

The Irish Catholic

'ABOLISH THE BIBLE'

John McGuirk: Minister McEntee's first objective Page 14

OUR HOLY MOUNTAINS

The Irish Spirit: What is it about climbing that attracts people? Page 17

BREDA O'BRIEN

Light in the search for family-friendly movies Page 7



Thursday, July 30, 2020

€2.00 (Stg £1.70)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

@IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

TD accused of being 'blinkered' and 'biased' in criticism of religious sisters

Chai Brady

Comments made by Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett criticising the Sisters of Charity after the order moved to wind down a Dublin nursing home have been described as "blinkered".

Mr Boyd Barrett – a People Before Profit member of the Dáil – described the sisters as "property magnates" who seem "to have lost any interest in the workers or the residents in the nursing homes" after the decision was made by the board of St Mary's Centre in Dublin to close the nursing home.

Reflex

Historian Gabriel Doherty, who has written about the contribution of religious sisters to Irish healthcare, told *The Irish Catholic*: "I think the most charitable commentary is that they are simply the reflex of an individual who appears to view every situation through the lens of anti-Catholic bias, and is, perhaps, too ideologically blinkered to respond to the actual tragedy that has unfolded in many care homes over recent months."

Dr Doherty – who lectures in University College Cork – was referring to the disproportionate number of deaths of residents in nursing homes in the coronavirus pandemic.

"On the one hand he believes the nuns have no place in the provision of such social services, yet also criticises them for the manner in which they are withdrawing from same," he said.

"The fact is that it was these nuns, in this as in so many other cases, who for decades made provision for the socially needy, when the state was either unable or unwilling to shoulder the burden of same, or indifferent to same."

"The exclusive focus on the negative aspects in the practice of that provision – and that there were negative aspects cannot be denied – has led many to generalise from these worst cases, and represent them not just as typical but invariable. But that was never the case, and it has not been the case now," according to Dr Doherty.

He added that care homes

» Continued on Page 4

A quiet Sunday on the Reek this year

Robert Lee McDonagh, Charlie McDonagh and Robert Connors from West Limerick on the Reek, Croagh Patrick. Photo: Conor McKeown



MARY KENNY

The euthanasia lobby is weakened by events PAGE 5



BLOOMING GREAT!

Jazzing up your window boxes

PAGES 31 & 33



DAVID QUINN

The delusion of freedom in China

PAGE 11



A NEW PILGRIMAGE ON THE LOUGH DERG LAKESHORE

The Lough Derg Pilgrim Path is the setting for Pilgrimage this Autumn

AUGUST DATES: 16, 18, 22, 26, 30 | SEPTEMBER DATES TO FOLLOW

With Station Island having to remain closed, I am pleased to offer a new pilgrimage experience at the Lough Derg lakeshore in the remaining weeks of the 2020 Pilgrimage Season.

We have received many enquiries from pilgrims who are missing their annual opportunity to come to Lough Derg. From Penal Times there is a memory of faithful people who undertook a

form of pilgrimage on the lough shore when they found they were not allowed access to the Island. In 2020, might they not do something similar? Fr La Flynn, Prior



Booking is essential. Phone bookings on 071 9861518 Mon - Fri 9am-5pm. Online bookings will open on 30th July. www.loughderg.org

Inside this week

Living Laudato Si'

It's time to make a sustainable energy switch

Page 34



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Why you shouldn't lock your 'doors'

Page 30



Dad's Diary

Some of us can only find 'sleep' in a dictionary

Page 33



Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Northern Correspondent: Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie

Multimedia Journalists: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

Aron Hegarty, aron@irishcatholic.ie

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
9.30am–5.30pm

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

Managing Director: Garry O'Sullivan

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €145. Airmail €250. Six months – €75.

ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,

Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandford, Dublin 18.

Printed by Webprint, Cork.

Place an Advert

Phone 01 687 4094 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Would you like to see your parish photos published in *The Irish Catholic*?

If you're present at a celebration or event in your parish, why not take a photograph and email it to:



chai@irishcatholic.ie



Photos in jpeg format are fine and please do tell us who is in the photo, the occasion and the parish.



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

TDs and senators pressure Govt on Uighur persecution

Chai Brady

Seventeen senators and TDs across several parties have signed a letter for the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs highlighting their concerns about the treatment of the Uighur people in China.

The letter asks that Ireland "immediately condemn the barbaric measures" used by Chinese authorities to decrease the Uighur population, the vast majority of which are Muslim.

It states: "The campaign has been labelled a 'demographic genocide' by international experts. We are deeply concerned about the 'detention camps' to which women are being sent if they have more than the 'permitted' number of children.

"News outlets are now reporting that China has subjected 'hundreds of thousands of women' to forced pregnancy tests, forced birth control, sterilisation and forced abortions.

"We are deeply concerned at drone footage that shows hundreds of men and women being led blindfolded onto trains. We are very concerned at reports of men and women being detained without charge or conviction for indefinite lengths of time in 'thought transformation camps'," it states.

Letter

The letter asks that Taoiseach Micheál Martin, Tánaiste Leo Varadkar and Minister Simon Coveney "urgently intervene and make Ireland's opposition to this torture known".

"We feel it would also be beneficial if the Irish government were to lobby other western and European countries to join us in condemning these practices."

The TDs who signed the letter included Aontú's Peadar Tóibín, Neasa Hourigan, Patrick Costello, Joe O'Brien from the Green party, John Lahart from Fianna Fáil, Neale Richmond from Fine Gael, Cian O'Callaghan, Social Democrats, and Independents Matt Shanahan, Seán Canny, Carol Nolan, Michael McNamara.

The senators include Malcom Byrne, Fianna Fáil, and independent senators Michael McDowell, Lynn Ruane, Gerard Craughwell, Ronan Mullen and David Norris.

Peadar Tóibín said: "In recent years and months, we

have witnessed the brutalisation of so many minorities by the Chinese Communist Party. No more so than the Uighur Muslim community in China. Its been report that up to a million members of this community have been forced into camps.

"Christians in China are now being told to renounce their faiths in order to avoid prosecution and to avoid removal of benefits and their rights. It began with the Uighur Muslims, and is now spreading to the people of Hong Kong and Chinese Christians.

"I call upon the Taoiseach, to denounce persecution in China at the present time, and to lobby other Western nations to do so as well," he added.

Annual novena at Knock Shrine postponed because of pandemic

Jason Osborne

The national novena to Our Lady of Knock has become the latest high-

profile casualty of a wave of events called off due to concerns about coronavirus.

The event is postponed until perhaps later this year, Fr Richard Gibbons, PP

Rector of Knock Shrine has announced.

The novena began in 1977 and has continued in an unbroken tradition since then. Taking place every year from 14-22 August and attracting as many as

150,000 pilgrims, the novena is an event of national and international importance.

Fr Gibbons commented on the decision, saying that: "Having discussed at length the logistics, health and safety of organising the novena, it is with heavy hearts that we have decided to postpone it."

Disappointment

He insisted that "This has been a very difficult decision that will cause a great deal of disappointment to pilgrims, it also has economic consequences for the wider community and the shrine itself. However, the health and safety of our parishioners, pilgrims, priests, staff and volunteers is of paramount importance to us at this worrying time."



Stewards who are helping with the return to Mass under the Government's health guidelines are pictured in St Augustine's Church in Drogheda.

They meant to strengthen their country and their positions with help from Spain. However, what unfolded during the epic *flight of the earls* proved disastrous for centuries to come.



A HIGHLY DETAILED, BUT READABLE ACCOUNT OF AN EVENT WHOSE SIGNIFICANCE TO IRISH HISTORY CANNOT BE OVERSTATED.

PRE ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY.

€14.99 + Free P&P

Phone 01 6874096

Visit www.columbabooks.com

columba BOOKS

Christian footballer thanks God for making 'impossible, possible'

Chai Brady

Professional footballer Alex Samuel praised God for being signed to the Wycombe Wanderers FC on social media in a message posted beside a picture of him kneeling and praying on the pitch.

Alex took to Twitter to reveal how much God helped him in his career, saying: "This time two years ago I was out of a job, released and injured, which nearly finished my football career.

"In the middle of that God gave me a vision that I would play for Wycombe. But then I discovered that I needed an operation.

After recovery, pre-season had already finished and that vision seemed an impossibility.

"Then a week before the season started Wycombe asked me to go for a trial...and the rest is history. I am so thankful to God and for the people that He's put in my life. It has made the impossible, possible!" he said.

This isn't the first time the footballer has been vocal about his Christian Faith. His team will be playing in the championship next season after they beat Oxford United earlier this month to secure promotion. After the win Alex said on social media: "We have done it! On our way to the Championship!...God is so awesome! Thank you Jesus."



Wycombe Wanderers player Alex Samuel in action for his club and, above, kneeling in thanksgiving – his club were promoted this season.

All-Ireland Primate targeted in New IRA intimidation campaign

Staff reporter

A hate campaign launched by the New IRA against the Primate of All-Ireland Eamon Martin has been condemned after intimidating posters were plastered outside St Eugene's Cathedral in Derry.

Archbishop Eamon was targeted because he has been encouraging young Catholics to join the PSNI.

In a parish newsletter published in February, the archbishop wrote: "I encourage the very best of our young people to seriously consider a career in the police.

"Help to shape the future of policing here and serve your community with gen-

erosity, concern, respect and courage."

Speaking to the *Belfast Telegraph*, Foyle MP Colum Eastwood said: "The people of Derry have consistently endorsed parties who support involvement with the PSNI.

"We are there to hold the PSNI to account because we need a police service to serve the community. Posters like these achieve nothing and I am glad that they have been removed."

Following a meeting of Church leaders with Chief Constable Simon Byrne of the PSNI, in December, Archbishop Eamon told this paper he had "concerns" about the future balance of community

representation and called for Catholics to consider the "noble vocation" and for communities to encourage and support them.

"I think now to have that visibility of policing as a legitimate noble career at our careers fairs and days in schools and also of course in our parish bulletins and to let people know that this is something that has the support of your church and hopefully then also other community leaders and political leaders will weigh in behind as well. I think that it's a united effort of all of us to try to really lift the recruitment of young Catholics into the police," Archbishop Eamon said.

The Irish Catholic is moving offices this week. Our new address is:

Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.



I hope that,
one day,
my grandchildren
will ask
**"What WAS
cancer?"**

You can help make cancer a thing of the past by
leaving a gift to the Irish Cancer Society in your Will.

To get a free legacy booklet with more information,
call 1850 60 60 60
email amcdarby@irishcancer.ie
or visit www.cancer.ie/legacy

 Irish Cancer Society

Catholic schools will reopen at 'full capacity' in September

Ruadhán Jones

Reopening schools will be "very challenging", but the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) are "absolutely confident" of a returning near full capacity.

All students and staff excepting those in high-risk categories will return in September, according to Seamus Mulconry, general secretary of the CPSMA.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, he said: "At the primary level, we are looking at full capacity. There will be some schools who will have insufficient space, but we're urging those to contact the dept as soon as possible."

Mr Mulconry said the Government's major investment of €375 million is "welcome assistance" and believes it will help schools significantly.

"It will be very challenging and a lot of it will come down to the commitment and hard work of all staff," said Mr Mulconry. "But certainly the resources the Government announced today are very welcome."

Distancing

Primary schools will have to put certain social distancing measures in place, but this will not be required for younger classes, Mr Mulconry

explained.

"For the junior classes, they won't be social distancing, it's totally impractical. For the more senior classes, there will be social distancing," he said. "But most of the distancing will be focused on adults

not children, in line with Government advice."

Challenge

Schools will be able to apply for a Government procurement package of hand sanitiser and a small amount of

PPE in the coming weeks.

Mr Mulconry finished, saying that "opening the schools will be the first challenge – the next challenge will be keeping them open. In that, the schools will be reliant on community action – people

need to behave responsibly and observe the Government guidelines.

"The aim is to have a safe and orderly reopening of schools to make sure that everyone is kept safe. And that's staff and pupils."



Special day marked in Cavan

Three generations of the O'Rourke family, Thomas, Ruaidhri and Callum, are pictured at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, marking Catholic Grandparents Sunday in the parish.

TD accused of being 'blinker' in criticism of religious sisters

» Continued from Page 1

were "effectively abandoned" by the State during the peak of the Covid-19 outbreak in Ireland "with horrendous consequences".

"Yet the consequent damage (including many deaths) is seen by Mr Boyd Barrett as a reason why that same State should take over the running of those same homes," he said.

Senator Rónán Mullen, responding to Mr Boyd Barrett's comments, said the nursing home closure was part of a "sad story of decline in the ability of our religious orders and congregations to run health and care services of various kinds which they did for so long and so well in the majority of cases".

He continued saying it's also about a "growing culture of compliance and regulation", and increasing dependence on the State for resources.

"Richard Boyd Barrett's comments show up the oftentimes cruelty and irresponsibility of the hard left. Is he saying that the State should fund and run all nursing



Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett.

homes? Let's have that debate.

"Is he saying that all privately-owned nursing homes should be seized by the State, instead of being bought out at a price that reflects the contribution of previous owners and donors and the latterday investment by the State?"

"Or is it just religious-owned and managed facilities which he thinks should be seized by the State? If that's his view then it's another case of a politician's views being clouded by his hostility to faith and religious belief," Senator Mullen added.

EU bishops says solidarity must be heart of Covid-19 stimulus

Staff reporter

European bishops have welcomed what they described as the solidarity shown by EU governments in agreeing the Covid-19 stimulus package. However, they warned that the process will be a failure unless it is focused on the weaker members of the bloc.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, president of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, insisted that the agreement reached by EU heads of government for a €750 billion coronavirus recovery fund was "a solution which expresses solidarity inside the European Union".

Cardinal Hollerich said he hopes "the recovery fund will help the weakest economies, the economies most touched by the pandemic to grow,

and to be there for people, for the real people who constitute the European Union, so that also the next generation can live in peace and in certain prosperity".

Covid-19 has claimed the lives of an estimated 135,000 EU citizens and damaged the bloc's economy, which is expected to contract by 8.3% this year.

EU leaders also agreed a €1.82 trillion budget which includes the coronavirus €750 billion. It will consist of €390 billion in grants and €360 billion in loans.

Brussels-based COMECE is made up of representatives of bishops' conferences from the EU and maintains a structured dialogue with the EU institutions. Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor – a former general secretary of the body – is now vice-president of COMECE.

Reek Sunday: Michael Kelly discusses the significance of mountains in the Bible – see *The Irish Spirit*, Pages 17-24



Call for national day of mourning post-Covid-19

Staff reporter

The Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) has called on the new Government to put in place a process for remembrance and reflection in post-Covid-19 Ireland.

The foundation submitted a paper outlining a series of proposals for Ireland to remember and reflect on the pandemic.

This includes a national series of mourning and remembrance events for all who have died since the pandemic started in order to express Ireland's collective connection with the bereaved and to honour, comfort and support.

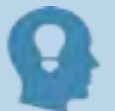
Another proposal calls for a reigniting of a national conversation on dying, death and bereavement in Ireland, led Government, to be followed by an official process to make recommendations and put them into effect.

Recuperation

Chief Executive of Irish Hospice Foundation, Sharon Foley said: "Although we are not through the pandemic, we must begin to plan for a process of active collective remembrance, reflection and recovery as part of the recuperation in post-Covid-19 Ireland.

"The ongoing response to the crisis continues to challenge us all in how we confront and deal with dying, death and bereavement. Our collective experience over the past number of months has shown us that we can't afford to turn away from our collective mortality and we need to come together and learn how to face it, head on."

What do you think?



Let us know by writing to:

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

One of the social effects of the Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdown is that it has, for the moment, somewhat quietened the voices of the euthanasia lobby.

We have heard a little less, over the course of this worrying year, about 'the right to die'. When the death toll internationally is announced and measured daily, the 'right' to die would surely seem incongruous. Not to say heartless and cruel.

The fact that older people, and people in care homes, are more vulnerable to catching the virus, and are more likely to succumb to it, has been, at least publicly, a deep cause for concern.

I'm not sure I altogether took to the word 'cocooning', but it does express a sense of protecting those who may need to be shielded from the infection.

Scandal

Although it is also a matter of shame and neglect that so many deaths did take place in care homes. It is considered a scandal, and a tragedy, that some older

The euthanasia lobby is weakened by events



Mary Kenny

● Olivia de Havilland, the last surviving movie star from *Gone with the Wind*, who died on July 26, aged 104, gave thanks that she had never 'yielded' to the swashbuckling actor Errol Flynn – although she had made eight films with him. "He would have ruined my life," she reflected.

The Irish-Australian Errol Flynn was a legend in his lifetime, but not always for the best reasons. "You always knew where you were with Errol," they said in Hollywood. "He'd always let you down." It was the drink that prompted such a reputation, and I'm afraid being let down is a recurring theme with alcoholics.

Beautiful young women are often drawn to bad boys. But Olivia obviously knew better!



people died alone, unvisited by family or friends, because of the restrictions that were imposed.

The suspicion that some sources seemed to think it almost an acceptable idea if the virus carried off the

old and the fragile was considered an outrage.

Most people have acted decently, and many people have acted heroically in caring for their elderly relatives and friends. I see messages on social media from younger people who are devastated by the loss of a grandparent or great-grandparent, even if the departed may have reached a great age.

"I've been surprised by how risk-averse most folks are"

The push for euthanasia won't go away, and it goes on apace, regrettably, in the Netherlands and Belgium. But its advocates may have to change their tone, and the language they use about the 'right' to die, which seems so insensitive in a time of plague.

But on the pro-life side, some adjustment of language may be needed

too. There is no 'right' to die: but there does come a time when nature takes its course, and we will all have to accept death. Thus, because we must die sometime, there is no 'right' to life either – but there is a right not to be killed. There is a right to affirm the gift of life, for sure.

Euthanasia is about putting into law the deliberate killing of a person, and the global pandemic has put that in a new perspective.

The extreme care which most people have taken to shield themselves from infection has been an outstanding feature of recent times. I'm by inclination something of a risk-taker, but I've been surprised by how risk-averse most folks are: people in their 70s, 80s and 90s prudently obeying all the rules so as not to be in danger of illness and death.

Yes, I do believe that one of the effects of Covid-19 has been to weaken the euthanasia lobby.

Tragedy of Lebanon

Lebanon will be 100 years old as a state in September, but some Lebanese are wondering if it will last long enough to celebrate its formal birthday. It is reported to be in a condition of near-collapse, with a melt-down of the Lebanese currency, the lira, and corruption rife.

Sad to hear that the Lebanon is now so dysfunctional, because it was once a byword for consensus and tolerance: 18 faiths are officially recognised by the Lebanese republic. When my father studied at the Jesuit American Seminary in Beirut – way back in the 1890s – he thought the country cultured and enchanting, and the people charming.

Christianity was at the time the dominant faith, but alas, it seems to have been pushed to the margins in recent times.

The Lebanese are an ancient trading people, their roots going back to the Phoenicians. Their country could be an oasis of peace and reconciliation in the Middle East. And once was.



SUMMER - FESTIVAL

14TH - 16TH AUGUST

REGISTER FREE ONLINE

WWW.YOUTH2000.IE

The Lord is my **STRENGTH** & my song
Psalms 118:14



Paddy Coyle: Man from iconic 'boy in the mask' photo dies

Tributes pour in after death of Paddy Coyle

Ruadhán Jones

The man whose image defined the early days of the outbreak of conflict in the North has died.

Fr Paul Farren, who officiated at his funeral, said that Paddy Coyle "never let the image define him" and he lived the life of "an ordinary Catholic".

Mr Coyle was photographed in Derry as a teenager wearing a gas mask and holding a petrol bomb in what is now regarded as one of the Troubles' most defining images.

Fr Farren told *The Irish Catholic* that, aside from the famous image, Mr Coyle lived the life of an ordinary Catholic. "It was a moment in his life which didn't define his life," said Fr Farren. "He lived a life like the rest of us, an ordinary Catholic, devout in his own way."

Humble

Bishop of Derry Donal McKewon reiterated Fr Farren's sentiment, saying Mr Coyle was "an ordinary humble churchgoer".

Paddy Coyle was aged 13 when he was photographed in the city's Bogside in 1969.

Photographer Clive Limpkin's image made the front cover of newspapers and magazines around the world.

In a statement on social media, Mr Coyle's cousin, Tom Kelly, said: "Paddy never ever exploited his iconic image, he refused many offers from TV documentary makers and newspapers to tell his story behind the image as he didn't like talking about it".

Mr Kelly, one of the Bogside Artists, would later use the image in one of Derry's most recognisable murals.

He said Mr Coyle will be

"missed by all who knew and loved him, but his image as a young boy...in 1969 will live on forever".

Limelight

Maeve McLaughlin of the Museum of Free Derry said to the BBC that Mr Coyle had never "wanted to be in the limelight but was quite proud of it (the image) in his own way".

Ms McLaughlin said the image of Mr Coyle was very much symbolic of the history it reflects, and of the "ordinary people, in this case a child, in extremely extraordinary times".



Homelessness charity launch virtual pilgrimage

An Irish charity has given pilgrims the opportunity to take part in a virtual Camino to help raise money to assist those suffering from homelessness.

Focus Ireland launched their virtual walk due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The charity said online: "This year due to Covid-19, we may not be able to go on our annual Camino fundraising trip, which will be a huge loss of income to Focus Ireland. So we have developed this virtual walk for the last section of the French way into Santiago, which you can do here on Irish soil while getting a clear insight into the route and all it has to offer."

Updates

Those who sign up can log how far they've walked online. Those interested can find out more at <https://virtualcamino.focusireland.ie/>

"As you log your distance, you will receive updates about the towns you are approaching, walking notes, recipes for typical foods in the area, recommended books to read on the Camino, films, podcasts and playlists to keep you in the Camino spirit!" Focus Ireland said.



Soulful lament for those who were left grounded

Musician and music teacher Patrick Dexter posted a video of himself on social media playing *The Deer's Cry*, set to music by Shaun Davey, for the pilgrims who did not climb Croagh Patrick over the weekend for Reek Sunday.

Deceased US gameshow star was a keen supporter of Catholic education



Regis Francis Xavier Philbin.

