

The Pope in Ireland: Days that will live on

The Irish Catholic

Special 48-page commemorative souvenir edition celebrating the historic visit of Pope Francis

Thursday, August 30, 2018

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Inside this week

Papal Mass

The pilgrims who saw Francis

Pages 36-39



Mary Kenny

Don't turn Church into hippie commune

Page 5



Fr Ron Rolheiser

How to respond to abuse

Page 42



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Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €125. Airmail €145.
ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,
23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.
Printed by The Irish Times

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Building on the energy of the parish priest of the world

One of the primary duties of the Pope is to confirm Catholics in their Faith. That is the principle motivation behind all papal travel. Irish Catholics experienced something of this during the momentous visit of Pope Francis at the weekend. Leading up to the Holy Father's arrival, the media coverage was relentlessly negative.

From fears that a measles epidemic would break out at Mass in the Phoenix Park to complaints about the cost of the trip, the mood music was intensely antagonistic. It was against this backdrop that almost 40,000 people each day started pouring into Dublin's RDS during the week to participate in the pastoral congress of the World Meeting of Families. The joy was palpable. People had come together to share their Faith and reflect on the challenges and opportunities facing families.

Former President Mary McAleese had dismissed the gathering as a "right-wing rally". It's a pity she decided to boycott the event. In the RDS, she would've found happy and faith-filled Catholics. There were people of all ages and walks of life trying to walk together on the journey of living their Christian faith as a family. The Church, after all, is the family of families.

It's no exaggeration to say that the stadium erupted with joy and welcome

Papal visits are grace-filled moments – opportunities to reflect on the past and chart a new direction for the future. As Pope Francis arrived on Saturday morning, his first functions were political – a visit to President Higgins and the civic reception at Dublin Castle.

He really came into himself when he arrived at the pro-cathedral later in the afternoon to talk to couples about



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

marriage and family life. His advice was remarkably on the nose and many people marvelled at the sight of a celibate man in his early 80s offering such insights into marriage. His secret? Pope Francis has spent a lifetime hearing Confessions. Even now, when he visits the parishes of Rome he always sets aside an hour to hear Confession.

He has spent probably thousands of hours listening to the joys and hopes, sorrows and despairs of ordinary Catholics – people he describes as God's holy faithful people. Similarly, at the Capuchin Day Centre Francis got to spend time with the people he loves most – those who are vulnerable and on the margins of the "throwaway culture".

First glimpse

The first glimpse many got of Francis – apart from on the television – was when he arrived in Croke Park. It's no exaggeration to say that the stadium erupted with joy and welcome. People have been preparing for the visit for almost three years: this was the moment they saw the Successor of St Peter in person. Again, he thrilled those present with his powerful reflections on marriage and family life.

He had been late for Croke Park because of his meeting with survivors. At the Mass on Sunday morning, he again turned to the appalling betrayal of trust caused by the abuse scandals and their cover-up. He spoke with compassion and sought forgiveness. The fact that his penitential remarks at the Mass were interrupted four times by the congregation shows the extent to which his words were necessary and appreciated by the faithful as part of the healing process.

As Francis departed, there was

much reflection on the lasting legacy of the trip. In a way, it's too soon to say. But what we must take from the visit is fresh heart. We have a proud legacy as a Church in Ireland, notwithstanding the dark chapters of recent decades.

Catholics clung to their Faith through centuries of persecution and the fact that Irish people still identify as Catholic is down to the sheer devotion and tenacity of their forefathers and foremothers. That is something to take pride in.

Francis has a heart that shines out in the way he always gravitates towards the vulnerable

Pope Francis sets a beautiful example as a pastor. He has a heart for people that shines out in the way he always gravitates towards the most vulnerable. Like a mother who loves all her children equally, but loves each more only when they need it, Francis displays the loving heart of God.

Ireland needs the "revolution of tenderness" that the Pope described during his trip. The wider culture is often hostile towards the Church and even hostile to discussions about things spiritual. But, Christianity thrived in the pagan culture of the Roman Empire because people allowed their lives to be transformed by the Gospel and this attracted people to that same Gospel.

The challenge of Francis, the parish priest of the world, is for each and every person who describes themselves as a Catholic to embrace every day a more authentic and joy-filled living out of the Gospel.

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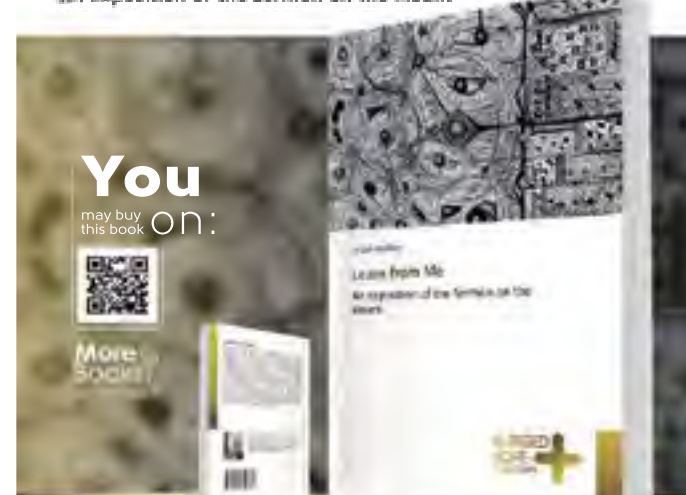
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Over one million people tune into Pope's WMOF visit

Colm Fitzpatrick

In the face of long walks and inclement weather, more than one million people tuned into Irish television at some point during the Papal Mass, figures have revealed.

RTÉ One's programme coverage reached an audience of 1.1 million viewers who tuned in at some point during the broadcast while RTÉ also shared the Phoenix Park footage with 77 broadcasters around the world.

It is estimated that around 300,000 pilgrims attended the Mass over the weekend, including approximately 5,000 people who travelled from the North of Ireland, and up to 20,000 overseas visitors.

While these pilgrims faced rain and wind to see the complete Mass, the national broadcaster also said an average of 535,000 viewers saw the full Mass from start to



finish from their television screens at home, in parish centres, and community halls.

TV viewing data released by Nielsen TAM shows that over 1.8 million viewers tuned into the RTÉ special live television coverage of Pope Francis in Ireland across the weekend, which included extensive commentary and interviews with this paper's editor, Michael Kelly.

In comparison, the most watched Irish television show in 2017 was *The Late Late Toy Show* presented by Ryan Tubridy which racked up 1.35 million viewers, whereas a *Mrs Brown's Boys* Christmas special hit around 700,000 views.

Coverage

Viewers in 159 different countries including Iran, Papua

New Guinea and Swaziland accessed the coverage on RTÉ streaming services.

On RTÉ2, the Festival of Families concert in Croke Park on Saturday evening saw 379,000 viewers, on average, watch the full four-hour programme.

The programme reached its peak with 570,000 people watching at one stage. The event included Irish singing

acts such as Nathan Carter, Daniel O'Donnell and the Riverdance troupe.

RTÉ provided wall-to-wall coverage of all the public events Pope Francis attended from when he arrived on Saturday morning until he left on Sunday evening.

The Pope's visit will go down in history as one of the most watched events ever in Ireland.

Papal trip only success if action is taken

The Primate of All Ireland has said that "decisive action" against clerical abuse will be proof of whether the Pope's visit to Ireland has been a success or not.

Speaking on RTÉ's *Morning Ireland* programme on August 27, Archbishop Eamon Martin said that Francis has taken lead in addressing the clerical abuse crisis, referencing a specific line he said during the Mass in the Phoenix Park: "I ask God's mercy and forgiveness".

Responsibility

The archbishop said: "I have never before heard a Pope accept a personal responsibility in some ways for all of the terrible trauma and hurt for the terrible crimes and sins of abuse."

He added that the success of the Pontiff's visit to Ireland will be evaluated on "whether or not we have strong accountability in the Church, the truth coming out, justice and healing for those who have been hurt, and as the Pope said himself in Knock, decisive action".

Papal wheels donated to Dublin's homeless

Staff reporter

The blue car used by Pope Francis during his WMOF trip to Ireland is to be donated to help the homeless.

On Monday, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin announced that the car would be donated to Crosscare, the social care agency of the Archdiocese of Dublin.

It will be used by Crosscare staff

based in the agency's Mater Dei homeless hub, which helps families move from the temporary facility to more secure, long-term accommodation.

Since it opened, 100 families have moved through the system, and the blue Skoda Rapid used by the Pontiff during his visit to Dublin will be used daily by Cross-



care staff to take families who are moving on to view their next accommodation.

Conor Hickey, Director of Crosscare services, said the agency was delighted with the gift from the Pope and he hoped that families who were struggling would find this gesture from the Pope of some comfort in

that they were constantly remembered by him.

Crosscare will not, however, be able to keep the number plate on the car – SCV 1 – which is an acronym both in Italian and in Latin.

The Latin is *Status Civitatis Vaticanae* and the Italian is *Stato della Città del Vaticano* and when translated from both languages, it means Vatican City.

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Pope wants Irish Catholics to be missionary disciples

All of us, as bishops, are conscious of our responsibility to be fathers to God's holy and faithful people. As good fathers, we want to encourage and inspire, to reconcile and unify, and above all, to preserve all the good handed down from generation to generation in this great family which is the Church in Ireland. It is true, the Church in Ireland remains strong; it is true.

So, my word to you this evening is one of encouragement – in line with my homily – for your efforts, in these challenging times, to persevere in your ministry as heralds of the Gospel and shepherds of Christ's flock. In a particular way, I am grateful for the concern you continue to show for the poor, the excluded and those in need of a helping hand, as witnessed most recently by your pastoral letters on the homeless

I am close to you: keep moving ahead with courage, Pope tells bishops

and on substance misuse. I am also grateful for the support you give to your priests, whose hurt and discouragement in the face of recent scandals are often ignored or underestimated. Be close to your priests! For you, as bishops, they are the closest of your neighbours.

Theme

A recurrent theme of my visit, of course, has been the Church's need to acknowledge and remedy, with evangelical honesty and courage, past failures – grave sins – with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Among these, women who were mistreated. In

recent years, you as a body have resolutely moved forward, not only by undertaking paths of purification and reconciliation with victims and survivors of abuse, but also, with the help of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Church in Ireland, you have set in place a stringent set of norms aimed at ensuring the safety of young persons. In these years, all of us have had our eyes opened – painfully – to the gravity and extent of sexual abuse and the abuse of power and conscience in various social settings.

In Ireland, as elsewhere, the honesty and integrity with which the Church chooses to

confront this painful chapter of her history can offer an example and a warning to society as a whole. Continue on this path. Humiliation is painful, but we have been saved by the humiliation of the Son of God and this gives us courage.

The wounds of Christ give us courage. I ask you, please, to be close – this is the word, 'closeness' – to the Lord and to God's people. Closeness. Do not repeat the attitudes of aloofness and clericalism that at times in your history have given the real image of an authoritarian, harsh and autocratic Church.

“Sometimes we can think that Faith formation means teaching religious concepts”

Passing on the Faith essentially takes place in the family; the Faith is passed on in everyday speech, the language of the family. At the same time, Catholic schools and programmes of religious instruction continue to play an indispensable role in creating a culture of Faith and a sense of missionary discipleship.

I know that this is a source of pastoral concern for all of you. Genuine religious formation calls for faithful and joyful teachers who are able to shape not only minds but also hearts in the love of Christ and in the practice of prayer.

Sometimes we can think that Faith formation means teaching religious concepts, and we don't think of forming the heart, shaping attitudes.

Forming the mind, yes, but also the heart. And teaching how to pray: teaching children how to pray from the very start. Prayer.

The training of such teachers and the expansion of programmes of adult education are essential for the future of the Christian community, in which a committed laity will be increasingly called to bring the wisdom and values of their Faith to their engagement in the varied sectors of the country's social, cultural and political life.

Upheavals

The upheavals of recent years have tested the traditionally strong Faith of the Irish people. Yet they have also offered the opportunity for an interior renewal of the Church in this country and pointed to new ways of envisioning its life and mission.

With humility and trust in his grace, may you discern and set out on new paths for these new times. Be courageous and creative. Surely, the strong missionary sense rooted in the soul of your people will inspire creative ways of bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel and building up the community of believers in the love of Christ and zeal for the growth of his kingdom.

In your daily efforts to be fathers and shepherds to God's family in this country – fathers, please, and not step-fathers! – may you always be sustained by the hope that trusts in the truth of Christ's words and the certainty of his promises. In every time and place, that truth “sets free” (John 8:32); it has a power all its own to convince minds

and draw hearts to itself. Whenever you and your people feel that you are a 'little flock' facing challenges and difficulties, do not grow discouraged.

As St John of the Cross teaches us, it is in the dark night that the light of Faith shines purest in our hearts. And that light will show the way to the renewal of the Christian life in Ireland in the years ahead.

Finally, in the spirit of ecclesial communion, I ask you to continue to foster unity and fraternity among yourselves – this is very important – and, together with the leaders of other Christian communities, to work and pray fervently for reconciliation and peace among all the members of the Irish family.

What is the first duty of the bishop? I say it to everyone: it is prayer. When the Greek-speaking Christians complained that their widows were being neglected (Acts 6:1), Peter and the apostles created deacons. Then when Peter explained the matter, he concluded by saying: “We [apostles] will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word”.

So, I throw out a question and each of you can answer it at home: how many hours a day does each of you devote to prayer?

“The Lord is very good, and Our Lady is watching over you”

With these thoughts, dear brothers, I assure you of my prayers for your intentions, and I ask you to keep me in your own. To all of you, and to the faithful entrusted to your pastoral care, I impart my blessing as a pledge of joy and strength in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am close to you: keep moving ahead with courage! The Lord is very good, and Our Lady is watching over you. When things get a little difficult, pray the *sub tuum praesidium*, because the Russian mystics say that at moments of spiritual turmoil, we should go under the mantle of the Holy Mother of God, *sub tuum praesidium*. Thank you very much!

ⓘ This is an abridged version of the speech given by Pope Francis to members of the Irish bishops' conference just before he left Ireland.

