

# The Irish Catholic

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## Ireland legend pleads with young people to make more time for God

Chai Brady

Former Ireland international and Birmingham City player Keith Fahey has urged young people to keep God at the centre of their lives and not to be sucked in by addiction or materialism.

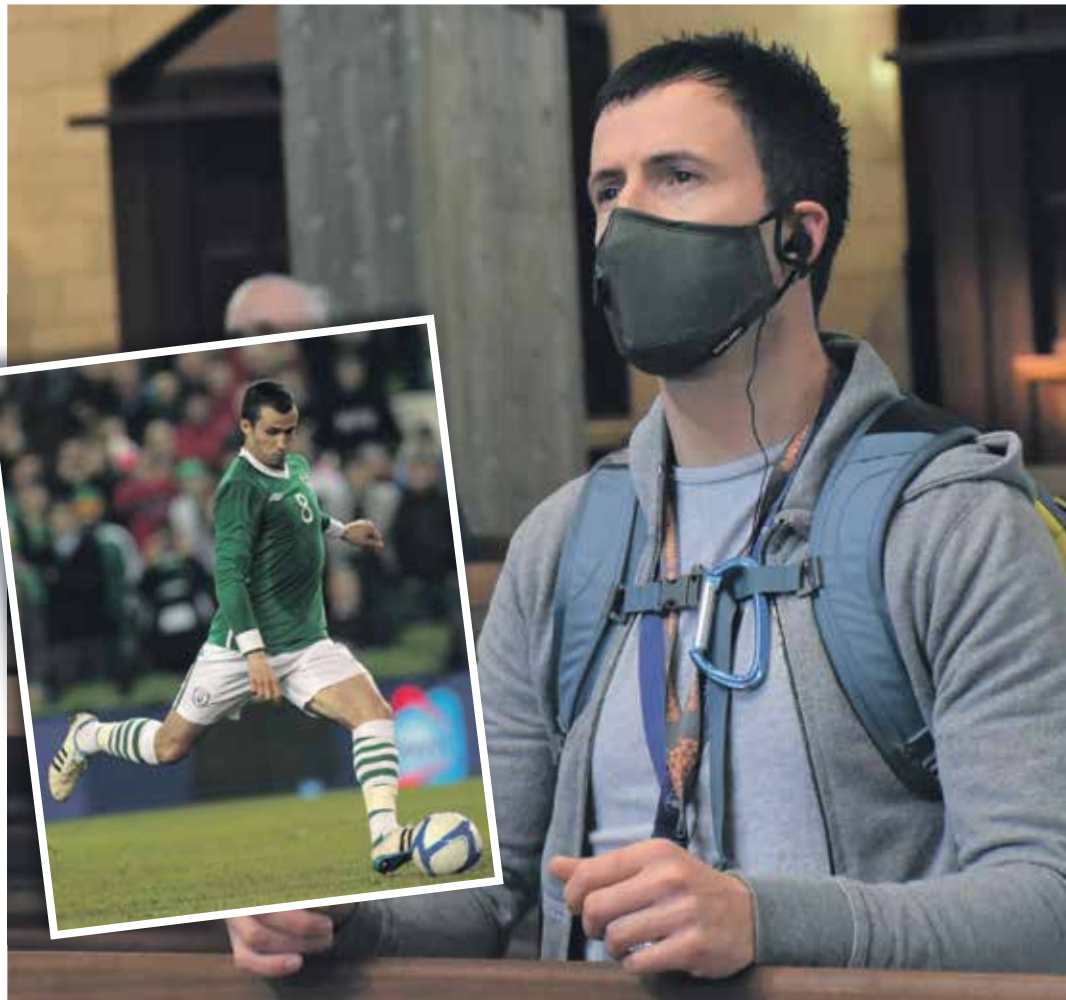
Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mr Fahey – who was capped for the Republic of Ireland 16 times – said he was on a “crash course of self-destruction” before he found his way back to God.

“I remember at one stage, I was flat out being dishonest. I remember just thinking to myself, ‘you need care now, this isn’t you,’ and that was maybe the voice of God. That was the turning point,” he said.

“There’s no problem with anyone wanting a football career, but I’d also make time for God each day, first and foremost, and you’ll be looked after,” Mr Fahey said.

“I think we can put all these things before God and some people aren’t so lucky to find their way back. It can end up messy: through addiction, alcoholism, all that sort of stuff. People end up taking their own lives because they’re that far gone and lost,” the 39-year-old Dubliner said of the pitfalls of the celebrity lifestyle associated with football.

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Keith Fahey prays at the Basilica of the Annunciation in the Holy Land. Photo: Chai Brady

## Rural parishes hope for summer boost after Covid

Ruadhán Jones

The Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions devastated rural communities, leaving some towns lying empty and derelict, but parishes now say they are hopeful of a summer boost having “weathered the storm”.

Fr John Joe Duffy of Creeslough, Co. Donegal, told *The Irish Catholic* “it’s tearing the heart out of rural communities to see them lying empty and derelict” after the coronavirus exacerbated high vacancy rates in commercial properties in the region.

“It takes the spirit and heart of a town,” Fr Duffy added, saying “places look deserted. It makes it seem like there isn’t a life in towns.”

Fr Duffy bemoaned a lack of support for the west, saying there seems to be a “hidden policy” to take people away from small villages, saying investment favours big towns and not rural areas.

Towns and villages across the North-west face similar difficulties, said Fr Vincent Sherlock PP Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo, as a lot of towns have become depopulated.

“There’s properties empty that would have been businesses,” he said.

“In the past, people would have had a shop and the family would have lived over it. But the shop is gone now and the family over it too.”

Fr Sherlock added that it takes services away too: “Since I came here, there were two banks. One of them closed just a month after I came, and that’s an empty building now and a service gone from the place. It’s the loss of services, when all you needed was

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# Pope's Vatican reforms are good news – but more needs to be done

**P**ope St John XXIII was reportedly once asked by an impressed visitor to the Apostolic Palace how many people actually work at the Vatican. The Pontiff is reported to have quipped back: "Oh, about half of them".

The story is probably apocryphal, and I have since heard it said about many large organisations. In reality, the global headquarters of the Church is lean when it comes to staff: the Vatican employs around 5,000 people in either the central governance of the Church or the various roles necessary to keep the world's smallest country going.

In a perpetually depressed labour market like Italy, the jobs are much-prized. It's not that the salaries are high, they are not. But Vatican employees do not pay income tax and their status as *dipendenti vaticani* also entitles them and their family to avail of tax-free shopping within the city-state, subsidised housing and use of the Vatican's excellent private health facilities. Crucially, it is a permanent pensionable job in an economy where unemployment and under-employment are plagues (full disclosure: I was a Vatican employee for a number of years).

**“In a perpetually depressed labour market like Italy, the jobs are much-prized”**

The long-anticipated reforms of the Church's central governance – known as the Roman Curia – took a step forward on March 19 when Pope Francis published a new apostolic constitution. From now on Vatican departments will not be known as congregations, councils or commissions – but each one will be known as a dicastery. Francis is adamant that the role of the curia is simple: to assist the proclamation of the Gospel. The Pope himself becomes prefect of the new Dicastery for Evangelisation underlining the role that this is the Church's central mission.

### Tough

Reform of the Vatican is a tough sell. Francis has been writing this new constitution for nine years – his



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Pope Francis leads a meeting of his Council of Cardinals at the Vatican in February. Photo: Vatican Media

commission of cardinals have been meeting regularly to discuss the finer details. It has evidently not been without hiccups. One of those drafting the document, Cardinal Óscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga SDB, told me four years ago that it would be published in a few weeks!

**“Reform of the Vatican is a tough sell. Francis has been writing this new constitution for nine years”**

At the same time, a cardinal is amongst those who have gone on trial in the Vatican accused of fraud and – to put it mildly – imprudent investments in London have seen the Church lose more than €217million that was donated by Catholics around the world in the understanding that it would be put to charitable purposes by the Pope.

The task is enormous.

### Reforms

Potentially the most important of the Pope's reforms is the fact that from now on any competent baptised Catholic can lead a Vatican department. Up to this point, one had to be ordained in order to exercise governance. The Pope has cleared the way for laypeople to now be involved in decision-making at the highest level within the universal Church.

There is a potentially seismic shift. Again, I say potentially because this is

in their movement will see them quickly reassigned.

Another problem is that traditionally Vatican salaries are too low to attract high-calibre candidates. They are good starter salaries for someone just starting out, but not enough to comfortably live and raise a family.

**“The Pope himself becomes prefect of the new Dicastery for Evangelisation underlining the role that this is the Church's central mission”**

“If the Pope wants to attract the sort of candidates who can make a real difference, he will have to look beyond those who are consecrated members of movements within the Church. He will also have to hire internationally and match competitive salaries to attract high-quality candidates with a proven track record.

So, the Pope's move on lay involvement is a good first step – but to borrow an old campaign slogan, we might just say: a lot done, more to do.

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## Ireland legend pleads with young people to make time for God

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He adds: “I think once you bring God into the centre, in my experience it works a lot easier, there's a lot more grace in your life. That would be my suggestion. I just know from my own experience of giving time each day that I'm being looked after, the proof is there.”

He also said that the Church should put more focus on teaching people about the person of Christ. “I think when people talk about Jesus...they just talk about the cross and what he did for us – but he also showed us how to live, performed miracles”.

Mr Fahey has recently returned from a trip to the Holy Land where he participated in a Christian Solidarity Pilgrimage organised by *The Irish Catholic*. He described it as a “special” place and said “it was lovely – there's a nice energy there”.

Mr Fahey's professional football career began as a trainee with Arsenal in the year 2000, he subsequently played with several Irish clubs, with St Patrick's Athletic being where he spent most of his career.

After being transferred to Birmingham City in 2008, the team won the 2011 League Cup in England.

See pages 14-15

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# Hollywood actor Will Smith senses God's call in controversial Oscars speech



Will Smith, Saniyya Sidney, Aunjanue Ellis, Daniele Lawson, Demi Singleton, Layla Crawford and Mikayla Bartholomew star in a scene from the movie *King Richard*. Photo: CNS

## Brandon Scott

Controversial actor Will Smith, who was the recipient of the Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance in the biographical sports drama film *King Richard*, celebrated his first Oscar by saying that he was "overwhelmed" by what God was calling on him to do and be in this world during his acceptance speech.

Mr Smith, who was visibly emotional throughout his speech, had earlier taken umbrage to host Chris Rock's comments alluding to his wife Jada Pinkett-Smith's medical condition, alopecia - which causes hair loss - and retaliated by hitting the comedian and warning that he desist from passing judgment on his wife in the future.

The American actor, who was raised as a Baptist and attended a Catholic primary school, distanced himself from religion in a 2013 interview but has since returned to Christian belief as per a 2015 interview where he accredits his grandmother as the person responsible for instilling his Christian faith.

## Connection

"My grandmother was really my connection to God," he told *Christian Post*. "She was my spiritual teacher, she was that grandmother at the church, the one having the kids doing the Easter presentations and putting on the Christmas plays and her kids and grandkids had to be first."

"She was the most spiritually certain person that I had ever met in my entire life. Even to the point that when she was

dying she was happy. She was really excited about going to heaven."

Mr Smith has previously featured in films which engage with Christian themes and messages, most notably the film *Concussion* where he played Dr Bennet Omalu, a devoutly Catholic doctor from Nigeria who became famous for discovering a link between concussions from football and their effects on the brain.

Recalling his time spent with the actor, Dr Omalu said that Mr Smith "was very observant" and what made the Hollywood actor accept the role was getting to meet the Catholic doctor. "The spiritual stuff is deep", Dr Omalu said. "We met, we shared and we communed the love of God, and he also saw the light. The spirit of God also touched him."

# Ukraine is more than just statistics, archbishop warns

## Staff reporter

Archbishop Dermot Farrell has criticised Russia's Vladimir Putin as an "unjust aggressor" and warned that the crisis facing Europe with the invasion of Ukraine parallels the Second World War.

The Archbishop of Dublin was speaking in Sacred Heart Church in Donnybrook as he led a solemn act of consecration of both Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The liturgy was attended by Green Party leader Eamon Ryan and Minister for Education Norma Foley as well as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo.

Dr Farrell said that "the barbaric killing of children, elderly people and of innocent, defenceless citizens brings immense suffering for millions of people to obtain vain political and national goals."

"The calculated, but reckless, armed aggression in Ukraine dwarfs in urgency the

many other problems our world faces, some of which threaten the very life of this planet; on a scale not seen since the horrors of the Second World War, we have a war in the heart of Europe, begun by an unjust aggressor intent on the destruction of a sovereign country and its people," Dr Farrell warned.

Commenting on the fact that some ten million Ukrainians are already displaced, Dr Farrell pleaded with people to see the reality behind the statistic. "For the people of Ukraine - our sisters and brothers, this is no statistic; it is not a memory; this is their reality."

"The killed, the wounded, the displaced, are their parents, their children, their husbands or wives, neighbours, friends: people, ordinary people like you and me, who have had their lives, their homes, their land ripped apart."

"And more: it is not only the indiscriminate destruction of tens of thousands of lives, but also a horrifying and tragic living reality that will haunt them forever," he told the congregation.

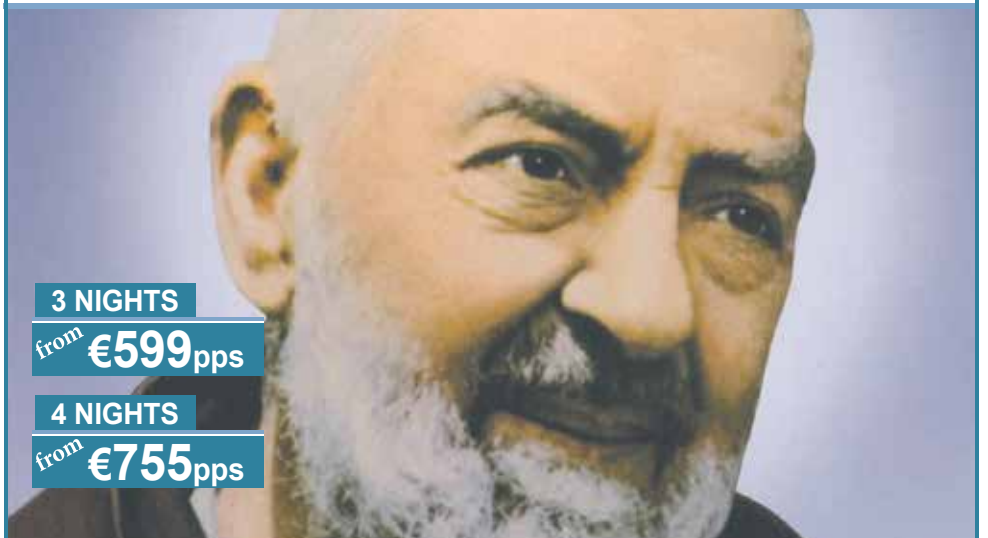


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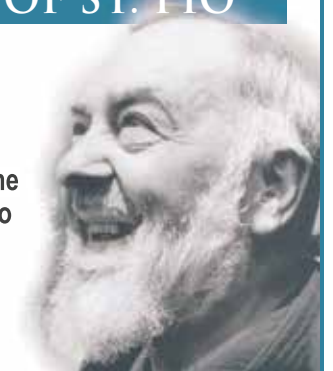
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# Fianna Fáil TD hits out at substantial delays on minister of religion visas

Ruadhán Jones

Fianna Fáil TD Brendan Smith has criticised the uncertainty caused by “substantial delays” in processing applications for the minister of religion visa.

The Cavan-Monaghan TD told *The Irish Catholic* that there are “substantial delays” and he knows from situations he has dealt with in his constituency it causes hardship on the person applying.

“It does because there’s uncertainty... these are people who are needed, where bishops or missionary societies have asked them to come and help,” he said.

Mr Smith also believes that there should not be a time limit of six years for people coming to Ireland to work as a minister of religion. The current legislation allows for a three-year visa, with

three possible one-year extensions.

“The timeframe of six years needs to be reviewed and removed I believe,” he said.

“Over the years we have seen people come from Eastern European countries and from Africa to minister in the different religions. And they have been a welcome addition for the churches.”

He added that they are not a burden to the state, they are contributing “through their different work, important pastoral work, important education work as well”.

“I know that the provision is made for people to apply for citizenship after so many years here. But that may not always suit an individual, depending on the situation regarding dual citizenship from their own home country.”

Mr Smith pointed out that it’s a relatively small number of people overall, “and I don’t think there should be any time limit put on the number of years those people can remain in this country”.

The Fianna Fáil TD had asked Minister for Justice Helen McEntee if she had any proposals to extend the limit beyond six years.

In response, Ms McEntee said there is currently no provision for further extensions under the minister of religion scheme but her officials are keeping the matter under review.

*The Irish Catholic* reported in December 2021 on issues caused by delays in processing the visa leaving missionaries in the lurch, with negotiations between the department and missionary orders ongoing.

## Giant Mary statue gets go-ahead in Brazil

Staff reporter

A Brazilian court has ruled that the construction of a giant, steel statue of the Virgin Mary can go ahead.

Sao Paulo State’s Court of Appeals reversed the 2019 decision that halted the building of the project in Aparecida, the city of a major Catholic shrine in Brazil. The 164-foot sculpture portraying Our Lady of Aparecida – which is taller than Rio de Janeiro’s famous Christ the Redeemer – can now be completed.

It was donated in 2017 by artist Gilmar Pinna to the municipality for the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the apparition at Aparecida.

The project includes five small religious statues located in different parts of

the same city, along with the large hilltop monument.

The work was interrupted because of a lawsuit filed by the Brazilian Atheists and Agnostics Association (ATEA), which claimed that the funds were being used to pay for religious symbols, which is forbidden under the Brazilian constitution.

However, Mr Pinna said that almost all the elements of the project were donated, including the sculpture.

“Forty years ago, I was facing a terrible problem in my family, and I asked Our Lady’s help. She gave me her grace and I promised her I would build something grandiose,” he told *Crux* news.

Mr Pinna said he had been saving part of the payment he received for his sculptures with the aim of creating the giant statue.

## Seeking vocations for Our Lady



Archbishop Eamon Martin is pictured with students following a large gathering of young people who attended the launch of a special weekend of prayer for vocations in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh on the Feast of the Annunciation.

## Journalist killed in Ukraine remembered as ‘a gift to us’

Jason Osborne

Mourners gathered for the funeral of journalist killed in Ukraine Pierre Zakrzewski were told that Pierre “understood the sacred” and it was this that compelled him to share the stories of others.

Mr Zakrzewski was killed alongside Ukrainian journalist Oleksandra Kuvshynova when the vehicle they were travelling in was struck by incoming fire outside Kyiv, March 14.

At the funeral in Foxrock Parish, Co. Dublin on Tuesday, Fr Kieran Dunne said Pierre “shone out as a ‘story-teller’. He could see each person ‘made beautiful in their time,’ a mystery, a gift if not from God, then for each other.

“Pierre himself of course was such a gift to us,” Fr Dunne told those assembled.

He was a “proud Irishman, unafraid of his roots and in his earthiness capable of



Pierre Zakrzewski. Photo: Fox News.

reaching across languages, cultures, traditions, and identities and seeing them not as barriers but as oceans of possibility for human encounter, sharing and growing.”

## Rural parishes hope for summer boost after Covid

» Continued from Page 1  
to walk down the street rather than travel for it.”

However, while many rural communities faced difficulties due to Covid, Fr Pat Lombard of Sligo town said they have hopes for a boost in the summer.

“We’re all coming out of that period [Covid pandemic], recovering from that,” Fr Lombard said.

“As we come into the summer, there’s a hope among people that there will be more spending that will generate more jobs and spending again.”

He lamented the decline in people on Sligo’s main street, but added that a new multicultural commu-

nity and vibrant youth life is keeping towns alive.

“They all seem to be managing to do their bit of shopping and those are the type of shops that are doing well,” Fr Lombard explained.

“There’s a different dynamic. You’re going down the street and our town has become more and more multicultural. We’ve been getting emigrants from different places, the Poles came in force and now we’re getting Ukrainians.”

The town of Carrick-on-Shannon, on the Leitrim-Roscommon border has “weathered the storm” of Covid too, Fr Mark Bennett CC said.

“There haven’t been too many closures around the place, not new ones anyway, we’re lucky in that way I think,” he said. “There would have been a couple of small places shut down, but there’s been new businesses going in as well, so there’s a bit of a turnover.”

Fr Stephen Farragher of Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo also believes the community have been insulated from the worst of the pandemic due to their local industries.

“We have one or two big employers here...and the nature of those businesses is that even in pandemics they have to keep going,” Fr Farragher said.



# A truth commission on adoption – yes, with full context

**P**rofessor Diarmaid Ferriter – probably the most influential historian in Ireland – has called for a “truth commission” to investigate the circumstances of Irish adoption practices in the past. He estimates that up to 20,000 Irish people may have been affected by historic illegal birth registrations, and this should be now be fully investigated by the state – the Mother and Baby Homes Commission did not include examining adoption records.

In principle, this is a laudable idea. If individuals are troubled by the question of what their true roots really are, yes, anything that can help straighten out a family tree is to the good.

## Caveat

My only caveat about Prof. Ferriter's proposal is that any retrospective approach to adoption should be carefully and fully contextualised.

Adoption was illegal in the Irish state until 1952 (Northern Ireland passed legislation, following Britain, in 1931). It was illegal because a lot of people didn't favour it. This included many country people, who disap-



**Mary Kenny**



TV cook Prue Leith is a great campaigner for adoption. Photo: Edwardx.

observes that Irish orphanages, in the 1940s, were “teeming” with children whose families did not claim them. Meanwhile, America was “teeming” with affluent couples longing to adopt a child – there were 20 American adopters for every baby that might become available from Ireland.

## “The lack of legislation led, eventually, to an informal market springing up”

Legal or illegal, a lot of perfectly decent people believed that a child would have a better life with a well-placed American family than in an Irish orphanage. Indeed, advocating adoption, and even allowing the child to start with a “clean sheet” – that is, a faked birth certification – was considered to be kind, often by very progressive people.

## Context

Yes, examine all this: but put context, context, context on loudspeaker.

A little comparative sociology wouldn't go amiss, either. Adoptions by sleight-of-hand were also practiced in other countries. The TV cook Prue Leith has written about how her husband, John Playfair, was adopted in England in 1949. A local GP knew a single mother who had had a romance with an American G.I. and couldn't keep the baby.

He also knew a couple desperate for a child. So, to the birth mother's relief, he discreetly took the newborn and placed him with the adoptive parents. Subsequently, it was all regularised with paperwork, since Britain had adoption legislation. But, Prue remarked that such informal arrangements often occurred.

## Campaigner

Prue is a great campaigner for adoption – she has an adopted daughter, who herself has adopted a child. When I met

Prue recently she noted sadly that today the pendulum has swung from the extremity of fast, informal arrangements to a complex international bureaucracy, and young infants can now wait years until every possible check and control has been enacted. Even though we now know the first three years of a child's life are the most essential for attachment.

Set up a Truth Commission. But be genuinely truthful about context.

## Being gracious towards gaffes

President Joe Biden will be 80 this year and quite a few commentators are asking whether he's “losing his marbles”, because of the “gaffes” to which he is prone. His comment that “this man [Putin] cannot remain in power” was widely regarded as enabling the Russians to claim that America is seeking to interfere with Moscow's governance.

There have been several other occasions when the White House has had to engage in “damage limitation” following Presidential “mis-statements”. He seemed to be indicating that the United States would respond in kind

if Russia were to use chemical weapons. He has forgotten the name of someone he's engaging with – he called the Australian Prime Minister “the fella Down Under”, and referred to his own Defence Secretary, Lloyd Austin, as “the guy who runs that outfit over there”.

As a senior citizen, I feel more inclined to be indulgent towards the President's ramblings. Which of us hasn't grasped at a name, which we feel is on the tip of our tongue? Which of us hasn't come out with the odd maladroit phrase not entirely intended?

Memory deterioration does

occur in old age, but researchers at Harvard, Columbia and Toronto universities have come up with a cheering explanation. Writing recently in the journal “Trends in Cognitive Science” the boffins claim that older brains gear up more slowly because they are already so full, from a lifetime's accumulated data. We have excessive information from all those years of absorbing so much mental input. Moreover, they believe that the overload in our little grey cells can also prompt creativity.

When Joe mis-speaks the next time, let commentators exercise Christian charity!

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# Ukraine refugees in Lisdoonvarna finding 'great sustenance' in faith

Chai Brady

There were scenes of sorrow and healing among Ukrainian refugees who escaped the war during a Mass held in Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare in conjunction with the Pope's consecration of Russia and Ukraine.

According to Fr Robert McNamara, the parish priest of Lisdoonvarna and Kilshanny, many of the refugees are finding "great sustenance" in their Christian faith.

Fr McNamara said that on March 25 during the consecration, "We had a candlelight vigil

and a quiet time in prayer and adoration and a lot of the Ukrainians were here and they were actually crying. It was a healing time for them.

"A lot of them are finding great sustenance, as any Christian would, in the hope of the Lord. I mean what have we got without him? We have to hope and trust and keep praying."

Many of the refugees in Lisdoonvarna arrived just before St Patrick's day and were integrated into the St Patrick's day parade. There are more than 800 refugees fleeing Russia's invasion of Ukraine in the area, according to Fr McNamara.

He said: "It is very moving, there were a couple of them in here the other morning and they were praying, and they were crying. A lot of people have been inviting them into their homes for tea. The local people are incredibly kind and great credit to them because there already is a centre here for asylum seekers."

"I have been down to the hotels every day welcoming them. It's amazing, it's mainly women and children and they're very professional, accountants, solicitors, IT people, teachers, doctors, nurses, one is a surgeon, and children."

There are four schools in his parish, three primary and one secondary school, which are working to accommodate more than 100 children of primary school age and about 80 for secondary, according to Fr McNamara.

"So far we've been able to accommodate most of them," he said, "we are trying and it's working so far, thank God, to give as many school places as we can."

"We believe that if you just say prayers and don't put them into action, that's a waste of time so we're trying to do what our Lord asked us to do."

## Jonathan Roumie to star in *Jesus Revolution* movie

Jason Osborne

*The Chosen* actor Jonathan Roumie is taking a break from portraying Christ to play one of Jesus' more colourful proponents, "the legendary, enigmatic hippie street-preacher," Lonnie Frisbee.

Mr Frisbee was an American charismatic evangelist at work in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, and is regarded as a key figure in the "Jesus movement" or "Jesus revolution" which took place on the west coast of the United States before spreading through-

out the rest of the country.

Taking to social media to inform his followers of his casting as Mr Frisbee in the upcoming *Jesus Revolution* movie, Mr Roumie said the hippie preacher was "particularly anointed by God with profound gifts of the Holy Spirit, including the gifts of healing and prophecy among others."

"His contribution came at a watershed moment in American history where he effectively helped rescue vast numbers of the post-LSD tripping hippie youth who were lost, confused

and disenfranchised, desperately seeking something greater than themselves," Mr Roumie wrote.

Mr Frisbee "convinced so many of his generation that the LSD and everything else they experimented with could not, and would never fill the void, provide answers or reveal the truth".

The Kingdom Story Company and Lionsgate film is inspired by true events surrounding the Jesus movement, and will see actors Kelsey Grammar, Joel Courtney and more portray key figures in the national spiritual awakening of the early 1970s.



Jonathan Roumie as Jesus in a scene from *The Chosen*.

## Tribute for much-loved and respected Derry priest

Staff reporter

Tributes have poured in for a "much-loved" and "exceptional" Derry priest who died on Monday morning.

Hailing from Culdaff, Fr Paddy O'Kane ministered as the parish priest of the Holy Family parish in Derry for many years.

Former mayor of Derry, Pat Ramsey, said Fr O'Kane "was a well-loved priest across Derry, highly respected".

