

The Irish Catholic

SPRIT GUIDE



INSIDE: 8-page special on Ireland's spiritual future Pages 17-24

WHERE THERE'S A WILL....

Dublin's drive-in Mass celebration to mark Corpus Christi Page 3

BREDA O'BRIEN

New ways of Reconciliation could be infectious Page 7



Thursday, June 4, 2020

€2.00 (Stg £1.70)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

@IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

Call for parish councils to take the lead in re-opening for Mass

Virus lockdown has increased people's faith

Ruadhán Jones

The challenge of re-opening churches for public Mass should be used as a moment to revitalise parish councils, a leading theologian has said in response to new research which shows increased online and offline prayer and practice.

Prof. Eamonn Conway told *The Irish Catholic*: "The main positive I see in this report is a renewed openness to and recognition of the need for shared leadership in parish communities."

"This is the time for parish councils to be empowered to offer both spiritual and practical leadership. They can bring so much expertise and wisdom to bear in particular on the practical problems parish communities now face from compliance with hygiene regulations to financial challenges," he said.

Prof. Conway also warned that because the Sacraments

have been rendered "effectively inessential", it may have exacerbated a sense of low morale amongst priests.

He was commenting on new research from Queen's University Belfast which revealed that moving worship online has led to an increase in prayer and religious practice. However, the research also found that priests' morale has been affected by the crisis.

Interest

The report – 'People Still Need Us' – carried out amongst priests and ministers north and south observed: "An intensification or invigoration of faith, including examples of people praying more and people who had previously demonstrated no interest in faith or religion tuning in to religious services or seeking prayer."

Prof. Conway said that

» **Continued on Page 2**

Sealed with a loving kiss...



Darragh Bailey and Kristina Vyknkalova Bailey were married in Co. Roscommon during the coronavirus pandemic. Friends and family watched the service via webcam. The couple met at Knock Shrine and have a very strong devotion to Our Lady of Fatima.

MICHAEL KELLY

Community and solidarity must be at the heart of our parishes [PAGE 2](#)



LOCKDOWN BLUES

How you can cope with pandemic restrictions [PAGES 31 & 33](#)



MARY KENNY

Transgendering teens? Follow the science [PAGE 5](#)



WE LIVE IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES...

Don't miss breaking news directly to your inbox or tablet each week with The Irish Catholic.

The Irish Catholic



SUBSCRIBE TODAY
3 MONTHS FOR ONLY

€9.99*

CODE: ICSRINGOFFER
*REGULAR PRICE €15

Inside this week

Fr Ron Rolheiser

Taking advice from an old master...

Page 30



Sr Karen Kent

You don't always need a sacred place to pray

Page 34



Medical Matters

Facts and figures on the so-called 'super spreaders'

Page 32



Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

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

Multimedia Journalists: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

Aron Hegarty, aron@irishcatholic.ie

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

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

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

Managing Director: Garry O'Sullivan

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €145. Airmail €250. Six months – €75.
ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,
23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.
Printed by Webprint, Cork.

Place an Advert
Phone 01 687 4094 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Support Irish Missionaries



'NET helped me make my faith SO much stronger than it's ever been, and it's really helped me improve as a man of God.' – Michael (19), Dublin

Please help support young NET missionaries like Michael to minister to the youth of Ireland.

Phone 074 919 0606 to make a donation today.

Community and solidarity must be at the heart of our parishes



Editor's Comment
Michael Kelly

It's 16 years since the then Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly painted the image of 'tiptoeing' back to the Church.

"It would be good if we recognised the new religions of sex and drink and shopping for what they are and tiptoed back to the Churches," she told the Céifin conference in 2004.

New research carried out by Queen's University Belfast would seem to indicate that the coronavirus pandemic is witnessing more than a little bit of openness to faith from what we loosely call the lapsed or unchurched.

Priests report people who don't regularly attend Mass tuning in to watch online liturgies via the parish webcam or social media.

Fear around the pandemic is probably a factor, but a more interesting factor to consider is to what extent the online participation is reflective of a felt need to be part of a community.

Goodness

It's been fascinating in Eastertide to read the Acts of the Apostles and witness the growth of

the early Church. It's also daunting since it was so often the goodness of the first followers of Jesus that attracted more and more people to their radical way of living the Gospel.

Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies...can be grace-filled moments to invite people to return"

That is our challenge too, and as parishes start to get back to public Masses we will have to stop and ask what we have learnt from ministry during the pandemic. What of those who are not regular attendees, but have been taking comfort and solace from participating online? They are now part of our

virtual community, how do we incorporate them in to the physical community? As the pandemic fades, will the new found interest in faith fade with it?

The answer is that it will fade unless we are proactive in inviting people to participate more fully in the life of the local parish. As weekday and Sunday public Masses begin in more and more parishes the webcam will continue to be a feature for those who will continue to cocoon. It might be an idea for priests to make a point of issuing the invitation online to those watching the webcam to come to a physically distanced Mass. The Church's roadmap envisages parishes being split by townland, street or housing estate and attending Mass accordingly with one's neighbours. What about a leafletting campaign to

make this clear and a special invitation to those who have maybe been away for a while?

It's very interesting that when people are asked why they do not volunteer in a local club or organisation, they often respond that they were never asked.

When Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies do start to take place in September, these can also be grace-filled moments to invite people to consider coming back.

This pandemic has underlined the importance of both community and solidarity. These were words that were at the heart of the growth of the early Church. If both community and solidarity are at the heart of our parishes these too will grow and people – tiptoeing or otherwise – will see the message of the Gospel as relevant to their lives.

Parish councils to 'take the lead'

» Continued from Page 1

"Many respondents are uplifted by the fact that religious faith, and by extension they themselves [priests and ministers], are still perceived as relevant to so many people.

"It is understandable, of course, that morale among religious leaders might currently be low because of declining practice rates, an ageing priesthood, the impact of the scandals, secularism and so on," Prof. Conway said.

However, he warned that "the fact that Church services and Sacraments have, in the public perception, been considered effectively inessential these past couple of months may well have exacerbated a sense of low morale.

"Priests' lives are dedicated to the selfless service of people face to face and to be with their people in good times and bad. These past few months have been a terrible interruption in that regard. So, of course it is heartening to hear that 'people still need us'.

"At the same time, a word of caution: it is not the level of public demand for our ser-

vices as religious leaders that renders us or, more importantly, the message we bear 'relevant' but that message itself, namely, God's unconditional love revealed in Jesus Christ. It is important that we don't forget that," he said.

Dr Ganiel believes that the survey indicates a renewal in faith. "You don't know how deeply people are engaging with the online content, but...when you have the surveys and leaders writing in multiple answers like that, it suggests an increased interest in religion evidenced by more people tuning in online than went to church."

See Page 16.



LET'S WORK FOR A BETTER SOCIETY FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. LEAVE A LEGACY FOR LIFE.

Support the Pro Life Campaign in your will.

The Pro Life Campaign promotes pro-life education and defends human life at all stages. For more info visit www.prolifecampaign.ie Contact us today to order a copy of our Wills leaflet.

prolife

campaign

LOVE BOTH

Pro Life Campaign, Suite 60, Clifton House, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2
info@prolifecampaign.ie | 01 6629275

What do you think?



Let us know by writing to:

Letters to the Editor,
The Irish Catholic,
23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2,
or email:
letters@irishcatholic.ie

Former Taoisigh call for easing of pandemic church restrictions

Chai Brady

Former Taoisigh Bertie Ahern and John Bruton have said the current restrictions on church services must be addressed and “flexibility” given.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mr Bruton said there can never be “absolute safety”, and that “anyone who is a practicing Catholic would regard the sacraments as essential”.

“The problem now I think is that, while people are able to keep in touch with the rituals of the Church through attending Mass online, both Confession and Holy Communion are not accessible in the normal way because of the lockdown.”

Although there would be “practical problems” regarding how parishes would limit the number of people attending a Mass, he said, it requires “creative thinking” and support from Government.

“I think the dialogue in this matter should be from both directions, that it isn’t just for the churches to come up with a solution or for individual parishes, although that is very important, but the health authorities should also be thinking about this and seeking to find solutions,” Mr Bruton said.

“The Church should be assisted in finding a solution

rather than having to do it all themselves.”

Under the current Government roadmap through the coronavirus pandemic, public church services are set to resume on July 20. If a safe method of delivering the sacraments is established, Mr Bruton said the date should be brought forward.

He said: “I imagine the Government is open to that because they’ve indicated flexibility for other sectors, less essential sectors you might say.

“It would be sending the wrong signal if the authorities were to say that because in secular terms the Sacraments are not essential, that they are not essential; they are essential in religious terms.”

Funerals

Bertie Ahern, speaking to Brendan O’Connor on RTÉ 1 on Pentecost Sunday, brought up the issue of churches, saying: “New Zealand two weeks ago went to 100 in churches, 100 for funerals, there’s some things I don’t know why we’re so conservative on.

“Think of 100 people in a church that holds 1,500... to be honest with you, I was in my supermarket the other night which is smaller than the local church and there was about 100 people in the supermarket, but only 10 in the church – I don’t get that.”

‘No man is an island, entire of himself...’



As Prior, Fr La Flynn has decided to live on Lough Derg for the summer. He is pictured offering the traditional Station Prayer and will do so once each day until pilgrims can return after pandemic restrictions are lifted.

‘Drive-in Mass’ planned for Corpus Christi

Staff reporter

Parishioners who have missed being physically present at the celebration of the Eucharist will have a unique chance to participate in a ‘drive-in Mass’ on Corpus Christi, Sunday, June 14.

Religious tour specialists Marian Pilgrimages are in advanced plans to hold an open-air Mass which will be held in Leopardstown, Dublin just off the M50 which will adhere strictly to all health guidelines set down by the HSE and the Government road map. The plan is to use the set up that will be at Leopardstown for drive-in movies for the Mass to mark the important feast day in the life of the Church.

It’s the brainchild of the staff in Marian Pilgrimages, who have for the past few months been running virtual pilgrimages and Mass from around the globe to their pilgrims, keeping them up-to-date and in contact with their otherwise connected community.

Niall Glynn, MD of Marian Pilgrimages told *The Irish Catholic*: “We have provisionally blocked off June 14 at 12pm for Corpus Christi celebration in Leopardstown, Dublin and all are welcome.

“We would plan to set up an altar for the priest to celebrate Mass which will be viewable on the world’s biggest mobile LED screen, while being able to listen to the celebrations through your own car radio. These celebrations

will include live readings from the Holiest of shrines throughout the world, including Jerusalem and Lourdes. If all goes well and other priests or parishes were interested, we could move it to their other venues countrywide,” he said.

Mr Glynn said: “We have been listening to our pilgrims over the past couple of months regarding how much they miss the annual pilgrimage and prayer meetings, and this idea made sense with travel restrictions due to be increased to 20km on June 8.

“We know this is only a small consolation in the current environment, however we hope that this small ‘pilgrimage’ will go some way to fulfilling peoples spiritual needs.”

Tribute for ‘man of faith’ Brendan Bowyer

Staff reporter

Showband legend Brendan Bowyer has been hailed as “a man of faith” who was “very friendly and very humble”.

Brendan was 81 when he died last week in Las Vegas

surrounded by his family.

Fr Brian D’Arcy, who knew Brendan when he was a student, said: “We were friendly that long ago and we always remained very good friends and indeed he invited me out to Las Vegas on a number of

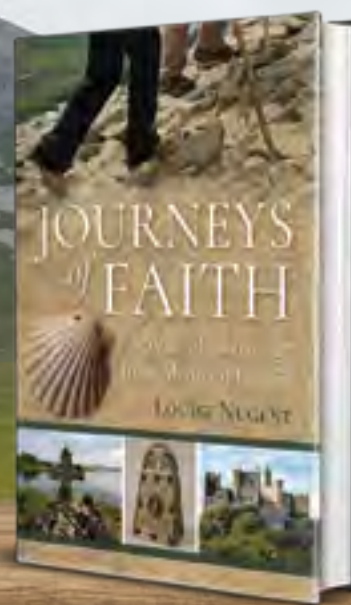
occasions to do weddings for band members and so forth and we kept in touch when he came home, we’d always meet and have a chat.

“He was a good guy,” Fr D’Arcy said, describing him as a “man of faith”.

Embark on a Journey of Faith with Medieval Irish Pilgrims

Whether atoning for sins, praying for an end to the black death or seeking salvation, Irish pilgrims set out on religious pathways for many reasons. Join Dr Louise Nugent as she uncovers the goals and destinations of these travelers, as well as the dangers they faced along the way.

Through historical sources, archaeological evidence and beautiful illustrations, follow these Irish pilgrims to gain fresh understanding of the motivations and experiences that shaped their journeys.



Order your copy today to explore Ireland's Medieval past.

€26.99 + FREE P&P

Phone **01 6874096** | Visit www.columbabooks.com
Post Cheque **23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2**

columba
BOOKS

Faithful hungry for 'real presence' says Laois priest

Aron Hegarty

A parish priest in Co. Laois says the Covid-19 pandemic has produced a greater hunger for presence and gathering among Catholics.

Fr Paddy Byrne of Abbey-leix, who is originally from Carlow town, told *The Irish Catholic* that online platforms have increased the spiritual

need for "real presence".

"These are very strange times and the virtual world, I think, is making people more hungry for the 'real presence'.

Community

"Whilst we are in a pandemic that's not possible," Fr Byrne adds, "the Church in Ireland is responding well to offering mediums where people can connect by webcam, Face-

book and in different ways to their spiritual community.

"However, there is an apparent need for that sense of presence and gathering," he said.

The coronavirus has killed more than 1,600 people so far on the island of Ireland and Fr Byrne feels the grief of many bereft families has been left "hugely exaggerated" by virtue of the "necessary restric-

tions" that are in place.

"I'm a little reserved on the question of the ten person restriction to funerals," he says.

"I think that is an arbitrary number and one, in terms of social distancing, that I question if it is necessary?"

Communication

"If I had a church which can accommodate a hun-

dred people or one that can accommodate a thousand people, why can I still only have 10 persons?"

"I would appreciate better communication on this," Fr Byrne continues, "in no way am I trying to lighten or demean the necessity of having restrictions, but that this is a huge issue for bereaved families."

Aontú: No logic in deferring Mass to July

Ruadhán Jones

Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín has criticised the Government's pandemic plan, saying he saw "no logic in deferring the phased re-opening of places of worship until July", while sporting events and restaurants will open in June.

Mr Tóibín called on the Taoiseach to "listen to the concerns of faith groups and their detailed ideas and plans" on reopening places of worship.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, he said: "I think it's important to every religious community that they do get a chance to celebrate in community settings. Aspects of people's faith can't be experienced remotely and people feel the loss of that."

He added that people were angered recently at images of the Leo Varadkar and hundreds of people gathered in Dublin's Phoenix Park.

"Hundreds of people gather in Phoenix Park in social distanced fashion, but many people feel they can't attend funerals in social distanced fashion in a graveyard, which can often be big spaces," he said.

Isolation

Mr Tóibín said that the fact that religious services are "basically banned" adds to the "isolation and loneliness that people experience".

"For a lot of people, especially people who are retired...daily Mass is part of their engagement with the outside world on a daily basis," the party leader said.

He said that this affects all communities and hits immigrant communities especially hard.

"For many immigrant communities coming into the country, the churches they attend have a spiritual and religious aspect, but also play a strong social role in terms of supporting each other in their new country."

Mr Tóibín said that he thinks it is time "to look at how we can, as people of faith, actually celebrate and participate in communal religious practices".

"There are solutions, definitely solutions, for people to remain safe and protect their health and yet participate in religious services," he said.

Cavan clubs roll up their sleeves



GAA teams from Cavan, Ballyhaise and Drumalee cleaning Cullis graveyard in Cavan town as part of the GAA response to serving the community during the coronavirus crisis.

Follow *The Irish Catholic* on Twitter



IrishCathNews

Accord counsellor 'not surprised' by unchanged divorce numbers

Staff reporter

A marriage counsellor at Accord says she is "not surprised" that divorce rates have remained largely the same since last year's referendum on the terms for divorce in Ireland.

New data provided by the Courts Service to Culture

Minister Josepha Madigan last week shows no major variation in the number of divorces being granted.

Mary Johnston, a counselling specialist at Accord's Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG, told *The Irish Catholic* that this is because marriage is still "very much valued in Irish society".

"I feel Irish couples who chose to marry are very committed to their marriages," she says.

Experience

"They work at their relationships and seek support when their relationships become difficult.

"In my experience, couples

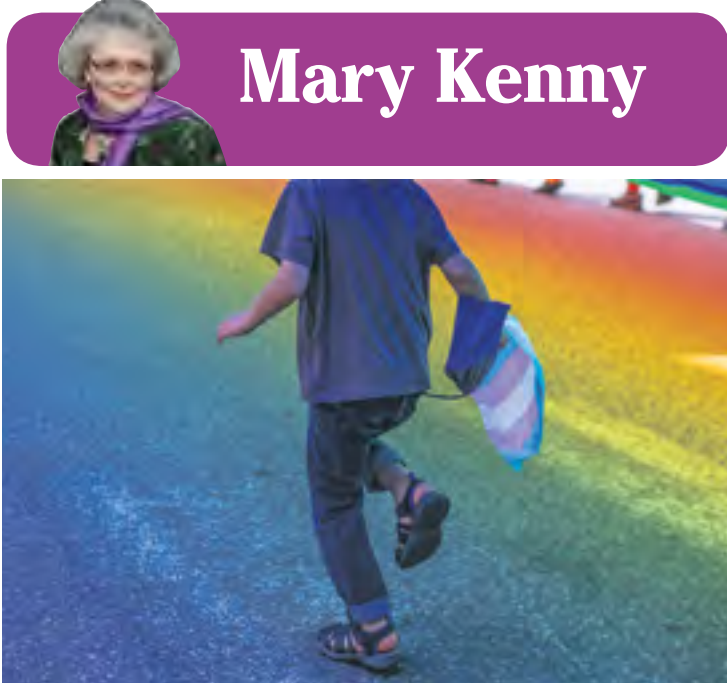
commence marriage with the intention of their marriage enduring for their own benefit and that of any children they may have."

Johnston adds that she was "not surprised (by the stats)" and was "very aware of couples' commitment to their marriages".

Transgendering teens? Follow the science!

Among the most interesting developments in neuroscience in recent years has been the study of the human brain, which can now be examined in great detail with the progress in medical technology. The study of the adolescent brain has yielded especially fascinating results. Teenagers have been scolded for lounging in bed for hours, and neuroscience is now telling us why: their brains need much more sleep than we realise. They're not just being lazy. Adolescents have also been noted, through the ages, for risk-taking behaviour. Whether it's rushing off to join wars – some volunteers in World War I were only 14 or 15 – or boy racers revving up vehicles to recklessly fast speeds, that's what teens do.

Impulsive
Teenage pregnancy has always been a cause for concern, in all societies, because it's been well-observed that youngsters are more given to impulsive behaviour. And now neuroscientists know why: their brains are not finished developing until the age of about 25. As an influential paper by three neuroscientists states: "In



the last decade, a growing body of longitudinal neuroimaging research has demonstrated that adolescence is a period of continued brain growth and change, challenging longstanding assumptions that the brain was largely finished maturing by puberty," write Johnson, Blum and Giedd in 'Adolescent Maturity and the Brain' published in a medical journal about adolescent health. The human brain, they state, is not matured until about half-way through the third decade of life – that's about age 25. The frontal lobes of the brain, which direct judgement, planning and impulse control, are the last to mature. On a personal note, I can certainly identify with that. I was as wild as a march hare during those years when my brain was struggling to mature! This new knowledge about the adolescent brain is crucial

to public policy about young people, and it is surely highly relevant to the subject of transgendering from one sex to another. If teenagers are prone to risk and impulse, and less able to handle planning and judgement, shouldn't any decision about changing sex be deferred until their brain has matured?

“Science says adolescent judgements in life-changing matters are likely to be risky and immature”

So could somebody please submit this information to the Fine Gael LGBT policy group proposing that children under the age of 16 should be able to legally change their gender? If individuals seek to alter their gender, either by surgery or by declaring that they identify with a different sex than assigned at birth, there is legal provision to do so. But here, surely, is a primary case for 'following the science': and the science says adolescent judgements in life-changing matters are likely to be risky and immature. Sixteen is just too young.



Foster not afraid to speak on the value of life

When Arlene Foster [pictured] was asked by Andrew Marr on BBC TV last Sunday if she was "embarrassed" that abortion pills for DIY home abortions weren't available in Northern Ireland, she immediately replied: "No, I'm not embarrassed. We value life in Northern Ireland and we offer support to women with crisis pregnancies." She said all this with a positive attitude, not the least bit ashamed of defending her values affirmatively. She spoke with simple sincerity and kindness. It's a welcome move, too, that Sinn Féin has come out against abortion for non-fatal foetal abnormalities. It is a recognition that many threatened disabilities can now be corrected, and people with disabilities are deserving not only of respect, but of life. Operations to correct a cleft palate in a newborn or young child are now usually very successful, as is surgery for a club foot. At Westminster, the Conservative MP Fiona Bruce is seeking to halt abortions – often well after 24 weeks – which take place because of these disabilities. It's unsure if she will succeed.

Not such an 'ugly duckling' after all!

I love 'ugly duckling' stories about unpromising starts in life and triumphs over failure, and an enchanting one appears in the classic memoir of Irish country life in the 1930s, David Thomson's *Woodbrook*. Anyone who bred horses could face years of risk and debt, even teetering on bankruptcy, as happened at the Kirkwood estate in Co. Roscommon. And then a "rather ugly foal" was born. Its pedigree

was considered mediocre: its maternal grandsire was a "fearfully bad-tempered animal" and its dam's breeding was thought to be below par. The unprepossessing nag nearly got sold off, but luckily it was kept, and was named, perhaps ironically at first, The White Knight. It went on to win the Curragh Grand Prize for two-year-olds, the Ascot Gold Cup

twice, the Goodwood Cup and won several times at races in Epsom and Newmarket. The White Knight then went to stud and kept the old estate in profit for years afterwards. There's a Biblical 'ugly duckling' story, too: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." It occurs in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

The book cover for 'The Bee's Knees' by James Morrissey features a close-up of a wooden beehive with bees flying around it. The title 'THE BEE'S KNEES' is prominently displayed in a hexagonal frame.

