

The Irish Catholic

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Thursday, April 20, 2017

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Catholic leaders urged to do more to support NI police

Young Catholics need encouragement to become officers says Chief Constable

EXCLUSIVE
Michael Kelly and Martin O'Brien

The North's most-senior policeman has called on Catholic leaders to do more to encourage young members of their community to consider becoming a police officer.

In an exclusive interview with *The Irish Catholic* Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) George Hamilton also reveals that he struggled over whether or not to attend the funeral of former deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness.

Mr Hamilton, who rarely gives interviews, also speaks about the importance of his own Christian faith.

On policing, he says that there "hasn't been the strength of advocacy for a career in policing that I would

have hoped for, this far into the new police organisation," he said.

Asked whether he meant Catholic leaders and opinion-formers within the Catholic community, Mr Hamilton said: "Yes." However, he also stressed that this support would need to come "probably more in the political realm than in the religious realm".

On the funeral of Martin McGuinness, Mr Hamilton said he "did have a dilemma" about his attendance, that there was both a personal and professional aspect to his decision and that he had to "weigh up" whether to go, but does not question himself now as to whether he made the right decision.

"I did realise that my attendance would be read

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Students from Hollybush Primary School taking part in the Chrism Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown in St Eugene's Cathedral in Derry. Photo: Stephen Latimer

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Dream it, believe it, achieve it

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Managing Director: Garry O'Sullivan

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €125. Airmail €145.
ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,
23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.
Printed by The Irish Times

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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment returns next week



New deacons ordained for Dublin and Clogher



Fr Hugh Clifford (Director of Formation), Fr Thomas Norris (Spiritual Director), Msgr Joseph McGuinness (Administrator, Diocese of Clogher), Msgr Ciarán O'Carroll (Rector), Rev. Seán Mulligan, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin (Archbishop of Dublin), Rev. Robert Smyth, Rev. James Daly, Fr Paul Finnerty (Vice Rector) and Fr John Bauer (Director of Formation, St John Vianney Seminary, Minnesota).

Three seminarians of the Pontifical Irish College, Rome, were ordained deacons on Easter Tuesday by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, at the Church of Saint Alphonsus on the Via Merulana in Rome.

Rev. James Daly (57), originally from Midleton, Co. Cork, a former parish pastoral worker and teacher, and Rev. Robert Smyth (32), from Knocklyon in Dublin, a former management consultant, were ordained for the Archdiocese of Dublin. Rev. Seán Mulligan (46), from Knockatal-

lon, Co. Monaghan, a former intellectual disabilities nurse, was ordained for the Diocese of Clogher.

All three are transitional deacons, meaning that they are due to be ordained to the priesthood later. Family members and friends of the new deacons travelled from Ireland to be present at the ceremony.

Rector of the Irish College, Msgr Ciarán O'Carroll said: "It is with great joy that we celebrate the ordination to the diaconate today of three seminarians

from the Pontifical Irish College in Rome. On behalf of everyone at the Pontifical Irish College I congratulate James, Robert and Seán on their ordination.

"I wish them every happiness and blessing as they commence their diaconal ministries of service, of charity and of leadership in prayer and liturgy. May they experience God's grace anew in their lives so that they may courageously proclaim the Gospel in word and deed, generously serving the people of God in their various dioceses with care and compassion."

Catholics urged to give more support to the PSNI

» Continued from Page 1

in different ways by people across the community, in different ways.

"I suppose Martin represented the sort of conflicted history that we have had, his involvement with the IRA and the pain and suffering that that organisation caused to communities, and then in the last half of his life the massive contribution that he made to building and maintaining the

peace.

"So, I suppose like many people my emotions regarding him and the attendance at his funeral was a little bit of a dilemma. My values and emotions were being pulled in opposite directions and I just had a fundamental decision to make about whether or not I believed it was the right thing to do, to go."

He says, as Chief Constable and holding a senior public office in Northern Ireland, it

was "appropriate to attend the funeral of [the person] who had been deputy First Minister for a decade".

Reflecting, Mr Hamilton describes his relationship with Mr McGuinness as "a positive relationship".

"We got problems solved together and he was a great pragmatist and he never compromised his own ideals and aspirations and values and he never asked me to compromise mine, which was

important, and it was a frank and forthright relationship."

On his own Christian faith, he says "there is a passage of Scripture from Micah [6.8] which talks about what God requires of us, and it says to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly and if you can do that, justice, mercy, have some compassion, and a bit of humility, those are three things that make a pretty good cop in my experience."

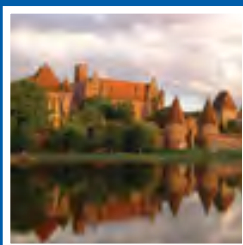
See Pages 10 and 11.

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FF push to condemn Christian persecution as 'genocide'

John Reid

Fianna Fáil is hopeful that the persecution of Christians in the Middle East will be condemned as a genocide, in a new Dáil motion due to be put before the house before the summer.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fianna Fáil's spokesman on Foreign Affairs, Darragh O'Brien, said that he is in regular contact with his Dáil colleagues and that "things are progressing well" in regard to the motion, with Fianna Fáil being "absolutely committed" to tabling and passing it. Deputy O'Brien stated that it was "his preference" that the persecution and killing of Christians in the Middle East would be condemned as "genocide".

He said he is eager that there would be consensus across the Dáil on the motion, so that Ireland's parliament would be seen around the world as having spoken with "one voice" on the issue of Christian persecution.

Bombing

Deputy O'Brien spoke of how the issue is "very close to his own heart", after a visit he undertook to Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo, last January, which is where 29 people were killed in an attack last December and where Deputy O'Brien met with the local bishop and with the priest who was actually saying Mass at the time of the suicide bombing which killed so many Christians that day.

Deputy O'Brien said that a reason for the delay is that other parties around the Dáil wanted to "throw everything into the pot" with regard to the persecution of other religious groups as well, but that this then "waters down the motion". Fianna Fáil believes that two separate motions are needed: one being a quite specific motion dealing with the issue of Christian persecution, and a second motion dealing with the treatment of other minorities, such as the Yazidis for example.

Deputy O'Brien concluded by saying that it was important that Ireland was not "one of the few parliaments in Europe that actually don't recognise" the widespread persecution of Christians in the Middle East.

Fundraiser to rebuild Sr Clare's school



Sr Clare Crockett.

Mags Gargan

A pilgrimage in memory of Sr Clare Crockett, who was killed in an earthquake in South America in 2016, will raise funds to rebuild the school where she was killed.

Sr Clare, a member of the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother, died a year ago this week trying to evacuate children to safety when a massive earthquake, which killed 668 people, struck the Playa Prieta area of Ecuador where she was based.

The death of the 33-year-old from the Brandywell area of Derry, was described by Bishop Donal McKeown as "a huge loss to her family – but it also touches many of her contemporaries who admired the generosity of this bright and gifted young woman".

Carol Toner from Downpatrick will travel

the Camino Way in August to raise funds to help rebuild the school in Ecuador, which was destroyed in the earthquake.

"When I heard about what happened to Sr Clare, I was really moved by her story," she said.

Teacher

"As a retired teacher I was inspired by her. She died while trying to evacuate children from the school as the earthquake struck and I knew I wanted to do something in her memory and of the children who died.

"Any donation will help towards getting the school rebuilt in order provide an education for the children of Playa de Prieta and to help them overcome the trauma they experienced in 2016."

To donate, please visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/carol-toner

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Call for Govt 'structured dialogue' with Churches

Mags Gargan

A return to 'structured dialogue' between the Government and Church leaders would be of great value as society becomes more pluralist, it has been claimed.

The Lisbon Treaty places an obligation on the EU to have a regular dialogue with religious and non-confessional organisations on EU policies and legislative proposals. Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern set up a structured dialogue forum in Ireland on a national level, and the meetings became a regular fixture until the current Government.

Mairead McGuinness MEP, who has been appointed to lead the EU Parliament's dialogue with religions, told *The Irish Catholic* "there is always a value in having structured dialogue".

"The remit of Churches is so broad and their engage-

ment with communities so deep that they will add value to any debate," she said. "As an elected politician I listen to all stakeholders in my individual work as an MEP whether they are farming or faith or retail or whatever they are, they have a right to be heard.

Europe

"In the case of Europe we make a conscious effort to listen and engage with faith groups and non-confessional organisations, so that their voices are part of the conversation. It seems to me Churches, who are embedded in parishes, village and towns, are part of European society and they have important things to say on the future of Europe, reflecting on their own members and congregation."

Prof. Eamonn Conway, Professor of Theology & Religious Studies at Mary

Immaculate College, said "the increasing intercultural and multicultural nature of Irish society" makes dialogue with faith leaders an "imperative". "Thankfully the Catholic Church has put interreligious dialogue to the forefront of its

concerns not just in Europe but globally," he said. "The Irish Government has some ground to make up in terms of recognising faith leaders as partners in building a pluralist society and having structured dialogue could be an

important first step in this."

In reply to parliamentary questions, Taoiseach Enda Kenny recently admitted he had not held any meetings under the structured dialogue process since the formation of the current Government.

Bishop "shocked" at church desecration

Staff Reporter

Bishop Francis Duffy has expressed his shock and sadness at desecration of a Longford church. It was discovered on Easter Sunday morning that St Michael's Church, Shrold, in Longford parish was broken into and the tabernacle stolen. The church had not been in use over the Easter period when all parish ceremonies took place in St Mel's Cathedral.

Bishop Duffy, who visited the scene of the break-in, said it was an "act of desecration" which was "disrespectful to religion and to the local community". "It is extremely upsetting for the parishioners and the clergy here in Longford that something like this could happen, but especially during Holy Week," he said.

"The tabernacle is the centre piece of every Mass as it holds the sacred Communion hosts. It holds the bread that we believe has been transformed into the body of Christ. That is what we believe and that is why this act of desecration is so distressing."

Gardai are also investigating theft and criminal damage at Ennistymon Church in Co. Clare. A robbery, believed to have taken place between 8pm on Easter Sunday and 10am on Monday, saw the loss of dozens of Trócaire boxes as well as Easter Mass donations.

Blessing of the Roads



Fr John Carroll from Barntown at the blessing of the roads (for road safety) which takes place annually in the Wexford parish on Easter Sunday.

Irish nun to head international NGO

Sr Jean Quinn [pictured], Daughter of Wisdom, has become the first Irish woman to be appointed to the post of Executive Director of Unanima International, based at the United Nations in New York.

Unanima International is a non-government organisation and its work focuses on supporting women, children,

migrants (especially those effected by poverty) and the environment. It has more than 20,000 constituent members representing 21 female religious congregations across 80 countries.

Sr Jean said it was "an honour and a privilege to be asked to serve at this most challenging time when NGOs and Inter-Governmental

Bodies are trying to co-ordinate efforts to tackle poverty and in particular the migrant crisis across the world".

Sr Jean founded Sophia Housing in 1997 as a national organisation, which cares and supports people with complex mental health and addiction needs who are also homeless.





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Fr Hederman's agenda for change

The former abbot of Glenstal, Fr Mark Patrick Hederman, has suggested that the Church's teachings on sexuality need to be dramatically modernised, and he has provided a list for this agenda including celibacy and the subjugation of women.

Any campaigner for change needs to beware of taking too broad a brush to an agenda. I love those idealists who wear a button saying 'World Peace Now', but admirable though this is, it's too big and too vague to be successful.

Some years ago, a newspaper I worked for suggested that I attend a tutorial on how to make a point in TV discussions – since I sometimes appeared on the box identified with their publication.

I was despatched to a studio where a group of us were lectured by a veteran TV executive on how to get our ideas across in TV debate. "How many points should you make in a TV discussion?" he asked. Some suggested "six", some "four", some "ten".

The guy held his index finger aloft. "One," he said. "You can only make ONE point effectively."

Overhaul
So, in consideration of Fr Hederman's suggestion of an overhaul of the Catholic Church's attitude to sexuality, I would just like to make one point – one single issue should be reviewed seriously, I believe. And that is the ban on contraception.

"Look," a Loreto nun said to me this week, "people follow their own consciences on contraception anyway. The smaller size of Catholic families is the proof."

That is as may be, but the theoretical Vatican ban on artificial contraception remains in place, and I believe it is time to review it.



Mary Kenny



Fr Mark Patrick Hederman.

This subject is much more important than celibacy, or wider, grand agendas about sexual ethics. This is about women's health, and the health of mothers throughout the world. Too much and too rapid child-bearing really can affect the health of mothers, and we absolutely must respect, and care for maternal health. It's fundamentally Christian too: healing and health are central to the Gospel story.

“People follow their own consciences on contraception anyway”

When the British National Health service was launched in 1945, doctors were shocked to find that huge numbers of women were suffering from prolapse of the womb (after 1945 they could visit a GP without paying a fee). Prolapse of the uterus is associated with frequent pregnancies and it was evident that these mothers needed attention to their health. (Even so, family planning was not included in the British NHS until 1958, as it was not considered 'proper'.)

I have read Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* – the papal

document which played a part in banning artificial contraception – and it is a beautiful and poetic invocation of conjugal love and family life. We would do well to consider its values.

Co-operation
Natural family planning is also, surely, an ideal, blending conjugal co-operation with the natural rhythms of the female cycle and mutual respect. But a prohibition on using any other method to regulate fertility surely requires, in the light of reason, to be revisited.

On a polemical point, Planned Parenthood and its global outreach are constantly seeking to conflate contraception with abortion, lumping them together as "reproductive choice". It's vital to make a clear distinction between the two.

"The subjugation of women", as Fr Hederman puts it, is a big, big issue, ranging from the horrors of female circumcision in many parts of Africa to the under-representation of women on corporate boards. But the matter of contraception and women's health is one, specific point which he, like other influential churchmen, might usefully campaign to review.

Heavenly sounds at Easter

Ever since I first visited Poland back in the 1980s, I have loved stringed instruments in church services – the Polish churches regularly had string quartets accompanying Mass. So it was heavenly to be present at Easter Sunday Mass at University College Church (Newman University Church) on Dublin's St Stephen's Green, where the sound of violins accompanied the enchanting

young female cantor. It's great to see this famous church undergoing a revival under the stewardship of the energetic Fr William Dailey from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. There's a very promising programme of events planned under the banner of 'Faith and Reason', as well as continued focus on beauty in music and liturgy.

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Bishop signals openness to women priests

Bishop Donal McKeown pictured with Eoghan, Shane and Gemma Tucker after baptising Shane during the Easter vigil Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral in Derry. Photo: Stephen Latimer



Staff reporter

Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown has signalled an openness to women priests, though insisted that there is no possibility of women being ordained "at the present time".

Dr McKeown – who was appointed Bishop of Derry by Pope Francis in 2014 – also said that the hierarchy had to face serious questions about seminaries for training future priests, including Maynooth.

Dr McKeown made the comments in an Irish-language interview broadcast by BBC Northern Ireland this week.

On the issue of women priests, he said: "If that's God's will in our day, I'm happy to accept it." However, he added that "there is no possibility at the present time women will be priests".

Pope Francis has repeatedly insisted that the Church will not re-open the question of women's ordination. At a recent press conference, the Pontiff declared the matter to be a closed issue

pointing out that "Pope St John Paul II had the last clear word on this and it stands, this stands". He was referring to a 1994 document by Pope John Paul that closed the door on a female priesthood. The Vatican says this teaching is an infallible part of Catholic tradition.

Training

On the issue of the training of future priests, Bishop McKeown said: "Maybe we shouldn't send anyone to somewhere like Maynooth."

"Maynooth was formed 200

years ago. Three hundred years or 400 years ago it didn't exist," he said.

He said that the Irish bishops had to struggle with the question of "what is the best way to prepare priests or prophets in this day and age?"

Referring to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's contention that seminarians might benefit from training that is more parish-based, Bishop McKeown said "this is an important question and he [Archbishop Martin] may have a point".

Tributes paid to former MIC president

Mags Gargan

Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick led the tributes to Prof. Michael Hayes, former president of Mary Immaculate College (MIC), who died on Holy Saturday after a short illness.

Bishop Leahy, chairman of MIC's governing authority, said Prof. Hayes had approached his role there with untiring zeal. "With a deep conviction that Catholic education has to do with the full flourishing of the human person in this life and the next, Michael gave himself more than 100% to the advancement of the college on so many levels," he said.

During his presidency the 59-year-old Limerick native, who was a priest of the Archdiocese of Southwark in England, oversaw the incorporation of St Patrick's College, Thurles into MIC, the opening of the Lime Tree Theatre, a growth in student numbers to almost 5,000 and the acquisition and development of the John Henry Newman Campus.

Vision

MIC acting president Eugene Wall said Prof. Hayes "worked relentlessly and with compelling conviction to lead the college with clear-sighted vision through a difficult era for higher education".

Fr Eamonn Conway, Professor of Theology & Religious Studies at MIC, told *The Irish Catholic* that Prof. Hayes "worked tirelessly for the college" and was "a great example to us in terms of his commitment and in particular the way he negotiated a distinctive place for MIC in the Irish educational landscape".

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Mercy volunteers offer a céad míle fáilte in Rome

Following an invitation from the Ossory Adult Faith Development team seeking volunteers for the Year of Mercy to assist pilgrims in Rome last year, we decided to take up the challenge and apply.

We logged on to the pilgrims website to check out the requirements, amongst which were a working knowledge of Italian plus two other languages, and most importantly a letter of recommendation from our parish priest, as to our suitability.

To prepare ourselves, and become somewhat fluent in Italian, we opted for October 15-22, 2016 for our week of service.

We arrived in Rome on October 14 and stayed for one night in Bishop Seamus Freeman's former home while he was in Rome, San Sylvestro in Capite, where we were warmly welcomed by the Rector, Fr John Fitzpatrick, who hails from Borrisoleigh, Co. Tipperary.

Mary McCarthy, Eilis Costelloe and Kathleen Maher share their experience as Year of Mercy volunteers

Fr John was very excited by Tipperary beating Kilkenny in the All Ireland Hurling final – and he let us know!

Irish people will be familiar with this small Basilica of San Sylvestro, from the many marriages which have taken place there.

Holy Doors

En route to San Sylvestro we visited the first of our Holy Doors, that of the Basilica of St Mary Major where on

August 5 each year a solemn celebration recalls the miracle of the snows.

After a very comfortable night's rest in San Sylvestro, we crossed the Tiber on foot for 7 Via della Conciliazione, where our training commenced.

Here we were addressed by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, flanked on either side by his secretary Fr Francesco – a very joyful, enthusiastic young priest – and the infamous 'Charly', who had overall responsibility for the security of the Pope.

The archbishop gave us an inspirational talk on the significance of the Year of Mercy.



Armed with our photo ID, yellow cap and yellow bib (tabard), we set off for our accommodation in the '4 star' Caserma di Centocelli – the Airforce Base, to you and us.

