

The Irish Catholic

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Irish priest tells of Venezuela horror as people hunt for food

Sacred Heart Missionaries vow to stay with people

EXCLUSIVE
Greg Daly

Irish missionaries have vowed that they will stay with the people of Venezuela in the midst of a deepening political crisis and widespread food shortages that has seen some people forced to scavenge through rubbish tips for food.

This is despite the fact that one of the Irish Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) priests has had to be evacuated from the country after 50 years due to a shortage of life-saving medicine to treat his diabetes.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* MSC provincial Fr Joe McGee, who has recently returned from a visit to the Latin American nation, said the situation facing Venezuelans was desperate.

"This is the first time that I've witnessed people scav-

enging in rubbish heaps to get food for themselves". He described a palpable sense of distress including "the fear of the people, afraid to go out, afraid to protest, afraid to raise their voices".

"I've been going there for the past 12 years, and I've noticed the deterioration in the facilities, deterioration in services, in infrastructure, in roadways and so on," Fr McGee said.

Referring to Roscommon-born Fr Joe Ruddy who had to be evacuated, Fr McGee said "he came home because, literally, there's no medication. And when I went to see another specialist because another one of my members was very sick, and asked 'Would you be able to look after this man?' he said, 'Well, no, because I'm leaving the country'."

Fr Ruddy leaves behind him four Irish priests who remain committed to

accompanying the Venezuelan people in their time of hardship, while a fifth priest, Kerry's Fr Seamus Kelly, is in Ireland after having spent 40 years in Venezuela but intends to return to the country regardless of how difficult the situation is.

The country's collapse has followed an economic crisis caused by a dramatic drop in global oil prices in 2013. With 95% of Venezuela's export revenues depending on oil, the popularity of socialist President Nicholas Maduro fell.

The Supreme Court's attempt this March to dismiss the opposition-controlled National Assembly sparked months of violent protests, and an election last month has been condemned by the EU. Protests continue, with inflation in the country now topping 700%.

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A man with a Venezuelan flag stands in front of security forces in Caracas, Venezuela, while rallying against President Nicolas Maduro's government. Photo: CNS

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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment returns in the autumn



Safeguarding work is 'credit' to Irish Church

Greg Daly

Ireland's experience in tackling clerical child abuse is being acknowledged around the world, according to the CEO of the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church.

Teresa Devlin told *The Irish Catholic* how the board was asked earlier this year to address Australia's royal commission on institutional abuse and explain the impact it has made in terms of child safeguarding in Ireland.

"They really wanted to understand how the Church had come to the position it was in in Ireland, the journey of the Church," she said. "Which I have to say has been a sad start but I think that we're still working away along that journey but the evidence in, and you'll have seen the annual report, the

statistics are way down."

Abuse survivors attending the commission's hearing congratulated her on efforts made to turn things around in the Irish Church, she said, with one survivor's evidence being "a credit to the work that is being done across the Irish Church".

Reality

The Australian commissioners had praised the board's work, Mrs Devlin was told in June's Anglophone Conference, where clergy and child protection officers from across the English speaking world shared their experiences with other countries, including ones where the reality of child sexual abuse is rarely acknowledged.

During the conference several African delegates said the problem didn't exist in their countries, Mrs Devlin said.

"Those who have been

there before are saying 'yes you do have this problem you just don't see that you have this problem'," she said, suggesting two ways that the Irish Church can improve child protection worldwide: it can attend conferences like the Anglophone one to try to influence good practice abroad, and it can influence the international policies of Irish orders that have missionary members.

Praising the "army of volunteers" who ensure Ireland's child protection safeguards work, Mrs Devlin stressed that the board has not made itself redundant, highlighting how more work is needed on how to tackle such issues as online child abuse. "I keep saying in our annual reports, as we have this year, that there is no room for complacency," she said.

See Pages 10-11.

Missionaries in Venezuela vow to stay with people

» Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, in a letter to the MSC congregation this week, representatives of the Venezuelan community in Ireland paid tribute to the work of the Irish missionaries.

"Despite the chaos and misery that is in our country today, we have been blessed by having these priests adopting our homeland as their second home and providing their help and support in the cities of Maracaibo and Caracas," they wrote.

Priceless

"It is important for us to let all the family of the Sacred Heart know how priceless is the sacrifice and commitment that you are demonstrating by staying there against the backdrop of conflict. God's will you can stay longer," they added.

Food in the country is not merely expensive and scarce but of poor quality, Fr McGee said, explaining that although he has been a regular visitor to the country for over a decade, he has never seen things as bad there as when he visited this summer.

Describing how two of the country's bishops had pleaded with him not to forget them when he returned to Ireland, Fr McGee stressed that the Irish missionaries are committed to staying in Venezuela. "Our men are just trying their best to stay along with the people and be with them and serve them – to accompany them, really – they don't want to leave them," he said.

New nuncio welcomed to Ireland



Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, the new Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, arrived at Dublin Airport on Monday where he was greeted by several Irish bishops including Cardinal Seán Brady. Archbishop Eamon Martin is currently on pilgrimage in Fatima and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin is on summer vacation. Photo: John McElroy

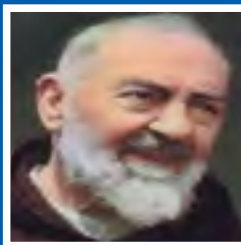
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One third of new priests inspired by Legion of Mary

Mags Gargan

Five of the 15 men ordained to the priesthood in Ireland this year were inspired in their vocation by the Legion of Mary.

Fr John Magner (Cloyne), Fr Liam O'Donovan SAC (Pallottines), Fr Rory Doyle OFM Conv. (Greyfriars), Fr Declan Lohan (Galway) and Fr Philip Mulryne OP (Dominicans) were all members of the Legion of Mary.

Fr Liam O'Donovan SAC told *The Irish Catholic* he "always had a devotion to Our Lady, but it was more sentimental and the Legion of Mary made my faith more concrete and my devotion more grounded".

Action

"I learned that my faith has to lead to action - it's not just a personal spirituality. It taps into a genuine Catholic calling to be apostolic, that we have to do something to spread the Good News and the Legion of Mary is another way of doing that which led me to that call to the priesthood."

Fr Philip Mulryne OP began volunteering in

the Morning Star Hostel when he returned home to Belfast after retiring from professional football in 2008. "I joined the local praesidium and volunteered at the hostel 2-3 nights a week. The Legion of Mary heavily influenced my vocation. I had just returned to the Faith at that point and there were a lot of scripture talks at the meetings and we prayed the Rosary which led to a devotion to Our Lady, and all these elements went towards me thinking about religious life," he said.

Apostolic

Fr Declan Lohan said he found the Legion of Mary "a great way to live out the Faith in an active way" which helped to "grow and deepen" his faith. "The work is active, social and apostolic and it really helped me to understand the Faith I grew up in," he said.

Some of the new priests will be sharing their vocation story at the Catholic Young Adults Conference organised by the Legion of Mary in All Hallows College Dublin over the weekend of September 2-3.



GAA star opens up about faith

Chai Brady

A former Gaelic footballer has opened up about the importance of his faith, saying he "prays regularly".

Sportsman turned fashion designer, Paul Galvin, who played on the Kerry senior team for over 10 years, spoke about the issue of homelessness in Ireland and the importance of going to Church.

Mr Galvin, who is launching a new fashion line, said: "My mother always said: 'Without God on your side, you have nothing', and I always believed that, so I pray."

Although

he said he stopped going to Mass, he still goes to Church, saying, "you can only go to Mass when Mass is on, but you can go to Church anytime".

"It's the difference between training and practice in sport. You can only train when the manager calls a time for training on a given evening, but you can go to the field to practice anytime," he said.

"In Kerry, the church and the football field are places of worship. You can visit anytime to practice, and it's a powerful place to be," he added.

As Ireland struggles with a homeless crisis Mr Galvin also mentioned the need to care for the less fortunate, saying: "Every day I wonder about sales, who is buying into my ideas, my style, how much I can grow, how much I can make. It's important for me to realise how much I can give too."

"Homelessness is a big issue in Dublin. Lack of compassion is bigger," he told the *Sunday Independent's Life* magazine.

JOE WALSH TOURS



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WMOF organisers ‘optimistic’ of papal visit to Ireland

Mags Gargan

The organisers of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin next year are “very hopeful and optimistic” that Pope Francis will attend the event.

Fr Timothy Bartlett, the Secretary General for the World Meeting of Families, told *The Irish Catholic* that the Pontiff “has repeatedly said he wants to be with us and so therefore, we’re planning provisionally on the possibility that he will be with us”.

“However, you still require a formal announcement that what will actually take place. My understanding is that can be anywhere from 8-6 months out from the event. But that’s ultimately totally in the hands of the Holy

Father himself and the Holy See. Obviously, there is any number of issues or considerations that he would want to consider before making an absolute commitment to coming, but we remain very hopeful and optimistic,” he said.

“We have to plan for all possibilities, which is one of the many things that makes the planning obviously challenging. So, as they say, we wait in joyful hope, for a formal announcement in due course.”

Launch

The one-year programme of preparation for WMOF2018 will be launched at Knock Shrine next Monday August 21, on the Anniversary of the Apparition of Our Lady in Knock. The WMOF2018 formal prayer will also be revealed

at the launch and the Icon of the Holy Family written by the Redemptoristine Sisters will be unveiled and anointed at Mass in the Basilica at 3pm, after which it will begin its journey around the dioceses of Ireland with a petition box for prayers.

A programme of structured reflection for parishes will go online on August 21 and hard copies will be sent to parishes across the country over the following weeks.

The venue for the pastoral congress is also expected to be announced.

1 A full interview and coverage of the WMOF2018 launch in Knock will be included in next week’s edition of *The Irish Catholic*.

PLC: The silence around botched abortions speaks volumes

Journalistic silence around reports of almost 400 failed abortions in England and Wales show how women’s safety is rated less highly than abortion providers’ reputations, the Pro Life Campaign (PLC) has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about how the Care Quality Commission found that 373 patients who had abortions performed by Marie Stopes in January and February

needed further treatment, PLC spokesperson Cora Sherlock said: “It’s very telling that when reports like this emerge about failings at the clinics of high-profile abortion providers, commentators on women’s health fall silent.”

Reputation

“It’s as if everything must take second place to the reputation of the provider, even the safety of

women,” she added, describing this as disappointing but “hardly surprising”.

“If abortion campaigners were to acknowledge or comment on reports like this, then they could hardly continue with their mantra of ‘free, safe and legal’ abortion,” she said, adding that “abortion is never safe for the baby, and reports like this show that it is very often dangerous for women also”.

From one generation to the next



The handover of the Mission Light from the oldest SVD priest in Ireland, Fr Norman Davitt, 70 years of priesthood (1947-2017), to the youngest, Fr Joseph Yang who was ordained last month.

Nursing home landlords are not answer to housing crisis – Fr Peter McVerry

Chai Brady

An initiative to encourage people in nursing homes to sell or rent their properties won’t be effective, and this group should be the last targeted, according to Fr Peter McVerry.

Several actions to deliver homes by utilising empty properties were announced this week by the Department of Housing which includes a ‘Fair Deal’ scheme, in which elderly people would be encouraged to sell or rent their empty houses.

“If you’ve lived in a house for 50 years and you’re in a nursing home I’d say many people would balk at the idea of strangers living in their home, so they’re not a group I’d want to target,” Fr McVerry said.

He added that currently 80% of the assessable income of anyone in a nursing home goes to the State, which would make becoming a landlord uninviting. Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy’s

department are believed to be in discussions with the Department of Health in the hopes of introducing an exemption for rental income.

“To date the Government has been using the carrot approach...but that has been remarkably unsuccessful,” Fr McVerry said.

The homelessness campaigner said that an assessment followed by substantial taxation on empty properties and “the ultimate threat” of Compulsory Purchase Orders were needed to tackle the growing numbers of families being made homeless.

In a statement the Peter McVerry Trust welcomed several of the measures announced, which they have campaigned for including “the creation of a national empty homes unit, the appointment of empty homes officers in each local authority area and a national empty homes database”.



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We need to talk about the strange death of the SDLP

I wish some bright young writer – or some bright older writer, indeed – would produce a book on the theme of ‘The Strange Death of the SDLP’.

The collapse of the Social Democratic and Labour Party in Northern Ireland is one of the major electoral events, surely, of 2017. It also seems to be one of the most unexplained – even ignored.

Apart from passing allusions, it is seldom the focus of analysis by political experts on the island of Ireland. And yet its annihilation at the polls – at the British general election – is hugely significant.

The SDLP was at one time the main, moderate political party in Northern Ireland for most Catholics. Yet at this year’s Westminster Election, it failed to win a single seat. This, in political terms, is total annihilation.

Squeezed

Why did it happen? How did it happen? Apart from some rather superficial points about ‘the squeezed middle’ in politics – the Unionist Party, too, has been outpaced by the fiercer Democratic Unionist Party – I haven’t seen any in-depth



Mary Kenny



SDLP leader Colum Eastwood (left) celebrates his election in 2015 with former deputy leader Fearghal McKinney.

explanation and analysis. Is there any truth in the allegation that the institutions of the Catholic church, so anxious to bring Sinn Féin on board with the peace movement, contributed to the SDLP’s demise, even if unwittingly? Or, once John Hume was

no longer well enough to be at the helm, did the party lack leadership? I only ask these questions because I want to know: and when there are unanswered questions or an issue to

be explained, that is the perfect opportunity for a writer who is in a position to do the research.

Certainly, the collapse of the SDLP has left a gaping vacancy in the House of Commons, where Northern Irish nationalists are now completely unrepresented. Surely this is a highly unjust democratic deficit – especially at the most important juncture of Westminster politics since 1940: the legislative terms to be formed around Brexit.

Population

Sinn Féin has made it clear that their policy of abstaining from a British parliament is non-negotiable. Well, that’s their choice, and no one can force them to do otherwise.

Although it’s a strange throwback to 1921 when the Oath of Allegiance to the King was the main stumbling-block (and ultimate cause of Civil War) to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of that time: as the Oath of Allegiance to Queen Elizabeth II remains the principle objection for Sinn Féin at Westminster today.



Away with the fairies

Danny Healey-Rae [pictured] has again entered the national conversation of mirth with his talk of fairies possibly being a factor in the ruination of the roads. I wouldn’t care to joke about fairies. To our ancestors, they weren’t funny, sweet little creatures, but malevolent forces prompting bad luck, ill feeling and fractured relations. Away with them!

Be that as it may, the fact remains that while Northern Ireland is still part of the United Kingdom, a large section of its population – maybe 40% – is unrepresented in the Commons. Mainly because of the SDLP’s annihilation.

Please, someone, write a thorough, comprehensive, honest and accessible book about this important subject – now.

The public disapproves of adultery

Since we live in more permissive times, it might be imagined that the sixth commandment (seventh in the Anglican version) “Thou shalt not commit adultery” is taken more lightly.

And yet the case of Charles, Prince of Wales, and his wife Camilla [pictured], tends to show that the British public remains fairly judgemental of the couple for having an affair during Charles’s marriage to Diana.

A poll taken by ICM last week found that 51% of the people now want William to succeed as the next monarch, skipping Charles (and Camilla). Only 22% now support Charles.

More than two-thirds – 67% – are opposed to Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, ever becoming queen.

The seasoned royal commentator Michael Thornton has written: “Many people recoil from the prospect of a woman who broke her own marriage vows and then assisted her next husband to break his, being crowned and anointed in



Westminster Abbey as ‘a great example of virtue and piety, and a blessing to the kingdom’... “Camilla wilfully persisted in an adulterous

liaison which she knew perfectly well could only result in the destruction of another woman’s marriage.” Charles, for his part, says Thornton, “ruined the life of an innocent young girl by marrying her with a lie on his lips, and without telling her he had a married mistress he had no intention of giving up.”

Some would consider this a harsh judgement. Some would say that “love is all you need” and if Charles and Camilla love one another (which seems to be the case), their affair was justified.

And yet, permissive age or not, it still seems that the public doesn’t admire the betrayal involved in adultery, and doesn’t easily forgive its disclosure.

Aware calls for more volunteers

Ireland’s leading mental health organisation, Aware, which provides support for those suffering from depression and bipolar disorder, is asking for 40 more volunteers following a 20% increase in the volume of calls to their support line.

With 450,000 people in Ireland living with depression, as well as 45,000 people experiencing bipolar disorder, the ‘Aware

Support Line’ is adding a new phone line to their current service to meet this demand.

“The Aware Support Line is a crucial lifeline to the one in ten people in Ireland experiencing depression,” said Brid O’Meara, Director of Services, Aware.

“We are asking the people to join our team and be a voice of hope for someone experiencing depression.”

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NI should have Irish Language Act says new Raphoe bishop

Chai Brady

The newly ordained Bishop of Raphoe has urged Stormont to support an Irish Language Act – a contentious issue in Northern Ireland.

Bishop Alan McGuckian, a fluent Irish speaker and scholar who translated a biography of St Ignatius of Loyola into Irish, called on politicians to agree on the act.

“Given the support there is for the local national languages of Wales and Scotland, it is obvious that there should be the same support for the traditional Irish language here,” he told *The Belfast Telegraph*.

Richness

“There is a great richness in the Irish language and I would like to see the Stormont politicians working together to make the Irish Language Act a reality.

He said that he would like to see DUP supporters, and

other people, beginning to find “some affinity with the Irish language and not to see it as a threat”.

Bishop McGuckian attended a Gaeltacht in Donegal as a teenager, where he first developed a passion for the language. In later life he served as a chaplain for many of the Gaelscoileanna in Belfast, in the Diocese of Down and Connor.

Worship

At Bishop McGuckian’s ordination earlier this month Archbishop Eamon Martin said he hoped the new bishop would encourage more Sunday worship “in our native language”.

A strong supporter of power sharing in the North, the new bishop also said that the Good Friday Agreement was “a wonderful achievement” and that it’s important “we do not let it slip”.

As battle plans are laid out for Brexit by the British gov-

ernment the new bishop is also very aware of the trials a border county like Donegal face, and said it could have implications on the peace

process.

“It could have huge consequences both socially and economically in both parts of Ireland, and there’s always a

danger of what a huge change would have for our still sensitive peace process,” he told *The Irish Catholic* before his ordination.

Lighting the way in Knock



The outdoor candlelit procession at Knock Shrine, during the opening night of the annual Knock novena on Monday. Photo: Stephen Farragher

Roscrea abbot elected to the motherhouse

Mags Gargan

In an unusual move, the Cistercian abbot of Roscrea Abbey has been elected abbot of the order’s motherhouse in Mount Melleray.

Dom Richard Purcell became Ireland’s youngest abbot when at the age of 33 he was elected in Mount St Joseph Abbey in Co. Tipperary in 2009 and re-elected in 2015. On Friday Dom Richard was elected abbot in Mount Melleray in Co. Waterford.

