

# The Irish Catholic

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# Priest's blood on Indian govt hands, says Irish Jesuit

Ruadhán Jones

The head of Irish Jesuits International has said that the Indian government "literally killed" an elderly missionary priest whose death was announced on Monday.

Fr Stan Swamy SJ (below) died while awaiting bail in an Indian prison where he was being held on charges of sedition, believed by many to be politically-motivated claims from the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Fr John Guiney SJ, who met Fr Stan while on a missionary trip to India, said the Indian priest "died a martyr for justice".



The 84-year-old priest-activist worked on behalf of marginalised communities.

"You just hope this will give inspiration and courage to his companions and to others who follow him to continue the fight," Fr Guiney told *The Irish Catholic*.

Fr Guiney said prime minister Modi has Fr Stan's "blood on his hands".

"I just hope this will make the struggle more resolute," he continued. "The regime literally killed him, what he was put through was so inexplicable. This is a man of 84 who had Parkinson's. In many ways they made a martyr of him."

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## Nation rallies for life



Bridget, Christine and Gerard Power attend the Rally for Life in Tralee, Co. Kerry. Photo: John Cleary

DAVID QUINN

Canada's cultural genocide

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MARY KENNY

The Queen's chaplain 'crossed the Tiber'

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**Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return in the autumn**

# Pope Francis in 'good condition' after surgery

**Staff reporter**

Pope Francis is in "good general condition, alert and breathing spontaneously," after undergoing colon surgery at the weekend the Vatican has confirmed.

"The surgery for diverticular stenosis performed the evening of July 4 involved a left hemicolectomy and lasted about three hours," a statement from the Holy See Press Office said. "A stay of about seven days is expected, barring complications."

A left hemicolectomy is the removal of the descending part of the colon and can be recommended to treat diverticulitis, when bulging pouches in the lining of the intestine or colon become inflamed or infected.

The 84-year-old Pope was admitted to Rome's Gemelli



A member of the Italian Polizia di Stato stands guard outside Rome's Gemelli hospital where the Pope is recovering. Photo: CNS.

hospital in the early afternoon July 4 after leading the midday recitation of the Angelus with visitors gathered in St Peter's Square.

As has been his custom, Pope Francis already had sus-

pended his weekly general audience and other meetings for the month of July, except for the Sunday recitation of the Angelus.

It is possible that Pope Francis' midday Angelus appointment July 11 could take place at the Gemelli hospital, as it did on several occasions when St John Paul II was hospitalised there. The hospital maintains a suite of rooms for the papal use when necessary.

## Scheduled

Announcing Pope Francis' hospitalisation in the mid-afternoon July 4, the Vatican press office had said he was

to undergo "a scheduled surgical intervention for a symptomatic diverticular stenosis of the colon".

About seven hours later, after the surgery had been performed, the press office said, "The Holy Father reacted well to the surgery, which was conducted under general anaesthesia".

Dr Sergio Alfieri, a staff surgeon at the Gemelli who specialises in surgery of the digestive tract and colon, led the surgery, assisted by a team of surgeons.

Stenosis is a narrowing of a passage in the human body. The Vatican's description of the Pope's condition indicated a partial blockage of the lower intestine. It provided no information about the cause or suspected cause of the blockage nor of the symptoms the Pope had been experiencing.

The Pope has been generally healthy since being elected in March 2013 except for recurrent bouts of sciatica, which causes sharp pain that radiates along the path of the sciatic nerve, which branches from the lower back through the hips and down each leg. In late December and early January, he missed several events because the pain was so intense.

## Priest's blood on Indian govt hands says Irish Jesuit

» Continued from Page 1

Fr Stan had difficulty in even sipping water from a glass and depended on co-prisoners for his other basic needs, Vatican News said, while he also had hearing impairment and other age-related ailments.

It is Fr Guiney's hope that Fr Stan's death will spark greater resistance to what he described as the "oppressive" ultra-nationalist government of Mr Modi.

"Our hope is that this will strengthen the resistance against that form of oppression," Fr Guiney continued. "There are many others in jail with him [Fr Stan]. It's an indication of how oppressive the Modi regime is becoming against minorities and against anyone who speaks out against this particular government."

"Out of the blood of martyrs comes the seeds of liberation", Fr Guiney added, paraphrasing a quote from Tertullian.

He said that Fr Stan sowed such seeds "not just by his

death, but by his life. He has been an advocate for the poor and indigenous all his life".

Many Church leaders in India spoke up after Fr Stan's death, including Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay.

Cardinal Gracias said in a statement that Fr Stan's arrest was "painful" and that his case did not even come up for hearing. "We were eagerly waiting for the case to be taken up and the truth to come out," the cardinal said.

Fr Guiney had previously told this paper that Fr Stan and 15 others were arrested for "purportedly" being part of a Maoist movement seeking to "violently overthrow the government".

India's National Investigation Agency (NIA), tasked with fighting terrorism and sedition under the controversial Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), arrested Fr Stan on October 8, 2020, and he had been awaiting a hearing since then, Vatican News reported.

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# Knock novena falls victim to Covid-19 for second year

## Staff reporter

The iconic Knock novena set for August will not now go ahead, the second year it has been affected by Covid-19 restrictions.

The event – which brings upwards of 150,000 people to the Co. Mayo shrine every year – had been due to take place from August 14-22.

Fr Richard Gibbons, parish priest of Knock and rector of the shrine

said the event will be “postponed until later this year”.

He said: “We have taken this decision in the interest of the health and safety of our pilgrims and staff here at the shrine. Given the recent concern from both Government and health agencies regarding the Delta variant of the virus, the responsible course of action is to postpone the national novena at this time.”

He expressed disappointment that the novena will not go ahead as

planned for a second year running due to coronavirus-related restrictions, but expressed hope that it will go ahead later in the year.

## Vaccination

“It is vital that we allow the national vaccination programme to proceed across all age groups. Once we can safely gather again at Knock Shrine, a full programme will be announced for the novena later in the year”, he said.

Knock continues to be open to the public and is welcoming pilgrims for the celebration of daily Mass with restricted capacity in the basilica. Confessions are available daily as well as other services including the Mass Enrolment office, Knock Museum and Knock Counselling Centre.

Fr Gibbons said: “We continue to welcome pilgrims to the shrine. They can rest assured that it is a very safe place to visit with every precau-

tion in place to ensure the safety of all visitors.

“There are queueing systems in place at all public buildings in the shrine grounds and ushers and staff are present to ensure everything is done correctly and in line with Government guidelines,” he said.

Throughout the month of August, additional Masses will be available.

Full details are available on the Knock Shrine website [www.knock-shrine.ie](http://www.knock-shrine.ie)

## Nigerian-Irish singer praises Gospel roots at literary festival



### Ruadhán Jones

Singer Tolü Makay praised her Pentecostal church for facilitating “a space where I could grow my skill in singing” in a recent interview.

Speaking to *The Irish Examiner* ahead of her virtual appearance at the West Cork Literary Festival, the 24-year-old told of how Gospel singing taught her how to connect with a song.

“Music is a huge, important, celebratory and moving section of the programme of church,” she said. “That’s the way you can connect to a higher power. That’s where I got to understand the importance of connecting

with a song so that other people can feel the connection that you’re feeling.”

Ms Makay began singing with her local church choir at the age of eight – when she was 16, she started leading it and arranging the songs to be sung each Sunday.

“The adventurous side of church singing is that you can mix,” she continued. “I learned how one song can lead into another song and how to arrange with musicians and how to keep an eye on backing vocalists. I could be experimental.”

In an interview with *The Irish Independent* last year, Ms Makay credited her choir with teaching her how to perform “without knowing what performing was”.

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Tolü Makay, pictured, said singing at Church helped her grow as a signer. Photo: Bobby Zithelo.



# Granting amnesty would leave families of Troubles victims in 'permanent limbo'

Chai Brady

Families will be left in a "permanent limbo" if they are denied any way to discover the truth about loved ones who were killed during the Troubles, the bishop of Derry diocese has warned.

Following indications that the British government could grant amnesty to all killings during the conflict, and the collapse of several high-profile legacy cases, Bishop McKeown said for many families the courts have been the only way to find truth.

"My perspective is that there are many families who have never been able to get the truth about what happened to their loved ones who were killed. Whether by army or by paramilitaries, at present, the court route is the only way they can seek any truth," Bishop McKeown said.

"The British Government has essentially said that they wanted to draw a line under it and that everyone is given amnesty. That all soldiers and paramilitaries get amnesties, which leaves the families of the innocent victims with no access to information at all," he said.

"If you have no way of getting the truth you

are simply left in a permanent limbo. All they could do was go through the courts and the courts have been slammed in their faces so there's nothing."

Bishop McKeown said the Northern Ireland Executive "have failed to put any other process in place to get truth".

The Stormont House Agreement, signed in December 2014, was supposed to create a truth recovery mechanism. "If you want the truth what do you do? Nothing. It simply hasn't been implemented, the Stormont House Agreement," said Bishop McKeown.

Last week the Wave Trauma centre, a cross community group representing victims and survivors of the Troubles wrote an open letter to Boris Johnson saying it would be fundamentally wrong to grant amnesty.

"If anyone in Downing Street or the Ministry of Defence or the Northern Ireland Office seriously thinks that an amnesty of this nature can form the foundation upon which reconciliation could be built then it shows how little they understand the nature of the pain and trauma which continues to be suffered by victims and survivors and their families," the group wrote.

## Conversion of intellectual peers to Catholicism striking – Douglas Murray

Jason Osborne

Author and political commentator Douglas Murray said he's been "struck" by the conversion to Catholicism of some of his friends recently.

"I've been very interested in recent years watching contemporaries of mine who have seen through, looked at, stared at some of the same problems

that I have and have come to conclusions of their own in a religious sense," Mr Murray said on the *Unbelievable?* podcast.

Speaking with host Justin Brierley and New Testament scholar N.T. Wright, Mr Murray said he's been "very struck" by the "very intelligent, thinking people" who've converted to Catholicism.

He said they come from a "wide range of different directions" and said he can think of the conversion of an Anglican, a Muslim and an atheist that he knows personally.

"What has struck me most is that they have gone to the most traditional form of that faith.

"I'm talking about people who have gone into Tridentine Mass-attending

Catholicism. They don't go to the weaker forms of it because they want to drink as directly from the well as they can."

He said that it saddens him that a "religion with this inheritance" would offer "the most watered-down version of itself" to the extent that it is "indistinguishable" from everything else on offer in society.

## Dramatic increase in NI abortions

Staff reporter

The numbers of women from the North choosing to terminate their pregnancies has dramatically increased since the procedure was made legal last year.

As of June 11, the Department of Health had received 1,624 notifications of abortions, despite the lack of a full and formal commissioning of the procedure in the region.

A further 371 women travelled to Britain in the 12 months ending March 2021. That is a decrease from 1,014 who trav-

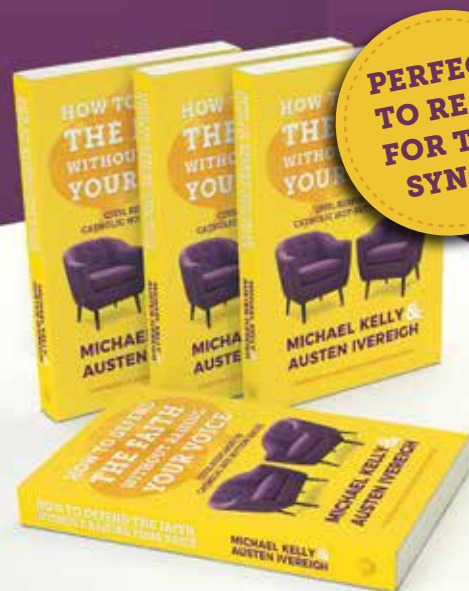
elled over the previous year.

In total, 1,994 women from Northern Ireland have chosen to end their pregnancies since the introduction of the legislation, both in the North and in Britain.

Abortion was imposed on the North by the Westminster parliament in 2019 over the heads of locally-elected representatives.

Britain's Secretary of State Brandon Lewis has warned the Executive that if it does not move swiftly to a further roll-out of abortion, the government in London will do so.

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# He was a chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, and then he 'crossed the Tiber'...

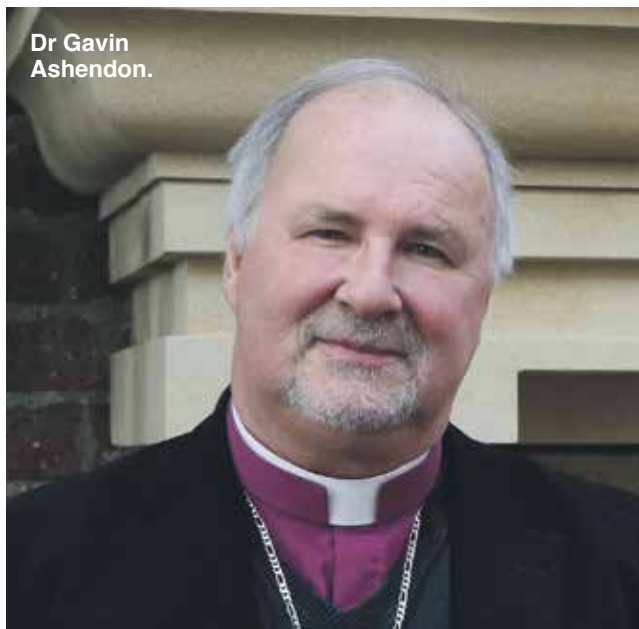
**D**r Gavin Ashenden, honorary chaplain to Britain's Queen Elizabeth II from 2008 to 2017, was received into the Catholic Church in December 2019. He recently gave a talk to 'The Keys' (the Catholic Writers' Guild of England and Wales) about his journey.

**“At the Church of England synod of 2008, liberals ‘squeezed out conservatives’ from the Anglican Communion”**

A merry-faced man aged 67, he had a distinguished academic record before being ordained in the Church of England in 1980. As an Anglican he had an active life, in a parish in Southwark, south London, as a chaplain and lecturer at the University of Sussex, and a canon at Chichester Cathedral. Then, doing post-graduate research at Heythrop College brought a Jesuit influ-



**Mary Kenny**



**Dr Gavin Ashenden.**

ence into his life, which “greatly impressed” him. His other studies included researching the psychologist Carl Jung – “mainly as an

antidote to Freud” – and the Greek Orthodox traditions.

Yet the year he was appointed Chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, 2008, he

now regards as “the year Anglicanism died”. At the Church of England synod of 2008, liberals “squeezed out conservatives” from the Anglican Communion. An Anglo-Catholic friend told him that 2008 was “the end of a 500-year experiment”.

**“He has long thought that the absence of a Magisterium was a grave disadvantage to the Anglican community”**

Among other measures, the 2008 synod admitted women to the episcopacy. “I have no problem with strong women – my mother was one of those powerful Celtic females,” he said, although he does think the current wave of feminism is “diabolical” (he considers previous female emancipation movements admirable). His main critique is that his former denomination

has submitted itself to the “progressive narcissistic relativism” that is characteristic of modern culture. There is a deep loss of the sense of the sacred. He has long thought that the absence of a Magisterium was a grave disadvantage to the Anglican community.

Dr Ashenden is married (his wife subsequently also ‘crossed the Tiber’) and he felt he had to resign from royal service when his teenage daughter felt “embarrassed” when his critical opinions were constantly quoted in the media. So, he either had to shut or up step down – and he did the latter.

I asked him what Queen Elizabeth thought of his

theological ideas – and ‘Tiber-crossing’. “HM is two people,” he replied. “She is the queen – in which position she has no views. And she is Elizabeth Windsor – only expressing her views rarely. But I’d be very surprised if Elizabeth Windsor wasn’t saddened by what has happened to the Church of England. I suspect she shares the dismay at contemporary values of people of her age.”

## Experiences

Dr Ashenden has had several mystical and near-death experiences which have brought him to a devotion to the Rosary and to Our Lady of Garabandal.

● Fortunate are those who have the opportunity to climb Croagh Patrick this month – it’s a great idea to dedicate the whole month to pilgrimage on ‘the reek’. Westport is one of the prettiest towns in Ireland, and Clew Bay almost a vision of heaven itself!

## The fruits of brutality

I had a journalistic colleague in London who had been a member of the Parachute Regiment (when military service was obligatory for British males). “We were trained killers,” he admitted. He chose such a tough regiment for somewhat perverse reasons: his father had been a Christian pacifist, opposed to all war, and Chris hadn’t been allowed play with toy soldiers as a child.

Another case: my late brother Carlos was a boozing pal of Robert ‘Paddy’ Blair Mayne, the highly decorated Newtownards-born soldier and founder member of the SAS (whose statue stands in Newtownards town centre). Blair Mayne used to spend weekends in Dublin in the 1950s to escape what was then a very dour Belfast, and my brother first met him when they were hitting every pub in town. Blair Mayne told Carlos that during World War II he had eagerly killed Germans with his bare hands. He was so aggressive in combat that Mr Churchill controversially denied him the Victoria Cross.

You don’t have to be a

military expert to grasp the fact that certain regiments are trained, and the men selected, to be ruthless: and that the Paratroopers should never have been let next, high or near Derry in 1972, when the terrible events of Bloody Sunday occurred.

Families have spent 50 years mourning, and are now deeply disappointed at not getting justice for those they lost: the North’s Public Prosecution Service have told relatives they will discontinue the prosecution of ‘Soldier F’, and will not start proceedings against ‘Soldier B’, of the Paras, who opened fire on the crowd.

It is very hard for the relatives, but it’s probable that the British authorities have decided more on grounds of protecting the military from a precedent than on grounds of justice.

Yet it must be a terrible thing to carry on your conscience, for 50 years, the knowledge that you have taken an entirely innocent life.

Blair Mayne drank to forget and ended his life in a self-destructive fatal car crash.



A mural to the victims of Bloody Sunday in Derry.

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# Hospital chaplains welcome 'honour' of NHS receiving Queen's George Cross award

Chai Brady

Hospital chaplains in the North have described the conferring of the George Cross to the NHS from Britain's Queen Elizabeth II as "a great honour".

The George Cross was awarded to the NHS to mark decades of public service, Buckingham Palace announced on Monday. It is the highest award for gallantry and heroism in the UK.

Fr Tony McAleese, chaplain at Mater hospital in Belfast said: "It's fabulous, it's a great honour to be awarded the cross. While I play a small part it is good to see that the NHS is being recognised for the valiant work that they are doing and have done, especially in the year where they celebrated such a great milestone."

## One year

The NHS marked 73 years of existence on Monday, following more than a year of tackling the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It's nice that there is some kind of recognition from Her Majesty to show that the hard work isn't unrecognised," Fr McAleese added.

Fr Henry McCann, Chaplain to the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald, said that the NHS are "very hard workers, maybe not as appreciated as they should be, so it's lovely to think that at least they are being recognised for what they have come through".

**“The NHS marked 73 years of existence on Monday, following more than a year of tackling the Covid-19 pandemic”**

Speaking of dealing with the pandemic, he said: "It was a very stressful time for a lot of people... We as chaplains decided to stay in the hospital, not visiting one to one with patients unless we were

called. We had noticed that staff were very anxious and afraid so we went around in pairs to the wards talking to staff trying to calm their fears, pray with them and have a little bit of banter."

It is just the third time the George Cross has been awarded to a collective body, country or organisation since it was instituted by George VI during the blitz, 1940.

In a handwritten message, Queen Elizabeth II said: "It is with great pleasure, on behalf of a grateful nation, that I award the George Cross to the National Health Services of the United Kingdom."

"This award recognises all NHS staff, past and present, across all disciplines and all four nations. Over more than seven decades, and especially in recent times, you have supported the people of our country with courage, compassion and dedication, demonstrating the highest standards of public service. You have our enduring thanks and heartfelt appreciation. Elizabeth R."

# Lack of staffing, chapels a 'serious impediment' for prison chaplains

Ruadhán Jones

In their annual reports, chaplains in Ireland's 12 prisons have called for new recruitments, as services are squeezed due to the "intense needs" and the often "challenging" nature of the work.

While the appointment of a head prison chaplain has been a "great boost", the 2020 chaplains' reports highlighted ratios as high as one chaplain to 200 prisoners in Wheatfield, and one to 175 in Mountjoy.

In Wheatfield prison, Dublin, for example, there were often instances where just one chaplain was on call. If a situation arose, such as a bereavement, "coverage of the prison stops", the chaplain's report says.

"The sheer volume of need that a chaplain encounters on a daily basis is challenging," the chaplain continues. "There were days in 2020 when a single chaplain went from one funeral to the next trying to meet the intense needs of those moments alone."

Other prison chaplains complained of a lack of facilities, including chapels and sacred spaces, in which inmates and staff could pray.

The chaplain in Shelton Abbey, Co. Wicklow, said it is a "problem" that there is no chapel in the prison, while the Midlands Prison chaplains called the absence of a dedicated chapel "a serious impediment" to the functioning of the chaplaincy.

# Bodies of children donated to Belfast university for research

Jason Osborne

The bodies of at least 27 children from mother and baby homes, workhouses and hospitals were donated to Queen's University Belfast for medical research, a children's rights campaigner has found.

*The Times* reported that the information was com-

plied using the Freedom of Information Act by Eunan Duffy, an adoptee from a Newry mother and baby home.

The donations of the bodies to the end of medical research and teaching at Queen's University, and parental consent wasn't legally required in many of the recorded cases.

It is expected that the number of donations will exceed 27 as Mr Duffy has not yet received data on male bodies that Queen's University received from the late 1930s to 1950s.

"Donors did not receive any form of payment for the receipt of remains," *The Times* reported Queen's University as saying last week.

## Jazzing up the Mass



Cathedral Parish, Co. Armagh celebrated of Mass with the residents in Cregagh Gardens, when Fr Emmanuel Fasakin MSP added to the celebration by playing "Lady of Knock" on the saxophone, July 2.

# Have your say SYNOD SOAPBOX

The Church in Ireland is moving towards holding a national synod in the next five years. It is part of the vision of Pope Francis of laypeople, religious, priests and bishops working together to discern where God is leading the Church and charting a future vision for Irish Catholicism.

As part of the process, The Irish Catholic wants to give a space for readers to share hopes and dreams for the future of the Church and what they would like to see as part of the synod process. The 'synod soapbox' will appear regularly in the paper as a space for dialogue and discernment.

If you would like to be part of the conversation, please send a submission of no more than 300 words to [editor@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:editor@irishcatholic.ie)

The Irish Catholic



# Church vents its disquiet over First Communion ban

Ruadhán Jones and Jason Osborne

Bishops have expressed their disappointment and frustration with the 'political' decision to ban sacraments, despite assurances from State officials that places of worship continue to be safe.

Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin Diocese told *The Irish Catholic* that the announcement came "completely out of the blue" and that it has caused upset and confusion for many people.

"A lot of people were ringing into the office, to know what this was all about," Bishop Doran said.

He believes the focus should be on regulating the unregulated gatherings, that take place away from the churches.

The diocese of Elphin had chosen not to hold the sacraments of First Communion or Confirmation until mid-August, but Bishop Doran said he sees "no reason now or later, while public worship is per-

mitted, to be excluding certain aspects of public worship".

He said he was surprised that baptisms were included in the ban as they were never "on the agenda of any Government announcements until they popped up in May".

"As far as I'm concerned that's simply not going to happen. Baptisms in this diocese under our own guidelines are restricted to a maximum of ten people. That's one fifth of the number that's allowed for religious services. So no, we're not going to cancel baptisms," Bishop Doran said.

## Political

Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan said this is a "political decision" that was made without consultation with Church authorities.

"I remain troubled that any Government or Government minister can cancel the celebration of religious worship or the sacraments while, crucially, saying at the same time that what happens within a church is safe.

This goes to the heart of freedom of worship," he said in a statement last Thursday.

Bishop Deenihan described the Government's decision as a "source of much disappointment to the young people who have been preparing for and looking forward to the various ceremonies.

"It is a source of disappointment to their parents, teachers and clergy too who have been involved in preparing them for an important moment in their faith. The proximity of the cancellation to the actual ceremony, which was based on previous Government advice, means that parents have days off planned and other expenses have been incurred."