**“Intriguing...
delightful...
beautiful
Ryan Tubridy**”

BEES ARE VITAL TO LIFE ON EARTH.

YET EACH YEAR THEY'RE UNDER EXTREME THREAT
BECAUSE OF HUMAN ACTIVITY.

James Morrissey is looking to open people's eyes to the importance of bees. In *The Bee's Knees* he rolls out a fascinating insight into the world of this hardworking species and writes of the valuable part they play in our ecosystem. From fun facts to in depth profiles of Ireland's beekeepers, uncover the history of the honeybee and discover how you can help ensure its survival.

Irish priests share ‘joy’ at Blessed Charles De Foucauld canonisation

Ruadhán Jones

“We have heard with quiet joy the decision of Pope Francis to canonise Brother Charles,” said the priest responsible for the Jesus Caritas fraternity in Ireland.

Fr Niall Ahern said that “all over the world small groups of people of every faith have been inspired by this hermit priest, who during his own life had no followers but whose witness to the Gospel has been of profound import”.

Pope Francis announced on Wednesday that the French priest and hermit Blessed Charles de Foucauld would be canonised a saint of the church.

Fr Ahern believes that Bro. Charles’ example and teachings can be a great solace during the pandemic, calling him a “saint for the lockdown”.

“During the pandemic which at present covers the earth, this one man can inspire us to a communal response of fraternity and outreach to one another,” said Fr Ahern.

“He lived alone and welcomed the deep peace of solitude; his outreach in prayer and the simplest of kindly gestures extended to all of humanity from his tiny cell in the desert.

“He brought to a new level of awareness the common bond of all humanity and our shared and privileged responsibility to reach out to one another in love and communion.”

Hermit

Born into an aristocratic family in 1858, Bro. Charles de Foucauld was a soldier, a playboy and an explorer who

became a Trappist monk, living as a hermit in the Sahara desert.

Initially living a dissipated life, Bro. Charles returned to the Church having spent many hours praying: “My God, if you exist, let me know you.”

He joined the Trappists, before leaving and being ordained a priest.

He moved to North Africa and settled as the only European in the Southern Sahara, where he served the Tuareg people.

“What Bro. Charles experienced is a little in line with current events and he has often come to mind,” says Fr Ahern. “He so often celebrated Mass alone and relied on hours of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

“What Charles experienced among the Muslims became a message of understanding and fraternity that we need to hear in these times of global pandemic.”

Bro. Charles was killed in 1916 in World War 1 and was beatified in 2005.

Though he didn’t have any followers during his lifetime, his spirituality and ideas “have proved to be well ahead of his time”, says Fr Ahern.

“The legacy he has left the Church is one of simplicity and holiness in the ordinary circumstance of life and today there are followers of his way of life throughout the world.”

Movement

The Jesus Caritas fraternity was inspired by Bro. Charles, with the movement first com-

ing to Ireland several decades ago. “The fraternity is like a magnet,” says Fr Ahern. “It draws us into communion with Jesus and with one another. It is for everyone.”

There are lay fraternities, fraternities for women religious and priests’ fraternities.

“The key words are Jesus – Caritas: Jesus – Love,” says Fr Ahern.

The fraternity continues to be active in Ireland and Fr Ahern is contactable at frniallahern@gmail.com and by mobile at 087 7973432.

Wheely thoughtful



Parishioners returning their Trócaire boxes to Fr Paul Thornton at a Trócaire box return drive-thru at St Cronan’s in the Brackenstown Parish, Swords, Co. Dublin. With schools and some churches closed, the charity has asked people to return their box donation online, over the phone or if possible to their parish. Photo: Mark Stedman

‘Piano’ priest takes to Facebook to boost morale

Aron Hegarty

An 81-year old priest in Co. Down has taken his love for music to Facebook on Saturday nights to boost morale in these difficult times.

Fr Seán Rogan of Carryduff, known as the ‘piano player’, told *The Irish Catholic* what prompted him to go on social media.

“While we were in this lockdown, it struck me that our parishioners are confined to their homes and could use a bit of entertainment.

“So I decided one Saturday night to use the web cam in the church and play the piano for over an hour doing different songs.

“The response was very good,” adds Fr Seán.

“People rang up and asked ‘could you do another one?’, so about three weeks ago, I did and this time it was on Facebook and got about 3,000 hits.

“I then did another one last Saturday and I thought it was the best one yet.

“I said this was for NHS workers to credit, praise and honour them for their heroism. I also asked to pray for those who are ill and those who had died and their families as well.”

Irish blessing for frontline workers unites religious communities

Ruadhán Jones

More than 300 Christian congregations across the island of Ireland have come together to record an ancient blessing of protection for frontline workers. *The Irish Blessing* was released on YouTube and has more than 300,000 views.

Fr Martin Magill, of St John’s parish Belfast, was one of the organisers of the video and says he’s “delighted” with the result.

“We’re really surprised by the huge response, we’re absolutely delighted, we’ve really appreciated the encouragement we’ve got,” he said.

“There was an enormous amount of planning, I won’t

deny that,” he added. “We had over 400 contributions from across the island of Ireland, from Antrim to Cork.”

The blessing is part of an international series which began in the US.

For the Irish version of the project, the hymn *Be Thou My Vision* was recorded by congregations across Ireland, as well as a setting of *St Patrick’s Breastplate*.

The blessing was dedicated to frontline workers, from doctors and nurses to cleaners explains Fr Magill.

“More than anything else, this would be a way of encouraging the Churches to pray a blessing together for those on the frontlines,” said Fr Magill. “So obviously the healthcare workers, but also for

people in shops, people who empty our bins and clean our hospitals.

“We were keen that the Churches would be praying a blessing on all these people. We asked all participants to dedicate their recording to a particular facility, and you can see that on our website.”

The video concludes with the Aaronic blessing, spoken in a variety of languages including Irish, Ulsters Scots, Hebrew and Arabic.

“We also had a late submission from the Greek Orthodox that’s sung, absolutely beautiful, but it was too late to use it,” said Fr Magill. “Hopefully, their version and others will be put up on our website, theirishblessing.com.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bishop says ‘poor planning led to tragic nursing home deaths’

Bishop Michael Ruter says a lack of planning was a significant factor in the amount of Covid-19 deaths in nursing homes.

The Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh, who chairs the Council for Healthcare of the Irish Episcopal Conference, says the shortage of necessary PPE and personnel led to an “extremely tragic” devastation.

“I feel the planning was poor,” he said. “There was intense pressure at the beginning of the pandemic and I feel that proper decisions weren’t made about nursing homes and they were overlooked.

“I think we have to reflect as a society on how much we care for the elderly and that they are not neglected or ignored.”

‘Spiritual cocooning never an option’ – bishop

In his homily on Pentecost Sunday Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry diocese said that due to the current pandemic there is a “temptation to hide, to wait till this is all over”, but that is part of a “deadly narrative”.

Delivering the homily in St Eugene’s Cathedral in Derry, Bishop McKeown spoke of the disciples when they were thrown out of their upper room into a “strange environment”.

“All they could see was their limitations rather than Christ’s mission. As a Diocese, we will have to come out of this challenge. But a Spirit-filled Church does not merely see the potential problems and sociological trends – and become self-absorbed,” he said.

“Physical cocooning may be necessary for some. Spiritual cocooning is never an option.”



Follow the Irish Catholic on Facebook

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

Breda O'Brien

The View



Who knows, new ways of precious reconciliation could be infectious

When the happy day comes when Covid-19 no longer constitutes an ongoing serious threat to human life, I hope that things will not go back to normal. I hope they can be better than they were and particularly in the area of the celebration of sacraments.

For example, there is one Sacrament that is overdue for revival: the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is not uncommon nowadays for children's first penance to be their last. Given that Confession is one of the two Sacraments of healing, this is so sad.

Reconciliation and mercy have been to the fore in Pope Francis' papacy. He has made a point of going publicly to Confession himself. He announced an extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy stretching from December 2015 to November 2016.

In 2014, he launched '24 Hours for the Lord', held annually on the Friday and Saturday preceding the fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare Sunday*). Churches remain open for 24 hours to facilitate adoration of the Blessed Eucharist and confessions. Many Irish dioceses have participated.

Testimony

This year, it was due to happen on March 20 and 21, but obviously, had to take place in the extraordinary circumstances demanded by Covid-19. The preparatory material for the days (which can be found online at <https://bit.ly/2yQGx0j>) contained a testimony by Beatrice Fazi, an Italian actor who was probably best known for her part in the long-running Italian soap opera, *A Doctor In the Family*. She is now a presenter for TV2000.

Having had a troubled adolescence which culminated in an abortion at 20, she was lost for many years. Then she experienced a moment of spiritual healing in a church in Rome which she had only entered to rest for a while.

There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament



Beatrice Fazi.

and in her own words, she began to cry like a fountain because of the message of love she felt emanating from the consecrated host. But this did not lead to some kind of overnight change of life.

Instead, Fazi says, she "left that church and tried not to listen because I thought I was not worthy of God bending over me. I didn't deserve God's love. And this is the first sin to confess. It took some time before I accepted that love."

During the celebrations of World Youth Day in August 2000, she was struck again by the joy she saw in some young people's eyes, the joy that she wanted so badly.

She was pregnant again and went to Confession almost out of superstition – for fear that God would punish her for her abortion years before.

Instead, Confession was a turning point. She is now married with four children and has written a book about her experiences.

What struck me about Fazi's testimony is that it is all about healing – healing the wounds of troubled teenage years, of abortion, of living only for what

pleased her.

The Sacraments are privileged channels of God's grace. Yet we have allowed one of those Sacraments almost to fall into abeyance. I know of parishes where very few go to Confession.

“If busy accident and emergency departments can adapt to Covid-19 by booking appointments, why not parishes?”

And yet, a great saint like John Bosco said that there “are two wings with which to fly to Heaven; they are Confession and Communion”.

Confession would seem to be an ideal way to begin the gradual return to church buildings for worship. (Re-opening for public worship must, of course, happen in a safe and orderly fashion which puts no-one at unnecessary risk.)

We have already had innovative priests like Fr Pat McGinley and his confreres in St Mark's in Tallaght who have held

carpark Confessions. He describes how he and his fellow priests experienced beautiful conversations,

including with one young woman who felt 'pushed' across the car park even though she had not been to Confession since her First Holy Communion. Like Beatrice Fazi, she was able to obtain forgiveness for things that were really weighing her down.

Open-air Confessions would be a start, but many of our churches are ideally set up for socially-distanced confessions. Boxes would probably have to be sanitised between each confession, which could be onerous.

I was recently in the Eye and Ear Hospital's emergency department, which now only sees patients on an appointments basis. If busy accident and

emergency departments can adapt to Covid-19 by booking appointments, why not parishes? There could be a booking form in the back of the church or even online for confessions. It would be the perfect preparation for returning to Mass.

Goodness knows we all need healing and reconciliation after these last few months. Let's not turn return to the Sacraments into some kind of culture war, with laypeople who long for the sacraments being seen as somehow threatening or strange. Let us all try to live in reconciliation with each other.

Facilitating Confession would be a good start.

Seeking inspiration for your parish prayer group?

.....

Looking for a way to strengthen your family's spiritual life?

Let Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap be your guide through the Daily Mass Readings with *Gospel Reflections and Prayers*. The weekly liturgy is food for the soul, providing optimism and hope. Through two short reflections on each day's Gospel, followed by intercessory prayers you can deepen understanding of the scripture and focus intentions through all three liturgical cycles.

Gospel Reflections and Prayers is a revised edition of Homily Hints and Prayers (2018)

 **columba BOOKS**

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY

€19.99

FREE Postage

Changes are afoot...but the future for film still looks good



Award-winning Knock film director Campbell Miller looks at the filmmaking future with **Chai Brady**

The film production industry faces huge challenges in the future due to the coronavirus pandemic and the need for social distancing, but a Northern Irish director who has won a prestigious award for his docudrama about Knock is determined to remain positive.

The film was made and directed in Ireland and recently won an award at the international Gabriel Awards. It was directed for the global TV network EWTN by Campbell Miller from Co. Down, who was the first Irish director to win the award.

The film, *Hope*, documents the 1879 Apparition at Knock. It had its first screening in the Filmotheca Vaticana in the Vatican in January this year.

Speaking about the award, Mr Miller told this paper: "It's special because it's very hard for anyone creating a Christian-based movie in the secular world to get some recognition for it."

"It's lovely to get that but it's really good for all the cast and crew because it recognises all the work that they put in to make the movie what it is. It's nice that they're being supported in that way."

Social distancing

Mr Miller said that the industry, like many others, is facing "very uncertain times".

"How do you have 20-30 actors on set but be social distancing yet looking as if they're close to each other talking, that's a difficulty, how we get those sorts of things across?" he asked.

"Especially given that I usually film historic pieces, you can't sort of cover things up with a modern-day look. The other thing you're coming across is actors have to do their own hair, their own make-up, do their own wardrobe and that again is difficult when you're doing historical pieces."

"It's nothing to just putting on a



Scenes from the docudrama *Hope* which is showing on Amazon Prime.

“One of the things that I’m doing... is praying for our leadership within the Church...”

in America and went down really well. The network has got a lot of great feedback from the content, people have loved the movie, also a lot had never heard of Knock so Knock itself have people contacting them that have watched the movie. We look forward to when we get to a time in which Knock itself is available to accept pilgrims again. The Gabriel Award allows the movie again to reach more people.”

* * * * *

The film is now available on Amazon Prime and is currently being translated into German and Spanish for broadcast worldwide. Despite a low budget, Mr Miller said, they managed to finish the film despite many challenges along the way.

He said: "To direct it was quite difficult, there was so many difficulties that you come across. It wasn't a very simple operation, we had 15 official witnesses and you also had an apparition in which nobody moves, nobody speaks and to try and bring that across in video is very difficult because if nothing moves and nothing speaks well it basically looks like a picture but we have to give it that whole three dimensional look."

"We found that challenging and that involves a lot of post-production and greenscreen work to get that across."

The Faithful have been faced with separation from many of the sacraments due to the current pandemic, with the life of the Church changing dramatically to ensure the virus does not spread.

Speaking of the challenges the Church faces, Mr Miller said: "My hope is that the sacramental elements of the Church, people will be able to take part in those, take part in the Mass as soon as possible – only when it is safe."

"One of the things that I'm doing, and a lot of Catholics like me, is praying for our leadership within the Church, that they are able to come up with and implement efforts that will allow people to be back in the church; back to Mass but in a safer manner."

normal pair of jeans and a blouse or something, if they're wearing something that's maybe from the 19th Century it becomes difficult."

"We're trying to feel our way through this, see what we can do that on-camera people, both cast and crew, will be safe. But also off camera that they'll be safe and everyone has these areas that they can go to and be able to keep a social distance."

“Our hope when we made this film was to bring international recognition to Knock”

Mr Miller said there will be dramatic changes, but "the future is still looking good".

Having released his award-winning film just before the

pandemic hit Europe on a large scale, Mr Miller was fortunate to avoid the chaos it would have wrought on production.

"We obviously didn't know that the release of *Hope* would coincide with the Covid-19 pandemic, but there are parallels between the two eras. People are fearful for their future, everything looks a bit grim."

"It is similar now, to the prevailing atmosphere at the time of the apparition. There is poverty, disease and a sense of despair. Our Lady's appearance at Knock gave people a sense of hope. Ireland needs to hear that message again at a time when so many are under pressure, depressed, and fearful," he said.

"Hopefully the people of Ireland now will look upon Our Lady for her intercession."

His docudrama on the national shrine blends commentary and

insight with reconstructions of life in 19th Century Ireland during the famine and mass emigration.

It features contributions from relatives of the original witnesses, as well as Fr Richard Gibbons PP of Knock and rector of the shrine, Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin and Knock historian Tom Neary.

Hope also includes an interview with Marion Carroll, whose healing from serious illness at Knock while on pilgrimage has been officially recognised by the Church.

"Our hope when we made this film was to bring international recognition to Knock, the movie was always going to be put out across all the EWTN networks in which we have a few hundred million people who have the possibility of watching," Mr Miller said.

"The movie has already gone out



Hope covers the Famine in Co. Mayo in the mid 19th-Century.

Strengthen devotion to the Blessed Sacrament with

MAGNIFICAT

Adoration Companion



Encourage your congregation to stay proactive in their prayer life with Magnificat's latest offering. Perfect for live streaming from home or praying in church, this precious tool features:

- Practical suggestions for adoration and explanations of this ancient practice
- Programs of Adoration in Time of Need
- Profiles of saints who were known for their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament
- Scripture and meditations
- Prayers, hymns, and litanies

TO ORDER:

☎ 01 6874024 ✉ info@irishcatholic.ie 🛒 www.irishcatholic.com/shop

Or send us the order form below

METHOD OF PAYMENT

☐ PAY BY: Cheque/Postal order for € _____ payable to: The Irish Catholic

☐ PAY BY CREDIT CARD: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Laser

Card No: _____

Exp date: _____ / _____ CVV No: _____

MY DETAILS

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

**BULK
DISCOUNTS
AVAILABLE**

POST IT TO :
THE IRISH CATHOLIC,
23 MERRION SQUARE NORTH,
DUBLIN 2. D02 XE02

Out&About

The gardening won't do itself!



ARMAGH: The community group in Lislea enjoy working on their allotments.



► DUBLIN: Connla Fallon (6) collecting a Trócaire box from his grandmother Margo Rice. Photo: Mark Stedman

◀ TIPPERARY: Fr Michael Toomey PP, Ss Peter & Paul's Parish, Clonmel, stands outside his church which has reopened for private prayer with a sign stating 'Welcome Home'.



IN SHORT

Celebrating the work of a much-loved Kilcullen priest

Over the weekend a few residents from the community in Kilcullen came together to pay respect to Fr Niall Mackey who has been a priest for 55 years.

Parishioner Thelma Kenna told this paper that since Fr Mackey arrived to the parish he has "adapted into the community and became friendly and well known among all of our community of all ages".

She said: "Fr Mackey is such a well-known, well-liked, and well-respected figure within the parish, whose kindness, hard-work and dedication to both our Lord, and in the preaching of his Word and also with the

community know no bounds.

Ms Kenna said that Fr Mackey gives adequate time to all people and can be seen in the community engaging with everyone.

"He is full of knowledge and interesting facts, which he often talks of within the church. He has the kindest nature and also a smile that lights up the dullest of days. Plus, he also participates yearly for the Dublin City marathon and many more throughout his life," she said.

Covid-19 threatens most vulnerable groups in Brazil – charity

The aggressive spread of Covid-19 in Brazil threatens to decimate vulnerable communities, as the country becomes the epicentre

of the pandemic in Latin America, Christian charity World Vision Ireland has warned.

Brazil is second worldwide in the ranking of Covid-19 confirmed cases, only behind the US. As these figures continue to rise, the most vulnerable – indigenous people, riverside dwellers, inhabitants of favelas, migrants and refugees – are at extreme risk.

"It is shocking to see how countries who haven't flattened the curve are now facing the worst of the global pandemic," Niall McLoughlin, CEO of World Vision Ireland, said. "Inequality appears to be the key factor that is driving Brazil's Covid-19 exponential curve. It is disproportionately affecting the country's poorest people and those living in peripheral communities."

The increase in the number of new cases in Brazil has led to hospital beds filled to

maximum occupancy and health and funeral services to become completely overwhelmed.

"Hospitals have run out of beds, health workers are overwhelmed and there are horrific scenes of mass graves. This is making it difficult for families and even for funeral homes to provide quick and timely services," said Luis Corzo, World Vision Brazil Response Director.

Manaus, the state capital, is a gateway to communities across the Amazon basin, and if the virus spreads, according to World Vision Ireland it could decimate many vulnerable indigenous groups and riverside dwellers. The charity is on the ground there, working with the local community to provide nutrition, sanitation kits and promoting behavioural change to prevent infections.

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



CARLOW: Askea parish in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin held a 'Leaving Certs 2020: A Blessing for the Journey' ceremony to give hope and reassurance to the Leaving Cert class of 2020.



DUBLIN: Crosscare's Swords Youth Service have been reaching out to young people at risk to help them with their mental health at home through positivity packs.



CLARE: Cantor Edel Vaughan and harpist Finoula Rooney at a ceremony of prayer and blessing for the graduation class of St Flannan's College in Ennis Cathedral.



TIPPERARY: The Crowning of Our Lady in St Mary's Church, Irishtown, Clonmel.



DERRY: Peter Cassidy, a student in St Mary's Grammar School Magherafelt claimed the top prize in the Columban Missionary's essay competition. Peter's essay on climate change was chosen as one of the winning entries by leading journalists in Ireland. He will receive a certificate and £100.



CLARE: Bishop Fintan Monahan speaks to Fionnuala Kelly and Myriam Black at a ceremony of prayer and blessing for the graduation class of St Flannan's College in Killaloe diocese in Ennis Cathedral.



DUBLIN: Thomas (2) and Connla (6) Fallon counting their Trócaire boxes with the help of their mother, Caitriona. The charity has warned its Lenten Appeal is down 60% due to people's inability to return boxes. Trócaire has appealed for people to count what is in their boxes and donate at trocaire.org. Photo: Mark Stedman

Events

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

Pentecost comes to parshioners in Belfast



Fr Tim Bartlett from St Mary's Church in Belfast offers a blessing to a woman in her car on John Street during Pentecost Sunday. Parishioners asked for the church to visit the local community to deliver Holy Water during the lockdown. Below, Fr Bartlett offers a blessing to Annette Daly on John Street. Photos: Ultan Naughton



Deacon Gregory McGuigan (left) and Fr Tim Bartlett writing messages of support to essential workers on a banner placed by residents of the John Street area of the Lower Falls Road in Belfast.



Fr Tim Bartlett blesses Elaine Keon on John Street.



Fr Bartlett offers a blessing to Jennifer Wilson on Hamill Street.



Fr Bartlett blesses Jackqui Magee's statue of the Holy Family during Pentecost Sunday.



Irene Leckey with her granddaughters Grace Connolly (right) and Meabh Connolly (left) help to give out Holy Water on Hamill Street in Belfast on Pentecost Sunday.

WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF CHRIST IN...

THE HOLY LAND

9 – 18 & 16 – 25
FEBRUARY 2021

PRICE:

€1685 *INCLUDING
TAXES AND TIPS

DIRECT FLIGHTS

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

Nine-night pilgrimage in four-star hotels

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

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

To reserve your place:

*Single Supplement Applies

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



MARIAN PILGRIMAGES
RENEW OUR SPIRIT OF LOVE, FORGIVENESS & PEACE

The Irish Catholic

Marian Pilgrimages is a fully licensed and
bonded tour operator TO142 - ATOL 10206

Online 'psalmathon'



A musician with a passion for psalms speaks to **Chai Brady** about the idea behind his initiative

A London-based composer and music teacher has taken to the online world to bring sacred music and hope to people in isolation during the coronavirus emergency by posting a cleverly edited video each day of himself, and sometimes others, singing a psalm.

Ben Vonberg-Clark, a choral conductor in his parish and a professional tenor, started putting the videos online in the early days of the lockdown. So far, he has posted dozens of them and plans to keep the 'psalmathon' going until the lockdown is lifted.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* he says: "I've been quite surprised, in a nice way, about the response. I was experimenting away and I thought, what shall I do? The psalms came to mind as the obvious thing, because you know they give so much hope to people."

"There's so much variety in the 150, and there's so much substance in them and it speaks to people in their own way, they can interpret them in their own way, it seems to have connected with something."

He creates the videos by making several clips of himself singing and editing them together to create a sound similar to that of a small choir.

Ben has invited others to join him and so far some of his musical friends have featured in the videos.

"I'm fairly up to date with the technological things you can do, but I hadn't really done anything like this before. I was sort of experimenting around it in the early days of the lockdown with some Apps and things," Ben says.

"I'm quite lucky...I've got quite a big range as a singer so I can sing quite a lot of the parts."

Psalmathon

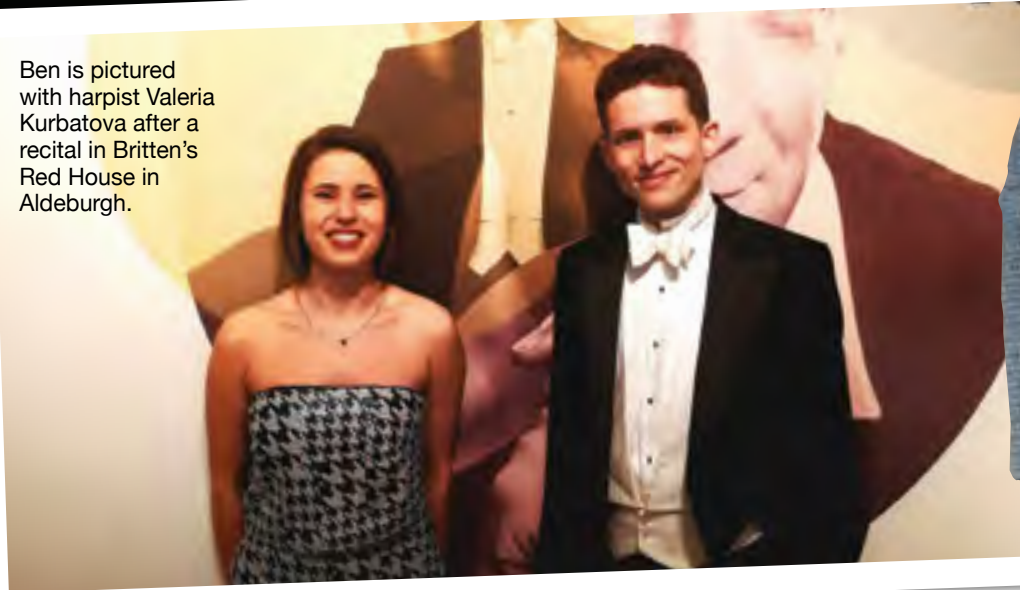
This isn't the first time Ben has done a psalmathon. Last year, when his childhood teacher who originally taught him how to sing the psalms developed oesophageal cancer, they decided a charity psalmathon would be an appropriate way to support him.

"He is obviously obsessed with psalms like a lot of people are, and a lot of musicians would say the benchmark of a good church choir is how they sing their



Ben conducts the Boys', Girls' and Teenagers' Choirs of St John the Divine Kennington. Altogether this consists of 80 children. Ben started the choirs from scratch in 2013.

Ben is pictured with harpist Valeria Kurbatova after a recital in Britten's Red House in Aldeburgh.



psalms and how together they are," he says.

"It was a very bad diagnosis and it didn't look good so we thought a way of raising money potentially for him, was to sing through 150 in a row. We did that, it took 12 and half hours and it was incredibly tiring but it was a wonderful experience actually."

The idea came to him to do a psalmathon once again on March 20, St Cuthbert's Day – a saint that Ben is very familiar with.

"I went to Durham University and we spent quite a lot of time up by Lindisfarne where St Cuthbert did all his teaching and preaching and I just remember then that he used to walk around with his students and they'd recite the psalms together," he says.

"He was in isolation a lot on an island off the island of Lisdisfarne and I just got the idea that him singing the psalms is giving him a sort of ritual and routine to help him through this and it seems to connect immediately to this [lockdown]."

"I was thinking about him and the psalms and suddenly it seemed that this is the time for the psalms, obviously they're read and chanted throughout the world every day, but the internet is so full of malicious content and unhelpful stuff, in a small way this can be something positive."

* * * * *

From the age of seven until he was 18, Ben was in a parish choir where

attendance was free. It was run by a retired schoolteacher who taught them how to sing and read music on a Friday evening.

Ben says the parish church tradition is "amazing" in the UK, but that choirs have been having trouble to keep going due to financial problems and a lot of people don't want to do it for free.

"So I was really lucky, in the right place, in my little parish church in Essex we did all this and they sent us on this wonderful summer camp to the lake district every year in a village near Penrith and you know we connected with people in parish churches all over the country and sung Evensong every year in Carlisle Cathedral, I think that really is how I got the bug," he says.

“St Cuthbert was in isolation a lot on an island off the island of Lisdisfarne and I just got the idea that him singing the psalms is giving him a sort of ritual and routine to help him through this and it seems to connect immediately to this [lockdown]”

Being part of a choir is not an "elitist" activity, Ben insists, saying that idea "really annoys me".

"The parish church stuff has been part of this country for hundreds of years and almost always it's free," he says.

He runs the choir in his parish in south London, St John the Divine in Kennington. "We've got eight new kids coming every week and it's completely free to do and we don't really select, we do auditions, but not to check quality just for commitment reasons. I just wish it was celebrated more," Ben says.

Apart from his work conducting and teaching music and singing, he has his own singing career as a tenor performing mostly 20th-Century English music.

Ben has a choral society in south London and is hoping to organise another in Colchester in September, but that depends on when the Covid-19 lockdown is lifted.

Nowadays he is doing his best to continue engaging in the music world in a digital way; adapting to the times.



gives hope during pandemic



Ben pictured with the Boys' Choir of the parish of St John the Divine Kennington, in London.

their advantage. However, like many other industries, musicians face huge obstacles and a drop – sometimes even a complete loss – of income. However, Ben does see the bright side as well.

“For me as a musician, the most tiring thing is actually just travelling around the country all the time, you're often not in your house, you don't see your wife for a couple of weeks at a time and being able to do quite a lot of work from home has its upsides,” he says.

“A lot of the big churches, they have very slick production teams so obviously they're doing really quite well out of this...”

“Because I'm teaching as well it makes it easier to do that. I've had a few people make contact; they can do it from their own house. I think this will have lasting effects on the industry, in a good way maybe, because it'll make people realise that you can do stuff online.

“If you were purely an operatic tenor and the opera houses are closed you've got real problems, so I feel for them all.”

Regarding the move to online services in churches, Ben says there has been conversations about it in his parish. Parishes across the UK and Ireland have made huge strides to improve how they reach

out to their congregation digitally, with many updating their websites more frequently or even getting webcams for their church.

Ben says that it can be a problem for some more elderly parishioners who don't use the internet, “so we're very aware of that, how we keep serving people via post and via phone calls and stuff like that”.

“But actually, there's been a huge following of our services all over the world,” he adds.

* * * * *

Part of the online outreach he says are his daily psalms. Some of the discussions have also been about how they can keep their work online going even after the lockdown, not as a replacement to the church building and physical ceremonies, but how they can incorporate their increased work online on a weekly basis.

Ben says: “We had quite a poor online presence preceding this because we were doing so much work in the community. A lot of the big churches, they have very slick production teams so obviously they're doing really quite well out of this so I think investment will have to be made by a lot of churches.

“But I think we can all help each other out, some churches don't have the resources to do this and they've just been pointing other people into links and I've been having conversations with other choir directors as to how they can



A screenshot of one of Ben's online videos.

do stuff online if they want to or if not how those of us who do know how to do it can help them out in a way. We all need to muck in together.”

The work of a church musician must continue despite the lockdown, he adds.

“Despite the challenges of living through a pandemic...Ben has hopes that there will be some light at the end of the tunnel”

Currently many countries in Europe and the world are faced with strict guidelines regarding the coronavirus in an effort to manage its spread. People are staying at home, socially isolating and practicing the hygiene requirements set out by the various governments in order to protect from infection. The coronavirus has certainly been affecting many who are concerned about their loved ones, with Ben saying it has been taking a toll on him as he fears for his wife's safety. She is working with some of the most vulnerable in society.

“It's been really hard,” he says, “my wife works around the homeless shelter, she goes into the hotels, a lot of them have guests who are homeless, so she goes in there three days a week to give them their food and give them a bit of company.

Protection

“It's a very heart-breaking time. I'm very worried about her because she doesn't really have the protection that they have in hospitals but they have a lot of Covid-19 positive people in the hotels. It's been generally a very worrying time for us in the household so I've been doing my

best as a husband – to support her really is my primary aim.”

Ben says that he feels lucky he is also able to assist people in a very practical way. He has been volunteering in his local hospice, St Christopher's Hospice in Sydenham, for quite a while.

“I've been doing the shopping for the people and giving them phone calls and stuff like that. You want to be of help as actively as possible. I find it difficult, music is a lovely thing, it's very important but it doesn't necessarily feel like you're actually literally helping people,” Ben says.

“I've found this routine, this ritual, of the psalms really quite therapeutic just for me in its own way. Obviously, I need to say the same words quite a lot of times if I'm doing four parts and you really get into the depths of it. Normally in a church you'd sing it once and it's done, the rehearsal is very quick, whereas I'm able to spend time on stuff. However, he adds: “I've had some pretty low moments I tell you, I'm sure we all have.”

Despite the challenges of living through a pandemic, which has infected more than millions of people and led to the death of almost 400,000 at the time this paper went to print, Ben has hopes that there will be some light at the end of the tunnel.

“If people can slow down, if it's possible within the remits of their work and their personal lives. Just that we all remember that you don't quite need to charge around to the degree that we did before. I think that's what the music and these psalms can offer, some stillness and some reflection,” he says.

“It's about just finding that extra element in life somehow.”

i Find out more about Ben and his work at <https://www.benvonbergclark.com/> or on Twitter: @benvonbergclark

“Some choirs have the appetite to sing still so we've been meeting every week on the Zoom conference thing and we do a full rehearsal via that medium and I teach it in the same way I would,” he says.

“Unfortunately, because of the latency problems on the connections I have to mute them so I'm essentially doing the rehearsal on my own in a room. You can see everyone joining in. There's quite a lot of creative ways you can sort of get people involved, it can be done, but obviously it's no replacement of all being in the same room together. I've done quite a lot of singing and teachings lessons in the same way.”

“Weirdly there's quite a lot more interest because I think a lot of people are quite nervous of singing and if you have to go to someone's house and sing – to them it can be quite a barrier.”

* * * * *

Ben says the current pandemic can be an opportunity for many musicians, particularly those that teach, to use the online world to



Moving worship online has led to an increase in prayer and religious practice, according to a new survey of faith leaders writes **Ruadhán Jones**

Before the pandemic began, 44% of faith communities on the island of Ireland did not provide online worship opportunities; now this figure is down to just 13%.

This is just one of the key insights of *People Still Need Us*, a new report by Queen's University Belfast.

The report was based on a survey of over 2,000 faith leaders conducted between May 6-22, with 439 usable responses.

It includes the testimony of faith leaders from a variety of denominations, including the Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland, as well as minority faiths.

The faith leaders observed surprising numbers of people tuning in for worship services and other events.

Faith

Many described “an intensification or invigoration of faith, including examples of people praying more and people who had previously demonstrated no interest in faith or religion tuning in to religious services or seeking prayer”.

While noting that 40% of people are experiencing more mental health issues, religious leaders testified to the importance of prayer and faith in overcoming these issues.

“This increase in online participation has already resulted in greater collaboration between religious leaders and lay members of their communities”

Almost 90% of respondents said that faith and/or religious practice have helped people cope with the pandemic.

“I could keep the church heated from the shrine candles alone,” wrote one Catholic priest. “If this increased devotional activity points to people seeking comfort in faith, then clearly at least some people are finding strength in their faith.”

Another priest wrote that “lots of parishioners who are not regular attenders at Mass have been contacting us via social media and saying that they are



Online faith increase brings hope of renewal

A majority of faith communities provided their members with new opportunities for online fellowship during the pandemic, including the use of Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube, etc., for activities such as prayer meetings, bible studies and youth groups.

70% of respondents agreed that they would retain aspects of their online ministries when restrictions on public gatherings are lifted.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* Dr Gladys Ganiel, who conducted the survey, said that there was a “big rush to move faith online for obvious reasons”.

“People can’t go to churches in the same way,” she said. “But it’s also partly because it’s the way people live in the modern world, people spend so much of their life online.”

Dr Ganiel believes that it’s important that churches maintain their online ministry after the pandemic is over.

Online

“If you want the church to be an evangelisation point, you have to be online. It’s important to realise an individual priest or minister can’t do this online ministry alone. There needs to be a group of volunteers who see this as their ministry, or paid staff to bring churches up to speed.”

This increase in online participation has already resulted in greater collaboration between religious

leaders and lay members of their communities, though mostly in protestant communities.

Zoom

One priest wrote in saying he had been “[w]orking through Zoom with Parish Pastoral Council members and so I have others to take responsibility with me for connecting with parishioners”.

However, the report notes that enthusiasm for online ministry was tempered by recognition of its limitations, including its potential superficiality, unequal access to the internet, and how it excludes people who lack the skills to access it.

Religious practice would need to continue with a mixture of online and in-person elements.

It is important to note then, the continued and in many cases increased levels of social care provided by faith leaders to their local communities.

“Among those providing services, 42% said their services had increased, 33% had stayed the same, and just 25% had decreased their services, demonstrating resiliency in challenging times,” the report says.

Even where leaders themselves have had to cocoon, 82% have continued to perform their ministry with the same vigour as non-cocooning ministers.

These efforts included tending to the elderly, young people and the homeless in the faith leader’s area.

Another significant area of social care was providing funeral services and counselling for the bereaved.

Dr Ganiel believes that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of faith in providing a context for grief.

“Almost 90% of respondents said that faith and/or religious practice have helped people cope with the pandemic”

“The pandemic involves a traumatic experience of death for many people,” she said, “when people are deprived of the traditional church funeral that’s even worse.”

“But it brings back religious faith as providing a context for grief at the time of death and the role of faith leaders in play in mediating the experience of death and helping people to move on after that.”

More than half of the respondents had conducted a funeral and “their replies provide a stark account of the challenges posed while following the guidelines, but also of thoughtful and at times creative pastoral care”.

One Catholic diocesan priest responded saying, he “found a terrible sadness – we could not touch family members whom we knew well or be really present to

those who suffered this terrible loss.

“The various changes made by the State bodies during the pandemic: just ten could be present, some did not receive the Sacrament of the Sick, others no funeral Mass, others not even a prayer was said at the cremation ceremony.”

Effects

The report has also highlighted the effects of the pandemic on faith leaders themselves. 46% reported increased levels of stress.

The main sources of stress were feeling guilty that they are not doing enough, conducting funerals and comforting the bereaved.

But ultimately, the report suggests that religious leaders have responded relatively well. A number of respondents noted that the pandemic has led to a greater respect for religious practice and their own ministry.

Commenting on the response from online and in his parish, one priest said he had been given “great hope for the future”.

“Knowing that having gone through the terrible years of abuse within the church globally and feeling slightly irrelevant, that the Church matters more than we fully really realised.”

Dr Ganiel believes that the survey indicates a renewal in faith:

“You don’t know how deeply people are engaging with the online content, but... when you have the surveys and leaders writing in multiple answers like that, it suggests an increased interest in religion evidenced by more people tuning in online than went to church. You can’t say it

“Many described “an intensification or invigoration of faith, including examples of people praying more and people who had

The Irish Spirit

June 4th, 2020
Issue No. 4

Where do you find God?

Discover the history of the rosary in Ireland
and how to form the parish of tomorrow.

EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT

Michael Kelly and Austen Ivereigh
on the Church and political life

AN EXCERPT FROM TRAVELLING LIGHT

Guardian Angels
Time to send for Reinforcements
by Daniel O'Leary

....and much more!

The Rosary in Ireland

From the book *Blessed Among Women*
by Peter de la Rosa

The Rosary that began during the ninth century in Irish monasteries, was never more needed than in 1540 when Henry VIII began to persecute the church in Ireland.

The local Parliament established the monarch's supremacy over the church and abolished papal rule. Religious houses were closed down, monasteries and churches fell into ruins. Many priests and lay people died professing their faith. Even invoking Mary's name made the Irish ineligible for public office or the professions.

Augustine Birrell, Britain's Chief Secretary to Ireland during the Easter Rising of 1916, wrote that the Irish 'tenacity of faith is, I believe, unexampled in the history of the whole world'. Until the reign of Queen Victoria, a Catholic in Ireland was an outcast. 'Catholics,' said Birrell, 'were robbed of their lands; they were given their choice between hell and Connacht.' But they did not yield. And their love for Mary, the Mother of the Golden Heights, helped them survive persecution.

In the early 18th century, the scaled-down Irish Penal Rosary, little more than a few beads on a string, became popular. It was a small secret sign of local rebellion against the English religion. The crucifix was hidden in the hand or slipped up the sleeve. At the end of it was a ring, and this ring was moved from the thumb to the four fingers, one after the other, in order to recite the decades of the rosary. Various symbols were etched on the rosary, a hammer for the nails of the cross, a chalice represented the Last Supper, a ladder pointed the way to heaven and so on.

The rosary continued to play a major role in the history of Ireland. In Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars*, Fluther complains about the British soldier who wanted the Irish to fight fair: 'Fight fair! A few hundred scrawls o' chaps with a couple of guns an' Rosary beads, again' a hundred thousand trained men with horse, gut, an' artillery ... an' he wants us to fight fair!'

Those were the odds during the Rising in 1916. The home-made bombs of the Volunteers threatened themselves more



Photo by Angelo Senchuke, LC / Cathopic

“The strangest and most moving appearance of the Rosary in Irish history took place the day after Michael Collins [...] was shot dead.”

than the Crown forces but they had other weapons. On the roof of the Dublin GPO, every half hour, men thumbed the Rosary with their rifle in their other hand until the Friday when the place went up in flames. They machine-gunned the enemy with Hail Marys.

On the first night of the Rising, deValera was checking up on his command around Boland's Mill when he came across his men, on their knees in the dark, reciting the Rosary. He joined them in spirit for a decade before moving on to check on the sentries further along the railway embankment. He gave the password. No reply. The sentries were praying with the others. He pointed out that sentries were not to leave their posts for any reason, not even the Rosary.

When Pearse's order of surrender was delivered to Hanlon's fish market where Clarke, Connolly and McDermott were taking refuge, the men under their command knelt down. Rifles in one hand, beads in the other, they said the Rosary. The leaders of the Rising were comforted by their beads as they awaited execution in Kilmainham Jail.

When the Rising was over and prisoners were being transported to England, the men recited the Rosary together in the locked hold. A storm blew up. Many prayed to Mary they'd sink and be drowned in preference to sea-sickness. Most were interned in Frongoch in North Wales. Whatever the routine, one thing never changed. In each hut, after the Last Post sounded at 9.30, the men knelt at the end of their beds to say the Rosary. This ritualised, almost hypnotic form of prayer was their link with home. Though it sounded like the distant sound of a cattle auction, it reminded them of their Irishness and their loved ones back home.

The strangest and most moving appearance of the Rosary in Irish history took place the day after Michael Collins, Commander-in-Chief of the Free State Army, was shot dead. The news spread quickly to Kilmainham Jail.

Tom Barry, one of the Republican prisoners, never forgot the eerie silence that settled over the jail. He chanced to look down from the corridor above. In the large ground-floor assembly area, what looked like a thousand hard-bitten Republican prisoners had fallen to their knees. And he heard the familiar drum-roll of the Rosary for the repose of the soul of Michael Collins, their enemy and their friend.



Photo by Marisaczl / Cathopic



Blessed Among Women
by Peter de la Rosa

PRICE: €14.99

☎ 01 6874096

✉ sales@columba.ie

www.columbapooks.com

or send a cheque to:
Columba Books,
23 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2, D02 XE02.

 columbaBOOKS

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

The Parish of Tomorrow

From the book *Tomorrow's Parish*
by Donal Harrington

‘Tomorrow’ flows from ‘today’. A lively awareness of where things are at today will give indications as to how tomorrow’s parish is to be shaped.

Outreach and Inreach

Tomorrow’s parish is one that appreciates the challenges of both outreach and inreach. We talk a lot about the need to reach out. But, we must think in terms of both reaching out and reaching in. We reach out to engage with people out there. We reach in to deepen our sense of who we are as a faith community. The parish can only reach out insofar as it is reaching in. There has to be a depth of inreach in order to support outreach.

