

The Irish Catholic

SEX TRAFFICKING

Vulnerable women targets of exploitation
Pages 12-13

RISING ANTI-SEMITISM

Ireland's Jews hiding their religion
Page 9

BULLY-PROOF KIDS

Effective ways to tackle bullying
Pages 24-25

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Record low for new seminarians in Maynooth

Preparation year increasingly a feature

EXCLUSIVE
Colm Fitzpatrick

There will be just five first year seminarians at the national seminary when classes resume later this month, according to figures obtained by *The Irish Catholic*. It is thought to be the lowest number on record in Maynooth's 222 year history.

While returns from 25 of the country's 26 dioceses show that 14 men have begun studying for Irish dioceses this year, many of them will participate in a so-called pro-paedeutic or preparatory year in anticipation of starting in the seminary in 2018.

The fall-off in Maynooth numbers is also due – in part – to the presence of a number of mature students this year who will be formed at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome which specialises

in priestly training for older candidates.

In all, 16 of Ireland's 26 dioceses have no new students either entering seminary or participating in the preparatory year. A spokesperson for the Archdiocese of Dublin told *The Irish Catholic* that it expected to have new seminarians but was unable to confirm how many until next week.

Killaloe diocese will send two new seminarians to Maynooth, while Tuam, Kilmore and Cork & Ross diocese will send one student each.

A survey carried out by *The Irish Catholic* this week reveals an increasing trend to ask candidates for formation to undertake the pro-paedeutic year first. The year is usually completed in Spain, however, two students of the

» Continued on Page 2

Picnic at Punchestown a winner alright



The Wilson family Tadhg, Tracy, Conan, Oscar and Michael pictured at the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin's Family Picnic in Punchestown Racecourse on Sunday. See pages 3, 10 & 11. Photo: John McElroy

MARY KENNY

Catholic education is still the gold standard [PAGE 5](#)



VATICAN POLITICS

Vatican not partisan but definitely political [PAGE 21](#)



DAVID QUINN

Persecution of faith comes in many forms [PAGE 8](#)



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Inside this week

Monastic life

Learning to listen to God's call

Page 15



Donald Trump

Lack of interest in historical knowledge

Page 29



Sierra Leone

Fears of disease in wake of mudslide

Page 20



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



Vulnerable migrant women exploited in Irish brothels

Chai Brady

Almost 100 women who access an Irish charity's services are victims of sex trafficking, according to a new report.

Ruhama has helped vulnerable women involved in prostitution in Ireland for over 25 years, and its 2016 Annual Report shows they assisted 304 women of 37 nationalities. The charity was founded as a joint initiative of the Good Shepard Sisters and Our Lady of Charity Sisters.

The majority of women and girls that Ruhama help, who are victims of sex trafficking, come from Nigeria. Many women were also trafficked to Ireland from Brazil and Romania, and have suffered many forms of psychological, physical and sexual

violence.

"The bulk of prostitution in Ireland is run by organised crime gangs who profit from the sexual exploitation of women and girls, particularly in off-street locations," CEO of Ruhama, Sarah Benson said.

"These unscrupulous individuals make money from human misery – moving often vulnerable migrant women in a coordinated fashion from brothel to brothel across Ireland, with a view to satisfying local sex buyers' demands."

Websites

Ireland's sex trade is mostly online, with websites registered in other countries openly advertising women in locations all over Ireland.

The majority of women attending Ruhama's services that were sex trafficked were self-referrals. Eighteen

women were referred by the Women's Health Service, 17 by Garda and 11 by solicitors.

The others were referred by a variety of centres and services such as direct provisions centres, the Domestic Violence Support Service, Crisis Pregnancy Agency, the HSE's Anti Human Trafficking Team, friends and social workers.

Since March this year it is illegal to buy sex in Ireland, and the penalties associated with organising and profiting from prostitution have increased. The law also decriminalises those who are selling sex outdoors. Ms Benson said: "It was already permissible for individuals to sell sex indoors and so now there is a recognition enshrined in law that no one should be criminalised for their own exploitation in Ireland."

See pages 12-13.

Just five new students for Maynooth seminary

Continued on Page 4

Derry diocese will complete their preparatory year in the diocese.

In all, five students will participate in the propaedeutic year, one will attend the Pontifical Irish College in Rome, two will attend the Beda and one Down & Connor student will begin his formation at St Malachy's College in Belfast.

New seminarians in 2017

Achonry	0
Ardagh & Clonmacnoise	0
Armagh	0
Cashel and Emly	0
Clogher	0
Clonfert	0
Cloyne	0
Cork & Ross	1 (Maynooth)
Derry	2*
Down & Connor	2 (1* and 1 to St Malachy's)
Dromore	0
Dublin	Number unavailable
Elphin	0
Ferns	0
Galway	0
Kerry	1*
Kildare & Leighlin	1*
Killala	0
Killaloe	2 (Maynooth)
Kilmore	1 (Maynooth)
Limerick	0
Meath	1 (Pontifical Beda College, Rome)
Ossory	0
Raphoe	0
Tuam	3 (Maynooth, Pontifical Irish College and Pontifical Beda College, Rome)
Waterford & Lismore	0

*Propaedeutic year.

Dublin parish celebrates 200 years



Sr Louise O'Brien, Sr Esther & Sr Elma Hurley (Daughters of Charity, Henrietta Street) with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap. after a Mass to celebrate the bicentenary of St Michan's Church, Halston Street which was followed by a street party.

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Diocesan family picnic offers creative reach out

Mags Gargan

The latest effort to answer Pope Francis' call for the Church to "seek people out", has been hailed a success following a huge crowd at the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin's 'Picnic in Punchestown'.

In what is believed to be the first Irish diocesan picnic, over 4,000 people attended Punchestown racecourse on Sunday, including a few hundred from the refugee orientation centre and two direct provision centres in the diocese, for an afternoon of music, dance and children's entertainment.

Organised in preparation for next year's World Meeting of Families, Bishop Denis Nulty said Pope Francis was an inspiration, in terms of "trying your best to reach out in a different way".

Mass

"When we in Church say 'what are we going to do', we say 'we'll have a Mass' for something. I said let's do something slightly different.

"Let's have liturgy at the centre of it, but let's also have fun and other aspects that life has," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

The family picnic fol-

lows a number of other recent imaginative reach-out initiatives offered by Irish parishes, such as Confessions in shopping centres and a 'drive-thru' Ash Wednesday service.

"All of those things are

so important," said Bishop Nulty.

"We have got to reach out. We have got to be present in the field, in the parks, where people gather. The Church can be the one who embraces people in

that environment and that is so important."

Bishop Nulty said he was "thrilled" with the turn out on the day and the positive feedback he received from parishioners.

"It was a splendid ini-

tiative and I am so happy the diocese was very much behind it," he said, adding, "I could not have got a better group to make this such a success".

See pages 10-11.

Blessing of Galway Bay



Fr Conor McDonough OP gives the annual blessing of Galway Bay off the Claddagh near Mutton Island lighthouse. Fr McDonough first blessed the boats and all who sail in them at the pier near St Mary's Church before the fleet sailed out for the centuries-old tradition of the Blessing of the Bay. Photo: Joe O'Shaughnessy

UTV star hits back at Down Syndrome comments

Colm Fitzpatrick

UTV presenter Paul Clark has taken to social media to reject claims that children with Down Syndrome lead unhappy lives.

The remark comes after a Twitter user said: "It's unfathomable how anyone would want to put a soul through life suffering with Down's. Religious driven madness."

The television presenter, who has a deep Christian faith and a son with Down Syndrome, responded: "As the father of David, who has Down Syndrome, I want to assure you that he does not suffer! He's enriched all our lives in his 26 years!!"

Response

He further added in response to a comment that, "David has brought a real sense of purpose to the lives of Carol [his wife] and myself..."

Mr Clark has previously said that he was "gutted" when he and his wife learned of their unborn child's condition, but that they leaned heavily on their faith to get through it.

He also added that it wasn't more difficult to bring up David than his older brother Peter, and that as a parent, "you just get on with it".

"You don't think: 'Our son has Down Syndrome'. He's our son and that's it," he said.

JOE WALSH TOURS

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More floods like Donegal to come – eco priest

Mags Gargan

Ireland can expect to see more flooding on the devastating scale experienced in Donegal last week as a result of the effects of climate change, according to a well-known ecologist.

Fr Sean McDonagh SSC told *The Irish Catholic* that while the flooding in Donegal, which has displaced 47 families following severe rainfall, can't be said to be directly caused by climate change, "it is a dimension as the situation gets worse and we can expect more and more of this".

"One of the interesting reasons it was so devastating was that it was also a high tide," he said. "The climate probably has more to do with the level of the ocean than we thought 10 years ago. We thought the ocean might rise by one metre in this century, now a lot of people say it could be double or treble that. These are the kind of issues that created a perfect storm in the North of Ireland."

Generations

Fr McDonagh said in Ireland "we have done very little to address this in any comprehensive way over the last 25 years". He said we haven't taken climate change seriously and "future generations are going to be paying for what we do now".

Anti-Semitism in Ireland linked to political beliefs – claim

Chai Brady

Instances of anti-Semitism in Ireland are often linked to political beliefs relating to the Israel/Palestine conflict, according to the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland (JRCI).

This has led to young people hiding their Judaism, and causes Jewish students not to engage in discussions about the conflict according to Maurice Cohen, chairperson of the JRCI.

"I do not believe that the Israeli/Palestinian situation has given rise to any great amount of overt anti-Semitism. However the small instances

do increase during times of conflict," said Mr Cohen. "There are times when some Irish Jewish people would be conscious of not being overt about their Judaism, for example wearing the Kippah (skullcap) in public.

Prominent

"This is more prominent in younger people who do not want to attract the generally obsessive nature of anti-Israel demonisation which goes on in Ireland."

This comes as a survey conducted by YouGov for the British group Campaign Against anti-Semitism (CAP)

last week found that over 80% of Jewish adults in Britain agreed with the statement: "Media bias against Israel fuels persecution of Jews in Britain."

Mr Cohen says that he has heard politicians in Ireland use terms he would deem anti-Semitic on public radio, with one councillor saying that Israel was "crucifying" Palestine, a term he said was "made out of total ignorance and demonstrates an underlying anti-Semitism".

The Palestinian flag was raised over Dublin City Hall for the month of May, following a motion stating it was "a gesture of our solidarity with the

people of Palestine living under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, with the Palestinian citizens of Israel denied basic democratic rights and with the over seven million displaced Palestinians denied the right of return to their homeland".

Motion

Dublin City Councillor John Lyons, who tabled the motion, said that any criticisms of the State of Israel were "directed solely at the political policies and decisions" made by the government.

i See page 9.

Trócaire's human rights appeal to Taoiseach

Trócaire has called upon Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to place human rights and solidarity at the centre of his foreign policy, following announcements that he will be doubling Ireland's diplomatic presence by 2025.

Mr Varadkar has said that he wants to outline "Ireland's place in the world in the years ahead".

"As Ireland seeks election to the UN Security Council, a reputation for principled human rights can have trade benefits as an added value for those who want to do business with us. An increase of diplomatic staff, embassies and agencies should enhance this proud tradition not marginalise it," said Julian Waagensen, Trócaire's Human Rights Policy Advisor.

Praying to Our Lady of Fatima



Local children dressed as the three children of Fatima, Jacinta (Grace), Lucia (Sarah) and Francisco (Gerard) pray at the International Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima during its visit to St Nicholas chapel, Ardglass on a tour of Ireland facilitated by Fr Aoilbe O'Reilly, order of the Holy Cross, in association with the World Apostolate of Fatima. Photo: Bill Smyth

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African community celebrates decade of faith

Colm Fitzpatrick

The African Chaplaincy in Dublin, which provides support for African communities in Ireland, will be celebrating their 10-year anniversary this weekend.

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Diarmuid Martin will be the chief celebrant at a Mass where he will be joined by over five hundred members of the African congregation and several other members of the Irish community with Mass Centres in Balbriggan, Blanchardstown, Clondalkin, Lucan, Phibsboro, Swords and Tallaght.

Speaking about the event, Chaplain Fr Cornelius

Nwaogwugwu CM said, "We have around 1,000 members in the chaplaincy...we're all very excited and we're all looking forward to it. It's probably one of the biggest events we've held in recent times."

The celebrations which take place over two days will include a Mass and Thanksgiving at St Peter's Church, Phibsborough, and a choral night of praise and worship with African themes at the Westmanstown Conference Centre.

The chaplaincy will also celebrate their Annual Harvest Thanksgiving on September 17 in Swords.

Catholic education is still the gold standard

Considering how important a subject education is, it's interesting to observe that relatively little national attention was paid to *The Sunday Times* list of top 100 Irish schools, just published.

Could this be because it is glaringly evident that Catholic schools continually emerge as the gold standard in educational attainment? Take the Salerno Jesus and Mary Secondary School in Salthill, Galway – top of the list, with 87.1% of its pupils going on to third level education (and it's not a fee-paying school either).

The Salerno school, we are told in the report, "is typical of Irish schools in that it has a strong religious ethos". It was founded in 1818 by St Claudine Thevenet, who, like St Angela de Merici before her, believed that education meant drawing out the best in the child.

Ethos

Another school with "a strong religious ethos" is the highly successful (and non-fee-paying) Presentation Secondary School in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork.

Just glance at the names adorning the first 50 schools, many of them so evocative of a long tradition of Catholic education: Laurel Hill in Limerick, Scoil Mhuire, the CBS in Cork, many Loreto schools



Mary Kenny



for girls, Gonzaga, Mount Anville, Holy Ghost Blackrock, the Holy Child, the Jesuit schools in Galway and Limerick, the Teresian School, Colaiste

Iosagain, Castleknock, Glenstal, Clongowes Wood, Belvedere, Cistercian College Roscrea, the CUS, Our Lady's Bower, St Michael's, Newbridge, and

of course the Gaelscoileanna which have blazed such a brilliant trail.

Alexandra College – founded under the patronage of Queen Alexandra, wife to Edward VII to advance the education of girls as an Anglican institution – though nowadays less specifically religious – continues to show a fine academic performance. But Catholic names and ethos still overwhelmingly dominate.

Nothing is perfect, and it's evident that there are inequalities of class and location pertaining to school admissions, and achievements. But it's worth celebrating the fact that this academic list is a tribute to the continuing high standards of Catholic education – surely the best defence against the opponents who seek to dismember it.

The tooth, the whole tooth and nothing but the tooth

Back in the day, it used to be the fashion to have all your teeth extracted for your 25th birthday – the idea being that you would be free from toothache and other dental misery for the rest of your life. This seems a very mistaken idea to us, now that dentistry

has progressed so remarkably. Yet, with the passing of the years, one tends to spend more time – and money! – in the dentist's chair, as they attend to such elaborations as canal root work, wobbly dental bridges, canine cracks, molar 'crumbling', gum

shrinkage, and even after a tooth has had lavish attention paid to it, is declared doomed and sentenced to extraction. Modern dentistry is terrifically impressive, but it still involves ordeals, and as I repose in that dental chair waiting for some new

ghastly application, I swing between telling myself to "offer it up", and "*il faut souffrir pour etre belle*", as French women say when subjected to painful cosmetic measures. Occasionally, I do see the point of having the whole set yanked out at the age of 25.



Nietzsche and Christian values

My son Patrick West has written a short book about Nietzsche which I think is most enlightening (not just the Mammy talking!). He's called it *Get Over Yourself – Nietzsche for Our Times*, because he says that Nietzsche would greatly dislike the narcissism and the "identity politics" – such as transgenderism – that's such a feature of social media today.

I vehemently disagree with Nietzsche's take on Christianity. I believe he misunderstood Christianity, and conflated it with the repressive and conformist Prussian morality that he saw in 19th Century German culture.

And yet, there's so much in Nietzsche's thinking that echoes Christian values – the way in which he underlines that life is not about an entitlement to "happiness": it's about struggling with ourselves and even embracing adversity. "To live is to suffer."

Experts

One of the renowned experts on Nietzsche, as well as on wider philosophy, was the Jesuit, Fr Frederick Coppleston, whose work Patrick also cites.

Nietzsche is in many ways a contemporary figure, and it's fascinating to consider what he might make of our world today.

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STATE PAPERS REVEALED

British were lobbied over Cardinal Ó Fiaich successor

Mags Gargan

The British government lobbied extensively while the Vatican was trying to find a successor to Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, newly declassified state papers reveal. The authorities were keen that a new Primate would be less critical of British policy in the North.

Files released by the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) reveal that at least three arms of the British government discussed how to lobby the Vatican following the cardinal's death in 1990.

The cardinal had served as Primate of All-Ireland since 1977 and was considered a thorn in the side of the British authorities whom he regularly criticised publicly for human rights abuses in the North.

Dr Ó Fiaich notably crossed swords with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

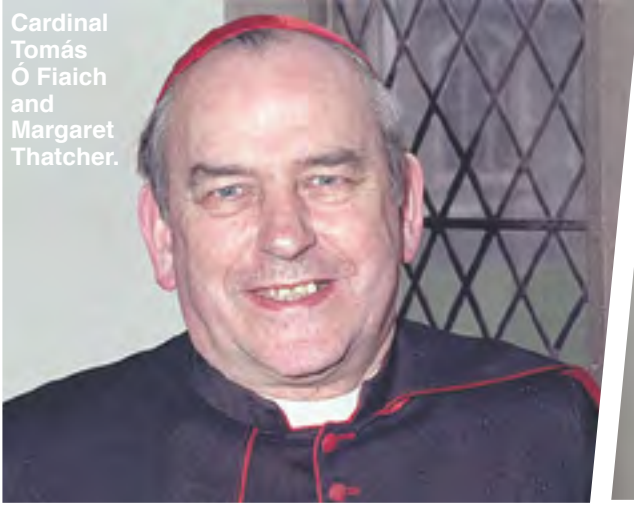
Modalities

A confidential Northern Ireland Office memo written just weeks after the cardinal's unexpected death from the Security and International Liaison (SIL) Division said that "following discussion at the Secretary of State's morning meeting on 9th May...SIL was asked to provide co-ordinated advice on the modalities of transmitting an appropriate message to the Vatican to register our interest in an element of consultation over the appointment of a successor to Cardinal Ó Fiaich".

The cardinal's death had only been announced the previous evening.

The memo added that "confidentially, our ambassador to the Holy See was already scheduled to meet Archbishop Emanuele Ger-

Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich and Margaret Thatcher.



ada [then papal nuncio to Ireland] in Rome on May 21.

