

# The Irish Catholic

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## Don't exclude Christ from Christmas – plea to Lord Mayor

Ruadhán Jones

What's the point of Christmas without Christian symbols like a crib, Dublin-based priests have asked after the cancelling of the traditional nativity scene outside the Lord Mayor's residence in Dublin.

The live animal crib, which has been a fixture outside the Mansion House since 1995, will be replaced by a "winter wonderland" in plans announced by Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy of the Green Party.

Fr Aquinas Duffy called the decision "unbelievable" and disappointing, adding that it's "part of the whole secularisation process".

"Anything to do with Christmas and religion is anathema," Fr Duffy told *The Irish Catholic*.

Cllr Conroy said the changes were to facilitate an "inclusive" Christmas display, but Fr Duffy questioned how "inclusive" could mean "exclusive of Christians".

"It's part of the whole thing to see it as a secular feast, a secular holiday," the moderator of Foxrock, Cabinteely, Johnstown and Killiney said.

"I know Mary Hanafin in Dun Laoghaire is trying to get the crib to go there, at least she recognises that Christmas has some role in the holiday. Dublin's loss is Dun Laoghaire's gain," Fr Duffy said.

Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap. was also critical of the move, saying he

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### All saints give praise to the Lord!



Abraham and Kirsten McNamee are pictured dressed as St Padre Pio and St Mother Teresa to celebrate the feast of All Saints in style. A fancy dress party took place in the Franciscan friary in Wexford, October 31.

## Fears as time running out for 'disappeared'

Jason Osborne

A new prayer campaign hopes to encourage people to come forward and provide fresh information about the so-called 'disappeared' – people who were abducted, killed and secretly buried by paramilitaries in the North.

Fr Joe Gormley of Derry Diocese, who works closely with the families who are desperate to give their loved ones the dignity of a Christian burial, told *The Irish Catholic* that hope is diminishing in the search because those who have information are getting older and inevitably dying.

"The death of a person who has information will inevitably mean that the prospects of the information becoming available diminish forever," Fr Gormley said.

Launched at a time when hope of finding the victims is narrowing, the 'Prayer for the Disappeared' was launched by the Wave Trauma Organisation at Stormont and Archbishop Eamon Martin in Armagh yesterday (Wednesday).

The prayer is written not to condemn, but to inspire those with information to come forward and enable a "ground-breaking" contribution in ending the anguish of the families' of the disappeared.

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### SPHE

#### New course ignores school ethos

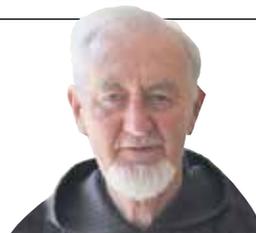
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## EASTER PILGRIMAGES 2023

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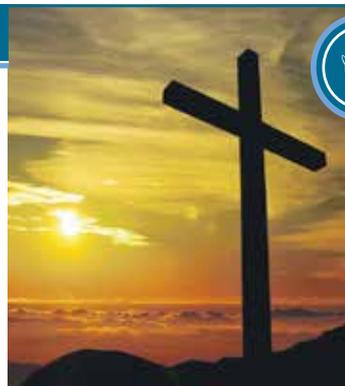
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# Unleashing a culture war over Christmas

**W**e're not even in Advent yet, and already it is Christmas time in the marketplace. But, what exactly does Christmas mean to us? Or, what does it mean to our political leaders. That is not a question as simple as it might appear at first glance. Every year we are treated to stunning attempts by political leaders to talk about Christmas without any reference to the Incarnation of Christ or the impact that this singular moment has had on the history of the world for the last 2,000 years.

We have become accustomed to politicians not wanting to speak about their faith, but now we're regularly treated to hearing them entirely unable to even articulate what feasts like Christmas and Easter mean to people of faith.

“We have become accustomed to politicians not wanting to speak about their faith”

Justapose that with the reference that one finds for faiths other than Christianity. Recently the Tánaiste Leo Varadkar, who describes himself as a non-practising Catholic, tweeted about the Hindu festival of Diwali. “Diwali

represents the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. “It is a time for friends, families and communities to come together,” he continued. Before adding: “A very special Happy Diwali to all our Hindu and Indian friends!” followed by a number of emojis connected with Hinduism.

Mr Varadkar is, of course, of mixed Irish-Indian heritage so one might expect him to know a lot about Hinduism. But, he was also raised as a Catholic in a predominately Catholic culture.

Despite this, Mr Varadkar didn't even mention Easter this year on social media.

He is not alone, and whenever Irish politicians mention Christmas is usually only to wish people a happy Christmas and say something vague about Christmas being about “spending time with family” – which is true, of course. But Christmas is so much more and such comments lack the context that Mr Varadkar, for example, was able to muster for Diwali.

**Enthusiastic** Irish politicians are similarly enthusiastic about wishing the Muslim community well as they celebrate the various occasions associated with that faith like Eid.

Ireland is a much more diverse culture now, and it is appropriate that politicians behave inclusively and wish people from different religious traditions well as they mark important days in their faith. But, is it too much

to ask for a bit of goodwill for Christians as well? Even if we not viewed as ticking the diversity box for politicians, there are still a lot of us and Christian tradition has shaped Irish culture.

Irish politicians are similarly enthusiastic about wishing the Muslim community well”



**Editor's Comment**  
**Michael Kelly**



The traditional crib that used to be erected at the Mansion House.

## Don't exclude Christ from Christmas – plea to Lord Mayor

» **Continued from Page 1** would “fully support” the continuation of the crib outside Mansion House, so long as the animals were well looked after.

The Mansion House crib is “a lovely Irish tradition” and part of the heritage of our Christian culture, Fr Shortall told this newspaper.

He added that politicians rightly respect and offer best wishes at other religion's festivals and Christmas shouldn't be any different.

“What's the point of Christmas” without Christian symbols like the crib, Fr

Shortall continued, saying: “There will be Christmas decorations and lights going up all over the place in markets in the city.”

Clr Conroy's decision has led to backlash from members of the public, politicians and the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA), while some animal rights groups have supported her.

Independent TD Michael McNamara wrote to the Leas Ceann Comhairle Catherine Connolly following what he described as the “daft decision” to discontinue the live animal crib.

The Clare TD said the crib could be facilitated in the

grounds of Leinster House, either on the Kildare Street or Merrion Square side.

“It would be relatively easy to accommodate at the Merrion Square side of the building, where the Merrion Square lawn and car park is separated from the Leinster House building by a railing and gates,” said Mr McNamara.

Meanwhile, Fine Gael minister Patrick O'Donovan has vowed to work to find a new location for the live animal Christmas crib, alongside the IFA.

He said he will be working with colleagues to “save the crib” this Christmas.

that will celebrate winter. Thankfully, there has been a good deal of pushback from the public and other politicians.

**Determined** But, Clr Conroy seems determined to push ahead with her plan which really amounts to a campaign to further secularise what is essentially a Christian celebration.

People of faith are sometimes accused of stoking culture wars, but the reality is – as the decision to ban the crib shows – that it is really secularism that is at war with Christianity and anything that smacks of traditional values.

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to ask for a bit of goodwill for Christians as well? Even if we not viewed as ticking the diversity box for politicians, there are still a lot of us and Christian tradition has shaped Irish culture.

**Irish politicians are similarly enthusiastic about wishing the Muslim community well”**

The Green Party Lord Mayor of Dublin has now decided that she wants to make the celebration of the birth of Jesus “more inclusive” and that Christ is to have no part in it. Caroline Conroy has decided that the nativity scene that has traditionally been outside Dublin's Mansion House needs to go in favour of something

## The Marian Movement of Priests



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# Cause for WWI hero Fr Willie Doyle's canonisation opened

**Jason Osborne**

Fr Willie Doyle SJ is one step closer to sainthood after Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan opened October 25 the canonisation cause of the Irish World War One

chaplain serving in the British army.

Servant of God Willie Doyle was born in Dalkey, Co. Dublin in 1873, and entered the Jesuits in Rahan, Tullabeg, Co. Offaly in the Diocese of Meath in 1891.

He served as chaplain in the 16th Irish Division of the British Army, and was killed by a shell on Frezenberg Ridge in Belgium during the Battle of Passchendaele August 16, 1917 as he was trying to save two

Anglican soldiers.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Patrick Kenny of the Father Willie Doyle Association said that there's a "huge devotion" to Fr Willie Doyle globally and that that devotion "never went away".

## Reconciliation

"Now we view him as a sign of reconciliation and a sign of unity," Mr Kenny said, adding that he's a "role model and intercessor" for the modern age due to his struggles for a time with

mental health following a breakdown.

"The opening of Fr Willie's cause is a response to the wishes of many people, over many decades, who have wanted to see him recognised as a saint in the Catholic Church," Mr Kenny said, thanking Bishop Deenihan for accepting the formal petition to open Fr Willie's canonisation process.

"His heroism during the war, as well as the holiness of his life in general, led to an outpouring of devotion

to him in the years after his death. By the early 1930's over 50,000 letters testifying to devotion to him were received, over 6,000 of which alleged favours and healings through his intercession."

Appointed as diocesan postulator for the cause, Fr John Hogan of the Diocese of Meath said that he's "privileged" to act as postulator for Fr Doyle's cause and that he looks forward to helping to make him a "new saint for the Jesuits and a new saint for Ireland".

[See pages 14-15](#)

## Priest stabbed six times in 'unprovoked attack' in Waterford

**Chai Brady**

A 22-year-old man appeared in court this week charged with stabbing a priest six times in his home in Waterford.

Indian priest Fr Bobit Augusthy of the Order of St Camillus, originally from Kerala, was hospitalised after the attack in his house which he shares with two other priests near Waterford Regional Hospital in Ardkeen.

The incident took place shortly after 9am on Sunday morning and lasted two minutes according to CCTV footage.

At a Special Sitting of Waterford District Court on October 31, Anthony Sweeney (22)

from O'Connell Court, Penrose Lane, Waterford City, was charged with assault causing harm.

It was alleged he climbed a wall from the Department of Psychiatry at University Hospital Waterford and entered the nearby hospital chaplains' house.

Det. Garda Harty said in court it was a "violent attack" which was interrupted by another priest in the house. It was said Sweeney used a peeling knife he found in the kitchen to assault the priest upstairs who was coming out of the bathroom.

Detective Garda Liam Harty told the court it was a "completely unprovoked attack".

## Famed author of Irish history dead at 82

**Staff reporter**

US scholar of the ancient world, Thomas Cahill, best known for his lauded *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, died at the age of 82.

Mr Cahill's wife, Susan, said the cause of death was a heart attack.

*How the Irish Saved Civilization* brought to widespread popularity the theory that Irish monks preserved western civilisation against the collapse of the Roman empire.

Mr Cahill painted a picture of monks living in seclusion at the edge of Europe who devoted themselves to

protecting and transcribing important literature, which allowed for the revival of the Catholic tradition in Europe in later centuries.

*How the Irish Saved Civilization* spent nearly two years on *The New York Times's* best-seller list and sold around two million copies.

## Enjoying a proper Brew...



The Dominicans brought a jazzy feel to Catholic café Brew 132 for the Cork Jazz Festival, October 28, with a live performance in the café in Cork City.

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# We must respond to 'urgency' of Gospel, says new Bishop of Ossory

**Ruadhán Jones**

We must respond to the "urgency" of the Gospel to create a new expression of the Faith in a secularised culture, said the new Bishop of Ossory.

Bishop-elect Niall Coll said Ireland has a "long history of Christian witness" and "we have to believe the Holy Spirit is with us, that we're going to do something new".

"This is a time of big change in the Church" and the wider culture, but the Church in Ire-

land "has come through good times and bad times".

"My job in Ossory is to assist the clergy and the people to create a theological and pastoral vision fit to life today in a very secular time," Msgr Coll told *The Irish Catholic*.

The Raphoe priest's appointment by Pope Francis was announced last Friday. Up to this point, Msgr Coll has been serving as parish priest of Donegal Town and Clar.

Bishop-elect Coll said he was "humbled" by the news, adding that he is looking for-

ward to getting to know the people of Ossory.

The vocations crisis that Ireland is experiencing is acute in Ossory, where there has been no new vocation to the priesthood in at least 20 years.

"Permanent commitment is a hard idea to sell in our culture today," Msgr Coll said. "We have to understand the culture and speak to it. The Gospel doesn't lose its force, its urgency."

The task of the Church today is to propose God, the transcendent, to a culture very

focused on the immanent, he continued.

"We must nourish the spiritual dimension of life. Maybe today people don't value it, maybe even despise it, but it's as relevant as ever."

"The Church in Western society has to continue to point to the integral human being and find more convincing ways of explaining the good of our spirituality."

Bishop-elect Coll finished by expressing his hope that he can "assist in making the Lord's presence in our world real for the people of Ossory".

# Trade relationship compromising Irish human rights stance, says senator

**Jason Osborne**

Senator Rónán Mullen has expressed his worry that Ireland's trade relationship with China is "compromising our Government's vigilance" on human rights issues China stands accused of.

These comments come as Government officials confirm that a Chinese "police station" in Dublin has been ordered to close.

A spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs said no request had been made in advance to open the station in Capel Street.

"No country should operate clandestine policing in another country," Senator Mullen told *The Irish Catholic* newspaper.

"Given China's treatment of religious, ethnic and political minorities or dissenters, we need to know that nothing they are doing in Ireland would involve any persecution of people here or their families back home," he said.

The Fuzhou Police Service Overseas Station opened

earlier this year in an office building on Capel Street which it shared with other Chinese organisations.

The BBC reported Chinese authorities as saying the station offered services to Chinese citizens in Ireland, including the renewal of driving licences.

However, human rights group Safeguard Defenders in a September report said stations around the world persuaded 230,000 emigrants to return to China, sometimes to face criminal charges.

Senator Mullen said that people are "presumably" not being persuaded to return home "for the purpose of giving them an award when they get back".

"The important thing now is that there be an investigation into this by the Irish Government – this would involve asking the Chinese Embassy to cooperate and supply information about what exactly has been happening and why, as appears to be the case, it had an illegal 'police station' operating in Dublin," the senator said.

# One of the world's oldest priests dies aged 104

**Chai Brady**

Irish Benedictine monk and former prior of Glensal Abbey Fr Placid has died aged 104 in Limerick this week.

Born Michael Murray in Lismore, Co. Waterford in 1918 he made his simple profession in 1937 and was subsequently sent to Belgium where he studied philosophy and started studying theology.

His community in Belgium fled the country to France when the Second World War began. Fr Placid was then sent to Sant' Anselmo in Rome for his safety by the abbot to complete his studies, and it was there he developed a love of the works of St John Henry Newman.

After being ordained in 1941, he was sent home because of the war. Fr Placid became Dom Placid in 1952 when he became the new prior of Glenstal, a position he

held for five years.

He was involved in setting up the ecumenical Societas Liturgica and was its first president.

He published a book in 1969 on St John Henry Newman called *Newman the Oratorian: Oratory Papers (1846 - 1878)*. He received a doctorate in theology for this. Fr Placid was also a consultant for the International Commission for English in the Liturgy and was involved in many translations.

Fr Placid died on Monday.



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## Released in Chosen cinemas



Jonathan Roumie as Jesus and Alaa Safi as Simon the Zealot feed the hungry crowd of 5,000 in season three of *The Chosen*. The first two episodes of season three of the popular Christian TV series are getting theatrical release in Ireland and the UK from November 18. For more information or to book tickets, visit <https://www.angel.com/the-chosen-3>.

# Fears as time running out for 'disappeared'

» Continued from Page 1

The prayer asks God to help those who have information to "experience their own worth in your sight through your mercy", adding that they can then show mercy and enable the families of the disappeared to give their loved ones the dignity of a Christian burial for which they so "painfully yearn".

The prayer for the disappeared: "God our Father send your Holy Spirit to enlighten the minds and hearts of those people who can roll away the stone of sadness and anguish long suffered by the families of the disappeared.

"Help those who have information to experience their own worth in your sight through your mercy.

"Then they can show mercy and enable the families of the disappeared to give their loved ones the dignity of a Christian burial for which they so painfully yearn.

"We give thanks to God for those who have given information that has allowed the families to bring their loved ones home.

"We make this prayer

through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

If you have any details about the following people, contact 00800 55585500 or +353 1 602 8655: Columba McVeigh, disappeared October 1975; Joe Lynskey, disappeared August 1972; Robert Nairac, disappeared May 1977; Seamus Maguire, disappeared 1973/1974; Lisa Dorrian, disappeared February 2005.

# 'Hate speech' law could be used to suppress opinions the establishment disapproves of

**E**lon Musk, allegedly the richest person in the world, sometimes seems a stereotype of the eccentric billionaire. He is an extraordinary innovator in areas from neurotechnology to futuristic engineering: he has controversial views about Covid-19, thinks that Artificial Intelligence is the greatest threat to the human race, and believes we should colonise Mars. He marries and divorces with frequency, and is philoprocreeative in his personal life – having children by several spouses and partners – and is a strong advocate of increased fertility among our low-birth societies.

**“He is an extraordinary innovator in areas from neurotechnology to futuristic engineering”**

Alarm bells rang when Mr Musk – a South-African-Canadian – finally purchased the online social media platform Twitter. In some quarters – especially in the US – there has been ‘outrage’ at the purchase, and predictions that he will allow wild conspiracy theories, and irresponsible extremists on the platform (and allow Donald Trump’s tweets to return). Elon Musk describes himself as a speech libertarian:



**Mary Kenny**

he is opposed to all censorship. This has raised questions about how far should free speech go – especially since Mr Musk posted what’s described as “an incredibly stupid tweet” about Paul Pelosi (recently subjected to a physical attack).

## Extremist

And, yet, at the risk of possibly facilitating extremist ideas – from either left or right – I think we have to be grateful that the idiosyncratic Mr Musk has acquired Twitter. Because it is essential that there are multiple methods of transmitting ideas, and of enabling open debate at a time when there are so many trends to ‘cancel’ discourse which is not acceptable to official culture. Minister Helen McEntee’s restrictions on ‘hate crime’ speech is just one worrying example of laws and regulations which seem designed to bridle opinions and to intimidate citizens. (Of course, there should be laws against aggression, violence or threatening behaviour: but ‘hate speech’ law could be used to suppress opinions the establishment simply disapproves of.)

I joined Twitter ten years ago, and I’ve found the platform refreshing in the free flow of ideas, conver-

sations and opinions jostling for public space. Some opinions are repulsive, yes, and some of the tweets are indeed nasty, but many prompt thought and reflection: and in any open forum you cannot always shelter from offence. I have a particular follower who strongly disparages almost everything I post: and yet I learn, too, from being corrected when I’ve made mistakes.

**“I joined Twitter ten years ago, and I’ve found the platform refreshing in the free flow of ideas”**

When I’ve been wrong, I’ve told myself – “here’s an opportunity to practice humility, Mary”. I have also come to realise that it’s sometimes unwise to be impulsive, and that passionate opinions may need to be framed with tact and sensitivity. And I have cautioned myself with the wise words of Dame Maggie Smith about any course of activity: “If in doubt – don’t!”

## Faith values

Any Catholic or Christian is aware that there is a bias in the ‘official’ culture against faith values – the Lord



Elon Musk.  
Photo: CNS

**“Musk describes himself as a speech libertarian: he is opposed to all censorship”**

## Brutal and unrelenting

The new German movie of the First World War classic, *All Quiet on the Western Front* has been widely acclaimed for its brilliant realism (on Netflix). It is certainly brutal and unrelenting in its depiction of the horrors of the trenches and the killing machine that is war.

There is also a fascinating re-enactment

of the 1918 Armistice, which occurred in a train at Compiègne; German negotiators are seen pleading to spare human life for compassionate reasons, while the French, led by Marshal Foch, are portrayed as tough and unyielding. The exquisite 1918 railway carriages are something to behold, too.

● In sweet Adare, Co. Limerick, the Holy Trinity Abbey was at first identified to me as a Church of Ireland edifice, but it turned out to be Catholic. Founded in 1230, it had been Anglican after the Reformation, but in 1824, the Second Earl of Dunraven gifted the Medieval-Gothic building, almost in ruins, to his Catholic parishioners. It has since been rebuilt beautifully.

Inside, the original stonework is fully visible, giving it an authentic sense of ancient and modern: it is so distinctive, with rose-coloured decorative panels over the altar and brightly attractive stained glass windows.

Sunday Mass last weekend was celebrated by a priest of African origins, Fr Raphael Okanumeh, and accompanied by a woman cantor, Linda O’Mahony, whose melodious voice rang out with such clarity that she was accorded a round of applause at the end of the liturgy.

Mayor of Dublin’s banning of a Christian crib in the cause of ‘inclusivity’ is par for the course. In a world which elevates consumerist globalism there is also something of a bias against normal sentiments of patriotism, which are often dubbed ‘right-wing’, or even ‘far right’.

People are sometimes afraid to say what they think for fear of being penalised for their opinions. That’s why we need an Elon Musk Twitter – to provide an outlet for thoughts, opinions and ideas that might otherwise struggle to get a hearing.

## JOE WALSH TOURS

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# Ossory welcomes Fr Niall Coll as new bishop

Jason Osborne

**P**ope Francis has appointed well-known theologian Fr Niall Coll as the new Bishop of Ossory, with the announcement coming via a communique Friday.

Bishop-elect Coll (59) is a priest of the Diocese of Raphoe and up to this point has been serving as parish priest of Donegal Town.

Speaking on the occasion of his appointment, Bishop-elect Coll said he's "daunted" by the prospect and knows that it will only be by "God's grace and your welcome and ongoing support that I will be able to minister fruitfully here".

"I come to Ossory at a time of great challenge to faith, a time when Irish society is increasingly secular and individualistic. The four-century and more long dominance of the Tridentine pattern has left Catholics almost everywhere unfamiliar with and thus unskilled in discerning and negotiating possibilities for change in Church life.

