

# The Irish Catholic

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# Vatican called to investigate third level handovers to State

Ruadhán Jones

A prominent Irish theologian has warned that the legacy of Irish religious could be "betrayed" by the gifting of third-level Catholic institutions to the State.

The Vatican must investigate several deals made by the Church in Ireland to hand over Catholic colleges in recent years, Prof. Eamonn Conway told *The Irish Catholic*.

The founder and until recently Head of Theology and Religious Studies at Mary Immaculate College said there needs to be a "formal evaluation" of the deals by the relevant Vatican bodies, such as the Dicastery for Culture and Catholic Education.

Prof. Conway questioned what the Church has received in return for the gifts of the Catholic institutions "in terms of safeguarding resources for the Church's mission in Ireland".

He called for the findings of any evaluation "to be made public in the spirit of accountability as demanded by synodality".

"It is important that the sacrifice of previous generations of Catholics who proudly and generously founded and built up these colleges, and that of the many religious sisters and brothers who worked selflessly over the years to provide a free education, is neither

» Continued on Page 2

## 'All God's creatures got a place in the choir...'



Fr John Dunphy PP Graiguecullen-Killeslin parish, Co. Carlow, blesses a pet dog at a drive-through blessing of pets held Sunday, October 2, ahead of the feast of St Francis of Assisi. See page 15

## PSNI failing to reach out to Catholics says police guild

Chai Brady

The Police Service of Northern Ireland is not doing enough to recruit Catholic police officers with outreach to some communities being "non-existent", the newly formed Catholic Police Guild has warned.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, leading members of the guild said they felt they have been "actively excluded" from recruitment drives.

Chief Inspector Graham Dodds claimed the guild were the only group that was not consulted and "found everything out at the last minute for this big drive to recruit more Catholics".

"We were finding out about events from other minority groups. And events were being organised, but not really being promoted..." said Mr Dodds, adding "it's almost as if they were ashamed of us".

Inspector Arthur McKenna who has been in the PSNI for 28 years said they had to "jump through hoops" to establish the guild, which aims to increase the number of Catholic officers and support those currently in the PSNI.

Mr McKenna said he has previously complained to PSNI authorities with responsibility for recruitment, outlining the guild's disappointment

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# Gifting Church resources to State does disservice to Irish Faithful

In just seven years, the Church in Ireland will mark the bicentenary of Catholic emancipation. Catholic relief in 1829 aimed to ease the restrictions on Catholics that had come about since the time of the English Reformation when King Henry VIII rejected the authority of the Pope and the widespread persecution of Catholics began.

While Catholic emancipation ushered in a welcome and much-needed liberty for Catholics, the temporal patrimony of the Church was essentially lost forever. Great cathedrals and, of course, churches remained in the hands of the Anglican tradition that had been brought to Ireland by Henry's revolt.

**“In 1888, this newspaper was established with a bold first editorial insisting that it was high time for Catholics to assert their voices”**

But, Catholic emancipation also marked and accelerated a tremendous period of new growth in the Church. Largely due to the influence of religious orders, Catholic institutions were set up in every corner of the island. Soon, many small



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



Worshippers wait for Pope Francis to celebrate Mass at Phoenix Park in Dublin, August 26, 2018. Photo: CNS

towns had convent schools to provide for the needs of poor Catholic children.

In 1888, this newspaper was established with a bold first editorial insisting that it was high time for Catholics to assert their voices.

How will we mark the bicentenary in 2029? The centenary – in 1929 – saw 300,000 people attend a Pontifical High Mass in Dublin's Phoenix Park.

The Church in Ireland is now in a very different situation, and the underwhelming visit of Pope Francis four years ago tells its own story.

### Decline

There has been a decline of faith, but this has been accompanied by a huge retreat of the Church and Catholic institutions. As Fr Eamonn Conway points out (see page 1) there are serious concerns about what is – and perhaps isn't – being done to safeguard resources for the future mission of the Church.

We have had lofty sentiments expressed about a more collaborative future in the Church in Ireland. There

is now an institutional acknowledgement of what many people have been saying for decades: that there is a piercing need for better adult faith development.

**“Catholic emancipation also marked and accelerated a tremendous period of new growth in the Church”**

The question becomes “with what?” One-by-one, we have seen Catholic institutions ‘gifted’ to the State and State-run institutions. Over time, it has become clear that often assurances about preserving a Catholic ethos were paperthin if existent at all.

The seeming willingness of the Vatican to give immediate blessing to these ‘deals’ should sound alarm bells. The history of the National Mater-nity Hospital (NMH), for example, will tell a story of an institution built on land

gifted to the State that will be the largest provider of abortion on the island.

### Patrimony

The institutional patrimony of Irish Catholics was built on the pennies and ha'pennies of people who survived the Great Famine. It should not be treated lightly nor whittled away in discreet deals carried out with little or no oversight. Catholics and those heroic religious and priests who built these institutions deserve better.

We also need to ask the question on what will the future for the Church in Ireland be built on? Institutions, of course, are not everything – but without solid resources for the future it will be hard to build an active and collaborative form of lay ministry.

**i To join Friends of The Irish Catholic and support Catholic journalism, please phone the office on 01 6874094 for more information or to make a contribution.**

## Vatican called to investigate third-level handovers to State

**» Continued from Page 1** forgotten nor betrayed,” Prof. Conway said.

His comments come as negotiations are underway to hand St Patrick's College, Carlow, the oldest Catholic college in Ireland, to the South East Technological University, while St Angela's College, Sligo was recently “gifted” to the Atlantic Technological University.

Speaking about St Patrick's College in the Dáil, An Taoiseach Micheál Martin said that it has been offered “with no strings attached” to the Department of Further and Higher Education.

“Provided it is retained for teaching and education purposes, there are no strings attached,” Mr Martin said on June 28.

In a statement to *The Irish Catholic*, a spokesperson for Carlow College said discus-

sions with the Department regarding the college's “strategic positioning” are ongoing and all possibilities are being explored.

In addition, *The Irish Catholic* understands Mary Immaculate College has appointed an independent expert in higher education governance as it examines “closer structural alignment” with the University of Limerick.

While there has been speculation that the two colleges will merge, the Diocese of Limerick and MIC have both said no merger is planned.

However, it is unclear what a closer structural alignment will involve, given the already close relationship between the two colleges.

As recently as 2016, Mary Immaculate College received the gift of St Patrick's former seminary in Thurles, worth

tens of millions, from the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, on the basis of it being a Catholic teacher-training college.

Local Bishop of Limerick, Brendan Leahy has recently been appointed to the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education and the Dicastery for Clergy, bodies which are involved in giving approval for the disposal of Church property.

Other deals cited by Prof. Conway included St Patrick's teacher training College in Drumcondra and the Mater Dei Institute in Dublin which were incorporated into Dublin City University.

Prof. Conway leaves Ireland at the end of this month to take up a prestigious position as Professor for Integral Human Development at the University of Notre Dame Australia.

**“There has been a decline of faith, but this has been accompanied by a huge retreat of the Church and Catholic institutions”**



# Dominicans see vocation success with 16 in formation

## Jason Osborne

The Dominican charism continues to attract men to the order, with recent novices bringing the total number of student brothers in formation to 16.

## Reporting

This comes as the Irish landscape for vocations grows increasingly challenging, with vocations to religious life generally in decline.

Speaking to *The Irish*

*Catholic* newspaper, vocations director for the Dominicans in Ireland, Fr Colm Mannion OP said that the Dominican "way of life is still attractive" to many of the island's young Catholic men.

"The idea of dedicating

ourselves to studying the truth, studying the Faith, and to help other people understand the Faith," are particularly appealing in Ireland at the moment, Fr Mannion said.

"There's a lack of under-

standing at the moment. So many people have fallen away from the Church because they don't understand the teachings of the Church. This was something prevalent in the time of St Dominic, he could see that the reason why people were falling away from the practice of the Faith is because they didn't really understand it."

## Founded

The Dominican Order was founded "to be able to explain what we believe", Fr Colm said, which is "attractive for a lot of young men today who've grown up in a culture where they may not have received much instruction in the Faith and yet when they've come to see the Faith and they value it, they have a desire then to help other people to understand it".

The "brotherhood" and

"fraternity" are also interesting to young men, Fr Mannion said, with the very fact that "we have brothers in formation is also attractive for other men who are thinking of it".

He added that the student brothers they're seeing aren't falling back on religious life as a "plan B" after other plans fell through.

"These men are bright fellas. One of the students, and one of the novices are doctors, so we've two doctors there among them. Also solicitors, engineers... they came from good jobs, they didn't just come as a 'Plan B'."

Those interested in the Dominican Order can contact Vocations Director Fr Colm Mannion OP at [colm.mannion@dominicans.ie](mailto:colm.mannion@dominicans.ie) or 086 4420.

## Irish missionary hailed for education work in Malaysia



Hillary Reilly

Speaking at the ceremony, Sr Enda said: "Education matters simply because it ensures every child has a fair chance of a successful and thriving life. Education ingrains civic and social responsibility in everyone – an essential aspect of human development specially to achieve world peace, justice, freedom and equality."

## Headmistress

Sr Enda is the founder and headmistress for 30 years of Assunta all-girls schools in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

Taylor's University deputy vice chancellor Prof. Pradeep Nair said: "As the foundress of Assunta primary and secondary schools, Sr Enda has contributed significantly to the development of Malaysia's education services and teaching profession."

## Chai Brady

An Irish sister has been hailed for her "significant" work in education as she was awarded an honorary doctorate in Malaysia.

Sr Enda Ryan FMM (Franciscan Missionaries of Mary) from Galbally, Co. Limerick worked in the country for 67 years. She received the doctorate in humanities from Taylor's University.

## Core talks with Apple CEO...



Pope Francis shakes hands with CEO of Apple, Tim Cook on Monday morning. Photo: Vatican Media.

## AMPLIFYING VOICES OF CATHOLIC SISTERS AROUND THE WORLD



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# No-religion rise in NI Protestant areas 'backlash' against authority

Jason Osborne

With traditionally Protestant areas particularly affected by the rise in 'no-religion' in the 2021 Northern Ireland census, an anthropologist has suggested that it could be the "backlash" of a more liberalised population against Protestant conservative influence.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Dr Hugh Turpin of the

Oxford School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography said that if "conservative social influence" is seen as coming from the DUP, Presbyterianism or Protestant ministers, "liberalised youths", are more likely to "backlash against the Protestant traditions than the Catholic one".

"Down south, increasingly now, the past is viewed as this Catholic theocracy and people backlash against that, whereas in the North, Catholicism was the oppressed tra-

dition so it didn't have that level of social control for people then to backlash against, so it's kind-of the opposite in the Protestant situation up North," Dr Turpin told this paper.

"So I think there are various reasons up North where you don't get the backlash against Catholicism, and it seems to be directed more towards Protestantism and those are more to do with conservative influence over the State I think."

The 2021 Northern Ireland census

revealed that 17.4% of the population now identify as having 'No religion'. This is an increase of 7.3% on 2011 when 10.1% had 'No religion'.

Mid and East Antrim (32.2%) and Ards and North Down (28.5%) were the Local Government Districts with the highest percentage of the population whose current religion was the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, but Mid and East Antrim saw around one in four people (23.9%) and Ards and North Down one in three peo-

ple (32.1%) as having 'no religion' or 'religion not stated'.

Meanwhile, Lisburn and Castlereagh (16.3%) was one of the Local Government Districts with the highest percentage of the population whose current religion was Church of Ireland, and also saw around one in four people (25.3%) identify as having no religion or 'religion not stated'.

See pages 16-17

## Elderly worried by euthanasia legislation, say Irish bishops

Ruadhán Jones

The elderly feel "vulnerable and worry" when they hear talk of assisted suicide and euthanasia, the Irish bishops said in their 'Day for Life' message.

In a statement read out in parishes across the country on October 2, the bishops warned that many elderly feel like they are "treated as a burden or a

'bed-blocker'".

"They often feel vulnerable and worry, when they hear talk about and even concrete proposals for the legalisation of assisted suicide and euthanasia," the Irish bishops said. "We share their concerns."

The pandemic highlighted the "desperate plight" of many older people, the bishops' message says.

They lamented the "bur-

den" carried by the elderly and their families, including delayed medical interventions and "tragic, isolated, deaths".

"Many family members and friends continue to bear the wound of deep grief which hurts and is still in need of healing."

The chair of the council for life Bishop Kevin Doran called on the wider community to "acknowledge and appreciate" the gifts of the elderly.

## Irish laywoman appointed to safeguarding commission

Staff reporter

Pope Francis has appointed Teresa Devlin, CEO of the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, as a new member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland Eamon

Martin welcomed Ms Devlin's appointment, saying that the Pope appoints those "who have demonstrated a deep commitment to safeguarding and to developing wide expertise and best practice".

"I am confident that Teresa will work positively with the Commission and bring her extensive experience of working with the

Catholic Church in Ireland to the sharing and development of safeguarding best practice initiatives across the global Church.

"It is also my hope that Teresa's presence on such an important international body will help bring back to Ireland fresh insights for the benefit of safeguarding in this country," Dr Martin said.

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## Rallying for Our Lady...



Men kneel in prayer at a rosary rally on Grand Parade, Cork, on Saturday, October 1. Rosary rallies have been taking place across Ireland as an act of public reparation.

## PSNI failing to reach out to Catholics says police guild

Continued from Page 1

at the "piecemeal" nature of how they were finding out about initiatives to reach out to potential new officers.

Sergeant Eoghan O'Conraoi, who is originally from Tyrone and has served in the police for 20 years, said outreach to Catholics/nationalists by the PSNI is

"very weak, and in some cases it's non-existent", adding that "policing here still has an awful lot of baggage for various reasons".

"The situation is that we're 20 years on from 50:50, if the police service, our police service, was doing their job properly, there'd be no requirement for 50:50 and that is a simple fact,"

Sergeant O'Conraoi said.

"And I say the guild is trying to assist in trying to redress that, because only through total representation will policing ever be right. And policing is not right even after 20 years. So the services failed to go out into the Catholic and nationalist communities and link in with them. Because there's

no binding between the Catholic, nationalist, republican community and policing," he said.

The Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin has previously called for the practice of 50:50 recruitment of Catholic and Protestant officers to be restored.

See pages 10-11



# Don't overlook the role of faith in a united Ireland...

**M**any aspects of a united Ireland are being currently discussed – and rightly so. What will the impact be on the economy, the health service, education? And how might we salute flags, anthems, and other symbols?

## “And what about the role of faith in a reunited Ireland?”

Shall we use kilometres or miles (or a mixture of the two, as often happens)? Will there be two concurrent currencies? Will Irish still be designated the first language? The conversation should be as wide-ranging as possible.

And what about the role of faith in a reunited



**Mary Kenny**

Ireland?

Much was made of the recent census findings that in the Northern Ireland state, Catholics now outnumber Protestants by 45.7% to 43.48% indicating a change in demographics. There are secularising trends in the North, as elsewhere, but nevertheless, people in Northern Ireland usually do take their faith traditions seriously.

## Re-united Ireland

So, what would the religious impact be of a re-united Ireland? That surely should be factored into the picture.

In his recent book, *Can Ireland Be One*, the writer

Malachi O'Doherty (a cradle, but not a believing, Catholic) looks at the variety of religious experience north and south, but does not see religion as a “binding force for the creation of a coherent Irish nation”.

## “Catholics and Protestants may have doctrinal differences, but they share many ethical and Scriptural basics”

(He also suggests that Protestants in the Republic of Ireland weren't well-

treated: I direct him to Gay Byrne's autobiography, in which Gaybo describes how Catholics got the lower jobs at Dublin's Guinness works, and yet, Catholics had nothing but respect for their Protestant neighbours and co-workers.)

## National consensus

Contrarily, I believe that a united Ireland would bring a reinvigorating element of faith into the national consensus. There would be a much bigger space for questions of faith and a bigger focus on faith values in

a re-united state. Catholics and Protestants may have doctrinal differences, but they share many ethical and Scriptural basics. Daíl Eireann would have to accommodate more men and women who are used to standing up for their faith, rather than being whipped through by the party machine.

The economy, health, education, flags and anthems – and the role of religion will be all be key elements in framing a re-united Ireland.

## “Daíl Eireann would have to accommodate more men and women who are used to standing up for their faith, rather than being whipped through by the party machine”

● A dear cousin of mine, May Mannion of Clifden, Co. Galway, died recently in her 90s, mother of a loving family and extended kin. She was a wonderfully sunny-natured person with a great memory of times gone by, having been a schoolteacher (and the descendant of school-teachers).

She remembered an especially vivid day in her young life when, in 1947, she returned from teacher training college to find that running water had been installed in their home. It was a moment of celebration – May used a charming old West of Ireland expression about feeling pleased: “I wouldn't have called the Queen of England my aunt!”

Until the late 1940s, in many parts of rural Ireland, water was obtained at the nearby pump, and it usually fell to women to bring it home in pails. We forget what hardships people endured, within living memory. Ar dhéis Dé go raibh a hanam.

## Much ado about Monroe...

A spokeswoman for Britain's largest abortion provider, the BPAS, has lodged an objection to the new Netflix movie about Marilyn Monroe, *Blonde*. Molly Boyden said that movie “over-sensationalised abortion” and was “incredibly unhelpful” to the abortion cause.

## Close-up images

The film depicts vivid close-up images of the unborn throughout the story, and quite truthfully describes how the big studios forced women into abortions because a baby would interrupt their career – and reduce the revenue the stars were generating for Hollywood. *Blonde*, written by the respected American writer Joyce Carol Oates, shows how deeply her abortion experience afflicted the already fragile Marilyn Monroe.

The movie is not an easy watch overall. The actress, who had a tough childhood, is seen being



Ana de Armas as Marilyn Monroe in the new biopic *Blonde*, recently released on Netflix.

raped (by Charlie Chaplain's son, Cass), exploited, disrespected, beaten by her husband Joe di Maggio, and forced into humiliating sexual acts. There's a sordid scene with President Jack Kennedy which is hardly

credible.

The Cuban actress, Ana de Armas, looks and sounds uncannily like her Monroe character, and Adrien Brody is well-cast as Arthur Miller. The film is currently in the Netflix top ten.

● There's a campaign afoot to persuade people that teapots are helpful to the environment. The reasoning is that a teabag or two brewed in a teapot can serve three or four tea-drinkers, whereas a single-use tea-bag in an individual mug is more wasteful of both tea-bags and water. I dislike single-use tea-bags served in a mug because you can't put the milk in first, so whenever possible, I use a teapot.

A teapot also represents a kind of heart-warming shared cuppa, and if serving tea to more than one person it surely is more energy-efficient.

But can the teapot be revived? Some households no longer possess such an item!

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# Archbishop Farrell promises parishes streamlined admin to encourage outreach

**Ruadhán Jones**

Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell has promised to “streamline” the administrative burdens on parishes, saying it is “critical” to promote outreach.

## Building Hope

Many of the 76% of parishes who have so far participated in the diocese’s ‘Building Hope’ process warned that high administration responsibilities for priests do “not serve the pastoral life of the parish”.

In response, Archbishop Farrell promised to expand supports to parishes in areas of procurement, payroll and book-keeping, “helping to free local resources for greater pastoral focus”.

In addition, a newly appointed asset manager, in conjunction with the new diocesan property committee, will work with parishes “to determine the most appropriate property requirements within each parish partnership” and “to assist in setting the future strategic direction of property throughout the Archdiocese”.

According to the archbishop’s summary of parish feedback, the “struggle to attract/involve” young people was a “grave concern” raised by 94% of parishes. Some 68% said that pastoral outreach needs improvement, particularly for the marginalised or for those who feel excluded.

## Active evangelisation

A further 81% identified the need for development in evangelisation, with many feeling the need for a structure or framework for active evangelisation and were unsure of the approach and

resources available.

The parishes’ feedback, drawn from meetings held at local levels during the summer and analysed by the ‘Building Hope’ committee, also identifies a need for “basic education on social justice issues”.

The section on social justice received fewer responses than others, with parishes saying the language used was “difficult to understand”.

Parishes of the diocese are now being invited to meet again and reflect on Archbishop Farrell’s summary of their responses.

As part of the meetings held over the summer, potential parish partnerships have been identified at a local level. The named partnerships will be announced in the next ‘Building Hope’ communication, planned for Advent.

## Mass schedule

In the meantime, parishes are being encouraged to restructure their Mass schedule, while pastoral councils are to consider closer collaboration with partner parishes.

# Priests ‘pulling out chequebook’ to pay school bills

**Staff reporter**

Struggling schools are turning to their local parish priest to help pay their energy bills, despite hikes in the capitation grant, said TD Michael Collins.

Mr Collins criticised Minister for Education Norma Foley’s claim that there was “no reason” for schools to

ask for voluntary contributions this year following the rise in capitation grants.

“It is a fairly ridiculous claim,” the Independent TD told *The Irish Catholic*.

“Priests are pulling cheques out of their chequebooks to keep lights on in their local school.”

A one-off €90 million energy subsidy has been promised by the

in Budget 2023, on top of a 40% increase of standard capitation grants.

However, due to the spiralling energy costs, schools are being faced with two choices, Mr Collins said.

“They can knock on the parish priest’s door and ask for help... or schools are making the decision to pay what they can and send

the electricity and oil bills to the department because if they do not, the power will be turned off and the school will close down,” he warned.

Mr Collins said that schools can’t keep going back to “mom and dad, they’re stretched already”.

“If the local church can’t pay out every bill that comes their way, what will happen then? I don’t know,” he finished.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### New exhibition celebrates Ireland’s people with Down syndrome

A collection of more than 40 black and white portraits of members of the Offaly Down Syndrome Association has been put together by one of Ireland’s most celebrated press photographers.

James Crombie’s exhibition will be shown in various locations across Ireland during October, which is Down Syndrome Awareness Month.

Mr Crombie told RTE: “It’s a really diverse group. We have nine-month-olds to 55-year-olds. It is about inclusion and raising awareness. Showing the world that a person with Down syndrome is so much more than one extra chromosome. Everyone has their own interests and their own story.”

### Support service launched for mother and baby home victims

The NI Executive Office has appointed the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) to provide new services for victims of Northern Ireland’s mother and baby homes, supported by Adopt NI and the Wave Trauma Centre.

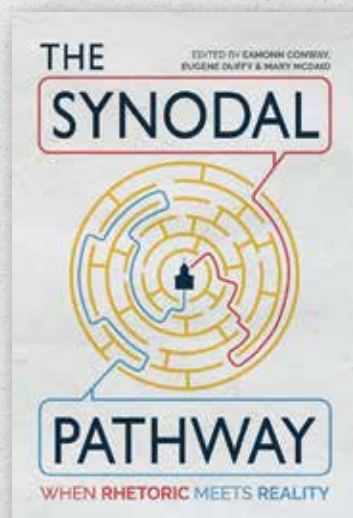
People impacted by the mother and baby homes, workhouses and Magdalene laundries will now have access to health and wellbeing services.

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## Pope commends Edmund Rice group on sustainability work



**Jason Osborne**

Pope Francis received the leadership of the Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders group September 29, commending them for their work around the world in helping to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

The meeting took place in Pope Francis’s private apartment in Rome to discuss how school communities “can help to create a world that is more just, sustainable and peaceful”.

Gerry Bennett, CEO of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust in Ireland and Chairperson of the Edmund Rice Beyond Borders’ leadership group said that they shared with the Pope “the wonderful work that teachers, students and our school leaders are doing in Ireland and around the world”.

“The Pope, in turn, invited the Edmund Rice schools to continue to commit to building a world that cares for each other and the planet,” Mr Bennett said.



# Irish priest tells of homes 'torn to shreds' in Florida hurricane

Chai Brady

An Irish priest based in Florida has told of the devastation caused by Hurricane Ian, with the death toll estimated at around 100 people so far.

Fr Murchadh O'Madagain PP of St Vincent de Paul in Fort Myers, is originally from Co. Galway. He told *The Irish Catholic* that while his parish was fortunate to escape the worst of the Category 4 hurricane – which made landfall near Fort Myers – other parishes were not so fortunate.

