

# The Irish Catholic

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The case examined  
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## IN GOD'S PRESENCE

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"Come you yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while"  
-Mark 6:31

The Irish Catholic

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# 'Not in our name'

## Northern Catholics speak out against 'no deal' Brexit

Greg Daly, Chai Brady and Colm Fitzpatrick

Prominent Northern Catholics have warned that a 'no deal' Brexit would be a disaster and insisted that uncertainty around Britain's exit from the European Union is increasing pressure for a referendum on a united Ireland.

Their comments come as former Unionist leader David Trimble published an open letter to Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May in which he claimed that fears about Brexit in the North were "groundless".

He also claimed that most Catholics have no interest in Irish unification.

Baroness Nuala O'Loan described the onetime First Minister's intervention as "bizarre" and insisted that Lord Trimble was speaking "rubbish" on Brexit, while Alban Maginness, the former SDLP mayor of Belfast, said the erstwhile First Minister's comments were "a flight of fancy". Prof. Deirdre Heenan of the University of Ulster

called the letter "irresponsible and reprehensible".

In the March 1 letter, Lord Trimble and Ulster-born Labour MP Kate Hoey say "the dangers facing Northern Ireland are much smaller than [Mrs May] may have been led to believe" and that difficult decisions about the UK's future outside the EU should not be "dominated by groundless fears about Northern Ireland".

Rejecting the notion that Lord Trimble is qualified to speak for the North's Catholics, Fermanagh priest Fr McVeigh said Brexit has "accelerated" discussions about unity, even among unionists, and Prof. Francis Campbell, onetime UK Ambassador to the Holy See, said a border poll now appears "inevitable".

"That feeling or that aspiration for Irish unity is likely something that would've been there in part of the population, but in the post-Brexit environment it would seem to have a wider appeal," he said.

See pages 8 and 9.

## The kindest cut of all



Kate Coyle, one of Booterstown's most senior citizens, cuts the ribbon beside Fr Gerry Kane, following the blessing of a restored Pastoral Centre performed by Bishop Eamonn Walsh on March 3. The 400-year-old parish was gifted with the building by the Sisters of Mercy when the school it used to house was closed.

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**F**or good or for ill, the symbiosis between nationalism and Catholicism that was once a given all across Ireland is still potent in the North. It's not surprising given the sectarian nature of the six-county state from its creation almost a century ago that Catholics united in opposition. From the beginning, anti-Catholicism was endemic and through a process of gerrymandering and unapologetic apartheid the founders of the state ensured that Catholics were largely excluded from civil society.

In that context, bishops and priests were community leaders and the Church provided a cohesiveness that galvanised the Catholic and nationalist community in a way that would lead to the agitation for civil rights that was sweeping the world in the 1960s coming to the North too.

The brutal repression of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) by the supremacist regime at Stormont further poisoned relations between the establishment and the minority community and gave licence to those who argued that violence to oppose the state was the only avenue open to the Catholic community.

### Culture

The great genius of John Hume was in convincing Catholics that the North could be reformed and a culture could be created where Catholics and nationalists enjoyed parity of esteem and could get a fair crack of the whip.

A series of measure as diverse as the redrawing of electoral boundaries, fair employment legislation and equal school funding meant that Catholics started to be treated the same as the majority community by the state and Catholic education became the gold standard.

The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 ensured that there was no going back to the bad old days of Unionist rule and power-sharing was the order of the day. A powerful illustration of the new dispensation was the fact that the Lord Chief Justice, the Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions were all Catholics. Policing – long a bastion of the ancient regime –

# Brexit is bad news – let's hope we can minimise the damage



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

became a credible career path for young nationalists and Catholics are now proud to wear that uniform.

The peace process – for all of its flaws – had worked and most people were happy with the status quo and had the same hopes and aspirations for health, happiness and prosperity for their families. All of this happened in the context of an ever-more-integrated Europe.

Brexit has smashed that consensus and polarised the North in a way that was unimaginable just a few short years ago. Catholics – who voted in large numbers to remain – feel that they are being cut off from their natural ties with the rest of Ireland.

**“The Good Friday Agreement ensured that there was no going back to the bad old days”**

Brexit is largely an exercise in English nationalism and the triumphalism leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of many Catholics who know that when the ugliest forms of supremacy take control it never ends well. It doesn't help that some commentators refer to Brexit as a second Reformation without mentioning the fact that the English Reformation unleashed centuries of anti-Catholic violence and discrimination.

In a letter to the British Prime Minister David Trimble and Kate Hoey make the audacious claim that fears about the effects of Brexit on the peace process are 'groundless'. It is a reckless and ignorant intervention

and – as the voices raised in *The Irish Catholic* this week prove – bizarre for Mr Trimble and Ms Hoey to claim to represent the views of Catholics to Theresa May.

**“Brexit is largely an exercise in English nationalism and the triumphalism leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of many Catholics”**

The fears around Brexit are real, it has divided the two communities in the North in a way that is unprecedented. It has also dismantled the status quo to such an extent that most nationalists – and even moderate unionists – now see Irish unification as the only realistic path to a future that is open to the wider world.

It might be fashionable for some to see Brexit as little more than a contrarian kick against the Establishment. Some Irish people see the EU as unwieldy, wasteful and overarching and resent the goal of 'ever closer union' delight in Britain leaving the union.

That is as short-sighted as it is dangerous. Brexit is bad news for Ireland, we can only hope – and as people of faith pray – that it does the least amount of damage possible.

**Michael Kelly is co-author of a new book with Austen Ivereigh *How to Defend the Faith – Without Raising Your Voice* – it is available from Columba Books, www.columbabooks.com**



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# Fight social problems not Church ones, Bro. Kevin urges Government

**Greg Daly**

Minister Josepha Madigan should concentrate on tackling poverty and inequality in Ireland rather than complaining about the Church, Bro. Kevin Crowley has said.

In a letter to *The Irish Catholic*, the leading homelessness campaigner appeals to the minister to use her influence with the Taoiseach and other Government ministers to champion the cause of fighting homelessness in Ireland.

Noting that "while highlighting the well documented inequalities in the Catholic Church, the Minister sits happily in a Government that presides over some

of the most discriminatory social injustices since the foundation of the State", the Capuchin friar calls attention to how nearly 10,000 people, including almost 4,000 children, are living in homeless accommodation.

Bro. Kevin, whose Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin's inner city provides over 900 meals a day to Dubliners in need, describes young families as having been "betrayed by those in power" and says the State's failure to abandon its duty of care to its young people is "a tragedy".

The campaigner also asks the Government to explain the extent to which the State has failed to comply with its obligations

under article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The article acknowledges a right to a standard of living – including housing – adequate for the health and well-being of adults and families, and says that motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.

## Action

Bro. Kevin explicitly calls on Ms Madigan to take "immediate action" to relieve the plight of "rough sleepers most at risk of dying on the side of the road" and to "relieve the misery of families who have been betrayed by successive failed 'Action Plans' and simply cannot wait for the Gov-

ernment to get it right".

"These families need immediate Christian/Humanitarian action so that they can live life to the full with respect and dignity as God Intended," he said.

Bro. Kevin's comments come following a high-profile speech by Ms Madigan to the 'We Are Church' group last month, in which the Government minister claimed the Church "has a blind spot when it comes to the real inclusion of the marginalised or the stigmatised".

"Irish public life in general has been well served by those who speak out against injustices, even when their actions are not appreciated or welcomed," she added.

See Page 26.

## 'Bring solutions' to online safety battle, tech companies urged

**Chai Brady**

Social media companies should take their civic responsibilities seriously and not wait for the Government, communities or schools to react to online safety concerns, the Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA) has said.

Minister for Communications Richard Bruton announced plans for new internet safety laws this week. They include the appointment of an Online Safety Commissioner who could prosecute and fine companies that break the new rules.

Welcoming the initiative, Seamus Mulconry of the CPSMA said: "We need to look seriously at the major tech companies and making sure they actually behave in a fully responsible fashion."

"Technology companies are collecting vast amounts of information, it's about time that we saw a similar sense of responsibility and that they played their role and that they start bringing solutions to Government and society not just waiting for other people to do so."

## Content

The safety commissioner would have the power to order social media and internet firms to remove content that breaches the agreed codes of conduct. Cyber bullying and content deemed to be seriously intimidating, harassing, humiliating or threatening are all included.

Mr Mulconry, albeit positive about the Government "stepping up" to ensure a safer online environment, says new initiatives shouldn't just focus on negative content.

"It's also about the fact that if you look at the amount of time children are now spending on social media, that is having an impact in terms of their socialisation, in terms of their physical exercise or lack of it and also in terms of sleep and that all of these are having a negative impact," he added.

## Bishops must back young evangelists – primate

**Staff reporter**

The Church must find ways to help young people share the Christian message, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh has said.

Speaking to around 8,500 young people at the Flame 2019 conference in London, the Primate of All-Ireland described how in Rome last year at the synod on young people he admitted that he finds it difficult to connect with young people who have drifted away from the Church. In response, he said, a young woman told him that young Christians should be empowered to reach out to their peers.

Dr Martin described this as one of his "best 'take-homes'" from the synod.

"You don't want simply to be the objects of evangelisation and pastoral ministry in the Church; you want to be agents of evangelisation and mission to each other and, indeed, to the whole world," he said.

Young people can be active participants in the new evangelisation, he said, if bishops "can find ways to accompany you on your personal journey of holiness, and if we can form and support you along the way".

Some of the attendees at the Flame 2019 conference.

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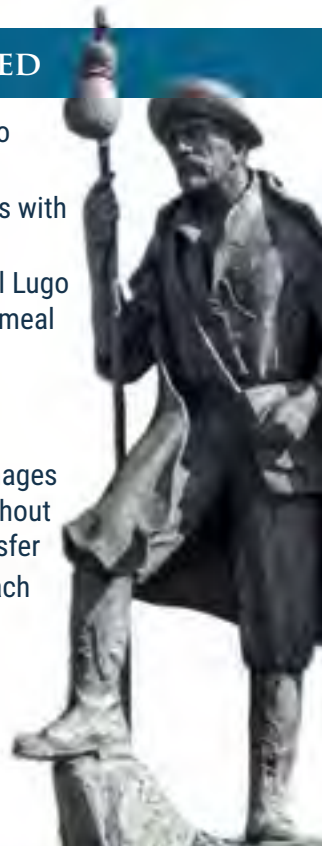
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# Parents' pockets empty over 'crazy' Communion costs

Colm Fitzpatrick

Parents shouldn't be relying on loan-sharks to curb the "crazy" costs of Communion celebrations, a spokesperson for a well-known family support centre has said.

Valerie O'Carroll, manager of Ballymun Child and Family Resource Centre in Dublin, said it's "absolutely crazy" the amount of money being spent on Communion celebrations, noting that the Sacrament has transformed into a "huge event".

She added that while priests encourage parishioners to spend less, this message fails to "filter" through, leaving parents with empty pockets.

## Comments

Her comments come after the community centre's success-

ful run of a drop-in service, which dresses children due to make their First Holy Communion with donated clothes, in the hope of cutting the price of the important day for struggling parents.

"It's very hard, we work with families in Ballymun, and we have a good idea that they are under pressure, many of them will turn to moneylenders and that's the big thing we've been trying to avoid," she said.

"So, we're saying come to us and we'll take away the stress, and would find it hard to believe that somebody would walk out and say I didn't like anything there. The stuff is just gorgeous."

Ms O'Carroll told this newspaper that so far, nine children have been dressed "head to toe" in Communion outfits, the local chemist has been providing prayer books

and rosaries, and the local dry-cleaners have offered to clean the suits and dresses free of charge.

"I'm absolutely overwhelmed by the real goodness of people. The quality of the dresses and suits we've got, even though they're second hand, children have worn them for a day - basically they are in fabulous condition," she said, pointing out that most outfits are hanging in wardrobes and have never been worn since.

Ms O'Carroll said that given the cost of the day, the community centre intends on running the service next year, and would be "interested in doing this every year".

The resource centre currently operates an all-year-round uniform bank, where parents can collect school outfits which others have donated.



Liam, a tenant in Peter McVerry Trust's new social housing development in Fingal which officially opened last week, will provide housing to single people with the most complex needs in eight one-bedroom homes together with a small community building.

## Big gender divide in Ireland's Bible baby names

Chai Brady

Bible names for boys have once again topped the list of the most popular baby names registered last year.

Jack (the diminutive of John) and James came first and second respectively in the list for both 2017 and 2018 according to CSO statistics. Out of the top 10 there were seven biblical names in total, with Noah coming third and Daniel fifth.

For two decades Jack has retained the top position, only

knocked off by James once in 2016. It continues to be Ireland's most popular.

Back in 1968, John, Patrick, Michael, James and David were the names most favoured by parents of new born baby boys.

Emily continues to hold the position for most-loved name for a girl since 2011, followed by Grace, Emma, Sophie, and Amelia in the top 5. Out of the top 25 girls names only one, Sarah, is biblical.

Not one of the top five names for girls 50 years ago appeared in the top 100

names last year. Mary, Catherine, Margaret, Ann and Anne were the most popular names for baby daughters in 1968, with 2,364 baby girls named Mary in that year.

New entrants into the top 100 names for boys included Frankie, Freddie and Theodore while Bella, Ada, Bonnie and Ivy entered the top 100 names for girls.

Over the years girls are given a wider variety of names than boys, with 4,779 girls names registered compared to 3,712 boys'.



## Probe into 'truly awful' anti-Catholic allegations

Staff reporter

An investigation into alleged serious sectarian activity in a Belfast hospital "harks back to the past" and "can't be tolerated" a Fermanagh-based priest has said.

This comes as a covert probe into sectarianism instigated by NHS bosses relating to events in Belfast City Hospital has come to light. It was launched after allegations of

harassment against Catholics and involved a surveillance camera and two listening devices being installed in a private area of the hospital's security department.

Leaked documents revealed alleged "nasty and vindictive" incidents including death threats and bullets being sent to a Catholic employee.

"Sectarianism, especially in parts of Belfast, there's a strong anti-Catholic thing going on," said Fr McVeigh.

"It's harking back to the past, sectarianism is still a reality, it has to be dealt with. These people should be dealt with by the courts. Truly awful stuff, I thought it was dying out but there are still parts of the North."


Although the alleged incidents occurred in 2011, a whistleblower tipped off the individuals being filmed last summer drawing the case into the public sphere. No one was ever disciplined.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Lone parents struggle more than ever**  
The rate of poverty among lone parents who are working doubled between 2012 and 2017 according to St Vincent de Paul. Over that time period one-in-11 lone working parents were below the poverty line, increasing to one in five.

The data also shows that the living standards of lone parents in Ireland are among the worst in Europe as they have the second highest rates of income poverty, persistent poverty and severe deprivation among EU-15 peer countries.

**Govt failing to target serious gambling**  
The State is not grasping the seriousness of gambling in Irish society and could even be encouraging problem gamblers with the Lotto and EuroMillions, Senator Ronan Mullen has said.

During a debate on gambling addiction in Seanad Éireann, Mr Mullen called on the Government to accelerate plans to introduce a Gambling Regulatory Authority.

"We must ask if the State encourages many forms of gambling in unhealthy ways. There is almost a cult surrounding the Lotto and the EuroMillions in which the media play its part," he said.



# Emphasise the glamour of geography

Many educationalists are very much opposed to the decision to drop history and geography from the junior curriculum. On history, many a wise philosopher has said that we cannot know where we are going until we know where we came from. "Those who do not learn from the past," said George Santayana, "are doomed to repeat it." And the key word there is "learn".

But it's dismaying, too, to drop geography, which is such an essential part of understanding our world and environment. Geography, if properly taught, can also have real glamour – hearing of those "faraway places with strange-sounding names".

**“It's dismaying, too, to drop geography, which is such an essential part of understanding our world and environment”**

Geography brings vital knowledge, but it can also stimulate the imagination, conjuring up exotic images about the Road to Samarkand, the Trans-Siberian train journey, the word-picture of 'Arabia Deserta' or sailing through the Amazon. It's great to stimulate a child's interest in the wonders of the world around her.

On the more practical side, Tim Marshall's book *Prisoners of Geography* explains with stunning lucidity just how vital geography is to understand international politics and economics from the viewpoint of where we



Mary Kenny

## Saints alive!



'St' Patrick's Day parade – it stays for now.

Now that our masters have suggested that religious images should be removed from hospitals what might be the next target of state secularisation?

Religious names might be a possible marker. Why not take the 'St' from St Stephen's Green? Or St James's Hospital? Why not abolish St John's Hospital in Limerick? Why not ban St Francis's Credit Union? Even St Bernard from Dunne's Stores might fall under the prohibition.

They could eradicate the moniker of Trinity College Dublin, named in honour of the Blessed Trinity. They could abolish wayside shrines, which they will argue have no place on the state's highways.

They could take the 'St' out of St Patrick's Day itself. That might be awkward since St Patrick is now a worldwide 'brand' which helps to bring investment to Ireland and boosts the egos of the politicians who travel to promote the brand, using the shamrock – that very emblem of the Holy Trinity itself.

St Patrick stays. Just about!

are placed on the map. Life doesn't look at all the same from Belarus or Brazil or Brazzaville.

To have a concept of why these perspectives are so different you must have some grasp of the geographical context of actual maps.

Modern geography is often about climate change and the environment, which are important. But the subject is itself so multi-faceted, and can contain both a poetic and a prosaic side, that surely it is of benefit to every primary school child.

## Whatever happened to moderation?

I think it's a terrible idea to impose a medical test on pregnant mothers to check whether they have been smoking. Yes, it acknowledges that the unborn infant is deserving of protection, but it also makes pregnancy more of a burden, and a set of hurdles to surmount, instead of representing it as a blessing.

I also believe that imposing ever more tests and standards on pregnant mothers can lead to more abortion, erecting a kind of bar of perfection around a natural event. Even already, too much perfection is expected by young couples in their 20s and 30s – their most fertile years – when they're considering parenthood.

They feel everything has to be in place before they can start a family: the house must be perfect, the nursery painted and the pregnancy must be faultless. Anything

less than ideal, and better not have a baby. I've known cases of women being so worried because they drank a glass of wine or smoked a cigarette they wondered if they shouldn't just terminate and "start again".

By contrast, a respondent on Twitter said that when she was pregnant in Spain a few years ago, and under a huge amount of personal pressure, her Spanish doctor told her that it was better for her to have two or three cigarettes a day – since she had been a smoker – than to be in a state of desperate stress.

She took his advice, felt calmer and the baby was just grand.

Medicine once advised "moderation in all things". Now it's turning to a counsel of perfection in every human situation. And in every human situation, there is always an element of chance.



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# The rise of a godlike State



Barring Christian taxpayers' taxes from being spent on Christian institutions attacks civil society, writes **David Quinn**

**W**ill Catholic hospitals soon be prevented from putting religious symbols such as crosses on public display? That appeared to be the suggestion of a report commissioned by the Government.

The Government asked



Catherine Day, former secretary general of the European Commission, to look into the future relationship of the State with 'voluntary hospitals'. This is basically a catch-all term for hospitals established by voluntary

organisations like religious orders.

In Ireland, publicly-funded Catholic hospitals look after about a quarter of patients in public hospitals at any one time.

One of the suggestions of

the report is that the matter of decor be looked at. The review says that Catholic hospitals should be "cognisant of the impact of decor" on patients and "strive to ensure" their personal preferences are met to the "greatest extent possible".

What does this mean? Does it mean, for instance, that if one patient on a ward objects to a cross in a ward it will be taken down so as not to cause offense?

But what about the wishes of all the other patients? If you are in a Catholic hospital you can reasonably expect to see Catholic religious symbols on display. Many patients will want to see those symbols and will derive comfort from them.

## Symbols

Hospitals patients almost by definition are older than average, many will be at the end of their lives, and they will be disproportionately Massgoers. Are they to be deprived of their wish to be cared for in an obviously Catholic hospital, or must they be told that any religious symbols are to be kept personal and private?

What about the overall ethos of the hospital? The report leaves open-ended whether these hospitals must provide every procedure and service that is legally available in the State.

It suggests that the State could enter into agreements with Catholic hospitals whereby they agree to provide particular services in return for funding for those services. A hospital could decide not to perform abortions, for instance, and therefore would obviously not be given public money for this purpose.

Such an arrangement would respect the ethos and autonomy of these hospitals. Needless to say, Health Minister Simon Harris is having none of it. A source at the Department of Health told Times Ireland, "government policy is that all hospitals should provide lawful services".

This goes far deeper than the issue of religious symbols on walls. If a Catholic hospital performs abortions it is no longer a Catholic hospital no matter what it says on the door and no matter what religious symbols are on display.

The distinct possibility is that within the next few years Ireland will also have assisted suicide and euthanasia. Must Catholic hospitals provide these 'services' too?

We live in the era of a very overbearing State. It no longer properly respects the autonomy and independence of civil society, of which the Church is only one part.

**“If you are in a Catholic hospital you can reasonably expect to see Catholic religious symbols on display”**

The State has a near-monopoly of legal power. It can pass any law it wants and force people and organisations to do anything that is not unconstitutional. It should be forbearing about its powers. No-one and nothing should be forced to do something that is against their beliefs.

For example, if a woman can obtain an abortion at the next hospital, there is no good reason to force Catholic hospitals to perform them also.

The State takes a huge amount of money from us, almost €80 billion per annum. This also squeezes civil society because it harms its ability to engage in the sort of very serious annual fund-raising necessary to fund a hospital, for instance.

A hospital like the Mater Public in Dublin costs about €300 million per annum to run (with about €250 million of this coming from public funds). When the State takes so much money out of our pockets, it would be incredibly difficult for it to stay open without public funding, or without going fully private and becoming available only to people who can afford private health insurance.

**“In return for taking so much money from us, the State has to be generous in how it uses that money”**

A State that takes so much money should be generous enough to fund the kinds of things that people want and allow them to run independently, within broad limits.

Therefore, if enough people want the State to continue funding Catholic hospitals, then it should do so, just as it should go on funding Catholic and other faith-schools, if people want them.

This is why almost every democratic State funds faith schools. France pays for teachers' salaries in Catholic schools, for instance, while Britain almost fully funds faith schools there. They do so in response to public demand.

The State has zero right to deny the public their wish in these matters and to insist that anything which receives a penny in public funds be effectively brought under State control as well.

Because the State has become so vast, civil society organisations, especially in the voluntary sector, have become very dependent on it for funding. That includes many Church organisations which provide all sorts of public services.

In return for taking so much money from us, the State has to be generous in how it uses that money. It has to fund the things we want, and that includes organisations run by the Church, such as schools and hospitals. If it does not respect the autonomy of civil society and allow it to flourish, then it is effectively annexing civil society.

That is not the act of a properly democratic State.