"During their discussion it seems the archbishop, without any prompting from the ambassador, launched straight into the question of the search for a new cardinal," the memo said.

To a question from the ambassador, Archbishop Gerada indicated that he felt that an approach to the Vatican Secretariat of State might not be wise at this juncture. He told the diplomat that the appoint-

ment of a new bishop was the sole prerogative of the Holy See and warned that Vatican officials would not take kindly to lobbying.

"The ambassador, while agreeing that the matter is rather delicate, in fact sees no difficulty in raising the issue in Rome; for instance when he meets Archbishop [Angelo] Sodano on other business. As he pointed out, the Vatican is well used to frank speaking in private."

In further evidence of how various arms of the British Government – from

Belfast to Whitehall to the Embassy in Rome – were involved in the lobbying, the memo went on to set out how the Foreign Office was "still considering whether the question of Cardinal Ó Fiaich's successor should be raised with Archbishop Luigi Barbarito [then papal representative in London].

Cardinal Ó Fiaich had staunchly opposed Archbishop Barbarito visiting the North fearing this would give the impression that Rome's man in London has a role in the region.

The memo adds: "Gerada had told our ambassador to the Holy See that now that Cardinal Ó Fiaich has died, the main obstacle to a visit by Archbishop Barbarito to Northern Ireland has disappeared".

“He felt that an approach to the Vatican Secretariat of State might not be wise”

The memo reveals that Archbishop Gerada assured British authorities that the three names he would present to the Pope for consideration as Archbishop of Armagh "would all be people whom he knew were well regarded by us".

Cahal Daly – then Bishop of Down and Connor and a fierce critic of republican violence – was appointed to Armagh six months later. Although the most senior bishop in the North at the time, his appointment to the primacy was seen as somewhat of a surprise given that at 73 he was just two years away from the Vatican-mandated retirement age for bishops. Dr Daly eventually went on to lead the Church in Ireland until his 79th birthday in 1996.

Churches offered cash to work together

Staff Reporter

Churches in the North were privately offered £100,000 a year by a British government minister if they would work more closely together in the interests of community relations, a declassified file has revealed.

A memo from Tony McCusker in the Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU) in January 1991 set out details of a meeting at which the issue was raised. He wrote: "At the last meeting with the Church leaders in May, Dr [Brian] Mawhinney [the minister] offered the Churches a substantial financial package (around £100,000 per annum) to promote inter-Church contact which did not impinge on theology or conscience.

"CCRU was to take discussions forward with the individual Church leaders to agree a programme, but with the death of the cardinal and the change in leadership in the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, nothing happened. Now that Archbishop Daly has taken up office an initiative could again be considered."

Warning

But Mr McCusker went on to warn: "Whatever structure emerges, it is important to realise that it is not simply a question of dangling money in front of the Churches in the expectation that they will co-operate just to get it. If that motivation had existed, there have been plenty of opportunities for them to get funds from CCRU or the Community Relations Council."

He added: "Whatever suspicions Churches may harbour about each other, they are probably slight compared to the suspicions they have about government's agenda in seeking to get them to co-operate."

Cardinal Daly saw defeat of Gerry Adams as 'desirable'

Cardinal Cahal Daly privately told the British government that it would be "highly desirable" if the SDLP defeated Gerry Adams in West Belfast, a declassified government file has revealed.

The then Archbishop Cahal Daly made the comment during a meeting with the British Secretary of State in November, 1990 – just a fortnight after he had been elevated to be Primate of All-Ireland.

A confidential note of the meeting which has been released at the Public Record Office in Belfast recorded: "He referred to the possibility of the SDLP winning the West Belfast seat...he thought this highly desirable but was not confident that they would do it...he was not convinced that the [SDLP] party

was sufficiently close to the community and he was not confident that the party machine in the area was sufficiently effective and hard working."

Little impact

The declassified files also contain a note of a June 6, 1990 dinner between Mr Alston of the NIO and three Catholic priests. One of the priests was the late Fr Matt Wallace but the names of the others have been redacted, presumably because they are still alive.

The civil servant was told by the priests: "the SDLP made little impact in West Belfast because of lack of organisation and as a reflection of the fact that it was a party of individuals."

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SATURDAY 30TH

September 2017

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9.30AM

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The Irish Catholic



Persecution of the Faith comes in many forms

Would you risk persecution to stand by what you believe, asks **David Quinn**

We often like to flatter ourselves that if we lived under conditions of persecution for our faith we would have the resilience and courage to risk persecution in order to stand by what we believe. I wonder if this is true though?

In much of the world, Christians are savagely persecuted for their faith, and often killed. In



Assyrian Christians, who fled Syria and Iraq, carry placards and wave Assyrian flags during a gathering in front of UN headquarters in Beirut. Photo: CNS

countries like North Korea all expressions of religious belief are totally forbidden under pain of death or imprisonment.

In countries like China,

people can practise their religion but under certain conditions. The Faith is not allowed to grow freely. There are restrictions on the building of churches, for example, and Christian leaders are often harassed or imprisoned. The State wants to approve of what leaders are appointed, which is a huge point of tension with the Vatican. No criticism of the state is permitted.

In many parts of the Muslim world, Christians find themselves under attack from local mobs, from terrorist groups, and even from the government. Christianity is disappearing from its place of origin. It is a disaster and it is happening right under our noses and we don't seem to care.

“Many Catholics and other Christians remain unaware of the horrors and extent of persecution that our sisters and brothers suffer”

In a homily delivered in the Abbey Church at Lamspringe, Germany at the weekend, Archbishop Eamon Martin used the occasion to draw attention to the persecution of Christians around the world. He did so because the Benedictine monks of Lamspringe were keepers of the relics of St Oliver Plunkett for many decades. Plunkett, of course, was famously martyred for his faith in 1681 by being hanged, drawn and quartered, a form of death matched only by burning for its horror.

“How can we mark

this day, honouring and commemorating St Oliver Plunkett, without opening our eyes and ears to the brutality of what some of our brothers and sisters in the Christian family are experiencing?”, Archbishop Martin asked.

“Sadly, many Catholics and other Christians in Ireland, Germany and other parts of the Western world, remain unaware of the horrors and extent of persecution that our sisters and brothers in Christ have to suffer,” he added.

Why are we not more aware? Well, when is the last time you heard the topic being addressed in your local parish? How often is it mentioned in the media? How often do politicians address it?

The lack of sympathy that Western Christians have for their persecuted fellow believers in other parts of the world is very mysterious. When Christians behind the Iron Curtain were being persecuted we did have a sense of solidarity, in the early days of East European communism at any rate. Maybe the lack of solidarity stems in part from the fact that we hold on to our own faith less strongly than we once did.

Homily

Elsewhere in his homily, Archbishop Martin spoke about the need for us Christians in the West to stand up for what we believe, even if it might come at a cost.

He said: “Standing up for your faith, being a witness for what you believe in, is not the stuff of ancient history or another world. It is a living reality for Christians across the world today. Even

in Ireland and Germany, Catholics and Christians are entering a time when we will need the gift of courage to stay faithful to the teachings of the Gospel.”

He spoke of a “sometimes aggressively secular world which would seek to silence the public voice of believers”.

He listed five areas where we need to be prepared to raise our voices.

“Two midwives in Sweden are banned from working in their profession because they do not believe in abortion”

These are: “The sacredness and dignity of all human life; the uniqueness of love and marriage between a man and a woman that is open to the gift of children as fruit of that love; the need for a fair distribution of the world's goods; welcoming the stranger and those who are persecuted; and, the importance of respecting the environment and caring for the Earth.”

It is the first two of these that require the most courage. The other three, while also very important, meet less resistance because in these areas the Church has many secular allies. But we have few secular allies when we are defending the right to life or the true nature of marriage and many ferocious opponents who denounce us as ‘bigots’ for what we believe.

Christians in the West are obviously not persecuted for their beliefs in the same way that Christians in certain other parts of the world are.

We do not face the risk of death, for example.

But if you speak out too loudly in defence of the right to life or the true nature of marriage, you can find yourself barred from certain jobs, you can face fines, you can face ‘hate crime’ charges.

Thus, two midwives in Sweden are banned from working in their profession because they do not believe in abortion. Bishops in various parts of the Western world (in Spain and Australia, for example) have been investigated for ‘hate crimes’ for defending the traditional view of marriage.

This is all extremely serious and does amount to a form of persecution, unless we are unwilling to consider anything short of death as persecution.

You will also face social ostracism for publicly defending certain Christian beliefs and the likelihood that in certain professions (academia, for example), your career will not progress, if it gets started at all.

I asked at the start of the article if we are really willing to stand up for the most controversial Christian beliefs, assuming that is, we believe in them ourselves. There is little evidence that we are. Most Christians fell silent during the marriage referendum of two years ago, and we will soon see how many people in sensitive positions will stand up for the right to life.

It is hard to stand up for what you believe in the face of ferocious opposition and sometimes the force of the law. But it is also a time when the quality of your faith is tested. This is now the situation we face, like it or not. How many of us will pass the test?

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Jewish people 'hide religion in Ireland'

Times of conflict in Israel increase anti-Semitism here, writes **Chai Brady**

Young Jewish people don't want to draw attention to their creed due to anti-Israel sentiment in Ireland, according to a Jewish representative body.

Irish Jewish people are conscious of being overt about their Judaism as they "do not want to attract the generally obsessive nature of anti-Israel demonisation which goes on in Ireland", according to the Chair of the Jewish Representative Council in Ireland (JRCI), Maurice Cohen. Many young people don't wear their *kippah* (a brimless skullcap) in public as a result, he told *The Irish Catholic*.

This comes as the Campaign Against Anti-Semitism (CAA) in Britain published the results of a survey this month that found 39% of British Jews conceal their Judaism in public, with the report stating that it "is a strong sign that British Jews expect to be discriminated against, or even harassed or abused".

It was also discovered that 36% of British people believe at least one anti-Semitic stereotype.

The survey, conducted by YouGov, was based on the answers of more than 10,500 British adults and Jewish people in Britain over the course of three years.

Overall the survey found there was progress in combatting anti-Semitism in Britain, but Chairman Gideon Falter wrote that "despite that inspiring progress, British Jews are growing more fearful because our authorities fail to enforce the law and our politics is punctuated by the repeated exposure of anti-Semites".

Racism

When quizzed, one-third of the Jewish community in Britain said they had thought about moving country due to racism, with the Chairman adding: "Just as British people increasingly reject anti-Semitism, British Jews are feeling unprotected and hounded out due to the failure of our institutions to



Photo: European Jewish Congress

protect the many from the few racists among us."

The findings also showed a large proportion of British Jews felt the criminal justice system did not do enough to combat anti-Semitic crimes.

Mr Cohen said that he doesn't know any Irish Jewish person that has had any thoughts of leaving Ireland due to anti-Semitism, adding there isn't a similar survey conducted in Ireland that can be used in comparison. This makes it unclear how many Irish people might believe in one or several anti-Semitic stereotypes, some may not even know that they do.

"In many instances, but certainly not all, I believe that people do not realise that beliefs they hold can be offensive to the target group..." Mr Cohen said, "as they may not know the origin of many of these stereotypes."

"These origins become distorted and twisted over time and in general were incorrect to begin with and were put about for malicious reasons."

"We find that there is much untruth being disseminated in public in Ireland about the situation"

Reflecting on the British survey he told the paper: "I believe that stereotypes of everything including people and ideas are the way our human brains cope with the vast amounts of information that we have to collate and act upon on a minute by minute basis."

He said that although many stereotypes are

incorrect, changing peoples' ideas is difficult, and that many stereotypes are taught at an early age by people we trust and respect.

Palestine/Israel

The Palestinian flag was flown over Dublin City Hall for the month of May due to a motion passed by two thirds of Dublin City Council which stated that the flag would be lifted "... as a gesture of our solidarity with the people of Palestine living under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, with the Palestinian citizens of Israel denied basic democratic rights..."

The decision was sharply criticised by former Justice Minister Alan Shatter in *The Irish Times* who said the decision was a "superficial and offensive approach taken by the Council at its meeting to the complexities of the long-enduring and tragic conflict between Israelis and Palestinians".

Reaction

The Department of Foreign Affairs also advised the council to fly the flag for one day rather than for the month to minimise any negative reaction from Israel and the US. Although Mr Cohen says he doesn't believe the situation between Israeli and Palestine has increased anti-Semitic feeling in Ireland, however "small instances do increase during times of conflict".

"Again we find that there is much untruth being disseminated in public in Ireland about the situation and particularly about the causes of the conflict and the continuation of the unhappy circumstances," he said.

He gave an example of a councillor saying that the Israelis were "crucifying

to express pro-Israeli or impartial views. However he said it does not mean that valid criticism of Israeli government policies by anyone is anti-Semitic.

One of the statements in the CAA's study that British Jews were asked to agree or disagree with was: "I have witnessed anti-Semitism that was disguised as a political comment about Israel or Zionism." Almost 80% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 81% agreed that: "Media bias against Israel fuels persecution of Jews in Britain."

"Any far right neo-Nazi views are abhorrent for us"

There was also a worry that British politics was playing a part in encouraging anti-Semitism, with four in five Jewish people believing

the Labour party has anti-Semites in its ranks.

Mr Cohen voiced concern about protests in Charlottesville in the US state of Virginia, in which one person was killed and several were badly injured.

White nationalists, including the KKK and neo-Nazis, demonstrated against the local council's proposal to take down a statue of a Confederate General – Robert E. Lee – who fought to preserve slavery.

Large amounts of counter-protestors arrived and there were clashes between the opposing sides. A 32-year-old woman called Heather Heyer was killed when a man believed to have white nationalist sympathies drove into the crowd during the protests.

The Chairman of the JRCI said that the Jewish people's views on Charlottesville are the same as most others saying: "Any far right neo-Nazi views are abhorrent for us. However when it comes to current threat level worldwide we find that the Left "neo-fascism" (those that declare freedom of speech and action for everyone as long as you agree with them) are far more dangerous," he added.

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K&L family picnic hailed huge success



Bishop Denis Nulty addresses the crowd.



Mags Gargan

Over 4,000 people from the 56 parishes of Kildare & Leighlin diocese descended on Punchestown racecourse on Sunday for a Family Picnic Day.

Organised as part of the diocesan preparations for the World Meeting of Families (WMOF), the 'Picnic in Punchestown' included music, dancing, children's games, competitions, a petting farm and a 4km fun run around the racetrack led by Bishop Denis Nulty.

Bishop Denis told The Irish Catholic he was "thrilled", saying "to see people smiling was the highlight for me".

"It ticked all the boxes in terms of bringing families together in an inclusive way, from all over the diocese, and making sure everyone felt part of the occasion," he said.

Direct provision

About 100 people from the refugee reception and orientation centre in Monasterevin attended, 30 from the direct provision centre in Newbridge and another two busloads came from the direct provision centre in Portlaoise.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, president of WMOF, attended the picnic, as well as the new papal nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo.

A large lorry at the racecourse enclosure acted as the stage for the afternoon event with acts such as Irish



Josh Byrne, Sophie Grogan, Louise Fox and Bernadette Grogan at the picnic.

soprano Celine Byrne, country singer Derek Ryan, the diocesan choir and Fr Liam Lawton performing throughout the

afternoon.

The Defence Forces, WMOF and Trócaire had displays around the grounds and

members of the Kildare & Leighlin youth ministry kept children entertained with games and face painting.



Children with some of the animals from the petting farm.



Fr Liam Lawton and soprano Celine Byrne who sang at the picnic on Sunday.





Ellie Crean, Laura Kane, Sarah Kane, Molly Crean, Orla Kane and Caoimhe Kane. Photos: John McElroy



Children playing on the display from the Defence Forces.



Ella and Emily Stephens having fun with The Tall Gent, Sally Stretch and High Harry.



Nuala O'Connell, Siofra Hopkins, Roisin O'Connell, Deirdre O'Connell Hopkins, Maltiu Hopkins and Jack O'Connell.



Bishop Denis Nulty and Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo with the African Catholic Family in Kildare and Leighlin.



Emma Howlett (2) from Kildare enjoying her drink among In Caelo from Newbridge as they perform at the Picnic in Punchestown.



THE RECORD



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Women who have been trafficked and subsequently forced into prostitution in Ireland sometimes don't know what country they're in.

Ruhama, an Irish charity that provides services for women involved in prostitution, often tackle challenging cases in which extremely vulnerable people are exploited by profit-fuelled opportunists, and transported like cargo both internationally and within countries.

"The truth is generally stranger than fiction when it comes to the ways in which unscrupulous people will exploit others, and the sex trade is no exception to that," CEO Sarah Benson told *The Irish Catholic*.

"We've had situations on more than one occasion where women don't even realise what country they're in; one woman thought she was in Canada – the ship she was on and then the subsequent journey – she had no idea where she was going.

"We had another woman who thought she was in the United Kingdom, more than once that's happened."

Sometimes people willingly travel with their trafficker, lured by the promise of a job in the hospitality industry or as a childminder, but when they arrive those (often fake) opportunities vanish. Other times they are forced into domestic servitude and additionally sexually exploited.

Suddenly those who thought they were being smuggled into a country to work are forced into the sex trade and told they have to pay off "obscene and spurious amounts of money" for the trafficker's services, according to Ms Benson. This can be as high as €50,000.

"It just tells you the degree to which the victims are kept in the dark and deceived, and it makes for difficult

investigations. Many victims of trafficking make poor witnesses in court, because often they are unsure of the facts surrounding what happened to them."

Report

Ruhama released their 2016 Annual Report this week which revealed the charity worked with 304 women of 37 different nationalities, and 92 of them were victims of sex trafficking.

Just under 100 women accessed the charity's services for the first time last year, 73 of them received general casework support and 26 received casework support as victims of trafficking.

Many of the women disclosed that they have experienced deeply harrowing experiences such as rape, assault and other forms of psychological, physical and sexual abuse.

In Ireland the sex trade is mainly indoors, with a much smaller proportion of people involved in prostitution operating on the street. The industry has moved indoors to anonymous apartments, suburban houses and even massage parlours.

"Indoors it's easy to control somebody, it's easier to keep

them hidden, it's easy to keep them moving, so that is where you would find victims of sex trafficking," said Ms Benson.

Even those who haven't been trafficked are generally under the control of criminal gangs or other third parties.