"He was an exceptional priest. There was many Masses I went to for family members, friends or neighbours and there's nobody as good at giving a homily, to get the emotion, to give testimony to someone who's dead, he had it at a fine art," Mr Ramsey said. "Everyone who went to a funeral service with Fr Paddy was leaving it feeling a lot better in terms of reconciling a death."

He said that Fr Paddy had a fun-loving side and loved to sing, describing him as "the Elvis of Derry with the white collar on", and that he loved telling stories, and was a magician as well.

Fr O'Kane was also a "proud member" of the Derry Cursillo community, Mr Ramsey said.

"He will be really sadly, sadly missed, a very outgoing priest, people will be very sad by his loss across the city. Everybody knew Fr Paddy," he added.

## Outstanding sisters...



Irish Ambassador to Liberia Claire Buckley meets Srs Ann and Bridget of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, who with support from Irish Aid provide vital services for the most vulnerable in Liberia. Ms Buckley says they exemplify "the outstanding contribution made by Irish citizens every day".

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## Niamh Uí Bhriain

### The View



# We need to support those brave families who know their baby will be born unwell

**I**t increasingly seems that the stories that should most inspire us, the lives that are illuminated with courage and love, are becoming the least often heard. Sometimes, that's a deliberate ploy, especially when the profound courage of families who carry and love their baby with a life-limiting condition are ignored by the media.

But in the past few months, baby Faith Wilson, a little girl whose brief life was a triumph against the odds, has made an extraordinary impact, not just in Ireland but across the world.

In 2019, Joanne and Phillip Wilson, a young couple living in Co. Fermanagh were told they were expecting a much-longed for baby. "It was amazing," Ms Wilson said. But then they were given devastating news: their baby was diagnosed with anencephaly. Her brain and skull had not formed properly and doctors said she would not live.

**"I never thought we would get to be a mummy and daddy home with her"**

In a profoundly beautiful video made with the support group Every Life Counts, Joanne and Phillip shared the story of what they did next.

As they grappled with the understandable anger, upset and confusion, Joanne said she questioned what to do, and that she prayed "really, really hard" and that "God just spoke to me and said 'you have to carry this wee baby' and we are really, really glad that we did".

They then used the time they had with their baby girl before birth to make precious memories for their little angel.

### Poignant

It's a beautiful and poignant story, but it didn't end there. Her parents had been praying for some time with their baby after birth, and her loud cry after birth was a cause of hope and joy.

Baby Faith went on to defy all expectations and surprise the doctors by living 15 days after birth with anencephaly.

She is the absolute star of

a beautiful video made during those precious days with the little girl and her parents, who describe their baby as their "little warrior princess".

Filmed in the nursery they had prepared for little Faith when she was 12 days old, the couple's love for their baby girl - who is cradled in their arms throughout - is profoundly beautiful and moving. It has been viewed 1.1 million times on Facebook and almost 900,000 times on YouTube. "She's only been here 12 days and she's done more good and spoke to more people than I've ever done in 31 years," said dad Phillip. "It's amazing."

### Mummy

"I never thought we would get to be a mummy and daddy home with her," mum Joanne said. "You needed to be strong and she has been so strong throughout this." "We were able to create so many memories...We went to the beach and picked shells and wrote baby Wilson. Just simple things," the proud parents said.

They had been told not to expect that Faith would live beyond birth, even though studies show that most babies with anencephaly do, in fact, live to have even a brief time with their families.

Joanne says of the birth: "It was long but both of us were very calm. I didn't hear anything when she first came out, but then we heard that cry and it was magical... Phillip just turned to me and cried and said 'we have a baby girl'".

Faith was the couple's first baby and their family and community rallied around to wrap them in support so that they could ensure that every moment of their little girl's life was filled with love. Joanne and Phillip also found that baby Faith confounded doctors in more ways than one.

"We've got to do so many nice things, we've got to feed her with a syringe and she's actually taken more each day. Doctors were very much against me feeding her, they said these babies don't feel hungry but she pouts those wee lips and she smacks them and she does tell us when she needs something," Joanne shared. The video was posted by

support network Every Life Counts, who provide care and information for families where baby may not live for long after birth. Amongst the many supportive messages on Facebook was one from another mum who said: "Thank you for sharing. My anencephaly baby is due in June. This gave me a much needed boost of faith. Thank you." Other messages praised the Wilson family for their courage, love and inspiration and admired beautiful baby Faith. Vicky Wall of Every Life Counts said that it was an honour to film the testimony to such an amazing little girl, and said that it was vital to recognise the importance of every baby's life, and that the heart-breaking loss of a child was eased for many parents by sharing the love felt for baby and the significance of the time shared before and after birth. We endeavour to show that these babies are, in fact, compatible with life and love and that the precious time parents get with their babies is forever cherished. We, as an organisation, worry that parents feel that there is no support to continue with a pregnancy of a sick baby, because stories like Faith's are given enough attention. "Baby Faith's impact on the world is profound and deeply felt," she said. "We hope her video continues to help other families because, like all these very special babies, she has lit a light that brightens the darkness and comforts those most in need."

**"Baby Faith went on to defy all expectations and surprise the doctors by living 15 days after birth with anencephaly"**

Take a minute to find Baby Faith's video on the Every Life Counts channels on YouTube and Facebook today, and watch and share her moving and inspiring story. We need to support those brave families who let love shine through and who ensure their babies lives know nothing but love. Their example, and the beauty of their children's lives, teach us how to build a better world.



Joanne and Phillip Wilson with daughter Faith.

## The Irish Catholic

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# Ukrainian refugee crisis 'recipe for human trafficking'

**Jason Osborne**

The refugee crisis as a result of the war in Ukraine is creating a situation "ripe for exploitation" by human traffickers across Europe, but especially in Ireland according to those working in the field.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Policy Officer at Care, Lauren Agnew warned that as refugees flee into known "source" countries for human trafficking such as Poland, Hungary and Romania, they fear that vulnerable women and children could be "tricked"

into situations of "modern day slavery" and transported even into the UK and Northern Ireland.

Ms Agnew said that traffickers see the refugees as a new "supply option", and that it's "heart-breaking" to see human traffickers "looking at the crisis and seeing a business opportunity".

Unregulated Facebook pages seeking to connect refugees and "sponsors" for the UK and Northern Ireland's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme are a particular concern for Care, Ms Agnew said.

"You throw a human trafficker into the mix, they could very easily masquerade on these

sites as genuine individuals wanting to help, when in reality they are online to shop for their next victim.

"I think these Facebook groups are really dangerous and we've been urging both hosts and refugees not to make contact with people they don't know online."

JP O'Sullivan of MECPATHS, a social justice response to the increasing prevalence of human trafficking, said that there's "potential" for the exploitation of unaccompanied minors coming into Ireland in particular.

"It has largely been children travelling with their mothers, but there have been a number of documented unaccompa-

nied minors coming into the country," Mr O'Sullivan told this paper, which is a concern as in Ireland, "we're not even looking for victims of child trafficking".

"We're extremely vulnerable in the country. We know that we're a source country for trafficking, we're a destination country for trafficking and we're a transit country for trafficking, and yet we still don't have the systems in place to be able to identify robustly those challenges."

Ireland "certainly" has created "that kind of environment for traffickers to be able to exploit," Mr O'Sullivan said.

## Phil Coulter thanks God for gift of his talent

**Ruadhán Jones**

The award-winning Irish composer and musician Phil Coulter said that he thanks God every day for having been able to make a living from his talent.

Speaking on Miriam O'Callaghan's *Sunday with Miriam*, Mr Coulter said he is very grateful for the fact that he was born with the "rare gift" of his musical talent.

"There's not a day goes by that I don't thank God for having been able to make a living from my talent," he told Ms O'Callaghan.

He added that he "was also given a work ethic in growing up in the

North and it was ingrained in me that if you have a talent, you have a God-given responsibility to do something with that talent.

"The talent per se entitles you to nothing. It's what you do with the talent and keep doing with the talent that keeps you with the game."

Mr Coulter is one of the biggest record sellers on the island of Ireland and is best known for composing *The Town I Loved So Well* and the Eurovision song *Congratulations*, which was sung by Cliff Richard.

He has previously spoken about his religious belief, saying that Clonard Monastery is special to him due to his mother's Belfast roots.



## Trinity Loyola Institute celebrates anniversary with festival of theology

**Staff Reporter**

The Loyola Institute in Trinity College Dublin will celebrate the 10th anniversary of its founding with a special 'Festival of Theology' in May.

The conference's theme will be on theology and the university, exploring "the challenges, relevance and difficulties of the relationship".

It will consider questions such as "what role can theology play in the life of a university, of society, of the Church" and the "critical role" of academic freedom.

The festival will open on Thurs-

day May 19 with a public lecture by the institute's inaugural director, Prof. Cornelius Casey, entitled 'Theology in a Conversation about Hope', which will be followed by a drink's reception.

The conference continues until May 21, and includes speakers such as Prof. Massimo Faggioli, a well-known commentator on Catholicism and professor at Villanova University, and many Irish and European theologians from Sweden, Belgium, Germany and Rome.

To register, visit [www.tcd.ie](http://www.tcd.ie)

## Celebrating a Filipino feast...



Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Alphonsus Cullinan is pictured at a Eucharistic celebration with some members of the Filipino community in the diocese for the Feast of the Filipino St Pedro Calungsod, March 28.



# Abortion exclusion zones passed by NI assembly

Jason Osborne

The pro-life community in Northern Ireland feel “particularly betrayed” after a new law making pro-life presence outside abortion providers illegal was passed in the Northern Assembly March 24 by 55 votes to 29, director of the Iona Institute NI Tracy Harkin has said.

Ms Harkin criticised the passage of the law, saying “not only have they ignored the public consultation, but now they have just steamrolled over public opinion and gone on ahead with this”.

The recent public consultation revealed little support for exclusion zones around abortion providers in Northern Ireland, with just 13 of 6,412

submissions expressing support for the measure.

Ms Harkin criticised the development, saying that many politicians who previously expressed pro-life sentiments are now voting against those positions.

“A lot of the pro-life community feel particularly betrayed by those politicians that have claimed in previous

elections that they are pro-life, that have perhaps voted for pro-life before, and they seem to now be under this direction of their leadership,” Ms Harkin said.

“So, we now have politicians that would profess to be Catholic and pro-life voting for this. Even during the debates there was such a lack of any articulation of concern about

this from those quarters – all the concern came from the DUP. It’s made people here just so disillusioned.”

Ms Harkin said she believes there to be an issue with the new measure relating to “democracy and human rights,” with people unable now to “dignifiedly and peacefully gather outside these sites where abortions are taking

place, which are the points of greatest need”.

“So many women just don’t know before they show up there that there is help, that there is support,” Ms Harkin said, adding “I just think that it’s a vital ministry.”

“Hopefully it’ll make people more determined to get out in the streets and campaign for good politicians,” she said.

## Priests feel pinch as fuel prices soar

Chai Brady

Priests particularly in rural parishes have felt the bite of rising petrol and diesel costs as the lifting of Covid restrictions has led to more in-person meetings, visits, weddings and more.

Fr Roy Donovan, a leader of the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) and parish priest of Cahersnash in Co. Limerick said the price increases are “very noticeable”.

Being involved in many Church organisations across the diocese and even nationally, Fr Donovan has to do a lot of travelling.

He said meetings “used to be by Zoom for the last two years and now they’re all in person again so there’s a lot more travelling involved”. Along with a “huge amount” of weddings taking place due to Covid restrictions lifting, priests’ petrol and diesel costs

are on the rise.

“The bigger picture is it takes a lot more to fill the tank and it doesn’t go as far,” he said, “A lot of our work can’t be done from the house, visiting sick people, funerals, weddings and all that, all that calls for visitation which is open a lot more now, even the nursing homes are open again.”

However for some priests in urban settings, it encourages greener methods of transport. Fr John Collins, also an ACP leader and based in Dublin, said petrol costs weren’t an issue for him as he travels around a small area.

He said: “The other thing is to get out the old bike and start doing it on the rothar, which is probably what I’ll be doing more of, maybe it will spur us on to do a bit more of saving energy and doing our bit for ecology.”



## Parish pushes for resources to help refugees get into schools

Staff reporter

A parish in Co. Clare is working hard to tackle logistical problems in getting Ukrainian refugees school places.

Fr Gerry Kenny Co-PP in Kilkee parish is working with St Senan’s Education Office in Limerick – a body which manages a large number of schools – and the Department of Education to expand resources.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* he explained the local school in Kilkee, which would be within walking distance from the hotels where refugees are staying, is at capacity.

“We’re negotiating with the department but that’s changing by the day. We need resources, we have accommodation for them but we don’t have staffing so we’re working with the department on that,” Fr Kenny said. “We’re going to liaise with the schools in the surrounding area but there’s a logistical problem with that as well because they would need transport to get to those schools but that’s the next phase, it’s a work in progress, we’ve been working on it all week.”

He commended the community for their “warm welcome” of the refugees, adding that “since they arrived the community has been tremendously generous with offers of anything they needed, a lot of people want to help”.

## God speed and bless the work...



Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap. blesses five Paddywagon buses, laden with supplies to travel via Cherbourg to the Poland/Ukraine border, before returning with 250 Ukrainian families, March 22.



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# Bishop Moriarty recalled as 'pastor of deep faith'

## Staff reporter

Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin has led tributes to Bishop Jim Moriarty who died at the weekend. The retired Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin was 85.

Archbishop Martin paid tribute to the late prelate as "a pastor of deep faith" who "encouraged everyone to make the most of their God-given gifts."

"His honest, humble and courteous nature - along with his ready-smile and ability to engage comfortably with people of all backgrounds - were hallmarks of his warm personality," the Primate said.

Dr Moriarty had been a long-serving parish priest in Dublin before being appointed by Pope St John Paul II as an auxiliary to then Archbishop Desmond Connell in 1991. Dr Martin said that the new bishop's "ministry coincided with a very challenging period in Church history in Ireland, and universally".

After the publication of the Murphy Report in 2009 into the mishandling of allegations of abuse while he worked in Dublin, Dr Moriarty resigned as Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin which he had led since 2002.

Insisting that there was no grounds in the report for his resignation, he said at the time: "it does not serve the truth to overstate my responsibility and authority within the archdiocese [of Dublin]. Nor does it serve the truth to overlook the fact that the system of management and communications was seriously flawed."

"With the benefit of hindsight, I accept that, from the time I became an auxiliary bishop, I should have challenged the prevailing culture."

"I know that any action now on my part does not take away the suffering that people have endured. I again apologise to all the survivors and their families," he said.

His successor in Kildare and Leighlin Bishop Denis Nulty also paid tribute to Dr Moriarty saying he brought with him "huge initiatives around evangelisation, faith development, vocations and youth ministry."

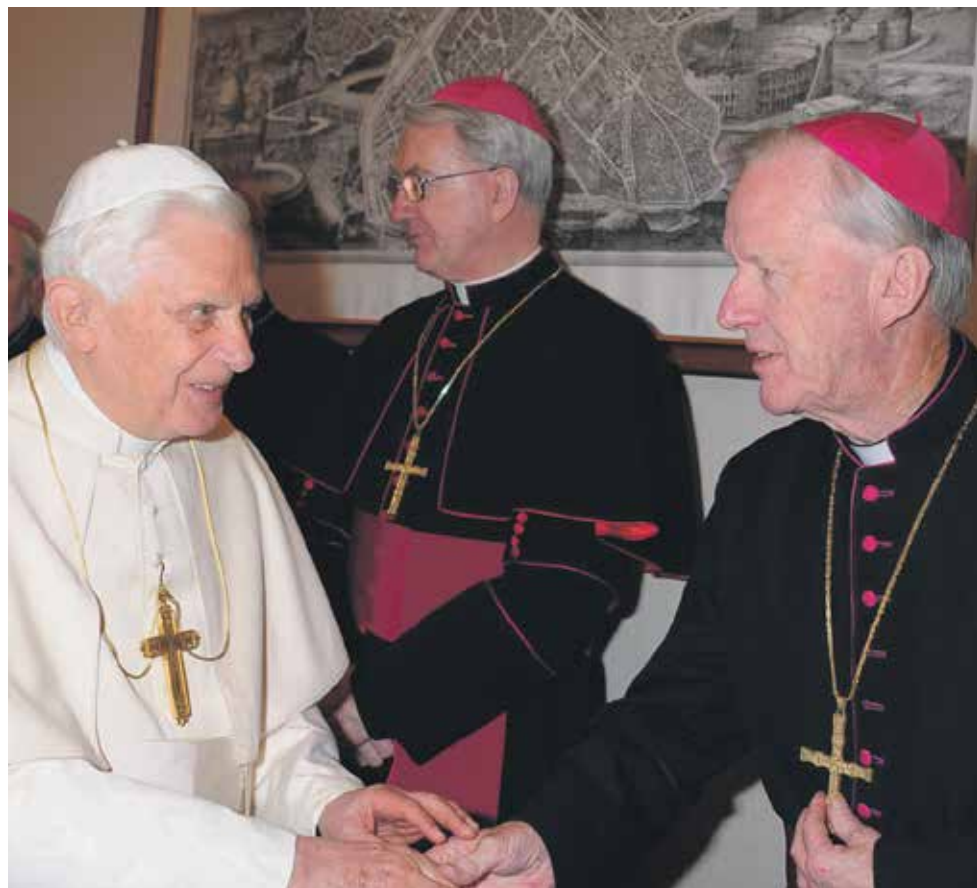
"Many of his initiatives in these areas were pioneering in the country. He is well remembered for his personal qualities of kindness, gentleness and openness to all," Bishop Nulty said.

"All of us will remember Bishop Jim as a kind and humble pastor as we hold his family and many friends in our prayers these days," Bishop Nulty said.

Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell said that "Bishop Moriarty offered a life of service to the people of Dublin in various appointments, and as Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin".

As a member of the bishops' conference he served as chair of its Commission for Worship, Pastoral Renewal and Faith Development.

He encouraged active Irish participation in the global World Youth Day gatherings and oversaw the launch of the Church's framework document on youth ministry *Called Together: Making the Difference*.



Bishop Jim Moriarty with Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican in 2010. Photo: CNS

## Charlie Bird spreads message of friendship in parish before big Croagh Patrick climb

### Chai Brady

Glenamaddy parish in Galway welcomed Charlie Bird who joined parishioners on a walk of their greenway before he goes to Croagh Patrick for his charity fundraising climb, which takes place April 2. He will be joined by people in different locations across the country and by some people abroad.

Mr Bird's 'Climb With Charlie' initiative has raised hundreds of thousands of euro already so far for the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association and Pieta House. The former RTÉ news correspondent was diagnosed with MND last year.

There are expected to be more than 150 separate fundraising climbs across Ireland. Glenamaddy parish will be joining in with a parish walk planned for Saturday on their greenway and are raising funds for Doolin Coastguard and the Alzheimer's association.

Retired parish priest of Glenamaddy Fr Paddy Mooney, who is vice chairperson of the Glenamaddy/Frass Greenway committee, told *The Irish Catholic* that Mr Bird also spread a "lovely message".

Fr Mooney commended Mr Bird's address to children during his visit to the school, where he received a "great welcome" and some live music.

Fr Mooney said: "He spoke to the children, it was a great message, of reaching out the hand of friendship to the person next to you, because you never know what they're going through. It's a lovely message he was spreading, to look out for each other."



Retired parish priest of Glenamaddy Fr Paddy Mooney and Charlie Bird on the Glenamaddy-Frass Greenway.

## Number of single people homeless in Dublin at record levels, warns Focus

### Ruadhán Jones

More than 3,000 single people in Dublin are in emergency accommodation, the highest number on record Focus have said, as homelessness continues to rise.

Figures by the Department of Housing show 9,492 people homeless in February, including 3,256 single adults in Dublin alone, a rise of 342 from January.

The number of families in homelessness has also seen a significant increase - a total of 1,180 families with 2,667 children homeless, up 61 families and 104 children compared to January.

"It's a reality that the most vulnerable are relying on the unpredictable private rental market where options are scarce across the country," Focus CEO Pat Dennigan said in a statement.

"The Government needs to do more to ensure landlords stay in the market and as well as delivering on its commitment to build more affordable accommodation."

Mr Dennigan added that "the Government priority must be protecting vulnerable tenants from evictions as we're now facing homelessness climbing above 10,000".



# Stormont not working and now needs realistic alternatives, says Aontú leader

## Ruadhán Jones

As the North's Assembly election nears, Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín said that Stormont is not working and he is confident his party offers a realistic alternative.

Mr Tóibín added that republican communities in the North are "frustrated" and "shocked" by Sinn Féin and the SDLP's position on abortion and civil rights.

## Election

The North's Assembly Election takes place May 5 and Mr Tóibín – a TD for Meath-West – said he is confident Aontú can claim seats for the first time since the party was founded in 2019.

"Because Stormont isn't working, people are very frustrated with the political parties of Stormont. That's a big issue," Mr Tóibín told *The Irish Catholic*.

**"The idea that you would discriminate against any section of society, especially against people with disabilities in such a manner is absolutely shocking"**

"There's a housing crisis in the North, with more than 40,000 people

on housing lists. There are a quarter of a million people on waiting lists for hospital appointments for more than a year. There are 300,000 people in poverty in the North; there is a cost of living crisis at the moment," he continued.

"And what's the executive doing about it? The executive is suspended and is not doing anything. This would be intolerable in any other functioning democracy."

## Frustrations

The party is well placed to address people's frustrations with Stormont's political parties, the Aontú leader believes: "We've developed and been more active in the last two years, we've got good candidates and good organisation."

In addition, Mr Tóibín said there's a "massive amount of people" from the nationalist republican parties – Sinn Féin and the SDLP – who are shocked by their volte face on equality and civil rights.

Sinn Féin "have binned" key republican principles, he said, by lobbying Westminster to introduce abortion on demand in the North of Ireland.

"In 200 years of republicanism, it was unheard of that a republican party would go to London and demand that it should legislate for any part of Ireland," Mr Tóibín said.

He added that Sinn Féin and SDLP MLAs voted for abortion up to birth for children with disabilities, something that "goes

against everything that nationalist parties have stood for".

"The idea that you would discriminate against any section of society, especially against people with disabilities in such a manner is absolutely shocking," he said.

## Safe zones

Both parties also voted in favour of safe zones outside abortion providers, which Mr Tóibín called "an incredible change of direction" that goes against the "touchstone" of civil rights for the North, the right to protest peacefully.

**"Stormont isn't working, people are very frustrated with the political parties of Stormont. That's a big issue"**

Mr Tóibín said there are four constituencies the party is targeting and expect to achieve seats from: Gemma Brolly in East Derry; Gerard Herdman in West Belfast; Cllr Emmet Doyle in Foyle; and Cllr Denise Mullen.

Aontú is contesting six further constituencies, which are as follows: Rosemary McGlone in South Down; Róisín Bennett in South Antrim; Daniel Connolly in Newry-Armagh; Aidan Gribbin in Upper Bann; Alixandra Halliday in Mid-Ulster; and James Hope in West Tyrone.



Volunteers for Aontú put up posters ahead of the North's Assembly election on May 5.

# Easier to find cheap food but energy bills are 'crushing'

## Chai Brady

People are able to shop around when it comes to food but the rising energy costs for homes could lead to a "serious crisis", according to Fr Peter McVerry SJ who is receiving an influx of requests for help with electricity and gas bills.

This comes as Ireland saw the largest annual increase in food prices – by 2.9% overall – since 2008 in February of this year,

according to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr McVerry said: "At the moment I'm not worried about that, I think what people will do is they'll go for cheaper food."

"There is the option of going for cheaper food or changing your food, but with oil and gas there's no options, you have to heat your place, if you want your lights on you have to pay

the bill. I'm much more concerned about the oil and gas than I am about the food."

He added: "They are noticing a big change in their electricity and gas bills, that's what will really concern me and that is just going to get worse and may even reach a crisis point if the gas and oil from Russia is stopped, we could have a serious crisis which would affect the most deprived people the most."

# CGA gets grandparents' life coach in for next Faith Café

## Staff Reporter

An award-winning life coach will help the Catholic Grandparents Association's promote grandparents' wellbeing and empowerment on their next Faith Café.

Life coach, author and speaker Tara Rafter will speak via Zoom on the theme of "the wellbeing and empowerment of Grandparents in a post-

pandemic world", on Tuesday April 12 at 7:30pm.

## Time

"As Grandparents we tend to spend a lot of time on others," said CGA founder Catherine Wiley in a statement March 25.

"We give so much of our time and our energies away and so at this month's Faith Café the CGA wants to offer some 'me time' for grandparents with an incredibly

talented young woman who will share some thoughts and tips with us on wellbeing as well as some of her beautiful personal stories."

Self-registration for the April Faith Café is open now and can be accessed on <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8000000000> or email [info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com](mailto:info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com) if you have any queries.

If you would like to see pictures from a First Communion or Confirmation in your parish published in *The Irish Catholic* please send a photo with a caption to [news@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:news@irishcatholic.ie)



# Go, and sin no more...

**O**ur Sunday Gospels this year are taken from Luke, but today's story of the woman accused of adultery is found in John's Gospel 8:1-11. But it is very likely that it was originally a portion of Luke that somehow found its way into the manuscripts of John. Its present location breaks the continuity of John while it would fit in perfectly at the end of Luke, Chapter 21. Jesus was then in Jerusalem just before his arrest and Passion. He came to the Temple, sat down and spoke to the crowd eagerly milling around him. The Pharisees and legal experts were scheming to get rid of Jesus. Various traps had been set for him such as the question of whether it was lawful to pay tax to Caesar.

**“Just like I said to you. I feel that I am too lenient with sinners. I'm not strict enough”**

Another opportunity arose when a woman was caught in the act of adultery. I have often been asked the obvious question. Where was the partner, the man? Maybe he just ran away. No, there was another reason why he was not charged. Their ancient laws declared that people who committed idolatry, murder or adultery should be stoned to death, but this sentence was rarely carried out, only when it suited the leaders' purpose. Furthermore, a popular interpretation of divorce allowed for cases where the woman who had previously been married was judged to be guilty of adultery while the male was not guilty. Guess who came up with this interpretation? Male legislators of course.

In today's second reading, St Paul, who had once been a very strict, legalistic Pharisee who arrested Christians, tells us of his absolute joy in coming to know and believe in Jesus Christ. Paul's problem was rooted in the claim made by Christians that Jesus had risen from the dead. But encountering the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus changed

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



everything. Now he knew that perfection is not to be found in strict legalism but in knowing Jesus Christ. He called his former behaviour rubbish. “All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death” (Phil 3:10).

### Harsh legalism

Many of us can remember the harsh legalism of the confessional, especially in relation to sex. Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, writes: “I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy which spurs us on to do our best.” It reminds me of a story that Pope Francis has often related. While he was a bishop in his native Argentina, a priest in his diocese came to him with a problem. He felt he was not strict enough in the confessional. The future Pope asked him what he did when this feeling upset him. “I go to the chapel and talk to Jesus about it.”

“And what do you say to Jesus?”

“Just like I said to you. I feel that I am too lenient with sinners. I'm not strict enough. But it's all your fault, Jesus, because it was you who started it!” That man knew his Gospel.

The legal experts who dragged the woman, under the guise of condemning her, were really intent on getting Jesus condemned. They set up a dilemma. He was noted for sitting with sinners and outcasts. Now, if he said she should not be stoned they could claim he was not obeying the law. But if he agreed to her stoning his reputation for mercy and forgiveness would be destroyed, and he would be in trouble with the Roman authorities who forbade the Jews to condemn anybody to death. Previously, when they presented the dilemma about paying taxes to Caesar, Jesus

asked them to show him a coin. Your answer is in your pocket. If you accept Roman money then you are accepting their taxation. In this case the pocket he referred to was their memory. “Let whoever is without sin cast the first stone.”

### Imagination

Let us change our approach now and use your imagination to visualise the scene. Focus on the hands of the people there that day revealing their inner attitudes. See the rough hands hauling this poor woman out of the house. Beckoning hands call out support from every doorway and dark corner. Cruel hands drag the woman and throw her into the centre. In full view probably means that she was stripped of clothing. Her trembling hands vainly attempt to cover her embarrassment.

