

The Irish Catholic

ARCHBISHOP CHARLES BROWN

'I will carry Ireland in my heart' Pages 14-15



REMARRIED CATHOLICS

Tradition may answer question on Communion Pages 12-13



MINDFUL WARRIORS

Teaching young people the art of stillness Pages 23 & 25



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Bishop warns hospital site puts children's lives at risk

Mags Gargan

Seriously ill children from rural Ireland could die en route to the proposed new national children's hospital in the heavily-congested city centre of Dublin, a bishop has warned.

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, is backing a grassroots campaign to urge the Government to move away from the current proposed site at St James' Hospital to a greenfield site closer to the M50 motorway in Blanchardstown. The campaign is being backed by influential supporters such as Fionnbar Walsh whose inspirational son Donal lost his battle with cancer in 2013.

Dr Cullinan – a former hospital chaplain – is rallying support from fellow bishops outside Dublin warning that the prospect of ambulances navigating Dublin traffic will put the lives of seriously sick children in "jeopardy".

Bishop Cullinan, who has been meeting with doctors and concerned parents, has said that 90% of sick children going to the three existing children's hospitals come from outside the M50 and that the proposed city centre site "will seriously disadvantage very ill rural children", because of the "poor location of the hospital services they need".

"This is a golden opportunity to get

» Continued on Page 2



Juliette Laydevant, Millie Ryan and Ollie Packman eagerly await Tayto Park's Easter egg hunt on Easter Sunday, April 16 where Mr Tayto is looking for help from some 'egg-cellent' detectives to help him solve the mystery of 'Who stole the egg?' – they're pictured at the launch this week. Photo: Photocall

Ireland set to have new Blessed

Ireland will see its first Blessed in 17 years with the date set for the beatification of Fr John Sullivan SJ in May.

The beatification of Fr Sullivan will take place in St Francis Xavier's, Gardiner Street, Dublin, on Saturday, May 13. Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregations for the Causes of Saints will attend the ceremony.

Fr Gerry Clarke SJ, parish priest in Gardiner Street, which houses Fr Sullivan's tomb, told *The Irish Catholic* "it has been a long wait" and the parish is delighted to host the ceremony.

"Devotion to Fr John is very strong here at Gardiner Street and across the country, especially in Counties Down, Armagh and Kildare. He was a 'man of others' and someone to imitate."

John Sullivan was born in Dublin in 1861. His father, the future Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Sir Edward Sullivan, was a protestant. His mother, Lady Bessie Josephine Sullivan was a Catholic.

In 1896 he was received into the Catholic Church and

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FR RON ROLHEISER

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Protecting children from modern fears

PAGE 25



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Values are products of ideologies

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'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown'

The Pope's representative Archbishop Charles Brown left Ireland this week to take up his new posting in Albania. Soon, a replacement will be appointed and a new archbishop will come to present his credentials to President Michael D. Higgins and act as a visible sign of unity between the Church in Ireland and the Holy Father.

Since his arrival in Ireland in early 2012, Archbishop Brown has been an unconventional Papal Nuncio. He was plucked from the Roman Curia by his old mentor Pope Benedict XVI and thrust into the diplomatic role at a time when relations between the Irish State and the Holy See were at an all-time low.

Just months beforehand, Enda Kenny has delivered a thundering speech in the Dáil in which he heavily criticised the Vatican and misquoted Benedict XVI to give the false impression that the Pope believed civil law should not apply to the Church. The rift deepened when Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore announced that the Irish embassy at the Vatican would be shut.

Mutual trust

It was an inauspicious and inhospitable start for the new Papal Nuncio. Despite that, Archbishop Brown worked tirelessly to mend fences with the State and work towards a new relationship based on mutual trust. While a lot of people worked behind the scenes to ensure that Ireland would reopen an embassy at the Vatican, that u-turn was due in



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

no small part to Archbishop Brown and his positive and warm leadership.

He also embraced with gusto the need to put a fresh heart into the Church in Ireland. His visits to dioceses, parishes, communities and schools made the Pope's closeness to the Church in Ireland a reality for many people who hitherto had never even heard of a Papal Nuncio, never mind had the chance to put their hopes and disappointments directly to the Pope's representative.

"The Church in Ireland will miss the charismatic American"

You can't please everyone in life: Pope Benedict certainly didn't, and Pope Francis doesn't either. Archbishop Brown had his critics – the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) nurse a hurt that he didn't organise meetings with the group. That's not to say he didn't know the reality for priests on the ground; it's hard to think of an Irish bishop (outside of, perhaps, Confirmation season) who visited more parishes than Archbishop Brown.

Young Catholics will miss the archbishop – he soon became a regular at youth events and, despite the evident challenges facing the Church here, never tired of trying to encourage young people to embrace

their faith.

To my mind, Archbishop Brown was not naïve about the challenges facing Catholicism in Ireland. He could do the sums too, he knows we're rapidly running out of priests. But, like St John XXIII, he too knew that there is nothing life-giving in repeating the mantras of the "prophets of doom" who are always forecasting worse disasters". His championing of 'green shoots' in the Church here was no silly optimism, but a fundamental trust in God's promise that all will be well.

The Church in Ireland will miss the charismatic American who broke the mould long cast for Papal Nuncios and brought the message of Christ to wherever he found people. We will miss his energy, his enthusiasm, his evident prayerfulness and comfort in his own skin, his words of encouragement and his 'can do' attitude.

In the 1967 musical comedy of the same name, the eponymous Charlie Brown sets out to find out what being a 'good man' means. In the end he realises that it rests in trying your best and making the most of the things you've been given in life. In the final scene, Lucy turns to him and puts out her hand, turning him shrink back. As he reaches out, she shakes his hand firmly, then tells him, "You're a good man, Charlie Brown."

Albania's gain is our loss.

'Hospital site puts children's lives at risk'

» Continued from Page 1

this right," he told *The Irish Catholic*. "We are now faced with the real likelihood of seriously ill infants dying in ambulances because they did not survive the journey through busy Dublin streets," he said.

Bishop Fintan Monahan of the Diocese of Killaloe in the west, agreed that "if it was a more convenient location for

rural access that would be more desirable".

Bishop Cullinan is supporting the 'Connolly for Kids Hospital' initiative, which is campaigning for the new hospital to be located at Blanchardstown, just off the M50 convenient to all national routes to the capital.

He said a greenfield site such as at Connolly would have "ample space" for

accessibility and parking, and the collocation of maternal and children's acute services would be "vital". "95% of transfers from maternity units are sick children," he said. "They often need urgent care and common sense alone indicates that transfer down a corridor to a special children's unit is immeasurably better than transfer by ambulance though traffic.

"Currently there is no maternity unit in St James' and plans indicate a maternal unit in 15 years' time!"

The bishop urged people to get involved in the campaign saying as "Christians we should be fighting the case for seriously sick children from rural Ireland whose lives will be put in jeopardy by the poor location of the hospital services they need".

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Vocations decline will mean more African priests – nuncio

Mags Gargan

Irish parishes will need to adjust to the reality that the declining number of vocations to the priesthood here will mean more African priests taking up the mantle, Ireland's former papal nuncio has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* as he prepared to leave for his new posting in Albania, Archbishop Charles Brown [pictured] said that the decline of the number of priests in Ireland "which will continue to decline, even at a more rapid rate than it is now" means that it is "inevitable one part of the future of the Church in Ireland – and this is only one part and people will

misunderstand me if they thought this is what I think is the only part – will be priests from other countries coming to work in Ireland, especially priests from Africa".

Responsibility

"We already have priests from Africa coming to work in Ireland and others will come," he said.

"Large parts of Africa were

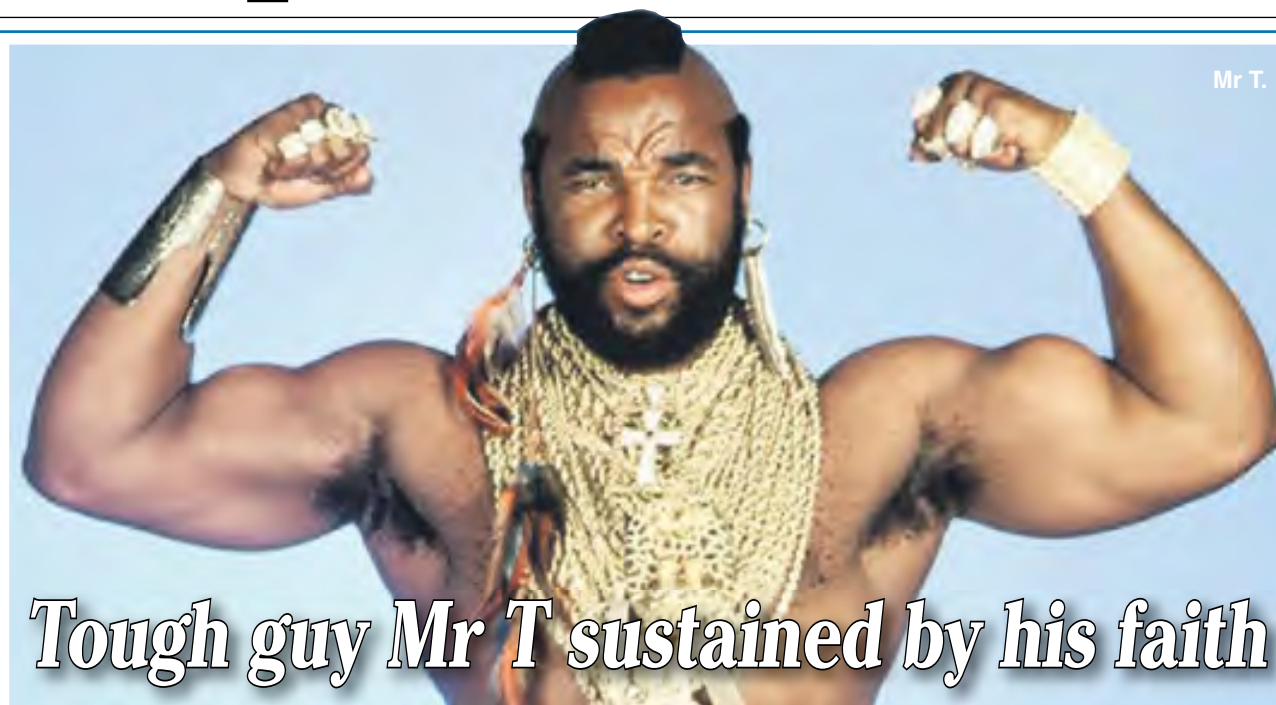
evangelised by Irish missionaries and the gift of Irish missionaries to Africa will be repaid in some way by African priests coming back to Ireland."

Archbishop Brown also said the future of the Church in Ireland will "imply a much greater responsibility for lay people". "As the number of priests decline the positions that will need to be filled by lay people will increase. That will give a different shape, a different image, a different face to Irish Catholicism," he said.

However, the archbishop said he was "certain the number of vocations to the priesthood will increase in Ireland" although it will "almost certainly not in my lifetime ever reach the numbers it was in the 1950s and 1960s".

Archbishop Brown said above all else he is convinced "that the Catholic Church has a future in Ireland, that the story of more than 15 centuries of Catholic faith in Ireland is not finished, that is continues into the future".

See Pages 14-15.



Tough guy Mr T sustained by his faith

Staff Reporter

Following the launch of the American version of *Dancing with the Stars*, TV tough guy Mr T has said the plans to knock out his dancing competition the same way he beat cancer – with God on his side

Best known for starring in *The A Team* and *Rocky III*, Mr T has revealed that it is his Christian faith that keeps him going.

"I answer only to God. I got so much, got gold...Rolls Royce [but] I didn't forget God. Every day I pray," he said.

Mr T, who said he will donate his entire *Dancing with the Stars* salary to a children's hospital, said the biggest lessons he's learned are from the Bible: "Stay humble and be concerned for the less fortunate... I take food down to the homeless. I don't call up the press and say, look at me! My mother told me, son, if nobody else knows, God knows. I do it for his glory."

The iconic star was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoma cancer in 1995. He is now cancer-free after treatment but admitted his faith was put under strain by that difficult period.

"My faith was tested like Job. That's the message I try to tell other people, just because you believe in God, serve God, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, people gotta realise, it don't mean things not gonna happen to you...I believed in God when cancer come to me. Now when I speak, I speak with authority because I've been there," he said.

"Mr T been to chemo, Mr T been to radiation, hair fall out...but he's back. Now I can give hope when I go to the hospital, see the sick kids with cancer, tell them, don't quit...I serve God," he said.

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Lisieux

NEWS
IN BRIEFOver 2000 attend
Knock's organ
donation Mass

There was a congregation of over 2000 at a special Mass at Knock Shrine held last Sunday to mark Organ Donor Awareness Week 2017 (1-8 April). The inaugural service was a celebration for organ donors and transplant recipients and was led by Fr Richard Gibbons, in the newly refurbished Basilica.

The chief organiser of this event was Monica Morley from the Family Life Centre in Knock and the concept came from local woman, Bernadette McNeive, whose son Matthew underwent a kidney transplant age 11.

Matthew (18), a Leaving Cert student, is now an accomplished sportsman and member of Transplant Team Ireland as he enjoyed success in the European Transplant & Dialysis Sports Championships in Vantaa, Finland last summer.

Youth opinions
sought on Church

Young adults aged between 16 and 29 are being asked to take part in a survey to gather information on youth attitudes towards faith and the Church. The 'Big April Ask', an online survey open until April 30, is an Irish youth ministry initiative in response to Pope Francis' announcement that in October 2018 a Synod of Bishops will take place to discuss the topic: Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.

See: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bigaprilask

Irish and British bishops
liaise to reduce Brexit risks

Greg Daly

Irish bishops have been working with their British counterparts to protect the rights of Irish people in Britain, following the country's decision to leave the European Union.

Liam Allmark, public affairs manager for the Bishops Conference of England and Wales, told *The Irish Catholic* that Bishop Nicholas Hudson, an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Westminster has liaised with his Irish counterpart, Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor, with whom he sits in COMECE, the European Bishops' Conference.

"There are about 332,000 Irish citizens living in Great Britain, a lot of whom living in England and Wales, and they've obviously been a large part of the Catholic community in England and Wales," Mr Allmark told *The Irish Catholic*.

"The UK government has obviously said that they want the longstanding rights of Irish citizens in the UK to be protected – that people's rights to stay and to work and so on are maintained here," he said, continuing, "as a Church with a very big Irish community as part of it, we're keen to make sure that happens."

Concerns

Explaining that this is part of the Church's wider concern for citizens of all EU countries in the UK, and that Irish citizens have a special status in the UK that predates both countries joining the EEC, he

said Britain's priests and bishops had heard concerns raised by many people of various European nationalities about what their future in the UK might entail.

Mr Allmark said the Church was doing what it could to ensure that the "long and large contribution" Irish

people and other Europeans have made in the UK was recognised and enabled to continue.

Describing Dr Hudson as the English bishop who is "leading on issues around Brexit", he said "At COMECE he's there with bishops from all other European countries

including Scotland and Ireland, which obviously Brexit is going to be affecting."

"He's had discussions with them," Mr Allmark said, continuing, "going forward [Brexit] will affect all three conferences, and there will no doubt be many discussions going forward."



Baroness Nuala O'Loan, columnist with *The Irish Catholic*, pictured with the outgoing Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Charles Brown, at a reception to mark the completion of his mission to Ireland at the Apostolic Nunciature in Dublin on March 30. The reception also marked the fourth anniversary of the election of Pope Francis.

Passion play with
female Jesus
causes concern

Mags Gargan

A local parish priest has expressed concern at a non-religious Passion play with a female Jesus, due to be played out across the streets and civic spaces of Ballyfermot and Cherry Orchard in Dublin.

On Holy Saturday Broken-talkers theatre company is presenting a re-imagining of the Passion of Christ through a confrontation between a homeless young woman and a property developer.

"A concern for me is that they have a female Jesus," Fr Joe McDonald of St Matthew's, Ballyfermot told *The Irish Catholic*. "I am trying to understand why, when there are lots of other ways to highlight the feminine."

"We have a number of heroic women in the community who have suffered great loss. We have third generation drug addiction and we have lost people through suicide leaving behind a broken-hearted mother or wife. The need to highlight the feminine is not lost on me, but they could do that without a female Jesus."

However, Fr McDonald said he did not want to be negative about the project, which he said has "good intentions", including raising money for the Simon Community.

Priests continue to fear false allegations

Staff reporter

Unfounded claims of abuse remain a grave fear for many Irish priests, while clergy often distrust their bishops, according to the minutes of two meetings of the Association of Catholic priests last month.

Safeguarding was a central issue at the ACP

South meeting, which considered the rights of clergy when faced with allegations. "Solicitors feel priests rights are ignored and are waiting for a priest to sue his diocese," according to the minutes of the meeting which claimed that accused clergy are denied the care given to their accusers.

This concern is despite the Church's national safeguarding board having last year introduced new standards

and guidelines on the care of clergy about whom complaints have been made.

Principle

Reporting that the principle of 'innocent until proven guilty' does not apply to priests, and expressing concerns about a lack of transparency in canon law, the minutes recorded that accused priests were advised to contact the ACP, who would accompany them in meetings with their bishops.

"If summoned to the diocesan office, priests should ask what it's about and should not go there alone," the minutes advised.

Earlier in March, an ACP West meeting saw about 60 priests discussing a perceived inability to "say no, to bishops and people", and a feeling that they are subject to "bullying by bishops", by whom they "are not trusted".

We are all ministers of the Mercy of God

"Dear young people, do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you! Do not be afraid to dream of great things." - Pope Francis

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Ireland set to have
a new Blessed

» Continued from Page 1

some four years later he entered the Jesuit order. Most of his priestly life was spent in Clongowes Wood College, in Co. Kildare, where he had a reputation for sanctity among the schoolboys and the many local people he came in contact with.

In 1960 Fr Sullivan [pictured] was declared a Servant of God and then 'Venerable' in 1914. In April 2016 Pope Francis approved a decree that authenticated a miracle attributed to Fr Sullivan, thereby approving his beatification.

This will be the first Irish beatification since Columba Marmion OSB in 2000.



Michael Collins and the Brexit protocols

There's an interesting link between Brexit and Michael Collins. In planning its withdrawal from the European Union, Britain is dusting down the old documents of procedures followed when Ireland – the 26 counties of the Irish Free State – left the United Kingdom in 1922-23, as a template of how it was done. As we recall, Michael Collins presided over the ceremonial handover from the Imperial power at Dublin Castle in 1922.

Although the ceremony was accompanied by a joking exchange between Collins and the Lord-Lieutenant, the withdrawal process between the Free State and the UK in the 1920s was a model of orderliness and common sense, according to the historians. Ireland inherited the laws that had been in place when we'd been part of the UK, gradually discarding or replacing those which were judged not applicable, and gradually adding on Irish sovereign law.

Benefit

We had the benefit of an excellent civil service, and many experienced Irish people who had lived overseas were inspired to return to the country now that it was to govern itself. Having a reliable (and uncorrupt) civil service was one of the most vital building-bricks in constructing the new state.

Some of the laws inherited from the UK have surely stood the test of time. That a person is innocent until proved guilty is one of the finest legacies



Mary Kenny



Michael Collins.

of British common law, and I sometimes think it should be constantly re-iterated in the public realm – so that it is fully understood in our era, when individuals are sometimes considered guilty simply by being accused of wrong-doing. Some of the British laws

were superseded by the Free State. We brought in a new law prohibiting divorce fairly soon, eventually to be abrogated in 1995.

The 1923 law disallowing divorce reflected the values of the time, even if it seems illiberal now in that it didn't

Twitter is akin to Medieval stocks

As Holy Week looms, I'm aware that I've failed to maintain my Lenten discipline of rationing my participation on Twitter. Yet, I've learned a Lenten lesson from its twitterings, as many have before me. It can be a bit like being in the Medieval stocks, with people throwing rotten vegetables at you – if you dare express almost any counter-cultural thinking. This experience has provided me with a degree of Lenten shriving.

