

# The Irish Catholic

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# Church backs major new youth evangelisation series

Greg Daly

The Church has thrown its support behind an ambitious new film series aimed to energise young Christians and help them tackle doubts they might have about their Faith.

The eight-part *NUA* film series was launched at Dublin's Gonzaga College last month ahead of the release of census figures that show significant declines in numbers of Irish people identifying as members of the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church.

The project cost almost €250,000 according to series presenter Jonny Somerville, who told *The Irish Catholic* the series was funded with the help of trust funds in Ireland, Britain and the United States.

## Input

Although produced by the Protestant evangelical organisation Scripture Union, *NUA* has had significant Catholic input, with Augustinian scripture scholar Fr Kieran

O'Mahony being one of three members on the project's ecumenical advisory committee and other Catholics contributing at other stages of the project.

"The principle behind it all has always been that whatever we can do together, we do together," Dublin's Auxiliary Bishop Eamonn Walsh told *The Irish Catholic*.

"When I first heard of this venture and then when I saw the actual product, it was very clear that this was a very useful evangelising tool for all age groups, and I could see it being used very fruitfully in parish discussion groups," said Dr Walsh, who attended the launch along with the Archdiocese of Dublin's post-primary adviser Anna Maloney.

Dr Walsh suggested that the series could be used in parishes ahead of Masses, saying: "When you come to Church you come to worship God, but also to have your faith nourished and your knowledge of your faith

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## Keeping the spirit of St John Paul II alive



Award participants from Scoil Bhríde, Mercy Secondary School, Tuam, Co. Galway at the 10th anniversary celebration of the Pope John Paul II Award in Knock Shrine. Photo: Stephen Latimer. See Pages 10-11.

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# Rumours of the Church's demise have been greatly exaggerated

**W**e've been talking about crisis in the Church in Ireland for so long it runs the risk of becoming a vicious circle of negativity. Paradoxically, the need to face up to the piercing urgency of Church reform and renewal can become paralysing as we endlessly talk about what needs to be done.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world goes about its business tired – as Pope Francis would say – of a Church that is endlessly self-referencing.

According to the latest census figures (released late last week) some 78% of the people of the Republic now self-describe themselves as Catholic. North of the border, about 41% of people tick 'Catholic' on the census form. All told, 4,467,133 people on the island of Ireland describe themselves as Catholic.

Now, it would be a mistake to believe that this means the same thing to each of those almost 4.5million Catholics. Some will be devout Mass-goers, for others it will be little more than a background identity. Nonetheless, being Catholic means enough to freely choose to tick that box on the census form.

### Expression

Yet, many (most?) of those who describe themselves as Catholic in Ireland rarely if ever attend Mass in their local church. For many



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

people, the outward expression of religious faith has become irrelevant. Now, I often hear people describe themselves as 'spiritual but not religious'. It's an interesting term that, at first glance, appears satisfying to those who utter it.

In reality, it often means little more than vague feelings of wellness or psychological resilience. Not that coping mechanisms are not important, but they're not the same thing as the personal relationship with God that is at the heart of Christianity.

**“We've become so used to Catholicism being the dominant culture, it no longer is”**

Pope Francis never tires of urging Catholics to go to the 'existential margins' to make faith a reality for people. This is an urgent need in Ireland. And it can only be addressed if we are to seriously consider the Gospel mandate to preach the Good News to our

contemporary culture. Amongst my peers, very few people go to Mass regularly. Not that they're opposed to it, they're simply left with the nagging question 'what's the point?'

The challenge for people of faith is not to roll our eyes at the question, but be ready to answer it. St Peter encourages Christians to “always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have” (1 Peter 3:15).

We're not very good at this – particularly in Ireland. We've become so used to Catholicism being the dominant culture, it no longer is.

Faith must be something that we propose and re-propose in the public sphere. There's everything to play for and despite the obvious challenges, now is not the time for discouragement.

If the Easter story teaches us anything, it's that God can transform the darkness of Good Friday in to the light of Easter.

## Church backs major youth evangelisation series

» Continued from Page 1

inspired in some way and this is an excellent tool for that.”

The project focuses on common difficulties young people have with Christianity, and Dr Walsh said this is well-targeted for a time when religious faith is defined more by conviction than by conven-

tion.

“Attendance at church may be declining, but people's search for faith is much deeper than when we lived in a culture that was predominantly faith-presumed,” he said, continuing, “Now you have people saying, well, I pray but I don't agree with everything that a particular

Church professes, or I have been put off by the scandals, and the poor witness, but I'm still searching for a meaning in life and God is very much part of that.”

### Worship

Despite discouraging census figures that indicate Ireland's Catholic population

has dropped from 84.2% of the population five years ago to 78.3% now, Dr Walsh said, “Faith isn't just a box to tick, but is something that propels us forward in the way we worship God and the way we treat people,” adding that such a faith requires a “solid foundation”.

See Pages 12 & 13.



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# Dropping census figures show strength of Catholic identity

**Greg Daly**

The most striking thing about the 2016 census is how it points to the resilience of Irish Catholic identity, a leading Church number-cruncher has said.

According to the census, Catholics now make up 78.3% of Ireland's population, down from 84.2% five years ago, with the number of Catholics in the country having dropped by 132,000, from almost 3.86 million to 3.73 million.

Church of Ireland membership has also fallen over the same period, as has membership of the Methodist Church, while membership of Orthodox churches and some evangelical groups has risen, largely due to immigration. The percentage of Ireland's population claiming to have 'no religion' has risen from 5.9% to 9.8%.

## Growing

Prof. Stephen Bullivant, director of the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society at St Mary's University in Twickenham, told *The Irish Catholic* that "the Irish 'No religion' population has been growing, slowly and steadily, for a while. However, the 2016 data show a significant jump.

"While overall numbers are still fairly small, this may well be a portent of things to come:

the much-discussed 'rise of the Nones' in the USA over the past 25 years may well offer an instructive comparison," the London-based academic said.

Despite this, he said, a willingness for Irish people to identify themselves as Catholic remains remarkably strong.

"For me, though, the most striking thing here is the relative resilience – despite everything – of Catholic identity in Ireland," he said, continuing, "Yes, there has been decline, about 1% of the population per year, between 2011 and 2016 (more or less in line with other main Christian denominations in Ireland). But a Catholic-identifying population of 78.3% still makes Ireland very much the outlier among leading, modern Western nations."

Prof. Bullivant cautioned, however, against interpreting the census figures in a simplistic fashion.

"A basic 'What is your religion?' identity question tells us nothing about practice, belief, or even how people feel about their chosen identity," he said, continuing, "Evidence from the UK, for example, shows that a large proportion answer 'Christian' to such a question who would answer 'No religion' if asked something slightly more nuanced. But it certainly tells us something."

See David Quinn, Page 7.

## Calling all pro-life ladies!

The LoveBoth Project is taking part in the VHI Women's Mini Marathon on Monday, June 5. The group would love if as many of their supporters as possible could join them for a day of fun and fitness as they help to spread the message of the LoveBoth Project. To find out how you can get involved, contact [info@loveboth.ie](mailto:info@loveboth.ie). Pictured below are Miriam Smith, Kate Gallagher and Cora Sherlock of the LoveBoth Project.



## NI bishops asked for clarity on coffin flags

**Mags Gargan**

A group of former republican prisoners has asked the bishops to clarify the rules around placing Irish tricolours on coffins inside churches during funerals in the North.

Flags and paramilitary trappings have been banned since the former Bishop of Derry, Dr Edward Daly took the decision in 1987 when shots were fired over the coffin of IRA man, Gerard Logue inside the grounds of St Columba's Church in Derry.

The debate was reignited last month when the coffin of former Sinn Féin and Provisional IRA leader, Martin McGuinness was allowed into the same church draped in a tricolour.

Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown later said Mr McGuinness had been afforded "a comparable honour to that which would have been accorded to a former or serving head of state or government of Ireland (Uachtarán or Taoiseach)".

"This is in recognition, not of an individual, but of a position that they held in public life," he said.

Frank Dempsey from the Falls Cultural Society, a group of ex-prisoners who have been petitioning Church officials in recent years in an effort to have the rules around flags clarified, said the Church's approach has been inconsistent.

"Martin McGuinness was allowed to have it and was entitled to it, why can't every other Irishman," he asked. "The problem is priests are all over the place, there is no consistency."

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# Bishops ask Government to use influence to protect minorities

**Mags Gargan**

Irish bishops have emphasised the need for the Government to use every effort to protect religious minorities from persecution, following the latest bombings targeting Christians in Egypt.

Bishop John McAreevey, Chair of the Bishops Council for Justice and Peace, said the bombings at two Coptic Christian churches in Cairo on Palm Sunday were “clearly a sectarian attack” which is “challenging the idea that Christians have a place in the Middle East”.

“It highlights the vulnerability of Christians in parts of the Middle East which are predominantly Muslim and it is a challenge to the governments in those places to make sure minorities are properly physically protected and also protected by law.”

He also said it was important that the Irish Government communicated “our concern that Christians would be properly looked after and protected”.

## Diplomatic level

Bishop Kevin Doran, also a member of Council, said the bishops have asked the Department of Foreign Affairs

to “particularly use their offices at the diplomatic level in countries where Christians are deliberately targeted to provide them with protection”.

Bishop Doran said there was also a “need for governments in these countries to protect religious minorities”. He said “any bombing that has taken human life is obviously grossly immoral”, it is “particularly tragic when people are targeted because of their religion”.

## Social action

He said as Christians we must “continue to promote through our teaching and social action respect for life from the very beginning right to its natural end”.

Bishop McAreevey called on Christians “in our own country” to continue to pray for persecuted Christians and to “show solidarity for them in any way that they can”.

The death toll from the two bomb blasts in Egypt was 45 as this paper went to print. The so-called Islamic State (ISIS) said it was behind the explosions, which is the latest in a series of attacks targeting the Christian minority in the country.

## Cuan Mhuire opens in Tralee

‘Friends of Cuan Mhuire’, a new nationwide network to support people in recovery from addiction, opened a centre in Tralee, Co. Kerry last week.

Bishop Ray Browne, who made the initiative one of the special projects for the ‘Year of Mercy’ in the Diocese of Kerry, said he hopes that the new centre at 11 High Street will be the first of many across the county.

Thanking Bishop Browne for his support, Sr Consilio said: “Every town in Ireland is impacted by addiction, the recovery programme is only half the battle. Remaining in recovery, day by day, can be a challenge and people need a lot of encouragement and support.”

## ‘Egg-cellent’ school fundraiser



Pupils from Blarney Street CBS in Cork City Centre taking part in an Easter egg hunt in aid of Trócaire.

## Downgrading of RE in curriculum ‘worrying’

**Greg Daly**


Catholic schools and religious education experts have criticised State proposals to remove religious education as a core element in Ireland’s primary school curriculum.

Under a consultation document issued by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, no space is explicitly set aside in school curriculum for religious education, in contrast to the current curriculum, introduced in 1999, which required that 2.5 hours per week be allocated to religious education.

“I believe this is indicative of the push to privatise religion and confine it to the personal sphere”, Dr Dan O’Connell of Limerick’s Mary Immaculate College told *The Irish Catholic*. He criticised the decision to relegate the so-called ‘patron’s programme’, which typically includes religious education, to a discretionary and flexible part of the curriculum as having been “done without any explanation whatsoever, and without any evidence or research”.

Seamus Mulconry, General Secretary of the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, told *The*

*Irish Catholic* that the decision was “worrying”. “The patron’s programme normally refers to religious education, and putting it into flexible time means putting it in with things that are not appropriate for a programme which is fundamental to the ethos of schools,” he said, continuing, “we are not the only organisation that has concerns about this – I think those concerns would be widely shared by other patrons as well.” He expressed concerns that if the patron’s programme was downgraded, “over time it may erode its role in the school”.



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## Iconic crucifixion statue reinstated in Belfast

An iconic statue of the crucified Christ has been reinstated outside a church on Belfast's Falls Road.

The 20-foot 'Passion of Christ' figure fell from the cross outside St Paul's Church in February. Clerics and parishioners acted quickly to move the statue and used a trolley to take it from the scene.

A spokesperson for the Diocese of Down and Connor said at the time that an iron join between the figure of Jesus and the cross appeared to have "worn away" and vandalism was not to blame. He said the statue had to be assessed to gauge if it could be repaired or had to be replaced.

According to historical papers the Belfast landmark, which has stood for decades under trees across from the Royal Victoria Hospital, could be seen by a German airman lit up in the night as bombs rained down on the city during the Blitz.

A blessing of the statue by Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor took place on Monday night.



# More women in Church? It's more men we need

In response to the latest census information – showing that just over 78% of people in the Irish Republic now describe themselves as Catholic (down from 84%), there have been calls to involve more women in the Church's structures and institutions. The thinking is that the male-dominated structure of the Church makes Catholicism seem old-fashioned and behind the times.

I'm all for involving more women in any institution, but in terms of strategy for the Catholic Church, I'd take the opposite view: the real challenge is to try and attract more men into faith practice.

Visit almost any church at any time and check it out. Despite women not being involved in Church hierarchy, the attendance will be predominantly female.

## Preparations

I went to Mass last year in a small village near Avignon in France. In opening up the church and doing the preparations for Sunday services, there was not a male in sight. When the priest appeared, he was the only man present. As

Mary Kenny



Mass started, a couple of other men appeared, one elderly, one father of a young family.

What would a market strategist deduct from this? That 'the product' has no problem attracting women. The problem is attracting men. The logical answer would be that 'the product' needs to become more appealing to the masculine.

Now, I apologise for drawing a parallel between faith and marketisation, especially at the most important and holiest of Christian feasts, when our thoughts should be on the Passion and the Resurrection.

But this is an important subject, and lessons from market

strategies can be useful.

If a Church (or any institution) seems to be too 'feminine', or even 'feminised', it's harder to get men involved. That's well established. J.K. Rowling was told she would never sell her *Harry Potter* books to boys if she used her Christian name – 'Joanna'.

Call this misogyny if you will, but it's the way things work. Girls will play with boys' toys, but more rarely will boys agree to play with girls' toys.

The religions gaining ground in Ireland – Islam and Evangelical Christianity – have a brand of 'male muscularity'.

Think outside the box: evangelise men.

## Legion of Mary deserve recognition

Veronica Kane of Blanchardstown, Dublin won the 'Letter of the Week' prize in the *Sunday Independent* last weekend, with – perhaps surprisingly – a letter pointing out the good work that the Legion of Mary had done for unmarried mothers in the past.

"I grew up in North Great George's Street in the Dublin inner city in the 1950s," she wrote. "At the end of the street there were five houses that the Legion of Mary owned. They bought them to help unmarried mothers to have somewhere to live and look after their babies.

"The condition of the houses was not great but it was an option instead of having to give up their babies. Most of the mothers found it hard as there was no unmarried mother's allowance at the time.

## Good lives

"However, a lot of the children I knew grew up to have good lives, thanks to the Legion of Mary."

What an interesting TV or radio documentary it would make to track down some of



those adults that Veronica Kane knew as children, who grew up under the protection of this caring organisation founded by Frank Duff. The research basis for such a documentary would begin with Finola Kennedy's meticulous biography (*Frank Duff – A Life Story*) published in 2011.

I should declare an interest and say that Finola is a friend of mine, but the biography stands on its own merits, and illuminates the very point that Veronica Kane makes.

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## Groups urged to promote World Meeting of Families

Marriage and family outreach movements with international aspects have been urged to promote next year's World Meeting of Families.

Speaking at a gathering of 17 groups convened by the Irish Bishops' Conference's Council for Marriage and the Family, Fr Tim Bartlett, Secretary General of the World Meeting of Families 2018, thanked the assembled representatives and urged them to rise up to the responsibility Pope Francis has given to the Irish Church.

Fr Bartlett encouraged the groups to use their organisations, many of which are globally linked, to push the international event, including by sending links to the meeting's official video. He urged them to continue their own initiatives. "If you have ideas you want to run with – please run with them and keep us informed," he said, continuing, "we will try to share your events through our website and others may be inspired by your ideas."

# Priests have role in getting answers on the 'Disappeared' – primate

Mags Gargan

Priests could have a role in sharing sensitive information which would help families left grieving after the Troubles, the Primate of All Ireland has said.

Archbishop Eamon Martin told a Mass for the Disappeared in St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh, there are people on all sides who carry secrets, "memories of their own involvement in the deaths and injury of thousands of men, women and children".

Dr Martin appealed to the conscience of anyone who can help with the cases of Joe Lynskey, Robert Nairac, Seamus Ruddy and Columba McVeigh, "to bring even the slightest clues" to the attention of the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains, so that the "agonising wait of the remaining families can be shortened and their loved ones can at last have a Christian burial".

### Trustworthy

He added that "in the absence of a formal mechanism", he was confident that there are "trustworthy people in society and in the Churches" who would be willing to accept and sensitively share information on killings during the Troubles.

The Archbishop of Armagh said there must be "so many people walking around today who know in their hearts that the information that they have locked down inside them is capable of unlocking the uncertainty and grief of families".

"In some cases they pulled the trigger, planted the bomb, blindly followed orders or gave the command for death or punishment. In other

cases they willingly drove a car, kept watch, spread fear, collected money or information, sheltered combatants, colluded or covered up,

destroyed evidence or intimidated witnesses.

"These were awful, terrible times," he said.

The archbishop also asked

for prayers at this "critical time in the peace process", that politicians in the North will have a "breakthrough at the talks in Stormont".

## Performance with a passion



Fr Paul Farren (second right) with Pope John Paul II Award participants from the Diocese of Derry who performed a Passion Play in St Eugene's Cathedral in Derry at the weekend.

## Pro-lifers call for SDLP suspension answers

Greg Daly

Pro-life campaigners in the North have called on people to push the SDLP to explain why they have suspended three councillors who abstained from voting in a motion that called for women not to be intimidated by "harassment" from anti-abortion campaigners.

