

# The Irish Catholic

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# Derry's pride



## Ireland bids farewell to a prophet and a peacemaker

Chai Brady

Delivering an island at peace was John Hume's life calling, the bishop of his native Derry has said.

Bishop Donal McKeown told *The Irish Catholic* that the city was overcome with two emotions when news of Mr Hume's death was announced by his family on Monday. "One was great sorrow at the death, the other is pride in what he was able to achieve and the status he

attained without ever forgetting who he was and where he was from," Dr McKeown said.

The bishop said that he was struck by the fact that while Mr Hume had spent time in seminary discerning a vocation to the priesthood, "he discovered he had a vocation for peacemaking and he stuck to that almost like that was his life's calling – to be a maker of peace, to be a reconciler".

Bishop McKeown said that Mr Hume had

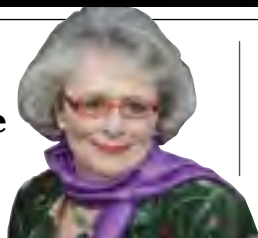
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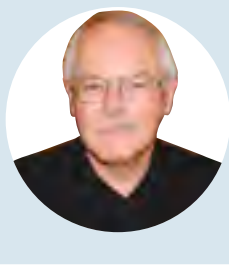


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**Managing Editor:** Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

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

**Multimedia Journalists:** Chai Brady, chai@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

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# A great man has fallen



## Editor’s Comment

### Michael Kelly

I had just turned 18 when the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998. I was on retreat for Holy Week at the time and therefore was forbidden to listen to the radio so as not to break the pattern of the retreat.

I had the profound sense that something momentous was happening and figured that God would understand, so I listened to the radio anyway. That Holy Week was full of ups and downs. To call the peace process ‘off-on’ at that stage was an understatement. Our hopes were all dashed by the walk-outs on Holy Thursday and – not unlike the first Holy Thursday – all seemed lost.

But as night gave way to daylight, a deal emerged and in the afternoon the leaders were ready to sign the accord.

**Mixed emotions**

It was with mixed emotions that I voted for the agreement some weeks later. The first time I was entitled to vote. I say mixed emotions not because I was in any doubt about what way to vote, I wasn’t.

But my joy at the potential of the agreement was tempered by sadness at the lives that had been lost and the thousands of people who had been maimed during the conflict we euphemistically call ‘the Troubles’.

Growing up in the North in the 1980s, my life and the lives of my contemporaries was characterised by the wastefulness of it all.

**“He did not denounce violence because it was counterproductive... he rejected it because it was morally wrong”**

The wasted lives, the lost opportunities, the missed chances, the shattered dreams. Thousands of people left the North and never returned. In the city of Belfast with the largest church attendance in western Europe, we had walls to keep Christians apart from other Christians. God made us neighbours to one another, and we weren’t good neighbours.

The Good Friday Agreement represented such potential and John Hume was the father of that historic accord. Even as a very young child, I watched him on television and was impressed by his moral courage.

He was no political cynic. He did not denounce violence because it was counterproductive (which it was), he rejected it because it was morally wrong. He was unshakable in his conviction that the most important thing was to get the killing to stop. And he eventually convinced the provisional IRA of this fact. While they may never have gone as far as Mr Hume in reflecting on the immoral nature of violence, they did accept that it was not a credible way forward.

If that was his only achievement, it would surely have been enough to earn him a place in the pantheon of the greats. But Mr Hume went on to see his long-cherished values enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement.

His tireless efforts ensured that my generation was the first in the North that genuinely held our destiny in our own hands. After decades of discrimination and prejudice, he showed young Catholics that they could have a place in building a shared future together.

**Dividing walls**

The home we are building together in the North is far from perfect, and there are tragically more dividing walls in Belfast than at the height of the conflict. But things are moving forward: young people are finding chances and opportunities and not fleeing elsewhere. Relationships between the communities are tentative but growing.

Any post-conflict society takes time to normalise, and this is as true of the North as anywhere else that has suffered such immense trauma. But a new dawn is emerging and more than any other person, we have John Hume to thank for that legacy.

May he rejoice now in that place where Lazarus is poor no longer.

## Ireland bids farewell to John Hume – a prophet and a peacemaker

» Continued from Page 1

been almost a daily Mass-goer while his health permitted. He also shared a powerful memory of Mr Hume’s devout Faith.

“The last memory of him in the church that sticks in my mind would be on Good Friday in 1919. It was John at the kissing of the Cross – shuffling up and kissing the cross. A man who had trod the stage of the world, who had got all these peace prizes, and yet he was kissing the Cross of Jesus Christ – one who was prepared to give his life for others.

“And in many ways I think John could be said to have decided that he wanted to shed all of his sweat rather than anybody else’s blood, and I think John is somebody who gave his life for the peace process and paid a big price for it,” Bishop McKeown said.

Mr Hume is survived by his wife Pat and was laid to rest following requiem Mass in St Eugene’s Cathedral, Derry yesterday (Wednesday). He was 83 and died after a long illness

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# Chelsea star Olivier Giroud sports jersey saying 'Choose Jesus, Eternal Life'

Jason Osborne

Chelsea FC striker Olivier Giroud [pictured] was seen sporting a jersey over the weekend which read, "Choose Jesus, Eternal Life". While this was set against Chelsea's defeat at the hands of Arsenal, the star seeks his solace elsewhere.

The French national and world cup-winner is a staunch Christian and has expressed his faith in God many times both on the pitch and off it.

On his right arm he bears a tattoo which reads: "Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit,"

which translates as the oft-quoted line from Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Further to this, Mr Giroud guest edited an edition of the French magazine, *Jesus!*, which purports to be the first magazine of which Jesus is the hero.

## Opportunity

His entire life, both professional and personal, is related back to God. During an interview in which he discussed the moment his French team won the World Cup, he paused to gesture to his arm and reflect on God: "I'm very religious so, at that moment, I just thanked God. I was very grateful to have the opportunity to live my dream."

"To live every single day for me is a day blessed."

Taken to church every Sunday by his mother as a child, he engaged eagerly with his Church of England parish in London.

Deepening the habit his mother instilled in him at a young age, he said in the same interview:

"After, I just carried on and now I'm seeing a Christian priest, studying the Bible together and I feel like I want to know more about Jesus Christ's life and every time I read the word of the Holy Bible it makes me feel grateful about everything that has happened to me. And positive. Because so many bad things happen in the world."

## Pub helps parents mark Confirmations together

Chai Brady

A Dublin pub has been helping parents come together to celebrate their child's Confirmation this week by opening early and livestreaming the event.

Due to the coronavirus some parents haven't been able to attend Confirmation ceremonies, with only the sponsor being allowed in some churches. After being asked by the parents of children receiving Confirmation this week in St Kilian's Church in Kingswood, The Kingswood Lodge answered the call and set out to accommodate about 40-50 people on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Pius O'Connell of The Kingswood Lodge said the event would be "socially distant totally, we have to stick to the rules".

"This is very much a local pub, we're in the middle of a housing estate here in Kingswood and any way that we can support the local community is great from our point of view. It'll be teas, coffees, scones, sandwiches, that's it, I think the Confirmations go on from 11am until 1pm, so it'll only be people that are associated, or have an interest in the Confirmations across the road that will come across."

With the pub being very close to the church, Mr O'Connell said: "The way I would see it is that some of the parents will drop their

kids off, get their photos taken outside the church, unfortunately they won't be able to go in, at least they have somewhere to come for the hour - across to us and hopefully they can watch their little John or Mary getting their Confirmation."

Mr O'Connell explained that even with social distancing

the pub's lounge "can hold a decent crowd" and there would be no problem accommodating 40-50 people.

Due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic the pub has restricted its opening hours - it now only opens at 2pm midweek but an exception was made after a request by parishioners.



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## Anger over archbishop's attendance at Muslim ceremony 'misplaced'

**Chai Brady**

An Irish expert in dialogue between Catholics and Muslims has said the protest and negativity regarding the Archbishop of Dublin's attendance at a Muslim celebration at Croke Park is "misplaced".

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin was met with screaming protestors outside Croke Park and has received criticism online for attending Eid al-Adha, one of two Islamic holidays celebrated yearly around the world. Due to the coronavirus restrictions 200 Muslims were permitted to attend a prayer service on the pitch over the weekend.

A video posted on YouTube shows the archbishop's car being surrounded and banged on, with people shouting

"traitor" and other abuse.

Fr Michael O'Sullivan M.Afr., who spent decades in the Middle East and is now the director of World Missions Ireland, defended Archbishop Martin saying he was "showing solidarity".

"This is in line of what the Catholic Church has been doing since Vatican II or even before it. There's nothing really controversial about a Catholic Church leader attending a Muslim celebration in that way, it has been done by many, many before him in other parts of the world," he said.

Fr O'Sullivan said he would "discourage" negativity and protests – at which many people were chanting the Rosary. He described the anger as "totally misplaced".

"The Muslims were having this important prayer in a public space that was granted to them by the GAA... Archbishop Martin was invited," he said.

"Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II have accepted similar invitations for the last 40 years and Catholic Church leaders all over would accept an invitation like that.

### Willingness

"It's in keeping with the Catholic Church's outreach and willingness to dialogue with the Muslim community and it was epitomised just over a year and a half ago with Pope Francis' signing of the Declaration for Human Fraternity in Abu Dhabi, at which I was present in February of 2019."

At the event Archbishop

Martin, who was joined by other religious leaders, said: "This is a very propitious moment for the Muslim community in Ireland. On the one hand, we are all at the event saddened not to be able to host large celebrations in our own places of worship due to the current coronavirus measures.

"On the other hand, there is something special at having this Muslim celebration here in Croke Park. Croke Park is a special gathering place for Ireland and for all Irish.

"I am honoured that you have kindly asked me as Archbishop of Dublin, the leader of the Catholic community of believers in Jesus Christ here in Dublin, to be part of your celebration."



Representatives of Marian Pilgrimages in Medjugorje proudly flew the Irish flag at the shrine as people gathered to celebrate the annual youth festival. Normally thousands of young Irish people would participate but due to Covid-19 restrictions pilgrims were unable to travel this year.

## Abortion activist 'cancelled' by Dublin's EPIC museum

**Ruadhán Jones**

EPIC, the Irish emigration museum, has removed a photograph of abortion activist Margaret Sanger from its buildings after a complaint about her racist and eugenicist views.

Ms Sanger, the daughter of Irish emigrants to the US, was recently "cancelled" by American-based abortion provider Planned Parenthood due to her "racist legacy".

In light of this decision, EPIC received a query from Angelo Bottone, a UCD philosophy professor and researcher for the Iona Institute, asking if they would be removing the poster.

EPIC responded on July 22, confirming that it would review the poster "as a matter of priority" and make a decision soon. On

July 29, they confirmed that the poster would be removed.

Nathan Mannion, senior curator at EPIC, said that the poster had only been placed there temporarily and would be taken down as it was an "uncontextualised image, with no accompanying background or material".

Two years ago, some visitors to EPIC took issue with Ms Sanger's entry in the museum, and it was changed to emphasise the more controversial aspects of her birth-control philosophy.

Born in New York in 1879, Ms Sanger opened America's first birth-control clinic in 1916 and founded the American Birth Control League, later Planned Parenthood, in 1921.

Though still a feminist icon, Mr Sanger's support for eugenics and racist views are now increasingly criticised.

## Just one in ten GPs sign up for abortion

**Jason Osborne**

Just 385 general practitioners have signed up to the Government's controversial scheme to carry out abortions despite handsome financial rewards for doing so.

This stands against a backdrop of 3,496 GPs currently practicing in Ireland, which makes the percentage of GPs who've signed up to perform abortion in the country 11.01% of the country's total general practitioners.

With 48 hospitals in Ireland, the 10 that have signed up to perform terminations represent 20.83% of the country's hospitals.

### Incentives

With the Government struggling to increase the number of doctors signed on to perform abortion, monetary incentives have been employed, with GPs receiving in the region of €400 per abortion.

Despite the lack of support the Government is receiving from the medical profession, 2019 saw over 19 abortions per day, totalling out at 6,666 abortions carried out for the year in Ireland. With the 345 abortions performed on Irish women in England and Wales included, the total number of abortions carried out on the unborn came to 7,041.



# Pondering the force of habit

It is none of my business whether Catholic friends and neighbours attend weekly Mass or not. After all, I spent formative years in France where I was told by a Catholic father of seven children that he only attended Mass occasionally, saying: “*Je suis Catholique, mais je ne suis pas fanatique!*” This French *paterfamilias* evidently thought it the sign of a “fanatic” to attend Mass every Sunday! (Although he sent his children to Sunday Mass.)

We are enjoined to attend Mass on Sundays, but people must abide by their own consciences, and it's certainly not for others to judge.

Yet a congregation is a coming-together of the Faithful, and if some disappear from the congregation, and they are folk you like to see, you may miss them.

### Lockdown

It so happened that over the past 10 days I've run into two people who regularly attended our local parish church in the days before lockdown. I



Mary Kenny



Mass after lockdown: in many churches, the fear factor remains and habits are broken.

like them both and used to enjoy a chat after the weekend Mass, but neither of them has reappeared since the church re-opened last month.

Quite independently, both individuals – one a woman, one a man – said the same thing: “I keep meaning to go back to Mass, but during lockdown, I just feel I've got out of the habit.”

No, neither of them is fearful of the pandemic effect – both are robust characters who know that

if you behave sensibly and follow the guidelines, there is no problem in resuming a fairly normal life. But they've grown accustomed to a different shape of weekend activity now, and Mass has somehow dropped off the schedule.

As I say, their decision is none of my business, but it did set me thinking about the role of habit in our lives, including in our spiritual lives. Sometimes habit has been disdained as ‘going through the motions’, or

even ‘empty ritual’; some think you should only do something because you really and truly mean it, and are fully committed to it. But as a professional writer and journalist, I have learned, after long working practice over five decades, that the discipline of writing depends on the habit of sitting down to write.

**“I wonder if there is a parallel with actually going to church, physically, every week: maintain the habit”**

This was a lesson laid down by the great novelist Anthony Trollope, who said that the most important principle for a writer is to develop the habit of writing every day, whether you feel like it or not. His motto was: “No day without a line.”

Trollope could be almost mechanistic about this – counting the words he had

committed to paper, even when he felt no inspiration whatsoever. But he had maintained his habit, and through the habit of writing, novels – which have since become classics – were formed.

I wonder if there is a parallel with actually going to church, physically, every week: maintain the habit, even if you don't always feel the glow of Faith.

Elsewhere, my friend Melanie McDonagh, an Irish writer working in London, has suggested something interesting about the Greeks: they are significantly ahead of other European nations in rating God as important in their lives. The Greeks, she points out, adhere to practice – not just thinking and believing.

They support the practice of fasting and feasting, observing saints' days and holy days, of venerating street shrines and holy pictures. It's the practice that maintains the focus of Faith.

Indeed so.



### Short and succinct

● There will be so much to remember from John Hume's life and leadership. But let us especially remember these abiding words of his: “The taking of human life is the greatest injustice of all.”

## Che bello! A graduate at a sprightly 96!



Guiseppe Paterno.

I am lost in admiration for Guiseppe Paterno, the 96-year-old Sicilian former railway worker who has recently become Italy's oldest graduate. He never got the chance to be a student when he was young, so three years ago he decided to become one at the University of Palermo. He has just been awarded his degree in history and philosophy.

It's nothing short of inspiring, and I'm tempted to emulate this excellent

veteran – being 20 years his junior!

My problem with academic life is that I am too disputatious. When I attended university sessions in middle life, I was too inclined to argue with the profs, who were almost all emphatically left-wing – by middle age I'd grown out of cultural Marxism. From what I read, they're even worse now, and anyone with conservative views – or, indeed, religious values – is obliged to keep such

opinions strictly private (according to a British survey, just published by the think-tank Policy Exchange). People can be fired or cancelled if their views are not aligned with the ‘woke’ version of politics and society.

Perhaps the solution is to attend university in Sicily! I am sure Italian uni life is entirely tolerant, and now that Mr Paterno has made them so proud, is especially favourable to senior-age students.

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# Pro-life campaigner slams ‘hypocrisy’ over Twitter storm

Jason Osborne

Pro-life campaigner and student Gavin Boyne (22) has criticised what he has described as inconsistent criticism of when people come under fire on social media.

This comes in the wake of the recent controversy surrounding Senator Fintan Warfield, which saw a picture surface on social media of the Sinn Féin representative wearing speedos and sporting a Pope Francis t-shirt from the World Meeting of Families in 2018.

This resulted in a torrent of online criticism and alleged abuse which saw Senator Warfield report some tweets to gardaí.

Politicians and journalists rushed to the aid of Senator Warfield, condemning the alleged abuse. Former Minister for Health, Simon Harris, tweeted: “Solidarity with the Senator. Disgusting and vile abuse directed at him. Those behind it and those who quietly stand by and refuse to condemn it are disgraceful. Shame on them.”

“Twitter and other social media companies would want to wake up

and take action”.

Responding to the events on Twitter, Mr Boyne referred to the debacle as “hypocritical”. He tweeted that in 2018 a photo was shared on Twitter by journalists which had been “dug up by trolls who trawled my personal social media accounts. The reason the photo had been dug up was because I was campaigning for a ‘No’ vote in the #Repeal referendum.”

**Direction**

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mr Boyne said that “if you happen to be Catholic or pro-life” then abuse

and condemnation in your direction appear to be justified.

Speaking of his experiences of the abuse, he said: “I received some of the most vile and personal attacks after... this, people telling me to kill myself, that I should have been aborted, to watch out because I was going to be beaten up.

“I had people on my Facebook, random accounts, commenting under pictures of me and my family.”

He concluded by describing it as “an extremely difficult period of my life to deal with”.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Nuns walk 26 miles in prayer relay for frontline workers

An order of nuns in Dublin took part in a walking prayer relay in tribute to frontline workers tackling Covid-19 this week.

The 12 Redemptoristine Sisters at St Alphonus Road in Drumcondra walked the distance of a marathon on Monday, with each of them walking an hour and 15 minutes.

### At risk

Speaking to *The Irish Times* Sr Lucy said: “We said the Rosary for all who had died and suffered and all those who have and are putting their lives at risk to care for people with the disease.

“That includes all the heroes who have been there on the button as well, the post people, those who have fed us, those who have continued to help us in every way through this. Dr [Tony] Holohan and his poor wife. Yes, journalists too, they kept people informed,” she said.

.....

### Ms Freda Nolan RIP

The Vice Chairperson of the CEIST Board of Directors, Ms Freda Nolan, has died late last week.

In 2016, she was appointed by members of CEIST to the Board of Directors.

In 2017, Ms Nolan joined the Audit Committee and in 2018 was appointed Vice Chairperson of the company; a position she held until her death.

Prior to her time with CEIST, Ms Nolan worked at a senior level within the Civil Service.

### Statement

According to a statement from CEIST, Ms Nolan gave her time generously to CEIST, contributing meaningfully to strengthening Catholic education in Ireland.

She is survived by her mother Mary, her sisters, Mary, Angela and Collette, her brothers Mattie, Michael and Seán, and her nieces and nephews.

May she rest in peace.

## OPW disavows responsibility for ancient Irish church

Staff reporter

The Office of Public Works has rejected responsibility for the preservation of a pre-Anglo-Norman church and ancient stone crosses in south Dublin.

Tully church and a number of ancient stone crosses date from between the 10th to the 13th Century, and the church is possibly of Hiberno-Norse design.

In a response to a parliamentary question, Minister with responsibility for the OPW Patrick O'Donovan said it had a list of some 700 sites across the State for which it was responsible, but the church and stone crosses were not listed.

“The department’s National Monuments Service has been unclear,” Mr O'Donovan said, “in recent days about its specific roles and powers.”

The church and crosses are within the Cherrywood strategic development zone (SDZ) in Dublin, and were to become the focal point for a new park.

Mr O'Donovan said the OPW’s heritage services had not been “directly involved or consulted” and was “not responsible at a national level for the protection of heritage, generally”.

## Welcome, Cónall!



Cónall Patrick Hanrahan is invited into the family of Faith – he is pictured with parents Hazel and Aidan from Gortnafrehaune, Kildysart parish, Co. Clare.

# Irish aid agencies team up tackle coronavirus in Sierra Leone

Ruadhán Jones

Three of Ireland’s largest aid agencies, Concern, Trócaire and GOAL, have teamed up with the Government to implement a €1.5 million Covid response plan that aims to support 400,000 people.

At the project’s launch last week, Ambassador of Ireland Lesley Ni Bhrian praised the “essential response work” the

three charities will carry out in Sierra Leone.

“All three Irish agencies have extensive experience responding to global emergencies and their experience in tackling Ebola has been particularly beneficial in responding to Covid-19,” she said.

In a statement, Trócaire said that the aim of the initiative is to “mitigate the impact of the virus on the country’s

most vulnerable communities”.

Covid-19 has already spread in all 16 of Sierra Leone’s districts, with over 1,700 cases so far, putting pressure on an already fragile health system.

**Initiative**

The initiative will take a “bottom-up approach”, placing local organisations at the centre of the response.

The agencies aim to empower communities to protect themselves through the provision of “training on prevention and control of the virus, as well as hand-wash materials”.

**Masks**

The organisations will also provide essential supplies such as soap, sanitisers, and face masks to the poorest regions of Sierra Leone.

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We've moved



Nuala O’Loan

The View



# Finding courage to do the right thing



As I sit to write, the news of John Hume’s death has just broken. There is one word that comes to mind when I think of John: courage. With Pat, his wonderful wife, at his side, ever encouraging, ever supporting, he marched through dangerous, hostile, challenging, territory to bring us peace here in Ireland.

Without him, I am sure, we would have suffered many more years of terror, indescribable horror, and desperation. He lived his life well. May his great soul rest in peace, and, as we thank Pat for her loving contribution to his work, may his family have the comfort of knowing that he brought peace and hope to millions of people, not just in Ireland but across the world.

Another great man is struggling on, trying to find the way to deal with the repression, the denial of human rights, the terror, the genocide that is the reality of life in China today for those who do not subscribe to the Chinese Communist Party’s ideology. Pope Francis is trying to negotiate his way through a massive dilemma, staying absolutely faithful to the Gospel in all respects.

Complexity

The complexity of the Chinese situation cannot be overstated. I wrote last month about the abuse of ethnic minorities in China, the concentration camps to which millions have been taken, the forced sterilisation, organ harvesting, genocide and slave labour being endured by millions.

The world is beginning to recognise these scandalous, gross breaches of human rights and to call them out for what they are, to condemn the Chinese Communist Party for its inhumanity and its arrogance. I have no doubt that Pope Francis is absolutely aware of what is going on in China, and I am equally sure that he grieves for all who suffer there, and who have suffered for so long as they strive to live a life in a community of religion, be it the Church, or other denominations or faiths. I hope that he will find the right words to speak with authority

and compassion directly to the Chinese Communist Party and its leaders, and to condemn in the strongest terms the terrible abuses we see today in China. That might be described as the easy bit.

“The Chinese Communist Party has long been determined to destroy religion”

For in so doing Francis must seek to help, not to endanger further the 10-12 million Catholics who live there. Theirs has been a long and difficult journey.

Another Jesuit priest, an extraordinary character called Matteo Ricci, went over 400 years ago to bring the Faith to China.