Abbot Richard explained to *The Irish Catholic* that when there is an election in a monastery, the abbots of the other monasteries “also have a right to vote and indeed can be elected”. “The motherhouse has the right to claim the abbot of a daughter house as their abbot. It is perfectly within our legislation and it does happen from time to time,” he said.

However, he confirmed his election was unexpected and had come as a shock to the community in Roscrea. “This has taken people by surprise,” he said. “Usually abbots have a term of office and people anticipate when there is going to be a new abbot elected.”

After living in the Roscrea community for 20 years, Dom Richard said the move to Waterford would be a challenge and a “bit of a leap of faith”.

He is expected to take up his new role in October.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Top model inspired by nun

One of Ireland’s most famous models, Rozanna Purcell has revealed that an 87-year-year-old American nun is her hero.

Madonna Buder, known as the ‘Iron Nun’ is a senior Olympic triathlete, and holds the current world record for the oldest person to ever finish an Ironman Triathlon, which she obtained at age 82 by finishing the Subaru Ironman Canada in August 2012.

Mission lives book signing

Matt Moran will sign copies of his book, *The Legacy of Irish Missionaries Lives On*, in Knock Shrine bookshop on Sunday, August 20. The book, with a foreword by Mary Robinson, illustrates how the work previously done by Irish missionaries is now being continued by local and indigenous religious in Africa, South America, and Asia.

Omagh bombing victims remembered

A remembrance service was held last Sunday for those who died in the Omagh bombing 19 years ago.

The prayer service took place in a memorial garden in the Co. Tyrone town to remember the 29 people, including a woman pregnant with twins, who were killed in the Real IRA attack on August 15, 1998.

Bereaved families have recently issued a writ to sue PSNI chief constable George Hamilton for failings in the police investigation that they believe allowed the killers to escape justice. Although a landmark civil trial found four republicans liable for the bombing no-one has ever been convicted in a criminal court of the murders.

The PSNI has said it will “respond in due course” to the legal challenge.

Grotto stunt aimed at inspiring campaigners

Colm Fitzpatrick

The pro-choice activist who draped a jumper with a ‘Repeal’ slogan over the altar of a Dublin church, said he did it to inspire “burnt-out” fellow campaigners.

Jim Healey, a pro-choice lobbyist, confirmed he took the photo of the jumper on the altar of the grotto outside Mary Immaculate Church in Inchore, Dublin. “I did it of my own accord,” he said, “and most of the campaigners I know seemed to like it.”

He added that he took the picture almost four months ago, describing it as “amusing” that it was only being discovered now.

His actions drew criticism from both sides of the abortion debate last week, with Fr Gerry O’Connor, a member of the Association of Catholic Priests’ leadership team, telling *The Irish Catholic* the stunt was aimed at provoking a “bigger gulf” between people who are trying to find the common good.

Meanwhile, over the weekend an iconic mother and child statue in Finglas was emblazoned with the word ‘REPEAL’ by a member of the pro-choice campaign.



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Confessional seal threats would be unconstitutional here – expert

Greg Daly

Attempts to compel priests to reveal information about abuse learned in Confession would be legally unsustainable and probably contrary to Ireland's Constitution, a leading expert on constitutional law has said.

"If you're given an undertaking at some point and then act to your detriment as a result of that undertaking, the law shouldn't turn around and take that away from you," UCC's Dr Seán Ó Conaill told *The Irish Catholic*, adding that statements made in Confession would probably be of little evidential value.

"Unless you're given a forensic level of detail, what weight can you really attach to it?" he asked. "It's not going to work unless the priest is going to have intimate knowledge of the whole event."

Principle

In addition, he said, a key constitutional matter to be considered is the principle of freedom of religion. "The other issue is the straightforward right to practice your religion," he said, continuing, "Confession is a key part of being a Catholic, and this would be such an infringement on it you'd wonder if it is legitimate."

Such a proposal would endanger other privileged

relationships such as doctor-patient privilege and attorney-client privilege, he said.

Dr O Conaill's comments follow reports that Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has recommended that legal protections for the confessional seal should be removed, and that Catholic priests must violate the seal of Confession if they hear about child sexual abuse.

The commission, which began work in 2013, issued its report on criminal justice on Monday, with one of its 85 recommendations being that laws on reporting child sexual abuse "should exclude any existing excuse, protection or privilege in relation to religious confessions".

Irish Government proposals in 2011 to compel priests to break the seal of Confession in such circumstances were criticised at the time by leading barrister Paul Anthony McDermott, who said the proposal made little sense when Confession was anonymous.

Speaking on RTÉ's *Frontline* he added: "So if that law was passed as it is, it would almost certainly be found unconstitutional, because the first thing a court would say to the Government is, why are you breaking the seal of Confession for child abuse, but not murder?"

ACP corrects false 'lay diaconate' claims

Staff Reporter

The Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) has been forced to amend a media statement after inaccurately describing members of the permanent diaconate as laypeople rather than clerics.

In a press release issued last week, headed 'Association of Catholic Priests Statement on the Permanent Lay Diaconate', the ACP leadership committed themselves to backing Fr Roy Donovan, parish priest of Caherconlish and Caherline, in his opposition to "the decision by the Archbishop of Cashel & Emly to set up a group to investigate initiating the permanent lay diaconate in his diocese".

Fr Donovan's objection, the ACP said, "is based on the

fact that currently the Church confines the lay diaconate to men, even though Pope Francis has a commission working on the history of women deacons in the early church, with a view to possibly opening the diaconate to women also".

The claim that Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly has decided to look into introducing the 'permanent lay diaconate' into the Archdiocese of Cashel & Emly has been published in turn by *The Irish Times* and on the website of ACP founder Fr Tony Flannery.

Like priests and bishops, however, deacons are clergy and as such there is no such thing as a 'lay diaconate' in the Church; the ACP has corrected its statement on its website which now refers simply to the 'permanent diaconate'.

Bishop Nulty gets the red hat



Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare & Leighlin with Minister Charlie Flanagan, school staff and local clergy, at the turning of the sod on the new building project at Knockbeg College, Co. Laois.

Zimbabwe honours missionary priest

Colm Fitzpatrick

A Franciscan missionary priest has been posthumously honoured by the Zimbabwean Government for his contributions to achieving independence in the country and his subsequent charitable work there.

Fr Paschal Slevin, who died in Dublin on May 1 this year at the age of 83, was given the highest honour reserved for foreigners, The Royal Order of Munhumutapa, highlighting his basic humanitarian, rather than strictly political, contribution to the quality of life of the citizens of his adopted country.

To date only six individuals have received the award including former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda and the late Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere.

Vice-President of Zimbabwe, E.D. Mnangagwa said in a letter offering the government's condolences to those who mourned Fr Slevin's death, "The late Father was a real friend and benefactor of the people of Zimbabwe", adding, that he "economically empowered the community that he lived in".



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Necessity: the mother of invention

When St John Paul II visited Ireland in 1979, Derry's Bishop Donal McKeown recalled this week, he said that each generation "is like a new continent to be conquered for Christ".

It's hard to avoid the conclusion that efforts at conquest have been lacking – or at least unsuccessful – for those generations who have come of age since Ireland's first ever papal visit, but with the prospect of a second papal visit on the cards next August, the Irish Church is grappling with new ways of re-evangelising a country where four out of five people identify as Catholic but barely one in three goes to Mass.

"The challenge for Church is not just to find personnel to maintain traditional structures but how to look forward, and not back, and adapt in such a way that we cease to be focused on maintenance, and develop laity and clergy in a way that they are fit for mission – making, forming and sending new disciples of Christ," Bishop McKeown told *The Derry News*.

The call for the Church to move from maintenance mode to mission mode is a common one at the moment, and one that was at the heart of Pope Francis' programmatic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, just as it had been for the Latin American bishops' 2007 'Aparecida document', which drew on Pope Benedict's insistence that Christianity should be based not on ideology or an elaborate doctrinal framework but on personal encounter with God through Christ.

Cultural change

This encounter – and its expression – needs to be part of the whole Christian community as it goes into mission mode, and so Dr McKeown said that that a cultural change would be needed to encourage and help lay people take part in evangelistic activity.

While he continues encouraging people to pray for more vocations to priesthood and to religious life, he said "there is also a parallel call to laity to take up their

Clerical shortages are pushing the Irish Church to implement a key insight of Vatican II, writes **Greg Daly**



Derry pilgrims with Bishop Donal McKeown before departing the Lough Derg island after a pilgrimage.

various apostolates that are part of being a Christian".

"That change of culture will involve a diocesan wide process of training and formation," he said, adding, "I find this an exciting and energising time as we become a missionary Church in Ireland."

"I think now may be the time when something that has been there is called to come to the fore"

Dr McKeown is not alone in urging Ireland's laity both to deepen their love and knowledge of the Faith and to share and apply this Faith in the world. While it might seem obvious to assume this call is simply a response to declining numbers of clergy and seminarians, there is another sense in which it is better seen as a belated attempt to realise one of the key insights of the Second Vatican Council.

As Ireland's newest bishop, Raphoe's Bishop Alan McGuckian, told *The Irish Catholic* last week, it's not enough simply to look at calls for lay involvement in the Church as attempts to fill clerical gaps.

"I don't like to look at the idea of co-responsibility for

the mission of the Church purely in terms of a response to declining numbers of clergy," he maintained.

"The vocation of the laity is to be the face of Christ in the world and for that to be the face of the Church – that has been with us so clearly now for decades, in particular since the Second Vatican Council."

He continued: "I think now may be the time when something that has been there is called to come to the fore and to take on real flesh and live. It has to always be clergy and laity working together."

Kildare and Leighlin's Bishop Denis Nulty made a similar point at a diocesan gathering this June, where he highlighted how *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, offered "a powerful vision of Church, a vision that has been built on by successive Popes and none more so than Pope Francis".

Noting how the document's vision entailed "a radical call to discipleship", he said: "This vision of Church is achieved through making sense of the universal call to holiness – each person will find a pathway to holiness, that is for every person, personal and unique."



The bishop explained that given Ireland's shortage of clerical vocations, the age profile of Ireland's priests, and the stress associated with such realities, serious reflection was needed, acknowledging how "the level of volunteerism in so many aspects of parish life continues to be staggering".

Consultation

Calling for a diocesan consultation to ensure the diocese moves together on a journey of discernment, he said "we need an element of patience to at times bring priest and people with us".

In connection with this, he said he believed each parish should have a team of lay people working towards a shared goal of collaborative leadership by autumn 2018, and said: "It would be a big mistake simply to pigeon hole lay people into an existing clerical model of leadership, to the neglect of new possibilities in the areas of teaching, catechesis, contemplation and evangelisation."

"It is not the Church that is dying, it is the model of Church," he recalled Bishop Christian Nourrichard of Évreux in France having told Limerick clergy on their visit to his diocese last year.

The visit, Limerick's Fr Eamonn Fitzgibbon told *The Irish Catholic* earlier this year, entailed a group of clergy joining Bishop Brendan Leahy on a visit to Évreux "essentially to see how things are done there, because they are now where we will be in 10 or 15 years in terms of numbers of clergy – just to see how they structure themselves and how they cope".

"A time of decline in one area can be an opportunity for growth in other areas"

This was part of Limerick's preparation for its diocesan synod, he explained, noting how as a group of clergy visiting a diocese with a similar profile as their own, the visit "tended to focus on how they coped with that – a small number of priests, and a big number of parishes".

The visitors noted how the clergy of Évreux managed working in teams with "priests and people managing maybe eight or nine parishes" with perhaps just one, two, or three priests in such a team.

Little surprise, then, that realism proved a hallmark on all sides of Limerick's diocesan synod, with practical suggestions about how people and priests could work together in ministry and liturgy across the diocese, and a pioneering attempt at introducing lay-led liturgy across the diocese generating international headlines this April.

For Ardagh and Clonmacnois' Bishop Francis Duffy, "a time of decline in one area can be an opportunity for growth in other areas", and it may yet be that local identity and a willingness of people to involve themselves in their local church may yet transform and save the Irish Church.

"By engaging more with each other we can take on responsibility for the formation, promotion and practice of the faith at local level in the changing circumstances in which we find ourselves," he wrote in *The Irish Times* earlier this year, adding that he believes parish pastoral councils are a key to the future.

"I think that they are rising to the challenge and will reinvigorate our church," he wrote.



The rise and rise of pro-choice militancy

Abortion advocates' tactics could backfire as pro-life ones once did, writes **David Quinn**

We're in something of a Catch-22 situation here.

If you draw attention to sacrilege you might end up playing into the hands of the sacrilegious. They're looking for attention. If you pay no attention to it at all, you could give the impression that you don't really care when the sacred objects of your religion are misused.

Last week there were two very good examples of the misuse of sacred objects by pro-choice campaigners. In one, a photograph appeared on the internet of how a campaigner had draped a pro-abortion 'Repeal' jumper over an altar at a parish in Inchicore. I drew attention to the picture on Twitter. It attracted a lot of reaction. People on the pro-life side were annoyed. People on the pro-choice side were divided.

The person behind the act was delighted with himself. Fellow campaigners patted him on the back. But other pro-choice advocates took a different view. They think acts like this could easily backfire with the general public. As a rule, the general public do not like militancy. Militancy is a quality long associated with the pro-life side, mostly unfairly, but these days a lot more militancy is to be found on the pro-choice side, even though most people are not aware of this yet because the media do not tend to draw much attention to pro-choice militancy.

Dismissed

The person behind the aforementioned stunt could be dismissed as a random activist. Acts like this cannot be passed off as representative of the pro-choice movement as a whole if they are isolated and not supported by the leadership of the pro-choice movement in Ireland.



However, we also had another example of the misuse of sacred objects last week, this time from the leadership of the pro-choice movement. A book is due out shortly making the case for repealing the pro-life amendment. It features contributions from leading pro-choice advocates. Its editor is *The Irish Times* columnist, Una Mullally.

“A pro-choice activist painted the word ‘Repeal’ on all four sides on the plinth”

The book is being promoted using a well-known image of the Virgin Mary. Superimposed over her is the heart-shaped 'Repeal' logo. To put it another way, imagery of the Virgin Mary is being used to promote abortion. Any reasonable person would find this utterly perverse.

When I drew attention to it on social media last week, this misuse of a sacred image found plenty of defenders among pro-choice campaigners. Una Mullally seemed pleased that my tweeting of the image might sell a few copies of her book, and it did indeed sell three or four.

But Twitter and other social media are not representative of the general public. For example, there is a lot more hostility towards the Catholic Church on social media than there is among the general public (although it exists there too), and social media is well known for tilting strongly left politically

speaking. For example, Labour has as many Twitter followers as Fine Gael and Fianna Fail combined. This is obviously no indication of the support Labour has among voters in general. Far from it.

Another example of pro-choice militancy emerged on Monday. In Finglas there is a 12 foot tall statue known as the Mother and Child statue.

A pro-choice activist painted the word 'Repeal' on all four sides on the plinth. What was this intended to accomplish or convey? The statue shows a woman joyously throwing her child in the air. Is the message, 'Repeal Motherhood'? We could be forgiven for believing so.

The support these stunts are receiving from other pro-choice campaigners on social media is very telling. Some pro-choice voices are raising concern, but they appear to be outnumbered by activists who support these moves. That is a sure sign of rising militancy and a sure sign of a movement that is spinning out of control and confusing its own support base with the general public.

Clinics

This problem can exist on the pro-life side as well. When pro-life militants picketed politicians' clinics or even homes years ago, that was guaranteed to lose middle ground votes, especially given the amount of publicity they received.

Posters showing aborted fetuses are also likely to be counterproductive. They do show the reality of abortion, but the general public appear resistant to seeing

them. Also, showing them on the street means small children see them as well and this isn't appropriate.

But the general public are aware of pro-life militancy because the media have always shone a spotlight on it. So far, they have mostly ignored rising pro-choice militancy.

However, it is leaking out on social media and bizarrely it is leaking out because many pro-choice militants are proud of their various stunts and want to show off what they have done.

“I think at this stage the militancy has more or less got out of control”

There are other examples of this growing militancy. For example, some of the posters on display at some pro-choice rallies are basically pornographic in content.

At the recent pro-life rally in Dublin organised by Youth Defence, pro-choice militants lined up on a part of O'Connell street opposite them to hurl abuse at them. I am trying to imagine the reaction if something similar happened to people attending a gay pride parade.

I think at this stage the militancy has more or less got out of control. The mainstream media is likely to go on either ignoring the militancy, or downplaying it, while throwing a spot-light on pro-life militancy where it occurs.

But pro-choice militancy is, as mentioned, leaking out on social media and

over time this will reach the general public. At that

point, it is likely to become counterproductive.

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Legion of Mary project

An invitation earlier this year to address Australia's royal commission on institutional child abuse shows how highly regarded Ireland's National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church has become, according to the board's CEO Teresa Devlin.

"It was probably the big event of the year so far in terms of the honour that is bestowed on the national board, to be invited to give evidence at such an important inquiry," she says, adding that Baroness Sheila Hollins, the psychiatrist who serves on the Pope's child protection commission, has said she expects the inquiry to lead to significant changes across the world in child safeguarding – "not just the Church but in civil society".

"So for me it was an amazing honour to be asked and to be able to share what we have done to make a difference here," she says. Initially they spoke remotely on background issues, and then she was – to her surprise – asked to address the inquiry directly as the commission had been interested in the impact the board has made in terms of child safeguarding in Ireland.

"The audience was full of survivors and interested others like members of the Catholic Church and various other people," she says, "But it was the survivors in particular that I was intrigued by because of course they were all at varying stages of their journey and some of them literally wore their victimhood on their backs.

"You know 'I'm a victim of child sexual abuse in the Catholic church' in t-shirts, some of them. And others you could see by their expressions and by the heavy load that they were carrying, that they were victims, survivors, complainants, whatever label you want to put on them."

Survivors

The commission arranged for counsellors to be there to help survivors deal with any trauma they experienced through listening to the evidence, Ms Devlin says, describing how she spoke to several of them, who related "horrible stories about their childhoods ruined and the consequences of abuse and how they had left their Faith".

The procedures at the commission genuinely impressed her, she says, detailing how serious efforts were made to tease out why the Church had failed so badly in preventing child abuse, and how it was trying to tackle it now.

"I think that's what impressed me most," she says. "They really wanted to understand how the Church had come to the position it was in in Ireland, the journey of the Church. Which I have to say has been a sad start but I think that we're still working away along that journey but the evidence in – and you'll have seen – the annual report shows the statistics are way down."

The guard can never be dropped, she adds, stressing that at the same

Lessons from an Irish experience

Child protection processes in the Irish Church are proving an education to the World, writes Greg Daly



time things really have changed.

On the last day she was at the commission, one survivor spoke to her about a priest who had moved to Ireland, and how the board had been contacted and spoke in turn with the bishop of the diocese where the priest hoped to work. The priest had never been convicted of abuse, she said, but the allegations against him were such that the bishops said he could not minister in his diocese.

"So it worked and the survivors were saying 'if you can do it, we can do it,'" she says, adding, "The evidence from that particular survivor in Australia was kind of a credit to the work that is being done across the Irish Church. That the systems are alert, everybody's wanting to make sure the safe guards are in place."