The Belfast City Council vote, calling for councillors to condemn any such harassment across the North,

was proposed by the Green Party's Georgina Milne, who said she had been approached by reproductive clinics reporting that people were forced to "run a gauntlet of intimidation and harassment" when they entered their centres.

Although the SDLP instructed its councillors to support the motion, Pat Convery, Declan Boyle and Kate Mullan abstained from the vote. The party whip was withdrawn from the three,

who have been suspended indefinitely.

Claiming that the motion used "manipulative, misleading language like 'harassment and intimidation' when referring to a pro-life vigil held at the Marie Stopes Centre in Belfast", Precious Life Ireland noted that nobody from the council had contacted the Stop Marie Stopes Campaign to ask for their version of events before voting on this motion.

Alicea Brennan from the

Stop Marie Stopes Campaign condemned the motion, rejecting "false claims of harassment" and pointing out that "at no time has a 'client' of Marie Stopes ever made a claim of harassment to police".

She criticised the council for having "passed a motion seeking to curtail our Human Rights under the European Convention to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly".

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# The 'à la carte nones' are the counterpart of the 'à la carte Catholics'



David Quinn

There has been a great deal of coverage about the undoubtedly significant fact that the number of people living in Ireland who say they belong to no religion has soared in the five years from Census 2011 to Census 2016.

These 'nones' as they are called (because they mark the box marked 'none' in the Census religion question), numbered 270,000 in 2011 but had jumped to 468,000 by 2016, a 73% increase.

No other religion category has increased by as much as the 'nones'. Their share of the population is now just under 10%. On the other hand, the number of people who ticked the 'Catholic' box in last year's Census declined from 84% to 78% compared with 2011.

Let's have a quick look at some of the other religions. What about the various Protestant denominations? The two major Protestant denominations, the Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian Church, both declined marginally. This was after a preceding period in which immigration swelled their numbers.

The number of people belonging to one or another Pentecostal Church has also declined somewhat (by 5%).

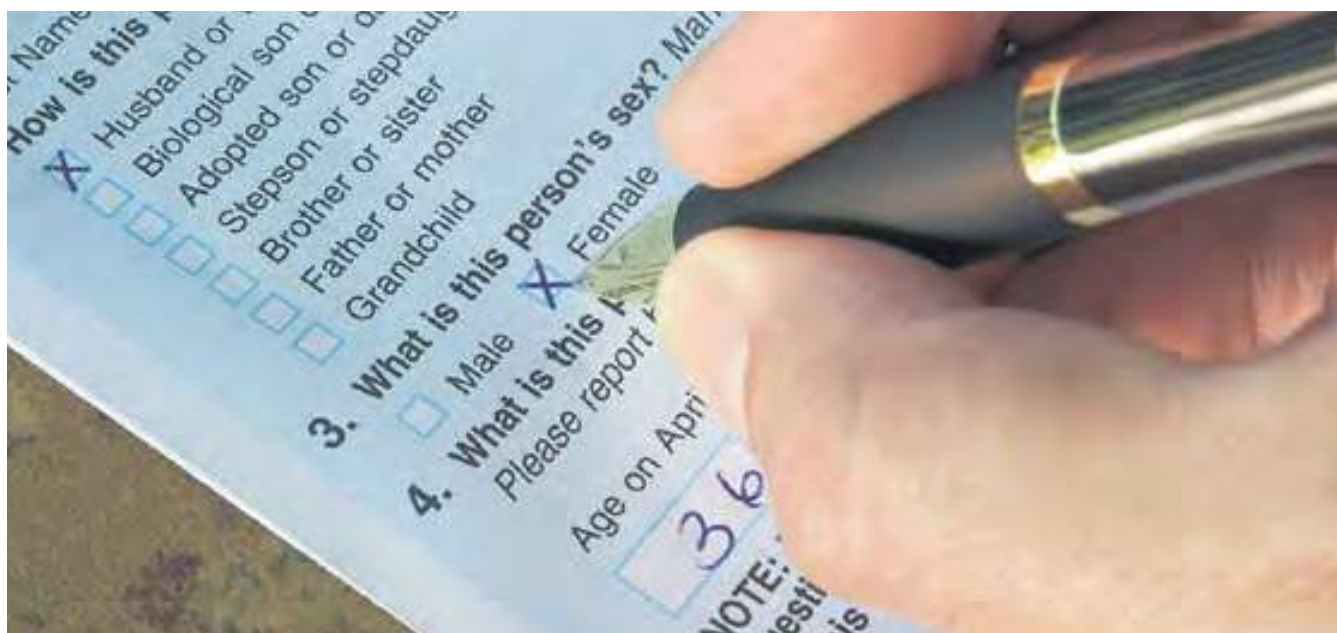
On the other hand, the number of people living here who belong to one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches has increased by 37% to 62,000.

There has also been an increase in the number of people living here who belong to a non-Christian religion. The number of Muslims has increased from 49,000 to 63,000 while the number of Hindus has increased from almost 11,000 to just over 14,000. In both cases the adherents will be overwhelmingly immigrants or their children.

## Immigrants

Many of the 'nones' are also immigrants. The Census 2016 figures, released last week, shows that about a quarter of them are immigrants which is higher than the number of immigrants living in Ireland. Therefore, immigrants are more likely to be 'nones' than the native population. English people, for example, are much more likely to be 'nones' than Irish people.

The proportion of the population who identify as



'nones' in the British Social Attitudes survey reached 48.5% in 2014. That is a huge figure, almost five times higher than the Irish one.

So, what are we to make of the rise of the 'nones' in Ireland? One thing it certainly means is that a growing number of people who don't practice any religion are now more willing to say they don't belong to any religion either.

For years in Ireland, the vast majority of people who didn't practice religion were unwilling to say they didn't belong to any religion. That is starting to change and the trend will probably continue to accelerate in the years ahead.

**“But are 'nones' necessarily non-believers, that is, are they atheists or agnostics?”**

For example, younger people are more likely than older people to say they are 'nones', although we shouldn't overstate this too much. While the total number of 'nones' in the population is 9.8% it rises only a bit to 12% among those in their 30s. That's lower than I would have predicted but it will rise in time in all probability.

But are 'nones' necessarily non-believers, that is, are they atheists or agnostics? The Census doesn't tell us, but other surveys do.

For example, RTÉ conducted a poll of voters as they came out of voting stations in the recent

General Election. This exit poll found that 14% of those who voted were 'nones' (higher than in the general population) but only 4% of those polled said they were atheists and just 1% said they were agnostics. In other words, about two-thirds of 'nones' believe in God.

This is backed up by US polling. The Pew Forum, which is a major polling company, has been tracking American 'nones' for some time here.

## Poll

A poll conducted by Pew in late 2015 found that 61% of 'nones' in America believe in God and 20% pray every day.

The numbers of 'nones' in the US as at 2014, according to Pew, was 22%, up 6% compared with 2007.

So, using 'nones' as our measure, Ireland remains far less secular than the US, never mind Britain.

The fact that so many 'nones' believe in God and even pray daily means they cannot simply be claimed by atheist organisations for themselves, and cannot be simplistically used as part of the campaign against Church-run schools.

Britain alone proves that. As we have seen, almost half of Britons don't belong to any specific religious faith but at the same time, Church-run schools in Britain are extremely popular.

By the same token, all those who say they are Christian in the Census cannot be automatically claimed by the various Churches either. Obviously, all of the 78% of people living here who said they are

Catholics do not subscribe to all of the major teachings of the faith they say they belong to. They are much more 'à la carte' than that.

In fact, when you think about it, the 'à la carte' Christian has now been joined by the 'à la carte none'.

Just as we cannot be sure of what someone who says they are Catholic actually believes, nor can we be sure of what those who say they don't belong to any given religion believe either when it comes to matters of religious belief.

**“All those who say they are Christian in the Census cannot be automatically claimed by the various Churches either”**

Both categories are picking and choosing what suits them.

This is because we live in such a highly individualistic age and let's keep in mind that this individualism extends beyond religion. It affects politics, among other things, as well. Party loyalty is not what it was.

The floating voter who isn't loyal to any given party is now commonplace. This kind of political and religious 'floating about' is the mark of our time.



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**Martin O'Brien** meets a remarkable sister with a thirst for justice

The first thing that strikes you about Sr Majella McCarron, a pioneering advocate for justice and peace within her congregation, is that she is no shrinking violet. Sr Majella, a sprightly, feisty 77-year-old who hails from Derrylin, Co. Fermanagh, is happy to talk for hours about her eventful 57 year-long ministry in the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA). She has much to say and it is difficult to do justice to an extensive ministry that has seen her “insertion (a favourite word) into a community in distress” whether it be the environmentally-embattled



Sr Majella McCarron.

people in Ogoniland, south east Nigeria; on the Garvaghy Road in Portadown during successive Drumcree crises; or those caught up in the turmoil around the Shell to Sea campaign in Mayo for whom she initiated a Good Friday walk. Although now retired as justice animator of the OLA Irish Province, and before that of the Nigerian Province (alongside her work as an

educator) her ministry continues. She regularly visits Monaghan Town to give support to asylum seekers at the St Patrick's accommodation centre and to refugees elsewhere. **Profession** A well-thumbed copy of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical, is by her side. And the day before we met, in her congregation's house in Ros-

trevor, Co Down she had been to Greencastle in the heart of rural Tyrone to support a group of residents opposed to planned goldmining in the area. Sr Majella said: “I was told that ‘this area is 95% Sinn Féin and not one Sinn Féin politician is standing with us.’” More than half of her 57 years as a nun comprise the 30 years she spent in her beloved Nigeria after her profession in 1964 – four years after independence from Britain – until 1994 when she returned to Ireland having lived through no fewer than eleven coups or supposed coups of one kind or another.

She never regretted “even for a moment” the decision she made and any idea of missing out as a wife or a mother never occurred to her then or since. She loved “the regimented culture, organisation and structure” of her congregation while not being afraid to speak her mind and when she did she found her superiors “reasonable and accommodating”. After four years in the juniorate, she joined the novitiate in Cork, was professed in 1959, passed her exams with the help of “my photographic memory” and graduated with a BSc in botany from UCC in 1964.

She became fascinated with anthropology while training to be a catechist in Uganda in 1972 and fitted in work for five years on a PhD through UCD in “marrying my theology and my anthropology” but had to give it up owing to the demands of her justice work with the Ogoni. Speaking to Sr Majella, it is clear her understanding of colonialism in Ireland and “my republican instincts” were of assistance to her in understanding the plight of the Ogoni. “If you have studied colonialism how can you be other than republican-minded?” she asks. Although immersed in the Ogoni situation she always appears to have harboured a wish to do her bit in her native North. An opportunity presented itself in 1996 when in the light of the breakdown of the IRA ceasefire she, as justice officer of the Irish Missionary Union, became part of the Table Campaign, a human rights-based initiative by various NGOs to promote dialogue.

**“I managed a week at home in Fermanagh, my first trip there in eight years”**

Sr Majella ended up spending four summers on the Garvaghy Road from 1996 where she became an observer reporting to the Department of Foreign Affairs. She also frequently visited the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast during contentious parades.

Despite her nationalist sympathies, she stresses that she was observing both the police and those protesting against the Orange parades to help ensure that neither overstepped the mark.

However, she makes a point of singling out Breandan Mac Cionnaith and Gerald Rice, residents' leaders in Garvaghy and Lower Ormeau respectively as “both very able who represented their people well and impressed me.”

Sr Majella says that she once turned down the principalship of a secondary school in Nigeria telling her congregation she “would prefer to be a lay missionary” rather than “be an administrator”.

Had she not seen that ad all of 65 years ago, she reckons she would have become a social worker. But there is no doubting just how happy she is to be a nun and how grateful she is to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles: “I have been given the freedom to do something worthwhile and that is a great gift.”

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Sr Majella loved Nigeria so much that on two occasions she saw off plans to send her back to Ireland. She is pleased that her congregations were the first religious sisters to establish themselves in what is now Nigeria, in 1878.

**“The idea of going on the missions attracted me”**

In response to a mandate from her congregation in 1990 to develop a plan to campaign on peace and justice issues, and as the Nigerian representative of the Brussels-based Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network she resolved to support the cause of the Ogoni people.

Sr Majella recounts the multiple human rights violations suffered by the Ogoni, not least because of devastating oil spills and by the actions of the government.

The nudge for that mandate on the peace and justice front – inspired by Vatican II's *Gaudium et spes* – came from OLA headquarters in Rome at the time of the establishment of an OLA Province in Nigeria.

Sr Majella, christened Margaret Mary McCarron, the eldest of five children, joined the fledgling OLA juniorate or sec-

ondary school for prospective nuns in Rostrevor as a 13-year-old in 1952. It was in fact the former Rostrevor House and had just been acquired by the sisters as a convent. “The idea of going on the missions attracted me and as a girl of 12 I replied to an ad in Tidings, the promotional journal of the OLA”

Her second Masters, through Immaculate College, University of Limerick (2007) examined “the challenges of the theological change in the understanding of religious consecration, mission and salvation after Vatican II” with particular reference to her own congregation.



# Faith schools face uphill battle to retain their ethos



Religion would be a second-class subject if new proposals take effect, writes **Fr Eamonn Conway**

**T**he latest proposal from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) will make it very difficult for patrons and boards of management of Catholic primary schools to fulfill their legal and statutory obligation to uphold their schools' ethos.

The 1998 Education Act states that primary school boards "shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school".

However, boards now face proposals to reduce Religious Education (RE) to at best a second-class subject, and this in faith-based schools.

Though technically not part of the current State curriculum as things stand, RE is included in the suggested minimum weekly time framework in the primary school classroom.

## Allocation

This is set to change in the new proposals regarding time allocation by the NCCA who are seeking to divide the school timetable into two separate categories. One is 'minimum state curricular time' (60% of the school day). In this category, the state would set the minimum amount of time required for six key curricular areas. RE is not to be among them.

The other category is called 'flexible time' (40% of the school day). This is to include discretionary curriculum time, assembly time, roll call, breaks and



what is being called the 'patron's programme'. RE is not mentioned but presumably it is to be squeezed into this so-called 'flexible time'.

In considering how to respond to the proposed new curriculum, Catholic patrons will need to be attentive to four issues.

The first is that individual schools will have responsibility for how this flexible time is divided. Boards of Management will need to become actively engaged in ensuring that RE is adequately catered for on the timetable in their schools. They will also need to put some mechanism in place to ensure the quality of what is taught.

The second issue will be to ensure that despite the NCCA's intention to hive off RE, it continues to be taught as integral to the curriculum as a whole.

The old (1999) Primary School Curriculum was founded on the principle of integrated learning and teachers have always been encouraged to establish valuable connections between spiritual, moral and religious education and all the other curriculum areas.

The Catholic Church's position on the integral nature of religious education is not only based on an understanding of the central role such education plays in a child's development but also on the "pedagogical principle that subject specificities are irrelevant in early childhood learning".

Catholics believe that God is found in all things. The new primary school programme 'Grow in Love' is specifically designed to encourage teachers to take

a thematic, cross-curricular approach to the teaching of RE.

However, the coalition Government's Forum on Patronage and Pluralism recommended that "the introduction to the Primary Curriculum should be revised to ensure that, while the general curriculum remains integrated, provision is made for denominational religious education/faith formation to be taught as a discrete subject".

**“If RE is relegated to so-called ‘flexible time’, will it eventually become a discrete subject, as the Forum wanted?”**

Is the Forum's recommendation behind the new curriculum proposal?

If RE is relegated to so-called 'flexible time', will it eventually become a discrete subject, as the Forum wanted? If so, this would be seriously damaging to the characteristic spirit of a Catholic school.

The third issue facing patrons and boards of management is that with the relegation of denominational RE, the way will be paved for the introduction of Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERBE) as part of the State curriculum.

Only a couple of months ago the NCCA published the findings of their consultation on ERBE. It amounted to a resounding rejection of what they had proposed. Parents, teachers and patrons rightly dismissed the notion that

faith – and this in Catholic schools!

Despite the fact that their proposal found little traction the NCCA is continuing its efforts to introduce it by the back door. Hiving off denominational RE from the rest of the curriculum would prise that door open.

The fourth issue for patrons and boards of management to consider is the most troubling because it is difficult to know how to deal with it. It is that regardless of what happens to RE the rest of the State curriculum is likely to undermine the distinctive Christian vision of the human person that sees ultimate human dignity and destiny as flowing from relationship with Christ.

The reality is that much of the current State curriculum implicitly teaches that individual human freedom and personal autonomy are

the 'be all and end all' of life. This is unlikely to change in the new curriculum; in fact, it could well get worse.

This issue needs consideration by patrons and boards as well.

The views of parents, teachers, clergy, principals, patrons and boards of management really matter. Written submissions on the reform of the primary curriculum can be made to the NCCA up to April 28 and information is available here at:

[http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum\\_and\\_Assessment/Early\\_Childhood\\_and\\_Primary\\_Education/Primary-Education/Primary\\_Developments/Structure-and-Time-Allocation/Consultation.html](http://www.ncca.ie/en/Curriculum_and_Assessment/Early_Childhood_and_Primary_Education/Primary-Education/Primary_Developments/Structure-and-Time-Allocation/Consultation.html)

**Fr Eamonn Conway** is Professor and Head of Theology & Religious Studies at Mary Immaculate College – University of Limerick.



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Award participants from St Colman's Collage, Claremorris, Co. Mayo.



# Pope John Paul II Award celebrates 10 years



Award participants from the Diocese of Raphoe.

## Mags Gargan

Over 1,000 young people, who are currently participating or have received the Pope John Paul II Award in the last ten years, gathered at Knock Shrine on April 5 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the award.