Explore

Tomorrow’s parish reaches out and it reaches in. It holds a balance. But not all responses to the situation achieve this balance. Let us describe four options. One is to ignore. Another is to deplore. A third is to restore. And the final one is to explore. Each represents a different balance between outreach and inreach. There are some who are not thinking about outreach at all. They choose to

go on as before. They choose to circle the wagons, as it were. They aspire to no more than an oasis of comfort for themselves. ‘It will see us out,’ they may think. This is where people choose to ignore what is going on. Then there are those who choose to deplore. They deplore what is happening out there. They deplore the materialism in today’s world. They deplore how people have abandoned their religious practice. And they deplore what is happening within. They deplore the changes in the church. This is all they see. In both these options, to ignore or to deplore, there is little inclination to reach out. But there is no inreach either. It is complacent – ‘as you were’. The problems are seen largely to lie out there. If there were a real interest in reaching in, it would generate a desire to reach out as well. As it is, these two options are heading for slow but sure extinction. There are also those who do think about outreach, but who think that outreach on its own is enough. It is outreach without inreach. It sees only one-way traffic. It thinks simply of ‘bringing them back’ – sometimes for self-centred motives, to make ourselves feel better. It does not



Photo by Josh Sorenson / Pexels

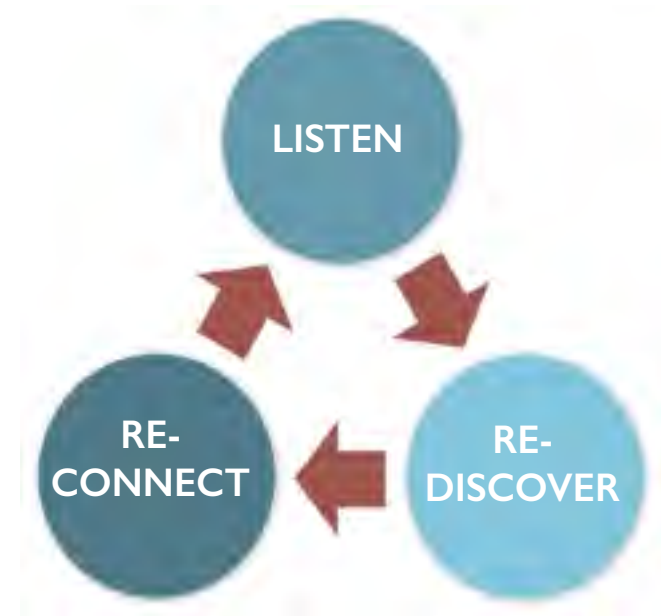
see what is spiritually rich in people’s lives out there. And it fails to ask, ‘back to what?’ It fails to see what is deficient or lifeless in here. This option naïvely wants to restore. The point is that reaching out and reaching in belong together. Tomorrow’s faith community is a place of exploration. Reaching out and reaching in explores new depths. It explores new ways of being church. It explores new ways of engaging with others out there. There is a sense of hope in this, a sense of possibility. There is a sense of the creative God. Exploring is unfamiliar. As a faith community, we are not used to having to reach out, especially in a way that is not patronising or condescending, appreciating the spiritual depth already out there without trying to proselytise. Equally, we are not used to having to reach in. We take our beliefs and roots for granted. We must challenge ourselves to engage in a deeper, newer faith.

A Two Way Process

Inreach and outreach work together in a mutual interplay. Reaching out does something to our reaching in, and reaching in does something to our reaching out. It is dynamic, and has the effect of enriching both perspectives. The diagram below is an expression of it. Listen refers to the attitude

of the faith community towards the larger community and to what is happening spiritually out there. The faith community listens in an open, appreciative spirit. It appreciates that there is something bigger than church, that God’s Spirit is active in all kinds of ways in people’s lives. The faith community allows itself to learn, to be enriched, to be challenged. Re-discover refers to the introspective illumination that listening invites. When we see the diverse ways in which people are living spiritual lives outside of the church, it gives us the possibility of understanding ourselves more clearly. We can come to a sharper, stronger sense of who we are. We can discover what we believe as if for the first time. We can gain new insight into just what we have to offer in a world that is already spiritually rich. Re-connect refers to the outreach that is built on the foundations of listening and re-discovering. It is a very different way of engaging

with people than just trying to ‘bring them back’. It respects and learns from where people are in their spiritual lives. It is filled with a new-found amazement at the Good news of the Gospel. There is now the possibility of a connection between the two – the Good news and people’s lives – that people may find creative, relevant, enriching, life-giving. ‘Faith comes from what is heard.’ It is not solely an interior thing. It is spirituality (as described in chapter two) that is interior, intrinsic to us. But Christian faith comes from without, from the other. It has to be offered in a way that is sensitive to where people are at, as well as out of a deep amazement at the Gospel. Then it can take root and grow in people’s hearts. It is an ongoing cycle, a spiral perhaps. Inreach and outreach feed off one another. An ever-richer sense of identity, of who we are, is emerging. An ever-richer relevance to people’s lives is being made possible.



columbaBOOKS

Tomorrow's Parish
by Donal Harrington

PRICE: €14.99

☎ 01 6874096 ✉ sales@columba.ie

www.columbabooks.com

or send a cheque to:
Columba Books, 23 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2, D02 XE02.

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

Where do you find God?

***Where I Find God* captures the spirituality of those living in twenty-first-century Ireland who believe in God. There is not much sign of a remote fearsome God but here is instead hope in a loving, caring God who dwells within us and all around us.**

Each believer has a unique story to tell of his or her relationship with God and the variety of stories underline that uniqueness. God's extraordinary felt presence in the ordinary and the everyday, in the joys and griefs, in the easy days and the days we cannot bear to face, is also underlined throughout. As this excerpt testifies, even the most devout believers can struggle at times to find God. Hopefully this will encourage and inspire, renew faith and lighten the spirit.



Image © Christy McNamara

Fr Peter McVerry

I do not find God anywhere; God finds me. The question for me is: 'Where do I look for God?'

Imagine a person sitting on a riverbank on a beautiful day, enjoying the sun. There is a child playing on the riverbank beside him. Suddenly the child falls into the river. The person on the river bank jumps in and rescues the child. What will the parents of that child do? Of course, they will go the hospital to assure themselves that their child is alright. But after that, what will the parents do? They will want to find that person to thank him/her for saving their child's life.

To look for God, we have to look not up into the sky, nor in our churches or mosques or synagogues, but around us: to look at the poverty, the suffering, the loneliness of those around us. That is where I have to look for God. When

I reach out to try and take some of that suffering off their shoulders, then God will come to find me, to thank me for what I have done for God's children. And when God finds me, I meet God. When I meet God, I am filled with a peace and joy which is unshakeable.

I meet God in the pain of those around me.

Fr Peter McVerry SJ has been working with vulnerable young people in Dublin for the last forty years. As a social activist Peter is a strong advocate for those who have no voice in society. He has written extensively on issues relating to young homeless people, such as accommodation, drugs, juvenile justice, the Gardaí, prisons and education, and spoken on these issues to groups around the country.



Image © Norman McCloskey

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy

I like to think of my life as a journey, a journey from God to God. But actually, there are two journeys: an outward and an inward. My outward journey was into education, work, ministry and service. That journey took me from Dingle to Dublin, to Kilkenny and back to Dublin; from home, to school, to the novitiate; and to the service of the poor; in Kilkenny Social Services, Focus Ireland, the Immigrant Council of Ireland, the Young Social Innovators and the Sanctuary. In each place I have found God, especially in the poor, vulnerable and marginalised people I encountered on my journey.

The second journey is an inward journey. That is the journey into my true self, the I am, the God within me and around me; that is my journey into prayer and meditation and towards my ultimate home in God. These two journeys are of course closely intertwined. They interact with and affect each other all the time. And so it is that when I come to describe the inward journey of the soul, I begin always from my involvement with the poor. The poor are, and have been, a source of life and healing to me every day of my life. As I walk with them, I have begun to understand better Jesus' relationship with the poor of his time. He said 'Blessed are the poor in spirit', and his whole life demonstrates his

love for the poor and his belief that those who were rejected by society are blessed.

Throughout my life, God has also spoken to me through my weakness. Through the cracks in my life, when I was open to it, God's radiance shone. Life taught this to me: the more I surrendered, the more I was able to let go of false images of myself, and see and accept myself as I really was: vulnerable, weak, afraid, anxious. And once I began to accept this, I began also to realise that God wanted to meet me there, in my brokenness, and that I could only really let God in through those broken parts of me. This was not something I could have done by myself; it only happens when I let God take over. And that is how it is that the radiance of God lights my way and leads me safely down the road home.

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy, 'Sr Stan', is a well-known social campaigner and founder of a number of voluntary organisations, including Focus Ireland, the Immigrant Council of Ireland, Young Social Innovators and the Sanctuary. She has received numerous awards and tributes in Ireland and elsewhere for her outstanding work for the marginalised in society. She is the author of several bestselling books, including To Live from the Heart, Seasons of Hope, Day by Day, The Road Home and Moments of Stillness.

Brent Pope

I was always aware of God and spirituality in my life. I know that sounds like a ridiculous thing to say, but religion played such an important part in my upbringing. With a surname like Pope I guess I had to be Catholic, huh? My father Mick was head of the local parish council for many years, and religion remains a huge part of who he is; even to this day Dad and Mum both have an amazing faith. For me it's not about one specific religion, despite being brought up a strict Catholic, and it's not about attending church every week either; to me it's about what I believe to be God's greatest message: 'That you always treat others as you would have them treat you.' I try to embrace that message every day.

I would like to think that God and God's children consider me a kind, empathetic person, that in my time on this world I am making a difference to someone else's life too. In that regard my charity work is a huge part of who I am as well; maybe in the end that is God's purpose for me. I still believe that my God is watching over me every

day, guiding me. Nobody is perfect and we all slip up – after all, to err is human – but if we try and live our lives as kind, thoughtful, caring people, then in my mind at least that is what God wants from me, whatever religion, faith, or beliefs I have.

I also find God in nature and children, in the beauty and purity of a young child's laughter; in the buzzing of the bees and the colours of the seasons. God is nature, God is innocence. Today we live in a hustle-and-bustle world: everything is about change. People need to slow down and take stock of what is really important in this world, like the beautiful planet that God created, that some are intent on destroying, and the beautiful creatures and people that inhabit it. At least that is where I find 'my God'.

Brent Pope is a New Zealand-born rugby player, professional rugby coach, and one of Ireland's best known and most respected media personalities. Brent has been prominent as one of RTE's main rugby pundits since 1993. He is also a children's book author and a charity worker.



Image © Norman McCloskey



Image © Norman McCloskey

Tommy Fleming

I suppose you could say the easy answer to this is 'God is everywhere'. To explain a little more, this is my opinion, and to fully explain you must also understand that I wouldn't consider myself to be overly religious in any way. But I do believe there is good and evil and sometimes in this complex world of ours these get mixed up and cause disruption to our daily lives and understanding. When I say God is everywhere I believe God is in nature with the bursting of life that spring brings; it can brighten your mood and offer peace and well-being. This is God. I believe God is in humanity and compassion, when you see reactions to natural disasters across the world and the generosity of people with their time, donations and all types of

help that humanity offers to others. Kindness in others is one of the finest examples of where God is. It carries across all communities worldwide and, from the smallest gesture of goodwill to the sacrifice of some for the benefit of others, this is where I see God. Kindness is not limited to humans, and to me the return of unconditional love from animals is one of the biggest influences on when we find God.

*Tommy Fleming is one of Ireland's finest solo singers, with a hugely successful international singing career. On 30 March 2012, Tommy lost both his parents, a tragedy that inspired both his autobiography and the recording of the album *Begin*, which Tommy describes as the most 'cathartic work he has ever done and a fitting and personal tribute to his beloved Mother and Father'.*



Where I find God
by Cora Guinnane & Joanne O'Brien
PRICE: €24.99

☎ 01 6874096 ✉ sales@columba.ie www.columbabooks.com
or send a cheque to: Columba Books, 23 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2, D02 XE02.

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

**DO YOU HAVE A SPECIAL PLACE
WHERE YOU FIND GOD?
WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.**

Send a brief text of up to 100 words describing your inspiration, along with a photo to editorial@columba.ie and you could feature in the June 25 edition of *The Irish Spirit*. Deadline for submission is Monday, June 15.

Tense Twins: The Church and Political Life

Exclusive Excerpt from *How to Defend the Faith Without Raising Your Voice*
by Michael Kelly and Austen Ivereigh

It is common to hear that religion and politics should be kept apart. But what is meant by 'religion'? The contemporary meaning of the word 'religion' came into being along with the ideology underpinning modern Western democracies that seeks to separate private and public, religious and secular. In *The Myth of Religious Violence*, William T. Cavanaugh shows that the idea that 'religion' should have nothing to do with 'rational' spheres such as economics and politics is "one of the foundational legitimising myths of the liberal nation-state".

The attempt to drive religion out of politics does not have a happy history. The greatest horrors of the twentieth century were inflicted by totalitarian states among whose first moves was the abolition of faith from the public sphere and the subordination of religion to the state, justified by an ideology that interprets the 'will of the people' as a license for unchecked, unlimited power. Among the first moves of communist and many fascist regimes was to abolish any legal recognition of God and to impose compulsory atheism classes; religion pointed to a power and authority beyond state control and therefore implied limits to the state.

Conversely, some of the proudest moments of Western political history — the abolition of the slave trade, for example, or the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s — are uplifting examples of what happens when religion enters politics. The greatest achievements in Western history are products of a civilisation in

which Church and state cooperate, and reason and faith are in dialogue. In Northern Ireland, when the atmosphere was too toxic to allow politicians to speak across the sectarian divide, courageous clergy and laity from different Christian denominations worked together on ecumenical programmes and began to build bridges which laid foundations for the peace process.

Religious freedom underpins democracy and pluralism. True democracy allows religion a voice in the public sphere. When critics resent the Church for 'interfering' or for 'playing politics,' it usually means they disagree with the Church's position rather than its decision to speak out. The same critic will usually say nothing when the Church has intervened politically on a matter with which they agree. Some accuse the Church of being reactionary or right-wing for opposing 'women's rights' (in arguing against abortion laws) or 'gay rights' (when it opposes, say, same-sex adoption), or of being left-wing in advocating a right to housing or an end to direct provision for asylum seekers, opposing the death penalty, or criticising a model of economic growth that puts money before people.

In short, people are against the Church 'interfering' in what they would much rather be left alone; and in favour of 'interfering' in what they believe should be changed. So, when should the Church speak out on political matters?

When to Speak and When to Stay Silent

When should the Church speak? The answer is rarely and cautiously,

and almost always because it is a matter that touches on questions of human dignity, on core freedoms and rights (such as the right to life or to religious freedom), or on basic principles of Catholic social teaching, which is the fruit of the Church's ethical reflections on what makes for human flourishing. In these cases, the Church not only needs to speak out; it has a duty to do so.

When it speaks, the Church typically prefers to lay down broad ethical principles rather than attacking particular policies or parties, leaving those involved to argue about the application of the principles. The bishops might tell you, for example, that people have a right to a dignified standard of living that persons who are unemployed deserve to be treated with respect. They will also say that the state has finite resources and people ought to be encouraged to play a fuller role in society by taking up employment if they can. What social welfare policy flows from these principles? Bishops might get involved in that question, but generally they leave it to politicians to debate and work out.

The Church promotes active citizenship and political engagement. Church leaders tell Catholics to get out and vote, and to be involved. Catholics are simultaneously members of the Church and citizens who obey the law and work for the good of the nation wherever they are, whatever regime they are under. This 'dual citizenship' is not a divided loyalty, for there is no contradiction, but it does produce a healthy tension.

Living in the world while looking to a transcendent horizon is one reason why Catholics are unusually active in politics in countries where they are not a majority.

The Church typically doesn't tell Catholics who to vote for, but rather what they believe Catholics should be concerned about in any given election. The Church is not partisan; it does not favour one political party over another. Nor does it blow with the wind; it starts from deep-seated principles that stand true in spite of changing times. It is the bishops' task to articulate Catholic teaching on behalf of Catholic voters in the language of reason, and the voters' task to challenge candidates to respond to them; and then to decide, in conscience, how to vote.

In a modern democracy, the Church has a right to speak out for the same reason any other civil-society association or organisation does — a natural right to proclaim and promote its values, and to persuade others of these values; to get a debate going about the health of society and its priorities, applying the wisdom and insights of the Christian tradition to the great questions besetting contemporary society. The

Church does this because it cares, above all, for the 'common good,' described by the Catechism of the Catholic Church as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily". The common good is a key tenet of the Church's vision for society and the principles which it believes lie behind its healthy functioning.

The Church in Ireland

When the Church raises its voice in Irish domestic affairs, it does so by virtue of its moral authority, its independent sovereign jurisdiction, and its strong presence in Irish civil society. In the Republic, Catholicism is the religious affiliation of the overwhelming majority of citizens. North of the border, Catholicism is fast approaching 50% of the population. Catholics attend and run 1,360 parishes across the island that are often the focal point for the local community. Parishes respond to the needs of the community in ways as diverse as parent and toddler groups, day care for the elderly, hot meals for those experiencing homelessness,





food banks for those in need and as hosts for organisations like Alcoholics Anonymous. In challenging communities, parishes and religious organisations have pioneered initiatives like breakfast clubs for children and after-school spaces where children can complete their homework in a calm and safe environment. Parishes run youth clubs and other activities to ensure that young people have somewhere to escape from hanging around on street corners at the lure of criminal gangs.

Catholics reach out to the poorest and most vulnerable irrespective of their beliefs. Catholic charitable action is not proselytising or trying to convert people: as Pope Benedict XVI wrote in *Deus Caritas Est*, “Those who practise charity in the Church’s name will never seek to impose the Church’s faith upon others.” As many Catholics say, “We care for the poor not because they are Catholics but because we are.” That doesn’t make Catholic charitable action independent of faith; there is no greater witness to Christ’s love than to serve the poor both through practical, direct assistance and through advocacy on their

behalf. Before either can happen, the needs of the poor must first be ‘sensed’: Christianity has from its beginning been acutely tuned to human need.

The reality of Christian mission in today’s parishes is a story of thousands of quiet kindnesses. In many of the most disadvantaged communities it is the Church and faith-based organisations that provide warmth, food, friendship and support for individuals who have fallen on the worst of times: the homeless, those in the grip of alcoholism or drug addiction, individuals with undiagnosed mental health problems, and those overwhelmed by multiple crises. Churches provide debt counselling, English language lessons for migrants, emergency accommodation, and, sometimes most important of all, someone to listen.

Catholic charities often do what no one else does, blazing a trail others later follow — out on the edge with those on the edge. There are countless examples of charitable outreach pioneered by Catholics that over time became ‘mainstream’ charitable activities; hospices caring for the terminally ill are a prime example. Others

“The Church has a natural right to speak out derived from its moral authority and its presence in society.”

remain preserves of the Church. No organisation compares with the Apostleship of the Sea, which provides support and assistance to hundreds of thousands of seafarers visiting ports each year.

Finally, Catholics are guided by a coherent set of principles, embodied in Catholic social teaching, which in turn enrich Irish social and political thinking and strengthen civil society. Through nationwide organisations, Catholic charities advocate on behalf of those they serve, influencing policy decisions and helping to shape laws that serve the interests of the poor.

The Irish Bishops’ Conference — headquartered at Maynooth — works to develop links between the Church and legislators and officials. Those links not only help relations between Church and state, but also provide a much-needed channel of communication between civil society and government. Because the Church is present among the poorest and most vulnerable in society, it can be their voice in the corridors of power; calling for a living wage and focusing public attention on joblessness and poverty.

What the Church Stands For

When Catholics vote or become politically active, their priorities and concerns will differ, along with their loyalties and their affiliations. But there are key principles on which all Catholics should agree because they have been consistently taught by the Church since 1891 when Pope Leo XIII issued the first ‘social encyclical’ of modern times: *Rerum Novarum*. Since then, there have been many more encyclicals — the latest are Pope Benedict XVI’s 2007 *Caritas in Veritate* and Pope Francis’ 2015 *Laudato Si’* — along with many other Church documents expanding on and applying these principles to contemporary challenges.

These principles are captured in a body of teaching known as Catholic Social Teaching (CST). It offers a set of principles for reflection, criteria for judgment, and directives for action. Its purpose is to contribute to the formation of conscience as a basis for specific action. It amounts, in effect, to a Catholic vision of politics, society, and the economy.

EXISTING FRAME

The Catholic Church uses its power and influence to advance a reactionary agenda designed to frustrate progress in human rights and liberties. Bishops tell people how to vote and threaten politicians with excommunication when they don’t do the Pope’s bidding. The Church is essentially right-wing, seeking to impose outdated views on a secular state and on people who have no Christian allegiance.

REFRAME

The Church raises its voice in the public sphere whenever an issue touches on the common good, often on questions of basic freedoms and rights, and especially when it can be a voice for the voiceless. Its authority to speak out derives from its moral authority and independence as one of the world’s leading and oldest civil society organisations. It is neither right- nor left-wing, and has no allegiance to particular political parties, but exists to defend the common good and the Gospel in its integrity. It defends, and speaks up for, a distinction between the political and the religious; it

upholds what it calls a ‘positive secularity,’ and deplores both religious fundamentalism and an aggressive kind of secularism that seeks to banish faith from the public sphere. The Catholic Church’s political agenda can be summed up as Catholic social teaching plus religious freedom, the freedom that underpins all other rights and freedoms.

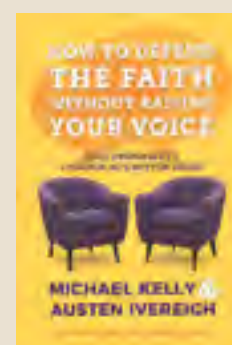
KEY MESSAGES

The Church has a natural right to speak out derived from its moral authority and its presence in society.

The Church advocates religious freedom and the proper distinction between faith and politics. At the same time, it calls for the political and the religious to be in dialogue, not separated.

Bishops do not speak out before elections to persuade Catholics to vote one way or another; they identify the issues they think Catholics should be concerned about and that voters should be asking the candidates to address. Nor do they put pressure on politicians to vote this or that way by refusing them Communion.

The Catholic Church’s political agenda can be summed up in Catholic social teaching and religious freedom. It is an agenda that is the bedrock of freedom and civilisation, and is a key contribution in contemporary Western society to creating a society of human flourishing that recognises the God-given rights and the dignity of all people.