We now, at last, learned the significance of our Catechism Confirmation answer – 'Soldiers of Christ'. Security in the Airforce Base was very strict. We experienced delays and protocols on entry and exit. Our shared rooms were basic but comfortable.

We were pleasantly surprised to see that each room had the John Paul II cross on the wall. The 'breakfast' was a revelation, second only to 'dinner'; frugal springs to mind. We were, after all, on pilgrimage and not in the Ritz!

Day one found us rising at 5am. Fortified by our 'soldier's' breakfast of a croissant and orange juice, we made our way to the metro and boarded for the Lepanto stop near the Vatican. Very large crowds were already gathering as Pope Francis was to canonise eight people.

Mass with Pope Francis began at 10am. The voices of the heavenly choirs echoed through the square to the musical setting of the *Missa De Angelis*. It brought us back to our youth and the High Masses in Ireland.

We were then hastily summoned by 'Charly' up to the steps of St Peter's to help form a cordon so that Pope Francis could pass smoothly through the aisles, to be greeted by the thousands of pilgrims from the four corners of the world.

Even though we had a busy schedule we still found time to visit the sights in Rome. One of our very pleasant afternoons was spent in the company of our very own, Fr



Mary McCarthy, Eilis Costelloe and Kathleen Maher returning the crosses brought through the Holy Door by the pilgrims; inset, the Irish volunteers with Archbishop Rino Fisichella.

It was an emotional experience to be so close to the Holy Father and to see his interaction with the pilgrims, while all the time witnessing to the 'joy of the Gospel' with his wonderfully broad smile.

Another duty was to lead groups of pilgrims, on the last leg of their pilgrimage, through the Holy Door (*Porta Sancta*), up the centre aisle of the Basilica to the Tomb of St Peter. We journeyed with them carrying their intentions and those of the many people at home, the many who were unable to be there to make this pilgrimage.

“We were surprised to be told that we were the only three people who volunteered from Ireland”

We were struck by the reverence of the people as they prayerfully made their way slowly up the pilgrim path to the Holy Door, all the time praising God in song and words. This all took place amid the hustle and bustle of the city – a sight to behold. God is surely in the “bits and pieces” of everyday life.

Even though we had a busy schedule we still found time to visit the sights in Rome. One of our very pleasant afternoons was spent in the company of our very own, Fr

Tom Norris in the Irish College, where we sampled some Irish hospitality, i.e. the céad míle fáilte and a cup of tea.

We made our own pilgrimage to each of the four basilicas in Rome: St John Lateran, St Mary Major, St Paul outside the Walls and St Peter's.

We were staggered by the sheer numbers of pilgrims prayerfully making their Confessions, spending quiet time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and lighting candles.

We returned home after our week of service with faith-filled energy, commitment and a heightened awareness of the richness of God's love and mercy for each of us. Such was our enthusiasm for the experience that we responded immediately to the Holy Father's invitation to return to Rome on November 12 to celebrate the work of the volunteers.

We were honoured to have been mentioned and we were surprised to be told that we were the only three people who volunteered from Ireland during the Year of Mercy. Following our final pilgrimage through the Holy Door, led by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, we attended a special Mass for the volunteers.

We were then invited to a wonderful reception, after which we were all presented with a ceramic plaque depicting the symbol of the Year of Mercy, 'Merciful like the Father'.



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Youth determined to ‘let it shine’



Davog McCafferty

Last Sunday April 9, over 50 young people from the parish of Cappagh in Co. Tyrone led their parishioners and the wider community into Holy Week with an evening of music and reflection on the ‘Way of the Cross’.

Christ The King Church in Strathroy, Omagh was packed to capacity as the participants of the Pope John Paul II Award delivered an inspiring and thought-provoking re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross, narrated by Anna Nugent who provided powerful and hard-hitting reflections on the stations and how we, as Catholics in 2017 can apply the teachings of Christ to our everyday life.

Christ the King Youth Choir provided thoughtful and uplifting musical interludes throughout the service which added to the reflective nature of the evening.

The Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown paid tribute to the amazing faith and witness of the young people involved in the liturgy and highlighted that the message of Christ is well and truly alive in the parish of Cappagh.

Many of the members of the congregation who had travelled from near and far were touched and moved by the liturgy of the evening and the prayerful way in which the young people delivered the service.

On the night, Christ the King Youth Choir, launched their CD, ‘Let It Shine – Songs Of Faith’

which includes many timeless hymns, some praise and worship songs, traditional instrumentals and a sung version of the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

Within minutes of the service ending, the CD had sold out! More copies are on their way and if you would like to order a copy, please contact the Cappagh Parish Office at the Parochial House, Killyclogher Road, Omagh or call 028.8224.3375 (from RoI, 048.8224.3375). You can also find the choir on Facebook at Facebook.com/ChristTheKingYouthChoir.

The choir will also be leading the musical ministry at the Divine Mercy Service in St Mary’s Church, Killyclogher on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 23 at 3pm.



Pics: Mary Rafferty



The folk choir.

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Bishop John Kirby of the Clonfert Diocese will
give the opening welcome address to delegates



Professor Father Ailbe O Reilly ORC.
Professor of Theology, Newman College



Donal Anthony Foley,
Marian author and Secretary of the
World Apostolate of Fatima, England

“We might not have government but we still have the law, which is pretty important for policing, so all is not lost”, deadpans George Hamilton, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in his comfortable if not overly-spacious office at Police HQ in the Knock area of east Belfast, just before Easter.

Mr Hamilton (49), a native of Newtownards, Co. Down, an affable man with a reputation for both straight-talking and measured words, holds one of the key positions in public life in these islands since his appointment by the Policing Board in 2014.

He joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) as an 18-year-old in 1985.

“It could sound a bit twee or trite but from my teenage years I wanted to make a difference in real people’s lives. I had a huge respect, probably given to me by my parents, for what the police did, even though looking back with the benefit of hindsight, maybe not everything was perfect.”

Twenty-three RUC officers had been murdered in 1985,

Catholic leaders need to encourage young people in the community to seriously consider policing, PSNI Chief Constable George Hamilton tells **Martin O’Brien**



in addition to the 202 who had fallen in the preceding years going back to 1969.

Was he not deterred by all that, I wondered.

“I think the risk was a bit of an issue of concern more for my family than for me” and looking back there might have been some “youthful foolhardiness” on his part.

Apart from an older brother who had served in the RUC for eight or nine years there had been no history of a direct family connection to policing.

Mr Hamilton, awarded the Queen’s Police Medal in 2015, was something of a highflyer, climbing to chief superintendent in the RUC before becoming assistant chief constable in Strathclyde in 2009 ahead of his return to Belfast as an assistant chief constable

in 2011 and the top job three years later.

I first saw George Hamilton up close at a packed West Belfast Festival meeting in St Mary’s University College, on the Falls Road in Belfast in 2015 when he famously shared a platform with the late Martin McGuinness, the deputy First Minister, and discussed the issue of dealing with the past.

His thoughts on Mr McGuinness will come later.

One of the most memorable moments at St Mary’s came when a member of the audience told him bluntly that he “might be the nicest guy in the world but I am not convinced that you are not constrained by the politicians at Westminster in terms of you dealing with the past”.

Mr Hamilton was warmly applauded when he replied: “I am concerned that your question is framed as if I am a representative of either unionism or the British government.

“You know what? I am neither. I am the Chief Constable of the PSNI.

“I am accountable to a Policing Board, there are four Sinn Féin members on it and one SDLP. It is representative [of the community].

“They selected me, they hold me to account. I am not answerable to the Secretary of State and I am not answerable to the British government. It is my job to grow confidence in policing, in the new arrangements, and I’m going to do that and I’m not going to be fettered by Prime Ministers or Secretaries of State or anybody else.”

Support

He leads a body of 6,763 officers plus 2,000 support staff who respond to half a million requests for service of one kind or another from the public each year. Mr Hamilton is responsible for a budget of just over £700m (€824m). But that budget, already cut by a quarter of a billion pounds in the past five years is to shrink further in these times of continued austerity and could face deeper cuts by July if there is still no Budget resulting from the collapse of the Executive.

With the political institutions broken and with no return of power-sharing in sight, policing is the only part of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) that is working after nearly 20 years.

Policing has been fairly

A man on a mission to keep faith in policing



described as the GFA’s greatest success because the PSNI is broadly acceptable to both Catholics and Protestants and its accountability and regulatory machinery including the Policing Board, Police Ombudsman and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, make it perhaps the most policed police service in the world.

the GFA’s Patten Commission for “at least” a 10-year period to achieve a decent critical mass of Catholics.

50:50 meant that for every Protestant (or other) constable recruited a member of the Catholic community had to be recruited.

The Chief Constable does not do many media interviews and his decision to give an exclusive interview to *The Irish Catholic* exemplifies the priority the PSNI is giving to encouraging Catholic recruitment following its commissioning of Deloitte, the management consultants, to examine the barriers affecting the recruitment of Catholics.

That research was commissioned in June, the report completed in December and its findings released just before Easter. The Deloitte Report provided confirmation, if it were needed, that the under-representation of Catholics applying for posts in the PSNI will continue unless Catholics can be persuaded to apply in much greater numbers.

The truth is that Catholic representation has not really grown since the discontinuation of the 50:50 rule by the then Secretary of State Owen Paterson in 2011.

The dropping of 50:50 was welcomed by unionists angered by a measure that discriminated against Protes-

tant applicants, and opposed by both nationalist parties who saw the need for its continuation.

Deloitte analysed three recruitment drives in 2013, 2014 and 2015 covering 19,000 applications and concluded: “Only 31% of applications came from individuals from a Catholic community background. Based upon the age profile of the working population of Northern Ireland, the proportion of applications from those with Catholic community backgrounds should have been closer to 45%.”

“We have a job of work to do to convince people that policing is inclusive”

While Deloitte found the Catholic community view of the PSNI performance as “reasonable/improving” some still thought there is too much of the old “RUC culture”.

A key finding that Mr Hamilton and his colleagues must digest is that Catholic officers’ applications are still considered as “breaking the mould” and many Catholics apply “invisibly,” keeping it a secret from their family, friends and figures of influence in their community.

Mr Hamilton comes across as being passionate about his ambition to secure a jump in Catholic recruitment and

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PSNI Chief Constable
George Hamilton.

loses no time in stressing the imperative of having a service which is “representative of the communities”.

“First of all, we have a job of work to do to convince people that policing is inclusive, that it is a warm place for people of all backgrounds, of all faiths and none.”

He stresses that there is work to be done by both the police themselves and by people of influence in the Catholic community while recognising all this may take “generational change”.

“We want to be inclusive not just because that is the right thing to do, to be representative. But we will be a better police service if we are representative, if we have an organisational mindset of being truly representative of the communities that we serve. I want the organisation to be the best that it can be and it can only be the best if it is truly representative.”

He says there are straightforward “transactional” measures the PSNI will take immediately such as shortening the time between the advertisement appearing and the start of police college, to reduce the drop-out rate and the introduction of a simpler on-line application.

While he strongly supported 50:50 recruitment in line with Patten, he does not support its re-introduction, pointing out it did achieve “a critical mass of 30%” on which

to build for the future.

“Some of the young Catholic people I speak to within the PSNI are a complete inspiration to us. Because of 50:50, the Catholic community is over-represented in those uniformed officers and detectives who go out and deliver front line service to the community when your house is broken into or whatever.”

However, Mr Hamilton admits: “There also hasn’t been the strength of advocacy for a career in policing that I would have hoped for, this far into the new police organisation.”

He can only mean from Catholic leaders and opinion-formers within the Catholic and nationalist community? “Yes, I would say probably more in the political realm than in the religious realm. I have said before publicly I do not question the *bona fides* of Sinn Féin as the largest nationalist/republican party in terms of their commitment to the peace process, and part of that being support for policing.

“It is almost support for policing, rather than the very specific support for a career in policing, for Catholic and nationalist young people. They need to get themselves to that point”.

He added: “All the accountability infrastructure is in place. We are striving to be representative, we are making reasonable progress, we had the 50:50 initiative

which was a government and a political decision which I supported, strategically it was the right thing to do.”



Mr Hamilton welcomes the support he has had from the GAA while pointing out that some GAA clubs are more “open” than others. And he recalls warmly a visit to St Paul’s High School, Bessbrook, Co. Armagh where Jarlath Burns, strongly tipped as a future president of the GAA, is principal: “That was a great experience. We had a full afternoon there, quite challenging too.”

While he is anxious to secure more “advocates of a policing career” in the Catholic and nationalist community he stresses: “If there are obstacles to people being convinced about the value of policing [as a career] I would ask them to challenge us because we are open to challenge on that. It doesn’t mean that everyone will get the answers they always want.”

Looking forward to a deepening engagement with the Catholic community he says: “I think when people start to engage with us and we break down some of those barriers then they might feel more confident in advocating and in encouraging young people to at least think about policing as a career.”

The dissident threat, classified as “severe” remains

an obstacle of course – there have been three attempts to murder police officers since January which mercifully failed.

“We take the threat seriously and it does cause us concern but having said that this is a small group who are determined to do harm. From their perspective, they have to get lucky once but we have been very good at disrupting them.”

Co-operation with An Garda Síochána “has never worked at a better level” and he has “a good relationship” with the Commissioner “my friend and colleague Nóirín [O’Sullivan].

Another obstacle to recruitment arises from the legacy of the past.

I reminded Mr Hamilton that he had specifically mentioned the Judge Peter Cory report and Sir Desmond de Silva’s review into the Pat Finucane case when he addressed the West Belfast Festival and asked him if the PSNI would provide all the information they have to the proposed information retrieval body.

He replied: “I have spoken on many occasions about how the past impacts on public confidence in policing. We know that it has an impact on recruitment from the Catholic community. This is deeply frustrating for me, because since becoming Chief Constable I have called for a better solution to dealing with our past. As yet, no such solution has been forthcoming.

He hopes that mechanisms outlined in the Stormont House Agreement two years ago will allow the PSNI “to concentrate on policing today rather than policing the past”.

In the absence of agreement by the Stormont parties on an Historical Investigations Unit, the PSNI has 55 investigators examining 1,118 killings at a cost of £4.3m in the coming year, who would be otherwise engaged on day-to-day policing.

“I do have my own personal convictions around faith”

“As Chief Constable, I have welcomed the Stormont House Agreement and have committed that the PSNI will do all in its capabilities to support its implementation. This will include, working within my legal responsibilities, the disclosure of information.”

But with Stormont itself currently collapsed it may be some time before the Independent Commission for Information Retrieval and the HIU, both agreed at Stormont House at Christmas 2014 are established, if they ever will be.

The Chief Constable is clearly concerned by the mes-

sage the Stormont breakdown conveys to society here, particularly with the marching season now just under way and its parades which, as ever, the PSNI is obliged to police.

He says there is less positivity or ‘feel good’ in the air than a year ago and, therefore, less potential for “a dampening effect on tension”.

He warns: “I don’t want to exaggerate this but this lack of political consensus, of political leadership permeates down to community level, down to the streets through parades or protests.

“Last year there was positivity, we had the First Minister and deputy First Minister together sending the right messages to their communities about a stable, peaceful and confident society.

“My values and emotions were being pulled in opposite directions”

“I am not saying there will be trouble on the streets because Sinn Féin and the DUP have fallen out. I am saying it is subtler than that.”

I wondered if he considered having a religious faith is important in a police officer.

“I think a strong value set is important in a police officer and I don’t want police officers to be so neutralised that they are devoid of any personal belief system. I think we should have a diverse workforce and I don’t think any one particular denomination or indeed faith should have a monopoly on positive values that coalesce with policing.”

He says that having faith and policing are “not in any way inconsistent”.

“I think that they are mutually supportive so people can have a faith and with that faith they very often bring these values, or personal anchor points, that tend to coalesce around with what makes good police work.”

I remark that he has not been publicising any personal faith, unlike his predecessor, Matt Baggott.

“I do have my own personal convictions around faith, maybe I present them differently, or quietly or more privately or whatever. I am from a non-denominational group.”

Christian? “Oh, yes. There is a passage of Scripture from Micah [6.8] which talks about what God requires of us, and it says to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly and if you can do that, justice, mercy, have some compassion, and a bit of humility, those are three things that make a pretty good cop in my experience.”

“You don’t even need to be Christian to have those things, what I am saying is I can see a lot of coalescing

between some of those Christian anchor points and good policing.”

Had those words of Micah inspired him in his own policing and human journey?

“Yes...it will be different for everybody by the way. I wouldn’t be advocating this as an organisational position. What I am saying is there are those sort of touchstones or anchor points, that when I am having a really difficult decision to make, or when I am reflecting on my own behaviour about how I have led something, or maybe reacted badly to something, I check myself against those words.”



I had last seen Mr Hamilton among the dignitaries in Long Tower Church in Derry at Martin McGuinness’ funeral in Derry. He volunteers that he “did have a dilemma” about his attendance, that there was both a personal and professional aspect to his decision and that he had to “weigh up” whether to go, but does not question himself now as to whether he made the right decision.

“I did realise that my attendance would be read in different ways by people across the community, in different ways.

“I suppose Martin represented the sort of conflicted history that we have had, his involvement with the IRA and the pain and suffering that that organisation caused to communities, and then in the last half of his life the massive contribution that he made to building and maintaining the peace.

“So, I suppose like many people my emotions regarding him and the attendance at his funeral was a little bit of a dilemma. My values and emotions were being pulled in opposite directions and I just had a fundamental decision to make about whether or not I believed it was the right thing to do, to go.”

He says, as Chief Constable and holding a senior public office in Northern Ireland, it was “appropriate to attend the funeral of [the person] who had been deputy First Minister for a decade”.

Reflecting, Mr Hamilton describes his relationship with Mr McGuinness as “a positive relationship”.

“We got problems solved together and he was a great pragmatist and he never compromised his own ideals and aspirations and values and he never asked me to compromise mine, which was important, and it was a frank and forthright relationship.”

One cannot help thinking that if Martin McGuinness was alive George Hamilton might already have been on the phone to him to assist with the next PSNI recruitment campaign.

Out&About

Killaloe Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage



MAYO: Bishop Fintan Monahan with young people who participated in the Killaloe Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick.



MAYO: Participants at a 'Family Day' in Knock Shrine including Fr Nigel Woollen, Breda O'Brien, Fr Peter Murphy, Bishop Kevin Doran, Fr Richard Gibbons, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Fr Timothy Bartlett and Archbishop Michael Neary.



▲ **WATERFORD:** Lucht Freastail an Cúrsa Spioradálta do Ghaeilgeoirí held recently at Mount Melleray Abbey. Front row includes an Athair Uinseann Ó Maidín, O.C.S.O., Spiritual Director, an Siúr Máiréad Nic Dhonnchada, O.C.S.O., guest lecturer and Aine NI Fhiannusa Mhic Craith, programme director.