"But, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, discern and change we must, in line with Pope Francis' emphasis on the need for 'synodality'. I look forward to working with



Newly appointed Fr Niall Coll as Bishop of Ossory at the Cathedral of Saint Mary, Kilkenny, Diocese of Ossory. Photos: John McElroy

the priests, people and religious of the diocese of Ossory to enhance the work already underway here to develop a sustaining theological and pastoral vision, one able to invite, inform and enthuse a new generation of Christian witnesses," Bishop-elect Coll said.

Bishops around the country welcomed the appointment of Fr Coll to his new posting, with Primate of All-Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh

Eamon Martin saying he brings a "wealth of educational expertise, along with strong pastoral instincts" to his new ministry in Ossory diocese.

## Experience

"Fr Coll will be well known to very many young teachers across the North and North West. He has a depth of experience of Religious Education and Religious Studies at third level which will be of immense

value to our discussions at the table of the Irish Bishop's Conference. He has also already made a significant contribution to ecumenical relationships on this island as a member of Irish Inter-Church Committee and Inter-Church meeting.

"As President of the Conference, I look forward to welcoming Bishop-elect Coll together with my brother bishops, especially at this time of renewal for the Church in Ireland as we continue our synodal conversations at local and national level over the next five years," Archbishop Martin said.

Archbishop of Dublin and former bishop of Ossory Dermot Farrell said that from first-hand experience, he knows Bishop-elect Coll will be "warmly-welcomed in Ossory".

"My own time in Ossory was a time of great blessing, and I wish Fr Coll even greater blessing and happiness as he prepares for his new ministry," Dr Farrell said, encouraging Bishop-elect Coll to know the power of the Holy Spirit and the reassurance of the Spirit's gifts in his seeking "to discern the Body of the Lord".

Offering congratulations on behalf the priests and people of Raphoe diocese, Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ described "Ossory's gain" as Raphoe's loss.

"Fr Niall has always put his many skills and talents at the service of the Church wherever he has been asked and needed. A skilled theologian he has served at third level in both Saint Patrick's College Carlow and Saint Mary's University College in Belfast. He worked with young people at second level in Saint Eunan's College, Letterkenny and Pobalscoil na Rosann. As a young priest he served as a curate in Dungle and more recently he has been the Parish Priest of both Drumholm (Ballintra) and Tawnawilly (Donegal and Clar).

**"I come to Ossory at a time of great challenge to faith"**

"Since his return to Donegal he has served on our Diocesan Pastoral Council and worked closely with priests and people to promote our Pastoral Plan 'Forward together; Ar aghaidh le chéile'. He will be a great loss to the diocese and to the parish of Tawnawilly."

The appointment will be a source of great joy for Fr Niall's family, Bishop McGuckian said, adding that his home parish of Saint Johnston will "take pride in the choice of one of their own to serve as a bishop".

The new Bishop being congratulated by locals at the Cathedral of Saint Mary, Kilkenny.



"As well as an honour, service as a bishop is a heavy burden and so I ask everyone in the diocese to pray very specially for Fr Niall that he will have all the grace he needs to serve the people of Ossory with generosity and zeal."

## Good home

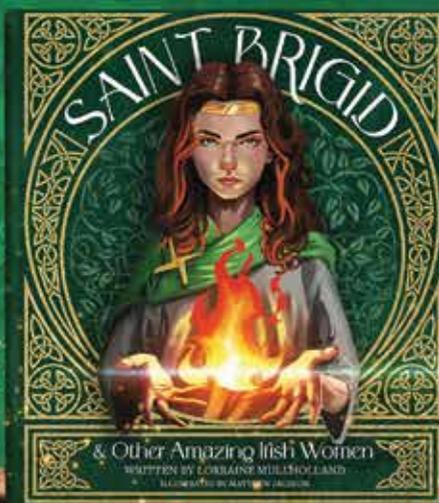
Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin and apostolic administrator of Ossory Denis Nulty said that Bishop-elect Coll will settle "wonderfully" in Ossory diocese, recognising it as a "good home" from his own experience.

"Niall, as we move into the weeks ahead, and as we plan for your ordination as the next Bishop of Ossory, we will continue to hold you in our prayers. That the Lord who has called you to this new ministry will support you as your undertake it. I know the fulsome support that the priests, religious and lay Faithful of Ossory will give you not only in these weeks as you prepare, but in the many years to come as your paths now continue together.

"May St Canice support you, may St Kieran guide you and may Saint Fergal bring you the assurance of God's presence and blessing in your new ministry as shepherd of Ossory," Dr Nulty said.

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Bishop-elect Coll being congratulated by students from CBS Primary School.

# Enlarge the tent: Synod document sees calls for greater inclusion

Staff Reporter

**A**round the world, listening sessions for the Synod of Bishops gave many participants a sense of finally being listened to, but they also raised questions about how to promote greater inclusion in the Church while staying true to eternal Church teaching.

Two of the issues raised most often in reports sent to the Vatican were the need to respect and value the contributions women make to the Church and the need to face “the impact of a lack of trust and credibility resulting from the abuse crisis,” according to the working document for the synod’s continental stage.

**“The document was approved by the cardinals and bishops belonging to the synod’s general council”**

Titled *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent* - the Lord’s command to the people of Israel in the Book of Isaiah - the document said, “This is how many reports envision the Church: an expansive, but not homogeneous dwelling, capable of sheltering all, but open, letting in and out, and moving toward embracing the Father and all of humanity.”

The document released last week is the result of a group reflection on the syntheses of synod discussions submitted by 112 of the world’s 114 bishops’ conference, all 15 Eastern Churches, 17 of the 23 dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the men’s and women’s international unions of superiors general, dozens of Catholic associations and more than 1,000 individuals, it said.

The general secretariat of the synod chose an international group of laity, religious, priests and bishops to read the submissions, pray about them and then draft a document that would help participants in the next phase reflect on the faith, hopes and concerns witnessed to in the reports. The document was approved

by the cardinals and bishops belonging to the synod’s general council.

What emerged from the reports, it said, “is a profound re-appropriation of the common dignity of all the baptised. This is the authentic pillar of a synodal Church and the theological foundation of a unity which is capable of resisting the push toward homogenisation. This enables us to continue to promote and make good use of the variety of charisms that the Spirit with unpredictable abundance pours out on the Faithful.”

Those who most often feel unwelcome in the Church or undervalued, it said, include: women, young people, people with disabilities, the poor, those who are divorced and civilly remarried, single parents, those in polygamous marriages and members of the LGBT communities.

Responding to experiences of exclusion and discrimination shared by Catholic with disabilities, the document said that “in spite of its own teachings, the Church is in danger of imitating the way society casts them aside.”

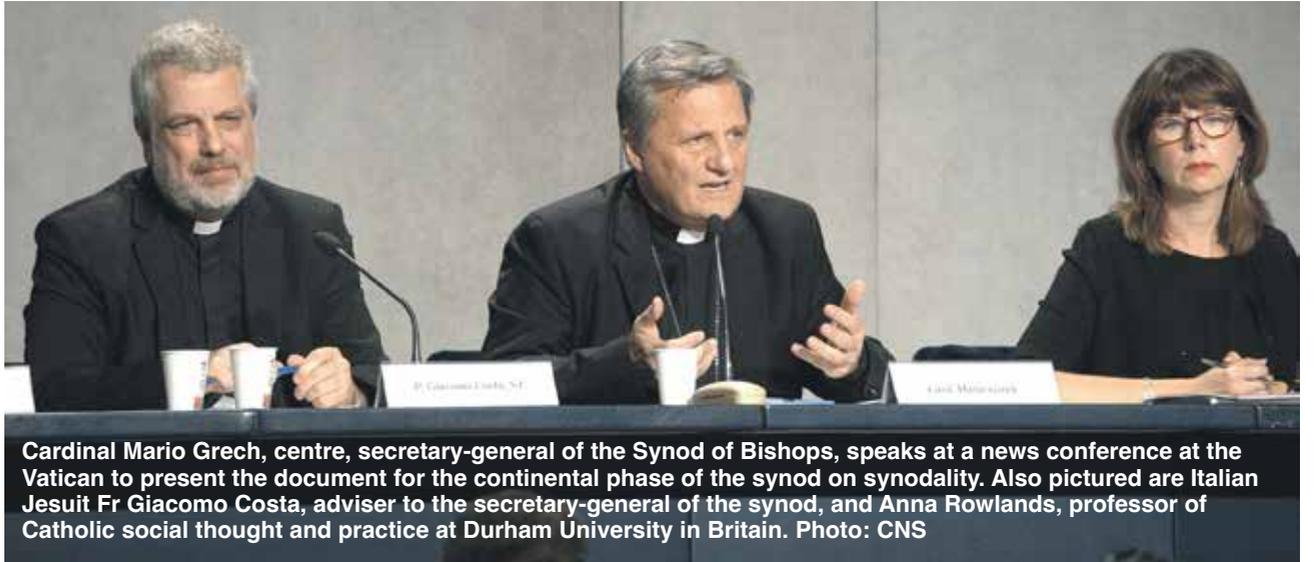
## Central place

Reflecting the central place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church, it said most submissions included a call for greater participation by all Catholics in the liturgy, working to ensure that it is less “concentrated on the celebrant,” involves more young people and women, including in preaching, and is more reflective of local cultures.

At the same time, the document also noted that in several reports some participants in the local listening sessions “lamented” Pope Francis’ decision to limit celebrations of the Latin Mass according to the rite used before the Second Vatican Council.

“The quality of homilies is almost unanimously reported as a problem,” it said.

But the document also highlighted a common desire to find solutions to various forms of “sacramental deprivation,” including for people in remote towns and villages without a priest, as well as for civilly remarried Catholics and those in polygamous marriages.



Cardinal Mario Grech, centre, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, speaks at a news conference at the Vatican to present the document for the continental phase of the synod on synodality. Also pictured are Italian Jesuit Fr Giacomo Costa, adviser to the secretary-general of the synod, and Anna Rowlands, professor of Catholic social thought and practice at Durham University in Britain. Photo: CNS

While the reports were not “against priests or the ministerial priesthood,” the document said, many of them cited “clericalism” as an obstacle to being a “synodal Church,” one where all the baptised share responsibility for the life of the community and for its mission of spreading the Gospel.

**“Clericalism produces ‘rigidity, attachment to legalistic power and an exercise of authority that is power rather than service’”**

“Clericalism is seen as a form of spiritual impoverishment, a deprivation of the true goods of ordained ministry, and a culture that isolates clergy and harms the laity,” it said. Clericalism produces “rigidity, attachment to legalistic power and an exercise of authority that is power rather than service.”

In synod listening sessions around the world, participants noted that women are the majority of Catholics regularly attending the liturgy and staffing most paid and volunteer parish activities, yet it is mostly men who make the decisions in the Church.

“Many reports ask that the Church continue its discernment in relation to a range of specific questions: the active role of women in the governing structures of Church bodies, the possibility for women

with adequate training to preach in parish settings, and a female diaconate,” the document said. “Much greater diversity of opinion was expressed on the subject of priestly ordination for women, which some reports call for, while others consider a closed issue.”

Between January and March, smaller groups of

Church representatives are to meet on a continental or regional level; organised by bishops’ conferences, the groups are to include bishops, priests, religious and laypeople to read the document, pray about it and discuss which issues raised it in are most important and urgent for Catholics in their region to address in order to increase

participation, a sense of communion and a commitment to missionary outreach.

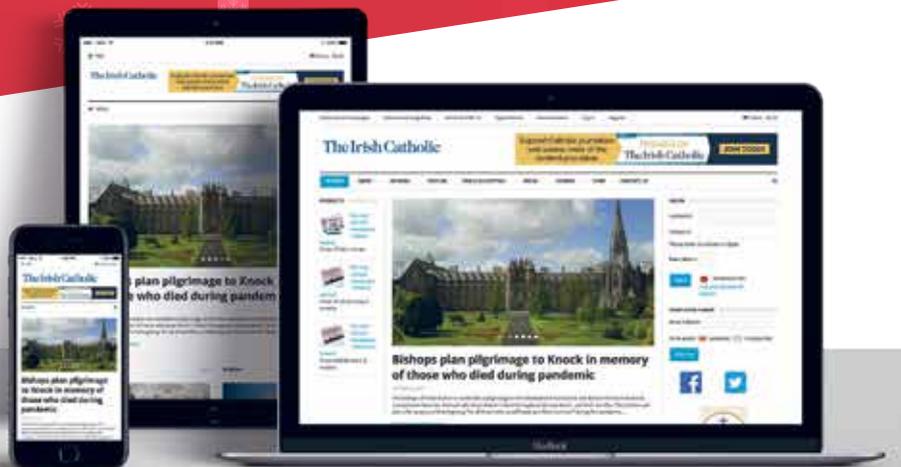
## Document

Each continental gathering will produce a document of about 20 pages which will in turn form the working document for the Synod of Bishops due to be held in Rome next October.

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# Sermons of tragic Fr Cummins reprinted in light of demand

Jason Osborne

The writings of Fr John Cummins who died in a tragic car accident in 2019 have sold out days after publication and have gone to reprint to satisfy the demand.

After his death in 2019, his family discovered he had kept many of his homilies from the previous twenty years on his computer.

*My Life in Your Hands* is the collection of Fr Cummins (52) sermons, which his family decided to publish posthumously in honour of his memory.

Fr Cummins' writings appeared in bookshops and parish centres in Carlow, Laois and Kildare earlier this month after being launched by his family. However, it soon became clear that 1,000 extra copies had to be supplied in order to satisfy demand.

Fr Cummins died in January 2019 after a "freak accident" involving his car at a parochial house.

His words are being welcomed by readers, as he was remembered as an "effective preacher". Ministering in Abbeyleix, Ballyroan, Carlow town and Naas, Fr Cummins was a well-liked and popular priest in the area.

His sister Maria and brothers Con and Gary published Fr Cummins' sermons in a format suited to accompanying Sunday's readings each week during the calendar year. Two more volumes may be issued to coincide with the three-year cycle of Church readings.

Con said: "John was very bright and had

wonderful insights. He was a man of deep prayer and personal thought. This book will be his legacy and readers will be able to follow John's reflections on a week-by-week basis."

An article by Fr Cummins marking his 25 years as a priest is included, as well as his funeral tribute to his father. Some select holy-day sermons are also included.

Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty said Fr Cummins' sermons were always carefully prepared.

"He has left behind a trove of homilies ... he was a wonderful wordsmith," Dr Nulty said.

A close friend of Fr Cummins', Bishop of Ferns Ger Nash recalled that Fr Cummins was very fond of the idea of the priest as an "Interpreter of Life", helping people to make sense of their lives and to see the presence of God in it.

Originally from Newbridge, Fr Cummins was educated at Newbridge Patrician Brothers school, Maynooth and in Rome.

He spent four years in Naas after his ordination in 1991, and following a five-year stint of studies in Rome, he became chaplain at IT Carlow in 2000.

Fr Cummins then ministered in Carlow Cathedral for over a decade until 2017.

He was parish priest of Abbeyleix and Ballyroan for only 18 months when the accident occurred in January 2019.



Members of the committee which published the writings of Fr Cummins – Joe O'Brien, Con and Gary Cummins, Paddy Pender and Fr Gerard Ahern PP Baltinglass.



Members of the Cummins family at the launch in Carlow on Oct 15 of *My Life in Your Hands*, a collection of writings by Fr John Cummins (52) who was killed in a tragic motor accident in 2019. From left - Yvonne, Gary, Maria and Con Cummins.



Fr John Cummins.

## New SPHE curriculum 'ignores' schools' ethos

Staff reporter

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's (NCCA) draft SPHE curriculum has been criticised by Catholic bodies for "ignoring" schools' rights to govern their own ethos.

The Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) have warned that the rationale underpinning the proposed Junior

Cycle curriculum "does not in any way recognise or attempt to accommodate the ethos of faith schools".

By not referencing the characteristic spirit of the school or the legal and constitutional rights of the school to be a faith-based community with its own beliefs and values, "the draft SPHE curriculum... ignores these rights", writes CEO of APTCS Dr Eilis Humphries.

The comments come in a submission to the NCCA's consultation on a new social, personal and health education (SPHE) course, which includes relationships and sexual education (RSE). The submission window closed on October 14.

Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) CEO Alan Hynes called the draft curriculum "a sign of continuing development of SPHE pedagogy within schools" in their submission.

The CEP echoes APTCS, however, in warning that the curriculum "fails to recognise the role the school's ethos necessarily plays as a stepping off point for dialogue" between contrasting perspectives, values and behaviours.

"The curriculum needs to give guidance to schools on the need to inform the programme with the school's ethos, and to provide sufficient flexibility to do so," the CEP say in their submission.

## Faith integral to human development – Prof. Conway

Ruadhán Jones

Faith and integral human development combine to create "authentically" spiritual people, Prof. Eamonn Conway has said.

Heart of reality

"When we realise that what lies at the heart of reality is loving relationality then we realise that the concept of integral human development is unavoidable for Christians," the Irish theologian said October 26.

Prof. Conway was speaking during his inaugural lecture as Chair of Integral Human Development at the University of Notre Dame Australia on October 26.

The establishment of this position is an outcome of the University's new Strategic Plan, which identifies Integral Human Development as one of its five key pillars.

"Given that we humans are made in God's image, and that God is life-giving relationality, it follows that as human beings we are all intimately and integrally bound up with one another," he said.

Fr Conway finished by praising the positive work by the University of Notre Dame Australia to deliver an authentically Catholic approach to education that places integral human development at the centre.

Prof. Eamonn Conway delivers his inaugural lecture as Chair of Integral Human Development at the University of Notre Dame Australia, October 26.



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Catholic schools' bodies welcome developments in SPHE course, but warn it ignores ethos, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

**T**he National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's (NCCA) draft SPHE curriculum for Junior Cycle has been criticised by Catholic bodies for "ignoring" schools' rights to govern their own ethos, although they welcome developments in other areas.

The Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) have warned that the rationale underpinning the proposed Junior Cycle curriculum "does not in any way recognise or attempt to accommodate the ethos of faith schools".

By not referencing the characteristic spirit of the school or the legal and constitutional rights of the school to be a faith-based community with its own beliefs and values, "the draft SPHE curriculum... ignores these rights", writes CEO of APTCS Dr Eilis Humphries.

**“They call for a specific recognition that morality and spirituality are important aspects of education”**

Additionally, the absence of a reference to spiritual development in the aims of the course leaves a "vacuum" between student's lived experience and the syllabus content and delivery.

There is "scant or no reference to developing a moral compass... and there is no place at all given to spiritual values in relation to sexuality," says Dr Humphries, adding later: "In excluding moral and spiritual dimensions the programme presents a very limited view of the human person."

APTCS recommends that "there must be flexibility within the programme to allow the school adapt the programme to suit the particular characteristic spirit and context of each school".

In addition, they call for a specific recognition that morality and spirituality are important aspects of education and that religious beliefs can make a very important contribution to wellbeing.

The comments come in a submission to the NCCA's consultation on a new social, personal and health education (SPHE) course, which includes relationships and sexual

# Proposed SPHE course 'ignores' ethos of schools



education (RSE). The submission window closed on October 14.

The draft curriculum is the result of work by the NCCA subject development group, based on research, evidence and engagement with stakeholders.

According to a July 18 statement from the Department of Education, the new curriculum includes topics like "healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships, human sexuality and gender identity, consent, the importance of safer sexual activity including contraception and the influence of digital media including pornography and the sharing of digital images online".

## Development

Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) CEO Alan Hynes called the draft curriculum "a sign of continuing development of SPHE pedagogy within schools" in their submission.

In particular, CEP praise the "integrated character" of the course's structure, the introduction of a classroom-based assessment and the emphasis placed on healthy non-sexual relationships.

CEP echoes APTCS, however, in warning that the curriculum "fails to recognise the role the school's ethos necessarily plays as a stepping off point for dialogue" between contrasting perspectives, values and behaviours.

"The curriculum needs to give guidance to schools on the need to inform the programme with the

school's ethos, and to provide sufficient flexibility to do so," the CEP say in their submission.

Another key theme that emerges in the two submissions is the importance of recognising parents' rights as the primary educators of their children.

"The full potential of the course," CEP's submission states, "will require informed parental engagement that empowers parents/guardians to make informed decisions with respect to their children and to support the learning outcomes through the home."

**“The JMB's submission focuses largely on the practicalities of implementing the proposed course at a local school level”**

They add that the course will need to provide "in a practical way" for the fundamental legal and moral rights parents have in this regard.

The "flexibility" of the course is important in this light, to make room for the "professional judgment of the teachers, in consultation where necessary with the student's parents/guardians".

APTCS argue that within the course's structure, "the centrality of the family needs to be respected and fully acknowledged" because

"the role of parents in bringing up their children is fundamental to their self-development".

Research shows that "parents expect that schools will assist their children to develop a moral compass". It is on this basis that schools "must be allowed to situate RSE within their ethos", say APTCS.

## Welcome

The rights-based approach encouraged in the course structure received a qualified welcome from the two Catholic bodies. Without a corresponding sense of duties owed to others, "a rights-based approach can risk an 'I' centred approach to topics covered," say the CEP.

They go on to immediately highlight the issue of pornography and sexual relationships, where a sense of other persons as "ends rather than means" is an "essential component" to encourage a moral obligation to treat people "as subjects, not objects".

The CEP add later that the importance of consent in sexual relationships is "rightfully recognised", but should "explicitly be acknowledged as a base-line idea". While this is partly addressed within the proposed course, "a fuller treatment" in choice and decision making is needed, they say.

A third Catholic body, the Joint Managerial Board/Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (JMB/AMCSS), have also warned that education cannot be deemed holistic if it ignores the

spiritual basis of values that inform our actions.

JMB's General Secretary John Curtis writes in the body's submission that while some people argue schools should adopt a neutral stance, "those who would exclude religion from school also espouse an ethos of their own".

