

# The Irish Catholic

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# Primate calls for border poll

Chai Brady

## Archbishop says plan must proceed slowly with consideration

Archbishop Eamon Martin has said that politicians must work towards a poll on Irish unification, but that this is something which must proceed slowly and with all voices considered.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about Britain's departure from the European Union (EU) at the weekend, Arch-

bishop Eamon warned that politicians on both sides of the border need to remain focused on ensuring that damage to the North from Brexit is minimised.

On the issue of Irish unification, Archbishop Eamon said: "You hear a lot of talk for example about a border poll

– I would be along the lines of those who think that this is something we must work slowly towards.

"If there is to be a border poll it must be prepared for and it must be in a way that only takes place whenever we're confident that the necessary building of rela-

tionships in these islands, north, south, east and west are sound and are indeed mature enough to accept the outworking of such a border poll," he said.

### Recalibration

He insisted that "this reconfiguration and this recal-

ibration of relationships will demand a lot of positivity from everybody, and a lot of willingness to work through whatever tricky issues begin to emerge".

The governments, he said, should "work very closely on North-south relations, east-west relations, and with Brit-

ain and Europe".

He added that the Good Friday Agreement proposed an infrastructure to improve relations between "these islands", and with Europe, saying "therefore I think perhaps it might be worthwhile reigniting interests in those

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Some of the children taking part in the Laudate Festival last week in Our Lady of Victories Church, Ballymun Road, Dublin. The Laudate Festival 2020 was celebrated in four venues in the Archdiocese of Dublin during Catholic Schools Week. Photo: John McElroy

## MICHAEL KELLY

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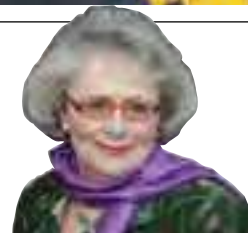
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**Managing Editor:** Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie  
**Northern Correspondent:** Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie  
**Multimedia Journalists:** Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie  
Róisé McGagh, roise@irishcatholic.ie  
Aron Hegarty, aron@irishcatholic.ie  
**Newsroom:** news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026  
**Books Editor:** Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie  
**Layout:** Declan Moroney  
**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  
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# Allowing the ordination of married priests is not a silver bullet

The latest culture war in the Church is being fought over the issue of mandatory celibacy for clergy. Those who have been agitating for a relaxation of the rules since the 1960s see an opportunity in Pope Francis considering the ordination of married men to the priesthood in the Amazon region. They see the admission of so-called *virī probati* as the beginning of the end of mandatory celibacy for the universal Church.

Of course, it would be no such thing. For many decades, former Protestant ministers have been ordained as Catholic priests and moved into the parochial house with their wife and children in tow. It has not affected the universal discipline on celibacy, and any decision on pastoral provision in the Amazon won't either.

## Comparison

Ireland is a very parochial culture, and that is even more so the case for the Church. Global issues in Catholicism are often seen through the lens of local issues. That's why some people here draw a ready comparison between the priest shortage in Ireland and the situation in countries like Brazil.

It's as naïve as it is wrong-headed. Catholic communities in the Amazon may go many months without seeing a priest. In many of Brazil's dioceses there is a priest-to-people ratio of one-to-20,000. In Ireland,

it is more like one priest for about a thousand people (in Clonfert there is one priest for every 600 or so lay Catholics).

**The Association of Catholic Priests is warning this week that priests risk becoming an endangered species"**

Even with the vocations crisis, Ireland has a lot of priests. And part of the challenge for planning for the future is that Ireland has been substantially 'over-churched' for decades. Successive bishops decided the best way to keep the Irish religious was to make it as easy as possible. Churches and chapels of ease were built at virtually every crossroads to encourage regular and relatively effortless practise of the Faith and there was a ready supply of priests to service communities.

That is rapidly disappearing, and difficult decisions will have to be made about where and when to close churches that no longer serve a useful purpose. The Association of Catholic Priests is warning

## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

this week that priests risk becoming an endangered species.

## No second thought

They're not entirely wrong, but they're not entirely on the money either. Will people have a Sunday Mass on their doorstep a decade or two from now? The answer is probably a 'no'. But at a time when people think nothing of driving to a neighbouring town for the weekly shop or cheaper fuel, is a 35km round trip too much to ask of a Catholic to attend Sunday Mass? I would suspect anyone serious about their Faith wouldn't give it a

second thought. As sure as night follows day, if the pope gives the green light for married clergy in the Amazon, a clamour will follow from other countries like Ireland where there is also a shortage.

But anyone who thinks allowing the ordination of married men will be a silver bullet that will see Ireland's seminaries fill up with would-be priests will be disappointed.

The reasons why young Irish men are no longer queueing up to take on a religious vocation run much deeper than a discomfort with priestly celibacy.

## Call for border poll

» Continued from Page 1

particular relations". He also warned that Brexit "has only begun" and is far from reaching a resolution with many businesses and farmers still very concerned.

"People talk about getting Brexit done, Brexit hasn't even begun and I think that certainly border communities – and I'm speaking to the people involved in agriculture, in fisheries and in small and medium enterprise businesses – are concerned that the outworking of Brexit does not impact unfairly on border communities," he said.

## Charity calls for clarity on homeless figures

A charity has asked for clarity on the homeless figures released by the Department of Housing after saying that the number "doesn't add up".

The latest figures for December show there was a record fall of 717 people living in emergency accommodation.

But Brian McLaughlin of the Inner City Helping Homeless

suspects the report statistics have been miscalculated.

"The report for December stated 94 less families were homeless in Dublin, yet this doesn't correlate with their quarterly report which stated there were 44 new families entering homelessness as 98 families exited, a difference of 54 families," Mr McLaughlin said.



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# Fr Ray Kelly – ‘I could win the Eurovision’

Chai Brady

Singing and dancing priest Fr Ray Kelly said if he was chosen for the Eurovision the song he entered could be a winner for Ireland.

Fifty years on from Irish singer Dana Rosemary Scallon's win with the song 'All Kinds of Everything' in 1970, Meath-based Fr Kelly said he would be "shocked and amazed" to be chosen.

"I have had a great interest in the show, I've watched it from my early teens from going back to Johnny Logan in 1980 and even before, I was in school when Dana won it," Fr Kelly said.

The song, written for him by two musicians, is called 'Hallelujah Day' and will be on the priest's new album set to be released by Easter.

## 'Unreal song'

Asked whether he thought the song could win the song contest he said: "Personally I think it could, I'd be biased though."

"It's an unreal song, it's



Fr Ray Kelly with his dance partner Kylee Vincent on *Dancing with the Stars*.

fabulous. It's a Gospel song with a country-western flavour to it. I think it would go down brilliantly, the chorus is so simple I could just see the whole auditorium joining in."

Fr Ray prefaced his comments saying: "My first love first of all is my priesthood, and that's number one in my life."

As this paper was going to press, RTE did not confirm

whether the Eurovision contestant had already been chosen, but told this paper it will be revealed in the "next three to four weeks".

Fr Ray said that even if someone else had been chosen: "I would still love to, that doesn't stop me from having that desire to, I would have loved to have gone to Rotterdam this year and to represent Ireland would have been

such a great privilege."

Currently the priest, who is based in Oldcastle, is competing in *Dancing with the Stars* and has stayed in the competition by popular vote despite receiving low scores from the judges.

## Popular vote

Fr Kelly said he would be happy whether knocked out or not. He said: "It looks like I'm getting a popular vote from the people of Ireland at the moment."

"And it's not particularly for my dancing but maybe for my entertainment or my popularity in other ways, or maybe the Hallelujah story resonated with a lot of people as well, there's a lot of things going on there."

"My logic is that it's bringing happiness and liveliness to people's lives for an hour or two, and if I can do that maybe not with my dancing but with my popularity and the fact that I'm a bit of an entertainer, then bring it on."

Fr Ray will be competing for a fifth time this Saturday.

## Gary Lightbody returns to Ireland to encourage peace and Christian unity

Róise McGagh

Gary Lightbody from Snow Patrol encouraged people to see each other as equals at a Christian festival in Belfast last Friday.

The Northern Irish singer [pictured] from Bangor said "I think that whether we see it or not we all have a bond with each other and a lot of that is to do with music", to Rev. Steve Stockman in an open conversation in Fitzroy Presbyterian Church.

"As you say you said you were having this experience where you realised everyone was connected, whether they were Catholic or Protestant or whatever religion while we were singing along to 'Run', I have those moments all the time."

He spoke as part of the Four Corners Festival, which runs until February 9. It aims to promote the coming together of Christians in Belfast city through a series of events.

## Inspiration

Mr Lightbody talked mostly about his young life growing up in Northern Ireland and told the crowd how much of an inspiration his grandmother was.

"She was born and raised in Derry as a protestant, a very devout Christian and one of her best friends Margaret Monaghan was a Catholic from when they were very young, for their whole life they were best friends," he said.

"She literally had an open-door policy where the Protestant Reverend would come for tea, and the Catholic priest would come for tea. Both sides would come for cups of tea round Betty's house."

He told the crowd how she passed away reading the bible and the verse on one of those pages inspired the song 'Church'.



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# Mary Immaculate decision ‘deeply regrettable’ – Mattie McGrath

**Chai Brady**

The decision by Mary Immaculate College (MIC) in Limerick to reject a course in Christian ethics has been dubbed “deeply regrettable” by outgoing Tipperary TD Mattie McGrath.

A programme was developed and submitted to the college authorities after academics in MIC were approached by hospital chaplains who asked for professional training to deal with difficult ethical decisions.

The Certificate for Christian Ethics aimed to help those struggling morally in Ireland’s changing health-care landscape. Mr McGrath called for the decision “to be urgently reconsidered”.

“We must remember that what we are talking about here is a course specifically designed to facilitate and inform a pastorally sensitive response to the increasingly complex and conflicting visions within the Irish health care system,” he told *The Irish Catholic*.

“I would also have additional concerns that the move by the authorities could be interpreted as a kind of institutional or cultural pushback against anything that would enable a sustained critique of the prevailing ethical model within contemporary Irish healthcare.

“We need to be absolutely clear that this is not what is happening.”

He added that MIC should be at the forefront of “advancing the richness of the Catholic ethical vision” and that “rejecting a course that could have achieved this is confusing to say the least”.

**Healthcare**

Defending the decision MIC sent a statement to this paper saying the programme would have diverted funds from other core programmes and they weren’t planning to expand its programme provision regarding professional healthcare.

The proposed course was not unusual, according to Prof. Eamonn Conway of MIC

who said that publicly-funded higher education institutions often provide specially designed courses for professionals.

He gave the example of Waterford Institute of Technology which provides a certificate in custodial care for prison officers.

Prof. Conway said that the

programme was developed to meet “a felt need among hospital chaplains and healthcare professionals for Christian ethics programme”.

MIC said: “As a publicly-funded institution, Mary Immaculate College is specifically mandated to provide programmes in the academic fields of education and the

liberal arts.

“At present, and for the foreseeable future, the college is not contemplating strategic expansion of its programme provision to the domain of professional healthcare, particularly where such programmes would necessitate a diversion of resources from MIC’s core programmes.”



Bishop Tom Deenihan was joined by 140 sisters, brothers and priests from religious communities around the diocese of Meath on Sunday to mark the day of prayer for Consecrated Life in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. Pictured are Mother Marie Fahy OCSO, Bishop Tom Deenihan and Administrator Fr Derek Darby.

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Loyalist pastor blasts Catholics and GAA**

An Ulster loyalist pastor launched a tirade against Catholics and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) calling it “Fenian, dark and hellish”.

Barrie Halliday, who made the remarks on Facebook at night on January 24, describes Catholics who go to Gaelic games on a Sunday as “Sabbath breakers”.

The ex-UDR man’s five-minute rant included offensive remarks about the GAA and Catholics, and took place at the grave of loyalist victims’ campaigner and former friend Willie Frazer.

“They (Catholics) lit the fire and then anti-RUC and particularly wicked against the UDR, and with the auld [old] GAA background and everything Fenian and dark and hellish it stands for,” said Mr. Halliday in his Facebook video.

“Local GAA clubs, and Irish language, and the abuse, and disgraceful acts of Roman Catholics going to and from their Masses, and GAA matches on Sundays, and all of that stuff – everything that auld [old] Sabbath breakers do.”

**Irish clergy appointed Burkina Faso Papal Nuncio**

An Irish priest has been appointed as the new Papal Nuncio of Burkina Faso on Saturday, February 1.

Monsignor Michael Francis Crotty of the Diocese of Cloyne was also elevated to the episcopal dignity of Archbishop.

“My gratitude at this time goes out to all who have nurtured me in the Faith,” said the Mallow-born clergyman.

The 40-year-old was educated at Christian Brothers School, Co. Cork before earning a licentiate in ecclesiastical history and canon law from Rome.

## Make radical change or ‘die irrelevant’ bishop tells orders

**Staff reporter**

The religious way of life could disappear in the Diocese of Ossory within a generation if “radical action” is taken according to the Bishop Dermot Farrell. In a homily for the World Day of Consecrated Life on Sunday, Bishop Farrell told the congregation in St Mary’s Cathedral in Kilkenny that “bold decisions must be taken today, even if it is painful to do so, and we risk making the wrong decision. Otherwise we die of irrelevancy.”

“Given the current age profile of the members of the religious congregations and orders, and indeed the diocesan clergy, with no young priests or religious, nor any

prospect of an influx of vocations, I can foresee a situation in which our way of life could, for all intents and purposes, within a generation or two have disappeared from the landscape in Ossory,” he said.

“When we look at the present shortcomings of structure and function within the Church then, like Jesus, we need a bold creative response rather than fleeing from the reality of the distressful present.”

Bishop Dermot said that although “we are living in times that can be very disheartening, consecrated life is about not battenning down the hatches until the current storms pass over or simply ‘survival’...but the call to live out our baptismal calling”.

## UK religious writer applies for Irish nationality

**Aron Hegarty**

A veteran religious writer has applied for Irish citizenship after renouncing his UK citizenship this week in protest at Britain leaving the European Union (EU).

Scotland born John Cooney holds the distinction of being the only journalist who has been the Religious Affairs Correspondent of the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent*.

His books include a biography of John Charles

McQuaid, *Ruler of Catholic Ireland*, now recognised as a classic work, and he is preparing a biography of Cardinal Tomas O Fiaich, *Ireland’s Lost Peacemaker*.

The 72-year-old from Glasgow said that since the Leave Campaign narrowly won the referendum on June 23, 2016, he was among the millions of British citizens who did not believe that a UK secession would actually happen.

“From 11pm on January 31, I have become

technically, temporarily and territorially a non-citizen in Europe and the world,” he said of Brexit.

“On Wednesday, January 29 my British passport expired and I decided not to renew it in protest against the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union.”

Mr Cooney, who is the father of Irish rugby international John Cooney, added: “I now intend to apply for Irish citizenship through the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin.”

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# The urge for change

A lot of things happen in this world because people feel that it's time for a change. The fashion industry is the supreme example of this. If skirts are short this season, they'll be long next season. If trousers are flared today, they'll be skinny tomorrow.

Fashion editors are practiced at catching this zeitgeist: 'out goes' boring old floral patterns (which were so 'in' just a few seasons ago) and 'in comes' jazzy new art deco shapes.

It's a staple of fashion, but it's also true in politics, in literature, in social issues, in ideas. Sometimes this desire for change is just restlessness and the human appetite for novelty (the most effective word in advertising is 'new'). Sometimes it is also prompted by an instinct to be fair – a feeling that 'it's their turn'.

I've seen this in the rise of feminism over the years. In the early days, it was seen as radical, even extreme. But a wave of sympathy for feminism swept over society because people felt that women had not been treated fairly, and that their turn at the helm had come. Today, women are sometimes favoured over men.

## Moment in the sun

In much of what is now deemed to be "politically correct" (or "woke"), many ordinary people simply feel that it's time for change. Minorities haven't had "a fair crack of the whip", as a post-Victorian uncle of mine used to put it. Let them have their moment in the sun.

## “Much popular feeling is driven by an instinct for change”

Even with many of the innovations wrought by Vatican II – they had momentum because people felt there was a need for change. Out went fuddy-duddy beautiful old churches and liturgy, and in came churches designed like aircraft hangers and liturgy



Mary Kenny



Queen Elizabeth on her way to church service.

## Dressing to impress

Prof. Vincent Twomey, who I much respect, has said in a speech that we should sometimes present ourselves in our "Sunday best" for Mass attendance: people too often turn up wearing any old thing. I am in no position to comment, as I know I've appeared in church looking as though I've just rushed out the door in whatever jumble of apparel I happened to fling on. Which can be the case.

Yet it fascinates me to observe that there's almost a weekly report these days in the British press of Queen Elizabeth on her way to church, or having just emerged from a Sunday service. She is always in bright colours (complete with elegant hat) for the occasion, and if any members of her family accompany her, they, too, are snapped wearing their best bib and tucker.

Elizabeth's dresser, the Liverpool-born Angela Kelly, evidently ensures her ensemble makes the best of the 93-year-old's appearance.

I'm not saying that church attendance should be a fashion parade, but it's evident that HM's style draws regular attention to her very regular practice of church-going.

emptied of the poetic and the mystical.

And we can, I think, sense this mood with the current election: much popular feeling is driven by an instinct for change. (Mind you, Leo drove the nail into

his own political coffin by disparaging pro-life T.D.s as "backwoodsmen". It was his Hillary Clinton moment, when she insulted voters as "deplorables".)

Sometimes change is justified!

## Perceptions differ from statistics

Let me revisit a point that has had some reaction. Last week I extolled John Waters for his courage and intelligence, but remarked that there isn't really 'mass immigration' into Ireland.

But my attention has been drawn to the stark statistics, as published by Pew Research, regarded as a reliable source of measurement.

In 1990, there were 230,000 people living in this state who were not born in Ireland. By 2017, this had risen to 810,000. So, 16% of the population of Ireland (Republic) were not

born in the state. This is higher, in percentage terms, than the UK, where 13% of residents were born overseas (3.6 million born overseas in 1990, 8.8 million in 2017).

Perceptions sometimes differ from statistics. In England, I have sometimes been the only person on a bus (or in a train carriage) not of Asian heritage. In Ireland, this has never happened to me.

However, I accept that there is concern in many parts of the country where the statistics belie my perception.



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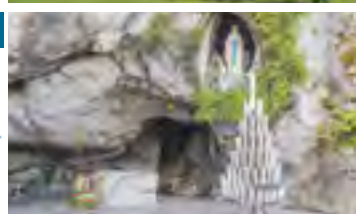


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# The day US President Donald Trump finally won me over

**“A**ll of us here today understand an eternal truth: every child is a precious and sacred gift from God. Together we must protect, cherish, and defend the dignity and the sanctity of every human life.

“When we see the image of a baby in the womb, we glimpse the majesty of God’s creation. When we hold a new-born in our arms, we know the endless love that each child brings to a family. When we watch a child grow, we see the splendour that radiates from each human soul. One life changes the world.”

I wish I could take credit for composing this paragraph, but I can’t. These are the words of the United

**Maria Steen**  
The View



States President, Donald Trump. Can you – even for one moment – imagine an Irish politician saying anything like them?

In what was perhaps the greatest pro-life speech in modern times, Donald Trump finally won me over – and I’m pretty sure many Americans too.

## Address

In a 14-minute address, he spoke to a crowd of tens of thousands gathered in Washington DC. He not

only articulated in quite beautiful terms the value of the child in the womb – reminding everyone that the Bible tells us that “each person is ‘wonderfully made’” – he also paid tribute to the “strong women, amazing Faith leaders and brave students” who have worked tirelessly for the past 47 years since the Roe vs Wade judgment that legalised abortion in America. He recognised their commitment and generosity, saying that they “embrace mothers with care and compassion”, and that they are “powered by prayer, and motivated by pure, unselfish love”.

Unlike most politicians, as is his way, he connected with the people on the ground, showing empathy and knowledge of what they were going through. He used language that was sincere, unapologetic in its religious tone, eschewing political spin-doctor-speak.

