

The Irish Catholic

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Missionaries represent best values of Ireland – President

‘You bring so much joy, practical help and hope where it doesn’t exist’

Mags Gargan

President Michael D. Higgins has told Irish missionaries in Peru that they present “the values of Ireland at their very best” through the “joy, practical help and hope” that they bring to disadvantaged communities in Latin America.

President Higgins is currently on a 12-day trip, encompassing Peru, Colombia and Cuba, to celebrate the historic connections between Ireland and Latin America.

Privileged

In Lima he was greeted by Irish missionaries with a rendition of *Amhrán na bhFiann* at an informal gathering at the headquarters of the Missionary Society of St James the Apostle, headed by Limerick man, Fr David Costello.

The President told the missionaries he was “very privileged” and “so pleased” that they were able to gather to meet him at short notice. “It is very important for you to know that as President of Ireland, it makes my heart lift to know there are people who are working to create hope where it doesn’t exist and where hope does, that spark is there, to make sure it is a bright flame that keeps people going,” he said.

“You bring so much joy but practical help, and you bring hope, and you indicate what I think is the values of Ireland at their very best.”

President Higgins said he is “moved” whenever he hears Pope Francis speaking out against “those models that are failing not just the

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The joy of love



Engaged couple Carol Dignam from Kilcock, Co. Kildare and Tim Boylan from Foxrock, Dublin received a blessing for their marriage from Bishop Denis Nulty at the Shrine of St Valentine in Dublin this week. Photo: John McElroy

MARY KENNY

Donald Trump: An attitude of moral superiority PAGE 5



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Adding the perfect touch to your bedroom PAGE 24



BREDA O'BRIEN

‘Reproductive health’ is one of those odious Orwellian euphemisms PAGE 7



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Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Features Editor: Mags Gargan, mags@irishcatholic.ie

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 6874024

Accounts: Elaine McNamee, elaine@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: Marian O'Meara, marian@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874028

Office Manager: Geraldine Kellett 01 687 4095

Managing Director: Garry O'Sullivan

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The truth will out



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

In the devastating report on the handling of abuse allegations against priests in the Dublin archdiocese, Judge Yvonne Murphy identified a clear pattern. The avoidance of scandal and the protection of the reputation of the Church were paramount concerns. Again and again, children and their families were let down by an establishment intent on protecting itself.

Of course, the truth is that those misguided individuals who thought they were protecting the Church actually brought it to its knees.

Looking at the controversy currently engulfing an Garda Síochána and the Government, you'd be forgiven for thinking that individuals and organisations are incapable of learning from the mistakes of others.

The same mind-set and patterns of behaviour that led to cover-up in relation to policing were at play in the Church.

“Those misguided individuals who thought they were protecting the Church actually brought it to its knees”

There's a certain sense in which the same denial of which Church people were guilty of as revelations of cover-up emerged is going on now amongst senior politicians and gardaí. It's virtually impossible to hear a discussion on the issue without someone interjecting that “we shouldn't forget about all of the good gardaí who are tirelessly serving communities across the country”. Of course, that's correct, but it runs the



risk of becoming ‘whataboutery’ and avoidance of the key issues.

Lesson

It's an understandable instinct, and undoubtedly motivated by the laudable desire to ensure that everyone is not tarred with the same brush. But, it shouldn't be used for purposes of deflection.

Ultimately, the gardaí will learn

the same lesson as the Church: when things go wrong, exception-less honesty is the only policy. Attempting to minimise, cover-up or worse – scapegoat and slur whistle-blowers – will only lead to more pain and loss of public trust.

Resistance to change is, as the Borg might say, futile. State institutions such as the gardaí, HSE and Tusla must be held to account.

● As an aside, it's been interesting to witness the reaction of senior politicians as the controversy emerged and the plot thickened. Both the Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Tánaiste Frances Fitzgerald have been at pains to point out everything surrounding the issue with Maurice McCabe and his family that they didn't know.

Whenever bishops used this excuse when it came to the abuse of children, the standard was always raised to the belief that as those in charge they should have known. It might be fitting for politicians to apply this standard to themselves and ask themselves what they ought to have known and reflect on what extent they chose not to know certain things.

President praises Irish missionaries

» Continued from Page 1

poor but failing humanity” and “to think that you are on the ground doing all of these things and putting them into practice”.

When the President last visited Lima in 1987 he stayed with the Columban Fathers, who he said “were doing their best to support communities of the poor and those fami-

lies affected by the economic policies of the day”.

Co. Mayo priest Peter Hughes SSC, who has collaborated with Mr Higgins since then in defending the

rights of the indigenous people of the Amazon basin, told *The Irish Catholic* that the President's words offered the missionaries a real “boost” in their work.

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Irish priests 'kept Roman pub alive' in its early days

Andy Devane in Rome

The owner of Rome's oldest pub has revealed how Irish priests and seminarians kept the place alive in the fledgling early days.

The famous Fiddler's Elbow, in the shadows of the landmark basilica of St Mary Major, is celebrating 40 years as the eternal city's 'go to' Irish pub.

Gino Bottigliero brought Guinness and 'the craic' to Rome long before mainland Europe embraced the now ubiquitous Irish pub.

He describes priests and seminarians from Ireland as amongst the bar's "most important" clientele down the years.

Support

He reveals that there was enthusiastic support from the students of the Pontifical Irish College, as well as a handful from the Venerable English College, and the Benedictines at San Anselmo.

According to Mr Bottigliero, among the seminarian regulars were the nephew of Winston Churchill, the brother of a serving British Foreign Secretary, a descendant of Oliver Cromwell, a man who gave up his string

of night clubs to serve God, and the son of the inventor of the zip, who waived his royalties for a greater glory.

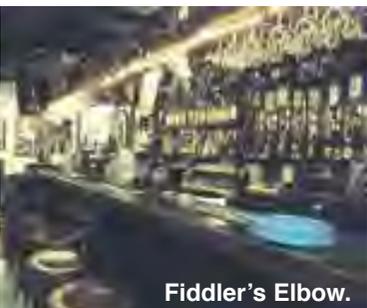
Until the advent of Fiddler's Elbow, foreigners living in Rome had nowhere to go for a libation, let alone a pint of the 'black stuff'.

"The notion of meeting for a drink in the evening, outside of a restaurant, was unheard of in Rome at the time," says Mr Bottigliero.

The pub was the first in Rome to serve draft Guinness, in 1981, as well as the first to employ Irish staff, while the hordes of customers were vetted by bouncers, another first for the capital.

Fiddler's hosts regular cultural events, with particular emphasis on Irish music and literature.

Prof. John McCourt of Università Roma Tre describes it as "one of Rome's great Irish cultural institutions", praising its important role in supporting conferences of Irish studies and organising "lively, entertaining celebrations of Irish writing". It has also hosted countless meetings of the Irish Club of Rome during the organisation's 25-year history.



Fiddler's Elbow.



Harry Connick Jr 'guided by faith' in life

Paul Keenan

The famed American crooner Harry Connick Jr has revealed how his deep Catholic faith has guided his entertainment career and sustained his 27-year marriage.

In an interview ahead of the airing of a new talk-show bearing his name, Connick Jr explained how his faith informs the decisions he makes in life.

"The decisions I make and my faith and values are entwined," he said. "All I really want, when I pray, I don't really ask for

anything. All I want to do is God's will and make the best decisions I can. I don't go out and preach...Faith is an extra big part of my life."

It was this strength of faith which saw the singer perform for the congregation at New York's Madison Square Garden as it played host to Pope Francis' Mass during his 2015 visit to America.

Pressed during his interview on the secret to his enduring marriage and lack of 'tabloid scandal' in the fickle world of show business, Connick Jr said, "I wake up every day and try to be the best husband, father and entertainer I can be. I'm no different offstage or talking to you or onstage than I am going to dinner with my family. It's all the same place and I apply the same values to all I do. It works for me. Many people in and out of showbiz live their lives in different ways. I try to be the best I can be."

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EASTER PILGRIMAGES



Rocamadour, France

Killaloe feels the 'power of prayer' for vocations

Paul Keenan

A prayer initiative in Killaloe has seen two-thirds of parishes in the diocese praying regularly for vocations and a rise in the numbers of young men considering the path to priesthood.

According to the diocese, a number of years ago, then Bishop of Killaloe Kieran O'Reilly invited the Lay Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration to become active in the diocese and for them to keep vocations to the priesthood central to their prayers.

Involved

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* this week, Fr Iggy McCormack, director of vocations for Killaloe, confirmed that parishes remain actively involved in the prayer initiative and that the diocese has three young men currently studying for the priesthood at St Patrick's, Maynooth, and another three discerning their vocation.

"This is more positive than for some time," Fr McCormack said. He added also that at least two of the young men had considered their vocations directly after their Leaving Certificate exams, "a sign that priesthood is once again an acceptable choice for young men".

Fr McCormack went on to explain that, from an examination conducted by Killaloe of American dioceses where Eucharistic Adoration was introduced, it was clear that this had a bearing on an increase in vocations.

The Diocese of Killaloe has praised the main parties involved in the prayer initiative, the Eucharistic Adoration Apostolate committee and the local branch of the St Joseph's Young Priests Society.

i Anyone wishing to assist in the efforts of the Apostolate and the Young Priests Society can contact Fr Iggy McCormack on 086 277 7139.

Schools welcome plans for imminent action to tackle vetting logjam

Greg Daly

Catholic schools have welcomed news that new guidelines to streamline the process for vetting people who work in schools are expected shortly.

"We're absolutely delighted to hear that it's imminent," Seamus Mulconry, General Secretary of the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA), told *The Irish Catholic*. "It will be very welcome by schools and voluntary groups," he added, continu-

ing, "We look forward to seeing it and spreading the word that it's out there."

Changes

Statutory changes in the vetting system introduced last year led to an upsurge in applications for clearances for organisations in which people would deal with children and vulnerable adults, with some dioceses having to arrange for as many as four times the number of vetting processes they had previously handled.

This caused a huge vetting backlog, with much of the upsurge due to duplicated

vetting, where individuals working or volunteering in more than one school have had to be vetted separately for each organisation.

In principle, this should be unnecessary: section 12(3A) of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 provides that where two or more relevant organisations have jointly agreed in writing for someone to undertake relevant work or activities with them, only one organisation needs to arrange for vetting, as long as that organisation has received a vetting dis-

closure from the Bureau in respect of the person.

However, Mr Mulconry told *The Irish Catholic* last week, the CPSMA has been waiting since September for legal clarity from the Attorney General's office as to how such written agreements would operate.

Circular

A Government spokesman has since told *The Irish Catholic* that when the new requirements were initiated last April, the Department of Education and Skills published a circular setting out the statutory vetting requirements applicable to schools along with the practical arrangements that had been put in place to support these procedures.

The Department also issued a Frequently Asked Questions document to assist schools with queries in respect of the circular.

"The FAQ has since been updated and the Department intends to issue a further update shortly which will include guidance in respect of the provisions of 12(3A) of the Vetting Act," the spokesman said.

i See Pages 10-11 for the CPSMA submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills.

A century worth of smiles



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin greeting Susan Jackson, aged 104, from Cherry Orchard Hospital before the Mass of Healing and Anointing of the Sick in St Gabriel's Church, Dollymount in Dublin on Sunday to celebrate the 25th World Day of the Sick. Photo: John McElroy

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Archbishop attacks healthcare system

The Archbishop of Dublin has criticised the country's healthcare system as being "one of the darkest shadows" hanging over a wealthy Ireland.

At a conference to mark World Day of the Sick in Sutton, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin attacked the bureaucratic failures of the HSE and warned that the "system itself is sick and in need of healing".

He paid tribute to "extraordinarily dedicated" doctors, nurses and carers, and said society has a responsibility to ensure that they do not leave Ireland through "sheer frustration or our lack of interest or recognition of the contribution they bring".

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An attitude of moral superiority

A young relation of mine in Germany was in touch with me last week saying how much everyone, it seems, in that country really, really dislikes Donald Trump. Although he is no fan of Mr T, the constant disparagement is all getting a bit repetitious.

Everyone this side of the Atlantic seems to dislike and disparage President Trump, too: Irish women, according to a poll published last weekend, are particularly keen to keep the new American president out of the country.

Two-thirds of women surveyed in a Behaviour & Attitudes poll said that the Taoiseach should not invite Trump to Ireland when he visits Washington next month. Most men are also opposed to an invitation, although not as emphatically.

“We’re all free to hold any political opinion that we like, and to express that opinion”

But look at it this way: isn't President Trump giving many people a gratifying opportunity to indulge in a superior moral attitude – an attitude that was once called 'holier than thou', and is now described as 'virtue signalling'? Oh see what a high-minded, upright person I am – I so disapprove of this vulgarian with his coarse attitudes to women and his hostility



Mary Kenny



towards Muslims and Mexicans! I am so much better than he!

Come to think of it there's a verse in the New Testament about that: the Pharisee who is so proud of being so much better than others, and places himself near the altar in consequence.

We're all free to hold any political opinion that we like, and to express that opinion, but would it be more genuinely Christian to say that, honestly, we're all sinners, and even if we dislike Mr Trump as a public

figure, we're still not entitled to feel so morally superior to him as a person.

Moreover, if the Trump regime starts seriously withdrawing American investment from Ireland, there might be some regrets for not having shown a little more Christian charity towards the elected leader of the United States.

There is an udder kind of milk

There is currently a vegan campaign to persuade people to stop eating dairy foods – the campaign underlines the fact that when cows give us milk their calves are taken away from them. But animal husbandry has always involved a certain lack of sentimentality and I don't see the human race giving up its milk products or its hamburgers any time soon.

However, some dietary advice focuses on dairy products as a cause of certain allergies in humans.

I am prone to psoriasis on my arms and legs, and I was advised that omitting dairy products would help the condition. I thought it no harm trying, and so

switched from dairy butter to goat butter, and from cow's milk on my porridge to goat milk, or, another delicious alternative, almond milk.



The eczema did fade from my legs, though it tends to return in patches to my

arms – and anyway, I haven't quit dairy products entirely, and still use some cow's milk.

But I did grow to like goat's butter better than dairy butter – it's less waxy, but it feels like a genuine food product (where oil-based substitutes just taste – artificial). Goat's butter is not as "goaty" as goat's cheese, although I like that anyway.

Goat's butter is not widely available – though Marks & Spencer in Dublin stock it.

I wouldn't want to disparage dairy farmers, who have struggled to make a living in recent years, but the nanny goat can be an alternative to the moo-cow.

In London, the Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, is coming under criticism for having announced in the chamber that President Trump would not be a welcome guest at Westminster. Critics feel that the Speaker (Chair) should not breach political neutrality in his statements.

It is now recalled, too, that John Bercow gave a somewhat divisive welcome to Pope Benedict in 2010, choosing to underline the differences between the Vatican and the British Parliament, saying: "As is well known, the House of Commons and the House of Lords, over decades, have taken positions on social, scientific, and sexual issues which are different from those of the Vatican."

"It is surely right to have robust but respectful debate on such issues within Parliament, between our institutions, and throughout civil society. A very difficult past, and a turbulent present, need not be a barrier to an enlightened future."

This was interpreted as being a lecture to the Pope to "move forward" on issues, such as LGBT rights, which Mr Bercow champions.

Yet he might as easily have said



John Bercow.

Not such a shared tradition of Christian values

that there were many areas on which there was broad agreement.

With politicians like Gladstone, Ramsey MacDonald, or even Clement Attlee, you would find a strong shared tradition of Christian values.

And Tony Blair, the last Labour PM, actually became a Catholic. Bercow could, had he chosen, have identified with the similarities, not the differences.

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Missionary to receive peace award

Irish Columban missionary, Fr Shay Cullen is to receive a justice and peace award from a German university for his work in defending human rights through the Preda Foundation in the Philippines.

The AK Shalom Award by the working group Shalom – For Justice and Peace

at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Germany was initiated by a group of theology students at the university, has been awarded annually since 1982 for extraordinary commitment in the field of peace and human rights.

Medjugorje papal envoy a 'positive sign' for controversial shrine

Greg Daly

Pope Francis' decision to send a 'pastoral delegate' to the controversial Marian shrine at Medjugorje has been welcomed by a leading Irish promoter of the pilgrimage site.

Archbishop Henryk Hosier of Warszawa-Praga has been tapped as the Pope's special envoy to the Bosnia-Herzegovina shrine, tasked with acquiring "a profound understanding of the pastoral situation" in Medjugorje, focusing especially on pilgrims' needs with the aim of suggesting future pastoral initiatives.

Donal Lowry, acting chairperson of the Medjugorje Council of Ireland, told *The Irish Catholic* that he hoped Dr Hosier would be successful in his mission to the controversial shrine, where Our Lady was first reported to have appeared in 1981, and where she has allegedly appeared twice a month since then.

Pastoral care

"His job is going to examine the current pastoral care, and he will be consulting widely with pilgrims from different nationalities, not least the Italians and Polish, and the Franciscans who are currently running the parish and the Diocese of Mostar," Mr Lowry said, adding, "my

hopes would be that the pastoral requirements or needs of the pilgrims would be taken care of, and that the envoy would be able to report back to the Pope about how the pastoral needs of pilgrims are being attended to."

Mr Lowry said the envoy's visit should enable the Vatican to realise how effective pastoral care is already central to Medjugorje, saying "the pastoral care of the pilgrims is already well catered for – that's part of the attraction".

Although the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said in 2013 that the credibility of the alleged apparitions "should not be taken for granted", with Pope Francis saying in June 2015 that a decision was imminent following a Vatican investigation of the shrine, no ruling has been forthcoming, so Mr Lowry believes the new appointment represents a vote of confidence in the shrine.

"In 2015 they said they would report back quickly, considering the entire phenomenon of Medjugorje including its authenticity, but this has still not happened," said Mr Lowry. "The fact that it has taken several years more than we thought would give one grounds for hope, and the fact that Pope Francis has appointed an envoy is a positive sign too."