The effect of the Irish experience clearly has had an impact, to judge by how in June at the Anglophone Conference for those involved in child protection across the English-speaking world one of Ms Devlin's Australian colleagues related how the royal commissioners had praised the work of the Irish board.

The conference, hosted in Rome this year, was a huge event with well over 100 delegates, such traditional Anglosphere countries of Ireland, England and Wales,

Scotland, the US, Canada and Australia being joined by delegates from further afield.

"Then we have the African countries which many of whom are saying, 'well we don't have child abuse in the Church. We have physical abuse in the family and that's the problem,'" she says, continuing, "but we know that's not the case, so at this large conference, I'm delighted that African countries are coming and we have Zambia, Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, a whole lot of African countries."

During the conference several African delegates said they didn't know how to address the issues raised because they don't exist in their countries, she says, making it all the more valuable that others challenge this.

"And those who have been there before are saying 'yes you do have this problem you just don't see that you have this problem,'" she says, continuing, "so we can do two things from an Irish perspective; we can continue to attend that conference and try to influence good practice but the large number of Irish orders that have gone out to the African missions, we can influence their international policy."

Encouragingly, she says, even those African delegates who doubted child sexual abuse is

a significant problem in their cultures did ask for resources to help take steps to prevent and tackle it.

Underpinning all responses to abuse allegations should be Gospel values, she says. "The principle is that you're doing this because you care – the Gospel says you should be caring for and protecting and safe guarding children," she says.

"I think we should be saying 'yes please learn from our mistakes. Please don't do what we did'"

This applies regardless what domestic legislation might be in place, even in countries where reporting allegations to civil authorities could have grave consequences for those reporting – one thinks naturally of countries where Church practice is legally proscribed or limited. "You have to be very careful of that but that doesn't mean you do nothing," she says, continuing, "you can still ensure that if someone is abusing a child that they are not in ministry."

"I think we should be saying 'yes please learn from our mistakes. Please don't do what we did,'" she says.

Not that the board has made itself redundant in Ireland, of

course. "I think we have come a long way," she says. "I keep saying in our annual reports, as we have this year, that there is no room for complacency. I have an anxiety that we're all going to sit back and say it's done now, and if we look at our allegations, they are going down, but that doesn't mean they're going away."

Citing a few allegations and expressions of concerns from recent years, she says one of the current challenges is considering how best to tackle the growing problem of online abuse – what is so often, and carelessly, labelled 'child pornography'.

"We aren't as wise as to how to safe guard children online because it's an international problem. So if a child is abused in Ghana and somebody downloads the pornography in Ireland," that's a problem for Ireland as it is in Ghana, she says, continuing, "so in Ireland we can't say we have sorted it."



An ongoing area of focus for the board in recent years has entailed standardising issues of care, she adds, this being an area which has been highlighted on several occasions by members of the Association for Catholic Priests (ACP).

The new standards and



guidelines, which include directions on how to care for respondents, were issued last year, and are, as far as Ms Devlin can tell, being embedded across Ireland, with staff telling her that from their visits to dioceses and parishes that "there is a huge amount of effort being put in to making sure that people understand the new standards".

Other than new standards on care of complainants and of respondents – accused priests – she says they're not radically different from the previous standards but are clearer, so people should find them easier to implement than before, even when dealing with such potentially tricky issues as visiting priests from abroad.

"There should be consistent application of that across the country, but we won't know that until next year," she says, since it will take time to establish for certain how things are working on the ground. With 26 dioceses and about 160 congregations and orders, she says, "there will be varying stages of implementation", but so far word is

“It isn't automatic anymore that someone is removed from ministry unless there is a semblance of truth to the allegations”

encouraging about the adoption of standards and about staff audits.

The board has recently worked with the ACP on the issue of care for respondents, she adds. "We went to them," she explains, pointing how reports of dissatisfaction from ACP members around how accused priests had been treated had prompted the board to contact them and have what Ms Devlin describes as "a very positive meeting".

Afterwards, she says, the board told the ACP that they would be working on a paper about the care of respondents this year. "This is our priority from here to Christmas and we wanted to engage with them, as we will do with others who are doing that work like One in Four and Marie Keenan, and others around the country who are supporting priests out of ministry," she says.



Things have changed in terms of how accused priests are handled, she says. "I do think from our own experience that there is a much better balance now in terms of responding to those who have been accused. It isn't automatic anymore that someone is removed from ministry unless there is a semblance of truth to the allegations," she continues.

"It is a much more measured, much more thought through process, in my experience," she adds. "There can be safeguards put in place while investigations are being conducted. I think the pendulum is swinging back towards the middle and I do agree with the ACP about one stage – at one stage nobody was taken out of ministry, of course, but the next stage all that was needed was a sniff of an allegation and you were removed from ministry."

Perpetrators

"I think certainly for the majority of cases now, it is a much more reflective approach to managing and responding to those allegations, caring for the complainant and – I think – offering some process of natural justice to the person who is being accused," she says.

One area that needs further work, she says, is the effect of abuse on those who were close to abuse victims or to perpetrators of abuse – those who are classed as 'secondary victims' – and while the board needs to work on this, she says she was pleased to find the issue being raised at the Anglophone conference.

"First of all there is the primary victim who has been harmed," she says. "Then there is his or her family, because they are generally traumatised by this experience, and then there is the community belonging to the person who has abused – so that could be a parish, a religious community, or his or her family; so there are a number of secondary victims that we need to start paying attention to."

The board has issued guidance on support for communities where a member has been accused of abuse, she says, admitting

that it is probably not detailed enough yet but that it is a start because there are concerns about parishes and religious communities where people are traumatised.

Particular concerns arise with very small communities where one member has turned out to be an abuser, she says, and someone is tasked with keeping an eye on them at all times.

"That is a serious ministry somebody is carrying," she says, "and that is how I would look at it – that that is their ministry in life now. That is a heavy burden that they have been given to support this person. And to assist them with that, they need counselling, they need support, they need spiritual direction, and maybe the opportunity to say 'I can't do this anymore'."

In the meantime, she says, the work of child protection continues, with April's appointment of Dubliner Msgr John Kennedy to head the discipline section in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) having "made a significant change" in the Vatican department others have frequently identified as dysfunctional over the last year or so.

"I didn't see him when I was over in Rome but I keep hearing people saying to me: 'that case was sat there for seven years, I got a phone call from the CDF saying it was being reviewed, and it was done in three weeks'," she says.

“Ms Devlin does not skimp in her praise for those who work steadily to ensure the Church is a safe place for children”

"In terms of the Irish cases, undoubtedly the appointment of Msgr Kennedy is making a difference," she says, adding that here in Ireland the national case management committee intends this autumn to start training a panel capable of conducting preliminary investigations to ensure allegations are examined in a consistent way whenever the civil authorities decide to take no action.

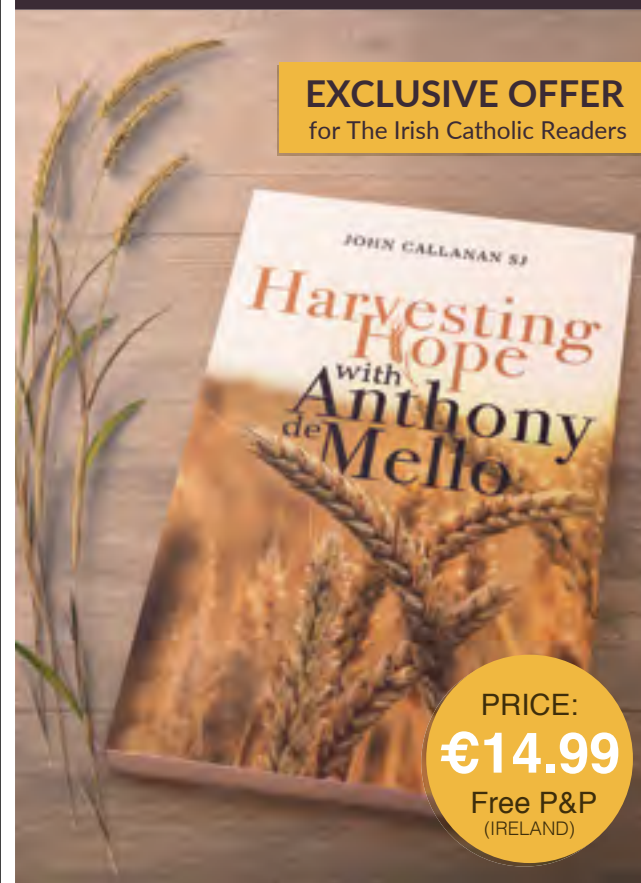
"I'm going to talk to John Kennedy about this as well in line with what the CDF would think is a good standard," she says, explaining that the board wants to ensure consistent assessing and interrogation of information, and to ensure there are consistent bars used when considering what constitutes a semblance of truth and whether or not there is a case to answer.

All this would probably be for nothing, though, were it not for "the army of volunteers across the Church who turn out to do the training and do the safeguarding and run the children's liturgy, and make sure that everything is in place", and Ms Devlin does not skimp in her praise for those who work steadily to ensure the Church is a safe place for children.

"The safeguards are working," she says.

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Msgr John Kennedy.





When it comes to the family, the Church has to present the ideal as something we can aim for, writes **Patrick Treacy**

The purpose of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in August 2018 is to fully present the teaching of *Amoris Laetitia*, the apostolic exhortation on love in the family, of Pope Francis. In the midst of certain controversies since its publication in April 2016, it is often forgotten that it was written after, and consequent upon two Synods of Bishops on the family in Rome in 2014 and 2015.

It reflects the teaching of the universal Church, therefore, in a dual sense, as an apostolic exhortation of the Pope and as a document based upon these two consecutive Synods of Bishops. Last month, WMOF2018 launched its new interactive website. Its homepage contains a quotation from Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, the President and host of this forthcoming international event. This quotation is a prelude to a visual recording of an address given by the Archbishop in June in Dublin to international delegates as part of the preparation for it.

The key quotation of Dr Martin, being relied upon on this website, is “the ideal family does not exist but great families do exist”. Undoubtedly, in one sense, this quotation reflects a central theme in *Amoris Laetitia* where Pope Francis writes that “no family drops down from Heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love.” (AL 325)

Description

In the summary description of *Amoris Laetitia*, published by the Holy See at the same time as this document, it is also stated therein that “the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* seeks emphatically to affirm not the ‘ideal family’ but the very rich and

Every family can make the ideal of God’s love a reality

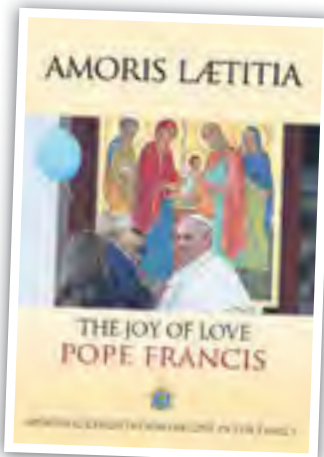
complex reality of family life. Its pages provide an open-hearted look, profoundly positive, which is nourished not with abstractions or ideal projections, but with pastoral attention to reality”.

Amoris Laetitia is grounded upon the emphasis by Pope Francis in his earlier *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), that realities are more important than ideas and that excessive idealisation of the family, which can alienate so many, should wisely be avoided. In this way, *Amoris Laetitia* is also consistent with a clarification at the heart of *Evangelii Gaudium* which is perfectly expressed by Fr Julián Carrón in the text *Disarming Beauty* (2017). This is the observation that, “in the Catholic world, the battle for the defense of values has become, over time, so important that it has ended up being more important than the communication of the newness of Christ and the witness of his humanity”.

“To say that the ideal family does not exist is problematic”

For the renewal of Christian life, this is the centre which must hold and around which all other endeavours must revolve. As Pope Benedict XVI has said and as Pope Francis has reiterated in *Evangelii Gaudium*: “Being a

Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction”. (EG 7)



With this centre of concern in mind, this quotation of Archbishop Diarmuid Martin can then be further understood when seen as a reiteration of what was said by him at the original launch of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in 2016. On that occasion he said: “you see that there is no such thing as the ideal family. There are many problems which we must address. But this does not mean that we renounce presenting an ideal, which men and women and young people can aspire to and hope to achieve”.

However, an unfortunate consequence of stating that “the ideal family does not exist but great families

do exist”, is to effectively renounce the real need of presenting an ideal which we can aspire to. It is also inconsistent with *Amoris Laetitia* which does not state that the ideal family does not exist but rather counsels that “there is no stereotype of the ideal family”. (AL 57) To say that the ideal family does not exist is problematic and an adherence to the dictatorship of relativism for a number of reasons.

In the first instance, it undermines the presentation of the ideal of marriage between man and woman, as central to the incarnation of God’s plan for humanity. The ideal of marriage is, in fact, precisely set out in *Amoris Laetitia* and in which Pope Francis clarifies: “In order to avoid all misunderstanding, I would point out that in no way must the Church desist from proposing the full ideal of marriage, God’s plan in all its grandeur...a lukewarm attitude, any kind of relativism, or an undue reticence in proposing that ideal, would be a lack of fidelity to the Gospel and also of love on the part of the Church for young people themselves. To show understanding in the face of exceptional situations never implies dimming the light of the fuller ideal, or proposing less than what Jesus offers to the human being.” (AL 307)

To say that the ideal family does not exist also unwittingly supports the greatest

intellectual malaise of Western society at this time, the ultimate product of relativism – the unquestioning adherence to a false understanding of equality. We believe that we are building Western societies without discrimination, but, in the name of this good purpose, we are really creating societies without distinction, by reason of having forgotten their Christian foundations.

“A school’s mission is to develop the sense of the true, the sense of the good”

Hence, for example, in publically-funded schools, the statist intention is to remove all religious identity from schools so that they are all the same in the secularist values that they teach to children. Catholicism is, however, based upon an inherited culture of ideals that arise from informed distinctions as to what is more beautiful, true and good.

Accordingly, Pope Francis has said that “A school’s mission is to develop the sense of the true, the sense of the good, the sense of the beautiful”.

The balanced meaning of equality, which we have abandoned in this country, is set out in Article 40.1 of the Constitution of Ireland, which

provides that all citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law. Yet, it also provides that this “shall not be held to mean that the State shall not in its enactments have due regard to differences of capacity, physical and moral, and of social function”.

The beautiful, true and good meaning of equality, expressed in the Irish Constitution in this way, recognises differences and then seeks to justly order common resources in light of them.

The false understanding of equality, however, as the unthinking imposition of a secularist uniformity, is the engine that is driving the ideological colonisation of marriage, something which Pope Francis emphatically warns us against. Last year, in Tbilisi, Georgia, Pope Francis said that “today there is a global war to destroy marriage”. He also said “today you do not destroy with weapons, you destroy with ideas. It is ideological colonisation that destroys.”

The collapse of true equality (which recognises genuine human differences and justly allows for them) and the corresponding rise of false equality (which confuses the just recognition of these differences with discrimination) has served to colonise marriage from being based on the difference between man and woman.

This relatively recent,





international phenomenon, has its roots in an adolescent progressivism (a phrase of Pope Francis) which denies the truthful differences of the nature of man and woman.

This is the anthropological crisis of our time – the denial of our nature as human beings. The drama where this crisis is being played out primarily is in marriage and family life as it is in this most human of fields that we especially need to be honest about our own nature.

We need to be true to who we are. Each of us is procreated from a man and a woman, our unique mother and father. The genetic heritage from each of them is written into the cells of our bodies. Every human person inherently longs to know his or her own mother and father and for them to love each other.

“Life is understood as being in a state of motion, of constant formation”

The loving, life-long bond between a man and a woman and their child or children, is the ideal not simply because the Catholic Church teaches that this is so. It is the ideal because it is in accordance with the most fundamental and truthful nature of the human person. To live life with a loving relationship with one's mother and father, who, in turn love each other, is an ideal which resonates with the very nature of each one of us, with how we have been created. To say that there is no ideal family is contradicted by the very nature of what it is to be human.

It is, of course, true that in Western societies this ideal is experienced less and less but it nonetheless remains as an essential ideal which is real. It is a reality written into the

genetic fabric of each human person. Realities may be greater than ideals but there is no ideal more real than the deepest nature of the human person. We cannot deny this. To say that there is no ideal family is such a denial.

Given the new power of the secularist colonisation of marriage, if the Church does not propose the ideal of what is ultimately beautiful, true and good in marriage and family life, where are young people to go in search of it? How else will the increasingly unspoken rights of children to the love of their mothers and fathers be vindicated?

Progressivism

We have to move from this adolescent progressivism that characterises so much of our public debate about marriage and family life into an adult understanding of them, which is tested by how committed we are to protecting the dignity of every child to know his or her own mother and father. For as Nelson Mandela said: “There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

To say that there is no ideal family also fundamentally undermines the way of proceeding set out in *Amoris Laetitia* to help families that are struggling or conflicted, which, in truth, applies in varying degrees to all families. Ironically, the Church's offer of this assistance to all families is precisely what this quotation of Archbishop Martin is seeking to capture. Instead, it serves to block an invitation to conversion.

“The way of proceeding” is a Jesuit term arising from its founder St Ignatius of Loyola. He urges us to be ‘contemplatives in action’, which means that life is understood as being in a state of motion, of constant formation and revelation, which necessitates continuous discernment and integration.

Accordingly, in seeking to

help and support all families, *Amoris Laetitia* invites those involved in giving pastoral care to distressed families to a threefold engagement of “accompanying, discerning and integrating weakness” (chapter 8).

The Christian ideal of the family is not needed to accompany a family that is conflicted or in distress. It is, however, essential for the further steps of discernment and integration for families to take place. If there is no ideal of the family to base a discernment upon, the weakness in the family cannot be integrated.

The family is then confined beneath a ceiling of mediocrity and is prevented from being lifted by the consoling presence of the Holy Spirit to realise the Christian ideal in daily life, an invitation that is constantly there for every family. For as Pope Francis says in *Amoris Laetitia*, “Let us remember that ‘a small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order, but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties’”. (AL 305)

We must avoid excessive idealisation of the family but we must also avoid the denial of its ideal as otherwise the horizon of hope becomes blocked. The Church must bring the light of Christ to where families are but it must then lead them into becoming transfigured by His love.

It is in the gaze of his light that it is suggested that there are five ideals or upward steps which must be sequentially honoured at the World Meeting of Families 2018 if the potential of this event is to be practically realised. They can be described as follows by reference solely to what is written in *Amoris Laetitia*:

The integrity of marriage

“Christian marriage, as a reflection of the union between Christ and his Church, is fully realised in the union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other in a free, faithful and exclusive love, who belong to each other until death and are open to the transmission of life, and are consecrated by the sacrament, which grants them the grace to become a domestic church and a haven of new life for society.” (AL 292)

The human ecology of the family

“Respecting a child's dignity means affirming his or her need and natural right to have a mother and a father. We are speaking not simply of the love of father and mother as individuals, but also of their mutual love, perceived as the

source of one's life and the solid foundation of the family.” (AL 172)

The domestic church

“Led by the Spirit, the family circle is not only open to life by generating it within itself but also by going forth and spreading life by caring for others and seeking their happiness. This openness finds particular expression in hospitality...The family lives its spirituality precisely by being at one and the same time a domestic church and a vital cell for transforming the world.” (AL 324)

The family as constitutive of society

“The family is a good which society cannot do without, and it ought to be protected. ‘The Church has always held it part of her mission to promote marriage and the family and to defend them against those who attack them’, especially today, when they are given scarce attention in political agendas.

