

# The Irish Catholic

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# Bishop warns Brexit hard border could be devastating

**EXCLUSIVE**  
Greg Daly

A 'hard border' across Ireland is "unthinkable" and could be devastating for the North, Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor has warned.

"A hard border is really inconceivable and no longer viable and would be detrimental in so many different levels and arenas of life," Dr Treanor told *The Irish Catholic*, highlighting the needs of the North and the growing interconnectivity recent decades have seen across Ireland.

"The level of the economic interdependence and enwebment of the economy of the Republic of Ireland and the economy of Northern Ireland is such that any kind of hard border cannot but have a profound negative impact".

### Illiteracy

Such a border, he said, could be devastating for the North, already suffering the highest levels of child poverty of any British region, with the high levels of illiteracy this typically entails, an underdeveloped private sector, and a desperate need to attract foreign direct investment.

Dr Treanor, who served as general secretary to COMECE, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the

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## Ready for the big climb



Winnie Woodburn, 84, during last Sunday's annual Croagh Patrick pilgrimage. See Pages 14 & 15. Photo: CNS

Government to blame for ongoing homeless crisis – campaigner

### Staff Reporter

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar is right that Ireland's homelessness crisis will not be solved in the Government's lifetime, and the Government is to blame, a leading campaigner has said.

Mr Varadkar's comments on TV3's *Tonight with Vincent Brown* revealed a profound ignorance of the nature of the crisis, Fr Peter McVerry told *The Irish Catholic*, explaining: "Given the plan that they have and any possible tweaking of the plan that they have, they're not going to solve it."

While welcoming proposals to tax empty properties, Fr McVerry said: "We need much more radical action like compulsory purchase orders, like legislation to prevent banks or landlords evicting people into homelessness. We need much more radical action if we're going to tackle this problem and

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Fluid families and fewer fathers

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Redeeming our loved one's memory

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

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# Historian questions if Ireland wants fairer view on Magdalene laundries

**Chai Brady**

A leading historian has questioned the established idea of the Magdalene laundries, saying that the public view of them makes it difficult for a "fairer assessment to emerge".

Dr Jacinta Prunty, head of the Department of History in Maynooth University, recently published a book investigating the history of the laundries.

One of the main points Dr Prunty makes is that the principal role of the laundries, at St Mary's High Park and on Sean MacDermott Street, were for short stay and emergency accommodation.

This is revealed through analysis of the register of entrances and exits of women in the laundries, who came and went in many cases

although there were longer term residents who stayed for two years or more.

"But the association of the Magdalene laundries with imprisonment, exploitation and cruelty, and with these alone, is so strongly established in the public sphere that it is difficult to know if there is space for a more rounded, fuller-informed and fairer assessment to emerge," Dr Prunty wrote in *The Irish Times*.

Dr Prunty, who is a Holy Faith sister, said the nuns that ran the laundries, the sisters of Our Lady of Charity, made real efforts to help young girls and young women.

She wrote: "The sisters in Sean MacDermott Street opened a transition hostel for teenagers in the Magdalene asylum in 1966, also with the aim of preparing for independent living, with basic life

skills named as 'budgeting, nutrition, socialising, coping with jobs and life, self-management and responsibility'." There was a period of modernisation in the 1950s, which edged the laundries away from the convent style. Large dormitories were divided into smaller cubicles, there was no more uniforms, Mass was not compulsory and pocket money was replaced with wages.

Dr Prunty stated: "Martin McAleese stated that there is 'no single or simple story of the Magdalene laundries' and the documentary evidence from these two refuges certainly bears this out."

Dr Prunty is the author of *The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853-1973* published by Columba Press.

**Government to blame for ongoing homeless crisis – campaigner**

» Continued from Page 1

you're not going to get that from a Conservative government."

Criticising how Ireland has had a succession of housing ministers and homeless housing strategies while the country has seen dramatic rises in homelessness, Fr McVerry noted how the most recent Government plan conspicuously lacked a target date for ending homelessness and has "two fundamental flaws".

It lacks provisions to limit the ability of banks and landlords to evict tenants, and is excessively reliant on people leaving homelessness for privately-owned accommodation, he said, adding: "The private rented sector is now part of the problem and it cannot be part of the solution."

# Brexit border 'could be devastating'

» Continued from Page 1

European Community, from 1989 to 2008, and who represents Ireland's bishops on the commission, also said that while a hard border was inconceivable, it is difficult to see how there could be a soft border in Ireland between the UK and the EU given the British government's stated intention to leave the single market and the customs union.

"A soft border there," he said, continuing, "does

that mean a hard border between Ulster and Britain somewhere out in the sea of Moyle and down the Irish Sea? If it does, what does that mean in terms of the future? What internal impact will this entail in terms of the constitutionality of the United Kingdom?"

## Transparency

Calling for clarity and transparency in the Brexit negotiations, Dr Treanor highlighted how the visit to Ireland in May of the

EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier showed the importance of Ireland and the border issue to the EU.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, meanwhile, has said he hopes the UK will yet pull back from the decision to leave the EU such that there would be no need for a border across Ireland or between Ireland and Britain.

Asked in Waterford whether there was any chance of the Brexit process being halted, he said, "I still hope that it won't happen."

Stressing that "Brexit is a British policy, not an Irish one", he said that in his work in the EU it is part of his remit working in the EU "to keep the door open, not just to the European Union but also to the single market and also to the customs union should they decide to go down that route".

He described this as "the best outcome for Ireland and Northern Ireland and Britain".

» See Pages 10 & 11.

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# More creativity is needed to get young back to Mass – bishop

**Greg Daly**

More creative ways are needed to draw young people towards the Mass and into a vibrant faith life, Bishop Phonsie Cullinan has said.

Explaining how the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore has been seeking to employ a diocesan co-ordination for Faith formation and New Evangelisation, Bishop Cullinan told *The Irish Catholic* that huge efforts are needed in “the whole area of evangelisation which is the mission of the Church, especially in these days when priests are under so much pressure”.

Stressing the urgency of the need for coordinated and thorough evangelisation in Ireland, Dr Cullinan said the new position was first mooted at a recent meeting of the diocesan senate of priests, he said, but was expanded so as to enable the diocese to reach out and do “old things in a new way”.

## Language

“In the West especially we have to find new ways of telling old truths, of putting across the Gospel message in a way and in a language that connects with the modern mind,” he said, continuing, “we can’t just do

the same old things in the same old way.”

He witnessed an excellent example of evangelical innovation on June’s diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, he said.

“The Irish had a Mass for everything – we had an opening Mass, we had an anointing Mass, we had a grotto Mass, we had a final Mass,” he said.

While this pilgrimage experience was “wonderful”, he was intrigued to see what a French pilgrim group to the shrine was doing, describing it as “a real eye-opener”.

“They gathered a very large number of young people in one of the big halls across the river in the Cote du Grotte, and had a young person being interviewed about their Faith, witnessing to their Faith, they had really good music, they had catechesis, and they didn’t have Mass for those youngsters on that day” he said.

“That’s thinking outside the box, that’s doing something different – you want to lead people to the Mass, but first of all there has to be a connection with the person of Jesus,” he said, asking, “How many Irish people understand that they’re meeting Jesus in the Mass?”

## Katie continues to box clever with her Faith



**Chai Brady**

As Katie Taylor’s career goes from strength to strength she has no problem expressing her faith.

The professional boxer and Olympic gold medallist tweeted a photo of herself before her debut fight in the US last weekend wearing a t-shirt with the words “It is God who arms me with strength...”

The boxer has spoken candidly about the importance of her Christian Faith, saying previously that Irish society is “open to everything except for God”.

The picture (left) shows Katie’s boxing trainer wrapping her hands in preparation for what would be an easy victory for the champion against Texan Jasmine Clarkson.

It was no competition for Katie as she rained punches on her opponent at will, winning her sixth professional bout in a row.

“It was a fantastic experience being my first time competing here in the US,” she told RTÉ afterwards.

“There were definitely some nerves before the fight. It was great to go in there and get a stoppage. I hope that I made some fans tonight. I loved hearing the Irish fans in the crowd.”

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# Call for mindfulness to be made mainstream in the Irish Church

Greg Daly

The Church should do more to make known the Christian tradition of mindfulness, a leading advocate of the discipline has said.

“What’s really needed is a renaissance of Christian contemporary publishing,” Bro. Richard Hendrick OFM Cap told *The Irish Catholic*.

“That means repackaging, new translations, etc. of the great classics with good introductions that enable people to connect with them and also encouraging new voices,” he continued. “One of the difficulties we have is that we have Christian writers at the moment who are writing about mindfulness and the value of it but don’t know the tradition well enough to know where it connects to the tradition.”

That tradition, he said, dates back to the Desert Fathers of the early Church and includes such figures as

St Francis of Assisi and the 16th-Century Carmelite mystics.

The Donegal-based Capuchin’s comments come against a background of reports of a publishing boom in the areas of mindfulness and spirituality, even as book sales slow elsewhere. According to sales monitor Nielsen Book, almost 13.3% more books offering spiritual assistance have been sold so far in 2017 than in previous years, while the market as a whole has dropped 1.6%.

## Popular

Especially popular books include the Buddhist monk Haemin Sunim’s *The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down*, and the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu’s *The Book of Joy*.

Noting how some people can be wary of books seeming too ‘religious’ – and being filed in bookshops accordingly – Bro. Richard said

contemporary distinctions between religion and spirituality are illogical and ahistorical.

“Part of what I’ve been doing and what the places like the Sanctuary Centre have been doing is saying to people ‘look within our own tradition – there is a perfectly

valid and deeply authentic and deeply orthodox way of living this experience of being in the present moment and using that as a way of connecting deeply with the presence of God’,” he said.

Describing contemplative prayer as something to which devotional prayer is meant

to bring people, Bro. Richard said a major challenge is to “liberate the vast amount of contemplative practice, tradition and teaching that is present within the Christian tradition and bring that to all Christians as their birth right”.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Belfast republicans argue for pro-life stance

A talk entitled ‘Cherish All Children Equally’ taking place in Belfast will put to the audience that there is an onus on Republicans to take a pro-life stance.

Prominent republicans, Dr Anne McCloskey and Monica Digney will argue the Proclamation’s commitment to “cherish all the children of the nation equally” means Republicans should oppose abortion in all circumstances.

It will take place in St Oliver Plunkett Parish Hall, Glenveagh Drive, at August 8, 7pm.

### Irish missionary making his mark

A programme which is fostering peace and reconciliation in the conflict-ridden areas of northern Kenya is to expand to a number of countries across Africa following its success.

In 2009, Fr Patrick Devine, founded the Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, which has now trained over 9,600 leaders and village elders as peacemakers, resulting in the building of solar-powered inter-ethnic and inter-religious schools, medical centres and water projects.

Fr Devine, who has spent almost 30 years in Kenya and Tanzania, founded the organisation to address the conflict in the Ilemi Triangle, with the model now spreading to other African regions.

Shalom’s peaceful coexistence goal is simple: “To help the people become the architects of their own future.”

## Pro-life billboard facts get green light



One of the billboards which had generated complaints.

Complaints made against pro-life billboards have been rejected by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) after the billboards were found to be accurate.

Pro-life campaigners, Both Lives Matter (BLM), displayed two billboards claiming that ‘100,000 people are alive today because of our laws on abortion’ in Northern Ireland. There were 14 complaints made about the claim, saying that it was misleading and could not be substantiated, but this was

overturned by the ASA.

A section of the report reads: “On balance, we concluded 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.”

Dawn McAvoy of BLM said that they were cautious with their estimate of 100,000, saying that if they were to compare the figure with abortion rates in England and Wales it would

be closer to 250,000.

She added that the passing of legislation on abortion in the UK, the 1967 Act, is the “single most important political decision in our lifetime” and that abortion has become “normalised” in England and Wales.

“We hope that this independent verification will lead to widespread acceptance of the fact that Northern Ireland’s different approach to abortion has made a very real difference – to at least 100,000 people.”

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## Fundraising drive for Skellig Michael comic

An American writer-artist duo are seeking to raise \$7,500 (€6,350) to complete production of a comic book about Skellig Michael.

*The Last Monks of Skellig Michael* by Philip Kosloski and Michael Lavoy, with help from veteran comic artist Jim Fern, tells the story of an adventurous boy who leaves a monastic school on the mainland to join the monks in the rigorous monastery off the Kerry coast.

“It’s a story about faith, trust and following your ‘gut’ when everyone else is against you,” according to Mr Kosloski, who added: “The comic also seeks to highlight the spiritual world that is often hidden from our eyes, but on occasion reveals itself in a miraculous fashion.”

The comic is intended to tap into the attention focused on the island by the most recent *Star Wars* films, Mr Kosloski told *The Irish Catholic*, explaining that comics are especially appealing in this digital age, and that he hopes it can prove a tool for evangelisation.

See [lastmonks.com](http://lastmonks.com)



# Quizzed for the ‘morning after’ pill... a pharmacist’s job

At the suggestion of a doctor, I occasionally have recourse to an over-the-counter medication called ‘Night Nurse’. It is a helpful aid to sleeping when you’re feeling a bit chesty, but it should be used sensibly, even perhaps sparingly, as it contains the opioids of paracetamol, promethazine and dextromethorphan.

Thus, whenever I purchase a bottle of this balsam, I am grilled by the pharmacist as to my understanding of the potion’s components. Occasionally I am treated to a little lecture on the dangers of overdosing or addiction. Rather than exclaiming “do you think I’m a complete eejit?”, I carefully assure pharmacists that I am a responsible senior citizen with a bronchial condition, using this medication at the suggestion of a GP. I am then permitted to acquire the remedy.

Some young women are, apparently, subjected to something similar when



Mary Kenny

purchasing ‘morning-after contraception’ at the chemists. “A trip to go to get the morning-after pill is never fun,” wrote Lorraine Courtney in *The Irish Independent*. “And when it involves a mandatory ‘consultation’ from someone behind the counter of a high-

street pharmacy that leaves you swaddled in judgement and shame? Well, it’s even less fun...”

### Judged

But, as I tell myself when obtaining my cough physic, it’s the pharmacist’s job to ensure

that medications are taken safely. You do feel ‘judged’ when asked to justify your use of an opioid, but for the pharmacist, it’s a necessary procedure.

The ‘morning-after’ pill – leave aside any moral or ethical issues – is a serious medication which can have implications and side-effects. I have known women to take it, then change their mind, then worry about the impact on a possible pregnancy. There is also a potential legal issue: should it be sold irresponsibly – if there were medical counter-indications – the pharmacy could well be sued.

There have been complaints that in Boots the chemists kept the price of the ‘MAP’ too high as a deterrent to “incentivising inappropriate use” which does sound a bit hypocritical. If they’re selling it and making a profit out of the sale, don’t pretend otherwise. But it’s legitimate for pharmacists to insist on a ‘consultation’ for a drug that can be, literally, life-altering.

● I cannot believe that any national committee would be so stupid as to replace St Patrick’s Day with ‘Independence Day’. But that, it seems, is being considered by a group of historians led by the distinguished Maurice Manning, planning centenary celebrations marking the establishment of the Irish state in 1922.

St Patrick’s Day is one of the most successful ‘brands’ in the world. Only someone living in an ivory tower, with no grasp of the commercial advantages of ‘brand recognition’ could even contemplate abolishing the identity of March 17.



## No fear of those longboats now



● One of the sounds of summer in Dublin city is the roaring cheer of tourists aboard the ‘Viking Splash’ tours, starting off at St Stephen’s Green. The vehicle is shaped like a Viking longboat and the participants equipped with horned Viking headgear; they’re urged to cheer loudly in unison, as they pass certain landmarks. It seems to be a very successful stunt – there’s always a queue of families waiting for the next Viking tour.

How interesting that with the passage of time, something fierce and terrifying can be tamed into something harmless and fun. To see that Viking armada appear on the horizon in 800-900 AD must have been the most frightening harbinger of a season of raping and pillaging.

Admittedly, many eventually settled down and founded cities like Waterford. And now the feared Vikings are but a jolly tourist ride around Dublin city.

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Packie Lee left a gift in his Will to Trócaire. His grandniece Carrie travelled to Ethiopia to see the impact of his gift.



## Midlands monastery set to host more than 1,000 Catholic youth

**Colm Fitzpatrick**

Over a thousand young people are expected to attend a Catholic youth festival in Roscrea later this month, conference organisers say.

The summer festival at Cistercian College will be a weekend of faith, fun and friendship, according to Youth 2000's Brian O'Driscoll, who told *The Irish Catholic*: "The weekend offers a fantastic weekend of faith and formation, a chance to step away from the craziness of our busy lives in order to embrace our faith and meet new people."

Youth 2000, which has been active in Ireland since 1993, runs prayer groups, retreats and youth festivals for young people aged between 16 and 35. Although exact numbers attending the August 17-20 event are unlikely to be known until the "last minute", Mr O'Driscoll says organisers anticipate that more than 1200 Catholics will attend. "All of our retreats throughout the year are steadily growing in numbers," he said.

### Variety

The weekend has a variety of religious and social activities taking place over the four days including Mass, talks, music from live bands, workshops, drama, football and games, Mr O'Driscoll explained, adding, "it's a chance to meet new people and find out what it means to be young and Catholic today – there's something for everyone".

❶ To find out more information about Youth2000, and how to register for the upcoming summer festival, see <http://youth2000.ie/>

# Proud parish raises €16k for East Africa

**Chai Brady**

Clergy at Portlaoise parish were "amazed" as over €16,000 was raised for Trócaire's emergency East Africa appeal – five times more than they would receive in a normal week.

The parish usually get €3,000 each week from their offertory collection, but this was far surpassed by the collection held late last month. Msgr John Byrne of Portlaoise parish described it as "an extraordinarily generous response".

"I think they just responded with their hearts and made a very generous

response to something that isn't getting a huge amount of publicity," he said.

While over 25 million people face starvation due to drought and civil conflict, the world is focused on US president Donald Trump and Brexit according to the Catholic charity Trócaire, who have thanked parishes all over Ireland for their generous response to the East Africa crisis.