Staff reporter

US gameshow and talkshow host Regis Francis Xavier Philbin, who has died at the age of 88, has been praised as a longtime proponent and supporter of Catholic schools.

"I think it made a great difference. Solidified me....taught me an awful lot. Everything that I am right now I attribute to" Catholic education, Philbin said in a 2009 interview.

What made a difference at Catholic schools, he told reporters in numerous interviews, was formation in virtue, and in faith. Before joining the Navy, and

eventually making his way to Hollywood, Mr Philbin attended the University of Notre Dame, and before that the Catholic schools in the Bronx, where he grew up.

Mr Philbin was named in part for Jesuit missionary St Francis Xavier. But his unusual first name came from Regis Catholic High School in New York.

"In the 1920s, my father was asked to leave Regis High School in Manhattan during his sophomore year. It was a Catholic school, and he had gotten into a fight with a priest or a brother. Years later, he was so sorry about what had happened that he and my mother named me Regis when I was born," he told *The Wall Street*

Journal in 2016.

Mr Philbin was an altar boy while attending his parish elementary school, and as a child had dreams of becoming a singer. He went to Notre Dame at his father's urging, after graduating from New York's Cardinal Hayes High School in 1949.

After achieving success on television, Philbin became a regular benefactor to the Catholic schools in which he was educated, especially his high school.

The host gave supported students with scholarships to Cardinal Hayes High School on an annual basis, and in 2000 gave the school \$500,000 (€426,000) for an auditorium renovation.

Breda O'Brien

The View



Light in the elusive search for family-friendly movies

During the lockdown, many people turned to Amazon, Netflix and good old-fashioned DVD box sets for entertainment. But it is remarkably difficult to find series that are family-friendly, particularly if you have older children and teens.

Family-friendly films or series with religious themes which are well-made are even rarer. As a result, I did not have high expectations for a new series called *The Chosen*, which is about the life of Christ. Yet after just a few episodes, I am hooked.

Dallas Jenkins, the creator, director and co-writer of the series, was a mainstream movie producer through what might be called the Hollywood system, but none of the films were massive successes.

He then produced a short film, *The Shepherd*, for his evangelical church. A company called VidAngel (about which more later) was looking for original content to stream and suggested that a pilot be aired on Facebook.

The interest was huge, right across US Christian denominations. A television series with high production values is costly to make. Amazingly, \$10.3 million (€8.78m) was raised from 15,000 investors to make the first four episodes of the series through crowdfunding.

Access

The Chosen crowd-funding process has now raised over \$20 million (€17.05m) which means that season two is now underway. While you can buy DVDs of the show in the US, the primary way that people access it is through an app. *The Chosen | Official Trailer HD* allows you to stream the first episode of the show for free. Paying for a Pay-It-Forward package via the app for as little as \$14.99 not only gives the purchaser lifetime access but also allows others to watch it for free.

Crowd-funding is an innovative way of side-stepping conventional media outlets such as television stations or the biggest streaming platforms, which are often indifferent to or actively hostile to religious material. The series has been viewed by nearly 50 million people in 180 countries and has



This is a scene of Jesus at a wedding in episode five of *The Chosen*.

been translated into over 50 languages.

The series is uplifting without being pious. It's a fresh and original take on the Gospels, which allows you to see Jesus through the eyes of the women and men who encounter him and whose lives are transformed as a result.

Jonathan Rhoumie, who plays Jesus, has a wonderful warmth and humour that is very far from Robert Powell's famous blue-eyed interpretation of Jesus in Franco Zeffirelli's 1977 *Jesus of Nazareth* television series.

Mr Powell deliberately almost never blinked during the filming and dark blue eyeliner was used to emphasise the intensity of his gaze. The portrayal of Jesus in *The Chosen* is closer to the lighter moments of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*. A minor spoiler if you have not seen the latter – there is a scene where Jesus (Jim Caviezel) makes a table with legs, which seems a bit odd to his mother Mary, used to reclining to eat her food.

It is a tender moment showing the love between mother and son. While there are similarities to

these gentler moments of *The Passion of the Christ*, Jonathan Rhoumie, who plays Jesus in *The Chosen*, has a very different screen presence to Jim Caviezel. What Mr Caviezel and Mr Rhoumie share is that unlike Robert Powell, they are both Catholics who take their faith seriously and both see portraying Jesus as a way of introducing the Lord to people who would not necessarily encounter him in any other way.

There is also a secondary aim of introducing him to people who have become numb to or jaded about the Christian story.

The enormous interest in this series shows that there is a real demand for quality religious programming but also for family-friendly material. VidAngel, the company I mentioned earlier, originated as a filtering service, where they allowed people to watch programmes or films with profanity or sexualised scenes removed.

This aspect of their business has resulted in massive lawsuits from film and television companies. VidAngel insisted that it was not pirating the material

and that it was legal under US legislation called the Family Movie Act.

They also said that they were simply making the material available to viewers who would never otherwise watch it.

“There is an obvious gap in the market for people who want to watch popular series without the parts that they find offensive”

Nonetheless, a US District Court has ordered it to pay \$62.4 million

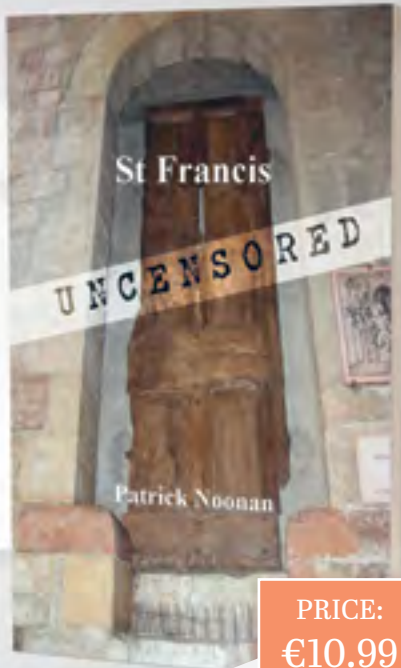
(€53.2m) to Disney, Fox, and Warner Bros. for streaming hundreds of movies on its service without permission. VidAngel maintains that it repeatedly sought permission.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the court case, there is an obvious gap in the market for people who want to watch popular series without the parts that they find offensive. Why are the entertainment media so hostile to that idea? If a series on the life of Christ can reach 50 million people, it should be possible to provide more family-friendly material of a secular nature, too.

ST FRANCIS UNPLUGGED, UNLEASHED AND UNCENSORED

In missionary Patrick Noonan's latest book, *Francis of Assisi* is the figure from the margins, the outsider from nowhere, the misfit who wonders about bishops and inspires Pope Francis. Presenting the 13th century saint with an aversion for clerical scandals he begs the question, "Will the real St Francis please stand up?"

These pages are a daring exploration of Francis (and St Clare) as rarely seen before – a questioning of their popular image today, and a different window on their personal struggles for meaning. This Francis is real, breathing and living.



PRICE: €10.99

“Over the centuries St Francis has become covered up with the sort of sentimental piety that obscures the real man and his associates. Noonan wants to cut through all that A 'revisionist' book, with the emphasis on the vision
The Irish Catholic”

“His (Noonan's) description of St Francis as a "loose cannon" making peace with the "Osama Bin Laden" of his day in the Middle East is a challenge to all of us as we face an ever-increasing sense of insecurity about Peace in our world
Hugh McKenna ofm, Rome”

“This is clearly not a romantic St Francis
Albert Nolan op, South Africa”

“The series is a fresh and original take on the Gospels, which allows you to see Jesus through the eyes of the women and men who encounter him and whose lives are transformed as a result”

AVAILABLE NOW

HOLISTIC HEALING

A CHRISTIAN APPROACH

PAT COLLINS CM



PRICE:
€16.99
POSTAGE
INCLUDED

Healing is one of the most beautiful gifts in God's treasure chest of blessing. Not only did Jesus heal, he passed on the same ability to those who believe in him. This timely book, describes how the gift of healing has been rediscovered in recent years. It examines its holistic and evangelistic nature by drawing on the best insights of medicine, psychology and biblical spirituality.

Holistic Healing stresses the therapeutic power of the Eucharist, while addressing difficult questions such as, 'why isn't everyone healed?' Attain the answer to this question and more, all the while discovering how faith, guided by God's will, can heal us and others.

TO ORDER PHONE
01 687 4096

OR EMAIL
SALES@COLUMBA.IE

OR SHOP ONLINE
WWW.COLUMBABOOKS.COM

 **columba BOOKS**

Block 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road,
Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277

Health minister dodges question on telemedicine abortions

Ruadhán Jones

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly refused to confirm whether that the system allowing home abortions via telemedicine will cease after the Covid-19 crisis passes, following a query from Deputy Carol Nolan.

Mr Donnelly would only commit to a review of the matter once the public health emergency is over he said in answer to a Dáil question.

In a statement from the Pro-life Campaign, Dr Kirsten Fuller said Minister Donnelly's assurances "falls short of the commitment given by his predecessor as Health Minister, Simon Harris, who clearly stated that telemedicine abortions would only continue until the end of the Covid-19 crisis".

Emergency

Then Minister for Health Simon Harris stated that the arrangement enabling home abortions "will lapse once the public health emergency is declared over".

Dr Fuller called on Minister Donnelly to issue a more explicit statement



Deputy Carol Nolan.

clarifying that he intends to cease the practice of telemedicine abortions.

Dr Fuller said that the practice, as well as ending the lives of unborn babies, "potentially puts the lives of pregnant women at risk as it does not involve a face-to-face consultation between the woman and her doctor before the abortion".

The decision regarding the sanction on telemedicine has been controversial from its initiation. In response to a question from TD Éamonn ÓCuív in April, then Minister Harris refused to confirm whether he sought advice from the

CMO before allowing home abortions to take place. Dr Fuller called on Minister Donnelly "to clarify whether he received advice from the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) before agreeing to sanction telemedicine abortions on his watch".

Referendum

Prior to the abortion referendum in 2018, Simon Harris, Stephen Donnelly, Micheál and Leo Varadkar were constantly on the public record talking about the serious risks posed to women's health by self-administering abortion pills without medical consultation.

Social workers warn mental health strategy lacks substance

Staff reporter

The Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW) has claimed that the recently-launched strategy on mental health lacks real substance.

"While a refreshed mental health policy is to be welcomed, the fact that the oversight group who developed the policy did not include any core health and social care professional members of mental health multidisciplinary teams is hugely disappointing," the group said in a statement.

Core level

"Overall, Sharing the Vision is an aspirational document that is short on specifics. It lacks tangible numbers or benchmarks to aim for.

"This will make it extremely difficult to argue for a core level of services, as a core level is not specified.

"A Vision for Change (2006) at least had specific targets, and while they may not have all been met, it will be impossible to meet unspecified targets. A lack of referral pathways leads to the absence of needs identification. This is particularly concerning given the weak commitments to diversify governance," the body said.

Loneliness, hunger of the heart

Today's Gospel (Matt 14:13-21) throws light on loneliness which is another name for the hunger of the heart. A popular film years ago was called *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. One form of loneliness is the grief experienced after the death of a loved one.

On hearing of the death of his cousin John the Baptist, Jesus withdrew to a lonely place to attend to his grief. A person who is grieving needs time and space. Different people deal with grief in different ways.

In the weeks after the funeral, people grieving will be very tired physically, emotionally and spiritually. One may not have the emotional energy to pray. It is important to let them know that you are praying for them. Pray for the discernment to know when to accompany the person grieving and when to let the person have time alone.

A lonely place

The quietness that Jesus sought did not last for long. Word went around about where he was and people sought him. Out of pity for the people he set aside his own need and attended to their needs.

Hours slipped by and the disciples were concerned because the people had not brought food. It is interesting that the apostles did not say to Jesus

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



that this is hungry place but that this is a lonely place. They had touched on the inner hunger of the heart, loneliness.

St Mother Teresa of Calcutta was shocked when her Sisters went to work in a poor area of New York. In Calcutta, the Sisters had ministered to the dying and fed hundreds of hungry people every day. But in New York she was confronted by the hunger of loneliness. She described it: "The worst disease is not leprosy; it is being unwanted, being left out, being forgotten. The greatest scourge is to forget the next person, to be so suffocated with the things we have that we have no time for the lonely Jesus – even a person in our own family who needs us."

In today's second reading, St Paul writes: "Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked."

This is a lonely place, a world filled

with lonely people. Jesus said: "Give them something to eat yourselves." He counts on us to reach out. The apostles had very little to give, but they gave all they had. And then, God did the multiplying. We might not have much to give. Give it anyway and let God do the multiplying.

Prayers

Inspired by the actions and words of Jesus we pray.

May the Church continue its long history of inspiring us to care for people who are poor, destitute or lonely. Lord, hear us.

May the rich nations and wealthy individuals open their eyes and hearts to help the millions who are starving today. Lord, hear us.

Open our eyes to the loneliness of people who may be very near us. And show us some way that we can help them. Lord, hear us.

May the God of all consolation comfort and support all who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Lord, hear us.

O God, we thank you for all that you have given us. Inspire us to be generous to people in any kind of need. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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

It's been said that if your name is held in the hearts of others, you will never truly die.

When you set aside a gift of any size in your Will to Trócaire, your good and generous name will never die.

Every year after your passing, we'll honour your name in gratitude and love at a special Remembrance Mass where all faiths are welcome.

We'll keep your name safe and warm in our Books of Remembrance, too, where all the people who've loved you can come to see it.

Simple bequests of any size by Will are some of the greatest,

most everlasting gifts of all made by caring people just like you across Ireland.

So whether you ultimately include Trócaire in your final legacy – *or another worthy cause* – we have a free and easy planner you can bring to your solicitor to get started. We're happy to post it to you, discreetly, and with our heartfelt thanks for your consideration and for being a faithful Irish Catholic reader.

For the relief your legacy will bring to people living in fear from poverty, injustice,

indifference, and exploitation worldwide, we believe that even though you pass on, your good name should never die.

Request your free and confidential legacy planner from Trócaire today. Then bring the planner to your family solicitor for an open and honest conversation.

We'll remember your name.

Trócaire

To request your free legacy planner now, including bequest wording and a simple 4-step worksheet you can share privately with your solicitor, ring Grace Kelly on 01 5053 221, or email grace.kelly@trocaire.org

Charity Regulatory Authority No. 20204842; Revenue Number CHY 22508; Company Number 661147



Archbishop hopes Covid-19 brings new appreciation for Sabbath on Reek Sunday



Orla and Willie McLoughlin from Castlebar.
Photos: Conor McKeown



Pat Boyhan from
Offaly makes his
way up the Reek.



Peter
McHugh
(Leitrim).



Chai Brady

Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam has asked the Faithful to put aside a day for God each week while the Sunday obligation is lifted due to the coronavirus, in his homily for Reek Sunday.

Despite the Reek Sunday pilgrimage being cancelled this year, several people still braved the Croagh Patrick climb, some not wearing shoes.

Archbishop Neary celebrated vigil Mass on the eve of Reek Sunday at St Mary's Church in Westport.

Speaking of the Sunday obligation, he said: "One fruit of the Covid-19 experience I hope has at least begun to blossom is a newfound understanding and appreciation of the centrality and importance of the Sabbath in our lives.

"While it was necessary for pastoral reasons to lift the obligation to attend Mass each Sunday during the pandemic, the human need to set aside a dedicated day for God each week, and the human need to rest from the non-essential tasks assigned to the other days of the week, remain."



Patrick Mallon
(Longford)
pauses on his
pilgrimage.



The delusion of freedom in China



The Pope must break silence about Chinese human rights abuses, writes **David Quinn**

As you may have seen in the media, the Chinese government has recently cracked down hard on freedom in Hong Kong by passing a new 'security' law. Pope Francis intended noting this in a recent address but decided not to at the last minute.

The reason we know that he intended mentioning the Chinese crackdown in Hong Kong is because journalists received an embargoed press release of the Pope's planned remarks, but when he actually delivered them, the references to Hong Kong, which were apparently very mild, were gone.

It seems clear from this little incident that Rome is very anxious to normalise relations with the government in Beijing.

Historically, communist China has been extremely anti-religious. Under the founder of the Chinese communist state, Mao Tse Tung, Irish missionaries were expelled, or even imprisoned. The 'underground' Catholic Church in China, suffered greatly.

After the death of Chairman Mao in 1976, China began to open up to the rest of the world. It has now risen to become the second biggest economy in the world after the United States (it may pass out the US soon).

Compared with the worst periods under Mr Mao, the country is less tyrannous than it was, and religious believers are less persecuted.

Political freedom

For quite a long time now, the West has managed to persuade itself that bit by bit, China would become more and more open, more and more democratic. Western leaders seemed to think that freeing up the economy there would lead to more political freedom.

This is an assumption, or rather a delusion, that we will now have to set to one side for the indefinite future. While it is true that China is freer as a society than it was under Mao, it is by no means free in the

way we might understand freedom in the West.

In fact, under its current leader, President Xi Jinping, it has been going backwards. The country has become more authoritarian again.

One of the first signs we had of this was in 2013 when something called 'Document No. 9' was produced which condemned what it considers to be Western ideas like constitutional democracy, press freedom and judicial independence.

Most Western countries did not think China was being literal. They managed to convince themselves that somehow the document was window-dressing for domestic purposes. It wasn't.

The crackdown in Hong Kong is merely an extension of what has happened in the rest of China where a minimum of political dissent is allowed.

Freedom of religion is not recognised in any real sense. Worshipers can practice their faith, but all religions are required to be subservient to the Communist Party. That includes the Catholic Church.

The Vatican appears to have been taken in by the attitude that China was bit by bit transforming itself into a Western-style

democracy and therefore has been anxious to end the old mutual suspicion between the Chinese Communist Party and itself.

“Beijing has decided that it must crush Muslim culture once and for all...”

This led to an as-yet-to-be-published agreement two years ago between Beijing and the Holy See that basically gives the Chinese Government a very large measure of control over who gets to be a Catholic bishop in China. The move was condemned by members of the persecuted Church in China. They had suffered for their religion and for the independence of the Church. Had they suffered for nothing?

But the attitude of the Holy See seems to be that it is better for the average



Members of the Uighur community protest despite the increasing threat from the Chinese regime.



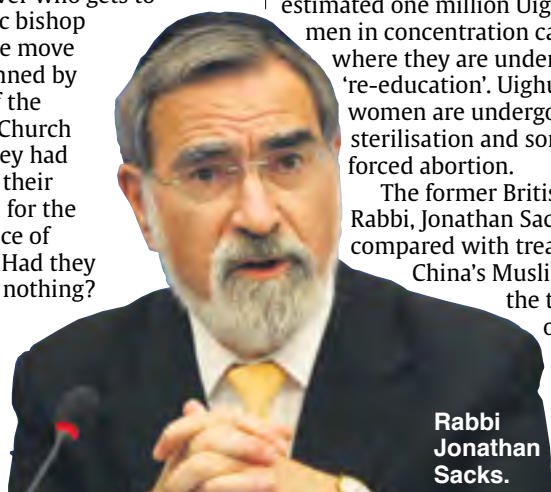
Catholic in China if relations with Beijing are as normal as possible.

The big question now is whether the price is too high.

Quite aside from the situation in Hong Kong, there is the much worse fate that has befallen Uighur Muslims in the far west of the country. It amounts to the biggest human rights abuse in the world today.

After an outbreak of violence among some Uighurs, Beijing cracked down hard. It has decided that it must crush Uighur Muslim culture once and for all. To this end, it has imprisoned an estimated one million Uighur men in concentration camps where they are undergoing 're-education'. Uighur women are undergoing mass sterilisation and sometimes forced abortion.

The former British Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, has compared with treatment of China's Muslims with the treatment of Jews by Nazi Germany prior to the



Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

“The Vatican appears to have been taken in by the attitude that China was bit by bit transforming itself into a Western-style democracy and therefore has been anxious to end the old mutual suspicion between the Chinese Communist Party and itself”

Holocaust.

Can the Pope really afford to be silent in the face of this?

Arguably, the Pope is now in a position similar to that of Pius XII during World War II. During that war, the concern was that by attacking the Nazi regime too strongly, it would make things worse for both Catholics and Jews. (In the end, of course, things could not get worse for the Jewish people as the worst crime in history was inflicted on them.)

Pius XII has been strongly criticised for not sufficiently standing up to Nazi Germany. He thought he was being prudent.

Does Pope Francis believe he is being prudent by maintaining silence as China's human rights abuses become ever more undeniable? Does he believe that speaking out will make it worse for China's five to 10 million Catholics?

On the other hand, if he continues to say nothing, then his personal moral authority will diminish, especially as more Western powers wake up to the true nature of Xi's China.

At a minimum, it seems to me, he will have to back some of the EU's expressions of concern about human rights abuse in China. Those statements pull their punches, but they are better than saying nothing. Even allowing for prudential considerations, silence no longer seems a viable, or a moral option for the Holy See or Pope Francis.



Out&About

Pioneers celebrate annual Mass in Mullingar

WESTMEATH: The Mullingar Deanery Pioneers held their annual Pioneer Mass in the Cathedral of Christ the King Mullingar. Administrator Fr Derek Darby was the celebrant.



▲ **DUBLIN:** The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien is welcomed by the Dublin Simon Community to Usher's Island treatment facility. The charity said: "We look forward to working with Minister O'Brien as we increase our bed count from 36 to 100."

◀ **WESTMEATH:** Fr William Coleman PP of Rochfortbridge, marking his silver jubilee of ordination in the company of Msgr Kevin Gillespie, administer of St Eunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny.

IN SHORT

St Patrick's College tackles Covid-19 challenge with 'blended learning'

As part of St Patrick's College Maynooth's long-term planning last year they decided to reformat their Higher Diploma in Theological Studies and from Autumn 2020 the programme will be delivered in a 'blended learning' format.

This means that students will no longer have to travel to the Maynooth campus twice a week, but will engage with most of the content from the comfort of their homes.

This new format is said to allow students from across Ireland to enrol in the programme. In the new format, students

will be expected to be on campus for six weekends over the year (Friday into Saturday). This is when the face-to-face classes will take place and when students will have a chance to meet their lecturers and each other.

Dr Neil Xavier O'Donoghue, lecturer in Systematic Theology, said: "Additionally, it is a time to take advantage of the many resources that the historic campus offers and the amenities of Ireland's only university town.