As in Ireland, and most of the Western world, pro-life Americans feel like they are in the trenches. Donald Trump is the first to really recognise and speak to this and pledge to do something about it.

**“Clearly, a diversity of voices is welcome in UCD – so long as they’re not Catholic. All students are protected from bullying – just not Catholics”**

He said: “Religious Liberty has been under attack all over the world, and frankly very strongly attacked in our nation.” Addressing those pro-life activists present, he said: “You see it better than anyone but we are stopping it, and we’re taking care of the doctors, nurses, teachers and groups like the Little Sisters of the Poor.”

He went on to say: “We are protecting pro-life



US President Donald Trump speaking to the March for Life rally (inset).

students’ right to free speech on college campuses. And if universities want federal taxpayer dollars, then they must uphold your First Amendment right to speak your mind. And if they don’t, they pay a very big financial penalty, which they will not be willing to pay.”

This stands in stark contrast to the situation in Ireland, where Irish universities, and in particular UCD, seem keen on indoctrinating their students in a culture of ‘wokeness’, talking about the importance of consent, while forcing students – against their wishes – to forego listening to a talk on sex (it sounds like something Establishment Ireland would accuse Archbishop McQuaid of).

Last week’s paper covered the story of the attempts by LGBT activists to block the American speaker, Jason Evert, from addressing Catholic students in Catholic meetings about the Catholic Church’s teaching on sex and marriage.

One of the talks was to be given to students attending Ignite 2020, Ireland’s first intervarsity Catholic retreat hosted in UCD. And so, in the name of diversity and anti-bullying, UCD caved in to a small group of bullies. Clearly, a diversity of voices

is welcome in UCD – so long as they’re not Catholic. All students are protected from bullying – just not Catholics.

In the case of Catholic students, the University – supposedly a bastion of free speech and free thought – was happy to join in and legitimise the bullying and ostracisation in an effort to prevent students from hearing a view different from that pre-approved by the university authorities.

## Doctrine

The same people who protested against Jason Evert speaking to Catholic students who wanted to hear him, the same people who succeeded in getting a State-funded university to suppress the constitutional rights of young people, and in effect, impose their doctrine on others, would be the very ones calling for the defunding of Catholic schools on the grounds that they indoctrinate their students.

I am happy to report that, in the end, Jason Evert did speak to the students – albeit by Skype, but nonetheless had a very successful talk followed by a lively questions and answers session. What will UCD do? Try to clamp down on telephone and internet-based communications,

North Korea style?

Many of the students who experienced the attempts by UCD to infringe upon their rights will be voting for the first time this weekend. In the space of less than two years since the passing of the abortion referendum, much of what pro-life speakers predicted would happen has happened.

Abortion numbers have increased; mistaken diagnoses have been made; doctors have signed off on abortions – despite promises of ‘safeguards’ – without ever meeting the mother and baby.

Pro-life voices have been shut out of the media; meanwhile, we are bombarded with pro-choice propaganda.

We have to endure abortions being carried out in maternity hospitals, with scarce resources being spent on killing babies while mothers and fathers fighting for their children’s lives are given short shrift in a woefully under-resourced maternity service.

The message has gone out loud and clear to doctors and nurses that they needn’t apply for jobs unless they are willing to participate in State-sanctioned executions.

Oh yes, and we are expected to pay for it all too. Religious freedom is

**“Many of the students who experienced the attempts by UCD to infringe upon their rights will be voting for the first time this weekend”**

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# St Kevin's begins life as Oratory after 160-year wait

Róise McGagh

St Kevin's Church in Dublin celebrated the beginning of its life as an Oratory at the weekend, more than 160 years after St John Henry Newman wanted to found one in the capital.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has given his approval on a trial basis which is expected to last for three years and celebrations marked the event in the parish in Dublin city centre at the weekend.

The founding members of the Dublin Oratory – in the tradition of St Philip Neri – are Dublin-based priests Fr Michael G. Nevin and Fr Gerard Deighan. They are joined by two men who were in formation for the Irish Dominicans but have now transferred to the Oratory.

Both Fr Nevin and Fr Deighan currently serve the Latin Mass community where the extraordinary form of the Mass is celebrated in St Kevin's on Harrington Street.

A spokeswoman for the

Dublin Archdiocese told *The Irish Catholic* that "there are plans to investigate the possibility of an Oratory in St Kevin's. However, the situation of the parish and church remain the same".

Speaking to this newspaper this week Fr Deighan said: "When the canonisa-

tion of Cardinal Newman was announced last year, the idea of beginning an Oratorian community in Dublin, which had been in the air for many years, received new impetus. On February 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, an Oratory-in-formation began its life at Saint

Kevin's church in Dublin 8."

He also stated that "until the community gets up and running there will be no real change in the parish. The only new feature, right from the start, is sung Vespers and Benediction every Sunday, at 3.30pm, which all are welcome to attend."



Sisters Theresa McDermot, Doonbeg and Josephine Shannon, Crannog, Co. Clare, visiting St Brigid's Well in Liscannor, Co Clare, on her feast day, St Brigid's Day, February 1. Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan

## PSNI aim to recruit more Catholic Officers

Aron Hegarty

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has opened a recruitment campaign this week which bids to increase its number of Catholic officers.

The PSNI is looking for 600 trainees to reach full complement and address the under-representation of Catholics in the force.

At present only 32% of the 6,848 police officers in Northern Ireland are Catholic, according to PSNI figures.

Archbishop of Armagh Rev. Eamon Martin, who first addressed the issue in a December interview on 50:50 recruitment with *The Irish Catholic*, said he was concerned by declining Catholic officer numbers.

"If we do not have a police service which is representative of the society it polices, you begin to run into accusations that the police service is not friendly to Catholic people," said Dr Martin.

"That's why I think this is a matter of concern for all of us and I think with a united effort of all of us to try to really lift the recruitment of young Catholics into the police, we could make a big effort to try and increase that percentage well up."

Applications are open from February 4–25, with the first part of the process handled by professional services firm Deloitte.

under threat. The culture has become ever more hostile towards those who believe that babies should be given their fair chance at life. So-called human rights organisations are protesting against the pro-lifers' freedom of assembly and even their freedom to pray peacefully where they like.

Many have been licking their wounds since the 2018 referendum. It was a devastating blow for human rights, for kindness and decency, for the vulnerable in our society.

Rather than stick our heads in the sand though, it is time for us to try to do something to change the landscape.

**“Every life brings love into this world. Every child brings joy to a family. Every person is worth protecting”**

We must use our votes to support pro-life candidates. Pro-abortion candidates and parties should not benefit from our votes. Change will not happen overnight. It will be a long road back, but nothing stays the same for ever.

If we look to the US and take inspiration from all the good people who refused to give up on the right to life of every human being, perhaps in time we can hope to hear an Irish politician say: "We cannot know what our citizens yet unborn will achieve, the dreams they will imagine, the masterpieces they will create, the discoveries they will make."

"But we know this, every life brings love into this world. Every child brings joy to a family. Every person is worth protecting. And above all, we know that every human soul is divine and every human life, born and unborn, is made in the holy image of Almighty God. Together we will defend this truth all across our magnificent land."

"We will set free the dreams of our people and with determined hope, we look forward to all of the blessings that will come from the beauty, talent, purpose, nobility and grace of every...child."

## Loughrea's Carmelite sisters set to leave the community

Staff reporter

The Carmelite sisters in Loughrea, Co. Galway are set to leave the town after a presence of over 300 years.

Like many other religious communities, the sisters have struggled to attract new vocations in recent years and the age profile of the sisters is older. As a result, their prayerful presence in the

community will soon come to an end. *The Irish Catholic* understands that this will happen within the next year.

There are currently five sisters living in the community.

It is understood that they will move to another convent in New Ross, Co. Wexford over the next year.

See Page 15.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Co. Down director presents Knock film to Pope

A filmmaker from Co. Down presented Pope Francis with a DVD of his docudrama about the 1879 Knock apparitions.

Campbell Miller, a director from Northern Ireland said: "It is an incredible honour to have the opportunity to meet the Holy Father and present him with the film. Having visited Knock during his visit to Ireland, he has a particular affection for our national Shrine."

The production, filmed entirely on location in Ireland, had its first screening in the Filmoteca Vaticana, in the Vatican on Monday, January 27.

### Drones to help in natural disasters

A researcher from Queens University Belfast is helping his home community by creating drones that can warn against natural disasters.

Dr Trung Duong created a low-cost system that can warn people early and hold a phone signal – using drones.

Dr Duong, from Vietnam, said: "When I was little, whenever we had flooding or storms every school closed...when you witness your friends, your close ones, getting injuries or people dying because of it, it really pushed me that when I grew up I could do something for my village, for my local community."



## NATIONAL DIRECTOR FOR CATECHETICS – THREE YEAR FIXED TERM APPOINTMENT

Columba Centre, St Patrick's College, Maynooth

The catechetical mission of the Church is a key component of Evangelisation. The National Director for Catechetics will support the Bishops' Conference in its evangelising work of promoting reflection, strategies and resources in initial proclamation, Christian initiation, catechesis and religious education.

The successful candidate will liaise with the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools, Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education, the National Associations of Primary and Post-Primary Diocesan Advisers, writers of catechetical programmes, Primary and Post-primary schools, Catholic colleges of education and a variety of other national offices in the area of catechesis, religious education, pastoral renewal, youth and adult faith development.

### Skills:

- Good interpersonal and organisational skills and ability to work on his/her own initiative and as part of a team.
- Excellent communication, research and analytical skills.
- Detailed knowledge of Catechetical teaching and the relevant magisterial documents of the Catholic Church.
- Familiarity with Church documentation on Evangelisation such as Pope Paul VI's 1975 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and Pope Francis' 2013 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*.
- Familiarity with current directions in the pastoral ministry and mission of the Church.
- Good working knowledge of Microsoft Office, Internet and Email.

### Qualifications:

- A qualification in Catechetics/Religious Education/Theology/Leadership and Pastoral Care, preferably at Post Graduate level.
- Qualified teacher at Primary or Post Primary level; or lecturer at Third Level.

The successful candidate will be appointed to a three year fixed term appointment which will include a probationary period of six months.

**To apply, send your Curriculum Vitae with a covering letter marked 'Confidential' to:**  
The Executive Administrator, Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, or by email to [admin@iecon.ie](mailto:admin@iecon.ie)



Closing date for applications no later than **5.00 pm on Monday, 10 February 2020**. Interviews will take place in Maynooth week commencing **24 February 2020**.

For more information please see [www.catholicbishops.ie/careers](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/careers)



# MAKE 2020 A YEAR TO GO TO THE HOLY LAND

Next September and October will see two groups of pilgrims depart on an unforgettable trip to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. In recent years, these trips have become an integral part of The Irish Catholic year with hundreds of pilgrims making the journey from every corner of Ireland to take part in a unique opportunity to visit the sites associated with the earthly life of Christ. The pilgrimage also helps the Bible come alive for people as they visit Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Here are some highlights of this year's itinerary:



The Sea of Galilee.

**Day One: Ireland to the Holy Land**  
Depart Dublin Airport in the evening for an overnight flight direct to Tel Aviv on El Al.

**Day Two: Nazareth**  
Upon arrival in Ben-Gurion Airport, pilgrims will be met by a Marian Pilgrimages representative and guide before boarding our tour coach to Nazareth. En route we will see stunning views of the sun rising over the Galilee region – site of much of the ministry of Jesus. After breakfast, check-in to the four-star Legacy Hotel for five nights with dinner and breakfast.

After time to rest and freshen up, we will walk the short distance to the nearby Basilica of the Annunciation to celebrate Mass. On the lower level of the basilica we see the remains of Mary's house and where the Archangel Gabriel visited her.

Adjacent to the basilica is St Joseph's Church, where we will visit the site of Joseph's workshop and the house of the Holy Family. A short walk from the basilica is Mary's Well here you have the opportunity to draw water from the same well as the Virgin Mary followed by free time in Nazareth before dinner at the hotel.

**Day Three: Mount Tabor and Cana in Galilee**  
After breakfast, we have a short drive to Mount Tabor to ascend by taxi for Mass at the Church of the Transfiguration where Jesus is transfigured and speaks to Moses and Elijah. There is time to enjoy the view of the Valley of Armageddon and the Jezreel Valley – bread basket of the Holy Land.

After time for lunch we take the short coach journey to Cana in Galilee. Here we visit the Wedding Church, the site of the first miracle of Jesus. Couples on the pilgrimage can take part in the special ceremony to renew their wedding vows and there is also prayers and blessings for spouses at home and deceased husbands and wives. In the lower level of the church, we will see artifacts from the site before having an opportunity to taste and purchase some of the famous wine from this sacred site before returning to Nazareth for dinner in the hotel.

Optional Eucharistic Adoration at the Basilica of the Annunciation at 8.30pm.

**Day Four: The Sea of Galilee**  
This morning we make our way to the Mount of Beatitudes overlooking the Sea of Galilee where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, Capernaum and Tabgha. Visit the site of the multiplication of the Loaves and Fish at Tabgha, and the Church of the Primacy of St Peter.

After lunch on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, continue to Capernaum and see the old synagogue and the excavations of St Peter's house before taking a boat trip on the lake, with relevant Bible readings. Before returning to the hotel we visit Magdala, the home of Mary Magdalene, a prosperous fishing village at the time of Jesus.

Optional rosary at the Irish icon at the Basilica of the Annunciation at 8.30pm.

**Day Five: Acre – the Crusader capital**  
We take the short coach ride to the coastal city of Akko, famed throughout history as the Crusader capital of the Holy Land. After Mass, we return to Nazareth for free time in the town of the Holy Family before dinner at the hotel.

Optional candlelit procession at the Basilica of the Annunciation at 8.30pm.

**Day Six: Jericho and Bethany**  
We leave Nazareth and drive south along the Jordan Valley into Jericho. Here we can see the Mount of Temptation and the Sycamore tree of Zachaeus. Continue to the Dead Sea and enjoy a 'dip' near Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Drive by the Inn of the Good Samaritan, to Bethany to celebrate Mass at 16.00 and visit the Tomb of Lazarus. Continue to Qasr el Yahud, the baptismal site of Jesus on the River Jordan, here we can renew our baptismal vows.

After we drive to Bethlehem and check-in to the four-star Manger Square Hotel, located just a stone's throw from the Church of the Nativity for four nights, with breakfast and dinner.

**Day Seven: Jerusalem**  
We drive to Jerusalem and enter the Old City to the Church of St Anne and nearby, see the Pool of Bethesda. Close by we begin the Via Dolorosa and follow the stations of the cross through the markets and narrow streets of the Old City to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the site of

Calvary where Jesus was crucified and His tomb. Here we will celebrate Mass at 11.00 and take some time to reflect at this sacred site. Enjoy some free time in Jerusalem for lunch before visiting the Western Wall.

We will then drive to Taybeh – a town where Jesus stayed before going to Jerusalem to endure the Passion. It is the last all-Christian town in the West Bank and here we will hear about efforts to keep the local Christian community vibrant, including local wine-making before returning to the hotel in Bethlehem for dinner.

**Day Eight: Mount of Olives**  
Drive to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem where we take our group photo and enjoy the view of the Old City below. We make our way to the highest point on the Mount of Olives to the Ascension Dome. Continue to visit the Pater Noster Church, Dominus Flevit, the Church of the Assumption and grotto and the Garden of Gethsemane.

In the afternoon we celebrate Mass at 15.00 in the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu or 'cock's crow', where St Peter denied Jesus

three times and see the dungeon where Jesus was held the night of Holy Thursday. We walk around Mount Zion and visit the church of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Tomb of King David and the Room of the Last Supper. Return to the hotel for dinner.

**Day Nine: Bethlehem**  
After breakfast we take the short walk to the Church of the Nativity and celebrate Mass. at 10.00. Here you can visit the birthplace of Jesus, and the Holy Manger as well as the chapels of St Joseph, St Jerome, the Holy Innocents and the Church of St Catherine.

Visit the Milk Grotto before lunch and meeting with members of the local Christian community in Bethlehem. Afterwards, we take the short drive to the Shepherds' Field and Ein Karem to the Church of the Visitation before returning to the hotel for dinner.

**Day Ten: Emmaus**  
After breakfast at the hotel, we have some free time in Bethlehem before boarding the coach for the journey to Emmaus where we will have Mass and lunch before proceeding to the airport for the direct flight back to Dublin.

## PRICING NOTES FOR THE PILGRIMAGE

<b>The package on offer is all inclusive of the following:</b>		<b>Entrance fees included</b>	
<b>Travel and accommodation</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Flight from Dublin to Tel Aviv;</li><li>● Transfer on arrival from Tel Aviv airport to the hotel in Nazareth with guide assistance;</li><li>● Five nights in the four-star Legacy Hotel in Nazareth</li><li>● Four nights in the four-star Manger Square Hotel in Bethlehem;</li><li>● Breakfast and evening meal served each day at hotels;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Transfer to Tel Aviv airport for return flight;</li><li>● Flight from Tel Aviv to Dublin;</li><li>● Luxury air-conditioned coach throughout the itinerary;</li><li>● Guiding audio system (earphones for listing to the guide).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● English-speaking guides throughout the pilgrimage;</li><li>● Full day guided tour of Jerusalem including visits to the Western Wall, Dome of the Rock, Church of St Anne, Via Dolorosa, Holy Sepulchre and Shrine of the Book;</li><li>● Complete programme of sightseeing and visits to sites of interest in the Holy Land;</li><li>● Boat ride on Sea of Galilee;</li><li>● Return taxi transfers to Mount Tabor.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Dominus Flevit;</li><li>● Capernaum;</li><li>● Mount of Beatitudes;</li><li>● Muhrakha;</li><li>● Qumran.</li></ul>
	<b>Tours and religious programme</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Full religious programme with a spiritual director including daily Mass;</li><li>● Services of Marian Pilgrimages representative.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>passengers 95 years and over should secure private travel insurance.</li><li>● Price per person sharing twin/double/treble rooms with private facilities. Passengers are entitled to check in one standard piece of luggage subject to airline's conditions. Single rooms are subject to availability at a supplement.</li><li>● Taxes, charges and government levies are included.</li><li>● Porterage at hotels are included in the package price.</li><li>● All tips and gratuities everywhere are included.</li></ul>
		<b>Optional</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Travel insurance €25 for passengers up to 85 years. Please note that an additional insurance premium of €25 is charged for persons aged 86 to 94 years;</li></ul>	



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# Paving a path for Armagh's



Phelim Rafferty (Ballymacnab) and Pat Prunty (Armagh parish) at the launch.



Deacon John Clarke (St Peter's, Drogheda), Betty Agnew (Knockbridge) and Loretta Smith (Kingscourt). Photos: LiamMcArdle.com



**Chai Brady** discusses sacraments in schools, defending the faith and Armagh archdiocese's new pastoral plan with Bishop Michael Router

**T**eaching parents how to defend and pass on the Faith, developing Christian communities and streamlining pastoral areas are all important aspects for reflection as the Archdiocese of Armagh prepares for a new pastoral plan, according to the auxiliary bishop.

Although the archdiocese will be taking a year out to discern the best path forward as their pastoral plan for 2015-2020, 'Share the Joy of the Gospel' comes to end, Bishop Michael Router spoke to *The Irish Catholic* about what may be on the agenda.

"I think people of Faith and people who take their religion seriously, they're finding it hard to speak about it, to talk about it in public, to mention it to workmates or to friends, even family members – that they take their faith seriously – because there can be a negative reaction to that nowadays," Bishop Router said.

"That's difficult for people and there's a lot of people for whom their Faith means an awful lot but they just keep their heads down and don't say too much or make it publicly known. I think part of my role as a priest, first and foremost, and the role of the Church is to encourage people to be strong and to hold firm to their Faith and not to be afraid and to give them the tools to defend it. That's a big problem."