“Master, Rabbi”, we hear, their hands gesturing like a pleading advocate, though they cannot altogether mask the hypocrisy of their appeal.

**“How relaxed are the hands of Jesus! No pointing: no bulging veins of frenzy”**

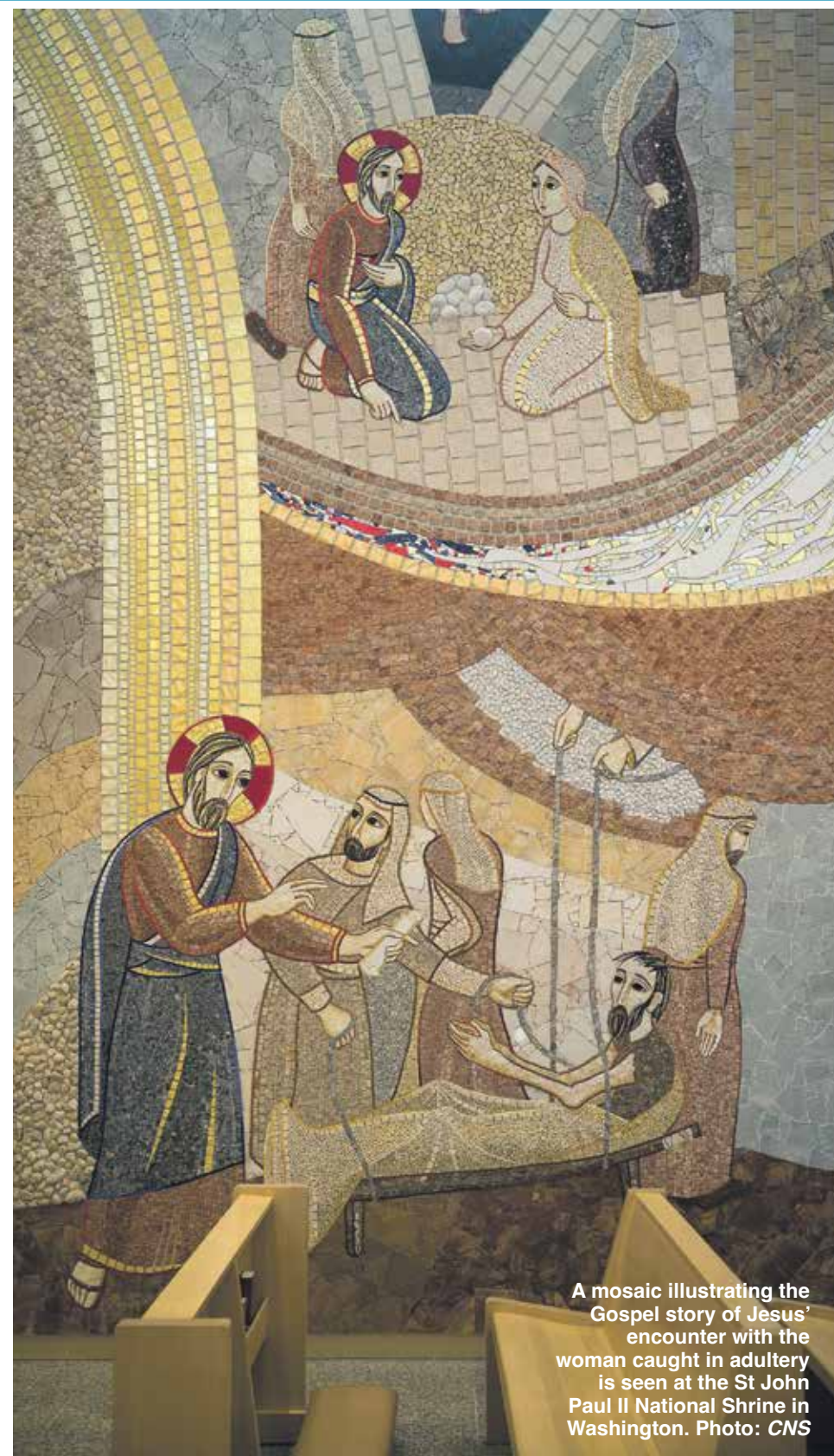
Then fingers of criticism stab the air in the direction of the accused...“this woman”...as if she had no name...no right to person.

The pointing fingers of condemnation then rise upright and wag back and forth in righteous indignation...“adulteress!” Fingers now lock savagely to form the clenched fist.

“The law says she should be put to death by stoning”, a cue for their hands to become frantic claws raking the earth for stones. Bulging hands now hold aloft the rocks of wrath, poised, waiting for permission to throw.” Jesus is asked, “What do you say?”

How relaxed are the hands of Jesus! No pointing: no bulging veins of frenzy: no angry clenching. There he is at the butt of a pillar, taking the shade and playing as a child in the dust.

Was he writing their sins? Or engaging in a little



A mosaic illustrating the Gospel story of Jesus' encounter with the woman caught in adultery is seen at the St John Paul II National Shrine in Washington. Photo: CNS

**“‘Master, Rabbi’, we hear, their hands gesturing like a pleading advocate, though they cannot altogether mask the hypocrisy of their appeal”**

act of distraction to divert attention from the lady's embarrassment? Or maybe he was just playfully dozing a daydream?

That one relaxed hand gave her an unexpected ray of hope. A hand of compassion, playing in the dust of creation, restoring the dead to life. “Go away, and don't sin anymore.”

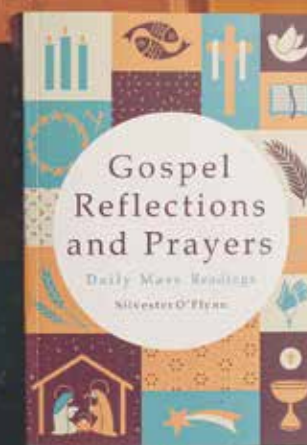
Wisely did King David say, “Let us rather fall into the hand of God, since his mercy is great, and not into the hands of men” (II Samuel 24:14).

### Prayer

God of mercy and compassion, look with pity upon me. Father, let me call thee Father, 'tis thy child returns to thee.

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# Making termination as rare as our politicians claim they want it to be



Whether the review of abortion legislation is window-dressing or serious remains to be seen writes **David Quinn**

**T**he operation of Ireland's abortion law is under review. It was introduced in January 2019, following the referendum of the previous year. In the first two years of its operation, the law resulted in the loss of more than 13,000 unborn lives in Ireland. We can probably add another six or seven thousand to the total for year three. Those figures will be released in due course. Added together, that comes to around 20,000 deaths. No more unjust law has ever existed on the Irish statute books. It is horrendous beyond measure.

The review has been ordered by Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly. When it was enacted, a promise was made to scrutinise the operation of the abortion law after three years. It is important to make clear that the law itself is not under review.

**“If the law itself was under review, pro-life groups would obviously be seeking to make it far more restrictive”**

Barrister Marie O'Shea has been appointed to oversee it. Interested organisations and individuals were invited to make submissions of their own and the deadlines for those is this Friday (April 1).

Those making submissions had to fill in a questionnaire that limited the sort of response you could make. Nonetheless, there was enough scope to be fairly expansive and wide-ranging in your thoughts.

If the law itself was under review, pro-life groups would obviously be seeking to make it far more restrictive. Pro-choice groups have already made clear they want it to be even more permissive, even though abortions under the present regime



Pro-Life campaigners demonstrate outside the Dáil ahead of the abortion referendum. Photo: CNS

are almost never refused, and it is already even more liberal in certain respects than the British law.

In Britain, a health ground (however spurious) has to be used before an abortion can be carried out. In Ireland, no reason at all needs to be given during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, which is when the vast majority of terminations take place.

Given the fact that the law is not being reviewed, and only its operation is, what can we say about it? I will list six areas that should be looked at by the Government. Others could be added.

## 1. End 'DIY' abortions

When we were all having to stay at home during the various lockdowns, the Government dropped the requirement for a woman to see a doctor in-person before being given the abortion pill. Instead, she could have an online consultation with a doctor and have the abortion pill sent to her at home. In reality, she takes two pills several days apart to induce the termination.

If she is doing so at home without properly seeing a doctor, complications can and do arise, such as excessive bleeding. They can and do arise anyway, but if a woman is not seeing a doctor physically, it is more likely that bad consequences can result.

This is why Britain has reversed this sort of 'DIY' abortion, or 'tele-medicine' and requires the woman once more to see a doctor before tak-

ing the abortion pill. Obviously, anyone who is pro-life does not want to see abortions take place at all, but this sort of 'DIY' abortion is particularly problematic and we should end it, as Britain has done.

## 2. Collect proper data about abortion

Proper data needs to be collected about abortion. We gather almost none. This is extremely unusual from an international point of view. In America they know from the data that the average person who has an abortion is in her mid-twenties, is single, already has one child, is from a poor background and is more likely to be from an ethnic minority.

We know none of that for sure here. But if we want to reduce the abortion rate, surely we need to find out the general categories of women most likely to have a termination?

## 3. Introduce accurate information about prenatal tests

Very soon after the abortion law was introduced, a couple at the National Maternity Hospital was wrongly informed that their unborn baby was suffering from a 'fatal foetal abnormality'. They proceeded with an abortion on that basis. The child turned out to be perfectly healthy. But they

were led to believe that the pre-natal test was far more accurate than is in fact the case. Misleading information about the accuracy of such tests is still very widespread and that needs to be ended immediately.

## 4. Formally authorise use of the Abortion Reversal Pill

Dermot Kearney, an Irish doctor living in Britain, recently had a complaint made against him for prescribing to women the abortion reversal pill. This can be taken between the first and second abortion pill to stop the termination taking place. The complaint ended up being kicked out because there was no proper basis for it.

The abortion reversal pill is often successful and results in a healthy birth. Dr Kearney has saved around 20 lives through his work. If a woman changes her mind about having an abortion after taking the first of the two pills, she should be facilitated in trying to stop the termination taking place. The HSE should formally approve use of the abortion reversal pill.

## 5. Require proper consultations before abortions take place

Given the evidence that woman can change their mind about abortion, doctors should be required to give

women proper information about alternatives to terminating a pregnancy, and also tell them about the abortion reversal pill.

**“The evidence is that about 20pc change their minds in those three days”**

At present, a woman has to wait for three days between asking for an abortion and receiving one. In those three days she has further time to consider. The evidence is that about 20pc change their minds in those three days. Imagine how many more lives might be saved if women were given enough information about alternatives to abortion?

## 6. Investigate reports about late-term abortions

A study came out in 2020 indicating that babies are being left to die in Irish hospitals following late-term abortions. This is monstrous and needs to be promptly investigated.

Even if you are totally pro-choice, all of the above are absolutely reasonable requests. For example, who can seriously object to gathering more data or ensuring people are properly informed about the accuracy of prenatal tests?

If the review is objective, and not merely an exercise in window-dressing, it must seriously consider such matters.

If we cannot yet reverse our abortion law, then it must certainly be made to operate in ways that make terminations as rare as our politicians claim they want it to be.

**“In the first two years of its operation, the law resulted in the loss of more than 13,000 unborn lives in Ireland”**



# Football star turned



Former Irish international and Premier League player Keith Fahey tells **Chai Brady** about his winding road to faith

**L**ooking back to the time he played professional football, Keith Fahey says he received a lot of compliments and “pats on the back”, but ultimately that didn’t serve him in the long run.

Nowadays, each morning, Mr Fahey (39) prays and has developed a discipline around the routine. “When I get up, I would spend time in prayer, whether that’s reading scripture or praying through scripture or listening to something guided,” he explains, “When I started to pray, I didn’t know God, I didn’t know Jesus, the Holy Spirit, I didn’t know any of that.”

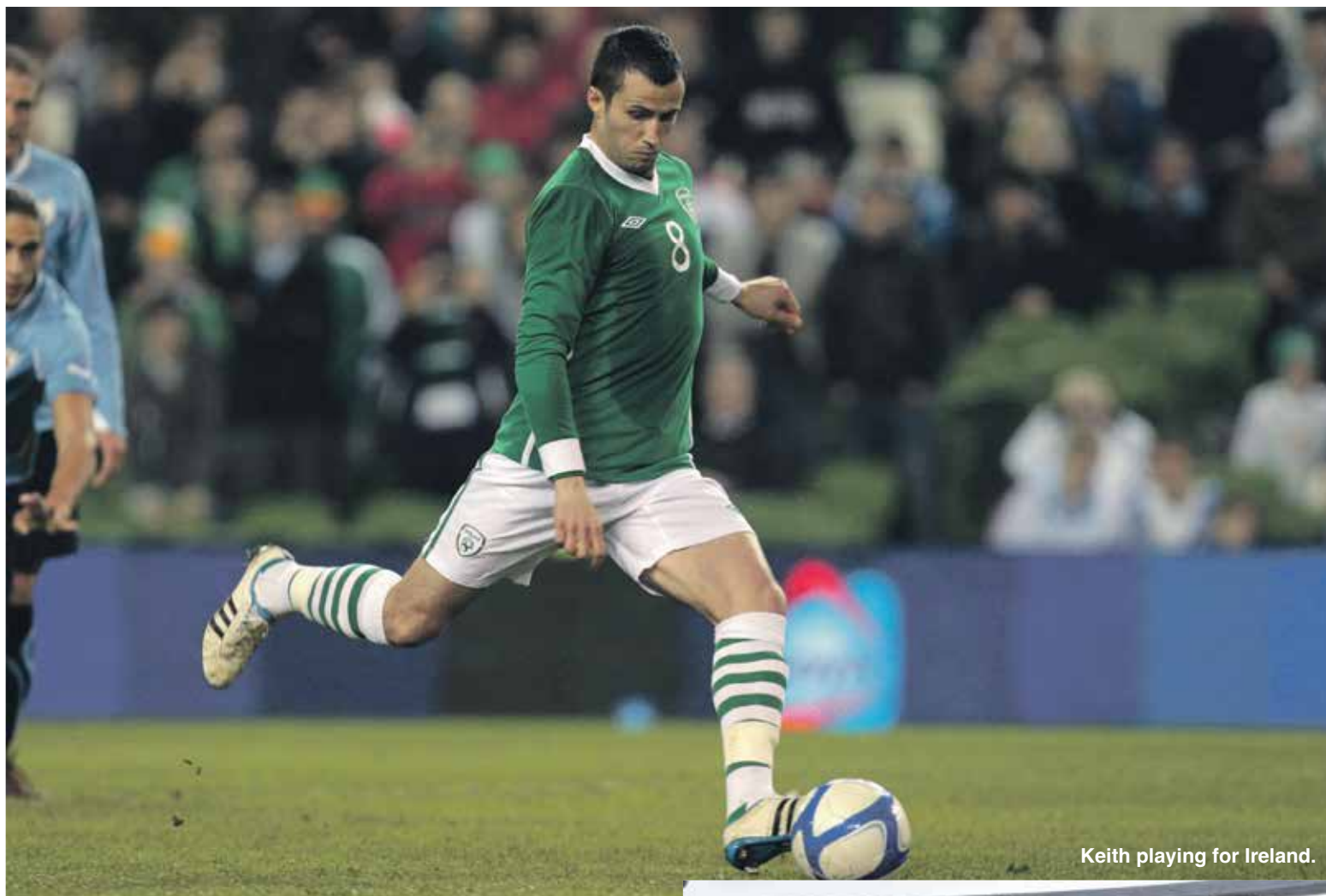
Prayer did not come naturally to him, as faith wasn’t really a part of Mr Fahey’s upbringing. He received the sacraments but his family did not go to church together apart from attending weddings and funerals. There were difficult circumstances within his family, he says, which made him feel like he had to “take the world on alone” in many ways.

However, on a journey beginning almost four years ago, Mr Fahey developed a personal relationship with Christ. There came a time when Mr Fahey felt he was “left with no option but to start praying” and since then a lot has changed.

## Football career

Mr Fahey’s professional football career began as a trainee with Arsenal in the year 2000. He subsequently played with several Irish clubs, with St Patrick’s Athletic being where he spent most of his career.

After being rewarded with a move to Birmingham City in 2008, he received promotion to the Premier League in 2009 and was also victorious in a 2011 League Cup final. Mr Fahey achieved 16 caps with the Republic of Ireland national team, scoring three goals during his appearances. During his career he mainly played as a central midfielder, but sometimes as a winger.



Keith playing for Ireland.

When asked about the proudest moment of his football career, Mr Fahey says: “Proudest moment: playing for Ireland. I played for Ireland, I scored a winner for Ireland, I won a cup with Birmingham as well.

**“I don’t deal well with the word fame, people are all the same. Putting people on pedestals and all, I get very uncomfortable with it”**

“If I look back a little bit, making my debut in the Premier League, my dad – God rest him – died a couple of weeks later. He was very good to me through my life and supported me especially in football. He would have my boots spotless as a child, he got me there early to everything. So for him to hang around and to see me playing that’s probably my fondest moment looking back,” he says.

“Playing the Premier League, sometimes you ask, ‘did that actually happen?’ The cup final – the one we won – was on a couple of weeks ago, and I actually just completely forgot. I’d just be mindful because I know where I was at when I was playing

football. I didn’t have the inner peace, I was against the world, I was in a very material, superficial bubble of football so a lot of it wasn’t enjoyable.

“Somewhere inside me I was saying, ‘should I even be here, what’s going on’. I notice when I talk about football I always pour a bit of cold water on it,” he adds.

Mr Fahey underlines that he wants to remind people that professional football is “not what it’s cracked up to be” and that it can be problematic when people idolise famous footballers.

He says: “People see the spotlight, but there’s a lot of money in football, and when there’s a lot of money somewhere, there’s a lot of not great stuff going on.

“Fame, I don’t deal well with the word fame, people are all the same. Putting people on pedestals and all, I get very uncomfortable with it and I try to remind people that, through my own experience in life, there’s more important things.”

## Tallaght

Growing up in Tallaght, in Dublin 24, Mr Fahey says that when he was young, he was in groups that “were up to no good, were messing and all that sort of stuff, and it didn’t serve me”.

So despite professional football creating many personal challenges



Keith sits on the deck of a boat on the Sea of Galilee during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in February.

**“People shine a spotlight on football as if it’s the be all and end all, I see it across the board”**

for him, Mr Fahey admits that in many ways “football probably saved my life”.

“I was on a crash course of self-destruction, so football took me in and looked after me. Kept me fit and looked after me financially, thank God. I was lucky in that sense. I practiced as a kid, I loved football, but then I didn’t always enjoy it – like any other job.

“People shine a spotlight on football as if it’s the be all and end all, I see it across the board,” he says, adding that it shouldn’t be viewed like this.

For Mr Fahey there was a point in his life in which he felt he had hit rock bottom and while he always valued himself as an honest person, it was when he was being blatantly dishonest to everyone including his loved ones that he felt there was divine intervention.

He recalls: “In the past I’d justify why I was telling lies about what I was doing because I didn’t want people to know, I was justifying it which is a dangerous thing because I thought it was ok.

“I remember at one stage, I was flat out being dishonest, I remember just thinking to myself, you need care now, this isn’t you, and that was maybe the voice of God. That was the turning point.”

Mr Fahey has since gone through a recovery programme for addiction as well as counselling which has helped him move on from the more turbulent times in his life.

## Young footballers

Asked about young aspiring footballers and what advice he would give them, Mr Fahey says: “There’s no



# faith-filled disciple



Keith joins other pilgrims carrying the cross along the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem.

problem with anyone wanting a football career, but I'd also make time for God each day, first and foremost, and you'll be looked after.

"I think we can put all these things before God and some people aren't so lucky to find their way back. It can end up messy: through addiction, alcoholism, all that sort of stuff. People end up taking their own lives because they're that far gone and lost. That can kick off in other ways, greed and all that sort of stuff, the money, and all of that.

"I think once you bring God into the centre, in my experience it works a lot easier, there's a lot more Grace in your life. That would be my suggestion. I just know from my own experience of giving time each day that I'm being looked after, the proof is there."

## Faith

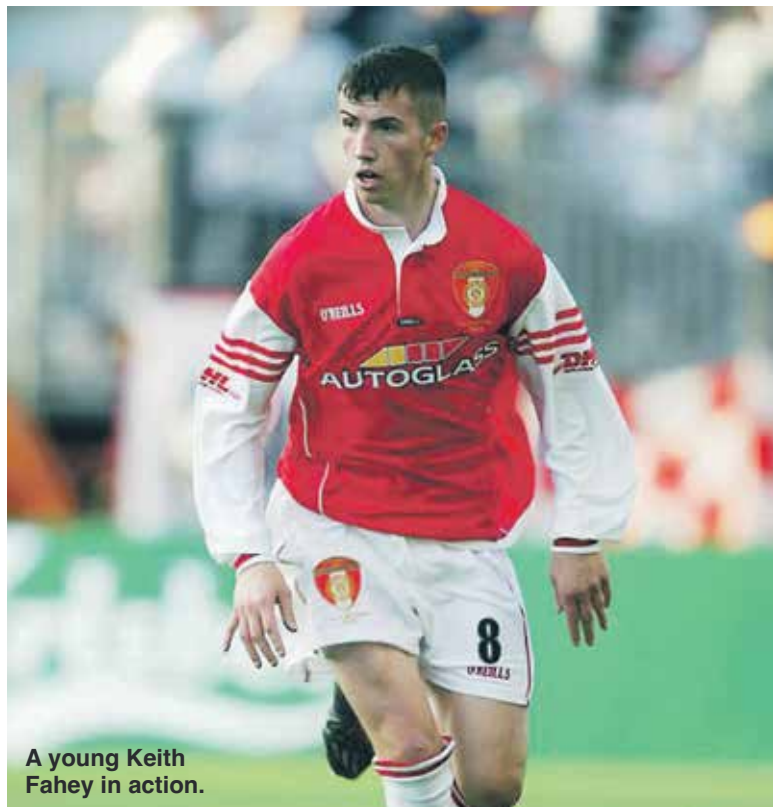
It's not always easy for people of faith to speak about Christ and their belief in the modern era, Mr Fahey believes, saying that "It's difficult, the world, society, communities have a very different kind of faith, it's like, 'if you want it, you go and do it'.

"I think it's difficult for young people growing up now, there's social media, there's influences regarding that, people want to fit in. Unfortunately, it's in us all, we all want to belong."

Regarding young people in Ireland and their faith, he implores them not to wait until they are in desperate times, saying: "I would encourage youngsters not to be afraid to be different and try and practice the Faith and get into groups and start it early in their lives and continue it, not to wait until you're at the bottom.

"I reached the bottom, I didn't really have anyone in my life, I pushed everyone away. I was forced to look inwards, asking 'How have I ended up here?' That was literally how it was for me.

"I wasn't taking stock as I was going along – the decisions I was making. I think we all walk around with blind spots and the big blind spot I had was not very good, it was leading me into a bad place. I hit the ground with a bang



A young Keith Fahey in action.

and since then I had a very grounding experience in my life, so I'm just mindful of the way I'm living now," he says.

## Alpha

Mr Fahey took part in an Alpha course which helped him better understand his faith, and Catholicism in general.

"I would be quite strong about my faith. Going back to when I played football, I was getting all the pats on the back, 'you're great', you're this, you're that and the other, and it didn't really serve me," he says.

For Keith Fahey, it's important to speak about faith regardless of how people react.

"When you speak in the Lord's name you're rewarded in heaven and I believe that. You're only here for a short time. The pats on the back, they come and go, and friends will come and go. My life playing Premier League football and with

Ireland, there was a lot of people... they're not really around now and it's probably to do with where my life is at."

Being religious and wanting to speak about faith has not always been easy for Mr Fahey in terms of the reactions he has received, but he says: "I speak up [for the Faith], a lot of people don't want to hear it, you can feel it nearly, like 'oh here he goes again', it's the Good News like, I didn't know the Good News before and when you hear it you want to share it and that's only natural."

When it comes to his personal relationship with Christ, Mr Fahey says he remembers someone telling him that he should learn to know God. He admits: "I didn't understand it, but Jesus is God, he walked the streets of Nazareth, of Jerusalem, and he showed us how to live. I didn't understand it when he said it at the time but obviously since the Alpha



A jubilant Keith Fahey after renewing his baptismal vows in the river Jordan. Photos: Chai Brady

course and more reading of the Bible, I see what he means now."

Mr Fahey went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in February of this year at a time when many pilgrimage groups had not returned due to the aftermath of the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Being a part of the first Irish pilgrimage group to return, Mr Fahey said he was delighted with the fact there were so few people there which meant the pilgrimage sites were very quiet.

**"I think it's difficult for young people growing up now, there's social media, there's influences regarding that, people want to fit in"**

He says about the Holy Land: "There were a couple of friends over at a prayer group a couple of Fridays before I went away, and they said 'Jesus is calling you over there', and I said 'Yeah he is actually'. I had a nice bit of personal time with Jesus."

Asked about his favourite sites, he mentioned Bethlehem saying: "Where Jesus was actually born, it was lovely, there's a nice energy there.

"The Garden of Gethsemane, I felt something there, I can't describe it. It is where Judas betrays Jesus and brings the guards to take him away. You start to feel all our sinful nature. It's special to be there. He suffered so much for me, and for all of us but – and I can't experience anyone else's relationship with Jesus – for me personally, wow.

"I think when people talk about Jesus as well, they just talk about the cross and what he did for us but he also showed us how to live, performed miracles, I also see a touch of humour in his teachings.

"I was going over there a bit over the top serious about it, praying and quiet time, but it was a great laugh," he says about the pilgrimage.

## Future

Looking to his hopes for the future, Mr Fahey says that his belief and awareness of the Faith was found "through a lot of pain".

"I was given the opportunity to change and I try and do that on a daily basis," he says. "My hopes for the future are finding more purpose in life – I'm getting closer. I'm getting a chance to practice, a lot of patience, I believe there's something niche for me to do that's meaningful, purposeful and that won't take up every hour God sends either."

He adds he would like "some kind of role in spreading the word of God and what God can do in our lives. When I speak I'm always going back to that. I have a strong belief... I don't have children, and I won't tell anyone how to raise their kids, but I was not taught the right ways to live and I think that is the most important thing.

"I can't get away from the fact that kids need security growing up and there's no greater security than the good Lord himself. When you talk about faith and practicing, we have choices to make in life, I'm free to make choices today but I also know there's consequences to whatever choices I make – but there's great fun to be had."



# Out&About

## A blessed tomb



**WATERFORD:** Pupils and staff of Doon CBS Primary School, Co. Limerick at the tomb of Blessed Edmund Rice, founder of the Christian Brothers, at Mount Sion. Back Row: Principal Joanne O'Connell, Bro. James Dormer and Denis Moloney.



**LIMERICK:** Fr Arnold Rosney PP of St Seanan's Parish, Shannon, welcomes Ukrainian families to the parish, saying it is a "joy and a privilege" to have them, March 20.



**DOWN:** Auxiliary bishop in the diocese of Westminster Paul McAleenan and Sr Martina Purdy joined Fr John Murray and parishioners of St Patrick's Parish, Downpatrick, on day seven of the novena in honour of St Patrick and are pictured at the saint's grave, March 14.

## IN SHORT

### Ireland must step up to meet escalating needs in Ukraine

Irish charities have called on the Government to "step up" and meet the escalating humanitarian needs in Ukraine as millions are displaced by the war.

Dóchas, the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations, said "the humanitarian crisis within Ukraine is becoming more critical by the day".

Ordinary civilians – some trapped in besieged towns and cities, others on the move – are living in constant fear of

indiscriminate attacks and having their lives torn apart, CEO of Dóchas Jane-Ann McKenna, told the joint committee on foreign affairs and defence, March 22.

"Ireland must step up and meet its pledge to fully fund all current humanitarian appeals and ensure those in need of life saving assistance, including food, can receive it," Ms McKenna said.

She added that reaching people to give them aid is becoming more difficult.