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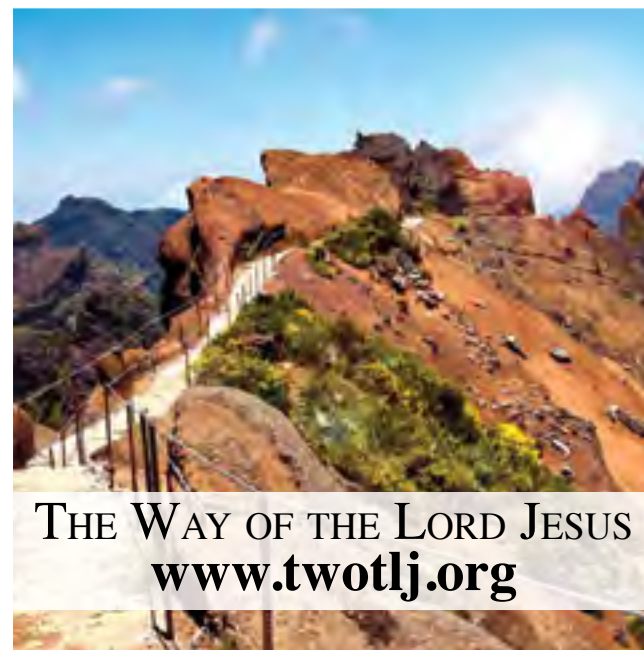
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A Church that is too liberal becomes akin to a hippy commune



Mary Kenny

The Irish now favour a “more liberal, less dogmatic” Church, according to a new poll carried out by the pollsters Ipsos/MRBI. This turns out to mean, first of all, that many people favour an ending to celibacy in the priesthood and are for the ordination of women.

I wasn't aware that these practices were 'dogmas'. Celibacy of the priesthood was only formally imposed in the Middle Ages. And according to some canon lawyers, there is no doctrinal obstacle against ordaining women.

Priestly celibacy could be ended tomorrow without a dogma being touched. I've met several former Anglican priests who are married, and have subsequently become Catholic priests.

Ironically, they often moved away from Anglicanism because

● I mourn the decline of the death notice in the daily newspapers. More and more families now seem to announce a death either on the radio or online at websites like RIP.ie. I can see the convenience – and the budgetary advantage – of using online obits, but the print versions had a matchless substance and a contribution to the historical record. Though I recognise that they can be pricey.

Regrettably, I have missed the deaths of relations and friends because they weren't recorded in print form.

it had become too 'liberal' and because they didn't agree with women being ordained.

And, as a matter of fact, from the 1970s onwards, the Catholic Church itself was

becoming increasingly liberal. The homilies of the Bishops and the priests writing in Catholic publications had embraced Vatican II with some fervour, and with it the many decent principles such as inclusiveness, forgiveness and the message of love.

A late friend of mine who listened attentively to Sunday sermons, summed up the theme of most of them, from the 1980s onwards, as 'All You Need is Love' – as in the Beatles' hit.

It is plausible that some of the liberalism in the Catholic Church contributed to the paedophile scandals. I heard Cathal Daly – a good man – say that “forgiveness and a firm purpose of amendment” could overcome all sins, including paedophile offences.

This message was too liberal. Forgiveness for the most heinous crimes is indeed embedded in the Christian message, but it's balanced by the notion that some things are forbidden, anathematised, and deserving of retribution.

The Ipsos/MRBI poll revealed

also that most Catholics agree with contraception, which isn't a surprise. Three-quarters of Catholics said that gay marriage should be recognised by the Church – a view aligned with the population as a whole, secular and religious. A majority wanted “inclusivity and diversity” within the Church and that the Church should embrace those who do not agree with Church teachings.

Nobody ever said the Church wasn't open to all. And any institution of a billion people is going to be diverse by definition.

It's a Christian ideal to practice tolerance. But a Church that is too liberal becomes something akin to a hippy commune. And hippy communes always end in collapse, corruption and debauchery.

Without standards, and without what the secularist columnist Eoghan Harris calls “good authority”, there can really be no Church at all. There has to be a balance between tolerance, reform – and the upholding of values.

Vatican, RSVP!

I would suggest that the Vatican does need a few more correspondence secretaries. Both Mary McAleese [pictured] and Catherine Corless – the local historian who uncovered the distressing circumstances at Tuam – wrote to the Holy See. Both women reported that they received no answers.

This is bad manners and bad policy, too. There should be enough personnel at the Vatican to attend to correspondence sent.

Why doesn't the Vatican copy Buckingham Palace's practice? Queen Elizabeth has a rota – I believe it is six – of ladies-in-waiting whose sole job is to answer letters to the monarch. Surely Rome could hire a few such stewards of courtesy – of either sex, or both – to do likewise?



“Prayer of supplication is an expression of the heart that trusts in God and realises that of itself it can do nothing.” (Pope Francis Rejoice and Be Glad 154)

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Fr La Flynn, Prior



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Phoenix Park Mass: 'We are the Church'



Shane, Helen, Hannah and Adam Stuart

There was "a sense of excitement" for the Stuart family before the Pope's Mass as the rain cleared and people continued to pour into the park.

"The walk was pretty fun actually," said Helen, who was accompanied by her husband Shane and children Hannah and Adam, "people were telling horror stories about 10km but it was nowhere near that."

Waking up just after 6am, they were on the parish bus by 7.30am. Over 100 parishioners from their rural diocese of Forkhill-Mullaghbawn in Armagh travelled on

two coaches to the Pope's Mass.

Helen told *The Irish Catholic*: "We had a small parish outdoor Mass last week which set the scene for this week, to show that it's about community coming together in any environment."

"We know that the Church... there's a lot of darkness, there's a lot of evilness there as well, but we want to come together as a family just to stand firm and say that we do need to hang on to what we've got and to say that we are the Church, our family is the Church." Photos: Chai Brady



Sophia, Muire, Lú, Sinéad and Thomas McCloughlin

The McCloughlin family were "proud and privileged" to attend the papal Mass on Sunday.

Sinéad said: "We're here also really on behalf of our families, some of them couldn't make it today," adding that her parents are elderly.

The family took part in the Pastoral Congress in the RDS and Thomas went on the pilgrimage of seven churches around Dublin which was organised as part of the WMOF.

Angela McBride, Aideen Reid, Una McAlister and Irene Reid

Seeing the variety of people, young and old, was a highlight for Angela McBride, who began the trek from Antrim to the Phoenix Park at 5.15am.

"You know what's lovely? Seeing all the different age groups, from really old people walking in and being pushed in, to young people, there's such a mixture of age groups," she said.

Asked whether she thinks Francis' promotion of family for the WMOF has come



across, she said: "Here's a family coming together, a sister, nieces. Family is very important to us. Angela and I are sisters and we're from a family of 15 and our

parents were in Drogheda for Pope John Paul II when he was here." She added their late mother would love to have seen them at the Mass "repeating history".

Martin Dyre, Danial Shaw, Nicola Davison, Jacqueline Lynch, Alan Davison, Joe McDowell and Aaron Bunting



This group from Holy Cross Parish in Ardoyne said they were on one of the six buses coming from north Belfast and there was a "lovely atmosphere on the way down".

Jacqueline Lynch said she was enjoying the experience and looked forward to seeing the Pope, saying: "I think it's very special he's on Irish soil, it's a big honour for him to be here."

"I think family is the most important thing in the world, and for me anyway I think it's very special that the Pope is celebrating family."

Helen, Deirbhaile (1), Maeve (3) and John McKeating

Excited for the "whole atmosphere and experience" of the Pope's Mass, the McKeating family from Belfast said they particularly liked what Francis has said on several different occasions about the use of technology in the home.

Helen said his message about not using phones at the dinner table is something she'll "take home".

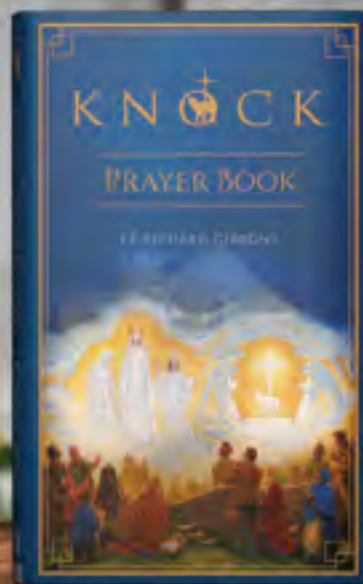
"It something you would see more and more often when you're out and about," she added.



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Francis' reform agenda has people's backing, says survivor priest

Greg Daly

People are fully behind Pope Francis' efforts to tackle abuse and concealment of abuse in the Church, according to a Belfast priest who was sexually assaulted by a priest while a seminarian and who was one of eight survivors of clerical and institutional abuse who met the Pope on Saturday evening.

The Pontiff was "obviously affected by what he heard", according to Fr Paddy McCafferty of Belfast's Corpus Christi parish, continuing that the Pope "responded unequivocally – expressing his shame, taking full responsibility as the visible earthly head of the Church, saying clearly 'I am responsible', asking for forgiveness".

Writing on his Facebook page, Fr McCafferty said Pope

Francis expressed his distress about corruption in the Church and his determination to tackle it, despite efforts to undermine and thwart his work.

"We told him that the people are fully behind him in his efforts," wrote Fr McCafferty. "We told him that justice needs to be seen to be done and that even the most highly ranking of prelates must not be exempt from just penalties, when they cover up the crime of abuse, or deal with it incompetently."

Healing

Other survivors present in the 90-minute meeting included: Marie Collins, a founding member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors; Fr Joe McDonald of St Matthew's Parish in Ballyfermot, Dublin; Paul Jude Redmond and Clodagh Malone, both of whom were

born in Mother and Baby homes; Bernadette Fahy, who lived as a child in the Goldenbridge Orphanage; Councillor Damien O'Farrell, who was abused by a Christian Brother when 12 years old; and a victim – who asked not to be named – of abuse by the late Fr Tony Walsh.

All those present agreed "that the Pope was truly sincere and appeared resolved, to continue the work of healing, purification and reform, without fear or favour," wrote Fr McCafferty, describing the Pope as "kind and gentle" and "visibly distressed" by the stories he heard.

Ahead of the papal visit, Fr McCafferty had called for the Pope to cancel the trip, saying that if he came he would be appearing alongside men who had serious questions to answer about abuse and cover-up.

Visit a reminder the Church does



Everyone who came away from an encounter with the Pope was uplifted, writes **David Quinn**

My first reaction to the address by Leo Varadkar to Pope Francis in Dublin Castle was positive but since then it has become a lot less so. Indeed, I think the address, and the reaction of the Government to the papal visit as a whole, was indicative of a State that probably has a worse relationship with the Catholic Church than practically any other country in the Western world.

I was comparing and contrasting how Popes, and other government leaders in other countries, have greeted each other when they have met.

For example, when Pope Benedict was leaving Britain following his visit in 2010, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, was totally upbeat about the visit. He said to the Pope: "People



Minister for Health Simon Harris, Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Josepha Madigan and Minister for Employment Affairs & Social Protection Regina Doherty at Dublin Castle after the Pope's and Taoiseach's addresses.

do not have to share a religious faith or agree with religion on everything to see the benefit of asking the searching questions that you, your Holiness, have posed to us about our society and how we treat ourselves and each other."

He described the visit as "an incredibly moving four days for our country".

When President Barack Obama visited Pope Benedict in Rome in 2009, the atmosphere

was mutually respectful. Each acknowledged areas of agreement and disagreement. They agreed about fighting poverty. They disagreed about abortion and other bioethical issues. But there was none of the unease that seemed to envelop Church/State encounters last weekend.


When Pope Benedict visited France in 2008, President Sarkozy was extremely cordial. France has a deeply, sometimes aggressively secular political culture, but Sarkozy was entirely welcoming towards Benedict and praised the religious contribution to society.

“Essentially, An Taoiseach envisages the Church being a handmaid to the State”

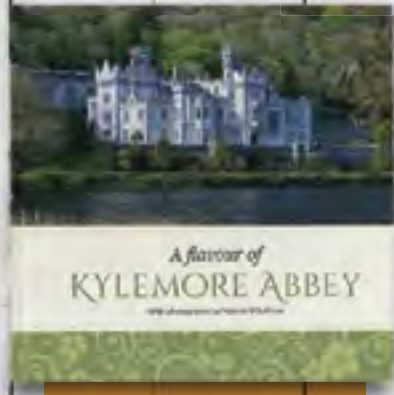
In Britain, France, and the US, the Church has been embroiled in scandals, just like here. But the scandals did not overshadow the meetings between Pope Benedict and David Cameron, Barack Obama or

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about the scandals but never acknowledged the very robust child protection systems the Church in Ireland now has in place and has had for roughly two decades. That would have been gracious of him. In fact, it could have been pointed out that the Irish Church's child protection standards are what the whole Catholic world should copy.

The Church overall was subjected to relentless and mostly hostile media analysis during and in the run-up to the visit. But the visit itself, and the World Meeting of Families at the RDS, was a reminder to those of us who took part in any of it, that there is still a Church here in this country that does tremendous good work and is full of people of good will.

Walking around the RDS you saw that good work and good will on display. Groups had stands setting out what they do to help the poor, the homeless, those whose marriages are in trouble, those experiencing difficult pregnancies and so on.

“The events were reminders of what their Church and their Catholic, Christian faith is really all about”

We are also saw the sheer ethnic diversity of the Church. There were Catholics in attendance from all over the world and they were cheerful and upbeat about their Faith. That was good for us Irish Catholics to witness because we can be tempted to think that the experience of the Irish Church is the experience of the Church everywhere. It is far from the case.

Those who want to the papal events at Croke Park, Knock and Phoenix Park will have witnessed something similar. Everyone who came away from these events felt uplifted. They were reminders of what their Church and their Catholic, Christian faith is really all about; serving God, following Jesus, being part of a huge Christian community that has its troubles, yes, but it also has a present and a future, as well as a past.

We belong to a Church that has its human flaws, but which also contains some of the best that humanity has to offer. Let's never forget that.

Nicolas Sarkozy. During the papal visit to Ireland, they overshadowed everything, and this is despite the apparent personal popularity of Pope Francis compared with Pope Benedict.