◀ **ANTRIM:** Lambeg clergy pictured at Derryvolgie Parish Church with people who took part in the Lambeg Churches 'Good Friday carrying of the cross walk of witness': Rev. David Knox (Harmony Hill Presbyterian), Rev. Stephen McElhinney (Derryvolgie Parish), Rev. Susan Moore (Assistant Minister of Harmony Hill Presbyterian) and Fr Paul Byrne (St Colman's Roman Catholic Church, Lambeg).

Edited by Mags Gargan
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



DUBLIN: Students at Dominican College Sion Hill, Blackrock demonstrate the uniform progression at the school from 1836 to the present day at a celebration to make 180 years of the Dominicans educating women, which included exhibitions, performances and music.



KERRY: Bishop Ray Browne and Sr Consilio at the opening of a new centre for 'Friends of Cuan Mhuire' in Tralee.



ARMAGH: Pupils from Dean Maguirc College receiving their Pope John Paul II Award from Archbishop Eamon Martin in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh. The 23 pupils pictured was the largest number of recipients from all the schools in the diocese.



TYRONE: Fr Edward Gallagher and James Warnock with representatives from Greencastle parish and Dean Maguirc College, as they depart from the school on Holy Thursday morning for the Mass of the Lord's Supper transmitted live from the RTÉ studios in Dublin which was co-ordinated by Trócaire.

IN SHORT

75 students commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers

A group of 75 students at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick were recently commissioned as Eucharistic Ministers by Bishop Brendan Leahy, the largest number to date.

Speaking at the event Bishop Leahy said he was commissioned as a Eucharistic Minister when he was in college "and I still remember it to this day". "Today is a day for all of you as we celebrate you being a part of the future of the Church."

The 75 newly-commissioned students undertook a training programme with MIC Chaplain, Fr Mick Wall. This training marked a significant extra commitment outside of the students' studies and lectures.

Fr Wall commended the student's commitment. "What you are doing here today is not about glory or honour, it is about service. As you go back to your communities you go with a commitment to service and witness. Today you come from different regions to humbly serve the Church into the future. You are a very important part of the Church going forward and should be commended for your commitment."

Dean Maguirc College participates in RTE Mass

The Mass of the Lord's Supper transmitted live from the RTÉ studios in Dublin, which was co-ordinated by Trócaire, involved representatives from both Trócaire and the parish of Greencastle, Co. Tyrone as well as pupils and staff from Dean Maguirc

College, Co. Tyrone.

The celebrant of the Mass was Fr Edward Gallagher, PP of Greencastle, who was part of a 10-strong delegation of Trócaire representatives from throughout Ireland who visited Honduras in Central America last November as preparation for this year's Lenten Campaign.

Commenting on the school's participation in this Trócaire Mass for Holy Thursday, the principal, Mr James Warnock said: "We are delighted and honoured to have been asked to be involved in this very special liturgy and I thank all the participants from the college, especially the choir who have put so much effort into preparing for this unique event.

"We do fundraising in the school each Lent for Trócaire and I am delighted to say that we have reached our target of Stg£3,000 for 2017."

CLARE

Divine Mercy Sunday on April 23 at 2.15pm in Ennis Cathedral with Devotions, Confessions, Mass and Benediction

CORK

Annual Novena to Our Lady Mother of Good Counsel in St Josephs Church, Castlemartyr at 7.30pm each evening until April 26.

Divine Mercy Sunday will take place in the Church of the Real Presence, Curraheen, Bishopstown, Cork on Sunday, April 23 at 2pm with Confessions, Rosary, talk on the Divine Mercy and Mass.

DONEGAL

Divine Mercy Sunday in St Mary's Church, Fanavolty, Fanad on April 23 commencing at 2.30pm: Confessions, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Mass and 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.

The Encounter Dublin City: Join other young adults (20s & 30s) for a night of live acoustic music, reflective prayer in adoration, with guest speaker & performer Kate Curran on Friday, April 28 at 8pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay (Smithfield). st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie

Dublin diocese is arranging a facilitated listening process for young people (16-30yrs) to the questions the Pope has put forward, in three locations around the diocese starting Tuesday, April 27 at 7pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay (Smithfield). st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie

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.

Divine Mercy Sunday, Good Shepherd Parish, Churchtown on Sunday, April 23. Holy Hour (only) 3-4pm. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Divine Mercy Chaplet, readings from the Diary, Holy Rosary, hymns and veneration of image. Mass at Rathfarnham Parish Church at 4.30pm.

Divine Mercy Sunday, April 23 in Rathgar Church of Three Patrons, at 3pm with Mass, Benediction & Chaplet. Blessing with Relic of St Faustina. Confessions from 2pm.

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

Divine Mercy Devotions every Monday night in St Nales 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.

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.

May Masses and Devotions in Our Lady of Clonfert Church, in Clonfert from May 1-31 each evening at 8pm except Sundays. Further information from 090-9675113 or stbrenseyrecourt@eircom.net

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

LEITRIM

Padre Pio Healing Mass in St Patrick's Church, Ballinamore on Thursday, May 25 at 7pm. Celebrant: Bro. Sean Kelly OFM Cap. from Kilkenny and native of Ballinamore. Blessings will take place after Mass with the relics of Saint Pio.

MAYO

Bishop Fintan Monahan will launch *The Lamb will Conquer; Reflections on the Knock Apparition* by Fr Nigel Woollen on Saturday, April 22 at 2.30pm at Knock Shrine Bookshop.

Mercy Sunday takes place at Knock Shrine on April 23 beginning with devotions at 12.45pm with Fr Bernard McGuckian SJ and concelebrated Mass at 3pm with Archbishop Eamon Martin. For more information see www.knockshrine.ie or call (094) 93 88100.

MEATH

Divine Mercy Sunday in St Patrick's Church, Trim, April 23 commencing at 2.30pm: Confessions, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Mass and blessing with first class relic of St Faustina.

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday, April 21 with Mass at 9pm. Adoration and prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085-7746763.

TYRONE

Life in the Spirit Seminars in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher continues on Thursday, April 27 at 7.30pm with Fr John Grennan.

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.

WEXFORD

Divine Mercy ceremony will be held in St Michael's Church, Gorey on Sunday, April 23 at 2.30pm. Stations, Chaplet, Mass & Confessions.



Expect the Government's Church-bashing to continue for some time, writes **David Quinn**

Unless there is a push-back from unexpected quarters, last Friday was the last Good Friday when pubs across the nation will close. It appears the vintners have had their way because the Government has cleared the path to the pubs opening each Good Friday from now on. That will leave Christmas Day as the one day of the year when the pubs close. Can it be far behind?

Church-bashing is the new Brit-bashing



Last Friday was the last Good Friday when pubs across the nation will close.

The Government says its aim is to curb our drinking habits. Opening the pubs on Good Friday seems a strange way to do that. It is very hard to avoid the impression that this is simply one more kick at Catholic Ireland and all it stands for.

What might stop the Good

Friday drinking restrictions being removed? Well, Senator David Norris coming out against removing the restrictions was a start. That was unexpected. Fine Gael Senators, Michelle Mulherin and Joe O'Reilly did the same. Might a few more in Fine Gael push back? What about

in Fianna Fáil?

Will leading figures in the Church of Ireland say anything? What about campaigners against excessive alcohol consumption, apart from the obvious candidates like the Pioneers?

Maybe if these all pushed back there might be some hope of defeating the vintners and the inveterate Church-bashers in the Oireachtas.

I've written before that Church-bashing is the new Brit-bashing. In the past, politicians lined up to show how anti-British they were. Today, many politicians do the same when it comes to the Church. The hard left never stop. Hardly a week passes by when the likes of Ruth Coppinger or Paul Murphy have a go.

“I'm not sure I can think of a single time during his six years as Taoiseach when Enda Kenny has had a good word to say about the Catholic Church”

But Enda Kenny seems to like nothing better than reading out in the Dáil one of his thundering denunciations of old, Catholic Ireland. He did it when the Cloyne Report came out (and closed the embassy to the Holy See into the bargain).

He did it when a report into the Magdalene homes came out, even though the report did not paint as dark a picture by any means of those institutions as the movie (which Irish broadcasters show non-stop), *The Magdalene Sisters*, did.

He also did it more recently when speaking about the

Tuam mother and baby home.

In fact, I'm not sure I can think of a single time during his six years as Taoiseach when Enda Kenny has had a good word to say about the Catholic Church or of Ireland's Christian heritage.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister, Theresa May (a vicar's daughter), regularly praises Britain's Christian heritage.

In her Easter message last weekend, she said, “We must continue to ensure that people feel able to speak about their faith, and that absolutely includes their faith in Christ.”

She added: “We should be confident about the role that Christianity has to play in the lives of people in our country.” She also highlighted the persecution of Christians overseas.

Terrified

I cannot imagine any senior Irish politician in the present climate emulating Theresa May, least of all Enda Kenny.

For a very long time Irish politicians were terrified of saying anything good about Britain in case they were called ‘West Brits’ and worse. If a politician today said anything good about Ireland's Christian heritage they would quickly be accused of being ‘subservient’ to the Church and so on.

It will be said, of course, that Christianity in Ireland, and the Catholic Church in particular, has little to be proud about. The mother and baby homes will be referred to, as will the Magdalene homes, the child abuse scandals and so on.

These chapters are deeply shameful and speak of an unaccountable Church that allowed itself to fall into the grip of a very authoritarian version of Christianity far removed from Christ's injunc-

tion to ‘cast no stones’.

But name an organisation, a religion, a nation, a society, an idea or a civilisation with a long history that does not have dark chapters in that history.

Many of the Church's critics are on the political left. The political left first emerged in history as a serious force with the French Revolution. It immediately set about killing people and murdered untold numbers in the 20th Century.

Britain obviously has many dark chapters in its history but does this mean it is set upon removing from public view all of its national symbols, every trace of its national identity?

Of course not, because it has a sense of proportion about itself and it knows it also has proud moments in its history, for example, standing alone for a time against Hitler, and its model of parliamentary democracy which has been copied in all the English-speaking world and elsewhere, including in this country.

“Britain has a sense of proportion about itself”

So, why the continuous negativity about the Catholic Church? Why are we presented only with its misdeeds while the good it has done over the long centuries is kept hidden from our view?

The reason is because that makes it all the easier to whip up public support for removing all significant public traces of it from national law and life.

This is being done in the small things (Good Friday drinking laws) and the much bigger things (our pro-life law). If the public can be made to think that Catholic Ireland was a terrible place, and nothing else, then we will be all the more determined to replace Catholicism and Christianity *tout court* with ‘secular modernity’.

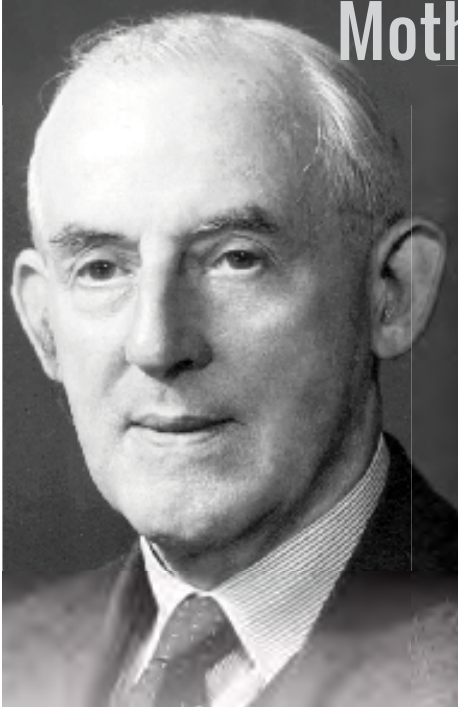
Business sector

This Government is certainly determined to do that. It has been one of the few consistent things it has done in its six years in power. It is easy to push around the Catholic Church.

It's hard to push around the public sector unions, the business sector, or the myriad media-supported left-wing NGOs which seem to drive the Government's social agenda.

Therefore we can expect more Church-bashing for the foreseeable future. The day when an Irish Prime Minister copies Theresa May, and praises our Christian heritage, is still years away, it would seem.

TALK | How Frank Duff offered a humane alternative to the Mother and Baby homes



**Thurs, April 27
at 8pm**

**The Davenport hotel
8-10 Merrion Street Lower
Dublin 2**

**SPEAKER
Finola Kennedy
Author of *Frank Duff: A Life Story***

**CHAIR
Finola Bruton**

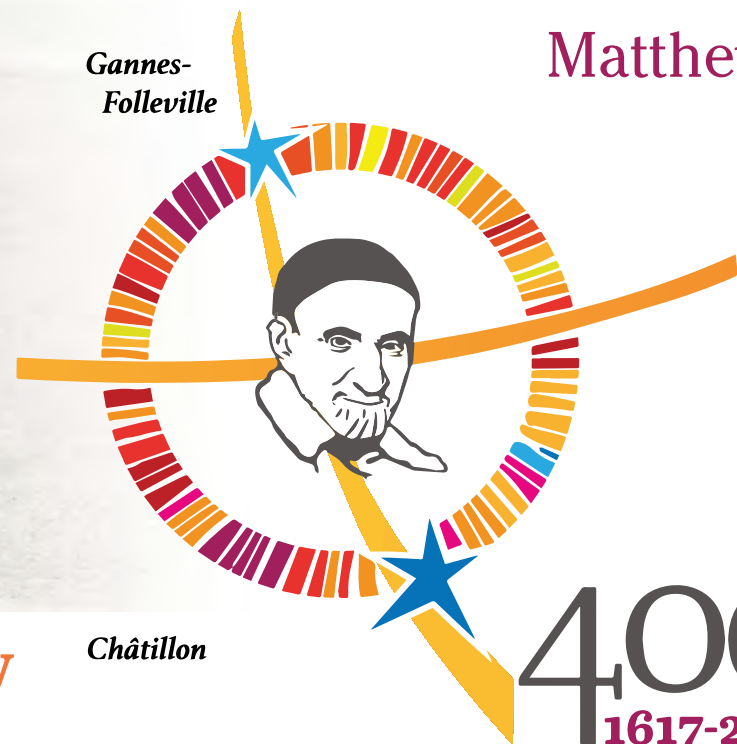
Admission Free

To register, please email
info@ionainstitute.ie
or phone **01 661 9204**

IONA INSTITUTE
for Religion and Society

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me..."

Matthew 25:25



400yrs.
1617-2017

What is the Vincentian Family Celebrating during 2017?

The Vincentian Family are celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of the Vincentian Charism throughout 2017

With the theme: *I was a stranger and you welcomed me* (Matthew 25:35), the worldwide Vincentian Family celebrates a Jubilee Year. This is the time during which we celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the origin of our charism of service on behalf of all those who experience the reality of poverty in their daily lives.

The Beginnings

The year 1617 was decisive with regards to Vincent de Paul's vocation. Two significant events occurred: on January 25, the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Vincent preached "the first sermon of the mission" in Folleville, (Northern France). That event took place several days after having heard the confession of a dying man which made Vincent aware of the spiritual abandonment of the poor country people.

"Vincent experienced the material poverty and misery of his parishioners"

Vincent understood that it was necessary to instruct the people, to make them aware of their dignity as children of God and to teach them the truths of God's plan for

humanity.

Some months later, in August of the same year, as pastor in Châtillon, in the Lyons area of France the second significant event occurred. Vincent experienced the material poverty and misery of his parishioners. On a Sunday as Vincent prepared to celebrate the Eucharist with his parishioners some people arrived at the church to inform him about a family in severe crisis in the parish. He spoke of the incident during the Eucharist and witnessed many people coming to the aid of the family later in the day. In fact the response was so great that Vincent understood that much of the food would be wasted. Much was given and that answered the immediate crisis but to sustain help and care of those in need into the future then the charity and goodness of people needed to be organised. That event took place several days later. Vincent had heard the confession of a dying man which made him aware of the spiritual abandonment of the poor country people.



Top: World Map showing some countries where the Vincentian Family is present.

Left: Church of Châtillon, (France).

Vincentian Family 400 years later

The events that took place in Folleville and Châtillon during the year 1617 mark the origin of the Vincentian charism and for 400 years the followers of Vincent de Paul, the members of the Vincentian Family, have dedicated themselves to service on behalf of the less fortunate members of society.

Our Love is International

At the present time, the Vincentian Family is composed of some 225 branches (various religious communities and lay associations) and is present in more than 90 countries.

The Vincentian Family is present on five continents and engaged in various ministries in which they "welcome the stranger" in their midst. Some of their ministries include: health care including the care of persons with intellectual disability and hospice care, education and particularly for persons with little or no access to formal education, human promotion and development, care of persons who are homeless, ministry to migrants and refugees, abandoned children and adults, of prisoners and of families in crisis situations.

Among the more well-known branches of the family, we highlight those branches here in Ireland:

- International Association of Charity (AIC)
- Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian Fathers)
- Daughters of Charity (founded with Saint Louise de Marillac)
- Society of Vincent de Paul (founded by Blessed Frederic Ozanam and with the assistance of Blessed Rosalie Rendu)
- Association of the Miraculous Medal (AMM)
- Vincentian Lay Missionaries (VLM)
- DePaul Ireland (a part of DePaul International)
- Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice.

The logo for the 400th Anniversary

It is created from a circle which represents, life, the world, relationships and inter-connectedness of all people. The circle is formed by lines in different colours. These lines symbolize the congregations, groups, associations founded within the Vincentian charism. They also symbolize society with its imperfections and joys, hopes and struggles. This circle is a link between two stars that remind of both places where Vincent de Paul saw the footprints of God in his life and through his words have become major events: Folleville and Châtillon. The stars, reminds us of their location within French territory and they are linked by a cross of light that recalls the Resurrection and Pentecost.

The cross is always a sign of the Spirit that inhabits and invites us to live as members of the Vincentian Family in the world of today. The face of Vincent is located at the intersection of the cross.

The Vincentian Charism, refers to the gift of the Spirit given by God to the Church in the person of St Vincent de Paul. The Vincentian charism is understood as the integration of evangelisation and charity. It refers to serving all people who experience poverty in its many forms, in a holistic way as St Vincent did four hundred years ago. The humble attempt made by St Vincent to serve others, especially the poor, translated the gospel into a living reality in the 17th century. That is how he responded to the challenging social problems of the time. As a consequence, evangelisation and service became the Vincentian Charism.

Today the Vincentian Family worldwide continue this initiative of St Vincent by translating their lives into living gospels addressing the challenges of this time. Serving others through a variety of ministries including education, health care, and social services and promoting human development and empowerment programmes. In each form of serving others the persons who are most abandoned, isolated and forgotten by society are those cared for by the members of the Vincentian Family. The underlying principle of the service undertaken by the Vincentian Family is seeing the person of Christ in all those served as St Vincent did.

Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice

The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice was established in 1995 as a Vincentian initiative for social and economic change tackling poverty and exclusion. The Partnership consists of: The Society of St Vincent de Paul, Vincentian Priests, Daughters of Charity and the Sisters of The Holy Faith.

What makes the Partnership distinctive is the Vincentian focus on people who experience disadvantage and the emphasis on doing things together, rather than for people.

Today the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice seeks to heighten awareness of the suffering and rights of people who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Two main aspects of their work include research on what constitutes a Minimum Essential Standard of Living and what constitutes a Living Wage. The Partnership works for transformation with members and people who are disadvantaged by providing leadership, support and advocacy.

Their vision of a just society is one in which all have an adequate income to live with dignity, appropriate accommodation, access to education, health, social and legal services, participation in decision making, where all cultures are respected and the environment is promoted.

For further information on the work of the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice explore: <http://www.justicematters.ie> or e-mail info@vpsj.ie

Connections between St Vincent de Paul and Ireland

Since the 17th Century there have been connections between Ireland and the Vincentian Family. At the request of the Bishop Dwyer of Limerick in 1646 St Vincent sent priests and brothers to Limerick. There are some churches and at least three parishes dedicated to St Vincent de Paul in Ireland. Many churches have stained glass windows depicting the saint. The following are some of the parishes and churches dedicated to St Vincent de Paul.

If there are other parishes or churches with connections to St Vincent de Paul we would love to hear about them. info@daughtersofcharity.ie

Daughters of the Charity

St Louise de Marillac, together with St Vincent de Paul in 1633, gathered a small group of women who would live as sisters and work as servants with the Confraternities of Charity. Louise taught them how to care for the sick, to pray each day to grow in God's love, to bring that love to those they served and do so with gentleness and compassion. This was the beginning of a new form of committed religious living, combining prayer and action while living among the people they served. People who saw them on the streets carrying their pots of soup and remedies called them 'Filles de la Charité', the name that continues to this day.

The Daughters of Charity first came to Ireland in 1855 when the country was still recovering from the effects of the Famine and great poverty abounded. Today the Irish Province of the Daughters of Charity comprises twenty-four houses

Depaul Ireland

Depaul Ireland is part of a wider group structure, Depaul International, with other subsidiaries in the UK, Ukraine, Slovakia, USA and France. The founding partners were the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Daughters of Charity and the Vincentian Fathers.

Depaul was established in 2002 in Ireland and 2005 in Northern Ireland. It is now a leading cross-border organisation and our focus is on those suffering homelessness and marginalisation, who need vital support and

the opportunity to realise their true potential. They offer support and guidance to break the cycle of homelessness and assist the service users in making positive choices for their future.

The mission of Depaul is to end homelessness and change lives. Depaul is a cross-border organisation working in four main areas of service provision; (i) Homelessness and vulnerable families' services, (ii) Homelessness prevention services, (iii) Homeless addiction services and (iv) Homelessness and criminal justice services.

Church of St Vincent de Paul - Oatfield, O'Callaghan Mills Parish, Co Clare.

Oatfield Church is reputedly the oldest church in the Diocese of Killaloe and has a unique history stretching back to Penal Times. It is one of only two surviving eighteenth-century barn churches in the country, and it is one of the best preserved and still in use.

In 1646 a French priest, St Vincent de Paul, responded to a request from Bishop Dwyer of Limerick to send priests to work in the city. By 1651 Limerick was under siege by the Cromwellian army under General Ireton, and a dreadful plague had broken out. At least five Vincentians came to Limerick at that time. Among them were two Irish Vin-



centian priests, Fr Gerald Bryan and Fr Edmund Barry both of whom had been ordained in Paris. Brother Thady Lee was born in Tuogh, Adare, Co Limerick in 1623. He was a clerical student with the Vincentians in Paris at this time. He also returned to work with the poor and the sick in Limerick. After

the fall of the city to the Cromwellian army he was captured and killed. Meanwhile Frs. Bryan and Barry escaped from the destruction and pillage which was rampant in the city at that time, and made their way over the hills to Oatfield. They settled in a little stone house in Derynaveagh. The tradition

is that they celebrated Mass for the local people in the thatched barn.

The Vincentian connection with Oatfield was recognised in May 1966, when the church, previously dedicated to St Peter, was rededicated to St Vincent de Paul, by Bishop Joseph Rodgers. A statue of

this saint had been sent from Paris to the Vincentian Church in Phibsboro, Dublin, a hundred years previously. It was subsequently donated to Oatfield Church by Fr O'Neill CM, on the occasion, of the dedication ceremony.



For further information explore: <https://ie.depaulcharity.org> or e-mail depaul@depaulcharity.net and for readers in Northern Ireland depaulni@depaulcharity.net

The Association of the Miraculous Medal

An International Association of the Church, to which all the Christian faithful can belong, its origin dates back to the apparitions of Our Lady to St Catherine Labouré in 1830. St Catherine was a Daughter of Charity when she first experienced the apparitions. The Association was founded in order to spread the message of the Miraculous Medal and was granted Papal approval by Pope Pius IX in 1847 and Pope Pius X in 1909.

The purpose of the Association is to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception and

encourage and help its members deepen their faith in order to create Christian communities of evangelisation.

To belong it is necessary to wear the Miraculous Medal and to recite the prayer, "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to you".

For further information on the Miraculous Medal and the Association of the Miraculous Medal: E-mail: virgopotensdublin@gmail.com or write to Virgo Potens Office, 10 Henrietta Street, Dublin 1. You can also go to: www.chapel-lenotredamedelamedaillemiraculeuse.com

Vincentian Lay Missionaries

The Vincentian Lay missionaries are a member of the Vincentian Family, sharing their origins and values with many other organisations working for justice and continuing the legacy of St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac.

Vincentian Lay Missionaries (VLM) is a not-for-profit volunteer sending organisation. They work in partnership with the Vincentian Fathers and the Daughters of Charity to support their work with disad-



The P

Marino... oped in... Dublin... decided... new su... area of... parish c... initiative... Flanagan... priest of... foundat... the Chu... cent de... on 2nd M... it was c... the 7 O... Edward... bishop... was de... Vincent... In 1... was est... Parish in...

Vincentian Charism

vantaged people across Ethiopia. During the past year they have branched out and have developed new partnerships with the Daughters of Charity in Kenya, Burkina Faso and Ghana. They recruit volunteers of all ages for a variety of placements all year round. VLM follows a 400-year tradition begun by St. Vincent de Paul among the most neglected in seventeenth century France.

For further information or to explore the possibility of volunteering go to: www.vlm.ie or e-mail info@vlm.ie

Society of St Vincent de Paul

The Society of St Vincent de Paul is one of the largest groups in the Vincentian Family. They take their inspiration from Blessed Frederic Ozanam, one of the principal founders of the Society and Blessed Rosalie Renud. Frederic was 20 years old when he began the Society and St Vincent de Paul was chosen as patron. From the outset the Society favoured a practical, direct approach to dealing with poverty.

Today the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) is an international Christian voluntary membership organisation. They believe that everyone should have the means to live life with dignity. Ireland is part of the international Society which is represented in over 140 countries, helping 30 million poor throughout

the world. They are one of Ireland's largest voluntary organisations with some 11,500 volunteers active in each county in Ireland.

Today, volunteer members of SVP are people from all walks of life who want to make a difference to the lives of people in need. Their goal is to fight poverty in all its forms through practical assistance to people in need. They offer direct, personal assistance that is non-judgemental and based on the need of the individual or family. In addition they provide a wide range of services for vulnerable people through their local offices, shops, resource centres, housing projects, day-care and holiday schemes among many other activities.

For further information contact www.svp.ie

AIC / Ladies of Charity

One Sunday in August 1617, Vincent De Paul, Pastor of Châtillon, near Lyons in France, was vesting for Mass when some of his parishioners told him about a very poor family in desperate need. Vincent spoke about the situation in his sermon, which 'touched the heart of his congregation' and the people responded by visiting the family with food and help.

Vincent then decided to set up the Ladies of Charity in order to ensure that as many as possible of those in need could benefit from their generosity. This was

formally established on December 8, 1617 with a very detailed Charter, which covered how the ladies should administer to those in need corporally and spiritually.

The first branch of the Ladies of Charity in Ireland was established in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin in 1843. In 1971, the AIC was formed, as in some countries the term 'Ladies' seemed no longer appropriate.

They instead agreed to call themselves 'AIC' – International Association of Charity. While there is still a branch of the Ladies of Charity in Dublin, a new branch was set up under AIC in 2014.

The Vincentian Fathers

The Vincentians, so called after their founder St. Vincent de Paul, are an international Congregation which dedicates itself to the service and evangelisation of the poor, and formation of clergy. Communities in Ireland and England work in parishes and in chaplaincy to schools and hospitals. Special works associated with the Congregation include parish missions, work with people who are homeless and with immigrant communities.

Collaboration among the various groups that compose the Vincentian family enriches all of us and our ministries. Vincentian parishes have SVP, AMM and AIC groups actively engaged. Our members also work with the VPSJ, DePaul, Daughters of Charity and VLM. Together we seek to deepen our understanding of the Vincentian spirit and in that spirit to serve Christ in His weakest and suffering members.

Who was St Vincent de Paul?

He was born in 1581 to a closeknit family of middle class peasants in Pouy, near Dax in the south of France. His parents transmitted a living, concrete faith to him. Vincent was intelligent and eager and with the support of his parents, he was fortunate to have a bright future: that of education and priesthood. He was ordained at the age of 19 in 1600.

Vincent travelled to Paris in 1608 and was introduced to Monsieur de Bérulle, one of the main members of the French School of Spirituality. This movement was involved in the internal reform of the Catholic Church. Priests were invited to take their priestly vocation seriously, becoming deeply rooted in Christ, something that was not present in that time when the life of the Church had lost its authenticity.

Vincent went through a period of three to four years of doubt and "a dark night of the soul". In 1612 he became parish priest of Clichy a village north of Paris and said, "My God, how happy you are to have such good people!" Soon after, he came into the service of the de Gondi's, an influential family in French society. Monsieur de Gondi was General of the galleys (convicts) and his wife managed their estates. Vincent became tutor to the children and spiritual director of Madame de Gondi.

1617 was a turning point for Vincent. One day while accompanying Madame de Gondi on her lands, Vincent heard the confession of a dying peasant. The peasant was considered to be an upright man but he was afraid of damnation for the sins of his past life, so much so that he never had the courage to confess. After this confession the man was at peace. Madame de Gondi was worried about the spiritual state of the people of her estates and she asked M. Vincent to find a "remedy for this". The next day, January 25, 1617, he gave a sermon in the church in

Folleville with such ardour that the parishioners came to confession in great numbers.

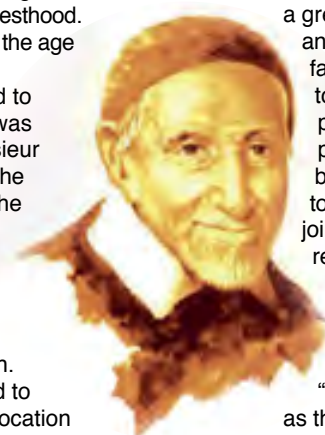
That same year, at the age of 36, he returned to Châtillon near Lyon. During Mass he learned of the dire need of a family. The congregation in the church was seized with

a great spirit of generosity and they visited the sick family bringing provisions to them. Vincent was pleased and immediately posed the question of better organization. Thanks to some pious ladies, he joined charity with a very respectful rule which invited them to serve a poor person "as if it were God himself."

These were the first "Charities" (today known as the AIC or Ladies of Charity). This experience reinforced his new vocation to serve those most in need. This was strongly supported by Madame de Gondi who, with Vincent in 1625, signed a contract for the foundation of the Congregation of the Mission, (Vincentian Fathers) charged with evangelisation in the countryside. Now, there were two goals: Mission and Charity.

Vincent was a man of prayer and a very practical person, who looked for ways to organize direct aid for those in need. St Louise de Marillac crossed his path and asked him for spiritual help. He confided to her the task of visiting the new Charities. They founded the Daughters of Charity in 1633. Nothing could stop the imagination of St Vincent and his collaborators. He worked for the relief of all people so that each person could nourish him or herself, learn a trade and find dignity as a child of God. St Vincent knew how to engage those who were wealthy to encourage them to give of their plenty and demanded their political aid also.

He died on September 27 1660 leaving behind laity, priests, sisters, a family – the Vincentian Family – and especially a spirit in which all members of the Vincentian Family live today, the fire of love which animated St. Vincent de Paul for the service of those most in need.



Parish of St Vincent de Paul - Marino, Dublin

was developed in 1924 when the Corporation decided to build a suburb in the Fairview. The church was the work of Fr John in the parish of Fairview. The foundation stone of the church of St. Vincent de Paul was laid in May, 1926, and consecrated on October by Dr Byrne, Archbishop of Dublin. It was dedicated to St. Vincent de Paul.

In 1942 Marino was established as a parish in its own right,

Canon McArdle being appointed Parish Priest. The Daughters of Charity taught in the parish primary schools from the foundation of

the schools. The sisters lived in the parish from October 1934 until they withdrew from the Parish in October 1978.



St Vincent de Paul Parish - Ligoniel, Belfast.

Around the year 1850, the villages of Ligoniel and Wolfhill were in St. Patrick's Parish. The parishioners had to walk from this area into the city centre for Mass, regardless of the weather conditions.

In 1851 the Society of St Vincent de Paul bought a site in Ligoniel, and built a school at the cost of £370. This was a very large sum of money in the 1800's! Thirteen years later, the Bishop of Down and Connor had this school building converted to a church, and the Parish of Saint Vincent de Paul was born! Full Par-



ish status, was granted to Ligoniel in 1891.

In 1894 Canon McDonnell and Dr Henry, the Bishop of Down and Connor, bought a new site further down the Ligoniel

Rd and on this spot is the present Church, school (now the boxing club) and parochial house. The Church was dedicated on 12th January 1898 by Dr Henry, Bishop of Down and Connor.

Church of St Vincent de Paul Garranbane, Dungarvan Co Waterford.



Rose Window in Garranbane Church

The church of St Vincent de Paul was built about 1807. It is one of three churches in the present parish of Abbeyside, Ballinroad and Garranbane. In the past when the Feast of St Vincent de Paul was celebrated on 19 July special devotions dedicated to the saint took place in the church.

The Vincentian Family in Ireland

Celebrate with us 400 Years of the Vincentian Charism.

Eucharistic Celebration

'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'. Matt.25:35

Tuesday 9th May 2017 at 2.15pm

Refreshment afterwards in St Catherine's Provincial House, Dunardagh.

Main Celebrant:

Fr. Guillermo Campuzano CM

A Vincentian priest from Colombia. He is currently one of the Vincentian representatives at the United Nations.

Place:

**The church of the Guardian Angels,
Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.**

① Parking in the grounds of St. Catherine's Provincial House, Dunardagh Blackrock Co. Dublin.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

For further information go to www.famvin.org
or email info@daughtersofcharity.ie

Upcoming Events

• International Symposium of the Vincentian Family

**Rome
October 12-15, 2017**

Our Jubilee theme "Welcome the Stranger" is the focus of this event. The Symposium goes from Thursday through Sunday, 1:00 PM.

Fr Tomaž Mavri, CM, the Superior General of the Vincentian Family says that it is a gift from God to us to be able to celebrate this event together with Pope Francis, who will join the symposium on Saturday, October 14. During the symposium the participants will have the privilege of having the reliquary with the Heart of St. Vincent, present in Rome for the weekend. The participants will cel-

brate a prayer vigil in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, as well as the closing Mass on Sunday at St. Peter's Basilica.

The 400th anniversary of the charism provides all member of the Vincentian Family with the perfect opportunity to celebrate their Vincentian heritage, to give thanks for all that has been done and to develop ideas and plans for the future. Of great importance is the consideration of

the changing demographics and social contexts, the pressing needs of the poor, and the ability of all groups to best respond to these as a Vincentian Family.

I also extend a special invitation to young people. We hope that the Symposium will also be a powerful time to animate you in your Vincentian vocation.

For further information see: www.famvin.org or contact any of the branches of the Vincentian Family in Ireland



Considering travelling to the Symposium?

Contact info@daughtersofcharity.ie for information and details of all arrangements or complete registration online by going directly to the REGISTRATION PAGE and submitting your registration before September 1, 2017. For questions regarding the Symposium please write us at: info.symposium@cmglobal.org

• Will you welcome the stranger?

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me" is the theme for the celebration for the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of the Vincentian Charism. It is a very concrete way of responding to the call of Pope Francis for Vocation Sunday this year. The theme that Pope Francis is asking each of us to reflect upon is "Led by the Spirit for Mission."

The Spirit leads each of us in response to the call that we received in Baptism. We are called to serve and care for each other – we are called to mission.

In his letter for this Vocation Sunday (May 7, 2017), Pope Francis writes: "All Christians are called to be missionaries of the Gospel! As disciples, we do not receive the gift of God's love for our personal consolation, nor are we called to promote

ourselves, or a business concern. We are simply men and women touched and transformed by the joy of God's love, who cannot keep this experience just to ourselves... Commitment to mission is not something added on to the Christian life as a kind of decoration, but is instead an essential element of faith itself. A relationship with the Lord entails being sent out into the world as prophets of his word and witnesses of his love."

St Vincent de Paul during his life deepened his relationship with God through his mission of evangelisation and service. All members of the Vincentian Family are encouraged to do the same; to deepen their relationship with God in the many and varied ministries that they

undertake in the evangelisation and service of all those in need in our society.

Would you like to join the Vincentian Family in this journey of faith and service? Reflecting on what you have read about one or more groups within the Family, where do you feel drawn to?

We encourage you to join one of the Branches of the Vincentian Family, you will be very welcome and will be friend not stranger. If you have been a member of one of the branches of the Family and would like to renew friendship, please do not hesitate to do so. The harvest is very great and there are few labourers to undertake the mission and ministry of evangelisation and service.

All are welcome.

Spend some time with the Vincentian Family and use the opportunity to get to know us better.

Take the time and space to reflect, to explore and discern your contribution to evangelise and serve others.

Enjoy the opportunity to have time for reflecting and relaxing.

Saturday 20th May 2017 at 10.00 – 3.30pm

**St Catherine's Provincial House,
Dunardagh, Blackrock, Co Dublin**

For details email info@daughtersofcharity.ie or phone **086 1009416**

• Jubilee Year Plenary Indulgence

This 400th Anniversary is a Jubilee Year for all members of the Vincentian Family. A Jubilee Year offers special graces to all the faithful. So on the occasion of this Jubilee Year of the Vincentian Char-

ism, Pope Francis, through the Apostolic Penitentiary, has granted the whole Vincentian Family, a Plenary Indulgence (Confession, Communion, and Prayers for the Pope). Those will receive it who participate

in the Eucharist or in some public or private prayer service and offer the following prayers - Our Father, Profession of Faith (Creed), invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of St Vincent.