**How to Defend the Faith
Without Raising Your Voice**
by Michael Kelly and Austen Ivereigh

PRICE: €14.99

☎ 01 6874096 | ✉ sales@columba.ie

www.columbabooks.com

or send a cheque to:

Columba Books, 23 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2, D02 XE02.

 **columba**BOOKS

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS

The False Guide

From the book *The Healing Habit*
by Daniel O'Leary

The mind is, of course, powerfully spiritual. Your beautiful mind, when fired by a loving trust, can transform your life at many levels. But your precious mind, when driven by greed, revenge, resentment or a burning sense of injustice, can wreak havoc on your inner peace and presence. And this virus touches all those around you, even the world itself. What you do not transform you transmit.

Notice also your strange compulsion to stray away from the safe path, to resist your true voice, to drift towards the negative, the closed, the deadly repetition of the same damaging thoughts and feelings. Deep in everyone's thinking there is a drive, a fatal attraction towards anxiety, towards giving up, becoming a victim of worry, or maybe towards getting even, being resentful, envious or judgemental. We usually keep this mental suffering well hidden from others. Most of our minds are more fragile and vulnerable than we let on.

These fatal forces are strong and persistent. They have been called the 'demons of the mind'. You may agree with those who describe them as addictions: those sinister patterns of thinking that bring so much misery and grief. Sometimes you feel powerless in their grip. For so many there is a kind of deadly attraction to their own flawed way of thinking and consequent feeling. They feel trapped in this condition, victims unable to escape.

Negative and anxious or fearful thinking devours our creative energy. It steals our strength and lessens our purpose and power. There is a worry-fatigue that eats into the resolve we need to grow and flourish throughout each day: a virus that infects the vibrant life of our imagination and beckoning dreams.

This is the false mind at work. The false mind is an illusion. It is not the truth. It is a relentless treadmill of confusion. It holds you captive, preventing you from experiencing a new freedom from your anxious, self-protecting ego. That is why here, we have emphasised that, beyond sporadic efforts and programmes, useful as they may be, a more profound and deeper sense of the spiritual is needed for those apps and courses to work, for your courageous efforts to bear fruit, for the healing to happen.



The Happiness Habit



The Healing Habit



The Heavenly Habit

by Daniel O'Leary

Price: €12.99 Each | Buy All Three for €30

☎ 01 6874096 ✉ sales@columba.ie

www.columbabooks.com

or send a cheque to: Columba Books, 23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, D02 XE02.

Send for reinforcements

When we find ourselves in trouble or struggling with external anxieties, our guardian angels are there to support us.

From the book *Travelling Light* by Daniel O'Leary



When we were children, having been beaten in a fight, or if the odds seemed too great, we would call on, or threaten the opposition with our fathers. (In actual fact, I have seen nobody to put the fear of God into even the biggest of bullies as the impassioned mother!) In all walks of life, both in professional and personal affairs, we look for help, we send for reinforcements, we call up the reserves. Even Jesus, in his final and most intense crisis, was well aware of the legions of angels waiting for his signal. This passage is about our guardian angels. Do you remember our sometimes perfunctory morning commitment to our invisible and holy minder? We were probably closer to them then than now.

*Angel of God, my guardian dear,
To whom God's love commits me here,
Ever this day, be at my side,
To teach and guard, to rule and guide.*

Almost everyone will have had a mysterious, unexplained occurrence in the course of life. The lucky escapes, however, the unexplained little miracles, the sudden rescue against all the odds and a hundred other unusual moments that most people write off as coincidences or fortunate chance, others thank their angels for. Dismissed with the rosary, benediction and Gregorian chant, we are now witnessing a rather shamefaced reclaiming of these gifts and so many other lost graces since the Vatican Council of the sixties. Guardian Angels were among the casualties. But now they are well and truly restored.

As many people are becoming more comfortable with an increasingly spiritual and mystical dimension to life, accepting

the possibilities of holy presences everywhere (as the old and new Catholic catechisms of the faith assure us), there is an immense belief springing up in the old teaching of a divinely-designated angel, appointed to take care of each one of us, all our lives long. Her task is to guard and guide us, to advise and warn us, to anticipate the dangers in our path. Sometimes we may have more than one. A very wise man in Dublin once told me that I had seven. One of them is the guardian angel of all my relationships (who is, incidentally, severely overworked!)

This is about the divine and delightful spiritual guide at our disposal every minute of the day. It is about pausing for a brief chat, a moment to ask for help, maybe to scream for it, a turning aside in private intimacy, as one might do with a tried and trusted friend. Our spiritual self has a natural affinity with angels. Many searchers are finding a new voice with which to address their heavenly companions. As with our dreams, our angels wait to be called in and called up. They will then lead us to the Holy One in the sanctuary of our souls. In this place, the external anxieties and confusions of our lives are seen in their true colours and in perspective. They become manageable.

There is a whole, beautiful world within and around the one we live in. The time and place environment we daily inhabit is, if we could but truly see, teeming with a life of energy and with astonishing beings of compassion. Do not be afraid to think in this way, to imagine such a space within and around you, and to live in it. We are surrounded by cynics who ridicule this kind of imagery and conviction. Because they often speak

with the voice of ecclesiastical 'clout' or medical authority, they keep many needy ones from exploring, and being nurtured by, the very powerful resources and storehouses of nourishment provided for them by a compassionate Parent. Such dismissive critics are often only acting out of their own ignorance, fears and poverty of imagination.

Along with the words of the Deer's Cry (already mentioned above and also known as St Patrick's Breastplate) where the 'mighty strength of the love, obedience and service of the Cherubim, angels and archangels' is invoked at the beginning of each new day, I love to remember this verse, by John Bate, whenever I'm frightened:

*You feel that dangers hold you tight;
remember, nature guards you well.
The way you are is shield all right
from horrors heaped up out of sight.
Be sure that nature guards you well;
trembling within, without so bright,
don't doubt there was a saving spell
cast at your birth for your delight;
your very nature guards you well.*

With typical brevity, Shunryu Suzuki, in his book *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, about Right Attitude in Zen meditation, writes, 'The point we emphasise is strong confidence in our original nature'. This confidence in original blessing is not always obvious in the emphases of other religions and of most Christian denominations. In *Sitting by the Well*, Marion Woodman teaches that 'We are moving into a new paradigm, leaving the old structures behind. Where do we go for guidance? I suggest to you that we have no place but our own well. We all have this well inside. We must drink or die.'

Read more inspiring stories like this one by buying the book *Travelling Light* by Daniel O'Leary from Columba Books by phoning 01 6874096 or visiting www.columbabooks.com. Price: €14.99

FREE POSTAGE ON ALL ORDERS



Letter from America



Is the Church Donald's trump election card?



Christopher White

Twice during the month of April, the US President held conference calls with faith leaders – the first was a mix of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and the second, specifically for Catholics in a call that swelled to include some 600 participants, ostensibly to discuss the future of Catholic schools navigating an uncertain future due to the global pandemic.

Yet the call quickly devolved into a pep rally, with the president soliciting support for his re-election efforts. I obtained an audio recording of the meeting and over the course of the hour long call, the president wasn't shy about ticking off what he views to be serious wins for the Catholic Church: two new justices to the Supreme Court whom he believes will eventually overturn Roe vs Wade, his in-person appearance at the March for Life last January, and his support of school choice programmes allowing parents to redirect their tax dollars in the form of tuition credits to Catholic and other private schools.

Remember this come November,

Donald Trump is the best president in the history of the United States...or at least that's what he told Catholic leaders on a conference call recently...

he told Catholic leaders, warning what "the other side" would do if he's not elected, before making the grandiose claim that no other president has been such an ally to the Catholic Church.

On the call were a handful of US bishops, and the remarks of Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York have garnered the most attention. Dolan, who lives just down the street from Trump Tower, is the only US prelate that the president has any real personal connection to and he's effectively serving as the primary liaison between the White House and the US Catholic Church.

Cardinal Dolan, a naturally gregarious figure, praised the president for his leadership during the crisis – a claim that polling data suggests most Americans would take issue with these days.

No serious Catholic commentator would say that the US bishops have no business being on such a call and that with declining enrolment and bleak economic prospects, the US bishops should take every opportunity they have to shore up support for Catholic schools, which are set to take a huge hit next academic school year.

Real wins

Yet what's divided many Catholics about this call is what some see as an unseemly chumminess with a president – who while delivering real wins for the tradition pro-life movement has been hypocritical in those commitments through his divisive rhetoric toward migrants, his cruel policies of family separation at the US-Mexico border, and his indifference toward

the rise of white nationalism.

Many Catholics fear that the president's co-opting of a phone call meant to be a working discussion about education and to turn it into a campaign pitch was inappropriate and that the US bishops shouldn't have hesitated to say so.

I've opined before in this column about the tightrope act that US Catholic leaders will face over the next six months as Donald Trump squares off against former vice-president Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee. 'Faithful Citizenship', the official voting guidelines written by the US bishops, cautions that "we bishops do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against

whom to vote. Our purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God's truth.

"We recognise that the responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election," they continue.

Indeed. But when bishops sit on phone calls with the president of the US and say "we need you more than ever", they should be reminded of their own wisdom in 'Faithful Citizenship'.

Affiliation

After facing backlash for his remarks, Cardinal Dolan defended himself saying he's following in the path of Pope Francis and merely engaging in bridge-building.

He went on to add that the US bishops have to work with whomever is in office, regardless of political affiliation and then cited the Italian expression that "you make gnocchi with the dough you have".

Agreed. But when one is in the environs of a messy, chaotic kitchen, one also has to be careful of not getting burnt, as well.

“After facing backlash for his remarks, Cardinal Dolan defended himself saying he's following in the path of Pope Francis and merely engaging in bridge-building”



Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

Christopher White is the national correspondent for Crux and the Tablet newspaper of the diocese of Brooklyn. Follow him on Twitter @CWWhite212.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Indian Catholics reject politician's 'baseless' conversion claim

● Church leaders and activists have rejected a claim by a member of parliament from India's Andhra Pradesh alleging that Christian missionaries use money for religious conversion.

Raghu Ramkrishna Raju claimed in a television debate last week that Christian missionaries are pumping large sums of money to carry out widespread conversions in the state.

"The Catholic Church does not promote or propagate religious conversion as claimed by the minister," said Fr Anthoniraj Thumma, executive secretary of the Federation of Telugu Churches.

"It is a baseless and misleading claim and there is no truth to it."

Malawi bishops seek improved services for June elections

● The Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) has called on the government to make changes to the country's public service system ahead of the June 23 presidential elections.

In a pastoral letter to the Church in Malawi last week, the bishops said the country suffers from an under-resourced health system, lack of funding in education and lack of unity.

"For a long time we have not put enough resources into the system and what has been put in has been misused," read their statement.

"The biggest victims of these evils are the poor and vulnerable people."

Filipino De La Salle Brother awarded Amnesty prize

● Amnesty International Philippines has bestowed a human rights defender award on De La Salle Brother Armin Luistro for his work in promoting the rights of vulnerable people.

Bro. Luistro, a former secretary of education during the administration of Benigno 'Noy' Aquino and current De La Salle University

president, was awarded the prize for his dedication in fighting for the people's right to an education, the rights group said.

The awards are aimed at inspiring more Filipinos who are struggling against injustice to continue fighting for human rights in the country.

Timor-Leste churches resume daily Masses

● Timor-Leste has officially reopened churches for daily Eucharistic celebrations after the country's Covid-19 taskforce reported no new coronavirus cases in the past fortnight.

The government, however, still remains cautious and Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak has extended the nation's state of emergency to June 26.

"Churches are open only for Masses," said the country's bishops in a statement last week.

"Parish priests and parish councils must ensure the faithful wash their hands, wear masks and keep their distance inside churches."

Fr Emanuel Lelo Talok, parish priest at St Joseph Church in Dili, said: "We pray [sic] that the pandemic will end soon."

Mozambique bishops denounce Cabo Delgado war

● The Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Nampula in the north Mozambique have denounced the violence of jihadist groups in the region.

In a statement, they said the war, which started in October 2017, is spreading and bringing many forms of violence causing great suffering.

"We want to express our closeness and solidarity with all citizens in Cabo Delgado and encourage them to never lose courage and hope in better times," read the statement.

"The Risen Christ and winner of the forces of sin and death, assures us that hatred, destruction and death do not have the last word, but the victory of life, justice and love."

Racism is a 'virus of the spirit' says Vatican official

The President of the Pontifical Academy for Life has condemned racism as a "cultural virus" which has spread throughout the world and must be eradicated.

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia was commenting on the death of George Floyd, while in police custody in Minneapolis and the subsequent protests throughout the US.

"I would compare [racism] to Covid-19," said the Italian archbishop, "but it is a virus of the spirit, a cultural virus that, if not isolated, spreads quickly."

The late Mr Floyd, 46, was arrested by police on suspicion of forgery. Once he was handcuffed, a white police officer pinned him down on the street and put his knee on Mr Floyd's neck for eight minutes.

Video

A widely-circulated video shows Mr Floyd repeatedly saying "I can't breathe" as he appears to lose consciousness and was later declared dead at a hospital.

Responding to the tragedy, Archbishop Paglia says that racism can only be defeated by people caring for each



A protestor in Texas holds aloft a skateboard with the phrase 'Please, I can't breathe' after the killing of George Floyd by police in Minnesota.

other. "Today we must start a revolution of brotherhood," he said.

"We are all brothers and sisters. Brotherhood is a promise that is lacking in modern times.

"In my opinion, the true strength that supports us in our weakness is brotherhood and solidarity. And just as it defeats the coronavirus, it also defeats racism.

"The fight against racism," he added, "[is done] not with

violence but in the style of Martin Luther King Jr: with words, with culture, with faith, with humanism. It is fought the same way we fight against the coronavirus.

"It's not enough to remain silent," he continued.

"To prevent the virus of racism from multiplying, those [who oppose racism] must also multiply."

Archbishop Paglia said he believed Pope Francis should consider writing a document

that addresses the subject of racism, a problem that exists "all over the world".

He also noted that the Pope's 2019 letter marking the 25th anniversary of the Pontifical Academy for Life reflects on many of the same divisions that exist in the world today.

Trust

In the letter, titled 'The Human Community', the Holy Father said the sense of fraternity between people and nations has been weakened by the erosion of mutual trust and "remains the unkept promise of modernity".

Pope Francis wrote: "Mutual distrust between individuals and peoples is being fed by an inordinate pursuit of self-interest and intense competition that can even turn violent."

Members of the US bishops' conference said the incident is a "wake-up call" and the issue of racism needs to be addressed by each of us in a "spirit of determined conversion".

They stated: "Racism is not a thing of the past [sic] it is a real and present danger that must be met head on."

Mexican state passes legislation to 'respect life' in schools

A state in Mexico has passed legislation which requires students to receive education supportive of respect for all human life. The new education reform bill of the northern state of Nuevo Leon is meant to foster a "respect for life from conception to natural death" in students.

Nuevo Leon's constitution "recognises, protects and defends the right to life that every human being has. From the moment of conception that life comes under the protection of the Law and is considered as having been born with regards to all corresponding legal effects until its natural death."

"The initiative to recognise the right to life in education will help young people, adolescents and children learn to appreciate human life," said Marcial Padilla, director of the ConParticipación platform.

Addictions

Mr Padilla added he is hopeful the reform bill would "reduce suicide rates, reduce addictions and will also help young people understand that abortion is not an option".

Above all, he said that students "will be able to know that abortion is always an attack on human life".

Fr José Manuel Suazo Reyes, director

of the communications office of the Archdiocese of Xalapa, also expressed satisfaction with the law.

"Mexico continues to cry out that it loves and wants life, and that abortion is not the solution," he said.

"It's important for the state to protect life," added Fr Suazo, "but it is also essential that it form citizens in respect and care for life.

"This reform creates awareness in students of the dignity that every human life has, thus contributing to the reduction of discriminatory, aggressive and even criminal behaviour, as is the case with abortion."

Indonesia archdiocese extends lockdown indefinitely

The Jakarta Archdiocese has extended its Covid-19 emergency period for a second and indefinite time as the Indonesian government prepares to introduce new measures.

The extension from June 1 was taken by the archdiocese a few days after Jakarta

authorities decided to extend lockdowns in the capital until June 4 to curb rising Covid-19 cases. "All Sunday and daily Masses, Novena and other prayers will be livestreamed on YouTube, or broadcast on television where possible," said Fr Samuel Pangestu, the

archdiocese's vicar-general.

"All religious and pastoral activities such as Masses for neighborhood communities and meetings are cancelled."

Similarly, Bogor Diocese in West Java province has extended its Covid-19 emergency period to June 13.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo has said he will deploy 340,000 troops to enforce social distancing as the government looks to ease lockdowns.

Areas where the virus has been brought under control will be allowed to reopen.



Edited by Aron Hegarty
aron@irishcatholic.ie

Colombia's poor have a new torment



Venezuelan migrant Alejandro Romero and his partner Erica outside Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Bogota. Migrants have been hit hard economically by Colombia's Covid-19 lockdown as they lose their jobs and struggle to pay rent. Photo: CNS

Hong Kong cardinal fears new China laws endanger religious freedom

Cardinal Joseph Zen says changes to Hong Kong's status in China could threaten the religious freedom of Catholics in the region.

The legislature of China approved a resolution to impose new "security laws" on its formerly autonomous region Hong Kong on May 28.

Cardinal Zen, Bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, worries that the new laws will be used to subvert the freedom of religion that the region currently enjoys.

"We have nothing good to hope for," he said. "Hong Kong is completely under [China's] control. We depend on China even for our food and water. But we put ourselves in the hands of God."

China had announced on May 21 a plan to enact so-called "security laws" affecting Hong Kong.

Chinese officials in Beijing said

that the National People's Congress (NPC), the country's legislature, would sidestep Hong Kong's legislature and impose changes on the region.

After the May 28 vote, which passed 2,878 to 1, Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam expressed her support for the new measures.

Resolution

The resolution did not specify a timeline for Beijing to implement the new measures, though some lawmakers anticipate that detailed measures will be revealed in the next few months.

Although Cardinal Zen believes many in the Catholic community in Hong Kong oppose China's actions, he worries these new laws could allow Chinese security forces to operate in the city.

He is also concerned that the Vatican

will appoint a new bishop, sympathetic to Beijing, who may not be as insistent on democratic values.

"I think the majority [sic] think that the authority is wrong," said Cardinal Zen.

"We rely on help from heaven [sic] from the human perspective, we have nothing to hope [for]."

"There is no more 'one country, two systems'. [China] didn't dare to say it in those exact words, but the fact is there. Now, with the [legislation], they will legitimise all that they are doing.

"We (Hong Kong Catholics) are not against having a law," he continued, "but we want it to be well formulated because the law they were presenting was against all our freedoms.

"We would not accept any law made by a government that does not represent the people."

Philippines Church takes in thousands fleeing Mindanao shelling

The Church in the Philippines has opened its doors to help thousands of refugees who fled clashes that erupted in Mindanao during the Muslim festival of Eid al-Fitr.

More than 6,000 people fled their homes when armed militants launched concerted attacks on army units, hitting three villages in Maguindanao province with mortar fire.

According to local media reports, mortar shells began raining down on the villages of Daplawan, Elian and Kitango, killing two children.

Fr Clifford Baira, director of Cotabato Archdiocese's Social Action Program for Peace and Justice, said the evacuees were occupying several schools and churches in the province and receiving

help from the Church's social action arm group Caritas.

"We are feeding thousands of evacuees now, both Christian and Muslims. Religion is not the issue now but the safety of all Filipinos," he said.

"May those responsible show some mercy. Please, we are suffering enough as a nation. Let us set violence aside."

Bishop Arturo M. Bastes of Sorsogon called the attacks a heinous assault and an "inhuman act of murder in the midst of a pandemic that has caused so much suffering".

Authorities believe the attack was launched by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), a radical group fighting for an independent state of Mindanao.

Vatican roundup

Pope advances new decrees for Causes of Saints

● Pope Francis has advanced the causes for canonisation of 12 holy men and women by authorising the publication of decrees recognising various miracles. The Holy Father also extended this action last week to the martyrdom of a missionary in El Salvador and a group of Cistercian monks.

The Congregation for the Causes of the Saints recognised miracles attributed to the intercession of Venerable Fr Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus, and Venerable Pauline-Marie Jaricot, foundress of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Living Rosary Association.

Miracles were also attributed to three Blessed: Charles de Foucauld, Cesare de Bus and Maria Domenica Mantovani.

The Congregation also determined that Franciscan priest Fr Cosma Spessotto was killed in *odium fidei*, that is, out of hatred of the Faith. Fr Cosma was a missionary in El Salvador who was martyred in 1980.

Finally, the Congregation recognised the martyrdom of six Cistercian monks who were killed as they tried to safeguard the Eucharist when their abbey was attacked by French soldiers during the Napoleonic wars.

The decrees on martyrdom will allow the causes of Fr Cosma and the Cistercian monks to proceed.

Francis thanks Astalli Center for helping migrants

● Pope Francis has sent a message of thanks to the Jesuit-run Astalli Center in Rome for assisting migrants and refugees.

"May your example ignite in society a renewed desire to promote an authentic culture of welcome and solidarity," he wrote in a letter last week.

The Holy Father's letter was addressed to Fr Camillo Ripamonti SJ, Director of the Center which is the Italian headquarters of the Jesuit Refugee Service.

The Pope thanked him,

along with all volunteers and employees, for their "courage in facing the migration 'challenge', especially in this delicate moment for the right of asylum, since thousands of people are fleeing from war, persecution, and serious humanitarian crises".

"I am spiritually near to you all in prayer and affection," wrote Pope Francis, "and I urge you to have trust and hope in a world of peace, justice, and fraternity among peoples."

Vatican warns of rising intolerance and religious crime

● The Holy See has warned that religiously-motivated hate crimes are on the rise, as the Covid-19 pandemic increases intolerance and inequality.

Msgr Janusz Urbanczyk, the Holy See's Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), was speaking at a conference last week aimed at raising awareness about intolerance and discrimination.

"Hate crimes against Christians and members of other religions," he said, "have negatively impacted the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

"These include threats, violent attacks, murders and profanation of churches and places of worship, cemeteries and other religious properties."