Portlaoise parish gave a full page to publicise the emergency appeal in their newsletter *Link Up*, and Msgr Byrne said "it was contributed by people who are attending our masses

and I think it was a very generous response by the worshipping community in Portlaoise".

### Minority

He added that the worshipping community is now "a minority community" in Ireland, and said: "I feel, well certainly among that community that made the contribution, I think they believe and trust that the money that they contribute will make a difference, and will find tactical expression in that crisis area".

For the duration of Trócaire's Lenten Appeal the parish raised €20,000,

which highlights the generous response of parishioners made over the short emergency response period.

Both the Irish Catholic Bishops' Council and President Michael D. Higgins encouraged donations, with the President saying: "Irish Aid and the Irish NGOs and missionary organisations are already providing highly effective assistance to millions of people across the region. But a response at greater scale is required."

Trócaire cannot yet confirm the full amount collected as it is still being counted.

## Derry ordination



Bishop Donal McKeown laying hands on Fr Malachy Gallagher at his priestly ordination in St Mary's Church, Drumagarnier, Kilrea, Co. Derry. Photo: Stephen Lattimer

## Family art sought for 2018 exhibition

Artists across Ireland have begun competing for their religious artwork to be a part of a 2018 exhibition inspired by next year's World Meeting

of Families, and Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia*.

The National Competition for Religious Art in the Home is calling on crea-

tors to submit pieces such as sculptures, candles or prints based on this familial theme.

## Grandparents should defend children's faith says archbishop

Grandparents are responsible for passing on faith values that will enable children to cope with sources that are "hostile to faith and spiritual values".

Archbishop Michael Neary spoke at a special mass organised by the Grandparents Association last week on the feast day of Sts Joachim and Anne in Tuam, Galway.

"We have a responsibility to pass on to children and grandchildren and future generations something in terms of faith values that will enable them to cope with and challenge so much that is being blared at them today from sources that are hostile to faith and spiritual values," Archbishop Neary said.

He said that grandparents are the first port of call in a crisis for many young people, and are able to share life experience that children can't learn in school.

He added that grandparents are the "real heroes and heroines, though they may never have received recognition".

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Turin Shroud shows torture traces

An ancient linen cloth allegedly bearing the image of Jesus' face show signs of blood from a victim of torture, scientists have revealed – supporting claims that it was the burial garment that Jesus was wrapped in following the crucifixion.

The Shroud of Turin, which has divided experts regarding its authenticity, was found to have contained 'nanoparticles' which Elvio Carlino, a researcher at the Institute of Crystallography in Bari, Italy says, "have recorded a scenario of great suffering, whose victim was wrapped up in the funeral cloth".

The findings challenge claims that the shroud is a forgery, probably dating from the medieval period.

### Jewish council defends Kevin Myers

The Jewish Representative Council of Ireland has defended journalist Kevin Myers' recent controversial column which was viewed by many people as anti-Semitic. The JRC said that branding Mr Myers "as either an anti-Semite or a Holocaust denier is an absolute distortion of the facts".

The council, which speaks for the 2,557-strong Irish Jewish Community, said that "more than any other Irish journalist" Mr Myers had "written columns about the details of the Holocaust over the last three decades", adding that his remarks were "a real error of judgement".

The defence comes after Mr Myers suggested that BBC presenters Vanessa Feltz and Claudia Winkleman are well paid because they are Jewish, which subsequently lead to his sacking.

### Siamsa founder honoured by UCC

Fr Pat Ahern, the founder of the Siamsa choir, has been honoured by the University College Cork. Fr Ahern, 85, established the choir back in 1957 and it became part of Ireland's National Folk Theatre in Tralee Town Park. He has studied organ and piano in Maynooth, and continued his musical studies in UCC, graduating with a BMus in 1962. Professor Pádraig Ó Macháin, Head/Ceann of Roinn na Nua Ghaeilge in UCC refers to Ahern as someone who embodies the spirit of *lán de cheol*, literally 'full of music'.

## What do you think?

Let us know by writing to:

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# NOVENA

**KNOCK** 14-22 August 2017  
*'Living Life to the Full'*



**14th Aug. 'Life to the Full; Jesus the Healer'**

3pm Dr Mary Healy

& 8.30pm

**Workshop** Dr Mary Healy  
12 & 6pm *Praying for Healing*

**15th Aug. 'Mary, Giver of Life and Joy'**

3pm Fr Seamus Enright, CSsR

& 8.30pm

**Workshop** Fr Michael Cusack, CSsR  
12 & 6pm *Mary, Giver of Life and Joy*

**16th Aug. 'Living Life to the Full'**

3pm Marty Morrissey

& 8.30pm

**Workshop** Rev. Kevin O'Gorman  
12 & 6pm *Sport, Virtue and Life*

**17th Aug. 'Organ Donation: giving and receiving life'**

3pm Bernadette McNeive

& 8.30pm

**Workshop** Darren Cawley  
12 & 6pm *Organ Donation: giving and receiving life*

**18th Aug. 'The Reformation, 500 Years On'**

3pm Rt. Revd. Patrick Rooke (Church of Ireland)

& 8.30pm

**Workshop** Prof. Salvador Ryan  
12 & 6pm *Was the Reformation a Great Misunderstanding?*

**19th Aug. 'My Spirit Rejoices in God, My Saviour'**

3pm Most Rev Philip Boyce, (OCD)

Retired Bishop of Raphoe

8.30pm Fr Daniel O'Leary

**Workshop** Fr Daniel O'Leary  
12 & 6pm *We are Treasured and Transformed*

**20th Aug. 'Making our families Christian'**

3pm Most Rev Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin

8.30pm Dr Aoife McGrath

**Workshop** Dr Aoife McGrath  
12 & 6pm *'Light through the cracks: life in local communities'*

**21st Aug. Launch of WMOF 2018 Programme**

**'When Plates Fly: Pope Francis on the joys and challenges of family life'**

3pm Most Rev. Diarmuid Martin,

& 8.30pm Archbishop of Dublin

**Workshop** Fr Timothy Bartlett

12 & 6pm *'Glued to our phones; can we make technology more family friendly?'*

7pm **'Witnesses' Walk** around Knock village

**22nd Aug. 'Cherishing Life to the Full'**

3pm Maria Steen

**Workshop** Cora Sherlock

12 & 6pm *Cherishing Life: a human rights issue*

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**Cradle Catholics need to be careful in their criticisms of converts, writes Greg Daly**

**T**he story of the workers in the vineyard is a powerful parable, and one especially apposite in these times when Pope Francis is trying to build on St John Paul's efforts to draw back into the Church's flock those stray sheep and lambs the Pope is tasked with tending and feeding.

'Cradle Catholics' and those who've long been faithful face a real danger of succumbing to the temptations of the constant labourers and judging those who have come or returned late to the Church, or of exasperatedly asking whether the same rewards we hope for could have been ours if we had lived our lives differently, as though we'd rather have done so.

Perhaps it's understandable, then, that the parable was highlighted in the journal *First Things* last week in an article entitled 'In defence of converts'. The article, by the English Catholic theologian Prof. Stephen Bullivant,

# Late labourers can do vital work



A vineyard and three commentators on the issue of 'late labourers': (from left) Stephen Bullivant, Massimo Faggioli and Austen Ivereigh.

one of the more balanced and brilliant observers of the modern British Church, takes issues with recent comments he felt were criticisms of converts as converts.

## Debate

Sparking this was a remark by the American Catholic journalist Michael Sean Winters, who, after watching a televised debate between papal biographer Austen Ivereigh and the young convert and *First Things* literary editor Matthew Schmitz, observed, "I am so tired of converts tell-

ing us that the Pope is not Catholic".

This view, Prof. Bullivant noted, had been shared online by the US-based Italian theologian and Church historian Massimo Faggioli, who earlier this year expressed concerns about convert influences on the reception of Vatican II. Prof. Faggioli tweeted in May that, "one could teach an entire course on fact that in top US universities the course on Vatican II is taught by recent converts to Catholicism who know nothing of the history of Vatican II and therefore have a quite idiosyncratically view of Vatican II", adding that this view is marked by the conflation of conversion with political ideologies and with distinctly Western worldviews.

Pointing out that his wife is a convert, he added that this wasn't a generalisation but did need considering, returning to the issue weeks later to observe that the problem is not one of cradle Catholics and converts, but a broader one of being "casual/ignorant/arrogant about some basic historical facts of Catholicism".

In fairness, it's hard to see that these comments were intended as criticisms of converts in themselves – if they're anything like me their shelves groan with well-thumbed tomes by converts – but as criticisms of the fact that a startlingly high proportion of the most vociferous online aspersions cast on Pope Francis' Catholicism come from converts.

"Stephen, we love converts," said Dr Ivereigh, whose

own wife is also a convert, continuing, "but some of them joined a Church imagined to be the antithesis of the Church of England rather than the one founded by Christ."

This in some ways gets to the heart of the problem, since conversion is less a matter of whether we like what the Church – with the Pope as its visible point of unity – teaches than it is one of whether we accept that it has the authority to teach what it does.

## “These last few decades have been tumultuous ones for the Church of England”

In the English-speaking world the vast majority of converts to Catholicism come from other Christian denominations, though we should be careful about our terminology in this respect, not least as those who become Catholic after being members of other Christian denominations are not converts in the strictest sense, baptism being always into the Catholic Church.

Further, even when we use the term 'convert' loosely it seems rather tricky to talk of "the vast majority of them"; in England and Wales, for instance, as Prof. Bullivant has shown, 92.3% of Catholics are 'cradle Catholics', with 6.4% of Catholics having come from other Christian denominations – most are former Anglicans – and just 1.3% being converts by the purest definition.

Few of us are without bag-

gage, and so it's natural that converts to Catholicism carry with them their experiences in other Christian groups – the great G.K. Chesterton, for instance, was always grateful for how his Anglican decades fed and formed his Catholicism, while at another extreme, the author Philip Pullman has described himself as "a Church of England atheist, and a 1662 Book of Common Prayer atheist".

These last few decades have been tumultuous ones for the Church of England, as they have for North America's so-called 'mainline' Protestant Churches, so it should hardly surprise us that those who have left such denominations and even those who've lived in cultures heavily influenced by them should be marked by the experience and even display signs of a kind of 'convert neurosis', where they fear the Church they've joined or in some cases have always been part of will succumb to the same tumult.

Little surprise then, perhaps, that one-time Anglican clergy should write articles with titles like 'The lesson of Anglicanism: liberalism will tear you apart', as though the barque of Peter is a ship that can capsize, or that other former Anglicans will tell of how they were drawn to the Church because it taught truths that they believed and that they felt their own communion was in danger of forgetting.

The same tropes seem to crop up time and again in the writings of those English Catholics, for instance, who would challenge the

Holy Father's orthodoxy: St Thomas More and John Fisher, Blessed John Henry Newman on the Arians and on conscience, the 1930 Lambeth conference, and a few other examples that make for a fine story, but that constitute a troublingly narrow and localised historical vein, one that seems somehow blind to the extraordinary breadth and texture of Church history.

There's no sense in such tales, for instance, of an awareness of how a fifth of those at the Council of Trent believed the rules on marriage instituted then were contrary to Scripture and the Tradition of the Church.

## “Anglicans will tell of how they were drawn to the Church because it taught truths”

Also apparently absent is a knowledge of how – as the future Pope Benedict XVI observed in the 1990s – denial of Communion to the divorced-and-remarried was not rigorously enforced throughout the early Church, with Pope St Leo the Great being one Church Father who sought pastoral solutions for rare borderline cases. Indeed, the then Cardinal Ratzinger observed that in the case of questionable annulment judgments, Catholics *might* be able to judge in conscience for themselves whether they should approach Communion.

It can take many years to absorb such a breadth of history, and neither converts nor cradle Catholics should be faulted for lacking such extensive knowledge. Where the problem arises, however, is when criticism of the Pope is filtered not through such a profoundly Catholic optic but through a jaundiced ex-Anglican prism.

Convert voices critical of the Pope and *Amoris Laetitia*, his exhortation on marriage and the family, seem at times omnipresent across the English and American Catholic media, and certainly seem disproportionate to their numbers.

Least cradle Catholics be tempted towards frustration about this, however, we might reflect that if critical convert voices are disproportionately present in the Catholic media, this may simply reflect how convert voices are disproportionately present across the Catholic media in general.

Converts often have the courage to speak out where cradle Catholics are inclined to keep their heads down, after all, and play a key role in reminding Catholics of the riches and reason that lie at the heart of the Faith. We could do with more of them.

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# Fluid families and fewer fathers



The decline of marriage is denying fathers to children, writes **David Quinn**

Discussing the latest census data released last week, RTE's George Lee said with a smile on his face that they show "people are still interested in each other but maybe in a more fluid way than the traditional way".

What did he mean? Simply this: the family based on marriage is not as strong as it once was. That is the 'traditional way' in which people showed they were 'interested in each other'. They met, fell in love, got married, had children and stayed together for better or for worse.

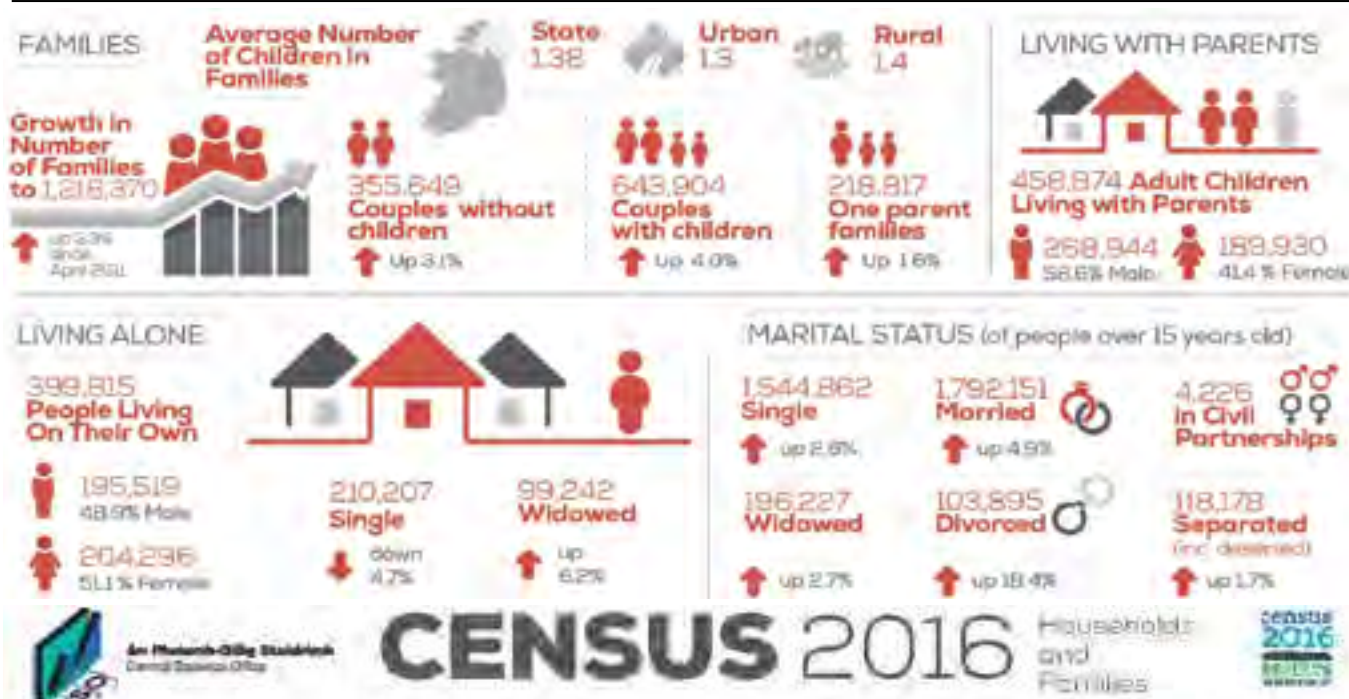
The new Census 2016 data dealt with families and households. They show that certain trends in Ireland are getting stronger. There has been a small rise in the number of single parent families, for example. The number now stands at 218,817. However, the increase since 1986 has been huge. Then, the number stood at 104,713.

There has been a very big increase in the number of cohabiting couples. In 1986, it wasn't even recorded. In 1996, the number stood at 31,296 and by last year it had climbed to 152,302. As with single parent families, the rate of increase has slowed down.

## Cohabiting

What has not slowed down, however, is the number of children living with cohabiting couples. This is up 25% compared with 2011 (the previous census).

This change is significant because prior to this a cohabiting couple usually got married before they had children. The fact that they are having children before they marry (if they marry) shows that marriage is now much less important to them. For a growing number of people, cohabitation is



becoming a substitute for marriage, rather than a 'dry run' before marriage.

The number of people who have divorced or separated has also increased, although again the rate of increase has slowed down. Including those who have since remarried, 283,802 adults in Ireland have been through a divorce or separation. In 1986 (when couples could separate but not divorce), the figure was 40,347. That is a very big jump.

## “Marriage is a tradition *par excellence*”

Finally, while the number of married people has increased, that's really only because the overall size of the population has increased. The percentage of adults who are married has declined to 47.7%, under half in other words.

So we can see from these figures that fewer people are marrying as a percentage of the overall population, fewer people are staying married, and a lot more children are being raised outside of marriage either by a single parent or by a cohabiting couple.

George Lee describes the present state of family life in Ireland as "fluid". Is all this "fluidity" a good or a bad thing, objectively speaking? Instinctively, liberals will tend to say yes.

Liberals will say yes because they dislike traditionalism. They think tradition attacks freedom. Having to marry, and stay married, attacks personal liberty and liberalism's most sacred value, choice.

Now that marriage is not the only option and people can divorce, cohabit, become

a single parent, marry for a second and a third time people can make more choices about how they organise their family lives. Liberals see this as a good thing and don't look much further than that.

Seeing as marriage was the 'traditional' way to organise your family life, traditionalists see the 'fluidity' as far more problematic than liberals do because it means far fewer people getting married and far fewer children being raised by their two married parents. The word 'tradition' is severely misunderstood. Liberals believe traditionalists follow tradition only 'because that's the way we've always done things'. But a tradition is a way of doing things that has evolved over sometimes great lengths of time in the white heat of human experience.

