

# The Irish Catholic

## Heroic callings during troubled times

12-page Vocations supplement  
Pages 15-26



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## Church urged to put plans in place for lockdown relaxation

Continuing restrictions need to be provided for

Chai Brady,  
Róisé McGagh and  
Aron Hegarty

Bishop Donal McKeown has said that Church leaders must come up with a plan to show health authorities that social distancing can work in parishes when restrictions start to ease.

As authorities on both sides of the border prepare to reconsider lockdown measures that have meant public Masses are suspended and forced churches in the North to close entirely, the Bishop of Derry said that the Church needs a plan.

"At some stage this lockdown is going to ease, people at some stage will be allowed to go back to churches, people at some stage will be allowed to celebrate baptisms and marriages even if only for small groups.

"Our job is to be preparing for what we would say – what we would do – when that possibility arises," he said.

In his own diocese, Dr McK-

own said they are working on "the things that we would guarantee to undertake to do as soon as the churches are open, as soon as baptisms and weddings are possible and as soon as Masses are possible. Whether it's three in a seat, and ticket-only and lots of Masses to cover a large number of people," we need to be ready Dr McKeown said.

### Guidelines

In Ossory, Bishop Dermot Farrell said that while churches were not closed, "given that social distancing will be with us for some time to come, we would welcome – if the guidelines of the NPHET allowed – the easing of restrictions for prayer, including and especially for funerals, Sunday and weekday Masses".

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of Waterford and Lismore told *The Irish Catholic* that the Church is trying to balance the spiritual needs of parishioners with health and safety.

"How do you limit the num-

bers and what do you do with Holy Communion? How do you distribute Holy Communion in a way that is going to be safe," he asked.

"It's not easy to solve...I am certainly getting a lot of requests here for Mass to recommence," Bishop Cullinan said.

Bishop of Ferns Denis Brennan said that "refraining from attending church for Sunday Mass for the good of others is something we never anticipated. Our people have been very understanding as to why this was necessary and their adaptation to spiritual participation – through varying media – has been almost seamless and widespread.

"Like every other grouping in society, we in the Church await the day when a move back to 'physical presence' on Sundays becomes possible. Quite likely it will be gradual. It will also require careful planning and co-ordination.

» Continued on Page 2

## Sharing love in isolation



Sarah O'Carroll and Mark Colton celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage despite the current pandemic in Holy Cross Church in Dundrum, Dublin. Although there was just a small gathering in the church, many guests joined via webcam.

MARIA STEEN

We need to know the truth about sin

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DAVID QUINN

We need answers about the failure to protect nursing home residents

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MARY KENNY

We've been through contagion before, and it wasn't flu

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## THE PATIENT WORK OF HOPE

"Prayer of petition is an expression of a heart that trusts in God and realizes that of ourselves we can do nothing. It calms our hearts and helps us persevere in hope." (Rejoice and Be Glad, Pope Francis no 154)

In this spirit, as we support each other through the present health crisis, the Prior welcomes your personal prayers of petition. Go to our website [www.loughderg.org](http://www.loughderg.org) and click on prayer.



## Inside this week

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# Health and safety can't become the Church's sole pastoral priority

In our Catholic tradition we often speak of the communion of saints as that spiritual union between the members of the Church on earth and those of us who have died in God's friendship.

Death is not the end for us, and those who have gone before us remain a part of us and a part of the Church. That's why reverence for the dead and their places of rest is central to how we grieve. Visits to cemeteries and the blessings of the graves are important rituals which help the grieving process. It was, therefore, with great relief that people greeted the news at the weekend that the Northern executive was re-opening cemeteries. It was a huge source of pain for people that they could not visit the graves of their loved ones.

In the Republic, no such restriction was formally imposed. It was disappointing, therefore, to hear reports this week that some gardaí were turning people away from cemeteries. There appears to be no uniform policy

since some members of the force are permitting travel to graveyards and others are not. The Garda Commissioner must urgently clarify the matter and – if necessary – the Government must intervene to permit bereaved people to visit cemeteries while applying all necessary precautions.

### Restrictions

More broadly, when restrictions are relaxed, the Church will have to act swiftly to assure public health authorities that communal worship can take place while observing social distancing. Most of our churches are very large buildings and can easily accommodate a larger group of people while observing distance.

Public health is of utmost

importance, but it must not lead to a situation where churches and public worship are amongst the last things to be considered. What are needed are credible plans that will meet the need for robust distancing.

As Bishop Donal McKeown says (see page 14): "It is so painful for many Christians that they cannot gather physically and hear the Scriptures proclaimed, and then share in Holy Communion...God wants to nourish us with the fullness of Jesus who is the Word of God – and that includes his Sacramental presence."

"That is why, we as a Church will prioritise people's physical health but are also able to speak a language that goes beyond the economic and the hygienic.

"If, after hearing this Gospel passage, we have nothing to offer but what one author calls 'the technocratic imagination'... then we have nothing to offer," the bishop adds.

It's a sobering thought and we must not allow our pastoral outreach and sacramental life to be subject to the rigors of health and safety alone. While ensuring that people can be as safe as possible, the Church must be ready to swing into communal action so that people can once again gather for worship – even if only in small numbers.

Where churches remain closed, every reasonable action and precaution should be taken so that they can once again re-open as places for private prayer.



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

## Church preparing for end of lockdown

### » Continued on Page 1

"Returning as a public congregation of whatever number is a day we look forward to, and it's one that will hopefully herald the permitted return of the fuller congregations – with the weekly reception of Communion – as we enjoyed so well, until recently," Bishop Brennan said.

He said he wanted to "compliment priests on the creative ways they have come up with to reach out to people, and people for the way they have embraced and participated in the various online liturgies."

Bishop of Killaloe Dr Fintan Monahan told *The Irish Catholic* that the bishops of Mun-

ster – where the decision was made to close churches – will address the issue this week in an online meeting. "The fervent hope would be that we would be able to reopen churches for personal prayer but that depends on the content of the advice given by the health authorities.

"The priority is the protection and safety of vulnerable people who might be at potential risk of the virus," Bishop Monahan said.

Bishop McKeown said that Church authorities had a responsibility to cater for the spiritual needs of people.

"We can be a bit easy in measuring the economic

effects, we can measure the health effects of the things that we do, but I think we have to look at the spiritual, the emotional, the general welfare of people which is much less measurable, much less tangible but equally important for very many people who are really distressed and they can't get into the church.

"Our job is to propose to government reasonable ways forward. Our job is to lobby them to say 'this is a reasonable way forward, we can do this without endangering anybody and that was the line we pushed about considering the cemeteries'," he said.

❶ See Page 14.



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# Concern at low number of older people getting ICU access

**Aron Hegarty**

A Fianna Fáil representative claims older people are “not being treated fairly” when it comes to healthcare treatment and coverage by mainstream media.

Mary Butler TD, the party's spokesperson on the elderly, told *The Irish Catholic* that those aged over 65 with Covid-19 being admitted to hospital may not be getting the clinical care they require.

Recent figures published by Health Protection Surveillance Centre this week shows 1,321 people over 65 were admitted to hospital with Covid-19 and 124 of them went to an intensive care unit (ICU).

“I accept that ICU may not be appropriate for many older people,” Deputy Butler said. “Yet there is significant concern and apprehension that older people are not being treated fairly.”

“The standard admittance rate is normally 13.6%. The rate to date is 9.4%, so that is a drop of 4.2% and I am concerned about that.”

“I felt it was important to raise the issue that fewer than 10% of those over 65 progress to the ICU and there is a growing fear being raised by older people that they may not get the full range of treatment and care available to them.”

## Treatment

Meanwhile, philosopher Dr Catherine Kavanagh has insisted that treatment should not be rationed for older people based on age alone. The acting head of philosophy at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick insists that patients who will benefit most from the treatment “should get it”.

She insisted that if the “resources are available”, then there is “no reason not to treat

a patient of 90 years of age, or a Down Syndrome patient”.

However, in the case of “triage” where there are not enough resources to go around, she says those “most likely to benefit most” from it “should be the ones who receive it”.

“It is going too far to assume that some people's quality of life does not merit access to treatment, even if it is available, and therefore to exclude them from getting treatment before they ever become ill – whatever the situation might be with regard to availability or benefit to the patient or the patient's wishes.”

“That is to deliberately condemn some people to death, without making any attempt to deal with whatever situation might present itself in real time, and far from being triage, does look very much like involuntary euthanasia,” she said.

On the issue of personal protective equipment, Deputy

Butler said that her attention had been drawn to a number of issues relating to staff in home care settings since the onset of Covid-19.

“Around 90% of deaths are among the over 65s and many of these deaths are happening in care home settings...Private or public, it doesn't make any difference: it's clear that care for the elderly is very important.”

## Mandatory

“For example,” she said, “it is now mandatory that masks be worn in all hospitals and nursing homes but it is not mandatory for them to be worn in the home care setting.”

“It is very important that those cared for in their own homes have the same terms and conditions in terms of PPE for those who come into their homes to care for them as those working in hospitals and nursing homes,” she said.

# Covid-19: ‘I clung to prayer’ says Dublin-based journalist

**Ruadhán Jones**

Dublin based journalist Yvonne Kinsella has revealed how she “clung to prayer” when struck down with the coronavirus.

Ms Kinsella spent 13 days in hospital due to Covid-19, and her condition worsened to the point that nurses told her she would be put in an induced coma and taken to ICU.

Speaking to Pat Kenny on Newstalk this week, Ms Kinsella described the experience. “They told me I had to be put into an induced coma. I knew then I might never see my family again...but one of the nurses got me to lie on my front, she said that it relieves the pressure on the lungs. Any small improvement could help.”

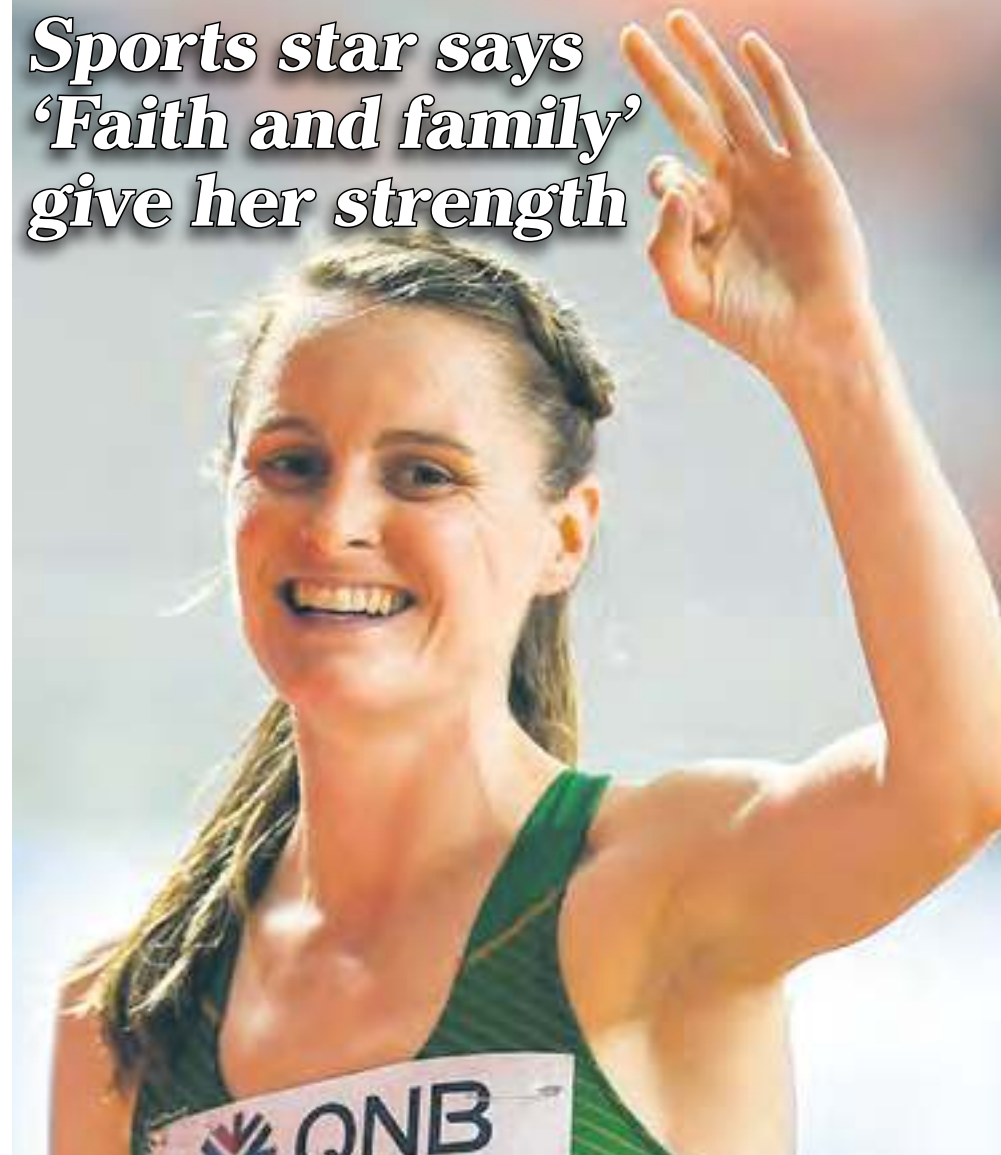
“After turning over, the nurse came back and told me that there was marginal improvement and they wouldn't have to send me to ICU.”

It was then that Ms Kinsella turned to prayer.

“I said, ‘Oh my God, thank you God’. And the relief – I literally prayed, and prayed, and prayed. And I wouldn't – I don't go to Mass, but by God, I clung onto prayer. I definitely clung onto prayer, and I kept thinking of my mam and how she'd react if I wasn't around, and I prayed and prayed and prayed.”

Ms Kinsella's whole family came down with the virus, but she told Pat Kenny that they are “thankfully now finally on the road to recovery”.

# Sports star says ‘Faith and family’ give her strength



**Chai Brady**

Irish sports star Ciara Mageean has said “Faith and family mean a lot to me” and that it is important people have something in their lives they can “look towards for that little bit of strength”.

She said her Faith is part of who she is – something she drew from her grandmother who died of cancer.

In an interview with RTÉ, Mrs Mageean

said: “I was visiting her one day in the hospital and I could tell she was praying so I didn't go in behind the curtain, I said I'd wait and let her finish the Rosary. She asked could she have the strength to make it through her next scan, because it was that painful.”

“That moment meant a lot to me because she didn't pray that it wouldn't hurt her, she just asked for strength.”



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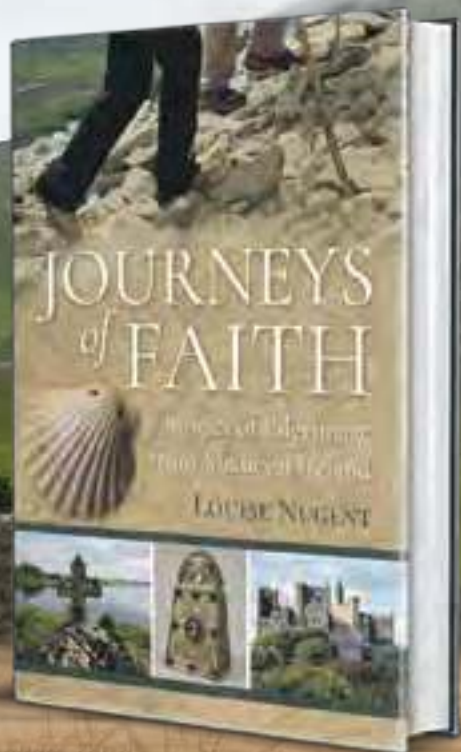
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# Britain 'exceeded power' imposing abortion on the North

Chai Brady

Britain's secretary of state for the North exceeded his powers by introducing liberal abortion regulations the region's chief legal adviser has said.

Under the European Convention on Human Rights protection must be given to the rights of those opposed on religious or philosophical grounds, Attorney General John Larkin QC, said, and it is doubtful that this was adequate in this case.

"This is of political and legal significance and, given that the relevant judgment call is best made by a local legislature, it may be inap-

propriate for the provision to have been so limited in light of the changed political context," the Attorney General said in written evidence to a House of Lords committee.

Last year, abortion was decriminalised in the region over the heads of locally-elected politicians by British MPs in a move that was widely criticised and opposed by all members of the UK Parliament from the North who take their seats.

## Regulations

Meanwhile, the northern bishops have written to members of the assembly to voice their opposition to new regulations regard-

ing abortion, insisting it must be debated "as a matter of urgency".

They said the current regulations, which were brought in due to legislation passed in Westminster, must be formulated to reflect the position of the majority of people in the North.

"While we regard this to be an unjust law, which was imposed without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland, we are morally obliged, wherever possible, to do all we can to save the lives of unborn children, which could be lost through abortion, and to protect mothers from the pressures they might experience at the time of an

unplanned pregnancy,"

Baroness Nuala O'Loan, in her submission to the House of Lords reiterated concerns about the consultation process, which she dubbed "deeply flawed".

## Debate

She stated: "It is time now for the NI Assembly to make its voice heard, to debate the issue and to reclaim its power over abortion."

"This new law with its obvious excess of power, uncertainties, lack of detail and dangers, has to be approved by parliament in the coming weeks. If this does not happen, the law will fall," she said.



**START THEM YOUNG:** Baby Éabha, born on April 15, enjoys her first Mass at just five hours old via webcam from Thurles parish with parents Wes and Sarah Morrissey.

## Priest calls for support for those in direct provision

Staff reporter

A Co. Laois-based priest who has been an outspoken supporter of asylum seekers has said that the coronavirus pandemic is having a severe effect on those living in direct provision.

Fr Paddy Byrne, parish priest of Abbeyleix, told *The Irish Catholic* that he fears the current crisis is "severely challenging" for "vulnerable" families living in accommodation while awaiting a decision on whether their application for asylum will be granted.

## Unwell

"They are living in very close proximity," he explained, "often in one room, and if one family member becomes unwell because of the coronavirus, how can self-isolation and social distancing take place?"

"This is a worrying time because my fear is that the vulnerable and refugees will be locked out."

"The present situation is not something new for these people, who have experienced lockdown and confinement for too long," Fr Byrne said.

## Christian Brothers make Dublin Retreat House available for coronavirus use

Aron Hegarty

The Christian Brothers has made the Emmaus Retreat House in Swords, Co. Dublin available for the State to use during the coronavirus.

"The State can use it in this time when we are dealing with a virus in whatever form they wish," Bro. Dominic Sassi CFC told *The Irish Catholic*.

Bro. Dominic also said he is fearful that the vocation of brothers in the Church is disappearing because it is a ministry that is little understood – even within the Church.

"There hasn't been a new member in the Christian Brothers in this country for about 30 years," he said.

"And that is partly because services – such as education – that we are involved in have been more or less taken over by the State. The brothers are no longer visible in schools and therefore people perhaps don't see the need of them [vocations]."

## Vocation

The vocation of the brotherhood is "not well understood", according to Bro. Dominic, and believes that it is up to the

brothers to ensure the congregation does not disappear.

"We are very aware of the decline in vocations and we are determined to be more open to the idea of new members."

Bro. Dominic, a leader in pastoral care, feels the brothers are "needed in today's world" and said they are looking at ways of keeping "themselves known".

"Even now, during this crisis and when it is over, we really need to keep the vocation of the brother in the public eye," he said.

**See Pages 16 & 17.**



# There has been contagion before

Historic memories of the Spanish flu of 1918-20 have been frequently invoked during the present pandemic – the novelist Emma O’Donoghue, who wrote *Room*, will be publishing a new novel in July based on the so-called Spanish flu. (Unfair to blame the Spanish for that pandemic: Spain’s press simply reported it, being free of wartime censorship, whereas the newspapers in other countries had reporting restrictions.)

But there’s a contagious disease which caused social isolation much nearer to our time, and which was also greatly feared: tuberculosis. Effective penicillin treatment for TB started to be introduced by the late 1940s, but TB cases which were incurable still existed right into the 1950s. In Dublin 4, where I grew up, there was a family man of considerable means who was obliged to be isolated in his large mansion house, because he was afflicted with TB.

**Smile**  
I used to play with his children in the grounds of that house, and their father, Timothy, would appear at an upper window to smile and wave. He was a



Mary Kenny



gentle kind of person and a good-looking man – my mother thought he resembled the film actor Tyrone Power, with dark eyes and a rich supply of hair. But when my elder brother paid a visit to Timothy because he was sorry for the poor fellow’s isolation, sharing, ‘a couple of bottles of stout’, my Ma was furious. My brother, earlier on, had had a brush with TB himself, but successfully recovered. Mother was terrified he would contract a second dose. Christian charity was extolled, but it was still thought

● April 30 is the feast-day of St Faolchú of Iona, a successor to Colum Cille. He became abbot of Iona at the age of 74, in the year 716, according Pádraig Ó Riain’s *Dictionary of Irish Saints*. Let us not forget that, according to Lord Clark in his famous BBC series *Civilisation*, the Irish monks who settled on the island of Iona were among those who kept Christianity alive when it was being extinguished by the barbarians all over Europe. April 30 is also the feast-day of St Ciarán of Seirkieran at Ballybott, Co. Offaly, the site of a former Augustinian monastery. He was a bishop and a prophet, as he foresaw the arrival of the Vikings in Ireland.

sensible to avoid the contagion – and TB was notoriously contagious. There was another case, too, in our neighbourhood, that I only learned about later – a young boy of about 10 years of age living in Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount. He had to be isolated in a garden shed at the back of his home and his meals brought out to him, while he stayed alone. That young boy died, as did Tim Lloyd. Despite his wealth, his tuberculosis couldn’t be cured.

**Sanatoria**  
The family moved out of that house, which had a magical, castellated aspect, with extensive grounds. It became the Marist College, Ballsbridge. TB patients were usually sent to sanatoria, but some were evidently isolated at home. How lonely they must have been – and in the days before electronic media or easy access to phones. Even in sanatoria, TB patients felt the stigma of their contagion. In this pandemic, I now think back to what TB patients must have suffered, not just from the disease, but from the isolation it imposed.