The sacrament of Baptism will continue in the diocese of Meath subject to the "pastoral judgement" of the local clergy, minimum numbers and public health precautions, Bishop Deenihan said, while First Communion and Confirmation will take place "as soon as possible".

# Political sparks fly over suspension of sacraments

Jason Osborne

There has been anger across the political spectrum in response to the cancellation of confirmations, communions and baptisms.

Tánaiste Leo Varadkar revealed that the services were to be banned in response to a question during a press conference early last week.

Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín TD stated that his office has been "inundated" with calls and from families who learned that Confirmation, First Communion and Baptism have been cancelled by the Government.

## Angry

"People are angry for a number of reasons. These are really significant events in the lives of children and families. Freedom of Religion is a fundamental human right according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," Mr Tóibín said in a statement, continuing, "For those rights to be cancelled in such a glib manner by the Government is incredible."

The "on, off, on, off" of the restrictions over the last year is creating "deep

frustration", Mr Tóibín said, calling on Government to end the confusion and reverse the decision "immediately".

The Rural Independents described the ban on the sacraments as "inhumane" and also called for an immediate reversal of the decision.

**"The 'on, off, on, off' of the restrictions over the last year is creating 'deep frustration'"**

Deputy Mattie McGrath said it has now become clear that the decision to ban "planned" sacraments, such as First Holy Communion, Confirmation and Baptism for the foreseeable future, "has been taken by the Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Green Government and not recommended by NPHE".

The decision to ban children's sacraments over the summer months is a "hammer blow to parents and children", Mr McGrath said, "who have been waiting, preparing and excited about the prospect of celebrating the various ceremonies".

The ongoing "uncertainty, lack of clarity and spin" is having a "dangerous" impact on youth mental health, he said.

Clare TD Michael McNamara said there doesn't seem to be "any consciousness of the Constitution" in the Government's dealings.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mr McNamara said that to announce that the sacraments are to be cancelled "as though they had the power under the Constitution to do that" is "worrying, but less and less surprising". "We're on a very slippery slope generally in society with regard to who's running the country, democratic accountability and rule of law," he said.

## Girls on tour...with St Patrick



Martina Purdy (back left) and Elaine Kelly (front centre) lead a group of pilgrims along St Patrick's Way in Downpatrick, Co. Down, June 25.

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# NI Catholic school embarks on £50 million-pound shared campus venture

**Ruadhán Jones**

The principal of Cross and Passion College Ballycastle welcomed the “wonderful opportunity”, which will allow the secondary school to expand while maintaining its Catholic ethos.

Planning permission has been granted for a shared campus between the Catholic school and Ballycastle High School, a local Church of Ireland school in the Co. Antrim town.

Principal Paul Mclean said it's a chance

to continue “building bridges” between the communities, which have a long history of collaboration.

“We're delighted in the town because the two schools have a long history of sharing education,” Mr Mclean told *The Irish Catholic*. “And what this does is allow both schools to continue with their own ethos and their own identity and their own board of governance and leadership.

“It allows parental choice in the kind of value system they want their children brought up in.”

The Cross and Passion Order established a school in the town in 1913, before opening the campus on Moyle Road, Ballycastle in 1924.

Principal Mclean said that “it is a tribute to their legacy, and the many staff and governors from both schools since then, that this special and celebrated project is being furthered, 100 years later”.

The £50 million campus will be funded under Fresh Start Programme of works for Shared Education, with the Minister for Education praising the “huge investment”.

“I am pleased that planning permission has been granted for this unique project, which represents a huge investment of £50 million of Fresh Start funding,” Minister Michelle McIlveen said in a statement.

“This scheme marks a new era for Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College, providing a brand-new shared campus and top quality sports facilities.”

The project will involve shared core buildings for each school, with the facility shared for practical subjects and study areas, as well as GAA and soccer pitches, and an indoor facility.

## ‘Heartening’ return to Croagh Patrick for priests and pilgrims



Fr John Kenny of Partry Parish, Co. Mayo, is interviewed by RTE's Carole Coleman on Croagh Patrick, July 2, 2021. Fr Kenny celebrated Mass for people doing the Reek pilgrimage.

**Staff reporter**

It was a busy weekend on the Reek, Fr Charlie McDonnell of Westport Parish said, as Masses and Confessions were available for pilgrims for the first time in two years.

Fr McDonnell said it was “heartening” to be able to provide religious facilities for people doing the pilgrimage.

“Normally we'd only have one day to provide services, this year it's 19,” Fr McDonnell said. “That's a positive thing. There's more than twice as many Masses as there would be on Reek Sunday, and we've Irish Masses as well.”

More than 60 people attended the Masses over the week-

end, along with 20 people for Confessions. Fr McDonnell said they hope to add a Blessed Sacrament chapel at the bottom of Croagh Patrick, as well as a Confession station.

Meanwhile, Fr John Kenny, who celebrated Mass on Croagh Patrick on Friday July 2, said it provides a “wonderful opportunity” for pilgrims.

“It's certainly appealing to people, that there's an opportunity to attend Mass on the Reek for those, as it were, spiritually inclined,” Fr Kenny said. “It's a wonderful opportunity.”

The Reek pilgrimage traditionally takes place one Sunday every year. This year, to maintain social distancing, it will be held across 19 days.

## Youths chased from Clonard Monastery after ‘delinquent’ acts

**Chai Brady**

Several young people were chased away from Clonard Monastery in Belfast by locals after they were said to be interfering with a statue and trying to dislodge a stone cross.

Fr Peter Burns CSsR, Rector of Clonard Monastery, told *The Irish Catholic* that on Monday evening young people were “trying to interfere with” a statue on one side of the church.

“Above that there's a very nice stone cross, it's part of the structure of the building, and they were trying to dislodge that.

“This is just fairly routine antisocial, delinquent behaviour. The main problem we had a couple of weeks ago seems to have gone away,” he said.

Last month the west Belfast church was targeted four times by teenage boys who

broke a window, stole food from the kitchen and one teen exposed himself to an elderly priest.

Clonard's gardens had also been targeted with flowers and lights destroyed.

On another occasion youths climbed onto the roof of an outbuilding in the monastery grounds and threw stones at the church windows.

“It's very invasive and it's very unpleasant. We're mostly an elderly community,” said Fr Burns.

“We do have very good local support and we have spoken to the community restorative justice people and they set up a meeting with the police, and the youth centre and the residents associations.

“These young people that were there last evening they were chased by the neighbours which was good. People are being vigilant and supportive.”

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Irish NGOs call on UN to keep vital aid border to Syria open

A group of Irish humanitarian aid organisations are calling on members of the United Nations Security Council, including Ireland, to approve the reauthorisation of a vital border crossing which allows aid between Turkey and conflict affected north-west Syria.

Concern Worldwide, GOAL, Trocaire, Oxfam Ireland and World Vision warn that over three million people in the region will be left without critical life-saving humanitarian assistance if consensus is not secured.

The UN Security Council members have until July 10 to unanimously agree to renew the Syria Cross-Border Resolution.

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# Historic Beirut Church Nears Reopening



Conn McNally

In August 2020, Lebanon's capital, Beirut, was torn apart by a huge explosion in the city's harbour. In a tragic accident, a warehouse full of 2750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, a component for fertiliser, exploded. Hundreds of people were killed, thousands were injured, and hundreds of thousands were made homeless. The Christian quarter of Beirut was hit particularly hard by the blast, as the district was located right beside the harbour.

## St. Joseph's Church

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is committed to helping the Church in Beirut rebuild after this disaster. The Church of St. Joseph is one of Beirut's oldest churches. Built 1875, the church is run by the Jesuits and was badly damaged in the August blast.

After carrying out an assessment of the work that was needed to be done in Beirut, ACN pledged a package of

around €5.3 million in aid to help the Church in Beirut to rebuild. This included rebuilding St. Joseph's. The engineer who is overseeing repairs of St. Joseph's, Farid Hakimé, described the damage as the following:

*"Due to the explosion which occurred on the 4th August 2020, Saint Joseph's Church was severely damaged. Most of the wooden windows and doors were destroyed, the pitched roof was severely affected too...You could see many cracks in the ceiling of the church, and many other areas, caused by the blast."*

The church suffered damage to its stained glass, most of which was destroyed. The church's original woodwork was also badly damaged as was the ceiling and light fixtures.

St. Josephus' played a very important role in ministering to Catholic immigrants, visitors, and tourists in Beirut. Holy Mass was celebrated at the church in the Latin Rite in both English and French. In addition, the church also held Holy Mass celebrated in Arabic in accordance with the Maronite Rite, which the majority of Lebanese Catholics are members of.

## Reconstruction

ACN supported the repair of St. Joseph's with €330,000 in aid. This support is vital, as Lebanon is going through an economic crisis. During this economic crisis, the Lebanese Pound has lost more than 80% of its value against the US Dollar.

Father Salah Aboujaoude SJ of St. Joseph's spoke to ACN about the progress of the reconstruction of the 19th century church. The first phase of the reconstruction is now complete. It is expected that the works will be completed in July. The Jesuit priest said the following:

*"The supply and installation of the new wood doors will be completed by the end of next week."*

The speed at which these repairs have taken place would not have been possible without the aid and supports of ACN's benefactors. Thank you for your support. It is helping secure a future for Christianity in the Middle East.

If you would like to help ACN carry out future projects like the reconstruction of St. Joseph's, please consider making a donation.



St. Joseph Church which was built in the 19th century and is served by the Jesuits. The building was renovated in parts three years ago, and has suffered heavy damages by the explosion the 4th August 2020.



The Holy Family depicted at the altar dedicated to Saint Joseph.

**“Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is committed to helping the Church in Beirut rebuild after this disaster”**



Reparation of Saint Joseph church after 4th of August port blast, Achrafieh quarters - Beirut.

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## Nuala O'Loan

### The View



# We are starting to see an unprecedented degree of accountability in the Church

Strange things have happened in the Catholic Church during recent years. Once the hierarchy of the Church and her clergy seemed, to so many of us, to be in some way superhuman, immune to normal temptations, strongly united through the graces of ordination in defence of the Church and her people against the powers of evil in the world.

The priest was described as the 'alter Christus' - another Christ. In 1935, Pope Pius XI wrote of priests thus: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and 'stewards of the mysteries of God' (I Cor 4:1). The priest is the minister of Christ, an instrument, that is to say, in the hands of the Divine Redeemer. He continues the work of the redemption in all its world-embracing universality and divine efficacy, that work that wrought so marvellous a transformation in the world. Thus the priest, as is said with good reason, is indeed 'another Christ'; for, in some way, he is himself a continuation of Christ. 'As the Father hath sent me, I also send you' is spoken to the priest, and hence the priest, like Christ, continues to give 'glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will.'"

This was and remains totally true. Yet pictures from the days of my childhood showed grand prelates in silken robes sweeping through crowds of people who genuflected at their passing as if they were the Lord himself; there was kissing of rings, subservience, things that, for the most part, no longer happen today. It seems as if the sacredness and sanctity of priesthood and of the Church which these men were ordained to serve, became corrupted by the battle for the survival and growth of the Church in so many strange lands, and by the reality of power which evolved over centuries of struggle against the secular world.

### Heroic missionaries

Simultaneously, good men and women travelled across the world. In many countries over long years, the work of many heroic missionaries resulted in the establishment and growth of Christianity. Like St Paul, whose travels we have been following in recent weeks at Mass, people travelled to foreign lands knowing that



Cardinal Angelo Becciu speaks with journalists after he was asked by Pope Francis to resign as prefect of the Congregations for the Causes of Saints last year. The cardinal is due to go on trial this month for alleged financial wrongdoing. Photo: CNS

their life expectancy might be measured in months, not years because of the dangers which they faced, particularly the dangers of disease and rejection. Yet still they went. The Church became stronger because of their faith.

**“What must accompany the creation and adequate resourcing of such systems is consistency of proper response at all times”**

We know, too, that over the centuries some of those who have led the Church have ignored their fundamental calling to “give glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will”. Many of the lay Faithful, too, have done terrible wrong. It is not possible here to rehearse the many human failings of the Church which we all love – they are written in history.

The recent most fundamental betrayal – the abuse of little children by both priests and laypeople within the Church, and the failure of some of those in authority to deal with allegations properly – resulted in incalculable

damage to those children, as did the equally prevalent abuse of children outside the Church. It also caused huge damage to faith in the Church across the world – something which today's Church must try and repair in a spirit of humility and faithfulness.

### Protection

We have now processes which, if properly resourced, could ensure proper governance of the protection of children and vulnerable people within the Church. Processes on their own are not enough, however, what must accompany the creation and adequate resourcing of such systems is consistency of proper response at all times, so that the Church can be seen to live the preached reality of the Gospels – that we should love one another as we have been loved. In all this, too, there must be an understanding that it is vitally important to hear each complaint with humility and compassion for both the accuser and the accused, and to provide proper care not only for the complainant but also for those against whom accusations have been made, whether they are guilty or not. It is a requirement of the systems in Ireland north and south that such complaints be reported to the State authorities for investigation, following which

the complaints must be rigorously and fairly investigated by Church authorities. The processes of Canon Law for such investigations and judicial decision-making are in urgent need of reform and development to make them timely, fair and transparent.

There have been other betrayals too – the fruit of greed and other sin, including very significant abuse of power over Vatican funds much of which are donated by ordinary people – effectively theft, fraud and embezzlement. Yet we really are now seeing an unprecedented degree of accountability in the Church.

Last November saw the publication of the 500 page

public report on the shocking allegations made by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano in relation to former US Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, during the papal visit to Ireland in 2018. In the lucid, evidenced and detailed report the failings of many, including Archbishop Vigano, were laid bare.

In January this year, the former president of the Vatican Bank was convicted and sentenced to eight years and eleven months for financial crime. Others were sentenced as well for their crime.

### Trial

Most recently the Vatican announced that an Italian

Cardinal, Angelo Becciu, and nine others have been ordered to stand trial on July 27 accused of financial crimes and corruption in connection with the misuse of Vatican funds. Cardinal Becciu and some of his co-accused have denied all the allegations against them, and they, like all other accused people are entitled to a presumption of innocence unless found guilty.

### Determination

What is interesting about these developments is that they are further proof of Pope Francis' determination to bring proper governance and process to the workings at the heart of the institutional Catholic Church, the Vatican.

**“It is vitally important to hear each complaint with humility and compassion for both the accuser and the accused”**

Humankind is fragile. Even at the heart of the Church, and even among those ordained to priesthood, there will be those who do serious wrong. It is scandalous that matters had been allowed to develop so that such crimes, such immorality, could occur on such a scale in the Church founded by Jesus to carry on the great work of redemption in the world, and that in many cases the desire to protect the institution had become the dominant purpose. Pope Francis, and many others are working hard to address such evil. Much remains to be done and it will continue to be important that the Church everywhere, in all its dioceses, parishes and institutions, adopts the highest standards of governance and accountability, so that people can trust in the integrity of the Church. This will require ongoing investment, training and generosity by the people of God. The work of the Church has been much damaged by the failures of the past. We have a duty to ensure, as best we can, that such terrible failures do not recur. Our faith requires of us integrity, honesty and love – simple words we all know, mighty challenges to each one of us in our daily lives.



The controversial purchase by the Vatican of 60 Sloane Avenue in the Chelsea neighbourhood in London has been under investigation. Photo: CNS



# NET Ministries' 2020/21 thanksgiving Mass



Tony Foy, Executive Director of Net Ministries Ireland.



Fr Luuk Jansen OP of Cork City, who worked with the Brew 132 team in Cork, helping Net to livestream the Mass.



Bishop Alan McGuckian with this year's Net teams and the Net staff community.

**N**ET Ministries Ireland celebrated their Thanksgiving Mass on Friday June 25 at the Franciscan Friary in Rossnowlagh, Donegal, joined virtually by parents, families, mission partners and the young people they served throughout the past year.

The staff and missionaries gave thanks to God for the past year of mission, which was largely changed from the norm by the pandemic.

"God was intervening and asking you to get up and go outside of where you are comfortable," Bishop Alan McGuckian of Raphoe Diocese told those gathered during the Mass.

"The NET missionary is meant to bear fruit, to bear Jesus to others, to see Jesus lighting up the lives of others. This is our call, this is our faith."



The Ceili Net team who were based between the Ceili Community and Rossnowlagh this year.



Eva Newell (Monaghan), Grainne Clancy (Tyrone), Peter Ahearne (Dublin), Bishop McGuckian, Padraig O'Laimhin (Mayo), Mairead Fleming (Kerry) and Jack McCarthy (Dublin).

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# The need for reflection in a world where anxiety and stress seem to be endemic



Following in the footsteps of St Patrick is an ideal way to find peace and solace, writes **Martina Purdy**

**W**hen I left the convent after five years, I left behind a life rich in silence, and was warned by a friend to be careful in a world that had become extremely busy. "It's the age of overwhelm," my friend declared. "People are constantly bombarded now with information, email, phones, texts, Facebook, not to mention radio and television. Be careful!"

Although I had a busy career as a BBC political correspondent before I entered the Adoration Sisters on the Falls Road in Belfast, I had been without a mobile phone (I used to sleep with my BBC phone under my pillow) for five years. Radio and television was rare and I had learned to really love silence.

Out of the convent (the congregation had grown too small and fragile to complete my nine-year formation), the world was very fast and very noisy.

## Post-convent trip

Elaine Kelly a former barrister was one of three other women whose formation as interrupted and we went on a post-convent trip to the United States and Canada.

In fact we discovered *Madam Secretary* on Netflix and we binged for three or four nights before realising we were stressed out. "My head is numb, I'm anxious and I don't know why," I complained to Elaine who immediately admitted she had similar symptoms.

"It's that show on Netflix," she said. "It's overwhelming us – it's all talk and way too much violence. We need to go cold turkey and be more careful what we feed our souls."

I agreed. We had over-dosed and were overwhelmed.

And it's a lesson for all of us in today's world where anxiety and stress seem to be endemic.

Of course, prayer is the antidote to this but it takes a while to come down from the speed of life sometimes. Where do you find that space, that quiet and how do you learn to protect it and guard it?

Well, if you are still reading, the Saint Patrick Centre is offering for the first time a new four day adventure in nature and silence and sacred



Pilgrim guides Martina Purdy and Elaine Kelly with comedian Tim McGarry and other walkers outside the St Patrick's Centre in Downpatrick.

space. It's called 'The Journey' and is designed for small numbers and begins at our base - Tobar Mhuire Retreat Centre in Crossgar, Co. Down.

'The Journey' involves three guided walks through the stunning St Patrick's Way in Co. Down, a visit to meet the Benedictine Monks in Rostrevor and receive a pilgrim's blessing and a chance to learn about their spirituality. It's also an opportunity for relaxation and retreat and to learn about monastic meditation and spiritual journaling on the journey through life.

**“Dr Tim Campbell, who began to develop this exciting new spiritual adventure before lockdown, said he wants people to learn about the true Patrick, not the caricature that has taken hold in modern culture”**

"One of the first things you will do is go to the beach at Ballynorhan," says pilgrim guide Elaine Kelly. "The beach offers gorgeous views of Gunn Island and you will then walk along cliff top paths on the stunning Down coast into Ardglass, visiting St Patrick's Holy Well at Sheepland, and Ardtole, the site of one of the ancient churches Ireland's patron saint himself was said to have founded."

"In the constant age of over-

whelm it's a chance to unwind, and to be refreshed by the absolutely stunning beauty of the coast St Patrick knew so well.

"You will begin to learn about the true Patrick, his spiritual journey and literally walk in the steps of this great apostle of Ireland," Elaine says.

Dr Tim Campbell, who began to develop this exciting new spiritual adventure before lockdown, said he wants people to learn about the true Patrick, not the caricature that has taken hold in modern culture.

"In many ways Patrick and March 17 has been overtaken by the festivities and we have forgotten the man and his message at the heart of it all. The true Patrick had to find faith for himself.

"The Christian faith which the young Patrick was born into did not blossom in him until he was kidnapped by Irish pirates, having witnessed his father's servants murdered before his eyes as a teenager. It was in the isolation of the Irish countryside, most likely at Slemish, that Patrick began to pray and to meditate and to open his eyes to the wonders of God's creation. It was then that he began to find the true God and his true self."

## Pilgrims

"I recently had the chance to walk St Patrick's Way again from Rostrevor to the Silent Valley and I have to say it is stunning and I think it is a hidden treasure that will feed many pilgrims in these challenging times as we emerge from the lockdown, perhaps seeking a more meaningful way of life," he says.



Some of the walkers on a recent camino way in Newcastle, Co. Down.

**“In Irish mythology the mountain was associated with the mythical figures Boirche and Slángha”**

When we heard about 'The Journey', Elaine and I immediately agreed to take part with the pilgrims. It reminded me of Irish poet John O'Donohue's poignant words, "Each new day is a path of wonder, a different invitation. Days are where our lives gradually become visible".

'The Journey' will also take you into Newcastle, on the seashore, where St Patrick himself converted the son of a chieftain, Donard. Northern Ireland's highest peak in the seaside town is named after Donard who became a holy monk on the mountain.

In Irish mythology the mountain was associated with the mythical

figures Boirche and Slángha. There are many treasures in the shadow of Donard's mountain and on the journey you will walk along the Shimna River, visit an 18th Century hermitage built into the river and enjoy panoramic views of the Mourne, including Slieve Bearnagh and Slieve Commedagh.

Why not join us in this great adventure? Why not walk on this journey and be amazed?

**i** More details about *The Journey* which takes place August 23-27 are available on [www.saintpatrickcentre.com](http://www.saintpatrickcentre.com) or contact The Saint Patrick Centre in Downpatrick on 028 4461 9000 (048 4461 9000 from the Republic).



# Canada's cultural genocide: if outrage is understandable, violence is not



The day might not be far off when protesters invade Irish churches, writes **David Quinn**

**E**ight Catholic churches in Canada have been burnt by arsonists in the last few weeks and in some cases totally destroyed. Ten churches were vandalised in the province of Alberta on one day alone last week.

The attacks are almost certainly a response to the discovery of hundreds of bodies at two former residential schools for indigenous Canadians run by the Catholic Church.

A policy existed in Canada lasting from 1867 until 1996 aimed at assimilating children from the native peoples (who we once called 'Indians') into mainstream Canadian society.

It was actually a form of cultural genocide in that the aim was eradicating the native culture of these people – now collectively called the 'First Nation' – not just their religion, but all of their customs and even their language.

Over that 129 years, about 150,000 children passed through the doors of these places and at least 4,500 died in them, although probably a lot more than that.

They were often extremely poorly resourced and badly run and disease was rampant in the days before antibiotics and vaccinations. The dead were buried in huge collective plots. The picture is not unlike the institutions here and elsewhere.

There was also widespread physical and sexual abuse.

Some of the children were of mixed race, and therefore could be rejected both by native Canadians and white Canadians.

## Travellers

The policy, introduced by the Canadian government, was equivalent to Ireland deciding that Travellers would have to be assimilated into mainstream Irish society, and therefore their children would need to be removed from their families and raised in institutions.

Canada is, or was, a majority Protestant country, aside from the French parts, like Quebec. It is now an extremely secular country.

Although Catholicism is a minority religion in Canada,

and always has been, about 60% of the institutions were run by the Catholic Church, and most of the rest by various Protestant organisations.

The non-Catholic institutions also have a tragic history.

The Catholic Church ran a majority of the residences for indigenous Canadian children because the religious orders had the personnel to do so.

**“The church meant so much to all of us, especially our ancestors. When your hurt turns to rage it is not healthy for you or your community”**

When the discovery of hundreds of bodies on the grounds of two former institutions were found recently, there was outrage in Canada. It is almost certain that many more will be found at every other institution where they go looking. There are calls to do precisely this.

If outrage is understandable, violence is not. Most of the churches have been burnt down on First Nation land. But the people most disgusted by these acts are mainly other indigenous Canadians.

One of the churches was a wooden structure, built over a century ago on Chuchuwaiya Indian Reserve number 2 by



Flames engulf St Jean Baptiste Church in Morinville, Alberta in Canada on June 30. The early morning fire destroyed the century-old Catholic church and is being treated as suspicious by Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Photo: CNS/Diane Burrel, social media via Reuters.

First Nation people who went to enormous lengths to do so.

They would then come from miles around to attend Mass there.

