

The Irish Catholic

THE THIRD AGE

Seeing older people as a resource Page 27

MARY KENNY

If you want to win a war, use words Page 5

DOLORES O'RIORDAN

Singer remembered as 'full of soul and courage' Page 3

Thursday, January 18, 2018

€1.80 (Stg £1.50)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

@IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

Combat surge in evil – top exorcist

Priest pleads with bishop for more exorcists in Ireland

Chai Brady

Strange occurrences and even demonic possession have caused a leading Irish expert to call on Church leaders to appoint a team of exorcists to cope with what he sees as a rising tide of evil in the country.

While for many exorcisms of those possessed by demons are the stuff of Hollywood blockbusters, renowned exorcist Fr Pat Collins told *The Irish Catholic* that he is inundated almost on a daily basis with desperate people seeking his help to deal with what they believe to be demonic possession and other evil goings on.

The priest said he is "baffled" that Irish bishops are not taking more action to appoint priests to deal with everything from people claiming ghostly encounters, being pulled from their beds, and even full-blown possession.

According to Fr Collins, "it's only in recent years that the demand has risen exponentially".

"What I'm finding out desperately, is people who in their own minds believe – rightly or wrongly – that they're afflicted by an evil spirit," he said.

"I think in many cases they wrongly think it, but when they turn to the Church, the Church

doesn't know what to do with them and they refer them on either to a psychologist or to somebody that they've heard of that is interested in this form of ministry, and they do fall between the cracks and often are not helped," he said.

Reality

Fr Collins said that for Church leaders to think there is no demand for priests well-versed in the now seemingly arcane ritual of exorcism is being "out of touch with reality".

He added that it's clear in the Bible that exorcism is central in the ministry of Jesus, and that he wondered if clergy in the modern-day Church still believe that there are evil spirits adding "I suspect they don't".

A spokesperson for the Catholic Communications Office at Maynooth told this paper that the Church does require that each diocese should have a trained exorcist who knows how to distinguish the signs of demonic possession from those of mental or physical illness.

She added: "Exorcisms are very rare and this office has not been made aware of any cases of 'exorcism' in Ireland in recent years".

He said that from time to time the Church does get requests for

» Continued on Page 2



Bro. Cassian Maria Aylward, 28, a native of Sydney, Australia, pronounced his first vows as a Benedictine monk at Silverstream Priory, Stamullen, Co. Meath, on Saturday January 13, 2018, feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Dom Mark Kirby, OSB, Conventual Prior, received, for a period of three years, Bro. Cassian's vows of stability, conversion of manners, and obedience, as set forth in the Rule of St Benedict. See Page 13. Photo: Pawel Kula

LOVE NOTES

How can I get my daughter-in-law to change? PAGE 30



FR ROLHEISER

Is it possible to lose your vocation? PAGE 22

PAGE 22



BRENDA DRUMM

Protecting family time in an age of digital disruption PAGE 28



PILGRIMAGE & SUN HOLIDAY

BENEVENTO, SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO & ALBA ADRIATICA ☀

5 JUNE | 7 NIGHTS

- 1 night Benevento | Full board
- 3 nights San Giovanni Rotondo | Full board
- 3 nights Alba Adriatica | Half board

€939 pps



Joe Walsh Tours
www.joewalshstours.ie
info@joewalshstours.ie
01 241 0800
T.O. 052 | T.A. 0689 | ATOL 5163

Inside this week

World Report

Belgians say new euthanasia law is being abused

Page 14



Personal Profile

Fighting an ancient disease in a modern world

Page 30



Letter from Rome

Hands-on Pope gets all the credit, and the blame

Page 17



Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Features Editor: Mags Gargan, mags@irishcatholic.ie

Chief Reporter: Greg Daly, greg@irishcatholic.ie

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

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874029

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Layout: Declan Moroney

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

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

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874024

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

Managing Director: Garry O'Sullivan

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €125. Airmail €145.

ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Printed by The Irish Times

Place an Advert

Phone 01 687 4094 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Beware of Orwellian doublespeak as referendum campaign kicks off

As I predicted in this newspaper some time ago, Fine Gael is increasingly trying to frame the debate around legalising abortion in all circumstances up to 12-weeks as a moderate position. The reality, of course, is that there is nothing moderate about the state-sanctioned killing of children – whatever the Taoiseach's spin doctors try to say.

Many Fine Gael backbenchers have been wheeled out into the media to speak about the 'journey' that they have been on. Some have claimed that they were against abortion until hearing the evidence before the Committee on the Eighth Amendment.

Setting aside the fact that the committee was heavily weighted in favour of pro-choice voices, it's hard to take seriously politicians who claimed that they were against abortion a few months ago and yet voted for Enda Kenny's abortion legislation in 2013.

It's a classic case of doublespeak so masterfully articulated by George Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – a crass combination of 'doublethink' and 'newspeak'.

Best place

Take, for example, a Fine Gael backbencher who was on RTÉ Radio One this week articulating how her mind had been changed on abortion. She simultaneously claimed to be pro-life while at the same time supporting the right to kill vulnerable children in



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

their mother's womb.

There have been other politicians who have claimed that the campaign to repeal Article 40.3.3 – which guarantees the equal right to life of the unborn child – has nothing to do with abortion. They claim simply to believe that the Constitution is not the best place to deal with such issues.

This rings hollow when the question is asked what they would do in the event of repeal. The inevitable answer is legislate for some form of abortion.

“One can't be in favour of abortion and pro-life at the same time – it's a logical and moral contradiction”

I have also heard other politicians claim that they are personally opposed to abortion but they think that it is up to other people, as if they have no obligation to defend the weakest in society. There is no other rights issue in which such a flimsy argument would be taken seriously.

Take, for example, if the Oireachtas

proposed to introduce exploitative legislation that would permit employers to ride roughshod over the rights of employees. How many TDs and Senators, I wonder, would go in to a television studio and try to argue that while they wouldn't exploit workers themselves, they don't see it as their duty to stop others exploiting vulnerable people? It would be laughable.

The protection of the rights of the unborn, it would seem, is the only issue with which politicians are expected to leave their conscience at the door before voting on.

In a functioning democracy, people are entitled to different views on abortion. I will never agree with someone thinking abortion is okay, but I defend their right to articulate sincerely-held views that are contrary to mine. However, people ought to have the courage of their convictions. One can't be in favour of abortion and pro-life at the same time – it's a logical and moral contradiction.

Politicians should stand by what it is they support rather than talk out of both sides of their mouths. Voters should be wary of doublespeak and call it out where they find it.

Bishops must appoint more priests to fight evil

» Continued from Page 1

for help and refers people to priests with appropriate training and expertise.

“In most cases it will emerge after several meetings that it may be a medical, psychiatric or psychological problem and the person would then be referred to the relevant specialists,” he said.

Pope Francis has regu-

larly reminded followers that Satan's presence is real, that his mission is to turn the faithful away from Christ through temptation, saying that this even infects communities. It has been a theme in many of the homilies throughout his Papacy.

Fr Collins has written an open letter to the hierarchy in which he says he has

observed a growing apostasy within the Church. He writes: “As this has happened, there has been increasing evidence of the malicious activity of the evil one.”

“I can't judge from my own subjective experience because people see on the internet that I'm supposed to be an exorcist so I get an inordinate number of calls from

people, and emails, all I can say is I have that reputation, but it's only in recent years that the demand has risen exponentially,” he said.

Fr Collins notes that Pope Francis gave formal recognition to the International Association of Exorcists in 2014, which is a group of 250 exorcists spread across 30 countries.

FATIMA 17 MAY | 7 NIGHTS

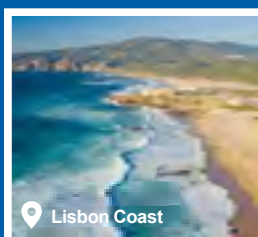
- Direct, return flights from Dublin to Lisbon
- 7 nights hotel accommodation
- Daily breakfast, lunch & dinner
- Led by Spiritual Director

€699
per person

FATIMA & LISBON COAST 17 MAY | 7 NIGHTS

- Direct, return flights from Dublin to Lisbon
- 4 nights Fatima | 3 nights Estoril
- Daily breakfast & evening meal; lunch also served in Fatima

€759
per person



Joe Walsh Tours
www.joewalstours.ie
info@joewalstours.ie
01 241 0800
T.O. 052 | T.A. 0689 | ATOL 5163

LEAVE A LEGACY FOR LIFE - SUPPORT THE PRO LIFE CAMPAIGN IN YOUR WILL

Contact us today to order a copy of our Wills Information leaflet

The Pro Life Campaign promotes pro-life education and defends human life at all stages, from conception to natural death. For more info visit www.prolifecampaign.ie



prolife
campaign

Pro Life Campaign
Suite 60, Clifton House,
Lower Fitzwilliam Street,
Dublin 2
info@prolifecampaign.ie
01 6629275

What do you think?



Let us know by writing to:

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

Dolores O'Riordan remembered as an artist 'full of soul and courage'



Dolores O'Riordan.

Greg Daly and Chai Brady

Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy has praised Cranberries' frontwoman Dolores O'Riordan as an artist of deep spirituality after her sudden death in London on Monday.

He said her "rise to stardom gave a huge amount of belief to young people locally at the time. She was a true child of Limerick; talented, honest, full of soul and courageous."

"And she never lost sight of who she was and where she was from," Dr Leahy said.

He recalled how she "often spoke about her spirituality and how important that was to her and, of course, she met Pope John Paul II."

She spoke of taking a lot of influence for her music from her spirituality. Limerick and the world has lost a kind, soft-hearted, talented soul," he said.

Meanwhile, local priests have said that there is a deep sense of tragedy in the city after the singer's death.

Dolores O'Riordan and the Cranberries on the cover of their *No Need to Argue* album.

Ms O'Riordan's family had been "devastated" by the news, Brickenmore parish priest Fr James Walton told *The Irish Catholic*, adding that her death at the age of 46 had shocked the community.

"Talking to people I've met, everybody is shocked, and very saddened," he said.

"The one word I keep hearing is 'tragedy' – and such a talent that was there," according

to Fr Walton.

"Nobody knows what to say – there's wall-to-wall media coverage, but everyone here's just trying to get their own thoughts around it," he added.

Redemptorist Fr John Goode, who served as chaplain in Laurel Hill Coláiste FCJ when Ms O'Riordan was a student there in the 1980s, said her voice had made her stand out in her schooldays.

"I remember her as having a very distinctive singing voice – there was a unique quality about it, and it would captivate your attention immediately," he said.

Describing people as "deeply shocked" by the news, he said he found it difficult to believe she had died so young. "She was such a gifted and talented woman – it's a great loss," he said.

Ms O'Riordan frequently spoke about her Catholic faith and the importance of prayer in her life. Her mother – with whom she was very close – named her in honour of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors.

Fr Tony O'Riordan SJ, who spent six years as parish priest in Moyross, Co. Limerick, said Ms O'Riordan was a "great ambassador" for the city.

"Obviously we relate to her as fans, but we also think that she's a mother and a wife and a daughter, her family comes to mind very quickly so our thoughts are with them," he said.

'I loved Pope John Paul II' – Dolores

Staff Reporter

Singing for St John Paul II was one of the highlights of Dolores O'Riordan's career.

Speaking to *The Irish News* last year, the late Cranberries singer said her mother had hoped she would consider a religious life, but that while she had chosen a career in music she was still able to make one of her mother's dreams

come true.

"I was invited to sing at the Vatican several times; it was a real honour," she said. "I was chuffed to see inside the place. But one of the best things was taking my mum to meet the late Pope John Paul II. She was blown away. He was such a good man, very kind and I loved him."

The strength of her mother's faith had

helped her through tough times over the years, she said, explaining how in 2014, after she was arrested for an alleged assault on an air hostess, her mother had rushed to her aid, shielding her from the media.

"I'm very close to my mum. She has a strong faith that gives her this amazing sense of peace. I admire her; she's a very strong woman."

JOE WALSH TOURS | 2018



FATIMA ANNIVERSARY OF SR LUCIA

11 FEBRUARY | 4 NIGHTS

- Direct, return flights from Dublin to Lisbon
- Daily breakfast, lunch & dinner

€ only
€499
pps

MEDJUGORJE

MINI BREAKS | 4 & 5 NIGHTS

- 4 nights | 28 March, 1 & 28 June & 4 October
- 5 nights | 19 May & 25 August
- Half board accommodation close to St. James's Church

€ from
€599
pps

SHRINES OF EUROPE FROM APRIL - OCTOBER

- Option 1: Lourdes | Loyola | Burgos | Avila | Fatima
- Option 2: Lourdes | Santiago de Compostela | Fatima

€ from
€799
pps

LISBON COAST ESCORTED TOUR

17 MAY | 7 NIGHTS

- Direct, return flights from Dublin to Lisbon
- Breakfast & evening meal served daily at hotel

€ **€899**
pps

SAN GIOVANNI & ASSISI

21 MAY | 7 NIGHTS

- 4 nights San Giovanni | Full Board
- 3 nights Assisi | Half Board

€ **€899**
pps

HOLY LAND

18 OCTOBER | 8 NIGHTS

- Flying direct from Dublin to Tel Aviv
- 4 nights Jerusalem | 4 nights Tiberias | Half Board
- Fully escorted and led by Spiritual Director, Fr Paddy Byrne

€ **€1,550**
pps

FLY
DIRECT

Jerusalem

SVP saddened at death of respected member

A highly-valued longstanding member of St Vincent de Paul has been remembered as a "compassionate, non-judgemental and caring person" by the charity. John Monaghan joined SVP in 1985 and was an active member of his SVP conference in Leixlip and a member of the National Management Council from 1996-2014. He was the media voice and face of the charity for 15 years, and was awarded the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice for his work in SVP – the highest papal honour that can be given to a layperson.

Advocate

Kieran Stafford, SVP National President said: "He was a truly exceptional member of SVP and has changed so many lives for the better. Every day he used his talents to advocate for social justice in our world, my last conversation with him was on that very subject." "Those of us who had the honour to serve with him will never forget his dedication to help those in need..." Growing up in Drimnagh in Dublin, he became a Professor of Mechanical Engineering in Trinity College, and was elected a Fellow in 1993. He was author/co-author of over 200 journal/conference papers and over 100 research reports. He was a member of the Church's Council for Justice and Peace from 2010-2013.

Priests reject 'sinister' ACP clergy rights card

Greg Daly

A war of words has broken out between the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) leadership team and priests from the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, after Fr Gerard Breen, secretary to the diocese's council of priests, wrote saying the council "strongly disagreed" with a card the ACP sent to clergy advising them on what to do if called to meet their bishop.

The council, Fr Breen wrote, recognised that the ACP had made good points on the care of priests, but took issue with the card's "sinister and false suggestion that a diocesan priest must always prepare for the worst if he is ever called to meet his bishop".

Every member of the council agreed with one priest's observation that "the card has put a far greater distance between the diocesan priests and the ACP than it has between diocesan priests and their bishops", he wrote.

Feedback

The ACP leadership team, however, has said the card was the fruit of feedback at regional meetings and that its protocols were based on guidelines published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Fr Breen's letter did not represent the views of all the diocese's priests, they added.

Meanwhile, the ACP has said it is "very appreciative" of the meeting this week between the ACP leadership and Archbishops Eamon Martin and Diarmuid Martin.

The meeting, which is understood to have been both constructive and wide-ranging, was arranged in November following a request from

Fr Brendan Hoban on behalf of the ACP.

In requesting the meeting, Fr Hoban had said the ACP wished to play its part in ensuring the success of the expected visit of Pope Francis to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families this August.

Describing the papal visit as "a great opportunity for

the Irish Church", Fr Hoban had written that WMOF2018 could generate energy and confidence, re-invigorating parishes and dioceses and encouraging the Church to face difficult issues.

Visit

He had also suggested that in line with Pope Francis' focus

on the poor the papal trip might include, for example, a visit to refugees in Direct Provision.

During the meeting, according to Fr Gerry O'Connor, the ACP "expressed supportive gratitude" to Fr Tim Bartlett and the WMOF2018 team.

Celebrating World Day of Migrants and Refugees



An evening of poetry, music and scholarship to mark the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees took place on Sunday evening at the Notre Dame-Newman Centre for Faith and Reason in University Church, St Stephen's Green, Dublin. Pictured is Seamus Deane who spoke on 'The Right to have Rights' following the 6.15pm Mass chatting with Chiamaka Enyi-Amadi and Christiana Obaro who both read poetry at the event. Photo: John McElroy

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mother of Bobby Sands dies

The mother of well-known hunger striker Bobby Sands was remembered as a principled and devout woman by her daughter.

Rosaleen Sands died last week aged 95 and her funeral was held in St Oliver Plunkett's Church in Blackrock, Louth.

According to *The Irish News* her daughter, Bernadette Sands-McKevitt said at the funeral: "She was a working class girl from a working class area and my mother never forgot her roots."

"She was a principled person who had times of trouble."

She added that none of her siblings were allowed to "leave the house without first saying our prayers blessing ourselves with holy water".

Emerald Isle shoots to success in weapons talks

Ireland has won the 'Arms Control Person of the Year' 2017 award for the Government's leadership during talks relating to disarmament.

The disarmament delegation of Ireland won the award for their leadership during the negotiations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney said: "While last year presented many challenges on the disarmament front, this award recognises the positive progress that has been made, fuelling our desire for further success in our goal to ensure a more peaceful world, free from weapons of mass destruction."

Knights call for Pontiff to appeal to pro-life Catholics

The Knights of St Columbanus have asked that Pope Francis send a letter to all Irish Catholics calling for them to "defend the humanity of the unborn".

A motion to make such a request was put forward at a September meeting of the order, with Grand Knight Richard Greene saying that if the Pope wrote this appeal the Irish bishops would ensure that it be read from the pulpits of every church in Ireland. The motion was passed unanimously.

The Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jude Thaddeus said he would bring their request to the Pontiff's personal attention.

Holy Land Christians 'not forgotten' – bishop

Staff Reporter

A group of bishops from around the world is visiting the Holy Land to remind Christians there that they are not forgotten by their fellow Christians, Derry's Bishop Donal McKeown has said.

Bishop McKeown is visiting Israel and the Palestinian Territories as part of an international delegation of bishops from Europe, North America and Africa. The annual visit,

organised by the Bishops of England and Wales and first suggested by the Holy See 20 years ago with the aim of visiting and supporting Christian communities in the area, is this year focused on education and young people.

"A key purpose of our pilgrimage is to remind the Christian communities in the Holy Land that they are not forgotten by their brothers and sisters in other parts of the world," Dr McKeown said.

The 15 bishops have been

visiting schools and meeting students and other young people from Gaza, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. As part of their hope of contributing to peaceful dialogue in the area, the bishops also met in Jerusalem with the Parents Circle – Families Forum, a body which brings together more than 600 Israeli and Palestinian families who lost relatives due to the prolonged conflict and who today, through various initiatives, support peace, reconciliation and tolerance.

YOUR LEGACY CAN CHANGE THE CHURCH IN IRELAND

PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL

ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO LOVE JESUS AND EMBRACE THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

NETMINISTRIES.IE
+353 74 919 0606

If you want to win a war, use words...

There's an old saying that "the pen is mightier than the sword", and it is as strikingly true today as it ever has been – if "pen" embraces the use of words in general.

People are often judged more by what they say than by what they do. Or even by what other people say about them.

Use a word out of place, make an inappropriate remark or a ill-judged joke, and your reputation can be ruined for life. You can also be ruined for life by a mere allegation – rather than an examination of facts – by words transmitted electronically.

I am no fan of Donald Trump and I wish there were someone more edifying in the White House. Yet it's extraordinary how passionately, ardently and remorselessly he is hated for what he says – or is alleged to have said. Some people are obsessed with hating him. The *New York Times* has considerably increased its output and reach because so many people like to work themselves up into a froth of detestation against Trump.

Meanwhile, according to Justin Webb, British commentator on American politics, the American economy is doing just fine right now, and that's what most voters care about – jobs. And Trump's foreign policy is quite sane, says Justin. But that doesn't weigh against the reckless words he sometimes uses.

Argument

Words and phrases are the political tools of today. Invent a clever phrase and you win an argument.

Surely Catholic parents are entitled to have priority when placing their children in Catholic schools? The phrase used to extinguish that notion is 'the baptism barrier', as though a Christening were a deliberate obstruction



Mary Kenny

President Donald Trump.



against the unbaptised. Just as 'bodily autonomy' is now the phrase to indicate support for abortion up to birth, as though pregnancy didn't involve the bodies of both mother and infant.