**“The 'flexibility' of the course is important in this light, to make room for the 'professional judgment of the teachers'”**

However, the JMB's submission focuses largely on the practicalities of implementing the proposed course at a local school level, which it commends for having "value-driven, life affirming aims" reflecting the needs of contemporary young people.

The degree to which these course aims are achieved will depend on factors regarding its implementation, including: teacher disposition and confidence, school leadership engagement, coherence with the characteristic spirit of the school community and high quality and relevant teaching and assessment resources.

JMB place a special emphasis on the need for "high-calibre teacher professional development and school leadership awareness" as the course structure presents "a challenge in terms of the skillset of the teacher".

They also highlight a potential issue arising from the course's integrated nature in the context of parents' right to withdraw their child from particular aspects of the course, particularly RSE. This will require "awareness and agency from all parties involved", JMB warn.

**“There must be flexibility within the programme to allow the school adapt the programme to suit the particular characteristic spirit and context of each school”**

# Synodal process creating confusion that the Vatican needs to address



It is not at all clear where this whole synodal process is going to end up, writes David Quinn

The Vatican has just issued a new synodal working document that is now to be studied at a continental level by the Church in the coming months. This new document is a synthesis of the papers produced by each individual country over the last couple of years. In turn, those national-level papers are the result of individual diocesan consultations and before that, parish meetings.

In addition, the synodal process in each country deliberately sought out groups who feel alienated by Church teaching to hear their views, as well as receiving submissions from interested parties and completed questionnaires from interested individuals.

**“The documents received from individual national hierarchies differed greatly in substance and tone”**

Rome in total received contributions from 112 out of 114 Episcopal Conferences and from all the 15 Oriental Catholic Churches, plus reflections from 17 out of 23 dicasteries of the Roman Curia besides those from religious superiors (USG/UISG), from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, and from associations and lay movements of the Faithful.

## Hierarchies

The documents received from individual national hierarchies differed greatly in substance and tone. The

most liberal came from countries like Belgium and Switzerland, with the one from Ireland not too far behind, which some might find surprising.

The synthesis document from Scotland was highly orthodox, while the ones from England and Wales, the United States, and Australia were more middle-of-the-road, allowing that voices demanding female ordination did exist, for example, but without exaggerating their prevalence.

The Scottish document makes perfectly clear that certain teachings of the Church are already decided and are no longer up for debate.

The Irish document gave a different impression, while not explicitly saying so.

When the Irish synthesis was produced, *The Irish Times* ran a front-page headline which read: ‘Irish Catholics demand big changes in Church’.

## Groundswell

The casual reader could have been forgiven for thinking that there was a great groundswell of opinion from ordinary, Mass-going Catholics insisting on major alterations of Church teaching. That would be a false impression. Parish meetings were mainly concerned with matters like declining attendance at Mass, and a lack of vocations. Liberal demands for changes to teaching on the priesthood, marriage, and human sexuality did feature, but were nowhere near as prominent as some media, and indeed some in the Church, might want us to believe.

The new document from Rome says that: “Globally, participation exceeded all expectations.” Is this really true? It might be if expectations at the beginning were very low, otherwise it is not.

Diocesan synodal papers here in Ireland often expressed disappointment in the low level of participation at parish meetings.

For example, Meath diocese noted that only about 1,600 people took part in its parish meetings. The diocese says that this was “an extremely small number of people”. It was by no mean atypical.

In the archdiocese of Dublin, only 35-40 people attended each parish meeting to discuss the synodal process.

The Catholic online magazine, *The Pillar*, looked at available figures to estimate the participation rate in

various parts of the world. In Brisbane archdiocese in Australia, for example, it was just 0.93pc of practising Catholics. In Melbourne it was 0.65pc.

In Belgium the figure was a seemingly more respectable 15%, but there are only a tiny number of practising Catholics in that country, which long ago lost its Catholic identity. This helps to explain why the Church in Belgium has now swung so liberal.

In England and Wales about 8% of practising Catholics attended parish meetings, while in France it was around 3.5%.

## Synodal process

There is no aggregate figure for Ireland, but in Dublin only 1.13% of baptised Catholic took part in the synodal process. If we allow that Mass attendance in Dublin is only about 10%, this means around 10% of practising Catholics took part.

**“The Scottish document makes perfectly clear that certain teachings of the Church are already decided and are no longer up for debate”**

You get the picture. This has not been a well-attended synodal process and apathy is not a noted mark of the working of the Holy Spirit.

It is not at all clear where this whole synodal process is going to end up. If those demanding major changes to Church teaching get their way, then the Church will split. If the intention is simply to engender more participation in the day-to-day running of the Church by lay people, that is a whole other matter. But Church leaders need to make it perfectly clear where the synodal process can and cannot go.

We should not pretend this is putting a ‘limit’ on the Holy Spirit. Doctrines may develop, but there must be fidelity to the original idea behind a doctrine and not a breach, or the demand for change is not coming from the Holy Spirit.

A good example of this is the attack on the Church’s understanding of the nature of marriage. The new document from Rome says that in different parts of the world, different groups feel alienated by Church teaching on divorce, or having children



Pope Francis leads a meeting with representatives of bishops’ conferences from around the world at the Vatican October 9, 2021. Also pictured is Maltese Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops. Photo: CNS/Paul Haring

outside marriage, or the fact that the Church only permits opposite-sex couples to marry, or indeed that it allows only two people to marry at a time.

At one point the Vatican document note that “Many summaries also give voice to the pain of not being able to access the sacraments experienced by...those who have entered into polygamous marriages.” Polygamy is still widespread in some parts of the world.

Sometimes a person might convert to Catholicism who is married to more than one woman, in Africa, for instance. What is to happen to his other wives? Arrangements can be made that his second, third, or fourth ‘wives’ be taken care of, but

to actually formally recognise polygamy would shatter the Church’s understanding of marriage.

In fact, all elements of what the Church has always believed marriage to be are now under fierce attack, namely that it is the permanent and indissoluble union of one man and one woman.

## Critics

If the critics of the Church in various parts of the world were to have their way, all of these elements would be dispensed with. Divorce would be permitted, as would same-sex marriage, as would the marriage of more than two people. (In the West this last element would be called ‘polyamory’ not ‘polygamy’).

The Church explicitly invited people to criticise its teachings in this, and other regards. That would be defensible if the purpose was simply to work out ways of upholding the teachings while not causing needless alienation and pain.

At present, the synodal process seems to be causing more confusion than renewal. Starting with the Vatican, the Church needs to make more clear what teachings are indispensable and unalterable. A completely open-ended synod where everything is seemingly up for grabs is ultimately a recipe for division, anger and chaos, and that would certainly not be the work of the Holy Spirit.

# Irish neutrality debate deepens in light of ongoing Ukraine war



The war in Ukraine has seen questions asked of the Irish policy of military neutrality, writes **Jason Osborne**

**T**he war in Ukraine has seen the topic of Ireland's military neutrality discussed with more vigour than perhaps any other time in recent history, with some arguing that the war in Ukraine has shown the need for powerful defensive alliances while others argue that Ireland's neutrality is a moral example to the world.

The urgency of the question has increased in recent weeks, as Ireland was asked by Ukrainian prime minister Denys Shmyhal for help in demining the many thousands of mines laid all over their country. Responding to People Before Profit TD Paul Murphy's claim that the Government is "cynically using Putin's war to drive a coach and four through Ireland's neutrality", Taoiseach Micheál Martin said that "Ukraine has asked us for help with demining. I think we should train Ukrainians if they seek help on that aspect of it".

In addition to this, Minister for European Affairs Thomas Byrne said that Ireland needs a new concept of defence following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but cautioned that Irish public opinion is currently not in favour of joining military alliances. During Minister Byrne's visit to France, he said that while there's no doubt as to where Ireland's sympathies lie, there's not sufficient public support for membership of NATO.

## Debate

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper about the neutrality debate, Fr Séamus Murphy SJ of Loyola University Chicago said that joining a military alliance is "not just the right thing – I think we have a moral duty to do it".

"It's not merely that it'd be good to do – we ought to do it. We're doing wrong in not doing it," Fr Murphy told this paper.

"Just War Theory – the label is a misnomer, it suggests that there's something good or just about war itself, and of course war itself is nothing good or just. War is itself a state of affairs that is destructive, misery, death. But, it's very much



Firefighters from the de-mining squad of the Ukrainian emergency services scan for land mines and other unexploded ordnance to clear an area for electricians to access power lines damaged by Russian strikes, in Ruska Lozova, Ukraine, October 25. Photo: CNS/Clodagh Kilcoyne, Reuters

in the Bible, that while Jesus tells the individual person to turn the other cheek, run away from the wrongdoer, the violent person – with respect to yourself – it'd be different with respect to, say, a vulnerable person in your charge. A child, for instance. You may not go sit back and be pacifist if your child is attacked."

**“It's not merely that it'd be good to do – we ought to do it. We're doing wrong in not doing it”**

It's the "duty" of the state to protect the weak and the vulnerable, Fr Murphy argued, saying, "You're to keep the thugs and the others at bay, and you're to use whatever force is necessary to do that, and you're not to be slow about doing that or hemming and hawing about doing it. Get on and do it."

NATO is the only possibility of making a "general peace" happen in

Europe, Fr Murphy said, adding, "We should be part of it".

"When we say we won't join NATO, it's not so much we're saying to the big, American imperialists, 'We're independent of you'...For me, the moral thing is much more we're saying to the likes of Finland, Ukraine at the moment, and the Baltics, 'Well, if you're attacked, we'll make a speech at the UN, but you won't get a single bullet from us. We will not help you'. I'm hanged if I can see how that can be morally justified," he said.

## Proud

Meanwhile, Director of social justice organisation AFRI, Joe Murray told this paper that Irish neutrality is a "long-held" and "very proud" tradition that makes an "incredibly positive contribution to the world".

Describing as "obscene" the suggestion of joining a military alliance such as NATO, Mr Murray said that he believes it's "the total opposite to what Christianity is about".

"If somebody can persuade me that that's what Jesus would

support, then, I just believe it's the total opposite to what Christianity is about. I think it's horrific that the message of Jesus has been so distorted that somebody can recommend a war alliance as a direction to follow. Our [AFRI's] main concern is to respond to hunger and inequality in the world, and we see one of the biggest obstacles to the ability of people to get access to food and clean water and healthcare is the war industry, which represents really a double immorality."

## Spending

The fact that military spending is increasing while so many lack the basic necessities of life is "an obscenity", Mr Murray said, and reflects a short-sighted outlook that is "completely counter to the proud tradition that we have developed over many years as an independent nation".

Mr Murray pointed to the example of former Tánaiste Frank Aiken, "who was more than anybody else, responsible for the development of the non-proliferation treaty, you

know, trying to get control over nuclear weapons.

"He argued for the rights of small nations – he even argued for a demilitarised zone within Europe, to avoid the danger of a conflict between two superpowers, and extraordinarily, many years after he has died, the wisdom of his approach is being seen in Europe," Mr Murray said.

**“Mr Murray said that he believes it's 'the total opposite to what Christianity is about'”**

Ireland is "sadly" abandoning the legacy of neutrality that's seen it avoid an aggressive foreign policy and involvement in the international weapons industry, Mr Murray said, choosing instead to form alliances with various blocs within the EU, such as the 'Partnership for Peace' and PESCO.

"One of the binding commitments of our membership of Pesco is that we increase our military spending each year. So now, we have a Government in a context where we're told that the world has maybe ten years at most before we see catastrophic climate crisis – we have an Irish Government setting out to develop a weapons industry, and setting out to get more deeply involved in the war industry and in aggressive military alliances," he said.

**“The urgency of the question has increased in recent weeks, as Ireland was asked by Ukrainian prime minister Denys Shmyhal for help in demining the many thousands of mines laid all over their country”**

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# Fr Willie Doyle SJ: 'In the shoes of a saint'

A US Army chaplain celebrates Mass for soldiers in 2009. Photo: CNS/courtesy of US Department of Defence.



As his cause opens, Fr Willie Doyle can be an inspiration for the Church today, writes Fr John Hogan

On October 27 last, Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan promulgated an eict announcing that he was opening the Cause for the Beatification and Canonisation of Jesuit priest and war hero, Fr Willie Doyle. The bishop's decision was in response to a petition the Father Willie Doyle Association, the official petitioner of the Cause, submitted in January of this year, following a process of prayer, discernment, and consultation, and with the support of the Society of Jesus.

Though he died over a century ago, devotion to Fr Willie has never waned, indeed each generation seems to have found in his life and example something dynamic which appeals to their lives and experience. And today, as his Cause opens, Fr Willie is as revered as he was in the 1920s when Professor Alfred O'Rahilly first published his landmark biography.

Willie Doyle was born in Dalkey, Co. Dublin, on March 3, 1873, and died on Frezenberg Ridge in Bel-

gium during the Battle of Passchendaele (Third Battle of Ypres) on August 16, 1917; he was killed by a shell as he was trying to save two Anglican soldiers. Between his birth and heroic death spanned a short life of intense religious fervour and an overwhelming desire to serve God and his neighbour.

## Deep prayer

Known for his deep prayer and mortification, Willie was a man possessed of an attractive humanity and infectious joy, even mischievousness, whose warm personal qualities and ingenious manner of priestly ministry drew people to God, most especially those who were far from faith. He had the common touch and could meet people where they were at, be it a former sailor angry with God because his mother died, or a prostitute suddenly woken up to God's mercy and love for her.

Ordained in 1907 in the same ceremony as Blessed John Sullivan, Fr Willie served just ten years as a priest, most of them spent travelling around Ireland and Britain giving missions and retreats. He was renowned both for his preaching and his direction of souls.

Concerned for the spiritual state of working people, he was part of a contemporary retreat movement which sought to provide retreats for laity. Another passion was nurturing vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Among the few published works he left us are two pamphlets written to help candidates discern vocations; these pamphlets became bestsellers. In

the same vein, in 1913 he cooperated in the foundation of the Poor Clare monastery in Cork.

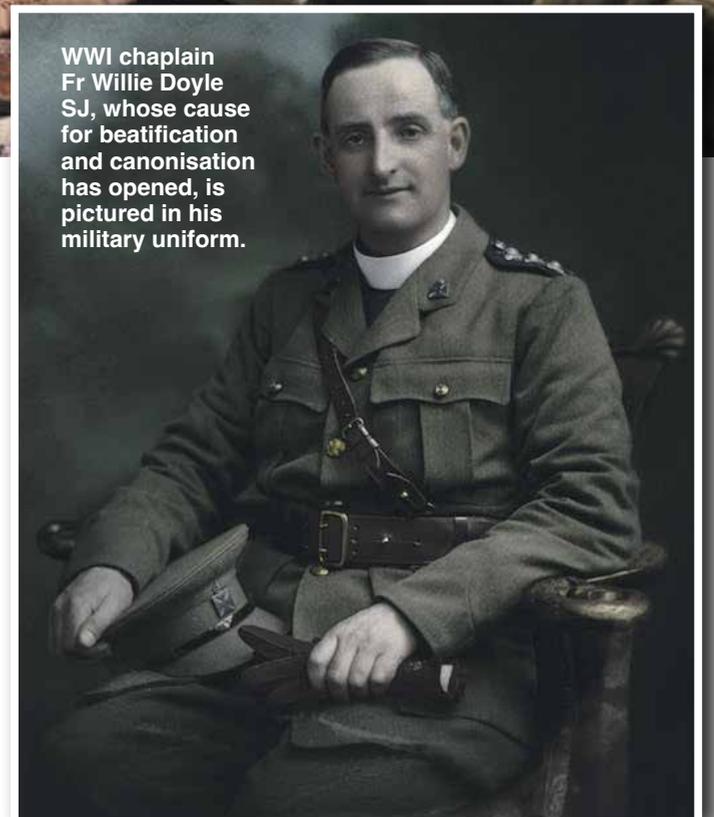
It was Willie's ministry during World War I which brought him to greater attention. With a deep concern for the young men volunteering for the Front, he discerned a call to go with them, to be with them as they faced the horrors of war and to be at the side of those who would perish in battle. Volunteering in 1914, he was accepted to serve as a chaplain and left Ireland in late 1915 for training in England, embarking for France in February 1916.

**“His years of prayer and mortification bore fruit as he coped with physical deprivations and the spiritual darkness of those around him”**

Willie's letters to his father from the Front, and his war diaries, tell us of his day-to-day experiences in the midst of the war, the conditions he and his men faced, and the sheer terror which was unleashed on all sides in that futile conflict.

His years of prayer and mortification bore fruit as he coped with physical deprivations and the spiritual darkness of those around him. His own faith was heroic, as was his hope, even with the realisation that every moment could be his last. All he wanted to do was to ensure those in his care were pro-

**“Concerned for the spiritual state of working people, he was part of a contemporary retreat movement which sought to provide retreats for laity”**



WWI chaplain Fr Willie Doyle SJ, whose cause for beatification and canonisation has opened, is pictured in his military uniform.

vided for and ready to meet God should death come for them.

In this he ministered to Catholics but also to Protestants, to Irish and British, but also to Germans taken as prisoners of war; for him they were all children of the same God, the God to whom he had given his whole life to serve.

In one of his letters, for example, he writes of a coming offensive by the British. Standing at the edge of a trench looking out over no man's land, to the German trenches with pity and concern in his heart for the young German soldiers who would die in the attack, he prayed for them and blessed them. Fr Willie hated war; he once wrote that

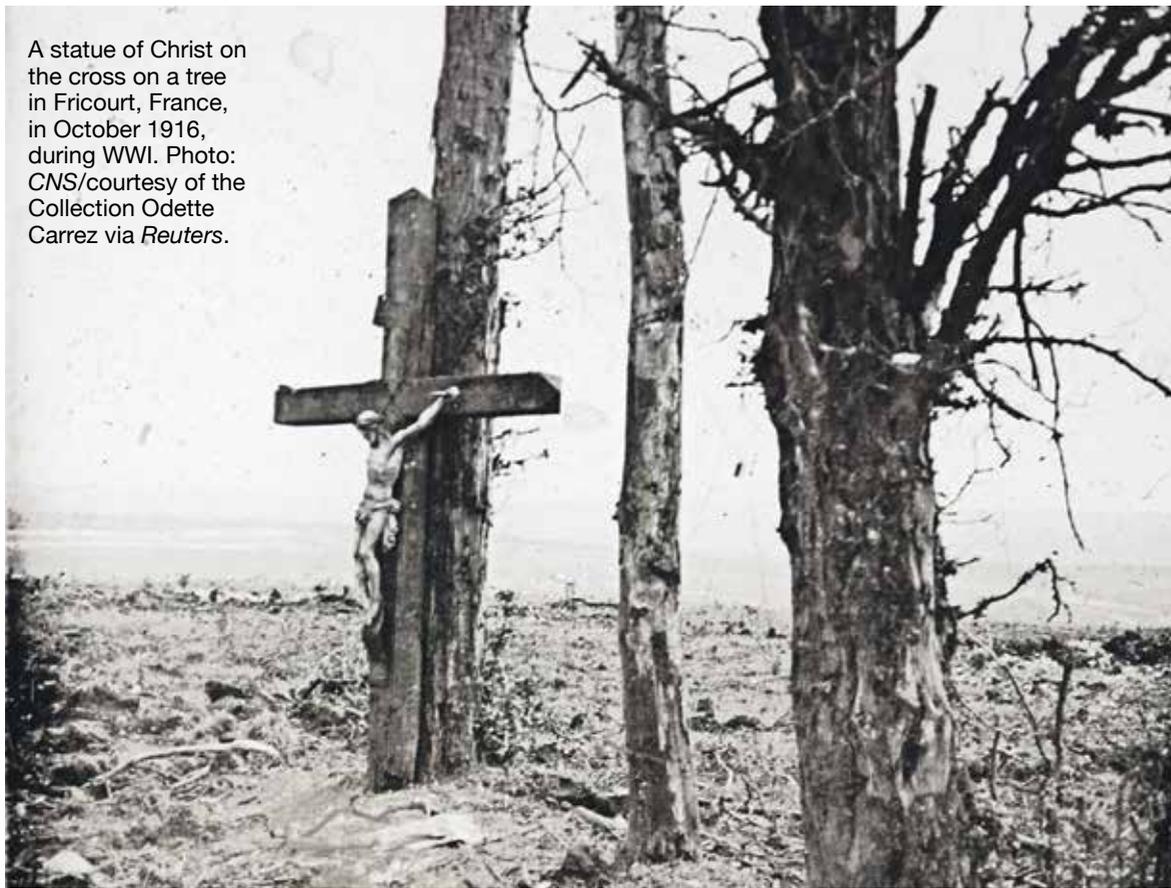
if those who conducted wars were forced to endure what the soldiers endured, they would do everything they could to prevent conflict.

## Spirituality

Willie's life and ministry were fuelled by a profound spirituality rooted in his Ignatian formation, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and a tender love of Our Lady, with whom he nurtured an intimate relationship. He also fostered a love of the saints particularly his contemporary, St Thérèse of Lisieux, then still a Servant of God, St Jean-Marie Vianney, and St Benedict Joseph Labre. For his own spiritual life, and guiding others, he saw that the saints served as models of the Christian life who accompanied Christians on their pilgrim journey.

Aware of the need for sacrifice, Willie embraced penance and sought the lowest place to bring his own passions and appetites under

A statue of Christ on the cross on a tree in Fricourt, France, in October 1916, during WWI. Photo: CNS/courtesy of the Collection Odette Carrez via Reuters.



control. As one of his devotees, St Josemaría Escrivá noted in his book *The Way*, Fr Willie had his struggles to ensure he did not give into greed. Willie loved his food, and being an Irishman, he especially loved butter, so his attempts to give up butter as a little penance met with success and failure at various times; St Josemaría called it “the butter tragedy”.

**“Fr Willie has often been seen as a man of immense strength, in physical, spiritual, and psychological terms”**

It was a small penance, but like St Thérèse, Fr Willie understood that even the smallest things which can mean so much to us, renounced for love, could achieve great things both in controlling the appetites and as offerings to God.