"It was pretty scary. There was high winds for 12 hours, the noise of it is exhausting. There were a few times I was beginning to wonder was the roof going to come off, that's what it felt like. I'm very close to some of the areas that were really badly hit but we're just out of the worst of

it thankfully," he said.

The worst hit areas were Sanibel Island and Fort Myers Beach on the coast, but further inland high winds and flooding, particularly near rivers, caused huge amounts of damage. Despite being only a mile and a half from the Caloosahatchee River, Fr O'Madagain escaped flooding. However, anyone beside the river faced up to 2-metre surges, he said.

"The places that were worst hit were around the river, better homes were recovered more easily," he explained.

"In parish next to me called Jesus the Worker – a much poorer parish – the parish priest Fr Patrick O'Connor told me that during the storm people were leaving their homes because they were literally being torn to shreds and running

to the church with their kids to take shelter. A lot of them would be in trailers or poorly made homes, they were torn to shreds, there is nothing to go back to."

While his church grounds were "in bits" the church suffered minor damages despite winds of more than 100 miles per hour, he said, adding "Down on the waterfront they had sustained winds of 150 miles an hour, which is almost tornado speed."

Fr O'Madagain's parish have a 'food pantry' which people use every week to get free groceries, it has been "cleared out of food because so many people are suddenly stuck".

"Another big problem after the hurricane, a lot of people don't have power or water. They're really good about restoring it as quickly as they



A flooded community in Fort Myers, Florida. Photo: CNS

can but it can still be up to two weeks for some people," he said, adding that while his power was restored after a day and a half, some people still don't have any.

## Irish religious and missionaries taken for granted, warns AMRI

Ruadhán Jones

The work of Irish religious and missionaries in setting up schools, hospitals and more has been "taken for granted", warned Fr Brendan Coffey OSB.

Fr Coffey, president of the Asso-

ciation of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious in Ireland (AMRI), said the "wider story" of the good done in Ireland by religious isn't being shown today.

Irish religious and missionaries "really did drag a whole swathe of the country out of poverty and illiteracy", Fr Coffey told *The Irish*

*Catholic*.

Services like hospitals, hospices and schools "wouldn't have existed without them, they simply wouldn't have been able to", he added.

"A lot of work done over the years, particularly by women religious but also by Christian Broth-

ers and Presentation Brothers, has been taken for granted... people took them for granted."

Fr Coffey's comments come as AMRI launches its five-year plan to future-proof religious and missionary life in Ireland, at a time when congregations are shrinking.

As part of the plan, AMRI are

launching a new communications strategy, with Fr Coffey admitting that "we're not very good at promoting ourselves".

"It's not in the nature of the work" religious and missionaries do to seek publicity or a "pat on the back", Fr Coffey said.

### A new pallium...



Archbishop of Tuam Francis Duffy (right) receives his pallium, a symbol of his authority over the archdiocese of Tuam, from the Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin, October 2. Photo: Sinead Mallee

### President calls on Nicaragua's leader to release prisoners

Staff reporter

President Michael D. Higgins has called on the leader of Nicaragua's authoritarian regime Daniel Ortega to release hundreds of prisoners.

The President called on President Ortega, a former friend, to release people "who have a right to participate in debate on the future of their country".

The European Parliament passed a motion last month calling on the release of more than 200 political prisoners and condemning the regime's "repression" of the Church. The motion also decried the arrest of numerous priests and Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa diocese – who was publicly critical of the regime's human rights abuses.

In a statement to the *Irish Times* President Higgins expressed "the deepest sense of sadness and disappointment at the contradiction of the principles which so many shared in the construction of a post-dictatorship society".

President Higgins had a close relationship with President Ortega, inviting him to his home in Galway for tea in 1989 during a visit to Ireland.

President Ortega has come under increasing international pressure following his clampdown on NGOs, civil society groups, political opponents – who were all either exiled or jailed in the last election – and the Church, in order to stem any dissent.

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# Understanding solidarity in sport



Governments and sporting organisations must ensure equal participation and access to sport for all children, not just the able bodied, **Gerard Gallagher** hears

**R**ecently an international summit on sport was held in the Vatican under the theme 'Sport for All', September 29-30.

Pope Francis addressed the attendees and spoke of "promoting the notion of sport as something for everyone: cohesive, accessible and fit for every person".

Those in attendance represented more than 40 countries, including the heads of many sporting organisations, athletes, members of faith communities.

Opening the event, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, noted that "sport can contribute to the integral good of the human person". He spoke of changing the way we think about sport in society. He pointed out that the Church is not looking to influence sporting organisations, but in the spirit of *Fratelli Tutti*, the Church can recognise the positive values that sport brings to society and ultimately the common good.

## Sport and solidarity

A common theme across many of the presentations was the understanding of solidarity within sport. Thomas Bach, who is President of the International Olympic Committee, welcomed both the support the Olympics has received from Pope Francis and the Pope's support for the change of the Olympic's motto.

**“A declaration on sport was signed by all the delegates at the end of the conference with Pope Francis”**

The motto of 'Faster, Higher, Stronger' now has an added value – 'Together'. Bach spoke of the power of sport to make the world a better place, saying that: "Sport and faith can complement each other."

He also quoted Pope Francis who has said, "Sport is a tool to communicate values, to build a better society." This was a strong point



Pope Francis greets a young person at the Sport for All summit in the Vatican.

also made by Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Mr Grandi recounted examples of how sport helped and healed many thousands of refugees and migrants around the world. He gave examples as to how sport assisted the betterment of those fleeing war, famine and injustice. The Olympics provided a space, a community of welcome so that they could participate as equals with other athletes. This point was echoed by Thomas Bach who said that at the Olympics

everyone is equal, "uniting the one and only human race".

## The challenge

Discussion and debate took place on three key themes of the summit. How can sport ensure it is really for all – cohesive, accessible and tailored to each person.

Delegates were impressed by various testimonies as to how sport can make a difference. Andrew Parson who is President of the International Olympic Committee pointed

out how Para-Olympians can be role models in society, doing the impossible and achieving greatness. He challenged governments and sporting organisations to ensure there was equal participation and access to sport for all children and not just the able bodied. Education of everyone within sport can lead to changes in how people perceive the equal access to sport for everyone. Sport needs to reduce the gap in poorer communities to allow equal access to sport.

**“The Olympics provided a space, a community of welcome so that they could participate as equals with other athletes”**

Tim Shriver, from the International Special Olympics enthused everyone in attendance to point out that "Sport is the elimination business – for some participants there has to be a winner". He pointed out that in the Special Olympics it is the opposite. It is where the various 'perceived' weakness will make us strong. Ireland has a special relationship with the Special Olympics, which took place here in 2003 and transformed and educated a whole nation.

## Faith and sport

One experience we all have in common is sport. Bishop Emmanuel Gobilliard, who is the Bishop Delegate for the Paris Olympic Games, observed there are different ways

that people encounter sport. Firstly there are the professional sports and those who take part at the elite level. He then pointed out the second group is made up of amateurs who take part in many different types of sports experiences. He then noted the final group is intergeneration, those who watch sport on television. He noted this was a form of 'communion', a common experience that elderly people right down to young people experience together.

A declaration on sport was signed by all the delegates at the end of the conference with Pope Francis. The Church and sporting organisations are now challenged to find ways of making sport accessible to everyone, equally. It states: "Everyone must be able to find sports practices suited to their potential, abilities and skills. The sports offered must be adaptable to the needs, limitations and potential of each person."

Sport can be used as a path towards integration to build on Pope Francis' themes of creating cultures of encounter and friendship.

Pope Francis concluded by saying, "Sport can be a symbol of unity for a society, an experience of integration, an example of cohesion and message of concord and peace...If the world of sport conveys unity and cohesion, it can become a formidable ally in building peace."

**i** Gerard Gallagher works with AMRI (Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland) and has just published, *Faith – In Search of Greater Glory in Sport*, Hero Books, which is available in Easons, Veritas and Amazon.



Pope Francis smiles after being presented with a rugby ball at the Sport for All summit in the Vatican audience hall September 30. Photos: CNS



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# Building a police force for all



Encouraging Catholics to join the police in the North continues to be a challenge for many reasons, PSNI officers tell **Chai Brady**

**T**he North of Ireland has a long history of sectarianism that continues to rear its ugly head to this day. A police force that is more representative can help to tackle legacy issues, but just how willing is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to actively push for Catholic recruits?

The reform of policing was a key part of the jigsaw of the peace process. The RUC was never trusted by Catholics and as a force was often described by nationalists as '92% Protestant, 100% unionist'.

For decades, Church leaders declined calls for them to encourage young Catholics to join the RUC.

This changed in 2001, three years after the Good Friday Agreement, when the Catholic bishops changed their stance and threw their weight behind reforms that would see the end of the RUC and the birthing of a new police service – the PSNI.

**“In the 20 years since, we’ve come a long way – but recruiting and retaining Catholics is still a major challenge”**

In the 2001 shift, the bishops said: “sufficient grounds now exist to give real hope for a new beginning in policing.

“We believe that the time is now right for all those who sincerely want a police service that is fair, impartial and representative to grasp the opportunity that is presented and to exercise their influence to achieve such a service,” they continued.

In the 20 years since, we’ve come a long way – but recruiting and retaining Catholics is still a major challenge.

Leading members of the newly founded Catholic Police Guild of Northern Ireland sat down with *The Irish Catholic* to discuss the problems Catholic police officers face and what they hope to achieve for them within the PSNI.

One of the main goals of the guild, according to PSNI Superintendent Gerry Murray, is to be a support for Catholics in the police force,



whether that be through assisting with access to pastoral supports or helping them “challenge inappropriate behaviour” from fellow officers. They also want to be a force that will help more Catholics make the decision to join the PSNI.

Mr Murray joined the police in Northern Ireland when it was still the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary) when the force just had 8% of officers who were Catholic.

## Workforce composition

According to workforce composition statistics published by the PSNI in August just one-third of police officers now are Catholic (32.3%). The introduction of 50:50 recruitment of Catholic and Protestant officers in 2001 until 2011 led to an increase of Catholic representation to 30%. Recent indicators show the numbers of Catholic recruits is declining, which has led some politicians and Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin to call for a return of 50:50 recruitment.

Of the officers hired in the PSNI's 2020 recruitment campaign, 75% were Protestant (144) and 24% were Catholic (46).

Inspector Arthur McKenna who has been in the PSNI for 28 years and whose father was in the RUC, said the guild not only wants to improve representation in the police force, but in the police support staff too – which is just 20% Catholic.

He feels that the PSNI is still not doing enough to reach out to Catholic communities and that the guild had to “jump through hoops” to be recognised as an official minority group in the first place.

“One of the main objectives is to improve the representation of

Catholics, both in the police and the police support staff which is only roughly about 24%. So it's not just about police, it's about the support staff, as well. There's a massive dichotomy,” he said.

Speaking about PSNI authorities, Inspector McKenna said: “They were well aware of what one of our main objectives is...to improve the recruitment of Catholics into polic-



Chief Inspector Graham Dodds, who acts as a communications officer for the Catholic Police Guild.

ing in Northern Ireland. To hopefully, aspirationally, not be a minority association in five to 10 years.”

Sergeant Eoghan O'Conraoi, who is originally from Tyrone and has served in the police for 20 years, said outreach to Catholics/nationalists by the PSNI is “very weak, and in some cases it's non-existent”, adding that “policing here still has an awful lot of baggage for various reasons”.

“The situation is that we're 20 years on from 50:50, if the police service, our police service, was doing their job properly, there'd be no requirement for 50:50 and that is a simple fact,” Sergeant O'Conraoi said.

“And I say the guild is trying to assist in trying to redress that, because only through total representation will policing ever be right. And policing is not right even after 20 years. So the services failed to go out into the Catholic and nationalist communities and link in with them. Because there's no binding between the Catholic, nationalist, republican community and policing. There's no links. I never knew a police officer, nobody, it didn't happen. I'm from Tyrone – it just did not happen.”

**“Not new in the UK, it's been going for over 100 years – massively established with loads of members”**

Before any of this work could start, they had to establish themselves as a minority group. They needed permission from the most senior officials in the PSNI – which they say was very difficult, and there was a lot of “push back”.

Chief Inspector Graham Dodds, who acts as a communications officer for the organisation and comes from an Anglican background, said he felt it was essential the group was established.

Regarding efforts to establish the Catholic Police Guild of Northern Ireland, Mr Dodds said: “There was, I think, a very unfair resistance from our headquarters. There are other groups, such as the Christian Police Association, which is technically open to everybody, but it would be mainly Protestant. And there's other groups such as the Ethnic Minority Police Association and LGBTQ. So

they've been around for a while.

“But the Catholic Police Guild is new. Not new in the UK, it's been going for over 100 years – massively established with loads of members. But whenever it was talked about here, it was really an uphill battle to get the PSNI authorities to sanction it. And I'm not sure we all understand, even now, why. Obviously, Northern Ireland is very political and the police are very much about being impartial,” he said.

“What I still don't understand was that all the other associations had really no problem. The hoops that the guys and girls had to go through to get the guild set up, appalled me... somebody at headquarters said this misplaced thing that if you set up a Catholic Police Guild it would make us look not impartial, it will annoy Protestants. As a Protestant, I was annoyed for my Catholic colleagues.”

He added that the guild is very open to everybody, Protestant or Catholic. “I've been made welcome to the extent I sit on the committee. I help out with the comms stuff. I think it really shows the value of the guild and it certainly undermines all the nonsense that headquarters put in our way,” he said.

Mr Dodds claims that the Catholic Police Guild is the only group that wasn't given sufficient notice or allowed to be sufficiently involved in the latest big PSNI recruitment process, saying “you could almost make the argument that we were actively excluded”.

He said the guild were the only group that was not consulted and “found everything out at the last minute for this big drive to recruit more Catholics”.

“We were finding out about events



# of the community



Leading members of the Catholic Police Guild of Northern Ireland Chief Inspector Graham Dodds, Superintendent Gerry Murray, Sergeant Eoghan O'Conraoi and Inspector Arthur McKenna. Photo: Chai Brady

from other minority groups. And events were being organised, but not really being promoted and yet, headquarters, and our senior people were saying, 'We're brilliant. We're having outreach events,'" said Mr Dodds. "I'm someone who's worked in predominantly Catholic areas over my service. And I was speaking to Catholic friends of mine in Mid Ulster, I asked, 'Do you know about these events?' - 'No'. Speaking to people at Catholic schools, 'Did you know about these events?' - 'Nobody told us.'

"If we had been involved as a guild, we could have said, 'You need to speak to these people, you need to go there'. And whenever we challenged that, the headquarters' response was a back slapping, saying, 'Oh no, our campaign's really, really good. And we've done all these things.'"

**“Superintendent Murray added to that by saying the guild should have been ‘front and centre’ and involved in school visits”**

Mr Dodds added that he feels “it’s almost as if they were ashamed of us”. Being a Protestant, he added that he believes his Catholic colleagues have to give up more to become police officers, whereas those from Protestant communities who join increase their social status. He said: “My Catholic friends and colleagues, they lose out because they often can’t tell people. They often can’t go to the same place of worship they’ve always went to. They might not be able to go to the same Gaelic Club. They might not be able to tell their family and friends. That’s one of the reasons, I suppose, I’m very supportive of the guild, because I want my Catholic friends, neighbours, and people I’ve never met to feel that this police service is as much for them as it is for me and

anybody else.”

Superintendent Murray added to that by saying the guild should have been “front and centre” and involved in school visits.

After the recruitment drive Mr McKenna said he sent an “incendiary” email to the PSNI authorities with responsibility for recruitment, in which he outlined the guild’s disappointment at the “piecemeal” nature of how they were finding out about initiatives to reach out to potential new officers.

He said they were either “incredibly incompetent or bigoted”.

## Demographics

Eoghan O'Conraoi said that if the senior executive team really want to portray the PSNI as an organisation that's representative of the demographics of Northern Ireland's society, a high ranking officer, could stand in front of headquarters and say “We want to move forward. We have got a Catholic Police Guild. We will embrace change within this organisation,” he said. “They won’t do it. You nail them to the mast, they will not do it because it’s not politically expedient for their own careers, because of the politics of the policing board and the recruitment of senior officers. “What you also have then in the senior ranks is accelerated promotion, high potential development

schemes. So therefore, if you get on that at a lower rank, you’re obviously then attached to your mentor who’s a senior-ranking officer, superintendent, chief, super and above. So you’ve got a bigger opportunity to get pulled up the greasy pole,” he said.

“And if you have, then, a disproportionate number of a certain religion up there, well they’re going to cherry pick who they get to pull up. It’s sad, but how do you break that? How do you cut that?”

**“The process of founding the guild began during the pandemic which added an extra layer difficulty”**

Inspector McKenna told this paper the challenges he and other members of the guild say they faced setting it up. Initially they contacted the Catholic Police Guild of England and Wales, which was established more than 100 years ago, in 1914. They already had a long-standing constitution which was copied by the newly founded Irish guild.

Mr McKenna said the reason there hasn’t been a guild founded



Sergeant Eoghan O'Conraoi and Inspector Arthur McKenna discuss the PSNI's future and the role of the Catholic Police Guild.



Superintendent Gerry Murray - the longest serving Catholic police officer in the North.

in Northern Ireland is because of its history and politics. “It’s the elephant in the room. You can talk about LGBT, ethnic minorities, but don’t talk Catholic and Protestant. But that’s not mature,” he said.

The process of founding the guild began during the pandemic which added an extra layer of difficulty. “It was very difficult to gauge people’s reaction when you’re submitting and it’s a phone conference call. It’s really different. But we were pushed back. We were pushed back by senior officers, ACCs, Head of HR,” said Mr McKenna.

## Committee

He says that the Deputy Chief Constable said to the members of a committee at the most senior level of the PSNI regarding the proposed establishment of the guild that they could not refuse particularly as there’s a guild for England and Wales representing 42 other constabularies. Mr McKenna continued saying: “So it was put in abeyance, basically. We had to go away and they were questioning our constitution. They were questioning the constitution in relation to the wording, which is fine. Because it’s over 100 years old. It’s quite sexist – that [their criticism] is fine. I get that. But there were other things that they were questioning in relation to the constitution, in relation to the prayer and what do we mean by fraternity? What do we mean by looking after others within the organisation? “I remember saying ‘This is not our constitution. It is not for you to change. It’s a reflection of England and Wales’ constitution. It is the constitution of every single individual member of the Catholic Police Guild’. And at that stage, roughly 230, 240 had all signed up. So that shouted out at me,” he said. The guild currently has more than 300 members.

“And then it was put in abeyance to come back to the next cultural board to make those amendments in our constitution and to jump through a few other hoops, which we did do. And we told them that we would obviously discuss this with the England and Wales committee and seek their views. And

that was fine,” he said, adding that among the things they changed was the references just to men and not women.

After making the changes requested, Mr McKenna said that at the 11th hour just before the next meeting they were requested to make several more changes.

“There was something like seven other changes that they wanted, over and above what they had already dictated to us. And I said, ‘No, we’re not changing them’. So we knew we were going to into the lions’ den again,” he said. After “reluctance” and further discussion, the guild was approved.

**“The Catholic Police Guild are determined to encourage young Catholics to join the PSNI and also support those who are already employed to feel comfortable and supported, despite the challenges”**

Mr McKenna also expressed concern about the retention of Catholic staff, saying there is a disproportionate amount leaving the PSNI and “they haven’t done anything about it”.

Anecdotally he says there are Catholic officers who feel uncomfortable in their own communities following their decision to join the police and there is “a fear factor” that the PSNI “don’t fully understand”.

Speaking on the issue, Mr Murray said: “You can do more to recruit people, because maybe after 15 months or 18 months, a young Catholic police officer could say, ‘You know, I’m not sure whether it’s for me’. But we would be in position to support the officer when these sort of thoughts are coming through.”

The Catholic Police Guild are determined to encourage young Catholics to join the PSNI and also support those who are already employed to feel comfortable and supported, despite the challenges.



# Pope Francis is right to call for a peace-deal in Ukraine



Sixty years on from the Cuban Missile Crisis, Pope's plea for cool heads is timely, writes David Quinn

It is 60 years ago this month since the Cuban missile crisis, which brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. Older readers will remember the events of those fateful few weeks well. When the Cold War ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, most people probably believed the threat of nuclear war was now a thing of the past. Unfortunately, Vladimir Putin's disastrous and immoral decision to invade Ukraine has revived the old fear. The possibility of him resorting to nuclear weapon use as Russian troops struggle on the field of battle cannot be ruled out.

**“The Pope is correct to issue this warning because few other leaders are doing so”**

On Sunday, Pope Francis addressed the crowd gathered in St Peter's Square for the noonday Angelus and spoke about the Ukraine-Russia war in his strongest, most urgent tone to date.

In a clear reference to Russia's illegal annexation last week of large parts of Ukrainian territory, he said: “I deplore strongly the grave situation created in the last days, with further actions contrary to the principles of international law.”

But then he added: “It [the annexation], in fact, increases the risk of a nuclear escalation, to the point of fearing uncontrollable and catastrophic consequences on the world level.”

The Pope is correct to issue this warning because few other leaders are doing so. Western leaders are barely talking to their voters about the possibility of nuclear weapon use. Maybe they think doing so would frighten us, or that if



Pope Francis leads the Angelus from the window of his studio overlooking St Peter's Square at the Vatican, October 2. In his remarks the Pope begged Russian President Vladimir Putin to stop the war in Ukraine and also called upon Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to be open to serious peace proposals. Photo: CNS/Vatican Media

voters were aware of the risks we now face, they would lose their stomach for this war. At the same time, we deserve to be treated like adults rather than have decisions which can affect us in the most profound way being made a thousand miles over our heads.

Let's reprise the events of October 1962 before proceeding. Cuba lies just 90 miles off the coast of Florida. Three years before, a communist government, led by Fidel Castro, took power. This enormously antagonised America which did not want a Soviet-aligned country so close to them.

They made various attempts to overthrow the Castro regime. Then, in 1962, President John F. Kennedy learned that the Soviet Union had based nuclear missiles there, within easy striking distance of the United States. The Soviet leader at the time was Nikita Khrushchev.

The USSR put their missiles in Cuba partly because America had stationed nuclear weapons of its own in Turkey, in easy reach of Soviet territory.

When Kennedy found out about the missiles, he ordered a naval blockade of Cuba. The Soviets sent warships steam-

ing towards Cuba in response. What would happen when they got there? Would war begin? Would it then escalate to nuclear war?

## Soviets

At the end of October, the Soviets blinked and backed down. The whole world breathed a sigh of relief. Khrushchev removed the missiles. Unknown at the time, the Americans agreed to remove their rockets from Turkey.

After the crisis, President Kennedy delivered a major speech in which he said that in a showdown with a nuclear power, that power must be given a face-saving way out.

As this October drags on, expect there to be a lot of reminders in the media about the crisis of 60 years ago.

It may have been on the mind of Pope Francis in his remarks on Sunday. He was 25 when the crisis happened and would remember it very well.

His remarks on Sunday were those of a man concerned that cool heads are not prevailing in the war and instead things are escalating all the time.

He called the conflict “an error and a horror” and added, “How the war is going in Ukraine has become so grave, devastating and threatening that it sparks great worry”.

He appealed to President Putin to stop this “spiral of violence and death immediately”.

**“It is very hard to see how the Russian army can take the initiative again using conventional weapons”**

“I am pained by the thousands of victims, in particular among the children, and by so much destruction, that leaves many persons and families homeless and threatens vast territories with cold and hunger”, he said.

“And what to say about the fact that humanity finds itself again faced with atomic threat? It's absurd”, he continued.

Turning directly to the leaders of Russia and Ukraine, the Pope implored: “My appeal is directed above all to

the president of the Russian Federation, imploring him to stop, also for the love of his people, this spiral of violence and death. On the other side, pained by the immense suffering of the Ukrainian people following the aggression undergone, I direct a similarly trusting appeal to the president of Ukraine to be open to serious proposals of peace”.

