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## Young Catholic group challenges synod on liberal reform agenda Letter insists younger faithful embrace Church teaching

**EXCLUSIVE**

**Jason Osborne**

Hundreds of young Catholics have signed a letter to Church leaders challenging the widespread perception that younger people in the Church want teachings to change.

The organisers of the letter – which attracted more than 500 signatures in less than a week from young committed Catholics before being sent – say they also feel they have been excluded from the synodal process and that the Church has not sought their opinion.

Their concerns relate in particular to some of the issues that have arisen in the diocesan reports calling for change to the Church's teaching on human sexuality, marriage and women priests.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, one of the letter's organisers

27-year-old Co. Wexford-based Maria Bridges (pictured below) said that synodal contributions as reported so far give the impression that Catholics "unanimously" want to change Church teaching.

"There is a group of us here whose voices haven't really been asked or heard who love Church teaching.

"We're not engaging in trying to change Church teaching," she added saying that young practising Catholics from across the island had signed.

The issue is expected to focus minds at the bishops' conference with many of the bishops admitting that their attempts to reach young people as part of the synodal process had failed.



At the national synodal assembly in Athlone, just a handful of younger people were present.

The letter to the synodal steering committee says the signatories have concerns that "the emerging synthesis risks presenting a false conclusion, namely that the *sensus fidei* is in conflict with current Church teaching and practice.

"As young faithful Catholics we fully accept and joyfully embrace Church teaching and practice, and do not wish for Church teaching to be changed or reformulated," the letter reads.

Ms Bridges said that the letter was also written with the intention of offering support to the bishops and priests who feel "bombarded" with the notion that everything needs to change.

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### Heading up the Reek...



A sister from St Faustina's Congregation for the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, Krakow, Poland, climbs Croagh Patrick on Reek Sunday, July 31. Photo: Fr Stephen Farragher. See pages 10-11

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## Young Catholic group challenge synod on liberal reform agenda

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"We had some priests get in contact to say thanks so much, it's nice to hear your voices in this," she said.

Another organiser of the letter, Cork-based Peadar Hand – also 27 – told this paper the younger Catholics are concerned that it may be perceived that there is a desire in Ireland among the faithful "to change Church teachings, practices and traditions when there is no need to, and that desire doesn't exist.

"Among people who are actually practising and trying their best to live their

faith, there's no desire for it.

"We understand why it is this way and we're happy with that," Mr Hand said.

Greater formation would be of benefit to the Church in Ireland, Mr Hand suggested. "The duty of the Church is not to change with the world, it is to change the world," he said.

The matter will be a dilemma for bishops given that there is a clear desire for change amongst some older Catholics as demonstrated in the diocesan reports and articulated by non-practising Catholics consulted as part of the synod process.



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

# Controversial law could ban pro-life march in capital

Chai Brady

The country's largest pro-life rally could be banned or face re-routing in the capital under controversial proposals being drawn up by Fianna Fáil Health Minister Stephen Donnelly.

Mr Donnelly has vowed to ban any pro-life protests or events within 100 metres of where abortions are carried out in so-called 'exclusion zones' despite the fact that senior gardaí have repeatedly said that such laws are unnecessary. The All-Ireland Rally for Life

– which alternates between Dublin and Belfast year-on-year – usually starts at Parnell Square when it is held in the capital. However, since part of the traditional route to the Custom House passes the Rotunda Hospital which carries out abortions, it could fall foul of the controversial plan to silence pro-life voices.

When the law is passed – which Mr Donnelly has assured pro-choice campaigners will be by the end of this year – pro-life activists could face fines and possible imprisonment if they have signs within 100 metres.

According to Google Maps, The Rotunda Hospital is just 30 metres from where the march passes on Parnell Square East.

The ban could put gardaí in the position of trying to impose restrictions on what signs people can carry or even whether people would be allowed to wear t-shirts with pro-life slogans as it passes along the traditional route before entering O'Connell Street.

On the other hand, gardaí could be forced to reroute the event – which usually involves children's face paint-

ing, candy floss and other carnival-like events – on different streets to avoid the hospital. However, this could also prove tricky as the ban would also apply to any GPs surgery which also provides abortion. Despite the fact that only one in ten general practitioners in the Republic has signed up to carry out abortions, this number is higher in the capital making the streets a potential minefield for gardaí trying to facilitate the constitutional right to a peaceful protest.

See Page 8.

## Cork diocese must change now, warns Bishop Gavin

Ruadhán Jones

The Church in Cork and Ross has to embrace change now or it will be left with no choice, Bishop Fintan Gavin has warned in a pastoral letter, August 2.

The Bishop of Cork and

Ross comments came as he announced structural changes to the diocese, with the introduction of 'families of parishes'.

"We have a lot of work to do together to make these changes," he said. "But if we are not pro-active, we will be in a short space of

time left with no choice. We have to embrace the opportunities while we still can."

The families of parishes will include three to six parishes, managed by a team of priests including a moderator and co-parish priests, Bishop Gavin explains in his letter 'Put out into deep waters'.

This will affect the schedule of Masses, he said, meaning fewer Masses.

"Indeed, certain Churches may not have a weekend Mass as they did

up to now," Bishop Gavin wrote.

However, he added that the new structure presents "a real opportunity for much greater lay participation in the leadership of parishes.

"While initially the team will consist of priests, it is hoped that lay leadership and involvement will grow in time."

Dr Gavin concluded, saying that families of parishes are an opportunity to "build up our local Church into the future".

## Priestly celibacy not reason for abuse crisis – report

Staff reporter

There is no "causal link" between priestly celibacy and the abuse of children, according to a recent report.

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry published the finding in 'The psychology of individuals who abuse children – Roundtable 1 Findings'.

The experts stated that celibacy may involve problems ranging from many of those who are celibate finding it difficult to talk about, to the use of pornography by religious abusers who do not regard that as a breach of their vows.

However, they insist that "there is no established

causal link between celibacy and the abuse of children. Sexual abuse of children is not the result of sexual frustration and celibacy is not likely to shift a person away from their primary sexual orientation. Even if the role of celibacy ought not to be overlooked, it should not be overemphasised".

In their findings, they also stated that the abuse of children by priests is connected to a lack of "human formation – that is, who you are as a person, your individual psychology, how you handle emotions and relationships, is thought to play a significant role here".

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## Capuchin Day Care Centre

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# No peace without justice – Ukrainians reject Higgins ‘peace’ claim

Ruadhán Jones

Ukrainians pray peace will come quickly, but getting there “must include” justice and respect for Ukraine’s recognised borders, the recently appointed Apostolic Visitor to Ukrainian Catholics in Ireland has said.

Bishop Kenneth Nowkowski’s comments come following a controversial letter from Sabina Higgins, wife to the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins.

In it, she called for world leaders to “persuade” Presidents Zelenskyy and Putin to agree to a ceasefire and negotiate a peace deal.



Sabina Higgins

to agree to a ceasefire and negotiations”.

“Concerned people of the world anxious to live together in peace and sustainability must demand that this war be brought to an end”, she added later.

Mrs Higgins also alluded to an article by a historian which said Ukraine has “little or no hope of recovering its lost territories”.

Prof. Geoffrey Roberts described the war as a “proxy war” between the West and Russia. Mrs Higgins did not herself use this phrase in her letter.

President Higgins is now under pressure from Government officials to clarify his position on the war.

Senators have also questioned how Mrs Higgins’ letter ended up on the presidential website.

“Sabina Higgins is entitled to her opinions and I have huge respect for her but her letter is viewed as a propaganda tool by the Kremlin in its drawing of an equivalence between the actions of Russia and Ukraine,” said Fianna Fáil Senator Malcolm Byrne.

“War crimes committed against the Ukrainian people need to be addressed,” Bishop Nowkowski added.

Mrs Higgins letter to *The Irish Times*, which was briefly published on the official Áras an Uachtaráin website before being removed, said the fighting would go on until the world “persuades President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

# Pope set for showdown with Russian Patriarch

Staff reporter

The Vatican has confirmed that Pope Francis will visit Kazakhstan in September and attend an inter-religious meeting in the capital city, Nur-Sultan.

Francis is expected to meet the Russia Orthodox Patriarch Kirill – a vocal supporter of Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine – and impress upon him the immorality of the Russian operation.

“Accepting the invitation of the civil and ecclesial authorities, Pope Francis will make the announced apostolic journey to Kazakhstan from September 13-15 this year, visiting the city of Nur-Sultan on the occasion of the VII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions,” the Vatican said in an August 1 communique.

Kazakh authorities had already confirmed the Pope’s participation at the congress during a Zoom meeting in April with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

The Pope said he plans to meet with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, who is expected to attend the interreligious meeting. Despite their



Pope Francis is pictured in a 2019 photo boarding the plane for a trip. Photo: CNS

opposing views on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the Pope said that he has “a good relationship” with the Russian patriarch. However, he said, “it is evident that his position is conditioned by his homeland in some way; which is not to say that he is an indecent man. No; God knows each person’s moral responsibilities in the depth of their hearts,” the Pope had said.

# Future is Bright for Down and Connor



Staff reporter

Fr John O’Laverty (30) was ordained to the priesthood for the diocese of Down and Connor in the parish of Bright, Co. Down, on Sunday.

Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor, who ordained Fr O’Laverty, said it was a “joyful” day and

prayed in his homily that God’s “angelic light” will inspire his priestly ministry.

“May it pick you up, revive and refresh you in dark moments, when you feel you are but an earthenware jar and may it enlighten you to bring many to know God and ‘the deep things of God’,” Bishop Treanor said.

He also prayed for God’s

blessing on his “vital service to the Church of tomorrow”.

Fr O’Laverty, a native of Bright, entered St Malachy’s seminary, Belfast in 2015, before completing his formation in Rome, where he will return in September.

He celebrated his First Mass in thanksgiving in the Church of St Patrick’s, Legamaddy August 1.

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# Senator calls for report on children sent to UK gender clinic NHS is shutting

**Chai Brady**

A senator is calling for a full report into the referral of 234 children by the HSE to a British clinic following the NHS's decision to shut it down.

By spring, the Tavistock clinic, named the Gender and Identity Development Service (GIDS), will shut down after it was criticised in an independent review released in February of this year.

The controversial clinic assists people looking to 'transition' from one sex to another. Children are given puberty blockers who are suffering from what is diagnosed as "gender dysphoria", which the NHS describe as a "sense of unease that a person may have because of a mis-

match between their biological sex and their gender identity".

The independent review, led by Dr Hilary Cass, said the clinic needed to be transformed and the current model of care was leaving young people "at considerable risk" of poor mental health and distress, and having one clinic was not "a safe or viable long-term option". Regional centres will be set up to "ensure the holistic needs" of patients.

Senator Sharon Keoghan accused the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly of not being interested in the warnings in Dr Cass's review.

"I have always said that our children must be an absolute priority – in politics as much as in the family home. I asked Minister for Health

Stephen Donnelly for him to give direction on the issue of the use of puberty blockers on children back in 2020 – he didn't respond," she said.

"I raised the findings of the interim Cass report in the Seanad in May this year, and again asked the minister if he would come into the chamber to discuss the level of care that we want Irish children to receive – again, the minister wasn't interested."

The independent review also stated that primary and secondary care staff said they felt "under pressure to adopt an unquestioning affirmative approach and that this is at odds with the standard process of clinical assessment and diagnosis that they have been trained

to undertake in all other clinical encounters".

It also stated that a lack of routine and consistent data collection "means that it is not possible to accurately track the outcomes and pathways children and young people take through the service".

Ms Keoghan added: "Now that the NHS itself has stated that the Tavistock clinic is not fit for purpose, perhaps the minister will take our concerns about our children more seriously, and order the necessary full report into the number of Irish children referred to this clinic, the 'care' they received there, and to start the collecting of up-to-date, qualitative data on the outcomes of their treatment in each case."

## Catholic faith a 'main factor' in speaking Irish in North

**Ruadhán Jones**

A new study from Queen's University Belfast shows that being Catholic is one the "main factors" in speaking Irish in the North.

The report, which draws on census data from the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study, shows that 91% of people who were raised Catholic have knowledge of the Irish language.

Catholics are four times more likely to have knowledge of the Irish language than Protestants, according to the 'Profiling the Irish language in Northern Ireland' report.

For those who knew Irish in either 2001 and/or 2011, 45.7% of those self-reporting as Catholic in 2001 but not in 2011 lost Irish. While 43.5% of those who were not Catholic in 2001 but were in 2011 gained Irish.

Dr Ian Shuttleworth, who led the research, said in a statement that "it is important for us to fully assess and understand the Census data as this helps to inform future government policy".

# Derry bishop says all Claudy bomb info divulged

**Staff reporter**

Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry diocese has said that he believes all information held by the Church in relation to the Claudy bombing in Derry has been handed to authorities.

The late Fr James Chesney was said to have been involved in the attack which killed nine civilians and injured 30 when three car bombs exploded. It happened 50 years ago on July 31, 1972.

A Derry-based unit of the Provisional IRA are widely believed to have been behind the atrocity,

with a 2010 report by the then NI Police Ombudsman naming Fr Chesney as a suspect.

A number of families affected by the bomb are continuing a legal action against the Church over the Chesney claims. It will be heard in October.

Bishop McKeown said: "To the best of my knowledge, absolutely every piece of information (held by the Catholic church) has been handed over.

"I can't speak about something that's before the courts but if I came across anything that I wasn't aware of and that isn't in the public domain, I would simply pass that over to anybody who is doing

investigations in the police to ensure that the families who suffered and the families who continue to suffer and those who were not even born at the time and who continue to suffer because of the grandparents and so on so that they can get some little bit of solace and truth," he said.

"I was a university student when this all happened. I know so little about what happened. I'm not going to comment on something that obviously is going to be discussed before the courts. Any information that I have or can get, any help that I can offer, I'm only too keen to do it."

## A day at the Lough...



Pilgrims from the diocese of Killaloe, including Bishop Fintan Monahan, are pictured beneath 'The Pilgrim', a statue of St Patrick, at Lough Derg, August 1.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Kilmore clerical changes announced

Bishop of Kilmore Martin Hayes has made the following clerical appointments, effective from September 3,

Fr Donald Hannon CC Arva to retire.

Fr Peter Casey PP, Kilmore to be CC Kilmore.

Fr Oliver O'Reilly PP Ballyconnell to be CC Arva.

Fr John McTiernan PP Belturbet to be Adm. Belturbet.

Fr Eamonn Lynch PP Killinkere to retire.

Fr Brian Flynn PP Laragh to be CC Munterconnaught.

Msgr Liam Kelly PP, Vicar General, Kilsherdany and Drung to be PP in Ballyconnell.

Fr Seán McDermott PP Ballintemple to also be Adm. Ballinagh.

Fr Martin Gilcreest CC Cavan to be PP Laragh.

Fr Darragh Connolly, Priest in residence Drumkilly to be PP Killinkere.

Fr Loughlain Carolan Adm. Killinagh and Glangevin to be PP Killinagh and Glangevin.

Fr Yusuf Bamai CC Kilsherdany and Drung to be PP Kilsherdany and Drung.

Fr Thomas Small, Priest in Residence Shercock to be CC in Cavan.

Fr Anthony Kidarathil CC Munterconnaught to be CC Shercock.



# A moment of change for the trans ideology?

Anyone with a sense of compassion can feel sympathy for a person with gender dysmorphia – someone who strongly believes that they were ‘born into the wrong body’, and feels driven to change their gender. There are numerous cases in Ireland, north and south, of transgender people who have undergone such a transition.

## Agree

Not all experts agree that a person can, in fact, alter their sex: the IVF pioneer Robert Winston says flatly “you cannot change your sex”, because it is encoded in chromosomes and DNA. Surgery, he says, simply alters the body’s appearance. Lord Winston is a



**Mary Kenny**

religiously-observant Jew and would draw on the Hebrew Bible’s position on the natural law: male and female He created them.

**“Not all experts agree that a person can, in fact, alter their sex”**

Nevertheless, if individuals feel the need to identity with a sex different to that in which they were born, most European societies now extend that entitlement by law. And most

people don’t wish to be judgemental.

But the problem is that the transgender movement – while it may be motivated by kindness – has become an ideology which is conformist, coercive and even oppressive. Woe betide the organisation which doesn’t fly the transgender flag, symbol of that ideology. Even the GAA has conformed.

## Biological

The ideology maintains that sex is not biological – but a ‘choice’. It has had a

disproportionate influence on official language – from ‘pregnant people’ (not pregnant women) to ‘assigned female at birth’ (not born a girl).

And it has become most dangerous where children and young people are concerned. In London, the Tavistock Clinic became renowned for treating minors with puberty-blockers and hormones, putting 12-15-year-olds on a pathway to gender transition.

**“The ideology maintains that sex is not biological – but a ‘choice’”**

Last week, the British National Health Service announced it was shutting down the Tavistock’s Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), calling it “not safe” for children and young people, many too young to consent.

Several of the Tavistock’s own medics had expressed alarm at the way in which transgender ideology was dramatically increasing the numbers of young people

seeking transgender treatment. Many of these may have other mental health problems such as autism, or teenage anxieties that will resolve in time. Organisations like Stonewall and Mermaids have been accused of over-encouraging the medicalisation of the young. Keira Bell, a young woman who had surgery to change sex, has now de-transitioned and says her life was ruined by the initial operation.

## Pause

The closure of the Tavistock’s GIDS service signals a meaningful pause in the approach to transgender ideology.

In the Oireachtas, Senator Sharon Keogan has stated that over 230 Irish children were sent by the HSE to the Tavistock for treatment. Will there be an investigation of the policy in Ireland? Will there even be a conversation about it? (see page 4)

**“The problem is that the transgender movement – while it may be motivated by kindness – has become an ideology which is conformist, coercive and even oppressive”**

**More to life than washing dishes...**



Georg Friedrich Stettner *Christ at the home of Martha and Mary*.

Whenever the story of Martha and Mary, occurs in a Gospel reading, a woman somewhere will say to another woman, “It’s not fair! Martha did all the work!”

It happened recently when a cousin of mine brought up the subject, which is told in St Luke’s Gospel (10:38-42), when Jesus is given hospitality by the two sisters, and Martha busies about prepar-

ing a meal, while Mary sits and listens to Jesus.

“Honestly,” said my cousin. “If Martha hadn’t skivvied so hard doing all the practical things, there would have been no meals, no cleaning-up and no nice home ambience in which to welcome the Lord! Unfair!”

I see her point. Poor Martha really did strive to serve – and it was her home. But

Mary chose “the better part” by sitting with Jesus.

My interpretation is that Mary is seen here as a disciple – and that also presented women as worthy of reflective and philosophical discourse.

There’s more to life than preparing meals and washing the dishes. Even though, as my cousin says, someone has to do it!

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# Bishops report newspaper to NI equality body over ad ban

**Chai Brady**

The Primate of All-Ireland has written to the North's Equality Commission after *The Belfast Telegraph* refused to publish an advert from the northern bishops without changes to text expressing the Church's stance on abortion.

Archbishop Eamon Martin of the Diocese of Armagh highlighted the implications for faith-based groups and their participation in public life. He asked for a comment from the commission.

The paid advertisement *The Belfast Telegraph* refused to print in full on May 2 was a pastoral reflection called 'Make Your Voices Heard' and was an appeal to people before the North's May 5 election.

Archbishop Martin said: "A commercial newspaper, *The Belfast Telegraph*, accepted full payment for a service it

is obliged to make available to all, on the basis of equal access and equal respect for their religious view.

"Our advertisement contained the established and widely published position of the Catholic Church on a range of issues. But the paper subsequently refused to publish the advertisement unless the bishops changed what they said about abortion, to the satisfaction of the editor. The refusal to carry the advertisement raises fundamental questions about the equal access of religious groups and people of faith to such commercial services," he said.

## Refused

The bishops refused to accept any changes and withdrew their request and asked for their money back. They are now seeking advice over the implications of the newspaper's decision for the right to religious freedom

and equality of treatment for people of faith.

At the time *The Belfast Telegraph* stood over its decision to request changes to the pre-election paid advertisement from the Church before agreeing to publish it.

"This newspaper reiterated that there was absolutely no attempt to alter the church's core anti-abortion message, a fact underlined by the publication of editorial on the same statement last week," a post in May on the Belfast Telegraph website read, "All advertising containing uncontested opinion and views, especially ahead of an election, is subject to review before publishing. We are subject to regulation by the Advertising Standards Authority."

*The Irish News* allowed the same advert to be printed in its paper. Archbishop Martin said: "From our point of view the situation is a fairly

straightforward case of a religious organisation having been refused a commercial service, after payment had been taken, unless the religious organisation was willing to change how its religious message was expressed.

"We believe it would be helpful for all parties, as well as for other faith groups who may wish to seek a similar commercial service in the future, for us to seek clarification and advice from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and others about the situation that has arisen. We will consider our next steps when we have received this advice."

Writing to Dr Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission NI, Archbishop Martin asked for comment and/or advice on two questions. Firstly he asked if the commission agreed that commercial organisations providing paid advertising ser-

vices have an obligation to offer those services to individuals, and groups, on the basis of equality and without discrimination on the basis of the religious views of the individual or group seeking these services.

## Concerned

Secondly he asked what guidance the commission can offer to commercial organisations providing advertising services in respect to refusing to carry such advertisements on the basis of the religious opinion expressed, where such an advertisement satisfies all other statutory advertising requirements.

He added that the northern bishops believe there are many in the Catholic community who are "deeply concerned" about *The Belfast Telegraph's* decision.

The bishops are also seeking legal advice.

## Waterford-Kenya parishes link up for 'mutual enrichment'

**Ruadhán Jones**

Parishes and schools in Kenya and Waterford are forging links for their "mutual enrichment", Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Alphonsus Cullinan has said.

Bishop Cullinan along with representatives from the diocese and Mary's Meals visited the diocese of Lodwar, Northern Kenya, in July to establish outreach programmes to the region.

"This is an arid and desert area where there has

been no rain for three years," Bishop Cullinan said in a statement.

"Life is lived at a very basic level, many live in poverty. Putting food on the table is a constant struggle."

