

# The Irish Catholic

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In his own words  
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# Pro-life means supporting women – Bishop Kelly



Greg Daly

The Church must do everything possible to support women facing crisis pregnancies, the new Bishop of Galway has said.

Dr Brendan Kelly told *The Irish Catholic* that Church and society need to "support them in every way that we possibly can if there's a child on the way" pointing out that people must be unafraid to say that "it is a baby that's on the way from the very first moment".

"That's how people see it when they want a baby, that's how it's always described," he said.

### Installation

Speaking following his installation as Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora on Sunday Bishop Kelly said Ireland's constitutional protections for unborn children had clearly saved lives, and said it was vitally important to help mothers in need.

Noting how a willingness to miss the value of even the weakest human lives has become clear in jurisdictions with established abortion laws, Dr Kelly expressed a concern that such disregard can spread to attitudes towards older people and said that time spent in a French L'Arche comm-

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## A picture paints a thousand words



Activists at the launch of a new nationwide billboard campaign to highlight the humanity of the unborn child in the context of the forthcoming referendum on the Eighth Amendment. The campaign – run by The Iona Institute – shows the image of an 11-week unborn child and carries the simple slogan 'One of Us'. See Page 15.

Some couples 'too poor to tie the knot'

Chai Brady

Young couples hoping to tie the knot may get some reprieve from wedding costs as parish halls are encouraged to open for evening receptions.

It comes as new research suggests that some couples are just too poor to get married.

Bishop Denis Nulty – head of the Church's marriage agency Accord – told *The Irish Catholic* that using parish facilities to help couples reduce "prohibitive" wedding costs is something parishes are keen to promote.

Bishop Nulty said the Church encourages couples to be "thrifty" in the receptions they organise and that the parish community, and the advice of older married couples, can play a role in mitigating expense.

"Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia* says this very thing. We need to revise how we celebrate Sacraments, particularly marriage in the parish community. He talks about accompanying the couple in the early stages of engagement," Bishop

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**Managing Editor:** Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

**Features Editor:** Mags Gargan, mags@irishcatholic.ie

**Chief Reporter:** Greg Daly, greg@irishcatholic.ie

**Northern Correspondent:** Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie

**Newsroom:** news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874029

**Books Editor:** Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

**Layout:** Declan Moroney

**Advertising:** advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

**Accounts:** accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

**Magnificat:** magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  
9.30am–5.30pm

**Shop:** shop@irishcatholic.ie

**Managing Director:** Garry O'Sullivan

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# Support for women is key to defeating culture of death

Often the Church is accused of holding up difficult ideals while not acting to help people try to achieve these ideals. The charge is, of course, false – helping others is of the essence of Christianity. Often you'll hear people who are supporting of the campaign to remove the right to life of unborn children from the Constitution accuse pro-life campaigners of not doing enough to alleviate poverty – as if standing up for the unborn requires activists to tackle every social ill. Usually, it is a diversionary tactic known as 'whataboutery' – the idea is to deflect arguments by constantly raising other issues.

Of course, those who advocate for the right to life of the unborn – the right to be born must see their pro-life ethic as consistent.

### Poverty eradication

The Church has always understood things like opposition to abortion, poverty eradication and end of life care as part of the same thing. Bishop Brendan Kelly is this week articulating that consistent ethic (see page one).



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

That's why women experiencing difficulty in pregnancy or approaching childbirth with a sense of trepidation must be at the heart of our thinking. Women who opt for abortion often see it as a solution to a real dilemma that they face.

**“Many pro-life and Church-based organisations discreetly offer support to women who are experiencing a crisis pregnancy”**

If we wish to tell them that it is never the answer to a dilemma – no matter how profound, we must not only tell them, but show them. This will sometimes mean putting our

money where our mouth is.

Already, many pro-life and Church-based organisations discreetly offer support to women who are experiencing a crisis pregnancy or feel that they cannot face pregnancy alone and isolated.

We have to ensure that women know this support is available to them so that they see there is a better way than abortion. When you meet women who were considering abortion but choose life instead, they will often tell you about a decisive intervention by a person or an organisation that helped them see that they would be able to cope after all.

Raising a child is difficult, it can be daunting – particularly if people feel unsupported. It is our responsibility to let people know that they are not alone.

## Pro-life means supporting women – Bishop Kelly

» Continued from Page 1

munity had transformed his understanding of our duties to each other.

Describing how he had learned to “look after and cherish and care for the very bodies of people” who had to “surrender themselves into your hands because they had no other choice”, Dr Kelly said of this sense of responsibility to our fellow human beings and to those who can care for them: “This is why we must help mothers and why our society must give every possible support to mothers and

their lives”.

Pointing to CURA, the Church's national crisis pregnancy counselling service, as an example of a support that can be offered to help expecting mothers in difficult situations, Dr Kelly said: “I'd be very, very clear that we have to love both mother and child, and I think we can offer much more to mothers who are in difficult situations than simply abortion.

“We have to take better care of our women, of our mothers, than that. There are so many other supports that they can be given,” he said.

## Some couples ‘too poor to tie the knot’

» Continued from Page 1

Nulty said before blessing an engaged couple at the Shrine of St Valentine in Whitefriar Church in Dublin.

“The Accord course would be part of it, other things would be being supported by older married couples in the parish community and part of that would be letting the parish community look after the simplest possible wedding reception that comes at a very low cost to the couple” he added.

### New report

It comes as a new report ‘Mind the Gap: Marriage and Family by Social Class’, shows that for many people – particularly from more socially disadvantaged communities – the dream of walking down the aisle will never become a reality.

Statistics from the North's Statistics and Research Agency show that 60.7% of upper professional workers (‘Social Class A’) aged 18-49 are married, compared with just 32.7% of unskilled or elementary workers (‘Social Class I’).

➊ See page 6.

## Quick and easy Gospel reflections

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(Sir 32:8)



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# 70th cure reaffirms Lourdes' importance – Irish doctor

**Greg Daly**

The Irish doctor on the Lourdes International Medical Committee has said it was “truly amazing” to be present when the shrine’s 70th formally-recognised miraculous cure was announced.

Sr Bernadette Moriau of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus began suffering from sciatic nerve pain in 1996 at the age of 27, and over time developed related ailments and became partially paralysed.

In July 2008 she returned home from Lourdes in, if anything, a worse condition than before, but on July 11, while in Adoration in her community chapel at the same time as the Eucharistic Procession was taking place in Lourdes, she experienced a sensation of laxity and warmth, and felt as though an interior voice was asking her to remove her various supports.

## Knowledge

Following medical examinations and several meetings, the Lourdes International Medical Committee ruled in 2016 that the cure had been “unexplained according to current scientific knowledge”.

Dr Michael Moran told *The Irish Catholic* that it is “really unusual” to find a medical case that meets the Church’s stand-

ards for ruling on whether cures really are inexplicable.

“The stringency of the code followed by the Comité Médical International de Lourdes (CMIL) is such that only the most rigorously assessed cases can be determined to be inexplicable,” he said. “The vote for this case took place in 2016, and was almost unanimous.

“The Committee were presented with robust medical evidence, a clear account of events, and were satisfied as to the permanence of the cure.”

Commenting on the “palpable energy and joy” in Lourdes’ Basilica of St Pius X when the Bishops of Lourdes and Beauvais declared the cure miraculous, Dr Moran said: “This was the first case considered by CMIL that I was asked to vote on, and so to be able to be present in the Basilica for the announcement and subsequent press conference was truly amazing.

“I suddenly felt very privileged to have my role in Lourdes, and feeling the atmosphere in the underground Basilica made me feel how relevant and important Lourdes, and the Catholic faith, is in the modern world,” he continued.

“With this came a renewed vigour for my work in Ireland to support Lourdes pilgrimages, and I look forward to all that 2018 will bring.”

## Trócaire’s Lenten campaign begins



Kumba (7) from Sierra Leone will feature in one million homes as Trócaire boxes go nationwide. Launching the Lenten appeal, Trócaire warns of ‘a lost generation’ across conflict-affected countries.

Over one million Trócaire boxes will be delivered to homes and schools across Ireland this week in order to raise funds for vulnerable people globally.

The charity’s Lenten campaign is Ireland’s largest fundraiser and saw €8.5m donated last year.

This year’s campaign focuses upon the Koroma family in Freetown, Sierra Leone, who were affected by recent landslides in their area. Featured on the Trócaire box is seven-year-old Kumba from Sierra Leone, whose home was destroyed in the mudslide six months ago.

Kumba and her family were almost killed, but narrowly avoided the mudslide before it enveloped their home, possessions and work tools. The whole community was devastated. Only 20% survived. Estimates put the number of dead at 500.

## Response

Trócaire responded to the disaster by providing emergency kits with essential supplies and counselling to help survivors. It also helped families rebuild their homes, businesses and livelihoods.

Eamonn Meehan, Trócaire’s executive director, said, “By supporting Trócaire this Lent you can help people like Kumba and her family to rebuild their lives after disaster and tragedy strike.”

It is expected that the money collected this year will support over two million people throughout the world.

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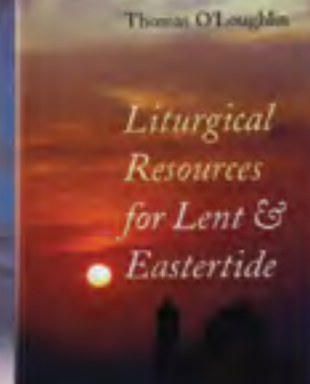
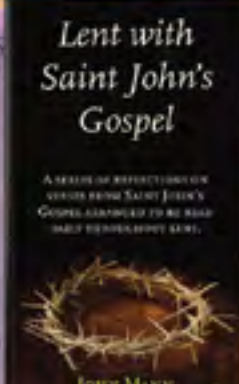
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# Few asylum seekers to benefit from work green light

Chai Brady

Despite a Supreme Court ruling that the ban on asylum seekers working is unconstitutional, Bishop Kevin Doran has warned that the Government's minimalist approach to the ruling will mean very few people in direct provision will benefit.

Bishop Kevin Doran welcomed the court's decision, but said it was "disappointing" that the Government's interim arrangement puts so many limits on the employment prospects of asylum seekers.

"With such a minimalist response to the Supreme Court judgement, very few asylum seekers will actually benefit from the judgement. This does not reflect the equality of dignity or the compassion which is so often promoted as a core value of our society in Ireland," the Elphin bishop said.

The current scheme requires those in direct provision to pay €500 to €1,000 for six to 12-month employment permits respectively. This is despite asylum seekers having a weekly allowance of just €21.60.

Employers can only hire someone in direct provision if they can't find a suitable candidate from Ireland or the EU. In addition asylum seekers can only work in a job that pays at least €30,000 a year – which points to the scheme focusing on only highly skilled people.

## Application

Shepherd Machayah has been in a direct provision centre in Portlaoise for two years, and was recently successful in his application to DCU's University of Sanctuary scholarship programme.

"In one way it's great news, in another, it's not. For example what they are saying is

the job you are applying for should be €30,000 a year. You're not supposed to just go out and get any job and work, no," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

Mr Machayah is currently studying Management of Information Technology and Information Systems, and said: "I'm starting university now, if I manage to do well – if I get a job, what is the entry point salary? Some jobs could be less than €30,000 with a degree."

Asylum seekers will also not be allowed to work in over 60 areas including social work, childcare, hospitality, healthcare, housekeeping, sales, administration, printing, housekeeping and food.

The Department of Justice has described it as a temporary measure remaining for four months until a EU directive is fully implemented and a work-permit scheme is drawn up.

See page 13.

## It's the Dominican way of life for Mary



Sr Mary Cathy Howard OP from Finglas, Co. Dublin with Sr Niamh Galvin OP, after Sr Cathy made her Solemn Profession at Monastery of St Catherine of Siena, The Twenties, Drogheda in the presence of family, friends from the Legion of Mary, and Dominican friars and sisters from her community. Young women interested in learning more about the way of Life of Dominican Nuns are welcome to join the sisters for the weekend March 9-11, 2018 and should see [www.dominicannun.ie](http://www.dominicannun.ie) or email [siena3@eircom.net](mailto:siena3@eircom.net) for details.

## Enforce rules to tackle 'feverish' rent rises, Focus urges

Ireland's rising rents are "like a fever", Focus Ireland has said, calling for the Government to implement rules effectively. Commenting on a DAFT report revealing average national rents to be €1,227 per month, with rents on the rise nationwide, Focus Ireland Advocacy Director Mike Allen said Ireland's housing system is "truly dysfunctional".

"These massive rent increases are like a fever that needs to be controlled if we are not to see thousands of families, including those on decent wages, forced out of their homes," he said, adding that a lack of monitoring was

undermining Government attempts at holding back rent increases.

Mr Allen also drew attention to how there were just 3,143 properties available to rent nationwide on February 1, with under 1,350 homes available to rent in Dublin compared to almost 6,700 at the same point in 2009.

"We are deeply concerned that because the limited amount of new rental available there will be fewer opportunities to move out of homelessness and people will be stuck in emergency accommodation for longer," he said.

## Nuncio urges Catholics not to be afraid to proclaim their Faith

Colm Fitzpatrick

Many Catholics feel they have to keep their heads down because their faith attracts criticism from the dominant culture, the Papal Nuncio has warned.

Archbishop Jude Okolo told a gathering in Galway in the weekend that it was also disappointing that the media tends to focus on negativity – particularly when it comes

to reporting on the Church. He added that as a former journalist, he understood the parochialism and sometimes insidious nature of the media, he said this should not deter people from having hope in the Church.

"I too am a journalist. I understand it. They will just pull you down and criticise you and then go to your files and see if there are some ghosts in the cupboard," he said. Despite this, he said,

Catholics should not be afraid, stressing that if God is put first in people's lives it is hard to lose hope.

He said discouragement and disillusionment amongst followers of the Church was not a new thing and that Catholics were denying their faith out of fear of being branded conservatives and traditionalists.

Speaking at the Festival of Faith Conference, the Nuncio prayed for forgiveness for the

times the Church has let people down.

"One of the first things I want to do here today, on behalf of the Holy Father is to close my eyes and say I am sorry. We are sorry; for creating the disappointment. Just like Peter, who wept bitterly, I'm saying we are sorry. I am sorry for whatever discouragement and disappointment we created for you. May the Lord forgive us, amen," he said.

## Good news for Bangor band

A Co. Down folk group has topped the USA Christian album charts with the equivalent of 9,000 album sales.

Rend Collective, a Bangor-based Christian band who met through a Bible group formed by the band's drummer, are planning a US tour after topping Billboard's Christian album charts for their third time with *Good*

*News*. Seven of their singles have also been successful in the Billboard ratings, placing them on the Hot Christian Songs chart.

Americans tend to see the band as "happy-go-lucky Irish people talking about Jesus", lead vocalist Chris Llewellyn told *The Sunday Times*, explaining that while the band were

excited at their chart success, that wasn't what motivated them.

"This album's called *Good News* for a reason," he said. "We see our purpose as to announce good news. There's so much bad news and negativity out there. We just want to be a message of positivity, hope and light that we think we find in Jesus."

## Swinford priest to run Achonry

Fr Dermot Meehan has been elected Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese of Achonry, following last Sunday's installation of Bishop Brendan Kelly as the new Bishop of Galway, Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh. Fr Meehan, who will continue in his ministry as parish Priest of Swinford, Co. Mayo, will now be responsible for the day-to-day running

of the diocese and will represent it at plenary meetings of the Irish Episcopal Conference in Maynooth.

The Diocese of Achonry, which includes parts of counties Mayo, Roscommon, and Sligo, has a Catholic population of 34,826 and 30 active priests, consists of 23 parishes and 48 churches.

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# The link between pregnancy and housing



**Mary Kenny**

**N**ell McCafferty made an apt point when she participated in a discussion celebrating the centenary of the women's vote on last weekend's *Sunday with Miriam*. There was, Nell pointed out, a connection between pregnancy and housing – between mothers being able to celebrate a pregnancy and welcome a baby because they are in possession of a home. We should be able to celebrate pregnancy and provide the homes that women and families need.

Constance Markievicz herself couldn't have put it better. She hoped – and believed – that an Irish Republic would mean an end to slums, and access to a home for every family.

And yet, the housing market is in crisis: we've seen yet another report from *Daft*, the property website, that rents in every county in Ireland rose over the last year – and that the average Dublin rented property is a staggering €1,822 per month. That is €380 higher than at the height of the Celtic

● Spare a thought for the sensitive souls of Hampstead, home of the famed Left-leaning North London intellectual, for many years represented in parliament by thespian Glenda Jackson.

There's an anguished conflict over whether transgender swimmers (male to female) may be allowed to use the all-female Hampstead Kenwood Ladies' Pond.

According to equality laws, transgender persons should have swimming access. But there is some dissent. "After all," one genteel Hampstead female resident told me, "some of these transgendering people still have their gentlemen's tackle." Equality and diversity can pose such problems!

Tiger. The trend was the same in Galway, Waterford – and Limerick, where rents have risen by 14%.

There are also a declining number of properties available



to rent, and private landlords, according to Fintan McNamara of the Residential Landlords' Association, are increasingly reluctant to invest in properties for rent because of the red tape and property taxes. He is also a continuing critic of the ban on bedsit flats which accelerated the shortage of budget accommodation.

## Accommodation

Most people want to own their own homes – and that, too, is linked with starting a family, and hence with embarking on

pregnancy: couples will defer marriage and children simply because the accommodation isn't within their reach.

Yet, even in a property-owning democracy, there has to be a fluid market for rented accommodation, and it's awful that things are in such a mess. It is blatantly obvious that the core problem is supply and demand: when there is a shortage, prices rise.

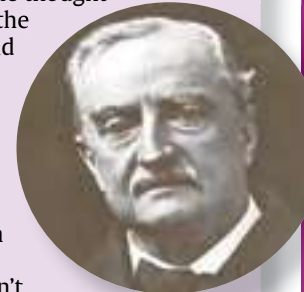
And Nell is surely right about the connection between pregnancy and housing. Let's not forget that point.

## Not so liberating

John Redmond [pictured] and the Irish Parliamentary Party are now disparaged because they did not support the Suffragettes' campaign. Poor Redmond had his hands full trying to keep the IPP together after the Parnell split. He also had his hands tied by Herbert Asquith, the British Prime Minister and Liberal leader, who was opposed to votes for women because he thought it would destroy the Liberal party – and probably because his bossy wife, Margot, was an anti-suffragist. (She preferred power in the home to power in the Commons!)

Redmond wasn't further endeared to the feminist cause after an English Suffragette threw an axe at Asquith and Redmond in Dublin in 1912. The hatchet lobbed off part of Redmond's ear.

Herbert Asquith was wrong to oppose women's suffrage – the cause could have been won peacefully if he had given it support. And yet, for his own political party, he was prescient. After women got the full franchise in 1928, the Liberal Party never held power again, and is now a small minority party.



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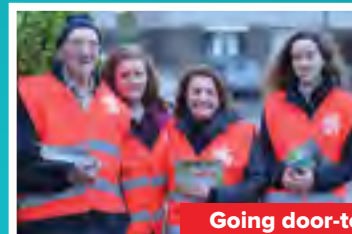
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# Vocal repealers not representative of doctors – medical council member

Greg Daly

Doctors' attitudes to the debate around the Eighth Amendment are unclear, with socially conservative doctors being unlikely to be outspoken on the issue, a leading member of the Irish Medical Council has said.

"It is very difficult to know where GPs stand on the 'Repeal the Eighth' debate," Drogheda-based GP Dr Ruairi Hanley told *The Irish Catholic*. "Certainly, there is a very vocal group who are active on social media who would be overwhelmingly in favour of the 'repeal side'," he continued, pointing out that such doctors are "of course entitled to their view".

"But many GPs (myself included) are not active on social media and have no desire to discuss our opinions with strangers online," he continued. "As a general observation social media also seems to be a very hostile place for those who would hold any form of socially conservative

views on any subject."

Dr Hanley's comments came against a background of widespread criticism of an online poll that claimed almost three quarters of doctors support open access to abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

The poll, conducted by *The Irish Medical Times* on Facebook, Twitter, and the publication's website, saw 73% of 388 respondents say they supported the introduction of abortion on request in a pregnancy's first 12 weeks.

Subsequently reported across other websites and news outlets, the story attracted a huge backlash within hours of being published, leading both *The Irish Times* and the *Journal.ie* to withdraw the story from their websites.

*The Irish Examiner*, however, said it was not its policy to remove stories from its website, despite a call from the Pro Life Campaign (PLC) that it retract its front-page story claiming 75% of Irish

doctors support open access to abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

The PLC described the story as "fake news" and

accused *The Irish Examiner* of having "misled the public by giving [the poll] such prominence", noting that the poll had been open to anybody.

"Anybody, not just medics, were able to vote in this poll," PLC spokesperson Dr Ruth Cullen said. "The only criteria for voting was a Facebook or

Twitter account. The flippant use of such faulty methodology doesn't augur well for the forthcoming referendum campaign."

## Fr Bonaventure celebrates 70 years of Ministry at Mount Melleray Abbey



Fr Bonaventure OCSO, a monk of Mount Melleray, celebrated the 70th anniversary of his priestly ordination at the weekend. Central to the afternoon of remembrance was the celebration of a Mass of Thanksgiving for the long life of Fr Bonaventure and his service to God and the Cistercian Community.