Currently, the Ukrainians are winning on the battlefield. It is very hard to see how the Russian army can take the initiative again using conventional weapons. This is why there is more and more talk of battlefield nuclear weapons being used. Influential Americans say the US would then have to strike back at the Russian army directly. That would mean a direct war between Russia and America, with the possibility of an all-out nuclear conflict.

This is what has the Pope so worried. We are now in a game of poker with the highest possible stakes. In the best-case scenario, the Russians fold, like in 1962, Putin resigns, and the fighting stops. But Cuba was thousands of miles away from Russia, while Ukraine is right

next door.

In the worst-case scenario, Putin is willing to risk everything and he presses the nuclear button, striking Ukrainian forces first. Then Western leaders will say ‘we must not give in to nuclear blackmail’, and they escalate further, after which things could easily go totally out of control.

## Peace

Pope Francis said Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, should be open to “serious proposals of peace”.

None are currently on the table. What might they look like? As I argued in this newspaper when the war broke out, it could be a withdrawal of Russian forces to the pre-February lines, some kind of agreement over the Crimea and those parts of Donbas which the Russians have held since 2014, EU-accession status from the EU (which has already been granted), and well-armed military neutrality for Ukraine.

China and India would have to pressure Russia into accepting such a deal, and the West, Zelenskyy.

Possibly, the Russians will blink in the end, but if they do not, the consequences are too grim to contemplate. This is why Pope Francis was correct last Sunday to make his heart-felt plea. He has the fate of the whole world in mind.

**“When the Cold War ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, most people probably believed the threat of nuclear war was now a thing of the past”**



**"Today the visibility of faith has for all intents and purposes vanished" – Archbishop Dermot Farrell**

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## The Irish Catholic



# Irish pilgrims progress to the Holy Land

**Ruadhán Jones**

**P**ilgrims on their way to the Holy Land as part of *The Irish Catholic's* pilgrimage arrived in Dublin airport on Saturday morning before boarding their flight to Tel Aviv.

The eight-night pilgrimage, organised by Marian Pilgrimages, takes place in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem and other sites in the Holy Land associated with Jesus.



Fr Gregory Carroll OP (Kerry) and his sister Mary Mitchell.  
Photos: John McElroy.



David Phillips (Wexford), Patrick Murphy (Antrim), Bernadette Bergin (Kilkenny) and Dan Bollard (Kilkenny) are pictured in Dublin Airport before boarding their flight to the Holy Land.



Pam and John Towers from Dublin are pictured in Dublin Airport, October 1.



Ginny Murray (Carrickfergus), Celia Burns (Wexford) and Bridget Murray (Dublin).



Denis and Kathleen McLoughney from Co. Tipperary.



Martina Keany.



Mary McDaid (Enniskillen) with Sean Cummins (Dublin) and Mary Boyle (Coalisland).



Liam Lally (Mayo) and Fr Eamonn Conway, Spiritual Director on *The Irish Catholic's* pilgrimage to the Holy Land.



James Chapman (Belfast) with Eamonn and Sonia Donnelly (Belfast).



Philip and Donna Cartin from Derry.



# Pets blessed across the country

## Ruadhán Jones

The blessing of the animals took place across the country over the weekend, October 1-2, ahead of the feast of St Francis of Assisi.

Proud pet owners thronged to Graiguecullen parish centre, Co. Carlow, on October 2 for a drive-through blessing of their pets, with parish priest Fr John Dunphy blessing all comers.

Meanwhile in Churchill, Co. Kerry, Fr Francis Nolan offered a blessing to pets and their owners for their continued health and happiness.



Fr Francis Nolan is pictured with families in Churchill, Co. Kerry, having offered a blessing to the pets and their owners, October 2.



Graiguecullen and Killeslin parishioners queued up in their cars for a drive-through blessing.



Fr John Dunphy blesses an inquisitive dog at Graiguecullen parish centre, Co. Carlow, on Sunday



Fr Nolan takes time to get to know the pets.



# Explaining and understanding the rise in unbelief



Northern Ireland's surge in people claiming to be non-religious is a reminder of just how much explanation is required when it comes to understanding unbelief, writes **Jason Osborne**

**T**he recent census results from Northern Ireland revealed an astonishing increase of 7.3% in those claiming 'no religion' – from 10.1% in 2011 up to 17.4% in 2021. Meanwhile, we eagerly await the results of the 2022 census in the Republic, as the 2016 census also revealed a significant growth of 'no religion' since 2011 – 9.8% of the population up from 5.9% in 2011.

While the shape and direction of society on this island is naturally of most interest to us, this trend isn't limited to Ireland. Across the world, there's a seemingly inexorable growth in those described as 'nones' – people who adhere to no-religion, whether they be atheists, agnostics or anything in between.

Against this backdrop comes the 'Explaining Atheism' project, a £2.7 million endeavour to investigate the reasons behind growing levels of atheism around the world. Led by researchers based at Queen's University Belfast, the project seeks to make sense of the rise in unbelief with a particular focus on six countries; Brazil, China, Denmark, Japan, the UK and the USA.

Dr Jonathan Lanman, senior lecturer in Cognitive Anthro-

pology, is leading the international team on this three-year study, and he told *The Irish Catholic* about the importance of such research at this present moment in history.

"The number of atheists and agnostics is growing substantially around the world. It's raising a number of questions, not just for me as a social scientist of religion. We have theories of religion and secularisation and the growth of atheism/agnosticism allows us to test those theories," Dr Lanman begins.

"But then there are a lot of questions in terms of public policy, education, a lot of issues of how we frame laws around belief and conscientious objection, freedom of religion, freedom of belief. Where do atheism and agnosticism fit into that? Sometimes we find that governments aren't necessarily very knowledgeable about what these things are – atheism/agnosticism, and even worldviews like humanism."

Dr Lanman cites an example of this from a number of years ago, of a Pakistani man seeking asylum in the UK, who claimed that he was humanist and that he was being persecuted for this in Pakistan. Those responsible for evaluating his case responded, "Oh, you're a humanist? Tell me about Aristotle".

"They wanted to quiz him on ancient Greek philosophy, which a lot of contemporary humanists wouldn't know very much about, so there's a real lack of understanding about contemporary worldviews and the changes that are happening and one thing we don't want are policy makers to not have the best, up-to-date information about the people that they're creating policies for."

## Secularism

The reality of rising secularism is something that has to be prepared for, as Dr Lanman says. The results of recent censuses, as outlined above, don't lie, and so research such as the 'Explaining Atheism' project and Dr Lanman's previous 'Understanding Unbelief' programme are crucial in setting out the lay of the contemporary landscape. Dr Lanman described some of the key findings of that last wide-ranging study.

One result, which may surprise many religious believers, is that many atheists, agnostics, and those adhering to 'no-religion'

are open to the existence of supernatural phenomena, Dr Lanman says.

"Only a minority of atheists and agnostics have no beliefs in the existence of any type of supernatural phenomena, which we call naturalists. That number varies, I think it's highest in the US amongst people who would qualify as atheists, where it's just over a third are what we would call naturalists, where across the board when we ask them about supernatural processes and ideas they say, 'No, no, no, no, no'."

"That's a minority position. That's one finding that is quite relevant," Dr Lanman says.

**“Only a minority of atheists and agnostics have no beliefs in the existence of any type of supernatural phenomena”**

"The other one is that the difference between what we might call unbelievers, so atheists and agnostics grouped together, and the general population, on a lot of values and things in terms of human rights and nature and the value of truth and a number of those different things... The differences between those groups is actually not large, so the majority of atheists and agnostics believe in objective morality and human rights and a deep value of nature beyond human use and a number of moral things that people would potentially say, 'Oh, if

you don't have belief in God, you can't have those things.'"

Regardless of the arguments for or against this position, Dr Lanman says it doesn't seem to stop lots of non-religious people from holding these beliefs. Commonalities between the non-religious population and general population on what they hold dear abound in the data.

## Struck

"One thing that really struck us was that we talked to a number of people in our field and we came up with 43 items that people thought across our countries that we've studied might make life meaningful you know, or that people might hold as most valuable. Out of those 43, only 14 made the top five across all the different countries so there was a fair degree of agreement."

"What was really striking is that across unbelievers and the general population, there's basically family and freedom are the two top things and then a lot of overlap on others as well. Things like compassion, truth – those kinds of things. But family and freedom certainly were winning the day across the board."

With findings like these, "anybody who's painting atheists and agnostics as rationalist naturalists, in the Richard Dawkins style" might be surprised to find that this brand of atheism is a "real narrow band of people". Dr Lanman says that their findings urge "a bit of caution" when it comes to assuming the values that necessarily accompany unbelief.



A small group of agnostics, atheists and freethinkers gather for a streetside demonstration in the US. Photos: CNS

If that's the situation society is increasingly in, the question remains as to just why that is so. After all, religion has been a part of the human experience for thousands of years and will continue to be. Dr Lanman says there are "a lot of different theories" about the rise in no-religion, and that with their latest research they're going to try to test as many of them as they can so as to sort out the "wheat from the chaff" in terms of the explanations of atheism.

## Hypotheses

"If you're asking me what my main hypotheses are at the start of this and how I think

this is likely to go – I could very much be wrong through the data – it's a combination of processes," Dr Lanman says.

"I think the key thing that would predict, at least my past work has shown that the key predicting factor to whether an individual ends up a theist versus a non-theist is not just religious socialisation, but a particular type of religious socialisation which is embodied practice."

**“Dr Lanman says it doesn't seem to stop lots of non-religious people from holding these beliefs”**

"It's the extent to which, especially your caregivers as you're growing up, demonstrate the religion and act as good religious role-models and embody their religion through making sacrifices, behaving according to the edicts of the tradition, not being able to be seen as a hypocrite in some way. We find that is potentially disengaging for folks, if they detect religious hypocrisy that can move them away from a religious tradition."

There are a number of things in the last 50-100 years that have reduced the amount of religiosity children see as



'This is no longer a Catholic country' is seen written on a Together for Yes flier during the 2018 referendum.





they grow up, Dr Lanman suggests as another factor, such as the separation of institutions from religious authorities, but also “existential security”.

“As societies increase in wealth and people’s lives are generally better off and they have less stress, they tend to not do as many, say, superstitious rituals. They tend to maybe shy away from constant attendance at religious gatherings and then in times of crisis you would see more of it. But overall, the more secure societies are, and they became more secure over the 20th Century, you would see people practicing less. They would have the belief, but the practice wouldn’t be there and then each generation you would see with lower levels of belief. I think that’s the main thing, but then more recently we’ve seen a supercharged timeline for secularisation and something else may be happening with that.”

### Attention

One of Dr Lanman’s colleague’s, Dr Hugh Turpin of Oxford University, has paid particularly close attention to the Irish context in his research on unbelief and the reasons for it in recent years. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, he outlined different aspects of the decline in Catholicism’s influence in Ireland in recent years.

“It’s pretty hard to pin it down in a very simple way

because it’s the result of a load of interconnecting factors. I mean you could begin with economic changes and life basically becoming somewhat easier and less difficult for people over the course of the 20th Century, so they’re less likely to turn to religion for comfort or to seek the support of their co-religionists through conforming to traditional notions of religious values in the way they once would have been.

**“It’s pretty hard to pin it down in a very simple way because it’s the result of a load of interconnecting factors”**

“On top of that, society is so much more globalised and worldviews are much more difficult to...control through local means. I mean, people’s ideas about what’s right and good or what’s an interesting way of life for decades have been formed by international media and these kinds of things, and now the internet on top of that, so it’s harder to, I suppose, insulate worldviews in the way that it once would have been possible.”

Dr Turpin emphasises the point made by Dr Lanman, that religious practice and socialisation within the home have

been declining for decades. Despite this, in the Republic, people still say they’re Catholic in censuses which leads Dr Turpin to ask “what does that actually mean?”

“It means a fairly superficial connection to almost an ethnic identity that they can forget about most of the time. It doesn’t really mean a tight connection to a religion and practice and beliefs and these kinds of things. So the connection, I think, over the few decades hollowed out a great deal and people were still saying they were Catholic perhaps on surveys and that kind of thing, but it could have been mostly the result of almost unconscious box-ticking or socially desirable responding.”

### Situation

Into this situation of a more economically comfortable population with a “very hollowed out, cultural Catholic connection to the Church”, arose various revelations and scandals from clerical abuse, Dr Turpin says.

With the revelation of the major rise in non-religion in Northern Ireland on many minds following the release of the census data, I asked both Drs Lanman and Turpin what the reason for this could be – particularly in light of the fact that some of the largest ‘no-religion’ gains were made in traditionally Protestant strongholds such as Ards and

## “Despite this, in the Republic, people still say they’re Catholic in censuses which leads Dr Turpin to ask ‘what does that actually mean’”

North Down, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim and more.

Acknowledging an incomplete familiarity with the Northern Irish situation, Dr Lanman suggests at least one of the processes that could be at play.

“In Northern Ireland, my perception since I’ve been living here is that it’s more on the Protestant side than the Catholic side in terms of the religious authorities, who are doing things that, in the technical language that I use, I call ‘theocratic threat’, so that is, developing laws and policies and trying to push laws and policies that bring religion into government.

“So it’s the DUP for the most part who are talking more about religious education and stuff with creationism and homosexuality and this kind of stuff. The Catholic Church in Northern Ireland doesn’t speak out as much on those issues in terms of governance as the DUP.”

### Theory

According to the theory of social scientist Ronald Inglehart, Dr Lanman says, “as folks have these individual choice norms and if the religions that they grew up in, they see as increasingly out of sync with their own values, then there’s going to be a growing reluctance to identify with that tradition, and I think the way the political parties and the religions in Northern Ireland have behaved over the last 10 or 15 years may explain why more people have been driven away from Protestantism than Catholicism”.

Dr Turpin says that while the full research hasn’t been done on Northern Ireland, what the initial results suggest is that “there is a difference, and in the south, most of the non-religious growth, for obvious demographic reasons, is people either rejecting their Catholic affiliation or them not baptising their kids as Catholics, so it’s all coming from an ethno-Catholic background. In the North there is some of that too, but it seems that more of the non-religious are actually ex-Protestants and that the Catholics are clinging onto the affiliation a bit more – even if they no longer believe some of them, or they don’t practice anymore, they’re maintaining the ethnic link with Catholicism to a greater degree than the Protestants are, so you have to speculate about why that might be the case.

“So I mean, given what I’ve said about the role of liberalising morality and scandals in the rejection of Catholic affiliation in the south, I suppose,

in the North, you’d have a situation where often, that kind of conservative social influence is seen as stemming from, let’s say, the DUP or Presbyterianism or that kind of thing, so if you get liberalised youths, they’re more likely to backlash against the Protestant traditions than the Catholic one.

**“The Catholic Church in Northern Ireland doesn’t speak out as much on those issues in terms of governance as the DUP”**

“Another factor about the North as well is, you know, down south, increasingly now, the past is viewed as this Catholic theocracy and people backlash against that, whereas in the North, Catholicism was the oppressed tradition so it didn’t have that level of social control for people then to backlash against, so it’s kind-of the opposite in the Protestant situation up North. So I think there are various reasons up North where you don’t get the backlash against Catholicism, and it seems to be directed more towards Protestantism and those are more to do with conservative influence over the State I think.”

While the significant rise

in no-religion in Northern Ireland surprised Dr Turpin, the result didn’t come out of the blue, as different studies have suggested a latent secularity that was waiting to come out in recent years.

“There’s one called the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey, for example and in 2021, that found 28% of the population ticked no-religion, which is even more than the census...10% more even than the census.”

### Gulf

“So there’s some huge gulf, and there’s some issue to do with how questions are asked in these censuses. They seem to tap into a very unconscious sort of responding, you know? ‘Oh yeah, I got baptised, right, that’s that box ticked’. The other surveys that ask more complex questions tend to make people reflect on their answers a bit more and produce these much larger non-religious responses. So I don’t know; did something happen over the last decade that made people think more about their religious affiliation and less inclined to tick the box unconsciously in some way?” Dr Turpin asks.

These secularising trends seem set to continue, what with the rapidly rising trajectory they’re on, making research into its origins and setting all the more valuable.



A protestor holds a sign during Pope Benedict XVI's 2010 visit to Edinburgh.



# Finding faith and fraternity in Medjugorje



Some of the 32 men sponsored by the Knights of St Columbanus to go on pilgrimage to Medjugorje are pictured with Fr Leon Pereira OP, the chaplain to English speaking pilgrims.



More than 30 men were sponsored by the Knights of St Columbanus for a faith-filled pilgrimage, Ruadhán Jones hears

“Everyone I talked to said there’s great peace out here and I was hoping to get some peace,” says Giorgio\*, one of the 32 men who went on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje recently. “And I got peace.”

## Highlight

Giorgio is tearful as he recounts the highlight of the week, attending Confession, saying it took a day and a half to build up enough courage to go to a priest. He laughs then, describing the trip as a “massive booster shot... Both me and my family are going to benefit from this”.

His testimony is not unique. “Spiritually over all it has helped me,” says Roberto\*, another of the pilgrims. “I mean, I got back into the church for the first time and

that was a big, big ordeal, knowing that I had to be there, given the responsibility of the prayers of the Faithful. I actually really enjoyed it, I listened and I do want to come back.”

The all-male pilgrimage, organised and sponsored by Irish apostolate the Knights of St Columbanus, was intended to gather men who may be “lukewarm” in their faith, needing the booster shot of a pilgrimage.

The project was a new initiative on the part of the Knights, explains their communications officer Colm O’Farrell: “I’d always had a thing bugging me as to what the Knights could do to reach out to men. Because we’ve a huge problem with the lack of men within the Faith here in Ireland, the fall away of men within the Church. It was all about how can we get men back to the Church.”

There were a number of different ideas bounced around by the Knights, including one from Mr O’Farrell. He had been thinking, “maybe if we go about this differently, why don’t we try outreach in areas we’ve never tried before?”

“Instead of spending money on some of the things we normally would, a group of us felt we should be spending money completely differently and that was an outreach area, trying to bring men back to the Faith, men who had become lost in their faith or weak in their faith. They were the

people we really should be going after.”

The Knight’s supreme executive met to discuss the various proposals, and Mr O’Farrell mentioned his idea to the council of directors. “It got a unanimous vote, they said yes, go for it and see how it goes”.

The plan was for the Knights themselves to reach out to men they knew who they thought would benefit from the pilgrimage. The lay order had put up €20,000 to pay for the entire trip. Once the men had been identified, they would be teamed with a sponsor within the Knights, who would pay their own way.

“This move paid off handsomely, as did approaching Human Rights International”

But initially things didn’t go as planned: “That [finding men] was difficult,” Mr O’Farrell admits. “Initially to be honest it was left to the Knights to go find the men but that didn’t work, that actually failed miserably. Everybody kept coming back and saying, I can’t find anybody, I don’t know anybody, which was absolute nonsense; if you want to find anybody you can.”

“So with the help of Charlie Clarke and another Knight in Belfast Neal Lang, we got in contact with the priests and sent an

email out to about 15-20 priests in Belfast. It was the priests who actually started getting back to us saying, I think this guy would benefit, or this guy would really benefit.”

This move paid off handsomely, as did approaching Human Rights International. They helped with outreach to different communities, advertising what the Knights were hoping to achieve and who they were looking for. In the end, 32 men of varying ages and experiences agreed to come on the pilgrimage.

## Medjugorje

The destination, Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was never in doubt, according to Mr O’Farrell. The small village where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to a number of villagers has become a place of pilgrimage attracting hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year.

“That’s where my own conversion took place,” Mr O’Farrell explains, saying that the place has a special attraction for him as a result. “There have been many conversions through the confessional of Medjugorje. That’s where many of the conversions of some guys that I know took place.”

“I went out on my first trip to Medjugorje in 2008,” he continues. “For the first two or three days I was in the company of my mother and a few other women. I didn’t like it, I couldn’t get into it at all.”

On the third day of his pilgrimage, however, Mr O’Farrell met a man from Belfast who began to show him around. He also introduced Mr O’Farrell to a group of 10 men and a fraternal bond quickly formed.

“The Knights had all sorts of activities planned for the group of men, including Mass, prayers, talks and social activities”

“There was 10 of us talking about our problems, the issues we had. It really resonated with me. And it was then that Medjugorje started to open up to me. That’s what I was thinking about primarily when we chose Medjugorje.”

With that memory in mind, Mr O’Farrell and the Knights began to plan the nitty-gritty details of the trip. The Knights’ communication officer is effusive in his praise of Marian Pilgrimages, with whom they travelled. The Knights had all sorts of activities planned for the group of men, including Mass, prayers, talks and social activities. But they were determined that it would not be forced on anyone.

“It was very fraternal, a great bonding exercise,” Mr O’Farrell reflects. “We didn’t force anybody; they could take part in what they wanted. Most through curiosity went out and joined us, climbed the mountain, did the bits and pieces, and during the week you could see them begin to break down and the barriers start to come down.”

“Then the tears would start

“The Knight’s supreme executive met to discuss the various proposals, and Mr O’Farrell mentioned his idea to the council of directors”





and then they would talk about things and eventually start to open up, especially out of the power of Confession, that was huge. We played them Fr Brendan Kilcoyne's video [from Immaculata Productions]... on going back to Confession and what it's about.

"And funnily enough when they watched that video, for a lot of them it took that fear away, going back to Confession," he continues. "We had one guy who hadn't been to Confession in about 30 years. He went one day and afterwards he was awful annoyed. He was awful troubled and I said to him what's wrong. He said I've a problem and I said what is it. He said when I went to Confession yesterday, I didn't tell the priest everything. I said that's alright, just go back today."

### Church

One of the highlights of the trip for Mr O'Farrell was an evening with Fr Leon Pereira OP, the chaplain to the English-speaking pilgrims in Medjugorje. He came to the pilgrim's house and engaged in a three-hour question and answer session with the men.

"The guys were allowed to ask anything on their minds," Mr

O'Farrell explains. "We sat around in a big circle and a lot of guys got a lot off their chest, asked a lot about the Church, the difficulties in the Church... everything!"

The men bonded very quickly, eating and socialising together regularly. Each night, the tables would be full and everybody got to know each other, "the problems, the difficulties and all the rest of it... it was brilliant, a fantastically rewarding trip for all the guys".

**“Now, that is not really what this is about but he went ahead and joined the Knights in Newry and we’ve a couple of others enquiring”**

Even for Mr O'Farrell, a seasoned pilgrim, it was a special one: "The best trip to Medjugorje I've ever had," he says, "because you could see so many of the guys getting so much out of it. Definitely next year there'll be a push to get those numbers up into the 40s."

The week-long trip isn't going to be the end of the Knights' engagement with these men, who all came with their own individual problems and hopes. The Faith doesn't work like magic, and so further contact is needed to build on the graces received.

"We still have a WhatsApp group we keep in touch with; I sort of contact them once a month and all the lads are now invited to our annual meeting, the banquet dinner which is Monaghan in two weeks' time," Mr O'Farrell says.

"Hopefully we get a good squad of them back there. We have had one of them already join the Knights in Newry. Now, that is not really what this is about but he went ahead and joined the Knights in Newry and we've a couple of others enquiring."

### Fantastic

"We keep in touch with them now and then and next year if they feel they want to go back with us, the Knights will subsidise their trip again in some fashion. So that number of 40 could very quickly go up to 50 or 60, which would be fantastic. And that's what we want to do, we want to grow it year on year."

*\*Not their real names*



Men from the Knights of St Columbanus' pilgrimage are pictured at the top of Cross Mountain in Medjugorje.



Pictured from left are Supreme Knight Brendan McCann, Fr Pat Devlin, Fr Brendan Kilcoyne, Bro. Colm O'Farrell and Bro. John McLlroy, some of the Knights of St Columbanus who accompanied pilgrims to Medjugorje.



# Irish missionaries and religious look to the future



**Missionaries and religious have launched a five-year plan to future proof religious life, writes Ruadhán Jones**

**‘A** future with hope’ – this is the title of a new five-year plan launched last week that aims to chart the future for religious and missionary life in Ireland. It comes at a time when the majority of Irish missionary and religious orders must cope with the “major challenges” of smaller and older membership, as new vocations dwindle.