## Reflection

Bishop Router said he believes theological reflection has been "poor" and adult religious education "hasn't been up to scratch". This, he explained, leads to people who feel strongly about their Faith not having the vocabulary to defend when people are hostile.

"Catechetical formation



Archbishop Eamon Martin with Jarlath Doherty at the launch of the Year of Reflection and Prayer.

will need to be a strong part of the pastoral plan, oftentimes when we think of catechetical formation we think about children preparing for first Communion or Confirmation but actually the real work needs to be done with parents," he said.

The schools under Catholic patronage will diminish and parents will no longer be able to rely on them for sacramental preparation, he said, and that this is a reality the Church must face.

"We're going to have to, in the next 10 years or so really, really work on that because our presence in schools is coming under pressure all the time and who knows what's down the line," Bishop Router said.

**“The process is based on reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit”**

"The numbers of Catholic schools will certainly have to diminish – I think the fact we have 85-90% of schools under Catholic patronage, primary schools is untenable really. We recognise that as much as everyone else."

He said the goal would be "helping communities to make that transition and then providing them with the catechesis that once was done by the schools to be done in community, not just for children but mainly for parents as well so they can pass on the Faith".

"Unless the parents actually get involved in passing on the Faith, then it won't be so terribly successful."

This process of moving

the emphasis on sacramental preparation from school to parishes and parents is already beginning in many dioceses across Ireland as they prepare for an uncertain future, as many parents are increasingly calling for multi-denominational or non-denominational schools.

## Programmes

Bishop Router mentioned two programmes being done outside schools where he formerly worked as a priest in the Diocese of Kilmore, saying: "I think a lot of dioceses are doing an element of that already, and there is a certain level of preparation for what might be down the line, that it might be untenable to do it through the schools."

"It's about providing them with the confidence to be able to do that and the resources to move that forward, it will have to be, if there's any thinking about the future that has to be the central part of it, there's no two ways about it."

"That has to be something that we really, as a Church nationally, are going to really have to think about together over the coming years but each diocese is very independent in Ireland and throughout the world, each diocese is an independent unit, so what might happen in one diocese at one pace will happen in one diocese at another pace. I think the reality is that we really need to work hard on finding the structures and resources to ensure there will be more building of community outside of school."

\*\*\*\*\*

The launch of the year of the 'Year of Reflection and Prayer'



# long-term pastoral future



Students join with religious leaders and teachers to help launch the Year of Reflection and Prayer in St Patrick's Cathedral.



Canon Benny Fee, Fr Brian MacRaois and Fr Eugene Sweeney.

for 2020 took place in St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh last week. The initiative is being spearheaded by Bishop Router.

The process is based on reflection and seeking the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit in discerning the way forward for the archdiocese in the years ahead.

Their website, launched specifically for the year of reflection, [armaghprays.com](http://armaghprays.com) states: "Our Diocesan Pastoral Council believes the process of planning for the future is too important to be rushed. It is essential to give time as well as to reflect on all that has been achieved over the past few decades of pastoral planning and in the last five years in particular. The 'Year of Reflection and Prayer' is an opportunity for everyone in the diocese to get involved in the process, including the housebound, our religious congregations and prayer groups."

Leaders of religious and parish representatives were given packs that included nine days of Novena prayers to help the process.

"We have four patron saints and they are nicely spread throughout the year – St Brigid in February, St

Patrick in March, St Oliver Plunkett in July and then in November St Malachy – so we have a Novena of prayer available to each of the parishes, or for individuals, and they will cover a whole wide range, like there will be intercessions, intentions within those novenas covering every aspect of life, pastoral life," Bishop Router said.

**“We need to reflect on why so many people feel left behind in society”**

Some of the prayers are for political leadership, when asked about this Bishop Router said: "I think we need very strong leadership on both parts of the island. It's not just the Church facing difficulties, there are signs that there are serious cracks appearing in society as well."

"We need the leadership to be able to bring people together to work to improve the quality of lives of people in their local communities and to counteract, I think particularly, the effects of addiction, especially drug addiction, and the associated gangland violence and activ-

ity we see so much of," he said.

"We need to reflect on that and reflect on why that's happening, why so many people seem to be left behind in our society. I know the quality of life may have improved for everybody but the gap in equality is expanding all the time – the gap between those who have and those who don't is increasing, and there are so many people who feel hopeless and don't feel they have any direction in life. That needs to be tackled. That would be one of the major things that our politicians are going to have to reflect on in the coming five years."

He added that organisations working in communities struggling with addiction or other issues, many of which are comprised of volunteers, need increased support from Government and shouldn't have to be "begging" for funding.

## Benefit

Pastoral areas in Ireland, which aim to increase co-operation among parishes, pool resources and plan for the future together to benefit every parish involved, is another key area Bishop

Router would like to focus on in the new pastoral plan.

"That may be one area that mightn't have taken off as well as would have been expected or hoped, but I think we need to put a lot more resources into actually getting priests and people to reflect together on how they can cooperate. They have to be seen as a way to assist the priest and to support them in the work that they do rather than, as can often be the case, if they're not properly reflected upon or operated, they can actually add work for the priest rather than take it away," he said.

"So that needs to be developed and we need to think about that, that's part of why we're spending this year reflecting, to see how can we enhance those pastoral areas."

However, there are also signs of life in the archdiocese, with Bishop Router saying lay people are already taking more responsibility for the life of parishes and are getting involved in prayer groups.

Since his arrival last summer he's noticed that Char-



Bishop Michael Router makes a presentation to Anne Coyle who wrote the prayer for the the Year of Reflection and Prayer.

ismatic prayer groups are "pretty strong".

"I think there's quite a resurgence in that need of gathering together with like-minded people to pray," he said. "I think all that we've been through in the past few years has galvanised a lot of faithful people that they need to work together, they need to stand together because there's very little support for the faithful person in the society we live in nowadays."

His hopes are that part of the plan in the future will be to develop basic Christian communities which are

"small groups of people in each parish who provide a core group of support for the priest and for each other to keep the faith alive in that sort of context".

He added: "I think the next 10 years are going to be very critical for every diocese in this country in terms of numbers of priests available and religious and all the rest, unfortunately our numbers are dropping. We don't have a huge number of vocations so there's going to be radical changes at the end of this decade I would say in how parishes operate."



Solange Made, Brigid Ninkam and Ntombi Mpange from Dundalk at the launch of the Year of Reflection and Prayer.



# Medjugorje goes mainstream



Church officials have adopted a warmer attitude towards the reported apparitions, writes **Michael Kelly**

**F**or devotees of Medjugorje, shifting attitudes in the Church on the phenomenon only confirm what they already believe: that the small town in Herzegovina is a place where heaven meets earth and wondrous things happen through the intercession of the Mother of God. An estimated 30,000 Irish people – many of them young people – visit the Marian town every year.

Many others – also devout Catholics – remain immensely sceptical and whilst Pope Francis has ushered in a thawing in the official Church's position on Medjugorje, there is still no ecclesiastical approval for the reported apparitions.

Ever since 1981, when six local children reported that they had seen the Blessed Virgin Mary, Irish people have been amongst the first visitors to the town. Devotion to the Mother of God as Our Lady of Medjugorje has been popular in Ireland and it has inspired numerous prayer groups around the country.

## Vocation

Anecdotal, many of those going forward for priesthood and religious life also attribute the flowering of their vocation to Medjugorje. The success of the Community Cenacolo in Medjugorje helping people suffering from crippling addictions has also led many people to associate the town with healing and helping people in desperate circumstances to get their lives back.

The story begins on June 24, 1981 when Mirjana Dragiccevic and Ivanka Ivankovic reported seeing an apparition of the Virgin Mary. The following day, another vision was reported



The six visionaries (inset left) had been established from June 25, 1981: (l-r) Mirjana, Vicka, Ivanka, Ivan, Marija and Jakov in the front.



The shrine at Medjugorje.

by Mirjana and Ivanka and this time four other young people reported seeing it as well: Marija Pavlovic, Jakov Colo, Vicka Ivankovic, and Ivan Dragiccevic.

The teenagers claim that they saw an apparition on Podbrdo Hill; the alleged apparition was a young woman with an infant in her arms. Surprised and scared, they did not approach. The next day at the same time four of the youths returned, and were later joined by the other two.

At the time of the first alleged apparition Vicka was 16 years old. She claims to have prayed and talked with Our Lady and to have been given nine 'secrets'. Her 'prayer mission', given by the Blessed Virgin Mary, is to pray for the sick.

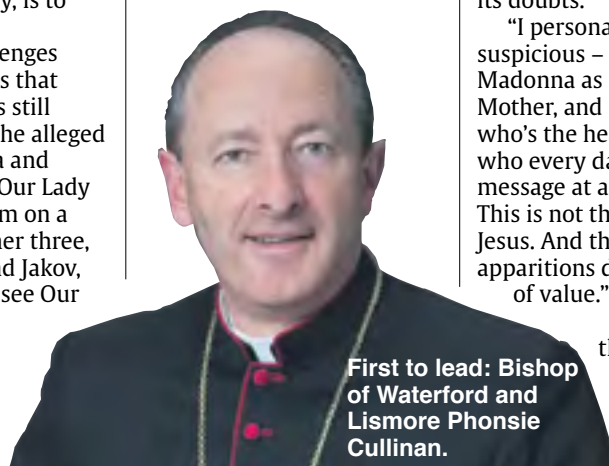
One of the challenges facing the Church is that the phenomenon is still ongoing. Three of the alleged seers – Ivan, Marija and Vicka – claim that Our Lady still appears to them on a daily basis. The other three, Mirjana, Ivanka, and Jakov, say they no longer see Our Lady daily.

The ongoing nature of Medjugorje makes it difficult for Church

authorities to make a definitive judgement on whether or not what is occurring is supernatural and, therefore, worthy of belief. Yet, the four basic messages of prayer, peace, fasting and penance are entirely consistent with the Catholic Faith.

**“Medjugorje is an international reference point for prayer where extraordinary spiritual fruits can be touched by hand”**

Pope Francis has taken a pragmatic approach to



First to lead: Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Phonsie Cullinan.

Medjugorje. In 2017, he said that he believed that the original apparitions more than three decades ago deserve further study, but has also voiced doubt in the supposed ongoing visions.

He also stressed the need to distinguish between the two sets of apparitions, referencing a report submitted to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith by a commission set up to study the apparitions by Benedict XVI in 2010.

“The first apparitions, which were to children, the report more or less says that these need to continue being studied,” he said, but as for “presumed current apparitions, the report has its doubts.”

“I personally am more suspicious – I prefer the Madonna as Mother, our Mother, and not a woman who's the head of an office, who every day sends a message at a certain hour. This is not the Mother of Jesus. And these presumed apparitions don't have a lot of value.”

He clarified that this is his “personal opinion” but added that Our

Lady does not function by saying: “Come tomorrow at this time, and I will give a message to those people.”

However, Francis also pointed to the fact that the “real core” of the commission's report, is “the spiritual fact, the pastoral fact” that thousands of pilgrims go to Medjugorje and are converted. “For this there is no magic wand; this spiritual-pastoral fact cannot be denied.”

The spiritual fruits of the pilgrimages, he said, are the reason why he appointed Polish Archbishop Henryk Hoser of Warsaw-Praga to study the best ways to provide pastoral care to townspeople and the pilgrims.

Archbishop Hoser has said that “Medjugorje is an international reference point for prayer where extraordinary spiritual fruits can be touched by hand”.

## Changes

One of the key changes has been that the Vatican has lifted a ban on bishops leading pilgrimages to the site. “People claim to feel the presence of Mary,” Archbishop Hoser said, “but allowing pilgrimages must not be interpreted as an authentication of the known

events tied to the name Medjugorje.”

He continued to state that the site is “a place, blessed by God, of encounter and dialogue with the Lord through the Virgin.”

**“It will be an occasion to enrich Faith and draw closer to God”**

Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Phonsie Cullinan was the first Irish bishop to lead a group to the shrine last August, and Bishop Fintan Monahan of Killaloe will lead a pilgrimage for readers of *The Irish Catholic* in July this year. The pilgrimage is an opportunity for people to ‘come and see’. Many pilgrims will already be familiar with Medjugorje, while many others will be either unfamiliar or even have their questions and doubts.

Together, it will be an occasion to enrich Faith and draw closer to God and witness the joy, sense of peace and experience of healing that is the story of Medjugorje for many people. I hope you will consider joining us on this special pilgrimage.



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# Out&About

## Rediscovering the joy in our Faith in Cork



**CORK:** Bishop William Crean of the Diocese of Cloyne and dozens of people gather from 14 parishes for a training day on how to run their diocesan Faith formation programme 'Grow in Love of the Lord: Rediscover the Joy in your own Faith'.



**DONEGAL:** Parishioner Vincent O'Donnell is presented with the Benemerenti Medal by Bishop Alan McGuckian of the Diocese of Raphoe in St Naul's Church, Ardaghey (Inver). It was awarded for Vincent's outstanding service in the parish, particularly as a sacristan and teacher.



**CAVAN:** Chairpersons Ciara Walsh, Michael Donohoe, Roisin Hughes and Barbara Gaynor of the four Catholic Schools in Kingscourt at a Mass to celebrate Catholic Schools Week.



**CLARE:** Young people from the Diocese of Killaloe who participated in Meitheal, prepare to share their experiences on 'Beyond Belief' on Clare FM.



**DUBLIN:** Noel Selorm from Ghana, currently staying in the Baleskin reception centre for asylum seekers, leads a group of Sanctuary Runners across the Samuel Beckett Bridge. The Sanctuary Runners, established in January 2018, uses running to bring Irish residents together with asylum seekers and refugees. Photo: Emma May Loughra



Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**GALWAY:** Intercessors display hurleys inscribed with petitions before the altar on which the Bible is placed, with a model of a ship on a stormy sea in the foreground at Mount Carmel Chapel during a Service of Prayer for Christian Unity with the Carmelite community.



**GALWAY:** The Mother Prioress and sisters of the Carmelite Community in Loughrea with Bishop Kenneth Kearon and Bishop Michael Duignan before their last Service of Prayer for Christian Unity in Mount Carmel Chapel

## IN SHORT

### Service of prayer for Christian unity with Loughrea Carmelites

The Mount Carmel Chapel in Loughrea was filled with worshippers for a service of prayer for Christian unity at the invitation of the Mother Prioress and sisters of the Carmelite community in Loughrea, the eighth year in succession they have done so.

Bishop Michael Duignan of Clonfert led the service, held in the last week of January, and Rt Rev. Kenneth Kearon, Church of Ireland Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe gave the homily.

The service was designed by churches of different Christian traditions in Malta for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and distributed by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Reflecting on the readings, Col Bishop Kearon in his homily spoke of the 'ecumenical boat' we are embarked on. How in it we are thrown together, our vulnerability is exposed, and we discover we must jettison historic baggage.

The Maltese called for eight oars to be used to represent petitions by representatives of different local congregations – hurleys were used instead as more practical in the confined space of the chapel. They were inscribed with what

was prayed for: trust, perseverance, harmony, courage, unusual kindness, transformation, generosity and the symbol of a heart.

### 'Wonderful' Cloyne Faith formation training day

Sixty people from 14 parishes joined Bishop William Crea of the Diocese of Cloyne for a training day on how to run their diocesan Faith formation programme 'Grow in Love of the Lord: Rediscover the Joy in your own Faith'.

This initiative continues to grow and is primarily offered as a support to families who have children

preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion for the first time. The themes explored on the day were: Called and Chosen; God Gives Us Good News; We Can Lose our Way; We Hear the Word of God at Mass; At Mass, Jesus' Disciples Gather Together.

Bishop Crea said: "It is wonderful to know that this new and important initiative is taking root at parish level to support family life in the practice of the Faith. May it help bring many people - grown-ups and young people alike - ever closer to the fullness of life in Christ."

**Contact:** cloynenew evangelisation@gmail.com to find out more about having the programme in your parish.

## CLARE

Cloughleigh Oratory will continue to pray the Novena Prayer to St Anthony every Tuesday morning at the 9.30am Mass.

## CORK

Medjugorje prayer meeting in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament every Wednesday night at 8pm in Holy Trinity Church, Fr Matthew Quay. Prayers for healing first Wednesday of every month.

A Pro-Life Mass is held on the last Friday of every month (except December) at the Poor Clares Monastery, College Road, at 7.30pm.

A Weekend of Praise Worship and Healing in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas, on Saturday and Sunday March 7 and 8. Mass and confessions on both days. Keynote speaker is Maria Vadia Florida. Also Fr John Keane Macroom and Msgr Finbarr O Leary and Mir Music Ministry. Commencing 9.30am both days. Enquires: Celia 087 2405568

## DERRY

Dungiven Parish: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Monday to Friday, 8-12pm and 3-9pm.

St Maria Goretti Prayer Movement: Prayer for healing for victims of abuse and reparation for the Church. First Holy Hour of prayer in the Immaculate Conception Church, Trench Road, at 8.15pm led by Fr Sean O'Donnell on the third Tuesday of every month.

## DUBLIN

Our Lady of Knock prayer meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month in St Gabriel's Nursing Home, Glenayle Road, Ratheny, Dublin 5, from 8-9pm.

First Friday and first Saturday devotions in The Morning Star Hostel, Dublin 7. Starts on Friday February 7 at 6pm with an All Night Eucharistic Vigil – Sacred Heart Mass at 9pm and concludes with Immaculate Mass at 10am on Saturday February 8, and every first Friday and Saturday.

## GALWAY

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday, 10-11am and Thursday, 8-10pm.

Life in the Holy Spirit Seminars at Immanuel House Clonfert, Ballinasloe, beginning Sunday, February 23, at 2.30pm – taking place for the next seven consecutive Sundays. Chief celebrant for Mass is Bishop Michael Duignan.

## KERRY

Weekly Monday prayer meetings led by Ben Perkins, from 8-9.30pm in the Ardferret Retreat Centre.

## KILDARE

Praying, reading and sharing the following Sunday's Gospel in Resurrexit, Killeague, every Wednesday from 8-9.30pm. See www.resurrexit.ie for details, or ring 087-6825407.

## KILKENNY

Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday at 5pm in St Patrick's Church, College Road, Kilkenny (opposite St Kieran's College).

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of the Assumption, Urlingford, every first and third Friday, from 2.30-5.30pm.

## LIMERICK

Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Friday in Raheen church following 10am Mass until 10pm, Crecora on Thursdays, following morning Mass until 12pm and from 6-10pm, and in Mungrat Church on Wednesdays, from 10-12pm.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Adult Formation Course Level 1 Part 1 offered at St Saviour's Dominican Church from February 28 – March 3, 2020. For more information email: limerick@op-tn.org.

## LOUTH

Mass in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary will take place at 10.30am every first Saturday of the month in St Malachy's Church, Anne Street, Dundalk. Organised by the Legion of Mary, Presidium of Our Lady of the Listening Heart. Spiritual Director Fr Bede McGregor OP.

A Centre Prayer Meeting is held at Mount Oliver (near Ballymascanlon, Dundalk) every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm. Contact 00353 863623361 from the North of Ireland or 0863623361 from the Republic of Ireland.

## MAYO

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Church of St Joseph and the Immaculate Conception Bohola every Wednesday from 10am until 10pm.

The next Latin Mass in the Extraordinary Form (Tridentine) will take place in the Parish Church Knock, on Sunday, February 9, at 5.30pm.

## MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday afternoon from 2.30-3.30pm in the parish centre for Adoration, Rosary, Chaplet and petitions. Also once per month a Lay Apostle meeting.

Adoration in St Patrick's Church, Stamullen, after 10am Mass every Thursday until 5pm, and in St Mary's Church, Julians-town, on Wednesdays from 9am and after 10am Mass.

## ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Drumboyland Church on the first Friday of every month from 9am-11pm.

## TIPPERARY

Our Lady of Lourdes Three Hour Vigil in the Pallottine Chapel in Thurles on Tuesday, February 11 from 7.30-10.30pm. Eucharistic Hour and Marian Hour conducted by Fr Conor Hayes PP Templemore. Concluding with Mass and Anointing of the Sick.