When the award was launched in Derry in 2006 by the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Giuseppe Lazarotto, it was never imagined that the award would spread beyond the diocese. It has now been introduced into 22 dioceses in Ireland and two in Britain – the Archdiocese of Birmingham and the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

In the last 10 years, over 20,000 young people have enrolled in the award. Funded by the Knights of St Columbanus, the JPII Award is believed to be the largest youth movement in the Church in Ireland today.

## Experiences

The day in Knock provided young people from different dioceses with the opportunity to share their experiences of participating in the award, discuss how it impacts on their faith and recognises the special place they have in the Church.

They had time to pray together, to listen to an inspirational talk by Elma Walsh, mother of Donal Walsh (donalwalshlivelife.org) and to cel-



Pope John Paul II Award participants from the Archdioceses of Tuam celebrating 10 years of the Award at Knock Shrine.



Award participants from St Joseph's Boys School, Derry.



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Cynthia Bourgeault - €30 6CD
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Over 1,000 young people from across Ireland attended the 10-year celebration of the Pope John Paul II Award at Knock Shrine.



Above: Award participants from the Diocese of Galway. Photos: Stephen Latimer



The Apparition Chapel at Knock Shrine was full to capacity with many in attendance outside.



celebrate the Eucharist. The chief celebrant was Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry, patron of the awards. He was joined by a number of priests from participating dioceses. Music was provided by Elation Ministries, choirs from participating dioceses and there was a special performance from singer/songwriter Niamh McGlinchey, a former recipient of the award. See Page 26 for an interview with Tony Brennan, the new Awards Co-ordinator.

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## Greg Daly meets the man behind a film series helping young adults wrestle with Christianity

**D**ublin's Gonzaga College might seem an unlikely place for the launch of an evangelical video series produced by the historically Protestant and highly dynamic Scripture Union (SU) group, but according to Jonny Somerville, presenter of *NUA*, it made perfect sense.

"I've had a relationship with Gonzaga for a while, mainly because of Danny McNelis, a chaplain there who passed away a few years ago," he says, "a Jesuit who was a very ecumenical man and used to pray with an Anglican every week on the phone, he was someone who was always very kind to me and I know he would have been very proud of *NUA*."

Thanking the school principal Damon McCaul for his support, Jonny says about 200 people were at the project's mid-March launch. Among these, significantly, were Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin Dr Eamonn Walsh

and the Diocese of Dublin's post-primary adviser Anna Maloney.

*NUA* is an eight-part film series that recognises people's doubts and is intended to encourage questions about Christianity, primarily intended to help provide young people with a way of discussing their worldview and wrestle with aspects of Christianity they may find challenging.

Now the 29-year-old father of four small children, including twins, Dubliner Jonny first got involved in youth ministry when, aged just 16, he volunteered at youth camps in Avoca, Co. Wicklow run by SU. An internship with SU followed, after which Jonny studied theology at the Irish Bible Institute – then accredited by the University of Wales – before returning to work full time with SU in 2008.

Some of his work involved retreats, before he became the 'Alpha Youth Coordinator', starting a partnership between SU and



the group that's pioneered perhaps the most iconic evangelising tour in English-speaking Christianity over recent decades.

Four or five years in this role, often working with schools, led Jonny to pick up on questions that young people regularly had. While Jonny himself was quite good at engaging with these questions, his supervisor wondered how that ability could be multiplied, recognising that "these are tough questions and a lot of youth workers struggle to engage with questions of the Christian faith".

**“We look a little bit at the disciples and just their foolishness that’s found in the Scriptures”**

A quest for funding began, with proposals being taken to trust funds and others. "We got significant amounts of funding and then launched into scriptwriting and ultimately production for the *NUA* film series," he says, with them eventually making eight 15-minutes episodes, each episode being broken into three segments, which people can engage with individually or as part of the set.

"It starts with science and faith," he says, continuing, "We look at the complexity of the universe, and we talk about the great chance that

we could be here by chance – amazingly – or that there could be a cool designer behind it all, and with that we also tap in a little bit into our search for meaning. Why does this longing for the 'why?' seem to be inbuilt in us? Why are we so fixated on it?"

### Gospels

After that, he says, the series turns to the four Gospels. "Instead of trying to go for the whole Bible we thought we might just look at the Gospels, asking the history of the Gospels, how they were written, who they were written by, what their agenda was," he explains, pointing out how problems in the Gospels may help support the basic accuracy of the story they tell.

"We look a little bit at the disciples and just their foolishness and waywardness that's found in the Scriptures – if they were fabricating the Gospels, why did these guys, who went on to be the leaders of the early Church, why didn't they fix parts?"

Acknowledging that this can be contested, he says, "There is a good case – it's not foolproof – that what we read today isn't far from what was originally written, although it can't be proven. We just want to put a case for that."

The third episode considers what Jonny calls "conspiracy theories against the Resurrection", asking, "what have been the best efforts to disprove it over

the past 2,000 years?" This entails looking again at the disciples noting how to judge by the New Testament, "they were cowards before Jesus' death, and they seemed to be courageous after it" and asking what changed them.

"Episode four," he says, "is a character assessment of Jesus." The episode considers whether we'd actually like Jesus if we had known him during his mission, pointing out how "how he treated people reveals his character", and examining his encounters with the woman caught in adultery, the woman who was bleeding for 12 years, and 'doubting' Thomas.

**“The episode considers whether we’d actually like Jesus if we had known him during his mission”**

"We did street interviews just 15 yards down the road (on Talbot Street) and one girl said 'I bet he wasn't a banter person'," he says, continuing, "that's a really interesting insight. I actually would like to think that he was full of fun."

Chesterton, of course, wrote in 1908's *Orthodoxy* that "there was some one thing that was too great for God to show us when he walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was his mirth," but Jonny is grateful for how in his



## Knock Programme for Sunday 30th APRIL 2017

*Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration*

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- 11.00 Welcome, programme handout, cuppa, in St John's Centre near the Basilica.
- 11.30 Confessions(finish at 2.30) Personal Adoration, Personal Prayer.
- 12.15 Lunch/Sharing time Tea/Coffee available in St John's Centre (bring packed lunch); lunches also available in Café Le Cheile, Knock House Hotel, local restaurants.
- 1.10 Message on Adoration for Children ..... Antoinette Moynihan, in the Basilica.
- 1.20 Message from the Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration ..... John Howard in the Basilica.
- 1.30 Talk: Fr. Bede McGregor OP 'To Jesus through Mary' ..... in the Basilica.
- 2.10 Rehearsals at the altar in the Basilica for all involved in the Mass; Readers, Offertory etc.
- 2.30 Anointing of the sick.
- 3.00 Holy Mass, chief celebrant and homilist is Bishop Denis Nulty, K&L diocese. Choir: In Caelo Choir from Newbridge Co Kildare.
- 4.00 Eucharistic Procession from the Basilica, finishing in the Apparition Chapel for Benediction with a final word from Brendan Cleary, a member of our National Apostolate. Bring your flags and Parish/Apostolate banners to make the procession as colourful and meaningful as possible.

- Adoration in the Adoration Chapel & Confessions in the Reconciliation Centre.
- Many priests are needed to hear confessions and for anointing of the sick.
- Priests are also invited to concelebrate the 3 pm Mass.
- Collect a range of materials for adoration from our stand in St John's.
- Launch of a new Eucharistic Rosary CD.
- People are invited from every parish and other organisations very welcome.
- Spread the word and organise buses and cars ASAP.
- Requests for promotion of Adoration in your parish contact our Apostolate.

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*Children need to be accompanied by parent or guardian and have written permission from parent/guardian to participate and to have photos/videos taken if involved in adoration activities/mass/procession.(that may be used later by the Apostolate).*

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# rspective on faith



Jonny Sommerville on location for *NUA* in the Holy Land (left) and New York (above).

2004 film *The Passion of the Christ* Mel Gibson featured a scene where Jesus is shown laughing with his mother. "I've used that in talks," he says, adding, "fair play to Mel for that little bit."

The second half of the series begins with an episode about stereotypes of Christians, asking why is there so often a disconnect or conflict between Christians and the Jesus they follow. "It's a reflection on how far we can drift from the Jesus we follow into people who become arrogant and judgmental and rule-based," he says, continuing, "or even just Christians who live out of fear, who live in a bubble and don't engage with or don't meet the needs of the world because they're protecting themselves from the world."

\* \* \* \* \*

The sixth episode, then addresses the subject of suffering, which Jonny says is probably the single biggest issue raised by young people with doubts about Christianity. While the episode does glance at some classic intellectual arguments around the issue, its heart instead is more a reflection of where God stands regarding suffering: "As in suffering sucks and life sucks, so where is God in the midst of that?"

"Ultimately we reflect on suffering from Jesus' perspective as one who came to suffer not only for us but with us, a God who wants to meet us in our suffering and

pain," he says, continuing, "it's not an episode that has all the answers – not like William [Lane Craig] would give those intellectual arguments, which are fine and there's a place for them – but ultimately we just want to talk about a Jesus who wants to meet with us and unfortunately we're going to have to journey the rest of our lives and maybe carry our questions."

The shortest verse in the Bible offers a particularly pertinent passage for contemplating this. "One part we home in on is that very short part in Scripture where Jesus wept at Lazarus's tomb," he says. "It's so bizarre for Jesus to cry at

says, reflects on the history of the Church, observing that "a functioning Church is unfortunately made up of broken people, and sometimes those broken people make horrendous mistakes".

Pointing out that "it's not Jesus who makes those mistakes – it's the people", he says, "we seek also, without glorifying it, to present the other side of the story, how say the Catholic Church specifically has been responsible for schools and hospitals and infrastructure throughout the last 2,000 years, and even Christian organisations today that are doing tremendous things. There are always two sides to



Jonny Sommerville being filmed as he works on *NUA*.

that moment, but I think the real revelation of his compassion is at that moment.

"He's going to bring Lazarus back to life, but that's not the point – he sees their pain and enters into it. That's the Jesus that I find in the Scriptures. That's the character of God ultimately revealed, if Jesus is the Son of God, and the revelation of God: that's what I hope God is like."

The next episode, he

the coin, and unfortunately people will let us down – that's really that episode in a nutshell."

The final episode ultimately asks what all this should mean for us. "It's a reflection on Jesus' message, on how him dying for me impacts my life, it goes away from us as sinners to the actual effect that sin has on us as people who struggle with our identity, our self-worth, even our drive in life,"

he says, pointing to how it presents God as wanting to speak into our identity and give us "hope and purpose".

It all sounds impressively well thought through, but Jonny is quick to stress that *NUA* "isn't just one man's theology". He points out that while he was – along with UCD chaplain Scott Evans and series director Greg Fromholz – one of the series' three core writers, it was also considered at length by an ecumenical committee made up of an Anglican, a Methodist, and the Augustinian scripture scholar Kieran O'Mahony, who, Jonny says, "was identified as a theologian who would rip the scripts apart, and at times he did, which was cool".

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a time, Jonny concedes, when he might not have been comfortable with that sort of thing, but years in youth ministry have knocked some corners off him. "Some of my best ideas were thrown out, and some of my scriptwriting wasn't used," he says, noting that with a bit of maturity under his belt, he was okay with this, and not precious about his ideas. "I think if I'd been a younger Christian I would have been more arrogant," he says.

The scripts went out to a further 35 people from all walks of life, from young professionals, to teachers, chaplains, parents, continues Jonny, and then a focus group from two schools as well, with the entire writing process taking around a year, with another year to make the series with Jonny fronting the episodes.

"Unfortunately, it's me: I'm the host or presenter, so you journey with me. We filmed here, and in Israel and Palestine, and over in the States a bit as well," he says, continuing, "It's not

like only one portion of it is in Israel or Palestine – it can chop and change and suddenly I'm jumping continents, but it doesn't really matter because there's a bit of quirk to how it's filmed."

**“We really want it to be a significant resource for senior cycle religious education across the country”**

It was a real pleasure to make the series, he says, pointing especially to how "it was great to work with professionals – even beyond people of Faith, just people who were great at their job". Praising their work, and their contribution to the end product, he says: "It was great to be able to do it right."

As for what the series might achieve, he says: "We really want it to be a significant resource for senior cycle religious education across the country, something that can supplement RE teachers and chaplains. Particularly as in the Republic we have a lot of non-exam RE, there's the freedom to engage with these types of resources. I know RE teachers are always crying out for a good credible resource, and I believe this gifts them one."

Beyond Ireland, he thinks the series can be promoted a natural follow-on to Alpha courses around the world, starting with English-speaking countries, and through SU itself. In the meantime, though, the series needs to walk before it can run, and Jonny says early feedback has been encouraging.

"Some people over the last couple of weeks have just binge-watched the

whole thing, like they would on Netflix," he says, "and the overriding feedback is that though they can clearly see that we have targeted this for young adults, this is completely universal, as in parish groups and groups of any age will benefit – there's quirk in there and there's fun, but there's nothing childish or patronising."

Describing how groups of his peers have gotten together in evenings to watch an episode, while chatting and eating, he says, "that's very encouraging, because it will be interesting to see if it will have that universal usage".

## Hopes

Similarly, he says, early feedback from schools has been good, but he's more interested in what he'll be told down the line when schools have completed the series. The sort of thing he really hopes to hear, he says, is comments to the effect that *NUA* helped people to have new conversations, or take conversations to a different level.

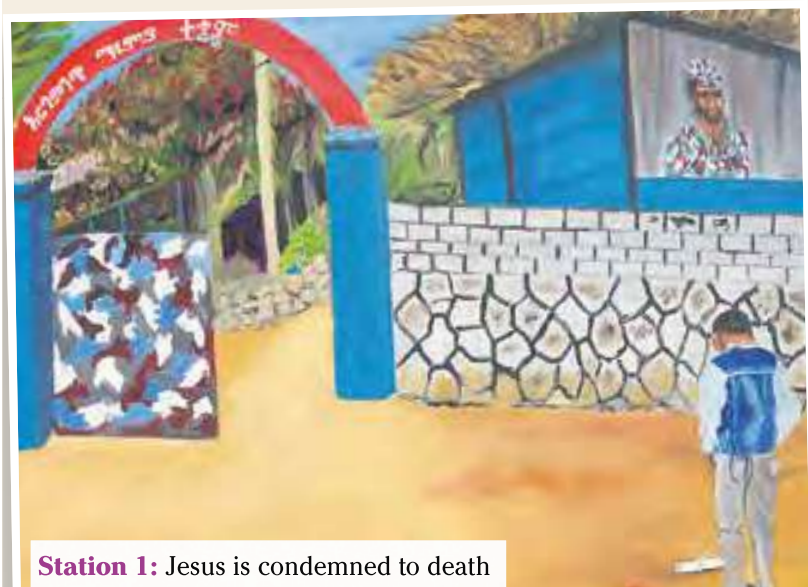
"We want, especially with the new generation, to model a better conversation, because that's what I believe the new generations need," he says, continuing, "for the people of faith, I think this will help them to build confidence to speak naturally about why they believe, but also for the sceptic, it's something that's credible to chew on."

"They can still dismiss it, and that's fine," he continues, "but I hope it will generate well-respected conversations, because that is my motto, that verse from Peter – always have the reason to explain your faith, but do so with gentleness and respect. With *NUA* we want it to be gentle in the right way."



# Walking the way of Jesus the

## *An Ethiopian prison perspective*



**Station 1:** Jesus is condemned to death



**Station 2:** Jesus carries his cross



**Station 3:** Jesus falls the first time

The Stations of the Cross as painted by a group of prisoners in Ethiopia, the style of which is contemporary to their culture. The 14 stations begin above and continue in a clockwise direction, across the pages.