There is a wonderful book based on his writings and journals, *The Wise Man from the West*. A scholar and a profoundly pastoral man, ever respectful of the culture of the Chinese people even when it was contrary to everything he believed, he died in 1610, much respected in Beijing, celebrated because of his

scholarship and his way of life. Yet he and those to whom he ministered had suffered terribly.

Since he died in 1610, Chinese Catholics have continued to suffer much, as they did in his lifetime.

Over centuries of repression Christians have been tortured, imprisoned and killed, their churches destroyed.

The Chinese Communist Party has long been determined to destroy religion. All loyalty belongs, under Chinese ideology, to the state and there is no space for those who affirm that God is, and that his law is pre-eminent. There is no space for freedom of belief and conscience, for genuine faith, in the Chinese Communist Party’s China.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Chinese Catholic church became an ‘underground Church’, functioning in the most difficult circumstances, then split, as some of its number chose to align themselves with a new ‘patriotic Church’ and were granted some rights by the Chinese government. It was a church, subject to a hostile state and divided in a way

that I do not really think we can comprehend.

Pope Francis has been trying to find a way forward, to heal that split, to create diplomatic relations with China, so that progress can be made. His much criticised, yet unpublished provisional agreement with the Chinese government in 2018 (which related to the appointment of bishops in China and which is said to give the Chinese a say in who is appointed bishop, subject to Pope Francis’ final decision), was an attempt to use the channels of diplomacy to achieve initial change.

“Francis is trying to negotiate a way in which the Church in China can be safe”

This was despite Canon Law which provides that “for the future no rights or privileges be conceded to civil authorities in regard to the election, nomination or presentation of bishops”.

American Jesuit, Fr Paul Mariani, wrote of the risks attaching to that agreement thus: “It would be naive in the extreme to think that the Chinese government wants any positive outcomes for the Church.” Yet, if we

are to achieve change, then we have to deal with the Chinese government. Francis is trying to negotiate a way in which the Church in China can be safe. The alternative – pure condemnation of human rights abuses has some effect, but it is not enough.

Plight

Pastor Martin Niemuller, who was originally an anti-semitic Nazi supporter in Germany, spoke up against the Nazis as he began to realise what they were doing, and he ended up in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Many years later, trying to alert the world to what happens when we ignore the plight of others he explained what had happened in simple terms:

*First they came for the communists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a communist.  
Then they came for the socialists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a socialist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
And I did not speak out  
Because I was not a trade unionist.  
Then they came for the Jews  
And I did not speak out*

*Because I was not a Jew.  
Then they came for me  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for me.*

The Vatican’s Secretariat of State is working in profoundly challenging and sensitive terrain to build a relationship with China at a time when the world is becoming aware of the atrocities inherent in the current government of China and is beginning to take action against China.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Archbishop Paul Gallagher and others in the Secretariat of State must do the work of diplomacy in the way that diplomats do that work: quietly, carefully, thinking deeply, identifying the possible consequences of proposed action and weighing all up, seeking to discern the best possible way forward in the context of what is happening today.

It is the most difficult of work. It is the work of God. This is Francis’ challenge.

We must pray that they will be enlightened by the Holy Spirit in their work and that what seems impossible now will become a reality – that the Church in China may be set free and that her people will have that freedom of religion which we take so much for granted today.

I hope that,  
one day,  
my grandchildren  
will ask  
“What WAS  
cancer?”

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Irish Cancer Society



# Tributes pour in for late John Hume

## ‘A paragon of peace’

**Archbishop Eamon Martin**

*Primate of All-Ireland*

“A great sadness has descended on my home city of Derry today as we learn of the death of one of our greatest sons, Mr John Hume. That sadness ripples out to every corner of Ireland and all around the world where the mere mention of the name of John Hume evokes admiration, respect and thanksgiving for a life dedicated to peace and social justice. Today we are remembering a paragon of peace, a giant of a statesman whose legacy of unstinting service to the Common Good is internationally acclaimed, even though it is still perhaps only unfolding.

As a young person growing up in Derry I was hugely influenced by this man of principle. For me, like many other pupils of St Columb’s College, John Hume was considered one of our heroes and role models.

### College

“When I went to study for the priesthood at Maynooth I was happy to know that he too had once been a seminarian for the Diocese of Derry. But John’s vocation was to serve God and his community as a layman, and he totally devoted his energies to that vocation – to relieving poverty, challenging injustice and providing decent living conditions for all.

Later, as a priest working in Derry, I came to know John as a man whose convictions were rooted in a



deep faith, in prayer and practical Christianity. I was honoured to announce eight years ago that Pope Benedict XVI had conferred on him a papal knighthood in recognition of his commitment to peace, reconciliation, non-violence and social justice. John put Catholic Social Teaching into practice – sometimes at great personal cost and risk – working ceaselessly for a process of reconciliation through which the dignity of every human person is recognised and upheld.

For me, this is best summarized in the words of his Nobel Laureate speech (1998): ‘I want to see Ireland as an example to men and women everywhere of what can be achieved by living for ideals, rather than fighting for them, and

by viewing each and every person as worthy of respect and honour. I want to see an Ireland of partnership where we wage war on want and poverty, where we reach out to the marginalised and dispossessed, where we build together a future that can be as great as our dreams allow.’

Every so often we come across a person of vision, who lifts us up to see and think beyond the confines of our own, much narrower, perspectives. John Hume was such a man of vision, whose dreams were challenging but always achievable – whether it was ‘people helping people’ in a credit union or ‘countries assisting countries’ in the European project – he lived out the principle of *Ní neart go cur le chéile* (there is no strength without working together).

His secret was to encourage the pooling of ideas and resources to raise the hopes and opportunities for all. *B’fhéidir nach bheidh a leitheid arís ann* – it is now up to the rest of us to step up and be as courageous and determined as he was to deliver (in the words of his favourite song) that ‘bright brand new day’!

### Prayers

“Our prayers and thoughts are especially with his dear wife Pat and family. Pat was such a rock of support to John, and is an inspiration to all of us.

We ask that God will comfort her and John’s extended family circle, friends, former colleagues and loved ones in the knowledge that John was someone special – one in a million!”

## ‘Blessed are the peacemakers’

**Bishop Donal McKeown**

*Bishop of Derry*

“The death of John Hume, one of the greatest peacemakers and champions of social justice of our time, will be felt by many people locally and around the world. He dedicated his life to the welfare of this community, at no small cost to himself. His name became a byword for dedication to the cause of peace, whatever the obstacles or criticisms.

While he strode the world stage, he remained firmly rooted in his local city. It was the specific circumstances that prevailed here in his native city that helped develop his vision for the future. His first-hand experience of injustice and violence and his broad European vision emboldened him to persevere in building bridges and friendships.

### Seminary

“John had spent a few years in seminary discerning whether he had a vocation to become a priest. In many ways he always retained that strong Christian sense of being called to be a peacemaker.

Because he generated hope for his local community he will be remembered as one of the great local and world figures of his generation.

I extend our sympathies to his wife Pat and to his family circle.”



## ‘A Faith-filled champion of human rights’

**Bishop Noel Treanor**

*Bishop of Down and Connor*

“I was saddened to learn this morning of the death of Mr John Hume KCSG, a founding member of the SDLP in 1970.

On behalf of the Diocese of Down and Connor and its clergy, religious and people, I offer our deepest sympathies and prayerful condolences to his wife Patricia, his children, grandchildren and the wider Hume family.

I had the honour of meeting John personally in his role as a Member of the European Parliament where he worked assiduously as a member, and for a time as Vice-President, of the Socialist Group. As an MEP, John was also a Member of

the Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism and a Substitute Member on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, all of which evidenced his deep commitment to his electorate and the wider region.

### Vulnerable

“Motivated by a strong personal faith and responding to the needs of the community, John was a champion of Human Rights. He actively sought to protect the most vulnerable across society.

He exercised and exemplified a model of civic leadership through dialogue. John had a visionary capacity to view the local political and societal challenges through the wider prism of human

dignity and International partnership.

As a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 with David Trimble, John was duly recognised and will be fondly remembered as an architect of reconciliation and peace in Northern Ireland, especially in his home city of Derry.

John Hume uniquely shaped a new and prophetic political narrative which enabled the decommissioning and disarmament of weapons and generated an infrastructure for a peace process that led to the Good Friday Agreement, and the foundations of a new politics that is his lasting legacy.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.”



**The Irish Catholic** has moved offices. Our new address is:  
Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277.  
Our phone numbers and email addresses remain unchanged.





# ‘Diversity’ is now the religion of Official Ireland



We now find ourselves in a situation where the Faith that is still practiced by a huge number of Irish people finds itself under constant criticism while everything new is celebrated, writes **David Quinn**

**I**t is almost two years since the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland. The contrast with the visit of St Pope John Paul II in 1979 could not have been starker. He drew huge crowds, while Pope Francis couldn't fill Croke Park, never mind the space allocated for the Mass in Phoenix Park.

Pope John Paul came to an Ireland which, outwardly at least, was still strongly Catholic, while Pope Francis came to a country that has become much more secular and hostile towards the Church, sometimes with good reason.

There was very negative coverage in the media in the run-up to the visit. We were warned that there might be an outbreak of disease at the Phoenix Park Mass. We were told a temporary morgue would be set up at the park for those who might die there. Older people were put on notice that the walk to the site of the Phoenix Park Mass would be so arduous they would have to prepare as if they were climbing Mount Everest.

## Debates

We had the usual debates about the teachings of the Church that create most friction with the prevailing secular morality, and a big report about clerical sex abuse in the dioceses of Pennsylvania was published that received lots of coverage and reminded people of the scandals in this country. The voices of abuse victims filled the airwaves again.

Last week, another, very different religious event took place in Croke Park. This time it was to mark the annual Muslim festival of Eid.



The Muslim festival of Eid at Croke Park last week.

It was held at the GAA stadium because Covid-restrictions mean only very limited numbers of worshippers can gather indoors. About 150 Muslims took part.

The event received glowing and uniformly positive coverage. No questions were asked about the content of Muslim faith. No light was shone on its attitude towards women or homosexuality as happens all the time in the case of the Catholic Church.

Nothing was said about Islamist extremism or about the fact that several dozen Muslims have gone from Ireland to fight for ISIS.

Why not? The answer is that Islam is a minority faith in the West, particularly so in Ireland where we have relatively few Muslims compared with say, Britain or France, and so it is accorded great latitude and given

every benefit of the doubt.

Modern liberalism evaluates every group according to the amount of power it has. Those with power must be torn down. Those which lack power must be lifted up. This is an egalitarian impulse.

**“After the event ...Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, who attended with other religious leaders, had his car surrounded by protestors who denounced what had just taken place”**

The Catholic Church must be pulled down, and even after that, kept down. It must therefore be

subjected to a constant barrage of criticism. Islam must be raised up, or rather Muslims must be raised up.

This means Islam must not be subjected to hard questioning. Indeed, hard questions will be taken as evidence of intolerance, which can be very real.

For example, after the event at Croke Park, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, who attended with other religious leaders, had his car surrounded by protestors who denounced what had just taken place and abused him as a ‘traitor’ and ‘heretic’. It was a revolting display on their part.

The man who organised the event was Dr Umar Al-Qadri, who runs a small Mosque in Dublin.

Dr Al-Qadri is the face of moderate, even liberal Islam. He supports religious freedom,

including in Muslim countries, and he bravely calls out Muslim extremism.

Disappointingly, he supported the repeal of the Eighth Amendment. The leadership of the far bigger mosque at Clonskeagh, and the Islamic Cultural Centre attached to it, took the opposite view.

It is odd that an Imam with a small congregation is presented as the face of Islam in Ireland, when the leaders of a far bigger part of the Muslim community here are rarely seen in the media.

The Croke Park event was praised as an exercise in ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusion’.

Dr Al-Qadri himself said: “This is a country that is proud of its diversity and embraces those who become part of the society.”

He said the ceremony had sent out a strong message that Ireland is a country of céad míle fáilte.

\* \* \* \* \*

We now find ourselves in a situation where the religion that is still practiced by a huge number of Irish people finds itself under constant criticism, and a religion that is relatively new to our shores, but is very big and old elsewhere, avoids any real critical scrutiny.

This is despite that fact that on the issues of current controversy, Islam is often even stricter than Catholicism.

From the point of view of Official Ireland, the new religion of Ireland is now ‘diversity’. Catholicism is to take its place within this new religion and is to be considered no more and no less important than any other faith, while at the same time, for reasons of history, it is to be constantly attacked.

That is to say, its history is to be a source of criticism only. Catholicism's deep historical roots and great size are not to be seen as a reason to accord it a greater place at the table of Official Ireland.

## Sacrifice

Eid, by the way, remembers the episode in the Bible (and the Koran) when God tells Abraham he does not have to sacrifice his son Isaac, after all. Abraham has shown that he is willing to trust God in all things and that is enough.

But the religious lesson of Eid was totally overlooked in the coverage of the Croke Park event, because our new diversity creed isn't really interested in the actual content of minority religions. It does not engage them on their own terms. They are welcomed only to the extent that they accept the new creed and their place within it.

‘Diversity’ is a religion that wants no challengers. It is to be regarded as the ‘ultimate truth’, which is what all religions believe, when you think about it. How ‘diverse’ is that really?

**“Nothing was said about Islamist extremism or about the fact that several dozen Muslims have gone from Ireland to fight for ISIS. Why not? The answer is that Islam is a minority faith in the West, particularly so in Ireland...and so it is accorded great latitude and given every benefit of the doubt”**



r1

# Will Ireland follow Scotland in its hate crime stance?

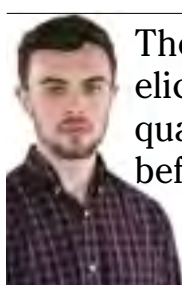
Scotland's proposed legislation makes it a crime to stir up hatred against any of the protected groups, which include race, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and transgender identity.

A societal dichotomy is rearing its head once again as a result, between those who argue that criminalising 'hate crime' is necessary to secure the perceived safety that it will bring to members of a country's minority groups, while others voice concerns that such moves seriously undermine freedom of expression and the ability to articulate controversial opinions.

## Teachings

The Scottish bishops are among those to caution against the bill, suggesting that orthodox teachings of the Church may be perceived as hateful against protected groups. They said: "Such pronouncements, which are widely held, might be perceived by others as an abuse of their own, personal worldview and likely to stir up hatred."

It has further been suggested that such legislation may render the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic*



The Hate Crime Bill has elicited raised voices from all quarters since it was brought before Scottish parliament earlier this year, writes **Jason Osborne**

Church inflammatory, and therefore, criminal.

While these developments have not yet taken place in Ireland, it does raise the question as to whether such legislation is possible, or even likely, here. There is reason to suspect that it is.

Speaking to *The Irish Times*, the then Minister for Justice and Equality Charlie Flanagan mentioned that a process had already begun in his department to formulate legislation that would "deal with" hate speech and hate crimes. He added that a public consultation programme launched last October in line with this.

Currently, An Garda Síochána define a hate crime

as "any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to, in whole or in part, be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on actual or perceived age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender".

**“The ‘hate’ aspect of a crime is filtered out as the investigation goes through the criminal justice system”**

While Scotland is currently further down this road than Ireland, there is a small

**“Such pronouncements, which are widely held, might be perceived by others as an abuse of their own, personal worldview and likely to stir up hatred”**



groundswell of support for the introduction of such legislation here. The Irish Council for Civil Liberties co-ordinated a report in 2018 which was funded by the European Commission, titled 'Lifecycle of a Hate Crime'.

It considered the lack of legislation in this area to be a "policy vacuum", and that as a result the "hate" aspect of a crime is filtered out as the investigation makes its way

through the criminal justice system. As a result of their findings, they recommended legislation tailored to combat hate crime specifically be introduced to Ireland.

The evidence suggests that 'anti-hate' laws are becoming increasingly popular across Europe, and this should concern those of religious conviction. While moves to protect the vulnerable and oppressed are in line with Church teach-

ing and its proclamation of the Gospel, compelling behaviour through legislation will seem to many a reckless and ill-considered way to achieve this goal.

As history has shown repeatedly, humans will be human, regardless of the laws a country puts in place. Hate-crime legislation can do little to bring about the world we desire to live in.

## The seas are stormy but the future of our Faith is assured

Today's Gospel about the Apostles' boat on a stormy sea (Matt 14:22-33) is timely. The logo chosen by Pope Benedict XVI for the Year of Faith in 2013 pictured a boat tossed high on waves. We all recognise that this is a difficult time for the Church.

Persecution of Christians is as bad now as at any time in history although it gets very little reportage. Attendance at Mass has fallen considerably as well as Christian ceremonies for marriages and funerals. Christian teaching on abortion is disregarded. Very few are coming forward for priesthood and consecrated life. Europe has lost touch with its Christian heritage and become very secular.

The uncovering of clerical and financial scandals shook the faith of many people. Getting to the root of this sinful behaviour has identified a serious faultline in the clerical mindset that caused a denial of the wrongdoing. We were

### The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



the untouchables. The Church needs a root and branch cleansing.

### New evangelization

The recent lockdown changed certain patterns of Christian behaviour for all of us. Church buildings were closed but, on the other hand, the Christian values inherent in people blossomed in the heroic services offered by frontline nursing, and in the voluntary efforts and neighbourly care shown by so many people. Being a church member means more than attendance at Mass.

The breaking of routine has

opened up a new way of thinking about liturgy, priesthood and the role of all who are baptised.

This fresh thinking may be very significant in the development of the New Evangelization first mentioned by St Pope John Paul II and then by Pope Benedict XVI. Back in 1962, at the opening of the Second Vatican Council, St Pope John XXIII made the important clarification that the substance of doctrine is one thing, and the way it is presented is another.

### Barque of Peter

The hand on the tiller of the barque of Peter today is that of Pope Francis. The Church of today is a huge vessel and it takes time and space to turn it around.

Pope Francis is not the sort of traditionalist who wants to conserve only a certain period of history. He wants us to go back the whole way to the gospel and the time of the apostles, before

clericalism, legalism and careerism controlled the steering wheel.

He refers to the Beatitudes as a Christian's calling card. Being strongly pro life he addresses the global problems of poverty, racism and climate change. He is meeting with strong currents of resistance to his vision of a Church of the poor, for the poor.

Let us return to the terror of the Apostles on the stormy sea. Are we close to sinking? Jesus had gone up the hills to pray. This perhaps refers to the time after his ascension when he is no longer physically visible in our boat. But fear not. Jesus has not deserted us. As the song says: "God is watching us, from a distance."

In God's own time, he comes. "Courage, it is I. Do not be afraid." One of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit is fortitude. Fortitude is the sort of courage that enables us to retain hope even when we are scared stiff. The Holy Spirit will

not allow the Church to sink.

Peter was the spokesperson for the apostles just as his successor, Pope Francis, is regarded as the spokesperson for the Church.

Peter trusted in the Lord's invitation. He stepped overboard into the heaving sea. As long as he remained focused on Jesus, he walked on the water. But once he looked at the breaking waves he began to sink.

The Letter to the Hebrews says: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, who leads us in our Faith and brings it to perfection."

If we only see the problems, if we let the bad news take possession of our minds, we begin to sink. But focus on Jesus, absorb the Good News, and the hand of the Lord holds us up. "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

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

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# Out&About

## ‘Godly Play’ at work

**KILDARE:** Attendees of the Godly Play programme in Maynooth say goodbye at the end of the sessions. Godly Play teaches children the art of using Christian language – parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action – to help them understand the mystery of God’s presence in their lives.



◀ **DOWN:** Pilgrims take part in the ‘Irish Camino’ in Downpatrick.

▶ **KILDARE:** Bishop Denis Nulty of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin visited the Parish of Clane and Rathcoffey to affirm Fr Paul O’Boyle PP, Fr Denis Harrington PE, the parish team and volunteers for their work “to ensure a gentle and safe return to public worship”.



## IN SHORT

### Two Irish missionaries appointed to Kenyan university council

Two well-known Irish missionaries have been appointed to the first governing Council of Tangaza University College in Nairobi. They are Cork-born Bishop Maurice Crowley SPS and Roscommon-born Fr Padraig Devine SMA.

Tangaza College was established in 1986 as a constituent college of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, and has now gained university status. It has its roots in the Catholic tradition planted and nourished in Eastern Africa through missionary endeavours. Its student body are multi-

ethnic and inter-religious from Africa and numerous other countries around the world.

Bishop Crowley – a member of St Patrick’s Missionary Society – is a native of Berrings, Co. Cork, and was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Kitale in 1998.

At that time, the new diocese had just 16 parishes with 15 local priests, and today it has 34 parishes with 68 priests. He has played a leading role in expanding education facilities throughout the diocese which now has over 500 Catholic sponsored primary and secondary schools. In addition to his new appointment, he is also a member of the Council of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

Fr Devine, a member of the Society of African Missions, is a native of Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon. He established the

Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation in 2009.

His efforts in peace-building started attracting international recognition when he was awarded the 2013 International Caring Award joining recipients which include the Dalai Lama, former US President Jimmy Carter, Mother Teresa and Senator George Mitchell.

In 2014, eight countries in Eastern Africa presented him with the prestigious IGAD Award for his visionary contribution to peace and development in the vast region.

He is a regular guest speaker at leading universities in the USA, including Harvard and DePaul. He is an adjunct faculty member and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for Conflict Intervention at Maynooth University. At

Tangaza College, Fr Devine has been lecturing for over 10 years. Prior to that he served on the college’s previous board for 12 years and was its deputy chairperson.

Reacting to his appointment to the Council, Fr Devine said: “I am honoured to be appointed to the first Council of Tangaza University College, and I look forward to contributing to its governance and administration.

“The mission of the college is to provide an all-round quality education in an environment which promotes freedom and responsibility, excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, ethical and integral development in service to society.

“The college strives for the integral formation in the physical, intellectual,



Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in  
advance of publication



▲ **CORK:** The faithful are pictured at the grotto in Ballinspittle where a statue of the Virgin Mary is said to have miraculously moved, last week was the 35th anniversary. Photo: Cillian Kelly



◀ **ANTRIM:** Precious Life's baby shoes memorial remembering the 129 babies.

▼ **ANTRIM:** Members of pro-life group Precious Life stand outside Stormont in front of their baby shoes memorial which remembers the 129 babies who have died by abortion since legislation was introduced last year.



**KENYA:** Irish missionaries, Cork-born Bishop Maurice Crowley SPS and Roscommon-born Fr Padraig Devine SMA have been appointed to the first governing Council of Tangaza University College in Nairobi.



**DOWN:** Cambell Miller of EWTN interviewed Fr Martin O'Hagan from music group The Priests for 'Faith and Life', a new series coming out in the Autumn on EWTN.



moral, social, and cultural dimension of its students. What I really like is that the skills of bringing about social transformation and justice for the poor and oppressed are integrated into every aspect of the educational process at the college."

## 'Baby shoes memorial' marks anniversary of NI abortion law

The first anniversary of Westminster passing abortion legislation for Northern Ireland was marked by pro-life group Precious Life at Stormont last week.

Precious Life held a 'baby shoes' display and observed a one-minute silence in front of Parliament Buildings at 1pm in memory of 129 babies who were aborted since Section 9 of Northern Ireland (Executive Formation) Act 2019 was implemented.

The law, which received royal assent on July 24, 2019, introduced legislation for abortion into Northern Ireland.

Director of Precious Life, Bernadette Smyth said the anniversary is a day to lament by everyone concerned about the future of Northern Ireland's unborn children.