“Pope Francis spoke of a “throwaway culture” that makes us ‘increasingly indifferent to the poor’”

A big part of the explanation for this is that the Catholic Church has never been a dominant force in the US, nor has it been for several centuries in either Britain or France. It just goes to show that it is almost invariably bad for the Church (any Church) when it becomes too powerful. Too many 'legacy' issues are created.

A hand-out for journalists in the Dublin Castle media centre more or less set the tone for the Church/State part of the visit. It emphasised how 'diverse' and 'equal' Ireland now is, and put front and centre our votes in favour of same-sex marriage, and the law that permits women to identify as men and vice versa.

In his Dublin Castle address, Leo Varadkar at least acknowledged the past contribution of the Church to Ireland, not least in health and education. He more or less acknowledged that the Church provided a sort of early welfare state. Indeed, strictly speaking, the welfare state throughout the Western world is the inheritor of Christianity's centuries-long outreach to the poor, the sick and the lonely.

But he spent the rest of the address trying to set out what the future state of Church/State relations should be. Essentially, he envisages the Church being a handmaid to the State, with organisations like St Vincent de Paul and Crosscare filling in the gaps in the services the State offers to people.

But the basic message was that Ireland is now a secular, liberal society and this underlying ideology is not to be questioned.

Ideology

For his part, Pope Francis did, albeit very briefly, question that ideology. He spoke of a “throwaway culture” that makes us “increasingly indifferent to the poor” and leads to us discarding the most helpless, including the unborn. He also referred to growing family breakdown.

The Taoiseach spoke



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THOSE WHO SUFFER PERSECUTION

by Venerable Fulton J. Sheen



The sister of Chaldean Priest Fr. Ragheed Ganni, who was martyred by ISIS, at the ACN (Irl) Exhibition at WMOF 2018.

Blessed are you when all men speak well of you, when you are popular and in the lime-light," is a beatitude of the world. Let the Lord come into a world that believes that our whole life should be geared to flattering and influencing people for the sake of what they can do for us, and say to them: "Blessed are you when men hate you, persecute you, revile you," and He will find Himself without a friend in the world, and an outcast on a hill with a mob shouting His death and His flesh hanging from Him like purple rags.

This Beatitude is really the Beatitude of the blessedness of being persecuted, or the happiness of being a martyr. In its full statement it runs: "Blessed are those who suffer persecution in the cause of right; the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Blessed are you, when men revile you, and persecute you, and speak all manner

of evil against you falsely, because of Me. Be glad and light-hearted, for a rich reward awaits you in Heaven."

When Our Lord spoke of the world, He did not mean the physical world or the cosmos, He meant the spirit of the world which was arrayed against Him and His followers; a world which would one day kill his servants and think it was rendering a service to God, a world that is composed of human nature organizing itself against Divinity.

The Christian is bidden to be happy as Peter and the Apostles were when they were permitted to incorporate themselves to the Cross of Christ in order to share in the glory of His Resurrection. To be tolerated sometimes is a sign of weakness; to be persecuted is a compliment. The mediocre survive. The persecuted person shows that his belief is taken seriously and the cause for which he stands must be

eliminated if evil is to conquer.

True it is that evil men are persecuted, but they do not come within this Beatitude, for as Saint Paul said: "If I should deliver my body up to be burned and have not the love of God and my neighbor in my heart, then it profits me nothing."

A martyr must die for the faith, not for his property, nor his good name, nor for the sake of the Party. Self-made martyrs are numerous, but they have no place in the ranks of those who are promised the Kingdom of Heaven for taking the Cross of Christ on their shoulders.

One would expect that a person who is humble and unselfish, merciful and loving of mankind, should expect a peaceful end, but the Lord who made human hearts knew better. He, therefore, closed His Beatitudes by showing the treatment He would have us expect from the world.

Martyrs, witnesses to the Divine Love in the world, are promised the Kingdom of Heaven. They do not possess it merely because they suffer and endure; they rather suffer and endure because they already possess the Kingdom in their own hearts.

One great and mysterious fact that is not generally known to the world is that wherever there is persecution on account of the Faith, it always results in a vast catch of souls for the Kingdom of God. Tertullian was right when he said: "Blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." The triumph of truth in Heaven is not enough; it must also have its glorious revenge in the very theatre of its humiliations and conflicts.

The world must see how mistaken it was in rejecting Divine Love, and must be forced to exclaim again with Julian the apostate: "Oh Galilean! Thou hast conquered!"

 Aid to the Church in Need
ACN IRELAND

Blessings and thanks

to all those who visited and participated at the ACN (Irl) Exhibition at the World Meeting of Families at the RDS.

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A LOOK AT WHAT WE ACHIEVED TOGETHER DURING 2017

The Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, likes to quote the artist André Heller who, during his widely acclaimed address to mark the 80th anniversary of the Nazi occupation of Austria, noted that **the universal language of mankind is compassion**, or at least should be.

We're sure you'd agree that giving practical expression to compassion is a decisive step in the direction of living Christian charity. Especially when the reason for it lies in **our desire to respond in some small way to the love of God for us and to imitate the love of Christ**.

During 2017, we received more than 7,500 applications for aid from all over the world and we were able to fund activities amounting to €122.1 million. The bulk of which (82.5%) flowed into mission-related expenditures like project work, media support as well as prayer activities.

Of course, we are not able to operate without administration, advertising and fundraising costs, but we use the funds as efficiently as possible in these areas, so that as many resources as possible are utilised to assist local Christians.

So it was that we were able to support a total of 5,357 projects with

more than €100.7 million euros in 148 countries and stand up for discriminated and persecuted Christians with information, proclamation of faith and advocacy. From the mission-related expenditures 84.0% went into project work and 16.0% into media support and prayer activities.⁵

The projects we support are primarily of a pastoral nature. In 2017, about one third of the outlays were used for the construction of seminary buildings, as well as the construction and reconstruction of churches and religious facilities.

More than one-fifth of our project budget was used for the training of priests and religious sisters, as well as the continuing education of priests and the formation of faith for the laity.

At nearly one-fifth, a large proportion of our funding amount was used for emergency aid, such as for the support of the numerous victims of the conflict in the Middle East.

An essential constant is also our funding of Mass stipends, which we supported in 2017 with approximately €12.6 million worldwide.

In 2017, the regional focus of our aid projects was Africa, the Middle East as well as in Asia. In all our project work, the dialogue with the local Church is particularly important to us, for the

local bishops and religious know best where the need is greatest and which relief measures must be taken. We consider our task to be supporting the Church, particularly in those places where Christians suffer from war, oppression, persecution and violence.

Unfortunately, a hotspot of violence in 2017 was once again the Middle East, where in many places the faithful are exposed to the arbitrariness and violence of IS and other Islamic groups. Therefore, aid projects for Syria and Iraq will continue to be high on our agenda.

But Christians in many countries of Africa also suffer from the persecution and violence of radical Islamism. At the same time, Africa is the continent with the strongest growth in believers. Our funding for Africa takes account of these developments, as more than a quarter of our overall project budget



Aid to the Church in Need
ACN IRELAND

went to the local churches of African countries during the year.

In Asia, we prioritise regions such as Pakistan and the Philippines, where radical Islamism is also on the rise. Of course, we are also active in India, where an increasingly radical Hinduism persecutes and oppresses the Christian minority with violence in many places.

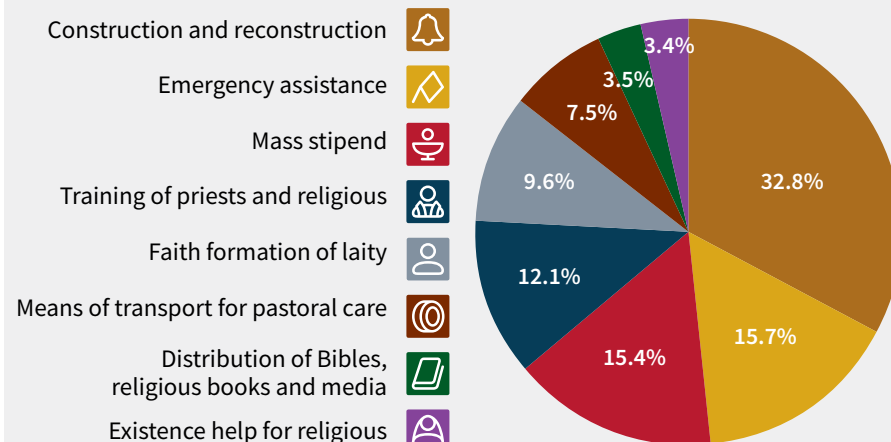
But also China, Vietnam and Laos, which have suffered under Communist power structures for decades, are still on our priority list.

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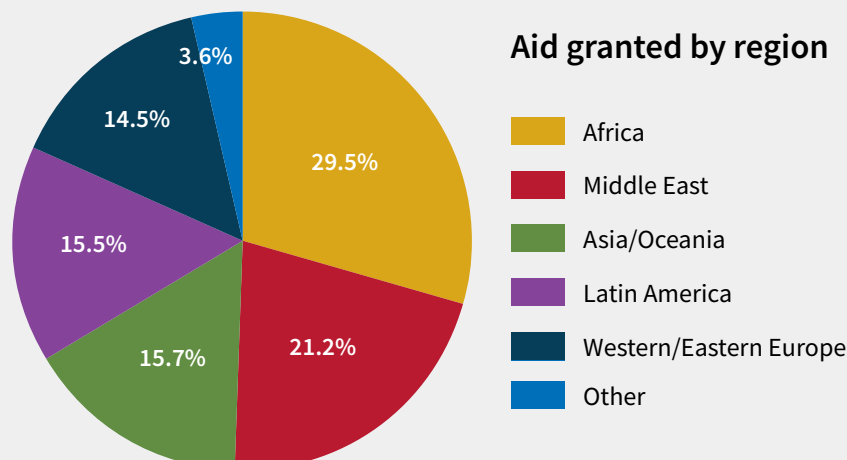
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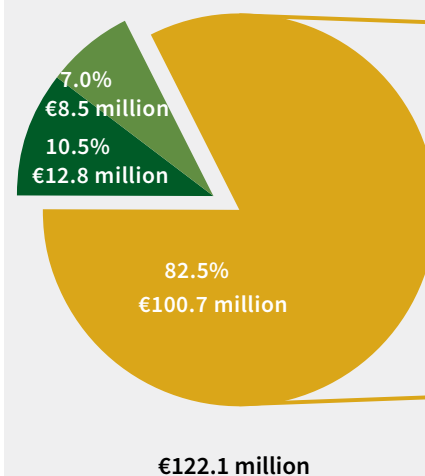


Facts & Figures

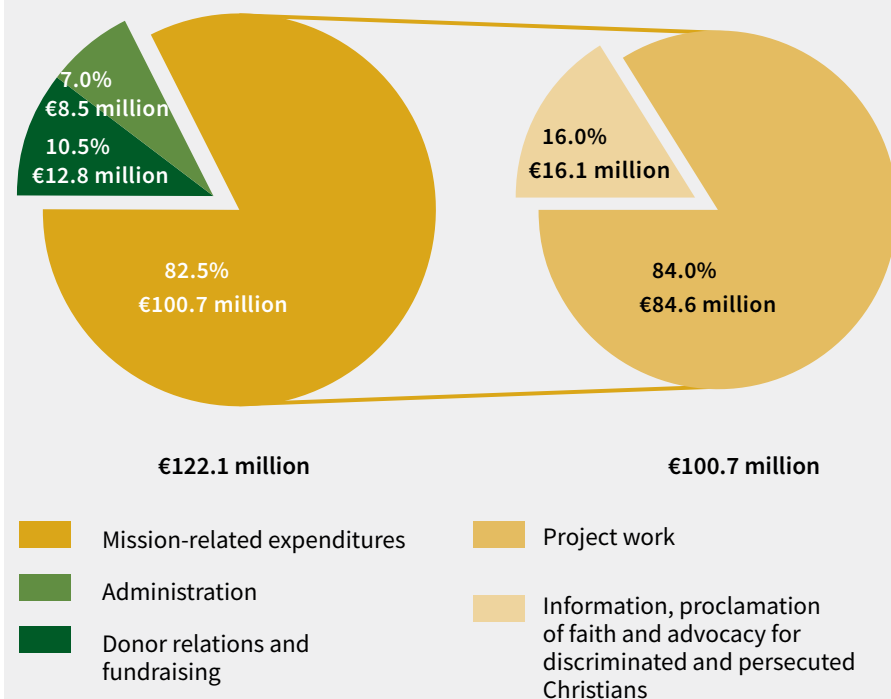
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Project partners in 149 countries
Over 5,300 approved projects worldwide
82.5% of the funds used are allocated in mission-related expenditures



Detailed use of Funds



Mission-related expenditure



acnireland.org

WMOF2018: The country celebrates

Joyous families help kick-off WMOF at opening ceremonies

Chai Brady

Thousands of families gathered as the sound of church bells filled the air on the evening of August 21 as people attended events marking the beginning of the World Meeting of Families this year.

All 26 of Ireland's dioceses simultaneously celebrated the opening ceremony – with the lead ceremony taking place in the RDS, Dublin.

The Opening Liturgy was a full celebration of Evening Prayer entitled 'Le chéile le Críost' (together with Christ) and set the theme for the duration of the WMOF. Many international delegates and speakers at the pastoral congress in the RDS were given the opportunity to join in the curtain raiser.

Some dioceses went a step further, organising street parties and concerts; pictured are some of the moments captured during the opening ceremonies across Ireland which helped boost spirits and energise people before the WMOF.

Generally the opening ceremonies were held in the cathedral of each diocese.



Achonry

Parishioners at the Cathedral of the Annunciation and St Nathy, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon,



Cashel & Emly

At the celebration in Thurles Cathedral.



Ardagh & Clonmacnoise



Altar servers in St Mel's Cathedral, Longford.



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At the celebration in Thurles Cathedral.



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Thirty-three years after Sr Stan Kennedy founded Focus Ireland, she explains why in the midst of this housing crisis young people are especially impacted. There are innovative measures that could be taken to prevent this from happening, many of which Focus Ireland has already introduced thanks to your generosity.

In June there were 912 young people counted in the official figures for homelessness. This has shot up from 560 in June 2015. The number of young people aged 18-24 who are homeless in Ireland has increased by 63% in the past three years. This number includes only those counted in the official monthly figures and does not include those experiencing 'hidden homelessness'.