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Bishop Cullinan said they plan on identifying projects that parishes and schools in Waterford and Lismore can assist with.

"We certainly understood from the very start that our brothers and sisters are in need, granted, but also very rich in terms of the spirit," he said.

He added, however, that the diocese are "very conscious that it is a giving of equals", saying "we have much to learn from them".

The links between schools and parishes can help foster "a mutual enrichment between people there and people in our diocese", Dr Cullinan continued.

"Eventually hopefully we will have exchanges, perhaps student exchanges.

"It cannot just be a nice experience, it has to be something on which we build," Bishop Cullinan finished.

## Rock of Cashel added to World Heritage shortlist

**Staff Reporter**

The Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary, where according to legend St Patrick came to convert King Aengus to Christianity, is one of three sites added to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List.

The neolithic passage tomb landscape of Co. Sligo, the Transatlantic Cable in Valentia, Co. Kerry, and royal sites of Ireland have all moved one step closer to being declared World Heritage sites, the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage announced July 21.

The Tentative List is an inventory of natural and cultural heritage sites that can demonstrate outstanding universal value considered suitable for nomination to the World Heritage List.

The Rock of Cashel was included as part of the royal sites of Ireland, which are "strongly linked to myth and legend and are associated with the transformation of Ireland from paganism to Christianity and St Patrick", according to the submission to UNESCO.

Inisceiltra (Holy Island), Co. Clare and Glendalough Valley, Co. Wicklow also applied to be added to the list, but were not accepted.

**'I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go...'**



As they continue their bid to attract passengers while Dublin Airport struggles, Ireland West Airport Knock posted on social media about their unique air controller: "Not too many airports where the good Lord himself is watching over you as you arrive and depart," the airport said on social media, July 29.



## Nuala O'Loan

### The View



# The greatest fulfilment lies in living for others

**D**uring these weeks priests are on the move across Ireland. Some will retire completely, others, will continue to minister as pastors emeritus, some will take responsibility for their first parish, others - young in ministry will move to new parishes - or even, in the very exceptional case to their first parish as curate. It is a time of change.

**“As this paper appears in the parishes of Ireland, Fr Aloysius will be on his way back to Uganda to resume his priestly ministry there”**

For those on the move it must be challenging to say goodbye and, no matter the warmth of the welcome in the new place, there must be some uncertainty about what it will be like to serve in a different location, to live in a different house and to minister to a new people.

My parish of Ballymena is saying goodbye to two much loved priests. Fr Paddy Delargy has ministered here for 13 years and although he has reached the age for retirement, he will continue to minister. For the past three years we have also been blessed by the presence of a Ugandan Priest, Fr Aloysius Lumala - I should describe him as the Revd Dr Lumala, for during his time with us he completed his doctorate at Maynooth, despite the difficulties of studying during Covid-19. As this paper appears in the parishes of Ireland, Fr Aloysius will be on his way back to Uganda to resume his priestly ministry there. He does not know what his bishop will ask of him yet, but he knows that there is much to be done, in Uganda, just as there was in Ireland. We will miss them both.

Both men have enriched our parish very much, working on the good foundations laid by their predecessors. Fr Paddy has developing parishioners, so that they now contribute significantly in liturgy, parish administration and outreach. He brought new ideas, restored All Saints

Church, witnessed to the call of the Gospel through liturgy, reaching out to people through his love of nature and his skills in making a barren plot of ground into a lush and lovely garden producing plants, herbs and flowers. When he announced one day several years ago that he was going to grow flowers “across the road,” I thought he was joking. I should have known better!

Fr Aloysius brought to us an extended understanding of our Church in the world. He told us of his parish at home, of the need there for help. Gently and without making any demands at all, he generated great support and a much greater knowledge of pig farming in Uganda and of what can be achieved with very little, in our terms. He wore his learning lightly, and preached with great care, his message always predicated upon what Jesus had said or done. He was to be seen learning to drive a tractor and digging in the garden in his wellington boots with Fr Paddy in his spare time, always learning, always helping.

### God's call

The departure of these two good priests, and of so many others like them across Ireland, causes me to reflect on how blessed we are in the men who answer God's call to become priests, giving their lives to the service of God and his people. Fr Paddy answered the call to ministry some 50 years ago. It was the beginning of the Troubles. Those were difficult days for priests who answered calls day and night, often in dangerous and challenging situations being with their people in their pain, their loss, their fear, their dying. They were with them, too, in their homes, at the GAA fields, as life went on, some normality amidst the ongoing tragedy of the Troubles and then through the emerging peace. For Fr Paddy - who was Principal of St Mac Nissi's College for many years - there was too the challenge and the joy of contributing to the formation of the faith of so many young people, and to the academic and other achievements which gave young people the tools they needed to build their

lives.

These men, and those like them across Ireland who are moving on at this time, will be much missed for that generous and constant presence, for the goodness and the faith that enabled them to fulfil so many functions even in one day - as men of prayer, spiritual guides, liturgists, property managers.

One day may bring a funeral, with a family to be helped along the difficult journey of loss and grief; a boiler to be fixed; a wedding, as a young couple begin in faith and joy their journey together; a visit to a school to meet the children; a visit to a person who is sick; and a meeting about how the Church is to journey onwards, how parishes are to be reordered as we face the diminishing number of those who are willing to give their lives as priests in the constant service of the Lord. Such days must be demanding.

The reality is that, while there are priests who are grumpy and grudging in their service, who seem to have lost the joy of priesthood, for whom maybe sickness or other problems have made life very difficult, most of our priests, like Fr Paddy and Fr Aloysius give their lives generously to God and for us. We are much blessed.

**“May the Lord send workers into the vineyard that is Ireland - strong, generous and brave men of faith, ready to witness to the Gospels, to be as Christ to all. In the meantime, Fr Michael and Fr Joe, welcome to Ballymena!”**

The number of priests across the world increased most recently to 414,336. Yet, few men now answer the call to priesthood in Ireland. Perhaps the process of the synodal journey will help: calling us to recognise again what it is we are all called to, why we are here, why God made us, and what it is he is asking each of us to do. Could it encourage men who have choices and who know of the demands of priesthood, to know that every journey in life has its sorrows and its

All across Ireland, priests are moving parishes.



joys, its loneliness, its bleakness and its richness, and that the greatest fulfilment actually lies in working for others in whatever way God calls us. We need builders, engineers, doctors, nurses: each in their own way provides for our physical needs. We need priests too, men of God, to lead us, guide us, walk with us in ministry, be with us on each step of our journey.

### Sacraments

I used to hear priests saying that they wanted to do so much more than bring the sacraments to people. That always saddened me because a priest is the only person who can bring Christ, really present in the Eucharist, to us. He is the only person who can absolve sins in the name of the Father. Without priests we will not have the Mass: that moment when the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, when Jesus is truly and fully present among us: an almost incomprehensible reality bringing us grace, love and so much more. The priest's challenge is to bring people to Christ - it is a life's work.

May the Lord send workers into the vineyard that is Ireland - strong, generous and brave men of faith, ready to witness to the Gospels, to be as Christ to all. In the meantime, Fr Michael and Fr Joe, welcome to Ballymena!

**"Today the visibility of faith has for all intents and purposes vanished"**

- Archbishop Dermot Farrell

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# Prayer vigils at abortion centres to be banned under proposed legislation



Chai Brady

**P**ro-life groups have condemned the move by cabinet to approve the introduction of legislation on so-called 'safe access zones' around healthcare facilities that can provide abortion.

The legislation proposes 100-metre zones around abortion providers in which pro-life demonstrations, even prayer vigils, would be banned and those involved could face a fine or imprisonment.

The Life Institute has said the move is driven by false allegations that women are being threatened outside facilities which provide abortion.

Spokeswoman for The Life Institute Niamh Uí Bhriain said that despite evidence contradicting claims women are being threatened "abortion campaigners just keep repeating the lie, using their allies in the Dáil and Seanad to repeatedly claim that small, silent, prayerful pro-life vigils at Limerick Hospital were intimidating and harassing women".

She said that an investigation undertaken by Gript Media "shows that neither Limerick Hospital nor any of the other maternity units and hospitals throughout the country had received any complaints from patients or staff".

**“There was ‘no evidence to suggest that there is threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour directed towards persons utilising those services’”**

"Of course they didn't because the vigils usually amount to two women at a time walking quietly around the hospital praying for mothers and babies. The whole push to criminalise such activists is based on a complete fabrication of events and a distortion of reality that has gone completely unchecked by most of the media," Ms Uí Bhriain said.

"Then further false claims were made alleging that staff in Limerick Hospital were leaking the times of abortion appointments to those praying for mothers. Again, that was shown to be untrue because an FOI revealed there was no set day for abortion appointments, but at no time were the politicians or campaigners held to account for misinforming the public."



The legislation comes despite former Garda Commissioner Drew Harris telling the former Minister for Health Simon Harris in late 2019 that it was unnecessary. At the time Mr Drew Harris said he was satisfied that existing public order legislation could "adequately deal with any reasonable public order incident that may arise at such centres, I re-confirm my views expressed at our recent meeting that protests to date at such centres have not contravened the law and are peaceful".

## No evidence

There was "no evidence to suggest that there is threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour directed towards persons utilising those services," Mr Harris added. Despite his advice, politicians continued to push for the tough legislation.

Ms Uí Bhriain said: "In fact, the legislation doesn't require anyone to misbehave or even to try to speak to a woman who might be undecided and panicked as she looks for an abortion.

"It seeks to criminalise any activity that might 'influence' a woman, or an abortion doctor, so a lone pro-lifer holding a small sign saying 'Pregnant? I can help you' could face a fine and prison."

The Life Institute spokeswoman said that the public understanding of the controversy was being "massively skewed" by repeated misreporting of the unchecked claims of abortion supporters.

## Extremists

"The truth is that most people are not abortion extremists. If they knew the truth – that this bill wants to criminalise peaceful people who are usually silently praying for women and hoping to offer them support – they would be opposed to this measure," she said. "There is no significant evidence that shows a need for this measure: it smacks of the kind of nasty and vindictive malice which can emerge when those who have, for now, achieved a majority want to punish their opponents."

Ms Uí Bhriain added she believes the matter will be decided in the

courts, where the claims of campaigners would "come under the kind of rigorous scrutiny that TDs, senators and most media platforms had failed to provide thus far".

Another pro-life group, the Pro-Life Campaign brought up the issue of freedom of expression and assembly.

**“The fact that citizens could be jailed under this proposal for silently expressing a position in public is utterly alarming”**

Eilís Mulroy of the Pro Life Campaign said: "The Government's plan to introduce exclusion zones outside abortion facilities sets a very dangerous precedent for denying freedom of expression and the right to peacefully assemble in public areas.

"The proposal being put forward is a wholly disproportionate response to the risk that a tiny number of people may at

some point in the future engage in harassing behaviour close to an abortion facility.

She said that no one wants to see people harassed when approaching a hospital or GP surgery, saying that An Garda Síochána already have "wide-ranging powers to deal with the situation under existing public order laws".

## Proposal

Ms Mulroy said that despite this the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly "persists in pressing ahead with this regressive and draconian proposal, for no other reason than to appease a group of radical pro-abortion campaigners who have lobbied non-stop for such a law.

"The fact that citizens could be jailed under this proposal for silently expressing a position in public is utterly alarming. Minister Donnelly even acknowledged on 10 February in the Seanad that introducing such a law 'pushes up against civil liberties', but persisted with it regardless."

She added: "The Government's proposal has nothing to do with public safety and everything to do with singling out a particular category of people, namely those who oppose abortion, and criminalising the expression of their views. In the interests of basic civil liberties and the constitutional right to peacefully assemble, the Government's proposal must be opposed every step of the way."

**“The Life Institute has said the move is driven by false allegations that women are being threatened outside facilities which provide abortion”**



# KNOCK

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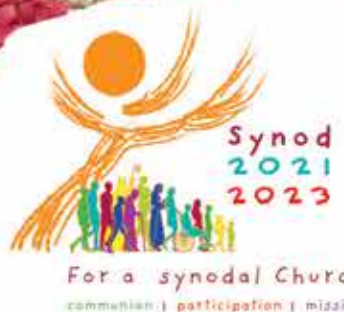
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3.00pm & 8.00pm Daily

**Evening Candlelight Procession will take place after the 8pm ceremony (weather permitting).**

The National Novena to Our Lady of Knock offers nine days of reflection and prayer and a chance to reconnect with your faith in the unique and sacred space of Knock Shrine.

The purpose of the Novena is to recognise the unique role that Knock, as an International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine, has to play in the life of the Irish Church and to honour Our Lady.



## Novena Speakers

### Sunday 14 August

- 3pm Most Rev Tom Deenihan, Bishop of Meath  
*What is Christian Hope?* - [MEATH DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE](#)
- 8pm Cormac Henry, former Youth Volunteer at Knock Shrine  
*What Gives me Hope Today?*

### Monday 15 August

- 3pm & 8pm Roseanna Ruane, mother of Saoirse Ruane  
*The Power of Prayer in Difficult Times*

### Tuesday 16 August - A Day of Thanksgiving for the Irish Contribution to the Universal Synod

- 3pm & 8pm Dr Nicola Brady, Chair of the Synodal Steering Group  
*The Synodal Pathway: What have we learned and what will we do?*

### Wednesday 17 August

- 3pm & 8pm Fr Terence Harrington: *How Can I Have Hope in my Brokenness?*

### Thursday 18 August - A Day of Prayer for Peace in Ukraine

- 3pm & 8pm Halyna Teslyuk: *A Hope that Inspires*

### Friday 19 August

- 3pm & 8pm Lauren Conroy, Student: *My Faith Story*

### Saturday 20 August

- 3pm Fr Michael McKeever, Parish of Gartan & Termon, Diocese of Raphoe  
*Eucharist: A Sign of Hope* - [RAPHOE DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE](#)
- 8pm Professor John Feehan, Geologists, Botanists, Author and Broadcaster  
*God in Everything that Lives: A Reflection on Laudato Si*

### Sunday 21 August - the Anniversary of the Apparition

- 3pm Most Rev Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin  
*They will take their Place at the Feast* - [ELPHIN DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE](#)
- 8pm Fr Richard Gibbons, PP and Rector, Knock Shrine  
*Knock - the Vision of Hope*

### Monday 22 August

- 3pm & 8pm Most Rev Francis Duffy, Archbishop of Tuam: *The Call of the Lord*

### FAMILY DAY - Sunday 21st August @ 3pm & 8pm

Our Family Day is a lovely opportunity for families to get together to enjoy a range of fun activities. All events and activities are free of charge and take place on the beautiful grounds of Knock Shrine, close to the award-winning Knock Museum and Café. There will be outdoor activities taking place on the green (weather permitting) & marquees with indoor workshops, games and more. Don't miss this special day of memory making and fun for everyone to enjoy.

### 'A Day of Prayer for Peace in Ukraine' - Thursday 18th August

We are inviting people from the Ukrainian community in Ireland and host families to join us for ceremonies at 3pm and 8pm.

### Engaging on the Synod

A unique feature of this year's Novena will be the 'Synod Tent', where members of the public will be invited to learn more about the Synod and what it means for all of us.

It will also provide an opportunity for us to listen to what you think Knock Shrine has to offer you and the Church in Ireland at this critical juncture in our history. Daily Sessions will take place in the Synod Tent at 12 noon with a facilitator present each day to provide structure and facilitate questions and group discussion.

Find out more: [www.knockshrine.ie/novena-speakers-2022](http://www.knockshrine.ie/novena-speakers-2022)

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# We must not lose hope, Archbishop Duffy tells Reek Sunday pilgrims

**Ruadhán Jones**

We must not lose hope “through this time of transition and restructuring”, Archbishop Francis Duffy told pilgrims ahead of the Reek Sunday climb up Croagh Patrick.

Speaking at the Vigil Mass in St Mary’s Church, Westport, Co. Mayo, the archbishop of Tuam said that now is a “time for faith, faith into action, faith into reaching out”.

Archbishop Duffy warned

that there is “no quick fix” to the challenges facing the Church in Ireland.

“The one certainty is the ongoing and sustained decline both in the numbers who practice and in the numbers of those who answer the Lord’s call to priesthood and religious life,” Archbishop Duffy said in his homily.

Reek Sunday is the annual pilgrimage to the summit of Croagh Patrick traditionally held on the last Sunday of July.



John Toner from Leitrim makes the pilgrimage to the summit in his bare feet.



Pilgrims commence the climb of the final steep part of Croagh Patrick, July 31. Photos: Fr Stephen Farragher.



Padraig McHale from Louisburgh.



83-year-old Padraig McHale from Westport reaches the summit.





Pilgrims at the summit, during the celebration of the 8am Mass.



Fr John Kenny, celebrant of 8am Mass.



Lucy Considine, Kilshanny, Co. Clare and Mary Brennan, Lahinch, Co. Clare were among the thousands of pilgrims who made the pilgrimage to the summit of Croagh Patrick.



Pat Boyhane, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath who made the pilgrimage bare-footed to the summit of Croagh Patrick.





# 'Safe access zone' law may need to be challenged in court



The Government has chosen to ignore the facts to make a political point, writes **David Quinn**

**T**he Government seems intent on passing a so-called 'safe access zone' law. The very term 'safe access' is a loaded one. It implies that if pro-life activists are anywhere near a hospital or clinic that provides abortions, women will feel 'unsafe', as though they might be physically, or at least verbally attacked.

It's why the Government, pro-choice campaigners, Health Minister, Stephen Donnelly, and, of course, our overwhelmingly pro-choice media, constantly use the term. It is a highly effectively way of swinging public support behind the proposed law.

**“What this adds up to is a Government that is eager to target a particular kind of demonstration, the pro-life kind, and curb it”**

When arguments are being made to justify these 'safe access zones' we hear that pro-life activists are 'harassing', 'intimidating' and 'abusing' women as they enter healthcare settings. Again, these are very loaded terms - they give the impression that pro-life campaigners are, at a minimum, shouting at women outside these places.

If that was actually taking place, then the law should intervene, but it can already, as Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris has previously confirmed. We have laws against harassment, intimidation and abuse on the statute books now. They have existed for years.

But the Government has chosen to ignore the commissioner. It wants to make a point. It wants to exercise its power. It wants to please pro-abortion organisations and their many friends in the media as well as steal some thunder from the Sinn Féin-led Opposition (a term I use advisedly because they almost never oppose the Government on social policy).

What this adds up to is a Government that is eager to target a particular kind of demonstration, the



A family displays signs during the annual All-Ireland Rally for Life in Dublin on July 2.

pro-life kind, and curb it.

The law it wishes to introduce is incredibly far-reaching and restrictive. Questions must surely arise as to its constitutionality. The Constitution protects rights of free speech, protest and assembly.

For a start, the proposed law will ban pro-life activists from coming within a 100-metres of a hospital or clinic that conducts or facilitates abortion. That basically puts pro-life activists out of sight. Not alone will they be nowhere near the entrance, they will be nowhere near the entire facility.

## Pro-life activity

But exactly what sort of pro-life activity will be banned, under pain of a fine or even prison? The answer is, everything, including, possibly, praying nearby with your rosary beads.

Outlining the proposed new law last week, Stephen Donnelly, said one of its aims is to ban the display of "any item, whether symbolic or otherwise, with the intended or likely effect of influencing a person's decision to access termination of pregnancy services".

What can this mean? It is incredibly broad-ranging. What sort of symbols does it have in mind? Would a cross or a bible fall into the category?

It also seeks to ban texts that might influence someone, so what happens if someone displays a

poster with the famous passage from the Old Testament which says, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you"? Could the person displaying this go to prison?

Obviously, directly pro-life posters and leaflets will be banned and so will offering an alternative to abortion, however passively.

**“What would the court have made of our proposed buffer zones, which will be ten times larger than the ones proposed by the Massachusetts' legislature?”**

A law along these lines was struck down unanimously by the US Supreme Court in 2014, before Donald Trump had shifted the balance of the court in a pro-life direction. Even judges known for being staunchly pro-choice, such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg found that the Massachusetts' 'safe access' law went too far. This is despite the fact that the exclusion zone it sought to enforce was only 10 metres in radius, not 100 metres like the one proposed here.

The ruling was made in a case called *McCullen vs Coakley*. The US Constitution has a strong free speech provision. Among other things, the Massachusetts' law sought to pre-

vent anyone offering pro-life counselling outside abortion clinics.

The court recognised the state's interest in protecting public safety, but ruled that the buffer zones restricted free speech substantially more than was necessary to achieve that interest. What would the court have made of our proposed buffer zones, which will be ten times larger than the ones proposed by the Massachusetts' legislature?

The woman who took the case, Eleanor McCullen, a pro-life counsellor, said after the ruling, "Many women have abortions because they feel they have no other option or because they are pressured by a boyfriend or parent. Today's ruling means I can offer loving help to a woman who wants it, and neither of us will go to jail for the discussion."

Her lawyer, Mark L. Rienzi, remarked: "It's a great day. It's a unanimous opinion, and it's a strong opinion saying: 'If there's bad behavior, the state should prosecute the bad behavior. They can't put peaceful grandmothers like Eleanor McCullen in prison'."

But this is exactly what Mr Donnelly's law would do. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, to judge from how she voted in *McCullen vs Coakley*, would take a dim view.

The reasoning adopted by the US Supreme Court is also found in almost every part of Europe, where buffer zones are exceptionally rare.

It is only in countries where pro-choice opinion has become militant, like in Spain, that they are found.

Scotland is also proposing such a law, and the North has already passed one, although it is under challenge in the UK Supreme Court with a ruling expected in the autumn.

England considered nationwide exclusion zones in 2018, but rejected them as disproportionate. It's interesting that they are found or are being proposed in what you might call 'Celtic fringe' countries that are angrily rejecting their religious heritage. Spain is doing the same, as are some South American countries. Perhaps it is simply a case of secular militancy replacing the religious variety and these are naturally militant countries?

## Strong qualms

Personally, I have strong qualms about people turning up outside maternity hospitals with small white coffins or photos of aborted fetuses. This is militancy of a pro-life sort and most members of the public probably find it deeply off-putting.