"Dóchas is demanding that all parties to the conflict fulfil their legal obligations and uphold international humanitarian law," Ms McKenna said.

She called on Ireland to use its seat on the UN Security Council to work with its international partners "to ensure

any and all violations of International Humanitarian Law are investigated and immediately condemned".

### Raphoe's oldest church remodelled to display St Faustina relic

The oldest church in the diocese of Raphoe was remodelled to mark the 1,500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Columba's birth. A part of the remedial work was the housing of a first class relic of St Faustina, now on display for veneration.

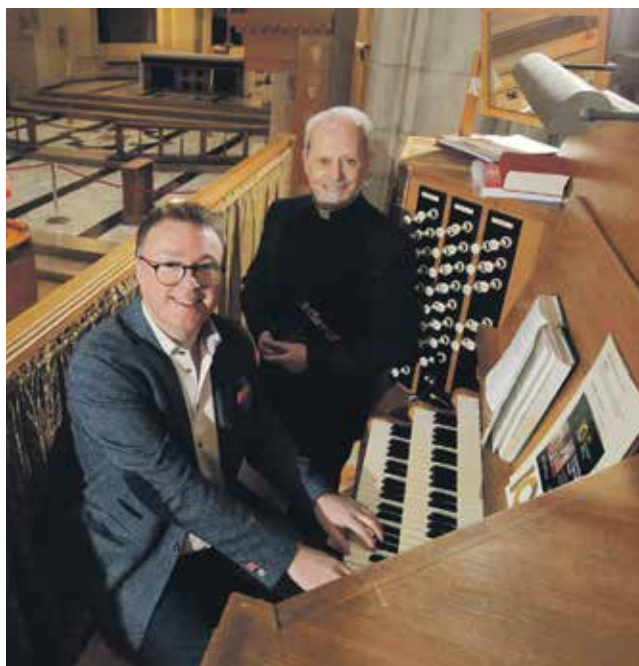
St Columba's church in the parish of Clondavaddog, Co. Donegal – the oldest Catholic church in Raphoe, built in 1790

– will celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday, April 24, with a blessing with a relic of St Faustina, whose visions of Jesus inspired the devotion.

The day will begin with Confession at 2:30pm in St Columba's church, Massmount, Co. Donegal, along with the recitation of the Divine Mercy chaplet. Then, the Divine Mercy image will be incensed and blessed, followed by Mass and a blessing with the relic. All are welcome.

The remodelled church now includes a hand carved oak statue of St Columba, elevated above a natural garden. To enhance the area further, a mural has been created depicting various local images associated with St Columba in the parish.





**DOWN:** Fr Eugene O'Hagan of The Priests and founder and chair of the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition Richard Yarr prepare for the competition's 10th anniversary in April.



**GALWAY:** Vincent Conroy of Lake Road, Loughrea, celebrates his 100th birthday with his son Fr Patrick PP Ballinakill and Derrybrien parish. He still enjoys great independence, good health, drives his car and was a basket collector in Loughrea cathedral up until two years ago when Covid hit. He is an avid supporter of *The Irish Catholic* and looks forward to receiving his copy each week.



**LONDON:** Dr Frank Hurl, KCHS Dublin, Chevalier Joseph McNally, KGCHS Kildare and Chevalier James Nidal AGHA, KCHS London, attend the banquet.



**WATERFORD:** Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan meets with the Brazilian community in Waterford to plan activities for the year ahead, March 14.

**DUBLIN:** Dublin City University lecturer Giovanna Feeley led 100 students from the bachelors in religious education from St Patrick's Campus DCU on a field trip, where they visited the chaplaincy in the Inter Faith Centre, March 9.



**LONDON:** KGCHS Member of the Grand Magisterium Prof. Bart McGettrick; KGCHS Lieutenant of Ireland Peter F. Durnin and KCGHS Vice Governor General Enric Mas of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem are pictured at a banquet in honour of the order held by the Right Honourable Vincent Keavney KSt.J KGCHS, the Lord Mayor of London, in the Mansion House.



**DOWN:** Papal Nuncio to Ireland Archbishop Jude Okolo and Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor are pictured with parishioners during a visit to St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast on the Solemnity of St Joseph, March 19.



Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



**WEXFORD:** The student councils of both Wexford CBS and Presentation Secondary Schools came together Friday March 14 in a joint community effort to raise funds for those in need for the Irish Red Cross and UNICEF.



#### ◀ LIMERICK:

Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan is pictured with Clare Crusaders charity running group after their 10km charity run for Milford Care Centre, March 13.

▼ **CORK:** A Youth 2000 prayer group are pictured in the Cathedral of Saint Mary and Saint Anne after their meeting in March. Pictured with the group is their spiritual director Fr Seán Crowley.



**DONEGAL:** Raphoe diocese held a young adult prayer and praise night at the pastoral centre in Letterkenny, with over 40 young adults attending, while Bishop Alan McGuckian and priests and religious helped with adoration and confessions.



**POLAND:** Students from St Mary's University Belfast in the Beyond Borders delegation meet with Prof. Adam Nowakowski of the Karpathian College, Krosno. The students are assisting where possible with refugee issues arising from the war.



**DONEGAL:** Scoil Mhuire Buncrana's staff and students were delighted to present Donall Henderson (right), past pupil and currently CEO with Foyle Hospice, a cheque to the value of €500. Also pictured are principal Rosaleen Grant with students Rory and Siúin.

## Events

● Following the lifting of almost all Covid-19 restrictions many Church events are now returning. The popular Events Listing column, which was suspended during the pandemic, will soon return. If you know of any planned parish event, prayer group meeting etc., please email: ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie or call 016855455



# COLUMBA SUPER SALE

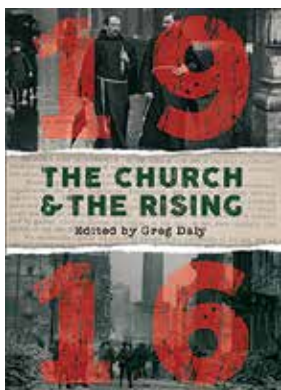
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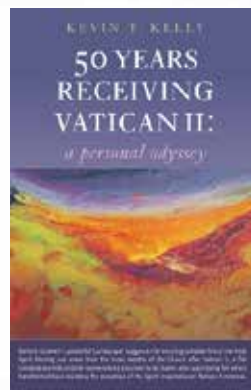
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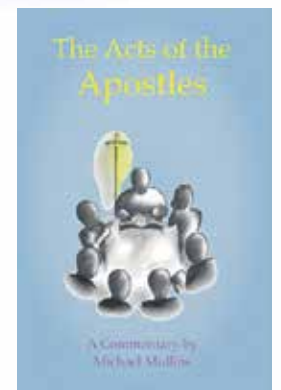
**50 Years Receiving Vatican II**  
Kevin T. Kelly



**Faith and the Hungry Grass**  
Enda McDonagh



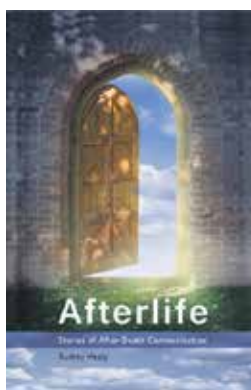
**A New Vision for the Catholic Church**  
Gerry O'Hanlon SJ



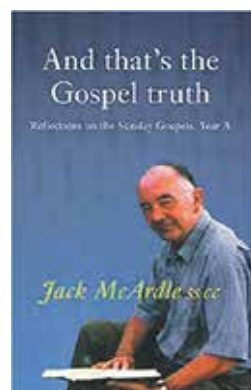
**Acts of the Apostles**  
Michael Mullins



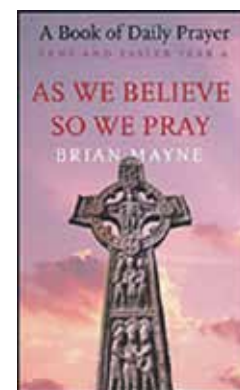
**Adventures of a Book Collector**  
Philip Murray



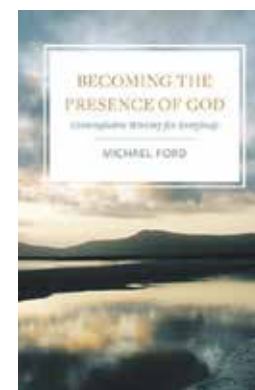
**Afterlife**  
Audrey Healy



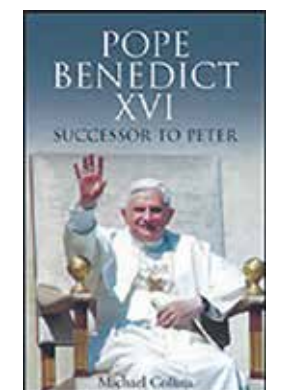
**And that's the Gospel Truth Year A**  
Jack McArdle ss cc



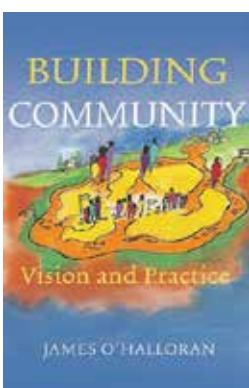
**As We Believe so We Pray: Year A**  
Brian Mayne



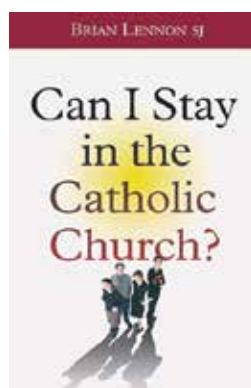
**Becoming the Presence of God**  
Michael Ford



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



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



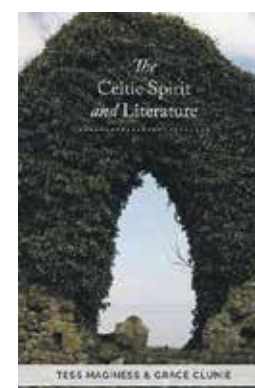
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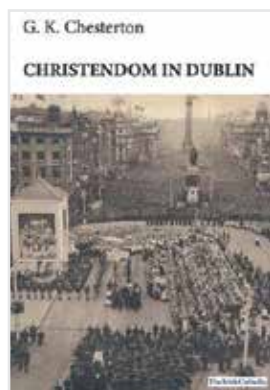


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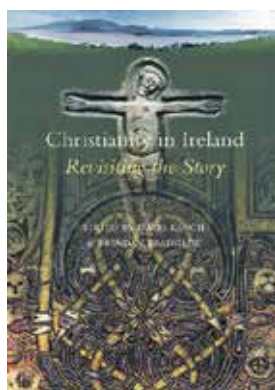


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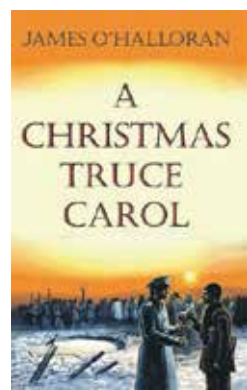




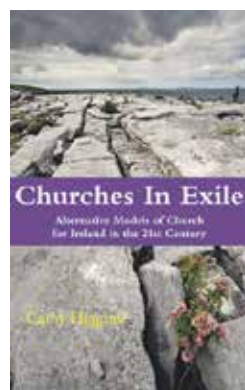
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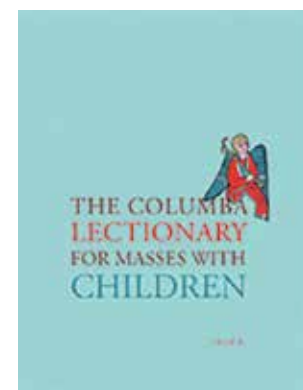
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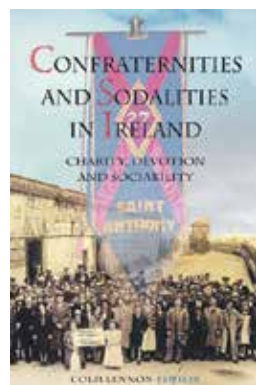
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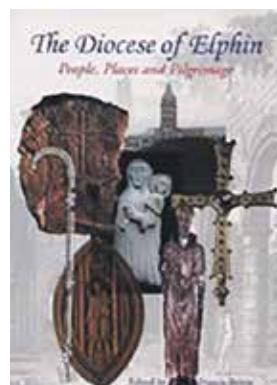
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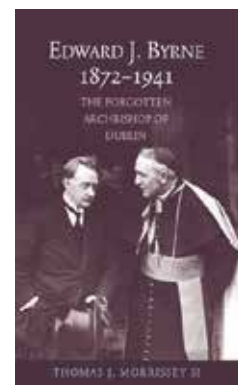
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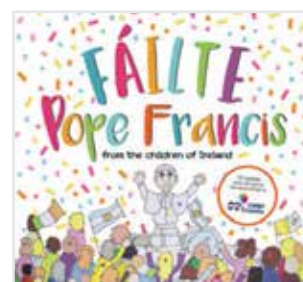
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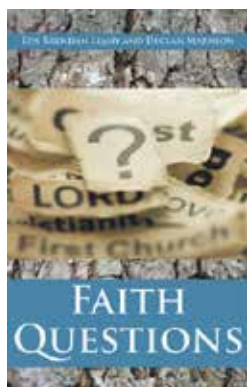
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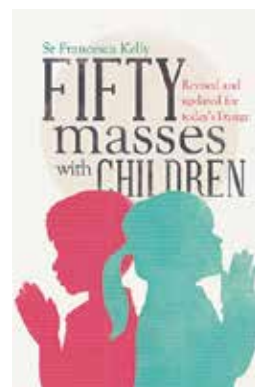
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Children of Ireland



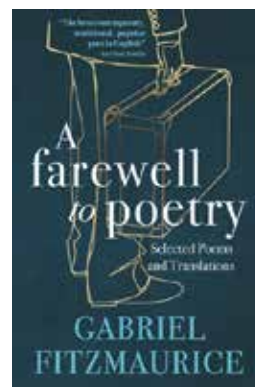
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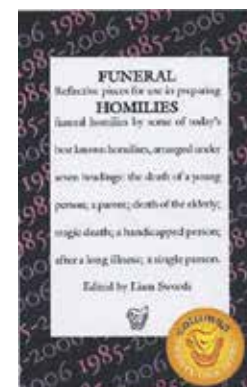
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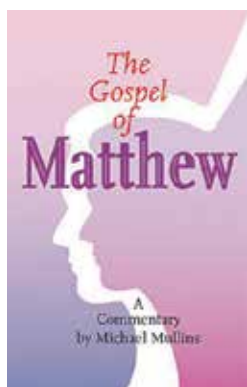
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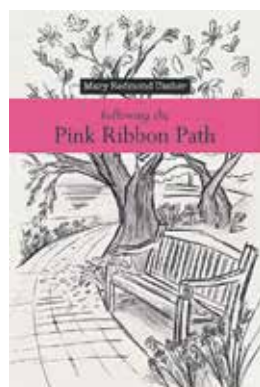
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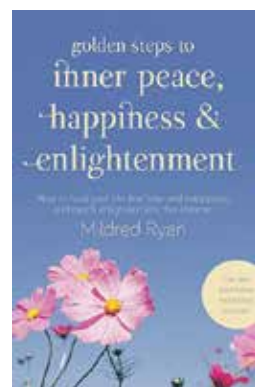
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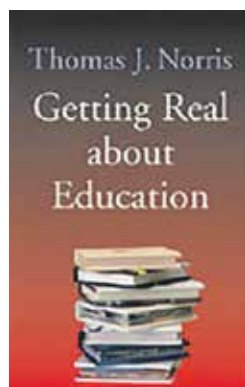
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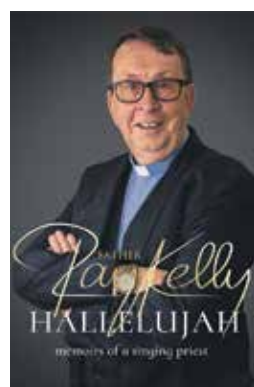
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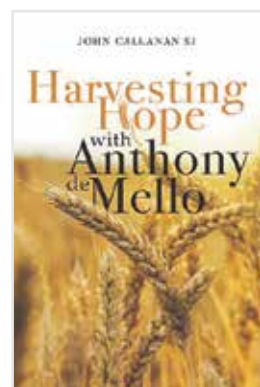
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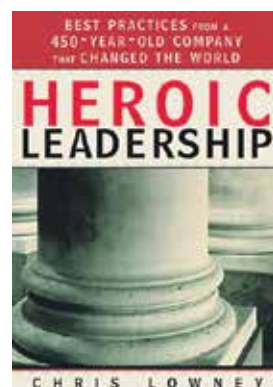
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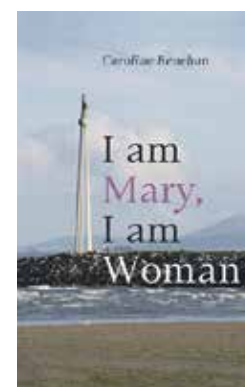
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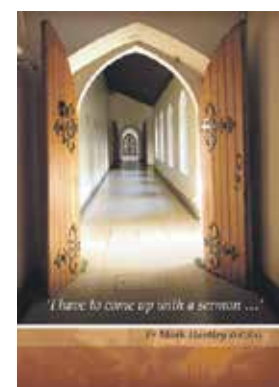
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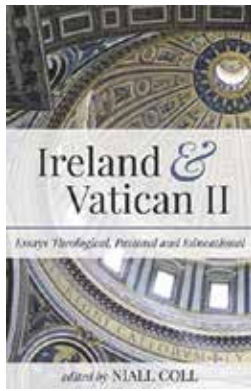


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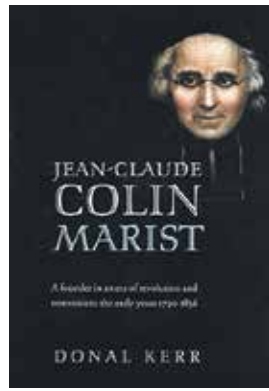




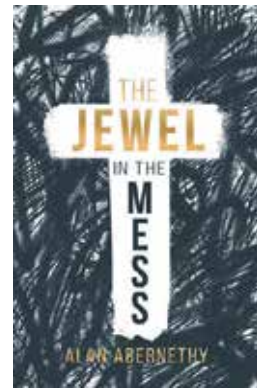
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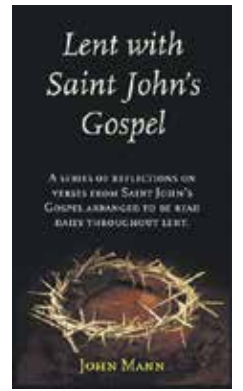
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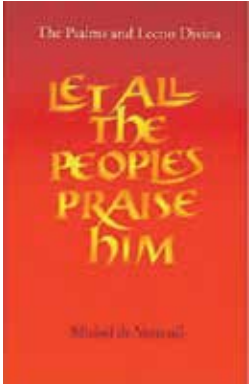
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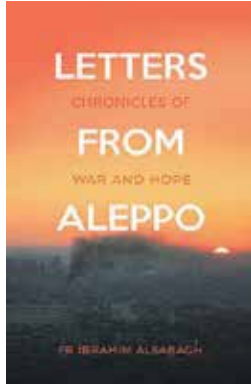
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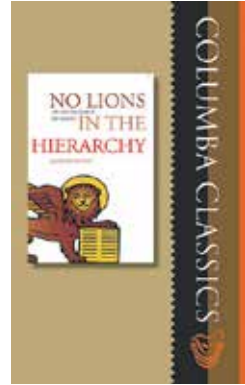
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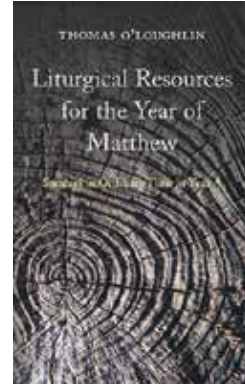
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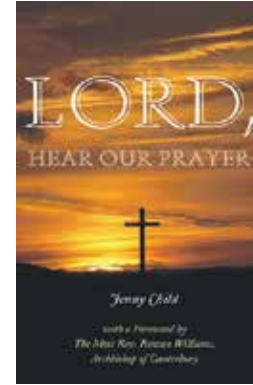
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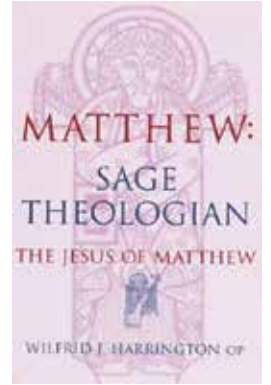
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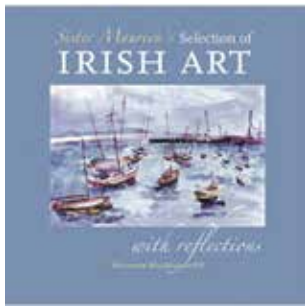
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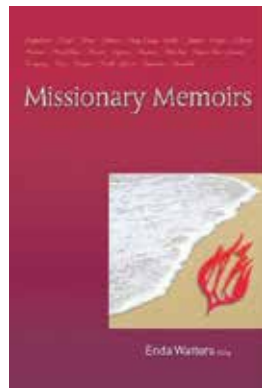
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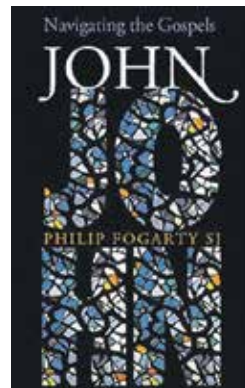
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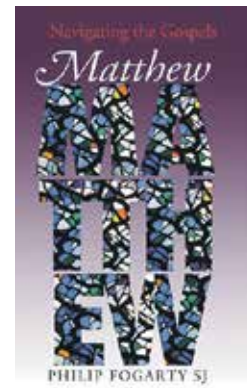
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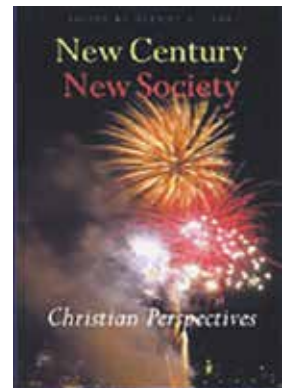
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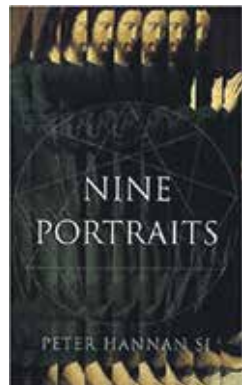
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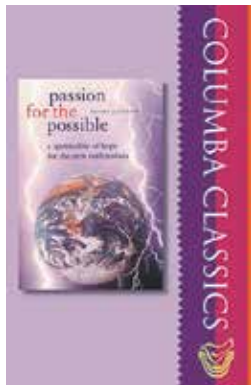
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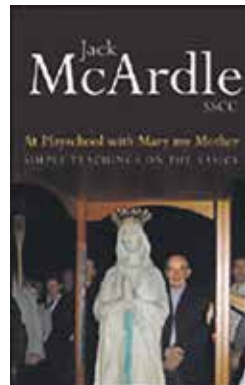
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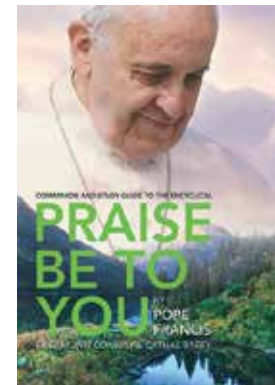
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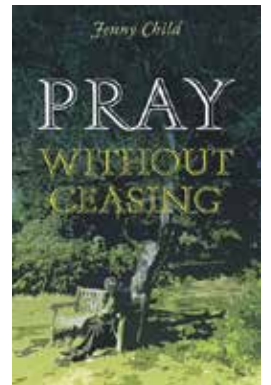
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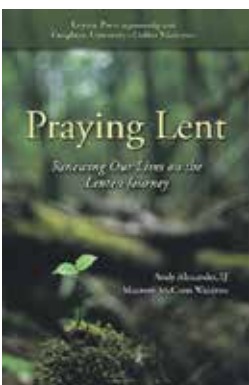
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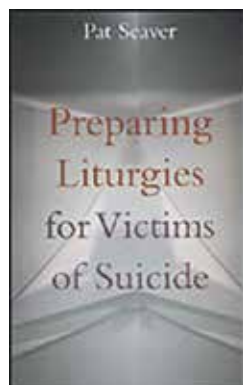
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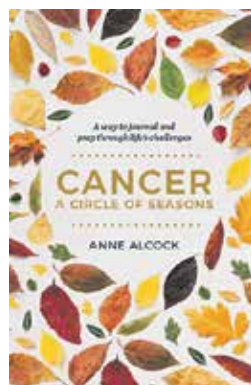
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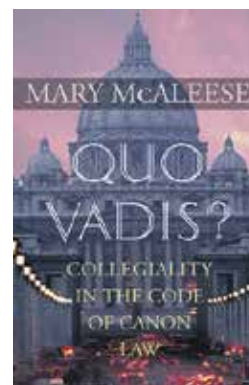
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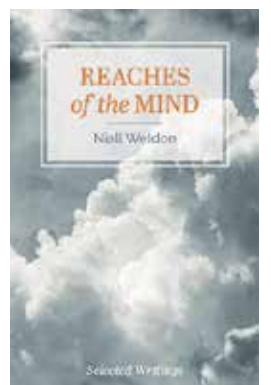
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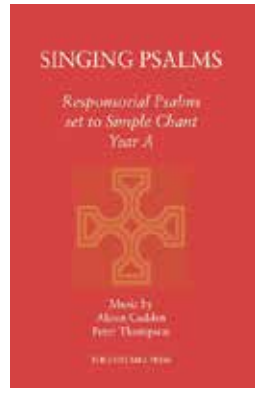
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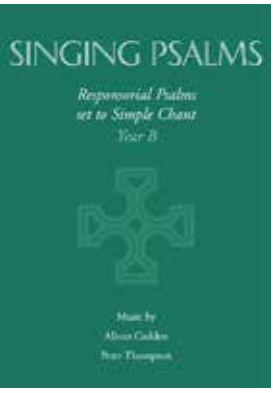
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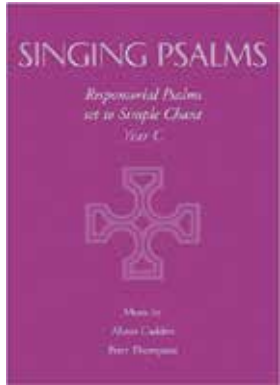
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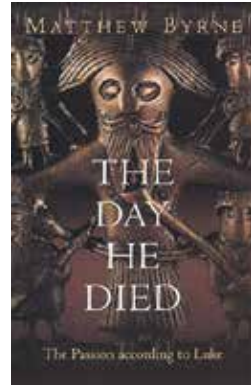
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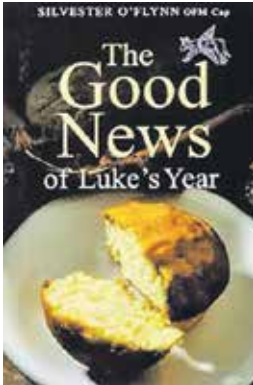
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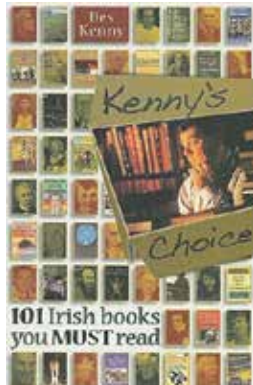
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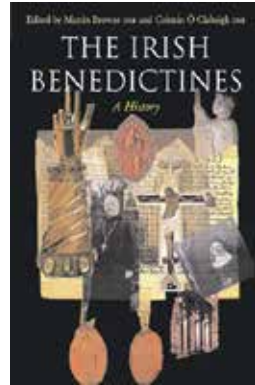
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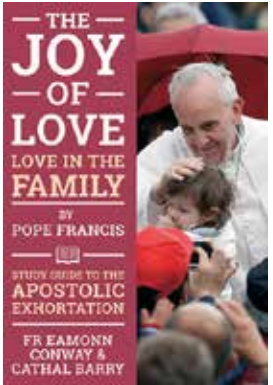
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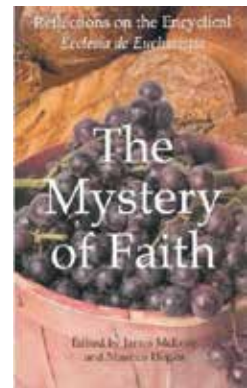
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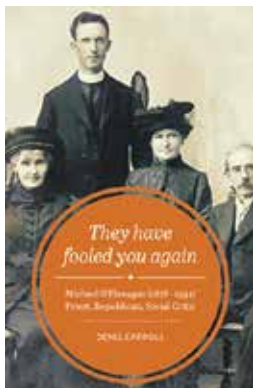
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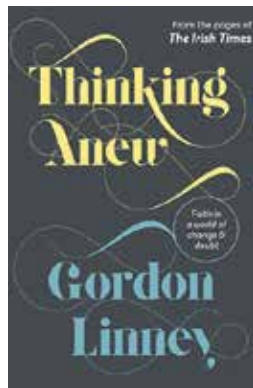
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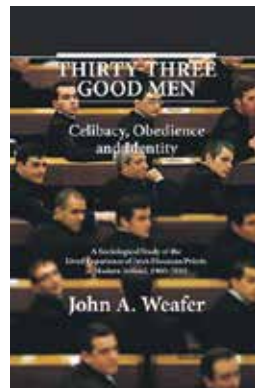
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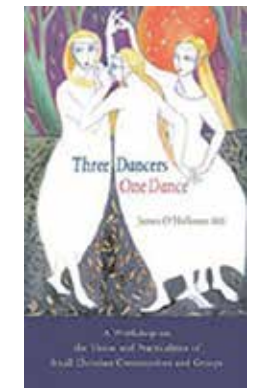
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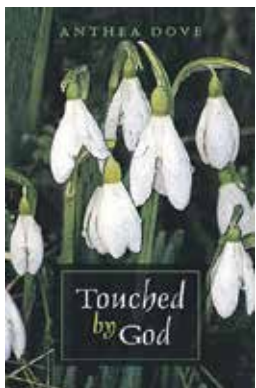
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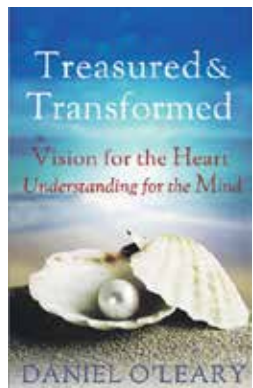
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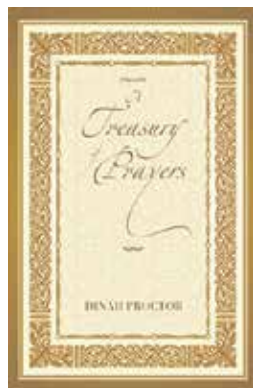
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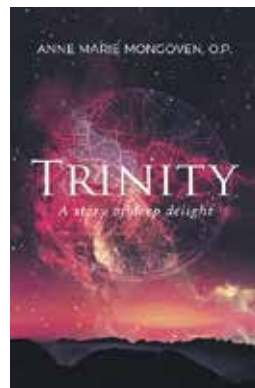
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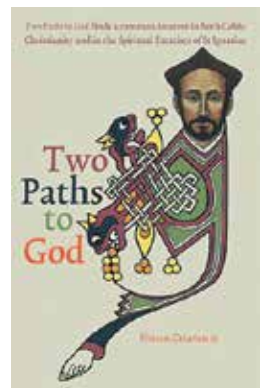
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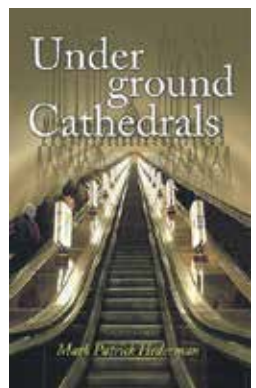
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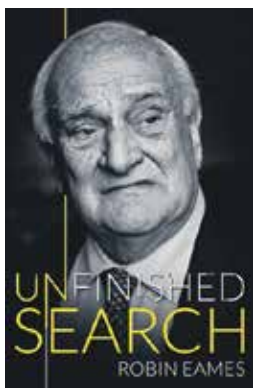
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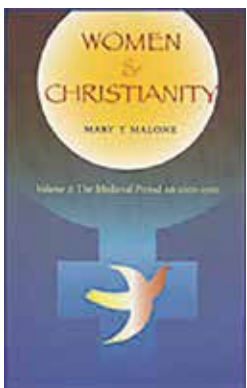
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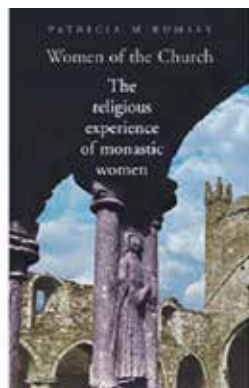
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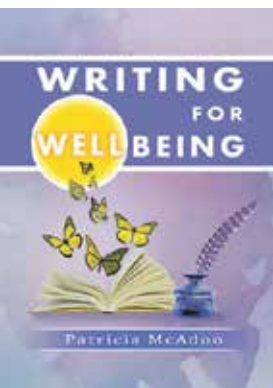
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# Giving the voiceless a voice



Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz hopes to shed light on human trafficking with his new sculpture, **Ruadhán Jones** learns

**“W**hen the Vatican asks you to do a sculpture, you have a tendency to drop everything you're doing and dive right into it,” Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz says. He should know, having previously unveiled his sculpture ‘Angels unawares’, on the theme of refugees, for Pope Francis in 2019.

When Canadian Cardinal Michael Czerny asked Mr Schmalz to create a sculpture on the theme of human trafficking, he said “absolutely, I will – but first of all, tell me what human trafficking is?”

“That’s basically how naive I was about human trafficking,” Mr Schmalz admits. But having worked on the project for more than a year, the Catholic artist is now travelling around the globe to unveil the sculpture and its models, and raising awareness about the evils of human trafficking.

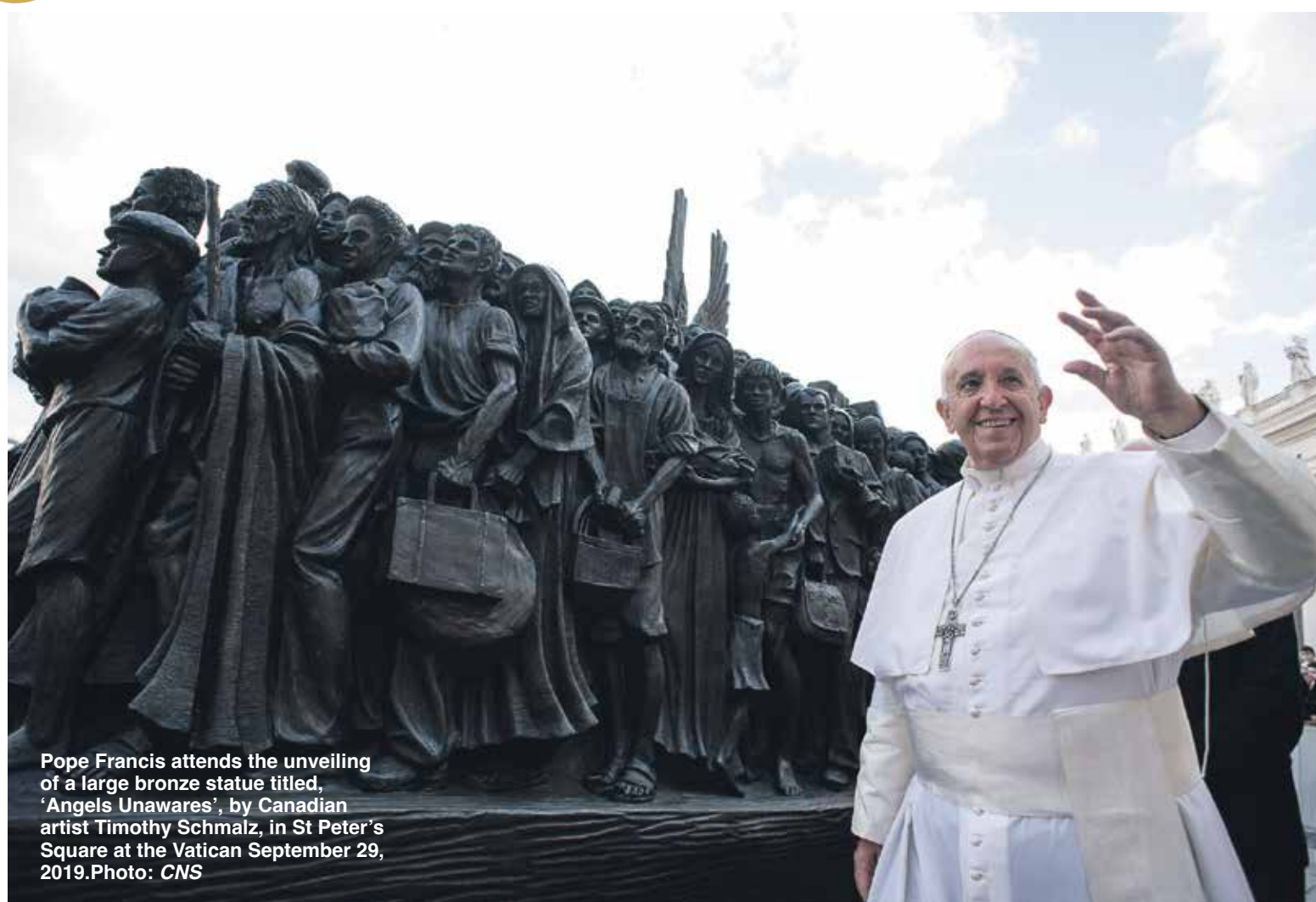
**“One of the reasons this sculpture has almost 100 different figures in it is that human trafficking has many different faces”**

His new sculpture, a six-foot scale model of which was blessed and unveiled in Dublin’s Pro-Cathedral by Archbishop Dermot Farrell on St Patrick’s Day, is called ‘Let the oppressed go free’. It features St Josephine Bakhita freeing almost 100 victims of human trafficking, lifting up the ground so that they emerge from the underworld and into the light.

## Unveiling

Mr Schmalz said unveiling the sculpture on St Patrick’s day highlighted the symmetry there is between St Bakhita’s story and that of Ireland’s patron saint.

“I think that, being a North American, there’s one day that universally everyone shares with Ireland and that’s St Patrick’s day,” Mr Schmalz explains. “And considering that St Patrick was human trafficked and his life story is in a



Pope Francis attends the unveiling of a large bronze statue titled, ‘Angels Unawares’, by Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz, in St Peter’s Square at the Vatican September 29, 2019. Photo: CNS

sense very similar to St Bakhita’s story. The symmetry that’s there, to bring it together visually with this sculpture, to have this sculpture unveiled on St Patrick’s day in Dublin – it brings St Bakhita into Ireland, but symbolically it’s a further reach for St Patrick.

“I think that there’s an irony in the way people respond to his story about being captured and being a slave. People think, it was centuries ago when that happened. But to know that similar, invisible stories are going on, not only here in Dublin but all over the world – that’s horrible. That’s one of the reasons why I’m here, because St Bakhita is here.”

## Mission

The artwork has a mission, Mr Schmalz says, to bring awareness of human trafficking and modern slavery that’s happening now: “I think it’s one of the best uses of artwork today, to shed light on this invisible evil that blights our culture and our society everywhere. If people do not know it exists, it thrives. And so many people don’t really know what human trafficking is and if they do, they have a very superficial understanding of what it is, a very naive understanding of what it is.

“One of the reasons this sculpture has almost 100 different

figures in it is that human trafficking has many different faces. It’s not just a 17-year-old abducted girl, it’s child soldiers, it’s organ trafficking, it’s child brides, it’s domestic workers that are literally slaves and it’s labourers all round the world that are forced to be basically working for free.

“You also have the male sex trafficking and I did some research on this and they feel completely invisible. So I’m putting faces on the different poor people around the world that are even right now as we talk trapped, enslaved, brutalised.”

## Statement

A statement accompanying the announcement of the artwork’s unveiling in Dublin references the 2021 *Trafficking in Persons Report* from the US state department, in which Ireland was placed at a Tier 2 watchlist. Quoting the report, the statement says that “human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Ireland and traffickers exploit victims from Ireland abroad. Traffickers subject Irish children to sex trafficking within the country”.

When asked if he hopes that his sculpture can spur people in Ireland to reflection and action, he says that’s absolutely the case.

“We take in visual artwork

very easily,” Mr Schmalz says. “In a sense with a sculpture the message can penetrate at a glance. What I hope is that this sculpture, just by taking up this physical space, just by making the invisible visible within the artwork, can perhaps be a human hand reaching out to people, an invitation to them to give it a couple minutes of their thought.

**“Being a North American, there’s one day that universally everyone shares with Ireland and that’s St Patrick’s day”**

“The small sculpture is going to be on exhibition at the pro-cathedral, but I think that it’s going to be moving in different places in Ireland, schools universities, different churches. I hope it can get to as many places as possible. Because wherever it goes in a sense it’s going to bring awareness.”

The idea for the final shape of the sculpture came to Mr Schmalz after a lot of research, he says. As he admitted earlier, he started without a great deal of knowledge. But the temptation to dive in was overwhelming and that’s what he did.

“I dove right into it, starting

with almost like a slave cart with all these figures on it, almost like the piece I did for St Peter’s square, but unlike a boat it was some kind of slave cart or something. But at night time I would go and I would read more and more about human trafficking and I got darker.

“And one day I was working on this model and I said to my mind, they’re sucking our children underground. And I thought of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, you know the Browning poem or the Grimm tale where the Piper wasn’t paid for getting rid of the rats in the town and so he played a different tune and all of a sudden the ground opened up and the children danced in.

## Symbolic

“Some people say that was kind of symbolic of the plague in medieval Europe. But this is a plague today. And I thought there’s no better way of describing this than the underworld, that almost right beneath our feet this is happening. These poor souls are just one sliver away from our normal day-to-day life. Just right beneath that is this whole other hellish inferno type world that exists.”

As Mr Schmalz continued to do his research, he came across a quote from Pope Francis that perfectly encapsulated his theme. Pope Francis said “human trafficking will always exist if it’s kept underground”, the Canadian sculptor recalls. “And I read that after I had thought of my design, after I was working on the new model. And I thought, yeah, I’ve got it here, I’ve got the design.”

**“Some people say that was kind of symbolic of the plague in medieval Europe. But this is a plague today”**



# through the power of art



Sabina Higgins, President Michael D Higgins, Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz and Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell are pictured after St Patrick's Day Mass, March 17, 2022, in Dublin's Pro Cathedral viewing a model of Mr Schmalz's recent sculpture 'Let the oppressed go free', which depicts St Josephine Bakhita with victims of trafficking.

The design of the sculpture is very deliberate, he explains, saying that it makes use of artistic techniques to really drive home the realities of human trafficking.

## “The idea for the final shape of the sculpture came to Mr Schmalz after a lot of research”

“Part of the cool thing about the design is that it's meant to be a life size sculpture, 20 feet long, where those figures are real life size figures. It's also meant to be placed as if it's on a sidewalk. It's supposed to be positioned in a point where it's an inconvenience, that you have to walk around it. It's not on a glorious pedestal like so many sculptures, but right there on a sidewalk, essentially to shock people when they see this.

“They just run into people coming out of under the ground. I think that having that life size is a technique, an artistic technique that will really capture people's imagination and sustain their interest in it.”

Mr Schmalz hopes to supplement the art piece with a QR code that will give information about human trafficking and how you can support organisations tackling the issue. But the artwork in itself has “an amazing power” due to the history of art in our western culture, he says.

“If you want to give someone an honour, you can give them an honorary degree, you can give them a title. But when you do a sculpture of them, a portrait in a park, that's almost one of the highest levels of status that one can achieve. Take

Winston Churchill, how many portraits of him are there?

“Here I'm working with people that don't have any status, who don't even get seen. It's fascinating, here I am working on the life size bronze of the organ trafficking figure. And I was thinking Tim, you had better do a good job here because this is the only chance that this poor guy has to be seen in the world.

## Deep

“Because you have to dig pretty deep into the human trafficking website or news to find visuals of what really happens. I'm bringing it basically face to face through this sculpture here. I'm taking something that's usually reserved for politicians or great historical figures and I'm bringing it to the people that are constantly, completely overlooked, the blind spot of humanity.”

Having been asked to do the project by the Vatican, Mr Schmalz says it really became his obsession. He worked on it for over year, starting at four

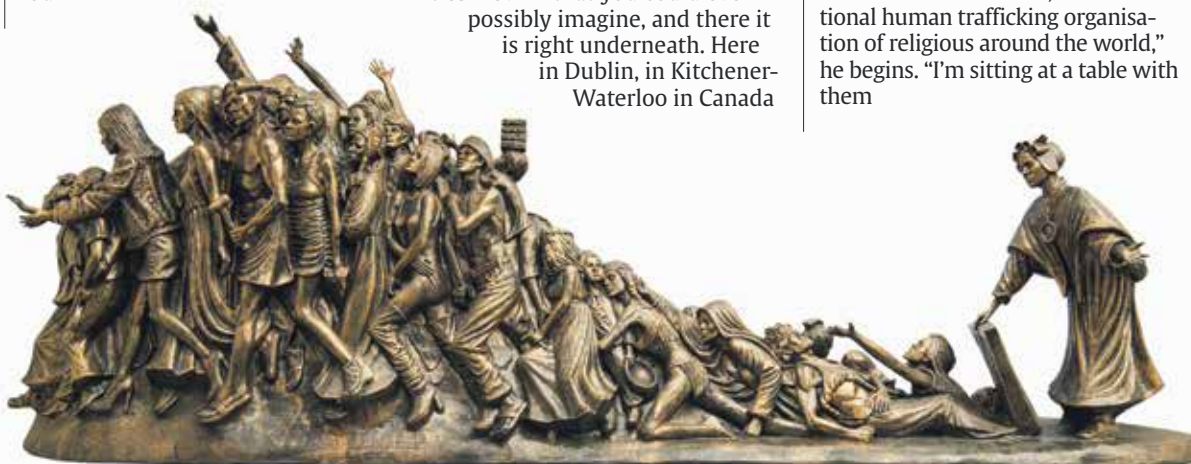
in the morning and going until the evening. Then, at night, he researched and learned more about human trafficking in order to represent it authentically.

“But at the end of that year, I felt I could not let go of it. I felt I didn't want to just slap my hands and say, it's done, move on to the next one. I really had this deep awareness that when you're staring at the faces of these figures for a year, you really begin to become attached to them.

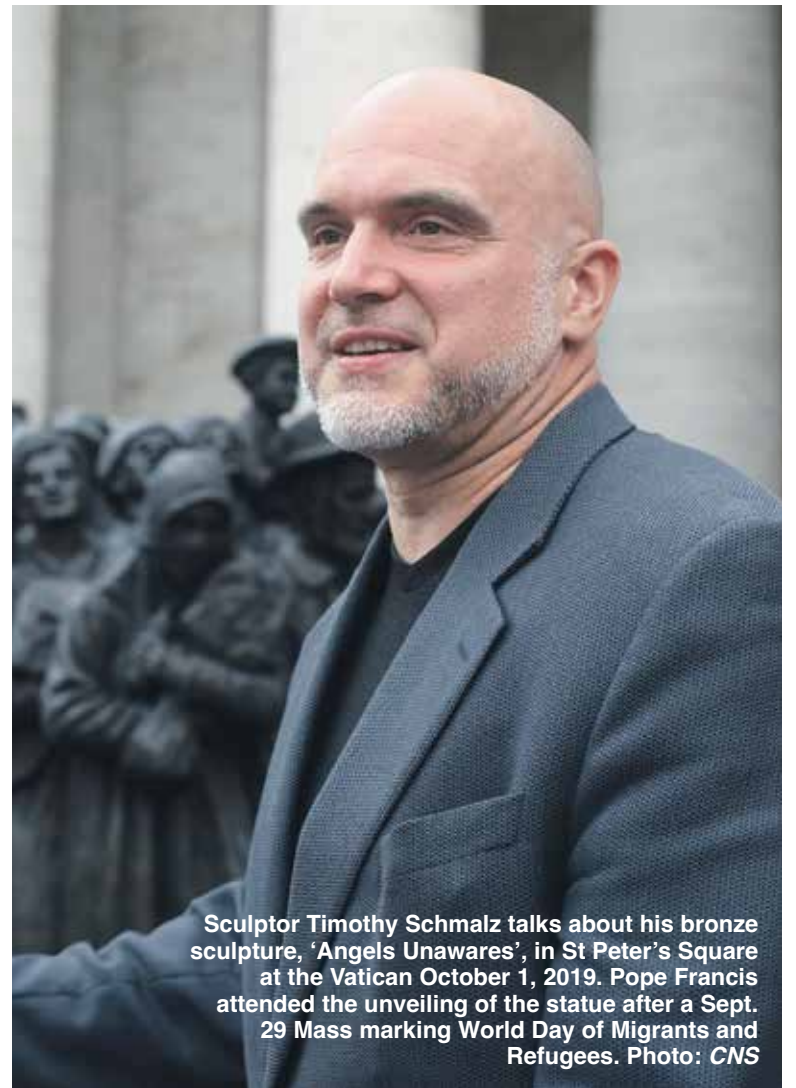
“That's one of the reasons I haven't left it now. If me being at the unveiling of the piece and if I can talk to people about the human trafficking, that can help give the sculpture power. I'm done sculpting it, but I'm going to be talking about it and describing it to as many people as possible.

## Locations

“And get it to different locations. I'm working on that too right now. You can't leave that. I don't want to talk about the stories, you can go deep into the web and find some of the most disgusting depravities – evil – that you could ever possibly imagine, and there it is right underneath. Here in Dublin, in Kitchener-Waterloo in Canada



St Josephine Bakhita is represented in this statue by Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz in this photo released by the Holy See Press Office February 3, 2022. Photo: CNS



Sculptor Timothy Schmalz talks about his bronze sculpture, 'Angels Unawares', in St Peter's Square at the Vatican October 1, 2019. Pope Francis attended the unveiling of the statue after a Sept. 29 Mass marking World Day of Migrants and Refugees. Photo: CNS

where I live – everywhere. When you figure out what's really going on, you lose your innocence in a sense. You can't necessarily go back. Your mind will think about how evil humanity is.”

## “Mr Schmalz hopes to supplement the art piece with a QR code that will give information about human trafficking”

But while that is the temptation, Mr Schmalz says that he was impressed with the nuns, priests and religious who work in the field and maintain their sense of hope.

“When I went to Rome and showing them progress of how it was going, I met with Sr Gabriella, who is the head of Talithakum, an international human trafficking organisation of religious around the world,” he begins. “I'm sitting at a table with them

and they're – look at their faces, they're filled with joy. And I remember Sr Gabriella was looking at the sculpture and she said, can I make one suggestion. I said sure, because it was half in the clay at that point.

## Babies

“She said, could you put a little baby in it because people sell babies on the black market as toys. I'm like, I can put a new born baby in there. I look at those sisters who are right there in the trenches, and I think of all the people who are there in real life, not in the artistic world that I'm in. But year in, year out, trying to help these victims.

“A lot of them, they have so much hope. It's fascinating, right? There is that hope that this is something, this evil can be destroyed and if I can bring my artwork to help that, as a tool, as a weapon, then I can't think of any better use of artwork than that.”

In keeping with the hope still felt by those working against human trafficking, Mr Schmalz says the sculpture is not a tragedy, but a comedy (in the classical sense of the word, where the story has a happy not a sad ending).

“St Bakhita's finally lifting up the ground and if you look at the sculpture, it's almost like a man-hole or something that's been opened up and all the victims of human trafficking are coming free. The suffering, the struggle but also the hope that what's represented in my artwork can be reflected in reality with these oppressed finally being set free.”





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Bishop-elect of Rumbek receives heroic reception

● Father Christian Carlassare, the bishop-elect of Rumbek, returned to his see March 23 to jubilation, as he emphasised his intention to build unity in the diocese.

The priest was shot in the legs shortly after his March 2021 nomination as Bishop of Rumbek.

He was cared for at a hospital in Kenya, and he returned to South Sudan last week.

"I am grateful to the governor and to all the authorities of this state and also this country because you have been standing by us as Church and helping us as you are working for peace in this country and in this territory," Fr Carlassare, 44, said on his arrival at Rumbek Airport March 23.

### Catholics urged to give with 'vigour' to Good Friday Holy Land collection

● A Vatican cardinal has urged Catholics to give with "new vigour" to this year's Good Friday collection for Christians in the Holy Land. Cardinal Leonardo Sandri made the appeal in a letter released on March 24, following a drop in donations in 2021 amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"For two consecutive years, the Christians of the Holy Land have celebrated

Easter and Christmas in a sort of isolation, without the warmth and solidarity of pilgrims visiting the holy places and local communities," the prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches wrote.

"Families have suffered beyond measure, more from the lack of work than from the immediate effects of the pandemic itself."

### MacKenzie Scott gives huge gift to abortion provider Planned Parenthood

● MacKenzie Scott, an early Amazon leader and ex-wife of company founder Jeff Bezos, has given \$275 million to Planned Parenthood, the United States' largest abortion provider, including grants to 21 regional affiliates. Still more money from one of the world's richest women will go to a Hispanic pro-abortion rights group.

"We are incredibly grateful for Ms Scott's extraordinary philanthropic investment in Planned Parenthood, as a critical part of the public health infrastructure," Alexis McGill Johnson, Planned Parenthood chief executive, said March 23.

Backers of the right to life of the unborn child have long criticised the abortion provider, which performed 354,871 abortions from October 2018 to September 2019, according to Planned Parenthood's 2019-2020 annual report.

### New Vatican guide on migrant ministry issued

● In a preface to a new Vatican guide on the pastoral care of migrants, Pope Francis highlighted the duty of Catholics to promote fraternity with others.

"All of us are called to commit ourselves to universal fraternity. For Catholics, this translates into being ever more faithful to our being Catholic," he wrote in *Pastoral Orientations on Intercultural Migrant Ministry*, published on March 24.

The 20-page booklet was created by the migrants

and refugees section of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

"As I wrote in the Message for the 107th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 'encountering the diversity of foreigners, migrants, and refugees, and in the intercultural dialogue that can emerge from this encounter, we have an opportunity to grow as Church and to enrich one another,'" he said.

## Ethiopian cardinal welcomes humanitarian truce in Tigray

Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel of Addis Ababa welcomed a humanitarian truce to allow aid to reach millions of people in the war-affected region of Tigray.

The government announced the indefinite and immediate truce March 24 and urged the Tigray defence forces to desist from all acts of further aggression. In response, Tigrayan military leaders said they had accepted the offer for a truce, if it would allow aid to reach the millions of people in urgent need in their region.

"The Church welcomes the government's announcement of a truce in hopes that it will help the innocent people affected by the war," Cardinal Souraphiel told journalists March 24, during a meeting of the Social and Development Commission of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia.

The war in Tigray – a semi-autonomous region in the north of Ethiopia – broke out in November 2020 after months of tensions between the government and regional leaders. Within 16 months, the conflict has killed thousands and displaced millions of people from their homes.

Despite a warning that starvation was threatening millions, no relief aid reached the region since



Workers from the International Committee of the Red Cross deliver medical supplies into Mekele, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, in this January 26, 2022, file photo. Ethiopian Cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel of Addis Ababa is welcoming a humanitarian truce announced March 24, 2022. Photo: CNS /International Committee of the Red Cross/handout via Reuters.

mid-December, according to officials in the Diocese of Adigrat. In January, the World Food Program said nearly 40% of the people in Tigray suffered from extreme food shortages.