Welcoming the congregation of family and friends of Fr Bonaventure, the Abbot, Dom Richard Purcell, OCSO said that it was not the 70th anniversary of his birth

which was being honoured, but of his Ordination to the Priesthood. "It is not often that we get to celebrate 70 years of somebody's Priesthood," he said, "and it is a great honour to be here today at such a significant celebration."

Fr Bonaventure and the members of the Cistercian Community were joined by some of the Sisters of Glencairn Abbey and Fr Bonaventure's family and friends at a reception in his honour in the historic monastery refectory.

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## Accord seen as 'essential' for marriage support

Chai Brady

A "strong society" is based on strong marriages according to the President of Accord, the Catholic Marriage Care Service. Speaking at the blessing of an engaged couple, Bishop Denis Nulty said the World Meeting of Families, to be hosted this August in Dublin, is a time when families all over the world will come to Dublin to reflect on family life.

Bishop Nulty said: "Families and friends, the guests who attend wedding ceremonies understand marriage as a fundamental human reality and the commitment of the young couple getting married is so moving because it says against all odds, no matter what happens 'we'll be there for one another'."

At a gathering at the Shrine of St Valentine in Whitefriar Church in Dublin the bishop blessed the engagement rings

of Anna Keegan and Seamus Walsh, who got engaged while visiting Christmas markets in Bucharest.

"We also realise in today's world it is a difficult commitment. Different stressors can take their toll on the mood in a marriage, and that's why the accompaniment work of Accord is so essential," he said.

Accord launched their most recent annual figures this week, which show that 8,432 couples completed Marriage Preparation in

2017 while 7,079 individuals attended Marriage Counselling sessions.

Overall both services have seen a drop in attendance. While there was a steady rise in the number of people attending Marriage Preparation from 2014 to 2016 (15,504 to 17,108) this dropped to 16,864 last year.

There has been a steady decrease in people availing of marriage counselling, from 42,467 in 2013 to 26,946 last year.

### Bishop regrets saying funeral Mass for priest

Dromore's Bishop John McAreavey has apologised for saying the funeral Mass for Fr Malachy Finnegan, a former president of Newry's St Colman's College, against whom 12 allegations of abuse were made between 1994 and 2016.

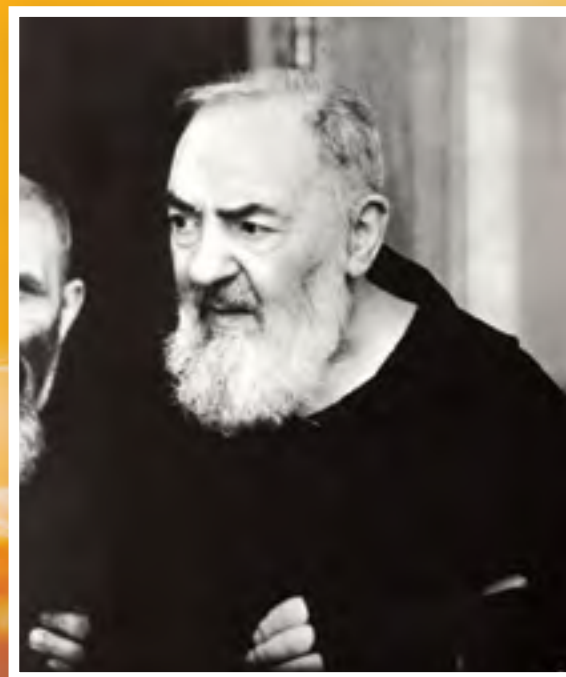
Describing Fr Finnegan's actions as "abhorrent, inexcusable and indefensible", Dr McAreavey said that it was through the perspective of victims that he concluded he had been wrong to say Fr Finnegan's funeral Mass.

"In November 2002 a victim told me how hurt he was by this, I realised that I had made an error of judgement. It is something I regret and will not repeat," he said.

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## Martin Mansergh

### The View



# A lot done, a lot more to do

**S**hortly, the people of the Irish State will be celebrating 100 years of independence, mostly with pride, despite the difficult circumstances of its birth. This will be done without trying to hide subsequent disappointments, failures and betrayals, or ignoring basic work that still has to be done.

Commemoration will also have to take account of those who would have wished to be part of an independent Ireland, but who found themselves on the wrong side of a hard border. It also has to acknowledge the attachment of another community over the same period to Northern Ireland remaining part of

the United Kingdom.

There are those who feel Ireland should have held back because of this, but most people wanted to go ahead and to demonstrate what independence could achieve in most of Ireland. In any case, unionist opposition was to any form of self-government in Ireland, however diluted. The potential historic compromise of Home Rule for the whole of Ireland within the Union was adamantly rejected.

#### Achievements

To return to the achievements, first of all, the State survived a difficult early period, better than most European States that emerged at the same period.

This was partly a question of geography, but also a matter of leadership on both sides of the post-civil war divide. There was already a strong parliamentary tradition going back to the time of Daniel O'Connell.

Over the first quarter of a century, the journey to full political independence was completed. Democratic alternation took place. The State had its own constitution.

Financial viability was maintained. Political stability remains, despite periodic challenges, and the country is not threatened by an extremist takeover from any direction.

The whole point of independence was to enable the Irish people to have a national life of their own, not in total isolation from the rest of the world, but with priorities, emphases and values of their own, a life that would evolve and change over time. Religion was an enormously important factor that transcended often bitter political divisions and that joined with the State in the early days in managing many of the institutions and organisations providing health, education and some social services.

**“One of the main aims of independence was to stem the haemorrhage of population”**

Nobody could quibble with the description of Ireland (26 counties) as a Catholic country during the early decades of independence, though less self-evident today.

A columnist in the *Irish Times* recently described the break involved in independence as an economic disaster, something that was certainly the view of that newspaper 100 years ago. It prompted the reflection that, while there had certainly been several economic disasters in Irish history, independence was not one of them.

The previous 120 years since the Union saw the

The Easter Sunday Parade celebrating the 1916 rising.



population of Ireland roughly halved, both as a result of deaths and emigration during the Famine and the heavy outflow of population mainly to the US in the decades that followed. This is not to suggest that everything flowing from the Union was negative.

One of the main aims of independence was to stem the haemorrhage of population and provide adequate employment opportunities here at home. The policy of self-sufficiency, while it achieved some advances, by the 1950s was proving inadequate. In a post-war world of rapidly increasing dynamism and mobility, Ireland had to provide a quality of life and a standard of living that could compete, or at least hold its own.

This meant opening up the domestic market to trade, and availing of the opportunity to join the EEC. Economic progress and prowess today is far more important to national self-esteem than it was originally.

#### Failures

On two fronts, often dubbed as failures, there was actually qualified progress. The Irish language, threatened with extinction in the 1890s, was salvaged, and to this day is an integral part of the school education system, albeit with mixed results. The ambition of some in the early years

that it would become the country's main spoken language never had the necessary popular support, with English too much the language of employment opportunities at home and abroad.

Really successful parts of the Gaelic tradition are the GAA, music and dancing, and the Celtic motif that permeates much of the arts.

It would be easy to say that no progress has been made towards unifying the country, but we have come a long way from the 1920s.

**“Political philosophies transcending parties are rarely purely based on abstract truth”**

The political apartheid is over, and today we are debating in a Brexit context how the imperative of maintaining an open border that was a consequence of both the European Single Market and the Good Friday Agreement is to be achieved. The leadership changeover in Sinn Féin provides a further reminder of the trauma involved, much of it avoidable, on the way to a complete remaking of the 1920-1 settlement regarding Northern Ireland.

To adapt the words of the late Fr Francis Shaw SJ, the civil rights movement will always be part of the canon of Irish history, in a way the

Provisional IRA campaign never will be.

The place of religion in Irish society is changing. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has emphasised the importance of maintaining the integrity of the message, and, by implication, regardless of societal choices. Desmond Fennell is right in noting that socio-moral changes of the past 50 years have been brought about by Catholics (including those of Catholic background), notwithstanding the use of a pluralist rationale in the 1970s and 1980s. Irish society as a whole is nonetheless still very far from wishing to discard its religious beliefs, practices and traditions.

On the other hand, political philosophies transcending parties are rarely purely based on abstract truth. Their ultimate test is their ability to deliver. In the times ahead, Ireland is likely to become more European-oriented.

Past realities, both good and bad, should not be tendentiously ignored, but abusive language and confrontational and exclusionary ideologies should be avoided.

If there is to be any hope of managing a transition to a more consensual all-Ireland constitutional arrangement, we have to become more serious about creating and cherishing a broader Irish identity.

DAVID QUINN

## BOOK SIGNING

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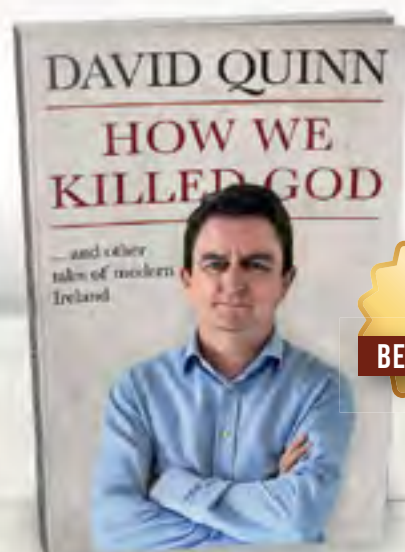
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The Divine Mercy Conference is about bringing God's mercy to the world, writes **Greg Daly**

**D**ivine Mercy has been top of the agenda for the last three Popes," says Don Devaney, organiser of the Divine Mercy Conference that will see thousands gather in Dublin's RDS this weekend.

"They recognised that God's mercy is for everyone and everyone needs God's mercy," he continues. "That's what they've been pushing, that's what the Year of Mercy was about. It's been in many ways getting back to basics to recognise that God is God. They're trying to ground us in the basics of life, that God is in charge, it's his law, it's his will, and that we won't have happiness or peace until we do his will."

This year's conference is the 27th, with Don having been involved from the start, and has as its theme the words of Jesus before he led Peter to walk with him on the waters of Lake Tiberias: "Courage, it is I – do not be afraid."

"The people who follow the Divine Mercy are actually apostles for divine mercy – they're interceding for the entire world," explains Don. "We don't have theology degrees and theology backgrounds but are just ordinary people who God in his infinite goodness has chosen to intercede and pray for the whole world."

That might sound self-important, but Don is under no illusions about the frail nature of God's instruments.

"The conference is the work of God, I think it's important to say, because it's by God's grace it runs and works – he uses broken instruments like ourselves, as in our committee, as part of it. We do realise this, and acknowledge our own brokenness and unworthiness to be a part of it, but nevertheless all he's looking for is our availability and our yes to his invitation," he says.

Traditional popular piety can be sneered at by some in the Church, but Pope Francis has consistently underlined its importance, speaking with approval and fondness on many occasions about those

# Reaching out to all with God's mercy



Some of the attendance at last year's Divine Mercy Conference. This year, 3,700 people are expected to attend the annual event.

who he refers to as God's holy faithful people.

"I hate to say it but there are elements in the Church who look on devotional stuff as being from another era that's long past, and 'God love them with their Rosary beads and their devotional mentality,'" says Don, arguing that such devotions really reflect an acknowledgement of God's devotion to us and play a crucial role on the Church calface.

"It's a huge task, and though we can be perceived as being 'devotional' and kind of simplistic, that's far from it," he says.

As usual, this year's conference has a packed agenda, opening with a free youth evening in the "intimate, prayerful space" of St Paul's Church on Aran Quay on Friday evening, before moving to the traditional and much larger venue of the RDS for Saturday and Sunday.

## Highlight

Speakers include leading charismatic Ralph Martin, Magnus McFarland of Mary's Meals, and Caroline Simons and Emma Moloney on pro-life issues. Capuchin Fr Sean Kelly will lead the reconciliation service that Don sees as the highlight of the weekend, and the Salesian Fr Eunan McDonnell will lead Saturday's holy hour with Franciscan Fr Paschal McDonnell leading it on Sunday. Saturday's Mass will be celebrated by Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, while Bishop Eamon Walsh will celebrate the conference's closing Mass on Sunday.

Asked where he thinks the extraordinary popularity of Divine Mercy devotion has come from, he says Sr Faustina Kowalska, the Polish nun whose 1930s visions underpin the devotion, has helped

the Church highlight one of its key roles.

"I do believe that St Faustina will be the next female doctor of the Church, because she's made an enormous contribution to theology and spirituality in expanding the whole notion of mercy," he says.

"The Chaplet of Mercy is key to it all," he continues, pointing to the set of prayers that are at the heart of the devotion. "I think people find the Chaplet of Mercy very consoling – it's easy to say and it's very powerful. There's a comfort and a consolation in it. People realise that it does bring them peace."

## “The Chaplet of Mercy is key to it all”

As for the conference itself, which this Saturday looks set to draw in the region of 3,700 people to the RDS, he sees it as something people view as "a kind of coming together just to renew their spiritual batteries".

"What people like about the conference is that we have Confession, we have Adoration, we have Mass and it's bringing us back to something we've lost somewhere along the way. I think what the conference does is reconnect people," he says.

This reconnection isn't just for those who are established devotees of the Divine Mercy, but for anyone – even those on the fringes of the Church – he stresses, with this being essential to the charism of the Divine Mercy.

"No matter what sins someone has committed, they're welcome back and there's a special welcome for those who've been away for 20, 30 years, where the floodgates of God's mercy open up," he says.

attracts me to it is the whole sense that we're dealing with people that everybody else has given up on, and trying to reach out with God's mercy and say 'it doesn't matter – come back, we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation'."

## “Francis is the leader of the Church – I think he sees a bigger picture”

Such an outreach should, he says, be at the heart of the Church's mission, and he is effusive about how Pope Francis has made this central to his papacy.

"The Year of Mercy put mercy on new standing and it highlighted mercy and brought it to the forefront of people's minds and the Church agenda. Mercy is love's second name, and as I've said mercy is for every-

body and everybody needs God's mercy," he says.

"That outreach is I think what Pope Francis is trying to do. There are 1.2 billion Catholics but there are 5.8 billion non-Catholics. He's trying to reach out to them as well. It's a very, very difficult job, and I would say we really need to just to pray for him, and pray for the decisions he has to make," he continues.

Francis' approach to this can cause those wary of the kind of risks he deems necessary to "go ballistic", Don says, but the Pope's pastoral agenda makes sense to him.

"It's not conventional, but I think he is the Holy Father, and he is the leader of the Church – I think he sees a bigger picture," he says. "I've never seen anything like the animosity towards him. I'm a big supporter of his, I have to say. People just don't understand what he's trying to do."

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# Charity urges Government action as violence against Christians in India rockets



Chai Brady

**U**rgent international action must be taken to protect Christians as attacks including beatings and torture continue to rise exponentially in India, an Irish charity has warned.

Knife attacks, extortion, battery and arson were just some of the crimes highlighted by Church in Chains, who have issued a briefing document to the Government detailing what is a quickly deteriorating situation.

Since 2014 the number of reports of violent incidents against Christians increased by over 33%, from 147 to 441. The statistics were compiled by the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) and the All-India Christian Council, with the EFI estimating the actual number of attacks is much greater.

The charity's director, David Turner, said the number of reports could be as high as 1,000 by the end of 2017 once figures are compiled, as there were 410 reported violent incidents in the first six months of last year.

## Significant

"For the past number of years people outside India have sat on their hands and said we'll ignore this because we want to have good trade relations and it's not statistically very significant," said Mr Turner.

"But that kind of approach has failed and has just emboldened those who are attacking Christians to keep going in their activities."

The briefing was sent to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Ambassador of India to Ireland, and the Oireachtas has Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence.

It details 57 of what Church in Chains describes as "serious incidents of persecution of Christians" in 2017 from Indian and international publicly available reports, and describes the action taken by India's police.

In one incident Pastor Amar Stephen from north India was attacked by a Hindu



Hindu nationalists are pictured in a recent photo burning an effigy of Cardinal Telesphore Toppo, archbishop of Ranchi.



Christian missionaries are seen in Guwahati.

extremist group who are said to have beat him with belts, shoes and sticks before taking him to a police station. The pastor gave a statement to the police who then released him.

Another report describes "five Hindu militants" who used steel rods and a butcher's knife to attack a father-son pastoral team. The father was left with brain tissue injuries. The police were said to have ignored identification of the attackers.

A third reported attack occurred in Uttar Pradesh in September, and involved Pastor Abhay Sagar (37) who lost

hearing in one ear after being tortured by what Church in Chains states were Hindu extremists.

The extremists were said to have prevented medical treatment of the clergyman and pressured police to falsely charge him. Police subsequently charged him with criminal conspiracy and insulting Hindu beliefs, according to the charity.

"The greatest shock for a person in Ireland would be that not only are the police not stopping Christians being attacked, but the perpetrators can feel such impunity

that often they beat up the pastor or members of the congregation and bring them to the police station," said Mr Turner.

"They then tell the police to charge the victims with trying to convert Hindus and sometimes the police go ahead."

However, he added, the charges are normally dropped "when it goes further up the ladder".

## Briefing

The briefing, entitled 'Official India: On the Side of the Militants', links the upsurge



A member of the radical Hindu group World Hindu Council holds a weapon during a protest in Jammu, India. Photos: CNS



A woman holds a rosary during Mass in late September at St Mary's Basilica in Bangalore, India.

in the persecution of Christians with the election of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

They are accused of not taking effective action to combat attackers, protect victims and promote religious freedom.

**“Over 800 cases of secular violence were recorded in 2017, with 111 people killed and 2,384 injured”**

Mr Turner said: "I think it comes down to a basic choice that legislators have to make, is India for all its citizens, or is India – as the Hindu extremist vision is – is it just for Hindus?"

Church in Chains has urged the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, to speak "clearly and consistently in support of full religious freedom for all in India".

India's government have acknowledged there is a spike in secular based violence, with detailed data being revealed in their parliament last week.

Over 800 cases of secular violence were recorded in 2017, with 111 people killed and 2,384 injured. In 2016 there were 86 people killed and 2,384 injured in 703 incidents.

Hindus form 80% of India's population or some 966 million. The 172 million Muslims and 28 million Christians are the two main religious minorities, followed by Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains.

"We'd be very hopeful that the foreign affairs committee in the Dáil would see fit to call the Indian ambassador in to answer questions about that," Mr Turner said.

"If nothing is done by the international community I can see nothing only a further increase in attacks," he added.



# Artsy students snatch prize in stroke of genius

Chai Brady

After over 200 school entries and hundreds more applications the Fáilte Pope Francis competition has finally been announced and the awards will go to three lucky contestants from schools across Ireland.

Aoife Murphy (7) from Scoil Mhuire na nGael, Bay Estate in Dundalk scooped the grand prize of €1,000 euro after displaying a level of artistic prowess that launched her to first place.

Primary school contestants who entered *The Irish Catholic's* competition were asked to draw a picture and write a letter of welcome to the Pope for his expected visit to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) in August.

In her letter Aoife, who is in 2nd class, wrote: "When Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem, they had nowhere to stay. Have you somewhere to stay when you come to Ireland? We have a spare room in our house and you could meet all my family and friends from school."

Speaking to the paper she said the Pope is "loving and caring like my Dad", and that her Dad had met St John Paul II when he was 12.

Principle Martina Rafferty said Fáilte Pope Francis set the scene for the school thinking of the Pontiff's visit to Ireland.

She said that by getting the children involved it also got families involved "because the children were going home and they were talking about it and thinking about it".

The principle added that the school were "quietly confident" that Aoife would do well.

## Second prize

Fionn Roche (9) from Christian Brothers Primary School in Doon, Co Limerick took second prize. The 4th-class student said his picture had both Argentinian and Irish flags in it with a crowd waving at Pope Francis.

In third place came eight-year-old Adam Phylan from 3rd class in Sacred Heart National School, Caim in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, whose drawing pictured Pope Francis' travelling to Ireland on his plane.

He said he also "drew a family with one of them holding an Irish flag to represent Ireland".

Adam's teacher, Brendan Fitzpatrick, said it was "an excellent exercise".

He said: "The whole class wrote a letter to Pope Francis



Aoife Murphy (7) cheers with her class after bagging €1,000 for her artwork in the Fáilte Pope Francis competition. Aoife is pictured at the front between Principle Martina Rafferty and teacher Robert Brennan from Scoil Mhuire na nGael, Bay Estate, Dundalk in Louth.



Fionn Roche (7) – front row second from the left – celebrates with his class, Principle Joanne Breen and teacher Denis Maloney from Christian Brothers Primary School in Doon, Co. Limerick, after coming second in the Fáilte Pope Francis art competition.



Third place winner of the Fáilte Pope Francis art competition Adam Phylan (8) from Sacred Heart National School in Caim, Enniscorthy in Wexford stands with Fr Jim Fegan, Principle Betty Kehoe and his teacher Brendan Fitzpatrick. Photos: Chai Brady

welcoming him to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families, Adam's entry was then selected and put forward to *The Irish Catholic* for the art competition.

"Adam is an avid reader and has a serious interest in art and dinosaurs as well. It

was no surprise to us that Adam's entry was selected to be honest because he is an excellent artist and we're very proud of his achievement."

The entries came from schools all over Ireland and the standard of entry was so high that the decision was

taken to publish a book with the most engaging entries.