Young people are more likely to experience hidden homelessness. This means that they may be "sofa-surfing" staying with friends or family, living in insecure accommodation -

modation or even squatting. Because they are not counted in the official figures, often there is very little known about people in these precarious situations. This is no way for young people to be living.

It impacts on every aspect of their lives, from education and employment opportunities, to their ability to maintain relationships with family and friends. In short none of us can plan for the long term, when we are preoccupied with finding a bed for this, or the next night.

The reality is life for many children is tough, very tough. Some parents cannot look after their children properly. Some children grow up not feeling loved or protected. By the time they are eighteen years of age, all they have experienced is a life of fear or anxiety. Home is not a stable place for every young person.

Young people are at particular risk during a housing crisis. It is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to access housing in the private rented sector due to the rising costs of rents, scarcity of properties available and lack of references.

In short, young people are finding it increasingly difficult to enter into the private rental market.

Focus Ireland aftercare

A Focus Ireland aftercare worker with the time and resources to

help can protect young people leaving care. Every young person at risk needs a dedicated aftercare worker. Focus Ireland provides support, from practical things such as counselling to wrap around supports in the area of education, housing provision, general advice and advocacy services.

“Focus Ireland provides support, from practical things such as counselling to wrap around supports in the area of education, housing provision, general advice and advocacy services.”

We employ skilled professionals who work with care leavers, with young people coming through residential care far more at risk of entering homeless services than young people who are in secure foster placements.

Supporting young adults to remain in education and training or helping them enter the labour market is key to ensuring that this vulnerable group of young people can move towards independence as quickly as possible after leaving the care system.

The reality is that young people can be protected with aftercare support. However, if there is no aftercare support young people often become homeless and their lives can spin out of control – sadly sometimes ending in tragedy.



In short we work to ensure that young people never become homeless in the first place, and that those already impacted by homelessness find a way into stable accommodation, and further support from Focus Ireland so they can achieve their potential.

Housing First for Youth

Our 'Housing First for Youth' service provides young people with housing as quickly as possible and then intensive and targeted, person-centred supports including healthcare, counselling, education, training, financial advice and more. This approach first gives young people a home, and then provides them with individually-tailored aftercare support on an ongoing basis.

Research has shown that many young people who exit homelessness do not receive adequate follow-on support, and are likely to re-enter

homeless services. Housing First for Youth provides this support which is shaped to the individual and enables the young person to build up a relationship with their support worker and contribute towards their personal



development. This approach recognises that young people have particular needs different to adults and the supports provided reflect these needs.

In our Limerick Youth Housing service, for example, decisions around sharing are based on the desire of the young people themselves and also considerations of their routines, such as their engagement with employment or training. Housing First for Youth not only provides young people with a safe and secure home, but also enables them to develop skills and develop positive relationships with their key workers.

Simply providing a young person with a house physically ends their homelessness, but for young people who have never had a home of their own, assisting them with feeling comfortable and safe in what may be their first real home is essential.

Our work across 12 counties - Carlow, Clare, Cork, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Limerick, Monaghan, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford - is made possible thanks to the support of our generous donors, the business community and State funding.

If you could consider donating to Focus Ireland it could change the life of an 18-24 year old struggling to cope with the challenges of a broken housing system. Your donations are so important in ensuring our vital work continues, and your generosity will help transform the lives of young people across Ireland.

We must act quickly together to combat the rising tide of homelessness among our young people.

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Limerick

Bishop Leo O'Reilly of Kilmore plants a commemorative tree in the grounds of St. Ninnidh's Church, Derrylin, Co. Fermanagh, following a diocesan celebration of Solemn Evening Prayer there to mark the beginning of the 2018 World Meeting of Families and the visit of Pope Francis. Also in the photograph are members of the Knockninny parish community with their priests, Fr Gerard Alwill, PP in Derrylin and Fr Ultan McGoohan, Priest-in-Residence in Teemore and Diocesan Director of Pastoral Services. Photo: Martin McBrien



Limerick

"God calls me today, tomorrow will be too late."

St. Peter Julian Eymard



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"On my knees, I beg you, to turn away from the paths of violence..."



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Francis arrives back in Ireland



Pope Francis arrives at Dublin Airport.



Jane Boland (11) from Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, who won a competition to design a vestment for Pope Francis, greets him at his arrival at Dublin Airport. Photos: Maxwells/WMOF

The Pope's happy return...

Staff reporter

Some 38 years after he spent three months in Dublin as a Jesuit priest, Jorge Bergoglio returned to Dublin as Pope. He made history by becoming the first Pope since St John Paul II in 1979 to visit Ireland.

Pope Francis was welcomed by high-ranking State and Church officials including Tánaiste Simon Coveney, Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin and Irish Ambassador to the Holy See Emma Madigan.

He also met with the Boland family, whose daughter Jane won a competition to design vestments for the Papal Mass.

After brief greetings, he left the airport in the small blue Skoda that was to become his trademark on the trip.



Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Simon Coveney TD, his wife Ruth and his daughters Jessica, Beth and Annalise greet Pope Francis; left, Emma Madigan, Ambassador of Ireland to the Holy See, greets Pope Francis.



Pope Francis is greeted by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin.



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Visiting Áras an Uachtaráin



(Above and below) Pope Francis and President Michael D. Higgins exchange pleasantries upon the Pope's arrival for a visit at Áras an Uachtaráin.

Warm presidential welcome for Pontiff



Greg Daly

The personal affection of President Michael D. Higgins for Pope Francis was evident when the Holy Father arrived at Áras an Uachtaráin. Mr Higgins has often referenced the Pontiff in his speeches and clearly sees him as a towering figure on the international stage when it comes to issues like global poverty and climate justice.

During the meeting, the third between the two men, the President noted how the Pope's environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'* had made an "important contribution...to the debate on the importance of connecting ecology, economics and ethics".

According to a communique from Áras an Uachtaráin, the two leaders also continued previous discussions on such issues of mutual concern such as inequality, poverty, violent conflict and migration, emphasising the need for concerted international action in tackling these and how social cohesion, solidarity and human rights must be at the heart of political and personal responses to the current challenges facing global communities.

President Higgins said he shared the Pope's concern at "the globalisation of indifference", with both men agreeing on the importance of protecting vulnerable com-



Pope Francis makes his way to a reception by President Michael D. Higgins which continued in the President's office (below).



munities and individuals, and on the need for measures to prevent and redress all forms of abuse of privilege and

power.

The President also spoke about homelessness, health, education and nutrition, and

said that an equality of rights defined a Republic, maintaining that acts of exclusion, including those based on gen-

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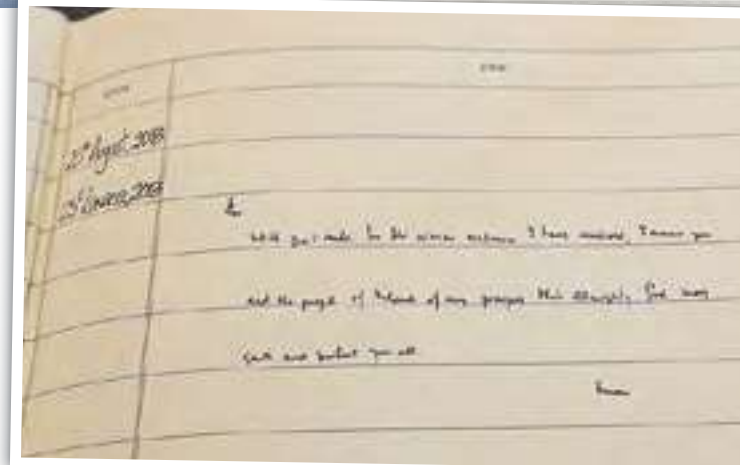
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Pope Francis, President Michael D. Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins; right, a photo of the comment left by the Pope in the guest book at Áras an Uachtaráin.

der and sexual orientation, have caused and continue to cause great suffering.

President Higgins also welcomed how Pope Francis has spoken of abuse in his recent pastoral letter, and urged him to follow these words with actions.

The President took advantage of the brief meeting to raise the issue of suffering and hurt caused by child abuse perpetrated within the Church. According to the statement, "he spoke of the

anger which had been conveyed to him at what was perceived to be the impunity enjoyed by those who had the responsibility of bringing such abuses for action by the appropriate authorities and have not done so".

Benefit

Welcoming “the honest and forthright language” used in last week’s Letter to the People of God, President Higgins “conveyed to Pope Francis the widely-held view that all

would benefit from a set of actions that gave the necessary assurances to all citizens past, present and future, of all faiths and none”.

During the visit Pope Francis planted an oak tree in the grounds of Áras an Uachtaráin, and wrote in the visitors' book: "With gratitude for the warm welcome I have received, I assure you and the people of Ireland of my prayers that Almighty God may guide and protect you all. Francis."



President Michael D Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins watch on as Pope Francis signs the visitors' book at Áras an Uachtaráin. Photos: Maxwells/WMOF



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WMOF2018

Joyful gathering of friends and family at the RDS

Some volunteers at the Congress.



Salone Olweny from Kenya.

For the hundreds of speakers and thousands of pilgrims who attended the World Meeting of Families Pastoral Congress in the RDS last week, it was a roaring success.

People from 116 countries arrived in Dublin for the congress which ran from August 22-24 with 37,000 attendees throughout the three days. There was 6,500 people under the age of 18 and 15,000 pilgrims from overseas who were registered to attend.

With musical acts, a focus



Chai Brady

on the environment, endless amounts of stalls and entertainment, and a full programme of speakers, there was always something to enjoy.

The programme of workshops, talks and discussions centred on the theme: 'The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World'.



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Students from Thornhill College Derry.



A family group from Meath having fun at the Congress. Photo: Chai Brady

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Visiting the homeless

Pope says we must protect



Pope Francis signs the guest book pictured with An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at Dublin Castle. Left, the Pope is pictured with Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland. Photos: Maxwells/WMOF



Colm Fitzpatrick

Pope Francis has said the clerical abuse of young people in Ireland was a “betrayal of trust” by Church authorities, and remains a source of “pain and shame” for the Catholic community. He also attacked our “throw-away culture” which strips the unborn of the right to life – a significant statement following the recent Irish referendum to legalise abortion.

Speaking in Dublin Castle to members of the Government, the Civil Society and Diplomatic Corps, the Pontiff said he is “conscious” of the circumstances of our most “vulnerable brothers and sisters”, in particular the difficulties women in Ireland have endured, and the abuse of young people caused by members of the Church.

“With regard to the most vulnerable, I cannot fail to acknowledge the grave scandal caused in Ireland by the abuse of young people by members of the Church charged with responsibility for their protection and education,” the Pope said.

“The failure of ecclesiastical authorities – bishops, religious superiors and others – adequately to address these repellent crimes has rightly given rise to outrage, and remains a source of pain and shame for the Catholic community. I myself share those sentiments.”

Measures

The Pontiff added that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI “spared no words” in the gravity of the situation, and demanded “truly evangelical, just and effective” measures to be taken in response to this betrayal.

“His frank and decisive intervention continues to serve as an incentive for the efforts of the Church’s leadership both to remedy past mistakes and to adopt stringent norms meant to ensure that they do not happen again”.

Francis said that each child is a “precious gift of God”, and must be cherished, encouraged to develop their gifts, and be guided to spiritual maturity and human flourishing. This has become increasingly difficult, the Pontiff said, as a result of our “throw-away culture” which abandons its own people.

“Or could it be that the growth of a materialistic “throw-away culture” has in fact made us increas-



ingly indifferent to the poor and to the most defenceless members of our human family, including the unborn deprived of the very right to a life?

“Perhaps the most disturbing challenges to our

consciences in these days is the massive refugee crisis, which will not go away, and whose solution calls for a wisdom, a breadth of vision and a humanitarian concern that go far beyond short-term political decisions.”



Pope Francis and An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar greet guests at Dublin Castle and, below, sit together during proceedings.



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young people and unborn

Pope Francis and An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar meet at Dublin Castle.



Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has said that religion will continue to play an important role in Irish society in the future. In a carefully-worded speech to welcome the Pope to Dublin Castle, Mr Varadkar also said he hoped that the Pope would soon be able to cross the border and make a visit to the North.

The Taoiseach said he believed that “the time has now come for us to build a new relationship between Church and State in Ireland – a new covenant for the 21st Century.

“It is my hope that your visit marks the opening of a new chapter in the relationship between Ireland and the Catholic Church,” Mr Varadkar said.

Referring to some of the main concerns of Francis’ papacy, the Taoiseach said “we thank you for your care for the earth, for emphasising the urgent challenge of climate change, and for reminding us of our responsibilities”, adding: “We thank you for the empathy you have shown for the poor, for migrants, and for refugees.”

Mr Varadkar cited ‘dark aspects’ of the Church’s history in a clear reference to clerical abuse. “We think of the words of the Psalm which tells us that ‘children are a heritage from

Taoiseach outlines new vision for Church-State relations



Michael Kelly

the Lord’ and we remember the way the failures of both Church and State and wider society created a bitter and broken heritage for so many, leaving a legacy of pain and suffering.”

Mr Varadkar said that “in place of Christian charity, forgiveness and compassion, far too often there was judgement, severity and cruelty, in particular, towards women and children and those on the margins”.

He pointed to Magdalene Laundries, Mother and Baby Homes, industrial schools, illegal adoptions and clerical child abuse as “stains on our State, our society and also the Catholic Church”.

Noting that “wounds are still open and there is much to be done to bring about justice and truth and healing for victims and survivors”, he appealed to the Pope to “use your office and influence to ensure this is

done here in Ireland and across the World. Above all, Holy Father, I ask to you to listen to the victims,” Mr Varadkar said.

On the wider context, Mr Varadkar recalled how Christian faith has inspired Irish people for centuries. “Both the 1916 Proclamation of Independence and the Constitution invoke God in their opening lines... the Catholic Church has always helped us to understand that we are citizens of a wider world and part of a global family.

“People of profound Christian faith provided education to our children when the State did not”

“Our brave missionary priests and nuns provided an education to many around the world, and helped the sick, the poor and the vulnerable. Today our UN peacekeepers and our international development workers around the world follow in that

proud tradition, and charities like Trócaire and Concern help those who suffer from famine today, and also refugees.