But what the Government is proposing is a total crackdown on any kind of pro-life activity, however passive and gentle within a wide radius of maternity hospitals and GP surgeries that prescribe the abortion pill.

Clearly the Government is now deep inside the pocket of militant pro-choice groups and is beyond listening to reason. When the Heads of the Bill are published soon, it will need to be closely examined as to its constitutionality. That might be the only hope of stopping it in its tracks.

**“The reasoning adopted by the US Supreme Court is also found in almost every part of Europe, where buffer zones are exceptionally rare”**



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# 'We live in very sombre times'



Maynooth's conference on the 'Future of Christian Thinking' took place in April of this year. Prof. Desmond delivered the inaugural 'Lecture in Christian Philosophy at St Patrick's'.



Irish Catholic philosopher William Desmond warns that modern Ireland has desanctified life, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

**R**eflecting on his return to Ireland in 1995, Cork-born philosopher William Desmond wrote that one sees home "in a doubled way" after a long time away. "There is no simple univocal home ever more."

I spoke to Prof. Desmond almost 30 years on from this reflection, in which time Ireland must seem to have changed even further from the 'home' he would have known in the 1950s and 60s.

"I do think we live in very sombre times," he says late in our conversation, which took place in the historic Renshan hall in St Patrick's College Maynooth.

"I've developed this notion of the counterfeit double," says Prof. Desmond, who has been a professional philosopher for decades. "It's

a double which looks identical to the original, but it has been hollowed out. I believe there are a lot of counterfeit doubles of Christian virtues that circulate in our society."

He singles out the virtue of compassion, spoken of so often today, but which he describes as being "a counterfeit compassion in that it doesn't care about others in a deep sense."

## Compassion

"But compassion is a Christian concern going way back to the beginnings of Christianity. Hospitals, for instance, are Christians inventions... taking care of the sick, treating the old with dignity. The young and the old are signed with a divine image and likeness and hence have to be treated with a reverence that is not really known in ancient pagan societies."

The emergence of this compassion came against the backdrop of Christian society that saw the "sign of the divine in us calling forth ethical action that is the appropriate response". But now, "the sense of the sign of God has vanished for a lot people, but they're still living on remnants of notions like compassion," the Irish philosopher says.

I ask if this counterfeit notion of compassion feeds into ideas of 'compassionate dying', in other words assisted suicide, and Prof. Desmond agrees it can be turned that way.

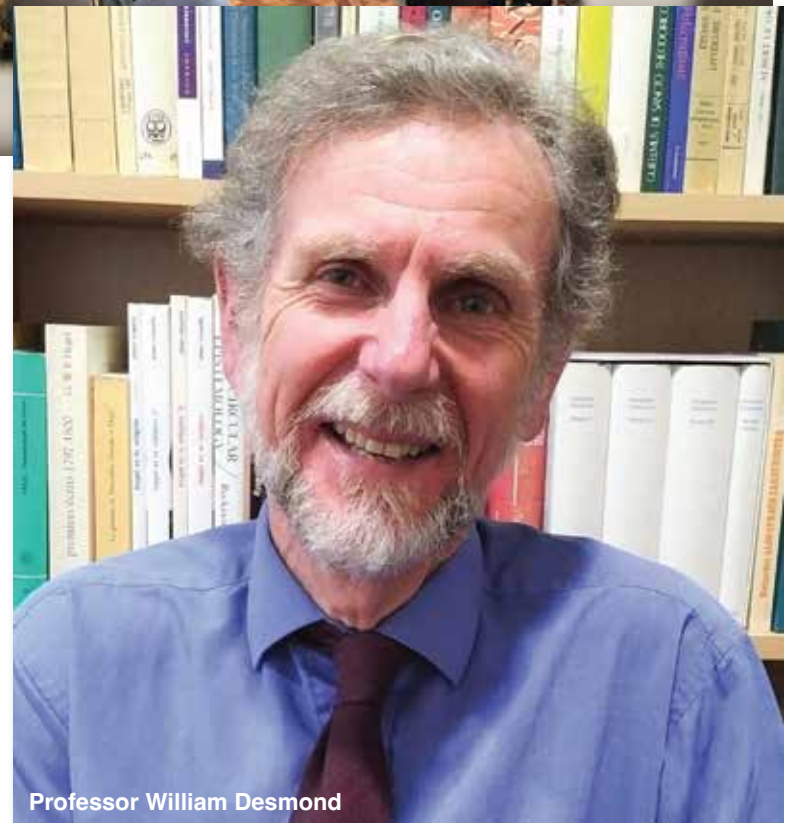
There is an "idea that human existence is almost a problem that has to have a technical solution for it or a medical-technical solution for it. Over the long haul, it leads to the diminished respect for what we used to refer to as the sanctity of life. But sanctity now sounds anomalous, it's life desanctified so to say. Those developments fill me with terrible foreboding actually."

**“There are questions that are actually evaded by the endless rush of consumption, entertainment, advertisements, media events”**

These developments in society come against a backdrop of what Prof. Desmond describes as the "narrowing" of discussion in Ireland. This is especially the case with Christian thought, as Christian and Catholic voices are squeezed out of the public sphere.

Prof. Desmond, who grew up in 1960s Ireland, reflects that modern Ireland owes its roots to the "elemental" influence of the sexual revolution. At the time, some in Ireland felt the revolution was not being offered to them.

**“Compassion is a Christian concern going way back to the beginnings of Christianity”**



Professor William Desmond

"Slowly as they became professionals and moved into journalism and so on, they brought out attitudes of a different sort. But attitudes that were in their own way hugely influenced by developments in consumer capitalism, by the upturning of traditional sexual morality with the contraceptive pill and so on."

The need for theology has increased as the "endless rush for consumption" now dominates our lives, Prof. Desmond says.

## Changes

"If there's to be changes and transformations, I think something has to strike into the heart of human beings on a more or less wider scale, that our way of life in buying completely into consumer capitalism and the idols of the market, this in the end brings satisfactions, but it doesn't bring a deep sense of fulfilment to the human being."

"There are questions that are actually evaded by the endless rush of consumption, entertainment, advertisements, media events, the chatterers on the radio, needing a new subject for controversy day in, day out."

His hope is that a space would be opened up in Irish society where "reflective thought about the ultimate things" can take place. If that's





True Christian compassion, which inspired its work in areas like hospitals, has been replaced by a hollowed-out version of the virtue. Photo: CNS.

to be the case, theology can't just be an academic speciality in a university.

"I wouldn't think of theology in that sense at all. It's less a question of the faculties in a university as the basic desire to reflect upon one's own religious nature such as it is," Prof. Desmond states firmly.

But even if we were to accept theology as being something broader, it would have little effect on wider society if it doesn't "acknowledge that there is something constitutively religious about the human being", he warns.

## **“In recent decades, a silo attitude has developed in philosophy in relation to theology”**

"To be a human being is to be in relation to something more than oneself, named in different ways in different religious traditions. But the relationship between the human and the divine, between the human and God or God and the human, I take it that it makes us to be the kind of beings we are.

"And we can remain perplexed and try to be true to that, to wonder what it means and to maybe develop a way of life that reflects our understanding. Or we can pretend that there's nothing there."

The fact that most people live as though there is nothing out there makes it difficult for theology to develop, because "thinking emerges out of the living so to say. Living religiously or not religiously is at a more elemental level than the reflective and perhaps more theoretical activity that goes on in theology or philosophy faculties.

"And the thinking may not reflect what's really going on in the heart

of the human being. You could have abstract thinking that doesn't really reflect the joys and the sorrows of the human condition itself. But I think religion at its best always brings us back to that passionate pilgrimage of the human being between birth and death," Prof. Desmond finishes.

The shape of contemporary culture – squeezing religious thought out – is reflected in the culture of the homes of modern thought, our universities.

"In recent decades, a silo attitude has developed in philosophy in relation to theology," Prof. Desmond says. "Philosophy and theology, especially philosophy I think, retreats into its own claim to be determining things through itself alone. And so the companionship doesn't exist in the way that it did in the earlier parts of our religious and cultural history.

"It presents a challenge of multiple dimensions. Professional philosophy, to a large extent, at the moment wants to maintain its own self-definition and tends to see religion in the light of a kind of heteronomy, the bad other that threatens the freedom of thinking for oneself."

## **Interactions**

This siloing leads to bad interactions, with each side creating caricatures of the other. Prof. Desmond cites the example of the New Atheists, who he calls "very, very poor thinkers".

"They presented religion as these kinds of fantasies of basically people who couldn't think for themselves or follow the science. Their picture of religion was even less than a cartoon. If you have a cartoon, it usually reflects something of the reality. But this wasn't even a cartoon, it was worse than a caricature.

"You can't be a companion to a friend that you caricature all of the time. There has to be some open tolerance of even the otherness of the other on both sides for companioning to take place. I've been trying to suggest some of the resources that might be available and developed through this model of companioning."

I spoke to Prof. Desmond at Maynooth, which he was visiting to deliver the inaugural 'Lecture in Christian Philosophy at St Patrick's'. The conference drew together philosophers of religion from around the world, all of whom display an openness to 'companioning' philosophy.

"I'm very impressed that this was taking place in Maynooth, which has often been seen as a fortress of darkness in and among some of the Irish intellectuals," the Irish philosopher said.

"But in fact, it's an open place of meeting, it's that 'between' relation that I mentioned.

"That it took place in Maynooth and that the president and the responsible authorities here put the resources available to the organisers, Gaven Kerr and Philip Gonzales, is a good thing. They were promised the resources to put on a major international conference. It wasn't just a small seminar, meeting on a Sunday morning with tea and digestive biscuits.

"It's a big conference, with eminent names from all over the world. That to me is a living refutation of that caricature of Maynooth as the fortress of darkness."

The conference and events like it can help make the space Prof. Desmond has been calling for, for reflective thought on big questions. It also helps philosophy and theology to come onto the threshold of each other and engage.

"This is what the conference is trying to do in many respects," he tells me. "I find in my own profession, academics, there are more theologians interested in philosophy than there are philosophers interested in theology, in this broad kind of ecumenical sense.

"David Bentley Hart, John Milbank, Rowan Williams, just to name those as perhaps the most eminent of the names here. Cyril O'Regan, who is Irish of course, and trained philosophically in UCD, doing a double degree in the late 60s, early 70s."

However, it has to be remembered that theology is not just an academic task, and this is something that Prof. Desmond stresses. He adds that, as a result, the Church in Ireland should encourage theology to be practised widely as a discursive and inquisitive searching of the heart. This is something it has traditionally failed to do.



Cork-born Professor of Philosophy William Desmond believes that theology is important for the health of Irish society.

"There's being religious, and you can be religious in the best sense without necessarily being a reflective thinker about the nature of what it means to be religious," Prof. Desmond begins. "And the Irish Church in its long tradition has tended not to encourage as much as it should have the reflective, the intellectual side of being religious.

"Again we have to remember a long history and this is a centuries old history. It was essentially a peasant Church. And you know yourself the Irish are very sceptical of people with 'fancy notions'. And so there is a kind of peasant farmer scepticism about – I mean we love to argue and we love to talk about this, that or the other – but if someone comes up with an idea, you know the way, there is the slight tremor of being threatened."

## **“The conference and events like it can help make the space Prof. Desmond has been calling for, for reflective thought on big questions”**

The Church in Ireland has tended to reflect these roots in a rural society and didn't cultivate a greater intellectual rigour, Prof. Desmond contends.

"It could be true as well that the kind of intellectuality that was present in the Church was dominated by a kind of rote scholasticism that wasn't really a living, wondering faith – scholasticism was almost streamlined into a set of handbooks and you learned about this part of theology, this part, then epistemology and this that or the other.

"It's like teaching poetry off by heart without touching the heart. The poetic impulse isn't encouraged. You can recite poetry and do it in a dead way. Similarly, with certain religious doctrines, they can be recited, but the living heart and the living spirit isn't in them."

Good philosophising is hard to find, Prof. Desmond says, because it is "a spiritual adventure and a discipline in its own way". Philosophical questions "make you unsettled".

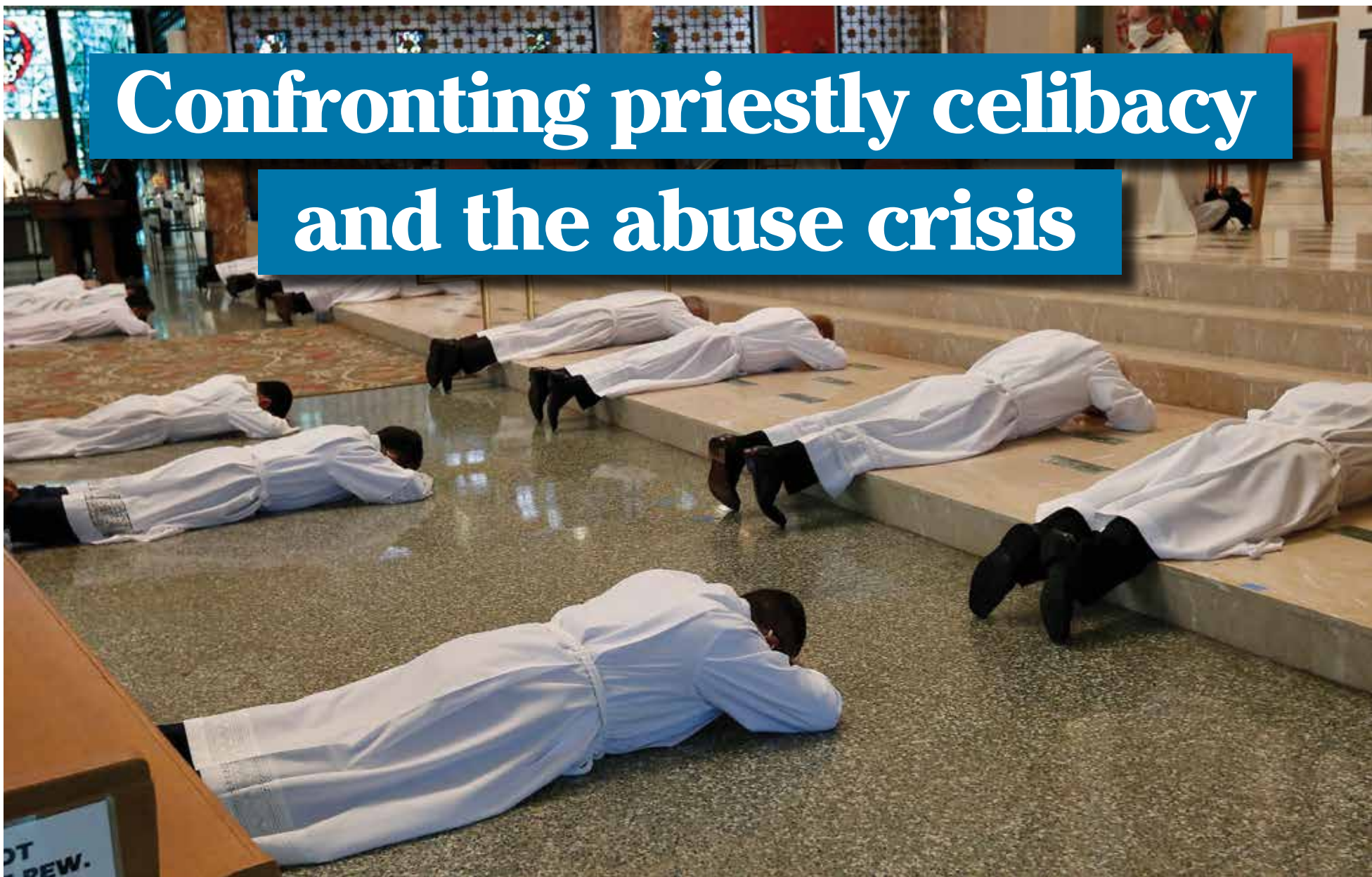
"They make you give expression to lack of certainty, perplexity. People want to get on with life. They'll say, get a life. And I understand that. Some questions are stupid questions. But sometimes you have to ask stupid questions to find your way and if you're just cutting off your questions, that's certainly not the way to go forward I think."

When it comes to the future of Christian thinking in Ireland, Prof. Desmond admits to being at a loss. He adds that it's a dangerous thing to talk about the future as if it were something already. "It's a fallacy of implying there's a future there and we have to find our way to it."

However, if there was one main thing that can help us with our journey to the future, Prof. Desmond says, it is to "understand where we've come from, where we are now and what the signs of despair and hope are".



# Confronting priestly celibacy and the abuse crisis



**There is a misunderstanding regarding priestly celibacy, sexual frustration and the abuse crisis according to experts, writes Chai Brady**

If a random person walking down any Irish street were to be queried about the reasons behind the child abuse crisis in the Church, there's a high chance they would say priestly celibacy was the cause.

How often have we heard it said with a shake of the head: "if only they allowed the priests to get married"?

Mandatory celibacy is an easy scapegoat, but judging the priestly commitment obfuscates the truth behind the horrors of the crisis.

Anyone tuned in to Irish media can see the idea of celibacy is treated humorously or ridiculed, and generally it is only slightly understood if at all.

The abuse crisis has been used as an argument against priestly celibacy and while it may have played a factor in some cases – according to some studies and reports – it is far from being the issue that led priests and religious to abuse children. Before delving into the work of psychologists regarding the matter, it's worth seeing the Church's reason and definition for maintaining the discipline in the western Church.

## Celibacy

Defining priestly celibacy, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain celibate 'for the sake of the kingdom of heaven'.

"Called to consecrate themselves with undivided heart to the Lord and to 'the affairs of the Lord', they give themselves entirely to God and to men. Celibacy is a sign of this new life to

the service of which the Church's minister is consecrated; accepted with a joyous heart celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God," the catechism states.

**“There is no established causal link between celibacy and the abuse of children”**

There's a large body of academic studies that touch on celibacy and the abuse crisis. Recently the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry published 'The psychology of individuals who abuse children – Roundtable 1 Findings' last month which reported there was no "causal link" between celibacy and abuse of children.

The experts stated that celibacy may involve problems ranging from many of those who are celibate finding it difficult to talk about, to the use of pornography by religious abusers who do not regard that as a breach of their vows.

However, they insist that "there is no established causal link between celibacy and the abuse of children. Sexual abuse of children is not the result of sexual frustration and celibacy is not likely to shift a person away from their

primary sexual orientation. Even if the role of celibacy ought not to be overlooked, it should not be overemphasised".

In their findings, they also stated that the abuse of children by priests is connected to a lack of "human formation – that is, who you are as a person, your individual psychology, how you handle emotions and relationships, is thought to play a significant role here".

## Academic thought

These findings have bolstered similar academic thought across the world. For instance Prof. Thomas G. Plante of Santa Clara University in California wrote an article in 2018 in which he attempted to dispel misinformation on the subject. While conducting research in the area, Prof. Plante also evaluates and treats both victims and perpetrators, conducts psychological evaluations and screenings of applicants to Catholic seminaries, and has served on child protection committees for the Church at national, regional, and local levels for more than 30 years.

He said: "Clerical celibacy doesn't cause paedophilia and sexual crimes against minors.

Think about it. If you can't or don't have sex with a consenting

partner would children become the object of your desire? Of course not. If anything, other consenting adults would.

"Additionally, if public school teachers have levels of sexual victimisation of their students at levels higher than Catholic clerics during the same time frame, then one can't simply blame celibacy for the sexual abuse problem in the Catholic Church. Moreover, the vast majority of sex offenders are regular men, often married or partnered, with 80% or more victimising their own family members with the most likely candidate being a step-father or older brother abusing a child or teen in the home."

**“The abuse crisis has been used as an argument against priestly celibacy”**

The Church itself has long defended mandatory celibacy, dismissing its connection with child abuse. In 2019, Fr Jordi Bertomeu Farnós, a senior official of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wrote there was "no evidence" celibacy has any relations to instances of sexual abuse.

He said: "Although unfortunately, in all social classes, professions, ethnic groups and, of course, religions, there is the phenomenon of child abuse, Catholic priests are seen or even increasingly treated as 'suspects' of having committed

**“The Church itself has long defended mandatory celibacy, dismissing its connection with child abuse”**





this horrible crime.”

Fr Farnós added that “there is no scientific data that demonstrates that a married life would put an end to the deviant behaviour of these few priests with this sexual disorder.

“In addition,” he added, “celibacy has never been considered as a relevant parameter to identify abusers. Rather, most abusers are married men. Priests, mostly celibate men are...usually characterised precisely for their psychological balance, for their availability and selfless delivery to all, not only to the Catholic faithful.”

**“Our society needs many young people to show everyone the goodness of living a true, chaste and free love”**

Fr Farnós went on to defend the discipline of celibacy which he described as “countercultural” particularly in today’s society.

“According to some, in a sexually uninhibited and eroticised society...with numerous cases of addiction to all kinds of pornography and sexual deviations or paraphilias, priestly celibacy would be a pernicious life option,” he said.

If this is to be believed, Fr Farnós said celibacy can only be understood by observers as a perpetual self-censorship of sexual desire which would inevitably lead to “psychological problems related to immaturity” that result in paedophilia.

He continued: “Our society needs many young people to show everyone the goodness of living a true, chaste and free love. Living the consecration as ‘anointing’ and not simply ‘function’ encourages everyone, particularly those who have received the marriage vocation, to surrender without fainting despite daily difficulties,” he said. “Priests are called, therefore, to surrender with a totalising love to be ‘signs’ of a more real love than any utopia.”

### Psychological dynamics

Psychologist and expert on tackling child sexual abuse, having advised the US Catholic bishops’ conference and publishing on the issue, Msgr Stephen Rossetti has said the “psychological dynamics” that lead to abuse of children are already in place before a candidate even enters seminary.

Msgr Rossetti previously worked as president and CEO of Saint Luke’s Institute. During his tenure as president, Saint Luke’s Institute treated 150 priests who had sexually abused minors.

Asked about the issue, he said: “whenever you see a priest that has a sexual problem, they say, ‘Aha, you know, it must be celibacy’. But anyone who works in the field of child abuse knows that most child abusers in the world are or will be married. And most of the psychological dynamics which lead someone to sexu-

ally abusing a minor are long in place before a person enters the seminary.