Marriage is a tradition *par excellence*. Every known society has developed marriage in some form. This would not happen if it did not somehow conform to something very deep in human nature.

## Attachment

At the heart of marriage has always been a man and a woman because only a man and a woman can have a child together via their sexual union. Every society in history has deemed it important that children are raised properly and that the mother and the father of the child are in some way involved in the raising of that child.

The attachment of the child to the mother has always been much more secure and reliable than the attachment of the father to the child. It is much easier for the father to walk away from his child than for the

mother to walk away from her child. This is proven today by the fact that the vast majority of single parents are women.

No social institution – no tradition – has ever been devised that more reliably attaches fathers to their children than marriage. This is why it is so vital.

Cohabitation is no

substitute. Cohabiting relationships break up far more often than marriage. A huge study called the British Millennium Cohort study found that whereas 27% of cohabiting parents have split up by the time their child is five, the equivalent figure among married parents is a third of that at just 9%.

So as marriage declines so

does the number of fathers actively engaged in the lives of their children. The Growing Up in Ireland study has shown that a third of children living with a single mother have no contact at all with their father by the time their child is three.

This kind of figure raises no alarm bells whatsoever among the people who run this country because they see the growth of 'fluidity' as a good thing and do not see an increasing disengagement by fathers in their lives of their children as a bad thing in general.

But this is what the decline of marriage signifies. This is why we should be alarmed by it.

Dr Martin McAleese some years ago spoke about "the dangerous blind spot" of ignoring the important role of fathers in the lives of their children.

The new CSO data shows the problem is growing worse. Will our governing class ever awaken from their slumber and try to do something about it? Will it even be highlighted at next year's World Meeting of Families for that matter?

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# Sailing in uncharted waters

**M**ore than a year on from the Brexit referendum, we're still in uncharted waters, according to Down and Connor's Bishop Noel Treanor, who hopes that the crash-course in global and European realities Britain has been receiving since the vote is not coming too late.

Across the rest of Europe, though, "the mood seems to have changed", he observes, pointing to the Dutch and French elections, with the caveat that "it's very difficult to generalise and one has to be very careful and recognise that coalescence of all kinds of factors can change the public setting and opinion".

"The growth in the Eurozone is the trigger for all of this but no other single country has decided to take the same route," he says, saying that this suggests that things have settled some-

One of the few things Bishop Noel Treanor is sure of about Brexit is that a hard border would be unthinkable, **Greg Daly writes**



what, although given how referendums can so often be about issues that aren't on the ballot, "that's not to say if you had a referendum in the morning and people were dissatisfied with something or other in the country you don't know what would happen."

Ireland's representative to the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), Bishop Treanor has a vast amount of experience on the European coalface, having served as General Secretary to COMECE from 1989 until

2008.

Explaining how COMECE itself had come about, the bishop details how from its beginning the European project had been a deeply Catholic enterprise, one which had seen Catholic political and ecclesiastical leaders and thinkers grappling from the 1940s on – he cites as an example radio addresses by Pope Pius XII – with how Europe's constant warring could be brought to end through the pooling of sovereignty between countries in order to establish and work for peace.

## Anniversary

From an Irish perspective, he cites the gathering in the French town of Luxeuil-Les-Bains in July 1950, intended to celebrate the 1400th anniversary of the birth of St Columbanus, and to provide an opportunity for the French foreign minister, Robert Schuman, to meet with like-minded others to discuss his great idea for the coming together of the countries of Europe. Among those present was the then papal nuncio to France, the future Pope – now St – John XXIII.

The meeting at Luxeuil came just two months after the famous 'Schuman Declaration', in which the French minister recognised that "World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it," and said, "The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations."

Such a Europe, Schuman said, "will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan" but would have to be built through concrete achievements creating a practical solidarity, starting by neutralising the old opposition between France and Germany by placing under a common authority the production of coal and steel – the principle materials of war – in those countries.

This, he said, would be "a first step in the federation of Europe, and will change the

destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims".

Schuman saw this as something that would make war between France and Germany "materially impossible", and a platform for the economic unification for further countries, all with the intention of building peace and enabling Europe to help others – he described the development of Africa as an essential task of Europe.

"But anyway to make a long story short," Dr Treanor says, "slowly but surely the inspiration for this project coming from people like Schuman and Alcide De Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer coalesced round the idea of a project that had a spiritual impetus, spiritual source, a call to reconciliation, a call to building peace."

"And you can see in the memories, diaries of Adenauer, the memories of Schuman, of Monnet, the writing of Schuman, this sense of Christian commitment to a project for building a new kind of political model," he continues, explaining how the fathers of the European project envisaged the replacement of 'balance of power' politics with a new model, expressed in treaties and according to agreed rules and principles, countries would pool aspects of their national sovereignty for the common good of the member states and their people.

**“Europe was pretty much spoken simply of in terms of a source for money and a source for grants”**

Against the background of the development of the European Coal and Steel Community and the subsequent European Economic Community (EEC), various Christian thinkers and groups would meet to discuss the political changes that were afoot, with Churches and religious bodies setting up institutions in Brussels to engage with developments, leading eventually, following the first direct elections to the European Parliament to the foundation of COMECE, with Essen's Bishop Franz Hengsbach being appointed its first president in 1980.

Dr Treanor's involvement with COMECE began in the mid-1980s, a period when



Bishop Noel Treanor.

Jacques Delors, as president of the European Commission, was looking back to the founding principles of the project to build on the concrete achievements of the EEC.

## Framework

"I think that he was saying 'Look we have achieved this, now we have a framework in which people can effect commerce on this even playing field'," Dr Treanor says, stressing that we should remember that trade and commerce have always been carriers of ideas, and "were in fact, as far as European evangelisation is concerned, key vectors of the transmission of the Christian Faith".

Institutions have always been essential to the European project, Dr Treanor says, noting how Pius XII had foreseen this and how Pope Francis in recent years has spoken of this. Mapping out how the European commission, councils, and parliament are intended to balance each other out by speaking for the common good of Europe, the individual states, and the people themselves, he describes the project as a noble one with a spiritual origin and drive, but one that's in need of recalibration especially in light of how the world has changed with globalisation being a reality that must be faced.

The attempt by Jacques Delors to renew the project through revisiting its sources and the creation of the European Union is often seen in Britain and elsewhere as the point at which the project

lost its way – as though it had only ever been meant to be an economic enterprise. The obvious question is whether the project somehow lost the capacity to communicate what it was about.

Somewhere along the way, the feeling among some net contributors that their contributions to the project were intended to bind Europe together in peace began to be forgotten, as the Cold War's bipolar world faded away and war was felt to have been excised beyond Europe's borders, Dr Treanor concedes, while pointing out that as he was in Brussels when this was happening, he wouldn't have felt this.

## Issues

Nonetheless, he says, while European issues were often reported in Ireland and elsewhere, dots were all too rarely properly joined. "Journalists reported them but the political narrative in the country somehow failed to include the European dimension as a formative element of political awareness and discussions," he observes, continuing, "Europe was pretty much spoken simply of in terms of a source for money and a source for grants. To that extent, as has often been said, it's been something of a victim of its own success."

That there is a gap between the European peoples and the European institutions is clear, he says, saying that this is probably due to a failure to embed European dimensions into national political



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# waters



building, sharing of resources, exercising solidarity for the purposes set out by the treaties, and set out fairly clearly and aspirationally in the preambles to the founding treaties”.

## “What internal impact will this entail in terms of the constitutional-ity of the United Kingdom?”

For people like John Hume and indeed Ian Paisley, this had a profound effect, he says. “That did bring about massive changes and it’s on that basis of course, then, that after the ‘94 ceasefires, the European peace programmes were established, which have brought significant financial resources into Northern Ireland and into the counties on both sides of the border, precisely to promote and deeply consolidate reconciliation through concrete societal projects.”

Where Brexit will leave this, he says, as almost impossible to say, not least as there is still no real sense of what this might mean: “They’re talking about a soft Brexit now, what in name of heavens does this mean in terms of the single market and the customs union? What does it mean concretely?”

### Soft border

It is certainly hard to see how a soft border between the UK and the EU in Ireland could be squared with the British government’s oft-proclaimed determination to leave the single market and the customs union, he says.

“A soft border there: does that mean a hard border between Ulster and Britain somewhere out in the sea of Moyle and down the Irish Sea? If it does, what does that mean in terms of the future? What internal impact will this entail in terms of the constitutionality of the United Kingdom?”

Right now it is impossible to say, he says, pointing to the unexpected results of Britain’s recent elections. “We are in very uncharted waters and at the moment I would say unchartable waters,” he says.

“At this point in time on this day,” he says, “I don’t know that one can say other than that there is confusion in the air.”

Pointing out that the British government’s plan and purpose are still not clear, he says that at least the European position is clear, noting how it was mapped out in March, with numerous papers having since been produced for all to see.

“I think that’s really important as well,” he says, continuing, “It is vital that the

negotiations of Brexit become very transparent. Citizens need to know and if they don’t know the democratic deficit is created, particularly in the knowledge society. And such a deficit will always engender disenchantment and reaction.”

The visit of the EU’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier to Ireland in May was a clear pointer of how important the Irish angle is to the EU, Dr Treanor says, noting how this has been acknowledged and stressed as one of the key priorities for the Brexit negotiations.

“The level of the economic interdependence and enwebment of the economy of the Republic of Ireland and the economy of Northern Ireland is such that any kind of hard border cannot but have a profound negative impact a) on the economy, b) socioeconomically and c) on the stability of Northern Ireland’s peace process and indeed on the future of, I would say, body politic in Northern Ireland,” he says.

The North, he says, is a society where the private sector remains radically underdeveloped, such that a hard border would make it much more challenging to attract

foreign direct investment, and would do so at a time when that is desperately needed.

## “Those who shape and weave the political narrative of our political parties are confronted with a significant challenge”

“We need here to further develop the society to further deepen the process of reconciliation and deal with the past,” he says, continuing, “We need employment. We need growth and promotion and skills. We need new and inventive ways of preparing our youngsters for a society where both cognitive and emotional intelligence have developed, preparing them to operate and live in a society where artificial intelligence – and the economic possibilities for the economy that that will open up – are developed.”

### Challenge

This challenge cannot be understated, he says.

“Let’s not forget what are we dealing with here: we are dealing with that region

of the United Kingdom with the highest level of child poverty, which entails low numeracy and high levels of illiteracy and high levels of drop out in certainly socially difficult areas of society,” he says, continuing, “so bring all that together with the European scenario and bring it together with the current difficulties attached to all the Executive, link it with the wider European, British and Irish contexts in the global village in which we live.”

“And you basically come back to the point that, those who shape and weave the political narrative of our political parties are confronted with a significant challenge to develop a new discourse about the future of this part of the world. And we need to prepare people for a world that is changing very rapidly.”

Given the needs of the North and the extent to which there’s a growing and vibrant interconnectivity between the two parts of Ireland, he says a hard border is unthinkable.

“A hard border is really inconceivable and no longer viable and would be detrimental in so many different levels and arenas of life,” he says.

discourses.

“Some tried to do this, there is no doubt about this, some political leaders and representatives did, but the main thrust was determined by the fact that the project necessarily involved establishing the infrastructure for the market, which became the framework of understanding, with this idea of the European institutions being kind of a source of finance,” he says.

In addition, he notes, it was easy for domestic politicians to blame ‘Europe’ for decisions they had been party to. “And then when some decisions were taken which were, for one reason or another, not very popular back home, Brussels was blamed when in fact the decisions were being taken together by national ministers,” he says.

Easily forgotten or missed in all of this, he says, is how partnership in the European project has transformed rela-

tions between Britain and Ireland, the leaders of which found themselves after 1973 regularly sitting together and dealing with each other as equal partners.

“You found the representatives in the European Parliament, there with equal voice, and this European framework and context no doubt further transformed the British-Irish relationship, and in terms of Northern Ireland, it created a context in a space in which those who were elected MEPs from Northern Ireland were working together with members of the parliament from other countries,” he says.

### Primary aims

Such parliamentarians, he says, included French and Germans who learned to deal with each other in an institutional setting “one of whose primary aims was reconciliation, peace



Bishop Treanor meeting family members of victims of the 1971 Ballymurphy massacre on Belfast’s Springfield Road. Photo: Bill Smyth

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**Victoria Holthaus** takes a guided tour of St Patrick's College, Maynooth

**H**ave you ever seen the largest choir-chapel in the world or the oldest native tree in Ireland? Are you interested in mysterious deaths and haunting ghosts? You can hear about all these and more on a tour through the Georgian, Victorian and Gothic Revival buildings of St Patrick's College in the picturesque and bustling university town of Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

The tour begins at the south entrance with a look at Maynooth Castle and its vast history. This includes the 'Silken Thomas yew,' the oldest native tree in Ireland at 800 years old, named after Silken Thomas Fitzgerald. It is said that he sat in the tree's shade before he renounced his loyalty to King Henry VIII. The Fitzgeralds have a long history with Maynooth that sets the historic tone of the tour.

Beyond the tree is Stoyte House, where St Patrick's College began in 1795. Although it has been remodelled to fit more accommodation, it still maintains the importance that it had at the start. Attached to Stoyte House is the Long Corridor and paired with New House, Dunboyne House, Humanity House and St Patrick's House, they form the frame for St Joseph's Square.

## Square

This picturesque square is featured in many photos of St Patrick's during any time of the year. During the school year, students fill the walkways or stop to catch up and bask in the good weather.

However there is a superstition with the middle walkway and the clock residing on Stoyte House. If a student is walking down the path and looks up at the clock, they will fail their exams. Students will walk with their heads down to avoid this but might miss the boarded up window in the Rhetoric Building.

Room 2 in this building is currently an empty space among offices, but it had a resident in 1840. This young man threw himself out of

# Discovering

## St Patrick's College, Maynooth – a brief history



The Choir Chapel.

### Colm Fitzpatrick

**ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE, MAYNOOTH** was founded in 1795 as the national seminary for the education of priests, and by 1850 had become the largest seminary in the world, having ordained more than 11,000 priests throughout its history.

The establishment of the college finds its roots in a complex social and political epoch. In the 17th and 18th Centuries the majority of Catholic priests were trained in the European continent, particularly in France.

However, during the French Revolution, which saw Britain at war with France, the British government decided to restore Catholic education in Ireland in order to reduce the number of 'revolutionary' priests returning from the continent.

As a result, a petition to Parliament by the Irish bishops was successful and an act "for the better education of persons professing the popish or Roman Catholic religion" was passed

in June 1795. The act provided a grant to establish a college, and the bishops eventually decided that it should be near Dublin, settling on Maynooth because of the benevolence of Duke of Leinster and his Duchess. The college was established in the autumn of 1795, in a house that had been recently built by John Stoyte, steward of the Duke.

### Seminarians

The college was initially founded to provide a university education for Catholic and ecclesiastical students, but the lay college only survived until 1817. It was, however inundated with seminarians, and so a long wing was built out from Stoyte House, called Long Corridor.

In 1809, the north side was completed and designated the name New House.

This construction led to serious financial problems, but in 1800, John Butler, 12th Baron Dunboyne died and left his fortune to the college, leading to the establishment of Dunboyne

House in 1815, which still exists today. The South side, now called St Joseph's Square, was completed between 1822 and 1824 and south of this lies a collection of buildings which housed the lay college.

Two large functional buildings, Rhetoric and Logic Houses, were later built in the early 1830s and became the Junior House.

A majority of the first teaching staff of the college were French scholars who were refugees from the Revolution. Yet the most famous of the earliest pedagogues, Nicholas Callan, was neither French nor a lecturer in theology, but a Professor of Natural Philosophy from 1826 to 1864. Callan, who had studied in Maynooth, returned to the college in order to teach mathematics and physics, and also began working with electricity in the basement of the university.

In 1836, he created the first induction coil, and in his lifetime also invented an early form of galvanisation and the world's biggest battery at that period. Both the Callan Building

and Callan Hall can be found in the campus, in commemoration of his work.

### Centenary year

Following its centenary year in 1896, a petition was sent to Rome for authority to grant degrees in theology, philosophy and canon law. Eventually, in 1910, Maynooth became a Recognised College of the National University of Ireland (NUI), so that clerical students could gain BA degrees during the course of their studies. This new-found status, combined with the decision to open the college courses to seminarians and the laity in 1966 led to an increase in student numbers. Indeed, by 1977, lay students outnumbered religious students.

Following the passing of the Universities Act, 1997, the Pontifical University of Maynooth became a separate legal entity, training in canon law, philosophy and theology, but continues to share its campus with National University Ireland.

the window for no apparent reason. The next resident in 1860 began to complain about unease a few weeks after moving in. One day he was shaving when he slit his throat and threw himself out

of the window. Unlike the first resident, he survived, and Dr McCarthy, the former Vice-President of the college, visited him in the infirmary before he succumbed to his injuries.

Apparently while the man was shaving, he saw a horned figure with hooves standing behind him in the mirror. The figure seemed to control his wrist and urged the blade across his throat. To get away,

the man threw himself out the window. After this, the president locked himself in Room 2 and made everyone promise not to unlock the door no matter what happened. Screaming and thuds

were heard throughout the night but the president survived. He walked out with his black hair turned white and only spoke about it to say that nobody would ever stay in that room again.