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## Martin Mansergh

### The View



# Working to build a lasting peace

**W**e live in a world where moral authority often seems to be scarce or diminished, and largely unheeded. One or two issues can dominate and distract attention from others. While practical considerations are always important, the ethical dimension has also to be weighed in the balance.

It is paradoxical that a prolonged era of peace in much, but not all, of the world has been underpinned by the threat of mutually assured destruction, which was only narrowly averted in 1962 and 1983.

Superpower leaderships, whose support base includes strongly organised groups strongly motivated by Christianity – in the case of Russia the Orthodox Church – do not hesitate to develop and update weapons of mass destruction regardless of past limitation agreements, that, if ever used, could extinguish millions of civilians, and jeopardise life on earth.

While the threat is diminished nowadays, despite recurring alarms, the opposition and critical comment has diminished as well. There have been small religious sects, mostly emanating from America, who almost look forward to a great cleansing and a new utopian humanity, dubiously relying on certain passages in the Prophets and Revelation.

### Integration

A group of former Irish parliamentarians, of which I was part, paid a short visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg a couple of weeks ago. We stayed three nights in Karlsruhe, home of the German Constitutional Court, which acts as a powerful brake on German support for European integration, and was once housed in a city Schloss belonging to the last Imperial Chancellor Max von Baden, who procured Kaiser Wilhelm's abdication in 1918.

We also toured places on either side of the Franco-German border along the Rhine. One of them was the Maginot Line, a largely underground string of fortifications built in the 1930s and intended to hold up any renewed German



Prime Minister Theresa May: pushing Brexit.

invasion. The problem, when it came to the crunch in May-June 1940, was not that it could be easily overrun, but that it could be circumvented. In many ways, prohibitions in the Irish Constitution were like the Maginot line. They held up the advance of secularism, but could ultimately be circumvented.

**“Common membership has also provided a framework in which independent Ireland has been able to thrive”**

A resident of Alsace born in the 1860s and who lived a long life would have changed state five times, in a province that shifted between France and Germany in 1871, 1919, 1940 and 1944. The father of our Maginot guide first fought the Germans in 1940, and was then conscripted to fight with them on the Russian front, being lucky enough to return to his family from Russian imprisonment in the late 1940s. Sensibly enough, the street signs in Strasbourg are bilingual, reflecting its mixed past, with the French name in larger print on the top, and the German name underneath.

The German word *Schlacht* is far more evocative than its English equivalent 'battle'. *Schlacht*

also means 'slaughter' or 'butchery'. The decisive but bloody battle of Leipzig in 1813, which led to the end of the Napoleonic Empire, is known as the *Völkerschlacht*, which can be translated as 'the battle of the nations' or as 'the slaughter of the peoples'.

If one reads graphic accounts of the wars that followed, the siege of Paris in 1871, then savage suppression by the French of the Paris Commune, the static slaughter in the trenches of the First World War, the deportations and extermination of the Second World War along with the incineration of cities, one gets a better sense of the moral and practical motivation behind the foundation in the 1950s of what today is the European Union. Several states are still applying to join, despite the UK being on the point of leaving. They see it as a way of securing their freedom, rather than as sacrificing it.

### Aspects

Common membership of the EU across these islands provided a model and framework for peace arguably far more important than any grumbles that people may have with different aspects of the EU. It has also provided a framework in which independent Ireland has been able to thrive to a far greater extent than was possible in the early decades of independence, because

EU membership gives us some influence over our external environment, as we have seen dramatically in the Brexit negotiations.

Crossing the border from the picturesque Alsace village of Wissembourg back into Germany at the top of the street, the tour guide pointed out a seamless and frictionless border.

**“Federalist ambitions will never be achieved on a tiny EU budget”**

There is now more reason to hope that Brexit will turn out less harmful than depicted in worst case scenarios. Behind the scenes there has been a huge amount of damage limitation work going on, with agreements made, where possible, to maintain

the status quo, sometimes on a changed legal basis.

The notion of March 29 as a cliff-edge is overblown. The reality is that negotiations on future trading relations between Britain and the EU will resume shortly afterwards. It is unlikely that there will be much immediate change, but over time adaptations may need to be made.

The Irish backstop is designed to guarantee the future free flow of goods and people between north and south, but a UK-wide customs union with the EU with regulatory alignment would achieve this across the Irish Sea. Apart from continuing peace, protection of the Single Market along the Irish and EU land border has to be secured, as otherwise there is a danger of barriers being created between Ireland and the EU,

which would be disastrous.

Tentative parallels have been drawn with Ireland's past. The EU has been compared to the Act of Union, but it does not involve abolishing our democratic institutions and their absorption into distant European ones. Federalist ambitions will never be achieved on a tiny EU budget.

Brexiters may be adopting the Michael Collins strategy of winning 'the freedom to achieve freedom', but they will lose, heavily, influence over their immediate European environment. The best analogy is external association.

As a British think-tank visitor put it recently, Britain is presently half-in and half-out of the EU. Post-Brexit, it will be the other way round.



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## Fr Joe McVeigh

"We want the Irish government to pursue the whole thing about the border poll which is part of the Good Friday Agreement and Trimble was one of the people who negotiated that and accepted that."

"...The whole momentum is going towards Irish unity even many unionists are beginning to see the potential and the advantages of having an all-Island economy, and all-island approach to health, farming, tourism...that's what's going to convince people eventually."

"I mean you'll always have those extreme unionists who would never countenance a united Ireland in any shape or form but there are many hard-headed farmers and businessmen, business women, who do not feel intimidated by talk about a united Ireland or a border poll."

"He's not at all qualified to speak for the Catholic community, he's flying kites here and he's just looking for attention for his viewpoint. It's not sustainable, there's no foundation for his arguments at all, he's out of touch with reality."

"(Brexit) has really accelerated the whole discussion and it has raised the whole issue of partition and the border again [...] It's now the most important political issue on this island for everybody, it's a debate that has to be had."

## Baroness Nuala O'Loan

"I think the letter from David Trimble and Kate Hoey is, frankly, bizarre. The extent to which they seek to present themselves as interpreting what Catholics and nationalists feel in the North is extraordinary. I think it is a very irresponsible intervention."

"They clearly didn't speak to Catholics or nationalists or they would've heard a very different story. People are anxious about the prospect of a 'no deal' Brexit or a hard Brexit. Fears about the border are real and not exaggerated. Feelings are running very high. The uncertainty has absolutely made many people – and not just nationalists – feel that a referendum or a process towards a united Ireland is inevitable."

"Frankly, David Trimble is speaking rubbish when he says that fears about Brexit are groundless."



## Oisin McConville former Armagh GAA star

"With Brexit it's heightened all our awareness and a realisation that there needs to be a vote."

"The economic consequences are way down the list when you consider that people in this area don't want to go back to the Troubles, they don't want to go back to the point where you're afraid to send your kids out to school [...] Realistically the only thing I hear is the economic implications and at this stage I could not care less about the economic implications."

"I suppose people in the North feel because there's no assembly, that there's no representation of what people's views are and I think in particular the Catholic community feels pretty cut off from everything at this stage. It's pretty disheartening, it's pretty annoying and frustrating but the most important thing is



that if the hard border comes in this country it will lead us back to the Troubles."

"...The thing about voting for a united Ireland is that there are sections of the other side of the community now who probably want it also, or probably are more sympathetic to it. It's not just a 'green' and 'orange' issue that it has been in the past."

## Prof. Deirdre Heenan

"I think it's utterly irresponsible and reprehensible for him to write such a letter."

"If he spent some time in Northern Ireland and met with business people and groups, he would understand how genuine their fears are. Businesses are all about certainty – future, planning and investing – and how can they make those decisions when they have no idea what the future will hold. To dismiss those fears is actually a concerning lack of political leadership and insight."

"Brexit has disrupted the political landscape and things we were fairly sure about, we are no longer sure about what would Brexit mean, for identity, in terms of rights, whereas prior they were pretty sure about those things."

"What we do know is that a period of great instability and uncertainty, things that were once inconceivable suddenly have become a possibility – many people four years ago thought it inconceivable that we would leave the European union, the idea of a hard border or any kind of a border was unthinkable."

## Bernadette Smyth Pro-life leader

"In many ways what David Trimble is saying is very correct."

"We're very disillusioned about what the future would hold, the one thing I would say very clearly, if you're pro-life, if you're pro-sacramental marriage we would not want to be part of the Republic, so a lot of Catholics now are saying are we safer morally to stay independent in the North, do we want our own government in Stormont to make laws that represent the people here and especially the Catholic? I think it's very clear with the DUP leading we're safer as Catholics, we're safer in the North to have our views represented – especially the moral views on abortion."

"...We don't want Westminster making laws for us, we certainly don't want the Irish government making laws for us, we want to elect good outstanding moral politicians and if that be Unionists so be it, they're actually more Catholic than some of the Catholic politicians."

"...We don't know where the future will lie with the economy, there's a lot of scaremongering going on regarding the economy and the peace process. I voted for Brexit. I want Northern Ireland to be independent. I want to see a future where we make decisions for our people."



## Declan O'Loan SDLP Councillor

"Any suggestion that all this talk of fears around a hard border are groundless is absolutely absurd and entirely off the mark...fears that some of the extremists would take advantage of that sense of betrayal around that issue to indulge in violence I think are very real fears."

"I think that there is an increasing sense among the nationalist community certainly but also to a degree among the unionist community as well that the sands are shifting here and that movement towards a united Ireland for the first time in my lifetime is now a very serious

live proposition, as something that might happen in the not-distant future. I absolutely think that that tendency has been deeply influenced by the Brexit debate, and I think that there's now almost among many a hunger for Irish unity."

"...The fact that we're part of a wider European community is deeply rooted among the nationalist community in Northern Ireland, and any sense that we'll be cut off from that is something that's just utterly, utterly unacceptable."

"I just think there's an increasing sense that Westminster and the way it



behaves just no longer speaks for us."

"...There needs to be preparation for a border poll. People quite rightly ask what does this mean? That's the conversation that needs to start, and that's a conversation that needs to be led by an Irish Government."



## Declan McGuinness Aontú Member

"There is a danger, and it's an immediate danger on the ground. Martin (McGuinness) worked so very hard at a rapprochement with the British and the unionists and effectively the border doesn't exist anymore. The border will exist again if some kind of curtailment in the movement of people between the Six Counties and the 26 counties happens, and particularly if there's a physical presence on those borders you couldn't give an absolute assurance to any officers in those places that they'd be safe.

"...I think Brexit might have galvanised the desire - and I think it might have increased it even to some tiny degree even within the unionist community. The applications for Irish passports may not be totally just a mechanism for free travel. There may be something more to it than that.

"Several unionists including Mike Nesbit and Peter Robinson have talked about how they don't want a united Ireland but they can see that unionists may have to start preparing for it. That is light years away from what would have been said before, so Brexit has had a massive effect in terms of that."

## Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry

"...People are not sure what Brexit means, and therefore the uncertainty is unsettling people.

"Some may say, like David Trimble and Kate Hoey, that there's nothing to be worried about.

"That certainly is one possible thesis, but others are saying there's a lot to be worried about, and ordinary people are finding themselves in that worrying space where they're looking for clarity and it's not being given. We're three and a half weeks away from this tak-

ing place.

"The uncertainty is damaging, and the crisis of democracy that's not just a Northern Ireland thing: it's a UK-wide thing and in many ways is a western-world-wide thing. If democracy is not seen to be capable of delivering, that's almost an existential crisis for how we run our countries.

"There's a recognition that economically Northern Ireland is heavily integrated with the Republic, and at least there's an openness on the part of

many people to say we've got to look and see what's going to be best for all of us in the long term.

"I think there's an openness to look at what changes might come down the line to us, but the other question that I think is important - we certainly have asked it about the Sinn Féin leadership - is that when people talk about a united Ireland,

what on earth sort of Ireland are you talking about?

"Because simply putting all the people of one island under one jurisdiction is about as clear as Brexit, and 'Brexit means Brexit'. I think the question we should be asking is not 'are there enough people to win a referendum?' The question that should be put to those proposing a united Ireland is 'What sort of Ireland?'"

## Tracy Harkin Iona Institute

"I don't think you should call them 'groundless' at all I think you have to acknowledge, people here in my generation have lived through the Troubles, the very thought of going back to a militarised border with all these tensions around...I wouldn't say they're groundless I think we have to be careful to always safeguard what we've got here.

It's still a divided community here in many ways, there are paramilitaries waiting on both sides to rear their ugly heads again they haven't gone away. We know that from the different activities, the punishing and shootings have continued to be a problem, there was obviously the bomb up in Derry not long ago, there's a lot of activity in the loyalist paramilitaries policing their own area etc. that's a very real problem.

"...I think in terms of a united Ireland I think that there's a sense here that also we've moved forward a lot, we've dual citizenship here, I've had an Irish passport for as long as I can remember.

"I think there's a realism there that nobody wants to rush into anything. It has to be a democratic process, well thought out, phased in and I do think that obviously Brexit has given us an impetus because most of the people voted to stay in the EU, not that they thought that the EU was perfect, there needed to be reform."



**Prof. Francis Campbell**  
Vice-Chancellor St Mary's University,  
London; Former Private Secretary to Tony Blair and UK Ambassador to the Holy See

"Whilst the [David Trimble and Kate Hoey] letter makes some good points, and it does not assume the conflation of Catholicism and nationalism, it seems to under-estimate the serious negative impact that Brexit has had on the confidence of many northern Irish Catholics who had assumed that the 1998 Belfast Agreement was the basis for a future of open relationships on these islands unimpeded by a border.

"The status quo of what the Belfast Agreement allowed for which was the Irish identity, the British identity or both under a European citizenship has certainly been put in jeopardy and called into question. It is one thing to be integrated into a civic

identity, it is another thing to be pulled towards a narrow ethnic identity that threatens that wider openness to the EU that the Belfast Agreement fully complimented.

"Before the result of the Brexit referendum I didn't think that I would have seen a border poll as allowed for under the Belfast Agreement in my lifetime. I now think that such a poll is inevitable.

"That feeling or that aspiration for Irish unity is likely something that would've been there in part of the population, but in the post-Brexit environment it would seem to have a wider appeal to a larger part of the population that hitherto would have accepted for the medium- and long-term the status quo."

## Prof. Anne Moran University of Ulster

"I find it quite extraordinary for an architect of the Good Friday Agreement to say that there's no connection between it and Brexit. It's just unbelievable.

"I believe that a 'no deal' Brexit would have the potential to destabilise peace, and probably more so because of the disruption that would be caused at border level, the commercial level, and the maintaining of cross border checks which would ultimately [lead to] dissidents becoming involved.

"Brexit would definitely harden the border and breach the spirit of the agreement and not least put at risk the economic and social progress that has been made over the last number of years."

## Alban Maginness former SDLP MLA and Lord Mayor of Belfast

"There are real dangers with Brexit, and particularly a hard Brexit in terms of the economic performance of Northern Ireland and also in terms of maintaining the integrity of the Good Friday Agreement.

"Both would be damaged by a hard Brexit or indeed a no deal. I think it's a flight of fancy of his part - whenever he says these things I don't think he's living in the real world as far as Brexit is concerned, and its impact on Northern Ireland.

"As far as Irish unity is concerned, there

is without doubt - in my view and as a nationalist politician of many years standing - there would be substantial support amongst nationalists for a united Ireland in any border poll. There's no doubt in my mind about that.

"However, having said that, any border poll should be on the basis of a well worked-out plan as how to implement Irish unity. I think they should take a lesson from the Brexit poll, where no such plan was on the table for the electorate's consideration."

## Aideen McGinley former NI Permanent Secretary

"There are definitely dangers with Brexit because part of the problem is the total unpreparedness and the total lack of considered opinion in terms of what actually would happen.

"...When you see agricultural communities, businesses, the community and volunteering sector, all really worried, I think that in itself is a barometer of what is possible.

"...I think interestingly, a lot of people both nationalist and unionist who have never thought there would be a reunification in their lifetime, it's now something being talked about because it seems to be more, instead of political issue about identity and jurisdiction, it seems to be more about an access to a wider European identity, and that in itself takes some of the politics out of it, particularly for the moderate unionist community."

## Fr Gary Donegan, C.P.

"If you put any kind... of uniform - soldier or guard or customs man - (on the border) you are going to give the people who oppose the Good Friday Agreement peace process the oxygen they need. They will take one of the people out in a couple of weeks.

"...How can Trimble be so assertive, when there is so much uncertainty around the issue?

"Many people never countenanced the idea of a united Ireland being a better option and that's why it's so much at the fore - you hear people talking about it that you'd never have expected. Friends in the Protestant tradition say the North voted to remain, and that's been ignored, which goes against the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement."



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# A litany of improbabilities

The conviction for abuse of a top Vatican cardinal looks highly suspicious, writes **Greg Daly**



**W**hat a load of garbage, and falsehood, and deranged falsehood,” Cardinal George Pell had retorted when questioned by police about allegations that he had sexually assaulted two 13-year-old choirboys in 1996.

It's the kind of brash, blunt comment for which the Australian prelate, until recently one of the Pope's top advisers, responsible for reforming Vatican finances, has long been famous, but despite a guilty verdict being in the trial, even long-time opponents of the cardinal suspect that he had a point.

The cardinal had been convicted on December 11 on five charges of sexually abusing the two boys while he was Archbishop of Melbourne in 1996 and 1997, after a previous trial for the same charges had left the jury deadlocked last August with – it is said – 10 out of 12 jurors backing a ‘not guilty’ verdict.

Although the guilty verdict was reached in December, it was not publicly announced until last week, as the County Court of Victoria had imposed reporting restrictions to prevent another trial, scheduled to begin in February, from being influenced. In the end, the second trial, in which the cardinal was due to face accusations of abuse dating back to his time as a priest in 1970s Ballarat, was dropped when key evidence was ruled inadmissible, and the suppression order on reporting was lifted.

## Details

The details which have since come to light have certainly made scepticism about the verdict seem justified, and go a long way to explaining why the cardinal's defence team have said they will appeal the decision on the grounds of jury composition, the refusal of video evidence, and especially straightforward unreasonableness.

The jury had found that after a Sunday solemn Mass in the second half of December 1996, the then Archbishop of Melbourne had discovered two choirboys drinking altar wine in a sacristy of Mel-

bourne's St Patrick's Cathedral, and sexually assaulted them.

The prosecution's case was based on the testimony of just one of the two then-choirboys; his peer had died in 2014 after a heroin overdose, having previously told his mother he had never been abused, and there had been no corroborating evidence.

The 35-year-old complainant said that he and the other choirboy had separated from the choir procession after Mass, and entered the priest's sacristy where they found and began to drink some red altar wine. The then archbishop had then walked in on them, he said, said they were in trouble, exposed himself, and sexually assaulted them. The attack lasted a few minutes, the complainant said, after which the boys left the room and returned to choir practice.

**“Is it really likely that after a solemn Cathedral Mass with full choir, a bishop would leave a recessional procession and head to the sacristy unaccompanied?”**

Some time later, the complainant said, either later in 1996 or early in 1997, the then archbishop attacked him again, also after a Sunday solemn Mass. On this occasion, he said, he was walking to the choristers' changing room in a corridor where lots of choristers were milling about when the archbishop pushed him against the wall, squeezed his genitals hard through his choir robes, and walked off.

Anybody who has ever participated in Masses celebrated by bishops will understand why the verdict has been greeted by informed observers with widespread scepticism. Many have been sympathetic to the cardinal's comment, when told by the Victoria policeman Christopher Reed that the alleged attacks had taken place after Sunday Mass, “That's good for me as it makes it even more

fantastically impossible.”

As the cardinal explained in that October 2016 interview, played at the trial in lieu of the cardinal taking the stand – his lawyer, Robert Richter, hardly ever has his clients take the stand – solemn Sunday Masses would end with a procession after which he would meet and chat with people at the front of the cathedral.

“My master of ceremonies will be able to say that he was always with me after the ceremonies, until we went back to the car park or back to the presbytery,” he continued, pointing out that cathedral sacristies are hives of activity

after Sunday Masses.

“The sacristan was around, the altar servers [were] around, people were coming and going,” he said, adding that even if a couple of choirboys had somehow managed to peel off from the procession without being noticed and get into an improbably empty sacristy, they wouldn't have been able to spend much time there. “They couldn't have dallied too long in the sacristy, because the choir-master would have been keen for them to get away, to get them dressed and away,” he said.

\* \* \* \* \*



Pope Francis signs a cricket bat of a Canterbury cricket team member received from Australian Cardinal George Pell at the Vatican in 2015. Photos: CNS



Cardinal George Pell arriving at the County Court in Melbourne late last month.

Indeed, the entire case for the prosecution seems to have been a litany of improbabilities, unsupported by any other evidence.

**“Police, strikingly, had never investigated the archbishop's vestments during their investigations”**

Both defence and prosecution agreed that the only days that the first assault, involving four of the five charges, would have to be dated to December 15 or December 22, 1996, these being the first and second solemn Sunday Masses celebrated by the then archbishop in the cathedral.

Is it really likely that after a solemn Cathedral Mass with full choir, a bishop would leave a recessional procession and head to the sacristy unaccompanied? Is it likely that his doing so wouldn't have been noticed? Has anybody ever seen any bishop do such a thing? And if this did happen, is it likely that his failure to greet people outside the cathedral door on his first or second Sunday Mass

in the refurbished cathedral wouldn't have been noticed?

During the trial, it's worth noting, both the cathedral sacristan Max Potter and the archbishop's then Master of Ceremonies, Msgr Charles Portelli, described how they would always have accompanied the archbishop after a solemn Mass with procession until they had helped him remove his robes.

## Altar wine

Could two choirboys have broken away from the procession without anybody noticing or remembering them doing so? If they had managed to do so, what were the odds that they would find the priests' sacristy empty and unlocked? What were the odds that they would find altar wine available, rather than locked away in the safe where it would normally be?

It was noted during the trial that the complainant said the altar wine was red, whereas the cathedral was using white wine at the time, but that's really the least of the contradictions in this affair. Memory can get things wrong sometimes, and it is far from rare for child abuse survivors to forget precise





This carved wood memorial and place of reflection is seen at St Patrick's College in Ballarat where Cardinal George Pell attended school.

details.

If the archbishop had somehow broken from the procession without causing a scene, and somehow chanced upon the two teenage boys drinking wine in a sacristy, would he really have had time or even capacity to assault the boys in the manner described, seemingly pushing aside his robes to do so? If he could have done so, is it really likely he would have done so, as the complainant alleged, with the sacristy door wide open and in full view of the corridor?

Police, strikingly, had never investigated the archbishop's vestments during their investigations, had never considered how heavy and cumbersome his chasuble was, how the long white alb worn under the chasuble was tied tightly with a cincture. It is hard to see how the kind of assault the complainant described would have been anything other than impossible for a fully vested bishop; certainly the prosecution never showed in the trial that this could have happened.