Carrie Allison, an elder who helped to maintain the church, told reporters: “The church meant so much to all of us, especially our ancestors. When your hurt turns to rage it is not healthy for you or your community.”

Another leader, Chief Keith Crow told public broadcaster CBC after being told another church was on fire: “I’m angry. I don’t see any positive coming from this and it’s going to be tough.”

Catholics in his community are very upset about the blaze, he said.

## Happy

Some other Canadians are happy, however. A Canadian comedian who has over 700,000 followers on Twitter, said on the social media platform: “I hate Christianity in general but I REALLY hate Catholicism so seeing those Canadian churches on fire makes me feel all fuzzy inside”.

This received thanks or ‘likes’. Similar sentiments were expressed on Irish social media.

While the Catholic Church was the big target of attack,

there were other targets as well. For example, two Anglican churches were burnt and one completely destroyed, although they might have been mistaken for Catholic churches.

One of the vandalised churches in Alberta was an African Evangelical Church.

**“Canada is, or was, a majority Protestant country, aside from the French parts, like Quebec”**

Statues of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II were also vandalised. It was Canada Day on July 1, and like Independence Day in the US, it is now seen by some as an occasion of shame because of how native peoples were treated, plus the legacy of slavery.

The question arises: could attacks happen here like in Canada? There is certainly plenty of public anger and it doesn’t take much to ignite it. There is increasing militancy in society generally speaking and acts of violence can have a copycat effect.

Churches in Poland were recently invaded by pro-abortion protestors after a law

was passed banning abortion on the grounds that the baby suffered from a disability like Down’s Syndrome, and in parts of South America, including Chile and the Pope’s native Argentina, there have been many attacks on churches, including arson.

Plenty of churches in Ireland have been vandalised in recent years. Some of the attacks seem to have had an occult motivation, but none so far seems to have been political in nature.

## Referendum

On the other hand, during the abortion referendum, pro-repeal campaigners would sometimes picture themselves in repeal sweaters alongside Catholic symbols.

The cross at the top of Carrauntoohil was cut down a few years ago and many think it was an act of protest against the Church because of the degree of motivation involved.

Don’t rule out the situation becoming worse. The day might not be far off when protesters invade churches in this country, even during Mass, as has happened elsewhere. We must fervently wish nothing like this ever happens here, but we can no longer rule out the possibility.

**“Although Catholicism is a minority religion in Canada, and always has been, about 60% of the institutions were run by the Catholic Church”**



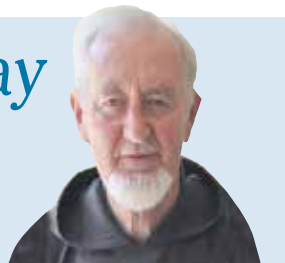
Indigenous boys pray on bunk beds in a dormitory at the Bishop Horden Memorial School, a residential school in the indigenous Cree community of Ontario in 1950. Photo: CNS/Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, Handout via Reuters.



# Sharing in Christ's mission

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



**W**hen Jesus sent out the apostles to extend his mission, he said more about their lifestyle than what they might say (Mark 7: 7-13). As St Francis put it, preach at all times, sometimes using words. We are so bombarded today by advertising pressure, slogans and biased media that people are rightly suspicious of words. Pope St Paul VI said wisely that if people today listen to evangelisers, it is because, first, they are witnesses. What sort of witness did Jesus emphasise for the apostles? Don't be burdened with unnecessary accumulation of goods. Cooperate with others. Trust in God's providence and the generosity of people. Bring peace and joy to all you meet. Avoid confrontation. Let the joy of your personal relationship with God pass the message to your face. What Pope Francis called "sour-puss religion" would put anybody off. As the Letter of James says, "Faith without good works is dead". The charity of works is the unmistakable proof of the charity of words.

### Who are the apostles today?

Sixty years ago, the Second Vatican Council emphasised the universal call to holiness, pointing out that the call to holiness and mission is not confined to priests and nuns. Clearly, Jesus did not intend that his followers would settle for a 'me-and-God' private religion. Our Christian mission has its source in the light of Baptism, its development in confirmation and its sustenance in the Eucharist where we are nourished firstly by the word of God and then by Jesus as the bread of life. At the end of Mass, we are sent out to love and serve the Lord. When Jesus said "You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world", he meant it for all his disciples, not just the clerical ranks. Here in Europe at any rate,

the clerical ranks are so depleted and old that at long last the apostolate of the laity has to be recognised.

### Beginning at home

What can you do to bring a family member back to religion? Angry confrontation usually does more harm than good. Does anybody ever win an argument? Getting the last word is never a sign of convincing the other person. The louder the voices, the more each side is hardened in their opinion. Nobody ever changes opinion unless being open to the possibility of changing. Angry exchanges close the door to any change of heart. That is why Jesus instructed the apostles: "If people refuse to listen to you, walk away and shake off the dust from under your feet as a sign to them." So, what can you do? Be gentle. Respect the other person even if you do not agree. Give witness by the way you live. Trust in God's power and pray. Change of heart has to take place before there is change of mind. And change of heart takes time.

### New Evangelisation

Pope Francis has taken up the call of his two predecessors, Benedict XVI and John Paul II, for a new evangelisation. We are being held back by a privatised and individualistic spirituality which neglects the social demands of charity. We must be open to reform because as Jesus said, you cannot put new wine into old containers.

Am I depressed by the scandals uncovered in the Church in recent years, by the radical decrease of vocations, by the age profile of those who come to church? Of course, I am upset by these happenings. Yet I am sustained by hope, that wonderful grace which remains strong through all crises or storms. This is not blind optimism but I draw strength from two great beliefs. I believe in the promise of Jesus that the Church founded on Peter the



Christ on the Road to Emmaus in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. Photo: CNS

Rock will never be overcome by the powers of darkness (Matthew 16:18). And secondly, I am sustained by the memory of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit totally transformed the Apostles at the birth of the Church.

### Spirit-filled Evangelisers

Pope Francis calls for Spirit-filled evangelisers who are fearlessly open to the Holy Spirit. "How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelisation full of fervour, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction. A Spirit-filled evangelisation is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel" (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*).

### A Synod means walking together

It is important to remember that we are not alone. Pope Francis wants the Church in every country to hold synods. A synod literally means walking together. Syn in Greek means together, while an odometer is an instrument people use to

measure their walk. A good example of how a synod works is the story of the disciples walking with the Risen Lord on the road to Emmaus. It starts with the crisis of faith experienced as these disciples lost hope when they saw Jesus crucified. They did not recognise that he was the one walking with them. Then he brought the light of scripture to them and something started stirring in their hearts. They began to understand the crisis of Calvary in a new way. They invited the stranger to dine with them. He led them in prayers before repeating his actions at the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. They suddenly recognised who he is but he disappeared from their sight. They had heard and seen enough to know what to do. They turned back to Jerusalem and became apostles witnessing to the Resurrection.

The stages of a synod begin with respectful dialogue about any crisis or problems people are sharing. The light of scripture will bring us back to what Jesus would say or do in this situation. The dialogue will lead to prayer.

And the living bread of the Eucharist will be the powerhouse of the mission.

"Jesus wants evangelisers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence" (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*).

### Prayer

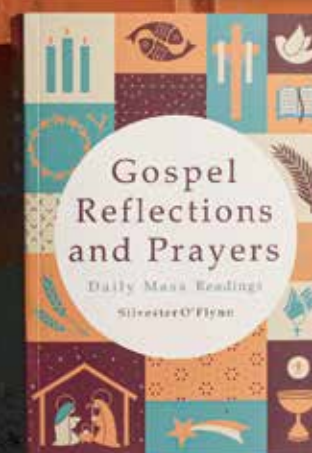
*Risen Lord, walk the road of life with us.*

*Come Holy Spirit, renew the heart of the Church, renew the face of the earth.*

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

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# Cause for 'Nigeria's St Patrick' carries on



Bishop Shanahan's reception when he returned as bishop of Southern Nigeria, Calabar, Nigeria, 1920.



## Irishman Bishop Joseph Shanahan's impact in Nigeria continues 100 years on, Sr Chinyeaka Ezeani MSHR tells Ruadhán Jones

**B**ishop Joseph Shanahan is not a household name in Ireland. But in parts of Nigeria, it's hard to move without seeing his name: schools, colleges, hospitals and halls all bare the name of "Nigeria's St Patrick", Sr Chinyeaka Ezeani says. She is a sister in the order Bishop Shanahan founded in 1924, the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary, for the express purpose of aiding the bishop in the conversion of Southern Nigeria.

"Since we initiated the cause for his beatification and canonisation in 1997, we have tried to promote among the younger people who didn't know the missionaries, and we have tried to promote his cause, but his name is all over the place," Sr Ezeani explains. "His name is familiar at home."

In Nigeria, the sister continues, everybody believes he is a saint – but his name has stretched far across the globe, from Ireland to Australia.

### Saint

"In Nigeria, everybody believes that he was a saint," Sr Ezeani says. "Here in Ireland too, sometimes we get people who pray for intercession through him. Some people have received favours, we get letters from as far away as Australia. In Nigeria, every year around June, his anniversary, they have a day called Shanahan day. All the dioceses celebrate his life, as a way of keeping his memory alive, and also

as a way of promoting his cause for canonisation."

His cause for canonisation is still at the diocesan stage, Sr Ezeani explains, the process being quite a long one. The cause was initiated in Onitsha, Nigeria, but the Holy Rosary sisters are seeking information from all round the globe.

"Because there are witnesses, a lot of people in Ireland couldn't travel to Nigeria," Sr Ezeani continues. "A lot of them were already elderly or not so well. Permission was given to open a kind of rogatorial enquiry here in Ireland, in order to get the witness testimonies. That's where it is now, gathering documents relating to his life to be studied by experts. After all that, it will be taken to the congregation for canonisation of saints in Rome."

**“By the time he had founded the order, Bishop Shanahan had been consecrated a bishop in Maynooth, becoming the first bishop in Southern Nigeria”**

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Bishop Shanahan's birth in Glankeen, Co. Tipperary, 1871, so it is a good time to read and reflect on his works and influence. He discovered his vocation very early, desiring from a young age to be a missionary. His parents didn't have the money to send him to secondary school, but thanks to the influence of his uncle, the 15-year-old Joseph Shanahan was awarded a scholarship to study with the Holy Ghost fathers – now Spiritans – in Beauvais, France.

He didn't return to Ireland for 11 years, and when he did, his only desire was to head to Africa on mission.

"After his ordination, in fact for all his life, his desire was to join other missionaries in Africa, to give his life for the mission in Africa," Sr Ezeani says, "but after his ordination he was kept back in Rockwell College. So finally, he was sent then on mission to Nigeria and he went there in 1902. He was happy to finally have his desire fulfilled because that was his aspiration all through his life."

It wasn't an easy life in Southern Nigeria at the turn of the century.

There was little in the way of infrastructure such as roads or hospitals, and malaria was an ever present threat. As soon as he stepped off the River Niger and set foot on the soil of Onitsha, Southern Nigeria, the superior of the Mission, Fr Leon Lejeune CSSp, already had practical work for then-Fr Shanahan to do.

### Bricks

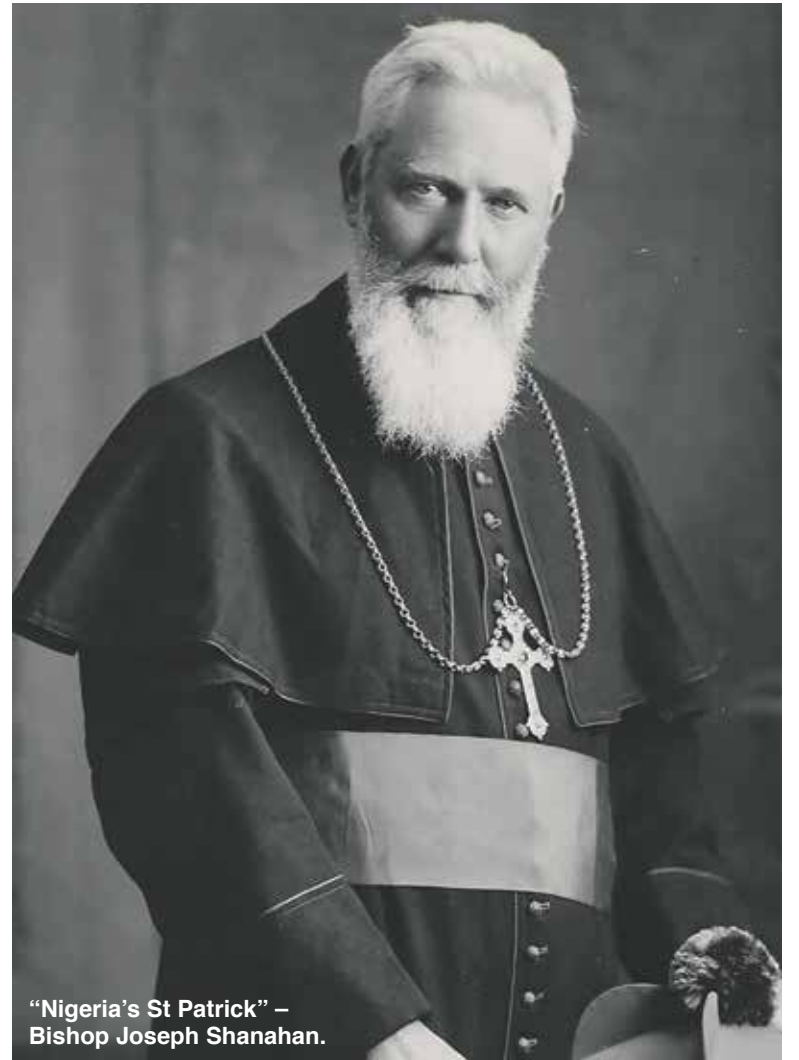
"When he first arrived, his superior, Fr Lejeune just got him to start with mud for bricks," Sr Ezeani said. "There, houses then were not durable and, you know, they did not have the hygiene and hospitals. So the first thing he had him do was help mortaring bricks in the heat so that could put up more permanent habitation for the missionaries. He did that, he got right into the work."

"Then he was sent beyond the river Niger, to go into the villages to catechise the people. Much of his missionary work was catechesis. But the elders [of local communities] told him that they were too old to change. So he decided to teach the children. After that he used the method of evangelisation through schools, which was different from the French way. Before him they used the method of Christian villages, where a priest lives with a community, mostly the outcasts of society."

"He [Bishop Shanahan] thought that if you teach children then the future of the Faith in the land is assured. So he tried to get his fellow missionaries – in 1905 he had become the superior of the mission – he tried to get his fellow missionaries to support him and they began through the



Bishop Shanahan with some Holy Rosary Sisters, in Nigeria on the day he left the Mission, Onitsha, Nigeria April 9, 1932.



"Nigeria's St Patrick" – Bishop Joseph Shanahan.

schools. Catechesis was used to catechise the children and also for formal education."

Under Bishop Shanahan, the mission to Nigeria went from strength to strength. He gradually phased out the "Christian villages", putting a strong emphasis on schools. This was to have a lasting impact on the region, Sr Ezeani says, and on the Church, which gained two new orders in the Holy Rosary sisters and St Patrick's Missionary Society.

**“The cause was initiated in Onitsha, Nigeria, but the Holy Rosary sisters are seeking information from all round the globe”**

"While he set up the schools for evangelisation, it was mainly focused on the boys," Sr Ezeani says, explain-

ing the origins of the Holy Rosary sisters. "So he just began to thinking, if we get the boys, who are they going marry to raise Christian families? So he began to explore education for girls. He started looking for volunteers and missionaries. He tried hard but he wasn't successful."

### Help

"He tried some, young Irish laywomen that came out to help. But he saw that wasn't going to last, unless he had an order that would take on that work and bring it to fruition in continuity. That's how he began to think about founding a congregation, the Holy Rosary sisters. The sisters were founded then, in 1924, to continue the mission. Finally, with time, the congregation which began in Nigeria, expanded to other parts of Africa. Most of the members now would be Nigerians, with the Irish population aging."

By the time he had founded the order, Bishop Shanahan had been consecrated a bishop in Maynooth, becoming the first bishop in Southern Nigeria. He continued to work there for some time, but towards the end of his life, ill-health caught up with him and he retired to Nairobi, Kenya, where he died in 1943.

Sr Ezeani hopes that, on this the 150th anniversary of Bishop Shanahan's birth, he will continue to inspire us in Ireland, Nigeria and across the globe. She is hopeful that his sanctity will be recognised.

"That is our hope and our prayer. We are working at it, trusting in the Spirit, because it's all God's work. We do our part and pray to God to show us signs that what we believe, that he is a holy man, is confirmed by God through something we can see as human beings," Sr Ezeani concludes.



# Five years of Holy Family Mission



The unique Waterford-based mission has proven itself both a home and spiritual school over the past five years, writes **Jason Osborne**

**H**oly Family Mission (HFM) began in 2016 when 10 young people between the ages of 18-30 signed up for a year of faith formation. Since then, they've welcomed 56 young missionaries through their doors, with another 14 to start next September.

Recently, past and present members and staff gathered to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the mission and the fruit it's borne. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mission Director at HFM Maura Murphy said there was a "sense of gratitude" in the air, as well as a "sense of pride, in the best possible sense".

"I think we had close to 50 of the community there for the weekend and there was just a real sense of gratitude. Like anything in life, it's only when you stop and look back that you see how far you've come," Ms Murphy says.

**“The desire in young people is great, she says, describing them as ‘extremely generous’ with their time”**

"Definitely there was that sense of gratitude for the members themselves and all that they had experienced and shared. A sense of pride, in the best possible sense, in ourselves as the people involved in the project, to see how much they've grown and the fruit that has happened in their lives."

Hearts and lives changed, talks given, retreats hosted and much more, HFM has changed the landscape of Catholicism in Ireland. Ms Murphy tells of but a few of the vocations that were represented as they met to celebrate the fifth anniversary.

"There was a variety of



Maura Murphy, Patrick Reynolds and Fr Patrick Cahill celebrate five years of Holy Family Mission.

vocations represented. Two of our community are in their discernment stage with the Dominicans, so we had two Dominican habits among our young people. Another two girls, one is getting married in the next two weeks and another in two or three months," she says.

"Then there were some who couldn't travel because they're actually in seminary in America or they're discerning with a religious order, so it was a great snapshot of the fruit of what a year of mission can bring, and that kind of dedicated space to focus on God and yourself and those around you."

The desire in young people is great, she says, describing them as "extremely generous" with their time. "Nine, ten months is a big commitment. That 'yes' to Holy Family is a 'no' to joining friends in college or going on a journey with their work or their career."

## Founding members

One of the founding members of the mission and spiritual father to those who make a home there, Fr Patrick Cahill described the space HFM fills on the Irish, Catholic scene.

"When young people come here, they generally come here with some degree of faith, but faith is a fairly broad term and may not be very specific at all to Catholic belief. As opposed to just believing in God, one of the fruits that we see here is that young people leave with a

much deeper connection and love for the Lord, for Jesus," he says.

## Personal

"So it becomes, as opposed to a generic or general idea of the Faith, they get to know the Lord in a very personal way, which is something we really want to focus on because a generic idea of God isn't very helpful in the real world.

"I think when people have different issues, family problems, struggles with all of the temptations that are out there, a generic or homemade idea of God isn't very useful – especially if what we believe is basically made up by ourselves, then that's exactly what it is."

A faith which we make up

is no greater than ourselves, Fr Cahill says, and it's much less than God in his reality, which is exactly who HFM puts young people in touch with.

**“I think we had close to 50 of the community there for the weekend and there was just a real sense of gratitude”**

An unfortunate discovery HFM made over the years is that there is "an awful lot more brokenness" in young people than society would care to admit. Social media and the

omnipresence of bullying and comparison are but a handful of the new challenges facing the youth of Ireland today, and Fr Cahill sees this in his own ministry.

"I think they've been sold a lot of lies. Social media, it has done great good, but situations like bullying or trying to 'measure up', they would have been a problem back in my day during school hours, but then at four o'clock you went home and you had a different reality at home," he says.

"You had your family, you had your friends, you had your neighbourhood or whatever it was. Whereas now, issues of bullying or being told that you're not good enough or that you're different to everybody

else, when you leave school that continues now via social media. It makes life difficult for young people, especially these days your faith is going to make you somewhat different and that's a huge challenge because I think isolation kills the Faith. If a young person is the only person in the neighbourhood, the only person in their town who practices, it's very, very hard to hold on."

## Prayer

At HFM, they find the healing they need through prayer and community, under the spiritual fatherhood of Fr Cahill – a role he delights in.

"It's been a great gift. I'm not just saying this, but there is really no place I'd rather be. If someone were to offer me a mission in Hawaii or the Bahamas, I'd say you can keep the Bahamas, there's no place I'd rather be. It's an absolute privilege to be here, it's very busy because, unlike a school of other sorts, this is residential, so you're with young people all of the day and seven days a week. It's very, very busy and it becomes very personal.

"We call this 'Holy Family Mission' to a couple of ends. We want the Holy Family to be our protectors, our guides and our example, but also we want this to be like a family. As a family, a person's problems, pains and joys become yours. We become heavily invested in each other, which I think is necessary for people to see."



Nicola Griffin, Ruth Terren Hogan, Niamh Palmer and Godelieve Teresia As attend the celebrations.



# New Irish app developed to help Faithful spread Good News



**Digital catechesis: teaching old practices using modern technology, Chai Brady writes**

All Christians are called to proclaim the Gospel but in order to do so they must have a solid faith formation. Seeing the need to make learning about the faith more convenient as many parishioners are often very busy during the week, Fr Dermot Ryan tells *The Irish Catholic* how they went about creating their new app.

Aspal, which means apostle in Irish, is set to be offered to parishes and dioceses across the island of Ireland. The app is a collaboration between the Ossory Adult Faith Development Group, of which Fr Ryan is the director, and St Patrick's College Maynooth.

## Support

It is intended to support and train those who work in parishes: readers; baptismal teams; parish councils; parish administrators and secretaries; extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist; choirs and more.

There were several reasons the app was developed, according to Fr Ryan, who says: "We're trying to broaden the number of people with whom we can engage. Oftentimes we have many members of our parishes coming to Mass at the weekend and they lead very busy lives through the week so

through the medium of Aspal, we're affording people a chance, on their own time, at a time and place that is convenient for them, to engage with a digital catechesis platform.

"The idea is they can journey through a course over a period of time on an evening or evenings that are suitable to them rather than the traditional form in parishes and dioceses when we declare training for Eucharistic ministers for four Tuesdays in Advent, whereas now it allows people to do it on their own time. That's the logic behind it."

**“Almost 50 people became the first students to complete the Aspal programme last week at its launch”**

Four parishes of the Comer Tri Pastoral Area came together and parishioners signed up to try out one of the Aspal programmes, to prepare for ministry in Slieverue church.

Almost 50 people became the first students to complete the Aspal programme last week at its launch. Also in attendance was the apostolic administrator of the Dio-

cese of Ossory, Bishop Denis Nulty, who said that in "preparing you for ministry in your parish communities we are but restoring old practices – albeit by using very modern technology – whereby people lead each other in prayer".

"In these rural communities, where we gather tonight, were not animals and crops blessed by men and women who for years carried their Easter water home, were not prayers said as neighbours died, and God spoken about in our domestic churches. Yours then is a future built on our strong past, yours is a Baptism finding new life," Bishop Nulty said.

## Our journey

Fr Ryan explained that it is "the first step in our journey", saying that the local launch is just the beginning of "something we believe can serve the Irish Church".

Aspal provides "excellent catechetical material for faith formation to any parish in Ireland at a time and in a place that suits the participants – thereby encouraging a much greater take up of faith development," he said.

"The hope is that we will engage with parishes and dioceses and that a parish would come forward and say, 'look, we want to train all our Eucharistic ministers', or a diocese would come forward and say they would like to train all their parishes' administrators, or all of their parish secretaries, whoever, and that the parish or diocese would sign up a group of people who would then be given log-in details for each individual member."

Those who took part in the Aspal course were involved in a series of modules over six weeks. "People were able to engage in their own time and then on the feast of St Peter and Paul, Bishop Denis Nulty celebrated with a limited number of them, obviously given the current restrictions, and presented them with certificates of completion."