She said: "Health minister Robin Swann revealed that a total of 129 abortions have been carried out since the law was implemented in the

province on March 31, up until May 22 this year.

"Our memorial will remember all of these unique and defenceless unborn children who died through abortion. We will display 129 pairs of baby shoes at the steps of Stormont. Each pair of baby shoes will represent an innocent life cruelly taken from the world by the injustice of abortion that was forced on us by Westminster.

"Every child deserves a chance to take their first steps."

"Our unborn child must be protected in law, policy and practice. We are calling on our elected MLA's to repeal Section 9 and restore personhood status for each and every child in the womb."



**ANTRIM:** Fiona Rushe, with her daughter Trinity, donate baby shoes for the 'baby shoes memorial' created by pro-life group Precious Life outside Stormont in Belfast last week.

## 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.**





He was a great man of faith who chose not to parade his Christianity – just to practice it and persevere through thick and thin writes **Martin O'Brien**

**J**ohn Hume was one of the greatest Irishmen who has ever lived. He was one of the greatest in this or in any age since hunter gatherers first reached this island around 8,000 years ago.

He is not a distant Titan like O'Neill or O'Donnell from the 17th Century or like Daniel O'Connell or Charles Stewart Parnell from the 19th. Or even St Patrick from the Fifth Century. But he is in the Pantheon of Irish heroes with all of them. He is not wrapped in mist and myth like so many Irish greats who have graced the stage of history down two millennia.

He was one of our own – living in our own time. He lived with us, toiled for us, served us and risked all for us.

### **Patriot**

John was a patriot and a peacemaker recognised by the wider world – the only person ever to have received the Nobel, Gandhi and Martin Luther King peace awards. A remarkable, incredible achievement in itself. And we were all thrilled when in 2012 Pope Benedict appointed John a Knight Commander of St Gregory the Great.

John Hume defied the perceived laws of political gravity to shape and change our history. He persevered in fighting for a better way – against all the odds. And in spite of all the abuse from people who should have known better.

We do not celebrate his memory. Rather, we celebrate and honour his achievements in the spheres of peace, justice and human rights. We recognise the cultural, constitutional and political earthquake that John Hume did so much to create. And let us never forget that, from the very start, he did it all by exclusively peaceful and constitutional means. He was no late convert to the ways of peace and his commitment to peace has never been tactical but immanent to his very being.

So, what was it about John Hume that has made him one of the greatest Irish persons of all time? That is a question that will engage scholars and the writers of theses for as long as politics and history are subjects in universities not just in this island and in Britain.

# John Hume: a prophet, a patriot and statesman

But I think when those historians come to dispassionately sift and weigh the evidence a number of qualities and values will be indelibly ascribed to John Hume.

Let me identify just some of them: service, vision, courage and perseverance.

**“His words, which had they been heeded, would have made the history of the past 50 years so very different”**

These are values all combining to make John Hume a statesman revered wherever he went.

When John received the Gandhi Peace Prize in 2002 he said Mahatma Gandhi was “one of my greatest inspirations because Gandhi chose peace over war and human compassion over self-interest”.

Now, it was Gandhi who said that “the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”.

And John's service to others began in earnest when just aged

23 he and Pat and other young teachers and Fr Anthony Mulvey founded Derry Credit Union, the first credit union in Northern Ireland – with John in the key role of treasurer responsible for collecting the money on Friday nights and Saturday afternoons.

His motivation, as one of the lucky young educated ones, was to give something back to his people in the Bogside plagued as they were by poverty and high unemployment. Within four years John was making a national impact as leader of the Irish League of Credit Unions.

Someone who knows about these things once remarked to me that the credit union meant that for the first time ordinary rank and file Catholics had access to capital and that empowered them to lift themselves up a little bit in the world, as he put it to me.

### **Commitment**

That commitment to selfless service, that rejection of indifferent individualism, that ‘no’ to what would be called Thatcherism a quarter of a century later, defined John's contribution to his fellow

man throughout his life as a civil rights leader, a public representative, (even at times unpaid) and a peacemaker and pioneering architect of an agreed Ireland – his phrase, before anyone used it – that began to take shape on Good Friday 1998. And six weeks after that momentous Good Friday, the deal was ratified by the all-Ireland referendum which John had first proposed as a 32 county wide act of national self-determination more than a quarter of a century before.

I imagine that those RTE viewers who voted John ‘The Greatest Irish Person Ever’ in 2010 and the 44 seats of learning around the world, who have conferred on him honorary doctorates, have been struck by that other great quality that he embodied – and that is vision.

Three hundred years ago another great Irishman Jonathan Swift famously declared “vision is the art of seeing the invisible”. It's that rare gift of vision that separates the statesman from the pygmy politician, the prophet from the jumped-up panjandrum.

John Hume showed the way forward to defuse the northern powder keg more than half a cen-

tury ago and no one listened – with dire consequences for all of us, and especially those who were to die and of course their loved ones.

Some may not know about this or have forgotten about it. And, certainly those who excoriated John when he almost put himself in an early grave during the Hume-Adams Gethsemane either chose to forget or must not have known.

Let's rewind the clock of history to Monday May 14, 1964. Lyndon Johnson's presidency was still young in the White House. Paul VI's papacy was still young in Rome. The 50th anniversaries of the Easter Rising and the Somme, were still two years away and it was still two years before Gusty Spence founded the new UVF and the murders of John Patrick Scullion and Peter Ward. It was five years before a Taoiseach could bring himself to talk about unity by consent.

**“John Hume defied the perceived laws of political gravity to shape and change our history”**

And on that day May 14, 1964 the 27-year-old John Hume wrote a prophetic article for *The Irish Times* entitled ‘The Northern Catholic’. I think future historians will recognise it as the words of a prophet and a visionary with a sharp intel-

**“He made it clear that the principal blame for the situation lay with the unionist government but added that the nationalist party must bear a share of the blame”**





ligence and a rare ability to step outside his own tribe and present a prescient analysis.

It was an analysis that challenged unionists and nationalists alike to lift the siege that had paralysed politics since the unfortunate birth of what one political scientist has called the “constitutional oddity” that is the Six Counties of Northern Ireland.

His words, which had they been heeded, would have made the history of the past 50 years so very different. Words that ring down the decades and may still assist any remaining slow learners at Stormont and elsewhere today.

On that day, when Gerry Adams was still a 16-year-old who had just started pulling pints in the Duke of York, John Hume, nearly 12 years his senior, was saying that “a truly united Ireland”, his words, could only come by rightly discounting violence, by what he called “evolution,” by “the will of the Northern majority”.

## Recognition

There was nothing inconsistent, he said, in nationalists accepting the constitutional position and believing that a 32 county republic was best for Ireland. He said Catholics and nationalists should clarify their position and if they seriously pursued a policy of non-recognition of Stormont the only logical policy was that of Sinn Féin.

He made it clear that the principal blame for the situation lay with

the unionist government but added that the nationalist party must bear a share of the blame.

In 40 years of opposition, the nationalists – they took their salaries all right – had not come up with one constructive contribution on either the social or economic plane re the development of Northern Ireland, which was, after all, a substantial part of the united Ireland for which they strove. Their only constructive suggestion appeared to be that the removal of discrimination would be a panacea for all our ills.

He talked about a dangerous fusion between nationalism and Catholicism in the North that resulted in censorship in the nationalist press, mirroring censorship on the unionist side, leading to a situation where it had become extremely difficult for a Catholic to express publicly any point of view which did not coincide with the narrow nationalist line.

John Hume continued: “Apart from being factual, it also ought to be made fashionable that the Catholic Church does not impose upon its members any one form of political belief”. More than twenty years before a Catholic Primate acknowledged bigotry on the Catholic side, John said that another step towards easing community tensions and removing what bigotry exists among Catholics would be to: “recognise that the Protestant tradition in the North is as strong and as legitimate as our own. Such recognition is our first step towards better relations”.

Another great virtue that John and his wife Pat always personified and that is courage – which is in the words of Mark Twain, “resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear”.

## Courage

Courage became the hallmark of John. He refused to be cowed even when his home was firebombed, his cars destroyed, when he narrowly escaped a mob while driven by his friend Dr Raymond McClean or when protesting internment, he was soaked with water cannon and spread-eagled against a wall by a British soldier, to cite just a few incidents.

That courage was particularly evident during the Hume Adams period when John gravely risked his health for the cause of peace. None of us will ever forget the image of him weeping at a Greys-teel funeral when the family of one of the victims told him they had prayed for him “for what you are trying to do to bring peace”.

John's physical and moral courage was an inspiration to people in Ireland and around the world. John persevered and without his perseverance there would have been no peace process in Ireland as we know it.

On October 16, 1998 the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo issued a statement part of which read: “Over the past thirty years, the national, religious and social conflict in Northern Ireland has cost over 3,500 people their lives. John Hume has throughout been the clearest and most consistent of Northern Ireland's political leaders in his work for a peaceful solution. The foundations of the peace agreement signed on Good Friday 1998 reflect principles which he has stood for.”

The Nobel Prize, the most coveted award on the planet, reflected the reality that John had been the prime mover and the consistently most influential figure in devising ways to break the cycle of conflict in Northern Ireland down the decades from Sunningdale in 1973 through to the Anglo Irish Agreement in 1985, the Downing Street Declaration of 1993 and to Good Friday in 1998.

## “Three hundred years ago another great Irishman Jonathan Swift famously declared “vision is the art of seeing the invisible”

And when in 1982 the Iron Lady ordered Jim Prior to remove the Irish dimension that John had persuaded William Whitelaw to accept as far back as 1972, John stood firm and told Mrs Thatcher and Mr Prior where to go and eventually Mrs Thatcher signed up to the Anglo Irish Agreement with John's friend, Garret Fitzgerald.

We now know that a key element in Mrs Thatcher's Irish u-turn at Hillsborough in 1985 was the pressure exerted on her by the United States government and her friend Ronald Regan and by John Hume's friends Tip O'Neill and Edward Kennedy.

And that pressure we now know can be traced back to John Hume and the tireless work he put into internationalising the problem of Northern Ireland in London, Washington DC and as a member of the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg. It has been said that he has had the ear of every American president since Jimmy Carter.

When I met the late Senator Edward Kennedy in his office in the Capitol Building, Washington DC in 1984 the first question he asked me was: “How is my friend John Hume?”

Edward Kennedy has written: “I first met John Hume in 1972...Ever since that evening I have had enormous respect for John, his courage and his leadership. He has had a profound influence on my thinking and on the attitudes of congress and the American government towards the conflict; he has often been called the 101st Senator from Northern Ireland.”

Indeed, the SDLP's seminal policy document ‘Toward a New Ireland’ in that year of 1972, the worst of the Troubles, which John did so much to fashion insisted no solution could be imposed by Britain, that a treaty between Ireland and Britain should be underpinned by legislation in both parliaments, that there should be a system of government in Northern Ireland fair to all sections of the people, and, crucially, it should secure the agreement and consent of the people of Ireland, North and South.

No wonder then the Nobel Committee declared the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement reflected the principles John has always stood for. His sharing of the prize with David Trimble appropriately symbolised John's own decades old analysis, mantra even. And when critics and political opponents got tired of listening to his so-called ‘Single Transferable Speech’ John persevered saying he would keep repeating it, and keep working for its implementation because the problem had not gone away you know, the problem had not changed, and an answer could only be found in the context of an agreed Ireland, the three sets of relationships, respect for diversity, equal respect for our two great traditions and identities and the Irish people exercising their right of self-determination.

As they did in the 1998 referendum North and South on the same day – as John had long proposed. Again and again and again he condemned violence offering a better way, repeating again and again the words of his hero and fellow Nobel laureate, Dr Martin Luther King: “The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everyone blind”.

## Perseverance

Miriam O'Callaghan summed up his perseverance and tenacity very succinctly on RTÉ in 2010. She said: “His friends call it his ‘stickability’: logically analysing and understanding not only the problem, but the solution; working out the way forward and repeating it as a mantra, like a teacher, until everyone else saw the light: a formula for peace.”

So, today I salute the late John Hume and I think of the people living today who would not be around without his efforts for peace. For perhaps more than any other man, in this or in any age in Ireland, he embraced and lived out to breaking point the Epistle to the Hebrews: “Let us run with perseverance the race that is marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1).

## “John's physical and moral courage was an inspiration to people in Ireland and around the world”

John was a great man of faith who chose not to parade his Christianity – just to practice it. Yes, he persevered through thick and thin and altered the course of Irish history in the cause of what is good.

At personal sacrifice and with results that historians will for ever chronicle he lived out the immortal words of his fellow Irish Nobel laureate and fellow student of St. Columb's College, Derry, Séamus Heaney, who once wrote: “Even if the hopes you started out with are dashed, hope has to be maintained...Even if the last move did not succeed, the inner command says move again.”

Yes, John Hume, prophet, patriot and statesman moved again and again in the cause of peace. And for a better Ireland for the children of this generation and for children yet unborn.

May he rest in peace.

**i** Martin O'Brien is northern correspondent of *The Irish Catholic* and a former editor of *The Irish News* and a producer with the BBC.



Northern Ireland political leader John Hume, pictured in a file photo, died at age 83 Aug. 3, 2020. Irish Catholic leaders praised the Nobel Peace Prize winner as a champion of social justice. Photos: CNS





The proud Derry man had to do Daniel O'Connell's work all over again writes **Dr Martin Mansergh**

**F**or most people in Ireland, John Hume was the guide throughout the northern conflict who advocated the necessity of a peaceful political resolution. It was one that demanded a fundamental rebalancing of institutions to reflect the fact of a divided society and to promote the agreement and sharing needed to hold it together. He was a constant influence with all Irish governments from 1969 to 1998, but he was also the principal voice listened to in Brussels and Strasbourg as well as Washington and New York. Even in quarters that often disliked or disagreed with the message that he was constantly propounding, most ended up accepting with some modifications the Hume strategy, the British government, the Ulster Unionists and the republican movement.

**“Hume was full of ideas for reforming the politics of Northern Ireland and eliminating the discrimination that held nationalists down”**

As many have observed, John Hume will share in history with Daniel O'Connell the honour of being the foremost champion in their time of the constitutional nationalist tradition. Catholic Emancipation won by Daniel O'Connell, having marshalled with able lieutenant's formidable popular support, led over time to the unravelling of other inequalities and injustices and to an ultimately irresistible claim for self-government not achievable in his day. The partition settlement, which allowed Northern Ireland to present itself as a unionist monolith, set northern Catholics back to where they had been before 1829, electorally powerless. Mr Hume had to do Daniel O'Connell's work all over again.

### Opposing

Up to the 1960s, all methods of opposing majority rule, whether political, abstentionist or paramilitary proved equally ineffective. The Catholic Church, together with cultural organisations like the GAA, held the community together, maintaining a solid Irish identity in the face of attempts to make it go away. Post-war developments in Britain, like the



John Hume with his beloved Derry city in the background.

welfare state, the National Health Service, the spread of secondary education, provided benefits across Northern Ireland, and strengthened the material base and confidence of the nationalist community. John Hume, initially a leading light in the credit union movement, was a product of this environment. The civil rights movement that began in apartheid South Africa and the United States, where the battle for equality is still being fought out, was the key that unlocked the door to fundamental change in Northern Ireland. John Hume was at the centre of the mainstream civil rights movement, that wanted reform, not revolution, romantic or otherwise. He did not confuse the struggle for independence of 1916-21 in the rest of Ireland that was overwhelmingly nationalist with a paramilitary campaign in majority unionist territory.

Already in 1969, John Hume was full of ideas for reforming the politics of Northern Ireland and eliminating the discrimination that held nationalists down. He and others came together to form the SDLP, which combined civil rights and social democratic ideals with a progressive constitutional nationalism that included a pluralist religious identity. Opponents of reform were not able to discredit

the SDLP by any association with violence. It also held up objectives and ideals, including those of constitutional change, that anyone at home or abroad could support without reservation.

### Agreement

Unfortunately, the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973-4, with the central elements of power-sharing and an Irish dimension, was 25 years ahead of its time; hence Seamus Mallon's quip that the Good Friday Agreement was Sunningdale for slow learners. It was brought down not only by loyalists, but also by republican fundamentalists. For the following 20 years, unionists sought to evade devolution, if it was not going to be majority rule, which left the SDLP without a forum. It was during this period especially that John Hume engaged in lobbying of the US Congress, of the EU and the Irish Government to raise the Northern Ireland issue to an intergovernmental and international level. He championed the New Ireland Forum of 1983-4, designed to bring constitutional Irish nationalism north and south together, recognise the equal validity of unionism, and spur on substantive negotiation between the governments. This culminated in the Anglo-Irish Agreement, backed by international financial

support for peace and reconciliation, which gave the nationalist community the same access to government through the Irish Government, using the Secretariat at Maryfield. The agreement heightened the prestige of the SDLP, and helped prevent any danger that the nationalist community would provide majority electoral support for Sinn Féin, while they backed the IRA campaign.

**“He was a constant influence with all Irish governments from 1969 to 1998, but he was also the principal voice listened to in Brussels and Strasbourg as well as Washington and New York”**

Mr Hume was impatient to build on the Anglo-Irish Agreement, not just as an instrument of reform, or as a means over the longer term of enticing unionists back into power-sharing arrangements, but as a way of bringing violence to an end, given the check that the agreement delivered to the armalite and ballot box strategy. From 1988, the SDLP entered dialogue with Sinn Féin, at first

publicly, then privately at leadership level. The Church, mainly through Fr Alec Reid of Clonard Monastery acting with the encouragement of Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, used its moral authority to encourage secret contacts, and to help devise an alternative purely political strategy consistent with republican principles.

### Endorsement

The endorsement of the Good Friday Agreement by the electorate in both parts of Ireland was an exercise in concurrent self-determination advocated by John Hume to replace the 1918 general election outcome constantly cited as the ideological justification of the post-1970 IRA campaign. The Good Friday Agreement was the fulfilment of John Hume's life work, for which, along with David Trimble, he was deservedly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Irish peace process has served as an inspiration to those trying to bring to an end intractable territorial conflicts round the world. 20 years later, it has remained the template for further progress on top of further development of the agreement. Mr Hume's view of the importance of the European Union has been underlined by Brexit.

John Hume had the invaluable support of his wife, Pat. He led a party that enthusiastically followed him. The country took its lead from a man who had exposed himself to danger from both sides, but whose ideas have largely come to prevail.

**“John Hume will share in history with Daniel O'Connell the honour of being the foremost champion in their time of the constitutional nationalist tradition”**



# The Irish Spirit

August 6th, 2020  
Issue No. 10

## *Flight of the Earls*

Exclusive excerpt detailing  
their journey to Spain

David Quinn  
On the reality of  
Christian unity

MEDJUGORJE

The Virgin Mary's  
last apparition

Plus much more....





Exclusive Excerpt from *The Flight of the Earls*  
by Liam Swords

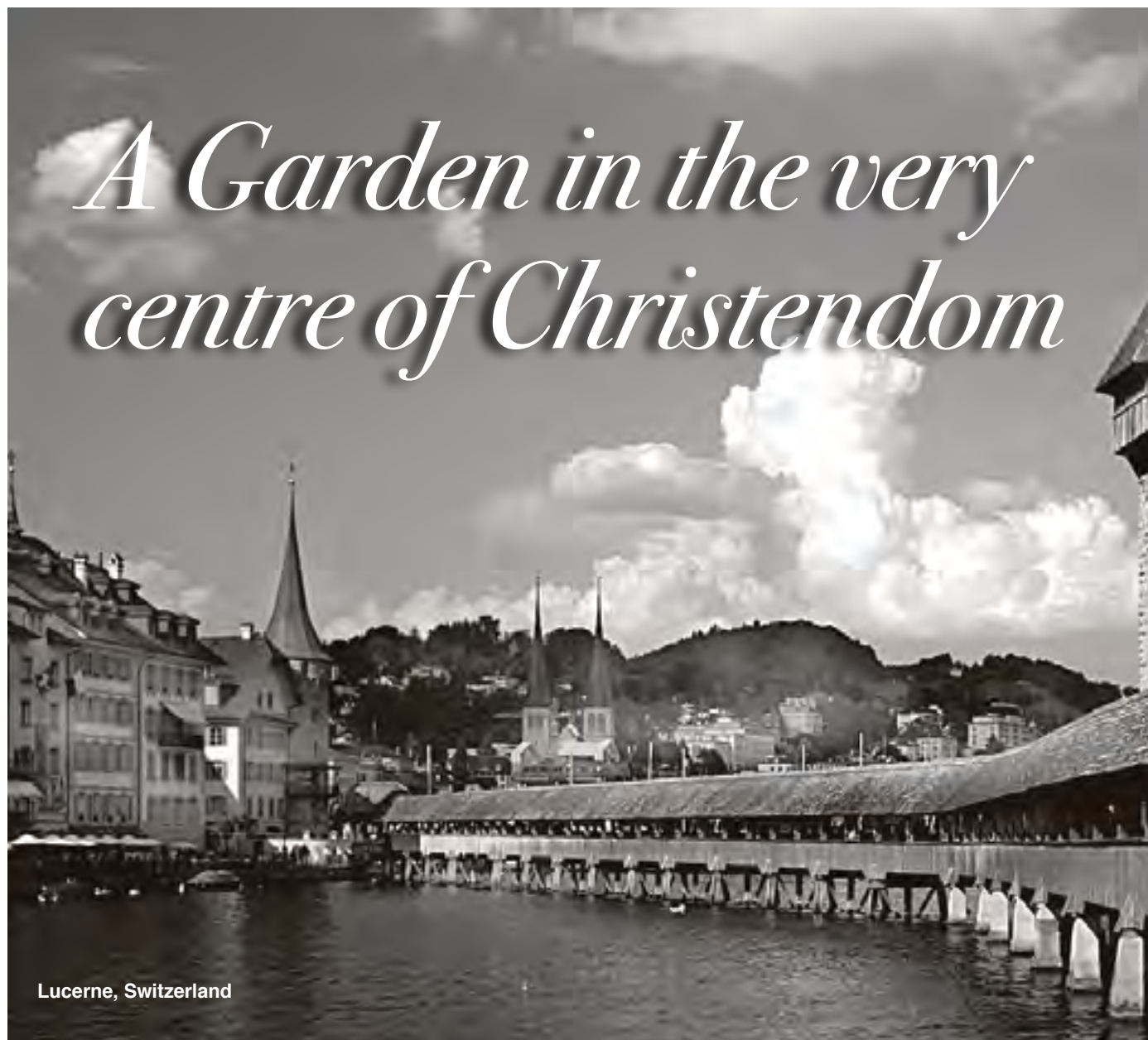
When the Irish left Louvain everybody was convinced that their destination was Rome, that is, except the Earls themselves. Their intention was to reach Milan, a Spanish territory, where they hoped to receive a reply, this time favourable, from the King to the letter they had sent him before they set out. The English ambassador was in no doubt that O'Neill was heading to Rome 'where he can promise himself no other relief than what may be derived from bulls and benedictions', and even so he had no intention of making it any easier for them. He wrote in French to the Duke of Lorraine, whose territory the Irish were approaching, that King James expected that the 'fugitive rebels ... against whom the door to Spain was shut', would be refused entry. He also sent him a French translation of the English king's proclamation against them.