Business is conducted online, with Ireland's largest website, escort-Ireland.com, openly advertising women for sex, with prices quoted as low as €50 for half an hour.

“The sex trade is organised now not by fixed premises but by internet ads, mobile phone numbers...”

The websites are registered abroad and are operated through servers around the world, which makes it difficult for Gardaí to tackle the online advertising of Ireland's sex industry.

"The point is that the sex trade is organised now not by fixed premises but by internet ads, mobile phone numbers and if a premises is shut down the mobile phone number isn't, and neither is the ad, so a buyer will just be

directed to another premises very very quickly. It's quite hard to disrupt as the whole thing is extremely mobile," Ms Benson said.

RTÉ *Investigates* released two documentaries about Ireland's prostitution industry called 'Profiting from Prostitution' in 2012 and more recently 'Sex for Sale', in which investigators tracked the movements of women being moved all over Ireland to meet with the demand of sex buyers, who look for a variety of ethnicities.

In 'Sex for Sale', 100 women's movements were tracked by following their ads online for a number of years. Although the number of women advertised in each location across Ireland remained the same, the women were constantly moved.

Ruhama, who have been supporting women involved in prostitution for 27 years, have found there is always a large proportion of women who have clearly been trafficked for the sex trade in Ireland, according to Ms Benson. On average about 300 women access the charity's services each year. Last year, according to the charity's 2016 Annual

Report, 222 women accessed a dedicated casework service, generally just about half of these women show clear signs of having been victims of sex-trafficking.

"Often somebody revealing that they're trafficked is not a straightforward process. It sometimes is, but other times they would have been lied to and sometimes they don't even know what the word trafficking means," Ms Benson said.

For them "they've gone through a series of events and circumstances often which they blame themselves for, which has been reinforced by the messages they've been given by the people who've been using them".

“All 43 women from Nigeria have been identified as victims of trafficking, as well as eight women from Brazil”

Only after building a relationship of trust, which takes time, can charity workers hear the full story.

Of the women who access casework services, 56 were Irish. The second most prevalent nationality was Nigerian, with 47 women coming from the West African country. Women from Brazil (28) and Romania (20) make up the majority of the rest of women involved in prostitution who seek help from Ruhama. However, there are also people from all over Africa and Europe, as well as Venezuela, Kurdistan, Hungary, China and Russia, to name but a few.

All 43 women from Nigeria have been identified as victims of trafficking, as well as eight women from Brazil and five from Romania and Zimbabwe. More have been identified from countries all over the world.

Rarely a choice

The majority of women involved in prostitution around the world come from poor socio-economic backgrounds and have often been denied access to education, come from abusive family backgrounds, or are an ethnic minority in their country of origin.

Ruhama work with 22 frontline organisations around the world in Malawi,

South Africa, Denmark, Germany, several in the US, India and more, and the overwhelming consensus is that prostitution is inextricably linked to people who have been denied their basic rights.

Many women were in State care, are runaways, and will be the poorest and least educated, making them easier prey for sex-traffickers and other third parties who would take advantage of them.

Ms Benson said that although some women may have chosen to enter prostitution, very often it is because they have been denied the option to make other choices.

Her charity operates what she calls an 'empowerment model' which aims to arm women with the skills and means to make choices.

"We would have a comprehensive education and development programme that focuses on both trauma healing and personal developments to develop confidence and support women to get over the traumatic experiences they've had, and then practical supports like English classes, career guidance assistance, and small education grants that can be really meaningful," she said.

Vulnerable women easy prey for sex-traffickers

Women in prostitution generally come from harsh, exploitative backgrounds, writes Chai Brady





Caseworkers also help if there is a problem with immigration status and accommodation – which has become increasingly difficult to find due to Ireland's housing crisis. However, 53 women received dedicated housing and welfare assistance according to Ruhama's 2016 Annual Report. In addition, 79 women received education and development support, which includes career guidance counselling, maths, English, IT skills, study skills, education grants and interview skills.

They also assist in connecting them with other support services.

Contact

The charity workers made face-to-face contact with 1,719 women, and conducted 11,307 phone calls to, and on behalf of, women in their services.

There is also a mobile outreach programme, which is a van that visits women working in Dublin's 'red light' areas. The van was in operation for 130 nights last year, and, according to the charity, "the van is a safe space where women can access very practical supports such

as hot drinks, snacks, hats and gloves and health and safety supplies, alongside much-needed emotional support and onward referrals to our own and other specialist services".

Many of the women they work with face a range of vulnerabilities, including poor physical and mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, poverty, debt and homelessness.

Ms Benson said: "So our model is very much an empowerment model that has taken very clear cognisance of the push and pull factors which draw women into prostitution. The experience of being in prostitution only compounds the barriers to exiting again, so those issues don't go away. They're further compounded by the experience."

Leaving the sex trade is not a requirement of Ruhama, but it is encouraged. This is often not a linear process as the same reasons that pushed women into prostitution draw them back in again.

A counselling service is also provided, with the report stating that women 'speak of living in constant states of tension and fear or hopelessness'.

“The charity workers made face-to-face contact with 1,719 women, and conducted 11,307 phone calls”

Many display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the Ruhama team frequently respond to women's suicidal thoughts.

Within the report was the experience of Nigerian woman Omorose* who was brought to Ireland by a woman she knew as 'Auntie' with whom she worked with in a salon. She was given the promise of a new job and education, and left Nigeria despite her grandmother warning against it.

When she arrived in Dublin she was told there was a problem with the family she worked for, and would have to work in Auntie's business because she owed her a lot of money for bringing her to Europe.

She wrote: "Every day men would come to my room, sometimes five men, sometimes ten. The only escape I found was in my mind. My eyes would go to the ceiling where I stared at a damp stain. I could leave my own body and go right up to that ceiling."

Finally she was able to escape while being moved

to a new location, after contacting Garda she was eventually brought to Ruhama, who have since helped her on the recovery process.

Criminalised

Since the end of March this year it is now illegal for anyone to buy sex in Ireland, although it is not illegal to be involved in prostitution.

Previously the law just targeted anyone soliciting sex publicly, the operation of brothels, and anyone involved in 'pimping'.

The new provision criminalising sex buyers in the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 was met with criticism from groups such as the Sex Workers Alliance (SWA), who say the legislation will further push the sex trade underground making it more dangerous for people involved in prostitution – who they say will be forced to take greater risks to meet and attract sex buyers.

Ruhama, who campaigned for the legislation to be passed, believe it will protect women working in the sex trade and shows that the State is taking steps towards recognising women are the victims of prostitution.

It is still too early to judge the effect of the law on the lives of women in prostitution and the industry as a whole, according to Ms Benson, who says similar models such as in Sweden – often called the Nordic method – have led to a decrease in serious violence against women in prostitution.

"In the Netherlands, which has the exact same overall murder rate as Sweden, 28 prostituted women have been murdered since 2000, and none in Sweden over the same period of time," she said.

“When you legalise the sex trade it exponentially increases in size”

"More needs to be done to ensure that these laws are properly enforced, in order to achieve their objective to minimise the inherent harm of a wholly exploitative trade."

Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have long campaigned for the full legalisation and regulation of prostitution, while the World Health Organisation has advised in favour of this model.

Amnesty International has said legalising the trade is the best way to defend people in



Sarah Benson, CEO of Ruhama.

prostitution against human rights abuses, and criticised Norway's 2008 decision to bring in laws criminalising sex buyers in an article published on their website in 2016.

It read: "Amnesty International heard how some sex workers who have reported violence to the police in Norway have been evicted from their homes or deported as a result of engaging with the police."

"Under Norway's laws, sex workers are at risk of forced evictions as their landlords can be prosecuted for renting property to them if they sell sex there."

“Prostitution is the ‘absolute denial of a woman’s bodily autonomy’”

The charity was told that Norwegian police launch investigations against landlords who had women involved in prostitution working in their rented accommodation, and due to fears of eviction the women don't report crimes.

A major argument in favour of legalising prostitution is the belief it reduces HIV rates. However Ms Benson argues that this was not the case.

"What's not taken into account is the scale effect. When you legalise the sex trade it exponentially increases in size," she said.

With legalisation she said there is increased competition, a lowering of prices, and a higher degree of control from third parties who would be regarded as legitimate businesses.

The heightened competition can lead to women in prostitution taking more risks, such as having unprotected sex and engaging in sexual acts they are uncomfortable with.

"Very different from harm reduction programmes that focus on the likes of needle

prevention, there's no circumstance anywhere where somebody will actually pay more to use a dirty needle.

"The fact is buyers will pay more not to have to use a condom, and so that creates a pressure and a tension for the person in prostitution. Either they are directly offered more money not to use a condom, or if the pimps know that it's a service that is desirable whether they publicly say it or not (we would

hear from women that they do) either they turn a blind eye or will encourage women not to use condoms in order to keep clients happy."

The legalisation of the sex trade gives courage to the buyers and normalises their behaviour according to Ms Benson, and with that a degree of dehumanisation occurs. This leads to people in the sex trade being seen as commodities.

In Germany, where it has been legalised, certain brothels advertise a flat rate in which men are told: "Sex with all women as long as you want, as often as you want and the way you want", before going into more detail about the services provided. According to German newspaper *Spiegel*, one of the largest newspapers in Europe, on

the brothel's opening night the police noted 1,700 men attended, and at one point 700 men stood in a line outside it. Ms Benson described the language used in such sales pitches as a device "primarily to utterly dehumanise the women".

Emotional impact

Ms Benson stressed the impact working in the sex trade can have on people, especially when they're young.

"A concern is that that experience somehow shapes their own sexuality, which is a very disempowering experience," she said, adding that there are potential impacts for that person with regard to having "fully autonomous intimate relationships" or just for them to recognise their own sense of value.

When a person's boundaries are so heavily pushed, regardless of whether they're involved in prostitution, it impacts on personal, particularly intimate, future relationships.

Ms Benson added that prostitution is the "absolute denial of a woman's bodily autonomy", because the buyer purchases the right to do what he wants to their body. "The imbalance of power becomes all the more pronounced, because what in effect they're doing is buying consent."

i Name changed to protect identity.

If you have been affected by any of the issues highlighted in this article, and would like support, please contact Ruhama on 01-8360292, or FreeText the word REACH to 50100. Find out more at www.Ruhama.ie

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In service of community and parish

There are three words that recur when you talk to Seamus McDonald, KSG, retired teacher, first-ever Irish secretary general of *Unum Omnes*, the International Council of Catholic Men, stalwart of the Knights of Saint Columbanus for more than 30 years and former pioneering GAA official in Co. Tyrone. They are 'service', 'community' and 'parish'.

They tell you a lot about his values and how they underpin his faith and his commitment to a religion that lives and thrives on praising and relating to God by doing good on the ground in the parish community.

Mr McDonald, aged 66, born and raised in Cappagh Parish, aka St Mary's Killyclogher outside Omagh where he still lives, is quietly spoken and discreet, modest about his achievements, and stresses that he is part of a team.

He says he couldn't have managed without the tireless support of Carmel, his wife, over the years.

Pressed on what has motivated him to give more than a generation of service to the Knights, an Irish order of Catholic laymen – motto: 'To restore all things in Christ' – he is clear. "I want my actions to make a difference someday, so I can make a change [to someone's life] or help someone. Too many people see religion as Sunday Mass but religion must be part of everyday life and a growing relationship with God."

Upbringing

Seamus McDonald recalls "a very Catholic upbringing".

Two of his grand-uncles on either side of his father's family were priests who served in New Zealand.

He recalls the Rosary being said every night, an aunt praying as she walked the road, and becoming an altar boy at Sunday Mass in the Chapel of the Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital where his father, Philip was a nurse, having met his mother, Catherine (nee O'Kane) from Drumquin, Co. Tyrone who was also a nurse there until her marriage.

Martin O'Brien speaks to a Tyrone man who has dedicated his life to helping others



Mr McDonald, the eldest of three children, attended the local Recarson PS and Christian Brothers Grammar in Omagh – enjoying maths and Latin particularly – before qualifying as a teacher in St Joseph's Training College, Trench House in Belfast in 1973 (where two Kenny brothers from Mayo also attended, including the future Taoiseach who was a year behind him).

“That commitment to youth also manifested itself in his service to Tyrone GAA”

Teaching jobs are at a premium in the North today, but he recalls being offered four jobs in one week and opting for a post close to home, teaching religion in St Patrick's Secondary School, Omagh, now Sacred Heart, where he remained until 1979 when he became a teacher in St Mary's Primary in his home parish in Killyclogher, a post he held right up to retirement in 2010.

"I transferred to the primary school because there, rather than taking pupils for two periods of 45 minutes a week, one had the opportunity to really get to know them and form a relationship. I particularly enjoyed preparing those young children for the sacraments," he says.

That commitment to youth also manifested itself in his service to Tyrone GAA, first with his local Killyclogher club where he remains a member, becoming vice-chairman of the county youth committee in 1981 and chair

of the county youth coaching committee in 1986.

Today he is chair of the county "strategic implementation committee, a fancy set of words" he avers but they signal Tyrone's intent to excel and keep excelling.

Back in the mid-Eighties, he introduced, with a colleague, "the idea of coaching to the county", taking a leaf out of what other counties such as Down were doing.

He was county treasurer of Tyrone from 2000-2006 "a glorious time when we won two of our three All-Irelands".

But rivalling the sweetness of those epic successes were Killyclogher's first senior county title in 2003 (when Tyrone first captured the Sam Maguire) and regaining it in 2016.

"It was a delight to see the sons of players we had coached years before, like the McCann brothers and Mark Bradley, come through [in 2016], that the wee bit of support we gave them contributed to being part of something," he says.

But it has been in the Order of Knights of St Columbanus, where he has served in numerous senior capacities at local, provincial and national level, including the highest office, Supreme Knight from 2008-11, where he has made his greatest impact.

Reflecting on his time as Supreme Knight it is clear that the clerical sexual abuse scandals which raged at that time with the publication of the Murphy Report and subsequent summoning of the Irish bishops to the Vatican and the Pastoral Letter to Ireland by Pope Benedict XVI cast a shadow.

"It was a very difficult



Seamus McDonald with his wife Carmel and their parish priest, Fr Kevin McElhennon, of St Mary's, Killyclogher – the church where he was baptised.

time because so many people were hurt and there was so much anger and a feeling of despondency."

He recalls that the Order was asked by the bishops to give its views on the Pastoral Letter and such was the atmosphere at the time that one council (branch) declined to co-operate and another decided to send their comments direct to the Pope because they feared it would be doctored.

Mr McDonald was invited to join the Knights in Omagh in 1977 and admits having been "a passive member" until 1985 when he was appointed vice-chairman of the Omagh council.

“Such was the atmosphere at the time that one council (branch) declined to co-operate”

There were 67 members when he joined but this had fallen calamitously to just six in 1985, due largely to the deteriorating security situation "army checkpoints and all that" and he faced a huge task in rebuilding it to the point today where there is a vibrant 46-strong membership.

"There was a lot of teamwork, a lot of prayer and soul-searching. There is no point in inviting people along without developing them and giving them concrete work to do, otherwise they drift away. You roll up your sleeves, and try to enlist people who are active in the Church and build up community, just as Pope Francis [pictured] asks of us," he says.

In keeping with the charitable remit of the Knights, ongoing initiatives in Omagh focus on alleviating problems

such as debt, suicide and poverty through, for example, organising 200 Christmas food hampers for four local Conferences of St Vincent de Paul at a cost of £3,400.

Since 2015 Seamus has spearheaded the Knights' Schools Public Speaking



Competition which they established to mark their centenary, adding to the John Paul II Awards, which the Knights also sponsored.

The competition has been such a success, attracting 50 schools from all over Ireland, that it has become an annual fixture and next year will be expanded with greater participation in Connaught. One school, St Ciaran's, Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone has fielded up to seven teams.

"It gives me great joy to see so many young people witness so eloquently to their faith and show such a grasp of Church teaching," Seamus says.

In 2012, he was appointed secretary general of the Catholic NGO, *Unum Omnes*, "an international lay organisation trying to promote Catholic values" active in 35 countries,

with the Knights providing its representation in Ireland.

"It was a great honour to be the first Irishman to hold this post," he says.

It is a part-time voluntary post that entails several visits to Rome and other locations each year and its focus includes development and the environment.

His travels abroad have left him concerned at an international trend of male lay non-participation in volunteering and in the mission of the Church, but he is emboldened by Christ's promise of continued grace to prevail.

“It gives me great joy to see so many young people witness so eloquently to their faith”

At the end of April Seamus and Carmel experienced "an unforgettable moment" when they were present in Rome to hear Pope Francis address the Congress of Catholic Action of which *Unum Omnes* is part.

"He is the best communicator I have ever witnessed, using stories to great effect, he inspired me."

Seamus commends readers to see and hear it for themselves on YouTube and on www.unum-omnes.org where there is an English translation.

In 2011, Seamus was appointed a Knight of St Gregory by Pope Benedict XVI in recognition of his service to the Church.

"I felt it was not a reward for me but an award to the community that I belong to. Yes, it is an honour and I am proud of it but not one I really deserve when you consider what others have done."

Learning to listen to God's call



Sophie Overall talks to Bro. Malachy Thompson about choosing to live a monastic life

Ido not believe the term, 'late vocation' exists," Bro. Malachy Thompson says when he looks back on how he came to join the Cistercian monks. "God calls people to the religious life when they are ready to truly experience it."

Bro. Malachy is currently the Director of Vocations at Mount St Joseph Abbey in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, but his path to the monastic life was full of ups and downs.

Living in the monastery in Roscrea, which was founded in 1878, means living a life of contemplative religion. It is marked by intense prayer, cultivated in silence and solitude and the contemplation of God. It is underpinned by a desire to give oneself totally to God in all one does, and it is a life that is witness to the efficacy of prayer. It's not an easy life, and it's not one that anyone chooses to pursue on a whim. This was also true for Bro. Malachy.

Originally Christened Paul Thompson, Bro. Malachy began his life in a Catholic working class family in Dublin, where he lived for all of his formative years. He notes that back then, there were no "broken homes", and he was surrounded by other, traditional Catholic families. After attending Catholic school, Bro. Malachy says that he felt he had "drifted away a bit" from his faith as he entered his teen and late teen years.

"My faith at this point was dwindling," he says. "It was not central, but there was always a deep faith and sense of God in my life as it should have been."

Workforce

At 21, Bro. Malachy entered the workforce with a job sweeping the main production floor for Kenilworth Products, Ltd., a packing company. He truly worked his way from the bottom up.