“Families have the right to ‘be able to count on an adequate family policy on the part of public authorities in

the juridical, economic, social and fiscal domains.’” (AL 44)

The family as a living reflection of God

The Triune God is a communion of love, and the family is its living reflection...the word of God tells us that the family is entrusted to a man, a woman and their children, so that they may become a communion of persons in the image of the union of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (AL 11)

Karl Rahner once said that “the most important fact in all of theology and spirituality is that the three persons of the Trinity want to reveal themselves to each person”. They do this through our families and call us to be completely one as they are one. (John 17:21) This ideal is something that they realise through us, notwithstanding our weaknesses, mistakes, infidelities and fragility. In fact, it is the humility of a repentant heart, broken by these experiences, that can often allow for their operative grace in families to become most visible.

Every family, no matter what its history, can make the

ideal of God's love a reality in our world, once those within it experience that God loves them first.

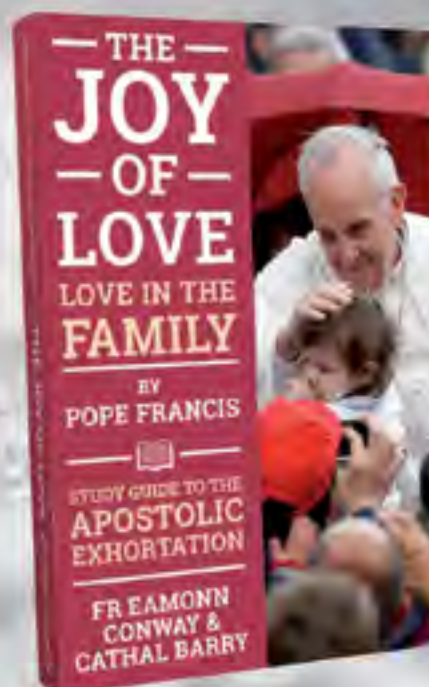
This is the deepest purpose of the family, to enable the joy of God's love to be found through its relationships, to satisfy the eternal longing in each of us, in the words of the poet Raymond Carver: “To call myself beloved, to feel myself beloved on the Earth.”

This is the ideal of the family made real – to make it known to each person within its embrace that he or she is loved first, loved and needed and not to be lived without. This is the Gospel of the family, joy for the world.

Patrick Treacy is a Senior Counsel. The five ideals referred to in this article for the World Meeting of Families 2018 are explained more fully in a text entitled ‘Mission Territory – Pope Francis, Ireland and the World Meeting of Families 2018’ which can be downloaded from the homepage of the website of Integritas, a domestic centre of Christian spirituality, Ennisnag, Stoneyford, Co. Kilkenny (www.integritas.ie).

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Leo offers no warm house for social conservatives



Children are noticeably absent from list of people the Taoiseach claims to fight for, writes **Fr Andrew McMahon**

I have no problem with civil partnership...I do think that marriage is separate...And I would be of the view that it doesn't have to be the case for everyone, but the preferable construct in a society is the traditional family, and the State through its laws should protect that and promote that. And that doesn't mean to say that other people can't have a different form of relationship, or different choices in their lives, and lots of people do, and that's fine. But I don't think that the government should be neutral on that, and that the best thing for – and this would be backed up by evidence – that the best thing for children is to be brought up by their father and their mother, a man and a woman, in a stable relationship underwritten by marriage. And I think the State should support that.”

The above pretty much reflects my thinking, as a citizen, and why I believe same-sex marriage is both unnecessary and undesirable north of the border. I don't see my approach as religiously-motivated in the main, but arising from a conviction that children deserve, where at all possible, the security and identity of a traditional family setting.

Parade

Had I expressed such views publicly in Belfast, last Saturday, while the city's Gay Pride parade was underway, I suspect I could have experienced a frosty reception. I might even have been brought to the attention of the Police Service of



An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar at the Belfast Pride Festival.

Northern Ireland and advised of the potential for 'hate crime'. So concerned were the police to identify with the ethos of the LGBT event, they rather controversially allowed uniformed officers to participate in the parade and liveried up three patrol vehicles with the slogan 'Policing with Pride'.

“He told a debate... ‘My view on this is simple. Every child has a father and a mother. Two men cannot have a child’”

My defence if challenged, however, would have been that the sentiments articulated above were not actually mine.

I was merely repeating, verbatim, the opinion formerly expressed by the most high-profile visitor to the Belfast gay pride celebrations, namely Leo Varadkar.

These opinions, significantly, don't belong to Mr Varadkar's distant past, before he had an opportunity to reflect on the responsibilities of public office or the challenges facing

contemporary society.

They were articulated in a *Hot Press* interview no further back than May 19, 2010, by which date Mr Varadkar was no political novice. He had already completed three years in the Dáil, was a Fine Gael front bench spokesperson and, moreover, had been contesting local government elections for more than ten years.

What's more, Mr Varadkar had expressed similar views in the Dáil earlier that year. Speaking about the notion of adoption by same-sex couples, he told a debate on the second reading of the Civil Partnership Bill, on January 27, 2010: “My view on this is simple. Every child has a father and a mother. Two men cannot have a child. Two women cannot have a child...it should be the role of the State, where a child is an orphan, to try and replace their mother and father with an alternative mother and father...every child has a mother and a father and every child has a right to a mother and a father and, as much as possible, the State should try and vindicate that right.

“And that right is much more important – the right of that child to have a father and mother – is much more important than the right of two men to have a family, or

two women to have a family, and I think that should be the principle that underlies our laws in relation to children and adoption.”

Provision

Just five years later and, by early 2015, as Health Minister in Enda Kenny's government, Mr Varadkar was campaigning for same-sex marriage provision and expressing what amounted to unqualified support for adoption by same-sex couples.

A few commentators raised questions about what Senator Rónán Mullen termed Mr Varadkar's 'U-turn' on these core principles. Senator Mullen told RTÉ radio, on January 23, 2015: “Leo Varadkar makes a great virtue of being someone who speaks his mind – now he must acknowledge that he has changed his mind.” In response, Mr Varadkar shrugged off the criticism, suggesting that any change in his opinion was really down to “a matter of emphasis”.

“I think, like a lot of people, my views have moved on in the past five years,” he explained.

Two years on from the referendum on same-sex marriage, and Leo Varadkar has recently emerged as Fine Gael's new leader.

He ended his first full

week in office as Taoiseach by attending a gay pride parade in Dublin and expressing delight at how Irish society had “moved on in the past number of decades”.

Mr Varadkar immediately identified family life north of the border as requiring his attention: “We really need to come behind and press for marriage equality in Northern Ireland. That's something I have already raised with Arlene Foster and will continue to do so...I will use my office to stand up for LGBT rights around the world.”

“How could a Taoiseach so easily overlook children's rights in his current thinking?”

True to form, the Taoiseach used the occasion of his first official visit to Belfast to attend a gay pride breakfast preceding their parade and reiterate his demand for same-sex marriage in the North. He told his Belfast audience that he was there as a “gesture of solidarity”, claiming that he was “not here to unsettle anyone”.

“Difference makes us stronger”, continued the Taoiseach, “and that's something I

believe in and something that I think can mark Northern Ireland out in the future.”

Mr Varadkar was accused by certain Unionists, in advance of the Belfast outing, of interfering unduly in matters of domestic policy north of the border, given that the gay pride event was actually campaigning for a change to Northern Ireland's laws in respect of marriage.

The nationalist daily, *The Irish News* also appeared to recognise that the Taoiseach was probably crossing a line: “While his support for the LGBT community in Northern Ireland is in line with his stated position, he will also know that he is straying into more political territory,” it commented last Wednesday.

In widely reported remarks, Mr Varadkar appeared trenchant in his response to concerns expressed: “I will attend the pride breakfast on Saturday morning in Belfast to express my support for equality before the law for Catholics, Protestants, non-religious people, men, women, gay people and straight people. And I won't be making any compromises about that for anyone really.”

A number of questions suggest themselves here: Firstly, children are – noticeably – absent from this presumably inclusive list of peoples, whose rights to ‘equality’ the Taoiseach aims to defend. The well-being of children seemed so critical to Mr Varadkar's previous stances on same-sex marriage and adoption that he had no difficulty declaring to parliament that “the right of a child to a mother and father is more important than the right of two men to have a family, or two women to have a family”.

In an Ireland allegedly vigilant about the protection and welfare of the child – with a Children First Act brought into law as recently as 2015 – how could a Taoiseach so easily overlook their rights in his current thinking? How, one might add, did Irish media outlets fail to identify this omission and probe it further?

Secondly, if Mr Varadkar genuinely believes that “difference makes us stronger” and that diversity should be a priority on the island of Ireland, then why can northern society not be allowed to continue with its existing civil



Participants
at the Belfast
Pride Parade.

partnership provision (ironically no longer available in the Republic) and without recourse to same-sex marriage? Why did a Taoiseach need to use his first official visit to the North to decry it, simply for being 'different'?

Has he missed the significance of the Advertising Standards Authority's judgment, last week, that a billboard campaign claiming '100,000 people are alive today' because of the North's restrictions on abortion, was

in no way misleading.

The authority was clear that "the evidence indicated that there was a reasonable probability that around 100,000 people were alive in Northern Ireland today who would have otherwise been

aborted, had it been legal to do so." To put it very mildly, the North has richly benefited from being distinctive in some of its legal provisions and not slavishly following Britain in matters such as abortion. Can Leo Varadkar not acknowl-

edge this and be respectfully open to the possibility of real wisdom in Northern Ireland's adherence to a conventional model of marriage?

Thirdly and, perhaps, most fundamentally: How can a Taoiseach take it upon himself to either look north, or come north, and lecture society here on accepting the kind of fundamental changes to family and marriage legislation to which he himself was opposed for the greater part of his public and political life?

“The presence of a Taoiseach among them would surely have been sufficient to hearten LGBT enthusiasts”

Can Mr Varadkar even begin to credibly challenge the largest political party in the North for remaining steadfast around a conviction about marriage and the family which he appeared to believe and was willing to articulate until somewhere around three years ago, or whatever time he 'moved on' - to use that highly ambiguous cliché?

Leo Varadkar insisted dur-

ing this year's Fine Gael leadership contest that he wanted the party to be, in his words, "a warm house for social conservatives". Last Saturday he came to the centre of arguably the most socially conservative city on this island and declared that it was "only a matter of time" - as he saw it - before Northern Ireland would be obliged to legalise same-sex marriage. For a visiting premier, apparently not here "to unsettle anyone", there seemed something audacious about this remark.

The presence of a Taoiseach among them would surely have been sufficient to hearten LGBT enthusiasts north of the border. Was such additional public commentary really needed?

For the more socially conservative among the North's population, there will have been little encouragement in Mr Varadkar's performance last weekend. Far from even attempting to 'warm' the air for them, his forecast had more of a chilling effect - something of a warning, perhaps, to those unwilling to dispense with their convictions as readily as the Taoiseach himself appears to have done.

CANCER

A CIRCLE OF SEASONS

This book, while it is very personal, it draws the reader in. The diary entries are honest, funny and poignant and the prayers to an intimate God are coming straight from the author's heart. Perhaps, the prayer on page 24 'My death as part of life' sums up the book. 'Lord let me live well, through accepting death'. The interweaving of journaling questions and Scripture, will invite the reader on a challenging and rich inner pilgrimage."

Martina Lehané Sheehan

Author of *Seeing Jesus, Whispers in the Spirit* and *Waiting in Mindful Hope*

Sr Margaret Quirke,

Loreto Sister, Clannell


Hugh Morley

Head Of Business with Cork Counselling Services and a qualified integrative humanistic counsellor practicing in the same organisation

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Out&About

Tralee Dominicans celebrate St Dominic



KERRY: Dominicans celebrated St Dominic's Day with Mass at Holy Cross with Bishop Ray Browne, and Franciscans and friends of the Dominicans, included in group, Prior of Holy Cross Abbey, Fr Joe O'Brien OP; Fr James Duggan OP; Fr Christoph OP; Bro. Thomaz OP and Dominican sisters Sr Teresa McEvoy, Sr Rose Clarke and Sr Bridget Kelly; Franciscans Fr Lars Frenzel and Fr Antony Yukes, Fr Tom Geaney, Sr Winfrid Mercy, Fr Gearoid Walsh, and members of the Third Order and friends of the Dominicans. Photo: John Cleary



WEXFORD: Mayor Tom Dempsey officially opens the two new pitches at Barntown parish after the annual 'Patron and Barbecue': Will Hayes, Christy Goggin (parish finance chairman), Fr John Carroll, Mayor Tom Dempsey, Mark Brazzill (field chairman), Councillors George Lawlor and Tony Dempsey, Daniel Brazzill.



ANTRIM: Canon Noel Conway former teacher in St Malachy's College, Belfast and parish priest of Strangford and Kilclief receives the papal blessing from former bishop of Down and Connor, Bishop Patrick Walsh after celebrating Mass at St Patrick's church, Downpatrick to mark his Diamond jubilee where he is priest emeritus. Canon Conway was joined by Canon Robert Fullerton, Fr Aidan Denny, Canon Brendan Murray and parish priest of Downpatrick, Fr John Murray. Photo: Gerard Smyth

IN SHORT

Dublin's first Cycle of Light in aid of NCBI

The National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) will hold its first 'Cycle of Light' event on August 25. This event will see 100 people cycle into the darkness of night for sight loss. From 8.30pm until dark participants will cycle from Dalkey to Howth and back to Dalkey, via the outskirts of Dublin city. Also cyclists can also choose to take part in relays and just cover one leg of the journey.

This is a unique 85km night time cycling tour shining a light for those living with sight loss and raising vital funds for NCBI's rehabilitation and children services.

Entrepreneur and former Dragon's Den star, Sean Gallagher is the Ambassador for the Cycle of Light. "We all need to be grateful for our sight and be aware of people who are blind or visually impaired. I know first-hand what it is like to experience sight difficulties

having been born with congenital cataracts. I have seen the great work NCBI do," he said, encouraging participation in the night cycle.

NCBI's services include emotional support and counselling, low vision solutions like magnifiers, assistive technology advice and training, rehabilitation training (including independent living skills and using a long cane), a large print, audio and Braille library. The organisation also has an online shop with lots of practical solutions.

To learn more or to register for the Cycle of Light visit www.ncbi.ie or email cycleoflight@ncbi.ie or call Collette on 01 882 1970.

Conference to honour legacy of Limerick's former bishop

Academics and historians will be celebrating the legacy of Bishop Edward Thomas O'Dwyer of Limerick this October.

The World of Edward Thomas O'Dwyer of Limerick (1886-1917) is a one-day conference organised by Limerick Diocesan Archives and the Department of History, Mary Immaculate College, to assess the legacy of Bishop Edward Thomas O'Dwyer of Limerick, on the centenary of his death.

Bishop O'Dwyer is best remembered for his celebrated clash with Sir John Maxwell in the wake of the 1916 Rising and his contrarian positions on everything from the Plan of Campaign, to university education and the fall of Parnell, as well as his lesser known anti-war writings which had a significant international impact.

The conference takes place in Room G10, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick on Friday, October 13. See <https://odwyer17.wordpress.com> or register at <https://odwyer17.wordpress.com/registration/>

Legion of Mary hosts Catholic Young Adults Conference

The Legion of Mary is once again hosting a Catholic Young Adults Conference (ages 18-40) in All Hallows College Dublin, over the weekend of September 2-3.

The theme of the conference is 'Know Mary, Know Jesus' and the MC again this year is renowned Dominican preacher Fr John Harris.

The conference will have a wide variety of speakers and workshops with over 200 young Catholics in attendance.

Two days non-residential €50 or residential €80. Contact Keith on 086-8899123 or Lucy on 087-9959803 or deusetpatria@gmail.com or see www.facebook.com/deus.patria

Edited by Mags Gargan
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



WEXFORD: Bishop Denis Brennan celebrated Mass in Bride Street Church, Wexford with Fr Pat Mernagh and priests from the Defence Forces and from the Diocese of Ferns to mark Fr Pat Mernagh's silver jubilee to the priesthood.



KERRY: Fr Ciarán O'Callaghan and Presbyterian minister Rev. Ken Newell, who spoke at Our Lady and St Brendan's Church, Tralee and attended a workshop at Milltown, are pictured with (left) Peggy Sullivan, parishioner Our Lady and St Brendan's Church, and Rev. Newell's wife Val. Photo: John Cleary



GALWAY: Fr Micheál MacGréil SJ; Bishop Fintan Monahan, Killaloe; Fr Kieran Burke, PP Leenane and Liam McNally, Westport at the annual Máméan pilgrimage in the Maamturk Mountains in Connemara.



▲ **DUBLIN:** Volunteers with the World Meeting of Families at the RDS Horse Show in Dublin where they had an information stand in Hall 3.

◀ **DONEGAL:** Participants on a charity walk to Knock for Mary's Meals meeting the new Bishop of Raphoe, Dr Alan McGuckian in Letterkenny.

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. All welcome.

ARMAGH

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

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

CORK

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

DERRY

Dungiven Parish: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Mon-Fri, 8am-noon and 3-9pm.

DONEGAL

John Pridmore, international speaker and author of *From Gangland to Promised Land* will lead a Healing Retreat in Ards Friary, Creeslough from Friday, August 25 to Sunday, August 27.

DUBLIN

Agape Charismatic prayer meeting in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, Tuesdays, 8pm (Mass last Tues of the month), Disciples of the Divine Master Oratory, Junction of Newtownpark Av/Stilorgan Rd. Bus: 46A/C/D or 58C. Tel: 087-6509465.

Divine Mercy Mass and holy hour 7.30pm every Tuesday in St Saviour's Church, Dominick Street. Also daily Divine Mercy prayers at 2.30pm at the shrine with the relic of St Faustina.

Life to the Full Book Club for young adults (20's & 30's) to reflect and discuss a chosen spiritual book over a few weeks. Every Thursday from 7-8.30pm in St Paul's Church Arran Quay (Smithfield). Email: michelle.manley@dublin-diocese

A special Mass for the anointing of the sick will be held on Sunday, September 3 at 3pm in St Patrick's Church, Ringsend.

'Mass on the Grass' community celebration with Fr Robert Colclough at Irvine Terrace (under John Cullen's Hill), East Wall on Saturday, August 26 at 2.30pm followed by refreshments, face painting and cake competition.