I've also learned that Twitter acts like any lure, temptation or addiction. "I'll just look – looking never did any harm," says the Tempter in your ear. Such a challenge to self-restraint and self-control!

sufficiently maintain the separation of Church and state.

The UK had just ushered in the right of women to sit on juries, which the Free State inherited and initially put into practice. But so many women pleaded to be excused jury service that Kevin O'Higgins abrogated it in 1927.

“Let's hope that wise counsels will prevail and the good legislation will be retained”

Looking back, it might have been better to get the message across to Irishwomen that they were duty-bound to take up their responsibilities as citizens. Jury service can be time-consuming and even tedious, but it's a valued part of the rule of law.

And now, Britain will have to trawl through over 7,000 pieces of legislation to disentangle itself from the EU and its institutions.

Let's hope that wise counsels will prevail and the good legislation will be retained (workers' protection, sensible environmental laws – and free movement between Britain and Ireland), while the sillier can be jettisoned (enforcement of the metric system so that grocers are barred from using pounds and ounces, over-regulation by red tape for small businesses).

Perhaps they should name the exit procedure the Michael Collins protocols.

Albania may be a rewarding challenge for the nuncio

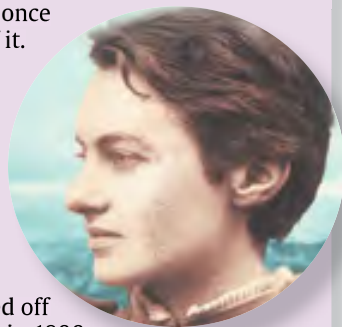
Archbishop Charles Brown – sometimes colloquially known as “Charlie Brown”, after the engaging Peanuts cartoon (a soubriquet the archbishop does not eschew, I believe) – will be missed when he leaves Ireland. His affable New York sense of humour was much appreciated and people found him very approachable. As Pope Benedict's envoy, he had his critics (some within the Church) but anyone of substance has critics.

The Holy See is now despatching him to Albania. That really will be a challenge and maybe a rewarding one too. It's a strange country – greatly shaped by its long experience of Ottoman rule, followed by one of the sternest Communist dictatorships ever known.

Hospitality

But fascinating terrain – a coast describe as ‘Virgilian’ – and deep, almost Bedouin tribal traditions, whereby the visitor is given any amount of hospitality within the clan's territory, but regarded as fair game to predators once outside of it.

There was a fearless Victorian spinster called Edith Durham [pictured] who sallied off to Albania in 1900, accompanied only by a native guide and a mule, and wrote what is still possibly the best book of anthropology about the country, *High Albania*. Someone should present Dr Brown with a leather-bound copy.



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Knock and Lough Derg heads welcome Vatican oversight swap

Greg Daly

Pope Francis' decision to switch Vatican oversight for shrines and sanctuaries to the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation has been welcomed by the priests who run Ireland's principal shrines.

Until this weekend, shrines and sanctuaries came under the jurisdiction of the Vatican's Congregation for Clergy, but on Saturday, April 1, the Pope transferred them to the council that was established in 2010 with the aim of promoting the Faith in the Church's historical heartlands.

"Despite the crisis of faith impacting the modern world, these places still are perceived as sacred spaces where pilgrims go to find moments of rest, silence and contemplation in the midst of a life that is often frenetic," the Pope said of his decision to give the council responsibility for such things as promot-

ing the shrines' evangelising activity, supporting pastoral initiatives organised between shrines, and ensuring pilgrims are offered the spiritual support they need.

"In a way it stands to reason," Fr Richard Gibbons, Rector of Knock Shrine, told *The Irish Catholic*. "The hope here in Knock is about evangelisation and reaching out to people as best we can," he said, adding, "Especially, in light of Pope Francis, to reach out to people who might never think of coming near a shrine."

Fr Owen McEneaney, Prior of Lough Derg, agreed, saying, "It makes a lot of sense".

Citing how Pope Benedict described becoming Christian as the result of a personal encounter with Christ, he told *The Irish Catholic*, "The nature of Lough Derg and in particular its three-day pilgrimage gives people that extended period of time that – while it's a challenging pilgrimage – facilitates

the personal encounter with Christ that Pope Benedict was very strong on and that Pope Francis has picked up."

He said the change would

put pilgrimage "centre stage" in Church life, adding, "Pilgrimage is essentially about people who have drifted away a bit from the Church and

about people who have been very faithful both coming to that personal encounter with the Lord – I think that's at the heart of evangelisation."



ORDINATION HAT-TRICK FOR WEXFORD BROTHERS: Fr Rory Doyle (centre right) from Co. Wexford and Fr Maximilian Mary Martin from England, both Greyfriars, were ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Kevin McDonald, Archbishop Emeritus of Southwark, last week. They are pictured with family members, including Fr Rory's twin brother Fr Brian, a Dominican, and his brother Fr Jim, a diocesan priest in Ferns.

Dublin priest to head Vatican discipline office

Staff reporter

Pope Francis has appointed a priest of the Dublin archdiocese to head the Vatican's office that deals with the disciplining of priests accused of grave crimes in the Church.

Msgr John Kennedy, who was ordained in 1993, will head up the disciplinary section within the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). The Vatican made the announcement in a communique on Tuesday.

Watchdog

The Clontarf native has worked in the Vatican's doctrinal watchdog since 2003 where he began his service working under the then prefect Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. In 2008, Benedict XVI appointed the priest as a Chaplain of Honour to the Pope.

Until this week's appointment, Msgr Kennedy was working as an official in the same congregation.

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108 bells for Ireland's oldest woman

The bells of St Brigid's Church in Ballintrillick, Co. Sligo, rang 108 times to mark the funeral of Ireland's oldest person last week, with each chime marking a year of her life.

Elizabeth Gallagher, who was buried on March 28, became the oldest person in Ireland last December, and was "very proud" of the fact, according to parish priest Fr Thomas Keogan, who told *The Irish Catholic* "she was very conscious that she herself was history in the making".

Describing Mrs Gallagher as someone who "had a very strong faith and was deeply religious", Fr Keogan said, "Whenever I went to visit her, the beads and the prayerbook were always in her hand."

An unusual aspect of Mrs Gallagher's funeral, he added, and one that Mrs Gallagher's family appreciated, was how the children from the local St Aidan's National School had lined up along the front wall of the school, forming "a guard of honour to the memory of a truly wonderful woman".

Cork missionaries offer home to refugees

Mags Gargan

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart have offered to house a family of refugees at their retreat centre in Cork.

Fr Michael Curran MSC, leader of the Myross Wood community, is currently working alongside the Irish Red Cross to put the suggested relief plan into action. Myross Wood House has already been inspected by an Irish Red Cross representative, and it has been confirmed that the house will be suitable to accommodate a family as soon as some slight modifications have been put in place.

"The rooms we have are

adequate enough, but we will need to create family space, such as a kitchen and a living room," said Fr Curran.

"We could take a family group of about 10 people, but the next step is to wait for the representative to come back to us to let us know if our offer is acceptable to the Irish Red Cross, and to receive their recommendations about the adaptations that will have to be carried out."

Fr Curran said the community is glad "to be able to help in any way". "We can accommodate about 40 guests in the house, but we have space for 10 refugees, because we will also need room to accommodate the people who come here on retreat," he said.

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Nuala O'Loan

The View



It's time to grasp the nettle of Garda reform once and for all

As I sat down to write this I was very pleased to learn that Frances Fitzgerald, the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, is asking for a "root and branch review" of An Garda Síochána, for a Patten-style international commission to examine Irish policing, as Lord Chris Patten and his Independent Commission provided a blueprint for the future of policing in Northern Ireland, a blueprint which has stood the test of time and which has informed the development of policing across the world.

It is definitely time for such a review. The various scandals which have beset An Garda Síochána over the years, which have led to so many allegations of partial policing, corrupt policing and failed policing, culminated in the last few weeks in a series of reports of very serious financial irregularities at the Garda College, of gross over reporting of roadside breath tests and of deplorable prosecutions of people who should never have been before the courts.

Shock

There can be no doubt that a letter from a court summoning you to appear will always come as a shock to the recipient. For 147,000 people in Ireland such letters were a reality. The problem was that they had paid whatever speeding fine, or charge that had been imposed for failing to display 'L' plates on a vehicle, or not displaying a tax or insurance disc. So can you imagine what that felt like?

These cases must have led to people incurring legal costs, suffering stress (nobody wants to be before a court), having to take time off work to explain to a judge that they had paid the fine. What of those who could not prove they had paid – who had lost or disposed of the relevant documentation? What too of the burden on the already overburdened court



system, required to process an additional 147,000 cases. What delays did that lead to for others engaged with the court system?

The problem did not stop there however. In 14,700 cases people were convicted of failing to pay a fine which they had paid. An Garda Síochána have not yet told us the outcome of those cases, but it is surely inevitable that the penalty in court was greater than the fine originally imposed.

Now An Garda Síochána are writing to all these people to tell them that the Garda will apply to have the convictions set aside.

“The 937,000 roadside breath tests which never took place must have informed Garda planning and resource allocations for years”

There are many problems with this for people. They had to find the money to pay the additional costs and penalty, money which can be very hard to find. They may have suffered additional penalty points on their driving licences which

in the most extreme of cases may have led to the loss of a licence – leaving someone unable to get to work or take children to school, attend medical appointments, get to church and do all the other things which are part of daily life. They may have suffered other problems. What does this do to confidence in policing?

An Garda Síochána were alerted to the problem by a whistle-blower in 2014. So in 2015 they conducted some internal audits of the Fixed Charge Penalty Processing system. They found a high standard of compliance with legislation and procedures. The problem continued. The 937,000 roadside breath tests which never took place must have informed Garda planning and resource allocations for years. They must have worked on the basis that officers were needed to conduct such a significant number of operations and allocated those resources accordingly.

The Garda Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan has said that she does not think that the over-reporting of statistics is confined to mandatory alcohol testing. She would not say this lightly at such a time. There are suggestions of irregularities in other

areas too. I spent a bit of time looking at the Garda website, and there may well be many other problems which will go ultimately to more questions about to what extent can people have confidence in their police? I see for example a reference on the website to audits of property and evidence management, and to problems there.

Property

Property and evidence management is one of the most important areas of policing. There is no point in gathering evidence and retrieving property for the purposes of criminal investigation, if it is not handled in a way which enables the Gardaí to show that they can account for every movement of that property, and that in the case of evidence there can be no possibility that evidence may have been tampered with, lost or fabricated. It is upon the integrity of the evidence presented to a court that decisions will be made about people's lives and liberty.

So I welcome the announcement of the request for a "root and branch review". I have no doubt it will be granted. It will be important, however, to ensure that all areas of

policing are examined. The reports refer to reviews of structure, management levels, recruitment and training, culture and ethos, oversight and accountability. If this commission is to have credibility it must have the power to inquire fully into all these areas, including the matters about which brave whistle-blowers have reported irregularities, including the treatment of whistle-blowers, and the management of crime and security, with all that that entails. National security is not best protected by failing to examine the practices and policies of those charged with its protection.

“The people of Ireland have the right to proper policing according to the rule of law”

What has happened in An Garda Síochána is not unique. There is a pattern in policing of the need to protect the institution against allegations of wrongdoing, lest the powers of police officers be circumscribed by what is actually proper accountability, or confidence in policing is diminished by

the exposure of the truth. In policing they call it the 'blue wall' – the invisible wall which surrounds and protects those charged with the protection of our peace and security against investigation and review. The blue wall is as old as policing itself. It is in the nature of any institution to protect its own and its power. When management fails, when officers cannot report perceived wrongdoing in the confidence that it will be dealt with, and that they will not become the target of those who should be investigating the alleged wrongdoing, those behind the blue wall feel very safe.

The people of Ireland have the right to proper policing according to the rule of law. We know that Jesus said "if you believe in my word, you will come to know the truth and the truth will set you free". Truth is what is needed at this time, truth and the courage to face and proclaim reality, so that, after so many false starts, Irish policing will be reformed and the brave officers who join policing to protect life and property will be able to do their job with confidence, skill and most vitally that full community support, without which policing is impossible.

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Rejecting redress: recovering the actual historical record

Religious aim to sift facts from perceptions, writes **Greg Daly**



The drumbeat has grown incessant in recent months: religious congregations, we are told time and time again, agreed to pay half the cost of the State's redress scheme for those who lived in industrial schools and similar institutions, and have not done so.

Technically, it is admitted, they only legally agreed to pay €128 million, but their greater obligation is a moral one: when the State made its plans for redress nobody could have expected how much redress would have been sought.

This 'moral pressure' needs to stop, according to a lengthy statement on the Irish website of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. "Morally speaking," the statement says, "the Government should be helping the public to understand a complex situation, not confusing it."

Claims

Although the statement is anonymous, signed by "an Oblate of Mary Immaculate", it is presented as the view of the congregation, or at least its Irish province, being introduced with a summary that bills it as "our factual response" to Government claims, about which, it says, "the public are rightly concerned".

In mapping the story of the official response to revelations about industrial schools,

the statement says "the moral question first entered the public arena in the late 1990s with the voicing in the media of protests by people who had been in Government care in various institutions", continuing, "These led – on May 11, 1999 – to the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern TD apologising to them and accepting State responsibility."

This made sense: industrial schools and other residential institutions may have been run on a day-to-day basis by religious, but this was on behalf of the State and with the involvement of numerous arms of the State. In a sense the religious were merely the "foot soldiers" of the system.

Beyond an apology, the State undertook two substantive responses to the revelations, establishing the Laffoy – which later became the Ryan – Commission and separately enacting the Residential Institutions Redress Act, 2002.

The statement says both the Government and Ms Justice Mary Laffoy wanted to wait until the investigation was completed before issuing compensation, but the Government decided otherwise because "Its hand was being forced by the refusal of victims' groups, with the support of their legal representatives, to cooperate with an investigation unless such a scheme was put into immediate effect."



A scene from inside the woodwork shop at the former Artane Industrial School.

Before the commission published its report in 2009, the Redress Board had already paid out millions of Euro both in awards and in legal costs wholly unrelated to the commission's investigation; indeed, the statement says, the roles of the commission and the board were sharply distinguished, the two being "strictly forbidden" from sharing information with each other.

“The report never suggests that the State envisaged the religious orders as essential participants”

Now, of course, they are commonly conflated, their costs being added to the redress bill religious orders have a supposed 'moral obligation' to meet.

Initially the Government said the scheme was set up without regard to whether the religious would be involved, doing this against a background of over a thousand High Court cases pending against both the State and various congregations. It said the orders had then come on board, saying they wanted to make a "meaningful contribution" to the scheme, their contribution eventually being agreed as €128 million in "cash, counselling costs and real property".

State witnesses told the commission in 2005 that though religious involvement was hoped for, the scheme was intended to go ahead even without

it. The report never suggests that the State envisaged the religious orders as essential participants, let alone equal partners, in the scheme.

Rather, they were seen as adjuncts or contributors, the bulk of redress to be paid by the State that had mandated, sustained and supervised the residential institutions, sending children to them and requiring that they be kept there.

In 2002, the then Minister for Education and Science, Dr Michael Woods TD, told Ms Róisín Shortall TD the redress scheme was expected to cost €250 million, but could be double that.

If this happened, he said, Church bodies would end up having paid a quarter of the total redress, but the important thing, he said, was that the State was living up to its overall responsibility.

For Ms Shortall, this was unacceptable. "The deal will result in a huge bill for taxpayers, a bill that could eventually reach €1 billion," she said, a concern that would have tallied with the fears religious congregations expressed to the Government in 2001 and 2002.



Róisín Shortall TD.

Despite the broad terms of the scheme, which was not tasked with making any findings regarding to fault or negligence, and which required that applicants supply no evidence of either, the Government was not worried about the number of applicants; this was before the financial crisis, and the Government was confident about the depths of its pockets.

"But unlike the Government, the religious were concerned about the number of applicants," the statement says, commenting on the breadth of the scheme's terms and continuing, "Surely no religious order could be an equal partner with the Government in such a fund! No religious order had a bottomless purse."

Responsibility

The scheme as agreed, according to the Ryan Report, "was not based on any apportionment of responsibility for abuse", and protected the congregations from being sued by past residents; without such protection, the statement argues, the religious could not have made a meaningful contribution to the scheme, as they would have needed to keep their financial reserves intact in case of legal action.

Things changed after the Ryan Report was published in May 2009, of course, and although the Government insisted that the 2002 agreement could not be reopened, 'moral' pressure began to be applied calling for a 50-50 sharing of costs. The Government was now facing far higher costs than it had expected at

a time, following the financial crisis, when it was discovering its pockets weren't as deep as it had thought.

Since then, the Oblate writes, the Government has "worked tirelessly to override the reality of the moral (and legal) situation as I have described it".

Details

Pointing out that while the report's central message should not be impugned, many of its details would not withstand judicial scrutiny, the statement notes that many religious feel ill-served by their treatment in recent years.

"In their minds their contribution to Irish society through their work in the orphanages, industrial schools and reformatories had been huge," it observes, continuing, "they alone had been there to do something for the poor of Ireland, often at great personal cost to their members, in the times of great poverty that marked the founding years of the State, and indeed long before that in the British era."

The spending of redress money on some of Ireland's most vulnerable, the restoration of dignity through the commission's inquiry, and the fact that a substantively true story was told by the Ryan Report are all, the statement says, things to celebrate.

However, it notes, the gap between how the religious see their history and its popular depiction nowadays is one that can only be addressed through serious historical work, and will only be resolved in time.



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Values are products of our ideologies

The World Meeting of Families must honestly address 'ideological attacks' on the family, writes **David Quinn**

Pope Francis has a reputation for speaking softly on issues, but when he has a mind to it, he can be very tough and direct as well. As an example of this, when he speaks about the family, he speaks as he always does, about the need for mercy and to meet families where they are and accompany them along the road.

But he has also spoken about the "global war" on the family, as he did in Georgia last year, and about the "ideological colonisation" of the family as he did on an earlier visit to the Philippines.

In Rome last week, the Pope issued a letter to the Dicastery of Family, Laity and Life, headed by Irish-born Cardinal Kevin Farrell. It was sent ahead of the ninth World Meeting of Families (WMF), to take place in Dublin in August next year.

At a press conference organised to coincide with the issuing of the letter, Cardinal Farrell and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin discussed 'ideological attacks' on the family.

Attacks

Archbishop Martin said it would be "foolish" to ignore such attacks. He then observed that this is something families rarely bring up with him when he meets them.

Instead they bring up "work, leisure, homelessness, how to make ends meet, how they're facing new challenges, how they have sleepless nights because of their teenage children ... These are the challenges parents have to be supported in, so they can carry out this essential role within society."

All of this is true, of course. Few parents think

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin speaking in Rome about the World Meeting of Families, accompanied by Cardinal Kevin Farrell and Vatican spokesperson Greg Burke.



about, much less discuss in explicit terms, 'ideological attacks' on the family. But that does not mean they aren't happening.

For example, why are so many parents having "sleepless nights because of their teenage children"?

One reason might be because a daughter is suffering from an eating disorder. Or she might be self-harming. Or a son might be addicted to porn. Or the parents might worry that a son or a daughter is developing a drug problem.

“There was a time when eating disorders were almost unheard of”

Parents have always worried about their children, and always will, but there was a time when eating disorders were almost unheard of, self-harm – much less suicide – was far less common, porn was almost impossible to access and so were drugs.

Changing values mean changing behaviour. Today, people have far more freedom than they once did. But this also means fewer boundaries for children and teenagers and more ways to get into trouble. Parental authority over children is hugely diminished. This is a good thing when authority became authoritarianism, but a bad thing when it becomes much harder for parents to keep their children out of trouble.

It becomes harder still when one set of parents is trying to (say) delay the day their children get a smartphone while other parents are giving their children's friends smartphones at younger and

younger ages.

Values are a product of ideology, of ideas. The current backlash against the authoritarianism of the past isn't just affecting children, it's affecting their parents as well. The hyper-individualism that is the driving value of Western society at present is affecting every aspect of family life.