“People of profound Christian faith provided education to our children when the State did not, in the open air next to hedgerows and in the schools and educational institutions they built. They founded our oldest hospitals, staffed them, and provided welfare for so many of our people,” he said.

Referring to controversial issues like divorce, abortion and same-sex marriage, the Taoiseach told the Pope “we have voted in our parliament and by referendum to modernise our laws – understanding that marriages do not always work, that women should make their own decisions, and that families come in many forms including those headed by a grandparent, lone parent or same-sex parents or parents who are divorced”.

Outlining his vision for a new relationship between Church and State, Mr Varadkar said that “building on our intertwined history, and learning from our shared mistakes, it can be one in which religion is no longer at the centre of our society, but in which it still has an important place”.



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Meeting new families



Cashel & Emly James and Cora McCarthy

Two schoolteachers from just outside Cashel will be bringing word of their experience in the pro cathedral to their pupils.

After being married for just 12 months, they said it was an opportunity they had to take. "We're actually expecting our first child as well, it just seemed like the perfect time,

the perfect opportunity," Cora said.

"I thought it was very modern, it was light-hearted. It wasn't what I expected it to be. From the minute we got in, the way we were greeted and the way the whole thing was MC'd it was very light-hearted and modern and very comfortable."



Limerick Eoghan and Ruth Ahern

Pope Francis described a baby crying during the ceremony in the pro cathedral as "music", which this Limerick couple really appreciated.

Ruth said altogether it was an "amazing and emotional experience", and was surprised at the informal approach of the Pope. "There were babies crying and he loved the sound of the 'music' that was coming from the babies, he took it in a good way and he was laughing it off instead of giving out," she said.

Eoghan said he felt a bit apprehensive before attending the pro cathedral address.

"My cousin is training to become a priest. He's in Rome but he's back here at the moment, but he had said he met the Pope and it was an amazing experience, and you know you're kind of like 'Ah Mark would you relax', but I have to say it was overwhelming. I had goosebumps for most of it. He talks so normally, it was like having a chat with your grandad."



Pope Francis pauses for prayer at the pro cathedral.

Pro cathedral: Francis urges Irish couples to share Faith at home



Chai Brady & Greg Daly

Highlighting how he is in Ireland to preside over the closing stages of the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) in St Mary's Pro Cathedral, the Pope praised marriage as being "about a love that gives rise to new life".

Recalling how Christian marriage is a sacrament sustained by Christ's love, the Pontiff urged the gathered couples to remember daily Christ's constant presence and his promise not to fail or abandon them.

Praising long-married couples as examples to newlyweds and to people considering marriage, who he encouraged to take the risk of getting married, the Pontiff described how a newly-married couple had asked him how parents can pass the Faith on to their children.

While carefully-prepared catechetical programmes are "essential", he said, "the first and most important place for passing on the Faith is the home, through the quiet daily example of parents who love our Lord and trust in his word".

Children learn the meaning of fidelity, integrity and sacrifice in the "domestic Church" through watching their parents, he said, explaining that they can in that way "breathe in the fresh air of the Gospel and learn to understand, judge and act in a manner worthy of the legacy of Faith they have received".

Experience

Explaining that it is difficult for children to grow up in the Faith unless they are taught it in their "real mother tongue", the Pope described from his own experience how it is beautiful for children to learn the language of love and Faith from seeing their parents.

He encouraged parents to pray with their children as family, celebrate Christian feasts, speak of holy things and make space for Mary in family life, living in deep solidarity with those who suffer and are at the edges of society.

"Your children will learn how to share the goods of the earth with everyone, if they see how their parents take care of others poorer or less fortunate than themselves,"



Down & Connor Lisa and Mark Thompson

Married for eight months, Lisa and Mark found the Pope's advice about talking to couples with long-term marriage experience very practical.

A couple who have been married for 50 years, Vincent and Theresa, spoke at the event. Mark said: "I like how he spoke about fighting and asking people who are older for advice, as they have the wisdom of marriage."

"We're pretty devout Catholics so it was a pretty unbelievable experience," he added.



Meath Kelly O'Brien and Donal McCaffrey

Donal said it was a "privilege" to see the Pope and to represent his parish and diocese at such a "momentous occasion".

He said: "We were hanging on every word – some very practical advice. He was very charismatic, his warmth with the couples who spoke – the couple who were 50 years married – and then the engaged and recently married, he was so warm in his interactions with them afterwards."

Kelly and Donal will get married in six weeks, adding they felt his advice included "every step" of what marriage entails.

he said.

Urging parents to be their children's "first teachers in the Faith" and to encourage their children to learn to converse and learn from their grandparents, he recalled

that the Christian virtues are not necessarily fashionable, and lamented how the world has "little use for the weak, the vulnerable and all those it deems 'unproductive'".

"By your example," the



Pope Francis greets a recently married couple. Photo: CNS

Pontiff said, “may your children be guided to become a kinder, more loving, more Faith-filled generation, for the renewal of the Church and Irish society.”

Humorous

The newly married and engaged couples were “overwhelmed” and “privileged” Pope Francis spoke to them in the pro cathedral.

From across Ireland’s 26 dioceses, 350 couples

swarmed the cathedral in Dublin for the first pastoral portion of Francis’ journey to Ireland for the WMOF.

The address was described as both humorous and informal, with the Pope telling couples never to go to sleep without resolving conflicts.

Met with laughter, he said: “I want to ask you: did you quarrel a lot? But that is part of marriage! A marriage without arguments is pretty boring...”

“Yet there is a secret: plates can even fly, but the secret is to make up before the end of the day.

“And to make up there is no need to talk; a caress is enough, like that, and peace returns.

He said if couples don’t “make up” before going to bed, the “cold war” the following day is too dangerous and “resentments build up”.

“Yes, fight all you want, but make up at night,” he added.

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Visiting the homeless



Pope Francis shakes hands with Rosemary Fearson, and her guide dog, Kia. Photos: Damien Eagers/WMOF



Pope Francis shakes hands with Bogdan Pampareu (4) and his mother, Irina Fiodorova.



Pope Francis meeting families at the Capuchin Day Centre. Photo: CNS



Pope Francis greets Aidan Walsh on his visit to the Capuchin Day Centre.

The Pope of the poor

After touring the streets of Dublin, at around 4.30pm Pope Francis visited the Capuchin Day Centre, paying tribute to the dignity of the homeless, and meeting with several families who are in need.

The Pontiff spoke with the co-director of the centre, Bro. Kevin Crowley, and thanked him for his charitable work, saying: "The Church has real need of this witness, so thank you."

Speaking in front of a group of disadvantaged people who use the centre, the



Colm Fitzpatrick

Pope thanked them for trusting in the Capuchin fathers, and said that this form of charitable work reflects Jesus' powerful message.

"They help you without taking away your dignity," the Pontiff said. "That's the face of Jesus Christ."

The Pope also offered a blessing to those in attendance before meeting a number of volunteers who work in

the centre.

After Francis' presentation in the centre, Bro. Kevin said the message he gave was that we should show dignity and respect to every person in need.

"Wherever he went he always made sure the poor were his priority and I think that is one of the greatest gifts for us here today that the Pope came to visit the centre and showed his great love for the poor and for the homeless," he said.





Pope Francis puts his hand on Larisa Argina (11) as Bro. Kevin Crowley looks on.



Bro. Kevin Crowley welcomes Pope Francis.



Pope Francis is presented with a backpack containing a tent, light jacket and sleeping bag by Rosemary Fearson and Alan Bailey.



A presentation is made to Pope Francis by Bro. Kevin Crowley, left, and Fr Sean Donohoe.



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Festival of Families



A Croke that became a roar

In an array of artistic displays, musical numbers, and family testimonies, a cross-generational audience of over 80,000 pilgrims shared and rejoiced in their Faith in the presence of Pope Francis at Croke Park.

Celebrating the Festival of Families in the stadium on a brisk Saturday night, the Pontiff arrived on the Popemobile and received thunderous applause and cheers from attendees as he drove through the crowds, waving and smiling.

Sitting on the stage, with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Cardinal Kevin Farrell on either side of him, Francis was treated to a range of Irish and international talent, firstly by the Riverdance troupe, as well as Daniel O'Donnell singing 'Let Your Love Flow',



Colm Fitzpatrick

and a rendition of 'Ave Maria' by Andrea Bocelli and Celine Byrne.

Between performances, social justice groups and families spoke directly to the Pontiff, explaining the difficulties they have endured, such as Azeez Al-Kanah who recollected fleeing their home in Iraq after the Islamic State invaded their village.

Missy Collins of the Pavée Point Traveller group, told Francis of the struggles the Traveller community face in Ireland for recognition, and asked for further work to be done so that her community is respected. This serious

testimony was followed by a light-hearted moment when 12-year-old Alison Nevin managed to snap a 'selfie' with the Pontiff after he gave her a blessing and some commemorative rosary beads.

When the performances ended, Francis opened his address to the crowds with the words "Dia diaobh", and then spoke about the importance of the family, with an emphasis on parents baptising their children. He called the Church the "family of God" and said baptised children are stronger than those who aren't, because it guarantees that they have the "strength of God within them".

Alongside the topic of children, the role of grandparents also got a mention by Francis, who said that a "society that does not

value grandparents is a society that has no future", and that this generational disconnection leads to a lacuna of love.

Social media

A key theme the Pontiff focused on was the dangers of social media, stating that while technology had its own merit and could bring people together if used with "moderation and prudence", it could also be responsible for "imprisoning us in a virtual reality and isolating us from the very relationships that challenge us to our full potential in communion with others".

The Pope left shortly after 10pm, and told the crowd "see you tomorrow", encouraging them to have a rest for the papal Mass in the Phoenix Park.





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Visiting the Marian Shrine

Pope in Knock: begs forgiveness for abuse scandals and prays for NI peace process



Chai Brady

Praying for the victims of abuse in Ireland, Pope Francis begged the Lord for forgiveness and for the intercession of Our Lady to heal survivors.

During his visit to the Marian Shrine in Knock the Pope described the clerical abuse scandals in Ireland as an “open wound”, while praying at the shrine in front of an audience of thousands. In a strong message of reconciliation, he said that this challenges the Church to pursue truth and justice.

Going off script, Francis also referred to the separation of children from their mothers, in an apparent reference to Ireland’s Mother and Baby Homes.

He was told in detail about the institutions in a private meeting with survivors of clerical sex abuse in Ireland, people who spent time in industrial schools, seminaries and Mother and Baby Homes, in the residence of the Papal Nuncio.

Innocence

While at the shrine, the Pontiff spent some time in prayer at the Apparition chapel, during which he entrusted to Mary’s care the victims and survivors of abuse.

“In my prayer before her statue, I presented to her in particular all the victims of abuse of whatever kind committed by the members of the Church in Ireland,” he said. “None of us can fail to be moved by the stories of young people who suffered abuse, were robbed of their innocence and left scarred by painful memories.”

He said that this “open wound challenges us to be firm in the pursuit of truth and justice”.

Francis arrived at Ireland West Airport on an Aer Lingus flight aptly named EI1979, a reference to St John Paul II’s visit in 1979.



A young girl waves a flag at Knock Shrine as Pope Francis arrives and, inset, he blesses children as Fr Richard Gibbons looks on. Photos: Maxwells/WMOF

He landed just after 9.40am on Sunday August 26 and spent an hour and a half at the Shrine, where he led pilgrims in the Angelus Prayer.

Pope Francis begged God for forgiveness “for the sins and for the scandal and betrayal felt by so many others in God’s family”.

“I ask our Blessed Mother to intercede for the healing of the survivors and to confirm every member of our Christian family in the resolve never again to permit these situations to occur.”

Preparation for the papal visit to Knock began at 8.25am when the bells of Knock Shrine where rung out.

From 8.30am, there was a gathering event entitled

Witness to Faith and Family which included video presentations, drama and music. Pilgrims were led in prayer and reflection until the arrival of the Pontiff.

The event focused on the story of Knock through the testimony of the witnesses to the 1879 apparition at the shrine, and Pope Francis’ invitation to witness to the joy of Faith and family in the contemporary world. Music for the occasion was provided by Knock Parish Choir with guest musicians and soloists.

Francis moved through the assembly on the Popemobile and met the Rector of the Shrine Fr Richard Gibbons. He presented the shrine with a golden rosary, saying he

knows how “important the tradition of the family rosary has been in this country”.

“I pray that all Christ’s followers will support the continuing efforts to advance the peace process”

“Who can tell how many hearts, of fathers, mothers and children alike, have drawn comfort and strength over the years from meditating on Our Lady’s participation in the joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of Christ’s life.”

Francis also asked Our Lady to sustain families in their efforts to advance Christ’s Kingdom and care for “the least of our brothers and sisters”.

Although there wasn’t a visit to the North of Ireland on the Pope’s itinerary, he addressed this by sending “a warm greeting to the beloved people of Northern Ireland”.

He promoted the work towards reconciliation and asked Our Lady to “sustain all the members of the Irish family to persevere, as brothers and sisters” in the work towards achieving this goal.

“With gratitude for advance of ecumenism, and the significant growth of friendship and coopera-

tion between the Christian communities, I pray that all Christ’s followers will support the continuing efforts to advance the peace process and to build a harmonious and just society for today’s children.”

In a post-Angelus address he offered a special greeting to men and women in Ireland’s prison system, especially thanking those that wrote to him when they heard of his visit to Ireland.

He added: “I assure you and your families of my closeness in prayer. May Our Lady of Mercy watch over you and protect you, and strengthen you in Faith and hope.”



Pope Francis is presented with flowers by Saoirse McCarthy (11) from St Patrick's National School, Cloonllyn, Co. Mayo, as he arrives at Knock Airport.



WMOF2018: The closing Mass in the Phoenix Park

Leaden skies couldn't darken the light of Faith



Greg Daly

Even wind and rain couldn't dampen the spirits of up to 300,000 pilgrims who made their way to Dublin's Phoenix Park on Sunday where a carnival atmosphere surrounded the closing Mass of the ninth World Meeting of Families.