The plan was launched at a gathering in Tullamore of almost 200 religious sisters, brothers and priests by the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI). In addition to above-named challenges, congregations must face the difficulties of “articulating the vision and value of religious life, vocations promotions and supports to younger religious”, the secretary general of AMRI David Rose said.

**“The report dwells also on the ‘shadow life’ to religious life – the sexual and spiritual abuses and cover up”**

The strategy grew out of consultation over 18 months with the leaders of religious congregations. In response, AMRI have committed to increasing supports and services for members, “providing training and more opportunities for collaboration on issues all the congregations are facing”, Mr Rose explained.

AMRI president Fr Brendan Coffey OSB points out in his foreword to the plan that religious congregations face “major challenges”, in particular aging demographics, over the next five years. As is noted in the plan, the average age of many of congregations is 75 years. “Caring for older members is an increasing priority,” they say, adding that “new structures for governance, care and support” need to be developed.

However, while vocations are declining for most congregations in Ireland, a small number of young people are answering the call to religious life. “These vocations need to be nourished and space allowed for new younger members to flourish,” the plan says.

Collaboration and synodality are key phrases in the report. Highlighting the “remarkable flourishing” of new ministries and the continued success of the missionary model of develop-



ment, the report says that much of this success has been achieved in partnership with laypeople. “The participation of laypeople as partners in mission needs to be further developed.”

The report dwells also on the “shadow life” to religious life – the sexual and spiritual abuses and cover up. The religious congregations see hope in the emergence of the synodal Church, to help tackle the “models of Church that allowed the abuse of power” to prevail.

“The equality of all the baptised is the basis of the synodal pathway,” the plan states. “The role of women in the Church demands urgent attention... The equality of women and men needs to be modelled in governance, and in the leadership of mission and ministry in the Church.”

Having analysed the environment and challenges facing religious and missionary orders, the plan presents five priorities for the future development of AMRI. They are: leadership support and development; promoting justice, peace and integrity of creation; supporting the emergence of a synodal Church; increasing services to members, and strengthening AMRI as a network organisation.

## Leadership and governance

Key among the objectives for developing leadership and governance support is facilitating training and piloting a new model of shared governance. In addition, the successful Religious Formation Ministry Programme (RFMP) will be continued, while new, shared formation policies will be created.

AMRI also hopes to form a network of young lay faith leaders,

comprising workers, associates and volunteers involved with AMRI members and contributing to leadership in the Church through collaboration with the Irish bishops’ conference is another high priority.

## Social and eco-justice

Responding to the challenge laid down by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’*, AMRI want to be “recognised as a credible voice on social and environmental justice among like-minded organisations and by the public”.

In particular, it will continue to advocate and educate to prevent human trafficking, listed first in its priorities for this strategic aim. The provision of accommodation and supports for refugees displaced by war and climate change is another, one which is being put into practice as we speak.

On the whole, AMRI stresses the need for flexibility and adaptability in tackling critical and emerging social and ecological justice issues. It hopes to build a network of justice, peace and ecology collaborators and like-minded agencies.

## Synodality

At the beginning of this strategic aim, AMRI lays down the challenge to its members: be a leader in shaping a different Church through “awareness raising on synodality, and by promoting a greater role for women in the Church, and promoting co-responsibility for laypeople”. Top of the list to achieve this is participation in Ireland’s own synodal pathway.

Second up is promoting a vision and culture of vocations to religious and missionary life. This is presumably an important priority for the religious orders, as AMRI are simultaneously launching a communications plan. They hope to encourage a “new appreciation of the value of religious and missionary life”.

Advancing a more inclusive role for women in the Church, encouraging members to share their rich spiritualities and piloting a new model of lay leadership are other priorities.

## Collaboration and service

The next two sections reflect specifically AMRI’s role in the future of religious life in Ireland. The association hopes to develop as a “shared services hub” to address common organisational needs that arise from the individual orders.

**“Finally, AMRI will also review its role in Catholic education to determine future involvement”**

Such a hub would address issues like: a shared archive, minister of religion visas, mission awareness programme, research on missionaries, Garda vetting and other emerging issues.

The facilitation of opportunities for younger religious to meet and collaborate inter-congregationally is also being considered, along with shared aged care and healthcare.

In collaboration with the bishops, AMRI hopes to “maintain and deepen” the culture of safeguarding and healing for survivors. Finally, AMRI will also review its role in Catholic education to determine future involvement.

## Strengthening AMRI

The final strategic goal suggests approaches to strengthening the AMRI secretariat and committees to ensure delivery of the ‘A future with hope’ plan. Adequate resourcing, good governance, financial accountability are all key areas that AMRI wants to address. It also hopes to put in place a communications strategy to promote “good news stories of religious and missionary life”.



Some of the 200 religious sisters, brothers and priests who gathered for AMRI’s AGM, September 28, at which they launched their new five-year plan.



# Out&About

## Following in a saint's footsteps



**SLIGO:** More than 50 men and women are pictured having participated in the Charles de Foucauld retreat held recently.



**LIMERICK:** Augustinian friars Fr Colm O'Mahony and Fr Stephen Shields are pictured with Ukrainian refugees housed at the Augustinian's Ostia property in Limerick by the Red Cross, September 26.



**DUBLIN:** Sadie Fitzsimons and Bernie Duff are pictured after receiving their Benemeriti medals in recognition of their service in the church of St Patrick, Ringsend.

### IN SHORT

#### Do more than mirror the culture – Bishop McGuckian

Pope Francis is challenging the Church to do more than simply mirror the culture around us, the Bishop of Raphoe has said.

Bishop Alan McGuckian was speaking at the annual Legion of Mary pilgrimage to Knock, Sunday September 25.

In the synodal process, the Pope is asking the Church "will we become polarised, demonising those who are different, demonising each other", said Bishop McGuckian SJ.

"The Legion of Mary answer has to be:

No. We are the Mystical Body of Christ," he continued.

"We will seek to walk together, listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church in our time."

The bishop acknowledged the "divisions of opinion" among Catholics about Church teaching.

"Where there is division there will be tension which is often unpleasant," Bishop McGuckian told the large congregation in Knock Basilica.

However, he continued, if we take up the synodal challenge, "Ultimately it is not the teaching of the Church that will be changed. It is we who will be changed."

#### Packed programme for annual Dundalk novena

More than 8,000 people are expected to attend each day of the annual Redemptorist novena to St Gerard Majella, which will include talks, Mass and prayer.

The novena, which takes place in St Joseph's Monastery, Dundalk, October 8 to 16, will reflect on the theme 'Let us Dream'.

It is the first in-person novena in St Joseph's since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

In a statement, rector Fr Noel Kehoe said people still experience "something special" at a novena.

"It is a celebration of community and faith and holds a special place in the hearts of people who

have been attending over generations," he said.

The preachers and speakers lined up for the novena include: Helena Connolly, director of evangelisation for the Redemptorists; Jim Deeds, author and pastoral renewal facilitator; Neil Foley, scientist and lay Redemptorist missionary; and Redemptorist Frs Tommy Hogan, Brian Nolan and Brendan O'Rourke.

"The voice and wisdom of women and men, lay and religious sharing together is important for our Church and the novena must continue to be an opportunity to hear those voices" Fr Kehoe said.

"This is an expression of synodality, and we must learn new ways to journey in faith together."

For more information please visit [www.redemptoristsdundalk.ie](http://www.redemptoristsdundalk.ie)





**MEDJUGORJE:** Fr Yanbo Chen SVD meets Irish singer-songwriter Dana Rosemary Scallan while on pilgrimage in Medjugorje.



**KILDARE:** First year students get to take in the breath-taking campus of St Patrick's University, Maynooth, on their first day, September 26.



**CLARE:** Bishop Fintan Monahan greets 100-year-old Lucy O'Halloran from Ennis en route to the Apostolic Work display in Ennis, September 25.



**DUBLIN:** Primary school students brought their schoolbags to Ballyroan parish church for a special blessing as they start the new year.



**CAVAN:** Pilgrims from Kingscourt parish, Co. Cavan are pictured following Mass at the basilica of St Michael in Menton, France on a recent parish pilgrimage.



**MAYO:** The diocese of Kerry in partnership with Kerry Travellers organised a pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick with a group of young people from across the diocese. The leaders were Des Bailey, Kerry diocese, and volunteers Richard O'Brien and John O'Brien.





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



**WICKLOW:** Rachael Duffy, a fifth-year student in Loreto Secondary School, Bray, won the 'Women during the revolutionary period in Ireland' category of the 'Decade of Centenaries Irish History Competition' with her project on Countess Markievicz. Rachael is pictured here with her teacher Ms Gray and Táiniste Leo Varadkar.



**ROSCOMMON:** Sr Mary Richardson and Marian Maloney work hard at putting together the Grow in Love First Communion Parish Programme packs for leaders and parents, to be launched in Achonry Diocese in October.



**TYRONE:** St Patrick's College, Dungannon, celebrated European Day of Languages with pupils showcasing their country's traditional cuisines, September 27.



**CARLOW:** President of Carlow College, St Patrick's, Fr Conn Ó'Maoldhomhnaigh greets Veronica Campbell, president of the newly formed South East Technological University, on her first visit to the college, September 26.

## ANTRIM

Anam Cara Belfast, the organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding its monthly parent evening for bereaved parents on Monday October 10 at 7:30pm in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast. This event is free and open to all bereaved parents. Contact 028 952 13120.

## CLARE

A blessing of expectant parents takes place Tuesday, October 25, at 8pm in Ennis Cathedral.

## CORK

Medjugorje prayer meeting every Wednesday at 8pm in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Trinity Church, Fr Matthew Quay, Cork city. Pure in Heart are hosting Mass and adoration Saturday, October 8, in St Mary's Pope's Quay at 6pm. For 18-35-year-olds. The Diocese of Cork and Ross is holding Connect 2 in UCC, on Sunday October 16 from 10.30am. It is a gathering for people aged 18-35.

## DONEGAL

The 150th anniversary celebrations for St Brigid's Church, Golan, Milford take place Friday, October 14, at 7pm. Bishop of Raphoe Alan McGuckian will be the main celebrant. Refreshment and entertainment afterwards. Making sense of this world, a men's introduction to philosophy begins Friday October 7 at 8pm at the Villa Rose Hotel, Ballybofey.

## DOWN

Spiritual exercises for women silent retreat takes place beginning October 7 at 6pm and ending October 9 at 3pm in the Dromantine Conference Centre, Newry. Cost €255. To book, contact faithandfamilycentre@gmail.com.

## DUBLIN

Annunciata Curia will mark the end of the Legion of Mary's 100th anniversary year with a social function at St Joseph's, 191, Rathgar Rd on Sunday, October 9 from 3-6pm. Former members of Praedicanda and Annunciata Curia are invited for reminiscences, refreshments, song and needless to mention,

the rosary and Legion prayers.

The Pallottine Community is hosting a weekend of reflection/discernment for vocations from Friday October 8 to Sunday 10. For more information call Fr John Regan 0876499724.

Evangelium are hosting 'Towards Halloween – souls saints and so much more', a Catholic apologetics conference Saturday October 8 from 11am-4:30pm in St Patrick's Campus DCU. Cost €15. Book on www.evangelium.ie.

A memorial Mass for Fr Tom Stack will take place on Sunday, October 16, at 11.30am in Milltown Parish Church with a reception afterwards in the parish centre.

## GALWAY

YouCat programme begins with an introductory session on Tuesday October 11, running from 7:30-8:15pm, at the Diocesan Pastoral Outreach Centre, Newtownsmith. Two books are used during the course, costing approximately €20. Contact Sara at 085 7221121 or sarakayne@gmail.com for more information or to book.

## KERRY

The diocese of Kerry is hosting a mission month seminar October 20. Guest speaker will be Pakistan-based missionary Fr Liam O'Callaghan. Visit dioceseofkerry.ie to register.

## KILDARE

An African Mass is held on the third Sunday of the month in St Brigid's Church, Kildare at 2pm.

## KILKENNY

The rosary is said at 2:30pm on Fridays in the Grotto Graiguenamanagh.

## LIMERICK

Youth 2000 are hosting a prayer meeting with adoration, reflection, music and socialising on October 10 in St Saviour's Dominican Church, Limerick City.

A come and see retreat for those exploring vocations with the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia takes place October 14-16. For more information or to register email limerick@op-tn.org.

## LOUTH

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Holy Family Parish, Drogheda, with the priests of the Institute of the Incarnate Word, daily from 8.30-9.50am; 3-5pm; 6.30-7.30pm. There is also evening Mass from Tuesday to Sunday at 7.30pm. Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal host a come and see retreat for women age 18-35 who are discerning a vocation in St Anthony's convent October 12-16. If interested, contact Sr Agnes 041 983 0441. The Redemptorist novena to St Gerard Majella takes place in St Joseph's Monastery, Dundalk, October 8 to 16, will reflect on the theme 'Let us Dream'. For more information please visit www.redemptoristsdundalk.ie.

## LEITRIM

Ballinamore prayer group meet on Tuesdays 8:30-9:45pm, in St Brigid's Parish Centre, Ballinamore.

## MAYO

The annual Blessing of Pets ceremony returns to Knock Shrine on Saturday, October 8 at 11am. The blessing will take place in the Shrine grounds at the Hub.

## MEATH

Introduction to the Bible on Kells webcam beginning Monday October 10 at 12 noon, led by Fr John Byrne. Each session will last 25-30 minutes. You can access the talks as you would the Mass each day on www.kellsparish.ie. For queries, contact Fr John on jplowebyrne@gmail.com.

## WATERFORD

St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn, the only Cistercian monastery for women in Ireland, is hosting a monastic experience weekend October 28-30 for women discerning their vocation.

## WESTMEATH

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





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Multiple challenges determine Catholic agencies' response in Africa

● A humanitarian official who works in Southern Africa said Churches must offer a unified regional response to the problems crippling development in the region.

Mwila Mulumbi, the Zambian country representative of CAFOD, spoke to the assembly of the Interregional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa, IMBISA, in the Namibian capital, Windhoek, in late September.

Ms Mulumbi said the effects of globalisation, violent extremism, migration, disease, politically driven conflict and tension, corruption, climate change and exploitation of natural resources continued to cripple development in Southern Africa.

"All these challenges have underscored for CAFOD that state-centric or country-specific approaches alone do not suffice and that there is a need for cohesive regional responses by the Church," said Ms Mulumbi.

CAFOD is the official development organisation of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and is part of the Caritas Internationalis network.

### Pope to visit Kingdom of Bahrain in November

● The Vatican has confirmed that Pope Francis will travel to the Kingdom of Bahrain, a Muslim island nation in the Persian Gulf, from November 3–6.

The possibility of a papal trip to the Islamic monarchy was mentioned on the Pope's return flight from Kazakhstan on September 15.

The director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, confirmed September 28 that Pope Francis will visit Awali and the capital city of Manama for the "Bahrain Forum for Dialogue: East and West for Human Coexistence".

Further details and the full trip schedule will be published at a later date.

### Catholics worldwide pray Divine Mercy Chaplet to end war

● Catholics recited the Divine Mercy Chaplet September 28 in the streets of 173 cities in Poland and 44 localities worldwide, according to organisers of the prayer event.

At 3 pm local time, street intersections and public squares in towns and villages throughout Poland turned into places of prayer for peace and for those affected by war.

With rosaries in hand, the Faithful asked God for mercy for all humanity.

"We believe that 10 minutes of supplication to God can change our families, cities, and the whole world," the organisers said.

The event was held under the auspices of the Polish community Spark of Divine Mercy Team.

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy was recited on six continents for families, priests, and those holding any power in the world.

### Pope tried to help Ukraine-Russia prisoner swap

● Pope Francis has said that he was involved in a prisoner swap between Russia and Ukraine.

Speaking to Jesuits during his trip to Kazakhstan earlier this month, the Pope said a Ukrainian military chief and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's religious adviser came to him with a request for help.

"This time they brought

me a list of more than 300 prisoners. They asked me to do something to make an exchange," Pope Francis said, according to a transcript published by the Jesuit periodical *La Civiltà Cattolica* on September 29.

"I immediately called the Russian ambassador to see if something could be done, if an exchange of prisoners could be speeded up."

## Nicaraguan president calls Church 'dictatorship' and bishops 'murderers'

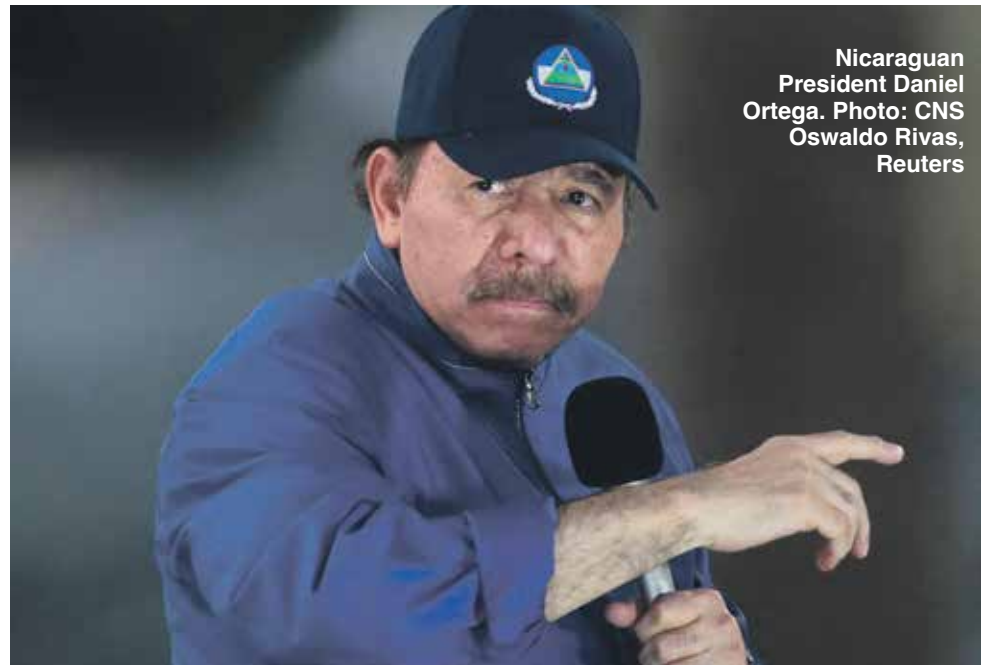
Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega blasted Catholic leaders as a "gang of murderers," in comments amping up persecution of the Church and scorning Pope Francis' call for dialogue in the Central American country.

In a fiery address, Ortega took aim at Nicaragua's Catholic bishops for promoting democracy as an exit from the country's political crisis, alleging without proof that they called on protesters to kill him during the 2018 protests – which his regime violently repressed.

He called the bishops and Pope Francis "the perfect dictatorship," then asked, accusatorially, "Who elected the bishops, the Pope, the cardinals?"

He continued in the September 28 speech marking the 43rd anniversary of the National Police: "With what moral authority do they speak of democracy? Let them start with the Catholic vote. ... Everything is imposed. It's a dictatorship, the perfect dictatorship. It's a tyranny, the perfect tyranny."

Catholic clergy in Nicaragua have remained mostly silent as Ortega – who won elections in 2021 after disqualifying and imprisoning opposition candidates – has persecuted priests and bishops speaking out on issues of human rights and democratic deterioration. The government also has closed Church-run charitable and education initiatives, along with Catho-



Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. Photo: CNS Oswaldo Rivas, Reuters

lic radio stations, and expelled priests and nuns, including the Missionaries of Charity.

Ortega claimed in his comments that he was Catholic, but did not feel "represented," partly because, "We hear talk of democracy, and they don't practice democracy."

The comments come as Bishop Rolando Álvarez of Matagalpa remains under house arrest after being taken by force from the diocesan curia August 19. The priests arrested with him in the pre-dawn raid are still being held in the notorious El Chipote prison, where the regime keeps its political prisoners.

"What ignorance! Such lies

and such cynicism. A dictator giving lessons on democracy," tweeted Auxiliary Bishop Silvio José Baez of Managua, who left the country for safety reasons in 2019. "Someone exercising power in an illegitimate way, criticising the authority that Jesus granted his Church; someone who is atheist, regretting that he doesn't feel represented by the Church."

Pope Francis broke his silence on Nicaragua August 21, calling for "open and sincere" dialogue.

He told reporters September 15: "There is dialogue. That doesn't mean we approve of everything the government is doing or disapprove of it."

The Pope also urged the Nicaraguan government to allow the Missionaries of Charity to return and defended the former apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Waldemar Stanislaw Sommertag, who was expelled from Nicaragua.

Ortega was first president between 1979 to 1990 after the Sandinista movement ousted then-dictator Anastasio Somoza. He later won election in 2006 and has won multiple re-elections – though the 2021 vote was condemned as a sham by international observers and not recognised by countries such as the United States.

### Jerusalem Church leaders thank Jordan's king for defending their rights

The patriarchs and leaders of Christian Churches in Jerusalem praised Jordan's King Abdullah II for turning a spotlight on what they say is "the deteriorating situation of Christian basic human rights" in the city and throughout the Holy Land.

The king, in his speech to the UN General Assembly September 20, said, "Today, Christianity in the Holy City is under fire. The rights of Churches in Jerusalem are threatened. This cannot continue. Christianity is vital to the past and present of our region and the Holy Land. It must remain an integral part of our future. The city is

holy to billions of Muslims, Christians and Jews around the world," the king said.

Any policy or development that undermines Jerusalem's "legal and historical status quo triggers global tensions and deepens religious divides. The Holy City must not be a place for hatred and division".

King Abdullah, who continues to claim the traditional title of custodian of Jerusalem's Muslim and Christian holy sites, has long complained that Israel is violating status quo agreements by allowing Jewish settlements in traditionally Christian and Muslim neighbourhoods

and, more recently, by not enforcing a 1967 agreement that allows Jews to visit the compound around the Al-Aqsa Mosque but not to pray there. Jews refer to the area as the Temple Mount, the site of ancient Jewish temples.

In a statement published September 27, the patriarchs and heads of the Churches in Jerusalem – Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Protestant – thanked the king for "his true and honest description of the Christian reality in the Holy land, especially in Jerusalem".

### Cardinal Zen's trial adjourned before defence can call witnesses

After only two days, the West Kowloon Magistrates' Court adjourned the trial of Hong Kong Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun, 90, and four co-defendants, until October 26.

The trial began September 26 and had been scheduled for five days, but the magistrate adjourned the trial when

defence lawyers attempted to cross-examine police witnesses called by the prosecution.

The outspoken cardinal, retired bishop of Hong Kong, was detained May 11 under the Beijing-imposed national security law. He and his co-defendants were then charged with failing to properly register

their 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund, which offered financial, legal and psychological help to people arrested during the 2019 protest movement. They have pleaded not guilty.

The prosecution said the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund had raised US\$34.4 million and that some of the money

was used for "political activities and non-charity events," including funding protest groups. The defence countered that defendants had a right to form an association under the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-constitution that critics claim has been subverted in recent years by authorities in Beijing.





Edited by Jason Osborne  
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## Struggling to keep afloat



A family in Fort Myers, Florida, stands next to a damaged boat amid a downtown condominium September 29, after Hurricane Ian caused widespread destruction. Photo: CNS/Marco Bello, Reuters

## Russian bishops: Nation must recognise conscientious objection to war

Russia's bishops said Catholics face dilemmas responding to a mass call-up for the war in Ukraine, and they urged President Vladimir Putin's government to recognise conscientious objection.

"The confrontation in Ukraine has grown into a full-scale military conflict and already claimed thousands of lives, undermining trust and unity between countries and peoples, and threatening the entire world's existence," the Moscow-based bishops' conference said in a pastoral letter.

"The permissibility of participating in hostilities is ultimately a matter for the

human conscience, which belongs to the most secret and holiest part of man – where he is alone with God, whose correct judgment he must always obey."