Words and phrases are the political tools of today

Those who would defend a moral – or even practical – position should first focus on the currency

of language, and how a single phrase can make all the difference on impact. It has been done before: John Redmond invented the phrase "the House of Lords veto" to demonstrate the disgraceful way in which the House of Commons' vote on Home Rule for Ireland was frustrated. Sinn Féin today has used "parity of esteem" and rights to "equality" very adroitly in the context of the North.

Wordsmiths – attend to this most powerful of all tools: words.

Mocking the less fortunate

I wondered if the Arctic weather would dissuade some younger (and not-so-young) people from wearing deliberately torn jeans, a prevailing fashion. But even in the bitterest cold, I notice the purposely ragged garments still appear.

I don't object to this fashion on grounds of either tidiness or 'respectability'. I'm fond of an eccentric fashion look. What I dislike about the deliberately ripped britches is that it seems to mock the poor. Multi-millionaires like David Beckham have led this style, when poor people in poor countries often need clothing. People in refugee camps often desperately need warm garments, not torn trousers.

The actor Colin Farrell [pictured] recently appeared in a shirt with deliberately ripped sleeves. Again, to me, it's a rich man mocking the poor.



Brexit could be a job for St Jude

From what I hear, Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU are not going well. Someone who was present at a special meeting last week between British business people and Michel Barnier [pictured] came away "very pessimistic" about the chances of a "soft" deal.

The impression was firmly given that the EU 27 are determined to "punish" Britain for voting to leave.

But does the EU realise that a 'hard Brexit' is very bad for Ireland – which has been a



loyal EU member, and doesn't deserve to be punished? A Dublin trader told me earlier this week that a 'hard Brexit' will mean a 20% levy on most of his stock, which would put him, and his staff, out of business. "It would be catastrophic," he said.

I suggested there must be a saint to whom to pray for a positive outcome. St Brigid of Sweden is the designated European saint, but the trader thought that St Jude, who assists hopeless cases, might be better casting.

MARIAN PILGRIMAGES

RENEW OUR SPIRIT OF LOVE, FORGIVENESS AND PEACE

FULLY ESCORTED PILGRIMAGES BY MARIAN PILGRIMAGES



ST. PIO ANNIVERSARY PILGRIMAGES



2018 ANNIVERSARY SAN GIOVANNI PILGRIMAGES

SPECIAL DATE

Visit of Pope Francis - 15 March 2018 - 4 Nights - €799pps

ST PIO FEAST DAY

September 17th 2018 - 7 Nights - €955pps

September 19th 2018 - 5 Nights - €795pps

MINI BREAK

June 1st 2018 - 3 Nights - €599pps

WE INCLUDE Return Flights - Hotel Accommodation - Fully Escorted Packaged Pilgrimage
Spiritual Directors - Services of Marian Pilgrimages Rep. on the Ground
All Airport and Local Taxes

EARLY BOOKING OFFERS 2018



€50 DISCOUNT AVAILABLE ON PILGRIMAGE PACKAGES TO

FATIMA - MEDJUGORJE - LOURDES

BOOKINGS ONLY REQUIRE €100 DEPOSIT BEFORE FEBRUARY 1st 2018 to RECEIVE €50 OFF

All Pilgrimages include an expertly created itinerary with spiritual director, flights, accommodation, transport, guide and a local Marian Pilgrimages representative while abroad as standard.
Full itineraries are available at www.marian.ie or on request by phone

WWW.MARIAN.IE

(01) 878 8159 | (028) 95680005 | info@marian.ie

19 Eden Quay, Dublin 1

Fully licensed and bonded tour operator TO142 - ATOL 10206

Catholic schools make big impact at Young Scientist Exhibition



Aoibhe Briscoe (13), Ellie Concannon (13) and Kate Owens (12) from Coláiste Iognáid SJ, in Galway, focused on the dangers of microplastics in Irish waters, which are very prevalent in schools according to their study 'Think Before You Drink Microplastics'. Photos: Chai Brady



Jack Murphy (15), Luke Cullen (15) and Michael Rafter (16), from Meánscoil na mBráithre Criostaí in Kilkenny, brought 'An investigation into the attitude of recycling in Irish students in primary schools and how it changes as they grow into secondary school' to the exhibition.



Kaleigh Brady, Marina Lago and Natasha McGlynn, all aged 15, focused on the topic 'Facebook depression: is it real' for BT's Young Scientist exhibition.

Chai Brady

A balanced use of social media is important in developing positive mental health and good grades, a group of young student scientists discovered.

Several projects in this year's BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition focused on the growing prevalence of social media in peoples' lives and the effect it's having from day to day.

Participants Kaleigh Brady, Marina Lago and Natasha McGlynn from St Brigid's Vocational school in Cavan found that although 75% of young people believed social media had a positive impact on their lives, those who spent longer periods online had low moods.

"People who spend a lot of hours on social media are

always looking at others' lives and thinking 'they have a perfect life and I don't,'" said Ms Lago.

"It starts making them feel bad, and it can lead to depression and other mental health issues."

Two students – Rosie Murphy (16) and Ciara Maguire (16) – from St Mary's Secondary School in Cork found that certain personalities on social media had a big impact on what people buy.

The influencers are described as "a user on social media who has established credibility in a specific industry/social media platform".

After a survey of 577 people they said they found that it was mainly females who were influenced to buy a product, which they put down to make-up and fashion influencers online.



Students Molly Browne (16) and Sinéad Moynahan (16) from Coláista Treasa in Cork focused on the impact female role models have on girls who are thinking of choosing STEM courses.



Rosie Murphy (16) and Ciara Maguire (16) looked into the impact of 'social media influences'.

REFLECT DURING THE 40 DAYS OF ADVENT & PREPARE FOR CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

WITH THE

MAGNIFICAT

LENTEN COMPANION

Price: €3.75

(Plus €0.90 for P&P)

01 6874024

magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

www.irishcatholic.com/shop

Dublin weekly collections continue downward trend

Greg Daly

Weekly collection figures fell in the Archdiocese of Dublin during 2016, according to the latest diocesan figures.

The newest tranche of reports from the Parishes and Charities of the Archdiocese of Dublin reveal that the diocesan Share collection dropped significantly in 2016, with family offerings to parishes and collections to support clergy also dipping in the period.

The total Share collection across the Archdiocese of Dublin for the 12 months to December 31 2016 was €6,273,000, which over a 52-week year would have meant an average weekly collection of €120,635.

This marks a significant drop on the €128,692 collected in a typical week during the 18-month period to December 31, 2015 covered in the previous set of accounts,

and fits with a general pattern of declining Share figures over recent years; weekly collections for the 12 months ending June 30, 2011 averaged €133,558.

Despite declining collection figures, the Share deficit for 2016 was just €234,000, a rather less alarming figure than the €3.66m shortfall over the 18 months to December 31, 2015. The overall value of the Share fund at year's end stood at €14,765,000, up from €14,447,000 at the end of the previous period.

The total income for the Common Fund, which covers the remuneration of priests serving in the diocese, as well as an amount which is transferred to a 'Clerical Fund' for sick and retired clergy, stood at €14.3m in 2016, which, at €275,000 per week is only a very slight drop on the average €276,077 raised in a typical week over the previous 18 months.

However, with incomes from donations and legacy being practically non-existent in 2016 compared to the previous 18 months – €3,000 as opposed to €547,000 – the fund had a yearly deficit of €920,000, whereas the deficit for the period to December 31, 2015 was €372,000.

Outgoings

Income for parishes, most of which came from the family offering collection, rose slightly in the period: if the €44.9m raised during the 18 months to December 31, 2015 meant an average weekly income of €575,641, the €31.8m raised over 2016 equated to a typical weekly income of €611,539.

Against this, though, given the wide range of parishes in Dublin, income will have declined in many places and these figures need to be read against different outgoings. Significantly, the basic fam-

ily offering figure seems to have dropped from an average of €258,436 per week to €248,288 per week.

Valuation of diocesan assets continues to be the trickiest part of the accounts, even allowing for how heritage assets such as chalices and art are not treated as assets since they are not held as investments or with any intent to dispose of them, or for how diocesan schools, despite being Church property, are treated as being in custody rather than owned.

The previous set of accounts did not consider land values at all, holding off the process of land valuation for later accounts. The 2016 accounts begin the process of identifying and valuing parish land, with land owned by three parishes being valued at €3,254,000, and note that the project of identifying and valuing parish land continued into 2017.

Martin Mansergh

The View



Keeping a close eye on the realities of European Union



EU flags outside the European Parliament in Brussels.

January may be the beginning of a new year. Mostly, it feels like a return to base camp, with life stripped back to its essentials and nature relatively bare. It is a month to be endured. Warmth is comfort; coldness and damp is living in misery.

January also tends to be characterised disproportionately by the disappearance of familiar figures.

The late Paddy Harte, former Fine Gael TD, will be remembered for his cross-border and cross-community initiative with Glen Barr of the Derry UDA, in creating with a young mixed workforce the Island of Ireland Peace Park at Messines with its distinctive Round Tower, opened by President McAleese, Queen Elizabeth, and the King of the Belgians in November 1998. The battle of Messines in 1917 saw Ulster and Irish regiments fight alongside each other during a devastating war that left few communities in Ireland unscathed.

Another disappearance was that of Maurice Hayes, one of the first Catholic top civil servants in Northern Ireland, of a similar mould to Ken Whitaker, also from Co. Down, who headed the civil service in the Republic during the Lemass era. Few people made as big an impact post-retirement as Maurice Hayes.

He served in the Patten Commission on the reform of policing, which paved the way for the creation of the PSNI and its subsequent acceptance across the community. He brought comparative experience to bear with wisdom during 10 years in the Senate, and he also expertly chaired the Forum for Europe in the early 2000s.

Long-term future

The European Union will continue to require our close attention, not just in terms of the immediate challenges of negotiating Brexit, but because it represents, as far as Ireland as a state is concerned, our long-term future.

There is no doubting the Catholic values that went into the making of the EU, with Europe as a concept appearing in letters of 600 and 613 AD from St Columbanus to Pope Gregory the Great and his

successor. The principle of subsidiarity in the EU Treaties comes straight from papal encyclicals. Social partnership, integral to the EU, is sometimes denigrated as neo-corporatism, but unlike the alleged original is an adjunct to democracy, not a possible alternative to it.

“France has no intention of surrendering its permanent UN Security Council seat to the EU”

Every Pope, without interfering in politics, has discreetly supported European unity. Through his impact on his native Poland, Pope John Paul II made a direct contribution to it, and to ending the partition of Europe. He also provided an answer to Stalin's derisive question: “How many divisions has the Pope?”

As referendum campaigns here, whether on EU Treaties or moral issues, have shown, a section of Irish Catholic opinion is deeply distrustful of the EU, where, of course, the Church's writ does not run. One fear was that the EU, or the European Court of Human Rights under the Council of Europe, would try to impose norms in relation to abortion or other moral issues against the will of a majority here.

At this stage, the pressure for change, yet to be measured in a referendum to remove or negate the pro-life amendment in the

Constitution later this year, comes from within. Any outside forces seeking to influence public opinion seem more likely, as in 2015, to come from the other side of the Atlantic than from Europe.

One difficulty in forecasting future EU developments is the absence of a single centre of authority. There are many senior figures, Presidents of the Commission, Council, Parliament, European Central Bank, individual heads of government, and so on, none of whom are in a position on their own to determine the future. Bold plans and visions, if they survive at all, tend to be heavily watered down, and appear only in moderate form after negotiation, compromise and decision.

Defeated German chancellor-candidate and former president of the European Parliament Martin Schulz, who could be German Vice-Chancellor if negotiations for a grand coalition succeed, created waves a few weeks ago, when he called for a United States of Europe by 2025.

This received a negative reception in Germany, the Bavarian CSU leader describing it as utopian. The political head of the German chancellery under Merkel called the target date wholly unrealistic and doubted it would happen in our lifetimes, adding: “The majority of our citizens in nearly all member States do not want sovereignty to reside in a Brussels centralised state.”

While Brexit supporters and EU critics here love to highlight such threats,

they are not to be taken seriously for two reasons. Germany has no intention of substantially enlarging the EU budget, currently around 1% of GDP, and is determined that the EU will not become a transfer union.

Secondly, France has no intention of surrendering its permanent UN Security Council seat to the EU, even if President Macron views the EU as “the instrument of our power and sovereignty”.

Perceived threats to territorial integrity in Eastern Europe mean that countries there still need continued American protection through NATO. Limited and voluntary participation in

European security policy, to combat international terrorism and to support UN-delegated peacekeeping tasks, is consistent with our tradition of positive neutrality. This is no time to distance ourselves from our EU partners, when they have shown strong solidarity with us over Brexit.

Challenges

As British Prime Minister David Cameron discovered when he failed to stop the fiscal compact treaty, individual countries on their own do not have vetoes that cannot be circumvented. Regardless of further challenges to our corporate tax

position, well defended to date over a long period, there are no foreseeable circumstances in which it could be to our advantage to leave the EU and to revert to greater dependence on the UK.

The disappearance of Peter Sutherland reminded us of some advantages to globalisation, of which Ireland is a net beneficiary, and of two of his great achievements, the democratisation of air travel and the Erasmus Scheme, encouraging university student exchanges across Europe. The EU is neither the neo-liberal nor the statist monster conjured up by its critics.

2018

A NEW YEAR

A TIME TO APPRECIATE ANEW ALL THE LOVE IN OUR LIVES

RRP: €15.00

To Love and to be Loved

by Desmond O'Donnell O.M.I.

I cannot think of a book which explores with such insight the importance, the gentle beauty, the demanding realities of love in all its manifestations in our lives.
- Baroness Nuala O'Loan

This wonderful encouraging and wise book rests on a very wide scholarship. I felt I gained much insight into my own life in reading it.
- Mary Kenny, Playwright, author and journalist

I recommend this book to anyone looking for insights or who simply needs confirmation of their own experience of love. Fr. O'Donnell writes with great empathy for all our limitations.
- Bishop Willie Walsh

At a time when hate speech and fake news are coarsening political discourse and widening divides, it is a pleasure to read the wise words of Fr. O'Donnell, showing us the power of love.
- Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland

To Love and to be Loved

Modern life makes questions about love intensely urgent. Loneliness and alienation are increasing. The meaning of love is now a central issue for reflective individuals and groups.

Available from Dominican Publications and Veritas.
www.dominicanpublications.com
or call / 353 (0) 1 8721611

GROWING BOLD & LIVING LIFE FULLY

"Ageing is a time for hope, not despair; for maturing in wisdom, not for personal diminishment; a time for enjoyment, not for colourless living."

PRICE:
€12.99
Free P&P
(ROI)



Love Life is for those in retirement or about to retire aspiring to have a greater understanding of ageing. It portrays ageing as a positive process, a time of endless possibilities for personal enrichment and fulfilment.

By showing us how to have a positive approach to our future years, Catherine McCann empowers us to opt for quality living over a long life without quality.

TO ORDER PHONE 016874096

OR EMAIL SALES@COLUMBA.IE

OR SHOP ONLINE WWW.CURRACH.IE



CURRACH PRESS

Each one of us need to play our part in fighting for unborn

The Dáil this week completed its preliminary debate on the report of the Joint Committee on the Eighth Amendment. It's clear at this stage that a majority of TDs will vote to allow a referendum take place on whether the Eighth Amendment should be retained or not. However, the precise wording of the proposition that we will be asked to vote on, most likely in May or June of this year, is not yet known.

What we do know is that the Joint Committee report contains recommendations that represent the most extreme parliamentary assault on the right to life of unborn babies in the history of the State.

Much of the political and media focus to date has centred on one recommendation in particular – permitting abortion for any reason in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

While this recommendation is horrifying in and of itself it is being used by some to distract from the real issue which is the proposal to repeal the Eighth Amendment itself. Any legislation that would follow repeal could change at any time so any debate at this stage on whether that legislation would be restrictive or permissive is irrelevant.

The fact is if repeal happens the Constitution will be effectively silent on the issue of protecting the right to life of unborn babies. The legislation that would follow could be worded in a very restrictive way for the first year after any referendum and within a short time after that it could be amended to take away any remaining legal protections for the right to life that were included to get the repeal referendum over the line.

“Others in Government will attempt to tone down the final proposal presented to the public”

At that point, it would be too late for well-meaning people to try and hold back the tide. With nothing in the Constitution providing protection for unborn babies, there would be no defence

There are signs that the reality of what repeal would mean in practice is starting to sink in with some politicians, writes **Cora Sherlock**



Dáil Éireann.

against the clamour to strip the remaining protections.

There are signs that the reality of what repeal would mean in practice is starting to sink in with some politicians who up until now seemed content to go along with it. We need these TDs to now stand firm.

But others in Government will attempt to tone down the final proposal presented to the public for no other reason than to ensure its passage in the referendum. The changes they make will be nothing but cosmetic as repealing the Eighth Amendment is where all the damage would be done to the future protection of unborn babies.

Unease

From talking to members of the public since the report of the Dáil committee was issued in December, I have detected a growing sense of unease and a greater awareness of what is going on.

When it's pointed out to people that the political process to date has completely

ignored all the personal testimonies about lives saved by the Eighth Amendment they are taken aback. When members of the public hear that one in every five pregnancies in England now ends in abortion, most people are horrified.

“We should cherish the Eighth Amendment and protect it as the beacon of authentic human rights that it is”

Bypassing the mainstream media groupthink and engaging directly with people on a one to one basis is the key to safeguarding the Eighth Amendment. Each one of us need to play our part in making this happen.

It is vital that the Eighth Amendment be retained in full and that the constitutional protection for the right

to life of both mother and baby is not dismantled and destroyed.

Not only would that be the very antithesis of a democracy that purports to cherish all the children of the nation equally, it would also represent a genuine humanitarian tragedy.

The great Italian philosopher Blessed Antonio Rosmini once described private property rights as a bulwark against tyranny and “a shield around the person”. The Eighth Amendment is our shield around the person, born and unborn. We should cherish it and protect it as the beacon of authentic human rights that it is.

We can win the referendum in May or June, of that there is no question. But it will only happen if each one of us puts our fears to one side and commits to engaging with our friends and families on the issue. Starting today!

❗ Cora Sherlock is a spokesperson for the Pro Life Campaign.



The Christian response to globalisation

While we can't build walls between people, unrestricted immigration is not an answer either, writes **David Quinn**

Globalisation refers to the free movement of both people and goods across borders. Some people are for both types of freedom while others are for either the free movement of goods or the free movement of peoples.

Pope Francis is a critic of economic globalisation. So is Trócaire. So is President Michael D. Higgins. They each think economic globalisation can easily lead to the exploitation of poor people, especially in developing countries when global corporations move their production overseas to take advantage of lower wages in countries like Vietnam.

Many of the Brexiteers in Britain are supporters of free trade, but not the free movement of peoples across borders.

Still others, for example the National Front in France are against the unrestricted movement of both people and goods.

Free movement

On the other hand, some people support the free movement of both goods and people. The late Peter Sutherland is an example of that.

Peter Sutherland presided over free trade talks in 1993 which super-charged economic globalisation following the fall of communism in Europe and China and India's willingness to play a bigger part in the world economy.

In 2012, on the subject of immigration, he argued that the sense of homogeneity of European countries must be undermined.

Referring to immigrant countries like America, Australia and New Zealand he said: "The United States, or Australia and New Zealand, are migrant societies and



Pope Francis greets migrants.

therefore they accommodate more readily those from other backgrounds than we do ourselves, who still nurse a sense of our homogeneity and difference from others.

"And that's precisely what the European Union, in my view, should be doing its best to undermine."

This was a remarkable statement. The EU already allows free movement of peoples from one EU member-state to another and this is already bringing to an end the homogeneity of EU countries, but this would obviously be brought to a swifter end if we completely opened our borders to people from outside the EU, which Sutherland seemed to favour.

“Some Britons were concerned that economic globalisation generally was harming British jobs”

In fact, the EU itself is somewhat protectionist in its own way. That is, it does not allow completely unfettered movement of people and goods (and services) from outside the EU. This is the nub of the Brexit negotiations with Britain.

Britain wants trade with the EU to be as free and unregulated as possible because non-EU countries can't trade as freely with the member-states of the EU as EU countries can. So, there is a limit to the EU's belief in free trade.

They are also arguing over how freely people from around Europe can travel back and forth to Britain and vice versa and settle

and work in one another's countries easily.

Immigration was an issue in the EU referendum in Britain two years ago. Many British people felt their livelihoods and way of life were under threat from very high levels of immigration from other EU countries and from outside the EU.

Some Britons were concerned that economic globalisation generally was harming British jobs. They wanted to 'take back control'. This was the central message of the Leave campaign.

This brings us back to the proper Christian response to globalisation. At the centre of this has to be concern for the poor.