**“They will be working with St Patrick's College Maynooth over the summer months in order to be able to offer a variety of courses to parishes and dioceses for the new academic year in September”**

"At the end of the course, we were able to sign off that they had all undertaken each of the modules and submitted the necessary tasks."

Asked what can be expected from the programme, Fr Ryan said: "The way we have it set up is that the participants would watch taught content for 10-15 minutes and for each there is a task, a reflection of maybe 200 words, on something to do with what they had learned. It is to get them to reflect on what they were listening to and then they submit that back in and it's approved and marked by the Aspal team and once that's done they can move to the next module, so you must

complete a module-by-module journey through the programme."

There has been interest in the app from dioceses in the US, with Fr Ryan saying that Ireland is doing well when it comes to keeping up with technological advancements.

"I'd hope to think that we might be dipping our toes in the water first and trying to lead rather than follow," he said, adding that they will be using the first people who went through the programme as a focus group in order to make any improvements needed to Aspal.

They will be working with St Patrick's College Maynooth over the summer months in order to be able to offer a variety of courses to parishes and dioceses for the new academic year in September.

## Faith development

"Every one of us, from the moment of our Baptism to the moment we finally meet the Lord, we're continuing to learn more and more about him. People involved in ministry and people who are not, by virtue of their baptismal calling, spend their days trying to learn more about the Lord. Ongoing faith development, encouraging people to continue ask questions about, and of, God is very important," Fr Ryan said.

"That's why we went with Aspal, it's the Irish for apostle, it's by virtue of our Baptism that every Christian is called and sent, each of us are missioned to go into the world to proclaim, so Aspal is an attempt by the Irish Church to be able to support people in that mission."

More details can be found at [Aspal.ie](http://Aspal.ie)



# Abortion 'anything but rare' as

Across Ireland there were up to 55 local 'Rallies for Life' on July 3, in which pro-lifers urged the public and TDs to rethink abortion legislation in view of the impact of abortion. The local rallies took place in lieu of the national pro-life march due to the pandemic. Organisers have said that the events are important given the review of the legislation which will take place this year.

Niamh Uí Bhriain of the Rally for Life committee said that thousands of people gathered because "pro-life activists seek to continue to protect both mother and baby, especially in the light of what had been revealed about abortion in Ireland, including late-term abortions and the disturbing rise in the number of abortions. We

are urging the public and TDs to rethink abortion". Figures released last week revealed that 6,577 abortions were carried out in Ireland in 2020 – meaning that 13,243 abortions were carried out in Ireland in just two years.

"We were promised, voters were promised, that abortion would be 'rare' post-repeal, but for the second year in a row, we have seen a huge rise in the number of abortions carried out in contrast to when abortion was illegal in Ireland," said Ms Uí Bhriain.

"This shocking rise in the abortion rate, with twice as many women undergoing abortion here as previously travelled, is indicative of the Government's complete lack of interest in reducing the number of abortions taking place," she said. "The reality is that abortion is anything but rare."



Pro-life groups in Antrim take part in the Rally for Life.



A pro-lifer in Belfast joins the Rally for Life.



Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim's Rally for Life group gather to advocate for the unborn.



Pro-life demonstrators gather in Castlebar, Co. Mayo.



Children join the Rally for Life in Castleknock in Dublin.



Pro-lifers in Castleknock, Dublin.



Family groups support the pro-life movement in Tralee, Co. Kerry. Photos: John Cleary



Pro-lifers in Clonmacnoise, Offaly.





# thousands attend pro-life rallies



Rally for Life, GPO, Dublin.



Rally for Life at the GPO in Dublin.



Pro-lifers at the Grand Parade, Cork.



Co. Kerry pro-life rally in Tralee. Photo: John Lleary



Pro-life group in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.



Longford town demonstrators highlight the number of abortions last year in Ireland.



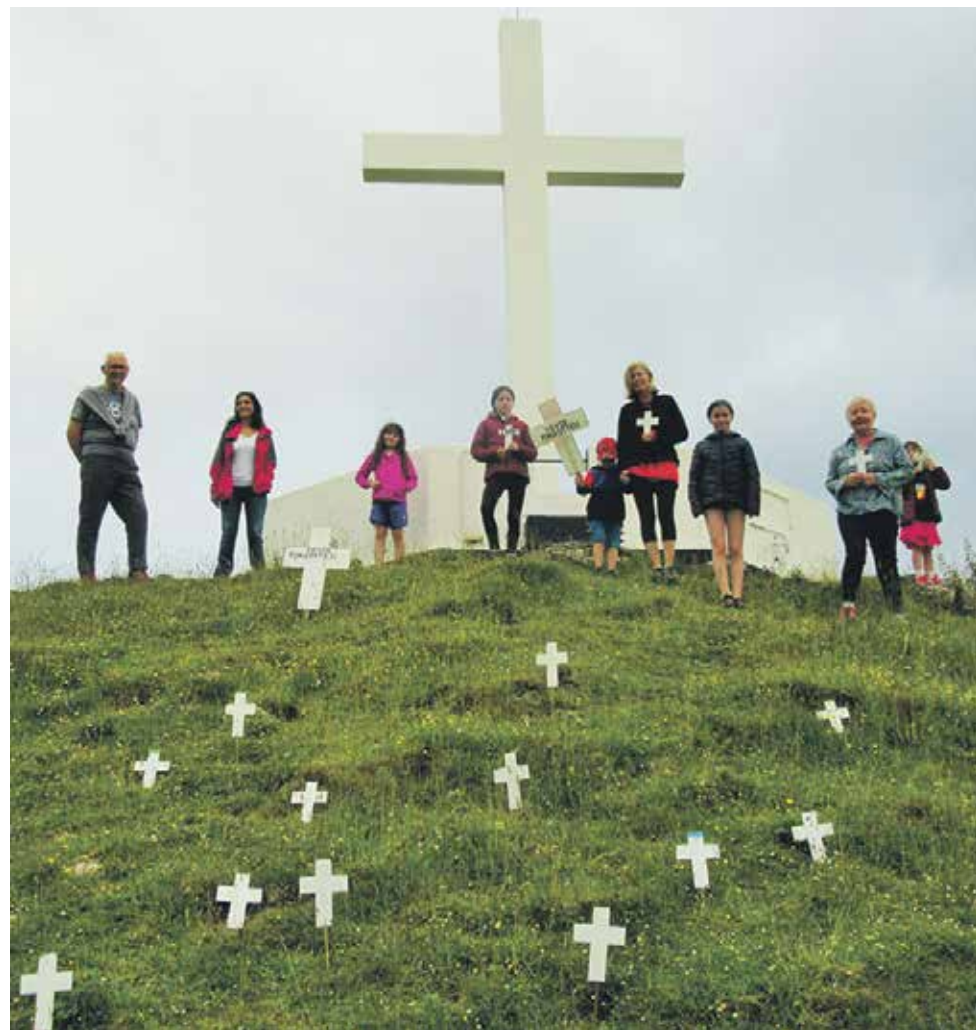
Pro-life demonstrator on Main Street, Cork.



Pro-life people attend the Rally for Life in Mayo.



Pro-life demonstrators at the Rally for Life in Co. Mayo.



Pro-life supporters from Leitrim gathered at Sheemore Hill, Co. Leitrim, for a vigil event, to coincide with vigil events held all over the country, prior to The Life Institute's national rally. The miniature white crosses were placed there temporarily, in remembrance of babies lost through abortion by members of CoS Leitrim Cares Pro-Life group.





Our world is mired in sexual confusion, which St John Paul II anticipated and provided a remedy for in his Theology of the Body, writes **Jason Osborne**

**R**ecent weeks saw the announcement of the first transgender athlete to compete in the Olympics, a development which resulted in an outpouring of anger, outrage, confusion and criticism from many quarters. New Zealand's Laurel Hubbard (born Gavin Hubbard) qualified to compete in the women's 87kg weightlifting category at the Tokyo Olympics. While many were shocked by the decision to admit the New Zealand athlete, others praised the move as a step towards greater inclusivity at the Olympic games.

Regardless of an individual's reaction to the news, the topic has proved polarising, divisive and confusing, symbolic of our world's current approach to sexuality and gender. The need, and desire, for clarity on the issue is becoming increasingly evident from the Church's perspective. Seeing this coming decades ago, St Pope John Paul II provided the Church with a gift of continuing relevance: Theology of the Body.

**“Theology of the Body was composed before this confusion reached the fever-pitch it has today”**

As mentioned, ours is a world in a state of dire confusion. There was, and is, no widespread agreement on the questions of where we come from, where we find ourselves, or where we're going. Still less is there agreement over the nature of the world, or the human place in it. St John Paul II spoke into this storm of perplexity with his Theology of the Body series – its delivery coming right as the world grappled with the 'sexual revolution' of the 1960's through to the 1980's in the US.

#### Unintelligible

He took his lead from the intuition of the Second Vatican Council, which insisted that, “When God is forgotten...the creature itself grows unintelligible”. He foresaw when few others did that forgetting God necessarily results in forgetting the meaning and purpose of the human body.

While Theology of the Body was composed before this confusion

reached the fever-pitch it has today, it was written in anticipation of it, the Pope seeing the debates of his day and understanding the direction they were moving in.

So what is Theology of the Body? It is the title given to a series of 135 reflections written by St John Paul II. Originally intended to be released as a book during his time as a cardinal, he was elected pope, and chose instead to deliver them using his Wednesday audiences during the first five years of his pontificate. While this all seems thoroughly ordinary, a Pope using his position to espouse the Church's teachings and reflections on them, the reaction to this particular teaching was and continues to be fiery and explosive. It begs the question as to what is so divisive about a collection of theological reflections on the body?

#### Misunderstanding

It's worth considering the fact that misunderstanding the nature of the body (and trying to change it as a result) is not a solely modern phenomenon. In order to see the rel-

evance of John Paul II's teachings on the body to the situation today, it's useful to look at some of the varied ways in which the human body has been viewed throughout history.

**“St John Paul II aimed to set out a ‘total vision’ of man that would encompass his beginning, history and destiny”**

The Gnostics thought that a person's true self was trapped or imprisoned inside their body, and that secret knowledge had to be obtained in order to set it free. A particular Gnostic sect, of which St Augustine was once a part, the Manicheans, understood that the goal of life was to set the spiritual 'essence' of the person free from the pollution of the body. Both Gnostics and Platonists thought that matter was inferior to the spirit, and more than that, that matter wasn't just 'low', but ulti-

mately evil because of its distance from pure spirit.

Centuries after Gnosticism and Platonism passed out of popularity, puritanism viewed the 'impure' body as a threat to the 'pure' soul, with René Descartes crowning this thought with his notion of the soul being like a “ghost in a machine”. The common thread running through all of these philosophies is that the body and soul are in some form of conflict, that they don't belong together. However, what John Paul II sought to communicate in his Theology of the Body is that these notions couldn't be further from the truth – the Church holds that we don't just ‘have’ bodies, we are our bodies, or as he puts it, our bodies reveal us.

#### Tendency

A more common tendency these days is to argue that the human person is nothing more than their body – no soul or spirit to be found. In keeping with this, they argue that the body has no meaning. While these may seem like purely academic disagreements, the influence

they hold over culture and popular thought isn't to be underestimated.

If a person buys into the idea that their body is holding them back in some way, whether from personal fulfilment or maximum pleasure, or if they come to the understanding that they should be set free from it, the results can be disastrous for an individual, as well as for a culture. They grow suspicious and resentful towards the body, and may seek to harm it or detach themselves from it.

**“It begs the question as to what is so divisive about a collection of theological reflections on the body?”**

Conversely, if a person holds that they are no more than their body, with no soul or spiritual dimension, what is to separate them from an animal? The issue is that if a person is no more than their spirit, they become completely detached from objective reality, whereas if they are no more than their body, there is nothing higher to aspire to than mere animality and baseness. Uncertainty around these issues has resulted in large-scale confusion in our times, and John Paul II remedied this with a clear picture of the human body.

# The good news of Theology of the Body





# “Should we fear the severity of these words or rather have confidence in their salvific content, in their power?”

St John Paul II comprised his Theology of the Body of two parts; the first focusing on three passages from Scripture and the second focusing on “The Sacrament”, which is the sign of Christ’s love for the Church and the love between a husband and wife. It’s essential to look at the Scriptural passages, the three “words” of Christ, that the Pope focused his reflections on if the sense of Theology of the Body is to be grasped.

## Christ appeals to the beginning

As with all solid Church teaching, St John Paul II grounded his reflections on the human body in Christ’s words. More specifically, he drew from three passages in which Christ referred to man’s beginning, his history, and then forward to the resurrection, the understanding being that a comprehensive and total view of humanity is required to undo much of the confusion people experience today.

## “Theology of the Body reminds the Faithful that, properly speaking, sex is not something humans do, but is something they are as male and female persons”

He began with Christ’s “appeal to the beginning”, which centred on the Gospel passage in which Jesus debates the Pharisees concerning divorce. Matthew 19:3-8 sees the Pharisees testing Jesus by asking him under what conditions it is lawful to divorce one’s wife, to which he responds:

“Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one’. So, they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.”

St John Paul saw in this response a referral back to Genesis, so that the misunderstanding Pharisees might have the origins of man explained to them. While the Genesis account of man’s creation is pre-scientific and archaic, he understood that it’s a mistake to consider it unscientific or outdated.

The pontiff explains that in Genesis, God intended to communicate essential spiritual truths to man, rather than a scientific picture. He saw in Jesus’ response to the Pharisees a roadmap for explaining the rational behind God’s plan for human sexuality. He reasoned that the Pharisees could only ask such questions if they had forgotten, or lost sight of, God’s design or plans, and so they needed to hear a re-statement of what John Paul II referred to as an “integral vision of man”.

Man’s state in the Garden of Eden was composed of “original solitude”,

“original unity” and “original nakedness”, according to John Paul. Original solitude refers to the fact that it was evident in the Garden that man is ultimately alone before God, the human person being absolutely unique in the pantheon of creation.

Original unity indicates, in the Pope’s view, that it was also evident from the beginning that man was made for another. The male and female form belie an incompleteness by their very nature – all of the systems of the human body, from the nervous system to the digestive system, work perfectly well on their own. There is only one exception: the reproductive system. Only the reproductive system requires a member of the other sex in order to serve its purpose. That the male and female bodies are made for each other are the obvious conclusion, the Pope wrote.

Finally, the Pope drew “original nakedness” from Christ’s reference to the Genesis narrative. St John Paul II observed that before the fall, Adam and Eve were naked without shame or lust, a state that the Pope also referred to as original innocence. He reflected that without sin clouding man’s heart, he is free to see and receive the other person as a gift, rather than as an object to be grasped.

All of this reflected, according to St John Paul II, what is now known as the “spousal meaning of the body”. What this means is that the human body has “the power to express the love by which the human person becomes a gift, thus fulfilling the deep meaning of his or her being and existence”.

## Christ appeals to history

St John Paul II then turned from Christ’s reference to Genesis to his reference to man’s current state: “historical man”. The first passage John Paul II focused on saw Jesus debating the Pharisees, but this one sees Christ diagnosing the ills in the human heart today:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

## Severity

The severity, and apparent impossibility, of these words are often off-putting to modern ears, but St John Paul II asked: “Should we fear the severity of these words or rather have confidence in their salvific content, in their power?” While to most these words sound like a condemnation, John Paul observed that God does not command the impossible.

## “St John Paul saw in this response a referral back to Genesis, so that the misunderstanding pharisees might have the origins of man explained to them”

Therefore, he argued, Jesus’ teachings against adultery in the heart show that acquiring a pure love is possible and realistic. St John Paul II went on to explain that the reason people sometimes think otherwise is because they become so attached to sin and its ensuing bad habits that they often identify with them and come to normalise it.

It is often assumed that lust is natural, and that to sin is simply to be human. This train of thought is what has compelled society to suggest that the Church is out of touch with reality in the realm of sexual ethics. However, Theology of the Body argues that nothing could be further from the truth; rather, the Church is where society should go to be put back in touch with reality.

## Christ appeals to the resurrection

The final passage St John Paul II referred to was Jesus’ discussion with the Sadducees in the Gospel according to Mark:

“There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no children; and the second took her, and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; and the seven left no children. Last of all the woman also

died. In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.’”

St John Paul II understood that Jesus’ words on Genesis show humanity where it comes from and its purpose, his words from the Sermon on the Mount show where people are going wrong in their hearts that they might correct their course, and his words about “eschatological man” hint at the final destination of men and women.

## Heavenly reality

Theology of the Body holds that the body is an essential component of heavenly reality. The lack of marriage in heaven doesn’t diminish its importance, but emphasises it in the Pope’s view. Leading into his discussion on ‘The Sacrament’, St John Paul II wrote that from the beginning, marriage on earth is intended as a heavenly sign. The nature of marriage is communal, intended to draw the spouses out of each other in love. In that sense, the Pope taught, marriage is a shadow and sign of what man has been created for: union with the Trinity in heaven.

Theology of the Body teaches that the human body reveals that man is created for communion, and heaven is the ultimate fulfilment of this. Heaven will see the perfect realisation of the spousal meaning of the body. As Pope John Paul II explained, “The absolute and eternal spousal meaning of the glorified body will be revealed in union with God himself, by seeing him ‘face to face’”. Marriage was instituted by God so that we would see the shape of this heavenly reality while still on earth.

As the world sees greater and greater levels of confusion in the area of human sexuality, St John Paul II showed us in his Theology of the Body that the desire for heaven has never left us, and our bodies testify to this.

In his Theology of the Body, St John Paul II aimed to set out a “total vision” of man that would encompass his beginning, history and destiny. Understanding the adage well that rules without relationship create rebellion, he invited people to seek the truth about reality by reflecting on their own human experience – rather than offering them another set of rules to be followed.

## Communicate

He chose to communicate not what man should do, but who man is, understanding that if he made that obvious, people would know how to live. St John Paul II understood that laws alone don’t change hearts, and that a new re-presentation of the Church’s teachings on human sexuality and sexual ethics was needed. As such, he sought to communicate not a defence and recitation of what was already in the public sphere, but a true unveiling of the beauty of God’s plan for human love and sexuality; something that would speak to the deepest desires of the human heart.

Theology of the Body reminds the Faithful that, properly speaking, sex is not something humans do, but is something they are as male and female persons. It reminds people who they are, as well as what it means to be human and how they should live, while clearing up other misconceptions along the way.





# Out&About

## Double ordination joy



**ARMAGH:** Fr Juan Jesus and Fr Callum pictured with Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin and Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh Michael Router after their ordination.



**DERRY:** Fr Austin McGirr celebrated his Golden Jubilee (50 years) as a priest June 19, in Portstewart Parish. He is pictured here with Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor, Ms Emer O'Keeffe, Ms Ruth McGuckian and Fr John Forsythe.



**ARMAGH:** Fr Juan Jesus Gonzalez Borrallo and Fr Callum Young lie before the altar of St Patrick's Cathedral during their ordination ceremony, June 29.



**LAOIS:** Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Bishop Denis Nulty is pictured after an ecumenical ceremony in the Church of the Holy Rosary, Abbeyleix to remember victims of farm accidents, June 27.

## IN SHORT

### 'Cancer services must be reopened now' – Aontú

GP referrals to Rapid Access Clinics are up an "astounding" 53% on 2020 due to the effects of the pandemic on services, Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín said.

The TD's comments came after he had secured statistics from the Department of Health which show that GP referrals for Rapid Access Clinics are up 53% on last year and up 26% on 2019's figures.

Mr Tóibín called the figures "alarming"

and called on the Government to reopen services now.

"The most frightening aspect of these statistics is that the Minister has told me he seeks the 'restoration of cancer services to 95% of pre covid levels' - this is shameful," he said. "Cancer services need to be reopened fully now."

Aontú believe cancer services should be operating at an increased capacity in order to deal with the backlogs in the system, rather than at a decreased capacity.

"Lives are at stake here," concluded Mr Tóibín.

### Abortion figures a 'damning indictment' of Govt, says PLC

The Pro-life Campaign's statement came after the 2020 statistics showed a 70% increase in abortions since law changed in 2019.

Eilís Mulroy of the PLC said figures show that voters were "misled every step of the way" by politicians over the reality of repealing the Eight Amendment.

"Today's abortion figures are devastating and are the opposite of what members

of the Government repeatedly promised when they said abortions would be 'rare' if people voted for repeal," Ms Mulroy said.

It cannot be "business as usual" for media and politicians, Ms Mulroy said, adding that "abortions increased by close to 20% in the first quarter of 2020 over the previous year prior to the onset of the Covid-19 lockdown".

"It is an outrage that over €20 million of taxpayers' money has been spent on abortion provision to date and not a cent on positive alternatives to abortion," Ms Mulroy concluded.



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Events deadline is a week in  
advance of publication



**LONGFORD:** The priests of St Mel's Cathedral Parish along with caretaker Paul Daly gathered June 23, to pray for all who are laid to rest in Ballymacormack Cemetery. Pictured (from left) Fr Michael McGrath CC, Fr Reji Kurian CC, Fr James MacKiernan Adm. and Mr Paul Daly.



**LONGFORD:** Fr Michael McGrath blesses the graves in Ballymacormack Cemetery, June 23.



**CORK:** Gerry McNamara presents a cheque for €10,000 to Dino, a member of the Syro-Malabar community at the SMA Church, Wilton, June 27, with Fr Michael O'Leary SMA and Fr Sibi Joseph, Chaplin of the Syro Malabar community.



**LOUTH:** With the sun shining on the Garden of Remembrance at the Augustinians Drogheda, a gathering of the African Community, June 24, with Fr Lazarus on hand to welcome them all.



**DOWN:** Summer break is a chance for the Catholic Chaplaincy in Queen's University Belfast, to catch up on much-needed repairs and maintenance, June 23. Cal and Jon, members of University Christian Outreach, lend a hand.



**KERRY:** Killarney Franciscan novice, Bro. Koen Van Durme, makes friends with a deer in the Kerry mountains.



**GALWAY:** The parish of Mountbellew-Moylough congratulates Stephanie King and Gary Mullin, who were married June 25 in St Mary's Church, Mountbellew. They are pictured with Fr Karl Burns.

## Events

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





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Parents urge Chile president to veto bill

● Pro-family organisations in Chile are urging President Sebastián Piñera to veto completely the recently passed “System of Guarantees of Children’s Rights” bill.

“Today the children of Chile are more defenceless than ever, thanks to the irresponsibility of parliamentarians who, knowing the content of the bill, gave it their approval. Mr President, I ask that for the love of the children of Chile and without delay, veto this law,” says a video from the pro-family CUIDE Chile Foundation.

The bill undermines “the relationship between parents and children, leaving the state as the first protector and guarantor of children, above the parents,” Pamela Pizarro, executive director of CUIDE Chile, told ACI Prensa.

### Canadian bishops, indigenous to meet Pope in December

● Some Canadian bishops, along with indigenous leaders, will meet with Pope Francis at the Vatican in December 2021, according to the Canadian bishops’ conference.

The delegations of a “small” group of Canadian bishops, along with indigenous First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders, will be scheduled for papal meet-

ings at the Vatican from December 17-20, 2021, “to foster meaningful encounters of dialogue and healing”, the Canadian bishops’ conference stated June 29.

Pope Francis is inviting each group of indigenous delegations – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – to a distinct meeting, the bishops said, praising “the Holy Father’s spirit of openness”.

### Nun surprised to be appointed to Eritrean bishops’ conference

● Comboni Sr Tsegghereda Yohannes said she was caught off guard when she was appointed secretary-general of the Eritrean bishops’ conference.

“This was most unexpected to me as my whole ministry has been on teaching,” she told *Catholic News Service* in a recent interview.

She has taught biology and chemistry in various schools. She also has served as a chaplain at Eritrea University and counselor for the Comboni Missionary Sisters in Kenya and Eritrea.

During the interview, the 64-year-old nun touched on various issues affecting Eritrea.

On the protracted conflict between her country and neighbouring Ethiopia, Sr Tsegghereda said it is unfortunate that the two countries should be at “loggerheads”.