The book *Fáilte Pope Francis* will be published in March by Columba Press. All royalties from the book will be donated to Our Lady's Children's Hospital in Crumlin, Dublin.

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2018 sees Ireland hosting the World Meeting of Families, and with an expected visit by Pope Francis, children from across Ireland were asked to write a letter or a poem and draw a picture of welcome for the Pontiff, the most engaging of which have been chosen to appear in a book. All royalties to The Children's Medical and Research Foundation (CMRF).

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# Fake news – but a real question



Could the Church consider blessing some same-sex unions, asks **Greg Daly**

“Cardinal Marx endorses blessing ceremonies for same-sex couples,” declared America’s *Catholic News Agency* (CNA) earlier this month, with a host of other Catholic news sites taking a similar line and with predictable fits of the vapours across the Catholic internet.

Interviewed by Bavaria’s State Broadcasting Service, Munich’s Cardinal Reinhard Marx, the president of Germany’s bishops’ conference and a member of Pope Francis’ Council of Cardinal Advisers, had been asked about the Church’s failure to “move forward” with regard to, for instance, the blessing of homosexual couples.

He answered by saying there is a question around how the Church can meet challenges posed by new insights and new circumstances in modern life, and that it must be pastorally close to gay people who want and need pastoral accompaniment.

“An entirely different question is how this is to be done publicly and liturgically,” he continued, saying these things need to be handled carefully and reflected on.

## Solutions

The interviewer, Karin Wendlinger, responded by asking whether he could imagine a way to bless homosexual couples in the Church, and he answered, the CNA reported: “Yes, however, there are no general solutions. That would not be right, I think.”

The cardinal had, in fact, not said this at all, as anybody who knew German and listened to the recordings of the interview freely available online could have pointed out.

His answer had in fact begun ‘es gibt’, meaning, ‘there is’. It was perhaps possible to discern a fluid “ja” – ‘yes’ – just before this, but without the crucial qualifier

Cardinal Reinhard Marx gives a blessing before celebrating Mass at St Joseph’s Cathedral in Hanoi, Vietnam.



‘aber’, meaning ‘but’ or ‘however’, this would have simply been a verbal nod of affirmation to indicate that he had understood the question.

Small wonder, then, that the German bishops’ conference had the CNA correct its story and publish the following more accurate translation of the cardinal’s response: “There are no general solutions and I think that would not be right, because we are talking about pastoral care for individual cases, and that applies to other areas as well, which we cannot regulate, where we have no sets of rules.”

It is hard to believe that bad German translations should have again set the Catholic internet aflame scarcely half a year after Pope Emeritus Benedict was wrongly reported on numerous sites as having sent a message to be read at Cardinal Joachim Meisner’s funeral that declared the Church to be on the verge of capsizing.

Given the prominence in

the Church of such prelates as Cardinals Marx, Walter Kasper, Gerhard Müller and Christoph Schönborn, not to mention the Pope Emeritus himself and Archbishop Georg Gänswein, one would think that facility in German should be more highly valued in Church journalism.

**“You cannot say that a long-term relationship between a man and a man... is nothing”**

In its absence, however, and while the CNA has changed its headline to state that the cardinal “discusses” blessings for same-sex couples, the Catholic internet and media are left littered with a legion of headlines that can only be described as, to use the phrase of the day, ‘fake news’. And, of course, more mainstream news outlets have uncritically followed

suit.

At the same time, Irish Catholics may recall how speaking in Dublin in June 2016 the cardinal reiterated a view he had expressed at 2014’s Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family that: “You cannot say that a long-term relationship between a man and a man, who are faithful, is nothing. That it has no worth.”

The cardinal, in a Trinity College lecture entitled ‘The Church and the Challenge of Freedom’, had said that society needed to create structures to respect the rights of same-sex couples, and said that the Church should not oppose this – although he stressed that marriage is something different.

A similar point was made in 2015 by Vienna’s Cardinal Schönborn, the lead author under St John Paul II and the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Interview by Fr Antonio Spadaro, editor of *La Civiltà*

*Cattolica*, the cardinal spoke of a gay friend of his who was in a stable relationship, after many temporary ones.

“It’s an improvement,” he said, pointing out that they share “a life, they share their joys and sufferings, they help one another. It must be recognised that this person took an important step for his own good and the good of others, even though it certainly is not a situation the Church can consider ‘regular’.”

While maintaining the necessity of the Church’s teaching on homosexual acts, the cardinal pointed out that a new stability is clearly a step in the right direction, and something that the Church could and should encourage as a way of helping people move gradually closer to a position in line with Church teaching.

## Assumption

Could the Church support such stable relationships, seeing them, to borrow a concept from Pope Benedict’s 2010 book-length interview *Light of the World*, as “a first step in the direction of a moralisation, a first assumption of responsibility, on the way toward recovering an awareness that not everything is allowed and that one cannot do whatever one wants”?

For Philadelphia’s Archbishop Charles Chaput, the answer appears to be ‘no’. In a blogpost written in the aftermath of the first reports on the cardinal’s comments, Dr Chaput said such proposals might sound generous and reasonable, but would be deeply imprudent.

Blessing rites for same-sex relationships, he said, would entail cooperation in morally

forbidden acts, undermining and confusing the Catholic witness on the nature of marriage. Maintaining that all people – which “emphatically includes people people with same-sex attraction” – are entitled to respect as children of God, he nonetheless cautions that “seemingly merciful” blessings could encourage people in a course of action that could lead them away from God.

It’s a powerful riposte, though one that invites questions about how, for instance, marriages are regularly celebrated for couples who will use contraception. Even if the numbers doing this are nowhere near the 98% often claimed, it could surely be argued that in blessing such marriages, the Church is tacitly encouraging people in courses of action that could likewise lead them away from God.

**“The cardinal pointed out that a new stability is clearly a step in the right direction”**

It may be time to revisit with suitably critical eyes John Boswell’s *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe* which, claiming that the Church had once blessed homosexual unions, met with predictable media adulation on its 1994 publication, only to be dismantled with scholarly precision in subsequent years.

Misunderstood or misrepresented by Prof. Boswell, ceremonies blessing same-sex pairs of friends were common in the Orthodox Church even in medieval times, and are not unknown now.

These *adelphopoiesis* ceremonies were adoption rituals, making two men brothers, or two women sisters, and although Boswell’s claim that these functioned as covertly-sanctioned homosexual marriages does not bear much scrutiny, there is surely something to be said for the Church considering such templates for blessing two people of the same sex who are determined to commit themselves to each other’s wellbeing.

The Church expects Catholics who have divorced and civilly remarried to endeavour to live together as brother as sister. Is there perhaps scope for it to consider blessing same-sex couples who wish to declare their love for each other, while endeavouring to live together chastely as brother and brother, or as sister and sister?



Ss Sergius and Bacchus, a pair of ‘spiritual brothers’ cited in *adelphopoiesis* ceremonies.





# Uni dreams come true for asylum seeker

DCU helps those in direct provision reach third-level, **Chai Brady** writes

**A**fter being tortured in Africa and escaping to Ireland, an asylum seeker's prayers were answered when he was accepted into university on his birthday.

Shepherd Machayah lives in a Direct Provision centre in Portlaoise, and was "very, very worried" that his application to Dublin City University's (DCU) University of Sanctuary scholarship programme wouldn't be accepted.

After studying Computer Science in Portlaoise College he applied for third-level courses through the CAO, but could not afford the fees.

"No one could pay for me to go to school, so I was very sad to be honest. I didn't have any plan," Zimbabwe native Mr Machayah told *The Irish Catholic*.

After hearing about DCU's programme, he applied, which was challenging as he says there is only one communal computer among about 100 asylum seekers in his direct provision centre, making online time scarce.

As he progressed through the application process, he said: "I was praying a lot, I keep my Bible here, and I keep reading my Bible, and I was thinking God help me."

"It wasn't easy to be honest, I was very, very worried, I really wanted to continue on with my studies."

## Accepted

On the day of his birthday in September 2017, he was lying in bed and received an email from DCU – he knew this would tell him whether he had been accepted or not.

"I was afraid to open that email, then I said, whatever happens at least I tried," he said, and saw that he had been one of the 10 asylum seekers out of 61 applicants that were accepted.

He said: "I jumped out of bed, it was my birthday, I was lying in bed, I didn't have a plan – I was bored. It was just a tough day. I didn't have anything, it's not easy to be in direct provision."

He is now studying Management of Information



Shepherd Machayah (on left) is pictured at the launch of Refugee Week with the president of DCU, Prof. Brian Mac-Craith and fellow DCU Connected Scholarship recipient Anne Oluwatobiloba.

Technology and Information Systems in DCU.

Mr Machayah had to flee from his home country, from his family, children and his job, due to extreme political tensions and violence.

He says people were ordered to attend rallies and were forced into trucks, adding that pictures would then be taken of the gathering to give the appearance of a strong political following for a particular party in his country.

"If there's 20,000 people, 15,000 were forced to be there, they've been beaten up," he said.

After refusing to support the party, Shepherd told this paper he was subjected to inhumane treatment.

"I was taken, I was tortured. When I say tortured, I wish I had a video to show the experience of what happened. I was beaten up, punished, I was taken into the thick of the jungle where you don't even know where you are."

**“If you are in direct provision and you have a child and you want to go to a match it's actually really difficult to try and budget €21.60 a week”**

Fortunately, he managed to escape and entered Ireland as an asylum seeker two years ago.

Just this month DCU organised a 'Refugee Week', which aimed to fight stereotypes and raise awareness of mental health issues among asylum seekers in Ireland's

direct provision system.

With several events organised to raise funds and encourage a better understanding and an interaction with people seeking refugee status in Ireland, it was the first initiative of its kind in the university.

Students' Union Welfare Officer Podge Henry took part in one of the events which encouraged students to live on €21.60 a week – the stipend that asylum seekers receive each week – to show how difficult it is to do basic things many in Ireland take for granted.

"I had to go to a meeting and I was late, I hopped in a taxi and got dropped to town and when I got there I realised I'd spent €17 on the taxi alone," said Mr Henry.

"It was funny to look back on but when we really thought about it we realised that if you are in direct provision and you have a child and you want to go to a match, and you live somewhere quite far away, it's actually really difficult to try and budget €21.60 a week."

## Refugees

Mr Machayah said that where he lives in Portlaoise is surrounded by farms and is 12km from the nearest town.

"You can't do anything, you can't go anywhere," he said, "there's a bus that goes into town, but what are you going to do in town? You only get €21.60 a week, you can only get a chance to go to town once, but for the rest of the week there's nothing to do."

In another event DCU's Soccer Club and Syrian refugees from Mosney Direct Provision Centre had five-a-side matches.

There are hopes that the

week will be recreated in future, and become as well established as the university's Mental Health Week.

During the week DCU marked the publication of its first 'University of Sanctuary' report which highlighted that 15 scholarship students in the asylum process were enrolled in DCU since September 2017. Five students are currently attending lectures on campus while 10 others, including Mr Machayah are learning through DCU's online platform: DCU Connected.

**“Everything I've done in my life is based on the Bible, based on God”**

Speaking at the launch of Refugee Week the CEO of the Irish Refugee Council, Nick Henderson said: "DCU have lead the way in providing meaningful education oppor-

tunities for people seeking asylum in Ireland. The innovative mixture of scholarships, English teaching, advocacy campaigns and sport are crucial in bringing real, positive change to people's lives."

Along with providing scholarships the university provides books for asylum seekers in Mosney through the DCU Hope Mosney Book Club, and research projects examining migrant integration into the school system and intercultural support for Syrian refugees in Ireland have begun.

When asked about the importance of Faith in his life Mr Machayah said: "Everything I've done in my life is based on the Bible, based on God, I believe that God leads the way."

"He is taking me step by step, all I do is keep praying."

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# Theology in dangerous times



Only the Gospel can rescue our society, writes **Colm Fitzpatrick**

**F**ocusing on our multiple global crises from environmental disasters and financial instability to political upheaval and security threats, Dr Michael Kirwan SJ, Adjunct Associate Professor of the Loyola Institute in Trinity College, Dublin, recently gave a thought-provoking lecture about the failures of secularism and the vital role of theology today.

Entitled 'Stand upright and raise your hand! Doing theology in dangerous times', the talk was the first of four public lectures to be hosted by the Trinity College institute.

Beginning his talk, Kirwan reminded his audience of almost 100 people that we are living in "apocalyptic times" as St Paul has reminded us. However, in today's society, this is not just a metaphor but a living reality where persecution and global warming are prevalent.

Kirwan believes that we are living in deeply troubled times, and – drawing upon the important religious thinker René Girard – sees our various crises as edging towards a 'tipping point'. The truth of the gospel is the only way to reverse or ameliorate this problem, as opposed to a deficient secularist perspective, he said.

## Margins

"The 'secularist' world-view which has elbowed religion and religious belief to the margins has dominated western societies for several decades. However, it is now widely seen to be seriously deficient as a description of our modern world," he pointed out.

"It is now nearly 20 years since a group of British theologians, under the banner of 'Radical Orthodoxy', declared that 'the logic of secularism is imploding'," he said. "Secularism is reduced to promoting a materialism which is 'soulless, aggressive, nonchalant and nihilistic.'"



Dr Michael Kirwan.

The redundancy of secularism is ever more evident today, he argued, given that we struggle with 'post-truth' and 'fake news', with a retreat from thought and reasoned argument in public life as well as the collapse of the post-war democratic consensus and the resurgence of extremisms.

For Kirwan, these crises "will not easily be solved by technological and scientific means".

At the same time, Kirwan pointed out that the secular hasn't completely removed the sacred, which is evident from our language today which is replete "laden with religious meaning".

"Meanwhile, if we examine our language, it is striking how laden it is with religious meaning. Our situation is often labelled 'apocalyptic'. Discordant social interactions are described as 'witch-hunts'

and 'scapegoating'. Warfare is still understood in terms of 'sacrifice'," he said.

**“The Book of Revelation is able to give us a sense of our situation as it shows the viciousness of oppressive political power”**

"It simply not true that we have moved away from religious ways of thinking and feeling, as the secularist tries to claim."

In his talk he also referenced another contemporary philosopher, Slavoj Zizek – a Marxist atheist – who insists that the Christian legacy is simply too important to be left to evangelical fundamen-

talists. For Zizek, the world is faced with an unsavoury choice between two false 'religions' – either the self-massaging narcissism of late-capitalist 'spirituality', or the herd-like transcendence of fascistic nationalism.

"These are two sides of a coin, as each betrays the same disastrous crisis of identity. In which case, says Zizek, perhaps it is wiser to stay with the Judaeo-Christian tradition," he said.

## Instabilities

The instabilities in the global world today including the fundamentally incoherent worldview of secularism, according to Kirwan, make for an especially opportune time "to do good refreshing theology", he said, pointing out the fruits of post-Holocaust theology or liberation theology.

Referencing the radical orthodoxy group which

rejects the paradigm of modernity, Kirwan said that theologians break out because they recognise the inherent weakness of secularity.

Kirwan acknowledged that this can be a challenge, pointing to the clerical abuse scandals and the Church's handling of it, and the fact that "Christians have a weird way of speaking about God".

**“Through faith and love, which are the foundations of the Gospel message, we are enabled to engage in the world in new ways”**

However, when theologians speak accurately, in a Christian way about God, this can "offer a way beyond the grim alternatives of total self-absorption, or systematic hatred of the other", he said.

Christian wisdom, as we find it in key passages in the gospels, and in the Book of Revelation, requires us to "stand upright and raise our heads", he says. "It gives us hints of what it means to flourish in troubled times without being overwhelmed by fear, insecurity and resentment," he said.

The Book of Revelation is able to give us a sense of our situation as it shows the viciousness of oppressive political power, tells of its dramatic downfall, and celebrates those who persevere in faith. At the end of the book is the glorious political vision,

the appearance of the New Jerusalem.

Through faith and love, which are the foundations of the Gospel message, we are enabled to engage in the world in new ways. Religious belief does not pull us away from the world but draws us to it. Kirwan believes that this type of engagement will perhaps require the building of a new political philosophy.

A question and answer session followed the talk, ranging from queries about neo-liberalism to the use of secularity and the reasoning behind it.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Dr Kirwan said in response to a question about the role of theology today: "My feeling is that theology in modern western societies needs to take the form of a 'dangerous memory' – the memory of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen – which interrupts our everyday life and thinking."

"This interruption ensures that society is persistently reminded of the suffering and vulnerability which it too often tries to forget or hide from view."

Dr, Fáinche Ryan, Director of the Loyola Institute, added: "These types of events challenge people to think critically and expose them to things that they may be uncomfortable with."

**i** For more information about the Loyola Lecture Series, see: <https://www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/>





A young 'Loving the 8th' supporter in Dún Laoghaire.

## Dún Laoghaire crowds point to an 'energised' pro-life movement

### Staff reporter

Over 600 people gathered in Dún Laoghaire last weekend to celebrate the value of unborn children, with the aim of keeping Ireland's constitutional protections for the unborn.

The event, 'Loving the 8th', took place on Saturday, 10 February and was organised by Dún Laoghaire Life Canvass and Cherish All the Children Equally as part of a growing and energised campaign to save the Eighth Amendment.

People of all ages, including many families and young women, carried heart-shaped balloons and posters, and wore 'Loving the 8th' hats to say that they believed the amendment should be retained.

"We were so delighted

to see such a great crowd come out for this event today, and it's really indicative of how people are becoming energised at a local level to save the Eighth Amendment ahead of the referendum," said spokeswoman Mairéad Hughes.

"It was such a positive event, pointing out that the pro-life Eighth Amendment protects both mother and baby, and is a provision that has saved so many lives," she said.

Ms Hughes added that our current laws show compassion and love to both mother and child.

"The Eighth encourages us to support women in crisis and to love both them and their babies, and surely that's the most progressive and compassionate way forward for Ireland," she said.

## Fianna Fáil leader 'crossed line' with Down syndrome comments – parents

### Colm Fitzpatrick

A pro-life group and parents of children with Down syndrome have expressed their hurt and anger following remarks made by Micheál Martin concerning the presence of disability activists in the Eighth Amendment debate.

Micheál O'Dowd of the group Disability Voices for Life said that the Fianna Fáil leader had "crossed a line" and "was trying to silence families" in relation to the debate taking place around abortion and Down syndrome in Ireland. Micheál Martin told the *Guardian* that concerns regarding babies with Down syndrome being aborted are "a bogus argument" and that pictures of people with Down

syndrome should not be part of the referendum debate.

"We will not hide our children away, and we will not be silenced regarding the devastation that abortion is wreaking on their communities," said Mr O'Dowd.

Mr O'Dowd added that a recent Save the 8th billboard pointing out that 90% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted in Britain has brought some reality to the debate in Ireland.

### Shocking fact

"The billboard features Joseph Cronin, a Donegal boy with Down syndrome, and gives a human face to the shocking fact that 90% of babies with the condition have their lives ended before birth in other jurisdictions," Mr O'Dowd

said.

Mr O'Dowd also said that parents had been forced to fight the political establishment tooth and nail for decades to get basic services for people with disabilities, and they would not be silenced on the debate surrounding the removal of the Eighth Amendment.

"It is upsetting and intimidating for families to see politicians come out and tell them that they can't express the facts, or their concerns, or that they can't include their families in the discussion.

"The days when people with Down syndrome were locked away and their families silenced are long gone, and we will be heard in this referendum," he said.

## Making the unborn visible

The Iona Institute has launched a new national billboard campaign to promote the right to life of the unborn. The billboards show an image of the unborn baby at 11 weeks with the simple message 'one of us'.

Speaking on behalf of The Iona Institute, Maria Steen said that neither the Citizens'

Assembly nor the Joint Committee on the Eighth Amendment has made the unborn child properly visible in the repeal debate. "We have launched this campaign because those who want to repeal the pro-life amendment constantly ignore or downplay the fact that abortion always ends the life of the child in the womb."

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# Families are asked to work together on Lenten promises



Chai Brady

Families are being encouraged to come together and discuss their ideas for Lent in order to take on acts of prayer, fasting and almsgiving in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.

Focusing on those three themes 'Our Kandle Family Lenten Promises' is a first for the diocese, and was inspired by the upcoming World Meeting of Families 2018 (WMOF).

"It's about having a conversation around the table, sitting together so it gives families time to spend a moment in the busyness of life just to put the pause button on and say: 'We're about to enter into lent, what is the season about, what could it be about for us as a family, and as individuals within the family', and here's a few ideas to explore," said Julie Kavanagh, the diocesan representative for the WMOF.

## Rosary

Focusing on prayer: families could say a prayer before dinner, pray a decade of rosary, read and think about a passage from the Bible and more, as well as being asked to consider other proposals family members may have.

People are reminded that they can also take it a step further, as well as giving up cigarettes, sweets or alcohol while fasting, deciding to take up a positive action is a plus.

"So there's an encouragement in the fact that everyone is aware of what other members of the family have chosen to do, and so we can support one another," Ms Kavanagh said.

"So there might be things as a family that we'll do together, but even within that individual family members might choose to do particular things that others won't, but we're aware of it and we're supporting one another.

"So for the child who gives up sweets maybe an older sibling isn't going to sit down in front of them and munch



Award recipients, award leaders and Living Youth volunteer team at the Pope John Paul II awards in the Diocese of Down and Connor.