● Each Sunday now, I visit a different church with online streaming and it’s interesting to see Masses in different settings and with different approaches. All of them have been rewarding in their different ways: the austerity of Mass from Glenstal Abbey has a prayerful beauty, while the Newman Church in Stephens Green and Haddington Road in Dublin have an aesthetic spirituality. Last Sunday I joined the Dominican church in Claddagh, Galway which is a little gem. The priest was a very sweet older man who brought a rucksack onto a table by the altar to illustrate provisions for a journey, like the disciples walking to Emmaus. It was a charmingly informal, west of Ireland touch. Several Sunday Masses have female cantors, who have been excellent. I wonder if this experience of people tuning into different Masses online will impact on styles of worship. Comparisons often bring accretions or subtle changes to any ritual.

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# Irish nuns on the frontlines of Covid-19 crisis in Africa

Róise McGagh

Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary in Liberia are attempting to tackle Covid-19 through passing vital information between rural villages.

Sr Bridget Lacey, one of the founders of Social Empowerment Through Learning, said: “Our aim of what we’re doing in Covid-19 is to prevent villages from getting the virus.

“We are currently working with around 300 villages in Lofa County.”

The sisters are training people they work with to repeatedly visit villages to give them correct information on hand-washing, social distancing and the spread of the virus.

“We are providing buckets and soap in villages, as many as we can afford to give. It’s expensive to do, it is expensive to have people going from place to place providing buffet buckets and soap but we’re trying.

**Bucket**

“Many people can’t afford to have a bucket specifically sitting there for washing hands and getting water is difficult for people, people go long distances from the villages sometimes to get water,” said Sr Lacey who is currently in Ireland on a longer stay than planned due to Covid-19.

She says there is a lot of

misinformation and false news spreading in the country, making people scared to access necessary healthcare and use their water pumps as needed.

Irishwoman Sr Pat Murray, executive secretary of the International Union of

Superiors General (UISG), said recently that women religious “are on the front lines” in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and treating the sick.

In the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, Mercy Sr Mary Killeen is in charge of the Mukuru Promotion Centre (MPC) pro-

vides education, healthcare and social rehabilitation services to 8,000 children and adults every day.

They recently began making face masks which will be distributed in slums around the city.

“I have worked around the

slums for very many years but I have never seen poverty affect the people in Mukuru as it has from last year.

“And it has gotten worse now due to the curfew meant to reduce the spread of Covid-19,” she said.

## Christ in the city



Fr Paddy McCafferty PP of Corpus Christi parish in Ballymurphy gives Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament from a car in west Belfast on Sunday. Photo: Mal McCann

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Catholics ‘will joyfully welcome’ new Rosary prayers

Catholics “will joyfully welcome” the Pope’s addition of new prayers to the Rosary, says the Promoter of the Rosary for the Irish Dominicans, Fr Colm Mannion OP.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, he said: “It’s great that Pope Francis is highlighting the importance of prayer and the Rosary in particular during the current crisis. I’ve no doubt that Catholics around the world will joyfully welcome these additional prayers.

“Although the Faithful may not be able to receive Jesus sacramentally in the Eucharist, we can always turn to Mary in prayer and ask her to lead us closer to her son.”

“As our heavenly Mother, the Blessed Virgin is always caring for her children. We know that she comes close to us in a special way when life is difficult,” he said.

### Redemptorists report surge in online engagement

The Irish Redemptorists’ have revealed that hundreds of thousands of people are tuning in to their online Masses during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Statistics for the first three weeks of April show more than 250,000 people worldwide spent 160,000 hours following live streams from the Redemptorist churches in Belfast, Limerick and Dundalk.

Posts on Redemptorist Facebook pages reached more than 500,000 people, generating almost 200,000 engagements in the month from 24 March.

“Though we cannot wait for our churches to open again, it is clear that our online presence has provided support and spiritual nourishment to a lot of people,” said Limerick-based Redemptorist, Fr Gerard Moloney CSsR.

### Derry young people step up

Young people are stepping up to be readers at daily Mass in Ardmore Parish, Diocese of Derry. Participants of the Pope John Paul II Award, mostly Year 13 students, would usually be very active in the parish through reading at Mass, serving at the altar, distributing Holy Communion, decorating the Church, or singing in the choir or folk group.

They are now adapting to the online reality doing what they can by reading at the live broadcast of 10am Mass and praying the Rosary each night at 7pm.

## Stress among main issues to Accord helpline

Staff reporter

A ‘pressure cooker’ environment is one of the main issues causing tension in the home that has been identified by Accord phone support lines.

Since setting up their line in mid-April they have received calls from

people with issues of pressure and stress caused by uncertainty around security of employment, the effect of the pandemic restrictions on children and relationships that were vulnerable, pre-restrictions.

Mary Johnston, a specialist in counselling for marriage and rela-

tionships from the Catholic marriage care service, spoke to *The Irish Catholic* about how reasonable anxieties can bring out the worst of people in this time. “Sometimes stress and anxiety can almost paralyse some people. Other people when they’re stressed and anxious, they do the

opposite to withdrawing, they sort of explode – they can be sharp, they can be tetchy, they can be rude,” she said, stating that the service is also concerned for those dealing with issues of substance abuse in the home and instances of domestic violence.

📖 See Page 31.

## Crisis pregnancy group to open new centre

Gianna Care, a crisis pregnancy support organisation is opening a new location in Kerry.

The new centre is to offer similar services as the other locations in Dublin and Galway including pregnancy counselling, post-abortion counselling, emotional and financial support for women, free maternity and baby equipment and more.

A spokesperson said: “In the past few weeks since all the restrictions

have been put in place we have seen an increase in calls from women who are needing a lot of emotional support and luckily we have been able to provide this support over the phone.

“We are really looking forward to opening our doors to the public as soon as the restrictions lift but for the moment we are just at the end of the phone.”

## What do you think?



**Let us know by writing to:**  
Letters to the Editor,  
The Irish Catholic,  
23 Merrion Square,  
Dublin 2,  
or email:  
letters@irishcatholic.ie

## Bishop Leahy asks public to ‘dig deeper’ for ‘common good’

Aron Hegarty

The Bishop of Limerick has urged the public to work together to overcome the growing “restlessness” with Covid-19 restrictions for the “common good”.

Dr Brendan Leahy used sport as an example in his weekly homily to explain how all of us has “an impact on each other” when it comes to life and death.

“A certain restlessness is now inevitable,” he said. “We

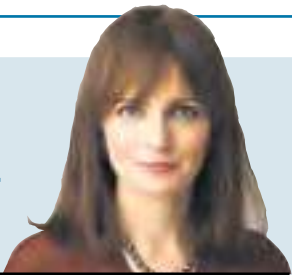
see signs of the strain. Worse still, a growth in domestic violence. Now is a time to remember what is often called the common good.

“There’s a huge victory for us ahead,” Bishop Leahy added, “but it is going to take sacrifice and it’s going to take teamwork.

“We are the team. If we don’t truly commit throughout the ‘season’, we will lose. And we’re not talking about a sports championship, we are talking life and death,” he said.



Maria Steen  
The View



# It may not be nice to hear, but we need to know the truth about sin

At the beginning of Lent we heard the words: “*Memento homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.*” Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return. In the two months since then – has it really only been two months? – a tiny virus has brought the world to its knees. Many families have suffered terrible bereavements.

If they have even been able to attend the funeral rites of our religion, they have been denied the comforts and consolations of our national customs surrounding death. Even for those of us whose families have, mercifully, been spared such pain, the coronavirus continues to confront us with the reality of our mortality.

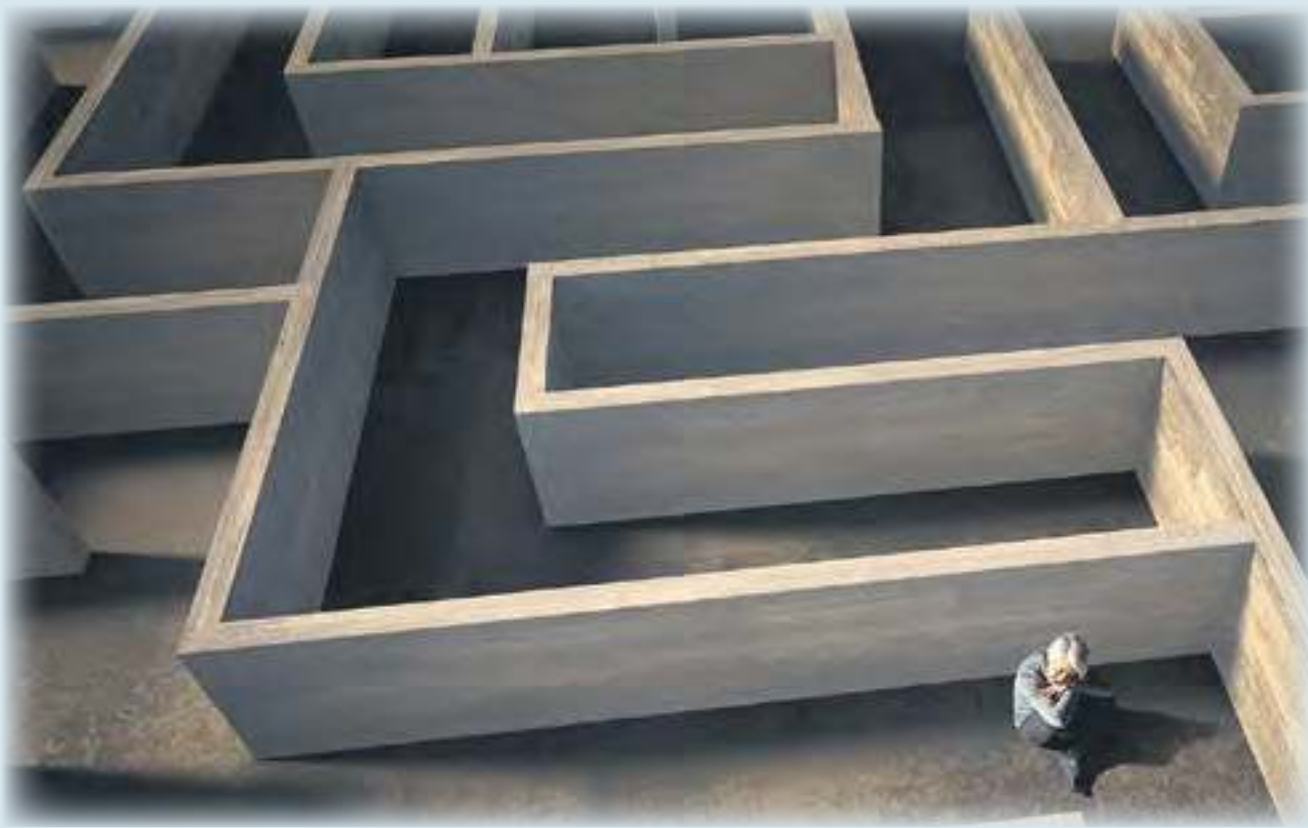
Although Easter is a time in which we express the joy of Jesus’ Resurrection, the condition of the world insists that we contemplate what it is to be mortal and on what are traditionally known as the ‘Four Last Things’: death, judgement, Heaven and Hell.

As Catholics, it is essential to reflect upon them from time to time, if only to remind ourselves that we are not made for this world, and to consider the direction our life is taking. Are we following the easy way leading to the wide gate, or the hard way to the narrow gate? Only one leads to eternal life. There are things worse than death. Perhaps it would be to say there is somewhere worse than death. That place is Hell.

No belief

Now some may say they do not believe in Hell. Others may say they do not believe anyone actually goes to Hell.

Let us recall for a moment at what Jesus himself said about the matter. In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus says: “I tell you, on the day of judgement, men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words



you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matt 12:36). And again: “The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear” (Matt 13:41).

“How many of us, if we have been brought up as Catholics, can truly say that we do not have full knowledge of right and wrong?”

In Mark’s account, Jesus tells us in the most startling terms that it would be better to maim ourselves than to risk being thrown into Hell, where “the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43).

The message is clear. No-one who professes belief in Christ can reject the notion of the existence of Hell. To do so is to disbelieve Jesus’ own words and teaching.

While the road to Hell may be paved with good intentions, what propels us along that path is sin, especially mortal sin. Mortal (or grave) sin is sin which cuts us off from God, which extinguishes God’s grace within us.

Specific

It being the case that Hell exists, and it being the case that mortal sin leads us there, what then are the conditions that pertain to mortal sin? How can we know what is mortal sin and what is not? The Church is very specific about this. To be guilty of mortal – as opposed to venial – sin, the following must apply: (1) the sin must be grave, or serious; (2) the person must have freely consented to committing the sin (whether by act or omission) – in other

words, he or she must not have been under duress; and (3) the person must have had full knowledge that the act was a mortal sin.

I have been thinking a good deal lately about the last condition. How many of us, if we have been brought up as Catholics, can truly say that we do not have full knowledge of right and wrong? For example, how man, can say they did not know that voting for abortion was gravely wrong? How many can say that they were unaware that (until the obligation was released for the duration of the current crisis) deliberately skipping Mass on Sunday was a mortal sin?

The outside world has rejected the notion of sin, and long since forgotten about it, only referring to it occasionally as a quaint notion swallowed by our gullible and benighted ancestors. But has the Church herself forgotten to inform the Faithful about the dangers of sin?

In the wake of the tragedy

of the 2018 referendum on abortion, some good bishops came under intense criticism for daring to suggest that people might consider going to confession if they had voted with the intention of legalising abortion. If such criticism had been in good faith (I doubt that it was), it would have been difficult to understand.

When considering the motivation of a senior clergyman exhorting his flock to repentance, it is necessary to consider the possibility that he may actually believe in the precepts of his religion: precepts like the possibility of souls being condemned to suffer in Hell. Our atheistic establishment class finds this suspension of its own disbelief impossible, but if it possessed a more sophisticated intelligence, it might consider the following options.

On the one hand there is Heaven: a place of refreshing coolness and light, in which the soul gazes upon the face of God. On the other hand

there is Hell: a place of eternal torment, in which souls are banished from ever seeing the divine countenance or enjoying any reprieve from just punishments.

These being the two possible ultimate destinations for us all, what is the kinder, the more loving thing to do? Is it to say nothing about the gravity of a person’s actions and allow him to persist in conduct that endangers his soul? Or is it to point out the fact of serious sin (without condemning the person; that is for God alone) in order to spare him from suffering?

The fact that sin often leads to suffering even in this world (as well as the next) only makes the answer more obvious. When a priest of the Catholic Church reminds those under his care of the wages of sin, he is not being judgemental – he is performing an act of charity and mercy.

“The role of the priest in providing the Sacrament of Confession is as important as that of a physician”

We may resist the notion, but mortal sin needs to be repented of and confessed in the same way that a life-threatening illness needs to be treated by medical doctors: it is an emergency situation.

During these days, when so many are facing uncertainty – and even death itself – the role of the priest in providing the Sacrament of Confession is as important as that of a physician. The difference is this: while the doctor cannot know for certain if he or she can heal the body, the priest, through administering the sacrament of confession to a repentant sinner, is guaranteed the ability to heal the soul.

If we need it, let us take this spiritual medicine, before it is too late.

“How many can say they did not know that voting for abortion was gravely wrong? How many can say that they were unaware that...deliberately skipping Mass on Sunday was a mortal sin?”





# We need answers about the failure to protect nursing home residents

It is untenable for the Government to refuse to admit mistakes and we need a public inquiry, writes **David Quinn**

**N**ursing homes in Ireland, whether private or HSE-run, look after about 30,000 elderly people. That comes to roughly 0.6% of our population. Yet these homes account for around 50% of all Covid-19 related deaths at the time of writing, a totally disproportionate number.

What accounts for this? Is it that the deaths were inevitable, or maybe some policy mistakes by the health authorities, and ultimately the Government, are also responsible? Also, is the situation in our nursing home worse than in other countries?

Let's deal with the question of inevitability first. Yes, it was inevitable that the infection would get into nursing homes. It is in the general community and therefore there was always the danger that it would get into care home as well. Once in those homes, it would be hard to contain. Staff go from patient to patient and if staff are infected, then they will infect patients as well.

Patients will also infect one another. This is what happens in families. If one member of a family gets it, then it is fairly likely other members of the same family will also contract it. However, a family member can stay in their room, and self-isolate, unless they are a small child. The person doesn't need to be fed, cleaned, gotten out of bed and into bed, given medication etc.

## Carer

The carer won't then be moving on to provide the same level of attention to other people. Therefore, while a family home can be compared to a nursing home, in the sense that one infected person can spread the disease to others, nursing homes are far more vulnerable.



In addition, it can be hard to keep an elderly person in their bedroom. They might well have dementia, and will be wandering the corridors, and if they sneeze or cough, might not think to cover their mouth or nose.

In a way, the care homes are in a similar situation to the mother and baby homes of old. Or indeed maternity units in regular hospitals. Babies were being kept at close quarters, and if one got (say) measles, then it

was very likely others would also get it because measles is incredibly infectious. This was in the days before vaccinations and antibiotics of course.

At one point after World War II, the Rotunda in Dublin had to basically close down and set up a temporary facility across the road because so many infants were dying.

As we know, elderly people, especially those with an existing illness such as hypertension, are the most likely to die if they contract Covid-19.

In other words, it is understandable that care homes are especially vulnerable to this pandemic. At the same time, we must not push the inevitability line too far because it can be a way of avoiding blame and not admitting that mistakes were made.

At the time of writing, about 40% of the country's 500 nursing homes are affected by the virus. Many staff have been, and are, off sick. Hundreds of elderly people have died, and thousands of residents are infected. Almost a quarter of residents with confirmed or strongly suspected cases of Covid-19 have died.

On the other hand, 60% of nursing homes do not report cases of infection. Is that because they are better run than other homes, or have they merely been lucky?

**“The official line has been that the first task of the health authorities was to protect the general population and now they are moving to protect the care homes”**

We also have to look at the State's role in this. In the early stages of the lockdown, the State was clearly paying far more attention to the hospitals than to the care homes. The hospitals were prioritised for staff, personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves and masks, and even oxygen.

The body representing private nursing homes (accounting for the big bulk of the sector), Nursing Homes Ireland, chased Health Minister, Simon Harris, for a meeting through the month of March before

finally securing one.

They complained about how the State was essentially outcompeting them for staff, PPE and oxygen. This made it much harder for them to fight the virus in the nursing homes. A care worker without adequate PPE is obviously far more likely to contract the disease and then infect others.

**“In some other countries, however, the authorities have admitted that mistakes were made, for instance in Belgium and Sweden”**

The official line has been that the first task of the health authorities was to protect the general population and now they are moving to protect the care homes. But does this make sense? Why could both not have been protected at the same time, especially in view of the much greater danger to nursing and other care homes?

Also, it was a decision, not an inevitability, to outcompete such residences for vital equipment and staff.

The HSE has said it is deploying staff to care homes. But thus far, this can only happen on a voluntary basis, and fewer than one HSE doctor or nurse per infected care home has been redeployed. That is hopelessly inadequate.

How do we compare with other countries in regard to these homes? We don't have a comprehensive picture yet, but the sector has been very hard hit elsewhere as well because many countries took the decision to prioritise the hospitals and effectively make the nursing homes their poor relations. Maybe groupthink had taken over again.

In some other countries, however, the authorities have admitted that mistakes were made, for instance in Belgium and Sweden. But here, the authorities won't admit any mistakes. That is untenable. In due course, there will need to be a public inquiry.



Minister for Health  
Simon Harris.



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# Out&About

## There's never a bad time for a party!



**LAOIS:** Some staff and residents from St Vincent's Community Nursing Unit in Mountmellick enjoy a cocooning party.



**WATERFORD:** After celebrating Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday, Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore follows the Divine Mercy image as it's brought through the streets of Waterford where many stopped to venerate the image of Jesus.



**WATERFORD:** Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore enjoys some beekeeping during lockdown. He has a few beehives in his garden.

### IN SHORT

## Knock Shrine offers virtual pilgrimages in unique times

This year Knock Shrine pilgrimage Masses will be broadcast online from Knock Basilica every Sunday at 3pm. Each weekend, there will be a welcome for the pilgrimage groups that traditionally travel to the National Marian Shrine for their own celebrations. Pilgrimage Sundays have long been a central part of the annual calendar at the shrine and the season traditionally begins on the last Sunday in April.

Pilgrims are welcome to join the afternoon ceremonies from their homes. The schedule for the afternoon will include the

praying of the Rosary at 2.30pm, followed by Mass and Benediction at 3pm. The celebrant will be Fr Richard Gibbons PP, Rector at Knock Shrine.

In advance of the day, pilgrims may place their petitions online on the Knock Shrine website and these will be placed on the altar for the Mass.

Many pilgrims light candles for loved ones and their intentions during their visit to Knock Shrine and this service is also available online. A candle will be lit at the outdoor candelabra for each request received.

Daily Masses continue to be broadcast on the Knock Shrine website and Facebook page at 12 noon and 7.30pm, with Rosary at 7pm. Sunday Mass is broadcast at 12 noon, Rosary

at 2.30pm and Mass at 3pm. For further details, see [www.knockshrine.ie](http://www.knockshrine.ie).

## A great time to 'bee' productive

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore has always been interested in beekeeping and told this paper how he has been enjoying his pastime during these weeks of lockdown.

About one year ago, a woman offered to install a few beehives in the bishop's garden since no fertilisers or weed-killers are used on the property, making it an ideal and safe place for keeping honey.

The bishop explained how the bee has always been a symbol of Our Lady: "Because

of its good working habits, the small honeybee is a well-known symbol for work, good order, and diligence.

"Less commonly known is that the bee is a representation of virginity. The worker bees have no part in the reproduction of its species, except for that of feeding the baby bees.

"The responsibilities of bee parenting are left to the queen bee and the drones. Since virginity is a virtue we find exemplified to its highest capacity in Our Lady, the bee quite naturally becomes one of Her symbols."

Bishop Cullinan added he plans to use the wax from his hives this year to make candles for the Easter Vigil next year.



Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication

**MONAGHAN:** The Parish of Tydavnet came together online as Mass was celebrated by Fr Stephen Joyce at the Penal Cross on Bragan Mountain on Divine Mercy Sunday.



**MAYO:** Fr Richard Gibbons PP, Rector of Knock Shrine, celebrates Mass for Divine Mercy Sunday at Knock Basilica.



**DUBLIN:** Catholic hospital chaplain Shauna Sweeney, pictured in Tallaght University hospital, has said it's "extremely harrowing" to see what patients and families are going through during the pandemic as she supports them and staff.



**DUBLIN:** Depaul staff John Smith and Pauline Mitchell thank Elliotts Food Service in Dublin for supporting frontline workers at the charity's Back Lane hostel in the Liberties.