# Maynooth



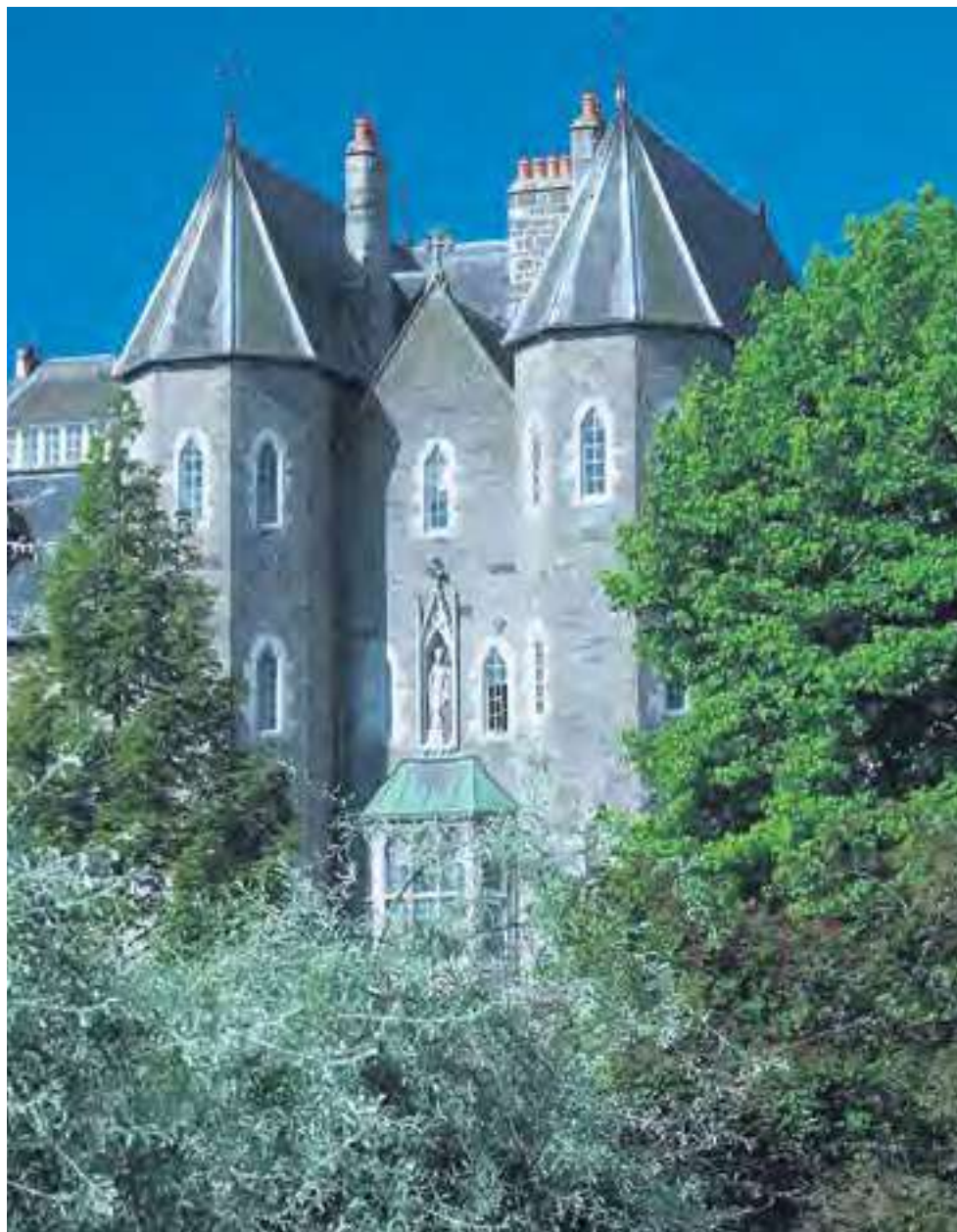
Upon entering St Patrick's House, there are large windows looking into the beautiful Bicentenary Garden. It's a stark contrast to the Gothic Revival interior designed by Augustus Welby Pugin. In between the windows, lining the walls are a collection of pieces and portraits from the graduating classes. They date back throughout the 200 years that Maynooth has been Ireland's National Seminary.

The last stop was the crowned jewel of the tour, the College Chapel. Built between 1875 and 1891, the design was created by JJ McCarthy, a professor of architecture at the Catholic university. The spire, designed by W. Hague, was added in 1895 to commemorate the first centenary of the college. This addition made the building the tallest in Leinster.

**“A common favourite is the Lady Chapel with its dominating blue tones”**

For the chapel's construction, funds were received from the Irish people at home and abroad during the hard times of the Land Agitation. So many people donated that it's a safe presumption that most of the Irish visitors of the chapel will have some connection to those who have contributed. The Stations of the Cross located above the oak carves, painted by Nathaniel H.J. Westlake, has names of the donors inscribed on them.

The theme of the chapel is *Laus Deo* (Praise God) which is supported by many of the details in the room. Walking down the mosaic floor, it's was hard to ignore the 454



carved oak choir-stalls facing out towards the aisle. The chapel is 222 feet long, making it the largest choir chapel in the world. The finials are also carved in detail, each one to a different design, representing the wild plants of Ireland and pointing heavenward to praise God.

The string course and cor-

bels, carved in French stone from Caen, are representations of the animal kingdom, stating that all creation sings the praise of God with depictions of birds and animals.

Above the carved stalls are windows depicting the story of Christ in chronological order in the main panels, while above them in

the hexafoil panels are corresponding scenes from the Old Testament.

As eyes work up to the ceiling, there is a heavenly procession featuring the Madonna and Child, angels and numerous Irish saints. Around each of their medallions is a painted sentence or phrase from

the scriptures Psalm 83/84, Psalm 127/128, the Te Deum and the Canticle of Zacharia. The paintings were designed by Westlake and executed by Mannix.

## Irish saints

Following the procession down the chapel, the focus lands on a wooden altar that almost seemed out of place. This is the original altar, which was replaced by the High Altar in 1911. The High Altar was a gift from Monsignor Gerald Molloy, Rector of the Catholic University in Dublin. Even if one took away the religious importance of this glorious work, it is still an incredible testament to the craftsmanship of the Irish. The centre of it features a relief of Leonardo Da Vinci's Last Supper.

Behind the High Altar are five side chapels, depicting St Brigid, The flight into Egypt, The Presentation of Mary in the Temple, The Sacred Heart, Saints Flannan & Molua of Killaloe diocese. A common favourite is the Lady Chapel with its dominating blue tones mixed with Venetian glass mosaics depicting the four principal mysteries of the Rosary. Many important guests have held their Masses here; Princess Grace and Prince Rainier of Monaco heard their Sunday Mass there during their stay in 1963.

Heading back to the entrance, there is the Rose Window beaming from

behind the recently restored 3,106-pipe Ruffatti organ. The pipes are laid horizontally as to not obstruct the view of the window, although the organ is a sight in itself. The design was based on a window in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Reims, it features Christ the King in glory at its centre. Surrounding him is a ring consisting of St Michael the Archangel with other arch-angels, the Blessed Virgin, St Joseph, St John the Baptist and the Four Evangelists. The outer ring consists of the Apostles and Prophets.

Before exiting, take a moment to read the saying across the doors windows, *Domus Dei Porta Coelimean* (House of God Gateway to Heaven). While still fitting to the chapel and its theme, it is actually a mistake. The quote was to go on the front of the door to welcome in visitors. However it is a graceful last remark from the chapel that the greatest designer in life is God.

**Visit Maynooth offers six daily guided tours of the South campus Monday through Sunday. Tours begin at 11am, 12pm, 2pm, 3pm, 4:30pm and 5:30pm and take an hour to complete including a private viewing of the chapel. Rates are Adults are €8.00, Students/Seniors are €6.00 and Under-18 are €4.00. Special group and family rates are available. For more information visit: <http://www.visitmaynooth.com/tours>**





The statue of St Patrick at the base of Croagh Patrick, signifying the start of the path.



Thousands of pilgrims ascended Croagh Patrick for the annual Reek Sunday.



Pilgrim Donie O'Connell prays after completing his pilgrimage at Croagh Patrick. Photo: CNS



A rescue helicopter flew in to aid pilgrims in need.



# Family is the 20,000 pilgrims

Instructions for pilgrims are outlined on a plaque on the summit of Croagh Patrick. Photo: CNS



## Victoria Holthaus

Over 20,000 people braved the harsh weather to climb to the summit of Croagh Patrick last Sunday, with pilgrims of all ages, abilities and disabilities approaching the mountain with rain coats, backpacks, walking sticks, and climbing boots – or in some cases without, with a few hardier souls braving the rough terrain barefoot.

Tuam's Archbishop Michael Neary, who led the climb, kicked off the event with the Reek Sunday homily, saying: "Our pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick, situated on the western shores in a most scenic setting, brings us into close contact with nature and God's creation. The setting provides an opportunity to reflect on who we are, on what we are doing, our place in the world and the meaning of life."

At the mountain's base, volunteers were handing out stickers, inviting pilgrims to pray for families during their time on the mountain in preparation for next year's World Meeting of Families in Dublin.

## Steep inclines

With hourly Masses at the summit and Confession available throughout the day, pilgrims could climb at their own pace, and take the time as they climbed to reflect on family, ourselves, the world we live in and the truth behind it all.

Croagh Patrick's slopes features steep inclines, loose rock and slate that make it physically demanding and varying weather such as harsh winds and battering



Loose rocks and slate along with rain made a difficult path for pilgrims. Photo: Mayo Mountain Rescue Facebook

The fog was so thick at the summit that pilgrims couldn't see past the edge.



rain only worsen the problem, but being close to God's creation was one of the main reasons that Emily Reid travelled over from Scotland to climb the Reek for her second time. "Last year my breath was taken away by the beauty of the mountain and also the kindness that everyone shows each other. Everybody looks

out for each other in some way, even though we don't know each other. It's a sign of God's love at work," she told *The Irish Catholic*.

"I couldn't see the top which would have been a big motivator for me," she added, referencing the heavy fog that obscured her vision, "when I stopped or looked a little



# focus as more than brave the Reek



▲ Winnie Woodburn, 84, at the annual pilgrimage at Croagh Patrick. Photo: CNS

◀ The early morning featured a beautiful view of Westport Quay.

▼◀ A dog sleeps in a pilgrim's coat during his pilgrimage. Photo: CNS

▼ Pilgrims descending the mountain, completing their pilgrimage.



down though, people would tell me 'you're nearly there' or 'you can do this'."

Family was another reason for her return as her initial interest in participating was due to her parents. "My parents met on this mountain so I wanted to do it in honour of them. That's why I did it last year and hopefully I can con-

tinue to do so," said Emily.

Another pilgrim honouring loved ones was Patrick McLoughlin, who in 1991 was introduced by his father to the idea of climbing the mountain for Reek Sunday.

"We didn't really know what we went into that first time we started," he said. At the time, his father was 70

years old so they could only climb together that one time. Something stuck with Patrick, however, and he continued to do the pilgrimage year after year.

## First climb

Before his father's death, "he would always come with me and simply wait in the car till

I came back down", Patrick said, adding that since that first climb, he has climbed Croagh Patrick 29 times, with 27 of them being on Reek Sunday. "Along with honouring my father, I do it for religious reasons. Faith is very important to me and the Mass is my favourite part," he explained.

# This summer be mellow with deMello

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# Out&About

## Blessing the children



**DUBLIN:** Fr Damian Farnon, Parish Administrator, Fr Fergal Maguire SS, CC and Fr Gearóid O Conaire OFM at the annual club Mass for deceased members of Round Towers GAA club, celebrated in the Clubrooms, Convent Road, Clondalkin. Photo: Tommy Keogh



**MAYO:** Fr Richard Gibbons and Fr Nigel Woollen gathered with parents and children after the 'Blessing of Children' at Knock Shrine as part of Family Focus Week.

**ROSCOMMON:** Fr Tim Lehane, SVD with Fr Norman Davitt SVD and Fr Pat Hogan SVD at Donamon Castle, where Fr Davitt will celebrate his platinum jubilee – the 70th anniversary of his ordination – on August 6.

**GALWAY:** Couples at the Esker Redemptorists Centre, Athenry, after completing a week-long 'Cana programme' where they spent time building up their marital and spiritual lives together.





Edited by Mags Gargan  
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**KERRY:** The annual Mass for the Holy Souls at Clogherbrian cemetery was celebrated by Fr. Padraig Walsh PP on Wednesday night and who is pictured with residents from Clogherbrian, The Spa and Fenit. Photo: John Cleary



**KERRY:** Parishioners came to welcome new priest Fr. Niall Geaney to Our Lady and St. Brendan's Church, Tralee; (from left) Eoin and Diane Stack, Bertie and Bernie Conway, Fr Niall Geaney, Fr Padraig Walsh PP, Eni O'Shea, Paddy Brosnan and John O'Mahony. Photo: John Cleary.

**CORK:** Fr Jerry Cremin, parish priest of Kilbrittain Parish on the occasion of his 40th Anniversary celebrations, with Kilbrittain Sacristan Mai Murphy and her grandson Rohan Lyons, who has recently become an altar server after making his First Holy Communion.



**GALWAY:** Fr Declan Lohan accompanied by his parents after Bishop Brendan Kelly ordained him to the priesthood for the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora on Sunday, July 23 in Oranmore's Church of the Immaculate Conception.



**LIMERICK:** Fr William Hennessy PP presents Ms Brid Shine with the Pontifical Award of a Benemerenti Medal in St Patrick's Church, Glenbrohane. The award was given to Ms Shine in recognition of her exceptional service to the Church in Glenbrohane and Knocklong, to the two parish schools and to the parish community.



**DONEGAL:** Achonry pilgrims in Lough Derg with Bishop Brendan Kelly.

## ANTRIM

First Saturday Devotions in St Matthias Church, Glen Road, Belfast, with Adoration/Confessions and Consecration to Our Lady at 3pm, Mass at 4pm.

## ARMAGH

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

## CAVAN

The relic of St Teresa of Calcutta will be at Cavan Cathedral from August 2-4.

## CORK

Annual devotions to take place at Lee Road Holy Rosary Shrine on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption, assembling at Our Lady's Hospital Gate before 6.30pm.

## 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

One Heart Adoration Vigil in Church of Three Patrons, Rathgar from 8.15pm, Friday, August 4 – 10am Mass Saturday, August 5. (Vigils every First Fri / First Sat for Life and Family.)

Novena to St John Vianney over August 4-12 at St John Vianney Church, Ardlea Road, Artane. Mass each day at 10am, with 7.30pm Mass on Friday August 4 and 11. Also Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9.30 and 11.30am. Guest celebrants and preachers each day.

Mass in honour of God the Father in Divine Master's Stillorgan on Sunday August 6 at 2.30pm.

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@dublindiocese

## 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.

## KILKENNY

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

College).

## LIMERICK

Mass for healing of families in the Church of the Assumption, Ballylanders on Tuesday, August 8 at 8pm with Fr Brendan Walsh, SAC. Enquiries: Anna 087-7873743.

## MAYO

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

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

## OFFALY

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

## MONAGHAN

The relic of St Teresa of Calcutta will be at St Macartan's Cathedral in Monaghan, August 4-6.

## ROSCOMMON

Family Picnic Day on August 6 at Donamon Castle, home of the SVD community, with Mass at 12.30pm followed by live music, stalls and entertainment until 6-7pm in the castle grounds.

## SLIGO

Fr Colm O'Brien Memorial Cycle in aid of Laura Lynn on Saturday, August 12. Route 1 at 11am from Ss Peter & Pauls Clonmel to Tramore (60km). Route 2 at 13.30pm from The Kingfisher, Tramore Rd, Waterford to Tramore (10km). www.frcolmobrien-memorialcycle.com

## 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

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.

Holy Hour of Adoration, Prayer and Music continues every Wednesday, 8pm-9pm, in St Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town. You can also join us on the live stream: <http://www.churchservices.tv/stpatricks-churchwicklow>



# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Papal Nuncio praises Scouts

● The US papal nuncio has praised the Scouting movement for fostering generosity, service and fraternity, which he said are all values "our world sorely needs".

"These values are the antidote to the selfishness and individualism of our society," Archbishop Christophe Pierre said in his homily. "Scouting also encourages you to work together as a team, to share adventures, and to have a greater vision of life and creation."

The Archbishop was the principal celebrant of the outdoor Mass celebrated in Glen Jean, West Virginia. The jamboree drew 25,000 Scouts and troop leaders from around the country, with about 7,500 attending the Mass.

The French-born archbishop recalled his own years as a Scout and how Scouting has benefited members of his family.

### Bomb explodes outside Mexican Bishops' Conference office

A bomb was detonated by unknown persons outside the offices of the Mexican Bishops' Conference just before 2am last week in northern Mexico City.

The explosion was recorded on security camera footage from inside the building, which was shared

online by Bishop Ramon Castro of Cuernavaca.

Bishop Castro said: "The headquarters of the Mexican Bishops' Conference has been attacked with a three cylinder explosive device. I believe this reflects the situation in Mexico."

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## Drought rages as Kenya bishops urge for peaceful elections

Bishops in Kenya have urged citizens to vote peacefully as an election on August 8 looms – while a drought ravages the nation.

Historically elections in Kenya have been extremely violent, with over 1,000 people killed and hundreds of thousands displaced in 2007 and 2008.

The Chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Philip Anyolo, said: "We need to create a peaceful environment to demonstrate our patriotism for our wonderful country and ensure that all parts are in peace."

"We are calling on all Kenyans to seize this opportunity to exercise our constitutional right and give ourselves leaders of integrity," he added at a press conference.

Ten years ago violent demonstrations erupted after claims the election was rigged, incumbent Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner and candidate Raila Odinga rejected the poll.



A boy collects water in a dry riverbed in Kitui, Kenya. Photo: CNS

"We don't want to see the divisions and violence we experienced in 2008. It was so bad, so bad..." said Bishop Arap Korir, whose Rift Valley region was most affected by the violence.

### Peace

The bishop said religious leaders are taking key roles in promoting peace as most candidates are members of churches, mosques or temples.

"We are saying how to help them at this crucial time of elections, how do we diffuse the tensions. We have been sharing a lot as religious leaders," Bishop Korir added.

In Turkana, northern Kenya, 17,000 children are already severely malnourished as charities battle to keep people alive.

Out of the one million people that live in the region, 80% earn less than 90c a day. The Catholic Diocese of Lodwar

caters for the whole region of Turkana, they have expressed fears of what the future may hold as the elections draw close.

The diocese run the majority of hospitals and schools in the region, and believe a new administration may cut their funding and violence could bring instability – according to the Chancellor of the Diocese and Irish Missionary, Tony Woods.

## French priest's shocking murder "transformed me" says bishop

The martyrdom of a French priest who was killed by Islamist extremists has brought the Muslim and Christian communities closer together, according to Archbishop Dominique Lebrun of Rouen.

On the anniversary of the terror attack last week the archbishop said the event "transformed" him.