Irish medieval thriller gains US cinema release deal

Tom Holland as Bro. Diarmuid.

Paul Keenan

An Irish film which follows the adventures of a young 13th-Century monk as he attempts to transport a holy relic from Ireland to Rome has been sold to a US distributor for €1.2million.

The deal means that *Pilgrimage*, directed by Brendan Muldowney, will reach cinema screens later this year.

Pilgrimage tells the story of Bro. Diarmuid, a monk in the West of Ireland in 1290 who undertakes to lead a Rome-bound party of pilgrims escorting a sacred stone reputed to have been used in the killing of the Apostle Matthias. Not only does the journey involve travelling across an Ireland made hostile by the

spread of Norman invaders, but a secret involving the stone itself divides loyalties among the travelling band, bringing danger to all.

The role of Bro. Diarmuid is played by English actor Tom Holland, who just this week won the British Academy of Film And Television Arts (BAFTA) Rising Star Award.

The actor is currently the latest incarnation of Spiderman in the Marvel movie franchise. *Pilgrimage* also stars Richard Armitage (*The Hobbit*) and John Lynch (*The Fall*).

Backed by funding from the Irish Film Board and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, *Pilgrimage* was filmed in Mayo and Galway in 2015.

Family gathering attracts hundreds of volunteers

Mags Gargan

Organisers of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin next year have expressed delight that 900 people have already shown an interest in volunteering at the event.

Fr Tim Bartlett, Secretary General of the World Meeting of Families 2018 (WMOF2018), told *The Irish Catholic* that while an official call for 2,000 volunteers had not yet been issued, nearly half that number have already "kindly and proactively made us aware of their interest since September".

"It is a mark of the enthusiasm that we are experiencing from across the country for World Meeting of Families that so many people are already expressing an interest in volunteering for various roles," he said. "However, we would still like to hear from many more and would welcome further volunteers to be part of this wonderful project that Pope Francis has given us responsibility for here in Ireland, on behalf of the Church across the world."

In 2012 approximately 2,000 volunteers gave their time and abilities to organise the events for the 50th International Eucharistic Congress and organisers of WMOF2018 are hoping that many of those volunteers will come forward again.

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Gordius Christmas Crossword No. 1
(published December 22)

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egg 11 Steeple 14 Award 15
Einstein 19 Inept 20 One-stop
shop 23 Dye 24 Primate 25
Ire 26 Las Palmas 28 Item 30
Custom 36 Aghast 37 Tacos 39
Orations 40 Velvet 43
Ermine 45 Ace 46 Obliging 48
Smash 49 Narrow 50 Nest 51
Asleep 54 Universal 56 Angels
We Have Heard on High 57
Zephyr 58 Pale 59 Offer 61
Ski 62 Gifts 65 Kir 66 Lea 67
Altar 68 Ewe 70 Towel 74
Idle 77 Talent 78 Trenchant 79
Mantra 83 Invade 84
Eased 86 Doghouse 88
Fez 89 Locker 95 Freezing 97
Faith 98 On tap 100
Homily 101 Rose 103
Sarong 105 Grew 106 Sat 110
Apricot 111 Ill 112 Assault 113
Nails 116 On a shoestring 117
Ripening 118 Punch 119
Martyrs 120 Love letter 121
Cattle grid

DOWN

1 A partridge in a pear tree 2
Clarinet 3 Adled 4 Greet 5
Line-out 7 Saint Francis of
Assisi 8 Iowa 9 Ha-ha 10
Gretel 11 Sweeps 12
Earrings 13 Propaganda 16
Therm 18 Next 21 Pinot
grigio 22 Yes 23 Door 27
Alien 29 Magi 30 Covenant 31

Use 32 Ocelots 34 Holly 35
Pangs 36 Ant 41 Larder 42
While Shepherds Watched
Their Flocks by Night 44
Mistletoe and Wine 46 Oyez 48
Sleigh 52 Pew 53 Chill 54
Ursa Major 55 Soft drink 59
Orals 60 Rat 63 Braced 64
Herald 65 Kept 69 Ham 71
Worcestershire sauce 72
Alkali 73 Kneeling 76
Safe 77 Tunisia 82 Rungs 85
Submariner 87 Opera 90
Crag 91 Pry 92 Panda 94
Son 96 Noel 99 Prisoner 100
Heat 102 Eat 104 Retsina 105
Stoops 107 Tinsel 109
Tipple 115 Ague

Gordius New Year's Crossword No. 2
(published December 29)

ACROSS

1 Tweedledum and
Tweedledee 11 Brother 14
Erode 15 Body blow 17
Bob's your uncle 19
Mould 20 Teacher 23 Fee 24
Nomadic 25 Eva 26 Tug 28
Acts 30 Credit 33 Bred 36
Enzyme 37 Yahoo 38
Aspen 39 Eloquent 40
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● The winner and runner-ups of the crossword competition have been notified.

Breda O'Brien

The View



'Reproductive health' is one of those odious Orwellian euphemisms

The idea that you can gather 100 people together over a number of weekends and that they will come to independent conclusions that are better than those arrived at by elected representatives is an interesting one. It probably reveals the low level of trust in elected representatives rather than any faith in a Citizens' Assembly, as Dr Eoin O'Malley of Dublin City University wryly noted.

It is also representative of the irrational idea that humans are primarily rational and individual. In evolutionary terms, we evolved as members of groups.

While early interpreters of Darwin might have favoured the idea of the survival of the fittest, Darwin, in fact, argued that we are a profoundly social and cooperative species.

That is the good news. The bad news is that those same instincts make it difficult for us to upset others by expressing ideas that go against the established consensus in any group.

Groupthink

Any Citizens' Assembly that takes its task seriously, would therefore be constantly on the alert to prevent groupthink developing. It would be constantly working to prevent framing the issues in a way that makes dissent difficult.

Yet what is happening instead? Incredibly packed agendas, with some very dubious choices of speakers, including, for example, Gilda Sedgh of the Guttmacher



US pro-life activists hold a rally opposing federal funding for Planned Parenthood in front of the Capitol.

Institute, and a way of framing matters that accepts terms like 'fatal foetal abnormality', offensive though the term is.

The Guttmacher Institute is named in honour of Dr Alan Guttmacher, former president of Planned Parenthood, and former vice-president of the American Eugenics Society. The institute proudly proclaims on its website that although "now in its fifth decade, the Guttmacher Institute remains committed to the mission and goals that led to its creation".

"It would be more accurate to speak of promotion of the right to cause death"

For most of those five decades, it was deeply entwined with Planned Parenthood, although it says that the last core donation

from Planned Parenthood was in 2007. It is fair to say, however, that even though there may not be a direct financial link, the Guttmacher Institute and Planned Parenthood are as one in terms of ideology.

The Guttmacher Institute declares that its purpose lies in the provision of "a factual basis for the development of sound governmental policies and for public consideration of the sensitive issues involved in the promotion of reproductive health and rights".

'Reproductive health' is one of those odious Orwellian euphemisms. In fact, it would be more accurate to speak of promotion of the right to cause death for one of the parties during the reproductive process.

These are the 'rights' that the Guttmacher Institute exists to push.

Its former affiliate, Planned Parenthood is currently under investigation because it may have been involved in illegally providing foetal parts for research in a way that violated consent and allowed third parties to make gigantic profits.

Planned Parenthood allowed technicians from foetal tissue procurement businesses, one of which was StemExpress, to be embedded in some of its facilities. There has been a US House Investigative Committee Report on the matter, which concluded that the embedded StemExpress technicians' workflow went something like this.

"The technician obtained the remains and filled the order for the customer, packaging and mailing it"

A customer placed an order for tissue, perhaps a heart, lungs, brain or liver, or in one case, the skin of a foetus with Down Syndrome.

The technician received information about the next day's scheduled abortions.

The next day, he or she checked the medical records, and obtained consent on Planned Parenthood forms, which implied that this was for life-saving research, not mentioning the question of profit.

Nor did the form specify that it might be a baby's brain, skin, organs or limbs. It only mentioned tissue. The technician obtained

the remains and filled the order for the customer, packaging and mailing it. The clinic was then paid. As Irish journalist, Phelim McAleer pointed out, in one case StemExpress donated \$55 to Planned Parenthood for a foetus's brain, but sold it to a researcher for \$3,000.

Detail

Two of the House investigators referred to StemExpress as the 'Amazon.com of baby body parts'. They obtained screenshots of a dropdown menu on the StemExpress site, listing in gruesome detail everything from spleens to female reproductive systems and ovaries.

The 'Amazon of baby body parts' has since changed its website entirely, and virtually the only foetal parts it now has on offer publicly are liver stem cells.

But Planned Parenthood had no ethical dilemma about allowing StemExpress carry on its lucrative trade right inside their clinics.

And the Citizens' Assembly had no problem with allowing former close affiliate of Planned Parenthood, the Guttmacher Institute, to address it.

The Guttmacher Institute is not under investigation for alleged trade in foetal body parts, but it does promote the idea that legal abortion is an unqualified good, and it still was welcomed as an impartial witness. Strange times we live in indeed.

faith
RENEWAL EVENTS



Spring - Summer Events

'Quiet Days for Busy People' Day Retreats

February 18th, March 11th & April 29th

Leading God's People in Prayer'

Training and formation 6th & 13th March

'Workshop for Choirs' 9th March

with the Irish Church Music Association

'Enrichment Days' March 25th & April 1st

(for Ministers of the Eucharist & Word)

KNOCK

Saturday 8th April

Celebrating Family; Preparing for World Meeting of Families 2018

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11am: Rest & Care Centre

3pm Mass in the Basilica celebrated by Most Rev. Diarmuid Martin, DD, Archbishop of Dublin

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Safeguarding head calls for faster Vatican processes

Greg Daly

The Vatican should speed up how it deals with the cases of priests accused of abuse, the head of the Irish Church's safeguarding body has said, calling on Ireland's hierarchy to engage with the Vatican to encourage this.

Addressing Australia's royal commission into institutional abuse, Teresa Devlin, CEO of the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC), said the board has asked the Holy See to reconsider how cases are handled once submitted to Rome.

"This is where I have a bit of a difficulty, because when it goes to Rome, it sits there for a very, very, very long time," she said, explaining that 12 members of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are tasked with handling cases from all over the world.

Effect

"They understand the gravity of these situations, and they all read every single case that is presented, and they deliberate between them," she said, with the effect that it takes the average case takes two or three years to be handled.

Explaining that the NBSCCC had asked the Vatican to consider alternatives to this arrangement, she said, "that's a matter for them, but I don't think it's justice for the accused," adding, "it's not justice for the complainant."

While she stressed that slow processes do not prevent local Church authori-

Hands on heart



Pupils from Senior Infants in Guardian Angels' N.S. in Blackrock, Dublin created a 'classroom of love' on St Valentine's Day. Photo: Anne Collins

ties from implementing restrictions and monitoring plans, she insisted the Church requires "some mechanism" for speeding things up in a fair and just way. It is, she said, "not reasonable" that processes can only be expedited when per-

sonal influence is brought to bear on the CDF.

Background

She also said it was unreasonable for just 12 men to be responsible for examining every case worldwide. "They must be emotionally drained

by it," she said.

The Irish hierarchy should push for more people to be assigned to dealing with cases in the Vatican, she said, adding, "I know there is a keenness on their part for this to be moved along much quicker."

Mrs Devlin's comments come against a background of rumours that the Vatican is to transfer responsibility for dealing with the cases of abused priests from the CDF, which has tackled all such cases since 2001, to the Congregation for Clergy.

Antrim parish left large legacy

A parishioner has left a Co. Antrim parish a legacy of more than half a million pounds, one of the largest donations ever received within the Diocese of Down and Connor.

The parish of Glenavy and Killeish received the generous donation from Peter McAreavey, who died peacefully in hospital in July 2015.

Fr Colm McBride said the will instructed that the "extraordinary and wonderful gift" would be solely used for the purpose of helping to pay off the parish building loan.

"On the second week of January this year the parish received a cheque for the sum of £554,000. It is an extraordinary and wonderful gift to our parish. This gift of over half a million pounds means that almost a third of our debt has been wiped out," he said.

"So as we begin a new financial year I'm happy to say that our debt now stands not at £1.68 million, but is now reduced to £1,135,000. The only way we can express our gratitude to Peter is to pray for his soul."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Belfast church to become restaurant

It has been reported that a landmark church in Belfast is due to be transformed into a restaurant.

The Holy Rosary Church on the Ormeau Road has lain empty for almost four decades, when it became too small for the expanding congregation of the parish during the 1980s.

A spokesman for Down and Connor diocese said it had not owned the building for a number of years and was unaware of the sale.

Limerick priest 'shaken' by break-in

A Limerick priest who was locked into a room at his home by three intruders has thanked parishioners for their support.

Canon Tony O'Keeffe of Shanagolden was threatened by three thieves when he returned to his parochial house after celebrating evening Mass in Foynes.

The men escaped with a quantity of cash and while the 72-year-old priest was not injured during the burglary, he said that he was still "a bit shaken".

"I'm enormously grateful to people for their kindness and generosity and interest for my welfare," Canon O'Keeffe said.

Church culture contributed to abuse mishandling – theologian

Staff reporter

Former Jesuit provincial Fr Gerry O'Hanlon has insisted that the Church's centralised model of governance contributed to the mishandling of sexual abuse allegations against priests.

Speaking to the royal commission on abuse in Australia via a video link from Dublin, Fr O'Hanlon also said that the Church suffered from the same defensive attitude as other

institutions.

"I think it's a defensiveness that you will find in many other organisations.

"We are finding it, for example, in England at the moment with regard to as different a field as professional football, soccer. We find it in different organisations. But of course it was all the more egregious coming from an organisation which, if you like, in a good sense, prided itself on doing what was good and what was right and favouring the weakest.

"For an organisation like that to have been shown to be so at fault and so in error, I think the reputational damage was enormous, and that was so whether it was simply a moral issue or had also criminal ramifications, which it clearly had," the Jesuit theologian said.

Fr O'Hanlon said that a culture of secrecy, deference to priests and, in turn, deference of the bishops to the Pope affected the institutional response of the Church to allegations.



Fr Gerry O'Hanlon.

'Huge increase' in demand for pre-marriage courses

Mags Gargan

Demand for pre-marriage courses from the Catholic agency ACCORD has seen a significant increase despite a devastating cut in Government funding.

Numbers attending the pre-marriage courses have steadily risen in recent years with an 8.5% increase across

the country last year and a 15.6% in Dublin.

Bishop Denis Nulty, President of ACCORD, welcomed the "huge increase" and told *The Irish Catholic* "the biggest advocate for a marriage preparation course are couples themselves who tell their friends and their peers".

He said the withdrawal of funding from Tusla in 2015

was "a big blow" but "any threat is an opportunity and you have to look and see what exactly do you provide and can we resource it better from our own resources, and we have had to do that".

Importance

He said: "Tusla continues to generously fund marriage counselling and that is so important for people who

need to avail of ACCORD marriage care services" and "because of the importance of the family for the life and wellbeing of society it is essential that both ACCORD and the State continue to work with each other to provide the necessary supports to strengthen marriage and the family."

17,104 people attend-

ing sacramental marriage preparation courses offered by Accord in 2016, up from 15,774 in 2015.

Attendance at marriage counselling services has decreased from 33,970 in 2015 to 30,666 in 2016. The main problems that couples present with continues to be 'not listening/ignoring' (60%), 'anxiety/stress' (58%) and 'criticisms/insults' (53%).

There has been an increase in problems around both phone/texting (22%) and use of the internet (19%).

"Sadly technology can cause huge damage to relationships," Bishop Nulty said. "What was said in that tweet; the picture that was shared on social media; the reactive immediate response on Snapchat can do enormous damage to a relationship, to trust and to the individual themselves."

Trinity College marks Reformation anniversary

Trinity College Dublin will mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with a series of events across February 17 and 18, including two exhibitions and a two-day theological symposium.

Organised by the Lutheran Church in Ireland and the Confederal School of Religions, Peace Studies and Theology, the symposium will deal with 'The Legacy of the Reformation' and take place from 5-7pm at the Arts Building, Synge Theatre.

A travelling exhibition, meanwhile, the 'Reformation Installation' will take place in a mobile unit on Front Square from Friday 4pm until Saturday 5pm.

Another exhibition, 'Power and Belief: The Reformation at 500' takes place in TCD's Library Long Room and features a rare volume from Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's confiscated library together with an early copy of *The Great Bible* (1540) and Martin Luther's translation of the Old Testament (1523).



President Michael D. Higgins shares a joke with Mayoman Fr Peter Hughes SSC at the headquarters of the Missionary Society of St James the Apostle in Lima on his official visit to Peru. Photo: Maxwell's

Clerics share Northern Ireland peace lessons with Colombia

Staff Reporter

Two clerics are part of an Irish delegation which travelled to Colombia last week to share the experience of the Northern Ireland peace process.

Methodist Rev. Harold Good and Redemptorist Fr Michael Kelleher were in Colombia to speak with the Government and

FARC members who have turned themselves in to reincorporation zones as part of a disarmament process that will allow the former guerrilla group to establish a political party.

Speaking to *El Espectador* Rev. Good, who oversaw the IRA's decommissioning of its weapons in 2005 with the late Fr Alec Reid, said "overcoming mistrust" through a "process of

dialogue" was the main lesson that Colombia could learn from Northern Ireland.

Fr Kelleher agreed that trust was very important and that the current problems in the Colombian process may be "to do with the perception of time" or unrealistic timelines.

On an official visit to Colombia this week President Michael D.

Higgins acknowledged the work of "many groups and individuals" who have travelled between Colombia and Ireland in recent months to "discuss lessons and parallels from our respective journeys", saying Ireland "can make a contribution by making available our own experience of peacebuilding over the last 20 years and more".