Award recipients from Dominican College Fortwilliam.

through a packet of crisps."

In terms of almsgiving, the newsletter states that: "Linked to our fasting, whatever form it may take, must be a concern for those who have no choice but to fast because of poverty and injustice."

Families are asked to question how they will support Trócaire this Lent, or perform other acts of charity.

"We are trying to provide very doable resources for families in the context of the World Meeting of Families this August, so this is something that we want to provide for families that they can take out next year and do again as well so it goes beyond the event of the WMOF but it's been triggered by it," Ms. Kavanagh added.



Award recipients from St Louise's College.

## Kerry gears up with Lenten events

A series of Lenten events prepared for the WMOF are set for the Tralee pastoral area in the Kerry Diocese.

The Lenten series will open on Monday February 19 at 7.30pm in St John's with an evening entitled 'The Christian Vision of the Family' with Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin speaking at the event.

The second session, on Monday, February 26 at 7.30pm in St John's parish will be entitled 'Family and Faith' and will feature Dr Patricia Kieran of Mary

Immaculate College, Limerick. As an expert in religious education and a mother of young children, Dr Kieran speaks from a wealth of experience and learning.

On Monday, March 5 at 7.30pm, Fr Francis Nolan and the local branch of ACCORD will be presenting a talk, along with the celebration of Mass and the renewal of wedding vows for married couples. The theme for the evening is 'Journeying together in Marriage' and will

be an opportunity for married couples to reflect on the blessing and challenges of married life.

The series will close on Monday, March 26 in St John's at 7.30pm with Maria Garvey of Belfast's L'Arche Community. Her talk will be entitled 'Revealing the gifts of people with disabilities in family and community' and will draw on her experiences with L'Arche where people with intellectual disabilities and those who care for them share a common life.

## PJP II winners celebrate WMOF themed awards

Over 250 winners of the Pope John Paul II award attended a ceremony in Belfast, with the theme of the celebration being 'Family', in anticipation of the World Meeting of Families 2018.

The director of Living Youth, Pauline Dowd, invited the gathering of 500 young people, parents, award leaders and friends to join in the prayer of the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) to celebrate school parish and immediate family members.

She congratulated the award recipients, encouraging them to stay involved with youth and young adult ministry and to keep volunteering. The PJP II winners were told of other events they could take part in including Nua, Altaration, Light the Blue Touch Paper, the summer pilgrimage to Taize and volunteering as part of the Living Youth Team at the WMOF gathering in Dublin at the end of August.

## Relationship

PJP II awardee Aimee from St Louise's College explained how the award helped her develop her relationship with God as well as the people in her parish and school.

She said that during her volunteering she realised how much young people are needed in their parish "to bring joy to others and to help keep their own faith alive". Aimee became an extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, and she explained that "participating in Mass has enhanced my understanding of the presence of Christ in our lives".

Please contact World Meeting of Families correspondent Chai Brady with photos, news or articles relating to your parish or diocese's WMOF2018 preparations and events for inclusion in the weekly update:

email [chai@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:chai@irishcatholic.ie)

• 01 6874020

Twitter @ChaiBradyIC







**Martin O'Brien** meets Fr Edward O'Donnell, a priest happy in his ministry and his own skin

**F**r Edward O'Donnell, first ever Catholic ecumenical canon in Belfast's Protestant cathedral, parish priest in one of the North's most well to do areas, former private secretary to the late Bishop Cahal Daly, noted homilist, and proud native of Heaney country in south Derry looks younger than most 67-year old men. It may have something to do with his sunny disposition.

Despite the scandals that have engulfed the Church in Ireland and his disappointment at the "grumbles" of some brother priests in the media he is upbeat while not being complacent.

"Of course, there are things that are not right and could be done better. However, I am not disgruntled with the Church, sometimes disappointed, just as I am disappointed with myself, but I am happy, and I hope I communicate that. I am happy in my own skin and with what I do."

### Blessed

Eddie O'Donnell is grateful that he has been blessed with good health, still not requiring any medication, yet mindful of life's fragility, reminding me that his father died of an aneurism at the age he is now. We're in his presbytery outside St Brigid's Church in south Belfast, where he has been parish priest for seven years.

He's grateful that the attendance at Sunday Mass has remained stable in that period, at around 2,000. According to the Down and Connor directory the estimated Catholic population of the parish is 13,500, making it numerically the biggest in the diocese.

It is one of the wealthiest parts of the region but Fr O'Donnell stresses that financial wealth and spiritual wealth do not always go together.

He says that the economic downturn had a more severe effect on his parish than is

# A mission to ignite passion for God's Word



Fr Edward O'Donnell.

realised and that parts of it experience "great poverty".

"There are more 'newcomers', immigrants and refugees in a particular 'end' of our parish area than anywhere else in the diocese. Many of those people in a very poor situation are not Catholics at all where our parish St Vincent de Paul Society go and minister to those in need and the need is great."

He considers the biggest challenge facing his parish – and parishes all over Ireland – one that he poses to the parish pastoral council: "How will you preserve the faith in St Brigid's when there is no priest?"

Fr Eddie is recognised as one of the best homilists of his generation and his giftedness in this area has been enhanced by his love and fascination for Scripture.

His Sunday sermons are invariably listened to intently – as a parishioner I can attest to that – and timed at just eight minutes, containing 800 words. They are Gospel-based, well balanced, written in simple language, and don't

dodge uncomfortable issues.

Homilies at daily Mass lasting three or four minutes are carefully prepared and enhance the congregation's knowledge and understanding of Scripture.

**“His Sunday sermons are invariably listened to intently...are Gospel-based, well balanced, written in simple language...”**

He is one of a small group of priests in Down and Connor who, following up Pope Francis' advice on homilies in *Evangelii Gaudium*, are working to promote greater consistency in quality.

Eddie O'Donnell was born in Hillhead, near Bellaghy in south Derry in 1950, the eldest of three children of Jimmy O'Donnell, a small farmer, and his wife Sarah (nee Heaney).

It appears his mother may have been a distant relative of Seamus Heaney, the poet

and Nobel Laureate, whom he knew slightly.

"There was a friendship between our families. Seamus' father used to visit my home and my mother would have gone down to visit his mother."

Eddie's birthplace was a stone's throw from the blacksmiths that inspired 'The Forge', and from the site of the poet's primary school immortalised in 'Anahorish'.

The Broagh, nearby, the townland where Eddie's family moved to when he was very small, is the subject of another place-name poem, 'Broagh' (in *Wintering Out*).

"I know so many of the people and places he wrote about. Grove Hill [mentioned in 'The Riverbank Field'] was my mother's farm; Leitrim [mentioned in 'Edward Thomas on the Lagans Road'] was where my father's farm was, and I remember (Big) Jim Evans, ('Mid-Term Break') the roadman, coming into our house to get boiling water to make his tea."

Heaney clearly means a lot to Fr Eddie, and a few months

ago he led a visit by parishioners to Home Place, the Heaney museum in Bellaghy. "He is part of my heritage."

Fr Eddie was ordained in 1976 and quickly found himself thrown in at the deep end as a chaplain at Belfast City Hospital. He has many memories from that troubled period.

On his first Easter Sunday as a priest he recalls a deadly feud between the Provisional IRA and the Official IRA in Belfast re-igniting around the Easter republican parades. Within hours two people were killed, a 10-year boy in a bomb explosion (a victim of the UVF but briefly assumed to be a victim of the feud) and a middle-aged man shot in supposed retaliation.

"I was in the casualty department of the Royal Victoria Hospital with doctors and nurses trying to cope as best they could. It was pandemonium. I can remember one man coming up to me and putting his fingers into my face and he said, "by tonight ten more dead". And then in the middle of it all there had been a traffic accident in which a poor man had been killed and I was ministering to his relatives as well as to the others. It was just crazy."

In 1982 Fr O'Donnell was asked "out of the blue" by Cahal Daly, the newly-appointed Bishop of Down and Connor, whom he had never met, to be his private secretary.

"He was essentially a very simple person, he had simple needs and was easy to work for and difficult to work for. Easy, in that in all my years with him I never received a critical word: if something went wrong he said it was his fault because he hadn't explained things clearly enough. Difficult because you were on call literally seven days a week, he worked at a ferocious rate.

"He was a very friendly man who was concerned for you personally and very interested in your family and when my father took ill he visited him in hospital."

Probed on whether Daly would have known about the Redemptorist-inspired secret peace initiative pursued by Fr Alec Reid CSsR, Fr O'Donnell is emphatic: "He was totally aware because Alec Reid would have frequently have come to brief him" [at his Belfast residence] and while he doesn't know if that briefing

continued when Daly went to Armagh, it appears likely that it did. (See my article 'Unearthing Cahal Daly's contribution to peace', *The Irish Catholic*, October 12, 2017, www.irishcatholic.ie)

He credits Daly with "opening my eyes to a worldwide Church. Suddenly, I became aware of a whole diocese, the whole country and the universal Church through all the contacts [he had]."

Fr O'Donnell has no doubt that Daly, an ardent ecumenist, would have been delighted with the surprise news last year that he (O'Donnell) had been appointed an ecumenical canon at St Anne's Church of Ireland Cathedral in Belfast.

**“He credits Bishop Cahal Daly with ‘opening my eyes to a worldwide Church’”**

One of his duties as a Canon is to preach at St Anne's once a year – he gave his first sermon there last May in which he cited the 'Common Declaration' of Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury in which they stated: "Wider and deeper than our differences are the faith that we share and our common joy in the Gospel."

"When I am preaching in St Anne's I am preaching on the Scripture of the day, what I understand it is saying to us and I am sharing with those people what is in my heart."

Fr O'Donnell drew my attention to a book that he has been reading, *In God's Hands: The Spiritual Diaries of Pope St John Paul II 1962-2003* in which the future saint says that Christ will hold priests to account for how they discharge His priesthood.

He says that St John Paul warns priests of the three "great sins" that they can commit which are sacrilege, hypocrisy and egotism, the latter he says, Pope Francis would probably describe as "clericalism."

I wondered had he ever witnessed the "sins of clericalism" that Pope Francis has warned or recognised clericalism in that sinful sense.

"I can recognise it in myself. Maybe somebody says something to me that I think is unjustified and I say 'I am a priest'. That's it [clericalism] and it is something that I must be alert to. People owe me nothing and I shouldn't feel they do."





The basic Christian task is to help people live fully, Bishop Brendan Kelly tells **Greg Daly**

**F**ew issues are as pressing or more commonly raised in discussions about the state and future of the Church in Ireland than declining numbers of clergy, with the Association of Catholic Priests' claim that the Irish Church is heading for a 'Eucharistic famine' being perhaps just the most stark expression of this.

For the newly-appointed Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, however, to focus on a lack of clergy is to miss the broader point that there is a lack of active laity too nowadays.

"It's a time in the Church, it's very clear, when there are major changes taking place, particularly in the practice of the Faith," Bishop Brendan Kelly tells *The Irish Catholic*, noting that "the numbers of people attending church in rural areas is probably under 30% at the present time and even smaller in the cities".

With such a low rate of practice in general, a small number of people responding to God's call to priestly ministry might not be surprising, and Dr Kelly suggests that the real crisis facing the Irish Church is a crisis of Faith.

### Connected

"I think we have to look after the question of Faith first of all, and the delivery of it, because they're both connected. As the number of priests has declined, so have the crowds in the churches. They've gone in tandem, as far as I can see, over the past 40 or 50 years," he says.

"That could turn around really fast," he adds with a note of surprising optimism, before reiterating, "I would say that our challenge is a challenge of Faith."

Part of this, Dr Kelly suggests, is that Irish adults can find prayer difficult, and can see it as almost a childish thing.

"I spoke a lot about prayer yesterday," he says of his homily at his Mass of Installation in Galway cathedral where he commented on how cries from the heart are

# A journey of FAITH



Most Rev. Brendan Kelly pauses to study his mitre and, left, blesses the congregation who attended his installation Mass. Photos: Aengus McMahon

hallmarks of believers, with Faith and prayer being inextricably bound together.

"Because I think that very often what happens in life is that somehow prayer is confined to children, and once we grow up we grow out of that. Maybe that's what we need to be doing with adults – it's a call to conversion," he continues.

One way or another, he says, now is a time when both creativity and courage are seriously needed if the Church is to succeed in what he calls "the really fundamental challenge of reimagining the way we present the Good News and the Gospel to people".

"The huge call for us all now, and

perhaps this was always the call, is the fundamental hearing of the Good News: how do we make Jesus known today? The real gift of our Faith is that we know Jesus who is alive," he says.

**“We’re people who passionately believe in life, not just now but for forever”**

Our Faith, he continues, is “fully based on the Resurrection – the passion, death, and resurrection event – and the fact that that connection is there intimately between the suffering and the

limitation of this world that we all experience, and the fullness of life emerging out of that powerfully”.

The Resurrection, he stresses, is utterly central to Christian identity, saying “that’s what we are: we’re people who passionately believe in life, not just now but forever, and that’s who we are as Christians”.

What’s more, he later adds, this isn’t simply one of Christian identity but of Christian mission. “The mission of the Church is very much to love your neighbour, particularly the one who is afflicted in any way,” he says, continuing: “The real call – the great call – of the Christian will always be to enable people to come to the fullness of life.”

Speaking at his Mass of

Installation, Dr Kelly, a Galway native who is in a sense ‘coming home’ after ten years as Bishop of Achonry, raised such challenges for the modern Christian as our need to be stewards of our world rather than simply consumers of its fruit, the desperation of migrants clamouring at Europe’s shores, the arms trade, and our deafness to those who call on us for help.

“Pope Francis has written much about the cry of the poor – and of all people whose lives in their defenceless innocence and vulnerability – being under threat in these times,” he had said.

There are few more fitted to being described as having a “defenceless innocence and



Some of the congregation at last Sunday's installation and, right, Bishop Kelly celebrating the Mass.







vulnerability” than unborn children, of course, and Dr Kelly is ardent in his conviction that Ireland’s constitutional protections for these most vulnerable human beings are a good thing.

### No burden

Maintaining that “children are not a burden – they were never seen as a burden”, he says it’s very clear to him that the Eighth Amendment has saved lives, and stresses the importance of helping mothers, especially in times of need.

“We need to support them in every way that we possibly can if there’s a child on the way – and it is a baby that’s on the way from the very first moment,” he says.

“That’s how people see it when they want a baby, that’s how it’s always described. Other terms, other language is used, perhaps, when people want something different,” he adds, noting how care needs to be taken about “the sort of language that would be used around this area”.

“I’d be very, very clear that we have to love both mother and child, and I think we can offer much more to mothers who are in difficult situations than simply abortion,” he continues.

“We have to take better care of our women, of our mothers, than that. There are so many other

supports that they can be given.”

Dr Kelly cites CURA, the Church’s national crisis pregnancy counselling service, as just one of the services that can be offered to help expecting mothers in difficult situations, adding: “The taking of infant life deliberately – I have never accepted this, and we as a Church can never accept this.”

**“A year spent working with people with severe intellectual disabilities was transformative”**

Much debate around the threat to repeal the Eighth Amendment has concerned the eugenic effect of abortion being legalised – in some cultures girls are more likely to be aborted than boys, being seen as burdensome, while in various European cultures it has been those with such conditions as Down Syndrome who are most likely to be disproportionately the victims of abortion regimes.

Even aside from the basic unacceptability of abortion, for Dr Kelly this misses how those with disabilities or other weaknesses can help enrich their society and those around them.

“Where would we be without people who are ill, where would we be without people who are weak,” he asks, continuing, “how can we ever become the people that we’re capable of becoming if we don’t reach out to others and give of ourselves to them?”

Noting how a willingness to miss the value of human life and what even the weakest can offer has become clear in jurisdictions with established abortion laws, Dr Kelly says that such disregard can spread also to attitudes to older people, with this becoming an especially dangerous threat in an aging society.

A year spent working with people with severe intellectual disabilities in a French L’Arche community was transformative in his understanding of our duties to each other, Dr Kelly says, describing how he had learned to “look after and cherish and care for the very bodies of people” who had to “surrender themselves into your hands because they had no other choice”.

This profound sense of responsibility to our fellow human beings and to those who can care for them, he says, is “why we must help mothers and why our society must give every possible support to mothers and their lives”.

## A great day for Galway



Bishops browse the Mass booklet prior to the installation in Galway.

President Michael D. Higgins enters the cathedral.



Fellow bishops and priests accompany Bishop Walsh into Galway cathedral.



Bishop Walsh leaves the altar after his installation.



# Out&About

## Big welcome in Derry for Papal Nuncio



**DERRY:** Hundreds of schoolchildren greet the Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, during a visit to St Columba's Church, Long Tower.



**LIMERICK:** Cian Hanrahan stands with his grandparents, James and Ann Ginnane (left) and Pat and Terry Hanrahan (right).

► **DUBLIN:** Three parishioners of St Mary's Parish Lucan received the Papal Benemerenti Medal. The Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, celebrated Mass. From left-right are Don McDonald, Fr Philip Curran, Ewan O'Flynn (seated), Archbishop Okolo, Fr Thomas Kennedy and Billy Birnie.



**KENYA:** Irish Kiltegan Fathers Sean Cremin from Cork and Willie Walshe from Wicklow who have collectively been in Kenya for over 60 years are pictured at the Irish Embassy in Kenya.

► **DUBLIN:** Primary school children performing at the Laudate Festival 2018 on its first night in the Church of St Colmcille in Knocklyon celebrated in the Archdiocese of Dublin involving 2,500 pupils from 45 Catholic primary schools. Photo: John McElroy





Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**ARMAGH:** Bishop John McAreevey is pictured with representatives from Catholic primary and secondary schools in the diocese, including pupils, staff, parents and governors, after celebrating Mass in St Peter's Church in Lurgan.



**WATERFORD:** Paddy Lannen poses with *The Irish Catholic* at a family lunch celebrating his retirement. Mr Lannen sold *The Irish Catholic* for 45 years and recently retired with "a heavy heart", according to his son Olivere Lannen. He sold the paper in two churches in Dungarven.



**GALWAY:** The Galway Poor Clares and NUI Galway students meeting for pizza and prayer.



**CLARE:** Senator Ronan Mullen, former UCD Students' Union President Katie Ascough, Bernadette Goulding from Women Hurt and Bishop Fintan Monahan attend a pro-life gathering in The Old Ground Hotel, Ennis.

## IN SHORT

### Faith Exploration at Knock

A series of 'Quiet Days for Busy People' day retreats "for those in need of some time-out or spiritual enrichment" offer time for thought, prayer and contemplation in the coming weeks in Knock.

Each retreat will focus on a different theme to inspire participants on their faith journey. Retreats take place on the February 24, March 24 and April 28 in the Prayer Guidance Centre, Knock from 11am-3pm. There is a €30 fee which includes lunch.

On Wednesday February 28, the Irish Church Music Association will facilitate

a 'Workshop for Choirs' at 7.30pm in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. 'A Joy for all the World' is the official hymn for World Meeting of Families 2018, composed by young Irish composer Ephrem Feeley. The hymn found its inspiration in the document *Amoris Laetitia* – *The Joy of Love*, written in 2016 by Pope Francis. This workshop will provide choirs with music and resources to help them prepare for the World Meeting of Families 2018. Choirs are advised to book in advance. It costs €10 per participant.

'Getting the Most out of Holy Week' with Colette Furlong will take place

on Saturday, March 10. The workshop explores the whole of Holy Week from Palm Sunday to Holy Saturday Morning as a time of personal reflection, but also as the busiest week in parish life.

### Art and spirituality

Knock Shrine will also host a second day of art appreciation and spirituality with 'Art as a Doorway to the Divine: Workshop with artist Róisín de Buitléar and poet John F. Deane'. Artist Róisín de Buitléar will share her ideas behind the design process of her commissioned work for Knock Basilica. 'Pilgrimage' the two glazed

halls at the entrance to the Basilica were completed over a two year period in collaboration with the Shrine and architects A&D Wejcherts.

Using two of his own poems, John F. Deane will illustrate how a poem may be created, read and understood. The workshop hopes to offer new insight into poetry: inspiration, method, technique and outlook. This event will take place at Knock House Hotel from 11am-3pm. There is a €30 fee which includes lunch.

For further information or to book an event phone Knock Shrine on (094) 93 75355 or email [faithrenewal@knockshrine.ie](mailto:faithrenewal@knockshrine.ie)

## ARMAGH

Eucharistic Adoration in St Malachy's Church daily from 6am to midnight, and all night on Wednesdays. Adoration chapel, Edwards Street, Lurgan, adoration on weekdays from 9am-9pm.

Lenten Retreat Day: A 'day with a difference' will take place in St Vincent de Paul Centre, Chapel Lane, on Tuesday, February 27 from 10pm-2pm in preparation for the WMOF, with reflections on family life. Booking essential at parish office: 028 37522813. Tea/coffee and light lunch provided.

## CLARE

Divine Mercy Chaplet prayer group meets every Tuesday in the Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul in Ennis at 8pm in the chapter room. There will also be a short Lectio Divina after the chaplet.

## CORK

Life in the Spirit Seminar in Knockavilla Community Centre (Innishannon/Knockavilla parish), with 7 weeks Life in Spirit Talks, every Friday, from February 9 to March 23 at 7.30pm. Contact: 087 4589133.