The Irish party, with an escort of the Archduke's troops, travelled from Louvain to Wavre on the first day. The next day they went to Namur where they spent the night. They left the coach there as the roads were very bad and they put the women on horseback. From Arlon in present-day Luxembourg, they crossed the frontier from the Netherlands into the Duchy of Lorraine. From there they passed through Longwy, Fillières and Conflans. Then they went through Mars-la-Tour, Pont-à-Mousson and finally to Nancy, the capital of Lorraine. Their journey through Lorraine to Nancy, comprising about 140 kilometres, took four days. The Irish party knew in advance that they would be given free passage through Lorraine. The English ambassador had reported in January that Maguire was absent and thought that he might have gone ahead to Rome, but he was back after a short absence and may well have gone to Lorraine to get assurances from the Duke.



The Duke of Lorraine

# *A Garden in the very centre of Christendom*



Lucerne, Switzerland

“The English ambassador had reported in January that Maguire was absent and thought that he might have gone to Rome, but he was back after a short absence and may have gone to Lorraine to get assurances from the Duke.”

I was then Duke of Lorraine where he had ruled years. He wasn't even three years old when his father died. He succeeded. At sixteen he married a daughter of the King of France, who was herself only eleven years old. On the evening of their arrival in Nancy, the Duke's steward showed them to the palace, but they declined, pleading the length of their journey. He returned the following morning to find them in the ches in which they were brought to the palace. They were warmly welcomed by the Duke. At midday they sat down to dinner, O'Neill, O'Donnell and the English ambassador. The Duke and his two sons, who were aged forty-five and thirty-seven. After dinner they were provided with two bedrooms for a siesta. Later they were accompanied back to their lodgings by the Duke's steward, who proclaimed under severe penalty that they should accept gold or silver of them as long as they were in the city, but that the Duke would bear all their expenses. The Duke's sister, the Duchess of Brunswick, afterwards called on Countess Catherine at her inn. King James was so angered by the reception given them that when the Duke died a little over two months later he

sent no representative to the funeral, which was commented on by the French ambassador in London.

They left Nancy on Monday, 10 March, and continued through St-Nicolas, to Lunéville on the first day and thereafter, to St-Dié. Then they left Lorraine which Ó Cianáin described as 'garden in the very centre of Christendom, giving neither obedience nor submission to any king or prince in the world, but ever steadfast, strong and unbending in the faith of God's church', and crossed into Alsace which was then within the empire. From there they went through Niederhergheim to Ottomarsheim and then through Bâle in Switzerland which was also occupied by heretics, and there were pictures of Luther and Calvin 'and many other wicked evil writers' in a large church in the middle of the city, which was not surprising as the famous portrait painter, Hans Holbein, lived there in the first half of the sixteenth century. He is probably best known for his portrait of Henry VIII.

They continued on to Liestal, a Catholic town. The next day they passed through Olten and Zofingen to Sursee and then to Sempach and Lucerne, surrounded by the Alps, a Catholic town where a nuncio resided. Here they put their horses into boats and rowed through the lake to Flüelen where they arrived at midnight.





## The Devil's Bridge

From that they advanced through the Alps. Now the mountains were laden and filled with snow and ice, and the roads and paths were narrow and rugged. They reached a high bridge called the Devil's Bridge in a very deep glen. One of O'Neill's horses, which was carrying some of his money, about one hundred and twenty pounds, fell down the face of the high, frozen, snowy cliff which was in front of the bridge. Great labour was experienced in bringing up the horse alone, but the money decided to remain, blocking the violent, deep, destructive torrent, which flows under the bridge through the middle of the glen.

O'Neill sent some people back next day to try and retrieve the money but without success. The loss of the money was a major setback. It was important not only that O'Neill reached his destination safely but that he did so in style. Europe would not be impressed by a straggling party of tattered beggars. When Dermot McCarthy and myself in 1985 first tried to find the Teufelsbrücke (the Devil's Bridge) we failed and decided to spend the night in a pensione in the nearest little town.

They passed through the Saint Gotthard Pass to Airolo and then through a valley with a gate called the Gate of Hell, where customs had to be paid under penalty of death, and reached Faido where they spent the night. The next day they went through Bellinzona and Lugano at the head of Lake Lugano where they, with their horses, embarked on boats which took them across the lake to Capolago. The lake separated Switzerland from Italy. Ó Cianáin was very impressed by the Swiss:

It is said of the people of this country that they are the most just, honest, and untreacherous in the world, and the most faithful to their promises. They allow no robbery or

murder to be done in their country without punishing it at once. Because of their perfect honour they alone are guards to the Catholic kings and princes of Christendom.

On Sunday, 23 March, they reached Milan, then a dependency of the Spanish crown.

Thus the English ambassador in Venice informed the King of England of their arrival in Milan. He had received this information from the Venetian ambassador in Milan who had managed to plant a secret agent among the Irish. The latter got his information from O'Neill's chaplain 'who speaks Spanish admirably'. The chaplain was Robert Chamberlain, from an Old-English family in County Louth, and it was no surprise that he spoke Spanish fluently as he took his doctorate at the University of Salamanca where he later taught theology. In Milan they stayed at the 'Hosteria of the Three Kings', so-called after the sarcophagus in the nearby church of Sant' Eustorgio which once contained the remains of the Magi who visited the Christ-child in Bethlehem.

The Governor of Milan, the Conde de Fuentes, had already received instructions from Philip III to keep them in Milan while he found out their intentions. As early as 1602 the Conde de Fuentes had recommended that the state of Ireland be discussed by the Spanish Council of State where the King's confessor thought it would be of great importance to send help to 'the Catholics of Ireland, who, at the risk of their lives, are demonstrating every day the zeal and devotion they have for the Catholic faith and for the service of Your Majesty'. Now in March 1608, a note added to the King's letter, by the Spanish Council of State, instructed the Conde 'to treat them with particular care and to send them on their way to Rome, and if they are in need, he should provide them with whatever may appear necessary'. The Conde informed King Philip of the arrival of the Earls 'and in accordance with Your Majesty's orders, I feasted them and treated them with care in as discreet and secret a manner as possible, in order both to assure them of the generosity and compassion of Your Majesty and to make them amenable to Your Majesty's wishes.'

O'Neill was determined to remain in Milan until he got a definite reply from King Philip, as he informed the Archbishop of Armagh, Peter Lombard, who was then in Rome: 'As regards our going to Rome ... we do not intend to undertake that journey without first receiving orders from the Catholic King so that he might not have an excuse to abandon us and to leave us to the sole patronage of the Pope.' The English ambassador in Venice was very much au courant with O'Neill's intentions, as he reported to King James: 'and there it seems, they determine to rest until answer has been had from Spain about them and accordingly to take their journey to Rome or otherwise.' Apparently, Irish émigrés in Europe were buzzing with rumours of O'Neill's imminent return to Ireland with Spanish help. An English spy in Spain reported to London that he had met an Irish merchant in the port of Bayona and when he asked him about Tyrone, 'the Irishman made no answer but put his finger to his mouth and bit his nail; and in the end told him that before it were long there would be something done which men little dreamed of'. The English ambassador reported early in September: 'Ireland is quiet. There had been a rising of some scamps who expected help from other scamps, who like gypsies came over to Italy for that purpose. They failed ...'

Meanwhile, the Irish had much to see in the city of Milan, where they spent three full weeks. According to Ó Cianáin, there were no less than two hundred and forty-three churches in the city, not counting the private chapels erected by noblemen, as well as altars erected in every marketplace where Masses were celebrated every day. The pièce de resistance was the Duomo, the cathedral, with its large collection of relics, many

of them exotic, such as the bodies of eleven of the Holy Innocents slain by Herod. It also housed the body of Charles Borromeo who had been recently Archbishop of Milan and whom everybody thought would soon be canonised. In fact, he was canonised about two and a half years later. The Irish were in Milan during Holy Week and they visited the cathedral on the evening of Good Friday.

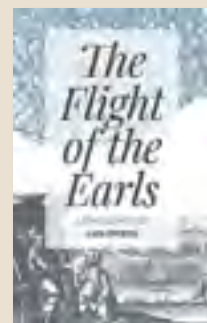
Meanwhile, there was frantic diplomatic activity behind the scenes. Philip III had already written to his ambassador in Rome instructing him to speak to the Pope suggesting 'how fitting and proper it would be that His Holiness protect and help these people for, in defence of our holy religion they have lost their country and all they possessed'. He was also to spread the rumour that the Pope had sent for them 'so that no one may know or suspect that the Earls have gone to Rome on my order'. The ambassador reported that the Pope had replied that 'he would honour and favour them as much as he could' but thought he would give them nothing or very little because 'the apostolic treasury is very low and His Holiness is not very liberal'. The Pope was not prepared to state that he had sent for them but that they were coming of their own accord to seek refuge with him. From London the Spanish ambassador wrote:

Such is the fear they have of the Earl of Tiron that they have now sent a messenger to Ireland with orders from the Viceroy not to press the Catholics, search their houses, nor punish them for hearing Mass in their homes.

This may have been in response to the English ambassador in Venice who commented on 'the Irish gypsies who are wandering from state to state and from city to city seeking support and favour under the pretext of being persecuted for the faith and for conscience, the cloak of every scamp nowadays.'

The Earls themselves were not lagging in making their own case to the Spanish King. They drafted no less than three lengthy memorials which were transmitted to Spain with a covering letter by the Conde de Fuentes. In one of them, they cite a recent Spanish authority who claimed that the Irish were descended from Milesius, a Spanish King. They had already, before leaving Flanders, sent Matthew Tully ahead to Madrid to represent them at the Spanish court and he presented a memorial to Philip III at the end of April requesting him to send an answer to the Earls. The English ambassador in Spain quickly learned of Tully, 'so notoriously known to be a solicitor for Tyrone', and his mission and made a formal complaint. But he was fobbed off by the Spanish Secretary of State who claimed that Tully 'neither brought letter in his pocket nor word in his mouth' from the Earls. The ambassador was not that easily duped. 'By God's grace,' he assured London, 'I will keep a vigilant eye upon the ways which that man will tread in.'

## The Flight of the Earls by Liam Swords



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# Life after retirement

From the book *Reaches of the Mind*  
by Niall Weldon

I think it is fair to say that most people give retirement little thought until they are within a short period of time prior to it happening. This is understandable and there are various reasons for it being put on the long finger. I happen to be one of those who went through my working years with the minimum of time or thought expended on planning how best to cope with the change. On the rare occasions when the thought came to mind, I promptly put it aside for consideration sometime in the future. It was not until the upcoming event was a year or maybe less away that I started pondering over how I would handle the adjustment to what I then reckoned would be a substantive change in my lifestyle as well as in the manner of doing things. However, that change came somewhat later than today's generally accepted norm. I had reached the ripe old age of eighty when it happened. Thankfully I was fortunate enough to have reached that age with the faculties essential for doing what I had planned in a leisure frame of mind reasonably intact.

In a short-lived preparation process, my first thoughts were to remain as active as possible in both mind and body. Boredom was at the top of my feelings-to-avoid list as it would be anathema to me to sit under a tree of idleness, whatever the circumstances. At the same time my body was telling me that I should live life at a much slower pace and, looking ahead, that I should try to avoid getting involved in whatever time-consuming or complex issues were likely to arise. There

would be a lower income, of course, and this would have to be factored into the scheme of things.

There would also be a reduction in the round of social engagements, and house/family commitments would inevitably consume some of the spare time available. No diary would be kept of things to be done as I wanted to avoid time constraints as much as possible. In short, I just wanted to be left free to do things whenever I felt like doing things. It was a question of figuring out what to do that would keep pressure and anxiety at a minimum, somehow.

My passion for poetry would unlikely diminish, nor would I want it to, and I will keep on adding to my anthology of 'nonsense verse' in the hope that one day I might be able to craft a poem fit for inclusion in the noble art. Pottering around the garden and playing at, rather than playing, the occasional game of golf will remain high on my to-do list.

Strangely, perhaps, my decision to retire came easily to me even though I would be moving into a brand new lifestyle, an unknown environment, as well as into a mad, mad, ever-changing world. After a short time in my chosen new style of living, I realised that I was somewhat wide of the mark in

my thinking process on what it would be like. Chores such as posting a letter, or collecting the daily newspaper, or putting out the waste bins, which were not even thought about in my working days, were now onerous tasks consuming leisure time and there was no escape from them. Numerous other chores were lined up for regular daily attention which had not occurred to me. At that stage, compromise came into play. Only time will tell if a fair and lasting solution has been reached. Come to think of it, there can't be much of that left to be endured should my plans fail to be realised!

As we all know, life is peppered with surprises, big and small, and life after retirement is no exception. Like most other people, I have had my share of them and while some were heart-warming, uplifting, pleasant and entertaining, others comprised a mixture of sadness, disappointment, delusion and worry. Never in my wildest dreams, however, would I have envisaged writing a book in my retirement years; but it happened, and I have already alluded to it elsewhere in my writings. It came as a major surprise to me and I still find it difficult to understand for a variety of reasons. It had to do with the history of Aer Lingus and Irish aviation and was

**“In a short-lived preparation process, my first thoughts were to remain as active as possible in both mind and body. Boredom was at the top of my feelings-to-avoid list”**



entitled *Pioneers in Flight*. Even more surprisingly, it has been followed by three further publications: *Sand in My Shoes*, *Lengthening Shadows* and this, *Reaches OfThe Mind*.

This brought about a gargantuan change to the lifestyle I had set for myself during my retirement days. I am happy to say, however, that while I had to forego a number of the things I had planned to do, I doubt if it has lessened in any way the pleasure and enjoyment I had longed for prior to my attempts at becoming an author.

Some general comments may be worthy of note for those cogitating on the subject matter. For many, perhaps the sudden adjustment to a new daily routine after a lifetime at work can prove difficult. As retirees lose contact with the workplace and work colleagues they may struggle to find new outlets for their energy and interests. For some, retirement provides a welcome opportunity to engage with society in a different way by involvement in voluntary or social activities; while for others, the increased leisure time is a chance to engage in further education, to develop new skills and hobbies, or to travel. Those who wish to remain economically active can, of course, choose to do so.

People are retiring earlier these days when compared with the situation during my early working years and, because they are much healthier, they are living longer. Life expectancy is now double what it was in the nineteenth century. The first Government Pension scheme was introduced in Germany in 1889 and the retirement age was set at sixty-five years when life expectancy at birth was forty-five. Today, retirement years account for a much larger span of the average human lifespan. It is now generally felt that society has given too little thought to the implications – financial and otherwise – that a rapidly ageing population presents. The benefits and costs of a greying world – both for the individual and the state – are not, it seems, fully appreciated. In 1960, just over a tenth of the population of the developed world was over sixty; by 2050 this is projected to reach one third. With the trend of increased life expectancy set to continue, the implications of soaring pension costs for the public finances are clear; not only in Ireland, but elsewhere as well. With an ageing population, the ratio of workers to retirees also changes, with the result that fewer people are in the workforce to support an increased number in retirement.

“People are retiring earlier these days when compared with the situation during my early working years and, because they are much healthier, they are living longer. Life expectancy is now double what it was in the nineteenth century”

It seems to me that for those who have retired and for those who will do so in the years ahead, the outlook is not encouraging, to say the least. Provision for pensions is going to become more expensive, pension benefits are likely to be reduced, and people will have to work longer and retire later. The age of retirement in Ireland has been raised to sixty-six and will reach sixty-eight in 2028. It is clear that people will have to save more for their retirement. An ongoing worry for many who have retired concerns the financial sustainability of pension provision, both public and private. The state pension has not been increased for a number of years, while most private sector pension funds are in significant deficit and unable to meet the pension promises they have made to members.

In my schoolgoing days I can recall reading the renowned English writer Charles Lamb's (1775–1834) memorable essays. One of his essays was called 'the superannuated Man' and it gave me immense pleasure at the time. In it he contrasts his thirty-six years of service as a clerk in the East India Company in Mincing lane in London, which he found depressing in the extreme, with the sublime years he had when he retired on a pension – a rare enough reward for lengthy and valuable service around two hundred years ago. When writing this piece on life after retirement, my mind drifted back to Lamb's essay, which I reread. I am setting out below two short extracts from the essay – the first dealing with his boredom and gloomy days at work during his thirty-six years of service pen-pushing in a counting house in London, and the second describing his freedom and elation when he had retired on pension.

First extract:

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps of mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree that it was visible in the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were, and the wood had entered into my soul.

Second extract:

I have time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May morning. It is lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring, like horses in a mill drudging on in the same eternal round – and what is it all for? A man can never have too much time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him nothing-to-do; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton mills? take me that lumber of a desk there and bowl it down.

Having read the essay years later, a well-known editor, whose name escapes me at the moment, once remarked that 'it is the perfect antidote to a bad day at the office'. I imagine few would disagree with that sentiment.

My ninety-fourth birthday is just around the corner, so to speak. On the assumption that I make it, every day alive after that I will treasure as a golden bonus day. The things that bothered me most during my near 'ninety years A-Growing' seem to be fast fading away, while the happy times keep on coming back to give renewed pleasurable hours. What's left to enjoy after that can be of little consequence.



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# There was never really a Golden Age of Christian unity

From the book *How We Killed God*  
by David Quinn

Catholics in particular like to imagine that there was a Golden Age of Christian unity that was fractured in the West by the rise of Protestantism, and five centuries before that between East and West when Constantinople and Rome split.

But for the first thousand years, they imagine, the whole of Christendom was unified, and in the West it was unified for a further 500 years.

In fact, arguably, except maybe for brief and sporadic periods, there has never really been Christian unity, properly understood. In a united Christian Church all the members would, of their own free will, agree on the essentials and disagree only on the inessentials.

But for the first 300 years or so of Christian history, no one could say there was true unity in the above sense. The heart of Christianity back then lay not in Rome and the Latin West, but in the Greek part of the Roman Empire and there were continual and sometimes violent disagreements among Christians about this or that doctrine.

When the Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, these disagreements prompted him to call the Council of Nicea in 325 AD and unity of a sort was imposed on the quarrelling Christians.

But heresies of one sort or another kept rearing their heads and the only reason some of them did not put down deep roots like Protestantism is that the ruling powers of both Church and State were able to destroy them, sometimes by force.

Had they lacked that power, Christianity would have formally split asunder much sooner than it did.

The reason East and West split in 1054 is that Rome and Constantinople were powerful enough to protect their respective Churches.

The reason Western Christianity split in 1517 is because by then there were princes both willing and able to protect the Protestant rebels.

So it was really force, not sweet reason and light that kept Christendom from formally splitting sooner than it did.

On the face of it, it seems a simple enough formula for Christians to be able to agree on the essentials and to allow disagreement on the inessentials.

Unfortunately, it seems to be part of the human condition, stemming partly from the limits of reason, that we frequently disagree over what is essential and what is inessential.

What applies to religion generally, and to Christianity, also applies to politics and philosophy. Full agreement is impossible to find and often the best we can do is not to fight – literally – over our disagreements.



The Baptism of Constantine by Gianfrancesco Penni

“Except maybe for brief and sporadic periods, there has never really been Christian unity, properly understood”

After World War II, and from the Catholic point of view, after Vatican II, the current ecumenical movement developed and grew. Naively, some of its more enthusiastic proponents imagined that Christian unity was just around the corner.

But as the decades have passed we have discovered that each Christian faction (to use a slightly unfortunate word) has certain essentials they feel they cannot compromise.

For Catholics one is the Primacy of Peter. For Protestants it might be Sola Scriptura.

Even liberals have their doctrines. Today, liberals are dealing the biggest blows to Christian unity by insisting on women clergy, women bishops and openly homosexual clergy. They believe these things are a matter of justice, and are therefore non-negotiable.

Disagreement over these issues is tearing the Anglican Communion apart.

To the extent that liberal Anglicans forcing these things on their Communion are destroying it, and also widening the gulf between Canterbury and Rome, not to mention between Canterbury and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

But they believe they have no choice but to press on with their programme because, as mentioned, they believe justice demands it. That is their dogma.

All this said, however, ecumenism has been generally a great force for good. It may not have achieved the hoped-for re-union of the Churches, but it has mostly improved relations between them, and between Christians of different dominations.

On this island, for example, sectarianism in practically non-existent in the South, and is abating in the North. In the West, the main religious conflict today isn't between Christians as such, but between secularism and religion.

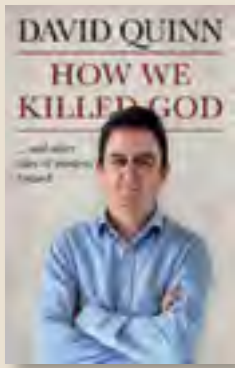
Secularists in particular stereotype and demonise Christians every bit as much as Catholics and Protestants once demonised each other.

Indeed, in the last century, extreme secularists have sought to exterminate religion and where that has failed, they have sought to quarantine it by restricting it purely to the private domain. The campaign to quarantine it is actually gathering strength again, including here in Ireland.

In fact, this threat to the freedom of Christians and religious believers can act to bring Christians closer together in common cause. For example, the Pope, and the present and past Archbishops of Canterbury (Rowan Williams and Lord Carey respectively), have each criticised aggressive secularism in often very similar language.

So for that matter has the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Jonathan Sacks.

There may never really have been a Golden Age of Christian unity, and Christian unity in the true sense may not be achievable in any case. But this does not mean Christians cannot grow closer together, humanly speaking, and it does not prevent them finding common cause where necessary. Let this be ecumenism's goal.



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# Heaven's Messenger

**And a great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. Revelation 12:1–2**

Exclusive Excerpt from *Medjugorje: The Last Apparition*  
By Wayne Weible

**W**hy is the Blessed Virgin Mary the one sent to deliver the last apparitional messages from heaven that will change the world forever? Why not Jesus himself; or, one of the biblical prophets, such as Moses or Elijah? The answer to the question can be found in Holy Scripture, the sure way to discern the truth of any claimed supernatural grace allegedly coming from heaven.

**“Mary’s first role undoubtedly is to be the chosen Mother of our God who comes to earth as a helpless human baby.”**

Most Christian theologians today acknowledge that the ‘woman clothed with the sun’ referred to in Holy Scripture is the chosen mother of Jesus Christ. This single piece of scripture offers a fundamental reason to accept the premise that the Blessed Virgin Mary received a second major role in God’s plan of salvation for his creation: to be the spiritual mother of the children of God. This second role singularly gives reason enough to accept her as the harbinger of such an ultra-critical message through her appearance at the little village.

Confirmation of Mary’s second role comes from the same book and chapter in revelation. Verse seventeen states: ‘Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus’. The

narrative of the Book of Revelation, credited to have been written by the disciple John, goes on to make clear that his reference is to Mary by writing in the fifth verse: ‘and she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron’. That son, of course, is Jesus.

The reference to ‘her children’ are the children of God – all of the children of God, including those who have not yet accepted his gift of salvation, and who do not as yet keep the commandments of God. A natural progression is to see Mary as the messenger sent throughout the centuries in supernatural apparition to assure that all of her spiritual children will at least have an opportunity through the grace of free will to respond to and accept the teachings of Jesus. The summation of her thirty-one-plus years of teaching messages at Medjugorje is to prepare us for what has been prophesied for centuries – the will of God on earth as it is in heaven. That is why Medjugorje will be the last apparition site of the Blessed Virgin Mary on earth.

Mary’s first role undoubtedly is to be the chosen Mother of our God who comes to earth as a helpless human baby. However, Jesus confirms her second role at the height of his indescribable suffering. He looks down from the cross at his mother standing with his beloved disciple John. We can only imagine the agony of actually speaking through such suffering as he utters, ‘Woman, here is your son!’ and to John, ‘here is your mother!’