Fr Jacques Hamel was killed at the age of 85 when two men claiming allegiance to the so-called Islamic State stormed his parish church in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray near Rouen.

After taking several hostages, the

attackers slit Father Hamel's throat and seriously injured another parishioner.

Police ended the hostage situation by killing the attackers.

"This tragic event shared by others has brought me closer to the local society in its diverse components: naturally to the town of Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray and then to the other municipalities in the area," the archbishop said. "And from now on, I am bound to the Muslim community and to the other communities of believers in the territory of my diocese."

Fr Hamel's martyrdom drew

the attention of Pope Francis who celebrated a memorial Mass for him on September 14, 2016, with Archbishop Lebrun, Roselyne Hamel, Father Hamel's sister, and 80 pilgrims from the diocese.

When Archbishop Lebrun presented the Pope with a photo of Father Hamel, the Pope asked him to place it on the altar and after the Mass told the archbishop: "You can put this photo in the church because he is 'blessed' now, and if anyone says you aren't allowed, tell them the Pope gave you permission".

## Chinese propaganda chiefs vs Cardinal Zen



Chinese authorities have ordered journalists not to describe an outspoken retired cardinal as the 'emeritus' bishop of Hong Kong, but to use 'former' instead.

Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun [pictured] was outspoken in his disdain for the ruling Communist Party, and raised issues regarding political freedom, human rights and religious per-

secution.

He expressed a willingness to get involved in political debates about Hong Kong's future, which drew favour from pro-democracy groups but attracted a lot of criticism from Beijing.

The new terminology on how to refer to Cardinal Zen was part of broader list of words and phrases to be "banned or used with care" handed

to journalists in the state-run Xinhua News Agency, coming in at number 48.

Cardinal Zen is the only Catholic Church public figure named on the list, which is divided into five categories: social and political; legal and laws, religions and ethnicity; Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan (sovereignty-related) and international relations.





Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie

## Vatican fights for peace in Venezuela

Pope Francis and the Vatican have "tried very hard" to find a solution that's "peaceful and democratic" in Venezuela.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, told Italian media the Vatican wanted to "help all without destruction".

On Sunday a referendum was held to elect a body to re-write Venezuela's constitution, a matter which has been the subject of fierce protests and violence, and since April over 100 people have died.

The president, Nicolas Maduro, claimed victory as more than eight million people are said to have voted in favour of the new constitution-writing body.

This was met by the deaths of at least 13 people, including teenagers, during a day of violence.

Cardinal Parolin said their efforts sought "to recall each person to their own responsibilities" and that: "The criteria for any solution must be only the good of the people."



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro delivers a speech in Caracas during the closing campaign ceremony for the country's Constituent Assembly election. The banner reads "Power". Photo: CNS

## Pope and Catholic organisations condemn human trafficking

Human trafficking is "brutal, savage and criminal," Pope Francis said, but often it seems like people see it as a sad, but normal fact of life.

"I want to call everyone to make a commitment to seeing that this perverse plague, a modern form of slavery, is effectively countered," the Pope said on July 30, the UN's World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

After reciting the Angelus with thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis asked them to join him in praying a Hail Mary so that Jesus' mother would "support the victims of trafficking and convert the

hearts of traffickers".

Catholic organisations said in the run-up to the UN anti-trafficking day that stopping criminal networks of human traffickers will require the creation of "safe, legal and responsible migration pathways" so migrants and refugees don't feel forced to turn to smugglers.

### Victims

Catholic humanitarian groups, religious orders and coalitions, who have a long history of helping trafficking victims, appealed for government and community action.

"People are trafficked within local settings as well as across international borders for domestic servitude, sexual and labour exploitation, begging, forced marriage, organ removal, surrogate wombs and criminal acts," said the statement, which was distributed by the International Union of Superiors General, the organisation representing the heads of Catholic orders of women.

"While estimates of the number of victims of human trafficking remain in the tens of millions, worldwide convictions of human traffickers are fewer than 10,000," the statement read.

## Understand migrants: change your attitude says Caritas

Meeting migrants makes you realise they are human beings, and they "have suffered much" according to the Director of Caritas Internationalis.

Michael Roy says that listening to the stories of migrants and refugees should help people transcend prejudice.

"You may be afraid of migrants as a large group of people coming in, but when

you meet a migrant, then you have a different vision," he said last week.

He said listening to their stories makes it clear that "they are human beings, they are human beings who have suffered much; they've left a situation where they could not live anymore because of violence, conflict or just because of misery".

"Once you understand the story of the person, then you

will have a different attitude," he added.

In late September, Pope Francis will launch the Share the Journey campaign, a two-year programme of Caritas Internationalis to promote encounters between people on the move and people living in the countries they are leaving, passing through or arriving in.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila, Philippines,

president of Caritas Internationalis, wrote a letter in late June asking members of the Caritas federation to participate in the campaign. He said: "One of the most important questions we can ask ourselves as individuals, communities and countries at this time of mass movements of people and global doubt is 'Do I allow fear to prevail in my heart, or do I allow hope to reign?'"

## Vatican roundup

### New US ambassador to the Holy See

US President Donald Trump has nominated Callista Gingrich [pictured] to be his ambassador to the Holy See.

She will face several challenges representing the US in the Vatican, particularly following Trump's decision to abandon the Paris climate agreement, while Pope Francis has made clear that care for the environment is a priority.

"What I used to say is that I dealt in moral diplomacy, which is the diplomacy about the human condition and human dignity,"

Jim Nicholson, the former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See.

Diplomatic work with the Vatican "didn't deal in arms, in military basing, it dealt in what I called the soft power of moral diplomacy, of trying to create a life for people with more dignity, and more opportunity," Nicholson said.

Mrs Gingrich is a former congressional aide, the author of several children's books and has made several documentaries. She is the wife of former US House Speaker Newt Gingrich.



### Vatican says don't forget Middle Eastern Christians

The Middle East needs peace, human rights, and the continued presence of Christians, a Holy See diplomat told the UN Security Council last week.

"Christian communities have existed for over two thousand years in that region and have peacefully coexisted with the other communities. The Holy See urges the international community, through the Security Council, not to forget them," Monsignor Simon Kassas, interim chargé d'affaires of the Holy See's permanent observer mission to the United Nations said.

"The Holy See believes that the rule of law, including respect for religious freedom and

equality before the law based on the principle of citizenship and regardless of one's race, ethnic origin or religion, is fundamental toward the achievement and maintenance of the peaceful and fruitful coexistence among individuals, communities and nations in the whole region and beyond," he continued.

Msgr Kassas spoke in an intervention during the UN Security Council's open debate on 'The Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question'.

He voiced the Holy See's regret at the loss of lives and property in wars and conflict in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq.

### Pope pays tribute as baby Charlie Gard dies

Pope Francis has paid tribute to baby Charlie Gard, who died last Friday as a result of a rare brain disorder.

Writing on Twitter, the Pontiff said: "I entrust little Charlie to the Father and pray for his parents and all those who loved him."

The Pope was seen to follow Charlie Gard's case closely "with affection and emotion". After a lengthy legal battle the 11-month-old's parents lost a High Court case to bring their terminally-ill child for experimental treatment in the US.

President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, said he was "deeply saddened" by the news.

"I offer my sincere and profound condolences to his parents who have treasured him with such a strong and undiminished love," he said in a statement.



# Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

Efforts to help Middle Eastern Christians stay in their homelands are cinema-worthy, writes John Allen Jr.

Right now, cinemas are featuring the summer blockbuster *Dunkirk*, written and directed by Christopher Nolan, about the famous WWII evacuation of trapped Allied troops which most Brits regard as among their finest hours.

That evacuation, in which hundreds of ordinary people joined an impromptu flotilla to bring the troops home, occasioned Winston Churchill's famed 1940 speech: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

Obviously, the WWII-era *Dunkirk* was a moment of high, world-changing drama, and it deserves to be memorialised. However, there's an equally dramatic, but as-yet uncelebrated, *Dunkirk* going on right now before our eyes, in this case a moment of great Catholic heroism.

The difference is, it's actually a *Dunkirk in reverse* – the idea isn't to get people out, but to help them stay. That's an image I've used before, and it remains completely on the money.

## Visibility

Since the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, every religious minority in the region has suffered, with Christians leading the pack because of their numbers and visibility. A variety of international groups, including the US government, has recognized those Christians as victims of "genocide".

The devastation has been staggering. In Iraq in 2003, there were an estimated 1.5 million Christians, while today the high-end number for those left is usually set at around 300,000. Similarly, Syria's Christian community is believed to have been cut in half.

Given the lethal violence directed at Christians, as well as the general social and political chaos, the real question probably isn't why so many have left, but why



A boy carries his belongings in Mosul – some Iraqi Christians who are making their slow return to ancestral lands say it will take time to rebuild their lives and trust of those who betrayed them. Photo: CNS

## A Catholic Dunkirk – in reverse

those brave few have remained. Therein lies the tale of the Catholic "Dunkirk in reverse".

Essentially, the answer is because private Christian organisations around the world, the lion's share Catholic, have stepped up for the last five years or so, ensuring those Christians are fed, sheltered, and have access to medical care – and, more importantly, that they have the promise of a better future to come, thereby offering them reason to ride out the storm.

**The local Churches have done absolutely astonishing work in supporting people**

One might think that such a responsibility for humanitarian rescue would fall to the entire world, especially the major Western powers and inter-governmental bodies such as the United Nations. Indeed, the UN and Western governments have invested major resources in Iraq and Syria, but the overwhelming majority has never reached Christian victims of the conflict, and doesn't to this day.

Here's why: the bulk of public humanitarian aid in Iraq and Syria is delivered through major refugee camps, either in places such as Erbil, or to camps in Jordan and Lebanon. However, Christians typically don't go to those camps, fearing infiltration by Jihadist loyalists and thus further exposure to persecution and violence.

As a result, the Christians take refuge with Church institutions – churches, schools, clinics, hospitals, social service centres, even the private homes and properties of other Christians. What that means is that from the beginning, those Christians, numbering in the hundreds of thousands by now, have been basically abandoned by most international relief efforts.

So, who's giving them food, water, clothes and medicine? Who, in effect, has kept them alive?

To begin with, it's been the local Churches in Iraq and Syria, who have done absolutely astonishing work in supporting people in the most difficult circumstances imaginable. The bishops, clergy and religious in those two nations are among the most unacknowledged moral heroes of our time. However, they're far from having deep pockets, so who's making that heroism possible?

The answer is, "We are", as in American Catholics. Certainly Catholics, other Christians, and people of good will from all around the world are also involved, but there's been a special, and remarkable, mobilisation by American Catholic organisations.

Consider the following numbers, which are only representative rather than comprehensive.

Since 2011, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), a pontifical organisation serving persecuted Christians, has spent \$35.5 (€30.3) million helping Christian refugees in Iraq and Syria, especially those taking shelter in Erbil and elsewhere in Kurdistan. The U.S. branch of ACN has been a major contributor to that effort.

## Beneficiaries

The Knights of Columbus have spent more than \$12 (€10.2) million for Christians in Iraq and Syria. The Catholic Near East Welfare Association, another pontifical organisation based in New York, has spent \$7.3 (€6.2) million directly on Iraq and Syria since 2014, and another \$9.8 (€8.4) million on Christian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.

Catholic Relief Services, the official overseas development arm of the U.S. bishops, doesn't distinguish among beneficiaries in terms of religious identity. However, since 2012, CRS has poured \$250 (€213.2) million into Iraq and Syria, benefitting 1.5 million Syrians and 300,000 Iraqis. All in, that's a stunning amount of American Catholic money flowing to help some of the most embattled Christians in the world today.

At the original Dunkirk, some 330,000 Allied troops were rescued. Although exact numbers at this stage are impossible, it's a slam-dunk certainty that at least that many Christians have been

kept alive, were able to remain with their families, and given some hope of better things to come by the current "Dunkirk in reverse".

Fear for the future, however, hasn't disappeared. I spoke this week to Fr Andrzej Halemba of ACN, which is spearheading a major effort called the Nineveh Plains Reconstruction Project, designed to rebuild houses and other facilities destroyed by ISIS to allow Christians in Iraq to return to their village homes.

"The Christians ask me, Father, is our future going to be like Turkey?" he said. The reference is to the fact that in 1915, Christians were almost one-quarter of the population in Turkey, but today it's around 0.2%, principally the result of the Armenian Genocide.

**The idea is also to rebuild the 363 church properties that were also burned, damaged or destroyed**

To avoid that result, the Nineveh Plains Reconstruction Project aims to generate \$250 (€213.2) million to rebuild the roughly 13,000 private homes that were burned, destroyed or partially damaged. ACN has already rebuilt 100 homes, and, in the meantime, is caring for the roughly 12,000 other families, or some 95,000 people, waiting to go back.

Eventually, the idea is also to rebuild the 363 church properties that were also burned, damaged or destroyed, not to mention thoroughly looted.

A survey conducted by Aid to the Church in Need in February found 41% of displaced Christian families today want to return, and another 46% are considering doing so. That's a reflection of military defeats for ISIS, of course, but also to the commitment of Aid to the Church in Need and other groups in providing these people a reason to believe they're not alone.

Fr Halemba stressed, by the way, that the Christians of Iraq aren't "beggars".

"We don't need foreign companies to come build houses," he said. "The people are industrious and qualified. We've got carpenters, engineers, masons, and others, ready to work."

"This is about restoring dignity and giving hope to the citizens of the Nineveh Plains, and at the same time giving them salaries," he said.

Fr Halemba called for a "great appeal" in support of the Nineveh Plains Reconstruction Project "to save the cradle of Christianity".

It's a drama that lends itself to celluloid. It's also one that calls for vigorous effort to bring the story to conclusion, so that the final scene isn't leaving anybody on the beach.

John Allen Jr is editor of Cruxnow.com



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as they struggle to accept the roughness of life and seek meaning or acceptance rather than  
escape. If they can find joy or gratitude, they're on my A-list. That's where Anne Alcock sits for me. I  
know her 'attitude' has been hard won, though she might call it a grace. In this book she looks  
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# Letters

Post to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic,  
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## Letter of the week

### Here today but gone tomorrow

**Dear Editor,** I'm delighted that Róisín O'Rourke, who responded to my original letter (IC 06/07/2017), is enjoying teaching religion in Leitrim Village. It reminds me of my own experience, 60 years ago, when I too was a primary teacher. I am presently the curate in the largest city parish in Limerick. We have marvellous First Holy Communion services, and Confirmations as good as mini-Eurovisions: but apart from these two ceremonies, and possibly their grandparent's anniversary Mass, we never see the children in the church again.

Most of our young people, who have experienced 14 years of 'faith

formation', are now part of the two lost generations of 'practising Catholics'. So, neither the knowledge they have learnt, nor their compulsory attendance in religious education classes has converted them into active members of their parish community.

Interestingly, a friend of mine who got first place in the religious knowledge exam, when he was in Leaving Cert, flung the silver medal that was his prize into the Lee during his first week in UCC. That was his way of symbolically rejecting the religion that had been part of every school day in both his primary and secondary education. So, it is not about knowledge, but about faith-formation

that starts in the home – and nowhere else.

I agree that primary school children are stimulated to ponder on God, outside of their class. In fact, I have been asked on several occasions by young primary school children, whether I believed in God or not. And they had no problem telling me that they didn't. Personally, I was not surprised.

The one thing that I would concede to Róisín is the fact that, in an increasingly secularised society, every mention of God is good.

*Yours etc.,  
Fr Patrick Seaver,  
Farranshane, Limerick.*

### A child is a child, no matter the argument

**Dear Editor,** Subsequent to the concert at Manchester Arena, outrage was expressed worldwide in the media at the deliberate targeting of the innocent.

Among the dead and injured were a sizeable number of young and teenaged children. Some of them were accompanied by parents to act as guardians in getting them there, ensuring to the best of their ability that they would be safe throughout the concert, and getting them home safely, having made happy

memories that would remain a highlight of their young lives. Having detonated the device the bomber was amongst those who died. Had he survived he would have served a long prison sentence.

What concerns me is the lack of condemnation when it comes to the deliberate targeting of pre-born vulnerable, innocent children during an abortion procedure. I try to imagine what must take place to carry out this outrageous act. The child in the womb is

scanned, is visible on screen to the abortionist and s/he terminates the life of the child by one of the various methods we read about. This is done with the approval of the child's mother and, at times, that of the father.

The Manchester outrage, was termed deliberate, indiscriminate, mass murder. Abortion is a targeted, deliberate killing of a vulnerable child who will never see daylight never mind enjoy an exciting pop concert. Abortions, like suicide bombings, require

the participation of more than one person to complete the task.

When will the media, which dispatches reporters to the troubled areas of the world to report back in a balanced way, the outrages they observe, not now get to grips with the wealthy abortion industry and call it to account. There is an on-going holocaust of pre-born children taking place worldwide today!

*Yours etc.,  
D.A. Martin,  
Raheny, Dublin 5.*

### Thank you, archbishop

**Dear Editor,** You published on July 13 Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's recent address at a conference in Germany. The archbishop concluded that the Church is "the redefinition of power in terms of the way in which Jesus revealed who God is".

To me anyway, I have not ever read words that outline the true meaning and purpose of the Church and faith in an ever-changing world.

Thank you, Archbishop.

*Yours etc.,  
Robin Gill,  
Church Hill,  
Carrigaline, Co. Cork.*

### Time to hand over civil marriage requirements

**Dear Editor,** In relation to Bishop Kirby's contribution to the conference 'Let's talk Family, let's be Family (IC 20/07/2017), the State definition of marriage "which cannot be described in terms of traditional Christian doctrine" is at odds with the Christian definition of marriage ("the creator

from the beginning made them male and female...is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body"), perhaps now is the time for the State to adopt the approach of continental Europe where the civil registration of marriage takes place away from

any denominational building (church, synagogue, mosque or temple) and ministers of religion are no longer required to be solemnisers of weddings.

*Yours etc.,  
Fr Oliver Skelly,  
Coole, Co. Westmeath.*

### Never was so much decided by so few

**Dear Editor,** Amongst the several useful points made by Martin Mansergh in his article on how Irish people should decide on the shape of their future society without the influence of foreign funding (IC 20/07/2017), is his comment that a "decisive battle between two very different visions of Irish society is not far off".