This programme of life had a broader relevance. All too aware of broken humanity, he was concerned for priests, particularly those who had sinned grievously, so he made a sacrifice of his own life in reparation for those sins. He was aware that the sins and misdeeds of priests had a terrible effect on the lives of others and on the Church, and not only did these sins need to be addressed and dealt with, but atoned for. He sought to offer his life, mortifications, and hardships as part of that atonement.

Willie sought to live his whole life as an oblation to God. This offering was first made during his novitiate at the Jesuit College in Rahan, Co. Offaly, in 1893, and was often renewed, most potently on the battlefield. He sought the grace to die as a martyr, and this desire strengthened his courage and trust in divine providence. His heroic death as he tried to carry out an act of charity, is considered by many as the fulfilment of that desire.

Fr Willie has often been seen as a man of immense strength, in physical, spiritual, and psychological terms. This was certainly true during his war ministry, but not so

throughout his early life. His physical health was never good, and his mental health was, at one point a cause for concern.

### Novitiate

During his novitiate, in November 1892, following a fire, he suffered a breakdown and had to return home for a period of time. It was a testament to his spiritual and psychological resources, and the work of God in his life, that he recovered completely and would never again suffer from psychological or emotional issues. Indeed, 20 years later he was renowned as a military chaplain for his courage, psychological and emotional strength in the face of terrible horrors, serving as a rock of support for the men in his care. This was an extraordinary transformation.

Following Willie's death there

was an outpouring of devotion. Prof. Alfred O'Rahilly wrote an extensive biography which became an international bestseller, it was translated into several languages and was republished in a number of editions. As he was devoted to the saints himself, he became the ‘formator of saints’, as men and women now canonised or beatified, were inspired by his life, drew on his teachings and became devotees.

Most notable among these were St Josemaría Escrivá, St Teresa of Calcutta and the young Trappist St Rafael Arnáiz Barón. Among Fr Willie's Jesuit confreres he was also revered by one of the Society's most recent saints, St Alberto Hurtado, who promoted devotion to him throughout his native Chile.

Perhaps the most poignant tribute to Fr Willie's holiness was

**“We hope that one day this son of Ireland, this son of the Church, will be raised to the altars as a sign and witness of God's love and providence for his people”**

that offered by his friend, Fr Frank Browne SJ, the famous Titanic photographer. Fr Browne, who served as a chaplain alongside Fr Willie during the war, secured his friend's shoes, and whenever he offered Mass, he did so wearing them so he could celebrate Mass “in the shoes of a saint”.

**“He was renowned as a military chaplain for his courage, psychological and emotional strength in the face of terrible horrors, serving as a rock of support for the men in his care”**

In the 1920s, 30s and 40s, his brother Fr Charlie Doyle, also a Jesuit, worked hard to have his Cause opened. Circumstances mitigated against it at the time, though superiors and the Jesuit Postulator General recognised that Willie Doyle was indeed a singular soul. Fr Charlie was told that a Cause would be left to “providence”; he himself died in 1949 hoping one day his saintly brother would be a candidate for canonisation.

That day has come, and it was indeed the work of providence. Fr Willie is more relevant to the Church today than he was when he died; he is a witness for Christ and the Church looking out into the third millennium and the New Evangelisation.

His warm humanity and ability to reveal the love of Christ speak to

the modern heart while his struggle with his mental health has a particular resonance for many today. And his early ecumenism strikes a chord as we Christians must band together as we face the winter of a growing tyrannical secularism. In a time of war, which we have entered once again, Willie speaks of reconciliation and peace, and bids us look beyond what divides to what unites, to the plight of poor human souls and what the terror of war inflicts on them.

The Cause of Fr Willie will open and be instructed in the Diocese of Meath, the diocese in which he entered the Society of Jesus, was first formed in the spirit of St Ignatius, endured his first martyrdom of psychological crisis, and where he first made his complete offering of himself to God even to the point of martyrdom.

### Devotion

However, Willie will not just belong to Meath, the Society of Jesus, and his native Dublin, but as devotion already reveals, he belongs to the whole Church, indeed to the whole world. The Church will discern through the process of the Cause if Fr Willie is to be counted among the saints, we will wait for her decision.

In the meantime, as postulator, I invite you to join us in praying for his Cause, in praying for miracles which are God's signs to the Church and will help see him beatified and canonised. We hope that one day this son of Ireland, this son of the Church, will be raised to the altars as a sign and witness of God's love and providence for his people.



Fr Willie Doyle (portrayed by Brian Milligan) distributes Communion to soldiers on the battlefield in EWTN's documentary *Bravery Under Fire*.

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# Out & About

## Lourdes be praised...



**LOURDES:** The Carmelite's annual pilgrimage to Lourdes drew a large crowd of pilgrims in October, including Jacqueline Maguire, a Dubliner now resident in Rathbarry, West Cork, who was on her 51st pilgrimage.



**WEXFORD:** FCJ Secondary School Bunclody recently held school Masses to mark the opening of the academic year. The Masses were held in the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Bunclody. Fr Laurence O'Connor PP of Bunclody celebrated Mass with the senior students and Fr Joe Power PP of Kilrush celebrated Mass with the junior students. Photo: Joe Guinan



**TIPPERARY:** The Laurentian Society, Trinity College Dublin, are pictured at Glencomeragh House where Fr Alan O'Sullivan OP led the students in a weekend retreat, October 22-23.

## IN SHORT

### Sisters of Mercy celebrate final profession

Sisters of Mercy, family, friends and colleagues gathered on Sunday October 9 in Mercy International Centre, Baggot Street, Dublin, to celebrate the Perpetual Profession ceremony of Sr Máire Hearty RSM.

Sr Brenda Dolphin, Provincial Leader of the South Central Province, thanked everyone who had journeyed alongside Sr Hearty to this day.

Welcoming Sr Hearty, she praised the "voyage of discovery of a love so deep and strong it can never be denied" that had drawn her to this day.

Fr Seán Cunningham from Tuam, Co. Galway presided over the liturgy and he was joined by Deacon Bro. Giacomo.

### Family Solidarity criticises 'disappointing' synodal pathway

The Irish national synodal synthesis "does not represent us and it does not represent what we have heard at the meetings in our parishes", Irish advocacy group Family Solidarity has written in an open letter to Ireland's bishops.

"After a year, we must admit that both the process and the provisional outcomes of the synodal pathway in Ireland are disappointing," Family Solidarity chairman Angelo Bottone wrote.

"At the local level, we have seen a lack of enthusiasm and poor levels of participation. Reading the diocesan reports, it is

clear that many parishes have shown no interest in the national or in the worldwide synod."

### Concern responding to cholera outbreak in Haiti

Concern Worldwide is responding to a cholera outbreak in Haiti, where there are currently 200 confirmed cases and 40 confirmed deaths.

There are a further 1,752 suspected cases of cholera, a bacterial illness causing severe diarrhoea, vomiting and dehydration, which can be contracted through contaminated food or water, the Irish charity said in a press release October 25.

"Haiti is contending with multiple concurrent shocks," said Kwanli Kladstrup,

Country Director with Concern Worldwide in Haiti.

"Economic deprivation, social and political instability, and violent conflict negatively impacts the everyday lives of people living in the metropolitan area of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

"The cholera outbreak adding to this myriad of issues, has aggravated the existing humanitarian crisis in Haiti, causing further stress to people's lives.

"Prevention and the knowledge on how to stop cholera spreading is essential to keeping the numbers of cases down."

The Irish humanitarian organisation is responding by supporting health centres, and cholera treatment centres with materials and resources to disinfect contaminated areas.



**CLARE:** Bro. Seán McNamara, a Christian Brother from Ennis and former Clareman of the year, marks his 95th birthday at the house of his birth, The Rambling House, Kilmurry-McMahon.



**DUBLIN:** Sr Máire Hearty RSM (centre) made her final profession to the Sisters of Mercy on October 9 and is pictured here with Congregational Leader Sr Marie Louise White and Provincial Leader Sr Brenda Dolphin.



**DERRY:** Students from St Eithne's Primary School get into a spooky spirit ahead of Halloween, October 25.



**BELFAST:** Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor (second from right) joined Jesuit provincial Fr Leonard Moloney (centre) and the staff of the Belfast Jesuit Centre at the centre's official opening. Also pictured are (from left) Fr Tom Layden SJ, centre director Fr Gerry Clarke SJ and Fr Brendan McManus SJ, October 22.



**KERRY:** The Prior of Holy Cross Dominican Church, Tralee, Fr Gregory Carroll OP is pictured with priests and helpers following the Fr Thaddeus Moriarty OP Mass, October 23. Pictured (sitting, from left) are Christy Switzer, Fr Philip Mulryne OP, Bro. John Melvin OP, Prior of Holy Cross Tralee Fr Gregory Carroll OP and Bro. Ruaidhrí Grieve OP; (back row, from left) Gerard O'Connor, Bobby Boylan, John O'Donnell, Fr David McGovern OP, Bro. David O'Donnell OP, Geraldine O'Donnell, Paul Cronin, Jackie Locke, Fr Gerard O'Leary, Bro. Aidan Mary OP and John Greaney. Photo: John Cleary



**DUBLIN:** The community of the Carmelite Monastery of St Joseph took a break from their retreat to celebrate the birthday of Sr Gabriel, October 24.



**DONEGAL:** Raphoe diocese held a young adult 'Tea-ology' evening recently in the Divine Mercy Centre, Letterkenny. Fr Brendan Kilcoyne led teaching and discussion over a cup of tea and buns for the over 40 people who attended, including Bishop of Raphoe Alan McGuckian SJ.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**CORK:** Brid O'Sullivan of the social committee, Margaret Buckley representing the Neocatechumenal Community and Donal Healy, chairman of the parish council, present a Bible, stole and keys of the church to Fr Con Doherty MSC, at his induction ceremony as parish priest at Sacred Heart Church, Western Rd., by Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin. Also included are Fr Des Farren MSC CC and immediate past PP Fr Tom Mulcahy MSC. Photo: Mike English



**LAOIS:** Killeshin National School students celebrate the raising of the Amber Flag, awarded to the school for making a special effort to foster and promote a healthy and inclusive environment that supports mental well-being, October 25.



**HOLY LAND:** Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan is pictured with Eileen and Andy Burns, Brid Galligan and Oonagh Farrell at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem on the 20th consecutive diocesan pilgrimage to the Holy Land.



**GALWAY:** Minister for Education Norma Foley and two students cut into a celebratory cake at the official opening of Presentation Athenry, October 22.

### ANTRIM

A monastic weekend experience with the Cistercian monks of Our Lady of Bethlehem Abbey, Portglenone, takes place Friday November 4 to Sunday November 6. Contact Fr Aelred on frmagee@yahoo.co.uk or 0044 28 258 21 211.

Musical Curry Night in St Joseph's Hall, Antrim Parish, takes place Saturday November 5 from 5.30pm. Proceeds in aid of the Orissa Mission. Three courses available, it costs £15 per adult, £10 per child, under 5's free. Tickets are available from Antrim parish office or contact Bijumon Michael Thalachirayil on 07872498704

### ARMAGH

Orly Watson organ recital tour comes to Armagh Cathedral Sunday November 6, 2pm. Admission is free, a retiring collection will be taken up.

### CARLOW

Carlow Cathedral first Friday devotions to the Alliance of the Two Hearts Novena takes place Thursday November 3. Mass at 8pm plus blessing of the sick, Confession, prayers, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction at 11.30, concluding with Mass at 12 midnight.

### CLARE

Sunday November 6 is Cemetery Sunday for the parish of Ennis. Schedule for the day: 12.30pm prayers at the Columbarium in the Cathedral; 2pm prayers in Corrovorrin Cemetery; 3pm prayers in Drumcliffe Cemetery.

### CORK

A marriage enrichment weekend takes place Friday November 4-Sunday November 6 in the International Hotel, Cork Airport. For more information or to book, visit www.marriageencounter.ie.

Youth 2000's Munster retreat takes place Friday November 18-Sunday 20 in Coláiste Chríost Rí, Cork City.

Medjugorje prayer meeting every Wednesday at 8pm in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Trinity Church, Fr Matthew Quay, Cork city.

### DERRY

Termonbacca Carmelite monastery will celebrate Masses November 3-4 at 7:30pm each evening to pray for the souls of family or friends who have died. Thursday November 3 will focus on deceased fathers and Friday November 4 deceased children.

On the first Saturday of each month, after 11am Mass in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, there is adoration and rosary, ending with Divine Mercy and Benediction at 3pm. On Thursdays, there is a Holy Hour for the unborn and for expectant mothers in Our Lady's Chapel, within St Joseph's Church building, Galiagh, starting at 7pm

### DONEGAL

God's Mercy in the Gospel of John, a silent retreat, takes place in the Divine Mercy Centre, Letterkenny, November 25-27. To book or for more information contact 074 916 9934 or dvmletterkenny@gmail.com.

### FERMANAGH

November Service for the Dead will take place in St Michael's Church, Enniskillen, on Sunday November 6 at 3pm.

### GALWAY

A day of prayer and reflection takes place in Emmanuel House, Clonfert on Saturday November 5 at 11am. It will be led by Eddie Stones and team. The day will include Confession, Adoration, healing service, rosary, music and Mass. Please bring a packed lunch.

### KILDARE

Cemetery Mass will take place on Sunday November 6 at 3pm in St Conleth's Cemetery, Newbridge.

### MAYO

Catholic Men's road trip retreat takes place November 18-20, walking/cycling from Knock, Co. Mayo to Rosstown, Co. Donegal.

Cost €80, for men aged 16 and up only. Daily Mass, food and accommodation included. Text 083 389 1105 for more details.

### SLIGO

A Youth 2000 prayer meeting for 16-35 year olds takes place the first Monday of every month in the side chapel of St Anne's Church at 8pm. Adoration followed by chat.

### TIPPERARY

A one-day healing and renewal retreat for couples November 12 in Gleconmeragh house. Costs €100 per couple, includes a three-course dinner. Registration begins at 9am, Mass at 10am, finishes 6pm. Booking essential, contact 052 613 3181 or info@holefamilymission.ie.

Holy Family Mission are hosting a family day Sunday November 6, 10am-3pm. Includes prayer, talks, Mass, music, fun and games for all the family and an All Saints costume party. Bring a packed lunch. Booking is essential: email info@holymission.ie

### TYRONE

Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group meet in the Pastoral Centre on Thursday evenings with Rosary at 7.40pm, followed by prayer meeting at 8pm.

### WATERFORD

Taize vigil of peace takes place Friday, November 4, from 8-9pm in St Paul's Parish Centre, Lisduffgan. Led by members of the Peace Choir and Friends in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, it is part of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations in the parish.

Renewal Workshop for RE teachers on how to use Christian meditation and/or Lectio Divina in the classroom takes place Saturday, November 12 10am-1pm in the Sacred Heart Convent, Cedar Lodge, Newtown Rd. Visit waterfordandlismore.ie/education to register.

### WESTMEATH

Charismatic prayer meeting takes place Tuesdays at 7pm in Mullingar Parish Community Centre.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Cathedral of Christ the King from 2:30-7pm Monday-Friday.

# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### YouTube shuts down EWTN's Polish channel

● For the second time in less than two years, EWTN's affiliate in Poland has had its YouTube channel suspended, reported Fr Piotr Wiśniewski, general director of EWTN Poland.

Without any warning or explanation, on October 22 YouTube shut down the Catholic programming channel, which features a live broadcast from the adoration chapel in Niepokalanów Monastery in Teresin, Poland, which was founded by St Maximilian Kolbe.

Almost one million viewers visit the channel each month for what is known as the world's most popular televised Eucharistic adoration.

### US bishops criticise Biden's abortion push

● President Joe Biden, a professed Catholic, must end his "single-minded" abortion extremism and see the humanity in unborn children, the US bishops have said. They said abortion's impact is "tragic" and urged the president to support mothers.

"The president is gravely wrong to continue to seek

every possible avenue to facilitate abortion, instead of using his power to increase support and care to mothers in challenging situations," Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, chair of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said October 25.

### Cameroonian diocese gives thanks for captives' release

● The Diocese of Mamfe has directed that prayers of thanksgiving be said for the release October 22 of nine people who were abducted in September from a local parish.

"I urge each of you to pray a decade of the rosary in thanksgiving to God for the safe release of our brothers and sisters who were kidnapped," Bishop Aloysius Fondong Abangalo of Mamfe said in an October 23 statement to the diocese.

"I am sincerely grateful to all those who joined us in this collective effort in praying for the safety and release of our brothers and sisters," he said, adding: "Words will only do scant justice in expressing my sentiments of gratitude to all those who collaborated with us in the process of negotiating for their safety and release."

### Church in England and Wales to 'carefully study' abuse report

● The Catholic Church in England and Wales has said it will "carefully study" the contents of a national report concerning sexual abuse, which recommends that reporting abuse to the police should be made mandatory, even if perpetrators admit to child abuse while confessing to a priest.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) released its report on October 20 after seven years

of investigation and evidence-gathering.

The IICSA examined a number of significant organisations and institutions and concluded that "the investigation into the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales revealed a sorry history of child sexual abuse where abusive priests and members of religious orders and institutions preyed on children for prolonged periods of time".

### Russia 'willing' to speak with Pope about war in Ukraine

● Russian presidential spokesman Dmitri Peskov said his government is willing to talk with Pope Francis, the United States, and France to find a solution to the war in Ukraine.

"We are willing to discuss all this (the situation in Ukraine) with the Americans, with the French, and with the Pontiff," Mr Peskov said during a daily telephone news conference October 25.

The Russian official was referring to the proposal by French President Emmanuel Macron, who asked the Roman Pontiff to call Russian President Vladimir Putin, US President Joe Biden, and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill to "promote the peace process" in Ukraine.

## Dozens of Catholic villagers reportedly killed in Central Nigerian raid

Details are still emerging after a violent raid by Fulani herdsmen October 19 in Benue State, Central Nigeria, reportedly left dozens of Catholic villagers killed.

Police and clergy agree that the raid was in reprisal for the killing of four Fulani herdsmen earlier in the week in a clash between herdsmen and farmers defending their crops.

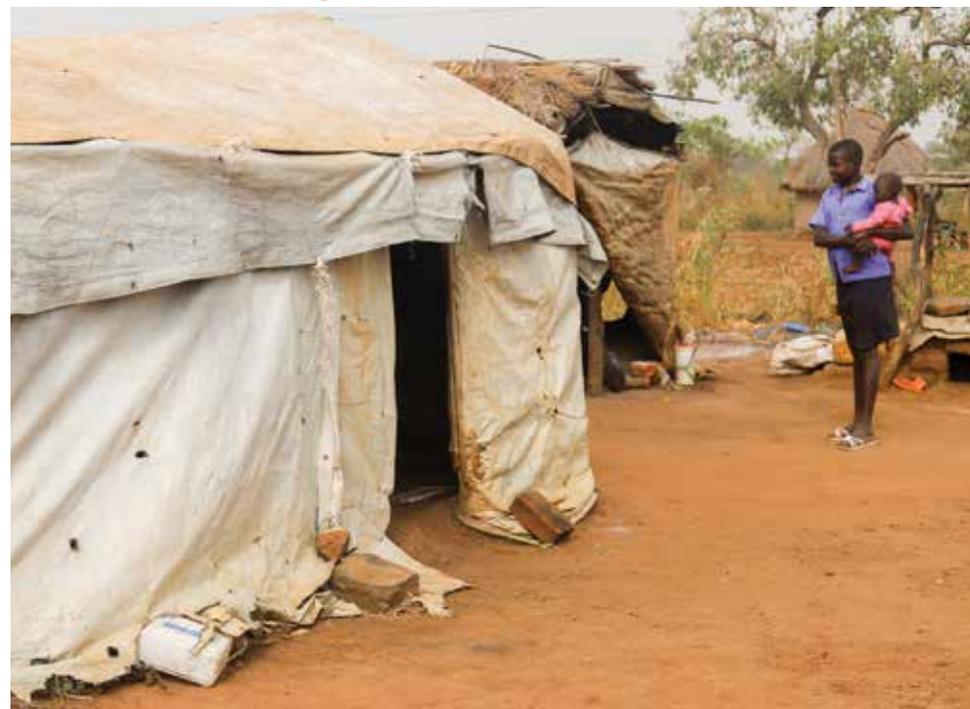
Accounts differ as to the exact number killed in the October 19 raid.

A county chairman, Kartyo Tyoumbur, told CNA that at least 71 residents of Gbeji — virtually all of whom were worshippers at a parish branch of St Michael's Roman Catholic Church — were killed in the attack. He said at least 35 bodies were found after the raid and 36 more bodies were recovered later in adjoining fields. The dead included women and children, along with two policemen, he said.

"The Fulani terrorists came at 6:00 am and began shooting indiscriminately," a local priest, Fr Samuel Fila, who was outside the village at a clerical assembly at the time of the attack, told CNA in a text message. He said an estimated 200 attackers participated in a well-coordinated raid, burning houses and slashing fleeing villagers with machetes.

"The village is currently deserted," he related.

However, Wale Abass,



A young woman carrying her baby walks between rows of tent shelters in the Abagana camp for those displaced by violence in Nigeria's Benue state. Photo: CNS/Tonny Onyulo

the Benue State police commissioner, provided a much lower death toll of "no more than 10, including one policeman".

### Exaggeration

"The higher figures may be due to newspaper exaggeration or by the fact that some of the families take the corpses of their family members away from the killing zones before an official count may be made," Mr Abass told CNA in a telephone interview.

"We have a combined team of 20 police and 15 sol-

diers pursuing leads as to the whereabouts of the attackers and the local men who killed the herders," he said, adding that no arrests have been made to date.