## WEXFORD

Taizé prayer services every first and third Friday at 8pm in Good Counsel College Chapel, New Ross.

## WICKLOW

The Glencree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glencree on the first Saturday of the month.



# Warm Achonry welcome for bishop-elect



Oisín Regan and Jamie McCoy, pupils of St Nathy's, Ballaghaderreen Co. Roscommon congratulates Fr Dempsey after it was announced he was to become the new Bishop of Achonry.



Bishops join Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo before a Mass in Roscommon as Fr Paul Dempsey's elevation to bishop was announced. Above and below, parishioners meet and welcome Fr Dempsey.



The Papal Nuncio Archbishop Okolo blesses the congregation at the Mass.



The Papal Nuncio, His Excellency, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo announces the new Bishop of the Diocese of Achonry, Fr Paul Dempsey from Newbridge in Kildare at 11am Mass in The Cathedral of The Annunciation and St Nathy, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. The Mass also marked Catholic Schools Week. Photos: Mick McCormack





The background of the entire page is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, glowing orange and yellow light that fades into a blue sky. In the center of the image, a black silhouette of a cross is hanging from a string of beads. The cross is positioned vertically, with the beads extending upwards towards the top of the frame. The cross itself is a simple, solid black shape.

The Irish Catholic

# A Great Treasure of the Church

CONSECRATED LIFE 2020



# Giving thanks for a gift at



The different forms of consecrated life enrich communities in varied ways, writes **Aron Hegarty**

**E**very year religious orders, congregations and societies around the world gather to give thanks for their calling to serve the Gospel in a consecrated way of living life.

This occasion comes in the form of World Day for Consecrated Life, which is celebrated in the Church on Sunday, February 2 and in parishes over the weekend of February 1-2.

In Ireland this year's event was marked with a Mass on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, by Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Foxrock.

Following the weekend celebrations, *The Irish Catholic* spoke to two Irish-based religious congregations – the Presentation Sisters and Dominican Order – to learn more about consecrated life, vocations and the way of living that is at the heart of the Church.

Sr Bernadette Flanagan PBVM says she believes that more people are becoming interested in consecrated life as they look to follow in the footsteps of Venerable Nano Nagle.

"The number of enquiries [from those seeking a consecrated life] has gone up since the 300th anniversary of Nano Nagle in 2018 and the numbers involved have also increased," she said.

Cork-born Nano Nagle (1718-1784), known as the 'Lady with the Lantern', founded the Presentation Sisters in 1775 and was a pioneer of Catholic education in Ireland.

She is considered one of Ireland's most extraordinary women and was declared venerable in Church in October 2013.

## Legacy

Sr Flanagan describes Venerable Nagle as "a woman for our time" and says that "her vision speaks volume even today".

"Nagle's legacy has made consecrated life more and more attractive because of the attention Nano Nagle Place – which receives 60-70,000 visitors a year – gets."

She added: "Many people



Community Life at the Dominicans.



Presentation Sisters gathered at the weekend to welcome a new novice, Sr Gabrielle, to the novitiate community in Portlaoise. Here Gabrielle receives the Nano Nagle Medal.

believe in living the Gospel in a practical way to those in need, as 'Mother Nano' did, which is attractive today."

Fr Colm Mannion OP, Vocations Director of the Irish Dominicans, says he and his order welcomes in those who choose to devote themselves to a consecrated life.

"We see giving oneself to God as our whole way of life with a view to preaching fully St Dominic's message of knowing truth and passing it on to others."

"We have been blessed in recent years with vocations and dedicated

young people who are committed and passionate about their faith and are willing to consecrate themselves," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

He added: "We believe in dedicating our lives to study scripture, culture and consecrated living, all with the view to evangelise."

Since the early Church, there have always been faithful people drawn by the Holy Spirit to follow Jesus Christ with greater freedom; seeking to imitate him by committing themselves to a

consecrated way of life.

Consecrated means 'set apart' and those living a consecrated lifestyle are thought to be set apart from others by Our Lord.

A consecrated life is defined as a "state of life in the Church lived by believers who wish to follow Jesus Christ in a more exacting way".

According to the *Code of Canon Law*, it is "a stable form of living" wherein the faithful are "totally dedicated to God".

**“People have different ways of making the Gospel visible in society. They focus on a particular aspect of the Gospel”**

The *Code of Canon Law* also states that institutes of consecrated life can be either religious or secular.

Forms and expressions of consecrated life vary, depending on the religious community. Examples of consecrated life include monasticism, societies of apostolic life, religious life, secular institutes, consecrated virgins and hermits.

In other words, persons commit themselves to giving everything (poverty) and doing anything (obedience) in God's service, as a loving response to His love for them (chastity).

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, forms of consecrated life include evangelical counsels, eremitic life, consecrated virgins and widows, religious life, secular institutes and societies of apostolic life.

Sr Flanagan says consecrated life comes in many shapes and forms depending on what element of the Gospel is pursued by that person.

"Right from the beginning of the Church, people have emphasised different elements of the Gospel

and had different visions of how to live the Gospel.

"People have different ways of making the Gospel visible in society. They focus on a particular aspect of the Gospel and live it very complicity to what Jesus Christ asked his followers to do."

In 1997 Pope John Paul II established a day of prayer for those in consecrated life. This celebration attaches itself to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2 each year.

The feast, also known as Candlemas Day, commemorates the presentation of Jesus at the Temple where candles are blessed to symbolise Christ as the Light of the World.

## Devotion

Those living consecrated lives are called to reflect the light of Christ to all people with the celebration of World Day for Consecrated Life the following Sunday marking their devotion to the Church.

One religious order in Ireland promoting vocations is the Dominican Order, also known as the Order of Preachers, which was founded by Spanish priest St Dominic Guzman in 1216.

Members of the order are referred to as Dominicans and generally carry the letters OP (meaning the Order of Preachers) after their names.

The order, whose base in Ireland is located at Tallaght in Dublin, believes in four pillars of society – preaching, prayer, study and community – and its mission is to preach "truth for the salvation of souls".

Fr Mannion, who hails from Birr in Co. Offaly, says the order's main purpose is sharing the Gospel and word of Jesus Christ.

"The key word is preaching," he said. "We are preachers; we spread the truth of the Gospel and the word of Jesus to bring people into a deeper love with Him."



# the heart of the Church



Pope Francis greets nuns and priests during a meeting with participants in an international congress organised by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

"As preachers our mission is to defend the faith and help people understand the love God has for each person. We engage in parish missions, retreats and help young people in the Church to evangelise. "Our role is to meet with those

who have a desire for truth and evangelisation. For the those who are committed to learning the truths of Faith and passing it on to others."

According its website, the Dominican vocation to preach

leads members of the order into many varied ministries.

"The Dominican vocation to save souls," it reads, "leads members of the order to engage with people beyond formal preaching, at a ministerial level, through the sacraments of the Church."

The site goes on to say that Irish Dominicans fulfil this obligation in "diverse ways". These include preaching through the pulpit, through mission and retreats, media, in parishes and chaplaincies to name a few.

Fr Mannion says the Dominicans offer vocation programmes to those who are considering living in consecration.

"We hold a number of events such as weekend retreats, which give opportunities for people who are thinking about a consecrated life within our community. They can come into our retreat and experience the life in a Dominican community and find out more about our vocation programmes."

The Presentation Sisters hold true to the founding charism to help the poor and the needy throughout the world.

Historically, the sisters focused on creating and staffing schools – many of which are still in operation – that would educate young people.

Today the sisters, who's Irish base is at Warrenmount in Dublin, are located in 25 countries with more than 2,000 sisters pursuing work in education and relief of the poor on every continent.

**“People are now starting their journey in their mid to late 20s, which is different to before as people used to start it when they were younger”**

According to Sr Flanagan, the sisters provide people those in need with “faith support” and are involved in chaplaincies, universities, prisons and hospitals.

She says the sisters' work has always been tailored to the needs of the society in which they are operating in.

"The call to live the Gospel is related to where society is at.

"Our vision is that of Jesus Christ: let the children come to me. Wherever we are, we aim to meet the needs of the Gospel in that particular society."

Sr Flanagan says the sisters host induction events for those interested in living a consecrated

life and describes how the concept of vocation has changed in modern times.

"We have an annual open day for enquiries about vocations which is on March 21 this year," she said.

"Usually what happens is six to eight persons gather; we'll have prayer, video presentations of our sisters worldwide, there will be a service opportunity then share stories of people working with the us followed by Mass.

## Backgrounds

On those commencing consecrated life, she said: "People are now starting their journey in their mid to late 20s, which is different to before as people used to start it when they were younger – in their early 20s.

"What is also different now is you have persons from multicultural backgrounds in the community, who are coming to us from all over the world and wanting to experience consecrated life."

For consecrated persons, the circumstances always change but the mission remains key: to bring Jesus Christ and the light of the Gospel to a world crying out for healing.



Do you long to live a life of prayer and service?

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Our mission as Presentation Sisters is to offer hope, love and hospitality to the world by confronting injustice and working for peace.

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# A Personal Encounter with Christ is at the Heart of Church Renewal



**B**ishop Fintan Gavin of Cork and Ross challenged young people to find deeper meaning in life and renew Church and society through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Speaking at a ‘Welcome Event’ organised for him by the Presentation Brothers

network in Cork, Bishop Fintan said the encounter with Christ brings joy, hope and renewal which are greatly needed in our world today.

The ‘Welcome Event’ held at the Mardyke Conference Centre on January 14th was organised by the Presentation Brothers L.E.A.F. Project (Leadership Education And Formation Project). This is a new initiative from the Presentation Brothers and the Presentation Family. The L.E.A.F. Project, through its’ programmes and activities, aims to form and mentor Christian leaders for the future.



Br Simon at his First Profession of Vows at Mount St Joseph, Cork, last August. Seen here with his mother Zehra, his brother Sean and his cousin Fiona.

A huge crowd attended the ‘Welcome Event’ representing the various groups within the Presentation Family and including many third level students and young adults. Along with prayers and music, the centre piece of the event was a thirty-minute interview with Bishop Fintan conducted by two students.

“I was very impressed with Bishop Fintan’s openness and inspired by his vision for the Church in Cork & Ross” said Br. Barry Noel, Vocations Director for the Presentation Brothers, “the energy, generosity and faith of the young people were also very impressive”.

Bishop Fintan expressed gratitude for the warm welcome he has received since his appointment as Bishop of Cork & Ross. He commended the work of the Presentation Brothers and the Presentation Family and looked forward to working together to build God’s Kingdom.

Br. Ray Dwyer, Province Leader of the Presentation Brothers, presented Bishop Fintan with a framed photograph of St. Finbarr’s Oratory at Gougane Barra.

In a much appreciated and entertaining address, Anthony Kenneally, Principal of Scoil Iosaef Naofa, Cobh, said that the people of Cork, hoping to better their fortunes in football had prayed that God would send Gavin to Cork! Their prayers had been answered! His teaching colleague, Kinsale and Cork Women’s G.A.A. star, Orla Finn, then presented Bishop Fintan with a personalised Cork football jersey, to enthusiastic applause!

“I really enjoyed the Welcome Event” said recently professed Presentation Brother and Maynooth student, Simon Fernandes, “Bishop Fintan was great and the presence of so many young people showed the vitality of the Presentation Family”.



Orla Finn presents Cork jersey to Bishop Fintan.



Bishop Fintan with Vocation Director, Br Barry Noel and St Patrick’s College, Maynooth students, Br Raj and Br Simon.

If you would like more information on the life and mission of the Presentation Brothers, please contact:  
Br. Barry Noel, Vocations Director, Presentation Brothers, Glashule Road, Co. Dublin, A96 FH67.  
Mobile: 087-7519794 | Email: [barrynoel@presentationbrothers.org](mailto:barrynoel@presentationbrothers.org)  
Web: [www.presentationbrothers.org](http://www.presentationbrothers.org) | [www.leafprojectpb.com](http://www.leafprojectpb.com)



## SISTERS OF BON SECOURS

The Sisters of Bon Secours are an International Religious Congregation of Catholic women based in six countries who bring to the world “Good help to those in need”. The Congregation was founded by a group of 12 women, led by Josephine Potel, who came together in Paris in 1824 to nurse the sick and the dying in their own homes, demonstrating the healing presence of Christ through their compassionate care.

Although the Congregation’s work has broadened since the early days, the core intention stays the same, to bring the healing hand of Christ to all those in need.

Today Sisters minister in healthcare, social services, pastoral and community based ministries.

In Ireland Sisters of Bon Secours are based in Cork, Dublin and Tralee. Their ministry includes more than just the physical; it is a holistic approach which includes peoples’ spiritual, psychological and emotional needs.

We are all called to serve. It is just a matter of finding the way that best suits your interests and talents.

See our website and social media for opportunities to come and spend some time with us in prayer and get to know the Sisters. We regularly host retreat days and prayer events.





# Risk Adverse Religious?



**A**t an evening of street evangelisation in Cork two weeks ago our preparations were interrupted by a brief, but animated discussion around one particular aspect of our outreach. Did we have the situation assessed? Was it in line with health and safety? Were all eventualities covered by insurance? Reflecting on it later that night, I couldn't help but wonder about how we have allowed ourselves to become so risk adverse?

Throughout the history of consecrated life, the hallmarks of religious mission-

ary endeavour have been hope, courage and joy. We have tried to listen carefully to the signs of the times and respond to the call of God, wherever it would take us.

As a fledgling congregation the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSCs) had a shaky start. Religious persecution in France shortly after our foundation in 1854 meant that we were forced to find sanctuary in other parts of Europe. In 1881 when we had just six members, we were invited to lead a mission to Papua New Guinea. Prudence would have dictated that we should have bided our time, established a more secure footing, and only then attempted something new.

The three missionaries who began the arduous eighteen-month journey that year from Barcelona were motivated by a spirituality rooted in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For them and for the remaining three members of the congregation it required a profound trust in the providence of God. They encountered extraordinary people scat-

tered across the islands with names like New Ireland and New Britain. They endured countless hardships, including invasion, imprisonment and even for some execution at the hands of the Japanese in World War II.

Yet in spite of all the difficulties they persevered and today our Papua New Guinean Province is one of the strongest in our congregation. Their ministry ranges from parish work, to outreach to young people out of home, to climate change advocacy. In 2016 Pope Francis made John Ribat, the Archbishop of Port Moresby the first Cardinal in the history of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Following the example of the Pope, he is an outspoken proponent of climate justice and care of refugees. Instead of allowing themselves to be killed by caution, those first missionaries sowed the seeds that gave rise to a vibrant Church today. Hope finds a way regardless of the odds.



Cardinal John Ribat MSC ministering in Papua New Guinea



Fr. Vinnie Screene MSC providing basic food supplies in his parish

## A €250 Cup of Coffee

In a country where MSCs have ministered for over fifty years, it is still a struggle to describe the daily grind that Venezuelans have to endure. How can you explain a crisis that began in 2014? You could point to the 4.8 million people who have left the country for their Latin American neighbours, the US, as well as a small community here in Ireland. However, perhaps the clearest example is a simple cup of coffee. Over the last twelve months the cost has spiralled to 9,900%, the equivalent to being told here that your daily cup of coffee now costs €250. With the collapse of their currency the use of the Dollar means that even most basic necessities are beyond the reach of the vast majority of people.

The queue in front of Fr. Vinnie Screene's centre in La Victoria Parish has been growing since 10:00am. Even though it does not open for another four hours

people are anxious not to lose their opportunity to receive a simple food parcel. It seems extraordinary that they would go to such lengths for a few bags of food, but circumstances are dire. Fr. Vinnie, from Galway, has been in Venezuela since the beginning of the mission and has worked with some of the poorest communities in Maracaibo and Caracas. Ministry there has not been without its challenges, but the people have always been joyful with what little they had and passionate about both their faith and their parish.

**“The goal this year is to build a kitchen and a dining room to provide a meal a day to each child.”**

However, in recent years things have become even more grim. Many

of the most capable, best educated people have left their country searching for a better life for their families. While understandable, the inevitable knock on effect is the absence of sufficient numbers of nurses, doctors, teachers and other essential personnel. Last year the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School, which is administered by the MSCs, had over nine hundred pupils from five to seventeen years old. This year it is down to only six hundred, because of immigration and poverty, and the number is still falling. As part of a nutrition programme, each student now receives a high protein drink weekly. The goal this year is to build a kitchen and a dining room to provide a meal a day to each child.



Our MSC students in formation attending a youth event

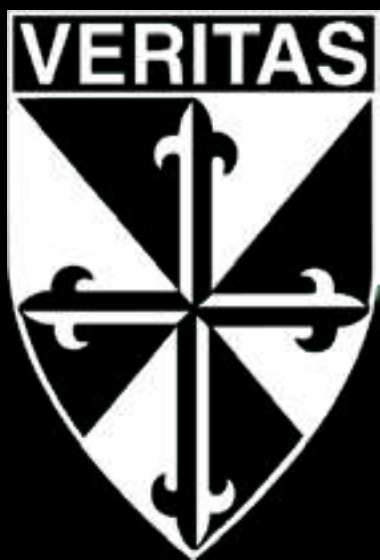
## Witnessing to the Love of the Sacred Heart

Throughout the history of our Church consecrated men and women have responded to the movement of the Holy Spirit to address the needs of our world and the signs of our times. Whether it is among the islands of Papua New Guinea, the barrios of Venezuela, or the parishes of Ireland, the mission is simple - To witness to the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus wherever we find ourselves and encounter the presence of God in those

we serve. Today our next generation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are continuing their formation, getting ready for the new challenges that lie ahead. As a Church we are called to raise up from within our communities women and men who will be those of sisters, brothers and priests of the future. Now is not the time to be risk adverse. In fact, now is the time to be filled with hope, courage and joy.

If you would like to know more about our programmes or to explore if you have a vocation to priesthood and religious life you can contact us by email [vocations@mscmissions.ie](mailto:vocations@mscmissions.ie) or by phoning (086) 7857955. You can find further information about the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart on our website [www.mscvocations.ie](http://www.mscvocations.ie)





# The Dominicans

*Do Good...*

*Spread Truth!*



"Good is never accomplished except at the cost of those who do it; Truth never breaks through except through the sacrifice of those who spread it."

- St. John Henry Newman

**Vocations Director - Fr Colm Mannion OP**

Mobile: 086-0864420 | Email: [colm.mannion@dominicans.ie](mailto:colm.mannion@dominicans.ie)



# Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles

## Think Globally, Act Locally

*“He who tends a fig tree eats its fruit, and he who is attentive to his master will be enriched.” Proverbs 27:18*

**S**r Bridget Okonye OLA was born in Agbor, in the Delta State of Nigeria, and she has spent the last year here in Ireland. She is about to complete her Bachelor of Nursing International at St Angela's College in Sligo. Already a qualified nurse and midwife with years of experience, she is completing the degree course. This is a new requirement in most parts of the world for those wishing to practice as nurses.

Sr Bridget's journey with the OLA Sisters began when she was born. Her family is Catholic and she was delivered into the world by Sr Celestine Sheridan OLA in St John the Baptist Maternity Hospital. She was baptised Bridget, the name chosen by her father, in St John the Baptist Church by an SMA missionary.

Her parents were strong advocates of the importance of education. When it came time for Bridget begin her schooling they hoped to enroll her at Agbor Model Primary, the school run by the OLA sisters. However, as per the criteria of the day, Bridget was deemed too small in stature to attend. She went instead to a government run Primary school nearby. A year later, when she turned six, her parents reapplied and she was accepted.

Traditionally, when completing primary education, pupils went on to attend the nearest high school. Bridget's parents had different ideas. They were determined that she complete her schooling at Marymount College, the OLA school. After much deliberation, they petitioned the Department of Education to make an exception. Happily, they were successful and Bridget went on to complete her schooling with the OLA Sisters.