Hyper-individualism means we are placing too much emphasis on personal freedom and autonomy as the be-all and end-all of life.

This is at its most obvious in the abortion debate. Those who back legalised abortion are not called the 'pro-choice' side for nothing. Being free to choose, up to and including the death of your own unborn child, is considered the ultimate good before which all other goods, even the right to life itself, must bow. The irony is that many women feel pressured into having abortions, sometimes by their own parents. So much for 'choice'.

But the hyper-individualism also means that many parents don't even bother to marry. Society once insisted that couples had to marry before they had children. When they didn't, the consequences could be dire, especially for unmarried mothers.

Equal

Marriage is good for children. Married parents are far more likely to stay together than unmarried parents and that kind of stability benefits children, all other things being equal.

Hyper-individualism also means couples are much more likely to divorce or separate than was once the case. Divorce and separation rates in Ireland are still low by Western standards. All the same, the number of Irish

people who are divorced or separated has increased from 40,000 in 1986 to 250,000 by 2011. That is without counting all the children affected.

When Pope Francis referred to the "global war" on the family last October, he was referring to gender ideology, which is the

theory that the 'gender' we are (male or female or something in between) has nothing to do with our biological sex. Therefore, someone who is biologically male might really be a female and vice versa.

“One big source of pressure on families today is ideological in nature”

This ideology is now in our schools. A couple with a son in the local primary school told me recently that he had come home from school and asked his mother: "Mammy, have you always been a mammy or were you once a daddy?"

This is because a girl in the school has declared she is really a boy with the full backing of the school and her parents. All the children in the school have now been

told that girls might really be boys or boys might really be girls regardless of their anatomies. That is a lot for young children to have to absorb.

This, by the way, is another manifestation of extreme individualism, in this case that you can even choose your own gender and that it is not something given to you by nature.

Without doubt, therefore, one big source of pressure on families today is ideological in nature because values stem from ideology and values help shape what we do and what we don't do.

The World Meeting of Families next year must imitate Pope Francis by showing both a soft side, and a tougher, more analytical side as well.

On that score, let's finish with the Pope's words from Georgia last year: "Today, there is a global war out to destroy marriage. Not with weapons but with ideas... we have to defend ourselves from ideological colonisation." Exactly right. The World Meeting of Families should be part of that process. Anything else would be a terrible failure of duty.

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Families need a Church which is with them

People of all backgrounds are fascinated by Pope Francis, writes **Archbishop Diarmuid Martin**

Even those who do not belong to the Church understand that Pope Francis wishes to set in place a real renewal of the Church and they wish him well.

What inspires Pope Francis in his desire for renewal? There is a danger that each person would try to impose their own idea which may well be other than the Pope's vision of authentic renewal.

In his Letter of Convocation of the World Meeting of Families, Pope Francis explains what his dream of the Church is: "I dream of a Church which reaches out, not a Church which is self-referential, a Church which does not pass by at a distance the hurts of humankind, a merciful Church which announces what is at the heart of the revelation of divine love, and that is mercy."

Pope Francis has expressed these ideas on many other occasions. They were evident in the short speech he gave to the cardinals on the days prior to the conclave which elected him. What is innovative in the Letter of Convocation is the emphasis on the central place that the family is called to play in realising this great dream of renewal of the Pope.

The family is called to be a place of encounter with that divine mercy which heals and liberates. The family is called to be the place where spouses love each other not in vague romantic terms but in terms of their everyday realities and difficulties. Living love in the family involves family members knowing how to generously give of themselves, involves knowing how to forgive, knowing never to lose patience, but rather to reach out to understand and to respect each other.

Vision

The Pope's vision of the mission of the family does not attempt to hide the fact that families experience challenges, weakness, fragility and even breakdown.

Families need a Church which is with them, accompanying them in a process of discernment and integra-

Dublin Meeting of Families can offer concrete signs of God's love – Pope



This is the text of Pope Francis' letter to Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, formally convoking the 2018 Dublin World Meeting of Families. It was published by the Vatican on March 30.

At the end of the Eighth World Meeting of Families, held in Philadelphia in September 2015, I announced that the subsequent meeting with Catholic families of the world would take place in Dublin. I now wish to initiate preparations, and am pleased to confirm that it will be held from 21 to 26 August 2018, on the theme "The Gospel of the Family: joy for the world".

Indeed, it is my wish for families to have a way of deepening their reflection and their sharing of the content of the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*.

One might ask: does the Gospel continue to be a joy for the world? And also: does the family continue to be good news for today's world? I am sure the answer is yes! And this 'yes' is firmly based on God's plan. The love of God is His 'yes' to all creation and at the heart of this latter is man.

Union

It is God's 'yes' to the union between man and woman, in openness and service to life in all its phases; it is God's 'yes' and His commitment to a humanity that is often wounded, mistreated and dominated by a lack of love.

The family, therefore, is the 'yes' of God as Love. Only starting from love can the family manifest, spread and regenerate God's love in the world. Without love, we cannot live as children of God, as couples, parents and brothers.

“We know how much Christian families are a place of mercy and witnesses of mercy”

I wish to underline how important it is for families to ask themselves often if they live based on love, for love and in love. In practice, this means giving oneself, forgiving, not losing patience, anticipating the other, respecting. How much better family life would be if every day we lived according to the words, 'please', 'thank you' and 'I'm sorry'.

Every day we have the experience of



fragility and weakness, and therefore we all, families and pastors, are in need of renewed humility that forms the desire to form ourselves, to educate and be educated, to help and be helped, to accompany, discern and integrate all men of good will. I dream of an outbound Church, not a self-referential one, a Church that does not pass by far from man's wounds, a merciful Church that proclaims the heart of the revelation of God as Love, which is Mercy.

Witnesses

It is this very mercy that makes us new in love; and we know how much Christian families are a place of mercy and witnesses of mercy, and even more so after the extraordinary Jubilee. The Dublin meeting will be able to offer concrete signs of this.

I therefore invite all the Church to keep these indications in mind in the pastoral preparation for the next World Meeting.

You, dear Brother, along with your collaborators, have the task of translating in a special way the teaching of *Amoris Laetitia*, with which the Church wishes families always to be in step, in that inner pilgrimage that is the manifestation of authentic life.

My thoughts go in a special way to the Archdiocese of Dublin and to all the dear Irish nation for the generous welcome and commitment involved in hosting such an important event. May the Lord recompense you as of now, granting you abundant heavenly favours.

May the Holy Family of Nazareth guide, accompany and bless your service, and all the families involved in the preparation of the great World Meeting in Dublin.

tion though helping them to respond with a 'yes' to the divine love.

“It is a moment in which the entire Church can deepen its reflection on the teaching of *Amoris Laetitia*”

The World Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin sets out to be not just a passing event or a fleeting celebration of the ideals of family life.

It is a moment in which the entire Church can deepen its reflection on the teaching of *Amoris Laetitia*; it is a moment in which the daily love of husbands and wives and the daily love of parents for their children can be recognised as a fundamental resource for the renewal of the Church and of society. The Church must be a place where those who have failed can experience not harsh judgement but the strong embrace of the Lord which can lift them up to begin again to realise their own dream even

if only imperfectly.

The celebration in Dublin in August 2018 will be prepared by an extensive catechesis on the meaning of conjugal and family love and on the role of the family in society. It will be a moment of renewal for the Church in Ireland with wide involvement of lay faithful. It will be a moment in which the role of the family can be understood in greater depth.

It will be a moment in which families can regain confidence in carrying out their mission in the context

of a Church which is merciful and which accompanies them in the ups and downs of their lives.

“It will be a moment of renewal for the Church in Ireland”

The Church in Ireland – and especially my Archdiocese of Dublin – is aware of the privilege that Pope Francis has assigned to it but is also aware of the challenge that the Pope has placed on its

shoulders.

The challenge is not just of organising a large world event, but of recalling for a modern society such as that of Ireland, with its complex mix of secularisation and faith, how important the family is for the future of Ireland and of the wider society especially in Europe.

1 This is the text of an intervention by Archbishop Martin, President of the 2018 World Meeting of Families, at a press conference in Rome on March 30.



Ireland's best known 'silenced priest' is rejecting a Church of strawmen, writes **Fr Bernard Healy**

Last week Fr Tony Flannery attracted the attention of *The Irish Times* with a blogpost entitled 'How Much of Church Doctrine do we Really Believe?'

The Church's credibility problem in Ireland, he argues, rests on something deeper than recent scandals. He argues that "[s]ome of the very basic doctrines of the Church no longer make sense to the modern mind, and are being quietly rejected even by people who still attend church".

He's far from being alone in this diagnosis. Many clergy would agree that a pervading unbelief is a real phenomenon in the Irish Church. However, Fr Flannery's response to that diagnosis seems to tell us more about him and his struggles than it does about the Church and the Christian faith.

Fr Flannery chooses to criticise a childish crude parody of God rather than the doctrine that the Church teaches. For example, he presents the idea of original sin as something that presents the Creator as having condemned the people before Christ to live "shut off from any relationship with God" as though the Catholic Church ignored the prophets of the Old Testament and the Ten Commandments.

Account

Many non-Christian thinkers choose to engage with a more convincing account of our faith than the parody Fr Flannery presents.

Even for those who think Church teaching is a subjective matter, the question of 'what the Catholic Church teaches as her fixed doctrine' is a question that's capable of being answered objectively. The fact that Fr Flannery fails to give an accurate account of what he critiques is the sign

of a bad argument.

One might hope that he was criticising the way Church teaching can be presented poorly or how inadequate the popular understanding of our faith can be. If that were the case, the next step would be to look at how a poor understanding could be brought to a deeper and better account of the teachings and person of Jesus Christ.

“That wonder that he speaks about is far from new! It is found in scripture and the Christian tradition”

However, Fr Flannery doesn't do that. Even though the supposed shortcomings he identifies are the kind of things that the Church has responded to repeatedly and with great care since the first days of Christianity, he prefers to take his strawman as being a sufficient reason to dismiss such ideas as the Trinity, original sin, the redemption and the role of Mary in God's plan.

When asked about whether he believes in the resurrection of Christ, he penned another blogpost opining that the Apostles "gradually began to realise that in a mysterious, but very real, way he was still with them".

The fact that the scriptures are at pains to insist on the physicality of the Risen Christ, and that people 2,000 years ago understood as well as we do that dead men, as a general rule, do not get up and walk again, seems lost on Fr Flannery who seems to write off the bodily resurrec-

tion of Christ as something only acceptable to generations who knew no better.

What do we get instead? Fr Flannery writes vaguely about 'quantum physics', presenting a very distant-sounding God, very unlike the personal God of scripture.

Perhaps the most substantial creed he gives is as follows: "The wonder and mystery of the universe, that we are now beginning to glimpse, is only a small insight into the far greater wonder and mystery of the creator. It should have been left at that, and leave us free to gaze in awe at the mystery in the many ways in which it reveals itself to us in our lives and in the world."

That wonder that he speaks about is far from new! It is found in scripture and the Christian tradition. However, what is missing is the Christian (and Jewish) conviction that God has chosen not only to show Himself in creation, but has chosen to speak to us directly.

Question

The question of how, through whom and with what intent God might speak to us is probably the loftiest human inquiry, and it's not for us to sneer at anyone's answers, no matter how strange we find them.

However, the issue with Fr Flannery is that he seems to be saying either that God hasn't spoken to us, or that it doesn't really matter whether or not God has spoken. He seems to think we should be satisfied with pondering the mystery of the universe.

On that point, Fr Flannery breaks clearly with the Christian tradition and every page of the scriptures.

This leads to an inevita-

ble question – why would Fr Flannery want recognition as a Catholic priest? He's not just saying that there are problems in the Church, that the Church should do better, and that the Church should be reformed.

“What his recent blogpost shows is that he's not just 'controversial' or 'questioning'”

If we take his statements at face-value, he is arguing that the teaching work of the Church has been systematically misrepresenting the Gospel since her foundation.

If he is so agnostic about whether God has spoken to us or not, he's denying any reason for the Church to exist at all. Why want to be a Christian, let alone a priest, if "awe and wonder in creation" is the summit of understanding?

The rehabilitation of Fr Flannery has been a *cause célèbre* for some years. What his recent blogpost shows is that he's not just 'controversial' or 'questioning'.

At face value, what he writes is so far from the basic ideas of Catholicism that it makes no sense for him to be an official teacher of the Faith. He has every right to go on his own spiritual and intellectual journey, but he can't expect to have the institutional support and backing of the Catholic Church as he tries to argue her out of existence.

A Catholic educator with the Twitter handle @nosd-nomde recently posted about an eight-year-old baptismal candidate who explained to her: "The Nicene creed happened in the Church a long time ago when the old people

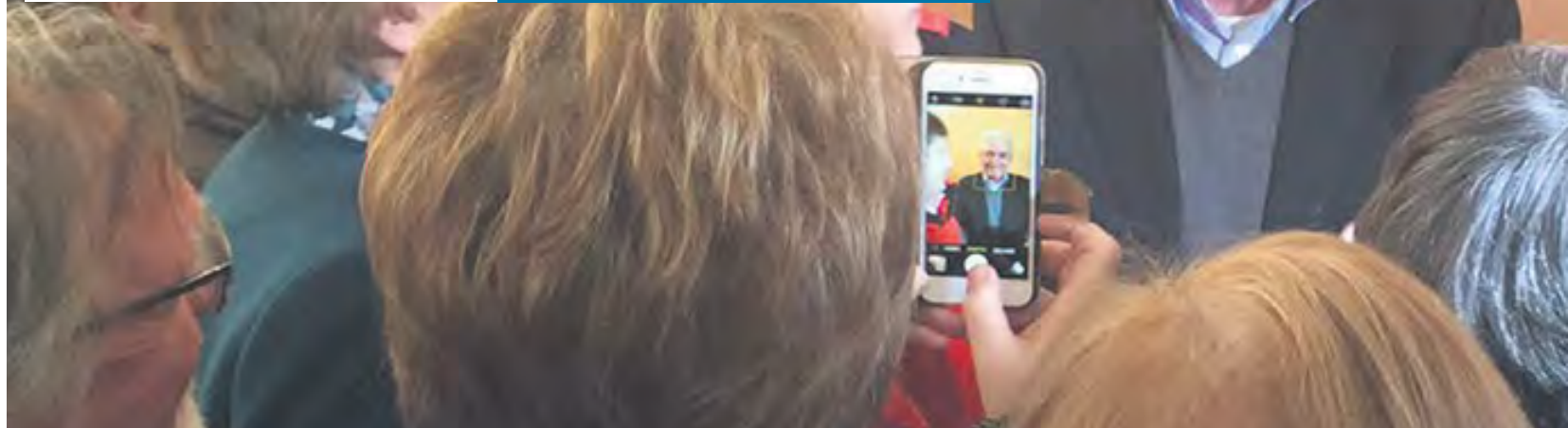
couldn't decide if Jesus was a man or God & we know he's both."

There's a better grasp of why we need doctrine in that

child's sentence than in Fr Flannery's empty creed.

1 Fr Bernard Healy is a priest of the Diocese of Kerry.

Fr Flannery's empty credo



Wellwishers gather around Fr Flannery at a community centre in Kilimordaly, Co. Galway, after he defied the Church this January by celebrating his first public Mass since 2012.



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Discussions about *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on love and the family, even if they have not set ordinary parishes ablaze have, at least in certain circles, been characterised far more by heat than by light, especially since last September.

That month saw Pope Francis respond to draft guidelines from the bishops of Buenos Aires on the implementation of the exhortation's thorniest section, that being the pastoral care of those who had married in the Church but since civilly divorced and remarried.

The bishops' document, 'Basic criteria for the application of chapter 8 of *Amoris Laetitia*', had mapped out ways of "accompanying, discerning and integrating weakness" for Catholics living in irregular family situations, focusing on the need to support and integrate divorcees into Church life, specifying that "in certain cases, this can include the help of the sacraments".

With an eye to how others might be confused by some divorced and civilly remarried Catholics being allowed to receive Communion, the bishops said "it may be right for eventual access to sacraments to take place privately, especially where situations of conflict might arise", continuing, "at the same time, we have to accompany our communities in their growing understanding and welcome, without this implying creating confusion about the teaching of the Church on the indissoluble marriage".

Calling in his response for extensive catechesis on the exhortation and for the urgent formation of priests to enable them better to help such Catholics discern the reality of their situations, Pope Francis said such cooperative discernment processes would be necessary even if they became "tiresome", noted the "pastoral charity" of the bishops' document, and said there could be "no other interpretations" of *Amoris Laetitia*.

Two weeks after the Pope's reply, four cardinals wrote to ask him for clarifications on five aspects of the exhortation. In doing so, they used a rarely used but well-established approach known as *dubia*, or 'doubts', where questions are asked with the aim of getting straightforward 'yes' or 'no' answers.

Questions

While the broad thrust of the cardinals' questions was surely reasonable, the questions were phrased in such a way that they seemed to cast doubt on the Pope's own fidelity to Church teaching, as well as seeming to demand blanket rules for situations where there could be innumerable unique variations.

The Pope refused to respond, and the cardinals published their questions two months later. Since then the arguments have not abated, with the quartet having threatened to issue a "correction" to the Pope.

It is hard to avoid concluding that some response to the *dubia* would have helped the situation, even if such a response didn't take a traditional format; in particular, it could have been helpful to agree that St John Paul's teachings on marriage and on moral theology, not least in his 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, are key parts of the Church's magisterial teaching as it has developed and continues to develop.

Doing this could have allowed Pope Francis to highlight how Church teaching on conscience and

The Church's challenge to reach out to lost sheep may be more logistical than doctrinal



Communion for divorced Catholics is a Church fault-line, but Tradition may point the way forward, writes **Greg Daly**



Above, St Thomas Aquinas. Left, 'The Council of Trent', by Pasquale Cati da Jesi, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome (1588), showing participants at the council's closing session with – in the foreground – allegorical representations of the virtues crowning the Church.

Thomas Aquinas effectively envisaged, would be a scenario in which a married man could have sexual relations with someone to whom he wrongly believed himself married, and could do so without sinning.

In a section of the *Summa Theologiae* where he considers the question of whether we are bound to follow our conscience, even if it is wrong, and whether we sin by following an erring conscience, he concludes that it is always immoral to act against our conscience. However, he continues, the question of whether or not acting in accord with a mistaken conscience is moral or otherwise depends on *why* our conscience is erring, with everything depending on this.

“We should know that adultery is contrary to God's law, and know that it's utterly forbidden”

"Mistakes made willingly, whether directly willed or arising from neglect of what one ought to know, cannot excuse any resulting act of will," he says, continuing, "but mistakes that arise without negligence from ignorance of some circumstance can make resulting acts of will involuntary and this excuse them."

Thomas being Thomas, he gives related examples to explain his point: "For instance," he says, "if mistaken reason tells a man he should go to another man's wife, the will that abides by that mistaken reason is evil, since this

on subjective culpability allows for some pastoral leeway in ways that the *dubia* don't seem open to acknowledging, at least for some Catholics in second unions, even if such leeway might not apply to most such individuals.

Obvious areas for discreet

movement on a case-by-case basis, after all, might concern wives who had remarried out of necessity after being abandoned – those who our Lord describes as having been *made* adulterers, as though they themselves weren't fully culpable – especially if such a remarried

wife could not leave her current marriage or realistically propose chastity to her husband because of a well-founded fear of violence against her and her children.

Conscience

Another area, and one that St

“The Church had always taught, after all, that the one essential ingredient to the formation of a marriage was the mutual consent of man and wife, regardless of the presence or otherwise of a priest. Blessings were desirable, of course, but not needed...”

mistake arises from ignorance of the Divine Law, which he is bound to know.”

So far so good. We have a duty to know what God expects of us, after all, and since we should know that adultery is contrary to God's law, and know that it's utterly forbidden, this is an area where ignorance is no excuse.

He continues, however, in a direction that might seem highly surprising, suggesting that if a man sincerely believes someone to be his wife, and sleeps with them, there's no sin.