Benue State — which does not allow open grazing of traveling cattle herds — borders the states of Nasarawa to its north and Taraba to the east and has been the scene of frequent bloody terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists since 2019. The herding clans belong to the Fulani ethnicity, which claims up to 10% of the population of Nigeria, Africa's

most populous country.

Gbeji is a remote farming town of 5,000 located two miles west of the state border with Taraba. Catholic villagers there receive ministry visits from St. Thomas parish in Afia, about 9 miles south of Gbeji.

The raid came in response to a violent clash earlier in the week. On Monday, October 17, local farmers carrying single-shot craft guns had clashed with and killed four Fulani herdsmen whose herds were threatening the ripe crops, Fr Fila told CNA.

## Nigerian teen struggles to forgive Boko Haram

As Maryamu Joseph, a 16-year-old victim of Boko Haram violence, recovers from trauma after years of captivity, she finds it hard to forgive the men who abducted her.

Maryamu recalls that one day when she was 7, armed men raided her community and went on a killing spree before she was abducted with 21 others.

She was caged in a militant camp deep in the Sambisa Forest, in northeastern Nigeria. "They took 22 of us into a thick forest, and we trekked for 22 days

before arriving at our destination. They put the Christians in cages, like animals," Maryamu told the pontifical aid agency Aid to the Church in Need.

"The first thing they did was forcefully convert us to Islam. They changed my name to Aisha, a Muslim name, and warned us not to pray as Christians, or we would be killed."

For nine years, she was in bondage in the camp, amid torture and abuse from her abductors, whom she described as heartless and ruthless.

"When I turned 10, they wanted to marry me to one of their bosses, but I refused. As punishment, they locked me in a cage for an entire year. They brought food once a day and pushed it under the door without ever opening the cage," she said in the ACN interview, conducted in her Hausa language.

Asked about forgiving the militants for incarceration, Maryamu said she needs time. "I don't think I am able to forgive them," she said.

## Hong Kong's Cardinal Zen returns to court

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun and five other activists returned to court October 26 to face charges of failing to register a legal fund meant to help those involved in anti-government protests.

Prosecutors said the now-defunct 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund should have been registered with police due to

its "massive" size and "systematic" mode of operation, according to the *South China Morning Post*.

In September, the West Kowloon Court found that defendants had a case to answer over their alleged failure to register the fund within a specified period.

The case involves the

Societies Ordinance, which says "any club, company, partnership or association of persons, whatever the nature or objects, to which the provisions of (the) ordinance apply," must register with the police commissioner or ask for an exemption.

Cardinal Zen, 90, is being prosecuted as a fund trustee

along with former lawmakers Margaret Ng Ngoi-yee and Cyd Ho Sau-lan, singer Denise Ho Wan-see and Hui Po-keung, a former university professor. Sze Ching-woo was charged as the organization's secretary.

Offenders can be fined HK\$10,000 (€1,280).



Edited by Jason Osborne  
jason@irishcatholic.ie

## Praying for peace amid the ruins



People attend a prayer service for peace with Pope Francis and other Christian leaders inside Rome's Colosseum, October 25. Photo: CNS/Remo Casilli, Reuters

## Disaffiliation grows in Canada as census shows 2 million fewer Catholics

The Catholic population in Canada has declined by almost 2 million people in the last 10 years, the Canadian census has found in a report that indicates the religiously unaffiliated now outnumber Catholics.

The latest census figures, compiled in 2021, show the Catholic Canadian population has declined to 10.9 million. Catholics now make up about 29.9% of the country's people. According to the 2011 census, the Catholic population that year was 12.8 million.

Just 53.3% of Canadians, 19.3 million people, now identify as Christian, a decline from 67.3% in 2011 and 77.1% in 2001. Statistics Canada, Canada's national statisti-

cal office, presented the latest figures in an October 26 report.

Catholicism is still the most popular religious affiliation in all provinces and territories except for Nunavut, the sparse population of which has a large Anglican component.

Quebec is the only majority Catholic province, but Catholic numbers declined "considerably," Statistics Canada said. In 2011, 74.7% of Quebec residents reported that they were Catholic. The 2021 figures indicate 53.8% of Quebec residents identified as Catholic.

CNA contacted the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Archdiocese

of Quebec for comment but did not receive a response by publication.

Among other Christian identities in Canada, the most numerous are the 7.6% of Canadians who identify as Christian without specifying a denomination. This is double the proportion from 2011.

About 3% of Canadians are adherents to the United Church of Canada, a mainline ecclesial community, and another 3% belong to the Anglican Church. Orthodox Christians, Baptists, and Pentecostal and other Charismatic Christians make up the remainder.

Among Christians, only the Orthodox Christian population and the non-specific

Christian population grew in the last decade.

Religious practice has also declined. A separate Canada Statistics summary, released in October 2021, said that in 2019 only about 20% of Canadians attended group religious activities at least monthly. This compares to 40% of Canadians who reported the same in 1985. Women were more likely than men to declare a religious affiliation, as were people born in older generations.

The religiously unaffiliated now make up 34.6% of the Canadian population, according to Statistics Canada's latest report.

## 'Citizens convention' to decide whether France legalises assisted suicide

This month 150 randomly-chosen French citizens will debate whether or not to adopt legislation that will legalise "assisted dying" as part of President Emmanuel Macron's plan to move forward on proposals to legalise assisted suicide.

The citizens' panel will take part in a six-month debate over whether to allow legal euthanasia and assisted suicide. Polling shows that 93% of French citizens support establishing a "right to die" in the country.

Macron said September 13 that the convention would be used to "then possibly change the legal framework by the end of 2023," according to European media outlet EURACTIV.

When news of Macron's plan broke in September, the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of France warned that the move departed from France's "ethical heritage" as a Catholic country.

"For several decades, a balance has gradually been found in our country to avoid therapeutic relentlessness and

promote palliative care. This 'French way' [says] something about our country's ethical heritage," the statement said.

"We perceive that the essential need of as many people as possible is to be considered, respected, helped, accompanied, not abandoned. Their suffering must be relieved, but their calls also express their need for relationship and proximity. Isn't the deepest expectation of all active help to live, rather than active help to die?" the statement added.

## Vatican roundup

### Synodality text praised at Vatican event

● The Holy Spirit is at work in the latest document of the Synod on Synodality, presenters said October 27 at a press conference on the guiding text for the next stage of the synod's discussions.

The document, or "synthesis of the syntheses," Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, SJ, said, "is therefore not a writing emerging out of theological writings. It is the fruit of the lived synodality, the lived theology, a dimension of the life in the Church".

"And, what is very beautiful, we were able to notice that the Holy Spirit is at work," he said at the presentation of the 44-page working document that will guide the next stage of synod discussions: the Continental Assemblies to be held between January and March 2023.

Cardinal Hollerich, who has one of the most important positions in the Synod on Synodality as relator general, spoke at the press conference via video call from Japan.

The document notes diverse challenges the Church faces worldwide, such as increased secularisation, forced conversion and religious persecution, lack of structures for people with disabilities and clericalism.

### Pope: Pornography weakens the soul

● After telling a funny story about receiving a cellphone decades ago that was "as big as a shoe," Pope Francis went on to encourage young priests and seminarians to use technology and social media, but to avoid pornography at all costs.

Responding October 24 to questions from priests and seminarians studying in Rome, Pope Francis said he wanted to speak plainly about a danger technology has put in everyone's reach: digital pornography. "I am not going to say, 'Raise your hand if you have had at least one experience of this,'" the Pope said.

But "it is a vice that so many people have, so many laymen, so many

laywomen, and even priests and nuns. The devil enters from there".

Pope Francis said he was not talking only about "criminal" forms of porn like child pornography, but of "the somewhat 'normal' pornography. Dear brothers, be careful of this. The pure heart, the heart that receives Jesus every day, cannot receive this pornographic information".

According to a transcript released October 26 by the Vatican press office, the Pope told the priests and seminarians that if their phones and computers would allow them to block all access to porn, they should set that up, and if not, they should be on guard.

### Cardinal Tagle defends Vatican-China deal

● Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle has defended the Vatican's decision to renew its provisional agreement with China on the appointment of bishops.

The Filipino cardinal, considered a contender to become the Catholic Church's first Asian pope, said that the Holy See signed the agreement "to safeguard the valid apostolic succession and the sacramental nature of the Catholic Church in China".

"And this can reassure, comfort, and enliven baptised Catholics in China," Cardinal Tagle said in an interview published October 22.

When asked in the interview for his response to critics of the agreement who say that the Holy See's dealings with Beijing have led to the Vatican's silence on the sufferings and problems of Chinese Catholics, he said:

"In dialogue, the Holy See has its own respectful style of communicating with representatives of the Chinese government, but which never ignores and indeed always makes present the situations of suffering of Catholic communities, which sometimes arise from inappropriate pressures and interference."

# LetterfromUSA



Dennis Sadowski

Universities around the world are taking steps alongside major technology companies to explore ways to bolster ethics education in the artificial intelligence field in line with an initiative supported by the Vatican.

The effort seeks to help those already working or aspiring to work in the tech fields understand that the development of artificial intelligence, or AI, should benefit humanity rather than pose uncontrollable challenges to human life.

Participants at a global summit at the University of Notre Dame October 25-26 explored ways to encompass ethics education in coursework with speakers calling for widespread integration in both technical and nontechnical curricula.

Casey Fiesler, associate professor of information science at the University of Colorado, told in person and online attendees in a session that the long-held view that ethical topics are a "specialisation" within technology education must be put aside.

"We should not be teaching ethics in the context of computing so that it is completely separate from everything else that we are doing," Ms Fiesler said in calling for a culture shift in higher education that can reach across society.

**AI software allows school officials to gauge whether a student is under stress or at risk of withdrawing from a class based on certain nonstandard cues"**

The Vatican's role stems from its involvement in the "Rome Call for AI Ethics," which calls for ethical principles and guidelines to be used in AI development so that products that are developed, sold and used actually promote the good of all humanity.

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, was among the first five signatories to the charter in February 2020. He joined executives from Microsoft, IBM, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation and Italy's minister of innovation.

He told the summit that the Vatican has led the development of the Rome Call for AI Ethics because the Church sees the advantages of technological innovation in improving human life, but that such progress must be guided by ethical principles.



A robot equipped with artificial intelligence is seen at the AI Xperience Centre at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Brussels. 2020. Photo: CNS/Yves Herman, Reuters

**"Ethics needs to be everywhere all the time. It's like the air. You run out of air, you'd be in bad shape"**

Progress, he said, "must be humankind's servant, not a monster that gobbles us up, wears us down, lets us die".

### Representatives

The summit included representatives of about three dozen Catholic, other faith-based and public universities in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America and the US. Speakers and panel discussions examined issues of transparency, accountability, impartiality, reliability and security and privacy.

The integration of AI systems in university life already is widespread, said Joseph Glover, provost and senior vice president of academic affairs at the University of Florida. For example, AI software allows school officials to gauge whether a student is under stress or at risk of withdrawing from a class based on certain nonstandard cues.

Having access to such information poses moral questions on whether to intervene, Mr Glover said during a panel discussion.

"We're grappling on a practical level (with) how do we make use

of this information and how to advance the student and promote student success," he said, explaining that "I know something about the student which the student may not know. How am I obligated to communicate that?"

Presenters also said such ethical questions can be raised in any number of areas, ranging from more sophisticated monitoring of social media usage to the development of military weapons that become more efficient at the risk of human life.

### Ethical implications

Speaker Pascale Fung, professor of electronic and computer engineering at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, told the summit she began looking at ethical implications in the AI field after working on a voice command system for fighter jet pilots in a project funded by the military industry in the 1990s.

She said her primary concern at the time was to make the technology more accurate and robust, thinking that eventually such an application would benefit civil-

ian endeavours as well. But others began asking her why she was investing her talents in a system that was reducing human involvement in decision-making that placed human life at risk.

"I was shocked by the questions and began to think about the why of what we were doing," Ms Fung said.

**Presenters also said such ethical questions can be raised in any number of areas"**

A deeper integration of ethical issues can reach across technology fields and can involve other disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, law and business so that students begin to think about how AI can serve humanity, Ms Fung and other participants said.

At the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, ongoing events bring people together to explore ethics and artificial intelligence, Karrie Karahalios, professor of

computer science at the school, said during a panel discussion.

Such gatherings allow for having "a common language across all our different departments" so that human needs are not eclipsed in the development of new technologies, she said.

### Ethics

Ms Karahalios also said the same type of ethics education can be extended across society, reaching lawmakers, middle school and high school students and even consumers.

Brian Green, director of technology ethics at the Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University in California, echoed this view.

"Ethics needs to be everywhere all the time. It's like the air. You run out of air, you'd be in bad shape," he said.

During the conference's second day, eight institutions, including Notre Dame, signed on to the "Rome Call for AI Ethics." Other are the University of Navarra and Schiller International University in Spain; Catholic University of Croatia; SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Poland; Chuo University in Japan, the University of Johannesburg in South Africa and the University of Florida.

The summit was planned by the Pontifical Academy for Life, IBM and Notre Dame and hosted by the Notre Dame-IBM Technology Ethics Lab.

# Catholic leaders want 'synodal' Church in Latin America



Barbara Fraser

**T**he Church in Latin America and the Caribbean is called to be a missionary Church that heeds the cry of the poor and excluded; a synodal Church where women, young people and laypeople have greater roles; and a Church that is evangelised even as it evangelises, according to the final document of the Church's First Ecclesial Assembly held a year ago in Mexico.

The document of reflections and pastoral challenges resulting from the assembly was released by leaders of the Latin American bishops' council, CELAM, October 31 during a news conference at the Vatican. The conference was livestreamed on various platforms.

**“In contexts as complex as those of our world, we are called to be a sign, to be an expression of a way of being and of values that definitely must be countercultural and eloquent”**

The publication reflects a desire for a Church that “goes out to the periphery ... a Samaritan Church ... a Church that builds fraternity, which is grounded in love, in the encounter with those who suffer most,” Archbishop José Luis Azuaje of Maracaibo, Venezuela, president of Caritas in Latin America and the Caribbean, said in a video message at the presentation.

The document is the fruit of a months-long process that included a “listening” period from April to August 2021, during which some 70,000 people throughout the region provided input, followed by the weeklong assembly November 21-28.

That process, which echoed the methodology used for the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon in October 2019, made the ecclesial assembly “a practical laboratory” for the Synod of

Bishops on synodality, which began with listening sessions this year, to be followed by meetings in Rome in 2023 and 2024, said Archbishop Miguel Cabrejos of Trujillo, Peru, CELAM president.

Published in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and German, with a French version also promised, the document is meant not only as a summary, but as a guide for action in the coming years, said Cardinal Leopoldo José Brenes of Managua, Nicaragua, and CELAM's second vice president.

“This isn't just another document,” he said, adding that the reflections and proposals “are something much more dynamic ... which will give a new impetus to our pastoral work”.

## Signs of the times

The document, titled *Toward a Synodal Church Going Forth into the Periphery*, begins by summarising “signs of the times” in the region, including the Covid-19 pandemic – which meant that only about 100 participants attended the assembly in person, while another 1,104 participated online.

These signs of the times, based on input from the listening sessions, include social and economic inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic; government corruption and the fragility of the region's democracies; ravaging of the environment, especially in the Amazon; massive migration; the growth of cities; and an expansion of both Pentecostal Churches and secularism.

Issues within the Church that were mentioned during the listening process and in the assembly included the need to “overcome clericalism,” a call for transparency in handling cases of abuse, better formation for priests and religious, and opportunities for more formation of and participation by laypeople, including women, young people, Indigenous people and those of African descent.

Men and women religious in the region “are embracing our identity as disciples and missionaries, and we understand that it is necessary that we be converted,” Sr Liliana Franco Echeverri of the Company of Mary Our Lady, president of the Latin American and Caribbean Conference



Catholics and members of a Peruvian community living in Chile attend the procession of *El Señor de los Milagros* (The Lord of the Miracles), Peru's most revered Catholic religious icon, in Santiago, Chile, October 30. Photo: CNS/Ivan Alvarado, Reuters

of Religious, said in a video message.

“We all need formation to be better witnesses and to prioritise formation in synodality so as to overcome the many and very diverse forms of clericalism,” she added. “In contexts as complex as those of our world, we are called to be a sign, to be an expression of a way of being and of values that definitely must be countercultural and eloquent.”

**“The document ends with dozens of ‘lines of action’ for addressing the challenges raised in the ‘signs of the times’ section”**

Participants in the 2021 Ecclesial Assembly also called for a greater role for young people, a plea echoed by Paola Balanza, a Bolivian youth ministry leader, in a video message at the news conference.

Young people, with their creativity and enthusiasm, “can make a great contribu-

tion to the Church. But we need to be in spaces where decisions are made, where we are taken into account, and where our voice is heard,” Ms Balanza said. “It is important that we realise that we are the work of God, we are the holy ground, we not only are the future, we also are the present.”

She urged the region's Church leaders not to leave the post-assembly document on the shelf, but to take action to implement it.

The document ends with dozens of “lines of action” for addressing the challenges raised in the “signs of the times” section. When the CELAM leaders were asked at the news conference about how those actions would be implemented, the response was generally that the specific steps would be up to each bishops' conference.

To some extent, that leaves the Ecclesial Assembly document in the same situation as the document that ended the Fifth General Conference of Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007. That gathering

ended with a call for a “great continental mission” to reach out to Catholics who had left the church and invite others to join.

While individual jurisdictions may have made efforts, however, no regionwide plan was ever developed.

## Latin American

It was for that reason that when the Latin American bishops proposed a sixth general conference to mark the 15th anniversary of Aparecida, Pope Francis – who as Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio of Argentina led the commission that drafted the Aparecida document – instead asked them to find a way to implement conclusions from Aparecida that remained pending. That request led to the listening process and the Ecclesial Assembly.

But although there is not a specific plan, the document does list the action areas for each challenge. The bishops at the news conference also agreed on the need to implement the guidelines from the Ecclesial Assembly, some of which are also serving as

input for the synod on synodality.

With their skill in using technology for networking, young people can play a key role in continuing the process, said Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer of São Paulo, first vice president of CELAM. During the Ecclesial Assembly, he said, young participants took advantage of social networks to quickly form discussion groups with members from as many as 20 countries.

**“Emphasising the participation of laypeople, including women and young people, he added, ‘This was the outcome of a dialogue of the people of God’”**

The document is part of a process that began with discernment, continued through the assembly and does not end with publication of the conclusions, Archbishop Cabrejos said. “It's like a door that opens, but that is not going to close.”

Emphasising the participation of laypeople, including women and young people, he added, “This was the outcome of a dialogue of the people of God.”

**“The document is the fruit of a months-long process that included a “listening” period from April to August 2021, during which some 70,000 people throughout the region provided input, followed by the weeklong assembly November 21-28”**

# Letters

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

## Letter of the week

### Govt plans to silence any pro-life discussion on abortion

**Dear Editor,** The Government is considering plans to extend exclusion zones to any place that might putatively be providing "termination of pregnancy services" and not only those already doing so.

The term itself is broad enough to cover everything from an actual abortion clinic all the way down to any local pharmacy that might be dispensing the 'morning after pill' – whether or not it is actually doing so. Would there be any logical reason not to include also any place providing abortion counselling services?

While the pro-abortion lobby claims harassment is widespread, to date not a

single protestor has even been arrested, much less charged, with any such crime, suggesting the pro-abortion lobby's case is greatly over-stated. This was the opinion too of Garda Commissioner Drew Harris, who said existing legislation was adequate to deal with any putative harassment. The commissioner's views were ignored yet An Síochána are being invited to participate in the latest review – presumably just so their professional viewpoint can be ignored again by the politicians and lobbyists determined to stifle all discussion around abortion.

Make no mistake, that is the real aim: if enacted, 'exclusion zones' will effectively prevent any kind of pro-life dem-

onstration taking place in most villages and medium sized towns. Few public places are more than 100 metres from a GP, pharmacy, hospital and so on. Once established, the next step will be to block pro-life advertising in the mainstream media, on grounds that a woman might stumble across them and reconsider her abortion.

Having won their victory at the polls the pro-abortion lobby move to silence any discussion around abortion for fear people might change their minds again, as they did between 1983 and 2018.

*Yours etc.,  
Nick Folley  
Carrigaline, Co. Cork*

## Reaffirming the greatness of Jesus Christ

**Dear Editor,** Reading *The Synodal Times* [October 6], which seems to be a sister publication to *The Irish Catholic*, I was struck by the interesting and varied overview it gave of the synodal process across the world. In the opinion piece by Peter Keenan I was very surprised that, near the end of the piece, he identified Charles Darwin, not Jesus Christ, as "arguably the greatest human being who ever lived". I don't want to detract from the greatness of Darwin, but I am taken aback, because the implication is that Jesus himself is not arguably as great as Darwin was. It got me thinking about the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), whose dominating influence the same author laments: this council reaffirmed the greatness of Jesus Christ in the face of those who would reduce it.

*Yours etc.,  
Fr Columba McCann OSB  
Murroe, Co. Limerick*



## Parishioners expectation of their bishops

**Dear Editor,** A number of bishops seem intent on blaming the woes of the Catholic Church on Catholics who take their faith seriously. Everyone else is to blame except the bishops themselves. Parishioners are being asked to fill out questionnaires on what type of Church we want into the future, however, should parishioners be drawing up questionnaires on what do we expect from our bishops? I.e.:

Do you think bishops should be men of prayer?

Should our bishops regularly lead parishes in hours of prayer and adoration? Do you think your bishop is afraid of politicians and mainstream media? Do you think bishops show far too much respect for other religions and little or none for the Catholic Faith? Do you think your bishop put up a good fight to try and

secure a 'No' vote at the 2015 gay marriage referendum and 2018 abortion referendum?

Do you pray for your bishop?

Do you remember a time when your bishop got into a heated debate on TV or radio in order to defend the Faith?

Do you think bishops should allow politicians who are openly anti-Catholic in their words and legislation to receive a Catholic funeral?

