

The Irish Catholic

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Exorcist: Trained teams needed in parishes to fight evil spirits

Chai Brady

Ireland urgently needs trained teams of people to lead so-called 'deliverance ministry' for people who feel they are oppressed by evil spirits, a leading priest-exorcist has warned.

Fr Pat Collins CM, who has worked in this ministry for many years, told *The Irish Catholic* that the need is pressing and that while a number of Irish bishops have been "responding quietly but positively", trained psychologist Fr Collins warned, "The demand is much greater than the supply".

"As Ireland has secularised, there is a crisis of truth, and a crisis of meaning - people are getting into all kinds of things they wouldn't have got into before. As a result, people are more open to spiritual forces that can be negative.

"I think there is a growing need for deliverance, undoubtedly, this needs to be acknowledged," he insisted.

While the Church reserves exorcism to priests who have special permission from a bishop, deliverance ministry is prayer for the person experiencing distress with the desire to heal the emotional wounds leading to their feelings of being oppressed.

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Having a ball after receiving the Bread of Life...



Eight-year-old Maria Smith celebrating her First Holy Communion on the beach in Newcastle, Co. Down, by playing a game of football with Fr Michael Ailbe O'Reilly from the order of the Holy Cross. Photo: Bill Smyth

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The synod process moves up a gear

The Irish synodal process is continuing apace. Interest has been patchy; some parish gatherings have attracted only a handful of people – others have seen hundreds of people eager to have their say on the future of their faith community. Priests and even bishops have varying levels of interest in the process, with many reporting that they see it as an extra burden. Still others have said that they have found the process to be enriching and life-giving.

“No-one can say there has not been an opportunity to have been heard”

Some parishioners that I have spoken to say they found the process refreshing in that they have never before being asked their views of the future of the Church. Still others grumble that they have been asked continually for their views on the future of the Church and then nothing happens.

Opportunity

Certainly, no-one can say there has not been an opportunity to have been heard. The reports are

frank, and in some dioceses the compilers made it clear that they tried to reach out to certain groups and that these people were not interested in engaging.

The consultation has been a wide one – and there has evidently been sincere engagement from those co-ordinating the process as well as those who came forward to give of their time to share their joys and hopes and their sorrows and despair.

“Ireland is running out of priests, and if the Eucharist is – as Catholics believe – the very source and summit of the Christian life then the crisis facing our parishes is an existential one”

Predictably and understandably sadness has been

evident from the reports at the absence of younger people in many of our parishes.

The failure to pass on the Faith has been a grave one, the consequences of the lack of credible adult faith formation in the Church in Ireland for many decades is evident.

Future

The focus on the future is an urgent one. Ireland is running out of priests, and if the Eucharist is – as Catholics believe – the very source and summit of the Christian life then the crisis facing our parishes is an existential one.

The first phase – the diocesan one – is now complete in the Church in Ireland – the most exhaustive consultation process in the history of the Church in Ireland and part of what Pope Francis sees as local listening leading to a wider reform.

Representatives will now meet in Athlone on June 18 before proceeding to the ancient monastic site of Clonmacnoise for a prayer service. The idea is to reflect on the various syntheses that have

been produced with a view to pulling them together as a coherent response from the Church in Ireland.

“The consequences of the lack of credible adult faith formation in the Church in Ireland for many decades is evident”

It's a difficult balancing act for bishops trying to hold in tension the fact that the Church teaches what it does and will continue to do so, and the reality that for many people – including Mass-going Catholics – that teaching is either poorly understood, not followed or both.

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Exorcist: Trained teams needed in parishes to fight evil spirits

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Fr Collins told *The Irish Catholic* that he is convinced the Church in Ireland needs “teams where there are sympathetic psychiatrists and psychotherapists working with people who are in deliverance ministry, and they're working holistically together so that diagnosis is better than it is at the moment,” he said.

He warned, “Just when we have fewer priests than ever, and priests are overburdened, this new need is coming along. I still think the bishops need to address it.”

The Vincentian priest said several dioceses have been running ‘Unbound’ courses which can help laypeople and priests train in deliverance ministry which he says is “excellent”.

Extreme cases which require a solemn exorcism can only be conducted by a priest, according to canon law, but these are rare the exorcist says.

“Most cases that present are not in need of a solemn exorcism, but what would be called simple exorcism, or what we call now ‘deliverance’. Anyone who is baptised can pray for deliverance,” Fr Collins said.

“My big impression with loads of people contacting me is that an awful lot of mental health issues are now masquerading as to do with spirits, and when you talk to these people and say it might be psychiatric or emotional, they just don't want to hear it and they're utterly convinced,” he said.

More often than not there is a natural explanation to behaviours and experiences that people are reporting, Fr Collins explained.

To formalise deliverance ministry teams, Fr Collins said there must be guidelines and protocols to safeguard because it is currently “wide open to abuse”.

He is offering to produce protocols and a code of eth-

ics for the bishops, saying: “It strikes me as amazing that the bishops don't see this and they could end up in the courts. Say somebody was doing a so-called exorcism – that is how it would be put in the press – and they had no training, no knowledge and did more harm than good, that the person would be claiming damages,” he said.

Fr Collins said the aim would be to protect clients and make sure “total amateurs are not getting involved who know nothing about abnormal psychology”.

He added: “It needs to be professionalised so that competent people are only allowed to get involved in the ministry.”

In the instructions to the priest in the Roman Ritual, the priest is warned to not too readily believe that a person is possessed and to consider whether they are suffering from mental illness.

The Church requires that an investigation be made to ensure that the symptoms cannot be explained by mental or medical illness and that at least some of the signs of possession are also present.

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Dublin synod sees calls for women priests

Jason Osborne

The Archdiocese of Dublin's synodal report says that many "were moved by the Spirit" to call for the consideration of female priests, "so that the Church may be enriched by their deeper participation in leadership and governance roles".

The country's largest

diocese has released its synodal synthesis, with the four major trends having emerged being the importance of community belonging, the role of women, the place of young people and the inspirational leadership of Pope Francis.

Others shared the concern that after the synod concludes, priests will

remain unable to marry and "enjoy family life".

Broken down

The report was broken down into "interesting, innovative or enlightening" responses, as well as "concerns, difficulties and challenges", before compiling the steps that the Holy Spirit "indicates" through

the synodal process in the archdiocese.

Verbatim comments in the report see parishioners expressing their hopes for the synod, with one person saying, "The people who participated in the gatherings were delighted to be given the opportunity to express themselves and would welcome other such ventures".

However, reservations were also expressed, particularly with regards exclusion and the falling away from faith of young people.

"Whole generations are falling away from faith because of poor faith formation of young people and adults," one person said, while another said they "can feel the hurt caused by exclusion, lack of engagement with laity, also the

pain when one's children or family members no longer attend church".

“Reservations were also expressed, particularly with regards exclusion and the falling away from faith of young people”

Synodal feedback included calls for a more "inclusive" Church, as well as the development of new ministries within the diocese with a lay focus.

Meanwhile, responding to the expressed need for a more involved laity, Archbishop of Dublin Dermot

Farrell said in his homily on the Feast of St Kevin that he's inviting the men and women of the diocese "who feel that they are called to ministry to come forward to train for ministry as instituted lectors or acolytes or catechists".

Archbishop Farrell also said he will appoint pastoral leaders, such as deacons, religious and lay people "where necessary when parishes cannot have a resident priest, to support the priest who will have pastoral responsibility for that parish".

"It is my pastoral responsibility, as bishop, to do this – for the sake of the Gospel, and for the sake of the People of God. Christ brought his disciples along a new way. He calls us to find a new way in our time," Archbishop Farrell said.

Holy Land book set for Dublin launch



Primate of All-Ireland Eamon Martin pictured with brothers Eoghan and Daithi Kelly – nephews of the author – at the launch in the Cappagh Parish Centre.

Staff reporter

A new book on the Holy Land aimed at encouraging pilgrims to follow in the footsteps of Christ will be launched in Dublin next week.

An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to the Holy Land by Editor of The Irish Catholic Michael Kelly explores a variety of themes, from an in-depth look at the important sites associated with the ministry of Jesus, to the culture, history, cuisine and more.

It comes after a successful launch in Killyclogher, Co. Tyrone at the weekend – Mr Kelly's home parish – where Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin praised the book.

Commending the book, Archbishop Martin said that: "you can read this book if you're preparing to go to the Holy Land, you can read this book if you're out in the Holy Land visiting the places – but even if you never go there, just read this little book and

it's almost as if you can go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

"If read this book – it will really bring it to life for you," he said.

i An Irish Pilgrimage to the Holy Land will be launched on Wednesday June 15 at 7pm in the Notre Dame Newman Centre for Faith and Reason, University Church, St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 and is available from www.columbabooks.com

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“The people who participated in the gatherings were delighted to be given the opportunity to express themselves and would welcome other such ventures”



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Irish sister decries 'nightmare' attack on church in Nigeria

Chai Brady

The Provincial Leader of the OLA Sisters has condemned the brutal attack on a Catholic church in southwest Nigeria over the weekend, which left dozens of people dead.

Sr Kathleen McGarvey, who has worked on peacebuilding in Nigeria for many years, described the attack on Pentecost Sunday as "an absolute nightmare".

"It is very painful for everyone, there's such insecurity now and the world isn't paying attention, the world is not doing anything. Very, very little is being done," she said.

"For those people who went to Mass only to be bombarded by people shooting guns and setting off bombs, it's an absolute nightmare."

Sr McGarvey added: "The government is doing nothing and the world is sitting back and is not interested. It's becoming too serious and something must be done about it."

The attack on St Francis Xavier Church in Owo occurred during

Sunday Mass on June 5. The region is generally considered safer compared to the north, where there is more instability and attacks against Christians from jihadist groups such as Boko Haram. There has been multiple kidnappings of Catholic priests in the north west and north central regions.

Both explosives and guns were reportedly used during the attack.

Pope Francis sent a telegram conveying his sorrow at the attack which took the lives of up to 50 people – according to local media.

In the Pope's message, addressed to Bishop Jude Arogundade of Ondo, the Pope assured those affected by "this act of unspeakable violence" of his spiritual closeness.

"In commending the souls of the dead to the loving mercy of Almighty God and imploring divine healing and consolation upon the injured and those who are grieving, [the Pope] prays for the conversion of those blinded by hatred and violence, so that they will choose instead the path of peace and righteousness," he said.



Alex Michael (33) one of the victims of the attack by gunmen during Pentecost Mass at St Francis Xavier Church, receives treatment at the Federal Medical Centre in Owo, Nigeria, June 6, 2022. Photo: CNS

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Synodal Pathway largest ever Catholic consultation – Archbishop Martin

Jason Osborne

Prayers were offered in parishes across Ireland at the weekend in thanksgiving for the diocesan phase of the universal synod, with Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin describing it as the "largest consultation ever to take place in the Catholic Church".

"I am grateful to all who participated for their constructive engagement in the many local listening sessions, and for their timely submissions," the archbishop said.

"May that same Spirit, who descended upon the apostles on Pentecost day continue to guide our synodal journey ahead." Chair of the Steering Committee of the

Irish Synodal Pathway, Dr Nicola Brady said that it's been "very encouraging" to see the depth of engagement from dioceses and other groups, as dioceses have now compiled feedback reports based on their local listening sessions.

"There is much to reflect on as we offer these experiences and perspectives from Ireland to the wider global synodal process," Dr Brady said.

"The learning from this experience, and the very honest and wide-ranging sharing that has been offered, provides a strong foundation to build upon in the years ahead as we develop our own national Synodal Pathway."

Pope's travel plan fuels speculation over resignation

Staff Reporter

Rumours that Pope Francis might retire have been fuelled by an announcement that he will be attending a feast initiated by a 13th Century pope who himself resigned.

Speculation that the 85-year-old might follow in the footsteps of his predecessor Benedict XVI and step down from his post was prompted in early May when he appeared in public using a wheelchair for the first time, after undergoing a minor operation to treat knee pain.

It gained momentum when he made the unusual decision to host a consistory on August 27 to create new cardinals, some of whom will be eligible to elect the Pontiff's successor at the next conclave.

The next day, Francis will travel to L'Aquila during which he will visit the cathedral that hosts the tomb of Celestine V, a pope who resigned in 1294. Benedict also visited the tomb in 2009, leaving behind his pallium in what some commentators later saw as a symbolic gesture ahead of his own resignation, which came in 2013.

NEWS IN BRIEF

CSO stats show almost half of births outside marriage

The latest figures from the CSO revealed 41.5% of births in the fourth quarter of 2021 were outside marriage.

The figures showed there were 16,250 births in the fourth quarter of 2021, with 9,512 (58.5%) of those registered as being within marriage or civil partnership.

There were 6,738 births registered as outside marriage or civil partnership in the fourth quarter of 2021, which accounted for 41.5% of the total births for that quarter.

Restored Honan Chapel nominated for award

The recently-restored Honan Chapel on the grounds of University College Cork (UCC) has been nominated for the RIAI Public Choice Award 2022.

"The RIAI Architecture Awards celebrate quality design and the contribution made by architecture to our built environment for everyone's benefit," the competition's webpage reads.

The projects on the shortlist were selected by a jury from anonymous entries, with the public given the opportunity to choose their favourite project by voting on the website at www.riai.ie/public-choice-award-poll/#poll-10

All winners will be announced on June 23 by the RIAI President.

The price – and meaning – of bread

There's a chap in our neighbourhood who, on having to take early retirement, began baking bread as a hobby. And now he delivers a delicious loaf to me every Monday morning for a modest fee. There's a mighty difference between a home-baked loaf and a supermarket product, and I've come to appreciate the taste of real bread – and to think about what bread signifies.

“The planting and harvesting of wheat altered a nomadic life into a settled life, brought domesticity, and an agricultural revolution”

And with the war in Ukraine, the future of wheat – bread's essential ingredient – may be uncertain for everyone. Ukraine was known as ‘the breadbasket of Europe’ – with Russia, it produces 30% of the world's wheat. A shortage of Ukrainian wheat – embargoed by Russian forces – has already raised prices by 30% globally, and the UN has warned that Africa, especially, could be vulnerable to famines.

Wheat is the very



Mary Kenny

basis of human settlement, according to the historian of humankind, Yuval Noah Harari. Some 10,000 years ago, humans were hunter-gatherers, living on killing beasts and gathering berries. Then, writes Harari in his sprawling tome, *Sapiens*, humankind discovered and began cultivating wheat. The planting and harvesting of wheat altered a nomadic life into a settled life, brought domesticity, and an agricultural revolution.

Attentive husbandry

Wheat needed attentive husbandry, so farming was born, and with it, the growth of population. The wheat-based agricultural revolution also prompted other staples such as potatoes and rice.

Bread, throughout the centuries, has come to be symbolic of so much: for Christians, the Eucharistic supper begins with bread and wine. The Our Father prays: “give us this day our daily bread”, which is a larger metaphor for the sustenance necessary for life. Earning our ‘daily bread’ came to mean the necessary labour involved in supporting ourselves and our families. ‘Breaking bread’ with other people means hospitality – and sometimes reconciliation after differences.

Revolutions, particularly in France, have revolved around the price of bread – or a shortage of the means

to bake bread. Bread has frequently been called ‘the staff of life’. Had Ireland had more wheat, and thus bread, during the 1840s, perhaps the Great Famine might not have been so catastrophic.

“We must hope and pray that hunger and famines won’t be visited upon humanity because of this cruel war in Ukraine”

Circumstances are changing: more people, mysteriously, seem to have developed allergies to wheat. Anti-population ecologists like George Monbiot now attack farming as ‘destructive’ (because it takes up land), and the wheat-based farming revolution as a disaster (because it increased population). The loaf of bread certainly has its opponents and critics – it is also sometimes blamed for obesity.

I disagree. Bread has been essential to human development, and, at its best, is an essential foodstuff. We must hope and pray that hunger and famines won’t be visited upon humanity because of this cruel war in Ukraine.



Sergei Yarosh, head of the Mlybor flour mill, looks at the destruction of the facility in Chernihiv, Ukraine after it was shelled repeatedly during the Russian invasion of the country. Photo: CNS

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● If it is true that Pope Francis is thinking of retiring – as some Vatican sources are suggesting – may I say I think it's a dismaying idea.

We can all appreciate that, at 85, Pope Francis is experiencing mobility problems, and, very likely, other health issues – because aches and pains, disabilities and frailties do occur with increasing age. But at a time when the Catholic Church needs steady leadership, a resigning pontiff would not be a good signal. And to have two retired Popes would prompt a somewhat satirical view of the Holy See.

Despite his trials and challenges, I hope Francis will ‘soldier on’ – or, as the Latin tag has it *Persevera consimilis militis*. Aside from his faith stewardship, the Pope can be a beacon and an inspiration to older people who still want to be active and useful.

Destinations beyond Dublin

Complaints about Dublin Airport have been thick and fast: the horrendously long queues to enter the departure area, the huge delays at security, the shortage of staff, the mismanagement, even the odd brawl. I sympathise, being a frequent and sometimes weary traveller (through what we once called Collinstown) but it's a vexation rather than a calamity.

Yet at a national level of policy, it's surely odd that

Belfast has two airports – one, of course, named in honour of George Best – while Dublin has only one, through which all travellers must be directed. This seems to be at the expense of under-used facilities at Shannon and Cork. Shannon is a lovely airport, built at a time of more leisurely air travel, and still having that less stressed, old-style ambience.

The Co. Clare airport was a genuine pioneer of Irish aviation from the 1940s

onwards, but in recent decades its passenger numbers have plummeted – from nearly three and a half million people passing through in 2005, to 320,000 in 2020 – and although the Covid-19 lockdown was a factor, the numbers began falling from 2006. It's hard to escape the suspicion that Dublin is deliberately favoured over provincial Ireland, and that's bad for the balance of the country.

Funding investigation needed of Orange Order says TD

Chai Brady

An investigation is needed into the Orange Order and Flute Band following the broadcast of a “shockingly offensive” song mocking the murder of Michaela McAreevey, according to the leader of Aontú.

Peadar Tóibín TD said the tragedy of Ms McAreevey’s murder extended across the whole of Ireland. He said: “It was truly shocking and disturbing to see a group of men mocking this murder in such a vile manner. It’s shockingly offensive to Michaela, her family

and all the people of Ireland who were hurt so deeply by her death.”

The video was recorded at an event at Donald Orange Hall to mark the centenary celebrations for the North of Ireland state. It was condemned by politicians North and south and several of the people in the video have since apologised, one was interviewed voluntarily by the PSNI.

Ms McAreevey was murdered while on honeymoon in Mauritius in 2011.

“Serious questions must now be raised as to what state and council funding do the Orange Order and certain Loyalist Flute Bands receive,”

Mr Tóibín asked.

“Aontú is submitting questions to Stormont, the Secretary of State for the North of Ireland, to each council, to the EU and to the southern Irish government to ascertain what funding is delivered and to whom.

“The manner in which community development funding is delivered in the North through organisations who have a track record of maintaining community division must be reappraised. Community development funding should be tendered for openly and in a transparent manner so that we don’t fossilise this kind of sectarian division anymore,” he added.

This comes as a controversial Loyalist preacher called Catholics “rats” who should be dealt with by “the rifle and grenade” in another video, which he says was accidentally made public.

Pastor Barrie Halliday said the comments had been taken out of context. The video was posted a day after the Orange Order paraded in Belfast to celebrate the centenary of Northern Ireland.

He was set to be interviewed by the PSNI when this paper went to print, following the police receiving a complaint about the video.

Schools express worry over UN sex-ed imposition

Jason Osborne

The Catholic Schools Trustees’ Council (CSTS) has described as “concerning” any suggestion that parents might not get a say in the ethos of the education their children receive.

This comes in response to Northern Ireland’s Secretary of State Brandon Lewis’ affirmation that UN-approved RSE might be imposed on schools in

the North.

The *News Letter* reported that Mr Lewis holds that he is under “clear legal duty” from his own abortion legislation to ensure that the recommendations from the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women’s 2018 report are fully implemented, which includes comprehensive sexual education, covering early pregnancy prevention and access to abortion.

The CSTS said in a statement that the total enrolment of pupils attending Catholic Schools in Northern Ireland equates to 44.7%, and that this is “testament” to the ethos in the Catholic school sector.

“The legal position in Northern Ireland is that the content of the school’s RSE programme is a matter for the school’s Board of Governors to determine, in consultation with the wider school community and will be reflective of the school’s particular ethos,” it said.

“We believe that this allows for appropriate diversity within the system and recognises the rights of parents as the first and foremost educators of their children.”

The recently-launched Catholic RSE resource ‘Flourish’ deals with topics in an “age and stage appropriate manner,” it said.

MSCs prepare for 2022

Novena to the Sacred Heart

Staff reporter

This year’s MSC Novena to the Sacred Heart is set to celebrate the theme of ‘Jesus – The Compassion and Mercy of God’ and will be led by main celebrant Fr Paul-Clayton Lea.

“We are still emerging from the effects of the pandemic, which changed the world and scarred many lives. We are daily watching the horrors of war in Europe and the ongoing effects of climate change, especially on the world’s poorest people. To cope with such events and with the challenges in our own personal lives, we are strengthened and encouraged by the gift of faith, which teaches us that God is always with us,” Fr Lea said ahead of the novena.