“But if a man's reason errs in mistaking another for his wife, and if he wishes to give her her right when she asks for it, his will is excused from being evil,” he writes, explaining, “because this mistake arises from ignorance of a circumstance, which is excusable, and causes the act to be involuntary.”

Confusion

Similarly, one would assume – and this is how the story of King Arthur begins – for a woman with someone she might mistakenly believe to be her husband. On the face of it this might be assumed to be a reference to confusion caused by darkness or drunkenness or madness or even the magical disguises and love potions that crop up every so often in medieval literature, but the broad principle is clear: there may be no sin in sincere cases of mistaken identity.

In this light, it is worth bearing in mind that one can be mistaken not merely as to the question of whether a certain person is who

one thinks them to be, but also to the question of *what* one thinks them to be.

This was, in fact, a pressing problem throughout the Middle Ages, when the Church did not absolutely require marriages to be contracted in public – indeed, when the Greek Church declared in the 9th Century that marriages contracted without the Church's explicit blessing were null and void, the Western Church did not accept this.

The Church had always taught, after all, that the one essential ingredient to the formation of a marriage was the mutual consent of man and wife, regardless of the presence or otherwise of a priest. Blessings were desirable, of course, but not needed.

Over the course of the Middle Ages, however, it became clear that ‘clandestine’ marriages – ones contracted without the knowledge of the Church – while theologically sound could pose serious pragmatic problems.

“That this created real human victims alongside theological conundrums was obvious”

Such marriages occurred when couples contracted marriages privately, perhaps through desire to marry partners of their own choice rather than ones picked by their families, but it was far from uncommon for husbands subsequently to pretend these clandestine marriages didn't exist and publicly ‘marry’ others,

with their true spouses unable to prevent this.

That this created real human victims alongside theological conundrums was obvious. Also problematic was the phenomenon whereby annulments could be garnered by the production of supposed ‘true spouses’ from prior clandestine marriages, despite nobody being able to test the truth of such claims.

The debate over how to tackle this would run to the 16th-Century Council of Trent, where some theologians would argue that the conditions for the validity of marriages had been fixed by Christ, such that for the Church to add to this would be a rejection of Christ's own teaching.

Eventually in 1563, the council introduced the concept of ‘canonical form’, declaring that marriages attempted without witnesses – including at least one priest – were null and void, although it would not make this universally binding until the early 20th Century.

Innovation

Dozens of bishops – about a fifth of those gathered – opposed this pastoral innovation, with some submitting a written objection to the Pope, preserving their opposition for posterity.

Two of the three cardinals who were present as papal legates made it clear that they were opposed to the change, but submitted themselves to the Pope's judgment.

It is easy to see, then, why in St Thomas Aquinas' day it would have been quite easy for men and women to have slept with people they believed to be their spouses but who were in fact clandestinely married to other people.

In situations of such sincere ignorance, it is hard to see that there could be any sin at all, let alone that accusations of adultery could be thrown about.

This seems pertinent, to say the least, to guidelines issued in January by Malta's Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta and Bishop Mario Grech.

In advising their clergy on how to give effect to *Amoris Laetitia*, they said people in “irregular” marital circumstances who are genuinely willing to engage in a serious process of personal discernment about their situation should be accompanied on their journey, helping them to form and enlighten their consciences so they can make an honest decision before God.

If it becomes clear along this journey that there are reasonable doubts about the validity of a first marriage, priests should encourage people to seek an annulment, the bishops wrote, noting that people can sometimes be “subjectively certain in conscience that their previous and irreparably broken marriage had never been valid”.

It's worth bearing in mind that there would be people in second unions who might not obviously be entitled to an annulment, or who might be denied an annulment on

technical grounds or because a first spouse had refused to cooperate, who could continue to believe their first union was never valid in God's eyes and their second one the true one.

They might, of course, be wrong on this – the guidelines, after all, describe such people as “subjectively certain”, not objectively so, but the Maltese bishops seem to be picking up on the fact that some people who have divorced and remarried may be fully aware of the Church's teaching on adultery, while genuinely being mistaken as a matter of fact as to the identity of their spouse.

An obvious objection might be that those who apply to Church tribunals should regard themselves as morally bound to abide by the tribunals' findings, but it is worth remembering that in cases of doubt – perhaps in cases where a person is not in a position to prove certain facts – marriage tribunals uphold contested marriages as presumably valid, rather than as demonstrably so.

Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI, when head of the Church's doctrinal watchdog, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wondered about this in 1998, noting that while some theologians believe Catholics who had subjected themselves to tribunals ought to accept decisions they believe to be false, others disagree since “the juridical forum does not deal with norms of divine law, but rather with norms of ecclesiastical law”.

Expressing concerns about what subjective decisions might mean in such cases, given how this could endanger the public character of marriage, he said this was a question that needed further study and clarification.

“This poses the question of how such people could believe their second marriages were their real marriages”

If, then, following a discernment process that had been sincerely engaged in with the help of a priest who could help form their conscience so they are enlightened fully as to what the Church teaches, not least in terms of chastity and the nature of marriage, a person still believes their current union is their true one – and sincerely believes in conscience that their partner is in fact their real spouse in the eyes of the Lord, then it could make sense for that person “to acknowledge and believe that he or she are at peace with God”.

Granted, this poses the question of how such people could believe their second marriages, solemnised as they would have been without Church approval, were their real marriages, but given that in these

situations it may well have been that the Church – rather than the couple themselves – that has prevented the ‘real’ marriage from taking place, it is hard to see that they could be deemed at fault, at least as Aquinas would read things.

As such, it could make perfect sense for the bishops to direct their priests that in the case of such a person, “he or she cannot be precluded from participating in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist”.

Whether the sacraments should be administered publicly or privately is another matter, of course, and the Argentine bishops, more so than the Maltese ones, tried to address this matter, presumably as a way of engaging with the concern raised by St John Paul in 1981's *Familiaris Consortio* that “if these people were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage”.

“It may be that modifications to canon law will be needed better to express the fullness of Church teaching in this area”

Against this, one should perhaps remember the comments of Elphin's Bishop Kevin Doran [pictured below] last December, when he told *The Irish Catholic* that “the most important thing

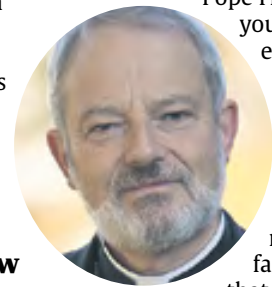
Pope Francis is saying is that you can't be anybody else's conscience”.

Stressing that Pope Francis has clearly said what Church teaching is on marriage, and that every priest must do likewise, the fact remains, he said, that “not even the Pope, judging from ‘outside’, can say ‘this person is in a state of mortal sin’”.

The bishop called on people to read Pope Francis ‘in the round’, and warned against presuming anything about the sinfulness of others, saying, “in the final analysis we can only be responsible for our own personal decisions – we can't be responsible for other people's.”

It may be that modifications to canon law will be needed better to express the fullness of Church teaching in this area, but this may not be the biggest problem posed by this attempt to recover long obscured Church teachings.

Whether the Church has enough priests who think with the mind of the Church and who have the wisdom, energy, and time to help couples discern effectively is a different matter altogether. The biggest difficulty with *Amoris Laetitia*'s approach to helping draw lost sheep back into the flock may turn out to be not doctrinal but logistical.





On the eve of his departure, Archbishop Charles Brown sat down with **Mags Gargan** to reflect on his time as Papal Nuncio to Ireland

Since arriving in Ireland in January 2012 as Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Charles Brown has become a very familiar face to Irish Catholics. He has travelled the length and breadth of this island attending parish events and giving many people their first opportunity to speak to the Pope's representative to Ireland.

His friendly nature and openness soon endeared him to the population and the announcement on March 9 of his new posting to Albania was met by sadness in most quarters.

Archbishop Brown admits to *The Irish Catholic* he too feels "a twinge of sadness in my heart" at leaving Ireland, "because I will miss the beauty of this island, I will miss the edification I have received from the people of faith on this island and I will also miss the amazing welcome that I received from people all over this island, without exception, from the moment I arrived in January 2012".

"I was received with such graciousness, openness and kindness on every side and every quarter, and that is a beautiful thing that I cherish in my heart and it makes it difficult for me to leave without lots of emotion," he says.

Experience

Archbishop Brown's posting to Ireland came as a shock five years ago, as the 57-year-old New Yorker had no previous diplomatic experience, having spent the previous 17 years in the doctrinal section of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in the Holy See.

He arrived in Ireland after a two-month crash course to train and prepare for

diplomatic work, and didn't know what to expect of his new assignment.

"I was beginning something that was very new for me and my expectations were quite fluid. I was really open to everything that was coming," he says.

However, Archbishop Brown's Irish ancestry – five of his eight great-grandparents coming from Co. Clare and Co. Leitrim – and his experience of working in St Brendan's, an Irish parish in the Bronx, did give him "a kind of preparation in a certain sense for Ireland".

"I think that the kind of Ireland I knew in an emigrant parish in the Bronx was borne out by my experience when I came here to Ireland, because I found an island in which there is still

– not withstanding all the events of the last 25 years – a large residue of Catholic faith and a great interest in the Church, a great appreciation for the Church," he says.

“I think my vocabulary has been changed with certain expressions that you only hear here...”

Five years later his American accent seems as strong as ever, but he will be taking some Irish influences away with him. "I think my vocabulary has been changed with certain expressions that you only hear here, such as 'to give out'. There is a lot of people giving out. I had no idea what 'to give out' meant before I came to



‘I carry Ireland in my heart’



Ireland because in the States it would mean to distribute, to hand out or to pass out. Here I found that 'to give out' had a different meaning and it can be quite common actually as an activity!"

Archbishop Brown has also developed a love for GAA, particularly for hurling. "I had never really seen a hurling match before. I went to a good number of hurling and GAA football matches and I love both sports. Hurling, I find especially interesting because it is such a fast moving sport and such a pleasure to watch. The frequency of the scoring is pretty perfect – they don't score too often the way you do in American basketball or too infrequently the way you do in soccer, which at times can be boring," he says.

"I think in terms of culture, I have learned so much and benefited so much in these five years, and I leave a much better priest and bishop because of my experience here thanks to the faith of the Irish people."

When pushed to select a highlight of his time in Ireland, the nuncio's first choice is the Eucharistic Congress in 2012. "That was an amazing event," he says. "A beautiful manifestation of the faith of Irish people in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist."

On the cultural side, he

says he will never forget his trip to Skellig Michael, for its symbolism and beauty. "This amazingly beautiful and dramatic rock in the North Atlantic, where monks prayed for centuries, tells us something about the spirit of Irish Catholicism. The deeply monastic spiritual vision of the Irish people is manifested so beautifully on Skellig Michael."

Chapel

Archbishop Brown also says he loved climbing Croagh Patrick, which he managed three times over the years as part of the Reek Sunday pilgrimage. "Again what a great image of the faith of Ireland – everyone walking together on this beautiful mountain, the chapel on the top, Confessions and Holy Eucharist celebrated on the summit. A great image of Christian life walking on a road that can be difficult at times, that can be rocky at times, in which at times you need to help one another to reach the summit and even get out of each other's way in order to ascend. The physical beauty of the West of Ireland, Clew Bay, these are all images that I carry in my heart as I leave Ireland."

The nuncio says his "biggest regret" is that he didn't do the pilgrimage on Lough Derg. "I went to visit Lough Derg twice, but I never

did the pilgrimage. I always intended to go, and this is no excuse for my indolence, but as you know the season for the three-day pilgrimage is quite short. I really do hope to come back and do that."

From all his travels and conversations with the faithful, the nuncio has an acute sense of the issues and struggles of the Church in Ireland, but looking to the future he says with certainty that the Faith will survive its current challenges, although perhaps in a different form.

"I am convinced before all else – and I know in my heart – that the Catholic Church has a future in Ireland. The story of more than 15 centuries of Catholic faith in Ireland is not finished," he says. "At the same time we know that every age of the Church is different. There was times of incredible missionary fruitfulness in which missionaries from Ireland were sent all over the world. There were times of horrific persecution of the Faith, in which the Mass was only celebrated clandestinely in Ireland."

"All of these different periods have existed before us and there will be challenges in the future, but the Faith will continue here because there is such a depth of faith in the hearts of

Archbishop Charles Browne with a group of young people in Skerries, Co. Dublin.



Irish people, such an innate and intrinsic spirituality, a longing for something more than materialism that is deep in the Irish people," Archbishop Brown says.

What that future will be like is more difficult to say, but one obvious change is the decline in the number of priests which he thinks will continue "even at a more rapid rate than it is now". "That also means that inevitably one part of the future of the Church in Ireland – and this is only one part and people will misunderstand me if they thought this is what I think is the only part – will be more priests from other countries coming to work in Ireland, especially priests from Africa," he says. "Large parts of Africa were evangelised by Irish missionaries and the gift of Irish missionaries to Africa will be repaid in some way by African priests coming back to Ireland.

“Lay people are taking a more active and central role in all aspects of Church life in Ireland”

"I also pray God, and I am certain, that the number of vocations to the priesthood will increase in Ireland, although it will almost

certainly not in my lifetime ever reach the numbers it was in the 1950s and 1960s."

A consequence of the decrease in priests is already leading to a much greater responsibility for lay people, which is another aspect of the changing face of the Church in Ireland. "Lay people are taking a more active and central role in all aspects of Church life in Ireland, in terms of administering parishes, as catechists, as pastoral workers, that is certainly a part of the future of the Church in Ireland," Archbishop Brown says.

"As the numbers of priests decline the positions that will need to be filled by lay people will increase. That will give a different shape, a different image, a different face to Irish Catholicism."

As society becomes more and more secular, Irish Catholics are now for the first time experiencing a sense of being in the minority, but Archbishop Brown urges the faithful not to be afraid of being different.

"To be a Catholic in today's world means to be somewhat different from the ambient culture and not to be afraid to be somewhat different, and that is a new experience," he says. "In a time where to be a Catholic is not to be just like everyone else, where cultural momentum is not carrying people to church but away from church, that means inevitably that the people who are in church will be people who have made a more conscious decision to be as some call them 'intentional disciples'. To practise the Faith in Ireland is increasingly becoming a decision that people make and a decision that their fellow citizens may not be making."

Important aspect

Archbishop Brown says that affirming people in their faith is an important aspect of the role of Apostolic Nuncio, and why he felt it was so important for him to accept invitations to visit parishes. "That's probably the best description one can have as papal nuncio, to confirm people in their faith. That was one of the things that St Peter receives as a charge from the Lord – once you have converted, strengthen your brothers and sisters in the Faith," he says.

"I think that was perhaps the most consistent and verifiable experience I had visiting parishes all over Ireland. People were happy to have someone who represents the Holy Father come and try to strengthen them in their faith and to encourage them to continue in the life of faith in Ireland,

because as all of us know there have been in the last 25 years many counter witnesses and even scandals that have led people to lose heart, so I think people wanted to be heartened, strengthened and to be confirmed."

Archbishop Brown was originally sent to Ireland by Pope Benedict XVI, but most of his time as nuncio has been under Pope Francis, and one of his last public engagements here was a celebration in the Apostolic Nunciature last week for the fourth anniversary of Pope Francis' election.

“The accentuation by Pope Francis of God's mercy is incredibly powerful”

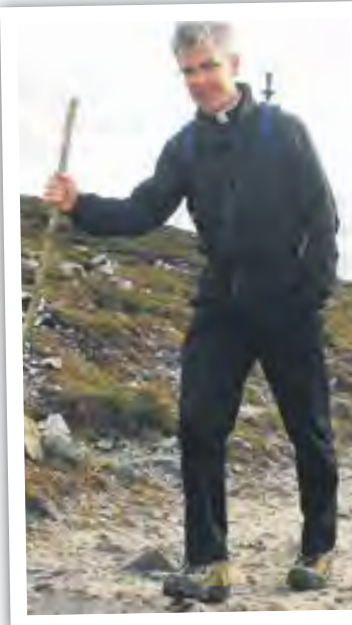
Asked what has been the Pope's greatest impact so far, the archbishop immediately nominates the Holy Father's "beautiful emphasis on God's mercy". "That is really his deep intuition about the way in which evangelisation needs to be accomplished in today's world. In a world that is very aware of human suffering, the accentuation by Pope Francis of God's mercy is incredibly powerful because it corresponds to people's desire to be strengthened, to be comforted, to be received in their difficulties.



"Pope Francis repeats quite often an image, that comes from the early fathers, of the Church as a hospital. That the Church is not a club for the perfect. The Church is a hospital for sinners, a place where all of us are receiving therapy in a sense, where all of us are on the way to healing.

"I think that perhaps the impression was given in some circles that the Church is somehow a place where the morally perfect are applauded for their moral perfection. But that is a grotesque misunderstanding of the nature of the Church. If you look at all the saints, at St Faustina, at John Paul II, the emphasis is on God's mercy, which is God's embrace of us in our brokenness, in our

For the Nuncio's album...



imperfection, in our human neediness, but also an embrace which changes us. I think that is the other side of the beauty of mercy, that God receives us, that Jesus accepts us, but also begins to heal us and show us the way towards healing, and that is why the image of the hospital is so beautiful."



Over the last five years Archbishop Brown has been central in the decision-making process of the appointment of 11 bishops to head Irish dioceses. He has also been credited with bringing a more open style to the role of nuncio and helping to rebuild fragile relations between the Irish Government and the Vatican with the reopening of the Irish Embassy to the Holy See.

Six dioceses await a new bishop and with Pope Francis expected to visit the World Meeting of Families in Dublin next year, the nuncio's successor can expect a busy first year.

Now as Archbishop Brown departs for Albania, he says his farewell message to the people of Ireland is "to remember that Jesus Christ is alive and active in the world today". "That the Faith of our ancestors is as true today as it was when they lived here. And that it is the Catholic faith, because it is the truth that comes from God, is a truth that liberates us and gives us a joy and a purpose that the world cannot give. That it is only in following Christ that we will find our greatest joy.

"When we make a small step towards following him, he supports us, receives us and strengthens us, and gives us the ability to be disciples. That discipleship gives us the greatest joy and satisfaction that is possible in this world," he says.

"My other message to the Irish people as I prepare

to leave is, of course, pray for me as I go to Albania and start my new mission. I will need a lot of prayers in a country that is utterly unlike Ireland, but a place that I go to on the one hand with a lot of eagerness and enthusiasm – because Pope Francis has sent me there – but of course I go also with a

sadness in my heart to some degree, because I am leaving Ireland and I have been so well received here and so immeasurably happy here in these last five years.

"But I just say to all the people who read *The Irish Catholic* that I carry Ireland in my heart and, God willing, I will come back some day."

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Out&About

Polish community welcomes pilgrim statue



KERRY: Children of the Polish community in Killarney with Fr Piotr Delimat welcomed the pilgrim statue celebrating the centenary of Our Lady of Fatima.



KERRY: Rachael O'Regan, Alex Kelly, Sadh Griffin and Mary O'Connell from Mercy Mounthawk in Tralee, who fundraised for a group of seven adults in Burkina Faso who had cataracts on their eyes but could not afford the €300 to do the operations.



DOWN: Each year on the eve of St Patrick's Day members of the Knights of St Columbanus Council 12 Downpatrick & Newcastle area gather at the grave of St Patrick in Downpatrick for an act of commemoration and thanksgiving for the life and work of St Patrick.

IN SHORT

Shaping the future of the Irish Church

Viaiores Christi (VC), one of Ireland's leading lay missionary organisations is hosting a series of talks on renewal within the Irish Church. These sessions, all from different perspectives, will address the future of the Church, through hard-hitting thought-provoking seminars featuring Fr Mark Patrick Hederman on May 3 and lay woman Patricia Coyle on June 7.

"I firmly believe that the Church needs a plan," said VC CEO Shane Halpin. "Without a plan we do not know where we would like to go and how we are going to get there. All good well-resourced organisations need planning, and our Church is no exception." If you want to get involved in this discussion, talks take place in Belvedere College

Lecture Hall, Dublin 1 from 7-9.30pm on May 3 and June 7.

