

The Irish Catholic

FAREWELL MAESTRO

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New Govt could 'kick Church out of education' warns Senator

Citizens' Assembly is merely 'a means to shape public opinion' and cut constitutional thread

Chai Brady

Senator Ronan Mullen has called for the Church to engage families in light of Government plans that could "kick the Church out of education".

He said that the aim of the new Government to hold a Citizens' Assembly on education is "not a triumph of public consultation" but a means to shape public opinion, similar to that of the abortion referendum.

"Critics of the Church see schools as one of its last remaining privileges, held on to by a constitutional thread, a thread they are determined to cut," he said.

"But that constitutional thread, made up of clauses in Bunreacht na hÉireann that guarantee churches the right to run schools, is not an oppression of the majority by the few. It is one of the last hopes of people who believe in genuine pluralism and diversity in our society."

Courage

Senator Mullen's comments are joined by academics who say the Programme of Government could see Catholic schools forced "to adopt a secular approach".

Dr Tom Finegan of Mary Immaculate College in Lim-

erick has called for "coordinated courage among parents" who want their children educated in Catholic schools.

He raised concerns about the development of a "liberal-secular" relationships and sexuality programme across primary and post-primary schools and a "liberal-secular" religious and ethics education across primary schools.

"The effect of both proposals would be to turn Christian schools into secular schools when it comes to sex and relationships education and when it comes to an important part of religious education," Dr Finegan said.

Interests

"This is not genuine pluralism: it is a coercive push towards secular monism. It goes a long way to destroying genuine choice of schools in terms of ethos, and so it seriously harms the interests of religious parents in having a choice of Christian schooling for their children."

He added that supporters of Catholic and wider Christian education "should not be passive in the face of these threats to an authentic, faithful and confident religious ethos in Irish schooling."

"Nor should supporters despair that these proposals will inevitably materialise."

Regarding the plans for a Citizens' Assembly he said there is a "real possibility" the Government will use it as a "means to a referendum to violate Christian parents' right to an authentically Christian education for their own children".

Improvement

Dr John Murray of Dublin City University said Christian schools shouldn't "adopt an inferiority complex, as if the faith- and reason-based approach that they take is in any way lacking or in need of improvement by being replaced with a multi-denominational or non-denominational status or approach".

"The new Government has no authority to treat Catholic education as outmoded or wrong; it needs to treat Catholic schools, and Christian schools more widely, as fully included in the Irish educational system and Irish society."

"If it looks like the government is planning to promote radical change in the Constitution to effectively ban Catholic and Church of Ireland education and schools, let's hope that concerned Christian parents

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Welcome, Kate Rose



Eimear and Dan Dooley stand with their baby Kate Rose Dooley in the Church of the Holy Rosary in Abbeyleix, Co. Laois, after her Baptism over the weekend.

DAVID QUINN

6,666 abortions not regarded as newsworthy PAGE 11



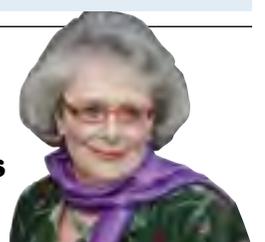
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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment returns next week



Can we talk about lay people please?

Editorial

Dublin Diocese has announced that priests are taking a 25% pay cut on already low salaries and that it is looking for one third of its 82 lay staff to take redundancies. Among those asked to consider redundancy are parish pastoral workers (see Page 4). The bishops' conference in Maynooth is also cutting back on hours for its lay staff.

Now think about cutting lay workers but especially pastoral workers in Ireland's largest Archdiocese for a moment. During Covid-19, churches were closed or open but with no Sacraments available; older priests were cocooning and the minority of fit and able priests who were already over-stretched running several parishes were trying to deal with Covid-19 funerals, sick calls and a myriad of other pastoral issues.

Apart from streamed Mass, the Church as we know it had essentially been cocooned. Some lucky parishes had parish pastoral workers, laity, who also tried to keep the parishes alive with online ministry to the most vulnerable while the churches were out of service along with many older clergy. The parishes were closed, but the parishes were very much alive and open because of the lay people and able clergy in the church and elsewhere keeping them going.

Vocations

With ageing clergy, little or no vocations, a seriously stretched younger priest cohort mostly tied up with sacramental demands, child protection and data protection paper work and finance meetings, pastoral workers are Dublin's last hope at having an outreach to people and at a time when we are told that many people have rediscovered their prayer life and a sense

of deeper meaning due to Covid-19. It might not be overly hyperbolic to suggest that now more than ever, the Church has an opportunity to preach the Good News and try to slow the tide of indifference to faith.

But Ireland's largest diocese is slashing its lay staff and among those its front line pastoral workers.

Does anyone want to ask how did Dublin get to such a sorry financial state? Covid-19 has just sped up the mess that has been Dublin's finances for years. Only two years ago, Dublin held the World Meeting of Families at a cost of millions.

Two years later, laity who have families to look after are being asked to take redundancy.

Yes the recession hit the collections, on top of falling

numbers, so the Church is shrinking and finances declining. We've known that for decades. Covid-19 sped up this problem with church closures and the collections dropping off a cliff. But where were the reserves?

“It's a huge task and few will be fit for it or have the stomach for it”

Why was so much money spent on the World Meeting of Families two years ago if the Diocese couldn't afford it? Why are the millions from the sale of Clonliffe ring-fenced for other projects and cannot be used to sustain parish pastoral worker jobs? What exactly are the priorities for the future and is any discussion

of such fundamentals allowed?

There has been an abject failure at leadership level to tackle these issues and now the next Archbishop of Dublin is being handed a diocese that is heading towards financial bankruptcy and will have no choice but to close numerous parishes throughout the diocese and shrink it even more. It's a huge task and few will be fit for it or have the stomach for it.

We mightn't like it but it's the stark truth and drastic times are ahead for the Dublin Diocese. The past three months have offered a glimpse into the future. It's time for a Diocesan Synod to be held while there still is a diocese. Laity and clergy need to stand up and make their voices heard.

The alternative doesn't bear thinking about.



Bishop criticises 'lack of clarity' on Baptisms

Ruadhán Jones

Bishop Donal McKeown has said it is unclear if parishes can actually baptise children and criticised the “lack of clarity” from the Northern Ireland Executive.

Bishop McKeown said that many parents have been “crying out” to have their child

baptised, which had been explicitly banned under lockdown.

Highlighting the confusion around the changing rules, Bishop McKeown said that baptismal parties now appear to be condoned, but he is unsure if the Baptisms themselves can take place.

“This last week, I have been trying to work out whether the NI Executive has now given us permission to baptise,” the bishop said. “I can understand the thinking behind the earlier temporary Baptism ban because, for some, sacramental events

seem to refer to the large parties afterwards. Now we can have the Baptism parties – but I am unclear whether we can actually have the Baptism before the party!”

Bishop McKeown said that it is unclear if the legal restrictions have changed and that he is “still waiting for further clarification”.

“When politicians accuse others of not understanding government messages,” Dr McKeown said, “that might suggest a lack of clarity in the messaging rather than merely culpable deafness on the part of the listeners.”

Church 'out of education'

» Continued from Page 1

will make known their views in favour of this education and these schools.”

Dr Murray said currently there is “rightly” a pluralist system of education, adding: “We can and should work on making it as representative as possible, but that doesn't mean making it a one-size-fits-all system of non-denominational and/or multi-denominational schools. And even if the Constitution remains as is, Catholic and COI schools need to guard against having programmes foisted on them that require them to contradict the truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

1 See Page 16.

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Churches closed for public Mass are a 'scandal' says author priest

Chai Brady

A well-known parish priest and author has said that it is a "scandal" for churches to remain closed for public Mass in the wake of the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

"I think it's an absolute scandal, I think it's just selfish. I can't warrant it, as our Christian leadership, they're erring on the side of caution but to a cost of discipleship and reaching out to people," Fr Paddy Byrne PP of Abbey-leix in Co. Laois told *The Irish Catholic*.

His comments come as dozens of churches decided not to facilitate public Mass as this paper went to press, including some of the largest churches in the Midlands, due to Covid-19.

Fr Byrne said: "We're on a long road to returning to where we were but we must offer the sacraments to people and I think it's just upsetting to be so legalistic."

When asked if he would turn people away, he said he had "no intention" and instead had "mechanisms in play whereby the doors were left open and we had our speakers outside".

However, Fr Declan Shannon, administrator of St Mary's parish in Athlone

defended the decision of his parish committee not to open for public Mass.

"If you imagine you're going to your grandparent's anniversary Mass and you can't get in because you're No.51 in the queue, it has the potential to lead to offence. We didn't want to exclude people, the vision we have for our churches is that they be places of welcome. This isn't a decision that was taken lightly or made solely by the priest."

Government guidelines state that places of worship can have more than 50 people in the church, given that social distancing can be maintained and they are in different sections that are at least four metres apart. Fr Shannon said the sections in their church are not four metres apart.

He said: "There's a balancing act here, the biggest one is respecting the health advice. We have to weigh that balancing act with people leaving the church because they couldn't get entry and feel offended. We're not going to put people's health in jeopardy, I don't want to put people in a position where they feel their health or wellbeing was compromised having been there."

Archbishop Michael Neary praises 'Herculean effort' as Masses resume

Ruadhán Jones

Archbishop Michael Neary has praised the hard work of all involved in restarting public Masses and "warmly welcomed" the new detailed guidance from the Government regarding Masses.

Following the news that Masses could resume, Archbishop Neary said that "teams of volunteers have been trained, churches have been prepared and marked out according to social distancing guidelines, and hand-sanitising stations have been sourced".

He continued, saying: "I am grateful for this 'Herculean effort' that sees us ready now to resume the sacramental life of the church in line with the guidance published by government."

Archbishop Neary said the cancellation of Masses was hard for priests and parishioners everywhere, and news of their resuming was met with "relief and joy".

"The reality is that our people have been unable to attend Mass or receive Holy Communion for more than three months now," he said.

Confirmed in Meath



The class of 2020 from Carrickleck National School, Co. Meath, in Kingscourt parish celebrate their First Holy Communion.

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International success as Irish Blessing reaches No.2 in Christian Charts

Ruadhán Jones

The Irish Blessing, originally released in May, came second to its UK counterpart in the UK Christian Music Chart for July after a public vote.

Co-producer, Fr Martin Magill, says the team are "absolutely delighted" with the result, and prays that it continues to be a blessing for people around the world.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Magill said: "We as a team are absolutely delighted

– we wanted this to be a blessing for people, we're delighted that it has been and pray that it continues to be so."

In a statement, the creators thanked all those who voted for the Irish Blessing, hailing it a "great achievement".

"*The Irish Blessing* was, in part, inspired by the many beautiful renditions of The Blessing from every corner of the earth," they said. "It seems fitting that we find ourselves beside the beautiful version sung by our nearest neighbours in this chart."

The archbishop said that he "warmly welcomed" the Government's new guidelines, describing them as being "clear and practical and very helpful".

Archbishop Neary also recognised the hard work that parish teams put in under lockdown: "Parish teams quickly responded to the situation in the most imaginative of ways, and full use was made of social media platforms, webcams and parish radio systems."



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Parish Pastoral Workers left in limbo over their future

Staff reporter

Dublin's Parish Pastoral Workers (PPWs) are among the 82 lay staff asked by Dublin Diocese to consider a voluntary redundancy package which has been described by some PPWs this paper spoke to as 'generous'.

However, the main con-

cern of PPWs appears to be what does the future hold for those who don't take the redundancy package.

What kind of diocese are they coming back to and what kind of Church are they staying for is one of the key concerns.

"What is the Church we are staying for – is it a Church focused on lay

ministry, is it a church that's focused on outreach, on mission, on supporting those most vulnerable, or is it a church that's focused on only sacramentals?" said one PPW who asked not to be identified.

"Is that the focus going forward, there's no guarantees, no reassurances, of the future of the Church...that

the future of the Church is not just a clerical one. That's where the uncertainty lies. If you're staying, what are you staying for or are there any reassurances going forward."

One lay member of staff in the Archdiocese told this paper that the PPWs should not have been included in the redundancy scheme

because they are needed in the parishes.

"If pastoral workers are the first to go, there are no vocations, so who is left? Elderly priests cocooning during lockdown, they can't fill the gap, neither can the younger men who are already stretched and now taking pay decreases."



Dermot Griffin, Fr Francis Nolan and Joan Trent celebrate the reopening of St Brendan's church Curraheen, Tralee, Co Kerry. It opened on Sunday after being closed for 15 weeks. Photo: John Cleary

Child poverty projections 'truly shocking' says SVP

Ruadhán Jones

Child poverty could be as high as 21% if the economy fails to recover by the end of the year, according to a study by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI).

The figures "are, sadly, not surprising" said Kieran Stafford, National President of St Vincent De Paul.

"Child poverty is already at an unacceptable level, but this particular difficulty that we find our-

selves in is only going to drive that higher due to the economic fallout," he said.

"We're at 16% at the moment and worse case is to go up to 20%, which is truly shocking for a relatively wealthy western country to have those kinds of figures."

Mr Stafford said that children are the "most vulnerable" in an economic downturn, and that the pandemic has cut them off from additional supports.

"There are huge challenges for parents in those situations, try-

ing to keep up with all the additional costs, as well as losing a job or potentially two jobs in the house."

The new Government has not committed to doing what's required to tackle the high levels of child poverty, Mr Stafford added.

"What's really lacking is that there isn't an all-of-Government strategy to tackle poverty. If they all pulled themselves together and came up with a strategy, we have some hope. But certainly not in the present guise."

Ferns remembers IC Holy Land Pilgrim

Staff reporter

The parish priest of Barntown, Ferns, Co. Wexford has paid tribute to Jason Donohue who sadly passed away recently. Jason travelled to the Holy Land last year with *The Irish Catholic* solidarity pilgrimage.

In his funeral homily, Fr John Carroll recalled a visit to the Tomb of the Holy Sepulchre: "Last year, Jason, myself and a few of the priests here present today [Frs Paddy Browne, Jim Fegan and Brian Broaders] made a memorable trip to Jerusalem and to parts of the Holy Land. At the site of the Holy Sepulchre, there was a large crowd. The queue was immense.

"After Mass, I said to Jason that I might approach the rather fierce-looking and lively Greek Orthodox monk who was porter at the entrance and see if I could 'get him in'. It must have been Jason's charm but the monk was no problem at all.

"Inexplicably, the monk stopped the queue, let the small shrine empty and then waved Jason straight through to the site of the resurrection.

"And as if by providence, he got his minute alone there (something that is quite difficult to get at any time – almost impossible)."

Paying tribute to the life lived by Jason, Fr Carroll concluded his homily saying: "I would like to leave you with a phrase used first by a German poet (Ludwig Jacobowski) titled 'Leuchtende Tage' published in the August 1899) – it's a simple one – it's helpful to where we find ourselves today: 'I don't cry because it has come to an end, I smile because it happened.'"

The Irish Catholic pilgrimage team extend their deepest sympathies to the family of Jason Donohue.

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Listen for the seeds of wisdom

"The reason that I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding." Jesus knew that people would listen to stories and remember them. Parable sounds like parallel.

A parable is a story that runs parallel to life, like a mirror that travels beside you in which you can see your life.

Jesus compared his teaching to seeds planted in different sorts of soil. A seed is not much use if it is left in a paper packet. It must be mixed in the earth. Scripture, the word of God, must be taken from the paper and planted in the earth of life. Only then will it be life-giving.

But there are different levels of listening. Every speaker has to remember that what is communicated is not necessarily what is said but what is heard. Everything that is read or heard is filtered through the mind of the listener or reader.

One listener is delighted while another gets nothing out of the same sermon.

There were very different reactions to the preaching of Jesus. Some people were filled with awe at his gracious words while others boiled over with anger and were hardened in their prejudice. The sermon is the same but it's the listening

that makes the difference. The parable of the sower and seed challenges us about how we listen.

Different soils

Some seed fell on the edge of a path, on hard soil. Birds devoured it before it got into the soil. Our minds are miles away, totally distracted and we take nothing in. Nothing has lodged in the memory. The shallow soil is alright on the surface but rocky underneath. This represents the shallow person who sort of hears but is caught up in superficial matters, more likely to remember who sat in which seat, or how somebody was dressed, than to take to heart anything that the readings said.

Other seeds started to grow but the shoots were choked by thorn bushes. Sometimes good intentions do not last long because the mind is too preoccupied by other concerns and worries. Finally, there is the good

soil which produces a crop in various amounts. If one prepares the soil beforehand there is every chance that the seed will flourish. Before reading or hearing the scripture always pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance. And if you have to listen to your least favourite preacher, pray to the Holy Spirit for the poor preacher and for yourself.

Ask God for a living word. Have a positive attitude that this reading or talk is just what I need today. Even if the preacher is poor, his incompetence might touch the compassionate quality of your heart. The most unwilling and incompetent preacher in the Bible was Jonah and his preaching converted an entire city.

It's amazing how a spoonful of sympathy can change our mentality! Extract from Silvester O'Flynn, *Gospel Reflections and Prayers*, Columba Press.

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



Odious attitude long pre-dates Epstein

In some ways, the saga of Jeffrey Epstein and his long-term girlfriend and associate Ghislaine Maxwell is almost a morality tale for our time.

Epstein, who exploited young girls for sexual purposes, flying them to various spots in America on an airplane jokingly known as 'The Lolita Express' is, of course, dead. It's widely known that Prince Andrew was his friend, and may face charges of being, in some way, complicit in these crimes – although he denies such allegations.

But Ghislaine Maxwell is in the frame as an accessory to Epstein's odious practices, and many ugly claims have been published to the effect that Maxwell acted as a 'madam' or procuress for these Lolitas – some as young as 14. She is facing charges that she groomed young girls for Epstein's pleasure, and sometimes joined in with the sexual abuse herself.

Victims

If convicted, the 58-year-old Maxwell faces a long stretch in a tough New York 'correctional penitentiary'. Virginia Robert Guiffre, one of Epstein's victims who claims she was manipulated by Ghislaine Maxwell, has said that "she belongs in jail. She ruined so many lives." The young woman, photographed with Prince Andrew's arm around her waist at Maxwell's mews house, says the arrest of Ghislaine Maxwell was "one of the best days of my life".

Yet, only last year, Maxwell attended a charity event in London where she was numbered among "the world's most successful women". It's but a short time ago since she mingled with a global elite, including Bill Clinton and the Trumps, and was



Mary Kenny

photographed larking around on the actual throne at Buckingham Palace. Her 'contacts book' – of renowned people on the international circuit – was said to be legendary.

Now all that glittering lifestyle is turning to dust, and many celebrate her downfall and call it well-deserved. St Paul's terrible warning "as ye sow, so shall ye reap" is enacted before our eyes in such public cases.



Ghislaine Maxwell.

It is for the law to decide whether an accused is guilty as charged, but the morality of the Epstein narrative is certainly pretty appalling. Yet it should be added, the sexual licence that prevailed in these circles had been 'normalised' for some time.

The 'Lolita' syndrome – the sexualisation of

young teenage girls – was well embedded in the culture. Nabokov's novel of that name was sold and marketed with a child-star image.

“Even now, much sex education material is constructed to encourage early sexual activity”

A supermarket chain in Britain, not long ago, was selling sexualised underwear for pre-teen girls with a 'Lolita' brand-name. The British Family Planning Association had campaigned vigorously to allow under-age girls to 'make their own choices' in matters of sexual activity.

Even now, much sex education material is constructed to encourage early sexual activity, not to empower the young to defend values of personal integrity or to affirm their right to chastity.

Jeffrey Epstein is deplored as a corrupt person, but the milieu in which he moved was altogether permissive towards that corruption.

● Barber shops opened in England last weekend, and a friend of mine decided to go to the barber's at 6.30am. The salon was already full, with a queue outside, proving that men are as keen on having their hair 'done' as women.

Hair-cutting is a very old profession – it was carried out by priests 5,000 years ago in Egypt. The barber-shop jokes are very old too. "How would you like your hair cut?" asks the barber. "In silence," answers the customer. This particular banter goes back to ancient Greece – possibly attributed to Socrates!

Precious cathedral's close call

Spain's most-visited monument is the stunning Cathedral of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona and, after a long period in lockdown, the beautifully unusual basilica designed by Catalan architect Antonio Gaudi is now opening up again to visitors.

The Sagrada Familia is designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, but it might well have been destroyed during the Spanish Civil War by the Republican forces, as so many others were.

According to George Orwell, when he got to Catalonia, "almost every church had been gutted and its images burnt". The only church the Republicans and Anarchists decided not to destroy was the Sagrada Familia – "spared because of its 'artistic

value", he wrote. Fighting alongside the 'reds' himself, the English author decided to take a look at the basilica that had, exceptionally, escaped destruction.

He pronounced it "one of the most hideous buildings in the world". The anarchists, he proclaimed, "showed bad taste in not blowing it up when they had the chance" (although they did hang a red and black banner between its spires).

Orwell showed precience, later, in his fabled novels *1984* and *Animal Farm*, but not much judgement about Gaudi's masterpiece, which is now widely regarded as one of the most artistically original places of worship in the world. The 1936 anarchists seemed to grasp that, and it is now Spain's pride.