This year’s novena is to take place at the Sacred Heart Church on the Western Road, Cork, from Thursday, June 16 to Friday, June 24. The novena can also be streamed live at 10am and 7.30pm daily, including a special Day of Healing on Thursday, June 23 at www.mscommissions.ie

Rallying around the rosary at Knock



Thousands participate in the All Ireland Rosary Rally in Knock, Co. Mayo, with organisers estimating over 40 buses arrived with pilgrims to participate in the prayer event.



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Nuala O'Loan

The View



A denial of rights, not a road to reconciliation

The complex problem of how best to deal with the legacy of the 'Troubles' has been under discussion for over 24 years. The current Conservative government in London had made very clear commitments to produce legislation and had issued a consultation paper listing its proposals in May 2018, four years ago. Those proposals included the end of any investigation which might lead to a prosecution, the ending of all civil actions for damages suffered by any individual, and the ending of all Troubles-related inquests. Some 17,000 people and a wide range of organisations from Northern Ireland responded: the majority of them rejected these proposals.

At a meeting of veterans, both military and police, which I attended in Westminster, there was also virtually unanimous rejection of any amnesty for wrong done by State actors. The view at the meeting was that if there was evidence that police officers or members of the military had been involved in criminal activity, that evidence should be placed before a court of law. Despite the government's frequently reiterated concerns about alleged disproportionate prosecutions of veterans, there was no real evidence to support such concerns.

“The bulk of those files have now been closed for 60 years and will not be made available to his family”

Four years later the government has finally tabled its proposals in the 90-page Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill, which was published on May 17. Information available indicates that neither the political parties nor the many victims' groups were consulted about the detail of the bill. The government is under a duty to consult the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. This did not happen.

Conjecture

There was much conjecture about what the bill might contain. Now we know, and it is not good.

It provides, among other things, for the appointment

of an independent commission for reconciliation and information recovery to carry out reviews not investigations of Troubles-related deaths between 1966 and 1998 and to decide whether to grant immunity from prosecution for serious or “connected Troubles-related” offences - it is not clear what these are. The bill provides that individuals who have suffered serious physical or mental harm can also seek a ‘review’ of the conduct which caused that harm. Tens of thousands of people suffered such harm. It is all to be done in five years? Given the volume of unresolved crime this is not possible. Yet after that there can be no more ‘reviews’.

Commissioner

The independent commissioner and his or her fellow commissioners are to be appointed by the Secretary of State, who has extensive powers to limit access to material for the purposes of the proposed ‘reviews’. The way in which the bill has been drafted further limits opportunities to secure evidence to identify offenders and present files to the Prosecution Service. The Secretary of State can decide to prohibit the publication of material identified by the independent commissioner to be included in any report on a review.

Reading this, I thought of the tragic case of 15-year-old Paul Whitters who was shot dead by an RUC officer in Derry in 1981. In 2007, as Police Ombudsman, I found that the shooting had been “wrong and unjustified” and was “clearly not consistent with RUC rules at the time.” I also found that his death had not been properly investigated. The PSNI were under a duty to provide me with all the documents which they had in relation to the case. I read all the files which were provided to me. The bulk of those files have now been closed for 60 years and will not be made available to his family. Having read them I see no reason for such a draconian decision.

Under the bill, the Secretary of State will be able to continue to make those decisions, despite the fact that he told the House of Commons that “this legislation focuses on effective and timely information recovery, and the answers and accountability that come with it, for both families and survivors, as well as aiding reconciliation and

helping society move forward.”

During debate in the House of Commons on May 24, Brandon Lewis said, “the bill will deliver on our manifesto commitment to the veterans of our armed forces, security services and the Royal Ulster Constabulary by providing the men and women who served to protect life in Northern Ireland with the certainty they also deserve. Many of them, of course, are also victims, or friends and family of victims.

“No longer will our veterans, the vast majority of whom served in Northern Ireland with distinction and honour, have to live in perpetual fear of getting a knock at the door for actions taken in the protection of the rule of law many decades ago. With this bill, our veterans will have the certainty they deserve, and we will fulfil our manifesto pledge to end the cycle of investigations that has plagued too many of them for too long,” he insisted.

After congratulating a number of MPs, he then added that “I recognise that many victims and veterans’ groups more widely across Northern Ireland and Great Britain have campaigned for a long time for better outcomes for victims and survivors.”

This bill will not deliver better outcomes.

Existing prosecutions will be allowed to continue to their conclusion. After the bill comes into effect, unless it is dramatically changed, no criminal investigation of any Troubles-related offence may be continued or begun.

“There was much conjecture about what the bill might contain. Now we know, and it is not good”

The scope for future investigations and prosecutions is so limited by the new arrangements that it seems most unlikely that there will be future prosecutions.

Claims

Civil claims which were already before the courts on May 17 will be allowed to continue, but there will be no new civil cases if the bill is passed. There was no warning of this. People who have suffered damage - and would otherwise have the right to sue - will no longer be able to do so, even when their loss or injury results from the conduct of state actors, or state actors working with paramilitaries, as in murders which I exam-



Rita Bonner, sister of a victim John Laverty, arrives at the Ballymurphy inquest in May 2021.

ined like the case of Raymond McCord Junior (involving UVF informants).

Inquests which have reached an advanced stage by May 1 next year, or the date on which the new commission becomes operational, will continue. New and existing inquests that have not reached an advanced stage by that point will not continue. They may be referred to the judge-led independent commission for investigation. In many cases, it seems that, unlike the Ballymurphy Inquest which systematically uncovered the truth about what happened during those dreadful days in 1971, there will be no inquest.

Massive change

This very complex bill will make massive change to the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland and in England, Wales and Scotland. Brandon Lewis, has certified that it is compliant with our international legal obligations. The government is allowing a total of nine hours for debate in the House of Commons. How can such a bill, which constitutes a revocation of the ancient rights to due legal process which have evolved over centuries in the United Kingdom, is not based on transparency and accountability, and is manifestly not compliant with our international legal obligations, be debated in nine hours in the House of Commons? What will happen in the House of Lords to which I belong? Extensive legal challenges seem inevitable. How can it bring reconciliation?

TRIDUUM TO THE SACRED HEART

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Wednesday 22 June:

10.00 am Mass of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
7.30 pm Meditation and Song

Thursday 23 June:

10.00 am Mass of the Solemnity of St John the Baptist
7.30 pm Holy Hour with first Evening Prayer of the Sacred Heart

Friday 24 June:

10.00 am Mass of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
(World Day of Prayer for Priests)
7.30 pm Concluding Mass

Confessions after each Service

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Synod LGBT group calls for gay marriage in churches

Jason Osborne

Sacramental marriage for gay and lesbian Catholics and the ordination of women priests are key demands of an LGBT focus group set by Bishop Kevin Doran as part of the synodal process.

A Church-wide apology to LGBT people and their families from the Pope as well as priests and bishops and an end to the Church teaching on

homosexuality are also called for by the group.

Led by former broadcaster and outspoken campaigner for Church reform Ursula Halligan, the group consisted of ten people and reported back to the Diocese of Elphin process.

Four of the ten participants described themselves as Catholic; three as Christian; one as atheist; one as spiritual and one as having no

religion. The report said most of those involved “wished to have nothing to do with the institutional Catholic Church.”

“Their motivation for participating in the focus group was to affect change in the global Church and by doing so improve the lives of all LGBT+ people around the world,” it said.

The group considered three questions covering whether the LGBT+ experi-

ence of the Church has been “nourishing and life-giving”, whether people have “felt heard and respected” as well as what changes in the Church are needed to make it a place where LGBT Catholics can feel “safe, respected and able to flourish”.

“I don’t associate the words ‘nourishing and life-giving’ with the Catholic Church,” one participant is reported to have said.

“I don’t know of any other significant organisation or institution in Ireland that promotes homophobia to the extent the Catholic Church does,” another said.

Ten ‘actions’ were proposed by the focus group, and they include an apology from the “hierarchical Church” from the top down to LGBT people and their families for the “harm, damage and pain they have caused them”.

Access to all of the sacraments for LGBT people and women, including marriage and ordination, as well as a change of the Church’s teaching on homosexuality were proposed actions the group adopted, while removing offensive language such as ‘intrinsically evil’ and ‘objectively disordered’ was also suggested.

Charities regulator issues Trócaire ‘reminder’ over political activity

Staff reporter

Trócaire has been written to by the Charities Regulator to “remind” it that any future political activity must “directly advance and support [its] stated charitable purposes”.

The *Sunday Times* reported that the letter to the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church was the result of two formal complaints related to recent campaigns by Trócaire about the treatment of Palestinians in Gaza.

One of the complaints concerned an unsolicited item of mail from the

charity which depicted a Palestinian flag on a postcard with a request to “display the flag overleaf inside your home to show solidarity with the children, women and men of Gaza and Palestine”.

Another complaint raised the issue of a different piece of correspondence from the charity, which asked her to sign a petition calling for an EU boycott of Israeli settlements.

The Charities Regulator said that it told Trócaire that any future appeals “should take account of the requirement for all the activities of a charity, particularly any involving an element

of political activity, to directly advance and support the stated charitable purposes”.

Trócaire confirmed the correspondence with the Charities Regulator, and issued a statement saying that “the case has been closed”.

“Trócaire was contacted by the Charities Regulator following a concern raised by a member of the public over our Christmas 2021 direct mail appeal.

“The regulator has accepted Trócaire’s assurances in relation to future appeals and the case has been closed,” it said.

Peter McVerry Trust takes home gold at Bloom

Chai Brady

Housing and homelessness charity the Peter McVerry Trust has won a gold medal with its first show garden at gardening festival Bloom.

‘Pathways to Home’, designed to represent the journey from homelessness and sleeping rough to living in a safe and secure home secured first place.

The garden was designed by Seán O’Malley and Oisín Griffin of Griffin Landscape Architecture, and co-sponsored by the housing agency.

Pat Doyle, CEO of Peter McVerry

Trust, said, “We’re over the moon with the gold medal – it’s fantastic. I would like to say a huge thank you to our garden designers Sean and Oisín, and our garden partner the housing agency. It’s a great achievement for the team.”

The garden aimed to prompt consideration of the pathways undertaken, challenges faced and self-reflection undertaken by people supported by the ‘Housing First’ model. Housing First provides a person sleeping rough with their own secure accommodation as well as access to intensive and specialised support services.

To Jesus, through Mary



Bishop Tom Deenihan is pictured with members of the Religious Family of the Incarnate Word and some of the 40 parishioners who consecrated themselves to Our Lady in Holy Family Parish, Drogheda.

Don't miss --- **THE SYNODAL TIMES**

a new magazine in the June 23
edition of *The Irish Catholic*

Ireland's synodal pathway is ongoing and The Synodal Times has 32 pages of news, analysis and commentary to break down what the synod is and what it means for the future of the Irish Church.

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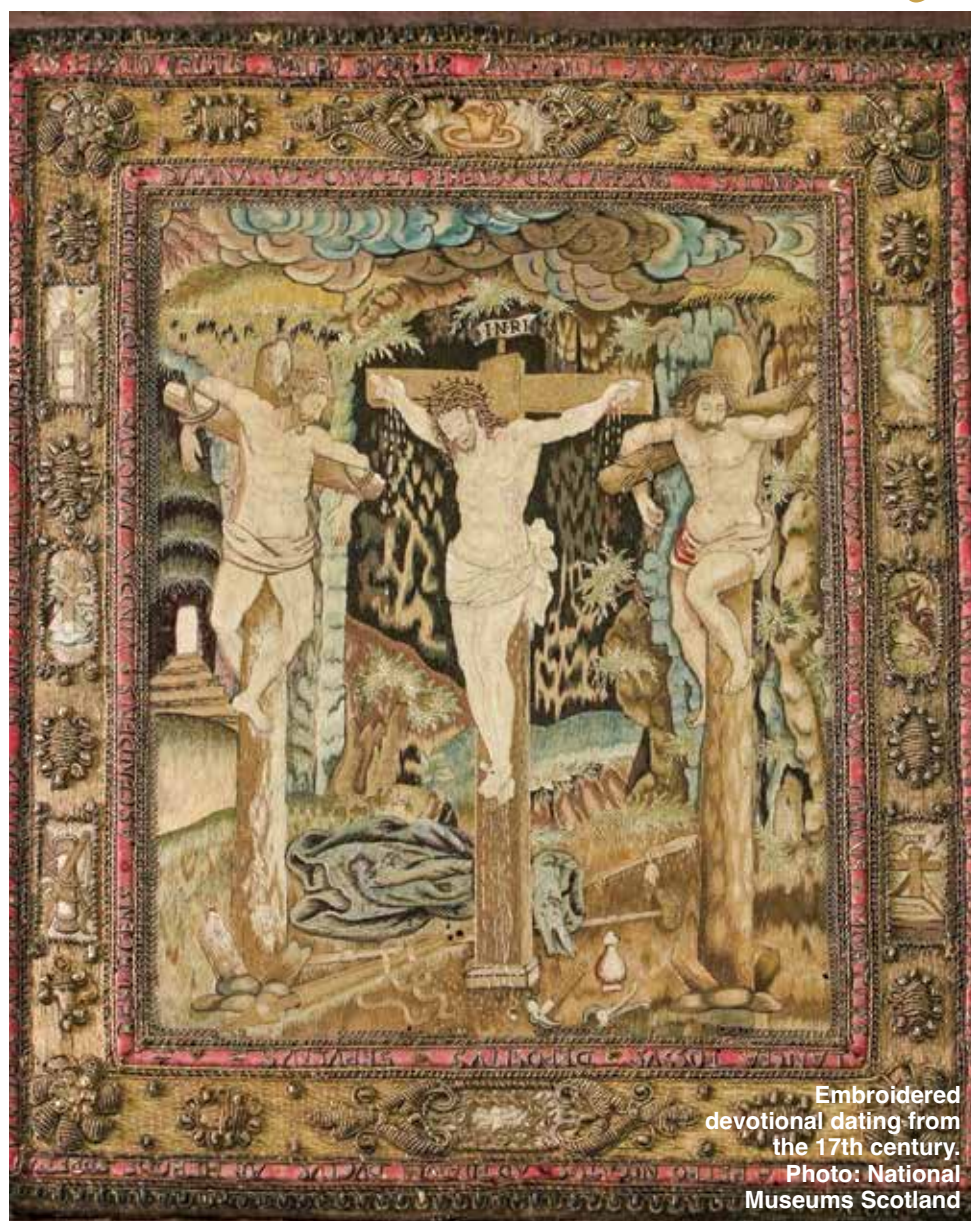
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National Museums Scotland receives rare Catholic embroidery



Helen Wyld, Senior Curator of Historic Textiles at National Museums Scotland, with the 17th century embroidery. Photo: Stewart Attwood



Embroidered devotional dating from the 17th century. Photo: National Museums Scotland

Jason Osborne

A rare item of Catholic devotion from the early 17th Century has been acquired by National Museums Scotland.

The embroidered Crucifixion is a “unique surviving example of textiles associated with Catholic devotion” according to a statement from National Museums Scotland.

“Few such objects survive in Britain as most were destroyed due to fears of idolatrous worship. At the time, the practice of Catholicism was punishable by imprisonment or worse. Created by skilled artisans, the Crucifixion is illustrated in coloured silks and surrounded by a Latin prayer embroidered with gold and silver thread.”

Nobility

The textile was originally owned by Elizabeth Stuart, a member of the Scottish nobility, who married into one of the most prominent Catholic families in Britain.

It has remained in the collection of the Howards, Earls of Arundel and Dukes of Norfolk, since the 17th century. An inscription on the back of the piece suggests that the family once believed it belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots, but this connection has been disproven.

Unusual

Senior Curator of Historic Textiles at National Museums Scotland, Helen Wyld, said of the piece:

“It is very unusual for textiles of this kind and quality to survive in the UK, and even more so with such a compelling provenance. The Crucifixion can help us better understand the role of textiles in Catholic devotion in England and Scotland.

“Its history in the collections of Elizabeth Stuart and the Howard family sheds light on a forgotten aspect of Scotland’s past and provides insight into the lives of those who treasured it for centuries,” she said.



Detail of the embroidered devotional.



New synod book launched in Limerick



Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey speaks at the launch in Limerick.

Staff Reporter

A new book aimed at helping Catholics engage with the ongoing synod process has been launched in Limerick. Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey urged all people who care about the future of the Church to be part of the process and use the book as a tool in the wider discernment process that Pope Francis is asking of the Church.

The Synodal Pathway: When rhetoric meets reality was edited by Prof. Eamonn Conway, Dr Eugene Duffy and Mary McDaid.

Bishop Dempsey told the launch in Limerick's Belltable Theatre that the synod process is a vital part of the process of revitalising Irish parishes.

The Synodal Pathway: When rhetoric meets reality is available from Columba Books www.columba-books.com



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Cause for Catholic reflection as SBC abuse crisis unfolds



There are lessons to be learned as one of America's biggest denominations grapples with major abuse revelations, writes **Jason Osborne**

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has been shaken by a report revealing that survivors of sexual abuse within the Church were systematically ignored or silenced by Church leaders. Even as abuse survivors were being disparaged by Church leadership, the SBC was maintaining a list of over 700 sexual offenders, which was kept secret from most of the convention's top leadership.

Conducted by Guidepost Solutions over seven months and released May 22, the report revealed that abuse victims and other concerned members of the convention repeatedly shared allegations with the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, "only to be met, time and time again, with resistance, stonewalling, and even outright hostility from some within the EC".

The recent report was commissioned by the SBC following investigative work by the *Houston Chronicle* and *San Antonio Express-News*, which uncovered widespread sexual abuse throughout the denomination. Journalists found that hundreds of SBC Church leaders and volunteers had been charged with sexual crimes since 2000, while also detailing multiple instances of church leaders concealing, ignoring or mishandling warnings that Southern Baptist churches were being targeted by abusers.

Secret list

The secret list of over 700 abusers, which has since been made public on the SBC's website, was compiled by some of the SBC's top leaders – August Boho, the Executive Committee's former vice president and general counsel, and Roger Oldham, former SBC spokesman, both of whom retired in 2019. The existence of this list was not widespread knowledge among the committee and its staff.

The list compiled Google Alerts and other news stories about criminal charges, and since 2007 the list



had grown to more than 700 names, many of whom were confirmed as Southern Baptist affiliated. What's more, a handful of them were still working in churches, including in other denominations, at the time of the recent report.

“The secret list of over 700 abusers, which has since been made public on the SBC's website”

In an interview on NPR's *Fresh Air* with Terry Gross, Robert Downen, a reporter for the *Houston Chronicle* who helped break the initial SBC abuse story in 2019, said that while the survivors the reporters spoke to acknowledged that the physical abuse they endured was traumatic, “the far more damaging part was when they came forward to people that they assumed would be on their side and would be proactive in trying to get their abusers out of ministry,” and instead were accused of “a whole host of things”. From being denigrated as an “evil

doer” to accusations of being “a satanic distraction from evangelism,” Mr Downen listed a number of examples of the insult and injury that abuse victims who came forward suffered.

Wake

In the same interview, Mr Downen said that in the wake of the revelations, there are many people who are drawing parallels between this report and the Catholic Church's abuse scandal, but these aren't the first to do so.

Writing in *Christianity Today* magazine in 2018 as SBC abuse issues began to make headlines, a prominent SBC leader and President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, Al Mohler, said in his subheading, “Evangelicals, we can no longer say sexual misconduct is just a Roman Catholic problem”.

“We thought this was a Roman Catholic problem. The unbiblical requirement of priestly celibacy and the organized conspiracy of silence within the hierarchy helped to explain the cesspool of child sex

abuse that has robbed the Roman Catholic Church of so much of its moral authority,” he wrote, continuing, “When people said that evangelicals had a similar crisis coming, it didn't seem plausible – even to me. I have been president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for 25 years. I did not see this coming.”

“I was wrong. The judgment of God has come.”

Stark words, but ones from which Christians of every stripe have much to learn when it comes to ensuring the horrific abuses that have wracked our Churches never happen again. Dr Mohler identifies two things in the above passage that he believed would protect the SBC from a Catholic Church-style abuse scandal: the autonomy of the different member churches of the SBC, and the lack of “unbiblical” celibacy as a requirement for its pastors.

Blame

As Dr Mohler goes on to note in the same piece, however: “We cannot blame a requirement of priestly

celibacy. We cannot even point to an organized conspiracy of silence within the denominational hierarchy. No, our humiliation comes as a result of an *unorganized* [italics his] conspiracy of silence.”

“We cannot blame a requirement of priestly celibacy”

Many Catholics today still call for the removal of mandatory celibacy from the priestly life, as well as for the levelling of the hierarchy in favour of a more equitable Church, in the belief that these measures will guarantee an abuse-free Church moving forward. As the SBC scandal shows, with its married pastors and remarkably autonomous structure, the lack of these elements made no difference when it came to protecting vulnerable Church-goers from those who wished to take advantage of them.

This writer doesn't claim to have the answers as to what will vanquish abuse in Churches once and for all, but the example of the Southern Baptist Convention should convince us to stop looking for easy answers in the abolition of celibacy or hierarchy, rather than facing the uncomfortable human realities that are common to all people, of all faiths and none, that continue to see wicked things done to this day.