FERMANAGH

Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick every Wednesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm. www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly

KILDARE

Carbury Parish – Adoration in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Derrinturn every Monday from 10.30am until 12 midnight. Adoration for priestly vocations every Thursday at 8.45pm.

Suncroft parish church: Eucharistic Adoration each Wednesday in the sacristy 10am to 6pm.

KILKENNY

Extraordinary Form Latin Mass every Sunday at 5pm in St Patrick's Church, College Road, Kilkenny (opposite St Kieran's College).

LIMERICK

Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Friday in Raheen church following 10am Mass until 10pm,

Crecora on Thursdays, following morning Mass until 12noon and from 6-10pm, and in Mungret Church on Wednesdays, from 10am to 12noon.

A Service of Healing with Mass will be held in Killeely Parish Church on Thursday, August 17 at 8pm. Celebrant: Fr John Keane.

MAYO

The National Traditional Pilgrimage to Knock will take place on Saturday, September 2 commencing with a High Mass/Missa Cantata at 2pm, followed by Stations of the Cross and Traditional Benediction. All events in the old church.

Holy Souls Society of Ireland annual pilgrimage to Knock Shrine – August 21 for a 3pm Novena Mass.

The 12th annual Charismatic Weekend Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, hosted by the Monaghan Charismatic Prayer Group, on August 25 at 6pm, August 26 at 9am and August 27 at 8.30am. Speakers: Fr Peter Casey, Sr Anne Maria O'Shaughnessy and Philip McArdle.

MEATH

Tara-Slane pilgrim walk departing from the Hill of Tara at 9am sharp on Saturday, August 26. Estimated time of arrival on the Hill of Slane is 4.30pm with conclusion of pilgrimage by 5pm. Mass at 3pm in Slane parish hall. See www.navanparish.ie

Trim Prayer Group meeting every Thursday evening, 8-9pm, in Trim Parish Centre.

Christ the King Prayer Group, Enfield, meeting every Monday evening, 7.30-8.30pm, Enfield Parish Centre.

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday, August 18 and every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries: Dave 085-7746763.

Eucharistic Adoration in the chapel of Tullamore General Hospital 24/7.

ROSCOMMON

Fr Flanagan & Boystown at The Library, Roscommon on Thursday, August 24 from 10.30am to 4pm. Includes talk by Bishop Kevin Doran, Prof. Daire Keogh of DCU and journalist John Waters.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday 10-11am and Thursday 8-10pm. Also at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday 7.30-8.30pm.

TIPPERARY

National pilgrimage celebrating the Fatima centenary on Sunday, August 27 at Holycross Abbey, organised by the World Apostolate of Our Lady of Fatima. Rosary Procession at 2.30pm followed by Stations of the Cross, Anointing of the Sick, blessings with relics of Ss Francisco and Jacinta and Mass at 4pm celebrated by Cashel and Emly's Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly.

WICKLOW

Eucharistic adoration, St Mary & Peter Church, Arklow, every Tuesday & Friday 2-7pm & Sunday 2-5pm.

Holy Rosary for priests, Aras Lorcain, every Friday at 7.45pm.

St Patrick's Prayer Meeting on Thursday evenings at 8pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre, Wicklow. Come for prayer, scripture, music and a cuppa.

World Report

IN BRIEF

North Korea vs US: Bishops urge diplomacy

● Diplomacy and political engagement are necessary to resolve the differences between the United States and North Korea to avoid a military conflict, the chairman of a US Conference of Catholic Bishops committee said. In a letter to US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, chairman of the bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, echoed a recent call from the Korean bishops' conference to support talks to secure the peaceful future of the Korean Peninsula.

Bishop Cantu acknowledged that the "high certainty of catastrophic death and destruction from any military action must prompt the United States to work with others in the international community for a diplomatic and political solution based on dialogue."

Philippines' bill to protect poor

A bill that protects the rights of the poor was passed last week by the Philippine Congress, but Catholic Church leaders are awaiting for it to get presidential approval.

The bill aims to give people equal access to basic rights and government services such as adequate food and housing, access to quality education and the right to the highest attainable standard of mental and physical health. An earlier version of the bill was rejected in 2013.

Fr Edwin Gariguez, executive secretary of the social action secretariat of the Catholic bishops' conference, welcomed the legislation as "a good development".

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Catholics call for peace after condemning Charlottesville white nationalist violence

US Catholics have called for peace in the aftermath of violence in Charlottesville, in which three people died and dozens were injured.

Catholic bishops, a cardinal and several Catholic organisations made the appeal following clashes between pacifists, protestors and white supremacists in the Virginian town.

A white nationalist rally was organised in reaction to Charlottesville city council's plan to remove the statue of Robert E Lee, a Confederate general who many say is a symbol of racism. They were met by counter-protestors, and at least 20 people were injured last Saturday according to the Associated Press.



White nationalists clash with counter-protesters at a rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Photo: CNS

Marchers

Further brutality at the University of Virginia the following day left one person dead after a car ploughed into a crowd of counter-protestors on the afternoon of August 12.

A 32-year-old paralegal, Heather D. Heyer, was killed when a man known to be a Nazi sympathiser drove into the marchers. Vigils were held for her and those who

suffered in several countries.

The bishop of the diocese that encompasses Charlottesville, Francis DiLorenzo, said: "In the last 24 hours, hatred and violence have been on display in the city of Charlottesville."

"Only the light of Christ can quench the torches of hatred and violence. Let us pray for peace," said Bishop

DiLorenzo in the statement. "I pray that those men and women on both sides can talk and seek solutions to their differences respectfully."

Virginia's governor declared a state of emergency when violence erupted during the Unite the Right white nationalist protest. According to US media reports hundreds of men and women with lit

torches chanted anti-Semitic slogans the previous day on the grounds of the University of Virginia.

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, called the events "abhorrent acts of hatred", in a statement. He said they are an "attack on the unity of our nation".

Kenya's election results spur violence

Catholic bishops in Kenya have called for calm as violent post-election protests led to over 20 people being killed, including a nine-year-old girl.

The protests have ignited anger in slums across Nairobi and Kisumu after Raila Odinga, the main opposition candidate, lost against President Uhuru Kenyatta.

Mr Odinga has travelled through slums saying the government has "blood on its hands" for the deaths of civilians, and accused the government of tampering with the voting process, saying they "stole our votes".

He has not conceded defeat despite

growing international pressure.

As the votes were being counted Bishop Alfred Rotich, retired head of the country's military diocese, said: "We need to be calm, we need to be sober... this is moment for peace."

"Politicians spent a lot of money for many years, five years, campaigning without stopping...they don't have time to reflect."

He suggested politicians should be restricted to two-month campaigns and recommended stress relief activities for after elections.

In Eldoret, Bishop Cornelius Arap Korir issued a similar appeal. In some

areas, his diocese is still recovering from a deadly post-election violence that occurred 10 years ago.

"We urge calm. Those who [are] aggrieved should go to court," said Bishop Arap Korir.

The Multi-Sectoral Forum, a group of religious leaders that advocate for peaceful elections, called on Kenyans "to remain calm and peaceful [and] resume day-to-day operations, appreciating that elections are important, but must not be the end of life".

Celebrated former president of religious order dies



The former president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and of her order, the Sisters of charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), has died age 82.

Sr Helen Maher Garvey [pictured] entered religious life when she was just 17 and subsequently earned a doctorate in organisational development in Columbia

University in New York City.

She was a teacher and principal of elementary schools across the US and was elevated to leadership in the BVM order in 1976. Sister Garvey served 16 years as either president or vice president of the congregation.

During her tenure, the BVMs created the Heartland Housing Initiative in Dubu-

que, Iowa, and renovated a stately old home into apartments for 22 families, naming it Helen Garvey Place. In 1993, she began an 11-year ministry as director of pastoral services for the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky.

She developed lay leadership and worked with parish councils in a largely rural and unchurched area.



Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie

Blunt message from Venezuela



A man in Caracas, Venezuela, walks past graffiti that reads, 'Down with Trump...rot'. Photo: CNS

Cardinal rejects foreign military intervention in Venezuela crisis

A Venezuelan cardinal rejected the possibility of foreign intervention in the country following US President Donald Trump's threat to pursue a military option.

"The crisis we Venezuelans are suffering is so serious that now an external problem arises: the threats of a military option by President Trump," Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino of Caracas said.

He spoke after celebrating the 150th anniversary of the consecration of his archdiocese's cathedral on Sunday, August 13.

He rejected the assertion that foreign military intervention could solve the cri-

sis Venezuela is experiencing.

"I – and I am sure all the Venezuelan bishops – reject all foreign military interference, such as the Cuban one present for some time in Venezuela," Cardinal Urosa said, "and I do not agree with the threat of a military option."

Meeting

After a meeting with Rex Tillerson, US Secretary of State and Nikki Haley, US Ambassador to the United Nations, Trump told journalists that a military intervention was "certainly something that we could pursue".

"Venezuela is a mess. It is very dan-

gerous mess and a very sad situation," Trump said. "The people are suffering and they are dying. We have many options for Venezuela, including a possible military option if necessary."

Elections for seats on a constituent assembly were held in Venezuela on July 30 amid massive protests and international outcry.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's push for the assembly, comprised mainly of his supporters and designed to rewrite the nation's constitution, has led to violent demonstrations in which more than 100 people have died.

Christians killed in Africa receive Pope's prayer

Pope Francis called for an end to violence against Christians following deadly attacks in two African countries.

The Pope led pilgrims in prayer for the victims of a deadly shooting last week at St Philip's Catholic Church in Ozubulu, in Nigeria. He also prayed for Christians killed following an attack at a mission in Gambo, Central

African Republic (CAR).

"I hope that all forms of hatred and violence cease and that such shameful crimes are no longer committed in places of worship where the faithful gather to pray," the Pope told said.

At least 11 people were reportedly killed and 18 others wounded as they attempted to flee the

carnage in Ozubulu in a suspected drug deal gone wrong. Nigeria's bishops described the incident as a "horrendous and callous killing of innocent worshippers".

In CAR there have been violent clashes between the mostly Muslim Seleka rebels and the mostly Christian anti-Balaka militia.

Spanish-born Bishop

Juan-Jose Aguirre Munoz of Bangassou detailed the horrors that occurred at the Gambo mission. "Several men and children have been beheaded. Everything is restless here," he said.

Bishop Aguirre said that UN peacekeepers expelled the anti-Balaka from the mission, but "the Seleka returned and cut about a dozen throats".

Vatican roundup

Pope saddened by Catholics who despise others

God did not choose perfect people to form his Church, but rather sinners who have experienced his love and forgiveness, Pope Francis has said.

The Gospel of Luke's account of Jesus forgiving the sinful woman shows how his actions went against the general mentality of his time, a way of thinking that saw a "clear separation" between the pure and impure, the Pope said during his weekly general audience.

"There were some scribes, those who believed they were perfect. And I think about so many Catholics who think they are perfect and scorn others. This is sad."

Continuing his series of audience talks about Christian hope, the Pope reflected on Jesus' "scandalous gesture" of forgiving the sinful woman – a woman caught in adultery.

The woman, he said, was one of many poor women who were visited secretly even by those who denounced them as sinful.

Although Jesus' love toward the sick and the marginalised "baffles his contemporaries", it reveals God's heart as the place where suffering men and women can find love, compassion and healing, Pope Francis said.

Beijing and Holy See negotiate appointment issue

A senior Vatican official has hinted there is an unofficial agreement between the Holy See and Beijing on the appointment of bishops, even as negotiations to formalise arrangements continue to hit roadblocks.

Argentine Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, who attended a conference on the sensitive topic of organ donation and transplants in the southern Chinese city of Kunming, offered the hint during an interview with state-run *Global Times*.

"We need to make a distinction between a formal agreement and the real things (that are

happening among the public). The real thing is that at this moment China and the Pope have a very good relation," said Bishop Sorondo.

Observers have been increasingly confident that a process has been put in place as the two sides work toward a formal agreement, especially after the appointment of five new bishops in 2015 and 2016 that were recognised by both sides.

However a formal agreement appears to have stagnated with regard to three bishops appointed by Beijing who are not recognised by the Vatican.

Vatican investigates claims Indonesian bishop has mistress

The Vatican has appointed an apostolic visitor to investigate claims by Indonesian priests that their bishop had a mistress and misappropriated Church funds.

Bishop Antonius Subianto Bunyamin of Bandung said that the Vatican has asked him to look into the accusations against Bishop Hubertus Leteng of Ruteng, Indonesia.

Bishop Bunyamin is scheduled to visit the diocese on Catholic-majority Flores Island on August 14.

The appointment followed social media postings that Catholics in the Ruteng Diocese living in Jakarta would gather at the apostolic nunciature for a vigil calling for a speedy resolution to the situation. Bishop Bunyamin said the gathering would "worsen the situation".

The conflict erupted in June when 69 diocesan priests submitted letters of resignation, leaving their positions as episcopal vicars and parish priests and demanding that Bishop Leteng change how the diocese is run.

The move followed allegations last year that the bishop secretly borrowed €80,000 from the Indonesian bishops' conference and €25,600 from the diocese without providing accounts for how the money was spent.

Letter from Los Angeles

Romero and a century of transformation

Romero's centennial coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Marian apparitions at Fatima, and it is useful to take Fatima as a guidepost to situate Romero's life in the life of the Church. Indeed, the major thematic set points in the Fatima message – the World's wars and the Church's sufferings in these conflicts – would define Romero's life.

Blessed Oscar Romero, the martyred Salvadoran archbishop beatified by Pope Francis in 2015, was born 100 years ago this week, on August 15, 1917, and his centennial was marked by devotees around the world.

At a memorial service at St. George's Cathedral in London on Saturday, August 12, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, postulator of Romero's canonisation cause, reminded over 500 attendees gathered there that they joined faithful “in El Salvador and in other parts of the world, to remember this shepherd for his Gospel witness that brings light to believers and non-believers alike.”

He added that, “my great hope is that Pope Francis will soon canonise him a saint”.

Paglia told Vatican Radio that canonisation may come as soon as next year.

In Romero's El Salvador, 1,500 pilgrims walked from his tomb in the San Salvador Cathedral to the highland village where Romero was born 100 years ago, some 90 miles away. Pope Francis sent Chilean Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati as his personal representative to the commemorations, publishing the letter of his commission, in which the Pope calls Romero an “illustrious pastor and witness of the Gospel”.

Human dignity

The Pontiff writes that Romero was a “defender of the Church and of human dignity”, and a herald of “the saving work” of Christ, manifested in his “love for all, especially the poor, the abandoned and the marginalised”, seeking to promote “reconciliation and peace”.

In the United States, Los Angeles Archbishop Jose Gomez celebrated a commemorative Mass for Romero at Our Lady of Angels Cathedral, while Dallas Bishop Edward Burns is presiding at a Mass at

The centennial of the Blessed Salvadoran bishop prompts us to look at 100 years that marked the Church, writes **Carlos X. Colorado**



Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia.

the Cathedral Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe, calling on all his priests to celebrate similar masses in their parishes. An independent group of Romero devotees that promoted the Romero centennial in the United States documented commemorations in various Latin American countries and in places as far-flung as Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

“The Church was recognisable but different in 1917, when Romero was born”

Romero's centennial coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Marian apparitions at Fatima, and it is useful to take Fatima as a guidepost to situate Romero's life in the life of the Church. Indeed, the major thematic set points in the Fatima message – the World's wars and the Church's sufferings in these conflicts – would define Romero's life.

He spent six years in Rome during WWII, and he attributed

the resolve of the pontiffs of the 30s and 40s – especially, Pius XI – as informing his ideal of the Church's stance before dictators and strongmen. Of course, Romero also lived and intimately bore the pains of the Cold War, in which El Salvador was a flashpoint and in which his own immolation played a part.

The Church was recognisable but different in 1917, when Romero was born. Neither St John Paul II (born 1920), Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (b. 1927) nor Pope Francis (b. 1936), were yet in the world. Romero's life mirrors the trajectory of the Church in the 20th Century, especially with respect to the Second Vatican Council, through which the Church committed itself to pursuing justice in the world. Romero embodies both the ‘pre-conciliar’ mindset and the ‘post-conciliar’ spirit that ensued.

The earlier, conservative Romero, who never appeared without a cassock, is a sort of pre-conciliar archetype; while the later, prophetic Romero who rails against human rights abuses and socioeconomic injustice is the



Photos of Blessed Oscar Romero are carried during a march to celebrate his life.

idealised, heroic ‘Vatican II bishop’.

Many of the debates about the Council – for example, whether it constituted a rupture or an evolution – can be applied to Romero himself, who is seen by some as bucking the system, while others view him as faithfully evolving with the Church's refreshed outlook in a ‘hermeneutic of continuity’.

Foundations

These profound foundations for Romero's relevance are bolstered by something much closer to the surface in his story – he was killed at the altar as he was about to consecrate the Eucharist. He was a bishop reduced to scorn and persecution in a Catholic country. There is an iconic, Hollywood quality to his assassination

which, taken together with his commitment to the poor, his similarities with Pope Francis, and his textbook fulfilment of a modern martyrdom, makes Oscar Romero a most accessible saint and point of reference for our era.

“One hundred years after his birth,” Gomez said at the tribute at the L.A. Cathedral, “Blessed Oscar Romero still inspires us for his humility and courage – for his love for the poor and his witness of solidarity and service to others, even to the point of laying down his life.”

① Carlos X. Colorado is a Salvadoran-American attorney who lives and works in Los Angeles. His blog, *Super Martyrio at polycarpi.blogspot.com*, follows Romero's canonisation cause.

African-American Catholics: ending 'invisibility'



John L. Allen Jr

In the wake of Saturday's carnage in Charlottesville, Virginia, it's clearer than ever that American society desperately needs help on race. The Catholic Church has unique resources to deploy, but it can't afford to allow its own African-American community and leadership to remain "invisible", as one African-American bishop recently described it.

It's not as if Americans should have needed Charlottesville, to remind us we've got a problem with race, including the ugly growth of white supremacy. Yet if the horrifying images we saw on Saturday, including a car driven by a man with a history of Nazi sympathies plowing into a crowd of counter-protestors, leaving one dead and at least 19 injured, wasn't a wake-up call, it's hard to know what would be.

As Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta put it in a recent interview:

"We've grown very accustomed to saying in the face of violence, 'We send our thoughts and prayers.' What we need to do is to send the thoughts and prayers before the event occurs. We need that investment before we're using it in the face of a violent action," he said.

Post-Charlottesville, that seems more obvious than ever. The question is, where will that investment take shape?

From a Catholic point of view, it's hard not to think one such venue could be, and should be, the Catholic Church. We're a quarter of the national population, and the Church in the US includes within itself people of all racial and cultural backgrounds.

If that's to happen, American Catholicism will have to take full advantage of all the resources it's got. While there are many, one that's often overlooked is represented by the country's African-American bishops, and organisations of African-American Catholics such as the National Black Catholic Congress.