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Tributes paid for 'gift to our Church' composer Ennio Morricone



Tributes have streamed in from the faithful around the world for Oscar winning Italian composer Ennio Morricone.

Most famous to many Catholics for his score for the film *The Mission*, he died aged 91.

Morricone died in a Rome hospital on Monday, July 6 after he was admitted days earlier with a fractured femur. Morricone's lawyer Giorgio Assumma said that the composer died at dawn "with the comfort of Faith".

In 2019, the composer was awarded Gold Medal of the Pontificate by Pope Francis for his "extraordinary artistic work in the sphere of music, universal language of peace, solidarity and spirituality".

Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare and Leighlin told *The Irish Catholic* that Morricone's music reflected his faith and that his music has been played in churches across Ireland.

"The famous instrumental piece *Gabriel's Oboe* [from *The Mission*] has been played I'd say in every church in our country," said Bishop Nulty. "A tremendous piece of music... a great gift to our Church, to our prayer, to our music."

"He has played in different Church environments across the world and I've heard his music in many different liturgies. In that respect, it was good to honour him," Bishop Nulty said. "Long may his compositions live after him."

Enslavement

The Mission (1987) depicted Spanish Jesuits' efforts to protect indigenous people from enslavement in 18th-century South America.

In an interview for the *National Catholic Register* in 2013, Morricone described the great merit of the



Ruadhán Jones

soundtrack as being "its technical and spiritual effect".

Morricone composed scores for more almost 500 films, achieving international fame for his work on the Spaghetti-Western trilogy – *A Fistful of Dollars*, *For a Few Dollars More* and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* – directed by Sergio Leone and starring Clint Eastwood.

“Recalling that he cried when he met Francis, Morricone said: ‘Don’t get the idea that I burst into tears at every opportunity; those were the only two times...’”

Morricone, who was simply known as 'Maestro' in his home town of Rome, won an honorary Academy Award in 2007, and an Oscar for Best Original Score for Quentin Tarantino's *The Hateful Eight* in 2016.

Morricone also wrote the score for *Karol: a Man Who Became Pope*, portraying the early life of St John Paul II, in 2006.

“He also composed a Mass marking the 200th anniversary of the restoration of the Society of Jesus in 2015, dedicating it to Pope Francis, the first Jesuit Pope”

He also composed a Mass marking the 200th anniversary of the restoration of the Society of Jesus in 2015, dedicating it to Pope Francis, the first Jesuit Pope.

The composer and his wife met Pope Francis before the premiere of the *Missa Papae Francisci*.

Recalling that he cried when he met Francis, Morricone said: "Don't get the idea that I burst into tears at every opportunity; those were the only two times I have ever cried – when I first watched *The Mission* and when I met the Pope."

Interview

Morricone had stated in his 2013 interview that he had no intention of composing a Mass setting, but changed his mind after a request from the rector of the Chiesa del Santissimo Nome di Gesù, the mother church of the Jesuit order,

"The thing that strikes me most about this task," he explained in a 2015 interview, "is the fact that I wrote the music for the film *The Mission*, which is the story of the Jesuits in South America, which after some years, in 1750, they were disbanded."

"In some way I have participated in their dissolution and now I participate in the celebration of the 200th anniversary of their restoration."

The composer commented that while his new Mass does subtly experiment, musically it is tied to the liturgy and to tradition.

"I was faithful to the modality we have in Gregorian music," he said, explain-

ing his use of dissonance and polymodality in the piece, as well as an overall air of serenity.

"The drama, perhaps, is located in the dynamism that there is in some moments."

Works such as this Mass are testament to the ability to adapt traditional music to modern musical language, Morricone said.

"The greatness of the language of today together with the greatness of the tradition. For example, the two choirs and the use of the modality are in the tradition, which is still there. There are tradition and innovation."

Sharing his memories of the late composer with *Vatican News*, Giancarlo La Vella, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi recalled that Ennio Morricone was a man of faith.

The President of the Pontifical Council for Culture also said he would remember this great cinematic composer for a least two particular spiritual events.

The first, Cardinal Ravasi recalled, was in Poland when he was preparing an Oratory for Pope St John Paul II.

"The second event is the most recent meeting on April 15, 2019, when I presented him, in the name of Pope Francis, with the Pontifical Gold Medal for his musical work. These two moments testify to what he has always attested: his Faith."

Morricone was born in Rome in 1928 and began composing music from early age. He worked on radio and television initially, before moving into films in the late 1950s.

Morricone married his wife Maria Travia in 1956, and she wrote lyrics to complement to her husband's pieces. Her works include the Latin texts for *The Mission*. They had three children.

Nuala O'Loan

The View



We need to talk about China

During the last four months the world as we knew it has stopped. Gone are many of the things we all took for granted. We know now that it will take years for our world to recover from the economic and social deprivation which have been the result of these months. Can you imagine what it must have been like as the world went to war in 1939, and how it must have been when peace was declared in 1945?

Outrage at the crimes of World War II: genocide, carnage, destruction, devastation brought most of the nations of the world together to make a Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It stated: "The inherent dignity and...the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world...disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind."

It proclaimed the right to life, the right not to be held in slavery or servitude; not to be subjected to torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

It stated that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State; that there is a right to believe, not to believe or to change belief; that there are employment rights, including the right to just and favourable conditions at work.

Evidence

In China today, despite the best efforts of the Chinese Communist Party, evidence of the most severe clampdown on human rights since the Cultural Revolution is emerging. There has been no effective response from the west.

Christians have been suffering for decades and more recently have seen an active campaign to remove all evidence and practice of religion from China.

At least one million, possibly up to three million, Uighurs, Kazakhs and



Inmates held against their will in a Chinese 'forced re-education' camp.

other ethnic groups have been forced into political re-education camps, which can be seen in satellite images, particularly in Xinjiang.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has described Xinjiang as "a massive internment camp shrouded in secrecy, a 'no rights' zone, while members of the Xinjiang Uighur minority, along with others who were identified as Muslim, were being treated as enemies of the State based on nothing more than their ethno-religious identity".

People have been arrested and sent to the camps for simply having WhatsApp on their mobile phones, for having relatives living abroad, for accessing religious materials online, for visiting particular countries, and for engaging

in religious activities. Often no reason is given at all.

They have no access to the law, no mechanism for appeal, and often families are not told where detainees are held.

People do not know whether their loved ones are alive or dead.

No windows

Mihrigul Tursun, a Uighur who managed to escape from one of these camps, testified at the US Congress, saying: "I was taken to a cell, which was built underground with no windows...there were around 60 people kept in a 430 square feet cell...we had seven days to memorise the rules of the concentration camp and 14 days to memorise all the lines in a book that hails the Communist ideology..."

"They forced us to take some unknown pills and

drink some kind of white liquid. The pill caused us to lose consciousness...I clearly remember the torture...I was taken to a special room with an electrical chair...there were belts and whips hanging on the wall. I was placed in a high chair that clicked to lock my arms and legs in place and tightened when they press a button. My head was shaved...the authorities put a helmet-like thing on my head.

"Each time I was electrocuted, my whole body would shake violently and I could feel the pain in my veins. I thought I would rather die than go through this torture and begged them to kill me."

Commentators are now saying that China is engaged in genocide

Evidence is emerging that the Uighurs and others have been subjected to DNA tests, and have been used for forced organ donation.

China has a very extensive programme of organ transplants. It is reported that prisoners are routinely used to supply organs. Although the Chinese one child policy has been relaxed in some circumstances, members of these minority

communities are being subjected to forced abortion and sterilisation.

The China Tribunal provided shocking new evidence in March this year of the continuing state-run programme of forced organ harvesting in China. The inquiry says that the organised butchery of living people to sell body parts could be compared to the "worst atrocities committed in conflicts of the 20th Century such as the Nazi gassing of the Jews and the Khmer Rouge massacres in Cambodia.

The People's Republic of China shows no sign of moderating its abuses and the Uyghurs and others in Xinjiang suffer gross abuses of their human rights. They are vulnerable to the destruction of their identity by enforced birth control and are at risk of becoming human organ banks."

Commentators are now saying that China is engaged in genocide.

In addition to this, people in the camps are used as slave labour for parts of Chinese industry, forced to work in appalling circumstances enabling the production of cheap goods for sale across the world.

We have significant economic problems in Ireland and in the UK. We

know now that so much of what we buy comes from countries far away, shipped across the world at huge environmental cost, leaving us very vulnerable to exploitation as we saw, for example, with some of the million of euros worth of PPE which was bought from China over the past months for hospitals and care homes, and which proved to be unusable.

Perception

Governments trading with China have not effectively challenged the human rights abuses by the Chinese Communist Party. The perception seems to be that our trade and economic interests are more important than the protection of minorities at the mercy of the Chinese Government. Most recently China has moved to extinguish democracy in Hong Kong.

“We need to demonstrate that our short-term economic interests do not outweigh human rights abuses”

It is time for governments to change their China policies and to respond to the proven findings about gross human rights abuses, false arrest and imprisonment, torture, the murder of citizen detainees for forced organ harvesting, forced sterilisation and abortion, slavery and forced labour.

We need to demonstrate that our short-term economic interests do not outweigh human rights abuses and that violations of human rights, such as those routinely engaged in by the Chinese Communist Party will be rejected.

Simultaneously we could move to encourage industry in these islands, so that we become more self-sufficient, providing employment for more of our people, showing that human rights and economic stability are not mutually exclusive; indeed they are each necessary in a functioning democratic society.



Pro-life groups 'unite for life' across Ireland

Chai Brady

Hundreds of pro-life advocates took to the street over the weekend both North and south to call for the protection of life in both jurisdictions.

The Rally for Life took place over the weekend, with protestors in the North calling for the repeal of Section 9 of new legislation that allowed abortion to be legalised. Many demonstrators in the south highlighted the report published last week by the Department of Health which revealed 6,666 abortions took place in the Republic last year.

Responding to the report the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference said: "The vast

majority of babies who were aborted in Ireland last year, 6,542 of them, are euphemistically described as having been 'terminated' in 'early pregnancy'.

"While we never got to know them personally, each one was a unique and precious human being. It was not their fault that their conception was inconvenient or untimely, or the result of sexual assault or that their parents lacked the support that would have helped them to embrace life."

Conference

There was also an online conference for young pro-life people which heard from a series of guests and looked

at different platforms to "win hearts and minds".

Niamh Uí Bhriain, spokeswoman for the Life Institute said the Rally for Life is the "biggest pro-life event of the year, and it brings tens of thousands of people together to be motivated and inspired, but most of all to stand for life, because the message and the works of the pro-life movement are needed now more than ever".

"The theme of this year's rally is 'United for Life' because the goal of the pro-life movement is to rebuild the culture and to bring the public to a better understanding of the horrific harm caused by abortion," she said.





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6,666 abortions in Ireland not treated as a big story



Covid-19 figures and the gender pay gap get the headlines when the tragedy of abortion is sidelined, writes **David Quinn**

The figure of 6,666 abortions that took place in Ireland last year will be seared into the memories of anyone who read it because it is horribly symbolic. But how many will get to remember it because how many are aware of it?

The number was horribly underreported. Considering that it was the first ever figure produced since we repealed the pro-life amendment in May 2018 and replaced it with a liberal new law that came into effect at the beginning of January 2019, you would imagine it would have been widely reported, but no.

Industries

Several times a year, the gender pay gap is published which informs us of the average pay gap between men and women. We have debates multiple times about what we must do to address the situation. We hear about the industries in which the gap is largest and smallest, and so on. Every time a new gender pay gap figure is produced it is treated as vital information.

But when the first ever figure for the number of abortions in the country was published, it was treated as a story of minor importance. Mudslides in Leitrim were higher up on the RTE news at one point.

Let's go back a few steps.



Peadar Tóbin TD, leader of Aontú, spoke about the abortion figures on radio last week.

Prior to the publication by the Department of Health last week of that figure of 6,666 we couldn't know for sure how many Irish women were having abortions because abortion was not legal in Ireland, but we can come up with a good calculation because British abortion clinics keep very comprehensive records.

In 2018, the last year before our own abortion law was introduced, about 2,900 Irish women had a termination in Britain. Pro-choice campaigners estimate that another 1,000 to 2,000 were taking the abortion pill having bought it illegally online.

That puts the total number of Irish abortions at between 4,000 and 5,000. Either of those figures mean we have had a very big jump in the number of terminations in the first year of operation of the new law.

In fact, you have to add on 375 abortions to the 6,666 Irish women who had abortions in Ireland because 375 still went to England for a termination despite our new law. That brings the total to 7,041.

“In 2018, the last year before our own abortion law was introduced, about 2,900 Irish women had a termination in Britain. Pro-choice campaigners estimate that another 1,000 to 2,000 were taking the abortion pill having bought it illegally online”

This means the number of abortions being performed on Irish women has soared by between roughly 40% and 75%, depending on whether the increase is from 4,000 or 5,000. Either of those increases is terrible.

And either of those increases is extremely newsworthy, just as the figure of 6,666 (plus the 375 who still went to England) is also very newsworthy.

“Imagine if the number of abortions had been much lower than turned out to be the case?”

But they were not deemed very newsworthy or worth debating or highlighting to any great extent. How many pro-lifers did you hear on major Irish shows over the last week? I am aware of only one, Aontú's Peadar Tóbin, on Newstalk's Ivan Yates show the *Hard Shoulder*.

Pro-choice campaigners in general were very quiet about the figures. When

they did comment they decided to focus on the fact that the vast major of the terminations took place before 12 weeks, or that the rate is low compared with England.

However, the fact that almost all abortions take place before 12 weeks is entirely predictable, because that is basically what happens everywhere.

Comparing us with England is all very well, but England has a very high rate and the real point is that our rate has gone up by between 40% and 75%.

If our gender pay gap was a lot lower than in England, but going quickly in the wrong direction, that would be the most important fact.

Imagine if the number of abortions had been much lower than turned out to be the case? Suppose the number was more like 3,000? I think that would have been publicised in a big way. I think pro-choice campaigners would have been all over the airwaves accusing pro-life campaigners of scare-mongering about the number of abortions

that would take place if we repealed the Eighth Amendment. I think every effort would have been made to place us on the backfoot.

Probably we would have seen headlines such as, 'Abortion figure much lower than predicted'. How often have we been reminded that divorce hasn't taken off in Ireland the way a handful of anti-divorce campaigners predicted in the 1990s? (Although there has been a big increase in marriage breakdown all the same.)

“Our newly-revealed official figure represents thousands of lives lost...even if you are pro-choice”

The reason the figure of 7,041 (6,666 plus 375) wasn't highlighted is almost certainly because pro-choice campaigners plus their media allies found it embarrassing and therefore it was thought better to hide it away and not discuss it.

If we had a fairer media, doctors and politicians (such as Minister Simon Harris) who insisted abortions go down when a law becomes more liberal would have been invited onto the airwaves to explain why they got it so badly wrong.

Is there, in fact, any abortion number that would have abortion campaigners pressing the alarm bell? In Britain there are about 200,000 terminations annually and that never seems to be a cause for concern.

For many abortion campaigners the figure is whatever it is. If X number of women obtain a termination in a given year, then so be it. If the Irish number is eventually 12,666 will they worry about that? It seems unlikely.

But in truth our newly-revealed official figure represents thousands of lives lost, and even if you are pro-choice, it means thousands of Irish women went through the experience of abortion that all would surely have preferred not to go through in an ideal world?

In fact, the figures show how many lives the Eighth Amendment was saving each year, because even if the increase was 'only' 40% year on year, that is still 2,000 additional abortions in 2019 compared with the previous year.

Multiply that down the years and we see that the Eighth Amendment saved literally tens of thousands of Irish lives.

The repeal of the Eighth was tragic in so many ways.



Out&About

Out of the desert



DUBLIN: The first Mass since lockdown is celebrated in St Finian's church, River Valley parish in Swords on June 29.



SOUTH SUDAN: John Skinnader CSSp is pictured in South Sudan helping communities prepare for the coronavirus pandemic. He returned to Ireland last weekend and is from Co. Monaghan.



DUBLIN: St Canice's church in Finglas congratulated former sacristan Paul Gernon [pictured] who recently celebrated his birthday.

IN SHORT

Irish Spiritan prepares South Sudan for Covid-19 crisis

The Spiritans, who began operating in South Sudan in 2012, are currently raising awareness of the Covid-19 crisis. The first death from the virus in the country occurred in mid-May.

Today the congregation is represented by Fr Boniface Isenge and Fr Sospeter Kiarie from Kenya, Fr Nolasco Mushi from Tanzania, and Fr John Skinnader from Co. Monaghan.

Fr Skinnader said: "We all manage projects such as agriculture, education, emergency relief, water or sanitation as well as the pastoral programmes of our Christian communities.

"People have yet to fully take on board

the serious dangers posed despite the fact that the UN warns that the outbreak is now growing rapidly, with a rising death toll and a significant number of health workers and many members of the Covid-19 task force, including two of the country's Vice-Presidents, having tested positive."

He explained that South Sudan scores particularly poorly in terms of the numbers of ventilators, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds or trained medical personnel at its disposal, though the WHO is working to improve health facilities and train health workers across the country to help stop the spread of the virus.

"In the Diocese of Rumbek where we operate," he said, "at least some people will be better prepared for the inevitable surge in cases and deaths which is likely to coincide with the rainy season that ordinarily begins in July.

"Our focus is a programme emphasising the need for handwashing, social distancing and, ideally, wearing face masks. This engages the women and girls – and the few men – who regularly collect water from the various boreholes in our communities."

Fr Skinnader said that much like all Church personnel in South Sudan, "we have effectively spent every evening in lockdown since the civil war started in 2013".

"The roads are unsafe for us to travel freely to other missions, even by day, and we have to be in our compound by 7pm every evening. Self-isolation comes easily to us.

"With the closure of South Sudanese schools and churches, we are using more of our time to pursue other activities such as gardening, farming and food-distribution. We have also built a new primary school at the cost of €400,000 in Holy Cross Parish, an

isolated out-station of Rumbek where there was only a 'hedge-school' until now. With the support of Misesan Cara, Fr Nolasco is constructing a set of four classrooms for use by children from a nearby leper colony," Fr Skinnader said.

"We continue to pray that the peace process will hold, that the virus will pass without leaving behind a major trail of destruction, and that the hard work of farmers here will be blessed with a good rainy season yielding increased food production and helping to keep hunger at bay," he added.

Fr Skinnader was ordained in 1981. He was in pastoral ministry in Sierra Leone for most of the 1980s. He also served in Rome, Ireland and Ethiopia before moving to South Sudan in 2012.

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



KERRY: Fr David McGovern OP, celebrated his first Mass on June 29 at Holy Cross Church, Tralee after lockdown. He is pictured with Grant O'Sullivan (left) and Bobby Boylan (right). Photo: John Cleary



ARMAGH: The Armagh Covid-19 team conducted a deep clean of St Patrick's Cathedral before it opened for public worship.



ANTRIM: A shrine was made to Noah Donohoe (14) in Clonard Monastery. He was found dead in Belfast after a six-day search. They posted online: "Eternal rest grant to Noah, O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon him. May his soul, and the souls of all the Faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace."



OMAGH: Fr Eddie Gallagher of Greencastle parish took part in a 12-mile (19km) sponsored memorial walk for Mickey Bradley. The proceeds were raised for Trócaire and the event was organised by Mickey's family.



CAVAN: Annette O'Rourke, Chair of Kingscourt parish pastoral council making a presentation to PJ Fleming, Mary Smith, Mary Duffy, Ann Burns and Aine Tuffy in recognition of their services to the parish in lockdown. In addition, she also presented a special set of Papal Rosaries from Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland on behalf of Pope Francis.



DUBLIN: Members of Our Lady of Victories church in Glasnevin's Covid-19 team who worked with over 30 volunteers to make sure the church was able to reopen for public Mass.



ITALY: Four young people celebrate their First Communion at the Irish College in Rome.

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.



Zoom orchestras and WhatsApp quizzes: Dublin charity St Agnes CCMA have had to innovate to bring music to their community writes **Ruadhán Jones**

The lockdown may be coming to an end for many, but for those with underlying conditions caution will continue to be the order of the day. Pauline McHugh is 75 and suffers from breast cancer. Only recently diagnosed, she has had to wait for treatment due to the pandemic and lockdown.

"I'm taking a tablet to slow its growth," she says. "I had open heart surgery a numbers of years back and that is complicating things. I have this hanging over me now, but I'm optimistic – I had cancer before, 20 years ago, and got through it.

"I'm working at getting mentally and physically well for any operations and trying to be positive."

The lockdown has been difficult for Pauline, but one of the ways she has been able to maintain her good spirits is through the virtual efforts of Dublin charity St Agnes' Community Centre for Music and the Arts (CCMA).

Before lockdown, Pauline was an active member of St Agnes' Parents Orchestra and the community choir. During lockdown, their sing along sessions have been a wonderful connection for her.

"I love music and I'm sorry I didn't learn to play something years ago," she says. "The practices give me a routine, which is very important.

"To have this technology at a time like this is brilliant... to be able go on the internet and look things up and for people to get in touch with me."