The theological question is this: Would a suffering Jesus take this particular time to address a domestic chore by asking his disciple John to physically care

for his mother from that time on? Would he not have taken care of such a task before his death? It makes far more sense to see this drama as Jesus assigning his human mother Mary as the spiritual mother to all humanity, with his disciple John standing in for all of us. It is confirmed by the obvious; ‘every word uttered by Jesus from the cross was done with explicit, meaningful purpose.’

The limited reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary in scripture adds to the mystique surrounding her. It adds to her profound humility, a necessary trait to fulfil the dual role of mother to God and to humanity. One final reference gives consolidation to all quoted Holy Scripture about Mary. It is from the new Testament Book of Luke, chapter one, beginning with verse twenty-six: ‘In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.”’

Later in the chapter, Mary sets out and goes to the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, who will be the precursor of the Messiah. As she enters the tiny courtyard, Elizabeth – who is filled with the Holy Spirit – exclaims with a cry, ‘and why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?’

Mary’s response, known as the ‘Magnificat’ is as follows:

And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour; for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty one has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has



**“Why is the Blessed Virgin Mary the one sent to deliver the last apparitional messages from heaven that will change the world forever?”**

shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever’

Therefore, Mary, the messenger

of Medjugorje, is according to Holy Scripture the daughter of the Father, the bride of the Holy Spirit and the mother of the son of God. Thus, it is reasonable to accept her as a messenger from heaven – the Messenger of Medjugorje. There is little doubt of the crisis that prompts heaven to send her to earth at this time. There is also ample evidence to see her as a prophet of these times.



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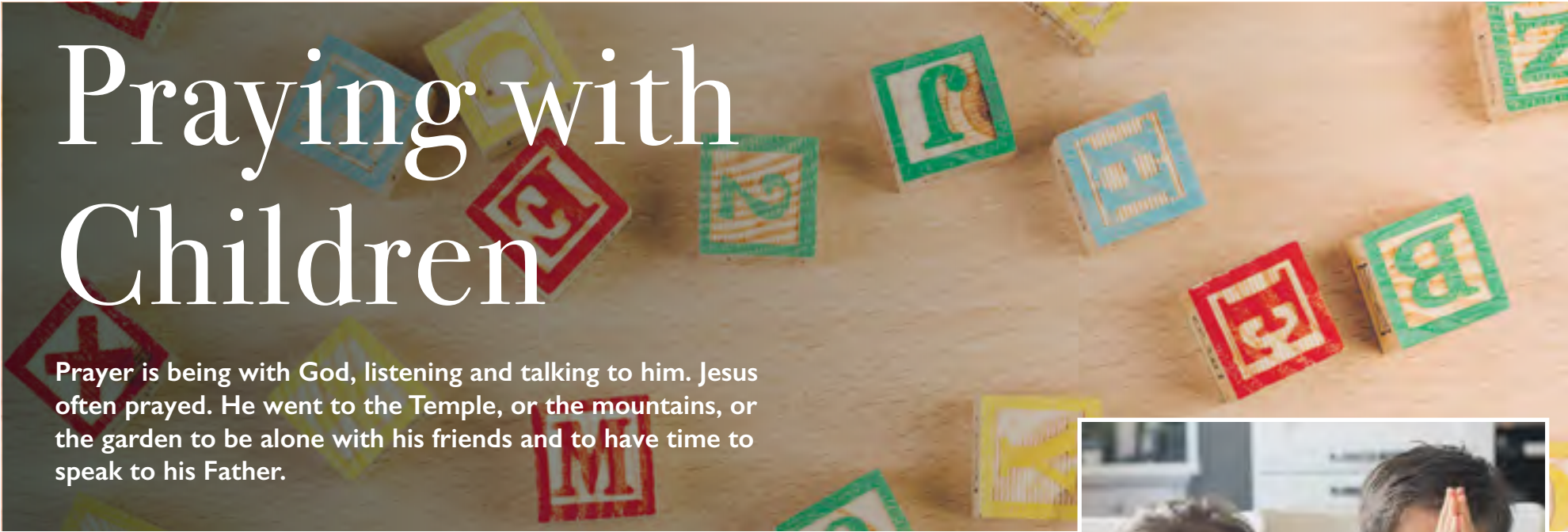
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1

### First Prayer

God our Father, you love us.  
We praise you and thank you for everything that we are and have.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**First Reading Lk 1:46-55**

*This reading is Mary’s prayer, the Magnificat. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, put her trust in God. She knew she could trust him, so she prayed.*

I praise the Lord, for he is good,  
he makes me glad!  
I am young and I am poor,  
and yet he comes and chooses me!  
And from now on,  
everyone will say that he has blessed me.  
The Lord is strong, the Lord is generous,  
stretching out his hand to help the sick,  
feeding hungry people with good food,  
looking after people everywhere!  
Long ago he said that he would help us.  
Now the Lord has kept his promise perfectly!  
He has not forgotten his own people,  
he has come to rescue them and keep them safe!

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 27:6-7**

*God is someone we can trust, so we pray to him.*

**Response:** Blessed be God!

1. Blessed be God!  
He listens to me.  
He hears me, when I pray for help. **R.**
2. I trust the Lord, for he is strong. **R.**
3. I thank the Lord, for he takes care of me. **R.**

**Second Reading Rom 8:26, 27**

*This reading comes from one of the letters of St Paul. The Holy Spirit will help us to pray if we don’t know what to say.*

Dear friends,  
sometimes we find it hard to say our prayers.  
But remember, we have a special friend, the Holy Spirit, and he will help us.  
Sometimes, we don’t know what to say to God, but the Holy Spirit will help us to pray without using words, and God will understand.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

**Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia, alleluia,  
When you say your prayers don’t worry so much about the things you want. Remember that you have a Father in heaven who knows all about the things you need.  
Alleluia.

**Gospel Reading Lk 11:1-4**

*This reading is from the gospel of St Luke. Jesus prays to his Father – so should we.*

One day Jesus was saying his prayers and, when he had finished, one of his friends said, ‘Teach us to pray!’  
So Jesus told them to say this prayer: ‘Father, we want everyone to praise you, and we want your kingdom to grow better and better until it is perfect. Give us enough food each day, forgive us when we do wrong, just as we forgive others when they do wrong to us, and help us when we are put to the test.’

**THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD.**

**Prayer of the Faithful**

God our Father, we know you care for us. We ask you now to listen to our prayers.

1. O God, you are great. Help us to praise you. Lord hear us. **R.**
2. O God, you care for us. Help us to trust you. Lord hear us. **R.**
3. O God, you are good. Help us to love you. Lord hear us. **R.**
4. O God, you are kind. Help us to be sorry when we fail to love. Lord hear us. **R.**
5. O God, you are always giving. Help us to be thankful for all your gifts. Lord hear us. **R.**
6. O God, you listen to us. Help us and all our friends in need. Lord hear us. **R.**



2

### Second Prayer

God our Father, we bring you our gifts to thank you for what you have given us.  
Through Christ our Lord.

3

### Third Prayer

God our Father, you have brought us close to Jesus in Holy Communion.


Help us to pray often and well, like Jesus.  
Help us to pray in school, at play and in church.  
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# Letter from Rome

## Francis' Medjugorje message expresses 'Marian classic'



John L. Allen Jr

**M**ore than a decade ago, I coined the phrase 'Marian cool' to characterise Pope Benedict XVI's attitude toward Mary. While the German pontiff developed a stronger attachment to Mary later in life than he had as a young theologian, when he feared Marian devotion was a distraction from the centrality of Christ, he's remained distinctly cool to speculation about miracles, apparitions and revelations, always insisting they're not the heart of the matter.

One of Benedict's favourite theological tropes is that 'simple believers' are often a better guide to the Faith than the flights of fancy of academic theologians, and he appreciates that if that's the measure, then Mary enjoys an unquestionable pride of place.

With Pope Francis, 'cool' is hardly the right word, since he has a classically Latin American passion for the Madonna and for popular devotions to her that express the souls of so many cultures on his home continent. He knows that throughout Latin American history, hope in the maternal compassion of Mary has sustained individual people as well as whole peoples through their darkest moments.

### Dedication

As is well known, Francis has made the trek across Rome to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the largest church in the world dedicated to Mary, to dedicate all of his foreign trips to her, and the first time we saw the pontiff tear up in public was when he visited the shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida in Brazil on his 2013 visit for World Youth Day.

On March 11 of this year, Francis entrusted the entire world to the protection of the Virgin Mary amid the coronavirus pandemic, composing a special prayer under her traditional title as "health of the sick".

Yet Francis too is suspicious of some of the more spectacular claims sometimes made by fervent Marian devotees. Famously, in November 2013 the pontiff declared that Mary "is not a postmistress, delivering messages every day", in the context of



Pilgrims pray at a statue of Mary on Apparition Hill in Medjugorje. Mary "is not a postmistress, delivering messages every day," Pope Francis said in 2013 when asked about the Marian shrine. Photo: CNS

answering a question about Medjugorje.

Perhaps for Francis, his Marian devotion too is rooted in the experience of 'simple believers', and his scepticism arises not so much from theological convictions like Benedict, but rather a more pastoral concern not to see those simple believers hoodwinked by people he believes are manipulating Marian Faith for their own ends.

Rather than 'cool' then, maybe the best term for Francis' style of devotion is 'Marian classic', meaning a deep and abiding Marian Faith that tends towards the classic expressions of that devotion

– Our Lady of Lujan in Argentina, Our Lady of the Rosary in Guatemala, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, Our Lady of Coromoto in Venezuela and so on, rather than newer-fangled phenomena which he may feel haven't stood the test of time.

### Derivations

Even within newer Marian devotions, Francis appears to prefer the original expressions of those experiences rather than later derivations, and to trust their pastoral and personal fruits more than the alleged supernatural extravaganzas.

All of which brings us to a

**“The great model of a Church with a young heart, ready to follow Christ with freshness and docility, always remains the Virgin Mary”**

risks, without any other guarantee of her certainty of being the carrier of a promise,” Francis said.

“Her ‘behold the handmaid of the Lord’ is the most beautiful example, which shows us what happens when the human person, in freedom, abandons himself or herself in the hands of God,” the Pope said.

“May this example always fascinate us and guide us!”

Nowhere in the brief, 750-word message did Francis refer to any of the alleged supernatural phenomena associated with Medjugorje, nor did he cite any of the messages that devotees believe Mary has delivered.

\* \* \* \* \*

In a 2017 press conference, Pope Francis referred to the original apparitions at Medjugorje, which occurred when the reported visionaries were children, noting that they were studied by a commission headed by Italian Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the Vicar of Rome from 1991 to 2008, and that body was largely positive but recommended further study. As far as alleged apparitions still occurring today, he said, the report “had its doubts”. He then added that personally he’s “more negative” and that these “presumed apparitions don’t have much value”.

**“That, perhaps, is the heart of ‘Marian classic’: a passionate devotion to the Madonna”**

Francis emphasised that he doesn’t dismiss the positive impact of Medjugorje on many of those who experience it.

“There are people who go there and convert, people that find God whose lives change,” he said. “This isn’t due to a magic wand, [but] this is a spiritual and pastoral fact that can’t be denied.”

That, perhaps, is the heart of ‘Marian classic’: a passionate devotion to the Madonna, with a preference for time-honoured expressions of that devotion, scepticism about thaumaturgical touches, and concern more for changed lives than spectacular revelations.

Later this month, on the Feast of the Assumption on August 15, when Francis is scheduled to deliver a special noontime Angelus address, we may well get another glimpse of the Pope’s ‘Marian classic’ in action.

John L. Allen Jr is Editor of CruxNow.com

message Pope Francis issued on Sunday last to young people gathered at Medjugorje, the celebrated and also controversial site of reported Marian apparitions still officially under review by the Vatican.

The event is called *Mladifest*, using the Bosnian word for ‘youth’, and is the second largest regular Catholic gathering of young people after World Youth Day. It’s held every year from July 31 to August 6, and usually draws around 50,000 youth and some 500 priests from around the world, though turnout this year obviously has been impacted by travel restrictions due to the coronavirus.

“The great model of a Church with a young heart, ready to follow Christ with freshness and docility, always remains the Virgin Mary,” the Pope said.

“The force of her ‘yes,’ and of that ‘let it happen to me’ that she spoke to the angel, strikes us forever. Her ‘yes’ means committing herself and taking





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Pope Benedict 'very unwell' since trip to Germany

● Pope emeritus Benedict XVI is sick with a bacterial infection and "very frail", according to a German newspaper report.

Citing Benedict biographer Peter Seewald, German newspaper *Passauer Neue Presse* (PNP) reported on Monday (August 3) that the 93-year-old Pope emeritus is suffering from facial *erysipelas*, a bacterial infection of the skin which causes a painful, red rash.

The infection can also result in fever, headaches and lymphedema. It is treated with antibiotics.

Seewald told PNP that Benedict has been "very frail" since his return from visiting his ailing older brother, Msgr. Georg Ratzinger, in Bavaria in June. Georg Ratzinger died on July 1.

● See photo on Page 29.

### Catholic prayer app sees huge increase in popularity

● The Catholic prayer and meditation app, Hallow, has seen a dramatic increase in popularity and is getting more and more users every day. "It started as this focus on young adults but actually we've seen a lot more...parents and retired folks get really excited about it and start using it," said Hallow's CEO and co-founder, Alex Jones.

The No.1 rating is based on "Apple's algorithm, which they don't disclose", Jones told *Catholic News Service*. "It's based on how many people have reviewed it in the last few weeks, how many people are downloading it, how many have viewed. We started off on the bottom of the list, went to No. 3, then jumped to No. 1 about six months ago."

The US-based app is born out of Jones' own faith journey and is thoroughly orthodox: "It's very important to us that everything on the app is 100% authentically Catholic and in line with church teachings," Jones told *CNS* about Hallow.

### Jesuit superior warns of pandemic's threat to democracy

● Human lives and jobs are not the only things threatened by the coronavirus pandemic: In many countries, democracy is also under attack, said Fr Arturo Sosa, superior general of the Jesuits.

"Democracy can be one of the victims of the pandemic if we do not take care with our political condition," Fr Sosa told *Vatican News*. "At this time, for example, many

governments – including so-called democratic governments – are taking the path of authoritarianism.

"In other words, the pandemic is an occasion to take steps forward or to take steps backward," he said. "And we must be very aware of this as the Catholic Church and as people committed to justice and peace so that we can build a more welcoming, more democratic society."

### Report finds hate crimes rising against Indian Christians

● Hate crimes against Christians in India increased by 40% in the first half of 2020 despite a three-month nationwide lockdown, according to a new report.

In a report published on July 29, the ecumenical group Persecution Relief said it had documented 293 incidents between January and June, including six cases of murder and five of rape.

"Compared to last year's number of 208 incidents, this year has seen a disconcerting rise of 40.87% in spite of the complete nationwide lockdown which was imposed for almost three months," the report said.

India, which is expected to overtake China as the world's most populous country within the next decade, is ranked as the 10th worst persecutor of Christians worldwide by the charity Open Doors.



Christians protest violence in India.

## Nicaragua cathedral severely damaged after firebomb attack

An unidentified man threw a firebomb into a chapel of Managua's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Friday, severely damaging the chapel and a devotional image of Christ more than three centuries old.

"This was a planned act, very calmly planned," Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes of Managua said. "So I want to say it clearly: it is a terrorist act, an act of intimidating the Church in her mission of evangelisation."

The man was hooded and held something in his hands that the witnesses could not identify. They also saw the man throw the same object. Following this, he was seen to circle the cathedral for 20 minutes before making an escape.

"In other words, he calculated everything: how to enter, where to do it, and then where to escape. This was planned," the cardinal said.

### Witness

A church worker and a parishioner were in the chapel. They noticed the fire and reported it to authorities. While the man was not identified, witness Alba Ramirez said the man was known to some in

A priest and nun pray in the Blood of Christ Chapel at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Managua after it was subject to an arson attack.



the area. According to Radio Corporacion, men in civilian clothes with a threatening attitude were in the vicinity of the cathedral.

The chapel houses a 382-year-old image of the Blood of Christ, a depiction of Jesus Christ crucified.

Cardinal Brenes said due to the fire's heat "half of the face came off, but the image was charred. We are going to evaluate this calmly because it is a beautiful image more than 300 years old."

The Archdiocese of Managua said the act was "a totally condemnable act of sacrilege and desecration".

The apparent attack comes after tensions between some Catholics and supporters of President Daniel Ortega, who previously led the country for over a decade after the Sandinistas' 1979 ouster of the Somoza dictatorship. Ortega has again been president of Nicaragua since 2007, and oversaw the abolition of presidential term limits in 2014.

Ortega's government has accused many bishops and priests of siding with his opposition.

Backers of Ortega have led actions against some churches, including Managua's cathedral when critics

of Ortega took refuge there.

On Sunday, Pope Francis turned his thoughts to the cathedral following the Angelus prayer: "I am thinking about the people of Nicaragua who are suffering due to the attack on the Cathedral of Managua," he said, "where a widely-venerated image of Christ – which accompanied and sustained the lives of the faithful for several centuries – was seriously damaged, almost destroyed."

"My dear Nicaraguan brothers," he added, "I am near to you and I am praying for you."

## China accused of hacking Vatican networks ahead of negotiations

State-sponsored hackers have reportedly targeted Vatican computer networks in an attempt to give China an advantage in negotiations to renew a provisional deal with the Holy See.

A report, released on July 28, said that hackers may have used a counterfeit condolence message from Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican Secretary of State, to gain access to Vatican communications.

The report was compiled by the Insikt Group, the research arm of the US-based cybersecurity company Recorded Future. Researchers said they had uncovered "a cyberespionage

campaign attributed to a suspected Chinese state-sponsored threat activity group", which they referred to as RedDelta.

Other Catholic targets included the Hong Kong Study Mission to China and the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME) in Italy.

### Network

Researchers said that the network intrusions took place ahead of talks to renew a "provisional agreement" between the Holy See and China, which was sealed in 2018 and expires in September.

"The suspected intrusion into the Vatican would offer RedDelta insight into the negotiating position of the Holy See ahead of the deal's September 2020 renewal.

"The targeting of the Hong Kong Study Mission and its Catholic Diocese could also provide a valuable intelligence source for both monitoring the diocese's relations with the Vatican and its position on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement amidst widespread protests and the recent sweeping Hong Kong national security law," the report concluded.

## Mass burials common as Nigerians face daily violence

Faith communities in Nigeria face daily violence and persecution, a US-based rights group said. It called for US intervention after a terrorist group executed five men abducted while providing assistance in northeastern Nigeria.

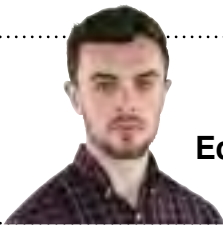
While Christians, particularly preachers, "are clearly the targets" of militants in the West African country, Muslims are killed too, said Archbishop Matthew Ndagoso of Kaduna, who chairs the bishops' committee on justice, development and peace.

Nigeria has suffered more than 10 years of killings, abductions, and other abuses by armed Islamist groups. In the hardest-hit northeast region of the country, tens of thousands of people have been killed and about two million displaced.

With abductions commonplace along Nigeria's roads, people are terrified to use them to go about their daily business, Archbishop Ndagoso told *Catholic News Service* on July 29.

"Mass burials have become very common," he said.





Edited by Jason Osborne  
jason@irishcatholic.ie

## Marching for life



Students from the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota, participate in the 2020 March for Life in Washington. Photo: CNS

## Bishops fear Scotland's hate crime law could criminalise Bible

Catholic bishops have said that proposed hate crime legislation in Scotland could criminalise the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

In a statement issued on July 29, the bishops argued that the Scottish Government's new Hate Crime and Public Order Bill could lead to censorship of Catholic teaching.

Commenting on the submission of the bill, the Director of the Catholic Parliamentary Office, Anthony Horan said: "Whilst acknowledging that stirring up of hatred is morally wrong and supporting moves to discourage and condemn such behaviour the bishops have expressed concerns about the lack of clarity around definitions and a potentially low threshold for committing an offence, which they fear, could lead to a 'deluge' of vexatious claims."

"A new offence of possessing inflammatory material could even

render material such as the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*... inflammatory. The Catholic Church's understanding of the human person, including the belief that sex and gender are not fluid and changeable, could fall foul of the new law. Allowing for respectful debate means avoiding censorship and accepting the divergent views and multitude of arguments inhabiting society."

### Legislation

The Scottish Government proposed the bill in response to an independent review of hate crime laws led by the retired judge Lord Bracadale. The government argues the bill modernises, consolidates and extends existing hate crime legislation. It also abolishes the offence of blasphemy.

In their submission, the bishops said they had no objection to the proposal to

abolish the common law of blasphemy, which has not been prosecuted in Scotland for more than 175 years.

But the bishops said they were concerned the bill could feed "cancel culture".

"The growth of what some describe as the 'cancel culture', hunting down those who disagree with prominent orthodoxies with the intention to expunge the non-compliant from public discourse and with callous disregard for their livelihoods, is deeply concerning," they wrote.

"No single section of society has dominion over acceptable and unacceptable speech or expression. While the legislature and judiciary must create and interpret laws to maintain public order it must do so carefully, weighing in fundamental freedoms and allowing for reasonably held views."

## Vatican official voices support for German abbess

Cardinal Michael Czerny has voiced support for a German abbess facing trial for sheltering refugees.

The cardinal said that Mother Mechthild Thurmer, a Benedictine nun, was in keeping with "a long tradition of Christians living their Faith to the final consequence".

Mother Mechthild is fac-

ing trial in Bamberg, Germany, for offering refuge on 30 occasions to women seeking asylum at her monastery, the Abbey of Maria Frieden in the Bavarian town of Kirchschletten.

Up to now, proceedings against those offering Church asylum have traditionally been dropped following the

payment of a fine.

However, the 62-year-old abbess has refused to pay the fine and stands accused of two counts of 'aiding and abetting illegal residents'.

Mother Mechthild has defended her actions stating: "I acted out of Christian spirit; to give concrete help to a person in need can't be a crime."

Asked how far people in the Church should go and whether they should be willing to take that risk the German abbess is taking, which potentially could lead to a jail term, Cardinal Czerny responded: "God bless her!"

He added there was no reason for this Christian tradition to be "refuted or broken".

## Vatican roundup

### Spotlight needed on abuse in women's orders – Jesuit journal

● The abuse occurring within women's religious orders deserves more attention from the media and must be remedied, said an influential Jesuit journal.

Novices and women religious, especially those who have been assigned to a country where they don't know the language, can be particularly vulnerable to abuses of power and conscience by superiors, and sexual abuse by their formators, said an article in *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

The article, released to journalists on July 30, was titled 'Abuse of authority in the church: Problems and challenges of women's religious life'. It cited different forms of abuse known by the author through his own work and from interviews given by Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

While much attention has been given to the abuse of minors and vulnerable people, and abuse perpetrated by priests, not enough has been said about the kinds of abuse women religious and novices have experienced within their own religious communities, the article said.

### Pope Francis tells young people to let Mary inspire and guide them

● "Let Mary inspire and guide young people today," Pope Francis told participants at the annual International Youth Festival at the Marian shrine in Medjugorje.

