

The Irish Catholic

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US Irish chaplains warn of border clampdown fears

Greg Daly

Irish community chaplains in the US have warned of a climate of fear and anxiety, following sudden clampdowns on immigration to the country by President Donald Trump.

Sr Christine Hennessy who works with Irish immigrants in New York, told *The Irish Catholic* that "there is fear among the undocumented" that they will suffer as a result of the president's hostile views on immigration.

"That executive order is against everything we believe in as Christians," she said.

Unknown

Roughly 5,000 of the 50,000 undocumented Irish in the US live in and around Boston, where Cork-native Fr Dan Finn is based. "There's a sense of fear and anxiety about the unknown," he said.

"We're just waiting and trying to remain calm to see what would happen with regard to the undocumented," according to Fr Finn.

Mr Trump provoked controversy and a wave of protests after he ordered the closure of US borders to refugees for four months

and indefinitely called a halt to refugee resettlement from Syria.

He also suspended entry for three months for citizens of seven Muslim-majority nations. The president claimed the suspensions were needed to protect the US from potential terrorists.

San Francisco-based Fr Brendan McBride, president of the Irish Apostolate USA, told *The Irish Catholic* that "things are changing very quickly day by day... uncertainty is the worst thing at the moment."

"There's a real fear of what's to come," he said.

The Donegal-born cleric joined a protest at San Francisco airport which he described as a powerful testimony to the broad opposition to the executive order.

He pointed out that while pro-immigrant demonstrators would normally be 90% Hispanic, the airport protest "was straight across the spectrum of all nationalities and peoples".

"There was great energy and a feeling that we have to be aware that these things are real and we're going to have to fight them in the courts, or through our public representatives, or by making

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Prayer & flower power



Leah O' Sullivan (5) from Portlaoise holds a St Brigid's cross during Mass for the opening of Catholic Schools Week in the church of Ss Peter & Paul, Portlaoise on Sunday, January 29. Photo: John McElroy

FR RON ROLHEISER

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The Church, red lines and faith that is challenging as well as comforting

Social Protection Minister Leo Varadkar rebuked the Taoiseach at the weekend after Enda Kenny hinted that Fine Gael might be prepared to enter government with Sinn Féin.

"In politics," Mr Varadkar said, "you have to make compromises to get things done but if you don't have red lines, then you stand for nothing."

It got me thinking about whether or not there are – or should be – red lines in the Church, boundaries outside of which Catholics shouldn't stray. Are there beliefs and practices so contradictory to what it means to be a Catholic that people following these paths are no longer Catholic in any real sense?

Pope Francis criticises what he describes as "vague theism" where people "treat religion as a consumer product". In this form of religion, "personal satisfaction, 'relaxation' and 'feeling good'" become the key goals, according to the Pontiff.

Priesthood

Addressing the heads of religious orders at the weekend, Francis expanded on the theme in the context of exploring why clerics leave the priesthood. He said the primary factor is a "provisional" culture, which leads to living an "à la carte" life which is "a slave to fashion".

"It has also produces a powerful practical relativism, according to which everything is judged in terms of a self-realisation which is often extraneous to the values of the Gospel," the Pope said.



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

That practical relativism which the Pope criticises manifests itself in many ways. One way is the tendency to set aside core parts of Christ's teaching that one finds uncomfortable or difficult to live.

Fr Tony Flannery, currently out of ministry at the request of his religious superiors due to his views at odds with Church teaching, was on the radio at the weekend. He was describing the recent Mass he celebrated to mark his 70th birthday, in defiance of his superiors.

Fr Flannery is clearly not even remotely on the same page as Pope Francis

"We had a ball," Fr Flannery said of the liturgy. Speaking of the congregation, he said that "a lot of them are people who don't go to Mass at all".

"I said to the people at the beginning 'look, I know people are here who don't go to Mass, some people who are here don't even believe that much', but, I said, 'if you can at all, come to Communion'," Fr Flannery said. According to Fr Flannery, everyone did. Presumably regardless of whether or not they had any faith in the sacrament or not.

Tellingly in the interview, Fr Flannery said that he believed the

Church should be "open to people of all views and attitudes" before, wait for it, going on to compare himself to Pope Francis. As authoritative papal biographer Austen Ivereigh points out in *The Irish Catholic* this week (see Page 3), Fr Flannery is clearly not even remotely on the same page as Pope Francis. But, sure, why let that get in the way of a good yarn?

There can be little doubt that there is a lot of the 'vague theism' that Pope Francis so roundly condemns. It often tends to see faith more as a fuzzy feeling of wellbeing or simply being together with a group of somewhat like-minded people rather than a relationship with Christ.

It's a deeply impoverished vision of faith that feeds neither mind nor soul. Perhaps, this is the reason why so many young people find nothing life-giving in this diminished presentation of a relationship with Christ. Perhaps this is why they come to the conclusion that all Catholicism is about is vague feelings of wellness or being with like-minded people, there's more fun to be had in the pub or the gym.

Just perhaps, a faith that has content and a context, that is challenging as well as comforting, exhilarating as well as giving rest, might hold more appeal for jaded young people.

US Irish chaplains warn of border clampdown fears

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our feelings known through peaceful protest," Fr McBride said.

In Boston, Fr Finn said anxiety caused by the president's actions are having a particularly difficult effect on families. He cited the example of an Irish mother he met who says she wanted to go

home because she feared the current "uncertainty", but whose husband wants to stay because of having a good job.

He said that the Church was committed to standing shoulder-to-shoulder with affected communities pointing to what he described as a "sense of solidarity about the

issue". He said the Church is "trying to be there as best we can for people and respond as best we can, given the resources that we have".

The executive order, issued just a week after the president's inauguration and just days after another executive order directing the construc-

tion of a border wall with Mexico follows announcements in recent months that Mr Trump intends to deport or imprison up to three million illegal immigrants with criminal records before making a "determination" about the country's remaining undocumented immigrants.

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Papal biographer rejects Flannery-Francis comparisons

Greg Daly

Claims by a controversial priest that he resembles Pope Francis are misplaced, a bestselling papal biographer has said.

Speaking on RTÉ radio at the weekend, Fr Tony Flannery denied that he disagrees with fundamental Church teaching continuing: "In fact, I would suspect that I am closer to the teaching and the attitude of Pope Francis than a lot of the Irish Church and a lot of the Irish bishops are."



Fr Tony Flannery.

However, Austen Ivereigh, author of *Pope Francis: The Great Reformer*, rejected this. "Pope Francis is a Gospel radical who is purifying the Church of its attachments and corruptions," Dr Ivereigh told *The Irish Catholic*, continuing, "but he is not a liberal who is downgrading or downplaying core Catholic doctrines and traditions, which he has always defended and assumed."

Understandings

Fundamental understandings about the nature of priesthood are central to differences between Fr Flannery, who has been barred from ministry since 2012, and Pope Francis, according to Dr Ivereigh.

Dr Ivereigh said that many of Fr Flannery's views are clearly at odds with the Pope and Church teaching.

"Fr Flannery doesn't seem to attach significance to the priesthood, seeing it as an historical deviation from what Christ intended, whereas Francis has a powerful, mystical notion of priesthood rooted in Christ's ministry," he said, adding, "the Jesuits' apparent loss of priestly identity in the 1970s is something he vigorously opposed."

In his RTÉ interview, Fr Flannery described how he came into conflict with Church authorities over articles in *Reality* magazine, notably one where he wrote that he no longer believed "the priesthood, as we currently have it in the Church, originated with Jesus".

Authority

Speculating that "some time after Jesus, a select and privileged group within the community who had abrogated power and authority to themselves, interpreted the occasion of the Last Supper in a manner that suited their own agenda", he also wrote

that he no longer believed only priests could celebrate the Eucharist.

In dealings with the Vatican later that year, Fr Flannery was loath to specifically acknowledge "that Christ instituted the priesthood at the Last Supper" or that the Eucharist is a sacrifice that

makes present the sacrifice of the Cross.

Asked to clarify that he believed "in the Eucharist, under the forms of bread and wine, the whole Christ is truly, really and substantially contained", he replied only with the vague statement that he believed "that

Jesus is really and truly present when we celebrate the Eucharist".

Disagreements on such issues as contraception and women's ordination came to the fore then, with Fr Flannery's views differing sharply from those of Pope Francis, who has hailed as

"prophetic" Blessed Paul VI's teaching on contraception in 1968's *Humanae Vitae*, and as recently as November 2016 said St John Paul II's 1994 ruling on the impossibility of women priests was "the last word" on the subject.

See David Quinn, Page 11.

'Pop' goes the curate...



Local curate Fr John Carroll gives a hand in the kitchen at a 'pop up restaurant' in the curacy of Barntown during a breakfast fundraiser for one of six Mayoral candidates running in the Wexford parish's charity elections, intended to raise parish funds and involve parishioners more deeply in local Church and community life.

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Fresh Mass translation 'a long shot'

Paul Keenan

Experts on the translation of the Roman Missal have cautioned that any expectation of change to the translation of the Mass currently in use are "a long shot".

It comes amid reports from Rome that Pope Francis has established a new commission to review the guidelines that led to the 2011 translation, the language of which has been criticised by some.

Responding to the commission report, yet to be confirmed by the Vatican, Bishop John McAreevey told *The Irish Catholic* that, in the context of criticism from some commentators that had greeted the 2011 Missal, "it is in place now and being used across the Catholic world".

Review

"The idea of a review that would lead to a new publication is a long shot," he said.

Bishop McAreevey is currently a member of the

International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), the body directly involved in preparing English translations of Latin liturgical books and texts in accord with the directives of the Holy See. Echoing Bishop McAreevey's caution on matters was Spiritan Fr Tom Whelan, who is a member of the Episcopal Council for Liturgy.

Expectations

"While I would love to be excited by the news of the creation of this new commission, my expectations are rather modest," he told this newspaper with regard to the Missal.

He said that it would be "wonderful" if the current Missal were to be changed. However, he said, "I think that the pragmatics of administrators will win out, especially when it comes to financial aspects of the project".

Fr Whelan said one area a commission could work on would be a return to the practice laid down by Vatican II

which "gives the local episcopal conference the authority to approve translations rather than the Congrega-

tion for Divine Worship in Rome. If we were able to go back to the stipulation of the Council on this mat-

ter, it would bring us fully in line with what Pope Francis is trying to do at present – to return to Episcopal Confer-

ences authority to deliberate on local issues."

This Fr Whelan said, would be a welcome development.

St Patrick's in Belfast targeted in arson attack



Diocesan Property Administrator Mr David Gantley examines the damage done after the fire in St Patrick's Church Belfast. Photo: Hugh Russell/*The Irish News*

Bishop Noel Treanor of Down & Connor has condemned an arson attack at St Patrick's Church on Belfast's Donegall Street which caused significant smoke damage to the building's interior.

In a statement reacting to news that someone had set fire to curtains covering the church's Year of Mercy door last Monday, Bishop Treanor said: "This criminal action is a violation of the sanctity of the Church and an attack upon the local community that has caused significant damage to the property and left the local congregation distressed and deeply upset. Places of worship hold deep significance for the entire community and for their congregations and they should not be targeted."

Shocked

Saying that he was "deeply shocked and appalled" by the incident, Bishop Treanor revealed that the attack had led to an outpouring of support for the priests of St Patrick's, bearing "testimony to the fact that the repercussions of this action are felt by all within the community".

Offering praise for the emergency service who reacted promptly to calls on the fire, the bishops urged anyone with information relevant to the incident to contact the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

St Patrick's, which celebrated its bicentenary in 2015, is currently undergoing a major refurbishment. The parish has stated that Masses will continue as normal in the church despite the fire.

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Senator calls for Pope to address Oireachtas in 2018

Fianna Fáil's Senator Aidan Davitt has called on the Government to invite Pope Francis to address the joint Houses of the Oireachtas during his visit to Ireland in 2018.

Senator Davitt said during a radio interview that the Pope's visit to attend the World Meeting of Families would present "an ideal opportunity" for the Pontiff to meet with legislators and address them as he had done in the United States in 2015 during the last Families gathering.

The senator added that the Pontiff "has a natural connection to Dublin as he lived here for over three months. Pope Francis spent a number of weeks studying English at



Senator Aidan Davitt, the Jesuit Milltown Institute in Ranelagh, south Dublin over 30 years ago."

In 2014 the Seanad adopted a motion to invite Pope Francis to address the Upper House should he visit Ireland.

Politicians on St Patrick's Day, let's go back to basics

Considering that so many Irish people vehemently object to the policies of President Donald Trump – especially towards migrants – should Taoiseach Enda Kenny cancel the usual trip to Washington to present the traditional bowl of Shamrock on St Patrick's Day? Here's a dilemma much mooted in the public realm.

Perhaps this is an opportune time to take a pause and discuss the practice – some might even call it a mania – for Irish politicians travelling to all quarters of the earth on March 17, leaving the impression that no one is actually governing the country at home. (The civil servants are running it, but then they do that anyway.)

Investment

This is, we know, a blatant exercise in 'selling Ireland' – advancing Ireland as a 'brand', and a source of investment and trade.

Fine; almost anything that generates employment is to be welcomed.

But it's interesting that the original purpose of St Patrick's Day has almost



Mary Kenny

Twitter tag: @MaryKenny4



An Taoiseach Enda Kenny presenting the then US President Barack Obama with a bowl of shamrock.

wholly been superseded by the merchandising element.

Those who say that the Taoiseach absolutely must be in Washington with that bowl of shamrock claim it is essential for Ireland's trading situation.

Poor old St Patrick himself seldom gets a look-in. That Patrick associated the shamrock with the Holy Trinity has been largely forgotten. Indeed, many people probably don't even

know about it. Just as many people don't know that Patrick was a unifying, not a dividing, force between Irish Christians – always accepted as much by Protestants as Catholics.

In the end, whether the Taoiseach presents that shamrock gift in Washington on March 17 is a question for the government (and I

have little doubt that they will decide to continue the usual practice, and brush aside calls to cancel it).

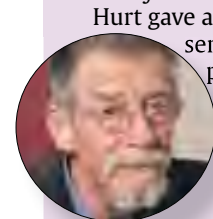
But a crisis is also often an opportunity, and a chance to re-focus on the roots and reasons of a custom and a tradition: an examination of first principles, and an exercise in 'back to basics'.

Perhaps Christian Ireland should more energetically affirm its position in reclaiming the spirit of St Patrick, and reminding those debating the point of how all this began. It wasn't the political class plying for trade which spread Patrick's Day around the world: 800 church bells rang out around the globe to mark the evangelisation of our country.

It might be nice for a representative of Patrician Ireland to bring a bowl of Shamrock to St Patrick's Cathedral in New York, so aptly named for the patron saint of the Gael.

Jackie's 'Father Confessor'

One of the last performances by the actor Sir John Hurt (pictured) – who died of pancreatic cancer on January 27, aged 77 – was as the priest, Fr Richard McSorley, to whom Jacqueline confided in the sorrowful period after President Kennedy's assassination in 1963.



Hurt gave a characteristically sensitive and thoughtful performance in the movie, *Jackie*, which was otherwise, I thought, fairly interesting but rather thin.

Mrs Kennedy was in the habit of seeking counsel from father-confessors. Between 1950 and 1964, she corresponded with the Irish Vincentian, Fr Joseph Leonard (the correspondence only came to an end on his death). Controversially, her letters were to be sold at auction in 2014 – expected to fetch \$1.3 million – but the Kennedy family objected, and the Vincentian order withdrew, out of respect for the family's wishes.

It would be fascinating to read the full correspondence, just as an historical artefact. Perhaps some decades into the future they will be made available.

Striving for excellence

I attended Sunday Mass last weekend at a North London parish, conducted by a solid Irish priest with a strong voice and a natural air of authority. There was a lot of cheerful music from the assembled choir of young people playing fiddles, piano and guitar, and an impressive attendance of young families.

"Full house," I remarked to my neighbour in the pew.

"There's a very good school attached," he replied.

I see nothing wrong with successful faith schools attracting parents to church. Faith schools should strive for excellence at every level. Didn't St Angela de Merici pioneer the education of girls by teaching her pupils so well that many sought the gift of instruction from the Ursuline nuns?

Denying motherhood

The British Medical Association has stated that pregnant women should not be called 'expectant mothers', as calling a 'pregnant person' female might offend transgender people.

The phrase 'political correctness gone mad' really does come to mind.

To deny that 'pregnant persons' are female is flying in the face of biological science.

To deny 'motherhood' to women is, surely, far more offensive to mothers and to women. Motherhood has been exclusive to females since the dawn of time, and women are entitled to claim it with pride and to be accorded respect, too, for their maternity.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Éamonn Meehan to lead international development network

Éamonn Meehan, executive director of the Irish bishops' aid and development agency Trócaire, has been appointed president of the International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE), the Catholic development network.