Humanitarian agencies have blamed the situation on a government blockade, but the government has accused the rebels of frustrating aid efforts.

"The government of Ethiopia believes that the situation warrants urgent measures to ensure those in need are able to receive aid in their localities," said

the government statement announcing the truce.

Agencies estimate that 9 million people in Tigray and neighbouring regions are affected by the conflict and need humanitarian assistance.

The Catholic Church in Ethiopia has launched a support project to provide humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation to the people affected by insecurity and war in Tigray and the neighbouring states. With a budget of about \$2.6 million, the project will provide food and non-food items to

more than 217,000 people displaced from their homes and the host communities. The funding for the project has been provided by Caritas Internationalis and agencies such as the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

Father Tishome Fikre, the general secretary of the Ethiopian bishops' conference, said the Church believed providing services would strengthen the trust-building process and tolerance among the communities living in the affected regions.

## German bishops' leader responds to Polish synodal criticisms

The chairman of Germany's Catholic bishops' conference has responded to a strongly worded critique of the "Synodal Way" by his Polish counterpart.

Bishop Georg Batzing said in a March 16 letter that he sought "a real theological exchange" with Archbishop Stanislaw Gadecki over the direction of the controversial multi-year process bringing together Germany's bishops and laypeople.

CNA Deutsch reported that excerpts from Bishop Batzing's letter were published on the German bishops' conference website on March 24.

The bishop of Limburg, in western Ger-

many, was responding to an almost 3,000-word letter published on February 22, in which Archbishop Gadecki questioned whether the "Synodal Way" was rooted in the Gospel.

"Faithful to the Church's teaching, we should not yield to the pressures of the world or to the patterns of the dominant culture since this can lead to moral and spiritual corruption," the archbishop of Poznan, central Poland, wrote.

"Let us avoid the repetition of worn-out slogans, and standard demands such as the abolition of celibacy, the priesthood of women, communion for the divorced,

and the blessing of same-sex unions."

Bishop Batzing explained that the Synodal Way was intended as a response to an analysis of clerical abuse in the German Church known as the MHG study.

"To us, this starting point in abuse, which you do not mention in your letter, is very important," he wrote. "Only if we address the systemic causes of the unspeakable suffering brought upon people by representatives of the Church, mostly priests, will it be possible at all to reopen the space in which a proclamation of the Good News meets with open ears."

## Pope meets Hong Kong bishop and records messages to Chinese Catholics

Pope Francis, in a video message recorded on their bishop's phone, encouraged Catholics in Hong Kong and in mainland China to be strong in the face of challenges, to be good citizens and to pray for him as he prays for them.

Bishop Stephen Chow Sau-yan of Hong Kong, a Jesuit who was ordained a bishop December 4, met privately with Pope Francis at the Vatican March 17 and posted the videos on the Diocese of Hong Kong's Catholic Way website

March 23 and the website of the *Sunday Examiner*, with subtitles in English.

"Dear brothers and sisters, you Catholics, I greet you with gratitude and love," said the English subtitles of the Pope's message in Italian to Catholics

on the mainland.

"Thank you for your testimony of faith." In both videos, Pope Francis thanked Catholics for the way they endured and continue to endure the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.



# Best way to prevent trafficking is to end conflicts



Pope Francis meets at the Vatican September 25, 2019, with delegates of Talitha Kum, which coordinates 52 networks of religious women and men in more than 90 countries. Photo: CNS



Carol Glatz

**P**rotecting the human rights of people fleeing from or caught up in conflict zones must be as big a priority as providing them with basic material needs, said the leader of an international anti-trafficking network.

People facing a humanitarian crisis need material assistance and they need experts committed to protecting their human rights, said Comboni Sister Gabriella Bottani, international coordinator of Talitha Kum – an international network of women and men religious and lay experts fighting human trafficking.

“Every conflict, every war, wherever it happens in the world, is (fuelling) not just human trafficking, but is creating many other serious violations of human rights,” she told Catholic News Service by phone from Milan, March 24.

The best way to prevent abuses, including human trafficking and exploitation, is to stop what generates the huge numbers of potential victims: war, conflict and social instability, she said. “We need to do everything possible to restore peace.”

Because of its international reach with its partner groups made up of religious congregations on five continents, Talitha Kum understands the common risks, red flags and causes of human trafficking. The network helps fund and train sisters and laypeople to be anti-trafficking experts on the ground wherever they work.

**“Every conflict, every war, wherever it happens in the world, is (fuelling) not just human trafficking, but is creating many other serious violations of human rights”**

For example, two huge areas of concern continue to be Myanmar and Syria where protracted conflict, instability and poverty have led to horrific human rights violations of civilians, Sr Bottani said. In Syria, for example, people have been forced into armed conflict, prostitution, marriage or being sex slaves for rebels or army personnel, she said.

## Priority

According to what she has heard from people on the ground in Syria, the priority has been to respond with emergency relief like food, blankets and basic needs, and less on protecting people's rights and vulnerabilities, she said.

“It is important to provide support for victims of human trafficking in conflict zones and prevent it,” she said.

For those fleeing Ukraine into Poland, Talitha Kum's partner group is “Bakhita: Religious in Poland Networking Against Trafficking,” which has been active since 2011.

What religious sisters do, Sr Bottani explained, is to work directly with local dioceses and Catholic charities to make their properties and resources available as part of one coordinated strategy, instead of acting on their own and risking redundancies.

“So, often when you hear that Caritas or a diocese is hosting however many people, many of them are in structures led by religious sisters,” she said.

Religious sisters in Poland have so far opened up many convents, retreat centres and other structures, some near the border with

Ukraine, to refugees and one religious congregation opened its convent for housing unaccompanied minors and orphans, she added.

“Offering accommodation to people at risk of trafficking plays an important role in preventing human trafficking,” she said, because it provides safe spaces for those who are a major target of traffickers, including women travelling alone with children.

Talitha Kum does not have a network in Ukraine, but many sisters are working inside the country helping coordinate people's safe passage into bordering nations and connecting them with legitimate forms of assistance, she said.

## Refugees

The “Bakhita” network works with refugees and the sisters build trust with people who may be sceptical or suspicious of those offering assistance, she said.

“Bakhita” members on the border in Poland are also “very quickly identifying risks” by listening to people and their concerns, she said; they are in contact with human rights advocates who are keeping track of suspicious activities and reports

of disappearances so they can present evidence to government authorities, she added.

## Complex

Human trafficking is very complex because “it is a process in which you do not know you are trafficked until you are in a situation of exploitation,” Sr Bottani said. The process can start off seeming legitimate; for example, it is not a crime to offer people free lodging in a private home, but from there, guests can be abused – even by a host family – or tricked or forced into illegal activity abroad by traffickers.

**“The ‘Bakhita’ network works with refugees and the sisters build trust with people who may be sceptical or suspic”**

Speaking about refugees and civilians stuck in conflict zones, “we need to be very aware that they are in such a vulnerable condition, easily making them victims of other forms of crime and violations of human rights,” she said.

The war in Ukraine has drawn greater attention to the importance of peace and the need to help those forced to flee, and it is “an appeal not to forget the other conflicts going on,” she said.

“The call for solidarity is inclusive, embracing all people facing the same pain and violence,” she said.

**“It is important to provide support for victims of human trafficking in conflict zones and prevent it”**



# Letters

## Letter of the week

# War is the triumph of evil

**Dear Editor,** In *The Irish Catholic* edition of March 17, I agree with Sean Ryan's letter stating that prayers are needed for Vladimir Putin and Russia.

We only have to recall the message given to the three children of Fatima by Our Blessed Lady in 1917 and showing them the consequence of serious

sin in a vision of hell. This vision was repeated to four children in Garabandal, northern Spain in 1962/63.

How terrible that scene was for those children and how terrible it was for us to read it. Our Lady requested us to pray for the conversion of sinners who otherwise could face this terrible fate for all eternity.

Yes, we need to pray much for Ukraine and Russia, especially Vladimir Putin to turn back to peaceful dialogue with all other world leaders. St Pope John Paul II said war is the triumph of evil.

Yours etc.,  
**Vera Loftus**  
Ferrybank, Co. Waterford

## Helping persecuted Christians in the Middle East

**Dear Editor,** I am an online subscriber and I want to congratulate you on a fine article about persecuted Christians of the Middle East in the current edition [*The Irish Catholic* – March 17, 2022].

I believe there was one substantial element missing in the article overall: how can an engaged reader do something, make a contribution? Maybe the subject of a future article?

One way to donate I found was through the UK website of Aid to the Church in Need:

<https://acnuk.org/get-involved/donate/>

One can select "I want my donation to help a particular location". This will allow you to further select between Syria, Middle East, Iraq. Donations can be made with either a credit / debit card.

God bless you and the work!

Yours etc.,  
**Fr Morty O'Shea**  
Bronxville, New York, USA



## Leaving out Sunday obligation permanently

**Dear Editor,** Referring to the proposed restoration by the Irish Bishops's Conference of the Sunday Mass Obligation [*The Irish Catholic* – March 17, 2022], this has been a cornerstone of Catholic religious practice for as long as anyone can remember. Its suspension in March 2020 was a recognition of the sever-

ity of the effects of Covid-19 on all our lives. It is only in recent weeks that normal worship has resumed and there has been a welcome return to religious practice.

It can be seen now that people are attending church services because they want to be there in person and want

to participate in the Mass, and not because of any obligation. The current increase in the incidence of Covid-19 in the community makes it hard to understand why the bishops' conference are acting in such haste to restore this obligation. Taking a broader perspective, this obligation might be seen

as a part of 20th-century religious practices. In these circumstances the opportunity presented by the lockdown suspension to leave the obligation in abeyance might well have been taken.

Yours etc.,  
**Michael Walsh**  
Clontarf, Dublin

## Understanding the causality of war

**Dear Editor,** When Jason Osborne speaks about 'contrarian Catholics' in his article for [*The Irish Catholic* – March 17, 2022] I hope he is not including those who feel that it is essential to have some knowledge of the history of the relationship between Russia and the West, especially since the end of the Cold War? In other words, to gain some understanding of the causality of this war?

Another point: Russia is criticised for its media censorship. Until recently, we enjoyed watching RT (Russian television) news, as well as French news, Euronews, NHK, al Jazeera, BBC, RTÉ and News Nightly on EWTN.

It gave us a rounded experience of what was happening... even the tonality in which a piece of news is delivered can alter or nuance the meaning. A few days into the war and we were completely unable to access RT news. Russia is not the only one to impose censorship.

Yours etc.,  
**Judith Leonard**  
Raheny, Dublin

## Saving Gougane from 'ruthless investors'

**Dear Editor,** Gougane Barra is as important to the Church in Cork as Bethlehem is to the Holy Land. Founded by St Finbarr, it is a small cul-de-sac off the Macroom to Bantry road. A haven of peace and serenity in a mad world, the little oratory, a small country hotel and a small graveyard are all that exist.

It's surrounded by a lake and hills all around. God lives here. No wonder there are three weddings a day and couples come from all corners of the globe during which you bring your own priest to celebrate. The little hotel is too small for most weddings, but hotels throughout Cork and Kerry host the wedding functions.

Each September the founding by St Finbarr is celebrated. Recently the *Cork Independent*, a local newspaper, featured an

article detailing how planning permission was granted for seven large wind turbines to be erected approximately 2,000 metres from St Finbarr's Oratory on Gougane Barra Lake. The facts of the story are correct and it is only the "tip of the iceberg".

The story is not known nationwide, but please give it coverage in *The Irish Catholic*. If the people knew there would be outrage.

Gougane is very thinly populated and fundraising has commenced to take a High Court challenge. I feel people power is the only hope to save Gougane from the ruthless investors.

Please, please help. The Catholic Church at large should come out in support.

Yours etc.,  
**Muireann Ni Chuilean**  
Gougane Barra, Co. Cork

## facebook community

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

### Contrarian Catholics do the Church a disservice

I think God continually punishes us for Christians being so divisive and mean to each other. – **Tammy Groves**

Whatever the context, no Catholic with a heart could justify the massacre Russia is inflicting on the people of Ukraine. – **Patricia Shearer**

I have not met a practicing Catholic in my parish that supports Russian aggression – thank goodness. We are raising funds for Ukraine at all Masses next week! – **Frank Browne**

### Archbishop Farrell ordains two new Dominican deacons

Thank God for the new Dominicans as they are a lovely order of men and women and may God bless them with vocations. – **John Long**

### Sunday obligation in Ireland to return after Easter

With holy water and Communion on tongue? No more stewards? Social distance measure? But make no mistake. Those who left the church during pandemic won't come back. – **Guillaume Rouy**

The vast majority of baptised Catholics in Ireland and elsewhere had repudiated Sunday Mass long before the Covid lockdowns. That's a damning indictment of the jobs our bishops have done for the last 50 years and are doing now, as well as of the quality of the form of the Mass itself. The first step to reverse of this tragic situation is for the bishops to begin finally to acknowledge honestly their record of failure and to apologise for it. – **William Broderick**

About time, people got lazy and were quite happy to sit in their couch and "watch" Mass. They definitely were not participating in the Sacrament. – **Annie Taaffe**

### Church put in no-win situation over its land

Basically they want to steal the land off the Church. Then rezone it afterwards. The old switcheroo. – **Christopher Mc Camley**

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

## Desensitising students to pornography

**Dear Editor,** It was with interest that I read Ruadhan Jones' article about abortion and pornography [*The Irish Catholic* – March 17, 2022].

Could it not be said that some of the new books on the school curriculum might actually, I believe, by desensitising students towards various issues included in those publications, it might make it easier for predators to groom young people into unhealthy situations?

Yours etc.,  
**Brid Fitzpatrick,**  
Terenure, Dublin

## 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



▲ **CANADA:** Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau receives a cake reading 'Glory to Ukraine' from the congregation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary in Montreal, March 27. Photos: CNS.

◀ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis consecrates the world and, in particular, Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary during a Lenten penance service in St Peter's Basilica.

**POLAND:** President Joe Biden meets March 25 with US Army soldiers with the 82nd Airborne Division serving in Jasionka.



**VATICAN:** Canadian Indigenous delegates from the Métis National Council arrive for an encounter with journalists after meeting Pope Francis at the Vatican, March 28.



**UKRAINE:** Service members of pro-Russian troops in the besieged southern port city of Mariupol, Ukraine, are seen atop an armoured vehicle with the symbol 'Z' painted on its side.



**USA:** A man holds his 2-year-old daughter outside their destroyed home in the Arabi neighbourhood of New Orleans March 23, in the aftermath of a tornado.



# The therapy of a public life



**F**orty years ago, Philip Rieff wrote a book entitled *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. In essence, he argued that today in the Western world so many people need psychological therapy mainly because our family structure has grown weak and many community structures have broken down. He contends that in societies where there are still strong families and strong communities there is much less need for private therapy; people can more easily work out their problems inside of family and community. Conversely, where family and community are weak, we are mostly left on our own to handle our problems with a therapist rather than with a family.

**“To participate healthily in other people’s lives can take us beyond our private obsessions”**

If Rieff is right, and I suspect he is, it follows that the answer to many of the issues that drive us to the counseling couch lie as much, and perhaps more, in a fuller and healthier participation in public life, including church life, than in private therapy. We need, as Parker Palmer brilliantly suggests, the therapy of a public life.

What’s meant by this? What’s the therapy of a public life?

Public life, life shared inside a



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

family and community, beyond our private selves and private intimacies, can be powerfully therapeutic because it draws us out of ourselves and into the lives of others, gives us a certain rhythm, and connects us with resources beyond the poverty of our own lives.

To participate healthily in other people’s lives can take us beyond our private obsessions. It can also steady us. Public life generally has a certain rhythm and a regularity to it that helps calm the chaotic whirl of restlessness, depression, and sense of emptiness that can so often destabilise our lives. Participation in public life gives us clearly defined things to do, regular stopping places, regular events of structure and steadiness, and a rhythm – commodities no psychiatric couch can provide. Public life links us to resources beyond our-

selves, and sometimes they are the only thing that can help us.

While doing studies in Belgium, I was privileged to attend the lectures of Antoine Vergote, a renowned doctor of psychology and the soul. I asked him one day how one should handle paralyzing emotional obsessions, both within oneself and when trying to help others.

## **Temptation**

His answer surprised me. In essence, he said this: “The temptation you might have as a priest is to simplistically give the advice: ‘Take your troubles to the chapel! Pray it through. God will help you.’ It’s not that this is wrong. God and prayer can and do help. But, obsessional problems are mainly problems of over-concentration, and over-concentration is broken largely by

getting outside of yourself, outside of your own mind, your own heart, your own life, and your own space. So my advice is, get involved in public things, from entertainment, to politics, to work. Get outside of your closed world. Enter with resolve into public life!”

He went on, of course, to qualify this so that it differs from the simplistic temptation to bury oneself in distractions and work. His advice here is not that one should run away from doing painful inner work, but that solving one’s inner private problems is also dependent upon outside relationships, both relationships of intimacy and those of a more public nature.

**“Our campus was small and intimate and we had a strong community life”**

Here’s an example. For more than a dozen years I taught theology at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Canada. Our campus was small and intimate and we had a strong community life. Occasionally a man or woman who was working through some emotional fragility or instability would show up on campus, not enroll in any formal classes, but simply hang out with the community, praying with us, socialising with us, and sitting in on a few classes. Invariably I would see them slowly get emotionally steadier and stronger, and they found that new

strength and balance not so much from what they learned in any of classrooms as they did by participating in the life outside of those classes. The therapy of a public life is what helped heal them.

For us as Christians, this also means the therapy of Church life. We become emotionally stronger, steadier, less obsessed, and less a slave to our own restlessness by participating more fully and healthily within the public life of the Church. Monks have secrets worth knowing. They have long understood that a regular programme, a daily rhythm, participation in community, a mandate that you must show up, and the discipline of a monastic bell calling everyone to a common activity (whether this suits him or her or not at the time) have kept many a man and woman sane and emotionally stable.

## **Responsibilities**

Regular Eucharist, regular prayer with others, regular meetings with others, regular duties, and regular responsibilities within an ecclesial community not only help nurture us spiritually, they help keep us sane and steady. Private therapy can sometimes be helpful, but public, ecclesial life, with its consistent daily rhythms and demands, more than anything else, can help keep us steady on our feet.

**“Private therapy can sometimes be helpful, but public, ecclesial life, with its consistent daily rhythms and demands, more than anything else, can help keep us steady on our feet”**



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, March 31, 2022

## Personal Profile

Having the courage to back up your convictions

Page 34



# Leaving scrupulosity behind this Lent



**T**he sense of wrongdoing is demonised into oblivion today, and there are obvious reasons for that. Many say the Church focused excessively on eliciting guilt from its followers in decades and centuries past, and while that was undoubtedly there, the Church also has a mandate to tell of man's transgression.

Humans have fallen and been redeemed by Christ, but the working out of that in time sees all of us stumbling over and over again into sin. A definition I once heard described the process of becoming a saint as "falling upwards", and I think it succinctly captures the lifelong nature of our relationship with sin, and how God ultimately uses it to our good.

The key point is that it's very



**A healthy sense of guilt is actually a good thing but too much of it can be enormously harmful, writes Jason Osborne**

important to know that you are capable of doing the wrong thing, or even to acknowledge that there are "right" and "wrong" ways to live. Our present age can be fond of denying this truth in many ways, with the ultimate value of "being yourself" highly esteemed.

### Wrongdoing

Broadly speaking, a sense of wrongdoing or guilt helps you to realise you've done wrong,

you've transgressed against the good, and it indicates that things won't be set aright until you've apologised and attempted to begin again. As such, a healthy sense of guilt is a gift from God, helping us recognise that we need to get back into good standing with him and with others.

With all of that said – and the goodness of a legitimate sense of guilt established – it is possible to experience an obsession with wrongdoing and sin, and this is

known as scrupulosity. *Scrupulosity* comes from the Latin word for "a tiny pebble". The idea is that this small stone can become a great burden or irritation over time, which when applied to the spiritual life, helps us to see scrupulosity as that which constantly burdens and irritates the soul.

### Hostile view

A scrupulous person is one who becomes obsessed with sin and the sense they've done wrong, which develops into an inherently hostile view of life as the perceived inevitability of sin is grasped and clung to. They live life burdened by the idea that they've done something to offend God whether they know it or not, and in fear that they'll continue to do so.

The struggle against obses-

sion is something humans have always had to put up with, and the temptation is to think that an obsession with sin is virtuous, an unwillingness to sin a motivation to be prized and nurtured. However, this is an example of the enemy disguising himself as "an angel of light," as St Paul warns against in his second letter to the Corinthians. Scrupulosity transforms us into spiritual pharisees, more focused on a legalistic keeping of the rules than on a joyful, loving relationship with our heavenly Father in Christ. Over time, the scrupulous person becomes cold, suspicious, joyless and rigid – the opposite of a saintly disposition.

Scrupulosity turns our eyes compulsively inward, away from

» Continued on Page 33



## Family News

## AND EVENTS

## ONE OF TWO BLACK BOXES FOUND FROM CRASHED CHINESE PLANE

Chinese searchers have found one of two black boxes from a China Eastern Airlines plane that crashed last week in forest-clad mountains with 132 people onboard, the aviation regulator said.

The device was severely damaged, and it was not immediately clear if it was the flight data recorder or the cockpit voice recorder, an official of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) told a media briefing.

Flight MU5735 was flying from the southwestern city of Kunming to Guangzhou on the coast on Monday when the Boeing 737-800 jet suddenly plunged from cruising altitude at about the time when it should have started its descent ahead of landing.

Most of the jet appears to have disintegrated upon impact and no survivors have been found.

The cause of the crash has yet to be determined, with aviation authorities warning that their investigation would be very difficult because of the severe damage to the aircraft.

## EGYPT UNVEILS FIVE ANCIENT TOMBS IN SAQQARA NECROPOLIS

Egypt has unveiled five ancient Pharaonic tombs at the Saqqara archaeological site south of Cairo, the latest in a series of landmark discoveries in the area.

Saqqara is a vast necropolis of the ancient Egyptian capital Memphis, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is home to more than a dozen pyramids, animal burial sites and ancient Coptic Christian monasteries.

Egyptian archaeologists discovered the five tombs northeast of the pyramid of King Merenre I, who ruled Egypt around 2270 BC.

According to Mostafa Waziri, the head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, the five tombs – all of which are in good condition – belonged to senior royal officials.

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said one of the tombs belonged to a top official named Iry. A limestone sarcophagus and colourful decorations were found in the tomb.

The remaining tombs belonged to other members of the royal court, including a "steward of the royal house" and a priestess who was "responsible for the king's beautification".

## PUPILS ENCOURAGED TO GET CREATIVE IN 'EVERYDAY MATHS' ART COMPETITION

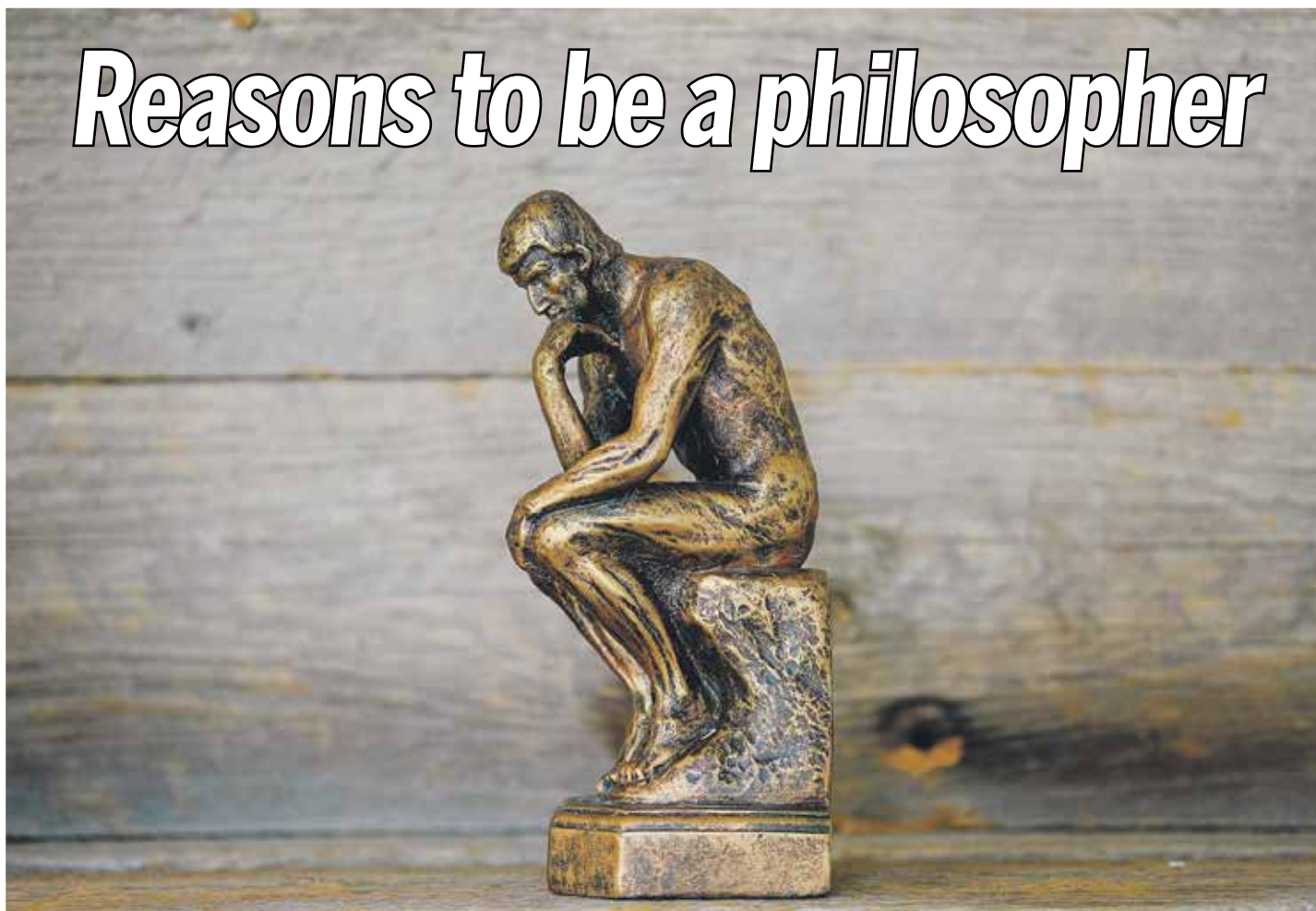
To get children in Ireland and across the UK thinking about 'everyday maths', edtech provider Renaissance Learning launched an exciting new drawing competition for primary schools.

Pupils across Ireland are being asked to think about how maths can be found in the everyday and create imaginative artwork showing their vision of where they can see and experience maths in the world around them.

The overall winning school will receive £2,000 (€2,400) towards a trip, whilst the individual winners from each of the three age categories will receive a Kindle Fire and a year's subscription to Freckle and Star Maths for their class or school.

Details on how to enter can be found at [www.renlearn.co.uk/sum-it-up](http://www.renlearn.co.uk/sum-it-up) alongside more information about Renaissance and Freckle.

## Reasons to be a philosopher



**W**hat's the point of philosophy? I don't mean to offer a justification for my own attempt to get a career out of it. When it comes to academic philosophy the standard reaction – "sure there's no jobs in that" – could best be described as "harsh but fair".

No, I mean, what's the point of doing philosophy in any capacity? Reading some Aristotle or Nietzsche, taking a class, having philosophical chats, perusing this column. Why bother with any of it?