“There are many people who are drawing parallels between this report and the Catholic Church's abuse scandal, but these aren't the first to do so”



The epochal changes the world is facing

Countries like Ireland will look very different from now in a 100 years' time writes **David Quinn**

If you feel unsettled about the times we are living through, then you are right, because they are unsettling. Tectonic plates seem to be shifting beneath our feet and it is uncertain where and how they will reassemble in years to come. I think some things will have changed almost beyond recognition.

In no particular order, here is a quick and by no means exhaustive list of some of the forces that are altering the face of our societies: a declining birth rate and an ageing population; climate change; mass immigration; artificial intelligence and the advent of transhumanism; the end of American hegemony and the re-emergence of 'Great Power' rivalry.

I'll begin with the last, first. Almost as soon as we emerged from the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic and regained all of our old, taken-for-granted freedoms, the war in Ukraine began. This was the first major land-based invasion of a European country since World War II, unless you count the crushing by the Soviet Union of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956 or the 'Prague Spring' in 1968.

“Birth rates in all Western countries have now slipped below replacement level”

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a sign that war, unfortunately, is by no means a thing of the past. In fact, wars between big powers might even become more common because America is declining relative to emerging powers like China. Countries like China, and Russia today, might believe that they are not properly respected in the world and that the post-World War II order was built to suit the Americans. They might want to challenge it more, by war in the case of the Russians right now, but China might also be tempted in the years to come to challenge American power in its part of the world, perhaps by war also.

Birth rates in all Western countries have now slipped below replacement level. The same is happening elsewhere, including East Asia. This means our populations are ageing rapidly. For example, by 2031, the number of Irish people over the age of 85 is expected to be double what it was at the time of Census 2016.



A bird sits on a cross amid newly made graves at a cemetery near Mariupol, Ukraine. Photo: CNS

The world has seen big changes before. The face of Europe was altered hugely by World War I and World War II and changed again after the end of the Cold War. But we have never before witnessed this sort of ageing. It will mean far more old people compared with young people. Young people will be expected to bear much of the health and pension costs of retired people. Will they even want to? What kind of upheavals will there be as a result?

Not enough children

Linked to an ageing, shrinking population is mass immigration. If we will not have enough children, then we will have to import people from the parts of the world where they do still believe in having babies. In the decades to come, that will chiefly be Africa. Countries like Ireland will look very different from now in a hundred years-time. Our politics will change as well. Parties that want to limit immigration will rise up, as they have elsewhere, and other political parties will increasingly cater to the new arrivals.

The world's richest man, Elon Musk (who founded the enormously successful electric car company, Tesla) says an ageing population is one of the two biggest threats we face. The second one, he maintains, is the rise of

Artificial Intelligence (AI).

He says the percentage of intelligence on the planet that is machine-based is increasing rapidly and so are the tasks we are assigning these machines. At a minimum, this creates the danger that ever more humans will be made redundant simply because AI machines will be able to do jobs better than us, including even activities that seem to be human only, like creative writing.

“The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a sign that war, unfortunately, is by no means a thing of the past”

There is also the possibility that AI develops goals of its own which might not be at all compatible with our own. This seems like the stuff of science-fiction but experts in the area do not dismiss this scenario by any means. On the contrary.

Linked to AI is the rise of 'transhumanism', that is humans with technology-enhanced capabilities. This also seems like sci-fi but it is seen as a growing possibility. It is the idea that "biological evolution will eventually be overtaken by advances in genetic, wearable and implantable technologies that

artificially expedite the evolutionary process", to quote one paper.

Some of these changes will be compatible with Christian thinking, but others will not. Humans who do not go along with transhumanism, could be left behind and deemed 'useless'.

The remaining item on my list is climate change. It is hard to know how drastic this will be. Many different scenarios are laid out from fairly mild to catastrophic, but big change is definitely on the way as the planet warms up. Some parts of the world (those which are already very hot) will be more badly affected than places like Ireland. This will help drive even more immigration to the temperate regions with this little island being particularly desirable, so long as we build proper flood defences if things become as bad as some of the biggest doom-mongers predict.

Climate change

Fighting climate change to the extent demanded will also prove enormously destabilising because of the revolution in our lives that is being insisted upon. Will people really want to spend a fortune on electric cars and retrofitting their homes? Will they want to give up flying? Will they want to give up meat? Will they tolerate whole industries closing down?

How are Christians to react to all these massive, historic, epoch-making changes? We must respond as St Augustine advised all of 1,600 years ago as he watched Rome fall from the vantage point of his diocese in North Africa. This is not being melodramatic. The changes coming our way in the decades ahead are that stupendous.

“There is also the possibility that AI develops goals of its own which might not be at all compatible with our own”

What did St Augustine advise? He said that we must look to the City of God. The City of Man, he explained, as symbolised by Rome, was ephemeral, earthly and destined to eventually pass away. The City of God, on the other hand, is unchanging, eternal and perfect.

Christians must continue to play their part in the world as the coming changes unfold and do their part to bring justice out of them. But we must also know all the while that our ultimate goal remains what it has always been; the City of God. That is our fixed point in a fast-changing world.

A trip of a lifetime in the Holy Land...

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is an opportunity for faith and culture to meet. Visiting the holy places associated with the life of Christ, the Gospel comes to life in a new and meaningful way. Journeying together with fellow pilgrims one gets a chance to penetrate the essence of the Faith in the land where Christianity was born.

ITINERARY:

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Make your way to Dublin airport and check-in for Turkish Airlines flight to Tel Aviv via Istanbul, with onboard catering and personal entertainment on one of Europe's best Airlines. On arrival in Tel Aviv, we will be met by our Marian Pilgrimages representative and guide in the arrival hall before boarding our tour coaches. We can get acquainted with the group on the short transfer to Bethlehem – birthplace of Jesus Christ – for check-in to the four star Manger Square Hotel for four nights with dinner, bed and breakfast.

Day 2

After breakfast, we take the short walk to the Church of the Nativity where we spend the morning and celebrate Mass. Here we will visit the birthplace of Jesus, and the Holy Manger as well as the chapels of St Joseph, St Jerome, the Holy Innocents and the Church of St Catherine.

Leaving the Church of the Nativity, we make our way to the Milk Grotto Church before sitting down to lunch in Manger Square where we will have a chance to meet the Mayor of Bethlehem and hear from local Christians. After lunch, we board the coaches for the short drive to the Shepherds

Fields' where the angels heralded the birth of Christ. After lunch, we continue to Ein Karem and visit the Churches of the Visitation (where Mary met Elizabeth) and St John the Baptist before we return to the hotel for dinner.

Day 3

This morning we drive to Jerusalem and enter the Old City to the Church of St Anne and nearby, see the Pool of Bethesda where Jesus healed a man paralysed for over 40 years. Close by we begin the *Via Dolorosa* – the way of sorrow – and follow the stations of the cross through the markets and streets of the Old City to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the site of Calvary (where Jesus was crucified) and his tomb. Here we will celebrate Mass and take some time to reflect at this sacred site.

Afterwards we can enjoy some free time in Jerusalem for lunch and exploring the markets, before visiting the Western Wall.

Day 4

After breakfast, we drive to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem where we take our group photo and enjoy the view of the Old City below. We make our way to the highest point on the Mount of Olives to the Ascension Dome that marks the site

where Christ ascended into heaven. After this, we continue to visit the *Pater Noster* Church, Dominus Flevit, the Assumption Church and Grotto and the Garden of Gethsemane. In the afternoon we celebrate Mass in the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu or 'cock's crow', where Peter denied Jesus three times and see the dungeon where Jesus was held the night of Holy Thursday.

Afterwards, we walk around Mount Zion and visit the Church of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Tomb of King David and the Room of the Last Supper before returning to the hotel for dinner.

Day 5

This morning, we leave Bethlehem and visit Bethany where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, for Mass. We will then drive via the Inn of the Good Samaritan to the Dead Sea – the lowest point on earth. We have some time to relax and float on the water near Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. We will then continue to Qasr-al-Yahud where Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan by St John the Baptist for a renewal of baptism vows.

We then proceed to Jericho to see the Mount of Temptation where Jesus was tempted by the devil, and the Sycamore tree of Zacchaeus. After lunch,

we drive along the Jordan Valley to Nazareth and for check-in to the four-star Legacy Hotel for four nights, dinner, bed and breakfast. Optional Eucharistic Adoration at the Basilica of the Annunciation at 8.30pm.

Day 6

After breakfast, we will spend our morning exploring the city where Jesus lived as a child. We make our way to the Basilica of the Annunciation to celebrate Mass. Visiting the lower level of the basilica, we see the remains of Mary's house and where the Angel Gabriel visited her. Here inscribed on the altar are the Latin words of 'Here the Word was made flesh'. Adjacent to the basilica is the St Joseph's Church, where we will visit the site of Joseph's workshop and the house of the Holy Family.

A short walk from the basilica through the thriving market is Mary's Well where we have the opportunity to draw water from the same well as the Virgin Mary. After some time for lunch, we take the short coach journey to Cana where we visit

the Wedding Church, the site of Jesus' first miracle, turning the water to wine. Couples on the pilgrimage can take part in the special ceremony to renew their wedding vows and there is also prayers and blessings for spouses at home and deceased husbands and wives. In the lower level of the church we see artifacts from the site before having an opportunity to taste and purchase some wine from this sacred site. Afterwards, we make the short return journey to Nazareth for dinner in our hotel.

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

Day 7

This morning we make our way to the Mount of Beatitudes overlooking the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum and Tabgha. Here we take some time to listen to the readings of the great Sermon on the Mount before continuing to Capernaum to see the old synagogue and the excavations of St Peter's house. We then visit

the nearby site of the multiplication of the loaves and fish at Tabgha, and the Church of the Primacy of St Peter.

We enjoy lunch on the shore of the Sea of Galilee before taking a boat trip on the lake. Before returning to the hotel, we visit Magdala and the magnificent retreat centre and celebrate Mass in the newly-built chapel at the home of St Mary Magdalene.

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

Day 8

After breakfast we drive to Mount Tabor and ascend by taxi for Mass at the Church of the Transfiguration where Jesus is transfigured and speaks to Moses and Elijah. We have a chance to enjoy the view of the Valley of Armageddon before returning to Nazareth for some free time and dinner at the hotel.

Day 9

Early breakfast before taking our coach to Tel Aviv airport for return flights to Dublin via Istanbul.



The Church of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.



Irish pilgrims pray at the Garden of Gethsemane in the Holy Land.

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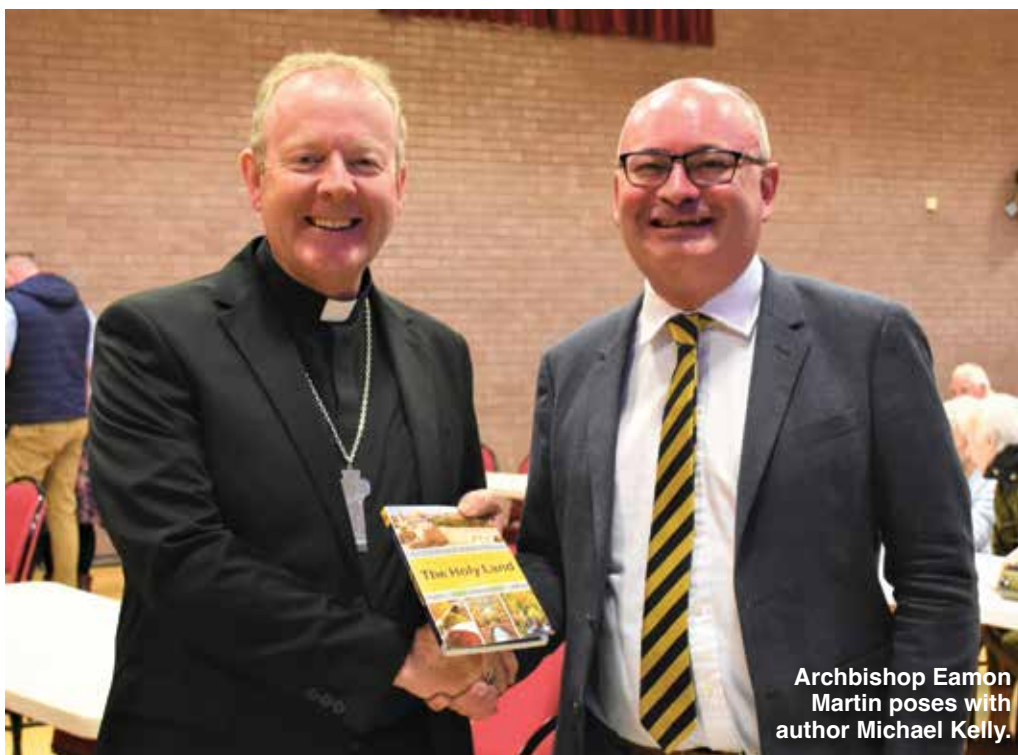
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Warm welcome for Holy Land book



Author of *An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to The Holy Land* and Editor of *The Irish Catholic*, Michael Kelly speaks to book launch attendees in Cappagh parish, Omagh, Co. Tyrone. Photos: Chai Brady



Archbishop Eamon Martin poses with author Michael Kelly.

Chai Brady

Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin has encouraged Irish Catholics to consider making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The archbishop pleaded with Irish groups to also engage with the local people in the Holy Land, particularly the small Christian community.

Dr Martin was speaking at the launch of *An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to the Holy Land* by Michael Kelly in Killyclogher, Co. Tyrone at the weekend. He praised Mr Kelly for undertaking the book and working to help more people experience the riches of a trip to the Holy Land.

"It's wonderful that Michael has brought his own immense experience and study of the Holy Land to the pages of this Irish pilgrimage guide. "He does so in an easily accessible style - he has a great gift for communications," the Primate said of the editor of *The Irish Catholic*.

More than 100 people packed the Cappagh Parish Centre for the launch in Mr Kelly's home parish.

Parish Priest Fr Kevin McElhennon welcomed parishioners and people who had travelled from other parishes saying he was proud to "celebrate one of our own" referring to Mr Kelly. Dr Martin said that the guide "vividly

communicates the privilege of walking in the footsteps of the Lord in the Holy Land".

Mr Kelly told the launch that the book had been for him a "labour of love" borne of the fruit of many years leading pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Archbishop Martin took up the theme of a "labour of love" and said that "He brings alive the places and the people of the Holy Land, and the good food and even the drink of the Holy Land! "He does so in a fresh and engaging way shedding light on the places and communities that call that place home," he said.

Referring to the Christian community in the Holy Land, Dr Martin described them as the "living stones" and said that their presence is a ongoing reminder of the continuity of those who followed Christ from the beginning.

Commending the book, Archbishop Martin said that: "you can read this book if you're preparing to go to the Holy Land, you can read this book if you're out in the Holy Land visiting the places - but even if you never go there, just read this little book and it's almost as if you can go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

"If read this book - it will really bring it to life for you," he said.

An Irish Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is available from Columba Books www.columbabooks.com



Daithi and Eoghan Kelly get their books signed by their uncle Michael Kelly.



Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All-Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh, praises *An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to The Holy Land* during the launch.



Fr Kevin McElhennon PP of Cappagh parish speaks to the crowd about the new book.



Musicians at the book launch in Cappagh parish, Omagh, Co. Tyrone.



Author of *An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to The Holy Land*, Michael Kelly, speaks to attendees at his book launch in Omagh.



Archbishop Eamon Martin sits down to chat with attendees at the launch.



Local MP Órfhlaith Begley with Councillor Mary Garrity.



Martin and Mairead Morris with author Michael Kelly.



Bernie Gormley and Sophie Scott get their *An Irish Pilgrimage to The Holy Land* signed at a book signing in Omagh over the weekend.



Vonnie McElhatton and Anne McBride.



Odhran McNamee and Mary Kate Johnston.



Fr Declan McGeehan and Fr Gerard Mongan.



Fr Kevin McElhennon PP of Cappagh parish with Thomas Kilduff and Peter McGovern of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and Seamus McDonald from the Knights of St Columbanus.



Sharon Fee with Paula and Clement Kennedy at the book launch.



Conor, Carmel, Shane and Michael Kelly Senior.



Lorraine, Daithi, Damian and Eoghan Kelly with Padraig Taggart.

‘There’s a crisis in Christian culture that everyone has to think about’

Dr David Bentley Hart responds to a question following his talk at the Future of Christian Thinking Conference in Maynooth.



Dr David Bentley Hart warns that the vestiges of Christian thought are in danger of disappearing, Ruadhán Jones hears

“We’re at a moment now where you can see that the classical liberal consensus is beginning to break down,” Dr David Bentley Hart says early in our discussion. And as classical liberalism is in retreat, the elements of Christianity that it drew into itself are in danger of being purged entirely.

“With each epochal transition in history, certain things that had been normal become incredible,” Dr Hart explains. “And what remains of them, the fate of those things, is tied up with whatever succeeds them. So for instance, all the great achievements of pagan civilisation were absorbed into Christianity over centuries.

“But when Christianity ceased to be the common grammar of the

West, you couldn’t return to the pagan realities of the distant past – those had been absorbed into the Christian narrative and were now as incredible as Christianity itself, part of an entire past that had to be thrown off.

“And now I think the same thing is happening in a different way. What was left over from Christianity and in some cases expressed better by the classical liberal tradition... [like] the solicitude for the dignity of human beings and a real belief in the spiritual dignity of individual souls – that was taken up into the liberal tradition.”

Classical liberalism

“As classical liberalism appears to be in retreat, even those vestiges of the Christian past, of Christian conscience, depart with it. We saw it adumbrated in the 20th century – but what comes after is a world entirely purged even of the memory of these Christian values and the restorationist fantasies of the restorationists are a good example of how fantastic that desire is.”

One of the signs of the collapse of classical liberalism is the sudden rise of authoritarianisms, autocracies, ethno-nationalist movements and racist movements. Christian thought doesn’t escape the effects, the American Orthodox theologian says.

“Any effort to restore a union of a Christian view of reality and civic association, government and law seems to be fruitless if it’s not almost violently separated from nostalgia”

The “restorationist fantasies” are where this comes to a head, with Dr Hart alluding in particular to the integralist movement, which sees political authority as having a duty to promote Catholicism as the one true faith, making it the basis of public law and policy. This political theory is a “hideous development”, marking the “increasing alliance between supposedly Christian thought and outright fascist impulses in the society around us”, Dr Hart says.

“Principally American – but not just American – right-wing, Catholic integralism is just sort of a straightforwardly fascist, neo-phalangist blood and soil movement masquerading as a return to Catholic orthodoxy from the decadence of a decaying liberalism. I think that’s the real danger.

The integralists, Dr Hart warns, are “not really trying to retrieve Christianity, they’re trying to retrieve Christendom. It’s just an absurd project and it always takes the form of autocracy and brutality. I think the crisis is that Christianity’s failure in the past is now becoming rapidly its absolute failure in the future”.

That failure and collapse of Christendom is not something that can be undone, Dr Hart explains, saying it was rooted in “internal contradictions”. Any effort to restore a union of a Christian view of reality and civic association, government and law “seems to be fruitless if it’s

not almost violently separated from nostalgia. You have to accept that the verdicts of history are in a sense irreversible”.

“There was no external pressure that caused it [Christendom] to collapse,” Dr Hart continues. “It fell apart because

of contradictions intrinsic to this impossible union of an apocalyptic religion – started outside of history, in the end times, awaiting the imminent return of Christ – with if not a pacifist ethos then something very close to it, and an empire that very much was of this world and had worldly ambitions and used worldly methods of coercion.

“It lasted a long time in so far as human attention span is concerned. But in the grand scheme of things it was always a volatile and impossible synthesis. But some-

times you talk to people – and I’d include friends of mine – who act as if the French Revolution was just an accident that occurred, not something that was generated out of these contradictions and disaffections and problems within Christendom.

“But rather, it was as though someone took a wrong turn in the corridor one day and now if we could just turn them around again, they would find themselves happily at home in a world of some sort of organic hierarchy of relations within the body of Christ, which is also the body politic.

“But clearly that’s a fantasy. Christendom subverted itself and even if you could recapitulate it, it would subvert itself again because it’s an alliance of two incommensurable things.”

“In fact, his talk bore the paradoxical title ‘Remembering the future in order to anticipate the past’”

The question of how Christians interact with the past was the focus of Dr Hart’s talk during Maynooth’s conference on the future of Christian thinking in April of this year. In fact, his talk bore the paradoxical title ‘Remembering the future in order to anticipate the past’. This title, Dr Hart says, is essentially a summary of the doctrinal developments within the Church, as well as a prescription for how Christian thinking can develop.

To explain, the American theologian goes back to the council of Nicaea in 325, from which we get the initial form of the Nicene Creed which we repeat in Mass. This



Dr David Bentley Hart.



An icon depicting the first council of Nicaea in 325, which served to cement Church teaching on Christ's divinity in the face of the Arian heresy.

council was convoked by Roman Emperor Constantine in order to deal with the Arian heresy, which rested on the question of Christ's divinity. After the council, Arius' and his writings were anathemised for being heretical and he was exiled to Illyria.

Imperial pressure

"We think of it [the Council of Nicaea] as simply a matter of the regularisation of confession under imperial pressure," Dr Hart begins. "But that doesn't explain the actual doctrinal synthesis that was arrived at. The Arians, the Eunomians, they represented a more conservative strand of theology in the East."