### Conclusion

At the trial's conclusion, the chief judge had directed the jury that it was not enough simply to believe the complainant, or to think the cardinal had committed the abuse. Rather, the judge said, they would have to find the cardinal not guilty unless they believed the abuse happened beyond reasonable doubt.

And yet, despite all this, despite the apparent implausibility of the allegations, despite being reminded on

numerous occasions that they should not make the cardinal a scapegoat for the Church's very real failures in child protection, the jury unanimously found the cardinal guilty.

While legal experts believe his appeal is likely to exonerate him, the fact remains that for the coming months he shall be legally deemed a guilty man, convicted on brutal and callous sexual assaults on young children.

However, while the cardinal is guilty as a matter of law, it is worth remembering that this does not necessarily mean that is so as a matter of fact. Irish people familiar with the stories of the Guildford Four, the Maguire Seven, the Birmingham Six and Nora Wall will be all too aware that courts sometimes get it wrong.

The case of Nora Wall, the first woman in Ireland to be convicted of rape, feels particularly relevant here, given how it has been observed that her wrongful conviction took place just weeks after the broadcast of the States of Fear series.

Cardinal Pell's trial came after the Victorian parliamentary inquiry, the federal royal commission, Tim Minchin's song 'Come Home (Cardinal Pell)', Louise Milligan's book Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of George Pell and a parliamentary apology to the victims of child sexual abuse. It is hard not to suspect that the atmosphere ahead of the trial was such that a fair trial was always going to be unlikely.

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While criticism of the ver-

dict has been anything but a rarity in English-language media since the suppression order has lifted, it has at times been hard to spot it. Sober discussion of the case has too often been drowned out by roars of disgust and outrage about the language used by the cardinal's barrister when he appealed for leniency in sentencing, arguing that the alleged assaults had had been no features that might be deemed legally aggravating.

**“If the evidence against Pell is as weak, even as implausible, as appears to have been the case, there is at least the possibility that the canonical case might not result in a guilty verdict”**

“This is no more than a plain, vanilla sexual penetration case where a child is not volunteering or actively participating,” Robert Richter had said, subsequently explaining that his comment had been addressed to a legal audience familiar with Australia's legal system and norms, and not something he had expected the media to seize upon.

“In retrospect, I regret using a term well understood by lawyers and judges which is open to misinterpretation by those who do not understand the process of plea making after a conviction where the accused still maintains innocence; I was

after all conceding that the conduct required imprisonment rather than arguing for a non-custodial sentence,” he wrote in a public apology to those hurt and scandalised by his language.

“I was trying to put it within a range which would avoid the kind of excessive number of years for which the crowd is calling,” he continued.

While his comment had been intended, he said, to acknowledge the gravity of the offences the court believed the cardinal guilty of while at the same time pointing out that the offences were without aggravating factors, he had realised that his phrasing had been deeply offensive.

“In seeking to mitigate sentence I used a wholly inappropriate phrase for which I apologise profusely to all who interpreted it in a way it was never intended: it was in no way meant to belittle or minimise the suffering and hurt of victims of sex abuse, and in retrospect I can see why it caused great offence to many,” he wrote.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Pell situation also creates a potentially enormous difficulty for the Church's own internal procedures, espe-

cially given calls nowadays for ‘zero tolerance’ approaches, however they might be defined.

It's long been a point made the more measured defenders and explainers of the Church that canon law facilitates disciplinary action when the hands of the State are tied.

“Action or inaction in one jurisdiction does not prevent action or inaction in the other,” observe Austen Ivereigh and Michael Kelly, editor of *The Irish Catholic*, in last year's *How to Defend the Faith Without Raising your Voice*. “The Church will often choose to pursue an allegation when the civil authorities have not. And even when the police have dropped charges against a priest, the accused priest must still go through a rigorous process of ‘risk assessment’ by Church-approved experts before he is allowed back into his parish.

An obvious example is the case of former cleric Dan Duane – the ‘Fr Ronan’ of the Cloyne Report – who was acquitted in criminal courts in May and November 2011, but nonetheless was removed from the clerical state following a canonical trial and despite a series of unsuccessful appeals, including one to the Pope.

Key to the Church's ability to act in this area is that the burden of proof in canonical trials is lower than in civil courts. While allegations in the latter are expected to be proven beyond reasonable doubt, canonical decisions are made on the basis of a balance of probabilities.

In the case of Cardinal Pell, however, if the evidence against him is as weak, even as implausible, as appears to have been the case, there is at least the possibility that the canonical case might not result in a guilty verdict, with the result that no penalties would be imposed. It is possible that in such a case the Cardinal might be formally restricted from ministry and even asked to surrender his red hat, purely for the sake of avoiding scandal.

Whether such actions would be fair or essentially honest, however, would be a matter of debate, as would whether the Church should do what looks right or what is right. There's a case to be made, surely, that the Church might not be in its current mess if Catholics had made a point of doing what was right, rather doing what might look good.

## ESCAPE TO GLENCAIRN ABBEY AND SUPPORT THE MONASTERY'S RENOVATION

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With photographs by Valerie O'Sullivan



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**“In retrospect, I regret using a term well understood by lawyers and judges which is open to misinterpretation by those who do not understand the process of plea making after a conviction where the accused still maintains innocence”**



# Out&About

## Derry student singers call the tune



**ANTRIM:** The junior school choir of St Mary's, Magherafelt, Co. Derry, receive first place at the Ballymena festival for their beautiful singing.



**CLARE:** Killaloe's Bishop Fintan Monahan attends the Clare launch of Daffodil Day which funds life-saving cancer research.



**DERRY:** Pupils of Rosemount Primary and Nursery School receive a visit from the ambulance service and learn about how sick people are treated and given the opportunity to see inside the ambulance itself.

### IN SHORT

#### Teaching tips in Tipperary

Giving educators a network where they can grow in faith and communicate their message more effectively, the Association of Catholic Teachers are organising a retreat for primary school teachers from all over Ireland in Glencomeragh, Co. Tipperary from April 5-7.

The aim of the retreat is to support primary teachers in their own faith journey and in teaching the new Grown in Love programme in their schools, the vocation of teachers, meeting the challenges of being a Catholic teacher today, and guiding children in prayer. Waterford and Lismore's Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, will be speaking at the retreat along with Maeve Mahon, Breda

O'Brien and others.

For information about the retreat, visit the website [www.actireland.ie](http://www.actireland.ie)

#### St Patrick celebrations in Armagh

Armagh is at the centre of celebrating the life of St Patrick and the 'Home of St Patrick Festival' which runs from March 8-18 promises a lively and varied Irish showcase of the best culture, music, song and dance. It was in Armagh that Patrick began his Christian mission in Ireland and established the city as the country's spiritual capital. When he visited Armagh, Saint Patrick called it his 'sweet hill', and founded his first large stone church in 445AD.

During the festival, visitors can explore Armagh County

Museum and Armagh Robinson Library which house artefacts, collections, rare books and illuminated manuscripts which reflect the city's leading role in early Christian Ireland. There will also be a host of events paying homage to the ancient saint, renowned for converting Ireland to Christianity centuries ago.

**St Patrick's Cathedral – March 9:** Join composer and presenter John Anderson as he conducts a celebratory and reflective event honouring our patron saint. From 8-10pm, choirs across the island and further afield unite in a unique evening of music and spoken word. This is an exciting mix of words, music and dance, traditional and classical, ancient and modern, the reflective and exuberant, sacred and secular, all combining to make this a very special evening.

#### The Market Place Theatre – March 12:

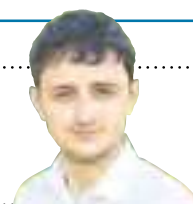
Armagh Cathedrals Partnership will hold a special evening of music, story, poetry and prayer to celebrate St Patrick, beginning at 7.30pm. The guest speaker will be Dean William Morton, Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. During the evening, he will reflect on 'Patrick and Columba, a Tale of Three Cities'.

#### The Market Place Theatre – March 15:

Prior to St Patrick's Day, the Primates of the two principal Churches in Ireland, Archbishop Richard Clarke and Archbishop Eamon Martin, along with their specially invited guest, will discuss what St Patrick means to them in a 21st-Century context and how his words continue to resonate across the world. The 1-2pm event is free, but booking is essential.



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**DUBLIN:** Volunteers and staff of Radio Maria Ireland celebrating the birthday of Mary Fitzpatrick (Director of Radio Maria Ireland) after her show 'The Immaculate Heart of Mary Prayer Group'.



**DOWN:** St Malachy's High School Castletwellan Community welcome the Michaela Foundation to speak to students about their upcoming camps, which are now open for registration. (l-r) Senior Teacher Mrs McKeever, Michaela Foundation representatives Orla, Clare and Nicole and Principal Mrs O'Neill along with campette representatives.



**DUBLIN:** Families across the county protest outside the Dáil for climate action as part of the Fridays for Future initiative which calls on students to strike in their closest town hall, every Friday.



▲ **ANTRIM:** Fr Noel Kehoe, Rector of Clonard Monastery, presents Kieran Hughes with a £10,000 cheque at Mass raised from the Clonard Christmas Crib Collection, with further donations from the Clonard community. The funds will aid the Welcome Organisation, Belfast, which cares for homeless people across the city.

◀ **WATERFORD:** Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan celebrates a Mass of Thanksgiving at the historic Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity in Waterford to commemorate the beatification of Blessed Clelia. Photo: Kris Wisniewski

## ARMAGH

Lenten talks to take place in St Malachy's Church each Monday of Lent at 7.30pm beginning March 11.

Armagh Parish Holy Spirit Prayer Group are hosting the Life in the Spirit Seminars in The St Vincent de Paul Centre, Chapel Lane, Armagh. March 12: Sr Josephine Walsh will speak 'New Life', March 19: Fr Peter McAnenly on 'Receiving Gods gifts'; March 26: Fr Gerry Campbell on 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'; April 2: Patricia Kelly on 'Growth in the Spirit'; April 9: Archbishop Eamon Martin will speak on 'Transformation in Christ'.

## CLARE

Youth 2000 prayer meeting every Friday at 7pm in the Poor Clare's Oratory, Ennis. Join other young adults for prayer and reflection followed by tea and chats in the Friary.

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

## CORK

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

Healing Weekend: A weekend of Praise Worship and Healing in the Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas, Cork on March 9-10. Mass and Confessions on both days. Speakers include Maria Vadia Florida, Fr John Keane Macroom, Fr Tony Emeka Nigeria, Canon Michael Fitzgerald Mitchelstown. Mir Music Ministry. Begins at 9am on both days. Enquires to Celia 087 2405568.

## DERRY

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

## DUBLIN

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

Lecture titled 'Does Creation Need God' to be given by Mr Joe Drew from The Kolbe Institute of Creation on Wednesday, March 20, at 1pm at Central Catholic Library, 74 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

## FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Tuesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm: [www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly](http://www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly). There is also a St Peregrine Novena Mass in Holy Cross Church, Lisnaskea on Tuesday nights at 7pm. [www.churchservices.tv/lisnaskea](http://www.churchservices.tv/lisnaskea)

Mass in the Extraordinary Form in St Patrick's Church (opposite St Kieran's College) every Sunday at 5pm.

## KILKENNY

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

## LIMERICK

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

St Saviours Dominican Church will be offering Bishop Barron's *Catholicism* Series at the Church on Thursday at 1.30pm and Fridays at 7.30pm weekly.

## LOUTH

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

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

A Holy Hour with music and reflections to be held in St Mary's Church James Street, Drogheda on Wednesday, March 13 at 8.00pm.

## MAYO

Latin Mass in the Old Rite (Tridentine) takes place in Knock Parish Church on March 10 at 5.30pm. The April Mass will be held on Easter Sunday

## MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday evening at 7.30pm in the parish centre.

Charismatic Prayer Group: Every Thursday, 8pm, in the Boardroom, Parish Centre of the parish of Trim and Boardmill. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Tuesdays 2-9pm, Wednesdays 10.30am-8pm, and Fridays 10.30am-9pm. Adoration is held in the Side Chapel in St Patrick's Church.

## OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085 7746763.

## ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday, 10-11am and Thursday, 8-10pm. Also at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

## WICKLOW

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

St Patrick's Prayer Group, Wicklow town, meet on Thursdays at 7.30pm in The de la Salle Pastoral Care Centre.





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### NY police investigate church 'hate crime'

● New York police officials have declared an act of vandalism against a statue at a local Catholic church last week to be a hate crime. The incident occurred at St Thomas Aquinas Parish in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

"At approximately 12 pm noon on Wednesday, February 20, a man wearing a hooded sweatshirt entered the church, removed the statue of Our Lady of Cisne and threw it in the trash across the street, causing damage to the statue," the Diocese of Brooklyn said in a statement.

A parish staff member retrieved the statue, and the police were notified.

### Man jailed for spitting on priest

● A man who spat on a priest as an Orange march passed a Glasgow church has been jailed for 10 months.

Bradley Wallace, 24, assaulted Canon Thomas White when the priest was unable to get back inside St Alphonsus Church on London Road. His DNA was later found to match saliva on the back of the vestment worn by Canon White.

Mr Wallace admitted the assault last month and the court was told he had accepted his crime was motivated by anti-Catholicism.

Sheriff Andrew Cubie said: "The courts in Scotland still deal all too frequently with cases of sectarian abuse which serve to harden and perpetuate divisions in society."

### Pakistan Church encourage peace, not war

● Catholic groups last week joined a protest in Lahore against a military escalation in Pakistan and India following the recent suicide bombing in Indian-administered Kashmir.

"If we don't end war, war will end us," read placards held by staff of the National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP), the Catholic Church's human rights body in Pakistan, at the protest in front of Lahore Press Club on February 28.

Peace activists including Christians NGOs also

protested about "war mongering" and "bomb blasts". Simultaneous demonstrations were held at press clubs in Islamabad and Karachi.

The nuclear-armed neighbours have conducted airstrikes on each other's territory this week as tensions run high after 40 Indian paramilitary troops were killed in a February 14 suicide attack. Pakistan-based terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (Army of Mohammad) claimed responsibility for the atrocity.

### Catholic priest placed on leave after alleged rape

● A Catholic priest in the central Philippines has been placed on leave following reports that he raped a four-year-old girl in Cadiz, a city in Negros Occidental province.

A statement from Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of San Carlos did not identify the priest. Details surrounding the circumstances have also yet to be revealed.

"We are committed to searching for the truth and to make sure that the [investigation] process will be fair and just to both parties, and whoever is responsible will have to face the consequences," said Bishop Alminaza.

The alleged victim is a day-care pupil. The child's parents reported the alleged crime to police and a rape complaint was filed against the priest with the public prosecutor's office in Cadiz City.

### Christian student faces jail for Islam insult

● Prosecutors in Indonesia have demanded an 18-month jail term and a €630 fine for a Christian student accused of insulting Islam. Agung Kurnia Ritonga, 22, a student at the University of North Sumatra in Medan, is currently on trial for insulting Islam in an Instagram post by mocking the burning of an Islamic flag in October last year.

Three Muslim youths in Garut, West Java burned a tawhid flag presumed to belong to Hizb ut-Tahrir, a banned militant group last October. Ritonga's Instagram post was said to have insulted the tawhid flag that has script describing the monotheistic God in Islam and God himself.

## Secret wartime documents of Pope Pius XII to be opened

Declaring that the Catholic Church is unafraid of history, Pope Francis announced that documents in the Vatican Secret Archives relating to the wartime pontificate of Pope Pius XII will be open to scholars in 2020.

Researchers, particularly those interested in Catholic-Jewish relations, have pressed the Vatican to open the archives and allow a full study of Pope Pius' actions during the war, including what he did or failed to do for Jews during the Holocaust.

"The Church is not afraid of history, on the contrary, she loves it and would like to love it more and better, just as she loves God. Therefore, with the same confidence as my predecessors, I open and entrust to researchers" this wealth of documents, Pope Francis said.

The Pope met on March 4 with supervisors, staff members and assistants working at the Vatican Secret Archives during an audience to mark the 80th anniversary of Pope Pius XII's election on March 2, 1939.

Staff at the Vatican Secret Archives, which holds the bulk of the documents related to the wartime Pope, have been working for the past



Pope Pius XII.

13 years to get the material organised, catalogued and accessible to researchers.

Bishop Sergio Pagano, prefect of the archives, said the years of work were necessary to pull together and catalogue material previously held in a variety of Vatican offices; this includes documents from the Vatican Secretariat of State, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, records from Vatican nunciatures around the world and thousands of notes regarding Pope Pius' charitable activity in Italy and abroad.

Pope Pius, who guided the universal Church dur-

ing World War II, already has been a subject of intense study and discussion, "even criticized – one could say with some bias or exaggeration", Pope Francis said.

### Attempts

While a small portion of some material produced during the pontificate of Pope Pius has been made available, all documents in the archives from his election in 1939 to his death in 1958 will be made available to researchers starting on March 2, 2020.

Pope Francis said he made the decision in consultation with trusted advisers and was

confident that "serious and objective historical research will know how to evaluate in the right light, with suitable criticism, moments of praise of that Pope and, without doubt, also moments of serious difficulties, tormented decisions, of human and Christian prudence, which to some could look like reticence".

Instead those moments of prudence were attempts – at times tormented attempts – to keep, "during periods of the greatest darkness and cruelty, the small flame lit of humanitarian initiatives, of hidden but active diplomacy, of the hopes of the possible positive opening of hearts", he said.

The Pope thanked the staff for their work, their assistance to the world's researchers and for the future publication of important sources related to the late Pope.

The normal Vatican practice is to catalogue and open all the archival material from an entire pontificate at the same time. In 2006 Pope Benedict XVI authorised the archives to make available to researchers all the documentation from the pre-World War II pontificate of Pope Pius XI up until 1939.

## South Sudan peace deal 'fatally flawed', country's bishops warn

South Sudan's peace deal is fatally flawed, the country's bishops said as they committed the Church to helping forge new negotiations. They also recommended a series of measures to end the conflict.

"We urge all stakeholders and friends of South Sudan to collaborate to seek a new model" for peace, the bishops said in a statement after their February 26-28 meeting in the capital, Juba.

While South Sudan's main warring parties signed a deal in September to end the five-year civil war that killed almost 400,000 people and displaced millions,

the situation on the ground shows that it is "not addressing the root causes of the conflicts" in the country, the bishops said.

The level of open conflict has decreased, but "all parties are involved either in active fighting or preparations for war," they said.

Human rights abuses, including murder, rape and looting, continue with impunity, they said.

With only three months left in the pre-transitional phase of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict

in South Sudan, most of what should have been achieved has not been done, the bishops said.

"This is likely to impact negatively" on the next activities in this and the following phase, they said, noting that all the "omissions and delays are deeply worrying" and "divide-and-rule" tactics seem to be in play.

More than 1.5 million people in South Sudan are on the brink of starvation and more than six million people, half the population, face extreme hunger, according to the United Nations.

## US state passes a 'sanctuary of life' bill

The Missouri House of Representatives has passed the Missouri Stands for the Unborn Act, an omnibus bill that bans abortion when the heartbeat of an unborn child can be detected, which could be as early as six weeks "depending on the method used".

The measure, also limits late-term abortions after

five months of pregnancy; declares the state of Missouri a "sanctuary of life"; bans abortions based on sex, race or Down syndrome; and requires abortion doctors to have adequate malpractice insurance.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the national pro-life group Susan B. Anthony

List, said the state House's "bold action shows the growing momentum to humanise our laws and challenge the radical status quo of Roe v. Wade".

### Protection

The United States is one of only seven nations – including China and North Korea

– that allow abortion on demand through the moment of birth," she said in a statement. Ultimate passage of this compassionate bill would make Missouri the 21st state to stop cruel late-term abortions and enact some of the strongest protections in the country for unborn children and their mothers."





Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie

## Thumbs up for the Pope



Pope Francis greets a child during an audience with members of Italy's Association Against Leukaemia, Lymphoma and Myeloma at the Vatican. The Pope said providing care to the sick should include taking care of their spiritual needs. Photo: CNS

# Methodists reaffirm teaching on homosexual unions

A major gathering of the United Methodist Church has reaffirmed its teaching on homosexuality, rejecting same-sex unions and the ordination of sexually active homosexuals, prompting predictions that some American congregations who reject this teaching will leave the denomination.

The international gathering, called a Special Session of the General Conference of the UMC, drew over 800 ministers and lay leader delegates to St Louis from February 22-26.

The debate drew out different approaches to the authority of Scripture, marriage, and sexuality, but ultimately left the ecclesial community's official teaching unchanged.

Scott Jones of the Methodists' Texas Conference said the decision resolves a longstanding debate and is consistent with the ecclesial community's teachings

on human sexuality, which it has listed in its *Book of Discipline* since 1972.

That teaching states "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching". It bars "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" from ordination.

"We will continue to welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer persons to our churches and affirm their sacred worth," said Mr Jones, according to the United Methodist News Service. "I pray we, as a denomination, can now move forward, working with each other in the spirit of Christian love and joining together as one. We are stronger together in serving God's mission as a diverse body of Christ."

The United Methodist Church is the largest mainline Protestant ecclesial community in the US, where it has about six million members. Almost one-third

of its membership is from Africa. Non-US speakers from countries like Liberia and Russia were among the strongest backers of the successful proposal called the Traditional Plan.

### Villages

"The progressive groups are loud, but they don't have the numbers," said Jerry Kulah, head of the UMC Africa Initiative, who said he was sorry so much time and money was spent debating homosexuality.

A pro-LGBT vote would have made the ecclesial community a "laughing-stock" in Africa, he said, according to the Washington Post. "I'm happy to go back to old ladies and old men in villages who received the Bible from missionaries and let them know that the Bible hasn't changed."

# Court rethinks death row for man with dementia

The Supreme Court is sending a death-row case back to the lower courts to determine if the inmate's dementia, brought on by strokes he suffered while on death row, should prevent him from being executed.

In the 5-3 ruling at the end of last month, the justices sided with Alabama prisoner Vernon Madison for now, saying the lower court should look at his case again.

Madison, who killed a police officer in 1985, suffered strokes in recent years that left him blind and with vascular dementia and significant memory loss. He cannot tell what season or day it is, and he doesn't remember committing the crime.

### Dementia

Justice Elena Kagan, writing the court's majority opinion, pointed out that Madi-

son's dementia is enough of a reason to re-examine his case, noting that the Eighth Amendment, which bans cruel and unusual punishment, "doesn't care about the particular diagnosis", or in other words should not apply only to someone with a mental illness or intellectual disability, which the court has previously established.

Kagan was joined by Chief Justice John Roberts and Jus-

tices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonia Sotomayor and Stephen Breyer. Justice Brett Kavanaugh did not vote on the case since it was argued before he was confirmed to the court.

Bryan Stevenson, Madison's attorney and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, said the court's decision affirmed "the basic principle of a humane system of justice".