**ARMAGH:** Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All-Ireland, celebrates Mass in St Patrick's Cemetery and prays for all deceased loved ones. He then blessed graves and prayed for all who have died in recent weeks.

## CLARE

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

## CORK

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

A Pro-life Mass is held on the last Friday of every month at the Poor Clares Monastery, College Road, at 7.30pm.

## DERRY

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

St Maria Goretti Prayer Movement: Prayer for healing for victims of abuse and reparation for the Church. First Holy Hour of prayer in the Immaculate Conception Church, Trench Road, at 8.15pm led by Fr Sean O'Donnell on the third Tuesday of every month.

## DONEGAL

Holy Face of Jesus prayer meeting: The oratory St Mary's Buncrana, Tuesdays following Rosary after 10am Mass. Contact: 085 252 5612.

## DUBLIN

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

Adoration Hour for Healing during Lent in St Laurence O'Toole Church, Seville Place, Dublin 1 at 8pm every Tuesday in Lent. Periods of silence, reflective music, individual prayers for healing all in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament [www.northwallparish.ie](http://www.northwallparish.ie)

## FERMANAGH

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

## GALWAY

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

## KERRY

Weekly Monday prayer meetings led by Ben Perkins, from 8-9.30pm in the Ardert Retreat Centre.

## KILDARE

Praying, reading and sharing the following Sunday's Gospel in Resurrexit, Kilmeague, every Wednesday from 8-9.30pm. See [www.resurrexit.ie](http://www.resurrexit.ie) for details, or ring 087-6825407.

## KILKENNY

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

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of the Assumption, Urlingford, every

● **In the current Covid-19 crisis, readers are advised to check with local organisers to ensure events will take place. If organisers have put in place alternative arrangements, please email us the details and we will publish same.**

first and third Friday, from 2.30-5.30pm.

## LOUTH

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

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

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

## MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday afternoon from 2.30-3.30pm in the Oratory, Enfield, for Adoration, Rosary, Chaplet and petitions. Also once per month a Lay Apostle meeting. However, all meetings are presently suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Adoration in St Patrick's Church, Stamullen, after 10am Mass every Thursday until 5pm, and in St Mary's Church, Julianstown, on Wednesdays from 9am and after 10am Mass.

Dunshaughlin & Culmullen parish. Sunday Mass live on Facebook (Dunshaughlin.Culmullen.Parish), 12pm. All welcome.

## ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Drumboylan Church on the first Friday of the month from 9am-11pm.

## WESTMEATH

Holy Face of Jesus prayer meeting: La Verna retreat centre beside private hospital Ballinderry, Mullingar. Thursdays at 7.30pm. Contact: 085 2525 612

## WEXFORD

Taizé prayer services every first and third Friday at 8pm in Good Counsel College Chapel, New Ross.

## WICKLOW

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



# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### First state in Germany reopens churches

● Saxony has become the first state in Germany to allow churches to re-open for public services. The governor of Saxony, Michael Kretschmer, announced that from last week onwards churches could hold services albeit "on a small scale".

Mass was duly celebrated in the Catholic Provost Church of the Holy Trinity in Leipzig for the first time since the suspension of Church services over five weeks ago.

Attendance was subject to the first 15 members to have registered on the internet and were let into the church by parish priest Provost Gregor Giele.

### Catholic university in US offers new students free tuition

● A Catholic university in the US has announced it will cover tuition costs for all incoming students this winter.

President Fr Dave Pivonka TOR of Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio said: "We feel called by God to ease the burden for students, so they can experience the irreplaceable value of a Franciscan University education."

"We hope this unique response will help them to overcome these obstacles and uncertainties and step out in faith with us."

The free tuition will go to new undergraduate students. The University has also created a financial aid fund to assist returning students facing hardship due to the pandemic.

### Church offers facilities to help Myanmar fight virus

● Catholic officials in Myanmar have offered Church properties for the State to use as quarantine centres during Covid-19.

Seminaries, Church-owned land and a Catholic Religious Conference building have been offered in Yangon as facilities to accommodate patients, nurses and doctors.

Bishop Raymond Sumlut Gam, head of Caritas

(Karuna) Myanmar, said the Church has joined the nation's battle against the virus through Karuna-run awareness campaigns and a response team led by Cardinal Charles Bo.

"The Church has pledged to contribute its involvement as a wider response through Caritas and the national team," he said.

### Indonesia Catholics and Muslims offer Ramadan aid

● The Jakarta Archdiocese and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) have teamed up to help those affected by coronavirus during Ramadan.

Under the project 'Your Ramadan, My Ramadan', NU Social Care and the diocese have started distributing food packages from April 24 to May 25 to marginalised Muslims.

"We and the NU are friends," said Jesuit Fr Christopher Kristiono Puspo. "Whenever there is a natural disaster, we always work together in emergency response and disaster mitigation."

"When it comes to humanity, we have the same vision, have one heart and mind. As Muslims enter their holy month, we want to build solidarity with them in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic," he added.

### Zambia bishops establish coronavirus response fund

● The Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) has set up a Covid-19 Response Fund (CRF) to give support to health facilities and help prevent the spread of the virus.

"This fund will supplement the efforts government has put into place," said Bishop Moses Hamungole on behalf of the ZCCB.

"We therefore urge our Catholic Faithful and other people of good will, to heed this call and contribute generously towards this fund."

Bishop Hamungole said the fund will be used to support Church initiatives dealing with the sick, elderly, people with mental and physical disabilities, orphans and the poor.

## Dutch cardinal expects euthanasia to surge following court ruling

A Dutch cardinal says a recent Supreme Court ruling permitting the euthanising of patients living with dementia creates confusion and raises questions about consent – particularly for the most vulnerable at the end of life.

Speaking on behalf of the Dutch bishops' conference, Cardinal Willem Eijk highlighted renewed concerns about the growing practice in the Netherlands.

Cardinal Eijk referred to the ruling, delivered on April 22, which found that doctors could forcibly euthanise such patients if they had previously signed a document approving the procedure.

### Declaration

"In 2016, a physician of a nursing home performed euthanasia in a woman who had a written euthanasia declaration, firmed four years before. This itself does raise the question of whether such a written declaration, firmed years ago, still expresses the actual will of the patient," said Cardinal Eijk.

The woman, who was unable to communicate due to her condition, had stated four



Cardinal Willem Eijk.

years earlier that she wished to decide when the time was right for her death.

She resisted the attempt to place the needle in her arm, was instead given a sedative in a cup of coffee before being reportedly held down by family members and euthanised.

Charges were brought against the doctor who administered euthanasia and he was acquitted. The Supreme Court further found that it was lawful to euthanise someone who cannot consent to the procedure, but had pre-

viously expressed a desire to be euthanised.

### Legal process

Cardinal Eijk said that experts were concerned the legal process left much to be desired in the case. "Does the legal proceedings against the physician of the nursing home lead to the clarity desired by the college of attorneys general? Physicians of nursing homes think that that is not the case," he asked.

"Instead of laying down criteria for interpreting the

written euthanasia declarations of patients with advanced dementia, the Supreme Court leaves this to the judgement of the physicians involved, by which their uncertainty only grows."

The doctor who euthanised the patient with Alzheimer's was initially cleared of any wrongdoing in 2019, but the case was further referred to the Supreme Court in an effort to establish legal precedent.

The Archbishop of Utrecht added that those "who consider human life as an intrinsic, and therefore universal value, and is convinced that it may not be terminated by euthanasia, medically-assisted suicide and termination of life without request, would prefer that these actions never take place".

He insisted that "one may fear that the Supreme Court's judgement, though making physicians perhaps more uncertain in performing euthanasia in patients with advanced dementia, will not lead in general to a decrease of the number of cases of euthanasia and medically-assisted suicide".

## China starts new wave of cross removals after Covid-19

China has begun another wave of cross removals from church buildings as the coronavirus pandemic subsides on the mainland.

The removals began over the past fortnight as government officials became relatively free from the pressure of fighting the pandemic, according to Christian leaders in the country.

Authorities have removed crosses from Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Anhui Diocese and one church in Yongqiao district of Suzhou City.

Most recently, they attempted to remove the cross of a church in Suzhou Road in Hefei City on April 27.

Parishioners were told by local

officials that they were acting on the "directions from superiors". However, no documents were produced to prove this claim.

"The same routine and tactics are used all across China," says Fr Chen from Anhui Diocese. "This is not the case of a particular diocese or province. It is happening all over the mainland, but the mainland Church is silent."

Fr Chen fears there will be more cross removals and said the Chinese Communist Party did not stop their persecution of Christians even when Covid-19 was raging in China.

"If the churches don't unite to resist, many more crosses will be removed," he says.

"After the religious symbol is removed [ ] it is no longer a church."

Since October 2018, hundreds of crosses across China have been removed.

Dioceses in Zhejiang, Henan, Hebei and Guizhou provinces have witnessed several crosses being removed, allegedly after they violated planning laws.

In October 2019, for instance, a church in Guantao County in Hebei was accused of "illegally occupying cultivated land" and then demolished.

Priests say the dioceses will normally cooperate with authorities in the removal of crosses in the hope of saving the church building.

## Increase in young people's Faith during pandemic

A third of US young adults who responded to a recent survey have reported an increase in their Religious Faith during the coronavirus.

In addition, nearly half (47%) of those reported that their level of Faith has remained the same during the crisis.

Seven out of 10 respondents who watched an online

service say that interacting with people, even virtually, makes them feel more connected. Yet, nearly half of these respondents report feeling isolated because no one has reached out to them individually.

The survey of 1,000 young people aged 13-25 resulted in publication by the Springtide Research Institute of Bloom-

ington, Minnesota of "Belonging: Reconnecting America's Loneliest Generation".

Following the study, Springtide interviewed 508 young people aged 18-25, and found that many young adults are experiencing increased levels of isolation, loneliness and anxiety.

Less than 1% of adults who reached out to young people

were clergy or Faith leaders.

Despite churches, religious or Faith communities providing online rituals and virtual spaces during this time of social isolation, the survey found that what mitigates the experience of loneliness for young people is the act of caring adults checking in and connecting with them.





Edited by Aron Hegarty  
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## Designed to be noticed



A man drives an auto-rickshaw depicting the coronavirus in Chennai, India to create awareness about staying at home during the pandemic. Photo: CNS

# Catholics in India preach to tribal villages about Covid-19

Catholic missionaries in India are trekking long distances to create awareness about the Covid-19 pandemic among tribal people in inaccessible villages of Madhya Pradesh.

Some 150 volunteers, including 45 priests, in Jabalpur Diocese are on this particular mission visiting Gond and Baiga tribal communities, who have not even heard of the disease, to teach them ways to prevent infection.

Most tribal people lack basic facilities such as proper food, shelter or water and, with the start of the summer season in April, the situation has worsened.

"Water shortage is a big problem for many," said Fr Thankachan Jose. "They depend on the forest for food, and the summer also creates a food

shortage, making their life miserable."

Fr Jose said he had visited some 100 families of Baiga and Gond tribal people, saying they knew nothing about Covid-19 as they do not have radio, television, newspapers or other mass communication means. Most are also illiterate.

"I have advised them not to follow this custom until the threat of Covid-19 infections is completely over. They have agreed," he said.

### No masks

Since they have no masks, the villagers cover their faces with towels, which they commonly use in summer to protect their faces and heads from the heat.

Other priests in Jabalpur also visit villages to create awareness

among tribal people about the global pandemic.

"Our priests are running awareness campaigns in more than 50 mission stations. Each station covers some 20 villages," said Fr George Thomas, who directs the Jabalpur diocesan social work society.

"Some priests allow one or two volunteers to accompany them, but they too follow social distancing norms."

Gulzar Singh Markam, a prominent Gond tribal leader, agreed that villagers had been unaware of Covid-19 and its ill-effects prior to the priests' campaign.

"It [priests' campaign] has given us a proper idea about the infection and the protection we need to take," he said.

## Indonesian Catholics start social movement for virus-hit families

An Indonesian Catholic youth organisation has formed a solidarity movement where people are being encouraged to help support families during the coronavirus.

The 'Adopt One Brother' movement, started by Catholic Youth, has spread to 26 of the country's 34 provinces, according to Stefanus Asat Gusma, who heads up the group's Covid-19 task force.

He said the movement involves thousands of Catho-

lic Youth members wanting to help poor people, especially those who had lost their jobs after restrictions on activities were imposed to prevent the spread of the virus.

"First, we mobilised our own members to help our fellow brothers and sisters who are experiencing difficulties. Then we extended our reach to anyone who was willing to help others."

He said the group is signing up volunteers who will

commit to donating 200,000 to 500,000 rupiah (US\$12-32) per week for an affected family.

"After we receive their data, we contact them about where they would like their donations to go," he said. "If a donor wants to donate to a family, we will coordinate with our members to seek a family in need."

He said they have also distributed around 2,000 aid packages to families in coor-

dination with local governments, dioceses and other religious groups.

"We want others to act, not only through our organisation but also individually or with other groups."

Gusma said the initiative will continue until the pandemic ends.

"We want to show the importance of showing human solidarity in the midst of this current crisis," he said.

## Vatican roundup

### Pope and French President discuss global unity

● Pope Francis has expressed his closeness and support to France during a telephone conversation with the country's leader. The President's office said the Pope and President Emmanuel Macron spoke for about 45 minutes last week by telephone.

The Pope positively acknowledged "the constructive responses taken by France at the international level after the health crisis caused by the pandemic".

Although the Holy See Press Office has not released a statement about the event as yet, President Macron's office said the two leaders also agreed on the need for a global ceasefire in all conflicts.

President Macron also announced the possibility of cancelling the debt of African countries to assist them in their fight against Covid-19 virus and, in line with the Pope, has also called for unity.

The President's office said the two leaders stressed their convergence of views on these issues and revealed that President Macron wanted to explain how France was committed to going forward.

At the beginning of the call, President Macron reportedly also renewed his invitation to the Pope to visit France. And after, reportedly engaged in dialogue with religious leaders and secular associations in France.

### Pope Francis offers gifts on his 'name day'

● The Church celebrated St George the martyr last week and marked the occasion by delivering ventilators to Romania, Italy and Spain.

Pope Francis also offered medical equipment, masks, protective glasses for doctors and nurses and coveralls for intensive care as a gift on his "name day" to these countries particularly affected by coronavirus.

A number of hospitals are to benefit – one is in the city of Suceava, Romania, where five latest generation ventilators are expected. Another two will

go to a hospital in Lecce, Italy and three more to Madrid, Spain.

"It is a beautiful sign that falls on this particular day when the Holy Father does not receive a gift but gives it to others," said Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the Papal Almoner.

Last year, the Pope donated Rosary wreaths made for World Youth Day in Panama to young people in the Archdiocese of Milan, and a 20kg chocolate egg to the poor at the Caritas canteen at Termini Station in Rome.

### Vatican prepares to ease restrictions in May

● Cardinal Pietro Parolin has met with members of the Roman curia last week to discuss the gradual reopening of Holy See offices as Italy prepares to end its national lockdown. The heads of Vatican dicasteries have decided to implement a "gradual reactivation of ordinary services" starting in May.

Italy's strict lockdown is due to end on May 4 and Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced he will be releasing a plan to slowly lift the coronavirus restrictions and reopen businesses.

"I wish I could say: let's reopen everything, immediately...but such a decision would be irresponsible. It would bring up the contagion curve uncontrollably and it would frustrate all the efforts we've put in so far," said Conte.

The Holy See press office director, Matteo Bruni, has repeatedly said that the Vatican is implementing measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus in coordination with the Italian authorities.

St Peter's Basilica and square, the Vatican Museums and several other public offices in the Vatican City State have been closed for more than six weeks.



# The Church will prioritise people's health but will also go beyond economic and hygienic concerns



It remains painful that we cannot gather physically and hear the scriptures proclaimed and share in Holy Communion says **Bishop Donal McKeown**

**T**he Holy Bible is full of great stories. It may be events like the one we have heard about today [the disciples meeting the Lord on the road to Emmaus] – or it might be parables like the Prodigal Son. But none of them were written down to be of merely entertainment value. All these dramatic stories have a teaching purpose.

St Luke wasn't writing his Gospel to help us escape from reality. Of all the things that happened in the life of Jesus pre- and post-Resurrection, this story was one that the early Jerusalem community kept telling – and Luke, writing 30 years later, knew it contained teaching important enough that it needed to be written down for posterity. As someone said, the Bible stories are not merely a window on the past, they are also a mirror on the present.

At the centre of the story are Cleopas and his friend. They are there at the start and at the end. In the middle they have an encounter that changes how they view both the past and the future. These are real people. They are open to share their feelings. We hear what their initial dreams had been and about their dashed hopes. And, at the end, we see them newly enthused. Here, as everywhere else in the Gospels, Jesus deals with real people.

The first thing that comes through in this story is that Jesus takes them seriously. He asks them what they are talking about. These are people who would have been his followers – but who were now heading home because things had not worked out as they had planned. He listens to their shattered dreams and the events that don't

make sense. He draws them out. With them He walks away from the place where they thought those broken dreams lay dead and buried.

Jesus walks with each of us this morning. Many people have suffered. Life has been stripped of the hopes and plans that helped them get up in the morning. Never be afraid to voice your anger, hurt and disappointment to the Lord. The One who was let down by His followers and rejected by many, the One who suffered in Gethsemane and on Calvary knows what physical and mental distress are like.

But, having listened to Cleopas and his friend, Jesus tackles their issue head on. He doesn't move on to talking about football or the weather. Their sadness has to do with the awful thing that happened to Jesus and their dreams on Good Friday. They can reluctantly accept what happened on Calvary – death is concrete. But they can't really get their head around the possibility of Resurrection. Calvary was sad but Resurrection sounds mad, too good and unreasonable to be true. But Jesus reaches into the writings of the Old Testament to water into bloom the seeds that they thought were all dried up. The story he tells is not just that things will be all right. His story about the prophets creates a whole new narrative about God's love for the world and the new Passover Lamb whose blood reveals hope and mercy for all. The early Christians began to see Calvary, not as a place of butchered dreams but as a revelation of God's new dream for the world.

Our cultural narrative has tended to move towards the assumption that we are entitled to whatever



The Supper at Emmaus by Caravaggio.

pleasure and happiness we can get and that everything should be removed that upsets my plans or causes pain. That is my right! But the Jesus narrative of Calvary is much closer to what we are now discovering. The heroes are those who face harsh reality, those who love and sacrifice themselves.

The ones who nourish us are not those who keep repeating foot-tapping, mind-numbing jingles but those whose lives and actions speak of courage and meaning beyond what tickles my fancy here and now. It is not all about me, screaming out from a lonely place that 'I am worth it'. Jesus takes us seriously but speaks of a heroism that comes from facing challenges with a generous heart. He calls us to believe in something beyond our own unimaginative dreams. There was a time when not believing in God was the rebellious thing to do. Now the real rebels are those who dare to believe in Resurrection and not just in a return to the status quo. Don't be afraid to let Jesus remake your hopes.

Thirdly, having explained the scriptures to them, Jesus does something that had become central to the life of the early Church. Breaking bread was one of the four

essential characteristics of the early Christian community, alongside the teaching of the apostles, the community and the prayers. All the Gospels talk about the multiplication of loaves and fishes – and use the words 'took, gave thanks, broke and gave'. We hear the same words today in the Gospel.

**“Breaking bread was one of the four essential characteristics of the early Christian community”**

The early Christian Church had discovered that the Risen Lord continued to show Himself to His followers when they gathered to let the Scriptures speak into the hopes and sadness's of our lives – and then to do in memory of him what he had done at the Last Supper. But St Paul – in the earliest written book of the New Testament, the first letter to the Corinthians – is very clear that we are not merely breaking bread in some human memorial action. He wrote to his listeners that “when we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim his death. Anyone

who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily will be behaving unworthily towards the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Cor. 11:26-7).

It is not surprising in St John's Gospel that when Jesus talks about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, many of his followers walk away because of this intolerable language (John 6:60). Breaking of bread opens up a Divine horizon. It is God's action, not ours.

For that reason, it is so painful for many Christians that they cannot gather physically and hear the Scriptures proclaimed, and then share in Holy Communion. That is not some hangover from a bygone age that means nothing to much more intelligent modern people. Christianity was never a solo hobby that can be lived equally well at home. Christians have always believed in the Church as physical body of Christ and in the Eucharist as an intimate sharing in the Body of Christ broken for us. As in His dealings with people 2,000 years ago, Jesus still wants to touch us, mind, body and spirit. Jesus still wants to sit at table with us and touches us sacramentally. Yes, the Lord wants to make our hearts burn within us with the words of God in the

Scriptures. But God wants to nourish us with the fullness of Jesus who is the Word of God – and that includes his Sacramental presence. That is why, we as a Church will prioritise people's physical health but are also able to speak a language that goes beyond the economic and the hygienic. If, after hearing this Gospel passage, we have nothing to offer but what one author calls 'the technocratic imagination'...then we have nothing to offer.

At the end of this story, we see what happens when people encounter the Risen Christ. Even though it is night-time, they race back to Jerusalem to share their encounter. They don't quite understand what has happened. But they know that something has happened that makes sense of Calvary. We don't have to be able to articulate all the logic of what is happening now. But Christians walk on with the conviction that there is One who does make sense of the apparent madness of shattered human dreams.

I suggest reading this passage in St Luke's Gospel, Chapter 24 a few times. Let Jesus speak to your broken dreams and allow Him to make your heart burn within you as He walks with you. And look forward in joyful hope for the day when He can gather us together around the table and nourish us with the fullness of His grace-filled presence that makes us apostles of His Good News.

**“Our cultural narrative has tended to move towards the assumption that we are entitled to whatever pleasure and happiness we can get”**



VOCATIONS SUPPLEMENT 2020

# Heroic Callings during Troubled Times





# Religious communities are here



Aron Hegarty

Chaplaincy, provision of food supplies and offering Church property as refuge are some of the ways religious orders in Ireland are reaching out to those need during the pandemic. This week *The Irish Catholic* asked three religious communities how they are coping, operating and helping society during the lockdown.

The first of these is Sr Mary Hanrahan PBVM of the Presentation Sisters, who serves as a chaplain at Arbour Hill Prison in Co. Dublin. As the only member of the team providing this service, Sr Mary's position has become integral to the prison in the current crisis. "At present we are the only outside agency that are allowed into the prison," she says. "The other agencies like psychology, probation etc. are working from their offices, but they are not being given access."