"Students are not obliged to stay on campus but those enrolled in the programme can avail of the very competitive discounted room rates provided by the Conference and Accommodations' Office.

"Then the bulk of the classes will take

place on two evenings a week during term time."

On Wednesdays there will be three hours of live online classes which the students can attend from their homes. Additionally, another evening's worth of learning material will be provided each week that the student can do in their own time.

Dr Xavier O'Donoghue said: "The HDip was set up for secondary school teachers who want to teach Religious Studies at post-primary level, and it meets all of the Teaching Council of Ireland's requirements.

"While many secondary school teachers continue to avail of the programme, in recent years many others have attended out of personal interest, a desire to study their faith or a desire to return to learning. In certain

cases, graduates of the HDip can enter a Master's Programme in Theology."

More details of the programme are available at: <https://maynoothcollege.ie/courses/higherdiploma-in-theological-studies>. For admission to the course or other details, contact Barbara Mahon at the SPCM Admissions Office at: admissions@spcm.ie; 00353 (0)1 708-4772

N.B. In the case that Covid-19 restrictions make the weekend residential impossible, these will be held virtually.

Pope Francis 'lockdown' homilies published

The Vatican Publishing House has published a downloadable publication containing the

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



ITALY: The Minister General and his definitory elected the Definitory for the Franciscan Province of Ireland to accompany Fr Aidan McGrath OFM as Minister Provincial, and Fr Joe Condren OFM, as Vicar Provincial, for the next three years.

► TIPPERARY:

Fundraisers Conor, Micheál, Mick, Noel and John (in blue) get ready for a 600km charity cycle from Mizen to Malin which took place from July 23-26 for the Tipperary branch of Down Syndrome Ireland. Donations can be made up until August 31 at https://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/11383485_mizen-to-malin-cycle-for-down-syndrome-ireland-tipperary-branch.html



MONAGHAN: Canon Terry Connolly PE Eskra, Co. Tyrone, is pictured with his great-grandnephew Theo McMahon in Clontibret. Photo: Jimmy McPhillips



◀ KILDARE:

Dr Neil Xavier O'Donoghue, lecturer in Systematic Theology in St Patrick's College Maynooth, is pictured teaching his class online.



OMAGH: Omagh Christian Brothers School has wished Conor Byrne 'all the best' after he received a golf scholarship from the University of Hartford, Connecticut, to study history. He will be a member of the men's golf team, Hartford Hawks, competing in the National Division 1 Championships over the next four years.

homilies delivered by Pope Francis during lockdown from Casa Santa Marta.

As a sign of his closeness to those who were ill, under quarantine, or for whatever reason, were unable to leave their homes, Pope Francis began transmitting his daily morning Mass as Italy went into lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

From March 9 to May 18, the Mass Pope Francis celebrated every morning was transmitted throughout the world.

Entitled 'Strong in the Face of Tribulation: The Church in Communion – A Sure Support in Time of Trial', the text also contains blessings and prayers, including the prayer used during the extraordinary moment of prayer with Pope Francis on

March 27; as well as the decrees of the Apostolic Penitentiary regarding the special indulgences granted because of the special circumstances created by the coronavirus pandemic.

Fr Giulio Cesareo, editorial director of Libreria Editrice Vaticana (the Vatican Publishing House), underlined how important Pope Francis' homilies were. "He is a father," Fr Giulio said, "a spiritual guide who accompanied us as we lived that period. His homilies are precious because they are not only valid for back then. We still experience conflicts, shame, difficulties in praying. We were perhaps more receptive and attentive to what he told us back then. But it is important to keep his words

with us so as to allow ourselves to be continually nourished by the beautiful things he said that concern life."

Since the suspension of the daily transmission of the Pope's Mass, the feedback received from many readers was that the PDF edition be made available in print.

The digital edition of the book can still be accessed for a limited period of time, using this link: https://www.vaticannews.va/content/dam/lev/forti-nella-tribolazione/pdf/eng/20_0961-Forti-nella-tribolazione-inglese-3.pdf

The print edition will soon be available through Amazon.com and through other publishers who obtain the rights to publish it.

Events

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

Priority one for Helen McEntee: abolishing oaths on the Bible



If the Government wants to abolish oaths, it should. Replacing it with a meaningless statement of truth is pointless, writes **John McGuirk**

Finally. Witnesses will no longer be required to swear before God or make an affirmation when filing affidavits under new proposals agreed by the Cabinet.

Instead they will be able to make what will be known as a 'statement of truth' and will face a maximum one-year prison term for breaking it.

The proposals will put an end to the 'embarrassing' practice of a witness having to indicate their religious faith when making an affidavit, the Law Society said.

The proposal is one of a raft of reforms contained in the Civil Law and Criminal Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2020 which outlines both temporary measures to help the courts during the coronavirus pandemic and long-term reforms of the justice system.

An honest question anyone might have, reading this: what is the difference between the present affirmation and a 'statement of truth'?

The affirmation already provides a secular option for those who do not wish to take a religious oath, and there's no enquiry as to your religious views.

A Judge simply asks 'do you wish to swear, or affirm', and you make your choice. He or she doesn't tut-tut at your lack of faith if you take the affirmation instead of the oath.

Options

These are your present options, in the case of an affidavit:

An oath sworn in the presence of a Notary Public, which will be transferred to the affidavit, is as follows:

"I swear by Almighty God that this is my name and handwriting, and that the contents of this my affidavit are true."

If a person refrains from taking an oath due to religious reasons, a solemn affirmation will be made as follows:

"I, (the name) do solemnly and sincerely affirm that this is my



name and handwriting, and that the contents of this my affidavit are true."

What's the offensive bit there? Is it that the word 'solemnly' has religious overtones, or something?

“It made sense to ask people to take an oath which might damn them were it to be broken”

The Law Reform Commission, who recommended the change, seem to say in their report that they believe the affirmation to "require a declaration that the person has no religious belief":

Clearly, the present law is in a number of respects unsatisfactory. In the first place, it has been seen that many forms of oath are at best embarrassing and at worst offensive to the religious beliefs of the persons to whom they are meant to apply. If the witness or deponent objects to the taking of an oath in such form, he must either:

(a) indicate some other form and declare it to be binding on his conscience; or

(b) declare that he has no religious belief, or that the taking of an oath is contrary to his religious belief, in which case he may affirm.

But in the first instance, this is not true in practice. And in the second instance, there's a second

problem: if a person is, in fact, religious, then a non-religious 'statement of truth' will hold significantly less moral weight than an oath on the Bible.

The whole point of the oath on the bible, after all, is that it's a form of self-curse: You're implicitly damning yourself if you swear on the holy book to be truthful, and then lie.

The oath emerged, of course, in the middle ages, when people took religion a little more seriously than they do now, but the principle is the same: since we cannot read somebody's mind, we ask them to provide some sort of proof that they are telling the truth.

In those days, when the concept of damnation was universally taken seriously, it made sense to ask people to take an oath which might damn them were it to be broken.

Penalty

Whether an oath retains that level of persuasiveness today is an open question, but one thing should be clear: a

'statement of truth' is meaningless, since the only penalty for breaching it is temporal, in the event that one is found out (which is always a low risk proposition).



Minister Helen McEntee.

Indeed, if you wanted to abolish the oath, by all means, abolish it. But replacing it with a statement of truth is utterly pointless, isn't it?

Just make it a criminal offence to give false evidence in legal proceedings, and abolish the whole charade altogether, if that's what you want to do.

But anyway, this is all the product of secular minds: they have in their possession a mechanism – the oath – which other people take very seriously, and they want to abolish it because they don't take it seriously themselves.

It is entirely stupid, and entirely representative of how Ireland has been governed for the past two decades, or so. If it is old or religious, it's bad, and it's got to go. And we'll replace it with something modern, and utterly meaningless.

Ho hum.

1 John McGuirk is Editor of Gript. ie – this article is printed with the kind permission of Gript.

“They have in their possession a mechanism which other people take very seriously...they don't take it seriously themselves”

WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF CHRIST IN...

THE HOLY LAND

9 – 18 & 16 – 25
FEBRUARY 2021

PRICE:

€1685 *INCLUDING
TAXES AND TIPS

DIRECT FLIGHTS

Visit Bethlehem, Nazareth,
Jerusalem and other sites in the
Holy Land associated with Christ.

Nine-night pilgrimage in four-star hotels

- Visit the site of Christ's birth
- Walk the Way of the Cross
- Experience Calvary and the Tomb of Jesus
- Tour the home of the Holy Family
- See the site of the Annunciation
- Boat ride on the Sea of Galilee
- Explore the site of Christ's miracles
- Journey to Mount Tabor
- Float in the magical Dead Sea
- Discover ancient markets

Luxury air-conditioned coach throughout the itinerary - breakfast and evening meal served each day at hotels - full religious programme - services of Marian Pilgrimages representative and professional English-speaking guide throughout the pilgrimage

To reserve your place:

*Single Supplement Applies

Call Dublin (01) 878 8159 or Belfast (028) 95680005 or email info@marian.ie

An *invitation* to a summer festival with a difference

The Youth 2000 e-festival will be a place where young people can encounter God in fresh ways, writes **Amy-Hurle McCann**

Youth 2000 Ireland has a full calendar each year with eight regional retreats, a Christmas festival and a summer festival. The Youth 2000 leadership team work tirelessly throughout the year to make each retreat a faith-filled space where the participants can encounter the living God. The summer festival has always been the highpoint, usually lasting four days, it sees approximately 1,000 young people aged 16-35 come together for fellowship and fun.

Where summer festivals are concerned, you could call the Youth 2000 event the Catholic 'Oxygen'. This year it was scheduled to take place on the weekend of August 15, 2020.

However, as the world came to a standstill due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was inevitable that the summer festival would not take its usual format. Observing social distancing guidelines would make it impossible to cater for the large numbers of young people who usually attend the residential retreat, not to mention the heavy traffic of day visitors that come and go throughout the four days.

Platform

The team have prayerfully decided to hold an e-festival instead. Using the online platform, the e-festival will deliver the key elements of the traditional summer festival and will allow young people to engage with the content from the safety of their own homes.

Many other Faith events have made the decision to adapt and deliver their content online, such as Scotland's 'Stronghold' and the Cork Dominicans' 'Ignite Conference'. The Youth 2000 leadership team have observed these fantastic events and have considered what would work for Youth 2000's unique ministry; that is, of youth bringing youth to the heart of the Church.



“There has also been catechesis online; live streamed adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and workshops every Friday evening with inspiring speakers”

The genesis of the idea builds upon the successful online presence Youth 2000 has garnered during lockdown through the help and hard work of its young volunteers. Already fluent in the digital sphere, and knowing what is attractive to young people, a successful online community has flourished.

Youth 2000's social media profiles are active and fruitful with different posts each day, such as shout-out Mondays, wisdom

Wednesdays and throwback Thursdays.

There has also been catechesis online; live streamed adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and workshops every Friday evening with inspiring speakers. All of this comes from the desire of Youth 2000 to be evangelistic, to engage young people who already have an active online presence, and to attract them with Youth 2000's joy and enthusiasm.

Mustard seed

Like the mustard seed, it is the hope that the summer e-festival would be a catalyst where young people can encounter God, and that it would kindle in them, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, a desire to attend future retreats.

The summer e-festival will take place on August 14-16. The itinerary is set to be exciting and inspiring.

Some major Catholic speakers are scheduled to give talks, including Fr John Harris OP, Scott Hahn, Beth Davis, Sr Colleen Mattingly OP, John Pridmore and many more.

There will be celebrations of Mass, 24-hour Adoration of the

Blessed Sacrament, Rosary, and a healing service – all hallmarks of the usual summer festival.

What sets this online event apart from the many others out there in the virtual field is the unwavering emphasis on the Sacraments. The Eucharist, the “source and summit” of our Faith, will be front and centre of the e-festival. It will be an interactive event with opportunities to engage and enjoy the craic with the two young host presenters via the Facebook Live and Instagram Live feeds.

The theme for this year comes from Psalm 118.14: “The Lord is my strength and my song” and we are assured of plenty of songs...some things never change!

The e-festival will be streamed live, but it will not be available post-event. So, go to www.youth2000.ie where it is free to register. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity and witness young people using their skills and creative gifts at the service of the Gospel even in uncertain times.



The Irish Spirit

July 30th, 2020
Issue No. 9

Reek Sunday

John G O'Dwyer writes what it is
about the holy mountains in Ireland
that attracts people

Michael Kelly discusses the significance
of mountains throughout the bible

Fr Bryan Shortall
On choosing joy each day

PLUS

A delicious recipe straight
from Kylemore Abbey, and
the history of cutlery

The wonder and awe of high places



Written by
John G. O'Dwyer

It is sometimes said that the past never truly dies but invariably comes back to revisit us. Nowhere is this more accurate than with the ageless tradition of pilgrimage.

The idea of taking the high road to spiritual healing on a remote mountain has been an alluring one throughout history since great peaks thrusting heavenward were almost invariably regarded as the abodes of pagan deities or Christian saints. Little wonder then, that distant and beautiful mountains have continually tempted up-gazing people with an implied "come up if you dare" challenge. It is perhaps the enigmatic quality of high places, their prominence and permanence against our transience and triviality that throughout history has draws us to them.

It is unsurprising therefore that mountains have, since time immemorial, been venerated as special places. Down the ages we have loaded them with legend and credited them with powers of spirituality and magic. To the people of Tibet, Everest is the "mother goddess of the universe" while nearby the beautiful Mount Kailash has never been climbed because of its religious significance. To aboriginal Australians, Ayers Rock is sacred, while the Alpenglow from the Swiss Mountains was believed to reflect the treasures of the earth. The poet Wordsworth ascended Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales by night. He found the experience transcended "the imperfect offices of prayer and praise" while on the summit he "beheld the emblem of a mind, that feeds upon infinity."

Small wonder then that salient Irish peaks such as Slieve Gullion, Slievenamon, The Paps, Mount Brandon, Slieve League and Croagh Patrick have also been interwoven with the heroic myths and beliefs systems that bound communities since before the arrival of Christianity. Reek Sunday, which in less dystopian times would have taken place on Sunday last, is just the best-known example of several, pattern-day climbs of pre-Christian origin. These have become seamlessly incorporated into the Christian calendar and are still taking place in mountain areas across Ireland, despite the otherwise steep decline in more formal religious practice. Materialism may squat immovably at the core of modern life, but the multitudes still following the ancient tradition of pilgrimage are the living proof of a continuing desire for higher meaning that material wealth leaves unsatisfied.

If, however, pilgrim walkers come to the "The Reek" or indeed any other Irish mountain, with dreamy visions informed by romantic poets and painters they are bound for disappointment. Mostly, it is not the weather or the unforgiving terrain that spoils the romance but the work of man. Wherever you wander on the Irish hills you'll come across the monuments of our ancestors. Heading up the Croagh Patrick pilgrims encounter statues, paths, prayer beds, cairns, archaeological remains and hopefully at the end of their penitential trek the early 20th century summit church. Economically, spiritually or politically - depending on contemporary need - the powerful image of high places has been exploited by adding a vein of material symbolism to build and buttress communities.

But would Croagh Patrick or Ireland's other iconic hills be in some way better if they had been preserved from the



Croagh Patrick, County Mayo.

“The idea of taking the high road to spiritual healing on a remote mountain has been an alluring one throughout history since great peaks thrusting heavenward were almost invariably regarded as the abodes of pagan deities or Christian saints”

multitudes as a pristine mountain pyramid similar to Mount Kailash? I believe not. Mountains are at their best when they contribute to human endeavour. A ruined croft in an upland tells the story of such contribution - a sheep farm on a mountainside affirms the continued importance of this contribution. The burial cairns, the pilgrim paths, the stone walls, the religious artifacts are not incongruous intrusions, but memorials to how we have gained benefit our highest places. Indeed, it is these signs and messages - many from our pagan and early Christian past - that are part of the magnetic power drawing us back to Ireland's most mystical mountains generation after generation.

Pattern day pilgrimages have long offered an excuse for many to tag a first summit. Of course, climbing uphill is an unaccustomed and singular struggle, no matter how we romanticise it, just as it was an unromantic but accustomed struggle for our forefathers. Today, the value lies not in the summit gained, or even with the view - which considering Irish weather is always a bonus - but in the effort itself and our empathy with the surroundings as we ascend.

On the way to most Irish summits, we will gaze upon the monuments of past generations and hopefully be reminded that these interventions never aspired to improve on creation.

The challenge today is to resist the understandable temptation to irrevocably change our mountain areas. Instead, we need to adopt a long-term sustainable approach aimed at supporting the type of healthy interaction between humans and hills, which occurred for countless generations on the last Sunday of July each year.



**Wild Stories from the
Irish Uplands
by John G. O'Dwyer**

PRICE: €14.99

☎ 01 6874096

✉ sales@columba.ie

www.currachbooks.com

or send a cheque to:
Currach Books, Block 3b,
Bracken Business Park,
Bracken Road, Sandyford,
Dublin 18, D18 K277.



CURRACHBOOKS

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

Mountains, the bible and divine encounters



Written by
Michael Kelly

In the Hebrew Bible, mountains have always been significant places where the Israelites encountered the Presence of God. Because mountaintops were high above the clouds the Jewish people discerned that this is where God could be experienced *par excellence*.

“Mountains were the places where the patriarch and the prophets went to be closer to God and discern his will at times of crisis and anxiety.”

The Book of Exodus tells us that Moses came upon the burning bush on Mount Horeb and the Lord instructed him to remove his sandals because the place where he was standing was “holy ground”.

Mountains were the places where the patriarch and the prophets went to be closer to God and discern his will at times of crisis and anxiety.

After the arrival of the children of Israel at the foot Mount Sinai, Moses ascended to the mountaintop and returned with stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments.

At the end of his life, as the Jews wondered if they would ever see the Promised Land after years wandering in the desert, God brought Moses to the top of Mount Nebo where he could see the land of Israel to fulfil his promise that he would see the “land of milk and honey”. On a clear day, one can even today see the city of Jerusalem from the top of Nebo which is in modern-day Jordan.

So, at the time of Jesus mountains would have been synonymous with the Divine Encounter for Jews.

After his baptism in the River Jordan by his cousin John the Baptist, Jesus went to the area around Jericho and spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert. The Gospel recalls that Satan took Jesus to the top of what we now call Mount Temptation and tested him. It’s significant that this happened before the Lord began his public ministry and to this day there is a monastery where monks live on the mountain in remembrance of God’s ultimate triumph over evil.

Some of the most important moments in that public ministry also happened on mountains such as the Sermon on the Mount and the giving of the Beatitudes on what pilgrims can pray today as Mount Beatitude.

“Some of the most important moments in that public ministry also happened on mountains such as the Sermon on the Mount and the giving of the Beatitudes on what pilgrims can pray today as Mount Beatitude.”

One of the most evocative moments in the New Testament takes place on the top of Mount Tabor in the Transfiguration where Jesus is joined by the prophets Moses and Elijah and the Heavens open and God proclaims: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Mark 9:7).

Mount Precipice on the outskirts of Nazareth is the site where Jesus was rejected by the people of his hometown after he had been preaching in the synagogue and they had taken him there to throw him off as recorded in the Gospel of Luke. Today one can visit the site and see the nearby Church of Mary’s Fear where the tradition records that the Mother of God witnessed the angry mob jostle with her son.

The Mount of Olives is frequently mentioned in the New Testament as part of the route from Jerusalem to Bethany and

the place where Jesus stood when he wept over the city.

We know that Jesus spent time on both sides of the mountain both in Bethany (where he raised Lazarus from the dead) and on the other side in Jerusalem itself. It seems likely he stayed here during his trips to Jerusalem because the bible records that in the evening he returned here to rest.

It was to the Mount of Olives where the Lord returned after the Last Supper on the night of his betrayal and it is here that the bible also records where Jesus returned to Heaven at the end of his earthly life – a moment we celebrate in the Feastday of the Ascension.

The scriptures illustrate that in biblical times, holy men and women encountered God on holy mountains and they still do.

What is the Doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception about?

On December 8 every year the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception. To some it's not clear what exactly we are celebrating. Is it the same as the doctrine of Mary's virginity? What does it mean to say that Mary was 'immaculate'?

Exclusive Excerpt from *Faith Questions* Edited by **Brendan Leahy**

It's true that the Immaculate Conception sometimes gets confused with other aspects of our faith. Mary's virginity, for instance, is about her conceiving Jesus in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit rather than as a result of a sexual union with a man. Jesus has only one Father – God the Father. His relationship with the Father is a central theme of the Gospels. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, on the other hand, is about Mary's own identity from the first moment of her existence – she was totally sinless, open to God. This is not a statement about how Mary was conceived. She was conceived in the normal way through the sexual union of her parents, Joachim and Anna.

Often Mary's preservation from original sin sounds negative. But it can and should also be thought of positively.

Original sin is not to be confused with our personal sins. Original sin is more about a deep-rooted turning against God that is written into history, into our social environment and into our lives. We are born into it. We find ourselves touched by this turn against God and so we need salvation, redemption and freedom in order to be able to turn in love towards God and one another. Only God can free us.

When God, who is Love, wanted to enter this world in order to bring us to share in his life and set us free, he needed an access point in history where he would be perfectly accepted and welcomed. This is the context for understanding Mary's Immaculate Conception. Being preserved from original sin meant she was full of grace, full of love and so able at the Annunciation to perfectly welcome without any obstacles whatever the fullness of God-Love come among us in Jesus Christ.

It might seem that Mary's Immaculate Conception removes her from us – she's too perfect, too spotless. But in fact the opposite is the case. It is precisely because she is so full of love that she also knew more than all others the extent to which sin and division impact on people. Love gives eyes and a heart to know what others are going through. Mary understood and was in solidarity more than anyone else with suffering humanity.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is, therefore, a hopeful teaching. It tells us that at the heart of the Church we have a point where God-Love has been perfectly loved and we are embraced within that. No matter how imperfect our 'yes' to God who has come among us in Jesus Christ may be, it can be uttered as an echo of Mary's immaculate 'yes'.