Mary will always be "the great model of the church" because she is ready to follow Christ with vitality and docility, he said in a message to those attending the festival in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He said, "her 'yes' means getting involved and taking a risk, without any guarantee besides the certainty of being the bearer of a promise", and that her example continues

to show the beauty of freely entrusting oneself completely to the hands of God. "May her example captivate and guide you!" he said.

An estimated 40,000 to 45,000 people attended the festival last year, including senior Vatican representatives for the first time. Organisers were unsure how many people to expect in 2020 because of the travel restrictions and safety measures in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before the pandemic, the shrine annually attracted up to three million people.

### Pontifical Academy defends coronavirus document that did not mention God

● The Pontifical Academy for Life has defended its latest document on the coronavirus crisis following criticism that it did not mention God.

A spokesman said that the text, *'Humana Communitas in the Age of the Pandemic: Untimely Meditations on Life's Rebirth'*, was addressed to "the widest possible audience".

"We are interested in entering into human situations, reading them in the light of Faith, and in a way that speaks to the widest possible audience, to believers and non-believers, to all men and women 'of good will'," wrote Fabrizio Mastrofini, who serves in the press office of the pontifical academy, which is led by Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia.

The spokesman's comments came in response to a July 28 article in the *La Nuova Bussola Quotidiana*, an Italian Catholic website founded in 2012.

The article, written by the philosopher Stefano Fontana, said that the document did not contain a single "explicit or implicit reference to God".

He wrote: "Just like the preceding document, this one too says nothing: above all it says nothing about life, which is the specific competence of the pontifical academy, and it also says nothing Catholic, that is to say anything inspired by the teaching of Our Lord."



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Secular schooling 'wholly unsuitable' for Christians

**Dear Editor,** Further to your articles on the nascent Citizens' Assembly on education [IC 09/07/2020], it is necessary to cast a cold eye on the spectre of a universal secular educational model. The argument for such a model is founded on the shifting sands of the secular viewpoint being the 'neutral' one.

As the philosopher Gadamer pointed out, there is no such thing as the view from nowhere, you can only look at something with all your own prejudices and the baggage

encumbering you. To be unaware of your biases is to be imprisoned by them.

The secular paradigm has inherent limitations which make it a wholly unsuitable regime for parents wishing to raise their children as Christians.

Take the vital area of sex education. The sex drive is so strong and primordial that to teach about it without any moral constraints will inexorably lead to hedonism, even if such behaviour is not explicitly taught or implicitly aimed at. Such

unbridled licentiousness is destructive of the individual, the family and wider society. It is a strange destination, arrived at due to the blind belief in the superiority of one particular worldview.

There are many other flaws in the secular approach, which I submit, render it wholly undeserving of its putative position as the gold standard for education.

*Yours etc.,  
Colm Fitzpatrick,  
Castleknock, Co. Dublin.*

## Laity's role must not be found in priest shortages

**Dear Editor,** On reading your edition [IC 23/07/2020] I could not help contrasting your lead article "Vatican warns bishops to consult laity on reform" and an article in the same issue by a clerical contributor in which he refers to "my parish pastoral Council", I immediately thought of Vatican II, its promise to the laity and its role in the context of the Church's mission of 'reaching out'.

Somehow the complexity of the core Christian mission of reaching out, which entails the awakening of

the "dormant giant", i.e. the laity, jumped out at me from your said issue. The Church's evangelical mission of 'reaching out' has so very far to go and appears to have travelled so very little, in comparison, in 2000 years.

We as Catholics are a Church of sinners and our Catholicity, by definition, is universal and all-embracing, reflecting the bits and pieces of our everyday lives. However, to avoid relativism in the very essence of our mission we collectively must seek to ensure that there is a

receptiveness in the broader Church to the central Christian mission of reaching out and to the words and directions, as to that mission, of our pontifical treasure in the person of Pope Francis.

However, there can be no such receptivity without structure and there can be no such structure without a recognition from the Vatican of the inherent human and cultural difficulties, and indeed obstacles, to reforming our Church in order to expedite its mission of reaching out. While the Pope warns

that parishes and churches must not be closed due to shortage of priests or financial difficulties, doesn't this warning also warn us that the role of the laity must not find its genesis in the shortage of priests or in the Church's financial difficulties, as such genesis can only be found in our Baptism. Our inclusive participation as Church must emanate from our Baptism so that our church may experience a new springtime.

*Yours etc.,  
John Lupton Snr,  
Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.*

### 'Disappointed' with comments about parish councils

**Dear Editor,** I was very disappointed with the comments of Fr Bernard Cotter [Notebook, IC 23/07/2020] regarding his parish pastoral council. Pastoral councils are volunteers who give of their time freely with the aim of helping in any way they can. There is very little formal training and also not much support from the diocese – at least that has been my experience in the Dublin diocese. The parish priest is also a member of the pastoral council.

So, if the council is of little use to the parish, part of the blame lies also with the parish priest. It seems unfair to publicly say that it is a good thing the council disappeared since lockdown (Fr Cotter's words, not mine).

I wish Fr Cotter well in the search for new recruits for his parish council.

*Yours etc.,  
Mary Kelly,  
Navan Road, Co. Dublin.*



## Supporting President Trump on abortion stance

**Dear Editor,** Christopher White in his Letter from America [IC 23/07/2020] claims that "in failing to challenge Donald Trump on his moral inconsistencies, Catholics have also failed their Church". I don't think there is anyone more against the death penalty than I am and I write to a prisoner on death row in the US, but, the greatest moral evil is abortion and, as Mother Teresa described it, 'the greatest destroyer of peace in the world'.

Over 60 million babies have been aborted there since Roe vs Wade and it is of the utmost urgency that

is voting for abortion. That party has made it abundantly clear that it has no difficulty with abortion and will allow no restrictions to be put on it.

On the other hand, President Trump has proved, by his actions, that he is against abortion with his efforts to curtail its funding, especially that of Planned Parenthood, but he has been thwarted at every turn by the Democrats.

He has also stood up for religious freedom, which is a most important issue now with the worldwide persecution of Christians and this

Government has spoken out on the issue.

An interesting question for the Democratic Party is how they can be so hypocritical in claiming to be Catholic while they are out and out supporters of abortion.

I hope and pray that he [President Trump] is re-elected and, if so, then we can try to ensure that both abortion and the death penalty are abolished but for now he must be supported for his stance on abortion.

*Yours etc.,*

## facebook community

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

### Priority one for Minister Helen McEntee: abolishing oaths on the Bible

That makes senses since most people do not believe in it.  
– **Guillaume Ry**

Are some people now afraid of the Bible, the one real truth. Maybe they want the people to live like wild animals. Maybe the real truth is a little bit over their heads. – **Donal O'Rourke**

It's too bad now that they are taking God out of everything, no wonder our society is breaking down so much.  
– **Seamus Ward**

Helen, there are more urgent issues like homelessness, assessment for children and young people with special needs, for the most part the people taking the oaths don't mean it and certainly don't keep it. – **Mary Cosgrove**

Politicians don't understand truth. – **Mary Carroll**

The dismantling of the Catholic religion continues.  
– **Key Judge**

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

## Politicians with care for life that ends with unborn

**Dear Editor,** Mary Kenny's highlighting of the perceived abilities of European female political leadership, with particular referencing to the current 'saint' of the media, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand [IC 23/07/2020], is problematic.

Quite frankly, not one of those names which she offered are noted for their pro-life credentials; indeed they are ideologically opposed to the unborn having any rights at all. I would love to be corrected, but if any male or female politician stood up on a pro-life platform in order to gain a governmental health post, they would be saying goodbye to their careers. No one must question the dark sacrament which is abortion, and to do so is heretical in today's political speak!

We've all been taken in with the 'empathy' and 'Madonna'-like attitude of Jacinda Ardern, but such care ends with the unborn, for whom she has never voted to support nor to protect. Her track record as with the vast majority of Western politicians is noted for the hash repetitive legal assaults upon the most vulnerable of the womb!

*Yours etc.,  
Fr John McCallion CC,  
Clonoe, Co. Tyrone.*

## Letters to the Editor

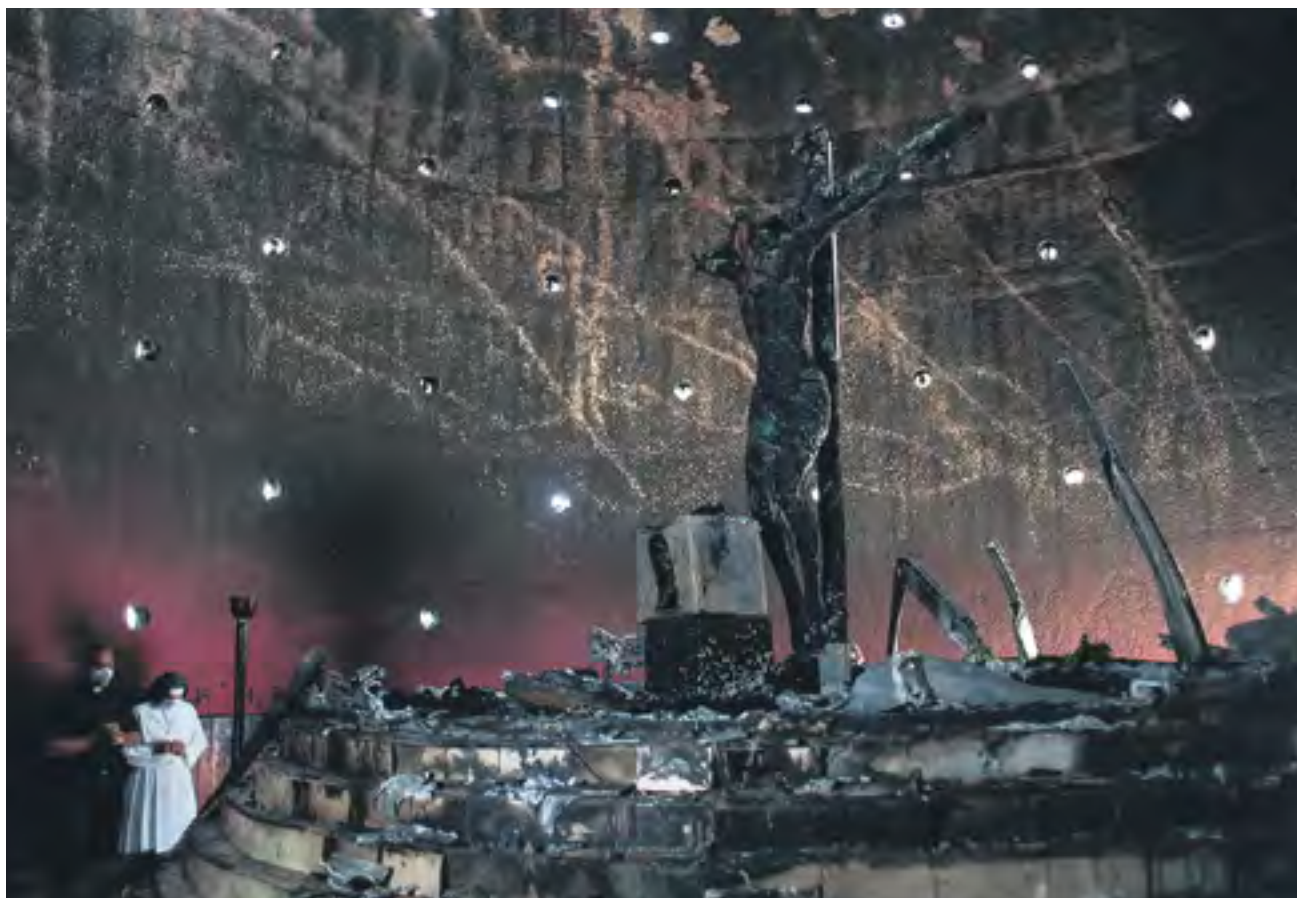
All letters should include the writer's full name, postal address and telephone numbers (day and evening). Letter writers may receive a subsequent telephone call from *The Irish Catholic* as part of our authentication process which does not amount to a commitment to publish.

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

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



# Around the world



▲ **GERMANY:** Retired Pope Benedict XVI speaks to his private secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, at Munich Airport before his departure to Rome.

▲ **NICARAGUA:** A priest and nun pray in the Blood of Christ Chapel at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Managua, after the chapel was destroyed in an arson attack. Photos: CNS



▲ **USA:** The cross is carried in procession during Mass at the new Mission Basilica San Buenaventura in Ventura.



▲ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis greets Bishop Dennis Sullivan of Camden, New Jersey, USA, during a meeting with US bishops from New Jersey and Pennsylvania in the Apostolic Palace.



▲ **CANADA:** Migrant workers wearing masks and practicing social distancing trim red cabbage at Mayfair Farms in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.



▲ **GERMANY:** A volunteer hands out a meal to a needy man in a home for asylum-seekers in Wupperta as the Covid-19 pandemic continues.





# Letting go of

# FALSE FEAR

**R**ecently in a radio interview, I was asked this question: "If you were on your deathbed, what would you want to leave behind as your parting words?" The question momentarily took me aback. What would I want to leave behind as my last words? Not having time for much reflection, I settled on this. I would want to say: "Don't be afraid. Live without fear. Don't be afraid of death. Most of all, don't be afraid of God!"

I'm a cradle Catholic, born to wonderful parents, catechised by some very dedicated teachers, and I've had the privilege of studying theology in some of the best classrooms in the world. Still it took me 50 years to rid myself of a number of crippling religious fears and to realise that God is the one person of whom you need not be afraid.

## Scripture

It's taken me most of my life to believe the words that come from God's mouth over 300 times in Scripture and are the initial words out of the mouth of Jesus whenever he meets someone for the first time after his resurrection: do not be afraid!

It has been a 50-year journey for me to believe that, to trust it. For most of my life I've lived in a false fear of God and of many other things. As a young boy, I had a particular fear of lightning storms which in my young mind demonstrated how fierce and threatening God could be. Thunder and lightning were portents which



## Fr Rolheiser

warned us, religiously, to be fearful. I nursed the same fears about death, wondering where souls went after they died, sometimes looking at a dark horizon after the sun had set and wondering whether people who had died were out there somewhere, haunted in that endless darkness, still suffering for what they'd had not gotten right in life. I knew that God was love, but that love also held a fierce, frightening, exacting justice.

Those fears went partially underground during my teenage years. I made my decision to enter religious life at the age of 17 and have sometimes wondered whether that decision was made freely and not out of false fear.

Looking back on it now however, with 50 years of hindsight, I know that it wasn't fear that compelled me, but a genuine sense of being called, of knowing from the influence of my parents and the

Ursuline nuns who catechised me, that one's life is not one's own, that one is called to serve. But religious fear remained unhealthily strong within me.

**“My fears lessened too as I ministered to others and learned what divine compassion should be”**

So, what helped me let go of that? This doesn't happen in a day or year; it is the cumulative effect of 50 years of bits and pieces conspiring together. It started with my parents' deaths when I was 22. After watching both my mother and father die, I was no longer afraid of death. It was the first time I wasn't afraid of a dead body since these bodies were my mother and father of whom I was not afraid.

**“Those fears went partially underground during my teenage years. I made my decision to enter religious life at the age of 17 and have sometimes wondered whether that decision was made freely and not out of false fear”**



Friedrich Nietzsche.

My fears of God eased gradually every time I tried to meet God with my soul naked in prayer and came to realise that your hair doesn't turn white when you are completely exposed before God; instead you become unafraid.

My fears lessened too as I ministered to others and learned what divine compassion should be, as I studied and taught theology, as two cancer diagnoses forced me to contemplate for real my own mortality, and as a number of colleagues, family and friends modeled how one can live more freely.

Intellectually, a number of persons particularly helped me: John Shea helped me realise that God is not a law to be obeyed, but an infinitely empathic energy that wants us to be happy; Robert

Moore helped me to believe that God is still looking on us with delight; Charles Taylor helped me to understand that God wants us to flourish; the bitter anti-religious criticism of atheists like Frederick Nietzsche helped me see where my own concept of God and religion needed a massive purification; and an older brother, a missionary priest, kept unsettling my theology with irreverent questions like, what kind of God would want us to be frightened of him? A lot of bits and pieces conspired together.

**“Last words aren't always intended to leave a message; they can be focused on saying goodbye or simply be inaudible sighs...”**

What's the importance of last words? They can mean a lot or a little. My dad's last words to us were "be careful", but he was referring to our drive home from the hospital in snow and ice. Last words aren't always intended to leave a message; they can be focused on saying goodbye or simply be inaudible sighs of pain and exhaustion; but sometimes they can be your legacy.

Given the opportunity to leave family and friends a few last words, I think that after I first tried to say a proper goodbye, I'd say this: don't be afraid. Don't be afraid of living or of dying. Especially don't be afraid of God.



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, August 6, 2020

## Personal Profile

The priest  
bringing Christ  
to the prisons

Page 34



# Entertaining kids without a screen

**I**t's been the summer like no other, following on from a bumpy spring and presumably leading into an autumn of uncertainty. However, one of the constants in all the chaos was the newfound understanding of the positive role screens and technology play in our lives.

Zoom calls, facetimes and phone calls were our primary means of communication and socialising. Streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+ kept us entertained. For parents struggling with homeschooling or entertaining their kids while working from home, the possibility of online classrooms and even video games



**Here's how to make the most of the last month before school starts**  
**writes Ruadhán Jones**

became a means of managing a double life effectively.

Screens are an integral part of our lives, whatever our opinions of them, and computer literacy is nearly as important as reading. However, becoming solely reliant on screens can have detrimental effects on children's development.

Equally, there are many wonderful skills and games to pass on to our children, away from the screens. After an excess of time to spend on their gaming talents, why not take August as a time to explore tried and trusted pursuits to fire children's imaginations and foster new memories of family fun.

### Game time

I grew up in a house without a TV and for us board games, cards and imagined games acted out in the garden were integral to our lives. We had a whole set of shelves set up in the corner dedicated to board games, ranging from classics like Twister to draughts and chess.

The virtues of such games are manifold. For a start, they are communal events, requiring the participation of all family members. While this might result in the odd family row, it's also a good way of developing relationships and engaging in our children's lives in way they appreciate.

Another virtue is that they often involve problem-solving, lateral thinking or imagination – in other words, they require children to be creative. For example, a game we have only recently discovered at home, called Dixit, is a really simple, but very imaginative game.

You're given a card with a set of cards with an illustrated picture on it. For your turn, you call out a phrase or word to match the image on your card. Then the other players give you a card they believe matches the phrase. You put them down and everyone has to guess which is the correct card. It requires

» Continued on Page 33



## Family News

### AND EVENTS

#### KICKING OFF IN KILDARE WITH FOOTGOLF

For those who like to try new things and enjoy football and golf, how about a family day out to Celbridge Manor Hotel with a day of a mix of the two?

For one day only the Kildare hotel will facilitate a family friendly activity: FootGolf! Tee (or kick) off with their specially constructed socially distanced course on the grounds of the hotel on August 16.

The prices are €10 per adult and €5 per child – all equipment provided (and correctly sanitised). Attendees are asked to wear appropriate footwear. Children are welcomed aged 4-16 however it's not recommended for children aged 3 and under. At least one adult booking per slot is required and it's a max of four people per slot. Pre-booking is highly recommended.

Organisers say: "We recommend you arrive 10 minutes before your allotted time to ensure smooth play throughout the day. BBQ on the day as we celebrate our re-opening weekend."

Bookings can be made at: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/football-golf-tickets-115121102316?aff=ebdsbdestsearch>

#### SURGERY MAY NO LONGER BE NEEDED FOR APPENDICITIS

New research has demonstrated that treating appendicitis with a course of antibiotics can, in some cases, resolve the condition without the need to remove the appendix.

A study found that having the option to choose the antibiotics can lead to better outcomes for both children with appendicitis and for their caregivers.

Published in the journal JAMA, the study involved more than 10 children's hospitals, which included 1068 children between the ages of 7 and 17 years who came to the hospital with uncomplicated appendicitis.

The study author was Peter Minneci, a paediatric surgeon and co-director of Nationwide Children's Hospital's Center for Surgical Outcomes Research said that of the 1068 children enrolled, 370 (a little over a third) elected to try treatment with antibiotics alone.

The researchers found that 67.1% of children who went the antibiotics route recovered without complications from their appendicitis and did not require an appendectomy within the one-year follow up period.

#### HEP B SPREAD IN YOUNG CHILDREN LOWEST IN DECADES

The global prevalence of potentially-deadly hepatitis B in children under age five, dropped to under 1% in 2019 – down from 5% in the pre-vaccine decades between the 1980s and early 2000s, the World Health Organization (WHO) have reported.

The advance marks the achievement of a critical target in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): to reduce the transmission of hepatitis B in children under age five to under 1% by this year.

The news coincides with World Hepatitis Day commemorated annually on 28 July to raise awareness of the disease, a viral infection of the liver that causes a range of health problems, including liver cancer.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the "milestone means that we have dramatically reduced the number of cases of liver damage and liver cancer in future generations".

positive identity, empathy and trust.

# Misconceptions about freedom of speech

Probably hear more people complaining about free speech in modern society than about any other social or political issue. No-platforming, cancel culture, campus censorship and various other associated phenomena: all are condemned as restrictions on free and open discourse, both by people who share my unpopular opinions and by those who don't.

It's not that all this complaining is wrong. 'Cancel culture' – if by that we mean social media-driven attempts to have someone fired or removed from public life – is mostly bad. A society in which there is broad latitude for sincere debate is a good thing, and if that latitude is becoming very narrow that's something to worry about.

**“The question of how we might approach the question of freedom of speech once free of these misconceptions is a huge, multifaceted one”**

Even so, I think the way most people talk about freedom of speech is misconceived.

The first misconception is that freedom of speech is only a matter of whether and to what extent the state can restrict or limit speech. According to this view, if some actor other than the government is censoring you or putting a limit on what you can say, your freedom of speech isn't being affected at all. The early defenders of freedom of speech didn't have much time for this view. As John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* recognised, non-governmental groups can censor and restrict speech just as effectively as governments. If saying certain things will make you unemployable by most



## Everyday philosophy

### Ben Conroy

companies, you are restricted from saying those things. If saying certain things will make you a pariah (or even just carry a high social cost), that's a real restriction too. The threat of a fine or a prison sentence is not the only form of speech restriction.

The second misconception is that freedom of speech is basically an unlimited resource. It's always possible to have more freedom of speech, at least up until some theoretical maximum where everyone can speak as freely as possible. But this isn't so. Freedom of speech is limited by two factors: time and space.

This becomes much clearer once we stop thinking of freedom of speech as just about state restrictions. Consider a current affairs radio programme like RTÉ's Today. To be featured on that programme massively amplifies whatever speech is uttered on it. To be on Today is to be part of Ireland's national conversation, to at least some extent. But the programme only has so many slots, and there are an infinite number of ways they could fill them. The choice to feature some topics inevitably excludes others: there has, for instance, never once been an item on the today programme discussing whether or not Queen Elizabeth II is a lizard. And if there was such a discussion, it would push some other item off the agenda. Time and space for discussions are a limited resource, and this inevitably puts limits on at least some people's freedom of speech.

Some people want to make a distinction between freedom of speech and being given a platform. But like the first misconception, I don't think the distinction really amounts to much. If some opinions can be voiced on the national broadcaster and others cannot, people holding the forbidden opinions have their freedom of speech restricted. The same goes for university campuses.