"I went from sweeping the floors to product develop-



Bro. Malachy Thompson with Fr Laurence Walsh.

ment, then sales and marketing team, and ultimately I was the European Sales Manager," he says. "This allowed me to attend night school for my college degree. I loved my job. It was a great company, progressive, with great people."

However, in his late 20s and early 30s, Bro. Malachy began to seriously delve into his faith.

"At this point, religion still wasn't central in my life," he says. "I then began feeling as if I wanted to embrace it again, at a higher level. There was no major catastrophe that happened, as some people experience. It was very gradual and natural. I began to feel drawn back to the sacraments and prayer."

Bro. Malachy recalls that depending on what time he got out of work, he would go to Mass at night. This occasional occurrence quickly transformed into a daily routine of attending Mass at St Mary's Pro Cathedral in Dublin.

"I began to feel drawn back to the sacraments"

It was during this time that an extremely important event occurred in Bro. Malachy's life, an act of fate that changed the trajectory of his life.

"I was 33, and one night I looked down at the pew I was in," he says "There was a small leaflet that was advertising a 'Young Adults Weekend in the Cistercian Monastery.' At this point, I had no knowledge of the monastery, and had never before felt a pull toward living the religious life. However, as soon as I read the leaflet, something sparked within me, so I booked the retreat."

This influential weekend

started with an abrupt welcoming, one which shocked Bro. Malachy when he realised what monastic life was really like.

"Immediately I thought, 'what did I get myself into?'"

"When I got there, which was around nine or 10 at night since I was coming from work," he says, "a nun was outside the guesthouse waiting for me. She said, 'the monks get up at 4am to pray. You are welcome to join them if you wish.' Immediately I thought, 'what did I get myself into?'"

A normal day at Mount St Joseph still begins at four in the morning, and the monks pray together seven times a day to help solidify the important sense of community in the monastery. They find solace and inspiration from each other in working towards a unifying, yet personal, goal.

The seven canonical hours flow out from the Eucharistic celebration and back into it. Vigils and Lauds prepare for the Eucharist which follows. The "little hours" (*tierce, sext, none*), Vespers and Compline are a kind of continuation of and return to the Eucharist that precedes them each day. Vigils is the Night Office, when the monks and nuns rise to watch and pray during the hours of darkness.

Despite his initial misgivings about getting up at 4am for morning prayer, Bro. Malachy did go to the early vigil that day.

"It was a vigils prayer with a silent ceremony directly following," he says. "This was an extremely special moment for me. After the prayer, as I was sitting there in the silence

and darkness, I felt something change in my heart. It was there, in that moment, that I first thought, 'could I become a monk?'"

Bro. Malachy ended up listening to his heart and going back and visiting the monastery every weekend. It was on one of his visits that a seemingly unsuspecting interaction would tremendously shape his path to, and consequently within, the monastery.

"While I was at the monastery, a monk came up to me and asked if I would like him to show me around," he says. "I said sure, completely unaware of who he was. When I got back, I was asked by a nun who had showed me around. I said I didn't know who it was, but he had this big papal thing around his neck. She told me that was Fr Laurence Walsh, the abbot at the time. Eventually, every Saturday became a walk and talk around the grounds with Fr Laurence. I was absorbing everything and observing Cistercian life from someone who had lived it for 60 years."

After around four years of meeting with Fr Laurence, Bro. Malachy knew he had to come to a final decision. In August 2005, he decided he needed to figure out if he truly had purity of motive in joining the monastic life. That Christmas, he attended a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. While sitting in a church during the pilgrimage, Bro. Malachy finally knew that God really was calling him to the religious life, and this needed to be the next stage of his life.

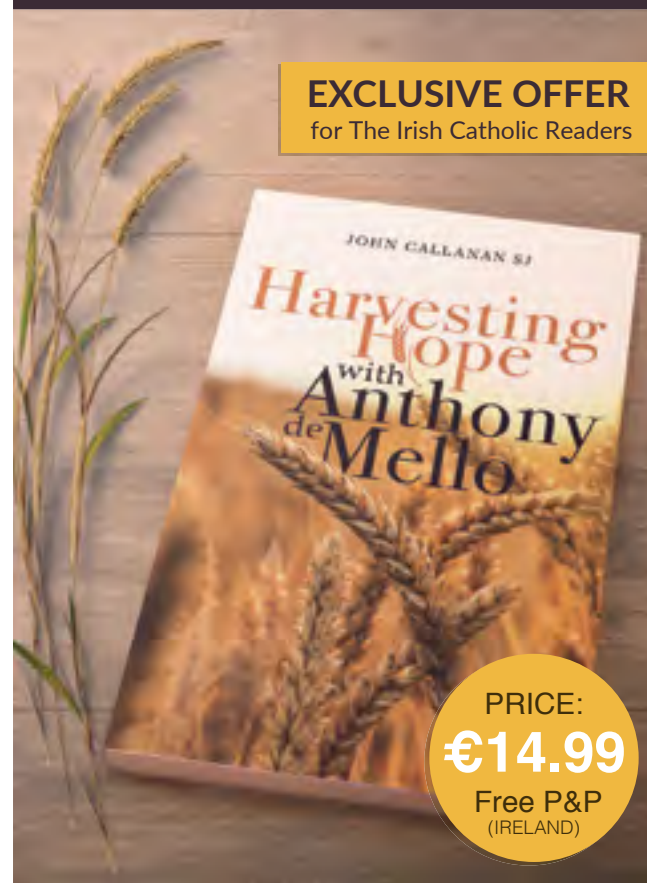
"One of the best parts about this transition was the meaning behind the day I entered," he says. "Usually people choose religiously important days, such as days devoted to specific saints. However, prior to entering the monastery, I had a great love for Dublin GAA football. So, July 17, 2006 was the last game of Dublin versus Leinster in GAA football, and the day I entered."

Amidst commemorating Dublin GAA, Bro. Malachy proclaims the true impact that entering the monastery had on his life.

"It exceeded all my expectations," he says. "Before I came to the monastery, I had thought my life was full. But after this slow realisation of God, and realising that this is what God is calling me to do, I have felt so much more fulfilled."

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Out&About

Carlow youth on retreat



◀ **WICKLOW:** Some of the 46 young adults from Graiguecullen & Killsehin parish in Co. Carlow who took part in the Lough Dan youth retreat.

▼ **CLARE:** Maria and Grace Doolan with their uncle Fr William Coleman PP, who took part in the recent Fleadh Cheoil in Ennis.



WEXFORD: Golden Jubilarians from the Diocese of Ferns: (front row) Fr Jimmy Ryan, Msgr Denis Lennon, Fr Tom McGrath, Fr William Oliver O'Neill (Savannah) and Fr Robert Nolan are pictured with Bishop Denis Brennan at Summerhill. Also in the photo (back row) are Fr Willie Howell, Msgr Joseph L. Kehoe and Msgr Joe McGrath.



CLARE: Bishop Fintan Monahan with participants at the Mass for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Ennis Cathedral.



DUBLIN: Sr Máire Brid from Co. Cork pictured with the Redemptoristine community in Dublin following her clothing ceremony last week.

Edited by Mags Gargan
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



FRANCE: Members of Clogher don Oige youth ministry on pilgrimage in Taizé.



MAYO: Fr Richard Gibbons PP, rector of Knock Shrine with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin after he celebrated Mass during the national novena last week. Photo: Michael Mc Laughlin



WEXFORD: Fr Jim Cogley, Parish Priest of Our Lady's Island Pilgrimage and Brendan Mullins of Carne who is almost 90 and has given 70 years of service to the island. Photo: Patrick Hogan



TIPPERARY: Bishop Fintan Monahan with Abbott Richard Purcell and some participants at the Youth 2000 Summer Festival in Roscrea.

ANTRIM

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

CORK

A pro-life Mass is held on the last Friday of every month at the Poor Clares monastery, College Road, Cork at 7.30pm. All are welcome.

DONEGAL

Solemn Novena to Our Mother of Perpetual Help in St Patrick's Church, Ballyshannon from September 11-19 with Redemptorist novena team, Fr Johnny Doherty and Fr Peter Burns, based on Pope Francis's Joy of Love and WMOF preparation.

DUBLIN

Divine Mercy Devotions in the Church of Three Patrons, Rathgar every First Friday at 7pm. Mass, Benediction, chaplet & blessing with relic of St Faustina. Confessions available.

Free four week course called 'The Practice of being in His Presence' is taking place in The Conference Room of The Divine Master Convent, Newtown Park Avenue, Blackrock from Friday, September 15 at 8pm. For more information ring 086 6050 344.

The Dublin 15 Faith and Justice Group welcomes new members and currently meet on the first Friday of the month in Hartstown Church. For information contact Fr Joe 087 6632944.

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

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

Our Lady of Knock prayer meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month in St Gabriel's Nursing Home, Glenayle Road, Raheny, D5, from 8pm-9pm.

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

KILKENNY

First Saturday Devotions, Adoration, Rosary, Divine Mercy and Prayer for Healing from 7-9pm in St Fiacre's Church, Loughboy.

Thomastown Parish commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Church of the Assumption with a series of talks at Thomastown Community Hall, Marsha's Street starting with Thursday, September 7 at 7.30pm with Fr Fergus Farrell

on 'The Church Building in Thomastown'.

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

LIMERICK

Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Friday in Raheen church following 10am Mass until 10pm, Crecora on Thursdays, following morning Mass until 12noon and from 6-10pm, and in Mungret Church on Wednesdays, from 10am to 12noon.

LOUTH

Mass to celebrate 27th Anniversary of Eucharistic Adoration will be held in St Mary's Church, James St., Drogheda on Friday, September 1 at 7.30pm. Chief celebrant Bishop Michael Smith. Mass will be followed by a cup of tea in St Mary's Pastoral Centre, Dublin Rd.

MAYO

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

Grandparents' National Annual Pilgrimage on September 10 in Knock Shrine at 2.30pm. Chief celebrant Archbishop Eamon Martin with Ballina School Choir providing music and Dana will sing Our Lady of Knock.

The National Legion of Mary Pilgrimage to Knock takes place on Sunday, September 24 with Bishop Fintan Monahan as chief celebrant and homilist.

The next Latin Mass in the Old Rite (Tridentine) will take place in the parish church, Knock on Sunday, September 10 at 5.30pm.

MONAGHAN

At Masses throughout the Diocese of Clogher on the weekend of September 23 & 24 priests will address the issue of suicide for Flourish Sunday.

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.

ROSCOMMON

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

WICKLOW

The Glenree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glenree on the First Saturday of every month.

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

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

World Report

IN BRIEF

Catholic schools warned against misusing funds

• The President of Kenya has warned Catholic school principals to be careful how they spend their funds. President Uhuru Kenyatta spoke at the Catholic School Principals Association (CSPA) fourth anniversary at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, which was themed "A Catholic School – A hub of integrity".

"We will not tolerate misuse of funds. And let me remind teachers and other leaders that we are all servants of the people, who look upon us," said President Uhuru. The president directed the Ministry of Education to cooperate with the principals to ensure funds are used responsibly and to work with law enforcers to act on rogue principals misusing the funds.

Catholics respond to floods

Christian organisations have been assisting tens of thousands of marooned people in northeast Bangladesh, which has suffered from recent intense flooding.

Caritas in Dinajpur, one of the worst affected areas, provided food and clothes to some 4,500 people residing in dozens of flood shelters. In

Rajshahi they offered meals to 1,500 people.

Church parishes, schools and boarding hostels are being used as flood shelters for hundreds of people. Churches and Christian groups have appealed to Christians to offer donations and daily essentials for flood victims.

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Vatican confirms papal visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh

A day after appealing for an end to the violent persecution of the Rohingya people, a Muslim minority in Myanmar, the Vatican announced Pope Francis will visit the country in late November.

After the visit on November 27-30 to the cities of Yangon and Naypyitaw in Myanmar, the Pope will travel on to Dhaka, Bangladesh, from November 30 to December 2, the Vatican announced on Monday.

After praying the Angelus with pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square, Pope Francis said he was saddened by the news "of the persecution of a religious minority, our Rohingya brothers and sisters".

Clashes

News media reported violent clashes on August 25-26 after Rohingya fighters attacked 30 police stations. More than 100 people, mostly insurgents, have been reported killed, according to the BBC.

Most of the Rohingya population in Myanmar's Rakhine state have been denied citizenship in Myanmar, which is predominantly Buddhist.



Pope Francis kisses a baby during an audience with participants in Italy's National Liturgical Week in Paul VI hall in the Vatican.

About 120,000 Rohingya are trapped in internally displaced person camps near the state capital, Sittwe. A further 400,000 live in the state's north, which is currently under martial law.

Media is forbidden to travel to the region, but reports of atrocities by the military, including rape, murder and burning villages, have leaked over the past year. The

United Nations says more than 170,000 Rohingya have fled to neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh, in the past five years.

"I would like to express my full closeness to [the Rohingya]," the Pope said. "Let us ask the Lord to save them, and to raise up men and women of goodwill to help them, that they may be given full rights."

The Pope also prayed for

the victims of monsoon floods in Nepal, India and Bangladesh.

The devastating floods have claimed the lives of over 1,200 people and displaced millions, the Arabic news channel Al-Jazeera reported.

"I express my closeness to all the affected populations and I pray for the victims and for all who suffer due to this calamity," Pope Francis said.

Catholic charities respond to US hurricane Harvey disaster

Catholic dioceses and charities are quickly organising to help in the aftermath of a Category 4 hurricane that made landfall with heavy rains and winds of 130 miles per hour into the Rockport, Texas.

The hurricane made landfall late on Friday, August 25. The National Weather Service said in a tweet two days later that the rainfall expected after the hurricane and storm "are beyond anything experienced before". The hurricane, named Harvey, is said to be the strongest one to hit the US in more than a decade.

Catholic Charities USA, as well as the Society of St Vincent de Paul Disaster Services, are mobilising to help people affected by the hurricane. The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops has a list of charities helping with the disaster listed on its website.

Casualties

Authorities reported several casualties but because of safety issues, not many emergency teams were able to respond immediately as the weather was still unpredictable. Texas Governor Greg Abbott declared

the state a disaster area, which will allow federal money to help in reconstruction. Catholic groups said they want to help with the immediate needs of the communities affected.

"We will be sending in rapid-response teams to help our impacted St Vincent de Paul councils and we are coordinating nationally with the Knights of Columbus, Knights of Malta and (Catholic Charities USA)," said Elizabeth Disco-Shearer, CEO of the Society of St Vincent de Paul USA.

Indonesia government to copy Catholic schools

The Indonesian government has met with Catholic bishops to discuss how a character-building programme could tackle extremism.

The programme is already in place in Catholic schools, but Education Minister Muhadjir Effendy is looking into applying the same model to state-run schools. It is expected these

schools will act as model schools for other institutions, providing examples of best practices in character strengthening among students.

"I met the bishops to ask for suggestions on character building because Catholic educational institutions have contributed much to education in Indonesia,"

the minister told reporters following the meeting.

He referred to Catholic schools organising live-in programmes, whereby Catholic students from big cities stay for a few days in the homes of people living in remote areas where there is no electricity or clean water so that they experience the hardships other people have to live

with.

"Live-in programmes are very good to build interdependency and mutual cooperation," Effendy said.

Archbishop Ignatius Suharyo Hardjoatmodjo of Jakarta, the bishops' conference chairman, said the programme instils social and moral sensitivities in students.



Edited by Chai Brady
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Houston, we have a problem



Texas National Guard soldiers assist people left stranded by floods following Hurricane Harvey during rescue operations in flooded areas around Houston, Texas. Photo: CNS

Cardinal reacts to ISIS threats against the Pope

Reacting to a recent video in which the Vatican and the Pope were threatened by ISIS, Cardinal Pietro Parolin said it represented "senseless hatred".

The Vatican obviously is concerned about terrorist threats and will continue to remain vigilant according to the Vatican Secretary of State.

Cardinal Parolin said he had seen the most recent video attributed to ISIS in which the Pope and Vatican are threatened, saying "one cannot help but be concerned".

However he did not believe the video prompted extra security measures beyond those that have been in place for some time.

For the Year of Mercy 2015-2016, the main boulevard leading to St Peter's Square was closed to traffic; it never reopened.

Pilgrims approaching St Peter's Square for Pope Francis' weekly General Audience on Wednesdays and his Angelus address on Sundays have already been subjected to security checks. Italian police are reportedly taking more time doing checks after Barcelona's terrorist attack in mid-August.

Cardinal Parolin spoke to journalists in Rimini, Italy, where he was addressing a large summer meeting sponsored by the lay movement

Communion and Liberation.

Cardinal Parolin expressed surprise at how much of the current debate in many countries "is focused on defending ourselves from migrants".

The public discussions and arguments show a "sharp division between those who recognise God in the poor and needy and those who do not recognise him," the cardinal said.

Government leaders certainly have an obligation to find alternatives to "massive and uncontrolled migration, and to establish programmes that avoid disorder and the infiltration of the violent," he said.

Diocese in mourning as priest murdered in Brazil

A priest in the north-eastern Brazilian state of Paraíba was found dead in his rectory Thursday morning, with signs of having been stabbed, according to police.

The body of Fr Pedro Gomes Bezerra (49) was discovered on August 24 in Borborema. His body was

found wrapped in sheets in his residence, which was in shambles.

According to the local press, investigators found some 29 punctures on his body.

The priest's car was not in the garage, but there were no signs of the house having

been broken into.

"Even though we are in mourning, let us stand united in prayer, professing our faith in the resurrection of the dead. And may the Lord grant eternal rest to Fr Pedro Gomes," read a statement from the Diocese of Guarabira, of which Fr

Bezerra was a priest.

The priest's neighbours reported they did not notice any strange movements in the house.

The police were notified by the parish secretary, who was surprised to see the doors closed when she came to work.

Vatican roundup

Believers are 'living stones' that can build up the Church

Although the Church is built upon a strong foundation, it is always in need of being reformed and repaired, Pope Francis has said. Before reciting the Angelus prayer last Sunday, Pope Francis said that Christians are the "living stones" that Christ uses to fill in the gaps and crevices that continually appear.

"Even with us today, Jesus wants to continue building his Church, this house with solid foundations, yet where cracks aren't lacking and which still needs to be repaired. Always," the Pope told pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square.