From earliest times, certainly in the second century, reference was made to Mary's miraculous conception. The Church came to understand her Immaculate Conception by reading, living and re-reading the Scriptures. St Paul, for instance, writes how we are all called to be 'immaculate'. It seems that perhaps firstly in Ireland but then certainly in England a feast celebrating Mary's conception began already around 1000.

There were difficulties in understanding the doctrine. Theologians, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, faced a conundrum. They knew Mary was uniquely holy, special, worthy of veneration but since it is our faith that Jesus Christ is the saviour of all humankind, how can Mary be exempt? She too needs to be saved, does she not? So how could she be immaculate from her conception before Christ?

It was the Franciscan theologian, Duns Scotus, who offered a simple solution that



The Immaculate Conception, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Madrid,

“When God, who is Love, wanted to enter this world in order to bring us to share in his life and set us free, he needed an access point in history where he would be perfectly accepted and welcomed.”

helped. He made the point that yes, all of us need to be saved by Jesus Christ. And that is true of Mary too. But in her case, God applied to her in advance the salvation that would come into humanity through Jesus' death and resurrection. He did so in view of the unique mission she was to carry out as the Mother of God.

On 8 December, 1854 Pope Pius IX declared to be infallible the doctrine that holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.

The Pope had previously consulted the bishops of the world to see if this doctrine was in accordance with what Catholics believed. Their answer was a resounding 'yes'.

One final point. Mary was immaculate by a gift from the Triune God of Love from the first moment of her conception. But in baptism we too are given the gift of an immaculate new start in life (freed from original sin)! The Christian life then is a journey of letting that gift have an effect in our lives; of letting ourselves become immaculate, that is, full of love. We have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world 'to be holy and blameless ... in love ...' (Eph 1:3–5). It's good to be reminded of this before Christmas when we celebrate Mary's Immaculate Conception.



Faith Questions

Eds, Brendan Leahy & Declan Marimion

PRICE: €9.99

☎ 01 6874096 | ✉ sales@columba.ie
www.columbabooks.com

or send a cheque to:

Columba Books, Block 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.

 **columbaBOOKS**

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

Glendalough after Saint Kevin

Exclusive Excerpt from *Glendalough: History, Monuments & Legends*
by **George McClafferty**

There is a tradition that following the death of Kevin, the monastery was taken over by his nephew Molibba, who, it is said, became the second abbot and first Bishop of Glendalough. However, there is no historical evidence to support this tradition and it may have been a later fabrication to show the continuation of the Dál Messin Corb, the alleged ancestral lineage of the founder saint.

Little is known of Glendalough during the 7th century and existing records do not clearly indicate to which septs or families the earlier abbots and bishops belonged. Ecclesiastical settlements were often founded on lands donated by ruling families from whose ranks came the abbots and their successors. It is possible that the local sept was the Dál Messin Corb and that they held the abbacy of Glendalough during the 7th century. There are a few references in the Annals to the deaths of ecclesiastics at Glendalough during the late 7th century but little else is known of the settlement.

The abbacy of Glendalough certainly seems to have been controlled by the Uí Máil (from whom the Glen of Imaal takes its name) during the 8th century. The ecclesiastical settlement was destroyed by fire in 775 but it is not clear whether the fire was accidental or the result of a hostile attack. The importance of Glendalough as a place of pilgrimage is evident from the references in the Annals to the deaths of a number of important people there. In the year 790, the bones of St Kevin were disinterred and enshrined at the site.

According to the Latin 'Life' of St Kevin, seven visits to Glendalough carried the same benefit as one pilgrimage to Rome.

At around the turn of the 9th century, the dynasty of Uí Dúnlainge became the dominant influence at Glendalough. There are many references in the Annals to the deaths of abbots during this period which indicate that the monastery was very important and wealthy. An entry in the Martyrology of Oengus describes Glendalough as follows:

*The fortress of Eamhain Macha has vanished
Except that its stones remain*

*The monastic city of the western world
Is Glendalough of the assemblies.*

The relative peace of the Irish ecclesiastical settlements was shattered with the arrival of the Vikings and Glendalough was plundered by them in 833. They returned and burned a church just two years later. The next fifty



Upper Lake, Glendalough, Wicklow Photo: Rob Hurson Source: Wikimedia Commons

years seems to have been fairly peaceful but the Vikings returned in 886 and plundered the site once again.

During the 10th century, the ecclesiastical settlement seems to have been under the control of septs from West Leinster. Most of the stone buildings which survive today date from between this period and the 12th century, as the earlier ecclesiastical structures which were built of perishable materials were gradually replaced by stone edifices. It was during this period that the monastic school was at its height and attracted students from all over Britain, as well as some from other parts of Europe.

Archaeological excavation of contemporary settlements has shown that corn was the main crop while cattle, sheep, pigs and goats were kept. Vegetables and herbs were grown, beehives provided honey and the local rivers and lakes supplied fish. The diet varied from place to place, depending on the wealth and location of the settlement while fasting at certain times was a feature of all ecclesiastical settlements. Both the domestic and farm buildings were built of perishable materials which were easily burnt and needed frequent replacement.

The Uí Muiredaig sept became the dominant influence at Glendalough during the late 10th century and remained there for most of the period up to the middle of the 13th century when record of the abbacy ends. In 1017, 1020 and again in 1061, the settlement was destroyed by fire. These fires were probably accidental but destructive enough to have been recorded in the Annals. In 1043, the site was attacked by a rival sept and sixty inhabitants of the ecclesiastical settlement were slaughtered.

The O'Toole family, a branch of the Uí Muiredaig, succeeded to the abbacy of

Glendalough in 1106 when Gilla Comgaill filled the vacant position. At the Synod of Raith Bresail in 1111, the bishopric of Glendalough was reconstituted as a territorial diocese which covered most of modern county Wicklow as well as parts of Kildare and Dublin. Gilla Comgaill's grandson Laurence (Lorcán), who was born about the year 1128, became the second saint associated with Glendalough. As a child, St Laurence O'Toole, lived as a hostage of Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, at Ferns in county Wexford. As a hostage, he was harshly treated and following protests from his father, he was given into the care of the Bishop of Glendalough. Soon, he became attracted to the monastic way of life and he relinquished all claims to the family inheritance. In 1153, he was chosen as Abbot of Glendalough but we are told that he declined the honour of bishop.

Laurence continued as Abbot for the following nine years and much of the 12th century building at Glendalough is attributed to him. Laurence was appointed Archbishop of Dublin in 1162 but frequently returned to Glendalough to spend the season of Lent in the cave known as St Kevin's Bed. As Archbishop of Dublin, Laurence negotiated between Strongbow and the citizens of Dublin during the siege of 1171. He also

helped to negotiate the Treaty of Windsor between Rory O'Connor and Henry II of England in 1175. In 1176, Glendalough was plundered by Anglo-Norman adventurers and in the following year an astonishing flood ran through the settlement taking with it a bridge and mills and leaving fish in the midst of the site.

Laurence was apparently popular among all his flock – Irish, Norman and Scandinavian. In 1180, he travelled to Normandy in France to seek a meeting with Henry II but was taken ill and died in the house of the Canons Regular of St Augustine, at Eu, on November 14th. His remains lie buried at Eu but his heart, enclosed in a casket, is supposedly preserved at Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin. Laurence was canonised in 1225.

During the 14th century, the settlement went into decline and lost much of its former glory but it seems to have still been important enough in 1398 for the Annals to record its destruction that summer by the English. The diocese of Glendalough was re-established by the Pope, about 1450, with bishops acceptable to the local inhabitants. The last of these bishops, one Denis White, a Dominican friar, surrendered to the Archbishop of Dublin in 1497. Abbots continued to be appointed up until the general suppression of the monasteries under Henry VIII.




Glendalough: History, Monuments & Legends
GEORGE MCCLAFFERTY

PRICE: €9.99

☎ 01 6874096 | ✉ sales@columba.ie
www.columbabooks.com

or send a cheque to:

Columba Books, Block 3b, Bracken Business Park,
Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.

 **columba**BOOKS

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

Give me Joy in my Heart

Exclusive Excerpt from *Sending Positive Vibes*
by Fr Bryan Shortall

We have to make our minds up to be joyful. It comes down to a choice; do we stand out in the sunshine or do we prefer to stay indoors with the curtains closed? It is easier said than done, depending on what kind of form we are in. Negative thinking saps our energy and closes us in on ourselves. And it is harder these days to avoid the onslaught of bad news and even aggression out there.

It is hard to focus on this when at times there is no escape from the bad news and the bad weather. But if I can't find a way out and if I feel like I'm smothered by all this, then I've got to reach out. I need others. We need each other and I'm lucky because I'm part of a religious order and so from day one I was accepted as a brother and I live in community. Now, I'm not going to lie, sometimes I envy you guys living on your own. And to be fair, the other fellows that live with me probably find me hard to live with at times. I remember when I was a student one of the older friars was grumbling at us because he couldn't hear the 9 o'clock news and he shouted; 'Grrrr! ye harriers!' ('Harriers' was the name the older friars gave to the student friars in temporary profession before we made our final vows.) Quick as a flash, one of the lads said; 'We are the fruits of all the prayers ye said for vocations!'

So, we've got to reach out. I couldn't do what I am doing without going for regular spiritual direction and also pastoral supervision. I was perpetually professed as a Capuchin friar in 1994 and I was ordained priest in 1997. I've been in school chaplaincy, local leadership in two of our friaries, I've been on our Provincial Leadership team, and I've been in hospital chaplaincy in Beaumont. While I was chaplain in Beaumont, I began to go for supervision, and it was one of the best decisions I made. I found hospital ministry very

challenging, and working in that environment, with emergencies, sickness and death, over a 12-hour shift either at night or during the day, isn't easy. I remember one night being on duty from 8pm to 8am and during the night seven people died. Going from one family to the other over the night for anointing and prayers was very hard. Yet many of them were concerned about me. 'It must be very hard for you, Father.' I will always be grateful for my time in Beaumont Hospital where I learned so much and where no matter who came through the emergency department, bad or good, all were triaged and treated. I salute the skills of our nursing, medical and care staff. So, I'm lucky enough to be in ministry, and if there's any place where we are challenged to keep the highest standards it is in ministry today. We minister in the name of Jesus Christ and his Church.

Being in religious life and in the priesthood is a great joy. I would say the challenge for me is to balance ministry with the administration of the parish. Thank God we have good personnel and Archbishop Martin has set up good diocesan offices and an excellent HR office which greatly helps us in running the machinery of the parish. I tend to switch off when there's talk of finance and paperwork. So, I try to concentrate on the ministry side, the people side.

St Michan's Parish is situated in the heart of the fruit and vegetable markets, so many of the Moore Street dealers live in the parish and many of them come regularly to Mass. They are a tonic to talk to and deeply generous people. The church is 200 years old this year and one of the things we did as a parish in preparation for the Mass of thanksgiving on 25 August, the Feast of St Michan, was to go out to the different parts of the parish to bless homes and families. The people in many ways took over. They put up bunting, they put out little altars and we had hospitality after the prayers.



“For me, there are three significant features of our priestly joy. It is a joy which anoints us, it is a joy which is imperishable and it is a missionary joy which spreads and attracts, starting backwards – with those farthest away from us.”

I told the archbishop at the Mass: there isn't a house that isn't blessed in this parish!

I get great life in identifying times and occasions of encounter with the people. In many cases this is through the celebration of the Sacraments. This gives me hope when I begin to pay attention to the attacks on the Church and our Catholic life out there. As I said at the top of this talk, it's hard to avoid. We are called to be joyful ministers of the Gospel, and in his Holy Thursday Chrism Mass homily in 2014 Pope Francis spoke about the grace of the Sacrament of Holy Orders as a source of joy for the priest himself and for the people we serve; and it reflects the generosity of God for us and in us.

'For me, there are three significant features of our priestly joy. It is a joy which anoints us, it is a joy which is imperishable and it is a missionary joy which spreads and attracts, starting backwards – with those farthest away from us.'

Pope Francis says that joy anoints, in that Grace fills us to the brim and overflows, fully, abundantly and entirely in each priest. We are anointed down to our very bones ... and our joy, which wells up from deep within, is the echo of this anointing. It has been there from the start and we need to remember to tap into it in prayer especially in the Scriptures and before the Blessed Sacrament.

He explains that it is imperishable, in that the fullness of the Gift, which no one can take away or increase, is an unfailing source of joy: an imperishable joy which the Lord has promised no one can take from us (John 16:22).

Pope Francis continues that it is missionary, in that priestly joy is deeply bound up with God's holy and faithful people, for it is an eminently missionary joy. Our anointing is meant for anointing God's holy and faithful people: for baptising and confirming them, healing and sanctifying them,

blessing, comforting and evangelising them.

I touched on prayer there. And that is the danger for us – whether in religious life and or priestly ministry – we just touch on prayer. Twenty years ago, one of our late great friars, now gone home to God, spotted something in the Sunday Independent one morning after Mass. It was about a well-known priest at the time and he had made the news in some area of pastoral activity, and I think the headline was 'Popular Priest ...'. And he was off: 'Popular Priest, what does he mean Popular Priest?', 'Oh, he's great with the youth', 'Father such-a-body gives a great homily.' 'Years ago we had golden priests and wooden chalices,' he lamented. 'Now we have golden chalices and wooden priests ... what we want are holy priests.'

And he was right. We need to rediscover our call to holiness and, of course, this is about the whole self, mind, body and spirit. The holiest

men I know and knew in the order were kind, prayerful, approachable, available, accountable, transparent and obedient. That didn't mean they didn't have their moments; look at St Padre Pio – friars often had to be on hand to meet upset penitents when he ran them from the confession boxes. But they were holy men, they were deeply prayerful in a down-to-earth way and holy through and through. One of them wasn't much of a preacher and he'd carry a load of books into the ambo with him and he'd stumble right through the homily, but he was so kind and caring to those who were in trouble or any need. He had a real empathy for the bereaved and a great ministry to the dying. He never had a minute and I remember when he got his first mobile phone he was tormented.

Another man who I judge as holy was a former provincial minister, now gone to God. He was provincial in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. If there was ever a man who blessed the order it was him. A missionary, home from Zambia, an Irish Capuchin but a native of the U., told me the story of asking for holidays to see his family in north-west England. In those days they got home to Ireland for six months every six years. He went to the previous provincial in Church Street and asked could he go on to visit his family in the UK and it was 'Let me think about it'. Then he got an answer after dinner; 'OK – go to England but be back on Friday' (and this was Tuesday). So he travelled on Wednesday, had Thursday with his mother, and back to Ireland on Friday. Horrible. Years later, the next provincial apologised for the way he had been previously treated and told him to go and spend as long as he needed and see his family. At his funeral in the early 2000s the Capuchin friar who preached said this provincial minister was 'Our Pope John'.

Finally, a word from the writings of St Francis of Assisi about priests and the friars who are priests. He sets the bar very high when he speaks of priesthood. He had an enormous respect for the priesthood. He wasn't a priest himself as

he felt genuinely unworthy of it, although we know he was a deacon because in the sources we see him minister as a deacon in the story of the first Christmas crib at Greccio. We also know he was a cleric because he speaks of 'we' who are clerics. He accepted diaconate also because he was minister general of the order.

From the Testament of St Francis of Assisi, we read:

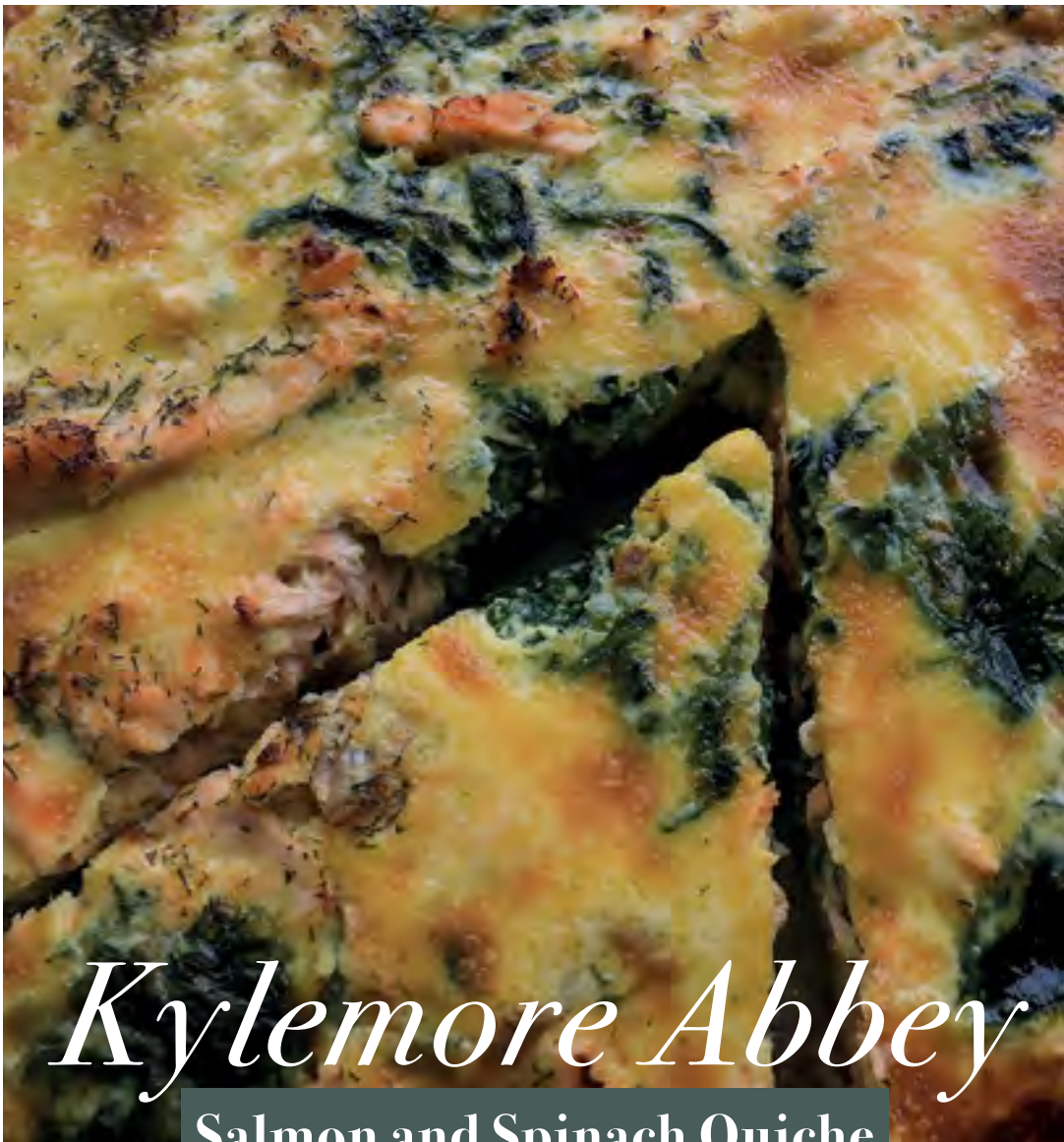
Afterwards the Lord gave me and still gives me such faith in priests who live according to the manner of the holy Roman Church because of their order, that if they were to persecute me, I would still have recourse to them. And if I possessed as much wisdom as Solomon had and I came upon pitiful priests of this world, I would not preach contrary to their will in the parishes in which they live.

And I desire to fear, love and honour them and all others as my masters. And I do not wish to consider sin in them because I discern the Son of God in them and they are my masters. And I act in this way since I see nothing corporally of the Most High Son of God in this world except His Most Holy Body and Blood which they receive and which they alone administer to others ...

I would argue that St Francis would urge all of us to be joyful ministers of the Gospel for our time, a time which is understanding priesthood, celibacy and a lifelong commitment less and less.

In the 21st century the world still holds up Francis of Assisi, who died in 1226; our present pope took his name. It seems to me that Francis of Assisi's values are things that the world needs more and more. But this is the thing of it; Francis of Assisi always points to Jesus Christ. I'll leave you with the first Chapter of the Rule of Saint Francis of Assisi:

This is the rule and life of the Friars Minor, namely, to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, in poverty and in chastity. Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to Pope Honorius and to his successors who shall be canonically elected, and to the Roman Church. The other brothers are bound to obey Brother Francis, and his successors.



Kylemore Abbey

Salmon and Spinach Quiche

Ingredients

For the pastry

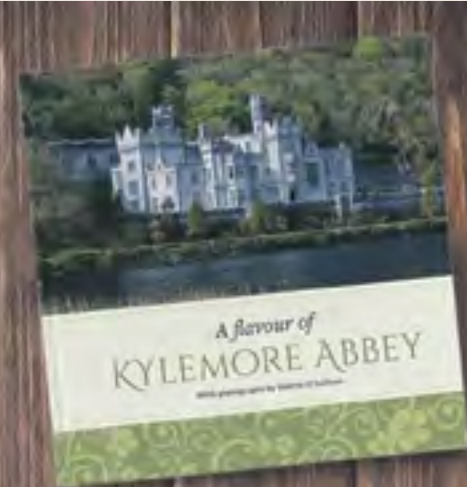
- 300 g wholemeal flour
- 300 g plain flour
- 100 g butter, cubed
- 150–200 ml water

For the filling

- 250 g spinach
- 600 g salmon
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 50 ml oil
- 100 ml cream
- Egg mix
- 8 eggs
- 800 ml cream
- 800 ml milk

Sieve the plain flour into a bowl, add the wholemeal flour and mix together. Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add enough water to form a soft paste with the flour when combined. Refrigerate for 1 hour or overnight. Roll out to a thickness of 1 cm and bake blind for 14 minutes at 140°C degrees.


Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the spinach and fry off quickly for 1–2 minutes. Add the nutmeg, sea salt, pepper and cream. Dice the salmon into small cubes. Spread the spinach mix over the pastry base evenly and lay the salmon over the spinach. Season the salmon with the remaining salt and pepper and place your quiche tray in the oven with a baking sheet underneath. Whisk all the egg mix ingredients together and pour over the salmon. Cook for 40 minutes at 160°C degrees.




A flavour of Kylemore Abbey
Photographs by Valerie O'Sullivan
PRICE: €24.99

☎ 01 6874096 ✉ sales@columba.ie
www.columbabooks.com

or send a cheque to:
Columba Books, Block 3b, Bracken
Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford,
Dublin 18, D18 K277.