He further makes the point that legislation will follow a referendum on repeal. This is an appalling prospect. By saying "Yes" to repeal, this important matter – the deliberate taking of (unborn) human life – will be handed over by two million people and given to the opinions of 80 politicians in the Dáil.

We already know that the leaders of all parties are partial towards restrictive abortion (initially). We also know that the reasons given for abortion has changed dramatically in the UK. These reasons have changed from those of compassion, to mere feticide, which is now being openly canvassed (e.g. guidelines, etc., of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and the British Pregnancy Advisory Service).

If repeal takes place, this will be the most serious surrender of power since the foundation the State. It is similar to the intended constitutional changes in Venezuela (e.g. the 'People's Assembly' of 500).

A root cause of the problem is that the Government, not the people, have the deciding of the wording of a referendum to be put to the people. This needs to be changed, though it will not happen in the short term, or ever. Drawing the teeth of the Constitution has now become the prime focus of politicians.

Back to a referendum on repeal, followed by legislation, this will be an easy sell. Many seek a reasonable "middle ground". This is laudable, of course, but it is a "will-o'-the-wisp", and, with the aid of the courts, cannot be attained.

Therefore, we are likely to have a referendum, followed by legislation. QED (Quite Easily Done).

*Yours etc.,  
Donal O'Driscoll,  
Blackrock, Co. Dublin.*

### Cardinal Schoenborn hit the nail on the head

**Dear Editor,** At the end of the article 'Building on Doctrine that speaks to real Human Situations' (IC 20/07/2017) Cardinal Schoenborn states:

"...It's very often a matter of justice...what is due to the other...the Bible teaches us to be very attentive to justice."

One often hears the statement: "The Church was too focused on sexual sins etc."

The Cardinal touches the heart of the matter. Sexual sins and injustice in society are almost always inextricably intertwined.

*Yours etc.,  
Judith Leonard,  
Raheny, Dublin 5.*

### 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



**PHILIPPINES:** A boy carries a bag of bread while wading through floodwaters in Quezon City.



**USA:** Senator John McCain, speaks with reporters ahead of a health care vote on Washington DC's Capitol Hill. The Senate rejected legislation to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act, with Arizona Republican Mr McCain casting a decisive and unexpected "no."



▲ **LEBANON:** Young people clap during the World Maronite Youth Days in Beirut. The July 15-25 event, organised by the Maronite Patriarchate Youth Pastoral Office, followed the World Youth Day model.

◀ **AUSTRALIA:** Cardinal George Pell is seen leaving the Melbourne Magistrates' Court, after the court set a date of October 6 for the magistrate to hear evidence and decide whether there is a strong enough case to go to trial on sexual abuse charges, which the cardinal has denied.



**VENEZUELA:** Demonstrators run away from riot security forces during a protest in the capital city Caracas against President Nicolas Maduro's government.



**KENYA:** Men sit in front of a wall with a message of peace in Nairobi. The country's Catholic bishops have urged citizens to prepare to vote peacefully in the August 8 general elections.



# Peacebuilding in East Africa

Project  
PROFILE

## Mary Ellen Doyle learns of the peace work of Irish missionaries

Originally from the 'sunny' south east of Ireland, I have been training and working since 2015 in the field of mediation, organisational conflict management and conflict transformation. I employ a variety of methodologies and experiences to work with individuals to help them identify the root causes of their conflicts, thus, helping them to improve their self-awareness, emotional intelligence and conflict competence. My passion for conflict resolution and transformation extends broader than workplace and person-organisation conflicts to community mediation and peace building.

After graduating with a Masters in Mediation and Conflict Intervention from the Edward M. Kennedy Institute, NUI Maynooth in 2015, I continued with the institute as an intern and project coordinator. During that period I met the founder and Executive Chairman of the Kenyan-based Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Fr Patrick Devine SMA [pictured]. Curious about the methodologies used by Shalom, Fr Patrick was kind enough to share a deeper insight with me on the work that it does with diverse ethnic communities in Kenya where there is a tradition of tribal conflicts and violence.

### Approach

Since February this year, I have been in Kenya experiencing first-hand the work of the Shalom Centre. It is evident that the approach they take to peacebuilding is unique. Their highly qualified team uses the paradigm of change that applies both theory and practice geared towards transforming negative peace (the mere absence of violence) to positive peace (conflict resolution) through in-depth theoretical conflict analysis, peacebuilding activities and developmental processes.

Shalom seeks to identify, understand and address the underlying causes of conflict rather than just address the symptoms. This deep-rooted approach allows for social and



Mary Ellen Doyle at a Shalom workshop at Wamba, Kenya.

religious values like peace, truth, justice and mercy to take root, enable sustainable development to evolve, and progressively enliven people to actualise their potential.

The training that the Shalom Centre imparts to the grassroots representatives and stakeholders of the various ethnic groups incorporates intensive research and analysis of issues and contextualised conflict transformation approaches. Communities are empowered in their understanding and application of various non-violent techniques that they can use to resolve their own conflict, and once taken through a series of training, they are brought together for inter-ethnic trust building aimed at slowly rebuilding and healing deep wounds.

I have had the opportunity to witness the effects of electoral violence on the people of Kenya. From rural Marsabit and Samburu, to urban Nairobi and Nakuru counties, I have listened to first-hand accounts from people, both victims and portraiture of inter-ethnic violence. Marsabit and Samburu counties are largely pastoralist communities that experience very violent livestock raids.

Closely tied to this is the struggle over scarce resources like water and pasture that sustain their livelihood. Ethnic tension in these areas is also present and is exacerbated by the raids and by influence from political leaders. Nakuru and Nairobi have slightly different dynamics where ethnic divides seem to be a major source of conflict. These divides run deep especially coming close to the 2017 election period with political leaders using it to gain momentum on their campaigns.

In my opinion, one view that cuts across all the diverse experiences is the fact that violence has never brought about positive change for their communities. It has only deepened the wounds and

strained the relations with the ethnic other. It is evident that people do not only value, but are highly energised by peace-building initiatives, which is what the Shalom Centre is doing on the ground with these communities.

Working with the Shalom team on their strategic design and delivery of transformative programmes on electoral violence has sparked a passion within me to expand my multi-disciplinary approach of mediation and conflict management to peace building efforts. To be engaged in issues of peace, justice, reconciliation and development without adequate skills-sets in terms of analysis and techniques leave a lot to be desired and can even at times be detrimental to real progress.

Shalom has allowed me to appreciate the value of professionally administered peacebuilding at the very grassroots in our societies as fundamental to identifying and influencing applicable policy making and sustainable development initiatives going forward.

The value and the strategic importance of the work of Shalom was emphasised recently by the then Minister of State Joe McHugh at a meeting of the EU Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Development in Brussels in May discussing the humanitarian situation in Africa, Yemen and Syria, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. Praising the work of the Shalom Centre, Mr McHugh said that we cannot have sustainable development without peace. "When we have examples of peacebuilding and conflict resolution that are successful" he said, "we should examine them and support them so that we can learn from them."

**i** Mary Ellen Doyle is a native of Adamstown, Co. Wexford. The Shalom Centre – [www.shalomconflictcenter.org](http://www.shalomconflictcenter.org) – is run by Irish SMA priests, Fr Patrick Devine from Roscommon and Fr Oliver Noonan from Cork.

## Aid for the alone

### Victoria Holthaus examines the work of a charity helping the elderly live independently



Older people of Dublin North City and County will no longer be lonely with the expansion of ALONE's support services to their area. The charity, which supports older people in their choice to age at home, has partnered with HSE to further this mission.

"Repeated studies have demonstrated that ageing at home is the first choice of older people and their families. Our Support Coordination Service addresses issues faced by older people living in their own homes and works with statutory bodies, community organisations and other service providers to ensure that the older people get what they deserve," says Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE.

Gary Blanchard [pictured], a Support Coordinator for ALONE tells *The Irish Catholic* "It's traditionally quiet (in Dublin North City and County) and we're trying to bring service to them and spread there. It's easier access to the work."

The charity's Support Coordinators assist older people who live in various accommodation types, including privately owned, privately rented and social housing. They aim to answer and address issues that impact older people's ability to remain living independently in their own home.

Volunteers assist in attaining access to money for clothing and addressing living conditions that might be unsafe,

or creating a connection between older people and community services. Gary has been with ALONE for over four years working with older people in crisis, a lot of the time due to "chronic loneliness".

"These are people who are cut off from the community. It really impacts not only their physical health but their mentality as well," he says.

To help in combatting this, Gary along with the many other volunteers help these older people through many different services. From helping throughout the entire process of a bathroom adaptation report to something as minor as getting someone to cut their grass, these volunteers "don't say no to anyone over 60".

"A lot of people aren't aware of their entitlements like applying for pension," he says. "Although we are a charity, we don't do charity work. We help people to get what they are entitled to."

According to Gary, volunteers go through training sessions before they are assigned and are asked to stay for a minimum of a year. They are advised a meeting time at first but are free to do what is best for both parties after a connection has been established.

He says 50% of referrals come from the older people themselves. "It's a very brave thing to pick up the phone and say to a stranger that you're lonely. It's a very brave thing and that's why we have a gentle process and we're very welcoming."







ALONE, the charity that supports older people to age at home, recently celebrated its 40th anniversary at an event hosted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Brendan Carr in City Hall, Dublin. Photo: Jason Clarke

**Family & Lifestyle**

John Bown with Imogan O'Rourke.



For John Brown, he was referred to ALONE by a nurse during his recovery at the hospital. He has now been a tenant in ALONE's supportive housing and a user of the befriending service for five years.

"I was very much alone at the time. My wife was taken away from me. She's in the nursing home and I had been looking after her. So it was hard for me after that," he says. "It's helpful knowing I'm getting somebody coming around once a week to help me with shopping. I can hardly walk these days."

### Volunteer

Once John called ALONE he was interviewed to see which volunteer would be the best fit for him. He found it easy to connect with his volunteer saying, "They were very careful. My volunteer is a lad who has even been to Africa the same as me".

While this has been the only volunteer assigned to John, others have come by to visit him "but that's just because they like me".

John has also taken part in activities organised by ALONE like their holidays. "They're quite fun. We

did a tour of a theatre and I used to work in a theatre doing spotlights back in London in the 60s. So that was a particular interest to me. It's a big outing and it's nice to get out."

ALONE, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, has supported thousands of older people through issues of loneliness, social isolation, and housing, lack of services, poor health, poverty and homelessness. These services are provided 365 days a year through programmes such as Support Coordination, Housing with Support, Befriending and Campaigning. With the expansion of these programs to the Dublin North City and County, more members of the community will be able to receive the benefits.

Mary Walshe, Head of Social Care HSE, says "It is important that older people feel supported in receiving the care they need and to live in a place of their own choosing. This new partnership between ALONE and the HSE will enhance the supports and services offered to older people in the community and ensure that all older people in the area have access to these services."

A place of people, prayer and peace, the French monastic site at Taizé offers a spiritual retreat from an often hectic and growing secular world. Established in 1940 by Brother Roger, who founded it as a safe haven during WWII, Taizé has become one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in Europe, with over 100,000 people journeying to it each year.

Its attraction is due to its unique liturgical style and music which entail religious chants and meditative prayer; its commitment to a simple life of worship and communal sharing; and its embracing approach to all cultures and religious denominations. The youth, however, share a particular significance in the ongoing history of Taizé, and are called to travel to the ecumenical location in order to bring about peace and reconciliation in their homeland. Enticed by this setting, I ventured to Taizé for the third time this summer to once again encounter and experience a little piece of the sacred.

Travelling with a group of Trinity students, I arrived at Taizé on a warm Monday evening, and was greeted with feelings of nostalgia as I began to remember the rustic aura of the site. Most of the infrastructure has remained the same since 1960s, and the sleeping arrangements of either small, wooden dormitories or tents mirror this antiquated vibe. Yet, little time is spent resting, as the daily routine is rigorous, reflecting the Benedictine tradition *Ora et Labora* (Pray and Work).

Each morning, every person in the community attends Morning Prayer at 8:30am, and many then carry out work that has been assigned to them. The communal dimension of Taizé requires that all pilgrims help to sustain it through these various tasks such as making meals or setting up tents. Indeed, its self-sufficiency is such that the brothers of Taizé refuse to accept donations and instead garner finances from selling pottery and unique pieces of iconography made by the brothers themselves.

### Duty

I was given the duty, with a group of international students, of washing the dishes and cutlery following the meals each day, which provided me with many opportunities to engage with people from different backgrounds. The mix of laughing, water fights and learning German words like butterfly (it's 'schmetterling') reduced the chores to a fun pastime where new friendships were made.

Following work there is another prayer service, which involves all of the attendees singing, or in my case attempting to sing, together Psalms and prayers of different languages and religious tradition. Amid these chants there is a long period of silence where individuals can meditate, reflect or just appreciate a stillness that is often rare to find in the modern life.

Afterwards, Bible group introductions take place



Guille Castellanos, Colm Fitzpatrick (centre) and Eóghan Stanley washing dishes in Taizé.

where a brother outlines some important messages from the Gospels, and how this affects each of us and society as whole today. One memorable teaching that the brother spoke of, in relation to

a session on Matthew 20:20-28, was: "Impatience is violence against time." This quote resonated with me and many others, who often feel pressurised by our fast-paced society.

Each day finishes in an area called the Oyak, where all of the pilgrims gather to speak and reflect about their journey in faith, as well as relax with snacks and alcoholic beverages (there's a two cup limit!). This type of open dialogue with fellow believers was refreshing, especially from the perspective of a college student growing up in Ireland, who often sees religion being misunderstood, mocked or treated with hostility.

Taizé helped me to realise that my own social and religious background is only a tiny part of a bigger narrative, and that Christianity continues to play an influential role in millions of peoples' lives throughout the world. As I result, I left Taizé reinvigorated and with a new found spiritual zeal, encouraged by the fact that the Christian message still speaks and people are still listening.

### I left Taizé reinvigorated and with a new found spiritual zeal

As my third time travelling to Taizé indicates, it is a place worth visiting for both the faithful and those questioning their faith. From personal experience, it seems that a lot of people of my generation, although having some type of

animosity towards the Church, still identify as 'spiritual' or have a sense of 'something being out there' that is guiding humanity. I think the Taizé experience, above all, provides a safe platform where these types of ideas can be explored. It is not somewhere that forces theological truths down your throat, but a place of searchers and wanderers who are asking questions that the consumerist world can't answer.

## YOUTH SPACE A little piece of the sacred

### Colm Fitzpatrick describes his visit to Taizé



The group of Trinity students who went to Taizé.





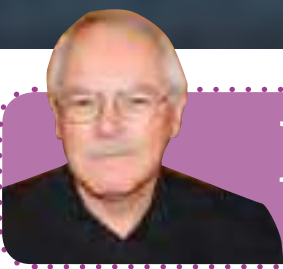
# REDEEMING THE MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

One year ago, virtually everyone who knew him was stunned by the suicide death of the most prominent American Hispanic theologian that we have produced up to now, Virgilio Elizondo. Moreover, Virgil wasn't just a very gifted, pioneering theologian, he was also a beloved priest and a warm trusted friend to countless people.

Everyone dies, and the death of a loved one is always hard, but it was the manner of his death that left so many people stunned and confused. Suicide. But he was such a faith-filled, sensitive man. How could this be possible?

**“The manner of that death becomes a prism through which his or her life and work are now seen, coloured and permanently tainted”**

And those questions, like the muddy waters of a flood, immediately began to seep into other emotional crevices, leaving most everyone who knew him with a huge, gnawing question: What does this do to his work, to the gift that he left to the church and to the Hispanic community? Can we still honour his life and his contribution in the same way as we would have had he died of a heart attack or cancer?



**Fr Rolheiser**

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



Fr Virgilio Elizondo.

Indeed, had he died of a heart attack or cancer, his death, though sad, would undoubtedly have had about it an air of healthy closure, even of celebration, that we were saying farewell to a great man we had had the privilege to know, as opposed to the air of hush,

unhealthy quiet, and unclean grief that permeated the air at his funeral.

Sadly, and this is generally the case when anyone dies by suicide, the manner of that death becomes a prism through which his or her life and work are now seen, coloured and permanently tainted. It shouldn't be so, and it's incumbent on us, the living who love them, to redeem their memories, to not take their photos off our walls, to not speak in guarded terms about their deaths, and to not let the particular manner of their deaths colour and taint the goodness of their lives.

## Least glamorous

Suicide is the least glamorous and most misunderstood of all deaths. We owe it to our loved ones, and to ourselves, to not further compound a tragedy.

So each year I write a column on suicide, hoping it might help produce more understanding around the issue and, in a small way perhaps, offer some consolation to those who have lost a loved one in this way.

Essentially, I say the same things each year because they need to be said. As Margaret Atwood once put it, some things need to be said and

said and said again, until they don't need to be said any more. Some things need still to be said about suicide.

**“As Margaret Atwood once put it, some things need to be said and said and said again, until they don't need to be said any more”**

What things? What needs to be said, and said again and again about suicide? For the sake of clarity, let me number the points:

**1.** First, in most cases, suicide is the result of a disease, a sickness, an illness, a tragic breakdown within the emotional immune-system or simply a mortal biochemical illness.

**2.** For most suicides, the person dies, as the does the victim of any terminal illness or fatal accident, not by his or her own choice. When people die from heart attacks, strokes, cancer, and accidents, they die against their will. The same is true in suicide.

**3.** We should not worry unduly about the eternal salvation of a suicide victim, believing (as we used to) that suicide is the ultimate act of despair. God's hands are infinitely more understanding and gentler than our own.

We need not worry about the fate of anyone, no matter the cause of death, who leaves this

world honest, over-sensitive, over-wrought, too bruised to touch and emotionally-crushed, as is the case with most suicides. God's understanding and compassion exceed our own. God isn't stupid. **4.** We should not unduly second-guess ourselves when we lose a loved one to suicide: What might I have done? Where did I let this person down? What if? If only I'd been there at the right time! Rarely would this have made a difference.