The Pope spoke about the day's Gospel reading from St Matthew in which Peter proclaims that Jesus is "the Christ, the son of the living God".

With Peter's affirmation, the Pope said, Jesus understands that "thanks to the Faith given to him by the father, there is a solid foundation upon which he can build his community, his Church."

Christ proclaimed Peter the rock upon which he would build his Church, the Pope said. And Christ sees every believer, no matter how small, as a precious stone that he can use "in the right place" and continue building up the Church.

Reform programmes welcomed in prisons

Although prisoners must pay a price for their crimes, incarceration must not be used as a method of torture but rather an opportunity to become contributing members of society, Pope Francis has said.

Punishment can be fruitful only when inmates are helped to look toward the future rather than only back at a past lived out in shame, the Pope said in a video message to inmates at the Ezeiza federal penitentiary in Argentina.

"Let us not forget that for punishment to be fruitful," the Pope said, "it must have a horizon of

hope, otherwise it remains closed in itself and is just an instrument of torture; it isn't fruitful."

The Pope's video message was addressed to inmates taking part in the prison's university studies programme, which he said was one of many programmes that provide "a space for work, culture, progress" and are "a sign of humanity".

He thanked prison administration officials for allowing the programme to continue, as well as the inmates in charge of the student centre. "What is happening among you in prison is a breath of life."

Reforms of Vatican II 'irreversible' – Pope

The Catholic Church must continue to work to understand the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council and why they were made, rather than rethinking them, Pope Francis has said.

"After this magisterium, after this long journey, we can affirm with certainty and magisterial authority that the liturgical reform is irreversible," Pope Francis told participants in Italy's National Liturgical Week.

The Pope's speech to the 800 participants last week was the longest and most systematic talk he has given as Pope on the theme of the liturgy since Vatican II.

Instead of reconsidering the council's reforms, he said, priests and liturgists should work on "rediscovering the decisions made" in reforming the liturgy, "internalising its inspirational principles and observing the discipline that governs it".

After congratulating the organisation on its 70th anniversary, Pope Francis said the Church has lived through "substantial and not superficial" events throughout its history, including the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent liturgical reform.

Letter from Africa



Ngala Killian Chimtom

Barely three years after the highly contagious Ebola virus struck Sierra Leone, killing roughly 4,000 people with 14,000 confirmed cases, the impoverished West African country is once more in the throes of disaster.

Weeks of heavy rain led to the collapse of a side of Sugar Loaf Mountain on August 14, crushing a settlement underneath called Regent. The mudslide also swept away houses in two other localities, Kaningo and Kumayama.

Nearly 500 people have died with over 600 still missing, even as emergency relief teams continue to remove corpses from the rubble.

"It is difficult to know the precise number of victims," volunteer body collector Fessellie Marah told the BBC, "because so many bodies were broken apart."

The disaster has brought in significant numbers of charities, including Catholic Relief Services, or CRS, the official overseas humanitarian and development arm of the US bishops.

Describing the situation as "heart-wrenching", the acting country representative of CRS in Sierra Leone, Lori Kunze, said that "thousands of survivors have been left homeless. In addition to losing all of their belongings, these survivors have suffered real trauma as a result of this disaster".

She relates stories of the "piercing sounds of mothers and children crying as they looked for loved ones", and "the sight of body parts streaming through the streets", as well as a "woman whose three children died during the Ebola epidemic, and her only surviving daughter was killed by the mudslide."

"It will take a long time for the communities directly impacted by these landslides to return to normal," Kunze said.

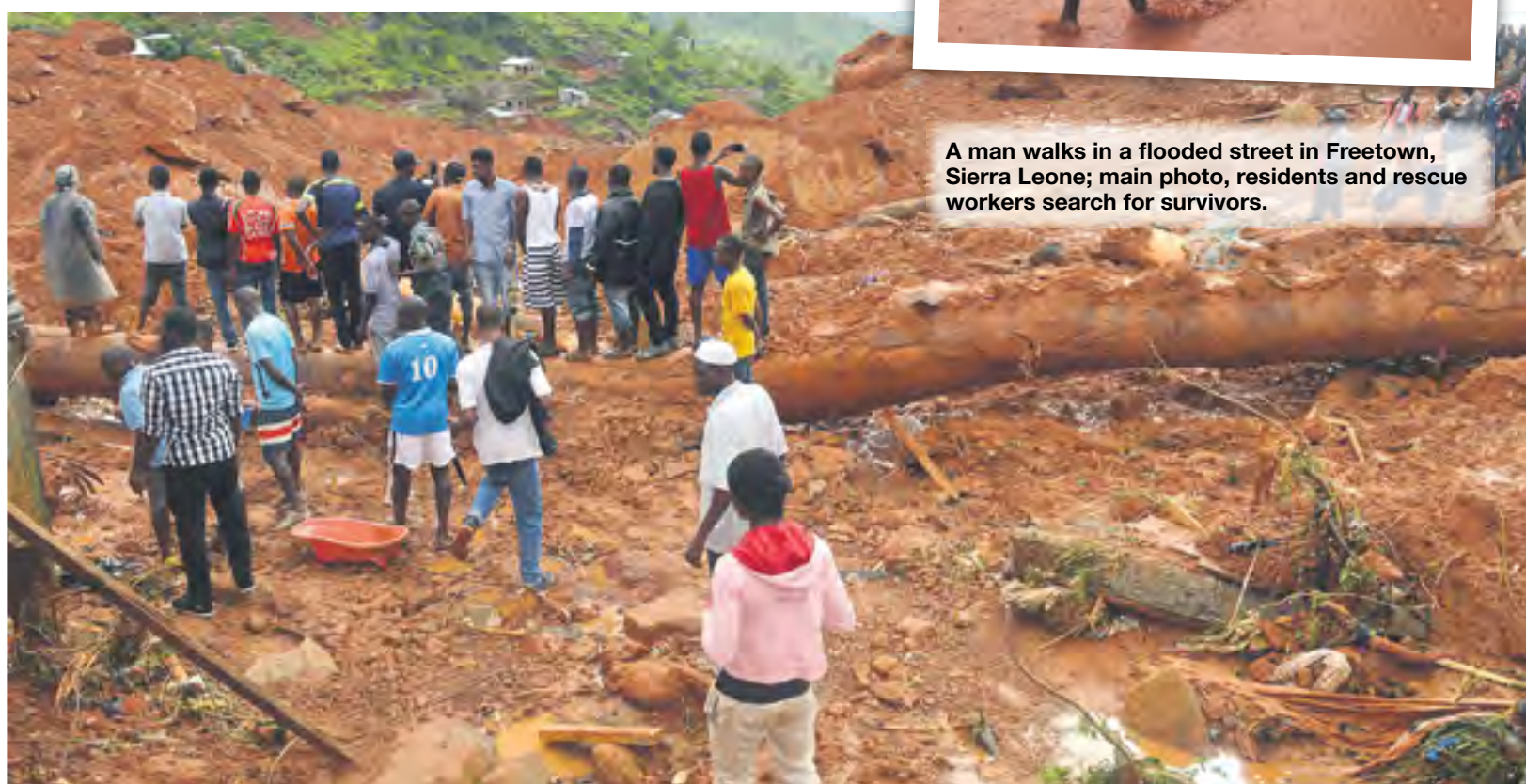
Needs

She said beyond the immediate needs such as food, shelter, water, and hygienic items like soap and toothbrushes, people need psycho-social support, because they are going through "a complicated grieving process".

"As a result, we've deployed social workers to the affected communities to help them cope. So far, we've reached more than 200 people with this type of support," Kunze said.

She said experience garnered during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in terms of emergency response has

Fears of disease in the wake of Sierra Leone's horror mudslide



A man walks in a flooded street in Freetown, Sierra Leone; main photo, residents and rescue workers search for survivors.

been instructive in the way CRS and other relief agencies are responding to the current crisis.

She said CRS is supplying water to people who are in the camp sites along with mattresses and blankets. The organisation has also joined with other organisations to form teams of social workers to provide counselling and support.

"Together this team has met with over 200 people. Finally, we're assisting the government with burials. That was one of our strengths during the Ebola epidemic and we're building off of that experience to provide similar support," Kunze said.

The fear of disease

Beyond the pain of losing loved ones and the associated psychological trauma is the lurking fear of the outbreak of disease.

"The greatest risk of disease outbreak actually comes not from unrecovered bodies, but from overcrowding and [poor] hygiene in camp sites where flood victims have been staying," Kunze said. "Children have begun to report upper respiratory symptoms."

The government of Sierra Leone

has prepared cholera prevention messaging which is being broadcast throughout the country via radio and social media, and a three-month cholera response has been developed. There are currently no confirmed cases of cholera, but the fear lingers.

“We have started burying some of the mutilated and decomposed bodies. All the corpses will be given a dignified burial”

The people of Sierra Leone "are incredibly resilient, but they need our help," Kunze added.

Authorities say they are digging up corpses in efforts to avoid a scenario in which fluids from contaminated corpses get into the water supply system.

"We are doing all we can to ensure cholera does not break out," Samuel Turay, an official at the health ministry told Reuters.

But the deputy health minister, Madina Rahman, warned of a

"possible cholera outbreak...as a result of the contaminated water pooling in the streets and bodies lying in the open."

Alexander Chimbaru, the officer in charge of the World Health Organisation in Sierra Leone, says the organisation is working with the government to avoid such a scenario.

"With damage to water and sanitation facilities, residents of affected areas are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of pre-existing infectious diseases including malaria and diarrheal conditions such as typhoid and cholera," Chimbaru said.

However, he notes that it's the population that must take the lead in the effort to keep these threats at bay. He called on the affected population to carry out simple, potentially life-saving tasks such as "hand washing, drinking only water that has been properly boiled or treated, use of latrines for sanitation and adherence to good food hygiene practices".

Burying the corpses

Zaino Parker, an official with Freetown's city council says the

corpses will be given dignified burials, and the graves will be specially marked for future identification.

"We have started burying some of the mutilated and decomposed bodies. All the corpses will be given a dignified burial with Muslim and Christian prayers," Parker told Agence France-Presse.

He said many of the bodies are being buried in Waterloo, 20 miles south-east of Freetown, significantly in the same locality where victims of the Ebola outbreak were buried.

Sierra Leone's President, Ernest Bai Koroma has said the devastation "was overwhelming us".

"Entire communities have been wiped out," Koroma said, before requesting urgent support.

A small nation of 7.4 million, Sierra Leone has suffered through more than its fair share of tragedies. Some 20,000 people have been displaced, 5,000 of whom are children, according to president spokesman Abdulai Bayratay.

Ngala Killian Chimtom writes for Crux.com



John L. Allen Jr

Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's Secretary of State, was in Moscow last week for meetings with both government officials and leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church.

He held a news conference last Tuesday after seeing Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, discussing areas where the two sides agree (persecution of Christians in the Middle East) and where they don't (Ukraine).

Presumably in an attempt to take the edge off of any perceived clash, Parolin made a point of insisting: "The Holy See does not intend, and cannot allow itself, to be identified with any political position."

Ironically enough, that statement came one day after Pope Francis released a message for a Vatican-sponsored "World Day of Migrants and Refugees" set for next January, in which, seen through Italian eyes, he took about as blatantly political a position as one could imagine.

At the moment, one of Italy's hottest political potatoes is a debate over a proposed *ius soli* law, which would grant Italian citizenship to foreign children born on Italian soil. Currently, Italian law bases citizenship mostly on *ius sanguinis* ("right by blood"), meaning based upon the parents' Italian citizenship. *Ius soli* tends to be the rule in the Americas but not everywhere else, and is generally seen as a more permissive way to afford citizenship rights.

It's an intensely partisan question, as the *ius soli* measure is backed by Italy's governing centre-left majority and Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, and largely opposed by the center-right and the country's populist *Cinque Stelle* ('Five Star') and Northern League parties.

Elections

With elections looking likely in early 2018, there's every reason to believe that the *ius soli* debate will be a front-burner, and divisive, campaign issue.

With that background, here's what Pope Francis said.

"While respecting the universal right for a nationality, it must be recognised and certified for all children at the moment of birth ...the statelessness in which migrants



Pope Francis greets Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni; inset, Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

Vatican is not *partisan* but definitely *political*

and refugees sometimes find themselves can easily be avoided through legislation on citizenship complying with the fundamental principles of international law."

Veteran Italian Vatican-watcher Andrea Tornielli rightly observed on Tuesday that the message is far broader than that one point, and is addressed to the whole world, not just *il bel paese*. He also correctly noted that Francis's broadly pro-immigrant line is in keeping with his predecessors, citing precedents stretching back to St Pope Pius X, whose feast fell on the day the message appeared.

“Popes and the Vatican are keenly interested in the policies those governments pursue”

However, Italians can be forgiven for concluding that the line on citizenship by birth has clear political relevance for them, because it does.

All this illustrates a classic form of ambivalence that runs through Vatican argot on politics. In a nutshell, here it

is: When Vatican officials say they're not 'political', what they really mean is, they're not 'partisan'.

That is to say, the Vatican is not really invested in whether Gentiloni gets re-elected in 2018 or whether the centre-right takes control of the Quirinale, the Italian equivalent of the White House. Similarly, they're not committed to seeing either the Republicans or the Democrats come to power in the United States, or the Tories or Labour in the UK, and so on.

Over the centuries, the Vatican has vast experience in dealing with regimes of all ideological stripes, and frankly has come to see them all as a mixed bag. Certainly the United States illustrates the point, as titanic battles were waged under St John Paul II with both the Democratic administration of President Bill Clinton (over abortion in international law) and the Republican White House of President George W. Bush (over the invasion of Iraq).

Pretty much whoever's in power, Vatican diplomats know there will be some things they like and some things they don't, and it's often a matter of pick your poison. Further, they can't

afford to be seen as partisan because politics is cyclical, and the forces you alienate today may be back in charge tomorrow.

Yet Popes and the Vatican are keenly interested in the policies those governments pursue, and will often speak out in ways that have obvious political implications.

St John Paul II's defiance of the Soviet system and his patronage of the Solidarity movement in Poland is a classic example, and, more recently, we've watched Pope Francis emerge as a moral leader in the global fight against climate change – a position with stunningly clear political import in the United States, among other places.

“St John Paul II's defiance of the Soviet system is a classic example”

The difference between the Vatican and other actors is that, fundamentally, Popes aren't interested in which political faction advances the positions they support, but in seeing those positions prevail. So, for instance, in Italy, should the centre-right come out tomorrow and embrace

the *ius soli* law, it's not as if the Vatican or Pope Francis would mute their advocacy simply because they don't want to see them succeed in 2018.

Underlying that point, of course, is the rich body of Catholic social teaching, which means that Popes and their aides don't take positions because they're in somebody's immediate electoral interests, but on the basis of longstanding principle.

Knowing this to be the case, I've often wondered why Vatican officials don't just put it like that: "We're political, but not partisan." That would be a lot clearer, and it would also avoid the inevitable charges of hypocrisy and "interference" that always follow, like night follows day, whenever they take a stand on something.

(In Italy, charges of *ingerenza*, or "interference," in politics is among the most common complaints about the Church one ever hears.)

But while we wait for the Vatican's rhetoric to catch up with its reality, don't be fooled. The Vatican may not really care who's in power, but what those people do once they're in charge is an entirely different matter.

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

Letters

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

Letter of the week

Abortion referendum not 'marginal' to Pope's visit

Dear Editor, Pro-life people in the Republic of Ireland are very worried about remarks made by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin in a TV interview on the Feast of the Apparitions at Knock, on August 21.

They were made in an interview on the Six One News on RTÉ with Teresa Mannion. In reply to a question, Archbishop Martin said that he hoped that Pope Francis would not become embroiled in the referendum that is promised for next year in the Republic of Ireland on the subject of abortion. Dr Martin described the subject as one that is marginal to the Pope's visit.

In saying so, Dr Martin is ignoring

Church teaching on when precisely the Church should intervene in politics: "It is part of the Church's mission to pass moral judgements even in matters related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it" (2246, Catechism of the Catholic Church, p. 485).

There is no doubt at all about it that the right to life is the most fundamental of human rights, and for Catholics to ignore it, and to vote for abortion, or for the further liberalisation of the same, is to put their eternal souls in jeopardy. Therefore, on both counts it is

imperative that the Pope and the bishops instruct their flock on the gross immorality of voting for abortion, or for its further liberalisation.

We call on Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, all the Bishops of Ireland, and on Pope Francis to speak out on this issue, as it is in no way marginal to the Pope's proposed visit to Ireland in 2018.

Yours etc.,

Richard Greene,

ADFAM (Alliance for the Defence of the Family and Marriage),
Unit 104, 35 Upper Rathmines Road,
Dublin 6.

Breaking seal of Confession is impossible

Dear Editor, Greg Daly is to be commended for his analysis as "unsustainable and probably unconstitutional", the recommendations of the Australian Royal Commission to compel priests to break the seal of Confession where child sexual abuse is disclosed (IC 17/08/2017).

His interview with Teresa Devlin, CEO of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) on improvements to child protection policy and practice in Ireland, referred to Ms Devlin's having been invited to give

evidence to the Australian Royal Commission, but did not mention that during her testimony, available online, she described as "chilling" the fact that some people consider the seal of Confession to be more important than saving a child from abuse.

There are problems with this approach however. It would be next to impossible to draft suitable laws and implement them fairly; no evidence exists that such laws would achieve their stated aim and most serious of all is that the commission's

recommendation completely misunderstands the Sacrament of Confession and takes a completely secular approach.

Confession is one of the seven sacraments of the Church, instituted by Jesus Christ. It is a direct spiritual encounter with God through the priest and all that is said there remains "sealed" by the sacrament, not just the confessing of sins. One of the Canon Law principles of the sacrament is that all information gained in the confessional should be regarded as not having been gained at all (CCL 983-984).

The Church's current child protection practice is vastly improved from the past, but the use of criminal sanctions to force priests to break a sacramental seal, in the name of improving child protection practice, is not just a fundamental breach of religious freedom but betrays what God himself has entrusted to the Church through ordained priests. The NBSCCCI must be reminded of this.

Yours etc.,

Catriona Rooney,
Belfast,
Co. Antrim.

Definition of progressive

Dear Editor, Someone who opposes abortion and holds to the traditional definition of marriage is immediately branded a 'social conservative'.

Why? If these values ensure the progress of human society into a safe and healthy future, surely that person merits the descriptive noun, 'progressive', i.e. 'forward looking'?