Shock

Lockdown was a big shock to St Agnes' CCMA. Only a couple of weeks before it began, St Agnes' Parents' String Orchestra celebrated 10 years since its founding by performing before President Michael D. Higgins.

It was a testimony to the hard work put in by the orchestra and the charity that backed them, St Agnes CCMA. The concert brought together musicians from around the world, including America, Singapore, Holland and more.

But had the concert been held the next month, it's quite likely it wouldn't have taken place, and this was one of the last occasions the 112-strong orchestra met before lockdown.

Music, mental health and wellbeing under lockdown

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* Denise Divers, part of the team that runs the charity, explains that "we had to move quickly to get our services online".

"We don't know what the effect of this extreme isolation will be on people," she says, "no doubt we'll see the impact of that in the coming months.

"We wanted to help reduce the effects of isolation by keeping the community together and improving mental wellbeing and musical skills."

“St Agnes' work under lockdown is an extension of the work they have been doing for nearly 15 years”

The community St Agnes' typically serves is made up of "a substantial number of families living in poverty, living on low incomes [and] many elderly people living alone", explained Denise.

This made it all the more important to move online quickly in order to help people cope with these "very, very tough times".

"We had to keep our various choirs together, so the first thing we did was organise a table quiz on WhatsApp. That began Thursday March 18 and is still going."

"We get over 60 people actively forming teams and taking part. Many more, not involved in any team, watch questions come in and out on Zoom - noticeable from the WhatsApp interjections!"

“Singing is so good for mental wellbeing, particularly in this lockdown. It is well recognised that singing cheers people up and makes you feel better”



End of year concert of community classes.

Online services

Since then, St Agnes' CCMA have worked hard to move their many other services online. The charity seeks to improve the lives and wellbeing of its historically low-income community through music and the arts.

Before lockdown, they ran a number of different services, such as the Scoil Úna Naofa violin and orchestra project, Crumlin Community Choir and the Memory Lane Choir.

"We've reoriented everything online," said Denise. "For example, there's children preparing for RIA exams, so we got them immediately onto student classes.

"We are providing private Zoom lessons for 22 primary and

secondary level students, a number of whom are preparing for exams in the Royal Irish Academy (RIA).

"It's a great opportunity for them. One girl from the area, Kelly O'Neill, with no family tradition of third level education, is now pursuing a Bachelor of Music and Performance at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

"There are other people who've gone through the project who are in third level level education, not all in music," Denise explains. "Research shows that this project has contributed to building their confidence and self-esteem, helping them to move into an environment they're not used to, that being third level level.

Technical difficulties and the need for isolation make it difficult

to provide all their services, Denise says, but that hasn't stopped them, Denis says.

"We have conducted Zoom orchestral sectionals sessions since April 22, with 90 people participating since then.

"The tutors, instead of playing the piece as would be normal at a live orchestra practice, use the Zoom session to instruct on technique and rhythm providing tuition for up to one hundred learners.

"You can't play together because of time lag, so it's about keeping people together. We meet every day to keep them focused on something with the hope that we'll be back playing together sooner rather than later."

While this might prove an impossible obstacle for some orchestras, the focus of the charity is always "people first, music second", explains Denise.

"It's all about the people," Denise says. "It's about people from different aspects like age,



St Agnes' chamber orchestre.



Louise Corrigan and Larry Dunne.

nationality, ethnic groups, who are coming and meeting each other, learning about each other and contributing to the cohesiveness of community.

"We want to be a vehicle of community contact for people during lockdown.

The most popular online program they run is their 'Sing a Song at Home' campaign led by Jennifer Grundulis, a member of the musical society and a "wonderful singer".

"She sings a song once a week and we overlay the words on it," Denise explains. "We send it out to everybody in the community, absolutely everybody we have contact details for, and ask them to sing it at home, even by themselves.

"Singing is so good for mental wellbeing, particularly in this lockdown. It is well recognised that singing cheers people up and makes you feel better.

"We've also kept the Memory Lane Choir going, which is very close to the heart of Sr Bernadette Sweeney, St Agnes' founder. It's for those with dementia and Alzheimer's and takes place once a week," Denise says.

"They come with their carers and their family members and take a trip down memory

lane with different songs. It's a fantastic morning of music, you can see it in their faces that they just love it."

Feedback

The feedback that they have received has been "fantastic", Denise says, because "people love to be able to link in with people they know and it gives a certain amount of structure".

"They know they've got violin on Monday which means they need to do a bit of practice. It gives structure to the week and to the day and allows them to look forward to meeting people again."

Mary Dowd, who is cocooning at home having recovered from Covid-19, has found the online gatherings particularly helpful to her.

She joined the orchestra two years after her husband Larry passed away. Her wish to learn to play the violin pushed her in the direction of St. Agnes.

Having joined, she finds that there is great camaraderie in the orchestra, and it is one of the things that helped her fill the huge gap left by her husband's death, giving her a great 'lift'.

"It helped a lot, even just getting out of the bed in the morning especially in the first year."

After starting in the orchestra,

she quickly applied her skills in finance and accounting on a voluntary basis, assisting the St Agnes' CCMA charity and soon found herself on the Board of Management.

This keeps her so busy now that she hardly finds the time to practice the violin, but the violin sectional was her first time on Zoom.

"I polished my violin and prepared for the Zoom class but once I saw myself, I realised I hadn't even brushed my hair. I'll do something about that this week!"

"Since then my family had quiz night on Zoom for my granddaughter's 21st because we weren't able to have a party. My birthday was last week, and the family arrived outside the front garden with a big banner to wish me a happy birthday."

Mary participates in the WhatsApp groups and quiz nights and is making the most of the situation. She wonders what God's plan in this is, saying "I think he is telling us to slow down and clean the world".

Another beneficiary of St Agnes' CCMA community's support is Gertie O'Brien, another cocooner. Gertie used to play accordion in St Agnes', but an accident hurt her right hand and she had to stop.

She promised to start again, however, and has since joined some of the viola sectional classes via Zoom.

“We meet every day to keep them focused on something with the hope that we'll be back playing together sooner rather than later.”

"I was able to get half the class this week on Zoom but I will get the whole class next week. The link came in on the phone and I'm not very good with a phone but with help from Margaret (a volunteer with the project) I managed to get half the class on Zoom."

"I contacted my desk partner, Ester, and she is going to practice with me during the week. One of the girls in beginner violas lives

across the road from me and she dropped a note in asking if I needed anything because I'm in my seventies and I can't really be out."

"So now she gets my groceries and drops me in the newspaper every day. And the only thing I could do for her was, she needed to tune the instrument and I gave her my spare tuner, that's all I could do for her in return at the moment, she is a lovely girl."

Music

Denise believes that lockdown has highlighted the importance of music as a way to create unity and strengthen communities.

"Music really nourishes people – it's a different language, a way we can communicate together," explains Denise. "If someone comes from Nigeria or Russia or the Ukraine and their English is not that good, conversation can be quite difficult.

"But you sit down and play together, you feel a kind of spiritual wellbeing, a communal thing knowing that you're experiencing the same sensation.

"That's a different language, not often nurtured but one which we are nurturing in our own community.

"We can smile and laugh and have a cup of tea, reflecting on the experience we shared by playing together without conversation."

Struggle

Although the arts industry in Ireland has struggled as a result of the lockdown, Denise is hopeful that the positive role music in particular has played will be recognized by the government.

"In one way, this negative time has highlighted the importance of art and music. It's always been something at the bottom of government agendas.

"Hopefully, media focus on the arts in the Covid crisis will help filter through to policy makers that the arts are very important. Not just for mental health, but to enrich people's lives.

"St Agnes' work under lockdown is an extension of the work they have been doing for nearly 15 years", says Denise.

The genesis for the charity was St Agnes' Violin Project, founded by Sr Bernadette Sweeney, then principal at St Agnes' Primary

School. Her desire was that every child get a chance to express their inner creativity, combined with a passion for music.

In 2006, she received a grant of €1,000 for violins, which she purchased for the school. The next year, a school orchestra was formed. On the back of its success came the parent's orchestra, the musical society and in 2012, St Agnes' CCMA was formed.

The central work of the St. Agnes' CCMA enables people from a historically low-income and disadvantaged community, to engage with music and the arts and that this engagement will potentially enhance their lives and wellbeing by providing scope for personal development, engagement and empowerment.

"It develops not just musicianship skills, but teamwork and commitment, practising – those disciplines that are so important to the workplace. It contributes to wellbeing in the sense that it gives structure to the day, gives confidence and relieves stress.

“The most popular online program they run is their 'Sing a Song at Home' campaign led by Jennifer Grundulis, a member of the musical society and a "wonderful singer"”

"It adds to their skills, which hopefully adds to ability to secure jobs and have better quality of life through their lives."

Denise says that they will have to be cautious in returning because of the nature of their community, waiting until it is absolutely safe to do so.

"We don't feel that a lot of these group things can start until we're sure that there are no possibilities of contamination.

"If we have to, we'll keep on going with this as a way of keeping community together. Not everybody can be involved as they would like because of tech difficulties, but we hope to iron those things out over the next couple months.

However, Denise is hopeful that St Agnes' will be able to "hit the ground running once lockdown is over".

"This project started in 2006 and has expanded. We have the committed volunteers that will keep up and running. They're doing absolutely amazing work, with Sr Bernadette right at the helm.

"Keeping this very positive project alive for the next 10, 15, 20 years is very important for the community and surrounding areas. We hope it's also a beacon for other communities to learn from.

"We're always cognisant that we're in a low-income, disadvantaged community and we want to be a catalyst for providing opportunities to people who otherwise wouldn't be able to avail of this kind of service."

New Government is pushing to turn all Catholic schools into agnostic schools



Supporters of Catholic education should not be passive in the face of threats to an authentic, faithful and confident religious ethos in Irish schooling writes **Dr Tom Finegan**

The term 'religion' is mentioned only once in the 139 page Programme for Government (PfG) adopted by Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party. On the occasion it is mentioned it is referenced, "all religions and none". So religion is only worth mentioning in the PfG in direct and neutral association with the absence of religion. Hardly a promising sign for the right of Christian parents to a religious education for their children.

Items

Four items in the draft PfG are of particular interest to Christian schooling and authentic denominational religious education:

- I. The divestment of more Catholic primary schools to give greater choice of schools for secular parents;
- II. Introducing a liberal-secular relationships and sexuality education programme to all primary and post-primary schools;
- III. Introducing a liberal-secular religious and ethics education to all primary schools, and
- IV. Establishing a Citizens' Assembly on the future of education at primary and second level.

Item (I) is welcome and very important. Non-Christian parents have the same basic human right to choice of schools as Christian parents. Genuine pluralism requires genuine diversity of choice of school ethos. Actioning this item needs the active involvement of Catholic bodies and persons, of course, and so the wider Church has a duty to take the divestment process very seriously.

The merits of the PfG as regards religion in education end at item (I). Absurdly, under the heading of "plurality and choice in education", the PfG pushes items (II) and (III). According to the PfG "pluralism" and educational "choice" require turning all Catholic schools into secular, agnostic schools. Item (II) involves introducing a liberal-secular relationships and



sexuality education programme into all primary and post-primary schools, while item (III) involves introducing a liberal-secular religious and ethics education into all primary schools.

“Our Constitution, which is the basic law of the State, is emphatically supportive of both denominational schooling and the rights of all parents to freedom of school choice”

The effect of both proposals would be to turn Christian schools into secular schools when it comes to sex and relationships education and when it comes to an important part of religious education. This is not genuine pluralism: it is a coercive push towards secular monism. It goes a long way to destroying genuine choice of schools in terms of ethos, and so it seriously harms the interests of religious parents in having a choice of Christian schooling for their children.

Take item (II), sex and relationships education. Previous State-sponsored documentation has already indicated that the State's favoured approach to sex and relationships education is liberal-secular. The PfG very strongly implies that this will be true for the incoming Government: its guiding ethic will be consent and choice. Marriage,

as the union of one man and one woman, will not figure as a good worth pursuing. Chastity will be ignored, at best. Christian sex ethics on sensitive topics will be rejected. 'Respect' for persons will be reducible to consent, as if persons cannot consent to be sexually disrespected. Virtue in sexuality will be omitted. Sex ethics will be divorced from God, love, moral goodness, fidelity, permanency, integrity, and the seismic incarnational significance of procreation.

Nothing in the proposed liberal-secular programmes will affirm credible, principled opposition to pornography, sexting, prostitution, casual/anonymous sex, abortion, polyamory, or adultery.

Now turn to item (III), the proposal to introduce liberal-secular religious and ethics education into all primary schools. This too amounts to forcing Catholic schools to adopt a secular approach to ethos-relevant education. Here the PfG is pushing a re-hash of a proposal rejected via consultation only a few years ago: a programme titled, "Education about Religious Beliefs and Ethics" (ERBE). Critics of the ERBE programme correctly argued that it assumed all religions and philosophies to be equally true, and thus encouraged religious relativism. Of course, the idea that all religions are equally true is directly contrary to Church teaching and the explicit teaching of Christ.

Tolerance

Supporters of the ERBE programme argued that its introduction was important for promoting religious tolerance. But Catholic schools do not promote intolerance – far

from it. More fundamentally, one needn't assume that all religions are "equally true" in order to accept the principle of religious tolerance and to respect freedom of religion. Vatican II insists that Catholicism is the only fully true faith and, at the same time, that all other religions should benefit from the right to religious freedom. The fact is that the liberal-secular understanding of "religious tolerance" is intolerant of Catholic schools being confident about the truth of the Catholic faith. It is not genuine tolerance.

Supporters of Catholic and wider Christian education should not be passive in the face of these threats to an authentic, faithful and confident religious ethos in Irish schooling. Nor should supporters despair that these proposals will inevitably materialise. Our Constitution, which is the basic law of the State, is emphatically supportive of both denominational schooling and the rights of all parents to freedom of school choice. Legislation (statutory law) enacted by the Oireachtas must not be incompatible with the Constitution. This is why the current Education Act is so supportive of denominational ethos. If the incoming Government was to pursue items (II) and (III) via legislation it would run into genuine constitutional difficulties.

Which is why item (IV), the proposal to establish a Citizens' Assembly on the future of education at primary and second level, is both intriguing and deeply worrying. Recourse to a Citizens' Assembly is often government's way of publicly justifying constitutional referenda it deems desirable. Stakeholders

in, and supports of, Christian schooling need to be acutely aware of this. There is a real possibility that the Government will use a Citizens' Assembly as a means to a referendum to violate Christian parents' right to an authentically Christian education for their own children. This would be in violation of Article 26(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unfortunately, recent precedent exists for the removal of a human right from the Constitution.

“Supporters of the ERBE programme argued that its introduction was important for promoting religious tolerance”

Educate

I believe in the right of non-religious parents to educate their children according to the truth as they judge it. And I will defend the same right for my wife and I and all other religious parents. Our moral, religious, and parental integrity depends on being able to pass on the Christian faith to our children. If denied our right by a liberal-secular state we will be forced to exit the public schooling system and incur the massive costs of either giving up work (and other) opportunities in order to home-school, or funding private schooling. This would be grossly unfair to taxpayers who are trying to raise the next generation in already challenging socio-economic circumstances. It would amount to unjust discrimination against Christian (and other religious) parents. And it would radically compromise the handing on ('tradition') of the Christian faith.

Secularists have succeeded in creating an agnostic public space where God is absent, where there is no meaning outside the finite self (and thus no ultimate meaning at all), and where moral wrongs are enshrined in the Constitution. If that is their best vision for their own children, they should be free to educate them accordingly. But they have no right to force their agnosticism, nihilism, and relativistic morality on Christian families.

Now is the time for the impassioned defence of both faith-based education and the right to faith-based education. There is a real need for coordinated courage among parents, Catholic education stakeholders and leaders, and Bishops to defend the rights of Catholic parents to an authentic Catholic education for their children.

i Dr Tom Finegan is a lecturer in theology at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Mary Immaculate College.

“One needn't assume that all religions are “equally true” in order to accept the principle of religious tolerance and to respect freedom of religion”

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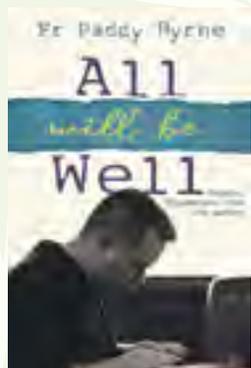
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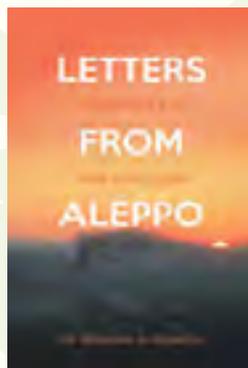
Pope Francis is offering a new inclusive, merciful model of Church. Fr Paddy Byrne has become one of Ireland's top advocates for this model of mercy, examples of which he shares here.

The Celtic Songlines
David Forsythe



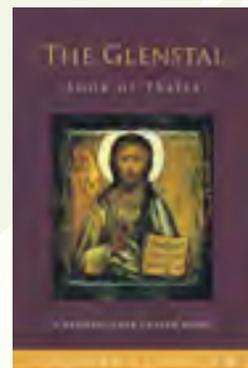
Is there such a thing as 'Celtic music' and if there is, what exactly is it? These are the questions that Dónal Lunny seeks the answers to in *The Celtic Songlines*.

Letters From Aleppo
Ibrahim Alsabagh



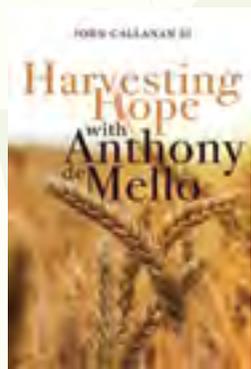
Often writing as bombs fell around his monastery, Father Ibrahim recounts how he and his besieged parishioners live everyday life, their joys, sorrows and cries that become prayers.

The Glenstal Book of Prayer
Simon Sleeman



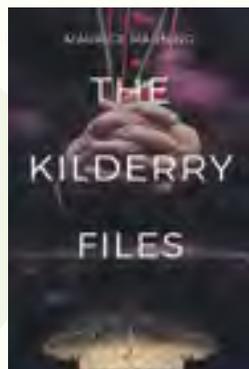
A rich nourishing resource for the dark, mysterious, but exciting journey which is prayer. It draws on passages of the Bible, the experience of modern monks, and the wisdom of the Church.

Harvesting Hope with Anthony de Mello
John Callanan SJ



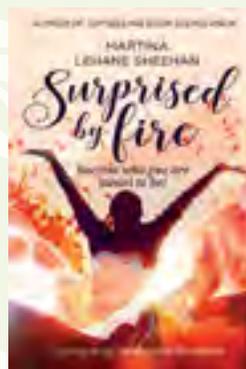
Using the wisdom of Anthony de Mello, one of the finest spiritual teachers of modern times, Fr John Callanan, an Irish Jesuit, outlines how to deal with life's darker moments.

The Kilderry Files
Maurice Manning



A fast-paced thriller, *Kilderry Files* brings together a rich cast of characters who take us headfirst into the heart and paranoia of troubled Ireland, and the hold of Church politics.

Surprised by Fire
Martina Lehané Sheehan



This is not just another self-help book; it will take its readers on a powerful journey towards transforming and healing the blocks that hold us back from living our dream.

Glendalough: History, Monuments & Legends
George McClafferty



Serving as a detailed guide to the monuments of Glendalough, this book will prove an ideal companion to the site, whether you are a recreational visitor or a pilgrim.

Cancer-A Circle of Seasons
Anne Alcock



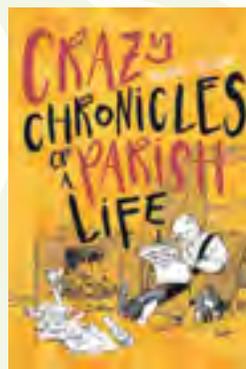
When Anne Alcock was diagnosed with breast cancer, she talked with friends, journaled, prayed and found resources. This book is her way of bringing it all together.

Where I find God
Cora Guinnane & Joanne O'Brien



Where I find God is a thought-provoking book where many of Ireland's finest thinkers share where they have found, and continue to find, the divine in their lives.

Crazy Chronicles of a Parish Life
Michael Collins



There is a touch of craziness in every life, and the clerical life is no different. This book is a conglomeration of the good, the bad, and the ridiculous experienced by Fr Michael Collins.

Already Within
Daniel O'Leary



Already Within contains the best writing of Daniel O'Leary, a summing up of the main thrust of his books and articles from the past and present.

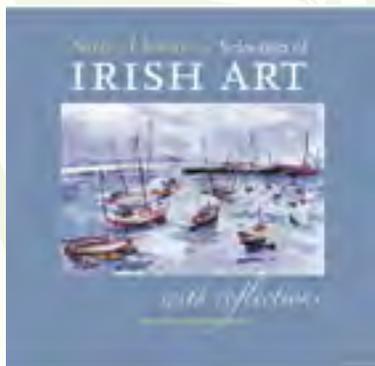
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Sr Maureen's Selection of Irish Art

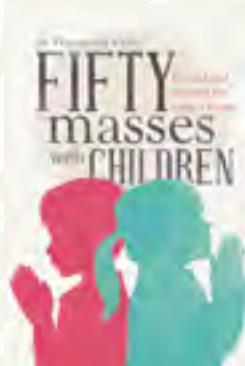
Maureen MacMahon OP



In this full-colour book, Sr Maureen selects a range of pictures from Irish Art and gives a descriptive commentary on the piece, finally moving towards a spiritual reflection.