Challenge

To be clear, there's a serious risk of being patronising, as well as not appreciating the magnitude of the challenge, to think, "We should do something about race, so let's get the black Catholics to do it." That woefully underestimates the importance of what's at stake. This is a national problem that affects everyone, and everyone has to be involved in seeking a solution.

Perhaps what the American Church needs is a national summit on race, maybe a smaller-scale version of the recent 'Convocation of Catholic Leaders' hosted by the bishops in Orlando, Florida, in early

Retired Bishop Gordon D. Bennett of Mandeville, Jamaica, takes a selfie with attendees during the 12th National Black Catholic Congress.



July, devoted exclusively to this topic, which wouldn't just feature African-American or Hispanic Catholics (or Asians etc.), but all of us together.

At the same time, the country's roughly three million African-American Catholics, as well as our 16 African-American bishops (including nine currently in office and seven retired), bring unique perspectives and experiences to bear on that common effort.

Those sitting bishops are:

- Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta
- Bishop Edward Braxton of Belleville, Illinois;
- Bishop Shelton Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana;
- Bishop Curtis Guillory of Beaumont, Texas;
- Bishop Martin Holley of Memphis, Tennessee;
- Bishop George Murry of St Thomas in the Virgin Islands;

- Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Perry of Chicago;
- Auxiliary Bishop Fernand Cheri of New Orleans.
- Auxiliary Bishop Roy Edward Campbell of Washington, D.C.

In early July, shortly after the Convocation, the National Black Catholic Congress held its 12th assembly in Orlando, Florida, bringing together 2,000 people representing 107 of the 195 dioceses in America.

Dr Braxton was one of the principal speakers, and he lamented what he described as the virtual "invisibility" of African-Americans within the broader Catholic Church.

Talking about the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, Dr Braxton praised the museum overall but was sharply critical of its exclusion of major figures in African-American Catholic history, such as Fr Augustus Tolton, the Sisters of the Holy Family,

Sr Henriette Delille, Fr Pierre Toussaint, Mother Mary Lange and Sr Thea Bowman.

"These absences reminded me that African-American Catholics, then and now, were already invisible in the larger influential black Church," Dr Braxton said. "At the same time, African-Americans were, and remain, all but invisible in the larger influential and largely European-American Catholic Church."

“It would be a promising sign if every diocese in America were to offer to assist, either financially or logistically”

There are undoubtedly lots of reasons for that neglect, some benign and others not so much, but in any event, it must end. If the Catholic Church is to be a contributor to racial healing in America, it has to begin by taking its own racial diversity more seriously, learning to value both the pasts and presents of all those communities.

One of the retired African-American prelates, Bishop John

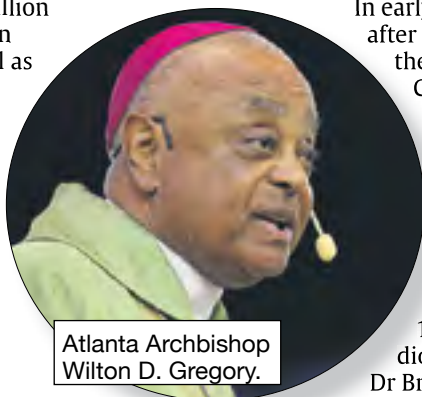
Ricard of Pensacola, Florida, serves as President of the National Black Catholic Congress, and he's announced that the group is working on a new pastoral plan that should be completed in a few months.

Meanwhile, a committee within the US bishops' conference is working on a new pastoral letter on racial harmony, as a follow-up to a 1979 document called 'Brothers and Sisters to Us'.

Both of those projects were important before, but now they feel like front-burner priorities. It would be a promising sign if every diocese in America were to offer to assist, either financially or logistically, and would also take the results deeply seriously when they're done – talking about them, publicising them, inviting others to study them, and so on.

American society desperately needs help on the question of race, and the Church has unique assets to deploy. The Church could be a game-changer, as long as those resources are able to step out of the shadows of "invisibility" and get the hearing they deserve.

John L. Allen Jr is Associate Editor of CruxNow.com



Atlanta Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory.

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

Shroud of Turin most likely real

Dear Editor, I was concerned by the lack of objectivity in the recent article on the Shroud of Turin (IC 03/08/2017 'Turin Shroud shows torture traces'). While detailing the latest forensic testing showing that blood stains came from a torture victim, it went on to give the general impression that the shroud is as likely to be a fake as being the true burial cloth of Jesus.

The main argument against the shroud was the 1988 carbon dating tests which indicated that it came from the 12th–13th Century. This test however was discredited in 2005 when it was shown that the test

specimens came from a corner of the material that had become frayed and was expertly (and almost invisibly) repaired back in the Middle Ages. A later spectrometer test indicated a date of 300BC–400AD. The midpoint of this range is around the 1st Century.

For me, the most convincing of the many supporting forensic tests is the way in which the image of the crucified man is produced on the fabric. It is not a stain, done with pigments or any other conventional process and possesses a unique 3-D quality. An Italian scientist who tried for five years to reproduce it said that

a high energy, pulsating, ultra-violet laser would be required. The only problem is that such a laser does not currently exist: it would have to release several billion watts of energy in a time frame of one forty-billionth of a second!

An open investigative approach should consider that the obvious answer might well be the right one. On this basis, it is quite likely that the Shroud of Turin is the burial cloth of Our Lord Jesus.

*Yours etc,
Fr Morty O'Shea SOLT,
Lettermacaward, Co. Donegal.*

The ordained priest acts in the person of Christ

Dear Editor, Mary Finegan (IC Letters 27/07/2017) believes that "banning women from being ordained priests is insulting". At the Last Supper, Jesus told his apostles that, "the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all I have said to you" (Jn 14:26). Further, "when the spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth (Jn 16:13). St Paul

speaks of the household of God which is the Church of the living God, "the pillar and foundation of truth" (1 Tim 3:15).

Those of us who still attend Sunday Mass are reminded of the "divinity of Christ" after reciting "I believe in one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church". Therefore, I believe when the Pope addresses the whole Church and uses the phrase "in virtue of my ministry of

confirming the brethren I declare..." (Lk 22:32), he is making a formal statement reminding us of what is the dogmatic and infallible teaching of the Church. "I declare that the Church has no authority to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgement is to be definitively held by the churches of the faithful".

The Church teaches that Christ ordained only men at

the Last Supper and regards this as a divine mandate to do the same. It is part of the deposit of faith and not even Pope Francis has the power to change it. In sacramental celebrations, the ordained priest acts in the person of Christ and represents Christ the bridegroom in relation to the Church as bride.

*Yours etc.,
Gerry Glennon,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin.*

Stunts won't win support

Dear Editor, I too was appalled when I saw the image on social media of a 'repeal' jumper spread on the altar of the Oblate church in Inchicore (IC 10/08/2017). This insult was intended to provoke the people of faith. However, I think it has back-fired on the pro-choice campaign because the people of the middle ground in this very sensitive debate are more likely to be put off by such a stunt than swayed to their side.

*Yours etc.,
Bernie Buckley,
Douglas,
Co. Cork.*



Morning-after pill is not medication

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny's article refers to the morning-after pill as "a serious medication" (IC 03/08/2017 'Quizzed for the 'morning after' pill...pharmacist's job').

Many journalists and medics have also called this pill a medication, but this is very misleading.

Check any dictionary for the definition of medication and you will see that it is a drug which aims to cure, control and prevent disease and/

or pain. The morning-after pill is a high dose hormone designed to stop ovulation, to stop sperm reaching the egg, and to stop a fertilised egg (newly conceived child) from implanting in the womb – an abortifacient.

It is not a medication unless you believe the newly conceived child is a pain, disease or an inconvenience. Mary has mentioned the moral and ethical issues also with this pill – how many pharmacists discuss these issues with

their customers? If they do will their job be under threat? Any pharmacist or chemist who does not dispense the morning-after pill on conscientious grounds is to be highly supported and praised. How many priests in their sermons have the courage to condemn this pill?

*Yours etc.,
Ann Campbell,
Scotstown,
Co. Monaghan.*

Empty churches should just be closed down

Dear Editor, I wish to congratulate Dr Andrew Maxwell (IC Letters 20/07/2017) on his point that the GAA is the new religion in Ireland. First of all the GAA is very well sponsored for all their games in Croke Park, therefore they should pay all the players. All Ireland tickets will be €90 this year, and the GAA sold their soul to Sky for €10million.

Did not the Church find and shelter the GAA? The officials soon forget the Church, eaten bread is soon forgotten. What is the purpose of a bishop in Croke Park All Ireland Sunday? He represents nothing in the eyes of the GAA.

The Church is useful for; Baptism (most do not practice their religion), First Communion (First Communion money and the sacrament of bouncing castles), Confirmation (the sacrament of looking good and a good feed of drink), marriage (many now go to the registry office) and deaths (bodies can now be cremated).

It is high time that like banks the Church would now move forward and close down its buildings. If the Church cannot maintain, it should be closed – it is a poor chimney that cannot draw its own smoke.

It is quality Christianity that Ireland needs. There are many good people who wish to practice Christianity in Ireland and who are willing to follow Christ. Many go on pilgrimages to strengthen their faith, as many go to rock concerts.

We need guidance in Ireland now and who can give us that leadership?

*Yours etc.,
Barry Alldis,
Bray,
Co. Wicklow.*

We need more than ordinations of new priests

Dear Editor, Our poor priests are run off their feet. Soon they will all be gone unless something radical is done. I cannot see the Church surviving, the way it is going. When discussions of the shortage of priests arise two solutions are always presented – ordaining married men and ordaining women. However, neither of these suggestions, one possible and the other impossible, will get to the heart of the problem. The Anglican Church ordains both married men and women and it hasn't solved their vocations problems.

Solving the vocations crisis will mean solving the downturn in the practise of the Faith first and foremost. It means evangelisation and a radical overhaul of how secular Ireland views religion and people of faith.

The appalling standard of religious education amongst the young people must be a starting point for bishops, as well as the quality of formation training being offered to seminarians.

We must face the future presented to us with faith, hope and lots of prayer.

*Yours etc.,
John Rogers
Swords,
Co. Dublin.*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



▲ **USA:** Nuclear war protesters demonstrate outside the White House in Washington. Church officials called for dialogue to ease US-North Korea tensions.

► **KENYA:** A woman reacts after a man was killed by riot police during protests in Nairobi. Protesters and police in Kenya clashed after the leader of the government opposition claimed he was cheated of victory by hacking last week.



USA: Fifth-grade teacher Jennifer May helps her students organise their supplies on the first day of school August 8 at St Helen Catholic School in Pearland, Texas.



VATICAN: Pope Francis greets the crowd during his weekly audience in Paul VI hall last week.



◀ **ITALY:** The Iuventa, a migrant rescue ship run by the German organisation Jugend Rettet, is docked for inspection in Lampedusa harbor. Jugend Rettet, which refused to sign the Italian government code of conduct for migrant rescue ships, is under investigation for aiding illegal immigration.

► **PUERTO RICO:** A crew member films a scene for Catholic Relief Services' short docudrama 'Changing the Way We Care' in San Juan. CRS released the video to help educate the public about the struggles families in poor countries go through when making the decision to place one of their children in an orphanage.



Family & Lifestyle



Victoria Holthaus offers a guide on preparing your child to start school

As back-to-school signs hang in seemingly every shop window, there is no denying that school days are just around the corner. The summer is winding down and as anticipation for school picks up, parents are preparing their little ones for the first day of school. Many parents are anxious about this new journey in their child's life, especially about handing them over to someone else for a major part of each day. This is the beginning of their time in the education system that will follow them up until adulthood. While you can't be there to hold their hand through all of it, you can give your family the best chance at a smooth shift in routine.

Do your parental homework for the first day. Prepare your child for what is to come by making everything you can recognisable. Part of the daily routine may involve who will be dropping them off and picking them up from school. Knowing this part of the routine is helpful and comforting for a child. If you can, tour the school together, find out their classroom and possibly meet the teacher.

Reminding your child of what their teacher's name is and where they are going is something you can practice with your child to ease those first day jitters. Even driving by and pointing out the school can make it easier for a child to handle the first day and it's a great excuse to get them excited as well.

Speaking of making things recognisable, label anything and everything you can get your hands on. Children have the ability to magically lose anything in a matter of seconds, leaving the house fully equipped and coming home empty handed.

Simple mistakes

The popular princess or superhero plastered over your child's book bag, lunchbox and pencil case may be a duplicate of eight or nine others in the same class. Try to teach them how to recognise their name beforehand, but if your child can't read their name, place a sticker, ribbon, key chain or anything to distinguish it from the rest. That way when they are rushing for their pick up, simple mistakes won't be made.

As for uniforms, you should be sure to label those as well on the tag or with iron-on labels. Even down to the socks as those can be

tossed aside at any moment in a chase around the play-ground. Keep a spare set of every article handy in case something disappears or becomes distinctly stained. This allows time to get a replacement without the panic of rushing to the shop that night. Velcro shoes will be your best friend as they allow your child to easily put them on and take them off by themselves. Label these

as well on the inside with permanent marker for when they are kicked off for circle time and mixed with a hundred other tiny shoes.

Save some time in the mornings by teaching your child how to put on their uniform by themselves. Although they may not be able to button, zip and buckle everything themselves, even the smallest thing can be the biggest help on a rushed Monday morning.

“Explain to them the importance of hand washing as well and how to properly do so”

Allow them time to practice by setting out their clothes a few weeks before school begins. A little independence goes a long way even if it is just a button short of perfection. While you're teaching

them how to get dressed, use this time as well to make sure that your child is able to use the bathroom by themselves. Not only in unbuttoning and buttoning their pants, but that it is always okay to ask the teacher to use the toilet. Being able to ask and go on their own is a major step in school that will really help the teacher and in trying to prevent accidents. However, know that if an accident does happen that your child is not the first or last to do so and it should be dealt with swiftly and privately by their teacher.

Explain to them the importance of hand washing as well and how to properly do so. Kids pick up many illnesses from schools due to close contact with one another and poor hygiene. Though this is inevitable, stressing the importance of quality hygiene can help to combat some of it.

Along with the early mornings of getting ready, come the early bedtimes. As your child comes home from a full day at school, they will probably be more tired than usual

when they return home. With a good night's sleep behind them, meltdowns and tantrums should be less likely when they get home.

“Use the weeks before to insert some healthy eating habits that most schools are trying to teach”

Get in the habit of a good night's sleep before summer is over by slowing inching back bedtime. This way when it comes to the night before the big day, your child won't be surprised at having to go to bed an hour or two earlier.

When it comes to a lunchtime routine, use the weeks before to insert some healthy eating habits that most schools are trying to teach. Pack up a lunch and snack in their lunch box to practice opening and closing it properly. Distinguish for them what is used for the little break 'snack time' and the big break 'lunch'

Beating 'FIRST DAY' blues





if this isn't a part of your routine at home. Be sure to pack food that is easily opened, peeled, etc.

Once the uniform is ready, the routine is starting to fall into place and your child is getting familiar with where they are going, it's time to pick out the fun stuff. Get your child excited for the school year by including them in buying their supplies. Take a day and shop for their favourite crayons, folder and school bags. Talk to them about what they may be used for and all the fun and exciting things they'll learn at school.

Generally, communication with your child is vital at this point in time. You should try to manage their anxiety and questions as best you can so they have solutions when you aren't around. Remind them that their teacher and the school staff are there to help them as well and not to be afraid of asking questions. Teach them the value of raising their hand in class and being respectful when the teacher is speaking. Some children may be extremely excited

about this new experience while others shy away from it. Reassure them that you are there to support them and know that this attitude may change from day to day.

The big day

When the big day finally arrives, be upbeat about the whole experience. Whether you anticipate them or not, emotions will run high, but you must keep them in check. If you seem anxious, your child will pick up on that and wonder if they should be feeling the same way.

Trust in where you are sending them and they will be more trusting as well. If you're a stickler for routine, try and say goodbye the same way every day so when it's over (whether it's a combination of hugs and kisses or something simple), your child knows it's time to go.

Don't hang around at drop-off – the longer you stay, the harder it will be. If needed, find comfort from other parents who are going through the same thing as well.

Fr Cathal Deery was born in Monaghan town, and had a traditional Catholic upbringing, where the family rosary was a daily occurrence. "It was part of growing up," he says, adding, "going to Mass wasn't an option – we'd go every Sunday." His maternal grandfather had a strong influence on his faith, which compelled him to become involved in the local parish. His faith stayed with him throughout his education and he was eventually ordained a priest and now works as a curate in Clones, Co. Monaghan.

Although he felt called to become a priest, Fr Cathal is still unsure as to whether it was the correct path to take, saying, "I'll never be sure whether this is for me". Continuing, he says, "I certainly grapple with my faith...I still struggle." Despite the uncertainty, he is sure of God's presence in his life, deep in "the midst of it".

One of the main realisations that Fr Cathal had from being in the priesthood for so long in Ireland is that "the Faith and the institution are quite different". Disillusioned by the institutional Church, and in particular, its failure to respond properly to the abuse scandals, Fr Cathal says that the "Church in Ireland will never recover – nor should it." He adds that, "we are not grappling with the issues that we should be... we talk around the issue." For him, the leadership in the Church is fragile, because we "don't hear too many prophetic voices".

Rather than ignoring issues for self-preservation, he feels the people in the Church should "shout from the rooftops" about these contentious issues. These negative aspects, however, have not overshadowed his experience in the Church, which he sees as being fruitful, especially through the provision of education and healthcare.

One of the most important problems that Fr Cathal is passionate about alleviating in parishes today, are mental health issues among the laity and the clergy, resulting in him becoming the Diocese of Clogher's designated priest on suicide and suicide prevention. He recently became involved in an initiative called 'Flourish!', in association with Lighthouse Ireland, which is aimed at the four main Christian Churches across Northern Ireland in helping to improve the mental health of the clergy, and promote emotional well-being.

Straining

From personal experience, Fr Cathal is aware that being a priest can be emotionally and physically straining, and so the "clergy should be supported by Church leadership" and the leadership in turn "needs to be supported", he says.

This support is especially needed in the priesthood because "the issue of celibacy has created loneliness", he says, adding, "there's a great sense of isolation because we're not married". This in turn means that less people decide to join the priesthood and so, "the demands of ministry can create an overwhelming feeling".

Another reason as to why mental health issues can manifest among the clergy is that those in spiritually authoritative positions are "reluctant to let people know that [they] are struggling" he says, adding that "a lot of priests think that they have to reach peoples' expectations and so they don't let their guard down".

Fr Cathal believes that all clergy should be "open to receiving help" and need "to know their limits",



Fr Cathal Deery.

through prayer, reflection, positive affirmations, as well as eating and resting properly. The new resource 'Flourish!' works as a self-care toolkit for the clergy to get informed about how to lead a mentally healthy ministry, and will hopefully be distributed throughout all of Ireland in the future.

The toolkit also offers a range of training courses

as practical support to help Churches respond to vulnerable people.

On average, over 800 people die annually by suicide on the island of Ireland, affecting thousands of people in their communities. "To me, this is a crisis," says Fr Cathal, continuing, "the government and politicians need to do more...it's a bread and butter issue".