The Vatican representative expressed "great concern" about a divide between religious belief and religious practice. "The false idea that religions could have a negative impact or represent a threat to the well-being of our societies is growing," he added.

"Rights and fundamental freedoms," continued Msgr Urbanczyk, "have been limited or derogated."

The Holy See's representative urged OSCE member states to promote tolerance and fundamental freedoms, including religious liberty.

Letters

Letter of the week

Road back will be tough, but don't despair

Dear Editor, It was wonderful to read your front page [IC 28/05/2020] which describes how the bishops have produced an 88-point draft plan to bring the sacramental life of the Church back to the faithful. There have been so many people being negative, letting fear and blind obedience cloud their judgement rather than being productive.

I must say, the bishops have knocked it out of the park with this document. I think it's very easy to constantly berate and belittle Ireland's hierarchy from the side lines, which many people inside and outside the Church do on a daily basis – with some of our own clergy being the most

vehement disparagers.

The coronavirus pandemic has made everything more complicated and will no doubt change the way we have done things as Church for the foreseeable future. I find it difficult to envisage receiving Communion from a priest behind a big screen, it just all seems so odd, but necessary of course.

There is certainly some wishful thinking when it comes to actually implementing a lot of what's in the draft documents, with so few people engaging in parish life it seems an insurmountable task. However, there's no point despairing and immediately dubbing it impossible, that is not our way. We must work towards

reopening our churches and access to sacraments, although many churches may not open for several more months due to their inability to make their building safe, I am sure many more can open for private prayer and for Mass and will receive the help they need through blood, sweat and tears.

This is not a time to be lethargic, it's a time for energy and renewal, when the faithful in the future look back at this time of pandemic, let them be inspired by how we responded with courage and determination.

*Yours etc.,
Pat Brady,
Drogheda,
Co. Louth.*

Plans for restoring First Holy Communions

Dear Editor, Why don't the churches arrange to have a small group of say 10 children make their First Holy Confirmation together which would allow for social distancing and give the children that much valued communal experience. Have two or three sessions every day, not just weekends.

Priests over 70 could be allowed officiate and I'm sure retired priests and priests not attached to parishes would be more than willing to help out. The danger is no greater now than it will be on July 20. Many parents will have put themselves into considerable debt to make sure their children were suitably attired and if left too long they will have grown out of their clothes.

No need for parties or bouncy castles!

*Yours etc.,
Pat Conneely,
Glasnevin, Co. Dublin.*



● 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.

NHS fighting Covid-19 is pro-life

Dear Editor, Fr McCallion has expressed a concern [IC 14/05/2020], shared I have no doubt by many readers, about the role of the NHS in the provision of abortion services in Northern Ireland. In the current circumstances I suggest however that the work of the NHS might be

seen in a broader perspective.

The Covid-19 virus has the particular characteristic that it targets people in the older age groups disproportionately; effects on younger people can be quite mild.

The reaction of the health

services in Ireland and Britain to the spread of the virus has resulted in severe damage to the economy and people's livelihoods, which will take some time to be repaired. The motivation for this is to limit as much as possible the extent of mortality arising from the

spread of the virus.

In this context the actions of the NHS in fighting the spread of the Covid-19 virus might be seen as an expression of a pro-life approach.

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

Baroness's criticism of ACP 'much needed'

Dear Editor, The Association of Catholic Priests seems very much out of touch with reality when they criticise people calling for a quicker return to Mass, any priest or lay person I speak to want this to happen (as long as it's done safely, of course). Do they really represent a majority of priests on this island? I find this quite hard to believe.

Baroness Nuala O'Loan, in her usual eloquent style, rightly held them to

account in a much needed and rather stinging rebuttal [IC 28/05/2020].

Their statement, which implied that it was individuals and groups with a vested interest pushing a return to public Mass, was deeply offensive. Just because I want a return to public Mass sooner than July 20 doesn't mean I don't care about people who are particularly vulnerable to this terrible virus, I want the return to Mass to be safe and it can certainly be

done before the Government roadmap suggests. Calling myself or any other Catholic 'self-serving' or 'self-interested' for expressing this view is absurd, it reads more like a message from an atheist group rather than an association of priests.

Shame on them.

*Yours etc.,
Deirdre Kelly,
Tallaght, Co. Dublin.*

facebook community

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

Church lays out a draft roadmap back to public Masses

If older people are asked not to attend there will be no need to open the churches at all. Even the priests and bishops are elderly. This is an outrageous suggestion, older people are the mainstay of the Church and if they stay away so will the younger generation. – **Aisling Brady**

Looks like it's going to be an ordeal rather than a pleasure. – **Annette Devlin**

Our bishops are being too cautious when it comes to a return to public Masses

Totally agree with our bishops – much as we would like to get back, better safe than sorry and have to go through all this again. At my very senior years I might never make it! – **Matt Hilda McColgan**

St Alphonsus Ligouri in his *Discourses on the Mass and Office* wrote: "A single Mass gives more honour to God than can ever be given to him by all the prayers and austerities of the saints, all the labours and fatigues of the Apostles, all the torments of the martyrs, and all the adoration's of the Seraphim, and of the Mother of God." – **Kate O'Connor**

We must be careful of course but large churches can be arranged to accommodate a reasonable number, or even people stay in their cars and bring table for Altar out to porch. – **Nora Flood**

I would agree. Harder hit countries are well ahead of us on this, despite the fact our churches are well able to accommodate whatever precautions would be necessary. – **Thomas O'Mahony**

Millions have died over this virus. I don't think the grieving relations of those deceased would think they're being too cautious at all. – **Marina O'Connor**

Considering, the elderly are 'high risk' in regards to this virus, and many go to Mass, it's better to be safe than sorry! – **John Joseph McGowan**

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

Brazil's pandemic situation is truly shocking

Dear Editor, I read with concern an article published in a recent edition [IC 28/05/2020] about the president of Brazil's response to the coronavirus.

The Irish Spiritan Fr Brendan Foley highlighted the shocking situation in some of the poorest parts of São Paulo which are being hard hit.

There has been so much coverage of President Donald Trump's response to the virus in the US but I have heard little about the situation in Brazil, which was reported as being the second hardest hit country in the world. Why aren't Irish media paying more attention and giving more coverage to what's happening there?

Surely the people of Brazil, who are apparently suffering under a person who appears to have little interest in the poor, deserve better than silence or indifference.

*Yours etc.,
David O'Leary,
Belfast,
Co. Antrim.*

Around the world



▲ **ENGLAND:** A woman prays at the closed doors of London's Westminster Cathedral during the Covid-19 pandemic.
 ▼ **VIETNAM:** A young man jumps while swimming in a lake in Hanoi after the government relaxed Covid-19 restrictions last week. Photos: CNS



COLOMBIA: Venezuelan migrant children are seen next to a tent at a camp in Maicao.



BURUNDI: Voters wait in line at a polling station in Ngozi during the recent presidential elections.



HOLY LAND: A Palestinian Catholic family attends Mass in St Catherine Church in Bethlehem, West Bank. The church has recently reopened after being closed during the Covid-19 pandemic.



SYRIA: A volunteer hair stylist from the International Association for Relief and Development cuts the hair of a displaced boy at a camp in Idlib.



Advice on prayer from an old master

At the risk of being simplistic, I want to say something about prayer in a very simple way.

While doing doctoral studies, I had a professor, an elderly Augustinian priest, who in his demeanor, speech and attitude, radiated wisdom and maturity. Everything about him bespoke integrity. You immediately trusted him, the wise old grandfather of storybooks.

One day in class he spoke of his own prayer life. As with everything else he shared, there were no filters, only honesty and humility. I don't recall his exact words, but I remember well the essence of what he said and it has stayed with me for the nearly 40 years since I had the privilege of being in his class.

Here's what he shared: "Prayer isn't easy because we're always tired, distracted, busy, bored and caught up in so many things that it's hard to find the time and energy to center ourselves on God for some moments.

"So, this is what I do: no matter what my day is like, no matter what's on my mind, no matter what my distractions and temptations are, I am faithful to this: once a day I pray the Our Father as best I can from where I am at that moment. Inside of everything that's going on inside me and around me that day, I pray the Our Father, asking God



Fr Rolheiser

to hear me from inside of all the distractions and temptations that are besetting me. It's the best I can do. Maybe it's a bare minimum and I should do more and should try to concentrate harder, but at least I do that. And sometimes it's all I can do, but I do it every day, as best I can. It's the prayer Jesus told us to pray."

Simplistic

His words might sound simplistic and minimalistic. Indeed the Church challenges us to make the Eucharist the center of our prayer lives and to make a daily habit of meditation and private prayer. As well, many classical spiritual writers tell us that we should set aside an hour every day for private prayer, and many

contemporary spiritual writers challenge us to daily practice centering prayer or some other form of contemplative prayer. Where does that leave our old Augustinian theologian and his counsel that we pray one sincere Our Father each day – as best we can?

Well, none of this goes against what he so humbly shared. He would be the first to agree that the Eucharist should be the center of our prayer lives, and he would agree as well with both the classical spiritual writers who advise an hour of private prayer a day, and the contemporary authors who challenge us to do some form of contemplative prayer daily, or at least habitually. But he would say this: at one of

those times in the day (ideally at the Eucharist or while praying the Office of the Church but at least sometime during your day) when you're saying the Our Father, pray it with as much sincerity and focus as you can muster at the moment ("as best you can") and know that, no matter your distractions at the moment, it's what God is asking from you. And it's enough.

“Our prayer seldom issues forth from a pure heart but normally from a very earthy one. But, and this is the point, its very earthiness is also its real honesty”

His advice has stayed with me through the years and though I say a number of Our Fathers every day, I try, at least in one of them, to pray the Our Father as best I can, fully conscious of how badly I am doing it. What a challenge and what a consolation!

The challenge is to pray an Our Father each day, as best we can. As we know, that prayer is deeply communitarian. Every petition in it is plural – “our”, “we”, “us” – there's no “I” in the Our Father. Moreover, all of us are priests from our baptism

and inherent in the covenant we made then, we are asked daily to pray for others, for the world. For those who cannot participate in the Eucharist daily and for those who do not pray the Office of the Church, praying the Our Father is your Eucharistic prayer, your priestly prayer for others.

And this is the consolation: none of us is divine. We're all incurably human which means that many times, perhaps most times, when we're trying to pray we'll find ourselves beset with everything from tiredness, to boredom, to impatience, to planning tomorrow's agenda, to sorting through the hurts of the day, to stewing about who we're angry at, to dealing with erotic fantasies.

Pure heart

Our prayer seldom issues forth from a pure heart but normally from a very earthy one. But, and this is the point, its very earthiness is also its real honesty. Our restless, distracted heart is also our existential heart and is the existential heart of the world. When we pray from there, we are (as the classical definition of prayer would have it) lifting mind and heart to God.

Try, each day, to pray one sincere Our Father! As best you can!

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, June 4, 2020

Personal Profile

'We can pray in different spaces and places' says sister

Page 34



Struggling with the lockdown blues? Here's how to cope



The spread of the coronavirus is a new and a challenging event and can be worrying. It can affect our mental health, leading to a number of different outcomes such as increased anxiety, stress, and loneliness.

But there are many things we can do to mind our mental health during times like this. While we can't get rid of the stress entirely, here are just a few tips to help ease the effects

Stay informed but set limits

We all want to know what's going on, and that's natural. Some of our anxiety comes from the fact that we don't know



The first effect of the pandemic was physical, but a secondary effect was psychological and emotional writes Ruadhán Jones

what's going to happen. It's important if we want to have a realistic grasp of the situation that we seek out the facts.

However, although helpful, this can quickly become overwhelming. The constant stream of social media updates and news reports about coronavirus can cause us to feel worried. On top of this, rumours can muddy

the waters, so it is important to seek out reliable information. If the coverage is proving too intense for you, then talk it through with someone close or seek support.

Equally, while the merits of social media have come to the fore during the crisis, too much time spent on them may increase our levels of worry or

anxiety. This is because people sometimes talk about their worries or beliefs about the virus. However, we don't need to make these our own, so if gets too much, consider limiting your time on social media.

Stay connected, keep talking

During times of stress, friends and family can be a good source of support. It is important to keep in touch with them and other people in your life. For some, our time in isolation is spent with our family and friends, so this is easy. We have an untold amount time to spend with each other, whether it be eating, playing, praying or relax-

ing. This can be a good opportunity for precious family time.

The difficulty here is the pressure cooker effect. Given the added stresses, we can become irritable and anxious. This can lead to tempers flaring and sparks flying. It's important to make time for yourself, but also to be aware of other people's needs. It is understandable to feel vulnerable or overwhelmed. By acknowledging these feelings and talking about them, it will help you to look after your health and the health of others.

For others, it's a case of getting used to time spent alone.

» Continued on Page 33

Family News



AND EVENTS

FREE CODING WORKSHOP FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN

A three-day free coding workshop, facilitated by the Academy of Code and delivered online through Zoom will take place next week, with tickets available from Friday.

It is organised by 'Work Matters at the Library' and is part of the South Dublin Creative Campus Programme.

The event is for secondary school students and is mainly aimed at coding beginners but there will be "extra bits and pieces for students who have some coding experience already" according to organisers.

A parent or guardian will be required to be present for the duration of the workshop and there is a limit of one pupil per computer screen. All participants must be able to attend all three days of these workshops.

A link to join the Zoom session will be sent to participants on the morning of the event. The ticket is valid for all three sessions which run from 2-3pm from June 10-12.

All that's needed to get started is a PC/Mac, mic/headset, webcam and a broadband connection.

IRELAND RANKS HIGH FOR PROBLEM SOCIAL MEDIA USE

A new report, *Spotlight on Adolescent Health and Well-being*, published today by WHO Regional Office for Europe, has compiled extensive data on the physical health, social relationships and mental well-being of over 227,000 school children aged 11, 13 and 15, from 45 countries.

Irish children rank low on substance use such as smoking and drinking alcohol and high on physical activity. Ireland also ranks high for problematic social media use.

Life satisfaction has reduced significantly since 2014, with Ireland ranking low for life satisfaction among 15-year olds. The report presents the comparative international findings of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey, which is co-ordinated by the WHO and undertaken every four years. The Irish arm of this study is led by Professor Saoirse Nic Gabhainn in the Health Promotion Research Centre in NUI Galway.

MAKING THE PERFECT SUNDAY ROAST

We all love sitting down for a Sunday roast, and we all have our own opinions on what does and doesn't belong on our plate. But what makes a perfect roast dinner? According to a new study from Satsuma Loans, it's all about the trimmings.

According to their survey, roast potatoes are the most important part of a Sunday roast, with 76.7% of Brits listing these as an essential ingredient. Gravy came in a close second place, with 70.2% of Brits wanting this on their plate.

Here are the top 10 most popular Sunday roast ingredients:

Roast potatoes – 76.7%, Gravy – 70.2%, Yorkshire Puddings – 65.8%, Broccoli – 46.1%, Stuffing – 45.5%, Roast parsnips – 43.6%, Peas – 42.7%, Mashed potatoes – 39.1%, Boiled carrots – 38.7%, Pigs in blankets – 35.7%.

Facts and figures on 'super spreaders' and vaccines



As we move into the next phase of the 'unwinding' of the coronavirus lockdown it is apparent that restrictions of some sort will remain with us for some time. Covid-19 has been the focus of many scientific articles and studies but while there are still many unknowns, we have learned much that perhaps may have changed our approach to tackling the virus.

Most of the discussion around the spread of SARS-CoV-2 has centred on the average number of new infections passed on by each patient or the reproduction number (R0). Without social distancing, this number is about 3.0 but is now estimated to be about 0.5 in Ireland. However, in real life some people infect few or no people while others pass it on to many. As a case in point, a patient in France had Covid-19 as early as December but this didn't lead to more widespread infection.

“A recent study suggested that infection with the common cold may provide some immunity against Covid-19”

This has drawn scientists to look at a different measure called the 'dispersion factor' (k) which reflects how much a disease clusters. The lower the value the more the transmission comes from a smaller number of people. We know that the spread of this coronavirus is in many cases from fewer people than the flu. In fact, it is now estimated that up to 80% of cases may result from spread from only 10% of people

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



meaning that restrictions like widespread lockdown is a very blunt tool. Indeed, the notion of one person spreading the disease to potentially up to 100's of others has given rise to the term 'super spreader'. In fact, this appears to account for significant outbreaks in choir groups, meat factories, night clubs and food markets.

But why might some people become super spreaders? Many factors are likely to come into play. Firstly, some people will shed more virus than others and of course this also depends on what stage the infection is at and whether they're coughing. Additionally, the amount of virus projected into the air is probably greater when shouting or singing. In fact, a study of healthy people in 2019 suggested that even those who speak louder are more likely to project viruses further.

What's also a big concern is that as well as droplet spread, the virus can probably be picked up from aerosols suspended in the air. This is particularly problematic when indoors or in enclosed spaces. Indeed, a study in Japan found that the risk of infection was 19 times greater when comparing indoors versus outdoors.

But what about the two-metre distancing rule? It probably originates from a study examining

cough droplets in the 1930's. The WHO has cited that 70% of droplets will travel one metre and that two metre keeps you safe 99% of the time. Of course, the virus can spread further but when outside the risk is low. Some countries like Germany, Poland and the Netherlands have adopted 1.5 metre rule and yet others such as Sweden, Norway and Austria only one metre.

On a positive note, a recent study suggested that infection with the common cold may provide some immunity against Covid-19. Scientists found a that a significant proportion of people (who had blood tests taken between 2015-2018) and hence did not have Covid-19 had specific immune cells (T helper cells) that recognised the virus. About 20% of the time, the common cold is caused by a coronavirus virus that has similarities to SARS Cov-2 which may help explain the findings.



News on the vaccine front has been mixed. There are more than 100 pre-clinical studies exploring vaccine development. However, only a handful have progressed into real clinical trials with patients. Ultimately, the goal is getting the body to produce antibodies that will latch on to the virus and stop it from entering cells.

The early results of two trials that used a vector model are encouraging. Essentially, components of the current coronavirus are put into a weakened cold virus which is then inoculated into an individual. In a Chinese phase one trial published in the Lancet where 108 people were vaccinated, they observed neutralising antibodies at day 14, peaking at day 28 with no major adverse reactions.

In Oxford, vaccination in a similar way in Chimpanzees resulted in antibodies within 28 days and prevention of lung damage when exposed to the virus. However, it didn't completely stop virus replication. This vaccine is now in clinical trials though ironically as the level of the virus in the community in the UK is now low, the number of people likely to get infected may be insufficient to gauge a clear comparison between vaccinated and non-vaccinated groups.

Finally, as regards, treatments, there is now good evidence for the anti-viral Remdesivir. It was shown to shorten time to recovery by four days in a trial involving 1063 patients supporting its use for those in hospital on oxygen therapy.

Unfortunately, the largest study of hydroxychloroquine with or without azithromycin that involved 9237 treated patients showed an increased risk of death by about 10-15%. A trial is also underway into the drug Ivermectin which was promising in pre-clinical studies.

Ultimately, we will need to wait for a vaccine and that is not likely until next year!

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

» Continued from Page 31



If you need to restrict your movements or self-isolate, try to stay connected to people in other ways. Technology offers multifarious means to keep up contact, whether it is the ubiquitous Zoom call or old-fashioned ways, like email and text! Many video calling apps allow you to have group calls with multiple people at the same time, bringing families and friends together.

Whatever your situation, remember that talking things through with someone can help lessen worry or anxiety. You don't have to appear to be strong or to try to cope with things by yourself.

Sit down and relax

We have to give our minds and bodies a real chance to recover from and process the ups and downs of the day. While this might seem obvious when we are busy or surrounded by other people, it's still important when on your own or with little to do. We still need to take time and relax.

There's a story about Bjorn Borg, the famously robotic, workaholic tennis player. An interviewer asked him "Bjorn, I hear you've been told you need to relax more, how's that going for you?" Borg is said to have responded "I'm working very hard at it".

“There are many things we can do to mind our mental health during times like this”

Though it may be apocryphal, there's a grain of truth in it; we sometimes need to work on relaxing. We have to set aside time, to practice and try different methods. There are many different ways to go about it.

For you, going for a walk, listening to music, watching TV, or playing sports could be your way to unwind. For someone else, it could be breathing exercises, meditation or focusing on being present.

For Christians, prayer can be an opportunity to relax. The purpose of prayer is to focus our attention on God, making it simultaneously an interior and an exterior process. God draws us

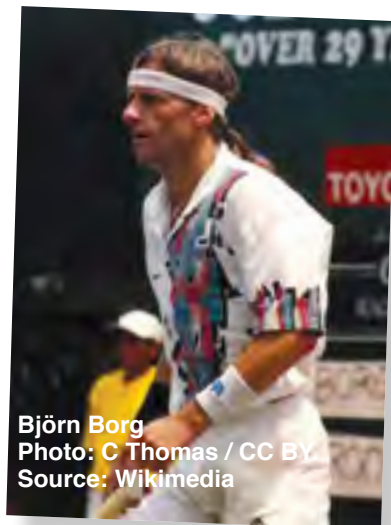
out of ourselves, but also helps us to understand ourselves better.

There are many different ways we can incorporate it into our lives – grace before meals, the angelus, the rosary, or the liturgy of the hours to name just a few. By incorporating them into our day, we can create a rhythm of prayer and relaxation.

The thing is to find something that relaxes you and make a conscious effort to do it every day. Even 10 minutes of downtime can help you manage stress and anxiety better. The more pauses you can build into your day the calmer you will feel.

Get creative

While we deal with staying at home, it's important to maintain an active and enjoyable sense of creativity and purpose. Doing something creative can help improve your mood, allowing you to express yourself in a playful manner. This is a great way of looking after your mental wellbeing.



Björn Borg
Photo: C Thomas / CC BY
Source: Wikimedia

That could involve learning a new language, picking up an old hobby, or reading a good book. Coronavirus may have deprived us of opportunities to take part in cultural and creative activities, such as visiting museums and galleries, or playing sports. But even under lockdown, the virtual and physical worlds offer a wide array of choices, from danc-

ing to reading, touring the Holy Land or visiting some of Ireland's own heritage sites.