Fifty Masses with Children

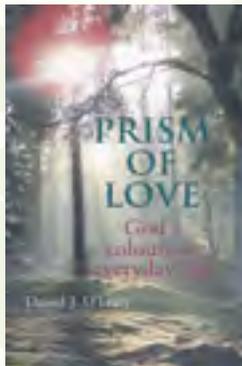
Sr Francesca Kelly



Fifty Masses with Children is an invaluable resource for all teachers and priests working with children who are now adapting their celebrations of the Masses to the new liturgy.

Prism Of Love

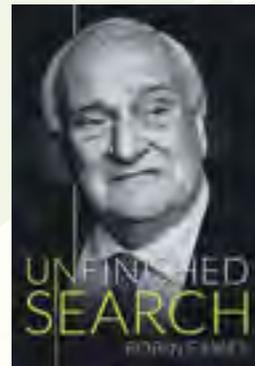
Daniel O'Leary



Daniel O'Leary continues to share his passion for enriching the lives of his readers by enabling them to delve a little deeper, below the surface of what is happening to them, and around them.

Unfinished Search

Robin Eames



In this deeply honest and personal account Robin Eames offers a glimpse into the pain and suffering that the Troubles brought to so many across the communities in Northern Ireland. He asks piercing questions about how to handle the past and possible ways forward.

Best Loved Poems: South of Ireland

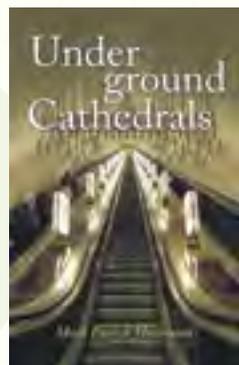
Gabriel Fitzmaurice



This collection of poetry, comprising of contemporary favourites, ninth-century poems, popular songs and ballads will delight the general reader and the poetry specialist alike.

Underground Cathedrals

Mark Patrick Hederman OSB



Coupled with very honest comments on the current state of the church in Ireland, and with a reflective meditation on the Murphy Report, Hederman offers a stimulating image of how things might be.

Padre Pio of Pietrelcina

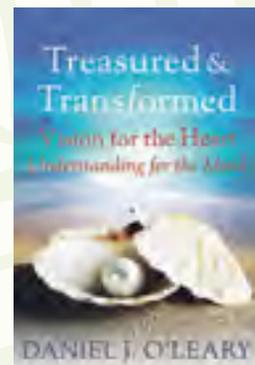
Fr Francesco Napolitano



This revisited biography follows the saint from his humble beginnings through his life of profound sacrifice and goodness. It recounts stories of the obstacles he overcame and the people he touched.

Treasured & Transformed

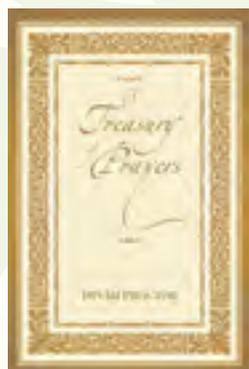
Daniel O'Leary



Begin to perceive yourself and the world in a shockingly delightful way. Explore the love and meaning in all your experiences, even the painful ones with Daniel O'Leary's *Treasured & Transformed*.

A Treasury of Prayers

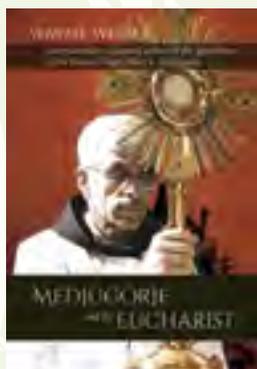
Dinah Proctor



Despite our failings, God doesn't stop reminding us how much he loves us. *A Treasury of Prayers* is a gathering of special prayers for different occasions to help us ground ourselves in God always.

Medjugorje and the Eucharist

Wayne Weible



The incredible apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Medjugorje are intimately linked with the Holy Eucharist. The heart and soul of these pages are personal witness and experiences that will add to the reader's faith.

And Catch the Heart Off Guard

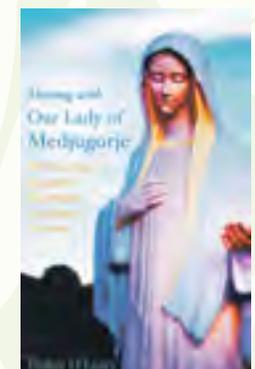
Brian D'Arcy



A quintessentially Brian D'Arcy book, these pages offer a collection of thoughts, reflections and stories from the heart, and look to both challenge and comfort the reader.

Meeting with Our Lady of Medjugorje

Finbar O'Leary



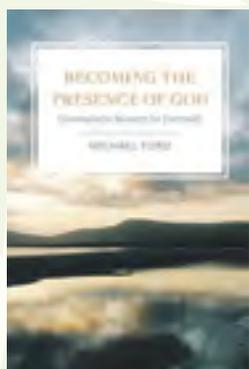
A rare, deep insight into the messages and happenings in Medjugorje through in-depth interviews with the visionaries, as well as rare and intimate interviews with the two locutionaries.

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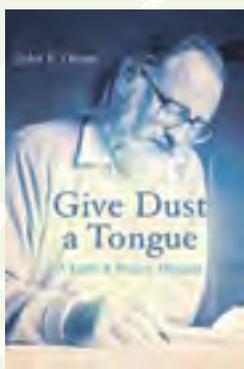
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Wherever we find ourselves on the spiritual map, *Becoming the Presence of God* encourages us to become contemplatives in the world at large.

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The book uses many of John F Deane's best-loved poems to directly face the question Christ asked: Who do you say that I am?

Three French Saints – Thérèse of Lisieux
Críostóir Ó Floinn



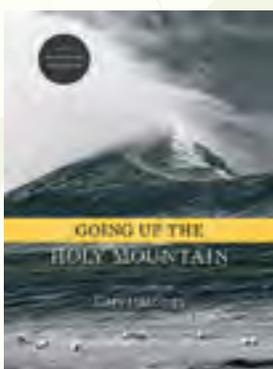
Written in a very simple manner, this book gives a background to the times of St Thérèse and a full account of her life which gave rise to her canonisation by the Church.

The Celtic Spirit and Literature
Grace Clunie & Tess Maginess



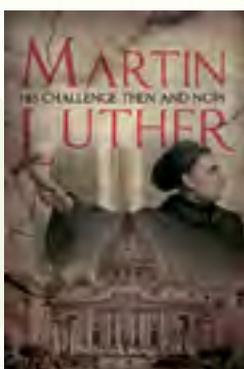
The Celtic Spirit and Literature offers a lively and thoughtful introduction to the rich and complex world of Celtic Spirit, past, present and to come. It explores many centuries up to the present day.

Going Up the Holy Mountain
Gary Hastings



Pilgrimages to Cruach Phádraig, Croagh Patrick, or the Reek, in Co. Mayo are explained and other ways you might use the mountain as a spiritual resource are suggested.

Martin Luther
P. Fintan Lyons OSB



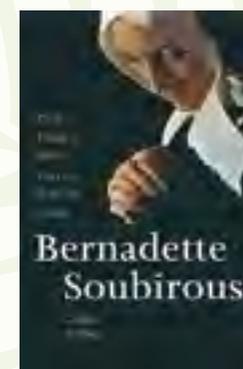
A study of the phenomenon of Luther, and his effects on church and society, leads in the end to recognising that issues which existed then are endemic to Christianity in every century.

In Search of the Awesome Mystery
Seán ó Duinn OSB



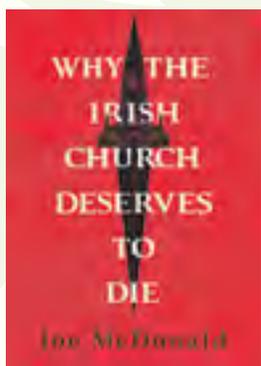
A masterly overview of the stories and continuing practices spanning religious living in Ireland from the earliest times. This adventurous book provides fascinating insights into the mindset and attitudes of the people of Ireland.

Three French Saints- Bernadette Soubirous
Críostóir Ó Floinn



Written in a very simple manner, this book gives a background to the times of St Bernadette and a full account of her life which gave rise to her canonisation by the Church.

Why the Irish Church Deserves to Die
Joe McDonald



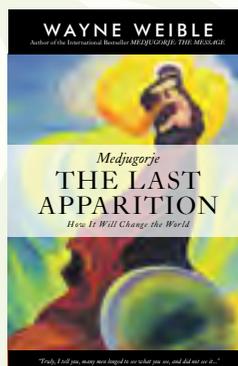
Is there any hope for us as an Irish Church? It remains to be seen as to whether we can implement reform never mind renewal.

Healing & Wholeness
Kathleen Glennon



This book is intended for those who are ill or for those who are dying and for their carers. It provides a variety of resource material for both groups.

Medjugorje: The Last Apparition
Wayne Weible



Medjugorje: The Last Apparition presents a close examination of what will be the last apparition of the Mother of Jesus and how it will change the world forever.

Eucharist Ministers
Brian Glennon



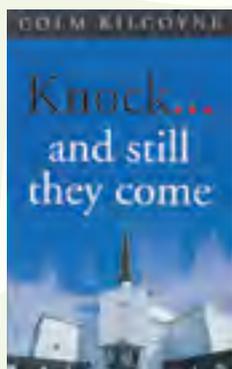
This little book of reflections for Eucharistic Ministers aims at deepening their commitment to that ministry and their response to the call of the gospel.

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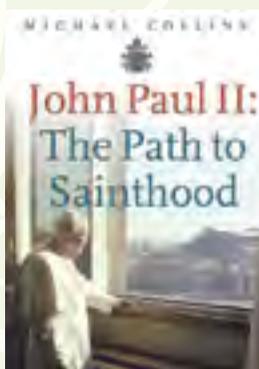
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Knock...and still they come
Colm Kilcoyne



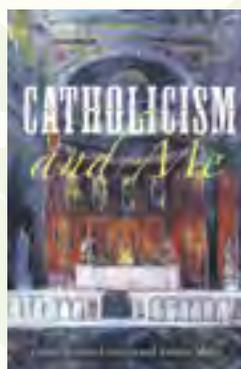
This unique collection of essays and insights includes the experiences of ordinary pilgrims to Knock as recorded in the shrine visitors book, and an interview conducted with the late rector of Knock Shrine, Fr Joe Quinn.

John Paul II: The Path to Sainthood
Michael Collins



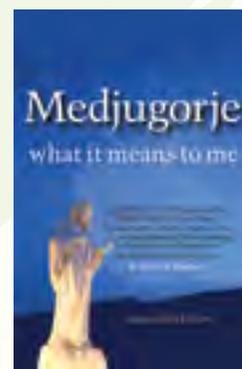
Beatified six years after his death, Pope John Paul remains an enigmatic figure. This book traces the life and legacy of the Polish pontiff, examining the journey which led to his beatification.

Catholicism and Me
Eamon Maher & John Littleton



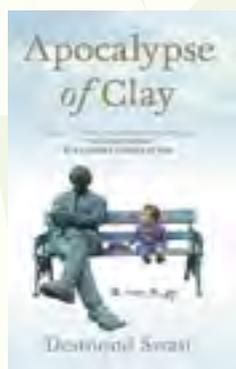
This collection of essays brings together contributors from various backgrounds who describe and critique how Catholicism has impacted both their professional and personal lives.

Medjugorje: What It Means to Me
Editor Louise Hall



This collection of testimonies from Irish people contains deeply personal stories about how they found themselves visiting Medjugorje, their experiences whilst there and the impact it has had on their lives today.

Apocalypse of Clay
Desmond Swan



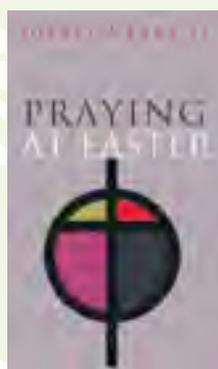
Patrick Kavanagh's epic poem "The Great Hunger", published in 1942, is regarded as his greatest achievement. Here Kavanagh's prophetic insights are illuminated through this bleak poem.

Three Dancers, One Dance
James O' Halloran



A workshop on the vision and practicalities of small Christian groups. Any priest or pastoral worker could begin to build up basic Christian communities using this book.

Praying at Easter
Donal Neary SJ



With a prayer and reflection for each day of a week author Donal Neary SJ links the gospel with elements of faith and prayer, while looking at the implications of the love of the risen Lord in everyday life.

Let Nothing Trouble You
Eugene McCaffrey OCD



Let Nothing Trouble You explores St Teresa of Avila's remarkable story and the influence of this charming, witty woman, who fits as easily into the twenty-first century as into the sixteenth.

Joyce County
Ray Burke



Written in an accessible style for the general reader rather than the Joycean specialist, this book contains considerable new information on Joyce and his wife and muse, Nora.

Earthing the Word
Thomas G. Waldron



Monsignor Tom Waldron became very well known as a writer and was considered the best preacher of his generation. This work comprises a selection of the sermons and articles written throughout his life.

The Celtic Quest
Rosemary Power



Celtic Spirituality is a helpful response to the modern move away from traditional spiritualities which have left many in search of a new path. Here, you can find new applications for these practices.

Columbanus
Kate Tristram



St Columbanus is widely regarded as the first of the great Irish Christian missionaries to Europe. His is the earliest voice of Christian Ireland, and this is his story.

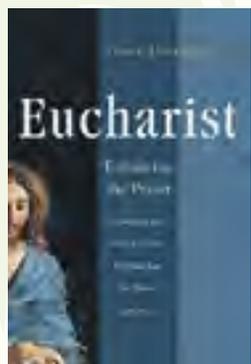
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TWO FOR €10

Eucharist: Enhancing the Prayer

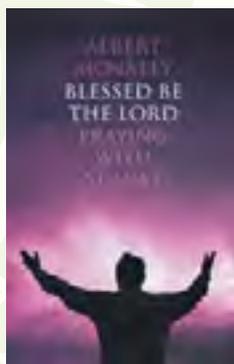
Donal Harrington



Resources offered here can be used to enhance the celebration of the Eucharist as an experience of prayer and contribute to the prayerful quality of the liturgy.

Blessed Be The Lord

Albert McNally



This is a workbook for the study, either alone or in groups, of the gospel of St Luke. It offers 21 sessions based on quotations from Luke. These sessions are to be used in a flexible way.

Wisely Pray the Psalms

Ambrose Tinsley OSB



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Anthea Dove



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Three French Saints- Joan Of Arc

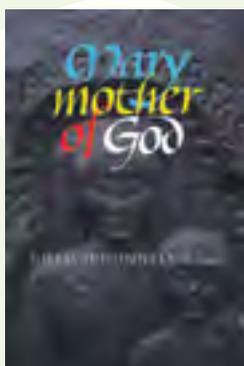
Críostóir Ó Floinn



Written in a very simple manner, this book gives a background to the times of St Joan and a full account of her life which gave rise to her canonisation by the Church.

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Being in Christ

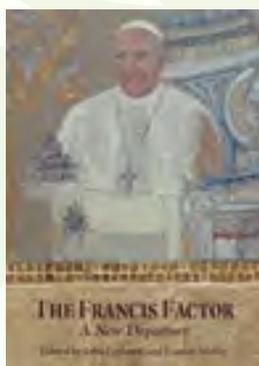
Rev Dr Peter Phillips



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The Francis Factor

John Littleton & Eamon Maher



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Niall Weldon



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A New Vision for the Catholic Church

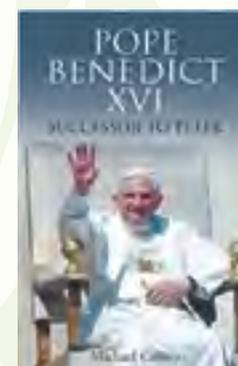
Gerry O'Hanlon SJ



Theologian Gerry O'Hanlon reflects on the church's crisis post Ferns, Ryan and Murphy Reports. He discusses how the vision of Church as People of God in the Second Vatican Council failed to be implemented.

Pope Benedict XVI: Successor to Peter

Michael Collins



Fr Michael Collins has an intimate knowledge of Vatican affairs and has written a balanced biography of the Pope Benedict XVI for those who would like to know him better.

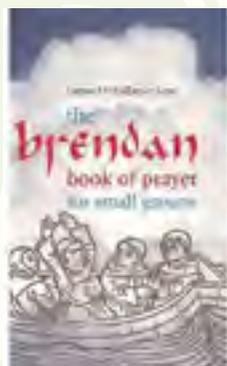
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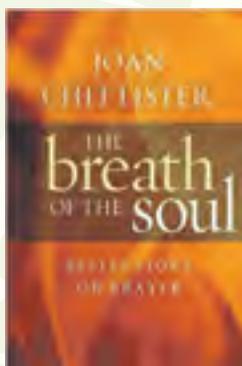
James O'Halloran SBD



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The breath of the soul

Joan D. Chittister



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A Bishop Could Not Do Otherwise

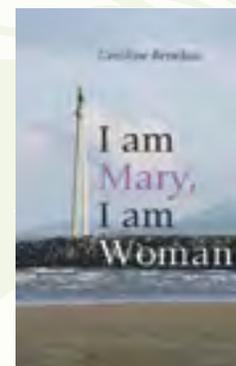
Compiled & Edited Míceál O'Neill



An intimate view of the man who became a champion of human rights, the voice of mission at the Second Vatican Council and a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

I Am Mary, I Am Woman

Caroline Renehan



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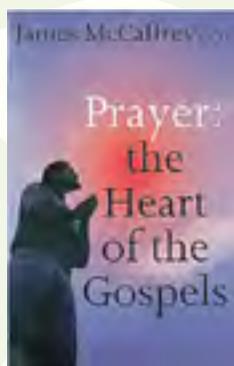
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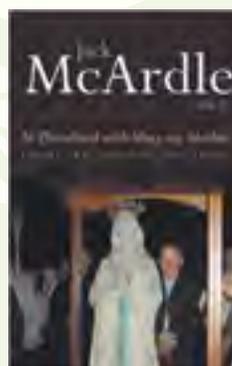
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At Playschool with Mary my Mother

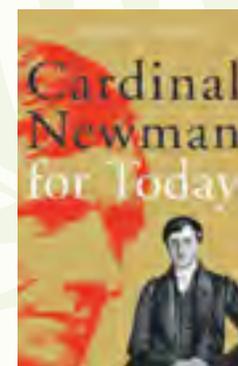
Jack McArdle



Fr McArdle writes: As someone who spent many years as a teacher, I appreciate the treasure of having a good teacher. I could think of no greater teacher than Mary my Mother.

Cardinal Newman for Today

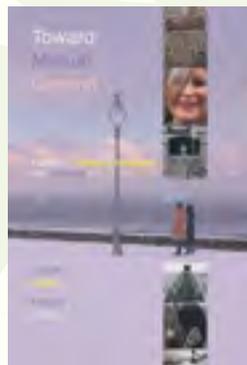
Thomas Norris



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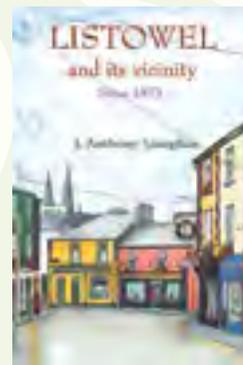
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Elise Ann Allen

As China appears to be considering relaxing its strict population control measures, American women's rights activist Reggie Littlejohn has criticised the country for hypocrisy in encouraging Chinese families to have more children while forbidding Uyghur Muslims to do the same.

She also voiced doubt that China will completely do away with birth restrictions, insisting that the policies have been used not only for family planning but to keep a chokehold on the population through spying and by quashing dissent.

"Population control is social control masquerading as population control, and that's why they have kept on it for so many decades beyond when it's been useful for them," Ms Littlejohn said, speaking of the Chinese Communist Party.

However, "they've dug themselves into a hole", she said, noting that China faces a "terrible demographic tsunami" with an aging population and diminishing workforce.

Ms Littlejohn is the founder of the 'Women's Rights Without Frontiers' organisation, based in Towson, Maryland, and dedicated to fighting forced abortion and gendercide in China.

Elderly

By 2050, around 35% of China's population will be elderly, she said, meaning the average couple will have to care not only for aging parents and grandparents but possibly great-grandparents, while also working and trying to raise their own family.