"As chaplains we have the same access that we always have had to the prisoners and prison staff. We are there all day doing what we try to do best which is to be a listening, supportive presence." In terms of preventing prisoners from feeling isolated or lonely due to restrictions on physical visits from loved ones during the lockdown, Sr Mary offers materials as well as spiritual messages. "My congregation and the Irish Prison Service (IPS) are able to fund and support me in purchasing things like jigsaws, music compact discs and prayer cards which are important for clients who maybe in quarantine or isolation for 14 days."

"We would be very mindful of the difference between a person being in quarantine or isolation in their home to being on their own in a prison cell." Sr Mary, who has been working full-time in the prison for four years, says her "essential" chaplaincy role allows her to serve and be there for a "marginalised" group.

"We are very happy that we, as chaplains, are recognised as an essential service and it is very significant for us to actually be able to be physically there for people, which is our role at all times."

"Our [Presentation Sisters] founder Nano Nagle always wanted to serve those



Bro. Kevin Crowley and Fr Sean Donohoe with Pope Francis. Photo: Damien Eagers

most marginalised and I'm delighted to be facilitated by my congregation to serve one of the most marginalised groups in our society today."

Since the onset of Covid-19 in Ireland, all work practices must now adhere to health guidelines and precautions in order to prevent contamination and stop the spread of the virus. "Our biggest response is being ultra-careful in terms of how we are in the prison and out of the prison," says Sr Mary of how she and the IPS have responded to the pandemic. "We are very careful that when we are at home that we limit our contact with other people so that we are not carrying anything into the prison."

She adds: "We are doing our utmost to keep the prisons Covid-19 free by doing little things like changing our clothes before we go into the prison, being careful about hand hygiene and following the usual protocols."

"We are also temperature checked every time we enter the prison." Sr Mary hopes that even if the situation gets worse and leads to tighter restrictions being imposed, she can carry on

her work for as long as she "needs to do it".

"We hope that going forward we would be able to maintain access with those who are locked up, if not being there physically then over the phone to provide support and listening."

**“Our main concern is that we don’t want to see anybody going hungry and we seem to have a lot of new faces”**

"We also want to keep giving prisoner families that support and reassurance that the person is ok, the prison is safe and Covid-19 free."

"These are the little things we will continue to do and keep doing as long as we need to do it."

On the entirely different subject matter of vocations, Sr Mary says the sisters have a "very active vocation group" and have had a "number of enquiries" this year already.

"We had a number of enquiries online with us



Christian Brothers inside the Entrance to Emmaus.

and a day to bring them together, which unfortunately we had to cancel due to the pandemic."

"We are hoping to resume with that once restrictions are lifted as we have had a good level of interest, which has come directly through social media."

For homeless people and those reliant on resistance, coronavirus has not changed their needs. Bro.

Kevin Crowley OFM Cap, of the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin, whose service helps feed the homeless, families and those growing numbers in need during the crisis, is adapting.

"Our main concern is that we don't want to see anybody going hungry and we seem to have a lot of new faces," he says. "These are people who have probably lost their jobs and are finding it extremely difficult to 'make ends meet'."

"Unfortunately the centre itself [at 29 Bow Street] is not open, so what we do is give out food for breakfast

in the mornings to about 200 people to takeaway. In the afternoon for lunch and evenings for dinner, we have between 700 and 900 people every day."

Bro. Crowley continues: "On Mondays we give out baby food and nappies to about 200 families. As well as that, we are giving out food hampers every Wednesday to between 800 and 900 families."

"The most important thing of all is we never ask any questions such as where they are from or who they are, we want to maintain the dignity of each person."

**“We would not be able to do what we are doing only for our excellent volunteers”**



# 'if and when needed' in crisis



Sisters and Friends of Nano pray at the tomb of Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Sisters.

Cork native Bro. Kevin says the charity, which he established back in 1969, relies on donations, fundraising and the support of volunteers.

"We would not be able to do what we are doing only for our excellent volunteers," he explains.

"We have two groups: one comes in for two or

three days, then the other comes in for two or three days. There is great harmony and spirit, and there is no problem adapting to a new system. They [volunteers] are fantastic, a great advertisement for us and are helping us in every possible way."

Bro. Kevin says the centre will keep going as

long as it can during the outbreak and "for as long as we get the support".

"Thankfully none of our staff have gone down with the virus so far, which is a great blessing. The local church is open for people to eat in because when the crisis arose we said we had to provide a shelter or place

where the homeless could eat their food.

"The majority of people take the food away and go off, but there are people who come to the church and treat it with great dignity and respect. We are supervising social distancing and constantly cleaning the building, taking all the necessary precautions."

He concludes by saying: "Hopefully when all this [coronavirus] is over, there will be a big turn back to the Church and more vocations.

"It's a very difficult time for us and many people are experiencing great difficulty, but we hope that our Lord God and Our Lady will lead us though it and many people will come back to us."

Bro. Dominic Sassi CFC of the Christian Brothers is the third one to speak on his congregation and how they are operating in the current climate.

"We function mainly through Google, Zoom, Skype or teleconference when we want to speak as a team or speak to a particular community," he says. "We try to make sure we keep in contact

with one another by ringing up every now and again.

"We also employ a nurse, who is working from home but is in frequent contact by telephone or visit.

"She [the nurse] would go around and keep in constant contact with the brothers."

**“These are the little things we will continue to do and keep doing as long as we need to do it.”**

The brothers keep themselves active through regularly praying and engaged through online religious services, according to Bro. Dominic. "As a religious community, we have various times for prayer in the community which, even with social distancing, we encourage the brothers to continue doing. We encourage them to do the liturgy and daily Mass through RTÉ or other web sources."

Bro. Dominic, a leader in pastoral care, says there

has been one death in the congregation so far during the pandemic - a 90-year-old brother, who lived in a nursing home. However, it has not been established if the cause of death was coronavirus related or not. "As there are very few Christian Brothers under 60 years of age," points out Bro. Dominic, "it means that many of our members would be in that 'high risk' category.

"We are trying to stress to each other how important it is to comply with the guidelines through isolation, staying at home or cocooning and we feel we are compliant with those rules."

The brothers have generously offered the Emmaus Retreat and Conference Centre in Swords, Co. Dublin to the State to use in "whatever form they wish" as a way of reaching out in the crisis.

"We have made that [Emmaus Centre] available and we got a reply back saying 'thank you very much'," says Bro. Dominic. "They are not sure if they will need it, but the offer is there."



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*"Take good care of the service of the poor. Above all, live together in great union and cordiality, loving one another in imitation of the union and life of Our Lord."*  
(St Louise)

Kenya



Ireland





# Presentation Brothers Responds during this time of COVID-19



**T**he Presentation Brothers extends their prayers, thoughts, best wishes and expression of solidarity to all affected in so many ways by this COVID-19 outbreak. The united effort, both local and global, to combat this virus, has been phenomenal. People have rallied together to do their part in the fight against the spread of the virus. Every one of you is doing your part to save lives - whether that's

by staying home to protect your families, community, friends or an elderly person, or working in the health sector as frontline workers, or supporting those on the frontline, or by leaving home to keep the country going as a key worker. We thank and applaud you for this and wish you and your families the absolute best at this difficult time.

What does this mean for the Presentation Brothers and the Presentation Family? As a human family, we all need inspiration in the ordinary living out of our lives, and more so at this time of crisis. Pope Francis would say we need to proceed by way of discernment. What is God asking of us now as we seek to respond to a suffering world? We see the witness to Christian Hope as the great need now.

## Through the initiatives of the L.E.A.F. Project this is how we are trying to help now

Brother Martin Kenneally, Director of the L.E.A.F. Project, based in Cork, says that the "Major challenges in mission awaits us. Beyond this crisis, there will be a great need for repair, renewal, and healing. Many people, perhaps most especially those who suffer poverty or disadvantage, will need help. God is setting a new agenda for the Church now. Religious and lay groups are called to be at the centre of this." We are responding through:

**PRAYER:** We are praying for the sick and the recovering, the deceased, and the bereaved. We are praying for medical personnel and frontline/essential workers. We are praying for civil and Church leaders that they may have the wisdom and courage to lead well.

**COMMUNICATION:** We are staying in touch by phone,

text, WhatsApp, email, Zoom, etc. Offering words of encouragement and hope. We are conscious, especially, of those who are elderly, feel vulnerable or isolated.

**PRACTICE:** We are putting into practice some of the gems from our Leadership Conference last year. We need them more than ever now! We are conscious of the Power of Gratitude and practice it as we connect with people.

**PRESENCE:** We are being present in the moment, praying for the grace, to act in a way that is worthy of our call.

**PREPARATION:** Thinking of the challenges post this pandemic, we are discerning how we might respond to the needs of people who might be disadvantaged, suffering or in need of support.

**MESSAGES OF HOPE:** A series of 'Messages of Hope' at this time of the coronavirus has begun. Several people involved with or connected to the L.E.A.F. Project have been invited to share a word of encouragement with others within the Presentation

Brothers, the Presentation Family and beyond.

On a global level, The Mission Development Office of the Presentation Brothers has applied for funding to help support the health authorities in Ghana in its efforts to contain COVID-19 in those areas with extremely poor health care systems. The fund will help poor families with food, soap, and other essentials. PPEs and other protective gear will be purchased for health workers in the community health clinics in villages. The funds will also, be used to support vulnerable households, pregnant women, the aged in the villages where the Brothers live and minister.

Pope Francis says, "This is the moment to see the poor. Jesus says we will have the poor with us always, and it's true. They are a reality we cannot deny. But poor are hidden because poverty is bashful. In Rome recently, in the midst of quarantine, a policeman said to a man: You cannot be on the street, go home." The response was: "I have no home; I live on the street." To discover such a large number of people on the margins.... And we do not see them, because poverty is bashful. They are there but we do not see them: they have become part of the landscape; they are things.... To "see" the poor means to restore their humanity. They are not things, not garbage; they are people".



Bros. Martin and Raymond with Bishop Fintan Gavin



Br Raj and Br Simon with friends at Youth2000 Summer Festival

Vocations to the Religious Life and the Presentation Brothers:

Is God Calling You?

If you are interested in knowing more about becoming a Presentation Brother, Please contact:

Br Barry Noel, Presentation Brothers, Glashule, Co. Dublin, A96 FH67

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# A Barefoot Jesus Walks into a Bank



**M**y favourite painting, without doubt, is found in a small church in Rome, just off the Piazza Navona, only a short walk from St. Peter's. The Call of St. Matthew is tucked away in a corner with two other works by the same painter, Michelangelo Merisi de Caravaggio. It depicts the very moment where Matthew's life is turned upside down, when he abandons his old life to follow Jesus. When we read the story in the New Testament we can lose the sense of how extraordinary the encounter was. In the painting Matthew and his colleagues, all splendidly dressed, are hard at work, assessing taxes, dividing the profits, and making money. Into this scene walks

a barefoot Jesus, along with Peter, looking slightly scruffy and decidedly out of place. With his arm extended, Jesus points at Matthew, who responds with a look of shock and incredulity. Matthew even points to the person next to him, assuming Jesus has made some sort of mistake. Jesus couldn't possibly be calling him, could he?

This is at the centre of our understanding of being called by God. Isn't it all too easy to become distracted and to lose our way? So much of our world today is designed to get us to settle for those things which don't really satisfy. You are meant for more. Before Jesus missions Matthew they share a meal, breaking bread together. Matthew opens his heart to listen to the Word of God. Then he is finally free to let go of whatever was holding him back to follow Christ with an open heart.

## Googling Prayer

It's interesting that as we spend more time at home during this pandemic we can become bored of constant streaming and consuming a never ending supply of social media memes. Like Matthew, we are looking for that deeper encounter, even if we're not sure what it will look like. Only last week, it

was reported that the word 'prayer' has been Googled more times than ever before. In our isolation we seek connection and meaning. It's who we are. There is that restlessness deep within us that can only be satisfied by God. This time is an opportunity for reflection and discernment, when we come face to face with ourselves. It is also a time for us to take action.

When this crisis has passed, we will look back and assess the work of our leaders, our carers, and our Church. Some will point to the closed doors over Easter and comment about the absence of priests, religious, and the parish community. However, we are an Easter people and if history has taught us anything it is that when things appear at their most difficult our Church comes into its own. Earlier this week I was reading the story of Elijah's encounter with God (1 Kings 19:10-18), not in the strong wind, the violent earthquake, or the raging fire, but in the gentle breeze. Throughout our country we have seen our hospital chaplains working tirelessly alongside our nurses and doctors, caring for the sick and dying. Chaplains have ministered to families as their loved ones have died, accompanying them to



A number of MSC students at their first profession in Cork



Fr. Alan Neville MSC leading a time of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament



Fr Martin Morrissey MSC working in South Africa

the best of their ability. Parishes have reached out to the entire community, but especially the isolated, offering prayers and the possibility of picking up shopping or prescriptions from the local pharmacy. Religious sisters have continued their outreach to people living in direct provision, providing a vital lifeline to those who have fled their countries. Acts of faith are quiet, gentle, and often unnoticed, but are nonetheless remarkable for their power bring hope, understanding, and love.

## Where To From Here?

Certainly the cocooning of everyone over seventy has shown the reliance we have on our older sisters, brothers and priests to run our parishes, community services, and outreach work with people on the margins of society. It illustrates our indebtedness to them, but reminds us that we need to be open to raise up men and women as good shepherds. Since the earliest days of the Church, the community has

been responsible for encouraging our men and women to be leaders. In a vocations conference last year a panel of religious in formation addressed the group. While they came from a wide variety of backgrounds, the two things they all had in common were a desire to serve God and that not one of them had put themselves forward first as a potential vocation. They did not feel personally worthy or good enough. It was only after some words of encouragement from friends, work colleagues or fellow parishioners that they decided to contact someone to begin the conversation that would change their lives.

As we look now beyond the borders of Ireland, there is real concern about developing world. Our Missionaries of the Sacred Heart priests, sisters and brothers are working with local communities in almost fifty countries in health clinics, hospitals, schools, and parishes to witness to the love of God in concrete ways. The circumstances have been

challenging, but now with COVID-19 the work is even more difficult. So what can we do? First, we can pray. We can pray for all those who serve and care, especially those who put their lives on the lines to help others. Secondly, we can encourage those around us. There has been an immense sense of renewed solidarity both in our communities and globally. Also, if there is someone you see that has the makings of a good brother, sister or priest, you might mention the possibility to them. Finally, we can remember who we are called to be. Like Matthew, we can become distracted or even lost, but the call of God is insistent. Let's remember that we are all followers of Jesus and renew our commitment to Him at this time. If you feel that God is calling you to a particular role of service in the Church perhaps now is the time to make that phone call or write that email that will change your life forever.

If you would like to talk about a possible vocation to the priesthood or religious life, you can call Fr. Alan on (086) 7857955 or email him at [vocations@mscmisions.ie](mailto:vocations@mscmisions.ie) Further information is also available on our website [www.mscvocations.com](http://www.mscvocations.com)



# THE CAPUCHINS

*A life of Prayer and Service in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi*



## OVER 400 YEARS OF SERVICE IN IRELAND



The Capuchin Franciscan Friars were founded in the early 1500's in Italy with the desire to return to a closer living of the rule of St Francis of Assisi. Capuchins arrived in Ireland in 1616 and since then have become an intrinsic part of the Irish story.

Today in Ireland we have Friaries in Cork, Dublin, Donegal, Carlow and Kilkenny as well as Irish Friars serving overseas in Zambia, South Africa, New Zealand, South Korea and California. Wherever we are found our mission is the same, to be an authentic Gospel presence as Brothers of the People.

## SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How do I know if I am called to be a Capuchin Friar?

The process of discovering what God is calling you to is called discernment. It oftentimes begins with a feeling or an experience or encounter that invites and compels us to seek deeper relationship with God, others, and all of Creation. This takes time, patience, prayer and guidance. It requires of us that we open our hearts and begin to trust in God in a whole new way. In many ways, it requires a step into the unknown.

### Who can help me discern my vocation?

The Irish Province of the Capuchin Franciscans takes the discernment process very seriously. We are committed to helping men discover their call by means of a comprehensive vocation accompaniment programme. This programme enables people explore the questions they have and to discover some new ones. The aim of accompaniment is to walk with you as a brother as you discern, listen and reflect, while offering sound guidance and practical support. Each and every vocation journey is blessed and unique.

### Do you wear a habit?

Yes! Capuchins wear a simple brown habit and white cord. The cord has three knots that serve as a reminder of the three vows we profess.

### What are the vows that you take?

We take three vows: poverty, chastity and obedience. Poverty allows us to develop a deeper respect for the world around us and for all the good things that God provides. Chastity encourages us to live with hearts centred on God and obedience invites us to listen deeply to God's plan for us.

### How long does it take to train as a Capuchin Friar?

Our training is known as formation and usually takes between six to eight years. A Friar in formation will study, work, pray and minister while growing into what it means to be a Capuchin Friar in the world today. Formation is an exciting and deeply meaningful time.

### Was Padre Pio a Capuchin Friar?

Yes, the Capuchin Franciscan Order are blessed to have many saints and St Pio is certainly one of the best known, particularly in Ireland. Saints like Pio, all went through a time of discernment, in fact it was something they did throughout their lives. As St John Paul II reminds us 'we are all called to be Saints'.



**That's great, what do I do now? I'd like to find out some more.**

To arrange a conversation with our Vocation Promoter, simply e-mail: [capuchinvocation@gmail.com](mailto:capuchinvocation@gmail.com)

You can also visit the vocation page of our website [www.capuchinfranciscans.ie](http://www.capuchinfranciscans.ie)



**CAPUCHIN  
FRANCISCANS**  
PROVINCE OF IRELAND



# Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles

## *A Gift of Life to the World*

*'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to his harvest.'* ~ Matthew 9:37

**Michelle Robertson**

**W**e are living through the strangest of times, a turning point in human history. I'm sure we all feel it, the world is on the brink of great change.

As we gather, physically separate, yet spiritually together on Vocations Sunday to pray, we reflect on the purpose of this day – A World Day of Prayer for Vocations – whereby we pray to “the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to his harvest.”

Pope Benedict XVI said: “Our life is to be a gift of love to the world. But what will that look like? We must remember that through our Baptism, everyone is called to holiness. Holiness will look different for each individual person because God works uniquely with each soul. God gives each person a particular mission in their vocation. This mission lives in the soul and is waiting to be discovered.”

### An Extraordinary Call to an Extraordinary Life

In Ardfoy Convent, Cork, there lives a generation of extraordinary women who answered an extraordinary call. They are living in isolation right now, part of the group that has been advised by the Irish government to “cocoon” because of the Corona virus that has swept the world. They are an incredibly resilient group of women – one of whom just celebrated her centenary!

When you speak to these Sisters they are humble and unassuming and when one points out that they have lived an extraordinary life, the response is often genuine confusion. This was the call they answered and chose to be obedient to, a call that for some was an easy and almost effortless discovery and for others, a long and arduous search. These women, following in the footsteps of those who came before them, gave up family and friends and left the shores of Ireland to venture to Africa where they worked and lived their calling.

They worked across many disciplines including medicine, education, social studies, justice and developmental work. The heart of their mission lay in the upliftment of the women and children of Africa. They lived and worked among the most vulnerable people, bringing hope by the very witness of their lives.



Two OLA sisters crossing a river in West Africa, circa 1877

### The need for women missionaries

The story of this Religious order began a long time ago, back in 1876. This too was a time of change. The missions of the SMA (Society of African Missions) had extended across the West African Coast from Ouidah to Lagos and the priests of these fledgling missions were acutely aware that in order to reach the people of Africa, they needed to be able to build relationships with the women. In order to do this they recognised the need for women missionaries.

Father Augustine Planque, co-Founder and Superior general of the SMA was desperately trying to recruit nuns from the existing Religious Congregations. The missions were dangerous and the mortality rate high among the Europeans who ventured to Africa. In fact, the founder of the SMA, Monsignor de Marion Bressillac, and all in his mission group, had succumbed to yellow fever back in 1859.

Fr Augustine, undeterred, and guided by his faith and trust in God, founded the Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles, specifically to answer the needs of the African Missions.

This call to mission in West Africa would be answered by only the most audacious; and so in May 1876, in an old house in Lyons, France, nineteen young women met to form this new Religious Congregation. They came from Anjou, Nantes, Coutances, Lyons, Cork and Dublin and were the first women missionaries to venture into the dangerous landscape of West Africa.

### With Mary, the Mother of Jesus

These brave young women were filled with the Holy Spirit, and took as their motto the words in the first chap-

ter of Acts of the Apostles, “Cum Maria, Matre Jesu,” with Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

The most important thing for the sisters was to make contact with the people and build relationship. To facilitate this building of relationship, they learned the languages and dialects native to the areas in which they worked and then went about opening schools for girls. They cared for the sick and did the works of mercy called for by the great human need they met there. A number of these young women lost their lives to the ravages of the African continent.

Today, the OLA sisters continue their work in Africa and other places across the world. The heart of their mission lies in their relationship with people, particularly the women and children of Africa.

The spirit of the OLA congregation is essentially an apostolic one. They speak of a Cenacle spirituality, drawing strength and inspiration from the experience of Our Lady and the Apostles in the ‘Upper Room’, who were filled with the love, joy and energy of their Pentecost experience. They continue to strive to be signs of hope for all people.

The spiritual life of these sisters is characterised by a filial trust in God, devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament, and a deep love for Mary, Queen of Apostles.

So, as we live through this strange time, we pause and pray not only for new vocations, but for those very special Sisters who answered the call so long ago, for the OLA Sisters across the world who continue to live lives of service during these difficult times, and for the extraordinary women cocooned in Ardfoy.



### Sharing in Our Mission

Interested in volunteering overseas?

Email: [volunteering@olaireland.ie](mailto:volunteering@olaireland.ie)

Interested in joining our Lay Mission Movement?

Email: [Imm@olaireland.ie](mailto:Imm@olaireland.ie)

Do you feel God is calling you to be an OLA sister

Email: [vocations@olaireland.ie](mailto:vocations@olaireland.ie)

[www.olaireland.ie](http://www.olaireland.ie)

[info@olaireland.ie](mailto:info@olaireland.ie)

Ardfoyle Convent, Ballintemple, Cork

Facebook: OLAsisters | Twitter: @OLAireland | Instagram: OLAsistersireland



# Franciscans Friars - OFM

## Walking in the Footprint of Jesus

**W**e Franciscans are a Fraternity in Mission, inspired by the life of St. Francis to bring the Gospel of Joy and Grace to the world. We devote our lives to the search for God in a communal life of prayer, simplicity of life and service to others. At the heart of Francis' Gospel vision is delight in the Lord and His overflowing goodness. We strive to continue our Order's 800-year-old mission as we serve the Church and the world as brothers and priests in a variety of ministries. We are part of the world-wide Franciscan Order present in 120 countries with some 13,000 friars.