• The relics of St Vincent de Paul

The relics of St Vincent de Paul normally reside in the Motherhouses of the Vincentian Fathers and of the Daughters of Charity in Paris, France. On the occasion of this 400th Anniversary of the Birth of the Vincentian Charism, the relics are participating in a worldwide pilgrimage.



Letter from Somalia



Abdi Tari Ali

I was on my knees fixing IV drips to patients' arms as they lay on the ground in a make-shift treatment centre in the town of Luuq in Gedo Province, southern Somalia.

I have treated cholera before, but I have never seen anything like this in terms of volume of sick people and lack of facilities.

Having previously trained as a doctor, I felt I couldn't just watch as the staff were overwhelmed with patients, so I scrubbed up to offer a helping hand. There is no question of normal working hours. Staff are working 24-hour shifts to save lives.

Somalia is facing two major challenges: hunger and cholera. If the long rains don't come now in April, it will be a catastrophe and there is an urgent need to get the spread of cholera under control.

I work for Trócaire, which has been providing humanitarian and development support in Somalia since 1992. The locals call Trócaire 'mother' as our long-term commitment to Somalia has helped Trócaire become a trusted actor in this volatile country.

We provide the only public health service available to over 220,000 people across five districts and have started a 12-month emergency response in Somalia that builds on our ongoing health, nutrition and education programmes to meet the increased and new needs.

A famine in 2011 left over a quarter of a million people dead, but the current situation is far more severe and protracted with millions on the brink of starvation.

Crops destroyed

Drought has destroyed crops and many villages are without water. Most Somalis in Gedo are farmers, but their animals have been wiped out. People are walking 90km in search of clean water or are fleeing to Ethiopia, but the border has been recently closed, so they are living in overcrowded makeshift refugee camps.

The UN estimates that half of Somalia's population do not have enough food to eat and are at risk of famine; over 363,000 children are acutely malnourished and 70,000 others are in need of urgent life-saving support.

We have seen over 40,000 cases of sick children in our hospitals and health centres, malnourished with diarrhoea, or respiratory infections because they are sleeping without proper shelter. Our feeding programme for children has



Over half the country's population is at risk of
STARVATION



Above and top: Trócaire Cholera Treatment Centre, Luuq, Gedo Province, Somalia.

Overview

Somalia is one of the poorest countries of the world. It is also a very complex and fragile country, which had no effective government from 1991 until 2012.

Over those 20 years, there was extreme violence and lawlessness in the country, with almost all of its social, economic and political structures breaking down.

The new government has brought some hope that Somalia will become more stable but the country still faces major challenges.

increased from 9,000 to 12,000 and we have scaled up our response in a further 13 villages.

But we are completely overstretched. Children are the first victims of hunger. You see straight away from their puffy faces, thin hair and swollen bellies that they are malnourished. If you press down on the skin, you leave a dent. There is no elasticity left.

“Widespread hunger is not our only challenge: cholera cases are soaring”

Trócaire focus on the most vulnerable yet there is a growing need for food aid across the board.

As this crisis worsens, Trócaire will, in tandem with nutritional support in clinics, be delivering food aid to schools. In 2011, increased school dropouts correlated with high levels of famine, and food interventions at school level are critical to keep children in education and protect the future of this country.

However, widespread hunger is not our only challenge: cholera cases are soaring. Conditions in the refugee camps are often unhygienic, there is a lack of clean water and people are weak from hunger. One case of cholera can quickly infect a whole camp or village.

Yet cholera is treatable once sufferers are reached promptly.

People are being carried 20kms on stretchers or camels.

We don't know how many have died on the way. If the patient doesn't receive assistance within six hours, they die.

Cholera kills quickly – children die even quicker.

“The lucky ones have a bed, but many more are treated on the floor or outside in the open”

Trócaire has established two cholera treatment centres, where people receive antibiotics and are rehydrated. The 30 beds in the acute diarrhoea and cholera treatment centre I visited in Luuq

are sadly not enough for the hundreds of cases flowing in at an alarming rate. Medicine is used as soon as it arrives with none to spare. The lucky ones have a bed, but many more are treated on the floor or outside in the open.

In 2017, no one should die from hunger or lack of clean water.

Trócaire has been in Somalia for decades, we harness local knowledge to access those who are most vulnerable. We were here before the crisis, and will continue to support families as they recover.

① Abdi Tari Ali is the Somalia Programme Manager with Trócaire. You can donate to Trócaire's relief effort at www.trocaire.org/donate

Letters

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

Letter of the week

Sound catechesis vital for lay-led liturgies

Dear Editor, I welcome the contribution which *The Irish Catholic* is making to the mission of the laity with Greg Daly's article (IC 23/03/2017). It would be good to hear more on the topic of lay-led liturgies. It was pointed out in his well-researched article, it is fraught with difficulties if not approached from a sacred, as opposed to secular, manner.

The laity has been leading devotions (Rosary, Divine Mercy chaplet etc.) all over the country. However, the clericalisation of

the laity needs to be resisted as highlighted by Patrick Morgan in the Letters page (06/04/2017), where "Eucharistic Ministers being further trained...to perform daily non-consecration Mass liturgies".

Last year I attended a rural church one Friday hoping to 'get Mass' as we say in Ireland.

The parish website stated that Mass was to be celebrated that evening. It wasn't.

What we had was a 'priestess' trying to say Mass. We had devotion beforehand, the Rosary and

Adoration led by the sacristan and two ladies. We really did not need a Communion service led by the laity.

This secular approach to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass gives people the wrong understanding of the true meaning of what the Eucharist is. Should we still continue with the diaconate when people, even clerics, see them as mini-priests?

Sound catechesis is very necessary in the area of lay-led liturgies.

*Yours etc.,
Declan Cooney,
Birr, Co. Offaly.*

Baby in womb a measure of innate rights

Dear Editor, Having chosen Franco Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth* film for my Holy Week viewing, something struck me that had never registered before. However, before revealing it let us backtrack a little on the 'story,' where the Blessed Virgin Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth in Ain Karim, Judea. This is where an astonishing communication from 'womb to womb' occurred through Mary's greeting. Elizabeth was filled

with the Holy Spirit and the child in her womb, St John the Baptist, leapt for joy, purified then and there in the womb. The embryonic Christ activated his ministry through the Blessed Mary's voice. This point alone communicates the importance of life in the womb.

Now we all know that Christ Jesus attended the wedding feast of Cana where he changed water into wine. However, how many of us reflect on the fact that Christ

Jesus was present in the womb as an embryonic God-Person at the wedding of Blessed Mary and St Joseph, a wedding blessed by the Triune God? This shot out at me from the film!

Our Coptic brothers and sisters are right now standing up to be counted. Where are we in Ireland where the oxygen flow to the Church is being subtly strangled? The baby in the womb is the measure of all of our innate human

rights. Bear in mind that the original Hippocratic Oath taken by all doctors, but now watered down, contained the words "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give a woman a pessary to produce abortion." Now is our moment of choice.

*Yours etc.,
Nollaig M. Ni Mhaoileoin,
Maynooth,
Co. Kildare.*

Catholic schools need strong ethos statement

Dear Editor, It would be great if there was displayed in a prominent place in every Catholic primary and secondary school a plaque on which is inscribed in bold, clear lettering the following three-sentence belief and ethos mission statement:

'We will always strive in the classroom, staff room and games' fields to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, True God and True Perfect Man, the Saviour of mankind, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

'Jesus said, 'If anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare for him in the presence

of my Father in Heaven (Matthew 10:32,33).

'We pledge our love, loyalty, service and adoration to the One True God in three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'

The greatest crisis in the Church today is the large number of baptised people who have lost or are losing their belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Preachers and teachers should use every suitable opportunity to proclaim the divinity of Jesus using the many texts in the Gospels in which Jesus speaks about himself.

The outstanding compassion,

courage, mercy, forgiveness, energy, passion for truth and justice, accessibility and sociability of Jesus with all classes of people - including fishermen and tax collectors, women, children, rich and poor, sinners and Pharisees - should be stressed as well as the superb and unrivalled moral teaching.

We should all be ambassadors for the Lord Jesus.

*Yours etc.,
Fr Sean O'Shaughnessy CSSp,
Kimmage,
Dublin 12.*

Lifting Good Friday ban deeply ironic

Dear Editor, I cannot be alone amongst the electorate in thinking that there is something deeply ironic in regard to the Government's stated intention that it will agree to the inclusion of a repeal of Ireland's longstanding ban on the sale of alcohol on Good Friday, within a broader bill with the stated aim of which is to reduce general alcohol consumption in Ireland!

Given that allowing more people to get drunk on Good Friday is unlikely to reduce the overall level of alcohol consumption, one has to

conclude that the chief motivation for abolishing the ban is to remove another piece of Ireland's Catholic heritage, even though there are non-Catholic majority countries who also ban alcohol sales on Good Friday (such as New Zealand, for example).

Is New Zealand a backward and old-fashioned country for maintaining this ban, as Ireland is often labelled by those within Ireland who hold a deep antipathy toward the Catholic faith?

Another argument put

forward by those who want to repeal the ban is that Christian traditions such as this are apparently not "reflective" of modern Ireland.

By this logic, the public holiday over the Easter long weekend should also be abolished because the reason why we have an Easter holiday in the first place is because we are celebrating the sacrifice and resurrection of Our Lord.

However, the citizens of Ireland would hardly tolerate the removal of the Easter holiday and so our brave

politicians will steer clear of such intellectual consistency.

Finally, the question must be asked: who is really asking for the removal of the Good Friday alcohol sales ban?

I would suggest that if an abolition of the ban was put to a referendum the proposal would be rejected, on the basis of it being another unnecessary attack on Ireland's traditions.

*Yours etc.,
Phillip Cooney,
Drogheda,
Co. Louth.*

Congratulations to Notebook writer

Dear Editor, May I please say congratulations to Fr Conor McDonough OP for his God-inspired message in *The Irish Catholic* of March 9. He gave as his title: "It's all so blindingly obvious."

Fr McDonough is truly in the tradition of St Thomas Aquinas who composed such beautiful hymn-prayers as 'O Bread of Heaven'.

The Irish Catholic has had a long-standing place in the home of my childhood.

*Yours etc.,
Nan Morris,
Foxford,
Co. Mayo.*

More men needed in church

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny says "More women in church? It's more men we need" (IC 13/04/2017).

For some strange reason, the number of men at the extraordinary form of the Mass at 10.30am on Sundays in St Kevin's, Harrington Street, Dublin 8, always vastly exceeds the number of women there (even when mothers of choristers attend Mass).

As the Americans say: Go figure!

*Yours etc.,
Kieron Wood,
Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.*

Speak up on children's hospital

Dear Editor, Well done to Bishop Phonsie Cullinan in Waterford (IC 06/04/2017) for speaking out on the ridiculous situation, where the Government seems determined to build the national children's hospital in a city centre location that no one can access in an emergency. I can't understand the stubbornness of carrying on with this plan when anyone can see that it is not suitable. Connolly Hospital in Blanchardstown makes sense on so many levels - it is accessible from the M50, has ample parking and green space. Parents need to make their voices heard on this issue before it is too late.

*Yours etc.,
Rosaleen Murtagh,
Salhith, Galway.*



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



VATICAN: People use umbrellas during a brief rainfall as Pope Francis celebrates Easter Mass in St Peter's Square.



USA: Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago leads a group of more than 1,500 people of all faiths and ages on a Good Friday 'Walk for Peace' April 14 through Chicago's Englewood neighbourhood, which has been a hot spot for violent crime. Photos: CNS

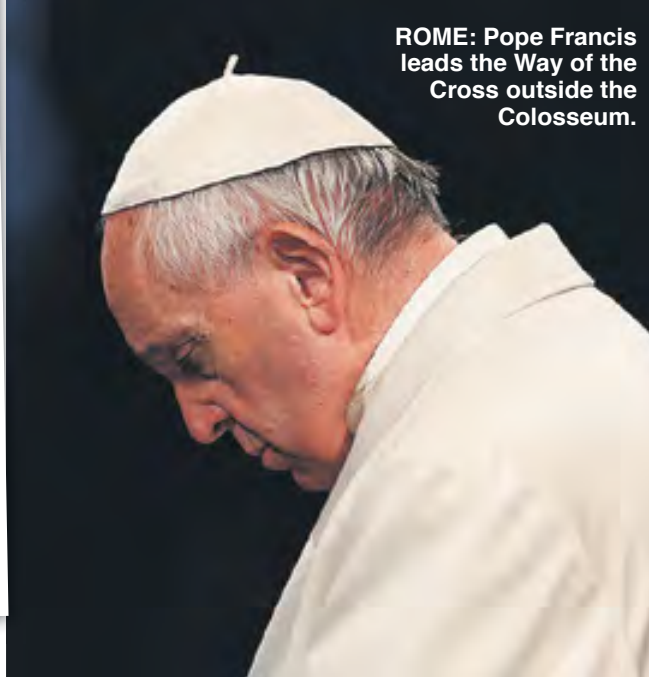


VIETNAM: A woman venerates a crucifix during a Good Friday service at St Joseph's Cathedral in Hanoi.

VATICAN: Cardinal Kevin Farrell of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, venerates the crucifix during the Good Friday service led by Pope Francis in St Peter's Basilica.



EL SALVADOR: A little boy looks out a Good Friday procession going by his house in Soyapango.



ROME: Pope Francis leads the Way of the Cross outside the Colosseum.

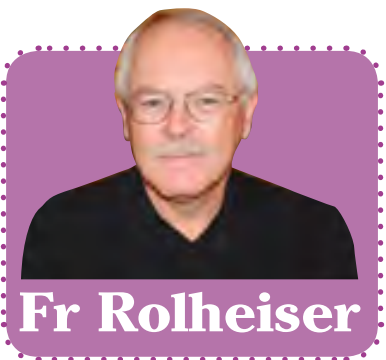
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Fr Rolheiser

The heart has its reasons, says Pascal, and sometimes those reasons have a long history. Recently I signed a card for a friend, a devout Baptist, who was raised to have a suspicion of Roman Catholics. It's something he still struggles with; but, don't we all! History eventually infects our DNA. Who of us is entirely free from suspicion of what's religiously different from us? And what's the cure?

Personal contact, friendship and theological dialogue with those of other denominations and other faiths does help open our minds and hearts, but the fruit of centuries of bitter misunderstanding doesn't disappear so easily, especially when it's institutionally entrenched and nurtured as a prophetic protection of God and truth.

And so in regards to Christians of other denominations there

remains in most of us an emotional disease, an inability to see the other fully as one of our own.

And so in signing this card for my separated Christian friend, I wrote: "To a fellow

Christian, a brother in the Body of Christ, a good friend, from whom I'm separated by 500 years of misunderstanding."

Five hundred years of misunderstanding, of

separation, of suspicion, of defensiveness, that's not something that's easily overcome, especially when at its core there sit issues about God, truth and religion.

Granted, there has been much positive progress made in the past 50 years and many of the original, more-blatant misunderstandings have been overcome.

But the effects of the historical break with Christianity and the reaction to it are present today and are still seen everywhere, from high church offices, to debates within the academy of theology, to suspicions inside the popular mind.

Differences

Sad how we've focused so much on our differences, when at the centre, at the heart, we share the same essential faith, the same essential beliefs, the same basic moral codes, the same Scriptures, the same belief in afterlife, and the same fundamental tenet that intimacy with Jesus Christ is the aim of our faith.

As well, not insignificantly, today we also share the same prejudices and biases against us, whether these come from fundamentalists within other religions or whether these come from over-zealous, over-secularised, post-Christians within our own society.

To someone looking at us from the outside we, all the different Christian denominations, look like a monolith, one faith, one Church, a single religion, our differences far overshadowed by our commonality. Sadly we tend not to see ourselves

like this from within, where our differences, more often than not based upon a misunderstanding, are seen to dwarf our common discipleship.

Yet, the Epistle to the Ephesians tells us that, as Christians, we share one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all of us.

At its most essential level, that's true of all of us as Christians, despite our denominational differences. We are one at our core.

“We also share the same prejudices and biases against us”

Granted, there are some real differences among us, mostly though in terms of how we understand certain aspects of the Church and certain issues within morality, rather than on how we understand the deeper truths about the nature of God, the divinity of Christ, the gift of God's Word, the gift of the Eucharist and the inalienable dignity and destiny of all human beings.

Within the hierarchy of truth this essential core is what's most important, and on this essential core we essentially agree. That's the real basis of our common discipleship.

Ecclesially, the issues that divide us focus mostly on Church authority, on ordination to ministry, on whether to emphasise word or sacrament, on how to understand the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, on the number of sacraments, on the place of sacraments and devotions

within discipleship, and on how scripture and tradition interplay with each other.

In terms of moral issues, the issues that divide us are also the 'red button' issues within our society as a whole: abortion, gay marriage, birth control and the place of social justice within discipleship. But, even on these, there's more commonality than difference among the Churches.

Theology

Moreover, today, the differences on how we understand many of the ecclesial and moral issues that divide us are more temperamental than denominational, that is, they tend to be more a question of one's theology than of one's denominational affiliation.

Granted, classical denominational theology still plays in, but the divisions today regarding how we see certain ecclesial and moral issues, be that ordination, gay marriage, abortion, or social justice, are less a tension between Roman Catholics and Protestants (and Evangelicals) than they are between those who lean temperamentally and theologically in one direction rather than the other.

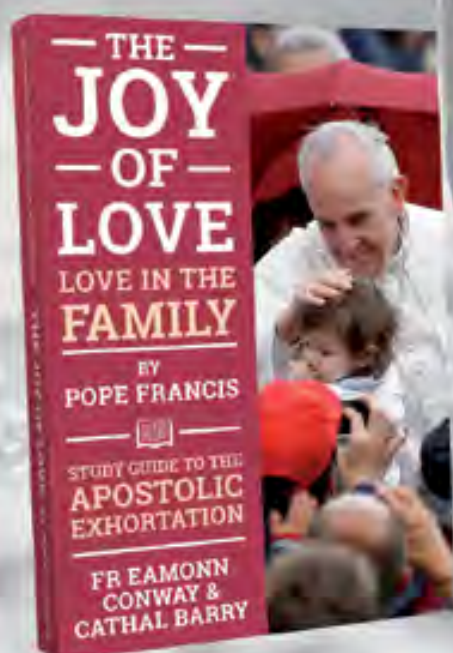
It's perhaps too simplistic to draw this up in terms of liberal versus conservative, but this much at least is true, the fault-line on these issues today is becoming less and less denominational.