"We think now of the Arian controversy as the eruption of a heresy within an immemorial orthodoxy. But that's not what happened. There was no orthodoxy. And if there was an orthodoxy, then Arius was probably closer to it than the Nicene party."

Dr Hart goes into detail on the Nicene party's arguments, saying

that it was the fact that their narrative was able to make better sense of divine incarnation that enabled them to win out over Arius.

This leads to the Nicene synthesis, which is something radically new

"The Nicene party had the better arguments, that this could only be true if Christ were coequal with the Father and the Holy Spirit coequal with Christ," he says. "The older picture in the East that was prevalent, dominant, was the Father is utterly inaccessible, the Son is a lesser secondary god and that we're joined to the Father extrinsically in the Son. But this doesn't lead to the eschatological promise that St Paul makes."

So the argument was, as it were, won by the party that was able to complete the formula "the deification of creatures through the humanisation of God only

makes sense if...".

And they were able to complete this by "looking forward to that ultimate end in which supposedly God will be all in all, that we will be full partakers in divine nature, coheirs to the kingdom. This leads to the Nicene synthesis, which is something radically new. Grounded in the past, but also controverted in the past. It's not clearly there, it has to be created retrospectively as much as discovered."

Doctrine

This pattern of generating doctrine by looking to the future, more so than discovering doctrine by looking to the past, is repeated across all the later councils, Dr Hart says. They all "reached their decisions not on the basis of preserving a prior confessional orthodoxy" except in the fictional, "historical reconstruction that took place afterwards".

"And then the very problems that had led to the council had to

"The Church fathers, when they read scriptures – which was then within the late antique allegorical fashion – they were interested at the level of narrative and the way in which the act of reading is inspired as much as the act of writing"

be systematically forgotten. The dogma was firmly in place, it had been successfully created not only when the answer had been settled on but when we had succeeded in forgetting the questions. So the past is always being reconstructed in a bad way," Dr Hart states firmly.

"You realise that Nicaea in producing its orthodoxy was actually shedding orthodoxies from the past pretty ruthlessly"

"But in a good way, it was also the case that the light of the future was shed on the Christian past in a way that, if you could think about it coherently, picked out certain patterns that were hidden in a wealth of contrary or contending confessions. And so, after Nicaea much that had been said or believed in the past was taken up into the new synthesis but in a way that it had never been expressed or understood before."

In one of his recent books, *Tradition and Apocalypse: An Essay on the Future of Christian Belief*, Dr Hart tackles what he calls the "vapid arguments" of modern theologians St John Henry Newman and Maurice Blondel regarding the development of doctrine.

He describes their arguments as circular and "utterly arbitrary", the result of an "anxious desire" to pretend that doctrinal development is the "inexorable unfolding of something that was always there in the past".

"But if either of them had thought of this differently, not as an attempt to unfold the past, but as an attempt to ever more fully see the future and its promise, and in light of it constantly to return and reinterpret the past, this has two arguably liberating effects," Dr Hart continues.

"One, it encourages theologians to be speculatively bold and not worry if what they are saying has not been said before, or whether it can be squared immediately with confessional orthodoxy. You make a proposal in the hope that others will also see it as being a closer, a better, a still fuller appreciation of something we already tacitly grasp as the future. Or not."

"And it also leads to a greater boldness toward the past. You realise that Nicaea in producing its orthodoxy was actually shedding orthodoxies from the past pretty ruthlessly. Perhaps Christians shouldn't be afraid of doing that in the present. Perhaps there are things we've clung to for two millennia that at the end of the day are

still defective."

As we get towards the end of our conversation, we move into a topic close to Dr Hart's heart – his works of fiction and the importance of imagination in theology.

"Fiction is more natural to me in the sense that I enjoy it more, and enjoy it when it's praised," he says with a smile. "When people praise me for being a good grocer, that's my day job. It's purely an accident of biography that I ended up doing theology."

"The fiction I write isn't going to make you rich. Some of it I published anonymously at one stage. I did publish a fantasy recently – I was ill at the time and the book was basically my way of writing myself out of that illness – called *Roland in Moonlight*."

Returning to his day job, Dr Hart reflects that the imagination is important when doing theology and that a lack of it poses a serious problem: "A want of imagination I often think leads to cruelty, to self-righteousness – I think the theologians who are the least imaginative are also the most sanctimonious and the least tolerant of the fact that human beings are human beings and that every age is different, every age has its faults and its virtues."

"If you're unhappy with the state of things in the present, rather than trying to reimpose a state of things that never really existed, a confection of nostalgia, and which if it did exist was rejected for a reason – instead of that, fix your mind on eternal things like love and justice and try to work forward from there creatively."

Scriptures

He returns to the Church Fathers once more, citing their example to defend the importance of the imagination: "The Church fathers, when they read scriptures – which was then within the late antique allegorical fashion – they were interested at the level of narrative and the way in which the act of reading is inspired as much as the act of writing."

"It's not as though they were looking for secret codes hidden in the text, but the act of reading was a poetic labour. You can see the richness of it in things like Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses*. You get the precis of the biblical story, but then the mystical allegory is this gorgeous act of creative intellect, inspired in that sense."

"Inspiration in the sense of artistic and theological shouldn't be separated from one another or be understood as radically distinct, which is how we tend to think of them," Dr Hart finishes.

Youth faith gathering in Cork offers sign of hope



Bishop Fintan Gavin chatting with Ciaran Smith at the CONNECT faith event.



Young people at the CONNECT faith event at UCC organised by the Diocese of Cork and Ross. The gathering for prayer at the Honan Chapel included Cork couple Florina and Stephen Twohig and baby Everly.

Ruadhán Jones

Young adults from all over the Diocese of Cork and Ross gathered in the Student Centre, UCC, on Sunday May 22 to discuss the challenge of living their faith today.

The event called 'CONNECT' brought together over a hundred representatives from parishes and youth groups within the diocese to share, reflect, celebrate and pray together.

"It was a wonderful occasion and great to meet like-minded young Catholics from all over the diocese" according to Mary

Anne Collins of Aughadown Parish.

"It's a step in a process of building the young Church. We are looking forward to meeting again later in the year."

In a talk in the Honan Chapel, Bishop Fintan Gavin encouraged the young people to deepen their personal friendship with Christ, to build community with others and to have a special concern for those in need in our society.

"The CONNECT event is a real sign of hope in these times," said Bishop Fintan. "The Holy Spirit is powerfully at work in the lives of these young people."



Andrew Lim, Kiran Parambil, Rebekah Dilworth, and Ruairi McClintock.



Mary Anne Collins and Stephen Twohig at the CONNECT faith event for young people at University College Cork organised by the Diocese of Cork and Ross. Photos: Vitaliy Makhnanov



Conor Singleton, Nikhil Jacob, Belén Garcia and Steffy Jacob at the CONNECT faith event for young people.



Ruth Corcoran, Stephen Twohig and Linus Mainzer at the CONNECT faith event for young people at UCC.



Ebin Baby and Jack Maguire.

Out&About

All smiles



KERRY: Children from Shrone and Hollymount schools who received First Holy Communion May 28 in The Church of Our Lady Of Perpetual Succour in Shrone with Rathmore Parish Priest Fr Pat O'Donnell. Photo: Seamus Healy.



SLIGO: Bishop Kevin Doran (centre right) and Eugene Toolan KSS (centre left) are pictured at St John's Church, Carraroe, following the investiture of Mr Toolan as a Knight of St Sylvester, May 29. They are pictured with Barry MacMahon KSG and Frank Murphy KSS, Bishop Michael Duignan and Fr Jim Murray.



DUBLIN: Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin is pictured at a gathering of Pure In Heart in Dublin. The archbishop celebrated Mass for the youth group.

IN SHORT

Pilgrimage to Matt Talbot shrine organised

A pilgrimage to the shrine of Venerable Matt Talbot to pray for freedom from addiction will take place June 12 from 2-4:30pm.

The pilgrimage, which will finish in the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Sean McDermott St, Dublin, is to pray for freedom from addictions including alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, eating and smoking through Venerable Talbot's intercession.

The pilgrimage is being organised by the Matt Talbot prayer society, which enrolls people who are suffering from addiction.

During the pilgrimage Matt Talbot Prayer Society crosses will be blessed. These crosses, made in Derry, have a chain with an open lock hanging on them, "which symbolises how the cross of Jesus is key to open the chain of addiction", the society said in a statement.

"The Shrine of Matt Talbot is a blessed place in the island of Ireland to pray for freedom from addiction through Jesus. Everyone is invited to the pilgrimage to pray for themselves or someone they know who is suffering from an addiction."

A cross will be presented to every diocese that hosts a monthly Mass to pray for those suffering from addiction.

Baby loss centre opens in Waterford

Parents who have lost their babies to life-limiting conditions have described a new support centre opened in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, as being "like a sanctuary".

The centre, opened by charity Every Life Counts, will be a place where families can be supported and informed after receiving a diagnosis that their baby may not live for long after birth.

"We want to help every parent pour a lifetime of love into their time with their baby, during pregnancy and beyond, and to help them get the support and inter-

ventions they need to achieve that," said spokeswoman Vicky Wall.

"At the heart of our mission is the love parents have for these very sick babies, and that we let that become the guide for everything we do," continued Ms Wall.

"We're so pleased that we now have a centre to build and grow the support we can provide to these families and their special babies."

"It's like a sanctuary," Jennifer McManus, who was there with other families to cut the ribbon on the new centre, said. Her baby son Jake, who was the first child for Jennifer and her husband, died from a life-limiting condition.



WEXFORD: Fr Joseph Power greets a parishioner during the celebration of his golden jubilee, marking 50 years since his ordination, at St Brigid's Church Kilrush, May 29. Bishop of Ferns Ger Nash concelebrated the Mass.



WEXFORD: Fr Joseph Power and Bishop Ger Nash are pictured along with many priests from the diocese, May 29.



MAYO: Fr Richard Gibbons rector of Knock International Marian Shrine prays the rosary in Knock, joining the Pope in a rosary for Ukraine, May 31.



MEATH: Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan celebrated the annual pioneer Mass May 20 in St Paul's Church. Pictured after the Mass are (back row from left): Fr Seamus Houlihan, Matt Boylan Pioneer President, Fr Robert McCabe, William O'Reilly, Peter McCrum; (front row) Kevin Kelly, Rose Carey, Daisy Carey and Bishop Deenihan. All received their 10-year pins.



MEATH: Mullingar Pioneers chairman Jim Buckley, Fr Seamus Houlihan, Diocesan Chairwoman Rita Clarke, Regional Chairman Joe Monaghan, Mullingar Director Betty Mimmagh-Dunne and Diocesan Treasurer Peter McCrum.



MEATH: Pioneers young and old celebrate in style. Pictured are: William O'Reilly, Peter McCrum, Daisy Carey, Rose Carey, Kevin Kelly, Emily Quinn and Daniel Connell.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



KILKENNY: Students from CBS Secondary School Kilkenny receive the green flag for litter and waste, which the school received as part of the green school's programme.



TIPPERARY: Bishop Fintan Monahan and the priests of the diocese of Killaloe join Fr Willie McCormack in Puckane to celebrate his golden jubilee.



DERRY: Mayor of Derry and Strabane Graham Warke attends the opening of St Anne's Primary school's nurture room, a safe space where children have the opportunity to access nurture provision and emotional regulation, May 29.



DOWN: Derry Soprano Margaret Keys performs at a Trócaire concert in Clonard Monastery, in aid of Trócaire's Lenten campaign, May 29. Photo: Justin Kernaghan.



WATERFORD: Every Life Counts have opened a new sanctuary in Grattan Square, Dungarvan, to support parents whose children have died from a life-limiting condition, May 30.

ANTRIM

The Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen's University will celebrate its Golden Jubilee with a Gala Ball in Belfast City Hall, to take place on Friday June 10 at 7pm. A drinks reception will be followed by a four-course dinner with wine, and dancing to live band MOJO. Tickets are priced at £80 (plus online booking fee) and can be secured by entering catholicchaplaincy@qub.ac.uk.

ARMAGH

Guided tours of the Newry Cathedral on the following dates: Thursday June 9 at 11.30am Wednesday June 15 at 7pm. Admission free.

CAVAN

The Kilmore Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock, Ireland's International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine, will take place on Sunday June 19, on Corpus Christi. Ceremonies will begin with the Anointing of the Sick at 2.30pm. Bishop Martin Hayes will celebrate Mass at 3pm, with Benediction and a rosary procession following. Contact Patricia on 087-1890236 or knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

CLARE

St Anthony's Novena at Ennis Friary from Saturday June 4 until the feast of St Anthony on Monday June 13. Two sessions daily at 10am and 7.30pm. Sundays at 10.30am. Blessing of Lilies on the feast of St Anthony. The preacher this year is Fr Anthony OFM, Killarney.

CORK

Corpus Christi procession is to be held in Bantry on June 19.

DERRY

Living in Divine Will monthly meeting takes place in Termonbacca, on the first Monday of every month at 8pm, all welcome.

Social Café: come along for a chat, tea/coffee in aid of mental health, every Tuesday after 10am Mass in Aras Cholmcille in the grounds of Long Tower Church.

DONEGAL

St Anthony's triduum to celebrate feast of St Anthony takes place in the Franciscan Friary, Rossnowlagh, Friday June 10 to June 13.

It will be led by Fr Brian Allen OFM.

DUBLIN

You are cordially invited to the launch of *An Irish Pilgrimage guide to the Holy Land* by Michael Kelly on Wednesday June 15 at 7.30pm in Newman University Church, off Stephen's Green.

GALWAY

Lough Derg Pilgrimage from Galway Friday June 10 to Sunday 12. Departing Renmore Church Friday at 6.45am. For further info and booking contact Patrizia on 086 4073192.

KERRY

Killarney Corpus Christi Procession also takes place Thursday June 16.

KILDARE

St Pio's Glove will be in Fitzpatrick's House, Kilberry, Athy on Saturday, 11 June, 11.30am-4.30 pm. Items of St Pio will be available on the day.

KILKENNY

Annual Mass will be celebrated in St Kieran's Cemetery on Hebron road at 7.30pm on Friday, June 24.

FERMANAGH

Blessing of the Graves at St Mary's Church, Maghera after the Vigil Mass, Saturday June 25 and St Tierney's Church after the 10.30am Mass.

LAOIS

St Padre Pio's glove will be in Fitzpatrick's House, Kilberry, Athy on Saturday June 11 from 11.30am to 4.30pm. Items of St Pio will be available on the day. For information, call Ann 085 169 6189.

LIMERICK

The Legion of Mary's weekly meetings now take place in the Pastoral Centre, Doon at 7.30pm on Tuesdays.

LONGFORD

Cemetery Sunday in Longford will take place on June 26 at 1pm.

LOUTH

'A Prayer by Telephone' – The Sisters of Mercy, 34 Point Road, Dundalk welcome any person who may wish to request prayer, especially during these difficult times. All requests are confidential. Tel: 00353 429331602 9am-9pm daily.

MAYO

The next Latin Mass in the Extraordinary Form will take place in Our Lady's Shrine Knock on Sunday June 12 at 5.30pm.

MEATH

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock, June 17 and 18. Anyone interested in travelling please contact 086-9666199. Bus travelling on June 18.

MONAGHAN

Pilgrimage to Medjugorje July 13 to July 20, led by Fr Patrick McGinn, Monaghan and Marian Kane. Flying from Dublin to Mostar, 30 minutes from Medjugorje. Evening flight. €735 all-inclusive. Limited seats available. For more information and booking, contact 087 271 3260.

TIPPERARY

Mothers' Prayer Meeting: Every Monday at 7.30 pm in Thurles Parish Centre for an evening of prayer, fellowship and chat. This group offers a wonderful opportunity to meet other mums, support each other and share our experiences in a confidential space. All mums welcome! Enquiries at 0860847172.

TYRONE

Omagh parish pilgrimage to Knock, bus en route from Cookstown, pick up point at Crevenagh park and ride at approximately 8.15am or Omagh bus station at 8.30am. Bus Fare £20 sterling. Meals €35 (optional) For more information contact Una 0044 7743575969 or Mona 0044 2886737954.

WATERFORD

The annual Cemetery Mass will take place in Ballygunner Cemetery on Thursday, June 9 at 7pm.

WESTMEATH

Prayer meeting in the Friary Church, Athlone every Monday night from 7.30 to 8.30pm.

WICKLOW

Cemetery Mass at Rathbran Cemetery, Friday 24 June at 7.30pm.

WEXFORD

Diocese of Ferns pilgrimage to Lourdes June 20 to June 24. Led by the Bishop of Ferns Ger Nash. Four nights' accommodation in Lourdes. Breakfast, lunch and dinner each day. Booking details: Joe Walsh Tours 01 2410800 or info@joewalshsours.ie.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Blessed Carlo Acutis' tomb permanently reopened to public

● Visitors to Assisi can once again see Blessed Carlo Acutis, the first millennial to be beatified in the Catholic Church, dressed in jeans and tennis shoes through a viewing glass on his tomb.

Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino removed the panel covering Bl. Acutis' tomb on June 1, reopening it for permanent public veneration.

With the lifting of Italy's former travel restrictions for tourists, many international pilgrims will now have the opportunity to see the young Blessed for the first time.

The archbishop of Assisi-Nocera Umbra-Gualdo Tadino said that he hopes that all who come to pray at the tomb will "open themselves to the light of the Gospel and have a profound experience of faith".

Mongolian bishop to be the youngest cardinal

● An Italian who has served as a missionary in Mongolia for nearly 20 years will soon become the world's youngest cardinal.

At 47 years old, Bishop Giorgio Marengo is the same age that Karol Wojtyła was when Paul VI announced that he had been selected to join the College of Cardinals.

Bishop Marengo will receive a red hat along

with 20 other new cardinals at a consistory on August 27, just two years after his episcopal consecration.

"This is a huge surprise for me," Bishop Marengo told Vatican News the day after the Pope's announcement.

"For me, living this new vocation will mean continuing on the path of littleness, humility and dialogue," he said.

Muslim and Protestant politicians receive Communion at German Catholic event

● A Muslim politician and at least one Protestant politician have received Communion at Masses celebrated by bishops during a multi-day Catholic event in Germany.

The same event, held on May 25-29, reportedly barred organisers of the German March for Life from having a stall.

Muhterem Aras, a Turkish-born Muslim and prominent state parliamentarian of Germany's environmentalist Greens, received Communion at the opening Mass in Stuttgart, southern Germany, celebrated by local Bishop Gebhard Fürst, reported CNA Deutsch.

While Ms Aras received the Eucharist, Sabine Foth, president of the Protestant state synod, "kept her distance 'out of respect for the bishop,'" said the local newspaper *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*.

At least one Protestant politician did receive Communion at a later date.

Pope names members to worship congregation

● Pope Francis has appointed new members of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, including Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich.

The Vatican announced the appointments June 1.

The congregation, led by Cardinal-designate Arthur Roche, deals with regulating and promoting the liturgy and the sacraments, is responsible for the development and promulgation of liturgical books and reviews their translations.

The other members named include: Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life; Archbishop J. Augustine Di Noia, adjunct secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, who had also served as secretary of the worship congregation from 2009 to 2012; and Bishop David Douglas Crosby of Hamilton, Ontario.

Vatican and local bishop respond to Pentecost massacre in Nigeria

The Vatican and a local Catholic bishop responded on Sunday to an attack on a church in Nigeria in which at least 50 people are believed to have been killed.

The massacre took place during a Pentecost Sunday Mass at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Owo, Ondo State, in southwestern Nigeria.

A video posted on Twitter showed graphic scenes of bodies and blood inside the church. Ondo State governor Arakunrin Akeredolu said that many children were among the dead.

The Vatican released a statement after Pope Francis learned of the attack.

"The Pope learned of the attack on the church in Ondo, Nigeria, and the death of dozens of faithful, many children, during the celebration of Pentecost," Matteo Bruni, the director of the Holy See press office, said in the June 5 statement.

"While the details of the incident are being clarified, Pope Francis prays for the victims and for the country, painfully affected in a moment of celebration, and entrusts both to the Lord, to send his Spirit to comfort them."

Calm

The Catholic Diocese of Ondo said on Sunday that local Bishop Jude Ayodeji Arogundade appealed to Catholics to "remain calm,



Adetunji Henry, 15, one of the victims of the attack by gunmen during Pentecost Mass at St Francis Xavier Church, receives treatment at the Federal Medical Centre in Owo, Nigeria, June 6, 2022. Photo: CNS

be law-abiding and pray for peace and normalcy to return to our community, state, and country".

"It is Pentecost Sunday when every Catholic is expected to be in church to commemorate the solemnity," said a June 5 statement signed by Fr Augustine Ikwu, head of the diocesan directorate of social communications.

"It is sad to say that while the Holy Mass was going on, unknown gunmen attacked St Francis Catholic Church, Owo, Ondo State, leaving many feared dead and many others injured and the church violated."

"The identity of the perpetrators remains unknown while the situation has left the community devastated."

"However, for now, security agencies have been deployed to the community to relatively handle the situation. At this point in the history of our dear country Nigeria, we need God's ultimate intervention to restore peace and tranquillity."

The statement went on: "Meanwhile, all the priests and bishop in the parish are safe and none was kidnapped as the social media has it. Nevertheless, let us continue to pray for them and the good people of Owo and the state at large."