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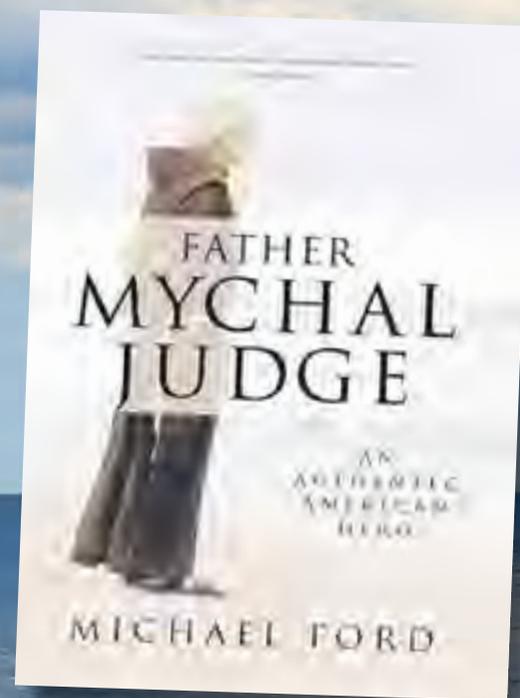


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Schooling the Oireachtas on the ‘baptism barrier’

No Catholic school wishes to exclude any child from the benefits of a Catholic education. In almost 95% of our schools, we take everyone who applies. Our schools are welcoming and diverse, dedicated to the full development of the child and not to indoctrination.

The school that my child attends is a pretty good example. It basically reflects the geographical area in which it is situated. It takes everyone and all comers.

The difficulties schools, parents and pupils face are really about resources and not religion.

There is a growing issue of oversubscription found mainly in the Dublin area and the commuter belt, such as Meath and Kildare, but that sometimes flares up in other locations. We have been looking at this issue for a while.

Last year, we identified about 21 schools in the greater Dublin area in which there were problems with oversubscription. This year we have identified 42.

In 17 of those schools, there was an issue with baptism. That equates to about 1.2% of rejected applications. There were approximately 26,968 applications to Catholic primary schools that completed a survey for us. Of these, 19,218 were successful. Of the remainder, only 1.2% were unsuccessful due to an issue with a baptismal cert.

Locations

The key point I am making is that this issue is really about a lack of school places in some geographical locations. The Bill before us is an admissions Bill. It will not add one school place. It will not solve the problem.

We need to investigate what is really going on in terms of oversubscription. We need to identify where extra school places are needed and put them in as a matter of urgency.

The Bill itself is a little bit unclear. It does not define the catchment area,

CPSMA general secretary **Seamus Mulconry** addressed the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills about the Equal Status (Admissions to Schools) Bill 2016



which is core to what the Bill is about, nor does it define how a school can prove that it has taken in sufficient numbers of its own denomination to prove that it has satisfied local need.

We have a real concern that if the Bill goes through, it will not solve the problems we are facing but could create a field day for lawyers who would have a merry time trying to figure out loopholes and could pit schools against each other. If schools are allowed to define their catchment areas, there is nothing to say that catchment areas could not overlap.

For this reason, we believe the Bill is premature and we urge the committee to investigate what is going on with oversubscription in the greater Dublin area.

“Most Catholic primary schools will take anybody who turns up, which means that our schools are very diverse”

It is interesting that the legislation has been drafted and we have had a long debate on religious issues in schools without hard data. That is precisely why we surveyed schools in the Dublin area, in order to provide hard data and give us a picture of what is going on.

Most Catholic primary schools will take anybody who turns up, which means that our schools are very diverse. If one goes to Ballaghaderreen or Portlaoise, one

will find schools with significant Muslim populations. There is no barrier to entry other than a lack of places.

It is not our desire to have wholly Catholic schools. In fact, in the Dublin area I know of no Catholic primary school that is wholly Catholic. There are significant populations from other faiths and significant numbers of people who are of no faith.

The issue is a lack of school places. Policy should be driven by data, not by anecdote. If communities are having specific problems – and I am aware and cognisant of the challenges faced by the Muslim community – then we need to understand what is happening.

Areas where there is a problem with the baptismal certificate tend to be concentrated, so the problem is not evenly distributed.

The worst case is a particular location where there were 402 applications for 208 places. There were roughly 16 refusals based on baptism, but – and this is important – there were between six and eight people who were not baptised but were brought in because of the sibling rule. Therefore, this idea that there is some kind of blanket desire to keep people out is absolutely incorrect.

We asked the Department of Education and Skills for an overall picture of what is going on in schools. They said it was not compulsory for schools to do it and seemed to be unsure of some of the data they had, so were not willing to publish it.

We would love that information to be made public because, if so, one would find – and I am absolutely con-



Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, Diarmuid Martin, during a visit to Our Lady of the Wayside National School, Bluebell, Dublin. Photo: Clodagh Kilcoyne

Prioritising children?

Asked whether the CPSMA believes schools need to be able to prioritise children of their own faith, Mr Mulconry said this was the case “within a catchment area”, and explained that since 2011 the CPSMA has advised that oversubscribed schools should consider

- children from a feeder school;
- sisters and brothers of pupils currently in the school;
- Catholic children living within the parish boundary;
- Catholic children living outside the parish boundary who do not have a Catholic school within their own parish boundary;
- and other children living within it.

vinced of this – that Catholic schools are reflecting the populations of their areas.

In some areas there is a sense that Catholic students from outside the catchment area – and most schools in Dublin are operating some variation of a catchment area – are getting preference in Catholic schools and therefore excluding others.

Issue

The issue for us is that there are three parishes in Dublin which do not have Catholic primary schools and therefore parishes around them have to take that overflow. That may be contributing to a perception that there is an issue on that.

I would love to see more hard data driving policy, so we can identify where there is a problem, deal with it now as quickly as we can, and then ensure that we predict where problems will arise in future. Our schools are reflective of the communities in which they live.

I would also like to raise an issue that has not yet been

raised, but which should be. I was speaking to my colleague in the Edmund Rice Trust which operates 33 primary schools. Almost all of them are DEIS schools with a focus on special needs and minority communities. Not one of them is over-subscribed, so there is something going on here that has less to do with religion and more to do with other factors.

“Therefore there is much more going on in admissions than religion, and a sole focus on religion is avoiding the bigger picture”

Catholic schools are often picked out as the ones that are somehow to blame for all of this. I would remind people that we have the majority of DEIS schools and we cater to some of the most marginalised communities.

What do we see happen-

ing where there is pressure in rural areas? Middle-class flight from town schools which may have an immigrant population to smaller schools on the outskirts creates problems for some of our schools on the outskirts.

Therefore there is much more going on in admissions than religion, and a sole focus on religion is avoiding the bigger picture.

Our concern over not being able to give priority to Catholic children in cases of oversubscription is not related to school ethos. Oversubscribed schools tend to be in areas where a number of schools are oversubscribed.

In a recent article in the *Irish Times*, Kitty Holland wrote about her problems in getting her child into a school. She pointed out that she could not get into the Catholic school because of baptism, but in point of fact the list was so long that baptism would not have made a difference anyway. Her child could not get into the Protestant school. However, the interdenominational school and the Gaelscoil were taking people from outside the catchment area.

These things happen. If, as a Catholic parent, I was trying to get my child into a school there, I could find myself being pushed down into a school with another patron rather than into a Catholic school where I would have the ethos I wanted for my child. It is a concern around Catholic parents being able to access Catholic schools in



It's time for Richard Bruton to acknowledge the important role of faith schools in society



David Quinn

In respect of denominational schools, Education Minister, Richard Bruton is following in the path of his two immediate Labour predecessors, Jan O'Sullivan and Ruairi Quinn. That is to say, he is investigating ways of reducing the influence of the Churches over our education system, especially at primary school level.

That influence, it should be said at the outset, is greatly exaggerated. The extent to which many Catholic schools are truly Catholic is open to question. Often the Catholic ethos extends to no more than a few religious symbols, preparation for Holy Communion and Confirmation – (supposedly) 30 minutes a day devoted to religious education, and perhaps the odd prayer.

To some, this will still seem like too much. But teachers will tell you that they struggle to find 30 minutes a day to devote to RE, and that is when they try their best to do so. When they do find the time, it often goes in one ear, and out the other, like in Irish class. The rest of the curriculum is set by the Department of Education.

Weak ethos

Frequently teachers, and even principals, don't practise the religion of the school that employs them. The same goes for many of the parents. In that sort of situation, the Catholic ethos of a Catholic school tends to be weak, and even RE comes to resemble civics class rather than religion class.

To some extent, of course, this shows that the education system does need to change. If the will is not really there to make Catholic schools properly Catholic, then isn't the Church better off getting out of some of its schools? The answer seems to be yes, but actually things are more complicated than that because when push comes to shove, most

parents seem content with a school system that is half-Catholic, half-not, because that is where many of the parents themselves are. Therefore they ending up resisting when there is an attempt to hand a Catholic school to another patron body.

These 'half-Catholic, half-not' parents might rarely come to Mass and will often criticise the Church, but they still tick the 'Catholic' box at Census time and don't mind too much a kind of 'soft' Catholicism, a version of Christianity without the Cross, which is to say, an undemanding, inoffensive version of Christianity.

For the most part, this is what their children are taught in RE class, so they don't mind their local school being Catholic because it most likely isn't all that Catholic.

“Most parents are neither fully Catholic nor fully secular”

Needless to say, this doesn't satisfy parents who want their local Catholic school to be more ardently Catholic. Nor does it satisfy those parents who want all publicly-funded schools to be fully secular (or as near as makes no difference) and for the Church(es) to have no say over them. It so happens that many journalists fit in this category, and so do most of the vocal politicians on the matter, and so this tendency has an influence far beyond its numbers.

But the truth is, this is not where most parents are at. Most parents are neither fully Catholic nor fully secular and most schools in the country more or less reflect their point of view.

This is also why Richard Bruton is placing far too much stress in his recent pronouncements about the need for the Church to reduce its footprint in education based on the fact that a third of weddings are now civil rather than religious.

To begin with, the figure for 2015 wasn't a third. It was 27%. So, by Bruton's logic that is the maximum number of schools that should be handed over by the Churches to other patron bodies. But it must be borne

in mind that a lot of the increase in the number of civil weddings is driven by the fact that couples can now marry in hotels rather in churches or registry offices. They often do this out of sheer convenience because the reception will very likely be at the same venue. Obviously, these couples can't be very religious, otherwise they would have married in a church. But it can't be assumed they are very secular either.

In the UK, only a third of weddings are religious. But as we know, Church-run schools are extremely popular in Britain, far more popular than the evident secularism of British society would lead us to believe.

Richard Bruton wants to change the admissions policy of faith-based schools so as to limit their right to select children from their own faith community first in the very unlikely event of over-

enrolment. Obviously where there is over-enrolment he would be far better off building more school places so no-one is turned away for any reason. He also wants to increase the number of multi-denominational and non-denominational schools to 400 by 2030, that is, in 13 years time.

Theory

In theory, few would object to this, and the Churches certainly don't. The trick is to identify the right schools in the right areas. To this end, Minister Bruton has ordered a survey in 28 areas.

The survey is to be conducted by Education and Training Boards (formerly the VECs) and parents of pre-school children only will be included. This is very strange on both counts. The Education and Training Boards are the bodies to which many Catholic schools will be transferred, so they

are a player in this. Why not ask the Catholic Church to conduct the survey while the Minister is at it?

Secondly, surveying only parents of pre-school children is bizarre. What about parents of children currently in primary school and who will be directly and immediately affected by any transfer?

Regardless of the outcome of the survey, however, the question for Richard Bruton is this; what rights does he want the remaining denominational schools to have? What rights will they have to control their own ethos? Will he set this out in a major speech? Will he properly acknowledge the popularity of faith schools with many parents? Above all, will he stop pandering to hard-core secularist groups that actually represent few people outside their own immediate circles and their friends in the media?

cases of oversubscription because they could actually be disadvantaged where they could not get their children into other schools.

I tend to think we should drive these things with data. That is why I would love to see some proper research into what is happening in Dublin.

It is clear to me from the story Kitty Holland wrote that the problem in the area was oversubscription, not religion. If we had hard data, it would inform good policy-making.

Barriers

I do not normally go for anecdotes, but one was given to me recently which was deeply shocking. A teacher had a Traveller child in her school, a lovely young fellow.

He said, "Miss, I like this school. I do not get expelled from it that often." She asked him what he meant. He said that at his last school, he was expelled every couple of days. The school was moving the child on and the family eventually got the message and moved. That stuff happens too. It is not around admissions, but there are soft barriers which are not defensible.

The above is an edited transcript of Mr Mulconry's contributions to the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills discussion on the Equal Status (Admissions to Schools) Bill 2016.

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Out&About

Pope John Paul II Awards in Derry



DERRY: Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow and Bishop Donal McKeown presented the Pope John Paul II Award to 428 young people from all over the Diocese of Derry in the Millennium Forum, Derry City last week including students from St Patrick's College Maghera (left), Loreto Grammar School Omagh (below left) and Sacred Heart College (below right).



IN SHORT

Derry to mark 10 years of Pope JPII Award

Archbishop Philip Tartaglia, the Archbishop of Glasgow, and Bishop Donal McKeown presented the Pope John Paul II Award to 428 young people from all over the Diocese of Derry and beyond in the Millennium Forum, Derry City last week.

These young people came from 21 second level schools and represented 49 parishes in the diocese and 16 parishes from outside the diocese.

The award was also presented to young people from Malin Presbyterian Church, Still

Waters Elim and Cornerstone City Church. This was the 10th Annual Pope John Paul II Award ceremony in Derry, where it was originally launched in 2006 and has since been introduced in 22 dioceses in Ireland. The Archdiocese of Birmingham as well as the Dioceses of Hexham and Newcastle in England has also introduced the award.

This year an international coordinator has been appointed for the award, Mr Tony Brennan.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the award there will be a day of celebration in Knock on Wednesday, April 5.

On October 30 there will be a pilgrimage

to Rome for over 18 year olds who have completed the award and a book will soon be published recording the experiences of many young people who have taken part in the award.

For more information contact Seán Farrell on sean.farrell@derrydiocese.org or phone +4428 71264087.

'Journey into Freedom' event in Tallaght parish

St Martin's Church, Old Bawn, Tallaght in Dublin is hosting a free event called Journey Into Freedom in March to explore what faith

means in everyday life and to support people in developing a better relationship with God.

The series starts on Tuesday, March 7 at 8pm for six Tuesdays and each night a different speaker will share a personal experience story of how they came to a deeper faith and what it has meant for them in their everyday life. There will also be a reflection and discussion on a piece of scripture followed by a cup of tea. Registration is in St Martin's Parish on Tuesday, March 7 at 7.45pm.

For further Information please contact: St Martin's Parish Office on 01-4510160 or saintmartinsparish@eircom.net

Edited by Mags Gargan
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



SLIGO: Bishop Kevin Doran at a meeting with parish secretaries from 18 of parishes in the Diocese of Elphin to thank them for their commitment and dedication.

► **INDIA:** A papal blessing was awarded to Moss and Janice Carrig from the Loreto nuns in Entally, Kolkata, India, for the work they have carried out over the past 20 years including housing for slum dwellers, donations of sewing machines, computers, clothing, medical bills etc. Photo: Rose Baker



▲ **LIMERICK:** Fr Brendan Coffey OSB, Abbot of Glenstal Abbey, His Excellency José-María Rodríguez-Coso, Spanish Ambassador to Ireland, Rafael Soriano Ortiz, Deputy Head of Mission, Fr Cuthbert Brennan OSB and Glenstal Abbey School students Jacobo and Jaime, who are from Madrid. The ambassador attended Mass and met with Abbot Brendan and various members of the Glenstal Community in preparation for a possible visit by the famed Catalan Boys Choir, the Escolania de Montserrat.

◀ **KILDARE:** Sr Pauline, 5th class teacher Eoin Kirk and pupils of Scoil Diarmada in Castledermot with a project by the children of Kilkea N.S., Levitstown N.S. & Scoil Diarmada N.S. about *Laudato Si*.

Lecture on Catholic education in Maynooth

The St John Paul II Theological society in St Patrick's College in Maynooth presents 'Education in the Catholic Tradition: Maintaining the Ethos and Identity of Catholic Schools', a lecture by Dr Leonardo Franchi of the University of Glasgow.

Dr Franchi is a lecturer in Creativity, Culture and Faith and was head of the St Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Teacher Education.

The lecture is on Monday, February 20 at 8pm in Renehan Hall in St Patrick's College in Maynooth.

Thousands expected at annual Galway Novena

About 10,000 people are expected to attend the annual Galway Solemn Novena which began this week and runs until Tuesday, February 21 at Galway Cathedral with a focus on 'Mary, Icon of God's Mercy'.

Redemptorist Novena Director over the past six years Fr Brendan O'Rourke said many come to the

novena "searching, maybe for meaning, or for healing, or for a sense of community". "Some love the community singing and the lively celebration of the Mass. Many others come especially for the preaching."

This year there will be a special element with the presence of the Icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help which toured every cathedral in Ireland last year. "Even if you can't make the novena, drop by and sit before the icon," Fr O'Rourke said.

For more information log onto www.galwaycathedral.ie

ARMAGH

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

CORK

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

Catholic Bible teaching with Br Johnson Sequeira on Tuesday, March 21 in Leahy's Farm from 6-9.30pm.

DOWN

Mass of Thanksgiving for Grandparents on Sunday, February 19 at 11.15am in St Patrick's Church in Mayobridge with Dana Scallon as guest speaker.

DUBLIN

Holy Hour, St John's church, Clontarf, February 19, 7.30pm, led by Fr Martin Hogan; theme: "In no-one in Israel have I found such faith."