The letter, quoting the Catechism of the Catholic Church, was published September 28 as Ukrainian forces continued an eastern counteroffensive, a week after Putin's announcement that at least 300,000 reservists were being called up to fight.

The bishops said their hearts were "filled with grief and powerlessness" at the inability to "decisively change the situation and prevent further victims," adding that the

mobilisation had confronted Catholics with a "most serious moral choice".

"Under certain circumstances, state authorities have not only the right, but also the obligation to use weapons, and to require citizens to fulfil duties necessary to protect the fatherland – those who honestly do military service serve the common good," said the letter, signed by the conference's Italian-born president, Archbishop Paolo Pezzi.

"All of this is true if military actions aim at speedily ending a conflict and avoiding a multiplication of victims. ... On the other hand, the Church reminds the state

authorities they must find a just solution when a person, out of conviction, refuses to take up arms and is obliged to serve the community another way. This right is enshrined in the Russian Federation's Constitution, and we call for its consistent observance."

The bishops also responded to fears Catholic clergy could be called up to fight. They said it was "categorically impossible for them to participate in hostilities, in accordance both with ancient Church rules and current international conventions".

## FBI arrest of US pro-life leader called 'horrendous stunt'

The head of the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia said the FBI's arrest of a prominent Catholic pro-life activist known for his sidewalk counselling outside a Philadelphia abortion facility is "a horrendous stunt to intimidate pro-lifers".

Mark Houck, 48, was arrested at his home in rural Bucks County, Pennsylvania, the morning of September 23 for allegedly assaulting an abortion clinic volunteer a year ago in violation of the

federal FACE Act.

The 1994 Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act prohibits intentional property damage and the use of "force or threat of force or ... physical obstruction" to "injure, intimidate or interfere with" someone entering an abortion clinic.

"There never was any blocking of access to an abortion centre, and instead it was a moment of defence for the sake of his 12-year-old son," Tom Stevens, president and CEO of the Pro-Life Union,

said in a statement September 26.

"This has been a consistent experience down at Planned Parenthood, where Mark and his family have been hassled."

Mr Houck made an initial appearance in federal court in Philadelphia the same day he was arrested. On September 27, he was arraigned in the same court on two counts of allegedly violating the FACE Act.

## Vatican roundup

### Vatican restricted East Timor archbishop after abuse allegations

● After a Dutch newspaper published an investigation into abuse allegations against retired Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo of Dili, the Vatican said it had become aware of the allegations several years ago and placed restrictions on him.

The newspaper *De Groene Amsterdammer* said it began its investigation in 2002. It used the first-person stories of two young men, then aged 14 and 16, who graphically detailed their interactions with Bishop Belo, claiming that he gave them money after certain physical encounters.

"He knows that the boys have no money. So when he invited you, you came over and (he) gave you some money," one of the alleged victims was quoted as saying. "But meanwhile, you are a victim. That's the way he did."

"From the research carried out by *De Groene*, it appears Belo had more victims," the story said. "*De Groene* spoke with 20 people with knowledge of the case: dignitaries, government officials, politicians, NGO workers, people from the Church and professionals. More than half of them personally know a victim, while others know about the case, and most discussed it at work. *De Groene* also spoke with other victims who didn't want to tell their story in the media."

### Vatican announces theme for World Communications Day

● Pope Francis' theme for the next World Communications Day is a call for a peaceful dialogue that allows for uncomfortable truths to be spoken of without resorting to contentious and hostile debate, the Vatican announced.

Speaking the truth "means giving 'a reason for your hope' and doing so gently, using the gift of communication as a bridge and not as a wall," the Vatican said September 29 when it announced the theme of World Communications Day 2023.

Each year, the Vatican and many dioceses mark World Communications Day on the Sunday before Pentecost; in 2023, it will be celebrated May 21.

The Pope's choice for the theme is: "Speak with the

heart: *Veritatem facientes in caritate*" (Speaking the truth in love). The Vatican publishes the Pope's full message for the occasion January 24, the feast of St Francis de Sales, patron saint of journalists.

Also September 29, the Vatican announced several new members for the Dicastery for Communication, including Bishop Valdir José de Castro of Campo Limpo, Brazil, and Italian Archbishop Ivan Maffei of Perugia-Città delle Pieve.

Pope Francis also appointed new consultors for the dicastery, including US communications expert Helen Osman, president of Signis, the World Catholic Association for Communication, based in Brussels.

### Cardinal says he did not compare German Synodal Way to Nazi ideology

● A Vatican cardinal has defended himself against an accusation by the president of the German bishops' conference, Bishop Georg Bätzing, of making a "totally unacceptable gaffe" over remarks regarding the German Synodal Way.

"I am responding promptly, but I cannot retract my essential point, simply because I have in no way compared the Synodal Way to a Nazi ideology, nor will I ever do so," the Swiss cardinal said, according to a report by CNA Deutsch.

Cardinal Koch, a native of Switzerland, is president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

In an interview with the Catholic weekly *Die Tagespost*, Cardinal Koch said that he was shocked that, of all places, the German Synodal Way was talking about new sources of revelation.

"This phenomenon already existed during the National Socialist dictatorship, when the so-called 'German Christians' saw God's new revelation in blood and soil and in the rise of Hitler," Cardinal Koch said.





# Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

**L**ife, as the famous John Lennon saying goes, is what happens while you're making other plans. In a similar fashion, we might say that news is what happens while you're paying attention to something else.

This summer, Catholic chatter was dominated by ultimately baseless rumours that Pope Francis was about to resign. In the meantime, a conversation was unfolding in the Philippines with potentially seismic significance, which flew almost entirely under radar.

**“Pope Francis recently tweaked the rules governing Opus Dei, but the substance of the personal prelature remains intact”**

In July, the Filipino bishops considered a proposal to petition Rome for the creation of a personal prelature to provide pastoral care for the roughly 12 million Filipinos living outside the country, who constitute one of the world's largest diaspora communities. The focus would be in particular on the roughly three million Filipino overseas workers, meaning temporary migrants who leave the country to work in order to send remittances back home.

A “personal prelature” is a structure in Church law first proposed at Vatican II, designed to mobilise clergy and laity to carry out specific functions without respect to geographic boundaries. At present the lone personal prelature is Opus Dei, though the Vatican offered to create another in 2012 for the traditionalist Society of St Pius X to bring the group back into communion with Rome, which they refused.

Pope Francis recently tweaked the rules governing Opus Dei, but the substance of the personal prelature remains intact.

The idea of creating one for Filipinos has been around for at least a quarter-century, since a Filipino priest now living in San Diego first floated it in a doctoral dissertation. The country's bishops created an ad-hoc commission to study the possibility in 2020.

During their July session, the bishops decided to take another year to consult with bishops and bishops' conferences in countries where the prelature might set up shop, meaning places with significant Filipino populations, and also to tap Filipino chaplains serving in various settings around the world.

Here's why this matters.

## A modest proposal from the Philippines might trigger a new Catholic era



A person prays outside a Catholic church in Manila, Philippines, April 9, 2020. Photo: CNS/ Eloisa Lopez, Reuters

**“The idea of creating one for Filipinos has been around for at least a quarter-century, since a Filipino priest now living in San Diego first floated it in a doctoral dissertation”**

Since time immemorial, the dominant principle of organisation in the Catholic Church has been geographical – the pastor rules his parish and the bishop his diocese, both of which are defined by territory. Bishops' conferences and federations of those conferences are organised nationally and continentally. Even religious orders, which deliberately exist outside the diocesan structure, usually are organised into territorial provinces.

Yet increasingly we live in a world in which geography, if not quite irrelevant, is at least relative. In the second half of the 20th century, accelerating mobility and ease of travel ate away at geography's hold on social life, and, in the 21st Century, the emergence of digital culture has further weakened it.

Over the centuries, Catholicism has generated new pastoral models to respond to just such changing conditions. The birth of the great

monastic communities came out of the disintegration of the Roman empire, just as the mendicant orders in the 12th and 13th centuries aimed to evangelise the new urban centres, and many missionary communities were a response to the Age of Discovery.

### Social situation

Today, most experts would say there's a similar need to generate new models to respond to a less territorially defined social situation. The personal prelature is such an instrument, but its potential application has been frozen in place for decades for reasons having more to do with politics than pastoral logic.

To begin with, it's a commonplace in Catholic life for any new impulse to be seen with suspicion. Once upon a time, religious orders were accused of jeopardising ecclesial unity by creating a “parallel Church” and undermining the authority of local bishops,

which are precisely the same accusations levelled against new entities of various stripes today.

Of course, the charge isn't entirely unfounded – there are plenty of examples of new outfits that have proven divisive and thumbed their noses at anyone who tries to call them on it. However, the question is whether that's inherent to the structure, with experience suggesting the answer is “not necessarily”.

Moreover, because Opus Dei conventionally is seen as conservative, more liberal Catholics have tended to be axiomatically hostile to the whole concept of a personal prelature. (In retrospect it's probably just as well the traditionalists spurned the Vatican's deal, because it might have become impossible to walk that perception back.)

In turn, that's what's so intriguing about the Filipino proposal.

First of all, the lion's share of Filipino overseas workers are in the Middle East, with more than a quarter in Saudi Arabia alone, where there's no real “local Church” in the conventional sense to undermine. Where the Church is more developed, such as pockets of Europe, North America and Australia, the avowed aim of the prelature would be to integrate its members into local parish and diocesan life, which is a consummation

most bishops would devoutly wish in the context of declining Mass attendance and vocations.

Second, nobody sees the Filipino diaspora as political. I mean, there's no *Da Vinci Code*-style potboiler out there about mad Albino monks from the Philippines whipping themselves into a murderous frenzy and trying to hijack the Church, is there?

**“That's probably not as sexy as a papal resignation, but it has the potential to be every bit as consequential in the long run”**

In other words, should the Filipino proposal be adopted, it might break the political logjam and allow the Catholic Church to become more nimble in a post-geographical cultural milieu, triggering an era in which personal prelatures and other related structures become as familiar as conventional religious orders.

That's probably not as sexy as a papal resignation, but it has the potential to be every bit as consequential in the long run.

**i** John L. Allen Jr is Editor of *CruxNow.com*



# Pope names new members to commission for protection of minors



Carol Glatz

**P**ope Francis reconfirmed the leadership of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and expanded its membership from 17 to 20 people, naming 10 new members and reappointing 10 returning members.

US Cardinal Seán O'Malley of Boston, president of the commission, said, "Coming from all over the world with varied backgrounds and a common passion for the well-being of children and vulnerable people, the members announced today include advocates and practitioners of prevention and protection to the many areas in which the Church ministers to children."

**“The commission’s leadership continues to be Cardinal O’Malley as president and Oblate Fr Andrew Small as secretary ‘pro tempore’”**

The members include “representatives from canon law, social work, the medical and psychological professions, law enforcement and the judiciary as well as pastoral experts who currently work in dioceses and religious congregations,” he said in a statement September 30, the day the appointments were announced.

“They have all spent significant amounts of their professional lives listening to and supporting victim/survivors of sexual abuse by clergy and Church personnel,” he said.

The commission’s 20 members include 10 women and 10 men. Twelve of the members are laypeople, three are women religious, three are bishops and two are priests. Four represent Africa or the Middle East, five come from the Americas, five from Asia and Oceania, and six from Europe.

The commission’s leadership continues to be Cardinal O'Malley as president and Oblate Fr Andrew Small as secretary “*pro tempore*”.

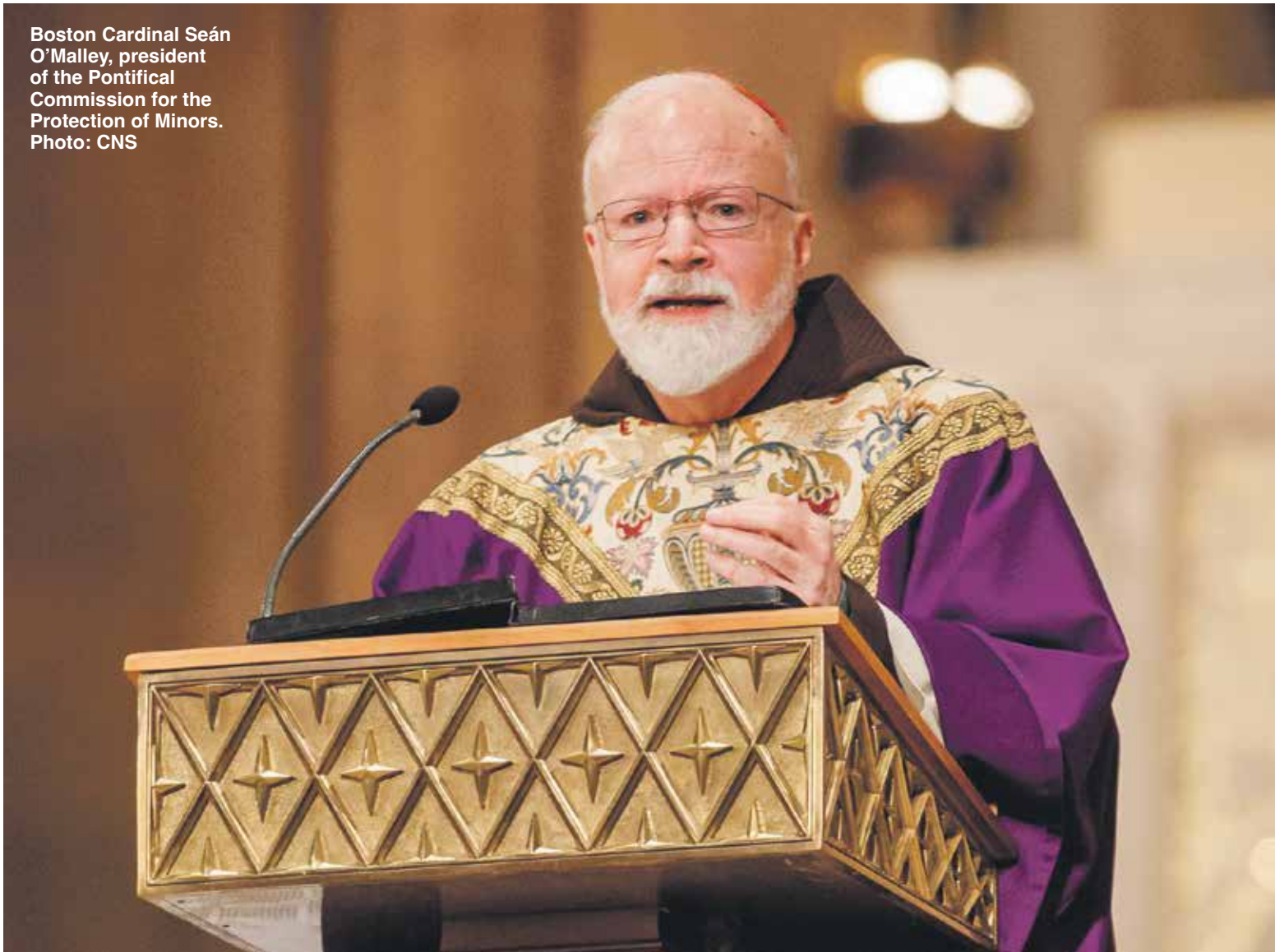
The new members are:

– Sacred Heart Missionary Fr Tim Brennan, a canon lawyer from Australia.

– Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, a lawyer from the Netherlands, long active in serving at the European Commission of Human Rights and its court and the Council of Europe. She was the UN special rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children from 2014 to 2020.

– Teresa Devlin, an expert in child protection from Ireland, cur-

Boston Cardinal Seán O'Malley, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. Photo: CNS



rently serving as CEO of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

– Emilie Rivet-Duval, a clinical psychologist from Mauritius specialising in the mental health of young people.

– Irma Patricia Espinosa Hernández, a surgeon, theologian, psychiatrist and psychotherapist from Mexico specialising in criminal psychology and the profiling and evaluation of victims of abuse and sex offenders.

– Maronite Bishop Peter Karam, a Lebanese who serves as patriarchal vicar of the Maronite Synod of Bishops.

– Ewa Kusz, a psychologist, therapist and forensic expert from Poland, who organises conferences, studies and formation seminars for the Church on safeguarding.

– Sr Annah Theresa Nyadombo, a member of the Handmaids of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, she is coordinator in Zimbabwe of Talitha Kum

– the global network of religious helping survivors of human trafficking – and is the coordinator of education and safeguarding for the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference.

– Sri Lankan Good Shepherd Sister Niluka Perera, a social worker and coordinator of Catholic Care for Children, a project of the International Union of Superiors General in Rome. She is also active with anti-trafficking networks, including Talitha Kum.

– Auxiliary Bishop Thibault Verny of Paris, who heads the archdiocese's efforts in child protection and is chairman of the Safeguarding Commission of the French bishops' conference.

The returning members are:

– Auxiliary Bishop Luis Manuel Ali Herrera of Bogotá, Colombia, a psychologist and theologian.

– Ernesto Caffo, founder and president of an Italian non-profit promoting children's rights and

combating abuse and violence against minors.

– Indian Sr Arina Gonsalves, an expert in law and education, vice provincial of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, and secretary-general of the safeguarding centre for the Latin-rite bishops' conference of India.

– Nelson Giovanelli Dos Santos, the Brazilian co-founder of Fazenda da Esperança and an expert in the rehabilitation of young victims of drug addiction and abuse.

– Sinalelea Fe'ao, chief education officer for the Diocese of Tonga and Niue.

– Teresa Kettelkamp, former executive director of the US bishops' Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection.

– Benyam Dawit Mezmur, an Ethiopian professor of law specialising in human rights and children's rights. He was chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2015-17.

– Neville Owen, a retired senior judge and former chair of the Australian Catholic Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council.

– Jesuit Fr Hans Zollner, president of the Pontifical Gregorian University's Institute of Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care, which trains experts in safeguarding and in the care of survivors.

– Juan Carlos Cruz, a Chilean communications executive, abuse survivor and advocate supporting survivors and preventing abuse.

**“The body of experts, with input from survivors, is meant to make proposals and spearhead initiatives to improve safeguarding norms and procedure”**

Pope Francis formally established the pontifical commission in March 2014. The body of experts, with input from survivors, is meant to make proposals and spearhead initiatives to improve safeguarding norms and procedures. It remains an advisory body for the pope, and it offers concrete assistance to every level of the Church worldwide.

**“They have all spent significant amounts of their professional lives listening to and supporting victim/survivors of sexual abuse by clergy and Church personnel”**



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Countering the horsewhipping of a book

**Dear Editor,** I must say I was grieved to see Peter Costello's unfavourable review of *The Saint Mary's Book of Christian Verse*, which I chose and introduced. Having enjoyed Mr Costello's amusing biography of James Joyce's father and knowing that he writes well of poetry himself, I would have liked to have had my book please him. I am writing now simply to parry a few of his objections.

He rates me for not including more Irish poets, particularly Seamus Heaney and John F. Deane, not to mention the Welsh poet R.S. Thomas. I had thought of including Heaney but since

his work is under copyright and would not have been inexpensive to include, I was constrained to leave it out. I agree that there are poems of his that might be included.

As for Thomas, I was considering his poem 'Kneeling' but decided against it. Poems, at the very least, should make sense, and this poem does not pass that test. In the revised edition, however, after Mr Costello's horsewhipping, I may very well reconsider Thomas. I see his appeal. I shall simply have to find something of his more suitable.

A friend of mine told me the other

day that he once reviewed a book by saying that it should not be read by the fire: it should be thrown in the fire. Mr Costello did not go that far in finding fault with my poor book, but he did rather stint its good points. Irish schoolchildren will discover wonderful Christian poems by many wonderful Christian and non-Christian poets in the book and although not all of them are Irish they are all worth reading.

Thank you for allowing me to have my counter say.

*Yours etc.,  
Edward Short  
Astoria, New York, USA*

### An essential part of spiritual growth

**Dear Editor,** We are becoming more familiar with the word of God, many groups within the Church in Ireland are involved in adult faith formation which promotes study of Sacred Scripture. Some of these groups are the Samuel Group operating in Meath diocese, the Neocatechumenal Way in Dublin and Armagh dioceses and Lectio Divina run by the Dominicans and others.

This is essential for the renewal of the Church where in the past we have substituted messages from Marian Shrines for the authentic Word of God which is only now becoming an essential part of our spiritual growth.

*Yours etc.,  
Andrew Kieran  
Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath*



### Objecting to new sex ed programme in schools

**Dear Editor,** I see that the Government plans to make contraceptives available free to young people and also to revamp the Relationships and Sexuality programme for our schools. Given also the acceptance already by so many supposedly Catholic schools of homosexuality as an "alternative life style" to be put on a par with traditional marriage, one can easily understand what the content of the RSE programme will be: sheer hedonism, free sex, with no

moral principle other than the consent of the parties engaging in any kind of relationship. But, of course, it will be dressed up in the language of tolerance, inclusiveness and responsibility etc., things which have no meaning if objective, moral principles are ignored.

Is the minister for education, a Catholic, even aware of this planned corruption? What will be the response of supposedly Catholic chemists and teachers? And what will be the response

of the shepherds who surely learned something about objective moral principles and intrinsic evil in their seminary training and have responsibility for souls?

Some faithful, lay, Catholic parents, and parents of other denominations also, who have concern for the souls of their children, will indeed respond and object. But what backing will they get from their shepherds who talk so much about the involvement of the laity? It seems to me that it is the

involvement only of liberal laity that is welcomed today. If backing for faithful laity is as lukewarm on this issue now as it has been so often in past decades on most other issues – the landslide defeats of various referenda is evidence – then it will be another indication that the Church in Ireland is selling out to a world that going far away from God.

*Yours etc.,  
Fr Richard O'Connor  
Rome, Italy*

### Dublin diocese should support pro-life march more

**Dear Editor,** I hope that a lesson can be learned from the lack of support from at least some of the parishes in the Dublin diocese. In this anti-Catholic Ireland, it can be assumed that many other pro-life marches will be needed. I appeal to the Archbishop of Dublin to ensure that the next march will have his full support and that an instruction will be sent to all parishes to mention marches from the altar.

*Yours etc.,  
Roger Garland  
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14*

### A pro-life Catholic should not support the death penalty

**Dear Editor,** The seamless garment approach to the sanctity of human life looks at abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, and social/economic injustices, as being issues that demand a consistent application of moral principles, on the basis of respecting life from conception to death.

Sadly, earlier this month, three Catholics on the United States Supreme Court -- Chief Justice Rob-

erts, Justice Clarence Thomas, and Justice Brett Kavanaugh – all voted in favour of the death penalty for a mentally ill prisoner in Alabama.

A Catholic cannot claim to be pro-life and in favour of the death penalty. To be pro-life means we cannot pick and choose about the values of human lives. All life is sacred.

*Yours etc.,  
Micheál Ó Braoin  
Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare*

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

### Church moves to protect quality of Catholic teaching in schools

I'm sorry, but the vast majority of so called Catholic education in both primary and post primary schools in Ireland is and has been a failure for quite some time. How are our young people equipped to tackle questions of the faith when they leave school at best agnostics, or even worse, atheists at the end of, at best, 12 years of Catholic education? The quality of young people's faith is no longer nurtured in schools nor the parishes but in external settings such as Youth 2000, Net Ministries, Holy Family Mission, Called to More, etc... teenagers simply have no basic understanding of the Catholic faith which stands, I believe, as a testament to the systematic failure of Irish Catholic education! – **Anthony O'Shaughnessy**

It is about time this issue was tackled. Where else are our children to learn about Jesus? – **Sheila Kelly**

Needs to be ensured that those teaching it are also practising it, the faith needs to be taught from those who truly believe it. – **Pauline Kerr Savage**

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

### Lack of priests is a wake up call, not an opportunity

**Dear Editor,** Irish people have an attachment to the Mass. Books have been written about how our ancestors braved the elements and the punishment of those who hated the Mass. Most of us will have gone to a priest to have him sign a Mass card as an expression of sympathy for the death of people close to us or for some other special need.

For this reason, I am somewhat bemused by articles and letters which look forward to priestless and subsequently Massless parishes. We know (I hope) that there is a merit inherent to the Mass that will never be replicated in a 'communion service'. The banality of modern music played on modern instruments with clichéd lyrics will never replace the profundity of the ancient liturgy.