“People value our presence and our contribution”

In religious circles, Fr Cathal believes many priests are not trained sufficiently enough to support families suffering with bereavements from suicide. Often, they will

reflect on questions such as, "How do I as a priest address suicide and my own fear? How do I celebrate the funeral? How can I be as sensitive as possible?".

Answers to these questions are vital for Fr Cathal, because "the clergy are at the heart of communities – people value our presence and our contribution". The clergy are able to provide a non-judgemental space of dialogue for people who come to them, and this type of presence can be "invaluable" he says.

Distressing issues

Fr Cathal also affirmed that spirituality can help people cope with these distressing issues, adding that faith has sustained him during dark

in his life. On September 30, a special event called 'Living with Suicide Day', will take place in Lough Derg supporting anyone affected by suicide, bereaved by suicide, working in the area of suicide awareness and prevention, those working in schools, clergy working in parishes, or those in emergency medicine.

Fr Cathal's parting message is "Don't ever underestimate what you might be able to do and what you are doing".

i For copies of the Flourish! toolkit and for further information visit www.wewillflourish.com

PERSONAL PROFILE

Touching hearts and minds

Colm Fitzpatrick talks to a priest working to improve mental health



God needs better press



The word “Protestant” is generally misunderstood. Martin Luther’s protest that led to the Protestant reformation was not, in fact, a protest against the Roman Catholic Church; properly understood, it was a protest for God. God, in Luther’s view, was being manipulated to serve human and ecclesial self-interest. His protest was a plea to respect God’s transcendence.

We need a new protest today, a new plea, a strong one, to not connect God and our churches to intolerance, injustice, bigotry, violence, terrorism, racism, sexism, rigidity, dogmatism, anti-eroticism, homophobia, self-serving power, institutional self-protection, security for the rich, ideology of all kinds and just plain stupidity. God is getting a lot of bad press!

Friendship

A simple example can be illustrative here: In a recent book that documents an extraordinary 50-year friendship with his former coach, basketball legend (and present-day exceptional writer), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, shares why he became a Muslim. Raised a Catholic, a graduate of Catholic schools, he eventually left Christianity to become a Muslim. Why?

In his own words: because “the white people who were bombing churches and killing little girls, who were shooting unarmed black boys, who were



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

beating black protestors with clubs loudly declared themselves to be proud Christians. The Ku Klux Klan were proud Christians. I felt no allegiance to a religion with so many evil followers.

“The civil rights movement was supported by many brave white Christians who marched side by side with blacks”

“Yes, I was also aware that the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King, Jr was also a proud Christian, as were many of the civil rights leaders. Coach Wooden was a devout Christian. The civil rights movement was supported by many brave white Christians who marched side by side with blacks.

“When the KKK attacked, they often delivered even worse beatings to the whites, whom they considered to be race traitors. I didn’t condemn the religion, but I definitely felt removed from it.”

His story is only one story and by his own admission has another side to it, but it’s highly illustrative. It’s easy to connect God to the wrong things. Christianity, of course, isn’t the only culprit. Today, for instance,

we see perhaps the worst examples of tying God to evil in the violence of ISIS and other such terrorist groups who are killing, randomly and brutally, in the name of God.

You can be sure that the last words uttered, just as a suicide bomber randomly kills innocent people, is: God is great! What a horrible thing to say as one is committing an act of murder! Doing the ungodly in the name of God!

And yet we so often do the same thing in subtler forms, namely, we justify the ungodly (violence, injustice, inequality, poverty, intolerance, bigotry, racism,

sexism, the abuse of power, and rich privilege) by appealing to our religion.

Silently, unconsciously, blind to ourselves, grounded in a sense of right and wrong that’s colored by self-interest, we give ourselves divine permission to live and act in ways that are antithetical to most everything Jesus taught.

“The God of Jesus Christ is a God of compassion, empathy, and forgiveness”

We can protest, saying that we’re sincere, but sincerity by itself is not a moral or religious criterion. Sincerity can, and often does, tie God to the ungodly and justifies what’s evil in the name of God: The people conducting the Inquisition were sincere; the slave traders were sincere; those who protected paedophile priests were sincere, racists are sincere; sexists are sincere; bigots are sincere; the rich defending their privilege are sincere; church offices making hurtful, gospel-defying pastoral decisions that deprive people of ecclesial access are very sincere and gospel-motivated; and all of us, as we make the kind of judgments of others that Jesus told us time and again not to make, are sincere. But we think that we’re doing this all for the good, for God.

However in so many of our actions we are connecting

God and church to narrowness, intolerance, rigidity, racism, sexism, favoritism, legalism, dogmatism, and stupidity. And we wonder why so many of our own children no longer go to church and struggle with religion.

The God whom Jesus reveals is the antithesis of much of religion, sad but true. The God whom Jesus reveals is a prodigal God, a God who isn’t stingy; a God who wills the salvation of everyone, who loves all races and all peoples equally; a God with a preferential love for the poor; a God who creates both genders equally; a God who strongly opposes worldly power and privilege.

Compassion

The God of Jesus Christ is a God of compassion, empathy and forgiveness, a God who demands that spirit take precedence over law, love over dogma and forgiveness over juridical justice. And very importantly, the God whom Jesus incarnates isn’t stupid, but is a God whose intelligence isn’t threatened by science, and a God who doesn’t condemn and send people to hell according to our limited human judgments.

Sadly, too often that’s not the God of religion, of our churches, of our spirituality, or of our private consciences.

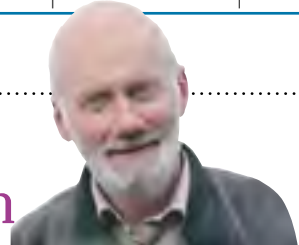
God isn’t narrow, stupid, legalistic, bigoted, racist, violent or vengeful, and it’s time we stopped connecting God to those things.



Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



US/North Korean stand off is fuel for debate

At the time of the election in the USA I wrote that I had a sense of dread with Donald Trump becoming President. I wouldn't have been happy with Hilary Clinton getting the job either, and wondered how such a vast country with such potential couldn't produce better than those two candidates.

My sense of dread was rekindled last week with all the bluster (I hope!) over North Korea. In the media it was all talk about the possibility of nuclear war, but I tended to favour those voices (like security analyst Declan Power on last Friday's **High Noon** on Newstalk) that said it's unlikely for now.

Presumably it would amount to Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD indeed!) as economist Jim Power suggested on the same show the previous day when presenter George Hook was hyping up the threat.

Cheerful

It turned into a cheerful and enjoyable show, with Hook and guests Power, Tom McGurk and Teresa Lowe sparking off each other in a most entertaining way, so that ultimately it felt like the nuclear threat was receding on the spot.

Not that Trump and Kim were listening and lightening up – 'locking and loading' instead.



Kim Jong Un was the focus of *High Noon* on Newstalk.

It was a good time to revisit just war theory. **Fr Rutler: Unchanging Truth** (EWTN) dealt with the issue last Friday night, and though a fascinating topic the presentation was quite dull – Fr George Rutler of New York speaking to camera, his back to a church wall, with random shots of the church's interior.

Some simple graphics wouldn't have gone astray, and as an effective teaching tool this really didn't really cut the mustard. He outlined St Augustine's just war conditions, still relevant and sensible today, though didn't

apply them to any particular conflict of our times.

I'd like to have heard more of his opinion of pacifism which he touched on briefly, saying that Christianity had as much to do with pacifism as Puritanism had to do with purity. Sometimes, he said, there was a duty to fight for a just cause.

He broadened the subject to include spiritual warfare and also the fight for justice for the unborn.

I was glad to hear him criticising those who would be violent in this cause (a tiny minority I'd say) and I liked

his definition of a fanatic – one who is confident that God would agree with him, if only God had all the facts.

More immediate is the housing crisis at home, especially as it involves thousands of young children.

Shaming

Last Friday on **Morning Ireland** (RTÉ Radio 1) the crisis was outlined comprehensively by Jennifer Thompson of the Society of St Vincent de Paul and by Fergus Finlay of Barnardos, who was scathing about the figures. It was "shaming", he said, and I had to agree when he suggested that if there was a comparable crisis in agriculture or in the banks, the Dáil would be recalled and a national emergency declared.

Housing Minister Eoghan



Audrey Carville.

Murphy got a grilling on the issue from Audrey Carville on last Monday's **Morning Ireland**. Her best shot was to ask the minister which aspects of his housing strategy were working.

After he gave some vague generalities about policies she had to ask the question again, whereupon he did give some practical examples that weren't that impressive, but then he's not in the job that long, and he did come across as serious and determined. The discussion covered the idea of incentivising older people in nursing homes to rent their vacant houses and become landlords – seriously? I'd say the stress would hasten their demise.

Later that morning, on **Today With Sean O'Rourke** (RTÉ Radio 1), stand-in presenter Cormac Ó hEadhra suggested the problem was Government failure to provide adequate social housing. Niamh Randall of the Simon Community stressed that any extra housing needed to be affordable, and was strong on the need to keep people in homes they already had rather than seeing them homeless due to rising rents.

It struck me that the lofty ambitions, or lip service, or virtue signalling involved in the Children's Referendum of a few years ago had lost its gloss, what with gross inadequacies in the fostering system, failures relating to

PICK OF THE WEEK

Songs of Praise
BBC 1, Sunday, August 21, 2.15pm

Featuring the Blind Boys of Alabama gospel group and the Edinburgh Festival.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S BENCH

EWTN, Wednesday, August 23, 9pm, also Thursday, 8am

Moral relativism: responding to the secular culture's lack of belief in absolute truth, with Dr Peter Kreeft and Fr Ron Tacelli.

EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND

Channel 4, Friday, August 25, 7.55am

Prodigal son: Debra challenges Ray as to why he doesn't go to Mass on Sundays.

children in direct provision, high numbers of children on medical waiting lists and the urgency with which some powerful people in government and media are seeking to have constitutional protection taken away from unborn children.

✉ boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

Gore spells out grim warning on climate change

An Inconvenient Sequel (PG)

He walks like John Wayne. He talks like Dr Phil. Who is he? He's Al Gore, the man who once said: "I used to be the next President of the United States."

That didn't happen but something else did. He found a life outside politics. A life of lecturing on ecology, on the way to make our world safer. Today he describes himself as a 'recovering' politician. The more time that elapses, he jokes, the less likely he is to regress.

There was a time I thought he was a colourless man. That was before *An Inconvenient*



Al Gore in a scene from *An Inconvenient Sequel*.

Truth, the film he made 11 years ago. It told us we were misbehaving, that we were leaving too many carbon footprints for comfort. It told us the 9/11 memorial site

could be flooded. We laughed – but then it happened.

Time is running out. We're at the tipping point. The ice caps are melting. Cities are turning into rivers. The sun

is drying the ground, creating forest fires.

Gore decided it was time for another wake-up call. This film is it. It's as bold a sequel as you'll get.

Terrorism

A lot has happened since *An Inconvenient Truth*. Terrorism. Syria. The Zika virus. We might think these things aren't related to global warming but in Al Gore's universe, or multiverse, everything is related.

"We should leave the planet better than we found it," says a mayor from Texas in this fine film. He's a Republican but is against Donald Trump on the environment.

Trump backed out of

funding the Paris resolve on climate change. "Solar costs too much money," he says, "and it takes too long to get it back." Money has been behind his attitude to this as it has been to every issue since he took power.

It's a myopic viewpoint. Trump is one of the biggest setbacks Gore has faced since he went on his mission to improve our lot. He's trying not to let it get to him.

Instead he focuses on the good things that are happening – in France, in Chile, even in Africa where one might have imagined the resources weren't available.

A couple of years ago a woman came up to him and said: "If you dyed your hair

you'd look like Al Gore." She was thinking of the black-haired Gore of *An Inconvenient Truth*. The Gore of *An Inconvenient Sequel* is grey.

It isn't only his hair that's changed in the interim. So has the world. For the better and for the worse.

We're at a fork in the road. Donald Trump has taken one direction. We need to take the other one. For all our sakes. Because there's no Plan B.

Pope Francis has even pleaded with Trump to change his mind on this. He didn't listen. He never listens.

What will he do if the hole in the ozone layer gets bigger? There are no pockets on a shroud.

Very good
★★★★

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Strange and secret scandals of the Church

The Nuns of Sant' Ambrogio: The True Story of a Convent Scandal

by Hubert Wolf
(Oxford University Press, £20.00)

Peter Costello

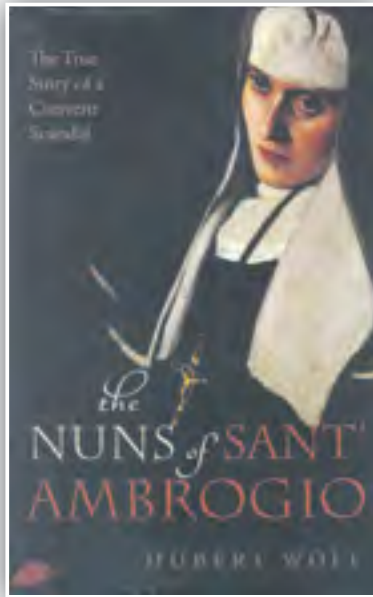
When the Church these days is besieged by scandal many seem to think that in previous generations things were different. They were certainly different, but in the sense of being far worse, as this book, by a distinguished German Catholic historian, reveals.

The subtitle may seem distressingly akin to those famous propagandist books circulated in the 19th century, such as *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk*, which were themselves the subject of vituperative controversy. But Hubert Wolf has a more interesting and far more serious purpose.

He studied Catholic theology at Tübingen and was ordained in 1985. He is one of the leading Catholic historians of recent times. He is currently professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Münster, and is a widely recognised authority of the history of the Papacy, the author of many books including *Pope and Devil: the Vatican Archive and The Third Reich*.

Story

This story opens in 1859, when a letter from a German princess, Katherine von Hohenzollern, who



was a nun in the convent of Sant' Ambrogio in Rome, wrote to her cousin, who was close to the Pope of the day, claiming she was being abused and feared she would be murdered by poison. She was soon rescued from the place.

The Inquisition was called upon to investigate the matter, and in due course revealed to the Church authorities the brutally autocratic manner of the convent superior, Mother Maria Luis.

The convent itself was dissolved in 1883 – the building is now a church.

The sealed-up judicial papers were overlooked in the Vatican

archives until recovered by Prof. Woolf, the matter being kept as secret as possible at the time, given the connections of those concerned.

The scandal may well strike the modern reader as being quite extraordinary, involving as it does what we can discreetly call Sapphic aberrations among the sisters, bizarre devotions to the founder of the convent, the manipulation, not only of the order but of the Church itself.

Though originally covered-up, events are undeniable. It is what we make of them, and what we can learn from them that is important.

“Revealed to the Church authorities the brutally autocratic manner of the convent superior, Mother Maria Luis”

The author's purpose is to use this case, unusual as it may have been, to investigate the actual working of the Church, the Holy Office, and the strange world of aristocratic nuns, the younger daughters of the highest families in Germany and Austria.

For his research extends further than the events into the later life of those involved, especially the delinquent Jesuit, Fr Peters, who was certainly punished, but then quietly released to reinvent himself



as a conservative theologian under another name at the time of the First Vatican Council when he argued strenuously for the very widest interpretation possible of the dogma of Papal infallibility – not merely solemn doctrines or the ordinary magisterium, but the most casual pronouncements of the Pope.

This made him an influential figure in that controversial matter, which certainly seems a strange contrast to what he was in earlier life. The princess, who died in 1893, was the founder of the Benedictine convent at Beuron in south Germany.

That atmosphere of aristocracy and well placed families which the Church was liable to find distorted its ideas, theological, social and

charitable, is now a thing of the past, when wider access to education has brought into the Church people from all levels of society, leading to wider views of what a true reading of the Gospels might involve.

Whatever the scandals and disputes of the present day, a more open climate of discussion, the sanctity of a free press, and a more insightful view of human nature in some upper levels of the Church, would seem to make such a scandal impossible these days; or so one hopes.

Extensive research

This is a book based on extensive and most painstaking archival research of an original kind, the kind of research on which true insights will always be based. But nevertheless this sober history will be found quite shocking to some sensibilities – potential readers are warned.

But to those concerned with the history of the Church in the formative 19th century, or those concerned with the roots of present day Church attitudes in that period, this will be a book of the very greatest interest, not for the scandalous misbehaviours of some in religion, but for the manner in which Church's bureaucracy can function for both good and bad.

But on leaving Prof. Wolf's work down a reader cannot but speculate on what equally astounding revelations are yet to come from the once Secret Archives of the Vatican.

An awesome wonder of faith

The Church of St Aengus, Burt, Co. Donegal: Celebrating half a century (1967-2017)

ed. by Donal Campbell and others
(Parish of Fahan, Inch and Burt, available from the parish office, fahanparish@derrydiocese.org, tel. 074 9360151; €10.00 plus p+p)

To mark the first 50 years of their church a group in Fahan, Co. Donegal, have produced a fine illustrated book which celebrates not just the church, its architect and its building, but the whole span of the known history of the place from the prehistoric Griannan of Aileach down to the present year.

Famous church

The architect of the now justly famous church was Liam McCormick, who was inspired in part by the locality and the Griannan.

The result of his work evokes, as John Hume rightly observed, “awe and wonder”. Here is a place one feels “where prayer has been



valid” (as T. S. Eliot said of another place of faith).

But this booklet is also about the people and priest of the parish, thier stories

and experiences. At a time when there is so much take of decline and the need for retrenchment, of a flight from the land and

rise of secularism, here is a publication with a truly positive outlook, drawing from the past certainly, and sustained by the talents

of the present, but with immense confidence it seems in the future.

These local parish publications are of great

importance and to future generations of visitors and parishioners this book will grant a glimpse into a time and a place. **P.C.**

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.



Tim Winton.

The Boy behind the Curtain: notes from an Australian life

Tim Winton
(Picador, £16.99)

Teresa Whittington

When he was nine years old, Tim Winton travelled by car with his family from Western to Eastern Australia: from the city of Perth to the city of Melbourne. One of the institutions the family visited was the National Gallery of Victoria.

They were seeing it for the first time, and the distance they had travelled to do so was not just physical but cultural; they had arrived in a limitless imaginative world having come from a close-knit working class community with little access to the arts.

The boy's realization that literally anything could be summoned into imaginative life in painting, sculpture or writing led him to tell anyone who would listen that he was going to be a writer.

Creative writing

In the piece 'Havoc: a life in accidents' Winton writes about his involvement in a serious car accident during his first year as a student of creative writing at the Western Australian Institute of Technology.

He was left with concussion and spinal trauma. His convalescence focused his mind both on his desire to be a writer and the fact that he was "drifting along a little bit", not really

using his time at college well.

His recovery was both physical and vocational: by the time he graduated he had written three books. He is now the author of nine novels (including *Breath* and *Cloud Street*), and three short story collections, (including *The Turning*).