Sr Bridget is soft spoken, smiling often as she speaks. She says that by her final year in high school, she already knew without question that she was called to be a Sister. She describes how, as a student, she was inspired as she watched the OLA sisters walk from their Community House, near the High School, to the hospital. Her motivation, she explains, has always been about how she could best serve humanity. She felt that the OLA sisters shared her focus.

Her work with the OLAs has seen her travel all over Nigeria; from the OLA Community, Oke Affa in Ibadan in the South West, to the OLA Communities in Asaba and in Papiri State in the North. She has worked in the health care sector, in pastoral activities ministering to the marginalised, as well as in community development.



Sr Bridget Okonye in St Mary's Community Garden, Sligo.

Sr Bridget's passion has always been to work with people at grassroots level. Reaching the most vulnerable who do not have ready access to education, health care, and basic services has been her mission. She feels at home among the disenfranchised communities, offering whatever services she can. Primarily a woman of faith, Sr Bridget lives out her love for the Lord in everything she does. She believes strongly in the adage “think globally, act locally”.

Complementary to her health-care services, Sr Bridget is an ardent advocate for sustainability. She carries this passion into her community development work. She speaks about her great sadness when she sees those who grow crops going hungry during the dry season. She explains that it is because they have not kept anything in reserve. She has found great joy and fulfillment teaching people how to manage crops and how to store reserves.

One of the projects that she particularly enjoyed working on was setting up a community garden in the grounds of one of the hospitals where she worked. It born out of a need to educate the women who came to the hospital for care, about anaemia and malnutrition. Sr Bridget was determined to teach them how

they could grow vegetables and tropical fruits for their own consumption. The garden was a great success and formed part of a health and nutrition education programme.

Sr B, as she is fondly called, loves gardening and is passionate about the environment. One of the primary focuses of her life is the integrity of Creation.

A prayerful and contemplative woman, she is always considering the long-term effect of each action.

She brings that love and her passion for sustainable living with her to Ireland. She volunteers at a community garden in St Mary's Parish in Sligo where she is studying. “The volunteering helps me to socialise and get involved with the local community,” she says. She goes on to say that she has learned about many of the different fruits and vegetables that are grown in Ireland. “I knew the fruits, raspberries, gooseberries, strawberries, plums, but had not seen the plants that they come from before.”

Sr Bridget's studies come to an end shortly, and we wish her well as she continues to follow God's calling for her life, wherever that may take her.



### Sharing in Our Mission

Interested in volunteering overseas?

Email: [volunteering@olaireland.ie](mailto:volunteering@olaireland.ie)

Interested in joining our Lay Mission Movement?

Email: [Imm@olaireland.ie](mailto:Imm@olaireland.ie)

Do you feel God is calling you to be an OLA sister

Email: [vocations@olaireland.ie](mailto:vocations@olaireland.ie)

[www.olaireland.ie](http://www.olaireland.ie)

[info@olaireland.ie](mailto:info@olaireland.ie)

Ardfoyle Convent, Ballintemple, Cork

Facebook: OLAsisters | Twitter: @OLAireland | Instagram: OLAsistersireland



# THE CAPUCHINS

*A life of Prayer and Service in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi*



## OVER 400 YEARS OF SERVICE IN IRELAND



The Capuchin Franciscan Friars were founded in the early 1500's in Italy with the desire to return to a closer living of the rule of St Francis of Assisi. Capuchins arrived in Ireland in 1616 and since then have become an intrinsic part of the Irish story.

Today in Ireland we have Friaries in Cork, Dublin, Donegal, Carlow and Kilkenny as well as Irish Friars serving overseas in Zambia, South Africa, New Zealand, South Korea and California. Wherever we are found our mission is the same, to be an authentic Gospel presence as Brothers of the People.

## SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How do I know if I am called to be a Capuchin Friar?

The process of discovering what God is calling you to is called discernment. It oftentimes begins with a feeling or an experience or encounter that invites and compels us to seek deeper relationship with God, others, and all of Creation. This takes time, patience, prayer and guidance. It requires of us that we open our hearts and begin to trust in God in a whole new way. In many ways, it requires a step into the unknown.

### Who can help me discern my vocation?

The Irish Province of the Capuchin Franciscans takes the discernment process very seriously. We are committed to helping men discover their call by means of a comprehensive vocation accompaniment programme. This programme enables people explore the questions they have and to discover some new ones. The aim of accompaniment is to walk with you as a brother as you discern, listen and reflect, while offering sound guidance and practical support. Each and every vocation journey is blessed and unique.

### Do you wear a habit?

Yes! Capuchins wear a simple brown habit and white cord. The cord has three knots that serve as a reminder of the three vows we profess.

### What are the vows that you take?

We take three vows: poverty, chastity and obedience. Poverty allows us to develop a deeper respect for the world around us and for all the good things that God provides. Chastity encourages us to live with hearts centred on God and obedience invites us to listen deeply to God's plan for us.

### How long does it take to train as a Capuchin Friar?

Our training is known as formation and usually takes between six to eight years. A Friar in formation will study, work, pray and minister while growing into what it means to be a Capuchin Friar in the world today. Formation is an exciting and deeply meaningful time.

### Was Padre Pio a Capuchin Friar?

Yes, the Capuchin Franciscan Order are blessed to have many saints and St Pio is certainly one of the best known, particularly in Ireland. Saints like Pio, all went through a time of discernment, in fact it was something they did throughout their lives. As St John Paul II reminds us 'we are all called to be Saints'.



**That's great, what do I do now? I'd like to find out some more.**

To arrange a conversation with our Vocation Promoter, simply e-mail: [capuchinvocation@gmail.com](mailto:capuchinvocation@gmail.com)

You can also visit the vocation page of our website [www.capuchinfranciscans.ie](http://www.capuchinfranciscans.ie)



**CAPUCHIN  
FRANCISCANS**  
PROVINCE OF IRELAND



# Eight schools receive 'Spirit of Catholic Education' awards



Holy Rosary  
Primary School.



Christ the Redeemer Primary School.

## Staff reporter

To mark Catholic Schools Week 2020, the Diocese of Down and Connor, recognising and paying tribute to the inspiring work within its schools, has presented eight schools from across the diocese with the 'Spirit of Catholic Education Award' held in St Mary's University College in Belfast.

Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration which commemorates the ongoing and inspirational contribution of Catholic schools to the education and faith formation of children and young people.

Each year, the celebration provides a timely focus on the role and significance of the school family as experienced within the lives of children and young people today. It also provides an opportunity to affirm and pay tribute to the ongoing work of teachers as they seek to form young people in their intellectual, moral, spiritual and social development.

Addressing representative students, teachers and principals from the award winning schools, Fr Edward McGee, Director of the Catholic Schools' Support Service for the diocese said that the awards "highlight that schools across this diocese not only exhibit a multi-cul-

## 'Spirit of Catholic Education Awards'

### Primary School Recipients

St Joseph's Primary School, Ballykinlar  
Holy Rosary Primary School, Belfast  
Christ the Redeemer Primary School, Belfast  
St Teresa's Primary School, Belfast

### Post-primary Recipients

St Killian's College, Carnlough  
Rathmore Grammar School, Finaghy, Belfast  
St Joseph's College, Belfast  
Mercy College, Belfast

tural, multi-faith, social, ethnic and academic diversity but, inspired and motivated by their faith-based mission and ethos, these schools uniquely respond on a daily basis to the pastoral and academic needs of all children in a respectful, tolerant and inclusive manner".

Fr McGee said that each school recognised "has made a unique contribution to recognising the particular needs of their student body and have created a truly inclusive school environment in which children are nurtured, valued, loved and educated".



Mercy College.



Rathmore Grammar School.



Prof. Peter Finn and the Down and Connor Catholic Schools Support Team.



St Joseph's Primary School.



St Joseph's  
Primary School,  
Ballykinlar.



St Killian's  
College,  
Carnlough.



St Teresa's  
Primary School.





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Top award for Catholic medic in Africa

● A Catholic medical missionary in Africa has been honored with a top international medical award.

Dr Tom Catena (55) from New York received the AMH Gerson L'Chaim Prize for 'outstanding Christian medical missionary service' last week.

The American Surgeon, described as "the world's most important doctor" on US podcast *The Drive*, serves more than a million people in the war-torn Nuba Mountains, south of Sudan.

Since 2008, Dr Catena has been on call 24/7 and serves more than 350 patients a day at Gidel Mother of Mercy Hospital. The Catholic hospital is the only medical facility in the region.

### Red Wednesday now a Philippines' Church event

● The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has made Red Wednesday as an official Church celebration in the country.

Red Wednesday, which falls annually in November, is a global initiative of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) to help raise awareness of persecuted Christians around the world.

"This formally makes Red Wednesday an official day of observance in all churches and Catholic institutions in the Philippines," said Jonathan Luciano, national director of ACN.

"Red is the Christian colour of martyrdom. Studies have shown that Christians remain the most persecuted faith group in the world, particularly in the Middle East and Africa."

### Chicago Church discontinues 'World's Largest Block Party'

● Old St Patrick's Church in Chicago has announced that it will no longer host the 'World's Largest Block Party' after 35 years.

The block party, which started in 1984, attracts thousands of people each year and is considered one of the city's signature summer festivals.

However, the West

Loop church stated on their website that they "feel it's time to start creating events that will launch us into the next chapter of our community life".

A new event, called 'Shamrock'n the Block', is being planned by the Church for St Patrick's Day and will be take place on March 14.

### Nun numbers dropping in New Zealand

● The number of New Zealand women choosing a life of religion in the Church is shrinking, according to reports.

Figures from the Vatican directory show there are only 182 Sisters across the country.

Of one those, Sr Ann Gilroy of St Joseph's Cathedral in Dunedin, believes the decline comes from young women not finding the Church an "easy place to be" these days.

"Women have far more options than they did in my time," she said.

*Women Church World*, the Vatican women's magazine, blamed the decline in numbers worldwide in part to working conditions and abuses of power.

### Repair of Church trust needed in Scotland

● Work is needed to enable the Church in Scotland to "repair trust" with its communities, an independent review has found.

Reviews of safeguarding processes within two of Scotland's eight dioceses – St Andrew's and Edinburgh plus Galloway – noted that "healing" was still ongoing.

The findings were published following the 2015 McLellan Commission report which recommended having an independent review into how the Church responds to abuse allegations.

In its report, the group found a willingness from the hierarchy of Scotland's Church to change but that work was required to "repair and build trust in safeguarding processes".

## One of four kidnapped Nigerian seminarians killed, bishop confirms

One of the four seminarians kidnapped from their seminary in Nigeria last month has reportedly been killed by his abductors.

Michael Nnadi (18), the youngest member of the group, was separated from the others and murdered, with his body being formally identified at the weekend.

"With a very heavy heart, I wish to inform you that our dear son, Michael was murdered by the bandits on a date we cannot confirm," said Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah of Sokoto, Nigeria.

First year philosophy student Mr Nnadi along with Pius Kanwai (19) Peter Umenukor (23) and Stephen Amos (23) were taken by gunmen from Good Shepard Seminary in Kaduna on January 8.

The gunmen, disguised in military uniform, broke through the fence surrounding the Catholic seminary campus, which houses 270 seminarians, and began shooting sporadically. They stole laptops and phones before kidnapping the four young men.

On January 20, one of the abducted seminarians had reportedly been freed by his



A file picture of a protest march in Nigeria against victims of violent attacks across the country.

kidnappers following 10 days in captivity. He was dumped along the highway with extensive injuries, which are believed to have been sustained during the kidnapping.

### Captivity

Eleven days later on January 31, an official at Good Shephard Seminary announced two more seminarians had been released. At the time it was reported that one seminary – Mr Nnadi – was still in

captivity.

In his February 1 statement, Bishop Kukah said he had to delay the announcement of Mr Nnadi's death until his mother was informed.

"We have broken the news to her and I will be with her," he said. "The Lord knows best. Let's remain strong and pray for the repose of his soul."

Kidnappings of Christians in Nigeria have multiplied in recent months, which has prompted Church leaders to

express serious concern about the security of their members and to call on the government to prioritise the security of its citizens.

In the past year, several priests and seminarians, along with pastors from other Christian denominations, have been kidnapped in Nigeria, some for ransom, and some by Islamist militant and terrorist groups.

"The security situation in Nigeria is appalling," said Thomas Heine-Geldern, executive president of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) International. "Criminal gangs are further exploiting the chaotic situation and making matters still worse."

He compared the situation in Nigeria to that of Iraq prior to the Islamic State's invasion: "Already at that stage, Christians were being abducted, robbed and murdered because there was no protection by the state. This must not be allowed to happen to the Christians of Nigeria. The government must act now, before it is too late."

## Archbishop calls for greater rights and dignity for Iraqi Christians

A clergyman has stressed that Christians must take an active role in the country's future if they want a unified, multi-religious Iraq. Archbishop Bashar Warda of the Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Erbil made the plea during a discussion of the country's future with a US congressman.

This follows months of protests against Iraqi government corruption and perceived Iranian influence in the country.

Dr Warda said that younger Iraqis are a major part of the anti-corruption protests.

"The corruption is at its highest. There are no jobs, no security, the future is not there," he said in a meeting with Republican Jeff Fortenberry on January 28.

The protesters, according to Dr Warda, "want a respectful relationship with all the international community respecting the sovereignty of Iraq in all its levels, political, social, religious, everything."

Christians, he said, had been welcomed into the protests, a sign of growing demand for a "genuine, multi-religious Iraq" built on a constitution that did not reflect Sharia law, but

respected religious freedom.

Pope Francis met with Iraq's President Barham Salih last week to discuss the need for stability in the country's future, as well as the importance of Christians to maintaining the "social fabric" of Iraq.

The Church, Dr Warda said, supports this call for "change" and he encouraged citizens, especially the youth of Iraq, to show solidarity and push for a unified Iraq where Christians can enjoy equal rights and dignity.

## Christians acquitted of involvement in Pakistan riots

Fourty-two Christians accused of lynching two Muslim youths in the aftermath of the terror attack on two churches in Pakistan have been acquitted.

The twin suicide bombings took place at Christ Church and St John's Catholic Church in Lahore on March 15, 2015 which killed at least 14 and

injured several others.

After the attack, Christians took to the streets in Youhanabad to protest and two Muslim men, accused of being involved, were lynched by the mob.

But last week a judge at the anti-terrorism court ordered the release of 42 suspects after the family of the victims

and the accused reached an alleged financial settlement.

While in custody, the suspects had to endure poor living conditions and abuse. As a result of this, two Christians – Indrias Masih and Usman Shaukat – died in custody in 2017.

Nasir Saeed, Director CLAAS-UK said: "The attack

on the two churches will always be remembered as a dark day in Pakistan's history.

"Those who gave their lives to protect the churches and lives of their fellow brothers and sisters will always be remembered."

"The Church already has their photographs on the outside wall."



Edited by Aron Hegarty  
aron@irishcatholic.ie



## In the image of Christ



Louy Fawadleh, a Catholic Palestinian, stands with his sons, Adam and George after Mass in Aboud, West Bank. Photo: CNS

# New database of abusive clergy will force greater transparency

A new independent database listing nearly 6,000 priests accused of abuse was launched this week, marking what some observers say is a sign of a new era of transparency in the Church and others labelling it the “privatisation of justice” after years of Church leaders blocking such efforts.

The database, which was activated last week, was a yearlong effort by *ProPublica*, “a non-profit newsroom that investigates abuses of power.” The launch comes after the 2018 release of the Pennsylvania grand jury report, which sent shock waves through the US Church as it chronicled seven decades of abuse of more than 1,000 victims at the hands of 300 priests.

Since then, numerous dioceses have rushed to publish their own list of

accused priests.

“Nationwide, the names of more than 5,800 clergy members have been released so far, representing the most comprehensive step toward transparency yet by a Catholic Church dogged by its long history of denying and burying abuse by priests,” write the researchers behind the *ProPublica* effort.

According to them, when surveying the lists which led to their efforts to compile the names into one accessible and searchable database, “numerous alleged abusers have been omitted and that there is no standard for determining who each diocese considers credibly accused.”

As of January 20, they note, there have been at least 178 lists produced

by US dioceses and religious orders.

41 dioceses and dozens more religious orders, they write, have not yet done so.

Terrence McKierney, president and co-director of the organisation, Bishop Accountability, hailed the *ProPublica* effort as one that “absolutely will increase pressure on other dioceses to publish lists.”

He said that the US Church has witnessed “a groundswell of transparency” following the latest wave of abuse scandals, much of it forced by outside circumstances.

Even so, he applauded the US bishops and dioceses for releasing these names, something that abuse survivors and accountability groups have long advocated for over the past two decades.

## Acquitted French cardinal offers to resign over abuse

A French cardinal says he will ask Pope Francis to allow him to resign, despite an appeal court judgment overturning his suspended jail sentence for failing to report abuse.

Cardinal Philippe Barbarin of Lyon was speaking after last week’s court ruling which quashed the prison term, imposed in March 2019 for failing to report accusations against Fr Bernard Breynat.

The 69-year-old clergy-

man said: “This court decision allows me to turn a page and for the Church of Lyon to open a new chapter. I will now go to Rome to renew my request. Once again, I will hand over my office as Archbishop of Lyon to Pope Francis.”

Prosecutors launched investigations against Cardinal Barbarin in 2016, following claims he had failed to take action against Father Breynat despite knowing of

the abuse accusations.

Fr Preynat, defrocked in July 2019, was charged with committing “sexual aggression and rape of minors” on at least 75 boys while chaplain of a Catholic Scout group between 1971 and 1991 at Saint-Luc Parish.

He is awaiting sentencing, which is expected to be handed down on March 16, where he faces up to 10 years behind bars.

Cardinal Barbarin confirmed being informed of the priest’s abuse in 2014 and told prosecutors at his trial that he had informed the Vatican and removed Fr Preynat from his position.

In March 2019, Pope Francis refused to accept Cardinal Barbarin’s resignation, pending the completion of his appeal, and in June appointed Bishop Michel Dubost to run the Lyon Archdiocese.

## Vatican roundup

### Uruguayan priest named as Pope’s new Personal Secretary

Fr Gonzalo Aemilius has been elected as Pope Francis’ new Special Secretary, filling the void left by Father Fabian Pedacchio in December.

The clergyman from Montevideo, Uruguay has been known to the Pope since 2006 when Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, endorsed him for his work with street children.

Fr Aemilius, a Doctor of Theology, was ordained a priest in May 2006 and takes over from Argentine priest Fr Pedacchio, who served alongside Pope Francis from 2013 to 2019.

The incoming secretary credited his predecessor’s ability to integrate different values and channel them in a single direction, saying that it had struck him deeply.

“Experiencing this ability of his was decisive in my life,” he said of Archbishop Bergoglio. “He taught me to take the best that is in each individual, however different he or she may be from others, and to put it to good use for the good of all”.

The Uruguayan priest chosen by Pope Francis will accompany his current Personal Secretary, Fr Yoannis Lahzi Gaid.

### Elderly have role to play in the future of the Church

Old-age is “a precious treasure that takes shape in the journey of every man and woman’s life”, said Pope Francis at an audience for participants in a conference on pastoral care of the elderly.

“Life is a gift, and when it is long it is a privilege, for oneself and for others. Always.”

The Pope called on the Church to care for the elderly, going to them with “a smile on your face and the Gospel in your hands”.

He noted that the world is facing a significant demographic change, with fewer young people and

a large increase in the number of elderly.

He said that issues facing the elderly – including social disorientation, and societal attitudes of indifference and rejection, are a call to the Church and to society “to serious reflection in order to learn to grasp and appreciate the value of old age”.

He reminded us that, in the Bible “longevity is a blessing”, and that the elderly, too, have a place in God’s saving plan.

“Both old and young”, he said, are “the future of the Church”.

### Society can be civil if it combats waste culture

Modern society is “progressively eroding the understanding of that which makes human life precious”, according to Pope Francis in an address to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The Holy Father spoke about the “intangible value” of human life, of care for the terminally ill and of the need to rewrite the “grammar” of responsibility and caring for those who are suffering.