The lack of vocations and reduced number of Masses is a wakeup call and not an opportunity. Those who treat it as an opportunity will not preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and so we should follow the advice of St Paul in Galatians 1:8.

*Yours etc.,  
Liam Foley  
Kilcormac, Co. Limerick*

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, October 6, 2022

## Personal Profile

Offering support  
in times of grief

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# Embracing an autumnal spirituality

**T**he slow descent into autumn is well underway in the northern hemisphere, with the darkness creeping a little further at the beginning and end of every day, the cold beginning to seep back in around the edges of the summer and with the rain beginning to fall a little more plentifully than it has in a while.

The seasons speak to those with ears to hear, and autumn urges us to prepare for the long, hard cold of winter while encouraging us to get back into the habit of eking out what warmth we can through the return of jackets, jumpers, hot



**The annual and liturgical calendars are useful roadmaps for directing our attention and efforts in the spiritual life, writes Jason Osborne**

drinks and plentiful blankets.

While it's not quite that cold yet, it promises to be for much of Europe. An unprecedented energy crisis – in my lifetime, anyway – is already upon us, and winter has become once again something to be feared. What to take from all of this?

Maybe it should be that the things we cling to as certainties aren't as certain as we thought, and that we need more than a little bit of help from above.

Fortunately, autumn helps us to contemplate these spiritual realities, too. It's the season of the rosary and the memento

mori tradition – what more could a Catholic ask for as a guide to this time of year? In this week's column, I thought it'd be worthwhile to examine the roots of these traditions and what they can lend us as we, like the rest of creation, adjust to a new season.

### The rosary

October is dedicated to the rosary, that most beloved of prayers in Ireland. Where did the rosary come from? According to an account by a 15th Century Dominican, Alan de la Roch, Mary appeared to St Dominic in 1206 after he had been praying and repenting

intensely because of his lack of success in defeating the Albigensian heresy (which held that the universe was a war between good spirit and evil matter). De la Roch tells us that Mary praised St Dominic for his efforts against the heretics and gave him the rosary as weapon. She encouraged him to preach it to others, commending it for its effectiveness.

October is designated as the month of the rosary because it's in October that the Church celebrates the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary/Victory/Victories on October 7. The feast was established by Pope St Pius V in

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## Family News

## AND EVENTS

PRICE FOR CORGIS  
ROCKETS IN UK AFTER  
QUEEN'S DEATH

Prices for corgis, the dogs beloved by Britain's late Queen Elizabeth, have soared to new highs since her funeral last week, AFP reported the UK's largest pet marketplace as saying

Pets4Homes told AFP it was currently experiencing "over ten times the volume of daily searches for corgis when compared to this time last week".

It added: "The prices asked for by registered corgi breeders have today hit a new high, with average asking prices doubling over the past three days."

One of the small herding dogs now sells for over £2,500 for the first time, even outstripping prices reached during the Covid-19 pandemic, when demand spiked for four-legged companions.

The dogs were a busy presence in the queen's court, following her from room to room and featuring in official photos.

They were even given a starring role in the spoof James Bond clip filmed with the queen for the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics.

NASA SPACESHIP  
STRIKES TARGET  
ASTEROID

A NASA spaceship struck an asteroid seven million miles away in order to deflect its orbit, succeeding in a historic test of humanity's ability to prevent a celestial object from devastating life on Earth.

The Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) impactor hit its target, the space rock Dimorphos, just after midnight Irish time, ten months after blasting off from California on its pioneering mission, AFP reports.

"We're embarking on a new era, an era in which we potentially have the capability to protect ourselves from something like a dangerous hazardous asteroid impact," said Lori Glaze, director of NASA's planetary science division.

Dimorphos – a 160-metre asteroid roughly comparable in size to an Egyptian pyramid – orbits a half-mile long big brother called Didymos. Never seen before, the "moonlet" appeared as a speck of light around an hour before the collision.

Its egg-like shape and craggy, boulder-dotted surface finally came into clear view in the last few minutes, as DART raced toward it at roughly 23,500km/ph.

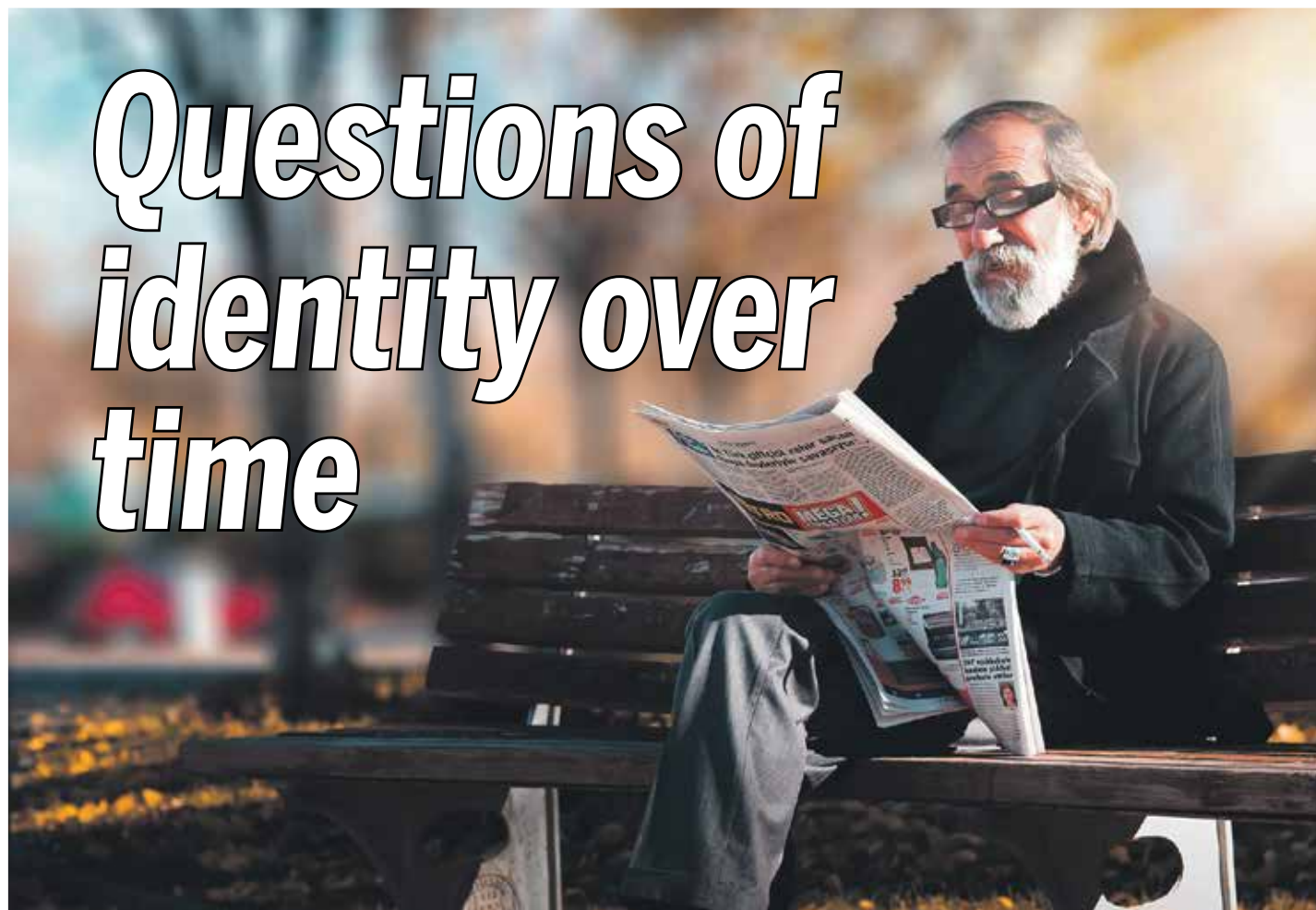
NASA scientists and engineers erupted in applause as the screen froze on a final image, indicating that signal had been lost and impact had taken place.

HALF OF WORLD'S BIRDS  
SPECIES IN DECLINE

Almost half of all bird species are in decline globally and one in eight are threatened with extinction, according to a major new report warning that human actions are driving more species to the brink and nature is "in trouble".

The four-yearly *State of the World's Birds* report, which provides a snapshot of the plight of species globally and more broadly a barometer for biodiversity, comes as the United Nations steers an international process to protect nature.

"One in eight bird species is threatened with extinction, and the status of the world's birds continues to deteriorate – species are moving ever faster towards extinction," said the report released last week by BirdLife International.

Questions of  
identity over  
time

If you see a photograph of yourself as a baby you might have all sorts of thoughts. "How cute I was", or "peaked in infancy", or "why was I chasing that goat?"

One thought you're unlikely to think is "I wonder what he's doing now?" You think yourself quite entitled to believe that he's looking at baby pictures.

A different scenario. You see a picture of yourself as a teenager. You marvel at your spectacular perm, or your My Chemical Romance (MCR) t-shirt, or your miserable half-moustache. "What was I thinking?" you muse, "I was a totally different person then." Or maybe when you look back on your past actions you're more seriously disconnected. Speaking for myself, sometimes I think about cruel things I have said to people, and am completely unable to reconstruct a context in which I could have found them acceptable to say. They don't seem to me like the kind of thing the person I am would or could say. Yet I said them.

**“These theories seem intuitively plausible, and they also fit very well with the kind of body-swaps that happen in fantasy or science-fiction stories”**

Or did I really? Was the person I am now ever that cruel, or was I genuinely someone different then? Were you the baby you're looking at in the pictures? Were you the MCR-loving teenager?

These are what philosophers call "questions of personal identity over time". They're not just about whether we are the same people as the babies that we were

Everyday  
philosophy  
Ben Conroy

or the old people we will become. They're about why. What is it that makes us the same person? The answer to that question has vast ethical implications: for how we hold people accountable for past actions, and for when the people that we are come into and out of existence.

One of the most influential theories of personal identity is based on psychological continuity. According to this view various kinds of psychological connections bind our past, present, and future together. If Bob the man remembers enough of Bobby the boy's experiences, or shares enough of Bob's intentions and goals, then they are the same person. These connections don't have to be direct. It could be that by the time he's in his 80s, Bobert no longer remembers being young Bobby. But he remembers being Bob in his 40s, who remembered being Bobby. Such a chain of memories is enough for psychological-continuity theorists to say that we're dealing with one continuous person.

These theories seem intuitively plausible, and they also fit very well with the kind of body-swaps that happen in fantasy or science-fiction stories. We may think that such swaps are impossible in practice, but we're inclined to believe that they could happen in principle.

But there's a problem. Staying in the realm of science fiction, there seems no reason why psychological continuity couldn't exist between one past person

and two or more future ones. If someone made an exact replica of me, both the replica and I would remember hiding under the sofa on our third birthday. It would seem then that my three-year-old self is the same person as me, and the same person as my replica. But my replica and I would clearly not be the same people as each other.



If this seems too dizzy, we might also flinch at the implication of a psychological continuity theory that a person with sufficiently severe Alzheimers is literally no longer the same person as they were: that our beloved parent or friend is gone, rather than here in front of us demanding our love.

The religious might seem to have a neat solution to this. What makes us the same person is having the same soul. From conception to death and beyond, it's the

soul that makes us who we are, memories or no memories. If we are split in two or replicated, our soul will only go with one body. Simple! If, though, we think of a soul as something completely separable from the body, we may run into some of the same problems as the psychological continuity theory. Why might a soul not swap bodies? And more importantly, how are we to know if it has or hasn't? If we say "we'd know because of the person's personality and memories" we're back to square one.

**“None of this necessarily means we don't have souls, but if we do they are inextricably bound up with our bodies”**

In the light of these difficulties, I am most persuaded by the personal identity theory called animalism. As the name suggests, animalism holds that what makes you the same person over time is simply that you're the same animal. We are, essentially, humble organisms of the species *homo sapiens*. We may change a lot – my character becoming kinder or more cruel, your hair becoming more and less spectacularly curly – but it's the same animal changing and growing, not a series of transformation into different people.

None of this necessarily means we don't have souls, but if we do they are inextricably bound up with our bodies. If we hope to survive death, we'd need a bodily resurrection to do it.



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1571 to celebrate the victory of Christian forces in the Battle of Lepanto on October 7 of the same year, as he attributed the victory to the power of the rosary rather than to the forces fighting the war alone.

**“Try to pray during the day: It can be tricky, too, to leave your rosary until the end of the day as sleep comes upon you quickly”**

With the great praise the Church lauds the rosary with, why not attempt to pick it up this October? If you're already an avid fan of the rosary, why not attempt to pray it every day this October? If you don't need the prayer power (we all do), somebody else surely does. Here are a couple of ways to incorporate it into your routine this month that might make it more manageable:

- **Pray with a group:** The rosary normally takes me 15-20 minutes to pray, which can be difficult to work yourself up to. Maybe try asking family or friends within your easy reach if they'd like to pray it too, affording you the strength that numbers brings. Ideally we'd be able to pray anytime, anywhere, but sometimes a friend that suggests it to us first is just what we need.

- **Try to pray during the day:** It can be tricky, too, to leave your rosary until the end of the day as sleep comes upon you quickly. Why

not make use of a lunch break, a car trip, a walk or some other part of your day by filling it with a wholesome and edifying prayer?

- **Use images or text:** Holding the different mysteries in your mind's eye as you pray can be challenging, so it can be a good idea to find an icon, picture or passage that raises your mind to the mystery in question. My mind is prone to wandering, and iconographic imagery has often anchored me just as I drift away.

- **Visit a Marian shrine or grotto:** A visit to a Marian shrine or grotto this October could be of use to you in your efforts to deepen your devotion to Mary, or to the rosary more generally. Seeing the way these places affect others can affect us in turn. I've often come away from these holy places with a greater desire to pray more.

### **Memento mori**

As beautiful as autumn is, it's also a month that sees life slow down and drift off into death. The leaves and beautiful foliage that we all enjoy so much throughout spring and summer are the most obvious example of this, but we can look here to the human realm, too.

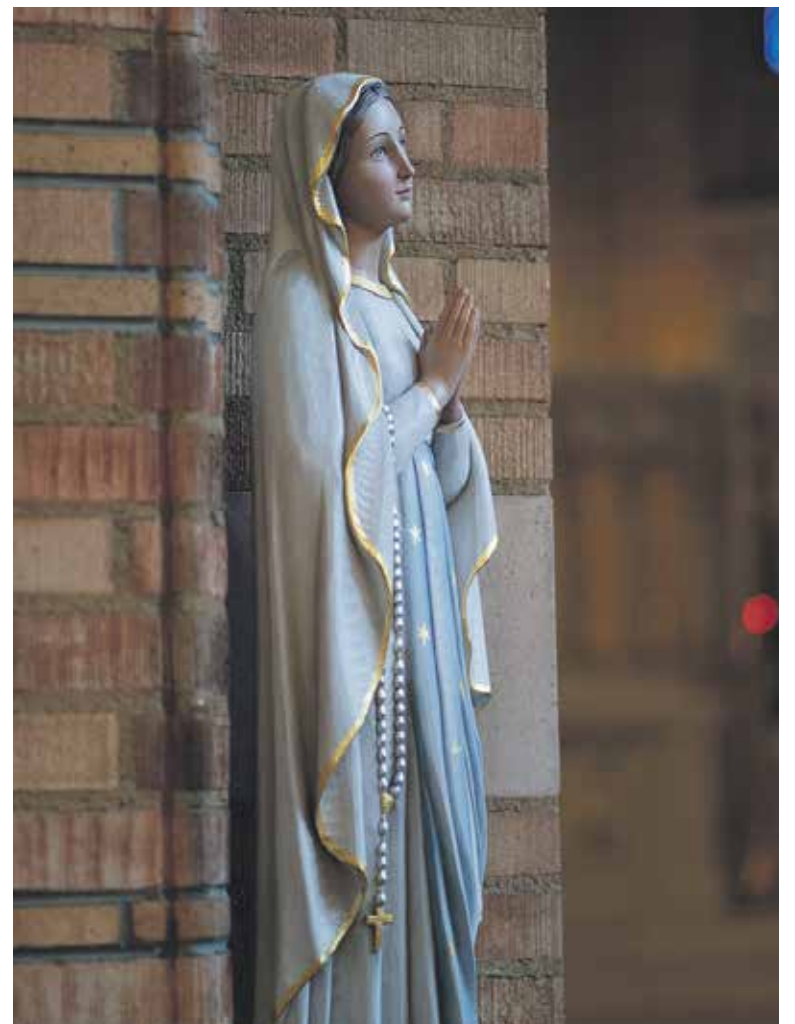
November is the month traditionally associated with the dead, both those in Heaven and those whose salvation is being worked out in purgatory. All Saints' Day is followed by All Souls' Day on November 1 and 2 respectively, and both are intended, at least in part, to orient our minds to things eternal. A useful exercise when current events force us to consider our mortality and our limits, as mentioned above!

**“November is the month traditionally associated with the dead, both those in Heaven and those whose salvation is being worked out in purgatory”**

Take advantage of the seasonal reminder this year to allow your mind and spirit to turn in the direction the Church intends it to by contemplating the last things. Visit a cemetery, pray (the rosary, perhaps) on behalf of the dead who need our prayers, and meditate on the fact that one day we too, will be like them. As a famous Capuchin bone crypt in Rome puts it, “What you are now, I used to be. What I am now, you surely will be”.

**“We ought to make use of the logic God has imbued both his creation and his Church with, and allow ourselves to be guided by the seasons he has set out”**

Far from being a grim and untimely reminder of things we'd rather forget, autumn and the Church's focus on prayer and mortality are balms to our troubled minds here on earth. We ought to make use of the logic God has imbued both his creation and his Church with, and allow ourselves to be guided by the seasons he has set out.





# Offering support in times of grief

## Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

**L**ong before she became a nun, Sr Helen Culhane RSM wanted to study nursing. Luck didn't favour her initially and she settled into another career. But after joining the Sisters of Mercy, new doors opened to her and she has spent many years accompanying the sick, the dying and the bereaved.

Sr Culhane grew up in a Catholic home typical of Ireland in the 1970s. They prayed the rosary when they were younger and went to Mass regularly. Although she didn't get a sense of her vocation until she was in her 20s, the Sisters of Mercy she met in her Limerick secondary school left a lasting impression.

**“Memories drift up from her schooldays, of a nun who used to give elocution lessons and of trips to the pool to learn swimming – all for free”**

“I was influenced by our principal, Sr Josepha O'Shea, she was a wonderful principal,” Sr Culhane recalls. “She was inspirational, very gentle in her approach.”

Memories drift up from her schooldays, of a nun who used to give elocution lessons and of trips to the pool to learn swimming – all for free. “All of these things touch you,” Sr Culhane marvels. She was particularly impressed by the order's preferential



Sr Helen Culhane RSM

option for the poor, giving them the gift of an education.

Another great influence on Sr Culhane's faith was her grandmother. She died when Sr Helen was just eight, but left a lasting impression: “She would go to about three Masses in those days, not that she'd take me to all of them, but a memory came back to me when I was making my final profession which I think is very profound.

“As Mercy Sisters, you get a ring on your final profession and decide on a motto from Scripture and that's inscribed on it. So here was I in 1991 and I was on retreat preparing for my final profession. I was with Sr Bernie Crew and... she asked [about my motto], and I said, nothing will come up for me, it's really driving me crazy.

## My Lord and my God

She continues: “But I went away for a walk and it was as if all of a sudden, I could see and hear a picture of my grandmother whispering into my ear. When the priest lifted the host, and this was as a five or six-year-old, my grandmother said to me, Helen, when the priest does that say ‘My Lord and my God’.

“She said that, and wouldn't you think a child would have that forgotten. But here I was, 34 years of age, and as I was walking that vision came to me and I heard my grandmother saying my Lord and my God and that's what's inscribed on my profession ring. I've often thought about that.”

In her early 20s, before Sr Culhane had begun discernment, she worked quite happily in a factory. She had wanted to study nursing, but now filled

her time playing camogie, soccer and trying to save money.

“I remember thinking, if I save £100, I'll be doing well. I remember going into the bank one day and I could see I had the £100. I felt very wealthy, I thought I had it made. I remember then I voice saying to me, ah that's not a lot now, you'll need 200,” Sr Helen remembers.

**“Sr Scholastica's sage advice, which was to shape Sr Helen's vocation immensely, was that she study to become a social worker”**

“I started saving again. But then I had this spiritual moment where I thought, money isn't everything, what's all this about? Prayer became a very important part of my life as I grew older. It became more than just praying when I was in trouble. I was developing a relationship with God.”

Initially, because of her devotion to prayer, Sr Helen considered an enclosed order. But as she says herself, “I'm an awful talker, and I thought I wouldn't last a week!” She saw the work the Sisters of Mercy were doing, running a hospice, working with the marginalised, and decided to discern with them.

While she was in formation, the superior of the time Sr Scholastica, asked Sr Helen what she would like to do as a religious sister. “I said, I want to pray. And Sr Scholastica said that's lovely Helen, but won't put food on the table”.

Sr Scholastica's sage advice, which was to shape Sr Helen's vocation immensely, was that she study to become a social worker. And this she did, getting a job initially with the Limerick youth service, before moving on to the child protection services. “That was very difficult work,” she says. “I saw the most painful side of life.”

Having spent 10 years working there, she moved on again to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, before finally applying for a job in Milford Hospice.

“Some 10 years previous to that my dad had died in Milford of cancer,” Sr Helen explains. “I was really struck by the care and compassion we all received, especially my dad. I went to Milford in my early 40s and loved it.”

The work seemed a natural fit to Sr Helen. She was “touched deeply” by the people she worked with, calling it a “privilege” to have accompanied them. It was during that time that she set up a group for bereaved children which she ran with a colleague. This small work was to inspire her to found a new service, the Children's Grief Centre.

What sparked her decision to establish the centre was a gathering held by the Sisters of Mercy, at which one particular phrase stood out to her: “what are the struggles of today?”

## Reflective

“I came back after thinking it was very reflective. Every evening after work I'd pray for some time. But this sentence, the struggles of today, kept coming up,” Sr Helen explains. “After 12 months, I phoned our provincial Sr Peggy Collins and she listened to me. She said, Helen, ‘could you get a group of professionals, maybe 10, that would discern what you're talking about’. After that, it was like these people just came to me.”

For the past 13 years, Sr Helen and the Children's Grief Centre have offered free support to hundreds of children and young people who have experienced a loss through bereavement, separation, or divorce.

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

## Sweet Treats

Kiley Britten



## Mouth-watering banana chocolate chip muffins

**T**hese humble muffins pack a big punch of flavour. The cinnamon and nutmeg make them warming, while the chocolate makes them comforting and slightly nostalgic.

I find that I often have high ambitions of eating healthy when I buy bananas, and then promptly forget about them. While not exactly ‘healthy’, these muffins are a ‘healthy-er’ alternative to a mid-afternoon biscuit or chocolate bar. They also make excellent portable snacks.

### Ingredients

- 9oz/250g plain flour
- 1tsp baking powder
- 1tsp bread soda
- ¼tsp salt
- 1tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼tsp ground nutmeg
- 3 ripe bananas

- 1 egg
- 50g chocolate chips
- 40 walnuts, optional
- 2oz/55g dark brown sugar
- 2oz/50ml vegetable oil

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas 5. Line a muffin tin with pastry cases.
2. Sift together the flour, baking powder, bread soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg.
3. Using an electric mixer, beat the peeled bananas at a medium speed until they are mashed.
4. Beat in the egg, sugar and oil until everything is just mixed.
5. Slowly add the flour mixture, beating on

a low speed. Once all the flour is mixed in, add in the chocolate chips and, optionally, the walnuts.

Use a wooden spoon to fold everything together and evenly distribute the chocolate chips through the batter.

6. Using a spoon or an ice cream scoop, spoon the batter into the pastry cases. They should not be filled all the way to the top, but leave a bit of room for them to expand when baked.