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

Maria Vadia and Fr John Keane will lead a day of prayer, praise, worship and healing in Rochestown Park Hotel, Douglas on Sunday, March 4, commencing at 9am and concluding with Mass at 5pm. Registration not required. Contact Celia on 087 2405568.

A pro-life canvassing workshop, hosted by Family & Life, will be taking place in the parish centre Doneraile on Saturday, February 17, starting 12pm. Please bring a lunch. Tea/coffee will be available. Further details please contact Gill 0868233110.

A pro-life media training session with John McGuirk at Doneraile parish centre on Saturday February 24, beginning at 11am. Contact Chris 0852392207.

## DERRY

Dungiven Parish: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Monday to Friday, 8am-noon and 3-9pm.

## DUBLIN

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

The Dublin 15 Faith and Justice Group welcomes new members and currently meet on the first Friday of the month in Harts-town Church. Contact Fr Joe 087 6632944.

Holy Hour at St John the Baptist Church, Sunday, February 18, on Clontarf Road at 7.30pm led by Fr Martin Hogan.

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

## FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Wednesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm. [www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly](http://www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly)

## KERRY

Share The Living Word of God: A six-week programme of prayer and reflection, creating a presentation and giving talks and reflections on Tuesday, February 20 and 27 from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Ardferret Retreat Centre.

Abortion - is it health care? Medical information night in the Rose Hotel Tralee on Sunday, February 25 at 6pm.

## KILDARE

A centring/contemplative prayer group meets in the Old Baptistery of St Michael's parish church in Athy every Thursday at 8pm. For more info ring Dolores at 086-3474679.

Leixlip Parish is hosting 'Amoris', a six-session programme to reflect on our experience of family based on 'The Joy of Love'. It will take place in Our Lady's Parish Centre, Leixlip, on February 28, March 7, 14, 21, April 11 and 18 at 8pm.

## LOUTH

A Centre Prayer Meeting is held at Mount Oliver (near Ballymascanlon, Dundalk) every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm. Contact 00353 863623361 from NI or 0863623361 from ROI.

The Rosary will be prayed for the protection of life every Saturday at 3pm at The Square Dundalk.

## 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.

## SLIGO

Latin Mass in Carraroe church on the last Sunday of each month at 3pm.

## TIPPERARY

'Come and See' weekend for men discerning a priestly vocation is open to all dioceses in the Munster region, taking place in Pallotine College, Thurles on Friday, February 23 at 6pm and concludes February 24 at 3pm.

## WATERFORD

A celebration of the anniversary of charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church will take place on Sunday, February 25 in The Edmund Rice Centre from 2pm-5.30pm. Contact Sile 086 8590394.

## WICKLOW

Midweek Lenten study programme begins February 21 with a penitential prayer service in thanksgiving for the gift of the earth, and an introduction led by Archdeacon Rountree and Fr Kennedy.

One week Icon Course held in the Carmelite Monastery in Delgany from February 26-March 2, beginners welcome. Tutor is Mihai Cucu. Email: [mihai-cucu78@gmail.com](mailto:mihai-cucu78@gmail.com)



# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Indian Catholic schools face militant threats

● The local government in insurgency-hit Manipur has assured Catholic schools in this northeastern Indian state that security will be stepped up if needed following media reports that militants have issued threats against them, seen as veiled attempts at extortion.

The schools were due to open this week after a six-week-long Christmas vacation but many have delayed doing so.

"Most Christian schools here remained closed on Monday," said Salesian Fr P. X. Francis, principal of Don Bosco School in the state capital Imphal.

"We haven't received a threat from any militant groups, at least not that I'm aware of," he said, adding that the reports sowed confusion among parents.

### Top court to investigate Duterte's drug war

● Several Catholic bishops in the Philippines have welcomed an International Supreme Court's (ICC) preliminary investigation into the government's 'war on drugs'. Fatou Bensouda, the court's chief prosecutor, said the ICC would analyse alleged killings of suspected drug users and peddlers during police anti-narcotics operations.

The government's anti-illegal drugs campaign was launched after President Rodrigo Duterte took office on June 30, 2016.

Human rights groups have reportedly compiled evidence in the past 19 months of police involvement in the killings.

## Pope decries toleration of widespread sex trafficking

Few people have considered how communities and nations actually tolerate and encourage human trafficking, particularly as it relates to prostitution, Pope Francis has said. Modern forms of slavery "are far more widespread than previously imagined, even within the most prosperous of our societies", the Pontiff said during a meeting with an international group of law enforcement and Church workers.

"God's cry to Cain, found in the first pages of the Bible – 'Where is your brother?' – challenges us to examine seriously the various forms of complicity by which society tolerates, and encourages, particularly with regard to the sex trade, the exploitation of vulnerable men, women and children," the Pope told the Santa Marta Group.

Through parishes and youth groups, he said, Catholic young people should meet survivors of trafficking, listen to their stories and befriend them. "Don't be afraid to meet them," the Pope said. "Open your hearts, let them in."



Pope Francis meets young Italian people, adults and migrants rescued from human traffickers. The Pope responded to questions asked by the migrants about preventing trafficking and assisting survivors. Photo: CNS

At another meeting this week Pope Francis spoke to a group of adults and teenagers who had taken part in a reflection on human trafficking. One young migrant, speaking in English, asked the Pope what could be done to prevent trafficking when, in her country, with promises of jobs in Europe young people are tricked into slavery and prostitution.

"How horrible it is to realise that many young victims were first abandoned by their family, considered disposable

by their societies," the Pope said.

### Ploys

Young people need to be educated to understand the traffickers' ploys and the reality that likely awaits those who fall into their clutches, he said. Survivors of trafficking can have a huge impact by sharing their stories.

Education is also important so that young people can get decent jobs at home or go to universities and not be tempted by the false promises

of traffickers, he added.

But, one of the migrants told the Pope, it is "almost impossible" to find a decent job in Europe. More must be done, Francis said, to create jobs for young people, especially for survivors who have been rescued from traffickers.

The Pontiff told the group he hoped some survivors of trafficking would address the Synod of Bishops on youth in October to share their stories and "call the Church to action".

## Cardinal applauds US abortion funding cuts

The US bishops have praised signs of progress against 'abortion ideology', in response to a State Department report on new limits to US funding for groups involved in abortion.

"Abortion undermines basic human rights, certainly for the child, and it also can wound the mother emotionally and physically," Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York said.

"US tax dollars have no business going to organisations that are unwilling to pursue health outcomes for every person and instead insist on promoting and imposing their abortion ideology on women and children."

Cardinal Dolan, speaking in his role

as chairman of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said: "I again applaud this administration for restoring our foreign assistance to its rightful goals of promoting health and human rights."

### Version

The report from the US State Department's Office of US Foreign Assistance Resources is a six-month review of the implementation of the Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy, an expanded version of the Mexico City Policy.

The original policy, first instituted under President Ronald Reagan in 1984,

directs US overseas family planning funding away from organisations that perform or support abortions overseas.

The report is early evidence that the "vast majority" of NGOs are "willing and able to comply with this policy and that compliance does not appear to undermine delivery of appropriate health services," said the cardinal.

President Donald Trump reinstated the Mexico City Policy on January 23, 2017, then ordered Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to extend the policy to other forms of monetary aid, like global health assistance, provided by all US departments or agencies.

## Olympic torch lit by devout South Korean Catholic



Yuna Kim.

Catholic Olympic gold-medallist Yuna Kim lit the torch at the Opening Ceremony for the 2018 Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

The Korean skating sensation has long expressed a desire to use her public role to share the light of Christ by witnessing to her Catholic faith in international competitions and performances.

Kim was honoured as the final torch bearer to light

the Olympic cauldron for this year's games, after two athletes from the inter-Korean women's hockey team, one skater from North Korea and another from the South, passed the flame along.

After making the sign of the cross as she stepped onto the ice to win gold in the 2010 Vancouver Games with a record-breaking score, Kim teamed up with Korean bishops for a national rosary campaign. Kim was seen

wearing a rosary ring, which her fans had previously mistaken for an engagement ring, during her silver-medal performance at the 2014 Sochi Games.

The Olympian converted to the Catholic faith alongside her mother in 2008 after they came in contact with local nuns and Catholic organisations through her personal physician – also a Catholic – who was treating her for knee injuries.

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Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie

## Blade runner



Figure skater Mirai Nagasu performs during the team event final in Gangneung, South Korea. Her performance helped the US secure a bronze medal. Photo: CNS

## Church response to abuse cases needs revamp – Jesuit expert

Even though the Church has all the necessary norms and laws in place to safeguard minors from abuse by clergy, the problem continues to be a lack in understanding or caring about those rules and guidelines and applying them effectively, said one Jesuit expert.

What must change “without a doubt” are Church procedures for handling accusations of abuse, said Jesuit Fr Hans Zollner, head of the Pontifical Gregorian University's Center for Child Protection.

The legal process “must be more transparent and more transparent for everyone”, including the victims, the accused and his or her superiors, Father Zollner told reporters at a ceremony awarding 18 people – religious and laity – diplomas for completing a specialisation course in safeguarding minors.

Victims receive no information during the process and the accused are left “in limbo” for what may be five

years or more not knowing if they will be sentenced or even found guilty, he said.

So while the Church's definitions of what constitutes a crime and suggested sentences are clear, he said, what needs addressing is how to beef up the Church's legal system so that it can “actually bring justice to everyone” and truly protect minors.

### Decision

Reporters also asked Fr Zollner about his thoughts concerning Pope Francis' decision to believe Bishop Juan Barros of Osorno, Chile, and not victims who claimed the bishop may have been aware of and even present during their abuse by the bishop's former mentor, Father Fernando Karadima. The priest was sentenced to a life of prayer and penance by the Vatican after he was found guilty of sexually abusing boys.

Fr Zollner, who had been a member of the Pontifical Commission for the

Protection of Minors since its inception in 2014, insisted the Pope does listen, and he knows that personally from being an interpreter for two German abuse survivors who had separate and lengthy private meetings with the Pope in 2014.

The meetings had a hugely positive impact on the emotional and spiritual well-being of those two survivors, the German Jesuit said.

But when pressed about doubts over whether the Pope listened to a Chilean survivor who had written a letter to the Pope that was to be hand delivered by Cardinal Sean O'Malley, head of the Papal commission, Fr Zollner said he would have no way of knowing whether the Pope read the letter.

Yet, he said that when he once handed the Pope two letters, “I am quite certain he did not open these letters” based on the nature of the Pope's response.

## Nun becomes 70th miraculous cure at Lourdes

As the Church celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, a French bishop announced the 70th officially recognised miraculous cure of a pilgrim to the Lourdes grotto where Mary appeared 160 years ago.

Bishop Jacques Benoit-Gonnin of Beauvais formally declared this week “the prodigious, miraculous character” of the healing of Sr Bernadette Moriau, a French member of the

Franciscan Oblates of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who had been partially paralysed for more than 20 years despite repeated surgeries to relieve pressure on the nerve roots of her lower back.

In November 2016, the International Medical Committee of Lourdes confirmed the nun's “unexplained healing, in the current state of scientific knowledge”. But it is up to the bishop, not

the physicians, to declare a healing miraculous.

### Pilgrimage

Sr Moriau, now 78, made her pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2008, the 150th anniversary of the apparitions. She had experienced lower back pain, the first symptom of her disease, in 1966 at the age of 27. Four surgeries did not stop the progressive worsening of her neurological deficits.

A few days after returning to her convent, she said she felt unusually relaxed and she experienced warmth throughout her body. Sister Moriau said an inner voice asked her to remove the rigid corset that helped hold her erect, the splint that kept her foot straight and the neurostimulator she used for pain control. She began walking unaided and without pain.

## Vatican roundup

### Healing found in wounds of Christ, Pope tells Stigmatines

A devotion to and meditation on the five wounds of Christ “may sound a bit medieval”, but anyone who recognises he or she is wounded will find mercy and healing in the passion of Christ, Pope Francis has said.

Meeting with members of the Stigmatine order, the Pope distributed his prepared text and then spoke off the cuff about the significance of naming a religious order after the stigmata, or wounds of Christ.

In his meditation of the wounds of Christ, St Bernard of Clairvaux, the Cistercian reformer who died in 1153, referred to Jesus as a “bag of mercy” who poured that mercy out on humanity through the crucifixion wounds to his hands, feet and side, the Pope said. “The Lord's stigmata, the Lord's wounds, are precisely the door through which mercy comes.

“If I'm depressed, if I've sinned too much, if I've done this or that, I take refuge in the wounds of the Lord,” the Pope said, paraphrasing St Bernard.

Forgiveness and healing, he said, come only from uniting one's wounds to those of Jesus.

### ‘Superpope’ visits sports stars to raise charity funds

The image of the ‘Superpope’ will gather autographs of sports stars around the world before eventually being auctioned off to raise money for the Pope's charity.

The initiative began at a Vatican news conference with the unveiling of a simple medium-sized yellow t-shirt bearing the iconic ‘Superpope’ depicting Pope Francis with his fist extended, flying through the air, holding his black bag packed with Christian values and a scarf representing his hometown San Lorenzo soccer team.

The first superstar who signed the t-shirt was recently-retired Roma football legend,

Francesco Totti. Next in line for the shirt signing “relay” will be soccer star Diego Maradona, followed by world champion motorcyclist Marc Marquez and many more.

The plan is to get as many famous signatures as possible before it goes on auction, possibly by the end of the summer.

The first ‘Superpope’ image went up on a backstreet near the Vatican on a cold night in January 2014.

The artist, Mauro Pallotta, who signs his work ‘Maupal’, paints his removable street art onto paper that he glues to walls around Rome with a water-based adhesive.

### Taiwan offered strength after devastating earthquake

Pope Francis expressed his solidarity with the people of Taiwan after two high-magnitude earthquakes devastated the island nation, killing at least nine people and injuring hundreds more. The Pope “offers the assurance of his prayers for those who have lost their lives and for those who have been injured,” read a telegram sent by the Vatican following the earthquakes.

“As he encourages the civil authorities and emergency personnel engaged in the rescue efforts, His Holiness willingly invokes upon all the Taiwanese people the divine blessings of strength and peace,” said the telegram, signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state.

A magnitude 6.4 earthquake rocked the east coast of Taiwan. This initial earthquake caused immense destruction in Hualien, a coastal city, destroying smaller buildings and walls and left some skyscrapers and larger buildings leaning at sharp angles.

But almost before anything could be done, a second earthquake rocked the region. The magnitude 5.7 quake was centred in roughly the same area.



# 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

### Gay Catholics are the elephant in the room

**Dear Editor,** I am sometimes amused by discussions within the Church about the possibility of Catholics with same-sex attraction. Much of the commentary seems entirely unaware that gay Catholics – many of them couples with fellow gay Catholics – are part and parcel of every parish community in the country. In some parishes, they are openly acknowledged, in many other parishes priests and other parishioners agree not to know!

If the Church is serious about the commitment to be inclusive and

open to all, the starting point needs to be an acknowledgement that gay people are as much part of the Church community as everyone else. This is a fundamental issue of welcome and belonging.

Other issues, inevitably, flow from this such as what the Church's approach to committed and faithful same-sex couples should be. Thus far, the attitude seems to be to ignore their existence. Some people will see this as pushing an agenda towards same-sex blessings in church, but I

don't think anyone expects the Church to change its fundamental teaching that sex should be reserved for marriage and marriage is between one man and one woman.

That being said, there are serious questions to be explored about whether or not the Church should look at long-term committed relationships as intrinsically better than a series of casual encounters.

*Yours etc.,  
Mary Kelly,  
Cork City.*

### Domestic violence works both ways

**Dear Editor,** I write with reference to your article on domestic violence 'The fight against domestic violence' (IC 01/02/2018).

Now, it's not the purpose of this letter to downplay the issue of domestic violence against women, nor does this writer have any special expertise in this area. Nevertheless, I believe it's fair to say that domestic violence is invariably seen as being almost always a male-on-female phenomenon. The

truth is that this is far from being the case. UK Office for National Statistics figures suggest that as many as 40% of domestic violence victims in the UK are male. It seems reasonable to assume that the situation is not much different in Ireland.

Veteran UK anti-domestic-violence activist Erin Pizzey, who opened the first shelter for abused women in the UK in 1971, quickly learned from her own experience of dealing

with the issue that domestic violence was far from being purely a matter of men abusing women and that much of it was reciprocal – and she made her views publicly known.

This was over 40 years ago, yet domestic violence continues to be perceived as being almost entirely male-on-female and continues to be portrayed as such in the mainstream media.

Why is this? Well, at least part of the answer

may lie in the fact that Ms Pizzey, after being hailed initially as a feminist heroine in the early 1970s, has been reviled by radical feminists ever since for stating publicly what she knew to be the truth, and has been largely ignored to this day by the mainstream media and by public policy-makers.

*Yours etc.,  
Hugh Gibney,  
Athboy, Co Meath.*

### There is no middle ground

**Dear Editor,** The government said recently that it wishes to seek out the 'middle ground' in the upcoming abortion debate. One is prompted to ask what this middle ground might look like in this situation given that the essence of the debate, when all is said and done, is about whether the child in the womb lives or dies. Do they mean that after the issue is decided, that the child will be left only half alive?

*Yours etc.,  
John Cleary,  
Redmondstown,  
Co. Wexford.*



### Thinking outside the box

**Dear Editor,** Many thanks for your item in *The Irish Catholic* of February 1 advising us about the closure of 'Equate: Equality in Education'.

It is remarkable that such a well-funded organisation, with a former Minister of Education on the Board, could have such influence at Government level with respect to changing the education system in our country. The main media channels very much control the news delivered to us in order that we won't know the involvement of the politicians in such bodies with such agendas.

Please keep us advised of these and similar news items that are normally not covered by the main media channels.

*Yours etc.,  
James Byrne,  
Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow.*

### Hands are no cleaner

**Dear Editor,** In his letter, 'The Host in hand, (IC 1/2/18), Fr Brendan McConvery expresses concern that Communion on the tongue may spread infectious disease. We swallow saliva 10 to 15 hundred times a day. It's nature's way of keeping the mouth and tongue clean. So the tongue may be cleaner than the hand. In touching the hands of a communicants, Fr Brendan could be transferring germs from one to the next.

Referring to Communion in the hand during a visit to Germany in 1980, Pope John Paul II said: "I say that I cannot be for it, and also cannot recommend it."

*Yours etc.,  
Dan Fitzpatrick,  
Knocknacarra Park,  
Galway.*

### We have no right to decide who lives and who dies

**Dear Editor,** General Charles Andrew Joseph Mary De Gaulle was undoubtedly one of the great leaders of France during and after the Second World War, and later as President of France – and he is remembered here in Ireland because he chose Connemara for his holidays and as a place to find peace.

He was the father of five children, the youngest of whom was Anne. She was his favorite daughter, whom he described as "my joy". Not known as a man of much emotion to the world, he opened his heart to Anne, singing to her, telling her stories, laughing and dancing with her and enjoying her company. She brought out a deep humanity in him that otherwise would never have been known.

To his indescribable grief, she died in her father's arms from pneumonia at the age of 20. He kept her picture over his heart in a silver locket which in 1962 stopped an assassin's bullet. Anne had Down's syndrome but it didn't make her any less human – she was a gift of joy to France and to the world, and not just to her father, and because of her the Fondation Anne de Gaulle exists. General De Gaulle's dying wish was that he be buried next to his beloved Anne.

We must remember that everyone, no matter who, has a right to be born. We have no right to decide who should die.

*Yours etc.,  
William A. Thomas,  
Craughwell, Co. Galway.*

### Erroneous opinions are the real problem

**Dear Editor,** The Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) are quick to jump on the bandwagon and claim that the Vatican are seeking to silence the voice of women, when in actual fact the Vatican has every right to be concerned about anyone, be they man or woman, who would seek to falsify the teachings of the Church. It is not women *per se* that are the issue, but erroneous opinions, that are called into question. The Church, as every Catholic should know, deals in the truth, not in popular opinions.

*Yours etc.,  
Rosarie O'Sullivan,  
Greenmount, Cork.*

### Paying lip service to asylum seekers

**Dear Editor,** I am truly appalled by this Government's minimalist approach to the issue of allowing asylum seekers to work. It is a consistent theme of Church teaching that work is a fundamental right. In fact, in work men and women find their dignity as co-operators with the Creator to help build up the common good.

Thank God for Bishop Kevin Doran for pointing out that with the Government's response to the Supreme Court, very few asylum seekers will actually benefit from the judgement.

In Ireland, we like to delude ourselves that we are a welcoming place – perhaps to tourists, not so to those we perceive as not part of our community.

*Yours etc.,  
Vincent Murphy,  
Ballymun, Dublin 11.*

### 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



**SOUTH KOREA:** Sebastiano Gastaldi of Argentina carries the national flag with delegates during the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics.



**USA:** A young woman gets a prime viewing spot atop a traffic signal adorned with the Vatican flag. The flags of all countries line the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, one of two major routes for the Philadelphia Eagles Super Bowl victory parade in Philadelphia.



**PHILIPPINES:** Fr. Jerry Habunal blesses burning dried palm leaves outside Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish in Manila. Ashes from the fire were used in Ash Wednesday services at the church on the first day of the penitential season of Lent.