**Station 14:** Jesus is laid in the tomb

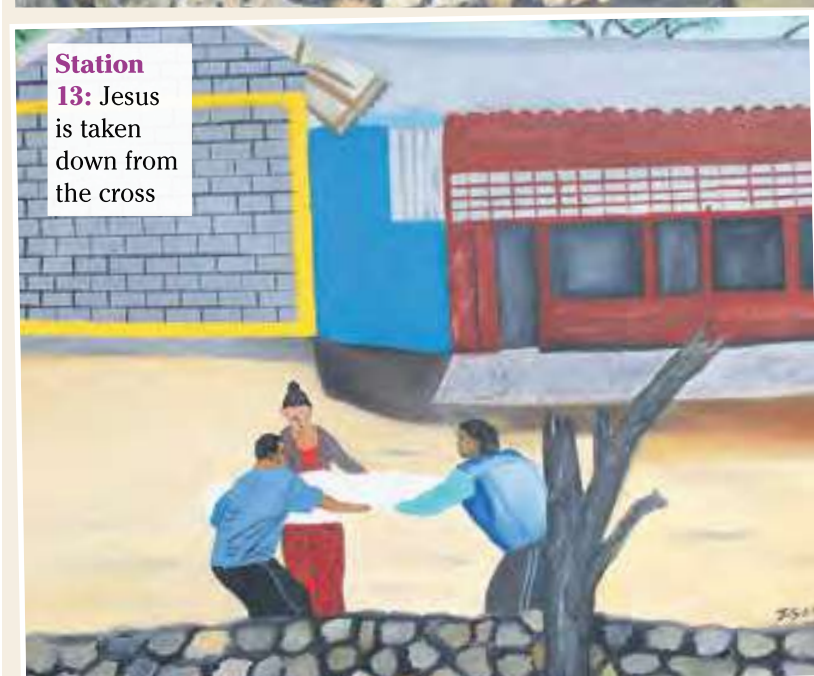


**Station 15:**  
The Resurrection

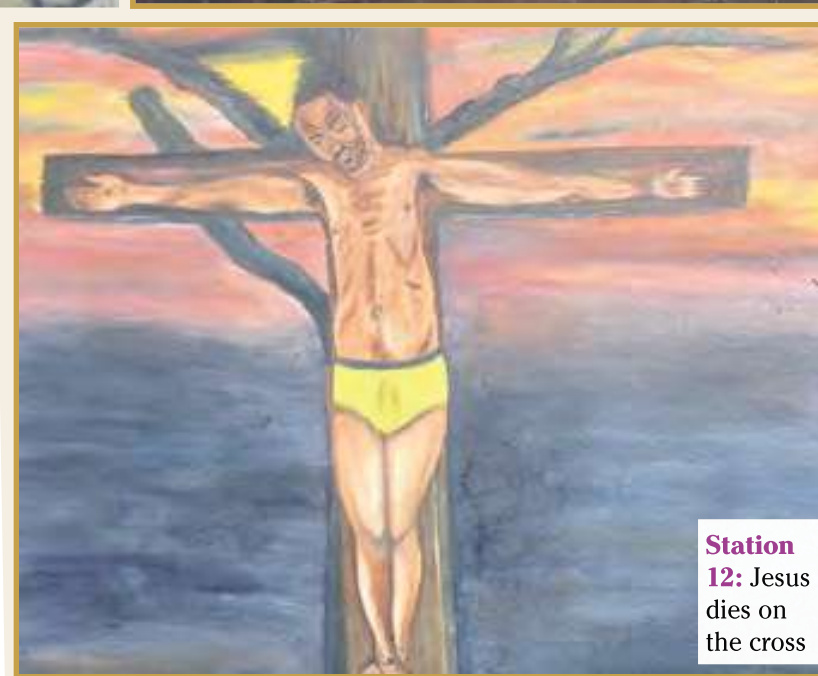


To understand the passion of Christ is to understand the human journey, writes **Fr Paddy Moran CSSp**

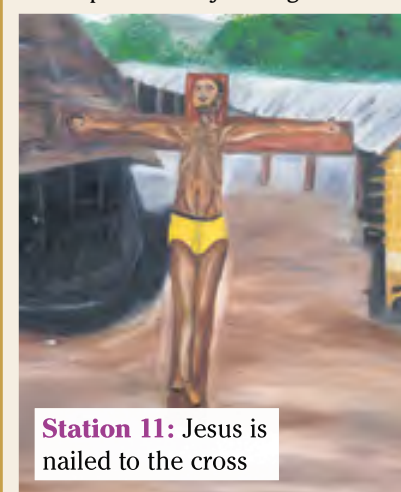
**A**s a missionary I had the great privilege to work for 11 years in Ethiopia. I spent a number of those years working with prisoners in Arba Minch prison. Arba Minch is a town 500 kilometres south west of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Recently reassigned



**Station 13:** Jesus is taken down from the cross



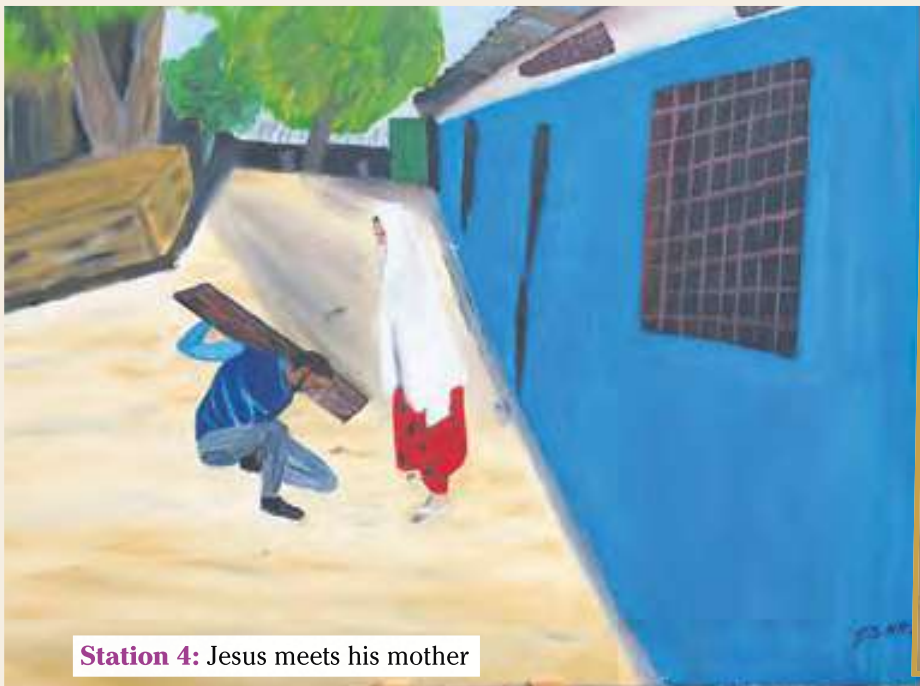
**Station 12:** Jesus dies on the cross



**Station 11:** Jesus is nailed to the cross



# captive



**Station 4:** Jesus meets his mother



**Station 5:** Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

to work in Ireland, I still have the opportunity to go back to Ethiopia and strengthen the friendships that I made there.

One of the works that I am particularly proud of is the establishment of an art project in the prison. On six separate occasions Irish painters have travelled to the prison to facilitate painting classes with male and female prisoners. The programme has evolved so that as we speak there are Ethiopian prisoners teaching their fellow prisoners how to paint in a purpose-built classroom.

Shortly we hope to have one of our artists leaving the prison and enrolling as a student in the Addis Ababa School of Art. There are great things happening and thank God for that.

It is hard if not impossible to fully appreciate the benefits of art. To a greater or lesser degree a painter engages with their art as a form of therapy, a means of expression and also a way to expand the horizon of imagination. Thinking of all those benefits it is easy to imagine the attraction that art offers to people locked up in a prison. I have

watched these artists grow and mature. Hesitant brush strokes have given way to confident flourishes. In a quiet manner every brush stroke is its own blow for freedom, the freedom to show their personality to the world.

**“Knowingly or unknowingly we are all part of the story of Christ’s death and resurrection”**

On a recent visit to Ethiopia, I asked five of the prison artists to collaborate on creating their own interpretation of the Stations of the Cross.

The guidelines were simple: the Stations were to be set in contemporary Ethiopia. More specifically the Stations were to be set in the prison. Jesus and all the characters depicted were to be Ethiopian.

The Stations were to have the look and the feel of the prison. It is a most intriguing thing but it was a surprise to the prisoners when I mentioned that Jesus had been a prisoner as well.

They knew the story but didn’t make the connection between their story and the experience of Jesus.

I am intrigued about the things that the prisoners have chosen to emphasise, to add and to subtract. When Jesus meets His mother it is a really touching scene.

Jesus is bowed down and Our Lady is hidden, lost almost in her own grief. Thinking of the grief of so many of the female prisoners it is a very poignant scene. When Veronica wipes the face of Jesus both their faces are hidden. In the scene where Jesus is consoling the women of Jerusalem it is Jesus who is missing.

## Strength

There is the strength of Simon of Cyrene as he lifts the cross. Jesus is exhausted but Simon is strong. I have found in the image of Jesus dying on the cross a window into the experience of vulnerability, fragility and powerlessness.

In spite of all this an angry sky in the background seems to hold a faint promise that this death might not be the end. The resurrection is dazzling and a timely reminder that the

wounds of Christ are still evident in our broken world. Christ is still present in the rags and the suffering of the poor.

I am delighted with this collection. They express the all too human journey of Jesus through his passion. There are moments in life that are really striking. The prisoners took a journey of faith to make this collection.

All of the five artists began and concluded their work with prayer. They learnt about each other and they learnt more about Jesus the prisoner.

Perhaps above all they show the relevance of Jesus in every place where we are. Knowingly or unknowingly we are all part of the story of Christ’s death and resurrection. We all have our stories to tell.

The prisoners have told theirs magnificently. It is a great joy to show their creativity to a wider audience.

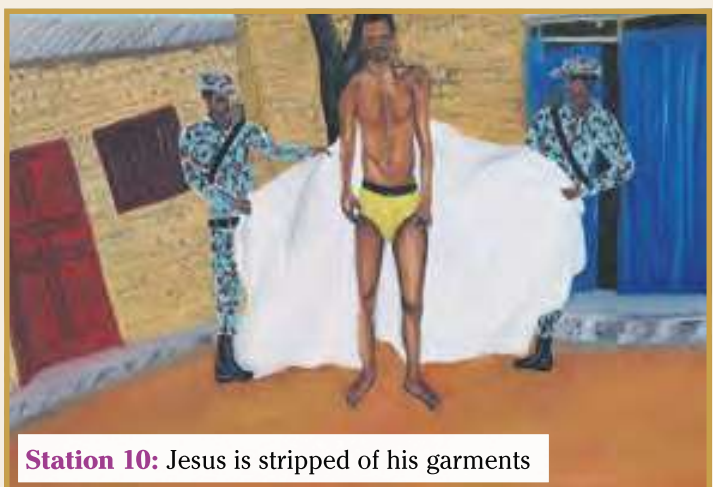
**Fr Paddy Moran CSSp** is the Vocations Director for the Spiritans in Ireland. For more information on becoming a Spiritan missionary his e-mail is [youth@spiritan.ie](mailto:youth@spiritan.ie)



**Station 6:** Veronica wipes Jesus’ face



**Station 7:** Jesus falls the second time



**Station 10:** Jesus is stripped of his garments



**Station 9:** Jesus falls a third time



**Station 8:** Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem



# Out&About

## Confirmation joy in Claddagh



**GALWAY:** The children who made their Confirmation in St Mary's Church Claddagh, pictured with teachers Joe Walsh and Gabriel Farragher, as well as Canon Peter Rabbitte and Fr Denis Murphy OP. Also pictured is the children's faith friend, Sarah Gibbons.



**CORK:** Sr Alphonsus celebrated her 100th birthday recently and the Bishop of Cork and Ross, John Buckley visited her at the Presentation Convent in Bandon to mark her milestone birthday.



**MONAGHAN:** At the Clogher Diocesan Chapter of Canons meeting are: Front L-R: Msgr Vincent Connolly, Msgr Gerard McSorley, Bishop Joseph Duffy, Msgr Joseph McGuinness, Bishop Liam MacDaid, Canon Philip Connolly, Canon John McKenna. Back L-R: Msgr Sean Cahill, Canon Joseph Mullin, Canon Shane McCaughey, Canon Ramon Munster, Msgr Larry Duffy, Canon Michael McGourty, Canon Macartan McQuaid, Msgr Richard Mohan, Canon Patrick Marron.



**DUBLIN:** Former Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Charles Brown celebrated Mass in Holy Cross Church Dundrum in Dublin on April 2 in which he presented Bene Merenti medals to three parishioners for their work in the parish over many years. L-R: Ronnie Smiley, Archbishop Brown, Elizabeth McCloskey and Gay McCarron. Photo: John McElroy



**MAYO:** At a Mass hosted by Knock Shrine as part of Organ Donor Awareness Week are (front) organiser Monica Morley, Matthew McNeive, who received a kidney transplant, and his mother Bernadette, along with Fr Richard Gibbons and other Mass participants.



Edited by Mags Gargan  
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**KERRY:** Students of Presentation Secondary School Tralee attending Ceiliúradh na nÓg in Tralee.



**CAVAN:** Patsy and Philomena Sherlock at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt on the occasion of their 70th wedding anniversary.



**DUBLIN:** A celebration took place last week at the Redemptoristine Monastery in Dublin for the first class of contemplative nuns to graduate in Monastic Studies from Maynooth College. Five religious congregation participated in the course: Redemptoristines, Adoration Sisters, Carmelites, Poor Clares and Our Lady of Walsingham.



**GALWAY:** Ronan Scully (centre, with walking stick) surrounded by supporters after he completed a walk from Dublin Bay to Galway Bay and raised €20,000 for charities Gorta-Self Help Africa and the Galway Rape Crisis Centre.

## IN SHORT

### Kerry diocese celebrates Ceiliúradh na nÓg

Over 350 students, representing 14 post-primary schools from throughout the diocese, attended the Ceiliúradh na nÓg celebration day in the Brandon Hotel in Tralee, Co. Kerry. The students presented their projects which they carried out over the academic year.

The purpose of Ceiliúradh na nÓg is to develop the faith life of Transition and Fifth year students. This was achieved through school or parish-

based initiatives.

Deirdre Walsh from Radio Kerry was the MC for the occasion, Bro. Richard Hendrick was guest speaker and there was a number of faith-based workshops, including from Trócaire, Siamsa Tire and NUA Ireland.

Bishop Ray Browne presented the students with their certificates of achievement.

### 'Bay to Bay Charity Walk' nets €20k

One-time 'Operation Transformation' leader, Ronan Scully, completed a

six-day 'Bay to Bay Charity Walk' from Dublin to Galway, which has raised more than €20,000 for his two chosen charities.

"The encouragement I received from friends, family and colleagues, who completed sections of the walk with me, is what kept me going," Ronan said. "I am grateful for the generosity and kindness of the people we met, and those who gave us food and water."

Ronan used the 276km charity challenge as a way to mark his recent 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and the monies raised will go to Gorta-Self Help Africa and the Galway Rape Crisis Centre.

## ANTRIM

The First Saturday Devotions will take place each month in St Matthias Church, Glen Road, Belfast. Adoration/Confessions and Consecration to Our Lady at 3pm, Mass at 4pm.

## ARMAGH

Eucharistic Adoration in St Malachy's Church, Armagh daily from 6am to midnight, and all night on Wednesdays.

Adoration chapel, Edwards St, Lurgan, adoration weekdays, 9am-9pm.

## CLARE

32 County Holy Face of Jesus – one hour public vigil at 12noon, O'Connell Sq., Ennis on Good Friday, April 14 including: Holy Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet. Contact Bernadette 086 16314553.

## CORK

Annual Novena to Our Lady Mother of Good Counsel will be held in St Josephs Church, Castlemartyr from April 18-26 at 7.30pm each evening.

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

## DONEGAL

Divine Mercy Sunday in St Mary's Church, Fanavoltly, Fanad on April 23 commencing at 2.30pm: Confessions, Diving Mercy Chaplet, Mass and individual blessing with first class relic of St Faustina.

## DUBLIN

Healing Mass in honour of St Peregrine, Patron Saint for Cancer in St Patrick's Parish Church, Skerries 7.30pm on Monday, April 24. Including Anointing of the Sick and Blessing of Relic.

Ewe Thina: We Walk God's Way. Want to get fit? Embrace God in nature and build true friendships? Join other young adults (20's & 30's) for reflective hikes around Dublin area. Monthly event. Contact: siobhan.tighe@dublindiocese.ie, <https://www.facebook.com/wewalkgodsway>

The combined parishes of Corpus Christi & Marino are celebrating the feast of Divine Mercy on Sunday, April 23 from 3-5pm (3-4pm holy hour and Confessions followed by Mass) at St Vincent de Paul's Church, Griffith Ave, Marino. Celebrant: Fr Rory Doyle OFM Conv. Collection for Capuchin Day Centre.

## FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Wednesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm. All welcome. [www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly](http://www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly)

Divine Mercy Devotions every Monday night in St Nilles Church, Kinawley beginning with Mass at 7pm, Divine Mercy holy hour 7.30-8.30pm, followed by blessing with first class relic of St Faustina.

Boho parish dawn Mass on Easter Sunday: Participants are asked to gather at the church car-park

for 6.45am. Mass will be celebrated at 7am in the townland of Reyfad, followed by breakfast in Boho Community Centre. For further details contact Fr Jimmy McPhillips at [jimmymcp@eircom.net](mailto:jimmymcp@eircom.net)

## GALWAY

Emmanuel House of Prayer, Clonfert - Divine Mercy Sunday celebration led by Eddie Stone, April 23 at 11am. Confessions, talks, adoration and veneration of Divine Mercy image.

## KERRY

Janice and Moss Carrig will hold a prayer meeting in Scartaglen Church on Sunday, April 16, 2.30pm.

## KILDARE

Carbury Parish - Adoration in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Derrinturn takes place each Monday from 10.30am until 12 midnight. Adoration for priestly vocations takes place every Thursday at 8.45pm. [www.CarburyParish.ie](http://www.CarburyParish.ie)

## LOUTH

Lenten Prayer for Healing 2017 at St Joseph's Redemptorist Church, Dundalk on Sunday April 16 at 7pm. This year's theme is: Wherever two or three gather in my name (Matthew 18:20).

## MAYO

Annual Holy Souls pilgrimage to Knock on Easter Monday, April 17: 1.45pm Rosary before Mass (2pm) in Parish Church and Holy Souls Chaplet, 2.45pm Stations of the Cross outside, 3.30pm meeting in Alexian Bros.

The next Latin Mass in the Old Rite (Tridentine) will take place in the Parish Church Knock, on Easter Sunday at 5.30pm.

## MEATH

Celebration of the Divine Mercy, including Confessions and Mass (4pm), from 2.30pm on Sunday, April 23, in St Patrick's Church, Trim.

## TYRONE

Life in the Spirit Seminars over seven weeks in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher beginning on Thursday, April 20 at 7.30pm with Fr Pat Collins.

## WATERFORD

New Beginnings in Faith: A series of talks given by members of the Neo Catechumenal Way each Sunday and Wednesday at 7.30pm in St Paul's Parish Centre, Waterford.

Taizé prayer in Good Counsel Chapel, New Ross from 8.15-9pm every Friday during Lent – concluding with 'Prayer around the Cross' on April 14.

## WICKLOW

Taize prayer at the Carmelite Monastery, Delgany every Wednesday from 8-9pm during Lent.

Easter Egg Hunt at Carmelite Monastery, Delgany on Easter Sunday after 9.30 Mass.



# Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson made waves this week with a blistering statement about reports that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had used chemical weapons in a recent attack on a rebel stronghold, calling it “brutal, unabashed barbarism.”