It is concern about the poor that leads some Christians to be critics of economic globalisation. If economic globalisation harms the poor, how could they be otherwise?

On the other hand, someone like Pope Francis seems to favour something quite close to open borders, also out of concern for the poor. Shouldn't the poor of the world be allowed to better their lives by coming to live in our more prosperous societies?

But a concern for the poor can give rise to different conclusions. For example, it is beyond doubt that economic globalisation has massively reduced levels of poverty worldwide over the last 25 years. In countries like China and India literally hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of the worst poverty because of it.

Equally, if you open your borders, or do something close to that, you have to ask yourself about the effects on the poor of your own society.

questions.

What happens to the countries the migrants are leaving? Those who immigrate from developing countries tend to be younger and fitter, and have the money to pay their way to the West. Who is left behind? The older, the less fit, the poorer, who become more vulnerable still precisely because so many of their able-bodied fellow citizens have left.

Simple

So, this isn't simple and there is no definitive way to settle on the position Christians must adopt towards globalisation. Yes, the position must be influenced mostly by concern for the poor, but concern for the poor can lead in one direction or the other.

To my mind, we cannot, as Christians, be in favour of simply 'building walls' that stop the free movement of people and goods. This

would hugely harm the poor of the developing world and ultimately our countries as well, because free trade and immigration up to a certain point has brought huge, if uneven, benefits.

At the same time, I don't think we can simply eliminate borders and build nothing but bridges because of the aforementioned reasons; what it could do to the poor of your own country, and the countries people are leaving.

Therefore, while no definite Christian answer can be given to the question of globalisation, I think we can agree that the answer is not building walls and it is not doing away completely with borders either.

David Quinn's new book is 'How we Killed God (and other tales of modern Ireland)'. It is published by Currach Press.

DAVID QUINN

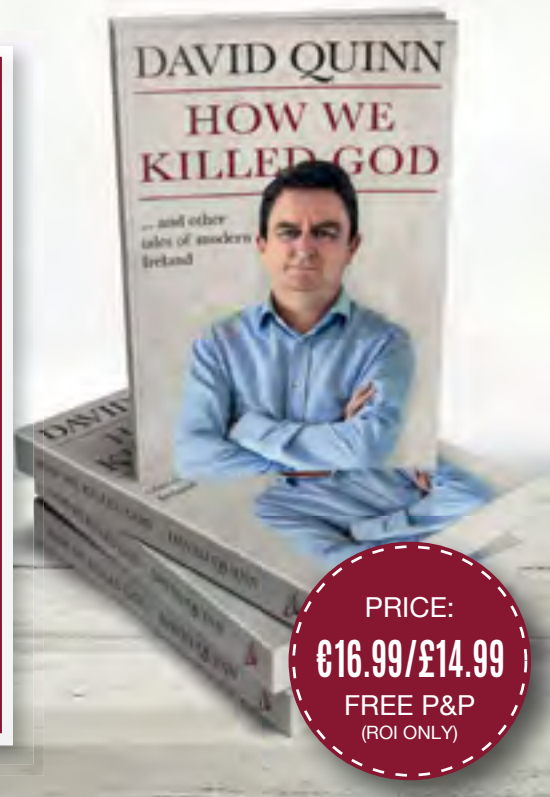
HOW WE KILLED GOD

...and other tales of modern Ireland

For almost 25 years, David Quinn, one of the country's best known and most controversial commentators on religious and social affairs, has charted the turbulent relationship between modern Ireland and the Catholic Church.

He has been a fierce critic of an aggressive secularism that is pushing religion to the margins of public life, and of what he believes is groupthink in contemporary debates.

Through the controversies that have raged about Church and State, marriage and the family, the abuse scandals, the right to life and the Celtic Tiger, this book is a very different take on nearly a quarter of a century of tumultuous change in Irish society.



PRICE:
€16.99/£14.99
FREE P&P
(ROI ONLY)

TO ORDER:

+ 353 (1) 687 4096

sales@columba.ie

www.currach.ie

CURRACH
PRESS

Tackling African drought problems at their very roots



A centre founded by an Irish priest has been proposed as a partner in Africa's Great Green Wall project, writes **Susan Gately**

Fifteen kilometres wide and 8,000 km long, the Great Green Wall is a band of indigenous trees and vegetation planted across Africa which aims to halt the desertification of the Sahel and the migration of displaced Africans throughout Europe.

And an Irish-founded Kenya-based conflict resolution centre could turn out to play a key role in the initiative.

Founded by Irish SMA priest Fr Patrick Devine in 2008, the Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution trains local community leaders in conflict transformation to enable them to analyse and overcome conflict in their own areas.

Since its foundation it has trained over 10,000 "key community opinion shapers" in northern Kenya "traversing the borders of Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, and among the Somali community", Fr Devine says. They have hosted over 340 workshops among 16 tribes in conflict zones and completed over 300 schools projects, many of which are inter-ethnic and inter-religious.

Power

At its educational level, Shalom runs inter-ethnic schools using solar energy for consistent power. In this way they have been able to provide electricity to 150,000 students, in particular in areas of entrenched violent conflict.



"The provision of solar panels to schools enabled children to study each evening, rather than just relying on fire outside their grass huts," according to Fr Devine.

Established in 2008, the centre works by conducting empirical research on the causes of conflict, which are "too often ignored when 'quick-fixes' are applied to problems", Fr Devine says.

Speaking in Maynooth in November at the Fourth Annual Lt. Gen. Dermot Earley Memorial Lecture, the SMA priest told a packed meeting that communities in Africa had difficulty experiencing "sustained development" because periodically schools, hospitals and other institutions become inoperable or totally destroyed. "We will be forever rebuilding and rehabilitating institutions if we do not address the root causes of conflict," he said.

“When completed the Great Green Wall will be an environmental ‘Wonder of the World’ spanning 11 countries”

As well as training community leaders and working on school projects, the organisation tries to influence government policies and strengthen religious and civic NGOs, which are often "best



placed to provide conflict early warning when tension and crisis are brewing".

As BBC foreign correspondent Fergal Keane said when visiting the centre: "What they do here matters to all of Africa."

It's not surprising, then, that the centre has been proposed as a strategic partner for Africa's Great Green Wall, traversing as it does a range of nations and giving rise to a host of issues.

As Society of African Missions (SMA) communications officer Don Mullan, who is liaising with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, says, the centre could be a "very good partner" in the project.

"It can be difficult when you are dealing with land and territory issues across many countries," Fr Devine explained to *The Irish Catholic*.

"The Great Green Wall is an African initiative that deserves the support of the international community," he continued. "When completed it will be an environmental 'Wonder of the World' spanning 11 countries from Senegal in the west, to Djibouti in the east, and benefiting tens of millions of people."

Still years from completion, the project began in 2007 and is expected to cost nearly seven billion euro in total. It is supported by the World Bank, the UN, the Afri-



Fr Patrick Devine, founder and executive chairman of Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (right) with Vincent O'Neill, Ireland's Ambassador to Kenya, and Mahboub Maalim, executive secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

can Union and many NGOs.

Of the 11 countries involved in the project, Senegal is believed to have made the most progress so far, planting 11 million trees. According to one Senegalese village chief, Absaman Moudouba, the project is having a real impact in halting desertification.

"When there were no trees the wind used to dig up and erode the soil. But it is more protected now. The leaves provide compost and the canopy increases the humidity of the environment and offers some shade so there is less need for a lot of watering" he said.

“The project began in 2007 and is expected to cost nearly seven billion euro in total”

The wall is made of drought resistant Acacia trees which retain water in their roots. This is causing formerly dry wells to fill up again. Mr Moudouba says the wall has generated a whole new economy. "Before there was widespread drought and hunger here, then the tree planting took place, and then a garden for the women to grow crops." Currently 200 women are working on the wall and, he says, "paid well".

Nomads who had previously migrated simply follow the line of the Green Wall for jobs and no longer have to leave the country, he says.

Attendance at local schools has increased and people are hopeful the children will be able to make a future for themselves.

Benefits

The benefits of the wall, then, should seem obvious, and so the Shalom Centre is working closely with the Society of African Missions through projects like the 'Laudato Tree' Project, to spur on support in Ireland for the Great Green Wall and reforestation in general.

Already backed by President Michael D. Higgins, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Irish biodiversity groups, the *Laudato Tree* project, which will be launched in parishes and schools early this year, encourages people to nurture and protect trees both in Ireland and in Africa in order to reduce and heal the effects of climate change.

Developed to coincide with the World Meeting of Families, being held in Dublin this August, it – according to the Society of African Missions – "presents an opportunity to promote family engagement both locally and globally".

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis tries to rouse us to care for our common home: through *Laudato Tree*, the Shalom Centre and others help every single one of us, wherever we are in Ireland, to try to reverse the desertification of Africa and to tackle the refugee crisis at the roots.

Focus Ireland moves two families out of homelessness every day in 2017



Sr Stanislaus Kennedy, Life President & Founder of Focus Ireland explains that while the homelessness crisis is the worst we have ever seen, the situation would be much worse without the work of Focus Ireland. She also explains how the crisis can be ended by returning to more provision of social housing...

When I founded Focus Ireland back in 1985 I thought we could solve homelessness within 10 years by housing all the people who were homeless and preventing people from falling into long-term homelessness. And I was not far wrong: if the Government had continued to provide social housing as they had done in the past, then it would have been quite feasible.

But as we all now know, to our horror and shame, that is not what happened. Instead, successive Governments made a conscious decision to move away from providing housing for people who could not afford to house themselves, and we saw a sharp decline in social housing.

We went from a situation where up to a third of houses in the country were provided by local authorities in the 1970s to a figure of 6.6% in the early years of this century – in spite of constantly increasing demand. The pri-



vate sector was supposed to step into the breach – with the results we now see daily on our streets and nightly on our television screens.

The government must return to delivering more social housing if we are to end this current crisis.

We, in Focus Ireland, are

working to end this crisis by putting our energy into helping those impacted, and finding practical solutions. We need to end homeless-

ness because it is morally and fundamentally wrong.

It breaks my heart to know that across Dublin last year more children were born into homelessness than ever before. Some of them recently spent their first Christmas stuck with their family, forced to live in one little room together.

Beliefs

This is truly awful and it made me think back to what Christmas is all about and to the first Christmas in Bethlehem when nobody would take in Mary and Joseph and Mary had to give birth to Jesus in a stable and lay him in a manger.

I am sure this will strike a chord with everyone no matter what their beliefs are, similarly these children today have also been turned away and left as homeless.

They are our children too and we have a duty as a society to provide a safe home for them. This is what we are working to do.

In 2017 Focus Ireland managed to help over 700 families to secure a home and escape homelessness.

However, the crisis still continued to deepen as shockingly at least two or

three more families – and other individuals – became homeless every single day in 2017.

How can we stand by while families and their children who are homeless are forced to live in one hotel room for months at a time?

There is nowhere safe for the children to play, do their homework or for the family to even cook a meal.

This is causing terrible damage for these families and also the many single people who are homeless, stuck in hostels or some even sleeping on the streets.

“We depend on donations now more than ever to raise funds so our services can cope”

Focus Ireland continues to put forward realistic policy solutions to help prevent and end homelessness.

While the crisis is still deepening the situation would be much worse without the lifeline services and housing we provide.

We are there when people need us. We helped a record number of over 14,000 people last year who were homeless or at risk. We also provide over 900 homes nationwide.

We work hard to support families and individuals every day but we depend on donations now more than ever to raise funds so our services can cope with the constantly rising demand.

Focus Ireland always stresses that every euro donated counts in the battle against homelessness as 89 cents of every euro received goes directly to our services to support people who are homeless and those at risk.

Any donation will support our work challenging homelessness and changing lives and help us to move towards ending this terrible human crisis.



Out&About

A special Sunday Mass in Kildysart



CLARE: To celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in Kildysart parish, babies baptised in the parish in 2017 were blessed during Sunday Mass.



GERMANY: Students from Mitchelstown, Cork's Presentation Secondary School, visiting Cologne Cathedral.



ANTRIM: Catherine Gribbon, Katie Rice and Kevin Bradley from the Trócaire Society in Queen's University Belfast pictured after holding a trad session that raised £611.64.



CLARE: Families affected by the Carmody Hotel Tragedy at a Diamond Jubilee Commemoration in Ennis with Bishop Fintan Monahan.

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication

ARMAGH

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

CORK

Life in the Spirit Seminar in Knockavilla Community Centre (Innishannon/Knockavilla parish). Introductory night on Friday February 2 at 7.30pm, followed by 7 weeks Life in Spirit Talks, every Friday, from February 9 to March 23 at 7.30pm. Tel. 087 4589133.

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

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

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

DERRY

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

A 'Celebration of Family' will take place in St Mary's College, Derry, on Saturday February 3, from 10am-6pm.

DUBLIN

Nine days novena, Mass and activities from January 12 to January 20 for the Feast of Santo Nino (Holy Infant). Blessing of Children on January 20 at 5.10pm. Outdoor procession on January 21 at 1.15pm followed by Mass and Sinulog. All events: St Joseph's Church, Berkeley Road.

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

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

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

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

FERMANAGH

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

GALWAY

The Poor Clares are hosting a Cloister Day on Saturday January 27 from 10am to 5pm. It is designed to help

young women aged 21-40 who are exploring the possibility of a religious vocation find out about the Poor Clare lifestyle. Contact: poorclaresgalwayvocations@gmail.com

KERRY

Share The Living Word of God: A six week programme of prayer and reflection, creating a presentation and giving talks and reflections to one another on Tuesday January 23 and 30 from 7.30pm to 9pm, and Tuesday, February 6, 13, 20 and 27 from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Ardferret Retreat Centre.

The Practice of Lectio Divina: Fr Brendan Clifford OP, Thursday January 18 from 7pm-9.30pm in the Ardferret Retreat Centre.

KILDARE

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

LOUTH

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

LIMERICK

Maranatha Prayer Ministry Healing Retreat Sunday, January 21, at 2.30pm at St Pauls Church, Dooradoyle through the Ministry of Bishop Brendan Leahy, Limerick and Jomon (Voice of Peace Ministry). Rosary, divine mercy chapel, song, talk, Confessions, Mass 5pm. Tea after.

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday 19 of January and every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. All Welcome. Enquiries Dave; 085-7746763.

ROSCOMMON

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

SLIGO

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

WICKLOW

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

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

An Icon Course will take place for a week, from February 26 to March 2, in the Carmelite Monastery, Delgany in Wicklow. The tutor is Mihai Cucui. Beginners are welcome. Contact: mihaicucu78@gmail.com



LIMERICK: Bishop Brendan Leahy of the Limerick Diocese is pictured during a Redemptorist youth ministry study day.



CHICAGO: College students Neil Shevlin, Mark Caffrey, Sarah Kate Moynihan, Alanna Bradley and Ivan Mather from the Diocese of Meath attend a Student Leadership Summit in Chicago organised by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), which was attended by over 8,000 people.



TYRONE: Fr Roland Colhoun of Newtownstewart Parish with Kevin McAnulla and Mark McAnulla, whose family donated the new porcelain vessel for Holy Water. The vessel was unveiled and blessed to mark the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord in the Oratory of Mary Mother of God.

IN SHORT

Meath youth volunteers attend US Leadership Summit

Five college students from the Diocese of Meath have commended a leadership summit in Chicago saying it was "a really positive experience" after joining over 8,000 people at the event. The Student Leadership Summit was organised by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS).

FOCUS is an outreach that helps college and university students to deepen their relationship with Jesus and the Catholic Faith. It aims to inspire and equip students for a lifetime of Christ-centred evangelisation, discipleship

and friendships which allows them to lead others to do the same.

The Meath participants included Neil Shevlin from Ratoath, Mark Caffrey, Ratoath, Sarah Kate Moynihan, Ashbourne, Alanna Bradley from Dunshaughlin and Ivan Mather (Ratoath).

"It was a really positive experience," Mark Caffrey said. "The summit encouraged us and helped us bring the Gospel to our generation which so desperately needs to hear it."

"Almost 80% of those who leave the Catholic faith do so by the age of 23. There are many of us who are college students and Faith means a lot to us. We are eager to deepen our Faith and to

share with it in a positive and fresh way with our contemporaries."

Australian monk pronounces vows in Meath priory

An Australian native pronounced his first solemn vows as a Benedictine monk in Meath, and was reminded during the homily why he left his native home to become a monk.

Dom Mark Kirby OSM, Conventual Prior, asked Bro. Cassian Maria Aylward: "Why did you leave your father and your mother, and your brothers, Matt and Luke, and your dear grandparents, and all your mates in Australia? Why did you leave the sunshine and sparkling waves

of the beaches of Sydney for this darkling east coast of Ireland?"

Answering his question, Dom Kirby said that like John the Baptist, Bro. Cassian (28) saw Jesus coming towards him. The profession took place during Mass in Silverstream Priory in Stamullen.

Bro. Cassian, a 2007 graduate of St Paul's Catholic College, Manly, holds a degree in education from Notre Dame University, Sydney. Before embracing the monastic life in 2016, Bro. Cassian was an avid body-boarder in the Australian surf and taught primary school in Sydney. He currently serves as the monastery's guestmaster.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Hindu students' raid on Catholic college crushed by police

● Right-wing Hindu students clashed with police in central India after they tried to storm a Catholic-run college to conduct a Hindu religious rite, according to Church sources.

About 800 students from the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) group were charged by police after trying to gain access to St Mary's College in Vidisha, in Madhya Pradesh state. They wanted to conduct the Aarati, a Hindu ritual.

Student leader Ankit Garg said that all they wanted to do was to promote patriotism among students.

College director Fr Shaju Devassy said the attempt to storm the college was not about prayer or patriotism, but was a symbolic attempt to impose Hindu dominance over minorities.

Religious leaders warn against US decision on Jerusalem

● Church leaders in the Middle East are intensifying efforts to combat US President Donald Trump's decision to declare Jerusalem as Israel's capital as well as plans to move the US embassy there.

"The two-state solution is accepted by all the world, including the Vatican. It corresponds to the legitimate resolutions passed by the United Nations," Auxiliary Bishop William Shomali of Jerusalem, patriarchal vicar for Jordan said.

Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem said: "Any unilateral decision is not a solution. Jerusalem cannot be reduced to a dispute. It is something much more than that."



You can support the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (POF) in a number of ways:

Prayer
Leaving a gift in your Will
Regular donations
Mass stipends



©Missio

POF is responsible for building much needed infrastructure in predominantly remote areas. Through POF, your support transforms lives and creates a hub from which the Young Church can flourish and grow, spreading the Good News of the Gospel. Priests in mission dioceses with a large number of outstations in remote rural areas cannot pay regular visits to the scattered communities of the faithful. They rely on the support of catechists and lay pastoral leaders, who travel long distances to lead prayer and minister the Sacraments. Funding received through POF enables the training of more catechists and pastoral leaders who are essential to the growth of the Church overseas.

☐ **YES, I want to help the Propagation of the Faith**
I enclose €

Name

Email

Address

Fr Maurice Hogan SSC
National Director WMI
64 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6, Ireland.
Web www.wmi.ie | Tel +353 1 4972035

WORLD MISSIONS
IRELAND

Charity No.
CHY2318.

Belgians say new euthanasia laws are being abused

Catholics in Belgium are concerned the country's euthanasia law is being abused to kill patients without legal checks and safeguards.

Auxiliary Bishop Jean Kockerols of Mechelen-Brussels said "not just the Church's hierarchy, but doctors and medical professionals as well" were concerned.

The Belgian Church's Cathobel news agency published an article saying the Federal Euthanasia Control and Evaluation Commission violated its statutes by failing to refer suspected legal abuses for investigation.

"It's shocking that, 15 years since its creation, this commission has not referred a single file to prosecutors or condemned a single doctor," the Catholic report said.

"It is acting as judge and jury, and not fulfilling its role. It isn't broadening application of the law, but violating it."

Bishop Kockerols said that the Church had long been aware the commission was "not working as it should." He said the bishops would support any investigation into

its activities or "any steps to ensure it functions as it's supposed to."

"We're against euthanasia in every form, and the Church's official position is well known," he said.

Euthanasia and assisted dying were legalised in traditionally Catholic Belgium in 2002, and euthanasia deaths are increasing by 27% annually, according to Health Ministry data.

The federal euthanasia commission, headed by Dr Wim Distelmans, a euthanasia practitioner, is required to verify that euthanasia deaths follow procedures written into the law, referring suspected violations within two months to a state prosecutor.

Dementia

However, in its report, Cathobel said a commission member had recently resigned when the case of a dementia patient, killed without consent, was not referred to prosecutors.