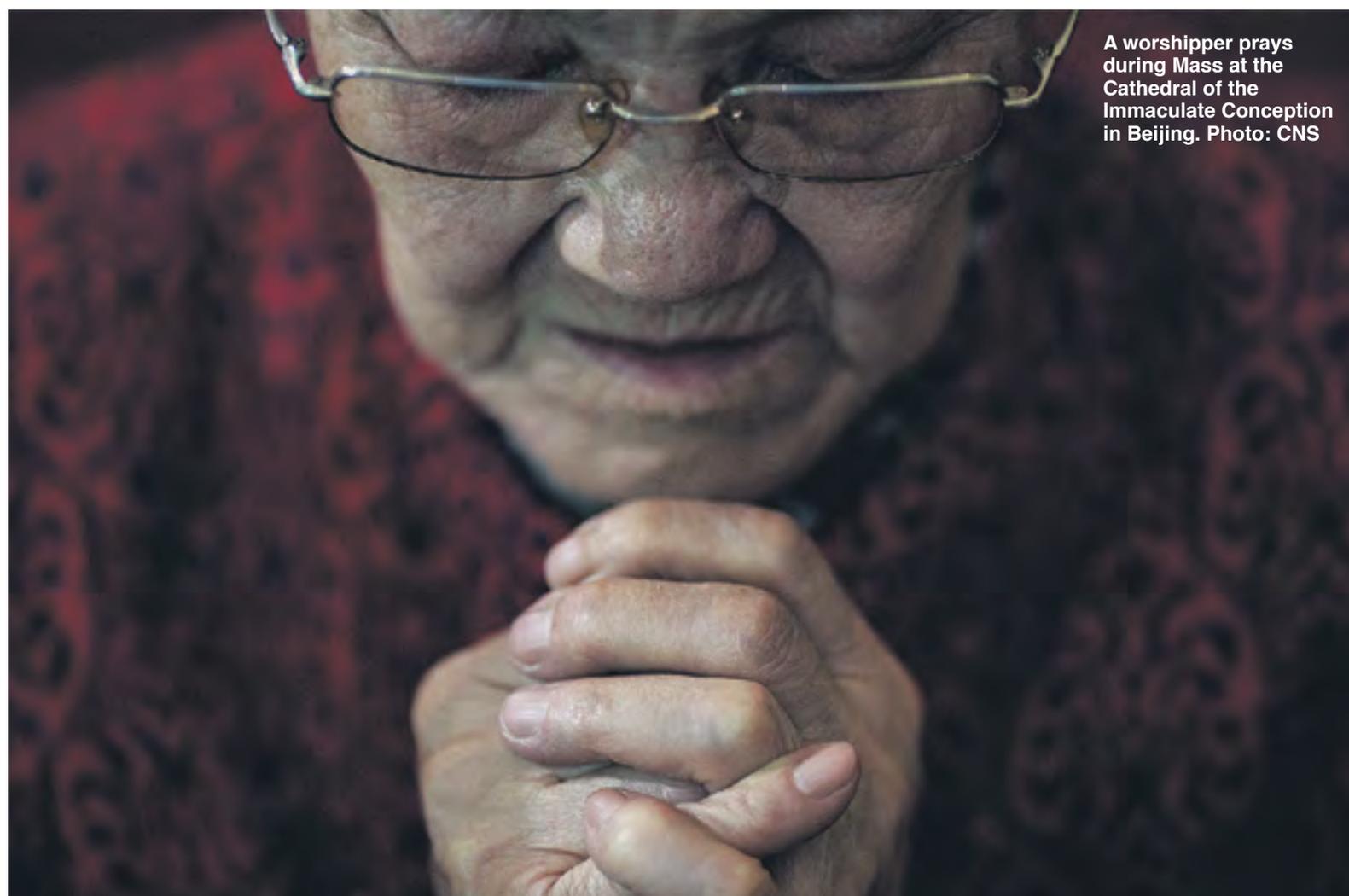
"I certainly believe that the Chinese Communist Party should scrap all coercive birth control immediately, and I think that there's a movement underfoot to do that," Ms Littlejohn said, noting that the suggestion of eliminating the two-child policy has come up recently in state sponsored newspapers.

Ms Littlejohn said she is unsure if China would completely end all birth restrictions, but said that if they're lightened, the child limit could be changed to three or four and penalties eliminated for families who have more than two children, such as the loss of jobs, hefty fines and forced abortions.

Decision makers, she said, are divided on the issue, "otherwise they would have done it already".

On one hand, Ms Littlejohn said she believes it will be hard for the Chinese Communist Party to admit "that they were wrong," which could explain some the reluctance to loosen the two-child policy.

Another factor, she said, are



A worshipper prays during Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Beijing. Photo: CNS

China's 'hypocrisy' on easing birth limits...except for the Muslim minority

the social compensation fees for violating the policy, which are "a big money-maker for the Communist Party".

There's also "the fact that the army of family planning police is a great infrastructure for them to quell dissent of any sort," she said.

To this end, Ms Littlejohn said that while the government is considering relaxing birth restrictions to save the country's infrastructure, it's doubling down on the same policies among Uyghur Muslim communities in the autonomous northwestern region of Xinjiang.

With the Uyghurs, the Chinese government is "using population control as a form of genocide", she said. "They are trying to weaken and break the Uyghur people and one of their main tools is population control."

China has long been criticised for persecution of the Uyghur population, largely through arbitrary detainment in mass internment camps.

According to Ms Littlejohn, there are currently an estimated 900,000-1.8 million Uyghurs living in internment camps in Xinjiang, most for family planning violations.

"They are in a very, very unfair

situation," she said, noting that traditionally the Uyghurs have been allowed to have three children because of their minority status and because they live in the countryside. However, now families with three children are being fined, even though it was legal at the time the children were born.

Littlejohn cautioned that forced abortions and sterilisations are rampant, and that in some cases, the children are taken from their families or are put into orphanages or are detained in a separate area.

“Last year China had 14.5 million births, a 4% fall from 2018 and the lowest birth rate since 1961”

Another "utterly appalling" practice is that a husband will be arrested, and a Communist Party official will then move into his home with his wife and children and begin acting as head of the family.

"The intrusiveness of this is beyond imagination," Ms Littlejohn

said, calling the treatment of Uyghurs "a form of slow, painful grinding genocide."

"What are they going to do, get rid of coercive population control for the whole country except for Xinjiang? How's that going to help their international image when they're trying to project being a credible government?" she asked.

Another issue China will have to grapple with, she said, is that even families can now have two children, they are still opting for just one. Last year China had 14.5 million births, a 4% fall from 2018 and the lowest birth rate since 1961.

China is "desperate for births", yet with costly education and poor maternity leave, many families can't afford more than one child, especially if they are also caring for elderly relatives, Ms Littlejohn said.

"What China needs to do is they need to institute incentives for people have more kids, like free education, better maternity leave, paternity leave, a cut in their taxes, whatever it takes to increase the population," she said, noting that even if every family had a second child immediately, it would still be 20 years before they are able to enter the workforce.

"They've really dug themselves into a hole, and I don't see how they're going to get themselves out of it," she said.

Ms Littlejohn, whose organisation also assists elderly widows, said another problem caused by population control is the abandonment of the elderly, who were once revered in Chinese culture, and are now seen as a burden.

In the past 20 years, senior suicide has increased 500%, Ms Littlejohn said, noting that in some cases, families have pointed to suicide as something honourable for their elderly family members to do in order to save money on medical expenses.

Stipends

Widows have also been denied government stipends due to their faith, she said, recalling how one widow her organisation assists was confronted by government official who came to her home and, upon seeing images of Jesus Christ hung on her wall, demanded that she remove them in order to keep her stipend of \$35 (€31) a month. The woman refused to take the images down and has since stopped receiving her monthly payment.

"Things are really desperate for seniors in China," Ms Littlejohn said, voicing disappointment that the issue of either relaxing or abolishing the two-child policy was not on the agenda for the National People's Congress in May.

"How are they going to handle more than a third of the population not working, having health issues, etcetera?" she asked, adding, "this is the devastation of the one-child policy."

“The intrusiveness of this is beyond imagination... a form of slow, painful grinding genocide”

i Elise Ann Allen is Senior Correspondent with Cruxnow.com



World Report

IN BRIEF

Glenmary Challenge editor wins St Francis de Sales Award

● John Feister, assistant editor of *Glenmary Challenge*, is the recipient of the 2020 St Francis de Sales Award from the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada.

The award – named for the patron saint of writers and journalists – recognises “outstanding contributions to Catholic journalism” and is the highest honour given by the CPA.

The announcement was made on July 2, via a pre-recorded video released as a premiere on social media during the 2020 Catholic Media Conference, which was held virtually using digital technology due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Catholic college cemetery reconsecrated after vandalism

● Two days after a vandal defaced some of the gravestones and a central cross with swastikas at the Dominican Cemetery at Providence College in the US, Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence reconsecrated and rededicated the sacred grounds where Dominican friars have been buried since the college's founding in 1917.

“Today we come to pray that God will cleanse us. That God will cleanse our world, our nation, our community, our church and this place of vandalism from all sense of anger and division, violence and vandalism, leaving a kind of peace that only the presence of God in the end can give us,” Bishop Tobin said.



Sagrada Família in Spain reopens

● The Sagrada Família in Spain [pictured], designed by Antoni Gaudí, reopened its doors on July 4 following a more than 100-day closure due to the coronavirus crisis.

The unfinished basilica, which was forced to close to tourists on March 13, offered free entry to medical workers and their families in the first

phase of its reopening.

Cardinal Juan José Omella, the archbishop of Barcelona and president of the Spanish bishops' conference, met with the presidents of the colleges of physicians, pharmacists, nurses, and physiotherapists on the same day.

Argentina government urged to increase Covid-19 response

● A bishop and priests serving the shanty towns surrounding Buenos Aires, Argentina, warn of Covid-19 spreading through their densely populated communities and said an inadequate response from health authorities is causing people to turn to parishes.

“We are entering the most critical moment of the pandemic and our parishes are accompanying their communities with many different actions. We cannot, nor do we want to, to replace the state. But we can and do want to collaborate,” said in a statement signed by Bishop Eduardo García of San Justo, in suburban Buenos Aires, and 11 of his priests.

US state bans abortion on sex, race, genetic disability

● Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves signed the Life Equality Act into law last week, banning abortion based on sex, race or genetic abnormality. The law went into effect upon passage.

About two thirds of all children prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted. Several countries have prohibited ultrasounds to determine the sex of an unborn child due to the prevalence of sex-selective abortions. The Life Equality Act was authored by Rep. Carolyn Crawford.

Prelate to push EU support for persecuted Christians in Nigeria

The president of the European bishops' commission has promised persecuted Christians in Nigeria that he will advocate for increased support from the EU.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, who leads the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), wrote a letter to the Nigerian bishops stating that the commission will advocate for EU assistance and cooperation with the Nigerian authorities to combat violence and persecution.

The cardinal expressed solidarity with Nigerian Christian communities, who, he wrote, are “living a situation of continuous attacks by terrorists, insurgents and militias, that in some cases reaches levels of genuine criminal persecution”, according to a European commission statement last week.

Kidnappings

An estimated 6,000 Nigerian Christians have been killed since 2015, mostly by Boko Haram and militant Fulani herders, the European commission reported.

More than 600 Christians



Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich.

have been killed so far in 2020, according to a International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law (Intersociety) report on May 15. Christians have been beheaded and set on fire, farms set ablaze, and priests and seminarians have been targeted for kidnapping and ransom.

A Boko Haram attack on

a village in the northeastern Nigerian state of Borno left at least 81 people dead on June 9.

The attack was the latest in an ongoing Islamist group against the country's Christian population. Earlier in June a Christian pastor and his pregnant wife were killed on their farm in the northeastern

region of the country.

In January, militants kidnapped four Catholic seminarians from Good Shepherd Seminary in Kaduna, killing one of them, Michael Nnadi.

On March 1, Nigerian priest Fr David Echioda was kidnapped by gunmen after offering Sunday Mass, but was released days afterward.

Statement

The European bishops' conferences commission has been vocal in calling on EU member states to “increase their efforts in order to stop the violence in Nigeria, bring criminals to justice, support the victims and promote dialogue and peace”, according to the COMECE statement.

In May 2020, the bishops “urged the international community to use diplomatic, political and financial instruments to assist Nigerian authorities to stop the violence, bringing the criminals to justice, supporting the victims and fully including Christians (47% of the national population) in all state structures and levels of administrations – including the police and armed forces”.

‘Immense’ poverty in Northern Italy in aftermath of Covid-19

A cardinal in northern Italy has said that the Covid-19 health crisis has created “immense” poverty in the area, and now is the time to rebuild, to take responsibility, and to share resources.

Indications from local charities and soup kitchens show that poverty in Bologna right now is “immense,” Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, the city's archbishop, told journalists July 3. “The economic crisis has already started.”

“We should have a sense of great closeness, of solidarity, of sharing,” he said.

Cardinal Zuppi, who was made a

cardinal by Pope Francis last October, spoke to journalists in an informal online meeting organised by the Iscom Association. Since 2015, Cardinal Zuppi has led the Archdiocese of Bologna, which is located in northern Italy, one of the regions worst hit by the novel coronavirus, with more than 28,000 total cases and 4,200 deaths.

Resources

The cardinal said the pandemic had involved everyone, at every level of the Church, and had given us “a sense of responsibility” and “an opportunity for

sharing resources”.

Reconstruction, he added, would require “much humility and much determination,” not unlike Italy's efforts in the post-war period.

Cardinal Zuppi also referenced the idea of society's “next to lasts” (“penultimi” in Italian), and the need to look out for those people in this period. Unlike society's weakest, such as the homeless and those in abject poverty, the “next to lasts” are those one often does not realise are in need of help, who now, due to job losses, are really struggling.

Pope sends condolences to Pope Benedict after brother's death

Pope Francis has sent retired Pope Benedict XVI his prayers and condolences for the death of his brother, Msgr Georg Ratzinger.

The monsignor, a musician and the retired Pope's elder brother, died in Regensburg, Germany, July 1 at the age of 96.

In a letter dated July 2,

Pope Francis told his predecessor he was praying for his brother, hoping he would be rewarded in heaven for being among the “faithful servants of the Gospel”.

“And I am also praying for you, Your Holiness,” asking that God and the Blessed Virgin sustain him with “Christian hope and tender divine

consolation.”

Pope Francis said he was touched by the retired Pope's kindness in “communicating to me first the news of the death of your beloved brother”. He reiterated his deepest condolences and “spiritual closeness in this time of sorrow.”

The pope ended his letter

expressing his “filial and fraternal” feelings and said they were “always united in the adherence to the risen Christ, source of hope and peace.”

Msgr. Ratzinger had been hospitalized for a while, and Pope Benedict, 93, flew to Regensburg June 18 to be with his ailing brother for a few days.



Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Searching for the virus



A young Yanomami is examined by a member of a medical team with the Brazilian army in the state of Roraima during the Covid-19 pandemic. Photo: CNS

'For God's sake', don't stereotype police officers says US cardinal

Utilising personal stories from his interactions with the New York Police Department, Cardinal Timothy Dolan said in a newspaper column that the city's police officers deserve better treatment and broad support on the job.

Writing in the *New York Post*, Cardinal Dolan said police officers deserve to be recognised for the heroic work they carry out daily to protect the city.

"Our valiant police officers have one of the most perilous, stressful duties around, and from what I have seen in my nearly dozen years here, they do it with care, compassion and competence," the cardinal wrote.

He said "one of the tumours on

our beloved nation, past and present" is how often African Americans are targeted, profiled, caricatured, blamed and suspected "as the cause of all evil and woe in society". And he urged people now not make police officers the object of similar broadsides.

"That is raw injustice," Cardinal Dolan wrote of this treatment of African Americans. "But for God's sake, let's not now, in a similar way, stereotype the NYPD."

He described the city's police officers as one of the features he likes most about being in New York when people back home in Missouri ask him about being in the city.

To illustrate his belief, Cardinal Dolan told the story of an officer who

rushed to protect him when a man holding an object in his hand in the congregation at St Patrick's Cathedral jumped up as the cardinal walked by.

"What he was clutching I did not know, but I have to admit, I feared it to be a pistol. Apparently, the officer on duty that morning did, too. He lunged not at the man, but at me, shielding me from the rushing congregant. Then we both saw the man was holding a cross, which he asked me to bless," Cardinal Dolan wrote.

"What moved me was the police officer's spontaneous instinct to protect me, literally, 'to take a bullet for me'. The NYPD would do that for any of us, members of the community they swear to serve and protect."

Cardinal says Congo has failed, as country turned 60

As Congo celebrated 60 years of independence from Belgium, Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo of Kinshasa said the "great dreams" of the people had been shattered by successive regimes.

"We have known successive autocratic regimes that have come to power like the colonialist without any concern for the will of the people, and this continues today: by force, war or fraud," Cardinal

Ambongo said in a homily. He did, however, remind people to celebrate.

He said citizens were much poorer to the point of being classified by some as the most miserable on earth. The exploitation of mineral resources has occurred in broad daylight, with the populations not benefiting, he said. In a visible policy of occupation, according to the cardinal, nine neighbouring

countries had a presence in Congo, either as armies or as migrants. He highlighted the violation of the country's territory and Balkanization agenda, pointing at the insecurity and rebel forces in the east of the country.

"We must recognize this... after 60 years of independence... we have shamefully failed. We have not been able to make Congo a more beautiful country than before," said

Cardinal Ambongo.

"Today's Gospel invites us to take responsibility, because each of us will have to account before God what he had done with his talents for this beautiful country," said Cardinal Ambongo.

"We must get out of this mentality as we often hear in the city: that the president or the government will come to do this or that."

Archives reveal Schonstatt movement founder accused of abuse

● Documents uncovered from the recently opened archives of the pontificate of Pope Pius XII revealed allegations of sexual abuse and abuse of power against the founder of the Schonstatt movement, Fr Joseph Kentenich.

Reports of the apostolic visitation made in the early 1950s written by Dutch Jesuit Father Sebastiaan Tromp were made known by German scholar Alexandra von Teuffenbach on July 2 after she wrote a letter regarding her discovery to German newspaper *Die Tagespost* and Italian journalist Sandro Magister.

Von Teuffenbach, a former professor of church history at Rome's Pontifical Regina Apostolorum University, said the testimonies, letters and conversations Fr Tromp had with members of the Schonstatt Sisters of Mary, as well as Fr Kentenich, revealed "a situation of complete subjugation of the nuns, concealed in a certain way by a sort of family structure applied to the work".

"Kentenich was the 'father', the founder with absolute power, often equated with God," von Teuffenbach wrote to Magister. "So much so that in many expressions and prayers it is not clear whether these are addressed to God the Father or to the founder himself."

Cardinal Parolin meets with Israel and US ambassador

● Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, met with the US and Israeli ambassadors to the Vatican to express concern that "possible unilateral actions" on their part would further jeopardise peace in the region.

"The Holy See reiterates that the state of Israel and the state of Palestine have the right to exist and to live in peace and security, within internationally recognised borders," said a statement from the Vatican press office.

"It thus appeals to the parties to do everything possible to reopen the process of direct negotiation, on the basis

of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and aided by measures that can re-establish reciprocal confidence," it said.

According to Reuters, Cardinal Parolin met separately with Callista Gingrich, US ambassador, and Oren David, Israeli ambassador.

Israel has said it plans to unilaterally annex parts of the West Bank, which is part of Palestinian territory, as part of a peace plan put forward by the U.S. administration.

Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said on June 29 that international law is very clear that "annexation is illegal".

Pope praises UN for ceasefire resolution

● Pope Francis applauded the United Nations Security Council on Sunday for its recent resolution calling for an immediate global ceasefire amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"The call for a global and immediate ceasefire, which would allow the peace and security necessary to provide the urgently needed humanitarian assistance, is commendable," Pope Francis said after his Angelus prayer on July 5.

"I hope that this decision will be implemented effectively and promptly for the good of many people who are suffering.

"May this security council resolution become a courageous first step towards a peaceful future," he said.

The ceasefire resolution applies to conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Libya, South Sudan, and Congo. It demands "a durable humanitarian pause for at least 90 consecutive days" to ensure that medical and humanitarian aid will reach those in need as the coronavirus continues to spread.

Letters

Post to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2, or email: letters@irishcatholic.ie

Letter of the week

Lockdown teaches we can't take Sacraments for granted

Dear Editor, Thank you so much to all at *The Irish Catholic* for your wonderful photos [IC 2/07/2020] of people returning to Mass. Although I was a bit nervous myself, I could not be separated from the Sacrament any longer, donning my facemask I left the house for Mass for the first time in so many months.

It was a wonderful experience and so very emotional. I realised the humungous extent I had been missing my local church and the Blessed Sacrament – I was almost in tears to be honest.

Seeing so many people doing the same I was overcome with a sense of solidarity and happiness, if even half of those attending Mass for the first time experienced what I did there must certainly be a widespread acknowledgement of the importance of Mass in our lives and how devastating it is when it is taken away.

Perhaps the people of Ireland will have a greater appreciation for the freedom we have in practicing our religion, in availing of the Sacraments that offer so much joy and freedom in themselves. There are so many

countries around the world where Christians are forced to practice their Faith in private and are denied the basic liberties that we take so readily for granted.

If there is anything to be learned from this time of lockdown, which has been so hard on so many people, it is that we must cherish the Sacraments and the ability to practice our Faith publicly and never take it for granted.

*Yours etc.,
Niamh Kelly,
Cork City,
Co. Cork.*

Looking at familiar with new eyes

Dear Editor, It may be the uncertainty principle highlighted by the pandemic, but people are looking at the familiar with new eyes.