Most of the time, we weren't there for the very reason that the person who fell victim to this disease did not want us to be there. He or she picked the moment, the spot, and the means precisely so we wouldn't be there. Suicide seems to be a disease that picks its victim precisely in such a way so as to exclude others and their attentiveness.

This is not an excuse for insensitivity, but is a healthy check against false guilt and fruitless second-guessing. Suicide is a result of sickness and there are some sicknesses which all the love and care in the world cannot cure.

**5.** Finally, it's incumbent upon us, the loved ones who remain here, to redeem the memory of those who die in this way so as to not let the particular manner of their deaths become a false prism through which their lives are now seen.

A good person is a good person and a sad death does not change that. Nor should a misunderstanding.



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Giants of the airwaves step away from the mics

It wasn't as momentous as some made out but the departure of the host from **Tonight With Vincent Browne** (TV3) after ten years is certainly worth marking.

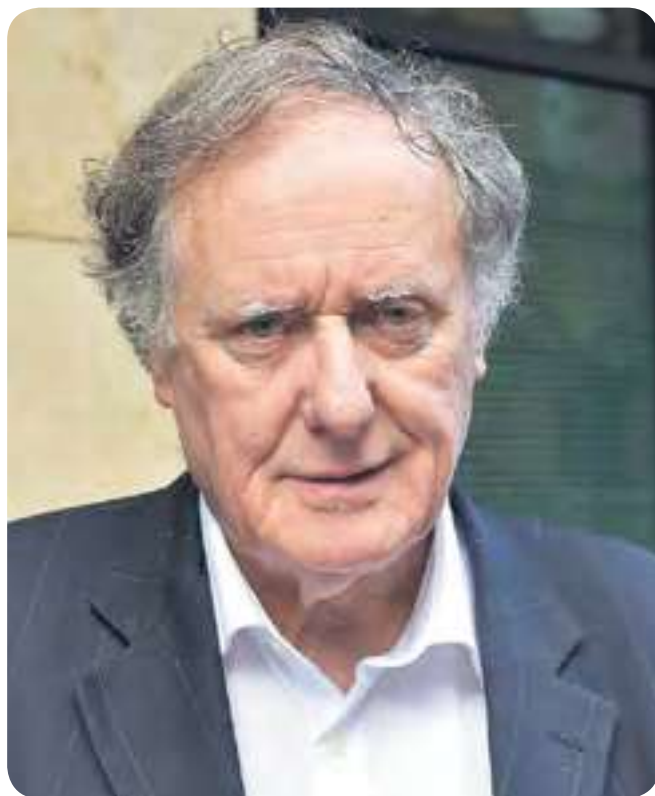
His period on the show has been marked by outrage at social injustice, incisive political analysis, savaging of politicians, affirming of journalists (except from the Irish Independent), relatively fair abortion debates and a heady mix of respect and rudeness.

On Wednesday night it was something of a coup to land an interview with new Taoiseach Leo Varadkar. Previous Taoisigh were notoriously and understandably reluctant to go on the show, so fireworks might have been expected. In the end it was a rather dull affair.

Varadkar seemed relaxed, and Browne seemed reluctant to go for the jugular. There was too much haggling over what time people got up in the morning and what that signified, and too much on wondering about who was middle class, or middle Ireland.

Browne may even have been a tad deferential, letting his guest away with one striking vagueness – challenged on some figures he gave, Varadkar said: "It's a standard statistic if you ask people."

On more specific financial stats he was, however, as much on the ball as Browne.



Vincent Browne.

He paid gracious tribute to his host, but there was a slight sting in the tail: "You've been fair; and even when you haven't been fair..."

### Gratitude

The show came to a cheerful end with guests including Mario Rosenstock, who had provided some memorable impersonations of prominent politicians and of Browne himself over the years.

The final show, on Thurs-

day night, started well, with Browne himself gracious in his gratitude to the TV3 staff and management that had worked with him over the years. He paid a touching tribute to the late Peter Matthews, former TD, and to the members of the public he had met on his travels, except "the woman from Dun Laoighaire" – I didn't get that, but I presume she knows who she is.

Browne's guests were all female (diversity deficit) but

he got the show proper going by playing a clip from 'Live From the George', his results show after the marriage referendum of 2015.

He described it as the "highlight" of his time with the programme, but I thought it was among his worst efforts, unworthy of a serious current affairs journalist and cringe-worthy in the extreme – a mess of self-congratulation and self-importance, unlike the more balanced audience debate on the issue a few months previously.

### Embarrassing

The interview with Bosco (a popular children's puppet, for those who mightn't remember) was particularly embarrassing, and the whole puppet motif was highly ironic, considering the role some media played in that referendum – campaigning before and celebrating afterwards. Bosco's line was "everybody should be equal", but strangely I haven't heard him (or any of the equality gurus) campaigning to defend equality for unborn children.

And wouldn't you know it, all four of Browne's guests on the night were singing from the same hymn sheet – Sinéad O'Carroll of *The Journal* thought the referendum result was "magical" (ah yes, I remember the tricks), journalist Dearbhail McDonald thought it was "wonderful", Mary Lou McDonald TD



Cathal Mac Coille.

thought Bosco was "moving" (!), Catherine Connolly TD thought it was a "transformative moment" – all further evidence of what is wrong with large sections of the Irish media – "groupthink" or "filter bubble" as Dearbhail McDonald called it, showing no awareness that she was in one!

The departure of Browne was discussed on a few current affairs shows. On **Today With Sean O'Rourke** on Wednesday, the host declared (tongue-in-cheek, I presume) that Browne had the "effrontery" not to appear on his show, but I can well understand why he wouldn't. With all the tributes one texter reminded us that he wasn't dead yet, and guest Maurice Manning said that if Browne was listening he might think the case was being made for his beatification.

Much less fuss was made of another significant depar-

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### SUNDAY SEQUENCE

**BBC Radio Ulster, Sunday, 8.30am**

Weekly coverage of religious and ethical issues.

#### MY COUNTRY, MY FAITH: IRELAND

**EWTN, Wednesday, 7pm**

Fr Bernard McGuckian tells us the stories of those Irish martyrs who paid the ultimate price, especially for the sake of the Eucharist.

#### FÍORSCÉAL

**TG4, Thursday, 10.30pm**

Documentary about child labour in Bolivia.

ture – without any fanfare, Cathal Mac Coille said his final farewell to **Morning Ireland** (RTE Radio 1) last Friday after 16 years of excellent service. He thanked his "wonderful colleagues" and co-presenter Rachel English paid a fitting tribute to his "professionalism, determination, diligence, good humour...decency and kindness".

The media landscape will be poorer without them – good luck with future projects to both journalists.

1 boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

# Film

## Subaquatic terror for shark cage siblings

### 47 Metres Down (15A)

When someone in a film says, "it's going to be the best time ever!" you know they're in for a nightmare – even (especially?) if they're in an idyllic Mexican holiday resort where all the beautiful people cavort.

The 'wine doubling as blood' prologue in a swimming pool sets us up for a *Jaws*-like scare-athon. Pretty Lisa (Mandy Moore) allows her equally pretty sister Kate (Claire Holt) finagle her into a thrill-seeking escapade. They agree to venture into a shark cage together. They're winched beneath the surface of the water. (Note: This is supposed to be fun, folks.)



Claire Holt and Mandy Moore in *47 Metres Down*.

Why are they doing it? So Lisa will have photos to show her ex-boyfriend, Stewart, who's just dumped her. The idea is that he'll be impressed by her bravado and take her

back. It makes sense, right? "Hey, you went down with the sharks! I've just realised I still love you!"

Stewart left Lisa because she wasn't as interesting –

or brave – as Kate. But when things go wrong in the cage and they end up, you guessed it, 47 metres below the sea, will Kate show us she's just as plucky as Kate? Will she find her 'true grit'?

### Frights

Yessir, behind all the nautical frights and parading sharks this is an empowerment yarn. Which is a pity, because it gets in the way of the drama. It makes us feel (cringe, cringe) we're watching yet another 'message' movie.

That said, any film which manages to hold our attention for 129 minutes of mainly underwater footage has to be respected. Mind you, I could have done without the rela-

tionship chatter between the girls as they hover between life and death. (Would you be analysing your character if you were stranded in a ginormous lobster pot at the bottom of the ocean, terrified out of your wits as you wondered if the sharks were going to gobble you up before rescue divers arrived?)

I could also have done without the fantasy sequence (Spoiler alert! Oxygen deprivation can cause hallucinations!) which dupes us into thinking things are even more dramatic than they are.

But this is still value for money. Holt exerts a quiet power while Moore, looking like a young Geena Davis (good face for screaming –

check out *The Fly*) manages to go from a presumptuous "we're gonna be all right!" (famous last words) to "we're gonna die!" in almost the same sentence.

Johannes Roberts directs with as much derivativeness as you'd expect from a 'genre' movie. He owes Steven Spielberg a pint the next time he sees him. In the end you feel he could have done a bit more with the plot. (Like making the organisers of the escapade sadists who break the winch on purpose? Or having Kate as the 'other woman' who steals Stewart from Lisa?). But as a straight-up adventure flick, it does what it says on the tin.

I'll never take breathing for granted again.

Good  
★★★★



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Recent books in brief

### The Oxford Illustrated History of the Reformation

edited by Peter Marshall  
(Oxford University Press, £18.99pb RPP)

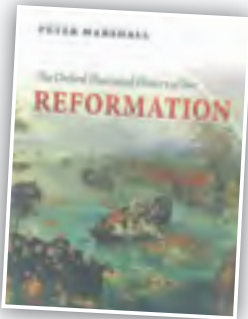
Peter Marshall, the editor of this book, is professor of history at Warwick and on the board of the journal *British Catholic History*. With six colleagues he provides an approachable *résumé*, very well illustrated with vivid and relevant images, in a paperback reissue for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation

The editor says that "the aim of the current volume is to bring out some of the ways in which over recent years our understanding of the Reformation has become more complicated (and therefore more interesting), while retaining a clear and coherent perspective on the balance between continuity and change".

It is essential for such a book that the text be both readable and authoritative, and this is certainly the case here. But the illustrations are not mere decorations in a book of this kind. They are a very important elements in their own right.

It is not merely a matter of seeing portraits of the people involved like the Popes, the princes and the preachers. One can also see the places and the way of life in these centuries, but also the ways of propaganda through the new printing press by way of graphic images – the vicious political cartoons of those days are often excoriating.

It is often said that the introduction of the printing press made the Reformation, but it was a medium used by both Protestants and Catholics, as can be seen in these pages. It is often suggested that Catholics were for censorship, while the Protestants were for liberty, but this was not quite the case. Catholic books could not circulate in Protestant England, while a little earlier, when the Papacy was in Avignon, there was no censorship of books in the Pope's enclave.



### The Big Wind

by Beatrice Coogan with a new introduction  
by Tim Pat Coogan  
(Head of Zeus, £8.99)

This novel was first published in 1969 when it achieved a huge success, both in Europe and North America. There was even talk of a film version being made, but that came to nothing. The novel opens on the 'Night of the Big Wind', January 6, 1839. Famously this date was later of great importance when in 1909 the state pensions came in and many people bereft of birth certificates (which date only from the 1860s) used it as the landmark date to prove their age.

It tells the life of Sterrin O'Carroll born in Kilsheelin Castle as those wild winds wrecked the country. Her love for Ireland and for a servant man Young Thomas provide the theme of the books which also reveals the course of Irish history from the time of O'Connell through the Famine and the Land War to a new century, and the rise of modern Ireland.

Definitely a book to soak in on the beach in the coming weeks of holiday. In the US it was later issued as *Flower of the Storm* derived from the Gaelic meaning of Sterrin, with quite a racy cover – here, however, the theme of Ireland's national destiny is happily restored. Perhaps now it might provide material for a TV mini-series.

The novel was like some epic tale, but closer to *Gone with the Wind* than to *The Betrothed*. Many who have only the vaguest memories of the enjoyment they got from this "great read" will be delighted to see it again in print, this time with a preface by the author's son, the editor and writer Tim Pat Coogan.

What that preface has to say about the author, her life and marriage to Garda Commissioner Eamonn Coogan, later a TD, and her heroic struggle to rear and educate her family after his early death in 1948, as well as build a career of her own in several fields, is of great interest. It struck this reviewer that in this material of his family and childhood Tim Pat has the germ of a great novel of his own.

(A decade after this book, Beatrice Coogan published a very different, more personal book, called *Miracles at Knock*. Perhaps that too might now come back into print.)



# The real threats to our way of life

## The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World's most Successful Political Idea

by Bill Emmott  
(Profile Books, £20)

Peter Hegarty

Our economies may be in recovery, but they are far from healthy, warns Bill Emmott, who writes with the authority and assurance of a former editor-in-chief of *The Economist*.

He believes that the most insidious of the 'enemies that lie within' is the swollen, still largely unregulated financial services sector, that was responsible for the recent recession.

Ten years on regulators still have 'no real idea' about what is going on in areas of international financial services. A thoroughgoing overhaul of a 'socially useless' industry would strengthen confidence in the world economy.

Governments should withdraw their commitments to intervene to save investment banks – safety-nets only encourage risk-taking – and look at banning certain forms of trading.

The lack of serious reform in the years since 2008 is attributable to the lobbying power of the banks and finance houses.

They, like the tech industry, buy themselves freedom from scrutiny by generously funding politicians, who are reluctant to move against these important (even essential) donors to their electoral campaigns.

## Internal threat

Another grave internal threat to the West is debt. Emmott considers the examples of France and Italy, two important countries with stagnant economies and generous pension provision.

A state with a growing, dynamic economy largely funds pensions from taxation, but a state with a struggling economy has to borrow:

Public debt is the most pressing economic problem facing these two countries, and it will not become manageable until both undergo what Emmott would call a 'shake-up': they need to reform their employment



Above, author Bill Emmott and, left, the cover of his latest book, *The Fate of the West* (subtitled *The Battle to Save the World's Most Successful Political Idea*).

large numbers of young educated migrants from around the world, and it's in better economic shape than President Trump would have you believe.

A fascinating, commendably clear book reminds us time and again that many of the woes of the West are attributable to the greed and under-regulation that caused the recent crash.

**“Russia is in economic and demographic decline, a power but not a rising power”**

Since then many people in the West have been living resentful, diminished lives. Politicians have spent a good deal of their time dousing financial fires or devising ways to reduce spending.

They have not properly attended to pressing matters such as growing disenchantment with the EU, concern about the effects of globalisation, and rising opposition to immigration.

The populists with their pat solutions have seized their opportunity, deepening our uncertainty about the future.

laws, so that hiring – and laying off – workers becomes easier and cheaper for employers.

The more people in employment, the greater the tax take and the more affordable benefits such as pensions become.

**“Many people in the West have been living resentful, diminished lives”**

Emmott also makes the good point that pensions and the welfare state would also become less of a burden on the state if people extended their working, tax-paying lives.

He disputes the notion that pushing back the age of retirement would make it more difficult for younger people to enter the workforce: if the state's income from taxation

is healthy it will have more money to invest in the creation of employment for the young.

Emmott isn't terribly exercised by the challenges posed by Russia and China. Yes, these powers have taken advantage of western preoccupation with economic and financial matters in recent times to exert themselves militarily, Russia in Ukraine, Syria and Georgia, China in the South China Sea, but both lack the reach of the United States, and probably always will.

Russia is in economic and demographic decline, a power but not a rising power. China is in better shape, for now, but lacks allies, unless you count North Korea.

The United States, on the other hand, has military bases and friends around the world. It is demographically healthy, annually absorbing



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.

# A well-judged choice of Irish classics

## Kenny's Choice: 101 Irish books You Must Read

by Des Kenny  
(Currach Press, €19.99; now on special offer from the publisher, €7.99)

J. Anthony Gaughan

For many years, Kenny's Bookshop has been one of the features of Galway City. Des Kenny describes here the beginnings of that mecca for bibliophiles – now only run on-line.

Maureen Canning and Des Kenny met for the first time when she was attending University College, Galway. Within a few years they married and opened their second-hand bookshop in 1940. From the outset they sold paintings in the shop, and in 1968 opened their much admired art gallery in separate premises with a Seán Keating exhibition.

## Business

Five of the Kenny children were to join the business.

The father attended book auctions throughout Ireland, where he sometimes bought whole libraries. Des describes the importance of US academics and general readers to their bookshop.

From 1980 onwards they became the Irish vendor to the Library of Congress. Soon afterwards they were supplying books to the New York

Public Libraries, Boston College and other institutions. There followed a flourishing trade in book parcels to the US and forty-five other countries.

During his apprenticeship as a book seller, Des was tutored by his father and mother.

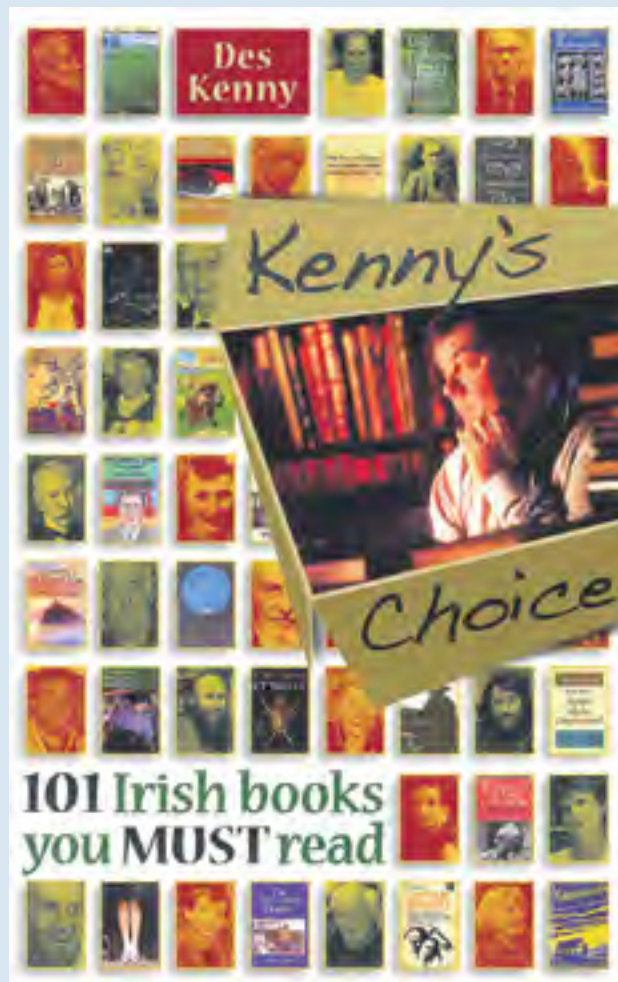
His father coached him on how to recognise the qualities of a 'good and saleable book', while his mother initiated him into the art of connecting a customer with a book and vice versa. His excellent choice of 101 books one should read is a measure of their wise guidance.