**“They have access, they have authority and they have the cover of a very respected profession”**

“So people will say, ‘Well, look at these priests sexually molesting minors. Let’s throw out celibacy and that will take care of the problem’. But, see, that’s going at the wrong issue and we’re going to waste a lot of energy going in the wrong direction. I think if we want to stop child abuse as much as we can than we have to go to the real roots of it or we’re going to have the same problem all over again,” Msgr Rossetti insisted.

Backing up this assertion, Carolyn Quadrio, an associate

professor at the University of New South Wales in Australia told the child abuse royal commission into Catholic institutions in Ballarat, in 2015 that the issue of celibacy is important but not the main cause of abuse. She said: “I don’t think the celibacy drives child abuse. The celibacy vow is not going to bother you if you’re not interested in having sex with other adults, so obviously that will be a more comfortable environment,” she said.

“They have access, they have authority and they have the cover of a very respected profession,” she said.

### Argued

The issue is still argued over. For instance, two former Australian priests Prof. Des Cahill and Dr Peter Wilkinson, in their 384-page survey entitled *Child Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: An Interpretive Review of the Literature and Public Inquiry Reports* pointed to manda-

tory clerical celibacy as being a major risk factor for child sexual abuse – but not the cause.

Regarding the issue of celibacy in the survey, which was published by the Centre for Global Research at RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) University, they state: “From our review of the literature, it cannot be argued that celibacy on its own has caused clerical sex abuse in Catholic settings.

“There have been too many good priests and religious who have successfully lived a celibate life. Celibacy has been a critical factor in the successful achievements of the Catholic Church throughout its long history...But it cannot be claimed that celibacy has been an unparalleled success. Although, from a social science perspective, it is impossible to conclude that celibacy has directly caused child sexual abuse, the preferred approach is to see celibacy as the major precipitating risk factor that has led to psychosexually immature identities and sexual deprivation on the part of those priests and religious who have offended against children.”

**“From our review of the literature, it cannot be argued that celibacy on its own has caused clerical sex abuse in Catholic settings”**

The issue is made further complex when looking at the idea of celibacy and its role in the crisis. In a chapter of *The Routledge Handbook of Irish Criminology* entitled ‘Hindsight, Foresight and Historical Judgement: Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church’, UCD associate professor Marie Keenan asserts that maintaining an image of clerical celibacy became more important than protecting victims of abuse.

### Clerical

She states: “For the clerical men, the preservation of an image of ‘perfect celibate’ had to be maintained, no matter what the personal and psychological cost, or more importantly the devastating consequences for other individuals, especially minors.

“Minimising and rationalising, and the Sacrament of Confession, helped to keep such a terrible realisation at bay. For Church leaders, the preservation of an image of celibate clergy and model of institutional perfection and holiness was more important than the reality of anyone’s life and ultimately of any individual who could be sacrificed; priest, bishop or child. While children became the sacrificial lambs of an image of celibate living that had to be maintained, the clergy themselves and some bishops became the sacrificial offering that the institutional Church was itself willing to make.”

Blaming mandatory priestly celibacy is an easy cliché to try to explain a phenomenon as uncomfortable to face as it is old: that people with a desire to do harm to children sadly live in our midst and only gold standard safeguarding procedures – including in seminary admissions – and heightened awareness can confront that terrible truth.



American psychologist Msgr Stephen Rossetti, an expert on tackling child abuse, gives a workshop on the human formation for priests and religious.



# A peek behind the curtain with



An extensive collection of the famed apologist's personal belongings offers a glimpse into the mind of the man, writes **Jason Osborne**

**F**ans of the 'Apostle of Common Sense' and the 'Prince of Paradox' Gilbert Keith Chesterton will be delighted to learn that the Notre Dame London Global Gateway has amassed a treasure-trove of the Catholic giant's personal effects as part of its Chesterton Collection.

G.K. Chesterton was a major literary figure in the early 20th Century, and remains one of Catholicism's stoutest defenders through the large body of writing that he left behind. However, he is perhaps best known for his *Father Brown* fictional series, which sees the priest/ amateur detective Fr Brown solving a plethora of crimes and mysteries.

Speaking to former archivist of the collection though, Ronan Doheny, we learn through the other items that Chesterton left behind that there was far more to him than his pen.

"I always think of him as first and foremost an artist, and even in his literature, he almost approaches it as an artist, not as a writer," Mr Doheny says as he approaches explaining the collection to me.

## Surprised

Comprised of far more than books, fans of Chesterton's might be surprised to find that it boasts a large amount of the artist's drawing, doodling and craft. How did the collection come to possess such a wide variety of his belongings? Mr Doheny tells me the extensive journey, and the many hands, that it passed through.

"The Chesterton Collection is, I suppose, it's the Aidan Mackey Chesterton Collection. Aidan Mackey is this, I think he's 99 now, extraordinary, retired schoolmaster, book-seller and Chesterton fan," Mr Doheny explains.



An undated portrait of G.K. Chesterton by Edwin Swan. Chesterton (1874-1936) was an agnostic who converted to Catholicism in 1922 and became one of Catholicism's best-known defenders. Photo: CNS

"After Chesterton died, and his wife Frances died, his estate passed to his secretary Dorothy Collins, who was basically a daughter to them. And so, Aidan Mackey became friends with Dorothy Collins and at the time of her death in the '80s, some of the collection passed to him, the books especially.

"Then also in the '90s, there was this donation of materials by the British Library that they didn't want, and so they were looking for a home and approached Aidan Mackey and he always says that this collection always came about through accident, just people coming to him. Originally, it was in Aidan Mackey's house and then it found a home in Oxford with the late Stratford Caldecott.

"He had a centre in Oxford... It was there for, probably, 20 years and then unfortunately Caldecott passed away young, so then it needed a new home and the Oratorians in Oxford took the collection in and housed it, but it was really only

a short term fix," he says.

Notre Dame took over the trusteeship of the collection after this, and over the years, it was added to by a vast number of people donating items – such as Aidan Mackey, who had collected a number of Chesterton books published around the world in different languages.

## “The collection speaks loudly of Chesterton's artistic side”

"So it's a mix of personal items connected to Chesterton – there's toy theatres he made, artwork created by Chesterton, some manuscripts produced by Chesterton and also a collection of books that were written by or about, or are related to Chesterton," Mr Doheny says.

I ask about the toy theatres Mr Doheny mentions, as even fans of Chesterton are often unfamiliar with the

dedicated, artistic pursuits of the literary figure.

"There's two, so there's one Spanish toy theatre that he bought – that's complete and it's beautiful," Mr Doheny begins, "But I suppose the main one is his own hand-made and hand-decorated toy theatre. We don't actually have the toy theatre frames of it, but we do have the characters and the backgrounds.

"The toy theatres are really an encapsulation of Chesterton, and what I love about Chesterton is just the joy within him, in that this is a man who is able to produce some of the best works of Christian apologetics in the 20th Century and yet at the same time, he'll be producing toy theatre shows for neighbourhood children just for the love of it," he says.

The collection boasts a "fantastic range" of characters and settings, such as saints, monsters, dragons and heroes. Mr Doheny reveals that there's even a figure of a child smok-



Former archivist of the Chesterton Collection, Ronan Doheny.



A copy of Chesterton's *The Innocence of Father Brown*, translated into Russian.

ing a cigar – which he attributes to Chesterton's abiding love of cigars.

The saints in question are the seven saints associated with Christendom – St Patrick, St George, St Denis of France, St Anthony of Portugal, St James of Spain, St David and St Andrew. St George is of particular interest here, as he was central in Chesterton's staging of the story of St George and the dragon.

"At the end of the killing of the dragon and the rescuing of the princess, there's then this victory parade of the seven champions of Christendom, I learned," Mr Doheny says.

## Artistic side

As mentioned, the collection speaks loudly of Chesterton's artistic side, through not only these extravagant toy theatres, but through his doodling, too.

"I suppose with the doodles, he was a wonderful artist and he went to art college – he

didn't go to college to study English or journalism or anything like that. I always think of him as first and foremost an artist, and even in his literature, he almost approaches it as an artist, not as a writer," Mr Doheny says.

"So the doodles, it's just the artist's mind of being bored and he'll doodle something because even through the '20s and '30s, even during the latter stage of his life, you'll be flicking through some random book that was given to Chesterton by Hilaire Belloc or someone and there'll be a random doodle on a random page that he was obviously halfway through reading the book and just absentmindedly started doodling something."

The books in which he's doodling, and the books the collection holds, will be of intense interest to Chesterton aficionados, as they're not only your run of the mill English productions.

**“Fans of Chesterton's might be surprised to find that it boasts a large amount of the artist's drawing, doodling and craft”**



# the Chesterton Collection



A background for Chesterton's toy theatre, hand-drawn by Chesterton himself.



Another of the toy theatre's backgrounds, produced by Chesterton.



A page from one of Chesterton's books, displaying some of his doodles.



A lock of Chesterton's hair, which would be a first-class relic if Chesterton's canonisation cause is successful. Photos: The Chesterton Collection at Notre Dame London Global Gateway.

"This was again a labour of love by Aidan Mackey in that he started collecting the different publications in the different languages. It's extraordinary the reach that Chesterton had across all the different continents. It's interesting that you see him pop up in a good few countries where there's authoritarian regimes, like behind the Iron Curtain," Mr Doherty says, continuing, "When the wall came down in the early '90s, Aidan Mackey was visited by two women from Russia who had brought two copies of Chesterton books that were translated into Russian and yet they told him how much of a source of hope Chesterton was because he's the apostle of common sense, he just shows so much reason and common sense."

## Hope

If these books brought hope to many living under the veil of

darkness, some final pieces of the collection that Mr Doherty mentions bring hope to those pilgrims of faith travelling through the world here below.

"Foremost is, we have some locks of his hair which would be first class relics," Mr Doherty says, alluding to the ongoing canonisation effort gathering steam behind Chesterton's cause.

"There's quite an amount of the hair – they didn't just take off small locks of hair, there's a large quantity that was disturbing to some members of the staff," he laughs. "It's just the Victorian and Edwardian thing of keeping a locket of old hair, but yes. There's some items that were taken from his deathbed and there are some clothes as well."

A collection ranging from toys to relics, the Chesterton Collection at Notre Dame London Global Gateway is set to be officially launched at the end of October, 2022.



One of the figures Chesterton produced for his toy theatre, depicting St George rescuing the princess and slaying the dragon.



Another of Chesterton's hand-drawn figures for his toy theatre.



# The beauty of old age revealed at Knock

**Ruadhán Jones**

The Catholic Grandparent's Association held its pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, July 24.

Grandparents from around the country gathered at the Eucharistic and Marian Shrine to celebrate the second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.

Mass was celebrated in the basilica by Archbishop Francis Duffy, patron of the CGA.



The Catholic Grandparent's Association held its first-ever pilgrimage to Knock Shrine for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, July 24.



Long serving members of the CGA were presented with commemorative medals by Archbishop of Tuam Francis Duffy.



Catholic Grandparent's Association founder Catherine Wiley speaks at the event.



# Out&About

## Coolerest crew in Kilmore



▲CAVAN: Kilmore Krew Summer Camp 2022 finished up July 22 as campers were awarded certificates, following a week of fun and activities.



DUBLIN: Fr Martin Cosgrove (Moderator of Rathfarnham parish) and parishioner Anne Marie Mulhall presented a cheque for €12,000 on behalf of the parishioners of the Church of the Annunciation Rathfarnham from their Lenten campaign to Mr Paul Healy Trócaire Country Director for Somalia, and Jessica Healy for the total of €12,000.

## IN SHORT

### Travellers' pride at Kerry Mass

The Traveller community has voiced its hope that the first ever Traveller Pride Mass celebrated in St Mary's Cathedral, Killarney, July 19, will become an annual event.

After the Mass, the organiser Richard O'Brien added that he hopes the Mass can be replicated in around the country, bringing the Traveller and the settled communities together in prayer.

Thanking all those who attended and helped plan for the Mass – celebrated by Bishop Ray Browne to mark Traveller Pride Week – Mr O'Brien said he is confident the attendance at the service will grow in numbers in the years ahead.

He thanked the Diocesan Justice and Peace Committee and the Kerry Traveller Project for their support.

### 'Play for Vocations' golf day a success

A golf event was held in Kilkenny Golf Club Wednesday July 20 to promote vocations to the priesthood.

Speaking after the 'Play for Vocations' event, Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan said he hopes the "very enjoyable golf event" will be repeated annually.

The event can "increase awareness of the need to promote vocations to the priesthood encouraging especially lay people to support

the promotion of priestly vocations", Bishop Cullinan said.

He added that "one of the winners said that she was delighted to be part of the day and supporting priesthood and looks forward to another such event in the future".

### Govt must aid vision impaired in Budget 2023 - NCBI

The NCBI has called upon the Government to tackle the rising cost of living for people who are blind or vision impaired in Budget 2023.

The Government must develop a road-map to address the additional costs faced

by people with disabilities "as a matter of urgency", the charity said in a statement July 26.

"We know that welfare policy decisions between 2007 and 2019 have led to a 7.5% reduction in income for households with disabilities," the statement reads.

June Tinsley, Head of Communications and Advocacy said "Government must act quickly to resolve the policy discrepancies that are leaving people living with sight loss in very difficult circumstances".

Tackling the low employment rates for people living with sight loss must be a priority through the full implementation of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES), the statement also says.





**DOWN:** Pilgrims lend each other a helping hand while walking St Patrick's Way on the Saint Patrick's Centre pilgrimage, July 26.



**DOWN:** Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin visits St Anne's Shrine, Mayobridge, to mark the feast of St Anne and St Joachim, July 26.



**KERRY:** Bishop of Kerry Ray Browne celebrated the diocese's first Traveller Pride Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, Killarney.



**CARLOW:** Capuchin Brothers Des, Pat, Philip and Christopher are pictured with Graiguecullen PP Fr John Dunphy following a Mass of thanksgiving as the order departs from the area, July 23.



**MAYO:** Fr Charlie McDonnell (centre) is pictured with former RTÉ journalist Charlie Bird, after Mr Bird handed over a cheque for the funds he raised for IMNDA and Pieta.



**CAVAN:** Pictured are Philip and Mairead Tinnelly with their daughter Pippa and their respective parents Philip and Clare Tinnelly and Keelan and Margaret Farrelly planting an oak tree at The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt as three generations marked World Day for Grandparents and the 150th anniversary year of the church.



**KILKENNY:** Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan is pictured with winners of the 'Play for Vocations' golf event held in Kilkenny Golf Club, July 20, to promote vocations to the priesthood. Pictured are: Ella Dunphy, Frank Dalton, Larry Carroll and Owen Dunphy.



Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
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Events deadline is a week in  
advance of publication



**KILDARE:** Queen's University Belfast's Catholic society's director of Sacred Music Marcella Walsh, and organist Fiona Donnelly, attend the Irish Church Music Association's Summer School in Maynooth.



**DERRY:** Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown and Mayor Sandra Duffy launched the late Fr Paddy O'Kane's poetry collection *In Sunshine and in Shadow*, July 23.



**CAVAN:** Pictured is Ann Burns making a presentation to Sarah Cunningham for her years of service as organist at Corlea Church in Kingscourt, before travelling for the next number of years to Australia. She is pictured with her fiancé Oisín and mother Rosemary.



**WESTMEATH:** Rochfortbridge Pioneer Centre marked its 80th Anniversary with Mass and presentation of pins recently. Pictured are (back row, from left) Fr William Coleman PP, President Rita Clarke, Joseph Monaghan Chairman and Fr Liam Carey; (front from left) Fr Seamus Houlihan PP spiritual director Meath Pioneers, Lily Curran, diamond pin and Des Ryan, diamond pin.

## ANTRIM

Youth 2000 prayer retreats for young Catholics aged 18-35 take place in St Comgall's Church, Castle Street, on Sundays at 7pm. Contact: Fr. James O'Reilly – 00442894429103.

## ARMAGH

Bach at Twilight, part of the Charles Wood Festival and Summer School 2022 collection, will take place in St Malachy's Catholic Church August 25. Tickets cost £10. Visit Eventbrite.ie for more information. The event will also be live streamed.

## CLARE

The Killaloe diocesan pilgrimage to Scattery Island takes place August 28 from 2:30-5pm.

## CORK

The 71st Annual Mass and Devotions at the Holy Rosary Shrine, Lee Road, takes place August 15, the feast of the Assumption.

The annual concelebrated Mass commemorating the day of Padre Pio's ordination to the priesthood will take place on Sunday August 7 from 2.30pm, in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Denehy's Cross. Confessions will be available from 1.30pm. There will also be the anointing of the sick, benediction, and blessing with First Class Padre Pio relics.

## DERRY

Exhibition on the life of Bishop Edward Daly, 'A Man for All Seasons' Monday August 8-Sunday August 14 in St Eugene's Cathedral Hall, Infirmary Road. This exhibition has been compiled to celebrate the life, influence, work and legacy of Bishop Edward Daly. For more information, please visit [www.steugenes cathedral.com](http://www.steugenes cathedral.com)

## DONEGAL

A half day retreat at the Divine Mercy Centre, Letterkenny, takes place Saturday August 13 from 2-5:30pm. The retreat will comprise

two talks, prayer time and community. For more information contact [dvmletterkenny@gmail.com](mailto:dvmletterkenny@gmail.com) or 074 916 9934.

## GALWAY

A Youth 2000 prayer gathering for young Catholics (aged 18-35) takes place in the Church of St Oliver Plunkett, Renmore on Fridays at 8:15pm. For more information, contact Maire on 0851482076

## KILDARE

Youth 2000 summer festival takes place August 11-14 at Clongowes Wood College, Clane. The Youth 2000 Summer Festival is a four day Catholic event run by young people for young people from all across Ireland. For more information visit [youth2000.ie](http://youth2000.ie)

## KILKENNY

The Legion of Mary meet in the presbytery of St John's parish on Tuesday evenings at 8pm.

## LONGFORD

The diocesan pilgrimage to Knock takes place Sunday September 4 with ceremonies beginning at 2.30pm.

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Mel's Cathedral from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 8pm to 12 midnight Monday to Saturday in the Oratory at the side of the Presbytery.

## LOUTH

Irish men's rosary rally to take place August 6 in Carlingford, opposite the village green and outside the coastal wall.

## MAYO

Knock International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine will host a family day on Sunday August 21, where children and families can join in a range of fun activities in the beautiful grounds of Knock Shrine.

## MONAGHAN

The blessing of the graves ceremony for Monaghan and Rackwallace cemetery takes place Sunday September 4 at 3pm.

## OFFALY

Clonmacnoise pattern day takes place Sunday, September 11. The pattern begins at 2.45pm with Mass at 3pm.

## ROSCOMMON

The annual cemetery Mass in St Coman's cemetery will take place on Sunday August 6, beginning at 7pm.

## TIPPERARY

Monastic experience weekend – share in the rhythm of monastic daily prayer life with the monks of Mount St Joseph Abbey, Roscrea, from Friday 5-Sunday 7 August, for men aged 20-50 who may be discerning monastic vocation. Contact [vocations@msjroscrea.ie](mailto:vocations@msjroscrea.ie) for more information.

## WATERFORD

'Amazing Grace' - Charismatic Day of Prayer will be held in the Rhu Glenn Hotel, Slieverue on Sunday, September 11 with Fr Pat Collins. Start 10am. Contact Tom 087 2701311/Sile 086 8590394.

Four-day Medjugorje-style retreat at Glencomeragh Retreat Centre, with Fr Patrick Cahill. Full board accommodation, but spaces are limited so book now. Takes place August 18-21/ September 1-4. Cost: €260. Full Medjugorje-like spiritual programme. For more information or to book contact [info@holyfamilymission.ie](mailto:info@holyfamilymission.ie) or (052) 6133181.

## WESTMEATH

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

## WEXFORD

St Aidan's Cathedral Enniscorthy's parish pilgrimage to Our Lady's Island takes place Monday August 29 at 8pm. The bus is subsidised by the parish so the cost is €5 per person.





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### St James honoured with procession in Cuban city

● A large number of Catholics from the Archdiocese of Santiago de Cuba participated in a procession July 25 to celebrate the feast of their patron, St James the Apostle.

The special event also commemorated the 507th anniversary of the founding of Santiago (St James) de Cuba.

Archbishop Dionisio García Ibáñez, who was joined by almost all the archdiocese's clergy, celebrated a Mass the same day in the Basilica Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption. "Teenagers from various parishes in the city" helped organise the Mass, the archdiocese noted on its website.

In his homily, Archbishop García recalled the time when the Spanish founded the city and placed it under the patronage of St James.

### AP adopts LGBTQ ideology in new guidance to journalists

● Revisions to a handbook many US news outlets consider "a bible" for grammar usage and style in news writing could signal a dramatic shift in the way the media reports on transgender issues.

The changes to the widely used Associated Press Stylebook adopt and promote the preferred language and ideology of the LGBTQ movement, which is sharply at odds with Catholic teaching on transgenderism.

As a result, a leading Catholic expert on gender issues warns that the changes disregard the inherent dignity of the human body and will have a major impact on society at large.

Abigail Favale, a professor of gender studies and feminist literary criticism at the University of Notre Dame, says the style book takes philosophical stands on issues under the guise of being a writing guide.

### Motorcyclist in Colombia crashes through church door

● On the night of July 25, a motorcyclist traveling at full speed crashed into the door of a church in Bogotá, Colombia. The vehicle ended up inside the church, about halfway down the main aisle.

The accident occurred at approximately 11 pm local time. The motorcyclist crashed into the wooden door of Our Lady of Valvanera Church, located at the end of a T-intersection in the El Restrepo neighbourhood on Bogotá's south side. The crash also shattered the interior glass door.

According to local press, the motorcyclist had no serious injuries and was able to stand up on his own.

When firefighters and police officers arrived at the church, they found the motorcycle a few meters from the altar.

### Priest offers Mass on inflatable lounge chair in sea

● After photos of a shirtless Italian priest celebrating Mass in the sea using an inflatable lounge chair went viral, the local Catholic archdiocese has called for liturgical decorum and respect.