A devout friend of mine decided recently to personalise the Rosary. She imagined meeting Our Lady on the street: "Oh Mary you are so full of grace it's obvious that God is with you, most blessed of women, and your beloved Son who is our Saviour!" Then with horror she realised that it was her sins that had caused their suffering, and she wept.

Now her prayer request in the Rosary is the gift of loving Jesus more, and who should be able to give this but his Mother? And what other prayer takes in all other prayers?

*Yours etc.,
Down Reader,
Newtownards, Co. Down.*



Hypocrisy of 'open-minded' people on exclusion zones

Dear Editor, The idea that this Government aim to enforce exclusion zones outside places that conduct abortions is ridiculous considering it is clearly against Irish people's fundamental right to assemble and protest set out in the constitution.

Maria Steen clearly highlights this in an article in late June [IC 25/06/2020].

The idea that those holding vigils outside hospitals are being violent in anyway is ludicrous and is nothing but a public relations exercise conducted by pro-choice groups and supported by

Government officials.

We live in a democracy and free speech is enshrined in our constitution, once certain people start choosing what constitutes free speech willy-nilly as well as who has the right to protest or gather in groups, how can we call ourselves a democracy?

I fear Ireland is going down a dangerous road, where increasingly people who dub themselves 'liberal' and open-minded are actually becoming some of the most authoritarian and inflexible people.

It seems they don't even understand their hypocrisy, which is sad because I truly believe the majority of people who think there should be exclusion zones have the best interests of women at heart. Unfortunately, there are too many people that are not open to any thoughtful debate on the subject, blinded by their own ideology.

*Yours etc.,
Deirdre Harney,
Rathfarnham,
Co. Dublin.*

Thanks for 'uplifting' edition

Dear Editor, Thank you for a very uplifting edition of *The Irish Catholic* [07/02/2020], which was especially appropriate at a time when we are celebrating the fact that most of our churches have reopened.

This past week I had the privilege of being able to return to daily Mass and Eucharist and on each day like others I was welcomed by a smile and a joyful greeting of one of several ushers each dressed in suitable attire.

My fervent prayer is that when Covid-19 has long passed we will continue to have these same cheerful volunteer greeters especially at Sunday Mass. The Ministry of Greeter must become a familiar and vital ministry in all our parishes. This would so well chime with the fervent call of bishop-elect Hayes for greater lay ministry in our parishes.

*Yours etc.,
Alan Whelan,
Killarney, Co Kerry.*

Fears for mental health of Ireland

Dear Editor, I'm increasingly concerned as more and more reports come out around the world about the negative impact of lockdown on people's mental health.

Whether it be those suffering from depression, anxiety or a myriad of other debilitating issues, lockdown appears to be exacerbating them to a worrying extent.

Furthermore, what about elderly people who were already feeling isolated? Or those suffering from dementia who need routine to keep them calm and grounded – I'm hearing again and again of the

importance of this but there seems to be no moves to reopen their healthcare facilities.

These examples, of course, are merely a drop in a vast sea of consequences. There is still no vaccine available for this dreaded coronavirus, it has led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people around the world and the health steps taken to save lives seem appropriate in that sense, but I fear to think what the drastic measures to stem it have done to vulnerable people around the world.

*Yours etc.,
Dan Murphy,
Ballyfermot, Co. Dublin.*

facebook community

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

Bishop Fintan Gavin congratulates Micheál Martin on election as Taoiseach

Why is the bishop getting involved in politics? Micheál Martin supported the removal of the Eighth Amendment and actively called for its repeal. We need bishops with the courage to confront politicians about their support for the murder of innocent babies. – **Peter Killeen**

My impression is that Bishop Gavin is being courteous in acknowledging this political appointment. – **Rosarie O'Leary**

Congratulate when they stop abortion and start looking after the old age pensioners and get homes for the homeless, also rented homes and flats at affordable prices and free health care, that's what we need. – **Christine O'Brien**

More than 7,000 Irish abortions carried out, new stats reveal

Ah such terrible news. Why oh why is this happening? Can't get my head round those numbers. So many people involved have those innocent babies' blood on their hands. – **Sheila Boyle**

Joy as Irish return to Mass

Thank God. I get recurring cough for years. Please pray I get a window of time free of cough so I can go to Mass. I dreamt I was walking down the main street where I live after receiving, hopefully that day will soon come when I can receive in my church. – **Nora Flood**

Freedom to assemble peaceably and to protest peacefully are fundamental democratic rights

God save us from the rule of the new "pure and righteous". – **Charles Glenn**

God bless them all. They're doing the Lord's work. – **Sheila Kelly**

Pope criticises 'hypocrisy' of politicians during pandemic

Sadly many of the Irish Catholic clergy and hierarchy have not always shared the Pope's sympathy for the poor and vulnerable. He remains, in my view, a great man with his views on the environment and social justice making him a Pope in touch with the concerns of humanity. – **Brian Thornton**

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

Letters to the Editor

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

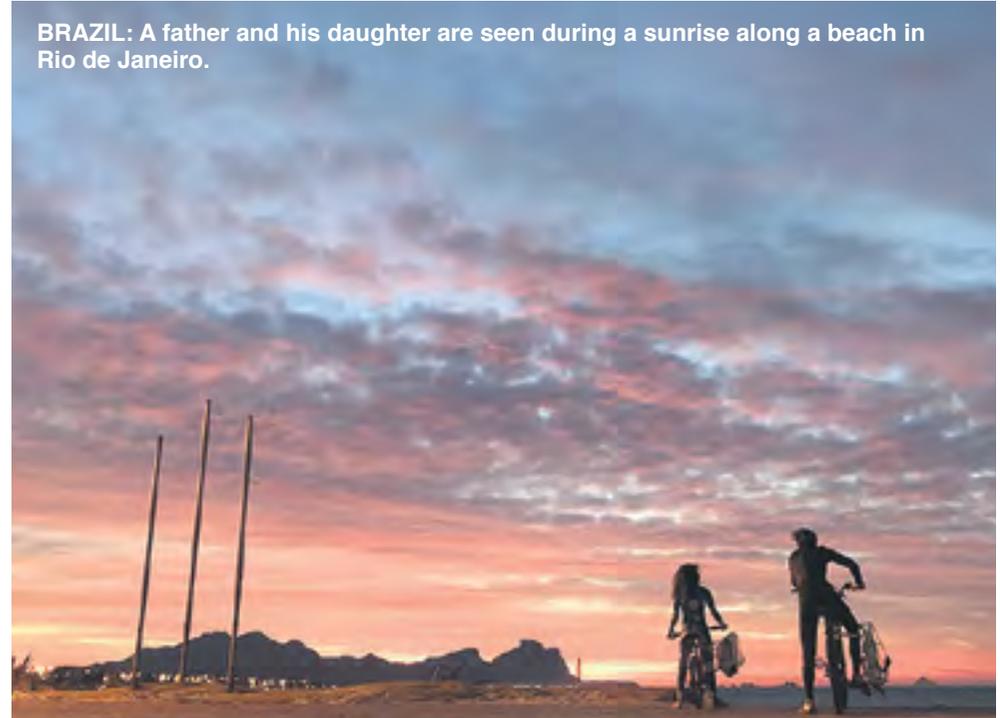
We regret that we cannot give prior notice of a letter's publication date, acknowledge unpublished letters or discuss the

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

📷 Around the world



USA: Black Lives Matter demonstrators in New York City block traffic near an area being called the 'City Hall Autonomous Zone'.



BRAZIL: A father and his daughter are seen during a sunrise along a beach in Rio de Janeiro.



▲ **LEBANON:** A homeless man with an artificial leg sits on a bench in Sidon during the Covid-19 pandemic.

◀ **FRANCE:** A migrant sits outside his tent at a makeshift camp in Paris. The camp was set up by Doctors Without Borders and four other humanitarian groups. Photos: CNS



USA: Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, extends the crozier to Bishop Kevin Sweeney, the new bishop of Paterson, New Jersey.



HOLY LAND: A Palestinian demonstrator returns a tear gas canister during a protest near the Jewish settlement of Beit El. The demonstrators were protesting Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank.



Deeper things under the surface

Imagine this. You are the dutiful daughter or son and your mother is widowed and living in an assisted living facility. You happen to be living close by while your sister is living across the country, thousands of miles away. So the weight falls on you to be the one to help take care of your mother. You dutifully visit her each day. Every afternoon, on route home from work, you stop and spend an hour with her as she has her early dinner. And you do this faithfully, five times a week, year after year.

As you spend this hour each day with your mother, year after year, how many times during the course of a year will you have a truly stimulating and deep conversation with your mother? Once? Twice? Never? What are you talking about each day? Trivial things: the weather, your favourite sports team, what your kids are doing, the latest show on television, her aches and pains, and the mundane details of your own life.

Conversation

Occasionally you might even doze off for a while as she eats her early dinner. In a good year, perhaps once or twice the conversation will take on some depth and the two of you will share more deeply about something of importance; but, save for that rare occasion, you will simply be filling in the time each day with superficial conversation.



Fr Rolheiser

But, and this is the question, are those daily visits with your mother in fact superficial, merely functional because your conversations aren't deep? Are you simply going through the motions of intimate relationship because of duty? Is anything deep happening?

Well, compare this with your sister who is (conveniently) living across the country and comes home once a year to visit your mother. When she visits, both she and your mother are wonderfully animated, they embrace enthusiastically, shed some tears upon seeing each other, and seemingly talk about things beyond the weather, their favorite sports teams, and their own tiredness. And you could kill them both!

It seems that in this once-a-

year meeting they have something that you, who visit daily, do not have. But is this true? Is what is happening between your sister and your mother in fact deeper than what is occurring each day when you visit your mother?

Absolutely not. What they have is, no doubt, more emotional and more affective, but it is, at the end of day, not particularly deep.

When your mother dies, you will know your mother better than anyone else knows her and you will be much closer to her than your sister. Why? Because through all those days when you visited her and seemed to talk about nothing beyond the weather, some deeper things were happening under the surface.

When your sister visited your

“At a certain level of intimacy in all our relationships, including our relationship with God in prayer, the emotions and the affectivity (wonderful as they are) will become less and less important and simple presence, just being together, will become paramount”

mother things were happening on the surface (though emotionally and affectively the surface can look wonderfully more intriguing than what lies beneath it). That is why honeymoons look better than marriage.

“It is okay occasionally to fall asleep while there because as Thérèse of Lisieux once said: a little child is equally pleasing to its parents, awake or asleep, probably more asleep!”

What your sister had with your mother is what novices experience in prayer and what couples experience on a honeymoon. What you had with your mother is what people experience in prayer and relationships when they are faithful over a long period of time.

At a certain level of intimacy in all our relationships, including our relationship with God in prayer, the emotions and the affectivity (wonderful as they are) will become less and less important and simple presence, just being together, will become paramount.

Previous to that, the important things were happening on the surface and emotions and affectivity were important; now

deep bonding is happening beneath the surface and emotions and affectivity recede in importance. At a certain depth of relationship just being present to each other is what is important.

Too often, both popular psychology and popular spirituality do not really grasp this and consequently confuse the novice for the proficient, the honeymoon for the wedding and the surface for the depth. In all of our relationships, we cannot make promises as to how we will always feel, but we can make promises to always be faithful, to show up, to be there, even if we are only talking about the weather, our favourite sports team, the latest television program or our own tiredness.

And it is okay occasionally to fall asleep while there because as Thérèse of Lisieux once said: a little child is equally pleasing to its parents, awake or asleep, probably more asleep! That also holds true for prayer. God does not mind us occasionally napping while at prayer because we are there and that is enough.

The great Spanish doctor of the soul, John of the Cross, tells us that as we travel deeper into any relationship, be it with God in prayer, with each other in intimacy or with the community at large in service, eventually the surface will be less emotive and less affective and the deeper things will begin to happen under the surface.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, July 9, 2020

Personal Profile

Keeping the faith alive in a digital age

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Routine business – looking after your wellbeing with good routines

Since the start of the pandemic, days have melted into each other. I've seen a cartoon shared a number of times recently; it's of a calendar which runs as normal until April, when it disintegrates entirely.

We used to work at set times, or go to school, mark our calendars with events and occasions, maybe eyeing up the next bank holiday. Now, it's all up in the air. Some of us are working from home, some not working at all; we're getting up later or sleeping less; no school, no work, no sports and no concerts. Even weekly rituals, like visiting the parents or going to the pub are gone or have changed completely.



Creatures of habit, we're lost without our routines and rituals, but they're vital for our wellbeing writes Ruadhán Jones

We are creatures of habit and this is reflected in our daily lives. With a firm foundation, we can start building and expand. But now we're rudderless and this can contribute to our already high levels of stress and anxiety.

Dr Eddie Murphy, a clinical psychologist, did a short video as part of the HSE's Gather Together campaign. He spoke

about finding ways to give our days structure: "It's critically important that you put structure and routine into your day. Part of this stress is when we lose our routine, so it's important to have a new structure and routine. Create a mini timetable for yourself for our 'new normal'."

Adjusting to "the new normal" can be challenging. We have

to balance working from home with home schooling, while also becoming a chef, a PE teacher, and filling the gaps left by absent friends. Some of us are finding the time at home lonely and the days long and hard to fill.

But it's also a chance to establish new routines, or to refresh old ones. If there's one thing a crisis forces it's self-examination. What was working for you before, and what wasn't? Were you getting too much sleep or too little? Were you working too much or not enough?

With all this floating through your mind, here are a few simple suggestions for establishing a new routine.

Give yourself time to make a plan

Planning for the week ahead, even the day ahead, can get lost in the chaos of the crisis. If you're a parent, then you've got so much on your plate to deal with, it's as much as you can do to keep everything running. If you're on your own, it might not seem worth the while.

But even though plans can go out the window quickly, you can't change them if you don't have them. The first thing to do is to set aside time, say half an hour, to plan your week or your day. Sunday night before bed

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Family News

AND EVENTS

GEARING UP FOR MAYO CHARITY 10KM

Looking for a day out and some exercise at an event that will help raise funds for the local and wider community in Mayo?

Ballyheane Community Council, in partnership with Mayo Mental Health Association and supported by Ballyheane AFC will host a 10km run/walk/jog.

The run will start from the Ballyheane Club House with rolling start times throughout the event to allow for social distancing. The event runs from 12-4pm on August 3. Entry fees: Individual €15, family of four €20, team of four €50. All runners will be professionally chipped to accurately measure times and prizes will be given on the day with the fastest time receiving €150, second fastest €100, fastest male and female under 16, €50 each and finally €150 for the fastest team (all four members to complete 10km).

Organisers say: "You must arrive on time to ensure social distancing measures can take place. So, if you are a serious runner or looking for a fun-filled family day out, please sign up as soon as possible as places are limited due to Covid-19 restrictions." Tickets: eventbrite.ie/e/ballyheane-10k-tickets-111128167340?aff=ebdssbdestsearch

SLEEP PROBLEMS AFFECT CHILDREN IN LATER LIFE

A study of more than 7,000 children in the UK discovered that babies and toddlers with irregular sleep routines were linked to having psychotic experiences in later adolescence. They also found that children who slept for shorter periods at night were more likely to be associated with borderline personality disorder at ages 11 and 12.

The research was published in the journal *Jama Psychiatry*. It was the first time possible links between early childhood sleep problems and adolescent psychotic experiences and borderline personality disorder (BPD) symptoms have been examined.

"We know from previous research that persistent nightmares in children have been associated with both psychosis and borderline personality disorder," said lead author Isabel Morales-Munoz, a research fellow at the Institute of Mental Health at the University of Birmingham.

"But nightmares do not tell the whole story. We've found that, in fact, a number of behavioural sleep problems in childhood can point towards these problems in adolescence," she said.

EFFECTS OF LOCKDOWN ON ELDERLY TO BE STUDIED

Researchers will study how people over the age of 50 in Ireland have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A team from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) at Trinity College Dublin plan to analyse the impact on older adults of the outbreak and subsequent lockdown.

TILDA is an ongoing study of people over the age of 50 in Ireland and over 6,000 TILDA participants will take part in this latest research.

A second coronavirus project will gather biological samples in order to establish who has been infected by the virus.

It is hoped that the findings from both of these studies will help to support health systems and policymakers, improving the national response to the virus in the long term.

Don't dismiss scientism too easily

If there's one thing philosophers hate, it's scientism. This is, roughly, the claim that 'science can answer all the meaningful questions that there are to ask' or 'the scientific method is all you need to acquire all the knowledge about the world that there is to acquire'.

Philosophers hate this for a predictable reason: if it were true, it would eliminate the need for philosophy. Every philosopher has probably had a conversation with some guy in his second year of undergraduate physics in which the phrases 'philosophy never made planes fly' and 'science just works' have made an appearance. Of course, science works very well at what it does (we respond through gritted teeth). It just doesn't do everything.

"We must critique scientism on other grounds: that it can't answer the hard problem of consciousness, that it struggles to explain moral truth"

In their loathing of scientism, philosophers are joined by religious people, and for equally predictable reasons. There's no repeatable experiment that you can do to demonstrate the existence of God: the question of his existence is not generally taken to be a properly scientific question. If scientific questions are the only sorts of questions worth asking, then questions about God are not worth asking, and the whole enterprise of religion is so much nonsense. Richard Dawkins has sold a lot of books making variants of this argument.

Given that I am both a philosopher and a Catholic,



Everyday philosophy

Ben Conroy

you will win no prizes for guessing my general attitude towards scientism. But I think that our loathing sometimes leads both philosophers and people of faith to dismiss scientism, or something very like it, a bit too quickly. There's a standard argument often used against scientism that might technically work, but is a bit too quick: it rushes too swiftly to a conclusion without dealing with some of the best reasons why people believe in something like scientism.

The standard argument runs like this: again, let's take scientism to mean 'the claim that the scientific method is all you need to acquire all the knowledge about the world that there is to acquire'. Now, what exactly constitutes 'the scientific method' is disputed, but we can pretty confidently state that it involves making falsifiable hypotheses to try to explain things about the world, and then duly trying to falsify them via repeatable experiments.

So, let's think about the scientism claim again. Is it a scientific hypothesis? Is there any scientific experiment you could do to falsify it? To test its truth at all? It certainly doesn't look that way. How, even in principle, could the scientific method tell us whether the claim 'knowledge properly in the scope of science is the only sort of knowledge that there is', is true? Whether or not such knowledge did exist, the scientific method would be unable to discover it.

But – aha! – if scientism isn't a scientific claim, and its truth can't be adjudicated by the scientific method, then by the logic of scientism you should disbelieve scientism: that scientism is true is not knowledge you can get from science. Scientism thus refutes itself.

That's how the standard argument runs, and it's true as far as it goes. Strict scientism is self-refuting. But is that as bad as it sounds?

You might laugh: self-refutation is about as bad as it gets for an argument. But all it takes for scientism to stop being self-contradictory is to weaken its scope a bit. Instead of claiming that the scientific method is all you need to obtain all the world's knowledge, you can instead say



Richard Dawkins.
Photo: Shane Pope

that science is all you need to obtain almost all of the world's knowledge. You might need some non-scientific philosophical justification for a few principles (like this new version of

scientism itself), but that doesn't have to be a big deal: philosophy can just tidy up the edges of a world that's almost entirely explicable by science. Let's call this 'scientism lite'.

I've often heard responses like this from people tempted by scientism when I use the standard argument against it. They say something like: "Yeah, maybe scientism can't technically ground or justify itself, but a lot of worldviews have problems doing that: and science still seems like the best way we have of answering the biggest and most important questions."

"Our loathing sometimes leads both philosophers and people of faith to dismiss scientism, or something very like it, a bit too quickly"

They don't see the standard argument as a reason to drop their scepticism about the idea of large realms of truth that science can't access.

To challenge this sort of response, we must critique scientism on other grounds: that it can't answer the hard problem of consciousness, that it struggles to explain moral truth, that it can't offer any answer to the question of why there exists anything at all. Those arguments are well worth making.

The standard argument can certainly get people thinking: but over-reliance on it can make the case against scientism look glib and nit-picky, winning on a technicality while leaving much of the substance of scientism standing.

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is probably not the time to do it, though that can be tempting. Give yourself the best chance by doing it when you're alert.

It's important to remember though; don't over plan. If you've set yourself a half-hour, stick to a half-hour. It can become tempting to plan every element, but just as it's important to set aside the time, it's also important not to let it take over.

But what do I plan?

Sitting down with a blank schedule in front of you can seem daunting. There are so many things to take into consideration, or perhaps there are none at all. So where to begin? With the essentials. You have to eat, so pencil in your meal and snack times. If you're working, then even if it's from home, you will have some kind of pre-ordained schedule – pencil it in. How about schoolwork? Pencil that in.

“The first thing to remember in that situation is; you're not alone. We all go through days like that. Especially given the circumstances”

Then there's relaxation, and exercise, and creativity, maybe some TV time, time alone, time together, zoom calls, new hobbies, old hobbies, and so on. Suddenly, the week is packed and it's not what to do but when to do it! Don't expect to fit it all in – keep plans simple and adaptable.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

When you're working or at school, there are set times to eat. Breakfast before work/school, lunch in the middle of the day, and a meal in the evening. But now that we're on our own or busy trying to mind kids, mealtimes can be the last of our concerns. Snacking and grazing become tempting alternatives when the fridge is so close and the cupboards stocked.