Nominations invited for Hugh O'Flaherty Award

As part of the 10th annual Hugh O'Flaherty Memorial Weekend, which will take place from Saturday, November 4 – Sunday, November 5 in Killarney, The Hugh O'Flaherty Memorial Society are inviting the public, NGOs, voluntary bodies and organisations to nominate the person or organisation they feel is doing outstanding humanitarian work and most deserving of the 2017 Hugh O'Flaherty International Humanitarian Award.

Msgr Hugh O'Flaherty, who was from Killarney, was dubbed the Scarlet Pimpernel of the Vatican for his lifesaving exploits during World War II, saving the

lives of more than 6,500 anti-Fascists, Allied escapees and Jews, hiding them throughout Rome.

Nominations for the award can be for an individual, team or organisation providing humanitarian services for those in need at home or overseas.

Nominations in no more than 500 words should be submitted in writing to the awards committee at the below address, or by e-mail to hofmemorialsociety@gmail.com before Friday, June 16.

Date fixed for 15th annual bikers memorial

This year's date 'Gone but not Forgotten Bikers Memorial' is set for Friday, May 5 at 8pm at the Sacred Heart Church in Clones, Co. Monaghan.

It's an occasion that for the past number

of years has become increasingly important to bikers and their families, from all over Ireland. From early evening the streets of the town will echo with the sound of hundreds of powerful machines as bikers come to remember and pay their respects to their fallen friends.

The organising committee, with the experience of 14 years behind them, are confident that this year will again see an increase in the numbers attending. "Each year the memorial has grown in terms not only of numbers, but also of geographical spread," said founding committee member Fr John Kearns. "It really shows how much this memorial means to people. To travel long distances underlines to us the positivity of the event that we who live locally already knew."

Visit www.gonebutnotforgottenbikers.net for more information.

Edited by Mags Gargan
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



TYRONE: Christ The King Youth Choir is preparing to launch their CD 'Let It Shine – Songs of Faith' in Christ the King Church, Strathroy, Omagh on Palm Sunday, April 9 at 7:30pm. The CD will be available to purchase on the night and further information is available at <https://www.facebook.com/christthekingyouthchoir/>



PRAGUE: The Palestrina Girls Choir of St Mary's Pro-Cathedral won the gold award and special outstanding performance prize at the Prague Young Bohemia International music festival 2017.



WESTMEATH: Some of the Mullingar members of Christian Life Community at a celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation in the Franciscan Friary, Multyfarnham.



CLARE: Bishop Fintan Monahan performing a tree planting ceremony to celebrate 150 years of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word who run Carrigoran Nursing Home



MEATH: Following a year of celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary as custodians of the Mother of Perpetual Help Icon, the Irish Redemptorists gifted the specially commissioned pilgrim icon to Maynooth seminary.

ANTRIM

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

ARMAGH

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

CLARE

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

Candlelight procession from Abbey St Carpark, Ennis on Friday, April 7 at 8.30pm to the cathedral for Mass of remembrance, 'Rising against cancer' in conjunction with the Sláinte an Chláir 48hr fast.

CORK

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

DONEGAL

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

DUBLIN

Gospel and Culture: Soiscéal agus Cultúr: bi-lingual talk on the spirituality of the early Irish monks: Friday, April 7 at 7.30pm at 13 Geraldine Street, (off Berkeley Road), Dublin 7. Organised by the Legion of Mary.

At Church of the Holy Name, Beechwood Avenue - A Lenten Reflection on Ministry, led by Sr Una O'Neill on Monday, April 10 at 10.45am and repeated at 7.30pm.

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

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

FERMANAGH

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

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

Boho parish dawn Mass on Easter Sunday: Participants are asked to gather at the church car-park for 6.45am. Mass will be celebrated at 7am in the townland of Reyfad,

followed by breakfast in Boho Community Centre. For further details contact Fr Jimmy McPhillips at jimmymcp@eircom.net

KERRY

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

KILDARE

Carbury Parish - Adoration in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Derinturn takes place each Monday from 10.30am until 12 midnight. Adoration for priestly vocations takes place every Thursday at 8.45pm. www.CarburyParish.ie

LIMERICK

Janice and Moss Carrig will hold a prayer meeting in the Desmond hall Newcastlewest on Sunday, April 9 at 3pm.

LOUTH

Lenten Prayer for Healing 2017 at St Joseph's Redemptorist Church, Dundalk on Sunday April 9 at 7pm. This year's theme is: Wherever two or three gather in my name (Matthew 18:20). Fr Brendan Callanan, CSSR is the speaker on the topic 'Welcome Home - Reconciliation'.

MAYO

On Saturday, April 8, Knock Shrine will welcome Archbishop Michael Neary and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin for a family day entitled 'Celebrating Family; Preparing for World Meeting of Families 2018' with Mass at 3pm. For information contact (094) 93 88100 or www.knockshrine.ie

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

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

TYRONE

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

WATERFORD

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

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

Monthly intercession for marriages and families in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament: Friday, April 7 from 6 pm - 7 pm in the Edmund Rice Heritage Centre, Waterford.

WESTMEATH

A programme of events to mark the centenary of the appearance of Our Lady at Fatima concludes at the church of St John the Baptist Whitehall, in the parish of Coole on Friday, April 7 with Fr John Nally PP, Ballynacargy.

WICKLOW

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

Letter from America

Exclusion of women from leadership positions diminishes us all



Michael W. Higgins

It is a story of two Maries and their personal courage over against intransigent authority that is as much inspiring as it is dispiriting.

Marie-Julienne Farrington, now deceased, was a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, its international leader, a university president's advisor on spiritual matters, a French translator and a social activist. She was also a person of uncommon bravery.

I was thinking of her recently — we worked together for years at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut — when I read of the recent apology issued by Pope Francis following his meeting with the controversial President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame.

The apology, long sought after by the Rwandan government, consisted of a formal acknowledgement of the Catholic Church's failures during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Like Belgium, the United States and the United Nations, the Vatican came in for heavy criticism for its complicity or inaction during the bloody slaughter that claimed over 800,000 lives.

Indifference

The Catholic Church in Rwanda (the majority faith by far of the population) suffered the loss of countless Church workers, professed religious, and clergy — including the Archbishop of Kigali Vincent Nsengiyumva — so it is by no means a matter of institutional indifference. But there were also instances where clergy succumbed to tribal identity and jettisoned the overriding Gospel imperative to love one's neighbours rather than to massacre them.

It is these specific failures that Pope Francis addresses in his apology.

For Marie-Julienne Farrington, apologies and strategic considerations were immaterial. Forbidden by



Pope Francis accepts a gift from Rwandan President Paul Kagame during a private meeting at the Vatican in March; below, Marie Collins. Photos; CNS



both American and Belgian authorities to travel to Rwanda, she disobeyed them, rented a car in Burundi, and crossed over the border to stand in solidarity with her threatened sisters, Hutu and Tutsi alike.

“The Vatican's ambassador was one of the first on a plane leaving the city once the bloodlust was unleashed”

At one point, she was halted by drug-crazed Interhawe thugs brandishing blood-laced machetes, but the diminutive nun stared them down. They let her pass.

Farrington knew Kagame, befriended the former Canadian general and senator Romeo Dallaire (someone who was only too intimately familiar with the Rwanda tragedy), and placed herself in danger as a religious leader

because her place was to be with the suffering and the intimidated.

By contrast, Dallaire once told me, the Vatican's ambassador was one of the first on a plane leaving the city once the bloodlust was unleashed.

Marie Collins, the recently-resigned clerical sex abuse survivor whose position on the Vatican Commission for the Protection of Minors was heralded as unprecedented and brilliant, is also a woman whose personal integrity was put on the line and who responded with the strength of her beliefs.

Dismayed by what she considered the stalling and stubborn resistance to change in the Vatican regarding various protocols for episcopal accountability, for the Vatican's frequent demonstrations of bad faith concerning the implementation of policies approved by Francis (at least in principle), and for the adamant refusal of appropriate Vatican officials to

respond to each and every letter from a victim apologising for their suffering and at least acknowledging receipt of the letter, prompted her, in the end, to tender her resignation.

Survivor

A survivor of abuse, an articulate spokesperson and advocate for justice for all survivors, and a committed Catholic who differentiates between depraved or corrupt representatives of the Church and the Church itself, Collins was the humanising lay face of the commission (a male survivor, Peter Saunders, lost the trust of the commission earlier and was suspended from it), leaving the Baroness Sheila Hollins, a British psychiatrist, the remaining high profile lay presence.

In both instances, the two Maries stood firm in their values and have edified us with their personal integrity.

Neither ecclesial renegades nor disaffected people of faith, their witness is yet another reminder why the continued exclusion of women from positions of serious leadership and ministry in the Catholic Church speaks to a poverty of vision and imagination that diminishes us all.

Michael W. Higgins is Distinguished Professor of Catholic Thought, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, an author and public broadcaster.

Sight is one of the greatest gifts you can give

World Report

Edited by Greg Daly
greg@irishcatholic.ie

Church, Faith and liturgy in 'serious crisis', says top cardinal

Modern Masses have caused disaster, devastation and schism in the Church, the head of the Vatican's liturgy department has said.

In an address sent to a conference in Germany, Cardinal Robert Sarah, who heads the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, said the Church is currently undergoing a "serious crisis" underestimated by many Church leaders.

The conference at Herzogenrath, near Aachen, entitled 'The Source of the Future', was organised to mark 10 years since the publication of Pope Benedict XVI's letter *Summorum Pontificum* which loosened restrictions on the celebration of the Tridentine Mass, now known as the Extraordinary Form.

Disintegration

Citing the Pope Emeritus, the Guinean cardinal said the Church has been in crisis for 50 years, this crisis being linked to "the disintegration of the liturgy".

He recognised that the



Cardinal Sarah celebrating Mass *ad orientem* in London. Photo: Fr Lawrence Lew, OP

Second Vatican Council aimed to promote greater active participation in the Mass, and praised how "some fine initiatives" had been taken to achieve this.

"However," he said, "we cannot close our eyes to the

disaster, the devastation and the schism that the modern promoters of a living liturgy caused by remodelling the Church's liturgy according to their ideas." Challenging how some innovations have glossed over how the Mass is

a mystery even more than it is a prayer, he said that active participation is not a matter of external activities and roles, but is rather about "an intensely active receptivity" to Christ.

The cardinal said a "serious crisis of faith" was afflicting both laity and clergy, with part of this confusion leading to the Mass being treated as "a simple convivial meal, the celebration of a profane feast, the community's celebration of itself, or even worse, a terrible diversion from the anguish of a life that no longer has meaning".

In contrast, however, he praised the "the tremendous, marvellous work" of the English-, Spanish- and Korean-language bishops conferences in translating the Mass texts in recent years along the principles laid out by the Vatican in 2001's *Liturgiam Authenticam*.

The cardinal's praise comes despite reports that Pope Francis wishes to review the translation guidelines.

Return, Iraqi bishops urge displaced Christians

Iraqi Christians driven from the Nineveh Plains by the so-called Islamic State are looking forward to moving home, with Church leaders having assembled a taskforce to spearhead a vast rebuilding programme.

The Nineveh Reconstruction Committee, formed from bishops from the Syriac Catholic, Syriac Orthodox and Chaldean Catholic Churches, will oversee the planning and rebuilding of settlements in the Northern Iraqi plains where it is thought that

about 12,000 homes need to be rebuilt. Aid to the Church in Need, the Catholic charity for persecuted and other suffering Christians, estimates that reconstruction costs will amount to around £160 million (€188 million).

Funds will be allocated in proportion to the number of damaged houses belonging to members of each Church.

Ceremony

After a ceremony in Erbil, the capital of Kurdish northern Iraq, in which the commit-

tee was established, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Timothy Mosa Alshamany [pictured] said:

"Today we are truly a united Church - Syriac Orthodox, Chaldean and Syriac Catholic - united in the work of rebuilding these houses on the Nineveh Plains and in restoring hope to the hearts of the inhabitants of these villages and inviting

those who have left them to return."

Expressing a wish that Christians could return home as soon as possible, Syriac Catholic Archbishop Yohanna Petros Mouche said: "I would like to invite the Christians of the Nineveh

Plains to return to their homes and resume living in their villages, in order to bear witness to Christianity."



Time for civil disobedience after Venezuela's judicial coup

Venezuela's bishops have described a Supreme Court decision to eliminate the country's National Assembly as "morally unacceptable". Saying Venezuela's Catholics cannot remain "passive, frightened, or hopeless", they have called for peaceful protests and civil disobedience to the government of President Nicholas Maduro.

The abolition of the assembly, which opposition parties have dominated for over a year, has been viewed by many as a coup, with the Organisation of American States calling it the country's "final blow to democracy".

Although Venezuela is the

world's 11th-largest oil producer, misgovernment has left it plagued with chronic shortages of food, medicine, and other basic products, causing the Church to be increasingly outspoken against the Maduro regime.

Archbishop Diego Padron, head of Venezuela's bishop's conference, said the Church must respond "not only with words but with facts, because a religion that is only vertical, intimate, individualist and spiritualist, which doesn't question the system and doesn't commit the faithful in the transformation of society, would be a religion that is opiate of the people".

Church welcomes UN Myanmar investigations

The Catholic Church in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, have joined civil society organisations and NGOs in backing the UN's decision to establish an official inquiry and a mission to investigate human rights violations against the Muslim Rohingya in the country's Rakhine State.

The decision by the UN Human Rights Council, from which the government of Myanmar has publicly dissociated itself, follows the displacement of about 90,000 Rohingya since early October, when a military offensive against civilians began after nine police officers were killed in an incident the military branded as an "act of terrorism".

The soldiers have been accused of burning houses, carrying out executions without trial, torture and mass rapes.



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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

Good Friday ban goes beyond its religious roots

Dear Editor, I was delighted to read that Minister Frances Fitzgerald will not be lifting the ban on the sale of alcohol on Good Friday (IC 30/03/2017).

Every year publicans bring up this issue as if it is some kind of religious persecution to deny them one day's profit in a country that has a serious

national drinking problem. It is true that people who do not drink on Good Friday for religious reasons can choose to stay out of the pubs, but I think the ban goes beyond its religious roots and now represents an opportunity for the nation to consider its relationship with alcohol.

It is interesting that the other day

on which it is illegal to sell alcohol in Ireland, Christmas Day, is never challenged by the publicans. One can only assume that they like to have Christmas off.

*Yours etc.,
Stanley Waters,
Sandymount,
Dublin 4.*

Some advance notification is needed for lay-led liturgies

Dear Editor, I write in relation to lay-led liturgies. In his encyclical letter *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*, the late Pope John Paul II wrote: "Parishes are communities of the baptised who express and affirm their identity above all through the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. When a community lacks a priest, attempts are rightly made somehow to remedy the situation so that

it can continue its Sunday celebration. Those laity who lead their brothers and sisters in prayer, exercise in a praiseworthy way, the common priesthood of all the faithful based on the grace of Baptism. However, such solutions must be considered merely temporary, while the community awaits a priest."

I believe good, sound catechesis is very necessary

in the area of lay-led liturgies. In the name of fairness, the Christian community should be told in advance if they are having such a liturgy, as this will allow those who wish to attend Sunday Mass, to make alternative arrangements. Once this is made clear then I see no difficulty with lay-led liturgies.

I will conclude with a further quote from the

said encyclical: "We are constantly tempted to reduce the Eucharist to our own dimensions, while in reality it is we who must open ourselves up to the dimension of the Mystery. The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity and depreciation."

*Yours etc.,
Fr Michael Reddan SVD,
Donamon,
Co. Roscommon.*

Others training lay people to cover priests

Dear Editor, Greg Daly's article (IC 23/03/2017) about Limerick arranging prayer meetings in all parishes shows a welcome initiative of Vatican II's more reformed idea of the permanent diaconate. Nevertheless, many other countries are training lay people for auxiliary services to supply a lack of priests.

In South Africa, for instance, a province of the English Jesuits, one has experience of Eucharistic Ministers being further trained, e.g. in the central Johannesburg University

Parish, to perform daily (evening) non-consecration Mass liturgies, using the Prayers of the Missal for the day plus suitable occasional prayers. Then, Holy Communion is distributed at the appropriate time and the "Eucharistic Service" is complete.

I have even known this to replace a Saturday Vigil Mass, where a mini-sermon, provided by the absent priest, is read out by the minister. The evening time usually suits both celebrant and congregation returning from work. This service provides both for daily prayer

and Holy Communion.

Apart from hospital visits with Holy Communion, another function there is to conduct funeral services at the five city funeral parlours (including the crematorium), proceeding afterwards to the cemetery for the burial rites.

These and suchlike changes do take time, but it is hoped the full permanent diaconate will soon follow.

*Yours etc.,
Patrick Morgan,
Rosslare Harbour,
Co. Wexford.*

Some answers on the issue of priestly celibacy

Dear Editor, Terry Healy raises two very important questions regarding the issue of priestly celibacy (Letters 23/03/2017).

Firstly, why do Catholic priests have to be celibate? Priests take a vow of celibacy freely so that they can devote all their efforts in the service of God without the distraction of the worries of married life. The Second Lateran Council (1139) decreed that a marriage of a priest would not only be unlawful but also invalid. The Church can dispense with this law if and when the time is right.

Secondly, to answer Terry's point regarding a priest taking a wife, it must be understood that the Church would be responsible for the family of the priest, providing salary, housing and education of the children. This will put an enormous burden on the parish and the diocese in

which the priest is working. Where will all the money come from? The people who are calling for the Church to change the law regarding married priests have every right to do so but, are they attending church regularly and contributing to the upkeep of their parish church and schools?

The parish church and schools are held in trust for the parishioners and there is an obligation on all parishioners to support their upkeep. If parishioners lived up to their obligations then the issue of whether priests should be allowed to marry could be discussed openly by the Church and the laity. This may be a long way off considering the half empty churches nationally.

*Yours etc.
Herbert F. Eyre,
North Strand, Dublin.*

Congratulations to your Youth Space writer

Dear Editor, Aoife Kehoe's article in your edition dated March 23 ('Religious education a 'lived' subject) deserves much praise.

I found it stimulating and encouraging and I expect she and her classmates will impact positively on Irish society.

Her writing ability suggests a possible career in journalism. Whatever path she chooses, I wish her every success.

*Yours etc.,
Patrick Ryan,
Glenageary,
Co. Dublin.*

Congratulations on exposé

Dear Editor, *The Irish Catholic* is to be congratulated on its March 30 exposure of attempts by George Soros' Open Society Foundation (OSF) to further undermine Ireland's pro-life culture.

Last August after reading an *Irish Independent* article detailing the OSF funding of three Irish organisations to promote repeal of the Eighth Amendment, I wrote to SIPO questioning the legality of this foreign funding. Dealing with SIPO was tortuous and eventually I was told that monies given to both Amnesty and the Family Planning Association were not being used for political purposes. Thanks to Greg Daly's article we learn that the foreign money is being used by these organisations for education purposes.

I think our schools should be more vigilant of foreign financed infiltrators promoting repeal of our pro-life laws, while disguising themselves as exponents of human rights. In this I am reminded of an event 15 years ago when Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue appeared before a House of Commons Committee and justified his Lancaster diocese's denial of Amnesty International access to Catholic schools.

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

Renua's official declaration

Dear Editor, I welcome the news that Renua has declared itself a pro-life party (IC 30/03/2017). It really was a surprise that it had not done so at the time it was launched. So many people like myself who attended the RDS "monster rally" organised by Renua's precursor the Reform Alliance, did so arguably because they were impressed by the courage of those Fine Gael TDs who lost the party whip because they could not in conscience vote in favour of abortion.

While Lucinda Creighton may have taken this support for granted, I do wish John Leahy, the new Renua leader, well in his work ahead. Pro-life supporters vary in backgrounds and age, some are pro-life because of a belief in the human rights of the unborn child, others based on faith reasons and many for both reasons. I believe it is important that all of us who value the dignity and value of all life come together to work to protect the constitutional protection of the Eighth Amendment that our previous generation, in their wisdom put in place.