Shepherds should be looking after the sheep instead of pandering to the wolves.

Another reason, although a lesser one, for bishops to look after the flock: It's regular Massgoers who donate at collection time, so bishops can live in beautiful furnished homes and drive good cars.

*Yours etc.,  
John Donohoe  
Blackrock Road, Cork City*

## Obsessive idolisation of the Latin Mass

**Dear Editor,** A couple of years ago my dad surprised me with a story I had not heard. It was about my baptism. Apparently I was baptised in Latin, so strictly speaking my name is not Stephen Anthony but Stephanus Antonious.

I wonder what all the fuss is about having Mass in Latin. It seems to verge on obsession from some quarters, particularly when it is idolised to the point of its proponents separating themselves from the Church, becoming essentially Latin speaking protestants – like the SSPX for whom even the subtle hint of excommunication of its bishops wasn't enough to snap them out of it.

Language is important though. And I think Scripture hints at what is appropriate. In the Acts of the Apostles, on Pentecost we see the apostles preaching (I imagine in Aramaic) and "everybody understood them in their own language" (Acts 2:6). That's how the Holy Spirit did it, he did not make them all suddenly understand Aramaic, but translated it for them into their own language; the language of the heart.

A few years ago, up in a fairly remote northern province in the Philippines I was talking to a chap from the Isneg tribe who told me about a missionary who had spent

years translating the New Testament into the Isneg language. The people there speak English and Filipino of course and many were already Christians but he said when he read Scripture in his "own language" he wept. It moved him so deeply to hear it in the language of heart.

Surely though what is needed is to get back to basics, not so much with tradition but fully 'orthodox' to the instructions left behind by Jesus. To preach the Gospel, heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons.

*Yours etc.,  
Stephen Clark  
Malate, Manila, Philippines*

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

### Court action to have baptism record destroyed

If he properly understood the Sacrament of Baptism he would never want to rid himself of the Grace he received. Once baptised always baptised. Paper can be got rid of but not the mark of the Sacrament. – **Brendan Gallagher**

He's taking it to court? He was baptised whether he likes it or not. He can repudiate it. But not change it. All sounds very petty to be honest. – **Caroline Hendron**

Given how easily Church institutions destroyed other records in the past one wonders why they would resist this request. – **Lorna Downey**

### Irish Columban in South Korea laments flaring military tensions

Is somebody listening to the Irish Columbans? It must be terrifying. The North Koreans are in danger of sending nuclear missiles. South Korea must be indeed worried, God help them. – **Deirdre Quinn**

### Media bias contributes to the decline of the Church that is so gleefully reported

The media bias against the Church is a disgrace. We no longer have journalists, instead we have political activists who have an agenda that is dictated by their masters to follow. The Government are equally as biased against the Church. We have a crowd of heathens running the country. – **Mary Duggan Murphy**

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

## Papal infallibility and orthodox Catholics

**Dear Editor,** Peter Keenan asks of the doctrine of papal infallibility, "do today's historically and theologically literate Catholics really believe this pretentious claim?" [*The Irish Catholic* – October 13, 2022].

The short answer to his question is 'Yes' – all orthodox Catholics do. Mr Keenan may wish to dismiss us as 'Ultramontanists' but correctly understood (as it is outlined by Vatican I and interpreted by St John Henry Newman) the dogma teaches us about the protection of the deposit of faith by the successor of St Peter; it is neither "pretentious" nor is it, contrary to a common misunderstanding, a license to invent doctrine.

What Mr Keenan dismisses as a "pretentious claim" was part of the teaching of the Church when I was received eight years ago and so it is today. The obligation to accept that teaching applies both to cradle Catholics and to converts – as much to Mr Keenan as to me or any other member of the Church.

I can add that as a Church historian I am (whatever Mr Keenan may think) theologically and historically literate.

*Yours etc.,  
C.D.C. Armstrong  
Belfast, Co. Antrim*

## 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.

# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, November 3, 2022

## Personal Profile

A faith matured  
in apostolic action

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# Resisting radicalisation on-and-off-line



**I**spend a lot of time on Twitter and other social media platforms by virtue of the line of work that I'm in, and it has opened my eyes to the level of detachment from reality that some permanently-online people achieve. If I had to guess, I would say the reason for this is that it's remarkably easy to create your own 'echo-chamber' space online – no matter your religious or political persuasion – and to control that space such that you don't often encounter things that really challenge or change you. Of course, it's possible to create or get stuck in a rut offline too, but there are some key differences that we'll come to later.



**The internet has exacerbated our tendency to veer to extreme views so it's important to be on our guard, writes Jason Osborne**

The increasing 'polarisation' of society is a well-discussed topic at this stage, with the phenomenon itself largely breaking into mainstream view around the time of the 2016 US presidential election. America having quite a dominant presence in the global media sphere, the splitting of discourse

into right- and left-wing, conservative and liberal, has increasingly grafted itself onto other places too, if not appearing exactly the same.

This polarisation seems to be the product of people inhabiting totally different worldviews, combined with an inability or unwillingness to engage patiently with

those arrayed opposite to them. While there are obviously social implications to this, for today's purposes, I'm more interested in the personal implications of going down a rabbit hole that you can't get out of.

This being *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, for the purposes of this article, I'm going to assume that our goal is sainthood – becoming the person God created us to be – which is to live a life guided and motivated by love. Becoming radicalised or extreme in any direction but in our pursuit of God (and it's tricky even to get this right) is detrimental not only to this goal, but to those around us, too.

Spending as much time online

as I do, and being exposed to the loud voices that I am, I thought it'd be worth sharing some of the thoughts I've had and the lessons I've learned regarding how to resist radicalisation, and choose the "better part" – that is, a life and conduct pleasing to God. This isn't to say I've succeeded at either of these things, just that I've picked up some useful tips and tricks in my own striving, that may well be helpful to you, too.

### Pray

Prayer is a piece of advice that comes up often in my columns here, with regards to a variety of topics, but I don't think that makes

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## Family News



### AND EVENTS

#### US WOMAN SETS BEES ON POLICE

A US woman is facing several charges after allegedly unleashing honeybees to attack police officers as they enforced an eviction on a home in Massachusetts.

The incident happened after Rorie Susan Woods, a 55-year-old professional beekeeper from Hadley, MA arrived at the property towing a stack of manufactured beehives with an SUV while Hampden County Sheriff's deputies were enforcing the eviction notice, the sheriff's department said.

The department said the residence belonged to a man who had garnered the support of anti-eviction activists, including Ms Woods.

The sheriff's office said Ms Woods exited the vehicle and tried to open the lids to unleash the bees as a deputy tried to stop her.

Ms Woods smashed the styrofoam lid of one hive tower, and as the bees escaped, the deputy received several stings on his face and head.

She flipped the entire hive tower off the flatbed, causing the bees to become highly agitated and swarm the area, stinging several members of the Sheriff's Office.

As she donned a beekeeper suit and moved a hive close to the door of the home, deputies swooped in and arrested her.

#### 'HOUDINI' SNAKE ESCAPE SHUTS DOWN SWEDISH ZOO

A Swedish zoo has been partially shut down after a king cobra staged an impressive escape from its enclosure at the weekend, with staff still searching for the venomous vagrant days after its escape.

The snake, named Sir Vas (Sir Hiss), escaped through a lamp fixture in a terrarium and was believed to be somewhere in an inner ceiling.

He had only been brought to the zoo a few days earlier.

The snake has now been renamed Houdini after the famed escape artist, said Jonas Wahlstrom, director of the Skansen Aquarium.

Staff have spread out flour to try and track the slithery fugitive and sticky traps have been deployed.

#### US CREATIONISTS BUILD ARK TO PROMOTE THEORY

A full-sized model of Noah's Ark sitting in rural Kentucky promotes a worldview that draws visitors from across the United States – that the theory of evolution is false.

The Ark Encounter and the associated Creation Museum espouse the belief that God literally created the Earth in six days around 4,000 BC.

Evangelical Christians flock to see the spectacular staging and sharp denunciations of scientific facts such as that dinosaurs became extinct about 65 million years ago.

"Dinosaurs are often used by evolutionists to proclaim their worldview. So we've taken the dinosaurs back, if you will," said Mark Looy, cofounder of the ark amusement park and the museum.

# The key feature of every type of relationship



Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi and he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father" [Matthew 16:13-17].

#### Distance and intimacy

Enda McDonagh, writing in *The Furrow* in 1981 reminded us that "Our relationship with Jesus Christ is characterised by an elusive combination of distance and intimacy. Our personal relationship with him is constantly nourished and modelled on the discipleship accounts of the New Testament."

In John 14:6 Jesus tells us "I am the way, the truth and the life". For much of our life we may accept the truth of this and may strive to follow the way he describes – loving God and our neighbour who is ourselves – but without having any sense of a personal relationship with Jesus. For much of my life I have felt challenged by the obscurity of our personal relationship – between him and me – as viewed from my perspective.

So, what does it mean to have a personal relationship with anyone. The nature of any relationship depends on so many things. For example, we can have a really close relationship with a best friend or a partner that is quite different to our relationship with siblings and parents. We can feel very close to people we haven't seen for years but when

## Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



we meet up it seems like only yesterday since we last spoke. By comparison we may encounter others almost every day without ever being particularly close. Relationships between father and son can be very different to that between a husband and wife, without being any less deep or meaningful.

A key feature of every relationship is that something draws the two of you together – whether it is a common interest or a shared passion or a common worldview which leads to mutual respect and admiration. In our ordinary everyday relationships, we choose to spend time with those with whom we desire to be in relationship. And, more importantly, we pay attention to them and to what they have to say to us, through words or otherwise.

Some relationships are the kind where everything is shared in great detail while in others all that is important and vital in life is understood and acknowledged without a word being spoken. Speaking recently with Paul Muldoon, Bono spoke of how he and his father would meet every Sunday at midday at the same table in Finnegan's pub in Dalkey, Dublin. Bono told Muldoon how he really came to understand his father from all those Sunday meetings

"by just sitting here and not talking". Yet by turning up and being together – albeit often in silence for long periods – their relationship deepened even if unbeknownst to themselves at times.

Very often when you go to talk with a friend about something that really matters to you and about which you are confused or conflicted, you are not really looking for someone who will tell you what you need to do. Instead, you value most the friend who listens deeply, says very little but, asking a few key questions with loving kindness, helps you find your own answers.

James Finley reminds us that we spend much of our lives on the outer circumference of the inner richness of our lives. Although we may have had an upbringing that honoured the spiritual dimension of our lives, the busyness of modern life means that we may pay little



attention to it for long periods of time. However, Fr Laurence Freeman reminds us that there often comes a decisive moment in our lives when we become aware that Jesus is aware of us; that He has turned around and sees us following him and we come to appreciate that he speaks not merely to his

disciples then but to us today when he says "Come and see". That awareness can be quite obscure, sensed merely as a growing recognition that there is something vital missing from our lives. One way of responding to such a call is to take up meditation.

#### Tradition

In the Christian contemplative tradition, every time you choose to meditate is a deliberate personal choice to spend time in God's company. Not talking to God but simply being still and silent in his presence. We have faith that in our time of meditation we enter into intimate communion with him at a level of experience which is deeper than our ordinary self-conscious experience. And our intention in entering such a state of consciousness is to leave ourselves – our true self – open and vulnerable to being changed personally by that encounter.

As we repeat our mantra in meditation we aim to take our attention away from ourselves, from the demands of the ego and redirect it towards God; not to thinking about God or our relationship with God but with the intention of simply being with God; we simply sit in heart-felt stillness and silence in God's presence.

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

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it any less relevant. By prayer, I mean not only personal prayer, but communal prayer, too – the sacraments and devotions of the Church and the people of God.

**“Christ, the sacraments and the example of humble, simple people act as beacons when the conversation and culture get a little too hot to handle”**

I do fervently believe these to be the firmest foundation upon which to base your life, and taking them as a starting point, coupled with sound guidance from those older and wiser than yourself, who are perhaps a little further down the road with Christ, is critical when it comes to orienting yourself properly in what can often be an overwhelming and confusing world.

This is a particularly important point when it comes to the topic of radicalisation or immersion in unsavoury discourse – Christ, the sacraments and the example of humble, simple people act as beacons when the conversation and culture get a little too hot to handle.

### Take breaks

Sometimes, after spending a good deal of time online, a break can have a salvific effect. There's only so much a person can take of see-

ing the craziest opinions and developments surpassed time and time again before they start to grow in despair and resentment. Continuing to engage with the madness of the internet when you're in that rut internally is a bad idea, as you're likely to be susceptible to the extreme voices that appeal to your sensibilities, but who often lack the love or nuance that our saintly aspirations require.

Even though the internet and its crazy contents can be maddening, it can be equally difficult to step away from. After all, as mentioned above, those comments that drive us craziest are often about things people hold dear – be it religion, politics or otherwise. It can be very easy to fall into the trap of thinking that you must always be standing guard, ready to engage with those you disagree vehemently with, but the better option would be to take a step back and take a break.

Retreats have a long and esteemed tradition in not only our Faith, but in many others as well. The goodness of separating yourself from your preoccupations from time to time is well-recognised, as it often puts you back in touch with those mundane but essential realities that we're so capable of forgetting – such as proper spiritual and physical care.

### Don't shun the mundane

Closely connected to the above point – don't shun the prosaic activities God has filled our world and our lives with. Engaging with the “culture war” and “fighting the good fight” are all well and good, but we

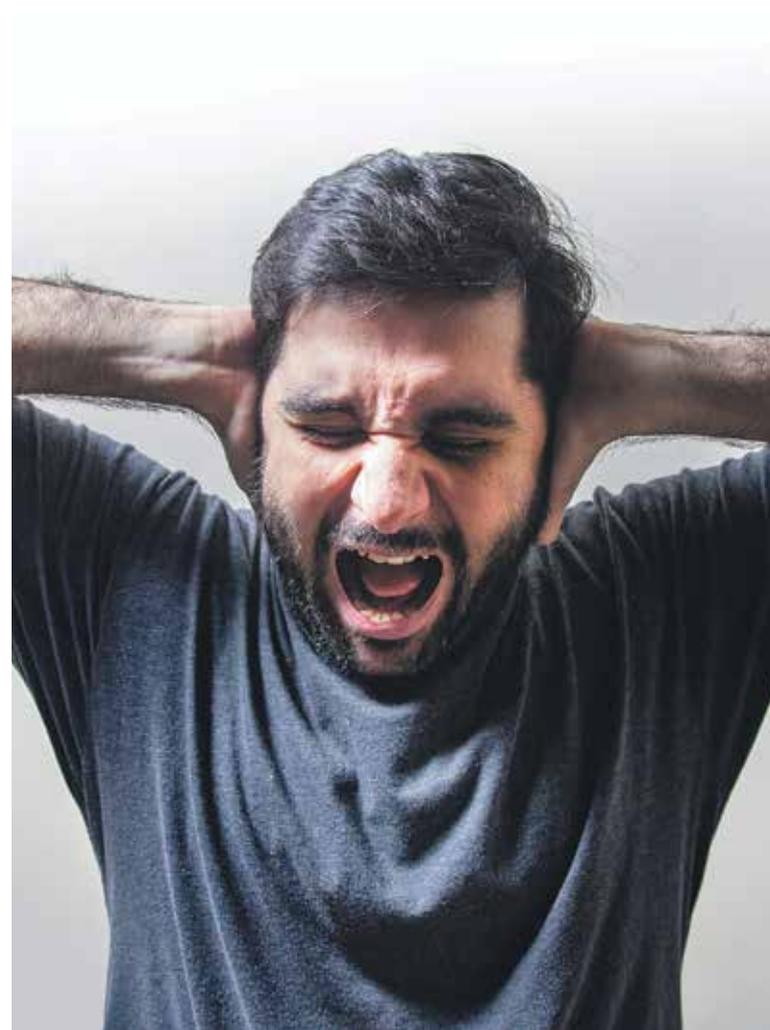
**“It's been said by wiser people than I that God gives us most of what we need – and so it's no coincidence that our lives are filled with dull repetition”**

can't actually spend all of our time doing those things or we become somewhat lopsided – caricatures who can't switch off, which is a skill that a well-rounded person ought to be in full possession of.

**“It's been said by wiser people than I that God gives us most of what we need – and so it's no coincidence that our lives are filled with dull repetition”**

I used to hate housework (like most people), but I've come to appreciate the simplicity of it after a long day of being exposed to the digital world and all that it contains. Washing the dishes or hoovering the house feels like a very solid, normal activity after reading or watching crazy opinions and news.

It's been said by wiser people than I that God gives us most of what we need – and so it's no coincidence that our lives are filled with dull repetition. Rather than shunning it in favour of flashy arguments and developments online, perhaps we ought to welcome those inglorious but necessary trials and tribulations that God fills our days with.



# A faith matured in apostolic action

## Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

A ski trip might seem a strange way to engage young people in the Faith. But that's how Áine Blake got involved in the Legion of Mary. Now volunteering in the women's homelessness hostel, the Regina Coeli, she says the work has helped mature her faith.

**“After college, Ms Blake moved to Dublin for work. Although she had heard of the Legion of Mary, she didn't know much about them and didn't actively seek them out”**

Ms Blake always had an attachment to the Faith, first coming to her from her parents. Both were practising Catholics and gave her “a solid foundation”.

“I took that with me into college,” Ms Blake tells me. “When I started into college, I started getting to know Catholics who were my own age who I really hadn't known before. The social circle broadened at that stage, which was super.”

“And I got in contact with different prayer groups and things going on, which was great. Then I came



Áine Blake.

up to Dublin to get involved in the Legion. It's been really good, the different steps along the way to help support my own spiritual journey.”

While there wasn't a time in Ms Blake's life where she felt like her faith was drifting, she knew going to college was a “definite transition”. She had to take “ownership of my own faith for myself and decide was I going to keep going to Mass and do those things”, she explains.

“And I wanted to, I thought it was really important when I did start college that I made that step for myself and never looked back really. I'm so grateful for all the friends I've made in the Faith, the different connections.”

“Through college when I was in Cork, the Poor Clare sisters were based there near campus. They had Eucharistic adoration on every day and

Mass every day and that kept me on the straight and narrow. I don't know where I'd be if I didn't have my faith. It's kept me going the whole way.”

### Ski trip

After college, Ms Blake moved to Dublin for work. Although she had heard of the Legion of Mary, she didn't know much about them and didn't actively seek them out. But then Fr Declan Lohan organised a ski trip through the Legion, to France in 2020, which Áine joined.

“We did some skiing out there, taking our example a little from Pope John Paul II, who enjoyed the outdoors, very much appreciated the beauty that God has put around us,” she says. “We were doing that active element of it.”

“There was also the prayer bit. We

had Mass and Adoration while we were out there. And I saw them do a little bit of street contact as well... That was my first contact with anything Legion related.”

Then, six weeks after coming back from France, Ms Blake was at Mass in Beaumont and had an encounter with two legionaries. They got into a discussion about the Faith and one of them invited her along to a Legion meeting.

**“Many of the residents are dealing with complex issues, like addiction and family problems”**

“I went and it was based in the Regina Coeli, the women's hostel and I have been involved ever since. I really, really enjoy it,” Áine says.

A number of praesidia – local councils in the Legion structure – help with the Regina Coeli. Ms Blake's was one of those councils and she volunteers on a weekly basis in the evening and helps with everyday duties. The work itself is quite straightforward, usually involving preparing teas, cleaning up or letting the residents in and out.

“The spiritual aspect of it is being there as a personal contact for the residents to help talk to them about how their day went,” Ms explains. “We help counsel them if there are any difficulties or problems and help encourage them in prayer.”

“We have a little oratory inside the hostel and the rosary gets prayed a couple times a day. And every now and again, we have things, like we might have Mass in the hostel and that spiritual peace is really important to help offer to residents.”

Many of the residents are dealing with complex issues, like addiction and family problems. Áine says that the volunteers job is to “meet the residents where they are at”, provid-

ing a friendly face, encouragement and support.

She continues, saying: “I find it fantastic. Every week I go in I find it lifts my spirits. And it's not that every week is easy, there are so many challenges that you face, there are ups and downs.”

“It's such a privilege to be able to meet these people and offer support in whatever way I can and learn from them as well. They've been through incredible trials and challenges, so I find them inspiring and they definitely make me appreciate all that I have and not take it for granted.”

As well as the work itself, the camaraderie of the volunteers is a great source of support for Áine: “We're all there to do our work on a voluntary basis and to do it for Our Lady. That's the ultimate aim. We want to spread the Gospel in whatever way we can and be the hands of Christ for those residents in the hostel. It's a privilege really to do that kind of work, to be there for people in their time of need.”

The work has been of benefit for Ms Blake's own spiritual life. She has found a balance between spiritual nourishment and giving back through active apostolic work.

“My main work is in the hostel, but I've also had opportunities to engage in other kinds of works like street contact in Dublin city and other things as well, like parish projects. We've been to Wexford and to Galway.”

“And you meet people, maybe it's on the street or door to door, you're calling to houses just to have a discussion with people to have a chat about their faith. And it's been very freeing for me definitely, to think you can have discussions with people about that. That ability, the thing of giving back, definitely helped mature my faith and I'm so grateful to the Legion for that.”

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

## Sweet Treats

Kiley Britten



## A perfect chocolate cake

This recipe is just gorgeous. I highly suggest making it your go-to cake recipe. You can cut the recipe in half if you are making it for 2-4 people, as it is quite decadent.

● ½ teaspoon espresso powder

### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/Gas 6. Prepare two 9-inch cake pans by spraying with baking spray or buttering and lightly flouring.

### For the chocolate cake:

2. Add flour, sugar, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, salt and espresso powder to a large bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer. Whisk through to combine or, using your paddle attachment, stir through flour mixture until combined well.

3. Add milk, vegetable oil, eggs, and vanilla to flour mixture and mix together on medium speed until well combined. Reduce speed and carefully add boiling water to the cake batter until well combined. Keep in mind that you

may not need all the water. If the batter is runny, don't make it thin.