Life to the Full (Jn 10:10) Book Club for young adults (20's & 30's) every Thursday from 7pm-8.30pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay (Smithfield).

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

Presentation Brothers are running their 10th Alpha series in Glashule on Tuesday evenings from 7.30pm for 10 weeks throughout February and March. For more information, email alpha@Presentation-Brothers.org

The 11th annual Candleweek in Cherry Orchard parish runs every night at 7.30pm from Monday, February 27 – Friday, March 3.

FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick each Wednesday evening in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Monea, at 7.30pm. All welcome. www.churchservices.tv/derry-gonnely

GALWAY

Our Lady's School of Evangelisation, Unbound Programme of Healing Prayers with Fr Benny McHale and John McCarthy from 8-10pm on March 6, 13, 20 and 27 at Abbey Hall, Newtownsmith. Contact 087-9980525.

KILDARE

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

A parish cell meeting will take place on February 21 in Leixlip, Confey, Celbridge, Straffan and Newbridge, with meetings for parents, grandparents, and expectant parents in Leixlip parish centre. Contact Bridie Clancy on 0863807917 or leixlipparishcells@gmail.com

KILKENNY

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

LAOIS

An Extraordinary form Latin Mass will take place at St Joseph's Church, Mountmellick at 2pm on Saturday, February 18.

MEATH

Parish mission continues in Rathmolyan Church on Monday (February 20), 8pm. All welcome.

OFFALY

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

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 on the last Sunday of each month at 3pm.

WATERFORD

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

Celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church with an afternoon of prayer and praise on Sunday, February 19 in the Edmund Rice Heritage Centre, Waterford from 2-6pm. Come and See! Contact Sile 0868590394/Mossy 0872136812.

Celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Charismatic Renewal with an afternoon of prayer and praise on Sunday, February 19 in the Edmund Rice Heritage Centre, Waterford, 2-6pm. Contact Sile 086-8590394/ Mossy 087-2136812.

WESTMEATH

To mark the centenary of the appearance of Our Lady at Fatima the church of Saint John the Baptist Whitehall, in the parish of Coole will host a programme of events on the six Fridays of Lent (except St Patrick's Day) at 8pm starting on Friday, March 3 with The Story of Fatima by Fr Donncha O hAodh, Opus Dei.

WICKLOW

St Patrick's Prayer Meeting on Tuesday evenings at 8pm in the Scout Hall, South Quay, Wicklow. All are welcome to get together for prayer, scripture, music and a cuppa.

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



World Report

IN BRIEF

Catholic samurai beatified

Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints has led the beatification Mass for Justo Takayama Ukon, the so-called 'Samurai saint' of 17th-Century Japan.

During the ceremony in Osaka, the life of Ukon was recalled, from his birth in 1552 to his death in exile as a martyr in 1615.

Baptised as a Catholic at the age of 12 after his father had converted to the message brought by the first Jesuit missionaries to Japan, Ukon was initially shielded from any punishment for his faith by his high birth. As a feudal lord, he later used his position to give missionaries a foothold in Japan.

However, a new round of Christian persecution in 1587 saw Ukon targeted, and rather than renouncing his faith as others had done, he opted to surrender his wealth and position and to live in poverty. He and others of the Christian community were eventually forced into exile to the Philippines, where Ukon died.

The Japanese bishops' conference launched a drive for Ukon's beatification in 2013 and three years later, Pope Francis declared him a martyr.

Gunmen abduct Catholic nun in Mali

Police in Mali are investigating the circumstance surrounding the disappearance of a Colombian Catholic nun, Franciscan Sister Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoti, who was snatched from a church in the country's south.

It is reported that Sr Argoti was present in the church in Karangasso village, close to the border with Burkina Faso, on February 7, when four gunmen burst in and

dragged her away. The attackers shouted to others present in the building that they were jihadists.

Police later arrested two men found driving an ambulance stolen from the church grounds.

A spokesman for the Malian bishops' conference said the local Church was working to find out who abducted the nun towards having her returned safely to Karangasso.

India is failing to protect religious minorities – report

Religious tolerance is steadily deteriorating in India and violations of freedom of religion are rising, a new report has found.

Sponsored by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 'Constitutional and Legal Challenges Faced by Religious Minorities in India' examined state laws across the nation and found that, while India's constitution guarantees equal rights to religious minorities, laws enacted locally belie this and adversely affect all but the Hindu majority.

"Religious minority communities and Dalits, both have faced discrimination and persecution due to a combination of overly broad or ill-defined laws, an inefficient criminal justice system, and a lack of jurisprudential consistency," the report states.

Example

Referring by way of example to the Indian Divorce Act 2001, the report points out



A marcher holds a cruxifix during a procession in India.

that this legislation not only restricts inheritance rights and property ownership for people of inter-faith marriages, it "also interferes in the personal lives of Christians by not allowing marriage ceremonies to be conducted in a church if one of the partners is non-Christian".

Launching the Indian

report, Fr Thomas J. Reese, chair of USCIRF said, "India faces serious challenges to both its pluralistic traditions and its religious minorities." He called on the government there to revise "problematic" laws so as to bring them into line with both the constitution and international human rights.

The report comes in the wake of the revelation that anti-Christian attacks in India ran at 10 per week across 2016, making the nation the 15th worst country in which to be a Christian, according to the World Watch List compiled by the Open Doors watchdog.

Reporting on the World Watch List in January, The Irish Catholic pointed out that India's placement represented a jump from 31st over just a four-year period, corresponding to the rise of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rejecting the findings of the USCIRF report, a spokesperson for India's External Affairs Ministry was quoted as stating, "we have serious doubts on their credibility... We take no cognisance of their report".

'Constitutional and Legal Challenges Faced by Religious Minorities in India' can be viewed at www.uscirf.gov

Church mediated talks for peace in Colombia begin

The Catholic Church in Colombia has mediated the first talks between the nation's government and members of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) rebel grouping.

Bishop Omar Sanchez Cubillos of the Diocese of Tibu travelled to the Ecuadorian capital Quito for the February 7 talks, which are aimed at

ending hostilities between the sides and building on the recent peace agreement reached with the larger Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) group.

Nearly a year after the ELN and Colombian government agreed to engage in dialogue – and 53 since the ELN launched its violent campaign –

their representatives finally presented their proposals for peace under the eye of Bishop Cubillos, a measure demanded by the ELN in order to guarantee their participation.

The Church in Colombia has signalled its willingness to assist at all phases of the talks, and said a number of bishops stand ready to help.

Filipino bishops march against 'war on drugs' deaths

Catholic bishops in the Philippines are to undertake a 'walk for life' this February 18 to demonstrate their opposition to the multitude of deaths resulting from President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs over recent months. At least 7,000 people have died in shootings linked to the police or vigilante gangs since Mr Duterte called for the killing of dealers.

Following sermons nationwide from pulpits against the "reign of terror" brought about by the violent tactics employed against alleged drug dealers by police at the behest of Mr Duterte, bishops have invited ordinary citizens to walk with them in a display of opposition.

Dead bodies

"Let us fill our streets not with blood, not with dead bodies but with prayer,"



Archbishop Socrates Villegas.

said conference present Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan. He called on all to "stand up for life".

"Is it God's will that blood be on our streets? Is it God's will that dead bodies of our brothers and sisters be found on our sidewalks?" he asked.

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Edited by Paul Keenan
paul@irishcatholic.ie

Free at last



Nizar al-Qassab, an Iraqi Christian refugee from Mosul, gets a kiss from his children as they prepare to depart from Beirut international airport en route to the United States. The US bishops have welcomed an appeal court's decision to overturn President Trump's ban on travellers from seven nations. Photo: CNS

Pakistan reforms laws to protect minorities

Pakistani legislators have moved to curb lynchings and mob violence against minority communities via a bill amending a number of criminal laws.

Under the reforms passed by the National Assembly, sectarian violence and forced conversions are outlawed while the deliberate use of words to hurt religious feelings, already an offence punishable by a year in prison, has been increased to one bringing a potential three-year term.

Significantly, in a move that has implications for the misuse of the nation's blasphemy law, the reforms also increase the punishment for bringing false information to an official so as to cause that party to use lawful powers to injure a third party, meaning that persons guilty of malicious accusation will now face a seven-year

term where the fraudulent accusation could mean a death penalty.

The reforms come in the face of years of mob attacks against minority groupings in Pakistan, most frequently sparked by questionable allegations of blasphemy against Islam.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's highest court has released on bail a Christian pastor who has spent the last three years in solitary confinement on charges of blasphemy.

Adnan Prince was arrested late in 2013 when a work colleague alleged to police that he had written messages abusive to the Prophet Mohamed and Islam in a book he was studying.

The Supreme Court in Lahore ruled that, in the absence of proper eyewitness testimony and a total lack of forensic evidence against prince, he should be immediately released.

Cardinals appeal to Indian leader on abducted priest

Three Indian cardinals have brought the case of Fr Tom Uzhunallil, the Salesian kidnapped in Yemen in March 2016, to India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Cardinal Baselios Cleemis, Cardinal George Alencherry and Cardinal Oswald Gracias urged Mr Modi to do all in his power to seek the release of the Indian priest, who appeared weak in an online video appeal in December.

Mr Modi said that every effort is being made to locate and free him.

Difference of opinion continues around *Amoris Laetitia*

The president of the Conference of German Bishops has said the Pope's *Amoris Laetitia* exhortation is "very clear" and new guidelines adopted by the conference on Communion for divorced-and-remarried Catholics are in line with that.

Speaking in Rome, Cardinal Reinhard Marx dismissed the ongoing row among priests and prelates on *Amoris Laetitia* and said he "can-

not understand" why there are other interpretations to the Pope's words.

"The answer is, I think, clear," he said.

Despite Cardinal Marx's words, however, the recent guidelines issued by the German bishops, paving the way for some remarried divorcees, on a case-by-case basis, still stand in opposition to the recent message communicated by fellow German,

Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect of the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith to the effect that "we cannot make concessions" in the area of Communion and that "irregular situations are not in accordance with the divine will".

These comments were made in the context of the cardinal's concern at prelates making their own interpretations on *Amoris Laetitia*.

In England, meanwhile, a bishop has voiced concern about what he has described as "a growing problem" of disagreements around *Amoris Laetitia*, again on the issue of Communion for divorcees.

Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth said that a recent meeting with his Council of Priests revealed the differing interpretations among clergy and a hunger for guidance.

Vatican roundup

Pope writes preface to abuse survivor's story

Pope Francis has written the preface to a new book penned by a victim of clerical sexual abuse.

The book, *I Forgive you, Father*, was written by Daniel Pittet, a devout Catholic who met Pope Francis in 2015, and so moved him with his childhood story that the Pontiff agreed to write the book's introduction.

Thanking Daniel for breaking down "the wall of silence that covered scandals and suffering, shedding light on a terrible dark area in the life of the Church", the Pope writes: "How can a priest at the service of Christ and his Church cause so much harm? How can someone who devoted their life to lead children to God, end up instead to devour them in what I called 'a diabolical sacrifice' that destroys both the victim and the life of the Church? Some of the victims have been driven to suicide. These deaths weigh on my heart, on my conscience and that of the whole Church. To their families, I offer my feelings of love and pain and humbly, I ask forgiveness."

Recalling his own Apostolic Letter, *As a Loving Mother*, of June 2016, the Pope reasserted that "our Church must take care and protect with special love the weak and the helpless as a loving mother".

Inspired by Pittet's example of forgiveness when the author ultimately met and interviewed his abuser after 40 years of silence, Pope Francis went on: "I'm very impressed by his words – 'Many people fail to understand the fact that I do not hate him. I have forgiven him and I built my life on that forgiveness'."

"I pray for Daniel and for all those who, like him, were wounded in their innocence, may God lift them and heal them, and give us all his forgiveness and mercy."

Trump-Pope meeting mooted

Pope Francis may have his first meeting with US President Donald Trump in May, according to reports from Rome. Diplomatic sources have signalled that such a meeting will take place when President Trump travels to Italy to attend the May 26-27 G7 summit in Taormina, Sicily.

Given that Mr Trump's predecessors, Barack Obama and George W. Bush used the occasion of their own attendances at what was then the G8 summit to visit Popes Benedict XVI and St John Paul II, a failure to do so on the part of Mr Trump could only be interpreted as a snub to Pope Francis.

The Holy See has not commented as yet on the possibility of a meeting between the two leaders.

Papal stance on anti-Semitism lauded

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has lauded Pope Francis for his outspoken denunciations of anti-Semitism and the Holy See's commitment to the wellbeing of Jewish communities.

During an audience with Pope Francis on February 9, Jonathan A. Greenblatt, CEO of the US-based group which monitors anti-Semitism worldwide thanked the Pontiff for his stance and said the ADL shares his concerns for "the horrendous persecution of ethnic and cultural minorities, many of them Christians".

"We are deeply troubled by the rise of violent extremism and of reactionary nationalism, including in the United States," Mr Greenblatt continued. "The love of neighbour, enshrined in the book of Leviticus and considered the greatest commandment by both Jesus in the Gospels and Rabbi Akiva, seems to be in short supply."

For his part, Pope Francis again vocally denounced anti-Semitism "in all its forms" as contrary to Christian principles, lamenting that it is still a widespread phenomenon. "I reaffirm that the Catholic Church feels particularly obliged to do all that is possible with our Jewish friends to repel anti-Semitic tendencies," he assured.



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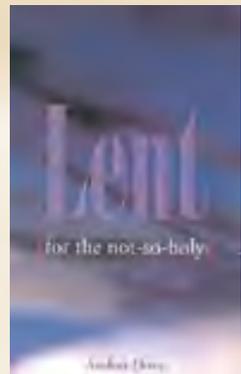
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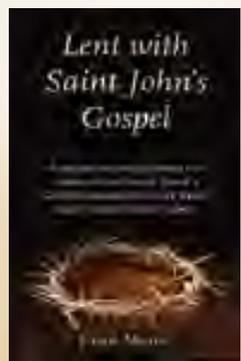
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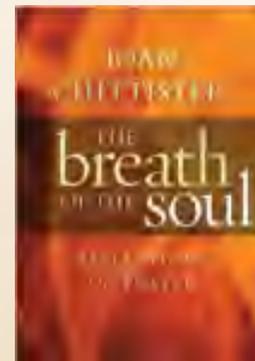
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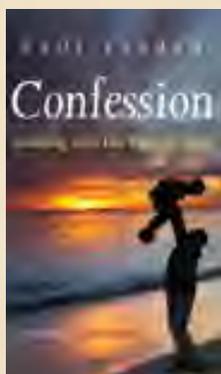
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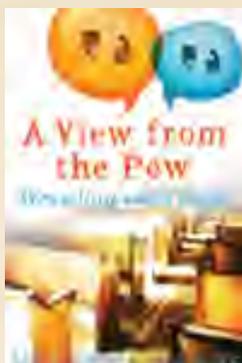
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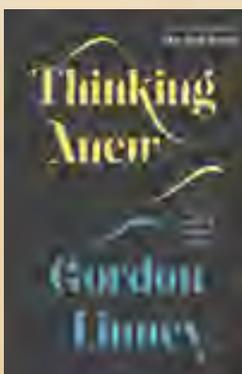
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Letter from Rome

Pope taps delegate to study 'pastoral situation' at Medjugorje



Inés San Martín

On February 11, Pope Francis sent an envoy to Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina, not to rule on the credibility of the alleged Marian apparitions taking place at the site since 1981, but to assist with pastoral issues.

Speaking to *Crux*, a source close to the matter said that Archbishop Henryk Hoser of Warsaw-Prague, Poland, the man tapped by the Pope, won't have a doctrinal role, but a pastoral one. It's the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that has to rule on legitimacy of the alleged apparitions.

In announcing the appointment, the Vatican acknowledged that thousands of pilgrims flock to Medjugorje every year.

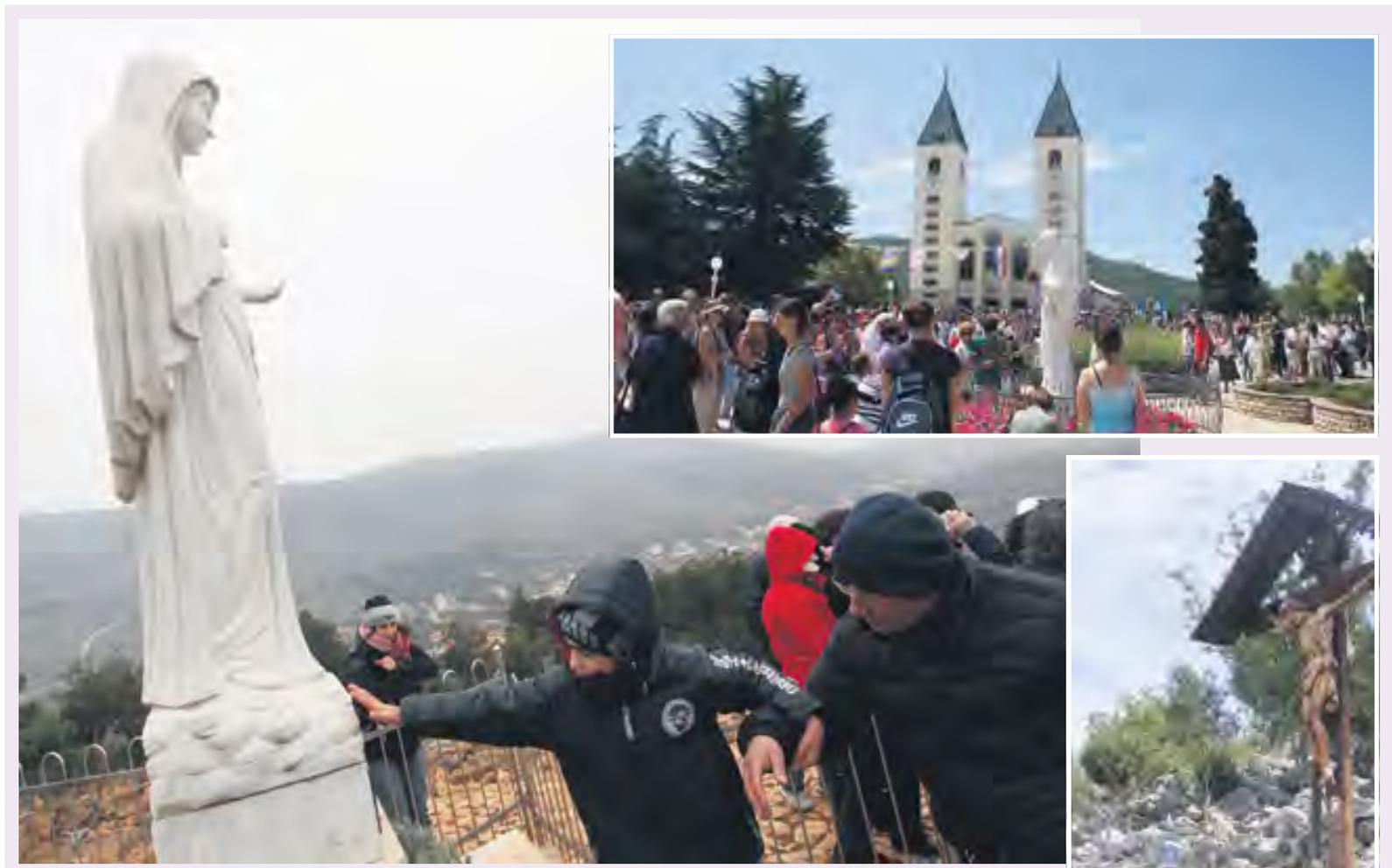
"The mission has the aim of acquiring a deeper knowledge of the pastoral situation there, and, above all, of the needs of the faithful who go there in pilgrimage, and on the basis of this, to suggest possible pastoral initiatives for the future."