### Mission to the World

St. Francis was a man on fire with the desire to tell others of the love of God that Jesus had made known to us. He spoke often of following "in the footprints of Jesus." Even when the numbers of his friars were very few, Francis

Joyful brothers in the Lord



sent them out two by two to preach the Gospel. Today there are many thousand Franciscans witnessing to Christ in mission lands.

Irish Franciscans are present in Central America, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is now the chief mission area for the Irish Franciscans. The friars came to Zimbabwe in the 1958. Young Zimbabwean men joined the Order

and today there are about 40 friars in the Franciscan Custody of Zimbabwe.

We are still inspired by the words of St. Francis: "God has sent us into the whole world so that by word and deed we may bear witness to Him."

### Peace and Good

Through a life of prayer and relationship, Francis came to see God's goodness at the



Br Ian Cunningham at his First Profession with his family and Br Pat Lynch (left).

heart of all he has created. As God's children we are called to praise and thank God daily for the gift of creation, a world that mirrors God's beauty and goodness. Francis shows us how to live with a spirit of gratitude for the gift of creation and how to joyfully embrace our responsibility to care for that same creation.

Pope Francis, who chose St. Francis as his patron and model when he became Pope, said, "Francis of Assisi - for me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation. He is the man who gives



Br Ronan Sharpley greets some furry friends.

us the spirit of peace, who tells us we should work to build peace, within our hearts and among ourselves."

"Pace e Bene!" (Peace and Good!) is a greeting used on all continents by Franciscan men and women since the time of Francis. It has grown to be an unofficial motto of the Franciscan family.

In the joyful and prophetic spirit of St. Francis, the Irish Franciscan friars are dedicated to sharing the Gospel of Christ by serving the poor and promoting justice, peace, and the care of creation.

If you would like to know more about following Jesus as a Franciscan Friar contact Friar Pat.

**Friar Pat Lynch OFM**

Mobile: 087 1346267 | brpatofm@hotmail.com

Postal address: **Franciscan Friary, Athlone, Co Westmeath**

We look forward to hearing from you and having a conversation. God will do the rest!

Check out: [www.franciscans.ie](http://www.franciscans.ie)



## CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY

### "I HAVE HEARD MY PEOPLE CRY"

The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary was founded in 1800 in France in the aftermath of the French Revolution. It was a time of great disorder and fear. One of God's responses to the cries of the people of that time was to call together a community of men and women who committed themselves to contemplating, living and proclaiming God's compassionate love for all and especially for the most poor and the marginalised.

### "WHOM SHALL I SEND?"

Today's world is no different. The cries of the poor can still be heard in many places throughout the world. There is a great need for men and women to be messengers of God's compassionate love. Is God calling you?

**EUROPE, NORTH & SOUTH AMERICA, AFRICA, JAPAN, INDIA, INDONESIA, PHILIPPINES, FIJI, TONGA...**



### MORE HEROES NEEDED!

On 10th May, 1873, a young Belgium Missionary priest belonging to the Congregation, having heard the cry of men, woman and children who had been banished to the Island of Molokai due to an outbreak of leprosy (Hansen's Disease), volunteered to go to the Island. His name was Damien De Veuster. He was 33 years of age. From that time until his death in 1889, aged 49, he placed himself at the service of his 'beloved lepers'.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

**YOU, TOO, CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AS A SISTER, BROTHER OR PRIEST OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY, WORKING AT HOME OR ABROAD SPREADING GOD'S LOVE.**

For more information contact:

Sisters: 11 Northbrook Road, Dublin 6  
aileenkennedysscc@hotmail.com

Brothers/Priests: 27 Northbrook Road, Dublin 6  
ssccdublin@sacredhearts.ie

[www.sacred-hearts.net](http://www.sacred-hearts.net) [www.sscpcipus.com](http://www.sscpcipus.com)



# 'We assist all who ask us' say Vocations Ireland



Vocations Ireland Executive

## Aron Hegarty

**V**ocations Ireland is an association of vocation directors from religious orders, congregation and societies which provides training in ethical decision-making and assessment of candidates for religious life and priesthood.

Over the last number of years, the association has sought to address the reality of life in Ireland and give professional training for those in the vocations ministry.

On the topic of vocations, *The Irish Catholic* spoke to three board members of Vocations Ireland about their current initiatives, upcoming projects and how they are faring during the crisis.

The first to speak is Sr Fionuala Quinn OP, chairperson of the Vocations Ireland executive committee and vocation director for the Dominican Sisters in Cabra, Dublin.

"Today, we seek to awaken a culture of vocation, in a wider context, that is characterised by inquiry, meaning, making, authenticity, while grounded in the search for the transcendent.

"There is a different consciousness now," continues Sr Quinn, adding that "vocations are nurtured with creativity and authenticity".

"We are about consciousness awakening, becoming

present to our spiritual depths, to nurturing an awareness of the Divine presence within."

Although Sr Quinn admits there is a "crisis of vocation", she explains it is about "public perception of the institutional Church" and "a crisis of Faith in relation to God".

"What Faith provides for people is a lens through which to look at life," she says. "Faith gives a person a way of relating to the universe, other people, oneself and the divine.

"Searchers today are often at a loss as to where to begin looking for purpose and meaning from a Faith perspective.

"We are at a time of kairos," says Sr Quinn, "a turning point and a time of opportunity to look at what really matters in life.

"What really matters are our relationships, with our families, our neighbours and our world."

On the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, she feels there is "opportunity to withdraw" from the "business of our minds" and to "sink down to where the indwelling of God is present and to nurture our relationship with the transcendent one".

"This is an ideal time for discerning what is the meaning of life for all of us and to be open to the promptings of the Spirit," Sr Quinn says.

"As a woman religious for the past 50 years, I can honestly say the search for God, for meaning in life has never grown old for me and the search for meaning now is even more urgent than ever."

The next board member to discuss present and future directives is Fr Alan Neville MSC of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

"There are two things really," he says when asked what the challenges are concerning vocations in this country. "The first is the membership to vocations in Ireland where we will be looking at how vocations are matching up to reality.

"The second is getting ourselves proactive in getting the numbers entering vocations to go up as opposed to being reactive, which is being discussed among ourselves."

He continues: "There's stuff going on and a lot of it is 'up in the air' as we have been 'caught on the hop' due to this pandemic, but we hope we can get people to be proactive during hard times to do vocations.

"What we are hoping is that we can get them together and say 'this is where we are' and go from there."

Fr Neville feels the Church has had to "get up to speed" with things like social media and stream-

ing services online during the crisis, and "break into places" where it "wouldn't normally have gone".

"We have seen churches go out to their communities and offer their services, which something I wouldn't have seen previously," he says on the Church reaching out.

"There is a real sense in this crisis of being able to find ourselves," says Fr Neville of his hope for more vocations. "People, while they remain very strong, will be feeling that absence of being able to come to churches and celebrate the sacraments.

"There will be signs of new life and new opportunities out of this crisis, it's the engagement that creates a new line of outreach."

Sr Carmel Ryan DC of the Daughters of Charity, another board member, says most of the association's initiatives are currently online as the pandemic disrupts the usual way of meeting people face-to-face.

"I keep contact with people through email, phone and Whatsapp," she explains. "I have been involved in a little spiritual direction through talking to the individual on the phone as we cannot meet and it helps them to have the

opportunity to keep regular contact through these strange times. Another initiative has been to update and create resources that may be used into the future on social media platforms and in more traditional ways as well.



Vocations Ireland at a Career Fair Day in the RDS

"Many people are using these platforms to access places of prayer and reflection during these times and we keep our media presence updated with some pieces for people to use for prayer and reflection."

One of the upcoming projects Sr Ryan says she will be involved in is the development of appropriate resources for online publica-

tion. "It was said recently that 'young people live online' and it is where we meet young people. I will be putting more time and energy into providing space for reflection and prayer online.

"There is time for greater reflection, solitude and prayer," says Sr Ryan of the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

"It has given me the opportunity to discern what is most valuable in life. I am thankful for the space and opportunity to enjoy life at a slightly slower pace and I value the freedoms that I have always taken for granted until now."

Vocation, according to Sr Ryan, is "a call to live life in a particular way" and adds that now is an ideal time to "re-evaluate" our lives for going forward.

"Many of us have the opportunity during this time of pandemic to question, ponder and reflect on what our calling in life is.

"We have during these times the opportunity to value our relationships; our relationship with God, other people and oneself.

"Perhaps this may prompt some people to re-evaluate how they live their lives and we, as vocation directors, will assist all who ask us," she says.

## HOW DO WE REALIZE GOD'S CALL...YOUR VOICE

Vocations Ireland invites you to consider the meaning of vocation and share your musical talents with  
**2021's Vocation Music Award.**

If you have a passion for music and songwriting, prepare your entry now for a chance to compete at the international Vocation Music Award and Key2Life Music Festival in Germany!

### 1ST PRIZE:



Entry to the Key2Life Music Festival + Travel for One Person

### 2ND PRIZE:



Two Hours in Irish Recording Studio

### 3RD PRIZE:



€100

The deadline for submission of an original song is  
**December 2, 2020, so start writing!**

**Entrance Fee: €25 Single, €50 Group**

## COFFEE MORNING WITH RELIGIOUS

Come and join us for a virtual coffee morning and have the chance to meet with different religious for a chat and share stories of how COVID is affecting you in your faith journey.

There will be a virtual coffee morning every Thursday from 11.00a.m-12noon via zoom.

Contact [vocationsireland1@gmail.com](mailto:vocationsireland1@gmail.com) if you wish to join!

There will be some religious priests, brothers, sisters available just bring your coffee.



For Rules, Guidelines and More Information,  
Visit [www.vocationsireland.com](http://www.vocationsireland.com)





# The Christian Brothers

## Edmund Rice

1762-1844

The Christian Brothers were founded just over two hundred years ago by a remarkable Irishman called Edmund Rice.

Born into a situation where his people had little share in their country's resources, Edmund was part of a minority who had the advantage of a good education and everything needed in the way of material goods. He saw that education and care of the young was the key to truly liberating people. At the age of forty, with no training or experience as a teacher, he made the decision to give his life to God by educating the neglected boys and young men in Waterford. Soon, in response to requests, Edmund's brothers spread all over Ireland and then beyond the sea.

Blessed Edmund was a man of deepest compassion and concern, particularly for the poor and those who were downtrodden by the social and religious circumstances of the times in which they lived. It was this awareness that led him to open his heart to these people who, for him, were the special image and presence of Christ in the world.



A young African Brother Charles Belmoh signing his final vows as Christian Brother in Sierra Leone West Africa.

This presence of Christ was the focus of the mystery of his life and of his connection with the poor and disadvantaged. His vision still inspires thousands of men and women today.

Today we recognise that we are living in challenging times, with the need for a new kind of education, and a new recognition of the needs, and indeed the rights, of those who are poor.

Today, as people who look to, and pray to Blessed Edmund, we are called:

- To live the gift and mystery of life to the full
- To live with an awakened consciousness
- To live in communion with each other in the whole human family
- To live in communion with the whole of created reality especially on this planet

Wondering where your heart is leading you? Could your heart be moving you to serve as a Christian Brother?

Christian Brothers live in a faith community. They engage with people in their daily lives, often in the context of education but also as community workers, youth leaders and teachers. They are committed to being with poor people in their struggles, and in their desire for a better life. A Brother is committed to

- Spiritual search
- Life in community
- Service of others, especially the poor.

You may be called to follow the example of Blessed Edmund Rice in sharing your life and your gifts in serving others.

For more information on becoming a Christian Brother, please write Br David Gibson at [dgibson5665@gmail.com](mailto:dgibson5665@gmail.com) or visit [www.christianbrothervocation.org](http://www.christianbrothervocation.org).



## PRESENTATION SISTERS IRELAND

When Presentation Sisters reflect on Vocation Sunday, the timing of the annual day of prayer influences their reflection. The day is placed in the post-Easter calendar, the same time of the year as when the foundress of Presentation Sisters, Nano Nagle, passed from the world (26th April 1784). One month after her death one of her founding companions wrote an account of Nano's final days for a Dublin friend, Teresa Mulally. A picture clearly emerges of how Nano Nagle's life was rooted and grounded in personal prayer. We are told in this letter that in the week before she died she spent eleven hours on Holy Thursday night before the Blessed Sacrament. This call to personal prayer continues to be central to the life of Presentation Sisters.

As Presentation Sisters living through the current pandemic we are reminded of the many health challenges - posed by famine, war and illness across the years in the various parts of Ireland - through which Sisters have lived and ministered. They were always addressed by more intense prayer, as well as frontline service. A Family Prayer from the Famine Years was special to the Mooncoin community in South Kilkenny, for example. The prayer read:

**At morning's dawn and evening's shade,  
Mary, to thee we call for aid.  
At every hour while swift it flies,  
Mary, to thee our souls arise.  
Yes, yes, thy dear and sacred name,  
Till life's last breath shall be our theme,  
Mary! our guide from childhood's day,  
Mary! to thee, to thee we pray.  
Oh! grant us, ere our course is run,  
Ere we appear before thy Son,  
Ere we at his tribunal kneel,  
Mary! thy own sweet aid to feel.  
Oh! shed from thy all radiant throne,  
The light that still must guide us on.  
Grant us Contrition's healing sigh,  
In grace to live, in peace to die.**

This Prayer to Our Lady was called in Mooncoin the "Tapestry Hymn" because it was worked in cross stitch in 1845 on native material by local woman Mary Lucas. In due course, the Tapestry was presented to Knock and is on display in Knock Folk Museum. Mary Lucas' two sisters joined Kilkenny Presentation community in 1842 and 1846. They knew the impact of the health challenges of those times and both died very young. Their grandmother, Mary Lucas, had originally

composed the prayer in the 1750's. We see in this story of community prayer legacy, as in the life of Nano Nagle that the family plays a critical role in sowing the seeds of prayer in the life of Presentation Sisters.

In the midst of the current pandemic Presentation Sisters, Friends, Associates and Co-workers are again uniting in a circle of prayer, this time through a prayer circle across rotating time zones around the world in order to invoke God help in addressing the the pandemic. The global network of prayer shared between our communities in five continents is inspired by the invitation of Pope Francis: "In these trying days, while humanity

trembles due to the threat of the pandemic, I would like to propose to all Christians that together we lift our voices towards Heaven. I invite all the Heads of the Churches and the leaders of every Christian community, together with all Christian of the various confessions, to invoke the Almighty, the omnipotent God, to recite at the same time the prayer that Jesus, our Lord, taught us. I, therefore, invite everyone to do this several times a day."

Prayer amongst Presentation Sisters at this critical time in world history, draws too on the intercessory power of Venerable Nano Nagle:

**O God, you filled the heart of Nano Nagle  
With loving care and compassion for the needy  
Through her intercession help us in our need  
during this time of the pandemic  
Grant that like her, we may do your Will  
And that we may grow in your love  
And the love of thy neighbour  
Through Christ our Lord. AMEN**



**VOCATION ENQUIRY**  
[pbvmireland@gmail.com](mailto:pbvmireland@gmail.com)

**Presentation Sisters Cork Vocation Link**  
Nano Nagle Place,  
Douglas Street, Cork  
TEL: 021 4975190  
[www.presentationisterssw.ie](http://www.presentationisterssw.ie)

**Presentation Sisters  
Dublin Vocation Link**

Acorn Centre  
28 Blackpitts, Dublin 8  
TEL: 087.2033006  
[www.presentationistersne.ie](http://www.presentationistersne.ie)

Follow us on Instagram: [womenofwelcominghearts](https://www.instagram.com/womenofwelcominghearts)





# The Dominicans

Truth has no Expiry Date!



"Opinion is a flitting thing,  
but Truth outlasts the sun."

- Emily Dickinson

**Vocations Director - Fr Colm Mannion OP**

Mobile: 086-0864420 | Email: [colm.mannion@dominicans.ie](mailto:colm.mannion@dominicans.ie)





# SISTERS OF BON SECOURS

The Sisters of Bon Secours are an International Religious Congregation of Catholic women based in six countries who bring to the world "Good help to those in need". The Congregation was founded by a group of 12 women, led by Josephine Potel, who came together in Paris in 1824 to nurse the sick and the dying in their own homes, demonstrating the healing presence of Christ through their compassionate care.

Although the Congregation's work has broadened since the early days, the core intention stays the same, to bring the healing hand of Christ to all those in need.

Today Sisters minister in healthcare, social services, pastoral and community based ministries.

In Ireland Sisters of Bon Secours are based in Cork, Dublin and Tralee. Their ministry includes more than just the physical; it is a holistic approach which includes peoples' spiritual, psychological and emotional needs.

We are all called to serve. It is just a matter of finding the way that best suits your interests and talents.

See our website and social media for opportunities to come and spend some time with us in prayer and get to know the Sisters. We regularly host retreat days and prayer events.



[www.bonsecourssisters.ie](http://www.bonsecourssisters.ie) | [@sistersbonsecoursireland](https://www.facebook.com/sistersbonsecoursireland) | [@BonSecoursIre](https://www.instagram.com/BonSecoursIre) | [sistersofbonsecours](https://www.instagram.com/sistersofbonsecours)

## My Life - Is This It?

Discerning a vocation to religious life takes a lot of courage, consideration and prayer, it is to embark on a quest to look at life with the eyes of God.

St Dominic founded the Order of Preachers 800 years ago. His method was simple: to go where people are, to preach and talk with them. To do this, he needed people whose sense of happiness was to be their most convincing witness to the Gospel.

Be <sup>who</sup> God <sup>meant</sup> you <sup>to be</sup> & you <sup>will</sup> set the world on fire.

*Saint Catherine of Siena*

Congregation of  
**Dominican Sisters**

of Our Lady of the Rosary and Saint Catherine of Siena, Cabra



## We Journey In The Search For Truth

As Dominican women of the 21st century we strive to continue Dominic's vision: Our mission is to study, share, proclaim and witness to the liberating Word of God in order that right relationships be restored between God, people and the earth where these are broken due to the lack of knowledge and distortion of the truth.

If you feel that God might be calling you to be a Dominican Sister why not talk with us? We would be happy to explore with you any questions you might have.

## CONTACT US

[domsvocation@gmail.com](mailto:domsvocation@gmail.com)

089 4585708

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

[@JoinDominicanSistersCabra](https://www.facebook.com/JoinDominicanSistersCabra)

[@JoinDominicanSistersCabra](https://www.instagram.com/JoinDominicanSistersCabra)





# No patient's needs should be dismissed because they are no longer deemed useful to society

Before capitulating to the law of the jungle, it is worth thinking about triage and euthanasia writes **Dr Catherine Kavanagh**

**D**iscussion is raging all over the internet (which is currently the only place where it can rage) about triage. Anecdotal claims are being made that automatic 'Do Not Resuscitate' (DNR) orders are being requested for disabled and elderly people living in managed care situations without any consultation with families or primary carers.

Perhaps these stories are true; perhaps they are not. However, one phenomenon that is certainly present is the reaction to such allegations when they surface. "Eugenics!" exclaim some people, "this is euthanasia. They want to kill off the elderly and the disabled!"

**“This situation has been discussed for several decades in medical ethics**

“Not euthanasia at all”, others claim “this is triage: when there aren't enough resources to go around, we must resort to triage, to try and make the best and most ethical use possible of scarce resources”. Such statements are usually followed by some kind of theoretical example: “If a young man and an old person both present at an ICU needing a ventilator, we must give it to the young person, who has years of life in front of him!”

One feels oneself pushed towards either claiming that all patients at all times must be given all resources and all possible treatment, or else accepting the brutal logic of 'strongest first'. Given that the former is likely impossible, since resources, even in the best managed situations, are finite, it seems that we must all become brutes, and it is alarming just how many people, who, when you object to compulsory DNRs, (if they exist), will now simply shrug it off as inevitable and refuse to



Photo: CNS

think any more about it. However, before capitulating completely to the law of the jungle, it might be worth thinking about triage and euthanasia, and asking if we really need to do this.

The basic dictionary definition of triage is “the sorting of and allocation of treatment to patients and especially battle and disaster victims according to a system of priorities designed to maximise the number of survivors” (Merriam Webster) The original use is military, as the definition indicates, and in civilian situations which present similar problems to those of a battlefield, such as a car accident or some kind of outrage, we also talk about triage. There are different systems of prioritising patients on the basis of need, but all presume an immediate emergency, with a need for very quick decisions. The point to note here is that the goal is to maximise the number of survivors, and to ensure that those who need it most get treated first, and that those who can afford to wait, wait. There are those who will not be treated: those who are already dying, and are unlikely to benefit from treatment, will give place to

those who are seriously injured, but will benefit from treatment.

We can see an important principle emerging here: benefitting from treatment. Triage, in any situation, is an action intended to give the best balance of treatment available in an emergency situation, to those who most need it and those who most likely will benefit from it. Need, balance and availability all factor in, but there is no patient whose needs are dismissed because they are no longer deemed useful to society or lack quality of life. Rather, if a patient does not receive treatment, it is because either:

a) He can no longer benefit from it, or  
b) Given the availability of resources, including time to respond, someone else, who needs it just as badly, would benefit more.

One can imagine a situation where a few ambulances pull up at an emergency department all needing ICU treatment, but one patient will most likely never recover from the condition, another is likely to make a full recovery, whereas another may recover, but with ongoing problems: it seems reasonable to give

the treatment to the person most likely to recover – but that is not to dismiss anyone else as useless, but simply to say that they would not benefit from the treatment.

**“Need a doctor prescribe antibiotics for every patient who comes down with pneumonia?”**

This situation has been discussed for several decades in medical ethics, obviously not in relation to Covid-19, but in relation to pneumonia, colloquially known as the 'old man's friend'. Need a doctor prescribe antibiotics for every patient who comes down with pneumonia? The medical ethicist F. J. Fitzpatrick observes that the answer to that depends on the benefit to the patient: if there is no real benefit to the patient in treatment with antibiotics, then one is not obliged to give it. But if there is real benefit, then one is obliged to give treatment. It has nothing to do with age, but rather with the benefit to the patient. Again, if there are two patients

requiring extensive medical treatment, which can really only be given to one of them, then it is the patient who will benefit most from the treatment who should get it. Once again, age is not a factor, but benefit to the patient. Moving on to Covid-19, one can see that the same criteria apply: all patients likely to benefit from treatment should receive it; in the case that there is not enough to go around, then those most likely to benefit most from it should be the ones who receive it.