The final major misconception about freedom of speech is that it is possible to approach it in a completely content-neutral way. As far as this misconception goes, whether or not what's being said is good or not should be completely irrelevant to a sup-



Evelyn Beatrice Hall

porter of free speech. The Evelyn Beatrice Hall quote (usually misattributed to Voltaire) gets thrown about a lot: "I may disagree with what you say,

but I will defend to the death your right to say it".

Obviously, there's something to this. If a society only allows the speech that's considered good or correct, it would obviously not be a society that values or respects freedom of speech. But given that there are only a limited number of times and places in which discussion can be had, restricting some speech is inevitable. And making the decision about which speech to exclude must involve making some assessment of its quality. It really would be a waste of time to discuss Queen Liz the Lizard on the Today show, because the topic is absurd and would take space away from many more productive topics. It's not only undesirable to remain completely agnostic about which views and opinions deserve a hearing: it's impossible.

**“The first misconception is that freedom of speech is only a matter of whether and to what extent the state can restrict or limit speech”**

The question of how we might approach the question of freedom of speech once free of these misconceptions is a huge, multifaceted one. But one obvious conclusion suggests itself: if we are worried that a view we hold is being excluded from the discourse, we should spend more time arguing for why that view is good, and less defending an illusory idea of unlimited free speech.



» Continued from Page 31



simple storytelling tools, skills of association and of memory, all in fun-filled environment.

### Card games

Another option are card games – we had an entire book dedicated to card games from which we could choose. These days, it's as easy to look them up online! The merits of card games are obvious, like teaching children to count.

They have the added advantage of being both communal and single-player – if you can get your child into a game like patience or solitaire, then they will be able to entertain themselves for ages.

## “There are many wonderful skills and games to pass on to our children, away from the screens”

There are such a variety of family games to explore that it's almost overwhelming trying to choose. But the advantage is that there is something for everyone and you can base your choice on the age of your child, their interests and their skills.

### Crafty kids

Whatever their age, children love making things. If you give them paint, pencils, crayons and a sheet of paper, they will quite happily while away the time making a masterpiece – or a mess. If they're older, than perhaps it's a chance to build that bookcase you've always wanted. No guarantees on the quality though!

Crafts include a range of activities from designing window pots to painting pictures or tie-dying t-shirts, so there's something for everyone. The place to begin depends on your child's interests – are they always fixing and fiddling? If they're old enough, a hammer and saw could come in use. Or if they're younger, a colouring book or a paint and stencil kit could be what you're after.

Many kids are fascinated by colour and there are plenty of child friendly activities which don't require extensive materials. For example, making mosaic pictures can feed a child's colour fascination

with just a scissors, old magazines or coloured paper and PVA glue. A sailboat, a sunset or a pretty flower can be knocked up in no time.

Another project from recycled materials is making models, such as ships or cars, out of cardboard and other such materials. If you have a big box from an Amazon delivery, a few egg cartons and the inside roll from a sheet of wrapping paper, you've got the beginnings of a DIY ship. Check out Backyard Crafts video “How to make a pirate ship” online for instructions.

If you're looking for inspiration, YouTube and Pinterest are awash with crafting channels and nifty ideas. The one thing to remember is that crafts will typically require a level of supervision, especially with young children, so setting aside time to help them out is important.

### Life skills

Keeping kids active at home is a great opportunity to provide them with a few of the skills they will need once they're on their own. Making pasta or rice are obvious places to begin, but often kids will like a bit more of a challenge.

There is a world of recipes to explore out there and it can be a great way to introduce children to the different cultures. Perhaps they would like to cook a curry, make their own pizza dough or try their hand at an apple tart.

Kids are often fussy eaters and getting them to cook dishes themselves can be a way of expanding their palate. If they've been involved in choosing and

making the dishes, they're more inclined to eat and enjoy them. It can also take a bit of the pressure off if the kids are cooking one day a week!

Aside from cooking, try to include them in activities you might be doing around the house. It could be changing a tire or the fuse in a plug, to hanging a picture correctly. They are all skills that can come in handy and you never know, it could spark an interest in housework previously undiscovered.

### New environments

Kids love to explore and can find endless entertainment in environments outside the everyday. The back garden can become a bit limited after a while, but take them to a beach, a park or woods and games they were tired of at home suddenly take on new life.

New environments also allow for activities that aren't available at home. It's much easier to build a sandcastle on the beach than anywhere else, while streams and rockpools can be dammed or fished to their heart's content.

## “The possibility of online classrooms and even video games became a means of managing a double life effectively”

Outdoor activities are also important, especially for young children, as a means of engaging their senses, testing their balance and providing them with exercise. The hands-on nature of learning in environments such as the beach provides children with an enjoyable, tactile way of developing their knowledge and skills. It can be easier to get them exercising too, through swimming, walking, biking and so on.

Taking the time to explore new environments, either literally or imaginatively through games, expands children's knowledge of the world and are a great way to get the whole family involved.

# Faith — IN THE — family



## Bairbre Cahill

The Gaelic football season had barely begun after lockdown when one of the lads in a neighbouring club informed his senior team's management that he had symptoms of Covid-19. All activity was halted, an upcoming match was postponed until the lad in question was tested. Thankfully the test came back negative and club activity resumed, the much-anticipated match rescheduled.

I have to say that this young man's action and attitude impressed me. It mustn't be easy to put your hand up and say, “Listen lads, I might have Covid”. Even though the individual in most cases carries no blame there must still be a sense of feeling responsible for the ensuing disruption. So I was impressed by this man's honesty and his awareness that the most important thing he could do was to protect the people around him.

To my mind, this is love, this is solidarity. You know in the Bible when Jesus says, “love your neighbour as yourself” or “treat others as you would have them treat you” – well here it is in action. I've thought and written a lot about solidarity over these months. It is something we have all encountered in a multitude of ways. Maybe sometimes we make it too complicated. It can really be rather simple and ordinary – but no less important and wonderful for that.

Solidarity strengthens a community. It draws people together and gives us a sense that however unsure or vulnerable we may feel individually, together we can face whatever challenge lies ahead of us. Solidarity gives hope. St Ignatius talks about consolation. Consolation is a sense of peace – even in troubled times. It is a sense of moving in the right direction, towards something which is life-giving and good. It is about seeing the bigger picture, rather than just being focused on ourselves. In consolation we are drawn beyond ourselves and our own cares, drawn towards more, ultimately drawn towards God. And in being drawn into that relationship with God we often become more aware of how deeply we live in relationship with others, with the world, with the earth on which we live. So consolation

tion is often an experience of connectedness, of wholeness.

My experience at the moment is that there is a lot of consolation about. Realistically there is also desolation. If consolation is about connectedness then desolation is about fragmentation. Rather than feelings of peace, strength and hope it brings feelings of distress, fear and despair. Rather than building up a community it undermines it, often working to divide, to set one against another, to arouse suspicion and negativity often in small, niggling, persistent ways.



Photo: Irish Defence Forces from Ireland / CC BY

For the past number of weeks many of our readings for Mass both during the week and on Sundays have been about the sowing and growing of seed – mustard, wheat, dandelion have all been in there. It leaves me thinking that we all need to be mindful of what it is that we are sowing with our words and our actions, what we do and what we fail to do. What seeds are we allowing to be sown in our own hearts through what we watch, read, listen to and engage in? Are we sowing seed for a harvest of consolation or desolation? Do we nurture our relationship with God and others or do we undermine it, becoming more self-absorbed and entangled in our own concerns? Do we build the community up or fragment it?

I love the phrase in Irish, “Cá bhfuil ár dtriall?” It conveys not just “Where are we going?” but “What is our purpose? And if we know our destination how does that shape what we are about now?” Surely, as Christians, our “triall” is to grow in the love of God and of each other. Let's guard against those desolations which diminish our vision and fracture our love. Instead, through small acts of solidarity, let us walk in the way of consolation.





# The priest bringing Christ to the prisons

## Personal Profile



Jason Osborne

**F**r Stephen McBrearty is a man intimately familiar with God's mercy. He spends his days communicating just that as lead Catholic Chaplain to the Northern Ireland Prison Service, a role which would see him become a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE). Ordained in 1981, and currently Parish Priest of St Colmcille's Holywood, his baptism into the prison world was not necessarily greeted with joy: "I was appointed to take on the prisons as prison chaplain to Hydebank, a young offenders' centre," he tells *The Irish Catholic*. "I just shook at it and thought, 'What am I doing this for?'"

**“Far from being a mere task or duty of the Church, Fr McBrearty's work in the prisons strikes close to home”**

However, the pull of the gospel and the opportunity at hand quickly won him over: "I took it on, and it proved to be a wonderful appointment. The prison chaplain role at that stage was all very minor. We were seen as just the nice people who came in and talked about God, but, my whole journey in it was to professionalise that role, of the chaplains, to have them recognised and work tirelessly, with the support of others, to have governors and the director generals recognise that chaplaincy is not just nice people coming in and smiling, but that they are very effective in their duty of care."



The scope of his work became apparent after some time there, the duty of care not being limited to the prisoners: "I saw it as the prison parish family, not just as the prison. Everybody here. Prison officers were coming under terrible pressure because of the circumstances in Northern Ireland, as you can imagine. Anybody working in that whole area - we had as much duty of care to them as we did to the residents. The residents demanded the respect that we could give to them, as people who represented ethical, moral, and pastoral roles."

### Chance

The Catholic Church has always associated prison work with a chance to perform works of mercy, and as such it is deeply involved in prison life in Northern Ireland.

"We're now the lead co-ordinating chaplain for all Catholic chaplains in the North of Ireland here. There are three prisons:

Maghaberry, Magilligan, and Hydebank. I co-ordinate that for our bishop, Bishop Noel, who has two prisons residing in his diocese, that's Hydebank, a young offenders' and women's prison, and also Maghaberry, which holds the majority of all those charged in criminality. Then the third is up in Derry, where Bishop Donal, who is a great friend of my own and who was of course here with us in Down & Connor as one of our priests, he has the third prison there," Fr McBrearty says.

Far from being a mere task or duty of the Church, Fr McBrearty's work in the prisons strikes close to home: "I grew up with these kids and their families in west Belfast and I knew that I'd know an awful lot of them. Their fathers had probably been at school with me and we didn't get on tremendously well then," he laughs. Still chuckling, he continues, "So you know, again, how was I going to get on tremendously well with their kids then?"

Asked about whether or not working in prisons has afforded him a deeper experience of the faith, Fr McBrearty had this to say: "There was a turning point in that ministry that I was in. They were rough, and they were tough, and they'd take you on if they saw any weakness in you - these were the young offenders, so you had to be tough back, and that was the breaking point for me. I learned to be tough very, very quickly, and I let fly at them because they were just messing about at Mass, and that was it. I became the voice. They grew to trust me, and that was a very deep awakening moment for me - to be trusted. In the same way that, at that stage, I was trusting God to guide me through all of this, and that was a very deep moment of awakening and faith."

### Glimpse

Prison ministry struck Fr McBrearty deeply, and offered him a glimpse into the truth expressed by St Philip

Neri, who said as he watched men walk to their execution, "There go I, but for the grace of God." He reflects: "Prison ministry keeps you grounded, because all that great stuff we've heard from our parents and grandparents in the past, about how you don't know what trouble can come to your door. I mean, that's the one thing that I so remember; my parents saying to me way back in the 70s during The Troubles, nobody knows what trouble can come to the door."

"Wee things like that really come through because I was meeting people who were being demonised in society and yet, their actions were not the total of them. There was much more, as there is to every person who's incarcerated, there's much, much more than the headline. There's a whole person in this, that circumstance and situation led to their criminality, and it's seeing that and understanding that. Then you very quickly realise that Jesus was able to forgive the criminal on the cross beside him."

**“The scope of his work became apparent after some time there, the duty of care not being limited to the prisoners”**

He describes a constant battle between the tendency to merely punish and seek retribution, and the knowledge that rehabilitation is ultimately what restores people's lives to them: "One of my biggest battles in my earliest years was fighting against the retributionists. The retributionist officers and staff members who were there to make prisoners suffer." Ministry to the prisoners is a battle far from over, and Fr McBrearty acknowledges that he's helped as much by it as those he ministers to:

"So, it's a big challenge, but it's the most magnificently, wonderful ministry, and it's probably saved me."

## Sweet Treats

Laura Anderson



## Enjoy a tasty summer treat with lemon and blueberry cake

**T**his fruity layered cake is a definite crowd-pleaser with the tanginess of the lemon, bursts of blueberry and indulgent cream cheese icing to top it all off. It would make a beautiful cake for a friend or family member's birthday. Don't be put off by the number of ingredients - you will find most of them in your kitchen already just pick up some fresh lemons and blueberries and you'll be good to go!

### Ingredients

#### For the cake:

- 220g butter
- 280g granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon zest (about 1 medium lemon)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 360g plain flour + 1tbsp
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 4 medium eggs
- 170ml milk
- 60ml lemon juice
- 200g blueberries

#### For the cream cheese icing:

- 500g icing sugar, sifted
- 230g cream cheese
- 6110g unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 1 tbsp lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°Fan/Gas mark 4. Grease and line three 8 inch circular tins. Start by mixing the milk with the lemon juice and set it aside. Prepare the blueberries by tossing them in 1 tbsp of flour, this will prevent them from sinking during baking. Then assemble the dry ingredients by sieving the flour into a bowl along with the baking powder and salt. Stir gently to combine. In a separate bowl using an electric whisk, beat the butter and sugar together on high for about two minutes until pale and creamy. Reduce speed to medium and beat in the eggs one at a time. Then add the vanilla and lemon zest.

Now working in three batches, fold in the dry ingredients from earlier alternating with the milk.



Start and end with the flour, so flour-milk-flour-milk-flour. Finally, fold the blueberries gently into the mixture, try to keep them intact.

Distribute this mixture evenly between the prepared tins. The tins may not be as full as you are used to but you want three relatively thin layers. Bake in the oven for about 25 minutes until a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean.

Leave to cool in the tins for about 15 minutes before transferring onto a wire rack to cool fully. It is important that the cakes are completely cool before icing!

Prepare the icing by beating the butter until it's pale and fluffy. Then add the cream cheese, lemon juice and rind and vanilla extract. Beat until combined, this shouldn't take long. Finally, slowly add the icing sugar and beat until you have a spreadable, smooth frosting. Use about half the icing to sandwich the layers together and the rest on the outside. Add a lemon twist and some blueberries on top to finish and chill for half an hour before serving.



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Claws out in TV battle to be Mrs America

**I**t's a pure fluke that the programmes under review this week all begin with the letter M!

I've been catching up on the TV drama series **Mrs America** (BBC Two) which came to an end last Thursday. It was an absorbing dramatisation of the culture war between radical feminists and activist conservatives over the Equal Rights Amendment in the USA in the 1970s.

While I found the show, predictably, much more favourable to the leftist side, it wasn't quite as biased as I expected, with both sides humanised, and major flaws shown on both sides. Neither side is happy with the portrayal – some from the conservative side complain about the way their home life is portrayed, feminists accuse the show of promoting the 'catfight theory of history'.

Leading conservative campaigner Phyllis Schlafly (Cate Blanchett) was portrayed as a tough campaigner, politically astute, a loving family woman, perhaps imperious and patronising at times and sometimes insensitive to her friends.

### Negatives

These negatives became more pronounced as the nine-episode series developed, but as with all such dramatisations of history the average viewer has no way of knowing whether this truly represents



Cate Blanchett stars as Phyllis Schlafly in *Mrs America* (BBC Two).

the actual person, so there's always the strong possibility of deep and hurtful injustice.

On the other side, Gloria Steinem (Rose Byrne), is a young feminist activist, flaky at times (politically and personally), unsure of herself, a gung-ho advocate for abortion, though a flashback seems to show her pushed into having an abortion when she was a vulnerable young woman.

Principles struggle with pragmatism as she tries to

get the Democrats to support abortion – in the wheeling and dealing prior to a key vote at a convention she wants 'right-to-lifers' not be allowed to speak – she doesn't want to hear anyone calling abortion 'murder' just before a vote. The pro-life position isn't articulated as strongly as the pro-choice argument – the humanity of the unborn and the human rights argument against abortion barely feature.

The race issue surfaces,

mainly through efforts to get a black woman, Shirley Chisholm, on the presidential ticket, which leads to more splits among the feminists – again, principles vs pragmatism. At one of Schlafly's meetings she is uneasy at the racist talk of one of her supporters and quickly ushers her off stage. The other side however is quite enthusiastic about throwing around unfounded slurs about involvement of the Ku Klux Klan in her movement.

Most of the focus is on the feminist activists. They are given more attention, are seen as heroes, especially in the last episode, though it's warts and all – in these ranks there is considerable in-fighting and disloyalty, and personal lives are characterised by broken marriages, threesomes, sleeping around and more.

And yet we see at times that women on both sides of the polarised debates have common concerns – all have to put up with chauvinistic men, two-faced politicians, and family problems. In one episode we see both Schlafly and one of the feminists hugging their daughters in times of difficulties. And yet they seem to be from different planets, with gaps in age, attitude, dress sense, politics and temperament.

In one pre-debate meeting in a washroom, Schlafly and radical feminist Betty Friedan

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### MASS

RTÉ News Now, Monday, August 10, 10.30am, continuing daily

Daily Mass live streamed and now available on RTÉ Player.

#### IN STEP WITH NEWMAN

EWTN, Tuesday, August 11, 7pm, Wednesday, August 12, 8am

A visual tour of places associated with the Blessed Cardinal John Henry Newman, including a visit to his private chapel and personal library in the Birmingham Oratory.

#### UNREPORTED WORLD

Channel 4, Friday, August 14, 7.30pm

As US President Donald Trump fights for re-election, his campaign is particularly targeting white women voters.

(Tracey Ullman) trade smart remarks, yet in a couples debate Schlafly and her husband have a friendly chat with the opposing couple.

Content-wise this is a show for adults. An anti-marriage play is particularly crude, and there's a bizarre sequence when a 'Mass' said by a feminist nun is attended by a conservative woman, Alice (a fictional composite character) who has had too much to drink. Same-sex relationships are portrayed rather frankly.

As drama it is riveting, with brilliant performances all round, but, apart from names, facts and looks, how much is historically true? For the uninformed, the drama may become the history.

### Welcome

In the real **Mass** that was on

RTÉ One last Sunday the camera stayed on Bishop Dermot Farrell of Ossory rather than the musicians during the key parts of the Offertory, the Bishop thanked RTE staff for their "gracious welcome and professionalism" and bid a nice farewell to cameraman Tommy Kavanagh who was retiring.

Finally, the Muppets returned last week. The new series **Muppets Now** (Disney+) was passable entertainment, but not that funny, though I did like the chaotic sketch with the Swedish chef. The main human guest star was actor and drag queen Ru Paul. Oh how things have changed.

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



Pat O'Kelly

# Music

## No Salzburg this year but rich memories serve us well



Dame Anne Murray.

Had all gone according to plan, I should be in Salzburg – Mozart's birthplace – this evening (August 6) at Richard Strauss' opera *Elektra*. But, as 'man proposes and God disposes', I abandoned my travels. Anyway, the Festival, celebrating its centenary this year, cancelled its original programme, proposing something less adventurous instead.

With a 'select vestry' of friends, I have been going to Salzburg annually since 1999 but I had been there in the 1960s when dress code was more stringent. I remember having my late father's dinner suit altered to fit me.

One of the 1963 highlights was Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, conducted by Herbert

von Karajan with a stellar cast including Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, Sena Jurinac and Otto Edelmann. Another was Mozart's *Così fan tutte* under the baton of Karl Böhm with Schwarzkopf and Christa Ludwig as the capricious sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella.

### No regret

I didn't have a ticket for the sold-out *Marriage of Figaro* but one became available at the box office and, after much soul-searching and qualms of conscience, I decided to spend the equivalent of £7. The magical performance, under Lorin Maazel, had Walter Berry and Graziella Sciutti as Figaro and Susanna with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Hilde Guden as Count and Countess

Almaviva. I never regretted paying the price.

This year, besides *Elektra*, I had tickets for *Tosca* with Anna Netrebko in the title role, another *Don Giovanni* and Luigi Nono's controversial *Intolleranza 1960*. No point in crying over spilt milk, 2021 is on the horizon.

Reminiscing further, I recall the 2008 *Don Giovanni*. This perversely surreal production, by Claus Guth, was set in a forest at night. The Don and his alleged servant Leporello spent their time high as kites on drink and drugs but stranger still, in the opening scene when Giovanni kills the Commendatore, the latter also managed to shoot Giovanni who slowly expired as the opera progressed.

When he invited the Commendatore's effigy to supper Mozart's music actually became grippingly frightening. Under conductor Bertrand de Billy, with the Vienna Philharmonic and a totally dedicated cast, led by English baritone Christopher Maltman, the performance reached an electrifying intensity. At the end I was shattered.

### Respect

Irish singers at the Salzburg festival have been relatively few but Dublin-born mezzo Dame Ann Murray enjoyed enormous respect there for over a decade while Tralee-born mezzo Paula Murrihy made a particular mark in Mozart's Idomeneo last year.

Alas, another Tralee area native, soprano Miriam Murphy, never made it to the prestigious festival. I was shocked by her recent death in London.

Opulent in voice and presence, a past pupil of Kerry School of Music, Miriam came under the guidance of vocal matriarch Veronica Dunne in Dublin before moving to London.

She made her Covent Garden debut as Verdi's Lady Macbeth and her Isolde for Wide Open Opera in Dublin's Bord Gáis Energy Theatre in 2012 was no less splendid. Her death, at the age of 48, ended a career that I believe had not yet reached its full potential. May her soul rest in peace.





# BookReviews

## Civilians are the first casualties of modern wars

**War, Suffering and the Struggle for Human Rights**

by Peadar King  
(Liffey Press,  
€19.95/£18.95)

**Anthony Redmond**

I remember many years ago, when I read Wilfred Owen's powerful anti-war poem, *Dulce Et Decorum Est*, how deeply it affected me with its description of the sheer horror, obscenity and cruelty of war. It was a poem that really made me think.

This book by Peadar King about the unspeakable suffering and cruelty of war has had the same effect on me. I cannot stop thinking about the people he met and the stories they tell of the pain they've endured. Many of these stories and accounts are the stuff of nightmares.

Peadar King is the presenter/producer of the documentary series *What in the World?* In this book he relates heartbreaking stories of about 13 different countries afflicted by war, racism and human misery. In a short review like this is forced to be, it is not possible to discuss all the places he has visited and the gut-wrenching stories he tells. The book covers a lot of ground: Afghanistan, Libya, South Sudan, Brazil, Iraq, Palestine/Israel, Syria and a number of other places, such as the Yemen.

### Tyranny

When George W. Bush went to war on Iraq in 2003 and told the world triumphantly that the people of Iraq would be pleased to welcome US soldiers who would liberate them from tyranny and terror, we can see the terrible consequences of his 'shock and awe'.

Samira Dawood was a kindergarten teacher and she was at home in Baghdad with her two small children as the bombs fell. She describes what happened that awful night: "The sky became bright and the night became like day from the missile explosions from the fighter jets. It was a state of horror. I myself was terrified but I was pacifying both my children and hugging them."



Near the northern Kuwait-Iraq border, a Kuwaiti refugee family heads towards home on March 2, 1991 after being imprisoned in Iraq for a month during the war.

"We stood in a corner of the house because they say that the corner won't collapse if an explosion happens. We remained standing and remained in that situation for two days, two consecutive days. We couldn't get anything to eat or drink. We constantly recited some verses from the Quran and felt scared."