7. Bake the muffins for 20-25 minutes, until the tops are lightly browned and a toothpick or knife comes out mostly clean. Let them cool in the tin for a couple of minutes before turning them out onto a wire cooling rack.





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Tied up in moral knots on a hellish spiral

I love a drama series that's unpredictable, steers clear of stereotypes and has a sharp script, a touch or more of humour and fluid acting.

**Inside Man** on BBC One, Mondays and Tuesdays, fits the bill with delights to spare. Its black humour reminds me of Coen Brothers material, especially the *Fargo* film and series. David Tennant plays a highly conflicted vicar who lands himself in a compromising situation involving a USB drive that he casually agrees to mind for a troubled acquaintance. The random act of kindness propels him into a hellish spiral as he gets tied up in moral knots to rival a dodgy fishing line. This vicar has a foul mouth on him, but is this caused by stress? I'd love to know what kind of vicar he was before the crisis descends. In the throes of it he spins between sacrificial love and cynical manipulation – especially in a church confession scene that's hard to watch. His son's maths tutor Janice (the excellent Holly Wells) gets caught up in all of this in the most bizarre of ways.

### Connected

Meanwhile, and initially connected by just the thinnest of threads, a certain Mr Grieff (the hypnotic Stanley Tucci), a prisoner on death row in the USA who solves



David Tennant stars in TV series *Inside Man*.

mysteries from his prison cell, is drawn into the mystery, along with his wise-cracking and serial killer neighbour on the row. Credulity is stretched. The script is sprightly and razor sharp, philosophical, reflective and at times cynical. I loved the dig at "the recreationally outraged" and Mr Grieff's quip "self-loathing is clarity" as well as his interest in deeds of "moral worth". Two episodes in and it's hard to

know where this is going, but I'm very keen to find out.

A more credibly conflicted vicar featured in the film **First Reformed** on TG4 last Monday, and this film was also unpredictable and well scripted (by Paul Shrader). Ethan Hawk does a tremendous job as Rev. Toller of the small First Reformed church affiliated to the more prosperous ministry nearby. He has health issues and is troubled after a family trag-

edy. He finds it difficult to pray, but is good with the parishioners and in particular finds himself counselling a young married couple. The woman (Amanda Seyfried, never better) is pregnant and looking forward to being a mother, but the husband is overcome by climate doom and doesn't want to bring a child into this world that, as he sees it, has a grim future. Drawing on his own experience Rev. Toller says to him: "The despair you feel about bringing a child into this world cannot equal the despair of taking a child from it."

The film teases out so many important issues, like reason, discernment, pride, hope, despair, family, courage, prayer, relationships, desolation and much more. The atmosphere is frequently grim, emphasised by the dark lighting in many scenes. The reverend's pastor boss, sympathetic to a degree but more worldly, says to him, with Gethsemane in mind, "You're always in the garden, for you every hour is the darkest hour".

### Destruction

Concern with planetary destruction is central, but there are implied warnings against extremism. The only character I found stereotyped and predictable was the businessman who owns

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### THE MEANING OF LIFE

RTÉ One Sunday October 9, 10.25pm

Joe Duffy speaks with mental health campaigner, former senator and presidential candidate, Joan Freeman.

#### FILM: DOUBT

TG4 Monday October 10, 9.30pm

(2008) Starring Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Amy Adams. Directed by John Patrick Shanley. A Catholic school principal questions a priest's ambiguous relationship with a troubled young student.

#### CATHOLIC SPHERE

EWTN Tuesday October 11, 9.30pm

Johnnette Williams and a panel of experts discuss the gender agenda. This divisive issue creates much disinformation, but our panel sets the record straight, showing every person's true identity as a child of God.

the local factory but who always funds many Church activities. Engrossing for the most part, I thought it went off the rails somewhat in the last quarter, and I found the ending unsatisfactory.

In this troubled world that causes so much pain to Rev. Toller I have found two recent events that offer some hope – the anti-war protests gathering force in Russia and the worldwide protests against the oppressive regime in Iran following the death in the custody of the morality police of Mahsa Amini, a young Kurdish woman arrested for wearing the hijab head scarf wrongly. On **The Leap of Faith** on RTÉ Radio 1 last Friday Siobhán Garrigan spoke to Iranian woman Dr Roja Fazaeli,

now Associate Professor of Islamic Civilisation at Trinity College. She welcomed how both liberals and conservatives, women and men, were joining in the protests and how hijab-wearing women were protecting protestors. She was impressed by the fearlessness of the protestors but also fearful of their safety. She had been put under house arrest herself on a visit to Iran in 2004.

Her response was marked by hope rather than despair, surely the best way to approach a challenging future.

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Pat O'Kelly

# Music

## Anguish and turmoil in extraordinarily moving performance

The National Concert Hall's International Concert Series brought our near neighbour, Manchester's Hallé Orchestra, on a welcome return visit last month. Formed in 1858, the orchestra's first Dublin event was on October 26, 1878, when it gave two concerts at the Exhibition Palace, now the NCH, conducted by its founder, German-born Charles Hallé, who was also a particularly eminent pianist.

The programmes included Beethoven's 6th Symphony (Pastoral) in the afternoon and Emperor Concerto, played by Hallé himself, in the evening. There was also Mozart's Jupiter Symphony as well as music by two popular composers of the day, Louis Spohr and Henry Vieuxtemps, with



Bulgarian Delyana Lazarova, music director of the Hallé Youth Orchestra.

two movements of the latter's E major Violin Concerto played by Wilma Neruda, Hallé's celebrated Brno-born wife.

By all accounts, the attendance at both concerts was rather poor, considered to be the result of the programmes lacking vocal music.

Undeterred the orchestra returned to Dublin on several

occasions playing in other venues including the Rotunda in 1900 and 1901 when its programmes included Dvorák's New World Symphony and the Irish premiere of Elgar's Enigma Variations. There was also Beethoven's 8th Symphony, Tchaikovsky's Fantasy Overture Romeo and Juliet and a Wagner selection.

### Memorable

On another memorable visit on June 21, 1959 the Hallé, conducted by Sir John Barbirolli, joined the RÉSO and Our Lady's Choral Society, with vocal soloists Victoria Elliott and Eugenia Zareska, for the first Irish performance of Mahler's 2nd Symphony (Resurrection) in the Theatre Royal.

In last month's concert young Bulgarian Delyana Lazarova conducted. Winner of the inaugural Siemens Hallé International Conducting Competition in 2020, she is now the orchestra's assistant conductor and music director of the Hallé Youth Orchestra.

The programme traversed classical, contemporary and romantic paths beginning with Mozart's Haffner Symphony; introducing Bulgarian Dobrinka Tabakova's Cello Concerto to Ireland for the first time and ending with Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony (Pathétique). Reminiscent of 1878, the NCH was less than full, which was a pity as this was a very fine concert indeed.

Ms Lazarova's tempi in the Mozart gave the music

an uplifting momentum with the bristling finale showing Beethoven approaching from the distant horizon.

### Programme

The programme notes for Tabakova's beautifully written Concerto – solo cello and strings – mentioned her viewing her three-movement (Turbulent, Longing and Radiant) piece as "one seamless form – a journey". Deeply committed English soloist, Guy Johnston, was consistently expressive and impassioned and also making light of the Concerto's concluding virtuosic extravaganza.

At its full strength, there was fire and drama in the Hallé's unveiling of the Tchaikovsky. Occasionally the

conductor's speeds seemed a little too hasty but, never mind, the orchestral playing was marvellous.

The inner movements – Allegro con grazia and Allegro molto vivace – were graceful and apocalyptic before the concluding Adagio lamentoso created a profound and poignant farewell. Delyana Lazarova and the Hallé left us in no doubt about the composer's anguish and inner turmoil in this extraordinarily moving performance.

Apparently in good health, Tchaikovsky conducted the symphony's first performance in St Petersburg on October 16, 1893. Nine days later, aged 53, he was dead with the cause continuing to be a vexed question.



# Gratitude is the heart of prayer

**L**uke, more than the other writers, is the evangelist of prayer. This Sunday's Gospel (Luke 17:11-19), the story of the healing of 10 lepers, instructs us on having trust in our prayer of petition and returning to God in thanksgiving. Asking and thanking.

"Jesus! Master! Take pity on us." They had to shout loudly because keeping a safe distance was far longer than the two metres distancing that we experienced. These pitiful outcasts may have been distant physically, but they were spiritually close. Faith draws us close to God.

Jesus tested the depth of their trust because even before there were any signs of healing, he sent them to the priests to have their healing authenticated. The first biography of St Solanus Casey was entitled *Thank God ahead of Time*, as this was the advice that he gave to people who came to him for a blessing. Trust strongly that God will answer your prayer.

## Giving thanks

The story then advances to the prayer of gratitude. Luke's Gospel tells of the acts of God and the inner reactions of people. Notice how the Gospel doesn't simply say that the leper was cured. The emphasis was on finding himself cured. Gratitude, which has been described as the heart of prayer, begins in discovering our gifts and blessings.

After finding himself cured, the Samaritan leper was moved to turn back, praising God at the top of his voice and throwing himself at the feet of Jesus to thank him. Praise is more about the giver while thanks is more about the gift. First, discover the gifts you have received. Then turn back in praise and thanksgiving.

## The Mass

The greatest prayer of praise and gratitude is the celebration of the

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



Eucharist. It is interesting that what our translation calls thanks, in the original Greek text the word *eucharistón* is used. Coming to the celebration of the Eucharist should not depend on how we feel or what we get from it.

**“Discovering your blessings can transform you, making you less negative as a positive outlook takes over”**

We begin to celebrate the Eucharist when we become aware of the gifts of God in the saving work of Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection. The Eucharistic Prayer begins with an invitation: "Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to God. It is right and fitting." And it closes with the doxology: "Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, all glory and honour is yours, forever and ever. Amen."

## The other nine

Was Jesus disappointed when only one of the ten who were cured came back to thank him? One out of ten. Is that my average score in showing appreciation to God or people? One word of appreciation will help me to preach next Sunday whereas any criticism will make it harder to keep going.

How many priests have dried up through lack of appreciation and encouragement? How many marriages would flourish if partners or children make a constant effort to show gratitude? Why not take pen to paper and list the other nine in your own life ... nine favours or blessings

that you have not sufficiently appreciated? Examine your conscience on your sense of gratitude. How often do you offer affirmation or praise?

## Blessings

It's a lovely practice at the end of each day to recall just one blessed moment: a helpful person, beauty, wonder, music, a nice meal, birdsong, or somebody who put a smile on your face. Sometimes your blessed moment might have come from a difficult confrontation which initially upset you, but as the day went on, you found the grace to have compassion for that difficult person.

Each night concentrate of just one blessing. Maybe note it in your diary. Over time, this practice of gratitude will make you more aware of God's constant blessings. Quoting Pope Francis: "The best way to discern if our prayer is authentic is to judge to what extent our life is being transformed by mercy" (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 105).

Discovering your blessings can transform you, making you less negative as a positive outlook takes over. Gratitude is the heart of prayer and the key to happiness.

## A Psalm of gratitude

O, praise the Lord, my soul: my soul, give thanks to the Lord. Never forget all his blessings.

O Lord, my soul is filled with your joy and my heart wants to break into songs of thankfulness and praise.

I have been to the vast and powerful ocean, and before its great power, all burdens were lifted from my mind.

I gazed at the ageless mountains and found how short-lived are my problems and how brief my passing clouds.

I have gazed in wonder at the delicacy of a flower, and my life was lifted up to a higher plane of sensitivity.

How have I been so blind every day! How have

**“You are great and glorious from all eternity. You are not depending on our praise. Our praise adds nothing to your greatness but is itself your gift”**

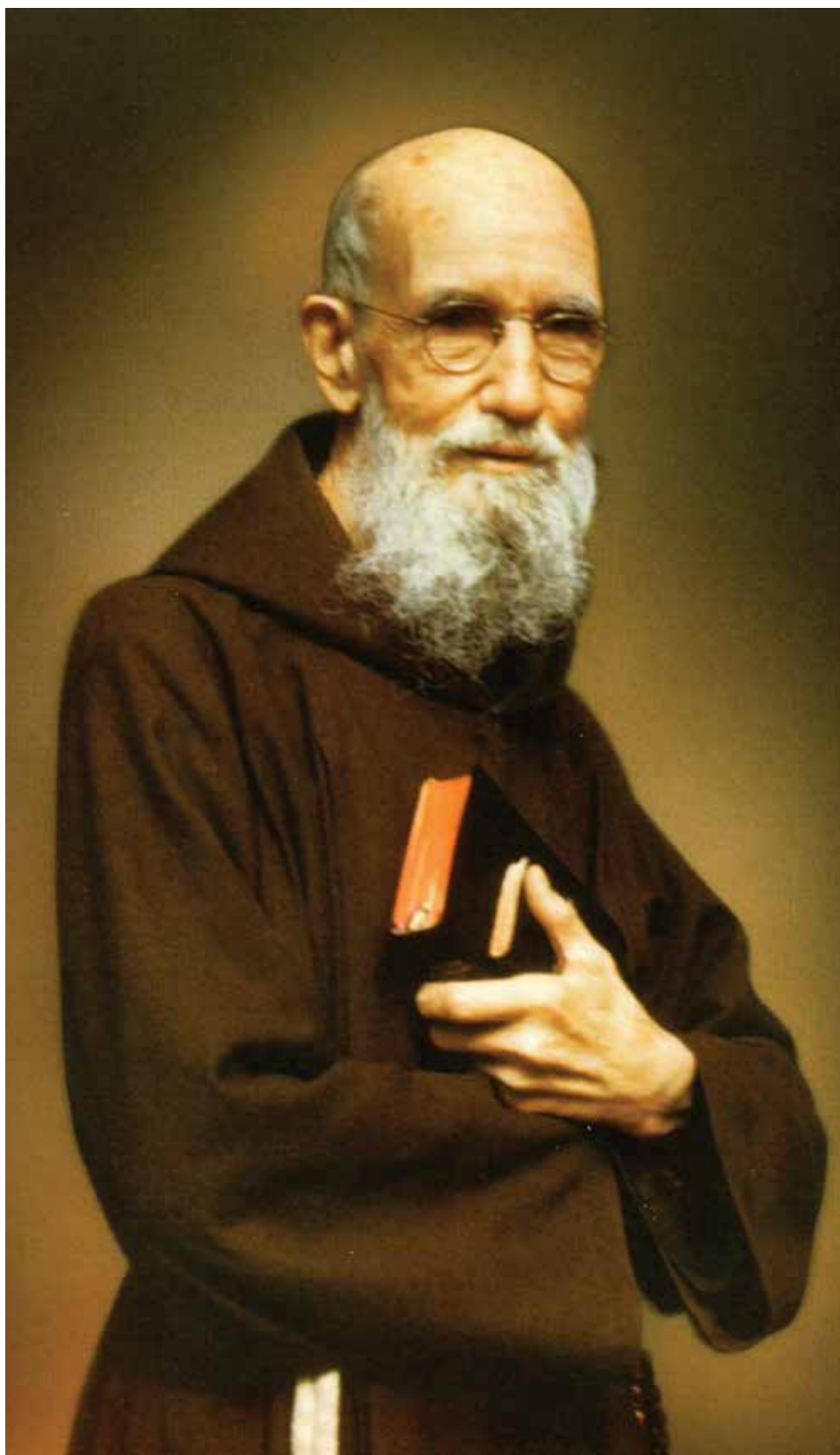


Photo: Solanus Casey, CC 3.0 via Wikipedia.

I missed your handiwork in the world all around me! I allow myself to be swallowed up in the small world of my petty concerns and I fail to see your daily miracles of creation.

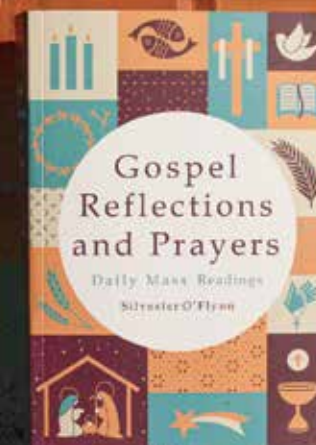
Too often my prayers have been about myself. Forgive me, Lord, for being so wrapped up in my own concerns that I have been insensitive to the beautiful messages you send every day.

You are great and glorious from all eternity. You are not depending on our praise. Our praise adds nothing to your greatness but is itself your gift.

Thank you, Lord, for the wonder of my being, and the wonders of all your creation

## More of Fr Silvester's Gospel Reflections

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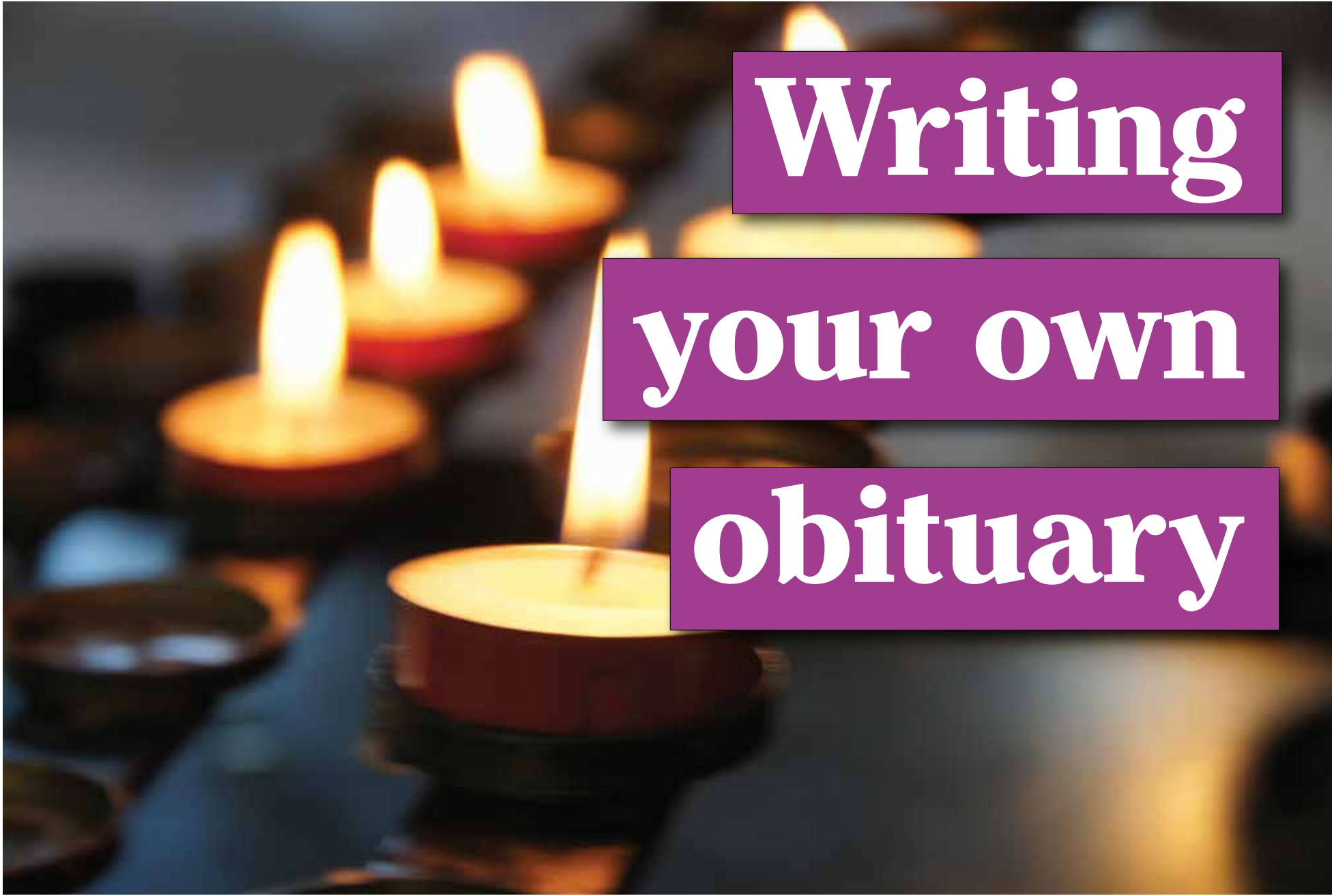
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# Writing your own obituary

**T**here comes a time in life when it's time to stop writing your resume and begin to write your obituary. I'm not sure who first coined that line, but there's wisdom in it.

What's the difference between a resume and an obituary? Well, the former details your achievements, the latter expresses how you want to be remembered and what kind of oxygen and blessing you want to leave behind. But, how exactly do you write an obituary so that it's not, in effect, just another version of your resume? Here's a suggestion.

There's a custom in Judaism where as an adult you make out a spiritual will each year. Originally, this will was more in line with the type of will we typically make, where the focus is on burial instructions, on who gets what when we die, and on how to legally and practically tie up the unfinished details of our lives. Through time, however, this evolved so that today this will is focused more on a review of your life, the highlighting of what's been most precious in your life, the honest expression of regrets and apologies, and the blessing, by name, of those persons to whom you want to say a special goodbye. The will is reviewed and renewed each year so that it is always current, and it's read aloud at your funeral as the final words you want to leave behind for your loved ones.



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

## Exercise

This can be a very helpful exercise for each of us to do, except that such a will is not done in a lawyer's office, but in prayer, perhaps with a spiritual director, a counselor, or a confessor helping us. Very practically, what might go into a spiritual will of this sort?

**“There's a custom in Judaism where as an adult you make out a spiritual will each year”**

If you are looking for help in doing this, I recommend the work and the writings of Richard Groves, the co-founder of the Sacred Art of Living Center. He has been working in the field of end-

of-life spirituality for more than 30 years and offers some very helpful guidance vis-à-vis creating a spiritual will and renewing it regularly. It focus on three questions.

First: What, in life, did God want me to do? Did I do it? All of us have some sense of having a vocation, of having a purpose for being in this world, of having been given some task to fulfill in life. Perhaps we might only be dimly aware of this, but, at some level of soul, all of us sense a certain duty and purpose. The first task in a spiritual will is to try to come to grips with that. What did God want me to do in this life? How well or poorly have I been doing it?

Second: To whom do I need to say, “I'm sorry”? What are my

regrets? Just as others have hurt us, we have hurt others. Unless we die very young, all of us have made mistakes, hurt others, and done things we regret. A spiritual will is meant to address this with searing honesty and deep contrition. We are never more big-hearted, noble, prayerful, and deserving of respect than when we are down on our knees sincerely recognising our weaknesses, apologising, asking where we need to make amends.

**“Perhaps we might only be dimly aware of this, but, at some level of soul, all of us sense a certain duty and purpose”**

Third: Who, very specifically, by name, do I want to bless before I die and gift with some special oxygen? We are most like God (infusing divine energy into life) when we are admiring others, affirming them, and offering them whatever we can from our own lives as a help

to them in theirs. Our task is to do this for everyone, but we cannot do this for everyone, individually, by name. In a spiritual will, we are given the chance to name those people we most want to bless. When the prophet Elijah was dying, his servant, Elisha, begged him to leave him “a double portion” of his spirit. When we die, we're meant to leave our spirit behind as sustenance for everyone; but there are some people, whom we want to name, to whom we want to leave a double portion. In this will, we name those people.

## Challenging

In a wonderfully challenging book, *The Four Things That Matter Most*, Ira Byock, a medical doctor who works with the dying, submits that there are four things we need to say to our loved ones before we die: “Please forgive me”, “I forgive you”, “Thank you”, and “I love you”. He's right; but, given the contingencies, tensions, wounds, heartaches, and ups and downs within our relationships, even with those we love dearly, it isn't always easy (or sometimes even existentially possible) to say those words clearly, without any equivocation. A spiritual will gives us the chance to say them from a place that we can create which is beyond the tensions that generally cloud our relationships and prevent us from speaking clearly, so that at our funeral, after the eulogy, we will have no unfinished business with those we have left behind.

**“How exactly do you write an obituary so that it's not, in effect, just another version of your resume? Here's a suggestion”**



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## The core ideas of St Matthew



Jesus preaching the Beatitudes, detail from the painting by J.J. Tissot.