In accepting the new role,

Mr Meehan pledged himself to contributing to the change the world so badly needs at this time.

"Since its foundation over 50 years ago, CIDSE has always remained true to the call to challenge global structural injustices in order to improve the lives of the world's poorest people," he said. "With inequality increasing, climate change rapidly advancing and war and displacement destroying the lives of millions, this challenge is even more urgent today."

Éamonn Meehan joined Trócaire's staff in 1991 as Programme Manager for the Southern Africa Region. He has been executive director since 2013.

CIDSE was founded was established in the wake of the Second Vatican Council to identify issues of concern to the Church and to campaign for justice at the international level. Based in Brussels, the organisation links 18 member organisations from Europe and North America.

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Belfast's Indian community prays for abducted priest

Staff Reporter

Members of the Syro-Malabar community in Northern Ireland have offered prayers for the safe release of Fr Tom Uzhunnalil [pictured], an Indian Salesian missing in Yemen since he was kidnapped by Islamic extremists last March.

Joining with a novena initiated by the Salesian community worldwide, Syro-Malabars attended a day of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Paul's parish on the Fall's Road in Belfast before an evening Mass celebrated in solidarity with the missing priest.

Curate at St Paul's, Msgr Antony Perumayan, who is also senior chaplain to some 600 Syro-Malabar Catholics in the North, said: "It was a most moving occasion, the priests and people from St Paul's joining with us to remember Fr Tom and pray for his release. In a sense, he is a prisoner of Christ in the way that St Paul was."

Fr Uzhunnalil was abducted when extremists stormed a Catholic nursing home in the port city of Aden, an attack which saw four nuns and others slaughtered.

Hopes for Fr Uzhunnalil were raised in December when he appeared in an online video to appeal with the Church and the international community to secure his release.



Bishops welcome new schools divestment plan

Paul Keenan

The Bishops' Council for Education has offered a welcome for Minister Richard Bruton's words on religious education in Catholic schools and his proposals for a consultative process on any future divestment of schools.

In a statement on behalf of the Council, its chair, Bishop Brendan Kelly said "The Council for Education will study these proposals and, in the meantime, will continue to engage with Minister Bruton, his departmental officials and with the Education and Training Boards."

Endorsement

In an endorsement for Community National Schools on January 27, Minister Bruton said that the value of such institutions lay in their accommodating different faith traditions, "not putting them outside the door, but bringing them in as something to be valued and recognised, but in an inclu-

sive setting". This he added, allows parents "who want faith instruction, whatever their faith, to have an opportunity to do that while the programme that integrates everyone runs right through the year."

Meanwhile, last Monday saw the unveiling of the Government's plan on future divestment.

Under the new two-stage plan, Education and Training Boards will work to identify areas where there is likely to be demand from families for diversity in schooling and, where such demand is demonstrated, a process will be set in train to realise this through divestment of at least one school.

On this latter stage, the Minister said, "the existing landowner, in cooperation with the local school community, will decide what multi-denominational patron to transfer to. The transfer will be by way of a live school transfer, with existing staff remaining in place, where

this is the wish of the parties involved. In most cases the new patron will lease the building from the landowner." He added: "I believe that we should acknowledge the role of religious organisations in providing a system of national education for nearly two centuries. I also believe that a desire on behalf of many parents to have their children educated within their faith is welcome and should be respected."

Criticism

The plan faced immediate criticism from Fianna Fáil's spokesperson on Education Thomas Byrne TD who said it appeared to be "a stale relaunch" of the previous divestment programme.

"The divestment programme under the previous Fine Gael Government ended up being an absolute disaster," Deputy Byrne said. "It riled many local communities and delivered few multi-denominational schools, despite high demand for such schools."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crossword Winners

The winner of the Christmas Crossword for an inclusive pilgrimage for two to Lourdes in 2017 courtesy of Pilgrimages Abroad-Lauri Duffy Travel is: Connie Corry, Ballymaclure, Quin, Co. Clare. Three runners up who each win a copy of The Francis Effect DVD are: Eamonn Long, Ballygarvan, Co. Cork; Lynne Fitzsimons, Whitehall, Dublin 9; and Marie Ni Ghrugain, Cora Chaitlin, Co. An Chlair.

Meath-built church provides refuge from Myanmar violence

A church in northern Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) built by the Diocese of Meath is serving as a refuge from civil war in the region, according to Fr Pat Colgan, an Irish Columban missionary who toured the region last month.

Fr Colgan said St Patrick's Church in Momawk is enabling refugees to be "sheltered, fed and educated in the church compound by a coalition of Catholic and local organisations, including Trócaire".

Meath's Bishop Michael Smith, who blessed the church in 2009, said he was following the situation with concern, and thanked the Columban Fathers and Trócaire "for the assistance they are providing in the face of this human tragedy".

100,000 'trapped in underemployment'

Social Justice Ireland (SJI) has warned that current headline employment figures mark the reality that "100,000 people are trapped in underemployment". In releasing findings from its latest quarterly *Employment Monitor*, SJI said: "Over 100,000 people are currently working part-time hours, but would take full-time employment if they could find it. This figure has increased by 25% since 2008 and points to a worrying employment trend in Ireland."

"Although many employment indicators are positive, hidden within headline employment figures are a number of problems, including significant underemployment."

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Fr Robert wins praise for 'tending his flock'



A Mullingar-based priest's literal interpretation of 'tending to the flock' has struck a chord across his rural parish.

With farmers working through a busy period of lambing Fr Robert McGivney undertook to bless lambs on the farm of friends in his community, an act which met with such positivity among others that the priest has found himself in great demand to bring blessings to farms far and wide.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Robert said the small but meaningful initiative "is resonating with people. There have been lost of positive comments".

Asked to account for its appeal of among farmers, Fr Robert said people saw the blessings as a recognition of their work.

Coming from farming stock himself, Fr Robert said he had been struck by the Pope's famous call that "priests should be like shepherds living with the smell of sheep". And while the Pope might be amused at Fr Robert's literal interpretation of that call, the priest said, "it's an important message priests must take on board. Religion is not something abstract, it's real life."

Fr Robert McGivney blessing animals on a farm near Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Martin Mansergh

The View



Politics should be about respect, not about putting up new barriers

The history of the independent Ireland that originated 100 years ago last year has hitherto fallen into two main periods. The first 40 years were guided by Sinn Féin ideals of self-sufficiency and the notion that Ireland was as much guided by spiritual as material ideals. By the 1950s, in much changed world circumstances, the momentum had faltered, and the population was sapped by the haemorrhage of emigration.

In some people's minds, the viability of the State itself was in question. The turn-around and the decision in principle, even if only implemented gradually, to open up to the world and in particular to Europe is for ever associated with the Secretary of the Department of Finance Dr Ken Whitaker working with the political leadership of Séan Lemass.

He passed away shortly after reaching his 100th birthday. He combined values and vision with caution and prudence.

In addition to his role in beginning the transformation of the Irish economy, he was also instrumental in setting the stage for North-South détente, accompanying Lemass and later Jack Lynch to their ground-breaking meetings with the Northern Ireland Prime Minister Terence O'Neill between 1966 and 1968. Though born in Rostrevor, Co. Down, in December 1916, he was not born, as a recent Sunday column asserted, in Northern Ireland, which did not yet exist at the time. On the contrary, as quoted in Anne Chambers' very informative official biography, "because I was born in the undivided Ireland of 1916, I took a special interest in the possibility of reunification".

Realistic

He was very realistic about the obstacles, and played an important part in ensuring through Jack Lynch that the government was not carried away by the storms that broke in 1969 into thinking



Prof. Ronan Fanning (left) and Dr. TK Whitaker.

that reunification was only just around the corner.

Ken Whitaker unveiled a statue of the great singer Count John McCormack in Iveagh Gardens in 2008. Before he spoke, the chairman of proceedings was incautious enough to say that there was probably no one still around who could remember his performance of *Panis Angelicus* at the time of the Eucharistic Congress in 1932. When he came to speak, Whitaker in his early 90s cheerfully admitted that he had been present.

“It is hard at this point to know what an election will change”

Elements of the Good Friday Agreement, such as the North-South institutions and the constitutional changes, were prefigured by Whitaker and Lemass in the 1960s.

It required an immense labour by many people to build a peace that might last after the immense destructive force of the Troubles. To stop the fighting and the deaths, to bring together painstakingly political opposites, required a lot of diplomatic skill with so many different parties as well as the governments involved.

Dermot Gallagher was, as ambassador in Washington, familiar with the American scene whose influence was brought decisively to bear in

the 1990s, but back at home in the last months leading up to the Good Friday Agreement he exercised a skilled diplomacy with all the parties, aimed at softening differences and intransigence, and led a quite large but very effective team from the Department of Foreign Affairs. After 1998, he was centrally involved in the difficult and tortuous task of implementing the Agreement.

Sadly, he died at the moment when, after 10 years relative stability, an achievement reflecting well on all those involved, the institutions foundered, temporarily at least.

It was sad also for the deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, who has had to step back because of health problems. Apart from the more obvious causes, differences over Brexit have also been unsettling. It is hard at this point to know what an election will change and whether there will be the same will to rebuild and rework the institutions, without placing politically impossible demands on them. A prolonged hiatus would mean that Northern Ireland would not have a government voice locally in the Brexit negotiations and that direct rule would be carried out by British Conservative ministers.

Prof. Ronan Fanning, a leading historian of independent Ireland, also died in January, having left amongst innumerable

writings a fine history of the Department of Finance up to 1958, the year of Whitaker's seminal paper on economic development, and in *Fatal Path* a very critical and masterly account of British government policy towards Ireland in the period 1910 to 1922. Like the two public

servants mentioned above, he was a strong believer in the State in a non-partisan way.

The funeral of Dean Victor Griffin, formerly of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, was held in Limavady last month. He was one of the principal proponents of pluralism from the Church of Ireland in the 1980s, and took a leading part in the social controversies of the time.

“Social cohesion is about maintaining consent and respect”

Contrary to then, concern for the rights of minorities has given way to attempts to reconstruct a new and secular majority ethos. Through a constructive relationship with then Taoiseach Charles Haughey, he managed to keep road

widening at a safe distance from the cathedral, and to negotiate appropriate State support for the ancient choir school. He too supported the State, and wanted to be able to contribute to it.

The beginning of the Brexit negotiations, a new and, in style unusual, American Presidency, and the Northern Ireland situation pose significant challenges and create a lot of uncertainty. It is in such conditions that belief in ourselves and in sane values, based on the best traditions that have been handed on to us, is so important. Social cohesion is about maintaining consent and respect, and not about putting up new barriers.

Life is often about trying to combine new approaches and old realities, so that progress can be achieved. Irish society has no need to be timorous about the future.





We are all ministers of the Mercy of God

“Dear young people, do not bury your talents, the gifts that God has given you! Do not be afraid to dream of great things.” - Pope Francis

Fr. Leo Philomin, OMI,
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Time to reclaim the legacy of John Moriarty

As we begin a new year with so many geopolitical challenges, ecclesial turbulences, and economic uncertainties on the horizon there are always grounds for hope, new discoveries, grace-filled epiphanies. The best of times and the worst of times, as one Victorian eminence once wrote.

One of the best things to unfold this year, and a compelling reason for celebration, is the 10th anniversary of the death of the Kerry savant and poet, John Moriarty. The anniversary provides us with an opportunity to discover, if not re-discover, the intellectual and spiritual legacy of this extraordinary man.

His contemporary, John O'Donohue, an icon of the Celtic Revival post-Yeats, often eclipsed Moriarty in the public imagination, in part because of his more popular and accessible persona. They died within a year of each other and neither voice has been really stilled, mercifully, but

The Kerryman's sometimes disturbing spirituality is a summons to a greater appropriation of faith writes
Prof. Michael W. Higgins



neither has been seriously replaced, unfortunately.



John Moriarty.

The recovery of Moriarty is an urgent matter. Although, thanks to his formidable RTÉ broadcasts, the splendid labours of scholar Brendan O'Donoghue

resulting in the brilliantly edited *A Moriarty Reader*, and the imaginative and inexhaustible energy of an impressive cadre of writers, engineers, professors and government leaders pledged to preserve the Moriarty genius for the generations, the results have been almost exclusively national.

Debut

Time now for his debut on the international stage for he has been a neglected treasure for too long. We need his sage insights, abiding compassion, poetic sensitivity and intellectual temerity in a period of social unrest, crushing despair, and soulless utilitarianism.

Moriarty's eco-spirituality and empathetic identity with nature anticipated Pope Francis' encyclical on the

environment and creation, *Laudato Si'*, and his recovery of the antique voices of suppressed if not extirpated peoples and their myths and his comprehensive grasp of diverse religious traditions and their commonalities speak to his expansive ecumenicity, a quality of mind and heart that scores of people now embrace as a way forward to universal harmony.

“As you read his work and listen to his voice, you realise that this Kerry visionary is really universal property”

Moriarty was an epic visionary in the tradition of the Franco-American monk-poet Thomas Merton and the Welsh artist-poet David Jones.

Like Merton and Jones, Moriarty mined his own history — personal, cultural, spiritual, and anthropological — in order to paint on the larger

canvas, to move from the particular to the universal. And like Merton and Jones he sought the consolations of contemplation, the sanctuary of isolation, the wondrous admixture of the primitive with the sophisticated, the elemental with the embellished.

Power

He understood the power of art, the power of story, the redemptive possibilities inherent in myth, the dangerous allure of nature, the devastating luminosity of the dark night of the soul.

Moriarty was part pioneer, part preserver and part renegade. He re-thought sacred truths, re-framed conventional beliefs, and re-imagined ancient rituals for a new and impoverished time.

His own narrative structured his philosophical ruminations; his theology was both orthodox and heterodox; he bled his psyche onto the pages he wrote not as therapy or authorial contrivance but

as his way of discovering himself in his anguished and yet often joyous quest for unity.

Moriarty was quintessentially Hibernian. In spite of his six years in the Canadian prairie province of Manitoba, his mystical forays into the geological wonders of Colorado, and his apophatic struggles in a Carmelite priory in Oxford, Moriarty remained a denizen of the west coast of Ireland, gardener, storyteller, and thinker.

But in the end, as you read his work and listen to his voice, you realise that this Kerry visionary is really universal property, his sometimes disturbing spirituality a summons to a greater appropriation of faith, his intellectual extraterritoriality a call to shatter the narrow boundaries of parochial thinking, his largeness of heart an invitation to love creation more deeply.

Time for Ireland to reclaim his legacy; and for the rest of us, time for an introduction.

Medjugorje

Monthly Message



“Dear children! Today I am calling you to pray for peace: peace in the hearts of men, peace in the families and peace in the world. Satan is strong and wants to turn all of you against God, and to return you to everything that is human, and to destroy in the heart all feelings towards God and the things of God. You, little children, pray and fight against materialism, modernism and egoism, which the world offers to you. Little children, you decide for holiness and I, with my Son Jesus, intercede for you. Thank you for having responded to my call.”





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Sightsavers

Fr Alec Reid receives GAA honour at Clonard

Paul Keenan

Peacebuilder Fr Alex Reid was remembered at a special celebration in his honour at the Redemptorist monastery of Clonard in Belfast last weekend.

Organised at the behest of the Co. Tipperary and Co. Antrim GAA boards, the memorial Mass saw the champion Senior All Ireland hurling team join with their northern counterparts to both remember a priest with firm links to Tipperary - Fr Reid was a member of the Tipperary Minor hurling panel which won the All-Ireland in 1949.

In recognition of this, and Fr Reid's enduring legacy on the Peace Process, the Mass saw the unveiling by the Tipperary and Antrim county chairmen of one of three plaques made in his honour. While this plaque will remain in Clonard, a second will be situated in the redeveloped Casement Park in Belfast, and a third will be erected in Tipperary.

Bridges

Also present at the event was GAA President Aogán Ó Fearghaíl who, in addressing the congregation, said he was "honoured, in a time when people are building walls, to play a part in honouring a man who built bridges".

Speaking to The Irish Catholic after the event, Fr Noel Kehoe, rector of Clonard said



that throughout Fr Alec's life at Clonard, "his GAA 'credentials' were very obvious to his fellow Redemptorists".

"Alex was born in Dublin and always shouted for the Dubs in football. He grew up in Nenagh and from an early



Fr Michael Kelleher and Clonard rector Fr Noel Kehoe.

age he played hurling and supported the Tipp hurlers.

"In the 1990s, when members of the community used to ask him how things were going in the peace negotiations between the various parties in the North, if things were going badly he'd say: 'We'll have to put the Holy Spirit in goal' and if things were going well, the Holy Spirit was a centre forward."

"The GAA featured very highly in Alec's world-view. Throughout his life, he remained a serious fan of both hurling and football. In

his retirement he watched and re-watched GAA matches over and over again; he had a large collection of videos of National League and All-Ireland games and not only of the finals."