*Yours etc.,
Frank Browne,
Templeogue, Dublin 16.*



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



FRANCE: Tyburn Nuns, whose mother house in London stands just metres from the spot where over 100 Catholics were martyred, outside the house in Grancey-le-Chateau in the Archdiocese of Dijon where their foundress, Mother Marie-Adele Garnier, was born in 1838. The order has purchased the property.



HAITI: Children in Les Cayes open presents they received through the Box of Joy programme from the Florida-based relief and development agency Cross Catholic Outreach.



HONG KONG: Women take selfies with Carrie Lam the day after Mrs Lam, a practicing Catholic and the candidate favoured by China's leadership, was elected Hong Kong's Chief Executive. The election was first such vote since 2014, when pro-democracy protests took place challenging the semi-autonomous city's election system.



▲ **USA:** Sister Carolyn Fachakh of Syria with US first lady Melania Trump during an award ceremony at the State Department in Washington DC in which the Syrian nun, a member of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, was announced as one of the 2017 Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award winners.

◀ **ITALY:** A girl greets Pope Francis, feeling his face, as he visits Rome's Sant' Alessio-Margherita di Savoia Regional Center for the Blind.

▶ **PHILIPPINES:** Rodelio Ordonio, who completed a drug rehabilitation program, embraces his wife, Rufina, during a ceremony at a Manila Catholic school to mark the completion of a drug rehabilitation programme run by local government officials and Church members.



What's so good about Good Friday?



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

Good Friday was bad long before it was good, at least from outward appearances. God was being crucified by all that can go bad in the world: pride, jealousy, distrust, wound, self-interest, sin.

It's no accident the Gospels tell us that, as Jesus was dying, it grew dark in the middle of the day. Few images are more telling. As Jesus hung upon the cross, seemingly, light gave way to darkness, love to hatred, and life to death. How can that be good? Moreover, as he was dying, Jesus no longer seemed divine, powerful, and in control of things, both in terms of what was happening in the world and in what was happening inside of himself.

The world was sinking into distrust and, if the Gospels are to be believed, Jesus, the incarnate God, seemed to be sinking into a personal doubt, one so gripping that it triggered the words: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!" What's happening here? How can this be good?

Deeper place

To understand what happened on Good Friday we need to separate what was happening on the surface from what was happening at some deeper place.

The surface event was bad and can never by any stretch of the imagination be called good. Sincere religious people, good though weak, out of fear and weakness were selling out what

was best in them and either helping incite the execution of Jesus or standing passively by and letting it happen.

“The angel who strengthened him in Gethsemane seems to disappear when he is on the cross”

In effect, other than a few strong women who were not succumbing to fear or group-hysteria but who were too disempowered to practically do anything about it, everyone was aiding in the crucifixion of God, either out of

ignorance, jealousy, or weakness. In Jesus' own words, darkness was having its hour.

The human, social, and political drama that played out on Good Friday was not good. It showed humanity at its worst before God's seeming silence.

But there was something deeper happening on Good Friday, a drama was playing out inside the recesses of Jesus' private soul and conscience the result of which was antithetical to all that was happening on the surface, in the crowd. Inside his struggle to accept what was happening in that situation and to accept what was being asked of him, we see the ultimate moral and religious drama: love struggling

with and then triumphing over hate, trust struggling with and then triumphing over paranoia and forgiveness struggling with and then triumphing over bitterness.

We see that epic struggle, first, playing itself out in his agony in the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus literally sweats blood in the face of his options, that is, standing before every form of opposition, hatred, ignorance and misunderstanding he must decide to either give himself over in trust or to flee in self-preservation.

“All that's wrong in our world will not be vanquished by a morally superior violence”

He chooses the former and, we are told, he is then strengthened by a divine presence.

But acceptance is not exactly full surrender and the next day, on Good Friday, the final test takes place. The angel who strengthened him in Gethsemane seems to disappear when he is on the cross and a crushing dark night of doubt now racks him to the point of making him cry out with what seemingly sounds like despair: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!"

His acceptance, given to his Father the night before, at this crucial moment, is made infinitely more difficult by the seeming absence of his father who had, up to now, been his very breath. In the face of that seeming abandonment,

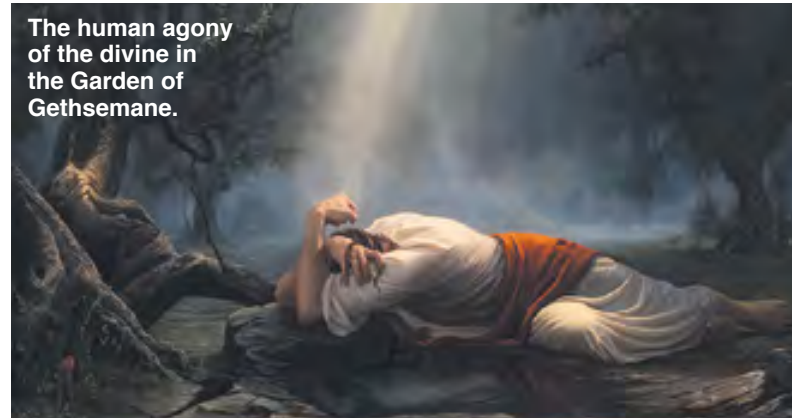
Jesus had to make a choice for faith, love, and trust at the rawest level, in ultimate darkness. What's the choice? What does Jesus do?

In the words of Karl Rahner, Jesus lets himself "sink into the incomprehensibility of God". He surrenders to God whom he cannot at that moment feel or understand but only trust. Here's where Good Friday turns from bad to good, as Jesus surrenders himself not in bitterness, grasping, or anger, but in trust, gratitude, and forgiveness. In that surrender, the struggle between good and evil, the most epic of all battles, is won.

Ultimately, all that's wrong in our world will not be vanquished by a morally superior violence, no matter how virtuous are those who are doing the vanquishing. Good violence will never rid the world of bad violence.

We will rid our world of those powers that perennially crucify God only when each of us, like Jesus, can let our bitterness, grasping and anger give way to trust, gratitude and forgiveness. And, barring being extraordinarily gifted by special grace, we will all, like Jesus, have to let ourselves sink into the incomprehensibility of God, that is, by trusting even when we don't understand, by loving even when we are hated, and by forgiving even when we are being hurt.

All of us will have our Good Fridays, not least in our experience of death. By every appearance, they will look bad, but if we give ourselves over in trust they will be good.



The human agony of the divine in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, April 6, 2017

Youth Space

You can have fun without drinking

Page 26



Teaching youth the art of stillness



Mags Gargan visits the Sanctuary meditation and mindfulness centre, to learn about a programme helping struggling teens to find peace

"I'm bored." Two words any parent dreads, whether your offspring is a young child or a teenager. However, according to Caitriona McColgan, young people need to sit in their own boredom for the world to become quiet enough so that they can hear themselves in our over-stimulated society.

"The inability to sit with boredom I think is a huge thing for all of us, but for young people in particular," Caitriona says. "They want instant gratification – that is the world they have been brought up in."

"It is almost cliché now to talk about how stressful and fast paced it is," agrees Bro. Richard Hendrick OFM Cap. "Particularly for young people who are being bombarded with this message that you must always be online and outward facing. I think all of us, young people and adults, can benefit from developing the reflective capacity within us and the prayer capacity within us – the capacity to reach the inner and the divine."

Caitriona and Bro. Richard are both course facilitators for the Mindful Warrior programme offered by the Sanctuary meditation and mindfulness centre in the heart of Dublin city. Founded by Sr Stan Kennedy to provide a reflective, contemplative place for people in the midst

of our frantic busy world, the Sanctuary is the perfect setting for being still.

You feel the calm and welcoming atmosphere as soon as you walk in off Stanhope Street into the bright, colourful rooms looking into a circular garden, where people can attend a full day, evening or weekend course, or join the staff and Sanctuary dogs – Coco and Lynn – for a drop-in meditation in the Sacred Space every Monday and Wednesday.

"It is a tiny place but it is mighty in terms of what it does," says Caitriona, who is programme manager here.

Since 1998, the Sanctuary has been developing a range of courses and workshops in the area of mindfulness and meditation, yoga and movement, creativity and well-being, with workshops from both a secular and spiritual perspective. In particular, it has developed a range of programmes working with young people and those who are at a vulnerable stage in their lives.

The Mindful Warrior programme was first developed 10 years ago by Bro. Richard and Niamh Bruce, who were both youth facilitators at the Sanctuary. "We had been working with schools in terms of bringing meditation, reflection and stillness practices

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Children's Corner

ERIN FOX



Test your knowledge of the Stations of the Cross

Holy Week starts this weekend with Palm Sunday and there's lots to learn and do to celebrate the week. You might have your own traditions each year on Holy Week such as attending your local Passion play before or after the Stations of the Cross, or staying up late on Saturday to attend the Easter Vigil Mass or maybe you plan an egg hunt on Easter Sunday.

You are probably already well versed in the 14 stations, but do you know them off by heart and if you saw the pictures, would you know them in the correct order?

If you haven't already taken part in an Easter egg scavenger hunt this year, start planning a Stations of the Cross-themed one this weekend for you and your family to take part in on Good Friday. You can have fun and test your knowledge of the Stations all at the same time!



How it works

For the scavenger egg hunt, you will have to find 28 items; the written 14 stations, and the pictures to match.

Cut out 14 strips of paper and write the stations of the cross of each strip. Place these to one side. (see below the 14 stations listed).

Next ask an adult to choose 14 objects that best represent the 14 stations. For example, to match the 14th station, "Jesus is laid to rest", use a small rock to represent the tomb.

On Good Friday, hide everything around the garden or inside the house. When the time for the scavenger hunt rolls around, split up and try to find all the objects.

Once all 28 items have been found, bring everything inside and try to match each object to its station. Keep a points system whoever gets the most guesses correct, earns a prize.

- Station 1: Jesus is condemned to death.
- Station 2: Jesus carries his cross.
- Station 3: Jesus falls the first time.
- Station 4: Jesus meets his mother.
- Station 5: Simon helps Jesus carry his cross.
- Station 6: Veronica wipes Jesus' face.
- Station 7: Jesus falls the second time.
- Station 8: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
- Station 9: Jesus falls the third time.
- Station 10: Jesus is stripped of his garments.
- Station 11: Jesus is nailed to the cross.
- Station 12: Jesus dies on the cross.
- Station 13: Jesus is taken down from the cross.
- Station 14: Jesus is laid in the tomb.



The Youth 2000 Summer Festival.

Young Catholics need like-minded friends

According to *The Good Retreat Guide*, a retreat is a journey that can be religious or spiritual in nature, and is typically taken away from the confines of everyday living. Its purpose is to get closer to God and to rediscover one's faith. Some adults will go on a retreat every few years and possibly every year. It might be the only time that there is an opportunity to escape the frenetic activity that characterises much of modern life.

Even at home, we're constantly connected to work, friends and the wider world through our phones and devices. There barely seems to be time to think, never mind focus solely on God or our relationship with him.

It's not only mature adults that need to focus on spirituality and get away from it all. Our teenagers and young adults are often under more pressure than we are with the stresses of school, work or college; balancing work and home life and the peer pressure to conform to a particular lifestyle.

“The difficulty of trying to practise their faith becomes apparent”

Often, young Christians have no one else in their immediate circle who understands their deep desire for the things of the spirit. If they're in college or living away from home, the difficulty of trying to practise their faith becomes apparent. It's often during these years that the young drift away from their religion. It's really important that they have a like-minded

A parent's perspective



Maria Byrne

circle of friends.

Often it is on retreats specifically geared to the young that these valuable friendships are forged and a support network formed that will help young people through some of their most challenging years. I spoke to three young people who had attended retreats recently to ask them about their experiences.

Personal reflection

Two had attended a retreat in Lismullin Conference Centre in Co. Meath, a beautiful location very close to the Hill of Tara. Inspired by the message of the organisation Opus Dei that everything in life can be a path to find God, retreats in Lismullin provide a pleasant atmosphere which supports personal reflection and encourages people to be active followers of Christ.

The other retreat attended was with Youth 2000 which is a Catholic youth organisation that organises lively faith festivals, retreats, prayer groups and other events for young people aged 16-35. Their retreats help guide the young in learning about their Catholic faith and discovering the great love God has for each one of them.

Even though the young people had different perspectives and different

reasons for going on a retreat, they were all really pleased and reinvigorated by the experience. One young man I interviewed is a 20-year-old law student. He described the retreat in Lismullin as "very worthwhile" and said that it provided plenty of time to focus on just one thing, his relationship with God, his life, its meaning and, as he said, "the bigger picture".

The other young man I chatted with is married with a young family. Having a very busy life, he really appreciated the time out, giving him a bit of space to be at peace with God and to receive spiritual guidance.

He felt it helped him to renew his commitment to his marriage, family and work.

My 16-year-old daughter was the third person who'd attended a retreat recently. It was a Youth 2000 retreat in Ashbourne, Co. Meath. It was her first time at a full retreat and she was impressed with how everything went and with the friendliness and support.

“She couldn't contain her enthusiasm as she told us about how great the retreat was”

She had been a bit apprehensive before she went but, when we were picking her up, a very different girl greeted us. She couldn't contain her enthusiasm as she told us about how great the retreat was and how fantastic all the talks and workshops were.

At a time when there is a lot of concern about young people

leaving the Church, it was heartening to hear her talking about her favourite parts of the retreat being Confession, Mass and the healing service. She described it as "so calming and peaceful just praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament after a good Confession".

New friends

She made loads of new friends and liked the fact that they had similar views on many issues. She felt the retreat really helped her to look at her life in a new way and see how she could improve.

I asked all the young people for their overall impressions of going on a retreat and got comments like "It's good to be with other people who share your faith and there's a great feeling of community and solidarity".

One of the young men said that it wasn't a place to catch up on college work; it was about larger scale things in life and about "playing God's game and following God's journey". He talked about making life about something more than yourself.

My daughter said that, after the retreat, she felt on a high and as if she'd never do anything wrong ever again, but of course, this wears off and you still have to make an ongoing effort.

She'd recommend that every young person goes on a retreat as "It's an amazing experience and anyone who is trying to get closer to God should go; even if you're nervous or feel like you won't fit in, you should give it a try."

As well as a great learning and spiritual experience, it's great fun.

» Continued from Page 23



to the classrooms," Bro. Richard says. "While we were working with mainstream education we kept getting requests from schools working with students who were right on the edge of the school system. Those who were finding the journey to life integration or social integration difficult, who were in danger of leaving school, who had discipline problems, behaviour problems, family problems, etc.

"So the programme basically came out of that request for developing a spiritual, holistic programme that would enable young people to develop the reflective capacity necessary to make whole and positive choices in their own life."

The 10-week programme is built around an initiation framework linked to adolescent psychological development that includes: ways to experience moments of reflective stillness; traditional wisdom embodied in the 'gentle warrior' figure; mindfulness and movement practices; use of creative imagination; insights from psychology of adolescent development.

“This is about young people discovering within themselves that they have a capacity and tools for reflection”

It is particularly suited to young people from sixth class to second year, who are finding the journey to maturity and social integration challenging, as it helps with emotional self-regulation, resilience, choice-making, and growth in self-esteem and positive body image.

"The aim was to bring young people who were finding the road to maturity difficult, through a process where they had a mindful and meditative experience, and within that just one moment of stillness. To give them the capacity to move from disconnection to connection – within themselves and with each other and with their community and environment," Caitriona says.

"This is about young people discovering within themselves that they have a capacity and tools for reflection, process and growth, and

that they can knock on that door. We call it the inner sanctuary and it is one of the practices that we use throughout the training. We take them to this inner sanctuary and they know when they leave they have that fierce inner resilience and they can call on that. That it is a resource that they have in themselves. It is a beautiful thing when a young person realises that they can within themselves find a place of peace and stillness – it is like a eureka moment for them."

Change

Bro. Richard says an extraordinary change takes place over the 10 weeks. "It is a change not just seen in how they encounter the material, but how they themselves describe the different experiences of the way they relate to disciple, family, education and even their aspirations for themselves begin to change," he says.

"One of the things that touching that reflective capacity, that meditative experience is we begin – even if we don't have words for it – to touch the divine green in ourselves. God in Christ calls us to that fullness of life and one of the things the young people discover is that the dreams they accepted from the external pressures – the vision of life and of themselves they had – is actually a lot less than what they are and what they are being invited to be. The feedback we have received from other facilitators and the students themselves is that it has had a lasting and profound effect on their experience of themselves and of their way of relating to others."

The Sanctuary has now developed a facilitator training course for teachers and youth workers who, after completion of the course,

will be able to deliver the Mindful Warrior programme in their own school or youth centre.

This facilitator training course is intended for experienced teachers/youth workers who are looking for experiential and effective ways to work with young people for whom traditional models of education or youth work are not as effective.

“The warrior represents the one who is fighting to survive”

"We wanted to develop the programme into a training course so that youth workers, teachers, chaplains and people who were working with at risk youth could come and train here and leave with a training they could deliver to young people," Caitriona says. "We are also developing an adult programme."

But what is a mindful warrior?

In all of the great mythologies of heroes and heroines, the warrior represents the one who is fighting to survive, fighting to be heard, fighting to become themselves.

"It is a big ask to be a mindful warrior," Caitriona says. "It is someone who is connected and mindful within themselves. That might mean knowing that if they are having a bad day, if someone said something or they got a text, or they had a row at home; the mindful warrior is the young person who knows there is a lot going on for me right now and they go to talk to the school counsellor or chaplain or a friend. It is a young person who recognises things are not ok right now, so I am going to take care of myself. And who also is that person to other people."

"I think for the young people doing something like this, it is different – different from school and from what they normally do. The deep connections and the belonging can't be broken, and for me that is the strength that it has."

1 The training course for facilitators of the Mindful Warrior programme will take place in the Sanctuary over three weekends in May. For further information please email: youth@sanctuary.ie or phone 01-6705419. Or visit: www.sanctuary.ie



Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



Whenever visiting London, I like to walk across Westminster Bridge on the way from Waterloo station. The vista of Westminster palace and the Thames stretching towards Tower Bridge is a sight to behold. I had been there just a few weeks before the recent terror attacks, with the children in tow, all excited about Big Ben and watching the boats ply up and down the river – although a man making giant bubbles proved an even bigger attraction to them.

They never noticed the police officers with machine guns outside Hamleys, even though we parents certainly did. I've not yet

had to explain the idea of terrorism to the children. They don't need to know about it, and there is no reason to cause them anxiety.

They need not yet know that we live in a world where there are people who wish to kill randomly on the streets of our cities, and that they do not care if children are killed too, as happened the Westminster attack. Some day they will find that out, and a little bit of their childhood will die that day.

We don't have the news on television each evening, as some families do. This saves the children much unnecessary anxiety, since the news is inevitably concerned with the gory details of murders, car accidents and terror attacks.

“The older children can read and are acute in picking up on any anxieties we have”

Our children know, in an abstract way that people get killed in accidents and that there are 'baddies' out there somewhere, but far away. A regular diet of such images and ideas only instills pointless anxiety in small children.

The new forms of terrorism involve the deliberate targeting of civilians and an exceptional brutality. The attacks seem

close to home, and locations are chosen for this reason, to be familiar to many, and so to instill a sense of being personally threatened.

Last year's Brussels attack was on my local train station when I lived in that city. I knew someone killed in the Bali bombing. Yet we can be thankful that the work of the security services is such that the level of killing in Britain and Ireland has been kept remarkably low in recent years.

I remember my 1980s childhood in Ireland and how every evening the news seemed to me to tell stories of a bomb attack or shooting in this faraway – from Cork – place called Northern Ireland.

I even remember that was how I learned the meaning of the phrase 'tit for tat', which seems a glib way for newsreaders to describe the bloody feuding of paramilitaries.

It was a strange and unsettling backdrop to a childhood, as was the Cold War and the nuclear weapons we knew were pointed at us, and which sailed by our Atlantic coast in submarines, like sinister sharks, threatening Armageddon.