The city is a pilgrimage hub because of the reported apparitions. In 1981, Medjugorje was an unexceptional farming community of some 400 Croatian families in the former Yugoslavia, and most believe it'd still be one had it not been for the regular Marian messages.

“Pope Francis cautioned against basing one's faith solely on predicted visions”

The news of a papal delegate being appointed was announced on Saturday by the Vatican's press office, through a statement that also insisted on the "exclusively pastoral character" of Hoser's mission. The bishop will continue to exercise his role as Bishop of Warsaw, but he's expected to finish his assessment by Europe's summer time.

Those who take the reported apparitions at face value believe the Virgin Mary, or the 'Gospa' as she's affectionately known in



Medjugorje, has been appearing in this small town 60 miles from Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia Herzegovina, since June 24, 1981. According to the lore, the Virgin



Archbishop Henryk Hoser of Warsaw-Prague, Poland.
Photo: CNS

first appeared daily to six young people aged between 10 and 17 at the time, but since 1989 has continued to do so only to some of

them – twice a month: on the 2nd and the 25th.

In the years since that first message, the Vatican hasn't ruled on the veracity of the apparitions. Generally speaking, for the Vatican to even consider issuing a finding on a reported apparition, the revelations have to be over, and in Medjugorje they're definitely not.

The fact that the local Catholic hierarchy is divided does not help either.

“An average of 26 priests per day concelebrated in the Masses in January 2017, and some 36,000 people received Communion during the same period”

In 2010, under Pope Benedict, the Vatican set up a commission to study the Medjugorje question. Five years later, on June 6, 2015, Pope Francis told reporters that "we've reached the point of making a decision and then they will say". But over 18 months later, nothing has been said.

Only days later, during one of his morning Masses, Francis cautioned against basing one's faith solely on predicted visions or anything other than Christ himself. And last November, he reiterated a concept he'd spoken about before,

which is that the Virgin Mary is not a postmistress, delivering daily letters, a point he mentioned again this week.

Among other things, Hoser will have to study the pastoral care given to the pilgrims by the local Franciscan community, which runs the St James church that doubles as a pilgrimage welcoming center.

There are several Masses throughout the day, Eucharistic adoration and some 35

confessionals where priests who accompany pilgrimage groups hear confessions in several languages.

According to their statistics, an average of 26 priests per day concelebrated in the Masses in January 2017, and some 36,000 people received Communion during the same period.

Yet despite the many pastoral services provided for the pilgrims, this community hasn't been free of scandals in recent years and has long been at odds with the bishops of Mostar-Duvno, the diocese to which Medjugorje belongs.



Both Bishop Pavao Žanic, who led the diocese from 1980 to 1993, and current bishop Ratko Peric asserted clearly that nothing supernatural is happening here.

Among the scandals surrounding the Franciscans, one of the most resounding was the 2010 defrocking of Father Tomislav Vlastic, a Franciscan priest who served as a former "spiritual director" to the six visionaries.

The decision, approved by emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, came after a year-long probe into charges he exaggerated the apparitions and had fathered a child with a nun.

It wasn't lost on many observers that the announcement came on February 11, the day on which the Catholic Church marks the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, who appeared in the small French village from February 11 to July 15, 1858.

i Inés San Martín is Vatican Correspondent for *Cruxnow.com*



Myanmar brutalises its unwanted people

No-one wants them." Across the plethora of reporting of the plight of Myanmar's tortured Rohingya community, no single phrase summed up the plight of a people so precisely as that employed by Pope Francis on February 8. During his weekly General Audience, the Pontiff chose to make the despised Muslim minority community the subject of a prayer amid horrific dispatches from their home state of Rakhine in the nation formerly known as Burma.

Pray, he urged pilgrims to Rome, "for our Rohingya brothers and sisters who are being chased from Myanmar and are fleeing from one place to another because no one wants them.

"They are good people, they are not Christians, they are peaceful people, they are our brothers and sisters and for years they have been suffering, they are being tortured and killed, simply because they uphold their Muslim faith."

Contempt

Numbering about one million, the Rohingyas have long been figures of contempt in majority-Buddhist Myanmar, denied rights and even citizenship – for many, the Rohingyas are mere interlopers from neighbouring Bangladesh (from where some arrived during that country's war for independence in 1971).

Contempt turned to outright violence, however, in early October, after attacks on a number of border checkpoints in Rakhine resulted in

the deaths of nine police officers. Blame was quickly levelled against Rohingya activists – from a group called Harakah al-Yaqin (Faith Movement) – and the military was ordered into the region to undertake a clearance operation against terrorists.

“In the absence of anything but platitudes to the UN, the mass displacement of Rohingya continues”

According to reports emerging since then, the military crackdown has become an exercise in the worst forms of brutality and torture as soldiers deal with a dehumanised enemy.

Video footage of military personnel meting out summary justice to prisoners in the backwoods of Rakhine does little to illustrate the extent of the alleged

crimes against humanity. For this, one must turn to testimonies gathered from displaced Rohingyas by the United Nations and human rights groups.

In addition to “thousands” of deaths, communicated by UN representatives in Myanmar, a report by the body (see: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56103#.WJ2LIRJO17E>) alleges “devastating cruelty” inflicted on Rohingyas as they fled to Bangladesh, from rape to the murders of infants and the deliberate confining of people inside dwellings which were then set alight.

“What kind of ‘clearance operation’ is this?” the UN demanded. “What national security goals could possibly be served by this?”

These are questions Myanmar leadership has been unable – unwilling – to answer when presented with the UN findings this month. Indeed, despite a verbal pledge by *de facto* leader

Aung San Suu Kyi to launch an investigation into the issues raised by the UN, this came with the caveat that she “would require further information”, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Raad al-Husseini reported.

Indifference

Whether through a personal indifference to the plight of the Rohingya, or an insecure political position in a country where the military holds one quarter of parliamentary seats, any hope that Aung San Suu Kyi can offer a concrete response is not helped by a report – from the ABC network – that her office has called independent reports of sexual violence against Rohingya women “fake rape”. (An earlier government-backed investigation into Rohingya suffering fell flat when the politician leading it dismissed rape reports as he deemed Rohingya women “too dirty” to rape.)

In the absence of anything

“What kind of ‘clearance operation’ is this?” the UN demanded”

but platitudes to the UN, the mass displacement of Rohingya continues, with anywhere between 60,000 and 65,000 having fled across the border into Bangladesh, a result that must surely please the more extreme voices.

But this is far from sanctuary or relief for the Rohingyas themselves.

No more willing that Myanmar to accept or recognise the rights of the minority people, Bangladesh has come up with the novel suggestion that it will press ahead with a plan to relocate the entire Rohingya refugee community to the flood-prone island of Thengar Char in the Bay of Bengal.

At the time of writing, the Muslim-majority nation of Malaysia has distinguished itself in answering to the Rohingya situation. Last week, a ship containing badly needed humanitarian assistance docked in Yangon, Myanmar. Less distinguished was the protest against its arrival staged by Buddhist monks who argued that the supplies are not needed as ‘there are no Rohingyas here’.

A clear obfuscation, given the ongoing actions of Myanmar's military in Rakhine.

What the monks really meant of the Rohingya was “no-one wants them”.

Kenya's ‘a looming disaster’ from months of drought

On February 10 the Kenyan government at last responded to the imploring of the nation's Catholic bishops and declared the ongoing drought in the country a national disaster.

Following a morning briefing that day from officials on the now dire situation in 23 of Kenya's 47 counties President Uhuru Kenyatta issued the declaration and called for local and international partners to immediately beef up schemes aimed at drought alleviation.

For many in the country, it was a case of ‘better late than never’.

Failure

As far back as November, the local arm of the Red Cross was working to assist a steadily growing number of people, mainly farmers and their families, falling prey to the creeping drought.

From the organisation's own report of February 7: “The drought situation in



The carcass of an animal which fell victim to Kenya's worsening drought.

Kenya follows poor performance of the 2016 long rains (March-April-May) and failure of the 2016 short rains (October-November-December) rendering 1.3 million people food insecure as of December 2016. The situation has since esca-

lated, in January 2017 more than two million people were facing starvation and as of February 2017, the figure has spiralled to 2.7 million people.”

At least one member of the Kenyan Parliament had urged a disaster declaration

last October amid reports that more and more people were giving up on trying to grow food or keep herds alive and were instead turning to local churches in desperate appeals for food.

The steady deterioration of this emergency supply

chain under pressure of numbers to a reality in which, today, families in affected regions are boiling leaves and chewing tree bark in the desperate hope of sustenance, led the Catholic bishops to make their direct appeal to the government on February 8.

“A specialist guard unit became overwhelmed and pulled out for its own safety”

“Even though the Kenyan Government, Kenya Red Cross and other philanthropic groups have made varied interventions, these remains inadequate because the number of families affected is huge. We are in a state of hunger, a looming disaster,” warned Bishop Philip Anyolo of Homa Bay and chair of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops.

That looming disaster has now being accelerated by herdsmen taking the unprecedented step of pushing their struggling herds onto lands conserved for Kenya's important tourist industry.

With the countryside drying up about them, the cattlemen have come in such numbers that in at least one case, a specialist guard unit became overwhelmed and pulled out for its own safety, leaving properties vulnerable to looters, and the tourism sector nervous.

Respite

Kenya's badly-needed long rains are still a month away, if they do not fail for a second year. However, even if they arrive to offer respite, the Red Cross has warned that they may not be of sufficient measure to reverse the damage already done by the protracted arid period, not to mention the long overdue response.

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

Solutions to 'nightmare' of Roman Missal translation

Dear Editor, Like Fr Tom Whelan ('Fresh Mass translation 'a long shot' IC 02/02/2017), I agree that the "pragmatics of administrators will win out," when it comes to the future of the largely unloved 2011 translation of the Roman Missal.

Its turgid prose, erratic use of capital letters and badly designed presentation of prayers in the altar edition are a nightmare. I have tried

my best to work with it, but more than five years later, it is still problematic.

There are two solutions which do not require any major outlay of money. The easiest is simply to permit parishes that wish it to return to the pre-2011 translation, in the same spirit as those who wish it have been permitted to resume use of the 1962 edition of the *Missale Romanum* (often wrongly described as the

'Tridentine Missal'). The other is to sanction the excellent ICEL translation of the Sacramentary, which was the forerunner of the 2011 text and was virtually ready for publication when it was sidelined.

*Yours etc.,
Brendan McConvery CSsR,
Belfast,
Co. Antrim.*

Unimpressed with Enda Kenny's diplomatic efforts

Dear Editor, I can hardly believe that the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, actually asked the Pope on his recent visit to reinstate Fr Tony Flannery to public ministry and I feel sure our ambassador was hardly impressed. Apart from the ignorance involved, like not knowing the reasons for Fr Flannery's

silencing (because of questioning the very basis of the priesthood and other basic teachings of the Church) but accepting those reported in the media, how disrespectful to question the Pope on decisions made by the Vatican.

As David Quinn mentioned in his article,

the Pope could very easily have asked him, with justification, why members of his Government were excommunicated because they opposed his abortion legislation, never mind, the closure of the Vatican embassy.

Questions are being asked about Mr Kenny and

his diplomatic efforts on our behalf regarding Brexit and President Trump and, after his visit to the Vatican, it would seem that there is plenty to worry about.

*Yours etc.,
Mary Stewart,
Ardeskin,
Donegal Town.*

Hypocrisy over Trump's immigration ban

Dear Editor, Regarding the article on the concern of chaplains in the US over Trump's immigration ban on countries heavily infiltrated by ISIS and Al-Qaeda (IC 02/02/2017): Sr Christine Hennessy says "it is against everything we believe in as

Christians".

She and Fr Dan Finn are living in a glasshouse. I lived and worked in Ireland for eight years with my spouse and daughter. Our daughter went to college in Cork and upon graduation was informed she could no longer

stay in the country. Mt. 7:3: "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye."

Hypocrisy is never pretty. Compassionate, politically-correct, Christian hypocrisy is particularly loathsome.

Even the US Conference of Catholic Bishops agrees a country has the right (and I might add the responsibility) to control its borders.

*Yours etc.,
Deacon James Rock,
Henniker,
New Hampshire, USA.*

The mere 'rantings of a jackass'

Dear Editor, We recently celebrated the feastday of St Francis de Sales, a man who lived through troubled times and had much success overcoming antichristianity by gentle preachings and writings.

I wondered if perhaps we could learn from him in relation to the incident on the *Late Late Show* on January 16 [in which the Eucharist was referred to as 'haunted bread']. My

late mother would have called it 'the rantings of a jackass' and the proper way to deal with it was to pray. So instead of censure let us pray that those involved (including RTÉ) would learn respect for our most precious possession – our religion. Let us leave it all in the hands of God.

*Yours etc.,
Angela C. Power,
New Ross,
Co. Wexford.*

Priests really must prioritise their time

Dear Editor, Your editorial comments (IC 09/02/2017), 'Show must go on' mentality cannot last forever', is the harsh reality. There are fewer priests and they really must prioritise their time to undertake all the important aspects of ministry. With fewer people attending Mass it makes no sense to have three or four sparsely attended Masses when two may comfortably meet the parish's needs.

There is no doubt that our priests will appreciate any time freed up. My parish priest advised me recently that he might give up to eight hours of his time in dealing with the death of a parishioner; meeting the family, preparing for the funeral service and attending at the graveside. But he also said it was worth making the time, as it was an opportunity to minister to the friends and family of the deceased, many of whom may not otherwise encounter the Christian message.

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

Food for thought on modern parish life

Dear Editor, Your column of 09/02/2017 on the reality facing parishes as the number of priests continue to decline in the country, really offered food for thought for parishes. I agree that the time has

come for parishioners to stop lamenting the situation and to step up to the plate.

*Yours etc.,
Mary Byrne,
Tallaght,
Dublin 24.*

Objectivity not the hallmark of President Trump's critics

Dear Editor, Stewart Maher's letter (IC 09/02/2017) on American blogger Simcha Fisher makes for interesting reading, and congratulations to him for having explored Mrs Fisher's blog and background.

Nevertheless, however impressive Mrs Fisher may seem, the question remains: who should conscientious pro-life American Catholic voters have supported on November 8 last when the alternative to the admittedly imperfect Mr Trump was the expressly pro-choice Mrs Clinton?

There are also the approximately 30 million women who voted for Mr Trump. It would surely be a major slur on these simply to dismiss them as deluded, or as suffering (as certain feminists claim) from that mysterious feminist-invented pathology, "internalised misogyny".

As for the quality of Mrs Fisher's research and knowledge, should we assume that she knows all there is to know about matters such as Mr Trump's appointments, policies, etc. and is offering objective comment and analysis based on this knowledge - or would we be wiser to exercise caution here?

While this may be related to Mr Trump's undoubted capacity for arousing strong feelings, objectivity is not the hallmark of many of his critics.

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



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.

Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit?

Dear Editor, Fr Tom Whelan refers to the "more proper Anglo-Saxon" translation of liturgical terms (A wish-list for a new translation of the Mass, IC 09/02/2017).

Presumably, as a member of the Bishops' Council for Liturgy, he therefore supports and recommends the use of the term Holy Ghost in preference to the "Latin form" Holy Spirit in the Sign of the Cross used throughout the Mass?

*Yours etc.,
Kieron Wood,
Rathfarnham,
Dublin 16.*

📷 Around the world



WEST BANK: Heavy equipment is seen as workers clear an area for the construction of a new home in the Israeli settlement of Shilo. The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem warned of “serious consequences” from a new law that allows the government to seize private Palestinian lands where unauthorised Israeli settlements have been built.



UNITED STATES: A statue of St Francis of Assisi is seen outside St Anthony Church in Butler, New Jersey, after a snowstorm.