Timely reminder

Fr Kehoe added: "The events commemorating Fr Alec Reid were a timely reminder of how our world needs people who build bridges and not walls [and] the work of reconciliation is central to the missionary call of the Redemptorists. Recent politi-

cal upheavals in the North and indeed internationally have heightened a rhetoric of sectarianism, of exclusion. Peace building is a never ending endeavour, so the reconciling mission of the Redemptorists must find new voices, new Fr Alecs in today's world."

Among those present at Clonard to remember and honour Fr Reid were Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams, Tipperary Lord Mayor Siobhan Ambrose, and Nenagh District Mayor Phyll Bugler.

Photos courtesy of Clonard Monastery.



Tipperary Lord Mayor Siobhan Ambrose and Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams joined the GAA representatives for the Fr Reid memorial celebration.



GAA President Aogán Ó fearghaíl (left) unveils the Fr Reid plaque with GAA County Chairs Michael Burke and Colin Donnelly.



Vatican cannot lift disciplinary measures against Fr Flannery

Pope cannot offer *carte blanche* for priests to dissent, writes David Quinn

It has now been confirmed that Enda Kenny did indeed intervene with Pope Francis when he visited him recently on behalf of a number of priests disciplined by the Vatican, including Fr Tony Flannery. This raises an obvious question: why did the Taoiseach feel this was any of this business? He was meeting the Pope as Taoiseach. He was only there because he is the Taoiseach. Why, then, did he believe it was appropriate to raise with the Pope something that is an internal matter of the Catholic Church?

If the Pope had asked Enda Kenny when and if he would be standing down as Taoiseach that, clearly, would be no business of the Pope. If Francis had raised the matter of Fine Gael effectively excommunicating the seven Fine Gael TDs and Senators who voted against the abortion bill of 2013, he would also have been told to mind his own business even though the seven in question are all Catholics.

Intervening

Perhaps it might be argued that Enda Kenny was intervening with the Pope in his capacity as a Catholic, but as he himself has said with great conviction, he might be a Catholic, but he's not a Catholic Taoiseach. He can't have it both ways.

At a minimum, if he was within his rights to raise the cases of Fr Tony Flannery, Fr Brian D'Arcy *et al*, then the Pope would have been within his rights to raise the case of the Catholics TDs and Senators who were thrown out of the parliamentary party ('excommunicated') because of their opposition to abortion.

Kenny says he told Pope Francis that "dealing with these cases would certainly improve the environment for his visit [to the World Meeting of Families] in 2018".

What Enda Kenny means is that the Pope should lift the order that prevents Fr



Pope Francis greets Taoiseach Enda Kenny at the Vatican. Photo:

Tony Flannery from saying Mass in public – an order he recently defied, and the order that prevents Fr Brian D'Arcy from writing about certain issues (women priests for instance) without prior approval.

The Fr Flannery case is the most serious of all the disciplinary cases because the degree of Fr Flannery's dissent from certain Church teachings goes furthest. Let's remind ourselves of how far he has gone.

The whole affair began in 2010 with an article he wrote for *Reality* magazine in which he brought into question the Catholic understanding of the priesthood.

As an article in *The New York Times* reported: "In the [*Reality* magazine] article, Fr Flannery, a Redemptorist priest, wrote that he no longer believed that 'the priesthood as we currently have it in the Church originated with Jesus' or that he designated 'a special group of his followers as priests'.

"Instead, he wrote: 'It is more likely that some time after Jesus, a select and privileged group within the community who had abrogated power and authority to themselves, interpreted the occasion of the Last Supper in a manner that suited their own agenda.'"

“The Fr Flannery case is the most serious of all the disciplinary cases”

In other words, the priesthood as we have it is, to a large extent, a man-made invention, the invention of an arrogant elite

that is perpetuated to this day.

This is what drew the attention of the Vatican, not his views on women priests and contraception.

Fr Flannery wrote back to the Vatican defending himself, but all he did was dig himself even deeper in the hole.

For example, with regard to his views on the priesthood (and the Eucharist) he wrote: "I believe and accept that the origins of the Eucharist and the priesthood can be found in the Last Supper, where, as Sacred Scripture tell us, Jesus gave the command to the Apostles gathered around the table to 'Do this in memory of Me'."

Respect

With all due respect to Fr Flannery, that is emphatically not the same as saying he no longer believes that "some time after Jesus, a select and privileged group within the community who had abrogated power and authority to themselves, interpreted the occasion of the Last Supper in a manner that suited their own agenda".

In his correspondence with the Vatican, Fr Flannery also said: "I believe and accept that the Eucharist was given to us by Christ Himself; that in the Eucharist we receive 'the Bread of Life', which is 'the food of Eternal Life'."

However, a Baptist pastor could have written that. What Fr Flannery does not address is whether or not he believes that at the moment of the consecration, the bread and wine are turned into the actual Body and Blood of Christ.

Fr Flannery, in defiance of the Vatican's instruction,

effectively extended to non-Christians as well as to Christians. Very few Protestant Churches would go this far. Some Protestants Churches allow all baptised Christians to share Communion with them.

“Some Protestants Churches allow all baptised Christians to share Communion with them”

But only the most liberal ones (and none that I can think of offhand) would extend Communion to non-Christians. What is the meaning of the word 'communion' when people who are clearly not in the Christian community are nonetheless invited to share in the highest Sacrament of the Church, the very symbol of unity and communion?

If the Pope rescinded the disciplinary measures against Fr Flannery as Enda Kenny wants, it would be effectively saying that a priest in good standing can break the Church's rules on who can receive Communion, call into question the Catholic understanding of the priesthood and cast doubt on the nature of the Eucharist.

The repercussions of the Pope doing this would extend far beyond Ireland. It would be effectively *carte blanche* for priests to believe and preach practically anything, no matter how much at variance with core Catholic beliefs.

Finally, we must consider the fact that the Association of Catholic Priests continually champions Fr Flannery. Does it share Fr Flannery's beliefs? Does it believe there is any limit at all to dissent? Catholics have a right to know.

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Lourdes – the perfect antidote to the well-being industry



Attendants prepare to carry a statue of Mary in procession at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes and, below, the grotto in Lourdes. Main photo: CNS



Germany, has made it his mission to be there on Christmas Day. Another Indian family are stopping here en route to Fatima.

Many of the people I met are far from the stereotypical devout people that many construct in their mind when they think of people worshipping at shrines. What struck me forcibly was that,

whether young or old, they were seeking a personal route to or relationship with God.

What impressed me most about these very average people or pilgrims was that they clearly had a belief that was not dependent on their membership of the Church as an institution.

They are the kind of believers

that the Church should be encouraging others to become. They were not showy or over-talkative about their faith, they had worked it out for themselves through the ritual of pilgrimage.

Miraculous

The younger generation fully understand the mystery and magic of Lourdes. *The Harry Potter* generation have, thanks to J.K. Rowling, been allowed the imaginative space to consider the miraculous to be possible.

For me at least, the continuing appeal of pilgrimage to Lourdes and other places is that in an age obsessed by consumerism, these places act as a religious antidote to the commercialised claims of the well-being industry.

i *Conor Lenihan is a former Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation. Over the past five years he has lived abroad principally as a Vice President of the Skolkovo high tech project in Moscow.*

“Immersing himself in the waters of the grotto leaves him refreshed and dry. There is, he says, a special quality to the water, it leaves no dampness on his clothes”

religious education. One got the distinct impression that excessive piety and devotionism was frowned upon.

But, back to Lourdes. As the French motorway arcs away from Toulouse the Pyrenees come into sight, filling out the horizon, snow-capped and wreathed in early morning mist. Lourdes is placed within them and surrounded by hills. It's easy to see why the Romans built a fortress on one of these hills.

We managed to get there for 11am Mass, one of only two being held on Christmas Day in the church that stands atop the grotto. The French liturgy is much better than its Irish equivalent. There are a great deal more hymns and sung responses led by a cantor whose sole duty is to do so.

The sermon is simple and focused on the idea of God becoming wholly man to save us. It being Christmas Day, off-peak season for the shrine neither the Mass nor the grotto are teeming with people.

Basilica

In the basilica after Mass there is reasonable cheer. An Irish traveller man tells me he has been coming to Lourdes since the age of 16. Immersing himself in the waters of the grotto leaves him refreshed and dry. There is, he says, a special quality to the water, it leaves no dampness on his clothes.

A young Indian from the province of Kerala, working in



Conor Lenihan

By sheer stroke of luck, this year a friend offered me his chateau in the Dordogne, France, for the Christmas period. After a quick family consultation we decided to take up the generous offer.

Dordogne lies between the Massif Centrale and the Pyrenees mountain range that firms the border with Spain.

On the run-up to Christmas day my wife decided we should take a trip to the Marian shrine of Lourdes – some 300km away. She wanted to have a Mass offered for my mother who had recently died.

It was a nice idea and I had never been there before, despite having heard so much about the place over the years. My mother would often threaten my father with either Mount Melleray or Lough Derg to atone for his sins or misbehaviour.

Educated by Jesuits we were not encouraged to explore the concept of pilgrimages and miracles – faith and reason were seen to be paramount in our



Paul Keenan attended the 'Laudato Si' and Catholic Investing' Conference in Rome

It is a sad truth of our modern world that the subject of financial investing, with its language of 'portfolios' and 'funds' is an exercise in eye-glazing disinterest to most who perhaps believe that the pursuit is confined to so-called 'money men' operating in brokerages and far beyond our everyday experience. Yet, when adequately elucidated, it very quickly becomes clear that no easy confinement is possible for a practice that has profound implications for us all.

This becomes quickly clear for *The Irish Catholic* when attending a one-day conference at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome on the theme of Catholic investing.

Perusing the literature made available by the Irish bishops' aid agency Trócaire, one of the organisers of the conference, the following piece of information is revealed: "The Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF), the successor to the National Pension Reserve Fund, is an investment vehicle of the Irish Government funded by tax payer money. According to the NTMA Annual Report, the ISIF in 2014 was invested in some of the world's most controversial fossil fuel companies, to the value of €72million. Particularly concerning investments include TransCanada, the company behind the highly controversial Keystone XL pipeline to bring oil from Canada's tar sands to the US market."

Linked

In an instant, Irish people become linked to one of the first acts of President Donald Trump in resurrecting the contentious pipeline that threatens environmental degradation and has already begun to affect the territories and cultures of Native Americans whose lands it cuts across. Irish money at the heart of a controversial investment.

This is just one illustration of that which 'Laudato Si' and Catholic Investing' hopes to unpick and clarify in numerous sessions.

Investing in a better future for all

Notably, among the invited speakers are those aforementioned 'money men' who have some surprising things to say on how investing, ethically pursued, can offer a better deal for everyone existing in what Pope Francis in his encyclical termed 'our common home'.

Specifically, the intention of the conference day is to cover one aspect of the Pope's encyclical *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home), that of 'divestment' from the fossil fuel industry towards combating climate change as a necessary component in eradicating global poverty.

A heady linking of elements, one might think at the outset, but all set to be clarified through the day, and explained through the organisers' own position paper for the conference: "Eradicating global poverty is within reach, but under threat from a changing climate. Left unchecked, climate change will put at risk our ability to lift people out

of extreme poverty permanently by 2030...The evidence is clear: a lasting solution to poverty requires the world's wealthiest economies to renounce coal, and we can and must end extreme poverty without the precipitous expansion of new coal power in developing ones."

“A lasting solution to poverty requires the world's wealthiest economies to renounce coal”

The conference organisers are not alone in their stance. According to the World Health Organisation: "Delivering affordable, safe and reliable modern energy services to poor homes can be transformative to their wellbeing. Electric lighting replaces expensive lighting fuel, reducing household costs. Electricity also powers mobile phones, fans, TVs and refrigerators that can be used to store food,

medicines and vaccines. Clean and safe methods of cooking using better fuels and more efficient stoves reduce indoor air pollution, a leading environmental killer."

Indeed, as the aid agencies behind the conference attest: "The most prevalent and harmful form of energy poverty is not lack of electricity, but lack of clean, safe and modern cooking. Indoor air pollution from unventilated cooking with fuelwood and charcoal is the fourth largest cause of mortality globally, contributing to 4.3 million deaths each year – more than unsafe water, HIV/AIDS or malaria."

All valid arguments, but there is a dichotomy here; more power generating capacity is needed in the developing world to bring it out of poverty, yet, through imitation of the industrialised world in its continuing dependence on fossil fuels, more people will die through their polluting effects, while global warming will increase to a point that what developing nations seek

to achieve will become an ever more distant goal.

Path

But this need not be the path to follow (despite arguments presented by the fossil fuel companies, the so-called 'Filthy Fifteen' whose existence relies on our continued consumption of their products).

Communicated by the conference speakers: "For the first time in history, renewable energy options are highly competitive with coal in nearly all markets, and becoming increasingly so. Renewable energy resources have the advantage of being more abundant and lower-cost than coal, and renewable technologies can be flexibly deployed to create more jobs."

On this latter point, it is already established that renewable power is now a promising source of employment. The sector employed 9.4 million people in 2015,

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compared to the seven million employed by the coal industry.

Thus we arrive at the key message of the day, pointedly delivered by Christina Figueres, former executive secretary with the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change: "We must align our moral compass with financial considerations."

Bringing direct testimony to the conference of the implications of a continued failure to seize the fossil fuel nettle by what tools are at disposal was Cardinal John Ribat of Papua New Guinea, for whose Pacific island nation, and its neighbours, "our situation with climate change is now".

Afforded the opportunity to address the first session of the conference, the cardinal offered a bleak picture of how rising sea levels in his region have already made flood barriers ineffective, while at the same time crops have been impacted through salt water seepage into fresh water tables amid unpredictable growing seasons.

Without action now, the cardinal warned, entire living communities face being uprooted and displaced.

On behalf of his fellow prelates, Cardinal Ribat said forcefully: "As bishops we cry out for action."

Hope

But can there be any hope of effective action against a fossil fuel industry armed with a war chest of billions in profits?

Yes, according to Mark Campanale, founder of the Carbon Tracker Initiative and a figure behind a number of responsible investment funds, whose own research presented to delegates showed that, while powerful, the fossil fuel industry that continues to fight for dominance of our energy supply, is in fact operating amid declining fortunes.

Pointing out that while investment in the fossil fuel sector is rising (thanks to moves such as Ireland's on the Keystone pipeline), profitability across all of the major companies involved in the industry "is collapsing", a major disconnect in the offered image of the sector.

"The cost of getting to oil reserves still in the earth is rising," Campanale revealed, detailing increasingly more difficult explorations in harsh terrains such as the Arctic. "But at the same time, we are still encouraged to invest in the sector."

Part of this drive for investment, Campanale explains, lies in the desperate need for funding of expensive exploration, but also because a mammoth amount of reserves still await to be tapped within the earth. Herein for Campanale lies a very real threat to the wellbeing of the earth's climate. If global warming is to be contained below 2 degrees Celsius, as agreed by 195 countries during the Paris Climate Conference of 2015 (COP21), then fully 80% of proven though as yet untapped fossil fuels must be left in the earth. Yet, as Campanale pointed

out, countries continue to award exploration licences to fossil fuel companies and investors – perhaps oblivious to the end use of their funds – continue to offer money to fund such explorations.

It is a situation, conference delegates were to subsequently learn, that is changing, but at a pace too slow to offer hope right now that irreversible climate change can be avoided.

It is a change being driven in part by investors who have begun to ask very valid questions around the use of their money (adding to those who already insist that they will not invest in the tobacco industry or in military arms manufacturers).

Enter the money men and the first major shift in the day towards the potential of 'direct action' on the part of ethical individuals, communities and indeed congregations.

Jochen Wermuth, the senior fund partner with Berlin-based Wermuth Asset Management revealed that from his purely financial perspective, "renewables are now competitive" and, in his native Germany, "solar power



Cardinal John Ribat.

became cheaper than oil for the first time in 2014".

Cheaper for consumers equals more sales equals growth in the sector, equals a more attractive area of investment, even for those not concerned with responsible investing beyond fossil fuels. Why would an investor not investigate this sector over the 'Filthy Fifteen' was the question left hanging in the air.

"Do not let anyone tell you that doing good is expensive," Wermuth said in response to lobbying figures.

“We saw no loss in switching to responsible investment”

Adding to Wermuth's voice were those of senior investment analyst Dan Carson of London's FTSE Russell who said of his company's activities that while the divestment/ethical investment area had been something of a sideline for a number of years, "in 2015 it began to gain traction and is today no longer niche, it is mainstream", and Ian Halstead, senior investment analyst with L&P Services, whose company, being cautious around the financial implications of divestment,

Bringing the climate



Cliona Sharkey.



Finola Finnan,

Paul Keenan

As Finola Finnan, Trócaire's deputy executive director, and the body's policy officer Cliona Sharkey sit down with *The Irish Catholic* on the fringes of the *Laudato Si'* and Catholic Investing conference, there is time enough to celebrate recent developments back home of direct relevance to the Irish bishops' aid and development agency.