It is difficult to see where compulsory DNR orders for the elderly and disabled would feature here, since triage is not a matter of anticipating emergencies before they happen, but of applying principles in an ongoing situation, and one cannot say for certain that any given old person or disabled person will necessarily be in a situation where there is another patient who will benefit more from treatment, which then becomes unavailable to them as a result.

However, there has been an increasing tendency in recent years to extend Fitzpatrick's 'benefit from treatment' criterion to much broader quality of life issues. As he points out, 'quality of life' is a dangerously ambivalent term: “the phrase 'quality of life' can be used to intimate that some people's lives are worthless, and therefore that we should

act with a view to bringing about their death”.

Compulsory DNR orders for disabled and elderly people indicate an excessively narrow conception of 'quality of life': the thinking behind them can only be that these people do not have 'quality of life' anyhow, and that death from Covid-19 would be a good thing for them. That does look a lot more like euthanasia than triage, since triage aims to save life as much as possible, is not concerned so much with broader 'quality of life' issues as with immediate benefit given the resources available, and is not concerned with long-term disability or age. If the patient would benefit, and the resources are available, there is no reason not to treat a patient of 90 years of age, or a Down Syndrome patient, or whatever.

**“We can see an important principle emerging here: benefitting from treatment”**

We can all imagine tragic situations where some people cannot be treated because they will not benefit from treatment, or because, given that there is not enough treatment to go around, they will have to yield to someone else who will benefit more, and we can all sympathise with medical personnel who have to make such judgements, which is what is meant by triage. However, it is going too far to assume that some people's quality of life does not merit access to treatment, even if it is available, and therefore to exclude them from getting treatment before they ever become ill – whatever the situation might be with regard to availability or benefit to the patient or the patient's wishes. That is to deliberately condemn some people to death, without making any attempt to deal with whatever situation might present itself in real time, and far from being triage, does look very much like involuntary euthanasia.

*Dr Catherine Kavanagh is senior lecturer and acting head of the Department of Philosophy at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick.*

**“One feels oneself pushed towards either claiming that all patients at all times must be given all resources and all possible treatment”**



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Put Sr Clare Crockett on the path to sainthood

**Dear Editor,** I was delighted to see your front page article [IC 16/04/2020] regarding the calls for Sr Clare Crockett to be put on the path to sainthood. Sr Clare's story is inspirational for us all.

Furthermore, I believe her devotion and Faith can be an example for young people today, who are constantly being led astray by false role models.

Her life, depicted in the wonderful film *All or Nothing: Sr Clare Crockett* is a must see, it documents the story of a young women who was pursuing

fame and worldly things but in the end dedicates her life to Jesus Christ and dies helping schoolchildren during an earthquake in Ecuador – a story I am very grateful your publication has so wonderfully highlighted.

There have certainly been many stories about people praying for her intercession and their prayers being answered, these must be investigated.

In my understanding the diocese the person is from must be the one to

begin the process that puts a person on the path to sainthood, for that reason I would encourage the bishop of the Diocese of Derry to do just that, it would be wonderful for the diocese, Ireland and the world for her to be made a saint, but particularly for young people.

She is a powerful role model.

*Yours etc.,*

**Pádraig McGill,**

*Derry City, Co. Derry.*

### Time to open churches safely for sacraments

**Dear Editor,** I read with interest the front page article 'Priests face severe cuts as pandemic takes toll' [IC 09/04/2020].

I wish to take the opportunity pose a few questions to the Church on the matter around Covid-19 in follow up to the article. Are Church services not considered essential in the current crisis? This was pointed out by Bishop Baldacchino in New Mexico recently where he pointed out that the Church services are surely as much of an essential service as the off licences remaining open?

It's now obvious the virus is going nowhere anytime soon and I suggest the Church should press the Government to include religious services as essential and put creative mitigation measures in place at parish level to allow religious services to commence otherwise the content of the article may come to fruition before this crisis ends.

Also, for example the Sacrament of Reconciliation could possibly continue where screens are installed and social distancing measures are put in place.

*Yours etc.,*

**Brendan Ferguson,**  
*Belleek, Co. Fermanagh.*



### A simple call to repentance

**Dear Editor,** It has struck me during this Easter season how many of the daily Mass readings one hears the Apostles, in the fledgling Church, speaking specifically about the need for repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

During the RTÉ televised Mass on the second Sunday of Easter, Bishop Kevin Doran again reminded us of the need for Confession

When the perplexed disciples approached Jesus, trying to figure out the reason for or meaning behind disasters that occur on this earth, Jesus did not reply with the empathy, compassion or 'niceness' we have come to expect. His reply was simply a call to repentance.

*Yours etc.,*

**Judith Leonard,**  
*Raheny, Dublin 5.*

## There is scope for online Mass to improve

**Dear Editor,** Many people are now getting their daily Mass online at ChurchServices.tv. Obviously, this is a good service for those with quality broadband and access to a PC.

However, there could be some improvements made by all concerned as follows:

- Show readings for the day

- on the screen before Mass starts so participants can meditate on same.

- Have readings done by laity and not just the concelebrant.

- Play some Irish music and popular hymns during the Mass – surely ChurchServices.tv could manage this from the many CDs available?

- Concelebrant to read the spiritual Communion prayer at the end of all Masses.
- As we all have time to spare, why not say the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at the end of Mass for all those dying from the coronavirus and other causes?

- Have an easy-to-use online donation link so viewers can pay for this service by

donating say €10.

- From this donation perhaps 50% could go to the local hospice movement or other worthy Christian charity, for example during Lent this could be Trócaire.

*Yours etc.,*

**Liam de Paor,**  
*Carrickane, Co. Cavan.*

## Were we always too close together?

**Dear Editor,** On a spectrum from distance to closeness, I've been wondering if we had become too close before Covid-19. This seems like a strange question but phrases like 'physical distancing' and 'social distancing', and what they imply, are strange.

And yet, in the midst of those strange distancing days, there has been the birth of a new spirit of neighbourliness, care and concern for others. It's like as if there is more space in our lives, freeing us from possessions of various kinds.

If too much distance means ignoring, too much closeness means possession and control. There's possession of

things and there's never been such an array of enticing things around. There's possession of people, when we over rely on others or don't give them enough space and respect.

Likewise, there's possession of the environment that we have controlled, bordering on destroyed.

Then there is God. Saints speak of becoming detached from the things of this world that we might focus more on God. We have tended either to ignore God or to try to possess God. Didn't God ask Moses, who was close to Him, to take off his shoes and to 'come no nearer', in other words to keep an

appropriate respectful distance? In this space God was able to communicate with him and he was able to hear what God was asking him to do.

Arising from Covid-19, have we been forced into a somewhat similar space as Moses? Could it be the subtle promptings of God in our less cluttered minds and hearts that are helping us, not just to find resources to live in a new way ourselves, but to reach out to others?

*Yours etc.,*

**Eileen Gaughan,**  
*Strandhill, Co. Sligo.*

## facebook community

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

### Cardinal Pell: 'I knew God was with me, but I didn't know what he was up to'

Thank God justice was served. May God bless him and protect him from those who wish to destroy him.

– **Mary Duggan Murphy**

There have been innocent men accused both in priesthood and laity. – **Caroline Hendron**

Justice done at last. – **Adam Conroy**

Covering up clerical abuse is just as bad as the abuse itself, victims need to be heard and listened to.

– **Donnacha Ciaráin**

### Bishop 'delighted' with Catholic schools' response to pandemic

Any chance front line workers and family members could borrow Churches for Mass on Sundays? – **John Donohoe**

### A time to take stock rather than to stockpile

Point of clarification: the hoarding has not stopped. We came two rolls away from running out of toilet paper and still couldn't find it. Had to reach out to friends and family to find any. – **Jon Brill**

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

## Archangel Michael prayer 'badly needed'

**Dear Editor,** The daily televised Mass on RTÉ is a wonderful consolation to many people during this pandemic. I am sure members of the Irish hierarchy had a hand in that initiative and if so, they deserve our gratitude and RTÉ deserve praise for giving television time to it.

In a lot of churches up and down the country, in normal times, the Rosary is prayed after weekday Masses. During this televised Mass, a very brief announcement by the priest, after the Gospel, suggesting people say the Rosary, in the privacy of their own homes, praying that Ireland be protected from the worst excesses of this virus, must surely have a powerful effect.

In *The Irish Catholic* some months ago, Fr Pat Collins CM spoke about the efficacy of reintroducing the St Michael the Archangel prayer [IC 26/09/2019], which was dispensed with after the Second Vatican Council. Given the rise in the practice of witchcraft and satanism, not just in Ireland, but worldwide, I would suggest that it is badly needed.

*Yours etc.,*

**Pat Mullin,**  
*Drumcondra, Dublin 9.*

## 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.



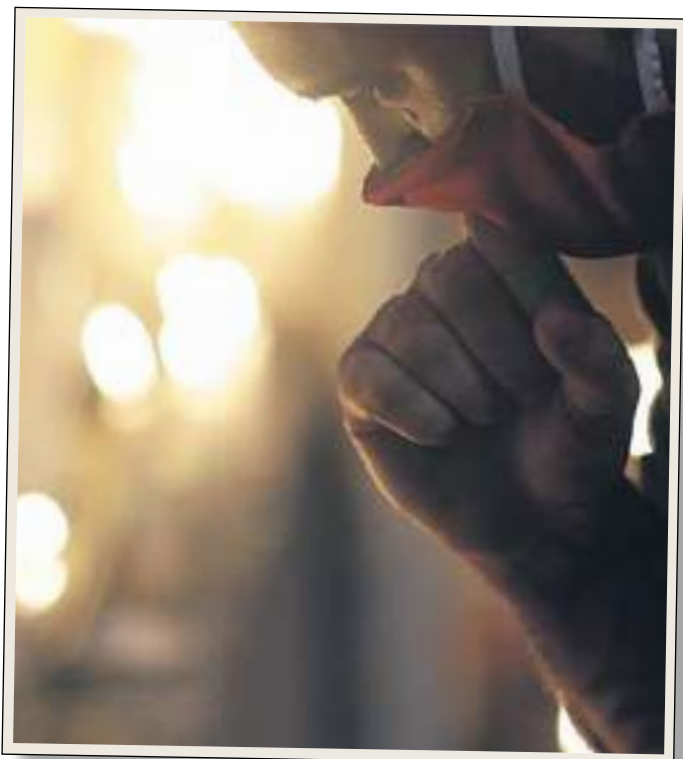
# Around the world



**GHANA:** Women wear protective masks at a market in Accra. The country's religious leaders held three days of national prayer and fasting from April 24-26. Photos: CNS



**GREECE:** Children display drawings from their home in Thessaloniki. The drawings read 'I want Spring back' and 'We stay home' which is the country's national slogan during the pandemic.



▲ **BRAZIL:** A man prays in front of candles during St George's Day celebrations in Rio de Janeiro, where the feast is a holiday.  
 ▼ **HOLY LAND:** A nurse wears a protective suit while taking the temperature of a Palestinian boy at St Joseph's Hospital in East Jerusalem.



**PERU:** Kukama boys watch boats on the Amazon's Marañon River near Dos de Mayo in the country's Loreto region.



**ARGENTINA:** Inmates are seen on the roof of the Devoto prison in Buenos Aires during a riot demanding health measures against the spread of Covid-19.





# God and the principle of non-contradiction



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

**I**t is funny where the lessons of our classrooms are sometimes understood. I studied philosophy when I was still a bit too young for it, a 19-year-old studying the metaphysics of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. But something from a metaphysics course remains indelibly stamped in my mind.

We learned that there are four 'transcendental' properties to God: Scholastic metaphysics tells us that God is One, True, Good and Beautiful. My young mind then had some grasp of what is meant by True, Good and Beautiful since we have some common sense notions of what these are; but what is Oneness? What is divine about being undivided?

The answer to that didn't come to me in a classroom or in an academic discussion, even though I have often tried to explain its meaning to students in a classroom. It came to me in a grocery store.

## Containers

I had been buying groceries in the same store for 12 years when a trivial incident helped explain God's Oneness and its importance to me. The store, a large supermarket, has a fruit isle where you pick up apples, oranges, grapefruits, bananas and the like and then bag them yourself in plastic bags the store supplies.

Alongside the plastic bag dispensers there are small containers holding metal twisters you use to tie up the top of your bag. One day, I picked up some fruit, put it into a bag, but all the containers containing the twisters were empty, every one of them. As I checked out my groceries,

suspecting that possibly someone that taken them as a prank, I mentioned to the cashier that all the twisters were gone. Her answer took me aback: "But, sir, we have never had them in this store!"

Thinking she might be new on the job, I said: "I've been coming here for more than 10 years and you've always had them! You can even see their containers from here!"

With an assurance that comes from absolute certitude, she replied: "I've been working here for a long time, and I can assure you we've never had them!"

I pushed things no further, but, walking out of the store I thought this to myself: "If she's right, then

I'm certifiably insane! If she's right then I'm completely out of touch with reality, have been for a long time, and I have no idea what sanity is!"

I was certain that I had seen the twisters for 10 years. Well, they had reappeared by the next time I entered the store and they are there today, but that little episodic challenge to my sanity taught me something. I now know what it means that God is One and why that is important.

## Sanity

That God is One (and not divided) is the very foundation for all rationality and sanity. That God is undivided and consistent within assures you that two plus two will

always be four – and that you can anchor your sanity on that. That God is undivided assures you that if you saw package twisters in a store for 12 years, they were there ...and you are not insane. That God is One is the basis for our sanity. It undergirds the principle of non-contradiction: something is or it is not, it cannot be both; and two plus two can never be five – and that allows us to live rational, sane lives. Because God is undivided, we can trust our sanity.

**“There is no internal contradiction within God and that assures us that there is no internal contradiction possible within the structure of reality and within a sane mind”**

The truth of this was never jeopardised by the great epistemological debates in history. Doubts about rationality and sanity do not come from Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Locke, Hume, Wittgenstein or Jacques Derrida; these philosophers merely argued about the structure of rationality, never about its existence.

What jeopardises our sanity (and is, no doubt, the greatest moral threat in our world today)

is lying, the denial of facts, the changing of facts, and the creation of fake facts. Nothing, absolutely nothing, is as dangerous and pernicious as lying, dishonesty.

It is no accident that Christianity names Satan the Prince of Lies and teaches that lying is at the root of the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit. When facts are no longer facts then our very sanity is under siege because lying corrupts the basis for rationality.

God is One! That means that there is no internal contradiction within God and that assures us that there is no internal contradiction possible within the structure of reality and within a sane mind.

What has happened, has forever happened, and cannot be denied.

Two plus two will forever be four and because of that we can remain sane and trust reality enough to live coherent lives.

The single most dangerous thing in the whole world is lying, dishonesty, denying facts. To deny a fact is not only to play fast and loose with your own sanity and the very foundations of rationality; it is also to play fast and loose with God whose consistency undergirds all sanity and all meaning. God is one, undivided, consistent.

**“That God is undivided and consistent within assures you that two plus two will always be four – and that you can anchor your sanity on that”**



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, April 30, 2020

## Personal Profile

Dodging bullets  
at a dangerous  
time in Guinea

Page 34



# Love in lockdown



**N**o one's relationship is perfect. They require constant work in order to keep both parties happy, contrary to the songs; love is not always simple.

Issues that usually crop up in relationships are undoubtedly going to be magnified, more difficult and more heated as you end up sharing more time in a likely not ideal space with your spouse and family.

Everyone living in a family has less room to themselves, less private time, less connections with other people and a lack of outlets compared to the way they normally live.

Mary Johnston, a specialist in counselling for marriage and relationships from Accord, the Catholic Marriage Care Service,



**Róisín McGagh chats to a specialist in marriage and relationships counselling from Accord about the issues heightened by lockdown.**

spoke to *The Irish Catholic* about the kind of things that come up for couples that could easily become more prominent due to our circumstances.

She says the most common issues are, you guessed it - communication and managing conflict.

"Whether people are finding it hard to understand one another or people might feel that the other person isn't

making an effort to understand them," she says

We are not only stuck in our homes at the moment, but we are also stuck with a huge amount of very reasonable stresses and anxieties. Many are worried about their health, the health of their family, the security of their employment, pay or financial issues.

"We can go very silent and retreat into ourselves and we

won't talk about anything because we're stressed. Sometimes stress and anxiety can almost paralyze some people.

"Other people when they're stressed and anxious, they do the opposite of withdrawing, they sort of explode - they can be sharp, they can be tetchy, they can be rude"

Ms Johnston explained how the heightening of these kinds of behaviours and mismanagement of conflict can impact other parts of the relationship. "The intimate relationship will be affected by how good or not the communication is, if you feel somebody is being hurtful or neglectful to you, you're not going to be open to being physically or sexually close to them."

"A lot of times couples would feel, 'oh we're having arguments, maybe we're not getting along so well,' but it's not really around the number of arguments you have - it's about how you manage an argument, how you treat the other person in an argument, how you speak to them, they're the things that can really do the damage."

Treating your spouse with respect and understanding, no matter how heated it gets is important, but not always easy. It is particularly important to not involve children in conflict.

A 2018 research study from the University of Vermont showed that the emotional processing of children, can be affected by parental conflict. It has the potential of making them overly

» Continued on Page 33



## Family News

### AND EVENTS

#### LIVE CLASSES ONLINE

Gyms have been closed for over a month now. Many of us will have spent hours scouring online for at-home workouts and tutorials and it's starting to get old. Not being able to interact with a class or get tips on your form can slowly start to take the fun and the impact out of exercising. Many instructors have started offering online classes, you might have already spotted some on your social media feed. If you haven't however, there is an easily accessible one on Eventbrite at the moment. Eat Dance Breathe is providing live online pilates and yoga classes for all levels. They cost €6.19 and have limited space to ensure attention can be given to each person. Pilates is a particularly good form of exercise for strength, especially core. If you want something slower and more focused on flexibility, then yoga is a better bet. The classes are 30 minutes long and taught by Simona, a yoga and pilates Instructor at 1Escape Health Club in Smithfield.

#### FATHER'S INVOLVEMENT PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS

A study done in the US has shown that fathers involvement in their kids life is passed down through generations. Dads who were involved in their child's life when they were one year old, were found to have a better father-child relationship when they were aged nine. Fathers who took part in the study who reported involvement from their own dad in their childhood tended to be more involved with their kids at age one, they were also shown to have a better relationship with their father. This suggests a pattern of father-child relationships and father involvement are passed down through generations. Research has already shown that kids with more involved fathers tend to perform better in school, are less likely to be involved in drugs, and have better emotional well-being. The average age of the fathers in the study was 27 and half were not in romantic relationships with their child's mother when the child was nine. Around a quarter of them had not lived with their child at any point since their birth.

#### DIFFICULT CLASPS EASILY SOLVED

A lot of things get difficult as we get older. One of these is our ability to do nimble tasks with our hands. Having difficulty using a lobster clasp or ring fastener on jewellery can be a common problem for people of all ages, young children, older people, and those of us that are not blessed with neat fingers. A magnetic clasp converter is a small set of strong magnets that you can attach to the end of your piece of jewellery. These can be put on by a family member, neighbour or jeweller if you have issues with attaching them to the clasps, then the ends can snap together and come apart without any fiddling around. They come in a variety of different of metallic colours, shapes and sizes and can be easily found online.

# The language of silence



**E**xceptional life events stop us in our tracks and can force us to see the world very differently. That truth takes on a very practical meaning in the economic and social lockdown caused by the coronavirus, Covid-19.

In extraordinary times, our everyday, routine, habitual worldview, our underlying, often unquestioned, way of seeing the world is exposed and we come to realise how many extraordinary, yet very ordinary, things we take for granted.

When we reign in our personal freedom for our own sakes and the good of society, we may develop a new appreciation for those same freedoms.

One of the freedoms that we often unknowingly deny ourselves is the freedom to simply be, without doing. The frantic pace of modern life presses in on all of us and tends to draw us in to its hectic pace. We develop an incessant – often unconscious – focus on getting things done, on reaching targets quickly, on personal achievement and personal gain. Modern culture encourages individuals to strive for ever greater power, prestige and possessions and we rarely take time out to reflect on whether these are the things that matter most to us.

When we are forced to slow down and take a step back from our habitual way of life, we often experience it as an unwelcome imposition. Sudden illness or the death of a loved one can force us to question our core values and way of life, just as this pandemic has. But even though our initial reaction can be one of deep frustration and annoyance, over time we may come to appreciate that this unwelcome burden, this imposed silence, has awakened

## Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



our consciousness to the more fundamental aspects of our being.

The writer, Michael Harding, in a note to the journalist Barry Egan, described his awareness of the importance of silence as follows: "In each of us there is a core which is silent and I don't know why I say this but I think that's the place to be now, on the edge of that silence, listening, to find out now who we really are. That silence is the ground of all being. All our love and joy and hope are founded in that silence, and arise from that silence, and that silence is our strength."

**“When we reign in our personal freedom for our own sakes and the good of society, we may develop a new appreciation**

Writing a few days later in the Irish Times, Harding added: "When I light a candle at twilight, I see and I hear the world inside [within me]; and then I know I am not alone".

What Harding describes so beautifully has been affirmed by the wisdom and religious traditions of the world for millennia. Although he describes it really well, it is nonetheless a truth that defies the capacity of language to

express it fully. It transcends the power of language. It has to be experienced. And to experience it we need silence.

As we go about our everyday activities, as we scurry about in the busyness of doing, we primarily engage with life through the body and the mind and, for many, more through the mind than the body. And, in our busyness, we forget that there is more to our being than body and mind. But in the silence and stillness of meditation, when the body and mind become still, we come to realise there is more to us, even if we struggle to find words adequate to describe what that is. But we know with certainty that there is something essential to our being that holds together and integrates all aspects of our nature.



While different wisdom and religious traditions give expression to this deeper level in diverse ways, they can only do so by using words and concepts. For centuries, because religion was such an inbuilt part of the culture of Western civilisation, the language of theology dominated that discourse. Given the decline of religion in modern society, it is extremely difficult in secular society to talk about this deeper,

and essential, level of our being. And, yet, it is vital for our individual and collective wellbeing that we find a way of talking about what matters most in life and to encourage its expression in public discourse.