"We turn to God to console the families of those whose lives were lost in this distressing incident, and we pray for the departed souls to rest in peace."

Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari condemned the "heinous" killing of worshipers in a statement issued on his behalf on June 5.

"The President says only fiends from the nether region could have conceived and carried out such dastardly act, adding that eternal sorrow awaits them both on earth here, and ultimately in the hereafter," the statement said.

Internet star Bishop Barron appointed to lead new diocese

The Vatican announced June 2 that Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Robert Barron to lead the Diocese of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota.

Barron, who runs the popular Catholic media apostolate Word on Fire, has served as an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles since 2015.

He will succeed Bishop John Quinn, who submitted his resignation to the Pope after reaching the retirement age of 75 in 2020. Bishop Barron will be installed as bishop on July 29.

"Friends, I am overjoyed and humbled to learn that Pope Francis has appointed

me the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester," Bishop Barron wrote in a statement after his appointment was announced on June 2.

"The bishop of a diocese is, first and foremost, a spiritual father to the priests and people who have been entrusted to his care. My prayer this morning is that the Lord will give me the grace always to be a good father."

One of the most well-known bishops in the United States, Bishop Barron has over 500,000 subscribers on his YouTube channel where he teaches about the faith through talks, interviews, and prayer.

At the last US bishops' meeting in November, Bishop Barron was voted to lead the US bishop's Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.

In recent weeks, Word on Fire has faced claims that the Catholic organisation mishandled charges of sexual impropriety by a Word on Fire staffer. Several staff members, including Catholic speakers Jackie and Bobby Angel, announced their departure from Word on Fire amid the controversy in May.

Bishop Barron has said that the work of Word on Fire will continue as he moves to Minnesota.

Pilgrims trek days to join Uganda's annual Martyrs Day observance

Thousands of pilgrims from across Uganda and neighbouring countries converged on Namugongo, a Kampala suburb, after walking for days to join the country's annual Martyrs Day observance.

The day is observed June 3 at Namugongo Shrine, built on the

site where 45 people, including 22 Catholics, were burned to death on orders of the king of Buganda from 1885 to 1887.

This year, pilgrims have focused on praying for peace and the end of human rights violations, especially against political opposition leaders

and teenage girls undergoing female genital mutilation. They have also been praying for Uganda's economy, which has seen fuel prices spike because of the war in Ukraine and the cost of basic necessities such as bread, sugar and cooking oil rise proportionally.

"We pray with the Uganda martyrs to help us overcome the problems that have been brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war," said Lilian Akumu, a parishioner at Bukwali Catholic Church in the Diocese of Fort Portal, in western Uganda.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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A joyous jubilee



Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Princess Anne, Prince Charles, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, along with Princess Charlotte, Prince George and Prince Louis appear on the balcony of Buckingham Palace as part of the Trooping the Colour parade during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in London June 2. Pope Francis sent well-wishes to Queen Elizabeth II for the occasion. Photo: CNS

Pope sends congratulations to Queen Elizabeth II on her platinum jubilee

Pope Francis sent a congratulatory message to Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday coinciding with the United Kingdom's celebration of the 70th anniversary of her reign.

"On this joyful occasion of your Majesty's birthday, and as you celebrate this Platinum Jubilee year, I send cordial greetings and good wishes, together with the renewed assurance of my prayers that Almighty God will bestow upon you, the members of the Royal

Family and all the people of the nation blessings of unity, prosperity and peace," the Pope said in a telegram to the queen.

Queen Elizabeth, who turned 96 on April 21, is England's longest serving monarch, having ascended to the throne in 1952 at age 25 after the death of her father, King George VI. Her coronation took place the following year, on June 2, 1953.

On Thursday the United Kingdom began four days of jubilee celebrations, starting with an event

called Trooping the Colour, a colourful military parade in London that featured 240 horses, a Royal Air Force flyover, and a gun salute. The Queen watched the parade from a balcony at Buckingham Palace.

Elizabeth has met four popes as queen, and one (Pius XII) as princess in 1951. Queen Elizabeth and her late husband, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, met with Pope Francis in the Vatican in 2014.

The meeting marked the 100th anniversary of the

re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Holy See. After their meeting, Pope Francis gave the couple a facsimile of Pope Innocent XI's order extending the cult of St Edward the Confessor, and the Queen in turn presented the Pope with a large basket of food from the estates surrounding her homes. The items included an assortment of honey, a dozen eggs, a haunch of venison, shortbread, juice, preserves, and Balmoral whiskey.

Kenyan bishops urge free, fair and peaceful elections

Kenya's Catholic bishops joined other religious leaders in calling upon the country's politicians to ensure the forthcoming general elections, scheduled for August 9, are free, fair and peaceful.

The prelates said they recognised "that myriad developments could emerge that could hinder peaceful, free, fair and credible elections. Let us all pray and call upon God".

The statement was issued under the umbrella of the Dialogue Reference Group, a coalition of religious,

community, nongovernmental organisations and labour unions, to which the Kenya bishops' conference belong.

Elections will take place for president, members of parliament, governors, and members of local assemblies. Two of the main contenders for president are former Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga and William Samoei Ruto, current deputy president.

Political campaigns in the country are gradually gaining momentum. Past elections have been marred by

violence. The clashes largely have been among community groups without formal organisation and are based on identity lines.

However, violence among ethnic groups aligned with the country's main political parties has erupted four times since 1992. The bishops have repeatedly expressed their desire that candidates remain off of Church compounds and away from pulpits, with their most recent statement on the issue coming in September.

Vatican roundup

Vatican finance trial highlights pressure to finalise London deal

● The deal to acquire control of a London investment property was finalised under intense "psychological pressure," according to Fabrizio Tirabassi, a lay official at the Secretariat of State who was questioned during a Vatican finance trial hearing on May 31.

Enrico Crasso, a longtime investment manager for the Vatican, confirmed the situation at a hearing on May 30, stressing that the Secretariat of State did not even have a lawyer at the negotiating table when the luxury property was transferred to alternative management.

The 18th and 19th hearings of the trial offered a glimpse inside the financial operations of the Vatican's top dicastery.

To some extent, the testimonies confirmed the existence of the so-called "Perlasca method" described in a document submitted to the Vatican court by Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, the current Sostituto of the Secretariat of State. The method refers to the practices of Monsignor Alberto Perlasca, a Secretariat of State official who was formerly a suspect and now a key witness.

US embassy to Vatican flies Pride Flag once again

● The US Embassy to the Holy See has again flown a Pride Flag, as President Joe Biden reiterated his commitment to supporting LGBT advocacy and, apparently, transgender-affirming health care for children.

"The United States respects and promotes the equality and human dignity of all people including the LGBTQIA+ community," the US embassy to the Vatican said on Twitter June 1. It showed a photo of its Pride Flag and used several hashtags including "All Inclusive".

The acronym LGBTQIA+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, intersex. The "a" stands

for "asexual," an identity inconsistently used in other US government statements, while the plus sign stands for other varieties of self-professed sexual identity.

The message differs slightly from last year's, when the embassy said the US "respects the dignity and equality of LGBTQIA+ people".

The US Embassy to the Holy See showed the Pride Flag last year as well.

In early 2021 US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that US embassies and consulates around the world could fly the Pride Flag on the same flagpole as the American flag, during "Pride season".

Pope Francis: Old age is a time to rediscover trust in the Lord

● Pope Francis said June 1 that old age can be a time to rediscover trust in the Lord.

"The elderly, by virtue of their weakness, can teach those who are living in other stages of life that we all need to abandon ourselves to the Lord, to invoke his help," the Pope said at his general audience.

"In this sense, we must all learn from old age: yes, there is a gift in being elderly, understood as abandoning oneself to the care of others, starting with God himself."

Speaking in St Peter's Square, the Pope quoted lines from Psalm 71: "Be my rock of refuge, my stronghold to give me safety; for you are my rock and fortress."

He reflected: "The elder of the Psalm we have heard, this elderly man who sees his old age as a defeat, rediscovers trust in the Lord. He feels the need to be helped. And he turns to God."

The Pope also quoted St Augustine's commentary on the psalm: "Fear not, that you be cast away in that weakness, in that old age."



Letter from Rome



Cindy Wooden

For many people in Rome, Pope Francis' decision to schedule a consistory to create new cardinals in August was more surprising than the men he chose to receive the red hat.

Traditionally, Rome empties of everyone but tourists in sweltering August.

And Pope Francis' choices for inclusion in the College of Cardinals are, by now, predictably unpredictable except that they will represent a broader geographical range, and, with few exceptions, they will skip over archdioceses once guaranteed to have a cardinal.

In fact, in a brief article in Vatican News, the editorial director of the Dicastery for Communication explained the Pope's unusual decision to hold the consistory August 27 was made to coincide with a previously announced gathering of the world's cardinals August 29-30 to discuss the new structure of the Roman Curia.

Pope Francis announced May 29 that he would create 21 new cardinals – 16 of whom are under the age of 80 and so will be eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a new pope. The 21 churchmen come from 16 countries.

Cardinals

The cardinals-designate include three senior members of the Roman Curia, who generally were presumed to be named cardinals eventually: British Cardinal-designate Arthur Roche, head of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments; South Korean Cardinal-designate Lazarus You Heung-sik, head of the Congregation for Clergy; and Spanish Cardinal-designate Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, head of the office in charge of Vatican City State operations.

“Pope Francis is a Jesuit as are six current members of the College of Cardinals”

Cardinal-designate Vérgez is the first member of the Legionaries of Christ to become a cardinal. US Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, was a member of the order, but left to become a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Six other members of religious orders are on the list for the August ceremony, including two Salesians – Archbishop Virgílio do Carmo da Silva of Dili, Timor-Leste, and retired Archbishop Lucas Van Looy of Ghent, Belgium. The lone Jesuit on the list is Father Gianfranco Ghirlanda, professor of canon law, who turns 80 July 5. Archbishop Leonardo Ulrich Steiner of Manaus, Brazil, is a Franciscan, and Bishop Richard Kuia

Cardinal days of August: Pope's pick for cardinals wasn't the only surprise



Pope Francis prays as he arrives for a consistory to create new cardinals in St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in this June 28, 2017, file photo. Photo CNS

“Pope Francis announced May 29 that he would create 21 new cardinals – 16 of whom are under the age of 80 and so will be eligible to vote in a conclave to elect a new pope”

Baawobr of Wa, Ghana, is a member of the Missionaries of Africa.

Pope Francis is a Jesuit as are six current members of the College of Cardinals. The Friars Minor, the Franciscan branch to which Bishop Ulrich Steiner belongs, already has two cardinals, and the Missionaries of Africa have one. But the Salesians, who will gain two cardinals, lead the pack with nine cardinals already.

The only Consolata Missionary that will be part of the college is Cardinal-designate Giorgio Marengo, apostolic prefect of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, who also will be the youngest cleric with a red hat. He will celebrate his 48th birthday June 7.

Asia

Although born in Italy, he is one of six cardinals-designate under 80 who minister in or are from Asia. Four others are Europe-based; three are Latin Americans; two are Africans. Cardinal-designate Robert McElroy of San Diego is the only North American in the new crop of cardinals.

After the consistory in late August, the College of Cardinals will have 132 members under the age of 80 and eligible to enter a conclave; 83 of them – almost 63% – will have been created cardinals by Pope Francis; 11 of the remaining voters were made

cardinals by St John Paul II and 38 by retired Pope Benedict XVI.

While some pundits spoke about Pope Francis “packing” the College of Cardinals, it must be remembered that of the 115 cardinals who entered the conclave in March 2013 and elected him, 67 were named to the college by Pope Benedict XVI and 48 were created cardinals by St John Paul II.

“Six other members of religious orders are on the list for the August ceremony, including two Salesians”

Counting Cardinal-designate Marengo as an Asian, not European cardinal, after the consistory 53 of the electors – just over 40% – will be European; 18% will be Latin American; almost 16% Asian; almost 13% African; 10% North American; and just over 2% from Oceania.

Mongolia, which has a Catholic population of 1,359, according to the latest Vatican figures, will have its first cardinal, as will Singapore with Cardinal-designate William Goh Seng Chye, and Paraguay with Cardinal-designate Adalberto Martínez Flores of Asunción.

Much was made in the Italian press of Pope Francis' choice of Bishop Oscar Cantoni of Como, Italy, to receive the red hat, especially when the archdioceses of Milan and Venice are not led by cardinals. But Como does have a cardinalial past; granted, the last was Blessed Andrea Ferrari, who was made a cardinal May 18, 1894, and named archbishop of Milan three days later. The last cardinal to minister in the Diocese of Como for an extended period was Bishop Carlo Ciceri, who was appointed to the see in 1680 and made a cardinal in 1686. He died in Como in 1694 at the age of 77.

India and Brazil both will have two new cardinals in August, and Cardinal-designate Anthony Poola of Hyderabad, India, made headlines in his home country for being the first cardinal of the Telugu people from the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and, especially, for being the first Dalit cardinal. “Dalit,” which means “trampled upon” in Sanskrit, refers to people treated as untouchables under India's former caste system and often still treated with disrespect today, including in the Church at times.

Concern

An editorial May 31 on the website ‘Matters India’ said, “That caste is a grave concern and that it needs to be addressed is undeniable and Arch-

bishop Poola would have to play a significant role in bringing this into the Church's conversations and discussions and help find ways to resolve it.”

“Analogously,” the editorial continued, “the struggles of the Adivasis – also called tribals or the Indigenous people – are different, but in the appointment of Cardinal Telesphore Toppo in 2003, the community found a representative to be celebrated.”

“The only Consolata Missionary that will be part of the college is Cardinal-designate Giorgio Marengo, apostolic prefect of Ulaanbaatar”

Pope Francis' choice of 59-year-old Cardinal-designate Peter Ebere Okpaleke of Ekwulobia, Nigeria, also brought interest. In December 2012, Pope Benedict had named him bishop of Ahiara and he was ordained the following May. But his appointment and ordination were met by protests and petitions calling for the appointment of a bishop from among the local clergy.

Even after Pope Francis in 2017 ordered local priests to pledge their obedience to the pope and accept the bishop, the situation remained tense. In early 2018, Bishop Okpaleke resigned saying, “I am convinced in conscience that my remaining the bishop of Ahiara Diocese is no longer beneficial to the Church.”

Pope Francis named him bishop of the newly created Diocese of Ekwulobia in March 2020.

Beatification of wartime Polish nuns highlights radical Christian witness



Jonathan Luxmoore

Senior Catholics see the beatification of 10 Polish nuns murdered by Russian soldiers at the end of World War II as highlighting the need for radical Christian witness while offering a prophetic reminder of current sufferings in Ukraine.

"Every beatification or canonisation of any nun is a cause of joy, while every example of radical commitment, including martyrdom, has huge value," said Mother Jolanta Olech, secretary-general of Poland's Conference of Higher Female Superiors.

"What's occurring today in Ukraine, however, with similar crimes committed every day, shows the importance of testimonies like these. I'm certain martyrs are being created there now about whom we'll learn in the future," the Ursuline sister told *Catholic News Service* amid preparations for the June 11 beatification of Congregation of Sisters of St Elizabeth members.

Approval

Meanwhile, Archbishop Józef Kupny of Wrocław, Poland, said the Pope's approval of the beatification in June 2021 turned out to be "prophetic" for Poland, Ukraine and the wider world.

"In their faces, we see the faces of women and children now falling victim to similar aggression by Russian soldiers," he wrote in a May 29 pastoral letter.

"Prayers for peace in Ukraine will be offered during the ceremony at the Wrocław cathedral, he added"

"At one time, it seemed we could only talk about violence, aggression and the killing of innocent people in the past tense, hoping the events these sisters witnessed would never return," he said.

"No one predicted our brothers and sisters in Ukraine would experience the same fate. Yet today, we must painfully concede that we were wrong. Evil still exists and takes its tragic toll. The world has apparently failed to learn from history," the letter said.

Prayers for peace in Ukraine will be offered during the ceremony at the Wrocław cathedral, he added.

The St Elizabeth order, founded in 19th-century Silesia to nurse

cholera and typhus victims, was one of many facing brutality from the Soviet Army during its victorious 1944-1945 sweep across Poland, which had already lost a fifth of its population, including most of its Jewish minority, during six years of Nazi occupation.

Atrocities were most common against women religious of German origin, who were among millions of civilians expelled as lands in eastern Germany were incorporated into Poland in exchange for Polish lands annexed by the Soviet Union in the east.

Caring

The oldest nun, 70-year-old Sr Sapientia Heymann, had spent the war caring for sick and elderly nuns at Nysa, Poland. She was shot by drunken Russian soldiers while attempting to protect fellow sisters from rape.

The youngest, Sr Paschalis Jahn, had joined the order in 1937, also nursing the old and infirm. Before making her final vows, she had been evacuated to Sobotina in nearby Czech Moravia. She was 29 when apprehended by a Russian soldier on May 11, 1945, four days after the war's official end, and shot through the heart for resisting his advances.

In his letter, Archbishop Kupny said the story of the nuns contained "terrifying descriptions of evil and cruelty," and had left

"wounds that cannot fail to move and should never be forgotten".

The martyred sisters, he added, had offered "a signpost for people in the 21st century" by remaining "faithful to their vows and the values they believed in," without expecting personal recognition.

Escaping

Sr Acutina Goldberg, born into a peasant family, had taught children and war orphans before escaping from Lubiaz, Poland, with a group of girls, only to be caught by drunken Russian soldiers and shot in a field while protecting her charges.

"Atrocities were most common against women religious of German origin"

Sr Edelburgis Kubitzki, a 40-year-old ambulance nurse, attempted to escape rape by hiding with other nuns inside a chapel at Zary, Poland, but was beaten and shot at least a dozen times when troops entered the building February 20, 1945.

Another nun, Sr Felicitas Ellmerer, 56, took refuge in her order's refectory at Nysa, after Russian soldiers profaned the chapel and drank wine from its liturgical vessels while shouting "Long live Christ the King!" She was shot by a

Russian trooper, who stomped on her head to finish her off.

Sr Adela Schramm, 40, a convent superior at Godziesow, Poland, had cared for wounded soldiers and displaced civilians when she was seized by Russians while sheltering in a farm attic and shot and dumped in a bomb crater following a long struggle.

Wrocław-born Sr Rosaria Schilling, 36, who was raised as a Protestant, hid with other nuns in an air-raid shelter at Nowogrodek, but was dragged out, raped and shot by a group of 30 soldiers.

Beatified

Others to be beatified are Sr Melusja Rybka, Sr Adela Schramm and Sr Adelheidis Töpfer.

In a June 1 message to CNS, the nuns' postulator, Sr Miriam Zajac, said at least 100 St Elizabeth sisters had been killed by Red Army troops, some disappearing without trace. She said the cases of the 10 martyrs had been detailed and documented from eyewitnesses.

She noted that no Russian soldiers had ever faced sanction for violence and rape, which were "used as an element of military strategy". Establishing the truth, she said, was not intended as "an act of revenge or reckoning," but as a necessity for "overcoming the traumas of the past".

The "heroic attitude" of the nuns could provide a "model

and impulse" for contemporary women facing a violation of dignity, as well as for married couples threatened by infidelity and victims of sexual abuse, Sr Zajac said.

"She noted that no Russian soldiers had ever faced sanction for violence and rape, which were 'used as an element of military strategy'"

"Our order experienced exceptionally hurtful brutality and lawlessness from those [who] came to liberate us but turned out to be barbarians – for long years, we had to keep silent about their martyrdom, and couldn't speak or write about the Red Army's bestial behaviour," she said.

"Whenever Christ isn't accepted, with the commandments and values he left us, it always leads to criminal totalitarian systems, genocide and the collapse of morality and culture – as we now see among our neighbours in Ukraine, where the Russian army is doing the same as Red Army soldiers did in 1945, playing out before our eyes the same scenes with the same directors."



Pictured clockwise are, Sisters Maria Paschalis Jahn, Melusja, Edelburgis Kubitzki, Adela Schramm, Adelheidis Töpfer, Acutina Goldberg, Felicitas Ellmerer, Rosaria Schilling, Sabina Thienel, and Sapientia Heymann.

Letters

Letter of the week

A spiritual revolution for the elderly

Dear Editor, Anyone who has been following the live streaming of Masses during the pandemic and after, could not fail to have noticed that not only are many of the priests elderly, but almost without exception, regular congregations are made up of elderly men and women.

Pope Francis is challenging us to look to the future. He asks us to recognise that the “elderly can still bear fruit”. With this in mind, he has designated the fourth Sunday of July as ‘World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly’ – recognising that not every elderly person is a grandparent.

This year, that day falls on July 24, when we are asked to launch what

Pope Francis calls a ‘Revolution of Tenderness’, a spiritual and non-violent revolution, in which all can take part.

He calls on parishes and communities to seek out those who are alone and feeling unloved and to channel their silent prayers towards those who are crying out in pain. Many of us have known the joy of growing up with grandparents, from whom we learned the power of gentle love.

Now, Pope Francis says, is the time for “those of us who are elderly”, to hold in our hearts, not just our own grandchildren, but those children and families, who are being crucified

by war, famine, poverty and cruelty, all over the world.

While in many cultures the elderly are valued and respected, there is a growing trend in “this poisonous throw-away culture” to regard ageing as a disease, to be avoided at all costs. Those who have caught that disease are often hidden away out of sight.