Just before the journey to Rome, it was announced that the Dáil had passed the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill to Committee stage, bringing the nation a step closer to withdrawing investments under the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) from fossil fuel companies and banning future investments in the industry by the Fund.

Worldwide ban

That Ireland could become the first country worldwide to ban such investment would be a proud achievement indeed. And if it ultimately becomes a reality, it will stand as the fruits of the labours Trócaire has been involved in for the past number of years.

The aid agency was directly involved in having the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill drawn up and tabled before legislators.

Indeed, well before the then UN General Secretary Ban Ki moon said during a presentation in Dublin in 2015 "Today one cannot be a leader on hunger without also being a leader on climate change", Trócaire was already linking the two as a direct result of what it was experiencing on the ground in its areas of operations across the developing world.

"The whole reason we are

involved [on climate change] is through what we see in the countries we work in."

“There is a point beyond which communities cannot adapt if the impacts get worse”

It was through such direct experiences that Trócaire, in the wake of the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan



conducted a full analysis. "We saw no loss in switching to responsible investment," he reported.

Building on these was Aldo Bonati, deputy head of research at Etica Sgc, a company now operating solely on ethical investments. He reported to delegates that despite an aversion to the fossil fuel sector among a raft of other questionable investments, the fledgling company has gone from strength to strength since 2013.

The reason for offering significant coverage to the money men here is to illustrate that there is a growing momentum beyond the Church/NGO call to arms on climate change that is being perceived by investment companies who, if not morally committed to ethical action, must still adapt to a growing taste for responsible investments.

In the words of Ellen Dorsey, executive director of the Wallace Global Fund/Divest-Invest Philanthropy, during her forceful address to the conference, "it's time to get out of fossil fuels".

As much a clarion call to action, Dorsey's words were a statement of fact that, with investment companies on board, and renewable energy sources catching on at a revolution-building pace, it is, in fact, 'time' for aspiration to become action, with investment companies ready and willing to accommodate the ethical concerns of investors. And to illustrate the scale of this quietly building revolution, Dorsey revealed that in 2015 "\$5.2 trillion in assets moved to divest from fossil fuel investing". That is correct: \$5.2 trillion.

“We don't all need to do the same thing, but we all need to do something”

Such a heady figure immediately puts one at risk of picturing philanthropic giants bringing chaos to the precincts of Wall Street institutions by their 'acts of responsibility', but as the later sessions of the conference were to show, the investment revolution

is one just as open to ethical individuals and congregations.

Yes, there is the example brought by George Hanley of the University of Dayton, whose institution's divestment from fossil fuel funds caused an inspiring domino effect among other universities across the United States. But so too there are the actions undertaken by the Catholic-run Dignity Health. Sister of Mercy Susan Vickers, the body's vice president of corporate responsibility, explained to delegates how Dignity is currently undertaking a slower divestment path for the good of the group's own programmes, resulting in a 5% divestment to date in an ongoing process. Baby steps when compared to the impact of Dayton, but, as Sr Susan so accurately put it, "we don't all need to do the same thing, but we all need to do something".

Or, as Aldo Bonati put it earlier in the morning by way of illustration for those who can only see divestment/investment as a

message back home



in the Philippines in 2013, partnered with Maynooth University on a five-country study to look at the effects of climate change on human development. The report – ‘The Burning Question’ – found evidence that, among others, floods and storms affecting Honduras have increased in frequency; crop yields across sub-Saharan Africa are falling, with grim projections for the century ahead, resulting in crop revenues in the region falling

by 90% by 2100. Projections for Kenya alone based on falling yields suggest a 3% annual loss of GDP to 2030.

Concern

Of more immediate concern, Finola says, is the fact that “10 million people in Africa are in need of aid through the impact of drought. That suffering is intensified by global warming.”

In the face of harsher realities and dire predictions, Finola details how Trócaire

has responded through local partners by backing water management schemes and education around water ecology. In areas at particular risk, the agency has upped its backing for disaster response and equally for disaster preparedness. In the longer term, Trócaire is already pre-planning for developing nations to avoid the example set by more affluent by fossil-fuel dependent nations.

“Poor countries must

be supported to develop low-carbon paths to avoid becoming trapped into carbon intensive energy infrastructure while the rest of the world transitions out of it,” the agency says. “[Thus] domestic and international policy must be designed to address poverty and environmental goals together in order to deliver just and lasting change.”

However, the same industrialised nations must recognise the part they play in either facilitating the growth of developing neighbours or stymying them through resistance to change. Returning to the themes visited in the conference, Finola warns “there is a point beyond which communities cannot adapt if the impacts [of climate change] are allowed to get worse”.

This is where Trócaire becomes active on the home front, continually pressing successive Irish governments on commitments on its EU commitments, but also helping to develop and support imaginative home-grown responses, such as the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill. For Cliona, the local and international approaches are easily summed up. Ireland’s “development goals and environmental goals should be inextricably linked”.

And it should not be doubted that Ireland bears a critical responsibility in matters around climate change.

Quite aside from the example of the Keystone pipeline investment mentioned in the preceding

pages, Trócaire points out that “The Irish population is small but greenhouse gas emissions per capita are among the highest among our industrialised peers. By comparison, the same emissions would be produced by around 400 million Africans.”

“Laudato Si’ has brought thinkers together to the task, and from all faith traditions”

At the same time, laudable though the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill is, Ireland is falling behind the pack of other nations in meeting its responsibilities on EU targets for greenhouse gas reduction by 2020 and beyond. (see: <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-strategy> – “By 2020, the EU aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20%, increase the share of renewable energy to at least 20% of consumption, and achieve energy savings of 20% or more. All EU countries must also achieve a 10% share of renewable energy in their transport sector.”)

Whatever about direct effects of climate change on this island nation and others by our behaviour, the agreements we have signed up to mean that continued failure to meet EU targets between 2020 and 2030 has the potential to cost us a minimum of €50million annually in fines and

corrective measures.

As Cliona explains, this is the price we pay as an industrialised nation; now extrapolate that out to a developing nation forced to spend more and more of its scarce revenues on protective and preventative measures, leaving little or nothing for those investments necessary to break its cycle of poverty and join the wealthier nations of the world.

In this, Cliona continues, “*Laudato Si’* has added so much to the conversation. It has brought thinkers together to the task, and from all faith traditions. It has opened up the conversation that needs to take place”.

Projecting just a short timespan ahead, Cliona suggests that by the time the Pope visits Ireland in 2018, “wouldn’t it be wonderful if dialogue [around *Laudato Si’* and divestment] had been built in Ireland”.

Until then, Trócaire has pledged itself to giving a new voice to the developing nations it assists, one on climate change that more and more observers agree, must go hand in hand with poverty reduction. It would be a proud moment if that voice were heard first and loudest in Ireland.

As Finola puts it, so simply and succinctly, be it through the scale of our greenhouse gas emissions, or the legislation to make us a world leader in shifting from fossil fuel investment: “What we do in Ireland affects the developing world.”

large-scale project, “buying one solar lantern for a home is a start to make all other things possible in the changes it brings to lives”.

Thus the call to action for all who believe in the message of *Laudato Si’* and the aims of Divestment Movement was issued by speakers. As Sheila Kinsey, representing the Union of Superiors General and the International Union of Superiors General, put it, “the potential for congregations around the world is huge” in pushing for divestment from fossil fuels. “Collaboration is key against an opposition that is strong,” she added.

Collaboration

Towards such collaboration, delegates were invited to check for themselves online ‘toolkits’ which have begun to emerge to bring others on board and to facilitate the shared desire to adopt a more ethical – and questioning – approach to investments. The Divest-Invest Toolkit for Catholics can be found at <http://bit.ly/divesttoolkit>

while further resources are available on the conference’s own website: <http://bit.ly/catholicdivest>

<https://fossilfreefunds.org/> meanwhile, allows the user to “search for mutual funds from your portfolio or retirement plan and find the fossil fuels hidden within” and www.catholicimpact.org offers testimonies from Catholic investors on challenges and successes linked to the movement.

The last words on matters are, ironically, those offered at the very commencement of the ‘*Laudato Si’* and Catholic Investing Conference’.

In his opening remarks to delegates, Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development summed up the goal afforded by the knowledge and tools subsequently imparted to the willing in the fight for our common home.

“Let us move away from fossil fuels,” he urged. “However gradually, let us move!”



Pictured during the *Laudato Si* and Catholic Investing conference in Rome are (l-r): Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, Jacquie Rémond Director Catholic Earthcare Australia and Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change. Photo: Trócaire

Out&About

Eager to serve!



DUBLIN: Boys and girls from Clonburris in Clondalkin, after completing training and being commissioned as altar servers by Fr Shan O Cuiv. Photo: Tommy Keogh



TYRONE: Pupils from Derrycrin and Ballylifford Primary Schools in Armagh Diocese being prepared by the Siolta school retreat team for their upcoming Confirmation on February 10.



MEATH: Castleknock's Canon Paul Houston and Rev. Eileen Armstrong from St Mary's Church of Ireland Church in Navan at an ecumenical Service in St Mary's Parish, Navan with Fr Declan Hurley Adm and Canon John Clarke.



USA: Cathy Boyle, Caitriona Heffernan and Orlagh McGlade from Pure in Heart, pictured in New York where they stopped on their way to Philadelphia, where they attended a 'Heart and Head Immersion Course' on Theology of the Body.



WATERFORD: Fr Patrick Cahill with members of Mitchelstown's Youth 2000 prayer group and the Kilsheelin, Co-Tipperary-based Holy Family Mission, who the Cork group joined for evening prayer.

Edited by Greg Daly
greg@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



ARMAGH: Pupils from St Catherine's College who dressed as such popular fictional characters as the BFG and the Cat in the Hat as part of a quiz during the college's Open Night.



ROME: Bro Jesse Maingot OP, a Dublin-based student of the Irish Dominican Province, assisting in the Basilica of St John Lateran during the final Mass of the Dominicans' 800th Jubilee and, right, Pope Francis processes from the closing Mass of the celebrations accompanied by Ireland's Bro. Philip Mulryne OP, who served as deacon during the Mass.



WEXFORD: Bunclody parish's newly-commissioned 'Faith Teens' youth group, who will assist in parish activities and meet every Friday evening.

ARMAGH

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

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

'Five First Saturdays' devotion to Our Lady of Fatima begins in St Patrick's Cathedral on February 4 with Confessions from 9:30am before 10am Mass and rosary.

Celebration of commitment in love for married couples at 7:30pm on February 13 in St Patrick's Cathedral.

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.

DERRY

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, in Dungiven parish from 8am to noon, and 3-9pm, Monday to Friday.

DUBLIN

St Gabriel's Church, Dollymount with host the Archdiocese Celebration of the 25th World Day of the Sick at 3pm on February 12, with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin as chief celebrant. All welcome, please contact Anne on 01-8333062 or email info@stgabrielsparish.ie

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.

FERMANAGH

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

GALWAY

Monastic experience day with the Poor Clares in Galway City from 10am to 5pm on Saturday, February 4, so young women between the ages of 21 and 40 can learn about the Poor Clare way of life with a view to vocation discernment. Contact: poorclaresgalwayvocations@gmail.com

KERRY

Prayers in St John's Park, Tralee at the monument to Bro. John Conway SJ at 5.30pm on February 6 to mark the 40th anniversary of the attack in Rhodesia where Bro. John and seven colleagues were shot.

KILDARE

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

Suncroft parish church: Eucharistic Adoration on Wednesday in the sacristy from 10am to 6pm. Parish cell meetings will take

place on February 7 and 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).

LIMERICK

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

LOUTH

Holy Hour with music and reflections in St. Mary's Church, James Street, Drogheda at 8pm on Wednesday, February 8.

MAYO

Extraordinary Form Latin Mass will be celebrated in Knock's parish church at 5:30pm on February 12.

MEATH

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

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

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, 3pm.

TIPPERARY

Vigil in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes will be held in the Pallotine Chapel, Thurles from 7:30pm until 10:30pm on Friday, February 10, with a Eucharistic hour, a Marian hour, Mass and anointing of the sick.

WICKLOW

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

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

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/stpatrickschurchwicklow>



World Report

IN BRIEF

Lay missionaries die in violent attacks

Catholic lay missionaries have died in violent incidents in Bolivia and South Sudan.

In what is being described as a botched robbery, Polish missionary Helena Kmiec, 25, was stabbed to death in a childcare centre in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on January 24 when she disturbed a burglar at the centre. She had arrived as a volunteer at the centre, operated by the Salvator Missionary Volunteers, just two weeks before her death. Police have reportedly detained a number of suspects in connection with the murder.

In South Sudan, a catechist only identified as 'Lino' died with five others during a gun attack on a chapel in Lomin city on January 22. The deaths have been linked to ongoing instability in the region which has seen widespread violence on the parts of army and rebel groupings.

Vatican Museums launch dedicated Youtube channel

The Vatican Museums have launched a dedicated YouTube channel to bring works of art and historic pieces to audiences around the world. The Musei Vaticani channel comes as the museums' official website museivaticani.va has also been overhauled for a better visitor experience.

The new YouTube channel offers virtual tours of collections as well as promotional

videos on tours for those who ultimately make the decision to travel to Rome.

The museums' website is currently working to include high resolution photographs of all 20,000 museum pieces on display ahead of a plan to then include all works of art, a project that will see the website offer a staggering 200,000 individual images.

Church forces Filipino police to suspend 'shoot-to-kill' campaign

President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines has been forced to suspend his controversial war on drugs just days after Catholic Church leaders issued fresh attacks on the campaign of murder.

Amid reports that police units tasked with undertaking the president's campaign are riddled with corruption – prompting criticism from Mr Duterte – police chief Ronald dela Rosa announced this week that the anti-drugs campaign is to be suspended as investigators root out corrupt officers.

Since Mr Duterte held true to a campaign promise in July to unleash a violent offensive against drug dealers, some 7,000 people have been killed.

Those killed by police – totalling 2,250 – are routinely described as having resisted arrest. The remaining number of those killed were reportedly targeted by vigilante groups.

However, the kidnap for ransom and subsequent murder of a Korean businessman

Rodrigo Duterte.



in October served to reveal that police officers were actively engaged with and even directing the vigilante groups.

Reality

This reality led Jerome Secilano, a spokesman for the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, to state, just days before the campaign's suspension, that it was "not any more in accord with the legal processes, and the moral norms are being

violated and so now is the time for the Church to speak up".

His message was echoed by conference president Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan, who stated, "I am ashamed of the things I read about the Philippines in the international media and more ashamed of what I hear from our leaders".

The latest Church voices built on repeated criticisms levelled by prelates and priests throughout the latter

half of 2016 against the daily raft of extrajudicial killings and impunity for police in the campaign.

For his part, Mr Duterte renewed his own verbal attacks on the Church in the Philippines, accusing it similarly to the police of being "corrupt".

Tirade

In a foul-mouthed tirade – just weeks after he had sent a letter of goodwill to Pope Francis – Mr Duterte accused members of the hierarchy of womanising and declared the Church "is full of s**t".

"You all smell bad, corruption and all," the president said.

Challenging the members of the hierarchy to resign, Mr Duterte said that if they did so, he would also step aside.

Despite his bluster, the suspension of the anti-drugs campaign is a blow to President Duterte, who has built a reputation as a strong leader on foot of a willingness to back the killing of those suspected of drug activities.

Bishop Ma Daqin rejoins the Catholic Patriotic Association

Reports from China indicate that Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin of Shanghai, who publicly revoked his membership of the Catholic Patriotic Association during his elevation Mass in 2012, has reversed his stance and rejoined the 'official' church recognised by Beijing.

It is understood that the move sees Bishop Ma lose his bishopric and revert to 'Fr Ma' within the group.

The reason for the move has caused

confusion locally, with some supporters of Bishop Ma believing that he acted under pressure from the authorities, who had removed him immediately after his 2012 renunciation and confined him to a seminary, while others believe that he was perhaps encouraged by Rome to re-enter the fold as part of the slow progress being made towards better relations between Rome and Beijing.

Meanwhile, a new report from China Aid, a US-based group which monitors Chinese actions against Christians has revealed that 2016 saw a ramping up of pressure on all Christian communities to conform to the will of the ruling Communist Party. China Aid said that in this coming year, there is every reason "to worry for the major religions in China, especially house churches".

Christians call for church rebuilding in Nigeria

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has called on the nation's government to help with rebuilding churches across the north-eastern states after a report revealed that at least 900 Christian places of worship have been destroyed by Boko Haram since the group began its violent activities.

Having gathered for a meeting of its national executive council in order to discuss ongoing pressure on Christian communities across Nigeria, and

especially in the north-east, where Boko Haram continues to operate, CAN lamented "continued attacks on Christians in Southern Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, and Taraba communities".