UNITED STATES: Vergie Davis, a parishioner of Resurrection of Our Lord Church in New Orleans East, places a statue of St Jude on a living room cupboard in her home, which was destroyed by a tornado. The statue had not moved from its position despite the house losing its roof in the storm. Photos: CNS



PAKISTAN: A shepherd herds goats on a roadside in Peshawar. Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Vatican’s permanent observer to the United Nations, called on countries to seek solutions to poverty based not only on economics but to also address personal, social and environmental factors that contribute to it.



VATICAN: Pope Francis greets a woman while meeting the disabled during his general audience in Paul VI hall at the Vatican.



GERMANY: A man examines coins displayed at the World Money Fair in Berlin. Pope Francis wrote in his February 7 Lenten message that money can chain people to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.

Welcoming the stranger



Syrian refugees seeking help in Europe.



Fr. Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

In the Hebrew Scriptures, that part of the Bible we call the Old Testament, we find a strong religious challenge to always welcome the stranger, the foreigner. This was emphasised for two reasons: first, because the Jewish people themselves had once been foreigners and immigrants.

Their Scriptures kept reminding them not to forget that. Second, they believed that God's revelation, most often, comes to us through the stranger, in what's foreign to us. That belief was integral to their faith.

The great prophets developed this much further. They taught that God favours the poor preferentially and that consequently we will be judged, judged religiously, by how we treat the poor. The prophets coined this mantra (still worth memorising): the quality of your faith will be judged by the quality of justice in the land; and the quality of justice in the land will always be judged by how orphans, widows and strangers fare while you are alive.

“God not only makes a preferential option for the poor, but God is in the poor. How we treat the poor is how we treat God”

Orphans, widows, and strangers! That's scriptural code for who, at any given time, are the three most vulnerable groups in society. And the prophets' message didn't go down easy.

Rather it was a religious affront to many of the pious at the time who strongly believed that we will be judged religiously and morally by the rigour and strictness of our religious observance. Then, like now, social justice was often religiously marginalised.

Option

But Jesus sides with the Hebrew prophets. For him, God not only makes a preferential option for the poor, but God is in the poor. How we treat the poor is how we treat God.

Moreover, the prophets' mantra, that we will be judged religiously by how we treat the poor, is given a normative expression in Jesus' discourse on the final judgment in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25. We are all familiar, perhaps too familiar, with that text. Jesus, in effect, was answering a question: what will the last judgment be like? What will be the test? How will we be judged?

His answer is stunning and, taken baldly, is perhaps the most challenging text in the Gospels. He tells us that we will be judged,

seemingly solely, on the basis of how we treated the poor, that is, on how we have treated the most vulnerable among us.

Moreover at one point, he singles out “the stranger”, the foreigner, the refugee: “I was a stranger and you made me welcome or you never made me welcome.”

We end up on the right or wrong side of God on the basis of how we treat the stranger.

“In Matthew's Gospel, mature discipleship doesn't depend upon us believing that we have it right”

What also needs to be highlighted in this text about the last judgment is that neither group, those who got it right and those who got it wrong, knew what they were doing. Both initially protest: the first by saying: “We didn't know it was you we were serving” and the second by saying: “Had we known it was you we would have responded.” Both protests, it would seem, are beside the point. In Matthew's Gospel, mature discipleship doesn't depend upon us believing that we have it right, it depends only upon us doing it right.

These scriptural principles, I believe, are very apropos today in the face of the refugee and immigrant issues we are facing in the Western world. Today, without doubt, we are facing the biggest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War.

Millions upon millions of people, under unjust persecution and the threat of death, are being driven

from their homes and homelands with no place to go and no country or community to receive them.

As Christians we may not turn our backs on them or turn them away. If Jesus is to be believed, we will be judged religiously more by how we treat refugees than by whether or not we are going to church.

When we stand before God in judgment and say in protest: “When did I see you a stranger and not welcome you?” Our generation is likely to hear: “I was a Syrian refugee, and you did not welcome me.”

This, no doubt, might sound naïve, over-idealistic, and fundamentalist. The issue of refugees and immigrants is both highly sensitive and very complex.

Countries have borders that need to be respected and defended, just as its citizens have a right to be protected. Admittedly, there are very real political, social, economic, and security issues that have to be addressed. But, as we, our churches, and our governments, address them we must remain clear on what the scriptures, Jesus, and the social teachings of the Church uncompromisingly teach: we are to welcome the stranger, irrespective of inconvenience and even if there are some dangers.

For all sorts of pragmatic reasons, political, social, economic, and security, we can perhaps justify not welcoming the stranger; but we can never justify this on Christian grounds.

Not welcoming stranger is antithetical to the very heart of Jesus' message and makes us too-easily forget that we too once were the outsider.



A refugee child rescued from the Mediterranean.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, February 16, 2017

Youth Space

Carrying faith into the future

Page 26



Dealing with the second trimester



The second trimester starts from the 14th week of pregnancy and continues until the 27th week. During this time your baby will grow a lot, increasing in size from around 10cm to over 30cm.

With your first trimester behind you, that morning (or should I say 'all day?') sickness should be beginning to pass.

The good news is most 'mums to be' would describe this trimester as the smoothest. You will start to get some of your energy and your appetite back.

Your chance of miscarriage significantly decreases, which is why people often wait until now to share their good news.



Wendy Grace describes the challenges of the smoothest stage of pregnancy

During this trimester, you begin to look pregnant and rather than trying to hide your little one, you're ready to show off your ever growing bump. It's during this time stretch marks may start to appear, so make sure to moisturise twice a day with bio oil or a body butter to help lessen stretch marks.

While you might not be running to the loo as much, you might begin to feel backaches

and increasingly you might also start to experience heartburn, while as the baby grows and starts to put pressure on your lungs, you might experience shortness of breath.

As for your baby, it is now fully formed - all they have to do now is to continue to grow.

The good news is that overall the second trimester is the easiest one. So use this time to look after yourself well, taking

advantage of your returning appetite and energy.

Eat well

With that queasy feeling passing, try to eat as healthy as possible. Remember you are now eating for two and, at this stage, you just need an extra 200-300 calories per day. You might have found yourself, during the first trimester, not exactly nutritionally full - I survived on nuts and crackers!

You might have even lost your appetite, but now that it has returned you need to nourish your baby and your body. What you eat is important for your baby's nourishment and development.

During your second trimester,

it's especially important to eat foods that are rich in calcium, magnesium and vitamin D. These nutrients will help your baby grow strong bones and teeth. It's also beneficial to eat foods containing omega-3 oils, such as oily fish and flax seeds, which are vital for your baby's brain development.

It's really important to eat lots of fruit and vegetables. Several studies have shown 'mums to be' who eat junk food while pregnant are more likely to have babies who will crave junk food, even into adulthood.

Foods such as avocados are a great source of good fats, calcium and magnesium, while blueberries are a natural anti-

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Children's Corner

ERIN FOX



A monogram is the perfect touch

Bedrooms are full of objects that make the room your own; from books, ornaments, posters, unique lamps and more. Make your mark on your personal space stronger with hand-made monogram letters. Collect some items you'll use for decorating the letter. Use beads, buttons, sequins, ribbon, yarn and anything you can get your hands on.

For the monogram letters you will need corrugated card, glue, scissors and crafts of your choice.

Trace your letter onto the card, you can make it as big or as small as you like. Use a ruler to ensure the lines are straight. Cut this out and place to one side.

If you're using yarn to decorate the letter, it's better to cut long strips to wind around as it's much easier to handle than holding the entire skein.



Select three colours or more and then begin from the bottom. Glue one end of the yarn to the back of the letter and then begin to wind it tightly around. Keep going and if you run out of yarn, wind back if you need to, to glue the end to the back of the card. Cut more yarn in the same colour if you wish to continue with it. When you're happy with how much there is, select the next colour.

Repeat until the whole letter is covered, remembering to glue the yarn tails to the back of the card.

“If you want to hang up the letter, take some ribbon and fold it in half to make a loop”

When you're finished, select your decorations. Glue these firmly in place to the letter and allow the glue to dry for a few hours or overnight.

If you want to hang up the letter, take some ribbon and fold it in half to make a loop. Glue this to the top of the letter at the back and stick a drawing pin through the ribbon to secure it. Don't worry about the pin poking through the other side, as it won't go all the way through the corrugated cardboard.

You can make more letters to spell out your entire name. If you have a spare photo frame, stick the letters to this and hang it up on the wall.

Decorate the letters with pom poms, or choose objects that best reflect your interests. For example, use an old map if you like exploring, newspapers if you fancy yourself as a writer, and crayons if you're an artist.



A healthy body can help protect a healthy brain

The concept of successful or optimal ageing has become part of the lexicon of modern day geriatrics and encompasses maintaining in as far as is possible our cognitive, physical and mental health as we grow older. Despite this, cognitive function which is crucial to healthy ageing declines significantly in many older adults.

Indeed, few conditions conjure up as much fear and anxiety as dementia, though increasing research suggests that adopting a healthy lifestyle and addressing factors like high blood pressure and cholesterol, particularly in midlife, protect against cognitive decline. Indeed, the age at which dementia is diagnosed has risen in recent years, likely reflecting better general health.

Dementia is a syndrome characterised by loss of cognitive function in two or more areas including memory, problem solving and language. While cognition and memory loss is common with advancing age, by definition dementia is said to occur only when it leads to a loss in the ability to carry out major activities of daily living.

Damage

In Ireland, about 45,000 people live with dementia and in about 80% of cases it is due to Alzheimer's disease. Overall, dementia incidence doubles every five years from the age of 65 and by 80 it is estimated that approximately 15-20% of adults have Alzheimer's.

In its earliest stages,

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



Alzheimer's leads to damage in an area of the brain called the hippocampus, a structure which lays down the trace for new memory. It is the equivalent of our brains' 'save button' and when it malfunctions there is impaired ability to save new memories.

While important information may be retained early on, a progressive decline leads to the incapacity to remember most things often resulting in repetitive questioning and poor or no recognition for things that were never stored in the first place.

This may affect both visual and verbal memories but long-term memories that were stored previously remain intact. Difficulty with generating names or words can also be an early feature and reflects a language as opposed to memory problem.

For a period of up to a few years, it is possible to have memory problems due to Alzheimer's disease without having major impacts on daily function or dementia. However,

early memory problems can have several causes and the distinction is not always clear.

Mild difficulty with retrieving words or memories can often be due to poor attention due to stress, poor sleep, absent mindedness, alcohol excess, medications, stroke disease, depression and endocrine problems like an underactive thyroid.

The same conditions can impair our ability to process, pick up and encode new information as opposed to storing it and often give rise to patchy memory loss.

On the other hand, if on a consistent basis, new and particularly important information cannot be retained and there is repetition as well as a gradual decline, then it is more concerning for Alzheimer's.

“Smoking and depression appear to increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's”

Whilst in most cases diagnosing Alzheimer's at an early stage prior to developing dementia is not possible, memory testing can identify those at higher risk who can be followed up closely.

Currently, two medications which correct neurotransmitter imbalances in the brain are proven to help maintain cognitive function in Alzheimer's dementia in about 30% of cases. Unfortunately, however, they have no effect on

the underlying disease process.

A large amount of research has focused on using drugs to prevent the build-up of abnormal and toxic amyloid and tau proteins that occurs in the brain in Alzheimer's. However, trials to date have not been successful or had to be stopped due to adverse effects.

Opportunity

Current research has also moved in the direction of trying to diagnose Alzheimer's at an earlier 'pre-dementia' stage with sophisticated brain imaging and memory testing. This may provide an opportunity to develop treatments that slow or halt further brain damage before a disease 'cascade' effect may occur.

It is also now widely believed that changes in the brain predate the development of Alzheimer's by up to decades. High blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, physical inactivity, smoking and depression appear to increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's and indeed it is estimated that addressing these factors might reduce your lifetime chance by up to 50%.

This has led to a renewed focus on preserving 'brain health' which has particularly taken stage on the back of an ageing demographic.

In short, having a healthy lifestyle and keeping physically, mentally and socially active appear important in maintaining optimal brain function and protecting against dementia.

» Continued from Page 23



inflammatory and will help boost circulation. Green vegetables, like spinach, are a great source of iron, vitamin D and folic acid. It's really important to get plenty of protein and eat it combined with any sources of sugar, for example having a handful of nuts with your banana will help to regulate your blood sugar and will help to prevent energy highs and lows.

Soups and stews

I found creating hearty, healthy soups and stews in advance and freezing portions was really helpful. I tried to start my day with a smoothie packing in kale, spinach, carrots and some fruit to get on the right track.

In terms of overall weight gain in your pregnancy, you should put on around 11 to 16kg. Most women put on 0.5 to 2.25kg in the first trimester and then an average of 0.5kg a week throughout the remainder of the pregnancy. If you are putting on substantially more than this, you need to talk to your doctor. You might be at risk of gestational diabetes and should be tested for this.

By week 20 your baby has developed taste buds and is already learning to prefer the food you eat, which should give you that extra motivation to order a side of green vegetables rather than chips!

Exercise

When it comes to exercise, the general rule of thumb is if you did it before you were pregnant (unless it was a high risk activity such as horse riding or a contact sport), you can safely continue.

Always adhere to the talk test, where you are never so much out of breath you can't hold a conversation. It's very important to listen to your body – although I ran before pregnancy I just found it too difficult and began walking every day instead.

If you find it hard to get out and exercise/walk, YouTube has hundreds of pre-natal workout videos. You can try anything from aerobic dance workouts to pre-natal pilates that strengthens your core. There are also

videos to suit your schedule with a variety of workouts from 10 minutes to an hour.

The great thing about watching these videos is you can pause when you like and pick and choose the ones that work best for you and your level of fitness.

Even though much of the time you might not feel like it, taking the recommended 30 minutes of exercise each day will really stand to you. During your pregnancy it will help your aches and pains feel less severe, your body will be better prepared for labour and after the baby arrives your recovery time will be quicker.

Feeling

The really exciting thing is many women start to feel little kicks or flutters during the second trimester. Some describe it as like a small fish swimming across your belly. Other women describe it as feeling like little butterflies.

By 18 weeks your baby will also begin to hear, as their ears have fully developed. Your baby will start to hear your voice and research shows that if you sing or play music to your baby from now on they may recognise the songs after they are born, so now is a great time to start learning some lullabies!

“You might be finding it harder to get a good night's sleep as you continue to grow”

Remember your hormones are in overdrive, so it is ok when you feel emotional for no apparent reason or have a strange outburst at something that wouldn't usually upset you. Don't be hard on yourself when your hormones seem to have a mind of their own.

Pre-natal depression is only beginning to be recognised. It is estimated that approximately 10-20% of expectant mothers will experience it. It is important to find support to treat any anxiety you might be having. Pregnancy is an

enormous life transition and it is totally natural to feel overwhelmed. If pre-natal depression is left unaddressed the pre-baby blues can have consequences for mum and baby.

Several studies have linked unchecked depression and anxiety during pregnancy to higher rates of C-section, pre-eclampsia and babies with a lower birth weight. If you feel you need help, be sure and seek the support of a counsellor. Make sure you are giving yourself adequate time and space to relax.

Symptoms

A lot of women experience heartburn during the second trimester. Eat slowly and eat small meals frequently. Avoid spicy or fatty foods. Over the counter antacids are perfectly safe to take, but if your heartburn is really bad there is prescription medication available that is also safe to have prescribed for you.

If you have swollen ankles, getting exercise will help decrease the fluid retention. It will also help if you put your feet up when you are sitting and sleep on your side at night.

You might be finding it harder to get a good night's sleep as you continue to grow. I found using an N-shaped pregnancy pillow really helps. This type of a pillow supports your back and separates your knees easing the pressure on your hips and ribs. Having a bath several times a week with epsom salts will help you relax and ease back pain.

Now is a really important time to start doing your kegal exercises, at least three times a day – an app developed by the NHS called Squeazy can be very useful. It's also a good time to go on a babymoon, a short break for you and your partner to really enjoy some relaxing time together, while you take this time off maybe start discussing baby names, planning the nursery, etc.

This trimester will go faster than you imagine, so enjoy all the incredible changes that are happening to you and your baby.

Faith — IN THE — family



Bairbre Cahill

I think the dog is putting a challenge up to me. I've written about Roise before, how she joins in with us when we pray the Angelus. As we respond to the prayers, Roise makes a strange, sing-song baying sound. She's a pack animal and we are her pack so she wants to join with us. Now, Roise has started her singing when I'm doing the hoovering. She doesn't do it when anyone else is hoovering – just me – and the rest of them haven't heard her at it so my family think I've finally lost it.

I like the fact that Roise 'prays' with us. I think it is cute and funny and says something about prayer being an important part of our lives as a family.

When she started singing along to the Hoover I just felt frustrated. What on earth could she find attractive enough about hoovering to make her want to join in with the sound? Because, you see, I don't like hoovering, or cleaning windows, or washing floors or doing the ironing or even, most of the time, cooking the dinner. I do them because they need to be done and I'm often glad afterwards that I have done them but they aren't the things that have me bouncing out of bed with enthusiasm in the morning.

I like being out, working with groups, meeting people, feeling that I'm doing something that matters.

“When life feels mundane... where is God?”

If I'm honest I probably like those things because they make me feel good about myself. Running a retreat boosts my ego in a way that getting the hoovering done never will. But my work goes in phases. There are times when I'm juggling half a dozen projects as well as keeping family life running relatively smoothly. Although it can be stressful and a bit manic, I love the buzz and the sense of achievement.

Then there are the times when work is quiet and much

of what I am doing is desk-based. I might be writing or developing new programmes but I'm at home doing it. Much of my day will also involve the mundane stuff – the kitchen cupboard that needs sorting so that things stop falling out every time the door is opened, the spring cleaning that cannot be put off any longer. It doesn't float my boat but it has to be done.

So I Hoover and the dog decides to sing! My frustration comes from a sense of “Singing when we pray is fine but there's no prayer here!”