### Tokyo Catholic churches to keep restrictions during Olympics

● The Tokyo Archdiocese says it will maintain infection control measures despite the Japanese government having lifted the Covid-19 state of emergency in many cities ahead of the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Tokyo Archbishop Tarcisio Isao Kikuchi said Catholics would remain on their guard following the government’s easing of restrictions, reported

ucanews.com.

He said pandemic control measures will be in place in areas covered by the Tokyo Archdiocese, which expects many people will visit the metropolitan area during the Olympics and Paralympics.

Following safety protocols, only a limited number of people will be allowed to enter churches, and they have to keep a one-metre distance from each other.

### Call for prayers after George Floyd’s killer sentenced

● Following Derek Chauvin’s June 25 sentencing for the murder of George Floyd, Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St Paul and Minneapolis prayed it would “bring a measure of peace and healing” to Mr Floyd’s family, his friends “and our community”.

At the same time, he said in statement, he also prayed this will prompt everyone “to go deeper in our conversations about race, justice, violence and peace”.

“Please join me in praying that the Lord will guide us in those conversations, no matter how difficult and uncomfortable they may be,” he said.

A former Minneapolis police officer, Mr Chauvin was given 22 and a half years in prison.

## Suspected arson attacks continue at churches across Canada

More churches across Canada have been destroyed or damaged by fires that police are describing as suspicious or suspected arson.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Morinville, Alberta, investigated a fire at St Jean Baptiste Church, a 100-year-old building that went up in flames early June 30.

The fire in Morinville, about 20 miles north of Edmonton, is being investigated as arson, Staff Sgt Tom Kalis told Canadian Broadcast Corp. News.

In a statement, St Paul Bishop Paul Terrio said, “It is with a sad heart that we learn the historic parish church of Morinville burned to the ground early this morning”.

He called for “prayers and support for our brothers and sisters of Morinville parish as they grieve the loss of their very beautiful and historic parish church”.

Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith released a video message on YouTube in which he called the news “heart-rending” and called for prayers for parishioners of St Jean Baptiste. He also said the archdiocese is working with parish priests and police on arson prevention protocols.

The fires occurred as news has emerged of unmarked graves at former residential schools on First Nations lands. About 70% of the government schools were run by Catholic religious orders, which worked to assimilate the First Nations students. A Truth and



Sacred Heart Mission Church on Penticton Indian Band land was destroyed by fire June 21, 2021. Photo: CNS.

Reconciliation Commission said more than 4,000 students died while attending the residential schools, and many of the families never heard what happened to them.

### Condemned

First Nations leaders have condemned the fires. Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band, who is also tribal chair and spokesman for the Okanagan Nation Alliance, told Global News June 27 he has no doubt the fires were intentionally set.

“Obviously, it’s the same group of people. Why did they

do it under the cover of darkness? Because it’s a criminal act and they are criminal,” he said.

On June 21, the Penticton Indian Band condemned the burning of two churches on First Nations Land in the South Okanagan area, saying they and the Osoyoos Indian Band “are in disbelief and anger over these occurrences, as these places of worship provided service to members who sought comfort and solace in the church”.

Perry Bellegarde, Assembly of First Nations national chief, said June 30 the indig-

enous way is not to burn things down, but, rather, is about building relationships and coming together.

Some politicians are also starting to speak out. On Twitter, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney said the burning of the Morinville church “appears to be another violent hate crime targeting the Catholic community”.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau mentioned the church fires, saying: “This is not the way to go. The destruction of places of worship is unacceptable. And it must stop.”

## Florida Catholics find comfort in rosary following apartment collapse

Following the sudden collapse of a multi-storey building with people trapped inside, many Catholics around South Florida have fled to a common refuge: the comforting presence of Mary.

So it was that several schools in the Miami Archdiocese reacted to the June 24 fall of the Champlain Towers South condo in Surfside by praying the rosary.

Reflecting on its glorious, joyful, sorrowful and luminous mysteries, they called on the Mother of God for aid and comfort.

“I think everyone understands that

in pain, you turn to your mother,” said Wendy Ortega, who helped organise a virtual online rosary June 27 for students, teachers, families and alumni of Christopher Columbus High School. “And in turning to our Mother, we turn to Jesus.”

About 2,000 people tapped into Columbus’ virtual rosary, coordinated by a group of instructors and alumni of the Marist school in Miami.

Taking part through YouTube, LinkedIn and Facebook Live, they were knitted together via the StreamYard platform. Individuals submitted their own inten-

tions in chat boxes.

They also prayed for members of a half-dozen families in the school’s “greater family” who remained missing. As of July 1, at least 18 people were confirmed dead and authorities put the number of those still unaccounted for at 145.

Miami-Dade County’s mayor said two of the 18 fatalities were children, ages 10 and 4.

Other schools also have held or planned their own rosaries. On June 28, Belen Jesuit Preparatory School in Miami drew 300 people to a “Prayer for Surfside”.

## Pope Francis: ‘Stop using Lebanon and the Middle East for outside interests’

Hosting a day of prayer for Lebanon with Catholic and Orthodox leaders July 1, Pope Francis said that the country should no longer be used to serve “unscrupulous interests”.

“Stop using Lebanon and the Middle East for outside

interests and profits,” the Pope said.

“The Lebanese people must be given the opportunity to be the architects of a better future in their land, without undue interference.”

Christian leaders from Lebanon spent the day at the

Vatican in private roundtable discussions about the future of their country, which is facing a severe economic crisis.

Representatives from Lebanon’s Maronite, Melkite, Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Chaldean, Syrian Catholic, and evangelical community came

to the Vatican for the day of prayer.

The day began with a moment of prayer in front of the high altar at St Peter’s Basilica before the Pope and the patriarchs placed lighted candles in the crypt chapel at the tomb of St Peter.





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## Cool pool in a heat wave



A swimming pool is hooked to a fire hydrant under a freeway underpass during a heat wave in Portland, Oregon, June 29, 2021. Photo: CNS

# Catholic groups urge action to curb pornography in Europe

Catholic campaigners have demanded action to curb growing online pornography and child abuse in the European Union, as the bloc's Catholic bishops welcomed new legislative proposals but also urged tighter controls.

"Internet access and digitisation have greatly increased during the coronavirus pandemic, and we're deeply concerned about the effects on children of harassment, abuse and grooming," said Bénédicte Colin, policy manager with the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe.

"In most EU member-states, it's illegal for minors

to access online pornography, but these regulations aren't put into practice. However effective your laws, they count for little or nothing if not implemented."

The French lay Catholic spoke as the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, representing over a thousand bishops, published a statement on current EU efforts to combat online crime.

In a June 20 interview with *Catholic News Service*, Ms Colin said her federation, grouping 28 Catholic family associations, was the only Brussels-based organisation working against internet

pornography in response to demands by parental groups across Europe.

"If it's possible to detect the relevant links and report illegal and harmful contents, it shouldn't be that difficult to block and remove them — yet there are still no overall controls," said Colin.

In December, the European Union's governing commission approved a Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act for enforcement across the 27 member-states in response to accelerated digitisation during the coronavirus pandemic. The act includes pornography and abuse controls.

In a report, the Catholic family federation welcomed the planned directives, but warned that "oversexualisation of children" in the media also needed to be barred as a root cause of crime and distorted attitudes among children.

It added that parents and family associations should be empowered to prevent sexual images and videos produced by children themselves. It said online access to pornography by minors had fuelled unprecedented sexual violence between children and should be viewed as a form of sexual abuse.

## Polish Catholic archbishop sanctioned by Vatican defends election as mayor

A Polish Catholic archbishop sanctioned by the Vatican has defended his election as a village mayor.

Archbishop Sławoj Leszek Głódz told Radio Zet on June 29 that his role as mayor of Piaski, in northeastern Poland, did not conflict with canon law.

Canon 285 of the Code of Canon Law says that "clerics are forbidden to assume public offices which entail a participation in the exercise of civil power".

But Archbishop Głódz, who holds a

doctorate in Eastern Catholic canon law, insisted that the canon did not apply to his new role.

"This is not a government function," he said.

Archbishop Głódz served as archbishop of Gdansk from 2008 to August 13, 2020, when the Pope accepted his resignation on his 75th birthday.

The apostolic nunciature in Poland announced on March 29 that the Vatican had sanctioned Archbishop Głódz after a

probe under the norms of Pope Francis' 2019 *motu proprio Vos estis lux mundi*.

The nunciature said that the Vatican had ordered Archbishop Głódz to live outside of Gdansk archdiocese and forbidden him to take part in public religious celebrations or meetings in the archdiocese.

The 75-year-old archbishop was elected on June 16 as mayor of Piaski, which is part of Bobrowka, the village where Archbishop Głódz was born in 1945.

## Vatican roundup

### Vatican secretary of state urges Catholic Church in Germany to unite

● Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, urged German Catholics to put aside visions and individual needs, noting, "the community must take precedence".

Addressing several German bishops during a church service June 29, Cardinal Parolin referred to Pope Francis' 2019 letter on the Synodal Path of the Catholic Church in Germany, reported the German Catholic news agency KNA. This reform dialogue deals with controversial issues such as Catholic sexual morality, priestly life, power and the separation of powers as well as the role of women in the Church.

Cardinal Parolin urged the Church in Germany "to return to a unity that does not depend on agreeing to common orientations, as is usual in politics, but on being rooted in God".

KNA reported that among those attending the service were Limburg Bishop Georg Bätzing, president of the German bishops' Conference; Cardinals Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising and Rainer Maria Woelki of Cologne; Berlin Archbishop Heiner Koch; and several other German bishops.

Bishop Bätzing had an audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican June 24 and said afterward that the Pope had encouraged the Catholic Church in Germany to "continue on the Synodal Path".

### Vatican suppresses Italy-based lay movement

● With the approval of Pope Francis, the Vatican has ordered the dissolution of an Italy-based lay movement, citing problems with the group's origins, catechesis, governance, respect for members' consciences, handling of donations and with the divisions it allegedly has created among clergy of the Archdiocese of Catanzaro-Squillace, where it is based. "The presumed revelations that gave birth to the Apostolic Movement through its founder, Mrs Maria Marino, are to be considered not of supernatural origin," the decree said.

While Mrs Marino has

not been public about what she says were apparitions of Mary to her, she said they inspired her to establish the movement in 1979 and form the basis of the two key texts used to educate members.

The decree ordering the suppression of the "Apostolic Movement" founded 40 years ago by Maria Marino was dated June 10 and signed by Cardinals Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; Beniamino Stella, prefect of the Congregation for Clergy; and Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life.

### Pope and the US Secretary of State Blinken meet

● Climate change, migration and geopolitical hot spots were on the agenda as Pope Francis met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken June 28.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said that during the 40-minute meeting, which "took place in a cordial climate", the Pope recalled his 2015 visit to the US and expressed "his affection and concern for the people of the United States of America".

While the Vatican provided scarce detail of the meetings, US Secretary of State spokesman Ned Price said that during his meeting with the Pope, Mr Blinken reiterated the "United States' commitment to working closely with the Holy See to address global challenges and the needs of the world's least fortunate and most vulnerable, including refugees and migrants.

"The secretary and Pope Francis also discussed China as well as the humanitarian crises in Lebanon, Syria, the Tigray region of Ethiopia and Venezuela," Mr Price said.

Pope Francis and Mr Blinken's discussion on the issue of human rights and religious freedom in China is a particular area of concern for the Vatican.





# Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

**T**oward the end of this week, rumours made the rounds in the Vatican press corps that Friday would be a *venerdì di fuoco*, meaning a day of fire. Friday came and went without sparks, so we breathed a sigh of relief. It turned out to be short-lived, however, because Saturday brought a blaze which, depending on what happens next, could burn out of control.

**“It was one of those days where you could almost hear and feel the tectonic plates of history shifting beneath your feet”**

The Vatican's criminal tribunal announced yesterday it had indicted 10 people and three corporate entities for various forms of financial corruption, much of it centring on an ill-fated \$400 million real estate deal in London carried out by the Secretariat of State, long the 800-pound gorilla among the Vatican's various departments.

For the very first time, one of those defendants is a Prince of the Church – Italian Cardinal Angelo Becciu, the former *sostituto*, or “substitute”, meaning the number two official in the Secretariat of State from 2011 to 2018.

Cardinal Becciu immediately released a statement through his attorney asserting his “absolute innocence”, as he has from the beginning of the saga, and other defendants put out similar declarations.

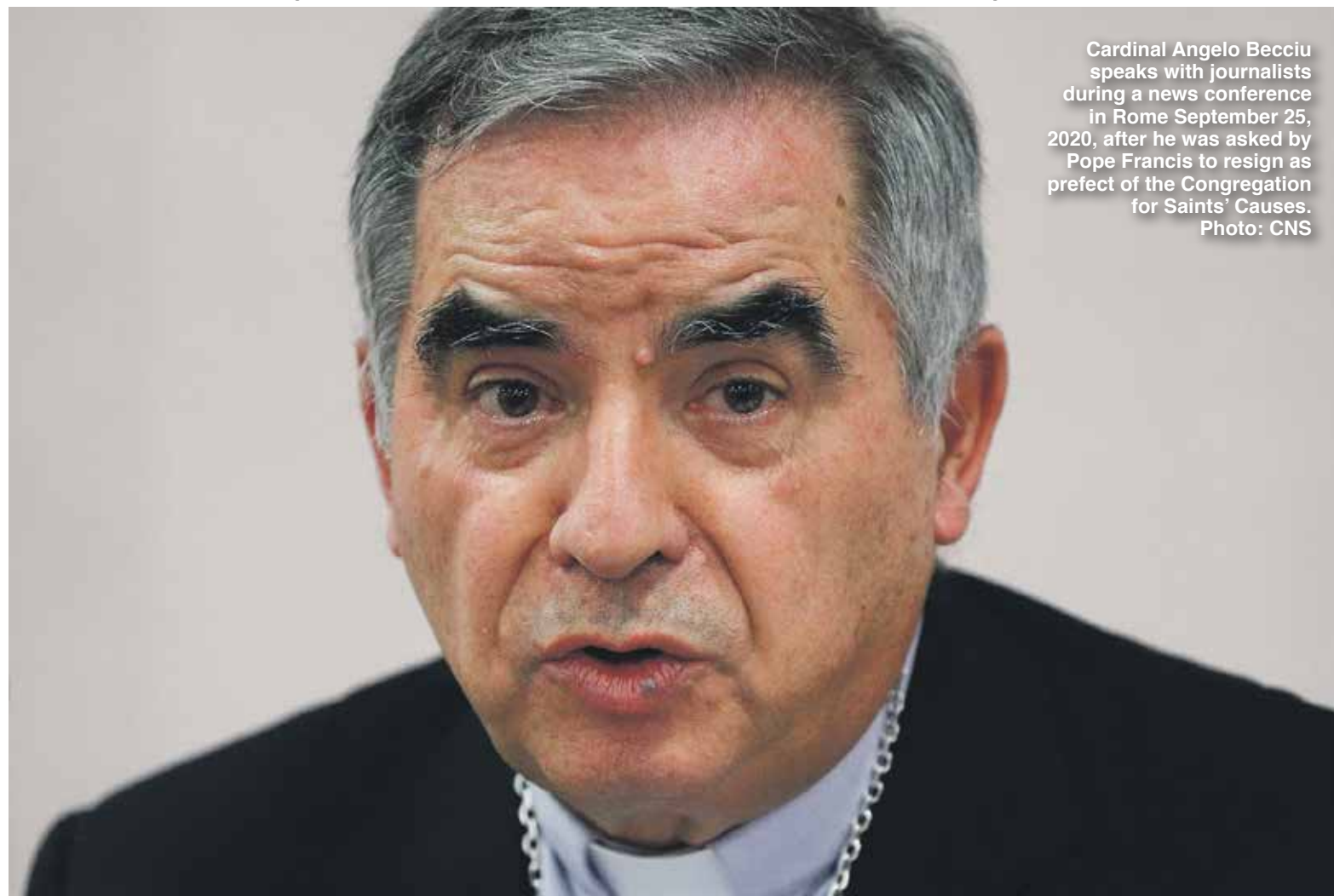
It was one of those days where you could almost hear and feel the tectonic plates of history shifting beneath your feet. In the Catholic system, being a cardinal used to mean never having to say you're sorry; now, it seems, even cardinals can be indicted and prosecuted, just like everyone else.

Yet among those following the course of Pope Francis's reform, the indictments also appeared to raise as many questions as they answered. How the responses are fleshed out in the days and months to come will determine whether Saturday is indeed remembered as a truly historic turning point, or merely the latest chapter in everything in the Vatican changing so that everything can stay the same.

## Question 1: What about Parolin and Peña Parra?

Two other figures involved in the London scandal were not among those indicted Saturday: Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Secretary of State, and Venezuelan Archbishop Edgar

## Historic Vatican indictments raise as many questions as they answer



Cardinal Angelo Becciu speaks with journalists during a news conference in Rome September 25, 2020, after he was asked by Pope Francis to resign as prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes. Photo: CNS

**“A November 25, 2018, memorandum from Parolin, for example, clearly states, ‘I’m favourable to the execution of the contract’ with one of the lay Italian financiers, Gianluigi Torzi, now under indictment”**

Peña Parra, the current *sostituto* and thus the successor to Cardinal Becciu. According to background on the investigation published by Vatican News, the official news outlet, prosecutors found that neither man “had been effectively informed to be fully aware of the juridical effects that the different categories of actions would cause”.

The London deal began in 2013 when the Secretariat of State, with Cardinal Becciu still in office, decided to invest about \$240 million to purchase a partial share in a former Harrod's warehouse in the upscale Chelsea neighbourhood, with the idea being at the time to convert the property into luxury apartments. Through various twists and turns, the affair continued until 2019, by which time Archbishop Peña Parra had taken over. Through it all, Cardinal Parolin was the man ultimately in charge.

There's a clear paper trail showing that Cardinal Parolin and Archbishop Peña Parra had been briefed

on the details of the various transactions involved and gave their assent. A November 25, 2018, memorandum from Cardinal Parolin, for example, clearly states, “I’m favourable to the execution of the contract” with one of the lay Italian financiers, Gianluigi Torzi, now under indictment.

## British judge

That memo, among other documents, was the basis for a British judge earlier this year lifting a freeze on Mr Torzi's assets in the UK, concluding that the evidence against Mr Torzi couldn't sustain a conviction because his moves were fully approved by the Vatican's most senior officials.

If it's true that Cardinal Parolin and Archbishop Peña Parra were deceived by their own staff and other Vatican officials, acting in cahoots with external consultants, that would appear to raise troubling questions about their judgment and competence.

For many observers, however, it's tempting to reach the conclusion that

Cardinal Parolin and Archbishop Peña Parra were spared at least in part because they're close to Pope Francis and thus politically “untouchable”. Cardinal Becciu, meanwhile, had fallen out of favour with the pontiff in 2018 and could be seen as “expendable”.

The Vatican's time-honoured, old guard strategy in criminal matters has been to insulate the higher-ups from blame while allowing some smaller fish, usually a layman or a minor cleric, to take the fall. The cynical perspective on these indictments thus would be that the only thing different here is that the word “minor” has been taken out of the playbook; now, if papal expediency demands, even a cardinal may be cut loose.

How credible the findings about Cardinal Parolin and Archbishop Peña Parra are doubtless will come up at trial, since defence attorneys can be expected to argue that whatever their clients did was fully endorsed and authorised from above.

It's also not yet clear whether the tribunal will permit Parolin and Peña Parra to be called as witnesses during the trial, which is set for its first hearing on July 27. When former Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone was at the centre of an entirely different corruption case in 2017, the court refused to allow defence attorneys to question him, leading to objections about due process.

## Question 2: Why René Brühlhart?

Becciu may be the highest-profile defendant among the ten, but arguably he's not the most surprising. That distinction probably belongs to Swiss lawyer René Brühlhart, former president of a new Vatican watchdog unit called the “Financial Information Authority”, or AIF, created under Pope emeritus Benedict XVI. Prosecutors charge that Mr Brühlhart, along with his former deputy Tommaso Di Ruzza, “seriously violated the basic rules governing supervision” by lending a patina of legitimacy to an illegitimate payment to Mr Torzi.

It's a somewhat puzzling finding, given that under the statutes of AIF (now known as “ASIF”, the Financial Supervision and Information Authority) it has no supervisory power whatsoever over the Secretariat of State, and didn't at the time Mr Brühlhart led



## “The statement didn’t specify what the defendants are alleged to have done to justify those charges”

it. The lone Vatican entity it supervises is the Institute for the Works of Religion, popularly known as the “Vatican bank”. In the abstract, it’s thus hard to know which “basic rules governing supervision” Mr Brühlhart is supposed to have violated.

Moreover, Mr Brühlhart was a non-executive president of AIF, meaning that while he provided direction and vision, operational authority was invested in Mr Di Ruzza. Even if he’d wanted to okay a shady deal, he had no authority of his own to do so.

By way of background, Mr Brühlhart previously served as head of the financial intelligence unit of Liechtenstein from 2004 to 2012, when he helped end the tiny principality’s reputation as a financial pariah and earn a spot on “whitelists” of virtuous financial players. During his term, Mr Brühlhart was elected the vice-chair of the Egmont Group, an international consortium of financial intelligence units facilitating the share of information to combat financial crime and the financing of terrorism.

When Mr Brühlhart was brought on board under Benedict, it was taken as a sign of the Vatican’s seriousness about reform. During his term, he helped create a reporting system for suspicious transactions that won praise from evaluators from Moneyval, the Council of Europe’s anti-money laundering agency.

Some observers here suspect it may be those Moneyval evaluations that prompted the indictment, since they often praised Mr Brühlhart but criticised the Promoter of Justice’s office, since 2013 led by Italian layman Gian Piero Milano, for slowness in prosecuting financial crime. Cynics wonder if including Mr Brühlhart among the indictments is a form of payback from Mr Milano for a perceived grudge.

In a statement released Saturday, Mr Brühlhart called his indictment “a procedural blunder”, predicting that it will fall apart as soon as his defence is able to make a case.

In the meantime, another thought occurs: Though Mr Brühlhart earned a handsome salary by Vatican standards – reportedly \$425,000 a year, plus an additional \$6,000 a month for personal expenses including regular travel to Rome – it was likely a pay cut by the conventional standards of the financial world in which he moves. Yet he answered the summons of a Pope and spent six difficult years trying to build a new financial intelligence system for the Vatican, and, in the end, this is his exit prize.

No matter what happens at trial, other professionals out there, with talents that could be of use to the Vatican someday, might look at the Brühlhart story and wonder, “Why would anybody in their right mind take the gig?”

### Question 3: Where’s the transparency?

When the indictments were handed down at noon Rome time on Saturday, all reporters had to go on was a two-page Vatican statement, which mostly consisted of a list of the people named and a

general description of the charges they face – “abuse of office”, for example, or “embezzlement” and “extortion”.

The statement didn’t specify what the defendants are alleged to have done to justify those charges.

A couple of hours later, Vatican News published a detailed background piece providing considerably more detail, though it still did not specify exactly which laws the defendants are alleged to have broken and how their conduct was illegal under the precise terms of those laws.

Moreover, at least one of the defendants, Mr Brühlhart, claimed that as of Saturday at 2:30 pm, he had not received “any formal notification in accordance with Vatican law”, meaning that he had not been presented with a formal bill of indictment.

## “In historic first, Vatican indicts a cardinal, nine others for financial crime”

In truth, there is a sprawling, 488-page bill of indictment from the Promoter of Justice’s office breaking down the charges which was prepared in advance of Saturday’s announcement. However, a decision apparently was made not to release it to reporters or even to defendants before going public with the charges.

There may well have been legitimate strategic reasons for that omission, but some observers in Rome wonder if Vatican officials simply didn’t want anyone taking too close a look at the fine print during the first news cycle, preferring instead what they got – a largely laudatory round of headlines in the global press along the lines of, “In historic first, Vatican indicts a cardinal, nine others for financial crime”. (By the way, that includes *Crux*.)

Given that one of the watchwords of the current reform is supposed to be “transparency”, questions may be raised about exactly how transparent this process will turn out to be.

For now, one thing seems clear: At least some of the defendants in this case, including Cardinal Becciu, do not seem inclined to go gently into that good night. Instead, they appear prepared to mount a rigorous defence, and especially given everything Cardinal Becciu knows about where the bodies are buried in the Vatican, that could get interesting in a hurry.