Fr Mattia Bernasconi, a priest of the archdiocese of Milan, publicly acknowledged in an interview on July 26 that his liturgical choice to swap out his vestments for swim trunks was "perhaps imprudent" and said that he would not do it again.

The 36-year-old priest explained that he had been helping with a week-long summer camp for high school students in southern Italy organised by Libera, an anti-mafia organisation.

## Catholic school has right to hire staff who uphold church doctrine, court rules

The US Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit in Chicago said July 28 that a Catholic high school in Indianapolis and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have a constitutional right to hire staff who will uphold their core religious teachings.

The case, *Starkey v Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Indianapolis*, involves Lynn Starkey, a former guidance counsellor at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis, who sued the school and the archdiocese in 2019, after her contract was not renewed due to her same-sex marriage.

School officials said her marriage was a violation of her contract and church teaching. Starkey argued she had been discriminated against based on her sexual orientation.

She appealed her case to the 7th Circuit after a federal District Court threw out her lawsuit last year.

In dismissing the case, the District Court judge said the school employee's case did not stand up to the principle of ministerial exception that protects a religious school's hiring and firing practices from government intrusion.

The 7th Circuit ruled the lawsuit must be dismissed for the same reason.

"Religious groups have a constitutional right to hire individuals who believe in their faith's ideals and are committed to their religious mission," Luke Goodrich, vice president and senior counsel at Becket, said in a statement. "Our justice system has



A sign for Roncalli High School in Indianapolis is seen July 23, 2020. Photo: CNS

consistently ruled that the government cannot intrude on a religious organisation's choice of who will pass on the faith to the next generation," he said.

Becket, a religious liberty law firm representing the Indianapolis Archdiocese, argued that both federal law and the First Amendment protect religious schools' right to make hiring decisions based on religious doctrine.

The firm also has noted Roncalli High School asks its employees to "sign agreements to uphold the Catholic Church's beliefs in their per-

sonal and professional lives".

In its opinion, the 7th Circuit drew on the Supreme Court's decisions in *Our Lady of Guadalupe School v Morrissey-Berru* in 2020 and *Hosanna-Tabor Lutheran Evangelical School v EEOC* in 2012. Both are prior Becket cases.

The 2020 ruling said religious schools had the leeway to dismiss teachers for poor performance because they serve as ministers, and the 2012 ruling said ministerial exception frees religious schools from employment discrimination laws.

"Catholic schools are tasked by the Church to uphold the dignity of every human person and teach the fullness of the Catholic faith," Mr Goodrich said. "The 7th Circuit's decision ensures that religious schools can remain faithful to their mission."

In her 2019 lawsuit, Starkey, who had worked at Roncalli for almost 40 years, said the school and the archdiocese discriminated against her because of her sexual orientation and subjected her to a hostile work environment.

## 'Our angels have wings' Zelenskyy says on Ukrainian Statehood Day

Ukrainians will fight for their statehood to the last and will not stop until they liberate the last metre of Ukrainian land, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a video address for Ukrainian Statehood Day July 28.

The day marks the 988 Baptism of "Kyivan Rus," the origin of Christianity in the region, but this is the first year Ukrainians marked Statehood Day, reported Religious Information Service of Ukraine.

Zelenskyy stressed that Ukrainians need neither fireworks nor pomp to show the importance of statehood for

the Ukrainian people. "Today we defend (Ukraine) with weapons in hands. For 155 days in a row," he said, referring to the February 24 Russian invasion.

"We can say that for us, Statehood Day is every day. Every day we fight so that everyone on the planet finally understands: We are not a colony, not an enclave, not a protectorate ... not a province, but a free, independent, sovereign, indivisible and independent state.

"Our warriors defend Ukraine on the ground, in the water and in the air. Our ancestors defend it from the skies.

And all of them together are our angels. Our angels have wings. But under them there are weapons. We never take weapons first. But if our home is attacked, we stand to the last.

"Because, losing its own state, any nation loses primarily not its territory. Not hectares or square kilometres of land or water. When a nation loses its own state, it loses its own face. Its own name. Its originality, identity, memory, and with them its heart and soul. And this is much scarier for us than enemy armies, planes, missiles and tanks."

## Skills training and education 'only way out of misery' for Pakistan's poor

To improve the lives of Pakistanis, many of whom are desperately poor, the Archdiocese of Lahore has ramped up its educational and vocational training efforts.

"We evaluated and studied that - through educa-

tion and then skill training and some other professional training - that is the only way out of misery," said Archbishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore, who has headed the archdiocese since 2013.

Beyond faith formation -

already a priority within the diocese - "we have operated our summer schools, which were only high schools. In Pakistan, high school is (only) up to 10th grade," Archbishop Shaw told Catholic News Service in a July

26 phone interview from Brooklyn, New York.

Archbishop Shaw was in Brooklyn for talks with Aid to the Church in Need/USA. ACN supports the pastoral work of the Catholic Church in Pakistan.





Edited by Jason Osborne  
jason@irishcatholic.ie

## Shaken but still standing



An aerial view shows a badly damaged church in Tayum, Philippines, July 28, in the aftermath of a magnitude seven earthquake. The Archdiocese of Tuguegarao in northeastern Luzon said its churches were not only places of worship but symbolised the history and tradition of their people. Photo: CNS

## Spanish bishop warns that the Synod can't re-invent the Church's mission

The bishop of Córdoba, Spain, Demetrio Fernández, warned about the challenges facing the Synod on Synodality, an initiative that he acknowledges "has stirred up the waters of the Church" but that cannot "invent" the mission of the Catholic Church.

In his weekly pastoral letter, which concludes by quoting the Letter to the Hebrews — "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teaching" — the bishop explained some of the challenges of the synodal process.

He noted that "the Church, by its very nature, is synodal, it is communion, it's an assembly, and therefore we are called to prophesy".

However, he clarified, "It is the Holy Spirit who speaks in us. And here's where the ambiguity can come in, because there is no lack of people who confuse the Holy Spirit with their own strange ideas."

Bishop Fernández warned that, although there are places where "erratic proposals" have been rejected in the first phase of the synod, in others, some of them "proposed by a small minority, have been immediately

included in the concluding documents, lacking the most elementary discernment".

Therefore, the prelate called for the exercise of discernment to "test the spirits to see if they come from God or from the evil one".

This discernment must be carried out under the criteria of the Word of God, the bishop stressed. "If all this movement distracts us in words and words, in meetings and in groups, in encounters at all levels, spending time and energy, and we do not convert, that does not come from God."

The prelate emphasised the importance of "looking

at what the Church has done everywhere and always throughout the centuries".

"The Church and the mission that Christ has entrusted to her are not going to be invented by us now," he said.

Bishop Fernández said that found within Tradition is the Magisterium of the Church, of the pope, and of the bishops in communion with him. Departing from that Tradition "is erratic, it is condemning oneself to sterility. The Holy Spirit cannot now come to tell us something contrary to what he has said on previous occasions," he said.

## Philippine diocese appeals for aid after magnitude seven quake

A diocese in the northern Philippines appealed for aid July 27 after a magnitude 7 earthquake that killed at least four and injured dozens.

The Archdiocese of Tuguegarao in northeastern Luzon said churches and historical sites sustained cracks and were damaged, but it also needed help to repair hospital infrastructure and equipment.

Patients were evacuated from a local hospital during the earthquake due to

fear the building would collapse.

"We ordered the evacuation because we thought our roof would fall in. Nurses had orders to remove as many patients as they could. But we had difficulty with those who were bedridden with medical equipment. I hope this will not happen again," said a doctor who wished to remain anonymous.

The archdiocese said its churches were not only places of worship but symbolised the history and tradition

of their people.

"They are a testament to our faith and culture. Though damaged by natural calamities like this recent earthquake, we will rebuild them, just as we rebuilt our lives after catastrophes in love and faith in Christ," the archdiocese added.

It pleaded for God to give parishioners the strength of mind and spirit to overcome the trauma and damage the earthquake had brought.

## Vatican roundup

### Vatican asks Catholics to share experiences helping migrants and refugees

● As the Church prepares to commemorate the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in September, Pope Francis launched a video campaign meant to highlight the spiritual and cultural contributions that migrants bring to people's lives.

"Migrants and refugees offer us a great opportunity for the cultural and spiritual growth of all of us. For this reason, it is essential to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue and to build the future on common values," the Pope said in a video message released July 28.

The Pope concluded his remarks by asking, "How do you think we can foster more enriching encounters with migrants and refugees?" The video message launched a communications campaign that highlights the theme of the September 25 world day celebration: "Building the Future with Migrants and Refugees."

The theme highlights "the commitment that we are all called to share in building a future that embraces God's plan, leaving no one behind," said an earlier statement from the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

### Rome enjoys floating procession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on the Tiber

● Rome's nine-day celebration of Our Lady of Mount Carmel culminated July 24 with a floating Marian procession in a boat down the Tiber River.

As the sun set over the Eternal City, a life size statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary perched on the bow of the Agrippina Maggiore led the boat on a short cruise on the ancient waterway to Rome's Trastevere neighborhood.

The procession was part of a Roman tradition that dates back nearly 500 years. Locals call the celebration the Festa de' Noantri, which translates from Roman dialect as

"ours."

According to tradition, fishermen found a statue of the Virgin Mary at the mouth of the Tiber River after a storm in 1535. The statue was given to the local Carmelites based in Trastevere who dedicated it to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The festival kicked off on July 16, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, when the Marian statue was carried out of the Church of Saint Agatha in Trastevere to the Basilica of St Chrysogonus, where it remained until the much-awaited river procession on July 24.

### Indian archbishop resigns at Vatican request amid liturgical dispute

● Syro-Malabar Catholic Archbishop Antony Kariyil, vicar of the major archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly, resigned July 26 at the request of the Vatican after he was accused of defying the Church's supreme synod in a decades-long liturgical dispute.

Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, the nuncio to India, visited the archbishop's house July 26 and held a discussion with Archbishop Kariyil, after which the resignation was announced, ucanews.com reported.

The Syro-Malabar Church issued no official statement about the resignation, but a source told ucanews.com that "it is just a formality" that the Eastern Church's synod accepts the resignation and makes alternative administrative arrangements.

Archbishop Kariyil was appointed vicar of the major archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly in August 2019 after Cardinal George Alencherry was removed due to his alleged involvement in Church land deals pending in court.

Archbishop Kariyil was appointed with the consent of Cardinal Alencherry, but they fell apart after the former refused to accept the Syro-Malabar synod's decision to implement a policy of uniformity in the celebration of Mass in the Church.



# Pope says residential-school policy was part of 'genocide' plan



Cindy Wooden

**T**he planned destruction of the families, languages, cultures and traditions of the Indigenous communities of Canada through the residential school system was "genocide," Pope Francis has said.

Asked by an Indigenous reporter why he did not use the word genocide while in Canada, the Pope said, "I didn't use the word because it did not come to mind, but what I described was genocide."

"And I condemned it," he said, during his inflight news conference on July 29 at the end of a trip that had begun on July 24.

Another Canadian reporter asked Pope Francis about the 'doctrine of discovery,' a collection of papal teachings, beginning in the 14th Century, that blessed the efforts of explorers to colonise and claim the lands of any people who were not Christian, placing both the land and the people under the sovereignty of European Christian rulers.

**“This doctrine of colonialism truly is evil, it's unjust,” the Pope said**

Francis said it always has been a temptation for colonisers to think they were superior to the people whose land they were colonising. In fact, he said, there even was "a theologian, who was a bit crazy," who questioned whether the Indigenous of the Americas had souls.

"This is the problem of every colonialism, even today," he said, pointing to modern forms of "ideological colonialism," which use requests for foreign assistance to force poorer countries to adopt policies that go against the values their people hold dear.

"This doctrine of colonialism truly is evil, it's unjust," the Pope said.

## Knee

Because of continuing knee pain, the Pope did not stand in front of the journalists' section for the 40-minute



Pope Francis watches as a musician performs during a meeting with young people and elders outside the primary school in Iqaluit in the Canadian territory of Nunavut July 29, 2022. Photos: CNS

news conference, but rather sat in portable chair in the aisle.

"This trip was a bit of a test" to see how much he could handle and how much of what was considered a standard part of a papal trip was really necessary, he said. "Perhaps we will have to change the style a bit, reduce a bit."

But the Pope said he still hopes to visit Kyiv, Ukraine - "we'll see what's possible" - as well as go to Kazakhstan in September for an interreligious meeting.

He also said he wants to reschedule his ecumenical trip to South Sudan with Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury and the Rev. Iain Greenshields, moderator of the Church of Scotland. They were supposed to go in early July, but the Pope was forced to cancel to give his knee treatments more time to work.

"I have all the goodwill"

to keep traveling, the Pope said, "but we'll have to see what the leg says."

## Retiring

As for retiring, Pope Francis told reporters: "The door is open. It is one of the normal options, but up to now I haven't knocked on that door."

**“Regarding the death penalty, he said, ‘we are close’ to declaring it immoral because people’s consciences have developed”**

"I haven't felt like I needed to consider this possibility," he insisted, "but that doesn't mean that the day after tomorrow I won't start thinking about it."

"Stepping aside," the Pope said, would not be "a catastrophe. You can change Popes, no problem."

He insisted again that he would not have surgery on his knee because, he said, he reacted badly to anesthesia in July 2021 when he had colon surgery.

"But I will try to continue to make trips and to be close to the people, because I think it is a way to serve," he said.

Pope Francis also was asked about an unsigned 'declaration of the Holy See' regarding the Church in Germany's synodal path that was published on July 21.

## Structures

The declaration warned that if the Church in Germany tried to "initiate new official structures or doctrines in the dioceses prior to an agreed understanding at the level of the universal Church," it would be "a wound to ecclesial communion and a threat

to the unity of the Church."

"That communique was written by the Secretariat of State," Francis said. "It was a mistake not to say so," but it was an oversight and "not out of bad will."

## Praying

Pope Francis said he had spent a month praying, reading and consulting with a variety of people before he wrote a letter to German Catholics in 2019 urging them to ensure their Synod Path was a process of prayer and discernment and not simply a search for an efficient way to handle challenges facing the Church in Germany.

"I wrote it as a pastor to a Church that is trying to find its path forward," he said.

After reports that Pope John Paul I, who will be beatified in early September, had supported changing Church teaching on artificial contraception in some cases and after the publication of

a book of papers from a Vatican-related conference where theologians debated that issue and others, Francis was asked what he thought about the possibility of "developments" in Church teaching on contraception.

## Church's teaching

In his response, Pope Francis did not talk about the Church's teaching against the use of artificial contraception. Instead, he spoke of the role of theologians in the Church and about the development of doctrine.

**“I wrote it as a pastor to a Church that is trying to find its path forward”**

Church teaching "is always in a state of development," either through being confirmed and consolidated over time or by being understood more precisely in relation to new problems or deeper understanding, he said.

The job of theologians, the Pope said, is to explore the possibilities, while the job of the Pope is to "help them understand the limits."

**“‘Stepping aside,’ the Pope said, would not be ‘a catastrophe. You can change Popes, no problem’”**





An Indigenous woman displays a cradleboard as Pope Francis meets with a delegation of Indigenous peoples in the archbishop's residence in Quebec City July 29.



Indigenous people march during a protest in Atalaia do Norte, Brazil, March 27, 2019

As an example of how Church teaching develops, Pope Francis told reporters, "today, officially, the Church had declared that the use or possession of nuclear weapons is immoral."

And regarding the death penalty, he said, "we are close" to declaring it immoral because people's consciences have developed.

A Church that does not allow

its teaching to develop does not remain the same, it "goes backwards," he said. "That's the problem with many who call themselves traditionalists; they aren't traditional, they are 'backwardists.' They are going backwards."

In such cases, he said, people are not embracing and sharing the "living faith," but rather "the dead faith of the living."



Pope Francis answers questions from journalists aboard his flight from Iqaluit, in the Canadian territory of Nunavut, to Rome July 29.



An older woman arrives for Pope Francis' meeting with young people and elders July 29.



People wait for the start of Pope Francis' meeting with young people and elders outside, July 29.



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Concern about school sex education curriculum

**Dear Editor,** As parents and grandparents, we are deeply concerned about the proposed radical revision of the Junior Cycle Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. In common with many of our contacts and friends, we strongly object to the proposed changes on the grounds of the primary rights of parents in education and the likely long-term negative impact on the lives of our young people.

In accordance with nature and the Constitution, parents have the primary rights and responsibilities in regard to the education and moral formation of their children. Only a totalitarian state would seek to impose such 'value-free', hedonistic education on its young people. Parents cannot be dismissed by token consultation as 'stakeholders'. The

revised curriculum as proposed, must either be withdrawn or else made applicable only to those schools who freely choose to adopt it.

The proposed changes appear to be motivated by ideology rather than by the wishes of parents.

The SPHE/RSE course must be subject to, and taught in a manner that is consistent with, the ethos of the particular school and the expressed wishes of parents. The negative effects of the proposed educational approach are likely to last long after particular Ministers and their advisors have left office.

In all their sporting activities, students are taught to comply with strict rules and to always respect themselves and others. Similarly, parents who send their children to say a Catholic school,

expect that they will be challenged with clear standards regarding sexual behaviour and marriage. They expect that their young people will be led to an understanding of the respect and discipline necessary to form an enduring and happy relationship.

It is, we believe, time for parents, grandparents and all those interested in education to let our public representatives know of our strong objections to the proposed changes to the SPHE curriculum for the Junior Cycle. We can also make submissions to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) up to the October 18.

*Yours etc.,  
Monica and Eamon Fitzpatrick,  
Strandhill Road, Co. Sligo*

## A Fatima 'first' in western Ukraine

**Dear Editor,** In the history of Fatima, Ireland seems to have had a 'first' in that the Archdiocese of Dublin was the first diocese, apart from those in Portugal and Spain, to be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in response to the Fatima message. The act of consecration was made by Archbishop McQuaid in the Pro-Cathedral on August 15, 1943.

In the light of current political events some of your readers might like to know that Ukraine too had a historical Fatima first. The current edition of the Fatima Shrine's Portuguese monthly paper reports that on November 13, 1936 the first Marian Congress in honour of Our Lady of Fatima took place in the city



of Tlumach, in western Ukraine. A statue of Our Lady of Fatima, specially blessed in Fatima by the bishop for the occasion, was carried in the

procession.

*Yours etc.,  
Lauri Duffy  
Howth, Dublin 13*

## Vatican II said nothing of lay-led funerals

**Dear Editor,** How short lived the permanent diaconate has been as an experiment to plug the gaps in parishes caused by the shortage of priests. We are, according to Bishop Brendan Leahy, to embrace the vision of Vatican II and have laypeople lead funerals

[*The Irish Catholic*, July 14, 2022]. Of course, the Second Vatican Council said nothing about laypeople leading funerals – one can absolutely believe that the council fathers would have been horrified by the prospect.

No, the fact that there

are no priests to celebrate funerals is the fruit of a lack of faith that has been evident in the Church in Ireland for decades and is now coming home to roost. We can dress it up anyway we like and speak about people taking up their baptismal call, but no amount

of gloss will hide the fact that it is thrust upon us because of the failure of priests and parishioners to pass on the faith.

*Yours etc.,  
Brian Carthy  
Milltown, Dublin 6*

## Have we ditched every essential feminine attribute?

**Dear Editor,** In a recent RTÉ Morning Ireland interview, discussing the roll out of "free contraceptives" to young women, a National Women's Council representative said that it was "important for gender equality".

This begs the question, equality with whom? Men presumably? Are men the standard, the measure, the universal template for all mankind both male and female, presumably because of their greater availability to fulfil employer's preference for employees who have fewer pressing family responsibilities?

What internalised misogyny this is, masquerading as progressive feminism!

In reality, today's women all too often feel pressurised into suppressing their innate fertility, inducing miscarriages, and viewing motherhood as a burden too onerous – at least until their biological clock can no longer be ignored.

In the biological world 'autotomy' is the name given to the practice of some animals discarding a part of themselves, as for example may happen when a predator has caught hold of a lizard by its tail. It is well known that violence can be internalised, people adopt strategies of survival and adaptations some of which can be extreme.

Is this the reality for us in Ireland

today; under the guise of absolute autonomy, summed up in the catch cry "my body my choice" we have in fact, ditched every uniquely essential feminine attribute, as well as normal family living, such that the next generation so often fails to see the light of day?

Do we need to urgently reassess how girls and boys are being schooled; the future they're sold? Isn't it time we shouted: "Enough of this, let's be human, responsible, fully aware of our unique dignity as men and women, children of God?"

*Yours etc.,  
Gearóid Duffy,  
Lee Road, Cork*

## facebook community

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

### Ossory takes fight for vocations to local level

How about bringing in foreign candidates? Irish missionary priests almost evangelised the whole world in the last two centuries. Now that they are lacking vocations, why can't they be humble enough to ask from those countries where there is vocation boom? – **Felix Mazeli**

Just get going with the job at hand – plenty of recruitments – we just need to advertise and consult. The word isn't getting out, we need to use the media. Period. – **Aoiheann Douglas**

Authentic liturgy, authentic teaching, pride in our heritage and traditions. Emphasis on continuity, masculinity, and strength. – **Kevin Bell**

No better man than Bishop Denis Nulty to come up with ideas on how to revive local parishes in his own diocese. He has great charisma and organisational skills. – **Sean O'Brien**

### Hate speech laws must not infringe upon religious expression – TDs

If we can have respect, whatever our religious beliefs, that is half the battle. Hatred directed against Christians could be part of this and is different from legitimate criticism of church leaders. – **Declan McSweeney**

This will be used against Catholics who are against abortion etc. This will only protect the liberal agenda, this country is destroying itself. – **Catherine Rose**

We had hate speech (incitement to hatred) legislation in the north for decades and it was totally ineffectual at protecting the usual targets who were then almost entirely the Catholic community. However given 'official' Ireland's prevailing political culture I can foresee these laws being used as vexatious instruments of harassment and suppression of dissent. – **Charles Glenn**

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

## Being denied a Christian burial

**Dear Editor,** I note that the latest brainwave from the hierarchy in response to the vocations crisis is to have laypeople lead funerals [*The Irish Catholic* – July 14, 2022]. What a joy to think that when I shuffle off this mortal coil, I will have a committee of the local ladies who now organise the funeral teas organising and presiding at the actual funeral.