Yours etc.,

Judith Leonard,
Raheny,
Dublin 6.

Prayers needed to save the Eighth Amendment

Dear Editor, An urgent plea to all, your prayers (especially the Rosary) are asked that we may continue to protect the unborn and that Ireland remains abortion free. There are many people in this country who wish to change

the law concerning the Eighth Amendment, which would allow abortion to be carried out in Ireland with very few restrictions. Help us to stop this from happening. At present an unborn baby has equal rights to life as does

its mother. This would not be the case if the Eighth Amendment is defeated. Help us keep Ireland abortion free.

Yours etc.,

Aodhan O'Fiachain,
Churchtown, Dublin 14.

SDLP is actually far from being dead

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny is mistaken when she refers to the "strange death of the SDLP" (IC 17/08/2017), because the SDLP is far from dead.

Yes, they took a hit in this year's Westminster election, but that still leaves a substantial group in the Northern Assembly and a sizeable number of councillors. However, longer term decline has been due to an over-reliance on senior figures in the party, especially John Hume, who some SDLP supporters think will one day be made a saint.

Mary touched on the attitude of the Irish Catholic Church to the SDLP in suggesting that they helped bring Sinn Féin in from the cold into "the peace movement".

I think it's fair to say that the problems for the SDLP ran a lot deeper than that and went back to the formation of the SDLP in 1970 from the era of the civil rights movement.

My feeling is that the Catholic Church hierarchy never really trusted the SDLP because they "annihilated", to use Mary's word, the old Nationalist Party, run mainly by businessmen, and the SDLP was socialist in name and policy.

The Church was more comfortable, in my view, with Sinn Féin, with its hopeless policies and its support for the IRA, which meant that in the 1970s it was going nowhere politically. In 1981, all that changed and the hunger-strikes made Sinn Féin a problem for the Church. The SDLP were more valued then. So time will tell if the SDLP is dead. I think not but who am I to say.

Yours etc.,

John O'Connell, Derry.

Tremendous work of Legion of Mary goes unnoticed

Dear Editor, I was delighted to read in *The Irish Catholic* that five of the recently ordained priests stated they "were inspired in their vocation by the Legion of Mary", having just read the book *From Navan to China* giving details of the success of the work of the Legion of Mary in China, where it was established and promoted by the late Fr Aedan McGrath, who was imprisoned there for almost three years.

What an inspiring story of courage and selfless devotion through imprisonment for many, and persecution of so many others. It is some accolade for the Legion that the Communists, when they came to power, described it as 'Enemy No. 1'. We in Ireland do not seem to realise the tremendous work done by the Legion, not just in Ireland but worldwide and that, in fact, many countries have seen the Catholic Church grow there and expand because of it.

Frank Duff, who founded it, was honoured by a standing ovation at the Second Vatican Council, and what about the example of Legionaries like Edel Quinn and others who spent their lives in the spread of Christianity through their work in the Legion? It is indeed an instrument of evangelisation which has resulted in the sanctification of its members and through them the sanctification of so many others.

Yours etc.,

Mary Stewart,
Donegal Town.

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



COLOMBIA: A man works on a mosaic of Pope Francis on a wall outside Hogar San Jose children's home in Medellin, Colombia. The Pope will visit the home on September 9 during his five-day visit to Colombia.



ITALY: Italian police use a water cannon as they clash with protesting refugees who had been forcibly removed from a building where they had been living in Rome.



USA: A woman prays during a Mass for solidarity and peace at St James Cathedral Basilica in New York celebrated in response to the violent and deadly white supremacist demonstrations in Charlottesville earlier in the month.



CHILE: Immigrants search for warm clothes to help them face the winter in Santiago, Chile. Around 20,000 Venezuelans have arrived in Chile this year, 15 times more than 2016.



USA: A man walks through floods and onto the main road after surveying his property which was hit by Hurricane Harvey in Rockport, Texas. Photos: CNS



AFGHANISTAN: Afghan men comfort another man after he heard his relatives were killed in a suicide attack followed by a clash between Afghan forces and insurgents outside a mosque in Kabul.

Family & Lifestyle



Stella O'Malley offers practical and effective ways to prevent and tackle bullying

Every day children in schools all around the world eat their lunch in toilet cubicles; others spend entire mornings in class silently agonising about who might hang out with them at lunchtime; millions immediately panic when they hear the familiar ping from their mobile and they realise that yet another so-called friend has posted spiteful venom about them on social media.

Although girls are more likely to use social bullying as a way to wield power over another while boys tend to use physical violence more often, it doesn't really matter whether the bullying is physical, social, emotional or cyber-bullying, it reaches deep into a person's psyche and shatters their sense of self.

The good news is that bullying can be combated. The bad news is that not enough people are educated about how to do this.

All too often teenagers are advised to handle bullying as a mature adult would in the corporate world; by asking the mean kid to meet them in private and to explain that the comments hurt their feelings and that they want it to stop. More often than not the bullies would laugh in the target's face and relentlessly ridicule them to the rest of the group.

Advice

Other common advice is to 'just ignore them'. However, in mean kid world, just ignoring the bullies is that not incendiary to them and so the bullies push and push in a bid to get a reaction. Of course, when they finally do get a reaction it is generally an emotional outburst and so this is also very dangerous advice.

Parents can also often misread the complexity of the bullying and tell their kids to answer back with one-liners such as "you're so immature". But the bullies are often a complex and sophisticated hierarchy of ringleaders, queen bees, sidekicks, wannabes and messengers who are fighting to maintain their status within the group and they will not allow the target to get the upper hand so easily. Mean kids tend to see through a false show of confidence and they will immediately reassert their strength so as to punish the target for daring to rise above their station.

Targets are often unused to asserting themselves sufficiently and the bullies intuitively realise this and take advantage of the target's nerves.

If your child has already tried to follow your (or someone else's) advice and found that it hasn't worked then the child can become cynical and secretive. The child often then believes that they can't go to their parents for advice because their parents will guide their children towards further humiliation and scorn. Feelings of isolation ensue as they can't confide in their parents any more, for fear of further exacerbating the problem.

“The days of making everything better are, sadly, over once a child leaves middle childhood”

When parents are confronted with our children's difficulties, our noble and natural reaction is to do everything in our power to annihilate the difficulty and yet, as the child moves from middle childhood to being a teenager, removing the difficulty is often an inappropriate response. More often connection has more value than solutions – the writer and motivational speaker Brené Brown highlighted this when she said, “Rarely can a response make something better; what makes something better is a connection”.

And so parents are better off ensuring that first and foremost they remember to take the time to authentically connect on a

deeper level whenever their teens or tweens come to them with a problem.

The days of making everything better are, sadly, over once a child leaves middle childhood and, with this, a new dawn is breaking where deeper relationships matter more than simple solutions.

The process whereby parents can lead their children to better relationships – with everyone – needs to be examined closely, with a critical eye, as parents and children consider what will work and what might fail in their individual situations. Blind devotion to any solution isn't appropriate – instead everyone needs to dig deep and determine how best their loved ones can beat the bullies.



When a teenager is in class a whole range of different social and emotional problems are erupting at the same time: “Will I put my hand up and answer this question? God, everyone will notice me. What if I'm wrong and I look stupid? If I answer right I'll probably just look like a swot, it's probably better to do nothing.”

Think about your child and

realise that for about seven hours, five days a week they are trying to juggle their actions according to the judgement of perhaps 30 of their peers. Their emotions are in overdrive as they try to figure out what is appropriate and what is not. This is all going on in a nice, easy, boring class under the control of the teacher, so we can multiply these worries by a thousand when it comes to lunch hour.

In an ideal world, parents shouldn't be required to step in and fight the child's fights, or at least should stay out of the situation until the children ask for help. Sadly, we don't live in an ideal world, and often parents feel forced to send their children to schools that have a bullying culture and so parents should be ready to step in to help if the child is clearly not coping on their own.

The help that parents provide should mostly centre on providing considered advice, emotional support and physical protection to their own child without needing to directly fight the perpetrator.

This doesn't mean that a gentle and passive child should be required to change in any way – more that targets of bullying need to accept who they are and develop the aspects of their personality that can save them from being bullied. For example, maybe the child is a good and loyal friend, or maybe they are funny so they can make people laugh at an opportune moment, or maybe they are sensitive and so can spot a troubling situation before others can.

Parents might also remind

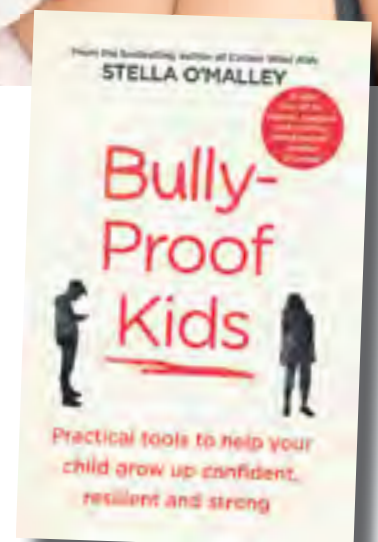
their children just how ineffective strategies such as hiding from the bully are as they didn't work previously and probably won't work in the future.

When parents do decide to step in and take action, this is a crucial moment in the arc of the bullying experience. The intervention needs to be effective, because if it fails, the child will feel all security fading away. And so the parent will need to gather up their strength and dig deep for this.

Distraction

It is important for everyone – parents and children – to learn from each experience and keep in mind each success and failure. In the future, parents can then remind their child how they faced down the bully in the schoolyard by using their wit, by using distraction, by spotting the potential upstander or by assertively and continuously requesting help and support.

Parents also need to admit when their advice and support did not





work. Parents need to realise that sometimes their advice isn't appropriate for the child and so the family might need to regroup and take stock.

As our children move from babies to toddlers through middle childhood and the teen years, so we parents move from being physical caretakers of our children to providing a role of mentoring and guidance. And so, although we can help, support, guide and encourage our children, by the time our children have become teenagers it is often neither appropriate nor helpful for the parent to try to solve the teenager's problems.

“Sometimes you need to trust that your child can handle the situation”

The teenager needs to learn how to handle bullies. If the parent steps in and mows everyone down then there will inevitably be further bullying incidents in the future. Although it is appropriate for children under the age of 12 to assume the adults will sort it all out, on some level, teenagers will need to refrain from automatically assuming that the nearest adult will rescue them – when a child enters the teen years they should be starting to learn how to handle themselves.

Teenagers need to learn how to think for themselves so that one day if they are involved in a complicated peer group situation, they can figure out the best route to take. No matter how much we wrap our kids in cotton wool, at

some point, whether it is when they are 14 or 18 years old, they will probably be offered some drugs, or offered a lift from a drunk but cool friend, or engaged inappropriately online – and your teenager will have to make a decision on their own. If teenagers are to learn how to handle themselves, they will need to have some practice in learning to rely on themselves.

The parent can come up with helpful ideas and different options but the teenager will probably need to be the one who has to try them out. The parents can open the door but the teenager must walk through.

Preparing your children for possible future events that are bound to happen enables them to be prepared for the curveballs that life often throws us.

If the parent can impart the idea that problems can cause difficulties but they are rarely insurmountable, then the parent has set the tone for the children to feel capable and able for the challenges they will face in life. Unless you think your child is in actual danger, sometimes you need to trust that your child can handle the situation and the best you can offer them is to hope for the best, prepare for the worst and cheer them on from the sidelines.

❶ Stella O'Malley is a psychotherapist, writer and public speaker with over 10 years' experience as a mental health professional. Much of Stella's counselling and teaching work is with parents and young people. She is the author of Bully-Proof Kids published by Gill Books, €14.99.



Maria Lezama with a member of the L'Arche community.

“We view our core members as friends, not clients,” says Maria Lezama, a volunteers' coordinator for L'Arche Cork.

L'Arche (French for 'The Ark') began in 1964 when Jean Vanier invited two men, who were confined within a local institution because of their intellectual disabilities, to come live with him. Together they shared a small house in the French village, Trosly-Breuil, north of Paris which became their home. From this simple beginning, L'Arche has grown to 149 communities, 14 projects in 37 countries worldwide.

The first community in Ireland was founded in 1978 in Kilmoganny, Co. Kilkenny. Since then, communities have been established in Belfast, Cork and Dublin. L'Arche in Ireland is currently home to over 50 people with intellectual disabilities and the assistants with whom they share their lives.

Maria made the move from Trinidad to Ireland for two things: the Irish culture and L'Arche. She began working there for one year as a volunteer and has now been there for 18 years. “It brings out a better me. It put me in touch with who I want to be,” she says.

Community

L'Arche Cork is a community where people with or without learning disabilities help each other “share life” and develop mutual relationships. It is comprised of five homes; An Croí (the heart), Suaimhneas, (place of rest) An Teaghlach (the hearth), An Cuan (the harbour) and Dochas (hope) and a workshop Le Cheile (together).

L'Arche Cork is based on participation from the community; everyone has a part to play no matter what their age, ability or skill. Members simply need to have an open mind and heart to all relationships and a willingness to help out and serve the community through its day-to-day tasks.

At the centre of it all is developing relationships with the person with a disability. L'Arche Cork believes that this relationship is mutually transformative, a sign of hope and a powerful witness in our world.

“It is ‘where people with or without disabilities foster relationships’”

Today, there are 20 core members living together in the homes and eight project workers who join during the day programme in Le Cheile.

According to Maria the community is inspired by the spirit of the Beatitude as found in the Gospel of Matthew 5:3-11, however they are welcoming and respectful of each member's religious tradition. Maria had always been interested in working in a faith-based community, as faith plays a major role in her life.

“Each one of us is challenged by the Gospel to become more deeply aware of God's love for us in Christ, to rejoice, delight in and respond to that love for us. One of the way in which we respond to God's love

is in our service of God and one another,” she says.

Along with being a volunteers' coordinator, Maria is also a pastoral coordinator, recruitment administrator, Health and Safety Officer, training coordinator and safeguarding officer.

“(Working with L'Arche) changes you. We have many volunteers who say their hearts have been changed because of it,” she says. Some of the qualities used to describe their volunteers are courage, flexibility, openness, warmth and generosity of spirit.

Qualities that Maria greatly exemplifies during her tasks and interactions with others.

“Ministry is about mission: witnessing and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Mission is about ministry: proclaiming God's love in Christ in our service of one another. We might use the language of being ‘called’ to a ‘ministry’, there being many different forms that such ministry can take. Whatever form such ministry takes, it will bear witness to Christ and Christ's love for us,” she says.

While working at L'Arche, Maria had a tragic death happen in her

family. When she went back home for the funeral, she questioned why it had to be him. Upon returning back to L'Arche, when her faith wavered, a resident came up to her and said: “Don't worry Maria, he is in Heaven now with my mom.” This taught Maria a big lesson about the residents and her faith.

“People with disabilities have a deep sense of love with God. We have a lady who always says, ‘God loves me no matter what’. They believe no matter what, they will be home with God.”

As Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche said: “In living this call faithfully, we discover the inner beauty of those we serve and reveal this beauty to them and to the world. We also encounter our own beauty.”

Faith

L'Arche is special because it is “where people with or without disabilities foster relationships”, Maria says. “It's a place where diversity in faith work together. We have a Syrian volunteer and a Russian volunteer. With what you see in the news, they wouldn't normally get along but here, they work together for the love of our core members.”

When it comes to the Irish attitude towards people with disabilities, Maria says: “It's changing. Some people view them as vulnerable and speak to them in condescending tones but people are becoming more accepting.”

She believes that part of this has to do with more employment opportunities as it raises awareness.

To this, Maria quotes Jean Vanier: “The belief in the inner beauty of each and every human being is at the heart of L'Arche...and at the heart of being human.”

PERSONAL PROFILE

Sharing life and faith

Victoria Holthaus speaks to a volunteers' coordinator for L'Arche



Stuck in traffic



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

There's a famous billboard that hangs along a congested highway that reads: You aren't stuck in traffic. You *are* traffic! Good wit, good insight! How glibly we distance ourselves from a problem, whether it is our politics, our churches, the ecological problems on our planet or most anything else.

We aren't, as we want to think, stuck in a bad political climate wherein we can no longer talk to each other and live respectfully with each other. Rather we ourselves have become so rigid, arrogant and sure of ourselves that we can no longer respect those who think differently than we do. We are a bad political climate and not just stuck in one.

Likewise for our Churches: we aren't stuck in Churches that are too self-serving and not faithful enough to the teachings of Jesus. Rather we are Christians who too often, ourselves, out of self-interest compromise the teachings of Jesus. We aren't stuck in our Churches, we comprise those Churches.

Challenges

The same is true apposite the ecological challenges we face on this planet: we aren't stuck on a planet that's becoming oxygen-starved and a junk-yard for human wastage. Rather it's we, not just others, who are too careless in how we are using up the Earth's resources and how we are leaving behind our waste.

Admittedly, this isn't always true. Sometimes we are stuck in negative situations for which we bear no responsibility and within which, through no fault of our own, we are simply the unfortunate victim of circumstance and someone else's carelessness, illness, dysfunction, or sin.

We can, for instance, be born into a dysfunctional situation which leaves us stuck in a family and an environment that doesn't make for easy freedom.

“When we're honest we have to admit that we're complicit in all these things”

Or sometimes simple circumstance can burden us with duties that take away our freedom. So, metaphorically speaking, we can be stuck in traffic and not ourselves be part of that traffic, though generally we are, at least partially, part of the traffic we're stuck in.

Henri Nouwen often highlighted this in his writings. We are not, he tells us, separate from the events that make up the world news each day. Rather, what we see written large in the world news each night simply reflects what's going on inside of us. When we see instances of injustice, bigotry, racism, greed, violence, murder and war on our



Henri Nouwen.

newscasts we rightly feel a certain moral indignation. It's healthy to feel that way, but it's not healthy to naively think that it's others, not us, who are the problem.

When we're honest we have to admit that we're complicit in

all these things, perhaps not in their crasser forms, but in subtler, though very real, ways: the fear and paranoia that are at the root of so much conflict in our world are not foreign to us.

We too find it hard to accept those who are different from us. We too cling to privilege and do most everything we can to secure and protect our comfort. We too use up an unfair amount of the world's resources in our hunger for comfort and experience.

As well, our negative judgments, jealousies, gossip and bitter words are, at the end of the day, genuine

acts of violence since, as Henri Nouwen puts it: nobody is shot by a gun that isn't first shot by a word. And nobody is shot by a word before he or she is first shot by a murderous thought: who does she thinks she is! The evening news just shows large what's inside our hearts.