Tillerson's rhetoric raised eyebrows, given that just last week, during a visit to Turkey, Tillerson had said the “long-term status of Assad will be decided by the Syrian people,” apparently signalling a shift in US policy away from the desire for regime change under the Obama administration.

In his statement on the attack, Tillerson went on to blast states helping Assad.

“Those who defend and support him, including Russia and Iran, should have no illusions about Assad or his intentions,” he said. “Anyone who uses chemical weapons to attack his own people shows a fundamental disregard for human decency, and must be held accountable.”

## Position

From the point of view of US-Vatican relations, here's the interesting thing: Tillerson didn't have to stop with Russia and Iran, because he could have included the Holy See.

Granted, the Vatican is not deploying units of the Swiss Guard to assist Assad in battling Syrian rebels. However, the diplomatic



A man carries the body of a dead child after what rescue workers described as a suspected chemical attack in Idlib, Syria. Photo: CNS

## Are Francis and Trump at odds over Syria too?

position of the Holy See, under Francis as it was under Benedict, is to engage Assad, in part based on a calculation that if he falls, whatever follows might be worse.

In his statement on Wednesday, delivered during a general audience, Pope Francis called the attack “unacceptable carnage,” but was careful to avoid anything that might be read as direct criticism of Assad.

Instead, the pontiff appealed to the “consciences of those with political responsibility, both locally and internationally, to cease this tragedy.”

Strikingly, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican's top diplomat, took part Wednesday in an EU summit

in Brussels on Syria, after reports of the chemical attack had already made the rounds, and never mentioned either the attack or Assad.

## “If we have to choose between ISIS and Assad, we choose Assad”

Where does the Vatican get that stance? Mostly from its own people on the ground, above all Syria's Catholic bishops, who have a fairly uniform position. Here's how Greek Catholic Melkite Archbishop Jean-Clement Jeanbart of Aleppo, Syria, talked about Assad in a

2015 Crux interview.

“If we have to choose between ISIS and Assad, we choose Assad,” Jeanbart said. “It seems sometimes all the countries of the world are against Assad, but we feel we don't have any other alternative. Honest to God, this is the situation.”

“I've met Assad a couple of times and all my colleagues, my fellow bishops and the priests and nuns, appreciate him,” Jeanbart said, carefully adding, “but that doesn't mean he's an angel.”

Chaldean Catholic Bishop Antoine Audo of Aleppo said in mid-March that if there were an open election in Syria today, Assad would get 80% support from the country's Christians – like Jeanbart, adding, “we will not say he is an angel.”

Obviously, no Christian leader in the region would justify the use of chemical weapons. However, they often have a different perspective on how such reports, assuming they're confirmed, effect their overall evaluation of Assad.

In general, many Christians in the Middle East feel they can't afford dreams of a thriving democracy. In reality, they believe, the alternative to a police state is more likely to be an Islamic theocracy, and, in such a situation, they don't like their odds. For them, the lesson of Iraq looms very large.

If ‘Assad must go’ sticks as Trump's new line on Syria,

then we may be able to add another item to the list of ways in which the White House under Trump and the Vatican under Francis don't see eye-to-eye.

We had already anticipated that immigration, climate change, anti-poverty efforts, and a host of other issues would be flash points. Up to this point, however, the presumption had been that Syria was one area where Francis and Trump could do business, creating the theoretical possibility of constructive engagement.

Now, it's a bit less clear what the basis for common cause might be.

The administration's apparent about-face on Syria raises questions on another front as well.

## Persecution

Candidate Trump pledged to make the protection of persecuted Christians in Iraq and Syria a foreign policy priority. The initial version of his controversial executive order on refugees would have provided priority treatment for religious minorities, and Trump spoke in a TV interview about helping Christians in particular.

The new order eliminates religious grounds, but recognises “fear of persecution or torture” as a basis for expedited consideration.

The protection of persecuted Christians is another concern Trump shares with Pope Francis, who dedicated his prayer

intention last month to their fate, asking in a video produced for the prayer request, “How many people are being persecuted because of their faith, forced to abandon their homes, their places of worship, their lands, their loved ones!”

Gallagher repeated the point in Brussels.

“Of deep concern remains the vulnerable situation of Christians and religious minorities in the Middle East, who suffer disproportionately the effects of war and social upheaval in the region, to such an extent that their very presence and existence are gravely threatened,” he said.

“As His Holiness Pope Francis has repeatedly recalled, their continued presence can enable them to fulfil their historic and essential role of contributing to the social cohesion of those societies, which will be of vital importance for the future of the entire region,” Gallagher said.

## “Whoever that envoy turns out to be, it would seem, will have even more fires to put out”

However, it would seem Francis and Trump may have a different concept of what “protecting” Christians in the Middle East actually means, pivoting in part on whether it's important to listen to them before reaching conclusions.

These emerging clefts between Rome and Washington lend even more drama to two looming developments in the relationship. The first is Trump's choice of an ambassador to the Vatican, which is expected soon. Whoever that envoy turns out to be, it would seem, will have even more fires to put out.

The second is a potential Trump/Francis tête-à-tête when the president travels to Italy in late May for a G-8 summit, since the two leaders could have an even more complicated agenda than was previously assumed.

No matter what happens on either front, the forecast would not seem to be exclusively for sunshine and blue skies as Rome and Washington continue to feel one another out on Trump's watch.

John L. Allen Jr is Editor of CruxNow.com

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# World Report



Edited by Greg Daly  
greg@irishcatholic.ie

## Catholics in Congo face new violence

Congo's bishops say Catholics are facing a new wave of violence following the collapse of a Church mediation plan, and in some places Church leaders have fled to the forest.

In late March, the bishops abandoned attempts to arrange a government-opposition power-sharing settlement and, within days, violence erupted in eastern Congo. "The militias are continuing their macabre operations - each passing day sees new killings and burning of religious buildings," said a statement on the bishops' conference website.

"The worst affected is the Diocese of Luebo, where the bishop's house, library, sisters' convent and vehicles have been burned, and priests and religious have fled to the forest with other inhabitants. The situation is harsh and unbearable."

The statement followed attacks on Church personnel and property in Congo's Kasai and Kivu regions.

Bishop Sebastien Muyengo Mulombe of Uvira said the situation in Kivu had been



People chant slogans against Congolese President Joseph Kabila as armed UN peacekeepers watch in Kinshasa. Photo: CNS

exacerbated by the arrival of 15,000 refugees from neighbouring Burundi, adding that he had been forced to suspend wages to teachers at local church schools after a delivery driver was killed in a robbery.

"The militias are arming young people who can't

continue studies and have no work; in these conditions, for \$20 (€18.80), you can manipulate whomever you wish," the bishop told France's Catholic *La Croix* daily. "We are in a state of permanent insecurity, of car-hijacking, pillaging and killing. These are reported to us each day."

### Number of Catholics continues to grow

The number of baptised Catholics in the world grew to 1.285 billion an increase of 1% year on year according just released Vatican statistics.

The latest statistical yearbook reports that the countries with the most Catholics account for almost 56% of the world's Catholic population.

The top 10 Catholic populations are (in order): Brazil, Mexico, the Philippines, United States, Italy, France, Colombia,

Spain, Congo and Argentina.

The global Catholic population increased by 7.4 per cent, the Vatican said, between the period between 2010 and 2015. Africa continued to be the continent with the largest percentage growth in Catholics, increasing by 19.4% over the same five-year period.

The increase in baptised Catholics in Africa outpaced the growth of the general population.

In Europe, the Americas

and Asia, the number of Catholics roughly correlated with the growth or decline of the population of Europe as a whole over the five-year period, according to the Central Office for Church Statistics.

At the end of 2015, the annual said, there were 670,320 professed women religious in the world, 415,656 priests, 54,229 religious brothers, 45,255 permanent deacons and 5,304 bishops.

### Priest faces embezzlement charges

A priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia responsible for a retirement home for priests faces charges of embezzling more than \$535,000 (€503,000) from that same home.

Msgr William Dombrow, 77, was charged by the US District Attorney's Office in Philadelphia April 5 with four counts of wire fraud in a scheme he is alleged to have devised to siphon off

funds intended for care of retired archdiocesan priests at Villa St Joseph where he has served as the rector since 2005.

The authorities allege that Msgr. Dombrow set up a bank account unbeknown to the archdiocese, directed money from the estates of retired or deceased priests as well as bequests of lay donors to Villa St Joseph, and transferred

money electronically for his personal use.

The scheme is alleged to have begun in December 2007 and continued until May 2016.

The district attorney charges the priest "had sole access" to the bank account, "which was funded by gifts from wills and life insurance proceeds that were intended for the archdiocese."

### IN BRIEF

#### US Church rolls out anti-violence campaign

Chicago Cardinal Blasé Cupich has announced a new initiative to increase the work of current anti-violence programs in parishes and schools. The Chicago Archdiocese also will seek out partnerships to increase programmes that will help break the cycle of violence. The cardinal announced the initiatives on the 49th anniversary of the assassination of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King.

With a \$250,000 (€235,000) personal donation, Cardinal Cupich said the archdiocese will create the Instruments of Peace Venture Philanthropy Fund that will provide funds for both new and existing neighbourhood-based anti-violence programs. The money comes from donations he's received to aid his personal charitable efforts.

#### Pope thanks bishops for Communion guidelines

Pope Francis has reportedly thanked Malta's bishops for their guidelines making it clear that some divorced and remarried Catholics can receive Holy Communion.

The Maltese website *Newsbook* has reported that the secretary general of the Synod of Bishops Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri sent the letter of gratitude to co-signatories of the guidelines, Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta and Bishop Mario Grech of Gozo, but did not give any further details.

The cardinal reportedly sent the letter on behalf of the Pope to thank them for their guidelines on applying the controversial Chapter 8 of the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*)

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# Letters

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23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2,  
or email: letters@irishcatholic.ie

## Letter of the week

### Why don't we wash each other's feet?

**Dear Editor,** "If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you." (John 13: 14-15)

Pope Francis has washed the feet of prisoners in Rome, men and women, some of them of different religious faith. Archbishop Rowan Williams reintroduced the practice in Canterbury some years ago. In 1998, Jean Vanier the founder of L'Arche facilitated the leaders of the World Council of Churches to wash each other's feet despite all their theological and disciplinary differences. Foot washing establishes

communion through the body with each other. I had my feet washed very tenderly, caringly (and even prayerfully) once and I returned the service. It was a very graceful experience. It can be a door to the sacred.

This practice has an on/off history in the Church. By the second century it was left to widows (1 Timothy: 5.10). It is something that we could rediscover despite the awkwardness, resistance (like Peter) and embarrassment of it all. On Holy Thursday in most churches the priest pours a little water on one foot of a few representatives from the congregation. This is very inadequate and looks more like a

mime to the rest of us looking on. Besides it should be a mutual washing.

Of course it would be very difficult to have a mutual washing with a big congregation, but small groups like readers or ministers of the Eucharist or the parish council could do it on one of their retreat/renewal/refresher days. In fact any group of Christians could organise a prayerful ritual of feet washing in their home. Most of these ideas have been inspired by a little book *Washing Feet* by Thomas O'Loughlin

*Yours etc.,  
Noel Bradley,  
Buncrana, Co. Donegal.*

### Irish Church dragging its feet on vocations crisis

**Dear Editor,** Both your own editorial of March 30 and Bishop Francis Duffy of Ardagh's letter suggest strategies for dealing with the present and looming critical shortage of priests.

I wish to make just two observations. Firstly, why has no one to the best of my knowledge ever followed up candidates for the priesthood who for one reason or another have quit and changed their direction in life? Just why did so many ostensibly good candidates leave? Firms do it all the time when a customer quits the buying process. Twenty-three joined the Jesuits in my year. As far as I know five followed through.

Secondly, there is a very definite perception that the Irish Church has been dragging its anchor for the past half century. It seems to me that the fields are as white as ever for the harvest. And people are praying for priests. Somebody somewhere must be blocking the action of the Spirit.

*Yours etc.,  
Brian Flanagan,  
Buncrana, Co. Donegal.*

## Science offers solution to Original Sin

**Dear Editor,** Greg Daly (IC 30/03/2017) quotes William Lane Craig: "I don't make a naïve claim like 'science proves God', my claim is that science can furnish evidence that is in support of a premise in a philosophical argument for a conclusion that has theological significance."

When it comes to Original Sin and its effects, science presently offers the only logical solution reconciling faith and reason, i.e. Original

Sin was/is a transcendental catastrophe in Eden, resulting in the Big Bang and Evolution, with every iota of matter-energy in the universe, subject to pain, decay and death, i.e. the out-working of humanity's original free will choice to know both good and evil. This theory also reconciles two apparently contradictory statements in the Catechism, viz

1. Evolution of a finite universe and all life. Then

Original Sin and the fall of humanity in Adam and Eve as an historical event (in space-time) on planet Earth. (C.C. 390)

2."At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. Then the just will reign with Christ forever, glorified in body and soul, and the material universe itself will be transformed. God will then be 'all in all' (1Cor 15:28) in eternal life". (CCC 1060)

All of creation exists in

"the eternal now of God". In finite space-time our human bodies emerge as a progression. Our infinite personal souls, (our life force gift at the moment of earthly conception) exist in the "eternal now of God". Before I formed you in your mother's womb I knew you. (Jer. 1.5). In God, knowing is being/existence.

*Yours etc.,  
Prof. J. Rooney,  
Belfast,  
Co. Antrim.*

### Still figuring it out

**Dear Editor,** When President Donald Trump informed the international media last week that he had detonated 59 Tomahawk missiles in Syria, he peppered his speech with references to God. I'm still trying to figure out where in the bible it says it's okay to approach your 'enemy' with a bible in one hand and 59,000 lb of explosives in the other. Assistance welcome.

*Derek Murray,  
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath*



## Finally a pro-life mainstream political party

**Dear Editor,** I and others have been wishing, hoping and searching for some years now for a political party to emerge that would be absolutist and unapologetic in its support for the Eighth Amendment and the protection of the unborn child, as well as many other social issues.

Thankfully the waiting is finally over and Renua has taken a courageous step forward, and stated its position in unambiguous terms (IC 30/03/2017), which is what many people disenfranchised and marginalised by

the current crop of parties yearned for.

Of course our liberal media, and their pals in the extreme feminist movement, and those false idols in the 'artist' and 'celebrity' world have already attempted to mock and denigrate Renua without any reference to its other very well-constructed policies.

Renua has demonstrated though that it will not be bullied by the usual predictable suspects, but will hold true to what it stands for which is surely a rare virtue in politics today. Even those

opposed to them may even secretly admire this stance.

We are being presented with a new and fresh movement here which has been sought for some considerable time. It would be a great shame not to grasp this opportunity which will hopefully restore much-needed balance to our society and democracy.

*Yours etc.,  
John Burke,  
Clontarf,  
Dublin 3.*

## Different forms of racism

**Dear Editor,** Fr Alan Hilliard is again commenting (IC 23/03/2017) on racism, yet his comments are very vague. Who is committing acts of racism, what are they and what is considered racism? Is it the Irish or non-Irish or new Irish? 'Racism' is part of the vocabulary used by groups funded from abroad who are intent on banishing Christianity from this island. It is used to stifle any questioning of what is happening in Ireland.

Rural, Irish, elderly, are being denied hospital transport by the HSE. At the same time the HSE is providing hospital

transport for non-Irish from the midlands to Dublin. People who have questioned this injustice have been accused of racism.

The most discriminated, highly-taxed, group in Ireland are working Irish families. Some of their taxes are used to pay for the health and education of non-Irish; working Irish families pay so much tax on their wages that they can't afford to pay for the health and education of their own children. This is real racism.

*Yours etc.,  
David Kelly,  
Crumlin,  
Dublin 12.*

### Parents will come to regret kids' lack of discipline

**Dear Editor,** I witnessed a class of 10-year-olds recently on a walk down O'Connell Street, Dublin. Even though there was a teacher front and back, the kids were in a 'do what you feel' mood. They were lampooning passers-by and gesturing at the traffic. This is typical in a society where we often hear the ludicrous comment where a parent tells us: "I am learning from my 10-year-old, he knows what's what".

There is a proverb in the Old Testament which warns that if parents don't discipline their kids, the same kids, when they become teenagers, will discipline them. Discipline might be translated into 'ignore their words of advice'.

*Yours etc.,  
Cecil Roberts,  
Rathmines,  
Dublin 6.*

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world



**SYRIA:** A child receives treatment after what rescue workers described as a suspected chemical attack in Idlib, Syria. Pope Francis strongly condemned the attack, which left more than 70 people, including at least 10 children, dead, and which prompted an American attack on Syrian military installations.



**VATICAN:** Pope Francis Pope celebrates his morning Mass at the Vatican's Domus Sanctae Marthae. Photos: CNS



**COLUMBIA:** Relatives and friends carry the coffin of a mudslide victim following a funeral Mass in Mocoa, after a mudslide which left more than 260 dead.



**VATICAN:** Pope Francis with Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster, England, and Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at a meeting with four imams from Britain. The pope encouraged religious leaders to listen to one another and teach their followers to do the same.



## ► VENEZUELA:

Demonstrators help an injured man during clashes between security forces and protesters in San Cristobal, Venezuela. The nation's bishops have called for "peaceful civil disobedience" to restore constitutional order

## ◄ USA:

Chicago's Cardinal Blase Cupich answering questions from the media after reading a letter from Pope Francis to the people of Chicago, after the cardinal announced an anti-violence initiative to increase the capacity and reach of current programmes of the Chicago Archdiocese to tackle the root causes of violence.





# The empty tomb

**B**elievers and non-believers alike have been arguing about the Resurrection since the day Jesus rose. What really happened? How was he raised from the dead? Did an actual dead body really come back to life and step out of the grave or was the Resurrection a monumental life-changing event inside the consciousness of Jesus' followers? Or was the Resurrection both, a real physical event and an event inside the consciousness of believers?