**“We need to talk about war. Actual war. About the insufferable pain it causes. The dead and the slowly dying”**

Peadar King comments: "Two days crouching by a pillar as the world collapses around you. With two traumatised children with nothing to eat or drink. How do you live through that experience? When your children ask, 'are we going to die?' What do you say? Two whole days without food and water."

There are numerous harrowing stories like that, and even worse, in this powerful book.

Noam Chomsky has said that the world's greatest terrorist is the USA.

On this description, Peadar King writes: "Chomsky

argues that if Principle 111 of the Nuremberg principles – the fact that a person who committed an act which constitutes a crime under international law, while acting as Head of State or as a responsible government official, does not relieve him of responsibility under international law – were applied, every post-World War II president would be indictable."

Peadar King goes on to mention Susan Sontag who said that many photos of war can be used by one side or the other as propaganda: "All photographs wait to be explained or falsified by their captors."

\*\*\*\*\*

As I read this extraordinary book, I thought of Syria and the dreadful suffering of its people. After nine years of horrific killing and savagery, after the unspeakable cruelty and sheer sadism of ISIS, Donald Trump is imposing the most terrible and vicious sanctions on that unfortunate country and its people.

Food is in short supply and some medicine is no longer available in pharmacies. He doesn't want anyone to help Syria rebuild. To make matters even worse, coronavirus has raised its ugly head in Syria. If Russia had not come to the aid of Syria the entire country would now be over-

run by the most cruel and tyrannical Jihadists.

Of course, it goes without saying that there is deep suffering on all sides of this inhuman, horrific conflict. The West should be helping Syria to rebuild and find peace and security and not doing everything it can to ruin the country.

If Assad is bad, just think of the alternative!

Syria is a very beautiful, ancient country with warm and friendly people who deserve peace and security. It is up to the Syrian people to choose their own leaders, not the US, Britain or Saudi Arabia.

Peadar King writes: "We need to talk about war. Actual war. About the insufferable pain it causes. The dead and the slowly dying. The injuries that never go away. The destruction it brings. The mayhem it causes. The fear it induces. The grief that clings on. And the pain, the physical and emotional pain. There is no glory in war."

"There is no heroism in killing other human beings, whatever the cause. There is nothing heroic in invoking war, even as a metaphor, whatever the cause."

This powerful, deeply moving book may keep you awake at night. It certainly brought tears to my eyes. Buy it, read it, share it.

**Peter Costello**



**Summer outings (No.3 in a six-)**

## A visit to Clonmacnoise in the mid 40s

Clonmacnoise is one of the most remarkable places in Ireland. However, back in the late 1940s, the Emergency had left it even more isolated, a place which in the right light could seem unchanged since Early Christian times in Ireland. One of the pioneers of exploring Ireland's inland waterways was Tom Rolt, who hired a boat in Athlone with a limited supply of fuel (still rationed in 1946). Here, from *Green and Silver*, is his evocation of St Ciaran's city, lost in the broad bogs of central Ireland...

The scenery along the Shannon, with the exception of Lough Derg, cannot be called spectacular, and this is especially true of the nine-and-a-half mile reach from Athlone to Clonmacnoise.

The country is so flat that in clear weather it is possible to stand on Athlone Bridge and see quite distinctly the shape of the Slieve Bloom mountains thirty miles and more away to the south. The great river winds tortuously through reed fringed levels of water meadows interspersed with patches of bogland which, in time of winter flood,

Some time ago the rain had stopped, and now the sun suddenly burst out upon the hills so that their greenness seemed to shine with a brilliance that was almost unreal.

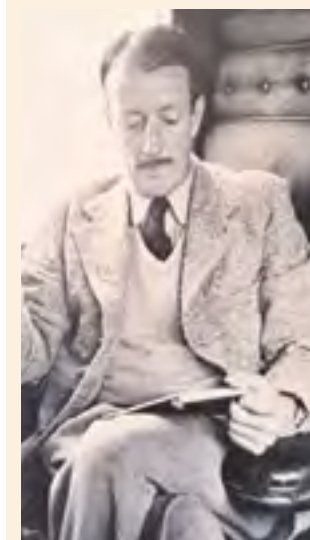
A grey round tower over-topped the shoulder of the hill, and we knew that we were approaching Clonmacnoise. But there was still some way to go for the esker deflects the river's course, causing it to wind round its flanks until, rounding a sharp turn, we saw the ruins of the Seven Churches directly ahead of us.

After we had had some tea we rowed off in the dinghy, landing directly at the foot of the slope that led up to the ruins...

[His first impressions were affected by the way in which modern graves cruelly intruded upon the medieval graves that filled the enclosure, with ancient bones being often scattered across the grass. The hasty structure used for celebrating Mass in times of pilgrimage also seemed rawly out of place to his conservator's eye.]

**“Long before our great abbeys were thought of, this silent place beside the Shannon was a great seat of learning”**

From the point of view of the sight-seer, the most noteworthy features of Clonmacnoise are the High Cross, or the Cross of the Scriptures as it is called, to distinguish it from the other crosses within the precincts, and the beautiful doorway and chancel arch of the Nuns Church a quarter of a mile distant along an old causeway.



Tom Rolt.

become a great inland sea...

Yet despite its monotony there is, for the river lover, a curious fascination about this great stream of Shannon, the tall reeds rustling and bowing to the wind, the spaciousness of the illimitable levels and over all the wide Irish sky which, even on a sunless day, has a strange luminous quality...

At length we sighted a line of low green hills, another of the eskers of glacial drift which interrupt the levels of the plain.



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.

part series)



The Celtic Cross is said to have been erected in the year 914 by Abbot Colman over the grave of King Flann Sinna, the Ard Ri. Between them, these two had founded the cathedral church of Clonmacnoise where, beneath the chancel, Rory O'Connor the last king of Ireland lies buried. The Cross, of elaborate Hiberno-Romanesque workmanship and displaying upon its shaft a number of sym-bolical groups of figures, is in a wonderful state of preservation.

Doorways

The doorway and arch at the Nuns Church belong to the 12th Century and are said to have been erected by Dervorgilla, wife of Tiernan O'Rourke who, because her faithlessness led to the Norman invasion, has been called the 'Helen of Ireland'.

With these exceptions there is nothing at Clonmacnoise to compare in glory of architecture with our mediaeval monuments. Yet, with the possible exception of Glastonbury, we have nothing to compare with these ruins in their historical importance. It is for this reason that I have felt moved to speak so strongly about their present state.

Clonmacnoise is a monument not of national but of European significance. Long before our great abbeys were thought of, this silent place beside the Shannon was a great seat of learning, culture and Christian faith, a lighthouse of the arts of living in the long night of chaos and barbarism which fell upon Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire, an influence which transcended national boundaries.

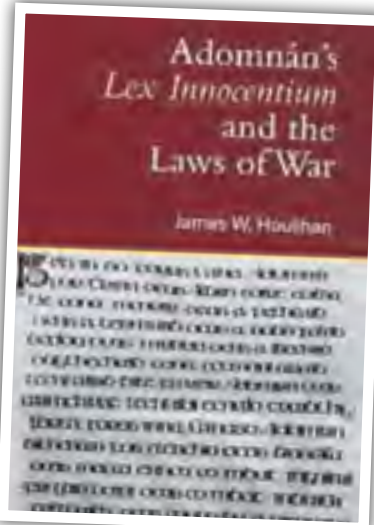
“There was no sound at all but the distant pipe of the curlew crying over the darkening bogs”

To-day, when Europe bids fair to fall into a similar state, there are those who believe that it will once again be Ireland's destiny to become a citadel of Christianity and the humanities... We clambered up the ruined stair of the castle that evening and sat upon the battlements looking out over the ruins and the river. The wind had fallen completely with the sun, the sky was overcast and it was very still. There was no sound at all but the distant pipe of

the curlew crying over the darkening bogs. No landscape can have changed so little in 1,000 years. In these days of chaos, arrogance and confused thinking it is a pity, I thought, that more men cannot contemplate in quietness such immutable solitudes. Their influence is salutary and chastening. They make man aware of his creaturehood, of the brevity of a life 'bounded by a sleep', and of the vanity of ambition. But while it thus humbles him, the natural world enlarges man's humanity by enabling him to perceive the potential greatness of the human spirit with its unique creative capacity. It is a paradox that this perception should be born of humility and perish with pride, but so it is. I believe that it was for

this reason that the Celtic saints sought solitude and built their churches in the loneliness of the bogs or upon the crags and islands of a wild coast. St Ciaran was no exception, and he seems to have loved especially the Shannon [and] Clonmacnoise. Did he come as we had done, sailing down the river in a hide-covered curragh?   
① *Slightly edited from passages in Green and Silver, by L. T. C. Rolt (London: Allen & Unwin, 1949). Another account of a visit to Clonmacnoise, also written soon after World War II, with a more local emphasis will be found in Harry Rice's delightful Thanks for the Memory (Athlone Printing Works, 1952).*   
● **Next time:** Boswell and Johnson on Columcille's Iona in 1773.

“I believe that it was for this reason that the Celtic saints sought solitude and built their churches in the loneliness of the bogs or upon the crags and islands of a wild coast. St Ciaran was no exception...”



The Medieval Irish Church's view of war and civilian lives

**Adomnán's Lex Innocentium and the Laws of War**  
by James W. Houlihan  
(Four Courts Press, €50.00 /£45.00)

Peter Costello

In this book the ordinary reader will find an account of the roots of the views about the treatments of innocent civilians, clergy and other unarmed folk in time of war. It is a discussion of the Cáin Adomnáin sworn to and promulgated by the community leaders of Ireland and Scotland at Birr in 697, but lawyer turned historian James W. Houlihan ranges well outside the confines of early Christian Ireland to discuss ideas about laws of war and the protection of non-combatants over the centuries. He quotes a harrowing account of the massacres at My Lai in 1968 during the second Vietnam War, and officer Calley's account drawing on the example of the Old Testament. Read in conjunction with Peadar King's book (reviewed elsewhere on these pages) readers will find thoughtful considerations in one matched by the anger in another. Today My Lai, while an instance of concentrated evil, is eclipsed also by the evil being perpetrated even at this moment in the Yemen, a war which is destroying in the name of peace a long isolated people and an ancient culture. Here in Adomnán is perhaps the basic source and moral justification of Ireland's long-sustained neutrality, and the country's well-established services in the cause of peace and development. Readers should not feel themselves daunted by the academic appearance of this book, for it is quite readable; the work of a new historian long used to handling and presenting legal evidence with clarity, and is filled with *aperçus* that will give everyone who reads the book 'furiously to think'.







# 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

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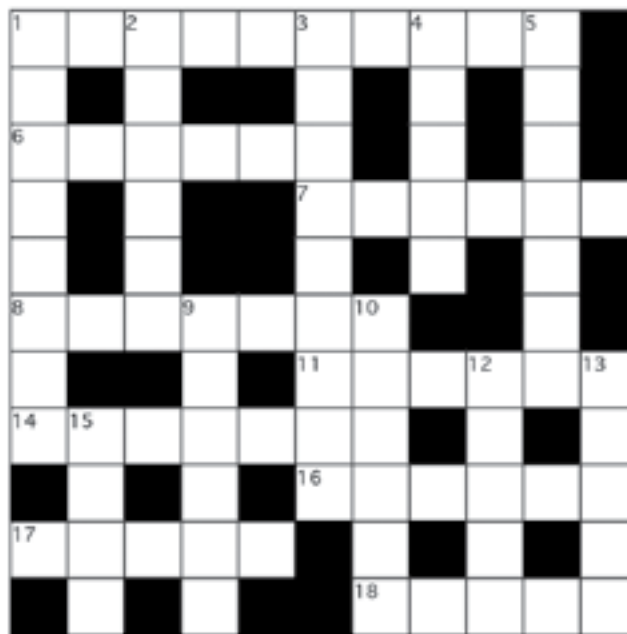
Trócaire

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 344



### Across

- 1 City in the Midlands of England; Aston Villa come from here (10)  
6 Plane that has no engine (6)  
7 Two tens make this number (6)  
8 Maybe (7)  
11 Unlocked (6)  
14 The Sleeping Beauty pricked her finger on this part of the spinning-wheel (7)  
16 The number of players on a soccer team (6)  
17 Go red with embarrassment (5)

- 18 Play the first shot in tennis (5)

### Down

- 1 This instrument makes us think of Scotland (8)  
2 Lara Croft, Tomb \_\_\_\_\_ (6)  
3 Point at the 'top' of the globe (5,4)  
4 Sweet stuff made by bees (5)  
5 Error (7)  
9 Truthful (6)  
10 Witches might cast them (6)  
12 Not at any time (5)  
13 Move to music (5)  
15 Tablet (4)

## SOLUTIONS, JULY 30

GORDIUS No. 466

Across – 1 Bootlegger 6 Agra 10 Fed up 11 Allotment 12 Mailmen  
15 Manor 17 Edna 18 Eats 19 Curse 21 Peevish 23 Corgi 24 Idol  
25 Guru 26 Beryl 28 Sambuca 33 Gemstones 34 Rhine 35 Yo-yo  
36 Stonehenge

Down – 1 Buff 2 Old master 3 Lapel 4 Grace After meals 5 Eels  
7 Green 9 Stomach 13 Mace 14 Nervous 16 Beach buggy  
20 Reduction 21 Piglets 22 Siam 27 Rummy 29 Arson 30 Birch  
31 Knot 32 Pele

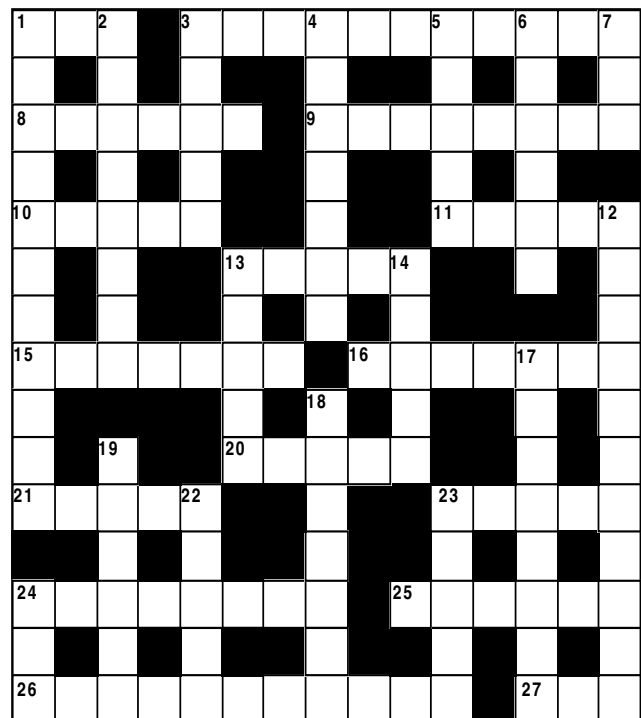
CHILDREN'S No. 343

Across – 1 Fringe 6 Carry 7 Obtain 8 Teeth 9 Karate 10 Baker  
11 Cheerful 12 Close 15 Green 16 Geese 17 Shop 18 Rat

Down – 1 Flock 2 Interfere 3 Glittering 4 Baseball 5 Brothers  
10 Bucket 11 Cages 13 Over 14 Exit

## Crossword

Gordius 467



### Across

- 1 Breed of dog one should pick up gently at first (3)  
3 It's hit in the game of Badminton (11)  
8 Haphazard (6)  
9 Came back (8)  
10 Fast and manoeuvrable; cold (5)  
11 In Nottingham, it flows right into a bivouac (5)  
13 A little extra from getting on in public transport (5)  
15 The sailor's anger may make one cross (7)  
16 Small farmer, particularly in Scotland (7)  
20 & 21 The result of car dismantling, or roles for thin actors? (5,5)  
23 I step around a ski-slope (5)  
24 How shocking if it should turn out to be a dud flare! (8)  
25 The fleece of an Angora goat (6)  
26 Thespieky? That's not very realistic (3,2,3,3)  
27 Professional charge (3)

### Down

- 1 Two's company! (11)  
2 Where Hackman swims is important in heredity, it

seems! (4,4)

- 3 Tintin's dog is in Kansas? No, Wyoming (5)  
4 & 22d Today's dinner, cooked in two ancient Phoenician cities (4,3,5)  
5 Explode like a volcano (5)  
6 There are sixteen of them in a pound (6)  
7 Given potassium, I'd get a young goat (3)  
12 & 13 Horrendous injuries that give University Award Number Three to Homer Simpson's boss? (5,6,5)  
14 Rush forward (5)  
17 & 18 Body of water also known as Lake Tiberias and the Kinneret (3,3,2,7)  
19 Light wind (6)  
22 See 4 down  
23 Type of flower (5)  
24 See the inspector quietly have a quick swim (3)

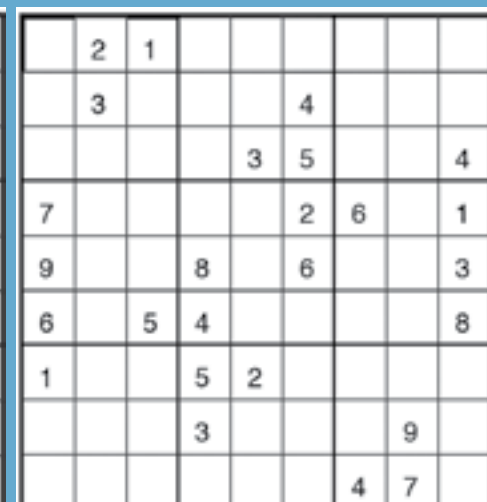
## Sudoku Corner

344

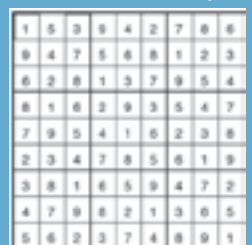
Easy



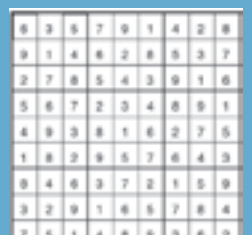
Hard



Last week's Easy 343



Last week's Hard 343



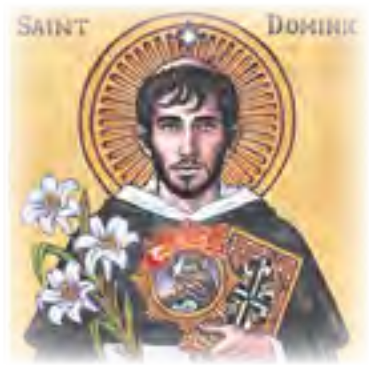


# The apostles’ mission remains evergreen – and it’s ours too

**ONE OF THE NICER ASPECTS** of life in lockdown – for me at least – was having a bit more time to read. I got around to reading some long-shelved books about St Dominic, for example, and I fell in love all over again with the founder of our Order.

What struck me most of all as I read was the fact that Dominic refused merely to maintain the structures of Christendom. Instead, he spent all his energy reaching out to those in Europe who had drifted from the orthodox Faith, especially the Cathars, and he harboured a lifelong desire, fulfilled by his brothers, to go beyond the bounds of Christian Europe and to preach the Gospel to people who had never heard it. Unbelievers, heretics and sinners: these were Dominic’s first love and constant concern.

**Mindset**  
Dominic, of course, could have been a decent priest without this missionary mindset. He could have lived out a very good life in his native Spain, caring for the Faithful flock there. But what drove him away from this comfort zone, and what led him to found an entirely new brotherhood



of mobile evangelists, was the example of the apostles. ‘Go’ was the command the risen Jesus gave them, ‘go’ – not ‘stay’: “go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature”. Dominic’s order of preachers was simply a timely

way of fulfilling that timeless commission.  
Revisiting all this made me wonder what the Irish Church would look like if we adopted St Dominic’s preference for unbelievers. How would that change parish life? Imagine, for example, if the first item on the annual parish budget was titled ‘Evangelisation’, itemising what would be spent in efforts to share the Gospel with lapsed Catholics, atheists, the indifferent and other religious believers. Imagine parish social events aimed not primarily at regular worshippers, but at welcoming those who don’t usually come to Church.  
Imagine church porches equipped with free or cheap

● St Dominic’s missionary mindset wasn’t just that of an activist. If it was, he wouldn’t have lasted very long. The source of all his missionary energy was, of course, prayer, especially the prayerful reading of Scripture. As he read the Bible, he would appear, as his contemporaries wrote, “as if he were arguing with a friend; at one moment he would appear to be feeling impatient, nodding his head energetically, then he would seem to be listening quietly, then you would see him disputing and struggling, and laughing and weeping all at once, fixing then lowering his gaze, then again speaking quietly and beating his breast”.  
While Church institutions require a great ‘missionary conversion’, such institutional change will only bear lasting fruit if it has at its heart the personal meeting between God’s Word and individual souls. Whatever the state of our parish, that’s a task to which we can commit ourselves daily.

resources for seekers. Imagine planning the parish year around outreach events, like Alpha courses. Imagine new faces being gently welcomed by parishioners, and shown ways to deepen their Faith and practice. Imagine a parish where priest and people are not seen, respectively, as ‘service provider’ and ‘service user’, but as apostles with a shared mission.  
**“Only those parts of the Church that become missionary will survive and thrive”**

It’s easy – and exciting – to imagine all this but, given that morale and energy is low in many Irish parishes, it will take a lot of work and imagination to build this missionary culture from where we currently are.  
And yet, that’s exactly the hard work the Holy See is asking parishes to do. In a document published by the Congregation for Clergy a fortnight ago, a vision is outlined for parishes based on the principle of ‘missionary conversion’.  
The document is a call for parish communities to ‘go out of

themselves’, and to examine and repurpose everything they do in order to reach out more effectively to people who do not know Jesus.  
The document makes predictions too. Parishes that do not become thoroughly missionary will “become self-referential and fossilised...of interest only to small groups”.  
I’m convinced this prediction is accurate, and that only those parts of the Church that become missionary will survive and thrive. The required missionary conversion will make us uncomfortable, it will sometimes be painful, and it will require great Faith and charity, but it is not something newfangled or untried: it’s the way of St Dominic and countless other saints, it’s the way of the apostles sent out by Jesus, and it’s the way of Jesus himself, whose mission is evergreen.



Sr Mary Clare Busingye with some of the victims of flooding in eastern Uganda, where homeless families struggle to live by fishing.



## PLEASE HELP DISPLACED FAMILIES HIT BY UGANDA FLOODS

Amidst the worldwide covid crisis, other human disasters persist. Sr Mary Clare Busingye of the Little Sisters of St Francis of Assisi, Tororo, Uganda, writes to The Little Way Association: “We had very heavy rains that caused flood and displaced people in Fungwe village. Most houses fell and gardens for growing food were submerged in water. Almost all that families owned was lost. About 250 families are now living in classrooms in our primary school where women, children and men are all mixed up. For bedding they sleep on mats. Each family prepares their meal under trees. They have not been given the help required. The main activity at the moment is fishing. The major challenge are the vulnerable women and children. We have tried to help but we cannot continue because of our own financial challenges. I am earnestly requesting for your financial help.”

Your kind donation will help the villagers of Fungwe and others who are presently suffering. The current epidemic means that many countries’ infrastructure is compromised.

**Every penny or cent of your gift goes to missionaries without deduction.**



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Your Mass offerings help to provide the missionary priest’s maintenance and assist him to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth.

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