**VATICAN:** Archbishop Giovanni Angelo Becciu, Vatican substitute secretary of state, speaks next to a t-shirt showing Pope Francis as a superhero during a news conference to present a charitable initiative. The Vatican will auction off a T-shirt signed by sports celebrities, with proceeds going to charity.



**TAIWAN:** Rescuers carry a victim from a destroyed building following earthquakes in Hualien. Pope Francis expressed his solidarity with the people of Taiwan after two high-magnitude earthquakes devastated the island nation, killing at least nine people and injuring hundreds more.



**USA:** Members of a mime group perform on the second evening of an African-American Catholic revival celebration at St Rita's Catholic Church in San Diego as part of Black History Month, observed every February.



# Our most common sin



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

Classically Christianity has listed seven sins as 'deadly' sins, meaning that most everything else we do which is not virtuous somehow takes its root in one of these congenital propensities. These are the infamous seven: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth.

In spiritual literature the first three – pride, greed and lust – get most of the ink and attention. Pride is presented as the root of all sin, Lucifer's primordial defiance of God as forever echoed in our own lives: I will not serve! Greed is seen as the basis for our selfishness and our blindness towards others and lust has often been given the ultimate notoriety, as if the sixth commandment were the only commandment.

Not to deny the importance of these, but I suspect that the sin which most commonly afflicts us and is not much mentioned in spiritual literature is wrath, that is, anger and hatred.

I venture to say that most of us operate, however unconsciously, out of anger and this shows itself in our constant criticism of others, in our cynicism, in our jealousy of others, in our bitterness and in our inability to praise others. And unlike most of our other sins, anger is easy to camouflage and rationalise as virtue.

At one level, anger often rationalises itself as justified indignation over the foibles, stupidity, egotism, greed and

faults of others: how can I not be angry given what I see every day! Here anger shows itself in our constant irritation and in our quickness to correct, criticise and make a cynical remark.

## Slow

Conversely we're very slow to praise and affirm. Perfection then becomes the enemy of the good and since nothing and no one is perfect, we're always in critical mode and we see this as a virtue rather than for what it in fact is, namely, an inchoate anger and unhappiness inside of ourselves.

But our unhappy cynicism

isn't the biggest problem here. More seriously, anger too often parades itself as Godly-virtue, as righteousness, as prophecy, as a healthy, divinely-inspired militancy for truth, for cause, for virtue, for God.

And so we define ourselves as 'holy warriors' and 'vigilant defenders of truth', taking justification in the popular (though false) conception that prophets are angry people, on passionate fire for God.

However there's a near infinite distance between true prophetic anger and the anger that today commonly parades itself as

prophecy. Daniel Berrigan, in his criteria for prophecy, submits (and rightly) that a prophet is someone who takes a vow of love, not of alienation. Prophecy is characterised by love aching for reconnection, not anger pushing for separation.

And love isn't generally what characterises most so-called prophetic anger in our world today, especially as it pertains to God, religion and defence of truth. You see this in its worst form in Islamic extremism where, in the name of God, every kind of hatred, violence, and random murder puts on God's cloak.

**“Someone once said that we spend the first half of life struggling with the sixth commandment”**

Blaise Pascal captures this well in his *Pensees* where he writes: “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.”

He's wrong on one thing – mostly we aren't doing it cheerfully but angrily. One only has to read the letters to the editor in our newspapers, listen to most talk-radio stations or listen to any debate on politics, religion, or morality to see raw hatred and anger justifying themselves on moral and divine grounds.

There is such a thing as healthy prophetic anger, a fiery response when the poor of God, the word of God, or the truth of God are being

slandered, abused or neglected. There are important causes and boundaries to be defended. But prophetic anger is an anger that emanates out of love and empathy and always, regardless of the hatred it meets, still exhibits love and empathy, like a loving mother in the face of a belligerent child. Jesus on occasion exhibits this kind of anger, but his anger is antithetical to most of what masquerades as prophetic anger today, where love and empathy are so noticeably absent.

Someone once said that we spend the first half of life struggling with the sixth commandment, and then spend the second-half of life struggling with the fifth commandment: thou shalt not kill! We see this illustrated in the famous parable of the prodigal son, his older brother and his prodigal father.

The younger son is effectively out of his father's house through wrestling with the seductive energies of youth. The older brother is just as effectively outside his father's house, not through sin, but through wrestling with anger.

As a young boy I was catechised to confess 'bad thoughts' as sinful, but bad thoughts then were defined as sexual thoughts. As we age, I suggest, we might continue to confess 'bad thoughts', but now those 'bad thoughts' have to do with anger.

A cynic, it's said, is someone who has given up, but not shut up! He's also someone who has confused one of the seven deadly sins, wrath, with virtue.



The prodigal son.



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, February 15, 2018

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## A silent addiction



**W**ith one in three Irish people viewing porn before turning 16, addiction can become a serious and harmful issue.

In an age where sexually explicit images and videos are available at the push of a button, questions need to be raised about the negative effects of this type of consumption.

A recent Newstalk-commissioned RED C poll revealed that almost one in 10 adults admit to currently consuming pornography at least once a week, while 14% admit to doing so monthly. Despite this, the majority of adults (72%) believe that pornography gives false expectations in sexual



**Porn addiction can have longstanding effects, writes Colm Fitzpatrick**

relationships, with most women (75%) and those in younger age groups especially likely to feel this way. Although watching porn can elicit short-term pleasure, its negative consequences are much more longstanding and damaging.

Tony Monahan, accredited psychotherapist with Mind and Body Works, Dublin, tells *The Irish Catholic*: "Porn is a big problem in Ireland. Some people

feel that by looking at porn on a daily or weekly basis they are addicted. That's not necessarily the case. Addiction depends on what the driver is, what's making them look at a particular form of porn."

Tony adds that some people need porn to get aroused whereas others may view it out of curiosity – "it can be a way of finding out the whole mystique of sex".

Despite the various reasons people have for consuming pornographic material, continuous exposure to it can have a detrimental impact on your mind, and subsequently your approach to sexual relationships. One way this happens is through the brain's release of a chemical called vasopressin while watching porn, according to David Hunt, General Manager of Pure in Heart.

"In viewing pornography, a man is exposing himself to abnormal sex, sometimes even sexual violence, and then this chemical, vasopressin, creates a bond in a man's brain to these scenarios. In a sense he is being programmed," David explains.

"This can happen to such

an extent that if exposure to pornography is prolonged over time then the man can only be aroused by these abnormal sexual situations."

### Consumption

Through repeated consumption of pornographic material, addiction cycles are triggered in the brain which eventually lead to a dependency. In this sense, porn addiction is as real and serious as drug or alcohol addiction, and so may require a recovery process to break the habit. If untreated, this proclivity can continue to grow affecting work, hobbies and the relationships with those around you.

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## Family News

### AND EVENTS

#### A weekend of visual creations

For lovers of visual art, Kilkenny Animated is a festival of visual storytelling, hosted by Cartoon Saloon, that will be taking place across a variety of venues around Kilkenny City from February 23-25.

Cartoon Saloon are a locally based animation studio who have been nominated twice for Oscars with their films *The Secret of Kells* and more recently *Song of the Sea*. They are assembling an amazing line-up of speakers and activities for this new festival.

Some of the world's finest animators, cartoonists and illustrators will be attending, such as Nick Galifianakis, David Coverly and Annie West. Featured in the line-up are screenings of animated films, an exhibition of cartoons and illustrations, and workshops for professionals and beginners. There will also be stand-up comedy, dance, and live graffiti displays.

**BRUSHING IT UP:** One of the hardest parts of the morning school routine is trying to get your child to brush their teeth. This can be a nightmarish activity for many children which usually leads to tantrums or tears. In order to tackle this problem, a new technologically-advanced toothbrush promises to incentivise kids to keep all of their chompers clean.

The Magik Smart Toothbrush by Kolibree is a toothbrush that uses computer vision and an augmented reality game to guide children on proper brushing technique. The toothbrush is connected to their phone and in order to make progress on the game, brushing is required. To prevent over-brushing, the game can only be played up to three times a day.

Parents will also be sent data each time their child plays, receiving information like the time of day their kids brush their teeth and the duration of brushing.



#### Careful with your cuppa

A cup of tea is a staple in every Irish home; it's a symbol of welcome when visitors arrive, a peace-offering, and a medicine that can soothe mental and physical ills. However, a recent study from Peking University in Beijing, China, has found that the temperature at which tea is consumed could affect health – particularly in certain groups already at risk of negative health outcomes.

Lead study author Jun Lv found that the consumption of hot tea correlates with the onset of oesophageal cancer. Lv and the team uncovered a positive correlation between drinking burning-hot tea, regular alcohol intake and smoking and a higher risk of oesophageal cancer. Those who engaged in all three of these habits showed a fivefold increase in the risk for this type of cancer compared with those who did not partake in these activities.

# Talking about 'The Joy of Love'



## Pope Francis' marriage encyclical is a rich source of advice for families, writes Julie Kavanagh

In the coming weeks, many parishes across the country and beyond will begin to host a series of parish conversations as part of their preparations for the World Meeting of Families 2018.

This series will give anybody who wants to join in on the conversation a chance to hear a wide cross-section of people speaking on the realities and hopes for family life today. These voices will be accompanied by an exploration of Pope Francis' letter, *The Joy of Love*.

Why might people consider being part of these conversations? Among the different reasons people may have, one may be the simple reason that each of us wants what's best for our family.

#### Information

As a parent to three teenage girls, I am very aware that, like many other expectant parents, from the moment I knew I was expecting my antennae were up for any advice on baby rearing. From books, to radio features, to internet articles, to shared conversations with others, I sought out the information I thought would be helpful

and that would put me on the best possible track for good parenting. As time has gone on the antennae are still up! The child rearing topics that grab my attention, however, have changed as the girls have gotten older. But I am wise enough to know that my husband and I don't have all the answers. We need to seek out the best answers for our children and for our family. And here is the nub! Where do we go to for those answers?

In *The Joy of Love*, Pope Francis re-presents to us the Christian vision of love and of the family that speaks realistically and compassionately into the lives of families today.

The Pope gives us a Christian understanding of love, of marriage and of the family that is attainable and that is do-able. But it is not necessarily an automatic understanding. In other words, what he writes makes the world of sense as we read it but it may not have consciously struck us before!

Over the course of these six parish conversations, participants get to tap into both this Christian vision, with its accompanying practical advice, and a space for reflection that has the potential to have a real impact on the quality of a family's life.

Pope Francis reminds us that love does not begin in perfection, and indeed it may never reach perfection, but rather love grows and changes as people grow and change. In typical refreshing language, Pope Francis alerts us to the fact that among these changes are the physical ones of aging which will likely see the person we married in their 20's looking very different in their 70's!

It may seem superficial but, actually, it is a real adjustment that forms part of a couple's relationship and that for some reason, despite its inevitability, some couples don't anticipate.

In our married and family life we can't just plod along and, in turn, expect our love to deepen and grow.

**“Pope Francis reminds us that love does not begin in perfection”**

To face the many changes that come as life moves on, we need to acquire the

interpersonal skills to help us figure out exactly what is and is not important in how we relate to others. This is one of the reasons why these conversations may prove so useful.

For example, God's vision of love (as articulated in St Paul's famous passage “Love

is patient, love is kind...”) is explored in the third conversation and, in doing so, concrete examples of attitudes, values and actions that we can exercise in our family life are shared.

Participants might walk away from this session more mindful of the need to put the pause button on before saying a harsh word that can't be undone; more conscious of the need to be aware of what we are saying about our spouse in front of our children; more willing to forgive ourselves and one another; readier to accept family members for who they are, rather than feeling angry or resentful that they are not who we would have them be!

These sessions remind us of the constant call of Pope Francis for us to act out of love for the

other person rather than out of our own expectations or needs or wants. If we are honest, that's a very difficult lesson to learn and it's one that requires daily practice.

As does the advice from Pope Francis to never let the day end without making peace in our family. In real terms, just think of the difference this one suggestion might make to family life if it were followed.

As we try to put into practice a Christian vision of living together as family, we know that there will be times when we will get it right and there will be plenty of times when we will get it wrong. But we are not alone; God, who is love, journeys with us.

#### Conversations

So, while these conversations can help us tap into the concrete, practical wisdom of the Christian vision, this might also be a good time to remember that prayer, for example the WMOF 2018 prayer, can help us tap into the concrete and constant companionship of God.

As we continue our preparations for August we instinctively know that even more important than this event is the legacy it may leave us. While this legacy must be visibly demonstrated in parish and wider Church life, it will fundamentally take flesh in individual families. There are tangible Christian values, attitudes and actions that we can practice and that will enrich the life of our family and, in turn, society. So maybe this is the time to embrace the opportunity WMOF2018 offers us. Because, after all, we each want what's best for our family.

**Julie Kavanagh is Resource Person for the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin and a diocesan delegate to WMOF 2018.**





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As a result of porn being normalised in our culture, the effects of its use in a relationship context are rarely discussed. Recent data analysis carried out by University of Oklahoma academics Samuel Perry and Joshua Davis revealed that increased porn use has a correlation with decreased marital satisfaction, and long-term consumption of it is significantly correlated with risk of romantic break-up. Viewing porn can create feelings of inadequacy or unworthiness especially if it pervades the sexual sphere of a relationship or replaces it altogether.

"Women feel betrayed by their husband or boyfriend's pornography use. It is serious infidelity, but some men who are addicted to porn often don't seem to realise this," David says.

"They are used to popular culture telling them that porn is no big deal and doesn't harm anyone. But this is a lie."

### False expectations

One of the more incisive effects it has on relationships is the false expectations that it creates, particularly on impressionable men who attribute untenable ideals to their own sex lives and partners.

Tony explains that many men feel that when they meet someone for the first time they should have to do something sexually similar to what they have seen on the screen.

"The sexual act should be one of sensuality, love, non-dominance, a caring and sharing thing. It should be guided through with kissing and cuddling – you feel pleasure and your partner feels pleasure. In porn, it is never that way", he says, adding that porn distorts reality as the male is made to feel that he needs to be dominant in the act.

**“It is concluded that the more physically attractive a woman is the more valuable she is”**

Men are psychologically re-wired to feel that they have to control the

situation, for the sexual act to be on their terms, rather than through a mutual interplay, which can lead to humiliation and subjugation of the receiving partner. The beauty and the sensuality of the sexual act becomes diminished in the face of this unrealistic dynamic.

Not only does this perceived notion of sex damage sexual relations but it can also often dehumanise the partner who is treated as a mere means to an end. This can create a snow-ball effect where consumers of pornography begin to look at the human as a purely sexual instrument.

**“The shame and guilt attached to it is immense. Seek help, talk to somebody, a professional who has worked with this problem”**

"Men who view pornography, without realising it start to place a value on women based on their ability to incite lust in them, says David.

"The dignity and personhood of every woman is replaced by an evaluation of how physically attractive she is. So, it is concluded that the more physically attractive a woman is the more valuable she is."

One of the main reasons why this view is so widely held is due in part to mainstream culture, which affords prominence to sexual objectification on television, in books, and through advertisements.

"Imagine our sexual desire as a fire. The culture says that pornography is a healthy way of keeping this fire under control, but in reality, watching pornography is like pouring petrol on the fire. The sexual desire rather than being controlled suddenly becomes all consuming.

"Suddenly men find themselves lusting after women automatically. So, when they encounter an attractive woman, their eyes begin to

wander without their even realising it. This will continue to happen even after the man gets married and is trying to be faithful. It has become a habit and it's difficult to stop."

This type of consumption is not exclusive to just men, as women are becoming more increasingly susceptible to viewing porn. David explained that one in three women now watch it, with pornographic literature becoming more targeted to women.

Some studies have shown that 17-18% of women are addicted to porn, using it habitually. As a result, pornographic consumption and the concomitant recovery process equally apply to women who can struggle with addiction.

For those who experience it, Tony suggests seeking help, although this can be difficult because of the guilt and shame often attached to it. In his clinical situations, he has found that people would be more open to talking about alcohol or drug abuse, rather than porn consumption.

"It is actually very secretive. It happens in your bedroom, your office, your car", he said.

"The shame and guilt attached to it is immense. Seek help, talk to somebody, a professional who has worked with this problem."

### Spiritual support

For those who feel like spiritual support is also needed in combating porn addiction, David suggests frequenting the sacraments like Confession and the Eucharist as well as the Rosary.

"Frequent Confession is vital as it removes the sin, shame and hopelessness that can cripple addicts and thus keep them in their addiction.

"It is a powerful sacrament where we personally encounter God's forgiveness and healing, and that essentially is what all addicts need: forgiveness and healing."

**i** For more information about porn addiction and seeking support see <http://www.mindandbodyworks.com/cms/>

# Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



**M**onkey see, monkey do. Small children are shaped, more than anything, by example.

As life underwent a metamorphosis with the arrival of children, many old habits and hobbies had to go by the wayside. Playing guitar was of the few things that survived into this chaotic new epoch. I found I could continue to play, even with mewling babies and toddlers milling around. It also had a beneficial calming effect on the mites. As a result, the kids regard it as the most normal thing in the world to play music and sing randomly during the day.

Even our toddler has a ukulele she 'plays'. She is prone to giving impromptu performances

of her own original material, songs written entirely in her own particular language. The older ones sing in choirs and think nothing of giving solo performances in front of a couple of hundred people – something I'd be terrified to do! Had they grown up in a different household, they might think singing was something strange, only done on television or radio.

Kids sense what truly excites us and find themselves carried along by our enthusiasms. I let the kids stay up late the other night to watch the first Falcon heavy rocket launch live.

They were in awe as the most powerful rocket in the world flew into space, and delivered its payload, before the side rockets flew back to earth and performed a synchronised landing in Florida. It was like watching science fiction.

### Happy hours

The kids have spent many happy hours with me outside in the dark watching meteor showers, glimpsing the planets, or looking at the craters of the moon through my telescope.

I probably got my enthusiasm for space from my own father. One of my earliest memories is watching the first

shuttle launch. Enthusiasms can be intergenerational, passed on like genes.

The word enthusiasm, interestingly, derives from the Greek *entheos*, meaning 'possessed by God, inspired'.

I never much cared for biology as a child, but fortunately the enthusiasm of their doctor mother for the subject means the kids find the human body fascinating. They've had kids' stethoscopes (which really work) from an early age. They've taken an interest for nature from both of us. The other day, my eldest daughter and I collected various leaves



and plants from the garden to examine under her microscope. I experienced afresh the awe of seeing the intricate hidden patterns of a fern, and the otherworldly sculptural beauty of a flower's stamen, as revealed by microscope.

The downside of 'monkey see, monkey do' is of course that our kids are also around when we're not at our best: when we are cranky in the morning, or exasperated in traffic – when we're feeling far from inspired.

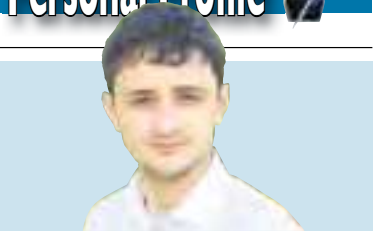
The presence of these little sponges means that we parents need to be mindful of our own failings, so that we don't pass them on. If we are to disagree, we must try to disagree well – or later, when the kids are in bed!

For perhaps the first – and most important – thing kids learn from us is how to treat other people.

Yet it's not all a one-way street. The kids drag their parents along into their own enthusiasms. Thanks to my son's fanatical devotion to Liverpool FC, I've rekindled an interest that had lapsed in about 1986. Even as we help them grow, they help us regress to feel, at least vicariously, a facsimile of the fresh feelings of youth.



## Personal Profile



### Claire Devaney tells Colm Fitzpatrick about her youth mission

From exciting camps and clubs to vital school ministry, one woman is stepping up to the mark to give religious education a new lease of life. Claire Devaney is Primary School Co-ordinator with Scripture Union Ireland, an ecumenical Christian organisation which focuses on meeting the spiritual needs of children and youth in the 21st Century.

Among her many roles, she collaborates with churches and parishes running retreats and faith-based transition programmes, along with confirmation programmes.

The movement was founded in 1876 and established in Ireland in 1896, and now employs a staff of 11 people with over 200 volunteers. It has a Christian Centre at Ovoca Manor, and runs over 25 camps and holidays impacting around 4,000 children and young people annually.

For Claire, the movement provides an opportunity for the youth to come together and feel God's presence. "The purpose is to come and experience God and to hear about the Word of God; to join in community with other young people their age in fellowship," she says.

This type of exposure to the Christian faith through events and

# Putting fun into the Faith

Claire Devaney.



people. I was sceptical – what do they want, and why are they so nice?" she explains, adding that the great community around her made her realise that there was "something to this".

She began working with Youth 2000, and moved into their leadership team helping out at different capacities and was later called into teaching.

She now runs Scripture Union's children and primary school department, helping children in the development of their faith.

"I feel like children are very close to God, they have this inherent openness to discover and question. They're very open", she says, adding that sharing the Gospel message in a way that involves fellowship and fun allows you to gain a small foothold.

Another important aspect of the ministry is giving young people an opportunity to respond personally to the Gospel message rather than forcing it on them.

"You need to give young people a space to respond to the message. It's not the jug and mug style where you say 'You'll receive the message I'm going to give.' You need more response time. It's amazing the questions that they come up with," she says.

Because the movement isn't solely Catholic orientated, Claire engages in ecumenical activities which has allowed to understand and teach the faith in exciting and innovative ways.