Creative Ireland has developed a number of good resources to get the creative juices flowing, mainly aimed at children and teenagers. In partnership with Fighting Words, they offer online resources to facilitate creative writing in Irish and English. They also run an online anthology, *Analecta*, which include poems, drama, short fiction, graphic fiction, plays and more by children aged from 13-17.

“Friends and family can be a good source of support. It is important to keep in touch with them and other people in your life”

Initiatives such as Get Ireland Making offer a variety of courses and tutorials for all age groups. Driven by Design and Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCI), a team of makers and designers have developed a series of online workshops ranging from how to make musical instruments from recycled materials to a series on jewellery making. They are fun and engaging, ideal for children, but also for those who want to take up a new hobby.

There are many other activities which are open to all age groups, such as The National Gallery of Ireland's virtual tours, eBooks from your local library, and much more.

Control the controllable

Life is about balance, and that has been upset by the coronavirus. To look after your mental health and wellbeing it's important to seek out that balance in the midst of all the chaos, between activity and rest, creativity and reflection, work and play and time together and time apart.

The main thing is to control the controllable and leave the rest to God; "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6:34)

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



Family homes across Ireland have been transformed into makeshift schools, thanks to the coronavirus epidemic. Our own home school has three pupils on the roll, along with an enthusiastic toddler who joins in from time to time. Our daily routine involves having all pupils up and breakfasted by 8 in the morning. This allows them to start the day gently, with time spent lolling around, walking the dog or playing in the garden before learning starts in earnest.

As with many kids all around Ireland and the UK, they love to start the day with the live online Joe Wicks PE workout at 9 am sharp. Our toddler invariably joins in, adding an element of comedy to proceedings as she clumsily imitates the older kids and tumbles around the room. The kids relish this bit of exercise, and afterwards head to their rooms, enlivened and alert, to begin their schoolwork. I think it also help them feel connected to the millions of other kids who're at home doing the same thing. They know that many pals from school are doing it, as are their cousins in Dublin and London. This gives them a sense of community amongst their peers, at a time when they have been cut off from contact with their friends for two and half months.

The two oldest children largely direct themselves when it comes to starting their day. They have their own laptops in their bedrooms and they login to see what tasks their teachers have set them. They set about these with some enthusiasm – not least as they know that the sooner they finish each task, the sooner they get a break.

Our junior infants aged girl needs a little more direction and encouragement to get going, naturally, but she flies through her tasks once she's up and running. She is allowed longer breaks and her older sister also hugely enjoys playing the teacher and helping her with her learning later in the day. Since I work from home, this is a boon for me, as it means fewer interruptions.

Múinteoir Rae is also a godsend, since the RTÉ home school hub programme keeps them going for another hour or two each afternoon. Due to my work, I haven't had as much time as I'd like to run lessons for the kids, but we've transformed a lot of daily tasks around the house into learning experiences. The kids have been involved in baking, cooking, carpentry,

gardening and doing little science experiments.

A straw poll of our three home learners reveals that, while they enjoy school, they tend to prefer home schooling, although do they miss seeing their friends. My eldest is adamant that he learns far more at home, while the other two concede that they learn more in school. This may be because my eldest has the benefit of an online maths tutorial each day from my mother, who is a retired primary school teacher. Having already missed a lot of school earlier this year thanks to a bad head injury he received playing football, he had a lot of work to catch up on. She patiently took him through the entire year's syllabus and now he's completely up to speed, so the lockdown has been a boon for him, as without it such intensive revision would have been impossible.

“The two oldest children largely direct themselves when it comes to starting their day”

They kids are allowed to take a 10 minute break between tasks, which often involves taking a run outside, kicking a ball around or maybe just relaxing on the grass for a while. Research suggests that regular breaks, and some exercise, can really help kids to learn – especially boys. Certainly, our kids seem to respond really well to this. Lessons ease away in the afternoon, and they often read books or help with the gardening.

We've also managed to source some amazing educational computer games and television programmes. For me, home schooling could never fully replace school, but it certainly could be complementary to it. Seeing how positively kids respond to a more relaxed learning environment is an eye-opener for many parents. When the kids do eventually return to school, I think they'll be more independent, self-directed learner - better able to look things up themselves, motivate themselves and learn things in new ways, using technology. We parents will have had a crash course in teaching and will be better able to make everyday life educational in a fun way. The lockdown will have taught us all a thing or two.

'We can pray in different spaces and places' says sister

Personal Profile



Aron Hegarty

As our church buildings move closer to reopening their doors, a sister in Cork says the Covid-19 crisis has presented an opportunity for us to "be Church" beyond physical structures.

Sr Karen Kent, coordinator of pastoral development for the Diocese of Cork and Ross, tells *The Irish Catholic* about her background, taking a "leap of Faith" and preparing parishes for the "new normal".

"I was born and grew up in England," she says, "my mother is from Wexford, she married a man from Cheshire in England who was a part of the Church of England and they got married in a Catholic church."

"It's a time to keep the flame of Faith alive and the spirit of prayer at home"

"My father never became a Catholic, but my brother and I were both brought up Catholic. We had both traditions in our house, my father would have gone to early service in his own church and then come to Mass with us. It was quite unique and unusual."

"I got involved in youth and music ministry in my parish and worked in pastoral care in school and I always had this thinking

there was something nagging at me to look at the possibility of religious life.

"I went to visit several religious congregations and I had an aunt who was an Ursuline nun in Waterford," she explains.

"I read about the Ursuline founding story and it spoke to me because it wasn't about what you did; they weren't founded for ministry – they were founded to make a difference in their local parish communities."

"There was something in that where 'if you can't see it then you can't be it', so there was something about being an example. I started to explore that further and I spoke to the vocation's director there at the time who said to me 'you have to make a decision at some stage, if you never try it you'll never know if it's for you'."

"So it was a 'leap of Faith' in asking myself 'is this life for you?' and those questions stayed with me, so I prayed and decided to take the 'leap', see where it would take me and that's what led me to come to Ireland."

Sr Kent came to Ireland in 1997 and entered the Ursuline order. She did two years as a novitiate, making her first profession in 1999 and her final profession in 2006.

Theology

She completed a Masters in Theology at St Patrick's College, Maynooth in 2004 and then took up her current occupation in the Diocese of Cork and Ross in 2005.

"I try to stay connected with people," Sr Kent says of her position, "show support, offer ideas, send out regular updates to clergy and parishes – seeing how can we

be Church in a new space and a new time.

"It is going to take time for people to move to that new space, people are looking at dates from government guidelines to see when churches can reopen, but it's important to understand that opening the churches to have public celebrations and Mass isn't going to be what it was. It's going to have to be and look different, and it will feel different."

"It's about finding new ways," she continues, "it's a time to keep the flame of Faith alive and the spirit of prayer at home, while becoming Church beyond the church building."

"Although our church buildings might be closed, it's also about being and living Church and that the church buildings exist to be a place for Church to gather."

"That is the message we need to build with people; that we are

Church wherever we are and Christ is present wherever we are, we can pray in different spaces and places."

In the current climate, Sr Kent feels the impact of Covid-19 has prompted parishes to "regenerate" in order to adapt to changing and challenging times.

Pastoral Plan

"It's very different now," she says. "When I came (to Ireland), it was to give expression to the pastoral plan, bring it to life, more pastoral councils to parishes and offer support and resources to bring people into ministry in their parishes."

"I always had this thinking there was something nagging at me to look at the possibility of religious life"

"So that's been developing over the last 15 years and when we come to now, it's very different."

"At the moment we are pondering over how we can gather people so that they can make collective decisions together and move towards collective action."

"Lots of people are talking about going into recovery," continues Sr Kent, "but recovery is going back to what you were and perhaps this is giving us an opportunity to look at what we can become in the sense of what a regenerated parish might look like going forward."

"The 'new normal' is going to be social distancing," she continues, "taking more care of how we act responsibly around each other and rethink how we are doing Eucharistic celebrations."

"It also means how we are outside of churches in terms of adult Faith development, sacramental preparation and all those things that go on in our parishes, which will have to look and be different."



Sr Karen Kent in the Pastoral Development Office at Parochial House, Ballyphehane in Co. Cork.

Living Laudato Si'

Jane Mellet



Practical tips after a week of Laudato Si' celebrations

During Laudato Si' Week, May 17-24 this year, we were treated to a huge online celebration of Pope Francis' encyclical on care for our common home.

Many international speakers, musicians, poets, theologians, activists and families came together to reflect on Laudato Si' five years on. One of the highlights of Laudato Si' week for me was the call from Pope Francis for a year-long reflection of Laudato Si'.

He said: "I invite all people of goodwill to take part, to care for our common home and our most vulnerable brothers and sisters." It will run until May 24, 2021.

On the same day, the Pope announced the Laudato Si' Action Platform, a programme that will encourage Catholic dioceses, institutions and schools, to publicly commit to total sustainability in the next ten years. The Pope is renewing this urgent call because he is listening to the science and is aware of what is happening to our world. During Laudato Si' week the Philippines was hit

with by Typhoon Ambo which forced thousands of people into evacuation centres in the middle of a pandemic. A few days later, Cyclone Amphan slammed into West Bengal in India and Bangladesh forcing the evacuation of 3 million people and devastating towns and cities such as Kolkata. The climate crisis has not gone away. During a Laudato Si' week webinar Christina Figueres, the former UN Climate Chief, called our present pandemic, "climate change in a time warp", stating that it gives us a snapshot of what the environmental crisis will bring in the next few years. She also added that this is a golden opportunity to press the reset button, to prove that we are capable of "building back better".

The Laudato Si' Action Platform, set before us by Pope Francis, gives an opportunity for Catholic Faith communities to shine as a beacon of light to the world, as a witness to protecting our common home for future generations. It is an act of love, solidarity and social justice.

As we continue to observe government restrictions at this time, I would urge people to use this opportunity for reflection about the type of future we want to build.

● This month, you might consider the gift of water as June 14 is National Holy Wells Day. In Ireland there are over 3,000 holy wells. In early Christian times they were seen as places of pilgrimage, prayer and healing. Find out if there is a holy well near you and, if it is in your 5km zone, take a visit there with your family. Thank God for the precious gift of water. Pray for those who suffer the consequences of drought worldwide and who have no access to clean drinking water. Think about how you and your family can protect water in your area and be mindful of its use. You can find out more information from www.lovingstherearth.ie

● You can watch back our wonderful celebration of Laudato Si', called A Love Letter to the Earth, by accessing it on the 'Margaret Aylward Centre' YouTube page. A family friendly hour of celebration.

Jane Mellet is the Laudato Si' officer with Trócaire.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Friends in high places pushed to one side

So, last week it was the second anniversary of the referendum to repeal the Eight Amendment, but I didn't notice much about it in the media. Maybe we're ashamed of what we did and want to pretend it didn't happen?

Anyway, some were in triumphalist mode. On the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk FM) last Thursday, we heard of a new documentary film about how the referendum was 'won'. Kenny interviewed the film-maker Anna Rodgers and Orla O'Connor of the National Women's Council.

A discussion between those on both sides, two years on, would have been welcome, but that was not on the agenda. In exploring the question of how the referendum was won, the two women never mentioned the support they had from pals in the media...still wanting to pretend the media was impartial?

Death toll

One question not asked (there or anywhere) was about the number of unborn children who died as a result of the 'win' – what current affairs presenter is going to ask about the death toll?

Kenny did point out on several occasions that the film was "a one-sided account", that there was "a lot of passion" and some "very public women" on the other side of



BBC presenter Emily Maitlis.

the debate. What a pity we didn't get to hear from one of them.

The issue of media bias blew up across the water last week. On **Newsnight** (BBC2, Tuesday), presenter Emily Maitlis led with an incredibly biased piece to camera slating Dominic Cummings, his lockdown travels and his PM's reaction. Whether she was right or wrong is beside the point – she was pushing her own opinion or what she thought was public opinion.

Eventually the BBC News team said it "did not meet our

standards of due impartiality", which of course led to a trip to the outrage factory for those who don't mind media bias as long as it favours their side of an argument.

The issue was raised on **The Hard Shoulder** (Newstalk FM, Thursday). Presenter Ivan Yates said Maitlis was "telling it like it is" – but no, she was telling it like she thought it was. Yates by his own admission does introductory rants every weekday. He spoke to UK media guru Roy Greenslade, who was informative and moderate. He found

the Maitlis contribution to be "extraordinarily partisan" but, according to polls, in line with the public mood, which of course was changeable.

It might seem like a big jump to go from these shows to **Messiah** (EWTN, last Saturday), but subtitled 'Triumph: Enemies Under Your Feet' here also was a taste of triumphalism, rarely an attractive look, but I suppose it depends on tone and context – surely we'll celebrate the triumph of good over evil for example? Triumphant but not triumphalist?

This was a relatively big budget documentary series, with a large dollop of Church history – that used to be a big thing in Catholic education but it's rarely heard about these days, leaving the field open to distortions, misunderstandings, prejudice and stereotyping.

The most intriguing aspect



Ivan Yates (Newstalk FM).

PICK OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY

BBC Radio 4, Sunday, June 7, 7.10am

Religious and ethical issues of the week.

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC1, Sunday, June 7, 1.15pm

Aled Jones looks back at stories of people who find spiritual inspiration in the great outdoors.

ALL WALKS OF LIFE

RTÉ1, Friday, June 12, 7.30pm

Repeat of the series in which Mary McAleese talks to people along ancient pilgrim trails. This week: Joe Canning.

for me was the exploration of the early days of the Church, when the lines were somewhat blurred between Jews and Christians, when there were those who worshipped as Christians but kept to Jewish rituals, when there were Gentile "God-fearers" who aligned informally with Judaism.

Expulsions

Eventually, and especially after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, the two groups drifted further apart, and with expulsions from the synagogues the new Christians moved to spread the Gospel on the streets.

I found the continuity a bit disjointed – starting with the victory of Constantine and the acceptance of Christianity in the Roman Empire then returning, appropriately for last weekend, to Pentecost and the birth of the Church, then through the early perse-

cutions and back up to Constantine again.

I liked that they used plenty of art works to illustrate the events, though some of the depictions of martyrdom were quite gruesome (as I'm sure the martyrdoms were!). Watching this would give some perspective on the sufferings of Christian today – worldwide some of the persecutions are similar but here at home we just have to put up with closed churches and a level of marginalisation.

Finally, I was impressed by the multi-lingual **Eurovision Mass for Pentecost** last Sunday on RTÉ1 – it was graceful, reverential and enhanced by commentary, translation and a Prayer of the Faithful from our busy editor, Michael Kelly.

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



Aubrey Malone

Film

Discover some gems by browsing online stores

I grew up believing Jean Harlow died of renal failure in 1937 because her Christian Science mother wouldn't allow her have a blood transfusion. That story was subsequently debunked. A few years ago, I reviewed the Emma Thompson film *The Children Act* on these pages. It dealt with a boy who refuses to have a transfusion because of his religious principles.

The most recent film I saw on this theme was the British release *Apostasy*. It explores it from the angle of an 18-year-old girl who's anaemic. She refuses a transfusion and thereby endangers her life.

It's an uncompromising treatment of the heartbreak experienced by her older sister who's just become preg-

nant outside marriage and has become 'dismembered' from the Jehovah's Witness congregation as a result.

Her mother adheres to its stern dictates, which causes a rift in the family. Will she be reinstated? Will her baby be brought up as a Witness? Does the fundamentalism of the congregation go too far?

It's the debut feature of Daniel Kokotajlo, a former Jehovah's Witness himself. It can be bought from Amazon or Alibris, the two sites I mainly use for film purchases. Prices vary but if you shop around you can generally find them at affordable prices.

You can also buy classic religious films from the past on these sites. You've probably seen the more well-



Siobhan Finneran and Molly Wright as Ivanna and Alex in *Apostasy*. Photo: Curzon Films

known ones. Even if you have they're worth a second view.

The Song of Bernadette (1943) is the story of Berna-

dette Soubirous, the French girl who wasn't first believed when she told locals in her village of her vision of Our

Lady at a grotto in Lourdes in 1858. Jennifer Jones was captivating in the role and won an Oscar for it.

Oscars

Going My Way is the ever-popular story of an easy-going priest (Bing Crosby) who softens his aging superior (Barry Fitzgerald) and some rough-around-the-edges street children. It won the Best Picture Award of 1944 and also scooped Oscars for Crosby, Fitzgerald and its director, Leo McCarey. Crosby reprised his role in the following year's *The Bells of St Mary's*.

The Nun's Story (1959) is the famous Audrey Hepburn film about a nun who serves in the Belgian Congo before eventually leaving the clois-

tered life. When I interviewed her in the 1980s, she told me it was her favourite film. She's more usually associated with *Roman Holiday* or *My Fair Lady* but the spiritual crisis her character underwent here resonated with her more than any other film she made in her career.

"At that time it was unusual for Hollywood to make a film about a nun who renounces her vows," she said to me, "but it was so emotional they felt it would strike a chord with the public."

Time proved them right. It was one of her most successful films at the box office and won eight Oscar nominations. You were with her on her journey right to the end, painful and all as it was.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



Theology and Ecology in Dialogue: The Wisdom of *Laudato Si'* by Dermot A. Lane, with a foreword by Seán McDonagh SCC (Messenger Publications, €19.95/£17.95)

Peter Costello

This year marks the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis's dramatic and historic encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

It is being marked by the publication here in Ireland of a book exploring the document's significance for the immediate present, and for the very long-term future, not only for the ecology of the world, but also for theology and philosophy, and indeed the development of the Church.

The new book, by the leading theologian Dr Dermot Lane comes to no conclusion, for the simple reason that what he has to say in these packed pages is not an end in itself, but a mapping out of paths towards what will undoubtedly be seen as a "new creation", a theology for the third millennium. And as such one hopes that it will be widely read and studied, and the references that underlie his ideas will be followed up by other Irish theologians.

This is a book which general readers should try and read, to encounter where the thinking of informed scientifically minded Christians is at today.

Scope

I can best give an idea of the scope of this book by outlining the contents. The author is confronted with a situation in which he has to define the problem facing humanity, and especially theology in light of the present crisis.

So he opens with a chapter on theology and ecology, and moves on to deal with theological anthropology and integral ecology, then with

Paths to a theology for the third millennium



integral ecology and what is here called "deep pneumatology".

(Theologians will have to come to terms with the fact that to make their insights universally available they will have to evolve their use of a specialist language: though in a book aimed at trained theologians in the first place, such terms are perhaps understandable.)

Deep ecology and deep Christology follows – where many will recognise echoes of what was tentatively expounded by Teilhard de Chardin three generations

ago, but deemed unpublishable. Also in a very Teilhardian mode is a discussion of eschatology and ecology.

“These new ways of worship will be hard for many to accept...”

The two last chapters are, perhaps for those already versed in ecological matters, the most interesting. They deal with ecology and the liturgy, and drawing on *Laudato Si'*, on the concept of the Cos-

mic Eucharist.

One foresees also that they will prove controversial and arouse great discussion. But they will also influence the way our great grandchildren will worship, which will become an expression of devotion to the Creator, as much as the Saviour. But because these ideas move towards new ways of worship, they will be harder for many to accept.

But as I say, Dr Lane is outlining the general problem and the areas of what are for many a new form of 'Good News'; they will need devel-

opment, not only by Dermot Lane himself, but by many others.

One thing he will certainly have to do is present these ideas in a form accessible to scientists ill at ease with any talk of theology, and to the wider readership of the fear-filled ranks of living Christians.

“To see ‘the wonders of God’s creation’ we do not have to climb the Himalayas”

I was troubled by one aspect of the book, which is dependent on so much written in the last two decades, as if this is a new problem, unknown before. He mentions Ernst Haeckel as defining in 1866 the term ecology. True enough, but Haeckel was a biologist. To ascribe a scientific name to an animal is not to bring it into being. The animal in question will be aeons old.

Haeckel merely defined ecology for the academic class. But the ideas and practices of ecology and of good care for the soil and the life around us are of prehistoric origin. They were skills known to those millions without letters, but filled with experience and knowledge of nature, long before Haeckel. We must always remember to 'ask the fellows who cut the hay'.

The problem of ecological disaster began in only the 18th Century, with the rise of

industrialised society, which sought to plunder the world to create great wealth for a few on the basis of the labour of the many, who were promised much, but given little.

A book on the Dodder, which I am re-reading, notes "the industlaists of the the 19th Century nearly killed the river". That was in the generation of our great grandfathers, but we have forgotten it.

The present crisis calls for theologians to go outside and try to understand 'creation' not as an intellectual concept, but a process that is going on in their own gardens.

Ecology

All the lessons of good ecology can be well studied in suburban backyards. To see 'the wonders of God's creation' we do not have to climb the Himalayas, but merely stay still among the trees and flowers, the birds and bees, and the pouring rain.

I often think back to Teilhard de Chardin, labouring patiently all those long years in Vatican-imposed exile in the deserts of Central Asia, deemed then a barren wilderness, where his discoveries as a geologist gave him a rich harvest of ideas that provided him with a sense of the deepest kind of reality for his philosophical thoughts.

He saw that as going literally to 'the heart of the matter'. He has left a way of thinking about what *le milieu divin* really and truly is, with all the possible emphasis that can be placed on the words 'reality' and 'truth'.



Rutger Bregman.

There are other ways to lead our lives

Utopia for Realists and How we Can Get There by Rutger Bregman (Bloomsbury, £8.99; can be ordered online for around €10.00)

Christopher Moriarty

At Easter, Pope Francis delivered a message endorsing the concept of the universal basic wage.

This idea, whereby every individual receives a basic income from their government whether they are in employment or not, has been around for some decades (going back to the small but influential "social credit" movement of the

interwar years). It has been put into practice in some communities – and with remarkable success. The worldwide concentration of minds that has resulted from Covid-19 may give a new impetus to the principle.

“The author supports his utopian outlook with solid statistics”

Meanwhile, those who wish to know more about it have the opportunity to read a very remarkable book, first published in Holland six years ago.

The author, Rutger Bregman, gave it the title *Utopia for Realists: and how we can get there* and its translation into 23 languages within four years testifies to its brilliance.

Comforting

The book is also a particularly comforting read at a time like this. On his very first page Bregman outlines the astounding progress that has taken place in the last 200 years: "Billions of us are suddenly rich, well nourished, clean, safe, smart, healthy and occasionally even beautiful."