Sending Positive Vibes
by Fr Bryan Shortall
PRICE: €12.99

☎ 01 6874096 ✉ sales@columba.ie
www.columbabooks.com

or send a cheque to:
Columba Books, Block 3b, Bracken
Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford,
Dublin 18, D18 K277.



FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

A radical change of eating habits

Exclusive Excerpt from
Food, Feast & Fast
by P. Fintan Lyons OSB

The custom of small portions in large numbers taken by the hand was standard in the early centuries before the knife and fork setting arrived and changed eating habits forever. Historical evidence for the introduction of the fork was not easy to establish and relied on contributions from art history as well as recipe books, but it seems that in the sophisticated surroundings of Byzantine Court life in the tenth-century small gilt ones began to be used to pick up sweetmeats. These forks were known in Greece for some centuries before arriving in Italy, where a French traveller noticed them admiringly at a ducal banquet in Venice in 1518.

“The instinct of these officials was that the commensality he portrayed, involving so many ‘vulgaritys’ such as the toothpick and the fork, was completely unacceptable in a sacred context”

At a session of the Inquisition Tribunal in Venice in 1573, the painter Paolo Veronese was questioned about a large painting, over four metres wide and nearly two high, a representation of the Last Supper commissioned for their refectory by the monks of SS Giovanni e Paolo in the city. As it was so large he had been able to include many figures including local notables, and as the Inquisitors put it: ‘buffoons, drunkards, Germans, dwarfs and other scurrilities’. It also included the monk who had not paid him enough for the picture. He is placed under the left arch, with knife and fork and napkin and ready to dine. All of these surround Christ and his apostles shown in the format typically used for the Last Supper, but St Peter seated beside Christ is engaged in carving a piece of meat. When asked what a figure to the right of Christ was doing he replied that he was cleaning his teeth with a toothpick (piron). To the Inquisitors, the painting presented



Paolo Veronese, Feast in the House of Levi

this sacred event in a decidedly worldly mode; they felt it was copying the practice obtaining in places infected with heresy, such as Germany, to mock the sacred rites of the Catholic Church. In fact, despite the terms of his commission, Veronese had never called it a Last Supper; and when asked what the picture actually was he replied that it was a painting of Christ and his disciples in the house of Simon, though he later changed it to the Banquet in the House of Levi, its present title.

The instinct of these officials was that the commensality he portrayed, involving so many ‘vulgaritys’ such as the toothpick and the fork, was completely unacceptable in a sacred context. Whether his contemporaries shared this dissociation between the sacred and the ‘modern’ or simply retained traditional ways is not clear but, in any case, until after 1800 and the transition from the great banqueting tradition to the more intimate suppers, already noted, most northern Europeans continued to eat with fingers and knives, or spoons and large slabs of bread called trenchers on which individual servings were placed. At a formal banquet in Russia in 1606, a Bavarian guest found that there was neither spoon nor plate provided.

Food rituals have always been important for sailors as their companionship can be so important for their survival, whether in commercial vessels or in the fraught conditions of naval battles. Nineteenth-century British navy gun-crews apparently ate their meals at tables slung between their weapons, taking turns to serve food from the galley.

The natural camaraderie of the table was thus transferred directly to the fighting effectiveness of the ship: men who ate their meals together worked better as a team and would more readily die together.

Perhaps that is the explanation for an otherwise strange Navy rule:

Even as late as 1897 the British Navy was forbidden the use of knives and forks, which were considered prejudicial to discipline and manliness. In America, however, nineteenth-century etiquette manuals were so severe about people who ate peas off their knives that those with better manners went to the other extreme – with the result that America became a nation of dedicated fork-eaters.

The introduction of the fork radically changed eating habits and had a significant effect on the humanising potential of the shared meal, its festive character, for a reason not overtly connected with the British Navy’s disciplinary concerns – but ultimately perhaps

not totally unconnected. The use of the fork in addition to the knife made eating a more efficient operation and consequently conducive to eating more quickly and in greater quantity. The two are in fact linked, as an increased pace of consumption interferes with the physiological process that registers fullness. This is a fundamental cause of over-eating. Clearly, such a practice has a negative effect on the atmosphere of sharing – even if plenty is available – as companions are likely to register feelings of unease, though probably silently.

A more fundamental situation also resulted from the introduction of that ‘momentous innovation’, the fork. As the Venetian officials seem to have realised, for the first time in Christian history there was now only indirect contact between the person and the food. A fundamental change had occurred in an activity which has the character of ritual.




Food, Feast & Fast
P. FINTAN LYONS OSB
PRICE: €19.99

☎ 01 6874096 | ✉ sales@columba.ie
www.columbabooks.com

or send a cheque to:

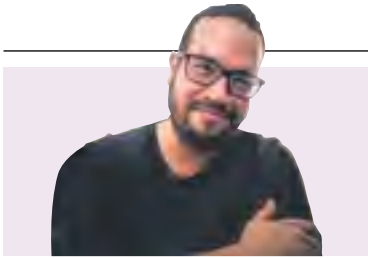
Columba Books, Block 3b, Bracken Business Park,
Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.

 **columba**BOOKS

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS



Letter from Rome



Junno Arocho Esteves

In the Catholic Church, a person's canonisation is almost always preceded by decades of meticulous investigation into the minute details of the candidate's life.

Thousands of saints have been raised to the altars after these thorough investigations, while the causes of many other candidates are usually suspended or closed when there is insufficient evidence of one's sanctity or the lack of a miracle. Yet, there are also causes that have been closed or delayed due to doubts or, worse, due to proverbial 'skeletons in the closet' uncovered during the investigation into their lives.

The delay in the sainthood cause of Fr Joseph Kentenich, founder of the Schonstatt movement, was the most recent example of that last scenario, after allegations of abuse uncovered during an apostolic visitation in the early 1950s were made public earlier this month.

His cause was opened in 1975 in the Diocese of Trier, Germany, and was in the diocesan phase, which is the first step in a candidate's cause before it is sent to Rome for further investigation.

German scholar Alexandra von Teuffenbach, a former professor of Church history at Rome's Pontifical Regina Apostolorum University, discovered documents in the recently opened archives of the pontificate of Pope Pius XII that revealed allegations of sexual abuse and abuse of power against Fr Kentenich.

The revelations led German Bishop Stephan Ackermann of Trier to announce the formation of a historical commission charged with collecting and studying the new evidence found in the Vatican Apostolic Archives concerning Fr Kentenich, to determine whether to proceed with his cause.

Reports

Cardinal Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, said although Fr Kentenich's cause was not yet in the hands of the congregation, his office received several negative reports regarding the priest's cause and immediately informed Bishop Ackermann "so he could proceed with the necessary verifications."

"Certainly, if the accusations that have come to the forefront were to be considered well-founded, there would be no hesitation in shelving the case," Cardinal Becciu said in an email to *Catholic News Service*.

It "may come as a surprise to learn that causes are stopped quite



often in the congregation," he said. In most cases, "it is a temporary halt, but it always has the aim of arriving at an objective judgment on the sanctity of the candidates. If the gaps or doubts are not removed, we do not proceed."

Cardinal Becciu stressed that every sainthood cause is taken seriously, and should "an allegation, or even a simple report, emerge when the cause is at an advanced stage, it is immediately examined, evaluating every aspect of the matter scrupulously and seriously".

"New witnesses will be heard, new archival research will be carried out and the diocesan tribunals and the apostolic nunciatures – when it comes to countries other than Italy – will be involved," he told *CNS*. "In short, nothing is left unturned."

Among the causes that were halted in recent memory, he noted, was that of Fr Leon Dehon, a French priest whose beatification was suspended in 2005 by Pope Benedict XVI to investigate "alleged anti-Jewish expressions" in his writings".

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen was another well-known cause that was postponed. In December, the Diocese of Rochester, New York, said it had "expressed concern about advancing the cause for the beatification of Archbishop Sheen at this time without a further review of his role in priests' assignments". The diocese also said "there are no complaints against Archbishop Sheen engaging in any personal inappropriate conduct,

nor were any insinuations made in this regard."

Cardinal Becciu told *CNS* that Archbishop Sheen's cause was suspended "out of respect for the US civil authorities, who must express their views on cases of sexual abuse that indirectly affect the period" when he led the Diocese of Rochester.

The cardinal also said the congregation recently intervened in the sainthood cause of an unnamed group of martyrs who were recently beatified.

“Cardinal Becciu said he believed the Church must always ‘maintain a healthy balance’ when opening a cause”

"It was necessary to intervene to remove the names of two people from the list who were suspected of sexual abuse and for which there was no possibility of clarification. The group of martyrs were declared blessed, minus those two," he said.

However, the cause of Fr Kentenich stands out in that, despite the fact his cause opened decades ago, the allegations against him were discovered in documents only recently made public.

Such circumstances raised several questions, particularly whether there should be a longer waiting period before a candidate's cause is opened.

Cardinal Becciu told *CNS* he believed the Church must always "maintain a healthy balance" when opening a sainthood cause.

"A cause should not start too late in order not to lose the wealth of data that can come to us from eyewitnesses," he explained. "On the other hand, archival research – which is now required for every cause of beatification – must be serious and carried out by experts in the field."

Question

Another question was whether the Church follows any specific protocol if a credible allegation of abuse is discovered after a person is beatified or canonised.

"That's a good question and, hopefully, something like that will never happen," Cardinal Becciu told *CNS*. "The Catholic Church does not recognise the institution of 'de-canonisation,' that is, the procedure of the deprivation of the title" of saint or blessed.

Cardinal Becciu said that while there is always room for improvement in the sainthood process, the current procedure is "quite serious" and have "so far proved reliable in its various passages of judgment".

"According to a wise practice of the Church, after a thorough and articulate human judgment on the life of a candidate to the altars, the approval of a miracle is required as divine confirmation of the conclusions reached by men and women."

Fr Kentenich's case also raised concerns regarding the cult of personality often yielded by founders of religious congregations and movements, as well as the possibility that followers may seek to protect their founder's legacy by

hiding allegations.

A similar case was that of German Doig, co-founder of Sodalitium Christianae Vitae, whose sainthood cause was opened after his death in 2001 and who was promoted as a model of holiness by the group's members.

His cause was closed a decade later after credible accusations of sexual abuse surfaced against him and the founder of the movement, Luis Fernando Figari.

Cardinal Becciu told *CNS* that while the Catholic Church takes a cautious approach to all sainthood causes, it "pays careful attention" to causes involving the founders of movements and religious institutes "precisely because of the role they play and their ascendancy among their followers".

Investigations

Canonical legislation, he said, dictates that those who testify during the investigations should not belong to the same movement or congregation as the candidate, thus allowing witnesses to voice their opposition to a person's canonisation.

"As an example, I can say that this was the case in the causes of St Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer (founder of Opus Dei), the Servant of God Chiara Lubich (founder of the Focolare movement) and others," Cardinal Becciu said.

Nevertheless, Cardinal Becciu told *CNS* that clarity and transparency were necessary elements of the sainthood process and that "any negative elements that emerge must be investigated with meticulous diligence."

"Not only is the judgment on a person's holiness at stake here, but the credibility of the Church itself," he said.



World Report

IN BRIEF

After lockdown, Italy's bishops seek new ways to engage parishioners

● Italy's bishops will need to help their communities participate more in parish life and return to taking part in the sacraments in ways that continue to respect evolving measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus, according to their conference leadership.

When Masses were once again open to the public starting May 18, there was a noted lack of attendance by families with young children, teenagers, and older parishioners.

In a letter drafted by the leadership committee of the Italian bishops' conference, it was advised that "parishes will need to 'listen' in order to understand what has contributed to their absence".

With difficulties caused by the pandemic, there are also new opportunities, it added, praising all the priests and catechists who worked hard to maintain contact with parishioners and young people, particularly online.

New US clinic allows doctors to practice in line with Faith

● A new clinic in the U.S is providing catholic physicians the option to practice their work in line with their beliefs.

As a young physician, Dr William Toffler provided contraception, including vasectomies and inserting intrauterine devices. He also performed an abortion.

"Looking back, it was the most regrettable act of my life," Toffler told the *Catholic Sentinel*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Portland.

He's now embarking on a new venture that allows him to practice medicine in line with his Catholic Faith. Toffler is teaming with a group of other Catholic physicians to start a nonprofit Catholic medical practice, Holy Family Clinic.

The clinic practice will be fully consistent with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' 'Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services'.

Hunger high on list of battles that aid agency CRS faces

● As the coronavirus pandemic commands global attention, the health crisis is just one in a long list of emergencies aid agencies must tend to in their mission to help the world's poorest.

Catholic Relief Services reports that hunger is a problem of utmost concern in many countries in the middle of the pandemic.

A July 13 report from the United Nations said almost 690 million people went

hungry in 2019, an increase of 10 million from the previous year; figures arrived at before the pandemic began.

With the challenges that Covid-19 has introduced, there simply is no way to sugar coat an impending tragedy building up, said Seán Callahan, president and CEO of the US bishops' overseas relief and development agency.

French police arrest Nantes cathedral volunteer

● A Rwandan man is facing up to 10 years in prison after he confessed to deliberately setting fire to the city's Gothic cathedral [pictured]. French media reported the 39-year-old man, named only as Emmanuel A, admitted to lighting two fires in the area of a 17th-century organ and a third above an electrical panel in the Cathedral of St Peter and Paul July 18.

The man is a Catholic who had been working voluntarily at the cathedral as a warden and had the keys to the building because he was responsible for locking it up on the day of the fire.

He was questioned by police following the blaze and released without charge but rearrested July 25. He confessed to arson later that day.



Cardinal Bo warns Hagia Sophia's conversion will reopen wounds

As Hagia Sophia opened for Muslim prayers on Friday for the first time in 86 years, a leading Asian cardinal said that the decision to turn the building back into a mosque will reopen wounds and intensify divisions.

In a statement sent via email on July 24, Cardinal Charles Bo said that he was grieved by Turkey's decision to change the status of the 6th-Century Byzantine cathedral.

"How does turning what was once the world's largest cathedral into a mosque do anything except sow tensions, divide people and inflict pain?" the Burmese cardinal asked. "It doesn't. It merely reopens wounds and exacerbates divides at a time when we should be healing humanity."

The archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar's capital city, said that he had spoken "consistently and passionately" in defence of religious freedom both in his homeland and elsewhere in Asia.

"Indeed, often I have spoken in defence of the persecuted Muslim peoples in Myanmar, and I will go on doing so without hesitation and unequivocally," he said.

"For true freedom of religion requires respect for others' freedom to practice, as well as the exercise and



Hagia Sophia.

defence of one's own liberty.

"For that reason, the decision in Turkey to turn what was for 1,000 years the world's largest cathedral – Hagia Sophia – into a mosque grieves me."

Bo, who was elected president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in 2018, continued: "It grieves me not because I want to deny my Muslim brothers and sisters places of worship. On the contrary, I defend their right to do so as much as I defend everyone's. But nor can the decision to turn Hagia Sophia into a mosque be seen as anything other than an unneces-

sary assault on freedom of religion or belief."

Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed a decree converting Hagia Sophia into a mosque, hours after a court declared that the building's conversion into a museum in 1934 was illegal.

Concern

Bo said that his concern over the status of the UNESCO World Heritage Site was part of his wider desire to uphold religious liberty around the world.

When Hagia Sophia reopened as the Ayasofya Mosque on July 24, Erdogan and other

officials joined hundreds of worshipers inside the building for Friday prayers, while large crowds filled the streets outside.

"At a time when humanity is enduring intense strains due to the global pandemic, we need to come together, not drive communities apart. We need to put aside identity politics, abandon power plays, prevent ethnic and religious conflicts and value the dignity of difference among every human being. And we must cherish diversity and the unity we find within it," Bo said.

Pope Francis asks young people to send a hug to the elderly

Pope Francis has exhorted young people to reach out in tenderness to the elderly amid the loneliness of the coronavirus pandemic.

"In the memory of Sts Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus, I would like to invite young people to make a gesture of tenderness towards the elderly, especially the most lonely ones in homes and residences, those who have not seen their loved ones for many months," Pope Francis [pictured] said following the Angelus prayer in St Peter's Square on July 26.

He asked the young to do something concrete for the elderly, using "the fantasy of love" to inspire their

actions. He then went on to give them suggestions for doing just that:

"Call them, video chat with them, send them messages, listen to them, go and visit them when it is possible while observing health precautions, send them a hug."

Tweeting that afternoon, he repeated the message to the world: "On the memorial of the Sts Joachim and Anne, Jesus's 'grandparents', I would like to invite young people to do something tender towards the elderly, especially the loneliest, in their homes or residences. Dear young people, each elderly person is your grandparent!"



'Mother Teresa of Pakistan' dies of coronavirus

Sr Ruth Lewis, also known as the Mother Teresa of Pakistan, died on 20 July, a victim of the coronavirus. She contracted the virus after making the decision to personally care for 21 infected residents of the Dar ul Sukhun home

(House of Peace), which she co-founded in 1969.

Known across Pakistan as the 'Mother of the Forgotten', Sr Ruth spent her life caring for children with disabilities in the city of Karachi.

A nun of the Francis-

can Missionaries of Christ the King, Sr Ruth became a mother to the children who had been abandoned by their families.

The Dar ul Sukun home, which the nun had directed since 2000, expressed their

sadness in a Facebook post.

"All our children, nuns and staff are heartbroken," they said, "as we have lost a huge part of us."

"She was the icon of love, care and true compassion."



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

The priestly sons of Aaron shall blow their trumpets...



A grotto depicting Our Lady of Lourdes and a crucifixion scene is pictured after sunset in the cemetery of St Francis and St Mary Church in Brussels, Wisconsin, USA. Photo: CNS

Tanzania mourns Benjamin Mkapa, former president who worked for peace

Former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, a Catholic who led several regional peace mediation efforts, has died. He was 81.

Tanzanian President John Magufuli said Mkapa had been undergoing treatment at a hospital in Dar es Salaam, where he died on July 24. Magufuli urged the people to remain calm, united and peaceful as they mourned their former president, who served from 1995 to 2005.

"Our retired president, rest in peace," said Auxiliary Bishop Method Kilaini of Bukoba. "You have fought a good fight and you have won the race."



Pope Benedict XVI greets Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa during an official meeting at the Vatican in 2005.

Mkapa is credited for introducing economic reforms after opening the country to foreign investors. He boosted

tax collection and introduced strict measures to curb corruption, measures that led the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to cancel Tanzania's debt.

In retirement, Mkapa became a key peace mediator in the East African region. His latest effort was an attempt to mediate peace in Burundi, where a controversial election triggered a crisis in 2015.

Mkapa is survived by his wife, Anna, and two sons.

The country will mourn for seven days, a period during which all flags will fly at half-mast.

Mass, procession to mark the anniversary of Fr Hamel's murder

The Diocese of Rouen, France will mark the fourth anniversary of the murder of Fr Jacques Hamel with a Mass and procession at the local church on Sunday.

Archbishop Dominique Lebrun of Rouen and Archbishop Eric de Moulins-Beaufort of Reims, president of the French bishops' conference, will be present, according to local media. French Minister of the Interior Gérald Darmanin is also expected to attend the ceremony.

A silent procession at 10am. will be followed by

a Mass at the local church at 10.30am, the diocese announced.

"It is good that religious and civil authorities, and citizens, believers of all faiths and non-believers, come together to demonstrate their common refusal of any violence and their deep respect for human life," the diocese said. It thanked "all those who participate directly or indirectly, through prayer and commitment on this fourth anniversary."

Fr. Hamel was killed while celebrating Mass on July 26,

2016 after two armed gunmen stormed his church in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray in Normandy.

Attackers

The assailants entered the church and took the 85-year-old priest and four others hostage. Local law enforcement reported that the priest's throat was slit in the attack, and that both hostage takers were shot dead by police. The attackers were identified as Islamist extremists.

News of Hamel's death shocked the world. His funeral

Mass was attended by thousands, including government officials and representatives from the Jewish and Muslim communities. At the funeral, Fr Hamel's sister Roselyne spoke about his mercy and love, saying that he had refused to become an officer during his military service in colonial Algeria so that he would not have to order others to kill.

In October 2016, Pope Francis waived the traditional five-year waiting period to open Hamel's beatification cause.

Vatican roundup

Historic manuscripts get a modern Vatican treatment

● A revamped website for the Vatican Apostolic Library brings modern technology to the study of historic manuscripts. "We are the Pope's librarians because the library is his and has been open by his desire for many centuries," Msgr Cesare Pasini, library prefect, told *Vatican News*. "So, we want to be truly at the service of our visitors with a modern and current tool that immediately provides what one is looking for."

"Especially in the period of health emergency that we are experiencing, in which the mobility of people is limited and it is more difficult for many to come directly to the Library, this open and communicative site, rich and captivating, wants to be an important place for welcoming, collaboration and openness," he stated.

The website of the papal library gives researchers and students free access to high-resolution digitized manuscripts, inventories, archival materials, coins, medals, and incunabula, which are books printed in Europe before the 16th Century.

Pope thanks pilgrim with disability who walked 'Camino'

● Pope Francis has sent a letter of gratitude to a Spanish teen with an intellectual disability after the 15-year-old travelled more than 60 miles along the famed Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

In a letter signed on July 21 and published on the website of the Diocese of Malaga, Spain, the Pope said he learned of Alvaro Calvante's [pictured]

journey after receiving a letter from the pilgrim's father.

"Thank you, Alvaro, for being inspired to walk and inviting many others to

walk with you," the Pope wrote.

"Amid the pandemic we are experiencing, with your simplicity, joy and humility, you were able to put into motion the hope of many of the people you met on the road or through social networks."

"You went on pilgrimage and made many people go on pilgrimage, encouraging them not to be afraid and to recover their

joy because, on the road, we never go alone. The Lord always walks beside us. Thank you for your testimony and prayers," he wrote.



Pontifical Academy for Life calls for solidarity in the midst of global pandemic

● 'Humana communitas in the age of pandemic: untimely meditations on life's rebirth' is the title of the latest document released by the Pontifical Academy for Life.