## Vatican roundup

### Jews and Christians should join forces for peace, Pope says

The fruitful friendship and dialogue between Jews and Christians must go beyond the world of experts and academia, Pope Francis said.

"It would be wonderful, for example, if in the same city rabbis and parish priests could work, together with their respective communities, in service to those in need and by promoting paths of peace and dialogue with all," he said.

This way the fruits of decades of dialogue "will not remain the prerogative of a select few, but become a productive opportunity for many", he said.

The Pope made his remarks during an audience with people taking part in a meeting to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of German Cardinal Augustin Bea – a leading biblical scholar who greatly influenced several documents of the Second Vatican Council and, particularly, the Church's relationship with Judaism.

"Cardinal Bea should not only be remembered for what he did, but also the way he did it," the Pope said.

"He remains a model and a source of inspiration for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue," he told the attendees of the meeting, which was sponsored by Rome's Cardinal Bea Center for Judaic Studies in partnership with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and the Center for the Study of Christianity at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

### Justice is needed for Pell case, Australian bishops urge

Australian bishops have expressed their shock at Cardinal George Pell's guilty verdict of child sexual abuse and have urged that "justice" be served.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, president of the Australian bishops' conference, said in a statement last week that "the news of Cardinal George Pell's conviction on historical child sexual abuse charges has shocked many across Australia and around the world, including the Catholic bishops of Australia".

"The bishops agree that everyone should be equal under the law, and

we respect the Australian legal system," the archbishop said. "The same legal system that delivered the verdict will consider the appeal that the cardinal's legal team has lodged."

He added that the bishops hope justice will be served and that they pray for "all those who have been abused and their loved ones, and we commit ourselves anew to doing everything possible to ensure that the Church is a safe place for all, especially the young and the vulnerable".

Cardinal Pell is expected to be sentenced to serve jail time.

### Don't become complacent of God's wrath, Pope warns

Christians must not take advantage of God's forgiveness – selfishly repeating sin after sin – because God's wrath for those who refuse to change their ways is just as great as his mercy, Pope Francis said in a morning homily.

"Do not say, 'God's compassion is great, he will forgive my many sins' and then I just keep going on, doing what I want," he said at morning Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Pope Francis suggested Catholics spend five minutes at the end of each day examining their conscience, pinpointing their failings and working to conform their life ever more closely to Christ's.

In his homily, the Pope reflected on the first reading from the Book of Sirach (5:1-8) in which the Jewish sage warns the faithful against being too overconfident with God, "adding sin upon sin", and delaying conversion because "mercy and anger alike are with him; upon the wicked alights his wrath". The reading prompted Pope Francis to tell the small congregation at Mass, "Do not wait to convert yourself, to change your life, to perfect your life, to remove the weeds."



# GAEILGE

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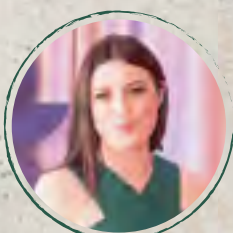
#### SPEAKERS:



**Bláthnaid Ní Chofaigh**  
Journalist, presenter and  
broadcaster



**Caoimhín De Barra**  
Assistant Professor of History  
at Gonzaga University



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John Carr, director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University and an abuse survivor, speaks during a panel discussion at the Leadership Roundtable's Catholic Partnership Summit in Washington to put forth possible solutions to the church's sex abuse crisis. Photo: CNS



**Christopher White**

## Catholic leadership group has plan to fight abuse and cover-up

**A** new report by one of the nation's leading organisations promoting best practices in leadership within the Catholic Church chronicles the "twin crises" within the Catholic Church, that of sexual abuse and its cover-up.

The report, released on Friday by Leadership Roundtable, comes just days after Pope Francis's historic meeting with the heads of bishops' conferences around the world in which he pledged an all-out war on sexual abuse.

The 40-page report serves as a compilation of recommendations that emerged from the organisation's Catholic Partnership Summit, which took place in February in the nation's capital, and brought together a mix of clergy and lay Catholic leaders, and seeks to promote a way forward with a "preferential option for abuse victims and families".

#### Leaders

Participants in the Catholic Partnership Summit included Cardinals Blase Cupich of Chicago, Sean O'Malley of Boston, Joseph Tobin of Newark; Fr Hans Zollner of the Center for Child Protection in Rome; Kathleen McChesney, a retired FBI agent who established the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Office of Child Protection; John Carr, the USCCB's former point man on Capitol Hill and current director of the

Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University; and a range of academics, theologians, and leaders from 43 dioceses in the United States.

Since the clergy sexual abuse crisis reemerged in the summer of June 2018, Leadership Roundtable notes that more than 50 dioceses throughout the country have sought their assistance in responding to the crisis.

**“The report calls for widespread “diocesan culture change” so that Catholics can rebuild trust”**

Solving the twin crises – sexual abuse and the “leadership failures that covered up the abuse” – will “require a long-term, culture change”, the report notes, and offers five guiding principles for a way forward: transparency, accountability, competency, justice, and trust.

Among the 50 recommendations in the report is implementing a new code of conduct for bishops and ensuring that bishops are held accountable under the Dallas Charter, the US Church's chief document for child protection which was first developed in 2002 in response to the clergy abuse crisis and has been updated twice since then.

Other recommendations include the development of a

“detailed list of punishments for clearly defined crimes of abuse or cover-up by clergy, religious, or laity”, a more transparent process for the selection of new bishops, the development of a mentoring program for bishops, the involvement of women in clergy formation, and a third-party reporting system for abuse or misconduct for any Church leader.

The report also identifies four root causes of the crisis that it suggests must be corrected for cultural change: a lack of bishop accountability, a lack of co-responsible governance structures and the need for synodality, a lack of transparency, and clericalism.

Further, a strong emphasis is given to the need for “co-responsibility” for leadership in the Church that calls for greater involvement of diocesan and parish lay leaders, theologians, academics, and philanthropists that can all contribute best practices from their respective fields and areas of expertise.

#### Summit

At last month's sex abuse summit, the Vatican said that one concrete outcome would be the creation of task forces on every continent to respond to sexual abuse, and the Leadership Roundtable's report proposes two interrelated task forces for the United States, one to aid in “recovery” and the other to aid in “reform” efforts.

The recovery task force

would rely on the expertise of “investigatory, legal, judicial, and victim services”, whereas the reform task force expertise would be systemic and organisational focused with a stated purpose to “replace a culture of clericalism with one of servant leadership and management practices”.

Going forward, the report calls for widespread “diocesan culture change” so that Catholics can rebuild trust in the pastoral leaders throughout the diocese on a local level, recognising that the crisis will affect at least three generations of Catholics: “Those who directly experienced the abuse crisis, those who did not directly experience the crisis, but were impacted by it, and those who did not directly experience the crisis.”

“The twin crises have demonstrated to many that silence is no longer an option, and that the strategy most urgently needed today is transparency, to tell the truth freely and openly,” the report notes.

Of the February gathering, the report states that “despite the recognition that some proposals will take time to change, there was a widespread belief that some reforms could – and should – be instituted without delay”.

📞 Christopher White is national correspondent at Cruxnow.com





# 2019 GUIDE TO RETREATS

*“Come you yourselves apart into a  
desert place, and rest a while”*

*-Mark 6:31*

The Irish Catholic



# Stepping into the presence



Retreats offer a chance to spend time with God away from the pressures of the world, **Greg Daly** is told

**T**he beauty of a retreat is that it is time for you to step away from the everyday and to reconnect with God and your Faith," according to Noírin Mulhern of Knock Shrine. "I think retreats are important for all of us, because our lives are so busy and we are bombarded with news and technology – the world that we live in is very, very busy compared to say, our parents' generation."

It's an important observation, and one that goes a long way to explaining the bewildering diversity of retreat centres in Ireland. The Drumalis Retreat Centre, just outside Larne, Co. Antrim, has been running since 1930, and now has a large and loyal attendance of retreatants, according to Sr Anna Hainey and Sr Margaret Rose McSparran.

"We have a very large footfall," says Sr Anna. "We have parish retreats, and there would be at least 300, maybe 350 of those in the year." With a host of directed retreats and adult faith-formation programmes taking place at the centre throughout the year it's hardly surprising the centre is busy.

"It's a large house, and we could have four groups in the house at any one time," she says. "Many of the people who have been participants in these courses here with us are now leading retreats and courses. We feel that a huge movement has taken place, that huge changes have taken place: it's a very active laity we have on our team, and the laity have taken our place in the Church."

## Divisions

Sr Margaret Rose says retreats at the centre have changed over the decades.

"It has developed from a traditional, straightforward silent retreat sort of activity into a much wider and more comprehensive and all-embracing catchment and provision," she says. "We feel we are working with people of all faiths and none connected into the wider community of Northern Ireland where there are very serious political and religious divisions."

While the Passionist sisters and the centre community have a strong



Padraic Walsh and Fr Steve Gibson from the Fr Peyton Centre, Attymass, Co. Mayo.

ecological strand to their activities, concerned as they are by disconnections between human beings and the planet itself, she stresses that "above all it's a centre for spiritual activity, for the provision of retreats, the experience of prayer, and the development of the understanding of what it is to be a layperson in the Catholic Church today".

While people can at times feel dissatisfied with their experiences

of the Church, they still have a hunger for spirituality she says, expressing the hope that the centre can help feed that craving.

"In our programmes we offer great variety, and we hope that what we're offering is offering what's needed," she says. "Everyone's looking for something slightly different."

\*\*\*\*\*

A welcoming attitude is key to a successful retreat centre, says Sr Eliza-

beth Gilmartin of the Ardferret Retreat Centre in Skerrillagh, Co. Kerry.

"The retreat centre is here since the 1970s-80s; it was a convent and then it turned into a retreat centre," she says. "The mission of it is that it's a very welcoming place, where people can come for time off for Faith, to refresh themselves and revitalise, and to have the opportunity to spend time in prayer and contemplation and rekindle their relationship with God."

**“In our programmes we offer great variety, and we hope that what we’re offering is offering what’s needed”**

Describing the centre as "very much a place apart where people can come and have time to themselves and have quiet time", Sr Elizabeth says that an especially welcoming atmosphere really helps the Ardferret centre stand out.

"We would try to make it a welcoming place where people feel they're away from everything else and they can actually have time apart to reflect on their own lives, and the lives of those near and dear to them," she says.

The centre runs its own retreats – Sr Elizabeth is herself a spiritual director – and also hosts retreats run by others, with the bulk of those attending retreats at the centre being locals.

"We're in the diocese of Kerry, our bishop is Bishop Ray Browne, and

it's the diocese that owns the place," she says, explaining that "the people who come to retreats here would be parishes in the diocese. It's been a tradition here that the parishes come and take a night during the year from 7pm to 11pm, where they come and have a talk with myself or another retreat giver, or others, people who are trained in retreat work, and we then have a priest come and say Mass and have Confession and reflection."

The numbers attending retreats at the centre seem to run into the thousands each year, she says. "Certainly we'd have between 500 and 1,000 a month, and in summer we'd have a lot more – we'd have full six-day retreats, and three-day retreats," she says. "The main thing is prayer, allowing us to commune with God, but there's an element of training and learning too. It's one thing to know about God but the other thing is to know God, and to know God in prayer is very much part of our thinking here."

\*\*\*\*\*

"The family that prays together stays together," said the famous 'Rosary priest' Fr Patrick Peyton, so it seems fitting that an emphasis on helping children and families pray has been at the heart of the Fr Patrick Peyton Centre in Attymass, Co. Mayo, which is now starting to spread its wings a bit.

"Our new residence retreat facility is a facility where we're just starting to do adult retreats," says Padraic Walsh, the centre's manager. "We



# of God

already do secondary and primary school retreats – we've been doing them about 10 years. The centre has been here about 20 years – we celebrated our 20th anniversary just in October."

The new facility will be open to all sorts of adult retreats, whether guided, self-guided, run by the centre itself, and for families or religious communities, says Padraic.

"We're aiming our facility at adult retreats. Some of those are aimed at religious communities that would come in – it might be self-guided or they might have their own speaker that would come in as well. We have Fr Steve Gibson here as well, our spiritual director, and he would be available if a group wanted spiritual guidance or wanted a talk," he says.

**“That whole contemplative aspect of the apparition is part of what draws people here”**

"Let's say somebody was in for a week or whatever, we'd start off in the mornings with Fr Steve probably giving a talk, then self-reflection for an hour or two, then probably lunch – we have a 60-seater restaurant so we can provide food as well," he says. "In the afternoon then there would probably be Mass or Benediction. We have a beautiful chapel here which is very conducive to prayer and reflection."

Despite being self-contained, with chapel, auditorium, restaurant and even a museum, the centre's size and setting make it especially conducive for small group retreats, Padraic says.

"We're very intimate – our retreat centre has seven bedrooms, so it's good for small groups. We're nestled in a beautiful area in Attymass, we've beautiful lakes and mountains with exceptional scenery," he says. "Fr Peyton was known worldwide

and has just been made venerable over a year ago – he always talked about the importance of prayer and family prayer, and our motto is 'we help families to pray'."

\*\*\*\*\*

Rather than being a destination for retreats, NET Ministries offer a different model of retreats where retreats are taken on the road and can be brought to parishes and schools all over the country.

"We do roughly three retreats a week," says Connor Duncan. "We start our ministry at the start of October and go through to the last week of May. That would be our own team – our other teams are based in parishes mainly, with one team working with Vocations Ireland. They do a series of retreats but work directly for vocations Ireland."

Australian Millie O'Connor says that since October the NET road team has run around 17 retreats.

"We mostly go into secondary schools and it really depends at what year level the teachers feel is best fit for a retreat. But we also do quite a few retreats for confirmation students as well. The retreats can be for anywhere from 20 to just over 100," she says. "There's 10 of us, from six different nations. I'm from Australia, then we have two from Ireland, three from America, two from Canada, one from Uganda and one from Hungary."

## Themes

Connor explains that the themes of retreats are generally chosen by schools, typically on such topics as God's love, peer pressure or leadership, and would involve talks and small group sessions, as well as songs, dramas, and testimonies.

"The final part is what we call prayer ministry where we do one-on-one prayer with each person, just for a couple of minutes, just asking them if they'd like to pray



Sr Margaret Rose and Sr Anna of Drumalis

for anything in particular, maybe something from the day, maybe they want to know Jesus more, maybe they want a deeper love for him," he says. "Sometimes these are run on gym floors, sometimes it's before the Blessed Sacrament, sometimes we do it when there's also Confession available – it just depends on the school. They change depending on the school environment or the retreat place we're at."

Such retreats typically are run over a full school day, he says, though sometimes they're just half-day retreats, with a real advantage coming from how the NET team are young people themselves engaging in a type of peer-to-peer ministry.

"We're not about the hard contents of the Bible," says Millie. "It's simply about our experiences and the way Jesus works in our day-to-day lives, and through that we encourage the students that they too

can have the same kind of relationships with Jesus."

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There's an impressive range of retreat options even at Knock itself, according to Noirín Mulhern.

"Through our Faith Renewal programme we have a series retreats and workshops that run usually either end of the season, so we have a spring programme and an autumn/winter programme," she says. "They are organised here by our own faith renewal theme and we would bring in speakers."

The 'Quiet Days for Busy People' retreats are always hugely popular, she says, with there being a range of speakers at these.

"One of our speakers is Jim Deeds, who is the author of Meeting God in the Mass. He'll come and give a one-day retreat – he spoke at the Novena last year as well and was

hugely popular," she says. "As well as all of that over the last number of years we would have done other workshops like 'Art as a Doorway to the Divine'. Here in the shrine we have a lot of very striking and beautiful pieces of artwork, from glass to sculpture and of course our mosaic."

The styles and sizes of retreats can vary enormously, she says.

"During our Jesuit week, which is our week of Ignatian spirituality, that's a wonderful seven-day programme where there's a retreat in the morning and you have your own free time in the afternoon to work on pieces of Scripture that would be recommended to you, so we would normally have between 50 and 60 people at an event like that," she says. "And likewise we have just finished our workshop for choirs – we had choirs from all over the area, and we had 70 people at that."

On the other hand, she says, other retreats can be far smaller. "And then you might have others that are more intimate that have between 10 and 15 people. As part of our faith renewal programme through the prayer centre we do have prayer guides, who guide people on a one-to-one basis through their prayer lives."

## Peaceful

Whatever people are looking for, one thing that Knock really offers is a special place for peaceful contemplation, she says.

"When people come to Knock, once you step across the threshold you know that you're in a special sacred place, and people regularly comment on the sense of peace they feel when they come here," she says.

"When you look at the apparitions that occurred here in Knock, the message was unspoken, and one thing that is unique about the apparitions is the appearance of the lamb on the altar representing the Eucharist. So that whole contemplative aspect of the apparition is part of what draws people here. It's for the peace and the quietness, and that's what's unique about coming to Knock."



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<b>Sat, 15 - Sat, 22 June</b>	<b>"Your One, Wild &amp; Precious Life: Awakening to Mindfulness!"</b> - Guided Retreat with Sr Joann Heinritz CSJ
<b>Mon, 24 - Sat, 29 June</b>	<b>"The Universe is a Revelatory Experience"</b> - Creation Spirituality Retreat with Sr Margaret Rose McSparran CP, Sr Anne Harnett CP & Team
<b>Sat, 29 - Mon, 8 July</b>	<b>Choice of 3, 4, 6 or 8 day Individually Guided Retreat</b> with Drumalis Team and Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Glasgow
<b>Tues, 13/Thurs, 15 - Thurs, 22 Aug</b>	<b>Choice of 8 or 6 day Directed Retreat</b> with Fr John Bennett MSC & Drumalis Team

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- Sunday 27 October - Thursday 31 October 2019

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- Friday 29 November - Sunday 1 December 2019
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**anclochan@eircom.net**

**Kilmantin Hill,**  
Wicklow Town A67 YX26  
Tel: 0404 61833  
**info@antairseach.ie**  
**www.ecocentrewicklow.ie**

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Glenmalure Vallery  
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**www.shekinasculpturegarden.com**

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EMMAUS

We welcome people who wish to take time out to find meaning in their lives through the adventure of the spiritual search. This is facilitated through various forms of dialogue, experiential programmes, workshops, conferences and retreats.



**5TH – 7TH APRIL**  
**Making Good Decisions: An Introduction to Ignatian Discernment**  
With Fr Kevin O'Rourke S.J.

**11TH – 12TH MAY**  
**Trusting in God: Embracing Freedom**  
With Denis Gleeson cfc

**25TH – 26TH MAY**  
**Burning Hearts Retreat for Married Couples**  
With Fr. Philip Scott, F.J

**16TH – 20TH JUNE**  
**A Journey of Healing and Wholeness Retreat**  
With Fr Jim Cogley

**22ND JUNE**  
**St. Joseph's Men's Day**

**20TH – 22ND SEPTEMBER**  
**Intimacy, Boundaries, and Healthy Relationships**  
With Fr Kevin O'Rourke S.J.

**21ST – 22ND SEPTEMBER**  
**Healing and Spirituality (The Twelve Steps)**  
With Denis Gleeson cfc

The Emmaus Centre, Swords | Co. Dublin  
Tel: +353 1 870 0050 | **emmauscentre@emmauscentre.ie**  
**www.emmauscentre.ie**



# Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre 2019 PROGRAMME

## SILENT PREACHED RETREATS

10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>  
MAY

**Martina Lehan Sheehan and Patrick Sheehan**

**Awareness and Mindful Living.** Through input, guided meditation, reflective music, gentle scriptural reflection and healing rituals, this retreat will provide us with ways of releasing stress, helping us to let go of self-judgement and unhelpful comparisons, and allowing us to live fully in the present.

27<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup>  
MAY-JUN

**Fr Denis McBride, CSsR**

**Where does the Jesus story begin?**

The preaching of the early Church began the story of Jesus with his death and resurrection. In this retreat Fr. Denis looks at the beginning of the Jesus story in the Gospels of Luke and John, seeing how they may relate to the beginning of our own stories. He will conclude with reflections on the spirituality of John's Gospel.

10<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>  
JUNE

**Fr. Brendan Comerford, SJ**

**"Mystics, martyrs and poets"** – This retreat will present the lives and thought of such Christian witnesses as Edith Stein, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Brother Roger of Taizé and Jean Vanier.

2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>  
SEPT

**Fr. Mike Serrage, MSC**

**"The One who has Compassion on them will guide them to Springs of Water: (Is 49:10)** This will be a quiet reflective time, and includes, poetry, meditations and ritual.

4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>  
OCT

**Fr. Gerard McCarthy, SVD**

**Parables to Ponder and Practise.** At some point in his ministry Jesus began to speak in parables. Read wisely, these stories lead us to a vision of God, ourselves and others that enriches our lives as disciples.

## 6 DAYS DIRECTED RETREATS

**JUNE 10<sup>TH</sup> - JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> @2PM**

**Frank Downes, OP and Mary Connellan, SSL**

**SEPT. 2<sup>ND</sup> - SEPT 8<sup>TH</sup> @2PM**

**Dermot Mansfield, SJ and Des Corrigan, SMA**

## 4 DAYS DIRECTED RETREATS

**SEPT. 2<sup>ND</sup> - SEPT 6<sup>TH</sup>**

**Dermot Mansfield, SJ and Des Corrigan, SMA**

## LENTEN RETREAT DAYS

**MARCH 16<sup>TH</sup> - Fr Damian Bresnahan, SMA**

**MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup> - Fr John Gallagher, SMA**

## HOLY WEEK RETREAT

**WED APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup> - SUN 21<sup>ST</sup>**

The Dromantine community invites you to join in reflectively celebrating the Easter Triduum, beginning with the Seder meal.

## DEVELOPING PRAYER THROUGH CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Facilitated by Florence Heyhoe (textile artist and spiritual director)

**9th March** Contemplative Collage

**21st May** Slow Stitch

**25th Sept.** Weaving

**SAT JUNE 22<sup>TH</sup> Fr. Des Corrigan, SMA**

**Forgiveness; The journey from hurt to healing, freedom and peace.** This retreat will give participants a deeper understanding of the nature and importance of forgiveness, so that we can let go, move on and find peace and happiness.

**SAT SEPT 28<sup>TH</sup> Fr. Joseph Ralph, OP**

**Lectio Divina.** An introduction to the ancient practice of Lectio Divina: Together we will Read, Recognize, Respond, Rest In and Reflect on the Sunday Gospel, culminating in a celebration of the Eucharist.

**SAT OCT 19<sup>TH</sup> Mr. Declan Coyle**

**The Green Platform: Simply Life –changing.** The internationally renowned, inspirational speaker and author will outline in simple steps his unique methods, which show you how to switch from negative Red to positive Green thinking, and so enable you to live a happier, more fulfilled life no matter what challenges you have to face.