It added that the commission had failed to refer complaints by the family of a



Auxiliary Bishop Jean Kockerols of Mechelen-Brussels.

38-year autism sufferer, when she was killed by request without required documentation after ending a love affair.

Bishop Kockerols said he was pleased prominent Belgians were now debating euthanasia practices, rather than resigning themselves to them.

He added that public support for euthanasia remained widespread, especially in the country's Flemish-speaking regions, but said it was impor-

tant the "moral dangers" were better recognised.

"Even if there's little chance for now of legal changes, the Church can work on a moral and pastoral level with medical staff and support critical voices," the bishop said.

"We've been discussing tougher application of Church rules to those who endorse euthanasia. But we also have to be prudent, considering each situation with its nuances."

Debate needed on blessing same-sex marriages – German bishop

The vice president of the German bishops' conference has urged a debate on whether Catholic clergy should bless same-sex unions.

"I'm concerned with fundamental questions of how we deal with each other; although 'marriage for all' differs clearly from the Church's concept of marriage, it's now a political reality," said Bishop Franz-Josef Bode of Osnabruck.

"We have to ask ourselves how we're encountering those who form such relationships and are also involved in the Church, how we're accompanying them pastorally and liturgically."

In autumn, the first gay weddings

were conducted in Germany, following a June 30 vote by the parliament to allow full same-sex marriage.

"Same-sex relationships are generally classified as a grave sin in the Church, but we need to think how we can differentiate," Bishop Bode said in an interview with the *Neue Osnabrucker Zeitung* daily.

"Shouldn't we be fairer, given that there is much that's positive, good and right in this? Should we not, for example, consider a blessing – something not to be confused with a wedding ceremony?"

He said the Church should discuss same-sex unions in more detail and

recognise "silence and taboo" settled nothing.

Canons 1055-1057 of the Church's Code of Canon Law define marriage as an indissoluble union between a man and woman.

June vote

The June vote to allow same-sex marriage was condemned by German church leaders, including Archbishop Heiner Koch of Berlin, chairman of the Church's Marriage and Family Commission, who said in a statement same-sex cohabitation could be "valued through other institutional arrangements".

Missing priest taken by Chinese government

A Chinese priest involved with the country's underground Catholic Church has been missing ever since government officials took him just after Christmas for "re-educating".

Fr Lu Danhua of Lishui Diocese of China's eastern Zhejiang province was the only priest of the diocese, and took over from Kenneth Roderick Turner of Scarborough Foreign Mission Society from 1948 to 1983.

He was ordained to the country's

underground Church by Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin of Wenzhou on December 14 in 2016, and served Lishui Diocese until the incident.

Bishop Shao was released by authorities on January 3 after being detained since May 2017. A source who did not want to be named told *ucanews.com* that the reason for taking Fr Lu away was not related to Bishop Shao.

But he said authorities had stated that Fr Lu needed to go to Wenzhou

for "re-educating" on new religious regulations coming into effect on February 1 and that he would return after obtaining a permit to be a priest.

At noon on December 29, officials of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) took Fr Lu away from a priests' dormitory. A Catholic who witnessed the incident said the officials claimed Fr Lu was only going for a brief chat.



Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie

Warm reception in Chile for Francis



Pope Francis walks with Chilean President Michelle Bachelet as he arrives at the international airport in Santiago, Chile. Photo: CNS

Vatican names trustee to lead scandal ridden Peru order

The Vatican has named a Colombian bishop to be the trustee of the scandal-plagued *Sodalitium Christianae Vitae*, a Catholic movement based in Peru.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life appointed Bishop Noel Londono Buitrago of Jerico, Colombia, trustee of the group, the Vatican press office announced.

Pope Francis, the statement said: "has followed with concern all the information that for years has arrived at the congregation" about the movement founded by Luis Fernando Figari. In 2017, Sodalitium leaders released a report acknowledging that Figari sexually, physically and psychologically abused minors, teen and young adult members of the movement.

Pope Francis "insistently requested" the congregation to act, the statement said, adding that he had been "particularly attentive to the gravity of the information regarding the (movement's) internal regime, the formation" process members went through and the financial operations of the group.

Concerns

Those concerns, along with a Peruvian court's request that Figari be jailed pending a criminal investigation into allegations of sexual and psychological abuse, led to the congregation's decision to name a trustee to assume control of the movement, the statement said. Figari apparently is living in Rome; in the first weeks of 2017, the Vatican

informed *Sodalitium* leaders that Figari had been ordered to remain in Rome and not have any contact with the organisation or give interviews to the media.

The Vatican also said Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey, will continue to be the Vatican's delegate in its relationship with the Sodalitium, particularly regarding economic questions.

The cardinal was named delegate in 2016 after a report drafted by an internal *Sodalitium* ethics commission painted Figaro as an abusive dictator who controlled and manipulated teens and young adults, enjoying a life of "personal privilege" while forcing rigorous austerity on others.

Syrian archbishop thanks Providence after bomb blast escape

A Maronite archbishop in Syria narrowly escaped death by just a few seconds when a shell crashed through his bed as he was preparing for a nap.

In an email to supporters Archbishop Samir Nassar of Damascus said priests cried when they saw him emerge from the ruins.

"Providence watches

over his poor servant," the archbishop said.

The shelling damaged 43 windows and doors of the cathedral, as well as fuel and water tanks.

Forced to leave, Archbishop Nassar said: "I am exiled like the 12 million Syrians who have done nothing.

"Violence is the only

master, innocents are being sacrificed every day."

Damage

ACN said the Melkite Patriarchate on Straight Street, the only road mentioned in the New Testament and the place where St Paul stayed, also suffered damage when a bomb fell on the courtyard.

The archbishop's supporter, Antonia Moffat, said several nuns from the Sisters of Jesus and Mary convent in Damascus, led by Sr Annie Demerijan, narrowly escaped death in a similar incident.

They have asked for prayers for seven people in hospital who were injured during the bombing.

Vatican roundup

Amoris Laetitia teaching should be faced with 'dedication'

The difficulties accepting Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia* are probably connected to accepting the new attitude and approach to providing pastoral care according to the Vatican Secretary of State.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin said that the Pope's exhortation on the family "flowed from a new paradigm that Pope Francis is pursuing with wisdom, with prudence and with patience".

"Probably the difficulties that arose and still exist in the Church, beyond some points of view on the content, are due to precisely this change in attitude that the Pope is asking of us – a change in paradigm, inherent in the text, that is asked of us, this new spirit, this new approach," he said.

Change

He said that although every change entails difficulties, they are to be faced with "dedication" in order to encourage further growth.

When asked about the ongoing reform of the Curia, Cardinal Parolin said the process of change again has less to do with external, "structural" changes and more to do with an internal call for "conversion".

Reform is not just a series of new laws, rules and appointments as much as it is about the kind of "deep spirit that must animate every reform of the Curia," he said.

Hypocritical pastors wound the Church – Pope

Pastors who preach one thing and do another are wounded and harm the Church, Pope Francis said.

Like the scribes and Pharisees of old, pastors end up leading a double life when they detach themselves from God and his people, the Pope said during morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"Jesus is clear in this: 'Do what they say' – they speak the truth – 'but not what they do,'" the Pope said. "It is awful to see

pastors with double lives: it is a wound in the Church."

The Pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading from St Mark in which Jesus astonishes the crowd by his preaching because he taught "them as one having authority and not as the scribes".

That same authority, the Pope explained, is awakened in today's pastors when they are "close to God in prayer and close to the people".

Observe silence, don't hurry at Mass says Pontiff

Pope Francis has said the silence that precedes the opening prayer at Mass is an opportunity for Christians to commend to God the fate of the Church and the world.

Departing from his prepared text at his weekly General Audience, the Pope urged priests "to observe this brief silence and not hurry". "I recommend this to the priests. Without this silence, we risk neglecting the reflection of the soul," he said.

Continuing his series of audience talks on the Mass, Pope Francis spoke about the Gloria and the opening prayer. After the encounter between "human misery and divine mercy" experienced in the penitential rite, the Faithful are invited to sing the ancient hymn of praise that was sung by the angels after Christ's birth, the Pope said.

"The feelings of praise that run through the hymn," he said, "are intertwined with the confident pleading of divine benevolence" that characterises the entire liturgy and "establishes an opening of earth to heaven".

After the hymn, the priest invites the assembly to pray and observes a moment of silence so that the Faithful may be conscious of the fact that they are in God's presence and formulate their petitions, the Pope explained.



Dominican Sisters of the Congregation of St Cecilia in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

Nuns are source of curiosity, but can be 'sole scapegoats'

Even as their numbers continue to decline in most jurisdictions, nuns, as in cloistered contemplatives, and religious sisters in the active congregations, continue to attract, bemuse, fascinate, confound and even repel observers from both within and outside the Catholic orbit.

Various documentaries on the 'religious' calling of women by the BBC and other networks, the Spanish for instance, have generated very favourable responses and wide public interest. 'Live-in' experiences in a convent may strike the seasoned Catholic as cynical but public reactions have been highly positive.

Novitiate is a work of stunning ineptitude: misguided casting, formulaic cinematography, poor direction...

Films and television series about Catholic and Anglican sisters have been plentiful – think of the estimable *Call the Midwife* as well as past series like *Body and Soul*, *In this House of Brede* and of films like the storied American *The Nun's*



Michael W. Higgins

Story and the brilliant Polish film *Ida*.

There, of course, have been countless comedic films, sitcoms, reality shows, exposés, documentaries and cameo portraits. If nuns are a disappearing act – in fact, they are not – then one can only be puzzled by their staying power in the public imagination.

They are often a bellwether of Catholic institutional life and an inexhaustible source of wider curiosity.

They have also been the focus of severe judgement, and sometimes the sole scapegoat, of egregious wrongs: residential schools for indigenous children, the Magdalene Laundries, etc. To be a nun must sometimes feel like being at the centre of swirling opinions and controversies

– anything but the stilled life contemplatives ardently seek.

And, then, lamentably there is the recently released US film by director/writer Maggie Betts, *Novitiate*. This is a work of stunning ineptitude: misguided casting, formulaic cinematography and poor direction resulting in stereotypical posturing and a script riddled with inaccuracies.

How can you take seriously a text that has an archbishop who can't grasp the semantic and existential difference between a novice and a novitiate, a mother abbess who is a variant of the Beast of Belsen, postulants and novices primed for grim psychotherapy and ignorant of anything theological, and all of this taking place in a cauldron of seething libido?

In a brief conversation recorded in the Talk about Town section of the *New Yorker* Betts identifies the source of inspiration for her movie. "It was a collection of Mother Teresa's letters. They were obsessive about her love for

her husband and I was thoroughly confused until I realised they were about God, and she was in so much pain because he had abandoned her for long periods across 30 or 40 years.

"Mother Teresa spent her life torturing herself and I and so many of my girlfriends also got into that dynamic with men of 'how do I make him love me?'"

Taking the notion of a nun as the bride of Christ literally, enveloping it in the direct experience of her own and her friends' love lives, she can only conclude that convent life is a misplaced life, riven by sexual confusion, repressive, an ugly mirror of patriarchal structures, and a prison to escape.

Betts, who is not Catholic and appears to have only the sketchiest grasp of what consecrated life is, has her fictitious congregation of cloistered repressives roiled by the Second Vatican Council, poised to

empty itself of its loveless inmates, erupting in a new and dangerous freedom.

It's all tripe, replete with sad caricatures, a sad script, and an incomprehensible ending. It is what happens when a script is written to a thesis built on shoddy work.

“Betts, who is not Catholic and appears to have only the sketchiest grasp of what consecrated life is”

The ascetic life is worth exploring, apophatic spirituality is a mystery worth probing and cloistered life is a subject of legitimate inquiry, artistic and sociological. And even when nuns and sisters are treated synonymously – and that is an historical and canonical mistake – much good can come from an enflashed portrait that is not fearful of subverting pious conventions.

But *Novitiate* fails by every standard.

Visit Michael W. Higgins' blog, *Pontifex Minimus*: <http://sacredheartuniversity.typepad.com/pontifexminimus/>



Melissa Leo stars in *Novitiate*.

Letter from Rome

Hands-on Pope gets all the credit, but also blame



John L. Allen Jr

Bishop Brian Farrell, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, gave a talk at Notre Dame's Global Gateway facility in Rome addressed to ecumenical and inter-faith experts, which laid out the Church's post-Vatican II approach to ecumenism and the new directions the press to bring Christians together is getting from Pope Francis.

Along the way, Farrell – not to be confused with his brother, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Family, Laity and Life – told a story about Francis, which he intended as a lesson in the Pontiff's understanding of ecumenical relations, but which also has much to teach on other levels as well.

The story goes like this: one afternoon not long ago, Farrell was sitting in his office when the latest *L'Osservatore Romano* arrived. (The next day's edition of the newspaper is distributed in Vatican offices the afternoon before it hits newsstands.) He found himself perusing a list of the Pope's audiences that day, and spotted a representative of another Christian Church – a person he'd never heard of, from a Church he'd never heard of.

“Francis feels that ecumenical progress isn't always going to come from institutional dialogues and venues”

That struck Farrell as odd, since normally his office prepares those meetings, so he said he checked various directories and resources and couldn't come up with anything by way of background. Finally, he called over to the Prefecture of the Papal Household, which is the Vatican office that puts together the Pope's daily public schedule, to ask where the appointment originated.

The answer was that it came from the Pope, so Farrell said



Pope Francis gestures during his general audience at the Vatican earlier this month. Photo: CNS

“thanks” and more or less forgot about it. The next morning, he said, he was at his desk when the phone rang, and it turned out to be Francis himself.

“I understand you were asking about an appointment I had yesterday,” the Pope told him.

Startled, Farrell acknowledged that he had indeed inquired, and Francis went on to tell him that it was a person he had known from the time before he was Pope. He added that he feels that ecumenical progress isn't always going to come from institutional dialogues and venues, but also from direct one-on-one friendships.

Farrell himself supplied the obvious punchline: “How's that for hands-on?”

He went on to say that the experience illustrates the way Francis sees ecumenism as a matter of “walking together”, a journey of friendship that stands alongside and informs the theological and ecclesiological exchanges that go on in formal dialogue programs.

Of course, the story also illustrates something else, which is that Francis is remarkably well-informed about the nuts and bolts

of actually running the Church. We're talking about a Pontiff who knew within hours that someone had called over asking about his schedule, and who acted immediately on that information.

I've heard similar stories from all kinds of other people. One cardinal who heads a Vatican department told me he keeps his mobile phone on pretty much all the time now, because the Pope may call at unexpected moments, and that for every one meeting with the Pontiff he's had that ends up on his public calendar, there have been three or four more at the Santa Marta, where Francis lives, off the books.

To take another example, my *Crux* colleague Claire Giangravé and I interviewed Cardinal John Onaiyekan of Abuja, Nigeria, this week, about the vexed situation in the Diocese of Ahiara, where a group of priests and laity have resisted the appointment of a new bishop for five years.

One rumour that's gone around the diocese is that Francis is insisting they accept the bishop only because he's poorly informed about what's going on, but Onaiyekan insisted that's a fantasy. “We know that they wrote

many letters, and they all got to the Pope,” he said. “The Pope was well aware of it, which is why he came out as firmly as he did. It's not true that he didn't know what was happening.”

Culture shock

All this is something of a culture shock compared to the internal climate in the Vatican under the last two Popes, St Pope John Paul II and Pope emeritus Benedict XVI.

Both were very much ad extra figures, whose passions lay outside the mechanics of ecclesiastical governance, and both were often content to leave many administrative matters in the hands of their aides.

That's clearly not the style of Francis, who is often happy to delegate, but who also never stops watching and stands ready to intervene at any time.

Critics of Francis (think the *Dictator Pope* folks) see that relentless will to stay informed as the fruit of a paranoid personality, who recruits spies because he suspects enemies everywhere. Admirers, on the other hand, see it as a man who takes his responsibilities deeply seriously,

and who has the intellectual acumen to operate simultaneously on the macro and micro levels of leadership.

What nobody disputes is the fact of the situation, which is that Francis just flat-out knows what's going on.

And that, by a short turn, brings us to the moral of the story.

Under John Paul II and Benedict XVI, when people got mad about one thing or another, they usually had the option of not faulting the Pope but somebody around him. It was, in a sense, the classic psychology of a royal court – one must never fault the monarch, but his courtiers are always fair game.

That's just not a viable option in the Francis era. There's no power behind the throne, no grey eminence, no regent pulling the strings, on his watch.

This is a Pope who governs in the first person singular – which means, of course, he gets all the credit when things go right, but also all the blame when they don't.

John L. Allen is editor of *Crux*. com

“One cardinal who heads a Vatican department told me he keeps his mobile phone on pretty much all the time now, because the Pope may call at unexpected moments...”

FOCUS Ireland

700 families escape homelessness thanks to Focus Ireland



Roughan Mac Namara
Focus Ireland Advocacy
Manager

At the start of 2018 Focus Ireland has reported that our services are being stretched to the limit in the midst of this unprecedented homeless and housing crisis.

Rising rents and a lack of enough action by the Government to deliver housing has brought our country to this point.

Focus Ireland firmly believes that homelessness is wrong and we are working hard towards helping to end this crisis. Our charity works tirelessly to help vulnerable children and their families have the safety, shelter and hope they deserve.

“Focus Ireland works tirelessly to help vulnerable children and their families have the safety, shelter and hope they deserve.

In 2017 Focus Ireland managed to help over 700 families to secure a home and escape

homelessness. However, the crisis still continued to deepen as shockingly at least two or three more families - and other individuals - became homeless every single day in 2017. Meanwhile, the crisis in child homelessness continues to deepen with record number of children now homeless.

Focus Ireland is committed to changing the shocking reality that almost 40% of the 9,000 people impacted nationally, or 3,333 children, are homeless. That is a rise of more than 25% in less than a year.

Focus Ireland works in partnership with the State but we also need to raise approximately 50% of the cost of providing our lifeline services and housing each year through donations and corporate support. We need to raise vital funds today more than ever before to help continue the successful delivery of our frontline services, and permanent homes.

We need to raise these funds so Focus Ireland is there to help vulnerable, men, women and children when they have nowhere else to turn.

In the middle of the worst

crisis ever it is important to highlight that much good work is being done. Focus Ireland works every day challenging homelessness and changing lives. This work saw Focus Ireland add 145 units to its housing stock last year, and this year will see also significant development including 31 homes in Dublin City Centre.

The residential apartment complex at John's Lane West will include one, two and three bed apartments as Focus Ireland continues to deliver on permanent housing solutions. This development will change lives by providing homes for young people, families and individuals who would otherwise be homeless.

“Focus Ireland has delivered 280 homes in two years and now provides 965 homes nationwide.”

Focus Ireland has delivered 280 homes in two years and now provides 965 homes nationwide. Focus Ireland



Sharon's Story

Sharon*, a mother of one, who was previously homeless and living in emergency accommodation explains how Focus Ireland supported her to secure a home.

She said: “Things started to get a bit better once I got help from Focus Ireland. It meant so much to me to see my daughter getting

the extra support she really needed. Then for me it meant I wasn't as isolated. Someone was listening to me at last. Someone was helping me.”

After a while Sharon managed to secure a rented home with the support of Focus Ireland and said she is now on the road back to where they were before homelessness.



Harold's Cross Dublin Development, opened in June 2017

also helped over 14,000 people last year who were homeless or at risk.

We would also stress that this work would not be possible without the amazing support we get from the public.

Here are two stories of people who overcame the nightmare of homelessness with the support of Focus Ireland.



Mark's Story

Mark Wright (28) fell into drugs at only 12 years of age and his problems grew as he got deeper into drug use.

He said: “It is like been caught in the headlights. Not knowing where you will sleep. Most nights I was going to sleep towards the end of my addiction hoping the drugs would kill me. In that situation I could not get clean. The only reason I got clean eventually was because of my children.

“When I went into Focus Ireland I was greeted by another human being. He shook my hand. There was a sense of belonging inside. He considered and treated me like another human being, and he didn't judge me on where I was after coming from.

“Focus Ireland worked with me on every aspect

of my life, from addiction issues through to money management and access to education. I got signed up for a two year night college course in UCC to get a Diploma in Youth & Community work.

“My Focus Ireland support worker also helped me through college with a weekly study session. They also helped me to find a home.

“I was nearly crying when I got the place. I can't express how much it means to me. It's not just my home it's a home for my children. I am more confident now. I am a brilliant father to my children. I will be forever grateful to Focus Ireland for what they have given me - and to my children. My future looks good now thanks to Focus Ireland.”

“Having a home again is unbelievable. I can close the door and I feel safe. I feel my daughter is safe. My daughter is also a lot happier again and that is the most important thing to me.