Many people who no longer see themselves as affiliated to any religion describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. They acknowledge, as a core element of their identity, a desire to live life with authenticity. Recognising that to be human is to be spiritual, the past 30 years or so have seen the rise of spirituality as an area of study separate from theology. It explores how human beings engage their spiritual capacity to tap into the creative source of the Universe and to work out for themselves how to live well.

Meditation is a gateway to this rich inner resource. In meditation we come to a personal, practical experience of the spiritual. We learn that silence is the language of spirituality. And we learn this in practice, not as a theory, not as a set of words and concepts to be understood rationally, but in terms of personal experience, personal spiritual experience. And that experience mysteriously changes how we live in the world.

**After 40 years in the education sector Noel Keating was awarded a PhD for his research into the child's experience of meditation and its spiritual fruits. Noel now leads, in a voluntary capacity, a project which offers free in-service to primary schools who may wish to consider introducing meditation as a whole-school practice. Noel is author of Meditation with Children: A Resource for Teachers and Parents.**



» Continued from Page 31



vigilant, anxious and 'vulnerable to distorting human interactions that are neutral in tone', throwing their interpersonal relations as adults off balance.

Accord recently set up a free phone line where people experiencing extra pressure due to social restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic can call with issues relating to marriages, families and relationships.

Ms Johnston said that the service is concerned about those dealing with issues of substance abuse in the home and instances of domestic violence. There has been a 16% spike in offences of domestic abuse recorded by the Gardaí since the lockdown period began.

Alcohol is not an issue if it's a simple glass of wine or beer in the evening, however if habits are not healthy, it can have a more prominent impact on those living with the person. People could get out of order; they could be withdrawn or problematic in another way.

At the moment when money is short for a lot of people and things have to be tightened, if one person is spending on alcohol it could cause a lot of tension in the home.

"You would be concerned about the people who have some problematic behaviours that they're trying to manage because maybe some of those support groups - maybe they're happening remotely, people who attend AA, people attend groups for gambling people, who attend groups for drug use or use of pornography."

"It would be difficult for people who are struggling with an issue so that might impact the family as well."

It is not always physical abuse that can make people afraid of someone they are living with. Ms Johnston explains how abuse can come in all different forms: "Sometimes when we say we are fearful of the person we're living with, we think of somebody who maybe has an implement or who is physically aggressive. Both domestic abuse and abusive behaviours can happen on a male side or a female side and it can be about verbal intimidation, it can be about control, it can be about harassment and it might not ever

become a form of physical abuse but it could be as frightening or as fear provoking as physical abuse."

There are a number of supports available for people experiencing domestic abuse including Women's Aid, Safelreland, What Would You Do and Operation Faoisimh by the Gardaí to assist victims of domestic abuse.

Luckily for many, the issues at home are not as serious as this, but they can still be difficult to deal with.

Again, nobody is perfect, we all do things that we regret. "Being able to repair from a difficult issue, being able to apologise, being able to see the other persons perspective, being able to look at yourself - when things go wrong it's not all about the other person we have to look at ourselves really," says Ms Johnston.

There are a few things you and your spouse can do to help ease any tensions that might arise from being in a confined space together.

It is important to remember that this is a temporary situation. Of course, at the moment the national advice is saying it isn't time to slow our efforts yet, however it it's important for people to bear in mind that this is not going to be permanent.

Ms Johnston says, "I think it's important to manage your thinking, let's not be going down the catastrophic road - that this will never end we'll never get out again."



Some things that can help with this is some prayer or meditation, getting out for a reasonable amount of exercise, and journaling your thoughts - or even speaking them out loud to someone willing to listen.

"The other thing I would think is important's a routine," says Ms Johnston. If you have felt your routine slipping, now is the time to get it back in motion. We have been encouraged to give kids set spaces and times for school work, recreation and helping around the house - it's time we do the same for ourselves. Balance the housework, the childminding, when you each have to do your paid work, in a routine - and most importantly make sure there is time for each person to have some space to themselves.

If there is something you like doing that allows you to take some time away from the noise and chaos of family life - it's great to get a bit of personal space for rejuvenation.

"The other thing for couples I would say is that they do need to talk to one another about how they're feeling and how this time period is affecting them and how they're managing," says Ms Johnston.

"Try and understand each other and where you're coming from and explain how this problem is affecting you and what feelings and thoughts are going on for you. Try and do a little of that on a regular basis and also to get a little bit of space for yourself."

"The other thing I think is really important is self-management." It is important to know when you're felling hot headed or easily worked up - this might not be the right time to bring up issues or argue back or hash something out. The last thing you want is this stressful time pushing you to say something that causes difficulty now or in the future.

Remember, this is difficult for everybody.

Speaking about communication Ms Johnston says, "I think it's something that takes a lifetime; to keep relationships healthy and close, to keep it going and to keep it a good thing."

"When you think about the relationships - we have children, we have siblings, we have parents, we have spouses. It's no mean feat to try and keep relationships going and to keep them so that they're good for us and good for the other people in the relationship as well."

# Faith — IN THE — family



Bairbre Cahill

**H**ow are your Easter Alleluias going? Is it, as Leonard Cohen would say, a holy or a broken Alleluia? It has been strange these weeks since Easter not being able to go to Mass and sing those vibrant, uplifting hymns to proclaim the resurrection. In some ways it feels as if we are still living Lent and yet we know we have come through Holy Week, we have welcomed Easter, we have celebrated - if rather quietly - the resurrection. The challenge now is to live it.

During the week I took part in an online prayer gathering. Soul Space happens once a month and is run by the Rev Dave Tomlinson, an Anglican vicar who is chaplain at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London. A friend of mine had invited me along to this virtual space for prayer so I turned on the computer, clicked the link and found myself in a group of almost forty people. Dave Tomlinson uses a mixture of scripture, poetry, imagery and contemporary music and I have to say I found it very beautiful and meaningful. He picked up on that quote from Leonard Cohen about the holy and the broken alleluias. In Cohen's opinion both the holy and the broken alleluias have the same value.

That struck me as a powerful image. We may be struggling with that transition from Lent into Easter. We are aware that so many people are walking a daily 'way of the cross'. The pattern of our lives at the moment is one of restraint, limitation and the self-discipline of social distancing. So we may falter in our efforts to raise our voices in song, to proclaim a joyful, holy alleluia, but what of the broken alleluias, the little ones, the ones we would almost miss if we didn't pay attention?

I'm involved with Family Support organisations and families are reporting that amidst the hassles of trying to keep to a routine, struggling to limit screen time and the difficulties of home schooling they also notice that they have more time to sit and eat together, time to reflect on what is important in life, less stress because they aren't running to school activities

and a greater sense of gratitude for what they have.

I find it frustrating in this beautiful weather not to be able to get out to the hills and beaches of Donegal. However, within the 2km radius of my home I can walk every evening and see the hills of Inishowen and Fanad, Muckish and Errigal. Queuing to get into supermarkets is stressful but I'm aware of the staff, putting themselves at risk by dealing with us but continuing to do so with a smile and a friendly word.



These may seem like small things in the context of all that is happening but they are some of our small broken alleluias. The more we notice them, name and proclaim them the more we are proclaiming Easter. Even the disciples had to grow into an understanding of what the resurrection meant for them. The Gospel readings that we have heard during these early weeks of Eastertide remind us that Jesus had to appear more than once to his companions to convince them of the reality of his resurrection. So we should not be hard on ourselves if it is taking time for us to fully embrace the Easter experience this year.

What is essential is that we keep noticing and thanking God for those broken alleluia moments. Pope Francis has called upon us to be people of hope. Ultimately that is what Easter is about, not a naive optimism but hope based on the reality of the cross and resurrection. So those small broken alleluias strengthen us and sustain our hope that when we emerge from this pandemic we will know the meaning of Easter in a more profound and powerful way than we ever have before.

Photo: Rama / CC BY-SA.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons



# Dodging bullets at a dangerous time in Guinea

## Personal Profile



**Róise McGagh**

“You have grenades going over, not knowing where they’re going to land and you have bullets flying – like our house had a number of bullet holes,” says Sr Bridget Lacey, speaking of her personal experience of an attack on a refugee camp where she was working at the time.

It was late in 2000 when the camp in Gueckedou, Guinea was attacked by various Liberian militant groups. It was, at the time, home to refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia where civil wars were raging.

“At that stage in Guinea, there would have been up to a million refugees between the two countries and then there were various different camps,” says Sr Lacey.

She had come with three others from her congregation, the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary (MSHR) alongside the Sierra Leonians who fled. She had been the administrator in a hospital there for just six months.

The sisters taught literacy and other practical skills in the packed camps that lined the borders of Guinea from 1995. Sr Lacey says there it was actually a great chance for people to access education they would not have received in their own rural homes. The camps were then attacked.

“We had decided we weren’t moving, we went there to be there so we’re not moving and the

other side of it was, we were being watched very closely by people. The feeling was that if the sisters go, then it’s over, were all finished,” says Sr Lacey.

“As it turned out nothing happened to us, but a lot of people got killed in the town that night, refugees and locals. The town was blockaded for a number of months.”

She says the sisters could hear people looking for them: “We were in the bathroom, on the floor, with everything going on and we had the dog and the cat as well and it was scary.

“But thank God for us it was okay, we stayed another night because we didn’t know which way to go. When we did try to go, one road was blocked so we knew there was no hope there. Eventually we got going on another road and we had quite a long trip.”

They travelled to Conakry, about 700km away and those that could returned to Sierra Leone as it was then considered safer there for them than Guinea. “There were lots of people with disabilities in the camps as well, and a lot of people actually walked to get out of the camps.

“We thought; how are all the people with disabilities going to be able to move quick enough? So, we decided we were going to try and hire buses to Conakry and get the people with disabilities on those buses.” At the time, the Sierra Leonian embassy in Conakry was operating a ship carrying Sierra Leonians back to Freetown.

“We found people very willing to help and put themselves in a risky position to help their own people.”

The sisters themselves couldn’t travel on the bus as it would put the journey at risk as they went

through checkpoints. They stayed with the Liberian refugees who were moved by the UNCHR further inside the country. “People didn’t feel very safe to be so far inside the country because they felt they were too far away from home if anything happened.

“The Liberians remained in Guinea so we, the sisters decided we would remain in Guinea with them. So then when peace came to Liberia and the first election was held at the end of 2005 at that stage we decided we would head to Liberia.”

The congregation had never been there but decided to go home with those they had been working with for so many years, to Lofa County in the north of the country.

“Overnight you’re gone out of the country and what you were doing and who you were with, you’ve left them all behind and you’re just

gone, a lot of the support that you were supplying is gone too,” said Sr Lacey of leaving Sierra Leone.

“When we got to Liberia then, we decided that we would prefer to set up something that would be there when we were not there.

“We didn’t know what might happen next, we thought maybe this war could escalate again and we will be gone again.”

**“You have grenades going over, not knowing where they’re going to land”**

They set up an NGO called Social Empowerment Through Learning that would be mainly run by locals so that it could continue on without the congregation if they had to leave. It has been running now for 14 years.

They teach literacy, mostly to women who never had a chance at an education, “within that we do lots of other things, it’s not just ABC”. They use situations that arise in people’s hometowns and new legislation brought out to teach people literacy and also inform them of their rights. They are currently working on having a law changed so that women in long term relationships can inherit land – not just married women as most couples are not wed.

Sr Lacey who was born in Tipperary and started off as a lab technician in the Regional Hospital in Limerick and was a late vocation at the age of 30, is currently in Ireland due to Covid-19. She is still working remotely from her sister’s home in Dublin where she was only meant to be holidaying but would prefer to be on the ground.

She says she has trust in the sisters that are there to implement the same kind of plans they put to action during the Ebola crisis, and it was them who got her through all the dangerous moments in her time.



Srs Felicitas Ogbodo, Bridget Lacey, Franca Onyibor (Congregational Leader), Ann Kelly, Loretha Michael when their congregational leader visited Voinjama, Lofa County, Guinea in October 2019.

## Sweet Treats

**Laura Anderson**



## Time for a fresh, zingy springtime treat

If you can get your hands on some flour and sugar these days, why not try and create a lemon and poppy seed drizzle traybake? This adaption of a classic Mary Berry recipe is the perfect springtime treat to make with the kids. With all the ingredients going into one bowl together it will allow them to practice their baking skills without fear of it ending in disaster. It’s also ideal if you are a novice baker as long as you measure everything correctly it’s practically fool proof! You can leave the poppyseeds out if you wish, but they do add a nice difference in texture.

### Ingredients

(Makes 16 squares)

#### For the traybake:

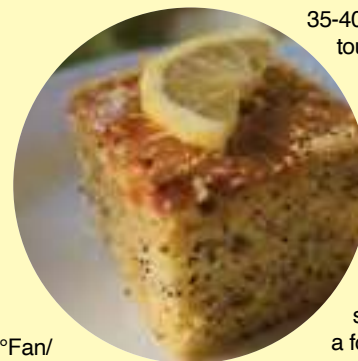
- 225g unsalted butter softened, plus extra for greasing
- 225g caster sugar
- 2 tbsp lemon zest (about 2 medium lemons)
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 275g self-raising flour, sieved

- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 4 medium-large eggs
- 60ml (4tbsp) milk
- 25g poppy seeds

#### For the lemon drizzle icing:

- 100g granulated sugar
- 3 tbsp lemon juice (about one lemon)
- Extra zest for decoration

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°F/Gas mark 4. Grease and line a 30x23cm/12x9in baking or roasting tray with baking paper. Add all the ingredients to a large bowl and beat together on medium speed for about 2 minutes until combined into a smooth mixture. You could do this by hand it will just require a bit more elbow grease. If using a stand mixer, be sure to scrape down the sides of the bowl halfway through. Turn the mixture into your prepared tin spreading it into the corners and smoothing the top. Bake in the oven for



35-40 mins until golden brown, springy to the touch and a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean. About five minutes before the traybake is ready, prepare the lemon drizzle by mixing together the sugar and lemon juice. Granulated sugar will make this drizzle nice and crunchy so if you have the option, use it. Take the cake out of the oven and allow it to cool slightly for five minutes in the tin. You want it still warm so the drizzle will soak in. Using a fork or skewer prick small holes evenly

across the cake which will allow the juice to sink in nicely. Pour the drizzle on top, I like to do this in the tin as it saves on the mess and top with some extra lemon zest for decoration. Leave in the tin for a further 15 minutes until the drizzle is somewhat set then gripping the baking paper lift it out and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Cut into even squares before serving. This cake keeps for 3-4 days in an airtight container or alternatively freezes well for up to a month.



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Seán's exit leaves big shoes to fill at RTÉ

Regular readers will know how unhappy I am with media treatment of controversial social issues. I find so many presenters pushing their own viewpoints and being unwilling or unable to ask the hard questions of those promoting a supposedly liberal viewpoint, while being well able and willing to grill those of a conservative leaning.

I've always found RTÉ presenter Seán O'Rourke to be an exception. An old school journalist in the best sense of the word he asks tough questions of all sides, while generally keeping his own views to himself. So I was very sad to hear that he was retiring from RTÉ and his must-listen **Today With Seán O'Rourke** show.

He announced this rather unexpectedly at the end of his morning show on Tuesday of last week.

I remember two striking interviews during the most recent abortion referendum. He was the only one that I heard who was prepared to ask challenging questions of An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar while others took the free pass route and got with 'the programme', effectively the pro-choice agenda. I looked back on my review of that interview: "That interview was robust, as it should be, but some of the answers were very telling. Asked whether



RTÉ presenter Seán O'Rourke.

he thought a doctor was dealing with one or two patients in a pregnancy situation he answered: 'The patient you're dealing with is the patient in front of you. That's the woman. At a later stage, beyond viability or when the pregnancy is wanted, you treat it in that scenario as two patients.'

So, the unborn child is only a patient if it's wanted? Later he was asked if it was a baby that was in the womb. He answered: "Absolutely...that often depends on the woman carrying the foetus or baby."

So, it's only a baby if the mother thinks it is? It was no wonder that Seán O'Rourke followed this up with an exasperated "is there not anything objective here?"

### Challenge

The other interview I remember was when he challenged former Senator Catherine Noone (she had been chair of the Oireachtas Committee dealing with the issue). It's worth revisiting what I wrote then: "She made out that the unborn child was 'at the centre' of the commit-

tee's deliberations, but when O'Rourke asked her what passages in her report supported that claim, her only answer was 'I don't have the report in front of me'." He could give conservative commentators a tough time too – I remember driving down the country once listening to a particularly robust interview he gave to John Waters.

I hope we'll see more of O'Rourke in the media, perhaps as an independent commentator, which would be interesting. In the meantime the execs at RTÉ will have a challenging time filling the mid-morning weekday slot – maybe they'll try a holding operation for the summer with the opportunity to try out alternative presenters.

While I'm writing of RTÉ presenters, a comment made by the host on the **Ryan Tubridy Show** (RTÉ Radio 1)



Ryan Tubridy.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### NEW! MESSIAH

**EWTN, Saturday, May 3, 7pm**

New documentary series with interviews, old masters artworks, music and more. Narrated by Leonardo Defilippis.

#### THE 13th DAY

**EWTN, Sunday, May 4, 9pm**

(2009) A dramatisation based on the true story of three shepherd children from the village of Fatima who experienced numerous visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

#### RETREAT: MEDITATIONS FROM A MONASTERY

**BBC4, Sunday, May 4, 10pm**

Repeat of series going in search of inner peace in three Benedictine monasteries in Britain. This week: Downside Abbey.

is worth noting. On last Friday's show he told us that in the first three weeks of March, around one and a half million watched religious services from Knock Shrine, that over 600,000 tuned in to the live streams from the Knock Shrine web page and that over 700,000 viewers tuned in to their YouTube channel.

Tubridy reckoned that "Faith is probably a good friend to have at a time like this in guiding you like a light hopefully for those of you who are fortunate enough to have a strong Faith".

On the **Sunday** programme last weekend (BBC Radio 4) presenter Edward Stourton also reflected on the growing phenomenon of online religious services – "virtual worship is one thing but there's no substitute for being with people". This was in the context of a discussion with Fr Dan

Mason, The National Chaplain for the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Communities in England and Wales. He had just recorded a Mass for his communities and found that they engaged well through smartphones. The younger travellers, he found, were literate, seeing practical applications of being able to read and write.

As regards travellers on sites he found they were doing their best with the challenges of hygiene and social distancing. He also found a sadness among these communities as they particularly missed the sacrament related gatherings that were so important for their communities.

It's a sadness we all share.

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[@boreganmedia](https://twitter.com/boreganmedia)



Pat O'Kelly

# Music

## Distinguished ensemble elevate Mozart's love for the quartet

Mozart's two *Piano Quartets* date from the mid 1780s – a period that also brought, among many other things, five of his major piano concerti, two important string quartets and his opera *Le nozze di Figaro*.

While there were earlier incursions by less well-remembered figures into the piano quartet arena, it took Mozart to raise its status on to an unprecedented plateau. In his two quartets he found a way of giving each instrument – violin, viola, cello and piano – its rightful sense of independence.

According to the composer's own catalogue, the *K 478 G minor Quartet* was completed on October 16, 1785 and was among a number of



Rosanne Philippens.

works requested by the Viennese publisher, Franz Anton Hoffmeister, who was also a composer. In it Mozart treats his four instrumentalists as equals, with the concerto-like piano part well balanced against the continuously interesting string writing.

However, Hoffmeister, hoping for something to suit the amateur market, was dis-

satisfied with what Mozart submitted, complaining the music was too difficult and that the public would never buy it.

He told the composer to write in a more popular vein or else he would neither print any more of his music nor pay him.

The disgruntled Mozart responded: "Then I will write

nothing more, and grow hungry or maybe the devil take me!" But he did write another *Piano Quartet* – in *E flat major K 493* – completing it on June 3, 1786. This time the more obliging firm of Artaria published it.

### Distinguished

But why am I telling you all this about Mozart's *Piano Quartets*? Well, the Swiss record company Claves has recently issued a CD of both of them played by an ensemble of distinguished European musicians – Dutch violinist Rosanne Philippens, Hungarian violist Máté Szücs and cellist István Várdai and our own celebrated Finghin Collins.

The CD launch took place, just before Covid-19 restric-

tions, in the convivial atmosphere of the Swiss Embassy on Dublin's Ailesbury Road. Ambassador Louis-José Tournon was the genial host and speaker and, with Finghin Collins at the piano, Mía Cooper, Ed Creedon and William Butt stood in for the CD's string players to present a sample of the disc's music. The occasion, which included some appetising Swiss cuisine, was highly agreeable.

Interestingly, the recording was made in the excellent acoustic of St Peter's Church of Ireland in Drogheda in May 2019. The CD sound is bright and spacious with the instrumental rapport handsomely blended. Despite the musicians' individuality they coalesce perfectly and convey

positive feeling for the music and single-mindedness in their approach to its interpretation.

Ms Philippens, who studied in The Hague and Berlin, plays a Stradivarius violin dating from 1727 while István Várdai's cello, also a Stradivarius, has a 1673 imprimatur.

It was previously owned by the late English cellist Jacqueline du Pré.

Máté Szücs, principal viola with the Berlin Philharmonic for seven years from 2011, is currently a professor in Geneva's Music University. Like his CD companions, he also pursues a worldwide performing career.

The number of the splendid CD is Claves 50-3002.





# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## In the North: a man of the peasantry

**The Autobiography of William Carleton** with a foreword by Benedict Kiely (The White Row Press, 1996; other editions are now available on line).

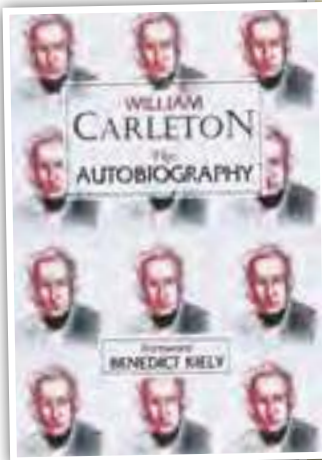
J. Anthony Gaughan

**T**his is the unfinished autobiography of William Carleton. Although it ends well short of when he died on January 30, 1869, together with his other writings, it is an important source for the social history and culture of 19th-century Ireland. And this edition is greatly enhanced by Benedict Kiely's perceptive Foreword.