**“Each lesson has games, activities and Bible stories to get young people talking about this important move in their lives”**

"Denomination doesn't really come into play," she says, adding, "my foundations would have been the Sacraments. I can't turn to those avenues. You have to be very

creative. I'm learning a lot from the fellow Protestant brothers."

The movement is committed to promoting Christian values and encouraging a healthy lifestyle through participation in activities. This ranges from residential camps for primary school aged children to parenting weekends, where parents are offered the opportunity to spend some time together with their child and explore their relationship with one another and God.

The hope is that all who participate in the activities will grow in the Christian faith and so become committed Church members and servants to a world in need.

Claire runs a faith-based transition resource called 'It's Your Move' (IYM) for students moving to secondary school. Each lesson has games, activities and Bible stories to get young people talking about this important move in their lives. At the centre of this resource is the assurance that God is with us always and the reminder for young people that they are not alone during this big move into secondary school.

She is also working on a new resource called 'Dynamite', which is a tool for current and future generations to encounter Jesus, not just through knowledge but also through experience. It provides basic kerygma delivered in a fun-filled way.

Although there are many great parts to her job, Claire finds working with the youth to be the most enjoyable. "I love the contact time. I have the meetings but that's the boring stuff – sometimes it's important. I love them and they know that – when they leave they know I love them," she says, adding that this type of interaction is a real breath of fresh air.

**i** For more information about Scripture Union Ireland, see: <http://scriptureunion.ie/>

activities can be formative, as was the case in her own youth. She was reared in a "really Catholic family", she says: her parents were involved in the Church, she regularly attended Mass, and her family had prayer gatherings, all of which had a "huge impact" on her growing up. When she was 12, she had a transformative experience on a pilgrimage abroad, and upon return began attending a prayer meeting

in Tallaght.

#### Adoration

"I went along to this group because I knew there was Adoration. I went for an hour and didn't talk. I slipped in a slipped out," she says. After a few months the group invited her for tea and eventually went to a retreat in Roscrea.

"I went away and had a ball. I was really struck by these young

## Unlock the doors and continue living your life

**My wife died suddenly last year and I am facing my retirement years alone. It seems all my hobbies are for two together. My children and grandchildren visit me at weekends, but my weekdays are long and very lonely. How does a widower in his 60s fill his days?**

**ANSWER:** Losing a spouse is one of the most difficult experiences we can face, yet I imagine when people ask "How are you doing?" you simply say "I'm fine."

One of the most important things to do is open up to friends and family, talk to people and ask for help. Independent Age in the UK surveyed over 2,000 widow and widowers and found that 31% of men didn't turn to anyone after the death of a loved one.

Do you remember at your wife's funeral all those people who said "If you need anything I am here"?

Now is the time to reach out to those people. Start off by deciding who you would like to reconnect with, then get your calendar out and be specific when you get in touch, because without an

arrangement with a date and time, it's unlikely to happen.

You say you don't have many hobbies. Well now is the time to try lots of new ones; you might just find yourself finding something that you truly enjoy.

You can also still do the things you used to do with your wife. Why not join a walking club? Get involved in your local active retirement group. Websites such as <https://www.meetup.com> can help you find people with similar interests.

There is even a group for widowers. (If you need help with using the internet ask your children to help you.)

At all these things, you have to make an effort to meet new friends. Use your telephone – don't wait for people to contact you.

You could also upskill and do an adult education course. Your local adult education centre will have courses in everything from Latin dancing to cookery to learning a new language. Not only do you meet people and get out of the house but you will also be

working your mind, which helps reduce the risk of Dementia.

Why not volunteer with your local Saint Vincent de Paul or homeless shelter? Not only will you be helping others, but you will meet new people – and volunteering has been proven to increase self-esteem and decrease the risk of depression.

#### Support group

Try to connect up with a nearby bereavement support group in your local parish, sharing with others in a similar situation to you can really be a great support.

You could also go on a holiday, specifically designed for independent travellers – go on that adventure you have always wanted to go on. There are lots of companies that run group trips around the world for solo travellers, you can get your own room, have your own space whilst enjoying travelling with others.

Finally, pray. God wants to help you in your grief. Let Jesus reach out to you and help you in your grief, pray and ask for his help. "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted." (Mt 5:4)

**Love Notes**

**Wendy Grace**



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Pearls sometimes found in strange places

If you needed something spiritual and relaxing (and don't we all) I can recommend a good show this week.

I rarely watch BBC Alba, but I enjoyed their religious music show *Alleluia*, on Tuesday of last week. It's a simple format: spiritual songs, with interviews and readings. Of course it's in Scots Gaelic, which is not too unlike Irish to listen to, but English subtitles are provided for the spoken sections, with Gaelic subtitles for the songs.

Last week's episode, set on the islands of Uist in the Outer Hebrides, featured reflections on Psalm 18. Mairi MacAonghais sang a beautiful version with tasteful piano accompaniment, while Caitriona Watt sang a fine version of 'Sein-nibh don Tighearna', followed by a fascinating backstory of the songwriter Donald John McDonald, a Catholic Scotsman imprisoned by the Germans during World War II.

The show highlights personal testimonies and last week we heard from singer-songwriter, Pól McCaluim, a Catholic originally from Glasgow, who found inspiration in nature, and indeed, with all the gorgeous Scottish scenery on view it was easy to see why.

The Church had always been part of his life – he had never been without it and wouldn't want to be. He expresses his faith through



Kevin Cullen of *The Boston Globe*.

the gift of music – it brings people together, and with singing there was no rank. It's not a very demanding or adventurous show, and technically it's fairly basic, but it's all heart and beauty.

There was a striking radio moment on *The Hard Shoulder* (Newstalk) on Wednesday of last week, when presenter Ivan Yates was chatting with Kevin Cullen of *The Boston Globe*, a regular contributor, and Cullen was ranting on and hurling intemperate verbal abuse at President Trump. I lamented the lack of objective journalism, or even the pretence or illusion of it. This carry on does nothing to

enhance political discourse and adds to the very polarisation that supposedly liberal journalists blame Trump for.

### Turn

Then it took a surprising turn – as Cullen lambasted American governments for sending young men off to die in wars, he referenced a nephew of his that had been in those wars; Timmy had been injured on duty in Iraq and died of a brain injury after getting home.

Cullen became quite upset and was struggling for words – the segment was transformed. I think Yates was affected as well, taken aback

and taken by surprise. Now this passionate approach has a role to play and can touch hearts, as long as there is no cynical manipulation of listeners, and in this case I don't think there was. It came across as entirely genuine.

**“People always fall short of the ideals...but that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the ideals”**

*The Ray D'Arcy Show* (RTÉ Radio 1) last Thursday featured an interview with Sarah Thomas, the daughter of a priest who was researching the issue. It was an interesting discussion and she didn't sound bitter or axe-grinding, but when a teen she was annoyed at what she saw as hypocrisy – the Church teaching one thing and then some of her members doing the opposite.

But hold on, isn't that inevitable, given human nature? People always fall short of the standards, of the ideals, but that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the ideals. She welcomed the new Church guidelines on the matter which put the wellbeing of the children first.

One quote from D'Arcy is worth noting: “I don't want to bash the Catholic Church



Ray Darcy.

all the time, but, and there are hundreds and thousands of priests doing huge pastoral work around the world and doing very good work.”

There were some very human moments on last Friday's *The Leap of Faith* (RTÉ Radio 1), but it was much lighter and more cheerful. It was a great idea, and well timed, for Michael Comyn to bring the fathers of two prominent rugby players together to discuss life, faith and of course rugby.

Unusually both were clergymen – Canon Horace McKinley, Rector of Whitechurch parish in Dublin and father of Ian McKinley who plays international rugby for Italy, along with Rev. Graham Stockdale who is chaplain to hospice and prison services in Northern Ireland and father of Jacob Stockdale, the Irish International rugby player who scored a classy try against the Italians last

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### DOCUMENTARY ON ONE: MAIREAD'S FIRST COMMUNION

RTÉ Radio 1, Sunday, February 18, 7.00pm

What do you do when you're not practicing Catholics but your daughter wants to make her First Communion?

#### CATHOLIC LIVES

EWTN Monday, February 19, 10am

David Kerr speaks to Dame Nuala O'Loan, House of Lords appointee and former Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

#### TREASURES OF HEAVEN BBC4, Monday, February 19, midnight

Andrew Graham-Dixon explores the ancient Christian practice of preserving holy relics and the largely forgotten art form that went with it, the reliquary.

Saturday.

Apart from telling of how their sons got into rugby, they spoke of their own personal and deliberate decisions to follow Jesus, and about their lives in ministry. Nice one.

[boregan@hotmail.com](mailto:boregan@hotmail.com)



Aubrey Malone

# Film

## Panther roars in seismic genre shift for Marvel Studios

### Black Panther (PG)

Both directed and written by Ryan Coogler, this is yet another highly entertaining offering from Marvel Studios. It concerns a king, T'challa (Chadwick Boseman) who returns to the technologically advanced fictional nation of Wakanda to be its leader.

His path to power is threatened by a cadre of nether-do-wells but a consignment of Special Forces and a CIA agent (Martin Freeman) align themselves to him to try and save Wakanda from civil – and even world – war.

This is the kind of film that rarely pauses for breath. If you're a fan of adventures, especially those based on



*Black Panther* is the latest from Marvel Studios.

Very good  
★★★★

comic book superheroes, you won't be disappointed. The latest in a long line of similar extravaganzas, this one differs from predecessors like *Captain America* and *Iron Man* by having a black man at its core, a welcome change of

emphasis and one you hope will continue in similar ventures down the road.

Maybe our next Marvel phenomenon, in a post-Harvey Weinstein Hollywood, will be a super woman. (The female characters in *Black*

*Panther* are very strong even as things stand.) The stellar cast also includes Michael Jordan, Daniel Gurira, Letitia Wright (as T'Challa's feisty half-sister Shuri) and Lupita Nyong'o, who was so effective in *12 Years a Slave* a few years back.

It will engross you with its costumes, its frenetic pace, even its humour. The soundtrack matches the action with its high octane energy. It would be difficult to praise the film too much. Its special effects will take your breath away.

### And elsewhere...

A few other films on show at the moment are also on my bucket list. The first is Guill-

ermo del Toro's eccentric fairytale *The Shape of Water*, which has Sally Hawkins delivering an Oscar-nominated performance in a film about a janitor who forms a relationship with an amphibious creature that's being held in captivity.

Greta Gerwig's *Lady Bird* stars Saoirse Ronan as a 17-year-old Catholic girl in a Sacramento high school looking for adventure as she prepares to go to college. A lot of people are raving about this.

Every time I pick up a newspaper I seem to see Ms Ronan attending some awards ceremony for her performance in it. She's even being talked of as Ireland's Meryl Streep on the strength of it.

Don't argue. I can't wait to see it. (I don't normally send fan letters to stars but after seeing Ronan in *Brooklyn* I did just that.)

A third film featuring a strong performance from a woman is *I, Tonya*, with Margot Robbie as a brilliant ice skater fighting prejudice from her peers because she comes from the wrong side of the tracks.

You might also like to check out Clint Eastwood's real life tale of three Americans doing their best to save lives on a train after a terrorist attack that took place in 2015, *The 15.17 to Paris*.

All in all, an embarrassment of riches. These are good times to be in movie houses.



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Inspiring thoughts from Henri Nouwen

**You Are the Beloved: Daily Meditations for Spiritual Living**

Henri Nouwen  
(Hodder & Stoughton, £14.99)

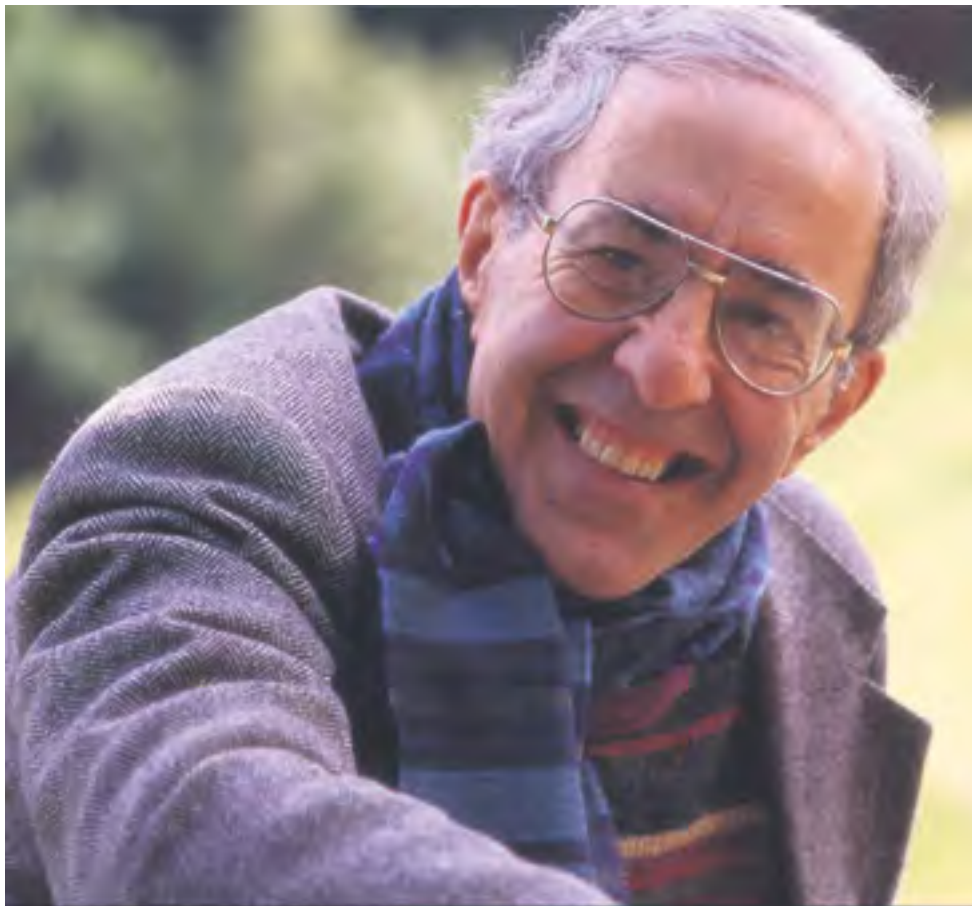
Anthony Redmond

I have read quite a few of Henri Nouwen's books and he never fails to move and inspire me. I never seem to tire of him. He was a profoundly spiritual, prayerful man, but he always struck me as lonely, insecure and, in his craving for affection, full of self-doubt. Friendship meant the world to him but his deep sensitivity caused him to be easily hurt and disappointed and let down.

This all-too-human quality made him so appealing and easy to identify with. He had a particular compassion for those on the margins of society, the outcasts.

**“I have a deep sense, hard to articulate, that if we could really befriend death we would be free people”**

His friends report that he couldn't pass a beggar on the street and he always stopped to listen to the poor man or woman's story and give them what help he could. He left a successful academic career to



devote his life to people with mental disabilities as pastor of L'Arche Daybreak Community in Toronto.

*You are the Beloved* is a book of meditations for every day of the year, selected from the writings, talks and letters of Henri Nouwen. It is compiled and edited by Gabrielle Earnshaw.

Henri was acutely aware of

his own mortality and fragility. Writing about death, he says: “I have a deep sense, hard to articulate, that if we could really befriend death we would be free people. So many of our doubts and hesitations, ambivalences and insecurities are bound up with our deep-seated fear of death that our lives would be significantly different if

we could relate to death as a familiar guest instead of a threatening stranger.”

### Vulnerability

Genuine, sincere friendship was very important to Henri. Nothing was too much trouble to him when it came to his friends. There was a deep vulnerability about him and he craved affirmation and

affection from friends. There is something profoundly moving about this.

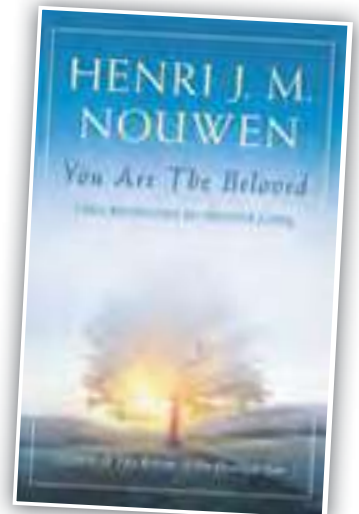
In a piece called ‘The Friend who Cares’, he writes: “When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand.”

The friend,” he continues, “who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing, and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is the friend who cares.”

**“God became a little baby. Who can be afraid of a little baby?”**

This theme of friendship permeates Nouwen's life and his writing. He experiences God's loving presence through the prism of caring human relationships.

“True friendships are lasting because true love is eternal. A friendship in which heart speaks to heart is a gift from God...love between people, when given by God, is stronger than death. In this sense, true friendships



continue beyond the boundary of death. When you have loved deeply that love can grow even stronger after the death of the person you love. This is the core message of Jesus...dare to love and be a real friend. The love you give and receive is a reality that will lead you closer to God as well as to those whom God has given you to love.”

Another theme of Nouwen is what he termed the “powerlessness” of God. God chose to enter into human history in complete weakness. “People with power do not invite intimacy,” he says. “God became a little baby. Who can be afraid of a little baby? How can we fear a baby we rock in our arms, how can we look up to a baby that is so little and fragile, how can we be envious of a baby who only smiles at us in response to our tenderness? That is the mystery of the Incarnation.”

When I read these very moving words I think of the efforts to legalise abortion here in Ireland up to 12 weeks of pregnancy with no reasons required.

Henri Nouwen died in 1996 at the age of 64 but his life and message continue to be relevant and deeply inspiring.

## Prayers from our own tradition of piety

**Leabhar Urnaí an Timire**  
níl aon eagarthóir ainmnithe  
(Foilséacháin Ábhar Spioradálta, €5)

Tadhg Ó Dúshláine

This slim volume of less than 50 pages will come as a godsend to the increasing number of teachers in Gaelscoileanna, under the trusteeship of the Church, charged with the transmission of the faith in a broken culture, where the rich heritage of prayer can no longer be taken as a given.

The formidable *Caiticíosma na hEaglaise* *Caitlicí* is not easily accessible; the Irish version of *Ucat* is neither available, nor planned; and the old reliable *Gairdín an Anama* is both out of date and out of print.

Pope Francis frequently draws our attention to the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, stressing the importance of acculturation.

The Irish experience of Christianity since the beginning has been just that: one of accommodation and amalgamation of the native and Roman traditions, making the Irish language the oldest vernacular in Europe. In the 17th Century the Irish Franciscan school in Leuven did much to maintain the continuum, producing a veritable library of devotional and catechetical material for the home mission.

This attractive little booklet is very much in that tradition: modern, innovative, inclusive and evocative in design.

The front and back cover illustrations are indicative of our time, and yet, Ceallachán's morning prayer of the 8th Century echoes



through the pastel opulence of the front cover, while ‘Pangur Bán’ and ‘An t-éan beag ...’, lurk somewhere near the back cover; and a vessel resembling a Galway Hooker accompanied by Fungi, the Dingle dolphin, illustrate the traditional offertory hymn, ‘Ag Críost an Síol’.

**“This attractive little booklet is very much in that tradition: modern, innovative, inclusive and evocative in design”**

The content is divided into seven separate sections, from the basic ‘Paidreacha Coitianta’ to the Adoration of the Eucharist. Coincidentally, or otherwise, this layout resembles

that of a booklet similar in size and format published 60 years ago. But there the comparison ends.

The earlier work is very much pre-Vatican II, with no acknowledgement, recognition or inclusion of the native tradition.

In contrast, the core sections of this collection, ‘Urnaí i Rith an Lae’ and ‘Paidreacha don Tríonóid Naofa’ breathe the vitality and authenticity of that ongoing tradition.

How natural and inspirational, for instance, is the ‘Grace before meals’ of this collection, compared with the uninspiring translation from the Latin in the pre-Vatican II booklet.

Worthwhile things take time, the proverb cautions, and while more than half a century has passed since such a natural collection as this might have been expected, it is never too late, and please God, it will find its voice in many of the Gaelscoil and further afield.



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.

# The amazing Gooch tells his own tale



**Gooch: The Autobiography**  
by Colm Cooper  
(Transworld, €20.00)

**J. Anthony Gaughan**

At the outset Cooper explains the origin of his nickname. It arose because when he was eight years old he had a passing resemblance to red-haired 'Goochie' dolls popular at that time.

The real heroes in this book are Colm's parents, Mike and Maureen. They began their married life in Cricklewood in London, but returned soon afterwards to Killarney. Mike was a builder's labourer, Maureen held two jobs, one in a bar, the other in a restaurant. Both worked hard to care for their two daughters and five sons. Committed Catholics, they were exemplary parents.

Cooper is refreshingly honest in recalling his early years. The family resided in a working-class area in the town, where 'neighbours looked after each other and their children'. Hence Colm and his siblings were able to roam around the town without much supervision.

**“Cooper reveals the severe training regime which present-day top-flight Gaelic players have to submit themselves”**

He began his education in the local convent school. Then he attended St Brendan's College, known as the 'Sem' as it was founded to provide priests for the diocese of Kerry. It is the *alma mater* of many of Kerry's best-known footballers. Although initially he tended to be overlooked because of his slight physique, he was soon a regular on the college teams.