**SAT NOV 9<sup>TH</sup> Fr. Brendan McManus SJ and Jim Deeds**

**Finding God in the Mess.** A practical approach to prayer for the messy times when God seems absent from our lives, or when we feel abandoned or forgotten.

## ADVENT RETREAT

**DEC 6<sup>TH</sup> - 8<sup>TH</sup> @2PM Fr. Pat Kelly, SMA.**

Advent is a time of waiting for the coming of the Lord. In a world where we expect to immediately get what we want, we look again at the importance of the state of "waiting" in the spiritual life.

## For enquiries or bookings contact:

The Secretary, Retreat & Conference Centre,  
Dromantine, Newry, Co. Down BT34 1RH  
Tel : 028-3082 1964 ; ( From RoI 048 )  
E Mail: [admin@dromantineconference.com](mailto:admin@dromantineconference.com)  
Website : [www.dromantineconference.com](http://www.dromantineconference.com)

# KNOCK HOUSE HOTEL

★★★

**CELEBRATING 20 YEARS**  
1999-2019

## MARCH/ APRIL SPECIALS

(UNTIL 17TH APRIL INCLUSIVE)

3 Nights Dinner Bed and Breakfast **€195pp**

4 Nights Dinner Bed and Breakfast **€252 pp**

**No Extra Charge for Single Rooms**

## EASTER BREAKS

Stay 2/3/4 Nights Dinner Bed & Breakfast  
from **€184 pp**





1879 CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY 2019

# FAITH RENEWAL EVENTS

One-day retreats  
and workshops  
to promote faith, prayer  
and spiritual wellness

*Spring-Summer 2019*



## 'Quiet Days for Busy People' Day Retreats

**Saturday 30 March and  
Saturday 27 April, 10.30am-4pm**

Take time out for yourself and join us for a day  
of quiet prayer and reflection.  
Individuals and groups welcome.

## 'Let the children come to Me'

with Kathleen Duffy

**Saturday 23 March, 11am-1pm**

A guide to nurturing rich, meaningful children's liturgies  
in your parish with insights into how we can share the richness  
of our faith with the next generation

## 'Finding God in the Mess'

Quiet Days for Busy People with Jim Deeds

**Saturday 27 April, 10.30am-4pm**

The good news is that God is with us in the mess of our daily lives and  
we can adopt principles of living that help us to find Him.

## Scripture Summer School

Come to the Feast – Reflections on Eucharist

**Tuesday 14 – Friday 17 May**

Facilitated by Fr. Kieran O'Mahoney, Jessie Rogers & Seán Goan

## 'Harnessing the Hope'

**Saturday, 18 May**

Rising to the challenges of 'Laudato Si'.

An engaging day of discussion on the reality  
of the danger that climate change poses for our future

## Jesuit Week - A Week of Ignation Spirituality

**28 July – 4 August**

Your life, your story, your pathway to God.

The team for the week includes Terry Howard SJ & Brian Grogan SJ.

## Family Day

**Sunday 18 August**

A special day to celebrate all things family with music, dance, art  
and crafts, games, fun workshops, and much more for all ages.

Find out more at: [www.knockshrine.ie/faithrenewal](http://www.knockshrine.ie/faithrenewal)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE FAITH RENEWAL EVENTS,  
PLEASE CONTACT THE MAIN KNOCK SHRINE OFFICE.

OUR LADY'S SHRINE, KNOCK, CO. MAYO, F12 Y226

e: [faithrenewal@knockshrine.ie](mailto:faithrenewal@knockshrine.ie) | t: (094) 9375355



faith  
RENEWAL EVENTS



# Ballyvaloo Retreat & Conference Centre



Magnificently situated overlooking the Irish Sea, Ballyvaloo Centre is the ideal place to take time out from the stresses and pressures of modern living. The long beach frontage, rolling terrain, mature trees and farmland surroundings help to create a tranquil environment for prayer, reflection and relaxation, away from the incessant demands of everyday life.

## Facilities Include:

- 32 En-suite Bedrooms
- Conference Centre (up to 80 Guests)
- Meeting/Counselling Rooms
- Coffee Room
- Chapel
- Prayer Room
- Private entrance to the Beach
- Garden Walks
- Counselling
- Spiritual Direction
- Holistic Treatments
- Complimentary Car Parking
- Complimentary Wi-Fi



For information about Retreats, availability and upcoming events please contact us:

Ballyvaloo Retreat & Conference Centre,  
Ballyvaloo, Blackwater,  
Enniscorthy,  
Co Wexford, Y21 HX73.  
Phone: 053 9137160  
Web: [www.ballyvaloo.ie](http://www.ballyvaloo.ie)  
Email: [office@ballyvaloo.ie](mailto:office@ballyvaloo.ie)

The Centre is a perfect venue for Retreats, Rest and Relaxation Breaks, Conferences, Meetings and Day or Weekend Courses. Above all, the Centre offers an oasis of peace and natural beauty.



A Ministry of the  
Sisters of St. John of God



**ARDFERT**  
RETREAT CENTRE

Contact: 066 713 4276  
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[www.ardferreretreatcentre.org](http://www.ardferreretreatcentre.org)

Ardferret Retreat Centre is situated in a quiet residential setting, 500 hundred metres from the local village Ardferret, The Medieval Capital of Kerry. The house comprises: 30 bedrooms including 17 ensuite rooms, Conference room, Dining room, Chapel, Prayer room and 2 Coffee Dock areas. Free parking and Wi-Fi.

A spacious garden with labyrinth. A further walled garden conducive to quiet relaxation, reading or writing. This is a perfect location for private retreats.

The Centre is close to all local facilities Banna Strand, Ballyheigue Beach, Fenit, Tralee with a variety of activities, Killarney, The Wild Atlantic Way, Leisure Centres and swimming pools nearby.



## Accommodation available for all our friends.

We welcome individuals and groups to enjoy our facilities at very reasonable rates. The Retreat Centre can accommodate all ages both young and old. Special rates available for carers and families who require rest. The greatest recommendation for the Centre is that it is 'a haven of peace and tranquility' for those who wish to spend quiet time away returning to daily life refreshed and renewed.

## FEEDBACK

### Monika – April 2018

Very picturesque for family and friends. Loved every minute.

### Antonie – July 2018

Staying at the Retreat Centre was wonderful. Breakfast was fresh and delicious. We couldn't have been more happy with our choice of accommodation!

### Meghan – April 2018

We really enjoyed our stay, a most enjoyable experience. Hope to visit again! We feel everything was awesome!

### Hazel – June 2018

The place is so serene, the host is so welcoming and kind. Will definitely go back again.

### Dawn – May 2018

...the best kept secret in North Kerry!

## 2019

### March 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th, April 2nd

Life in the Spirit Seminars: Moss & Janice Carrig

### March 6th

The Beatitudes: Fr. Sean Sheehy

### March 7th

Ardferret Historical Society Lecture Series: Anne Kearney

### March 15th - 17th

Encounters for Married Couples: Monika Kowalczyk-Szylka

### March 22nd - 24th

Family Systems Network (Closed Group)

### May 30th

Diocesan Adoration Day

### June 1st - 6th

Kerry Clergy Retreat: Fr. Sylvester O'Flynn, PFM Cap

### June 7th - 13th

Sisters Retreat: Fr. Philip Baxter, PFM Cap

### June 29th - July 4th

Kriya Private Retreat

### July 26th - 28th

Growing Old Gracefully: Fr. John Dunne, SMA

### August 5th - 11th

Silent Retreat: Fr. Kilian Byrne (Foyer of Charity)

### September 1st - 5th

Limerick Clergy Retreat

### September 27th - 29th

Family Systems Network (Closed Group)

### October 25th - 27th

Encounters for Married Couples: Monika Kowalczyk-Szylka

As events are continually added to calendar, please visit us at  
[www.ardferreretreat.org](http://www.ardferreretreat.org) or [www.facebook.com/Ardferret-Retreat-Centre](https://www.facebook.com/Ardferret-Retreat-Centre)  
Private Retreats and Guided Retreats available upon request throughout the year.



## RETREATS AND SABBATICAL PROGRAMMES IN

### AN TAIRSEACH 2019

**A Celtic Christian Journey of the Heart: Crossing the Threshold Home**  
Presented by Deirdre Ni Chinneide

**17th to 22nd June 2019**

To journey through the Celtic world is to travel widely. The call to remember with this ancient civilisation, our ancestors, is to retrieve that which we have lost and longed for in these current times. During this five day retreat, Deirdre will guide and explore themes of soul loss, disconnection and the return home to the Spirit of God within.

**Laudato Si—Care for Our Common Home What is Mine to Do?**

Presented by Anne and Terry Symens-Bucher

**15th to 20th July 2019**

How can we find our soul's work in the world – our own unique and beautiful contribution to the web of life? How can we know whether or not we are doing our soul work? We will explore these questions and possible answers through prayer, poetry, song, Scripture and the Work that Reconnects (J Macy). We will use the lives of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi as inspiration to find our own way in the world.

An   
**Tairseach**  
Organic Farm & Ecology Centre



**Summer School: Knowing Our Place, from Stardust to Sand**

Facilitator Sr. Colette Kane OP

**8th to 12th July 2019**

#### Private Retreats

Individuals and groups are invited to make their own private retreat at An Tairseach with use of both accommodation and facilities.

#### Sabbatical Programme

**8th September to 15th November 2019 – Ten week Autumn Sabbatical**

**Exploring Spirituality in the context of an evolving universe, an endangered earth, in the Christian tradition.**



## SEASIDE RETREATS

### FCJ IBRICKEN LODGE, SPANISH POINT, CO CLARE

Ibribken Lodge FCJ, beautifully situated overlooking the sea, Ibribken Lodge, Spanish Point is close to the beach and is two miles from Milltown Malbay.

Blessed with beautiful surroundings of sea and countryside, the area is an ideal venue for retreats, workshops and holidays. There are thirteen single bedrooms in the house with a large area around the house where one can sit or walk.

People come from far and near to this holy place by the sea for spiritual refreshment and renewal. It is a place of peace and healing.



#### POETRY WEEKEND

Friday, 31 May–Sunday, 2 June 2019

Poetry of all kinds is a language of love, and nearly always is a language of God. 'Poetry does not aim to teach, to prove, but to point beyond all objects into the silence where nothing can be said.' (Thomas Merton)  
Director: Jo Donovan RSM

#### SILENT GUIDED RETREAT

Wednesday, 5–Sunday, 9 June 2019

Director: Kathryn Lennon FCJ

#### DIRECTED RETREATS

Tuesday, 11–Tuesday, 18 June 2019

Directors: Brian McLoughlin CSSp and Kathryn Lennon FCJ

Wednesday, 21– Wednesday, 28 August 2019

Directors: Dervilla Byrne RSM and Helen Grealy (Cenacle Sister)

**Tuesday, 3–Tuesday, 10 September**

Directors: Marion Dooley FCJ  
Fr Joe Coghlin (Former chaplain UCC & Camino)

#### LAY RETREATS

Friday, 21–Monday, 24 June 2019

Director: Moya Hegarty OSU

**Friday 16 - Sunday 18 August 2019**

Director: Geraldine Lennon FCJ

#### LECTIO DIVINA RETREAT

Thursday, 27 June–Thursday, 4 July

Director: Fr. Seamus O'Connell (6 Days)

#### CONTACT

Centre Manager Kate | Email: [info@antairseach.ie](mailto:info@antairseach.ie) | Phone: 00353-404-61833  
See our NEW website for further details: [www.antairseach.ie](http://www.antairseach.ie)

#### For further information contact:

**Geraldine Lennon FCJ**

100 The Forts, Dooradoyle Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick  
Tel 086-3423692 | Email [geraldinefcj@yahoo.ie](mailto:geraldinefcj@yahoo.ie)

# Medjugorje

## Message of February 25

### The 5 Main Messages of Medjugorje

5 stones to help slay GOLIATH

Daily  
Holy Mass

Daily  
Rosary

Fasting on  
Wednesday  
and Friday

Daily  
Reading of  
Scripture

Monthly  
Confession

*"Dear children! Today, I am calling you to a new life. It is not important how old you are, open your heart to Jesus who will transform you in this time of grace and, like nature, you will be born into a new life in God's love, and you will open your heart to Heaven and the things of Heaven. I am still with you, because God permitted me out of love for you.*

*Thank you for having responded to my call."*



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Minister can speak up for the poorest

**Dear Editor,** Now that she has broken through the political 'glass ceiling' and commands publicity opportunities for her activities distributed from powerful media outlets such as the Fine Gael Press Office, I appeal to Minister Josepha Madigan to use her influence – particularly with the Taoiseach and her Government colleagues – to embrace and champion the "Homeless" cause which is having such a catastrophic social impact on the lives of so many citizens.

In his editorial (IC 14/2/2019) Michael Kelly rightly points out the irony that while highlighting the well documented inequalities in the Catholic Church, the Minister sits happily in a Government that presides over some of the most discriminatory social injustices since the foundation of the State. I refer to the fact that almost 10,000 people are living in homeless accommodation and the biggest scandal is that almost bordering on 4,000 of them are children.

If we are speaking of 'equality' it should be noted that these 10,000 people (both male and female)

together with another 'sizeable chunk of the population', share equal amounts of misery and lack of care for their wellbeing.

In 50 years of journeying with people in need, I have never seen such undignified day-to-day living conditions, particularly for the young families who have been betrayed by those in power. It is a tragedy to note how far we have moved from the fantastic aspirations of those who subscribed to the 1916 Proclamation that vowed to "cherish all the children of the state equally".

Likewise with so much pride in our European Union participation, could Ms Madigan and her colleagues explain the deficit in complying with our obligation to fulfil the following declaration that Ireland signed up to many years ago?

Universal Declaration of Human Rights - Article 25 (1948):

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and

the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Finally I appeal to Ms Madigan to take immediate action to relieve the plight of the following:

● The rough sleepers most at risk of dying on the side of the road tonight. (This risk rating is the highest in the 50 years I have been involved in homelessness.)

● The families who have been betrayed by successive failed 'Action Plans' and simply cannot wait for the Government to 'get it right'. These families need immediate Christian/Humanitarian action so that they can live life to the full with respect and dignity as God intended.

Yours etc.,

**Bro. Kevin Crowley OFM Cap.,**  
Capuchin Day Centre,  
Dublin 7.

### No tapping in church

**Dear Editor,** When a country loses its moral compass it must also lose its many blessings, because it has turned its back on God. What next? Now we have a money-making machine, a card machine, in the Holy House of God (IC 21/2/2019). Did Jesus not go into the Temple and make short work of the money-changers?

Go up it or over it, a card machine should not be in the house of God. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, please bin it. Bin it.

We already have church collection plates, monthly envelopes and the shrines. I do believe that when we are grateful for what we have, what we have becomes enough.

Yours etc.,

**Valerie McCoy,**  
Ballinteer, Dublin 16.



### Sunday isn't just about football

**Dear Editor,** Having read the review of *Gamechanger* (IC21/2/2018) one comes away with a view of an athlete that has given much to her role as a Mayo County stalwart.

Nevertheless, with such biographies, they only hint at a faith life, with the omnipresent grainy photos of reception of the Sacraments of initiation and after that nothing much else.

How refreshing it would be if the example set by Limerick's Cian Lynch, whose counter cultural engagement with faith shows that Sunday isn't just about football!

Yours etc.,

**Fr John McCallion,**  
Clonoe, Co. Tyrone.

### We must not allow ourselves to be forced to 'look away'

**Dear Editor,** Various media commentators have criticised those who would congregate in public areas, in the vicinity of doctors' surgeries and hospitals, saddened by what is now taking place there, under the guise of healthcare. Without exception all those taking part are trying to say: "We are here to help".

It is strange indeed, that so much attention is given to those outside such clinics, while so little of the spotlight is shone on the horror unfolding inside. Calls for exclusion zones is merely normalising this attitude of 'looking the other way'.

The impression is

promoted that women always feel thoroughly informed, and sufficiently supported financially, socially, emotionally, etc., to make what is an irrevocable decision. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Again and again, women have been so grateful for the presence of those willing to reach out to them, in their crisis, letting them know that there is both help and understanding available.

In the recent past, the Government through the HSE has rendered the work of Cura and Life Pregnancy Care Service, inoperable: the counselling, accompaniment, pregnancy support,

supervised access for fathers, parenting courses, post-abortion-trauma, etc. HSE funding would require them to act as accomplices to the abortion industry.

Into this vacuum, various groups are forming out of necessity, to meet the need, and so replace what the HSE has torn down. The most notable of these GiannaCare, has found itself catapulted into the limelight. Their professionalism and willingness to help, deserves to be more widely known.

Yours etc.,

**Gearóid Duffy,**  
Lee Road, Cork.

## facebook community

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

**If they are truly serious about fighting clerical sex abuse, bishops must join forces with journalists and not view them as enemies plotting against the Catholic Church, Mexican journalist Valentina Alazraki said.**

She is 100% correct. Unfortunately, some 'traditional' Catholics are unable to see this – a prominent member of a traditionalist group last year said he would 'pay' to witness the disappearance of mainstream media. He showed no concern for those who have already lost their jobs in the journalism world as a result of newspaper closures and redundancies. On the other hand, when I worked in the now-closed *Offaly Express*, I recall the late Fr Willie Cleary, PP, Tullamore, as a model of openness; we worked closely with each other and journalists were often guests at the parochial house to hear plans the parish had on various issues. – **Declan McSweeney**

I like this article very much. It seems to me that there is a real job of work to be done in building the relationship between journalists and the Church. It will require movement on both sides of course. But I would agree that a healthy way of going forward is to develop open and honest communication. – **Jim Deeds**

Well, as Christians, we shouldn't regard anyone as an enemy! I agree that the Church must stop being so defensive and accept criticism when deserved and challenge when undeserved. A lot more humility and acceptance of faults required if we are to live up to the name of Christ followers. – **Mary O'Vallely**

**Thousands of children across Ireland will be skipping school on Friday, March 15, as part of a global day of action pressuring governments to act against climate change.**

As I understand it, when children come to school the teachers act *in locus parentis* and if they encourage children to walk out of school they abandon this responsibility. However, if it is done with parental permission, it is more in the manner of keeping the child at home and avoids this problem. A third possibility is that it would be a school activity which would be quite novel. – **Peter O'Reilly**

Delighted to see this movement to live the Gospel take hold. – **Siobhán Ní Thaidhg**

Imagine the uproar there would have been if students were taken out of school last May in defense of unborn human lives... – **Maria Forrestal**

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

### 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.



# Cornerstone

Building tomorrow's parish today

**Book Recommendation:**



**The Eucharist**

Page 30

## Starting with Alpha

**Dominic Perrem**

**W**hen a few brave people decided to start running The Alpha Course in Schools a few years ago, no one could have anticipated what would happen by 2019, with thousands of students attending Alpha.

"I was expecting to be met with older people on this retreat who were going to try and prove to us that we should have faith. I was also expecting to have activities exercising trust. I am very happy that my expectations were wrong and the people talking to us about faith were around our age and they didn't force anything upon us but just talked to us about their experiences. The main thing I'm taking away is that I want to actively and openly search for the Holy Spirit." (Dublin Student)

"I have discovered that God is like a father. Since I never had a father, this has been amazing for me." (Waterford Student)

"Since Alpha classes I now consider God as a close friend, someone who is close to me and will always be there for me." (Tullamore Student)

I could fill this whole article with quotes of God moving young people's hearts and changing minds in schools around the country. Suffice to say, Transition Year students take this ten week course in around 35 schools, and it works. We can't keep up with demand, and we need help. We can reach around 2,000-3,000 youth - we need to reach many more.

» Continued on Page 28



Students play games before the Alpha Youth in school

**Welcome to this week's Cornerstone**

### World Youth Day:

Ameera Ahmed concludes her piece detailing her experience in Panama, January 2019 which was featured last week

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### Scripture:

This week's reading is from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Page 28

### Breaking the Word together

Anne McGrath provides an insight in how a weekly Bible study was established and has been sustained in her parish

Page 30



Please spread the word and join us on the journey of the building tomorrow's parish today – a familial community of faith, fostering authentic, intentional discipleship. If your parish is engaged in something exciting or innovative, contact us and let us know! Email me on [eoin@irishcatholic](mailto:eoin@irishcatholic).



# Starting with Alpha

» Continued from Page 27



**Dominic Perrem**, with contributions from Amanda O'Shea, highlights the impact Alpha is having across the country

"I can't express how much the students and the teachers enjoyed [Alpha]. The class teacher told me today that he was told it was the best [experience of TY] ...What an impactful experience for them." (Dublin Transition Year Teacher/Co-ordinator)

"I have learned that God is always there to guide us and that we should be more thankful for what we have. It has strengthened my faith, I now see God as someone to talk to." (Dublin student)

You get the drill - great things are happening. What on earth are we doing with these kids? It's really simple: a double period is filled up with a film and a discussion - specifically, the Alpha Youth Film Series (see [alphaireland.org](http://alphaireland.org)), and group discussion led by Alpha staff and volunteers.

Don't get me wrong - these courses can be run by anyone - and they don't have to take place in a school. We're thrilled when folks from Net

Ministries run Alpha Youth for Confirmation candidates, or when youth groups decide to run Alpha Youth. It takes nothing but willpower, a telly, and some pizza to do it.

**“Students are taken to a Holy Spirit Retreat during Alpha, this student attended in Scripture Union’s wonderful venue in Ovoca Manor.”**

The changes and conversations that occur with these youths would blow you away. One such conversation was with a 16-year-old young woman who had made her confirmation and she felt she truly loved God but her best friend had died that summer and this rocked her faith. She had begun to question God and wasn't sure she wanted to follow Him anymore. Then she did Alpha in her school in the Autumn. Students are taken to a Holy Spirit Retreat during Alpha, this student attended in Scripture Union's wonderful venue in Ovoca Manor. She shared with one of us (in floods of tears) how after doing Alpha and going through the prayer journey she felt close to God again and that she wanted to trust him again.



**“No one expects there to be Good News when it comes to young people.”**

Another young man was bursting with excitement. A leader asked him building-on his Confirmation: did he want to follow Jesus? He exclaimed "Yes! how do I do that?" He said he had not taken his confirmation seriously but after doing Alpha he now realised what it all meant: that Jesus is real and he wants a relationship with him.

No one expects there to be Good News when it comes to young people. Don't believe this lie, these adolescents and teens are crying out for input and are full of a desire for life and truth. Run an Alpha for them - it could change their life. And yours.

"I was bullied. I suffered depression. I self-harmed. Life was horrible for me and at that point I turned to Jesus. I prayed at night, crying endlessly, restless and hurt.

But I never got an answer... I joined an Alpha Youth and I can't believe it. I am as alive as I've ever been. My faith changed. My life changed. I changed."