I for one would prefer to have the option simply to be taken to my place of rest with silent solemnity rather than have anyone give a speech or recite poems in my memory. One of the few rights one has in Church law is a Christian burial, if that is to be denied us in Ireland in the future, I'd prefer no fuss and will leave some money in my will to send to the missions to have a requiem Mass offered for the happy repose of my soul.

It's a sad day at which we have arrived.

*Yours etc.,  
John Leonard,  
Limerick City, Limerick*

## 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, August 4, 2022

## Personal Profile

Building faithful intensity in the face of adversity

Page 32



# Making and breaking habits

**L**ast week I wrote about the importance of good decision making, but this week I want to turn to a topic that I feel is of equal importance: making and breaking habits.

The habits you hold are likely to influence the decisions you make, but aside from this, they'll determine the shape of your life outside of those momentous, life-altering moments of choice – in other words, the vast majority of ordinary time we journey through here below.

Catholics above all others should be aware of the importance of habit, as it's the stuff



**If life is all about decision-making, it's all about which habits we make and break too, writes Jason Osborne**

of a faithful life. The soaring, heady romantic sentiment that propels you to take your faith more seriously from time to time is fleeting, whereas habit is what keeps you praying and participating in the Church and its sacraments for a lifetime.

Habit is useful when it comes to our relationship with God and his Church, but it's use-

ful for everything else, too: a happy and healthy life, full of good relationships with others. A person in the habit of eating healthily, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, working hard and maintaining their relationships has a good chance of enjoying greater happiness or life satisfaction than one whose habits have turned against them.

A lot, most I would guess, of people acknowledge all of this, and yet struggle to change their ways, resting in bad habits rather than swapping in good ones. I'm guilty of failing in this struggle too, although I take hope in the fact that I'm at least aware that some of my bad habits need to change. Why is it so difficult to make the change? To adopt healthy habits rather than remain in ruts of bad behaviour?

### Set the scene

A large part of the problem seems to be that we dive into our desired new habit full of zeal, only to meet cold, hard

reality after our initial enthusiasm has worn off, leading us to slowly but surely grow discouraged and give up. Unfortunately for us, it's not usually quite so easy as just setting your mind to something and accomplishing it immediately.

Fortunately for us, however, it is possible to change our ways; to make new habits and to break old ones. Rather than trying to conjure a healthy new habit out of nowhere, set the scene, lay the groundwork which will make it easier for you to take to this new behaviour over time. Here are a couple of ways to do just that.

**» Continued on Page 31**



## Family News



## AND EVENTS

**COLD SORES TRACED BACK TO BRONZE AGE**

The spread of the modern-day cold sore has been traced back to the Bronze Age and linked to the advent of kissing in a new DNA study.

Research suggests the HSV-1 strain of the herpes virus arose in the wake of vast migrations of people from Eurasia to Europe around 5,000 years ago.

The migration led to both denser populations, which drove up rates of transmission, and new cultural practices being imported from the east, including kissing, according to the study.

Scientists at the University of Cambridge leading the research have become the first to uncover and sequence ancient genomes of the virus, which currently infects some 3.7 billion people worldwide.

Previously, genetic data for herpes only went back to 1925, but the team hunted down four samples from human remains dating over a 1,000-year period.

By comparing older samples with ones from the 20th century, they were able to develop estimates for a timeline of evolution.

Facial herpes is spread orally, and the researchers point out the earliest known record of kissing comes from a Bronze Age manuscript from South Asia.

**BOAT-BENDING WALRUS VISITOR MAKES A SPLASH IN NORWAY**

A young female walrus nicknamed Freya has enamoured Norwegians by basking in the sun of the Oslo fjord, making a splash in the media and bending a few boats.

The 600kg marine mammal has been named after the Norse goddess of love and beauty.

She has already been sighted in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden and has now chosen to spend part of the summer in Norway.

Freya first gained notoriety in Norway by climbing onto recreational boats in Kragero, an idyllic southern coastal village, and has been doing the same in the waters of the capital since 17 July.

The presence of the mammal, which normally lives in the even more northerly latitudes of the Arctic, has sparked curiosity among locals and made headlines in the press.

Newspaper Verdens Gang has put up a livestream of the walrus's every move on its website.

**DRONE HELPS TO SAVE DROWNING BOY IN SPAIN**

A pioneering drone lifeguard service rolled out across Spanish beaches saved the life of a 14-year-old boy in July, as he struggled against a powerful tide off a beach in Valencia, its operators have said.

The drone dropped a life jacket into the sea that was able to keep the teenager afloat just as he started to sink below the waves, until a physical lifeguard team arrived moments later, Reuters reported.

"When we arrived what we saw was a kid that was in very bad shape, with almost no energy to keep floating, so I sent over the life vest," Miguel Angel Pedrero, drone pilot for General Drones, the firm that supplies the technology, said.

"Because of the heavy waves it was a complicated manoeuvre, but we finally managed to give him the vest and he could float until the lifeguards reached him by jet ski."

# Siblings and their treasured positive influence



**W**hen you get a late-night phone call from one of your adult children asking "Did you hear what happened?", the natural reaction is to go into panic mode wondering what disaster has struck.

It's amazing how many worst-case scenarios can be conjured up in a split second and when the next question is "Were you talking to Dad?", you're convinced that some dire situation is unfolding.

This time, it was just the small matter of a younger son having got himself into the unfortunate position of being stuck in soft sand on a deserted Connemara strand hours before the tide was due in. Add to that, the fact that my youngest son and two grandchildren were in the car too and it was enough to result in one of those moments where "Relax, Mam!" is going to have little effect.

**Relaxation**

My eldest son is an expert in the art of encouraging relaxation during times of crisis. His calm and practical approach to problem solving is probably the reason why he was the first port of call for his younger brother when he found himself in a predicament. Even though I couldn't quite dispel the image of my younger son's car being swept off in the Atlantic waves, I had perfect confidence that once his level-headed sibling was on the scene, all would be well. The great thing about having siblings is that while you may sometimes fight like cat and dog, having them offers a level of ongoing support and care that's hard to replicate. According to Science Daily, the online source for the latest scientific research news, research on siblings found that both older and younger siblings positively influence each other's empathetic concern over time. Like parents, older brothers and sisters "act as role mod-



## A parent's perspective Maria Byrne

els and teachers, helping their younger siblings learn about the world".

This is thought to extend to younger siblings' capacity to feel care and sympathy for those in need. I think it makes sense to deduct from this that, in a Christian family, where people are actively striving to grow in virtue and live better lives, this influence must be even stronger. It's not only the older siblings that can act as the leaven in the flour of family life. In many families it's the younger children that take on this role exhorting their older brothers and sisters to improve their efforts. This can be particularly valuable in our present times when so many adult children are falling away from the Faith.

## “My eldest son is an expert in the art of encouraging relaxation during times of crisis”

While a parent can be accused of nagging or overstepping the mark, a younger sibling can inject that one comment or word of advice that touches their sibling's heart. Even the youngest of children can exert a positive influence. While my 4-year-old grandson was staying with us recently he was quick to suggest saying morning prayers while his young aunts were tucking into breakfast. His small, but determined, voice was a definite reminder to put first things first. In his post *The Importance of Siblings*, Dr Shawn Sidhu, from the University of New Mexico Health Sciences, writes about the impor-

tance of sibling relationships in the healthy development of children and teenagers. There is often a big focus on child/parent relationships within a family, which are really important, but are only one part of the family system. Some 82% of children in the US live with a sibling and these relationships are often the longest in our lives. It's



worthwhile nourishing them and fostering good sibling connections and interactions.

In a world where young people can feel increasingly isolated and alone, a sibling is always there, someone a child can talk to and express their feelings to. Dr Sidhu says that this can be "highly therapeutic and can prevent a worsening of depressed mood or anxiety".

**Support**

On the Jack and Jill Children's Foundation website, they highlight the importance of sibling support when caring for a child with additional needs. This organisation provides in-home nursing care, respite and end-of-life care for children with severe to profound neurodevelopmental delay. Men-

tioning the key role of siblings in these children's lives they talk about how through siblings "children learn to express a range of emotions including love, loyalty, anger, rivalry and resilience". They gain support and companionship and learn to give and take while their siblings can gain positive qualities like compassion, insight and a sense of responsibility, often forming a special bond with their brother or sister and taking great pride in their achievements. A sibling in crisis can bring out the best in a family if managed carefully.

## “In a world where young people can feel increasingly isolated and alone, a sibling is always there”

Even in adulthood, good siblings help us to grow and flourish. I know that it's often my younger sister, who lives less than five minutes away, who pushes me to be a better version of myself and there's no one like a sister or brother to help knock off those rough corners that stand in the way of holiness.

Siblings share our path through life and even if there are challenges and difficulties, we should treat them with love and respect reflecting the love we share outwards into our wider society. Quoting Pope Francis: "Having a brother, a sister, who loves you is a deep, precious, irreplaceable experience. Christian fraternity happens in the same way."

This is very encouraging, that all of us who share the same Father in heaven will see each other as brothers and sisters sharing that love we first experienced in our childhood homes with our own siblings.



» Continued from Page 29



### Identify undesirable habits

We only have a finite amount of time, and enacting our habits takes time, so the first step should be breaking old habits, that we might replace them with new ones we actually want.

The very first step in this process is identifying your triggers and tracking your own behaviour. You might notice that you look at your phone first thing in the morning, as soon as your eyes open. You might observe that you have a habit of sitting down to tv shows as soon as you get in after work. Perhaps you regularly go to bed too late after hours of mindless content, resulting in a deep tiredness the next day that you just can't shake.

**“We're not often inclined to make a difficult effort only for a dim and distant reward – we need little pick-ups along the way”**

If you saw such things in your day, and they're behaviours you'd like to change, it'd be worth taking note of how you were feeling as you did them, where and when they happened and what activities these ones are connected to.

Identifying all of these “triggers” or “links” makes it easier to put a plan in place that will help you to get over these bad habits.

### Replace the habit

Once you've identified the habits you'd rather not have, it's time to go about getting rid of them. However, it's very difficult to just up and lose a bad habit – they're habits, after all. A smarter way is to co-opt them, or to put intermediate habits in place that take you closer to where you want to go.

To stick with the previous examples, say you wake up and find yourself reaching for your phone just as your eyes open in an

effort to stave off further sleep. A less-jarring start to the day (for your eyes, at least) would be to place your phone across the room so that you have to start getting up to retrieve it. It's not as pleasant to stand there browsing as it is to lie there, so there's a good chance that particular habit will be broken. Once it is, and the dependency drops, you could potentially put the phone back beside your bed.

Or to take another example, perhaps you find yourself going to bed too late night after night, stuffed full of mindless content following a scroll on the tv or internet. As written in this column previously, and to be found in abundance in the sleep-research, exposure to screens right before bed isn't the best strategy for a good night's sleep. If it's impossible to just go to bed earlier, healthier activities like reading or a walk are much better suited to slowing your mind down to a sleepy pace.

### Have mercy

Discouragement is one of the key foes we face in any effort to do better, and the battle to change our habits is no different. I'm prone to giving in to it when I face a single setback or slipup, but the unfortunate reality for me is that that's what the road to improvement looks like.

If you find yourself slipping back into old ways and habits, you'll be very inclined to wonder



whether it's worth the effort at all – it is.

Start looking at your successes instead. If you've been trying to go to bed earlier, and managed four out of seven nights this week whereas previously it would have been none, that's a triumph to be celebrated and a base to build on.

**“Discouragement is one of the key foes we face in any effort to do better, and the battle to change our habits is no different”**

The struggle against bad habits is more a marathon than a sprint, and naturally requires a deep well of patience on your part. If you start to turn the tide, though, it's important to focus on how far you've come, rather than on the setbacks you're still facing. One day you'll get there, leaving the setbacks in the dust.

### Reward yourself

You have to be a realist: you have to be bargained with. We're not often inclined to make a difficult effort only for a dim and distant reward – we need little pick-ups along the way.

For the person who struggles with staying up too late, a good reward might be doing a nice activity with the extra time they have the next morning, once they start getting up earlier after changing their ways. For those trying to change an unhealthy diet, cutting out all pleasurable foods at once isn't likely to see too much success. Rather, focus on eating more healthily than you did, while not denying yourself the odd treat. Over time, your tastes and preferences will change, leaving you in healthier territory. Intersperse your efforts with rewards and the effort will quickly start to look more bearable.

Making and breaking habits go hand-in-hand as, for better or for worse, we're habit-forming creatures.

# Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



Summer means summer camps. Summer camps mean drop-offs, pick-ups, packed lunches and learning things. Essentially, it's school by another name. In the case of our toddler, her 'summer camp' literally takes place in her preschool, with the very same teachers, hours, kids and everything. However, since it's called a 'summer camp' it seems incredibly exciting to her. At the same time, this week, one of the other kids is doing a science summer camp, while the older two are on a less school-like water sports course.

### Interests

At their best, summer camps can indeed introduce kids to new sports and interests, while also helping them learn, get exercise and make new friends. For parents, the kids are kept engaged and looked after while they work – or recuperate from the stresses of summer holidays spent away with the kids. Other popular camps with our gang have included the GAA Cúl camp, outdoor camps, scout camps, soccer camps and sailing courses.

**“For kids, a taste of boredom is often the key to adventure and creativity”**

Of course, there's also the self-directed 'doing nothing' camp. Some participation in this camp is essential for kids during the summer holidays, I find. After a hectic couple of weeks on holidays in France, it was exactly what the kids needed. They were happy to just be at home, to read books, recline in the garden and stare at the clouds. After a couple of days, the participants began gardening, making bonfires and constructing dens. Some friends are invited over to play football or to bounce on the trampoline. This is real down time in an age when kids are too often shuttled from one thing to the next.

I remember those long summer days with

nothing in particular to do. Sometimes, boredom might arise, but this only prompted me to go deeper into a book or into my imagination. Sometimes, a collectively bored group of kids might build a raft, or cycle off with



sandwiches to explore some distant woods. Alternatively, they might tie a lifejacket to a BMX and build a ramp at the end of the pier and spend days cycling merrily off the pier into the water. Anything could happen, but for it to happen, the kids first had to be left alone by adults and secondly, they had to get bored.

### Key

For kids, a taste of boredom is often the key to adventure and creativity. Yet few are allowed to experience its dreary promptings, and go through the other side to the interesting part, where they find their own creative and exciting ways to alleviate it. Sadly, these days, that process is often interrupted by technology as, too often, there's always the PlayStation or some other device to prevent true boredom coming into play and weaving its magic.

The summer holidays are far from over. Many long summer weeks lie ahead as August beckons, with its golden days, and hints of autumn. We shall try to keep time moving slowly and easily for the kids, as the days go by. For there are only so many childhood summers.



# Building faithful intensity in the face of adversity

## Personal Profile



**Liam Fitzpatrick**

**D**octors are often intense. Getting through medical school is a difficult task, and the work that comes after requires a strong will and incredible passion.

Dr Davog McCaffrey is no exception. In what little free time he has, Dr McCaffrey works at Lough Derg, one of the toughest pilgrimage sites in Ireland.

"You take off your shoes, and while you're there you're fasting," he said. "You're only allowed one Lough Derg meal - black tea or coffee, dry toast and oat cakes. You're up all night on your first night, keeping vigil and praying constantly."

Dr McCaffrey has kept this intensity through his whole life, from childhood until now. He believes that, with a strong, concerted effort to introduce ordinary people to the teachings of Christ, the Church can build a strong following, both population-wise and mentally.

### Faith and medicine

He says he "was lucky to grow up" in a Catholic environment, attending Killyclogher Parish in Co. Tyrone, diocese of Derry.

"It wasn't anything over the top... I would probably describe it as a 'simple faith,'" Dr McCaffrey said. "But it was definitely a very loving, very welcoming family where faith was definitely important."

The genuine connections Dr McCaffrey made at his parish helped him feel connected to the Faith.



**Dr Davog McCaffrey**

"Over the years, we've had so many wonderful priests, many of whom I've become friends with," he said. "They encouraged and brought me on the Faith as well."

**“Dr McCaffrey has kept this intensity through his whole life, from childhood until now”**

He attended Catholic schools throughout his primary and secondary years, calling "the ethos of faith" central to his education and home life.

"So I kind of had all of the strands, if you like - faith in the family, faith in the parish, and faith in the school," Dr McCaffrey said. "So I suppose I was very lucky in that respect."

At those schools, Dr McCaffrey realised he could combine his passion for science and math with a

love of helping people into a single career: medicine.

"It's a little cliché, but medicine - well it's a combination of art, it's a combination of science and people. I enjoyed science - I was really quite intuitive at it - thinking about things, like different processes and how they worked."

"But I also love people and love interacting with people. Medicine brings the two of them together."

Dr McCaffrey noted that medicine allows him to help people when they need it most.

"When you're a doctor, you're with people at some of the most vulnerable points in their lives," he said. "You're there when they're giving birth, toward the end of their life or when they're approaching the end, and you have a chance - a very privileged opportunity to be with them."

"Maybe you feel like you can't offer much, but by being there, by being of service to them, by being able to help them do things, it's such a joy and privilege to do that."

### Music

As a young man, Dr McCaffrey found that he could engage with Catholicism through family, prayer, education, and a fourth strand: music. This engagement with music would open Dr McCaffrey's eyes to the world of expressing Christian values through song.

"I had grown up being involved with music, drama throughout my childhood," he said. "So when the time to get involved with that choir came along, I was still in school, about 16 or 17, so I went with my best friend Patrick and we did the choir with them for nine weeks."

He says that the nine weeks "flew by", but he still wanted to engage with the Faith musically.

**“Dr McCaffrey found that he could engage with Catholicism through family, prayer, education, and a fourth strand: music”**

"We came to the decision that between Patrick and myself, we would try to keep on with the choir," Dr McCaffrey said.

From there, the choir continued to grow with "all different people from all backgrounds and all walks of life". They were so popular with the community, in fact, that the choir made two CDs - one general album, and one Christmas album.

"Something about music just reaches into everyone's heart and everyone's soul," Dr McCaffrey said.

"Music can speak to all of us."

### Lough Derg

Dr McCaffrey has worked with Lough Derg, a pilgrimage site, on their three-day pilgrimage season for the last five years. There, he remains involved with the music that he first engaged with as a young man.

Calling it "a huge part" of his per-

sonal and faith journey, Dr McCaffrey encouraged all who could to embark on the pilgrimage.

"It's one of the toughest, oldest, most beautiful pilgrimages in the western world," he said.

He compared his experience seeing people grow and change at Lough Derg with his work as a doctor.

"It's completely different, but also so similar to medicine, in that, in a way, you're really helping people," he said.

"The transformation you can see in people, even working there the transformation I see in people - the beautiful healing, the beautiful joy that you see on people departing the island on the third day," he said. "Having the chance to interact with people... as I said before, with medicine, you're often with people at their most vulnerable - with Lough Derg and working there, you're also seeing people at their most vulnerable."

Dr McCaffrey noted that Lough Derg can provide those struggling with traumatic experiences with the chance to decompress and find strength to continue through God.

"Some people have been through horrible, really challenging things, but they know about coming to Lough Derg, that they can have a chance to 'switch off' from everything else going on in the outside world, to reconnect with God, and to receive strength for the journey" he said.

He encouraged anyone who wants to embark on the pilgrimage to arrive at Lough Derg any day from June 1 to August 13.

"It's been one of the greatest privileges of my life to work in Lough Derg and to meet the hundreds, thousands of pilgrims over the years," he said. "Each one of them have their own story to tell, and it's just been so lovely to be able to share in part of their story."

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



## Children's Corner

**Chai Brady**

## Dreaded rust and an interesting chemical reaction

**T**he dreaded occurrence of rust is a fear held by car owners and anyone with appliances or tools made of steel or iron. It weakens steel and iron and is identified by a brown flaking coating. It often heralds the beginning of the end of an object that succumbs - unless action is immediately taken before the situation gets worse.

But what is happening and what is one of the ways to examine rust and the chemical reaction associated?

Soak steel wool in vinegar and watch what happens as the iron in the steel begins to react with the oxygen around it. This is one way to learn more about the rusting process and the chemical reaction that occurs.

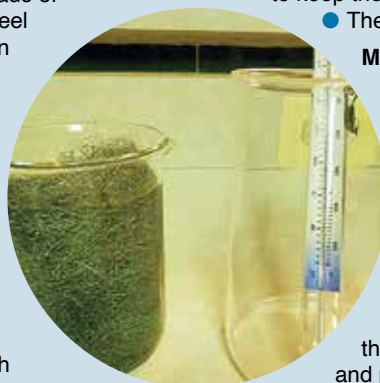
### Apparatus

- Steel Wool
- Vinegar

- Two beakers
- Paper or a lid (something to cover the beaker to keep the heat in)
- Thermometer

### Method

- Place the steel wool in a beaker.
- Pour vinegar on to the steel wool and allow it to soak in the vinegar for around one minute.
- Remove the steel wool and drain any excess vinegar.
- Wrap the steel wool around the base of the thermometer and place them both in the second beaker.
- Cover the beaker with paper or a lid to keep the heat in (make sure you can still read the temperature on the thermometer). Making a small hole in the paper or lid for the thermometer to go through is a good idea.



- Check the initial temperature and then monitor it for around five minutes.

The temperature inside the beaker should gradually rise, you might even notice the beaker getting foggy. When you soak the steel wool in vinegar it removes the protective coating of the steel wool and allows the iron in the steel to rust.

Rust is an iron-oxide. Rusting (or oxidation) is a chemical reaction between iron and oxygen, this chemical reaction creates heat energy which increases the temperature inside the beaker. This experiment is an example of an 'exothermic reaction', a chemical reaction that releases energy in the form of heat.

Nowadays there are many ways to prevent rust such as rust-resistant alloys, galvanisation (the application of a protective layer of metallic zinc) and several more.

The importance of using these methods can't be understated as many disasters, such as bridge collapses, have occurred due to rusting. It's certainly not something to take lightly!