The document opens with: "Covid-19 has brought desolation to the world. We have lived it for so long, now, and it is not over yet. It might not be for a very long time."

The proposed solution to this is for the human community to step back and give thanks for the gift of life that we have been given, that the pandemic predicament might be transformed into a "passageway to life's rebirth".

The first part of the text examines the hard reality of the lessons learned from the pandemic. The second part details a new vision and path towards the rebirth of life through a call to conversion. It ends with a reflection upon the moral nature of solidarity.

"Solidarity entails responsibility toward the other in need, itself grounded in the recognition that, as a human subject endowed with dignity, every person is an end in itself, not a means."

Letters

Letter of the week

Don't 'exclude religious teachings' from education system

Dear Editor, A headline in your newspaper [IC 09/07/2020] 'New Government could 'kick Churches out of education' warns Senator' saddened me deeply. I was educated in a Catholic school many years ago (too many years) and am proud of being a Catholic. It was free education for which I am very grateful.

During the 1950s there was a lot of unemployment and my parents certainly couldn't have afforded to pay for six children to be educated otherwise.

We only had one half hour of religious teaching each day. The rest of the day was centred around the very necessary teachings to enable us to learn how to read, write, and do arithmetic and spellings. All the essential knowledge to grow up

and reach our potential in society. But most importantly, to get back to religious education, it taught us the difference between right and wrong. How to have respect for one another and also to respect ourselves. It also instilled in us the fact that each one of us was important. The Church played an important role in preparing us for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. You will know that during these past four months many children have been disappointed because these sacraments couldn't take place.

Our churches had to close due to the coronavirus.

During this lockdown thanks to technology most of us were able to attend Mass via webcam. All over Ireland (and indeed the world) our

priests celebrated daily Mass bringing comfort and solace to so many of my generation who were 'cocooning'.

They were a beacon of hope during a very troubled and anxious time. They prayed daily for all the wonderful doctors, nurses and all the people working on the front line putting themselves at risk in order to help save others.

I believe the Catholic faith which we were brought up with played a very important part in our lives during this crisis.

I would ask the Government not to exclude religious teachings from our education system.

*Yours etc.,
Ann Schmitz,
Sandyford,
Co. Dublin.*

Helping financial future of parishes

Dear Editor, We are all overjoyed and thankful to return to Mass, receive the Eucharist, to meet our priests and community. We now have an opportunity to show our appreciation and thanks as the Church collection baskets are available for donations.

I did a little calculation which might be of interest. If you normally put €5 in the basket each Sunday, your diocese is at a loss of €80 from you since March. These Sunday collections are needed to run our parishes and the Government are not likely to assist us. Let's do the right thing and help out as best we can.

*Yours etc.,
Anne McGrath,
Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin.*



'Abuse' to deprive priests of marriage

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny [IC July 16/07/2020] in her loyal attempt to defend the unjust clerical law of enforced celibacy asserted that a married clergy is not the answer to the growing crisis in Catholic ministry. Nobody is making that claim. However, it would be one small step in the direction of much needed systemic reform.

It is an abuse to deprive any man of the option to marry as an entry requirement to any vocation or ministry. Such clerical abuse may lead to further crimes and cover up. Enforced or mandatory celibacy is an unjust, outdated and dangerous imposition by a small group of ancient Church fathers

who were imbued with misogyny and a negative attitude towards sexuality. The Catholic People of God have not voted for the medieval law which has led to Eucharistic famine worldwide.

It seems to me that it is not possible to evangelise people today in the language of sexism, misogyny,

patriarchy, authoritarianism, homophobia or negative views about sexuality. The Good News of Jesus Christ must be about selfless love, compassion, justice, equality, inclusion, liberation and joyful celebration.

*Yours etc.,
Joe Mulvaney,
Dundrum, Co. Dublin.*

Keeping informed and vocal on abortion

Dear Editor, Thank God for *The Irish Catholic* and its coverage of the shocking number of abortions carried out here in 2019. As the bishops said in their statement it is 'staggering' to see the contrast between the grief expressed over the Covid-19 deaths and that for the 6,666 babies killed here in one year through abortion. It was great to read the articles by David Quinn and Brendan O'Regan while the media practically ignored the issue.

Was a decision made to ignore these

tragic deaths to avoid embarrassment for those, like the Taoiseach, who stated there would be no increase in abortions here after the referendum?

What is equally staggering is the contrast between the coverage prior to the referendum, especially from journalists openly campaigning for abortion, and the silence now. How can a claim be made that we have a media which seeks to tell us the truth and is balanced and fair? It most certainly is neither and is now blatant in censoring

what issues are to be reported on and what are to be ignored.

It is vitally important that we keep ourselves informed on this vital issue and that we do not remain silent. The aim of those who are pro-abortion is to make it acceptable and to ensure that those opposed to this barbaric practice are silenced. It is our duty to ensure that this does not happen.

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

facebook community

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

Let's not imagine that a married clergy is a solution

Having had four excellent married priests work in schools I led I have every confidence that there is a place for married priests in part-time ministry. The Anglican stipendiary and non-stipendiary models have something to recommend them. – **Alan Whelan**

Completely against married priests. I have a brother who is a priest and there is no way he could do the excellent job he does for his family, his parishioners, if he was married.

– **Catherine Rose**

Priesthood is vocation, one in which man is asked to mimic Christ, to be pure in all things body and soul, as to be worthy to consecrate bread and wine in to flesh and blood. I don't think people understand the role of the priest in God's eyes. Our Lady told the children of Garabandal if they meet an angel and a priest they should bow to the priest first as he is the incarnation of her son. This is a great responsibility that requires many hours of prayer and much fasting. They are already married to the Church. – **Annette Devlin**

What Catholics can learn from a distant election

Time and again Poland has saved Europe and time and again she's been betrayed and ravaged by her barbarous neighbours. We are due a re-run I suppose. – **Charles Glenn**

Congratulations Poland for standing up for Catholic values. – **Caroline Lewis McLoughlin**

Any Conservative who wins an election gets vilified by the left media machine. – **Eamonn Breen**

The Polish people stood for truth and not the liberal, modernist and Marxist propaganda being spewed out by Brussels. – **Peter Killeen**

RTÉ 'humbled' by feedback to broadcast Masses

A great achievement for RTÉ and Church Services TV at a time of great need for so – **Paula McKeown**

I have to say I was delighted to be able to view Mass on RTÉ during the lockdown. The churches were beautiful and the priests were so sincere and inspiring. Credit where credit is due. – **Mary Kelly**

Thank you so much RTÉ. Daily Mass means so much to my Dad who isn't able to attend the church anymore. A truly great service. – **Ann Keating**

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



▲ **VATICAN:** A pilgrim in St Peter's Square watches Pope Francis recite the Angelus from a window of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican. The Pope urged young people to show grandparents and the elderly tenderness.

◀ **USA:** The casket of the late Rep. John Lewis, a civil rights hero, travels in a procession from Brown Chapel AME Church over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. Photos: CNS



POLAND: People wearing protective masks attend a baptism at Church of the Monastery of St Joseph in Warsaw.



USA: Police officers in Kaaawa, Hawaii, and a bystander, use plywood boards to push beach debris off the road ahead of Hurricane Douglas.



ENGLAND: People wearing protective masks to prevent the spread of the coronavirus walk at Oxford Circus in London.



SENEGAL: A health care worker wearing protective gear takes a swab sample from a woman to test her for Covid-19 at the Institute for Health Research, Epidemiological Surveillance and Training testing center in Dakar.

On not locking our doors

In his book *The Secret*, Rene Fumoleau has a poem entitled 'Sins'. Fumoleau, who was a missionary priest with the Dene Peoples in Northern Canada, once asked a group of Elders to name what they considered the worst sin of all. Their answer: *The 10 Dene discussed together, And after a while Radisca explained to me: "We talked it over, and we all agree: "The worst sin people can make is to lock their door."*

Perhaps at the time this incident took place and in that particular Dene village, you could still safely leave your door unlocked, but that's hardly sound advice for most of us who are safe only when we have double locks and electronic security systems securing our doors.

Still, these Dene Elders are right because at the end of the day they're speaking of something deeper than a security bolt on our outside door. What does it really mean to lock your door?

As we know, there are many kinds of doors we lock and unlock to let others in and out. Jean-Paul Sartre, the famed French existentialist, once wrote: "Hell is the other person." While this may feel very true emotionally on a given day, it is the antithesis of any religious truth, particularly Christian truth. In all the great religions of the world, in the end, being with others is heaven; ending up eternally alone is hell.

That's a truth built into our very nature. As human persons we



Fr Rolheiser

are constitutively social; meaning we're built in such a way that while we're always individual, private and idiosyncratic at the same time we're always social, communitarian and interdependent.

We're built to be with others and there's no ultimate meaning or fulfillment to be found alone. Indeed, we need each other simply to survive and remain sane. Still more, we need each other for love and meaning because without these there's no purpose to us. To end up alone is death of the worst kind.

Destructive

This needs to be highlighted today because both in society and in our Churches too many of us are locking a select number of our doors in ways that are both destructive and genuinely unchristian. What's our issue?

Twenty years ago, Robert Putnam looked at the breakdown

of community within our culture and named it with a catchy phrase, 'bowling alone'. For Putnam, our families, neighbourhoods and wider communities are breaking down because of an excessive individualism within the culture.

More and more, we're doing things alone, walking within our own idiosyncratic rhythms rather than within community rhythms. Few would dispute this assessment.

However, what we're struggling with today goes further than the individualism Putnam so playfully names. In the excessive individualism Putnam describes we end up bowling alone, but mostly still inside the same bowling alley, separate from each other but not locked out. Our problem goes deeper. Metaphorically, we're locking each other out of our common bowling alley. What's meant here?

Beyond an isolating individualism, we're struggling

“Politically, in many of our countries we're now so polarised that the various sides are unable to even have a respectful, civil conversation with each other”



Robert Putnam.

today in our families, communities, countries and Churches with a demon of a different sort, that is, with doors locked in bitterness.

Politically, in many of our countries we're now so polarised that the various sides are unable to even have a respectful, civil conversation with each other. The other is 'Hell'. This is true too inside our families where conversation at the Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner has to carefully avoid all references to what's going on in the country and we can only be at the same table with each other if we keep our political views locked away.

Sadly, this is now mirrored in our Churches where different visions of theology, ecclesiology and morality have led to a polarisation of such intensity that each theological and ecclesial group now stays behind its own solidly locked door.

There's no openness to what's other and all real dialogue has been replaced by mutual demonisation. This lack of openness is ultimately what the Dene refer to as the worst sin of all, our locked doors. Hell then really is the other person. Sartre must be smiling.

“Whether it's Satan or the devil, we end up behind locked doors where those outside ourselves are seen as Hell”

It's interesting how evil works. The Gospels give us two separate words for the evil one. Sometimes the evil one is called 'the devil' (*Diabolos*) and sometimes the evil one is called 'satan' (*Satanas*). Both describe the evil power that works against God, goodness, and love within a community. The 'devil' works by dividing us, one from another, breaking down community through jealousy, pride and false freedom; whereas 'Satan' works in the reverse way. Satan unites us in sick ways so as to have us, as groups, demonise each other, carry out crucifixions and cling to each other feverishly through sick kinds of hysteria and ideologies that make for scapegoating, racism, sexism, and group-hatred of every kind.

Either way, whether it's Satan or the devil, we end up behind locked doors where those outside ourselves are seen as Hell.

So it's true: "The worst sin we can make is to lock our doors."

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, July 30, 2020

Personal Profile

John Quinn,
from Alpha
through omega

Page 34



Jazzing up your window boxes



What are window ledges for if not to beautify with a lovely flower arrangement? Or perhaps you're more of a practical type and would like some herbs! Whatever you fancy, window boxes are a versatile and attractive way to add some flair to your home exterior.

Whether you're a seasoned gardener or someone just starting out, window boxes are a great way to get into gardening. If you're looking for an outdoor activity to do with children, then they're something to consider. That's because they're simple to design and they don't require complex materials or tools.



With summer here and little prospect of overseas travel, there are simple ways to bring a bit of colour to your home, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

Much of what you will need can be purchased at your local hardware or home improvement store. Often, it will come cut to size – if not, most shops will be able to cut them on-site. All you need is to know your measurements and you're on your way. Once you're set on the

design, it's time to decide how to fill them.

To say the options are wide ranging is an understatement. So, whether indoor or outdoor, wood, metal or stone, standing on a ledge or doing its own thing, here are some simple tips for getting into window boxes.

Making your own box

Much of the time, the window boxes you will see are shop-bought and quite simple designs, with a focus more on the contents. However, there's much more that can be done if you have the time and the interest.

The basic materials you'll need before starting out are wood glue, hammer and nails, and/or a drill and screws. If you feel like a little extra labour, a saw could come in handy and a box of paint as well.

Plastic window box liners can also be useful to hold the flowers themselves – most are lightweight, with drainage holes already in the base and sit into your window box without being visible. It saves on the wood you will have to buy, so that the

bottom only needs be a couple of wooden slats. You should be able to find them in a local hardware store, or else online.

The next thing to consider is where it's going? Is it sitting on a ledge, perhaps you want a hanging basket, or will it stand on its own? If you're just beginning, then going for the ledge is probably best as it allows you to be versatile in its style, but not overcomplicated in its creation.

Different designs

The classic design is the white window box with a stylish trim moulding. It can be put together in about 30 minutes using pine boards and trim, the size depending on your windowsill.

» Continued on Page 33

Family News

AND EVENTS

Don't be bored, stand up and paddle

It's not every day that the majority of people get the opportunity to take part in stand-up paddle boarding. In one-hour sessions, participants will learn paddle boarding skills, enjoy a trip down the canal in Vicarstown, Co. Laois. Instructors will take participants through some basic skills.

There are two time slots: 11am-12pm and 1-2pm.

No experience is required and all equipment is provided. Wet suites won't be available but attendees can bring their own, however they are not essential.

Those interested are asked to wear old clothes and runners and to bring their own towel, water bottle and spare clothes. Due to the current pandemic changing facilities and toilets can't be provided according to organisers, the SVT Activity and Wellness HUB, who will be adhering strictly to Government guidelines. They ask people to arrive 15 minutes before the session for registration. Tickets can be purchased at <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/svt-canoeing-kayaking-club-stand-up-paddle-boarding-tickets-112788300844?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

TALL CHILDREN MORE LIKELY TO BECOME OBESE – STUDY:

Children who are relatively tall for their age have a higher risk of developing obesity, according to a new study.

Investigators examined the health records of 2.8 million children who were initially examined between two and 13 years of age.

When they were re-examined, an average of four years later (but up to 13 years later), it was found that taller children were more likely to have a higher body mass index than shorter children.

Among the thinnest children at the start, the prevalence of obesity at the second exam was five-fold higher in the tallest children than in the shortest children (3.1% versus 0.6%).

"As about half of this association is independent of the initial body mass index of the child, the use of height may be a simple way to more accurately classify which children will become obese," said lead author David Freedman, PhD, of the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

Physical stress in job linked with memory decline

A new US study has found that physical stress in a person's job may be associated with faster brain aging and poorer memory.

Aga Burzynska, an assistant professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in Colorado State University, and her research team connected occupational survey responses with brain-imaging data from 99 cognitively normal older adults, age 60 to 79.

They found that those who reported high levels of physical stress in their most recent job had smaller volumes in the hippocampus and performed poorer on memory tasks. The hippocampus is the part of the brain that is critical for memory and is affected in both normal aging and in dementia. Their findings were published this summer in *Frontiers*.

"We know that stress can accelerate physical aging and is the risk factor for many chronic illnesses," Ms Burzynska said. "But this is the first evidence that occupational stress can accelerate brain and cognitive aging."

'Promising' vaccine trials across world



The Covid-19 pandemic has now infected more than 15 million people globally and claimed the lives of more than 600,000. While the incidence in Ireland remains low, significant spikes in the number of cases in parts of the US, UK and Australia are a reminder of the need for ongoing vigilance and restrictions.

Indeed, unfortunately, without a vaccine the limitations on some of the liberties we take for granted will likely remain in place.

Currently, there are more than 137 candidates for vaccines in laboratory development with a further 23 in clinical studies. Promisingly, three studies where vaccines were administered to healthy people have recently shown very positive results.

Just last week, the Oxford group in conjunction with the pharmaceutical AstraZeneca published the results of their latest trial in *The Lancet*. Their vaccine contains the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2 virus packaged into a weakened cold virus. When administered to 543 healthy adults they found that it triggered two immune responses with peak antibodies detected at 28 days as well as an earlier rise in a specific type of immune cell (T cells).

Replication

Antibodies binding to the virus can prevent it from latching onto and invading cells. However, T cells are also very important as they specifically recognise virus infected cells and kill them preventing further replication of the virus.

Some participants in the trial received a booster dose of vaccine which led to them developing neutralising antibodies. Importantly, side effects were not serious though included local pain at the injection site, headaches and fever which resolved

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



quickly and were relieved with paracetamol.

The vaccine is now entering a phase 3 clinical trial in which about 4,000 participants enrolled in the UK and is also being extended to South Africa and Brazil.

Vaccine researchers have cited an 80% chance of a successful result and the UK government has also secured a deal for supply of about 90 million doses should the vaccine be approved.

“The vaccine trials to date have also not included older adults or those who are immunocompromised”

The results of another promising vaccine trial in Wuhan, China were also published last week. They used a genetic fragment of the coronavirus which they packaged into a non-replicating adenovirus. When administered to 382 adults, there was a significant neutralising antibody response after 27 days.

Finally, promising news also came last week from the US based company (Moderna) which published its early stage clinical trial in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Their vaccine contains a fragment of genetic material that encodes

the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein which allows it to attach to cells. Their study found that in 45 healthy adults who were administered the vaccine 28 days apart, there was a significant neutralising antibody response.

While results so far are encouraging, the real test will be whether or not the immune responses elicited are sufficient to prevent Covid-19 or significantly reduce its severity.

It also remains unclear how long any immunity might last. For example, in a recent study of patients affected with SARS-

exposing people to the coronavirus after vaccination to gauge how effective it is. Clearly, this would pose the risk of serious infection for some and there would be logistical problems as to where people would be inoculated and what strain of virus to use.

Nonetheless, it's very likely that before the end of the year, there will be conclusive results on some phase 3 clinical trials. However, even if successful, they will need to go through fast track approval by the regulatory authorities. Manufacture, distribution and also vaccine administration poses a major logistical challenge given the sheer numbers involved. However, all going well, the prospect of vaccination for most people could begin in early to mid-2021.

“There is always the potential for serious but less frequent side effects to emerge with vaccination at large”

For a vaccination program to be successful at reducing spread, immunity will need to be conferred on about 60-70% of the population, so it's crucial too that vaccine uptake is high.

Finally, while clinical trials can involve up to several thousand people, there is always the potential for serious but less frequent side effects to emerge with vaccination at large. However, with several candidate vaccines in trials, we may well have several options available to us.

Dr Kevin McCarroll is a Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine, St James's Hospital, Dublin.



CoV-2 there was a significant drop in antibody levels at three months. However, vaccine responses may be greater and the immune system has a memory, (particularly with T cells) that can lead to a quicker reactivation of antibody production after virus exposure.

The vaccine trials to date have also not included older adults or those who are immunocompromised, groups that are less likely to elicit the same immune response.

It has been proposed that to speed up vaccine development 'challenger' trials could be done. This would involve deliberately

» Continued from Page 31

size depending on your windowsill. Painting the window box is a great time to get your children involved as it's safe and fun.

If you want to turn them into an indoor window box, then there are a couple of extra steps. While you need your box to drain, if it's indoors, you'll want the box to hold water! A couple of decent bin bags to insulate the interior. But what can you do to ensure your soil doesn't become soggy? A nifty trick is to place a layer of dried pinecones – the kind hanging around at Christmas – to provide drainage while keeping the weight down.

“The wood needs to be waterproof, so paint or a coat of varnish will help a lot; ensure it can drain”

Of course, if you don't want to design and make your own, there are plenty of options for either shop bought or recycled window boxes. One idea is to use old dresser drawers to create a quirky, genteel impression. Using them in their entirety is risky, as they aren't designed for the outdoor world – but, if you take the front, paint it to waterproof and add a base, it becomes the perfect front for a plastic window box.

A couple of things to remember when you're designing your box are: the wood needs to be waterproof, so paint or a coat of varnish will help a lot; ensure it can drain, so that you don't get soggy soil; and too deep is better than too shallow.

What to plant

Good quality soil is the first thing that goes in, regardless of what your growing. Window boxes are small spaces, quite confined for root growth, so soil quality is essential. If you're using fertiliser, organic is the best way to go, especially if you're growing food – you don't want unknown chemicals mixed in.

But now, to the business end: what do you want to grow? While there are limitations on the size of plants, ultimately what you choose will be a matter of taste. Let's deal with one of the choices for those of a practical bent: the herb pot.

The handy thing about using a window box for herbs is that it can be placed on a kitchen windowsill. They provide fresh, home grown options for adding flavour to a dish, although they require more attention than some.

Some of the most popular options are:

■ **Chives** – perfect in a potato salad, chives are fast growers and will fill out a box nicely with their long, narrow structure.

■ **Parsley** – with a wide variety of parsleys, this is quite a versatile herb. With its long, thin stems, it has a tendency to droop and provides an aesthetic overhang.

■ **Basil** – flavoursome and fragrant, basil is a fast grower, but it needs a lot of water. Placing it in a corner on its own is best.

■ **Coriander** – a useful addition to any herb garden, coriander grows comfortably with either frequent watering or drought conditions. If you have different herbs with



different requirements, coriander provides a good buffer between them.

An aesthete's approach

If you're not into the idea of a herb garden and prefer window boxes for their aesthetic appeal, then perhaps flowers are more your thing. Fortunately, you have plenty of options, depending on your interest.

If you want instant height and structure, a boxwood shrub might be the thing for you. A lush, evergreen shrub, these shallow-rooted plants grow quickly and can provide a focal point around which to organise your flowers.

“Geraniums are another colourful plant and they provide a slightly different shape with large, soft leaves”

Another option for a different view is a plant like trailing ivy, which, as the name suggests, will dangle gently over the edge of your window box. If you have created a fancy front for your box, you might not want to obscure it. But this gentle, leafy plant is a pleasant addition on a high sill.