**Besides, the relentless reduction of everything that matters in life to economic advantage is a bit grim"**

Probably the most boring answer is that philosophy gives you skills, skills that can be put to use doing other jobs. A lot of talk about the importance of critical thinking boils down to this. It's not exactly wrong. According to the stats website FiveThirtyEight.com, it is apparently a fact that among people who enter the workplace after getting an undergraduate degree, philosophy graduates have higher average salaries than graduates with chemistry or business ones.

But while this might give me some hope for my future financial prospects, it can't be a central reason for doing philosophy. It would be strange if the main reason for doing philosophy was so that you could do something else. Besides, the relentless reduction of everything that matters in life to economic advantage is a bit grim. This is supposed to be the

Everyday philosophy  
Ben Conroy

kind of thing that philosophy gets us to question, right?

President Michael D. Higgins, who has been a steadfast champion of the study of philosophy, made this point pretty ably when he addressed the Young Philosopher Awards in 2019 and warned of education systems telling students that "we exist to be made useful". Speaking to the same awards in 2021, he talked about how much of a role philosophy can have in making us active democratic citizens.

"If we lose or neglect that capacity to question, to critically evaluate," he said, "we can all too easily drift down a precarious road leading to a society where citizens become passive observers rather than active shapers of its evolving structure and form. That is why the study of philosophy is so greatly important."

Is it though? Again, it's not that Higgins is wrong. Philosophical habits of thought can definitely help you think about politics and society better and avoid certain obvious errors. Most of the contributions that pass for public debate in the three countries I have so far lived in (that's Ireland, Britain and the USA) would fail an "introduction to philosophy" class for first-year undergraduates. But while Higgins is right that philosophy shouldn't be the handmaiden of economics, it shouldn't be the handmaiden of civics either.

Philosophy has a broader scope than just being a kind of anti-virus for our social and political systems.

So OK, let's make it really broad. Is philosophy about how to live well? Now we're much closer to the mark. One very good reason to do philosophy is to figure out what is good, with



a view to doing it. That can be in the political arena (and Higgins is right that pursuing the good here is of critical importance) but it can also be in the context of any sort of interaction with others at all. One of the ways that studying philosophy changed my life in this way is that I used to think the best people were those strong-willed dutiful types who do the right thing even if they hate doing it. I now think the best way to be is to do the good and love doing it,

building up habits so that you actively enjoy being virtuous. That change was a direct result of my becoming less influenced by Kant and more by Aristotle. So philosophy as a way of life, a life of pursuit of the good, has a lot to be said for it.

**“But if, as Plato wrote, ‘philosophy begins in wonder’, it’s worth remembering that wonder can be all the reason one needs to pursue it”**

But this isn't the only purpose of philosophy. Aristotle thought that the highest thing a philosopher could do was not achieving moral goodness but rather contemplating the deepest truths of existence. This is perhaps the reason for being a philosopher that's hardest to understand in our modern society because it's really not about usefulness at all. It's useless in the way that music and art is. But this is perhaps the purest reason to be a philosopher: just because you want to come to know what is true.

I don't think I've reached this level and I'm not sure I ever will. I'm an attack dog of a philosopher. There are so many bad ideas out there messing things up! So many people who are wrong, wrong on the internet! Nor, if I'm being honest, am I sure I have to become like this. Not everyone who does philosophy has to do it for the same reasons. But if, as Plato wrote, "philosophy begins in wonder", it's worth remembering that wonder can be all the reason one needs to pursue it.



» Continued from Page 31



God, our neighbours, the Church and the world, until our focus is fixed firmly on ourselves. It belies a life lived out of fear or caution rather than out of freedom rooted in the love of God.

**“This might just be an error in judgement, but those prone to scrupulosity have a difficult time letting go of this worry, that they might be engaged in sinful behaviour (which in reality isn’t sinful)”**

The primary antidote to this spiritual problem is to refocus our gaze on God and his love for us, as well as the holy example of the saints. Many of them dealt with scrupulosity in their time, foremost among them St Ignatius of Loyola.

At the end of his *Spiritual Exercises*, St Ignatius provides six notes on what he refers to as “perceiving and understanding scruples and persuasions of our enemy”. In the first three notes, St Ignatius outlines the classical notion of scrupulosity, which is that scruples are the constant tendency to “decide that something is sin which is not sin”.

This might just be an error in judgement, but those prone to scrupulosity have a difficult time letting

go of this worry, that they might be engaged in sinful behaviour (which in reality isn’t sinful). Scrupulous people are constantly nagged by the notion that they’ve offended God, and while God can make use of a sort of “holy” doubt as mentioned above, it is here that one must learn to distinguish between this constant, pestering notion and a true desire to please God in all things.

For St Ignatius, to grow in holiness is also to grow in self-awareness. He would advise discerning the inner movements of your heart, so that you’re wide awake internally and don’t easily fall into the extremes of laxity or scrupulosity.

St Ignatius teaches here that the desire to please God is real, and we must live out our lives from the realisation that we exist and act surrounded by God’s merciful love



for us. God’s overwhelming mercy allows us to move ahead with our doubts, with St Ignatius advising that we can’t let minor setbacks, imperfect motives or otherwise stop us in our desire to work for God.

**“It is Christ alone who can forgive us and heal us – our efforts to remain sinless cannot do this”**

Four antidotes to scrupulosity are suggested by Fr David Meconi SJ, and they are as follows:

- Become aware of the fact that serious sin must be conscious and deliberate – if there is not total and deliberate consent to the sin (which is easy to identify), then a serious sin wasn’t committed.

- Revel in the fact that God loves you not because you are loveable, but because he is love. As Fr Meconi says, “Surrender, not sinlessness, is what the Lord asks of us”.

- Understand that the weeds always grow with the wheat. God is content to let the weed of sin inhabit your life for now, and if you try to rush through uprooting them yourself, you’ll undoubtedly make a mess of it. God will accomplish what you cannot in his own time.

- It is Christ alone who can forgive us and heal us – our efforts to remain sinless cannot do this. The ones who kept the law perfectly were the same that crucified God himself.

## Faith — IN THE — family



Christina Malone

Over the past few weeks, parishes all around Ireland have been organising listening sessions to give as many people as possible the opportunity to share their thoughts and experience of the Church as part of the synodal path. At the same time many parishes are back to the ‘conveyor belt’ mentality for Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

My oldest daughter made her first Holy Communion last year and told me recently that hardly any children in her class had been back to the church. Not even her best friends. She is only ten but is well aware, she is/ we are different. My other daughter is going to celebrate the sacraments over the next few weeks, mainly organised by the school. Very little input is asked of parents. Just come along. Personally the past two years have been very difficult for my family. I am working in a parish where my vision is to bring the Church alive. Part of my work is supporting families as they prepare to celebrate those mile stones, while at the same time my family is just turning up for the day.

At a recent deanery meeting priests, religious and lay people shared the good and challenging experiences of the pandemic. In regards to the sacraments all agreed, the smaller groups and less ‘fuzz’ was wonderful. After the meeting I wondered – is that all we have learnt from the pandemic? As a German living and working in Ireland I am aware I am a complete blow-in but I can recall endless discussion about the challenges parish teams were facing with the ‘numbers’ of those presenting themselves for the sacraments. Many meetings, discussions, programmes and policies later, many are still doing the same, just with less people at it and how is that working out for ‘us’?

I would say just the number attending those ceremonies have changed. As a mother and as a pastoral worker I have been talking to friends and colleagues about this many times. For years we have been discussing and reflecting on those sacramental classes, trying to figure ‘it’ out. Over the past two years the

pandemic had given us a real excuse to pause and to review but what have we done? Once we opened up the churches we continued the same pattern, in smaller groups, under huge pressure from parents who wanted dates/ a day. When will we finally wake up and look at this dilemma! We are baptising second class children because parents just did not get around to getting it ‘done’ sooner.

A colleague once wrote in an article “children have been to Santa’s Grotto more often than the church”. Sad, but reality.

So where is the hope in all of this? People are still coming forward for those mile stones in their children’s lives. The challenge is, how can parishes respond to this in meaningful way? The Catholic schools are doing their best. Even so, many teachers do not believe what they are teaching and you know as well as I do, children feel that. Children can tell when you are genuine or you are “making it up”. Maybe it is time to ask how Catholic are the Catholic schools? Many parents shout for more choices, would that mean the demand for sacraments would lower? I am not sure. Many parents choose an educate together or Church of Ireland school for all kinds of reasons. Catholic parents often pay for religion classes outside of school hours. Are they more committed? Not sure.

What about the grace of the Sacrament and of course the Holy Spirit I hear you saying reading this? Yes, of course you are right but believe me, the future of the Church is dark, if we don’t stop “throwing around” the sacraments. Now retired Archbishop Diarmuid Martin used to encourage parish teams to ask families: “Who is Jesus Christ in your life?”

What was missing, was a response when parents answered: “I don’t care. I just want to get it done.”

I hope the listening sessions will give us food for thoughts for the national synod and how to be Church in 2022 in Ireland. New energy and approaches are needed. Unless, we are happy to do the same things over and over again but expecting a different outcome. However, Albert Einstein and others would call that insanity.



# Having the courage to back up your convictions

## Personal Profile



**Ruadhán Jones**

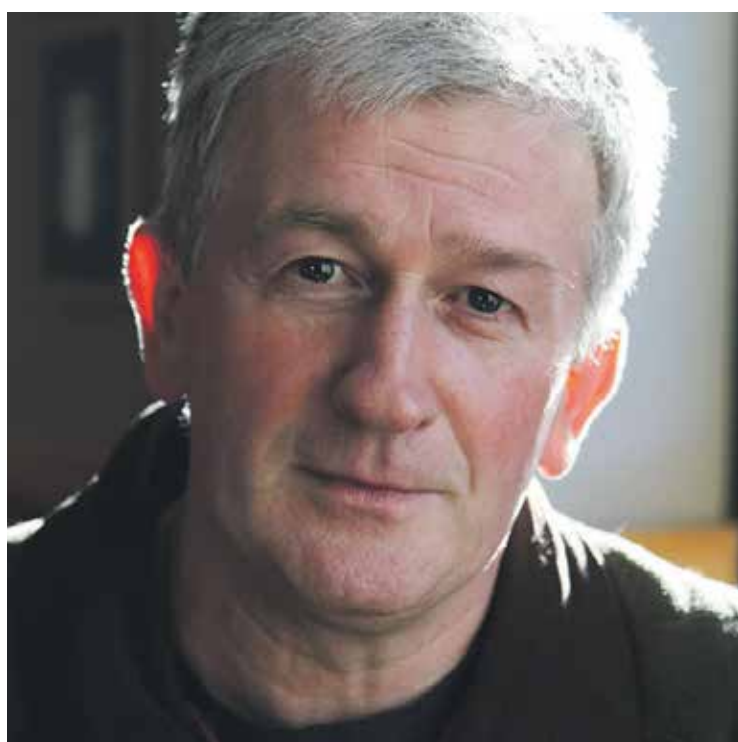
**D**r Dermot Kearney, past president of the Catholic Medical Association (CMA) UK, believes that we must always be prepared to invite people to talk about faith and spirituality. His Catholic faith has helped him deal with the challenges being a doctor presents and he wants to share that gift.

Irish born but based in England, Dr Kearney explains that the Faith has always been important to him, as he was raised a Catholic.

**“In that sense it’s engrained in most Christian healthcare professionals that they have to respect at all times the other person”**

“Even during my teenage years while still in secondary I still would have been practicing and believed in the teachings of the Church,” he tells me. “I went to University College Dublin and while I was there I joined the Legion of Mary. I was surrounded by people who were practising their faith and keen and enthusiastic to develop their faith. I was certainly influenced by a lot of the people I met through the Legion and the works that we did.”

Having obtained a medical degree from UCD in 1989, Dr Kearney completed a fellowship in interventional



Dr Dermot Kearney, a hospital cardiologist and a past president of the UK’s Catholic Medical Association, is seen March 6, 2022, in Chester-le-Street, England. Photo: CNS

cardiology in Leiden and Amsterdam, Netherlands 2001-2003. He then moved to England, where he has been working as a cardiologist ever since. Dr Kearney believes the Faith he grew up with continues to influence his work.

“As a Christian you’re taught from a very young age certain moral standards,” he says. “The world is not only about you and you have to respect all other human persons. Through Catholic teaching you accept that from conception right through to natural death.

“In that sense it’s engrained in most Christian healthcare professionals that they have to respect at all times the other person. We may not always like it, we may be tired, overworked, people may get on our

nerves. There are situations which are challenging.

“But it’s always in the back of your mind, that this is a person made in the image and likeness of God, and you’re duty bound to care for them. Having said that you don’t necessarily have to be a believer to hold that moral viewpoint. But you can’t get away from it if you have been brought up in a Christian background.”

Dr Kearney says that his faith has helped him in difficult times, when he faced the challenges that being a doctor throws up. He has to deal with death, illness and suffering in his patients, as well as personal struggles.

“It puts it in perspective,” he explains. “You realise that you can’t solve every problem. There are some times when death is inevitable, and

then you have to resort to other skills to relieve suffering, which is an important part of being a human.

“We can’t always save all lives, but you do the best you can and my faith would help me to see things in the proper perspective. You know, I would love to be able to keep this person alive for the sake of the family of the person themselves. But I have to accept that death is inevitable. And then you can move towards helping people.

“We are limited with what we are allowed to do in that regard, in terms of praying with people and praying for people. But you can at least look on the perspective that you can help this person in another way, in a spiritual manner that someone without a faith perspective may not be able to appreciate.”

## Challenge

Offering such comfort can be a challenge, Dr Kearney says, as you run the risk of being seen to impose your beliefs on someone. But he always approaches the subject with great delicacy and without judgement.

“I offer, saying, ‘would it upset you if I said a prayer for you’, or ‘would you like to pray together’ or saying ‘I will pray for you’. In my work I wear a little cross, just as a symbol. I never bring it to anyone’s attention. But sometimes others will approach me and say, oh are you a Christian, are you a Catholic?”

“I look on it as an invitation that if others want to bring up their belief or their lack of belief or faith questions, they realise it’s a safe place to do that, that I’m going to be open to talk to them in a very non-judgemental way. I think we always have to have that perspective that we should be prepared to talk about the metaphysical and the spiritual to people at these vulnerable times, whether it be the patient themselves or the family members.”

Dr Kearney served recently as the president of the CMA, finishing his three-year term in 2021, and says that the association’s aims are to protect

vulnerable groups and to support Catholics working in healthcare.

“The primary aim is to make sure that Catholics working in healthcare are supported,” he explains, “that they’re able to do their work but at the same time to remain faithful to their conscience and the teachings of the Church.

“But secondly, we keep a close eye on what’s happening in society. If we see any vulnerable groups – whether it be the unborn, embryos, the sick, the disabled – being placed at risk by legislation or by pressures of society, we’re prepared to stand up and come out in public to protect the dignity of human life at all stages,” Dr Kearney says.

He faced his own difficulties of late for standing up for unborn lives by providing abortion reversal pills. A case against him, which could have seen him fired from his position, was struck down. However, he still firmly believes it’s important that people of faith have the courage to stand up for the vulnerable and those being unjustly treated. The CMA has provided him with a community of faith that supports him and others like him in their work.

“It’s been a great support to me, you meet wonderful people, you learn a lot from other people and I’m hoping that I can pass whatever experience and knowledge I have on to those coming on behind me. It’s very important to have others around you who think the same way you do, who hold the same values you do, and who are prepared to have the courage to stand up for the vulnerable and for those being unjustly treated,” Dr Kearney finishes.

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

## Love Notes



**Marta Osborne**

## Managing different personalities in marriage

**My wife and I sometimes have trouble managing our divergent personalities – she’s very quiet and reserved while I’m extremely active and extroverted. How do we make it work?**

**T**he saying goes that “opposites attract”, and this is often the case. The attraction is the easy part, however – making it work in the long run can be a different story. It’s not impossible, it just requires effort from both spouses. In fact, you might find your spouse’s strengths fill in your weaknesses, and vice versa, leaving you both much better off than if you’d married someone with a very similar temperament.

My husband and I find ourselves in this situation. He’s inclined to slower and steadier

ways and habits, such as reading, hiking, silence and more. I’m more active, enjoying a full schedule and complex plans coming together.

This has worked in our favour, though, with him becoming more capable of faster-paced living from time to time, while I’ve come to appreciate slowing down every so often and realised that life doesn’t have to be all-go all the time.

It’s a work in progress, and it’s unlikely to be finished in this life. It’s just an example of how different personalities or temperaments can complement each other in marriage if both husband and wife encounter each other in a spirit of love, patience, understanding and compromise.

The reality is that your spouse’s differences are God’s way of calling you to grow in love, and you might pick up an extra skill or trait or two along

the way. Living your life alongside someone who behaves quite differently, enjoys different things and who thinks in a manner alien to yourself of necessity requires that you come out of yourself and embrace another person as they are.

However, it’s also an education in the art of compromise, as neither spouse is likely to be fulfilled in marriage if one or the other personality dominates most of the time. Instead, you need to learn to take a moment when the other person’s differences seem incomprehensible to you; you need to learn to view the other person’s skills and behaviours as potentially beneficial for you, and you need to learn when to stand up for your own outlook and way of doing things.

If these boxes can be ticked, not only will God use your marriage to inspire growth in both of you, you’ll likely come to enjoy life and each other more as well. It goes without saying that the best base to build this holy effort on is a mutual prayer life, and an approach to life that’s rooted in common values.







# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Congratulations quickly turned to a filleting

On a media training session for politicians the advice would include being on top of your brief, knowing your facts. You'd probably be schooled in the skills of dodging – learning to answer the question you'd like to have been asked instead of the one you were asked. You'd be told to stress how 'clear' you are and have been – even if you weren't. And you'd need to throw in an occasional "in the coming days" (from here to eternity!)

These thoughts were prompted by Sarah McInerney's interview with new Labour Party leader Ivana Bacik on *Drivetime* (RTÉ Radio One, Friday). It started with the warm glow of congratulation but quickly became a filleting. Ms Bacik was vague and evasive about how much she was involved in the move to unseat the previous leader Alan Kelly. She said the party had already addressed that but "we have to move on from that". Ms McInerney almost offered her a carrot – "I'd like to move on but I'd like to get an answer". Eventually she said she had known a few days before the unseating but wouldn't say whether she'd been at the meeting that sealed Alan Kelly's fate – "I'm not going to comment on internal party matters". She said she hadn't been



New Labour leader Ivana Bacik

planning to run for election as party leader so soon after becoming a TD, but then she didn't 'run', did she? It was more of a coronation (what parties does that remind you of?) She couldn't give a figure on how much Labour would spend in the mini-budget she was proposing ('I don't have figures in front of me') but did have her figures when it came to proposals on increasing the minimum wage.

### Abortion

The previous evening's *News* (RTÉ One) had outlined Ms Bacik's history of campaigning on abortion, though she wasn't stressing that in any interviews I heard. Instead, she emphasised her championing of equality, solidarity and fairness – hard to square with her support for scrapping the Eighth Amendment, an explicitly equality-based article of the Constitution, and her blatant lack of solidarity with some of the most

vulnerable in society – living unborn children. On the *Drivetime* interview Sarah McInerney put it to her that that perhaps she didn't resonate with the traditional membership and values of the Labour Party. At least with Ms Bacik, you know what you're getting, unlike some Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael members who fly their pro-life credentials while touting for votes and then go on a 'journey' and 'evolve' to the opposite position, leading to a huge breakdown of trust in the powers that be which has resonated through the Covid-19 outbreak.

### Challenges

The challenges for the Church posed by Covid-19 were the subject of an item on *The Pat Kenny Show* (Newstalk, Wednesday). I wondered why the item was confined to the Church as I'm sure other denominations and faiths have similar problems. Reporter Barry Whyte referenced reduced attendance, reduced income, fewer priests, elderly priests retiring before they might have otherwise. *The Irish Catholic* Editor Michael Kelly spoke of the pandemic exposing existing problems like the age profile of priests, effectively "catapulting" the Church ten years forward in time, thus accelerating problems that were already going to present challenges.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### LENT AT EPHEBUS

EWTV Sunday April 3, 11am

The Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles in Northwest Missouri transform their priory into a modern, high-tech recording studio for three days to produce an album of sacred music for the Lenten season.

#### BÁS AS BAILE

BBC TWO NI Monday April 4, 10pm

Documentary telling the story of how the death of a Newry man led to his family setting up a charity which has repatriated the bodies of over 1,000 loved ones who have died abroad back to Ireland.

#### PILGRIMAGE

BBC Two NI Friday April 8, 9pm

Seven celebrities of differing faiths and beliefs set out in search of St Columba, an Irish monk born 1,500 years ago who helped spread Christianity from Ireland to Scotland.

All in all it was a fairly positive item. Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap. of Priorswood Parish in Dublin was hopeful and was getting "nice crowds" at Masses. Fr David Vard of Portlaoise seemed optimistic too and was seeing a reasonable amount of "people of a certain age" attending – I think he meant people who were youngish. He wanted the Church to go forwards being real, honest open and accepting. I can't see anyone objecting to that though there could be difficulties when you'd get down to specifics. Pat Kenny read out what I thought was a mean-spirited text from 'Jimmy', who thought the biggest problem the Church had was its "utter irrele-

vance" with the public. What a sour note to end on!

On *Ayesha Hazarika* (Times Radio, Saturday) I heard President Joe Biden speaking in Poland, and he started by quoting St Pope John Paul II – "Be not afraid". He stressed the role the pontiff and his native Poland, played in the demise of the Soviet Union. All fine so far. I wondered if there was any hope he'd quote John Paul's opposition to capital punishment and abortion and apply those teachings when he got home. Unlikely or what!

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[@boreganmedia](https://www.boreganmedia.com)



Aubrey Malone



# Film

## International intrigues from present and past

**Compartment No. 6:** We don't hear much about *glasnost* or *perestroika* since Vladimir Putin's invasion of the Ukraine but they're applicable to this. It explores the friendship between a Finnish woman (Seidi Haarla) and a Russian man (Yuriy Borisov) on board a train bound for the Arctic Circle in the late 1990s. Directed by Juho Kuosmanen, it's been a hit at film festivals as a result of its sensitive treatment of an initially rocky relationship that becomes warmer as it develops.

**The Outfit:** This stars Mark Rylance as a British expatriate who's fled the carnage of World War II Britain to work as a tailor in Chicago. Set in the 1950s, it has Rylance becom-

ing embroiled in a turf war between various members of the Mafia as he tries to keep his dignity – and his life.

**One of These Days:** Twenty Texan people enter a 'touch the car' competition in hopes of winning a pick-up truck. Directed by Bastian Gunther, the film recalls *They Shoot Horses, Don't They*, another work about a marathon that ended in tragedy. *They Shoot Horses* was set during the American Depression. This explores a similar kind of desperation against the backdrop of poverty in the Deep South.

### Avenge

**The Northern:** Graphic epic from Robert Eggars about a Viking (Alexander Skarsgård) out to avenge his father's mur-



A scene from the animated film *The Bad Guys*.

der during the Middle Ages. Nicole Kidman's ethereal queen provides some kind of antidote to the blood and guts.

**Morbius:** A Greek biochem-

ist (Jared Leto) performs a dangerous experiment to treat a rare blood disease from which he's suffering but in the process becomes a vampire. The

Marvel-inspired tale explores his struggle between the good and evil in himself as the cure becomes worse than the disease.

**The Worst Person in the World:** Joachim Trier directs Renate Reinsve in this tale of a woman who's approaching 30 but still doesn't know what to do with her life. A kind of *'Bridget Jones Meets The Graduate'*, it's a feelgood rom-com about love and career.

**Benedetta:** Paul Verhoeven has always gone for the sensationalist option in his films and this story of a 17th-century nun who falls in love with another nun is no exception. It was accused of blasphemy by a group of protestors from the American Society of Tradition, Family and Property at its New

York premiere last September. It will be interesting to see if anything similar happens here.

**The Bad Guys:** This animated movie features a gang of criminals who pretend to reform themselves to avoid lengthy prison sentences. Watch Mr Wolf, Mr Snake, Mr Piranha, Mr Shark and Ms Tarantula try to pull the wool over their mentor's eyes in this fun-filled extravaganza from Pierre Perifel.

**Casablanca Beats:** A former rapper (Anas Basbousi) puts a bunch of teenagers through their paces in a working class neighbourhood in Casablanca, using hip hop music to free them from the restrictiveness of their environment. Like *West Side Story*, it's ultimately a film about liberation.

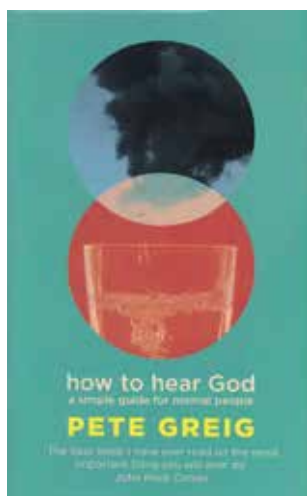


# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## That 'still small voice' that all can hear, but do not always listen to



**How to Hear God: A Simple Guide for Normal People**  
by Pete Greig  
(Hodder and Stoughton, £14.99/€18.00)

Author Peter Greig is pastor in Emmaus Road Church in Guilford, England. This is his eighth book, but his books are only a part of his life. He says that he often finds himself bewildered, but his bewilderment is understandable, given all that he makes himself do, but he can also see many things clearly given his experience. One of those earlier books was called *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*. This new book is what he calls, it should be noted, a "prequel to this title".

### Refreshing

It opens with a very refreshing section called disarmingly "How to Read this Books in Five Minutes".

This is in effect a summary of the book, but don't be tempted to take it too lit-

erally, for the book is filled with insights and thoughts that need to be read for themselves.

The dominant image pervading the book is the encounter on the Road to Emmaus, where the two disciples encounter Jesus and listen to his voice and his wise words, and all in a very friendly way. And how the experience of recognising the voice one is hearing is the voice of God.

Greig reminds his reader, and this is page one, of the remark of St Teresa of Avila that "Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God".

**“It opens with a very refreshing section called disarmingly ‘How to Read this Books in Five Minutes’”**

The book emphasises what happened on the road again to the two disciples when he explained to them, what theologians call the *Christological hermeneutic*.

One cannot help on reading a new book of this kind to note passages apposite to the day we are living through.

"A Christological reading of the Bible may well unsettle hierarchical models of Church governance based upon the Old Testament temple and its elliptical priesthood. It will dismantle the arguments used by some people to justify nationalism and racism based purely on the Old Tes-

tament view of Israel. It will also challenge attitudes that subjugate women in ways he himself clearly and consistently redressed."

Having undoubtedly rattled a few cages here, Greig adds this Jesus-centred view "is that it makes love the lens through which we must henceforth read the Bible in the light of Christ".

He reminds us too that: "The whole Bible does nothing but tell of God's love", according to Augustine of Hippo.

### Efforts

Greater efforts rather are put into converting others. But for great changes he says "we don't need non-Christians to become Christians, we need Christians to become Christians".