Snacks are not bad in themselves, but frequent grazing can be. Try to keep regular times for meals

and snacks. It will help you give structure to your day and to keep track of what you're eating! A blank page quickly takes shape when you have three meals on it and provides a pleasant grounding for kids and adults alike. We all like to eat, so setting up your day around meals is not a bad thing.

For many people before the pandemic, mealtimes as a family were simply unthinkable. I know from my own experience that an average school night might be strewn with trainings, homework and hobbies, so that dinner was usually taken when you could. Now, we have the chance to make family dinners if not a nightly than a weekly occurrence. If you're on your own, consider organising a dinner over Zoom or some similar video call service. Dinner as a family is a great way to build a community spirit.

Don't forget your sleep

Vivid dreams and disturbed sleep have been common themes of the pandemic. Being tired can affect us in many ways, making it harder to cope with the extra stresses this pandemic has put on us. It's important to establish a sleep pattern that suits our needs.

Try and establish a regular sleep pattern, going to bed and getting up at the same time each day. Taking care of sleep hygiene is important as well, and simple steps like avoiding laptops or screens an hour before bed, not drinking caffeine after 2pm, can help you sleep even sounder. Rest and sleep are



critical to self-care, so it's good to take it into account.

Think long-term too

Not all routines are daily. We like to have little things to look forward to, something marked in the calendar days, weeks and months down the line. Maybe it's a trip to the cinema, a night out with your loved one or a family holiday. When work is hard or life's a little down, you can look at the calendar, safe in the knowledge that something good is coming.

“Try and establish a regular sleep pattern, going to bed and getting up at the same time each day”

And then along came the pandemic and our calendars went out the window. But they're still on our walls so why not put them to good use? Pencil in a family quiz night or a dinner date. Don't be shy, put on some fancy dress or a nice shirt; set up a little party corner with some games; if you're very lucky, your children might even do the cooking for you!

Whatever it may be, give yourself something to look forward to, to give shape to your week or your month.

Not all days go the way you want them to

Some days, it doesn't seem like it's meant to be. The best laid plans go to pieces when you wake up sick or a project takes longer than you expect. It can feel like you're getting nothing done and suddenly your plans loom over you.

The first thing to remember in that situation is; you're not alone. We all go through days like that. Especially given the circumstances, it's more a miracle when things come off right than when they don't. Take a moment, stop and breathe.

Don't fret, hard days will come, and plans go out the window. But it's good to have them all the same, because you can't change plans when you don't have any.

Faith — IN THE — family



Bairbre Cahill

As I suspected, returning to Mass after three and a half months was an emotional experience. I went down to the cathedral here in Letterkenny, the 8am Mass, mask on, hands sanitised, social distancing in effect. So it wasn't like any Mass I've ever been involved with before but it was good to be there. I believe that in the Eucharist Jesus puts himself into my hands, entrusts himself to me in a very visible, tangible way. The Eucharist has long been an anchor for me in my faith, reminding me of what is most important, that God's love for us is so strong, so unwavering, that Jesus became one of us. Jesus stands in solidarity with us, God at the heart of our humanity and our humanity at the heart of God.

It was good to be there and yet I find myself filled with questions. When I looked at the Gospel for this Sunday it crystallised the anxiety which niggles at me. Matthew chapter 13 – the sower goes out to sow. Some seed falls on patches of rock, springs up, but has no roots and withers with the first sunshine. Other seed falls on rich soil and produces a rich crop. Which are we?

We have travelled a journey we could never have conceived of at the beginning of this year. I think back to the powerful image of Pope Francis in St Peter's on March 27 with that extraordinary 'Urbi et Orbi' prayer for the pandemic. Pope Francis urged us to see this time as "a time to choose what matters and what passes away". In his Easter Sunday homily he called us to solidarity with the whole world. More recently, on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul he invited us to allow ourselves to be challenged by God, to allow our lives to bear witness to the love of God. He says: "Just as the Lord turned Simon into Peter so He is calling each one of us, in order to make us living stones with which to build a renewed Church and a renewed unity."

Have we the courage to be renewed or will we just retrench into our old ways? For me, it was wonderful to receive the Eucharist again but if this is the limit of our aims then we have missed the point entirely. These past

months have shaken us up, seeds have been sown. Have we the courage to reflect on the experience, to explore the questions that have been thrown up?

My own sense is that if we fail to do this, if we are the rocky path where seed springs up rapidly but withers even more rapidly, then people will walk away from the Church. Pope Francis connected with people around the world in what he said and did over these months. He has shown us



what it means to be a Christian. The destruction of the natural environment, of God's creation should matter to us as Christians. The death of George Floyd and far too many others together with the existence of racism in our own country and potentially within our own hearts should matter to us. The impact of layering coronavirus upon poverty, malnutrition and discrimination should matter to us. And if it doesn't then are we truly Christian at all?

Because being Christian has got to be about sharing in the Divine Life of God, seeing the world as God sees it, desiring the transformation that God desires and working to make that happen. As Catholics the Eucharist is essential to us, nurturing that divine life, but not simply for ourselves. If these months have taught us anything, surely it is about the importance of relationship. Perhaps our experience of being Catholic has too often drawn us inwards into private faith rather than outwards towards the solidarity Pope Francis calls us to.

In the Eucharist Jesus puts himself in our hands so that we might be his living, active presence in the world. May our expectations be no less than His.

Keeping the faith alive in a digital age

Personal Profile



Aron Hegarty

For many religious communities, the coronavirus pandemic has been a time to discover the importance of an online presence. It's something that the Oblates of Mary Immaculate have been wrestling with for some time, and has come into sharper focus during the crisis.

Rebecca Roughneen, digital communications specialist for the Oblates in Inchicore, says she and her team are working to "ensure faith is presented in a relevant and inspiring way" through a "period of transformation".

In an interview with *The Irish Catholic*, she spoke about her faith journey, the work being done for the Oblates and how their digital outreach is connecting parishioners.

"Faith plays a huge role in my life," Rebecca says of her own religious connection.

Knock

"I was fortunate to grow up close to and spend a lot of time in Knock Shrine, Co. Mayo, which I believed helped me to discover the beauty, depth and meaning of our faith.

"For me, the central message of our faith is that each of us are created in the image and likeness of God and are deserving of dignity, respect, and are loved by Him beyond measure, and it is one that I believe our world needs to hear more than ever.

She adds: "The Oblate community aim to be 'always close to the people' and to uphold the dignity of every human person, and as a community reaching out to a wider



audience online with this message is part of this mission."

Rebecca works alongside the Oblates communications team, which is made up of members of the community and lay people who have expertise in the area.

“Working together through a time of complete transformation to ensure we present our faith in a relevant and inspiring way”

"I work to support and raise awareness of the work of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate through digital communications online and on social media platforms," she says of her role.

"I highlight our projects within our communities and ultimately help to grow the Oblate mission of 'respecting the dignity and sacredness of each person, we seek to grow close to Christ and make

him known through our way of life and ministry."

According to Rebecca, the Oblates established a communications team to respond to Pope Francis' call to view the world of social media as a "digital continent" and to treat it as a "mission territory".

The purpose of this in doing so, she says, enables the Oblates to extend their missionary outreach to an "increasingly important area" of daily life.

"Once the pandemic crisis hit and our churches closed, we acted quickly to ensure that we had a means of maintaining a connection with our faith communities online," says Rebecca.

"Along with Lisa Clancy and Fr Lorcan O'Reilly of the Oblates communications team, we pivoted our community online to ensure our parishioners and volunteers across Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales had support in these challenging and uncertain times.

"As churches were closing, our virtual channels for prayer needed to expand providing a personal approach for all who needed it.

"Since late March," continues Rebecca, "the Oblates community including priests, parish workers, volunteers, youth workers and mission team workers have all answered the digital call and have had to learn quickly how to navigate the digital world."

Youth Defence

Rebecca, who was part of Youth Defence - Ireland's largest pro-life organisation, says the Oblates reach out to and gather parishioners through having daily prayers online across all platforms.

"Each day at 9.30am and 9.30pm we invite viewers to join us for a short morning and night prayer together - a short time of reflective prayer to begin and end our day together, which are streamed on our Facebook and YouTube and shared on our website and Twitter.

"In our daily reflections we have prayed for all parts of our society including those working on the frontline in the emergency services, our Oblates community, our parishioners, for people who have lost jobs, victims of domestic violence, families

who are missing each other and important family occasions."

Humbling

She continues: "The response has been humbling and people have joined us in prayer not just from our own parishes, but from all over the world; all praying together during these uncertain times, finding solace.

"We know that this has helped people cope and gives comfort to those struggling and also gives a daily focus to those who want to pray with us.

“The central message of our faith is that each of us are created in the image and likeness of God and are deserving of dignity”

"Masses and prayer services are live-streamed daily from the Oblates parishes [across Ireland and the UK] and many people have emailed in their prayers and intentions to us and our online connections are increasing every day."

The National College of Art and Design (NCAD) graduate, with a Bachelor's degree in Design and Visual Communications, adds that "the overall digital approach has connected us" during the pandemic.

"Working together through a time of complete transformation to ensure we present our faith in a relevant and inspiring way," she says.

"We have also combined our digital approach for those who prefer to read and a daily reflection email is also sent to those interested.

"As raising awareness of vocations to the Oblates way of life is very important to us, our regular Social Oblates podcast gives information on vocations following our founder St Eugene de Mazenod.

"Looking to the future," concludes Rebecca, "we will work together as a community and as Pope Francis said: 'Let us remain united. Let us make our closeness felt towards those persons who are the most lonely and tired.'"

Readjusting to return to work after lockdown

At the start of August, I will not be working from home anymore and I will be back working in the office. I'm nervous about how I and the family will readjust to another change in routine.

At the beginning of lockdown, it seemed daunting, but now many of us have gotten used to our 'new normal' and just as you have adjusted, you have to readjust all over again by heading back into your office. You and your family have just had a huge amount of time together. It is natural that you will all feel some separation anxiety. Of course, you all will have mixed emotions, perhaps some of relief and some of sadness.

First, sit down and look at what your new day is going to look like. What changes do you need to make to your timetable? Next look at what the practical implications returning to the office will have. Reflect on what elements you have enjoyed in this season of life slowing down.

Are there parts that you can keep? Talk to your children about what they have enjoyed the most, perhaps it's been time for that extra story in the morning, or everyone being together sitting down at breakfast time. What elements of this can you keep consistently doing, or what adjustments do you need to make in order to keep those parts of your routine?

Of course, think also about what you have enjoyed the most? Have you had time for more exercise or relaxing in the evening, these are things that don't have to change once you are committed to keeping them in your routine, decide on what really matters and what are non-negotiable and put them in your calendar. Map out your week at the start of the week with your

family, and slot in all those important items.

Take the time to reassure children of family time, for your first week back at work try to plan some special for that weekend, it could be a hike or a family movie night.

Perhaps there is an activity that you can do together as a family like the zoo or a favourite playground.

You're concerned of course with your children and how they feel, but remember it is important to also think about the impact on you. You can't give what you don't have, so take time to think about your own needs during this transition back to work. It's important to remember that this is just another transition phase and that you and especially your children are adaptable and will adjust much quicker than you think.



Wendy Grace

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Some stats are just too inconvenient to ponder

There was some low level controversy in the media late last week relating to the death toll due to Covid-19 – was it 1,700 or was it 1,200? Important to get the facts right of course, at the same time a much higher death toll barely caused a ripple – the 6,666 unborn babies who died in 2019 under our new abortion regime. It was a scary number in more ways than one.

There was just a little coverage last Tuesday when the figures were released. Senator Ivana Bacik debated the matter with Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín TD on **The Hard Shoulder** (Newstalk) that evening. Tóibín stressed how devastating these figures were for human rights campaigners – no matter what way you took the figures they represented around a 40% increase – 2,000 extra deaths, 2,000 people missing because of the legislation.

Most of the debate, he said, was about the difficult cases, but these were only a tiny proportion of the abortions carried out. Most of the abortions were done for socio-economic reasons and yet the Government he reckoned was not doing anything about these factors, expending no energies into lifting women out of poverty – instead, the Government response was to allow lives to be ended.

Bacik seemed inclined to



A scene from the musical *Hamilton* which featured on Disney+ last week.

deflect from a concentration on the drastic figures. She thought “haranguing” about the figures was insensitive to women (actually Tóibín was a model of calm and courtesy as usual). And she thought the legislation should be even less restrictive, e.g. finding fault with the waiting period.

Soon after, the 6pm **News** on Newstalk highlighted Colm O’Gorman of Amnesty also wanting more liberalisation. He was concerned for the “pregnant person”, thought the “serious harm” threshold was too high, and was concerned about “lack

of access in case severe non-fatal and foetal impairment diagnosis”. Now that was really scary.

Strangely I couldn’t find any coverage of the issue on that evening’s **Drivetime** (RTÉ Radio 1) apart from a brief report on the news headlines. Nor could I find coverage the following day on RTÉ’s news and current affairs shows. I thought there surely would be something on the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) next morning, but couldn’t find anything there either although Kenny’s show covered the issue intensively in the lead up to the ref-

erendum to repeal the Eighth Amendment.

Ciara Kelly was also quite exercised about the issue at referendum time and frequently covers the latest medical issues but I didn’t hear a word about it on her **Lunchtime Live** (Newstalk) show that day either. So, nothing to see here? A death toll of around 7,000 human beings not worth some discussion?

Betrayal

Speaking of discrimination, last Friday Disney+ launched a filmed version of a 2016 production of the stage musical **Hamilton**, a strikingly modern take on the politics surrounding the early days of the USA. Themes of power, politics, corruption, race, betrayal and forgiveness blended seamlessly – universal themes with a distinct resonance for modern times.

Obviously it’s not as good as being present in the theatre, but with as big a screen and as sound as I could muster it became immersive as I was drawn into the unpredictable story (I confess I didn’t know the detailed history very well). The plot, music and lyrics were excellent – and all written by the multi-talented Lin-Manuel Miranda who also excelled in the leading role as politician Alexander Hamilton.

Between the fluid camera work and the revolving stage

PICK OF THE WEEK

WHERE GOD WEEPS

EWTN, Sunday, July 12, 9.30am

Exploring the situation of Catholics in Nigeria, with Boko Haram terror and little to no recourse for justice or protection.

NATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION

RTÉ1, Sunday, July 12, 11am

Live coverage from Collins Barracks in Dublin of the annual military ceremony and multi-faith service.

FILM: KATERI

EWTN, Sunday, July 12, 9pm

After witnessing the atrocities of war, a young, orphaned Mohawk girl embarks on a fervent journey of faith as a Catholic missionary for her people.

areas there was a kinetic energy about the whole thing as musical genres varied between rap, hip-hop and big Broadway-style numbers. Though on Disney (no guarantee of wholesome family entertainment anymore, alas) there were a few profanities and some crude dialogue at times, but on the whole it packed a powerful punch, and held the attention for over two-and-a-half hours – I liked the ‘intermission’!

Finally I note the arrival of a new UK radio station Times Radio – accessible through a phone and tablet app, internet radio and website. I listened to it intermittently for now and reckon it will give LBC and BBC Radio 4 a run for their money in the talk radio landscape. Among the presenters are Michael Portillo and also journalists



Jenny Kleeman.

Stig Abel and Jenny Kleeman, both now bumped off their *Press Preview* stints on Sky News, apparently because of perceived conflict of interest. Sky’s loss, and now they have a wider audience.

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[@boreganmedia](https://www.facebook.com/boreganmedia)



Pat O’Kelly

Music

More on the much-travelled Stanford’s creative latter years

In my previous column, I left Charles Villiers Stanford as deputy organist of Trinity College, Cambridge in 1873. He was promoted the following year but before accepting the principal post stipulated that he be allowed to study in Germany during the next two summers. Cambridge agreed and Stanford went to Leipzig.

It didn’t work well. Disliking his conservative professor, Carl Reinicke, Stanford later commented, “of all the dry musicians I have ever known he was the most desiccated”. On a brighter Leipzig note, he met English singer Jennie Wetton. They married in 1878.

Back home Stanford was advised to try the highly regarded Friedrich Kiel in Ber-



A painting of Charles Villiers Stanford from the Trinity College chapel.

lin’s Hochschule für Musik. He did and described the agreeable Kielas “a master at once sympathetic and able... I learned more from him in three months than from all the others in three years”.

Returning to Cambridge again Stanford resumed his duties at Trinity, writing “some highly distinctive music” for its choir. He also assumed the college Musical Society’s baton, introducing many new works, among them Brahms’ *German Requiem*. Conducting the British première of Brahms’ *First Symphony* brought him national acclaim, raising his status further in Britain’s musical life.

In the early 1880s Stanford played an important role in establishing London’s Royal College of Music (RCM), giving invaluable assistance to its founder/director, George Grove.

In full agreement with Grove’s progressive ideals,

the latter appointed Stanford his professor of composition – a position he held until his death. During his time there he taught many future famous composers including Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Supervision

Stanford also placed an indelible mark on organising the RCM’s vocal department, supervising and conducting 32 opera productions during his tenure. As an aside, the workaholic Stanford was conductor of London’s Bach Choir, the Leeds Philharmonic Society and that city’s Triennial Festival.

Realising his diverse capabilities, Cambridge appointed Stanford its professor of music

in 1887 and he was later honoured with doctorates from it, Oxford and TCD. He was knighted in 1902.

Between all this activity Stanford found time to compose and leave a legacy of over 200 works including nine operas, two of which were premièred within two weeks of each other in May 1884 – the serious *Savonarola* (“ruthlessly berated”) in Hamburg and the comic *The Canterbury Pilgrims* (“positively received”) in London. Shamus O’Brien (1896) proved a hit here, in Britain and on Broadway!

His choral music covers a plethora of pieces for the Anglican Church as well as a Latin *Requiem* and *Stabat Mater*, which Vaughan Wil-

liams considered had “imperishable beauty”. His many orchestral works embraced seven symphonies – the third subtitled Irish – several concerti and six Irish *Rhapsodies*.

Stanford was disappointed his richly romantic second *Piano Concerto*, successfully premièred by Russian virtuoso Benno Moiseiwitsch in Bournemouth in 1915, did not reach the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts in his lifetime.

The matter was rectified over 90 years later when Finghin Collins played it at his BBC Proms’ debut in the Albert Hall in 2008.

Stanford died on March 29, 1924 with much of his music by then overshadowed by a number of his esteemed pupils.



BookReviews



Peter Costello

The Jesuits of Dublin's Penal years – a template for resilience



The Fr John Austin Memorial in St Kevin's Park, Dublin.

Irish Jesuits in Penal Times: Thomas Betagh and his Companions
by Thomas J. Morrissey SJ
(Messenger Publications, €19.95)

Peter Costello

In what is now called St Kevin's Park in Dublin's Camden Row, just off Camden Street, which was once a graveyard dating from medieval times, there stands a monument. It is to the Jesuit Fr John Austin, who died in 1784, once widely known and popular in his own day. The name may now mean little or nothing to those without Jesuit connections.

It is rarely visited. But those who do go there find it a reposeful place, lost in the throbbing hum of the modern city. The monument has a sad and lonely look, a neglected celebration of a largely forgotten priest from a little known period in the city's history, the penal years in the city.

Companions

In his latest book, Fr Morrissey relates the activities of the gallant Fr Austin who was one of the companions mentioned in the subtitle, the Irish Jesuits in Dublin in the 18th Century.

It is one of a series the author has written over the

years from archival researches that fill out what we know of the personalities of those living in the grim years of persecution in Ireland.

Dublin, unlike other European cities of any size, had no living folklore connections with its past. The city's traditions seem only to really begin with the post-Famine years. So in a real sense, Fr Morrissey is doing us all a great favour by bringing before us some of the important Catholic figures of that city.

However, as the title indicates, the main focus is on Fr Betagh and later Jesuit colleagues who worked in what would today be called inner-city Dublin. Their stories reveal the dark side of the glorious image we have of civilised Georgian Dublin, the downstairs to the upstairs of Merrion and Fitzwilliam Squares. So this book is very much a necessary corrective to all we read and hear about Georgian Dublin.

The challenge Fr Betagh and his colleagues faced was keeping a faith alive in changing and difficult times. But through education, they preserved not only the continuity of Catholicism, but helped in the emergence of an educated mercantile class in Victorian Dublin, a class that would have a dominant influence on the creation and



The burial place of Thomas Betagh (inset left) in Glasnevin, Dublin.

outlook of the New Ireland of the late Victorian and early 20th-Century Ireland.

“When he died in 1811 he was given a huge send-off at a funeral attended by representatives of several of the city's religious traditions”

Yet they did not neglect the poorest of the poor. Betagh and his colleagues ran ragged schools in cellars and attics in the poorest of parts of the city, all the while avoiding the authorities.