Most likely, the hearing on July 27 will lead to a postponement for the traditional Italian vacation period in August, meaning it may be September when things start in earnest. If so, the trial seems destined to become the Vatican’s “must-see TV” of the fall season.

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

# Bishops support investigation of former US residential schools



Carol Zimmermann

In response to a late June announcement, the United States will be conducting an investigation of former federally funded boarding schools to search for graves of Native American children, a spokesperson for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops said June 28 the bishops will “look for ways to be of assistance”.

“It is important to understand what might have occurred here in the United States”, said the statement from Chieko Noguchi, who added the bishops will be “following closely” the investigation announced June 22 by Interior Secretary Deb Haaland.

Ms Haaland, who is a member of the Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico and is Catholic, announced this upcoming review, called the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, during her remarks at the virtual conference of the National Congress of American Indians.

“I know that this process will be long and difficult. I know that this process will be painful. It won’t undo the heartbreak and loss we feel. But only by acknowledging the past can we work toward a future that we’re all proud to embrace,” she said.

Many of these government-funded schools were Church-run boarding schools.

### Initiative

The US Interior Department’s initiative was prompted by the recent discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia. Just two days after the US initiative was announced, 751 unmarked graves were discovered at a second site, a former Catholic residential school in Saskatchewan.

“We are deeply saddened by the information coming out of two former residential boarding school sites in Canada. We cannot even begin to imagine the deep sorrow these discoveries are causing in Native communities across North America,” said Ms Noguchi in her statement.

By “bringing this painful story to light”, she added, “may it bring some measure of peace to the victims and a heightened awareness so that this disturbing history is never repeated”.

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition said in a June 25 statement that it felt “deep gratitude” for the upcoming investigation, which it said will “provide critical resources to address the ongoing historical trauma of Indian boarding schools. Our organisation has been pursuing truth, justice and healing for boarding school survivors, descendants and tribal communities”.

The group, based in Minneapo-



Indigenous performer Danielle Migwans attends a march on Canada Day in Toronto July 1, 2021, after the discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves on the grounds of two former residential schools for indigenous children in Canada. Photo: CNS

lis, has identified 367 “historically assimilative Indian boarding schools that operated in the US between approximately 1870 until 1970”, but it has only been able to locate records from 38% of these schools.

“Because the records have never been fully examined, it is still unknown how many Native American children attended, died or went missing from Indian boarding schools,” the statement said. “We believe that the time is now for truth and healing. We have a right to know what happened to the children who never returned home from Indian boarding schools.”

## “These schools in the US came about after the Civilisation Fund Act of 1819, which aimed to introduce ‘habits and arts of civilisation’ to Indian tribes”

On its website, the coalition points out that over 350 government-funded, and often Church-run, boarding schools operated across the country in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Although the group said it does not have an accurate count of the number of children who were placed in these schools, it said it was likely hundreds of thousands.

It also notes that these children were voluntarily or forcibly removed from their homes and families and “punished for speaking their Native language, banned from acting in any way that might be seen to represent traditional or cultural practices, stripped of traditional clothing, hair and personal belongings and behaviours reflective of their Native culture”.

These schools in the US came

about after the Civilisation Fund Act of 1819, which aimed to introduce “habits and arts of civilisation” to Indian tribes.

The new initiative, which will present a final report next April, will not only identify the locations of these former residential schools in the US but also will identify where there may have been burials and what tribes the attending students were from.

In Canada, not only have hundreds of graves been detected at two former residential schools, but an investigation by Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the past six years has revealed accounts of brutality, neglect and sexual abuse within the network of these schools.

Chief Cadmus Delorme of Canada’s Cowessess First Nation has called for a papal apology for what has happened, saying it would be “one stage of many in the healing journey”.

### Catholic Bishops

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops announced June 10 that a delegation of “elders/knowledge keepers, residential school survivors and youth from across the country” representing First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities is preparing to travel to the Vatican.

Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina, Saskatchewan, said Pope Francis would be able to listen to their stories and hear, in person, what they need from him and the Church.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Archbishop Michael Miller has said the archdiocese will “offer to assist with technological and professional support” to help the affected nations in whatever way they choose to honour, retrieve and remember their deceased children.

By Carol Zimmermann, CNS reporter



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Right to life more important than political demands

**Dear Editor,** Given the current debate about the site for the new National Maternity Hospital, it is important to ask the question that, while our country needs more hospital beds, do we really need more abortion facilities?

The number of abortions increased dramatically to 6,666 in 2019. In 98% of those cases, no threat to the life or health of the mother or baby was notified.

Many Irish citizens are ashamed of the changes that have taken root in our health services over the past

three years. The grim reality behind our abortion regime is coming to light in medical publications and senior Irish doctors are now being trained internationally to carry out late-term abortions, using horrific methods, despite assertions prior to the referendum that late-term abortions would be illegal.

For many years prior to 2018 our National Maternity Hospital provided excellent, world class care, for mothers and babies, using the 'two-patient' approach. This approach recognised

the reality and intrinsic rights of the baby in the womb.

If the site at St Vincent's were simply handed over to the State, without the constraints of such an ethic; it is likely to be soon associated with horrific abortion practices. The right to life of the next generation of Irish citizens is far more important than the politically motivated demand for even more abortion clinics.

*Yours etc.,  
Eamon Fitzpatrick,  
Strandhill Road, Sligo*

### Defenceless human being in the womb left without rights

**Dear Editor,** As the country rightly recoiled in horror last week, with the media coverage of the court case in relation to tragic baby Christopher Joseph Kiely, we would do well to remember the other 6,666 babies aborted here in the first year following the legalisation of abortion in Ireland in 2018.

Meanwhile, 'Yes' campaigners, 'Yes' politicians and 'Yes' voters must feel vindicated, now that the European Parliament voted and declared, in the same week, that abortion access is 'a human right', that is, for all except the defenceless human being in the womb.

*Yours etc.,  
Sinéad Tracey,  
Leitrim Village*



### Church should have challenged State 'more rigorously'

**Dear Editor,** Can I congratulate Larry Donnelly on his excellent article [IC 24/06/2021] underlining the stupidity of some of the rules we have had to endure as churchgoers during the pandemic.

The willingness of Church authorities to agree with and enforce these regulations is very disappointing. Surely the policing of these regulations

should be left to the State, and the courts allowed to adjudicate if necessary. We have also recently been given a letter from the archbishop outlining the dire state of the diocesan finances – a direct result of the Mass regulations. Is the Church looking for compensation from the State for implementing these policies? – not to my knowledge. It is depend-

ing on the diminishing band of Church attendees to solve the crisis. The net result of this acquiescent policy will to my mind be a permanent drop in Church attendance. Surely attendance at Mass is important enough to warrant the Church challenging the State more rigorously.

*Yours etc.,  
Tom Nolan  
Foxrock, Dublin*

### Moving confession online

**Dear Editor,** Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of us now attend holy Mass online. Might I suggest that other ceremonies should also be online. In particular, the Sacrament of Penance. Visiting our Church recently, I wondered when the confession boxes were last used.

*Yours etc.,  
Seán Quinn,  
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.*

## Catholics must push for ethical medications

**Dear Editor,** In 2005 the Pontifical Academy for Life provided justification for the Covid-19 vaccines in use in the present circumstances but told Catholics to demand ethical alternatives. Unfortunately the use of foetal cell lines in medicine is so pervasive that if Catholicism were to reject drugs tested with any foetal cell line, it would reject many aspects of modern medicine.

Individual Catholics aware of such inhumanity and its incongruity with the commandments feel, as Stacy Trasancos puts it, powerless other than to "accept the vaccines without accepting them... pointing a finger while getting a jab... benefiting from abortion while opposing it". Conscience soothing is not enough.

Catholicism should not relinquish the ability granted it to influence ethical decisions on how to deploy human-kind's current power over nature. But is there a sense that Catholics at all levels including the Vatican are passive about unethical medical drug creation practices? This despite a CDF clarifying note in December 2020. There is no general Catholic objection demanding ethical alternative vaccines. There is no effective Catholic reminder that ethical alternatives are possible. One such is The John Paul II Medical Research Institute, Iowa. It works at developing ethically derived human cell lines to bio-manufacture vaccines replacing the HEK293 and PER.

C6 cells. It has the required technical resources and expertise. It relies on financial support from individuals and organisations. Its budget for 2021 is \$750,000, (150,000 contributions of \$5!). Whereas the developed world has become practically non-reliant on Catholic hospitals, ministry in humanitarian ethical medicine awareness is the new imperative. Catholicism doesn't have to submit to or join a culture guided by untutored movements of will. But which synod will provide the leadership?

*Yours etc.,  
Neil Bray  
Cappamore, Co. Limerick*

## facebook community

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

### No outdoor speakers at Archdiocese of Dublin churches makes no sense

As I listened this morning to the Mass readings for Feast of Sts Peter and Paul I pondered on the apparent lack of missionary passion of today's Irish Church. That said I know of one local Kerry church that has managed to minister beyond the church door and this is so well appreciated by a people with a hunger for Gospel and Eucharist. – **Alan Whelan**

### Vindication for Catholic college after 'fake news' slur about body shaming

Amazing how journalists can influence politicians against the Catholic church. And politicians do not always have the guts to stand up to biased journalism. – **Brendan Kennedy**

The politicians themselves, except for a few, are anti-Catholic Church. The Church has been under attack for quite a while in this country, more so than in any other country in Europe. – **Mary Duggan Murphy**

Just shows the calibre of some journalists and politicians we have when they hear one side of a story they jump in both feet first. I hope the teachers in this school take action. It might just make these journalists and politicians engage their brains first before spouting crap. I won't hold my breath. – **Daragh Harmon**

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

## 'Disappointed' with decision to fly Pride flag

**Dear Editor,** When my wife, daughter and I started to attend Sunday mass in the Redemptorist Church in Limerick, we had the pleasure of listening to many a homily by Fr Adrian Egan. He was, and I imagine still is, a wonderful speaker, with or without notes. However, in all those homilies I don't ever remember him mentioning rainbow flags or the LGBT community. I feel Fr Egan has fallen into the modern propensity of picking a popular cause and aligning himself with it.

I imagine Fr Egan's fellow priests all over Ireland have causes they would like to espouse but they obey the rules and do it the way the church decrees. I'm extremely disappointed by Fr Egan's 'in your face' action.

Finally, when we attended the Redemptorist Church there was a banner over the front entrance which exclaimed "This is God's house, your home. All are welcome here". All are welcome in the church, and they don't need their particular flag flying on the building to know that. It's condescending, populist and elitist.

*Yours etc.,  
Pat Duffy  
Medieval Quarter, Limerick*

## Making a womb a tomb

**Dear Editor,** It bemuses me to see the protesters and their slogans re: the new hospital [the new National Maternity Hospital] and its ethics. Perhaps a more apt slogan would be 'Don't make the womb the unborn's tomb'.

*Yours etc.,  
Brid Fitzpatrick,  
Terenure, Dublin*

## Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world



▲ **RUSSIA:** Russia's Sports Minister Oleg Matytsin places candles during a traditional prayer service at Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow, June 30, ahead of the team's departure for the Tokyo Olympic Games. Photos: CNS.

◀ **USA:** Geoffrey Esper and Joey Chestnut, contestants in Nathan's Famous Fourth of July International Hot Dog-Eating Contest, stare each other down at the official weigh-in ceremony in the Manhattan borough of New York City, July 2.

**HOLY LAND:** Palestinian demonstrators take part in a night protest against Israeli settlements in Beita in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, June 22.



**HOLY LAND:** A nun kneels during the celebration of the Feast of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, presided by the Custody's Vicar Fr Dobromir Jasztal, at the Basilica of the Agony at Gethsemane, just outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, July 1.



**BURKINA FASO:** Burkina Faso Prime Minister Christophe Joseph Marie Dabirè, second from left, talks to a wounded man at a hospital in Solhan, following an attack two days earlier that left at least 160 people dead.



**CONGO:** Smoke rises as residents walk near homes destroyed by lava deposited by the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo in Goma.



# What's inside the face of God?



**O** God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water.

We pray these words with sincerity. Do we ever really mean them? Can we honestly say that the heartaches that drive us to our knees are a longing to see God? When we're obsessed with an ache that won't let us sleep, can we honestly say we're thirsting for God? At first glance, no. Our existential thirsts tend to be more earthly, more self-focused, and more erotic than would merit the claim that they are a longing for God. Only the rare mystic (or perhaps one of us in a rare moment) can, at a given time, examine her burning desires and say honestly, what I want is God. I'm longing for God.

## Distinction

However, there's another side to this. We need to make a distinction between what we explicitly desire and what we implicitly desire within that same desire. Allow me an earthly example as an illustration. Imagine a man on a given night feeling restless and seeking out sex with a prostitute. Is he longing to see the face of God? Is he longing for union inside the body of Christ? Explicitly, no. That's the furthest thing from his mind, at least from his conscious mind. However, there's something else inside his awareness at that same time (which he in fact knows but of which he is not explicitly aware). His desire, which on this evening



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

has constellated so strong sexually, is in its true intent a desire to see the face of God and to be in union with others inside the body of Christ. Implicit in what he is hungering for is what St Augustine expresses in his famous axiom: You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. He is longing to see the face of God.

**“Can we honestly say that the heartaches that drive us to our knees are a longing to see God?”**

In teasing out this distinction between what is explicitly

intended in an act and what is implicitly contained in that same act, we should not conflate this with our notions of conscious and unconscious. These latter terms are psychological categories, valid and important in their own right, whereas explicit and implicit are philosophical terms, slightly different in meaning, with a particular insight into what is actually contained in any act. Again, perhaps an example can be helpful. Imagine yourself making a simple, elementary judgment. You look at a wall and say, this wall is white. That's what you are aware of explicitly at that moment. However, for you to make that judgment (This wall is white) you also at the same time have to know, know implicitly, really, and as surely as you know

that the wall is white, some other things. First, that the wall is not green or any other colour; and, further, that you cannot say that the wall is not white without denying the truth of what you are seeing. These latter dimensions are something you in fact know, but of which you are not consciously aware.

**“You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you”**

Now, apply this to the man whose desire drives him to have sex with a prostitute. We see that what is on his mind explicitly at that moment is not any desire to see the face of God or to be in union inside the body of Christ. Far from it. However, as he is engaging in this act, he implicitly knows that this is not what he is really searching for and that he cannot pretend that it is. This implicit knowing of these other dimensions is not just a function of conscience, but a function of knowing itself.

There are multiple implications from this, beyond not feeling false guilt for the fact that, most times, we find ourselves congenitally incapable of making God the real focus, main object, and the 'all' of our desires. Mostly we don't see our obsessions and heartaches as having God as their real object. I suspect that this is because we do not conceive of God as containing the powerful allure, attractiveness, beauty, colour, and sexuality that can so obsess us in this world. I wonder if anyone (outside of a mystic) has ever obsessed about seeing the face of God because he or she sensed that in God there was even a richer beauty, attractiveness, and sexual allure than can be found here on earth. Do we ever imagine God as infinitely more interesting and alluring than any sexual partner on earth?

## Alluring

Sadly, the God of religions is hard to long for! That God, while philosophically perfect and alluring, is existentially devoid of the real beauty and eros that obsesses us on earth.

Therese of Lisieux, young doctor of the soul that she was, offers us this warning: “Be careful not to seek yourself in love because you will end up with a broken heart that way.” Thankfully, an implicit knowledge of what we are actually longing for can help save us from that.

**“We need to make a distinction between what we explicitly desire and what we implicitly desire within that same desire”**



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, July 8, 2021

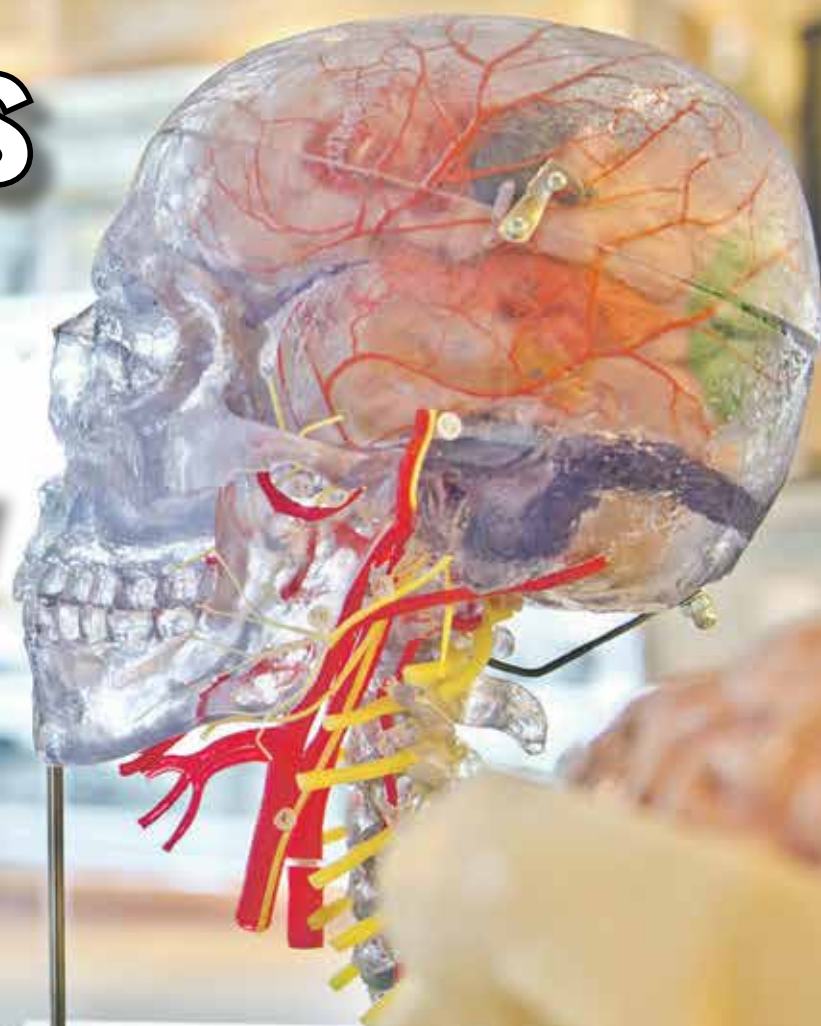
## Personal Profile

Following St Augustine in the 21st century

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## Two decades of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland



**A**cquired Brain Injury Ireland (ABII) recently celebrated its 21st birthday, the organisation being set up in 2000 to meet a need to provide “life-changing, specialised neuro-rehabilitation” for people in Ireland whose lives have been changed forever by brain injury. This includes people whose brains have been damaged as a result of a wide-range of events, such as falls, road traffic accidents, concussions and strokes.

The leading provider of community-based rehabilitation services for people in Ireland living with an acquired brain injury, ABII was established in 2000



**Acquired Brain Injury Ireland marks 21 years of service for brain injury survivors and their families across Ireland, writes Jason Osborne**

as the Peter Bradley Foundation. CEO and co-founder of the organisation Barbara O’Connell spearheaded the development after her brother, Peter Bradley, suffered two brain injuries as a result of two serious traffic accidents before the age of 42.

As a result of this, Peter was no longer able to live independently and having no access to appropri-

ate rehabilitation services, he was transferred from acute care to a nursing home.

Commenting on the 21st anniversary of the founding of the organisation, Ms O’Connell said:

“Too often people who acquire brain injuries are young and left [in] inappropriate settings such as nursing homes, acute hospitals or at home where families are una-

ble to cope.

“The findings of the Ombudsman’s ‘Wasted Lives’ report have been at the core of our purpose from the very beginning: to prevent individuals with brain injury going into the nursing home system, to take those misplaced there out, and to give them the specialist response they need to rebuild their lives. We still have a long way to go.”

Peter’s ordeal was what drove Ms O’Connell to set up the foundation, which saw the opening of the first ABII house in Dublin. It was a place her brother and other brain injury survivors could be supported to live life with as much independence as could be managed.

Since then, ABII has gone on to become Ireland’s leading provider of “clinically-led community rehabilitation” for people with brain injury aged between 18 and 65. They now operate 16 rehabilitation residences, as well as providing in-home community, day and vocational rehabilitation programmes alongside family supports in every province in Ireland.

We might be inclined to think that brain injury isn’t as prevalent as it is because of the severity of it, but that would be a mistake. According to ABII, there are 19,000 new brain inju-

» Continued on Page 33



## Family News

## AND EVENTS

**PASSENGER RIGHTS NOT PROTECTED DURING PANDEMIC – REPORT**

- Airlines and EU member states did not fully protect passenger rights throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a report by the European Court of Auditors.
- Travellers often lost out on money due to cancelled flights or because they were not informed about their right to be reimbursed.
- The report also found that at the same time, while airlines were being bailed out with billions of euro of public money, no member state made it such that the receipt of that money came with the obligation to reimburse passengers.
- RTÉ reports that a source close to the report revealed that airlines were effectively using passengers as banks by keeping their money on their books throughout the crisis.
- The European Court of Auditors estimates that around 50 million tickets were cancelled at the beginning of the pandemic, between March and May of 2020.

**DEATH RATE SOARS AS WESTERN CANADA REACHES ALMOST 50 DEGREES CELSIUS**

- The province of British Columbia experienced nearly double the average deaths after temperatures hit a record high of 46.6 degrees Celsius during four days of extreme heat last week.
- At least 233 people died in the western Canadian province between Friday June 18 and Monday June 21, which is about 100 more than the average for a four-day period.
- Officials said the number was expected to rise further as more reports were filed.
- “Since the onset of the heat wave late last week, the BC Coroners Service has experienced a significant increase in deaths reported where it is suspected that extreme heat has been contributory,” BC Coroners Service said June 21.
- The coroners are now gathering information to determine the cause and manner of deaths and whether heat played a role.

**BANK OF IRELAND WARNS OF SURGE IN FRAUD**

- Bank of Ireland has issued a fresh warning to the public about an “unprecedented spike” in “smishing”.
- They advised the public to take extra caution around fraudulent text messages which have been in heavy circulation over the past week.
- The bank identified a rise in smishing in particular, which sees fraudsters sending fake text messages, which appear to come from Bank of Ireland, and direct customers to fake websites imitating Bank of Ireland websites.
- Bank of Ireland said the number of new ‘phishing’ websites detected by its fraud prevention team has doubled since last month.
- It also said it’s seen an unprecedented level of activity in the last week, with up to 20 new fraudulent sites appearing a day.
- Bank of Ireland is advising their customers or whoever receives the texts not to click on links or to respond to SMS text messages, which are designed to appear as if sent by the bank and look as though they are originating from a genuine phone number.

# On following moral rules



There’s an interesting tension in Catholic moral thought. On the one hand, we have the prevalent idea that living well as a Catholic is not a matter of rule-following. The last few popes have spoken extensively about how authentic faith is not about obeying a set of rules, but a relationship with God. This is not a modern innovation. The popes are echoing St Augustine, who said “love and do what you will”.

**“There are some rules, like ‘don’t murder’ the breaking of which are pretty definitionally unloving”**

On the other hand, Catholics have a lot of rules. What, we might ask, is the deal? One part of it is that faith and the practice of Catholicism amount to much more than morally good action. That is more theology than philosophy, so I won’t say much about it. But St Augustine’s remark does seem to be about morality: it’s about what you should do with yourself, what counts as acting well. So there’s definitely an idea in the Catholic tradition that morality itself is not about following rules but coexisting with a highly codified set of moral rules. That’s what I’m going to talk about.

One easy way to resolve the tension is to say ‘well, following the rules is the loving thing to do!’ If this feels a bit youth pastor, we must concede that the youth pastors of the world sometimes have a point. There are some rules, like ‘don’t murder’ the breaking of which



## Everyday philosophy Ben Conroy

are pretty definitionally unloving. The youth pastors are also right that sometimes tough love is called for: it’s a boring truism that parents are not loving their children if they refuse to give them any rules of conduct, but it’s no less true for that.

But if this was all that was going on – if acting with love was always equivalent to following a certain set of rules – then Augustine’s claim would be a bit redundant. It might even seem like a trick: sure, he says “love and do what you will” but what he really means is “if you’re really being loving you’ll follow all the rules”. There must be more to it than this.