The Cooper family were involved with the Dr Croke's football club across a number of generations. Colm played on the club's underage teams. He graduated to the senior team and aged 17, with his four brothers, was a member of the Dr Croke's side which won the Kerry Senior County Championship in 2000. Cooper leaves one in no doubt that it is this club and its members which has pride of place in his affections.

He was the Dr Croke's team mascot when they won the All-Ireland Senior Football Club Championship in 1992 and captained the team, when they won it again in 2017. While standing down as a Kerry player in 2017, he indicated his intention to continue to play for his club.

It is as a Kerry footballer that Cooper is best known. Apart from appearances in National League games, he has lined out for the county in 85 championship matches, including five in which he won All-Ireland senior football medals.

He records his experiences of

some of the most important of these matches, those in which he and his teammates were successful and those in which they had to gracefully acknowledge defeat. Cooper claims that before all the 'big' matches in Croke Park he remained composed and focussed.

As one who for more than 10 years celebrated Mass with Kerry teams before they went in to play in Croke Park I can vouch for the fact that all those well-prepared teams were equally composed and focussed.

## Outspoken

By nature outspoken, Cooper is critical of the lack of sportsmanship exhibited by some of the Tyrone footballers, particularly with regard to their practice of "sledging". He reserves his severest criticism for the thuggery of the Australian Rules players in the international match in Melbourne in October 2005.

Throughout Cooper reveals the severe training regime which present-day top-flight Gaelic players have to submit themselves.

The book includes a large measure of self-analysis. This concerns his grief following the loss of his father and later his mother, to whom he was greatly attached. He also discusses his dark brooding following a devastating injury which threatened to cut short his football career.

Inevitably he provides a number of reflections and suggestions with regard to the future role of the Gaelic Players Association in the GAA.

The extensive use of expletives in the book is needless and off-putting. But still it is an interesting and valuable autobiography of a man who will be remembered for his sublime football skills for many years to come.

## The World of Books

By the books editor

# Vain glory and the Great War

**T**he literary commemoration of the Great War takes many curious forms these days. But none can be more curious than the recent suggestion by Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, that a new renaissance of war poetry should be encouraged among modern soldiers.

He had in mind the great heritage of Great War poetry, by Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, Siegfried Sassoon and, sadly, so many others.

But the prince seems not to realise that the war was celebrated in other forms of verse than cannot be called poetry, the kind patriotic poetry which praised efforts to save civilisation (identified with Anglo-American culture) from what Chesterton called "the dreadful Hun".

It was not until the end of the 1920s that the books that we take to be the true commemoration of the war began to appear, when at last the real writers managed to soothe their tortured minds and to relate their experiences: *Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves' memoir, appeared in 1928; it was later followed by Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, the novels of Henry Williamson, *Sagittarius Rising* by Cecil Lewis, Frederic Manning's *Her Privates We*. Abroad there were similar books; one thinks of Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu*, Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* and other books by Germans, Czechs, Southern Slavs and Russian writers.

**“Christians should always bear in mind... that they are explicitly commanded to ‘resist not evil’”**

The commemoration of war was not then a matter of celebration at all. These writers knew very well that the deaths of millions in the war, and the further deaths from the Spanish flu epidemic that swept the world afterwards (killing even more people than the war), could be put down the account of the national leaders, the politicians, the career generals, the "old men who failed", as the young generation came to call them.

The literature of the Great

War on a universal scale was anthologised by the soldier, historian and publisher Guy Chapman in his important publication *Vain Glory: A Miscellany of the Great War 1914-1918* written by those who fought on all side and on all fronts (London, 1933; reissued 1968). Chapman himself was the author of a war memoir, *A Passionate Prodigality* (1933).

His point of view is one which commemorators even to this day still try to avoid. There is a tendency to celebrate the ordinary combatants. This is right and proper. But it has to go hand in hand with a denunciation of the attitudes and policies and the fatuous foolishness of those old men that took the world to war.

One has to respect the pious hope of Prince William that his country's wars, which have been many since the cease fire of 1918, will not be forgotten in literary form. Yet to call for "a renaissance of war poetry" seems to be a quite mistaken notion.

## Dictators

New war poetry implies new wars. What we need to have, and which Christians and every human being of good will has to strive for, is no war at all. Pacifism should be the true creed of all. But we are told we have to resist the wicked dictators, a cry that that been put forward in every decade since. Democracies can only go to war in a "good cause".

But Christians should always bear in mind – and Catholics sometimes need to remember that they are Christians too – that they are explicitly commanded to "resist not evil".

These are Jesus's own words: "But I say to you resist not evil: but if one strikes thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other cheek." (The context can be found in Matthew 5: 39-48.)

The passage ends with the command "Be you therefore perfect..." But was it not Chesterton (I hesitate over the reference) who remarked that perfection only walked once on the earth.

We cannot use our imperfections to allow our leaders to murder millions.

The prince is well meaning. But these present commemorations are not really intended to recall the dead, but to enhance the standing of the living in their own eyes.

A call for complete pacifism will always go unheeded while we elect leaders like Donald Trump.





# Classifieds

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

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## The Miracle Prayer

Dear Heart of Jesus,  
In the past I have asked for many favours.

This time I ask for a special one. (mention here)  
Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

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

Say this prayer for three days.

S.D.

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## Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre 2018 PROGRAMME

### SILENT PREACHED RETREATS

4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>  
**MAY**

Dr. John Feehan and Fr Hugh O'Donnell, SDB  
Finding God in the Singing Heart of the World: an exploration of the creation spirituality of Laudato si'.

28<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>  
**MAY-JUN**

Fr Denis McBride, CSCR  
Where does the Jesus story begin? We will reflect on the different beginnings of the Jesus story alongside the question: given who you are today, where did that story begin?

31<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>  
**AUG-SEPT**

Fr Nick Harman, MSC  
**RECOVERING THE SACRED IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE.**

9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>  
**OCT**

Fr Daniel O'Leary  
**'AN ASTONISHING SECRET: The Love-story of Creation - the Wonder of You'** Reflections on the beauty, challenges and pain of all life, and of our own in particular.

### 6 DAYS DIRECTED RETREATS

**AUG 31<sup>ST</sup> - SEPT 6<sup>TH</sup> @2PM**  
Elizabeth Dunne, SMR  
Des Corrigan, SMA

**9<sup>TH</sup> - 15<sup>TH</sup> OCT @2PM**  
Frank Downes, OP  
Dermot Mansfield, SJ

### 4 DAYS DIRECTED RETREATS

**31<sup>ST</sup> AUG - 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPT**  
Elizabeth Dunne, SMR  
Des Corrigan, SMA

### LENTEN DAYS

**17<sup>TH</sup> FEB** Fr. Aodhán McCrystal, SMA  
**10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH** Fr. Des Corrigan, SMA

### EASTER TRIDUUM

**28<sup>TH</sup> MAR @6 PM - 1<sup>ST</sup> APR @9 AM**

### CARE OF THE EARTH IS CARE OF OUR FUTURE

**12<sup>TH</sup> MAY**  
Reflecting on the beauty and goodness of God's creation, and on our responsibility as its stewards. Ben Kimmerling and Noel Bradley

### FAITH IN THE FAMILY

**16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**  
Joe & Paula McKeown, and Bosco & Lynette McShane will lead us in a day of reflection, prayer and storytelling helping us to rediscover the joy of Faith in the Family.

For enquiries or bookings contact:  
The Secretary, Retreat & Conference Centre,  
Dromantine, Newry, Co. Down BT34 1RH  
Tel: 028 3082 1964 ; ( From RoI 045 )  
E Mail: [admin@dromantineconference.com](mailto:admin@dromantineconference.com)  
Website: [www.dromantineconference.com](http://www.dromantineconference.com)



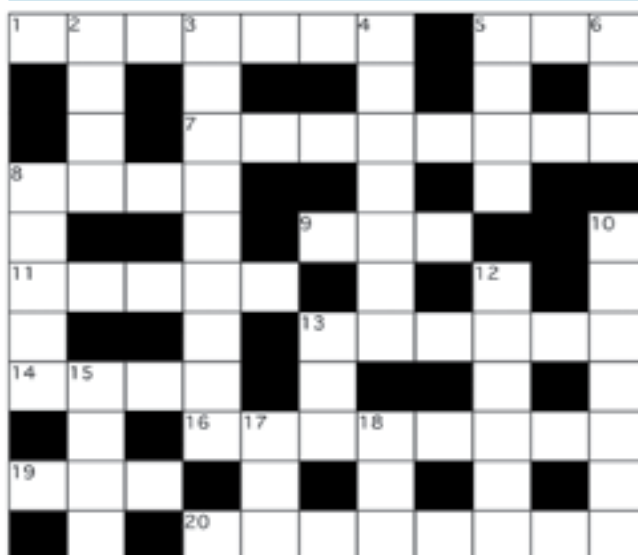
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# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 219



### ACROSS

- 1 Noticed (7)  
5 Type of seafish (3)  
7 Fish tank (8)  
8 You don't want this plant in your garden! (4)  
9 A baby wolf or bear (3)  
11 Flavour (5)  
13 This fruit has a slippery skin (6)  
14 Brave person (4)  
16 Famous knight from King Arthur's court (8)  
19 Not wet (3)  
20 Journalist; person who writes for a newspaper (8)

### DOWN

- 2 Tall tree that has cones (4)  
3 It looks a bit like a mushroom (9)

- 4 This count is a Vampire (7)  
5 It's just below your mouth (4)  
6 Huge wall that holds back water (3)  
8 You wear it on your wrist to tell you the time (5)  
10 Let this set to help a broken bone to heal (7)  
12 You might carry your money in this (6)  
13 Where you put your rubbish (3)  
15 Coin that can be spent in many countries in Europe (4)

- 17 Hatchet (3)  
18 The sound a dove makes (3)

## LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

### GORDIUS No.337

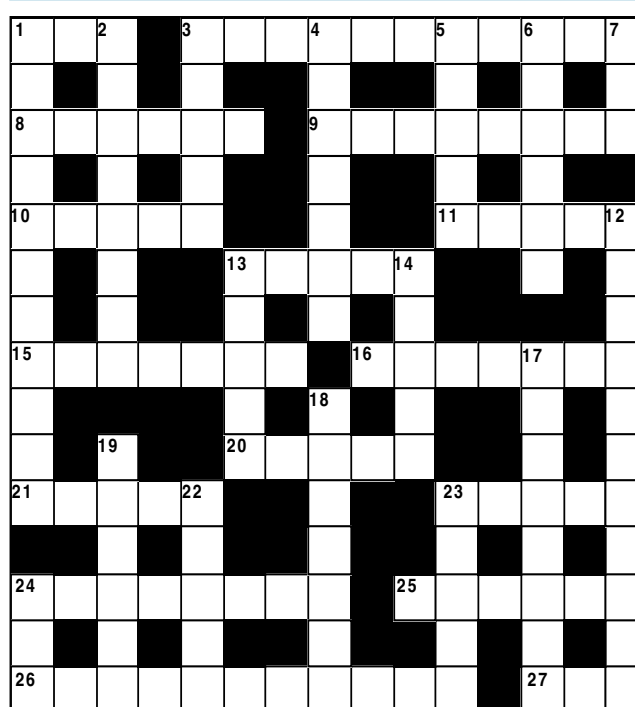
**Across** – 1 Scaremongers 7 The Garden of Gethsemane 9 Lead 10 Mother 11 Brat 14 Prune 15 Titan 16 Cola 18 Local 21 Equip 22 Ouija 24 Inky 25 Salsa 26 Banjo 29 Give 34 Diva 36 Ret.  
**Down** – 1 See 2 Adds 3 Emma 4 Outer space 5 Green 6 Stir 8 Extravaganza 9 Little finger 12 Struck 13 Snaps 14 Palma 17 Oriole 19 Credo 20 Louse 27 Aware 28 Judah 30 Veto 31 Knee 32 Idea 35 Vie

### CHILDREN'S No.218

**Across** – 1 Charlie 5 Bone 6 Eating 7 Adder 9 Equal 10 Plant 12 Tribe 15 Alive 17 Candle 18 Talks  
**Down** – 1 Chestnut 2 Antler 3 Language 4 Knee 5 Bad 7 Alphabet 8 Rat 11 Animal 13 Rice 14 Bond 16 Eyes

## Crossword

Gordius 338



### ACROSS

- 1 Immature newt (3)  
3 Relatively speaking, she might give you the pip! (6,5)  
8 & 9 This Roman emperor has thrown sugar sauce at us (6,8)  
10 Not married (5)  
11 One of America's Great Lakes (5)  
13 The cardinal finds snakes to be stinging creatures (5)  
15 Might a Greek character slope in like this? (7)  
16 The capital of Thailand (7)  
20 Edgar disrupted the class (5)  
21 Historically, you could spend it in part of a Hindu catalogue (5)  
23 Quietly, the elderly are summoned (5)  
24 Monster affected by the moon (8)  
25 Funeral vehicle (6)  
26 A celebrant's reconstructed these places for the Eucharist (11)  
27 Producer of acorns (3)

### DOWN

- 1 Met (11)

- 2 & 3 Papal soldiers may

literally give a shrew disgust! (3,5,5)

- 4 The tidiest kind of sea tent (7)

5 & 18d Musical named for an ocean (5,7)

6 A hospital's resident surgeon (6)

7 Possesses (3)

12 Embrace and embrace

again, being such a close race! (4,3,4)

13 Mistaken (5)

14 Vibrate, tremble (5)

17 A jumper from Australia (8)

18 See 5 down

19 Beetle regarded as sacred in ancient Egypt (6)

22 Turret (5)

23 Has a look - at a diarist, by the sound of it (5)

24 Damp (3)



Imagine just for today you are homeless. Hungry. You have no money and no phone.

Join us for Tea and a private Tour of our homeless centre. See confidentially how Merchants Quay Ireland uses donations and legacies to bring relief and hope. All welcome.

to find out more visit [www.mqi.ie](http://www.mqi.ie)

Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included on the guest list for the March 8th tour.



Giving Family & Life a gift in your Will is a hugely inspirational, lasting and dignified way to leave a loving mark on countless lives.

A gift in your Will ensures that the most effective pro-life/pro-family organisations will continue working for the kind of society we all desire.

Remember, everything we do to save babies and strengthen the family relies on you and our other generous friends.

For further advice or to avail of our Solicitor's free Wills service, please contact us today on

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**Family & Life**

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email: [fandl@iol.ie](mailto:fandl@iol.ie)

26 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1  
[www.familyandlife.org](http://www.familyandlife.org)

## Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart work in poor parishes in Africa, Russia and Venezuela

Please remember them in your Will

Contact:

Mission Support Centre, Western Road, Cork.  
Tel: 021 - 4543988

[www.mscomissions.ie](http://www.mscomissions.ie)

Trócaire is working for a just world and an end to poverty.

Please remember this work when making your will

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



01-629 3333  
[info@trocaire.ie](mailto:info@trocaire.ie)  
[www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org)

## Sudoku Corner

219

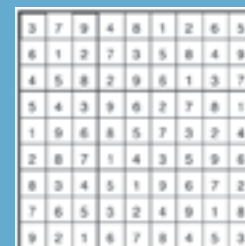
Easy



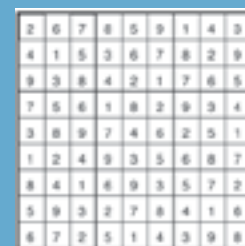
Hard



Last week's Easy 218



Last week's Hard 218





Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough

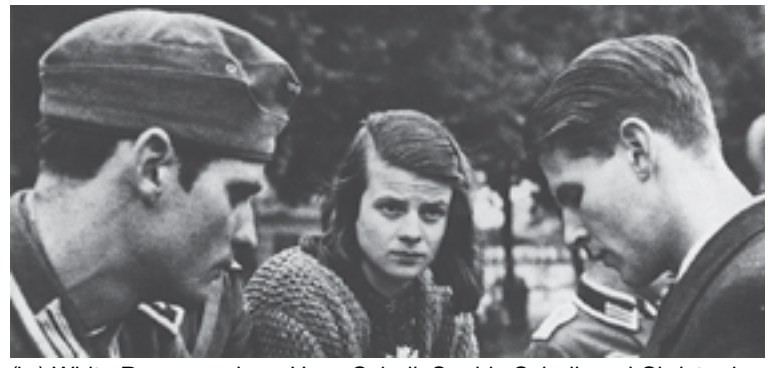
# Who now will give themselves to a righteous cause?

**AMONG THE** noble efforts to resist the Nazi regime was that of Sophie Scholl and the other members of Munich's 'White Rose' group. This small group of friends printed and distributed thousands of copies of anti-Nazi leaflets, even, with incredible courage, throwing huge bundles of them down the staircase between lectures at the University of Munich.

These leaflets were an eloquent appeal to the consciences of the German people: "Why do the German people behave so apathetically in the face of all these crimes, so unworthy of the human race? [...] The German people slumber on in their dull, stupid sleep."

If the conscience of Germany was asleep, Sophie and her co-conspirators were there to wake it up: "We will not be silent. We are your guilty conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace!"

It is easy to romanticise these resistance movements, and to imagine that those who defy corrupt and unjust regimes always feel like heroes, as if their every action is done with certainty and panache, but Sophie Scholl was a 12-year-old girl when Hitler



(l-r) White Rose members Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl, and Christoph Probst in Munich, 1942. All three were executed on February 22, 1943.

became chancellor of Germany. Later, when considering resistance, she had no political leaders to look up to, no obvious movements to join. All the important institutions, all the sage professors and clever

journalists, all the self-appointed voices of reason and authority were lined up behind the Führer. Resistance meant living in fear and isolation, risking humiliation, and renouncing the right to a

**AMONG PRIESTS** I've heard a lot of debate about how best to address the issue of abortion in the run-up to the referendum, with some unsure about whether and how to preach on the topic. I have little wisdom to offer on that point, but there is an enormous amount that priests can do, apart from the homily, to energise and activate their parishioners. We can find out which parishioners are already active in this area, and encourage them. We can individually invite others to join them. We can make sure that reading material is available in the back of the church – from the bishops' conference, from the Love Both campaign, from the Life Institute, and so on. And we can invite members of our congregations who have real doubts on this issue to come and talk them over with us. Our parishes are sleeping lions – let's wake them up!

quiet life. This is what the White Rose group were choosing when, after much prayer, reading, and conversation, these friends began to form a tiny but tough knot of resistance which shook the Nazi machine for almost a year.

**Dehumanisation**

Germany has long since woken up to the crimes of the Nazis, but in the meantime nearly the whole world has fallen into a deep sleep concerning the dehumanisation and widespread termination of our unborn brothers and sisters. Many of the great global institutions and voices of authority are now lined up behind the idea that the right to life of the unborn child is an enemy of progress.

In the face of this global machine Ireland is currently part of the counter-movement which claims that the rights of mother and child ought to be, in all cases, protected by law. And in the face of current threats to the Eighth Amendment the pro-life movement, in all its manifestations, is a tough knot of resistance.

I have come across so many people who have recently found the courage to become active in this resistance movement, people

who have been quietly living the culture of life for years as parents, as carers, as volunteers and community workers. Now they are knocking on doors, handing out leaflets, sporting slogans on jumpers and badges, debating with respect and resolution, and untiringly questioning the logic of abortion.

Sophie Scholl was executed by guillotine on February 22, 1943, at the age of 22. Her last recorded words are worth imprinting on our conscience: "How can we expect righteousness to prevail when there is hardly anyone willing to give himself up individually to a righteous cause? Such a fine, sunny day, and I have to go, but what does my death matter if, through us, thousands of people are awakened and stirred to action?"



The Little Way Association

## Please give Lenten alms for poor children

Countless missionaries throughout the world ask The Little Way Association for help to feed, clothe and house deprived children. They tell us of orphaned children left alone with no one to love or care for them, and of street children, totally abandoned, hungry and homeless, experiencing much anguish and hardship during their most tender years. Many of these children's future depends upon whether a missionary can find sufficient funds to care for them.

Shocking as the facts of child poverty are, things would be even worse were it not for the generosity of people like yourself. Could you save the life of one child by giving alms this Lent? Simple measures such as providing a proper diet could avoid many tragic deaths.

**Your Lenten gift will be gratefully received and sent WITHOUT DEDUCTION to the missions, to enable a missionary priest or sister to carry the love, care and compassion of Christ to a deprived, abandoned or orphaned child.**

**EVERY EURO YOU SEND WILL BE VERY GRATEFULLY RECEIVED AND FORWARDED WITHOUT DEDUCTION.**

In 1893, St Therese of Lisieux wrote to her sister Celine: **"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself, as it were, at our mercy. He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart. The very least trifle is precious in His sight."**

The three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The Catechism says: **"Giving alms to the poor is a witness to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God."**

**In Lent, we can serve Christ and help the destitute with our almsgiving.**

The Little Way Association uses the world's network of missionaries to help those in the direst need. Priests, Sisters and Brothers work in some of the world's poorest areas and in political trouble-spots. Our policy is never to deduct anything from donations earmarked for the relief of poverty or for missionary work.

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(Please state no. of Masses \_\_\_\_\_)  
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**Name** (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss) (Block letters please)

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To donate online go to [tinyurl.com/lwadonations](http://tinyurl.com/lwadonations)

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IC/02/15