The earliest Christian Creed had but a single line: Jesus is Lord! All Christians still agree on that and so we remain brothers and sisters, separated only by 500 years of misunderstanding.



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Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, April 20, 2017

Youth Space
Nicole Turner's
Paralympic
journey
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No *good food* should go to waste



Founders Iseult Ward and Aoibheann O'Brien at a FoodCloud distribution hub. Photo: Naoise Culhane

In Ireland an estimated one million tonnes of food is wasted annually, while one in eight people are suffering from food poverty. Within communities across the country businesses are throwing away perfectly good food, while local charities are struggling to raise funding to feed those in need. Redistribution of that food seems like the obvious solution and two young entrepreneurs have come up with an app for achieving just that.

FoodCloud is a not-for-profit social enterprise that connects food businesses that have too much food with charities that have too little, through a cloud-based platform and mobile application.



Mags Gargan examines a social enterprise project which is tackling both food waste and food poverty

FoodCloud started off as a student project when Trinity graduates Iseult Ward and Aoibhinn O'Brien met at a social entrepreneurship event and got talking about how to tackle food waste. They researched the needs of charities and approached local shops and cafes, then began dropping off food to charities themselves. They soon realised this was not sustainable and looked to technology for a solution.

FoodCloud was launched in October 2013 in Dublin city centre, with one Tesco store, a few small food businesses and six partner charities.

"They started working with Tesco as a pilot," explains Niamh Kirwan, Marketing and Communications Manager. "That went very well so in 2014 they started to roll out with Tesco nationally and have grown from there. In Ireland we are in almost all Tesco stores and we are

rolling out with Aldi. We are also operational in the UK with Tesco and we have launched a pilot with Waitrose."

FoodCloud now works with 1,318 donating businesses across the UK and Ireland. Over 3,900 community groups and charities, from breakfast clubs to homeless hostels to family support services, have benefited from donations of surplus food via the FoodCloud platform.

Innovators

This year Iseult was named on *Forbes'* prestigious "30 under-30 Europe" list of leading innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders, and *The Guardian* newspaper listed FoodCloud as number three in its top 10 food waste apps.

Tackling food waste has certainly become a global issue. Last year, the French government voted in a law forcing supermarkets to donate their surplus food to charity. In 2012 the European Parliament passed a resolution for urgent measures to halve food waste by 2025 and to improve access to food by the needy. The United Nations have reported that reducing food waste by just 25% could feed all the people who are malnourished globally.

Ireland is one of 200 countries that signed up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, of which one goal (12.3) calls for a reduction in food loss and food waste. Last month at the

» Continued on Page 25

Children's Corner

ERIN FOX



A craft activity for the Easter break

The Easter holidays are nearly over, but there is still plenty of time to have fun and indulge in some Easter crafts before you go back to school – all while appreciating the true meaning of Easter.

Rabbits, chicks and lambs are popular animals associated with Easter because they represent new life – particularly lambs as they represent the Lamb of God.

Jesus was named the Lamb of God because of the self sacrifice he made for our sins. And it was John the Baptist who first gave Jesus the name referring to him as “..Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...”

He called him so because when John baptised Jesus he saw the Holy Spirit come down from Heaven in the form of a dove. The dove landed on Jesus and the voice of God spoke, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” From here on, John encouraged people to follow Christ.



These Easter lamb pom poms should keep you busy reflecting on the meaning of Easter over the next few days before school begins. You can leave them up for a few weeks after Easter has ended. The Lamb of God is usually portrayed as all white, but I've used black card here so you can see the features more easily. **YOU WILL NEED:** Tissue paper, white card, scissors, pencil and a hair grip.

Practise making the accordion folds on a blank sheet of paper before you use the tissue paper. You will be turning the sheet each time you make a fold, and that's how you make accordion folds.

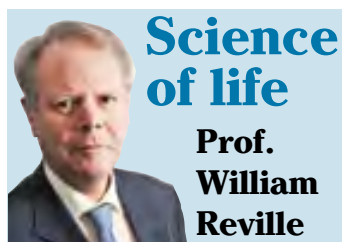
“If you like, you can make a few other Easter animals such as chicks”

When you're ready to make the real deal, take a thick wad of tissue paper and make accordion folds.

Fold the fan in half and place a hair grip in the centre. Cut a 'C' from each end of the fan, and then start fluffing out the folds.

When you are finished you should have a fluffy pom pom.

Next draw the sheep's head onto some white card. Cut it out, dab some glue to the back of it and place onto the pom pom. Leave to dry. If you like, you can make a few other Easter animals such as chicks. Use yellow tissue paper for the pom poms and yellow card for the face, and orange card for the beak.



Science of life

Prof. William Reville

We often hear that Europe is now in a 'post-Christian era' and it is fashionable to attribute Western progress from the Enlightenment onwards to overcoming religious barriers to progress. However, much historical research paints a different picture. Most recently, American sociologist Rodney Stark published a number of books, arguing convincingly that Christianity was directly responsible for the main intellectual, political, scientific and economic breakthroughs of the past millennium.

If Stark is correct, and I believe he is, then to discard Christianity would be to discard the rudder that has guided us to success and to replace it with another that may steer us on to the rocks.

Stark attributes Christianity's fruitfulness in spinning off progressive practical developments to its commitment to logic and reason as the path to enlightenment, progress and freedom. Jesus left no written strategic plan so Christians, inferring from scripture as to how best to proceed, developed the concept of a rational creator of an orderly universe that humans can understand and use for various purposes.

The world's other great belief systems emphasise mystery, introspection and obedience more than Christianity and, although successfully accumulating knowledge and technology, they were less efficient than Christian Europe in translating these advances into freedom and prosperity.

Fruitful

Of course I acknowledge that although Christian principles are very fruitful, the practice of Christianity, both at individual level and at Church level, is often poor. Nevertheless, Christian principles influenced Europe sufficiently over the past 2000 years to power unparalleled progress.

For example, modern science arose in Christian Europe in the 17th Century, not in China which had developed a sophisticated culture long before Europe, or in classical Greece. Many people credit Christianity with providing the missing ingredients that gave rise to modern science.

The way Christians think about creation has four significant consequences. First, Christians believe in a rational God who created an orderly world. Second, the world is



Christianity gave rise to modern science

worthy of study because it is God's creation. Third, in order to understand God's handiwork it is necessary to examine the world. Fourth, the universe is not itself divine so it is not irreverent to investigate it. Together these four features provided the intellectual setting necessary to spark off modern science.

Christians believe that the individual is made in the image of God and is therefore endowed with intrinsic value and bears individual responsibilities. This gave rise, for example, to opposition to slavery. The Church banned slavery between Christians and ended slavery in Europe by the end of the 11th Century.

“The notion of gender fluidity has been enthusiastically embraced before being rigorously investigated”

The Christian image of the individual also sparked concern for individual property rights. Stark describes how capitalism was invented in Christian monasteries, motivated by the idea that we have a God-given obligation to make progress. Indeed, capitalism was in full flower in Europe centuries before Protestantism, the conventionally-accredited 'founder' of capitalism, arose.

By the end of the 13th Century modern type corporations operated in Italy with share ownership and profit distribution and merchant banks arose with branches around Europe.

There are very many good things in modern society. For example, children from all backgrounds can access education up to the highest levels. People live longer

today than ever before, living standards are high compared to the past and little severe poverty remains. Women now have pretty much the same opportunities as men and a wide range of minority groups are now tolerated much better than in the past. And much more.

Consequences

Nevertheless, as European Christianity loses its influence negative consequences are clearly emerging. We now live in an age where individualism is rampant and the person is increasingly seen as the sum of his/her wants and desires.

There is widespread pressure to facilitate these wants/desires and to attach a human right to as many as possible, but little pressure to accompany new rights with responsibilities. Absolute values are denied and the notion of transcendent realities widely scorned.

Sexuality is commonly reduced to sensuality and the notion of gender fluidity has been enthusiastically embraced before being rigorously investigated. Material values predominate, periodically precipitating crises, e.g. the economic crash following the recent Celtic Tiger era. And current soaring suicide rates are surely related to diminished spiritual resources available to handle personal crises as formal religious observance declines.

Christianity always disapproved of abortion and today Catholic Church rules forbid abortion from conception on the basis that full human essence is present from the start. But there is no longer a strong widespread conviction that human life is somehow special, particularly at its earliest and latest stages. Almost every country in Europe has abortion on demand, a service used with alarming frequency

- about one in four pregnancies are aborted.

While the battle to protect life at its earliest stages has been lost in Europe, the struggle to protect life at later stages is now in full flow but is also likely to be lost. Demands to facilitate euthanasia, both for the elderly and others who are in physical or mental distress, are loudly proclaimed.

“A Christian revival will undoubtedly emerge eventually, but who knows when or how strong it will be”

Only a widespread Christian conviction that every human life is sacred would be powerful enough to see off these liberal demands for abortion and euthanasia. A non-religious person of course could also hold this reverence for life but there will never be enough such people to hold the line against abortion and euthanasia.

Although Christianity is on the rise in China, India and Africa, it is in sharp decline in Europe and seems set to decline still further as opinion-formers in the media everywhere promote secularism and call for religion to leave the public square. A Christian revival will undoubtedly emerge eventually, but who knows when or how strong it will be.

If Christianity continues to decline in Europe then I fear that the various tendencies I have identified above will continue to intensify. However, if people pondered the practical consequences of losing Christianity they would be emboldened to fight to retain this invaluable asset.

i William Reville is an Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at UCC.

» Continued from Page 23



FoodCloud founders Iseult Ward and Aoibheann O'Brien demonstrating how the app works.

Forum on Food Waste, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Denis Naughten announced the formation of an Action Group to look at how Ireland can reduce food waste by 50% before 2030. The Charter on Food Waste was also launched, asking retailers, producers, households, restaurants and manufacturers to publicly commit to reducing food waste.

The genius of FoodCloud is in its simplicity. It puts food waste to use by feeding the needy. While it is called food 'waste', Niamh Kirwan is keen to emphasise that it is "all perfectly good food", which otherwise would have been thrown out by retailers. "We work very closely with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland as regards to what food can be donated and what can't," she says.

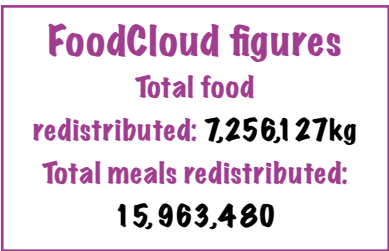
“Niamh says one of the great things about FoodCloud is the relationships that are built up at a local level”

So how does FoodCloud work? "In the evening a store uploads details of what food they have and that goes as a text message through the technology platform to a local charity who can go collect the food," Niamh explains.

"The businesses have different options depending on the retailer. For some the staff in store will use the app to upload the details and some of them use an excel uploader to manage the data around the food centrally and then that is uploaded.

"Then what we have started using in the UK are instore scanners.

"The great thing about that, is that it is integrated with the retailers' own systems. We have a tech team working to build that technology so that the staff can use their existing



scanners and there is a button there to opt to donate food, which will keep a record of it, so there is full traceability of everything."

Niamh says one of the great things about FoodCloud is the relationships that are built up at a local level, "and making sure these relationships grow and strengthen is really important". "We have a support team who are able to work with the charities and businesses, to make sure everything runs smoothly," she says.

Benefits

The benefits of this free service to the charities – which include Don Bosco Teenage Care, Inner City Helping Homeless, Balbriggan Meals on Wheels and Drogheda Homeless Aid – is quite obvious in that it provides good food and allows them to relocate their funding towards their core service and support their underlying mission.

The Whitefriar/Aungier Area Community Council has been involved with FoodCloud since the pilot and Brendan Dowling says over the last 5-6 years food has become a big part of what they do.

"We run a whole range of services from young people to our older members of our community. Every morning we send out a text message to about 270 families in the area saying we have this food and come between 11-1pm and people come and take it. It works," he says.

While retailers have to pay an operational cost, Niamh says FoodCloud also has many benefits

for the businesses. "The retailer would have had to pay waste costs to dispose of the food, but there are other benefits in terms of making a real impact in their community and building up relationships with charities.

“When we were made aware of FoodCloud and offered an opportunity to work with them, we took that on board straight away”

"From the point of view of corporate social responsibility, and I think there is a responsibility on businesses at this time, if they have an opportunity to feed people they should do that rather than throwing good food into the bin, and I think there is a growing recognition of that."

Sian Lewis-Wilmot from The Bretzel Bakery says FoodCloud offered them a perfect solution for their surplus stock. "We had an issue where at the end of every day we have an excess of produce in our shop. We were running around to charities with bags of stuff ourselves so when we were made aware of FoodCloud and offered an opportunity to work with them, we took that on board straight away," she says.

Christine Heffernan, Corporate Affairs Director with Tesco said they thought it was "a fantastic idea" from the beginning.

"We really focus on trying to minimise food waste in all our operations, but inevitably as a retailer there will always be food left at the end of the day. As a result of our partnership with FoodCloud we are able to ensure that food goes to people who really need it," she says.

<https://food.cloud/>

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald

A small portrait of a man, Rory Fitzgerald, holding a baby. He is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression.

I'm writing this sitting on a plane on the short hop from Southampton to Cork. We're heading home for Easter. The older kids are behaving miraculously well – for now. Our toddler is asleep on my lap, which explains my ability to type.

This same route, but by sea, was a staple for the old transatlantic liners. Famously, the RMS Titanic took this route on her maiden, and final, voyage. Back then, in 1912, travellers stepping on board in Southampton and arriving in Cobh – then Queenstown – were travelling between two great ports of the same state. The same coins and stamps were accepted in Cork and Southampton, and the same red post boxes stood in front of the Victorian houses on the seafronts in both ports.

A hundred years ago, these islands were politically unified, albeit with home rule in the offing for Ireland. Yet the cultural differences were perhaps greater back then than today. Nowadays, we watch the same television channels, communicate digitally and flit from London to Dublin in an hour.

“Family links and technology means our human definition of home expands”

Many families on board this plane, like ours, have an Irish and English parent. Such journeys home have been made for generations. Whenever I think flying with small children is tough, I think of my uncle Tony riding his motorcycle home to Kilrush from Norfolk in the 1960s, with his wife and daughter in the sidecar.

Even further back, in the age of sail, passage between Ireland and Britain was frequent and commonplace. Despite the hype, Brexit won't change this longstanding connectedness much, since the EU, the UK and Ireland all say they're all committed to the Common Travel Area. Yet Brexit does mean an ever-greater political differential between the two islands, even as ever-larger

aspects of our culture are shared. Across both islands, we follow the same football teams, watch Netflix, and shop in Tescos and M&S. The bitter divides of the Reformation have been nullified by this secular age. Despite such convergence, Scotland may soon join Ireland in the EU and who knows what path Northern Ireland may ultimately choose.

It is interesting to see such political fragmentation take place, even as the peoples of these islands become ever more connected, and perhaps more fundamentally similar, than ever before. Having lived in England for nearly two years, I feel at

home on both islands. Sean dressed as Setanta at a recent school dress up day, and thinks of himself as Irish, yet he doesn't feel different from his classmates, and nor is he. Many of them too have Irish ancestry.

As we fly at this moment over the beaches of St David's in Wales, I can already see Wexford in the distance. This extraordinary archipelago is small, and its islands are close, yet 'these islands' don't even have a name acceptable to all, the British Isles being the geographic term rejected by many in Ireland. Yet, neither the lack of a collective name, nor Brexit, nor various independence movements can change geography, nor history, nor the bonds of affection that naturally arise when people meet.

We on these fragmented, yet intimately bound, islands will continue our ancient rivalries, and friendships, in tandem, and our migrations and intermarriages will go on, as they have done for centuries. Family links and technology means our human definition of home expands, despite the machinations of politicians.

As the airplane touches down on the sacred concrete of Cork airport, my English wife spontaneously exclaims, in her Surrey tones, "It's great to be home!"

Yet, whenever the ferry noses in to harbour on the Isle of Wight, I also feel that I'm coming home. Perhaps because both places are now home.

'Dream it, believe it, achieve it'

Fourteen-year-old Nicole Turner shares her incredible journey as a paralympian

I was born with a disability called hypochondroplasia, a form of dwarfism. At the age of five my parents sent me to have swimming lessons for safety reasons and then I joined a local swimming club in Portarlinton, Piranha Swim Club where I trained three times a week.

When I was seven years of age, in order to meet other people with dwarfism, I attended the World Dwarf Games in Belfast. This was the first time I had competed against people with a similar disability and I won eight medals in both swimming and athletics: five gold, one silver and two bronze. I got to meet Paralympic swimmer Eleanor Simmonds who had won Paralympic and World Championship medals which inspired me to believe that I could also be successful at swimming.

Following the success of the World Dwarf Games, I was selected to join the national development programme for both swimming and athletics, and would attend training once a month in Dublin.

It was around this time that I realised that one day I wanted to represent Ireland in the Paralympic Games.

Experience

To gain experience in competitive swimming I would travel to competitions every year in Birmingham, London, Lisburn, Northern Ireland, and I was invited to train with Eleanor Simmonds in Swansea for one weekend.

In 2013 (aged 11) I represented Ireland at the World Dwarf Games in Michigan (USA) and I won 19 medals in total in both swimming, athletics and team events meeting Erin Popovich, a successful USA



▲ Nicole Turner with her European Championships' medals.

◀ Justin Brown, Ceist Schools Co-ordinator, Nicole Turner and Ceist CEO, Marie Griffin at the Ceist Leadership Conference.

youth
SPACE

Paralympic swimmer

I received a local hero's welcome when I returned home and there were many young children there. This makes you realise how being successful can be inspiring to other children and since then many of them have taken up sports.

In 2015 I was selected for Ireland's senior Paralympic swimming team for the World Championship in Glasgow and qualified for six finals in the six events I entered. Whilst also achieving the qualification time for all six events for the Rio Paralympic Games.

The Paralympic Games journey started in August when the Paralympic Swimming Team travelled to Uberlandia in Brazil to get used to the climate and overcome jetlag. The team then travelled to the athlete's village in

Rio at the beginning of September a couple of days before the games began. I was entered into all six events qualified for, which is more than any other Irish athlete.

“It was an incredible honour to be given, to carry the tricolour at the world famous Maracanna Stadium”

My first event was my best, the 50m fly, and I was half a second off a bronze medal place. It was a great swim and I achieved a lifetime best. Of the remaining events I swam, I managed to get into the final of each event and was called the 'Queen of Finals' by my Paralympic Ireland colleagues.

Near the end of the games a reception was held by the Irish Ambassador in Rio for the Irish Paralympic Team where athletes were honoured for their performances during the games and it was announced that I would be the flag bearer for the closing ceremony.