Challenge

So here is the challenge. I write and speak and give workshops about the spirituality of family life, about discovering the presence and action of God amidst the ordinary bits and pieces of our lives. Somehow I feel Roise's singing urges me to live up to my own message and find God right here in the midst of a fairly unexciting routine.

I want to shout “Don't look for God here, I'm only doing the hoovering!” but surely if the spirituality of family life stands up to scrutiny then even here in the hoovering and cleaning God must be present?

So Roise and I have been sitting with this challenge, pondering, reflecting. Well, Roise spends most of the time sleeping but I've been pondering. When life feels mundane and in a bit of a rut with nothing exciting happening, where is God? I find myself coming back to the idea of constancy.

We all know that so much of family life is about repeating patterns. Today we may clean a house, feed a family, walk the dog but the task is not completed. We have to do it all again tomorrow and the next day and the next.

Often we don't do it for great personal fulfillment but because it is somehow part of what makes us family. There is something about the commitment, the constancy that family life asks of us which I believe images God's utter faithfulness to us.

So maybe doing the hoovering doesn't give me a buzz but I actually think Roise is right to sing.



Carrying Faith into the future

Nicole O'Leary describes how students in Portlaoise benefit from the John Paul II Awards

As part of being a CEIST school, 5th and 6th year students from Scoil Chríost Rí, Portlaoise, participate in the John Paul II awards annually. Girls in our school from all walks of faith come together to rejoice and actively participate in their religion. The Pope John Paul II Award was created to commemorate St John Paul II, who was committed to young people believing that they had the spirit to carry faith into the 21st century.

The Pope John Paul II Award allows students all over Ireland an opportunity to take their own faith into their own hands. It enables participants to have an active part in the life of their Church community. The programme encourages independent learning about the Catholic Church and how we as young people can engage with Christ upon a deeper level.

The John Paul II Award enhances vital skills for students which they can bring forth into their later lives.

Participation

The award is committed to helping young people enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development through participation in school, parish and community activities.

As well as the feeling of personal achievement that a participant will gain from taking part in the award, participation will help to show future employers and educators that an award participant demonstrates they can make an on-going commitment to a task and goal.

The award is for anyone between



Students from Portlaoise Parish who received their JP II awards from Bishop Denis Nulty.

the age of 16 and 18. Luckily we have a parish and people who are willing to help us with completing our awards. There are three award levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Those who have completed the Gold award may then complete the Papal award if they wish.

“The John Paul II Award enhances vital skills for students which they can bring forth into their later lives”

Miss Byrne, a religion teacher in Scoil Chríost Rí, decided to use the pre-existing model of a 'Pray and Play' group in Portlaoise's St Peter's and Paul's Church and combine the award requirements with it to enhance the experience for the participants.

This programme was developed in order to allow younger members of the Church community to engage with the Gospel message at an age appropriate level while Mass proceeds. It consisted of inviting



Pray and pray group.

children aged four to seven out of 11.15am Sunday Mass to participate in other religious activities. Some of my group's favourite moments included acting out Noah's ark where all the children pretend to be an animal, constructing their own Advent wreaths to recognise the birth of Jesus at Christmas and throwing of Palms down on the ground before our 'little' Jesus and

donkey.

One Award leader, Rosemary Cushion – currently in 6th year – says: “My experience of Pray and Play has been incredibly positive. For quite a few people my age, religion isn't seen as a substantial part of people's lives anymore.

As society becomes more and more secular I begin to ask myself as a young person if our souls are

becoming secular.

“I was raised in a family where religion was highly regarded, but it never seemed like a job. I have fond memories of me as a child sitting in St Peter and Paul's church with my parents and brothers in complete awe of my surroundings. Going to St Bridget's well, attending Mass at Christmas, participating in our commemorations to St Brigid, getting dressed up for Christmas and Easter celebrations, decorating my own prayer table and preparing for my sacraments. Religion, for me as a child, was fun.

“Pray and play lets children establish their own independent faith along with others of their own age”

“I'm delighted to be given the opportunity to give children what I was so lucky to experience when I was their age, especially when religion has received such negative media attention within the last few years. Pray and play lets children establish their own independent faith along with others of their own age. The John Paul II award allows participants to explore their faith, as well as open their hearts because no matter how much the world changes around us our faith will always unite us.”

The award leaders receive their leadership awards annually presented by the bishop of the diocese.

This initiative adds a unique, rich dimension to our weekly celebration of the Eucharist that could easily be adopted in other parishes around the country.

i Nicole O'Leary is a student at Scoil Chríost Rí in Portlaoise, Co. Laois, one of 110 voluntary Catholic secondary schools managed by Ceist (Catholic Education and Irish Students Trust).



Eco Eye

Sr Colette Kane OP

You can make a big difference no matter where you are

I am a religious sister living and working in An Tairseach, the Dominican Farm and Ecology Centre in Wicklow town. The spirituality of this community and place is given expression and witnessed to through the lens of creation theology, where planet earth is understood as the primary revelation of the Divine. Here we attempt to live in right relationship with God, humankind and the cosmos.

An Tairseach is the Irish word for threshold and it suggests a new beginning, an alternative and more sustainable way of working with the land as well as a renewed relationship with the whole community of life, human and other-than-human. Our land is farmed in a sustainable way, i.e. organically with no chemicals at all. In winter the animals are housed in the traditional way with straw bedding.

Of course, you don't have to live in a farm or ecology centre to make a difference to the environment where you live. It's easy to make small but important changes in your own lives.

GREENER CLEANING: A glance at many of the products we use to clean our houses will reveal warning/danger signs. Chemicals like phosphates, found in washing powder and dishwashing products, pollute water systems and harm aquatic life. But what are the alternatives? Good old-fashioned remedies like bread soda, vinegar, and even lemons – along with some elbow grease – are all possibilities, or alternatively, you could buy phosphate-free washing powder for example with ECOVER cleaning products from www.ecover.com.

BUY LOCAL: Buying locally is one of the most important things you can do to improve the environment. If you buy food that has been produced locally, you will help to reduce the need for long-distance food transport and, ultimately, save energy. Take a walk to your local store or

farmers' market to buy locally produced (and, therefore, in season) organic food. And, when supermarket shopping, check where food has come from.

One kilo of New Zealand apples accounts for its own weight in CO2 transmissions by the time it arrives in Ireland while 10 litres of orange juice needs one litre of fuel (for processing and transport) as well as 220 litres of water for irrigation and cleaning. The typical food item you see in a supermarket has travelled more than 1,600km. The more locally-produced food you can use, the better!

IN THE OFFICE: Switch to an eco-friendly search engine – www.envirosearch.org – that donates profits to charity! Launched by <https://carbonfund.org>, the free search engine hosts sponsored advertisements that generate revenue which is then donated by <https://carbonfund.org> to environmental projects around the world, including the Haiti Reforestation Initiative, and the India Mangrove Project

Many more suggestions can be found on the website of Eco-Congregation Ireland: <http://ecocongregationireland.com/eco-tips>



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Political correctness from the echo chamber

A couple of new shows hit the TV screens last week. With much advance hype one of these arrived on RTÉ2 last Thursday night. US drama **This Is Us** tells the interacting stories of several individuals who share the same birthday.

It was appealing enough to make me want to watch another episode, but only just. It wasn't a problem that I was confused about how all these characters related to each other – at least that made me engage with the show and is inevitable in a first episode.

And I was impressed by the surprise ending (at least I didn't see it coming) which showed rather startling connections between the main characters.

The most moving plotline featured a successful young man re-establishing a relationship with the father that had abandoned him as a baby. By contrast the story of the woman having triplets was a tad overwrought and a shade corny.

There wasn't much of what's euphemistically called 'adult content', though the opening scene was pointlessly risqué.

Another new programme was Channel 4's **Fake News**, a panel show sifting through the week's news and beyond. I'm getting really sick of that phrase, as if 'fake news' was something new. Last Friday



Mandy Moore and Milo Ventimiglia star in *This Is Us* on RTÉ2.

night's episode was funny in spots but smelled of cheap shots, with predictable targets. And so there was a segment on news being 'spicered', i.e. real news being given the Sean Spicer treatment, a nod to the White House Press Secretary.

'Alternative facts'

Of course much play was made of 'alternative facts', thanks to Trump counsellor Kellyanne Conway's unfortunate choice of words. Worryingly, some fake news the guests deliberately sent out took off in cyberland, with

several media outlets taking the stories to be true.

The 'echo chamber' segment was rather ironic – as they sent up the concept (people hearing only their own points of view fed back to them), but didn't seem conscious of their own echo chamber existence, where it's the done thing to mock Trump *et al.* at every opportunity. Mind you those targets do make it all too easy sometimes. But who is going to send up liberals' excesses and hold them to account?

It's not quite a new show, but a new series of **Pat**

Kenny Tonight started on TV3, Wednesday night of last week. They're not short of momentous political events to talk about.

However it's all too much like Kenny's old show from Monday nights on RTÉ and **Clare Byrne Live**, currently running in that slot.

I really enjoyed the interview with journalist Mary Ellen Synon. She was introduced rather peculiarly as having been "a lonely right wing fish in a liberal sea" – talk about marginalising! Synon was "beyond thrilled" at Trump's election, but accepted that he had said some "jackass things".

I'd like to have heard more about her take on Trump advisor Steve Bannon...she said he didn't want war with anyone, but was a "disruptor". Inevitably there was more banter about 'fake news', when Synon gave an example of a fake story about Judge

Gorsuch, Trump's nominee for the US Supreme Court.

She ended on an odd note about herself and other Trump fans – "we take him seriously but not literally" – chew on that!

The show ended with a lively debate on political correctness, with George Hook fulminating against the excesses of the PC brigade, e.g. the British Medical Association wanting the term 'mother' replaced by 'pregnant person'.

Fergus Finlay didn't seem keen on the excesses of PC either, but didn't want offensive language and labelling, especially in relation to children.

A contributor from the audience, Keith Mills, made sense – he favoured free speech, but with limitations relating to the likes of defamation and incitement. Another audience member, Margaret Hickey, referenced the marginalisation of people with views contrary to those of the PC crowd, and how that feeds into media bias.

Example

Funny enough, there was a telling example on the **Pat Kenny Show** the day before when Kenny gave a thorough grilling on Irish language promotion to Julian de Spáinn of Conradh na Gaeilge, followed by a soft interview with Ed Walsh, founding President of the University of Limer-



RTÉ's Claire Byrne

PICK OF THE WEEK

EWTN NEWS NIGHTLY
EWTN Tuesday,
February 21, 7.30pm
EWTN's daily news and analysis programme from Washington, DC.

HAS POLITICAL CORRECTNESS GONE MAD?

Channel 4, Thursday,
February 23, 9pm
Trevor Phillips investigates the liberal urge to protect minorities from offence by gagging so-called populists and concludes that for liberals it's backfired.

THE LEAP OF FAITH
RTÉ Radio 1, Friday,
February 24, 10.02pm
Topical religious affairs with Michael Comyn.

ick, who was discussing the class divide at third level and, among other things, lambasting lack of action on 'bad teachers'.

Seems to me like you're so lucky when presenters are sympathetic to your views, but so unfortunate when they aren't!

✉ boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

Frustrated father foists failure on his '50s family

Fences (12A)

'Good fences make good neighbours', wrote Robert Frost. The present – heavily symbolic – film re-writes that epithet to read, 'some people build fences to keep people out and other people build them to keep people in'.

Based on August Wilson's Pulitzer prize-winning play of the same name, it deals with the efforts of a working class father to raise his family in the 1950s.

Denzel Washington – doubling as director – reprises his Broadway role of Troy Maxson, a Pittsburgh garbage collector whose youthful dreams of being a major league baseball player were thwarted

because he was black. The colour barrier was finally broken in 1947. That was far too late for Troy.

When his son Cory (Jovan Adepo) looks set to succeed on the sporting field where he failed – though at football instead of baseball – Troy doesn't support him. He throws a spanner in the works by refusing to sign the paperwork that would get him into college.

He's still, as John Osborne might have put it, 'looking back in anger', still feeling resentful that glory eluded him when he was Cory's age.

His life since has been unfulfilled, his ambitions reduced to moving from the back of his garbage truck to



Very good
★★★

Denzel Washington and Viola Davis in *Fences*.

the front. It's a pale reflection of his former dreams of becoming a black Babe Ruth.

This is a strong family drama but Washington makes few enough efforts to disavow its theatrical origins. He sets

most of it in Troy's backyard, leaving it open to the charge of being little more than a play with the cameras turned on. And yet, in a strange way, such claustrophobia adds to its power.

Now that Washington – who says he's going to make a staggering nine other films based on Wilson's work – is getting on in years he's starting to look more craggy. This helps his performance. But the real star turn is Viola Davis as Rose, his long-suffering wife.

She even steals a scene from him that should be his, where he confesses to an extra-marital affair that resulted in a pregnancy. Watching the pair of them square up against one another calls up memories of Willy Loman and his wife from *Death of a Salesman*.

All the big themes are here – dysfunction, loss, catharsis – set off against a bleak soci-

ological backdrop. Adepo is suitably intense as Cory. Russell Hornsby is more muted as Troy's older son Lyons, a struggling jazz musician.

Mykelti Williamson plays his trumpet-playing brother Gabriel who suffered brain damage in World War II and now believes he's the Angel Gabriel, entreating the Almighty to admit him to the Pearly Gates. The cast is rounded off with Stephen Henderson. He's more muted – but no less potent – as Troy's work colleague Jim Bono.

Some may find it all a bit 'talky' at two hours plus but the stirring performances of the main leads should help you overcome this potential stumbling block.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Finding a haven of refuge

The Harbour Within: A Book of Simple Spirituality
by Sister Consilio
(Hachette Books Ireland,
€14.99 hb / €8.99pb)

Peter Costello

While working as a young nun in Athy Sr Consilio came in contact, through the local hospital, with “the men of the road”. These were men, often from a farming background, some ex-soldiers, who had been rendered homeless.

She began to care for them by providing a little room from them to call into and to talk, later expanding the facility into the Old Dairy across the yard behind the convent. This safe haven for wanderers, and later those suffering from addiction to alcohol and drugs, has grown into a series of five similar places across the island.

She has, in time, come to be recognised for the stalwart

soul that she is. But in this book she shares her experiences and her thoughts and her prayers with readers, to try to help them as well.

The book opens with an account of her early years, with her parents and siblings on the family farm, in the convent, and with the first of those thousands she has helped. This is very moving and filled with insights, not only into those she has helped, but also those she wishes to help now.

“In these pages readers will find her discoveries couched in simple and direct language”

At the heart of the book is a seven-day programme which will enable her readers “to live from the soul”. She recounts that at school she (like Sir Bob Geldof) hated Mondays, but forced herself “to eat

the frog” (an expression of a friend for doing something very distasteful), to swallow the worst part of the week, and so to get happily through the other six days.

Truths about life

This programme, however, is framed by two other sections which present “the simple spirituality” to which she refers in the sub-title. And after that thoughts and prayers from the Old Dairy days, drawing again directly on the truths about life, love, and other people that she came to learn from “the men of the road” and many others.

In these pages readers will find her discoveries couched in simple and direct language that all goes to the heart of the matter.

Last year Cuan Mhuire marked its golden jubilee, in the half century of its existence Cuan Mhuire has helped in some many ways more than 70,000 residents. Cuan Mhuire now maintains 600



Sr Consilio and, below, a room in the Cuan Mhuire facility in Co. Limerick.



treatment beds in five centres nationwide. Of these, she says, some 106 are designated for detoxification (used by both men and women).

This is a book simply presented which reveals a lifetime of garnered wisdom in a most accessible and warm-hearted way. Sr Consilio has

witnessed a great deal of pain and suffering over the decades, but has turned all of it to good advantage. A wonderful book.

A splitting headache for millions of silent sufferers



Migraine: Not Just Another Headache

ed. by Dr Marie Murray, compiled by Patrick Little & Audrey Craven
(Curra Press, €12.99)

Peter Costello

In my time I have suffered from migraines. They are a very unlovely thing indeed, debilitating a person for days, or even weeks, on end. Recurrent and painful though they are, they are not fatal. They also come with mental effects that are also crushing.

Migraine is in a way a little like epilepsy, it is a condition that causes great suffering, but which few others really understand. It is a condition that frightens people, for both seem to evoke fear rather than pity. After all, “It’s only a headache”.

This book will be an important aid both to those who are afflicted with the condition in all its varieties, their families, and their social circle, even their employers. It aims to increase understanding, to overcome

the prevailing ignorance. But, as we know, nothing is harder, than to shift people’s all too well-fixed notions about social, sexual and medical issues.

Written by some nine contributors with different professional experiences of the condition and its treatment, it carries at the end an important chapter on tips for living with migraine compiled by the Migraine Association of Ireland Helpline team (who can of course be contacted online).

Complex condition

Migraine, as is made clear, is a complex condition. This alone makes it hard to deal with. Matters of genetics and environment enter into it, but also life style, eating habits, inappropriate medication, and failure to seek out support - this last being a very vital point. Treatments change and improve all the time, and both



patients and their doctors need to stay up to date. The help is there: don’t suffer at home when wider contacts can provide support, aid, and comfort.

All that said, there are a couple of caveats about the presentation of the book.

While the design is attractive and practical, the type is far too small, and the page too crowded.

More importantly, for a book of this kind filled with multifarious facts and topics treated in several places, an index is essential. The contributors should have insisted on one from the publishers.

But as readers of factual books well know, indexes (which cost money to make) are gradually disappearing from books aimed at the popular market: a sad sign of the times. Publishers and writers know what is in a book, the new readers do not.

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.