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Something life-giving after a cloud of gloom

**T**he tragic figures for Irish abortions in 2021 were released recently but didn't garner much interest on television and radio. Don't frighten the horses?

What got a little attention was the Minister for Health's plans for 'safe access zones' around places providing abortion 'services'. It would be more useful to have safe access zones in these establishments aimed at protecting the lives of living unborn children. The instruments of abortion do more damage than posters and rosaries.

The issue surfaced on **Drivetime** (RTÉ Radio One, Wednesday) when Sarah McInerney interviewed Dr Mary Favier, who spoke of her practice facilitating 'abortion provision'. She said research had shown that one in seven women had met protest and intimidation accessing the 'service' – but these are two very different things and conflating them was too convenient. She welcomed the safe access zone proposals and yet said it's "not a particularly common problem".

### Barrier

"Fear of protest" had been a barrier to the provision of abortion, especially in rural areas, so presumably if there were no protests the rising abortion figures would be even worse. We learned



Derek Mooney and Nuala Carey on The Summer Show.

the good news that only one in ten GP surgeries offered abortions, and that only 11 of the 19 maternity hospitals did so – and why would they, when abortion is the very opposite of maternity? None of these challenging points I am making were made or suggested by the presenter. At one stage Ms McInerney asked if the shortage of services was due to fear or was there "something else at play"? She might have suggested principle, but she didn't.

Senator Ronán Mullen had concerns – there were already laws to deal with any harassment, Gardaí had said there was no need for a new law, so he thought there was "something strange going on". In abortion cases, he said, "a life is lost every time". People on peaceful protest were being demonised – the "freedom of expression and peaceful witness" had to be respected.

### Cherry

Dr Favier got another bite of the cherry – "Is there any-

thing you want to respond to in what Ronán said?" She made the claim that there hadn't been a rise in abortion rates – rather perplexing when the figures suggest otherwise. She wasn't challenged on this.

Something more life-affirming, **The Summer Show** (RTÉ One, Sunday) is loosely built around Irish pilgrim routes, and last Sunday's episode featured St Finbar's Way in West Cork. Derek Mooney and Nuala Carey were our genial travel companions as they explored some facets of this ancient path. I particularly liked the contributions of folklorist Sean Lehane, who outlined the various elements of pilgrimage – taking time out, journey, allegory for life, the meeting with fellow pilgrims and following in the footsteps of our ancestors. I would have added prayer as well. We met him at St Finbar's Church at the lake in Gougane Barra, where he spoke of Pattern Days (Lá Patrúin) where there were lots of prayers – 'praying the rounds', like the Stations of the Cross. Here, at the start of the River Lee, he saw pilgrimage as a way of getting back to the beginnings, back to origins and centre of things. He noted how popular pilgrim walks were these days, though I thought it would have been worth exploring how pilgrimages have been

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### MASS

RTÉ One/RTÉ Radio One Extra/LW252 Sunday August 7, 11am

Fr Paul Kenny celebrates Mass in the RTÉ studios, Donnybrook, with members of the Irish Church Music Association. The musical director is Ian Callanan.

#### BEING...CHRISTIAN

BBC Two Sunday August 7, 12.35pm

How British Christians from across the spectrum mark life's big milestones, from birth and coming of age to marriage and the end of life.

#### DOMINIC – LIGHT OF THE CHURCH

EWTN Sunday August 7, 9pm

A dramatic portrayal of St Dominic, a renowned preacher who was a tireless defender of the Faith and famous for his profound learning, heroic sanctity and apostolic zeal.

getting more secular, losing their spiritual and religious heart.

### Monastic ruins

Derek Mooney also visited ancient Christian sites and monastic ruins on the islands of the Lough Erne waterways. Historian Frank Roope told us about these places of spiritual renewal and hospitality in olden times. Some paganistic sculptures had been collected and installed in a monastic ruin in recent times and I found this jarring – better in their original locations I would have thought.

I would have preferred if the focus had stayed on one pilgrim route, but it's a light summer magazine show so I suppose it wasn't surprising that it flitted to other aspects

of Irish life – poetry, seaweed and a hot air balloon!

On another positive note I enjoyed an item on **Vaticano** (EWTN, Sunday) about the Sacred Art School in Florence, founded 10 years ago. Director Dr Lucia Tanti spoke of "the attraction of what is beautiful and holy", as we saw artists and artisans learning their trade in painting, sculpture and goldsmithing, with an emphasis on theology and liturgy.

Attention to the arts in a religious and spiritual context gives me hope for the future.

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# Film

Aubrey Malone



## Pre-code and European films in August at the IFI

Hollywood was a hotbed of scandal both on and off the screen in the 'Roaring' twenties and tumescent thirties. It was a time of flux in the film industry. It cleaned itself up after 1934 when the Hays Code made a stern set of celluloid bans – no double beds (even for married couples), no toilets, no kisses lasting longer than a few seconds.

This month there are two pre-Code films at the Irish Film Institute. Jack Conway's 1932 feature, *Red-Headed Woman*, is showing on August 7, featuring Jean Harlow in a landmark performance as a seducer. It may seem tame today but in its time it caused shock waves. People said there was a silent 't' at the end of Harlow's surname because of her antics.

Barbara Stanwyck is also a seducer in *Baby Face* (8). The remainder of the month sees a strong European influence. On August 13 there's *Shanghai Express*, the first of seven films Marlene Dietrich made with her Svengali, Josef von Sternberg.

### Questions

August 14 has *Queen Christina* (1933). This was a film that raised many questions about Greta Garbo's sexuality. She dressed like a man in it and also passed suggestive comments to her lady-in-waiting.

The month's highlight is *Double Indemnity* (August 17). Don't miss this Billy Wilder thriller at all costs. It's the greatest film noir of all time bar none, the gold standard of



Red-Headed Woman (1932)

the genre. Every line is a gem. The performances of Barbara Stanwyck and Fred MacMurray, each playing against type, are sensational.

Both of them were warned that their roles could spell the end of their careers. Instead they made them.

### Casablanca

Michael Curtiz' *Casablanca*, which most of you have probably seen, is showing on August 20. You must remember this, as Dooley Wilson might say. It's a kitsch classic that's always worth another look, especially on the big screen. When Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman started shooting it they thought it was going to be a dud but they played off one another so movingly, aided and abetted by that great screenplay ("Of all the gin joints in all the world, why did she have to walk into mine?") it warmed its way into so many hearts. Sometimes the problems of three people do amount to more than a hill of beans in this crazy world.

*The Killers* (August 21) was directed by Robert Siodmak from a short story of only a few pages by Ernest Hemingway. It oozes tension, both Ava Gardner and Burt Lancaster (then unknown) creating monochrome magic.

There's another classic on the August 22, Fred Zinnemann's *High Noon*. The plot, as you probably know, has worried sheriff Gary Cooper doing what a man's gotta do against a gang of villains coming to town at 12 sharp to spring one of their gang from his grasp.

If you're interested in any of these films you can get tickets by consulting [www.ifi.ie/pre-code/](http://www.ifi.ie/pre-code/) for the first two and [www.ifi.ie/when-europe-made-hollywood/](http://www.ifi.ie/when-europe-made-hollywood/) for the others.



# Faith in light and darkness

“Character, like a photograph, is developed in darkness.” So said Yousuf Karsh, the great portrait photographer, who had extraordinary ability in balancing light and darkness to portray not only the outer visage but also the inner character of his subject.

All three readings on this Sunday touch on the theme of faith persevering through the dark nights. The Book of Wisdom (18:6-9) recalls the night when the Hebrew people prepared for their escape from slavery in Egypt and the long journey to become a free people in a land of their own. They were led by a cloud by day and a flame by night. The human eye could not take the full light of God's glory so – mercifully – it was shaded by a cloud...later called the Cloud of Unknowing. Then in the full darkness of night there was always a flame to lead them. Faith brings light on the meaning of life, what to believe in, and a code of morality. Yet there are mysteries to be lived with and questions we cannot answer...the darkness of faith.

## The journey of faith

In our second reading (Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19), the life of Abraham is the model of the journey of faith. On the strength of God's word, he left the security of home for the promise of many descendants. He experienced seven blessings (light) and ten times of testing (darkness). He and Sara had no children, let alone the many descendants they were promised. Then Sara, long past the normal age, carried a child. They called him Isaac, a name meaning the smile of God. Some years later, Abraham was asked to sacrifice this boy who was the smile of God in his life. When the boy asked where was the lamb for sacrifice, Abraham answered, “God will provide”. His belief in God's promise never wavered in any time of testing.

Today's Gospel (Luke 12: 32-48) begins with the promise of Jesus. “There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom”. But just like the journey of Abraham, the possession and enjoyment of this kingdom will be in the future. The disciples were told to seek this kingdom as a great treasure,

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



being dressed for action, with their lamps lit.

St Paul had a great insight into the growth of faith. “When I was a child I thought and reasoned like a child, but when I grew up, I gave up childish ways. Now we see dimly, as in a mirror, but then we shall see face to face” (1 Cor. 13:12). Mirrors in his day were made of metal and provided a very poor image. Faith is the preparation for the full knowledge of God, called the beatific vision.

“Adolescent faith (which may be at any age) is quite unclear and very uncertain”

As in the stages of human growth, faith develops through the stages of childhood, adolescence and maturity. These stages of spiritual growth do not necessarily correspond to a person's age.

Childlike faith is uncomplicated. It is very clear and totally certain. It is simple and sure, accepting what is handed down without question.

Adolescent faith (which may be at any age) is quite unclear and very uncertain. There are many doubts and questions. It is obscure and uncertain.

Mature faith can cope with obscurity (darkness) while remaining certain. There may be many questions but this house is built on the solid rock of God's promise, like the staunch faith of Abraham. When St John Henry Newman converted to the Catholicism, he lost many friends and his link with Oxford University. In writing about it he said, “Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.”

In the darkness of faith, one finds it impossible to focus attention in prayer, or on any image or thought. Consolations are absent and feelings are dried up. But God is present in the darkness as much as in clear daylight. Is God absent in the garden during winter? Not for one second but working in a different way. Frost breaks the fallen leaves

into compost and plants need darkness as well as light.

Thomas Merton noted that in the daylight we can see the objects all around us but it is only in the dark of night that we can see the distant stars. Darkness stretches our vision. We would too easily settle for mediocre satisfactions unless God shook us up and stretched our desires for what today's Gospel calls the treasure that will not fail you. A wise spiritual director can help one to discern whether the darkness is due to tiredness or sinfulness or the Holy Spirit.

## Mystical

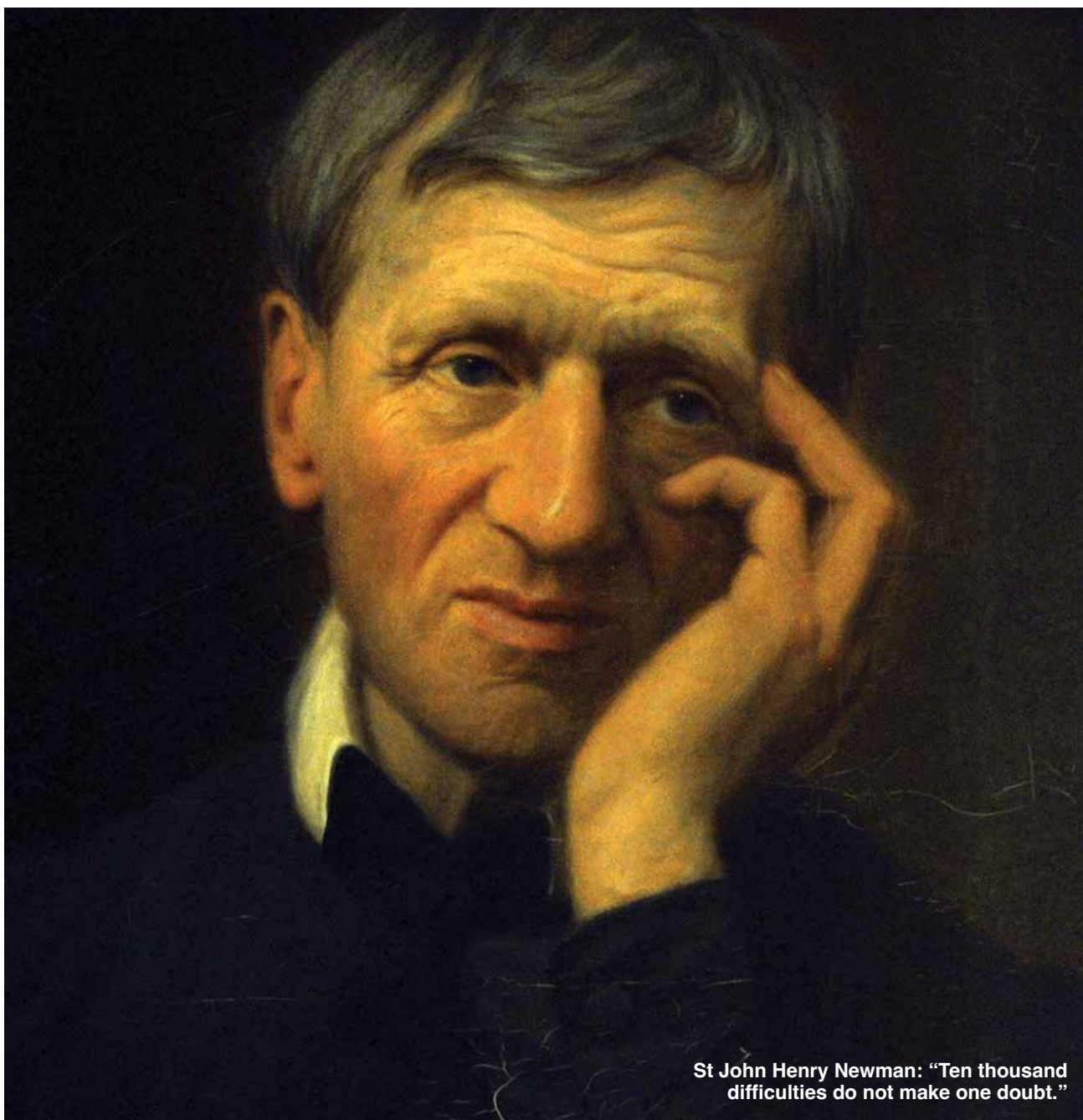
There is a vast body of literature by mystical writers on darkness in the spiritual life. One of the best exponents was St John of the Cross. “Do not be satisfied with what you understand about God. Nourish yourself instead on what you do not understand about him. Do not base your happiness or delight on what you may hear or feel of him, but rather on what you can neither feel nor hear. The less one understands, the

closer one gets to Him.”

Remember that Jesus, the light of the world, experienced the darkness of his agony in Gethsemane and his cry of dereliction on Calvary, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me”. He entered into total solidarity with us, like us in all things, so that we might know he is always with us.

Even Mary, his mother, did not understand what her son meant in saying that he would have to be busy in his father's affairs. What did Simeon mean by the sword of sorrow that would pierce her heart? She pondered on these sayings as she went forward under that cloud of unknowing.

Many of the saints experienced great darkness and dryness. St Teresa of Kolkata went through 40 years without any consolations in prayer. Only her spiritual director knew about it. She had experienced one vision when the Lord repeated his words on Calvary, “I thirst”. She understood her aridity as a sharing with Jesus, particularly in his thirst for souls, as he showed at the well in Samaria.



St John Henry Newman: “Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.”

In times of darkness let us keep our lamps lit by continuing to give time to prayer. Be dressed for action like Mother Teresa by

serving Christ in caring for the needy.

“Character, like a photograph, is developed in darkness”.

## Prayer from a concentration camp

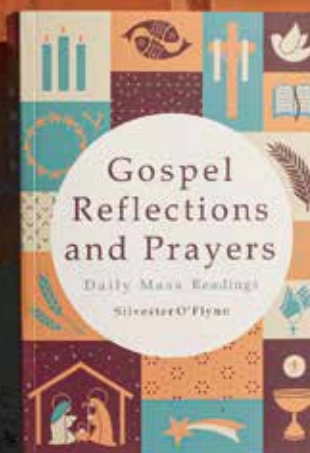
*I believe in the sun even when it is not shining.*

*I believe in love even when I feel it not.*

*I believe in God even when he is silent.*

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# Disarmed and dangerous



**A**fter his first arrest, the peace activist Daniel Berrigan went into hiding. After four months, he was captured, but during those months underground, although a threat to no one, he was put on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. There's an irony here that did not go unnoticed. Someone put up a poster of him with this caption: "Wanted – Notorious consecrator of bread and wine. Disturber of wars and felonious paper burner! The fugitive has been known to carry the New Testament and should be approached with extreme caution. Disarmed and dangerous."

**“Christian, acting alone at first, against the majority voice in his own community, categorically refused armed protection”**

Disarmed and dangerous! Corny as that may sound, it expresses the real threat to injustice, violence, and war. Disarmament is dangerous. Someone who is genuinely unarmed is ultimately the one who poses the greatest danger to disorder, immorality, and violence. Violence can withstand violence, but it can be brought down by non-violence. Here are some examples.

In our own generation, we have the example of Christian de Cherge, one of the seven Cistercian monks who were kidnapped and later killed by Islamist extremists



**Fr Rolheiser**

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in Algeria in 1996. His journey, and that of the other monks who died with him, is chronicled in a number of books (including some of his own letters and diaries) and in the awarding-winning film, *Of Gods and Men*. Living within a small community of nine monks in a remote Muslim village in Northern Algeria, Christian and his community were much loved by that Muslim community and, being French citizens and enjoying the protection of that citizenship, their presence constituted a certain protection for the villagers against Islamic terrorists. Alas, the situation was not to last.

## Terrorists

On Christmas Eve, 1995, they received a first visit from the terrorists with the clear warning that they had best leave before they would become its victims. Both the French and the Algerian governments offered them armed protection. Christian, acting

alone at first, against the majority voice in his own community, categorically refused armed protection. Instead, his prayer became this: "In the face of this violence, disarm us, Lord."

His response to the threat was complete disarmament. Eventually, his entire community joined him in that stance.

Six months later they were kidnapped and killed, but the triumph was theirs. Their witness of fidelity was the singular most powerful gift they could have given to the poor and vulnerable villagers whom they sought to protect, and their moral witness to the world will nurture generations to come, long after this particular genre of terrorism has had its day. Christian de Cherge and his community were disarmed and dangerous.

There are innumerable similar examples of other persons who were disarmed and dangerous. Rosa Parks, disarmed and seemingly powerless against the

racist laws at the time, was one of the pivotal figures in ending racial segregation in the USA, as was Martin Luther King. The list of dangerous unarmed persons is endless: Mahatma Gandhi, Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day, Desmond Tutu, Oscar Romero, Franz Jagerstatter, Dorothy Stang, Daniel Berrigan, Elizabeth McAlister, Michael Rodrigo, Stan Rother, and Jim Wallis, among others. Not least, of course, Jesus.

**“Unconsciously, they recognised the real threat, someone who is unarmed, non-violent, and turning the other cheek”**

Jesus was disarmed and so dangerous that the authorities of his time found it necessary to kill him. His complete non-violence constituted the ultimate threat to their established order. Notice how both the civil and religious authorities at the time did not so much fear an armed murderer as they feared an unarmed Jesus... "Release for us, Barabbas!" We prefer to deal with an armed murderer than with an unarmed man professing non-violence

and telling people to turn the other cheek! Give them credit for being astute. Unconsciously, they recognised the real threat, someone who is unarmed, non-violent, and turning the other cheek.

However, turning the other cheek must be properly understood. It is not a passive, submissive thing. The opposite. In giving this counsel, Jesus specifies that it be the right cheek. Why this seemingly odd specification? Because he is referring to a culturally-sanctioned practice at the time where a superior could ritually slap an inferior on the cheek with the intention not so much of inflicting physical pain as to let the other person know his or her place – I am your superior, know your place! The slap was administered with the back of the right hand, facing the other person, and thus would land on the other person's right cheek. Now, in that posture, its true violence would remain mostly hidden because it would look clean, aesthetic, and as something culturally accepted.

However, if one were to turn the other cheek, the left one, the violence would be exposed. How? First, because now the slap would land awkwardly and look violent; second, the person receiving it would be sending a clear signal. The change in posture would not only expose the violence but it would also be saying, you can still slap me, but not as a superior to an inferior; the old order is over.

Disarmed and dangerous. To carry no weapon except moral integrity is the ultimate threat to all that is not right.

**“In our own generation, we have the example of Christian de Cherge, one of the seven Cistercian monks who were kidnapped and later killed by Islamist extremists in Algeria in 1996”**



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## We would benefit from improving our conversations

**The Unbroken Thread: Discovering the Wisdom of Tradition in an Age of Chaos**

by Sohrab Ahmari  
(Hodder & Stoughton,  
€20.95/£17.95)

Frank Litton

I used to tell my students at the institution where I then taught that the purpose of their education was to equip them to engage in conversations. My role was to introduce them to the conversation on Public Administration.

My mission, I declared, was to elevate conversations in Irish pubs. Out would go point-less tittle-tattle, the banalities of weather, the inanities of sport, the dangers of gossip, in would come important, exciting, challenging, questions on the role of the civil service in our design for democracy, the constraints hindering our civil servants and how these might be overcome.

The underlying point was serious, inspired by the English political philosopher, Michael Oakeshott, who wrote of the "Conversation of Mankind". He discussed how we came to understand and orientate ourselves in the world through conversations.

### Conversation

It was in conversation that we found what the discoveries of the scientists, the conclusions of philosophers, the illuminations of poets and artists meant for us, how they positioned us, as we sought to make a world in common. A culture can be judged for the resources it provides for the conversations that draw us, and it, onwards.

On the evidence of the media, these resources are slim and shouting matches far more common than conversation. Maybe it was always so, and I am in the grip of an

unwarranted nostalgia, when I remember a time when matters were better.

Remember when Fergal O'Connor OP was a regular guest on the *Late, Late Show*? Remember Andy O'Mahony's book programs and interviews? Remember when the book reviews in *The Irish Times* were worth a glance? Remember when the commentariat were not only opinionated, but also educated? Remember when pluralism was valued, and demanded, before calls for diversity came, paradoxically, with demands that we must all think alike? Remember when arguments were not short-circuited by adjectives masquerading as analysis? I do.