A host of performers ranging from Audrey Assad and Eimear Quinn to Daniel O'Donnell and the Northern Irish Rend Collective entertained pilgrims before and after the Mass in the Park's Fifteen Acres, with children breaking out into dance at the fringes of the gathering.

The opening hymn to the Mass was Ephrem Feeley's 'A Joy for all the Earth', the official hymn of WMOF2018, sung by a 3,000-strong choir, and then ceremonies took on a sombre tone, as Pope Francis read in Spanish from a handwritten note he had penned that morning, begging forgiveness for abuses committed by members of the Church.

Fr Liam Lawton's psalm 'The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor', written especially for WMOF2018, followed the first reading, read in Irish from the

book of Joshua by Clontarf's Marie Whelan, one of those who has worked on the new Irish translation of the Mass.

The second reading, from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, was read



in the Pope's native Spanish by the Argentina-born Teresa Menendez, marketing manager of WMOF2018.

Dublin's Deacon Paul McHugh read from the Gospel of John, with the Pope then stepping into his traditional role of confirming his brethren in their Faith, encouraging those gathered to hold to their Faith even if it seemed hard. The Apostles' Creed was then sung to John O'Keefe's own composition, with Fr Pat Ahern's 'A Thiarna Éist Linn' being sung between the Prayers of the Faithful.

Olive Foley, widow of former Munster coach Anthony Foley,

and mother-of-five Emma Mhic Mhathuna, accompanied by their children, were among those who brought up gifts in the Offertory Procession to the strains of Z. Randall Stroope's 'Caritas et Amor', with the bread and wine being placed on the altar beside an 18th-Century penal cross.

After the consecration, priests and filed out among the people, with yellow umbrellas marking those whose ciboria contained gluten-friendly bread as Communion was shared with over a quarter of a million people.

Several hymns later, the priests returned to their seats and the ceremony was brought to a close: Cardinal Farrell announced that the next World Meeting of Families will be held in Rome, the Pope gave his final blessing, and the Mass ended, while the festivities continued as the crowds trailed out to take the message of WMOF2018 to their families and communities.



Eleanor Kiernan (8) from Collinstown, Co. Westmeath.



Enda Byrne (left) pictured with his family Jack, Suzanne, Suzie and Grace Byrne, from Wexford. Photos: Maxwells/WMOF



Alex Kelly and Leah Brown, from Tralee, Co. Kerry awaiting the Pope's arrival.



Pope prays for strength that justice be done for survivors

Pope Francis used Mass in Dublin's Phoenix Park to beg forgiveness and issue a wide-ranging apology for Church abuses.

In an unprecedented extended penitential rite at the beginning of Mass with an estimated 300,000 people for the World Meeting of Families, the Pontiff said that he wanted to seek forgiveness for abuse of power, conscience and sexuality.

"We ask forgiveness for the cases of abuse in Ireland, the abuse of power, the abuse of conscience and sexual abuse on the part of representatives of the Church," he said, after having reflected on what he had been told the previous evening by eight survivors of clerical or institutional abuse.

Speaking in Spanish which was then spoken in English by an interpreter, the Pope said: "In a special way, we ask forgiveness for all those abuses that took place in different kinds of institutions directed by men and women religious and other members of the Church. We also ask forgiveness for cases in which many



Michael Kelly

minors were exploited for their labour."

He continued: "We ask forgiveness for some members of the hierarchy who took no responsibility for these painful situations and kept silent."

He added: "We ask forgiveness for those children who were taken away from their mothers".

Having already asked forgiveness for when the Church withheld compassion and concrete actions to help the pursuit of justice and truth – he apologised to mothers and children separated in Church-run institutions who were told afterwards it would be sinful to look for their children or birth mothers.

"May the Lord preserve and increase this sense of shame and repentance, and grant us the strength to ensure that it never happens again and that justice is done," he concluded at the beginning of the Mass.



Larry Cassidy (11).

WMOF2018: The closing Mass in the Phoenix Park



Don't give up Faith just because it's hard, says Pope

Christians face enormous challenges in bearing witness to their Faith, but must never be "swayed or discouraged" by those who resist it, the Pope has said.

Speaking in Dublin's Phoenix Park at the closing Mass of the World Meeting of Families, the Pope said that being a Christian isn't "easy", and the challenges they face today are no less difficult than those faced by the earliest Irish missionaries.

"I think of St Columbanus, who with his small band of companions brought the light of the Gospel to the lands of Europe in an age of darkness and cultural dissolution," he said, explaining that their "extraordinary missionary success" was based on the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

"It was their daily witness of fidelity to Christ and to each other that won hearts yearning for a word of grace and helped give birth to the culture of Europe. That wit-



Colm Fitzpatrick

ness remains a perennial source of spiritual and missionary renewal for God's holy and faithful people," the Pontiff said.

Addressing a crowd of an estimated 300,000 people, Francis pointed out that there will always be people who resist Christ's message, but like St Columbanus, Christians must endure against those "who 'murmur' at its 'hard words'".

Discouraged

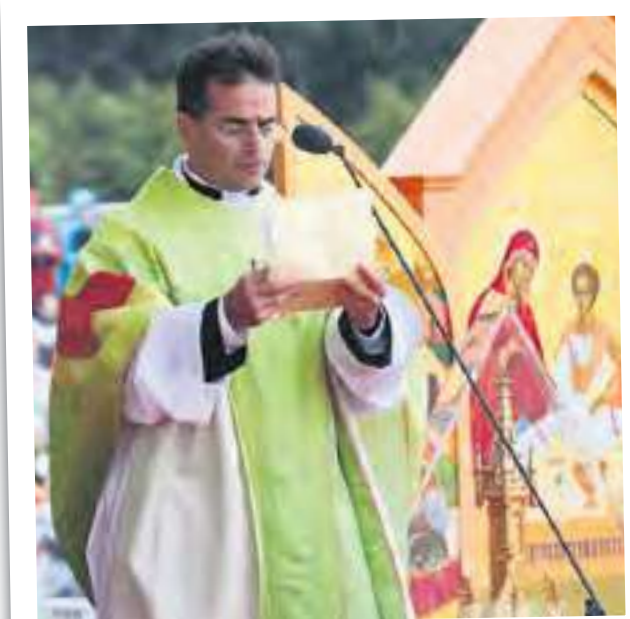
"Yet like St Columbanus and his companions, who faced icy waters and stormy seas to follow Jesus, may we never be swayed or discouraged by the icy stare of indifference or the stormy winds of hostility," the Pontiff said.

The Pope added, however,

that even Christians can "find the teachings of Jesus hard", especially in the struggles and difficulties of everyday life, but that this can be overcome with the strength of the Holy Spirit.

"How difficult it is always to forgive those who hurt us; how challenging always to welcome the migrant and the stranger; how painful joyfully to bear disappointment, rejection or betrayal; how inconvenient to protect the rights of the most vulnerable, the unborn or the elderly, who seem to impinge upon our own sense of freedom," he said.

"Yet it is precisely at those times that the Lord asks us: 'What about you, do you want to go away too?' With the strength of the Spirit to 'encourage' us and with the Lord always on our side, we can answer: 'We believe; we know you are the Holy One of God'."





Pilgrims enjoy Pastoral Congress at the RDS



Two families who stayed with WMOF hosts in Ireland from Derby, England. Photo: Chai Brady



Claire and Christine from Wicklow. Photo: Chai Brady



Indian band Rex performing at the RDS.



Members of the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of Renewal and members of the Holy Family Mission in Waterford. Photo: John McElroy/WMOF



Couples for Christ, who are Indonesian missionaries, travelled to the RDS.



Priests from Toledo, Spain. Photo: John McElroy/WMOF



Mary Wheelan, Gwen McKenna, Fr Pat O'Toole and Marie Nerney. Photo: Chai Brady





(Above) Marian and Vincent Bradley and family, with Christian Gangemi, Michael Gannon, and Tim Kearney of L'Arche Community, International, in a panel on Families and Parish; Supporting Families with Special Needs. (Right) Thomas, Fintan, Samuel and Matthew O'Shea with Madeleine and Elizabeth Shepherd from Dublin.



A group of pilgrims from Nigeria.



Dr Marie Griffin (right) and other representatives of Ceist at the Pastoral Congress.



The Emmanuel Community from Belfast made the trip to the RDS. Photo: Chai Brady



Photo: John McElroy/WMOF

How to respond...

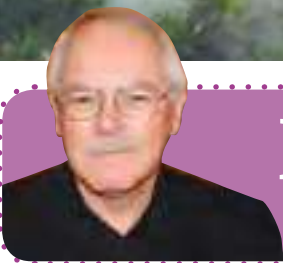


Sometimes all you can do is to put your mouth to the dust and wait. That's a counsel from the Book of Lamentations and while perhaps not the best response to the recent revelations of clerical sexual abuse and cover-up in the Roman Catholic Church, it seems the only helpful response available to me as Roman Catholic priest today. Beyond prayer, I've been hesitant to respond otherwise to this current situation for three reasons.

My first hesitation has to do with the seeming futility of yet another apology and breast-beating. Since the report on sexual abuse and clerical cover-up was released in Pennsylvania a few weeks back, there have been apologies issued by virtually every diocese, every parish, and every priest in America, including one from the Pope himself.

“Jesus was crucified between two thieves. He was innocent, they weren't; but he didn't protest his innocence”

While these apologies have been almost universally sincere, non-defensive, and rightly focused on the victims, they've also for the most part not been well-received. More generally the response has been: “What good does that do now! Where were



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

you when this was all happening?” The apologies have generally met with more cynicism and anger than acceptance. And yet it's important that they be made, though I'm not sure my adding another one will be helpful.

My second hesitancy stems from the fact that there's so much anger and grief around this issue right now that words, even the right ones, generally don't hit their mark, akin to telling someone freshly grieving the death of a loved one that “she's in a better place”.

The words are true, but the moment's too raw for the words to be heard. They only become effective later. And that's the situation now; we're in a time of raw anger and dark grief. These are

in fact the same emotion (just that one's hard and the other soft) and so for many people dealing with the revelations of clerical sexual abuse and cover-up right now, apologies, while necessary, are not being heard. The moment is too raw.

Celibacy

One last hesitation: as a priest with a vow of celibacy I'm painfully aware that right now I'm at an understandable disadvantage to speak out on this. Victims speak from a position of moral privilege, rightly so, their voices carry extra authority; but those who stand symbolically connected to the perpetrators, and that's me, are understandably heard with suspicion. I accept that. How could

it be otherwise?

At this particularly charged moment, what moral authority can my voice carry on this issue? What does my apology add?

But, for what it's worth, even given those caveats, I do offer an apology: as a Catholic priest, I want to publicly say that what's happened in the Church in terms of sexual abuse by the clergy and cover-up by the hierarchy is inexcusable, deeply sinful, has harmed thousands of lives irrevocably, and needs radical redress in terms of reaching out to the victims and of prompting structural change in the Church to ensure that this will never happen again.

Let me add something else: first, as a Catholic priest, I do not distance myself from this by morally separating myself from those who have done wrong by declaring: “They're guilty and I'm not!”

The cross of Jesus doesn't allow such an escape. Jesus was crucified between two thieves. He was innocent, they weren't; but he didn't protest his innocence, and those looking at three crosses that day didn't distinguish between who was innocent and who was guilty.

The crosses were all painted with the same brush.

There are times when one does not protest one's innocence. Part of Jesus' mission, as our liturgy puts it, was “to become sin for us”, to risk having his innocence mixed in with guilt and be perceived as sin so as to help carry darkness and sin for others.

Beyond our apologies, all of us, clergy and laity alike, are invited to do something for the Church right now, namely, help carry this scandal as Jesus did. Indignantly separating ourselves morally from this sin is not the way of Jesus and the cross.

“What's happened in the Church in terms of sexual abuse by the clergy and cover-up by the hierarchy is inexcusable”

Like Mary standing under the cross, we must not replicate the anger and darkness of the moment so as to give it back in kind. Instead, like her, we must do the only thing possible sometimes when standing beneath the consequence of sin, that is, let our posture, like Mary's, speak deeply through a voice that, unlike bitterness or collapse, says: “Today, I can't stop this darkness, nobody can. Sometimes darkness just has its hour. But I can stop some of the sin and bitterness that's in the moment by absorbing it, not distancing myself from it, and not giving it back in kind.”

Sometimes darkness has its moment and we, followers of Jesus, may not self-servingly distance ourselves from the sin but need to help absorb it.

Sometimes all we can do is put our mouths to the dust...and pray...and wait. Knowing that, at some future time, the stone will again roll away from the tomb.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



RTÉ excels at covering a very special visit

I'd need the full newspaper to do justice to all the media coverage of the World Meeting of Families and the papal visit, so I'll stick to some of what stood out for me.

First off, hats off to RTÉ's religious programmes department and the outside broadcast units for the live coverage of last weekend's papal visit and the creation of a strong sense of historical occasion. And there has to be an honourable mention for EWTN and Salt and Light TV, especially during the Pastoral Congress at the RDS.

I have to say that earlier in the week I found the current affairs coverage relentlessly negative. In various programmes, the message was given that if you went to the papal Mass in the Phoenix Park you'd get measles, you'd be burgled, you'd faint from the walking and you might even die – there were even reports of a temporary morgue! And that's not even to consider the overwhelming emphasis on child abuse and LGBT issues and the ignoring of large elements of the congress.

Of course these controversial issues are hugely significant, and need to be addressed effectively and urgently but I thought all sense of proportion was abandoned as agenda driving seemed to get the better of news coverage.



Pope Francis' visit to the Capuchin centre in Dublin featured on several TV channels

Things got much more positive as the visit got under way. One of my favourite moments from Saturday's live coverage, **Pope Francis in Ireland** (RTÉ), the most modest of moments, was the visit to the Capuchin Day Centre for the homeless. To see Pope Francis and Bro. Kevin Crowley together was a tonic to the harshness of much that passes as public discourse.

Compassion, empathy and respect were the order of the day as Pope Francis met and greeted those who availed of the services of the day centre.

I was also very taken with those moments when Pope

Francis withdrew into private prayer, in Knock and in the pro cathedral, and with all the wonderful music at the Croke Park concert and the Phoenix Park liturgy.