Obviously nobody was there to see what actually happened. Those who claimed Jesus was alive again didn't see him rise and emerge from the tomb, they met him only after he had already risen and, immediately, believers and sceptics began to divide from each other, persons who claimed to have touched him and persons who doubted that testimony.

There have been sceptics and believers ever since and no shortage of persons, professional theologians and non-scholarly Christians alike, who believe in the resurrection of Jesus as a faith event but not as a physical event, where an actual body came out of a grave.

## Faith event

The faith event is what's important, they claim, and it is incidental whether or not Jesus' actual body came out of the grave.

Was Jesus' resurrection a



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

faith event or a physical event? It was both. For Christians it is the most monumental event, faith and otherwise, in history. Two thousand subsequent years cannot be explained, except by the reality of the Resurrection.

**“Two thousand subsequent years cannot be explained, except by the reality of the Resurrection”**

To understand the resurrection of Jesus only as a literal fact, that his body rose from the grave, is to cut the Resurrection off from much of its meaning. However,

that being admitted, for Christians, the Resurrection must also be a radically physical event. Why?

First, because the Gospels are pretty clear in emphasising that the tomb was empty and that the resurrected Jesus was more than a spirit or ghost.

We see, for instance, in Luke's Gospel where Jesus invites a doubting Thomas to verify his physicality: "Look at my hands and my feet. It's really me. Touch me. You can see that I have a living body; a ghost does not have a body like this."

As well, and very importantly, to cut the Resurrection off from the literal fact that there was real physical transformation of a once dead corpse is to rob it of some

of its important meanings and perhaps of the deepest root of its credibility. For the resurrection of Christ to have full meaning it must, among other things, have been a brute physical fact. There needs to be an empty tomb and a dead body returned to life. Why?

Not as some kind of miracle proof, but because of the Incarnation. To believe in the Incarnation and not to believe in the radical physical character of the Resurrection is a contradiction. We believe that in the Incarnation the Word was made flesh.

**“The Resurrection rearranged hearts and minds, but it also rearranged atoms”**

This takes the mystery of Christ and the reality of the Resurrection out of the realm of pure spirit. The Incarnation always connotes a reality that's radically physical, tangible, and touchable, like the old dictionary definition of matter as "something extended in space and having weight."

To believe in the Incarnation is to believe that God was born into real physical flesh, lived in real physical flesh, died in real physical flesh, and rose in real physical flesh. To believe that the Resurrection was only an event in the faith consciousness of the disciples, however real, rich, and radical that might be imagined, is to rob the Incarnation of its radical physical character and to fall into the kind of dualism that values

spirit and denigrates the physical. Such a dualism devalues the Incarnation and this impoverishes the meaning of the Resurrection. If the Resurrection is only a spiritual event then it is also only an anthropological one and not also a cosmic one. That's a way of saying that it's then an event only about human consciousness and not also about the cosmos.

But Jesus' resurrection isn't just something radically new in terms of human consciousness; it's also something that's radically new in terms of atoms and molecules. The Resurrection rearranged hearts and minds, but it also rearranged atoms. Until Jesus' resurrection, dead bodies did not come back to life; they stayed dead, so when his came back to life there was something radically new both at the level of faith and at the level of the atoms and molecules.

Precisely because of its brute physicality, Jesus' resurrection offers new hope to atoms as well as to people.

I believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, literally. I believe too that this event was, as the rich insights within contemporary theology point out, highly spiritual: an event of faith, of changed consciousness, of new hope empowering a new charity and a new forgiveness.

But it was also an event of changed atoms and of a changed dead body. It was radically physical, just as are all events that are part of the Incarnation wherein God takes on real flesh.





# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, April 13, 2017

**Personal Profile**  
We meet the new  
Pope John Paul II  
Awards Co-Ordinator

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## Babies doing it for THEM- SELVES



**B**aby-led feeding works from the same principles as baby-led weaning. It begins when your little one is around the six-month mark and has started to show signs of being able to pick up food. You will know when your baby is ready when the piece of toast in your hand is suddenly being stuffed into their little mouth or your stem of broccoli disappears with only remnants left on your little baby's face.

It is this curiosity and adventure that makes baby-led feeding so special. It's a natural exploration of everything around them and this is encouraged by giving them wholesome and naturally delicious foods that they will grab, explore and

**Baby-led feeding allows your child to explore food at their own pace and become a healthy eater, writes Aileen Cox Blundell**



put into their mouths all by themselves.

It is such an enjoyable time for the baby and the entire family. You get to watch this little human being you have brought into the world take complete control over what they eat.

You watch them poke holes in muffins, peering in to see what the soft textures contain, and experience that joy of seeing them try a mushroom for the first

time and loving it or hating it, but knowing they picked up that food all by themselves, put it in their mouth and tried.

The main belief behind baby-led feeding is that all food should be healthy food, and with the growing statistics of obesity in Ireland, it is more important now than ever to make sure we are giving our children the right foods to help nourish them for the long term.

### Healthy food choice

If you only give your baby healthy food then that is what they will grow up knowing – good food is healthy food. It takes a while for your baby to happily munch on a lettuce leaf but you will be astounded when they do so for the first time.

There are no spoons, no choo-choo trains, no 'Daddy's gonna eat your dinner'. Your baby gets to choose from here on in. They decide what they want to eat and what they don't, how much to eat and, more importantly, when they are full.

### Learning to chew

If a food is soft enough to squish

between your finger and thumb then your baby's gums, even without teeth, are strong enough to break it down. This chewing develops naturally with the new foods you give your little one and also aids in the natural digestion of food.

### Different textures

Your baby will learn to explore and manage different textures and shapes of food from six months old. They will have the opportunity to practise their fine motor skills by grasping and picking up food at every meal.

### Better eaters

As your baby tries new foods,

» **Continued on Page 25**



## Children's Corner

ERIN FOX



### An Easter cake inspired by Resurrection Hill

**I**t's Easter weekend and it's time to rip open the bags of mini eggs for some serious Easter baking. But before you jump straight into helping your parents make a bunny rabbit cake or a chocolate nest, think of ways you can bake that reflects what Easter's all about.

This light orange sponge inspired by Resurrection Hill is just the cake you need after indulging in chocolate all day. Use any citrus fruit you like for the cake; a combination of orange and grapefruit is surprisingly nice!

#### CAKE

- 275g self-raising flour sifted.
- 2 tsp baking powder.
- 275g butter softened.
- 275g caster sugar.
- Zest of 2 large oranges (keep the juice for the icing).
- 5 large eggs lightly beaten.
- 1 x 8-inch loose-bottomed cake tin.
- 1 x 8-inch hemisphere cake tin or a bowl.



#### ICING

- 225g unsalted butter.
- 250g icing sugar sifted.
- Juice of 2 large oranges.
- Green food colouring.
- Chocolate fingers for decoration, mini eggs and a small amount of fondant icing.

Preheat oven to 175 degrees. Grease and line the cake tins with baking paper. Beat the butter, sugar and zest together for five minutes until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs with the flour and baking powder and mix until fully incorporated. Divide the mixture between the two tins and bake in the preheated oven for 30 to 35 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool before turning the cakes out onto a wire rack.

To make the icing, beat the butter and icing sugar together for five minutes at a high speed. Add the orange juice and the green food colouring and mix until the colour is even.

Spread some of the buttercream onto the flat cake and then place the domed cake on top. Smooth the remaining buttercream – reserving some for the crosses – all over the cake and then start decorating.

To make the crosses, stick two chocolate finger biscuits together with a little of the buttercream. Repeat until you have three crosses and then place these side by side on top of the cake.

Mould the fondant into a boulder and brush with edible silver dust. Place this at the base of the cake in front of the crosses.

Scatter the mini eggs over the cake and place it on the table at Easter lunch.

# Long-term care costs an urgent issue



**A**n ageing population has led to a significant increase in the number requiring nursing home care in Ireland in recent years. While the vast majority of adults aged over 65 continue to live at home, about 5% have care needs that require placement in long-term care rising to about 20% in those aged over 80 years.

Indeed, the average age of those entering nursing home is between 80-85 years and about two thirds are female, figures which have remained relatively stable over the past two decades.

In the 1980's, the majority of all nursing home facilities were state run (70%), but due to increasing demand as well as divestment of care by state authorities over two thirds are now privately managed.

There are several factors including physical, cognitive, mental health and social that come to play in determining the complex care needs that may result in someone no longer being able to live at home.

**“Severe physical impairment due to stroke, advanced arthritis and other conditions like Parkinson's are also common”**

While dementia ranks as one of the commonest disabilities leading to institutionalisation, severe physical impairment due to stroke, advanced arthritis and other conditions like Parkinson's are also common. In many cases, it is the combination of both cognitive and physical problems (poor mobility, recurrent falls) that impacts on activities of living that makes home living no longer viable or safe. The decision around going to

## Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



a nursing home is often complex and difficult for the individual and their family. For many, not only is there a loss of their own personal privacy and space but a perception that a nursing home is the 'end' as a result of the culmination of their medical problems.

While many live in nursing homes for several years, a significant proportion will have much shorter stays reflective of complex medical illness. In Ireland (based on limited data), the mortality rate in nursing home (at one year post admission from hospital) is about 25% and about half will not survive beyond 2.5 years, figures comparable to other countries.

### Preferable

It is always preferable to keep people at home for as long as is possible in a supportive environment. However, providing for those individual care needs will depend also on social, family and indeed financial factors that will vary case by case. For example, living alone or having no children or close family members can make the difference between staying at home or going to long-term care.

When 24-hour care is needed, expense makes it out of reach for most people and

indeed exceeds the cost of nursing home itself. However, care needs are often much less and may vary from having more frequent calls and help with personal care to daytime supervision such as in those with dementia (who may be at risk of wandering or hazardous activity) but who pose no difficulties at night.

**“Under Fair Deal 80% of income and 7.5% of assets are taken per year to fund nursing home costs”**

Unfortunately, limitations in the extent and availability of home care support can mean that for some, nursing home may be the only option to bridge this gap.

In practise, additional home support would ensure that a proportion of such older adults remain at home rather than going to long-term care.

The Nursing Home support scheme otherwise known as the 'Fair Deal' scheme was introduced in 2009 as a funding model that can be accessed by all who are deemed medically in need of nursing home.

In general, under Fair Deal 80% of income and 7.5% of assets are taken per year to fund nursing home costs, payment of which can be deferred. Where the asset is a family home the 7.5% contribution is capped after three years nursing home stay though all other assets after exclusion of the first €36,000 are considered.

For those with limited finances, the scheme funds the overwhelming burden of nursing home cost which accounted for nearly one billion euro in expenditure by the HSE last year.

Indeed, the scheme has gone over its funding allocation more

than once and there has been delays in cases of individuals where there are complex finances and lack of capacity.

Furthermore, property that is transferred to other persons within five years of applying for the scheme is treated as an asset, a rule which is likely to face legal challenges in the future.

On the other hand, many have to make substantial contributions and some who have greater assets choose to pay privately from their own resources.

Whether this actually represents a 'Fair Deal' has been a matter of much discussion though in a lot of cases, an individual bears the minority of the cost.

The scheme has reduced the numbers waiting in hospital for long-term care. In addition, a substantial proportion of older adults now go to nursing home from the community where in the past they previously first entered hospital.

Providing home care packages on a statutory and needs based model to ensure that older adults in as far as is possible remain at home has been recently proposed by the Government.

For a significant proportion, this is also a more cost effective given that the average annual expense of nursing home at nearly €50,000.

Looking to the future, it is estimated that an additional 13,000 nursing home places will be needed in the next 15 years, a demand which will no doubt put a renewed focus on the discussion of how we want as a society to fund long term care.

**i** Dr Kevin McCarroll is a Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine, St James's Hospital, Dublin.



» Continued from Page 23



they will experience a world of new textures they would probably not have had the opportunity to try if they were traditionally weaned. This is so important because, in the long term, they will be more inclined to pick up and try new foods than ‘taste with their eyes’.

Less time-consuming

Your baby eats what you eat. There is no mashing concoctions of foods you probably wouldn't eat yourself: you simply cook healthy, delicious food for your family and then let your

baby get to work on it on their own.

Warm dinners

The biggest plus for me is being able to eat my own dinner while my little one munches away on his own food. Because I'm not trying to get him to eat one more bite and he is eating at his own pace, we get to eat dinner as a family and it is so much more fun. Watching a seven-month-old feed himself spaghetti and meatballs while the rest of the family eats them too is what it's all about.



Getting started...

**THE GREAT THING** about the baby-led way of feeding is that you don't need much to get started. There are just a few basic principles to follow:

- Invest in a long-sleeved bib: The long-sleeved bib saves on changing clothes after every meal and if you can get one with a catch pocket that's even better, as it reduces spillages on the floor. Forget the bowl: unless you can find a really good suction bowl your baby is just going to fling it across your kitchen floor. So just place the food onto their high-chair tray and let them get to work.
- Teach them how to use cutlery: I gave my baby a kiddie spoon when he was about seven months old. Sometimes you have to pre-load a spoon. This simply means you put the food on the spoon and let your baby pick it up and put it in their own mouth. Essentially, you are still not feeding them – they are doing the work.
- It's a great way for them to master the art of using cutlery, and before you know it they'll be drinking soup from a spoon on their own like a pro!
- Let them use their hands: They will want to use their hands regardless of how messy the food is and will learn about so many textures and tastes.

Choking vs gagging

Choking is a really scary word and one that is at the forefront of our thoughts when we start letting our little babies feed themselves. However, once you only offer soft and safe foods, your baby is quite capable of chewing and breaking up the food with their strong gums. Gagging is a common occurrence in early baby-led feeding, although it might never happen at all. The gag reflex is a safety mechanism that prevents choking as babies learn to move food from the back of their throats to the front. Gagging also teaches them not to stuff their mouths with food. As babies get older and more skilled at eating, they gag less and chew more.

- Start slow: Introduce soft foods at the beginning like banana or roasted sweet potato. I also gave my kiddies roasted butternut squash, avocado, steamed carrots, broccoli and scrambled egg. It's so much fun watching them explore their new food and having that first magical taste.
- Make it manageable: When you are giving fruits and vegetables on the side, cut them into thick chip sizes. This makes it much easier for small babies to manage, as they get frustrated if the food is too small to pick up. Just remember that all food should break apart when squashed between your thumb and index finger.
- Ensure a balanced diet: Until

babies are six months old, they get all the nutrition they need from either breastmilk or formula. After that, iron-rich and nutritious foods need to be introduced to their diet.

.....

Baby-led feeding has been one of the best and most enjoyable things we have done as a family. It is so much fun watching this little human explore their food and taste new things for the first time. It flies by so take a deep breath and enjoy it. Honestly, the mess gets less and less and before you know it you will have a pro on your hands.

**i** Edited extract from The Baby-Led Feeding Cookbook by Aileen Cox Blundell, published by Gill Books.

Faith  
— IN THE —  
family



Bairbre Cahill

I am a happy mammy. For three weekends in a row my whole brood is at home. It is unusual enough to get our older two girls home together but because of a few family events and now Easter we are having a great run of family time. I love the banter and craic, sitting longer round the dinner table, Diarmuid recounting the details of every point and goal he has scored since he last saw his older sisters, the girls eyeing up any new clothes or bits of make-up. Our youngest daughter, Méabh, is due to go to University in September. I am excited for her and I know she just wants to get through the Leaving Cert and off to college. I love the way Deirbhile has flourished at university, developing a wonderful confidence and a great social network. Caoimhe, now working in Belfast, is constantly juggling half a dozen projects. We nearly have to make an appointment to have a chat on the phone! I love having my children home but I also love the lives they are building and I would never take that away from them. I do not want to tie them to my apron strings but I would have to admit, there is a loneliness about being a parent.

**“Being a parent asks us to be generous with our love and with the freedom we offer our children”**

We raise our children to be confident enough to leave the nest and move out in the world. We want our children to become themselves not to be pale shadows of their parents. Being a parent asks us to be generous with our love and with the freedom we offer our children. If that means that we live with the reality of missing them, so be it, that is the price of our children building their own futures. In the midst of it all I have found myself thinking about

Mary and her experience as the Mother of Jesus. Peter had realised that it was dangerous for Jesus to travel to Jerusalem. He tried to talk him out of it and got sorely rebuked – “Get behind me, Satan”. I wonder did Mary ever try to stop Jesus? Or did she know too deeply what it meant to have handed her own life over to God to ever consider trying to stop Jesus doing the same thing? Perhaps she recalled those days when her boy was young and got lost only to be found then in the temple in Jerusalem. He told herself and Joseph clearly that he must be about his Father's business. But surely still she must have struggled.

**Power**

Was she in the upper room at that supper which turned out to be his last? She would have seen the power behind his gesture – this is my body broken for you, this is my blood poured out for you – and would have known what it meant. We are told that Mary is one of the women who remained at the cross when the apostles had run away. How did she manage to look upon her son in his suffering? When my children are hurting, I would do everything to be able to take that pain away from them and carry it myself. What passion, what emotional and psychological crucifixion did Mary go through? But she did not leave him. She did not run away but stood there offering him her strength. We are not told of the encounter between Mary and Jesus but surely, he must have gone first to her. Did she know this moment was going to come? Did she believe that God's love and power could not be defeated, even by the scandal of the cross? And how she must have laughed and cried and wrapped him in her arms, her boy, made new. And somehow the ordinary loving, missing and rejoicing in my own children has opened a door, letting me enter the Gospel and the wonder of this Easter season in a powerful and personal way.