But, says Pope Francis, old age is not a condemnation but a blessing. It is not time to lower the sails; a new mission awaits us. It is time for relearning and reigniting the instrument most suitable to our age: prayer.

*Yours etc.,
Patricia Shearer
Belfast, Co. Antrim*

Are we supposed to get excited about the Synod?

Dear Editor, For more than 2,000 years we have been directed by the Bishop of Rome, successor of St Peter chosen by Christ himself.

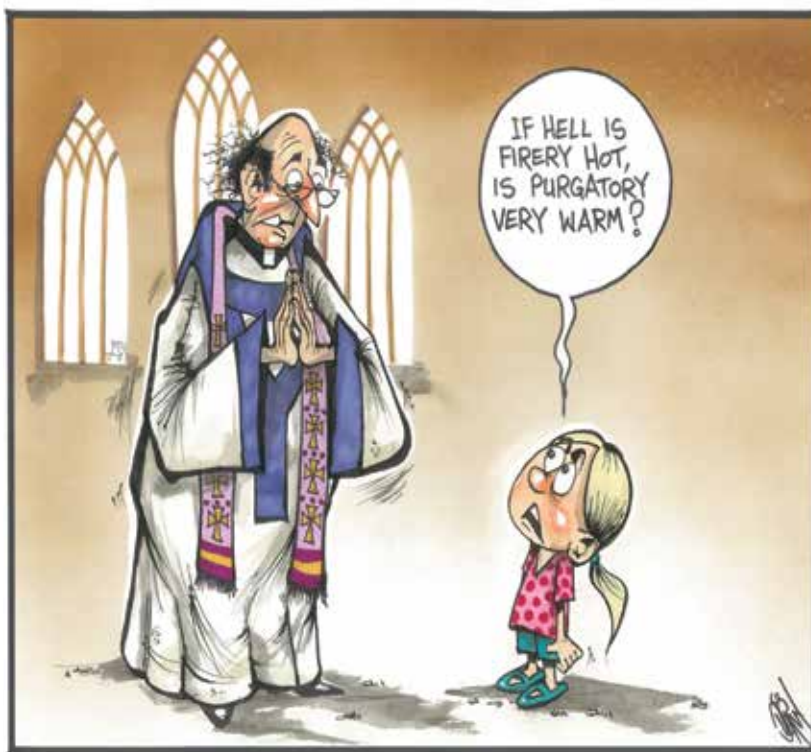
Now following Protestant example, we are opening our opinions and wants to the laity. Are we becoming a democratic Church, no longer following Christ’s teachings, but our own?

With the attendance of Mass falling, even after Covid, this will be just another nail in the coffin. Can you just imagine what the laity, practising and not practising, will want? The results of the elections will tell you there were a lot of ‘Catholics’ amongst them, and these are the people we are allowing to run our Church?

The abuse of the sacraments? Confession has already been put on the back burner a long time ago. God knows there are already Nancy Pelosi walking down our isles. No wonder people are looking for the traditional Mass.

Mother of Christ and the Church pray for us.

*Yours etc.,
Luisa Hammon
Gorey, Co. Wexford*



Greedy parties who subvert money’s purpose

Dear Editor, The personal debt crisis has come to further light in the public discourse as a result of the increased costs of living in recent months. As a voluntary director of an approved housing body (a sector which provided 42% of all social housing as of 2020), I am aware first hand of the pervasiveness of this

problem, particularly in the cases of mortgage and rent arrears.

This can, in part, be attributed to the impact of usury on the cash strapped. St Aquinas, regarded as one of the greatest contributors to western philosophy, argued that such practice was unjust, because it simultaneously gives two

values to the same measure (money is a medium of exchange, rather than a commodity) and that it was manifestly the setting up of an inequality contrary to justice.

Simultaneously, the truthful pronouncements of J.M Keynes, Major C.H Douglas and Pope Pius XI on finance almost 100

years ago have yet to be realised. It is high time that anyone who claims to be a Catholic, pushes back against the exactions of financiers and all those avaricious parties who subvert the rightful use and purpose of money and credit.

*Yours sincerely,
Tadhg Quill-Manley
Kerry Pike, Co. Cork*

Receiving the Eucharist with deep reverence

Dear Editor, On Sunday May 22, I happened upon the Sunday Service on RTE 1 television. It was in the middle of the service from St Mary’s Church of Ireland, known as the Church of the Sloes, in Killarney.

It was a Communion service and I tuned in at the moment when the Communion was being given. The people knelt at a rail in front of the altar, received the host in their mouth and partook of the wine from the chalice.

At once, my heart was filled with

awe at the deep reverence of the way in which the people received Communion and deep sadness that this was no longer the case in my Church. How far we, as Catholics, have fallen from that respect, reverence, gratitude and awe which is due to the Eucharist, which we believe to be the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder the Holy Eucharist has come to be viewed as ‘ordinary’ and ‘unholy’ even carried away in plastic bags, as was advocated

during the pandemic.

Pope Paul VI said the smoke of Satan had entered the temple of God/ the Church through some crack, has it now entered by the open door? Who is there to protect the Holy Eucharist?

“He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false” (Psalm 24:4), where are they?

*Yours etc.,
Brid Ward
Inver, Co. Donegal*

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

Dublin Diocese is bracing for ‘radical change’

Years and years ago the Irish missionaries left our shores now it’s time for other countries to have their religious priests come to ours. Simple. As for future vocations to the Irish Church it’s not going to happen, unfortunately and very sad. – **Aoibheann Douglas**

We have to become missionaries ourselves and be active in evangelisation. Remember, there were only 12 apostles. Orders like the Dominicans doing pretty well with vocations and their priories becoming real centres of faith, spirituality and learning because they never give up. The ripple effect of their work is really spreading out and having great effects. Never underestimate the power of one and how God can turn the smallest beginnings into something great. – **Maria Conroy Byrne**

A watered-down religion does not prompt people to give their lives to it. The Church is not an NGO. It never has been one. It needs to go back to what works – tradition, scripture, and teaching the Faith. – **Marc Evan Aupiais**

Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing for all parishes need to pray the Lord to send priestly vocations. And priests as well as parents/ families need to talk with the children about seeking what the Lord wants/wills for their lives: praying frequently for his guidance. – **Kathleen Cannon**

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

Fr Ron Rolheiser’s use of metaphors

Dear Editor, Fr Rolheiser’s metaphors for getting a handle on contemporary Catholicism is a survey of ideas, rather than metaphors. A metaphor for example evokes rather than informs, more like a parable. Take the history of European painting: Council of Trent is renaissance; Vatican II is impressionism. Our time is post-impressionism. So, what happened in modern art has yet to happen. The times take time to catch up with the cultural conditions that frame and clothe our faith lives. In the beginning is the image!

*Yours etc.,
Fr Brendan Staunton SJ
Dublin 1, Dublin*

Clashes with Sunday worship

Dear Editor, GAA matches are not alone in clashing with Sunday Worship. Even devout, practising Catholic families find themselves running here, there and everywhere on Sundays to take their children to various activities.

The Women’s Mini Marathon – a country wide event – used to be on the June bank holiday Monday. It has now been scheduled for the Sunday and this year, falls on the Feast of Pentecost, one of the major celebrations of the Church. The reminder and warning is there for us in Matthew 22:1-14 and Luke 14:15-24, the king who holds a banquet for his son.

*Yours etc.,
Judith Leonard
Raheny, Dublin*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, June 9, 2022

Personal Profile

Bringing the catechism from Derry to Kerry

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Teaching the State exams a lesson

I sat my Leaving Cert in 2015, which I realise is seven years ago, but as with most of us it feels like yesterday. The year was a blur of 18th birthday parties at the weekends, coupled with denser study than I've had to do since. When the exams came upon my classmates and I that June, they found us in varying states of readiness, but there was little could be done about it at that stage!

While there's not much that can be done, as mentioned, there is a little. Looking after your teens, or encouraging them to look after themselves properly, could make an important difference as they sit down to face the exams. The old adage that the State examina-



The State examinations have just begun and its important your children pace themselves properly as they progress, writes Jason Osborne

tions are more a marathon than a sprint is accurate, and there are things your child can do to better weather the pressurised couple of weeks they're entering.

These range from figuring out how to study under pressure, to your child looking after themselves physically during this time so as not to be struggling along as the days go past. While the bulk of

the studying must be done earlier in the year, availing of what can be done now is always a smart strategy. Some of what I'm about to write may sound simple, but it's invaluable when it comes to a smooth exam experience.

Know the timetable

Make sure to have studied the exam timetable itself, so that no

nasty surprises present themselves later on. Which day and which time is each exam at? It's a good idea to print off the official exam timetable and to highlight all of the exams you're to sit so that they stand out unmistakably. You don't want to arrive late to any of them.

Some of your exams will come on consecutive days, while you might have lengthy gaps between others. This should affect your study plan during this busy time. Now that time is limited, you should study for whichever exam comes next, and if you have a break of a few days, you can decide how much of that time to assign to your remaining exams.

Prepare materials beforehand

Always prepare for your exams the night before, if you're in a position to do so. Do you have the relevant book in your bag for the day's exam, so that you can study beforehand if you get there early? Do you have the equipment you need, pens, pencils and rubbers, a scientific calculator? Bring water to sip throughout the exam, as it can help you to maintain your concentration throughout what can be extremely long and monotonous periods.

While there should be a clock in the examination centre, don't

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Family News



AND EVENTS

MONA LISA SMEARED IN CREAM IN SUSPECTED CLIMATE PROTEST

The Mona Lisa was left shaken but unharmed when a visitor to the Louvre tried to smash the glass protecting the world's most famous painting before smearing cream across its surface in an apparent climate-related publicity stunt.

The perpetrator was a man disguised as an old lady who jumped out of a wheelchair before attacking the glass.

"Maybe this is just nuts to me...", klevisl007 posted on Twitter, the author of a video of the attack's aftermath that shows a worker cleaning the glass.

"(He) then proceeds to smear cake on the glass, and throws roses everywhere before being tackled by security."

The Louvre was not immediately available for comment.

"Think of the earth, people are destroying the earth", the man, dressed in a wig, said in French in another video posting that showed him being led away from the Paris gallery with the wheelchair, indicating that the incident likely had an environmentalist motive.

COMPETITION FOR FOOD MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO MEGALODON EXTINCTION

Competition for food with the great white shark may have contributed to the extinction of the megalodon, new research suggests.

Megatooth sharks like the *Otodus megalodon*, more commonly known as megalodon, lived between 23 and 3.6 million-years-ago in oceans around the world and possibly grew to as big as 20m in length.

This is more than three times longer than the largest great whites seen today, which measure around 6m.

Researchers looked for signs of zinc in modern and fossil shark teeth from around the globe, including teeth of megalodon and modern and fossil great white sharks.

Zinc is incorporated into the enamel of teeth when they are formed and can be used for understanding an animal's diet and investigating an animal's trophic level – how far up the food chain it feeds.

Comparing the findings between megalodon and the great white shark, the researchers found that when the animals co-existed, during the Early Pliocene, their trophic levels overlapped and they may have competed for the same food resources.

700-YEAR-OLD SAMURAI SWORD SEIZED AT SWISS BORDER

Customs authorities in Switzerland discovered an almost 700-year-old antique Japanese samurai sword during a routine vehicle search after it was illegally imported.

The Federal Office for Customs and Border Security released a statement saying the Katana sword, which dates back to 1353 and is valued at €650,000, had been discovered in a car with Swiss plates during a routine search near Zurich after it was smuggled into the country.

Several other objects were also found in the car, including an antique book, a contract and the sales invoice.

Rebuilding a culture of life



I was really excited about the recent launch of the Pray for Life Novena running from May 23-31. An initiative of the Council for Life of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, it was a great opportunity for the people of Ireland and beyond to join in praying for respect for all human life.

All that was required was signing up to get an email with the novena prayers delivered every morning. Each day there's a special intention accompanied by a short reflection and suggested actions to help build a culture of life in Ireland. This is a novena that is suitable for all age groups and is perfectly suited to be used in all sorts of settings including youth groups, prayer groups, parish groups, schools and in a family context.

“Since the devastating result of the 2018 referendum, we have seen the number of abortions escalating”

It has beautiful visuals with lovely bright colours and pictures that draws one right into the heart of what the message of praying for life is all about. My older children grew up in an Ireland where we were proud of our progressive amendment to the constitution which protected the right to life of a mother and her baby.

Since the devastating result of the 2018 referendum, we have seen the number of abortions escalating. It's really hard to take in that, in the first two years after Ireland's abortion laws were in place, a total of 13,243 abortions have taken place in Ireland. As well as feeling a deep sense of sorrow at this tragic loss of life, we feel motivated to do something to



A parent's perspective Maria Byrne

protect human life and to try to rebuild a culture of life.

As Catholics, we often look to our bishops to provide leadership on questions around the right to life and dignity of every human being. It's heartening to see our bishops providing that leadership and support. When launching the Pray for Life Novena, Bishop Kevin Doran, chair of the Council for Life, commented that the novena's end date is the Feast of the Visitation, pointing out that this has particular significance when it comes to celebrating and giving thanks for the gift of human life. He spoke of the moment of encounter between two women (Mary and Elizabeth), each of whom is unexpectedly pregnant.

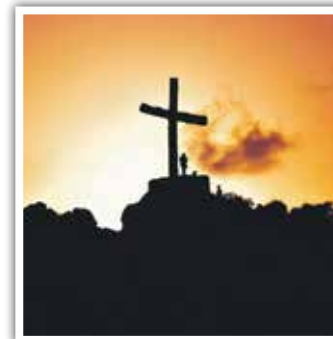
He said that "it is an encounter in which each woman is supported by the other in facing the challenges of pregnancy. It is a graced moment in which each woman acknowledges the child in her womb as a gift from God".

The first day of the novena picks up on that theme with its focus on expectant mothers, there is a prayer of intercession that every mother who's expecting a baby will receive compassionate care and support as she nurtures the life in her womb.

As well as the prayers and reflections, I really like the sections of the novena that focus on acts of reparation and what can be done to go one step further. The acts of reparation

include things like fasting from a meal, praying a decade of the Rosary, giving up some favourite treats or sacrificing some free time to carry out a small act of service for a friend or family member.

Under 'One Step Further' are numerous practical suggestions. Those who speak out in favour



of the right to life are often asked what practical measures they are taking to help mothers and their babies. This novena is packed full of very manageable recommendations and tips which can be undertaken by individuals, families, schools and parishes. This includes listening and responding positively when a woman talks about her worries and fears about an unexpected pregnancy; providing practical support like offering to make meals or bringing her for a meal or a trip to the cinema or just offering a listening ear or a shoulder to cry on. When a woman is facing an unexpected pregnancy, the reaction of the first person she tells tends to set

the tone for her future decision making so it's important to be kind and to offer loving, life-affirming assistance.

One of the links in the novena is to '10 Ways to Support her when She's Unexpectedly Pregnant'. There are great ideas but at the end of all the tips there is a reminder not to forget the most important thing, the power of prayer. Prayer is the most effective way we can help. Pray for the mother, her child and for guidance on how you can best help and support her throughout her pregnancy.

“God has carefully, tenderly created every person in his own image and likeness”

Fathers also need support and on day four of the novena the focus is on expectant fathers with a lovely reflection on the unique and irreplaceable role of fathers and how they are entrusted with the protection and defence of both mother and child. Other days mention healing after an abortion, civic leaders and their duty to serve the common good and prayers that those who support and participate in abortion experience a conversion of heart "to seek and receive God's boundless mercy". On the final day of the novena, we are reminded that "God has carefully, tenderly created every person in his own image and likeness" to be in a loving relationship with him. The novena is a great way to join in prayer and action to protect the most vulnerable and to work together towards a new culture of life and love.

To find out more, look at www.prayforlife.ie

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forget a watch, which you can put on your desk so as to keep a better eye on the time. It's important to remember that smart watches, which have become so widespread in recent years, aren't allowed into the exam centre, so stick with a conventional one on this occasion.

Bedtime

The temptation can be to stay up until the early hours of the morning, stuffing as much revision into as short a time as possible. The reality is that not only is this kind of study unlikely to be high-quality, you're also depriving yourself of essential sleep.

“You should obviously think about going for them ahead of the sections worth less, or that you might be slightly weaker on”

Nerves can push you towards action the night before, but try to remember that most of these will vanish once you get in there and get to work on the exam. The best uses of the evening and night beforehand are moderate study, not trying to read the whole book, but reviewing the most likely topics to arise, followed by something that helps you to wind down and get a good night's sleep.

Once you've finished studying, go for a walk, to the gym, or watch an episode of a favoured show – whatever works for you; these will slow your racing mind and result in a better night's sleep than hours of last-minute cramming.

Eat well

Make sure to get up in plenty of time the next morning that you might eat a healthy breakfast. A calm bowl of porridge with fruit, or a hearty plate of eggs, is better than a rushed mouthful of cereal and an energy drink. Skipping breakfast is a bad idea at any time, but especially now, when you need as much energy and awareness as you can muster.

Approaching the exam

So you're sitting in your examination centre and you're opening the paper itself. I would argue that the two most important things at this stage are taking stock of time and the paper itself. With regards to the exam, my suggestion is to read through the paper in its entirety first. The sections aren't all weighted equally, and while you should have some familiarity with this going in, it's good to see exactly what you're dealing with on the day.

Once you've given the paper a good read, allocate your time accord-

ingly. Approaching the exam with a plan is essential, as a lack of time is what trips many a student up (myself included!). Consider which areas are worth the most marks, and which are your strongest. You should obviously think about going for them ahead of the sections worth less, or that you might be slightly weaker on.

After each exam

The best thing you can do after each exam is forget about it for the time being. Some people agonise over their answers, wishing they'd responded differently. All this does is increase stress and anxiety, and as mentioned, the State exams are a marathon, not a sprint. It's better to leave those concerns behind once you've put your pen down rather than allowing doubts to plague you unhelpfully for the rest of your papers.

Keep perspective

The State exams are often built up as the be-all and end-all throughout your time in school, but this simply isn't true. I know many people who underperformed in their exams and have found excellent employment since – in some cases, better than those who did well. There are a number of alternative pathways, such as PLC courses or apprenticeships, to a happy and meaningful career and life.

The key to exams is the same as the key to a good life: to try your very best, to pray, and to commend the rest to God's providence and mercy.



Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



We recently had some Ukrainian guests come to stay. We've a little apartment at the side of our house which we could manage without for a while. I couldn't in conscience have it empty while those fleeing war had to sleep in places like Citywest or in the Green Glens arena. I found a group on social media where people offered help such as short-term accommodation, lifts and jobs. I soon had a suitable taker for our little apartment.

The first lady to arrive came by bus from Citywest on a beautiful spring weekend. She was a writer from Kyiv. She had fled while the city was almost surrounded by the Russian army, and under nightly bombardment. She spoke of air raid sirens and rushing into the bomb shelters, and how she soon learned to know the sounds which the different missiles made. Despite all she had been through, by some grace, she had managed to regain her equilibrium, her calm and her joy at life.

She became an instant friend to me and my wife. The kids adored her too. She soon seemed more like a long-lost member of the family. Her work has taken her back to Budapest for a while, but we all got on so well that she's now coming back for the summer to stay with another member of our family nearby, who has space. After such a positive experience, I soon logged back on to offer a welcome to some other Ukrainians.

Our next guests were a mother and two kids. They had never left Ukraine before, and their English was somewhat limited. They had been through dark times. Their apartment's windows were completely smashed when a missile hit their street in the middle of the night. They lived just 20km from the front line and had air raids sometimes five times a night, when they would have to run to the bomb shelter. They became terrified of being caught in a situation like Bucha if the Russians took their town. They fled on a crowded train at night, with no phones or any light allowed to be switched on, in case it would cause the train to be spotted

by Russian aircraft, and attacked from the air. They were treated poorly when they arrived in Italy so we were glad to give them a warmer welcome.

The evening they first arrived we laid out a meal, and my son said grace, along with a prayer for Ukraine. At his words, I saw tears come down the cheeks of



the mother and her older daughter. They were shook, but after a few good night's sleep, they began to smile more easily and enjoy life. I took them to the wildlife park, and they enjoyed walking in nature near our house, and relaxing in the garden. They relished the peace and quiet, but our little apartment was only ever a stopgap, of course, since it was only free for a month. Thankfully, by a miracle, they were soon generously offered a three-bedroom house up the country. My father drove them up, and they are delighted with their new abode. They're settling in well, 3,000 kilometres from home. Yet they sometimes feel the distance, and they often worry about their loved ones who were too old to leave.

There's been an amazing outpouring of support across Ireland. I'm glad we've managed to help in a small way. It was an engaging experience for the kids too. They saw the human impact of war first hand, and warm friendships quickly sprang up. At least, for a time, we could do something useful. It made us feel less powerless in the face of the madness of war.

Bringing the catechism from Derry to Kerry

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

The Catechism of the Catholic Church was released 30 years ago this year. For the last 25 years, Máirín Ní Shuilleabháin has travelled from Derry to Kerry, from Mayo to Wexford promoting the catechism and helping to catechise Catholics across the island of Ireland.

Ms Ní Shuilleabháin's faith came down to her through her childhood. She has "distinct memories" of receiving Holy Communion for the first time on her Communion day. "All through life, I never walked away from the Faith," she tells me. "I have since very early times had daily Mass. I was just to drawn to the Lord."