The author adroitly provides crisp *vignettes* of the

various figures, which are brief and informative. There were problems, however, such as the difficulties that the Irish Jesuits had with counterparts at Stonyhurst, where the English Jesuits displayed some of the mindlessness about Ireland that has so bedevilled relations between the two countries for centuries.

Anecdotes

But there is room in these pages for strange anecdotes, such as the new bishop of a rural diocese travelling to Ireland by sea, whose ship was seized by the American privateer John Paul Jones who held his baggage with his money, books, clothes and vestments for ransom, leaving the prelate on arrival having to beg

for vital support from friends. This same licensed Yankee pirate attacked Dublin too, an event now forgotten in the city.

Betagh was something of a distinguished character in the city. He preached strenuously against the ideas of the French Revolution, against Tom Paine, and the 'specious ideas of liberty' in America.

Yet he was acutely conscious of the established and emerging injustices in Irish society and attacked those as well.

When he died in 1811 he

was given a huge send-off at a funeral attended by representatives of several of the city's religious traditions. He bridged a gap and so helped to save some of the past, and promote a revitalised future both for the Church and for the Jesuits.

This book will also serve to remind present day Catholics, at a time when so many of them are despairing over the 'decline of the Faith' in recent decades, that things have been bad for the Church in the past, but they have been passed through.



“Through education they preserved not only the continuity of Catholicism, but helped in the emergence of an educated mercantile class in Victorian Dublin”

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.

The origins of Partition: a sensible solution or the creation of a sundered island?



Northern Ireland Customs Preventative Officers checking a car to see if there have been any replacements, or a new engine installed, in July 1949. Photo: Byline Times

Without a Dog's Chance: The Nationalists of Northern Ireland and the Irish Boundary Commission 1920–1922

by James A. Cousins
(Irish Academic Press 2020)

J. Anthony Gaughan

In July 1925, nearly a full century ago, the Irish Boundary Commission sat for the last time, bringing to an end a sorry business that began badly and ended in confusion. It may happen very soon with the outcome of Brexit, whenever that happens, that the Border will become once again a matter of controversy.

Back on April 26, 1924 the Irish Free State formally requested the British government to constitute the Boundary Commission provided for by article 12 of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

The governments of the UK, Irish Free State and Northern Ireland were to nominate one member each to the Commission. When the Northern Government refused to cooperate, the British government assigned J. R. Fisher, a unionist journalist, to the Commission.

The Commission consisted of Fisher, Eoin MacNeill, Minister for Education of the Irish Free State, and Justice Richard Feetham, a South African judge who was appointed chairman jointly by the British and Irish governments.

The Commission sat from November 5, 1924 to July 1925 and considered 130 submissions and examined 585 witnesses. The commissioners agreed not to publish or disclose their findings until they could agree on a joint report.

Apart from nominating Eoin MacNeill to the Commission, the Irish government appointed Kevin O'Shiel

director of the North-Eastern Boundary Bureau, which was established in October 1922, to compile data for the Boundary Commission.

As part of this work he was sent to Geneva to examine material from other boundary commissions at the League of Nations archives. Subsequently, on behalf of the NEBB, O'Shiel prepared two proposals to be presented to the Commission.

The first was the so-called 'Maximum Line' which they anticipated 'would fall flat'. The second was the 'Minimum Line'.

This presented the Irish Free State with most of Tyrone, 'a considerable slice of Co. Derry', including Derry city, Fermanagh and the southern sections of Armagh and Down, 'including the Borough of Newry'.

“The three governments agreed that the border should remain as fixed”

In this comprehensive account of the Boundary Commission, the author highlights the main reasons why it ended in a fiasco. The nationalists in the border areas were the strongest supporters of the Commission. They hoped for a considerable transfer of land to the Irish Free State, as most border areas had nationalist majorities.

Those on the Northern Ireland side of the border were particularly keen to have this outcome. However, the nationalists in Northern Ireland were not at one with regard to the Commission.

While those in the border areas, who were almost all members of Sinn Féin, were avid supporters of the Com-

mission, Joe Devlin, MP, and his followers in West Belfast and elsewhere in the internal areas of Northern Ireland saw little advantage to be gained from the re-drawing of the border and argued that they should rather be setting out by "peaceful and constitutional means to bring together North and South".

In the meantime the Ulster unionists were aware that the British Government would not permit any outcome from the deliberations of the Commission which would impinge on their interests.

Then MacNeill, it seems, was not a very effective member of the Commission. His most significant intervention occurred in November 1925, when he resigned in protest at the publication of the Commission's proceedings and findings in the *Tory Morning Post*.

It revealed that the commissioners would leave Cos Antrim, Derry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone as they were, while an area of east Donegal would become part of Northern Ireland and south Armagh would become part of the Irish Free State.

Amidst recriminations from all sides, the Commission was wound up. The three governments agreed that the border should remain as fixed by the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The British government formally established Northern Ireland by transferring its powers under the Council of Ireland to the administration in Belfast.

Thereby the nationalists of Northern Ireland became a 'trapped minority' which was to see two generations come and go before they managed to secure their due redress.

The World of Books

By the books editor

It's all change in the world of work

In recent months people have been forced for reasons of social solidarity to work from home, rather than make what was for many a two-hour drive to work and another two hours home. But this working from home, feared at first, has worked out well.

Working from home may emerge as the new norm, a norm that many had long predicted, the advent of the dispersed office, but which companies and managers (all those eager folk with MBAs) never allowed to emerge.

Thinking back to the early 1960s, with its hopes of change and prosperity, of change in society and even in the Church (remember the enthusiasm so many had for Pope John XXIII and *Mater and Magister?*), it was an era, at least for some, of hippies living in tepees and Native American lodges. The thought then was that a simpler way of life would provide the solution to climate change, to famine, to a divided society of haves and have-nots.

From those heady days post-1968 – for some Catholics in America the days of *Ramparts Magazine* and the direct application of Gospel values in daily life, much to the horror of the suburbs then still enjoying 'the American way of life' – I have retained a battered paperback which evokes a different style of facing the 'the world of work'.

“The authors were all emphatic that it was important to find out about local laws and rules about business, such as food safety and so on”

It is called *A Handbook of Home Businesses Ideas and Plans*, edited by John Shuttleworth and others (Bantam Books, 1976), which was subtitled a 'do-it yourself employment ideas that work!'; such at least was the claim. The creator and publisher of this handbook were associates of *The Mother Earth News* – a reminder of the happy enthusiasms so many of us back then had.

When this book appeared in 1976, the notions that coalesced into a philosophical movement were already centuries old. They may seem to be 'new' in some places and for some people, but for others they have been a part of their outlook for ages.

So what sort of business notions was *Mother Earth* putting forward? These ideals were new to business men. There were no ambitions to dominate the streets with global technology. But this

is the way artists, writers and poets had lived and worked since the dawn of time. It presented the ancient working habits of creative people, the ultimate in working from home, as the new way to go.

Now it's back again. Sometimes the simplest lessons and ideas are the best. So we do not need to return to 'normal', we need to learn to live in the new reality. This will make the concept of 'life-long learning' come to pass.

One idea that appealed greatly to me was a chapter by one Clarence Socwell with



Multi-tasking when working from home.

two supporting essays by others, on how he ran a paperback exchange shop. The idea certainly worked. I felt I could do that – buy the books at a quarter of the original cover price, and then sell them on at half of it, which is 50% profit for you and a half-price bargain for the customer.

But there were ideas for all kinds of other business: cement laying service; a window cleaning business; a photo-business based on the technique of the Victorian tintype; how to run a kitchen table sweet factory; or to sell fresh local produce door-to-door. These all sound very small scale, but from such small ideas great things rose.

The authors were all emphatic that it was important to find out about local laws and rules about business, such as food safety and so on, to keep careful books and to pay your taxes, especially VAT.

How many businesses of all sizes fail in these respects, especially in the matter of VAT, which so many sole traders think they will be able to pay off later without putting anything aside to do so?

But this sentence appears on one of the first pages: "This book is dedicated to a revival of neighbourly self-reliance that soft-headed government bureaucrats seem so determined to kill."

So take that as a warning. Plunge into the new world of working from home with care.



Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie




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Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.



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FOCUS Ireland

Remembering

**MEMORIAM CARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
CARDS & NOTELETS
BOOKMARKS**

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The Miracle Prayer

Dear Heart of Jesus, In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for a special one. (mention here)

Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

HOD

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Leisure time

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

“May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model”

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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There is no greater legacy that will leave a mark on future generations than supporting our pro-life and pro-family work.

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Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

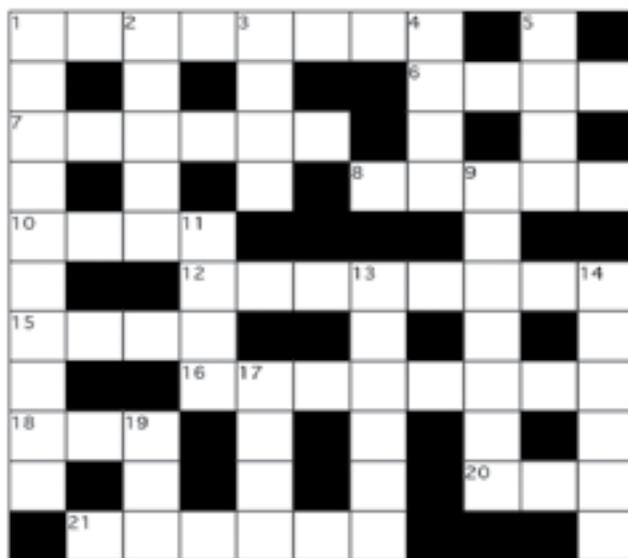
Trócaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 340



Across

- 1 Everest is the world's highest one (8)
- 6 The sound a pig makes (4)
- 7 Spiky plant that grows in some deserts (6)
- 8 In the movies, this ogre is married to Princess Fiona (5)
- 10 Do as you are told (4)
- 12 Animal with a trunk (8)
- 15 The back of the foot (4)
- 16 Five line funny poem, or a city in Munster (8)
- 18 Catch fish in it, or hang it behind a goal (3)
- 20 Weapon you shoot (3)
- 21 Citrus fruit (6)

Down

- 1 A pop star often holds this

while singing (10)

- 2 The brother of your mother or father (5)
- 3 Not false (4)
- 4 He saved the animals, two by two (4)
- 5 A joint halfway up the leg (4)
- 9 Enjoying a book (7)
- 11 Shout (4)
- 13 You should always use this word when you ask for something (6)
- 14 Removing (6)
- 17 This country is near Iraq (4)
- 19 Black substance poured onto the road (3)

SOLUTIONS, JULY 2

GORDIUS No. 462

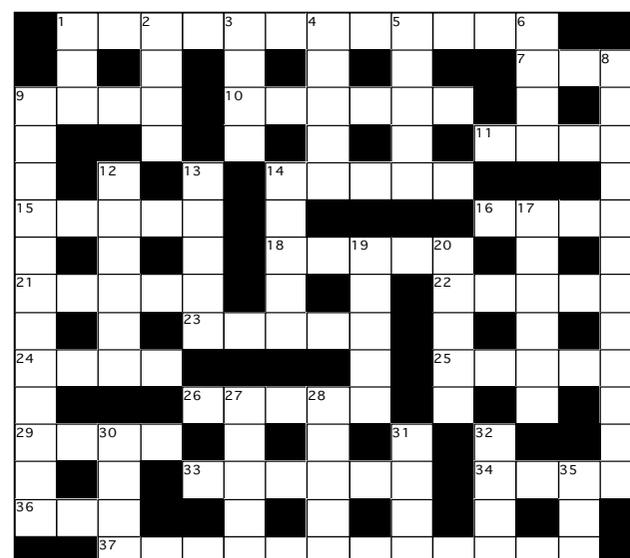
- Across** – 1 Ail 3 First cousin 8 Censer 9 Tottered 10 Druid
11 Cross 13 Green Jacket 15 Chinese takeaway 16 Broncos
20 Ounce 22 Eland 23 Passe 25 Spades 26 Get-together 27 Roy
- Down** – 1 Archdiocese 2 Linguini 3 Freed 4 Settled 5 Optic nerve
6 Sorrow 7 Nod 12 Senselessly 13 Gusto 17 Crusader 18 Analyst
22 Draco 23 Piper 24 Tag

CHILDREN'S No. 339

- Across** – 1 Washing up 7 Ill 8 Nurse 9 History 10 Sir 11 Inches
13 Nil 14 Ewe 17 Eyebrows 19 Noel 20 Laughter
- Down** – 1 Windscreen 2 Surprise 3 Ice-hockey 4 Grasped 5 Pilot
6 Play 12 Closer 15 Well 16 Arch 18 Emu

Crossword

Gordius 463



Across

- 1 Being polite, the 5 down works for the government (5,7)
- 7 Massage some of the 17 down (3)
- 9 The sound of a bell (4)
- 10 & 13d An American president may literally not dump lard (6,5)
- 11 Eye infection (4)
- 14 Simple song (5)
- 15 & 29a How can the guest crib about their being small and stripy? (5,4)
- 16 Availed of (4)
- 18 Noxious gases start flowing under my external screen (5)
- 21 Allege (5)
- 22 Great Lake named for a Native American people (5)
- 23 Carefully examined what made an Italian river crimson (5)
- 24 Short letter, or piece of musical notation (4)
- 25 & 31d Boo! Wax elk relocated to a watery geographical feature (5,4)
- 26 Unintentionally pour (5)
- 29 See 15 across
- 33 Cereal crop used to make part of a mannequin oarsman (6)
- 34 Parasites? You'll find many with hard water (4)
- 36 Member of a religious order (3)

- 37 Tragedies men can create when there's lack of consensus (12)

Down

- 1 Snooker stick (3)
- 2 Five take beer to the dell (4)
- 3 Gentlewoman (4)
- 4 Every night, non unionised individuals begin to cause boredom (5)
- 5 There's that 'gentleman's gentleman' character at the bottom of the 2 down (5)
- 6 Jog (4)
- 8 One banned a weird mixture that has provided Melchizedek's offerings (5,3,4)
- 9 Innocent chap upset by the furniture van (12)
- 12 Shocked, horrified (6)
- 13 See 10 across
- 14 Postpone, or yield to a more authoritative person (5)
- 17 Scours surgical wear (6)
- 19 Military decoration (5)
- 20 Fire a section of the plant (5)
- 27 She gets soft gold to Los Angeles (5)
- 28 One who shuns company (5)
- 30 Musical group (4)
- 31 See 25 across
- 32 Behold - in the south-east, there's hedgerow fruit (4)
- 35 Infant's bed (3)

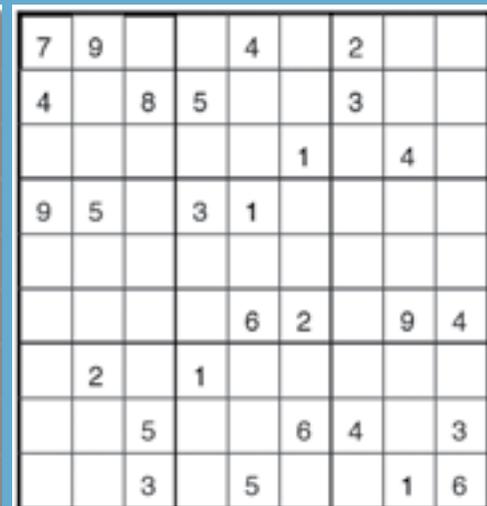
Sudoku Corner

340

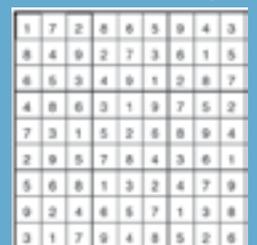
Easy



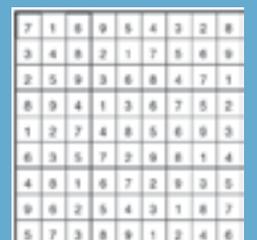
Hard



Last week's Easy 339



Last week's Hard 339





Notebook

Fr. Conor McDonough

Benjamin Lay

Reading Tom Holland's new book, *Dominion*, introduced me to the fascinating figure of Benjamin Lay. He was born into a Quaker family in 1682, and grew to just over four foot tall.

His diminutive height didn't prevent him from becoming a sailor and eventually a merchant in the Caribbean. Like Las Casas, he had his eyes opened to the cruelty of the slave trade there, and with his wife, Sarah Smith, he undertook deliberately to educate himself on the situation of the slaves.

Stories

He began to invite the slaves of his neighbours to dine at his house, to tell him their stories. This simple act of listening led him to become a radical – and radically unpopular – opponent of slavery.

His abolitionism led to his being ostracised by his peers, but he would in no way be daunted. He was dismissed as a fanatic, as a single-issue campaigner, as impractical and unrealistic.

But, much like the committed pro-life activists of today, he had little interest in pleasing the mainstream: he knew his cause was just.

PICTURE THE SCENE: two men face each other in debate in a stunningly ornate hall. A jury of experts listens intently. They are in Valladolid, the year is 1550, and the debate concerns the moral and legal status of the newly conquered 'savages' in Spanish territories. The two men: Dominican friar, Bartolomé de las Casas, and humanist scholar, Juan de Sepulveda.

For Sepulveda, the whole question of the enslavement of Amerindians was largely academic. He had never been to the Western hemisphere. He was a bookish man, a man of the Renaissance, and it was precisely as a man of the Renaissance that he appealed to ancient Greek authorities.

Aristotle, the great Athenian philosopher, had argued that certain groups of humans were "natural slaves", and Sepulveda, outlining some of the shocking practices of the Amerindians, and exaggerating many more, argued that these peoples had no natural right to freedom, or dominion over their own lands. They should, according to Sepulveda, be enslaved and forcibly converted to Christianity.

For las Casas, the whole thing was a lot more personal. Some 50 years earlier, while still a teenager,

The Valladolid debate



Bartolomé de las Casas.

he had taken part in slave raids on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic).

As a young adult he had been a slave owner. He was ordained a priest, but he continued to own slaves and to defend slavery.

When the Dominican community in Hispaniola, led by Antonio de Montesinos, launched a stinging attack against slave ownership ("Are the Indians not men? Do they not have rational souls?"), las Casas had argued against the friars.

Even when he was shocked by atrocities against the indigenous peoples of Cuba, as he accompanied conquistadores invading that island, he was not moved to change his mind. It was only a year later, when he was meditating on a passage from Ecclesiasticus about the rights

of the vulnerable, that las Casas finally had a change of heart, and became a convinced defender of the Amerindians and a dogged critic of slavery and aggressive colonising.

Las Casas knew, though, that moral outrage and solo activism weren't enough. He knew that his cause needed solid arguments, based on the unshakeable foundations of the Christian Faith, and he knew he needed collaborators. This conviction led him to join the Dominican friars in Spain.

His attempted demolition of institutional slavery was completed centuries later by William Wilberforce

For the rest of his life, las Casas campaigned against forced conversions, against slavery, against unjust military campaigns, and he did so with the intellectual and spiritual support of his Dominican brothers.

They might not have seen the horrors that he had seen, but they were prepared to think through

the political, economic, and moral dimensions of these questions, and to propose laws and practices that would favour the indigenous victims of Spanish colonialism.

When las Casas faced up to Sepulveda in Valladolid, he did so as a man of experience, as a man inspired by the Word of God, as a thinker, as a man supported by a network of prayer, study, and action.

The concessions he won at Valladolid were modest, but the integrity of his position was evident to all, and his attempted demolition of institutional slavery was completed centuries later by William Wilberforce and his movement.

As we Christians struggle to find the right words and actions with which to oppose the injustices of our day, the example of Bartolomé de las Casas shows us the virtues we need to get beyond virtue-signalling.



Bishop Jaya Rao Polimera and members of Eluru Diocese, Andhra Pradesh, India, distribute aid packages to the poor.

YOUR GIFT WILL HELP PROVIDE FOOD FOR THE POOR AND MARGINALISED

Your gift can make a life-and-death difference for desperately poor families and for sick and needy people who are struggling in the midst of the present covid crisis. The Little Way Association has received many urgent appeals from Bishops, priests, sisters and missionaries asking for help for those in their care.

Bishop Jaya Rao Polimera of Eluru, India, writes: "Hundreds of poor people lack food and other basic necessities because of the lockdown and urgently need assistance."

Families are battling against hunger

Heidi Caluori of Arco in Sao Paulo, Brazil, writes: "The people from the slums are the hardest hit by the virus. Not being able to work anymore means people do not receive a salary and have no money to buy food. Families are battling against hunger. We want to continue to distribute food to the people in the surrounding slums. We need your donations!" Sr Eileen Quirke of the Presentation Sisters in Quito, Ecuador, asks for help with: "...Basic Food Kits, and Home Medical Attention (initial visits, necessary examinations, followed by the prescribed medication) for elderly people who are isolating for the last two months in our poor villages."

Every cent that you send for our "hungry, sick and deprived" fund will go intact to those who look after the very poor

Mass is offered daily for all our supporters' intentions. Thank you so much for your prayers and your continued practical support.



MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

Your Mass offerings help to provide the missionary priest's maintenance and assist him to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth.

We like to send a missionary a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass.

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.



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Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss) (Block letters please)

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