# JPII Award continues to expand



## Mags Gargan talks to the new Pope John Paul II Award Co-ordinator

Over 1,000 young people gathered in Knock Shrine last week to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Pope John Paul II Award. This was just a small portion of the over 20,000 teenagers who have completed the award since it was set up by Fr Paul Farren in 2006, in his role as director of the Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre. Now underway in 22 dioceses in Ireland and two in Britain – the Archdiocese of Birmingham and the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle – and enquiries coming from the United States, the award continues to grow in popularity, which has led to the appointment of Tony Brennan as Award Co-Ordinator.

Originally from Tubbercurry in Co. Sligo, Tony has lived in Derry for many years as a graphic designer and his company was involved in the award project from the very beginning.

### Responsibilities

"We've been involved with the Pope John Paul II Award since it was founded in 2006, managing the award marketing materials for each diocese involved," he says. "It has been a natural progression into this challenging role. The main responsibilities are to continue to promote the award throughout Ireland and internationally. To



Award participants at the celebration in Knock and, left, Tony Brennan, Awards Co-Ordinator.

**“Each year we have new surprises and new challenges, but we have a good, strong team behind us”**

Personal  
PROFILE

keep to the award founder, Fr Paul Farren's vision of celebrating young people's involvement in their church and to encourage more young people to get involved."

Funded by the Knights of St Columbanus, the Pope John Paul II Award is a faith achievement award for young people between the age of 16 and 18. It is non-competitive, inclusive, flexible and voluntary. Each award is completed over a 16-month period beginning at the start of the academic year. Awards are earned by taking part in parish and social activities - one hour per week over 8, 14 or 20 weeks. There are three award levels - Gold, Silver & Bronze. Those that have completed the Gold Award have a further option of completing the Papal Cross Award.

Tony believes the secret behind the award's great success lies in its simplicity. "The simple idea was to get young people visible with

their church," he says. "Fr Paul's idea from the very start was to make young people visible in their Church and community. Schools are an obvious choice to use and promote the award, but no two dioceses are the same. In some the award is run through the parish and the parish leaders go into the schools, in other dioceses the award is run through the schools and they go out into the parishes.

### Worthwhile

"But the simple concept of making young people feel they are contributing in a worthwhile way to their community and the Church is part of that community. That is what makes it so easy to work in each parish and diocese and why we believe it is expanding."

As well as getting young people involved in their local church, a great strength of the award is to appeal to young people's desire

to make a difference in their community. "On the social side we see a lot of the activities to do with fundraising or visiting old people's homes or neighbours who live in their own and things like that," Tony says. "Many young people continue to do this after completing the award. One local lad found out the gravedigger needed help and he volunteered to dig the graves with him.

"People like bad news and most of the publicity we see is the negative side to young people, but the majority are just trying to figure things out. The award slots into the need for young people to get involved in something and to see what they are doing is worthwhile. It is rewarding for them to see they are appreciated for what they do."

The celebration for award participants in Knock was only the first anniversary event for the

award. On October 30 there will be a pilgrimage to Rome led by Bishop Donal McKeown for those over 18 years old who have completed the award, which organisers hope will include an audience with Pope Francis.

A book is also currently being compiled on the history of the award, which will record the experiences of many young people who have taken part in the award.

When asked if he had any idea 10 years ago that the award would grow so much, Tony says "the mind boggles".

"We started off 10 years ago trying to figure out if it was worth anyone's while. We thought it was an achievement just to get it out into a few parishes in the first year, but it ended up across the whole diocese. The teachers were engaged, the pupils were engaged and it just worked," he says.

"Each year we have new surprises and new challenges, but we have a good, strong team behind us and thankfully everyone is really enthusiastic and coming up with great ideas and little ways to make it work."

**i** If you have any questions about the award, or if your school, parish or diocese wish to enrol, contact 028 7126 4087 (from Republic of Ireland: 048 7126 4087) or [admin@thepopejohnpauliiaward.com](mailto:admin@thepopejohnpauliiaward.com)



## Eco Eye

Hannah Evans

## Parishes have many options for talking climate change

**A**t all levels, a change of mind-set is needed. It is the same mind-set that is needed to tackle both climate change and world poverty." (*Laudato Si'* 175)

The words of Pope Francis were gratefully received in 2015 when he released his groundbreaking papal encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

Since Trócaire began the number of natural disasters such as floods, droughts and storms has quadrupled over four decades. Each year on average 26 million people are forced from their homes because of natural disasters. Unfortunately, it is the poorest people in the world who are the most vulnerable and the least able to cope with disasters such as drought, flooding and storms, when they strike. They cannot protect themselves sufficiently during emergencies and their homes, farms and livelihoods are often



Six-year-old Maria Jose Gonzales Campo from Cuyamel in Honduras, where rising sea levels are endangering homes, holds a Trócaire Lenten box which features a picture of both her Mum, Miriam, and herself for the Trócaire 2017 Lenten campaign. Photo: Frank McGrath

destroyed. Afterwards they do not have the resources to rebuild and recover.

In the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis called on everyone across the world, not just Catholics, to stand up and take action on the destruction of the environment and the worsening and unjust impacts of climate change on the world's poorest people.

There are many ways that parishes and communities can take action by learning more about climate change and taking

practical steps in their own lives to reduce their impact on the environment. Taking time to reflect and worship is the first way. For example prayers can be offered during Mass for vulnerable people and communities affected by climate change.

On a practical level, groups and committees could enforce 'reduce waste' rules for parish hall

events and parties. Email and text could be used more often to reduce paper consumption. Taking small steps that link the impact of our lives on the lives of communities in developing countries is a critical step towards tackling this issue.

Parishes that discover a keen interest within their congregation could hold a talk or workshop on *Laudato Si'* and invite a Trócaire speaker. Finally, hosting a 'Green Tea' social event using only locally sourced foods and Fairtrade beverages would be a fun way to highlight these important issues.

For more ideas Trócaire's GLAS resource [www.trocaire.org/parish](http://www.trocaire.org/parish) provides a checklist for parishes looking to be eco-aware. The checklist covers a wide range of topics from liturgy to church administration offering tips and suggestions for parishes to become more environmentally conscious.

**i** Hannah Evans is a Church officer with Trócaire, the bishops' overseas aid agency. Tel: 01 6293333.



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## The issue of faith reduced to numbers

**T**he new census figures released last week have caused a stir, and among the aspects heavily reported have been those related to religion.

I've noticed a concentration (even satisfaction in some quarters?) on the drop (since 2011) in the percentage of the population identifying as Catholic (from 84% to 78%) along with the 10% figure for those ticking the 'no religion' box (which doesn't necessarily mean no belief in God) and an almost complete lack of interest in the figures for other religions – I didn't hear one mention of the Church of Ireland or the Judaism, and only passing references to Islam.

On **Leap of Faith** (RTÉ Radio One) last Friday night, Declan Smith from the Central Statistics Office outlined some of the findings, while theologian Gena Menzies tried to interpret. Mind you, she started by saying that people may interpret the figures according to their own agendas!

She expected the drop in the numbers of Catholics to be greater – "anecdotally" she said she knew many people on the east coast (!) who had given up their faith. Rightly, I think, she suggested that despite everything (which no doubt includes scandals and the accompanying and sometimes opportunistic media trouncings) people



Gina Menzies spoke on RTÉ's *Leap of Faith*.

still have an 'affiliation' with the Church.

She thought the 'institution' of the Church didn't seem able to build on this affiliation, and I think there's some truth in that, and she also felt it would be a mistake for the Church to think the figures weren't that bad, though she also thought groups like Atheist Ireland were perhaps too enthusiastic about the stats.

The programme also aired an issue that is rarely topical but always universal: difficulties with prayer. Michael Comyn spoke to Fr Finbarr

Lynch SJ about the times when prayer becomes dry. Fr Lynch, who has written two books – *When You Pray* and *When You Can't Pray* – stressed that prayer involved relationship, and that often in his prayer the Lord is the more active one.

He said prayer was a lot about gratitude and had learned a lot about prayer from people who were ill, people who found it hard to pray on their own.

Further, he liked to think of a 'state of prayer' as distinct from 'saying prayers'. Asked by Comyn about people who

say they are spiritual rather than religious I think he hit the nail on the head – with 'spiritual' there's an individualistic approach but with religion there's community.

### Persecution

The community of Chinese Catholics was the subject of a fascinating documentary series **An Misean sa tSín** (The China Mission), on TG 4.

The latest episode, Wednesday of last week, concentrated on the time of persecution, in the 1950's especially.

The missionaries were looking forward to an extensive spread of the Gospel after the Second World War, but the resumption of the civil war between nationalists and communists put paid to that, especially when the communists led by Mao won the conflict in the late 1940's.

From then on anything deemed 'anti-revolution-

ary' was suppressed. Foreign priests were jailed or expelled, while native priests were treated more brutally – it's estimated that around 128 of them were killed.

The Legion of Mary was a particular target, apparently because they were thought to be literally a fighting legion.

Eventually, Mao set up a Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association and to this day there's an underground or unofficial Church (eight million members estimated) and an overground or official Church (four million).

One historian reckoned there was around 100 million Christians in China, many of whom had joined the Faith after Mao died in 1976 and regulations relaxed from the 80s on. It's well worth catching up on at the TG4 Player website.

And finally, some good news broke on the political front last week with the unilateral disarming of the Basque paramilitary group ETA. Last weekend's **Sunday Sequence** (BBC Radio Ulster) featured an interview with Rev. Harold Good who was involved in the verification procedures as he had been in the Northern Ireland peace process.

He was critical of the Spanish Government's no-compromise attitude and called on them to be more compassionate (e.g. allowing prisoners to be moved closer to home), but



Rev. Harold Good.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

**EASTER VIGIL MASS**  
EWTN, Holy Saturday, 7.30pm

Pope Francis celebrates the Easter Vigil Mass, live from Rome.

**MASS FOR EASTER SUNDAY**  
RTÉ One, Easter Sunday, 10am

From the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Sligo, with celebrant Most Rev. Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin.

**URBI ET ORBI**  
RTÉ One/EWTN, Easter Sunday, 11am

Pope Francis gives his traditional Easter Message to the city and the world with commentary from Fr Thomas McCarthy OP.

also called for compassion for the victims of violence and their relatives.

Others, on text, thought that Government approach was more just and were critical of aspects of the Northern experience. Whatever the case, peace is getting a chance.

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Aubrey Malone

# Film

## Three amigos opt to grow old disgracefully

### Going In Style (12A)

What else can Hollywood do with the elderly? It's made them into dolts. It's made them into geniuses. It's even, for goodness sake, put them into space (in *Space Cowboys*). Now, in a re-make of a 1979 movie, they've turned them into bank robbers.

Enter Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman and Alan Arkin, three friends from yore who hang out together on a daily basis, doing everything from commenting on asinine TV shows to discussing the advisability of tucking into an out-of-date pie at their local diner.

But when Caine becomes



Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman and Alan Arkin in *Going in Style*.

threatened with foreclosure on his house and Freeman is informed he needs a kidney transplant very soon 'or else'...it's time to think seriously about 'the folding stuff'.

Caine comes up with the idea of the robbery after

being the victim of one himself, and of being 'shafted' by the system. This is something that will strike a chord with anyone over 50 in our own country who's seen their life's savings dwindle to nothing due to the erratic behaviour

of bank officials. (A joke that went the rounds during the troika bail-out went: "What's the best way to become a bank robber these days?" Answer: "Open one.")

They've all worked hard all their lives but have nothing to show for it. Now it's payback time. So they start planning the heist. They don't want a penny more than they're owed by their pension fund from it.

### Pleasant

This is a pleasant film that plays into most of the stereotypes of former celluloid senior citizens. While not exactly a *Fun With Dick and Jane* for golden agers, or a geriatric version of *Bonnie & Clyde* –

though it veers dangerously close to this Scylla and Charybdis – it likes itself a little too much for comfort.

The script should have been a little less glib and repetitive. (The amusement quotient of hearing the phrase 'young man' applied to near-octogenarians wears a bit thin after hearing it the sixth or seventh time.)

The main leads could have phoned in their performances but that doesn't make them any the less risible. Like ageing hoofers going through tried and tested dance routines they hit the marks with deft precision every time.

The main problem, of course, with films which depict seventysomethings

as incontrovertibly kind and witty souls – with a Robin Hood attitude to money – is that not all elderly people have these qualities. To suggest they do is to fall into the same trap as those who would have us believe that when you get to bus pass age you become cranky and demented. It's inverse ageism.

We also get a romance between Arkin and Ann-Margret. Their boudoir cavortings have an adolescent feel about them but Margret looks incredible. Not too different, in fact, from when I watched her cosying up to Elvis in *Viva Las Vegas* over half a century ago.

What's her secret? Has she been robbing banks too?

Good  
★★★★



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Recent books in brief

### Time with the Master: Reflections on the Life of Jesus

by Seamus Devitt CSsR  
(Messenger Publications, €7.95)

Though Christmas seems to dominate the annual round, Easter Sunday has always been for Christians the central feast day of the year. As we celebrate next Sunday this little book by Fr Devitt will remind many people that Easter is not just for Easter, but for every day. In a series of 37 short reflections he considers the everyday presence of Jesus in people's lives.

He wishes to remind us, as he says, of "the presence of God in all things and the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf".

He bases himself in scripture and the experiences of the early Christians, which is perhaps a very necessary reminder to many that Christianity had once a more unified and simpler aspect. He calls on his readers, or reflectors, to see the beauty of the Holy Spirit in the routines of everyday living. People find it easy to attend to the great feasts, but that "domestic" faith which St Teresa of Avila speaks about is actually where religion ought to live.

### The Living Flame of Love

by John of the Cross, with an introduction by Baroness Caroline Cox  
(SPCK, £9.99)

In 1578, St John of the Cross, for what the editor of this book calls "political reasons connected with the government of the Carmelite order", was imprisoned.

It was at this time that he largely composed the poems that are an ornament of Spanish literature. This text, however, belongs to a later period, and was conceived as an explication of one of them, "O, Living Flame of Love".

The text is followed by a series of commentaries that provide a very close reading of its apparent and its inner meaning. It may well be that for many who, daunted by the scale of the saint's accomplishments as a writer, hesitate to embark on this work, that this little book will provide an ideal first step in experiencing the high point of Spanish mysticism. Baroness Cox is the founder and chief executive of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust.

### 13 Powerful Ways to Pray

by Eamon Tobin  
(DynamicCatholic.com, US\$14.95)

These days we are told that a healthy diet is a varied diet. Eamon Tobin has applied this idea to the matter of prayer, explaining that there are different ways and modes of prayer suitable for different times and locations.

Over the centuries many have found prayer in solitude and in silence, but Fr Tobin reminds us that to pray one does not have to take time away from your normal activities. This of course recalls the ancient precept "laborare est orare", to work is to pray.

This book is published by an internet publisher as a new form of evangelisation and its worth looking at. But remember the books come from the US so added postage is involved. Eamon Tobin, who comes from Kilkenny, is currently the pastor at Ascension Catholic Church, in Melbourne, Florida. More of his other writings are available on www.ascensioncatholic.net.



**The Book of Joy**  
by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, edited by Douglas Abrams  
(Hutchinson, £12.99)

Patrick Claffey

A few years ago, taking a taxi into Nassau St to teach a module at Trinity College, the Dublin driver asked me what I taught. That afternoon, I told him, I was to give a lecture on Buddhism.

"The Buddhists, they're alright, aren't they?", he remarked. 'Very hard to have a row with one of them. Sure, your man, the Dalai Lama, he's a great fella, isn't he? All he had to go through!'

That, I imagine, is how many people see Tenzin Gyatso (b. 1935), His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, as he travels the world, with an apparently unquenchable good humour, a permanent smile, and a deep sense of equanimity even when he is being cold-shouldered by governments who fear he will compromise their relations with China.

### Detachment

He refuses to be morose and certainly illustrates well the deeply Buddhist concept of nekkama, commonly translated as detachment or renunciation. "If something can be done about the situation, what need is there for dejection? And if nothing can be done about it, what use is there for being dejected?"

The Dalai Lama is without doubt one of the major religious leaders of our time. His influence has spread far beyond his own Tibetan mountain community.

**“He travels widely, much to the irritation of the Chinese government”**

Since 1959 he has lived in Dharamshala, in northern India, from where he travels widely, much to the irritation of the Chinese government for which he is a permanent, albeit non-violent, thorn in the side, preaching a very simple message of peace and joy. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1989.

While very different in background, Desmond Tutu, former Anglican Archbishop of South Africa, was a prominent early crusader in the struggle against apartheid. During much of the time of Nelson Mandela's long, invisible imprisonment, Tutu was

# Inspiring the world with joy

the visible face of the anti-apartheid struggle.

Inevitably eclipsed by Mandela following his release and inevitable rise to power, Tutu found a new apolitical role as an apostle of national reconciliation when he was appointed Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

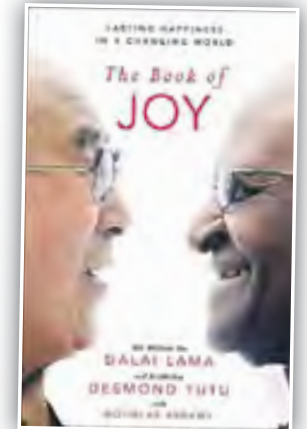
Over time and through lived experience, Tutu developed a philosophy, which was essentially the opposite of apartheid, and indeed much of the heated "anti-Other rhetoric" we hear today.

ther man would make any apology for that. Life experience has led them far beyond pomposity and false formality to the realm of the really real.

As Douglas Abrams, who drew the conversations together observes: "[They are] two spiritual masters of our time...moral leaders who transcend their own traditions and speak for humanity as a whole."

Central to their witness is the fact that "they refuse to give in to the fashionable cynicism that risks engulfing us."

The main theme of the



Pope Francis first Exhortation was *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), bringing to the fore an aspect of Christian life that is often neglected. He sees the Christian life as being based on knowing and experiencing God's love, mercy and salvation offered to all through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### Source of joy

This is the source of our joy. In his ministry, even in recent difficult times, he has given witness to this joy.