“I can't thank Focus Ireland enough as I don't think I would have made it this far on my own without the great support they gave me and my daughter. I feel we really have a future now.”

**Not her real name.*



Join us in the fight against homelessness in 2018.

Visit focusireland.ie to donate or fill out the form below and return to us.

☐ €60 ☐ €100 ☐ €250* ☐ Other: € _____

Please debit my: ☐ Debit Card ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Card Number /

Expiry Date / Signature _____

Date of signing

/

***If you are a taxpayer and donate €250 or more in any given year we can reclaim the tax paid and make your donation go 45% further.**

We would like to send you updates about how your support is helping people who are facing homelessness. We'd also like to tell you about supporter events and opportunities to support our work. However if you would prefer not to receive further postal communications from Focus Ireland please tick this box. ☐

Please print name and address

If you're happy to hear from us by email or phone, please enter your details below.

Email:

Phone:



Best Practice in Transparency and Accountability

3408

FOCUS
Ireland

Challenging
Homelessness.
Changing lives.

9-12 High Street, Christchurch, Dublin 8
T 01 881 5900 E info@focusireland.ie
CHY 7220
focusireland.ie

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

God's power is at its best in weakness

Dear Editor, Like many people, I am heartbroken by the news that the wonderful Dolores O'Riordan has died. She was a wonderful artist, but above all a daughter, a mother and a sister. She loved Limerick, and Limerick loved her.

We live in a culture where strength is prized above all else. A world dominated by Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un has little time for the weak. Dolores, in contrast, never hid her vulnerability. Many of us have the

grace of living our struggles in private: this was never a luxury she enjoyed given her prominence as a musician and artist. Yet, she fought her demons in public and was never shy about sharing her mental health struggles.

Christians take strength from the fact that we believe in a God who became man and never hid his vulnerability; a God who wept over the death of his friend Lazarus and his beloved city of Jerusalem; a God who cried tears of

anguish as he faced his passion and death. The Greeks and Romans may have taken consolation in the strength of their gods; our strength and hope is that we have a God who lives in the midst of our pain and struggles. It's worthwhile to recall the words of the Lord to St Paul: "My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9).

*Yours etc.,
Mary Crollin,
Swords, Co. Dublin.*

'People of goodwill' – it's time to speak out

Dear Editor, A very clear message on the question of abortion was delivered by the leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin, when he was interviewed by Colm O Mongain on the lunchtime radio news programme on RTÉ on Sunday.

He called on Catholics, "and all people of goodwill" to become active as the referendum debate progresses, so that the

current protection for the child in the womb is maintained.

Catholics needed to have courage to speak with their neighbours and colleagues on this issue.

He made the point that this was perhaps the first time that people were being asked to vote to take away rights from a section or group of human beings, and that unborn children were the most vulnerable human

beings.

He continued that great support was needed for women in a difficult situation to ensure an optimum result for the woman and child.

One of his main points was that people should not vote pro-life because the Catholic Church told them so, but rather because it was a crucially important human rights issue, and he also said that there was a tendency

by some at times to leave the unborn child, and its importance as a human being, out of the discussion.

I think the clarity of the archbishop's comments are to be greatly welcomed in the context of the upcoming referendum, and should be greatly heeded by all Catholics and, as he said, "all people of goodwill".

*Yours etc.,
Sean O Domhnaill,
Spiddal, Co. Galway.*

The hope for new life burns on

Dear Editor, Fr Mark Link SJ in his booklet *Vision 2000* penned the following reflection for the Feast Day of The Epiphany. "A Michigan newspaper carried a story about a lightbulb that had been burning day and night on a porch for 35 years. An electrical engineer speculated that early lightbulbs had strong filaments, which may account for the bulb's longevity." What an appropriate metaphor for the Eighth Amendment that has been part of our Constitution for 35 years next September.

*Your etc.,
Frank Burke,
Terenure, Dublin 6w.*



Ireland remains a safe place for mothers and babies

Dear Editor, As a northern republican, and member of the majority in the Six Counties from all political backgrounds who oppose abortion, I've watched in disbelief as the farce which passes for a consultation process in the 26 counties has unfolded.

The report of the Eighth Committee was launched before Christmas in Leinster House. The Government formed the committee to outsource the decision on abortion. The matter was decided upon by the political establishment

and the grossly imbalanced Committee was used to reverse engineer the result.

And what of the media? The *Wall Street Journal* recently wrote: "While the Irish public is wrestling with the issue, the Irish media is not. National media outlets have devoted themselves almost exclusively to the pro-repeal position." It's been said with justification that some media outlets should register with the Standards in Public Office as campaign groups, so blatantly biased has been their output! Most

journalists do not even bother pretending to be objective on the issue.

All of this distortion and dishonesty means that the majority of people in Ireland who are pro-life are led to believe that they are in fact a minority. It has a chilling effect and reduces their likelihood to articulate their views honestly in public.

Some years ago the chattering class were full of the promise of a never-ending property spiral. They were aided and abetted by a self-interested media and political class. This groupthink

cost the State dearly.

Right before our eyes the same groupthink is happening in the same political and media bubbles. It's time the people stood up for the right to life. We don't have to repeat the mistakes of the past. Ireland is a safe place for mothers and their babies, with among one of the lowest maternal and perinatal mortality rates in the world. That is the simple truth the establishment don't want the people to hear.

*Yours etc.,
Dr Anne McCloskey,
Waterside, Derry.*

We need to consider the 'Benedict option'

Dear Editor, David Quinn makes important points in his article 'The Irish Church and the Benedict option' (IC 11/1/2017).

One can appreciate that many practicing Catholics are heavily influenced by our more secular culture and media in general. I think most of those who voted in favour of same-sex marriage may have been influenced by the zeitgeist of the day and voted in favour of same-sex marriage both from an emotional response and by not wanting to be perceived as prejudiced.

However, in relation to the issue of abortion, I think the Church's social teaching is particularly robust in challenging secular and liberal thinking. But as Catholics we do need a shot in the arm of the 'Benedict option', with proactive, evangelistic teaching by bishops, priests and catechists that highlight the argument that ethically one has to consider the outcomes of any action.

And so logically retaining the Eighth Amendment which aims to protect the life of both mother and unborn child whenever possible, is surely the morally right ethical position.

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

Consequences of migration will linger

Dear Editor, Some time ago Pope Francis remarked that if each parish adopted one migrant family the problem could be resolved.

The migrant flow continues apace, it only hits the headlines when the death toll reaches double or triple figures.

We are at sixes and sevens in Europe, and sadly the traditional Catholic countries – such as Poland, Austria and Hungary – are the most intransigent. Dealing with migration is going to be a feature of our lives for the foreseeable future.

We should not make the mistakes of France and England, creating ghettos, where alienation and radicalisation abound.

Can we in the Catholic Church take Pope Francis's suggestion seriously, could each parish adopt a family?

I don't think we should wait for a response from the 'Official Church', that is the Bishops and clergy. My experience here to date has been somewhat underwhelming.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to tell Pope Francis when he comes here for the World Meeting of Families, that we have taken his advice and started practising Christianity.

Any takers?

*Yours etc.,
Joe Manning,
Bagenalstown,
Co. Carlow.*

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



EL SALVADOR: Deportees get off a bus at an immigration facility in San Salvador after a flight arrived with immigrants who had been in the US without documents.



CHILE: A priest removes glass from a vandalised church window in Santiago. Pope Francis is visiting Chile and Peru from January 15-21.



AUSTRALIA: Family and friends sprinkle holy water on the caskets of three family members of actress Jessica Falkholt (best known for her role in *Home and Away*) after their funeral Mass at St Mary's Catholic Church in Sydney. Lars, Vivian and Annabelle Falkholt were killed in a car accident the day after Christmas.



HOLY LAND: A Palestinian demonstrator hurls stones toward Israeli troops near Nablus, West Bank, during a protest against US President Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

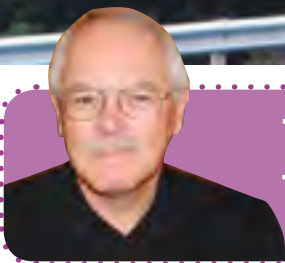


USA: Search and rescue workers with dogs scour through properties after a mudslide in Montecito, California.



VATICAN: A woman holds Chile's flag as Pope Francis celebrates Mass marking the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in St Peter's Basilica. Photos: CNS

Is it possible to lose your vocation?



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

Recently I received a letter from a man who shared that he was still deeply haunted by a story he'd heard in grade-school many years before.

One of his religion teachers had read them a story about a priest who went to visit a childhood friend. While staying with his friend, the priest noticed that, while his friend was cheerful and affable enough, he seemed to be harboring some deep, residual sadness. When he asked his friend about it his friend confessed that he "had lost his salvation" because he had felt a call to priesthood when he was young but had chosen instead to marry.

“For a Christian, existence does not precede essence. We're born with a purpose, with a mission in life”

Now, he felt, there was no existential redemption from that. He had had a vocation and lost it and, with that, also lost for good his chance at happiness. Though happily enough married, he felt that he would bear forever the stigma of having been being unfaithful in not accepting his God-given vocation.

I was raised on stories like that. They were part of the Catholicism of my youth. We were taught to believe that God

marked out a certain vocation for you, that is, to be a priest, a sister, a married person or a single person in the world, and if you didn't accept that, once you knew your calling, then you had "missed" or "lost" your vocation and the consequence would be an abiding sadness and even the danger of missing heaven.

Such were the vocation stories of my youth and, truth be told, I went to the seminary to become a priest with that lingering as a shadow in my mind. But it was only a shadow. I didn't enter religious life and priesthood out of fear, though some moral fears did play a part in it, as they should. Fear can also be a healthy thing.

But it can also be unhealthy. It's not healthy to understand both God and your vocation in terms that can have you missing out on happiness and salvation on the basis on singular choice made while you are still young. God doesn't work like that.

Conscience

It's true that we are called by God to a vocation which we are meant to discern through conscience, through community, through circumstance and through the talents that we've been given.

For a Christian, existence does not precede essence. We're born with a purpose, with a mission in

life. There are many clear texts in scripture on this: Jesus, praying for entire nights to know his father's will; Peter conscripted on a rock to lead by a belt that will take him where he would rather not go; Paul being led into Damascus and instructed by an elder as to his vocation; Moses being called to do a task because he saw the suffering of the people; and all of us being challenged to use our talents or be stripped of them. We're all called to mission and so each of us has a vocation.

We're not morally free to live our lives simply for ourselves.

“No matter how many times you disregard or disobey its command, the voice never expresses impatience”

But God doesn't give us just one chance which if we miss it or turn down will leave us sad forever. No. God opens a new door every time we close one. God gives us 77x7 chances, and more after that, if needed.

The question of vocation is not so much a question of guessing right (what very specifically was I predestined for?) but rather a question of giving oneself over in Faith and love to the situation that we've chosen (or which more often than not has by circumstance chosen us).

We should not live in unhealthy fear about this. God continues to

love us and desire our happiness, even when we don't always follow to where we are ideally called.

Recently I heard a homily in a church in which the priest compared God to a GPS, a Global Positioning System, that is, that computerised instrument, complete with human voice, that countless people have today in their cars and which gives them ongoing instructions on how to get to their destination. One of its features is this: no matter how many times you disregard or disobey its command, the voice never expresses impatience, yells at you, or gives up on you. It simply says "Recalculating".

Sooner or later, no matter how many times you disregard it, it gets you home.

Delightful as is that image, it's still but a very weak analogy in terms of understanding God's patience and forgiveness.

None of us should be haunted, long-term, by sadness and fear because we feel that we've missed our vocation, unless we are living a selfish life.

Selflessness rather than selfishness, a life in pursuit of service rather than a life in pursuit of comfort, not guessing correctly, constitutes one's vocation.

Our Christian vocation is to make what we are in fact living – married, priest, religious, single in the world – a life of selflessness and service to others. Happiness and salvation are contingent upon that, not upon guessing correctly.



St Paul on the road to Damascus: he accepted instruction from an elder.

New Year SALE 60% DISCOUNT

SELECTED BOOKS

OFFER VALID UNTIL JANUARY 31. EXCL. P&P

Adventures of a Book Collector

Philip Murray



The true and continuing story of one man's love of the written word; of what happens when a hobby becomes an obsession. Stories and anecdotes involving some of the great literary figures, including C.S. Lewis, Roald Dahl, Beckett, for the reader's greatest pleasure.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

An Endangered Species

Jerry Daly

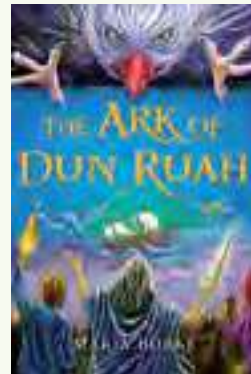


The memoir of Fr Jerry Daly, a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Order active for over fifty years and his views on topics as diverse as marriage, alcoholism and most importantly, the state of the contemporary Catholic Church.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

The Ark of Dun Ruah

Maria Burke

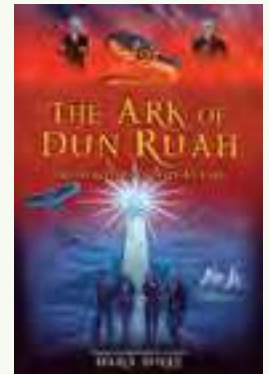


Giant Eagles are far from being extinct. They have the power to carry grown men to their death. What chance do a grumpy old owl like Pod and his friends, Simon and Kerry Macken and Malachy have against them? A thrilling, fast-moving adventure that young readers will devour.

was €12.99 **€4.99**

The Ark of Dun Ruah II

Maria Burke

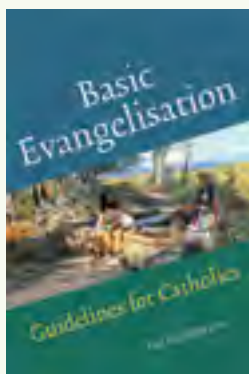


This sequel to *The Ark of Dun Ruah* follows Simon, Kerry and their friends into a new adventure as they unwittingly become the Protectors of the Flame against the Black Viper Gang who wants to possess the secret of Platinum Fire.

was €12.99 **€4.99**

Basic Evangelisation

Pat Collins



The purpose of this book is to spell out in detail, and with plenty of practical advice and approaches, how exactly the New Evangelisation, suggested by the Pope Benedict XVI, might be carried out.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

Bishop James Moynagh of Calabar

Colman M. Cooke



This biography is a vindication of sincere and simple tributes paid to Bishop Moynagh, a man of whom the Irish Church can be truly proud. Here was a man of total commitment to the missionary cause to which he devoted his life.

was €24.99 **€9.99**

Catholic Primary Education

Ed. Eugene Duffy



In a society so preoccupied by economics that it is increasingly losing sight of its more deeply rooted values of freedom and empathy, the very nature of education faces great challenges. This collection of essays is a significant contribution to the debate around the role of Catholic primary schools.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

Celtic Spirit and Literature

Tess Maginess & Grace Clunie



This book offers a lively and thoughtful introduction to the rich world of Celtic Spirit, past, present and to come. The book considers how the Celtic Spirit can still operate in our lives, enabling us to be a welcoming people, respectful of the gifts of nature, and imaginatively open to 'otherworlds' and the worlds of others.

was €16.99 **€6.79**

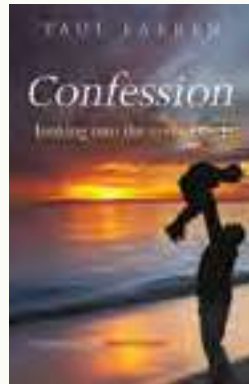
Christianity at its Best
Donal Harrington



At its best, Christianity is filled with hope. It is positive and attractive and relevant to life. It is what Christians believe and what is the heart of their belief. How Christians are to live from that hope is the matter of this very positive book.

was €16.99 **€6.79**

Confession
Paul Farren



This book explores the sacrament, focusing on the two people who confess - God and the penitent. The gift of freedom, the existence of Hell and the role of conscience are dealt with in the book while forgiveness and sin are discussed at length.

was €9.99 **€3.99**

Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland
Editor Colm Lennon



The essays in this volume offer a variety of perspectives on the contributions of confraternities and sodalities to the religious and social history of modern Ireland, from their role and dynamics in the Catholic revival after the Penal Laws to the pattern of their decline in the mid-twentieth Century.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

Dancing with Dinosaurs
Mark Patrick Hederman



Dinosaurs have been described as the most successful animals that ever inhabited this planet. Today we have invented our own dinosaurs: churches, banks and multinationals. This book describes a spirituality for the 21st century which requires that we recognise the dinosaur nature of all institutions, including the Catholic Church.

was €9.99 **€3.99**

Going Up the Holy Mountain
Gary Hastings



Going Up the Holy Mountain is about prayer and meditation as tools to move closer to God in the silence, this gap between words which allows them to make sense, this pause between the musical notes which allows the tune to form.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

Haunted Inkwell
Mark Patrick Hederman



What is the future for civilisation as we begin the 21st century? Could the answer lie in art? After all, the most interesting spiritual exploration of the last century was carried out by artists, even though many of these were ignored or condemned.

was €16.99 **€6.79**

Holy Cross, A Personal Experience
Aidan Troy



During the Troubles in Northern Ireland, only a handful of people have become symbols of true courage. Fr Aidan Troy is one of these. Although he knew little of the North, within months in the Catholic Ardoyne community, he had witnessed one of the most disturbing incidents in the North's recent history.

was €15.99 **€6.99**

Ireland and Vatican II
Ed. Niall Coll



Explore the scope, impact and future implementation of the Second Vatican Council with special reference to Ireland, north and south. Examine the documents of the Council applying them to an Irish context, taking into account education, human rights, social justice, liturgy, society and theology.

was €19.99 **€7.99**

Our Lady of Charity in Ireland
Jacinta Prunty



Based on archival records held in Dublin, Caen, Angers and Rome, this book deals with the Magdalen asylums, reformatories, industrial schools, hostels and 'family group homes' run by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, as well as the convents themselves.

was €34.99 **€13.99**

Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, a brief biography
Fr Francesco Napolitano



This revisited biography follows the saint from humble beginnings in Pietrelcina through his life of profound sacrifice and goodness. It recounts stories of the obstacles he overcame, the people he touched, and the stigmata he bore.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

Pray Without Ceasing
Jenny Child



Committed to Celtic spirituality, Jenny Child reveals her creation theology, whereby she finds it very easy to see God and the hand of God in the most ordinary manifestations of nature all around us, and shares it through a short inspirational prayer for every day of the year.

was €9.99 **€3.99**

Praying Body and Soul (A. de Mello)
Gabriel Galache



This is a reprint of the Anthony de Mello classic *Praying Body and Soul*, adapted and enlarged by Gabriel Galache. It is a step-by-step exercise book integrating the Christian tradition of contemplation and the Eastern wisdom of meditation.

was €11.99 **€4.99**

Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul
Ed. Louise Sullivan & Ed. Jacinta Prunty



A collection of essays that recount the early foundations of the Daughters of Charity in Ireland, their innovative work at national and local level and the spirit which has inspired them.

was €24.99 **€9.99**

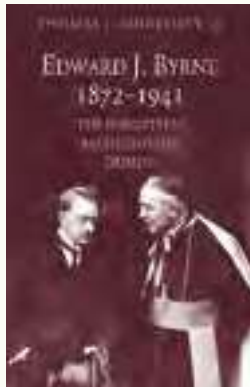
Earthing the Word
Thomas G. Waldron



This work comprises a selection of Monsignor Tom Waldron's sermons and articles, written throughout his life. A man who "so loved the words not as dictionary components but as struggling bodily attempts to communicate between body-spirits".

was €14.99 **€5.99**

Edward J. Byrne, 1872-1941
Thomas J. Morrissey



Archbishop of Dublin in 1921, Byrne remained in office until his death in 1940. He ruled during the new Irish Free State from the Civil War, through the change of government in 1932 and right up to the adoption of De Valera's Constitution of 1937.

was €19.99 **€7.99**

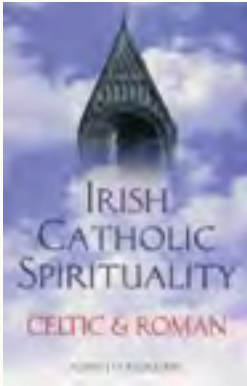
Free at Last!
Noreen Mackey



Free at Last! shows that prayer is as essential to all of us as the food we eat. It is an adventure, a response to someone who has called our name, a journey into relationship that will bring us our deepest heart's desire.