CAN also urged the government to re-establish the Nigeria Inter Religion Council (NIREC) towards fomenting peace between faith traditions and to offer an alternative voice to that of Boko Haram in seeking new recruits through selective interpretations of the Koran.

Honour for murdered Fr Hamel

A public square in the French capital, Paris, has been renamed in honour of Fr Jacques Hamel [pictured], the elderly priest murdered at his church by Muslim fundamentalists.

The mayor of the district of Ermont, Hugues Portelli, led events to rename the square, which is home to the John Paul II parish centre, in the presence of Fr Hamel's family and representatives of religious communities present in the district.

The decision to rename the square had come from a council vote that was unanimous.





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Edited by Paul Keenan
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March for life draws huge crowds



Students from the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan hold signs during the annual March for Life in Washington DC on January 27. Photo: CNS

US and Mexican bishops decry Trump border wall

The Catholic bishops of Mexico have lamented the executive order signed by President Donald Trump which signals the start of the process to build his notorious southern border wall.

Reacting to news of the order, the bishops issued a statement in which they called for consideration on how to create employment and promote security without constructing a wall. "The first thing that hurts us," the prelates said, "is that many people who live their relationship of family, faith, work, or friendship will be further blocked by this inhuman interference."

"We continue to support our brothers and sisters who come from Central and South America and who are in transit through our country to the US."

The opposition to the wall was echoed north of the border also. In a release from the US bishops, that conference's Committee on Migration chief, Bishop Joe Vasquez said: "I am disheartened that the president has prioritised building a wall on our border with Mexico. This action will put immigrant lives needlessly in harm's way."

Traffickers

"Construction of such a wall will only make migrants, especially vulnerable women and children, more susceptible to traffickers and smugglers. Additionally, the construction of such a wall destabilises the many vibrant and beautifully interconnected communities that live peacefully along the border."

Bishop Vasquez added the pledge: "Instead of building walls, at this time, my brother bishops and I will continue to follow the example of Pope Francis. We will 'look to build bridges between people, bridges that allow us to break down the walls of exclusion and exploitation'...We will continue to support and stand in solidarity with immigrant families. We remind our communities and our nation that these families have intrinsic value as children of God. And to all those impacted by today's decision, we are here to walk with you and accompany you on this journey."

Bishop Vasquez went on to describe plans under the executive order to increase immigrant detention space as "alarming".

Australia honours Catholic nun

A Catholic nun famed for her work among an indigenous group in Australia has been named Senior Australian of the Year.

Sr Anne Gardiner, who is 85, spent 50 years working with the Tiwi people of the Northern Territory's Bathurst Island. In that time, she became principal of the local school and established numerous community clubs. Most significantly, she was instrumental in establishing a museum to Tiwi language and culture on the island, the Patakijiyali Museum.

Sr Gardiner used her acceptance speech to call on the Australian government to work towards greater recognition of country's indigenous people.

Vatican roundup

Order of Malta Grand Master resigns

The grand master of the Knights of Malta has resigned after Pope Francis declared all actions undertaken by him since the December dismissal of Grand Chancellor Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager "null and void".

According to the *National Catholic Register*, Fra' Matthew Festing was summoned to an audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican on January 24 with orders not to disclose the meeting. He was then required to resign and to submit a letter to that effect while still in the Vatican.

Announcing the resignation subsequently, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin said in a statement that Fra' Festing will be replaced by an interim leader, the order's Grand Commander Ludwig Hoffmann von Rumerstein, while the Pontiff works to nominate a Papal Delegate to fully investigate matters of concern within the Order of Malta.

Cardinal Parolin added: "The Holy Father, on the basis of evidence that has emerged from information he has gathered, has determined that all actions taken by the Grand Master after December 6, 2016, are null and void. The same is true for those of the Sovereign Council, such as the election of the Grand Chancellor *ad interim*."

Commission

The resignation of Fra' Matthew Festing came after weeks of defiance on the part of the Order of Malta against the Pope's wishes to appoint a commission to investigate the circumstances behind the dismissal of von Boeselager, amid allegations that he had backed the distribution of contraceptives by at least one medical programme in the developing world backed by the order. Von Boeselager has protested his innocence in this.

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray to leave Rome

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray [pictured], the vice dean of the College of Cardinals, has announced he is to leave Rome and live in retirement in Bayonne in his native France.

The cardinal, who is 94, became vice dean of the College in 2005 after the election of Pope Benedict XVI.

Formerly Archbishop of Marseilles, Cardinal Etchegaray was elevated to the College of Cardinals in 1979 by St John Paul II. Since then, he served as president of the Pontifical



Council for Justice and Peace and the Pontifical Council Cor Unum. Following his resignation at the age of 75 in 1998, he continued to undertake special diplomatic missions for the Holy See.

'Doctor of the Popes' dies

Dr Renato Buzzonetti, personal physician to four Popes and the first to treat the injured St John Paul II after the assassination attempt in 1981, has died at the age of 92.

Born in 1924, Dr Buzzonetti entered papal service in 1974 and tended to Blessed Pope Paul VI, and was later present at the passing of that Pontiff in 1978. He served Popes John Paul I, Benedict XVI and St John Paul II.

In addition to the dramatic and near-fatal events of May 13, 1981, Dr Buzzonetti was first to tend to St John Paul II on May 12, 1982 in Fatima when the late Pope received stab wounds from Spanish priest Juan Fernandez Krohn. He later diagnosed St John Paul's Parkinson disease and tended to that condition.

Upon retiring during the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI, Dr Buzzonetti received an honorific title, *pontifical archiater emeritus*, meaning physician emeritus of the Pope.

Rebuilding of Iraqi Christian communities begins

The Chaldean Patriarchate in Iraq has begun to distribute funds to dioceses and parishes to begin the rebuilding of communities in areas liberated from so-called Islamic State (ISIS). As Patriarch Raphael Louis

Sako I led a delegation to the Nineveh Plain last week to view for himself the damage inflicted on homes and churches by the terror group, it was announced that newly formed committees have already offered the equivalent

of €380,000 in rebuilding funds to encourage displaced Christians to return to their villages.

Towards the reconstruction, Patriarch Sako issued an appeal to Chaldean communities

around the world to contribute to the fund.

On arriving in Telkaf as part of his tour, the Patriarch led prayers for peace in the region and for the speedy return of Christians to their ancestral home.

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

So who should voters have chosen?

Dear Editor, I write with reference to your Web Watch article regarding American blogger Simcha Fisher (IC, 26/01/2017) who is quoted as expressing strong (some might say strident) anti-Trump views which in some respects echo those of the mainstream liberal media, and who takes the 'pro-life establishment' to task for supporting Mr Trump.

While, on the face of things, Mr Trump's qualifications to be a pro-life champion are less than ideal, the stark reality on November 8 last was that only he or the unequivocally pro-choice Hillary Clinton would win the election (and previous statements attributed to Mrs Clinton

and her team suggest that she was not a friend to the Catholic Church). Under these circumstances, what does the outspoken Ms Fisher think conscientious pro-life American Catholic voters should have done on November 8? This is a valid question.

As for the gender dimension in Mr Trump's election as president, it's worth noting that approximately 30 million women voted for him, a figure not much publicised in the mainstream media but far in excess of the numbers who participated in the hugely-publicised demonstrations against him on January 21.

One more thing: not surprisingly, and in stark contrast to media

coverage of the demonstrations on January 21, I've seen no mention in any of the secular newspapers I've looked at of the March for Life in Washington, DC, held on Jan 27. This highlights the importance of the internet as an alternative to the mainstream media as a source of news, comment and analysis.

One wonders if newspaper editors will ever wake up to the fact that they're damaging the reputations (and maybe the sales) of their own publications by engaging in such easily-detectable bias.

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

Doing nothing is simply not an option

Dear Editor, In regard to the incident on *The Late Late Show* two weeks ago where the Eucharist was openly mocked and ridiculed, it's difficult to know what was the worst aspect of the whole sorry episode.

Was it the ignorance, the gratuitous contempt shown, the studied insult to those who actually pay to keep RTE afloat, the abuse of privilege, or was it the fact that only one priest stood up publicly, alone and isolated, to object and say "Stop! Enough is enough!"?

The level of indifference and fear and sheer cowardice

among priests and senior members of the Catholic Church in the face of these attacks at the moment is quite extraordinary.

Is it an exaggeration to say that peaceful coexistence with even the worst enemies of Christ in society today seems to be the priority? Where is the witness and where is the leadership that's needed now? Many seem to be just men of straw!

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us, "Do not cast your pearls before swine, do not give dogs what is sacred lest they trample

them underfoot and turn and tear you to pieces."

He uses dogs and pigs as representative of those who would ridicule, reject and blaspheme the Gospel and sacred things and while the context is only slightly different with this incident, nevertheless all believers are obliged to counter these direct diabolical attacks in whatever way they can and seek redress.

Doing nothing is not an option because history abounds with examples of where sustained mockery and ridicule first precede

incitement to hatred and then when – the climate is right open – violence inevitably soon follows.

So, what can people do? Well, every parish in every diocese now has a pastoral council so a suitable structure or network is in place to collect signatures and register disapproval to demand an apology and that the offending remarks be withdrawn.

Again, it's all down to leadership and witness.

*Yours etc.,
M. O Riada,
Tralee, Co. Kerry.*

The peril of moving from a natural state

Dear Editor, Prof. William Reville asserts that defining meaning in our lives is a precursor to happiness, as he concurs with author Emily Esfahani Smith in her book, *The Power of Meaning* (IC, 12/1/2017).

Taking this approach is to miss the whole point of happiness, that it is the natural state of a human being. Happiness is what Adam and Eve had before the Fall.

The search for meaning arises when

we have moved away from the natural state (of happiness) and are struggling to find a new happiness which we sometimes find in a meaning acquired after a search of some kind.

The meaning found is usually a distraction. But it may help to bring a person some happiness. We may then confuse this happiness with the happiness found in our natural state.

In that happiness, meaning is inherent and does not involve searching

for it. It is simply there. It is implicit.

My feeling concerning suicide in Ireland is that it is due to a loss of happiness rather than meaning, as Prof. Reville suggests.

It is more likely to be born of depression than to be born of someone's search for a philosophical answer to their pain.

*Yours etc.,
John O'Connell,
Derry, Co. Derry.*

The term 'post-truth' is a contradiction in terms

Dear Editor, I have been puzzling over the term 'post-truth' and its latest incarnation 'alternative facts' (courtesy of Donald Trump's press people) over the past week.

I agree with Anthony Redmond's letter in *The Irish Catholic* of January 19 but would just add that the term 'post-truth' is a contradiction in terms or it is, as has been pointed out by others, a 'performative contradiction' i.e. as soon as you say it you have contradicted yourself because you say it as if it were true which, of course, it can't be because,

according to you, there is no such thing as truth. If there is no truth then there is no difference between truth and lies. To tell the truth is to tell a lie.

And so we have landed ourselves in the double-speak world of George Orwell's nightmarish vision in his novel *1984* and have touched down in the heart of his propagandist 'Ministry of Truth' where truth is whatever I say it is.

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

A sincere thank you

Dear Editor, A heartfelt thank you to the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference for their letter: 'Two Lives, One Love' – their submission to the Citizens' Assembly. It is a beautiful document – clear and compassionate in its teaching. I do hope it will be promoted in Parishes throughout the country.

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

The damage caused by Trump

Dear Editor, I am amazed that our mainstream media practitioners do not realise the grievous harm their single-minded biased and hostile treatment of President Donald J. Trump is doing to their profession.

*Yours etc.,
J. Anthony Gaughan, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.*

Plan now to share later

Dear Editor, The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is over for another year. However, it is time that all RC parishes where there are any significant number of other Christians plan for a series of positive events during the year. Some ideas could be as follows:

- Invite a Protestant cleric into a Mass during 2017 to give a homily on a topic agreed.
- Organise a joint Good Friday public pageant or service.
- Organise a joint Harvest Thanksgiving service and alternate this between the respective churches.
- Pray for dead members of the Protestant community if they are from the same parish.

*Yours etc.,
Liam de Paor,
Carrickane, Co. Cavan.*

A word in your ear

Dear Editor, Apparently Pope Francis told the Irish bishops on their *ad limina* that they should exercise a "ministry of the ear" (IC, 26/02/17).

It might have been better if they had been instructed to concern themselves with the 'ear-after'.

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



Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



SYRIA: Boys carry sandwiches in Aleppo. Conveying Pope Francis' closeness to the Syrian people, a Vatican delegation visited Aleppo following the end of the hostilities that left thousands dead and the city in ruins.



UNITED STATES: A father holds his son at the annual March for Life in Washington DC. Photos: CNS



CHILE: People are seen with their belongings in the street after they left their homes because of wildfires near Vichuquen, Chile. Pope Francis sent his condolences to the victims and survivors of one of the worst wildfires in Chile's history.



IVORY COAST: Members of the Ivory Coast presidential guard patrol as they arrive at the port of Abidjan. Catholic bishops in Ivory Coast have launched a campaign of fasting and prayer for peace after a wave of army mutinies and civil service strikes.



SOMALIA: Rescuers carry an unidentified injured man from the scene of an explosion in Mogadishu. Islamic extremist group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the latest in a series of hotel attacks in Mogadishu that killed at least 14 people.



FRANCE: A homeless man and his dog sleep on the pavement in Nice as cold winter temperatures continue.

God's power as powerlessness



The French novelist and essayist, Leon Bloy, once made this comment about God's power in our world: "God seems to have condemned himself until the end of time not to exercise any immediate right of a master over a servant or a king over a subject. We can do what we want. He will defend himself only by his patience and his beauty."

God defends himself only by his patience and his beauty! How true! And how significant for our understanding of power!

The way we understand power is invariably bound up with how we see power exercised in our world. Our world understands power precisely as a force that can lord it over others, a force that can compel others to obey. In our world, power is understood to be real only when it can forcibly assert itself to make others obey it.

Rulers

For us, strong people have power, political rulers have power, economic systems have power, billionaires have power, the rich and the famous have power, muscular bodies have power and the playground bully has power; power that can make you buckle under, one way or the other.

But such a notion of power is adolescent and superficial. Power that can make you buckle under is only one kind of power



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

and ultimately not the most transformative kind.

Real power is moral. Real power is the power of truth, beauty, and patience. Paradoxically, real power generally looks helpless. For example: If you put a powerfully muscled athlete, the CEO of a powerful corporation, a playground bully, an academy-award winning movie star, and a baby into the same room, who has the most power? Ultimately, it's the baby.

At the end of the day, the baby's helplessness overpowers physical muscle, economic muscle, and charismatic muscle.

Babies cleanse a room morally; they do exorcisms, even the most callous watch their language around a baby.

“St Paul writes that Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at”

That's the kind of power God revealed in the incarnation. Against almost all human expectation, God was born into this world, not as Superman or Superstar, but as a baby, helpless to care for its own

needs. And that's how God is still essentially present in our lives.

Pulitzer prize-winning writer Annie Dillard suggests that this is how we forever find God in our lives, as a helpless infant lying in the straw whom we need to pick up, nurture, and provide with human flesh.



Annie Dillard.

She's right, and her insight, like that of Leon Bloy, has huge implications for how we understand God's power in our lives and for how we understand God's, seeming, silence in our lives.

First, God's power in our lives: When we examine the biblical account of Adam and Eve and original sin, we see that the primary motivation for eating the apple was their desire to somehow grasp at divinity, to become like God.

They wanted Godlike power. But they, like us, badly misunderstood what makes for genuine power. St Paul shows us the antithesis of that in how he describes Jesus in the famous Christological hymn in the Epistle to the Philippians. Paul writes there that Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at, but rather that he emptied himself of that power to become helpless, trusting that this emptying and helplessness would ultimately be the most transformative power of all.

Apparent absence

Jesus submitted to helplessness to become truly powerful. That insight can shed light on how we understand God's apparent absence in our world. How might we comprehend what is often called 'the silence of God'? Where was God during the Holocaust? Where is God during natural disasters that kill thousands of people? Where is God when senseless accidents and illnesses take the lives of countless persons? Why doesn't God forcefully intervene?

God is present and intervening in all these situations, but not in the way we ordinarily understand presence, power and intervention.

God is present the way beauty is present, in the way a helpless, innocent newborn is present and in the way truth as a moral agent is always present.

“God is present and intervening in all these situations, but not in the way we ordinarily understand presence”

God is never silent because beauty, innocence, helplessness and truth are never silent. They're always present and intervening, but unlike ordinary human power, they're present in a way that is completely non-manipulative and fully respectful of your freedom. God's power, like that of a new born, like the power of beauty itself, fully respects you.