4. Distribute cake batter evenly between the two prepared cake pans. Bake for 20-25 minutes, until a toothpick or cake tester inserted in the center of the chocolate cake comes out clean.

5. Remove from the oven and allow to cool for about 10 minutes, remove from the pan and cool completely.

### For the buttercream:

6. Add cocoa powder to a large bowl or bowl of stand mixer. Whisk through to remove any lumps.

7. Cream together butter and cocoa powder until well-combined.

8. Add sugar and milk to cocoa mixture by adding 1 cup of sugar followed by about a tablespoon of milk. After each addition has been combined, turn mixer onto a high speed for about a minute. Repeat until all sugar and milk have been added.

9. Add espresso powder and combine well.

10. If frosting appears too dry, add more milk, a tablespoon at a time until it reaches the right consistency. If it appears to wet and does not hold its form, add more icing sugar, a tablespoon at a time until it reaches the right consistency.



### Ingredients:

- 9oz/240g all-purpose flour
- 7oz/300g sugar
- 3 1/2 oz/100g cocoa powder
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp espresso powder
- 240ml milk
- 120ml vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 240ml boiling water
- 12oz/340g butter softened
- 4oz/130g cocoa powder
- 12oz/340g icing sugar
- 120ml milk

# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Plenty to crib about over Dublin mayor's decision

As many programmes were gearing up for the Halloween horrors, it was great to watch a relaxing programme that celebrated the joys of autumn and the beauty of creation in general.

It was the last episode of the current series of **Gardeners' World** (BBC Two, Friday) and *I* was a good one. Regular presenter Carol Klein visited an arboretum and the autumn colours of the leaves were simply stunning. The beautiful brown and golden leaves that fall off the trees may be a nuisance to some but main presenter Monty Don showed us how to recycle them as leaf mould.

### Seasonal display

Pumpkins figure prominently at this time of year and they formed part of a marvellous seasonal display. I never knew there could be white pumpkins and that they were part of the squash family, but the orange ones are essential for Halloween creepiness. If only Putin, Kim Jong-un and their likes were keen gardeners they'd never be dangling the spectre of destruction over our heads. God is not explicitly given credit for the beauty of nature during the show, but in context that's OK I think – believers and nonbelievers can meet on common ground – the ground we dig to get things growing.



Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy's decision to cancel the live animal crib outside Mansion House has led to backlash.

Moving on a season, last week there was a minor controversy about the Mansion House live Crib. The Lord Mayor Caroline Conroy (Green Party) and her protocol committee have decided to go instead for what she described, when grilled by an unsympathetic Bryan Dobson on **The News at One** (RTE Radio 1, Friday) as a "more inclusive", "more interactive" 'Winter Wonderland' experience. Reports are contradictory as

to whether there will still be a nativity scene, just without live animals.

On the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk, Friday) I thought animal rights campaigner John Carmody overreached. He "absolutely" wanted a permanent ban, thought there would be "no love lost" about this among the public (subsequent reaction seems to contradict this). He said nativity cribs were a relic of an older Ireland, when we knew no different about ani-

mals and were "indifferent to women and gay people"! As for religion, he said "we kind of disconnected big time from that and thankfully we're better as a result". He had a tendency to throw the 'we' word around quite a bit, but it wasn't clear who he was supposed to represent, if anyone other than himself.

### Live crib

Former Mayor Nial Ring took a contrary view, loved the live crib, but understood that it would not have been as good an experience with the Perspex screens allegedly still required by Covid protocols. Eamon Sheehan of the IFA, which supplies the animals, said there was no need for any Perspex this year and, like Councillor Ring, said the animals were very well treated. Pat Kenny seemed more sympathetic to the latter side of the argument, suggesting that the animals might enjoy the buzz of Dawson Street.

There was quite a buzz in the media for the anniversary of the death of Savita Halappanavar, a sad event still weaponised by pro-choice campaigners. From what coverage I came across it seemed almost entirely a celebration of the abortion legislation brought about as a result of the tragedy, with heavy pressure for more of the same.

On **It Says in the Papers** (RTE Radio 1, Sunday) her

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### MOVIE: THE MISSION

RTE One Saturday (night) November 5, 1am.

The missionary work of Jesuit priests in 18th Century Brazil is threatened by crooked merchants and rival Church factions. Historical drama, with Robert De Niro, Liam Neeson and Jeremy Irons.

#### SUNDAY SEQUENCE

BBC Radio Ulster Sunday November 6, 8.30am

Topical religious and ethical issues with Audrey Carville.

#### TRANSGENDER MOVEMENT: WHAT CATHOLICS NEED TO KNOW

EWTN Monday November 7, 7 pm and 2am, Tuesday 8am

Start of new series where Mary Rice Hasson looks at the cultural changes and controversies surrounding the transgender movement.

death was mentioned but not a word about the sepsis that caused it. Instead the pro-choice narrative was favoured. Later that morning, on **Brendan O'Connor** (RTE Radio 1), it was dealt with briefly, when all guests who spoke were positive towards the abortion liberalisation that followed her death. The host provided a fig leaf for broadcasting impartiality – there were "huge shades of opinion" on the issue, he wasn't "rehashing" the abortion debate, they weren't "set up" for that. Yeah right.

### Headlines

Finally, a strange thing happened on the **Press Preview** (Sky News, Friday) – one of the headlines from the

papers said that the new UK PM Rishi Sunak was going to stamp out "woke" policing (when the cops police the tweets rather than the streets).

Presenter Gillian Joseph laughingly said she wasn't going to use the word in the headline (though she quoted it earlier) and was going to ban it from the discussion – a 'woke' stance? Journalist Jenny Kleeman made a brave effort to comply, referring to "the 'w' word", and to being "right on", but eventually the offending word slipped out. Oh dear.

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

# Music

Pat O'Kelly



## William Tell at the Gaiety is something to look forward to

With Wexford Festival Opera drawing to its close – the final performance of Dvorák's *Armida* takes place next Sunday November 6 at the town's Theatre Royal – the spotlight moves to Dublin's Gaiety Theatre and Irish National Opera's co-production with the Swiss Nouvel Opéra Fribourg of Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, which runs between November 8 and 13.

### Rossini

Written when Rossini was 37, the last of his 39 operas, *Guillaume* (or *William*) *Tell*, was first heard in Paris on August 3-1829. Rossini, born in Pesaro on Italy's Adriatic coast, then part of the Papal States, on February 29, 1792, died in Paris on November 13, 1868.



Brett Polegato

The composer's inspiration for the opera came from German writer Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) whose drama *Wilhelm Tell* was set in Switzerland during its time of Austrian oppression in the 13th Century. Not unusual for the composer, he mulled over a number of libretti before settling on one by Étienne de Jouy,

later revised by Louis Florent Bis.

*William Tell* was well received with the critic of *Le Globe* later writing "from that evening on a new era had begun, not only as French music was concerned but throughout the musical world".

The *Revue Musicale* reported "there is sufficient

in this opera to make ten very fine others full of ideas" with Berlioz commenting "this is poetry, this is art, fine noble and pure". Donizetti, enthralled by Rossini's first and last acts, thought God was responsible for the second, which Berlioz also considered "sublime".

### Gaiety

At the Gaiety, where *William Tell* will be conducted by Fergus Sheil and produced by Julien Chavaz, the title role is being shared between Canadian baritone Brett Polegato and Hungarian/Irish Gyula Nagy. Mexican tenor Jesús León and Korean Konu Kim, alternate as the Austrian Arnold with Máire Flavin and Rachel Croash rotating as Mathilde, his Swiss innamorata.

It was great to have a 'full house' at the NCH recently for Romanian diva Angela Gheorghiu in a programme of aria and song with the NSO conducted by her compatriot Ciprian Teodorascu. Despite my considering the programme to be a bit of a 'curate's egg', Dvorák's 'Song to the moon' (*Rusalka*) showed Ms Gheorghiu's creamy tone coming to the fore beautifully while Puccini's 'Donde lieta uscì' (*La bohème*) had a charming innocence.

Also at the NCH, virtuoso violinist Maxim Vengerov gave a dazzling account of Ravel's *Tzigane* with the NSO under David Brophy. This programme also brought the première of Ina Boyle's Second Symphony that had been gather-

ing dust for almost a century. Expressive music of its time, it showed strong Anglo-Irish feelings from a composer who studied with Vaughan Williams and spent her, somewhat secluded, life in her ancestral home – Bushey Park in Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow.

Pianist Finghin Collins introduced Jane O'Leary's *unfolding soundscapes* with the NSO under Kenneth Montgomery. Connecticut-born Galway-domiciled, Mrs O'Leary took her inspiration from cartographer and writer Tim Robinson's *Unfolding Irish Landscapes* with the composer telling us "the piano's bright resonance is often silhouetted against softer, shimmering orchestral colours". As scripture said "And so it was".

# How the saints put flesh on theology

Normally, our weekly reflection is based on the Gospel of Sunday, but this week we will consider two days to Tuesday, November 1, the Feast of All Saints.

In the northern hemisphere, November is the darkest month. The poet, Thomas Hood, captured the mood.

“No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,

No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds, November.”

In pre-Christian Ireland, summer began with the festival of Bealtine, which can mean a bright fire or the fire of Belanus, also known as Baal, the object of worship in the Old Testament.

Six months later, the November feast of Samhain marked the entry into the season of darkness and coldness. It was the threshold between light and darkness, between the material world and spiritual, between life and death when the spirits of the departed were thought to be very near. Some were playful while others were harmful, offering trick or treat.

It's not clear when exactly the Church took over and gave a Christian meaning to the celebration. What better way to give meaning to the season of death than to celebrate all the saints who passed from this fragile life to the eternal joy of heaven? Hallowe'en means the evening before All Saints Day.

Sadly, as Christianity is waning, the pagan customs are re-emerging with witches, skeletons and haunted houses. It may be fun but we have lost the celebration of the saints.

## Saints lived the Gospel

St John Paul II beatified and canonised more saints than all his predecessors. He often referred to the living theology of the saints. Christian living resides not in books but in the lives of holy people. At a time when scandals in the Church were beginning to be publicised, the recognition of so many genuinely holy men and women was a statement that the Church isn't totally bad. It is a historical fact that the lowest periods of the Church produced the greatest saints.

Rather, the Spirit of Pentecost breathed afresh to renew the face of the earth, enkindling the fire of divine love in the hearts of new saints. G.K. Chesterton, with his typical humour wrote:

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



“There were five times when the Church went to the dogs but it was the dogs who died!”

## Ss Francis and Dominic

Back in the 12th and 13th centuries the popes had armies at their command. Bishops had huge political power. Crusades were organised to oppose the Saracens or Moslems who had taken over the Holy Land. Many holy and idealistic Christians joined those armies, but the evils of war quickly contaminated the ventures.

“It's not clear when exactly the Church took over and gave a Christian meaning to the celebration”

In the meantime, Ss Francis and Dominic inspired a new kind of religious life based on a very simple lifestyle inspired by the Beatitudes of the Gospel. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they struck the chord that the world needed to hear. Thousands followed their example because nothing can stop the attraction of an idea which has reached its time.

## Reform in the 16th Century

In the 16th Century, the Protestant Reformation had shown up many forms of corruption in the Catholic Church, but the Holy Spirit inspired the Counter Reformation. It was a period of wonderful reformers, saints with diverse charisms. Let us look at some of these saints and the different reforms they represented.

We start with St Charles Borromeo who, more than anybody else, drew the long, meandering Council of Trent to its conclusion. He drafted the documents of the Council as well as the Catechism which was used until recently. Having completed his work in Rome, he was appointed Bishop of Milan.

One decision of Trent was that a bishop should reside in his diocese. Milan, the largest diocese in the world, did not have a resident Bishop for 80 years! Now they had a shepherd, not a prince, who visited every

parish, arranged for a synod of reform, set up catechetical instruction, cared for the poor and visited the sick.

St Ignatius of Loyola, a soldier whose military career was ended by a bad injury, found a new direction while reading about the life of Christ and the lives of the saints. With a few friends he founded the Society of Jesus, a new form of religious congregation like an army at the service of the pope through foreign missions, education and retreats based on discernment of spirits. His friend, Francis Xavier, ventured as a missionary as far as Japan.

At the same time, St Philip Neri developed an apostolate with young businessmen in Rome. His attractive personality drew people to his little oratory. Biblical texts were set to music, thus beginning the Oratorio. He was advised to stay in Rome rather than travel abroad and became the Apostle of Rome.

Meanwhile, St Francis de Sales in Switzerland counteracted the dour face of Calvinism, through preaching and writing that brought a smile back to religion. He helped St Jane Francis de Chantal, a widow, to form the Sisters of the Visitation, a new form of religious congregation, living outside the cloister.

Other great reformers were Vincent DePaul, Louise De Marillac, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. What began as a very low period in the Church, under the inspiration of the Spirit of Pentecost, flourished with new vitality.

## Where are we today?

It is obvious that we are in a very low period today, with closure of churches, ageing clergy, lack of seminarians, and smeared with scandals. The tide has to go out fully before it begins to come in again. How further out must it go? When will people begin to sense that there is a God-shaped emptiness in the human heart?

Virtually every night the news reports a murder. Marriages break up. The threat of destruction of this planet is caused by human lifestyle. The gap between rich and poor is constantly widening. Not only the Church, but all society needs serious reformation. Could a return to religion be the answer? It

## A prayer to be repeated every day

Come Holy Spirit, renew the heart of the Church, renew the face of the Earth.

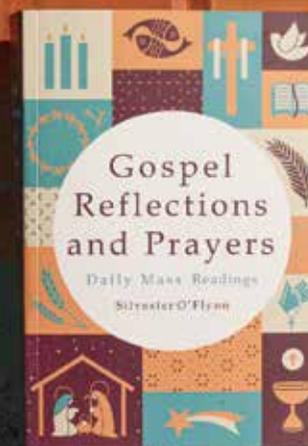
Enkindle within us the fire of your love.



St Ignatius of Loyola is depicted in the *Vision of Christ and God the Father at La Storta* by Domenichino.

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# Workaholism and greed



**T**here's only one addiction for which we are praised – overworking. With every other addiction, concerned others are looking to put you into a clinic or into a recovery programme, but if your addiction is work, generally it's seen as virtue. I know of what I speak. I'm a "recovering workaholic", and not exactly in full sobriety at the moment.

However, I recognise the disease. Here are its symptoms: we are forever short of time with too many things to do. Our days are too short.

In his autobiography, movie critic Roger Ebert, writes: "I have filled my life so completely that many days there is no time to think about the fact that I am living it." Many of us know the feeling. Why do we do this to ourselves?

The answer may surprise us. When our lives are so pressured that we never have time to savour the fact that we are alive and living it, when we are always short of time with too many things to do, we are suffering from greed, one of the classical deadly sins.

## Greed

We have a simplistic notion of greed. When we think of a greedy person, we imagine someone who is stingy, selfish, rich in money and material things, hoarding those riches for himself. Few of us fit that category. Greed, in us, has infinitely subtler forms. What most of us who are generous,



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

unselfish, and not rich in money or property suffer from is greed for experience, greed for life itself, and (if this doesn't sound too heretical) greed even in our generosity. We are greedy to do more (even good things) in our lives than time allows.

**“When we are always short of time with too many things to do, we are suffering from greed”**

Where do we see this? We see it in ourselves whenever there is never enough time to do what we (seemingly) need to do. There is always pressure that we should be doing more. When we think that somehow God made a

mistake with time and didn't allot us enough of it, we are suffering from greed. Henri Nouwen once described it this way: "Our lives often seem like over packed suitcases bursting at the seams. In fact, we are almost always aware of being behind schedule. There is a nagging sense that there are unfinished tasks, unfulfilled promises, unrealised proposals. There is always something else we should have remembered, done, or said. There are always people we did not speak to, write to, or visit."

## Time

But... God didn't make a mistake in giving us time. God gave us enough time to do what is asked of us, even in generosity and selflessness. The issue is on our side and the problem is greed. We

want to do more in life than life itself allows.

Moreover, in most cases, this is easy to rationalise. If we are burning out while serving others, we can easily look at our over-extension, tiredness, and our haunting sense that we are not doing enough and see it as virtue, as a form of martyrdom, as selflessness, as giving our lives away for others. Partly this is true, there are times when love, circumstance, or a particular season in our lives can demand that we hand it all over to the point of radical self-abnegation; even Jesus was overwhelmed at times and tried to sneak away for some solitude. However, that is not always the case. What a mother needs to do for an infant or a young needy child is quite different from what she needs to do when that child is grown and is an adult. What is virtue in one situation can become greed in another situation.

## Virtue

Being too busy generally begins as a virtue, and then often turns into vice – subtle greed. What was once necessary to serve others

now begins more to serve our own self-image and reputation. As well, it functions as a convenient escape. When we are consumed with doing work for others, we don't have to face our own inner demons nor the demons that need to be faced in our marriages, vocations, and relationships. We are simply too busy; but this is an addiction, the same as all other addictions, except that this particular addiction is seen as a virtue for which we are praised.

**“God gave us enough time to do what is asked of us, even in generosity and selflessness”**

This is one reason why God gave us the Sabbath, ordering us to stop working one day each week. Sadly, we are losing the very notion of Sabbath. We have turned a commandment into a light lifestyle suggestion. This can be a good thing to do, if you can manage it! However, as Wayne Mueller writes in his very challenging book on the Sabbath: "If we forget to rest, we will work too hard and forget our more tender mercies, forget those we love, forget our children and our natural wonder... So God gave us the commandment to observe the Sabbath – 'Remember to rest'. This is not a lifestyle suggestion, but a commandment, as important as not stealing, nor murdering, not lying."

Overwork is not a virtue.

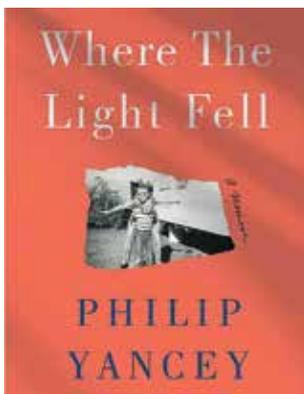
**“There's only one addiction for which we are praised – overworking”**

# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Escape from the darkness of a childhood in a Southern trailer home



**Where the Light Fell: A Memoir**  
by Philip Yancey  
(Hodder and Stoughton,  
£12.50/£10.99)

Peter Costello

Considering how influential they are, the forms of faith in the United States are very important, even when not to the taste of Europeans. The tropes of the Episcopalians, the bare style of the Congregationalists, these would be familiar, with echoes of England, Wales and Scotland. But the Baptist Churches in the form they take in the Southern, once slave-owning, states are quite unfamiliar. In its various manifestations it goes to the heart of Southern and Black cultures, the great conflicted grounds of recent times.

Those who wish to understand the effect, good, bad and indifferent of American religion on American society will learn a lot from this heart-seizing book.

Today Philip Yancey is a famous author of 25 books, with some 17 million in print in many languages around the world. But he was brought up in Alabama for a good part of his childhood. He was reared in the Baptist way, but managed to escape from it by moving north, by educating himself into a more humane form of faith, closer he believes to

what is actually taught by Jesus in the New Testament, and became the man he is today.

"My writing career began fifty years ago, and I have been contemplating the book ever since. I had read fine memoirs about growing up Orthodox Jewish, or Jehovah's Witness, or Irish Catholic, but none that fully captured the peculiar sub-culture of my own Southern fundamentalism."

He had seen it all. He had seen the Klan in action, in a lingering era of burning crosses and murders. He had encountered preachers from Billy Graham up to Jerry Falwell. He has, like all of us, experienced "the more recent anomaly of evangelicals' support for Donald Trump". He calls himself "a born racist"; but when he went to live in Philadelphia, he found that Irish dominated northern city just as racist then as the Old South was.

**Philip Yancey is a famous author of 25 books, with some 17 million in print in many languages around the world"**

It seemed time to put the past down on paper. It was time to explain, he says, "how I came to love God out of gratitude, not fear".

Many of his readers will be glad he did, though in parts this is a grim story, relieved by nature, music and literature – and it has to be said the love of good woman. He learned not through prescription, but he says the direct experience of Jesus in his life. Through these *dona bona*, or good gifts he re-joined the human race.

The title too comes from a passage in St Augustine describing his pre-conversion

years: "I had my back toward the light, and my face towards the things on which the light falls."

In Yancey's case the light fell on a grim panorama of life, dominated by his elder brother, and his mother. The one, multi-talented, who fell apart and almost destroyed himself; the other who rejected in a strange way her own children, making one feel rejected, the other accursed.

Their father died very young and this marked them off. But it was only when he was in his 20s, thinking of marrying, that Philip learned by accident from an old cutting that fell out of a book, that his father died because his wife, Yancey's mother, took him away from hospital and the iron lung that kept him alive, claiming that faith alone would cure him. Her action blasted the family ever after, leading for a time to them having to live in a trailer caravan, while she taught groups about biblical love.

One way and another it is a fear-filled story. But an important one. Whatever it may mean for Americans, for European readers it will reveal aspects of the culture and life of the United States that go a very long way to explaining the rise of Donald Trump, even though Mr Trump believes in nothing except his absolute right to control, a male version of Philip Yancey's mother.

This is a must be read book; but it is not one to be enjoyed in any conventional way. It is a dispatch from the borders of perdition. But also a healing epistle of faith. For it all turned around, as recounted in the fifth and final part, which is entitled "Graced", for Christians the ultimate *dona bona*. This part will lift the heart of every reader, for Yancey recounts exactly how Jesus entered into his life, how he feels that Jesus saved him.

### Leinster House: A House with Three Lives

An exhibition at the Architectural Archive 45 Merrion Square  
Until November 25;  
admission free, 9am-5pm.