**"A culture can be judged for the resources it provides for the conversations that draw us, and it, onwards"**

This book reminds us of important questions with which we should be engaged and that the resources to address them are abundant. The author Sohrab Ahmari is an author and commentator; well-known in the United States where he arrived, aged 13, in 1998 when his family escaped the oppressions of Iran.

While he relished the freedoms of a liberal society, he discovered the limitations of the ideology that underpinned it. He converted from atheism to Catholicism in 2016 and has since made a name for himself as a combative interlocutor in the cultural wars. He is editor of the recently established radical online journal *Compact*.

The book ranges widely. In each of its 12 chapters we are introduced to a thinker, the question they explored, and the solutions they propose. So, for example, we are introduced to CS Lewis, who questioned the limitations of science as we seek to justify our lives.

### Reasoner

We learn of Thomas Aquinas, the supreme reasoner who demonstrated that faith and reason worked together, each enhancing the task of the other, in their shared search for truth.

We find how Augustine answers the question 'does God need politics?' in the interplay between the City of God and the City of Man.

St John Henry Newman is summoned to help us understand what it is to be free with his exploration of the nature of conscience. Not all the thinkers are philosophers or theologians. The anthropologists Victor Turner and his wife Edith teach us that without symbols and shared rituals, 'spirituality' is a thin deceiving gruel, while the feminist writer Andrea Dworkin provides a powerful indictment of modern takes on sexuality.

Not all the thinkers are Christian; the Jewish philosopher Hans Jonas' life-time study of Gnosticism instructs us in the dangers of ignoring our nature as embodied spirits while the pagan stoic Seneca leads a discussion on death.

The topics cover a wide range. All the thinkers presented have made substantial contributions. Bringing them together in 12 shortish chapters faces two dangers: either the presentations are trite or they are compressed into the dry abstractions of an encyclopaedia article. Ahmari escapes both traps. Thanks to his considerable skill, the book has the qualities of a good conversation.

Ahmari engages the readers' interest, extending their horizons. On finishing each chapter, I wished the conversation to continue, to delve deeper into the question, to know more of the thinker.

There is, I suppose, no hope that the media's slide deeper into tabloidisation can be stopped. I expect that readers of this book will be stimulated by its reminders of the resources that our tradition provides for examination of the questions posed by the human condition.

Could I hope that now pubs and cafes have reopened, with the help of this book.....?

## Dutch Drawings: highlights

**Curator for the NGI: Anne Hodge. This exhibition is organised in cooperation with the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.**

16 July – 6 November 2022; Print Gallery I  
Admission free – no booking required

**An appreciation by Peter Costello**

**T**he Print Room in the National Gallery is a shaded coign which in an almost retreat-like atmosphere creates a mood of relaxed enjoyment.

It is very well suited to showing these drawing from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. It is one of the great galleries of the world, a place everyone should try and visit. The present show is centred on a collection of drawings, and they reveal the nature of Dutch art in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Holland is a low-lying country whose whole existence derives from the control and use of water and land. There are no spectacular landscapes, no great cities in ruin or partial ruin, no sense of dominant majesty. The scenery, in the rural parts, is of rivers, canals, farm houses, lonely trees, occasional woods. But the true character of the people is revealed in the towns and cities, and their art is one of intimacy, of private life, of the interest of individuals for themselves.

**"Holland is a low-lying country whose whole existence derives from the control and use of water and land"**

All of these aspects can be seen in the 50 drawings on display. Even the religious scenes such as Ferdinand Bo's *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene as a Gardner*, Rembrandt's *Annunciation to the Shepherds*, or van Hoogstraten's *Incredulity of St Thomas* have a small-scale intimacy. But it is the living, closely observed detail of ordinary life and animals that especially strikes the visitor: a calf lying down, a monkey on a chain, the defiant head of a goat, an artist at work on a woodblock, a woman spinning, an old woman with a cap. The exhibition has chosen to promote itself with a striking image of Rembrandt's self-portrait wearing a black beret looking out at the world wide-eyed.

### Wealth

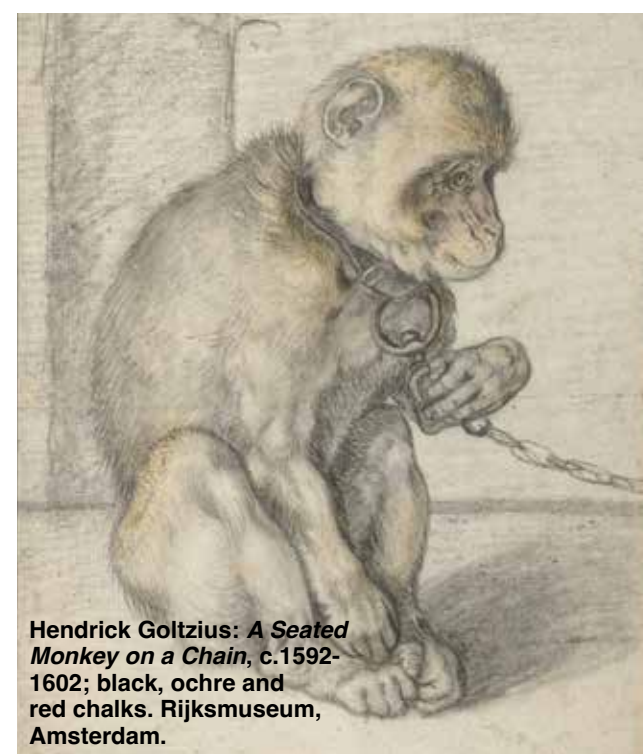
However, though this was the age when the wealth of Holland was being built up through activities around the world of its sea-borne empire, domestic life was not forgotten. This privacy is still a feature of Dutch life.

**"The present show is centred on a collection of drawings, and they reveal the nature of Dutch art in the 16th and 17th centuries"**

Yet if there is one images that I carried away in my memory it's Gerard ter Borch the Elder's *Portrait of a girl reading a book*: doubtless this might be thought to have been a devotional work, though perhaps not, but the record of a petty bourgeois girl owning and reading a printed book, for amusement or improvement, epitomises a whole era in Northern European culture after the introduction of printing. The drawing is evidence of a massive revolution in world culture.

These may be small images but they are filled with profound reflections on life as lived.

As the curator says, "From a child's first steps to peaceful wooded landscapes, *Dutch Drawings* gives an insight into life in the Netherlands centuries ago through exquisitely skilful works on paper".



**Hendrick Goltzius: A Seated Monkey on a Chain, c.1592-1602; black, ochre and red chalks. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.**

**Sohrab Ahmari expounds his views.**





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.

## from the Rijksmuseum

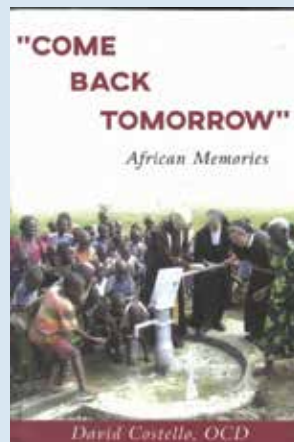


Gerard ter Borch the Elder (1583-1662): *Girl Reading*, early 1630s; pen and brown ink, brush and brown and grey ink, red chalk. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Samuel van Hoogstraten: *Incredulity of St Thomas*, c.1648-1649; pen and brown ink, with brown wash and some opaque white, over red and black chalk; framing line in brown ink. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

## From Castlemartyr to the land of martyrs



### "Come back tomorrow": African Memories

by David Costello OCD (Wheat Mark Publishing, Tucson, Arizona, USA, US\$11.95; also available on Amazon in paperback and ebook)

Over the years I have found the recollections of missionaries, and they come in a great many shapes and sizes, are always of interest. They cast a great deal of light not only on the remoter and lesser known parts of the world for those of us who live our lives in "the North" rather than the often deprived "South". These days so long after the great flush of countries gaining independence in the 1960s, deprivation is less and less the result of colonial plundering than the greed of local figures of power.

Fr David Costello is a Discalced Carmelite who was an Irish missionary, and still is in a different capacity. Back in April he celebrated his 60 years of priesthood. These days he serves as a priest in residence at Santa Cruz Parish in Tucson, Arizona. Though Arizona has a dry warm climate, a far cry from the humid days and nights he passed in East Africa.

### Jubilee

That diamond jubilee focused his mind on writing these memories, which deal in large measure with his life in Africa, in Uganda and Kenya. But they begin back in Ireland. He was born in Castlemartyr in Cork, and I think this is the first book I have ever encountered that describes life in that pretty town, which has complicated history of its own, though today it is perhaps more widely

known for the celebrated golf course attached to the great house.

Some three chapters of over 10 pages cover his early life in Ireland, then on to the years he had in Uganda – where famously some of the earliest Catholic missionaries in the 19th Century were martyred for their faith and witness.

However some eight pages or so are devoted to the nature of the Carmelite charism and to the spiritual and human matters of the personal and social development of both the priest and his people. These pages are rather at the heart of what Fr Costello has to say, as they can be appreciated by Christians at home as well as by his colleagues in the field.

### Injustice

The injustice that is spread across Africa cries out for change. Those following the current Presidential election in Kenya will realise that the current social and political problems of that large country are a problem not to be dealt with overnight. Uganda, too, has had long periods of both tragedy and dictatorship, the fate of all too many African states, where traditional custom and obligation have been modernised but where the social order of the tribe has barely been replaced by the notion of civic society. (The casual way he reports how he and one of his colleagues provided a traffic policeman with a personal *pourboire* (tip) to deal with a driving offence, illustrates how power is exerted in Africa down to the lowest level. It is the way things are done in Africa.)

Africa is a continent of striking contrasts. On one page (p. 156) he writes the homeless in the United States "are more prosperous than most people in Uganda" and "have access to all their essential needs" – a claim many since Michael Harrison and Dorothy Day have disputed.

But on the facing page a colleague rightly celebrates the energy, even joy, of a home for mentally challenged children. Though people speak casually of the untapped resources of Africa,



Fr Costello today in Tucson

they think too often in terms of gold, diamonds and minerals essential to technology. But the real untapped resource of Africa is its people and their courage, and how even in what seems a sad and miserable situation, they can laugh and enjoy themselves.

At the heart of the book is an exploration of the Carmelite mission in the light of Karl Rahner's famous dictum that "The Christian of the New Millennium will be mystic or he will not exist at all". He refers to John Walligo, the Ugandan theologian, who contributes to "the flourishing area of Christology". The question is "Who is Jesus for the people of Africa. What image of Jesus makes sense for Africa? Jesus as Healer, as Ancestor and Elder Brother, as Chief and as Liberator." Walligo selected to write about "Jesus the Suffering Servant" in *The Faces of Jesus in Africa*.

### Accretions

Only by striking away the European accretions to the true image of Jesus as Middle Eastern can Africa begin to see the black face of Jesus, it seems. If the future of Christianity is in Africa, as so many claim, impressed by the strongly traditional address of some senior prelates, that "black face of the Church" will have many surprises for the world which will owe little to the 12th Century to which so many look back in nostalgia for certainties that are gone.

There are many comments fertile for further thought in these pages. The publishers speak of this book as a resource for future missionaries; but those missionaries may not be to Africa, but to Europe and to North America, as I think Fr Costello seems to suspect.



Fr Costello is entertained by the future of Africa.



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A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Clare Martin at  
clare.martin@hospicefoundation.ie  
or call 01 679 3188



Irish  
Hospice  
Foundation

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

**MQI**

Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services

## Your heart for the homeless

Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

**To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering**

Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email [emma.murphy@mqi.ie](mailto:emma.murphy@mqi.ie)

Please pray for the beatification of

## Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

## Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.  
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: [info@mscmisions.ie](mailto:info@mscmisions.ie)

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

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

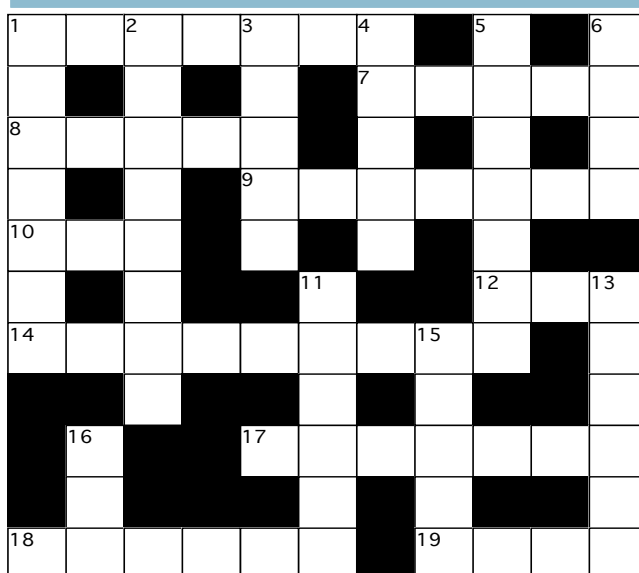
**Trócaire**

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email [grace.kelly@trocaire.org](mailto:grace.kelly@trocaire.org) or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

## Crossword Junior

Children's 444



### Across

- 1 'Rock-a-bye baby, on the \_\_\_\_\_' (4,3)  
7 The lovely smell of some foods (5)  
8 County in England beside Cornwall (5)  
9 Go here to see a play on stage (7)  
10 Black liquid you put in an engine (3)  
12 Oxygen is one (3)  
14 Dear (9)  
17 A thousand thousands (7)  
18 Make up something completely new (6)  
19 "Don't go near the \_\_\_\_\_ of

### the cliff!" (4)

### Down

- 1 Baby frog (7)  
2 You put a letter in this before posting (8)  
3 One place after ninth (5)  
4 You can read it, write on it or wrap presents in it! (5)  
5 Small house (7)  
6 Make bread (4)  
11 Help (6)  
13 You might use it when washing yourself (6)  
15 'That's good \_\_\_\_\_, it's well worth the price' (5)  
16 What boys grow up to become (3)

## SOLUTIONS, JULY 28

### GORDIUS NO. 569

**Across** – 1 Rap 3 Nonsensical 8 Enigma 9 Penitent 10 Blood donor 11 Fault 13 Based 15 Tadpole 16 Invites 20 Wafer 21 Guard 23 Awful 24 Governor 25 Parrot 26 Harpsichord 27 Has

**Down** – 1 Reed bunting 2 Poisoned 3 Named 4 Suppose 5 Skiff 6 Cheque 7 Let 12 Tonsillitis 13 Bylaw 17 The Firth of Forth 19 Waiver 22 Darts 23 Award 24 GBH

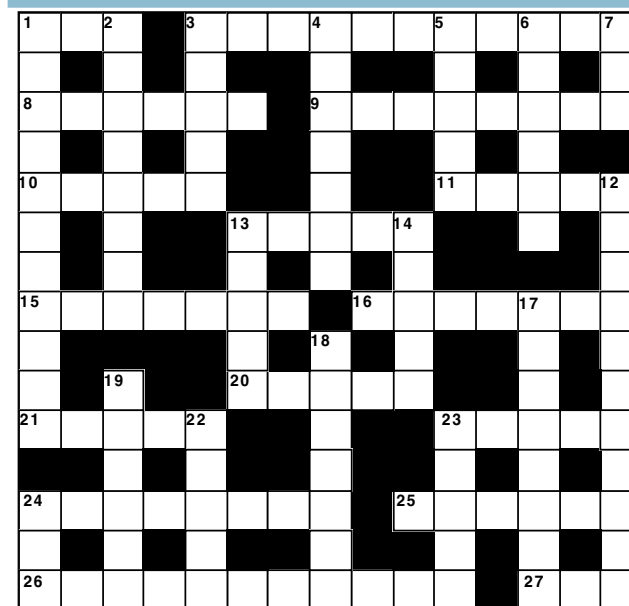
### CHILDREN'S No. 443

**Across** – 1 Sunroof 4 Big 5 Instrument 7 Zebra 10 Hen 11 Anthem 13 Ease 14 Legal 15 Octagon 16 Dessert 17 Cat

**Down** – 1 Switzerland 2 Return 3 Famine 4 Bench 6 Internet 8 Badgers 9 Athlone 12 Medal

## Crossword

Gordius 570



### Across

- 1 In excellent physical condition (3)  
3 Piece of furniture named for a beverage (6,5)  
8 & 18d The first and largest stadium in ancient Rome (6,7)  
9 Golfing transport that will store your tea as you drive? (5,3)  
10 International airport serving Chicago (1'4)  
11 Water vapour disturbs mates (5)  
13 Lacking in strong flavour (5)  
15 Earnestness of feeling (7)  
16 Biblical female or shameless woman (7)  
20 Gives out cards (5)  
21 Chaim is confused about an Old testament prophet (5)  
23 Great poet, author of 'The Inferno' (5)  
24 Supplementary piece of writing at the end of a book (8)  
25 Gambling venue (6)  
26 Scenic and beautiful? Quite spruce, perhaps (11)  
27 Went in front (3)

### Down

- 1 Agricultural unit using intensive, industrial and cost-cutting methods (7,4)  
2 Bullfighter (8)  
3 Sporty model of car (5)  
4 Pertaining to established truths (7)  
5 Sea movements (5)  
6 Quarrel in a petty way (6)  
7 Be mistaken (3)  
12 Infinitesimal amount of time (11)  
13 Tied up (5)  
14 Impurities found at the bottom of a liquid (5)  
17 Plant with a two year life cycle (8)  
18 See 8 across  
19 Having a low pH value (6)  
22 Disciple of an Asian religion (5)  
23 Curtain that has the padre confused (5)  
24 A parish priest can use it on the phone (3)

## Sudoku Corner

444

### Easy

2							1	
	1	6	8	2	7		4	
3	7			4			5	
	6			3			8	9
					6	1		7
9	4	3	7		1	6		
						5		8
		2		9				
		8	5	1	3		7	

### Hard

1	4		8	6		3		7
				3				
2				1				4
					2	1		
		4	6		8	9		
		2	9					
8				9				5
			3					
3		7		5	4		8	9

### Last week's Easy 443

1	2	3	6	9	8	5	4	7
4	7	5	2	1	3	6	8	9
8	9	6	7	4	5	3	1	2
9	8	1	4	2	6	7	3	5
5	3	4	9	8	7	2	6	1
7	6	2	3	5	1	4	9	8
2	1	9	5	6	4	8	7	3
3	4	8	1	7	2	9	5	6
6	5	7	8	3	9	1	2	4

### Last week's Hard 443

6	8	2	5	3	7	4	9	1
3	4	9	2	8	1	7	6	5
7	1	5	9	6	4	3	2	8
8	6	1	4	5	2	9	7	3
5	9	7	6	1	3	8	4	2
4	2	3	7	9	8	1	5	6
9	3	6	8	7	5	2	1	4
1	7	4	3	2	6	5	8	9
2	5	8	1	4	9	6	3	7



## Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



# Anyone free to throw in a few bales?

## RECENTLY I HAD REASON

to call a support line to discuss problems with a service. Over the space of four days, I called and though I spoke to someone each time, the situation remained unresolved.

I arrived at the stage where I did not have to wait for the instruction to press 'One' or 'Two' as I had memorised the menu options.

I also arrived a point where I felt I was wasting my time. This was wonderfully brought home to me when I made one of the calls at 8.30am as that was the start of day for the support team. I explained my situation again, was put on hold again and once again was told the problem would be sorted by the "end of day" – that had not happened at the end of each of the three previous days! I said to the team member that this was disappointing and more than a little annoying. "Can you understand that?" I asked. "Yes", he replied and then added: "Is there anything else I can help you with today?" "What do you think?" I replied.

Later, I shared this with a friend, and he gave me the answer



I wished I had at around 8.45am that morning. "Would you be free to throw in a few bales later?"

## Laugh

Have to say, that made me laugh and regret that the line hadn't presented itself to me when asked: "Is there anything else I can help you with today?"

Of course, the man was doing his job and I realised that on the scale of world events, my problem with the disruption to service was and is minor. That same day I attended the funeral Mass of a young mother and would

never ever equate the level of frustration I felt with the pain and grief of her loving family. We need always to keep things in proportion. All our problems are relative.

Why then mention this at all? Partly because I loved my friend's comment. It truly made me laugh and, as I say, regret I hadn't thought of it when it was needed. I think the reason I mention this at all is that we can all fall into that place where we throw away phrases that serve little purpose and add nothing to a difficulty someone might be experiencing. I have no doubt that line was part of that man's training – "Always end by asking the customer if there is anything else I can help you with today" – makes sense when an issue has been resolved. Somewhere though, there is place for common sense and a realisation

there is no point in asking that question when this person's problem has not been sorted.

Too easily we can throw away lines that serve little purpose. It can be our way of filling a vacuum or wanting desperately to say something in a situation. I think of the death of a child: "You have a little angel in Heaven", we might say. Though there is absolute truth in it, I often think the parents would prefer to have a little "demon" on earth – a living child, full of devilment, goodness, fun, innocence, beauty, and potential.

## Grieving

The truth of the angel will hopefully come a little later for those grieving parents. "Ah, she's in a better place", when someone dies – again, truth in it but to those who grieve, the reality is they had tried to make the place she

shared with them the best place it could be. "God's will", that too can add confusion rather than clarity. At times, and it is not easy I know, we need to be able to say nothing – maybe, as the song says, that's when we "say it best".

Anyone free to throw in a few bales??

## God never closes one door...

Another of those phrases we often use. I heard a comedian mention it one of his routines. He was using one-liners and said: "My grandfather used to say – God never closes one door but he opens another."

A little pause and then the punchline: "He was a wonderful man, my grandfather, but a hopeless cabinet maker!"

## Knock Novena

It is August and one of the regulars returns this year – 'The Novena'. It brings me back in years to going there with my mother – RIP – Mass, Rosary procession and chips! Through the years it has been a wonderful occasion of faith and hopefully this year it will shine again and be reflected in the Mayo August sky in a procession of "lighted" faith.



## PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU



Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

**Please send whatever you can for this special project.**

**The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.**



*"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."*  
~ St Therese

## WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

## Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

## 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)

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU**  
€..... **UKRAINE APPEAL**  
€..... **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.**

IC/08/04