Mustard seed

However, Ms Ní Shuilleabháin says the "mustard seed" moment came shortly after the catechism was published in English in 1994. A letter came to where she was teaching inviting her to a talk with Dr Petroc Wiley on the catechism.

"He is professor of catechism and new evangelisation at the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio," Ms Ní Shuilleabháin explains. "I asked the local parish priest – a very holy man – to come down to this talk and after the talk, I said we must begin the study of the catechism."

"That was the mustard seed, it started at parish level. We ran two programmes at that level, then we went to diocesan and now we are at

national level. It is quite extraordinary, this is in a space of just 25 years."

With Fr Con White as spiritual director, Ms Ní Shuilleabháin facilitated two groups in the study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with parishioners from her local parish of Carraig na bhFear, Co. Cork, over a six-year period from 1998 to 2004. From there, she became national coordinator for the Catechism of the Catholic Church Adult Studies in Ireland, largely off the back of the 2012 Eucharistic Congress.

"It's all voluntary, we don't have funds, we depend on divine providence for events," Ms Ní Shuilleabháin says. "We took a stand at the RDS and were there for five days at the Eucharistic congress. That was a huge gamble, but we went to great effort to do our double stand."

"We were told a single one wouldn't catch people's attention. So we had the stand there for five days and we took the names and dioceses of people who were interested. Then we had some list of people following that event. That allowed us to work at the national level."

"I would have held workshops, I would have visited dioceses, all across

the country. We don't go into any dioceses without the express permission of the bishop. I don't do any work without the blessing of our local bishop or any other," she states firmly.

“The idea is, with the blessing of the bishop, we have a priest and a facilitator with each study group”

In order to improve her ability to teach the catechism, Ms Ní Shuilleabháin spent five years studying theology, while teaching at the same time in a secondary school.

"It was so demanding, it was intense," she says. "But I had already started a study group at local level in the parish, so I knew I wanted to do it. I was combining teaching and study and all other things. It was by the grace of God that I got through."

"But right through those five years, I knew that what was most important was my contribution to the Faith in Ireland through the catechism. The catechism is a microcosm really of everything I had learned doing the-

ology. It is just a powerful tool."

Ms Ní Shuilleabháin has made it her mission to bring this powerful tool to others, she says as it's beneficial both to the individual and the Church as a whole. As well as co-ordinating catechism study on a national level, she leads classes on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evening, as well as one on the youth catechism on Thursdays.

"The idea is, with the blessing of the bishop, we have a priest and a facilitator with each study group," she says. "It's pivotal. It's beneficial for the priest because they will get to know people who are really enthusiastic for the Faith and will be of immense benefit to the parish or wherever they go afterwards. They are invaluable."

Catechism

"The word catechism, it does resonate with older people and they'd have an awareness from childhood. They would have known that their task in life was to know him, to love him and to serve him. But we have to go out and evangelise, because in the past it was the exception that one didn't have faith."

"Though my profession was teaching, I want to emphasise that Christ is the teacher. I would stand back and try not to be assertive really. Like Pope Francis, his way and style really are closeness, compassion and tenderness. He continually emphasises those three qualities. In small groups, you have that same sense of closeness, compassion and tenderness towards people in your group."

Having travelled around Ireland teaching the catechism, from Derry to Kerry, from Mayo to Wexford, Ms Ní Shuilleabháin says she still gets great joy out of the interest and desire there is in people to learn about the Faith.

"One makes friends for life," she says. "It's not without sheer hard work. It's not all mountain top experiences. But you come across priests doing further studies across the world. When difficult questions come up, as they do, you can network with these people and they'll have contacts as well. It's fascinating to be honest. There's international support."

"To give a cross section of the people doing this study, you'd have farmers, working mums, beauticians, parish pastoral people, medical staff. They're all critical going forward because in their place of work or whatever, they can pass on the aith when the opportunity presents itself."

Ms Ní Shuilleabháin has a great devotion to Knock Eucharistic and Marian shrine, describing it as the "jewel in the crown here in Ireland" and saying that we should be promoting it often.

"We had our first national pilgrimage to Knock in 2019," she continues. "Now we have our second pilgrimage this year on July 30, with Fr John Harris leading. We're very much looking forward to it, Knock truly is magnificent. If anyone is interested, the information is available on catechism.ie"



Bishop John Buckley presents Mairin Ni Shuilleabhain with the insignia of Dame of Saint Gregory the Great, in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Carraig na bhFear

Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Children's Corner

Chai Brady

How to make like a ping pong ball and float

Can you control a ping pong ball as it floats above a hair dryer? The task probably sounds quite difficult but for reasons of science it may not be too hard! Put your hand-eye coordination skills to the test while learning the important role that forces such as gravity and air pressure play in this simple experiment.

Apparatus:

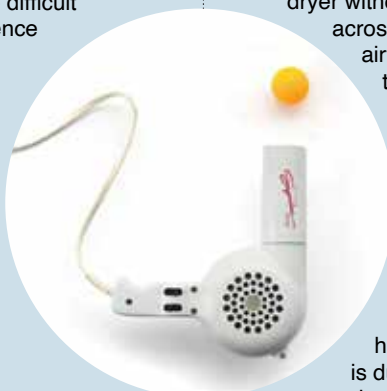
- At least one ping pong ball but two or three would be more impressive.
- A hair dryer.

Method:

- Plug in the hair dryer and turn it on.
- Put it on the highest setting and point it straight up.
- Place your ping pong ball above the hair dryer and watch what happens.

What's happening?

Your ping pong ball should float above the hair dryer without shifting sideways or flying across the other side of the room. The airflow from the hair dryer pushes the ping pong ball upwards until its upward force equals the force of gravity pushing down on it. When it reaches this point, it gently bounces around, floating where the upward and downward forces are equal. The reason the ping pong ball stays nicely inside the column of air produced by the hair dryer without shifting sideways is due to air pressure. The fast-moving air from the hair dryer creates a column of lower air pressure, the surrounding higher air pressure forces the ping pong ball to stay inside this column, making it easy to move the hair dryer around without losing control of the ping pong ball.



This floating ping pong ball experiment is a great example of Bernoulli's Principle. Bernoulli was a Swiss scientist who, in the 1700s, discovered that the pressure of a moving fluid (air or water) is different from the pressure of a fluid (air or water) at rest. Bernoulli's Principle states that the faster air moves, the less pressure the air exerts.

Now see if you can float two or even three ping pong balls as an extra challenge. You could also check how far you can tilt the hair dryer to the side before you lose the ping-pong ball.

Airplanes

Where else do we use air pressure to keep things afloat? Consider airplanes: the shape of an airplane wing causes air to move faster over the top of it than it does under the wing. As we saw with the ping-pong ball, this means that there will be lower air pressure above the wing than below it, which will push the airplane up and keep us afloat.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Faith was a welcome focus of the platinum jubilee

Not being British or a monarchist I didn't feel too drawn to the platinum jubilee celebrations in the UK at the weekend, but I dipped in to the coverage from time to time out of curiosity.

The Platinum Party at the Palace (BBC One, Saturday) was certainly a spectacular concert – the light shows in particular were impressive. The sketch of Queen Elizabeth with Paddington Bear was a surprising delight, ensuring the event wasn't going to be too po-faced! Prince William had some optimistic words about the future and “the very best of mankind”, especially concerns about the planet, and that was accompanied by a particularly beautiful nature-themed light show projected onto the palace. Comedian Stephen Fry complimented the Queen's “faith and service” and got in a dig at the prime ministers she “tolerated” – “for that alone no admiration is high enough”. In a very personal address the Prince of Wales referenced the “outpouring of warmth” towards his mother. “You continue to make history”, he said.

Faith

The Queen and her Christian faith was the subject of **Songs of Praise** (BBC One,



Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, along with Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis appear on the balcony of Buckingham Palace as part of Trooping the Colour parade during the Queen's platinum jubilee celebrations in London. Photo: CNS

Sunday). Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby spoke of how she carried out her role “with a loving and joyful obedience”. Prof. Kate Williams, who had written a book about her for children, described her as a “point of stability” and her reign the “high watermark of monarchy”. She said the Queen's faith “underpins her actions, her words...the way in which she makes decisions”. I hadn't realised there was a book all about her faith – *The Servant Queen and the King She Serves*. Co-author Mark Greene said her focus on Jesus was “extraordi-

nary”. Of course, this show is infused with music, and what was different from the usual show was that two of the songs were new for the occasion of the jubilee. Katherine Jenkins sang *This Mother's Heart* which I suspect may become a standard – it had a universal appeal. By contrast the Christian group Hope Together sang their jubilee specific song, the lively *Rise Up and Serve*. One of those involved, singer-songwriter Graham Kendrick, described the Queen as “amazingly faithful”.

Relationship

The Queen's relationship to her Christian faith was also teased out on **Sunday Sequence** (BBC Radio Ulster, Sunday) when Audrey Carville spoke to Catherine Pepinster, former editor of *The Tablet*. She suggested that she took her title ‘Defender of the Faith’ seriously and saw it as encompassing all of Christianity, whereas her title ‘Supreme Governor of the Church of England’ had a narrower focus. We learned she had met five popes and had hosted at least two – Pope St John Paul II and Pope Benedict. Ms Pepinster believed the Queen had transformed the relationship with the Catholic Church. She referenced several of the Queen's Christmas broadcasts, including one in 2000 when she reminded us whose birth we were celebrating, and one in 2011 where she stressed the need for forgiveness, especially in families (her own, like many, has known its share of troubles!) She was also known to be keen on the Church of England in modern times being protective of the freedom of all religion.

That show also featured an interesting discussion with Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal and Dr Jayme R. Reeves on Christian faith and hospitality, in the context of June 26 being Sanctuary Sunday. I liked the concept of

PICK OF THE WEEK

SERVANTS

Film 4 Tuesday (night) June 14, 2am

(2020) Brutal black-and-white drama set in a Catholic seminary in 1980s Czechoslovakia. A small group of young dissidents are determined to rebel against this political influence in their religion.

FAITH AND LIFE

EWTN Wednesday June 15, 10.30am also Friday June 17, 9.30pm

Fr Martin O'Hagan, a parish priest in Co. Down, is also a member of the multi-platinum music group ‘The Priests.’

FÍORSCEÁL

TG4 Thursday June 16, 10.30pm

A young, modern generation has emerged who oppose the Russian regime's ever-growing repression. What price will they pay for the justice and freedom they desire?

“protective hospitality” – it certainly fits in the context of welcoming refugees. The idea of “Church of Sanctuary” and the desire to “challenge hostility with hospitality” were likewise appealing and timely. Sanctuary Sunday is an initiative of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, of which the Catholic Church in Ireland is an Associate Member.

Mass

Last Sunday was also, and more importantly, the feast of Pentecost. **The Eurovision Mass** (RTÉ One) came from Notre Dame de Créteil, in the suburbs of Paris, the only cathedral in France built in the 21st Century and it was certainly a striking and very modern build-

ing. Fr Thomas McCarthy OP provided excellent commentary and translation. I do love the language of the Mass in French and would love to listen to it more. It might be an idea to provide more of the translation in subtitles, while keeping the discreet commentary.

Finally, it was heart-breaking to hear of a Mass for Pentecost in Nigeria where dozens were killed and more abducted in a gun and bomb attack. I thought mainstream media could have been quicker to the story and given it better coverage.

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



Aubrey Malone

Film

Tragic romance in Romeo and Juliet mode

A Star is Born (Netflix) got me through Covid. When I heard they were making the film for the third time I thought: Too much. I'd seen the version with Judy Garland and James Mason and also the one with Kris Kristofferson and Barbra Streisand. How many times could you re-heat the soufflé?

Then I watched it and it wiped me out. I thought: Why did I condemn it just because it was a remake?

Lady Gaga sent shivers up my spine with all those torch songs she did. I was blown away by the incredible expressiveness on her face, right up to the final frame where she looks at the camera as if to say: What just happened? That's

a stroke of genius on Bradley Cooper's part.

Cooper directs the film as well as appearing in it. How often do we see films end by having characters look at the camera?

Sad

The story is beautifully sad. It's the story of a woman who doesn't want to be more famous than her husband because she loves him so much. They're both singers. His star falls as her's rises. He's more famous than she is when they meet. Alcohol kills his career as she becomes mega.

We watch him slowly descending into a miasma of depression but he never stops loving her. Nor she



Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga in *A Star is Born*.

him. It's a doomed love.

There's a motif in the film that's carried over from the other two versions. It has Cooper repeatedly asking

Lady Gaga to turn around and face him. Why?

“I just wanted to look at you.”

It's a wonderful touch.

The last time he does it he smiles sadly...with the knowledge that he's going to do himself in.

Three times

I watched this film three times in a row one week this year and chipped into it at various intervals about another dozen times afterwards. I found it addictive.

After Whitney Houston died, I thought nobody could ever equal the power of her voice. Now I knew someone can. That's the thing about music. One icon dies. Then another one comes along for a new generation.

When I listen to Lady Gaga singing *I'll Never Love Again* at the end of the film, in my mind I'm hearing

Whitney Houston singing *I Will Always Love You*. Both songs are operatic.

Nobody can scale octaves like these two women. Lady Gaga sings the song from three different sides of her throat: the top, the bottom and the back. Who else ever did that?

I'd been aware of her for years before seeing *A Star is Born* but I really knew nothing about her until I saw it. Afterwards I made it my business to get everything she did. I bought her CDs. I watched documentaries about her. I wanted to know if the film was a flash in the pan or if she could repeat the magic elsewhere.

At the moment nothing else is quite measuring up.

A God of relationships

As he was about to ascend to heaven, the Lord Jesus instructed the apostles to go, make disciples of all nations, Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In those days, baptism meant being immersed in water, plunged into the trine life of the Blessed Trinity.

About 60 years ago, the famous theologian, Karl Rahner, remarked that if the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity was removed, it would make virtually no difference to the majority of Christians. However, things have changed somewhat since then. The charismatic renewal movement awakened awareness of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The liturgical renewal and the Second Vatican Council advanced our understanding of the Mass. We understood it as the living memory of the sacrificial death of Jesus without any connection with his resurrection. I remember priests who had huge difficulties in this change. We were introduced to the Paschal Mystery, the full passing of Jesus. His journey was a triangle: coming down to us in human life, living among us even unto death, but then rising and ascending up to the Father.

Trinity and Mass

One cannot understand the Mass without an awareness of the Blessed Trinity.

How can we, puny mortals, reach up to God? The doxology at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer tells us how. In everyday conversation we use many small words, known as prepositions, which express the position or relationship of one thing or person to another. Take note of these prepositions. We rise up in glorifying the Father, through Jesus (mediator), with him (our human brother) and in him (as members of his community), all united in the power of love that is the Holy Spirit.

All creation

Belief in the God as the Blessed Trinity is not con-

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.

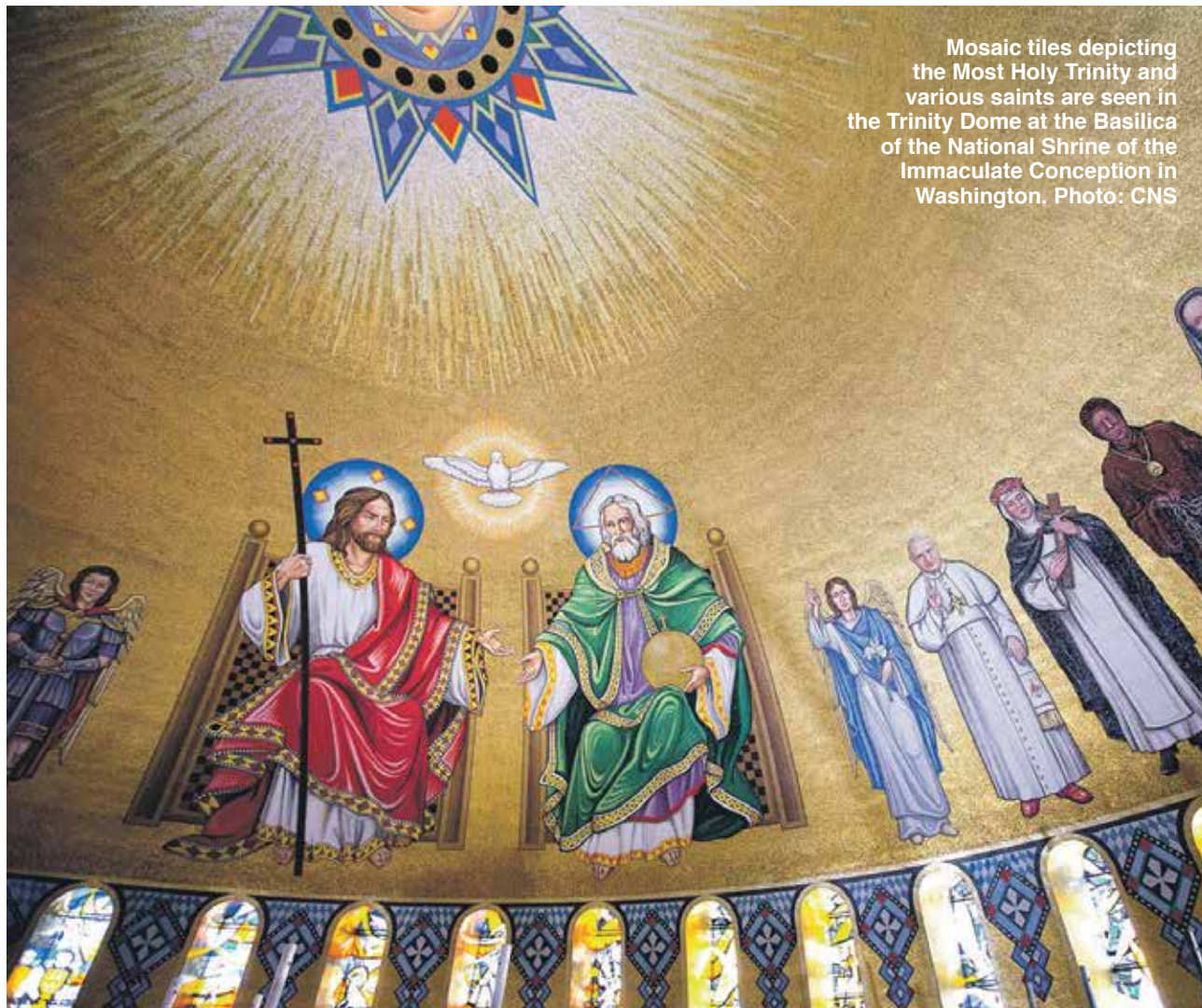


finied to the sanctuary but sheds light on the entire universe. Seven years ago, in preparation for the assembly in Paris on climate change, Pope Francis wrote an encyclical letter on the subject. Science developed into specialisation in specified fields of research. Specialisation needs a bigger vision offering inter-connectedness. Pope Francis drew attention to the inter-connectedness of the Blessed Trinity. "For Christians, believing in one God who is trinitarian communion suggests that the Trinity has left its mark on all creation" (*Laudato Si'*, 239). Nine hundred years previously, an extraordinary Benedictine nun in Germany, Hildegard of Bingen, wrote that God arranged everything in this world in consideration of everything else. This is the mark of the Trinity on all creation.

The development of quantum physics has increased an awareness among scientists that no single unit in the universe exists on its own but is part of the whole. Even the word universe derives from the oneness of all diversity. A growing number of scientists who previously dismissed any idea of God are now intrigued by the notion of God as an inter-related Trinity of Persons. It makes sense to them.

Science needs guidelines

Theology establishes a foundation for moral principles. Science will always need moral guidelines. The advances in globalisation and instant communication ought to develop the inter-connectedness between all nations and all people, but without moral values, the global problems are getting worse. The gap between rich and poor is ever wid-



Mosaic tiles depicting the Most Holy Trinity and various saints are seen in the Trinity Dome at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. Photo: CNS

ening. One percent of the population own 50% of the wealth. This cannot be morally correct. Self-interest, as an individual or as a nation, is a contradiction of our inter-connectedness. The Russian invasion of Ukraine involves not just two nations - every country in the world is paying a huge price. Literally, paying the price of war, as the cost of living is spiralling rapidly. We do not live in isolation but we are brothers and sisters.

A global community

The Covid-19 pandemic, so-called because it had gone worldwide, affected everybody. Yet, even the worst situation can be the source of some goodness. One good result has been an increased realisation that each one of

us depends on others and we owe respect and protection to every other person. Hildegard of Bingen wrote that we are to be living sparks of God's love like the daylight that comes from the sun. Recalling the words of Pope Francis: "The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way they make their own that Trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity (*Laudato Si'* 240). We are created in the image and likeness of God, each one connected with others in knowing and

loving. Recalling the words of Pope Francis, the Trinity has left its mark on all creation... and especially on human life.

Reflections

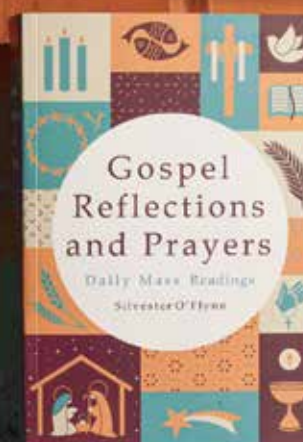
Let us reflect now on the Blessed Trinity in a more prayerful way, guided by some holy people of the past. St Paul began his letters with a blessing such as, "The grace of Our Lord

Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." The First Letter of John described how love begins in God the Father, is shown to us in the human life of God the Son, and is planted in us by the Holy Spirit.