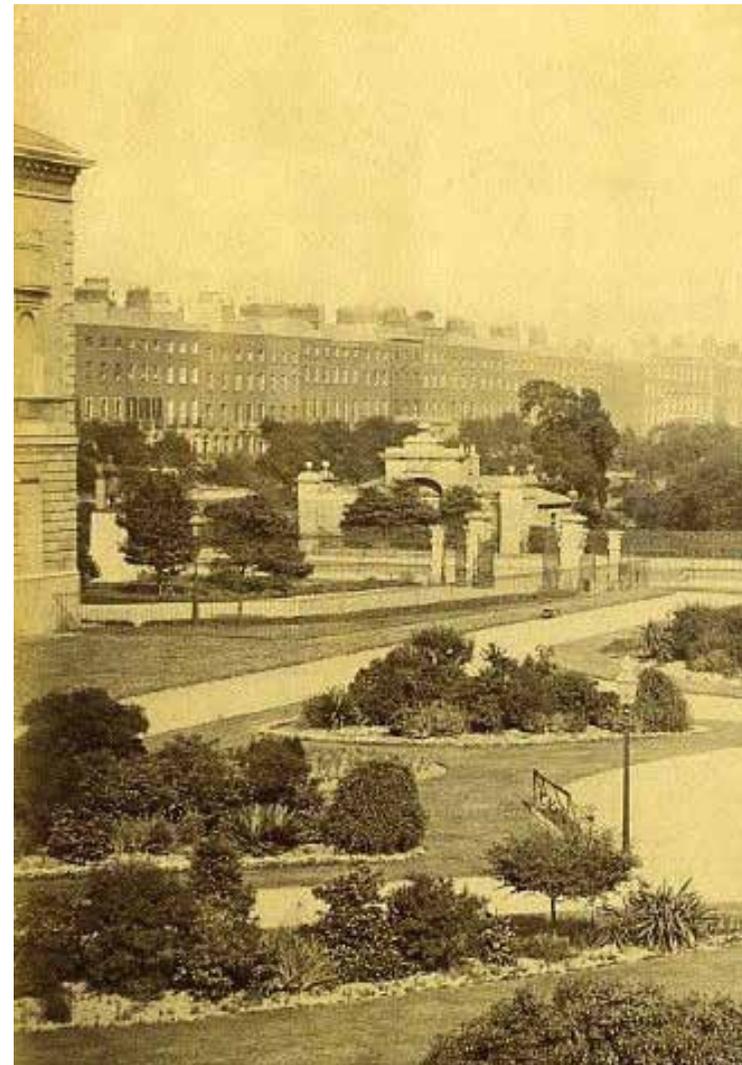
Peter Costello

In recent months anyone going down Kildare Street in central Dublin and passing the noble facade of Leinster House, one of the city's finest public buildings, will have been able to read the large placards on the front railings describing the on-going restoration work that is being undertaken by the OPW to maintain and preserve its essential Georgian fabric.

I have a personal interest in the history of Leinster house. My mother grew up nearby. And one of her regular stories of her early years was how she and her siblings were able to go there to play on what she always called "The Duke's Lawn", that grassed-in area at the front of the house overlooking Merrion Square.

**There is also a pendant to the three lives, the fourth life for Leinster House as the direct inspiration of the White House in Washington DC"**

My mother like most Dubliners knew little about the house, not even as we learned later, that hardy piece of Dublin folklore that once when the Liffey overflowed the square was flooded and the Duke had himself rowed up Holles Street to his front door.



This exhibition explains a lot of the actual history, and makes for a very interesting contribution to the Decade of Commemoration. It is in three parts: the house as Ducal townhouse, as intellectual centre (surrounded by galleries and museums) in the days of the Royal Dublin Society ownership and as a National Assembly since 1922.

### Plans

The original plans for the residence are fascinating, with

little flaps stuck down on them that could be lifted up to reveal alternative treatments for the decorations. The days of intellectual glory are also well explained. A sense of proper pride is at the heart of the third section, for given the history of the world since 1922, Leinster House's continuity as a democratic institution is indeed something to be really proud of. The placards explaining all this are wonderfully clear and explicit, and the contemporary draw-



Author Philip Yancey.



Leinster House facing Kildare Street in recent times.

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.

# Leinster House in the life of the Nation



The Duke's Lawn in the old days.

ing, prints and photographs add to the rich mix.

## Inspiration

There is also a pendant to the three lives, the fourth life for Leinster House as the direct inspiration by James Hoban of the White House in Washington DC. The current talk about “the special relationship of the US and Great Brit-

ain” is a construction of very recent times, dating really only from the days of FDR and WWII. Back in 1812 the British invaded Louisiana; and still dispute with the Americans who really won the Battle of New Orleans. On another front, the British marched into Washington DC, and burnt down the White House.

And as for my mother, her take on all this history was different and very personal. As a 10-year-old in 1922, the gaining of Irish freedom meant for her and her friends their loss of access to their wonderful playground on “The Duke's Lawn”... for it now belonged, not to the children of the Nation, but to the State.

## See, and sing, what a determined woman can achieve



**The Song of Brigid's Cloak**  
by Catherine Ann Cullen  
Illustrated by Katya Swan  
(Beehive, €14.99/£14.99)

**Peter Costello**

There has been great interest in St Brigid of late among

historians and writers. Some of these have been in their way controversial; but there is nothing controversial about this little book. It is altogether delightful.

Award-winning children's poet Catherine Ann Cullen has created a rhyming poem which can easily be learned off and sung with relish.

She has taken the medieval legend of St Brigid's cloak and how it was stretched to cover enough land to build a church in Kildare, land that the local king, an angry roaring old greybeard, had refused the determined young woman that Brigid was.

“Cause nobody gets as rich as me/by giving their fields to the poor for free...”

Would he give her, she

asked, as much land as her little cloak would cover? He laughed at her. That little cloak. He would indeed.

With the help of her followers she pulled out the fabric in a marvellous way, till it covered all the land she needed – this is a local adaption of a very ancient myth found all over Europe.

The king had laughed at her, but she carried the day. He sees the error of his ways, and becomes her kind friend, sending his men to help with the building.

This may well be a book for Christmas come early, but it is still worth buying at any time, for it is great fun at any season of the year. We will look out for more books from this creative team.

## A century of changing fortunes for Northern Ireland



Clouds gathering over Stormont.

**Northern Ireland 1921–2021: Centenary Historical Perspectives**  
Edited by Caoimhe Nic Dháibhead, Marie Coleman and Paul Bew  
(Ulster Historical Foundation, €19.99/£16.95)

**Martin Mansergh**

Ireland was never rigorously partitioned like Germany, Cyprus or Korea. Churches, sporting and cultural organisations continued to operate island-wide. Since the peace process and the Single European Market, any hard physical border is gone. Ireland's history is not susceptible to hard borders either.

The Ulster Historical Foundation (UHF) helps achieve a rounded view of Irish history, documenting amongst much else people and developments that led a Protestant majority in the province to insist on remaining part of the UK and not of an independent Irish State. Three counties were let go, with “not enough lifeboats to go round”.

One invaluable reference work is the six-volume history of the *Irish Parliament 1692–1800*, edited by the late Dr Edith Johnston-Liik, the cost of publishing which was co-financed by the UHF and the Irish Government.

## Centenary

This present volume, marking the centenary of Northern Ireland, is the initiative of the Centenary Historical Panel established by the Secretary of State in 2020.

It consists of 23 well-illustrated essays by professional historians and researchers aimed at the

broader reading public. It is divided into two parts, the first being a distilled account of Northern Ireland's troubled formative years, the second part being snapshots of life there since.

A benefit of the centenary has been to integrate Northern Ireland's origins into a broader narrative, not just on this island, but across post-First World War Europe. The outbreaks of violence could be as acute as anywhere else across Ireland, but thankfully well below the levels experienced in Continental Europe.

“The Ulster Historical Foundation (UHF) helps achieve a rounded view of Irish history”

Despite horrific incidents, full-scale sectarian civil war was avoided, though not the trauma of population displacement from both parts of the island. Nationalist Ireland underestimated and little understood the strength and durability of Ulster unionism, while unionists during the Stormont years underestimated the long-term difficulty of containing a one-third minority that they had made no attempt to reconcile.

One essay by David Torrance, taking issue with my father Nicholas Mansergh and other historians, plausibly contests the notion that Northern Ireland seceded from the Irish Free State, or that it was ever part of it under the Treaty, even for a single day.

The only problem is that, on British legal advice, the

NI Parliament passed a resolution on December 7, 1922, the day after the Irish Free State came into being, praying that its powers “shall *no longer* extend to Northern Ireland” (my italics). The single day that all Ireland was notionally part of the Free State was the basis of the right to Irish citizenship so valued by northern nationalists.

One principle that the British Government remains determined to uphold in Northern Ireland is devolution, now on a power-sharing basis, though always with a Westminster override button, recently deployed, as related here, with the Executive in abeyance, to impose the provision of abortion services and the redefinition of marriage.

## Conflict

The awfulness of recent conflict is not frontally addressed. Recent controversies, such as Brexit, are avoided. There is scant discussion beyond living standards of the relative position of the Northern Ireland economy today, hugely changed from 100 years ago, when Belfast was the industrial capital of Ireland.

The volume avoids predictions. Northern Ireland's existence for 100 years cannot be denied, and, from any impartial perspective, it had achievements as well as shortcomings. Its key failure is that it remains so strongly contested. The danger for nationalism is that over-confident false steps caused by impatience for unity could prejudice irredeemably the chances of its achievement.



# Leisure time

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– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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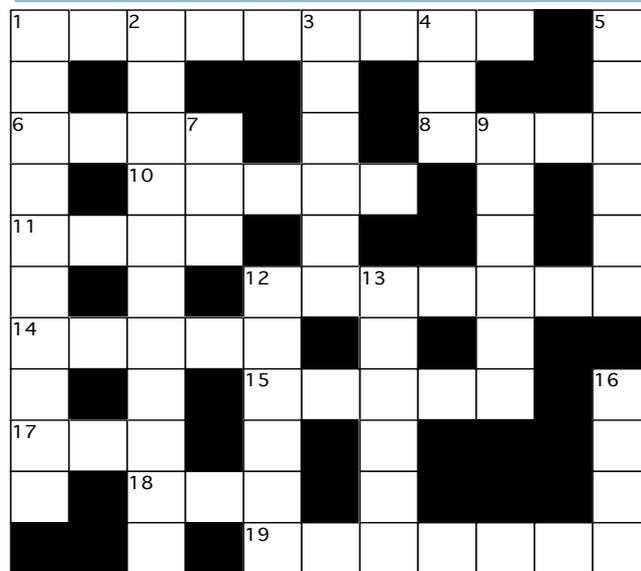


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One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

### Crossword Junior

Children's 457



#### Across

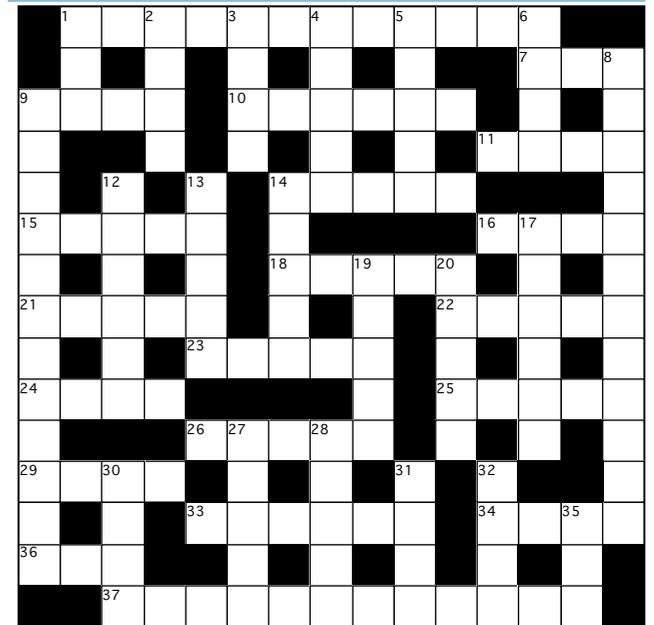
- 1 The \_\_\_\_\_ of China is the biggest man-made structure there is (5,4)
- 6 You might say this if you make a small mistake (4)
- 8 Jack Horner pulled one out (4)
- 10 Spooky (5)
- 11 Tasty pastry filled with fruit (4)
- 12 Paid no attention to (7)
- 14 Makes a wild creature obedient (5)
- 15 Walks lamely (5)
- 17 Sprinted (3)
- 18 Moses was given have this many Commandments (3)
- 19 We use this word for 'sleeping' when talking about some volcanoes (7)

#### Down

- 1 This tale might be about a haunted house (5,5)
- 2 Scientific tests (11)
- 3 Walking through water (6)
- 4 One go around the track (3)
- 5 Type of nut we use to make marzipan (6)
- 7 'On your marks, get \_\_\_\_, go!' (3)
- 9 What a pupil does at school (6)
- 12 It's completely surrounded by water (6)
- 13 One, two or three, maybe (6)
- 16 You tie it with string or rope (4)

### Crossword

Gordius 583



#### Across

- 1 A bird that will return to its loft when released some distance away (6,6)
- 7 Equip with weapons (3)
- 9 Worry, be agitated (4)
- 10 & 28d Woman to whom one is related by marriage (6-2-3)
- 11 South American country (4)
- 14 Salt water (5)
- 15 Catch fish with a bag-net (5)
- 16 Drink found on the left side of a ship? (4)
- 18 Rail-post at the head or foot of a staircase (5)
- 21 Reserved, distant (5)
- 22 Proof of absence from the scene of a crime (5)
- 23 Lobby (5)
- 24 Deceased (4)
- 25 Grasp tightly, hold on desperately (5)
- 26 Flightless birds symbolic of New Zealand (5)
- 29 Egg-shaped (4)
- 33 Political refuge or protection (6)
- 34 Silly (4)
- 36 Professor (3)
- 37 Tricycle (5-7)

- 2 Spouse with whom one can form a team (4)
- 3 The 'N' of ENT (4)
- 4 Tricky problem (5)
- 5 Putting area (5)
- 6 The main part of a church or cathedral (4)
- 8 Caprine creature that grazes at a great altitude (8,4)
- 9 & 19d This phrase encapsulates both the spiritual and practical imperative of all Christians (5,3,4,5)
- 12 Eastern temple (6)
- 13 Vertical stretch of rock (5)
- 14 Child's word for a rabbit (5)
- 17 Source, beginning (6)
- 19 See 9 down
- 20 Fastening found on a door (5)
- 27 Publish, bring forth (5)
- 28 See 10 across
- 30 Female relative (4)
- 31 Captain Hook's sidekick in Peter Pan might seem upset (4)
- 32 Ms Quinn, historic envoy of the Legion of Mary to East Africa (4)
- 35 Distant (3)

### SOLUTIONS, OCTOBER 27

GORDIUS NO. 582

**Across** – 1 Bin 3 White coffee 8 Unwind 9 Cast your bread upon the waters 11 Needs 13 Slump 15 Opinion 20 Towel 21 Doubt 23 Dingo 24 Regiment 26 Mountain ash 27 Thy

**Down** – 1 Blue-blooded 2 New Delhi 3 Waned 4 Tactful 5 Often 6 Fooled 7 Ear 12 Strenuously 13 Shout 14 Papal 17 Transept 18 Sweeten 19 Kung fu 22 Tempt 23 Death 24 Rum

CHILDREN'S No. 456

**Across** – 1 Haystack 6 Wax 7 Marathon 8 Rehearse 11 Rome 12 Arm 13 Eels 15 Elope 16 Bright 17 Down 18 Gag 19 Amen

**Down** – 1 Hammerhead 2 York 3 Title 4 Cooler 5 Parasol 8 Reaping 9 Handbag 10 America 14 Satin

## Sudoku Corner

457

### Easy

				9			1	
2	4			3	6	8		5
	6	1					2	
9				6	8			
7	3						5	8
			9	7				4
		5				1	6	
8		7	6	4			9	2
	9			1				

### Hard

							7	6
		9					1	5
			1	2				3
	1			7	9	5		2
		7				6		
8		2	6	3				1
	2			1	8			
4		3				8		
9	8							

### Last week's Easy 456

5	9	3	6	1	8	7	2	4
8	1	2	9	7	4	5	3	6
7	6	4	2	3	5	9	1	8
2	7	5	3	9	6	4	8	1
9	8	1	4	5	2	6	7	3
4	3	6	7	8	1	2	5	9
6	5	9	8	2	3	1	4	7
3	2	7	1	4	9	8	6	5
1	4	8	5	6	7	3	9	2

### Last week's Hard 456

5	3	4	8	9	1	2	6	7
1	8	2	6	7	5	3	4	9
9	6	7	3	4	2	1	8	5
8	1	6	2	5	9	7	3	4
2	7	5	4	1	3	8	9	6
4	9	3	7	6	8	5	1	2
6	2	8	9	3	7	4	5	1
3	4	1	5	2	6	9	7	8
7	5	9	1	8	4	6	2	3

Notebook

Fr John Harris OP



# Travelling on fumes

**THE RECENT TRAGIC** events in the village of Creeslough, Co. Donegal reminded me of a journey from a funeral I attended with two friends a long number of years ago in Donegal. We had attended the funeral of a nephew of a mutual friend and were returning to Dublin. At some point on the return journey, when deep in the Irish countryside, it was a Friday evening in the winter, early in the new year if my memory serves me well, the petrol light on the dashboard started flashing, warning me we were low on petrol. I searched in my pocket for my wallet to discover I had very little money and my two companions had even less between them. If we did find a petrol station we judged it wasn't worth our time stopping, in case we used up more petrol stopping and starting, such was our detailed knowledge on the mechanics of a car.

**Journey back**

The journey back to Dublin seemed to be much longer than our journey earlier in the day to Donegal. These were the days before credit cards and mobile phones. If we stopped in the middle of nowhere, that was the end of the journey.



St Mary's Priory, Tallaght, Dublin.

But thank God, we did make it back to Tallaght, after saying many rosaries and making all sorts of deals with God. Since then, we have often joked that we were driving on fumes, as there was little if any petrol left in the tank by the time we got home.

As I look at modern Ireland and its relationship with its Christian and Catholic past I often think of that journey from Donegal. As a society and maybe as individuals we are traveling life's journey on fumes left by our Christian heritage if not faith. The faith as a living and life-giving relationship with Christ and his Church are distant memories, memories some of us dip into

every now and again when we are faced with life's tragedies.

**Local priest**

Recently a journalist in a national paper commented favourably on the role of the local priest in the

midst of the suffering community of Creeslough, commenting that a loving Church retains a special place in our communities of post-Catholic Ireland. My question is for how long? If we are living on the fumes of the past, eventually they too will die out and we will be left stranded. I agree Fr John Joe Duffy did more to restore faith in the power of the personal Church than any pope could hope to achieve. But this came from a heart filled with faith and love of Jesus, not just as memory of a Christian past.

As a Catholic theologian (whose name I cannot recall) wrote a number of years ago; God has no grandchildren only children. We can't live off our grandparent's faith we need to claim God as our heavenly father for ourselves.

We travelled safely from Donegal on fumes but I would not recommend such a travel plan for life's journey, with its many twists and turns. We need something more real and substantial, life in Christ.

**Changing channels**

A few weeks ago, a lady said to me that she loves watching Mass on the television. She said that if she doesn't like the priest, she simply goes to another Mass somewhere in the world. "It is just like changing channels". When I pointed out to her that the Mass wasn't meant to be entertaining, "you're telling me!" she replied, "what we have had to listen to over the years and we had no choice but to sit there and bear with it, but no more, with the simple pressing of a button".

**A saint with two feasts**

According to the Dominican calendar St Martin de Porres feast is November 3 as it is in the universal calendar of the Church but in the calendar for the Church of Ireland St Martin is celebrated on November 5. St Malachy is celebrated on November 3. When this was changed in the new missal St Martin was dropped altogether from the Irish missal but thanks to the editors of the liturgical calendar for Ireland St Martin's prayer is included every year. I know travelling through the country that St Martin or indeed Blessed Martin is beloved by many people so I hope that in the coming week St Martin the simple lay-brother of Lima will be celebrated twice in Ireland.



## LITTLE WAY PAKISTAN FLOODS APPEAL

### Flood-hit victims urgently need our help

Bishop Khalid Remat, of the Apostolic Vicariate of Quetta, is urgently asking for our help for 3,600 of those in great need as a result of the very heavy monsoon rains. He writes to The Little Way Association: "Those whose homes were damaged or destroyed need above all food and clean water. Polluted water is likely to cause, especially to children and pregnant women, pneumonia, diarrhoea, dengue fever, on top of the malnutrition they are enduring.

"Our project, upon which ten volunteers and ten members of staff will work free of charge, will aid flood victims in the districts of Sibi, Loralai and Pashin. With your help 600 families will be provided with food items such as wheat flour, cooking oil, sugar, tea, pulses, rice and milk packs. The families will be given drinking water, high energy biscuits, soap, washing powder and other hygiene products."

### PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN TO HELP SOME OF BISHOP KHALID'S PEOPLE

**THE SITUATION IS DESPERATE. Your gift will be forwarded WITHOUT DEDUCTION to Bishop Khalid to provide food, and basic essentials to help the flood victims to overcome their sorrow and hardship. Please give whatever you can. Thank you.**



*"Our Lord does not look so much as the greatness of our actions, but at the love at which we do them."*

~ St Therese

**PLEASE HELP FEED THE HUNGRY**

Please spare a thought for the millions who die each year of hunger and disease in mission lands. Your donation will relieve the pangs of starvation, and every euro you send will be forwarded to a missionary priest or sister for food for the hungry.

**MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS**

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.

**We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass**

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

**THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION**  
**Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR**  
**(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466**  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

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- €..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND DEPRIVED**
- €..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**
- €..... **MASS OFFERINGS**  
 (Please state no. of Masses \_\_\_\_\_)
- €..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to [www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**