No one can look at the distress all around us today and not be moved - the young need our help - they need to hear The Good News - hear it afresh. If something in this article is speaking to you - please get in touch with us - please support our work. Send an email

to visit [www.alphaireland.org](http://www.alphaireland.org) and we can equip you to run Alpha, or tell you how to join in. You don't need to be a theologian - you don't need to be a 'people person', all you have to be is the one who says, 'here I am'. God is so good! He will bless every effort we put in - and these young people have never needed it more.

Alpha runs for eight to 10 weeks in secondary schools all over Ireland. On week seven we bring these students away on a "Holy Spirit Retreat" where they encounter the living God, a gentle healer, burden lifter and a beautiful rescue ensues. It's a privilege to be involved.

## Scripture

Reflecting on Scripture is an important part of the Christian faith. Often, however, we Catholics do not allow ourselves the time to really reflect on the Word of God. This weekly series will explore the Second Reading from the coming Sunday's Mass. While originally written to the early Church communities, Scripture is the living Word of God, so each week we can read what was being said to encourage and challenge early Christian communities in order to hear what is being said to us today.

### Romans 10:8-13

Scripture says: The word (that is the faith we proclaim) is very near to you, it is on your lips and in your heart. If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. By believing from the heart you are made righteous; by confessing with your lips you are saved. When scripture says: those who believe in him will have no cause for shame, it makes no distinction between Jew and Greek: all belong to the same Lord who is rich enough, however many ask his help, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

### Spend some time in prayer with the reading.

1. Find a quiet place, and give yourself fifteen minutes without distractions. Read the section once, and then pause for reflection. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and response to the passage.
2. Read the passage a second time. Ask yourself: What do I find challenging about this reading? Is there anything that I can try to do differently in my life as a response to it? What is the message in this reading for our parish? Write down anything that comes to your head.
3. Pause in silent reflection, and then read the passage a third time.

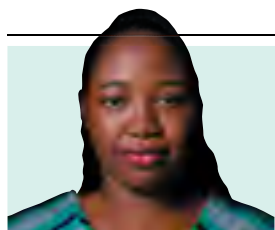




# Dare to say yes!



Ameera with fellow pilgrims in Panama, January 2019.



## Ameera Ahmed continues detailing her experience at World Youth Day in Panama, January 2019

**O**n Monday, we completed volunteering activities for the local parishioners which involved visiting the sick, bringing food to those who had none, and playing football (soccer) with some of the local young people as a way to help with their English and give them a positive influence. I was part of the group that visited the sick, and we met a beautiful lady called Rosa, who was unfortunately bed-ridden by her illness and not able to leave the house. We introduced ourselves, spoke to her for a bit through a translator, sang 'Lord I need you' by Matt Maher for her, and concluded with a prayer. What struck me was her joy, in spite of her illness. She didn't feel sorry for herself, and angry about her situation, just quiet peaceful joy and gratitude that we had taken time out of our day to come see her. It was a very humbling experience.

The official World Youth Day agenda started on Tuesday with the Opening Mass led by the José Domingo, Archbishop of Panama. This was the first real experience of the true impact of the amount of young people attending World Youth Day. As we made our way down to the Cinta Costera, the venue for the opening Mass, we encountered people from many different countries! Australia, Hongkong, France, Paraguay, Spain, Brazil, just to name a few. There was excitement in the whole city, with everyone eager to exchange trinkets and gifts with different countries, sharing blessings with each other, and everyone truly joyful to be where we were. The atmosphere was

electric! And the sun was very hot! We (Team Ireland) took refuge in the shade under a bridge – yes, a bridge, you did not misread – as we waited for the main event to start. In true Panama style, Mass was a very joyous affair, with lots of vibrant music, and colours, but also very reverent as well. The Archbishop spoke about the theme of WYD Panama – Mary's answer to God's call – Here I am, the servant of the Lord. Let Your will be done unto me, encouraging all of us present to allow ourselves to be open to God's call trusting that he will equip us with the tools to complete what He has planned for our lives. This theme continued throughout all the subsequent events over the next few days. The opening ceremony ended with a concert in the evening with contemporary Christian music that could have kept us dancing all night long but for the fact that we had a long journey back home with about a million other pilgrims, and another early start the next day!

The Pope's first address to the youth happened on Thursday, and the atmosphere at this ceremony (and all subsequent events led by the Pope) was on a completely different level. It is very difficult to not get intoxicated on the anticipation and joy that fills the whole arena once the Pope arrives in the Pope-mobile, and drives through the crowds, smiling and waving at the young people as he goes by. The awe in the eyes of us fortunate enough to be closest to the barriers as he drives past, the joy and screams of the youth as we all chant "Esta es

la juventud del Papa", translating as "We are the youth of the Pope!". The atmosphere is very difficult to put into words. It is more electric than a highly anticipated concert. It is very energising, but also deeply touches your soul and cuts through to your vulnerabilities, telling you that this is a safe space to let go of any insecurities, allowing you to surrender yourself to the moment and let your true self shine.

World Youth Day is an event that has to be experienced because, if taken at face value, is just a gathering of young people with similar ideals celebrating Mass with the Pope as well as attending festivals with upbeat religious music with people from other countries. However, many lives are changed by this token week, and mine is one of them. In fact, my life continues to be changed each day. Why, because it is an experience which has energised me to the core, body, mind and soul. I have built relationships and friendships with like-minded people that I can continue to connect with on return from home when I need some support, or a friendly chat. These connections open your world to a new community of young people here in Ireland who also search for the same thing we are all searching for, peers that we can share and discuss our faith with, without fear of rejection or condemnation.

The next WYD will be taking place in the summer time in Portugal, 2022. Set this date in your calendar. Dare to Say YES and book your place on the next WYD event. I guarantee you – it will change your life.

Ameera began her account in last week's Cornerstone – to see this and more, a digital download of the 4 Cornerstone supplements from each month is available as at [www.irish-catholic.com/shop](http://www.irish-catholic.com/shop)

## Fish & Tips

### Daily Ideas for Disciples



Like most Irish people Family.ie are passionate about the family. Family.ie are a charitable organisation, built on Christian principles, which supports, encourages and strengthens the family through education and resources.

#### What Family.ie do

Family.ie support, encourage and strengthen families in a variety of ways

- Radio
- Podcasts
- Seminars and Training
- Resources
- Support and Encouragement

#### Aim

Connect with people at every stage of life, with time-tested advice, quality resources and relevant training. Young children, teens, young adults, parents, grandparents.

Family.ie also provide materials such as

- A wide range of Radio Programmes and Podcasts.
- Resources to help equip Parents, Marriage and Marriage Preparation.
- Quality tips and advice online via facebook and social media.
- Marriage and Parenting seminars and conferences.
- Equipping parents to protect their children from alcohol and drugs, 'How to Drug Proof Your Kids' training.
- Supporting those in Church leadership and their families.
- Growing network of people working to strengthen your family.
- Small-group DVD Study Series – The Family Project.

## The Lenten Calendar For Children

This calendar has a little activity for you to do each day of Lent. Besides what you see in the calendar it's good to do one or two things all through Lent. Some people give up things – sweets, chips, xbox or playstation for example... Some people take up something – a good work or a small act of kindness – helping more at home, making your bed each morning, giving some of your pocket money to a good cause for example...

Remember to try and say an extra prayer each day!! As you'll see, the Sundays of Lent don't really count. There are 40 days without Sundays. Each Sunday is like a mini Easter – So you can have a special treat those days!!

<b>Ash Wednesday</b> ✠ • Give some money to the poor or share your toys. • Pray that God will help you make a good Lent. • Give up something you like to eat. 1	<b>Thursday</b> At the Last Supper Jesus told His disciples that he loved them. • Help with the dishes without being asked out of love of God and your family. 2
<b>Friday</b> Jesus offered His Body and Blood as a sacrifice in payment for our sins. • Give up a bit extra food as a sacrifice to Jesus. 3	<b>Saturday</b> Pray to Our Lady Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen. 4

This resource is generously shared by Frank Brown of the Combined Parishes of Clondalkin.



## EVANGELISATION

# Studying the Word at Divine Word

**Anne McGrath** provides an insight in how a weekly Bible study was established and has been sustained in her parish

One of the best things I ever did was to join a Bible Study Group. For years I promised myself that I would read the Bible regularly but I rarely did. One day, about 14 years ago, I got an invite to visit a Bible study in the neighbouring parish. The group met once a week in a parishioner's home. I felt as if I had found what I had been searching for, for a long time.

I attended that group each week for about six years and made many friends during that time.

In the summer of 2008 I decided to do a short study in my own parish. When we finished our six-week study the group wanted to continue, and we have been going ever since.

Our Parish is Divine Word, Marley Grange, Rathfarnham. We are very fortunate to have the Servite Fathers serving our community for the past 20 years. We are a very strong and united Parish and we have about 30 long-established groups ministering to the Parish.

lished groups ministering to the Parish.

## How we started

When our Bible study group started in 2008, I, who has many years' experience in leading a group, joined our group for a few weeks. We are also blessed in that, Robert, a local lay Presbyterian man well versed in the Bible, was part of our group from the very start. Our local Curate Fr Camillus attended each week without fail until his recent retirement.

To advertise our first meeting and with the blessing of our parish priest we put a notice in our weekly missalette to invite everyone to our first Bible Study. We were surprised and delighted at the response to our initial information meeting as more than 20 people showed up.

## How it works

We meet in the Parish Centre every Wednesday after 10 am Mass. The centre is warm and inviting, we have tea, biscuits and a chat before we get started on the study. At the moment we have eight people in the group, the number varies slightly from year to year.



papers for each person in the group, binding them together in a booklet of six to 10 lessons. The materials provide homework on the section of Scripture that we are currently reading. The homework takes about one hour to do. We bring our homework to the meeting and go through the answers together in our class. At the meeting, one person is assigned the role of facilitator, reading out the questions and giving everyone a chance to participate. One of the reasons the group has been meeting for more than 10 years is that it is very enjoyable. It can be serious as we discuss serious topics, but it is also good fun and not a week goes by that we don't have a laugh.

**“We use materials from a longstanding worldwide non-denominational organisation called Community Bible Study International.”**

We use materials from a longstanding worldwide non-denominational organisation called Community Bible Study International. We download and print the

encourage Scripture reading. God lives in His Word, and as we read Scripture, God speaks to us individually. As we work through the questions and answers we share our insights and learn from each other. We often share about our faith and struggles. There is great respect within the group and an unwritten code of confidentiality. We also discuss concerns we may have as Christians living in our world today. The facilitator may need to bring us back to the Scripture if we get carried away on a tangent! People participate as much or as little as they wish.

## The Living Word

The goal is not to acquire academic knowledge, but to

struck by St Paul's unselfishness in his ministry, echoing the ministry of Jesus. We have just started a 30-week study of St John's Gospel. We believe that by reading this Gospel over the next 12 months we will grow closer to God and His Beloved Son Jesus.

The reason I attend the class every week is that it improves my relationship and communication with God. I want to read His word to know more about Him, His wisdom, teachings and promises. “Your words are a lamp for my feet and light for my path” (Psalm 115). It's essential food for the journey. I feel very privileged to be part of our Parish Bible Study.

*Why not start your own Bible study? If you would like ideas and/or advice, you can email [eoin@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:eoin@irishcatholic.ie)*

## Sacraments

# The Eucharist – Book recommendation

In her work, with both students of theology and people in parishes, Fáinche Ryan was struck by the many questions people have, and of how difficult it is to access good solid information on the faith of the Catholic Church. This book, *The Eucharist*, addresses this need for accessible theological information on one central aspect of Catholic faith and practice, the Eucharist, ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’ (Lumen Gentium 11). The book will seek to explain to the reader why Catholics do what they do, and what Catholics understand by the ‘Eucharist’.

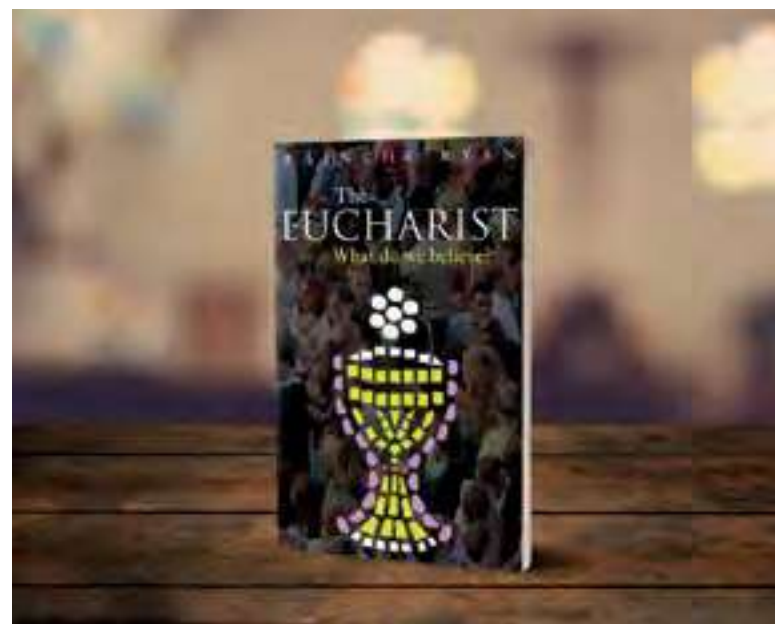
Complex but central ideas such as sacrifice, Sacrament and transubstantiation are addressed and rendered accessible. The feast of Corpus Christi and the very popular practice of Eucharistic adoration is discussed. The often controversial Church teaching regarding who can and cannot receive the Eucharist is presented and discussed, as is Jesus' challenging practice of eating with ‘tax collectors and sinners’. “The book aims to be both instructive and challenging and to go some way to addressing the many questions put to me from my encounters with people, members of parishes, parents of first

communicants, friends who have drifted, and not least those who might like to join or simply want to know a little of what Catholics actually believe, all of whom are asking questions but seem to have nowhere to go for answers.”

Parish members, Eucharistic ministers, priests, parents of first communicants, teachers of first communion classes, members of parish councils, people involved in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults programmes, people involved in Clinical Pastoral Education programmes, Parish Pastoral Workers, first-year undergraduate students in sacramental theology, teachers and pupils at second level and those simply inquisitive about Catholic teaching.

Several excerpts from *The Eucharist* have been used in Cornerstone which provide a glimpse to the rich, accessible and required reading contained within. It is essential reading for each and every parish and parishioner. *The Eucharist* is available at [www.columbabooks.com](http://www.columbabooks.com).

*Fáinche Ryan is the current Director of the Loyola Institute, Trinity College Dublin.*





# Around the world



**IRAQ:** Syriac Catholic Archbishop Yohanna Moshe of Mosul elevates the Eucharist during a liturgy at St Thomas Syriac Catholic Church in the old city of Mosul.



**BRAZIL:** A woman sits with children in a hammock at a makeshift camp in Boa Vista. About 100 indigenous refugees from Venezuela have created their own unofficial refugee camp. The official, army-run camps house less than 20% of the Venezuelan refugees in Roraima, Brazil's most northerly state. Photos: CNS



**USA:** A man holds a sign at the US-Mexico border near Sunland Park, New Mexico, during an Interfaith Service for Justice and Mercy at the Border.



**VATICAN:** Pope Francis greets a baby during an audience with members of the Italian charity, Circolo di San Pietro. The audience was held as the group marks 150 years of serving the poor and the suffering.

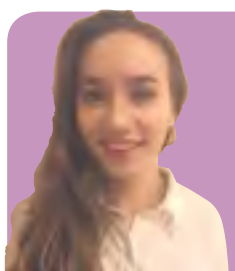


**USA:** Students and parishioners from St Elisabeth of Hungary School in Van Nuys venerate the incorrupt heart of St John Vianney after Mass. The heart was on tour through several parishes of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.



**SOUTH SUDAN:** Armed members of the South Sudanese security forces are seen in Bentiu earlier this year. Bishops of South Sudan say the peace process is not working, and they suggest more than a dozen ways to improve the situation.





## Sweet Treats

Laura Anderson

### Cherry and raisin fairy cakes – a blast from the past!



**F**ruit buns like these were and remain a familiar sight in many Irish homes, and with a cup of tea in the evening these humble sweet treats cannot be beaten. They are so easy and fast to whip up, perfect for the most beginner of bakers or for making with the kids.

With just a few staple cupboard ingredients in under an hour you can have your own little taste of nostalgia. This recipe makes about 12 cakes. To give a citrus twist you could add the grated zest of a lemon in with the fruit. Or of course, if you don't like raisins or cherries these could be substituted with chocolate chips or just left out altogether. Still just as tasty!

#### Ingredients

- 110g (4 oz) margarine, softened.
- 110g (4 oz) caster sugar.
- 2 medium eggs.
- 110g (4 oz) self-raising flour.
- 1tsp baking powder.
- 30g raisins.
- 30g glace cherries.

#### Method

Preheat the oven to 190°C/fan 170°/gas mark 5. Line the fairy cake baking tin with good quality paper cases. With an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Next whisk in each egg one at a time, making sure each is well incorporated before adding the next.

Now you want to introduce as much air as possible to give a light fluffy sponge. Sieve in the flour and the baking powder and stir gently into the wet ingredients, so as not to knock out any air.

As the cherries contain a lot of moisture, to avoid them sinking to the bottom of your cakes it's a good idea to quarter and then wash them to remove some of the syrup. Make sure they are thoroughly dried before folding them into the mixture carefully with the raisins.

#### Less fruit

You can of course add more or less fruit if you prefer, this is a personal preference. Divide the mixture evenly between the paper cases, about one heaped teaspoon per case should be sufficient. Don't fill the cases to the top as the mixture will rise, about ¾ full is perfect.

Place the cakes in the oven for 12-18 minutes or until they spring back when you touch them, are well risen and golden brown. Allow to cool in the tin for a few minutes and then transfer to a wire rack to cool fully before eating, if you can wait! Serve on a plate with a doily and a dusting of icing sugar for that extra touch of sweetness.



### Chai Brady discusses keeping Lenten promises

**S**teering clear of constantly searching for instant gratification and focusing on the needs of others in addition to our personal wellbeing sounds like good advice all year around, but perhaps Lent can be a time we take a closer look at making this more of an everyday reality.

It's one of the most important liturgical seasons, everybody knows it's a time for almsgiving, prayer and fasting, but sticking to the positive commitments we aspire to for 40 days can be tough, making them a habit that surpasses the season is a bigger ask.

In an age of instant messaging, fast food and quick fixes there doesn't seem to be space for patience and perseverance, so the rewards of sticking to something and witnessing the hard won benefits may not seem as appealing to many.

Julie Kavanagh of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin tells this paper that putting the time in is certainly worth it during Lent.

"I think we all instinctively know that the things we really value and take pride in are the things that have taken a little bit of effort," she says.

"Whereas we might have gained very quick gratification on something, I don't think they'll be as deep as something that took a little bit more effort to do."

#### Journeys

Mentioning TV series like *Operation Transformation*, Julie says they reflect that often big changes don't happen overnight "we do have to incrementally make a difference".

Seeking and giving support from and to the community, parish, family and friends is a simple key to success.

"While we might be doing our individual journeys, we know other people are on similar journeys," says Julie.

"It's about doing that in community, but in Lent we may have to do different things because we're all different people but we know that others are undergoing a common journey and there's support in that."

With families and friends in particular, supports can be found. Coming back this year is the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin's KandLe Family Lenten Promises, which was introduced for families before the World Meeting of Families in August.

The resource encourages families to work together to undertake promises regarding fasting, almsgiving and prayer.

"The idea is that an individual or families write down what they intend to do and by virtue of writing it down you're kind of committing to it but also

# Making a dent at Lent



hopefully the people around you that you live with will support you in that," says Julie.

"We don't all have to do the same thing but we can be aware and supportive of one another of what we need to do."

It's also something parishes take on she says, with many making a "tremendous effort every year" to put on particular events during Lent offering the community some possibilities and ideas that can be undertaken in a group.

Although fasting from sweets, chocolate and other naughty treats is one of the most popular things to do during the Lenten season, it doesn't have to stop there.

"I suppose then some of the

greatest fasting can be the fasting from gossiping. Putting on the pause button before you go to give out about someone. A lot of this is about cultivating a good habit for ourselves that is ultimately beneficial for ourselves and probably those around us as well," Ms Kavanagh says.

**“Life can get very empty if you're all the time consuming and that instant gratification is always on the go”**

Disciplines are solidified with time but once a habit develops they become easier, she says, "the more you do it the

**“The idea is that an individual or families write down what they intend to do and by virtue of writing it down you're kind of committing to it but also hopefully the people around you that you live with will support you in that”**





it, that may change my attitude beyond Lent with regards to how I'm actually going to engage with social media."

### Devices

Leaving electronic devices in another room or out of arms reach when we're going to bed or engaging in family activities can be tough for some, especially those who bring their work home with them, but thinking about how much reliance there is on those devices and questioning the psychological and familial effects they may be having can be reflected and acted on during the Lenten period.

A report by UK researchers last year published in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* found that phone use during a meal led to a modest but noticeable decrease in diners' enjoyment, after a study of 300 people. Technology at the table caused people to feel more distracted and less socially engaged.

Another report coming from the University of Pittsburgh found that too much use of social media, intended to bring individuals together, actually led to greater isolation and that it is detrimental to social bonds. The researchers surveyed a representative sample of 1,787 adults aged 19 to 32 years. They assessed both the frequency of use and time spent on 11 social media platforms.

**“Even if we were to stop and think how many times we touch our phones in an hour... our fingers on the phone, maybe that would be a really healthy fasting for Lent”**

Julie says: “Even if we were to stop and think how many times we touch our phones in an hour, even if we don't send a text or anything, but how many times we physically

put our fingers on the phone, maybe that would be a really healthy fasting for Lent that would have repercussions not just for ourselves but for family members around us as well.”

During the Lenten season there can be quite a lot of focus on what someone personally gives up, and helping others keep their Lenten promises. There's also the idea of almsgiving, thinking outside ourselves or perhaps our immediate communities.

### Prayerful space

Jesuit academic Dr Michael O'Sullivan, Director of the Spirituality Institute for Research and Education, says Lent is a time for people to enter a reflective, contemplative, prayerful space but also to consider the good we can do outside ourselves.

“Lent is calling us into this time of self-presence, Jesus himself did it and saw the value of it and obviously then it matters to us, we want to learn from him about how to live a good life and about the steps to take to do that,” he said.

“One of the things Jesus did during his time, and not just in the 40 days in the desert that the Scriptures speak about, in the Scriptures you see him being on his own and being quiet and taking time to look at things and consider things.

“It was a lived practice he had throughout his life and it's something that all of us can benefit from...of taking time to look at how we're living and to pray about it and to see how to be better human beings and to be more responsive to the needs of our time – to be more caring about people.”

Ultimately though, he says, it's important to look at what action is being taken to make this world a better place, and asking: “What is my private practice doing to bring me into solidarity with people in terms of their needs and concerns and can I link personal practice to social solidarity with others?”

## Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



**I** love the idea that our senses are the doorway to the soul. So, it is through our touching and tasting, our listening and seeing, even our smelling and our sense of our own body that we encounter God. The bottom line is, we are people of the Incarnation and it is through being incarnate – having bodies – that we encounter each other and God.

I recently spent a day facilitating a workshop in the Jesuit Centre for Spirituality and Culture in Galway. Those present are all involved in ministry as spiritual directors and prayer guides – lay women, religious sisters, Jesuit and diocesan priests.

A central theme of our day was encounter – how people encounter God in everyday life. It is something I have been thinking about a lot lately. In my last column I wrote about how important that encounter is but I have been thinking that I need to tease out more what I mean.

I talk a lot about God being at the heart of family life but we don't literally bump into God in the kitchen or trip over God in the playroom – it isn't that explicit. So, what is it then? Well, we believe that God is the source of all goodness and beauty, all love and mercy, all life and all of creation.

**“We are invited to wonder our way into the Gospel. Wonder how it would feel to be there, to stand in the crowd listening to Jesus”**

All of these come from God and for that very reason, every time we encounter goodness, love, beauty, mercy, all that is life-giving, each aspect of creation, we are encountering God. So, the love within a family is an echo, an incarnation, a making real, of God's love.

When we are confronted with the wonder of the created world we are confronted with the wonder of God as Creator. Every experience of hope, of courage, of generosity and selflessness, of beauty and goodness offers us an experience of God.

This is why Pope Francis so often urges us to pay attention to the details of life – because in the detail is the divine. Every small gesture, each loving tenderness, each mundane task completed in love puts form and flesh on God's

love for us.

That is why when we begin to notice those details, we become more aware of and more in awe of how much love and blessing surround us even in situations of challenge and struggle. For some reason, noticing seems to cause blessings to multiply – and with it our gratitude.

### Encounters

So, it is in the ordinary everyday that we encounter God but there is more. God's desire to be with us, to know us face to face meant that from the beginning Jesus would become one like us. The Gospels are our doorway. Again, it is through our sense



that the encounter will happen. St Ignatius urged people to approach Scripture in a very embodied way – to allow imagination to take us into that place and time, to touch and taste, see, hear and smell, to allow ourselves to be present. If senses are the doorway to the soul then imagination is the bridge between experience and understanding. Imagination lifts the words of Scripture off the page and through the action of the Holy Spirit allows them to become full of life and power and meaning.

We are invited to wonder our way into the Gospel. Wonder how it would feel to be there, to stand in the crowd listening to Jesus. Wonder how people are reacting to him, how you are reacting. Wonder how you would respond if he spoke to you – and where your conversation would take you. Wondering allows us to meet Jesus in Scripture in a way that is powerful and personal. If you need help – ask a child to wonder with you!

We are all invited into that encounter with God so that our faith is rooted in experience that God is indeed the one in whom we live and move and have our being.

easier it becomes but that initial phase can be particularly hard but then you kind of realise that you might find what you're fasting from beyond Lent you continue to fast from, or that you go back to something but you appreciate it in a new way or a fresh way”.

Instant gratification is so much sought after in a society that demands no wait times or lengthy processes, that it can be forgotten many virtues are strengthened by delaying gratification.

“I think it's kind of a life skill, life can get very empty if you're all the time consuming and that instant gratification is always on the go. In actual fact if you have to wait for something obviously you're going to appreciate it more when you get it but you might also even be thinking more about what you're receiving,” says Julie.

“Say social media, that whole arena, we probably would shock ourselves at the amount of times we're checking Twitter or Facebook, if I say one day a week during Lent I'm not going to go near Facebook or Twitter I might suddenly realise the time I had been spending on





A colleague of mine, a clinical therapist, shares this story: a woman came to him in considerable distress. Her husband had recently died of a heart attack. His death had been sudden and at a most inept time. They'd been happily married for 30 years and, during all those years, had never had a major crisis in their relationship.

On the day her husband died they had gotten into an argument about something very insignificant and it had escalated to where they began to hurl some mean and cutting words at each other. At a point, agitated and angry, her husband stomped out of the room, told her he was going shopping, then died of a heart attack before he got to the car.

Understandably, the woman was devastated, by the sudden death of her spouse but also by that last exchange.

"All these years," she lamented, "we had this loving relationship and then we have this useless argument over nothing and it ends up being our last conversation!"

The therapist led off with something meant partially in humour. He said: "How horrible of him to do that to you! To die just then!" Obviously the man hadn't intended his death, but its timing was in fact awfully unfair to his wife, as it left her holding a guilt that was seemingly permanent with no apparent avenue for resolution.

### Hesitation

However, after that opening, the therapist followed by asking her: "If you had your husband back for five minutes what would you say to him?" Without hesitation, she answered: "I'd tell him how much I loved him, how good he was to me for all these years, and how our

## Unfinished relationships...



Fr Rolheiser

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

little moment of anger at the end was a meaningless episode that means nothing in terms of our love."

The therapist then said: "You're a woman of Faith, you believe in the Communion of Saints; well, your husband is alive still and present to you now, so why don't you just say all those things to him right now. It's not too late to express that all to him!"

He's right. It's never too late! It's never too late to tell our deceased loved ones how we really feel about them. It's never too late to apologise for the ways we might have hurt them. It's never too late to ask their forgiveness for our negligence in the relationship, and it's never too late to speak the words of appreciation, affirmation, and gratitude that we should have spoken to them while they were alive.

As Christians, we have the great consolation of knowing that death isn't final, that it's never too late.

And we desperately need that particular consolation... and that second chance. No matter who we are, we're always inadequate in our

relationships. We can't always be present to our loved ones as we should, we sometimes say things in anger and bitterness that leave deep scars, we betray trust in all kinds of ways, and we mostly lack the maturity and self-confidence to express the affirmation we should be conveying to our loved ones. None of us ever fully measures up.

**"We aren't the only ones who come up short. At the moment of Jesus' death, virtually all of his disciples had deserted. The timing here was also very bad..."**

When Karl Rahner says that none of us ever experience the "full symphony" in this life, he isn't just referring to the fact that none of us ever fully realises her dream, he's also referring to the fact that in all of our most important relationships none of us ever fully measures up.

At the end of the day,

**"It's never too late to tell our deceased loved ones how we really feel about them. It's never too late to apologise for the ways we might have hurt them. It's never too late to ask their forgiveness"**

all of us lose loved ones in ways similar to how that woman lost her husband, with unfinished business, with bad timing. There are always things that should have been said and weren't and there are always things that shouldn't have been said and were.

But that's where our Christian Faith comes in. We aren't the only ones who come up short. At the moment of Jesus' death, virtually all of his disciples had deserted. The timing here was also very bad. Good Friday was bad long before it was good. But, and this is the point, as Christians, we don't believe there will always be happy endings in this life, nor that we will always be adequate in life.

Rather we believe that the fullness of life and happiness will come to us through the redemption of what has gone wrong, not least with what has gone wrong because of our own inadequacies and weakness.

G.K. Chesterton said that Christianity is special because in its belief in the Communion of Saints, "even the dead get a vote". They get more than a vote. They still get to hear what we're saying to them.

So...if you've lost a loved one in a situation where there was still something unresolved, where there was still a tension that needed easing, where you should have been more attentive, or where you feel badly because you never adequately expressed the affirmation and affection that you might have. Know it's not too late. It can all still be done!

## QUESTIONS of faith

Each week Colm Fitzpatrick looks at interesting and sometimes controversial questions people have about Catholicism...

### Why do we fast during Lent?

It can seem odd to non-believers that at a certain point every year, Catholics abstain from certain practices considered comfortable, or adopt new behaviours aimed at improving their spiritual lives. While initially this may sound slightly off-the-wall, there's a very good reason behind it.

The season of Lent lasts 40 days (technically 46, if Sundays are included) ending at Easter, and during this period Catholics are asked to pray, fast, think about God and try to become better followers of Christ.

This period mirrors the 40 days and nights Jesus spent in the wilderness, overcoming temptations presented by Satan, before beginning his public ministry.

The Gospel of Matthew describes part of the iconic story like this: "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted 40 days and 40 nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

**"By finishing on Easter, this mourning is transformed into joyful hope"**

Following the message of this passage, Catholics try to imitate Christ by practicing prescribed fasting and abstinence on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and the days of abstinence every Friday of Lent. On these days, Catholics can't eat meat that comes from animals such as chickens, cows, sheep or pigs – all

of which live on land. This isn't some bizarre pseudo-Christian practice; Jesus actually issues instructions for how the disciples should fast in Matthew 9:14-15.

Apart from these particular days of fasting, Catholics have traditionally chosen additional practices during Lent whereby they try to overcome temptations and be more aware of their calling by God. Like Jesus who fasted, Christians give up some comfort or take on new spiritual tasks in anticipation of Easter, and to better dedicate themselves to serving God and others.

This is why the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "By the solemn 40 days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert."

The six Sundays throughout Lent are usually considered by traditional Christian teaching to be small feast days in remembrance of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. As a result, those observing Lent are encouraged to break their Lenten Fast on these Sundays and celebrate that radical moment in history.

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent, and on this day, Christians have their forehead signed with ashes, symbolising our mourning for Christ's suffering on the Cross and our responsibility for this. By finishing on Easter, however, this mourning is transformed into joyful hope as Christ has risen from the dead.

While committing oneself to fasting and abstinence is important, it's vital to remember that without inward transformation, such practices are in vain. The Church calls us to spiritual conversion, and the season of Lent is one crucial way this is made more possible.

Got a question or comment?  
Email [colm@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:colm@irishcatholic.ie)



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## A view from Australia gets tepid reception

It amazes me sometimes how people who can't possibly know the truth of an event get very dogmatic about it and take definitive positions. They fuel polarisation and aggravation, setting themselves up for a fall if things don't turn out as they assumed, and that's if we ever find out the truth.

Last week Australian Cardinal George Pell was found guilty of child abuse and of course I don't know if he's guilty or not, but for now he's guilty in the eyes of the law though his planned legal appeal may well reverse that.

Whatever the case, the evidence against him and the trial process look questionable, as far as can be judged from has made it into the media.

Among those with reservations is Fr Brendan Purcell, an Irish priest serving in Sydney. On last Friday's **Morning Show** on Spirit Radio he pointed out how much Pell is unpopular among secularists because of his strong stand on the hot button social issues, how there's an anti-Catholic atmosphere, with Pell often treated as a scapegoat even though he had been impatiently ahead of the other Australian bishops in tackling the scandal of clerical child abuse.

Fr Purcell also referenced non-Catholic commentators who suggest that the conviction is unsafe and the



Joe Duffy, presenter of RTE Radio 1's *Liveline*.

case of another Australian bishop whose conviction was recently overturned, with the appeal judge having harsh words about the original trial.

Even the secular *Sydney Morning Herald* was questioning the safety of the judgement, and there were other instances of where the actions of the Victoria Police were problematic. Fr Purcell was quick to state that Cardinal Pell should be subject to the full rigours of the law if it turned out he was guilty and he wasn't in any way an apologist for abuse or the mishandling of complaints.

He had made much the same points earlier in the week when he was interviewed by Joe Duffy on **Liveline** (RTÉ Radio 1, Tuesday), but in this context he was given something of a roasting by various callers. Fr Purcell was also given a fair and respectful hearing by Duffy and likewise for Ivan Yates when he had him on the **Hard Shoulder** on Newstalk that evening.

On last Friday's **The Leap of Faith** (RTE Radio 1) Dr Ben Matthews of Queensland University in Brisbane was doubtful of any appeal by Pell

succeeding as he didn't think there was any "substantial miscarriage of justice".

A discussion between Dr Matthews and Fr Purcell would have been enlightening so we could hear ideas and opinions being tested. I thought Dr Matthews started in a factual analytical way but then he talked about the Catholic Church being "exquisitely set up for the infliction and cover up child sexual abuse on an industrial scale", hardly a dispassionate approach.

He also thought that secrecy was a "paramount obligation" for those in the Church dealing with abuse, but that's hardly the case when you consider how much material was handed over (eventually) in Irish dioceses.

The other significant religious story of the week was the publication of a report questioning the use of Catho-



Fr Brendan Purcell.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### NOAH

**BBC2, Saturday, March 9, 11.10pm**

(2014) Biblical epic from Darren Aronofsky, with Russell Crowe, Anthony Hopkins, Emma Watson. Some odd scenes and choices.

#### SONGS OF PRAISE

**BBC1, Sunday, March 10, 1.15pm**

For Lent, Seán Fletcher visits the university city of Oxford to take on a generosity challenge where he joins in with a new movement of Christians who 'give back'.

#### CATHOLIC LIVES

**EWTN, Wednesday, March 13, 5.30pm**

Host David Kerr talks with former British Ambassador to the Holy See, Francis Campbell.

lic religious symbols in Catholic hospitals. No blanket ban was suggested, just a call for sensitivity to patients' wishes, but it felt like another instance of state interference in Church matters, and considering the drastic problems in the health service this felt a bit like fiddling with icing on the cake when the rest of it was gone off. More worrying was the suggestion that hospitals refusing to do abortions might lose state funding.

### Search

On Newstalk **Breakfast** last Thursday morning. Political commentator John McGuirk thought the fuss over the religious symbols was "a solution in search of a problem", thought patients were more concerned with medial competence and questioned the amount of money spent on

this report.

Later on the same show this was one of the issues raised by Shane Coleman with An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, who pointed out that the controversial report was an "independent" one, commissioned by his Health Minister Simon Harris (man on a mission!) into the role of religious bodies in health care.

He said he didn't believe in "banishing religion to some sort of private space". He thought removing cribs from hospitals was "totally over the top" and gave out about "aggressive secularists" on the left!

I wondered if An Taoiseach and his Health Minister were on the same page.

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Aubrey Malone

# Film

## Is this controversial thriller Liam Neeson's swansong?

### Cold Pursuit (16)

Why would one of the most beloved actors of our country, someone who received a tsunami of reverence for the dignified manner in which he dealt with the freakish death of his wife Natasha some years ago, commit career suicide through a racist rant?

Unless you've been living under a stone in recent months you'll know that in an interview to promote this violent, blackly comic film in which he plays a Colorado-based snow plough operator who goes on a revenge mission after his son is killed by hoodlums, he revealed that, some four decades ago, after a friend of his informed him she'd been raped by a black



Liam Neeson stars in *Cold Pursuit*.

man, he went on something of a revenge mission himself.

He ventured into seedy areas in the hope that he

would be confronted by a black man, any black man, upon whom he could unleash his wrath.

Because of his inflammatory comments, Neeson subsequently became a pariah in Hollywood, a quarantine he still inhabits. Will it prove to be his last film? If so, maybe it's a blessing in disguise. On his own admission, he was getting too old to play the action hero anyway. And *Cold Pursuit* is unsettlingly reminiscent of the *Taken* franchise in both theme and tone.

But I still feel very sorry for him. It would be a shame if he had to shuffle off into the celluloid sunset under the cloud that now enshrouds him.

I don't, by the way, for a second believe he's a racist. His crime was naiveté. Real racists express their venom behind closed doors or on back streets, far from any-

where they could be damaged by them. Neeson casually volunteered his primeval feelings in a ho-hum interview. Racism wasn't even on the agenda.

Why? Because, he said, he wanted to describe the manner in which so-called civilised man is at times only a hair's breadth away from his barbaric predecessors.

Yes, Liam, we get that bit. But did you not realise it's not okay to say you once harboured the desire to harm black people randomly?

### Seasoned pro

If he was a kid on the cusp of a burgeoning career I could understand his foot-in-mouth disease. But we're talking about a seasoned pro.

He had everything to lose and nothing to gain by regaling his interviewer with his age-old bout of recklessness.

If I was that interviewer, I'd like to think I would have said: "Liam, I presume what you've just told me is off the record because if I run it your career is over." She didn't, though.

So for now the man who could do no wrong for so long has been consigned to the dustbin of the *glitterati*.

I hope he emerges from it some day. In the meantime, see *Cold Pursuit*. Apart from being a captivating film, it's probably the last time you'll be seeing the Big Man on the big screen for a long, long time.

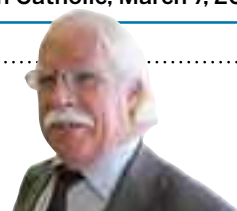
Very good  
★★★★





# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Recent books in brief

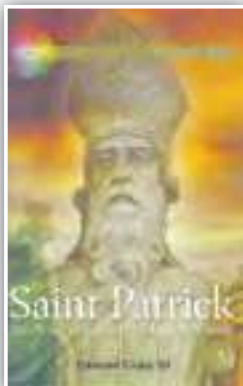
### Saint Patrick: An Ancient Saint for Modern Times

by Edmond Grace SJ  
(Sacred Heart Messenger, €4.95)

At this time of the year we Irish tend to think of St Patrick as 'our saint', but Edmond Grace begins his brief book with a very insightful encounter far from Ireland. In St Patrick's Cathedral in New York he observed a black American woman praying very devotedly before a statue of the saint.

Stepping outside, he suddenly realised that though he was Irish, she had a very different relationship with the saint. She saw him as a young man lifted from his life at home, and cast up in Ireland as a slave – just as her ancestors had been torn from Africa. She was able to avoid all the Irish nonsense and to grasp what ought to be an essential feature of our ideas of the saint: Patrick the patron saint of the enslaved.

This little book, by a Jesuit who has had many years of experience in the life of Dublin's inner city, where he saw other kinds of slavery, is full of such insights and well worth reading for them, when much longer (and more complicated books) may discourage. He will help us all think about Patrick in very different ways.

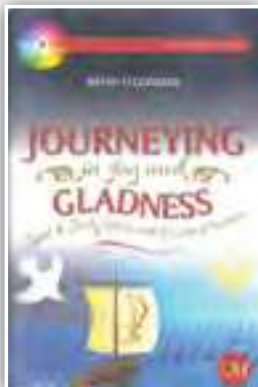


### Journeying in Joy and Gladness: Lent and Holy Week with Gaudete et Exsultate

by Kevin O'Gorman SMA  
(Messenger Publications, €4.95)

Lent is always seen as a time of penance and privation. So much so that it may well, Fr O'Gorman feels, obscure the real outcome for Christians, which lies beyond Good Friday in Easter Morning. The sense of joy felt on that day should, he thinks, be fed back into the season of Lent, and he proposes the use of Pope's Francis's exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* as a means to that end.

Day by day he takes his readers through Lent, offering a passage from that document as a reflection for the day. This seems a novel and very worthwhile approach to what is the central mystery of Christianity. He reminds us that in these often tumultuous times the message of love at the heart of the faith should not be lost sight of.



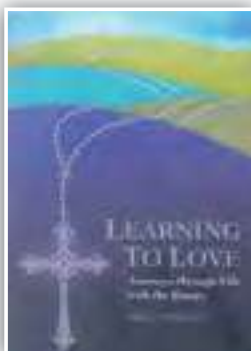
### Learning to Love: Journeys through Life with the Rosary

by Fr Nigel Woollen  
(Veritas, £8.72)

Fr Woollen is an English priest whose name may be familiar to some from his previous book on Knock, *The Lamb Will Conquer: Reflections on the Knock Apparition*. Here, for the same readership, he returns to a long familiar, but perhaps neglected devotion, praying the mysteries of the Rosary.

He takes his readers through them set by set, showing how they can be related to the human journey through life, involving as it does new experiences, pain and set back, yet in the end a sense of joy and wonder. This is an easily read book which many individuals and parish groups may find an enhancement in their efforts to develop their prayer life.

It will make a very effective combination with Fr O'Gorman's book above.



# The roots of Heaven in Irish earth

## The Mystical Imagination of Patrick Kavanagh: A Buttonhole in Heaven

by Una Agnew  
(Veritas, €16.99)

Peter Costello

This is a new and enlarged edition of an important book first issued over a decade ago. For a work of literary criticism this is an unusual thing, but then for many readers what Sr Agnew has to say about the inner mysticism of the poet and the relations of his poetry to what was often a difficult life. His career as a published author was broken backed. A libel action by Oliver Gogarty and the collapse of a clever but disreputable London publisher buried *The Green Fool* and *Tarry Flynn* by 1948.

It was hard for even his admirers in later years to learn what he was writing – the only collection dated back to 1947. He did not publish a book again until 1960, and despite what is now said about local regard for him this was from a London firm. This relaunched the poet in what were to be, alas, the last illness ridden years of his life.

I grew up near Baggot Street, and as I recall the shambling, often abusive man was not always held in high regard. That he is now respected as something approaching a saint still

surprises some in the neighbourhood. He had, of course, good and supportive friends (Dr McQuaid among them, as well as the Ryan family), but he was a difficult man.

Living in the city perforce for economic reasons he remained rooted, quite literally, in the acres of his rural childhood. A lovely photograph in full colour of Kavanagh on a return visit to his native place created by Elinor Wiltshire graces the cover of this reissue.

From the green fields he draws the full force of his mystical vision. We praised this book when it was first issued and that can now be re-emphasised.

This is one of the essential books on Patrick Kavanagh, going a long way to explaining the sources of his strength as a poet for whom God remained an essential element of his life and poetry.

Sr Agnew sees this as a life-long pattern of awakening to the world and the spirit, followed by a purification of his thought and inspiration, leading finally to a deep sense of illumination.

## Challenge

It is often said that very few of the innumerable writers of modern Ireland really come to a sense of the spiritual, and of the meaning of religion – they are often too quick to slogan-



Patrick Kavanagh.

ise rather than think. Patrick Kavanagh is one of the very few that rose to the challenge of really trying to penetrate the heart of life's mystery. This book will guide his readers along the path of his growth as both a man and a poet. And who knows this book may well affect the spiritual lives of those who read it.

But there is one general observation that has to be made. During those bleak years Kavanagh earned what little he did through journalism, writing a column for the *Irish Farmer's Journal*, and acting as film critic of the *Standard*. In both these roles he commented continually on Irish affairs and life, indeed through his encounters with film stars, on the strange

shape of the modern world.

Yet this journalism seems to be uncollected, and largely unread by those who admire him and write about him. I suspect this work has much to tell us about the vision of Patrick Kavanagh, and until these writings are integrated into a complete overview of his life and work there will remain much to learn about the man and the poet.

Meanwhile anyone, even those reading Kavanagh at school and college, will be greatly enlightened about Kavanagh by a careful reading of Sr Agnew's book. She deserves all the plaudits she has received over the years for her insightful criticism of Patrick Kavanagh.

# Back to the land...and to love...in Co. Kildare

## Falling for a Farmer

by Maura McElhone  
(Mercier Press, €14.99)

J. Anthony Gaughan

In this beautifully written memoir Maura McElhone presents a perceptive mirror both to life on the farm and life in 21st-Century Ireland. This she achieves in a romantic tale about herself and a farmer, named Jack.