For colour, there are many plants to suit your window box, but there are a few 'commoners'. Petunias, pansies and poppies are small,

but vibrant flowers which provide good pep to any box. Geraniums are another colourful plant and they provide a slightly different shape with large, soft leaves. And lastly, cornflowers are unfairly neglected, their colourful leaves providing a slender, streamlined option.

How to mind it

Once your window box is set up and you have planted all your herbs or flowers, how much care you take of it will depend at least in part on what you have planted. It's important that it gets plenty of sunlight, ideally six hours, so choosing where to put them needs a little forward planning.

Some flowers require regular watering, others are more drought resistant. Either way, regular watering will be an important part of tending your box. Once planted, the box shouldn't need too much repotting, but an occasional dose of fertiliser won't do any harm. At the start, mixing some slow release, organic pellets will provide a good base.

The final thing to watch out for is if your roots are beginning to show through the bottom. That's a sign that your plant needs to a new pot, or perhaps it's time to plant it in the garden, otherwise it will become root bound.

After that, it's a case of keeping an eye and watching them flourish!



Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



I stared out the window as the sublime blue-grey of a summer's dawn broke. The dawn chorus slowly erupted, to distract somewhat from the interminable chorus of 'banana, banana' from an annoying character that featured in the cartoon which was playing on my phone. In these past weeks, our two-year-old has apparently given up sleeping almost completely. She is apparently never tired, night or day, and gets by happily on a couple of hours nap here and there.

On this particular night, she woke at 1am for the day. Initially, my wife dealt with the situation. From the contented depths of my slumber, I was vaguely aware of a child screaming sporadically and demanding things. My poor wife, already exhausted and with work early in the morning, handed her over to me at 2am. I blearily stumbled into the little one's room and was greeted cheerfully by a two-year-old saying: "Hi daddy, I want breakfast, I want downstairs."

I quietly explained that it was the middle of the night and that everyone was asleep. Lying together in the darkness, we went through the list of everyone who was asleep: granddad, the birds, her brother, her sisters and the trees. After we had listed everything in the world that was asleep, she quite correctly observed: "I not asleep, I awake." She went on to further observe, also with complete accuracy: "Daddy not asleep, daddy awake."

“My wife and I moved through the morning, like deeply sedated zombies, working on autopilot”

Further nursery rhymes failed to produce results and her demands for breakfast increased in their vigour, so around 3am, I cracked and brought her downstairs to see if some food might settle her.

Trying not to wake the dog, I gave her some bread as she played merrily with

blocks, and began building towers. I stared at the wall, the clock and my phone, as she cheerfully went about her business, repeatedly inviting me to admire her handiwork. "Daddy, look" she said pointing to each new creation, "that's amazing."

As time wore on, the fatigue became painfully intense and, as she showed no signs of sleepiness by 4am, a glass of medicinal



whiskey was required.

The ordinary rules about screen time went out the window, just as first light came in it. I streamed her favourite cartoons on my phone and cuddled her, hoping this might settle her a little. The cartoons went on and on, interminably irritating, until around 5am when an amazing thing happened – she yawned. A while later, I took her up to my wife, who at least by now had slept some few hours. I handed her over and, after a little milk, she drifted off... until 7.30am that is, when she cheerfully woke and got up again, ready to start a new day.

My wife and I moved through the morning, like deeply sedated zombies, working on autopilot, somehow getting the kids ready for summer camp, and ourselves ready for work, wondering just how much more of this we can take.

None of our four kids have slept, and this year we are staring blearily at an unwelcome anniversary: 11 years of almost continual sleep deprivation. It's a small price to pay for the joy those 11 years have brought, but it's no fun at all and it wears you down in body and mind. Perhaps someday, mysteriously, our smaller children will eventually become like the rest of the creatures of the world, all of which require sleep.

We can only live and hope.

From Alpha through omega, it's a whole new world

Personal Profile



Jason Osborne

Most people know Alpha as a series of sessions exploring the Christian Faith, open to those of all faiths and none. With each talk designed to explore a different question concerning faith and with the intention of creating conversation, it caters perfectly to the truth-seeking mind. However, it does so much more than this, as John Quinn, National Coordinator for Alpha Online & Marriage and Parenting assures me.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, he reveals what Alpha embodies for him: "For me, Alpha is that moment of experience. Alpha is that invitation for someone to step into a place of trust."

Coming from a "pretty general upbringing" in South Dublin, the Faith was a notional aspect of John's life for much of his youth: "I was involved in doing things around the church, like reading at Mass and that kind of thing, but I never really felt like I owned the Faith."

Drifting slightly during his university years before getting into filmmaking, John enjoyed a couple of years doing work he was passionate about before the recession hit: "The recession hit and it was pretty difficult work, but I enjoyed it and was passionate. I thought it was what I wanted to do. Tell stories to people about ourselves. I always wanted to dig deep on why people do what they do."

University

"Then I got a call to say that my best friend from university had taken his own life, and it was one of those moments where everything just falls apart. I got

"It's all well and good having arguments with people about why God exists... but unless you bring them into a personal relationship with Christ, it's just information"



John Quinn, National Coordinator for Alpha Online & Marriage and Parenting.

this sense as to, and I know a lot of people think this when suicide is involved, 'Why didn't they come to me?' That was the first question that came up.

"Then after thinking about it a little bit longer, I was actually, kind of, relieved that he hadn't come to me because if he had of sat down and said, 'Okay, I'm struggling here, give me one good reason to live', I don't know if I would have been able to answer that.

"So, I began a process of then trying to figure out why should anyone live. Yeah, I knew I wanted to, and I knew I was happy out doing what I was doing, but I had to start asking the questions. Those questions led me back to my Faith, and the only answer, the only thing that makes sense, is Jesus. I was very fortunate to have an experience of the Lord

such that everything started to make sense. I knew I wanted to try and help people when I knew that God was the answer and that Jesus was the answer. I knew I wanted to try and help young people who might've been struggling and asking questions as to why they should live."

"I started to see that here was a chance to bring young people to an understanding of the Faith..."

The depth of these experiences, and these questions, prompted John to take a different path to the one he had originally set out on. "I got into doing youth ministry and I was looking for jobs in Ireland, but there was nothing really that came up, so I went to the UK where I was

a youth minister," he recalls. "I was learning more about my Faith as I went on, and while I was there I was doing young adult ministry and teen ministry, trying to build strategies and figure out how you can best reach people."

* * * * *

John's relationship with ministry was only beginning, and before he left London, a door opened that would lead him to where he finds himself today: "I went along with one of my young adults who had started work in Alpha, and I went along to HCB in London and experienced Alpha there.

"It was an amazing experience and I started to see that here was a chance to bring young people to an understanding of the Faith because what I realised when I was running the Confirmation programme was that you had an awful lot of young people who

maybe were 'sacramentalised', you know, been for the Sacraments and maybe a little bit of catechesis, but actually hadn't heard the Good News...didn't know that it was possible to have a personal relationship with Christ."

Touched by the work Alpha did, he got his relationship with the group underway by running an Alpha course himself in his post with the Presentation Brothers upon his return to Ireland. Based around a meal, a talk designed to stimulate conversation, and the conversation itself, Alpha is rooted in the experience of people meeting each other where they're at.

"It's a totally different world and we need to be open to that. We can't be working out of the old model"

Progressing from simply hosting Alpha sessions to working for Alpha, John's passion for the group's vision and work runs as deeply as ever: "What I realised was that it was experiential. And so, what you do is you bring people along and experience. It's all well and good having arguments with people about why God exists, and why they should believe certain things, and trying to catechise them, but unless you have that experience, unless you bring them into a personal relationship with Christ, it's just information.

"When I was growing up, everyone was Catholic. You were born and you were Catholic and that was it.

"Now, it's a totally different world and we need to be open to that. We can't be working out of the old model, we need to be working out of the new model, and that model needs to be mission. We need to be driven by the very reason the Church exists, which is to evangelise."

Living Laudato Si'

Jane Mellett



Time to make the switch to sustainable energy

I went to get my bike serviced last week and was told there was a four-week waiting list for bike services, four weeks! While that would usually put me in bad humour, it didn't. I smiled. "Isn't that fantastic?" I thought to myself. Covid-19 has put a lot of things into perspective for people and I think that includes our relationship with nature and with how we walk on this earth, God's creation. I get a sense that people are out exercising more and planning outdoor activities for their holidays.

As I mentioned last month, Pope Francis has announced this year as a special *Laudato Si'* Anniversary Year running from May 24, 2020 to May 24, 2021.

He is inviting us into a deeper exploration of *Laudato Si'* and to put this rich teaching into action locally. Pope Francis also announced the *Laudato Si'* Goals (or LSGs), a seven-year plan towards Church sustainability. The LSGs invite church institutions to reflect on how they can achieve each goal, but they also invite each of

us, individuals, families, parishes and schools to do the same. I will be exploring these goals here in the coming months. The first *Laudato Si'* Goal deals with energy use. Specifically, it says: "A Response to the Cry of the Earth. This involves a greater use of clean renewable energy and reducing fossil fuels in order to achieve carbon neutrality, efforts to protect and promote biodiversity, guaranteeing access to clean water for all." It can sound overwhelming, but we begin with the small actions.



Corporations

When looking at LSG 1, it is also important to remember that there are huge corporations out there who are causing irreparable damage to our common home. One hundred fossil fuel companies in the world are responsible for 70% of the carbon in our atmosphere and this drives the climate crisis. Just 100 companies! We must continue to highlight this issue so that our political leaders can address this at government level. Parish councils and

eco-parish groups can make their voices heard by writing to their local TDs and encourage them in their efforts to 'build back better'.

So, what can we do? One easy way to deal with our individual energy output is to walk and cycle more around our towns and cities or to use public transport where available. We can also examine our energy use in our homes and church buildings. A key question is, who is your energy supplier and what sources of energy do they use to supply electricity to your home or church? There are many sustainable options out there, we simply need to look them up online and make the switch. This sends a strong message.

Finally, as the Season of Creation approaches in September, how will your family and parish celebrate these weeks? Pray, reflect and take action for our common home. The Season of Creation liturgical resources will be available from www.catholicbishops.ie in the coming weeks. "Truly, much can be done!" (*Laudato Si'*, 180).

i Jane Mellett is the *Laudato Si'* Officer with Trocaire

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Ivan the not-so-terrible makes a grand exit

End of an era' would be too strong; it was more a case of significant change in the media landscape.

Last Friday saw Ivan Yates' last outing as presenter on the evening show **The Hard Shoulder** (Newstalk). He could come across as cynical, brash, crude and laddish, but was open to diverse viewpoints, and in particular to views that might be considered conservative.

His show was a cold place for sacred cows. In his trademark opening sequence (sometimes rant!) on the final show he thanked Newstalk for the freedom to stimulate discussion and he certainly did that.

He got a rise out of allcomers, prodding them cheerfully, for the most part. As he said of those who engaged with the show: "Even if I agreed with them I found a way to be disagreeable."

He said he feared for the Irish media in these difficult times, but unfortunately didn't develop the idea. Faults there were, but he was well informed politically (if not always in other areas) – having been a member of Government at one stage, he was under no illusion about the shenanigans that went on behind the scenes.

Yates is also retiring from **The Tonight Show** (Virgin Media One), and last Thursday saw his last appearance,



Colm Flynn presents *Life on Soul* (RTÉ One).

with a roundup of lively moments from the series – there was his cheeky characterisation of politicians as "chancers and charlatans", his admonition to presidential candidates – ("you don't understand the knockdown drag out nature of politics"), Michael Healy Rae's admonition of him – "your rudeness goes beyond belief...slapping the table like a spoiled little pup"), his sensitive interview with medical campaigner Vicky Phelan and finally his gracious gratitude to the team on that show.

While Yates is stepping back at the moment, the star

of another Irish journalist, Colm Flynn, is on the rise. He presented the award winning (and sadly discontinued) **Life and Soul** series on RTÉ last year, and has popped up on BBC World Service.

Mosque

Last Sunday night he was presenter of **Vaticano** (EWTN), a weekly roundup of Vatican related matters.

I had seen brief news items about the Hagia Sophia Museum in Istanbul being turned back into a Mosque but this was a comprehensive treatment of the issue. Flynn reminded us that it had

originally been, from the 6th Century, a Catholic church, converted to a mosque in 1453, then to a museum in 1934, a move by the then secular Turkish government. Now the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan had reinstated it as a mosque.

Though Erdogan had said it was still open to all as "humanity's common legacy", reaction was understandably negative in the Christian world and beyond. Pope Francis was "very saddened" by it, the World Council of Churches expressed "grief and dismay" and the Moscow Patriarchate feared it would "hurt a fragile interreligious balance".

In Rome, Fr Jason Welle OFM of the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies saw a "grave danger" for interreligious dialogue, and saw the move as a political power play by Erdogan to gain more support within Turkey. Yet he had hope – so far there



Ivan Yates.

PICK OF THE WEEK

MASS

RTÉ One, Sunday, August 2, 11am

Dr Dermot Farrell, Bishop of Ossory, celebrates Mass live in the RTÉ Studios in Donnybrook, Dublin. He is joined by Fr Willie Purcell, National Director of Vocations.

EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND

Channel 4, Tuesday, August 4, 7.45am

Prodigal Son: Debra challenges Ray on why he doesn't go to Mass.

THE REFORMATION

EWTN, Tuesday, August 4, 10.30 pm, also Wednesday, 10.30 am and Friday, 5 pm

The Protestant movement soon begins to fracture over disagreements on basic theology and the Bible itself, leading to armed conflict and persecution.

had been no attempt to get rid of the Christian artwork, though in Islam there's an objection to representational religious artwork.

Also he pointed out that as a museum it hadn't been a place of worship, and such a place should not just be a place for selfies.

The second half of the show reviewed the apostolic visit of Pope Francis to the area in 2014 when the three days of dialogue included a trip to the-then museum.

Also on EWTN last Sunday I enjoyed **The Quest for Shakespeare**, when presenter Joseph Pearce explored the theme of choice in *The Merchant of Venice*, focusing particularly on the choice of suitors for Portia.

The series has been finding Catholic themes and symbolism in the bard's works and

in this episode found links between the works and the poetry of martyred priest St Robert Southwell.

Though the presentation was a bit stiff, I liked the way Pearce moved among the actors as he elucidated his themes, rising to his own poetic heights as he did so – at one stage he referenced "falacious philosophies fuddled with pride" and later identified "metaphorical metamorphoses"!

The acting in the relevant extracts was acceptable, though some were too short.

I'll be watching these EWTN shows again, and suspect I'll see more of Ivan Yates in the media.

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
[@boreganmedia](https://twitter.com/boreganmedia)



Aubrey Malone

Film

Open doors or not Netflix continues to deliver quality

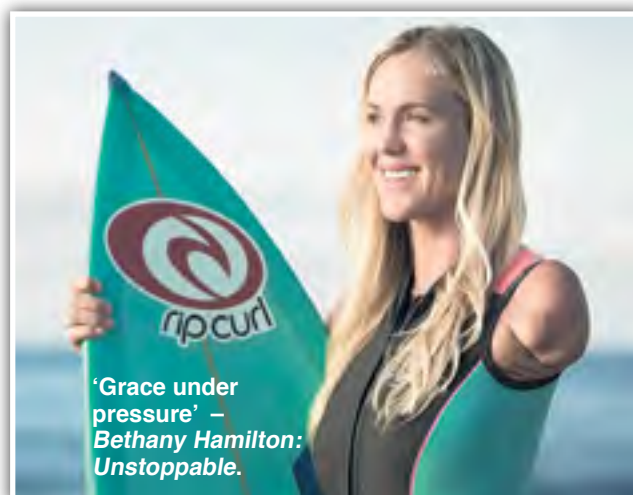
I recently mentioned some Christian-themed films you can watch on Netflix. There are many others as well, some of which you may have already seen, like *The Two Popes*. It got a lot of publicity at the time of its release. It has Anthony Hopkins as Pope Benedict and Jonathan Pryce as the future Pope Francis. They try to find common ground in a series of robust exchanges.

You may also have seen the 2014 release *God's Not Dead*, an interesting film which features a college student who learns to his bewilderment that he's expected to sign a Nietzschean-style 'God is dead' proclamation in order to pass his exams.

He refuses. The profes-

sor who demands it then challenges him to a series of debates to defend his position. They culminate in the student asking the professor why he hates God so much. He replies that it's because he let his mother die. The student poses the question: how can one hate something that doesn't exist?

This intriguing film was followed in 2016 by a sequel, *God's Not Dead 2*, and in 2018 by a third instalment of the franchise, *God's Not Dead: A Light in Darkness*. This concerns a university pastor whose church is burned down. Afterwards he faces a legal battle against members of the university staff who want to remove his congregation from the campus.



'Grace under pressure' – Bethany Hamilton: *Unstoppable*.

The Gospel of Matthew/Mark/Luke and John (2014/5) is a quartet of films employing the unabridged text of Scripture *verbatim* as its basis. The

cast is mainly Middle Eastern. It's the first time in cinema history that the gospels have been unified like this. A massive undertaking.

Same Kind of Different As Me has an all-star cast. Greg Kinnear plays an art dealer who befriends a homeless man who helps him heal his crumbling marriage (to Renee Zellweger.) Jon Voight appears in a smaller role.

Trouble

An Interview with God (2018) may appear frivolous but it isn't. It presents us with a journalist returning from the war in Afghanistan. His marriage is in trouble. Neither is his head in a good place. When he's offered the eponymous interview he jumps at it. David Strathairn plays the man claiming to be God.

Along similar lines, *The Case for Christ* (2017) has a journalist questioning the

validity of the resurrection, and indeed God's existence. This is against the backdrop of his wife's strong faith.

Victor deals with a mother's struggle to save her son from a life of drug-fuelled crime in New York in the sixties. *Bethany Hamilton: Unstoppable* (2019) is a 'grace under pressure' tale of a young girl who reaches the top of the surfing world despite having had one of her arms bitten off by a shark.

Younger viewers may enjoy the animated musical *Joseph: King of Dreams* (2000). It tells the story of a boy who's sold into slavery by his brothers. He goes on to forgive them after becoming a member of Pharaoh's court.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



The pleasures of our search for the true and the good

Lost in Thought. The Hidden Pleasures of Intellectual Life
by Zena Hitz
(Princeton University Press, £18.99)

Frank Litton

The world is too much with us. The most distinctive feature of Irish culture is its contempt for all things intellectual. Consider the questions that occupy us in the daily round. Because we are social animals, we seek to fit in, meeting the expectations of our fellows.

So we ask what is required of us in this or that circumstance. Because we, well most of us, must earn a living, we ask how we can secure, or increase our income, win promotion, or find a better job, a more profitable enterprise.

Because we seek love and understanding, we are prompted to evaluate our lives, to find purpose and meaning.

This is not a hierarchy of questions. It would be a strange life, indeed, in which all three did not figure. The attention given to each, of course, varies, from individual to individual, from one time to another, and in different cultures.

Our culture pays scant attention, and affords little value, to the life of the

mind. Inevitable, perhaps, in an impoverished rural society, with few markets for its agricultural surplus. But in a modern, urban, society?

Anti-intellectualism is not unique to Ireland. Nor are we the only society where it is advancing, or deepening.

Zina Hitz reports how, in the US, the intrinsic value of studying the humanities has been displaced. Students are 'consumers' and universities scramble to sell them 'products' that promise to further their interests in making money.

So she writes, not a defence of the life of the mind, nor a lament for its eclipse, but far more positively, in its praise. She reminds us of the "hidden pleasures of the intellectual life".

Account

Her account is persuasive, not least because it is personal. She writes of her own experience as an academic – she holds a PhD in ancient philosophy from Princeton. Her enthusiasm for philosophy drained away as social pressures and academic competition took centre stage.

She joined a convent of contemplative nuns for a time and discovered that the intellectual life remained her vocation. She recounts how she regained her sense of the good of that life. That journey



Author Zena Hitz.

informs her reading of the journeys of others.

“We are less pluralist and more intolerant of views that question the reigning orthodoxy”

We read of Primo Levi, the novels of Elena Ferrante, Augustine, John of the Cross, Simone Weil, Dorothy Day. Their journeys exemplify how social pressures, ambition and the search for the true and the good interact.

We may think, or our culture may allow us think that only the first two count. The journeys show us that this is not so. The intellectual life is its own reward that is discovered in the interaction.

Hitz is not concerned with the spiritual life. While this has affinities with the intellectual life and while some of her examples were on a spiritual quest, her topic is our natural urge to follow Socrates in living out his assertion that the unexamined life is not worth living. The affinity is worth exploring.

Many years ago Basil Chubb, professor of politics, TCD, told us that Irish political culture was “localist, authoritarian and anti-intellectual”. It was generally accepted that the dominating influence of the Catholic Church was largely responsible for the last two attributes.

How do things stand today? Despite the growth in numbers attending university, we are more anti-intellectual than ever.

We are less pluralist and more intolerant of views that question the reigning orthodoxy which suggests that our

authoritarian score, is, if anything, higher.

The influence of the Catholic Church approaches the vanishing point. Perhaps we got it wrong.

As transcendence is disparaged, the motive to examine our lives, never strong, diminishes.

Getting and spending is all there is.

Hitz does not discuss the rise of anti-intellectualism. This is not a criticism, it is not the subject of her book. But it is a book that should be written, indeed, that needs to be written.

Revolutionary days of fear relived in Ireland

Freedom is a Land I Cannot See

by Peter Cunningham
(Sandstone Press, £8.99)

John Bruton

Peter Cunningham's latest novel, *Freedom is a Land I Cannot See*, is one of his best. He shows great skill and sympathy in evoking living conditions of a century ago, when Ireland, or more particularly north rural Dublin was passing through revolutionary turmoil, what one of those revolutionaries (Frank Gallagher) called “days of fear”.

The novel is set in the Baldoyle/Sutton area of Dublin in 1924 when the new Irish Free State was coping with the aftermath of the successive internecine wars of the 1919-23 period.

To explain why the characters were as they were in 1924, the novel then switches back to 1920.



Peter Cunningham.