Carleton was born on March 4, 1794 near Clogher, Co. Tyrone. His father was a Catholic tenant farmer. William was educated at a few local hedge schools.

He exhibited early intellectual ability and his father hoped he would see him ordained to the priesthood. This was also an ambition shared by William. Hence he spent two years studying in St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

However, his experiences while on a pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory in Lough



The cover of William Carleton's autobiography and, right, Carleton with, far right, a modern pilgrimage at Lough Derg.



Derg caused him not only to lose his vocation but also, as he wrote subsequently, "detached me from the Roman Catholic Faith".

Not having settled to any occupation he left home in 1818 and found occasional work as a tutor. Then he held a number of teaching jobs in Dublin, Mullingar and Carlow.

In 1827 he met Reverend Caesar Otway, a writer and magazine editor and an

enthusiastic proselytiser for Protestantism. At Otway's suggestion he wrote a number of stories for the *Church of Ireland Christian Examiner*. The short stories grew into a very successful series, entitled *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, the work for which Carleton was to become best known. He was prolific, also contributing stories to the unionist *Dublin University Magazine* and the

nationalist *Nation*. Influenced by Thomas Davis, he also published a number of novels on political and social themes.

**“Carleton's last years were characterised by drunkenness and poverty”**

Carleton reached the

high point of his career in the 1840s. He was granted a government pension in 1848. This followed a public petition, which was signed by a cross section of the Irish political and intellectual life of the time. Among those who signed it was Maria Edgeworth, one of the pioneers of the Irish tale. She wrote that Carleton's writing gave 'with masterly stokes and in such strong and vivid colours the pictures of

our country's manners, her virtues and her vices'.

Carleton's last years were characterised by drunkenness and poverty and it was a time when he succeeded in offending almost everybody he met. But, it seems, one friend remained with him to the end. His home was near the Jesuit College at Milltown Park in Dublin and Fr Robert Carbery SJ, a member of the community, as Carleton lay



## Storytelling and social reflection through fantasy

**Dark Enchantment** by Dorothy Macardle (Tramp Press, Recovered Voices Series, No.6)

Teresa Whittington

Dorothy Macardle has been primarily associated with her 1937 partisan history *The Irish Republic*, written at Eamon de Valera's request to give an account of the independence struggle from the anti-treaty side.

In so far as the novelist Dorothy Macardle is known, she is sometimes presumed to be a different writer, of the same name. It's important to correct this. As Leanne Lane has commented: "Macardle's literary work was central to her sense of self throughout her life, making it essential to look at her fiction in any attempt to understand the woman in all her complexity."

Macardle was far from being just a narrow devotee of her political colleague de Valera and the internecine intricacies of Irish politics. Educated at Dublin's Alexandra College and later a teacher there, she was a deeply



Dorothy Macardle.

cultured internationalist.

Alongside *The Irish Republic* can be placed her 1949 study *Children of Europe* (London, Victor Gollancz). This book analysed the impact on children of the bereavement, displacement and trauma occasioned by World War II, with details of their reactions and their special

But she reflected on society through the vehicle of fiction also,

and thanks to the inclusion of three of her novels in Tramp Press's Recovered Voices Series we can now appreciate the ways in which she did this.

Tramp Press has republished *The Uninvited* (2015), *The Unforeseen* (2017) and *Dark Enchantment* (2019). Well-conceived and charmingly written 20th-Century fairytales, Macardle's novels have also been assessed by critics

such as Leanne Lane and Caroline Heavey as vehicles of dissidence: as a means of objecting to the potentially damaging impact of a given society on its individual members (often, for Macardle, its female members).

Let's look at *Dark Enchantment* to suggest how this is done.

Macardle had lived between 1952 and 1953 in the Provençal town of Roquebrune (where Yeats

had died in 1939), and she sets *Dark Enchantment* in the imaginary town of St Jacques, in that area of the French Maritime Alps.

### Social reflection

The novel's heroine, Juliet Cunningham, is paired with an anti-heroine, the Romany woman Terka. These two women, as well as the hero Michael Faulkner, each have a dual aspect. They are creatures of fairy tale (princess, sorceress, prince) and real inhabitants of the 1950's (young woman whose career as a teacher has failed, outlawed gypsy, young botanical researcher) existing on the twinned planes of Macardle's project: story-telling and social reflection.

Throughout the novel, we can note the co-existence of fantasy and realism at every stage of the narrative. For every fairytale pleasure that Macardle offers her reader, she will offer a corresponding element drawn from the real world of post-war European society.

Romance and realism effectively co-guarantee each other. Hence



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.



dying sent a message that he would come and give him the 'Last Rites'. However, Carleton sent back word that he had not been a 'Roman Catholic for half-a century or more'!

Benedict Kiely in his Foreword brilliantly captures the spirit of Carleton. Indeed they were kindred spirits. Both were proud sons of Tyrone; both studied for the priesthood; both were distinguished literary figures and

most of all both excelled in story-telling. But, while Kiely merely gently teased his fellow-countrymen and women for their failings and foibles, Carleton was brutally honest in displaying their coarseness, fecklessness and savagery at wakes, weddings and faction-fights; as well as their secret societies, superstitions, popular beliefs and family feuds and in so doing earned unforgetting opprobrium. But to his

credit by his brutal candour, as one chronicler noted, he succeeded in offending 'every class of Irishman'!

For further information about Carleton, editions of his work and events in Ireland and elsewhere, contact [wcarletonsociety@gmail.com](mailto:wcarletonsociety@gmail.com) for bookings and further information, and at <http://www.williamcarletonsociety.org> on the Internet

the fairytale is an authentic one – the social reflection equally compelling.

To take an example from the opening of the novel, Juliet is gazing in wonder at St Jacques as it first appears to her, "hanging there in the golden air", until her companion interjects with: "They call that a village?"

This companion, her father Frith, is in "good walking form" and looking forward to reorganising his career as an actor "...if he only could think of what the devil to do with the girl" (i.e. Juliet!). The chapter is poised between Juliet's qualities as romantic heroine – vulnerability combined with strength of character, attractiveness, sensibility – and her father's rueful worldly self-concern.

Then, before the chapter ends, there emerges the 'dark woman' of its title, glimpsed with fascination by Frith and his daughter as they walk through the town's gilded streets.

A moral and physical victim of the inhabitants' hostility and rejection, and expelled even by

**“A moral and physical victim of the inhabitants' hostility and rejection, and expelled even by her own Romany family, Terka's occult strength is central to Macardle's gothic plot”**

her own Romany family, Terka's occult strength is central to Macardle's gothic plot.

The Tarot reading Terka gives to Juliet structures the novel. The subsequent path for Juliet and Michael does not, of course, run smoothly.

The fairytale does (with wit, lightness and humour) reach the destination prescribed by its genre. For Terka, the end is a hospital clinic, where she is protected from her own violence and that of the villagers by the sympathetic care of a psychiatric specialist.

She is rescued, contained, unfree. She has provided Macardle with a means of exploring the mechanisms of social rejection.

Of exploring too the treatment of women who show an 'occult' drive towards sexual and economic freedom; freedoms which Macardle had seen undermined in the constitution promulgated by de Valera's government, two months after the publication of *The Irish Republic*.

## Cork scientist: the plant lady from Ballylickey



Some of the mosses loved by Ellen Hutchins and, inset, the cover of *A Quiet Tide*.

**A Quiet Tide**  
by Marianne Lee  
(New Island Books,  
€14.95)

**Felix M. Larkin**

Ellen Hutchins (1785–1815) is described in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* as "one of the earliest Irish women scientists...an avid collector of plants, especially the mosses, bryophytes, fungi and lichens around the family home on Bantry Bay".

Though she never published anything herself, she corresponded with and shared the fruits of her collecting with many of the leading male botanists of her time, and her achievements were recognised and duly acknowledged in their work.

This debut novel by Marianne Lee is based on Ellen's life, starting from when she left school and went to live at the Dublin home of Dr Whitley Stokes – a friend of her eldest brother, Emanuel.

Under Stokes' influence, she became interested in botany. He tutored her and equipped her to pursue what became the passion of her life after she returned to West Cork. She spent the last ten years of her life there, dying just before her thirtieth birthday.

### Virgin territory

Being then a remote and fairly inaccessible corner of the world, West Cork was virgin territory for a botanist and Ellen was able to discover many plants not previously known or recorded – preserving samples, and drawing

and painting them. She is introduced to us in the prologue to the novel as "the plant lady from Ballylickey", the location of her family home.

Her return home after her sojourn in Dublin is depicted in the novel as involuntary. She is ordered back home by Emanuel, the head of the family since their father's death, in order to care for their aging mother and crippled brother who are the only family members now living there. He tells her: "It's my decision to make, Ellen, and I've done so." She accepts that it is her duty to obey her brother.

**“At least today women's voices are being heard loud and clear”**

Such was the fate of women in the early 19th Century, even one with the unusual ability of Ellen Hutchins – whose "name was noted beyond the confines of place", to again quote from the novel. They had to be "adaptable" to the wishes – the whims – of their men folk; "women usually have little choice to be otherwise", Ellen is told by Whitley Stokes' wife.

Her crippled brother describes womanhood as "an affliction" comparable to his physical infirmity, and she tells him: "I wasn't allowed your freedom, being a girl."

Her school-friend, married off by her father to a much older man, writes to Ellen that she hopes one day "to feel less like a piece of muslin, to be blown here

and there without direction or influence".

Early in the novel, Ellen wonders: "What will become of me? My place in the world." This question is answered later when Ellen muses upon how she manages to juggle her domestic responsibilities with her botanical endeavours. She thinks: "...with one hand I hold a knife, a paintbrush, I adjust the microscope lens. With the other I wipe my brother's face, help my mother to the chamber pot, darn moth holes and feel for the pulse of a newly laid egg."

### Fine novel

This novel inevitably prompts us to consider how much real progress women have made in finding a "place in the world" in the 200 years since Ellen Hutchins lived and died.

No doubt the author feels not enough, but at least today women's voices are being heard loud and clear. Unlike her near-namesake Mary Ann Evans, the novelist George Eliot, Ms Lee does not have to adopt a male pseudonym in order to have her work taken seriously.

*A Quiet Tide* is a fine novel, thoroughly researched and beautifully written; and the publishers, New Island, are to be commended on a very attractive production – with a well designed cover.



# Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email [advertising@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:advertising@irishcatholic.ie)



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Homeless & Drugs Services

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Call 01-5240139 or visit [www.mqi.ie](http://www.mqi.ie)



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We at Boxx BarberShop are preparing for our return. We require Barbers in both our shops in Finglas Village and IFSC Docklands Dublin 1. If you would like to join our team please send a CV or short letter about yourself, where you've worked, where you live and your experience etc to our email address [info@boxx.ie](mailto:info@boxx.ie).

Barbers who have applied before are welcome to apply again.

Looking forward to hearing from you and stay well during this crisis.  
- Declan

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Little Flower Penny Dinners have been providing meals and services to the homeless and the elderly for over 100 years. Please help us continue and donate what you can on our website [www.LFPD.ie](http://www.LFPD.ie) or by phoning us with your credit/debit card details or by post to Little Flower Penny Dinners, 11 Meehan St, D8. Phone 01 4536621 or 01 4546795 e-mail: [stbrigid@littleflower.ie](mailto:stbrigid@littleflower.ie)

## Classifieds

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The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2.

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Phone: 01 687 4094



# Leisure time

Please pray for the beatification of

## Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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Please help us with a gift in your Will

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MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.  
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When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

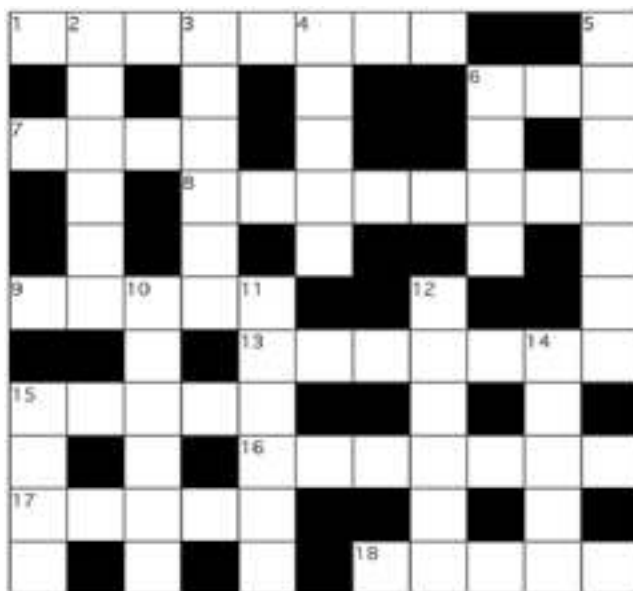
Trócaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email [grace.kelly@trocaire.org](mailto:grace.kelly@trocaire.org) or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 330



### Across

- 1 Three-wheeler (8)  
6 A short form of the name Samuel (3)  
7 A cowboy wears this at the back of his boot (4)  
8 They hang beside a window (8)  
9 Girl's or lady's garment (5)  
13 Shouted to encourage your team (7)  
15 You might carry this to help you see as you walk around in the darkness (5)  
16 Sea creature with eight tentacles (7)  
17 Musical instrument with five strings (5)  
18 Took something that did

not belong to you (5)

### Down

- 2 Mend, fix up (6)  
3 Show you see in a Big Top (6)  
4 You can use this to make butter (5)  
5 Broke to pieces (7)  
6 Jump over a rope (4)  
10 A message you might go on (6)  
11 Where pupils and teachers learn together (6)  
12 Read it to see how you did in your tests (6)  
14 Exactly the same (5)  
15 Baths (4)

## SOLUTIONS, APRIL 23

GORDIUS No. 452

**Across** – 1 Detonation 6 Isis 10 Yukon 11 Bus driver  
12 Carafes 15 Manse 17 Limb 18 Ivan 19 Latch 21 Silence  
23 Lit up 24 Gnaw 25 Acre 26 Dig in 28 Stetson 33 Converted  
34 Naiad 35 Swag 36 Charioteer

**Down** – 1 Days 2 Take apart 3 Ninja 4 Table 5 Ouse 7 Seven  
8 Screech owl 9 Grumble 13 Fiji 14 Sleeves 16 Diplodocus  
20 Ten to five 21 Spaniel 22 Come 27 Genoa 29 Tudor  
30 Tango 31 Etch 32 Oder

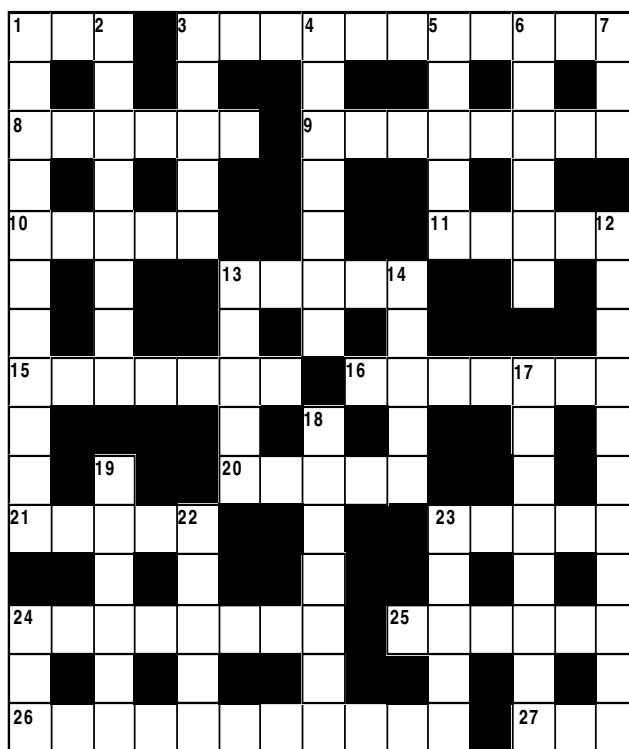
CHILDREN'S No. 329

**Across** – 1 February 5 Owl 6 Shouting 8 Elm 9 Snooker  
10 Target 13 Rag 15 Skid 17 Farmer 18 Sell 19 Scissors

**Down** – 1 Fastest 2 Bookmark 3 Alien 4 Flour 7 Good 9 Shed  
11 Ashes 12 Gills 13 Romeo 14 Germs 16 Ears

## Crossword

Gordius 453



### Across

- 1 Mandible (3)  
3 Stair I chain up in old Oslo (11)  
8 Left the old city with a gin cocktail? How enticing! (6)  
9 Lucy A sat around a hospital department (8)  
10 Imperial measures of length (5)  
11 Freshwater fish (5)  
13 Make a meal of it when an article is missing from the boat (5)  
15 & 23d Strangely, he banned bran as he wrote 'The Borstal Boy' (7,5)  
16 See 7 down  
20 Implements (5)  
21 See 7 down  
23 Kipling's bear takes a bachelor to the toilet (5)  
24 & 25 Apostle of questionable disposition? (8,6)  
26 Gin's nickname can turn heroism around (7,4)  
27 Arid (3)

### Down

- 1 Infants after dessert food - how sweet are they! (5,6)  
2 Atrocity committed in time of

conflict (3,5)

- 3 Should one pour whipped ice-cream into these before placing them on the motorway? (5)  
4 Tend to slope (7)  
5 'One Night in Paris' with a denizen of the Arctic (5)  
6 Horatio's surname or Mandela's Christian name (6)  
7, 16a & 21a During 'The Tempest', one is not too choosy about the fortified drink, it seems (3,4,2,1,5)  
12 O, I hack Sky TV in order to see a great composer (11)  
13 Jumped (5)  
14 Barbed items of fishing tackle (5)  
17 End a film in order to have aroused passion (8)  
18 Do have a bet, woman! (7)  
19 Travel with a statue to achieve financial ruin (2,4)  
22 Bishop's headgear (5)  
23 See 15 across  
24 Hydroelectric structure (3)

## Sudoku Corner

330

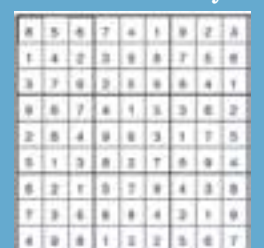
Easy



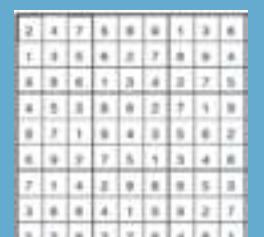
Hard



Last week's Easy 329



Last week's Hard 329





# Where there’s a will, there’s always a way

**I HAVE BEEN** live-streaming Sunday Mass onto our parish Facebook page since March 15, so I feel like a hardened cyber-veteran at this stage. But even with nine broadcast Masses under my belt, the Sunday morning liturgical adventure is always preceded by a sleepless Saturday night. Maybe after a year, when this becomes ‘normal’, I may become more placid.

Taking on the livestreaming of Mass has involved a steep learning curve. I have never worked with a camera before, never even made a video on my phone. I am not the world’s most adept technology user but I have become humble enough to realise that the parish has many who are (usually people half my age). In any house which broadcasts elements of the Mass, the young people are always those consulted when things go wrong.

## Temptation

Live-streaming involved a temptation: will our parish aim to be the best ever, to have the most professionally-finessed production? That temptation was resisted, in the knowledge that the perfect is often the enemy of the good, that waiting to be the best



leaves too many people without any Mass.

For the first couple of Masses, I had on-site technical help, before the severe lockdown eliminated that possibility. On the first Sunday, the ‘studio’ (see photo above) was laid out as it has continued. A small step-ladder was set up in the kitchen and a solid, ‘Thomas-the-tank-engine’ bookend placed on top of it, to which my iPad was bound

by a very strong rubber band. A box of matches, inserted between the iPad and the bookend, brought the camera’s focus down a fraction, so that more of the altar table came into view, and less ceiling (and cobwebs).

For those first Sundays, a Minister of the Word could come and read, and a couple of people made the responses, but

the lockdown ended that: now it was just me and the camera on the iPad, and the hope there was someone, somewhere, listening and participating.

Technology came to my aid. A computer was set up near the altar and a Facetime connection made to the house of a Minister of the Word, where the minister read the readings and a family provided the responses. A couple of songs were taped onto a phone by another parishioner and these were played at the start and end. It was participation, but “not as we know it” (to quote Jim in *Star Trek!*).

All continues to rely on technology. Wifi, it turns out, is not as constantly reliable as had been thought, but, like humans, sometimes stutters and fails (rain and fog usually being the culprits). Back-up systems are always needed.

Mass is shorter in this format. I try to keep it to 30 minutes, recognising how hard it is for watchers to retain focus. The comments made on Facebook give me hope though, and some people punch the ‘love’ emoji during Mass as their way of participating. It’s a new world, but we believers have always adapted, so why not!

## To make you smile...

People share lots of fun messages on social media. Enjoy these:

- Afraid of Santa? You may be claus-trophobic.
- People are making apocalypse jokes like there’s no tomorrow.
- The trouble with political jokes is that sometimes they get elected.
- Is irony the opposite of wrinkly?
- I’m terrified of lifts and am taking steps to avoid them.
- Cows have hooves because they lactose.
- I’m friends with 25 letters of the alphabet. I don’t know Y.
- Just because you are offended doesn’t mean you are right.
- For chemists, alcohol is not a problem, it’s a solution.
- Dogs can’t operate MRI scanners, but catscan.



## HELP TRAIN A YOUNG MAN FOR THE MISSIONARY PRIESTHOOD

YOUR EASTERTIDE GIFT TO OUR RISEN SAVIOUR

Each year THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION receives numerous requests from Religious Orders in mission lands for help to train their seminarians.

**It costs approximately €100 a month (€1,200 a year) to feed, clothe and educate a student for the priesthood**

The great majority of young men who come forward to offer their lives to God, and His people, come from poor families. Their parents do not have the means to support them financially. The cost of educating and maintaining seminarians is often a heavy burden on the Religious Orders. It costs approximately €100 a month (€1,200 a year) to feed, clothe and educate a student for the priesthood. We appeal wholeheartedly, this Easter/Pentecost, to all readers to help train and support a candidate for the priesthood.

**Any donation you can send will be most gratefully received, and will be sent without deduction, to help to train a young man for the priesthood.**

**EVERY EURO YOU SEND WILL BE VERY GRATEFULLY RECEIVED AND FORWARDED WITHOUT DEDUCTION.**



## MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

Your Mass offerings help to provide the missionary priest’s maintenance and assist him to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth.

**We like to send a missionary a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass.**

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