was €12.99 **€4.99**

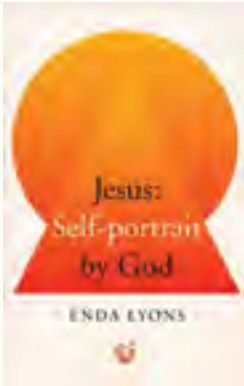
Irish Catholic Spirituality
John J Ó Riordáin



This book traces the fortunes of Irish Catholic Spirituality from its Celtic origins, through the reforms of the late medieval period, the influences of the Reformation, and the dramatic and traumatic nineteenth-century changes which revolutionised and, in many ways, vandalised the traditional Irish approach to God

was €12.99 **€4.99**

Jesus: Self-portrait by God
Enda Lyons



From earliest times, scholars have asked questions about this Jesus, like could he really have been God? If so, could he really have been human? How much did he know? Fr Lyons succeeds like no other in guiding today's Christians along the intriguing and enriching path of discovery of the reality of Jesus of Nazareth.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

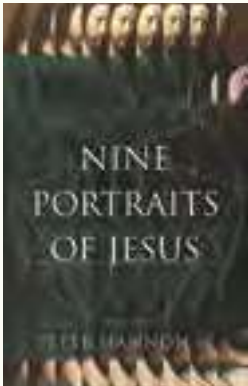
The Next Gig
Frank Kelly



Most famous for portraying Father Jack Hackett in the hugely successful Father Ted, actor Frank Kelly had a whirlwind of a career. In *The Next Gig*, Frank Kelly explores the world of acting through his own honest, and often humorous, life experiences.

was €19.99 **€7.99**

Nine Portraits of Jesus
Peter Hannon



Jesus asks: 'And what about you, who do you say that I am?' Your answer will be the expression, not only of what you think of and feel about Jesus but of what you think of and feel about yourself.

was €13.99 **€5.59**

Real Irish Ghost Stories
Paul Fennell



This collection of stories of ordinary people will persuade the sceptic that there are more things in this world than we are aware of. From stories of revenants and grounded spirits, poltergeists to demonic possessions, Paul Fennell has collected fantastic reports from all over Ireland.

was €12.99 **€4.99**

Spirituality, Our Deepest Heart's Desire
Donal Dorr



Spirituality is about our deep longing for meaning, peace, and a sense of our personal call in life. It is also about the various moral, political, or religious activities through which we live out our commitments from day to day. Dorr brings together these different aspects of spirituality in a heart-warming volume.

was €13.99 **€5.59**

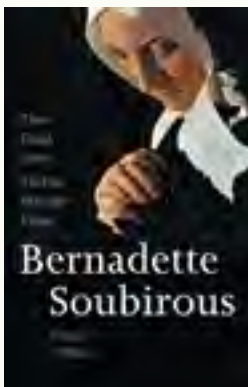
The Sublime Round Tower
Sr Kathleen Lynch



The Sublime Round Tower is an exploration of John Cassian's writings and his integral 'sublime tower' metaphor which is a pedagogical masterpiece in presenting an 'Icon' for this spiritual journey into contemplative prayers.

was €9.99 **€3.99**

Three French Saints - Bernadette Soubirous
Críostóir Ó Floinn



'The One who Saw Visions'. Best known for her visions of the Immaculate Conception in Lourdes, Bernadette Soubirous was canonised in 1933 by Pope Pius XI. Discover the full account of her life and how the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes led her to sainthood.

was €9.99 **€3.99**

To order please fill in the form below and send it to
Columba Press, 23 Merrion Square North, D2, D02 XE02.
Alternatively you can
call us on 01 687 4096 or email sales@columba.ie

MY ORDER (Please put the quantity before each book) * Postage costs €4 per order

- _____ Adventures of a Book Collector – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ An Endangered Species – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ The Ark of Dun Ruah – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €4.99***
_____ The Ark of Dun Ruah II – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €4.99***
_____ Basic Evangelisation – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ Bishop James Moynagh of Calabar – Price (was €24.99) **NOW €9.99***
_____ Catholic Primary Education – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ Celtic Spirit and Literature – Price (was €16.99) **NOW €6.79***
_____ Christianity at its Best – Price (was €16.99) **NOW €6.79***
_____ Confession – Price (was €9.99) **NOW €3.99***
_____ Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ Dancing with Dinosaurs – Price (was €9.99) **NOW €3.99***
_____ Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul – Price (was €24.99) **NOW €9.99***
_____ Earthing the Word – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ Edward J. Byrne, 1872-1941 – Price (was €19.99) **NOW €7.99***
_____ Free at Last! – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €4.99***
_____ Going Up the Holy Mountain – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ Haunted Inkwell – Price (was €16.99) **NOW €6.79***
_____ Holy Cross – Price (was €15.99) **NOW €6.99***
_____ Ireland and Vatican II – Price (was €19.99) **NOW €7.99***
_____ Irish Catholic Spirituality – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €4.99***
_____ Jesus: Self-Portrait by God – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ The Next Gig – Price (was €19.99) **NOW €7.99***
_____ Nine Portraits of Jesus – Price (was €13.99) **NOW €5.59***
_____ Our Lady of Charity 1853-1973 – Price (was €34.99) **NOW €13.99***
_____ Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, a brief biography – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ Pray Without Ceasing – Price (was €9.99) **NOW €3.99***
_____ Praying Body and Soul (Anthony de Mello) – Price (was €11.99) **NOW €4.99***
_____ Real Irish Ghost Stories – Price (was €12.99) **NOW €4.99***
_____ Spirituality, Our Deepest Heart's Desire – Price (was €13.99) **NOW €5.59***
_____ The Sublime Round Tower – Price (was €9.99) **NOW €3.99***
_____ Three French Saints - Bernadette Soubirous – Price (was €9.99) **NOW €3.99***
_____ Three French Saints - Joan of Arc – Price (was €9.99) **NOW €3.99***
_____ Three French Saints - Thérèse of Lisieux – Price (was €9.99) **NOW €3.99***
_____ Walking on Water – Price (was €9.99) **NOW €3.99***
_____ Weekday Prayers – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ What Being Catholic Means to Me – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***
_____ Word & Spirit – Price (was €14.99) **NOW €5.99***

MY DETAILS

Name _____
Address _____

Phone Number _____
Email _____

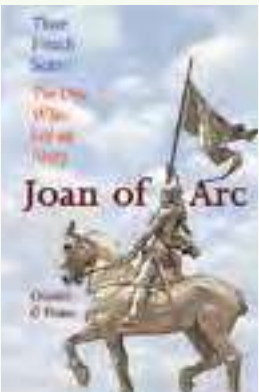
METHOD OF PAYMENT

- ☐ PAY BY: Cheque/Postal order for € _____
payable to: **Columba Press**
☐ PAY BY CREDIT CARD: Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Debit ☐
Card No: _____
Exp date: ____ / ____ CVV No: ____

* Please don't forget to send an extra €4 to cover postage

Discover more titles at
www.columba.ie and www.currach.ie

Three French Saints - Joan of Arc
Críostóir Ó Floinn



'The One who Led an Army'. Known as "The Maid of Orléans", Joan of Arc is considered a French heroine for her role during the Hundred Years War. The instructions she received in her visions of Archangel Michael, Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine of Alexandria paved the way for the French victory.

was €9.99 **€3.99**

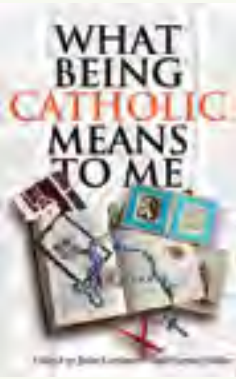
Walking on Water
Anthony de Mello



Fresh, lively and absorbing, Anthony De Mello's extraordinary insights into the reality of human living, and its divine origins and destination, will come as a breath of fresh air and encouragement to everyone who seeks meaning and purpose in our turbulent world.

was €9.99 **€3.99**

What Being Catholic Means to Me
Ed. Eamon Maher & Ed. John Littleton



In the aftermath of the publication of the Ryan Report and the horrors it revealed, this book invites a wide range of people to answer honestly and frankly the very searching question, 'What Being Catholic Means to Me'.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

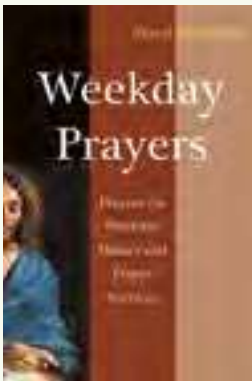
Three French Saints - Thérèse of Lisieux - Críostóir Ó Floinn



'The One who Hid Away'. Popularly known as "The Little Flower of Jesus", Thérèse of Lisieux became famous worldwide through her autobiography *The Story of a Soul*, published after her early death. Discover the strong will of this very young nun who became an inspiration for Christians the world over.

was €9.99 **€3.99**

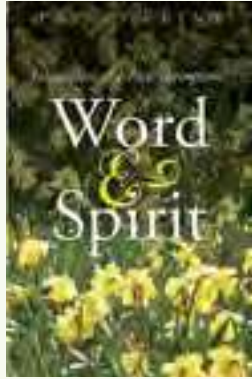
Weekday Prayers
Donal Harrington



This book is about more than just providing prayers. It 'translates' the meaning and message of the day's Gospel and explores the riches of the texts. In a time when less priests are available to lead weekday Masses, the book's resources will help in the preparation of simple prayer services.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

Word & Spirit
Pat Collins



With a "pastoral potpourri" of both academic and spiritual sources, Pat Collins created a springboard to reflection, heartfelt prayer and evangelisation. Only in bringing the Word and the Spirit together can the Catholic Church experience the New Springtime prayed for by Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

was €14.99 **€5.99**

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, January 18, 2018

Personal Profile

Fighting an ancient disease in a modern world

Page 30



A resource — not a burden



We age from the day we are born. Yet when the word 'ageing' is used, people assume it refers to the older years. What in fact are the older years? Those who are considered old in one culture will not be in another.

Definitions of the older years will also vary among individuals within a culture. Until recently, many considered the older years to begin at the time of retirement which generally meant at 65. A light-hearted answer says that an old person is someone who is 15 years older than me.

A well-known saying is apt: 'We are as old as we feel'. The experience of most people is that they feel young inside even



Society needs to plan for the reality of longer life expectancies and an active older population, writes Catherine McCann

when certain physical limitations are present. It is important that society in general and each one individually, fosters keeping alive that 'young inside' person.

Only towards the end of life may a change from this outlook become noticeable. The usual manifestation of this is weariness, at both the physical and psychological levels of the person. Such fatigue is often an expression that a person is now

tired of living and is readying to leave this life. This phase may be preceded by a period of frailty that moves towards passivity. It is a time when they are unable to be other than this way.

A false 'enlightened' view of ageing does not always allow for this period in people's lives. Those around can try to cajole such a person to be and to do what they are no longer really able for.

At present life expectancy in the western world is into the mid-80s. Many obvious factors have led to this: improved sanitation, nutrition, housing, education and discoveries of all kinds, the most recent including the huge modern technological and pharmacological advances.

Achievement

The one great achievement that has caused life expectancy levels to rise has been the dramatic drop in infant mortality. Death in modern society is now largely due to old age. This does not mean individual members of the race are living longer. People in previous ages of history have lived to over a hundred.

The difference now is that

more people are surviving into their older years. The number living over 70 has trebled in recent years. The statistics from the recent 2016 census shows 30% of the Irish population are over 50; 18.4% are over 60; 5.8% are over 70; 2.8% are over 80 and 0.4% are in the 90+ years.

Problems will undoubtedly exist if nations and individuals do not take cognisance of, and plan for, this reality. Planning is required in many different areas such as good pension schemes, health and social care systems, suitable housing, education programmes that prepare for and allow for fulfilled living in these years.

These realities should be

» Continued on Page 29

Family News

AND EVENTS

Kilkenny church is a major attraction

Would-be historians in the family aren't the only ones likely to be thrilled by a visit to the former St Mary's Church in Kilkenny.

Now the ultra-modern Medieval Mile Museum, the 13th-Century former church is Kilkenny's newest visitor attraction, packed with medieval artefacts and treasures, and the starting point of the 'Medieval Mile' trail, bringing to life Kilkenny's history as Ireland's premier medieval city.

The museum allows visitors to explore the city's origins from before the medieval landmarks that are so prominent today, going back to when St Canice founded a monastic settlement in the 6th Century, as well as learning how Strongbow built a fort where Kilkenny Castle stands today and his son-in-law fortified the city, or how Ireland's only known witch trials took place in Kilkenny in 1324.

Guided tours cost €25 for the whole family, or €12 for adults and €5 for children.



A 'NATURAL' APP: More than 6,000 women in Ireland and over 125,000 in Britain have started using a new smartphone app that helps couple use 'natural methods' to plan attempts to have children.

'Natural Cycles' claims that 7% of women using the app will get pregnant when trying not to; in comparison, the contraceptive pill has a rate of 8% and over a typical year of condom use between 10 and 15% of sexually active women will become pregnant.

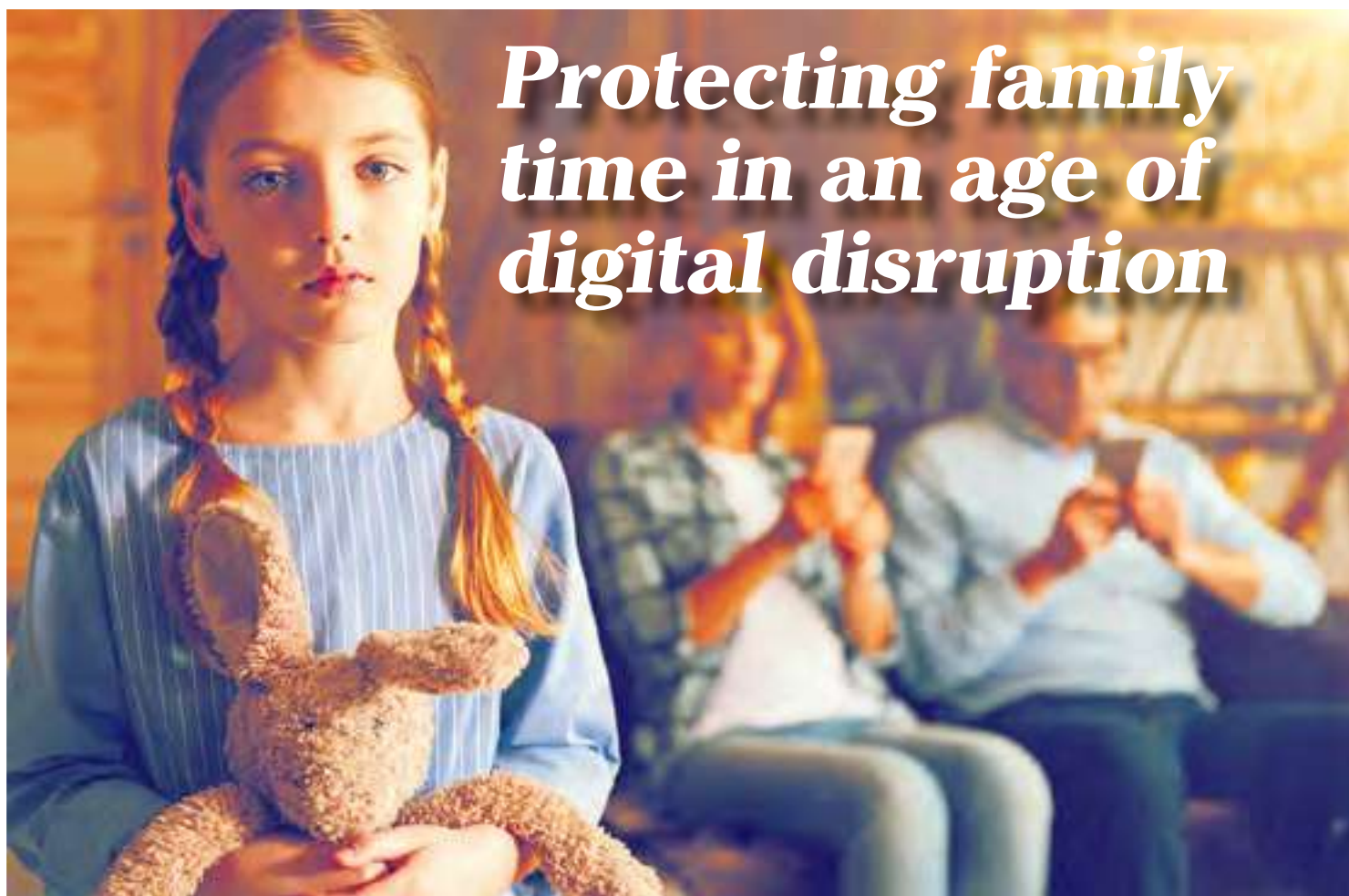
Designed by husband-and-wife team Dr Raoul Scherwitzl and Dr Elina Berglund, the Natural Cycles app, which was approved by the EU last February, estimates hormone levels based on variations in body temperature, rating fertile days as 'red' and non-fertile ones as 'green'.

'Dry' January is worth considering

With the excesses of Christmas now solidly behind us, January is a good time to check – and maybe cut back on! – the amount of alcohol we drink, especially following a new study from UCC and HSE South that has suggested that heavily overweight men who drink heavily have the highest liver damage risks.

The study of 2,047 adults aged between 50 and 69 found that as alcohol consumption increased women were almost twice as likely as men to have raised levels of GGT, an enzyme mostly produced by the liver and correlating with liver disease, whereas men were 1.5 times more likely to have elevated GGT levels as their body mass index increased.

This rose to 2.3 times among men with high levels of alcohol consumption, with the link between GGT, body mass and alcohol being highest among those consuming more than 14 units of alcohol per week.



Protecting family time in an age of digital disruption

As we continue with our preparations for the World Meeting of Families 2018, parishes will shortly be offering the first of six parish sessions as part of our *Amoris*: Let's Talk Family, Let's be Family programme. The first theme that parishes will be looking at is 'The Reality of Family Life today'.

One of the issues that will no doubt come up in parish discussions will be the impact of technology on the family.

Those of us who were teenagers in the Ireland of the 70s and 80s, grew up without technology as we know it today. We had a vastly different experience to the age of digital and technological disruption that we all find ourselves living in today.

I grew up in a family of five siblings in a small town in Co Cavan. We had no telephone in the house. We had one colour television and the act of watching television was mostly a family affair. We had a small black & white television for when Top of the Pops clashed with something my parents wanted to watch.

Opportunity

I had the opportunity recently to reflect a little bit on just how disruptive technology has been when I was invited to speak to 600 teenagers about social media and technology.

When I described my teenage experience of technology and the lack of a landline many of the young people told me that they just could not imagine a house like that.

Then I described the list of technology in my home today

WMOF 2018

Brenda Drumm



and most of the young people said they had the same sort of list and some had even more technology. The list in my house includes a landline, smart TVs, game consoles, smartphones, Apple TV and Netflix. We even have a washing machine that plays music to announce when a cycle is finished. One of my children calls the 'start' button on the washing machine the 'play' button!

There are also smart vacuums that you can programme to clean the floor by themselves when you are outside the house. There are even apps that allow

technological advances are positive but I also believe that the way many of us are using technology has impacted negatively on quality family time.

Take the television – everyone wants their own screen, or to sit and watch something when it suits them. In many cases we no longer sit down to watch TV together. Then there's the arguments between husband and wife when one person goes ahead in a box set or Netflix show without the other!

“Parents hand on faith and life lessons to their children not only by what they say but by what they do”

Look at social media – I do believe that it has been and can be a positive tool for communication and networking. But, as a parent, I can't ignore the headlines about children and young people being bullied or children as young as 11 taking their own lives because they are not seeing in their mirrors what is being reflected back at them from the 'perfect' lives of their idols on social media.

The example that many of us adults and parents give in our own consumption of technology is less than perfect. I see so many couples out for a meal together looking at their phones instead of each other. I see parents ignoring their kids because they are too attached to their smartphones.

A recent survey showed that Irish adults who have

smartphones check their phone a minimum of 10 times a day and that 34% of men and 17% of women smartphone owners check their phone up to 40 times a day.

Pope Francis has spoken often about the many benefits of technology and social media, he uses it well himself! But, he recognises that over-reliance on its way of managing our lives can lead to an expectation that human relationships can be managed in the same way as social media, and can be switched off and reconnected at a whim.

He has also spoken about how young people are bombarded by social media messages that are not beneficial for their growth and maturity. He has said that young people, in particular, need to be educated to recognise the values of social media for what they are.

Lessons

The family home is where children first learn about God. Parents hand on faith and life lessons to their children not only by what they say but, more importantly, by what they do and how they treat others both inside and outside of the home.

This includes their example and stewardship of technology in the home. This includes the online spaces we inhabit.