In a recent homily he



the Dalai Lama (left) with Bishop Desmond Tutu.

This is based upon the specifically African concept of *Ubuntu*, meaning: "A person is a person through other persons."

As Tutu explains it, sharing is a kind of 'self-interest', simply because 'none of us came into the world on our own' and consequently we need others to live fully. "We are meant for a profound complementarity. It's the nature of things... we belong in this delicate network."

This book is essentially a conversation between two old men as they reach the end of this earthly life, however they see that.

It is a conversation between friends, 'mischievous spiritual brothers' although they have only met half a dozen times. There is indeed something both child-like and mischievous about the conversations, and nei-

book is the very opposite of cynicism, as we can see from the title *The Book of Joy*. Having lived lifetimes that involved much suffering both on a personal level and in their respective communities, they remind us that "that joy is our birth right", and the birth right of all people and peoples.

**“They are spiritual masters**

**of our time....**

**moral leaders who transcend their own traditions”**

The purpose of the five days of dialogue was the "very purpose of life – the goal of avoiding suffering and discovering happiness".

It is significant to note that

declared: "A Christian is a man, or a woman, of joy: a man and a woman with joy in their heart. There is no Christian without joy!"

Abrams tells us that research suggests that "three factors that seem to have the greatest influence on increasing our happiness are our ability to reframe our situation more positively, our ability to experience gratitude and our choice to be kind and generous".

These two friends return to these as central pillars of joy, a joy that is deep and lasting, throughout this work. In their respective and very different, but complementary, lives, they have left us a great witness to this that is very well drawn together in this lovely book, which should itself bring some joy in these questioning and often dark times.



Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.



Some of the contributors to the publication, on the occasion of its launch in Youghal. (l-r) Michael Hussey, Kieran Groeger (editor), Dymphna Quill, Marian O'Halloran and Felix Larkin.

## Aspects of an historic town

**Youghal Celebrates 1916**  
ed. Kieran Groeger  
(Youghal Celebrates History,  
€10; address Mary's College,  
Emmett Place, Youghal Co.  
Cork; email: ytta@eircom.net)

**J. Anthony Gaughan**

This booklet marking Youghal's contribution to the 1916 celebrations includes a number of interesting articles, one of them relating to Sir Roger Casement.

Patrick Cockburn writes about a link between his grandfather, Jack Arbuthnot, a major in the Scots Guards, and Casement. Major Arbuthnot was responsible for guarding Casement when he was in the Tower of London. Arbuthnot was a part-time journalist and artist.

Four of his sketches of Casement in the last days of his life are reproduced.

There are profiles of some residents of Youghal who were totally opposed to the Nationalist agenda and the Easter Rising. Rev. Richard Hodges, the rector of St Mary's Collegiate Chapel and a Freemason, was editor of the *Church of Ireland Monthly* for the combined dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

His son Eric Hodges, fighting with the Royal Munster Fusiliers, was fatally wounded at the battle of the Somme.

He also published a book of photographs of Co. Cork, with pen pictures and photos of the important people in the county. Few Catholics were listed, not even



Youghal.

Canon Keller, the parish priest of Youghal.

Canon Keller was imprisoned for refusing to give the authorities information concerning the Plan of Campaign funds.

### “Larkin traces an interesting connection between James Connolly and Youghal”

Felix M. Larkin in his article continues the nationalist theme, pointing out that Youghal, and especially the Ponsonby estate nearby, were active locations in the Land War. The prosecution of the Plan of Campaign caused bitter civil strife on the estate and in the town of Youghal.

Larkin concludes his article

contending that in the period 1869 – 1921 the cause of land reform and Irish independence were inextricably linked. In an addendum, Larkin traces an interesting connection between James Connolly and Youghal.

As a boy soldier, aged 14, in the King's Liverpool Regiment he may have been with his regiment in Youghal from 1882 to 1884.

A section, 'What was Youghal like in 1916', reveals a thriving market town with a garrison of 400 soldiers. Pages of Guy's Directory for Youghal 1916 provide a great deal of information on the town's commercial life and much else besides.

The final chapter is a photographic record of the 2016 Flag Raising ceremony in the towns schools.

## The World of Books

By the books editor

## One of Ireland's 'other' poets

On January 20, 1947, *The Times of London* carried a short report: "NEW YORK. At 10.15 a.m. yesterday Mayor O'Dwyer, of New York, received a telegram from Mr John McCann, Lord Mayor of Dublin, which read as follows: 'Poet Eoghan Roe Ward dying. Bananas may save life. Is it possible send some by air?' Five hours later two hands of bananas were on their way to Rineanna airport – bought in New York and sent to La Guardia field in a police car in time to catch a Pan-American World Airways aeroplane. But prompt as Mr O'Dwyer was, the American overseas airline, though he did not know it, was prompter still. Already at 11 am, responding to an appeal from its Shannon office, it had dispatched four bunches of bananas to Éire."

When I first read this paragraph, I was intrigued. Fairly familiar with the poets of the 40s and 50s of the last century, I had never heard of Eoghan Roe Ward. Though at times it seems that every second person in Ireland is a poet, I wondered who he was.

Short items in American and Irish papers filled out the story. It was reported that when the bananas arrived his doctors at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital said that Ward was too ill to eat them. He passed away two days later. His death certificate says he died of a pancreatic cyst, a quickly fatal condition.

### “A number of his friends feel that this man deserves the means to comfort him...”

Back at the end of December a public appeal had been made on his behalf: "A number of his friends feel that this man, whose personality and whose ballads enlivened many friends here and in England, deserves the means to comfort him and, as they hope, to survive."

Donations were to be sent into the Grafton Street address of the Writers', Actors', Artists' and Musicians' Association (the much derided WAAMA of Myles na Gopaleen's satire).

The poet, whose real name was Patrick O'Connell, left a young wife and a small family. Though they lived out in Dun Laoghaire he was

buried from St Andrew's Church in Westland Row and laid to rest in Glasnevin.

He had been born in Donegal in the spring of 1916. His pen name 'Eoghan Roe Ward' was adopted from that of Eoghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird (d. 1630), a poet descended from the hereditary poets of the O'Donnells, chiefs of Tir Connail, who was famous for his laments on the passing of Red Hugh O'Donnell, famously translated by Mangan.

Ward was described on his death certificate as a 'journalist' – but that at times can be a very loose term. In a fragmentary manuscript of an autobiography, scribbled out in pencil in a school copy book in his last days, he describes how left home at a very early age and took to the roads.

This wandering life he followed in Ireland and England until he married and settled down. He travelled with a donkey and cart, composing ballads and poems as he went along, which he had



'Ballad Singers'.

printed by local jobbing printers to sell on market days. He was nicknamed "the last of the wandering bards".

### Influential

A few of his ballads were reprinted in ballad books of the 1960s, but do not seem to have survived as songs. But sung at fairs and in pubs they were often in praise of the then militant IRA and were not much favoured by the authorities.

One of his influential friends, Prof. Roger McHugh of UCD, managed to save a very few items, later presenting them to the Manuscripts Department of the National Library, among them some printed song sheets (Ms 31,755).

Reading about Eoghan Roe Ward one is reminded of Padraic Ó Conaire and his little black donkey, of Michal "Zozimus" Moran, Yeats' "last of the gleemen", and of the those ragged itinerant singers one sees in the pictures of Jack. B. Yeats, ballad sheets in hand, proud and indifferent to the praise of the crowd.

Though Eoghan Roe Ward was the sort of poet who get little academic notice, as "the last of the wandering bards", he was in a way a figure from a long, long tradition, and deserves to be remembered, even at this late date.



# Classifieds

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

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# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 177



### ACROSS

- 1 Place in California where movies are made (9)  
 6 Tidier (6)  
 7 Doghouse (6)  
 10 The steps of a ladder (5)  
 12 'Harry Potter and the Order of the \_\_\_\_\_' (7)  
 14 Engine (5)  
 16 Movie star (5)  
 18 Large type of tree (3)  
 19 Fling; chuck (5)  
 20 Your boy-child (3)

- 3 Do a job (4)

- 4 Not closed (4)  
 5 You may eat cereal or soup from this, perhaps (4)  
 8 Huge (8)  
 9 Take one from twenty to get this number (8)  
 11 Small common bird (7)  
 13 Quick or speedy (4)  
 15 The capital of Italy (4)  
 17 Black substance poured onto the road (3)

### DOWN

- 1 In need of food (6)  
 2 One who is finding out how to do something (7)

## LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

### GORDIUS No.293

**Across** – 1 Lab 3 Cliff-hanger 8 Daniel Defoe 9 Shame the devil 10 Minks 13 Spots 15 Beeline 16 Delayed 21 Heath 23 Curia 24 Bavarian 25 Tahiti 26 Skeleton key 27 Hen

**Down** – 1 Lady Macbeth 2 Banknote 3 Chefs 4 Fashion 5 Aimed 6 Get off your high horse 7 Rue 12 Eradication 13 Synod 14 Steel 18 Avignon 19 Larvae 23 Chary 24 Bus

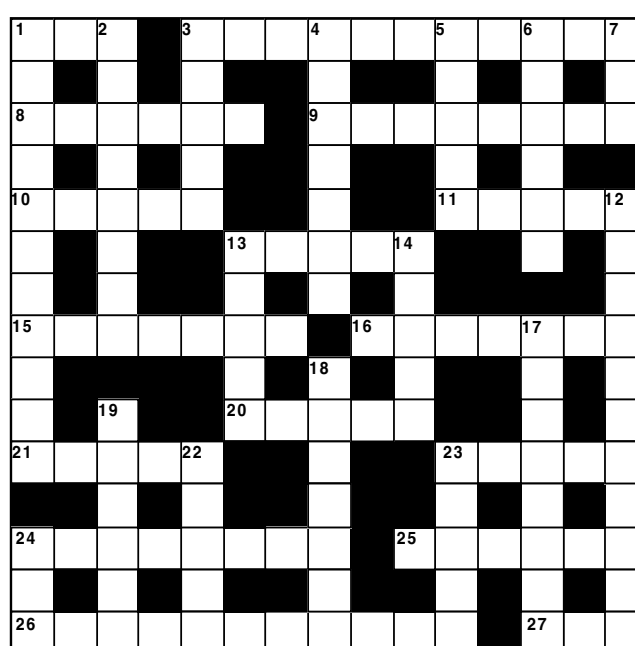
### CHILDREN'S No.176

**Across** – 1 Rowling 5 Cold 6 Sesame 7 Cheese 8 Bait 9 Press 12 Right 14 Stream 15 Yells 17 Crossword

**Down** – 1 Raspberry 2 Washing 3 Niece 4 Closes 5 Cheer 9 Potato 10 Eyelid 11 Summer 13 Helps 16 Ear

## Crossword

Gordius 294



### ACROSS

- 1 The cardinal gets up to drink (3)  
 3 For starters, make Julius green (6,5)  
 8 Sign up (6)  
 9 Stranded (8)  
 10 & 16a Belligerent in mood, strangely hot when apart (2,3,7)  
 11 You need it in order to hum (5)  
 13 Damp (5)  
 15 Completely, absolutely (7)  
 16 See 10 across  
 20 'Cleaned out', the Pole cried (5)  
 21 A mass of eggs (5)  
 23 The cost of soft cereal (5)  
 24 Virtue (8)  
 25 Potatoes, for example, can be found right inside pipes (5)  
 26 How one may refer to our sacrificial saviour - in somewhat sheepish manner? (7,4)  
 27 Imperial unit of weight (3)

### DOWN

- 1 As our guest's upset a dinosaur... (11)

- 2 ...pets toil thus to be most civil (8)  
 3 Indian social class (5)  
 4 Biblical region referred to in a Peckinpaw song (7)  
 5 Tempest (5)  
 6 Make a connection with part of the chain above (4,2)  
 7 Make Father go up and down (3)  
 12 Treachery - from someone on drugs? (4,7)  
 13 Some distance from jazz trumpeter Davis (5)  
 14 "Raise your glass to ... hot bread!" (5)  
 17 The 'A' of A&E (8)  
 18 The act of saying no (7)  
 19 Renowned (6)  
 22 Beethoven's Choral is half way round, of course (5)  
 23 Find the depth of a fruit by letter (5)  
 24 Hiatus (3)



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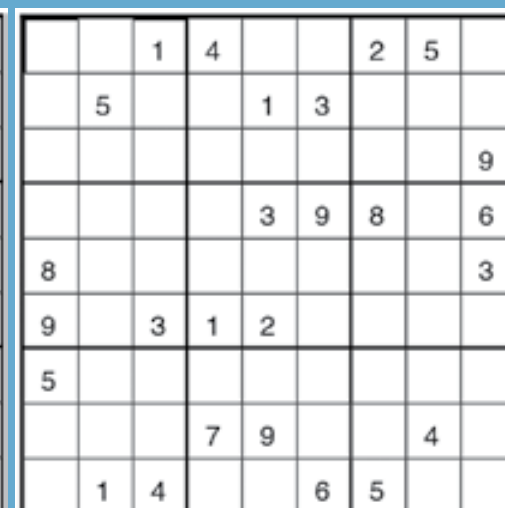
## Sudoku Corner

177

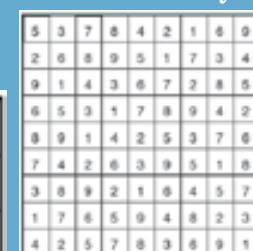
### Easy



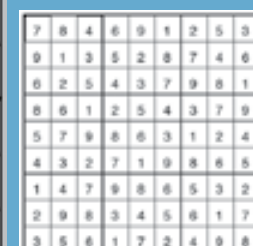
### Hard



### Last week's Easy 176



### Last week's Hard 176







# Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough OP

## Adding shades of colour to the People of God

**AMONG THE BOOKS** on my shelves, one of my favourites is Ernest Klein's two-volume *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. It doesn't offer definitions of words, but shows their roots in other languages and periods. So the entry for the word 'diamond' traces it back to a Middle English word which was borrowed from the French.

This French word was in turn a corruption of the Latin *diamas*, which combined two Greek words, *adamas*, meaning unconquerable, and *diaphanes*, meaning transparent. The archaeology of the word 'diamond' thus brings us two and a half millennia backwards in time and transports us 2,000 miles away. Flipping casually through the pages of this dictionary brings you on all sorts of journeys like this through time and space.

What I really love about this book, though, is the reason the author dedicated his life to this work. Klein, a Czech Jew, lost his entire family in the Holocaust, including his wife and young son. With the aid of "the Eternal who gives power to the faint", he somehow transformed this unimaginable trauma into a lifelong pursuit of peace on Earth through linguistics research. His dictionary would show that language connects us all, and spills over the racial and political boundaries which seem to divide.

As Christians, we are motivated by a similar desire for unity, not just the harmony of earthly peace, but the longer-lasting spiritual harmony of the Body of Christ, both here on Earth and in Heaven.

Because this Body is to be made up of members "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (Rev 7:9), the growth of the Body depends on the Gospel being translated and transported into an enormous variety of contexts, and this requires a knowledge of, respect for, and love of the varieties of human culture.

We see this work of translation right at the beginning of the apostolic mission, in the preaching of Paul in Athens. Addressing a philosophically-educated Greek audience, he quotes two Greek thinkers, Epimenides and Aratus.

### Audience

He looks for common ground with his hearers, referring with respect to the Athenians' "Altar to the Unknown God". But, importantly, he refuses to water down the Gospel for the sake of winning his audience over. When he mentions the resurrection of the body – unthinkable to the Greeks – many of his hearers scoff and depart, and Paul does not recant.

In recent times, this work of

evangelical translation is what kept our Irish missionaries busy, from Nigeria to Korea. They learned the local languages, but also customs and thought patterns, so that the Gospel could be preached, understood, and lived *in situ*. In 21st Century Ireland, this is our task too. Our society is made up of an enormous array of overlapping subcultures each with its own way of thinking and talking – the sporting world, the elderly, gamers, hipsters...

Our temptation as Christians is simply to become one of these subcultures, an inward-looking love-in with its own impenetrable dialect. But our mission is to grow the Body of Christ, and this demands curiosity and sympathy on our part, as we come to know, understand and connect with the lives of others.

Our first task, of course, is to be rooted in Christ and to learn the language of the Word of God, but we should also, with all the necessary caution and prudence, be learning the languages of our contemporaries, watching their movies, listening to their music and reading their books, always with the goal of adding ever more shades of colour to the people of God.

● **AT OUR** Dominican summer camp in Knockadoon, Co. Cork, we run many catechetical workshops for the young people who attend. One of the most enlightening, for me at least, involves simply listening carefully to pop songs with the campers, and discussing the lyrics with an eye on the Gospel.

The results are always fascinating. The campers, who know all these songs but rarely actually listen to them, are able to find all sorts of common ground between the aspirations of their music and those of the Christian faith. We find points of discord too, which can lead to heated conversations. When one group dissected and discarded the vision of love found in a One Direction song, the diehard fan among them offered this dubious defence: "They don't write their songs!"

● **THE SEDUCTION OF BEAUTY:** The best motivation to learn a language is an experience of its beauty. I first became interested in the German language when I heard a female announcer pronouncing extraordinarily delicate and charming German at World Youth Day in Cologne. This was not the harsh speech of Nazi soldiers in the movies I had seen, but something else entirely, and something worth exploring.

For our non-believing contemporaries, the lives and examples of their Christian friends are perhaps the only encounter they will have with 'speakers' of the Word of God. What will they encounter in the speech of our lives? Simplicity, charm and spiritual beauty?

Our contemporaries struggle with the grammar and vocabulary of the Christian life, but if they are seduced by its beauty, there's hope they will persevere and become, in their turn, fluent speakers of the Word.



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