When we look at the struggles within our world and within our private lives, it often seems like divine power is forever being trumped by human power. As the cartoon character Ziggy likes to put it: The poor are still getting clobbered in our world. But, like David, standing with a just a boy's slingshot before Goliath, a giant who looks overpowering in terms of muscle and iron; and just like the apostles being asked to set five little loaves of bread and two tiny fish before a crowd of 5,000, God always looks underwhelming in our world.

But we know how these stories end.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, February 2, 2017

Youth Space

Casting
a net for
Christ

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A year without spending



“You’re not buying anything? At all? For a whole year?” This is the phrase that I’ve heard a million times, usually followed by: “I could never do that!”

And it’s true, most people don’t want to give up spending and treating themselves for an entire year. Most people are sensible. But lots of people do want to cut back, have more pennies in their pocket and make better financial decisions.

They just don’t know where to start.

Imagine enjoying every item you owned. Imagine not feeling burdened by the items you’ve kept just because someone gave

**Michelle McGagh describes
how she saved £22,000
in just one year**



them to you and you would feel guilty for throwing them away. Deciding that you’re not going to beat yourself up because you no longer fit into clothes you wore 10 years ago, and getting rid of them instead, along with the guilt that goes with them.

I realised that the things I owned had started to own me and I had bought things to tell people a story about who I was, or at I wanted them to think I was. By getting rid of those items I was taking back control of who I

really was.

As a millennial I’d grown up being sold to through magazines and TV and I was hooked. I was happy to be told what item to buy to make me look prettier or seem cleverer or more interesting. Except none of the items ever really did what they said or would, so I did what advertising is supposed to make us do: I continued to shop on the off-chance that I would find the elusive products that I thought would make my life better.

By getting rid of the items I owned, I was finally telling the advertisers that I was on to their game, that I didn’t need an object to make me happier.

I set out on the road to try to determine what would make me genuinely happy. The starting point was to get rid of the stuff that had been crowding my house and my mind.

Safe

Luckily, my husband Frank had been feeling the pressure of the stuff too, so we decided to get rid of as much of it as we could. Nothing was safe from being donated, given away or sold. Crates of vintage dresses ended up on eBay; the local charity shop became the recipient of multiple

1950s and 1960s crockery sets; family benefitted from rugs, chairs, lamps and pictures.

In total, after two years of paring back our belongings, I’d estimate that we got rid of 80% of our things and made ourselves a few pounds in the process (PayPal actually suspended my account because it thought I was a business, I’d flogged so much!)

As my interest in minimalism grew, Frank and I even set up our own blog, www.londonminimalists.co.uk, and I became part of a growing community of people who were fed up of being stuck in the vice-like grip of consumerism.

It’s also through this community that I heard about

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Children's Corner

ERIN FOX



Take charge of your own choices

January begins with new promises and resolutions for the year. One of the most popular new year's resolutions is to eat more healthily, especially if you enjoyed lots of selection boxes and chocolate coins over the festive season.

It can be hard to break out of a habit of eating sweets and chocolate but you can stay true to your new year's resolutions as the year goes on by taking charge of your meals and growing your own fruit and vegetables.

Throughout the months, there are so many different kinds of fruit and vegetables you can grow to enjoy. So for February, pick out the seeds to grow this month and start sowing.

While you're working hard bringing your plants to life, you can plan salads and lunches to make with your produce. You can even plan a special meal using everything from your harvest when it's ready for picking.



Grow a selection of edibles that will pair well together on a plate such as leafy greens, herbs like basil and oregano and sweet tomatoes. If you're growing tomatoes, for example, make sure you sow them indoors.

Spray bottle

The end of the month is the best time to start growing tomatoes but you can start gathering everything you need now. When you are ready, fill some plastic peat pots with soil and using the spray nozzle on a watering can, lightly water the tray.

Sow two to three seeds in each pot, about one quarter of an inch into the soil, and pat the soil over. Transfer the tray to a mini green house.

Use a spray bottle to mist the seeds for the next week until the sprouts start to show. When the sprouts are 10 – 15cm tall, you can then transfer the plants to a larger pot.

You can transfer the tomatoes outdoors to continue growing when the weather gets warmer, but if you have space, aim to keep them indoors.

“When your own tomatoes are ready, you'll notice a huge difference in the taste”

If you can't wait several months before digging into your own crop, practise making salads and soups with good-quality tomatoes from the supermarket or green grocers. When your own tomatoes are ready, you'll notice a huge difference in the taste, and you'll want to keep on planting tomatoes every year!

Don't forget to mark your seeds with seed markers. Use wooden craft sticks to label each plant.

Either write the name on the stick or, whip out your best felt tip pens, and draw the plant on the end of the stick.



As you look forward to the year ahead, I am sure that like many others you have made resolutions and hope to keep to at least some of them. Parents have a the most responsible job in the world because your every action, gesture and word impacts on your children. When you stop to think about that, it is quite mind-blowing.

There is no off duty for parents even if you have time alone or time away to look after your own needs. A well run parenting course provides terrific learning and support. But those opportunities aside, there is no annual refresher or self-check test for parents.

That is why I ask the question in January: “What resolutions have you made for your children?” How you have answered that question is important.

Hopes

Often people make plans or hopes for what they want their children to achieve. Today, I am asking you to also consider your parenting style can be more powerful.

Just as children begin learning words, numbers and colours at home when a parent counts potatoes into the red pot, children also learn far more enduring lessons of character and behaviour from noticing what their parents say and do.

In the next few weeks, a traditionally quiet time for most of us, parents could enhance what they do by observing and noticing how you engage with your

Getting the balance right

Parenting Matters

Dr Colm Humphries



children.

If that sounds daft, consider giving it a try. If you are lucky to have a supportive partner or friend, ask for their honest comment. None of us easily realise how we sound when cross, irritated or angry. Few of us easily accept the impact of a tone of voice and how it communicates.

Parents cannot be perfect. In fact, if you get it right 75% of the time, you are doing the best anyone can do. Not getting it right the rest of the time gives your children a chance to see you make a mistake but also put it right.

“Many parents are not able to correct their children or say no”

Repairing what does not work out is as important a lesson for your children as correcting their faults or

affirming something you are glad to have seen them say or do.

However, parents have to try to succeed at being bigger, wiser and in control.

One way to help achieve secure parenting is through warmth which creates the best possible conditions for a parent to affirm what is right and good. It also makes it easier for a child to accept when you say no or have to be strict about something.

It may sound strange to say this but many parents are not able to correct their children or say no except when the matter is seriously important. Kids who are not used to being told no or to getting correction find that really hard.

Kids need to be corrected warmly over small things and affirmed for the tiniest of good deeds. Ensuring that you do it with warmth in your voice over things that don't matter so much will make it easier for you

to be taken seriously when the stakes are high.

Of course, all of us have been formed by the relationships we have had growing up and how our parents or carers chided and affirmed us. If noticing how you interact is hard to achieve, consider what your own relationship with parents was like when you were growing up.

“Parents who take care of themselves will take better care of their kids too”

Try to do this from your memory of what it was like to be four years of age and older. It can be very instructive and often helps us to understand why we sometimes do and say things in ways we regret but also in ways that are just lovely.

Getting it right is a matter of balance. Our children will grow up to be independent but that is a task not easily learned and is a subject for another day.

For now, take time out to notice and be aware but be wise enough to give yourself a break so tiredness does not set in. Parents who take care of themselves will take better care of their kids too. May we all experience kindness in whatever 2017 brings.

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Buy Nothing Day. This day falls on the same day as Black Friday, an American phenomenon that has been transported to the UK in recent years. Black Friday is the day after Thanksgiving in the US and is a popular shopping day, with consumers flocking to shopping centres to purchase deeply discounted items.

I'm making Black Friday sound much more civilised than it is. The fact that there is a website dedicated to logging the deaths and injuries that happen as a result of Black Friday shoppers squabbling over TVs and food mixers tells you all you need to know.

In the UK in 2015, Black Friday sales broke the £1 billion mark for the first time, but not everyone was out shopping. There were also those who had pledged to avoid the shops and take part in a Buy Nothing Day.

“I couldn't spend money on anything other than my normal bills and food”

Buying nothing for a day was a good start in rallying against rampant consumerism, but abstaining for a longer period would be even better for the wallet.

But how long would a spending ban have to last to make a real impact? A week would be good, and a month would be even better, but if I really wanted to break the habit of putting my hand in my pocket and spending mindlessly then a 365-day spending ban was surely the way to go.

I decided that I was going to be one of those people who bought nothing but, instead of avoiding the shops for a single day, I was going to do it for a whole year, starting on Black Friday of 2015, November 27.

The No Spend Year Challenge was born.

Every challenge has to have rules, and mine were pretty simply: I couldn't spend money on anything other than my normal bills and food.

Before I go into what I couldn't spend money on, let me tell you what I did spend money on.

Total outgoings

These are the only total outgoings for our household, which Frank and I split evenly:

- Mortgage.
- Money to charity and to help family.
- Council tax.
- Gas and electricity.
- Phone bills.
- Water services.
- House and contents insurance.
- Life insurance.
- Critical illness insurance.
- Washing machine insurance.
- TV licence.
- Internet.
- Bank account fee.

The only other thing left to buy was food and toiletries. Everything else was off-limits. Which meant there'd be no more rounds of drinks purchased in the pub (tap water only from now on), no new clothes, no presents for my nephews, no takeaway coffees, no meals out and no holidays. There was also no



budget for transport, not even a bus fare, so I'd have to go everywhere on my trusty bike.

You name it, I couldn't buy it. And I couldn't let Frank or anyone else pay for me either. That meant no drinks bought for me at the pub, no family paying for dinners out or gig tickets; it was a year of no spending, not a year of scrounging off my friends and family. That would be one way to lose mates quickly.

It was going to be hard. In order to succeed I needed a target, something to work towards. And what better target than the enormous mortgage debt hanging over our heads?

“Day-to-day spending was compounded by the fact that I love travelling”

The mortgage has always been a black cloud for me and I had made an effort in the past to chip away at it meant overpaying just £50 a month.

Thanks to my job as a freelance personal finance journalist, I have access to people who know a lot about money. A few years ago an adviser told me that it makes sense to pay off your mortgage quickly and when your mortgage is gone, throw all the spare money you no longer need to use to pay off your mortgage into a pension. This seemed really sensible to me but the problem is that while I was overpaying the mortgage a little bit, I was still spending money like it was going out of fashion.

Don't get me wrong, I wasn't running up bucketloads of credit card debts or prioritising shopping over paying bills, but the reality of the situation was that I was constantly handing over my card with no real idea of how much I was spending.

A coffee in the morning, a sandwich at lunchtime, drinks after work, maybe a little treat for myself because I worked so hard – it all adds up; I just had no idea how much it was adding up to.

If you'd have asked me if I was good with money I would have said “Of course!” and I'm sure my friends and family would have said the same.

Day-to-day spending was compounded by the fact that I love travelling and holidays were the way I treated myself (conveniently forgetting about all the other smaller treats I gave myself throughout the year).

With the idea of a no spend year firmly entrenched in my mind, I decided to look at my bank statements to see just where my money went. You can imagine my shock when I went through a year's worth of statements and categorised everything that I'd spent, right down to the £12.50 I spent on an eye test. And I can tell you that I thought I needed another eye test when I totalled up the numbers – surely that couldn't be right! I definitely needed time off from spending.

Terrifying exercise

It's a terrifying exercise but I would recommend that everyone does it. You don't need to look through a year of bank statements; looking at your spending over the past month would probably be enough to help you identify where your spending pitfalls are.

I divulge the embarrassing details of my spending throughout my book, and hopefully you'll be encouraged to examine your spending habits too (I'm sure they can't be as bad as mine).

❗ *The above is an abridged extract from Michelle McGagh, The No Spend Year: How I Spent Less and Lived More, published by Coronet Books.*

Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



At various times over recent years I have worked with young people preparing for the oral Irish exam in their Leaving Certificate. Apart from the challenge of developing a level of fluency in Irish most of the students also face the challenge of developing and expressing their own opinions.

Our education system does little to encourage students to develop the skills involved in critical thinking. I have heard of students at second and even third level being told to learn off essays in preparation for exams rather than being told to understand the concepts, develop their ideas and be able to articulate and support an argument.

We live at a time when what we believe and how we engage with the beliefs of others is becoming more and more of a minefield. Part of the problem is how we are communicating. Twitter is not an appropriate means of engaging in a debate. There is little room for a measured

response or intelligent argument in 140 characters. I find it distressing that the new president of the United States relies on Twitter to take his critics to task. It seems to me to be a very juvenile way to deal with a difference of opinion.

There is also much talk of how we are now in a post-truth society. What this means is that debate is driven by emotion rather than objective facts. In the Brexit referendum in Britain both sides tried to influence voters by appealing to their deeply held fears rather than by offering rational, fact-based arguments.

“We all need to develop our ability to analyse and explore opinions and beliefs”

Another tendency is the presumption that if we repeat our opinions as often and as loudly as possible they will be accepted as fact. This is helped by demonising one's opponent. We see that in our own media. Those who hold opinions at odds with the mainstream media on important issues are belittled or castigated.

Currently there is a perception being created that anyone who is forward-thinking and compassionate wants to see the removal of the Eighth Amendment in our constitution. That makes it difficult for people to openly say they believe the Eighth Amendment is something positive that we should be proud of.

Courage

Yet my own daughters have found that at school and at university they are actually surrounded by more like-minded people who support the Eighth than they ever expected. It has taken courage for them to even start that conversation – but it has given them confidence that actually they are not the odd ones out.

They have also encountered people who disagree with them and have had to deal with that hopefully in a positive way.

I want my children to be able to engage creatively and positively with difference. I do not want them to run and hide nor to attack and belittle.

As a family we do not always deal well with different opinions. We are a house full of hotheads. There are times when my children are saying “But why...?” and I want to just shout “Because I'm your mammy and I said so!” and then run out of the room. But I know that doesn't work and it shouldn't work. We all need to develop our ability to analyse and explore opinions and beliefs. We need to be able to debate ideas without making personal attacks on those who think differently.

Faith

My son is involved in the Pope John Paul II Award and is helping with the confirmation programme in the parish. We had been looking at the Creed and Diarmuid asked me: “We say ‘I believe’ but do we really mean ‘we believe it’ or is that just something we say because we are Catholics?” My son is clearly coming to a point – and I am encouraging him in this – where if his faith means anything to him he is going to have to figure out what he really does believe.

It is a challenge we all face – in faith and in life.





Stephanie Moriarty describes the fun of youth ministry in Cork

This time last year, I was sitting at a hard desk in a freezing cold school wearing a scratchy school uniform. I was probably in class listening to my teacher prepare us for the dreaded Leaving Cert. Now, I'm sitting on the top floor of the Dominican Priory where I live with my NET Team in Cork City. What an amazing and delightful change!

My name is Stephanie Moriarty and I am 19 years old from Tuam in County Galway. I am so excited to be here serving with NET Ministries of Ireland!

NET (National Evangelisation Teams) Ministries Ireland is a nine-month program that has over 50-plus missionaries volunteering their time working in local communities throughout Ireland, spreading the message of the gospel to youth through their witness of Jesus.

Since October 2015, the Dominicans and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart have brought NET Teams to Cork City, where we have been working hard to engage youth, young adults, and the general population.

Option

I realised during my Leaving Cert year that a gap-year seemed to be 'taboo' subject – something that was not seen as a viable option for a person who just finished their secondary school education. So, NET was a 'secret' option for me. I was quite hesitant to tell people that I felt called by the Lord to be a missionary – especially in my own country.

I had not met many people from Ireland that had volunteered to be missionaries with NET. Most of the people I knew on NET were from some far off exotic place! I was so afraid of what my family and friends would think of me and

what I wanted to do.

The Lord has truly blessed me during this year as he showed me that there were other Irish people like me who were called to be missionaries, and that it was a beautiful and amazing calling in life. I now know that the Lord has a plan for me and I must follow the path he is leading me on, no matter what society thinks.

“I realised that I could not hold back from the call any longer”

I hope that is something every young person can learn – that their lives are their own and shouldn't be shaped by what people think is considered the “norm”. Thankfully, I realised that I could not hold back from the call any longer and so, here I am!

Since September we have been working in classes teaching religion, running day-long religious retreats, which have led to us

starting two youth groups, a Youth 2000 prayer meeting, and a young adult group – which meets for fellowship in faith. We have been very busy with our work and had many exciting ministry events.

One of these was a full day retreat with Leaving Cert students, all of whom took up the opportunity to come to the retreat rather than have a day off school. They engaged in the topic of letting God lead them on the road trip of their lives! The students were provided with fun ways to enter into their faith with games, prayer, dramas, sketches and talks. Our NET team was really excited to see the students becoming more invested into where God wants them to go, as they make their next big life decisions.