What's in the macrocosm is also in the microcosm.

And so we aren't just viewers of the evening news, we're complicit in it. The old

catechisms were right when they told us that there's no such a thing as a truly private act, that even our most private actions affect everyone else. The private is political. Everything affects everything.

The first take-away from this is obvious: when we find ourselves stuck in traffic, metaphorically and otherwise, we need to admit our own complicity and resist the temptation to simply blame others.

“Our negative judgments, jealousies, gossip and bitter words are, at the end of the day, genuine acts of violence”

But there's another important lesson here too: we are never healthier than when we are confessing our sins; in this case, confessing that we are traffic and not just stuck in traffic.

After recognising that we are complicit, hopefully we can forgive ourselves for the fact that, partially at least, we are helpless to not be complicit.

No one can walk through life without leaving a footprint. To pretend otherwise is dishonest and to try to not leave a footprint is futile. The starting point to make things better is for us to admit and confess our complicity.

So the next time you're stuck in traffic, irritated and impatient, muttering angrily about why there are so many people on the road, you might want to glance at yourself in rearview mirror, ask yourself why you are on the road at that time, and then give yourself a forgiving wink as you utter the French word, *touché*.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



An insight into how people become radicalised

When a drama is scheduled to run for four consecutive nights you know the broadcaster thinks it's offering something special.

And so it was with **The State** (Channel 4), which finished on Wednesday of last week. It was sad, disturbing, absorbing, and the recent terrorist attacks made this story of people joining ISIS all the more topical and unnerving.

The four young central characters abandoned their old lives, leaving England for Syria in the dead of night. The question of motivation wasn't explored enough, nor was the issue of how they were radicalised. Even more so, the motivations of the Westerners who joined were vague, but there was a dig at the converts knowing the rules better than the average Muslim!

Their motives seemed largely religious, but they were marked by a striking naiveté – one young woman wanted to be a “lioness among the lions”.

Another woman, a doctor, brought her nine-year-old son, and thought she'd be able to do some good for the cause by tending to the wounded. Considering the attitude of ISIS towards women they were in for a shock. One young man was following his brother, allegedly a martyr for the cause, but he was misinformed and hadn't the stomach for the



A scene from *The State*. Photo: Channel 4

brutality.

It was all there – the beheadings, the slavery, the child soldiers, but it was less graphic than it might have been, though they could hardly have done the drama properly without showing some of the horrors. Thankfully the camera turned away at some of the most violent moments. In fact at various stages I felt that ISIS was being a little sanitised.

Madness

In all this madness of violence and propaganda there were crises of conscience and acts of kindness. One of the new English recruits bought two Christian or Yazidi slaves to protect them. He also tended to the wounds of a local chemist whose torture he had just attended, passively.

It's impossible for me

to know for sure, but it all seemed authentic. Every now and then Islamic terms were explained in dictionary-like subtitles.

There were arguments among the Muslims as to whether their principles allowed the barbarity. There was a key scene where the father of one of the Englishmen tracked him down and berated him for the dishonour he had brought on his family, accusing him of being selective as to which bits of Islamic teaching he'd follow.

A few seemed cruel by nature, others seemed very ordinary, even pleasant, enjoying the cheerful camaraderie even as they partook in the butchery because they thought their cause justified it. It showed how it's so much more important to be right rather than be sincere and

think you're right.

Back home the upcoming World Meeting of Families is likely to dominate religious affairs coverage for the next year. Fr Timothy Bartlett, General Secretary for the event, was interviewed on **Today with Pat Kenny** (Newstalk), Tuesday of last week.



Fr Tim Bartlett.

It was a positive and cheerful interview, with Fr Bartlett enthusiastic that Pope Francis had chosen Ireland as the next venue for this high profile event and quite optimistic about the likelihood of the Pope attending the event. Kenny raised the question of the Pope “embracing modern family configurations”, while Fr Bartlett responded with the idea that not everyone can reach the ideal that we should be working towards. Walking on eggshells there!

Another conversation later that morning impressed me as well. This was the interview with Vincent Doyle on **Today with Seán O'Rourke** (RTÉ Radio 1).

Doyle is the son of a priest and has spearheaded a support initiative for others in the same situation. He had nothing but positive things to say about his priest-father and about the Church's accommodating attitude to his venture, with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin funding the associated website copinginternational.com.

Now a psychotherapist he was still a practising Catholic and combined a deep interest in theology with an empathic approach to humanity.

At one stage presenter Cormac Ó hEadhra suggested to him that he'd have to be angry at the Church at some level.

But no, he wasn't. He accepted that the Church had “created issues” in the past but wanted to concentrate

PICK OF THE WEEK

WHERE GOD WEEPS
EWTN, Saturday (night),
September 2, 2am

A local bishop discusses ethnic and religious tensions in Nigeria and Boko Haram's cruel acts of terror.

BROKEN

RTÉ One, Wednesday,
September 6, 10.40pm

BBC's drama about a troubled priest (Sean Bean) in a northern England city. Deeply moving but can be dismissive of some Church teaching.

Film: THE TREE OF LIFE
Channel 4, Wednesday
(night), September 6,
1.30am

(2011) Terrence Malick's challenging drama exploring the tension between brute nature and spiritual grace.

on resolution, and getting into issues like celibacy was a deflection – he thought it unhelpful “to respond to a child-centred situation with adult centred needs” – a point of view that has relevance across several controversial topics.

boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

Love conquers all for confined teenager

Everything Everything (12A)

Maddy has spent most of her 18-year life cooped up in her custom-built California home. Her world is the internet. She can't go outside the door because she suffers from a rare condition SCID (Severe Combined Immuno Deficiency). Translated into English, that means her immune system doesn't work. Any virus could kill her.

She lives with her mother Pauline, a doctor. Her father and brother were killed in a car crash when she was a baby. Besides Pauline, there



Amandla Stenberg and Nick Robinson in *Everything Everything*.

are only two other people in Madeleine's life: her nurse Carla and Carla's daughter Rosa. They have to pass through an antechamber to see her.

One day a new set of neighbours arrive. Maddy looks down at them from her

bedroom window. And falls in love with one of them.

Olly is a loner like herself. They're drawn to one another by their alienation from others. Olly's father is cruel. His mother is trying to work up the courage to leave him.

Maddy and Olly communi-

cate by texts and emails. They wave to one another from their respective windows. They mime words and smile.

And then they meet. Nurse Carla arranges it. They're smitten with one another. “I loved you before I knew you,” Maddy says obliquely to Olly.

Maddy's mother isn't happy about the rendezvous. She dismisses Carla for putting Maddy's life at risk. A more strict nurse replaces her. She gives Maddy less freedom.

But a fire has been lit in her heart. Watching people from windows isn't enough for her anymore. She wants to experience life. She wants to see the sea.

She buys two plane tick-

ets for Olly and herself to go to Hawaii. She tells him she's cured of her malady and he believes her. So they go off, Romeo and Juliet style, on their idyllic holiday.

How will the Hawaiian trip end? Will Maddy die from love? This is what we expect will happen. It's how most Hollywood films about people with strange diseases end. But *Everything, Everything* has a big twist in it. It's the most interesting thing about it. I won't tell you what it is.

Visually it's a bit like a Bounty bar ad. There are dreamy walks on the beach. There are golden sunsets. There are songs.

It's not long before the girl who told Olly she would

“spontaneously combust” if she went outdoors starts jumping from cliffs and swimming underwater like Jacques Cousteau. What's going on?

Don't expect too much reality from this blanc-mange slice of escapism. It's schmaltzy but it still holds your attention, thanks mainly to the charming performances of Amandla Stenberg and Nick Robinson in the leading roles.

Stella Meghie directs. She carries the hermetically-sealed idea even into the outdoors. It was only when I left the cinema it struck me that Maddy and Olly didn't meet a soul during their Hawaiian holiday.

Everything, Everything is clever, clever.

Good
★★★★

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief

Radical & Free: Musings on the Religious Life by Brian O'Leary (Messenger Publications, €10.99)

With vocations seemingly in permanent decline, there is a need, some Catholics might feel, for a book of this kind by an experienced lecturer, to explain to a sceptical age where the sources of a religious vocation lie.

The answer to the vocations problem had traditionally been seen by many in structural definitions. But Fr O'Leary prefers to see the matter to be rooted in the matter of values. This makes his book of special interest, for though the world today may seem indifferent to religious life, there are many people who are deeply alive to the need for values in an age which sometimes seems without them.

He also shows how his insights apply to both the monastic life, which still has its advocates, and the forms of religious life which find their meaning in activities in the wider world, the world in which people actually live.

Though aimed at those in religious life who may wish to refresh their justification for what they are doing with their lives, this book will also interest lay people, especially those to whom the life that the consecrated religious live seems strangely separate from 'real life'.

Come into the Light: Church Interiors for the celebration of the Liturgy

by Daniel McCarthy OSB & James Leachman OSB (Canterbury Press, £18.99)

How often on a holiday trip are tourists inveigled into a church or cathedral which is part of the "heritage" of the place they are visiting. Many people simply do not understand the real purpose of

the things they are seeing, as it was intended they be used. The building becomes merely an aspect of architectural history, deprived in many cases of any religious or spiritual meaning.

This reviewer can recall being at Mass in Notre Dame de Paris, during a visit by Japanese tourists who zealously photographed the small congregation gathered before the altar – doubtless "natives at their quaint religious rites".

There is currently controversy in England over why at Canterbury Cathedral everyone is charged £21.00 – no provision being made for those who wish to pray. Even worse is the situation in St Mark's in Venice, where many thousands of visitors a day from the cruise ships are seen simply as a seen an "a revenue" stream to be passed through as quickly as possible.

But the authors of this book, rich with examples taken from all ages, explain in straightforward and not-pietistic language exactly what the continuing purpose of every part of the church is there for.

This is a book to be highly recommended to everyone who has anything to do with churches in any way. While it will be invaluable for art historian to whom these building often seem to have nothing but an aesthetic value, it will also greatly interest those who wish to deepen their appreciation of what was done in churches in the past, what is done to-day, and, let it be said, what the evolving liturgy of the future will create.



Behind the gates of the Magdalen Homes



The monasteries, magdalen asylums and reformatory schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland 1853 – 1973

by Jacinta Prunty (Columba Press, €34.99)

J. Anthony Gaughan

I found Jacinta Prunty's account of the institutions of the congregation of Our Lady of Charity both magisterial and immensely satisfying. But here I must declare a personal interest.

With other duties I served in the 1960's as chaplain to St Mary's Magdalen Home in Donnybrook, which was conducted by a similar congregation, the Religious Sisters of Charity. I witnessed at first hand the generosity of the sisters as they spent their lives helping the women and girls in their charge and noted their solicitude for each one of them.

This history reveals something of what lies in the past that created the kindness and solicitude I witnessed.

Request

This archival based study begins with an account of the establishment of the first Our Lady of Charity Refuge in Dublin. At the request of Fr John Smith of Ss Michael & John's parish four sisters and a novice, from the convent of Notre Dame de Charité at Caen in Normandy, took possession of No.2 Drumcondra Road in September 1853.

The sisters found the early years in the new foundation challenging, owing mainly to the tendency of Fr Smith to interfere in their daily routine. However, after Dr Bartholomew Woodlock,

president of nearby All Hallows College, was appointed their spiritual director and following a transfer to High Park their work in caring for women, girls and children on the margins of society began in earnest.

The sisters at High Park were strongly influenced by the constitutions and traditions of the mother house at Caen, which had been founded by St

Jacinta Prunty details the developments at High Park from 1853 onwards. St Joseph's, a reformatory school, was established in 1859. At different times it cared for up to 80 children. It morphed into an industrial school in 1927 and became a national school in 1941-55. Because of endemic poverty, severe want and neglect, children found

Prunty refers to the media-driven distorted and negative image of the sisters and their work among the public at large. Typical of this distortion is Peter Mullan's *The Magdalen Sisters*, where the nuns are portrayed as sadists, punishing young girls with impunity and in the name of religion. Far more than most, the sisters have been the victims of so-called 'fake news'.

“Hopefully this comprehensive monograph will help people realise what a debt is owed to the sisters of Our Lady of Charity”

In one of the excellent illustrations in the book there is a classic example of this. It depicts the May Procession in Seán MacDermott Street parish in 1965, in which women and girls from the refuge, clad in their Child of Mary cloaks, are walking. Also walking in this procession are members of the Gardaí.

A number of media outlets and at least one 'scholarly' work claimed in recent years that the picture showed that the Gardaí were on duty to prevent the women and the girls from escaping the clutches of the nuns! Hopefully this comprehensive and meticulously researched monograph will help people realise what a debt is owed to the sisters of the institutions of Our Lady of Charity and the other sisters engaged in the refuge ministry for caring for some of the most deprived and vulnerable members of our society during the past 150 years.



Jacinta Prunty.

John Eudes (canonised 1925) in 1641. As set out by the founder, its aim was to provide a house, where women who wished to turn their lives around from crime or prostitution could feel safe and secure.

Between 1641 and 1891, 34 other foundations were established throughout Europe, the US and Canada. Sisters from High Park established the refuge at Gloucester Street / SeánMacDermott Street in 1887 and foundations at Kilmacud and Kill of the Grange in 1944 and 1956.

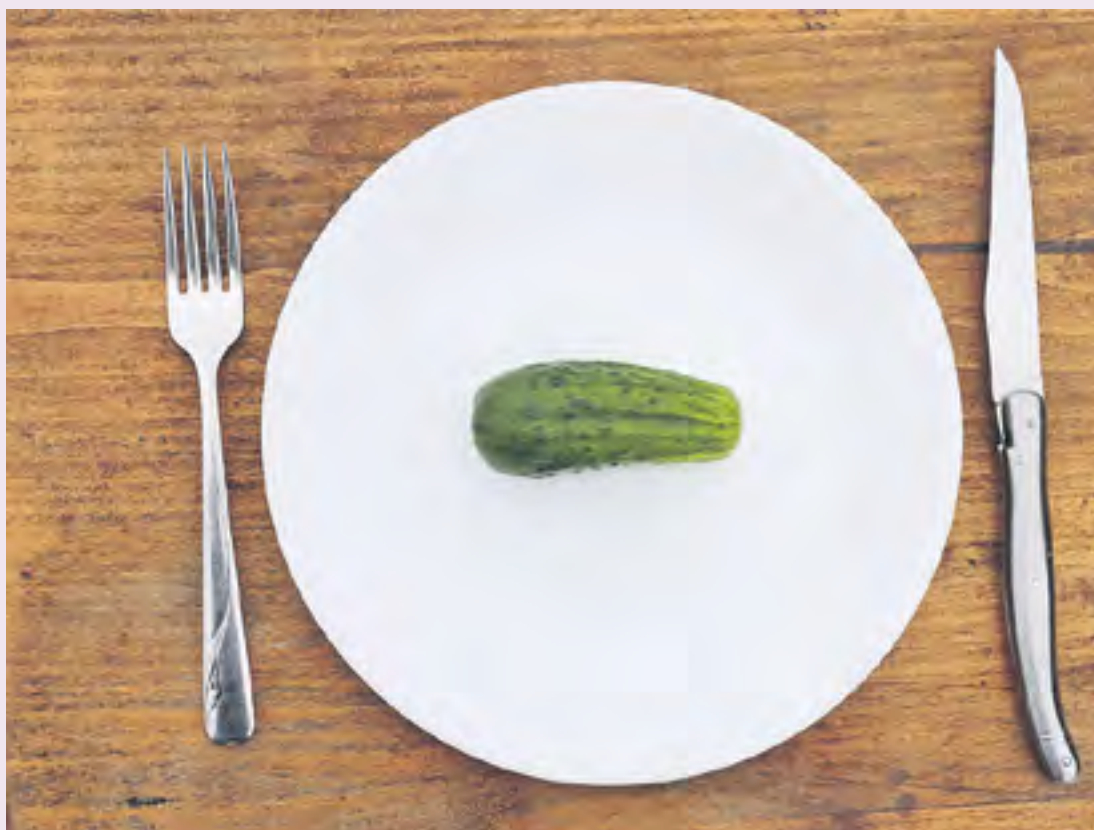
At the convent in Angers in France some changes were made to the constitutions, and thereafter it became the motherhouse of what became known as Good Shepherd convents. Four of these were opened in Ireland as follows: Waterford (1858), New Ross (1860), Belfast (1867) and Cork (1870).

themselves in this and other industrial schools. They simply had nowhere else to go for assistance.

Every aspect of life in those schools is examined by the author with copious references to official reports and the conclusions of frequent inspections. Of particular interest were the development of hostels and teenage units, 1950 -72, in all three monasteries (High Park, Seán MacDermott Street and St Anne's, Kilmacud).

Very often the Our Lady of Charity refuges are referred to as 'Magdalen Laundries'. The author records that the sisters who ran these refuges were dismissive of the term laundries! Laundries were simply a means for generating an income and in them the sisters worked side by side with the women and girls in the refuge.

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.



Eating well is the best revenge

The Angry Chef: Bad Science and the Truth about Healthy Eating
by Anthony Warner
(One World, £12.99)

Peter Hegarty

Warner's love of food in all its variety and versatility greatly enlivens his provocative, most entertaining book.

He argues that healthy eating involves moderate consumption of a wide range of foods. The odd treat – a bag of crisps, a biscuit – does us no harm. The bag of chips that rounds off a jolly day at the beach with the family surely does more to enhance our sense of well-being than a day on the Grapefruit Diet. What we need is dietary advice, not diets, he suggests.

With great wit and the careful employment of expletives, he makes a powerful case against what he calls 'nutribollocks' – superfoods and wonder diets and their 'charlatan' advocates.

The claims the charlatans make tend to be exaggerated rather than false.

Craze

Take the current craze for coconut-oil, an ordinary saturated fat, for which Gwyneth Paltrow is largely responsible. Extra-virgin coconut-oil has a greater level of anti-oxidants and polyphenols than the refined variety. But that is about

it, according to the nutritionists.

Who are the charlatans?

Some are money-grubbers or the shills of corporations. Many, though, are true believers, perhaps with 'alternative' backgrounds, people predisposed to believe that certain foods or substances have special properties.

“Research increases knowledge and fresh knowledge in turn changes attitudes: dairy is in favour again”

Why are the charlatans thriving? Warner believes that they exploit the uncertainty surrounding food and diet.