The family is precious. Technology is everywhere, so let's use it well and do all we can to protect our quality family time.

i Brenda Drumm is Media and Communications Manager for the World Meeting of Families. For more on the *Amoris* Parish Programme see www.amoris.ie



you to 'communicate' with your pets when you are out of the house and to use technology to release a doggie treat for them! [I feel I should clarify here that I don't have a smart vacuum or a dog!]

I do believe that our

» Continued from Page 27



considered the norm for the vast majority of people.

The fact that a greater number of people survive inevitably makes huge changes in society. It can change consumer power, for example advertising. The arrangement of supermarket shelves is now geared towards older people's needs. The greater number of frail older persons will mean more people leaning on a state's limited resources. Some are fearful that this need will happen at the expense of other groups who also require care services.

Complicated

Many complicated and difficult problems are already occurring and need to be faced by societies and their politicians. Overall government and other groups in society need to provide a suitable environment, in the general meaning of this word, for people to grow old.

Planners must see that preventative measures are in place for health, social and financial care, as well as providing adequate and appropriate housing, leisure and other facilities. Older people themselves should be included in the formation of all policies related to their care.

The EU selected five priority areas in relation to older people: the role and potential of the active retired; improving the situation of older women; management of an older workforce; transition from work to retirement, access to care for dependant older people. Their overall orientation is seeing older persons as a resource and not a burden, and to implement this fact in all policies related to older people.

“Old age is not a pathological state. People can become ill when old as they do other age groups”

While most are adapting to people living longer, ageism is still a reality. Like other 'isms' its removal takes time and action such as the rooting out of attitudes and changing of structures and laws that buttress its continuation. Attitudes towards ageing develop from various sources but come particularly from our personal experiences with older



people and from experiences we have had with close older relatives. If that experience was negative it can affect us for the rest of our lives.

Older people can be victimised in many ways by ageist attitudes and they themselves can perpetuate the problem by unknowingly participating and continuing in false roles and behaviours that colour all aspects of living. Misconceptions can include equating the older years with sickness.

Chronic conditions

Old age is not a pathological state. People can become ill when old as they do other age groups. True, older people tend to have more than one complaint but many of these are likely to be chronic conditions. These can be managed, but the person is not ill because they are left with certain limitation of functioning. Small children cannot carry out all tasks for themselves, hence they are dependent on others, but we do not consider them ill as a result.

On the more positive side, education needs to promote personal responsibility for adopting a healthy lifestyle and how to manage financial affairs realistically. Planning for adequate pension, insurance and other saving schemes needs to be introduced early in life and be evaluated throughout the middle years.

A large part of all education is to normalise the ageing process,

by neither denying it nor allowing it become a disempowering stage in life. It is essential healthy attitudes are promoted. The most fundamental attitude is to approach ageing as something we create ourselves rather than view it as a passively given reality. In other words, we 'make' our own older years to a great extent. It is a period when we need to work at making things happen, as well as allowing for and accepting those happenings over which we have no control.

There are certain established criteria for ageing well. These include good morale, self-esteem, experiencing satisfaction in our ordinary everyday living, having control over our lives.

“The most vital element in ageing well is to keep a sense of purpose to life”

Erik Erikson, the great American psychoanalyst, speaks of certain features in later life which help to make the above experiences possible. The abilities we need to develop are the following: to be able to adapt to change, to accept the past, to transcend self-preoccupation and to lose a fear of death. People will come in their own way to degrees of achievement of some or all of these.

One thing is definite: the most vital element in ageing well is to keep a sense of purpose to life and one could add a sense of humour. It means not constantly giving into our inner voice which could say something like, “stay on in bed today, the weather is too bad”. Awareness of purpose may grow dim and narrow at times due to illness or stress, but fanning it into flame again and again so that it is personally real in the nitty-gritty of everyday happenings is what gives energy and meaning to living life fully to its completion.

1 Catherine McCann is a physiotherapist, counsellor and spiritual director. This is an edited extract from her new book *Love Life*, published by Columba Press (€12.99).

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



“Mummy's always vomiting,” my three-year-old daughter told her preschool teacher merrily, “vomit, vomit, vomit, all day long”. “Oh, is she now?” said her teacher, with a smile and a knowing glance in my direction.

The teacher had surmised correctly; there was indeed a baby on the way. However, we didn't want to tell the children that “there is a baby in Mummy's tummy” just yet. Having experienced the tragedy of miscarriage more than once, we knew how upsetting it would be for them if the baby didn't make it, so we resolved to wait until the 12-week scan. By then, the odds would be more in our favour.

Andrea had shockingly severe morning sickness and could barely leave the house for weeks, except to go the hospital to get fluids via a drip. Our plans to travel for Christmas were cancelled and we hunkered

down at home for a more sedate festive season. One evening, I was playing chess with my eight-year-old boy, when she walked in to the room, pallid and weak, and I said, absent-mindedly: “You poor thing. It's not much fun being pregnant, is it?” Oops.

Since Seán regularly beats me at chess, there's not much I can get past him. There followed a – dare I say – pregnant pause, as our little boy absorbed the implications of my throwaway remark.

“I've permitted myself to hope, but amid the joy, there's always for me a fearful sense of the risk”

He looked at me and his mother searchingly. Then, the inevitable and, very pertinent, question came: “Dad, is Mum pregnant?”

Andrea and I looked at each other with amused expressions. I improvised:

“Well, she might be. We're starting to wonder if that's why she's so sick. We're going to have a scan next week to check”. His eyes lit up, and he stood up with a bright smile, raising his arms in the air like a striker who had just scored the winning goal in the FA cup final: “Hooray - a baby!”

We tried to dampen expectations until, finally, the day of the scan came. We were nervous going in.

We expected to, once again, see the sonographer shake her head, as the image of a lifeless, tiny body came up on the screen, and for our hearts to slowly break.

Clear image

Yet this time, the screen showed an amazingly clear image of a very active little person kicking their legs, and moving their arms about, and



generally behaving as if my wife's womb was some sort of discothèque.

I felt a surge of joy to see the heart beat so strongly. It was incredible to see the tiny face in profile, already somehow familiar.

The sonographer printed off a little picture of the baby to take back to show her brothers and sisters at home.

The kids were overjoyed. Rose had some questions about just where everyone was going to sleep, but once these were answered to her satisfaction, she joined in the general delight.

I've permitted myself to hope, but amid the joy, there's always for me a fearful sense of the risk and fragility of the precarious journey of pregnancy.

The kids' prayers for the baby ease my worries. They already speak to the baby in their mother's tummy, morning and evening. God willing, this summer will see this brand new person arrive safely amongst us.

Fighting an ancient disease in a modern world

Personal Profile



Ken Gibson tells Colm Fitzpatrick about the myths surrounding leprosy

An Irish-born charity is working globally to try and make one of the world's oldest diseases a thing of the past.

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, often evokes imagery of contamination and bodily disfigurement but the reality of the ailment is very different to what most people think.

According to Ken Gibson, Chief Executive of The Mission to End Leprosy, a charity focusing on eradicating leprosy worldwide, there are many myths surrounding leprosy, with Ireland being particularly prone to accepting this misinformation.

"Sadly, if you ask people in Ireland about leprosy, they'll see it as a disease from biblical times," he said, adding that because it's not on our doorstep, most people don't think it exists anymore.

In fact, leprosy affects more than 250,000 people a year, with over 2-3 million living with Hansen's disease-related disabilities globally, although the actual figures are much higher. It has a particularly acute effect on those living in India, Brazil and Indonesia but is also present in Western countries such



Ken Gibson meets a patient with leprosy who lives on the streets of Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. Photo: Jonny Somerville

as the US.

Leprosy is referred to as Hansen's disease, named after the Norwegian physician, Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen, who debunked the prevailing theory that leprosy was a hereditary disease, proving instead that it actually had a bacterial cause.

Commemoration

Sunday next week – January 28 – is the 61st World Leprosy Day, annually observed around the world on the last Sunday of January. The day was chosen in commemoration of Mahatma Gandhi who worked on integrating those with the disease back into society. It was initiated in 1954 by Raoul Follereau, a French philanthropist and writer, as a way to raise global awareness of this deadly ancient disease and call attention to the fact that it can be prevented, treated and cured.

On the day, organisations hold rallies and marathons to try and

raise money for prevention and rehabilitation, with opportunities for the public to learn more about the symptoms.

For Ken, it is also an opportunity for myths to be dispelled, and for people to become more educated about its pervasive effects.

"It's the oldest known communicable disease in history, firstly appearing in China," he explained. "As a result, nobody had any medical knowledge about it – and so you began to separate people. That's where the greatest myth comes from, that people need to separate. That's the hardest challenge we have in the world today."

Despite popular belief, leprosy is extremely hard to catch with around 95% of adults immune to it. Even those who contract it can live a normal life surrounded by friends and family if treated with antibiotics.

Ken also explained that the disease does not make your limbs

fall off, but this is actually a result of the numbness of nerves. The disease affects the nervous system and with no sensation, you're more prone to injury, which may create an infection and subsequently require amputation. "I know a man in China who had no sensation in his feet, and while digging in the field he accidentally removed his foot. Eventually all of the bacteria got into his leg," said Ken.

Experience

Previously called The Leprosy Mission (TLM), which has over 140 years experience in fighting leprosy, the charity was given its new name to highlight the purpose of its role. It has six key areas of focus such as the breaking of transmission by investing heavily in scientific research, or building inclusive communities in order to build an understanding of acceptance and making sure affected people have the skills needed to participate fully in

society.

"We aren't just running hospitals, we're doing a whole heap more," said Ken. "We're investing in cures and developing a political will internationally to put leprosy on the agenda."

Although there are many times of difficulty in trying to ameliorate the leprosy crisis, Ken remains continually encouraged by his self-sacrificial team who are always there to help.

"The level of commitment from the staff on the ground from the front lines is incredible," he said, adding that some of the best surgeons and medics in the world who could earn a fortune elsewhere are choosing to treat the poor and marginalised instead.

He is also routinely inspired by those suffering from the disease, who in the face of their ordeals are still able to thrive personally and socially.

"Some sufferers have nothing in life, yet they've found and inner contentment because an organisation has come to them."

Helping those with leprosy also has a spiritual dimension according to Ken, who pointed out that because the disease is associated with the healing miracles of Jesus, its eradication resonates with many Christians.

"For anybody with Faith, there's a real alliance to Christ. This is what Christ did," he explained, and so it is both an ecumenical and interdenominational mission.

Although Christians have an acute affiliation with leprosy, it still remains a problem with which everyone should be concerned.

"In Ireland, we need to become aware that it's a problem, to become aware of its effects," said Ken, adding that we are called to personally respond to this crisis and extend our hand of compassion.

i For more information about World Leprosy Day and combating the disease, see: <https://www.tmtel.org/>

Love Notes

Wendy Grace

How can I get my daughter-in-law to change?

My daughter-in-law and I have never really gotten along. She has recently given birth to our first grandchild and I am desperate to spend time with him but she keeps finding excuses to avoid visits. I'm thinking of saying something to my son, but my husband says it will seem like I'm being critical and just make things worse!

You need to start with the reality that your relationship with your daughter-in-law isn't a good one. What is the underlying reason?

Have you interfered or had an argument that you should apologise for?

If you go separately to your son, before trying to resolve any underlying issues, there is a good chance it will only push your daughter-in-law further away.

A better starting point is figuring out how to mend and build a relationship with your daughter-in-law and, in turn, your grandchild. You need to discover the reasons for your daughter-in-law's

behaviour. Meet and talk with her, don't be hostile or angry, be open, without being defensive. Being vulnerable and letting her know that both the relationship with her and your grandchild means a great deal to you and your husband and tell her you want to do whatever is needed to make it work.

Before meeting it is very important to take a long hard look at yourself, have you been overly critical and/or interfering in the past? There may have been things you saw as helpful suggestions, but your daughter-in-law might feel very differently and may fear you will interfere in a similar way with your grandchild.

The age-old advice of putting yourself in the other person's shoes is always a good starting point!

Grandchild

It is more than likely that she is keeping your grandchild away from you because of an unresolved issue, possibly one that you are not even aware of. It might have been a small misunderstanding that, over time, has grown into

a bigger issue. It is tempting, of course, to be stubborn but by doing this everyone misses out on the love and support that happy extended family can provide for each other.

In your chat, you need to be clear that this isn't about butting in, but simply wanting to resolve any problems and to spend precious time with your grandchild. It would be beneficial to mention all the things she is doing well, be positive, and make sure your mind is focussed on what you can do to build a better relationship, rather than pointing out what you think she should be doing.

If trying to communicate with your daughter-in-law fails, then it might be time to talk with your son, but this really depends on your relationship with him. You have to ensure that you're not attacking your daughter-in-law. You must remember she is his wife and his happy marriage is his priority.

Proceed with utmost caution, but if you feel that he can gently express your feelings to his wife then this might be the solution.

The good news is your grandson might just be the person that finally brings you all closer together.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Mixed blessings from new drama shows

The various TV companies often launch new drama series at this time of year and so far this year's crop is a mixed bag.

The best I've seen so far is **Next of Kin** (ITV/TV3, Monday nights, with ITV a week ahead) – it's a rollercoaster of emotion and conflict, with more emphasis so far on character than on thriller elements of the plot.

In the first episode a young doctor from a Muslim immigrant community in England is abducted as he goes about his humanitarian work in his home country. His sister and family at home are preparing for his homecoming party when they get the devastating news.

The scene where his sister observes his fate on a web video is as intense as I've seen for a long time. Family relationships are hard to make out in the first episode as the extended family hangs out so much together but as the episode ends the focus shifts to the doctor's estranged son who has absconded from England...but to what purpose?

Archie Panjabi is superb as the sister, while Jack Davenport impresses as her patient and supportive husband. Claire Skinner as a cop plays a totally different role to her harassed mother in *Outnumbered*. Points are made about racism but based on last



Amy Huberman stars in RTÉ's *Striking Out*.

week's first episode it's subtle but effective.

Themes of race and abduction are also prominent in **Kiri** (Channel 4, Wednesday nights). The versatile Sarah Lancashire (of *Coronation Street* and *Happy Valley*) is excellent as a caring but unconventional social worker whose world is thrown into disarray when a young girl in her care is abducted by her dangerous biological father on an unsupervised visit to her grandparents.

The intrusive media and

her supervisors are all over the case, with suggestions that she would have been more careful if the child was white. Acting and pacing are intense so it's hard to take your eye off it.

There's some unnecessary strong language which adds nothing to it – the lazy way to do gritty perhaps? I've seen social workers online suggesting it doesn't portray their work well or accurately, but there's no denying the strong emotional punch. For me last week's first episode

took a surprisingly dark turn, but maybe all is not what it seems.

The strong language in that show was relatively tame compared to the barrage of obscenities in another new Channel 4 show **Derry Girls** (Friday nights).

It's gratuitous and offensive, with most of it coming from one student character in this comedy drama about four secondary-school girls growing up in Derry during the Troubles.

The girls go to a Catholic all-girls school run by a tough and wily nun with rather unchristian attitudes (she won't go on a school tour to Paris because she 'despises' the French).

The situations are credible, except for the one boy attending the girls' school. I found it very funny; the girls portray often innocent teenage angst with bravura performances,



Archie Panjabi.

and the loving but often chaotic family life is endearing – the closest I can use as a comparison is Roddy Doyle's Barrytown universe in work like *The Snapper* or *The Commitments*. There are some surprise turns – Tommy Tieran is credible and restrained (his best mode!) as the hapless father and in the second episode last week it was great to see Kevin McAleer giving one of his trademark monologues as the boring Uncle Colm.

If they had toned down the gratuitous foul language this could have been a brilliant family show, but the opportunity is lost.

Human interest

I'm even less enamoured, for different reasons, of the second season of **Striking Out** (RTE 1 Sunday nights). I liked the first series of this legal drama that features Amy Huberman as a young lawyer breaking from the corporate scene to take on human interest cases.

Huberman is still effective, but this time around it seems more stilted and uninvolved, even corny at times, with a sort of 'drama by numbers' feel.

I think the problem is with the script more than anything else. And what was the point of having the talented Maria Doyle Kennedy as the new character, the lawyer called George? Clichéd scene

PICK OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY SEQUENCE
BBC Radio Ulster,
Sunday, January 21,
8.30am

Topical religious and social issues, with a variety of topics and guests.

MAGICAL SITES
RTÉ 2, Monday, January
22, 10.55am

Children explore the ancient monastic yard at Monasterboice where they find amazing carved high crosses, a round tower and a medieval church.

THE MEANING OF LIFE WITH GAY BYRNE
RTÉ 1, Monday, January
22, 11.35pm

The late Peter Sutherland, UN Special Representative for Migration joins Gay Byrne to discuss his take on the meaning of life.

of the week was when the three main lawyers marched in slow-motion towards the camera, like legal superheroes – cringe worthy or what! Speaking of cringing I see a future episode will deal with a nun divorcing the Church!

✉ boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

A feast of new year releases for the big screen

There's a mouth-watering pairing of Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep in Steven Spielberg's *The Post*. The title refers to *The Washington Post*, the newspaper that brought down Richard Nixon after the Watergate scandal. Set in 1971, this centres on a leaked government study of the Vietnam war which basically admitted it was unwinnable.

Streep plays the owner of the paper. Hanks is its executive editor. He wants to publish the Pentagon Papers. She fears the exposé could create enemies in high places.

Comparisons to *All the President's Men* will inevitably be made – Jason Robards played Hanks' character in it –



Meryl Streep stars with Tom Hanks in *The Post*.

with *The Post* probably being seen as second best in the comparison, but the prospect of two of Hollywood's pre-eminent performers going head-to-head is too much of a temptation to resist.

Also tantalising is *Darkest Hour*. After the recent Jonathan Teplitzky film starring

Brian Cox as Britain's most famous PM you may feel Churchillised-out. The fact that Gary Oldman – one of that country's most respected veterans – takes on the iconic role might change your tune.

It's a measure of the magnitude of the man that most films about him seem to dwarf

the seismic events over which he presided. In *Churchill* the war became almost like a subplot. Here again director Joe Wright seems more interested in the man than the historical backdrop.

Buzzword

Downsizing is the great buzzword of our times. Sooner or later they had to make it the title of a film. But who could have expected it to refer to people rather than things?

The plot concerns a scheme to reduce people to less than half a foot in size as a gambit to try and solve the world's overpopulation problem.

Matt Damon and his wife (Kristin Wiig) volunteer to have themselves reduced by

a Norwegian scientist even though they know they can never go back to their original height. It's a fascinating premise that harks back to a film that thrilled me as a child – *The Incredible Shrinking Man*.

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri has Frances McDormand as a traumatised mother seeking justice for the murder of her raped daughter against a system that frustrates her efforts at every turn. She vents her wrath against good cop Woody Harrelson, who's suffering from cancer, and bad cop Sam Rockwell, a racist. Writer/director Martin McDonagh injects black humour into her billboard protest.

Animated films about the afterlife are thin on the ground. *Coco*, a Mexican musical from Pixar, is one such, featuring a young boy who becomes transported into the Land of the Dead after stealing a guitar from the tomb of a musical hero of his. Its upbeat mood makes even the skeletons look jaunty.

The Final Year looks at Barack Obama's last year in office. His dignity, in contrast to the schoolyard rhetoric of his successor ("my nuclear button is bigger than yours little Korean man!") is staggering.

As Zsa Zsa Gabor used to say: "Macho doesn't prove mucho."

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief

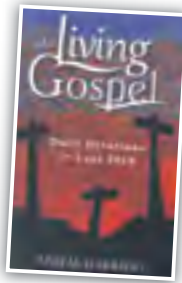
The Living Gospel: Daily Devotions for Lent 2018

by Ann M. Garrido
(Ave Maria Press / Alban Books, £2.99)

The Feast of the Nativity just over, and the New Year hardly begun, then the mind of the Church turns towards Lent, which begins less than three weeks from now, Easter being this year on April 1.

This little booklet is designed by American preacher Ann Garrido. She hopes that her readers will come away with “a deeper conversion of heart” than they might have thought possible. This may sound very pietistic, but there is a strong sense of reality and the possible here. She quotes a friend’s driving instructor who said that a “wise person would not go more than 30mph on this road whether there was a speed limit or not”.

That line – and there are many like it through these pages – focuses the reader’s mind on that great problem we all face, doing the right thing because we know it is right and not because there are others to see it. This can be highly recommended for the bag or pocket in those 40 days of preparations for Holy Week.



Say It To God: In Search of Prayer

by Luigi Gioia
(Bloomsbury, £9.99)

This book has been selected as the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Lent book for this year, and indication of its potential to appeal widely to many thoughtful people.