Media

The images and idea of terror loom ever larger in the media these days, yet the actual risk to us as individuals thankfully remains statistically minuscule. Crossing the road is a far bigger danger to children, and those are the risks they do need to know about. The older children can read and are acute in picking up on any anxieties we have.

I will continue to avoid their having any access to images or news stories about terrorism. Our children are developing their foundational view of the world, and of humanity now.

That should be a positive and happy picture, for the overwhelming majority of people are good, and the world is a good place – contrary to what you might hear on the evening news.





You can have fun without drinking

The social aspect of the Pioneers has had a positive effect on my life, writes **Jim Bird**

I hail from the small rural area of Boardsmill in Co. Meath. I'm 24 and currently studying history and geography in Maynooth University in the hope of entering the teaching profession. My parents are teetotalers all their lives, so alcohol was mainly absent from our family home.

This helped determine my choice, not only to be a teetotaler like my parents, but also to become a Young Pioneer, where young people from the age of 12 upwards take a pledge to abstain from alcohol until they are at least 18 years of age and to keep off illicit drugs for life.

Young Pioneers also say a short prayer daily for those suffering from alcohol and drug addiction, including those who suffer the ripple effects the misuses abuse can cause, not only to the addict, but to other family members who also bear a loved one's dependency.

Pioneer activity

Throughout my teens I was lucky as there was lots of Pioneer activity in the Meath area, with a particular focus on Pioneer youth-based activities such as weekends away and one-day seminars. These were held locally which made it easy of access and encouraged me to make many lifelong friends along the way.

I find that being a Pioneer helps me enjoy a healthier lifestyle. I'm also a keen GAA player, playing for Boardsmill GAA Club, where I'm also the club's Health and Wellbeing Officer. The social



The Pioneer National Ball organising committee.

aspect of the association has had a positive effect on my life where I have met and continue to meet like-minded people who can enjoy themselves without taking a drink.

I've been involved with my local Pioneer Centre in Boardsmill for the past few years, and I'm currently the secretary of the local committee.

More recently, I became actively involved with the Leinster Youth Pioneers through which I have met a great group of people and it is a wonderful opportunity to participate in the association. We are a group of Pioneers from our late teens to late 30s, some of whom have been actively involved in the association since the 1990's.

Strong bonds of friendship have been formed among the members of the committee. The Leinster Youth Committee is currently making the final preparations for

the 21st Annual Pioneer Ball, being held this year in Athlone Sheraton Hotel on April 8.

As this is a significant milestone in the history of the Pioneer Ball, we have also organised a jam-packed weekend of activities from April 7-9, including sight-seeing excursions, bowling and a cruise on the Shannon among other fun things to do.

“Strong bonds of friendship have been formed among the committee members”

The idea for the Pioneer National Ball came from the Pioneer Youth Conference in Limerick in 1995, where it was suggested that there should be social events for Pioneers at national level, as most national events at that time were

competition based. The Killeely/Dromkeen Young Pioneers took on the challenge of organising the first Pioneer National Ball in the Limerick Inn Hotel in February 1997. It was a resounding success and since then, the ball has featured in the Pioneer calendar, taking place each year.

Starting with Mass reflecting the spiritual dimension of the Pioneers, the ball has proved a great occasion for Pioneers to get together and have a good time, with food, music and dancing into the small hours! The Pioneer Ball is held in a different province each year.

The Pioneer Association, currently operating in its 120th year, will see this remarkable movement enter a new phase as it becomes a Private Lay Association of the Faithful from January 1, 2018. Although the Jesuits will pass the baton of temperance

into the hands of the lay faithful, the core values and aims of the association, established by Jesuit priest Fr James Cullen in 1898, will remain promoting temperance and sobriety through prayer, example and self-sacrifice and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The Pioneer Association has evolved and changed in response to developments in Irish society over its 120 years. It started out as an association for women only, but that soon changed. In the mid-1990's it became clear that for many, making the commitment to life membership at 16 was a big step.

Distinctive badge

So the new membership category of Young Pioneer for young people from 12 upwards was established, with its own distinctive badge and prayer. The red and purple badge surrounding the gold Sacred Heart, which has become our symbol – the red is symbolic of the fire of the Holy Spirit and the purple the sacrifice made by Young Pioneers out of concern for others.

I encourage more young people to sign up, take the pledge, get involved and experience the alternative to the drinking scene, like I have done. The benefits of being a Young Pioneer can be invaluable, particularly for young people still in school, studying or beginning their career.

If you want the challenge, come join us and a whole host of Pioneers and friends at the ball in Athlone and see how we party the Pioneer way.

1 The 21st Pioneer National Ball takes place on Saturday, April 8. The event commences with Mass at 6.30pm in St Mary's Church, Athlone, celebrated by Bishop Francis Duffy. The ball continues with dinner in the Sheraton Athlone Hotel, followed by music and dancing to Nite Fever. The guest speaker will be racehorse trainer Jim Bolger. Tickets €30 each. For tickets/information – contact Brenda Lynch 087-6189411 or Dermot Fagan 085-7201646.



Green Fingers

Paul Gargan

April is the best time to enjoy your spring garden

April is full of those perfect early spring days when the sun is shining, the air is clear and you just want to get out into the garden and enjoy it.

Clip over winter-flowering heather with shears now that they have finished flowering. This will dead head and tidy them up in one job. Prune hydrangeas lightly, just a little deadheading really.

The spent flower heads from last year were left on to provide some frost protection for the new buds.

Before you cut anything, look over the plant. There are two kinds of shoots: The ones with the remains of last year's flowers on them and the unflowered shoots which will have a fat growth bud at the tip. Follow the flower shoots back down to a strong healthy side shoot and cut just above it. Don't cut the shoots with the fat green buds, these are this season's flowers.

Lime

Acid-loving plants such as hydrangea, azalea, camellia, rhododendron and ceanothus may develop pale green or yellow leaves if grown

in soil that contains lime. This is lime-induced chlorosis and is prevented by seeding in April with sequestered iron.

This allows the plant to access the vital nutrients and minerals that are locked up in the soil by the lime. Chlorosis of the lower leaves of plants is often due to bad drainage.

Now that daffodils have finished their show for another year, the temptation is to tidy them up. Don't – just deadhead them by twisting and pulling the spent flower heads off.

These produce seeds that are not viable, as in most modern daffodils the ability to reproduce by seed has been bred out of them. It's just wasting the bulb's energy.

Spring flowering bulbs are now recharging their batteries. Their leaves are taking in sunlight and converting it into starch. This starch is stored in the bulb, ready to power next year's show of

flowers. Don't cut them or tie them up in bundles, they need to get the maximum amount of sunlight that they can.

Deprive them of it now and next year all you will have is leaves and no flowers.

Wait for at least six weeks to cut then to improve next year's show. Feed them with a high-potash feed or even a general purpose feed.

Evergreens

April is the best month to plant or move evergreens and conifers.

Dig up as big a rootball as you can manage. The rootball will usually be wider than it is deep.

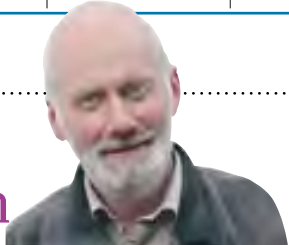
The fine feeder roots around the edge of the mass are the most important, as these are the ones the plant uses to take up water.

When replanting, turn the plant so it faces the same direction as it was in the original position. Evergreens don't like being reorientated once growth is underway. Water it regularly during its first year to help it get established.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Speaking with authority and insight

I'd love to be completely in the dark about the personal opinions of radio presenters, I'd love them to respectfully ask the hard questions of all sides in a particular debate, to be so well informed that they know what questions to ask, and to know the information that will blow prejudice and ignorance away. OK, time to wake up and take a reality check.

With this in mind I decided to take a closer look at last week's **High Noon**, the Newstalk show presented by George Hook. Now, Hook makes no secret of his personal opinions, has his pet subjects (immigration, cyclists, old movies, religion) and while his curmudgeonly grumpy old man shtick can be irritating, most of the time I find him respectful, fair, and sympathetic to conservative views, a rare thing in his profession.

His week got off to a fine start – a lovely interview with Ailish Concur, a young and articulate autistic woman who was offended by something Hook had said and texted him to that effect. Hook was humbled and apologetic and I felt both he and the listener gained some valuable insights.

The next day he had his regular Tuesday slot with American comedian (important to remember) and political commentator Michael Graham. The banter is usually entertaining, and we get some



George Hook.

unusual angles on the foibles of US life and politics, but I thought last week's discussion on public transport fell, untypically, rather flat.

Transport remained on his mind, and on Wednesday he got particularly cranky, lambasting Ciaran Cuffe of the Green Party for using what he saw as dodgy maths in defending the new low speed limits for motorists in certain areas of Dublin.

Emojis

But an even worse red rag to the Hook bull was a 'spelling bee' event where the young participants could only spell in 'emojis' (those little icons people send in their phone messages).

Literacy is surely gone to the dogs, or to the apes, as George thought one of his

favourite films, *Planet of the Apes*, with its deterioration of the human species, wasn't sounding so far-fetched after all.

Later in the show however the mood became more sensitive when he was at his empathetic best, giving voice to a mother, Aisling McNiffe, having difficulties with her son Jack (who has Down's Syndrome and a range of other medical issues), especially when he is out and about – the problem was particularly with the inadequacy of facilities in places like cinemas, inadequacies that excluded him from activities that his disabilities didn't.

On Thursday, I tuned in and caught George in a moment of prayer, well sort of, as he was reading out the Dáil prayer that the institution's Com-

mittee of Procedure and Privileges had decided to keep. He didn't voice any objection to the prayer but wasn't impressed by the wording and thought he, or anyone, could write a better one.

This was followed by a fascinating discussion of how we speak of the dead. Emeritus Professor of DCU, Colum Kenny noted that out of



Baroness Nuala O'Loan.

respect and decency we don't tend to speak ill of the dead but this might stand in the way of a realist assessment of the consequences of certain people's actions.

On Friday Hook's guest was another opinionated commentator, Ivan Yates, plugging his new Sunday morning show and offering some interesting views on the bus drivers' strike.

On a lighter note, Trinity film lecturer Stephen Benedict provided an intriguing analysis of another favourite Hook film, *All the President's Men*. Finally we got the 'Here Come the Girls' segment, a regular Friday chat between Hook and a few women ... it's a bit of a borderline sexist cringe inducer (discussing sexism, red dresses, nice hair and the bus strike). I'm surprised the 'girls' agree to partake!

Re-jig

Another show not constrained by a stifling liberal consensus is Sarah Carey's **Talking Point** show on Newstalk Saturday mornings, though in a week-end re-jig the show has just been bumped back an hour to 8am which won't help listenership figures.

Last week's show was about water charges, which didn't seem entirely topical with so much else going on, but it was a considered review of the topic away from crisis mode which was useful.

Finally, if you want to

PICK OF THE WEEK

JERUSALEM PASSION
RTÉ Lyric FM, Monday,
April 10, 2pm

Exploring the Passion of Christ, through dramatisations of medieval texts and original music.

BRONX TO BRADFORD: FRIARS ON A MISSION
BBC 1, Holy Thursday,
10.45pm

Following five Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in Bradford on a mission to support the poor, both spiritually and materially.

SOLEMN LITURGY FOR GOOD FRIDAY
RTÉ One, Good Friday,
2.55pm

Margaret McDonagh from the Parish of the Travelling People introduces us to the importance of the cross, faith and what Good Friday means to individuals and the wider Travelling Community.

hear someone speaking with authority and insight check last Sunday's **This Week** (RTÉ Radio 1) for Baroness Nuala O'Loan's interview on the Garda crisis.

boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

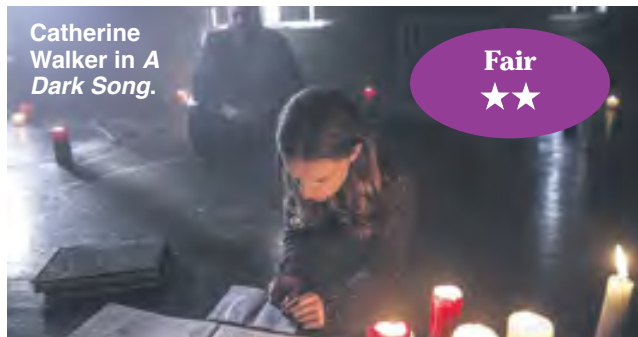
Film

Grieving mum seeks atonement for murdered son

A Dark Song (16)

Most horror films seem to populate their casts with masochists. They summon up demons to plague them. They run repeatedly into the face of danger. They seem geared towards inflicting the greatest amount of punishment on themselves for the least possible gain.

Sophia Howard (Catherine Walker) at first seems to embody the same need for self-immolation in this Welsh/Irish co-production. Having lost her faith as a result of the killing of her young son, she spends her life savings on an aggressive medium called Joseph Solomon (Steve Oram), who



Catherine Walker in *A Dark Song*.

Fair
★★

claims he'll be able to invoke the boy's spirit – and Sophia's own guardian angel – in a macabre ritual so she can gain revenge on his killers.

It's a ghoulish (if not contradictory) precept in a primarily ghoulish movie. Notwithstanding this, there's a nod towards purgation at

the end. This didn't work for me as it was decidedly out of sync with the main mood of the film, which threatens to explode into a full-scale horrorfest at any given moment.

The fact that it doesn't is down to the eccentricity of writer-director Liam Gavin, whose debut feature it is. He

sets it in an isolated mansion but apart from this conventional staple of the horror genre he eschews most of its conventions.

No squeaky doorknobs here, then. No severed heads tumbling out of closets as things go bump in the night. Instead Solomon and Walker tease out a kind of class war (she's posh, he's working class) as he puts her through rigorous – and, in one scene, terrifying – ordeals.

Forgiveness

One always expected this elliptical film to end weirdly and it does, going from David Lynch territory to a kind of symphonic ode to forgiveness. Can one be

expected to 'buy' this quasi-religious transmogrification? Not really. Catharses should be led up to.

For the rest of the time it's a claustrophobic two-hander that has Walker and Solomon feeding off one another in a series of baroque encounters replete with the requisite amount of mumbo-jumbo that seems *de rigueur* for black magic cult movies.

Gavin's penchant for glumness means that *A Dark Song* will, at best, only attract a niche audience. I approached it with some optimism as it was well received in the press but it failed to live up to its expectations on a number of levels.

My main problem with it

was the fact that neither of the main leads are particularly likeable.

You don't really care what happens to them, which is a major stumbling block as there's really nothing in the film besides them.

With a little less preciousness and a little more variation in the mise-en-scenes this could have been another *Sixth Sense*. Instead, it's more like *The Blair Witch Project* – without the witch.

Devout occultists – if that isn't an oxymoron – will admire it but most people will probably leave the cinema scratching their heads and wondering aloud, "what was all that about?"

BookReviews

Peter Costello



John Redmond – a chairman, not a chief

The Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster, 1900-18

by Conor Mulvagh
(Manchester University Press, £75.00)

Felix M. Larkin

The centenary commemoration of the 1916 Rising last year was marred by the curious incident of the banners on the facade of the Bank of Ireland building in College Green.

These banners were a minimalist attempt to commemorate at the home of the pre-1801 Irish parliament some heroes of the Irish parliamentary tradition – Grattan, O'Connell, Parnell and John Redmond – and their contribution to the achievement of an independent Irish state and to shaping the political culture of the state.

But the Sinn Féin members of Dublin City Council led a chorus of complaints about the banners on the grounds of (as reported in the press), "their seeming inappropriateness in the context of the 1916 Centenary". The banners were removed immediately after the matter was raised at Council meeting.

That incident symbolises the regrettable tendency in

independent Ireland since 1922 to denigrate the great popular Irish constitutional leaders of the 19th and early 20th Centuries, reducing them to peripheral figures – a species of quisling, prepared to compromise with the "hated oppressor".

The Irish parliamentary tradition has, however, been well served by our historians. The groundbreaking work of Oliver MacDonagh on O'Connell and of Conor Cruise O'Brien and F.S.L. Lyons on Parnell and the Irish party at Westminster has been supplemented by more recent work by Patrick Geoghegan on O'Connell and by James McConnel, Dermot Meleady and Michael Wheatley on the Irish party.

Conor Mulvagh's book is an important addition to the corpus of work on the Irish party.

Focus

Mulvagh's focus is on the leadership of the party in the period from 1900, when the so-called "Parnell split" was healed and the party re-united under Redmond, until the death of Redmond in March 1918 and the subsequent demise of the party itself in the General Election of December 1918. He takes issue with what he refers to as

"the recent vogue" for treating Redmond "as a strong and charismatic leader of the parliamentary party".

He demonstrates that there was, on the contrary, a collective leadership in the period under consideration – comprising John Dillon, Joseph Devlin and T.P. O'Connor, as well as John Redmond. The leadership is thus characterised by Mulvagh as a tetrarchy – and much of this book is concerned with the twists and turns within that leadership structure.

“Where discipline is prized, innovation is excluded”

Employing Brian Farrell's typology in his assessment of our taoisigh, Mulvagh regards Redmond as a chairman rather than a chief.

However, Mulvagh's book also shows that the tetrarchy at the head of the party – "a very narrowly based oligarchy", to quote Mulvagh – dominated the party. Dissidents originally within the re-united party of 1900, notably Tim Healy and William O'Brien, were ruthlessly excluded.

Moreover, the leadership failed to recruit new blood



John Redmond at the door of Houses of Parliament.
Photo: Benjamin Stone MP

“The leadership failed to recruit new blood into its inner ranks... and this contributed to a de-radicalisation of the parliamentary party”

into its inner ranks – except for Devlin, each of the tetrarchs had been MPs since the early 1880s – and this contributed to a de-radicalisation of the parliamentary party and declining participation by rank-and-file members at Westminster.

Mulvagh traces this gradual drift away from the crusading roots of the party under Parnell through a detailed analysis of parliamentary questions tabled by Irish party MPs.

This analysis, and a similar analysis of the voting record of the party members

at Westminster, is further used by Mulvagh to illustrate the strong party discipline imposed by the collective leadership.

Efficacy

He argues that these analyses confirm "the efficacy of collaborative government within the party ... loyalty did not leak, it simply mutated to conform with the shifts developing in the ruling oligarchy".

Mulvagh concludes his study by drawing a vital lesson for all political parties by reference to the history of the

Irish party. He writes: "Where discipline is prized, innovation is excluded and the party that shuts out the talent of the next generation will re-encounter these potential political allies, not as friends, but as enemies either on the streets or at the ballot boxes".

That was the fate of the Irish party in 1916, and again in 1918.

As the incident of the banners in College Green at Easter 2016 indicates, the reputation of the party – and, by extension, that of the entire Irish constitutional tradition – has not yet recovered.

Catering for an emerging Ireland

My Memoirs

by Peter Malone
(Kingdom Books, €25.00; all receipts will go to charity; for details contact Loretto Dalton, lorettodalton@gmail.com)

J Anthony Gaughan

This is a delightful memoir by a proud son of Dundalk. Born in 1944, Peter Malone was educated at the Dominican Friary Primary School and St Mary's Marist College. Both sides of his family were in the 'pig business'.

Just as Peter completed his secondary education his father suddenly died (aged 45). To care for her seven children, Peter's mother took in lodgers and opened a small shop.

During his school holidays Peter worked in a hotel in Bundoran owned by his aunt. He was attracted to the work and in 1964 secured a place on a management



Peter Malone honoured by Limerick University.

training course operated by J. Lyons & Company which ran a chain of restaurants and hotels in London.

At the conclusion of the course he began his career in the hospitality industry as restaurant manager at the company's premises at Charing Cross. A year later he enrolled in the Shannon College of Hotel Management. After graduating he held a number of managerial appointments, including that of Pat Quinn's PQ

Club at Kiltarnan in Co. Dublin.

Peter's association with the Jurys Hotels began in 1975 with his appointment as front office manager of the Ballsbridge Hotel. It marked his first step into the heart of the Irish hospitality and tourism industry. He was soon the hotel's food and beverage manager with responsibility for the famous cabaret which was the most popular evening visitor attraction in Dublin at that time. He also had a role in popularising Gilbey's new Irish drink: 'Bailey's Irish Cream'.