As we've seen the city does feature in this collection of autobiographical essays: from Melbourne in the East to Perth and its satellites in the West. In 'The Shadow of the Hospital', Winton provides a front-row account of the human cost of illness, observed during five years he spent living opposite the hospital in the port city of Fremantle.

But the sea is vital to him. Introduced to surfing at age five, he developed a life-long passion for the water, for fishing, swimming, and walking the West-Australian coastline. In 'The Wait and the Flow' he gives a social history of the

Australian surfer, and also communicates everything that surfing means to him personally. Surfing works too as a metaphor for his practice as an imaginative writer.

“He emerged from the Ningaloo campaign with a reinforced trust in the altruism”

Like the surfer, the writer turns up, and waits – one for the wave, the other for words. Winton suspects that surfing is another factor which “unlocked the artist” in him.

His love of the sea made him an environmental campaigner. In 'The Battle for Ningaloo Reef' he describes his involvement in a campaign to save a west-Australian coral reef from a commercial development plan.

The campaign was

successful; the reef is now registered as a world heritage site. Winton credits the many volunteers he worked with on this campaign as being his “midlife post grad course in civics”. He clearly understands and never under-estimates the socio-political factors behind the ruthless exploitation of the natural environment.

But he emerged from the Ningaloo campaign with a reinforced trust in the altruism and civic sense of his fellow Australians.

This collection of essays will captivate both established Winton readers and those new to his writing. The quotation from Les Murray's poem 'Poetry and Religion' at the head of the collection underscores Winton's religious sensibility; another significant factor in his artistic and personal life.

i Dr Whittington is Librarian at the Central Catholic Library.



A road in the Australian outback stretching into the distance.

The World of Books

By the books editor

Irishmen at the ends of the Earth

I have been a reader of books of travel and exploration since I was 10 or so – by which I mean real explorers and not the self-advertising egomaniacs so common today. Books by giants of science and endeavour, such as Marco Polo, Livingstone, Sir Richard Burton, Humboldt, Waterton (an old Stonyhurst boy) and others, were devoured – Livingstone in an edition of about 1864 which could then still be borrowed from Rathmines Public Library.

But among all these heroes there were it seemed no Irishmen – the exploits of Irish-born travellers became British by imperial acquisition to speak.

There were exceptions of course. Tom Crean, now so well known and celebrated, could then be read about in Cherry Apsley-Garrard's *Worst Journey in the World* or other records of Scott and Shackleton. There is a charming vignette of Crean as the owner of The South Pole pub at Anascaul in Robert Gibbings' *Sweet Cork of Thee* (1951).

But there were, of course, Irish explorers, people filling in that long gap between St Brendan and others and Tom Crean. One of these was James the Irishman, the travelling companion of the Blessed of Poderone.

I read of him in *The Contemporaries of Marco Polo*, a book edited by the American writer Manuel Komroff. The book is a supplementary volume to his edition of Marsden's translation of the Venetian pioneer of Asian exploration.

Marco and his family were traders, seeking wealth. But the point about his contemporaries is that they were missionaries, sent expressly by the Pope to the Mongol potentates of Eastern Asia, with whom it was hoped to establish an alliance to throw back the tide of Islam – instead of course there was an even more alarming tide of



Mongols, who managed to reach Eastern Europe.

These men were William of Rubruck (d. 1255), John of Pian de Carpine (d. 1247), and Friar Odoric of Poderone (d. 1330). These writers

give vivid glimpses of those distant lands, their peoples and customs, and the strange nomadic life of the Mongols.

But here I want to focus on Odoric and his companion. Odoric is thought to have been born about 1286. He became a Franciscan very early in life, entering the monastery at Undine in northern Italy. There he became famous for his ascetic life, purging his body with a hairshirt. He soon had miracles attributed to him.

Yet in 1318 he was ordered into Asia to take part in the order's great missionary effort which was focussed on the Holy Land and the nations east of it. By 1321 he had reached India, where he visited the shrine of the Apostle Thomas in Madras. However, his goal was China and so from India he sailed eastward, visiting Sumatra and Borneo on the way, and eventually reached Peking.

Assassins

His companion on these travels was for a large part of the time a man called James the Hibernian. They returned through Tibet, Persia and the country of the Assassins – already described by Marco Polo.

Odoric resumed his saintly life at Undine, later moving to Padua, where he died in 1331 having dictated his account of his travels to a brother Franciscan.

Such was his fame as holy man and a traveller that he soon became a saint by popular acclaim; though it was not until 1755 that he was formally beatified by the Church.

But the municipal records of Undine record that soon after Odoric's death two marks were awarded as a pension to James the Irishman, described as Socio beau Fratrís Odorici, amore Dei et Odorici, “holy partner of Brother Odoric, beloved of God and Odoric”. (Two marks, is now worth about €17,500, a fortune in medieval times.)

Here was one Irish traveller who certainly reached “the uttermost end of the earth”, returning with tales of China, Japan, Tibet and India.

It is a great pity that he too did not have his recollections of the East set down. But as it was, the travels of Odoric and his partner James were pillaged by the author of the suppositious *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a fraud of sorts, but one of the most popular books of the middle ages.

Classifieds

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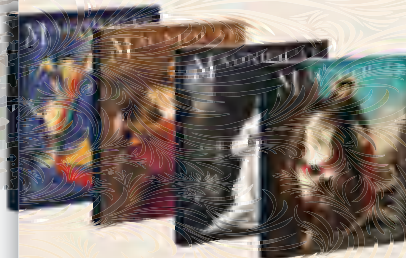


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Archdiocese of Dublin

Pastoral Co-ordinator

PERMANENT CONTRACT

The Archdiocese of Dublin is recruiting a Pastoral Co-ordinator for the Office of Evangelisation and Ecumenism. A highly motivated person is required with qualifications in theology and relevant pastoral experience to join a highly dedicated team delivering on the Archbishop's goals for mission and evangelisation. The successful applicant will be a baptised Roman Catholic committed to the ethos of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Office of Evangelisation and Ecumenism

Evangelisation is an essential mission of the Church and in this mission the office of Evangelisation and Ecumenism supports the parish, groups and organisations in the Archdiocese. The office advances an understanding of evangelisation, promoting faith formation as well as providing resources to implement the Diocesan vision.

The successful applicant for this vacancy will:

- Work as part of a team to devise and implement initiatives for the Pastoral Areas and parishes.
- Design appropriate resources and training programmes.
- Work with Parish Pastoral Councils to assess needs and provide training and resources appropriate to each group.
- Develop strategic pastoral plans for carrying out of evangelisation initiatives.

Requirements:

- Be a baptised, practising Roman Catholic with a strong commitment to witness to Jesus Christ and his Church and a desire to serve his mission.
- Have a Primary degree in Theology. A Masters degree in Theology or other additional qualifications relevant to this role is desirable.
- Have 5 or more year's relevant pastoral work experience which must include parish involvement.
- Be supported and recommended by their own faith community.
- Have the ability to work as part of a team and work collaboratively with others.
- Have a full driver's licence and the use of a car.
- Possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the proven ability to facilitate and evaluate adult learning.
- Have highly developed project management skills with up-to-date IT skills.

Applications:

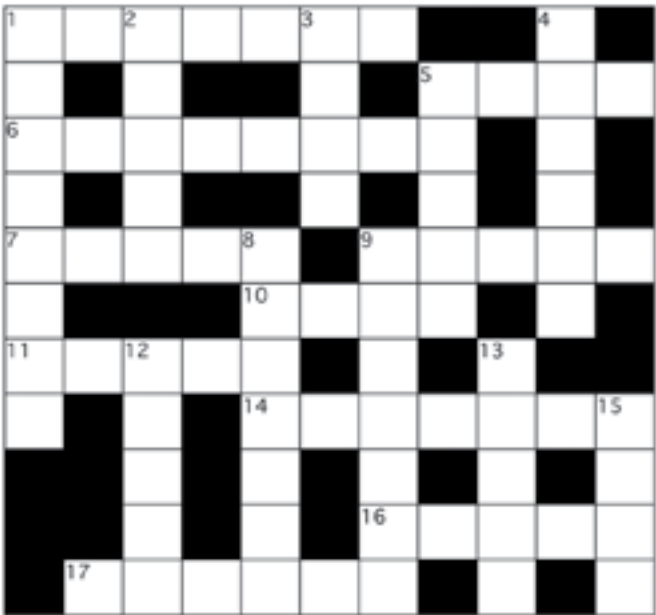
Candidates should make their application for this role by submitting a curriculum vitae and covering letter stating clearly how the requirements set out above are met.

Applications should be made by email to Ms. Judith Maxwell, HR Manager, judith.maxwell@dublindiocese.ie

The closing date for receipt of applications is 5pm, Monday 28th August 2017.

Leisure time

Crossword Junior Gordius 195



- ACROSS**
- 1 Marriage (7)
 - 5 Female relative (4)
 - 6 Using your brain (8)
 - 7 The backs of the feet (5)
 - 9 Kolkota and Mumbai are in this Asian country (5)
 - 10 Very small (4)
 - 11 It involves fine singing and acting (5)
 - 14 The second schoolday of the week (7)
 - 16 Locomotive (5)
 - 27 Shows gratitude (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 This pet will bark to protect
 - your house (8)
 - 2 Control a car (5)
 - 3 Use a hammer to knock it in (4)
 - 4 Unjust (6)
 - 5 Great pain (5)
 - 8 Where to catch a 16 across (7)
 - 9 Creepy-crawlies (6)
 - 12 Our planet (5)
 - 13 Thoughts (5)
 - 15 Slang word for an American (4)

LAST WEEK’S SOLUTIONS

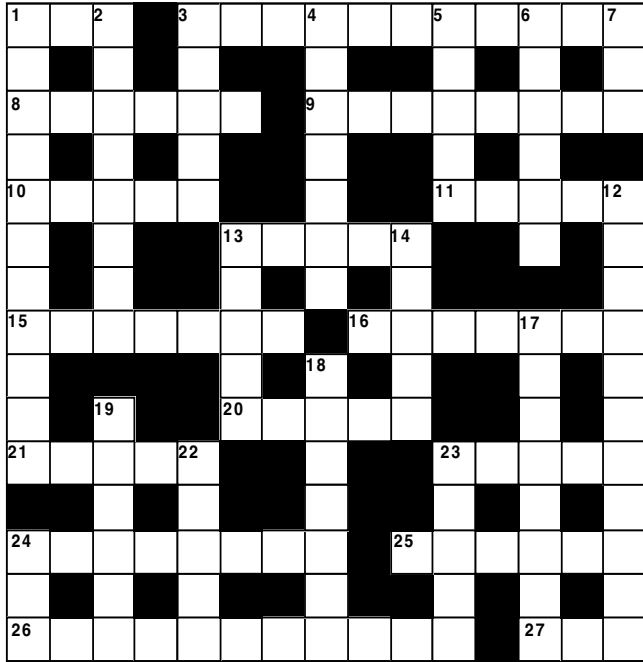
GORDIUS No.311

- Across** – 1 Transylvania 7 Via 9 Hold 10 Gog and Magog 11 Edel 14 Sneer 15 Realm 16 Flay 21 Twigs 22 Licit 23 Stare 24 Hunt 25 Bream 26 Write 29 Asps 33 Invite 34 So-so 36 Tie 37 Lamentations
- Down** – 1 Two 2 Andy 3 Sage 4 Log on 5 Annie 6 Avid 8 All systems go 9 Heart to heart 12 Malign 13 Amass 14 Samoa 17 Lackey 19 Glebe 20 Globe 27 Range 30 Twist 31 Peel 31 Wept 32 Oslo 35 SMS

CHILDREN’S No.194

- Across** – 1 Cowboy 5 Bark 6 Metal 7 Ice 9 Aims 10 Confused 12 Ape 14 Blacksmith 19 Paint 20 Draco 21 Trolley
- Down** – 1 Comic 2 Women 3 Years 4 Trumpet 8 Comb 9 Adam 11 Foal 13 Pistol 15 Skier 16 Handy 17 Dodo 18 Paw 19 Pot

Crossword Gordius 312



- ACROSS**
- 1 Floor covering (3)
 - 3 Heeding Lent might make one wise (11)
 - 8 Illusion seen in a desert (6)
 - 9 Furtive (8)
 - 10 Candle (5)
 - 11 Fly high around the novice when it’s sunny (5)
 - 13 A farewell in Spanish (5)
 - 15 Fight, grapple (7)
 - 16 With calico, ‘e becomes one who avoids gluten (7)
 - 20 Hangman’s knot (5)
 - 21 Imbided (5)
 - 23 Applauds a novice in headgear (5)
 - 24 Beautiful yellow wild flower (8)
 - 25 Felon I upset (it’s in the records) (2,4)
 - 26 Some acolyte hogs the theology of Final Destiny (11)
 - 27 Small drop of alcohol, or a little child (3)
- DOWN**
- 1 It’s what you may call
 - Mother - but keep it to yourself! (4,3,4)
 - 2 Divert fish to the tollgate (8)
 - 3, 13d & 24d This American writer earned a gallop around (5,5,3)
 - 4 Hormone that allows the body use sugar (7)
 - 5 Snares (5)
 - 6 Stinging plant (6)
 - 7 Home improvement activity (1.1.1.)
 - 12 Symbol shown on certain emergency vehicles in Islamic countries (3,8)
 - 13 See 3 down
 - 14 Have a cigarette (5)
 - 17 One high-minded, notional catalogue (8)
 - 18 Hide (7)
 - 19 A raver can aim to disrupt (6)
 - 22 Asian peninsula (5)
 - 23 Rabbit? There’s one in the outskirts of Coventry (5)
 - 24 See 3 down

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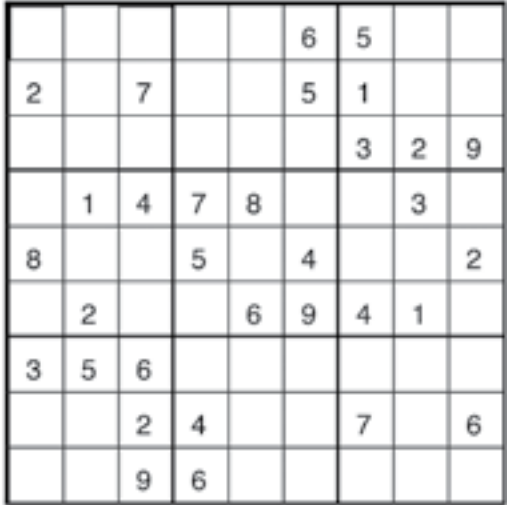
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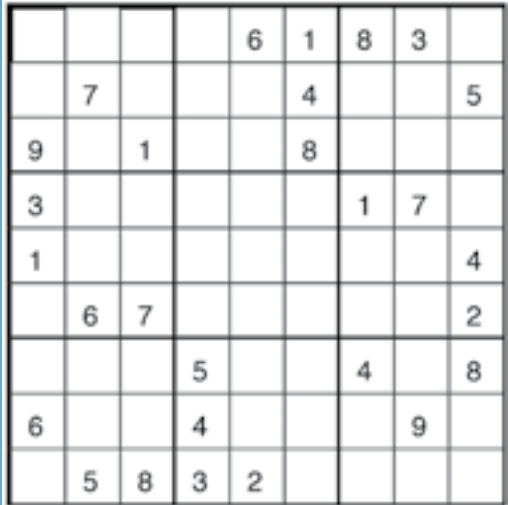
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Sudoku Corner 195

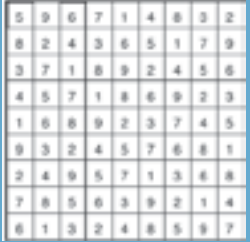
Easy



Hard



Last week's Easy 194



Last week's Hard 194





Fr Vincent Sherlock

Notebook

Clerical changes are taking on a very different meaning

HE PULLED IN to get petrol. The back seat of his car was filled with bits and pieces from his home – the bits, over and above, what the van had taken away earlier that day. The young petrol attendant, seeing the packed car said: “Are you the new man?” The priest, telling the story afterwards, told us he smiled to himself as he had been in the parish for five years and was moving to another! At least the petrol pump attendant had heard the word that there was a change of priests.

It's that time of year. Priests in dioceses across Ireland are packing, moving re-imagining their ministry and role as they move to new surroundings. It's different now though for, in many cases, the movement is one way, there will not be a 'new man' stopping at the filling station on his way in to take the place of the one going out.

Yearly event

There's a death taking place in parishes across the country – for some parishes, the anniversary of that death is already a yearly event, for others we are heading towards the 'month's mind'. It saddens me. It saddens many as



they ask, “why our parish?”

This year, in a way I haven't experienced before, it's quite personal to me. For eight years I have worked alongside another priest in this parish. I never took that for granted; neither did I take for granted his friendship, total commitment and willingness to share the roads, the decisions, the ups and downs with me. He

is being re-assigned and, with everyone in the parish, I wish him every blessing but the reality is he will not be replaced. Our diocese has had one priest ordained for ministry in the diocese in the past 13 years. It is simply not possible to fill vacancies in the absence of vocations, ordinations and people believing they are called to priesthood.

A TRUE STORY! Priests were plentiful and the parish was small but scattered. The trend had been towards having a very old parish priest and a young (in many cases newly-ordained) curate. He did most of the work. The parish priest died and was being buried. It was around the Christmas days and the winter was especially harsh. As the old man's coffin was lowered into the soil he had tilled for many, many years, a woman looking at all the priests gathered by his graveside asked another: “Which of them do you think we'll be getting?” The other looked at her and said: “Don't be daft! The one we're getting wouldn't be out on a day like this!” (Those were the days!)

Now the four churches and church areas in this parish need re-imagining too. I dread the thoughts of it – of disappointing people when the level of service, in the best sense of the phrase 'taken for granted', has to be looked at a-fresh.

Diocesan changes are taking on a very different meaning for our Church and the parishes of our country. Already there are parishes across Ireland without a resident priest. Already too, and thankfully, there are mighty people meeting this reality with vision and a God-given ability to see the bigger picture.

Faith is and remains our foundation. God will provide for his people and that very provision is, at its best found, amongst God's people. We will work together and with enthusiasm. We will seek ways to enrich and enliven our parishes and faith communities. It won't happen in a day or seven days but maybe, for many parishes the work of re-creation has begun.

We'll take our time with this and hopefully arrive at the Sabbath day, when seeing all that has been done; we may rest in the knowledge that “it is very good”.

Striking a balance

If a priest preaches for over ten minutes, he is long-winded; if his sermon is short, he didn't prepare.

If the parish funds are low, he is a poor businessman; if he mentions money, he is money-mad.

If he owns a good car, he is worldly; if he doesn't, he is a disgrace to the parish.

If he starts Mass on time, his watch is fast; if he starts Mass late, he is holding up the congregation.

If he redecorates the Church, he is spending too much money; if he doesn't, he is letting it run down.

If he is young, he is not experienced; if he is old, he should retire.

If he dies, “you'd think he would have taken better care of his health”.



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