We get closer to the heart of things when we think about moral goodness like a skill. If you’re a complete beginner learning to cook, you won’t just need recipes: you’ll need a lot of specific instructions for how to hold the knife to quickly and safely chop vegetables, how to whisk eggs in a way that gets air into them, and the like. But as you get better at cooking more and more of it will be automatic to you. Make the same recipe enough times and you don’t need to consult it any more.

With morality, as you do more and more good actions you’ll be teaching yourself to love goodness and virtue for its own sake. The more you do this, the less you’ll be thinking about rules. Your character will have transformed so that what you want, what you love, is to do

good things. Notice: it will not be case that what you want is to ‘follow the rules’ any more than a really good cook develops a desire to follow the recipe. What the cook wants is to make good food, and if he has spent enough time following a recipe he no longer needs it to make the meal he wants. Moral rules can



thus serve a teaching function: you obey them until you no longer need to, because you’ve developed the skill of being virtuous and acting out of love.

But there’s more to Augustine’s words even than this. Just as a true chef can modify a recipe, a virtuous person will know when moral rules do and don’t apply in a given situation. Relatively few moral rules are absolute and apply in every conceivable situation. All of the ones that are

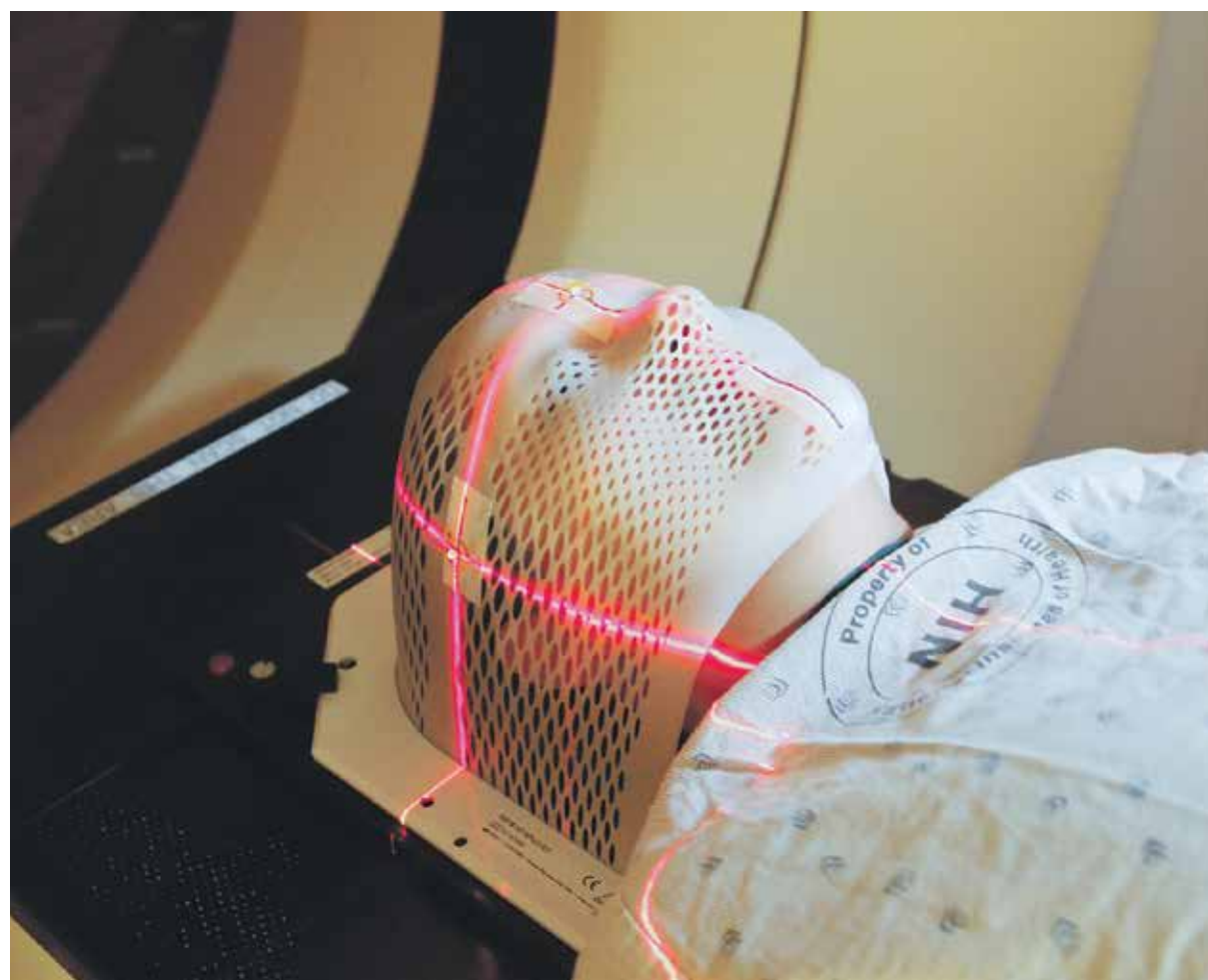
negative, denote types of action that are always wrong and that people must accordingly never do (murder, torture, adultery etc.). Thomas Aquinas believed that there was no such thing as an absolute positive requirement, a type of action that must always be done regardless of the situation.

**“A person who acts out of love – and, crucially, a person who has wisdom – will be able to know how to implement what the rules require as well as when to bend them”**

A monk may have made a commitment to pray with his brothers every day at particular times: but if his mother is on her deathbed the virtuous thing might be to miss one of these to be with her. In much more ordinary situations too, knowing moral rules doesn’t itself tell you what to do. “Be kind” is a moral rule: but being kind to different people may involve doing very different things. A person who acts out of love – and, crucially, a person who has wisdom – will be able to know how to implement what the rules require as well as when to bend them. Living well involves rules, but Augustine is right that the good life goes beyond them.



» Continued from Page 31



ries acquired in Ireland every year – which works out as around 52 people every day.

### What is an acquired brain injury?

An acquired brain injury (ABI) is an injury to the brain that has occurred after birth. Such injuries often result in life-long challenges, including changes to behaviour, emotions and physical functioning.

### “So every brain injury is unique to each individual affected”

ABIs may be traumatic, but not necessarily. Traumatic instances may be precipitated by a blow or a jolt to the brain, and they're usually serious. These often occur as a result of falls, road traffic accidents and assaults. As mentioned however, you can also experience a non-traumatic ABI. These are a result of something occurring within the body, such as a stroke, brain haemorrhage or a viral infection.

The ABI website notes that just as every brain is different, “so every brain injury is unique to each individual affected”.

The Main causes of brain injury include:

- Stroke (39%)
- Road traffic accidents (14%)
- Falls (14%)
- Tumour (7%)
- Assault (5%)

### Impacts of brain injury

There are a number of ways in which a brain injury encroaches on a person's life, some more obvious than others. The ABI website's 'Understanding brain injury' section tells us that it does so in a few key areas.

● Physically, those who've suffered a brain injury may find themselves

weaker or not as strong as they had been previously. This, coupled with less stamina and potentially weakened eyesight and hearing are often indicators of brain injury.

● Brain injury survivors might find it harder to track conversations, especially when there is more than one person speaking at the same time.

● Day-to-day organisation may be harder for those with brain injury, with their ability to problem-solve and plan in many different areas weaker than they once were.

● Those with a brain injury may have trouble taking in new information or recalling details of recent events. Day-to-day tasks also may elude them – even if they have no difficulty in remembering things from long ago.

● Decision making will also be affected in many cases as weighing up information and working out the best decision may be harder for brain injury survivors. They may find themselves either more rigid or impulsive, or less able to operate under pressure.

● Concentration and speech and language will be affected too, coupled

with fatigue in many cases.

### Rehabilitation

As mentioned, and in ABI's own words, as every brain is different, so too every brain injury is unique to each individual affected. As a result, the recovery and rehabilitation journey is unique to each person.

The type of injury, the individual's age, social network and outlook on life are all factors that can affect how recovery goes. The length of time symptoms remain also indicate just how severe the brain injury was.

Often the most rapid recovery occurs in the first six months after brain injury. In milder cases of ABI, many people find that their symptoms disappear or are greatly reduced within a year.

### “This includes the establishment of a meaningful everyday routine, getting enough rest, and gradually introducing some exercise, social activities and family responsibilities”

Regardless of age, circumstance or the nature of the brain injury, early access to neuro-rehabilitation services such as ABI can play a vital role in the rebuilding of a life. This includes the establishment of a meaningful everyday routine, getting enough rest, and gradually introducing some exercise, social activities and family responsibilities.

For more information on acquired brain injury and the services ABI Ireland provide, visit [www.abiireland.ie](http://www.abiireland.ie).



## Faith — IN THE — family



Christina Malone

Last year my children and I started reading the children's Bible (again). We made our way from Adam and Eve to Moses, Noah, Ruth, Daniel and many others.

Moses was the one that sparked endless discussions and questions for days after. My girls were astounded that he built a tabernacle big enough that it had two parts. One for the men to pray and the other one, called the Holy of Holies, for where the Ark of the Covenant was kept.

My children were confused by reading that only men were allowed inside. Lily made the point that it was not fair considering God created everyone the same. It took me a lot of time to explain. I tried to put it into context, those were different times, different ways of living and the best I could come up with was comparing it with my own experience. They were shocked to hear that their aunt, my sister, was one of the first female altar servers in my home parish in Germany about 35 years ago. They could not understand that in the olden days, as they call it, girls were not allowed to be altar servers and it made no sense whatsoever to them that the mass was in Latin. My daughters could not get their heads around this. During those chats I realised how much the Church has changed. Of course changes are slow. Many still have to discover the full meaning of the documents of Vatican II. These conversations with my own children made me reflect further. I wonder what the Church might look like when my children are my age!

I grew up in Germany and have seen and experienced the importance of collaboration, laity, in particular women in leadership, the importance of parish pastoral councils and more. I often say, the German Church is 20 years ahead of Irish Church and I believe the synodal way in Germany will give direction for western countries. Changes are needed. We need to accept that.

Recently I was asked to join the task force called 'Building Hope' for the Archdiocese of Dublin. Archbishop Dermot

Farrell asked the taskforce “to develop a pastoral strategy that supports parish communities of faith to undertake a radical renewal, looking to the future of creativity, to enable the Archdiocese of Dublin to act now so as to give witness and service in the years ahead”.

Everyone is invited to take part, every voice counts. Make the most of this opportunity and make your voices heard. Synodality has become the new word within the Church, walking together, discerning, consulting, listening to each other. In October,

Pope Francis will open a three-year synodal journey with three phases (diocesan, continental, universal). Every diocese is asked to reach out to all the people of God. Archbishop Farrell has started already and is reaching out to you. Let him know what 'your' Church looks like in years to come.

The Church can change. Remember, the Mass used to be in Latin and maybe you or your parents were not allowed to take an active ministry within the Church as it was unknown, not allowed or just not supported. Who would have thought a Pope could step down?

Changes have been happening but as we all know changes are slow. Only in 2000 the ministry of deacons became a reality for many men. Today there are over 100 ordained deacons in Ireland. We have to be open minded and explore what the future can look like. You are asked “What does the Church look like in 10, 20 years' time?” Dream big – nothing is impossible for God.

Throughout history many of our brothers and sisters had to let go of the old and embrace the new. But God never left their sides. In Pope Francis' document 'Rejoice and Be Glad' he calls for Holiness for all believers. Pope Francis made it very clear after the Synod on Families that the Church should not be a stuffy “museum of memories” but have the courage to change if that was what God wanted. Or as Pope John XXIII said as he opened the Second Vatican Council, it was time to “open the windows and let in the fresh air”.





# Following St Augustine in the 21st century

## Personal Profile



**Ruadhán Jones**

**F**r Colm O'Mahony OSA wears many hats: vocations director for the Augustinians in Ireland; student master for the pre-novitiate; and prior and bursar of the Drogheda community. But it was always the call of community life that attracted him to the Augustinians, and his zeal for work 'on the ground' is constantly renewed through fresh engagement.

**“This initial training and interest came in the years before Fr O'Mahony discerned his vocation”**

“One of the main reasons I went for the Augustinians was because our whole charism is community – working as a community, praying as a community, but also engaging with the community,” Fr O'Mahony told me. “That can be people who come to church, or people who don't come to church. I've had the opportunity to work in prisons, schools, hospitals – it's very much the case my initial training and interests have been fulfilled.”

This initial training and interest came in the years before Fr O'Mahony discerned his vocation. He studied social sciences in University College Cork for three years, before heading into the world of work. But the call to the priesthood was always in the back of his mind.

“Even in secondary school I felt a desire to become a religious, but at the time no one I knew was inter-



Man of many hats, Augustinian brother Fr Colm O'Mahony is very active nationally and in his own community in Drogheda.

ested in religious life or priesthood or anything like that,” Fr O'Mahony says. “And I wanted to go to university and live a proper experience of life. After school, I went to university and I felt that once I went to university, either it would disappear or else I would have some experience of life. And it didn't.”

Fr O'Mahony didn't immediately begin a process of discernment, deciding instead to get a job and test the call he felt a little more: “I decided I'd never worked anywhere properly, so I might as well get a job first, see how it works out and then if it doesn't

go away, I'll know it's genuine.

“I worked for a year or so, it didn't go away, so I decided to do something which, at the time, I thought made perfect sense, and I applied for and entered Maynooth for the diocese of Cork and Ross. But I never actually wanted to be a diocesan priest, I always felt called to be a religious. But I went for Cork and Ross because I thought it would be an easier option. I'd be stationed in Cork, close to home, so it would be fine.

“I was three years in Maynooth. Great experience, I had no complaints, the lads were fantastic, but

it just wasn't for me, I just wasn't called to be a diocesan priest. So I left and I went back working for a couple years and then applied for the Augustinians and at least 16 years later I'm still here.”

**“In the course of his work as vocations director, Fr O'Mahony has travelled widely and met many young people in the discernment process”**

Fr O'Mahony now leads a busy life with the order, both for the order nationally and his own community in Drogheda, where he's prior and bursar.

“The prior of the community has overall responsibility for looking after and maintaining the community, their needs, the physical buildings that we have, the ministries, the volunteers, the staff and things like that. I pay all the bills and go to all the various meetings in the parish and the town, liaise with the local officials, voluntary groups and things. Everything comes through me. The bursar means I'm in charge of the finance of the community, upkeep of buildings and the like.

“In Drogheda we're very active, there are only four friars. We're part time chaplains to the hospital, to the secondary school, chaplains to the primary school, we engage with the Red Door and people in addiction, we work with St John of God services, we work with people with specific needs, we do a lot of work with people who are homeless, we do work with people who are refugees. For the four of us, as well as doing all three Masses a day, we're quite connected with the local community.”

In the course of his work as vocations director, Fr O'Mahony has travelled widely and met many young people in the discernment process. Asked if he notices any commonalities among those discerning, he says it's “the search for God, the search for

meaning, the search of the community, the search of where do I sit in this whole scheme, how can I fulfil my vocation”.

Often, his work in vocations means dealing with people in the initial stages of their vocation, who are still asking questions and trying to figure things out. This can have fruits for Fr O'Mahony's own vocation, as he says it “holds a mirror” up to it.

“Not only do they ask questions but it really does hold a mirror up to your own religious life,” Fr O'Mahony explains. “Because you're expecting people to come and experience religious life and you have to be confident that what you're offering is life giving, life sustaining, is relevant, is valuable.

“It may be a different experience of how their friends experience life at the moment. It has to have some engagement with the wider world, some sense that it's not just a group of guys, behind a wall praying all day, that we actually do get out and engage with the community, engage with people.”

**“We've one friar studying for novitiate, we've one friar who has just taken his solemn vows and we have a couple of guys who are interested in entering in August or September”**

Fr O'Mahony believes there has been a small “turn in the tide” for vocations to the Augustinians, and praises the help Vocations Ireland have given in supporting the order's efforts.

“There seems to be a very small change in the tide. We've one friar studying for novitiate, we've one friar who has just taken his solemn vows and we have a couple of guys who are interested in entering in August or September,” he finishes.

## Starting the day with a kiss

**Myself and my wife are married 6 years, I have fond memories of our first few years of marriage always leaving in the morning with a kiss goodbye, but as the years have passed and our family has grown, each morning is filled with stress and rows and it's impacting our relationship.**

**I**am sure there are many families that can identify with your situation, and while it is common, it is also relatively easy to improve. Generally rushing is what contributes to a lot of stress in the morning. What jobs can you do the night before that delay you in the morning? Can you have all the clothes ready or the lunches made? What tasks can you delegate to older children?

The biggest improvement you can make is getting up 20 to 30 minutes earlier in the morning. Although having a little less sleep is a tough sacrifice it will mean you being able to get yourself ready in the morning in peace before having to help your kids. I have found starting the morning getting ready together while listening to the 10-minute

daily devotional Pray as you Go together has really helped us get out of bed on the right side. Creating enough time will mean that you won't feel rushed which will stop the knock-on effect. When your children feel rushed and they see your stress it immediately rubs off on them and can just make the problem worse.

You can make the morning time a time for fun and play, singing songs while brushing teeth or getting dressed and having the time to sit down and eat breakfast together.

Currently you are caught in a cycle where stress in the morning is expected, subconsciously you expect cross words, rushing and perhaps raised voices, your body is feeling stress before you have even begun. You need to totally shift this understanding. The morning, when you have prepared well and set aside the time you

need, can be a time to start the day with fun, and most importantly love.

Children love routine so have a proper morning routine and set mini-deadlines for yourself, for example everyone dressed by 7.30am at 7.45am we brush our teeth. Start the day with smiles and snuggles (and not just for your kids!) Perhaps the most difficult part but most effective is when things go wrong, stay calm. This is where I find my faith is of huge help because I pray for patience.

Remember you and your wife are a team so work out who can do what part of the preparation and routine best. You can even prepare the porridge the night before. Finally when you are leaving the house start the day with a blessing, your kids will love using a holy water font at the door to bless mommy and daddy and each other. Both for yourself and your wife you can bless the day and start it asking God to watch over you, keep you safe and of course finish with a kiss!



**Wendy Grace**





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## I wish tv channels would stop patting themselves on the back

I'm thoroughly cheesed off with media outlets telling us how great they are. Unfortunately, it's more often the spin than the reality.

So, for example, RTÉ is telling us constantly, with very slick video ads, how great they are with news, trust, integrity and journalism. And yet, in current affairs coverage, I think they are often guilty of bias, a selectivity driven by ideology, especially in relation to controversial social issues. I'm also finding it tiresome for some GB News presenters to be telling us how great they are at tackling "woke culture" (is that a contradiction in terms?). 'Other channels tell you what to think but we...etc.' Stop with the self-congratulation and just do the job, professionally!

### Mixed

I wrote of my mixed feelings about GB News a few weeks ago and now that I'm dipping in only occasionally I find the level of interest depends almost entirely on the quality or otherwise of the special guests. Last week **Tonight Live with Dan Wooten** featured US journalist Bari Weiss. She had left a job at *The New York Times* (NYT) because of what she found to be the stifling woke atmosphere. She found that newspaper had gone from being the paper of record with "all the news that's fit to print" to one that was open only to "all the



The announcement from Tánaiste Leo Varadkar about the sacraments took many people by surprise.

news that fits the narrative". I could relate to her notion of 'institutional capture'. For example, she described how, effectively, Twitter had now become the "ultimate editor" of the NYT. Young journalists felt afraid of being 'cancelled' if they covered stories that didn't fit the favoured narrative – they'd be think-

ing "Do I really want to die on that hill"? She described (lamenting I think) how we live in two "epistemological realities", two polarised bubbles.

At the very least, she maintained, there should be agreement on the basic facts of an issue – e.g. with the Wuhan lab leak story, where early

efforts to get at the truth were tagged as 'misinformation' on social media. She regarded the Chinese communist government as the greatest threat to human freedom – their treatment of Hong Kong was indicative of their expansionist interests, with a move from a free society to a fear society.

We've become quite a fear society here too thanks largely to the pandemic. With last week's delay in easing restrictions the casualties included Baptism, Communion and Confirmation ceremonies – presumably because of the fear of after parties rather than anything inherently dangerous about the ceremonies themselves. On **Morning Ireland** (RTÉ One Wednesday) Fr Michael Toomey of Waterford and Lismore Diocese was minded to go ahead with planned ceremonies, subject to guidance from his bishop. He described the Tánaiste's remarks re sacraments ("They're off") as "off the cuff", said that this was first time Baptism was ever mentioned in terms of restrictions, that the ceremonies were easier to manage safely than the Sunday Masses and that all possible was being done to encourage safe gathering after the ceremonies. He wondered if this was law, and couldn't find clarification on the Government website (it came later). He was also on the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk, Wednesday) when Mr Kenny

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### LEFT TO TELL

**EWTN Saturday July 10, 8am**

A survivor of the Rwandan genocide, Immaculee explains how she was able to forgive the people who murdered her family.

#### SUNDAY SEQUENCE

**BBC Radio Ulster Sunday July 11, 9am**

Topical religious and ethical issues, often with a northern flavour.

**SACRED MUSIC: THE STORY OF ALLEGRI'S MISERERE**  
**BBC Four Sunday July 11, 7pm**

Simon Russell Beale tells the story behind Allegri's *Miserere*, one of the most popular pieces of sacred music ever written.

went all biblical encapsulating Fr Toomey's views with an appropriate adaptation – let God look after God's business, let Caesar take care of the parties!

### Tonight Show

On the **Tonight Show** (Virgin Media One, Wednesday) Michael Healy Rae TD was puzzled by how 50 people were allowed at Mass, but not at First Communions or Confirmations. Archbishop Eamon Martin, interviewed on **The News at One** (RTÉ Radio One, Thursday), said the way last week's message about restrictions was announced was "grossly disrespectful" and "almost cavalier". He said churches had been led to believe by Government that they could resume, had done so much to get ready, to be safe, to encourage parents against

large after parties, and the ceremonies were proceeding safely in the North of Ireland.

On **Today With Claire Byrne** (RTÉ Radio One, Friday) Peadar Tóibín pointed out that religious practice was a fundamental human right and criticised the Tánaiste for not engaging prior to the announcement. Josepha Madigan, Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion said, with notable lack of both clarity and logic, "he didn't, no, that's not correct... there will be engagement". More logically she said that the situation can change rapidly, and less relevantly she reminded us that she goes to Mass and reads at Mass.

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# Music

Pat O'Kelly



## Recalling the contribution of the RDS to the arts

A long-standing friend invited myself and two other close acquaintances to lunch at the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) recently – outside of course in accordance with Government regulations. But the sun shone and the company was convivial.

As might be expected the conversation was never far from music and we recalled the RDS' contribution to the arts over the years. We reminisced on the weekly recitals 'during the season' and the wealth of wonderful artists the RDS brought to its platform.

### Memories

Alas, these are now only memories but what is par-



Phoebe White

ticularly current is the RDS' annual music bursary. Established in 2003, this major €15,000 award is given to a young musician who shows

not only particular talent but who, in the opinion of the judges, will best use it in furthering his/her music career.

The bursary is closely connected to Feis Ceoil with the winners of its major senior competitions – Morris Grant Bursary for piano, Gervase Elwes Cup for voice, McCullough Cup for woodwind, Senior Brass Recital for, naturally, brass and the Aileen Gore Cup for strings – qualifying for the bursary auditions.

The 2021 award recipient is 24-year-old Dublin violinist Phoebe White, who already has a considerable portfolio of prizes to her credit and has been playing the violin since she was three.

Initially, Phoebe studied

at the RIAM with Fionnuala Hunt before moving to the Jacobs School of Music in the University of Indiana where she completed her bachelor of music degree. Back in Europe she has been preparing for her masters at Berlin's University of the Arts.

### Bach

In between Phoebe took third prize, as well as giving the best performance of a piece by Bach, at the Young Musicians' Competition in Tallinn, Estonia when she was ten. At this year's digital Feis Ceoil her programme included Beethoven and Ysaÿe. Phoebe plans to continue studying in Berlin.

While Phoebe's success is very interesting in itself it

has another dimension to it in that her younger brother, Killian, won the RDS bursary in 2018 when he was 18. The first cellist to be awarded the €15,000, he used it to continue his studies at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et Danse in Paris. Killian had been a winner in Tallinn when he was eleven.