Following stints as general manager of Jury's Hotel in Cork and subsequently their hotel at Ballsbridge, at the age of 45 he became CEO of Jury's Hotel Group plc. He enthusiastically promoted the Jury's Inn, a new competitively-priced hotel category. Thirty-five inns and hotels in Ireland, the UK and the US were added to the group. Before stepping down

as CEO Peter was a key-figure in creating the merger between the Jury and Doyle hotels in the short-lived Jury-Doyle plc.

“He has been and continues to be refreshingly modes”

In the last phase of his working life Peter served as chairman or board member on a number of public bodies and private companies, the most significant of these was his role as chairman of the National Roads Authority from 2002 to 2012, and as chancellor of the University of Limerick from 2007 to 2012.

Under his chairmanship the NRA completed, for the most part, on time and within budget more than 120 road projects, including a new national motorway system linking all the main population areas with

roads up to the highest international standards.

In typical fashion, he shares credit for his truly remarkable stewardship at the NRA with Fred Barry, the CEO, and Charlie McGreevy, the minister for finance. During his chancellorship at the University of Limerick, he brought his business acumen to bear on the development of a number of large-scale projects.

Throughout his Memoir Peter makes it clear that, no matter how important or onerous his work commitments, his family remained his top priority. He has been and continues to be refreshingly modest and unassuming. Hence the Memoir was initially intended for just the extended family and friends.

But for the fascinating "inside story" it provides on Irish business, industry and tourism it deserves a much wider readership.

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.

Edith Stein:
Selected Writings
ed. Marian Maskular
CPS

foreword by Sarah Borden
Shareky (Paulist Press,
£35.99)

Peter Costello

Edith Stein (St Theresa Benedicta) is very much a witness to faith for the modern world. It perhaps significant that her philosophical thesis in 1920 was entitled 'The Problem of Empathy', for empathy, the sympathetic love and concern for others lies, very much at the heart of what Christian witness ought to be in these troubled times that we live.

Stein died at the hands of National Socialism, and at present there seem to be similar tides of impassioned hate sweeping the world, in which anger has transcended any sense of empathy for many millions.

This book provides the reader, new to Edith Stein, with an overview of her life and the themes of her writings. Thus it forms an ideal introduction to the saint's thought.

But it would also be essential to read the book in tandem with a biography of the saint – Walter Herbstrith's *Edel Stein* (Ignatius Press, £9.95) is the standard one. The integration of life and experience with thought and prayer in Edith Stein makes such a personal approach, perhaps unusual in a philosopher, essential in her case.

Philosopher

Edith Stein's life as a woman philosopher and theologian makes her of special interest today. Her life and thought touches so many people not only through her philosophical ideas, but to her developing spirituality of very special interest. Hers is an appeal that reaches out to many people, often people with very varied ideas and approaches within Catholicism and Christianity. This too makes her perhaps of vital interest.

Edith Stein was a philosopher first of all, influenced by her teacher the phenomenologist Husserl. But her career advancement was affected by the prejudices of the male-dominated discipline in Germany. After her early conversion her desire was to be a nun.



**Truly a saint
for our times**

It is this aspect of a woman of faith with ideas and special insights of her own and the social reactions to them that makes her of interest today to those who would wish to develop theological insights that draw on experience in its widest sense, the experiences of both men and women in their uniqueness.

But that theme of empathy mentioned above seems a touchstone for the essential qualities of Edith Stein, which readers will be able to explore for themselves across the volumes of her collected works.

**“Hers is an
appeal that reaches
out to many people”**

Edith Stein was Carmelite, and naturally enough her writings are infused with the particular character of that order's spiritual tradition.

But what is striking today is the universality of what she has to say, illustrated in this book by the chapter of selections that deal with 'Community and Interconnection of All Mankind'. For her those words 'all mankind' were not an empty formula, but an essential fact of life.

Having fled Germany for a convent in Holland with her sister, they were arrested on August 2, 1942. A week later they were murdered in Auschwitz, along with other Jews, some baptised. She was a victim

of nationalism and racism, forces that are still very much alive in the world. It would be a sad error to imagine that the shadow of Auschwitz in other forms does not still stretch across the world. Her witness to love, life, and faith in God remains to encourage others.

But to emphasise Edith Stein's end would be to distract from the fact that most of her life, thoughts, and prayer was a part of an earlier time, and influenced by general themes, not a particular situation.

Title

The title mentioned above, *On the Problem of Empathy* (ICS Publications), published in 1989, is still available as part of the Collected Works of Edith Stein, published by the US-based Institute of Carmelite Studies. This should form the essential first step in a thorough exploration of her philosophy and spirituality. Also important is *Edith Stein: The Philosophical Background* by Alasdair MacIntyre (Continuum, £25.00), published in 2007.

Essential reading, too, especially for Catholics, and indeed all Christians, interested in Edith Stein is her unfinished autobiography *Life in a Jewish Family, 1891-1916* (ICS Publications) which appeared as the first volume of her collected works. For it was in the Jewish home of her childhood that her experience of God had its beginning.

WebWatch

Nuncio's transfer causes conjecture and intrigue

Ireland's Outcast' was the headline on the front page of last week's *Catholic Herald*, prominently and admirably flagged across social media ahead of publication as is usual. Below the headline was a picture of Ireland's then outgoing papal nuncio, Archbishop Charles Brown, and the tagline: 'The nation's respected nuncio has been sent to Albania. Jon Anderson asks why.'

It was a cover that will have intrigued many of those who'd read this newspaper online, and will have left many wondering what to expect, given how recent pieces on the *Herald* website had cast the 6th-Century British saint Gildas as almost a kind of proto-Farage, or criticised Martin McGuinness for his failure to publicly repudiate the IRA's actions, as though doing so wouldn't ultimately have caused more bloodshed.

Fuss

In the end the story will have left many wondering what the fuss was about. 'Why Ireland needs more Rome, not less' on catholicherald.co.uk didn't remotely touch on the question of why Dr Brown has been moved.

It said, rightly, that Dr Brown had been subject to hostile briefing from some quarters from the start, partly because of his perceived closeness to Pope Benedict XVI from his time working under him in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and in particular because bishops appointed during his tenure had come from outside the dioceses where they would serve.

Beyond that, nothing, which seems especially odd given how Ireland is now without a nuncio less than 17 months until Dublin hosts the World Meeting of Families and when there has been just one bishop appointed in the last two years, with five dioceses currently headed

by bishops past retirement age and a sixth run by a diocesan administrator.

It's a strange piece overall, with some decent but commonplace points, some bizarre omissions, a number of open goals missed, and a range of other points at which informed readers will have raised quizzical eyebrows.

**“One wonders
whether the ACP,
acting as a platform
for him, does
likewise”**

Among its stranger parts is its characterisation of the Association of Catholic Priests as “a liberal lobby group with good media and political connections”, whose members are, if rather elderly, “probably no more so than the average for Irish priests”, and “very much a loyal opposition, which unites with the Irish hierarchy in rejecting too much interference from Rome in Ireland's affairs”.

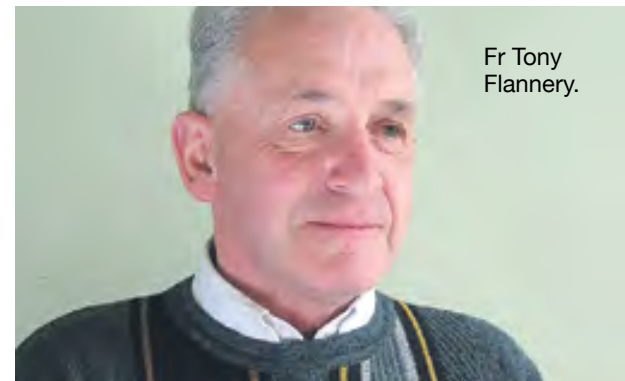
Leaving aside the unasked question of

site's recent posts is a posting from the blog of the supposedly 'silenced' priest Fr Tony Flannery, just weeks after the ACP site republished a post of his detailing an exchange he had with Dr Brown, accusing the then nuncio of misrepresenting him on RTÉ.

The recent post, from tonyflannery.com, is entitled 'The language of doctrine'. It says some Church teachings are “no longer credible” before going on to misrepresent Church teaching, raising the question if Fr Flannery knows what he's rejected.

Having read the piece several times, it's hard not to wonder whether Fr Flannery is rejecting as “impossible” Church teaching on the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, and Immaculate Conception, or merely his own misunderstandings of these things.

Indeed, one might wonder whether the ACP, acting as a platform for him, does likewise, and also whether this is really the



Fr Tony
Flannery.

whether the leadership and more vocal members of the ACP are genuinely representative of those members who joined because they felt they'd need some sort of 'trade union' support if faced with unfair allegations or attacks, readers could do worse than to test this description by asking younger clerics in Ireland whether they're ACP members, or by taking a trip over to associationofcatholicpriests.ie.

Prominent among the

kind of stuff that a “loyal opposition” would push, even on a site viewed by just a few thousand visitors from Ireland each month.

In fairness to the ACP, it is – elsewhere – at least acknowledging some very serious problems in the Irish Church, though its proposed solutions invariably call to mind G.K. Chesterton's observation that “The reformer is always right about what is wrong,” which continued, “he is generally wrong about what is right.”

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M.O'R.

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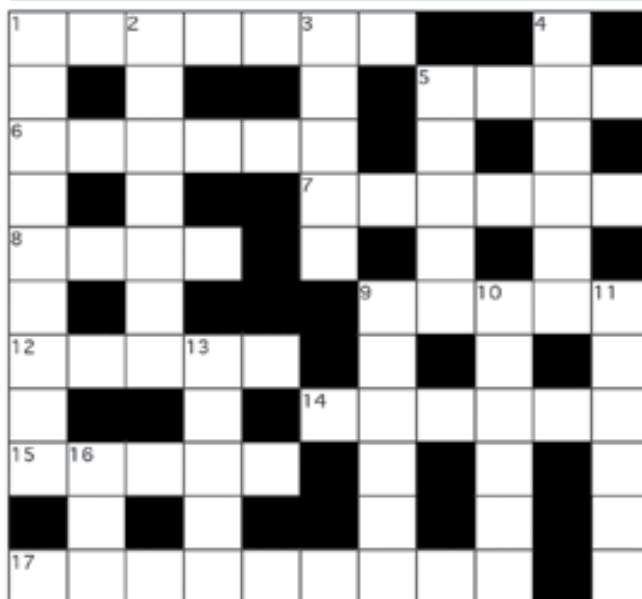
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Crossword Junior

Gordius 176



ACROSS

- 1 JK _____ writes the Harry Potter books (7)
5 More than chilly (4)
6 Ali Baba said "Open _____" (6)
7 It may be cheddar or gorgonzola, perhaps (6)
8 When fishing, you put it on your hook (4)
9 Cupboard (5)
12 Correct (5)
14 Small river (6)
15 Shouts (5)
17 A puzzle like this one (9)

- 2 Cleaning with soap and water (7)
3 How a girl is related to her uncle or aunt (5)

- 4 Shuts (6)
5 Shout to encourage your team (5)
9 Spud (6)
10 You move one when you wink (6)
11 The hottest season (6)
13 'Lends a hand' (5)
16 You listen with this (3)

DOWN

- 1 Small red summer fruit (9)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.292

Across – 1 Pledge one's troth 6 Vial 10 Basil
11 Flowerpot 12 Endgame 15 Paler 17 Filo 18 Ibis
19 Khaki 21 Remorse 23 Halve 24 Ursa Minor 25 Sect 26 Sum up 28 Scapula 33 Bone china 35 Ears 36 Jack the lad

Down – 1 Pubs 2 Essential 3 Gulag 4 Oxfam 5 Eros
7 Impel 8 Liturgical 9 Bespoke 13 Anne 14 Efforts 16 Light sabre 20 April Fool 21 Respect 22 Skua 29 Crack 30 Pitch 31 Pita 32 Thud

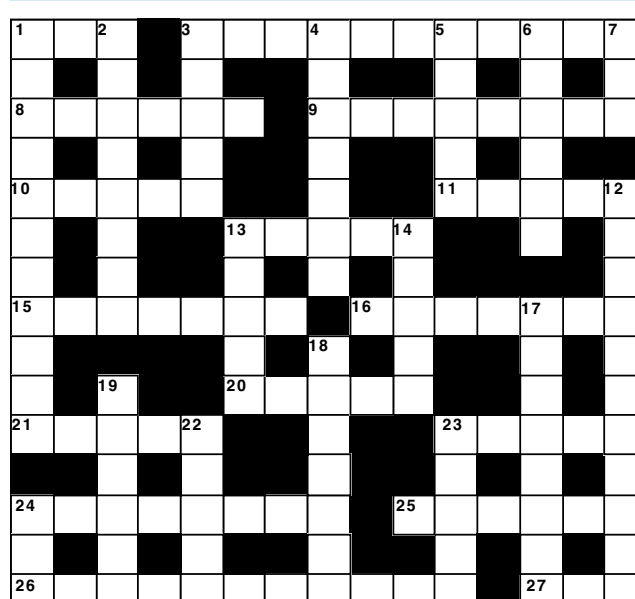
CHILDREN'S No.175

Across – 1 Code 6 Smarter 7 Pain 8 Zodiac 9 London
14 Guitar 15 Crisps 17 Took 18 Nail varnish

Down – 1 Chapel 2 Design 3 Amazing 4 Stain 5 Price
10 Over 11 Diesel 12 Mitten 13 Famous 16 Sea

Crossword

Gordius 293



ACROSS

- 1 Room used for scientific research (3)
3 Mr Richard's executioner will keep you in suspense (5-6)
8 & 11a Robinson Crusoe's creator might have needed a foil (6,5)
9 & 20a Tell the truth to do this - otherwise Eve's halted him (5,3,5)
10 Small creatures, or the fur coats made from their pelts (5)
11 See 8 across
13 Notices symptoms of acne (5)
15 Direct route (7)
16 Hindered, kept late (7)
20 See 9 across
21 Moorland that can warm up hydrogen (5)
23 The court of the Papal See (5)
24 Coming from Munich, perhaps, upsets a vain Arab (8)
25 Iconic Pacific island (6)
26 With which to gain access to a haunted house? (8,3)
27 Female bird (3)

DOWN

- 1 Being a Shakespearean

- villain, she hated cymbal adjustment (4,7)
2 Piece of paper money (8)
3 Skilful practitioners in the kitchen (5)
4 Style (7)
5 Planned to disrupt the media (5)
6, 17d & 22d Stop sitting on thy stoned mustang - how arrogant is that! (3,3,4,4,5)
7 Regret (3)
12 The wiping out of some arcane idiot (11)
13 A gathering of church leaders will be held in part of the embassy, no doubt (5)
14 Iron which has been treated (5)
17 See 6 down
18 French home of seven popes in the fourteenth century (7)
19 Grubs (6)
22 See 6 down
23 Careful - don't scorch X or Z! (5)
24 Public transport vehicle (3)

Sudoku Corner

176

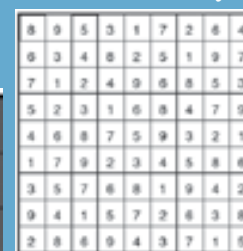
Easy



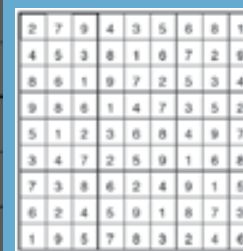
Hard



Last week's Easy 175



Last week's Hard 175



Faith in science

Interestingly Fr Tony Flannery says religion has lost out with its 'children's stories' to science. Again, not true. In science we are asked to believe in black holes, string theory, dark matter, theories and probabilities, all of which are based on mathematical calculations that may not ultimately add up.

Physicists are, however, at home with unknowing and some even believe it can lead us closer to God than religion can. They call this mystery. We too call ours a 'mystery of faith'.

Religion was never supposed to provide easy answers, allied to art its purpose was to help us live creatively, peacefully and even with joy as Karen Armstrong writes "with realities for which there were no easy explanations and problems that we could not solve".

Was Mary a virgin all her life Fr Flannery asks with incredulity – well, we do know that she was a mother, who watched her son undergo a horrific death while he forgave the people who did it, and had a kind word for his fellow condemned, and worried who would take care of his mother. Ponder that level of love next time you look at the stars.

Nuncio proved himself as a 'can-do' priest

WHEN IT WAS announced that our Papal Nuncio was being dispatched to Albania, there was shock that firstly the nuncio was leaving after only five years and secondly, Albania! Some in Church circles saw Machiavellian motivations behind the appointment by the Vatican. There is a tendency here in Ireland to see everything the Vatican does as straight out of a Da Vinci Code-style novel and have little grasp of the fact that Ireland isn't a major player for the Catholic Church on a daily basis.

Speaking to a former senior Irish diplomat recently I was quite taken by a non-Church view of the appointment.

Albania, from a secular



diplomatic point of view, is not a punishment posting. It's on the border of one of the oldest divisions, Western and Eastern Christianity. It is also a mainly Muslim country and how Islam and Muslim communities fit within Western Europe is a huge issue, not to mention the Church's position on dialogue with Islam. It's also the Balkans and is an area fraught with regional tensions and pressures.

Finally, it is a post-communist

state, so the Catholic Church there and its communities need to be nurtured, so who better than a nuncio who has proved his pastoral instincts in Ireland, visiting every parish, known for a friendliness and openness that surprised many from a former 'CDF man'. As a relatively young ambassador, Albania is a regional Church that Charles Brown gets to sculpt and not some cozy posting to gain weight on the diplomatic dinner circuit.

So rather than being shafted, the Vatican might just have handed the Albania posting to a talented can-do priest who has proven himself with skills that are needed in his new post, which incidentally, is a short hop from Rome.

1 Garry O'Sullivan is a former Editor of The Irish Catholic.

FR FLANNERY'S DISBELIEF After 2,000 years of Christianity of course we should question our faith and there are very few if any forums to do this in. However I'm not sure priests broadcasting their theological doubts are being fair to the non-theologically literate in the pews trying to live out their faith in difficult times.

Redemptorist Fr Tony Flannery says that young people are walking away from Christianity because the dogmas such as the virgin birth are incredible and amount to children's stories. I can't disagree more.

Young people aren't walking away because Catholic teaching is incredible, they can't reject what they don't know. They are walking away because they were never

instructed properly at all! In the Letters of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem (c.315-386) we have one of the earliest accounts of how candidates were introduced to the rituals and doctrines of the Church.

It was only after a long road of initiation and after Baptism that they were introduced to 'dogmas' as it was believed it would only make sense to them afterwards.

'Belief' in the modern sense did not come in to it as Karen Armstrong writes in her bestseller *A Case for God*. Faith was purely a matter of commitment and practical living.

The early Church knew that the 'dogmas' would sound ridiculous to the uninitiated and be rejected and were therefore kept secret.



YOUR LENTEN GIFT CAN RELIEVE FAMINE IN AFRICA

Famine is afflicting the people of Africa, and the Little Way Association needs to send urgent relief to priests and religious who are helping the poor and destitute. Fr Peter Ndegwa CSSp of Garissa Diocese, Kenya, writes: "There are tales of households suffering, desperation, hopelessness and imminent loss of life here. We are in a state of hunger leading to famine and a looming disaster of untold magnitude. The residents are boiling leaves of trees to use as vegetables. Livestock have died in big numbers." Kenya is just one of several countries affected. The United Nations speaks in terms of millions at risk of starvation. The disasters are partly man-made, partly natural. The Catholic bishops of South Sudan warn that the church is being targetted for attacks. There are problems also in Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen.



LITTLE WAY HOUSE IN FATIMA AVAILABLE FOR GROUPS

Would you like to take a group to Fatima for the Centenary celebrations? Casa Little Way is available for parish or group bookings.

The house is about 20 minutes' walk from the Shrine and can accommodate up to 22 pilgrims in shared rooms.

You would need to book your own flights but transport can be arranged between Lisbon airport and Fatima for groups.

Ph: 00 44 207 622 0466

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IC/04/06