One of our most successful monthly events has been Nightfever, where, joined by 26 other young adult volunteers, including the Holy Family Mission, we spend an evening on the streets

of Cork City and invite passers by into Cork's Augustinian church to light a candle. If the awe of the church completely lit by candle light doesn't fill people with wonder, then the quiet music, opportunities for prayer, and Confession just might. Going out onto the streets of Cork invites young adults not to just believe in their faith, but fight for it and work to share their love of God with others.

“Cork's people have been so kind to us and so generous with time and prayers”

More locally, the team had a great time with their youth groups during their 'Christmas Series. First learning about Our Mother Mary and her *fiat* – her 'yes' – then the humble St Joseph and, finally, a great social night full of fun and healthy competition in Laser Quest.

It was great to see many youth from both the youth groups come

together through faith, and if fun was measured by the number of pizza boxes, we couldn't have had any more.

Cork has been so fantastic. My team and I have been really blessed here. We are so welcomed everywhere we go. Cork's people have been so kind to us and so generous with time and prayers. From the schools we work in to the prayer meetings we take part in to the youth groups we run – we have had beautiful experiences in every aspect of our ministry.

With nothing but positive experiences here, I have honestly come to see Cork as a second home. I am so thankful to my team, contact people and youth for making this year so wonderful and I know that they will all be huge factors in continuing to make this year more beautiful every day.

I am so excited to see what God has in store for the youth here in the future and where he will lead me next!

The NET Ministries team in Cork.



Sweet Treats

Erin Fox



Mini bundt cakes made with ground nuts

Baking with ground nuts is so much fun compared to using flour. But there is a little flour included in this recipe to help the cake rise. This cake is also delicious made with hazelnuts and orange zest instead of the pistachios and lemon. You can make the cakes without the icing too if you prefer.

Makes 12 mini bundt cakes or one round eight-inch cake.

Cake

- 170g pistachios
- 75g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 200g golden caster sugar
- 175g butter softened
- Four eggs
- zest and juice of one lemon.

Syrup

- Juice of two lemons
- 100g granulated sugar.

Icing

- Juice of one lemon
- 100g icing sugar.

First, preheat the oven to 170 degrees for fan

ovens. Grease a tray of mini bundt tins and lightly dust the bases with plain flour.

Scatter the pistachios on a roasting tray and place in the oven for five minutes. Remove them from the oven and leave aside to cool. Once they are cool, roughly grind them in a food processor.

Meanwhile, cream the butter and the sugar with the lemon zest for five minutes. In a separate bowl, sift in the flour and baking powder.

Lightly beat the eggs and gradually add to the butter and sugar, beating well after each addition. Fold in the flour and then the ground pistachios and lemon juice.

Divide the mixture into the mini bundt tins, filling each one about two thirds full. Place in the oven and bake for 25 to 30 minutes until a knife emerges clean when you prick the centre of one of the cakes.

While the cakes are baking, make the syrup.

Gently heat the sugar and lemon juice in a pan until the sugar has dissolved. When the cakes have been removed from the oven, prick them all over with a wooden skewer and brush the tops with the syrup.

Leave to cool for 10 minutes before turning them out onto a wire rack to cool completely. You may need to use a knife to gently ease them out of their tins.

While the cakes are cooling, start making the icing.

Sift the icing sugar into a bowl. Roll the lemon to release the juices and then cut in half and squeeze the juice into the bowl of icing sugar.

Whisk until everything is combined and no lumps remain.

Turn the cakes the right way up onto a wire rack and place a sheet of baking parchment underneath.

Drizzle the icing all over the tops of the cakes and let it spill down the sides.

Chop the remaining pistachios, and scatter them over the tops of the cakes.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Television drama in both fact and fiction

In the past few weeks I've been following the English crime thriller series **Unforgotten** on ITV. This is series two and the high artistic standards set in series one are thankfully maintained...though really it's the same plot with different characters – a body is found that has been hidden for years, and gradually the police work out what happened. Several people who have moved on with their lives now find themselves with the truth closing in and their new lives unravelling.

Nicola Walker is again superb as Detective Cassie Stuart, incisive, perceptive and sympathetic, while Sanjeev Bhaskar is impressive as her colleague Sunil Khan.

As is obligatory these days, the cops have their own personal baggage but it never gets in the way of the main story (a lesson for the makers of *Sherlock*?). The actors who play the chief suspects are impressive also – the only one who appears to be thoroughly nasty is the victim, and you alternatively feel sympathy and revulsion for the suspects as they struggle, often dishonestly, to confront the past.

Their respective spouses, largely in the dark, have their own challenges coping with the dramatic revelations. There is a little bad language, child abuse figures more strongly as the story



Nicola Walker and Sanjeev Bhaskar star in ITV's *Unforgotten*.

progresses, and a gay couple trying to adopt a child is a significant plot element.

But, much as I'd love to be immersed in TV drama, it's hard to ignore the dramatic developments on the US political scene. Mind you, the Irish media did a good job of ignoring last Friday's March For Life which attracted tens and probably hundreds of thousands to Washington. RTÉ had a brief clip on the **Nine News** that night but it was absent from the Late News, and I could find no trace of it on their news website.

BBC Radio 4 on the other hand continued to give it relatively reasonable coverage on their **Midnight News** programme.

EWTN gave over most of the day last Friday to the event. I managed to dip in

and out and was glad I caught most of Vice President Mike Pence's address – it was full of visionary language, that insisted on respect and compassion for all.

His catchphrase was "life is winning" and it certainly seemed that the pro-life movement was buoyed up by the fact that this was the first time the rally had been addressed by a vice-president.

Live coferage

American news networks gave the march considerable coverage last Friday, improved on other years, probably because of that historic appearance by Pence. At one stage I saw NBC doing live coverage, CNN covered it to some extent, as did Fox News – on the latter I saw an impressive interview with

the President of the US Students For Life group, though weirdly the presenter thought the march was going to be on the following day. You see,



BBC reporter Stacey Dooley.

she assumed it would be on a Saturday because the previous week's Women's March was on a Saturday!

Earlier in the week (BBC One, Tuesday), **Brainwashing Stacey** had challenging issues for pro-life and pro-choices advocates alike. Reporter Stacey Dooley took part in a pro-life summer camp for young people where awareness was tied to activism. She had understandable reservations about how young some of them were and about their methods – graphic abortion images in the street and activism at abortion clinics – but got to like the young people and build relationships with them.

In a way it was easy because these youngsters were welcoming, articulate and kind.

Emotions ran high during a ceremony at a cemetery for aborted babies that had been dumped as 'medical waste'.

Dooley was disapproving of the dumping, but uneasy about what she saw as manipulation. She spoke at a clinic to a woman who had several abortions who, ironically, railed against 'innocent children' being used for the protest, and who, tellingly, felt that she had no choice but to have the abortions.

This led to a tearful moment between Dooley and one of the leaders on whether this woman had been shown enough compassion.

PICK OF THE WEEK

IT'S A MIRACLE

EWTN Saturday (night), February 4, 2.30 am

Barbara McGuigan speaks with three Irish teenagers about loving properly.

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC 1 Sunday, February 5, 3.30 pm

On the 200th anniversary of the death of Jane Austen, Connie Fisher explores her – not always flattering – portrayal of clergymen.

PAT KENNY TONIGHT

TV3 Wednesday, February 8, 10.00 pm

New season, dealing deal with the important news and current affairs issues of the week.

This led to the revelation that some from the group had actively supported women they had dissuaded from the abortion path – the sight of one little adopted girl saved from abortion spoke volumes.

By the end, Dooley's pro-choice views had moderated somewhat and she was certainly more thoughtful on the issue. First step on a path perhaps?

1 boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

Portman supreme as widowed First Lady in 1963

Jackie (15A)

If you get the accent right, the part usually takes care of itself. Natalie Portman does that to an exemplary degree here – right down to Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy's tendency to pronounce 'r' as 'w' – and ends up giving a performance of such quality that the film, like its title, truly belongs to her.

That walk. Those teeth. Cheekbones that look as deep as the Grand Canyon...

If you thought her finest hour was in *Black Swan*, think again. She goes from bewilderment to anger to devastation to sarcasm – and even black humour – after that dark day in Dallas.

What doesn't kill us makes us stronger. Jackie's life, in some ways, really only began when her husband's one ended. It was then we learned she wasn't just the fashion plate who showed people around the White House on tours, exulting about her forbears and Old Glory.

No, this woman was made of steel. That becomes evident early on in the film when she's confrontational with a man who comes to interview her for *Life* magazine.

Such an interview bookends the film. It's threaded in between flashbacks to a time when she was "happy-everaftering in Camelot", before "a little communist" by the name of Lee Harvey



Natalie Portman as Jackie Kennedy.

Excellent
★★★★★

Oswald fired two bullets from a depository in Dallas into a man's head and thereby changed his wife's life forever.

The cheery pink costume with the pillbox hat became morphed into her 'widow's weeds'. Did she spend too much time in these? Was her

procession through Washington in them at Kennedy's funeral an exercise in vanity? Or did it feed the nation's – nay, the world's – need to grieve for (and with) her? The reasons she gives are complex.

It's a reflective film

directed sensitively – so why the 15A cert? – by the Chilean Pablo Larrain. It stops you in your tracks just like Oswald stopped Jackie in hers. The tragedy also tested her faith. "I think God is cruel," she tells the kindly priest (an excellent John Hurt) who does his best to comfort her – and who admits to some struggles with his own faith.

Weakness

The film's main weakness is Peter Sarsgaard as Robert Kennedy. Sarsgaard is a capable actor but he makes no attempt to do a Boston accent (we're back to accents). The last three films I've reviewed on this page all had Massachusetts connec-

tions – Sarsgaard should have consulted either of the Affleck brothers for help.

Neither does John Carroll Lynch look like Lyndon Johnson. Caspar Phillipson, on the contrary, is a ringer for JFK. What a pity this is only a cameo role.

But Portman dazzles. She immerses herself so much in the part it's almost frightening. Whether flashing that 1,000-watt grin or furrowing her brows in bewilderment or being cranky with everyone in the aftermath of the assassination – her way of dealing with being in shock – this is a performance that's so good it's beyond words. Absolute genius.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief

Tired of all the Bad News

by Fr Bryan Shortall
(Columba, €12.99)

This might be just the book for The Donald when he feels particularly hard done by. But Fr Bryan, a Capuchin, while accepting that we seem to live in a period suffused by negativity, not just in the news but in life, has other answers.

He draws what he has to say from the real experiences of his parishioners in inner Northside Dublin, suffused with insights from Scripture and theology.

The pieces are all short, easily read in a minute or two, making it ideal for that quick morning touch-base with faith. Here is a book from which every reader, whatever their circumstances, whatever their status in life, will be able to draw something vital for living today in the real world.



Something Within: Reflections and Sketches

by Nollaig O'Donnell
(Veritas, €8.99)

This is a very personal book, a collections of thoughts, poems and drawings through which new writer Nollaig O'Donnell expresses her love and appreciation for her world and all the little joys and experiences that are in which she wants to share with her readers through her writing. She makes effective use of a sort of haiku form, into which those moments of life are intensely recorded.

This may look like a little book, but it is filled with a lot of life, observations and feeling, for the world, for others and for God.



Love One Another As I Have Loved You: Prayers, meditations and Reflections in Family Love

by Gareth Byrne
(Veritas, €4.99)

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis developed for his readers his thoughts on the theme of love and the family. In this little booklet, Dr Gareth Byrne, a priest of the Dublin diocese who directs the Mater Dei Centre for Catholic Education, introduces materials which will help his readers draw from the Pope's thoughts their own reflections, influenced by his challenging ideas.

He has in mind that the World Meeting of Families will be hosted by Ireland in the summer of 2018. To gain the most out of the occasion he feels Irish Catholics (and others) should make thoughtful and prayerful preparations. This booklet will be of assistance to many in that aim. It is made up of brief but focussed extracts from the scriptures, from papal documents, from the writings of such people as Jean Vanier, and ordinary folk here and there.

These texts are intended to provide both a challenge and a comfort. In this they succeed very well.



Studies An Irish Quarterly Review, Winter 2016 / 2017

(Messenger Publications, €10.00)

Over recent years *Studies*, now in its 105th volume, has presented themed issues. This latest number represents, though subtitled 'Framing the News', a slight break with that format. There are several articles on the news, how it is made, how it is presented, what it does. But more general and assorted articles make a welcome return, the most striking being one on a trip Yeats planned to Taiwan.



A haunted soul on the sea of faith

Mariner: A Voyage with Samuel Taylor Coleridge

by Malcolm Guite
(Hodder and Stoughton, £25.00)

Peter Costello

The *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* are two poems known in some way to anyone anywhere who reads English. Yet there was more to Samuel Taylor Coleridge than these and a handful of other poems. He was also a critic, philosopher and table talker supreme.

But he was also a Christian and a religious writer. Yet never once at school or at university (where I studied the Romantic Movement) was the *Statesman's Manual* or *On the Constitution of the Church and State* alluded to that I can now recall. One can read quite a lot about the poet without his religion being mentioned by critics who are not themselves religious.

Reputation

Malcolm Guite, the Chaplain at Girton College in Cambridge, himself a critic, poet, song-writer and teacher, aims to restore some balance to Coleridge's reputation. He observes that even such vital writers on the poet as John Livingstone Lowes and Richard Holmes fail to explore the poet's religion in any real way.

When he wrote the *Rime*, Coleridge aspired to be a Unitarian minister; he ended as an apologist for the Established Church and an inspiration for the Oxford



The albatross, like the cross, leading the way through the icefields.

Movement. There is a certain kind of outlook which cannot take this Metaphysical-Kantian-Anglican seriously – an attitude well displayed in the still amusing caricature of Coleridge in T. L. Peacock's satirical novel of 1818, *Nightmare Abbey* as Mr Filosky, a lachrymose and morbid gentleman, "of some note in the literary world". "He lived in the midst of that visionary world in which nothing is but what is not. He dreamed with his eyes open, and saw ghosts dancing around him at noon-tide."

In this remarkable book, using a very close reading of *The Rime of the Ancient*

Mariner as an armature, Guite attempts to make good this lacuna and to use Coleridge's evolving religion – to build up a view of the poet's visionary life, to reveal the inner reality of what was satirised by Peacock.

The book falls into two parts. The first is devoted to scene setting, exploring the poet's early life, his misadventures and his difficulties, problems relieved by the intensity of his fruitful relationship with Wordsworth and his sister.

This is all excellent and richly compelling reading. But that "morrow morn" of the older and wiser Coleridge

is explored in a different way through the influence which Coleridge exerted over other writers such as Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, David Jones and R. S. Thomas.

Most interesting here is the exploration George MacDonald's *There and Back* (1891) – MacDonald is also now much admired by a few, hardly read by the many.

Guite also illuminates the insights into the poem provided by three of its illustrators such as David Jones, but most especially Gustave Doré, and Mervyn Peake.

Terror

Peake, I think, through a limited number of images, give *The Rime* an edge of suppressed terror that is disturbing. But it is Doré, who was at the peak of his powers, who in 1876 really interpreted the poem as another truly great artist.

This book will be of vital interest to all readers of caught up in Coleridge's visionary world of suffering and redemption – a message which has moreover a very "Green" aspect to it today. But undoubtedly the revelation of Coleridge's intense Christianity will be for many readers a most rewarding experience.

But I think too that it will be of immense value to teachers who (like the author himself) straddle the realms of both literature and devotion.

Senior classes at school might indeed find this a book of transcendent use in exploring themes of religion's relevance in the modern world through a masterpiece of world literature.

Mons. Poirot reads the Bible

The Bible in One Year, New International Version

read by David Suchet CBE
(Hodder and Stoughton, £29.99; also available as a digital download)

David Suchet is one of the popular and talented actors of his time, famous for in incarnation of Agatha Christie's Belgian detective Poirot (whose 'little grey cells' were informed by the conscience of a cradle-Catholic). Since Suchet himself became a Christian, as he puts, at the age of 40, it has been his ambition to bring the good news of the Scriptures to the widest possible audience.

These six MP3 CDs, running for about 80 hours, are his latest project. The readings themselves took 200 hours simply to record. But they provide not just "the Bible in a year", but a way of revisiting favourite texts. With fewer people in their 20s actually owning any book at all, these CDs may in the future be the way many encounter the Book. **P.C.**



David Suchet CBE.

Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.

The eco-warriors trying to save the world



Peter Willcox.

Greenpeace Captain
by Peter Willcox with
Ronald B. Weiss
(Sandstone Press, £9.99)

Peter Hegarty

In his memoir, seafarer Peter Willcox drolly recalls the 30 years he has devoted to creating 'chaos and spectacle' to heighten awareness of destruction of the environment.

Activism is dangerous. He was on board the *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland harbour in July 1985 when two French mines exploded on the hull, sinking the ship. Divers later found the body of photographer Fernando Pereira, a father of two young children, in a water-filled cabin. It transpired that President Mitterand himself had approved the attack.