Phoebe was leader of the Irish National Youth Orchestra between 2013 and 2015 while Killian led the cello section in 2016. Both of them were winners of Camerata Ireland's Flax Award at the Clondeboy Festival in Co. Down.

The siblings founded the Ophelia Quartet along with close friends Colma Ní Bhri-

ain, violin who studied in Bremen and Séamus Hickey, viola who is a graduate of Amsterdam's Conservatory. The quartet made a sensational debut at the 2019 West Cork Chamber Music Festival.

The experienced jury for this year's bursary comprised Irish Chamber Orchestra CEO, Gerard Keenan; former head of music at BBC Northern Ireland, David Byers; professor of piano at TU Dublin Conservatoire, Pádraic Ó Cuinneagáin and artistic director of Westport Chamber Music Festival, Catherine Leonard. Brian O'Rourke, former general manager of the RTÉ NSO acted as chairman.





# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Recent books in brief

### Time to Call Home

by Hugh O'Donnell  
(Veritas, €14.99/£12.90)

Fr Hugh O'Donnell SDB lives in Dublin's inner-city, where he helps minister to the local parish. But in his writing and poetry he explores what he sees as "ecological spirituality".

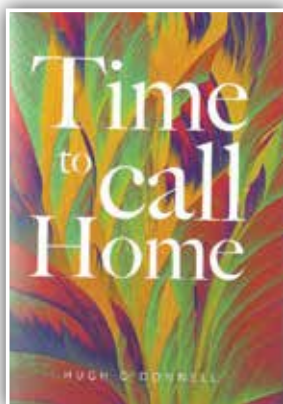
Doubtless the cityscape that surrounds his daily life sharpens the contrast with what should be the true ecological environment of both body and soul. This little book completes a trilogy by "inviting us to fall in love with the earth and to respond to her endangerment with passion" (echoing here the words of Hildegard of Bingen).

In these pages he develops his response to the themes that Pope Francis has been extolling. He writes however as a poet, rather than a preacher, urging rather than admonishing. He also has that rare thing in today world, a real sense of humour.

The book is made up of brief two page *aperçus*. But at the heart of these are small every day, but deeply moving insights. In 'Baking Bread', for instance, about his mother: "It was all grace, though we would never have known to use that word. Bread it was. You could build a home around it."

Not that as children they thought in such terms, but in hindsight he feels it was as close as you get to the injunction 'this for you, take and eat'.

A wonderful little book, which many may come to treasure.



### Meditating on the Mysteries of Salvation A Guide to Praying the Rosary with Joy and Dedication

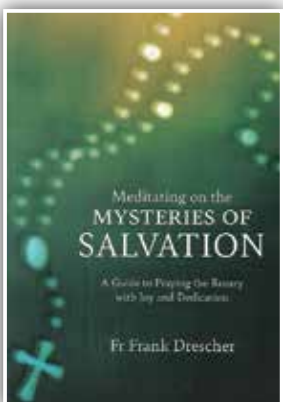
by Fr Frank Drescher  
(Veritas, €7.99/£6.99)

Fr Frank Drescher is a German who is now a priest of the Archdiocese of Dublin. This little book derives from ideas and practises current in German Catholicism. This gives it a distinct form, which contrasts with the usual run of devotional books.

The way of praying the Rosary presented in this book is rich in variety and offers, in a special way, what the famous theologian Romano Guardini called "A participation in the life of Mary, whose focus was Christ". Fr Guardini, though Italian in origin, was a German theologian who greatly influenced many important figures such as the present Pope.

The author provides guidance on praying the Rosary within the traditional sets. But he introduces four new sets such as the 'miraculous mysteries' and the 'merciful mysteries'.

These ideas coming from an unfamiliar direction will help refresh for many readers a traditional form of prayer that has never lost its appeal to Catholics in Ireland.



### Coming of Age: Navigating Parish Pastoral Council Responsibilities – A Benedictine Perspective

by Justin Harkin  
(Veritas, €14.99/£12.99)

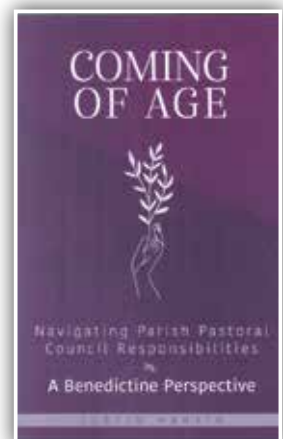
With the return of at least a partial Church life in parishes after a long period of great difficulties, many must be asking themselves about the future. Everywhere there seems to be a feeling that returning to what was being done before the crisis is just not enough. Not back to normal, then, but to the realisation of a new normal.

One area which will surely be affected greatly is parish pastoral councils. These often function on an *ad hoc* basis. But Justin Harkin proposes in this book the idea that forms of Benedictine life and purpose would form for parish a guide to what might be done. This is an excellent idea, for it draws on long centuries of a tradition which is both traditional and innovative.

It might seem to some of those who involve themselves in parish activities that it imposes on them the need for a certain amount of study. But this surely is a good thing. For it is only through exposure to new ideas, or rather ideas new to oneself (for they may be thousands of years old), that new horizons of thought and feeling are opened up. It serves to give a sense of depth and seriousness to an important contribution by the laity.

This excellent book offers a proposal that will appeal to many. But others may not agree. However that may be, Catholic parishes are bound over the next few years to see great, and perhaps surprising, changes.

These will have to be met, and for that a clear idea of what their tasks really are will have to inform parish pastoral councils. So what we see here is a challenge that affects the whole country.



# From the outside looking in, but is it relevant?

## From the Outside: Rethinking Church Doctrine

by Fr Tony Flannery  
(Red Stripe/Orpen Press, €15/£13.99)

Ruadhán Jones

**F**r Tony Flannery CSsR has been barred from his public ministry for nine years and was most recently in the public eye having declined to sign a document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) that would have led to his reinstatement. In it he was asked to assent to Catholic teachings regarding the ordination of women, same-sex marriage, homosexuality, and gender theory. In his own words: "I will not, indeed I could not, sign any of these propositions."

In titling this work *From the Outside: Rethinking Church Doctrine*, Fr Flannery was setting out quite a chal-

lenging project. The thesis of the book is that, in being exiled, Fr Flannery was freed from the homogenising force of the Church and can look at Catholic doctrine "from the outside". In theory, this affords him the opportunity to go much further in his analyses of the ills of the Church and its teachings than those "on the inside".

### Practice

This is not how it works in practice. The book leaves much to be desired regarding any diagnosis of the problems besetting Church doctrine, of which no doubt there are plenty. For a start, it is only 115 pages long, which given that it proposes to rethink Church doctrine from the ground up is not enough.

Fr Flannery begins by calling into question the Nicene Creed and its viability as a dogmatic pronouncement because, he says, it doesn't cor-

respond to modern sensibilities and knowledge regarding religion and Christianity. According to Fr Flannery, the Church's foundational statement is too precise in its definition of God and the Trinity, "trying to impose unity – which can be a rather futile exercise" (p18).

**“Fr Flannery begins by calling into question the Nicene Creed and its viability as a dogmatic pronouncement”**

By declaring the Creed a dogmatic pronouncement, the Church limited the possibility of looking at these declarations again and recognising they are "time-limited".

**“By declaring the Creed a dogmatic pronouncement, the Church limited the possibility of looking at these declarations again”**





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.



Fr Tony Flannery

They claim a full knowledge of the nature of God, when in truth we have none, he suggests. From there, Fr Flannery goes on to question Church teaching on the divinity of Christ, denies the existence of original sin and argues that Mary's birth was not exceptional as we are all immaculately born.

### Argument

The substance of his argument is that times have changed and people today do not think the same as the early Christians. Or Christ for that matter – passages in the Gospels he disagrees with are fortunately later additions and not the words of Christ himself, Fr Flannery writes. He makes a worrying claim that we no longer take the Bible literally, as though we once did. Whether he was taught this or misunderstood, it puts into question the points he wishes to make, such as modern science's disproving the Genesis

story's factual basis. His view is ultimately that we are just more enlightened than the poor souls in the past who believed the world was flat, that the Earth was the centre of the universe and that Jesus truly was the Son of God.

It is true that over-explanation can suffocate divine truths, and that the element of mystery that Fr Flannery wants to reclaim is integral to the Faith. But the mystery of the Faith is defined to ensure unity, coherence and the very existence of the Church, not merely to shut down opposition. In writing a book that seeks to rethink Church doctrine from the ground up, Fr Flannery demonstrates what this entails – it means dismantling the Creeds and beliefs of the Catholic Church and replacing them with something of your own. Fr Flannery's sincerity and concern for the Faith is obvious, but this book does little to support his theological vision.

# Life in rural Ireland, two generations ago



Walter Macken at home in his native Galway.

**The Bogman**  
by Walter Macken [1952]  
(Modern Irish Classics/New Island Books, €11.95)

Ruadhán Jones

**W**alter Macken may be a familiar name to some of our readers. In the 1960s, he was a hit author, with a best-selling trilogy of historical novels, and before that he was a successful actor and playwright with the Abbey Theatre. Knowing this, New Island Book's decision to reprint his works as part of a 'Modern Irish Classics' series makes sense, to introduce him to new generations of Irish readers.

Their choice of novel, however, is strange. *The Bogman*, Macken's fourth novel and one of the plethora of Irish 'misery memoirs', bares the markings of an ideological rather than an artistic choice. His vision of a stifling, irrational rural village in the 1950s fits nicely with our preconceptions, but does little to make reading the book an inviting prospect.

### Orphan

Set in the fictional village of Caherlo in the west of Ireland, it recounts the travails of Cahal – an intelligent, good-looking orphan, recently released from an industrial school to return to his tyrannical grandfather, who turfed him out originally. Just 16 when he returns, the novel spans 14 years, as Cahal falls out with everyone in the community, with the exception of a few good-looking young women. (It's likely his various affairs with them led to the book's ban shortly after being released.)

Irish artists down through the years have devoted their time to demonstrating the stifling nature of rural Ireland – John Millington Synge and Patrick Kavanagh in *Tarry Flynn* are two others who jump to mind. If Macken's portrayal of rural communities is accurate then it's no surprise that they did so. When Caherlo's men arise to cast Cahal out of the community, they are characterised as one, black, lumpen mass, the worst kind of irrational mob.

**“New Island Book's decision to reprint his works as part of a 'Modern Irish Classics' series makes sense, to introduce him to new generations of Irish readers”**

This depiction, it would seem, results from a chasm of understanding between the man of artistic sensibility and his subjects, who unfortunately have no literary skill in rising to their own defence. It also seems a conflict between modern and pre-modern sensibilities. Cahal – and presumably Macken – shows little sympathy for their pride or sense of self, inimically tied up as it is with their community. To him, they are ultimately the oppressors, unable to recognise or accept his individuality. For him, freedom comes when communal ties are severed and man is his own master.

The issue is that Cahal, having misunderstood when he first arrived the need to stand up for himself in order

to thrive in the community, compounds his error by then deliberately and successively tweaking the noses of his neighbours. It's hard to have much sympathy for him, however hard Macken works to create it.

And he does work hard – the plot-twists tip over into melodrama towards the end and the book becomes almost a page-turning pot boiler. For instance, when Cahal rescues a man – Jamesy – from a river, but not the man's father, Jamesy turns on him, accusing Cahal of effectively killing his father. It's the kind of clumsy device necessary to ensure there's not one friend left for Cahal,

that we might better sympathise with his plight.

The pity is, Macken can clearly write. His sentences are short and fluid, while the dialogue often has a musicality to it. He brings to life with tender care the landscape, so that at times it is like a painting and at others a poem. There are smatterings of humour and passages – such as Cahal rescuing Jamesy from a river made swollen and turbid by heavy rains – that are exciting.

So, while this book is not the best way “in” to his works, there was enough evidence of his skill in it to pique my curiosity in Macken. Almost despite the book, he is now an author I'd like to read more of.

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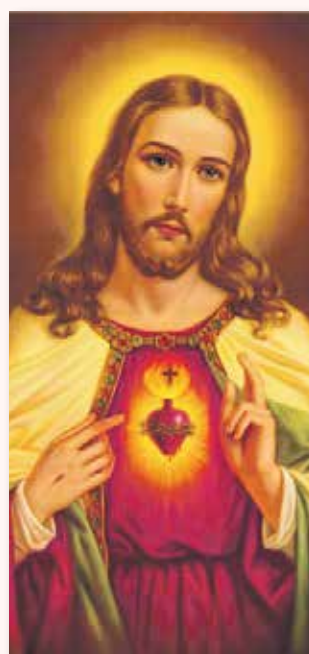
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M.B.

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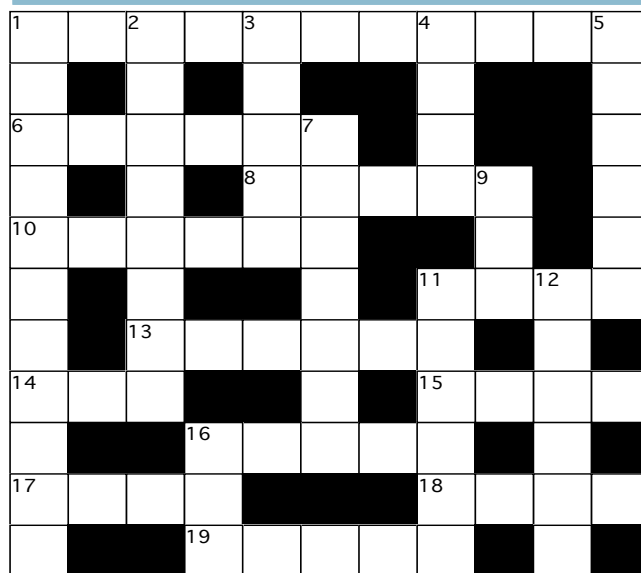
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## Crossword Junior

Gordius 390



### Across

- 1 Capetown and Johannesburg are cities in this country (5,6)  
6 Eat something with tiny bites (6)  
8 Not telling the truth (5)  
10 It may be cheddar or gorgonzola, perhaps (6)  
11 Doing nothing (4)  
12 Sometimes, a speech begins with the phrase "\_\_\_\_\_ and gentlemen" (6)  
14 Hot drink (3)  
15 Bird that is said to get up very early (4)  
16 Spaghetti and lasagne are types of this Italian food (5)  
17 "Don't go near the \_\_\_\_\_ of the cliff!" (4)  
18 Have to have (4)  
19 Defend, protect from harm (5)

### Down

- 1 You might use a bucket and spade to build them on the beach (11)  
2 Open it above you to keep you dry (8)  
3 They're not as high as mountains (5)  
4 Water falling from the sky (4)  
5 Look up to (6)  
7 You move them when you blink (7)  
9 The Creator, Who lives in Heaven (3)  
11 It's completely surrounded by water (6)  
12 Bigger (6)  
15 Use it to put a garment on the clothesline (3)

## SOLUTIONS, JULY 1

GORDIUS NO. 514

**Across** — 1 Common Market 7 Hid 9 Brim 10 A clean bill of health 11 AWOL 14 Unity 15 Loose 16 Toga 18 Samba 21 Fence 22 Greta Garbo 23 Latin 24 Eats 25 Naomi 29 Lady 33 Parish 34 Oast 36 Ham 37 Pope Benedict

**Down** — 1 Cur 2 Mime 3 Oman 4 Milan 5 React 6 Thaw 8 Delta variant 12 Hornet 13 Jewel 14 Upset 17 Ocelot 19 Mango 20 Agony 27 Abate 28 Bride 30 Dump 31 Thee 32 Gobi 35 Sit

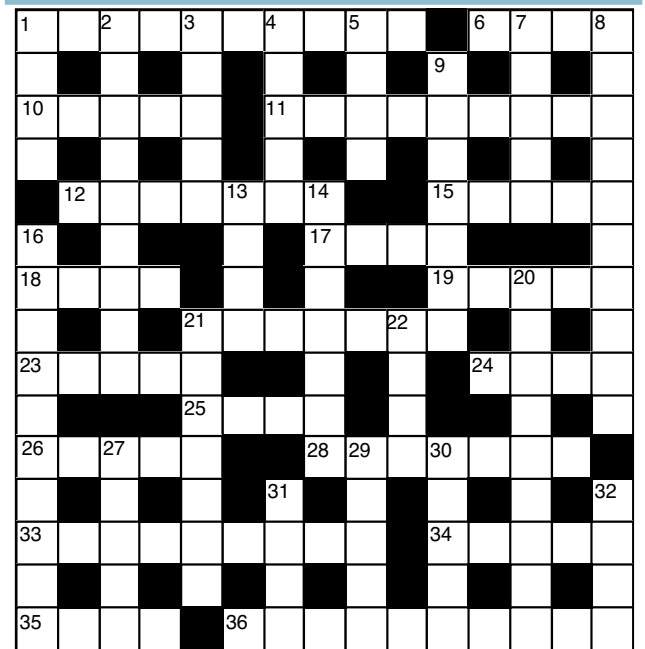
CHILDREN'S No. 389

**Across** — 1 Supporter 6 Ringlets 9 Brother 11 Noises 12 Flour 13 Cruel 15 Dirty 16 Doctor 17 Berry

**Down** — 1 Sardines 2 Penguin 3 Oil 4 Tot 5 Boxer 7 Ears 8 Satellite 9 Bedroom 10 Equator 12 Fed 14 Fox

## Crossword

Gordius 515



### Across

- 1 Show solicitude while distributing peas, Smithy (10)  
6 Above or finished (4)  
10 Popular ballroom dance (5)  
11 Securing device used with a cloth nappy (6,3)  
12 River that flows through Washington DC (7)  
15 Make the motor travel as freight (5)  
17 In a frenzy (4)  
18 Rage (4)  
19 Musical based on the life of Eva Peron (5)  
21 Suppressed, smothered (7)  
23 Incompetent (5)  
24 Apartment (4)  
25 Opera by Verdi (4)  
26 Went a-wooing? How old-fashioned is that? (5)  
28 Extraordinarily gifted youngster (7)  
33 Got everyone out of an area (9)  
34 Black fur (5)  
35 Look for (4)  
36 Tasty cut of meat from an Eton basket (1-4,5)

### Down

- 1 Female pigs (4)  
2 Major city in Australia (9)  
3 Italian city, scene of a major battle of World War II (5)  
4 Oaths may issue from this flower! (5)  
5 Yielding to the touch (4)  
7 Snake (5)  
8 & 16d Spontaneous and unexpected considerate deeds (6,4,2,8)  
9 Stored items one above another (7)  
13 Beef or mutton, for example (4)  
14 It allows the feline access - to rip up a flat cap (3-4)  
16 See 8 down  
20 Impossible to read (9)  
21 Sporting venue (7)  
22 This chap makes the mole run around (4)  
27 Business or skilled occupation (5)  
29 Sculptor famous for 'The Kiss' and 'The Thinker' (5)  
30 Lightly sprinkles a cake with sugar, etc (5)  
31 Wound with a knife (4)  
32 Seven days (4)

## Sudoku Corner

390

### Easy

9			2		7			6
		7	3	4	9			
		4		1		7	9	
5	1						7	9
	7	8				3	1	
3	2						6	4
	9	2		6		4		
			1	9	2	6		
8			4		3			1

### Hard

			7		4		5	3
	2			6				9
					5	6		2
					6	2		
	4	1				3	6	
		2	3					
3		7	5					
2				8			4	
6	5		1		2			

### Last week's Easy 389

3	6	2	4	5	8	1	9	7
8	9	5	7	2	1	4	6	3
4	7	1	9	6	3	2	8	5
1	4	8	5	3	2	6	7	9
9	3	7	8	4	6	5	1	2
5	2	6	1	9	7	3	4	8
2	1	9	6	7	5	8	3	4
7	8	3	2	1	4	9	5	6
6	5	4	3	8	9	7	2	1

### Last week's Hard 389

4	3	7	5	9	2	6	1	8
2	8	6	4	1	3	5	7	9
1	9	5	6	8	7	4	2	3
5	4	1	7	2	9	8	3	6
3	7	8	1	6	4	2	9	5
9	6	2	8	3	5	1	4	7
6	1	4	3	7	8	9	5	2
7	5	9	2	4	6	3	8	1
8	2	3	9	5	1	7	6	4



## Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough



## C.S. Lewis' thoughts on Christian care for the sick

**IT IS 1947, AND DUSK** is falling on the town of Drogheda. In the White Horse Inn on West St, a middle-aged writer is at work, penning a short essay. His name is Clive Staples Lewis.

He had already made his name as a scholar of English literature, and as a lively proponent of Christian faith. He had already published *The Problem of Pain* and *The Screwtape Letters*, but it would be three years before he found global acclaim as the author of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and the other Narnia books.

What's curious about the essay he wrote that night in the White Horse Inn, though, is the fact that he wrote it for a local order of nuns, the Medical Missionaries of Mary.

## Thoughts

The essay, given the unassuming title, 'Some Thoughts', is a brilliant explanation of Christian concern for the sick, a concern that stretches from the Medical Missionaries, to the medieval hospitals, and deeper still, to the words and actions of Our Lord himself: "When I was sick, you visited me" (Matthew 25:36).

Lewis argues that the establishment of hospitals and hospices by



C.S. Lewis

so many generations of Christians is evidence that Christianity is not uninterested in this present life. Although Christians are certainly focused on the promise of eternal life, this in no way leads them to ignore the injustice and suffering that blights this present age. Christianity, Lewis writes, is neither merely a "world-affirming religion" nor a "world-denying religion": it affirms the goodness (and brokenness) of this world, while recognising that it is not our ultimate home, since it will ultimately

be transformed into a new creation where evil, death, and suffering will have no dominion.

Death is one aspect of this world's brokenness, and, Lewis argues, Christians who hope for the renewal of creation rightly fight sickness and death here and now by means of medical care. We know that death is not final, and so we can face death calmly, but we know too that death is not according to God's original and ultimate plan, and so we fight it. This is why it makes sense for followers of Jesus, who wept at the death of his friend Lazarus, to do what the nuns at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital were doing every day in 1947: "fighting against death earnestly, skillfully, and calmly".

## Protestant

Why, though, was Lewis, a Northern Protestant, writing an essay in support of a Catholic order of nuns? What had brought these two worlds into contact?

The answer is unexpectedly moving: C.S. Lewis was in Drogheda that night because his brother, Warnie, was a patient in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, being cared for by the nuns there. Warnie, a former soldier, had been battling alcohol-

ism for many years, and the Medical Missionaries of Mary had helped him "dry out" many times before this night in 1947, and would help him do so almost annually until his death.

## Suspicious

Warnie, for his part, had been suspicious of the nuns initially. He admitted that he had regarded the Roman Catholic world as "sinister and ogreish", but in Drogheda his prejudices simply fell away: "The first thing that strikes you is the radiant happiness of these holy and very loveable women, from Mother Mary Martin, their superior, down to the youngest novice; whatever else it is, it is a life of joy and laughter". Warnie, through his long fight against the disease of alcoholism, found in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital a place of gentle, Christlike care, "a little fortress of happy, valiant Christianity".

That night in the White Horse Inn, C.S. Lewis wrote a well-argued essay, using all his intellectual skills, but he did so with a grateful heart, grateful that his sick brother was safe in the "earnest, skilful, and calm" care of the Medical Missionaries of Mary.

## Welcomed like Christ

Just a minute's walk from the White Horse – now the Westcourt Hotel – is a fairly substantial ruin of a priory of the Crutched Friars, St Mary's de Urso, known locally as the Old Abbey. The Crutched Friars aren't all that well known today, but in medieval Ireland they ran a number of hospitals, places of care and rest for travellers, lepers, and the dying, and St Mary's de Urso was one such establishment. These were part of a nationwide network of dozens of hospitals and hospices run by orders like the Knights Hospitaller, the Benedictines, and the Norbertines. From Kilmainham to Rindoon, from Leopardstown to Trim, from Killagha to Drumacoo, the sick and the weary were welcomed like Christ.



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Fr Ndegwa lists multiple problems caused by this culture in the slums. He adds: "Covid has only made things worse. A key way to alleviate this crisis is to offer beans, maize and oil to vulnerable families, especially those led by single mothers with small children. If families have food, they are less likely to resort to crime."

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