He said that in contemporary times, lives that are seen as no longer useful are considered “unworthy” or to be “discarded”, “devoid of authentic value.”

### Danger

Pope Francis warned there is danger of losing “the imperative duty of solidarity, and of human and Christian fraternity”.

He insisted that we must never abandon “anyone in the presence of incurable illness”. “Human life”, he continued, “because of its eternal destiny, maintains all its value and all its dignity in whatever condition.”



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Keeping an eye on Mary Immaculate College

**Dear Editor,** Regarding the front page of your paper (IC 16/01/2020), I read with alarm the decision made by authorities in Mary Immaculate College in Limerick to disallow the Certificate of Christian Ethics in Healthcare being made available.

Hospital chaplains clearly showed ample interest in the development of the programme – which led to it being produced – that the university shouldn't have dismissed it so readily. These chaplains face huge moral dilemmas and stress in overcrowded hospitals and deserve better, it's not like the HSE would be offering similar

training. Not just these chaplains, but other persons in the medical professions could benefit hugely.

Prof. Eamonn Conway, quoted in the article, is only right when he expresses the concern: "I sincerely hope this will not cause any damage to our Catholic ethos. Our Catholic identity has been very important in forging strategic links with colleges overseas and as a department we remain very committed to serving the Church's mission."

The university is publicly funded, so why shouldn't they provide for the needs of members of the public in need of this training? The university

apparently has a Catholic ethos, is it doing enough to maintain and promote that ethos among students and staff (I doubt it)? I have a good few questions for this lot.

It may be too outlandish to believe that there may be some pressure from on high to keep the university as secular as humanly possible – a growing trend on this Emerald Isle. But I wouldn't be so quick to dismiss it, and will be keeping a beady eye on all future decisions made by MIC.

*Yours etc.,  
Alan McCarthy,  
Tallaght, Dublin.*

### Enjoyable stroll with Cannings and McAleese

**Dear Editor,** I enjoyed Joe Cannings inspirational one-to-one with Mary McAleese on RTÉ, as they strolled through the stony bóithrín on the Mám Éan pilgrimage in Connemara.

I've always liked Joe's attitude in post-match

interviews and how he showed such respect to the memory of another Galway Great, Tony Keady when The Tribesmen brought home The McCarthy Cup in 2017.

Joe mentioned his habit of taking Holy Water as he left home. That was such a

handed down "Slán abhaile" ritual at almost every doorway one time and if you didn't dip in the erected font yourself, it would be scattered in your direction; my Mam showered it on us as we left for the local dance, sometimes affecting

the back-combed hairdo! We never forgot that parting blessing and I hope Joe's reminder will now rekindle thoughts of the Holy Font refill.

*Yours etc.,  
Eilís Uí Bhriain,  
Castlelyons, Cork.*

### Praising coverage of Seamus Mallon

**Dear Editor,** I'm writing to praise the coverage done by *The Irish Catholic* regarding Seamus Mallon (IC 30/01/2020), a true hero of his time.

Martin O'Brien's insightful and extensive interview was brilliant and your editorial did him a great justice.

When I was growing up he was also a towering figure during my childhood, and his work towards peace will never be forgot.

Although there is still more to do in the North regarding the process towards reconciliation, his efforts, as well as many others, should continue to be an example to every one of us.

*Yours etc.,  
John McCarthy,  
Enniskillen,  
Co. Fermanagh.*



### Aontú are only worthwhile party

**Dear Editor,** We may not agree to all of Aontú policies, but the most important issue for Ireland today is the right to life. All

the other leading parties in Ireland have blood on their hands. To even give them a 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th vote is assisting in the continuous

murder of pre-born Irish children in our land.

*Yours etc.,  
Kate Barry-Murphy,  
Waterfall, Co. Cork.*

### Polluted homes: an important issue

**Dear Editor,** Polluted homes cause a myriad of health issues and I don't believe enough people know about it. So it was good to see your article in the Family and Lifestyle section (IC 23/01/2020) tackling the issue of air quality in houses.

For example in my house, I have banned my children from using aerosol deodorants – as well as being detrimental for the environment, they are dreadful for the lungs, breathing in all those chemicals.

I regularly open windows to air out rooms, keeping things ventilated. Issues like mould need to be regularly

checked as they can contribute to all sorts of health issues such as asthma.

Drying clothes indoors is a must for me during the winter due to a busy household but I always try to keep windows open and for cooking I leave the extractor fan on that bit longer.

As the article correctly states using bleach isn't a good idea against mould, as these toxic solutions can evaporate and can lead to the user breathing in harmful chemicals. Using a mask and opening a window is essential.

What I use, when the occasion

calls for it, is simple vinegar, which has always work for me. Just spray it on and leave it for a few hours before giving it a scrub.

To be honest, I generally use homemade cleaning products for my home – it's hard to find more natural brands that aren't as chemically volatile and dangerous, but that's a story for another day.

*Yours etc.,  
Katie O'Hara,  
Drogheda,  
Co. Louth.*

### Trump's 'wonderful' March for Life speech

**Dear Editor,** I have just seen the 47th March for Life in Washington on the wonderful EWTN Catholic TV station. What really amazed me and delighted me was the wonderful speech made by US President Donald Trump. A number of other politicians also spoke at the march.

What a contrast in Ireland, I hope people in Ireland remember that not only did our president not support our pro-life people, he signed abortion into law.

*Yours etc.,  
Helen Gately,  
Athlone.*

### Cartoons err on 'skit of sacred'

**Dear Editor,** I'm a great fan of *The Irish Catholic*, getting it every week. I've often contacted you to congratulate you on your integrity and search for the truth.

One small niggling factor. I find that your cartoons in the letter page can often time err on the side of 'skit of the sacred'.

I intended sending this a while back, and have only done so now.

Keep up the good work.

*Yours etc.,  
Lorraine Doran,  
Fionnradharc, Dublin 3.*

### Timing of future elections

**Dear Editor,** In view of the multiplicity of promises being made by all parties, would it not be more opportune to hold future elections before Christmas? Then children and adults alike, could look forward to the arrival of Santa Claus.

*Yours etc.,  
Steve McGarry,  
Bishopstown, Cork.*

### Guns: action not rhetoric

**Dear Editor,** Drugs are causing growing violence and huge despair in Irish communities. It was great to see your front page article with the headline: 'Guns, drugs and killings need urgent Irish response' (IC 23/01/2020). I've seen this get worse over the decades and the young boy who was killed in Drogheda in January is an example of the darkest, most sickening depths of inhumanity these people have no problem descending to.

A strong reaction is needed, a real clampdown and not just rhetoric from our Government. It needs to happen to keep our young people safe and stop those already in the throes of addiction being used to sell drugs and commit violent acts for the benefit of gangland kingpins who think they are untouchable. These monsters must be punished.

*Your etc.,  
Harry O'Sullivan,  
Harold's Cross, Dublin.*

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world



▲ **USA:** Johan Ickx speaks at the United Nations in New York on the Church's efforts to save Jews during the Holocaust.

◀ **UGANDA:** Politician Robert Kyagulanyi of Uganda is detained by police as the government cracks down on opposition. Photos: CNS



◀ **CHINA:** A passenger's temperature is checked entering a Beijing subway station during coronavirus outbreak.



▲ **AUSTRALIA:** Fr Kene Onwukwe of Sacred Heart Church in Mosman near debris from the bushfires in Australia.



◀ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis meets Argentina President Alberto Fernandez and his partner Fabiola Yanez.



◀ **COLOMBIA:** Venezuela refugee Addy Arrieche poses with her two daughters in Bogota.





# What does it mean to be big-hearted?

Once during a baseball game in high school an umpire made a very unfair call against our team. Our whole team was indignant and all of us began to shout angrily at the umpire, swearing at him, calling him names, loudly venting our anger. But one of our teammates didn't follow suit. Instead of shouting at the umpire he kept trying to stop the rest of us from doing so. "Let it go!" he kept telling us; "Let it go – we're bigger than this!"

Bigger than what? He wasn't referring to the umpire's immaturity, but to our own. And we weren't "bigger than this", at least not then. Certainly I wasn't. I couldn't swallow an injustice. I wasn't big enough.

But something stayed with me from that incident, the challenge to "be bigger" inside the things that slight us. I don't always succeed, but I'm a better person when I do, more big-hearted, just as I am more petty and smaller of heart when I don't.

But just as our teammate challenged us all those years ago, we remain challenged to "be bigger" than the pettiness within a moment. That invitation lies at the very heart of Jesus' moral challenge in the Sermon on the Mount. There he invites us to have "a virtue that's deeper than that of the Scribes and the Pharisees".

And there's more hidden in



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

that statement than first meets the eye because the Scribes and Pharisees were very virtuous people. They strove hard always to be faithful to all the precepts of their Faith and were people who believed in and practiced strict justice. They didn't make unfair calls as umpires!

**“Someone who is immature, self-centered and petty of heart is not held to the same moral and spiritual standard”**

But inside of all of that goodness they still lacked something that the Sermon on the Mount invites us to, a certain magnanimity, to have big enough

hearts and minds that can rise above being slighted so as to be bigger than a given moment.

Let me offer this example of what that can mean: John Paul II was the first pope in history to speak out unequivocally against capital punishment. It's important to note that he didn't say that capital punishment was wrong. Biblically we do have the right to practice it. John Paul conceded that.

However, and this is the lesson, he went on to say that, while we may in justice practice capital punishment, we shouldn't do it because Jesus calls us to something higher, namely, to forgive sinners and not execute them. That's magnanimity, that's being bigger than the moment we're caught up in.

Thomas Aquinas, in his moral

**“Isn't a sin a sin, irrespective of person? Not always. Whether or not something is a sin or not and the seriousness of a sin depends upon the depth and maturity within a relationship...”**

astuteness, makes a distinction that one doesn't often hear either in church teachings or in common sense. Thomas says that a certain thing can be sin for one person and yet not for another. In essence, something can be a sin for someone who is big-hearted, even as it is not a sin for someone who is petty and small of heart.

**“We're invited both by Jesus and by what's best inside us to become big enough of heart and mind to know that it's a sin not to give a compliment”**

Here's an example: in a wonderfully challenging comment, Thomas once wrote that it is a sin to withhold a compliment from someone who genuinely deserves it because in doing so we are withholding from that person some of the food upon which he or she needs to live. But in teaching this, Thomas is clear that this is a sin only for someone who is big-hearted, magnanimous and at a certain level of maturity. Someone who is immature, self-centered and petty of heart is not held to the same moral and spiritual standard.

How is this possible? Isn't a sin a sin, irrespective of person? Not always. Whether or not something is a sin and the seriousness of a sin depends upon the depth and

maturity within a relationship. Imagine this: a man and his wife have such a deep, sensitive, caring, respectful and intimate relationship so that the tiniest expressions of affection or neglect speak loudly to each other.

For example, as they part to go their separate ways each morning they always exchange an expression of affection, as a parting ritual. Now, should either of them neglect that expression of affection on an ordinary morning where there's no special circumstance, it would be no small, incidental matter.

Something large would be being said. Conversely, consider another couple whose relationship is not close, where there is little care, little affection, little respect and no habit of expressing affection upon parting. Such neglect would mean nothing. No slight, no intent, no harm, no sin, just lack of care as usual.

Yes, some things can be a sin for one person and not for another.

We're invited both by Jesus and by what's best inside us to become big enough of heart and mind to know that it's a sin not to give a compliment, to know that even though biblically we may do capital punishment, we still shouldn't do it and to know that we're better women and men when we are bigger than any slight we experience within a given moment.



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, February 6, 2020

## Personal Profile

Marie Evans:  
a life of healing

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## Half of Irish kids can't kick a ball properly



**I**n a modern life, the average Irish person lives quite well. The shops are full of food, people are safe from conflict, rarely face severe weather in comparison to many other countries and the world is at our fingertips; with free travel and technology we can now go anywhere.

However, have we stopped to take a look at what kind of affect recent advancements in our society could be having on upcoming generations?

Last week a report from a Dublin City University study was released. It found that a large amount of primary school children on the island of Ireland are physically illiterate; one in four can't run properly.

Researchers at the DCU The Moving Well-Being Well project



### One step forward, two steps back for kids writes Róise McGagh

carried out the research all over Ireland with over two thousand primary school kids. They also found half cannot kick a ball properly; and less than one in every five children can throw a ball.

It was also noted in the findings that skills categorised as fundamental movement skills (FMS) plateaued and stopped progressing at age 10. These skills include running, jumping, catching and kicking.

The kinds of activities boys and girls take up are also quite different, with the girls taking up gymnastics, dance and the boys tending to take part in rugby and soccer. Both tended to be involved in GAA.

Another recent study, the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity (CSPPA, 2018) study found that only 17% of Irish primary children engage in the recommended one hour per day of moderate to vigorous activity.

Dr Stephen Behan from the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics, DCU and DCU School of Health and Human Performance speaks to *The Irish Catholic* about the reasoning behind the study and why it's so important that young kids get moving.

Why is physical literacy even important? Not everyone is naturally good at sport but that might have more to do with how much practice you got as a child than pure luck.

"Put it this way," says Stephen, "if you're kicking a ball and you think you're good at it, you'll be confident enough to do it in front of friends or your family or whoever.

"If you're confident in doing it, you'll be more motivated

to take part; if you're more motivated to take part, you'll end up doing it more often, which means you'll get better at it, which means your competence increases, which drives your confidence, which drives your motivation, and that's what we call being physically literate."

Rather than develop an exercise programme based off of data from other countries around the world that would be culturally different to Ireland, the research team went out and collected that data for an Irish context.

So far the findings have been used to create some pilot programmes, designed to develop the physical skills of primary school children. "The results of the pilots are very

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## Family News

### AND EVENTS

#### TIME TO WELCOME SPRING'S SNOWDROPS

With the coming of spring, flowers are beginning to break through the soil and it seems like the whole environment is coming back to vibrant life with a huge variety of colour. What better way to enjoy the season than to take a walk in nature and enjoy one of the most beautiful flowers that blooms at this time of year – the snowdrop.

'Snowdrop Walks at The Argory' takes place every weekend of February. Organisers say: "Come and see our wonderful displays of snowdrops planted over the years by our estate staff and volunteers. Enjoy this spectacle at your leisure with a self-guided walk then relax in the coffee shop for a warm drink or tasty bite. Snowdrops will also be available to buy."

The event is free for children under 5 years old and people can visit from 11am-5pm. The Argory is situated at 144 Derrycau Road, Moy, Dungannon, Co. Armagh.

#### PLANT-BASED COOKING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

New to vegan cooking and not sure where to start? Don't fret. In a cooking demo in Dublin attendees will be taught how to feed themselves and their family and friends on a plant based diet.

Organisers say it will cover main courses, quick dishes, fridge and freezer staples and questions will be answered along the way. Students will taste dishes during the demo and all recipes will be provided. A small culinary goody bag will also be given at the end of the evening.

"The event is for vegans, vegetarians and anyone wanting to find out more about how to cook vegan dishes in a tasty and nutritious way. It is held in a fun and informal way and will hopefully inspire you to recreate the prepared dishes in your own home environment," organisers say.

The event takes place on February 11 from 7-9.30pm at 3 The Strand, Marina Village in Greystones. Tickets can be bought online on Eventbrite.

#### LESS SLEEP MORE ANXIETY FOR TEENS

Sleep deprivation is exacerbating mental health problems among teenage girls according to experts who conducted a study in the UK. Research has shown almost a third of young people experience problems nodding off which has a negative impact on both mental and physical health.

But girls age 15 and over in particular are experiencing high levels of pressure in their lives which has contributed to anxiety and nervousness.

Leaders of the recent study, which focused on teenagers in Scotland, said the picture is complex.

The research, led by Glasgow University and commissioned by NHS Health Scotland, surveyed school-age children in 2018. It found that the proportion of young people reporting sleep difficulties more than once a week increased from 23% in 2014 to 30% in 2018. Some areas of wellbeing did show improvement – such as a reduction in substance, alcohol and tobacco use as well as healthier eating habits and 85% reporting high life satisfaction.

# Meditation: Sitting to Attention



Children take to meditation very easily – they have a natural disposition for silence because they have an infinite openness to life without expectation. Adults can quickly tire of meditation because they feel they are getting nowhere. It seems – on the surface of things – that nothing is happening and that can lead to a nagging doubt that the silent repetition of the mantra is a waste of time. But repetition doesn't bother children – indeed, they welcome it. I sat and played with my three-year-old granddaughter after I collected her from crèche recently – we played the same game over and over for forty minutes. She never tired of it. It seems clear that repetition plays an important role in brain development.

A simple analogy can help to clarify the benefits of repetition. The first time we cross a grassy area we have to make a path for ourselves across the unmarked terrain. But as we and others make the same trip across the same ground day after day, a trail emerges and that pathway is strengthened with every journey made. We can see this most obviously when we visit a park where concrete pathways have been designed with too much attention to the aesthetics of design and too little attention to how people behave. In so many new developments, where an architect designs a two-legged path from A to B, human beings inevitably create a new shorter path that links A and B directly across an area where grass has been sown! The path becomes more obvious over time as more and more people follow it.

The same is true of neural pathways in the brain. When we repeat a given sequence of

## Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



actions, the more we repeat the steps the easier the process becomes until eventually we are able to repeat the actions without consciously thinking about them as a series of separate actions. When we first learn to drive a car, we think about every step laboriously: touching the brakes, pressing in the clutch, changing gears, releasing the clutch, maintaining pressure on the accelerator. It can be a painful and noisy experience but as we practice we get better and better at it until we eventually manage to do it every day without any conscious thought.

When we practice meditation regularly, that too has an effect on our brain. A study in Harvard in 2011 identified where new grey matter developed in the brain in a group of meditators being studied. Other researchers suggest that meditation opens up neural pathways between the two hemispheres of the brain, each of which processes information very differently. In Western society we tend to spend most of our time acting out of the left-hemisphere of the brain and to make considerably less use of the more creative right-hemisphere. By repeatedly letting go of our preoccupations, meditation helps us to achieve a better balance.

Meditation is about one-sided attention – choosing to focus on a word and holding our attention on it. Of course, what happens to all of us when we try to do that is that our attention wanders – often very quickly and repeatedly. But the moment one realises that the mind has wandered is a moment of watchful awareness that enables us to return our attention to our mantra. Doing so repeatedly over a meditation session – and every time we meditate – strengthens our capacity to hold our attention on that single focus and to leave thoughts and distractions behind. It's not that they cease but when they arise we find we have the capacity to

experience distraction after distraction all the time, most of them utterly trivial. Meditation helps to realise how often we allow our attention to be so easily distracted.

By restoring a balance between the two hemispheres of the brain, meditation changes how we perceive reality. It quiets the mind and restores a harmony between doing and being, helping us to develop a more integrated way of seeing and being in the world.

Meditation might be described as sitting to attention. As we sit in meditation, attending to our word and letting go of distractions, we are brought to a deep awareness of being itself, a deep sense of participation in pure being. It deepens our awareness of our true self and of our connectedness to others at the deepest level of our being. As we grow accustomed to that deeper sense of who we are, we begin to live our lives from that awareness. As we become grounded in the presence in which we live and move and have our being, we are transfigured. We might say that the ABC of meditation moves us through Attention to Being and Connection.

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



ignore them and to return our full attention to our mantra.

Most of us nowadays are easily distracted by our phones. If you use social media apps or news apps you will know how frequently notifications are sent to your phone with unless you take steps to limit them. Because every notification is normally accompanied by a sound, many people now



» Continued from Page 31



positive and obviously they're not published yet, but the idea would be, in the next phase of it do a more nationwide trial" said Stephen, "and we would make sure that the stuff we are looking to do works - not just in Dublin schools, in the urban environment."

"We want to make sure that what we have is adaptive to the teachers in schools and the environment they'll have and it will work out in any context," says Stephen

Of course it is important that children exercise outside of school but the research teams are focusing in school so they can make a real impact. Stephen says the main aim of their research is not only to help out kids but to facilitate teachers.