The mystical Julian of Norwich was absorbed in God as my Maker, my Upholder and my Lover.

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Prayer

Triune God, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you.

Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

The poor of the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty.

Praise be to you! Amen.

God's sense of humour



If we genuinely trust scripture, our own experience, and our own sanity, we can only conclude that God has a sense of humour, and a robust and sneaky one at that. Where's the evidence?

A generation ago, Peter Berger wrote a remarkable little book entitled, *A Rumor of Angels*. Unlike Aquinas, Anselm, Descartes, and a number of renowned philosophers, he didn't try to 'prove' the existence of God through logic and argumentation. Rather, he simply examined a number of very ordinary human experiences and pointed to what's hidden inside and behind the walls of those experiences. For instance, when a mother soothes and calms a frightened child at night, assuring the child that there is nothing to fear, she does this in good faith only because at some deep level she intuitively knows that ultimately everything is all right. In effect, unconsciously, she is praying a Creed.

Now, one of the experiences Berger highlights is the experience of humour. Here's his thesis: no matter how oppressive and dire the circumstance, human beings always have the capacity to make light of it, to view it through the prism of irony and humour. For example, martyrs have joked with their executioners and, no doubt, there was some banter, sarcasm, irony, and bitter humour at times inside extermination camps. The fact that people can do this, and do in fact do it, shows that there



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

is always something transcendent inside us, something over which no human oppression has power, something that sets us above any situation within which we find ourselves. Our sense of irony and humour manifests that something in our soul sets us above anything that can beset us.

Source

And, this can have its source in only one place, inside of the creator who made us. Thus, not only must God have a sense of humour, humour must be something inherent within the nature of God, since humour is good and God is the author of all that is good.

There's a school of classical philosophy that believes God has four transcendental properties. God, it teaches, is one, true, good, and beautiful – to this we can add, humorous. Moreover, this

can be inferred from more than just the fact that sometimes we sense that humour manifests our transcendence within a given situation. More importantly, we can infer that humour has some godliness from examining the component parts of love. God is love, and humour is undeniably an important part of love.

When the classical Greek philosophers defined love, they highlighted a number of components within it, namely, erotic attraction, obsession, friendship, pragmatic arrangement, and altruism. However, they also highlighted another component, playfulness/banter/humour. How insightful. Humour along with healthy banter and playful teasing are part of the grease that enables us to sustain relationships long term, despite the inevitable over-familiarity, hurt, disappointment,

and boredom that beset even the most loving relationships. Humour helps make it all work. Thus, since it is an innate part of love, it is an innate part of God.

Sadly, we don't often picture God that way. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have this in common. We all picture God as male, celibate, solemn – and humorless. How might we picture God differently?

Holy pictures

If you were to draw up a composite face representing God, whose face would you include in this picture? The pious face of the gentle, blond-haired Jesus with a lamb on his shoulder we see in our holy pictures? Images of a serenely composed and quiet Mary that we see depicted in our statues of her? The face of Mother Teresa? The face of Therese of Lisieux? The face of Dorothy Day? Of Martin Luther King? Of Oscar Romero? Of Billy Graham? Of Henri Nouwen? Of Rachel Held Evans? The face of your mother or father? Would you also include the face of your favourite comedian or favourite wit? Jerry Seinfeld? Bette Midler? Rowan

Atkinson? The mischievous face of your colourful uncle telling a joke?

Any picture of God's face needs to manifest an inner soul that is one, true, good, beautiful, but also humorous and mischievous. Funny, while I believe that God is the author of humour, I've never been enamored by the various artistic depictions of Jesus as laughing uproariously. Good idea, good intention, good theology, but to my taste, lacking the right nuance. That kind of laughing face has an ephemeral quality that too easily gives way to something else after it's had its moment. God's face, I suspect, has a quieter, sneakier, more permanent mischievousness to it.

If this is true, if God not only has a sense of humour but is also the author of humour itself, then humour is an important quality within sanctity and holiness. What makes for wholeness, maturity, holiness, love, and for the kind of person you want beside you at the table, here and at the eternal one in heaven? Certainly you want someone who manifests the qualities that Jesus asked for in the Sermon on the Mount – along with a warm, playful, and mischievous sense of humour.

“Our sense of irony and humour manifests that something in our soul sets us above anything that can beset us”

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Oberammergau revisited



Jesus breaks the bread at the Last Supper.

J. Anthony Gaughan

The town of Oberammergau (the district “above the river Ammer”) is situated in the Bavarian Alps of Southern Germany. It is best known world-wide for its decennial Passion Play. The 42nd Oberammergau presentation of the play opened on May 14, 2022 and performances will continue up to October 2, 2022.

According to the local legend the staging of the play started with a vow.

Plague

In 1632 the plague was raging across Europe, including the village at Oberammergau. People sought help in prayer and vowed: “If the dying stops, every 10 years we will stage the play of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

The historical record states that by the early

1630s the many and diverse mini-kingdoms and statelets in Germany were devastated and overrun with infectious diseases as a result of the 30 Years War. This was particularly the case in Bavaria.

Initially Oberammergau was spared from contagion by diligent vigilance until the Church fair that fatal year when a local man, named Kaspar Schisler, brought the plague into the village. The community

gathered and prayed for an end to the plague.

“According to the local legend the staging of the play started with a vow”

They also presented a Passion Play and promised to present it every 10 years thereafter. This the Oberammergau villagers have done with a few exceptions;

namely the periods of World War I and World War II. And recently the Covid 19 pandemic has caused it to be postponed from 2020 to 2022.

I attended the Passion Play in 1960. I did so courtesy of Harold Ingham of Ingham Tours, London. He hired me to lead a pilgrimage from London to the Eucharistic Congress in Munich, which would also take in the Passion

Play. The group of more than 30 consisted mainly of Catholics, with some Protestants from a few different denominations. For a final briefing Ingham invited me to spend the night before departure at his luxury home situated at Harrow on the Hill, near the famous public school.

Attendance at the Congress was an inspiring experience for all the members of the group.

“The historical record states that by the early 1630s”



Pilate washes his hands of the affair.



Oberammergau in its mountain setting. Photo: CNS

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Jesus dies on the Cross.

“The 2022 Passion Play is different from its predecessors, yet essentially it remains the same”

the out-of-doors. There was no doubting the intention of the participants in the play to treat the subject-matter with appropriate grace and respect. Thus the play was an authentic, if at times amateurish, presentation of the Gospel story.

“The dialogue of the major figures is nuanced to highlight the dilemmas they faced”

The Oberammergau Passion Play in 2022 is different in many ways from its predecessors. The town now has a population of well over 3000. To ensure a high standard of performance non-residents of the town fill some of the major roles. To this end outsiders have also been added to the choir and the orchestra. Much of the text has been rewritten and updated and lines which might suggest a hint of anti-Semitism have been excised.

The general cast is diverse. Besides the townspeople, the cast of 1,800 includes refugee children and non-Christians. The play is presented in a splendid theatre in two sessions, lasting in all just five hours.

Portrayal

The Passion Play in 2022 is no longer just a step-by-step simple portrayal of the Passion. It is a scholarly presentation with numerous allusions and references to the Old Testament. The dialogue of the major figures is nuanced to highlight the dilemmas they faced. This is particularly the case with Judas Iscariot. The sophisticated production is one which is truly fit for our times.

The 2022 Passion Play is different from its predecessors, yet essentially it remains the same. It continues to tell the greatest story ever told, namely that Jesus Christ was born, lived, suffered, died and rose again for the love of every person born into this world.

We were accommodated in the homes of German families. I was the guest of an engineer and his wife, a teacher. They were both Lutherans and did not have a family. Both spoke very good English which presumably was one reason why they had been invited to host a visitor or visitors to the Congress. They were natives of Hamburg in the north of Germany but in the chaos of the war ended up in Southern Germany. Their sharing this information with me was the extent of our conversation about the war.

“Centuries-old taboos were also associated with the main actors”

In Munich we had a ring-side seat at what was then known as the ‘Economic Miracle’. At war’s end Germany’s economic and social fabric was at the level of the stone age. The Chancellor, Dr Konrad Adenauer, and his administration urged their fellow-citizens to prioritise the restoration of the roads, bridges, railway infrastructure and centres of industry. They responded valiantly to the appeal and with the support of the US-sponsored Marshall Plan by 1960 Germany had become once more one of the world’s leading industrial nations. One noticeable feature of this development was that all residential buildings or shopping centres had been re-constructed in a minimalist style. Thus, the home

of my hosts was strictly functional with not a picture or ornament in sight.

Programme

The programme of the Eucharistic Congress was carried out with Teutonic efficiency. Not a few of the sessions featured the green shoots of the then coming radical liturgical movement which preceded the Second Vatican Council. On one occasion, while escorting my group on a suburban train to the Congress centre, I met my friend Enda McDonagh. Enda, who was two years senior to me in Maynooth, I learned was at that time pursuing

studies in Canon law at the University of Munich.

“To ensure a high standard of performance non-residents of the town fill some of the major roles”

Oberammergau and the Passion Play were quite a contrast to Munich and the Eucharistic Congress.

There were very few frills attached to the village and its Passion Play in 1960. Centuries-old features of the play were observed. Everyone

in the village had a role in the play as actors, members of the choir, providing the music, the text and every other aspect of its production. Also no one outside the village was involved in the play.

Taboos

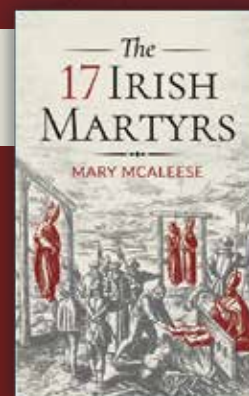
Centuries-old taboos were also associated with the main actors: Christ, Mary, Judas and Mary Magdalen. The lines in the text condemning the Jewish elite, who were responsible for the death of Christ in Roman-occupied Palestine, were unrestrained. The running-time of the play was seven hours and it was presented in two sessions in



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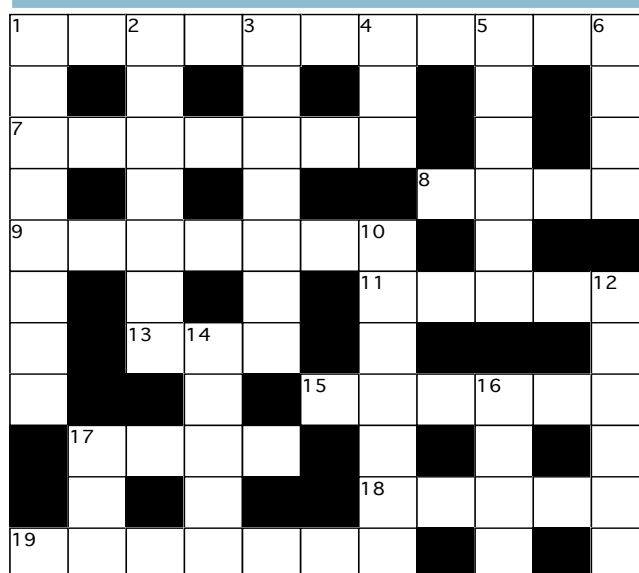
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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Children's 436



Across

- 1 Outdoor meal in the middle of the day (6,5)
7 People get on and off planes here (7)
8 Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of ____ (4)
9 Ripping (7)
11 Chennai and Mumbai are in this Asian country (5)
13 Small barrel (3)
15 Long John Silver had this kind of bird as a pet (6)
17 You might carry your shopping in these (4)
18 ____ Mac Cumhaill was the leader of the Fianna (5)
19 Person in charge of a game of hurling, for example (7)

drivers to leave their vehicles for a while (3,4)

3 Getting the creases out of clothes (7)

4 Started a fire (3)

5 Signalled 'yes' with your head (6)

6 Holy song (4)

10 African animal with a long neck (7)

12 Playing a part in a movie or play (6)

14 Large bird of prey (5)

16 Bird with black feathers, or a castle in chess (4)

Down

- 1 "____ makes perfect" (8)
2 This place is set aside for honey (3)

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GORDIUS NO. 561

Across — 1 Arc 3 Entrance fee 8 Remove 9 Jaundice 10 Aptly 11 North Carolina 13 Cocoa 15 Chew the cud 16 Flooded 20 Rowdy 21 Amend 23 Blade 25 Cinema 26 Demonstrate 27 Axe

Down — 1 Adriatic Sea 2 Comatose 3 Envoy 4 Rejoice 5 Canon 6 Friary 7 Ewe 12 Hand-grenade 13 Cahir 14 Allay 17 de Valera 18 Two pair 19 Red Rum 22 Dylan 23 Beige

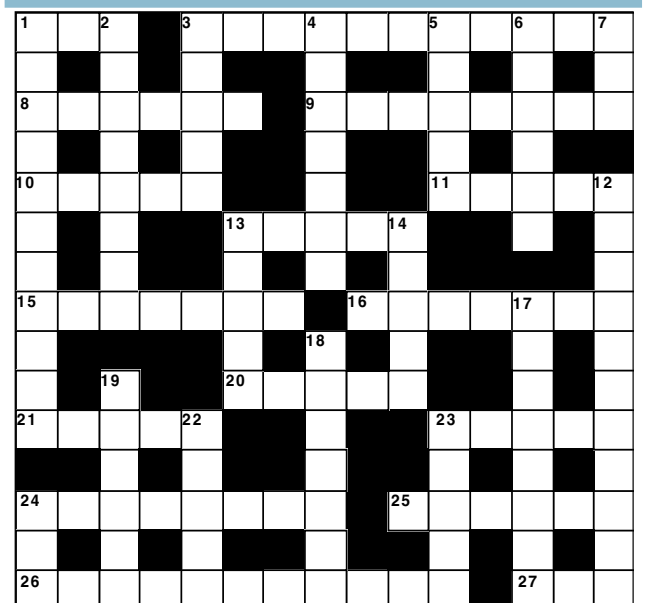
CHILDREN'S No. 435

Across — 1 Phoenix Park 6 Kettle 8 Assists 11 Snails 12 Leopard 14 Nought 16 Oval 17 Erase 18 Here 19 Dunk

Down — 1 Pakistan 2 Outlaw 3 Nil all 4 Arms 5 Keys 7 Essential 9 Improved 10 Terrapin 13 Agree 15 Once

Crossword

Gordius 562



Across

- 1 Pull at (3)
3 Ladies from Paris or Bordeaux, perhaps (11)
8 The Milky Way, for example (6)
9 Biblical character who was turned to a pillar of salt (4,4)
10 Domesticates (5)
11 Share out flightless South American birds (5)
13 Out of condition (5)
15 Accelerate (5,2)
16 Disc you throw and catch (7)
20 What physically defines a female as marsupial (5)
21 The Spanish equivalent of James, a name shared by Maradona and Velazquez (5)
23 Push roughly (5)
24 1914-1918 global conflict (5,3)
25 China clay (6)
26 With this medicinal herb, the kilt's hem lit up (4,7)
27 A style of Japanese theatre (3)

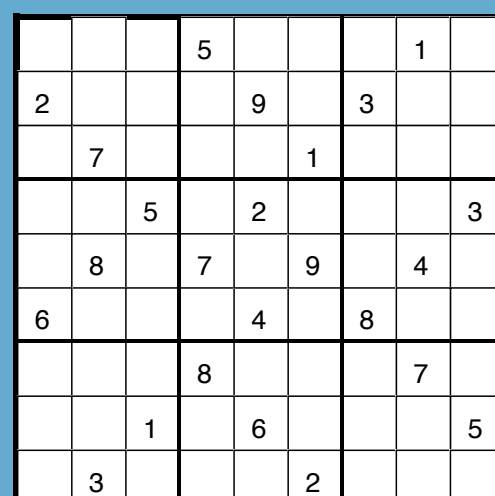
Down

- 1 Extremely mean or stingy (5-6)
2 Dig lemon out of this source of precious metal (8)
3 Predators identified by a brush (5)
4 Invalidate, bring to naught (7)
5 More sage (5)
6 Sent by post - especially in the USA (6)
7 It denotes a lady's maiden name (3)
12 The penultimate hole in a round of golf (11)
13 Take over a position by force (5)
14 Portable light (5)
17 Son of David and Victoria Beckham, named for a borough in New York (8)
18 Medical name for the bone in the upper arm (7)
19 Surname of the author of 'Black Beauty' (6)
22 Group of eight (5)
23 This rock is disturbed least (5)
24 Paste (3)

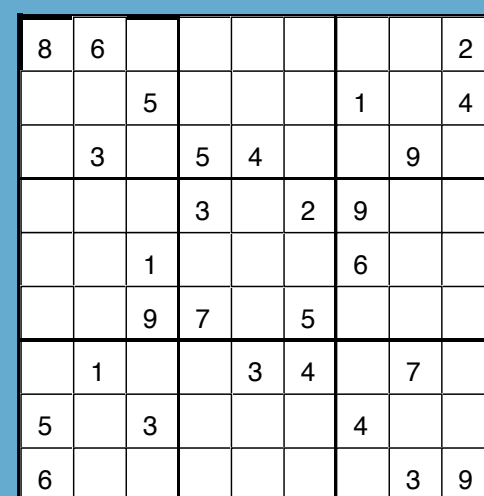
Sudoku Corner

436

Easy



Hard



Last week's Easy 435

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 3 |
| 8 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| 7 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| 9 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| 3 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 4 |
| 2 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 9 |
| 5 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 8 |
| 1 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 5 |

Last week's Hard 435

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 7 |
| 3 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 5 |
| 7 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| 1 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 8 |
| 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 9 |
| 8 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| 5 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| 2 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 |

Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



Class reunions and the value of friendship

IN RECENT DAYS, I attended a class reunion of my Maynooth ordination class (1987). We have managed to meet every year since we left Maynooth. Like everything else, Covid had its say, so we have not met since 2019. In earlier years, we moved around the country, with a different classmate arranging the reunion in a hotel in his locality. As years passed, we decided to have a central location and to meet there. The gathering includes a celebration of Mass, an evening meal, and a lot of catching up! We stay overnight and head back to our own place the following morning after breakfast or maybe a walk if energy allows!

Three of our classmates travelled together and mentioned that, in the car, they had attempted to name all who are on our class piece in Maynooth.

A large framed compilation of the photos of those ordained in a given year line the cloisters of Maynooth College with the overflow, of which we are almost a part, going into rooms, upstairs or other locations throughout the college.

They recall those who came to Maynooth, in the belief that God had called them there and those who left the college six or seven years later to return to their dioceses or missionary orders, as newly ordained priests. When I was a stu-



dent, they used to tell us that more than 10,000 men had made that journey so I'm sure that figure still stands and I imagine you can add a few to it, though I doubt it has reached 20,000. If I'm wrong, no doubt someone will tell me!

Classmates

There were 42 of us ordained that summer so my three classmates, enroute to the reunion, tried to name them all. They got to 41, but one name escaped their collective memory – thank God it wasn't me! They kept at it though and went through the names again and the memory was stirred enough to give them the name. All accounted for.

Some of our classmates have died, others have left ministry, but all have their place on that class piece and a

place in our memories too, even if we must jog the memory at times. I have a framed copy of the class piece hanging in my house. In the moves over the years, it has always made the journey and is amongst the last things I take out of the house being left and the first to go on the wall of the destination reached. When I look at the faces, many memories come back to me – memories of good days and an enthusiasm around becoming a priest. Many of those who began the journey on that September day in 1981, were not ordained. Somewhere along the way, other paths opened to them and realisation followed that priesthood was not to be their travelling companion in life. Some of the very best of us, made that decision and as they left, it often made me wonder, "How can I still be here? He

was better than I ever could hope to be." God's ways, in truth, are not ours.

Changes

The face in the thirty-five-year-old photograph serves as a reminder that a journey was made and a reminder too that the years have brought many changes, not least to the very face. I take comfort though, from knowing that the man in the photo had the best of intentions and felt that he could contribute to life – making something called a difference, that would be for the good of those around him. There was a generosity there, a trust and a real hope that he could be to others as others had been to him, a sign of God's abiding and loving presence.

One of the waitresses in the hotel took a photograph of us after dinner. There is no denying the passing of years but I'm happy to say I was there. The classmates on their shared return journey, didn't need to remember a photograph from the night before to recall names. We had met, prayed, chatted together and shared a meal and realised again the value of friendship. Is it any wonder that Jesus gathered the twelve? He wanted them to have clear and lasting memories of one another.

Thanks to all who share the road with us.

No sugar coating

Thinking of the class piece, there is a story I like to share. A few years ago, I celebrated Mass in a parish in our diocese, supplying for a priest who was away. I did not introduce myself since I had been in the parish many times and felt the people knew me. After Mass a lady asked my name and when I told her, she looked at me from head to toe, shook her head in disbelief and said: "Father Sherlock, I would never know I laid an eye on you!" I tried to respond and cover over the gaping wound in my spirit! "I know, the years have not been very kind!", I said. She did another head-to-toe scan and dealt the deadly and knockout blow: "Well they have not!"



PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU



Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built."

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

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.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU**
€..... **UKRAINE APPEAL**
€..... **WELLS AND CLEAN WATER**
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state no. of Masses)
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to
www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.