**The Deep End: A Journey with the Sunday Gospels in the Year of Matthew**, by Triona Doherty and Jane Mellett (Messenger Publications, €14.95/£12.95)

Peter Costello

Some readers may be familiar with the authors from their first book written together. Jane Mellett is an experienced pastoral worker, while Triona Doherty is currently the editor of *Reality* magazine.

**“God always sides with the poor, those who thirst for justice and peace, those who are persecuted and those who mourn”**

But this book may well be for their readers an important experience. For they explain it is the Gospel attributed to St Matthew, that presents us with the Beatitudes – the core statement of Christian belief, whether we all like them or not. For they certainly challenge the notion claimed by many evangelicals, who like to think of “good Christians” being awarded not only with grace, but also with worldly wealth. Chris-

**“This book will provide readers with a very affirmative presentation of the Christian outlook – in itself a very useful thing”**

tian bookshops in Ireland, Europe and North America often have a section devoted to books expounding this point of view. I find that they make sad viewing.

The authors, however, are anxious to point out that “God always sides with the poor, those who thirst for justice and peace, those who are persecuted and those who mourn”. It is Jesus, too, who emphasises what we should do for those who are imprisoned either in their minds or bodies.

### Core ideas

This book provides an excellent presentation of these core ideas. But more than that, they bring to the task in hand the outlook of female pastoral theologians. Merely adding a female dimension to human affairs does not, as so many thought in the past, lead to a gentler, kinder world, as once hoped. To achieve that we need all of us to work together.

This book will provide readers with a very affirmative presentation of the Christian outlook – in itself a very useful thing. But this book will also provide a consoling read in the darkening autumn days which forecast a darker winter.

## Why the ‘Vanishing Irish’

**The Way We Were: Catholic Ireland Since 1922**, by Mary Kenny (Columba, €19.99/£17.99)

Peter Costello

Mary Kenny’s new book is of great importance, and in its arrangement will enlighten many about what has become a controversial aspect of our recent past. The first section deals with the course of Irish history, basically since the founding of the Free State

She was inspired by a hope of giving Catholic culture in Ireland since about 1922 a fairer view than is now usual. This is an important thing to do.

No one can form a true opinion without hearing all sides: as she remarks of the Jesuit tradition of debate, we often learn most from our opponents.

**“If the rural Irish continued to emigrate at the rate they did, and refused to marry and have families, they would soon be gone”**

Thinking over the theme of her book, some images came into my mind that seem to have been passed over. They may seem symbolic in ways, but I think they are revealing. As I am mentioned and quoted in it, it is difficult to review this book in the ordinary way. But I have some comments to make on it.

Nowhere does she refer to a once famous landmark text, but then she is not alone in this. The book, published in 1954, is *The Vanishing Irish*, edited by the American Catholic journalist John A. O’Brien, a well-known publicist of the day. It was a collection of essays by writers such as Paul Vincent Carroll, Shane Leslie, Sean O’Faolain and others, addressing “one of the strangest of modern phenomena, Ireland’s declining population”. The Irish some predicted then in all seriousness were destined for cultural extinction.

If the rural Irish continued to emigrate at the rate they did, and refused to marry and have families, they would soon be gone.

But back in 1954 the “better life” for many hundreds of thousands of Irish people was simply not to be found



Mary Kenny (right) pictured with long-time friend Sabina Coyne Higgins at the launch of her new book from Columba Books. Photo: Alexis Sierra

in the Ireland that Mary Kenny wants to celebrate.

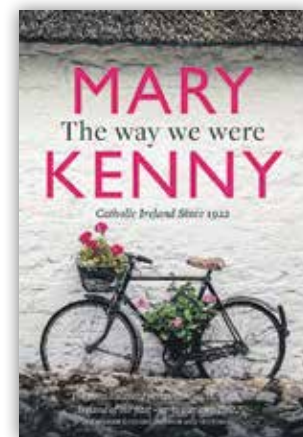
This is not my opinion, but the opinion of those who left Ireland, and those who then never wished to marry, the “Diaspora” as so many now call it, made their choice, an “American wake” and the boat to “Philadelphia in the morning”.

### First production

In playwright Brian Friel’s play Gareth O’Donnell was from rural Donegal, but Ireland also lost a multitude of graduates as well. Only in the years after its first production in 1964 did emigration begin to decline and then reverse, the populations at last began to expand. Something happened that needs explanation. Ireland in the decades before Vatican II had already changed.

The other item that came into my mind is a photo-

graph of a modern church in Co. Clare, showing the single males, who in those days often kept to the back of the church, leaving second Mass on a Sunday, the men in their caps and 30-year-old best suits in a sharp contrast to the walls of glass, light steel, and concrete. My father had got this from his friend



Michael Scott to show to students in one of his classes in the American University where he then taught in the School of Architecture. It became for me, when I found it among his papers, a symbolic tableau, of the very Ireland Mary Kenny is writing about. The contrast between the ultra-modern and the very traditional is striking.

**“Germany had gone through a physical and moral catastrophe”**

What does this image mean?

The modern style of the new Irish churches of the period derived from Germany. There, and in other European countries, churches destroyed in the war had to be replaced. Their



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.

## didn't actually vanish



answer to John O'Brien's book was that the Irish of the kind he and others thought of as "Irish Catholics" did vanish, and were replaced by what other have come to see as "the true Irish" who had no problems increasing the population.

**“Just reading what she thinks is needed will surprise many readers”**

Having been part of some of what she describes, I think that Mary Kenny's book will be very revealing to a younger generation. It is a sign of our times that she provides between the two parts of the book, a glossary of terms which she feels young readers will be aided by. Just reading what she thinks is needed will surprise many readers.

The first part of the book is an historical narrative; the second part a selection of biographies of influential Catholics active in the period who often reflect aspects of Ireland we hear little about, such as Danny La Rue. Thus she manages a neat combination of treatments that actually tell her readers more than some recent histories do.

Her last words on the history of the period sums up *in petto* the whole book. "A central tenet of Catholic Christianity has endured as an everyday reflection: that every person has, within them, the spark of the divine and the tramp who sits next to you in a crowded city church is just as valuable in the eyes of the Lord as a glitteringly successful individual who has been bestowed with worldly benefit. Life is unfair, but everyone matters."

"modern style" became the latest thing.

But with the new post-war churches came a new post-war theological style. Germany had gone through a physical and moral catastrophe. The old theology had somehow failed to provide against the dynamic rise of Hitler. The changes we think of as "post Vatican II" were in fact in train some decades when they came. Not everyone in the Catholic institution in Ireland could see this; but many others were already under the influence of new ideas from Germany.

### Mass

Those men without children coming away from Mass would find the caps they wore would not fit the growing children they left behind in the church. Indeed in what new church would they find themselves at ease?

It was in this period too that the some in the Church in Ireland (I am thinking of psychotherapist Fr Eddie O'Doherty of UCD), were made conscious of the need to pay more attention to the psychological and psychosocial needs of priests. His writings such as the *Priest and Mental Health* (1962) and *Religion and Personality Problems* (1964) were ripples showing how the current was running at this time.

Here I think we can see that already some were aware that the mental and sexual health of the clergy needed reordering. Alas in due course the bishops were content to ignore what he had to say about priests involved in later crimes. Mary Kenny talks about Prof. Tony Clare, but not Fr O'Doherty. But then one author cannot cover everything.

The reality is that the

## How we came to read Egyptian



Jean-François Champollion and the Rosetta Stone which aided in the decoding of Egyptian hieroglyphs.

**Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-François Champollion,** by Andrew Robinson (Thames and Hudson, €14.99/£12.99)

**Peter Costello**

People often remark carelessly on what the sacred writings of the Bible and the New Testament "say". They give little thought, as often as not, to the astonishing ability of being able to read a text in translation from a language they cannot understand, but which thanks to scholars and translators comes to them as if they were the actual words of Moses or Jesus (or any other great religious figure). This is really not something we should take for granted.

In the Middle Ages, say from about 450 to 1450, Greek, Hebrew and even Latin were not as well known in Europe as we sometimes think. But then few people could read even their own language.

The writings of ancient Egypt were even more difficult. They could not be read at all. People guessed at what they might say, people like the extraordinary Jesuit scholar Fr Athanasius Kircher. This led to strange assumptions about ancient Egypt, about the magical power of its language and the hieroglyphic writing, just as bitumen from ancient mummies was credited with strange properties and was traded all over Europe, ground up finely in medical potions.

However, at last the language code was broken and the mystery was dispersed. We could hear the ancients in their own words.

There were other breakthroughs too. Not only the Rosetta stone, but the Rock face at Behistun, and others, followed after careful comparison and parsing.

In this book Andrew Robinson gives a highly readable account of how the code of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic writing was broken. Champollion is indeed the chief person involved, the person from whom the modern stream of translation comes, but many others were involved and made their contributions to.

### Heroic break-through

We love the idea of the heroic break-through by a single solitary genius, but forget that often important discoveries come to the minds of many at the same time: their hour has simply come. These others, in several countries, who were involved, aside from Champollion, should not be forgotten.

However, once made a translation very often came to dominate. The *King James Version* is nearly always used by journalists, the NIV by scholars. I myself like to use the Douai-Rheims version for all contexts earlier than 1450, and certainly all Catholic contexts down to 1900. I suppose having been reared on it, it sounds more truly medieval, the King James Version to my mind belonging to the Enlightenment.

Anyone fascinated by the mysterious ways of translation, and their effect on the course of culture, will delight in this book, but the whole story is much more complicated than the triumph of one genius.

## The Christian outlook in its many aspects

**Rainbows and Windmills,** by Peter Tarleton Stewart (Columba Books, €14.99/£13.99)

**Peter Costello**

Peter Tarleton Stewart retired two years ago after 46 years as an active Anglican pastor and parish priest. From those long years of widely spread and varied experience not only among his parishioners, but also with students, the sick and imprisoned, he has seen many aspects of life, and attempted as best he could to

present the Christian outlook as he understood it from his life to those who must often have felt alienated from it.

In this book he talks about a person-centred Church, one less dependent or not dependent on doctrinal matters – after all these are mainly of interest to theologians and not much to the parents with a sick child.

As well as his own life experiences to which he has given much thought, he also draws on a range of writers not often thought of as "Christian" but who are deeply

engaged with the interpenetration of the spiritual and the material. Readers following up his sources will be led into many curious places.

One aspect which many will feel needs to be emphasised is the outdated view of the real nature of the world. We cannot approach the problems facing us today when those running the Church shy away from engagement through ever evolving scientific understanding of it.

This is the real world, and modern spirituality should

live in the light of its insights. One of those facts that always gives me pause for thought is how blithely so many Christians never give a thought to the sobering estimated age of the universe, but continue to think in the "Mosaic" model (as it was once called) outlined in *Genesis*.

This book is filled with insights clearly, if vigorously expressed. It is the kind of book to which readers will have to bring their own experiences. It will repay rereading, in the way only a few books do these days.







# Leisure time

## The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Anna Sadlier at  
anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie  
or call 01 679 3188



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

Please pray for the beatification of

## Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

## Children's Competition



We want to hear from you!

Tell Christian TV Ireland a funny little story, your morning and evening prayers or what stories your mummy and daddy tell you before bedtime.

We'll be picking the best to share on our programme.

Have a think and send your responses to:

**CHRISTIAN TV IRELAND**  
UNIT 9A, PLATO BUSINESS PARK  
DAMASTOWN  
DUBLIN 15  
D15 PA4C

Submission Deadline: November 1

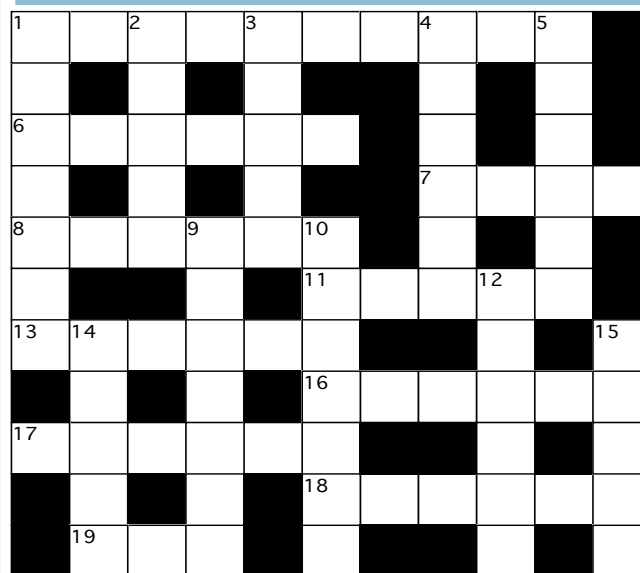
Open to children up to 12 years of age.  
Judges' decision final.



Classifieds: 01 687 4094

## Crossword Junior

Children's 453



### Across

- 1 The first man and woman in the Bible (4,3,3)
- 6 Mother or father (6)
- 7 Produced an egg (4)
- 8 Every single time (6)
- 11 Flavour (5)
- 13 Make your mind up (6)
- 16 Machine or motor (6)
- 17 Mend, fix up (6)
- 18 Mistakes (6)
- 19 Hot drink (3)

### Down

- 1 Clap (7)
- 2 It's shot from a bow (5)

### 3 Get on someone's nerves (5)

- 4 Large birds of prey (6)
- 5 The \_\_\_\_\_ State Building is in New York (6)
- 9 In the story, he was involved with forty thieves (3-4)
- 10 Controlled the direction of a car or other vehicle (7)
- 12 This person will make a suit just for you (6)
- 14 Vote into power (5)
- 15 A group of these birds is called a gaggle (5)

## SOLUTIONS, SEPTEMBER 29

GORDIUS NO. 578

**Across** — 1 Pub 3 Jabberwocky 8 Accept 9 The Roman Empire 10 Train 11 Dough 13 Purrs 15 Chewing gum 16 Sidecar 20 Croft 21 Thump 23 Felon 24 Gold ring 26 My Sweet Lord 27 Hod

**Down** — 1 Plaster cast 2 Backache 3 Japan 4 Bittern 5 World 6 Campus 7 Yin 12 Hairpin bend 13 Panic 14 Skirt 17 Childish 18 Donegal 19 Qualms 22 Purse 23 Fume

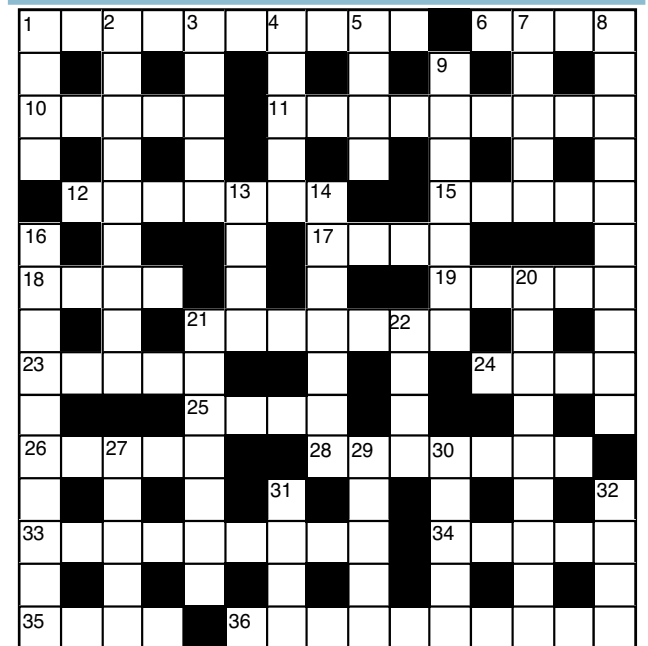
CHILDREN'S No. 452

**Across** — 1 Gold medal 7 One 8 Imitating 9 Sat 11 Ear 12 Open 14 Ready 15 Smash 18 Anthem 19 Barrel 20 Fleece 21 Plant

**Down** — 1 Glider 2 Leitrim 3 Meadows 4 Driver 5 Logs 6 Best 10 Audience 13 Nettles 15 Small 16 Apron 17 Half

## Crossword

Gordius 579



### Across

- 1 Remembers (10)
- 6 Wading-bird (4)
- 10 Donald served as 45th president of the USA (5)
- 11 Dashing courage (9)
- 12 What Nero did while Rome burned, according to legend (7)
- 15 Drink served from a bowl, or to strike with the fist (5)
- 17 Tiny bit, or a letter from the Greek alphabet (4)
- 18 A piece of French-fried potato (4)
- 19 Polite (5)
- 21 Securing device (7)
- 23 Wireless (5)
- 24 Run away from how you might feel (4)
- 25 Small animal whose fur has been used to make expensive coats (4)
- 26 Deliberately misbehave (3,2)
- 28 Consulate (7)
- 33 Existing only in your head; not real (9)
- 34 Entertain (5)
- 35 The last word of a prayer (4)
- 36 Piece of music in the middle of a longer piece or concert (10)

### Down

- 1 Book of the Bible named for a woman (4)
- 2 Executed on a cross (9)
- 3 Moved with bounding gait (5)
- 4 Large bird of prey (5)
- 5 Story (4)
- 7 Stick used by orchestral conductors (5)
- 8 Country in the Indian Ocean comprising 115 islands (10)
- 9 Group of actors and singers that included Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Junior (3,4)
- 13 Ms Simpson, who plays the saxophone (4)
- 14 Feel aversion to (7)
- 16 Fever caused by Cara's Latin translation (10)
- 20 Diego, Spanish grand master who painted 'Las Meninas' (9)
- 21 Historic site of volcanic destruction in Italy (7)
- 22 Grooming implement (4)
- 27 Macbeth held the title \_\_\_\_\_ of Glamis and Cawdor (5)
- 29 Perhaps (5)
- 30 Cause worry or panic (5)
- 31 Piece in chess (4)
- 32 Blocking vote (4)

## Sudoku Corner

453

### Easy

			6		8			9
8			3		1			4
9	3						5	8
	1		7		9		4	
	7		8		3		2	
	4		2		5		9	
7	8						6	1
5			1		6			2
1			9		2			

### Hard

4		8			7	9		2
	1	9						
			4	3				5
	7		8					
		2	3		5	7		
					1		2	
7				9	4			
						2	9	
5		3	2			6		4

## Last week's Easy 452

2	6	3	5	8	4	7	1	9
5	7	1	3	9	2	6	8	4
4	8	9	7	6	1	2	5	3
8	5	7	1	4	9	3	2	6
9	2	4	6	5	3	1	7	8
1	3	6	2	7	8	4	9	5
3	1	5	8	2	6	9	4	7
7	9	2	4	3	5	8	6	1
6	4	8	9	1	7	5	3	2

## Last week's Hard 452

7	3	8	1	5	9	6	2	4
4	6	9	3	8	2	5	1	7
1	2	5	6	4	7	8	9	3
9	4	6	8	7	5	1	3	2
8	7	1	9	2	3	4	6	5
2	5	3	4	6	1	9	7	8
3	1	4	2	9	8	7	5	6
5	8	2	7	1	6	3	4	9
6	9	7	5	3	4	2	8	1



# Confirmation as rite of passage must end

**NEXT YEAR** in both parishes I now have responsibility for, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. That means that eight different 5th and 6th classes in four schools are eligible to celebrate the Sacrament. In recent weeks I have been visiting those classes to begin a conversation around Confirmation. One thing that I have been trying to emphasise is that even though there is now a date announced for the celebrations next March and the fact that they are eligible by being in 5th or 6th class, this does not mean that all of the children will actually take this step. I sensed more than a little surprise when I suggested that they think seriously about whether they wanted to celebrate Confirmation at this point in their lives. Stressing that it had to be an informed choice I encouraged them to discuss this honestly with their parents. I am meeting their parents at gatherings in October, and I will be making the same points to them about this being a choice informed by the current faith story within their families. In the past I have experienced resistance from some parents about this approach. Some feel strongly that I should not be planting bad ideas in the heads of their children talking about this being a choice.



**Outcomes**  
One of the outcomes of the Covid pandemic and the two-year interruption to so many practices and habits in our lives has been that where something was just done out of habit it has been difficult to resume. This is certainly noticeable in our Church practice as many families and individuals who got out of the habit of going have not returned to regular Mass attendance. I'm wondering if there will be a corresponding effect among those who could present their children for Confirmation and perhaps even First Communion? In a very real

way, I hope there is. I hope that one positive expression of Covid will be that parents and young people will think more seriously about the choice of celebrating sacraments and that the link between celebrating sacraments and some kind of commitment to faith and the practice of faith in the context of community will become more real, more honest and more authentic. The practice of using these sacramental moments as simply hooks to mark a rite of passage must come to an end. I wish our secular society would develop some meaningful rites of passage that meet the needs of young people, needs that currently are only being met by participation in religious sacramental moments.

**Deaf ears**  
Sadly, I suspect that my words to the parents and young people in

the 2023 confirmation classes will fall, for the most part, on deaf ears. Most will present for Confirmation next March. They will make all kinds of public promises in front of the most important people in their lives about how they are going to be full members of the Christian community and true witnesses to the Gospel. In reality that public ritual will be the Sacrament of exit away from the Church community. Am I too cynical? Maybe so. In my naivety I will still hold on to a vision of what the Sacrament of Confirmation is all about, a vision very well-articulated in last Sunday's second reading when St Paul strongly encouraged his good friend Timothy to "fan into a flame the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. God's gift was not a spirit of timidity, but the Spirit of power, and love and self-control. So you are never to be ashamed of witnessing to the Lord".

**Liturgical surprise**  
The new young Confirmation teacher assured the parish priest that she had everything organised for the Confirmation and there would be a lovely surprise in the middle of it. The day arrived and the parish priest was both intrigued and nervous about the impending surprise. The bishop arrived in a very cranky mood which just added to the tension in the church. Just before the offertory of the Mass the surprise was revealed in the form of the young teacher performing a liturgical dance towards the sanctuary. The PP was horrified because he knew the bishop disliked any such innovations. As the nymph was on her third round of the bishop's chair and wafting off into the distance, from the corner of his mouth, the bishop growled at that PP: "If she asks for your head on a dish, she's getting it."

**Seeing is important**  
When asked what one piece of advice he might share with someone, former US President Bill Clinton gave a surprising answer: "I've come to believe one of the most important things is to see people. The person who opens the door for you, the person who pours your coffee. Acknowledge them. Show them respect. The traditional greeting of the Zulu people in south Africa is 'Sawubona'. It means 'I see you'. I try to do that."



## LITTLE WAY PAKISTAN FLOODS APPEAL

Flood-hit victims urgently need our help

Bishop Khalid Remat, of the Apostolic Vicariate of Quetta, is urgently asking for our help for 3,600 of those in great need as a result of the very heavy monsoon rains. He writes to The Little Way Association: "Those whose homes were damaged or destroyed need above all food and clean water. Polluted water is likely to cause, especially to children and pregnant women, pneumonia, diarrhoea, dengue fever, on top of the malnutrition they are enduring.

"Our project, upon which ten volunteers and ten members of staff will work free of charge, will aid flood victims in the districts of Sibi, Loralai and Pashin. With your help 600 families will be provided with food items such as wheat flour, cooking oil, sugar, tea, pulses, rice and milk packs. The families will be given drinking water, high energy biscuits, soap, washing powder and other hygiene products."

**PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN TO HELP SOME OF BISHOP KHALID'S PEOPLE**

**THE SITUATION IS DESPERATE.** Your gift will be forwarded **WITHOUT DEDUCTION** to Bishop Khalid to provide food, and basic essentials to help the flood victims to overcome their sorrow and hardship. Please give whatever you can. Thank you.



*"Our Lord does not look so much as the greatness of our actions, but at the love at which we do them."*  
~ St Therese

### PLEASE HELP FEED THE HUNGRY

Please spare a thought for the millions who die each year of hunger and disease in mission lands. Your donation will relieve the pangs of starvation, and every euro you send will be forwarded to a missionary priest or sister for food for the hungry.

### MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass

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

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€..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND DEPRIVED**  
€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**  
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**  
(Please state no. of Masses \_\_\_\_\_)  
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**