Maura, a native of Portstewart in Co. Derry, was educated locally and then studied at a university in Scotland. Later she graduated from UCG with a Masters.

She emigrated to the US, where in California she was employed in a publishing company. She revelled in the lifestyle of the Sunshine State: enjoying her work, workmates, new friends, US boyfriends and the sunshine.

Aged 30, she and her US boyfriend failed to agree where to settle in the event of their

marrying. She ended the relationship and returned home.

Jack is the eldest in a family residing near Clane in Co. Kildare. A graduate in economics from UCD, he spent 10 years working in a bank in Dublin, while assisting his father on the home farm. Eventually he resigns from his city job and opts for full-time farming.

Not long after returning home Maura secures an appointment as a 'Social Media and Community Manager' in a new tech company in Dublin. She describes the challenges faced in securing suitable flat accommodation but also the pleasure of sharing it with congenial companions. The carefree life she shared with them included joining in Tinder digital dating.

After a number of disappointments in this up-to-date vehicle for 'boy meets girl', in steps Jack. He describes him-



self as a 'banker/farmer'. As the relationship develops Maura is soon introduced into a world of farming. She experiences cows calving, sheep lambing and being sheared, flocks of lambs being

killed by marauding dogs, diseased animals being destroyed, hears about farm accidents and helps to make silage. She learns that the work on the farm is not from 9 to 5 but 24/7 and that attendance at shows and especially the Ploughing Championship was *de rigueur*. The central role of the GAA in Jack's life and that of the local community becomes clear to her. However, not withstanding Maura's reservations about life on a farm, love conquers all and in the end Maura and Jack are set to marry.

The contrast between Maura's life before she met Jack

and afterwards is stark. Her early life could be described as carefree, even somewhat superficial. As her relationship with Jack developed she becomes ever more aware of the environment and 'reality' and becomes imbued with a deeper sense of responsibility.

Perhaps the contrast is overdrawn. In Maura's narrative of her life before Jack there seems to be something missing. Surely the typical well-educated, highly intelligent twentysomething at least occasionally reflects on the purpose of existence, the meaning of life, and the crucial importance of moral values? And in this era of political correctness a reader could regard Maura's references to the Mass as gratuitously offensive.

Despite these quibbles, farm folk and townies alike will immensely enjoy reading this well-crafted publication.



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.

## A glimpse of Nathaniel Hone's Orient



Palm Trees and Sand Dunes, Egypt, 1892, Nathaniel Hone the Younger (1831-1917). Watercolour on paper, 17.3 x 12.5 cm. Photo: © National Gallery of Ireland

**Nathaniel Hone: Travels of a Landscape Artist**  
National Gallery of Ireland  
23 February–1 December 2019

**Peter Costello**

After Nathaniel Hone the younger died in 1917 his wife donated to the National Gallery some 500 works of art: it took until the 1950s to catalogue them all. Most of us have an image of Hone as the creator of pastoral scenes of the east of Ireland; Pastures at Malahide (1907) has long been a favourite with visitors to the Gallery.

This small exhibition is intended to give a glimpse of another aspect of his work,

his painting of scenes in Europe, but also in the Near East, that other east. The pictures on display are a small taste of what is a rich hoard of work.

The European scenes are interesting, but it is the 'oriental' ones that truly catch the imagination, being so very different to what we think we know about Hone. One would like to see more of them. Perhaps a show of Hone and other artists' images of the Muslim world would be welcome; Sir John Lavery's North African pictures come to mind.

Such a show might also provide an occasion to reconsider at long last the views of Edward Said on 'Orientalism', so readily accepted by many critics

## WebWatch

Greg Daly

# Learning lessons about our bodies

**S**t John Paul II's Theology of the Body isn't just about sex. That might seem unlikely to those who've only ever encountered specific introductions to the late Pope's biggest area of catechesis, or who've only ever heard caricatures of the late Pope's teaching, but it's important to understand for all that. Emily Stimpson at [thecatholictable.com](http://thecatholictable.com) in a post entitled 'The Gift of the Body' offers a fascinating testimony on how the Polish Pope's teachings helped her in her struggles with anorexia.

"This is National Eating Disorder Awareness Week," she begins. "On Instagram, I've been talking about how, after a six-year struggle with anorexia, the Eucharist transformed my understanding of food (I'm also giving away five copies of *The Catholic Table* over there this week). But it wasn't just the Eucharist that helped me. Just as the Eucharist transformed my understanding of food, the theology of the body transformed my understanding of my body."

**“We have all been given our bodies for these reasons, she says, and it should be treated as holy places to be tended with love”**

Until she was 25, she said, she valued her body solely in terms of weight and numbers, but encountering the Theology of the Body gave her a profound lesson. "It taught me that my body wasn't a problem to be controlled; it was a gift to be cared for. It was me – as much a part of who I was as my soul and

## Not damaged but gifted



It's peculiar what kind of insights one can find in the most unlikely places across the internet, including the revelation that even damaged bodies can be real gifts. Given how before Christmas [vanityfair.com](http://vanityfair.com) had published an execrable piece by John Cornwell entitled 'Pope vs Pope: How Francis and Benedict's simmering conflict could split the Catholic Church', it was intriguing to read Julie Miller's "There's no tragedy for me": Selma Blair's transformation.

Detailing how the Hollywood actress's world had been rocked by a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis, the article reports Ms Blair as having moved through the pain to a place of serenity.

"As Blair sees it," she writes, "there's a humility and a joy I have now, albeit a fatigued joy."

The diagnosis utterly changed her life, Ms Blair says. "The doctor said, 'Your life will forever be different.' And I was like, 'Well, thank God.'"

Noting the people with disabilities can be invisible to many, she says it's important to be seen and to share her story.

"There's no tragedy for me," she says. "I'm happy, and if I can help anyone be more comfortable in their skin, it's more than I've ever done before."

as much a gift as my soul," she writes.

Her body had been given to her, she realised, so she could do all the things she loves, to love and to serve others, to express her feelings to those she loves, to appreciate the splendour of God's creation, to worship God, and to make God known in the world. We have all been given our

bodies for these reasons, she says, and it should be treated as holy places to be tended with love.

It's a fascinating and enlightening piece, and could serve as a good introduction to Theology of the Body for those who view it with suspicion even now, thinking it is somehow 'all about sex'.

## Just who are the laity these days?

● In a [commonweal.com](http://commonweal.com) piece entitled 'Beyond personal piety: The laity's role in the Church's mission', Fr Michael Sweeney OP argues that the Church at large needs to fully understand and express who the laity are, and what their roles are in the Church.

When thinking of the Church, he says, it's normal – too normal – to think of the Church as made up of clergy, religious, and laity. "According to this reckoning,

the laity are defined in a negative manner: they are the ones who are neither ordained nor members of religious orders. If one is a Catholic, and neither ordained nor a religious, then one is lay; it cannot be helped," he says.

Leaving aside how unordained religious are themselves laity, the point stands, and it's an issue that needs thinking about. The laity are not just leftovers.



# Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email [advertising@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:advertising@irishcatholic.ie)



## A beacon of hope to shine, because of you...

For Ireland's homeless and hungry, Merchants Quay Ireland's Riverbank Centre is first to open in the morning and among the last to close at night. Those with nowhere to turn can find a good meal, medical care, a helping hand, and a fresh start, thanks to donations and legacies.

**Come for Tea and a Tour**, in private while Riverbank is closed for a couple of hours. See confidentially how Merchants Quay Ireland uses donations and legacies to bring relief and hope. All welcome, bring a guest if you wish.

Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included on the guest list for the March 14th Tour.

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

Please remember

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when making your will so that everyone in Ireland will have access to hospice care one day.

Contact:  
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[anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie)  
[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)



## Leave a Legacy of Hope

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Call: 01 6353629 Email: [Saoirse@threshold.ie](mailto:Saoirse@threshold.ie) Visit: [www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie)

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Little Flower Penny Dinners have been providing meals and services to the homeless and the elderly for over 100 years. Please help us continue and donate what you can on our website [www.LFPD.ie](http://www.LFPD.ie) or by phoning us with your credit/debit card details or by post to Little Flower Penny Dinners, 11 Meath St, DB. Phone 01 4536621 or 01 4546795 e-mail: [salrigid@littleflower.ie](mailto:salrigid@littleflower.ie)

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### PLEASE REMEMBER BÓTHAR IN YOUR WILL.

€1,800 will allow us to give an Irish, in-calf, dairy heifer to a struggling family in Rwanda, completely transforming their lives. Your gift will live on for generations. Phone the office on 061 414142 or [info@bothar.ie](mailto:info@bothar.ie)

## PILGRIMAGE

**CHRISTMAS PILGRIMAGE GROUP** to the Holy Land. ex Dublin 19th – 27th December. Also Holy Land Pilgrimage 31st October – 8th November 2019. Taking in Bethlehem, Jerusalem (Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Last Supper Room and Calvary), Mount Tabor, Cana, Nazareth, Jericho, River Jordan, Dead Sea and Sea of Galilee. **MEDJUGORJE PILGRIMAGE** for Youth Festival 2019 August Bank Holiday Weekend. ex Dublin 7 nights. Both Pilgrimages can be made by instalments, "this pilgrimage is operated by Joe Walsh Tours who are bonded and licensed". Contact James Treacy 0860572216.

## Classified Ads

### SERVICES

**ALL UNWANTED** home waste removed. Cookers, fridges, beds, suites, wardrobes, carpets etc. Removed and disposed of in a proper manner. No job too small or big. Contact Tommy, 087 6406015.

### THE THIRTY GREGORIAN MASSES

**THIS IS** the ancient custom, instituted by Pope Gregory the Great, of having 30 Masses said for one deceased person for release from Purgatory. Can also help in healing family tree. For information please phone 087-9381997.

### SCAPULARS & ROSARY BEADS

**BROWN** Scapulars & rosary beads – direct to you post free. The brown scapulars are made from pure wool and last for many years. €1.00 each. With miraculous medal attached €1.30. (inc postage). Information leaflet also supplied. Any quantity. Rosary beads are excellent quality in glass / lustre in all colours. Also wooden Padre Pio beads. €1.00 each inc postage. Rosary leaflets supplied. Any quantity. Phone (00353) 087 9381997, [info@theopendoor.ie](mailto:info@theopendoor.ie)

## The Way Forward Pro Life and Pro Family Event

Hosted by: Fingal for Life and The Iona Institute  
David Quinn from the Iona Institute will speak on the Pro Life Movement in Ireland and The Way Forward.  
Maria Steen from the Iona Institute will discuss the proposed changes in the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme in schools, as parents are concerned about this very liberal and possibly compulsory programme.

20th MARCH @8.00 PM

at the Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co. Dublin



Please come and support this very important event.

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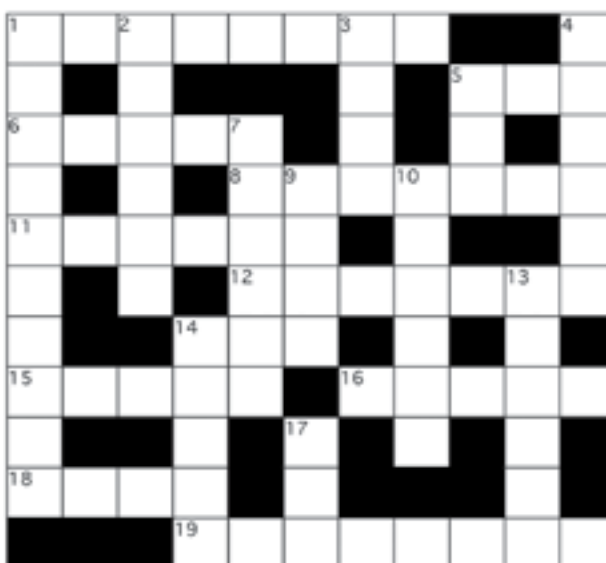
Miracle Prayer €40



# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 272



### ACROSS

- 1 People still sometimes throw this outside the church after a wedding (8)  
5 Tart, cake (3)  
6 Spot on, not just close (5)  
8 Tiny waves you make when you throw a pebble into a lake (7)  
11 Houses made of snow and ice (6)  
12 A toddler might be put in this to have fun in safety (7)  
14 Roald Dahl wrote 'James and \_\_\_ Giant Peach' (3)  
15 There is a prayer that begins "\_\_\_ be to the Father..." (5)  
16 Try to get the smell (5)  
18 "It belongs to me; it's not yours, it's \_\_\_" (4)

### DOWN

- 19 Butlers or maids, perhaps (8)  
1 When you take this sticky stuff from your mouth, you should dispose of it very carefully (7-3)  
2 In a tidy way (6)  
3 Stumble (4)  
4 One piece of learning (6)  
5 Friend (3)  
7 Cup you win (6)  
9 Ireland is often called the Emerald \_\_\_ (4)  
10 Snooping, 'sticking your nose in' (6)  
13 'You tried hard - you made a great \_\_\_' (6)  
14 Oaks or sycamores maybe (5)  
17 Jam container (3)

## SOLUTIONS, FEBRUARY 28

GORDIUS No.392

**Across** - 1 Dim 3 Loose cannon 8 Punish 9 Feast day 10 Oscar 11 Sifts 13 Bulbs 15 Needles 16 Home run 20 Drain 21 Chair 23 Padua 24 Polygamy 25 Scrawl 26 Grand Canyon 27 Eva

**Down** - 1 Dipsomaniac 2 Manicure 3 Loser 4 Suffolk 5 Apses 6 Nod off 7 Nay 12 Saintpaulia 13 Bread 14 Spoon 17 Road rage 18 Halcyon 19 Dahlia 22 Rigid 23 Pecan 24 Pig

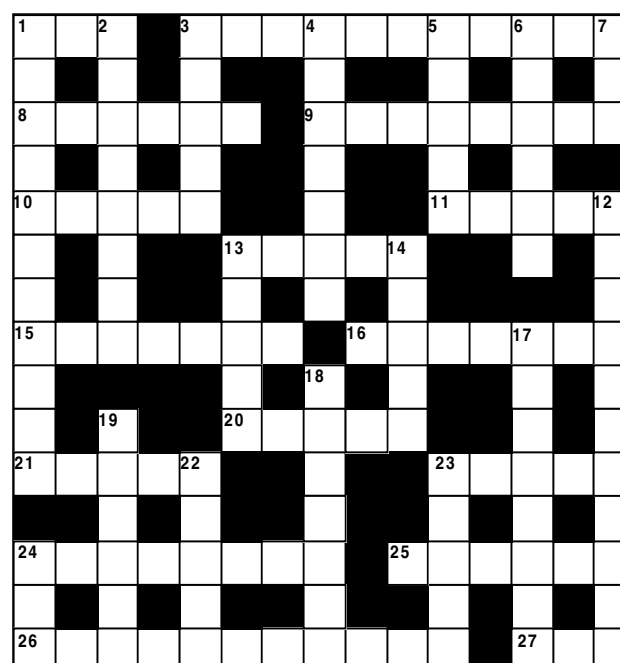
CHILDREN'S No.271

**Across** - 1 Saving 4 Brave 6 Uncle 7 Damaged 10 Oil 11 Enjoyed 12 Pays 15 Horrible 19 Halo 20 Rob 21 Ouch 22 Knot

**Down** - 1 Squid 2 Victory 3 Needle 5 Angry 8 Major 9 Dodge 13 Again 14 Short 16 Ruby 17 Iron 18 Lock

## Crossword

Gordius 393



### ACROSS

- 1 Married by the cardinal, Edward? (3)  
3 What colour feint can be printed from the stub? (11)  
8 Ceremonial procedure (6)  
9 Cassettes attempt to show an embroidered creation (8)  
10 How Verdi might play a golf shot (5)  
11 Anne's returned to find the late Ayrton (5)  
13 The apostle placed a preserve before some cardinals (5)  
15 Error (7)  
16 Charming ladies! (7)  
20 Spacious (5)  
21 & 12d Classic Chinese dish featuring in a new, super stonework ad (5,3,4,4)  
23 Break one's truce and be more winsome (5)  
24 The friar has broken a china cup (8)  
25 Coiffure for the Hot Air party (6)  
26 How one finished with the East European editor is not on (8,3)  
27 Oriental pan (3)

### DOWN

- 1 Strange Sumo drawl of of

- global renown (5-6)  
2 How to make trust die? That's rubbish! (8)  
3 Large box (5)  
4 Bridge call? No, American President! (2,5)  
5 Smells of smoke (5)  
6 One has literally to send out for a Belgian city (6)  
7 Ballad (3)  
12 See 21 across  
13 Batman's enemy is quite a card! (5)  
14 Reflective, glossy (5)  
17 Make sailor Ted use oars to take flight here (8)  
18 Grieved to see the rum done up like this (7)  
19 Friend with whom one is not on speaking terms? (3-3)  
22 Parasites get the correct marks! (5)  
23 The bird lacks an inch, so gets only the husks (5)  
24 Slang word for a police officer (3)

**Please make a little room in your will for people who are homeless**

Contact our Fundraising Department in strictest confidence  
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www.focusireland.ie

**FOCUS Ireland**



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[www.familyandlife.org](http://www.familyandlife.org)

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Missionaries of the Sacred Heart work in poor parishes in Africa, Russia and Venezuela

**Please remember them in your Will**

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Tel: 021 - 4543988

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

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

**Trócaire**

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call **Grace Kelly** on **01 629 3333**, email [grace.kelly@trocaire.org](mailto:grace.kelly@trocaire.org) or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

## Sudoku Corner

271

Easy



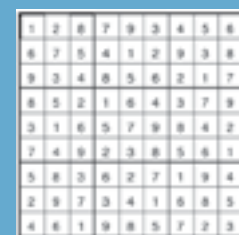
Hard



Last week's Easy 270



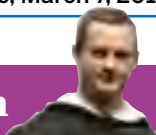
Last week's Hard 270





## Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough



# Recognition at last for the female intellectual gift

**MARCH 8** is International Women's Day, a day set aside for celebrating the achievements of women and campaigning in favour of equality. Recent years have focussed on celebrating pioneering women scientists and encouraging girls to choose STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) at school and university.

Even in the 20th Century, the gifts of many women scientists were neglected. Jocelyn Bell Burnell co-discovered pulsar stars in 1967, but the Nobel Prize for the discovery was awarded only to her male supervisor. Likewise with Rosalind Franklin's contributions to the discovery of the structure of DNA, recognised only after her death. Cambridge University, that epicentre of modern scientific research, only admitted women to degrees in 1947. The first female professor of engineering was appointed in 1998, chemistry in 2001, mathematics in 2002.

## Gifts

How is it that women's intellectual gifts were neglected for so long? That question is far too large even to begin to answer here, but it's worth noting that there are some



Jocelyn Bell Burnell.

exceptions to the general neglect, one of which is very surprising indeed: the women scientists supported by the patronage of Pope Benedict XIV (Prospero Lambertini) in 18th-Century Bologna.

● When he became Pope, Lambertini set up an academy for the greatest scientists of the day: the 'Benedettini'. Despite objections from some of the other members, he named Laura Bassi as the 25th member of this elite group.

Today there still exists a distant descendant of this academy – the Pontifical Academy of Sciences ([www.pas.va](http://www.pas.va)) – and it has counted among its members some of the great names: Rutherford, Planck, Bohr, Dirac, Heisenberg and Hawking. If you want to know the current state of the 'conversation' between the Church and the natural sciences, it's well worth visiting their website.

The first of these pioneering women is Laura Bassi (1711-1778). As a child, her prodigious intellect was spotted by the family doctor, a professor at the University of Bologna, and he undertook to tutor her privately in the sciences. At the age of 20 it was time to display her intellectual talents to the great and the good of Bologna, including Archbishop Lambertini. The examiners were so impressed that she was awarded a doctorate – the second woman ever to be granted this degree – and, a year later, during a series of celebrations organised by Lambertini, she was named an honorary professor at the university.

## Experiments

Bassi married and had 12 children, and most of her teaching, including experiments, took

place in her family home. Her teaching and research was based on the work of Isaac Newton, still relatively new and controversial. At the age of 65, just two years before her death, she was named full professor of experimental physics at the university, the first woman ever to hold such a role.

A few years younger than Bassi, the Milanese mathematician Maria Gaetana Agnesi was similarly prodigious as a child. Her proud father used to invite the learned men of the town to come and listen to her discuss questions in mathematics and physics, and he had her tutor her siblings – all 20 of them! She was exposed to new developments in mathematics under the tutelage of Ramiro Rampinelli, a Benedictine monk, and at the age of 30 she published, to universal acclaim throughout Europe, an introduction to mathematical analysis.

One of those doing the acclaiming was Lambertini, now Pope Benedict XIV. He wrote to her, saying that he had studied mathematical analysis "in the flower of [his] youth", and knew enough to know that she was at the top of her field. He was no longer Archbishop of Bologna,

but since Bologna was in the Papal States he still had authority there, and he used this authority to name her professor of mathematics there: another first for women in science.

Agnesi never took up her post, however. She had made her contribution to mathematics, and was determined now to devote herself to the Lord by studying theology, and serving the poor, homeless, and elderly of Milan. This great genius was also a great saint, and she spent the rest of her life fully engaged in works of charity.

Bassi and Agnesi: two pioneering women scientists supported and celebrated at the heart of the Church centuries before more secular institutions woke up to the intellectual talents of women.

History is full of surprises...



Photo: Water from the lake being brought to the health centre by use of hired donkey carts.



## A CATHOLIC HEALTH CENTRE IN TANZANIA NEEDS CLEAN WATER

The Sisters of the Incarnate Word administer a mission health centre, primary school and school hostel in the Catholic Diocese of Musoma, Tanzania. Sister Irene recently contacted The Little Way Association for financial help to install a desperately needed new water system for the health centre. "Water supply has been an issue since the mission started to expand", she wrote. "Initially the water supplied by water mills was enough to serve the small community, but now we are experiencing great water shortage to the point of hiring donkey carts to fetch water from the lake. This is very expensive and unhygienic. With a solar powered water supply system our health centre patients will get constant, clean water for their use, and the whole community will benefit."

**Can you help the Sisters in their life-saving work for disadvantaged mothers, babies and the sick?**

**A reliable supply of clean water will make such a difference. Every donation that we receive in response to this Appeal will be sent, without deduction, to this project or a project in similar need.**



"True glory is that which will last eternally, and to reach it, it isn't necessary to perform striking works but to hide oneself and practice virtue in such a way that the left hand knows not what the right is doing." - St Therese

In our modern age of materialism and selfishness, when so many are searching for an authentic spirituality, Therese's little way of simple love for God and others has a powerful appeal. Perhaps we too can join her on the 'little way'.

**All Little Way benefactors share in a daily Mass offered for their intentions in the Missions.**

## HELP FEED THE HUNGRY

Please spare a thought for the thousands 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 for food and medicines for the hungry and sick.

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