"Primary school teachers are heroes. I don't know how they do it they have 12 or 13 curriculum subjects to get in a week and I think it's a 27 hour week then you take away the lunchtimes and breaks.

"What were trying to do is put together resources and a package that makes teachers' lives easier as best as we possibly can, as they're under enough pressure as it is."

The aim is to implement an easy, effective programme that can slot into school time, clubs or even at home, and improves the data that currently shows Ireland as falling behind as far as children's FMS goes. Not a simple feat.

"If we can get that in a really broad range of simple skills in kids, then as they get older they will be able to take part in whatever activity or sport that they want. They'll have that foundational level of movement to be allowed to try whatever it is they want to do."

The basics of why exercise is good are plain to see. "There is a lot of attention on childhood obesity and low participation rates in sport - a focus on the fundamental movement skills in young children could be key in tackling both," says Stephen.

The NHS states exercise, for kids, can improve fitness, provide an opportunity to socialise, increase concentration, improve academic scores, self-esteem and posture, build a stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles, encourage healthy growth and development, lower stress levels and encourage a better night's sleep.

**“At the moment we are failing our kids badly, and that is a very sad situation”.**

Dr Sarahjane Belton, another researcher on the project defined just how serious the results they have been seeing are: "It is no surprise that the 2018 follow up of the national CSPPA study shows a decline in physical activity participation rates of children by a



further 2% since 2010. At primary school, less than one in every 5 is active enough to sustain health.

"At the moment we are failing our kids badly, and that is a very sad situation".

Making sure children are physically literate might be the best way to encourage more young people to take up the sport long term.

Physical health isn't the only benefit as stated, it has been fully proven to impact mental health; a colleague of Stephen's, Dr Cameron Peers, a psychologist, is looking into the motivation and the wellbeing side of these FMS.

"Physical literacy is hugely linked to preventing mental health issues, it is seen as an underpinning mechanism that allows the benefits of physical activity towards mental health to be seen," says Stephen.

"If we can improve the most basic skills at a young age that will set the kids up with the tools they need to be active for life."

Stephen says they are unsure about why exactly Irish children are lacking basic skills in comparison to many of our European neighbours.

"What we do know is kids physical activity has dropped over the last 20 years or so.

"We don't know exactly why that is, some people would say its increased screen time, sedentary lifestyle but I suppose society has changed a little bit. You don't see kids playing out on the street or on the road as much anymore, so I would say there's a multitude of things impacting that," he says, but his team is not examining the causes.

"What we're looking to do is raise awareness, these basic skills are easy to develop with a little bit of practice."

## Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



I am going to be doing some work over the coming months with social enterprises. A social enterprise addresses challenges or needs in the community through an entrepreneurial business approach. An example of a social enterprise could be a bakery which employs people with learning difficulties or a community venture which provides classes, activities and support groups for people locally to combat isolation.

Part of my role will be to help these groups with their strategic planning. What do they see as their purpose? What would success look like? And for a social enterprise that is more about the change they want to see in the local community rather than making large amounts of profit. What is their strategy - how do they get from where they are now to where they want to be?

A strategic plan is a very useful thing to motivate an organisation but not if it is left sitting on a shelf. It has to be translated into action. So I will be helping the organisations explore how they can do that. What needs to happen on a day to day basis to move them forward in the direction of their vision? Nor is a strategic plan just something for the boss. If it is going to have any vitality, then everyone in the organisation needs to feel a sense of ownership of that plan and be able to see where they fit into it and what they can contribute to move it forward. How leadership in an organisation gets that buy-in from everyone will be yet another challenge for us to explore together.

The readings for Mass this Sunday got me thinking along similar lines. If someone asked you, "What is your purpose as a Christian?" what would you say? Jesus in Sunday's gospel is very clear. "You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world.... your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). That sounds great, but what would it look like to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world? The first reading, from the Prophet Isaiah provides us with the

action plan, "Thus says the Lord, 'Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and turn not from your own kin... If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word, if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness and your



shadows become like noon" (Isaiah 58:7-10).

As an action plan that is pretty clear! The Word of God is not something to be left on the shelf but something to be lived out, made real, incarnated. Internal communication is a vital strength in any organisation if all involved are going to feel that the vision is their vision and that they have a role and responsibility to make that vision a reality. It is the same in the Church. The vision of being a light for the world is not something just for the hierarchy - it is for all of us.

We have another of our First Holy Communion Family Masses this weekend and at the beginning of Mass we will bring up a bowl of salt and a lantern with a lit candle. These will set the theme for the Mass and also provide Fr Brendan with useful props when he engages with the children at the homily. We want the children, their parents and all of us present to leave Mass this weekend thinking about how we can be salt and light. The responsibility to live the gospel is not reserved for the few. It is an invitation and a challenge for each of us. How will you be salt of the earth and light of the world this week? Now there's a topic for round the kitchen table!



# Marie Evans: a life of healing

## Personal Profile



Róisie McGagh

**“I** just feel I’m here to help bring people closer to God in the wider sense, and that is my work.”

Marie Evans hails from Castleblaney in Co. Monaghan but has now settled, among the trees with her dog Millie, in the remote townland of Lurganboy, Co. Leitrim. She was once a Mercy nun, a nurse, a midwife and is now a healer. “I’ve been doing it here now for seven years,” she tells *The Irish Catholic*.

She began her training as a general nurse in the Mater Hospital, Belfast before moving on to train as a midwife in Belfast City Hospital. “After that I was asked, because I was a Mercy sister then, to go to Kenya. I went for a year and I was there for 12.”

The Sisters of Mercy first went to Kenya in 1956. They established schools, hospitals, dispensaries and mobile clinics in many different regions of the country. Kitui, the place Marie was sent, was one of these places.

“The experience I got in Kenya was unbelievable” she says. “The people taught me so much of my own arrogance from their own simplicity and their own happiness with so little.”

Marie arrived in 1987 and worked in Our Lady of Lourdes Mutomo Hospital, which still exists today. “It was a really small hospital in the middle of nowhere with no running water and no

electricity, it was just full of need. I was in my element.

“In that awfully simple life, there was nothing to get dramatic about because when there’s no water everything falls into perspective.”

Marie recounts being taught and studying things in Belfast she was told she would never see. “Well I saw that with the people in hospital in Kenya.”

The main illness she dealt with were malaria and then with starving children. Despite arriving after a severe famine in the mid-70s, she says there were often long periods without rain causing intermittent periods of hunger. She says HIV was also a prevalent issue: “We had just opened a TB [Tuberculosis] unit and that became a HIV clinic.”

She says it was difficult readjusting to a plentiful life in Ireland: “The harder part of the experience was actually coming back after that and seeing how much we have.”

After returning she left to go to the United States for a few years. “I was really happy to get to America because you can stand on your head there and nobody would notice. That was great after the intensity of a very small village and everybody knowing everything,” she says.

She then started to study different kinds of healing, working with an American Shaman in the US and then a Mexican medicine woman back in Ireland.

“When I was a nurse, I always felt there was so much more to

treating the physical complaints that someone would be in hospital with. I even used to just sit and hold the hand of a person who was sick. I was praying really for their healing.”

**“Now Marie’s time is still spent helping others.”**

Marie left the Mercy nuns, feeling she had to find her own way. “You can be taught one way of doing something but you have to follow your intuition too, this feels right to me.”

“Fear was what I had to face when I was leaving. You know when you’re part of a group for a

while or for a long time, there’s a sense of belonging there. It was a huge decision to make to actually leave, that meant that I had to face being insecure and not knowing and not having.”

She was with the order for 36 years and says it gave her a lot, “The gift in that was that I was given some tools for learning how to develop my own spiritual life, which was a great gift to me.”

**“She also runs workshops, writes and makes cards to help to reconnect people to nature.”**

Now Marie’s time is still spent helping others. People come to her for healing, direction and guidance. She also runs workshops, writes and makes cards to help to reconnect people to nature. She says her nursing is still an important undertone in her work.

“I feel like nursing is of great value to me in my work here, my nursing and my time as a midwife as well. If there’s someone who comes to me and is seriously ill, I’m going to say you need to see a doctor,” says Marie.

She feels that everyone has their own way of expressing their spirituality and she likes to help people feel connected to that in whatever way they feel is right, “It is about healing the past so that we can be fully present. That includes work on myself as well as anybody who comes to me.”



## Sweet Treats

Laura Anderson



## Red Velvet Macarons - the perfect treat for St Valentine’s day

**M**acarons have a reputation for being tricky but don’t fear! If you follow the recipe carefully these red velvet flavoured versions will make an impressive gift this Valentine’s day. A top tip is throughout the recipe, make sure that all the ingredients are at room temperature.

### Ingredients

**Makes about 12 filled macarons**  
**For the macarons:**

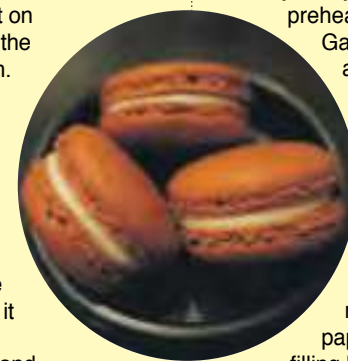
- 2 large egg whites
- 35g granulated sugar
- 150g icing sugar
- 2 tsp cocoa powder
- 70g almond flour/finely ground almonds
- ½ tsp red gel food colouring

**For the cream cheese filling:**

- 40g cream cheese softened
- 20g unsalted butter softened
- 90g icing sugar
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract

To begin, line two large baking trays with parchment paper. Sift the almond flour, icing sugar and cocoa powder into a bowl, removing any large almond pieces. Then in a separate bowl beat the egg whites with a whisk attachment on high speed until foamy. Slowly add the sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Add red food colouring and beat for one more minute on medium speed. Using a spatula gently fold the almond flour and icing sugar mixture into the egg whites. This is the most difficult step, getting the consistency of the batter right. It should be thick but able to flow, like lava. The more you mix the runnier it gets so be careful.

Fill a piping bag with the batter and using a round nozzle ½ inch in diameter pipe rounds about 1.5 inches in diameter onto the lined baking trays. Next, take the trays and bang them hard on your worktop a few times to eliminate any air bubbles. Leave the macarons to rest at room



temperature. This can take 20-50 mins depending on how humid your kitchen is. You should be able to see they have formed a ‘skin’ and they shouldn’t be very sticky to the touch. While they are resting preheat the oven to 150°C/140°F fan/

Gas Mark 2. Macarons bake better in a conventional oven without a fan otherwise, your cooking time may vary. Bake the macarons one tray at a time for about 18 mins. The second tray, the one that will have rested for a longer period of time may take slightly less time to cook. Transfer the macarons still on the paper to a wire rack to cool for 15 minutes before removing from the paper. Finally for the cream cheese filling beat the cheese and butter together until fluffy. Add the icing sugar and vanilla and beat until well combined. Chill the mixture for 15 minutes then transfer to a piping bag and carefully fill each macaron. They will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days.



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Netflix's *Messiah* needs divine intervention

Last week I wrote about the March for Life in Washington. During the week other significant gatherings came across my radar.

Most bizarre of all was the march on Washington portrayed in *Messiah*, an intriguing 10-part drama series on Netflix. This dramatic march was led by a character thought by his followers to be the Messiah returned. It is not a theological work and some of the premises don't sit too easily with Christianity, so some faculties have to be suspended to enjoy it.

Some of his activities have echoes in the life of Jesus (e.g. with his followers in the desert, being interrogated by authorities, slipping through the crowds unnoticed). He has some wise sayings alright (e.g. "if you seek comfort you won't find truth, but if you seek truth you may find comfort") but these may have been lifted from other sources.

It's all very ambiguous and mysterious but quite intense, absorbing and rather unpredictable.

Michelle Monaghan excels as a conflicted CIA agent and there are other interesting characters – an angry Israeli agent who won't confront his many demons, a disillusioned Baptist Minister who finds new purpose in following the guru. So is this mystery man really a/the Messiah, or



Nigel Farage celebrates Brexit.

a charlatan or a fantasist or political extremist?

As far as any objectionable content goes, we could have done without the fairly frequent f-words and unfortunately it is also marred by a gratuitous sex scene that's fairly graphic.

### Brexit

Over in the UK there were many marches and gatherings last Friday to either celebrate or protest Brexit. I was travelling at the time and out of curiosity listened to much of LBC's coverage. That UK radio station has lots of opinionated presenters and those on that night were Andrew Pierce, a very strong Brexiteer and Nick Ferrari, a more muted Brexit supporter.

In one contribution Nigel Farage compared the split with the EU to Henry VIII's break with Rome – a bit of a stretch I thought. In his own *Nigel Farage Show* on Brexit Day (aka Independence Day, Freedom Day, etc.) he sounded like the cat that got the cream. I'm not a fan of triumphalism in any situation, and I had to admire those Brexiteers who said they'd take a low key approach out of sensitivity and respect for the feelings of those who voted Remain.

**The Big Questions** returned for a 10-week run to BBC1 last Sunday morning and I was surprised Brexit didn't figure more prominently.

When one audience member mentioned it

presenter Nicky Campbell wryly said "did you say Brexit was divisive?" This question under discussion was: "Is Britain failing white working class boys?" This was partly in the context of a college refusing a substantial donation to fund scholarships for such boys, because of the perceived racial/colour discrimination.

Experts who disagreed over the premise of the question quoted figures at each other – "follow the data!" one man said with conviction, but then others thought the data showed something different. There were distinctions between class, poverty, those in receipt of school dinners – different measurements.

I found myself most convinced by those who argued for support for all those underachieving regardless of race or colour.



Ivan Yates (Newstalk).

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### SONGS OF PRAISE

**BBC1, Sunday, February 9, 1.15pm**

Seán Fletcher is in Whalley Abbey in Lancashire with a minister with Asperger's and the world's first performing autistic adult choir.

#### FOR THE RECORD: SEAMUS MALLON

**RTÉ1, Monday, February 10, 11.35pm**

Following his recent death, another chance to see this profile of one of Northern Ireland's pre-eminent politicians.

#### BEING STAN: A LIFE IN FOCUS

**RTÉ1, Thursday, February 13, 10.15pm**

Sr Stanislaus Kennedy recently turned 80. This documentary celebrates her life's work as a champion for the homeless.

One lady launched into a sentence that immediately included "patriarchy", "privilege" and "entitlement". Others also followed a strong ideological line with a flavour of divisive identity politics.

And what of our own politics with a General Election imminent? For the most part I can't stand the discussions between the politicians as they are so predictable. I've had more than enough of politicians telling how 'clear' they are, their sporting metaphors, those 'leaders' interviews. I think it's unfair to have 'leaders' debates' without all leaders present, however unwieldy that might be. From a democratic point of view Peadar Kirby of Aontú and Mary Lou McDonald of Sinn Féin have been excluded too often.

I do enjoy the shows

where the pundits discuss the polls and the relative chances of various candidates being elected. Ivan Yates' predictions on *The Hard Shoulder* (Newstalk) have been particularly engaging.

There should have been more explanations of the proportional representation (PR) voting system – so that people will learn how to use it effectively – by giving first preferences then moving on to give votes down the ballot paper to candidates you can just about tolerate to ensure they get ahead of candidates you can't tolerate at all.

And there's quite a few of those.

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

# Film

Aubrey Malone



## Rush to judgment of an innocent security guard

### Richard Jewell (15)

You've got to hand it to Clint Eastwood – at 89 years old, he's still churning out great films.

I'd never heard of Richard Jewell before seeing this. In July 1996, the overweight security guard noticed a suspicious-looking knapsack under a bench at Atlanta's Olympic Games. It turned out to contain a bomb.

Jewell (Paul Walter Hauser) was instrumental in dispersing the crowd before it exploded. Two people were killed. Over 100 were injured. It could have been much worse. He was lauded in the aftermath of the event but the

FBI's frustration in failing to catch the person who planted the bomb resulted in Jewell himself becoming a suspect.

The horrendous treatment he received at the hands of both the FBI and the media on absolutely no evidence is the stuff of this fascinating film. It manages to inject occasional humour into the proceedings and still deliver a corrosive indictment of how the investigation was (mis)managed.

Not since the Faye Dunaway of *Network* have I seen a more voracious reporter than Kathy Scruggs (Olivia Wilde). She breaks the news of Jewell being a suspect. It's leaked to her by the equally venal Tom Shaw (Jon Hamm), an FBI agent who does everything in his power to blacken his



Paul Walter Hauser stars in *Richard Jewell*.

reputation. In the process he destroys both his life and that of his distraught mother, Bobi (Kathy Bates).

Though Jewell was eventually vindicated, and the real culprit caught, he died at 44.

The stress of the investigation had to have been a factor in this.

One thinks of Fatty Arbuckle, an equally overweight star of early Hollywood who was arrested for

raping a woman at a party in 1921. There were two hung juries before he was finally acquitted but he died at 46 as a result of the negative publicity. It killed his career and broke his heart.

### Laidback

This is a must-see film with a wonderful performance by Hauser. His Forrest Gump-style laidbackness occasionally explodes into righteous anger at his victimisation.

Sam Rockwell can always be relied on to deliver a quality performance. He does so again here as a whimsical lawyer. He does his best to make Jewell realise how easy it is to implicate himself in the crime he's charged with unless he learns to box as

clever as the FBI agents dogging his footsteps and trying to get him to trip himself up.

Eastwood once again puts his laser eye on a hot button theme.

Here in Ireland it will serve to remind us of similar miscarriages of justice in our own past – The Guildford Four, The Birmingham Six, etc. – as a man with virtually nothing to hide is turned into a pariah when a firestorm breaks out around him.

He goes from hero to villain and back to hero again. Eastwood gives us a dignified finale to a thoroughly undignified period in America's history.

See it and then read the book, *The Suspect*. It's equally engrossing.

Excellent  
★★★★★





# BookReviews

## Home Rulers in Independent Ireland

### The Legacy of the Irish Parliamentary Party in Independent Ireland, 1922-1949

by Martin O'Donoghue  
(Liverpool University Press, £80.00)

**Felix M. Larkin**

Conor Cruise O'Brien, the grandson of a long-time Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) MP, was once discussing the 1916 Rising and its aftermath with his father-in-law, Seán McEntee, a 1916 veteran and foundation member of Fianna Fáil, TD, and cabinet minister.

He said ruefully to McEntee that "your people pushed my people aside", and that is indeed the popular impression of what happened in the 1918 general election.

But it is not as simple as all that, as Martin O'Donoghue demonstrates in this important new book examining the legacy of the IPP post-1918.

He writes that the party "left a distinctive mark on the politics of independent Ireland", and he sees this manifested in three ways: the adherence of the political parties of independent Ireland to the parliamentary and democratic norms to which the IPP had accustomed the Irish people, the continued participation of some former IPP members and supporters and their families in Irish politics, and the persistence of commemorative events celebrating Parnell, Davitt and the Redmond family and their achievements through agrarian agitation and in other areas.

### Emphasis

O'Donoghue, understandably, places much emphasis on the political careers of those identified with the old IPP tradition, most notably Captain William Redmond, James Dillon and Frank MacDermot.

Two of them were, of course, sons of the last two leaders of the IPP – and both of them, with MacDermot, ended up in Fine Gael or its antecedent party Cumann na nGaedheal. All three, however, first attempted to revive



Parnell, the leader of the Irish people.

the IPP – albeit in new configurations – as a means of circumventing the Civil War divisions that defined Irish politics after independence.

**“Parnell’s memory is still celebrated in Glasnevin cemetery on Ivy Day each year and the annual Parnell Summer School”**

Captain Redmond, an independent TD for Waterford from 1923, founded the Irish National League party in 1926, but joined Cumann na nGaedheal in 1931 after the League collapsed. He died in 1932 and was succeeded by his widow – who held the seat for Fine Gael until her death in 1952.

Dillon and MacDermot

entered politics as independent TDs in 1932, and then established the National Centre Party in 1933 – though it soon merged with Cumann na nGaedheal to form Fine Gael.