Honour

It was an incredible honour to be given, to carry the tricolour at the world famous Maracanna Stadium in Rio and one I will never forget. Next year is the European Championships in Dublin, but all my efforts are clearly focused towards Tokyo in 2020, where I will be hoping to reach the podium.

The level of training required to compete at this level is very challenging. I am currently in the process of changing clubs from

Portlaoise to Dublin. This means every day when I leave school I travel to Dublin on a two-hour train, then I swim about 5km and drive back home, doing my homework and having my dinner in the car.

I do this Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I also have strength and conditioning training twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays, with a day's rest on a Sunday.

Representing your country, your local community, your school, your swim club and your family brings responsibility and makes you want to perform to your best.

“Dreams do come true. But they just don't happen, you have to make them happen”

Also being in the media so much, you realise that there are so many people who look up to you and who you inspire, who also want to participate in swimming, sports, disability sports and represent a club, school, country. Just like I was inspired when I was only seven years of age at my first games in Belfast.

My motto in life is "Dream it, believe it, achieve it".

Dreams do come true. But they just don't happen, you have to make them happen. You only get out of life what you put in, so the harder you work the more successful you will become.

The more successful you become, the more responsibility you will have, and the more people look up to you. The more people will then want to follow you. This is called 'leadership'.

1 Nicole Turner is a pupil at Colaiste Isogain in Portarlinton and this is an edited version of her opening address to the Ceist Leadership Conference.

We are sold a false idea of Hollywood romance

I am dating someone who is perfect for me 'on paper', but I think there is a key ingredient missing. How important is chemistry in a relationship?

The first thing to highlight is knowing the difference between infatuation and chemistry. So many people are misled by infatuation, which soon fades away. How many relationships have you seen or experienced where once the infatuation diminishes, so too does the relationship that was never based on anything really meaningful.

Before you decide this relationship is going nowhere, ask yourself some questions. What qualities are you looking for in a future spouse?

Often we look for chemistry prematurely. We are sold a false idea of Hollywood romance, of fireworks and passion that rarely is the reality in real life. True lasting chemistry

develops, based on the whole person, rather than just part of the puzzle which is how physically attracted you are to them. This, of course, is very important but it is only part of the picture, often the more you know someone, the more your attraction grows. Chemistry should not be at the front and centre of your desires, over the important core characteristics of this person.

Friendship

Do you have true friendship? This really is the best start for a lasting solid relationship. Here is where you can nurture attraction and explore chemistry. It is important to set a reasonable timeline to see if the friendship is moving forward and growing into a romantic relationship.

What is your criteria for chemistry?

Is it merely just sexual attraction? This is a shallow understanding of authentic attraction. Ask yourself are you attracted to the person's character? Is this someone who will help you to be the best you can? How do your

personalities gel? Do you compliment one another? Do you enjoy spending time with this person? Are you on the same trajectory in terms of what you are looking for in a relationship?

Don't be fooled into looking for physical attributes first and foremost, before other more important things. Chemistry can result through building a strong relationship in other areas. If you measure your chemistry prior to building the foundation of true friendship then you are leading with your feelings and nothing more, this will make it very difficult to find the right person.

Attraction

This is not about ignoring physical attraction but making sure it is one of many parts of a solid relationship. You cannot force a relationship, but you do need to give it time to show its full potential.

Remember, attraction can be instant or it can be cultivated. If you have all the other ingredients give it a chance, you may not have swooned the first time you met but if this person has so much more of what you are looking for, you might be surprised and see your attraction to each other grow.



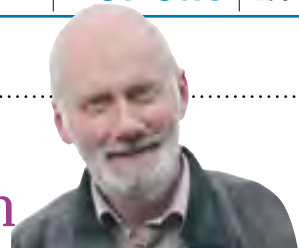
Love
Notes

Wendy Grace



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Easter sees a brief increase in religious programmes

Easter is one of those times of the year when there's a brief increase in religious programming – mostly the usual biblical epics, comprehensive coverage of the religious ceremonies and vigorous debates about the Good Friday pub-opening ban.

One of the best this year was the film **Bronx to Bradford: Friars on a Mission** on BBC 1, Holy Thursday. This warm documentary told the story of a group of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (founded 30 years ago in New York) based in the St Pio Friary in Bradford, UK. What came across strongly was how cheerful and grounded the friars were.

Their lifestyle was challenging and inspirational. They got up at the crack of dawn and over the day spent five or six hours in prayer. In between, with the help of lay volunteers they served the poor and homeless of their parish and city, with a soup kitchen and clothes bank.

Music was important in their lives as well and we saw two talented friars playing guitar and singing in prayer. The guitars were one of their few possessions as they tried to live a simple lifestyle. Ironically people who admired this lifestyle gave them stuff, and so, every now and then they had a 'poverty check' where they gave away material goods that had piled up creating what was an excess from



Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in the BBC film *Bronx to Bradford: Friars on a Mission*.

their point of view.

They relied entirely on donations, especially of food, and we saw several companies and individuals dropping off supplies for the friars and the soup kitchen. Yes, they begged for their needs, but one contributor said she didn't see it as begging as they were doing good work and she felt she had a responsibility to help.

And there was an Irish connection – the nearby St Patrick's Church, built originally by Irish immigrants, was no longer in use but the monks, working with their bishop, were planning to revive it.

For starters they had a one-off Mass there for St Patrick's Day, much to the joy of the local Catholics who had

fond memories of the church – some had been married there and one lady was hoping it would open again so she could have her funeral there!

Conflict

The biblical epics are fine, but I really enjoyed a very different film, **Selma**, on BBC 2 Good Friday night. David Oyelowo was excellent as Martin Luther King, as was Carmen Ejogo as his wife Coretta.

Their relationship was one of the most interesting aspects of the film, but it wasn't thoroughly developed. Marital difficulties were more hinted at than made explicit and the actors, especially Ejogo, conveyed the emotional subtleties really well.

King came across as confi-

dent in public, but conflicted in private, as he tried to steer a non-violent path to vindicate black people's right to vote.

The filmmakers were wise to concentrate on this one particular phase of King's life,



David Oyelowo as Martin Luther King in *Selma*.

culminating in the famous civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery. The first effort to cross the iconic bridge in Selma was met by brute force on the part of the police and that is conveyed in an effective but quite frightening way – moments like these were unbearably tense and necessarily violent.

Conflicts within the movement were highlighted which guarded against the film being overly sentimental, though there was an understandably triumphant mood at the end. Religious faith was prominent and sympathetically presented. King, a pastor, was obviously motivated by his faith, as were many of his supporters.

At the march, supportive priests, ministers and nuns were very much in evidence. There was a memorable scene as well at a second march where King led the crowd in a silent prayer. Overall I found it an inspiring and moving film.

Finally, the celebratory mood of Easter Sunday was marred by at least two items on the **Nine News** (RTÉ). A car bomb had destroyed a bus convoy of refugees, killing 68 children, and when you combine that with stories from earlier in the week about children being increasingly used as suicide bombers, especially by the Boko Haram group, you get a sense of real evil.

The other item was the depressing report of the desecration, at Easter, of a small

PICK OF THE WEEK

MY COUNTRY, MY FAITH: IRELAND

EWTN, Saturday, April 22, 10.30pm

Kathy Sinott and Fr Brian McKeivitt join host Fr Owen Gorman to talk openly about abuse scandals, poor catechesis and erosion of Catholic faith.

GRANTCHESTER

UTV, Sunday, April 23, 9pm

New run of the adult drama series set in the 1950s, featuring a crime solving cleric with relationship issues and baggage from the past.

THE MEANING OF LIFE, WITH GAY BYRNE

RTÉ One, Sunday, April 23, 10.35pm

Repeat of the episode featuring John Sheahan, of Dubliners fame, speaking about the people, faith and values that have shaped his life.

church in Longford – the aim, it seems, being to steal the tabernacle.

The Risen Lord has still a lot to do in the hearts of his people, if only they are willing.

boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

Sexual prejudice in well-to-do Rugby College

Handsome Devil (15A)

'The love that dare not speak its name,' to quote Oscar Wilde's famous phrase about homosexuality, has become very vocal in recent times. So much so that we're almost in danger of replacing homophobia with heterophobia. I say this because most of the 'nice' people in this film from writer/director John Butler are gay, or suspected of being so, and most of the nasty ones are 'straight.'

As a 16-year-old I was plucked from a school in Connacht and plunked into a rugby college when my father retired and we moved

to Dublin. Having little or no interest in rugby, which was almost like a second religion to the place, meant the strain of trying to mix in with the other lads in my class (many of whom had been there almost from the cradle) was multiplied a hundredfold.

Ned (Fionn O'Shea) has similar adjustment problems here in the posh college he attends in the 1980s. Added to them is the suspicion among his classmates that he's gay. He isn't but it still results in his ostracisation from 'the pack.' It also causes a kind of 'Berlin Wall' to be erected in the space between his bed and that of his rugby-playing room-mate Conor (Nicholas Galitzine) – to 'protect' Conor



Fionn O'Shea and Nicholas Galitzine star in *Handsome Devil*.

from possible advances from him in the night.

The pair of them bond through a common interest in music and this creates problems for a nasty rugby coach. (He feels Conor's 'contamination' by Ned will detract from

his prowess on the field of play).

Conor had to leave his old school because he was always getting into fights. But what was the cause of such fights? Is there a question mark over Conor's sexuality too?

Good
★★★

When a telling revelation about this comes about, through a megaphone doubling as the 'conch' of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* – a text referenced by Ned's friendly English teacher Mr Sherry (Andrew Scott) – the film reaches its climax.

Plagiarism

Sherry berates Ned in an early scene for plagiarism but the film itself is guilty of this fault too, especially in the fairytale finale culled from almost every sports film you've ever seen. And indeed in the message Ned has on his guitar – 'This machine kills fascists' – which is Woody Guthrie's copyright.

That's not to say *Hand-*

some Devil isn't a well-made film. It makes some important points about tolerance and bullying and boasts solid performances all round.

The critics have been going into ecstasies about it and I'm sure it will be regarded by many as the Irish film of the year.

I won't grudge it whatever kudos it earns. It has a pleasant frivolity that underscores its didactic edge.

It's just a pity the treatment of its theme wasn't more nuanced.

Having said that, it adeptly evokes the awkwardness of adolescence for a misfit in a repressive environment. To that extent it brought the past right back to me.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief

The Legacy of Irish Missionaries Lives On
by Matt Moran
(OnStream, €15.00)

With the apparent decline of priestly vocations, the nature of Irish missionary movement has changed. I say apparent because in reality it may be that the call that was responded to in the past still exists, it is merely that the responses to it now come in more varied forms.

Seeing old forms decline, too many fear that the end is nigh, when in fact we are witnessing a new beginning, a renewal.

This book is a personal account drawn from experiences, perspectives and views of those involved mostly from Africa, Latin America and Asia who have benefited from the work of Irish missionaries in the past, the changes that it produced, and how these change will continue into the future.



Volunteers

It finds too as might be expected that among the “new missionaries” are lay people, with special skills often in the technical field, who work abroad not for a life time, but as volunteers for a few years. The halls of Maynooth may be echoing empty, but out where it counts men and women are busy.

This is a book which should not be missed by anyone interested in Ireland’s future role in a rapidly changing world. These missionaries are no longer a part of a colonial enterprise, but they work as friends to empower the powerless, to help bring justice to those denied it, to end inequalities of all kinds.

Bombs, Bullets and the Border: Policing Ireland’s Frontier: Irish Security Policy, 1969-1978

by Patrick Mulroe
(Irish Academic Press, €24.99 paper / €45.00 cased)

This detailed study of how the security forces, Garda and Army, struggled with inadequate resources to contain the spill-over into the Republic from IRA violence in Northern Ireland is timely in view of current ‘hard border’ discussion.

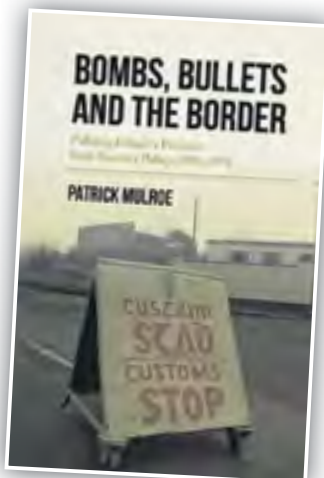
The author has drawn on Government papers in Dublin and London to give valuable insights into how the Garda policing the border had to cooperate with the RUC and the British Army and give the impression that they had little or no contact. Their job was not helped by the vacillating attitude of their political masters in Dublin intent on restraining the IRA while not abandoning claims to a united Ireland.

Complicating factor

Loyalist bomb attacks in the Republic were a complicating factor, especially in view of suspicions of RUC and/or British intelligence collusion. The book details the problem for the Garda on the border in coping with the IRA, loyalists, changing Governments in Dublin and increasing pressure from London to crush the IRA.

The London papers reveal how British diplomats in Dublin had a grudging sympathy for the efforts of successive Governments to restrain the IRA without de-stabilising their own position. There were “sneaking regards” in all parties. Jack Lynch’s permission for British over-flights in hot pursuit of IRA incursions into the North played a part in his resignation.

This book recalls how fraught this period was for those policing the border and the carnage wreaked by the paramilitaries.



A wandering scholar’s view of the world

About Being Normal: My life in Abnormal Circumstances
by Desmond Fennell
(Somerville Press, €20.20 / £17.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This memoir provides an interesting account of the life and writings of Desmond Fennell, who has long been a striking voice in modern Ireland.

Fennell was born in Belfast in 1929. After attending the Christian Brothers’ O’Connell School and the Jesuits’ Belvedere College he graduated from UCD in 1950, completing an MA in the following year. Thereafter he began his peripatetic life by spending three years teaching in an Opus Dei school in Bilbao.

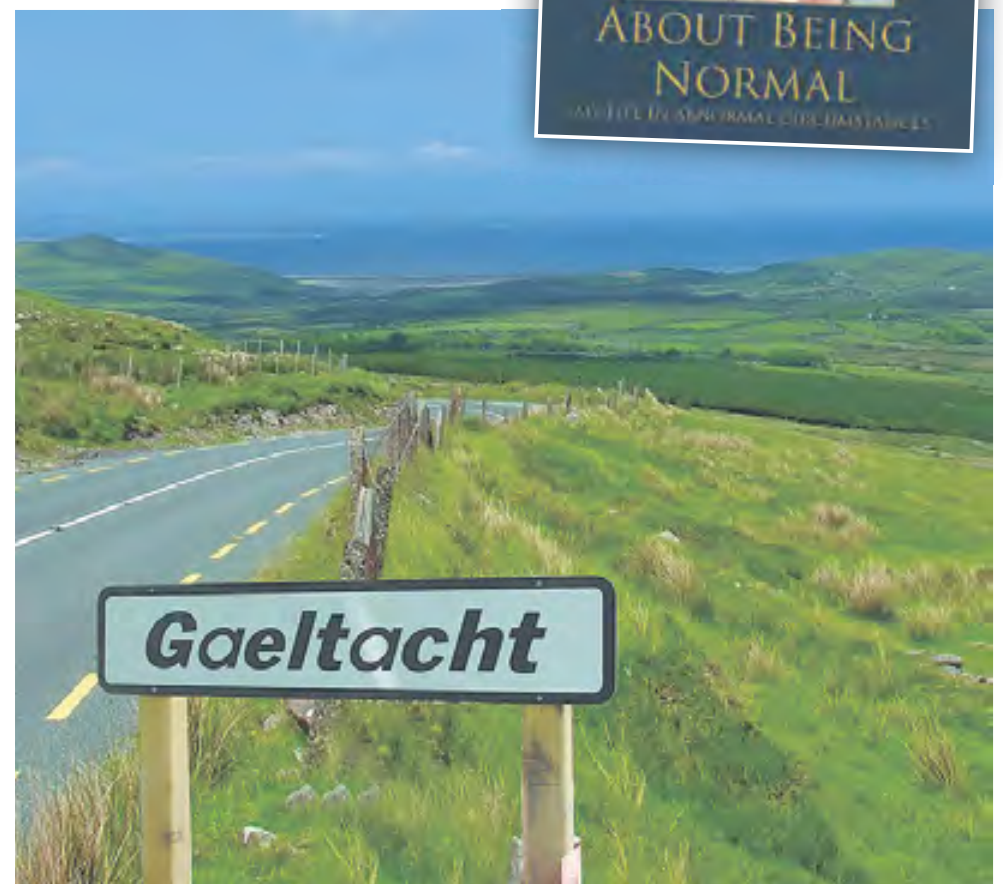
Determined to be a writer, Fennell went to live in Cologne, contributing to *The Irish Times* and *The London Times* while working for Die Deutsche Welle (German Worldwide Radio) translating news into English.

After a few years he set out on an extensive tour of the Far East. On his return he was commissioned by Hutchinson, the London publisher, to write a book on Sweden. At the time Sweden was notorious as an affluent and ‘pagan’ country that had broken with European norms, most notably in sexual matters.

“Like most of his compatriots Fennell was greatly exercised by communal violence in Northern Ireland”

His experiences during his Sweden year brought on a kind of philosophical conversion. His complacent assumption of the superiority of a liberal life-style was shattered as he surveyed angstridden and spiritless Swedish society.

Fennell was back in Dublin in 1961 employed as an Exhibitions Officer by the Arts Council and writing on



art for *The Evening Press* and *Hibernia*. From 1964 to 1968 he was assistant editor of the English edition of the Herder Correspondence, a monthly Catholic journal of ecclesiastical affairs and general world affairs, living first in Freiburg and later in Dublin.

Involvement

Then, mainly because of his involvement in the Irish-language movement, he and his family settled on an island off the coast of Connemara. In 1982 Fennell was back in Dublin, where he lectured in the College of Commerce in Rathmines until he retired in 1993.

Next he dropped anchor in Anguillara, not far from Rome, before completing the circle and returning to Dublin in 2009.

When Fennell and his family settled in South Connemara, he with others energised the local parish.

This led him to be a key-figure in a movement which transformed the Gaeltacht areas in Donegal, Galway

and Kerry. Among the movement’s achievements were the establishment of Raidió na Gaeltachta, followed by Telefís na Gaeltachta. He also proposed a detailed plan for those engaged in spreading the use of Irish. It was akin to that followed by the Israelis when they successfully established Hebrew as their nation’s vernacular.