Revolt in the suburbs

Rebellion and Revolution in Dublin: Voices from a Suburb, Rathfarnham, 1913-23 (South Dublin County Council, €15; available also from any South Dublin Library, or online from www.southdublinlibraries.ie/bookstore)

Gregory O'Connor

This book consists of 13 essays by different authors on various aspects of the momentous events which occurred in the 10 years between the founding of the Irish Volunteers and the end of the Civil War. Its publication formed part of South Dublin County Council's 1916 Centenary Programme, and also of their wider Decade of Centenaries Programme.

The editors, Dr Marnie Hay and Prof. Daire Keogh, lay out the main themes of the volume in their introduction. The first article by Prof. Mary Daly, 'The Social Context of Wartime Dublin', provides an excellent, penetrating portrait of the social and economic condition of the capital city and of the effects on that condition of the both the war raging in Europe and the Revolution begun at home.

The majority of articles relate to the Easter Rising and the period leading up to it but there are several that continue the narrative to describe events in the War of Independence and the Civil War.

“All the pieces are of a high quality, but several stand out”

That the Irish Revolution began in the middle of the earthshaking global event that was the First World War is reflected in articles on the Fetherstonhaugh Home, which cared for hundreds of wounded soldiers; and another on the Jesuits in Rathfarnham Castle, which also includes data about the order's priests who served as army chaplains on the Western Front.

There is also an interesting article on four artists: May Guinness,



Willie Pearse, Sean Keating and Patrick Tuohy, who lived or worked in Rathfarnham during the revolutionary period.

All the pieces are of a high quality, but several stand out. One is Martin Mansergh's comparison of the Proclamations of Emmet's Rising of 1803 and of the 1916 Rising, and another Michael McDowell's analysis of the attitude of his grandfather Eoin MacNeill, firstly to those he suspected of preparing for an insurrection, and secondly to event itself when it became an immediate prospect.

Emmet, the "haunted ghost" of Pearse's imagination also appears in the article by Brian Crowley (the Curator of St Enda's Museum), which describes the spiritual connection which the latter felt with the former.

Wisdom

One article by Conor McNamara deals directly with the men from Rathfarnham who went in from St Enda's to the city to take part in the Rising.

The sharply divergent views on the wisdom, and also the basic morality of the Insurrection at the time of its planning and launching, are strikingly brought out in Senator

McDowell's essay. The heated debates on these matters between historians of recent decades are tellingly recounted in an essay by Felix Larkin, which elucidates in detail the stringent critique of the Rising written by Fr F.X. Martin.

“An international dimension is added in Robert Schmuhl's essay”

Articles such as those by Gareth Coghlan on his grandfather F. X. Coghlan, and that by Michael Laffan on W.T. Cosgrave and his home called Beechpark, provide some valuable information on post-1916 events.

An international dimension is added in Robert Schmuhl's essay on 'Easter 1916 and Ireland's Exiled Children: The American Connections', while the article on Bulmer Hobson by joint editor Marnie Hay explains his opposition to the Rising, and goes on to describe his later activities, which included pamphlets on political and economic issues and a spell as Chairman of the Whitechurch Library Committee

This book describes the local contribution to the revolutionary movement, but also transcends the local to address and inform the national debate on the legacy which the events of those extraordinary years have left the country which continues to be relevant right up to the present day.

It has to be said, however, that much work remains to be done to fulfil the expectations raised by the subtitle of the book, that is to say 'Voices from a Suburb 1913-23'.

Such a larger task really necessitates a companion volume to this one. While the involvement of Rathfarnham in the events of the Rising itself was almost entirely "exported" into the City, the area was a very significant theatre of action in both the War of Independence and the Civil War.

In telling that fuller story of the later period the promised release by the Irish military archives of all the National Service Pension Claims files – which include both sides in the Civil War – will prove an indispensable resource.

Gregory O'Connor is an archivist with National Archives who lives in Rathfarnham.

The World of Books

By the books editor

Donald Trump's good books

The old adage tells us we are what we eat. Whatever about that, it is certainly true that, intellectually at least, we are what we read.

This being the case, I was not unnaturally curious about how books might have shaped the mind and imagination of the new president of the United States.

What are his favourite books, or the books that he greatly admires? Unlike, say John F. Kennedy, the president is not (so it seems) a reading man; he prefers to spend his after-dinner evenings and early mornings watching cabled news channels whose views reflect his own, and in tweeting *au courant* policy statements to the wider world from his sofa or bed. Television, which he watches continually from six in the morning, even over his lunch, is his essential intellectual feed. It is not a matter of 'reality TV'. For Trump, TV is reality.

However, he has read up on topics in the past – China, for instance. On one occasion he astonished a reporter by rattling off a list of 20 books on modern China, presumably in a business and political context.

Aside from that, however, I understand – that is I do not state as a fact, or even an alternative fact, but merely what my understanding is – that two books have greatly influenced him. These are Erich Marie Remarque's novel *All Quite on the Western Front*, and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*.

Remarque's novel, originally published in 1929, was one of a series of anti-war novels and memoirs that appeared a decade after the Great War concluded. It was resolutely pacifist, so much so that it was hated by the National Socialist Party, and was among the books burned in the appalling bonfire in Nuremberg when decadent works were destroyed under Goebbels direction.

Remarque [pictured], a cradle Catholic, changed his name back to its original French form. Along with Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That*, the poems of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, and the novels of Barbusse, his recreation of war marked a generation.



The US, coming late into the war, suffered less than the devastated European nations. But the novel describes how a generation of young men were betrayed and destroyed by the false claims of patriotism and nationalism – the very watch words of the new administration.

It was to prevent another continental war that drove the creators of the European Union, not trade or free migration. It was an effort to preserve the peace by generation who had known war, and save future generations from all the horrors they had witnessed. But for Trump and other nationalists all across Europe, "it is easy to sleep on another man's wound".

It is really difficult to imagine that Trump also holds with Remarque's views. One might imagine that he seen and been impressed by Lewis Milestone's classic 1930 film; but in fact it is more likely that Trump would have had in mind the 1979 made for TV movie, though that was not of the same quality.

Waste

Does Trump believe in the waste of war? It seems unlikely, given his other favourite book *The Art of War* – clearly echoes in his own book *The Art of the Deal* – by Sun Tzu – he of that maxim-justifying terror: "Kill one, terrify a thousand."

This book a manual of war written in 514 BC, which of late has become a businessman's handbook, with the application of martial strategies and tactics to commercial life. But this idea, that business is war, its aim the annihilation of an 'enemy' and the seizure of his goods and ideas, is a chilling one.

It suggests that far from espousing an untroubled world of quite trade and exchange, Trump (like some 19th-Century social Darwinist) sees life as a perpetual struggle for existence, resolved only by the survival of the fittest, Donald Trump himself being, in his own opinion, the very fittest of all to survive. It is what the dinosaurs believed too, and they had the advantage of having two brains.

These literary choices still leave me puzzled and bewildered about Trump's world view. But if I am confused, it is a confusion shared by countless others.

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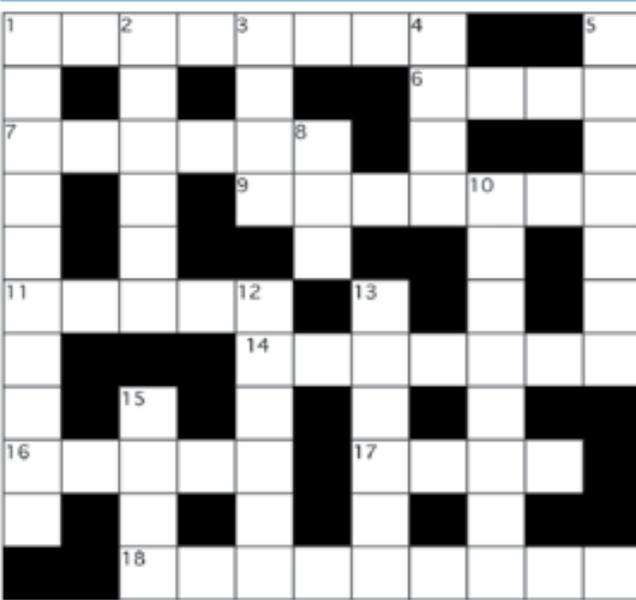
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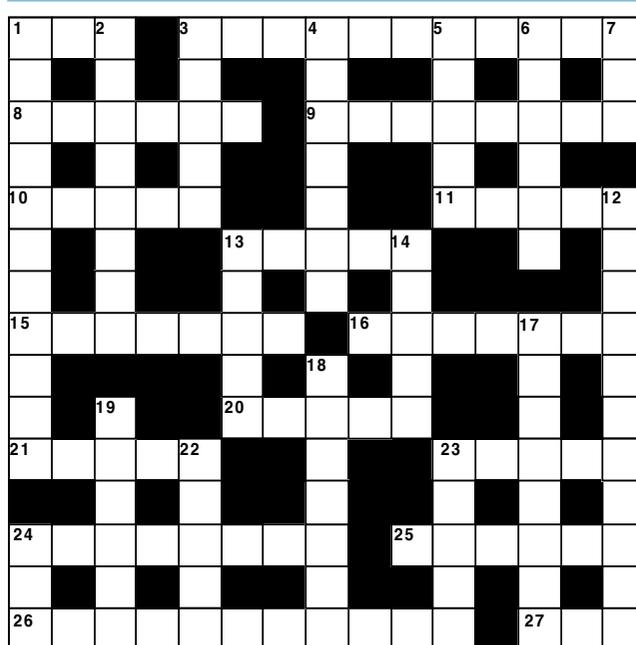
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Crossword Junior Gordius 169



- ACROSS**
- 1 You sit and relax in this comfortable piece of furniture (8)
 - 6 Having a pain might make you say this (4)
 - 7 A design on the skin (6)
 - 9 Illness (7)
 - 11 Use it to make a stable comfortable (5)
 - 14 Looked up to (7)
 - 16 Come to call (5)
 - 17 Roll them to get a number up to twelve (4)
 - 18 They each wear three stripes (9)
- DOWN**
- 1 A man might splash it on when he's finished using his razor (10)
 - 2 Mum (6)
 - 3 Robin ____ lived in Sherwood Forest (4)
 - 4 The capital of Italy (4)
 - 5 Shouted to encourage your team (7)
 - 8 Black liquid you put in an engine (3)
 - 10 Person from the USA (8)
 - 12 Person who works in a restaurant (6)
 - 13 Dirty mark (6)
 - 15 Employs something (4)

Crossword Gordius 286



- ACROSS**
- 1 Small bird (3)
 - 3 Great beginning to the horse-race by Pegasus? (6,5)
 - 8 The number of players on a soccer team (6)
 - 9 & 19d Might one order this dish to please vocal foe? (8,2,4)
 - 10 Hibernian got Ms Murdoch hot! (5)
 - 11 Chucked (5)
 - 13 Snake (5)
 - 15 Infinite (7)
 - 16 The advice is to clone us differently (7)
 - 20 & 27a Perhaps Walt Y won this predator (5,3)
 - 21 Number represented by the Roman numeral L (5)
 - 23 Leapt headlessly, causing a crash (5)
 - 24 Married - about to get sick? How dreadfully unfortunate! (8)
 - 25 Nine days of prayer (6)
 - 26 Completely beset by the reissuing of a blue degree (11)
 - 27 See 20 across
- DOWN**
- 1 & 2 By the sound of it, they don't sew bloomers in part of the farm! (3,6,2,3,5)
 - 3 Newly-baked or newly-picked (5)
 - 4 Are they awarded for Arctic internationals? (3,4)
 - 5 Clever or chic (5)
 - 6 A plank on ship (6)
 - 7 & 12 Some wagtail hen will fly around this historic part of Jerusalem (3,7,4)
 - 13 Call socially (5)
 - 14 Spacious (5)
 - 17 From Java, Rose makes it to the capital of Bosnia & Herzegovina (8)
 - 18 Con-job (7)
 - 19 See 9 across
 - 22 Plant originally from Mexico (5)
 - 23 Haughty (5)
 - 24 Spider's trap (3)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.285

- Across** - 1 Patrol cars 6 Talc 10 Great Bear
11 Manhattan 12 Several 15 Refer 17 Inca 18 Limp
21 Lettuce 23 Binge 24 Lido 25 Boon 26 Norma
28 Ginseng 33 Geologist 34 Orate 35 Task 36 Bone shaker
- Down** - 1 Page 2 The Sermon on the Mount 4 Comma
5 Rung 7 Act of Contrition 9 Macrame 13 Role 14 Lifting
16 Fly-by-night 20 Union Jack 21 Lebanon 22 Coin
27 Rooms 29 Istle 30 Sloth 31 Wino

CHILDREN'S No.168

- Across** - 1 Handlebars 5 Neck 7 Eighteen 8 Oven
9 Archer 10 Spider 13 Cue 14 Hinge 15 Allowed
- Down** - 1 Handsome 2 Nice 3 Batteries 4 Spanner
6 Kidnap 10 Sand 11 Idea 12 Weed 13 Cow

Sudoku Corner 169

Easy

		9	1					
1	2	5	4		7			
7				9		2	8	
		1					6	
7	5	4		6	3		2	
2					5			
4	5		8				9	
		6		1	3	4	7	
					4	8		

Hard

4	1							2
	7				1		9	8
		9	3			5		
	4			2		1		
			4		6			
		2		7				8
		8			9	4		
1	3		8				6	
5							1	7

Last week's Easy 168

4	2	7	3	1	9	8	5	6
3	9	8	6	5	7	4	1	2
1	5	6	4	2	8	9	7	3
8	7	2	9	6	1	5	3	4
9	1	5	2	4	3	6	8	7
6	3	4	7	8	5	2	9	1
5	4	9	1	3	6	7	2	8
2	8	1	5	7	4	3	6	9
7	6	3	8	9	2	1	4	5

Last week's Hard 168

5	4	2	6	1	9	7	8	3
1	6	7	3	4	8	2	9	5
8	9	3	2	5	7	4	6	1
2	3	5	9	7	6	8	1	4
4	7	9	1	8	3	5	2	6
6	1	8	4	2	5	9	3	7
3	8	4	5	9	1	6	7	2
7	5	1	8	6	2	3	4	9
9	2	6	7	3	4	1	5	8



Bro. Kevin O'Reilly OP

Notebook

The rich vocation to beauty



Alma Deutscher.

anything but naivety. She knows that it's not the 'done thing' to compose beautiful music – but she doesn't understand why this is the case. As far as she is concerned she wants to compose such music and to make the world a more beautiful place.

I wonder whether a long-awaited shift is occurring in the world of classical music. Alma is not alone in wanting to write beautiful music. Ireland's very own son, Patrick Cassidy, the greatest composer she has ever produced, has the same attitude.

I recall the first time I heard part of Cassidy's cantata, *The Children of Lir*. I couldn't believe that a contemporary composer

had produced a work of such exquisite beauty. What's more, the composer was Irish!

Many people are familiar with *Vide cor meum* which Cassidy wrote for the film, *Hannibal*. It appears on a CD entitled *40 Most Beautiful Arias* alongside Mozart, Bizet, Puccini and Verdi. A setting of a text by Dante, one might describe it a hauntingly beautiful.

Patrick's opera on the life of Dante will be premiered in Florence in 2018. He is beginning to reap the rewards of his perseverance in his vocation to beauty. One should not forget his setting of the Mass, which will also be premiered in the not too distant future.

beautiful. In fact, she adds, she wouldn't have remembered it if it wasn't particularly beautiful.

In interviews, Alma displays a breathtaking innocence that is

A COMEBACK? One wonders if beauty is making a comeback. Indeed, one hopes that with composers such as Patrick and Alma that it is, and that Western culture will once again espouse the canons of beauty in all the arts for this reason: beauty is intimately related to truth and goodness.

That point bears repeating: beauty is intimately related to truth and goodness. It is in fact the true experienced as good. The great Dominican philosopher-theologian, St Thomas Aquinas, expresses this idea in concrete terms: "Beautiful things are those which when seen give pleasure."

This definition has been highly influential in the history of aesthetics, that is to say, the philosophy of art and

beauty. To unpack its implications one would in fact have to write a whole book! To be able to say so much in so few words is the mark of genius.

This definition is arguably not the fruit of detached speculation for Aquinas was a highly-accomplished poet. His texts for the Feast of Corpus Christi are an aesthetic monument in the Catholic liturgical tradition.

If you follow the intellectual tradition inspired by Thomas Aquinas, the ineradicable allure of the beautiful, as witnessed to by the music of Cassidy and Deutscher, is heartening. Where beauty is valued, so too are truth and goodness. This enduring magnetism of the beautiful is heartening in a culture where the term of the moment is 'post-truth'.

Let's pray for perseverance

The art that any particular culture produces and values speaks volumes about its condition. Gabriel Marcel makes the challenging observation that "contemporary art, in certain of its most disconcerting expressions, constitutes an irrecusable testimony of what must be called an alienation".

Watch and listen to Alma's *Cinderella* on YouTube. Clearly the child has not yet become alienated.

Hopefully she never will. Let's hope she displays the perseverance of Patrick Cassidy in her service of beauty and the truth and goodness that attend it.



A NEW MUSICAL prodigy has appeared in our midst: Alma Deutscher, an 11-year-old English girl, has been causing quite a sensation in the world of classical music. Although she prefers not to be compared with Mozart, it's difficult not to think in these terms. Hearing is believing when it comes to Alma's genius.

Mozart is in fact one of Alma's favourite composers and one can discern his influence in her own compositions. This influence is one of the features of her music that makes it so beautiful. In general terms her music is exquisitely beautiful because it is readily intelligible in terms of the Western classical tradition.

Her first opera, *Cinderella*, which recently premiered in Vienna, is captivating. The most striking aspect of the imaginative adaptation of the story is that the prince recognises *Cinderella* by a melody he heard her sing at the ball. And, indeed, the melodies in this opera are very memorable.

Composition

Alma reveals that the opera came to her in a dream. She dreamt that it was a beautiful piece of music by Mozart but when she woke up she realised that it was in fact her own composition. She remembered it, she says, because it was so



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