Nuclear tests

In one of his best chapters Willcox describes a visit to Rongelap, an island contaminated by radioactive fallout from American nuclear tests on nearby Bikini Atoll.

The Americans had deliberately exposed the Rongelap population,

seeking to improve their understanding of the affect of radiation on the human body. Children born there after the tests were hideously deformed, some without facial features or a skeletal structure.

For decades the islanders vainly petitioned the US government to move them to a cleaner island: "No-one else was going to do it, so we had to." Willcox and the crew moved the population of 350 people to their new home, the nearby island of Mejato, before sailing on to Auckland.

'Operation Exodus' was one of his many

achievements. Russia agreed to desist from dumping radioactive waste at sea after Greenpeace intercepted and filmed a decrepit vessel spewing radioactive water into the Pacific.

“Russia's oil and gas companies...have a head start on their competitors”

France agreed to end atmospheric – but not underground – nuclear tests in the South Pacific in the face of world revulsion at her heavy-handed treatment

of Greenpeace protesters. Willcox believes that Greenpeace actions in Peru hastened the end of whaling off the Peruvian coast.

The Arctic is where the battles of tomorrow will be fought. The ice is thinning, the far north will soon be ice-free during the summer months, and the resources of the region are now exploitable. Russia's oil and gas companies, with ample experience of drilling in inhospitable environments, and with the Arctic on their doorstep, have a head start on their competitors.

What worries campaigners is the near-impossibility of cleaning up an oil spill in a remote region, especially in the permanent darkness of winter. That Russia, a country with an appalling record on the environment, should be leading the scramble for resources, is a particular concern.

The indefatigable Willcox spent two months in Russian prisons after leading an attempt to hang a banner on an oil-rig in the Barents Sea in September 2013. He won't be the last unwilling guest of the Russian government.



The Rainbow Warrior after an on-board explosion in 1985.

The World of Books

By the books editor

Welcome to the world of alternative truth

The row that erupted after President Trump's inauguration between Team Trump and the media about the attendance at the inauguration has thrown up some interesting attitudes to what some of us I suppose are old fashioned enough to call 'truth'. Pilate may have turned away with the philosophical comment "what is truth?" and washed his hands of the crucial matter brought before him; but few others can really do that.

The media were right in suggesting that the crowds were in fact thinner than for president Osama's inauguration. The *Financial Times* carried a ground-level with a caption pointing out the large gaps between people. But Team Trump wished to include in the figures those who watched on TV round the world. But they are hardly attending in the sense of being present. Having promised the greatest inauguration of all time, Trump cannot bear to be seen to have failed. To his TV-fixated mind, ratings matter.

In the course of the altercation a Trump spokesperson said it was their aim to present "alternative facts". The *New York Times* remarked that this was a synonym for lies.

A mere by-liner like me hesitates to disagree with the august oracle of 620 Eighth Avenue. But surely there are alternative facts. Certainly they are well known to historians.

If one were writing a narrative history – a thing few historians actually do these days – one would construct the narrative on the basis of a selection of facts between which one established a linkage or continuity, leading to a conclusion about an historical event, let us say, Easter 1916.

However, another historian approaching this problem might well select an alternative set of facts and arrive at a very different conclusions. Some people call this 'revisionism'.

A Hegelian (a polite term these days for old-fashioned Marxists) would say this thesis and antithesis would in the end produce a synthesis. And that is indeed more or less how the writing of history proceeds, through a system of argument and counter-argument, in other words debate and dialogue.

But alas 'alternative facts' has these days quite another meaning. In any large bookshop – the kind of thing that is becoming rarer these days – one will find perhaps close to that section dealing with 'Mind, Body and Spirit' a smaller section entitled 'Alternative History'.

Here might be found such creative works as *The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail*, which gave rise to Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. Mr Brown was, however, writing a novel; the work of Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln claimed to be fact. Certainly it read with a brisk determination not to let the reader pause to think. But the book certainly had "facts" (factoids perhaps) in it, but also a lot of untruths (or rather lies).

Cover-up operations

An even more surpassing best seller was *The Tomb of God* in 1996. This can now be bought on line for £0.01. It is described by Amazon as "an exposé of one of the greatest cover-up operations of all time". In 1992, two men undertook to solve an ancient mystery; their discovery involves the search for "one of history's greatest treasures and includes paintings, coded messages, maps, murder and gold". The gist of it was that the body of Jesus is hidden away in a tomb in the south of France on Mount Cardou, near Rennes-le-Chateau, of course.

Need I go on? The mystery of Rennes-le-Chateau at the heart of these two books is in fact no mystery. The mysterious local parish priest was a clerical racketeer who made a fortune accepting money for Masses he never said, but, as Christopher Howse has observed, the books containing the facts about his life being in French, are unread in the English-speaking world, in the UK and US. There it seems readers prefer 'alternative facts'.

Books such as *The Holy Blood and The Holy Grail* and *The Tomb of God* and countless others whose titles may be less familiar to most readers, have inured people to accept that the academics and others who reject these notions, those much derided "experts" of recent election controversies, are intent on hiding "the truth" from the public.

All too often we attribute our own worst intentions to our opponents, for it is politicians who all too often lie and cover up, not historians. Historians are among nature's blunders.

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In the past I have asked for many favours.

This time I ask for a special one. (mention here)

Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

M.C.

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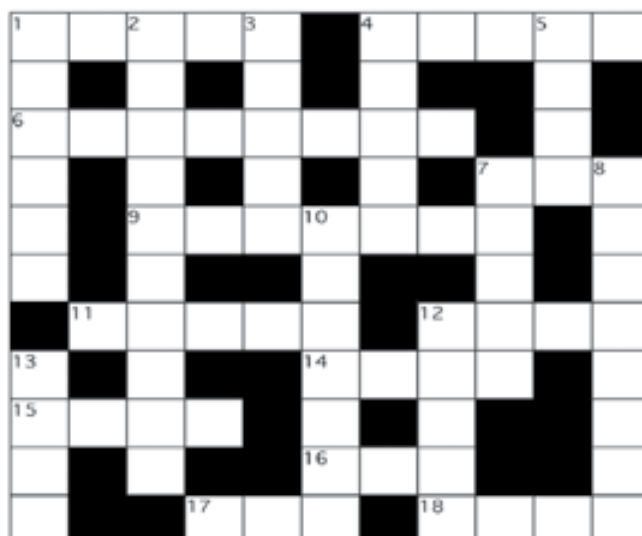
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ACROSS

- 1 An elephant uses it to pick things up (5)
 4 Piece of furniture (5)
 6 There's one in each room as part of central heating (8)
 7 A plus sign tells you to do this (3)
 9 Got as far as (7)
 11 Use a rudder to do this in a boat (5)
 12 Group of three musicians (4)
 14 Pain (4)
 15 Magician's stick (4)
 16 Hatchet (3)
 17 The team with the highest score will ____ (3)
 18 How many Houses in Hogwarts? (4)

DOWN

- 1 A king or queen will sit on it (6)
 2 Get the meaning (10)
 3 Australian animal (5)
 4 You use it to bite (5)
 5 Go in front (4)
 7 Love greatly or worship (5)
 8 Huge reptile from millions of years ago (8)
 10 Mobile home (7)
 12 Person who steals (5)
 13 In the story, what the Ugly Duckling became when he grew up (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.283

Across – 1 Motherwell 6 Noah 10 Sugar 11 Lithuania
 12 Stories 15 Alert 17 Adit 18 Riot 19 Outer 21 Shutter
 23 Dwelt 24 Nota bene 25 Rear 26 Cuppa 28 Eternal
 33 Insincere 34 Again 35 Noon 36 Centimetre

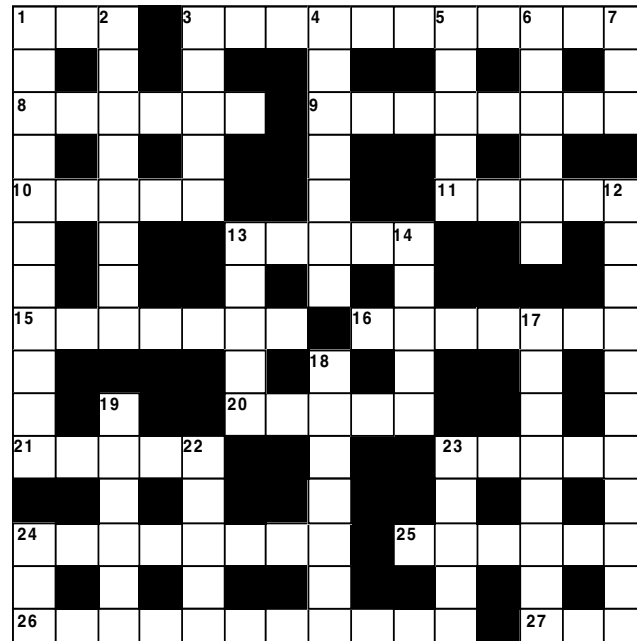
Down – 1 Mass production 2 Tightrope 3 Error 4 Wilde
 5 Lute 7 Ounce 8 Heartbreak 9 Curator 13 Inch
 14 Saltire 20 Took apart 21 Strains 22 Ease 27 Pesto
 29 Treat 30 Realm 32 Knee

CHILDREN'S No.166

Across – 1 Seagull 4 Wag 7 Abroad 8 Tyre 9 Bedroom
 10 Washes 13 Sty 15 Fence 16 Pizza 17 Slice 18 Tart
Down – 1 Shadow 2 Across 3 Ladies 5 Airport 6 Start
 9 Belfast 11 Artist 12 Snail 13 Sewed 14 Yells

Crossword

Gordius 284



ACROSS

- 1 Faucet (3)
 3 Make this a feature of the dance hall? That's some tall bet, girl! (11)
 8 Part of the bicycle got by a divine in the sale (6)
 9 Rub touts the wrong way and get an angry reaction (8)
 10 Notions (5)
 11 & 18d He sent a girl through a mirror (5,7)
 13 Weeps (5)
 15 Some old ones may be found in the soup (7)
 16 Water source not fresh? That's rich! (4,3)
 20 'Out of shape' stage (5)
 21 Jumped (5)
 23 The bone that protects the brain (5)
 24 Spanish soup traditionally served cold (8)
 25 Some sausage for Sarah and her French pal (6)
 26 What Scottish town might a film run need? (11)
 27 Stretch part of a shekel (3)

DOWN

- 1 That letter of recommendation contains strange litanies, Tom (11)
 2 Would not Pip adore to be like this Italian saint? (5,3)
 3 The breathing organs of a fish (5)
 4 Set of implements for a tradesman or DIY enthusiast (4,3)
 5 Insurrectionist (5)
 6 Archery projectiles (6)
 7 Biblical character found at an auction (3)
 12 Please flick away an English mountain (7,4)
 13 Inexpensive (5)
 14 Containment within a city by military force (5)
 17 How can a doubter be so unyielding? (8)
 18 See 11 across
 19 Fictional ape-man created by Edgar Rice Burroughs (6)
 22 Business or skilled occupation (5)
 23 Trap (5)
 24 Divine Creator (3)

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Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included on the guest list for the February 9th tour.



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Sudoku Corner

167

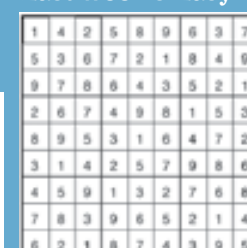
Easy



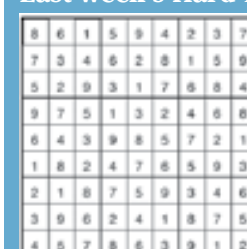
Hard



Last week's Easy 166



Last week's Hard 166



Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



The weakness of the Lamb is our source of strength

A RECENT SUNDAY gospel proclaimed the familiar words: "Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." With those words, Jesus Christ was introduced on to the world stage by his cousin, John the Baptist. As familiar as I am with that phrase, it was the second part of it that shouted out at me. What an outrageous claim by John that Jesus could take away the sins of the world.

While thinking about this, my mind wandered back to a visit I made to a most fascinating museum in Washington DC. Washington is full of interesting museums but none more so than the Newseum. The Newseum is a museum dedicated to everything that has been newsworthy in history.

Violence

So much of what has been newsworthy has been violent, evil and destructive. There is a section which contains the largest piece of the Berlin wall outside Berlin, including a watch tower from the East German side. Next door is an area dedicated to 9/11 and the centre piece are the twisted remains of the antenna on top of one of the World Trade Centre

towers.

From the assassination of leading world figures to the discovery of the link between smoking and cancer, this place is in many ways a museum of the sins of the world.

Throughout history, many groups and individuals have sought to tackle the sins of the world. Governments and great political movements have tried to take away the sins of the world and have often ended up becoming

more corrupt and destructive themselves.

Communism is probably the perfect example because it supposedly sought to rid the world of two of its greatest sins; poverty and inequality. However, as Fr Bill Bausch says, "communism was a powerful, massive bureaucratic, atheistic movement with an elaborate spy system, secret police and censorship that ultimately failed to feed the people either physically or spiritually and



● I'm a great fan of Billy Keane's weekly column in the *Irish Independent*. He can be quite irreverent which is part of the appeal for me. On more than one occasion Billy has written about his childhood friend Fr Pat Moore. I knew of Pat many years ago when I started working in Catechetics. Pat is a genius, a man steeped in poetry and literature, a man of deep spirituality particularly in the Celtic tradition.

Sometime ago in Billy's column, he quoted extensively from a homily Fr Pat gave at a wedding of two of their mutual friends. One passage I found particularly moving: "To love somebody is an art. It doesn't come simply or cheaply, it is a lifetime's work. It is a risk. There will be storms, but there will be times when the beauty of your lives together brings unexpected joy. Deeply buried hurts will resolve and release themselves...healing light flows from unknown regions of the heart...love does change everything. Where there is fear, courage begins to dawn, confusion gives way to clarity. In old walls unexpected doors open. Hearts awaken...Here in St Mary's church, in this house of wise and intuitive shelter, God's house, you are surrounded by family, friends people who wish you well".

so it collapsed". The irony is that in history it has been the lambs and not the lions that have most effectively tackled the sins of the world.

One of the other exhibits in the Newseum is the original lunch counter from a restaurant in Greensboro North Carolina where, on February 1, 1960, four black students sat and asked to be served. Because it was a 'whites only' section they were refused. They in turn refused to move and their act of defiance ignited a civil rights movement which went a long way towards taking away one of the greatest sins of the world.

And there are countless examples of little lambs- lambs of God; little people of honesty and integrity who will conquer sin and take it away. In our own country I think of inspirational young people like Anthony Foley's 11-year-old son Tony who launched a Facebook appeal to encourage people to go to Mass and pray for deceased loved ones; Donal Walsh the young Kerry teenager and cancer sufferer who encouraged people to live life to the full; and Joanne O'Riordan, who challenges our attitudes to those with disability.

For many of them, their

inspiration is the Lamb of God spoken of by John the Baptist whose message and ministry involved turning the other cheek, praying for one's enemies refusing to condemn the woman caught in adultery and running out to welcome home the prodigal son.

This is the Lamb who laid down his life for his friends but through that apparent act of weakness he has strengthened and inspired all of us who choose to follow him.

● The priest appears on Sunday for Mass and his face is covered with small plasters. He explains that as he was shaving that morning he was looking at the text of his sermon and while distracted he cut his face several times. A written message comes up in the collection plate which read: "Next Sunday Father, please look at your face and cut the sermon!!"



DESTITUTE MOTHERS AND CHILDREN IN THE HOLY LAND NEED OUR HELP



The Comboni Missionary Sisters in the Holy Land seek our help with supporting refugee African women and children in Tel Aviv, and disabled Bedouin children in the West Bank. Sr Azezet Kidane and Sr Agnese Elli write from Jerusalem: "Female asylum seekers, many of whom are victims of torture, and/or single mothers with disabled children are among the most vulnerable asylum seekers in Israel. We provide practical and psychosocial support to the women, who have no access to state healthcare. Also, while visiting the Bedouin villages of the West Bank, we have come across many handicapped children, who are also deprived of basic support." The sisters ask for our help with healthcare for these two vulnerable groups of women and their children. They add: "Our appreciation and gratitude goes to all those who in their generosity will contribute to our requests."

Could you help?

The Little Way Association will send your gift, **without deduction**, to the Comboni Missionary Sisters for the relief of the suffering refugee women and children in the Holy Land.



LITTLE WAY HOUSE FATIMA AVAILABLE FOR GROUP BOOKINGS

Would you like to take a group to Fatima for the Centenary celebrations?

Casa Little Way is available for parish or group bookings for pilgrims wishing to participate in the celebrations commemorating the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions to the three shepherd children.

The house is about 20 minutes walk from the Shrine and can accommodate up to 22 pilgrims in shared rooms.

You would need to book your own flights but transport can be arranged between Lisbon airport and Fatima for group bookings.

Ph: 00 44 207 622 0466

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