On Saturday morning, RTÉ Radio 1 had a special edition of **The Leap of Faith** with Michael Comyn at the time of the Pope's arrival, covering the event and having one of the better and more positive discussions of issues surrounding the visit. Fr Bryan Shortall, Capuchin, was delighted about that visit to the Day Centre. Theologian Ann Thurston had issues with the Church, but was glad that

now the Pope was here, Irish hospitality had kicked in.

References were made to conservative voices and those on the 'right wing' though I felt that it would have been an idea therefore to include some of those conservative voices on the show. Author Elisabetta Piqué, who has known the Pope personally since his days in Argentina found him to be shy, authentic, still himself, a man of great inner peace and freedom, not easily tagged liberal or conservative.

Positive treatment

Songs of Praise (BBC1, Sunday) had a very positive treatment of the visit without ignoring the challenges around child abuse. Presenter Claire McCollum spoke to some enthusiastic pilgrims from Birmingham diocese – one lady thought being at the event in Croke Park "better than winning the



Elisabetta Piqué.

PICK OF THE WEEK

TOLKIEN'S LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FACES OF FANTASY

EWTN, Saturday, September 1, 8pm

Joseph Pearce explains how J.R.R. Tolkien used fantasy as an art form to communicate some of the most profound truths of the Faith.

EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS

Channel 4, Saturday, September 1, 10.15pm

(2014) Christian Bale and Joel Edgerton star in Ridley Scott's epic retelling of the story of Exodus.

SUNDAY SEQUENCE

BBC Radio Ulster, Sunday, September 2, 8.30pm

Covering a wide range of topical religious and ethical issues.

lottery", while the Hope family, aptly named, spoke of the joys of family life. Tina Hope liked showing her children what it was like to be part of the Catholic family. Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, spoke about the character of Pope Francis, describing him as a man of "inner peace", "as tough as old boots" but full of warmth.

That warmth certainly came through during the visit – especially in the personal encounters with a whole range of people, from bishops, to abuse survivors to the homeless.

On balance, post visit coverage started fairly positively. On **Morning Ireland** (RTÉ Radio 1) on Monday morning, *The Irish Catholic* editor Michael Kelly gave some useful background on the Archbishop Vigano controversy, on

Today With Seán O'Rourke (RTÉ Radio 1) Minister Katherine Zappone and abuse survivor Marie Collins told how they found Pope Francis good at listening and hearing. On **Today With Pat Kenny** (Newstalk), guest hosted by Jonathan Healy, there was a positive vox pop from the Phoenix Park by Henry McKean, impressed by the numbers who attended despite the hurts and the daunting trek, and several members of the traveller community were delighted about how prominently their community figured in the weekend's events.

Let's see how it develops from here.

📧 boregan@hotmail.com



Pat O'Kelly

Music

Westport's classical approach deserves some attention

The ever-assiduous Madeleine Flanagan of 'Classical-links' in Claregalway keeps me informed of events in the West. Her latest missive draws my attention to this year's Westport Festival of Chamber Music taking place over the weekend September 7-9.

Founded in 2013 by violinist Catherine Leonard and pianist Hugh Tinney, they continue to guide the festival artistically and expand its content. This year an array of artists from at home and abroad appear in six eclectic programmes at three venues – Westport House, Holy Trinity Church and the Town Hall Theatre – each ideally suited to the intimacy of chamber



Hugh Tinney and Catherine Leonard.

music.

Opening at Westport House, Grieg's '3rd Violin and Piano Sonata' introduces Venezuelan and Irish musicians Giovanni Guzzo and Michael McHale. Later Britain's Heath Quartet and Norwegian violinist Eivind Holtsmark Ringstad

combine for Mozart's marvellous 'G minor Quintet'.

Less familiar music provides a separating buffer – two song cycles from tenor Robin Tritschler accompanied by English pianist Diana Ketler. Tritschler has a penchant for peppering his recitals with things a little off the beaten track and here he offers Darius Milhaud's 'Chants Populaires Hébraïques' (Hebrew folksongs) and Arthur Honneger's 'Petit Cours de Morale' (Little lessons in morals). Contemporaries in 1920s Paris, the composers were part of a mildly rebellious group known as 'Les Six'.

Three events on Saturday, September 8, begin at the Town Hall with young artists

Killian White, cello and Gary Beecher, piano. Last year's €5,000 Fr Frank Maher award winner, Killian received a €15,000 RDS bursary earlier this year. The talented Beecher, from Cork's School of Music, was the Irish Freemasons Musician of the Year in 2014. Beethoven, Schumann and Debussy are their morning-matinee composers.

Programme

The Town Hall also houses the evening and late-night concerts and finds Robin Tritschler in both with music new and old. The former brings US composer Lowell Liebermann's six Yeats settings 'A Poet to his Beloved' in which the Heath Quartet,

William Dowdall, flute and Hugh Tinney, piano join the singer. The romantic sweep of Rakhmaninov's 'Cello Sonata' with Natalie Klein and Diana Ketler and Fauré's 'G minor Piano Quartet' complete this substantial programme.

The late-night recital is devoted to Schumann's song cycle 'Dichterliebe' (A poet's love) with Messrs Tritschler and McHale. Written in 1840 with Schumann at the pinnacle of his vocal writing powers, 'Dichterliebe' is a setting of 16 poems by Heinrich Heine.

The festival returns to Westport House on Sunday morning for the Heath Quartet in Britten's '2nd Quartet'. Dating from 1945, this was

completed soon after the success of his opera *Peter Grimes*.

The afternoon's concluding concert in Holy Trinity Church focuses on Schubert's intriguing 'Arpeggione Sonata' with Ringstad and McHale and Mendelssohn's exhilarating '2nd Piano Trio'. In between Diana Ketler also commemorates Debussy's centenary – he died in Paris on 25th March 1918 – with his Six *Épigraphes Antiques*. Originally for piano duo and the only music he wrote in 1914, Debussy revised them for solo piano the following year.

Booking online at www.westporttheatre.com, by phone on 098 28459 or in person at the Town Hall Theatre box office.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Why we Need Religion
by Stephen T. Asma
(Oxford University Press,
£20.00)

Christopher Moriarty

The dramatic increase in secularism and fall in numbers of professed adherents to religion has been a feature of the past few generations in the western world.

Its roots lie in the application of the scientific method which began to explode in the 17th Century and the thinking of the Enlightenment which has been gathering strength since about 100 years later. A refusal to accept the authority of the Bible and of religious dogma together with an insistence, in science and medicine, to reject theories that could not be proved by experiment led to a widely spread questioning of all past knowledge.

In matters of science and technology the result has been an incalculable improvement in the health, comfort and longevity of individuals throughout the world. An intellectual parallel was a belief that, ultimately, science and rational thought would explain all aspects of creation.

Many writers in recent decades have questioned some elements in this godless belief system. They have put forward a number of important principles, all supported by experimental observation or carefully applied logic. These include the fact that, although scientists aim to be wholly dispassionate and objective in their approach, few have ever fully succeeded.

The human need for a living religion

Inset, Dr Stephen T. Asma.



Realisation

Another realisation is that humans, even the most advanced intellectuals, are controlled at least as much by their emotions as by logic.

A third, perhaps the most comforting to people of religion, is that the concept that all will eventually be explained by science and logic is in itself questionable. Above all is the observa-

tion that, while science may explain what and how, it provides little or no insight as to why.

Remarkably, the author of *Why We Need Religion* is an agnostic, having moved that way since his primary school days when he was a Catholic altar boy. Now Professor of Philosophy at Columbia College, Chicago, he has worked also in Cambodia and Beijing. His earlier books

were 'strenuously critical of religion' and his approach in this one remains agnostic – though he as had occasional lapses into belief at times of extreme personal stress.

As a teacher of philosophy he has an impressive background of erudition and as a traveller, particularly in eastern countries, many encounters with followers of faiths other than Christianity. Asma is a gifted communicator and

this book brings together a very remarkable spectrum of knowledge in praise of and support for religion.

It presents and analyses a rich assemblage of information on philosophy ancient and modern, on the beliefs and practices of the major religions of the world and also of the survival and significance of animism. Such concepts have been part of human thought for thousands of years, but scientific work of the past 100 years or so has added an important dimension. Neuroscience is revealing unimagined details of the very mechanism of thought, rational and emotional.

“There is the horror of the religion-based slaughter of human beings carried out by zealots”

The examples of religious and non-religious thoughts and practices presented by the author vary from horrific through shocking to benign and inspiring. There is the horror of the religion-based slaughter of human beings carried out by zealots of most of the major religions since

the dawn of history and still with us at the hands of adherents of ISIS and other groups.

Christian fundamentalism too has its strange and darker sides. On the brighter side is the fact that the vast majority of religious people enjoy a peaceful existence, rearing their children, and caring for each other at all levels.

Religion, in Asma's view and very well supported by the examples he gives, has been an essential factor in enabling humanity to thrive in increasingly large and settled populations rather than in its earliest manifestation as very small tribes of hunter-gatherers.

Success

He makes the point that a major factor in the evolution and colossal success of human communities has an element of Darwinian theory with its basis of 'survival of the fittest'.

Religion has come about in part from emotional rather than rational mental processes, whose origins now can be traced to different regions of the brain. But religion not only serves to enable communities to survive, it is the source of comfort and stability, especially in situations, such as the death of a close companion, which demand something more than mere rationalisation to enable the survival of the bereaved.

"Those who target religion and wish to abolish it – such as Marxists and the New Atheists – seek to pull away the life preserver, mistakenly blaming the flotation device for the drowning."

Treasures of a Dublin parish

Rich in Faith, Beauty and History: St Mary's Church, Haddington Road, Dublin

ed. by Patrick Claffey
(From the Parish Office, €5.00)



Fr. Con Buckley
WHEELS OF LIGHT

Provides introductions, homilies, prayers of the faithful and reflections for all Sundays of the three-year cycle

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Felix M. Larkin

One of the ways we find God – or, more accurately perhaps, how He finds us – is through the art and architecture of places like St Mary's, in Haddington Road, a lovely church whose art is celebrated in this little publication. Founded in 1839, the church has been extended and renovated extensively on various occasions since then. Peter Costello records in his book on Dublin churches that the first church here "was simple in style, even to having an unpaved earth floor". Things have improved in the intervening years.

The title of this booklet – *Rich in Faith, Beauty and History* – captures the essence of St Mary's. It certainly does justice to this wonderful church, so beloved of so many of us.

The short text is largely about the beauty of its artefacts and, in particular, its stained glass, which is "central to the interior of the church...and is one of the highlights of the building. It could be described as the Gospel in glass".

The church has an outstanding selection of work from the great phase of Irish stained glass production [pictured] in the first half of the 20th Century, with works by A.E. Child, Beatrice Glenavy and Earley's Stained Glass Studio. My own favourite window – that of 'Christ the King' in the east transept – is by Earley, as is the 'Rose Window' at the back of the church.

A beautiful panel from the 'Rose Window' features on the cover of the booklet – a serene image of Our Lady, patron of the church. Our Lady's Chapel in the west transept

is also a magnificent shrine to the patron of the church, with an exquisite image of the 'Madonna and Child' on the side wall which is difficult to see properly from outside the sanctuary – but it is well worth making an effort to see it.

“This book certainly does justice to this wonderful church, so beloved of so many of us”

The first strand in the title of this booklet – Faith – is, of course, what inspires and defines the other two strands: the beauty and the history. One can only wonder at the power of that Faith and marvel at the physical evidence of it that this building and its art represent.



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.

A Russian family's life under Stalin and Putin



The Shoemaker & His Daughter
by Conor O'Clery
(Doubleday 2018)

J. Anthony Gaughan

Conor O'Clery was the *Irish Times* correspondent in Russia for many years. He married Zhanna Suvorov in Moscow in 1989. His new book reads describes "one ordinary family's remarkable journey from Stalin's Soviet Union to Putin's Russia".

It records the travails of Zhanna's extended family through the Russian Revolution, the dictatorship of Stalin, the autocratic regimes of Khrushchev and Brezhnev and the disintegration of the Soviet Union into autonomous republics under Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

Nerses Gukasyan, Zhanna's grandfather, was the descendant of a noble Armenian family. He was born in 1902 in Martakert in the autonomous Armenian enclave called Nagorno-Karabakh inside the traditionally Muslim Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan.

He supported the revolution and joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). When Bolshevik rule came to Azerbaijan, including Nagorno-Karabakh, in 1920, the commissioners acted ruthlessly to collectivise the larger farms and suppress religion.

Monasteries

All Karabakh's 220 Armenian churches and monasteries were closed and many priests were shot or exiled. Yet Nerses remained a member of the CPSU to further his career as a judge and because Bolshevik rule promised stability after a period of war and turmoil when Armenians experienced bloodshed on an unprecedented scale in the Ottoman (Turkish)

empire.

Following the invasion of the Soviet Union by the Wehrmacht, Nerses enlisted in the Red Army. He was fatally wounded on the borders of Romania in 1944. Thereafter his widow Marietta and her two daughters, Zhanna and Larisa, settled in Grozny in the Caucasus.

This was an area populated by the Chechens. While 30,000 of them served in the Red Army, some had joined units of the Wehrmacht. In one of the notorious purges Stalin carried out more than half a million Chechens were hounded out of their homes and villages into cattle rail-cars and dumped on the frozen steppes of Kazakhstan with between a half and a third of them being 'liquidated' during the operation.

“Russia still remains as in the time of the Tsars a collective of peoples and nations”

Stanislav Suvorov, the shoemaker Zhanna later married, and the other residents of Grozny witnessed this operation, but in Stalin's Russia "no one spoke to strangers about matters that did not concern them".

The vast majority of Russians were grief-stricken when the death of Stalin was announced. Trained to regard Stalin as their saviour, they felt lost and bewildered without him. They were further disillusioned and upset by the disclosures made by Khrushchev concerning the appalling slaughter of Soviet citizens for which Stalin had been responsible.

Moreover, with Stalin dead the new inhabitants in Chechnya feared that the Chechens might return and claim back their

homes and villages.

While Khrushchev eased considerably the shackles of the secret police and other agencies on people, he had a hatred of speculation and profiteering. Thus, when Zhanna's father sold his car to a neighbour he was charged and convicted of a 'crime against the Party' and spent five years in jail.