**“He included each title because it had a story and writer able to tell it”**

Kenny states that he included each title because it had a story and writer able to tell it. He also chose books not only because of their intrinsic merit, but also because they represented an important aspect of Irish life and society.

His choice ranges over novels, plays, poetry, memoir, history and travelogue written in the past two centuries on Irish topics.

The Irish language is represented by classics such as *An t-Oileánach* and *An Béal Bocht*; and our island's



social history by the works of Carleton and Synge. His aim was that his final list included books that would enhance the quality of one's life, and those which had a unique feel to them.

Samuel Beckett and Séamus Heaney, our Nobel Prize winners, are included. The many books on history include T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin's *The Course of Irish History*, Cecil Woodham Smith's *The Great Hunger* and Liam Sword's *A Hidden Church*.

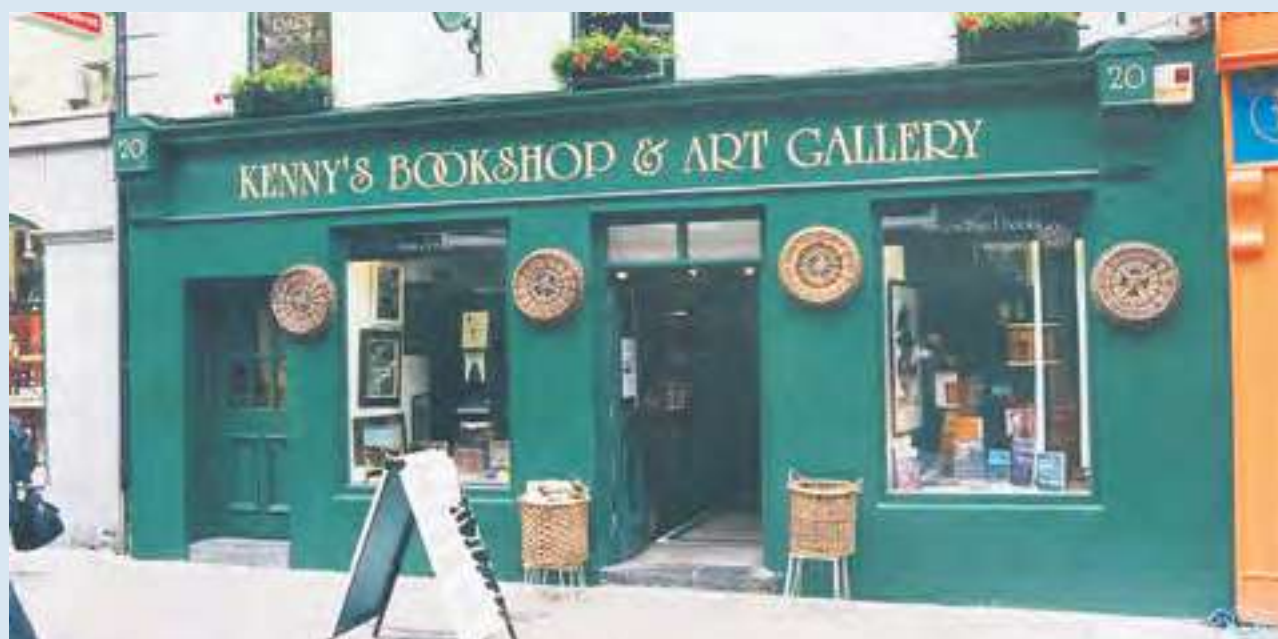
In making his choices Kenny seems to have been influenced by geographical considerations. He flags up

representative authors from all corners of our island.

Maurice Walsh, author of *Blackcock's Feather* (Ireland in 1590) and other popular novels set in Ireland and Scotland, is the standard-bearer for other North Kerry writers, such as George Fitzmaurice, Bryan McMahon, John B. Keane and Brendan Kennelly.

Des Kenny's comments on the author whose books he selects, are both incisive and informative.

For this reason alone his book is one everyone interested in books and culture should read.



## The World of Books

By the books editor

## Sixty days that shook the West

The release of *Dunkirk* has been the focus for mixed reviews and divided opinions. Christopher Nolan's movie with its clean-shaven, well-washed, un-muddled British soldiers retreating with their weapons still in hand, though loved by critics, has been derided by veterans of WWII as a travesty. To see *Dunkirk* merely as an "heroic retreat" is to fail to see it for what the event really was.

It may well seem to some a saga of human survival, with hardly a glimpse of the Germans and no sight of the French, let alone the Belgians. The British, to fight another day, abandoned Europe; the Europeans remained to suffer under occupation.

However, the controversy brought to mind a remarkable book, a classic of French historiography from 1956, *Sixty Days that Shook the West: France 1940 May–June 1940*. This only appeared in the US and Great Britain in a heavily abridged one volume edition (559 pages), now out of print.

However, for Europeans, the complete text of the three volumes of *60 Jours qui ébranlèrent l'Occident* (Bouquins / Robert Laffont, €30), running to 1,056 pages, is still available: twice as long and three times as detailed.

Now the name of the author, Jacques Benoist-Méchin, may not be familiar. But he has a small place in the folklore of Irish literature. In his early 20s he moved in the same circles as James Joyce, and it was to him that Joyce remarked at the end of 1921 that he had filled *Ulysses* with enough enigmas to keep the professors busy for centuries.

He was also a friend of Proust and Claudel. However, Benoist-Méchin was then a journalist, working largely for the Hearst organisation. This important book belongs to his later guise as an historian.

The author had already written in 1936 a three volume admiring history of the German army – part of which de Gaulle later had reprinted for the use of the French officer corps. But he was also an admirer of Hitler, whom he saw (as so many then did) as a bastion against Communism. In 1940 he himself wholly supported the Vichy regime, in which he was a minister, to the extent that he plotted to get rid of Laval to strengthen it. After the war he was tried and sentenced to death, but was reprieved and later released. Not then in the eyes of many today an admirable person.

This book belongs, however, to his mature years of reinvention as a serious historian, but one with a lingering admiration of strong men and great rulers, Alexander, Kemal Ataturk, Ibn Saud, Muammar Khadafy.

But *Sixty Days* is something else again. It is a day by day, almost hour by hour, account of what went wrong in the early months of 1940 when the "phoney war" came to an abrupt end.

## Not one war

Benoist-Méchin sees what happened as not *one* war, but *three* wars, distinct and separate: a Belgian war, a British war and a French war. The leaders of these counties acted in isolation, and fought for their own ends. This thesis makes astonishing sense of the confusion of what was for the French, in any case, a fearful replay of *La Débâcle*, the collapse of 1870.

Benoist-Méchin himself at the time hoped for the emergence of a stronger Europe, one which would be better fitted to defeat Communism.

Though the author's own politics in the pre- and war-time years are unappealing, his skills as historian make his book important. He has been called "a revisionist". But in reality he was writing the truth, a complicated truth, as he saw it. In effect he was as much an actor in the events as was Churchill – who does not by the way appear in *Dunkirk*. In Benoist-Méchin's scenario, Dunkirk is not a triumph of human survival, it is merely one event in a total disaster.

The contrast between what happened, as Benoist-Méchin saw it, and how Nolan recreates it, is sobering. With Great Britain again retreating from Europe, and the government of Poland shaping up, with warm Catholic support, to create yet another dictatorship, if there are lessons to be learnt from history it is not politicians or film makers who learn them.





# Classifieds

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

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# Leisure time

**Crossword Junior**

Gordius 193



- ACROSS**

1 This bird bangs a tree with its beak (10)

6 Meddle, 'poke your nose in' (9)

8 Bed for an infant (3)

9 Sport played with a racquet (6)

11 Coming from the Emerald Isle (5)

12 Big, floppy cushion you might use as a 'chair' (7)

13 Catch fish in it, or hang it behind a goal (3)

15 Crazy (3)

16 You get it from a sheep (4)

17 Found the total of some numbers (5)

18 Containing nothing (5)
- DOWN**

1 You wear a watch on this part of your body (5)

2 Many times (5)

3 The people who work on a ship (4)

4 When people have a chance to vote for a new government (8)

5 You keep a rabbit in one (5)

7 Coloured arch in the sky (7)

10 Green jewel (7)

11 Pay no attention to something (6)

14 If you brought someone breakfast in bed, you might carry it on this (4)

**LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS**

**GORDIUS No.309**

**Across** – 1 Buttermilk 10 Scuba diver 11 Number Ten 12 Cheddar 15 Dense 17 Ebbs 18 Erie 19 Ewers 22 Ocean 24 ASBO 25 Apes 26 Poser 28 Sundown 33 Spaghetti 34 Veers 35 Dots 36 Holy Orders

**Down** – 1 Bust 2 Touchline conversion 3 Eland 4 Manna 5 Lane 7 Latin America 9 Dead Sea 13 Drum 14 Redress 16 Decomposed 20 Elsewhere 21 Anarchy 22 Chin 27 Smart-Alec 29 Unify 31 Otto 32 Uses

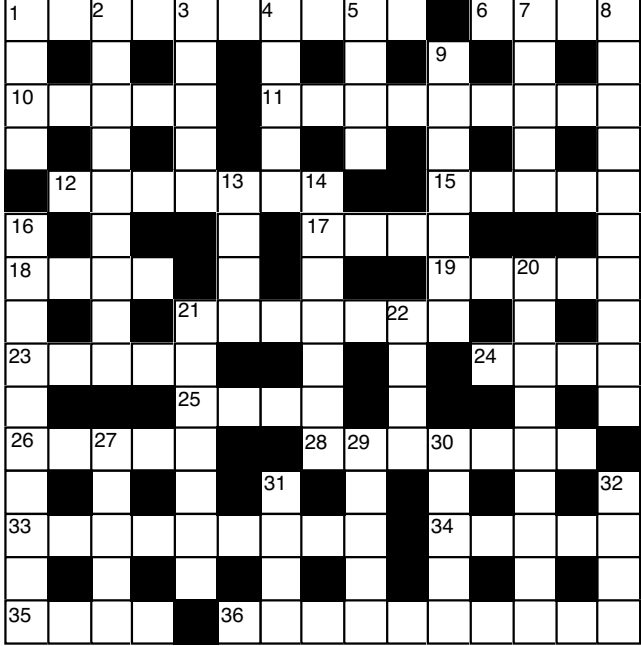
**CHILDREN'S No.192**

**Across** – 1 Shark 6 Illegal 7 Night 9 Going 10 Weight 13 Noticed 15 Hair 16 Coin 17 Eighty 18 Sister

**Down** – 1 Sandwich 2 Kitchen 3 Flag 4 Again 5 Plugs 8 Grinning 11 Circus 12 Decide 14 Obeys

**Crossword**

Gordius 310



- ACROSS**

1 Twice as much green space in which to leave your car inconsiderately (6,4)

6 Crustacean (4)

10 I leave disorientated hikers to find an animated ogre (5)

11 One may air art all around this part of a church (5,4)

12 The doting worker is sweet! (7)

15 Dance style featuring in Saturday Night Fever, etc (5)

17 Wander over, somehow (4)

18 Produced an egg (4)

19 Native American tribal leader (5)

21 Boastful courage (7)

23 The American soldier goes back into the vehicle to find Havana (5)

24 Mark on the skin from an old wound (4)

25 & 34a One's old school may cause the team alarm (4,5)

26 Grieve, lament (5)

28 & 5d A tenor barely can arrange to memorise thus (5,2,4)

33 Underworld villain (9)

34 See 25 across

35 One positive response? Lots of them, formally! (4)

36 Con ensured somehow that this is untouched by the blue pencil (10)
- DOWN**

1 Spoon's eloping partner (4)

2 Our opting to change is causing sudden displacement (9)

3 One enjoyed having fibbed about the capital of Kenya (5)

4 Not ornate (5)

5 See 28 across

7 Highways (5)

8 An invoice for travel cost is on the menu (4,2,4)

9 Design style a cad tore asunder (3,4)

13 Attest (4)

14 Inconsequential (7)

16 Prisoners' transport for the heroine of West Side Story, if set in Harlem? (5,5)

20 It keeps infants and baby animals warm (9)

21 Marked cattle with hot iron (7)

22 Do get an artist to identify an animated explorer (4)

27 & 30d He told about Brer Rabbit changing cruel menus (5,5)

29 Spooky (5)

30 See 27 down

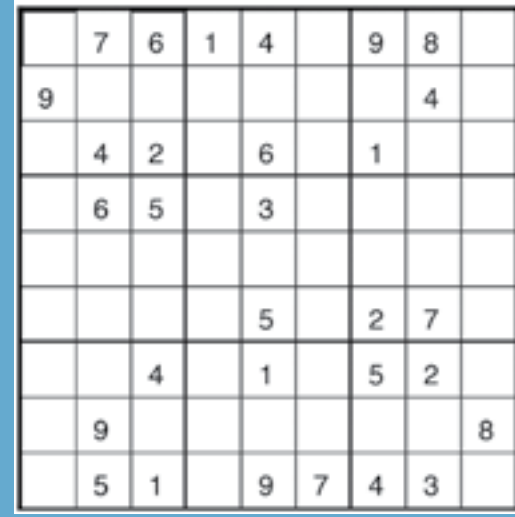
31 Incline to be thin (4)

32 On which to fill in a crossword (4)

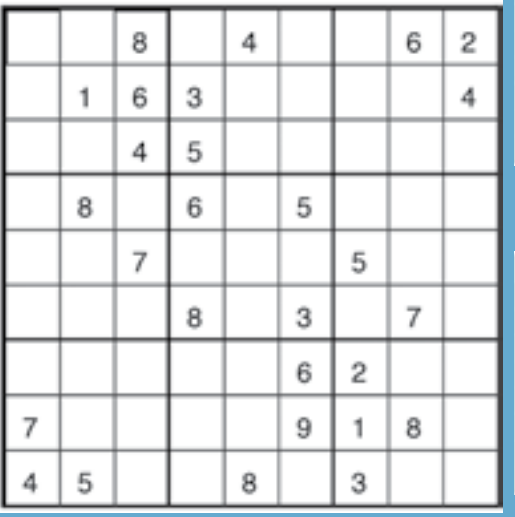
**Sudoku Corner**

193

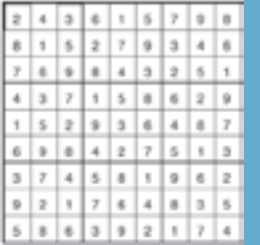
**Easy**



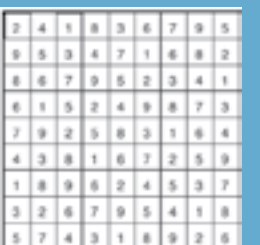
**Hard**



**Last week's Easy** 192



**Last week's Hard** 192







# Three essential 'f' words for today's world

**'F' WORDS ARE HIGH** on my agenda at the moment. With an opening like that I suppose there is a chance you will read further. In recent weeks I have been stopped in my tracks by two heart-breaking personal situations.

Firstly, a young couple whose wedding I participated in last year had the joy of welcoming their first child, a little girl, just three months ago. Two weeks ago they received the devastating news that their little daughter has leukaemia. The news was all the more painful because this young couple live in the southern hemisphere far from the circle of care and support which is their extended family. Amy is being treated in the local hospital and at the moment is responding well.

Then there is one of my closest friends, Michael who in the last few weeks has been struck down by a mysterious illness of his brain. After a few frightening episodes characterised by confusion and frustration Michael too has ended up in hospital but we await a diagnosis. Like Amy, Michael too lives in another country far from his immediate and extended family.

In both scenarios family



members here at home have dropped everything and without a thought to cost and other sacrifices have organised to fly out to be present to their loved ones and offer whatever practical support they can. In Amy's case a group of friends got together and launched an appeal

for funds simply to enable the young parents to be with their little daughter at all times. The response to this appeal has been extraordinary. Amy and Michael are also both surrounded and supported by a tsunami of prayer from many corners of the world.

As I reflected on these two 'life

altering' and 'stop you in your tracks' situations a number of things struck me. The scripture readings for Mass on the 17th Sunday of the year focused me further when we were asked to reflect on the real 'treasure' in our lives and the 'pearl of great price'. The most obvious thing is something we take for granted and that is 'our health is our wealth'.

## Treasures

When a health-related crisis occurs as it did for Amy and Michael in recent weeks, what are the treasures we can most rely on? This is where my 'f' words come to the fore: family, friends and faith. While all three of these pearls are invaluable in a crisis we cannot presume they will automatically be available to us.

These are treasures which must be cared for and attended to in the good days and the calm days. Above all, family, friends and faith need our quality time. They need us to be present, to remember important moments. Creating memories with family, friends and faith in the good times will insure that we can call on them when the storms come.

## A Prayer for Unity

Lord Jesus Christ, We pray you for unity.  
Unity among all who profess your name.  
Unity among people from every nation and every colour.  
Unity within the families; let not the winds of alienation extinguish their fires of love.  
Unity within our hearts; let us not turn divided or rejected enemies to ourselves.  
Envelop us in your seamless robe, the one and whole garment of unity in which you suffered for us.

– E. Laridon. Text found in Bruges Cathedral.

## ONE WIFE – TWO FUNERALS

A funeral service is being held in a church for a woman who has just passed away. At the end of the service, the pallbearers carrying the coffin accidentally bump into a wall jarring the coffin. They hear a faint moan. They open the coffin and find that the woman is actually alive. She lives for ten more years and then dies. A ceremony is again held at the same church and at the end the pallbearers are again carrying the coffin out. As they are walking, the husband calls out "watch out for the wall!"



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