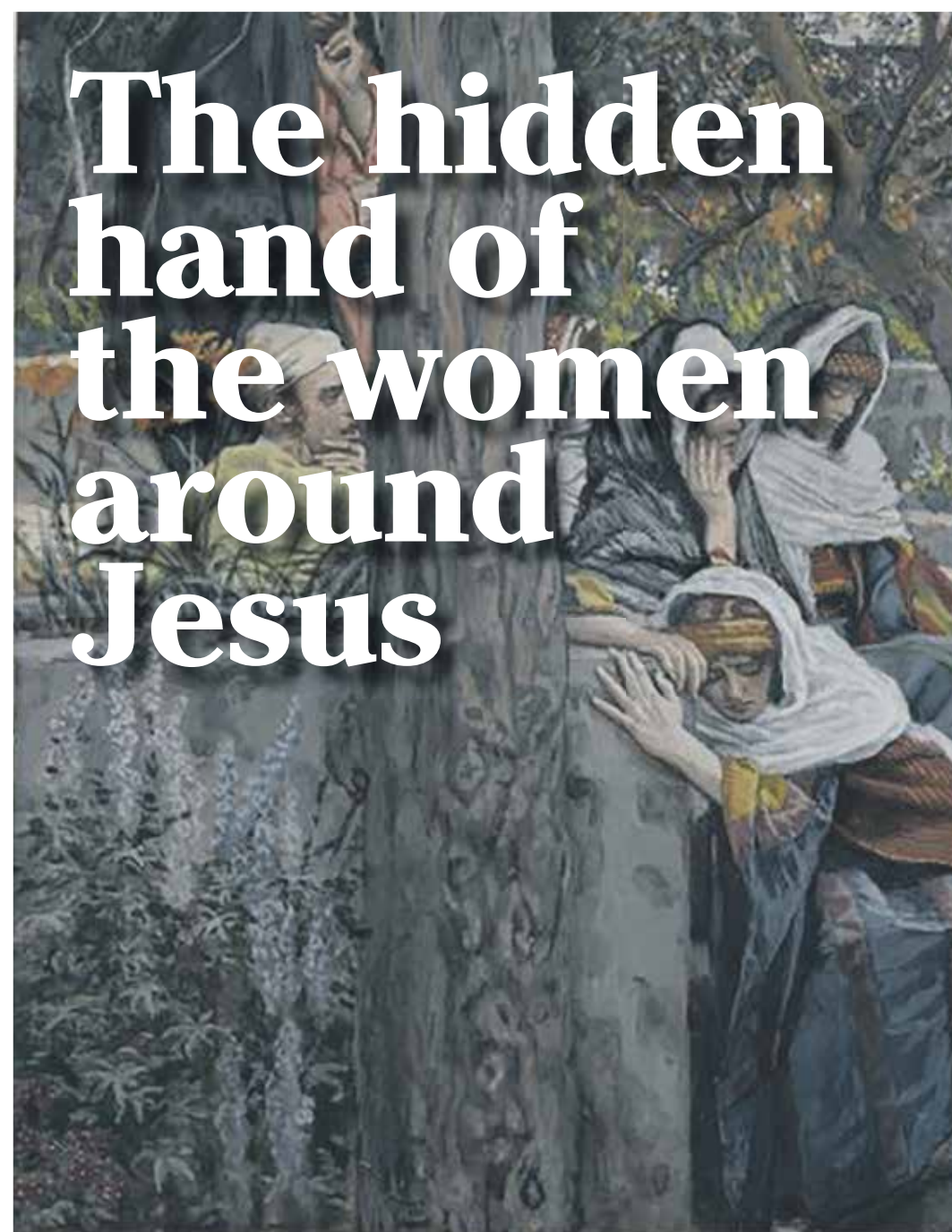
Later in the book he notes that it is estimated that there are two billion Christians in the world. What profound things might happen if they all acted as Christians.

But a tide of change depends on people he thinks adjusting themselves and their way of life to hearing that "still small voice".

For "normal people", which we all aspire to be, that is perhaps a hard task today.

The heart of Peter Greig's book suggests how they might go about it. This is not just a book written in a charming style, but perhaps in the end a book that will help many change their lives and adjust themselves to hearing that "still small voice" of which the Bible speaks.

## The hidden hand of the women around Jesus



**Women Remembered: Jesus' Female Disciples**  
by Joan Taylor and Helen Bond  
(Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99)

Peter Costello

**P**ublished last week on St Patrick's Day itself, this may seem an unusual book to read for Lent. But on deeper consideration I think not. Many readers will welcome it.

Inspired by the authors' *Channel 4* documentary, which was filmed in Jordan, Israel and Italy, readers will find that it takes them as well to other interesting places of the past. The documentary which was first broadcast in 2018 enjoyed worldwide attention and was widely discussed in the media.

During these penitential weeks Christians have traditionally been urged to fix their thoughts on the events of Good Friday. But in another sense the purpose of that week of suffering should also be suffused with thought of the joy to come, as Christians see it.

In bringing the initial news of the resurrection to the world the voices of announcement were not those of men but women. For many this has always posed a problem of the real role of women in the very first days of the new faith.

**“For a long time the authors have wanted to reach beyond the strict limits of academic inquiry to share what is now known”**

But before that I had my thoughts about the details of the Gospel narratives. In the week of Easter, for instance, who arranged for the donkey on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem – it does not seem to have been the Apostles, they merely collected it.

And who obtained the use of the upper room and saw to the food for the Passover meal, including of course the bread

and the wine? There were people behind the scenes.

We are not told by the Evangelists who they were. But I suppose we have always really known in an unthinking way that a woman's hand managed it all. That women were an essential part of the very early, months and years, is the idea explored in this book.

### Limits

But unlike too many widely read books on early church, let us say those about Mary Magdalene, this book nowhere seems to step beyond the limits of what can be demonstrated by actual history and real evidence, some of it of very recent discovery by scholars around the world, and much of it quite unknown to many of us in the pews.

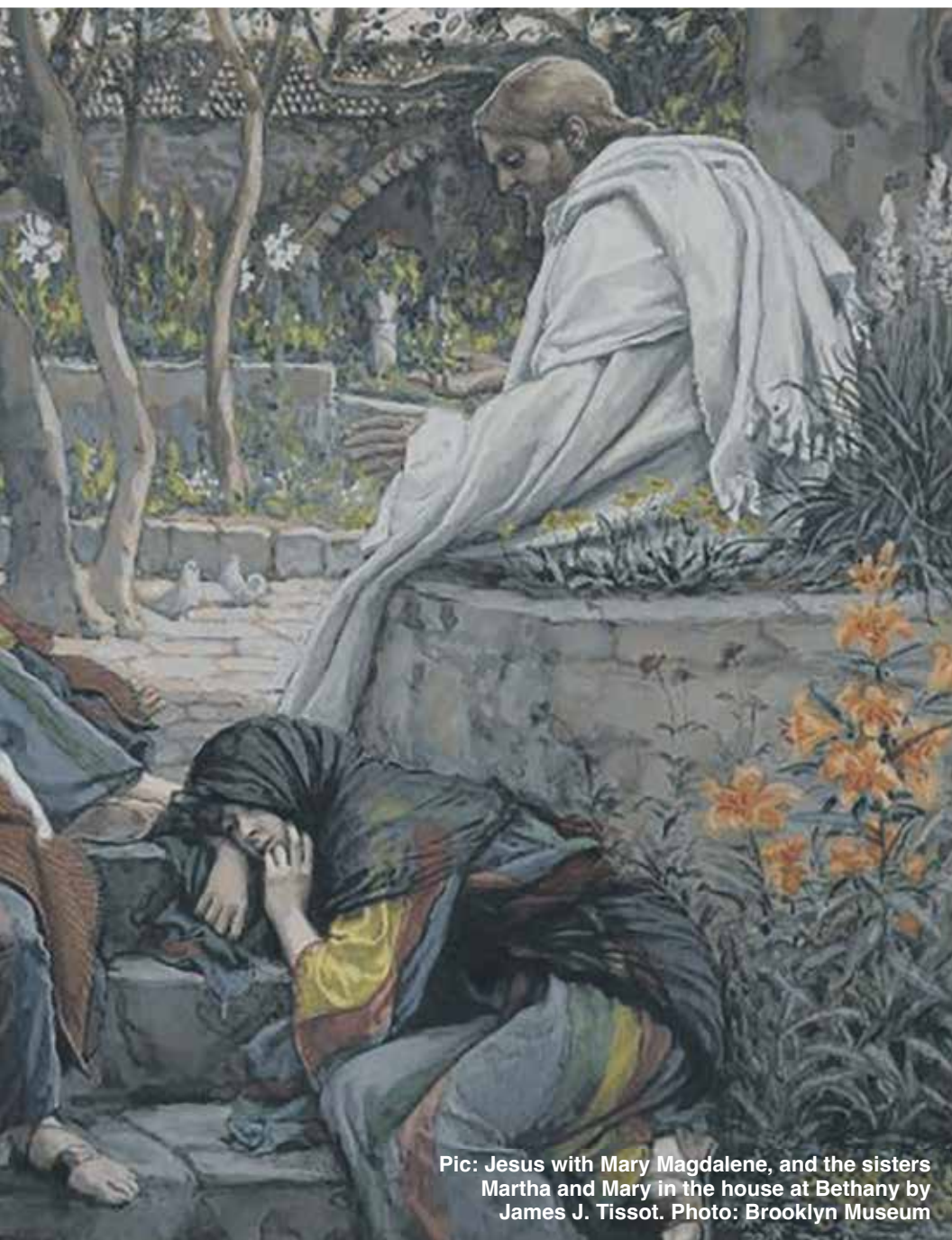
For a long time the authors have wanted to reach beyond the strict limits of academic inquiry to share what is now known, thought or speculated about Christian origins. This is a controversial area, but one which is perilous to explore



On the road to Emmaus.



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.



Pic: Jesus with Mary Magdalene, and the sisters Martha and Mary in the house at Bethany by James J. Tissot. Photo: Brooklyn Museum

given the amount of misleading information now at large in the infosphere.

Here, however, is a book which can be read with the hope of learning what is really thought today by the vanguard of scholarship, for as they used to say in Victorian times, where the vanguard stands today, the rear guard camps tomorrow. Time and knowledge move on.

They show what women were said to have done or must have done, and what an equal role they played in the early days of the new faith. Of course we know that in our hearts of hearts, for we can see in our churches every week from the role of parish administrator down to altar girls (altar boys seem to have vanished in some parishes). As it is now so it was then.

### Confused

Later centuries have not read the words of the gospels in the same way as those in the first century, hence the confused interpretations that gave rise

to so much dispute, division and even schism in later eras.

An example they put forward is the occasion in which the Apostles are sent out two by two, but they make it clear that this did not mean two men going together, but a man and a female colleague.

**“Here, however, is a book which can be read with the hope of learning what is really thought today by the vanguard of scholarship”**

This is a continually interesting book, full of (to me) new information. For instance, their account of the discovery during excavations near ancient Maresha, in south-west Palestine, at a site now called Horvat Qasra.

It was an underground chapel made out of a Jewish rock-cut cave dating from the

early Roman period. “This cave, where the soot of ancient candles still adheres to the walls, is covered in graffiti in Greek, Syriac and Arabic, testifying to a long veneration of a ‘holy one saint Salome’, at the shrine of Salome. There were prayers for healing and for mercy on those who venerated her.

“This is an example,” the authors’ write, “of ancient memories and traditions relating to Jesus’ female disciples that have been lost over the course of time, and we can only imagine what sorts of stories were told.”

Salome was the second most common name it is thought of women in first-century Palestine, so we cannot leap to any definite identification with a named Salome in history. But she can stand, as the authors suggest, for thousands of women whom history has left unnamed.

Yet one feels one might almost reach out and touch the life of long dead people of those ancient days, in the pre-Latin Church.

## The World of Books

By the books editor

# A classic master piece of translation by a great Irish poet

**The Tain, from the Irish epic Táin Bó Cuailnge**  
Translated by Thomas Kinsella and decorated by Louis Le Brocqy  
Dolmen Edition IX (Dolmen Press, 1969)

When this landmark in Irish culture appeared back in September 1969, I was living in London. I still recall the delighted pleasure with which I bought the original Dolmen Press edition in Zwemmers of Charing Cross Road. It cost all of £9.50 as I recall, a very large sum of money indeed for a young graduate then trying to get some kind of literary activity of his own going, writing articles to support the research on the books I wanted to write.

I still have that large volume in slip case. It looks down on me as I write from the book shelf in the upper room in which is housed – what the French would call my bureau.

I have never regretted the purchase. As we seem to be living in last days of real books this is certainly unusual. But this book is tied up in my mind and memory with much muddled thought about art archaeology and personal identity.

### Remarkable

What made it remarkable was not only the nature and fluency of the poet’s version from the middle Irish, but the wonder of Louis Le Brocqy’s decorations. And they are decorations. They are not mere illustrations such as might once have suited a magazine. Le Brocqy was then moving into that period of dissolving landscapes and faces in a mist of colour from which the essential image seemed to emerge, as in the portraits of Joyce and Beckett. But these decorations are different: they are so speak an almost direct evocation of the Iron Age.

Kinsella is not long dead. And there is always a danger that a poet’s reputation will fade after his death, and take a long time to recover. This has always seemed a sad process. We have commissioned an appreciative assessment of Kinsella’s sub specie aeternitatis which will be published in due course.

But here I would like to comment on the significance of this particular achievement of the poet.

The Tain has become a collector’s item. But the Oxford University Press paperback with the decorations is not hard to find on the internet. But not only for one’s own pleasure, but also the enlightenment of your children. Parents ought certainly to be to be their family’s primary educators in poetry, if not in others things.

### Tales

An Táin Bó Cuailnge, the centre-piece of the eighth-century Ulster cycle of heroic tales, is Ireland’s great epic, a Gaelic Iliad, and like all such epics it had a long life previously as an oral performance, such as we still find in Africa, the Balkans, and in Asia. Indeed cultures depending on memory were and are often reluctant to write down their great poetry.

The power of the epic resided in the spoken rather than the written word, in a way that modern cultures dependent on the printed word (now in the form of the digital image) often forget.

Thomas Kinsella’s very human, and unponderous translation is based on the partial texts in two medieval manuscripts, with elements from those other versions, as



An image from the text of The Tain

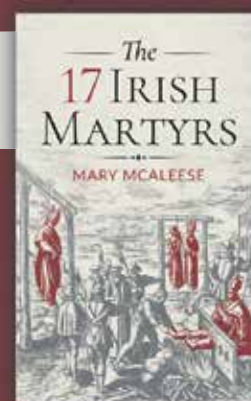
he explains in his own notes, along with some connected tales.

However looking at the book again for this appreciation, I am struck by the irony of the Tain’s survival in modern memory. How easily we have come to overlook that Cuchulainn is the hero of the Ulstermen defending to the death their native land against those arrogant and rapacious men of the south.

I wonder, reading the recent news, at how well Sir Jeffrey Donaldson is versed in the events of the Tain. That Ireland 2,000 years ago made an epic out of matters which are still in contention says much for the continuity of culture, or rather cultures, in this little island of ours.

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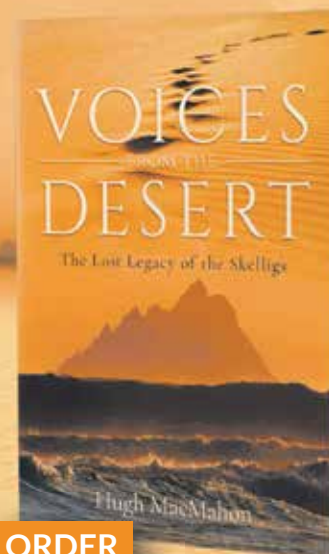
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MQI

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Your heart for  
the homeless



Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

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Please pray for the beatification of  
Little Nellie  
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“May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model”

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

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

When you remember  
Trócaire in your  
Will, you bring hope  
to people living in  
the world's  
poorest places

Trócaire

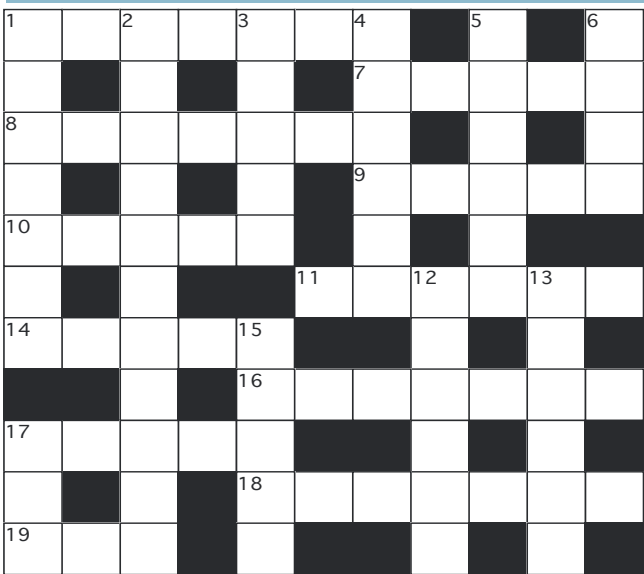
It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email [grace.kelly@trocaire.org](mailto:grace.kelly@trocaire.org) or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives.  
Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 426



Across

- 1 The best hit you can make in baseball (4,3)
- 7 Large bird of prey (5)
- 8 Move back from battle (7)
- 9 Oaks or sycamores, perhaps (5)
- 10 Unlocks (5)
- 11 You use it when sewing (6)
- 14 Get as far as (5)
- 16 You may wear it to school (7)
- 17 You put it on with a brush (5)
- 18 Placed a lid on something (7)
- 19 The opposite of 'no' (3)

Down

- 1 Port (7)
- 2 The full name of a school subject with numbers (11)
- 3 Wind fishing lines on these (4)
- 4 This plant might sting you (6)
- 5 Said 19 across to something (6)
- 6 You'll find these in a pod (4)
- 12 People go to Paris to see the \_\_\_\_\_ Tower (6)
- 13 Bigger (6)
- 15 You keep a rabbit in one (5)
- 17 Hand over money (3)

SOLUTIONS, MARCH 24

GORDIUS NO. 551

Across – 1 Tub 3 Comfortably 8 Enlist 9 Cut glass 10 Ovens 11 Sumps 13 Merit 15 Longbow 16 Taliban 20 Elfin 21 Rioja 23 Sauna 24 Pompidou 25 Devout 26 Predecessor 27 Tan

Down – 1 Teetotaller 2 Bulletin 3 Casts 4 Factory 5 Togas 6 Brahms 7 Yes 12 Saint Martin of Tours 13 Moose 14 Train 17 Beaufort 19 Coombe 22. Alive 23 Spear 24 Pup

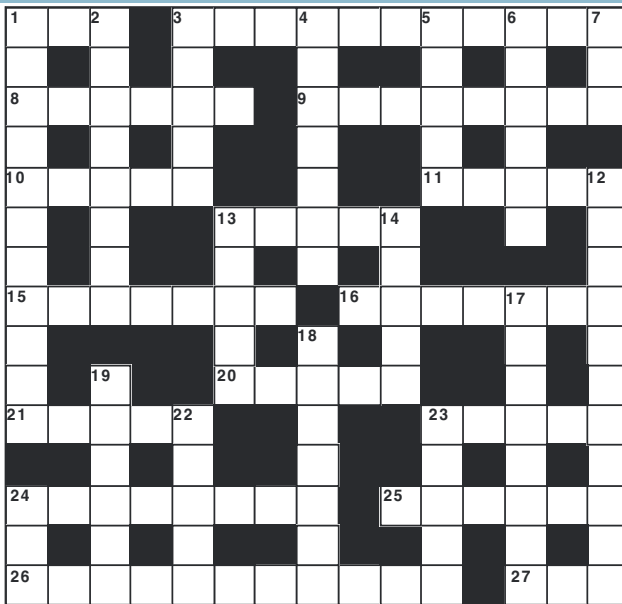
CHILDREN'S No. 425

Across – 1 Travel agent 7 Ice cube 8 Fun 10 Interfere 12 Leaves 14 Inches 16 Pie 17 Strike 18 Flight

Down – 1 Triangle 2 American 3 Erupt 4 Ale 5 Elf 6 Tandem 9 Officers 11 Easiest 13 Week 15 Owl 16 Pig

Crossword

Gordius 552



Across

- 1 Damp (3)
- 3 No TV sorcery about? That's a contentious matter (11)
- 8 Ordinary, as you would expect (6)
- 9 Tree also known as golden chain (8)
- 10 Malice (5)
- 11 Turret (5)
- 13 Sandy place by the sea (5)
- 15 Distinctive taste, tang (7)
- 16 The language Jesus spoke can be translated by Ciara, Ma (7)
- 20 Ardent, flaming (5)
- 21 Aladdin's magical helper (5)
- 23 Mr Johnson's name can be written with broken biros (5)
- 24 Grieving, lamenting (8)
- 25 World-famous gallery in Paris (6)
- 26 A desire to co-operate (11)
- 27 One item in an auction (3)

Down

- 1 Rig fun winds appropriately

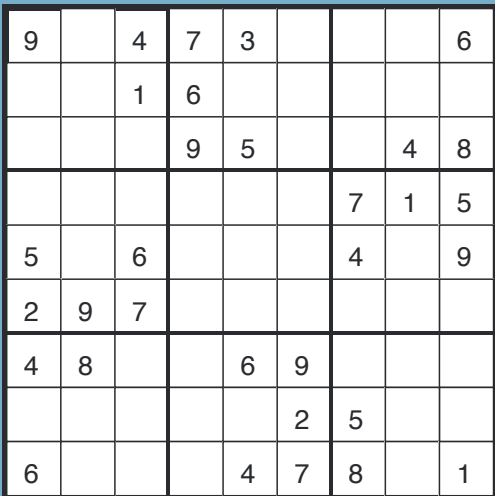
for this activity (11)

- 2 Mexican pancake (8)
- 3 The Banner County (5)
- 4 Somehow startle this early satellite (7)
- 5 A safe or tomb (5)
- 6 Pays for another term of membership (6)
- 7 Sweet potato (3)
- 12 Symbol shown on certain emergency vehicles in Islamic countries (3,8)
- 13 Pretence, as in poker (5)
- 14 & 19d Frost-surviving plant (5,6)
- 17 A 'thumbs up' for this variety of larva, Pop? (8)
- 18 Ten-sided shape (7)
- 19 See 14 down
- 22 From the French, a feeling of weariness or boredom (7)
- 23 Tones (5)
- 24 Cut grass (3)

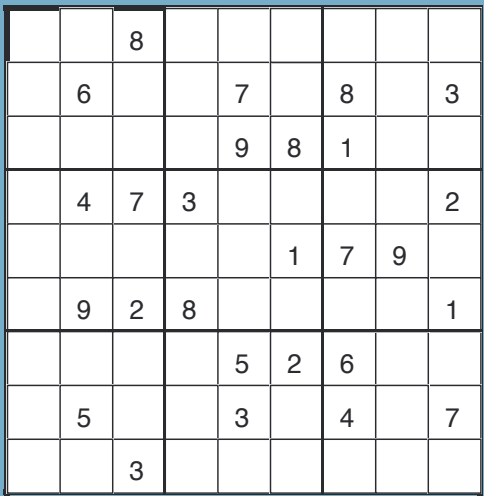
Sudoku Corner

426

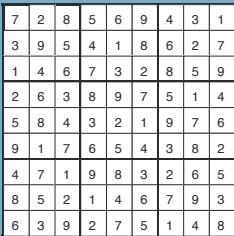
Easy



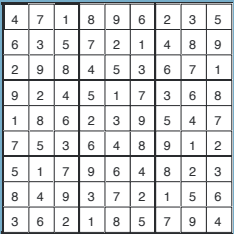
Hard



Last week's Easy 425



Last week's Hard 425





Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



# Celebrating a Chicago parish

**IT'S NEARLY** 25 years since I spent a year in Chicago, studying liturgy. It was a great opportunity for me, mind-blowing and perspective-enhancing. I got to understand how the US works, but I also learned about what makes Ireland unique, something you can only appreciate from outside it.

I stayed at St Bernadette Parish on the southwest side of Chicago, in a village called Evergreen Park (the 'village' being a 20,000-strong suburb). The rectory that accommodated me also held three other priests; a Filipino seeking to join the Archdiocese of Chicago, a Croatian-born and Italian-raised priest of the Order of St Camillus and a late-vocation native-born American pastor (and his chocolate Labrador non-housetrained dog, living with us in the rectory!). The variety made for an interesting mix of experiences, and we were often joined by the chaplain at the adjoining Catholic hospital. This meant that there were five priests available to cover the four weekend Masses in St Bernadette Church, so each of us had a weekend off a month, and a maximum of one Mass every other Sunday. Even then I knew that things would never be like this again.



## Population profile

Roll forward 25 years to St Bernadette Church today. In the intervening years, the population profile locally has changed dramatically. When I lived there, St Bernadette Parish was mainly made up of Irish immigrants of the 1950s and their Catholic families, with a mixing of Polish immigrants also, similarly Catholic. Between Evergreen Park and Lake Michigan to the east was a large African-American neighbourhood, which has expanded over the years to include much of Evergreen Park. Unfortunately, St Bernadette Parish

has found it hard to attract these new residents, whose religious affiliation is mainly Baptist or Evangelical.

The fortunes of St Bernadette Parish declined all the while. Its Catholic school closed, the nuns in the attached convent moved out, the number of priests at the rectory reduced. It is blessed in its new pastor, a Polish-born young priest who has put his heart and soul into the parish. He is popular and well supported, but unfortunately parish numbers continue to decline.

During my year in St Bernadette, the parish celebrated its Golden Jubilee. It had been founded in 1947 by Fr Morgan O'Brien, a retired World War II army chaplain of Irish extraction, who used a decommissioned army hut as the parish's first chapel. In the

spring of 1997, his contribution was honoured at a Mass celebrated by the then cardinal archbishop of Chicago, Francis George, which I was privileged to concelebrate.

## Invitation

Out of the blue last month came an invitation to the parish's 75th anniversary, this April. Somehow, 25 years on, people remembered my time at St Bernadette, celebrating what to the locals seemed refreshingly short Masses, much appreciated by Irish emigrants with memories of those traditional Irish (and speedy) celebrations.

Covid permitting, I am hoping to return to St Bernadette in April, for what I feel will be a 'farewell' visit. More on this, next time I write here!

## Bring peace to Ukraine

In my year in Chicago studying liturgy, we students were encouraged to experience the many Catholic rites being celebrated in Chicagoland: the Syro-Malabar (Indian) rite, the Maronite rite of Lebanon and my favourite, the Ukrainian Catholic Divine Liturgy (Orthodox in style but in full communion with Rome). This introduced me to the blue and yellow Ukrainian flag, flying proudly outside their cathedral in downtown Chicago, where the beautiful eastern way of celebrating Mass was faithfully followed. Little did I know then how much more prominently that flag would feature so ubiquitously in Ireland.

May God bring peace to Ukraine.

## Ready for war

I was in the sacristy after Mass and a parishioner burst in, ready for war. I had forgotten to call out an anniversary: "oops."

Luckily, I was able to defuse the situation with diplomacy. The sacristan was amazed and asked how much we prepared in Maynooth for such a situation. We didn't, of course, but I had a secret weapon: those years I served in the family shop. I learned then that the customer was always right (even when wrong) and that you couldn't fight with a customer whose support you would need. Many lessons learned there serve me still.



## LITTLE WAY EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR UKRAINE

Hundreds of thousands of families have been displaced in Ukraine and many more have sought refuge by crossing international borders. A bishop in south-western Ukraine, whose identity we must protect, has written that his diocese has already taken some 300 displaced women and children into their seminary, youth centre and retreat house.

These refugees all need food, clothing and hygiene products. The diocese is also providing free medical examinations. Another 100 refugees are in a church school and the bishop writes: "The refugees sleep in the classrooms. We have provided mattresses, blankets, etc., we prepare the food in the kitchen and the refugees get three meals in the dining room. In the basement there are 10 shower cabins. People are very grateful." He adds: "We collect food in our parishes of our diocese - some food we keep for refugees in our archdiocese and some food we send to the [Russian occupied] east of Ukraine." The bishop sends his blessing on all who would help him.

Iryna Havryshkevych, head of projects for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church, writes: "I am very grateful for all your prayers for Ukraine and for your initiative to support us in these difficult times. The war in Ukraine affected foremost the priests and religious serving in the eastern territories of Ukraine. Many priests and religious stay at the frontline with their parishioners (for today - estimated 110 priests and 70 religious). We are searching for the funds to support them. Would The Little Way Association be able to provide emergency existence aid for them?"

**Please give what you can for the families, clergy and religious of this war-torn country. Every penny you send will be gratefully received and sent without deduction to help the suffering people of Ukraine.**

**Please join us in praying the rosary for peace in the Ukraine and for her afflicted people.**



In 1893, St Therese of Lisieux wrote to her sister Celine:

**"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself, as it were, at our mercy. He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart. The very least trifle is precious in His sight."**

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In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

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