When Zhanna's father returned from prison the family, so as not to live under the cloud of his prison sentence, migrated to Krasnoyarsk in Siberia. This was a week's train journey to the east and there they endured harsh and bitter winters and resided in the vicinity of a silo containing nuclear-armed missiles.

When involved in trips as a tour guide outside the Soviet Union, Zhanna was put under pressure by the KGB to spy on her compatriots.

In due course Khrushchev was succeeded by Brezhnev when conditions in the Soviet Union were so depressing that public drunkenness became an acute social problem. Next the disintegration of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev and Yeltsin led to widespread criminality and conflicts within and between the autonomous republics, the most serious occurring in Nagorno-Karabakh and in Chechnya.

This book illustrates the enormous complexity of present-day Russia. It still remains as in the time of the Tsars a collective of peoples and nations. O'Clery also highlights the lack of freedoms, challenges and physical hardship endured by Russians in their daily lives.

It is frequently claimed that Russians seldom smile or look happy. One finds in this fascinating memoir many reasons for Russian tristesse.

The World of Books

By the books editor

The little library at the village corner

In recent years a new sort of library movement has got under way across Europe, which promises well, because it is created and run by ordinary people and depends on neither commerce nor the state to function.

This is the little library movement. I first came across it in, of all places, the booking hall of Belfast Central Station, on a trip to the North.

It consisted simply of a set of shelves set up against the wall filled with a random selection of books of all kinds, all donated.

The idea is the readers will donate a book and take away another, thus sharing their books with others, while also enjoying other people's ideas of what constitutes a good read.

The movement began, so I understand, in Austria. The idea soon spread through Switzerland and elsewhere and now I suppose in various forms can be found everywhere.

We have all seen in both pubs and coffee shops such little colonies of books. They provide customers with some relaxation for their short time out from the worries of work or life.

The idea, however, has spread way beyond the city and its fashionable whims, into small towns and rural villages. The little libraries can be found anywhere there is some free space, protected from the weather and perhaps from vandals, can be found.

Some have even been set up in out-of-service telephones boxes - ideal places one would have thought: carelessly abandoned by feckless privatisation, they have been taken over by the community. All too often when people talk of "community action" they mean either the local authority, or radical groups of right or left with an agenda. Those who love and want to encourage the reading of books have an agenda too, to spread the love of literature in all its forms, with all its insights into life, history, and the prospect for the future.

“They stocked, for instance, many books and manuals needed by those studying for their City and Guilds in the past”

In the 1950s, Victorian-style high-minded libraries still survived.

Their committees ensured that they were worthy. They stocked, for instance, many books and manuals needed by those studying for their City and Guilds in the past. There were books on philosophy, culture,

and the literary classics, as well as book-keeping, plumbing and woodwork.

But these libraries were not widely used by the upper or middle classes. Most patronised the subscription circulation libraries, for which there were many, run on the original model of Mudie's Library in London.

These ranged from a set of shelves in a local corner shop from which you could borrow a current novels

too much grander one such as the *London Times* Subscription Library which was in Brown Thomas's in Dublin's Grafton Street. In the early 1960s that closed with a great sell-off, destroyed by the advent of the paperback. By that time the corner shop libraries were gone too.

As a result the public libraries, now that they had to be used by the respectable, and not merely by the deprived, were greatly improved. But now, as most librarians agree, they have gone into decline as regards level of stock and choice of books. They are over filled with ephemeral literary fiction - there are long delays on non-fiction books, as fewer are now bought.

Movement

Given the state of the public libraries it is to be hoped that the little corner library movement will spread - like an infectious disease perhaps - across the country.

These will provide every small place with its own outlet for books, quite independent of book stores with their now over priced-books, or the public library with their cutback budgets. They will provide a new kind of social focus for a small place, cost-free, where the virtues of friendly exchanges of all kinds can be promoted.

"Educate that you may be free" was the once widely known call of Thomas Davis. He was concerned not just with national, but individual freedom. "Read a book a week that you may stay free" ought to be the slogan of modern communities. Depend on yourselves, dear readers, for commerce, cultural organisations, and the state are not the full solution to the problem, the readers themselves are.



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

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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 247



ACROSS

- 1 A man might splash it on when he's finished using his razor (5-5)
 6 Instrument that's a bit like a tin whistle (8)
 7 These birds hunt at night (4)
 9 What's the price - how much does it ____? (4)
 11 Take a tiny drink (3)
 12 Matthew, Mark, ____ and John wrote the four gospels (4)
 13 You might have these when you are asleep (6)
 14 Piece of cutlery used for cutting (5)
 15 You may see him at your Confirmation (6)

16 How many in a pair? (3)

17 Person from the USA (8)

DOWN

- 1 Word used by magicians (11)
 2 Small, sharp nails (5)
 3 "There are two ____ to every story" (5)
 4 A pilot flies it (9)
 5 Wicked (4)
 8 All the bones of the body (8)
 10 Person in charge of a class (7)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.365

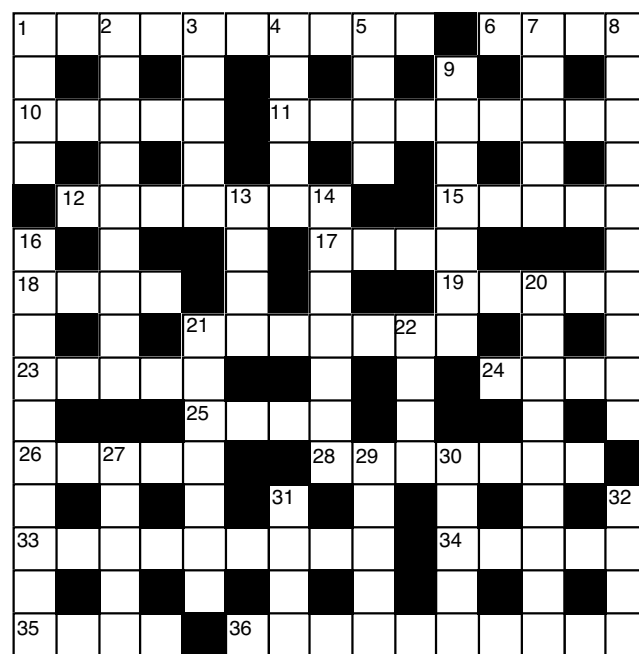
Across - 1 Odd 3 Mother-in-law 8 Talent 9 Salesian 10 Osier 11 Tweed 13 Scrum 15 Erratum 16 Trouble 20 Beech 21 Crete 23 Judea 24 Parabola 25 Wasabi 26 Periwinkles 27 Han
Down - 1 Orthopaedic 2 Dulcimer 3 Minor setback 4 Hosier 5 Inert 6 Loiter 7 Wan 12 Desecration 13 Squib 14 Mirth 17 Birdbath 19 Terror 22 Elbow 23 Jeans 24 Pop

CHILDREN'S No.246

Across - 1 Gentlemen 6 Air 7 Ladders 9 Stop 10 Ice-hockey 13 Over 14 Enters 15 Rat 16 Fewer 17 Swan 18 Greatest
Down - 1 Goldilocks 2 Nudge 3 Lie 4 Nasty 5 Grape 8 Rocket 9 Seat belt 11 Herring 12 Orders

Crossword

Gordius 366



ACROSS

- 1 Thief who operates in crowds (10)
 6 Protective watercourse that splits the atom (4)
 10, 11 & 12 The patron of river horses? (5,9,2,5)
 15 Wash out with water (5)
 17 Fairy taken in by a mother superior (4)
 18 Dutch variety of cheese (4)
 19 The Welsh word for Wales (5)
 21 Shakespeare made play on this night! (7)
 23 Relating to the moon (5)
 24 Drop a building in the garden (4)
 25 Pictorial symbol on a computer screen (4)
 26 Presley lives! (perhaps) (5)
 28 Wherein dramatic surgery is performed? (7)
 33 It's said to be the sincerest form of flattery (9)
 34 Commissioned rank in the army (5)
 35 See 3 down
 36 Youths plan to move a hybrid primrose (10)

DOWN

- 1 As snooty as Mrs Beckham? (4)

2 Leader of a clan (9)

3 & 35a Perhaps the priest hid some laboratory equipment (5,4)

4 It is used to immobilise an illegally parked car (5)

5 Periphery (4)

7 The hunter has no right to take one on (5)

8 & 31d 'armless bit of sculpture, this! (3,5,2,4)

9 The world's largest bird (7)

13 The front of a boat (4)

14 Rich (7)

16 Dropped off the pace, having an moor-covered hill at one's back (4,6)

20 Indian prince (9)

21 Iseult's lover was in need of some psychiatrist, anyway! (7)

22 When measuring this, you might have to allow for seconds! (4)

27 26 across is disorientated by such garments (5)

29 Convenient (5)

30 The capital of Jordan (5)

31 See 8 down

32 Greek war-god with unusual ears (4)

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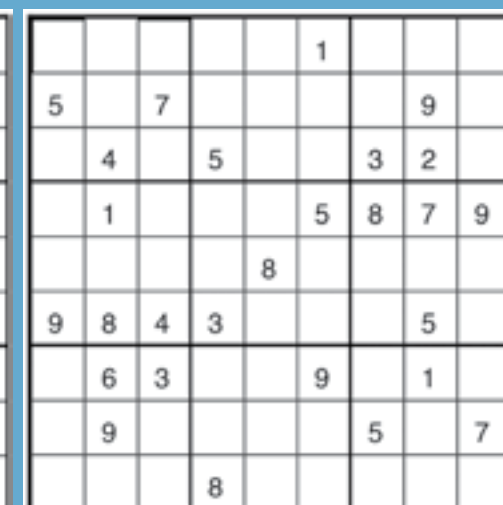
Sudoku Corner

247

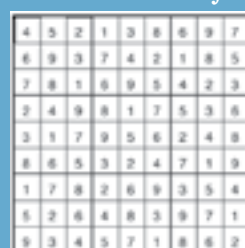
Easy



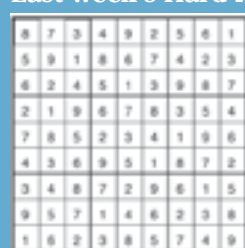
Hard



Last week's Easy 246



Last week's Hard 246



The meek inherit Pope Francis' compassion

DURING THE PAST 10 years of parish ministry, I've often been asked how priests deal with the sheer variety of our work. There are days when you have to go from a funeral to a baptism, or from a wedding reception to a deathbed. At all times the priest has to bring something of the love and encouragement of Christ, respecting the particular needs of each situation.

That same question came to my own mind when I watched coverage of Pope Francis's first day in Ireland. In many ways he might be thought of as the universal parish priest trying to bring Faith and hope to the whole world. Things in Dublin kicked off with the formalities of welcome and the tense exchange of speeches with the Taoiseach.

From there followed a round of pastoral visits: to Sean McDermott Street, to meet with newlyweds and engaged couples in the Pro-Cathedral and to the Capuchin Day Centre in Church Street.

The evening brought a meeting with survivors of abuse where sorrow must have been the prevailing emotion, and the day concluded with the joy of the Festival of Families. Add to all the



Pope Francis speaks with a family during his visit to the Capuchin Fathers' day center for homeless families in Dublin

above the concerns and demands of his worldwide ministry and you have to ask where he gets the energy for it all.

I got the impression that during the day's activities, the Pope was most alive and invigorated when visiting the Capuchin Day Centre in Church Street. On RTÉ1, Bro. Richard Hendrick rightly pointed

out that the Capuchins and their local community form a kind of family and the Pope picked up on this. He praised the work of the Capuchins and their closeness to the poor. He spoke about their generosity to all and said that it should be an encouragement to all priests to be generous with God's mercy.

Then, speaking to the clients of the Day Centre, he praised their love and trust for the Capuchins, noting that this springs from the dignity with which they are received. He asked them to seek out the Capuchins for advice in time of doubt and crisis.

And then he did something surprising! He asked especially for the prayers of the poor – for the Church, for priests, for the Capuchins, for Bishops and for the Pope himself. He could have asked prayers of any or all the people he met during the day, but he made a particular point of asking them from the poor.

There's a message in all that about what makes Pope Francis tick, where he finds his energy and the kind of pastoral care that's most important to him.

● GK Chesterton famously wrote: "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried."

In saying this he was putting his finger on the value of witnesses to the Christian faith who make the most difficult ideals real by living them in their lives.

In the commentary surrounding the World Meeting of Families it was largely forgotten that the Meeting serves as a chance for families who bear witness to the Gospel to encourage and inspire each other.

They might not make headlines, but the various families who spoke at the Festival of Families should stick in our minds and remind us that removed from all the debates and controversy there are still families and communities that enthusiastically, imaginatively and faithfully live out the Christian virtues.

● At the foot of the Penal Cross placed on the altar for the Papal Mass in the Phoenix Park and on the modern processional cross used at the Mass is the image of the rooster and cooking pot.

The reference is to an Irish folk tale. Pilate's wife was distressed by the crucifixion of Christ. The story goes that Pilate told her that Christ would no more rise from the dead than the rooster cooking in the pot would come back to life. With that, the bird leapt out of the pot crowing "Tá Mac Na hÓige Slán" – "The Son of

the Virgin is safe".

Pope Francis often talks about the 'God of surprises'. I sometimes think that the word 'surprise' is too mild a word to describe what God actually did in winning our salvation. Every 'surprise' he gives us springs from and points back to the Cross and Resurrection and brings with it the Good News that the powers represented by Pilate and his minions are living on borrowed time. Only sacrificial love prevails! That is our supreme encouragement.



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"Seva" is a Sanskrit word meaning "selfless work" and the Seva Missionary Sisters of Mary work amongst the most needy, disadvantaged and discriminated-against people in rural India. The Sisters supervise a hostel and school in the district of Kattur for orphans, destitute children and children of bonded labourers and want to provide school uniforms for these children. The uniforms will help to increase their sense of identity and self esteem and encourage a communal spirit of self-worth. The Sisters tell us that these children are at risk of being dragged into the same cycle of never ending poverty which has brought their parents so much suffering – the life of bonded labourers. "Only education can liberate the younger generation from this slavery", write the Sisters.

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