Dillon was Minister for Agriculture in the two inter-party governments of 1948-51 and 1954-57 under John A. Costello as Taoiseach. Costello did not come from a conspicuously IPP background, but neither had he been a Sinn Féiner in 1918 – and his biographer is quoted as claiming there “could be no doubt” that he had been a “staunch home ruler” in his youth.

Not everyone with old IPP loyalties gravitated to Fine Gael, however. One former IPP MP, Thomas O'Donnell, who was a co-founder with Captain Redmond of the National League, later joined Fianna Fáil; he failed to win a Dáil seat as a candidate for either party.

Another former IPP MP, Alfie Byrne, remained an

independent – and was a TD for north Dublin constituencies almost continuously from 1922 until his death in 1956 and, famously, was elected Lord Mayor of Dublin on ten occasions. His name was canvassed as a possible candidate for the Irish presidency in 1938, but Douglas Hyde was chosen instead.

O'Donoghue suggests that by 1949 (the closing date of this study), “a distinct home rule identity [had] faded from everyday politics”. Nevertheless, even today, former Taoiseach John Bruton has distinguished himself in defending the achievements of the IPP and, in particular, those of John Redmond.

And moreover, Parnell’s memory is still celebrated in Glasnevin cemetery on Ivy Day each year and the annual Parnell Summer School, of which Martin O'Donoghue is a former academic director, remains a staple of the Irish calendar.

**Peter Costello**



## European Ireland ov

### Ireland in the European Eye

edited by Gisela Holfter and Bettina Migge  
(Royal Irish Academy, €25.00)

**Joe Carroll**

**T**his large book (515 pages) is billed as “a comprehensive survey of Ireland’s place in Europe, providing a detailed narrative of a cultural relationship that began with Irish missionaries bringing Christianity and learning to the continent”.

The 22 authors, all experts in their fields, examine Ireland’s relationship with Europe from the missionary expeditions of the early Middle Ages right up to the present. They cover film, music, art, architecture, media, literature and European studies.

The first part provides a historical context with useful essays on trade and educational links with the continent up to the 17th Century, Irish foreign policy towards Europe since 1921 and how Ireland negotiated its membership of the European Economic Community in the 1970s after prolonged dependence on Britain.

The portrayal of Ireland in modern times in the literatures of France, Spain, Poland, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands is quite enthralling for an Irish reader who does not have access to them for linguistic reasons. Pierre Joannon, a student of Irish writing and culture over many years, rhapsodises over Ireland’s effect on French writers: “A people which cultivates reason and madness with equal passion, a nation which extends beyond its glens and its coasts, a ghost, a cry, a song.”

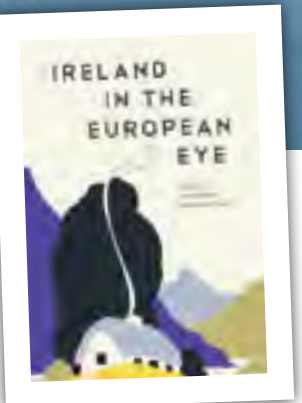
### Languages

The chapter of “Nordic encounters with Irish literature” gives an interesting glimpse into how Irish writing is viewed in the Scandinavian countries. Work by Irish women writers as well as Joyce, Yeats and Swift figure here with even a section devoted to Irish chick-lit now available in all the Nordic languages.

There is a useful survey of translations from Irish into various European languages.



Part of the Wild Atlantic Way. Photo: Ashford Castle



These are mainly French and German, but there are also examples in Romanian and Czech. Irish language poetry is also widely translated.

**“French director Yves Boisset’s Un Taxi Mauve (The Purple Taxi) was a box-office hit in France in the 1970s. It was worth millions for tourism”**

The section dealing with the European appreciation of Irish art, architecture, film and music is especially inter-



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.

# visions of er the centuries



esting. Harking back to the missionary period, Lynda Mulvin discusses the Celtic artistic aesthetic in the art and architecture of continental Europe, again reminding us of the debt we owe to those pioneering monks.

They brought not only their Faith to dangerous Frankish and Germanic territories, but also superb Celtic art some of which is fortunately preserved in European museums and religious houses.

The depictions of Ireland in British, German and French cinema in the period 1938-2014 can be at times cringe-making. The beauty of the Irish landscape vies with sectarian or drunken violence as poles of attraction for foreign film-makers.

French director Yves Boisset's *Un Taxi Mauve* (The Purple Taxi) was a box-office hit in France in the 1970s. It was worth millions for tourism. As some commentators pointed out: "For many French tourists, the film's representation

of Ireland as a primitive paradise untouched by the trappings of modernity (albeit peopled by brawling and savage locals) is a key factor encouraging them to visit." Today's equivalent might be videos of the Wild Atlantic Way.

**“The depictions of Ireland in British, German and French cinema in the period 1938-2014 can be at times cringe-making”**

In music, it will be a surprise for some Irish readers to learn of the huge influence of Thomas Moore's lyrics and music in 19th Century Germany and further afield. Today that is replaced by the widespread appreciation for Irish traditional music, in some cases via the ubiquitous Irish pubs.

The growth of European studies in Irish universities is examined. To its credit, Limerick created a degree course back in 1974 before the bigger universities followed suit with the help of EEC grants which also financed the invaluable Erasmus scholarships.

Thousands of 'Erasmus babies' have benefited from exposure to the higher education cultures of European universities and vice versa.

In Britain, academics view with dismay the severing of this link for their undergraduates because of Brexit. The extensive bibliographies accompanying each chapter of this book will be a valuable resource for those engaged in current European studies

The idea for this book arose from the Royal Irish Academy's committee on language, literature, culture and communication. It has proved to be a worthwhile project which may in future be extended to include Northern Ireland.

## The World of Books

By the books editor

# The Parnellite by the fireside

**B**ack in the 1950s, when such a case was less common, an Irish poet was teaching a course on modern Ireland literature in a US university. He chose James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) as the text for the semester. By the time he was finished, he later confessed, "the class were Parnellites one and all".

One of the most powerful scenes in the book is the Christmas dinner in the house in Bray where old Fenian supporter of Parnell breaks down in tears for his poor dead king.

'Mr Casey' was modelled on a Joyce family friend, John Kelly. He is discussed in detail in my book *James Joyce: The Years of Growth* (1992). The image of him on this page comes from that book. It is a Special Branch photograph taken by the policeman shadowing him with a concealed "detective-camera" on St Stephen's Green. I found this attached to Kelly's police file in the National Archives. It is the only picture of the man I have ever seen.

Quite as effective (as some of the students later found) was the story from *Dubliners* (1914), 'Ivy Day in the Committee Room'. In *Ulysses* (1922) too the mourners for Mr Cunningham go round to visit the grave of the Chief (a title that Fianna Fáil later usurped for Dev). In fact, there is nothing Joyce wrote that was free from the memory of the dead leader. Even the working notes for Joyce's only play *Exiles* (1918) cogitate on the historical significance of Katherine O'Shea.

This perennial passion, which Joyce derived from his father John Stanislaus Joyce, who lingered on still talking about Parnell in the 1930s. This Parnellite tradition and its literary after life is discussed in my biography of John Joyce, written with John Wyse Jackson.

By the time John Joyce died, a new generation was emerging into public life. Just as the image of the old Fenian by the cottage fireside had informed the Easter Rising, so these lingering Parnellites informed the body politic with the habits of democracy, as suggested in the review of Martin O'Donoghue's new book across the page – a book which, alas, neglects to deal with Parnell in literature.

**“We should honour those democrats who in the past seized every opportunity to sit in any the democratic assembly they were elected to”**

Yeats too was deeply influenced by the legend of Parnell, as was his brother Jack the painter. This theme is explored further by Herbert Howarth in his book *The Irish Writers 1880-1940* (1958) which explores what he calls a "literature under Parnell's star".

Conor Cruise O'Brien in one of the chapters of his important study of the

Catholic imagination, *Maria Cross* (New York, 1952), is devoted to 'The Parnellism of Sean O'Faolain'. (Another of O'Faolain's books, widely read at the time of publication, was *Newman's Way* (1952) which reminds us that there was a time when Irish writers were not ashamed to engage with Catholic thought.)

**“O'Faolain was also a founder of the Irish Civil Right Association – a landmark in Ireland's social maturity”**

The reputation of O'Faolain has faded a little, but his civilised voice is a distinctive one, which is destined to survive much that appears today. O'Faolain (like his then friend Frank O'Connor) had been an active IRA man, but his conscience led him to break with 'the movement' when it became, as he thought, destructive of Irish character. The



Joyce's 'Mr. Casey' in reality.

darker record of the War of Independence is reflected in their stories, as described in my literary study *The Heart Grown Brutal: The Irish Revolution in Literature from Parnell to the Death of Yeats* (1977).

I mention O'Faolain as he was a founder editor of *The Bell*, perhaps the sanest 'little magazine' and the most influential ever created in Ireland. He was also a founder of the Irish Civil Right Association – a landmark in Ireland's social maturity.

At the moment we are marking the establishment of the Dáil. But we should also honour those democrats who in the past seized every opportunity to sit in any the democratic assembly they were elected to.


In these activities to I think we can see the democratic heritage of O'Connell and Parnell continued.

Once a public figure such as Parnell becomes a part of literature their memory will never fade. Parnell lives on in Irish literature (especially in the pages of Joyce) in a way no other political figure in Ireland ever has again.



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## Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

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MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.

Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

Trócaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 318



### Across

- 1 January 1st (3,5,3)
- 6 Book that comes out once a year (6)
- 7 The first man in the Bible (4)
- 8 All around (10)
- 12 Uncommon (4)
- 14 The people who come to see a show (8)
- 16 Take part in a battle (5)
- 17 You might go skating on it (3)
- 18 Scheme (4)
- 19 You might call this when a coin is tossed (5)
- 20 Obtained (3)

### Down

- 1 Tidier (6)
- 2 The coldest season (6)
- 3 Permitted (7)
- 4 Use a razor (5)
- 5 Not asleep (5)
- 9 Dracula was one (7)
- 10 Got as far as (7)
- 11 Jogging or sprinting (7)
- 13 The Sahara is one (6)
- 15 Rome is the capital city of this country (5)

## SOLUTIONS, JANUARY 30

### GORDIUS No. 440

**Across** – 1 Capitate 6 Ceps 10 Thick 11 Pistachio  
12 Counsel 15 First aider 17 Etna 18 Tool 19 Ricer 21 Approve  
23 Mused 24 Tuba 25 Dice 28 Ransack 33 Bathsheba  
34 Amble 35 Made 36 Rock of Ages

**Down** – 1 City 2 Poisonous 3 Taken aback 4 Lapse 5 Task  
7 Ether 8 Shortbread 9 Fanfare 13 Sump 14 Learner 16 Stamp  
album 20 Clutch bag 21 Address 22 Vain 27 Doted 30 Staff  
31 Memo 32 Mess

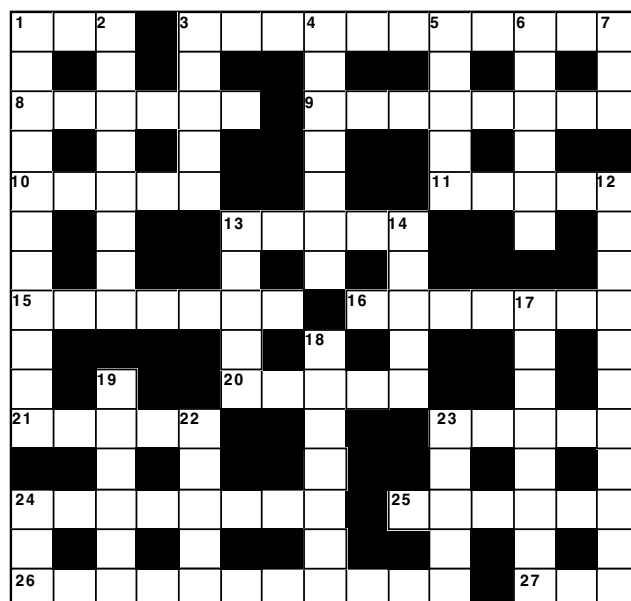
### CHILDREN'S No. 317

**Across** – 1 Pencil-case 6 Cuckoo 7 Number 8 Lace 9 Salmon  
11 Cows 13 See 15 Water 17 Elf 18 Heals 19 Tyres

**Down** – 1 Pictures 2 Necklace 3 Lioness 4 Adam 5 Envelope  
10 Leaves 12 Wales 14 Easy 16 Rose

## Crossword

Gordius 441



### Across

- 1 Being right, I would clear out (3)
- 3 Is one suit all that is found on this part of a sailing vessel? (11)
- 8 Produce alcoholic spirit (6)
- 9 Support this below what you need at the ATM (8)
- 10 Have a thing about the time of darkness (5)
- 11 Small fish usually followed by mackerel (5)
- 13 The principality of Western beers (5)
- 15 Bimbo, such as the chief of the RAF? (7)
- 16 & 22d Grooming implement for those with a hands-off approach to winter sport? (7,5)
- 20 You may wish to keep it in your pocket in Monaghan, Kylie (5)
- 21 Kitsch letter one might post on social media (5)
- 23 Sweet, sticky liquid (5)
- 24 How amicable, to allow a strange diner fly around! (8)
- 25 Navigates, gives directions (6)
- 26 Summits ain't upsetting the coin collector (11)
- 27 The match official is rarely easily fazed, for starters (3)

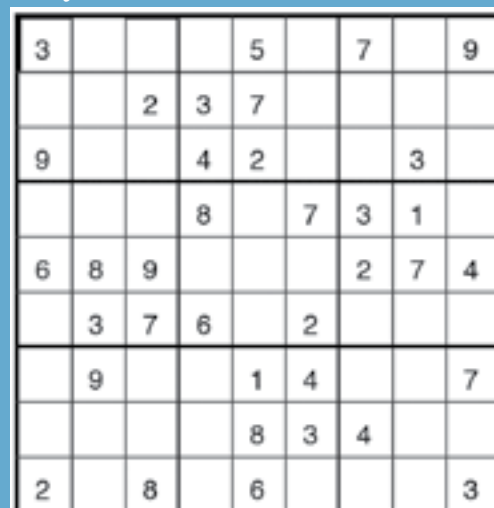
### Down

- 1 Ensemble for one with a penchant for being on horseback? (6,5)
- 2 Stylist who undoes autographs? (8)
- 3 Bedspread (5)
- 4 Alter a holy rug to an approximate degree (7)
- 5 Coral formations (5)
- 6 International dominion (6)
- 7 Relations will get the potassium in (3)
- 12 & 13 John Steinbeck novel whose title comes from a metaphor in Revelations (3,6,2,5)
- 14 Impudent (5)
- 17 Interloper I'd return to be reformed (8)
- 18 Put into code, making some maiden cry, Ptolemy (7)
- 19 Clairvoyant who is neither large nor small (6)
- 22 See 16 across
- 23 Illegally occupy a disused building (5)
- 24 A fellow-supporter can bring a breath of fresh air (3)

## Sudoku Corner

318

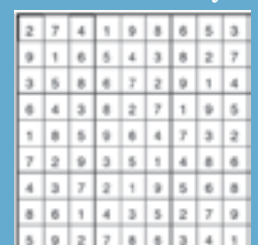
### Easy



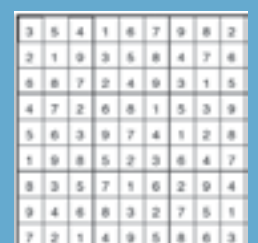
### Hard



### Last week's Easy 317



### Last week's Hard 317





# Opting for the good in a world full of lesser choices

**A COUSIN WAS** speaking with me recently and she told me she was in London for a weekend, with her two young sons, to visit her sister and family. They went for a day trip to London and travelled on a number of trains and by underground.

Later in the evening, her younger son told her he'd lost his phone. He was upset as was she. Not life or death, of course, but she'd prefer if it had not been lost and felt upset for her son. They reported the missing phone via an online app but she held out little hope.

The next morning she noticed a missed call on her phone and a text. It read something like: "I found a phone and I think it may belong to a member of your family."

**Power**

She called and the person on the other end of the call told her that he'd found the phone the night before. Its battery had run flat so he plugged it in to charge it. When power came back, he noticed it was locked but on the screen there were some words "MISSED CALL MAM" and her number. Hence the contact.



She thanked him and said "red or white?" He was confused and asked what she meant. She said she wanted to thank him and wondered did he like red or white wine. "Neither," he replied "I'm 17." *Seventeen!*

I think of the gospel moment when St Thomas was doubtful about Christ's resurrection and insisted on what was needed for

proof. Later, when offered that proof, he no longer required it: "My Lord and my God", he said. His faith in 'Divinity' was restored.

My storyteller told me that her experience from last weekend had restored her faith in 'humanity'. It's good to have faith restored.

I thought about that lad after speaking with my cousin and what it was that made him

## Speaking of choices....

● Our diocese recently received news of a choice made. Our new bishop was announced. Fr Paul Dempsey, parish priest of Newbridge will soon become the shepherd of the people of Achonry Diocese.

He moves from one of Ireland's largest parishes to one of its smallest dioceses and we look forward to welcoming him and journeying with him. The place may be small but the Gospel is alive, the needs are real and the welcome is certain.

**See Page 16.**

contact my cousin? There were other options. Though the phone was locked, he could have had it unlocked and sold it or kept it for himself.

**“Could he imagine his own mother calling him or worrying for him if he lost something?”**

He could have sold it to a friend and made a quick profit for

himself. He could have dumped it. He opted for none of these but called the number of a person he felt would be able to restore it to its rightful owner. He did the decent and right thing.

I wondered was it the word 'MAM' that struck a chord with him? Could he imagine his own mother calling him or worrying for him if he lost something? Whatever the reason, he did the right thing.

That's where we're at, I think – a place and world full of choices, choices we meet on a daily basis and the choice can quite often be between right and wrong?

There's something in this story, as I hear it and tell it, about opting for the right – opting for the good. Something about restoring faith in humanity and Divinity.



## Holy Spirit Sisters need water harvesting system for village school

In a remote area of India, close to the border with Myanmar, the Holy Spirit Sisters run a village school for children unable to travel to the parish centre, which is 33 kilometres distance away. At present the school has 220 pupils, most of whom come from deprived families, living by subsistence farming and struggling to make ends meet. The only source of water in the village is rain water and a nearby stream, as the land is not suitable for a well, or bore-hole. The Holy Cross Fathers, who are in charge of the parish, have appealed to The Little Way Association for financial help to install a rain water harvesting system for the Sisters and their village school.



"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself as it were at our mercy; He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart, and the very least trifle is precious in His sight."

**- St Therese**

### You can help repair a mission chapel

The Little Way Association has a long history of providing humble places of worship for far-flung parishes in mission countries. Nature can take its toll on these simple buildings, and we receive requests from priests for help with repairs.

We humbly ask that you allocate some of your kind giving to our chapels fund. By ensuring that these small but dignified churches are in good repair, you help to make possible the offering of Holy Mass in needy Catholic communities.

*The missionaries and people overseas who benefit from your generosity invariably promise to pray for their benefactors' intentions.*

### Can you help The Little Way Association make a big difference in the daily lives of the Holy Spirit Sisters and the children they teach?

A source of clean water is vital for the health and well-being of any community, large or small. Can you help The Little Way Association to assist those who do not have access to clean, safe water? We have new requests for grants to fund water projects every week. Any donation will be sent without deduction and gratefully received. Thank you, and may God reward your generosity.

**You and your intentions are remembered in a daily Mass offered in the Missions for all our friends and benefactors.**



Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

**THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION**  
**Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR**  
**(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466**  
**www.littlewayassociation.com**

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **CLEAN, SAFE WATER**

€..... **NEEDY CHILDREN**

€..... **CHAPELS IN THE MISSIONS**

€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**  
(Please state number \_\_\_\_\_)

€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

To donate online go to  
**tinyurl.com/lwadonations**

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address