The author supports his utopian

outlook with solid statistics, and this is the essence of the book. It is very easy reading and very enjoyable with its examples of the good effects of the worldwide reduction of poverty and forecasts for the even greater benefits which could be conferred by the application of the universal wage.

The beauty of this rosy view of the future is that the text is laced throughout with an impressive array of the basic statistics – so skilfully interwoven that they don't overwhelm the reader. This book is a remarkable combination of visionary fervour with solid fact.

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.

The Bee's Knees
by James Morrissey
(Currach Books, €19.99)

Barbara Pierce

The title comes from 1920s slang: "Bee's knees – highly admired person or thing; Something excellent!" This all applies so well to James Morrissey's tremendous book. As a long-time bee keeper in flowery south Dublin, I simply loved it and warmly recommend it to all.

James Morrissey's feeling and opinion about honey bees, who have been generously blessing humans since before Abraham was led to a 'land of milk and honey'.

Actually they were here 50 million years before us – pictured here the oldest bee known, preserved in amber in India from a remote geological date. From Mesolithic cave painting showing two honey collectors hanging by creepers, subduing the bees with smoke to Egyptian beekeeping records, 3,000 BC, to Aristotle's writing and through recorded history, bees and wax and honey have been valued. They bring sweetness and light, and our orchards are dependent on bees to form fruit from flowers.

Obligations

A very interesting chapter on the history of beekeeping in Ireland, where bees were always valued, describes the 7th Century Brehon Bee Judgements which were used to decide the rights and obligations of beekeepers.

After the Famine there was such poverty, particularly in the western counties from Donegal to West Cork, that the Congested Districts Board (CDB) was established to aid small farmers, who were



Honeyed words about the wonderful bee

living close to starvation. The CDB promoted beekeeping as a source of income for destitute farmers, "a well-managed hive could produce as much profit as a pig".

A famous CDB instructor, 'the Bee Man of Co. Clare', Turlough O'Bryen, who used to travel the area on his bicycle bringing supplies and teaching, is well remembered in beekeeping lore.

The author extends his admiration to the many beekeepers and researchers who have mentored and taught him how to tend his bees. Interviewed by journalist Lorna Siggins specially for the book, they entertain us with anecdotes and information, and the many questions which beekeepers are asked. 'Why do bees do "the bees dance"?', 'Why are bees endangered?', and a new question, 'What is honey laundering?'. 'Is there a native Irish bee?'

All these are explained clearly, giving a new understanding of how we

need to live in harmony with this "aspect of nature in the world we co-share".

Visually, this is a very pleasing book. The beautiful cover is all golden yellow wood and wax and gold striped bees. These sunshine shades continue, interleaving the pages.

“The threat to the bees from loss of ecology and other dangers...are not glossed over”

Many photographs show the well known Beekeepers in stunning locations and working intimately with their bees – these have a true ecological flavour of people at one with their work and their environment. A bee-keeper examines a translucent frame of golden honey, surrounded by flying flecks as if of gold leaf.

Of course the threat to the bees from loss of ecology and other dangers, some from

other natural sources, are not glossed over. The huge loss of bees over the last couple of seasons is reported and make grim reading. We have to all remember that bees are not just essential, but vitally essential, to the propagations of other flowers and plants, carrying pollen from plant to plant.

This lack of future pollinators threatens not just the supply of honey, but also the very system of nature itself. This can be traced, many say, back to the overabundant use of pesticide by the giant agri-businesses that supply our supermarkets with the cheap food that so many demand because those who employ them often do not pay them proper socially-relevant wages.

James Morrissey, by the way, is a leading communications consultant and the author of several books. A former award-winning journalist, he was a founder director of the *Sunday Business Post*. He is a native of Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.

Lockdown literature • Chapter 3

Oh for the safety of a desert island!



In this series, some literary collaborators will be giving suggestions for lockdown reading, books of all kinds to amuse and raise our spirits. This week: Ian d'Alton writes about *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812) and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871)

For adults, children's books often open a window onto a clearer, and different, vision of the world. In these self-isolating, social distancing times, my thoughts hark back to a book I first read when an eight-year-old. That was in 1958, when another pandemic, that of polio, struck fear into us and our parents – there had been a serious outbreak in Cork in 1956-7.

Swiss Family Robinson, by Johann David Wyss, was first published in 1812. The book is about a shipwrecked family which has to make a life for themselves on an island in the East Indies. Its resonance for today lies in the atomised life of that family who, in the absence of any other human beings, have to cope with little but their own company.

They also have to be resourceful. Wyss helps the narrative by setting them up as well-provided for – they rescue everything they can from the shipwreck, from livestock to posh silverware, and their island isn't exactly a desert one either with abundant natural resources. The book, of course, has a moral purpose: careful husbandry, acting in concert with (rather than against) the natural world, co-operation, the value of family and self-discipline and self-reliance. All of which we need today, in abundance.

And if we are living through surreal times, what book is better than Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*? Everything is reversed and logic is upended – flowers can speak, unbirthdays are celebrated, imaginary figures come to life, to remain stationary you run, to walk towards something you need to walk away from it and so on. In these pandemical times, solemn press conferences carry echoes of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. How many hapless politicians seem like Humpty Dumpty?

The pen-name 'Lewis Carroll' failed to conceal the identity of a clergyman academic at Oxford who lectured in logic. But 'Carroll's' imagination seems often to be at odds with the world of the Rev. Charles Dodgson.

The book's ending – "Life, what is it but a dream?" – reflects what many of us in the 'cocooning classes' are experiencing at the moment.

Editorial note: Belloc article. Belloc's pilgrimage on foot was from Toul (Meurthe-et-Moselle), in north-eastern France, to Rome, and not from Toulouse as appears in the text (IC 28/5/20) due to an editorial oversight and not a mistake by the writer.



Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie

MQI

Merchants Quay Ireland
Homeless & Drugs Services

Your heart for the homeless

Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering

Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email emma.murphy@mqi.ie

GOAL

Please remember GOAL in your Will

42 years on we continue to deliver lifesaving support to the most vulnerable people in our world. Leaving a gift in your Will is priceless.

Contact Courtenay on 01 2809779 or via email at cpollard@goal.ie

Registered Charity No. 20010980; CHY 6271

Follow The Irish Catholic on Facebook

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

By remembering World Missions Ireland in your Will you are leaving a gift of hope for all God's children

World Missions Ireland is the Church's official charity for overseas mission

Please help your Church to survive & flourish

To learn how, call Eimear on 01 497 2035 or email eimear@wmi.ie

MESSAGE TO POPE FRANCIS, THE IRISH SISTERS OF CHARITY AND THE PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND.

"My life at 12 weeks will be taken in a hospital built on Land gifted by the Church. My Pain will be small compared to that inflicted on the Person of Christ"

Can you help our campaign?

Replies to Emmanuel Sweeney at repealthedecision@gmail.com

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.

To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact eve.kerton@focusireland.ie or phone 01 881 5917

FOCUS Ireland

Remembering

MEMORIAM CARDS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CARDS & NOTELETS

BOOKMARKS

Samples / Information

KENNEDY PRINTERS

BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND

Tel. 027 50102

www.kennedyprinters.ie

email: info@kennedyprinters.ie

LEGACY

Help evangelize Ireland by remembering The Irish Catholic in your will.

Since 1988 we have known Ireland's leading Catholic weekly. Your help will grow subscriptions to schools and poor parishes.

For more information contact us on 01-687-4020

Please remember

THE IRISH HOSPICE FOUNDATION

when making your will so that everyone in Ireland will have access to hospice care one day.

Contact: Anna Sadlier at 01 679 3188 or anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie www.hospicefoundation.ie

The Irish Catholic

PREPAID CLASSIFIED AD COUPON

Please print your advertisement in the coupon, placing ONE word in each space. Below, please print your name and address. Do you require a Box Number? YES ☐ NO ☐ (Please tick ☒) Box Number €6 extra.

1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

Name and contact detail form MUST be filled out

Name
Address
Landline Mobile
The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2.

STATE UNDER WHICH HEADING YOUR AD IS TO APPEAR:

Minimum charge of €24.60 (inc. VAT) for 5 lines (25 words). Extra lines €4.92 each.

No. of insertions: _____ weeks
Miracle Prayer €40

I enclose Cheque/PO: €..... I wish to pay by Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Laser ☐
My Visa/Mastercard/Lasercard number is: _____
Expiry Date: Signature

Phone: 01 687 4094

SERVICES

ALL UNWANTED home waste removed. Cookers, fridges, beds, suites, wardrobes, carpets etc. Removed and disposed of in a proper manner. No job too small or big. Contact Tommy, 087 6406015.

CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS

LET GOD answer your prayers for a partner. Be successfully introduced to other Catholics who are also looking for a partner. Call 'Heavenly Partners' on 01 568 6558.

BÓTHAR

PLEASE REMEMBER BÓTHAR IN YOUR WILL. €1,800 will allow us to give an Irish, in-calf, dairy heifer to a struggling family in Rwanda, completely transforming their lives. Your gift will live on for generations. Phone the office on 061 414142 or info@bothar.ie

NOVENA TO ST. CLAIRE

ASK ST. CLAIRE FOR 3 FAVOURS, one business, two impossible and say nine Hail Mary's for nine days with lighted candle. Pray whether you believe or not. Publish on ninth day. Powerful Novena. May the sacred heart of Jesus be praised, adored, glorified and loved today and every day throughout the whole world forever Amen. Say six times daily for nine days. Your request will be granted no matter how difficult it may seem. Favour publication must be promised. CP.

Leisure time

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

Legacy for Life



There is no greater legacy that will leave a mark on future generations than supporting our pro-life and pro-family work.

With your legacy commitment today we will Rebuild a Culture of Life in Ireland.

Call for our free brochure today to find out how you can save countless lives for years to come.

For further advice or to avail of our Solicitor's free Wills service, please contact us today on

01-8552790

Family & Life

26 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1
Ph: 01 8552790 | email: fandi@iol.ie

www.familyandlife.org
www.prolife.ie

Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

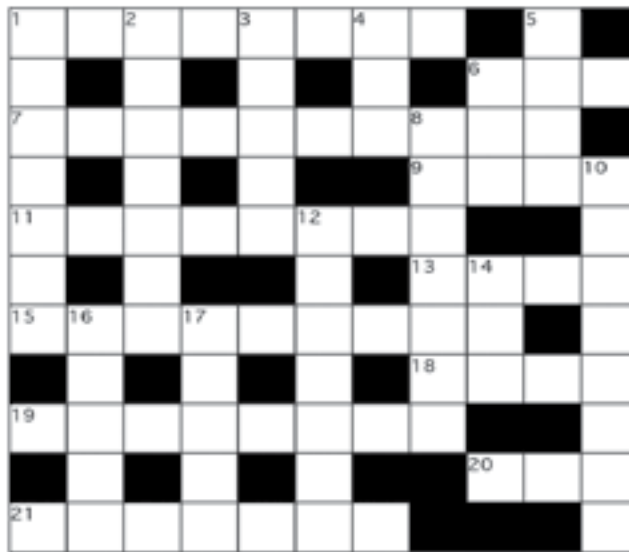
Trócaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 335



Across

- 1 As it when you want an answer (8)
6 Tree which gives us acorns (3)
7 Having fun on a rink (3-7)
9 You'll find this plant beside water (4)
11 Three-sided shape (8)
13 Not as much (4)
15 24 hours ago (9)
18 Close to (4)
19 Press (8)
20 Happiness (3)
21 Controlled the direction of a car or other vehicle (7)

Down

- 2 Silently (7)
3 Put it in a slot - it looks just like a coin (5)
4 Not in (3)
5 An animal may be locked up in one (4)
6 Number that means a single thing (3)
8 The Emerald Isle (7)
10 Completely wrecks (8)
12 What Americans may call rubbish (7)
14 What you see with (3)
16 Blow up, like a volcano (5)
17 Piece of furniture (5)

SOLUTIONS, MAY 28

GORDIUS No. 457

Across — 1 Ash 3 Harum-scarum 8 Emboss 9 Gaslight 10 Icily
11 Owllet 13 Widow 15 Arsenic 16 Aerosol 20 Thank 22 Doors
23 Fatwa 24 Ave Verum Corpus 26 Chock-a-block 27 Woe

Down — 1 Ameliorated 2 Hebrides 3 Hasty 4 Upgrade 5 Cello
6 Regale 7 Mat 12 Tallahassee 13 Waist 14 Whelk 17 Southpaw
18 Caramel 19 Come to 22 Sneak 23 Flock 24 Arc

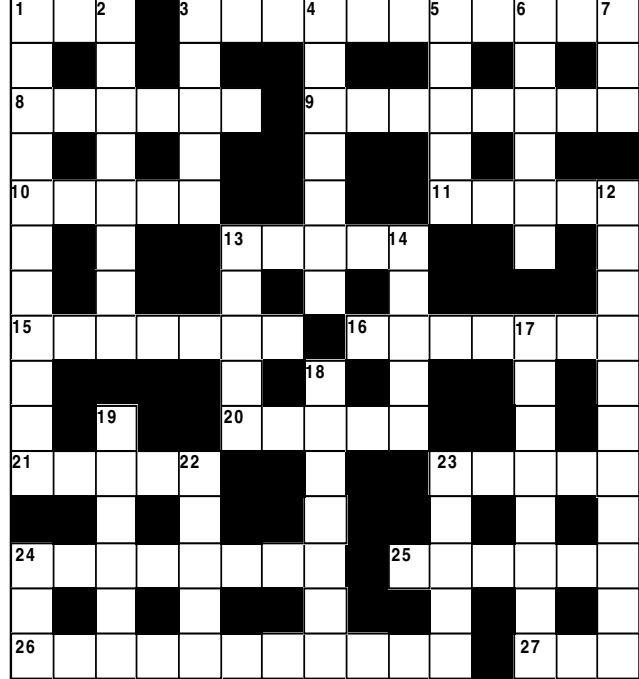
CHILDREN'S No. 334

Across — 1 Cardboard 7 Run 8 Imaginary 9 Kites 11 Again
13 Nails 15 Diets 16 Soap 17 Avoids 19 Enters 20 Wand

Down — 1 Chicken 2 Roast 3 Boils 4 Adam and Eve 5 Dry
6 Invents 10 Eclipse 12 America 14 Acorn 18 Sad

Crossword

Gordius 458



Across

- 1 That Sligo cardinal is a pig! (3)
3 Firework you might light in a church in the Eternal City? (5,6)
8 Oak nuts (6)
9 & 23d Will this great writer have the fig ravioli now cooked? (8,5)
10 Lies out in the sun (5)
11 The automaton will nick half the Bible, initially (5)
13 Perfectly clear (5)
15 As parched as a patella or as sere as a sternum, perhaps (4,3)
16 The act of saying no (7)
20 Bird one might greet strangely (5)
21 Animal bedding made of some finest rawhide (5)
23 Aspired (5)
24 Ballerina Anna's sweet creations? (8)
25 She's in charge of an orderly group! (6)
26 The products created here are of interest to campanologists (4,7)
27 Twenty-four hours (3)

Down

- 1 Suds (4,7)
2 Forester who can make a dam swoon (8)
3 Jewellery? Sounds like the products of 26 across! (5)
4 Go forward (7)
5 With fury, a Glasgow footballer loses the head! (5)
6 This river is not always as blue as Strauss would have us believe! (6)
7 The Age of the Eastern artist (3)
12 & 17d The first words of the twenty-third psalm (3,4,2,2,8)
13 Big regal upset (5)
14 Resided (5)
17 See 12 down
18 Mr Icon's turning red (7)
19 Note, the bolero man is small and stony (6)
22 See 9 across
23 Does this bird hunt just as a pastime? (5)
24 "The Local" (3)

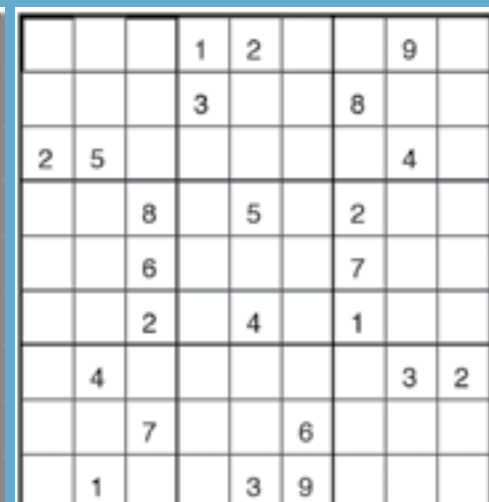
Sudoku Corner

335

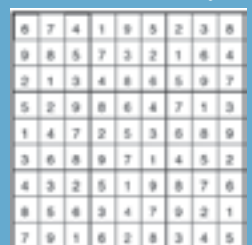
Easy



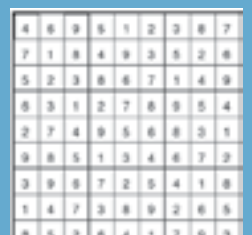
Hard



Last week's Easy 334



Last week's Hard 334



Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



One small step for SpaceX, one giant mention for God

I ONCE HEARD the comedian Ardal O'Hanlon say that he would love to have his own chat show and invite famous people to be his guests. The twist was that he would not talk to them about what they expected. He gave an example: "I'd love to have Neil Armstrong on and talk to him for a full hour, but never mention the Moon!"

Then he said: "Well, maybe with a minute to go, just mention it but then move on to something else before he got a chance to reply!" I thought it was funny and a clever take. So, I have decided this weekend not to mention Covid-19 – apart from that quick mention. Sure, in fairness, it's not our guest anyway. We never wanted it.

Launch

I'm not going to mention the Moon either, but I am going to say something about space. I watched the launch of SpaceX on Saturday, having watched the attempted launch a few nights earlier. That launch was cancelled at the last minute because of bad weather. It reminded me of having to cancel Cemetery Masses in July or August for the same reason so I felt a

The SpaceX launch.



certain empathy with them. I jest of course.

So much precision, planning and not to mention money, had gone into that launch and every detail was executed to the finest degree of accuracy but weather

had its say and all was called off. Cancelling a Cemetery Mass or a parish event would certainly be an easier call, though disappointing too.

In any case, I watched again on Saturday night and all the planning, staged photo opportunities, commentary and analysis came down to those last ten seconds.

As SpaceX began its journey, the announcer continued: "Go SpaceX, go NASA..." and then "God speed, Bob and Doug."

I have to say I found that moving. Millions of people tuned in all over the world and God's blessing was called for. I wondered was it just a throw-away remark but still rejoiced that it had its place in this moment.

As these men headed into space at a speed that could reach 17,500 mph, there was no questioning

their speed but that speed was put into God's hands. It seemed so right. Within 15 minutes, for those with eyes to see, Bob and Doug's trail could be seen over Irish skies. I was also moved to hear a phrase 'notification Shannon' as the SpaceX began its journey. A call out to Shannon Airport that in the event of anything going wrong at that second, the mission would be cancelled and SpaceX would land in the Atlantic off the west coast of Ireland and Shannon airport was on alert, to arrange and be part of rescue.

“There is something about not being afraid to acknowledge God”

The world felt very small and it was comforting to believe God was watching over that world.

I mentioned this at Mass on

Pentecost Sunday, about not being afraid to call on God in the public square or to witness to him in our conversations.

Recalling our Irish language with its repeated mention of God, even in every day phrases, there is something about not being afraid to acknowledge God. Since then, a friend in America who heard my homily via webcam, told me he too was moved and that the phrase goes back to 1962, when John Glenn became the first American to circumnavigate the Earth. Just before the 10-second countdown, the announcer said: "God speed, John Glenn."

While the placement of the call for God's blessing may have shifted, there was still something very right about its inclusion and the holding on to the sacredness of that piece of tradition.

In a word, 'witness'.

● Though I said I would not mention our uninvited guest, I think in these days after Pentecost, there is room to focus on some of the Spirit's gifts.

It seems to me that we need 'patience' now and that to rush anything

at this time could well be ill-judged.

'Right judgement' must have its voice too, alongside 'reverence' and 'understanding' all leading us to a place and time where we can express more fully 'wonder and

awe' in God's presence. We need to respect the gift of 'judgement' and take counsel and advice.

The Pentecost story led the disciples out of a locked room and onto their streets. Our journey, rooted in seeking the fullness of

the Spirit's gifts, seeks to bring us from our streets through locked doors and into the 'borrowed room' that is our parish church.

We look forward to that day of shared worship.

For now, in a word: patience.



Bishop Jaya Rao Polimera and members of Eluru Diocese, Andhra Pradesh, India, distribute aid packages to those made poor by the covid crisis.



YOUR GIFT WILL HELP PROVIDE FOOD FOR THE POOR AND MARGINALISED

Your gift can make a life-and-death difference for desperately poor families and for sick and needy people who are struggling in the midst of the present covid crisis. The Little Way Association has received many urgent appeals from bishops, priests, sisters and missionaries asking for help for those in their care.

Sr Eileen Quirke of the Presentation Sisters in Quito, Ecuador, writes: "We are very aware of the conditions in which our poor and marginalised families around us try to live and survive. The current pandemic has shown up many sad economic, social and medical problems. Unemployment and corruption are very much in evidence. Your help for the poor and needy would be very much appreciated."

Bishop Jaya Rao Polimera of Eluru, India, writes: "People lack food and other basic necessities because of the lockdown and urgently need assistance. Your support will be a great help for us to reach out to the poor and marginalised people."

Heidi Caluori of Arco in Sao Paulo, Brazil, writes: "The people from the slums are the hardest hit by the virus. Not being able to work any more means people do not receive a salary and have no money to buy food. Families are battling against hunger. We want to continue to distribute food to the people in the surrounding slums. We need your donations!"

Every cent that you send for our "hungry, sick and deprived fund" will go intact to those who look after the very poor

You can give online at tinyurl.com/lwadonations or ring us for our bank details on 00 44 20 7622 0466.

Mass is offered daily for all our supporters' intentions. Thank you so much for your prayers and your continued practical support.



MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

Your Mass offerings help to provide the missionary priest's maintenance and assist him to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth.

We like to send a missionary a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass.

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:
€..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND DEPRIVED**
€..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state number)
€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

IC/06/04