“Fennell throughout his life was a firm believer in the importance of transparency and public discussion”

Like most of his compatriots Fennell was greatly exercised by communal violence in Northern Ireland. In an influential newspaper column and numerous articles he proposed an equitable solution to the problem which is reflected in the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

Fennell throughout his

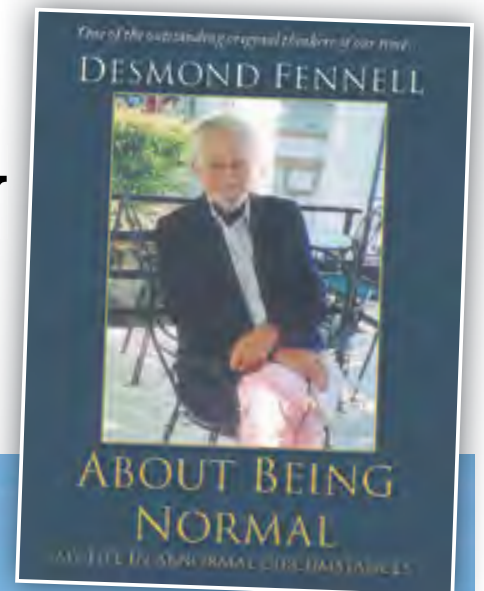
life was a firm believer in the importance of transparency and public discussion, was ever ready to join in debate on the most controversial issues and never shirked supporting unpopular causes.

He challenged the ‘group think’ of the Irish media establishment, the promoters of ‘social progress’ and the prevailing superficial culture. As a result, he became for the liberal elite their *bête noire*.

Fennell was unfazed by this response and it seems enjoyed his role as the little boy who pointed out that the emperor had no clothes. To this day his commentary on cultural and social developments in the West are never other than thought-provoking.

Fennell owes a debt of gratitude to the editor and designer of this book.

A remarkable autobiography, it is also a splendid showcase for some of his best and most influential writing over the decades of a strenuous career, lived largely for the intellect.



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.

Justin Keating's mind changing experiences

Nothing Is Written In Stone: The Notebooks of Justin Keating

Edited by Barbara Hussey and Anna Kealy (Lilliput Press, €20.00)

Joe Carroll

Justin Keating intended to write an autobiography, but died in 2009 on the eve of his 80th birthday leaving eight handwritten notebooks. His second wife, Barbara Hussey, and Anna Kealy have done their best to fashion out of these notes the life story of a remarkable man, but inevitably there are large gaps.

His active political career in the Labour party spanned 1967 to 1981, the highlight of which was his term as Minister for Industry and Commerce in the Fine Gael-Labour Coalition of 1973-77. His background was veterinary science and a short spell making agricultural programmes for RTE, so he was a curious choice for the post he calls a "poisoned chalice".

“Keating demolished Browne's arguments and swung the party behind him”

He was plunged almost immediately into the 1973 oil crisis and he did not have a good relationship with fellow Labour ministers, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Michael O'Leary and Jim Tully. He admits that he did not really trust them. Possibly they were somewhat suspicious of him as an agnostic and former communist with strongly anti-clerical feelings.

He was actually closer to his Fine Gael colleague, Garret FitzGerald, who unsuccessfully tried to have him nominated as Ireland's EEC Commissioner instead of Dick Burke in 1976, though this is not mentioned here.

He worked hard as a minister, travelling the world to drum up investment in Irish industry,

pioneering legislation in oil and gas exploration and ensuring State involvement in Tara Mines. He lost his seat in 1977 in the new Dublin West constituency.

He served in the Seanad until 1981 and then withdrew from active politics.

Showdown

He writes about his "difficult" relationship with Dr Noel Browne, whom he "loved" and admired for his work as Minister for Health in 1948-51. But when Keating became a minister, Browne had become a fierce critic of his policy on oil and mineral resources leading to a showdown at the party conference in Cork in 1973.

Keating demolished Browne's arguments and swung the party behind him, but writes that he went home that night "deeply troubled and psychologically exhausted".



He was passionate about preserving natural resources on land and sea and farmed extensively in Co. Wicklow. In 1977 he was diagnosed with Paget's disease, a painful bone condition which eventually led to deafness and immobility.

But he rose above this handicap to continue farming and to teach equine science at Limerick University. He also was prominent in the Humanist

Association of Ireland.

In his notebooks he describes an idyllic early childhood on Killakee mountain where his father, Sean, combined farming along with his post at the National College of Art. There is hardly any mention of his father's distant influence, but much about his warm relationship with his mother May.

He soon abandoned his Catholic faith, and there are constant critiques of all revealed religions, but especially Catholicism for which no words are hard enough. The child abuse scandals only confirmed his loathing for religion.

Knowledge

He read widely and applied his scientific knowledge to how the Earth's natural resources could be preserved from both industrial and agricultural exploitation while getting barbs in at the Book of Genesis for encouraging ecological damage. He seemed not to realise that the Catholic Church in these days also disowns a fundamentalist interpretation of Revelation.

He was never afraid to change his views and became disabused of communism while continuing to admire Marx. From vigorously opposing Ireland's entry into the EEC in 1973, he came around to believe it was the best decision the country ever made. He also switched from pro-Israeli views to an anti-Zionist position drawing down the wrath of the pro-Israeli lobby worldwide.

He was passionately anti-IRA in spite of the republican sympathies of his parents. As a 12-year-old, he had witnessed the murder by the IRA in 1942 of their Killakee neighbour, Detective Sergeant Denis O'Brien.

To add to Keating's trauma, he had then to testify at the trial of Kerryman Charlie Kerins, who was later hanged for the murder.

The World of Books

By the books editor

Asia Minor's forgotten Celts

Every summer some 700,000 people come together in the Breton town of Lorient for the Festival Interceltique, which sees a gathering not just of musicians and singers, but also poets, writers, and community leaders from the Celtic fringe of Western Europe, from Galicia to Galloway.

But in all this feast of what is locally called "Celtitude", which at times has even paid homage to Bohemia and Switzerland as the home of the ancient Celts, there is one strange absence. Or perhaps not so strange, for the people I am referring to are barely alluded to in the great catalogue of the pan-European exhibition The Celts, mounted at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice in 1997 by Sabatini Moscati, Otto Hermann Frey, Barry Raftery and others – one of the most remarkable assemblies of Celtic art and artefacts ever seen.

In the authoritative text of the catalogue the Galatians, to whom St Paul addressed one of the most significant of all epistles, are barely acknowledged as being Celts at all.

Modern city

The Galatians occupied in classical times a large territory around the modern city of Ankara, the capital of Turkey since the revolution 1923. Seen as "Hellenogalata" by Greek writers, these people arrived there from the south of Gaul, by migrating across Italy, Greece and Thrace, arriving in 278 BC.

What I know of the Galatians in detail comes largely from Fernand Lequenne's *Les Galates* (Artheme Fayard, 1959), which recounts their interesting connections, not only with the European Celts, but also with the ancient Jews and the early Christians.

“Twenty miles from modern Ankara there is a place called in antiquity Drunementon, an echo of our own city of Derry”

Lequenne has no doubts about their Celtic nature, as demonstrated by their hardihood in war and their religious beliefs. Here too, in the central mountains of Asia Minor, were to be found those sacred oak groves, with which we in Ireland are so familiar. Twenty miles from modern Ankara there is a place called in antiquity Drunementon, "the sacred place of the oak", an echo of our own city of Derry.

The Galatians left a distinctive mark on Hellenistic art, through statues such as "The Dying Gaul", or another found in a temple at Pergamum of a defeated Celtic warrior, committing suicide by driving his short sword down behind his sternum into his heart. These were often copied in late classical times.

Celtic words still survive, I understand, in modern Turkish, but not enough it seems to gain these hardy highlanders, now Muslims, a summer invitation to Lorient.

Legends

In an almost casual aside Lequenne speaks of medieval legends that the Mary the Mother of

Jesus was not Jewish, but was a blonde Celt of Galatian origins. But, as he exclaims in despair at one point, "legends, legends...". But there is nothing legendary about St Paul's epistle – which after all provides the New Testament with a Celtic aspect. Though

the Galatians retained much of the ancient character of the Gauls, and something of their ancient language, the everyday language used was Greek, as was the case throughout Asia Minor. The monumental inscriptions found at ancient Ankara are in Greek, and St Paul himself wrote his epistle in Greek, the letter being composed about 56 AD.

We might, with a little latitude, see it as being written to all non-Jewish, non-Roman peoples, of which the Celtic elite of this island would then have been another example.

This is a key document in the development of Christianity. A party of Jewish Christians had been persuading the Galatians that to be full Christians they would have to follow the Mosaic code – Jewish culture would have to prevail over all others.

That party insisted that circumcision of Gentiles was essential. This Paul denied. The Mosaic code belonged to the earlier dispensation.

Paul described for the Galatians the substance of the new covenant: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Whatever about Jew and gentile, slave and free, the distinction between male and female is all too present in the world today, according to some critics. Perhaps we should all pay attention to what St Paul had to say to Asia Minor's almost forgotten Celts.



Classifieds

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

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Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

M.C.

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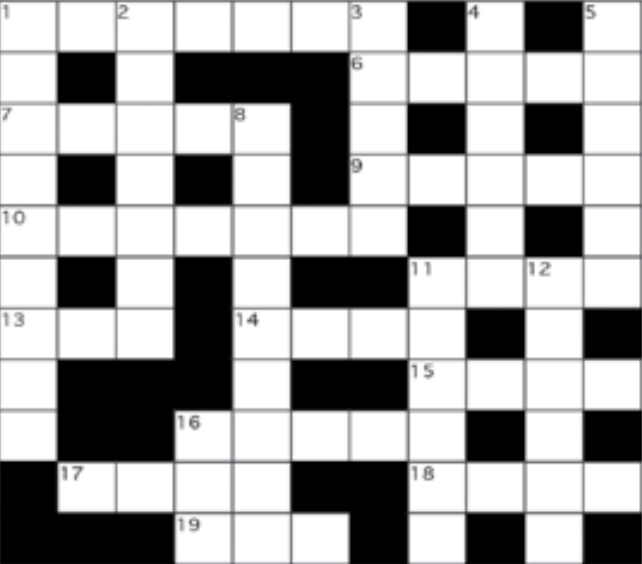


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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 178



- ACROSS**

1 This bird displays a very colourful tail (7)

6 House made of snow and ice (5)

7 Competitions of speed (5)

9 Holds onto, doesn't give away (5)

10 Good for nothing (7)

11 Intend (4)

13 Plant that grows up walls and trees (3)

14 Tall tree that has cones (4)

15 Huge group of soldiers (4)

16 Dodge, get out of the way of (5)

17 You might burn coal or turf in this (4)

18 You use them when rowing a boat (4)

19 "Have a go" (3)
- DOWN**

1 Spiny animal, a bit like a huge hedgehog (9)

2 Sport involving bows and arrows (7)

3 Moves a ball using the foot (5)

4 A sheep's woolly coat (6)

5 A child of your aunt or uncle (6)

8 A party in which your friends stay for the night (9)

11 Grassy field (6)

12 Look up to (6)

16 Paintings and other creative works (3)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.294

Across – 1 Sup 3 Caesar salad 8 Enlist 9 Marooned 10 On the warpath 11 Mouth 13 Moist 15 Utterly 20 Swept 21 Spawn 23 Price 24 Goodness 25 Tubers 26 Paschal lamb 27 Ton

Down – 1 Stegosaurus 2 Politest 3 Caste 4 Samaria 5 Storm 6 Link up 7 Dad 12 High Treason 13 Miles 14 Toast 17 Accident 18 Refusal 19 Famous 22 Ninth 23 Plumb 24 Gap

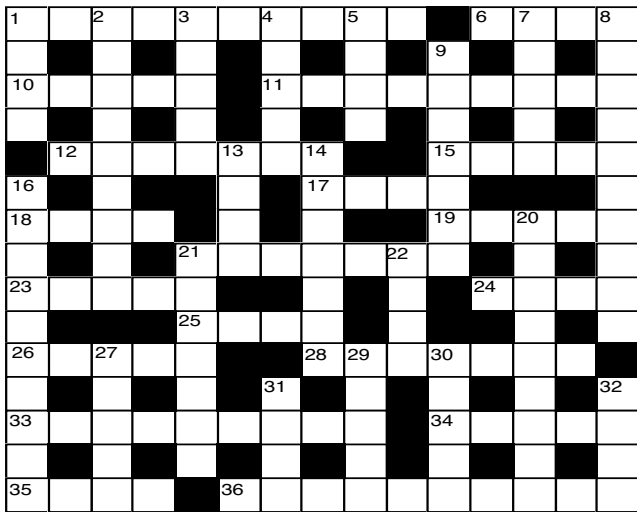
CHILDREN'S No.177

Across – 1 Hollywood 6 Neater 7 Kennel 10 Rungs 12 Phoenix 14 Motor 16 Actor 18 Elm 19 Throw 20 Son

Down – 1 Hungry 2 Learner 3 Work 4 Open 5 Bowl 8 Enormous 9 Nineteen 11 Sparrow 13 Fast 15 Rome 17 Tar

Crossword

Gordius 295



- ACROSS**

1 'Peter Pan' or 'Toad of Toad Hall', perhaps - dramatically, for a youngster, it's easy! (6,4)

6 Word Jesus used in reference to God the Father (4)

10, 28a & 27d Gloomy Dolly drawls about the entire estate, as mentioned in marriage vows (3,2,7,5)

11 & 32d Athletic act by a goalkeeper that rescues part of the hand? (9,4)

12 Artemis or Venus, perhaps (7)

15 Manufacturer (5)

17 Bird of prey controlled by string? (4)

18 Charity (4)

19 Himalayan country annexed by China (5)

21 One believes they're the names at the end of a movie (7)

23 Dance involving many dancers in a "train" (5)

24 If returning, then do give the dog this name (4)

25 Does little Lillian love an inflatable mattress? (4)

26 In accordance with the law (5)

28 See 10 across

33 The crew, Robin, stirred some cereal (5,4)

34 Tree-dwelling marsupial (5)

35 Orient (4)
- DOWN**

1 Outer garment (4)

2 Where Douglas is, it sounds like part of the church is for chaps only! (4,2,3)

3 In Greek mythology, a wood nymph (5)

4 Makes whiffs of smoke; swells up (5)

5 Female relative (4)

7 Craft involving the dyeing of material (5)

8 The divine appearance certainly changed a piano trip! (10)

9 Items of protective headgear (7)

13 Middle-Eastern potentate (4)

14 The pig has taken a child right in to where vagrants live! (4,3)

16 Capable of being quantified or worked out (10)

20 Fish with one worker - fantastic! (9)

21 A muezzin's vocation? (7)

22 Rip (4)

27 See 10 across

29 Headless groups of witches? Things may get heated here! (5)

30 Compare (5)

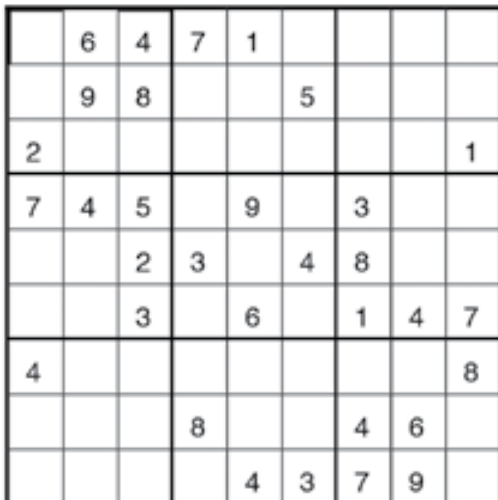
31 Ms Minelli requires only part of the reptile (4)

32 See 11 across

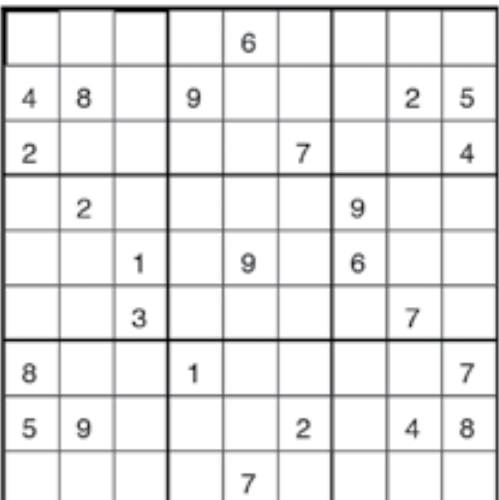
Sudoku Corner

178


Easy




Hard



Last week's Easy 177



Last week's Hard 177



Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



There's work to be done – and a Gospel to be preached

IT'S GOOD, I SUPPOSE, to be on the back page of a newspaper without being in the obituary or 'items for sale' sections!

There's a lot of talk about 'low morale' these days. It may well be across the board, but quite often this crops up at diocesan gatherings of priests or maybe in some quieter conversations.

I've been a priest for almost 30 years now and, for most of those years, the 'good times', if ever there were good times, seem to have been on the decline. Yet through these same years people have been great. Support at parish level remains relatively high and goodwill, on the local map, seems real and present.

There is a reality to be addressed nonetheless; that priests cannot take for granted this support and need to earn people's trust, perhaps even regain it.

Verbal tirade

A priest friend told me a few years ago that he was verbally attacked in a restaurant. He was with some others following a meeting. Someone approached the table he was sitting at and launched into a verbal tirade. "I wish the ground could have opened and swallowed



me," my friend recalls. As he spoke, it was clear he remained shaken and I thanked God that I'd not had this experience.

Within days I found myself in a shopping centre, paying for some items I'd just purchased. As the shop assistant handed me my change, she spotted the collar and said: "I hadn't noticed that

until now." I braced myself, feeling my moment had arrived. "Yeah," I said, "it's a dangerous piece of equipment to have these days" (I don't know where that line came from but thought it might soften the blow!). "Not at all," she replied: "we never needed you more." I was amazed and humbled. She meant it. This girl,

maybe in her mid- to late-20s, was serious and convinced. Then she added: "It all depends what you do with it."

Leaving the shop, I carried more than a few bags. I carried a challenge alongside a sincere word of encouragement. The girl was right. I am needed – priests are needed. She was right about the collar too. It has its place and something of a story to share but it should never, must never be used to seek control of people or situations.

Challenge

The bottom line is service – being there with and for people. It's not always easy and it won't always be recognised but it is important. "We never needed you more," she said and there's something in it. A challenge too for maybe "we never needed to be more".

So priesthood and ministry should not slip into the obituary section. There's living to be done, work to be done and a Gospel to be preached. The pulpit isn't a vantage point but an opportunity, so too the shopping centre's counter and maybe even the crowded restaurant.

Don't forget the music

'The day the music died!' Don McLean's powerful song reflects the emptiness felt following the death of musical legends. Into the reflection comes "trinity", whatever form it took for him; "The three men I admire most, The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, they caught the last train for the coast, the day the music died".

He wasn't wrong! Music is at the heart of our faith life. Miss no opportunity to include it in our liturgy. Maybe you, dear reader, have a tune in your head right now. Share it!

ROOM FOR A SMILE? Someone recently shared these with me...

When fish are in schools, they sometimes take debate.

A thief who stole a calendar got 12 months.

When the smog lifts in Los Angeles UCLA.

A boiled egg is hard to beat.

A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.

He had a photographic memory which was never developed.



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