This is at the height of the fighting between the IRA and the army, police and Black and Tans. The killings, that happened then, left a mark on the surviving characters that was still there in 1924.

The central character, and narrator in the book, Rose Raven,

is the daughter of a Presbyterian, English born, ex-soldier, who is married to an Irish Catholic woman and living in a cottage in Sutton.

Rose's mother believes Ireland would be safer staying in the Empire. Her father tries to keep

his head down, but Rose's friends are all nationalists of various hues, who want out of the Empire and are prepared to act in varying degrees to achieve that.

In 1920, the risks run by mixed allegiance families like the Ravens were substantial. People were suspected of being ‘informers’ solely on the strength of their religious beliefs and/or past service. Many left the country out of fear.

“The author makes the reader feel he or she is living in North Dublin, alongside the book's characters, as they navigate the successive crises of the 1920s”

By 1924, the Free State had finally been established, and was

trying to stay afloat financially. It was highly sensitive to its credit rating, and worried about the dissemination of bad news that might damage international confidence in the State's creditworthiness.

The plot of the novel revolves around the involvement of some of Rose Raven's friends in endeavouring to pass some such damaging information, about conditions in the West of Ireland, to a US newspaper.

Peter Cunningham makes the reader feel he or she is living in North Dublin, alongside the book's characters, as they navigate the successive crises of the 1920s.

Peter spent much of his own early childhood in Sutton and has a great eye for local detail. That said, the characters he describes remain something of a mystery.

This a good book and I recommend it.

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.

Summer outings of the past (No.2 in a six-part series)

Impressions of Lough Derg in the 1890s

The Canon Daniel O'Connor (1843-1919) was the parish priest in the 1890s in whose domain Lough Derg and the ancient Shrine of St Patrick's Purgatory lay. He was one of its first real historians of the place, a writer who devoted many years to collecting and making known the facts, legends and traditions about the shrine, so remotely located in the depths of the Donegal mountains.

His first publication, *St Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg* came out 1879, with later enlarged editions in 1895 and again in 1903. He ensured that copies of these editions were brought to the attention of the Pope in Rome.

The copy I own of the 1903 edition is a remarkable thing. The text body is the ordinary edition issued in Dublin by that long-lived firm of James Duffy (who would issue later editions in 1910 and 1931). But it is heavily bound in real vellum, stamped in gold with the Papal arms and other decorations.

It too was one of a set clearly intended for presentation in Rome, again to the Pope and other high prelates. It carries no name or inscription.

Given its date the book presents the reader with a very different shrine to the one they know today. These pages present a glimpse of what the place was like in the half century after the Great Famine, in the years of his own lifetime.

To accompany these are two photographs, carried over from the 1898 edition. Taken by Mr French for Lawrence's of Dublin in the spring of 1886, before the season of the pilgrimage. They must be among the earliest photographs ever taken of the shrine.

Here are some edited extracts from the 1903 edition which will give the flavour of the whole... P.C.

The varied moods of the Red Lake

Daniel O'Connor

During settled weather Lough Derg wears an aspect pleasing in the extreme. At times its waters lie hushed as if in sleep, and not a ripple disturbs its placid surface. Under such tranquil repose have I witnessed it at early morning in the beginning of August, 1876.

The morning was exceptionally beautiful, the air fresh and clear, the sun reddening with his rising beams the mountains encircling the lake. Through the air rustled an indescribable harmony, as if all the fishes in the lake were chanting in chorus their matin melody. The crowing of chanticleer at some distant farmhouse anon broke like bugle-note upon the ear; and the whir of the moor-fowl through the heath also imparted life and variety to a scene unique and charming.

Such solemn and impressive scenes are not

of rare incidence at Lough Derg; and they are well calculated to make deep and vivid impressions on the memory.

A sunset on Lough Derg, under favourable circumstances, is, also, a spectacle of extraordinary grandeur. Such a sight have I witnessed from Station Island on July 22, 1878, between 8 and 9 o'clock, as the sun was going down behind Croagh-Breac. Its reflection in the lake looked like a massive pillar of gold, having its apex in Upper Lough Derg, and reaching down through the channel between Saints' Island and the midland more than midway to station island.

One might well imagine it to be the golden portal to some bright realm. The sight was one my companion had never before witnessed during his 25 years connection with place.

But though Lough Derg not rarely reveals itself in such mild guise, it more frequently betrays a sterner mood, and lashes its well-worn shores in angry fashion. At times, indeed, does



John Lavery, St Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg. Photo © National Gallery of Ireland, NGI.4666.

the tempest toss its waves in such fury, that we must regard it as due to a merciful Providence that more accidents have not occurred there; and this more particularly when we take into account not only the propinquity of the Atlantic, but eight or ten miles west of it, and the elevated and mountainous situation of the lake itself, but, also, the frail kind of craft which in bygone days used to ply upon its waters.

During the time the religious establishment stood on Saints' Island no tradition survives of any boat accident having occurred, though the barks then in use were frail canoe-shaped boats, formed out of a hollowed tree, or coracles, covered with hides or canvas, such as are still in use on many of the islands off the coast of Ireland.

* * * * *

It is handed down that many years ago two priests went for a sail in a boat of this sort, and when but a short distance south of Station Island, where there is a

round rock hidden under water (since called the 'Priests' Rock'), the boat capsized, and its occupants were drowned. This is said to have been the first boat accident on Lough Derg.

As the island has passed through times of persecution, and has seen its great monastic buildings and noble churches demolished in the common ruin

Over 60 years since a second boat was lost between Saints' Island and the river Fluchlynn. The boatman, one Doherty from Aughkeen, was returning, in company with two or three others, from Kelly's Islands, in the month of March, when the boat, which was small and unsafe, capsized some distance from land, and all met with a watery grave, not even Doherty, skilful swimmer

though he was, being able to escape.

This sad accident inspired the muse of a local poetaster, who commemorated the event in a mournful lay, still sung in the locality.

But the most lamentable accident of all happened here in 1795, a catastrophe which for many years cast a gloom over the place, and the recital of which to this day fails not to evoke from the pious pilgrims many a tear and prayer for those who met with such an untimely end, Sunday, July 12, 1795, when a large boat containing 72 pilgrims was upset, only two saved out of all.

* * * * *

As the island has passed through times of persecution, and has seen its great monastic buildings and noble churches demolished in the common ruin, we need not wonder that many of the glories of its worship have passed away, and that its edifices until recent times have been of so unpretentious a character...of late

years a decided reaction has set in, buildings more in the dignity of the place have been erected, and the ceremonial of our holy religion is latterly observed with more befitting splendour and solemnity.

The erection of the Hospice has been a distinct advance. But a much greater work remains yet unaccomplished, namely, the erection of a temple worthy of the National Pilgrimage of Ireland.

During the passage, the pilgrims employ their time in singing litanies and hymns, and occasionally the sound of instrumental music may be heard

Visiting some years ago the gorgeous Basilica crowning the rock of Massabielle at Lourdes, and that stupendous votive church raised by Gallia Poenitens on the summit of Montmartre, we at once bethought us of that humble island chapel, that did duty for Catholic Ireland at its National Pilgrimage, and the comparison saddened us indeed.

The Irish Catholics over the universe will, we doubt not, exclaim: "Let the reproach be no longer endured; let the Irish people raise a votive temple at St Patrick's Purgatory, worthy of our faith and nation, and where in after times the children of our race may receive grace to emulate the virtues of their ancestors."

Before nearing the end, I should not forget to mention that at two o'clock each afternoon the pilgrims' boat leaves for Saints' Island, about two miles distant from Station Island; and a more delightful trip can hardly be imagined.

During the passage, the pilgrims employ their time in singing litanies and hymns, and occasionally the sound of instrumental music may be heard. Having traversed Saints' Island, they start on their return voyage, spending usually about an hour in this charming excursion.

● Next time: visitors to Clonmacnoise in the 1940s.

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

MQI

Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Your heart for the homeless

Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone. Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you. This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering
Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email emma.murphy@mqi.ie

GOAL

Please remember **GOAL** in your Will

42 years on we continue to deliver lifesaving support to the most vulnerable people in our world. Leaving a gift in your Will is priceless.

Contact Courtenay on 01 2809779 or via email at cpollard@goal.ie

Registered Charity No. 20010980; CHY 6271

Please remember

THE IRISH HOSPICE FOUNDATION

when making your will so that everyone in Ireland will have access to hospice care one day.

Contact:
Anna Sadlier at 01 679 3188 or anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie
www.hospicefoundation.ie

APPEAL TO POPE FRANCIS, THE IRISH SISTERS OF CHARITY AND THE PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND.

"My life at 12 weeks will be taken in a hospital built on Land gifted by the Church. My Pain will be small compared to that inflicted on the Person of Christ"

Can you help our campaign?

Replies to Chairperson Emmanuel Sweeney at repealthedecision@gmail.com

By remembering World Missions Ireland in your Will you are leaving a gift of hope for all God's children

World Missions Ireland is the Church's official charity for overseas mission
Please help your Church to survive & flourish

To learn how, call Eimear on 01 497 2035 or email eimear@wmi.ie

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.

To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact eve.kerton@focusireland.ie or phone 01 881 5917

FOCUS Ireland

Remembering

**MEMORIAM CARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
CARDS & NOTELETS
BOOKMARKS**

Samples / Information
KENNEDY PRINTERS
BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND
Tel. 027 50102
www.kennedyprinters.ie
email: info@kennedyprinters.ie

Classified Ads

SERVICES

ALL UNWANTED home waste removed. Cookers, fridges, beds, suites, wardrobes, carpets etc. Removed and disposed of in a proper manner. No job too small or big. Contact Tommy, 087 6406015.

CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS

ARE YOU YEARNING for someone special to share life with? Let the team at 'Heavenly Partners' introduce you to other like-minded single Catholics. Call: 01 568 6558.

Follow The Irish Catholic on Twitter

IrishCathNews

NOTICE THIS?

Get your message out to 90,000 readers!

The Irish Catholic

OCEANS ENERGY

Harvested at source along Ireland's west Atlantic coast

IRISH SEAWEED CAPSULES

BUY DIRECT & SAVE

1 bottle	€39
(4 month supply)	
2 bottles	€65
(8 month supply)	
3 bottles	€90
(12 month supply)	
FREE POSTAGE	

OCEANS-ENERGY.COM

BÓTHAR

PLEASE REMEMBER BÓTHAR IN YOUR WILL. €1,800 will allow us to give an Irish, in-calf, dairy heifer to a struggling family in Rwanda, completely transforming their lives. Your gift will live on for generations. Phone the office on 061 414142 or info@bothar.ie

Leisure time

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

Legacy for Life



There is no greater legacy that will leave a mark on future generations than supporting our pro-life and pro-family work.

With your legacy commitment today we will Rebuild a Culture of Life in Ireland.

Call for our free brochure today to find out how you can save countless lives for years to come.

For further advice or to avail of our Solicitor's free Wills service, please contact us today on

01-8552790

Family & Life

26 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1
Ph: 01 8552790 | email: fandi@iol.ie

www.familyandlife.org
www.prolife.ie

Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

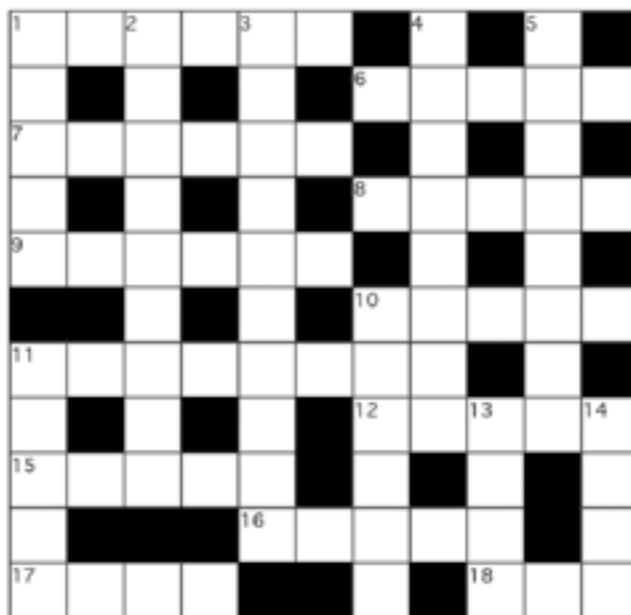
Trócaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 343



Across

- 1 Hair that hangs down over your forehead (6)
6 Pick up something and move it (5)
7 Get (6)
8 You should brush these twice a day (5)
9 Japanese way of fighting (6)
10 Person who makes bread and cakes (5)
11 Happy (8)
12 Shut (5)
15 The colour of grass (5)
16 A group of these birds is called a gaggle (5)
17 You can buy things here (4)

- 18 Creature that followed the Pied Piper (3)

Down

- 1 Group of sheep (5)
2 Meddle, 'poke your nose in' (9)
3 Sparkling the way tinsel does (10)
4 You can hit a home run in this American sport (8)
5 "I have no sisters, but two _____" (8)
10 Pail (6)
11 Animals may be locked up in them (5)
13 Above (4)
14 Sign over the way out (4)

SOLUTIONS, JULY 23

GORDIUS No. 465

Across – 1 Pilgrimage 6 Heat 10 Comet 11 Scrimshaw 12 Inertia 15 Ruler 17 Loki 18 Hare 19 Cacti 21 Anaemia 23 Appal 24 Spot 25 Char 26 Rodeo 28 Obscure 33 Concourse 34 Roger 35 Loot 36 Plesantry

Down – 1 Pick 2 Lemon drop 3 Rotor 4 Messi 5 Germ 7 Ethyl alcohol 8 To work is to pray 9 America 13 Tarn 14 Allegro 16 Theatrical 20 Copyright 22 Inns 27 Dingo 29 Breda 30 Curia 31 Oral

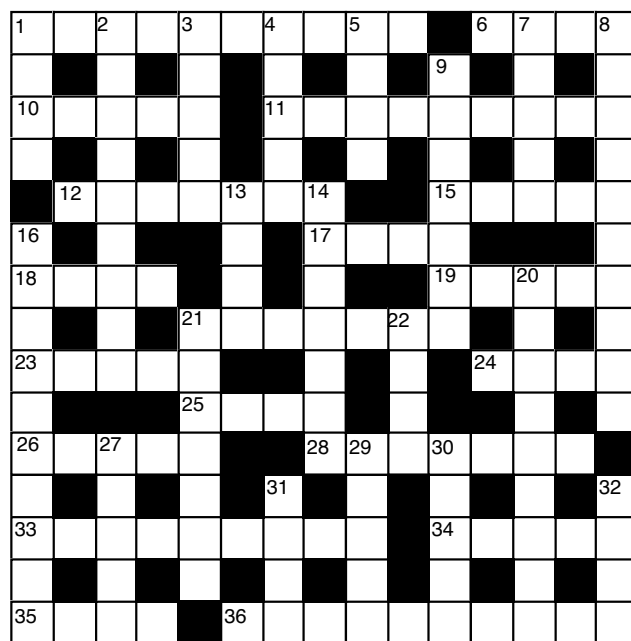
CHILDREN'S No. 342

Across – 1 Golden egg 6 Experiments 8 Nut 9 Innocent 13 Oak 14 Sandals 16 Earl 17 Lie 18 Lovely

Down – 1 Greengrocer 2 Lipstick 3 Earrings 4 Greece 5 Bus 7 Tart 10 Centre 11 Nearly 12 Ashes 15 All

Crossword

Gordius 466



Across

- 1 A dealer in illicit alcohol can make George bolt off (10)
6 Travel here to see the Taj Mahal (4)
10 Tired of how one is catered to when aloft (3,2)
11 Is a mallet not to be deployed in this vegetable patch? (9)
12 These chaps deliver the post in the USA (7)
15 House of Roman design (5)
17 Some blessed name for Ms Everage! (4)
18 Has a meal (4)
19 Malediction (5)
21 Cross and irritable sheep scatter around six (7)
23 Dog associated with Wales (5)
24 Statue that is adored by heathens (4)
25 Mentor essential to sporting Uruguay (4)
26 Article lost by bleary, confused lady (5)
28 This Italian liqueur comes from Cuba, Sam (7)
33 Some gents redistributed jewels (9)
34 This European river requires high, if not extraordinary, origins (5)
35 Toy on a string (2-2)

- 36 This Wiltshire site is old and awkward - honest, Gene (10)

Down

- 1 Light yellow (4)
2 Great painting by a senior teacher (3,6)
3 Part of a jacket (5)
4 & 8d 'Elegance Following New Salem', as one recites having eaten (5,5,5)
5 Slippery creatures (4)
7 Inexperienced environmentalist? (5)
8 See 4 down
9 'Tummy' (7)
13 Spice used in jousting? (4)
14 Anxious (7)
16 How can Sandy motor around with a chubby egg? (5,5)
20 Price decrease (9)
21 Lips get moving when little porkers appear (7)
22 Former name of Thailand (4)
27 Card game (5)
29 To blazes with this crime! (5)
30 Deciduous tree with distinctive bark (5)
31 A nautical mile per hour (4)
32 Brazilian soccer legend, believed by many to be the game's greatest (4)

Sudoku Corner

343

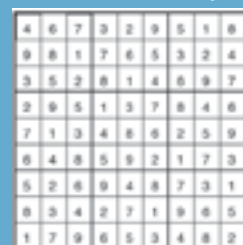
Easy



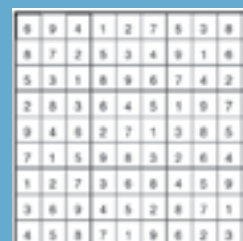
Hard



Last week's Easy 342



Last week's Hard 342



Following a dream isn't always blowing in the wind

THERE WAS A FUNNY song a while back about a man going into Lidl or Aldi to buy a few loaves and rashers and leaving with a chainsaw, a wetsuit and a portable generator. I have been that man... well, apart from the wetsuit and maybe the generator and the chainsaw!

I mean, I know the aisle he is referring to and have wandered there, leaving the trolley with vegetables, meat and what I planned on getting minding its own business as I looked at things I never knew I needed.

I had this experience just before Christmas and though my unplanned purchase from the centre aisle was inexpensive, it was something I had not imagined seeing, never mind bringing home with me. A harmonica at €5 – I mean, how could I not buy that?

Something different

For many years I had sang *The Little Drummer Boy* at Christmas Masses and added the bongos (now that I think of it, from the same aisle) to the tune some years ago. I wondered if maybe I might manage to play the tune on the harmonica, just for something different.



My nephew had steered me in a different direction a year earlier when he said he had wondered what I might bring to Christmas Mass for a change, maybe a smoke machine or an electric guitar, but “no”, he concluded, “the drums again!” (I paraphrase so that I do not lose my spot on the back of *The Irish Catholic*!).

Anyway, I brought it home and when I put away the essentials, I took a look at my new musical instrument and went from there to YouTube and was pleasantly surprised to find a very helpful man showing me how to play *The Little Drummer Boy* on the harmonica. I can do this, I thought ...I watched, listened, blew and drew and something like notes were coming out. I kept it secret

but enjoyed the thoughts of maybe adding something new to a tune I dearly love. I chanced it, people were kind and my nephew was shocked. More than that, I could not ask for.

“I believe we should share that tune that we all have within us”

Since then, I realised the €5 harmonica in the key of C was not up to the job, so I bought a more expensive one, not crazy expensive but maybe €30 and it sounded better. Since then I bought a few in different keys.

The same man on YouTube introduced me to other songs I liked – *Blowing in The Wind*, *The*

Fields of Athenry, Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*, *How Great Thou Art*, *Nearer My God To Thee* and I found others like *The Town I Love So Well*, *Forty Shades of Green*, *Raglan Road*, *Were you There* and more – they passed a bit of time for me during ‘lockdown’.

I love music and I love a song that tells a story and a singer who delivers it and a musician who plays it. I think we all have a tune in us. More than that, I believe we should share that tune. Since I live alone, I have shared a few attempts on my blog and Facebook, and I have noticed my dog move to another room when he hears the first stirrings of ‘the harp’!

You might well wonder what this is all about? I think it is about being willing to give something a go, following a dream and letting a €5 harmonica find its way into your trolley and then, maybe, upgrading it a little.

Maybe it is about leaving the door open so that the dog can walk into another room too! I think it is about wanting to improve and knowing that we need to watch, listen, spend time, make mistakes, learn and add our tune.

Green lists and green shoots

As the Government publishes a ‘green list’ of countries that are less dangerous to travel to and from, I think of green shoots as our churches return to public worship.

It has been such a strange time and our return was maybe less than we had anticipated.

I encouraged people to come to Mass during the week to lessen pressure on numbers for the weekend.

It is pleasing to see more people at weekday Masses.

I love the sight and the sound of them – people gathered and people praying. Bit of a green shoot, I believe.



Sr Mary Clare Busingye with some of the victims of flooding in eastern Uganda, where homeless families struggle to live by fishing.



PLEASE HELP DISPLACED FAMILIES HIT BY UGANDA FLOODS

Amidst the worldwide covid crisis, other human disasters persist. Sr Mary Clare Busingye of the Little Sisters of St Francis of Assisi, Tororo, Uganda, writes to The Little Way Association: “We had very heavy rains that caused flood and displaced people in Fungwe village. Most houses fell and gardens for growing food were submerged in water. Almost all that families owned was lost. About 250 families are now living in classrooms in our primary school where women, children and men are all mixed up. For bedding they sleep on mats. Each family prepares their meal under trees. They have not been given the help required. The main activity at the moment is fishing. The major challenge are the vulnerable women and children. We have tried to help but we cannot continue because of our own financial challenges. I am earnestly requesting for your financial help.”

Your kind donation will help the villagers of Fungwe and others who are presently suffering. The current epidemic means that many countries’ infrastructure is compromised.

Every penny or cent of your gift goes to missionaries without deduction.



MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

Your Mass offerings help to provide the missionary priest’s maintenance and assist him to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth.

We like to send a missionary a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass.

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:
€..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND NEEDY FAMILIES**
€..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state number)
€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

To donate online go to
tinyurl.com/lwadonations

**DONATIONS FOR THE
MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT
DEDUCTION FOR ANY
EXPENSES.**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss) (Block letters please)

Address