What is good for some of us is not good for others. If a nutritionist tells you that drinking a glass of red wine a day may benefit your health, he also needs to warn you against drinking alcohol if you are pregnant, or if your brain is still developing, or if there is a history of alcoholism in your family.

Research increases knowledge and fresh knowledge in turn changes attitudes: dairy is in favour again; free radicals are not as evil as we once believed they were, and so on, and on.

When it comes to food and



Anthony Warner.

diet there are no hard rules. Charlatans are flourishing in an age when information tends to spread horizontally.

However, food professionals need not engage the cranks in debate. As Anthony Warner so ably demonstrates, ridicule is the best way to deal with the ridiculous.

The World of Books

By the books editor

Donald Trump, discipline and history

In the middle decades of the last century the *National Geographic* – then a magazine well worth reading – carried in the back pages a section of small ads for, among other things, elite schools.

A feature of these were the ads for Military Academies. These were nothing to do with the US Army. They were private schools, largely for the wealthy, which offered to the parents of troublesome, boisterous boys who were not progressing academically the prospect of good grades, self control and personal-esteem. They were designed to make real men of wimps.

In the education offered by these schools to youths between 12 and 18 were emphasised self-discipline and a knowledge of America's great past, and also a sense of integrity.

When Donald Trump's parents discovered that, aged 13, he had been making secret trips into Manhattan they packed him off to the New York Military Academy, 60 miles deep in the country.

This was a well-known institution, founded in 1889. The school was strict: it set great store by the 'Cadet Honour Code' it adopted from West Point (the US Army's Saint-Cyr): "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal or tolerate those who do."

Though a Presbyterian, Trump's first university-level education was provided by the Jesuit-run Fordham University. But the Jesuits could do little with him. He later switched to a college that offered real-estate studies. Despite that Military Academy, he was not drafted in the Vietnam War, nor was he in the Reserve Officer Training Corps at college – a group held in deep suspicion by liberal students at my university.

“Before he became President, Trump claimed it was his greatest achievement. It was his favourite book ‘next to the Bible’”

What puzzles me about Trump's education is that it seems not to have left much mark on his mind. He certainly admires the US Army and its generals, but in much the same way as baseball fans admire the best players in their team.

But from the New York Military Academy Trump seems to have gained little sense of personal discipline – the sort of demeanour one sees in his present Chief of Staff, the steely General John Kelly.

Nor, to the amazement of many, does he seem to have absorbed even the most basic facts about US history as known to every school child. Of course, to take an interest in history requires one to be interested in the experiences of other people, even other nations. For such an extremely self-centred person as Trump this seems to be impossible.

But a lack of knowledge, or even interest in history, is certainly strange in a US President. As we all know, most politicians, of whatever colour, in whatever culture, are history geeks, as the Americans say.

Jack Kennedy, for instance, not only constantly read history books, he even wrote one (albeit with the



Tony Schwartz and President Donald Trump.

assistance of Ted Sorensen). This was the once widely read best-seller *Profiles in Courage*, which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1957.

Without entering into the controversy over exactly how much of the book is Kennedy's and how much Sorensen's, these essays on leaders who stood in defiance over matters of conscience against their parties and their supporters remains a still relevant book for anyone in public life. It admires a standard of behaviour.

Bestseller

But Trump, too, has managed a bestseller in *The Art of the Deal*. But whereas Kennedy aimed at a conscience-driven stance, the 'art of the deal' extols a destructive model of life and commerce. This really was a 'ghosted' book, being completely written by journalist Tony Schwartz, in the writing of which Trump had no role.

Yet before he became President, Trump claimed it was his greatest achievement. It was his favourite book "next to the Bible".

Schwartz, a graduate in American studies, and author of *What Really Matters: Searching for Wisdom in America*, predicted this month that Trump will resign before the end of the year, rather than go to jail.

So it seems that in Trump's case the New York Military Academy was a failure, leaving him ill-educated. The school itself declined when ideas about education changed. It closed, only to be reopened by a group of Chinese investors. Now there is a nation which certainly believes in the virtues of discipline and historical knowledge.

Classifieds

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

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Archdiocese of Dublin

Post Primary Diocesan Advisor

SECONDMENT FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & SKILLS

The Diocesan Advisor, reporting to the Episcopal Vicar for Education, supports religious education (RE) in post-primary schools. This work involves liaising and working with school principals, teachers, chaplains and Diocesan Agencies and dealing with any queries / problems while keeping the Episcopal Vicar informed of issues that arise at post-primary level.

The Education Secretariat

The Education Secretariat is a support and advisory service to Boards of Management of schools by:

- Training boards of managements
- Promoting and monitoring religious education at primary and post-primary levels
- Providing in-service training in the teaching of religious education for principals and teachers
- Providing religious education resources to schools

The successful applicant for this vacancy will:

- Support the central position of religious education as part of the curriculum
- Support the development of a school's Religious Education Policy
- Engage with schools and partners in education
- Prepare resources to assist RE teachers of examination and non-examination classes
- In partnership with other diocesan services, promote and encourage links between school and parish

Requirements:

- Have a Primary degree in Education. A Master's degree in Education is desirable
- Be registered as a current member of the Teaching Council of Ireland
- Have the ability to work as part of a team and work collaboratively with others
- Have a full driver's licence and the use of a car
- Possess excellent interpersonal skills with an ability to deal with sensitive situations
- Have excellent organisational skills with up-to-date IT skills

Applications:

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

Applications should be made by email to Ms. Judith Maxwell, HR Manager, judith.maxwell@dublindiocese.ie Please insert 'Diocesan Advisor' in the subject line.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 5pm, Wednesday 6th September 2017.

Archdiocese of Dublin

Roman Catholic Chaplain

MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY,
CO. KILDARE

The Chaplaincy Service works to provide care and support for students, to enable each individual to make the most of their opportunities at third-level. It is a first contact for all students, to determine the personal supports which may be required, to provide a pastoral care and spiritual support facility for students and to contribute to the development and delivery of the Student Services function with Maynooth University Campus.

The successful applicant for this vacancy will:

- Work within agreed structural arrangements as outlined by the Diocesan Education Secretariat
- Maintain a campus-wide presence and perspective
- Have a capacity to respond, intervene and be present at times of trauma, crisis, illness and grief affecting students
- Offer a bridge to, and support for, other professional services on campus (e.g. counselling, health budgeting, access)
- Recognise and respond to the specific needs experienced at the beginning, middle and end of an academic year and of an academic career
- To foster a quality relationship with all levels of academic and support activity (student services, clubs and societies, students' union and other support services)
- Beyond the campus, to keep a confidential link to family, neighbourhood, church / parish, where appropriate, and a supportive link to vulnerable communities and individuals, where possible
- To contribute to the overall development of support services for students on the Maynooth University campus

Requirements:

- Be a baptised Roman Catholic committed to the ethos of the Archdiocese of Dublin
- Hold a primary degree in theology or equivalent
- Have formal training for ministry preferably at a post-graduate level, including relevant pastoral experience
- Advanced counselling/facilitation skills with up-to-date IT skills
- An ability to deliver adult faith formation initiatives

Applications:

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

Applications should be made by email to Ms. Judith Maxwell, HR Manager, judith.maxwell@dublindiocese.ie Please insert 'Maynooth University Chaplain' in the subject line.

The closing date for receipt of applications is Sunday 3rd September 2017. Interviews may take place from 6th September 2017.



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If you would like further information please contact Trocaire, Maynooth, Co. Kildare



01-629 3333
info@trocaire.ie
www.trocaire.org

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 197



- ACROSS**

1 You might sprinkle it on your chips (7)

7 Adam and Eve ate this fruit (5)

8 Closest (7)

9 A game like rugby or basketball (5)

10 Take part in a play (3)

12 Bigger (6)

15 Lets, permits (6)

17 Snoozing (6)

18 If you make a mistake writing with this, you can rub it out (6)

19 Gobbled (3)

20 Newspaper bosses (7)
- 1 This person thinks it's fun to damage things (6)

2 In the Bible, he built the Ark (4)

3 Athens is its capital city (6)

4 They followed the Pied Piper (4)

5 In the Nursery Rhyme, the Dish ran away with it (5)

6 Send a written message by phone (4)

10 Said "Yes" to (6)

11 Caught in a snare (7)

13 Help (6)

14 A place in space like Mars or Jupiter (6)

16 Gives something away for money (5)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.313

Across – 1 Vocabulary 6 Scat 10 Lying 11 Persecute 12 Tintern Abbey 15 Igloo 17 Exam 18 Trip 21 Holdall 23 Rambo 24 Cake 25 Lava 26 Topsy 28 Larceny 33 Uniformed 34 Whale 35 Kate 36 Corned beef

Down – 1 Vole 2 Criticism 3 Bigot 4 Leper 5 Rare 7 Cruel 8 The Holy See 9 Decimal point 13 Echo 14 New Deal 16 Star-struck 20 Brainwave 21 Holy Joe 22 Lear 29 Add on 30 Cowed 31 Ambo 32 Leaf

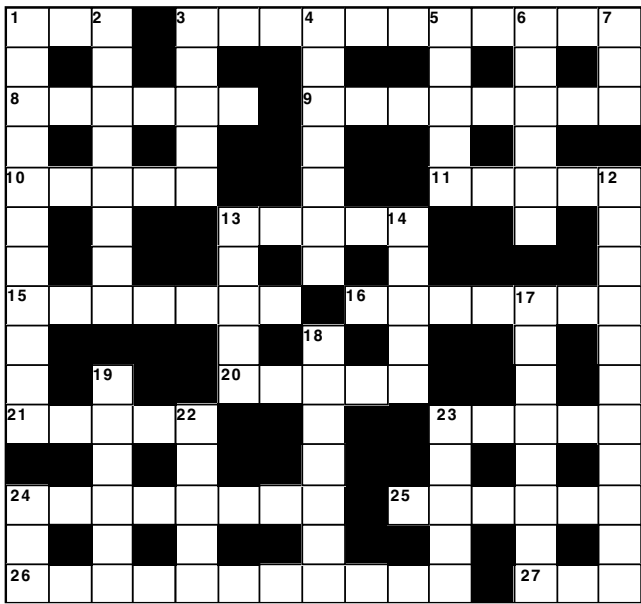
CHILDREN'S No.196

Across – 1 Cricket 4 Sea 7 Alligator 8 Pan 9 Statues 11 Snug 12 Bank 13 Movie 14 Boss 15 Sail

Down – 1 Champagne 2 Island 3 Exact 5 Atlas 6 Cotton wool 9 Sadness 10 English 12 Book

Crossword

Gordius 314



- ACROSS**

1 Gratuity (3)

3 Insist scars are treated? Such vain people! (11)

8 Sarcastic or unexpected (6)

9 & 15a Natural aptitudes, gifts from above (3-5,7)

10 Banishment (5)

11 Explode like a volcano (5)

13 During Christian service, a character provides marine uprights (5)

15 See 9 across

16 A movie or show such as La La Land or South Pacific (7)

20 Gleamed, radiated (5)

21 Perhaps the safe contains a hot bundle (5)

23 Dither, be uncertain (5)

24 The sailor worked out how to be forgiven (8)

25 The saint will acquire bread at a leisurely pace (6)

26 & 14d Condiment often served with roast beef (11,5)

27 Distress signal from a so-and-so? (1.1.1.)
- movement (11)

2 & 7d Oops, darling has upset a character from a parable! (8,3)

3 Din (5)

4 Most wary (7)

5 Some of those guests can make a smooth transition (5)

6 Enjoy the flavour (6)

7 See 2 down

12 Is the looter still upset by these paper products? (6,5)

13 Legends (5)

14 See 26 across

17 Strangely hot vices identify hills on the England-Scotland border! (8)

18 Dog the editor pursued aggressively (7)

19 A puzzling problem (6)

22 Untrue (5)

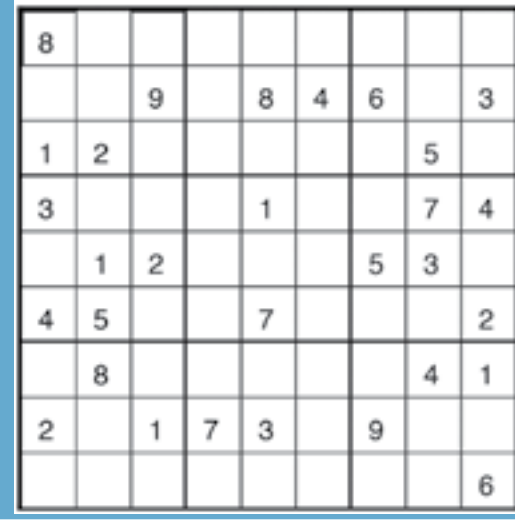
23 Keep an eye on the timepiece (5)

24 Burnt tree? (3)

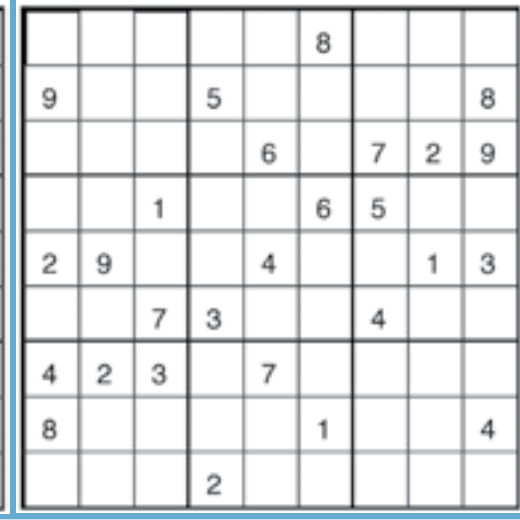
Sudoku Corner

197

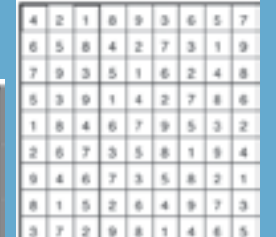
Easy



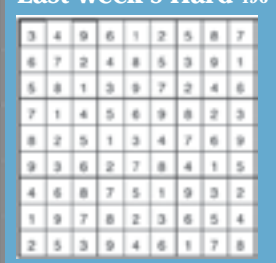
Hard



Last week's Easy 196



Last week's Hard 196



Reaching out means stepping outside church gates

ONE OF THE great challenges that Pope Francis is setting before the Church is the need for Catholics to get out of their comfort zones and bring the Gospel closer to people. Francis likes to talk about the absolute urgent need to reach out to what he describes as the “existential margins” or “peripheries” of our modern world. (Of course, there’s a bit of a paradox because – at least in the western world – the Church itself increasingly finds itself on the existential margins in an increasingly secular environment, but that’s another discussion.)

The Pope’s point is that the Church will not be renewed by Catholics sitting around together in churches wondering why those who don’t come to Mass stay away. If we want to reach out to people, it means going beyond the church gates and being present in the places where people go.

It also means that community has to be the starting point of any authentic renewal of the Church. Often we start at the wrong place, we start at inviting people to come to Mass without realising that without a community to support us, faith can often falter. This is why so many young people give up the practise of

their faith when they go to college unless they are involved in a vibrant chaplaincy or parish where they meet like-minded people.

Faith

We often speak of the Faith as being characterised by truth, beauty and goodness. Those who are attracted to the Christian life by a experience of truth and beauty are few and far between. More often than not, it is the goodness and witness of those who call

themselves Christian that attracts people (which is a daunting responsibility).

Community was very much the focus at the ‘Picnic in Punchestown’ organised at the weekend by Kildare and Leighlin diocese (see pages 10-11). More than 4,000 people came together to celebrate at the venue better known as a racecourse. It was an extraordinary initiative and Bishop Denis Nulty and his team deserve huge praise for having the courage to try something new.

There was no ‘hard sell’ at Punchestown. The agenda was simple: to bring people together in the context of next year’s World Meeting of Families in Dublin.

It would be great to see more initiatives like this. The Church is fundamentally a community of believers coming together to worship God and to work to make the world a better place. But, before the worship and outreach can happen, a community has to be built and nurtured.

When it comes to secular influence in the appointment of bishops, there is no more egregious example than the notorious veto that used to be part of the process of electing a new Pope.

As recently as the conclave of 1903, the cardinals were in the process of electing Mariano Rampolla when the Emperor of Austria used his traditional prerogative to block the election.

Giuseppe Sarto was instead elected as Pope Pius X. The following year, the new Pope moved to abolish the veto once and for all and remove secular influence from the process of electing a Pope.

Recently declassified files released by the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) have revealed that the British government lobbied following the death of Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich to have a successor who might be seen as less critical of British policy in the North. The late cardinal had been a trenchant critic of Britain’s human rights abuses in the region. London, evidently, wanted someone who they felt would be a bit more passive.

In the end, Pope John Paul II chose then Bishop of Down and Connor Cahal Daly as the Primate of All-Ireland. It would be foolish, however, to think that even though Dr Daly would’ve been seen as more sympathetic to the British position, the Vatican was heavily influenced.

Rome has been appointing bishops for the best part of 2,000 years. The Pope has also been exchanging ambassadors with secular powers for some 1,700 years.

It won’t be the first time that the Holy See will have been lobbied about the appointment of a bishop, and Rome is well-versed in handling such lobbying.

Voices

One can also be sure that the British were not alone in their lobbying. I have no doubt that authorities in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin were also keen to make their voices heard in Rome about the appointment of the country’s most-senior Churchman.


Of course, the fact that the British archives are now released a decade ahead of records in Dublin means that we’re always left guessing at what was going on in the minds of the Irish authorities.


This will become increasingly problematic as the history of the peace process continues to be written.


It will be a shame indeed if the story is one that is told in a one-sided fashion because the Dublin archives are released later.

➊ See page 6.

Notorious veto







VULNERABLE, MALNOURISHED PEOPLE

IN KENYA NEED YOUR HELP URGENTLY

“Please help us support 150 children, 200 mothers and 80 elderly and terminally ill,” writes Sr Modesta Karuri to the Little Way Association from East Pokot Medical Project, Kenya.

She continues: “A 10-month drought has killed livestock and armed conflict has closed the markets and the roads. Malnutrition among pregnant mothers increases the risk of miscarriages, premature births, anaemia and low weight babies, so we desperately need to give mothers folic acid, iron sulphate and food supplements. Malnourished children can’t absorb medication and elderly women have no one to support them. Unicef left here in February, so people are now imploring the church to provide healthcare and food. Please Little Way we need your assistance urgently!”

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IC/08/31