The author is a professor at the Pontifical University of Sant’ Anselmo in Rome, but also a research associate of the Von Hügel Institute in Cambridge (which is named not after the celebrated baron, but his equally distinguished brother who was a Stonyhurst- educated anthropologist at Cambridge).

This background sounds complex, but this book is intended for the widest audience to provide a source of daily reading over Lent. He leaves aside matter of technique and complex theological notions, but using quotations from scripture he sees prayer as a conversation with God. This is an excellent concept, for we can all talk, but need to remind ourselves that a conversation is not one sided. We also need to listen, and to expect to be replied to in unusual ways. This is an excellent book which can be highly recommended.



55 Ways to Connect with Families in Your Parish

by Karen Kent
(Veritas, €12.99)

At Christmas time, as if by some small miracles, the parish churches are filled with people. Some are home from abroad, others are visiting families they no longer live near; all want however to recapture something from their pasts. Not the same something for all, but a real something for each one.

This little book, published with the World Meeting of Families in mind, contains ideas for a renewed sense of connecting people with parish, but not just at Christmas, not just for some special event, but on every day of the year.

The author is an Ursuline sister involved in pastoral development in Cork and Ross. Inspired by *Amoris Laetitia*, she attempts to revitalise both the laity and the clergy throughout the liturgical year.

There is little sense in calling up traditional ideas when these ceased to be part of people’s lives years ago. Something new is needed, something perhaps “new everyday”. Her insights will prove very inspiring for many, both in rural and urban Ireland.

But it’s perhaps worth remembering too that we have civil as well as religious parishes. The life of the parish should not be seen as just what we do with our co-religionists, but what we do to promote the social and civil life of our changing neighbourhoods. This means not only the other religious groups, but also many kinds of civil society groups too.

And those who work in Dublin need to remember that their lives are not only in those weekends at home in the country, but in the city where they work. In these pages many will begin to find an answer to that old question asked so long ago: “Who is my neighbour?”



Alfie Byrne: the representative Dubliner

Alfie: The Life and Times of Alfie Byrne
by Trevor White
(Penguin Ireland, €20.00)

Almost alone, Alfie Byrne survives in the larger public memory as the quintessential Lord Mayor of Dublin, almost a ‘Mr Dublin’. The chance play of politics meant that he filled the office for a decade, between the three man commission that ran the city when the city council became too dominated by Sinn Féin for the patience of the Free State government and the return to the older system of a mayor being elected by the city council to serve a single year at a time, largely on the basis of “Buggins’ turn”.

Dublin never had a Mayor like those of New York, Boston or Detroit who, having actual executive powers, became in themselves national power brokers. No one in Government Buildings has ever wanted that.

“This is not just a biography. As the subtitle suggest it is also an attempt to tell the story of Dublin largely between the two wars”

So though he had no actual political power to speak of, Alfie Byrne became a greatly loved public figure, who filled the office with a native grace and good manners. He was popular without having to be controversial.

He became for Dubliners between the wars, the generations of our parents and grandparents, a folklore figure, the subject of stories and tales.

Certainly my own mother had a story about him taking her aside at a reception in the Mansion House to show her the famous silver cradle in which his grandson slept.

Now at last this very representative Dubliner has got an ideal biographer.

Trevor White is the energetic and imaginative director of The Little Museum of Dublin, which has been one of the great cultural successes of recent years, not only among



Alfie Byrne.

visitors, but among native Dubliners too.

It is a delightful place, and leads to complete strangers having long and energetic chats about the items and their own recollections of “the good old days”.

Changes

For many they were not such good days at all. Alfie Byrne was well aware of this, and as an independent politician worked to achieve what changes he could.

This is not just a biography. As the subtitle suggests, it is also an attempt to tell the story of Dublin largely between the two wars, or rather between the ‘War of Independence’ and ‘The

Emergency’ – Irish history is rightly out of sync in its descriptive terms with the rest of Europe.

This book manages both to be amusing, instructive and insightful, which is quite an achievement. It is to be hoped that author White will find another Dublin character to write about and go on enlarging the average Dubliner’s knowledge of his own city state in such an accessible book.



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.

Financial conspiracies and clerical skulduggery



Maurice Manning.

The Kilderry Files
a novel by Maurice Manning
(Currach Press, €14.99)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This novel is set in the pre-and post-Vatican II period. An elderly Irish bishop dies and his successor discovers in his papers US stocks and shares worth millions of dollars. Wishing to dispose of these without questions being asked as to their source, the bishop requests his vicar-general to help him to this end. He in turn seeks assistance from his nephew, a university lecturer and former journalist.

Notwithstanding their best efforts, rumours concerning the valuable find begin to circulate. The result is that, apart from the bishop, others begin to show an active interest as to who would benefit from the newly-found wealth.

Generous

There was the county solicitor, a nephew of the late bishop. The bishop had been more than generous to him and his siblings throughout his life. However, when the bishop's will was read, he and the rest of the bishop's sister's family were shocked not to find themselves mentioned in it.

When the solicitor learned about the extra funds associated with his uncle he

considered that he might have an opportunity to put right that 'wrong'. Moreover, he was aware that it had come to the attention of the Law Society that because of a gambling addiction he was in serious financial difficulties.

Then there was a corrupt papal nuncio. He was also struggling with gambling debts. If he had to transfer the newly-discovered wealth to the Vatican he anticipated an opportunity of diverting some of it in his own direction.

Each of the interested groups followed various paper trails. Eventually the full story emerges. Henry Alsop was the source of the million-dollar donation. A US citizen and Catholic convert, he had been immensely successful in business and in the New York stock exchange.

Not long before he died he befriended the late bishop, whom

he admired and whose alarm he shared at the threat posed by Communism and the Soviet Union to Western democracies in the post-World-War-II period. Thus, recognising that the Catholic Church was a bulwark against Communism, he presented his financial holdings to the bishop to be used for the missionary and social aims of the Church.

The greedy

solicitor and corrupt nuncio are effectively dissuaded from their interest in the fund. The research into the fund discloses that two sums from it, each of £400,000, had disappeared. It seems a flamboyant person trusted by the late bishop to transfer these sums had instead sequestered them.

In the end the discovered wealth is set up in an Alsop-Concannon (the name of the bishop) fund for charitable purposes and to round off the story the wealthy son of the person who allegedly stole from the Alsop donation makes two grants of £400,000 to it.

Throughout the book the author paints a jaundiced picture of Irish life, clerical and civil. He is particularly critical of the Irish Catholic clergy and, in so doing, displays a mood in tune with the zeitgeist of present-day Ireland.

“Others begin to show an active interest as to who would benefit from the newly-found wealth”

Cynicism is depicted as a feature in the country's public life, legal and political. However, Maurice Manning, retired academic and public figure, has written a very interesting novel by weaving together a number of conspiracy theories which have been swirling around for more than half a century.

These continue to be popular in some political circles, where they lose nothing in the re-telling. As that wonderful story-teller Benedict Kiely was wont to say: “One should never ruin a good story by telling the truth!”



The World of Books

By the books editor

Frescos of St Patrick's Purgatory at Todi 733

At this time of the year many people are thinking about and booking their summer holidays. Not many I suspect, planning that annual stay in the sun-drenched Umbrian region of central Italy, will be considering its connection with Lough Derg and with the medieval shrine of Patrick's Purgatory.

Those planning a trip to Umbria will think first of a visit to Assisi or one of the other historic cities and shrines of the region. But Todi, where a surprising number of fortunate Irish people have second homes, has a connection with Lough Derg.

Legend ascribes the foundation of the town to Hercules, rather than to the historic tribe the Umbri. It has recently been called the “most liveable city in the world”.

However, of great interest to Irish visitors is something quite different. In the enclosed convent of the Sisters of St Clare in Todi is a remarkable fresco. It is a schematic depiction of the shrine of St Patrick, not perhaps as it was in its actual physical form, but in its mystical interpretation.

Some six surviving panels show the stage of the passage of the souls through Purgatory. The fresco is a sort of theological interpretation of St Patrick's Purgatory [pictured is a medieval view of the Purgatory cave] as understood in Italy. This fresco is not a tourist sight – special arrangements have to be made to see it, as the convent is not, of course, open to the manifestations of modern mass tourism – which is just as well.



But the fresco is of great interest to scholars.

The idea of Purgatory developed and took on a special significance from the 12th Century on.

One can see in so many carvings and illustrations of the period not only the idea of the purging of the effects of sin, but also in the analogous images of Hell, the notion that the rich and powerful both aristocratic – the medieval equivalent of people with second homes perhaps – and clerical would in the next life receive the condign punishments that ordinary people felt they deserved, but could not impose on them. In many the sinful clergy are herded naked into the gaping mouth of Hell.

The shrine at Lough Derg had down to the 17th Century a Europe-wide reputation. Before a financial scandal led to the Vatican playing it down, it left its mark on European culture in many ways, and not only in playing an important part in the development of theological beliefs about the afterlife. It was for instance the subject of a play by the great Spanish dramatist Calderon (translated into English by the Irish poet Denis Florence McCarthy).

“The Lough Derg shrine was for instance the subject of a play by the great Spanish dramatist Calderon”

In the very first scene of *Hamlet* the apparition of the ghost is invoked by the name of St Patrick. Seen as the late king, he is referred to as “a perturbed spirit”. Here as in so many places in Shakespeare's work we hear an echo, albeit a weakening one, of the medieval Catholic beliefs that the Reformation had tried to shift.

This complex history of the shrine at Lough Derg, of which the Todi fresco is a small part, is dealt with in *The Medieval Pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory: Lough Derg and the European Tradition*, edited by Michael Haren and Yolande de Pontarcy (Clogher Historical Society, 1988). This is now out of print, but readily available through the public library system.

The term ‘holiday’ has its origins in the medieval Holy Day, a church feast which often provided the little time off people had. Yet in the summer, as at Lough Derg, between sowing and harvesting many would take a longer break and travel to a famous shrine, just as Chaucer shows in the *Pilgrims Progress*. Perhaps today it might as well if people gave a thought to the same thing, a trip not to the sunshine of Todi, but the rigours of Lough Derg.

Classifieds

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

**Please make a little room
in your will for people
who are homeless**

Contact our Fundraising
Department in strictest
confidence

Tel. 01 8815 900
Email: info@focusireland.ie
www.focusireland.ie

FOCUS
Ireland

Please pray for the beatification of

***Little Nellie
of Holy God***

“May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model”

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

Please remember

THE IRISH HOSPICE FOUNDATION

when making your Will so that everyone,
everywhere will have access to hospice care one day.

Tel: 01 679 3188
E-mail: info@hospicefoundation.ie
www.hospicefoundation.ie

The Irish
Hospice
Foundation

Classified ads

SERVICES

ALL UNWANTED home waste removed. Cookers, fridges, beds, suites, wardrobes, carpets etc. Removed and disposed of in a proper manner. No job too small or big. Contact Tommy, 087 6406015.

**NOTICE
THIS?**

*This could be your ad,
prices start at €25*

**GET YOUR
MESSAGE
OUT TO 90,000
READERS!**

The Irish Catholic

MAGNIFICAT
YOUR DAILY MASS AND PRAYER COMPANION

Magnificat Subscription

Bring the Word of God into your life daily
with this monthly prayer book.
(13 issues per year)



€49
1 Year
Subscription

€98
2 Year
Subscription

* Including P&P

Call the Magnificat Team at 01-6874024
to renew or join.
Or send payment to
23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2

BÓTHAR

PLEASE REMEMBER BÓTHAR IN YOUR WILL.

€1,800 will allow us to give an Irish, in-calf, dairy heifer to a struggling family in Rwanda, completely transforming their lives. Your gift will live on for generations. Phone the office on 061 414142 or info@bothar.ie

Remembering

**MEMORIAM CARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
CARDS & NOTELETS
BOOKMARKS**

Samples / Information

KENNEDY PRINTERS
BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND
Tel. 027 50102
www.kennedyprinters.ie
email: info@kennedyprinters.ie

LEGACY

**Help evangelize
Ireland by
remembering
The Irish Catholic
in your will.**

Since 1888 we have been Ireland's leading Catholic weekly. Your help will grow subscriptions to schools and poor parishes.

 For more information
contact us on
01-687-4020

The Irish Catholic

PREPAID CLASSIFIED AD COUPON

Please print your advertisement in the coupon, placing ONE word in each space. Below, please print your name and address. Do you require a Box Number? YES ☐ NO ☐ (Please tick ✓) Box Number €6 extra.

1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

Name and contact detail form **MUST** be filled out

Name

Address

.....

Landline Mobile

The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2.

STATE UNDER WHICH HEADING YOUR AD IS TO APPEAR:

Minimum charge of €24.60 (inc. VAT) for 5 lines (25 words). Extra lines €4.92 each.

I enclose Cheque/PO: €.....I wish to pay by Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Laser ☐

My Visa/Mastercard/Lasercard number is:

Expiry Date:Signature

Phone: 01 687 4094

No. of insertions: _____ weeks				
Miracle Prayer €40				

€24.60
€29.52
€34.44

Leisure time

MQI
Merchants Quay Ireland

Imagine just for today you are homeless. Hungry. You have no money and no phone.

Join us for Tea and a private Tour of our homeless centre. See confidentially how Merchants Quay Ireland uses donations and legacies to bring relief and hope. All welcome.

to find out more visit www.mqi.ie

Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included on the guest list for the February 8th tour.



Giving Family & Life a gift in your Will is a hugely inspirational, lasting and dignified way to leave a loving mark on countless lives.

A gift in your Will ensures that the most effective pro-life/pro-family organisations will continue working for the kind of society we all desire.

Remember, everything we do to save babies and strengthen the family relies on you and our other generous friends.

For further advice or to avail of our Solicitor's free Wills service, please contact us today on

01-8552790

Family & Life
Ph: 01 8552790
email: fandl@iol.ie
26 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1
www.familyandlife.org

Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart work in poor parishes in Africa, Russia and Venezuela

Please remember them in your Will

Contact:

Mission Support Centre, Western Road, Cork.
Tel: 021 - 4543988

www.mscmissions.ie

Trócaire is working for a just world and an end to poverty.

Please remember this work when making your will

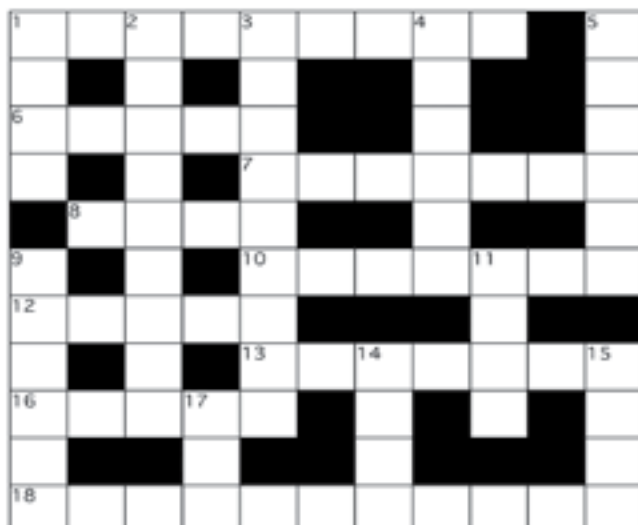
If you would like further information please contact Trocaire, Maynooth, Co. Kildare



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

Crossword Junior

Gordius 215



ACROSS

- 1 Sometimes when there's thunder, you'll see a flash of this (9)
6 Noah built the Ark to save the animals from the ____ (5)
7 These creatures are famous for their hibernation (7)
8 This 'picture' lets a doctor look at your bones (1-3)
10 Be careful it doesn't burst when you blow it up! (7)
12 Adam and Eve ate this fruit (5)
13 Coming from the continent where Egypt and Nigeria are (7)
16 Dick Whittington became Lord ____ of London (5)
18 This English phrase is

shortened on a gravestone to RIP (4,1,5)

DOWN

- 1 The opposite side to right (4)
2 In this subject, you find out about different countries (9)
3 The most famous kind of cuddly toy (5,4)
4 Usual, as you would expect (6)
5 Some people breed this bird for racing (6)
9 Person who produces food from the land (6)
11 Just a single time (4)
14 Gather a harvest (4)
15 The world's longest river (4)
17 Not in (3)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.333

Across – 1 Popemobile 6 Grog 10 Woven 11 Red grouse 12 Breadth 15 Steam 17 Ankh 18 Ants 19 Unfit 21 Two-step 23 Shire 24 Agree 25 Acer 26 Ulcer 28 Steppes 33 Tasmanian devil 35 Rash 36 Racehorses

Down – 1 Pews 2 Pavarotti 3 Manta 4 Burst 5 Lads 7 Rouge 10 Grey matter 9 Brush up 13 Dhow 14 Hawsers 16 Pass muster 20 Fig leaves 21 Tear gas 22 Else 27 Costs 29 Tinge 30 Pedro 31 Lima 32 Plus

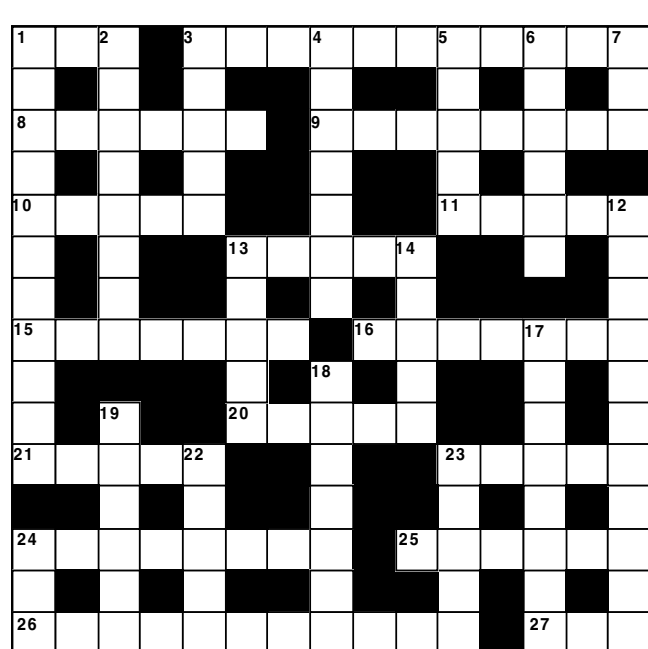
CHILDREN'S No.214

Across – 1 Baby buggy 7 Eat 8 Dangerous 9 Tap 10 Solve 12 Noel 14 Raw 16 Dangled 18 Easy 19 Said 20 Nosy 21 Storm 22 Fixing

Down – 1 Bad manners 2 Bunk beds 3 Bless 4 Growl 5 Yesterday 6 Step 11 Organ 13 Layers 15 Wading 17 Essex

Crossword

Gordius 334



ACROSS

- 1 Float up-and-down in the water - like Mr Geldof? (3)
3 Worsen (11)
8 Novice, first-timer (6)
9 Decipher (barely) how to tweak once more (8)
10 Girl's name found in the States, between South and North (5)
11 Coral formations (5)
13 & 19d Had stout oak transported to an American state (5,6)
15 To father, old jokes may add taste to a movie (7)
16 Depressed youngster in a Gainsborough painting (4,3)
20 La Cosa Nostra, the criminal organization originating in Sicily (5)
21 Raising agent, or brewer's ingredient (5)
23 Thin oatmeal (5)
24 Musical instrument (8)
25 Can Ron fit out the Hungarian capital? (6)
26 Cameras keep changing - how blessed are they? (11)
27 Spoil, impair (3)

DOWN

- 1 These raptors sound disrespectfully like nuns! (5,2,4)

2 Outlet that does business in

- volume! (8)
3 Condescend (5)
4 The tympanic membrane (7)
5 The command is to occupy part of the Border region (5)
6 A copper, lads, has savvy (6)
7 Dine (3)
12 CUL8R (3,3,5)
13 South-eastern drink has medicinal properties (5)
14 Mrs Ogden was hot, then laid up (5)
17 A boil must erupt if food poisoning is to appear (8)
18 Cheaper tariffs are available at this time, so long as you don't want to go to the mountaintop (3-4)
19 See 13 across
22 Item of furniture (5)
23 Twelve dozen (5)
24 Does only the uppermost part of this toy spin? (3)

Sudoku Corner

215

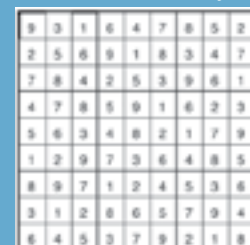
Easy



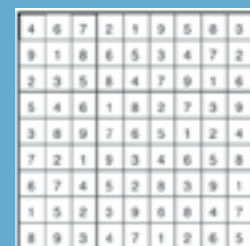
Hard



Last week's Easy 214



Last week's Hard 214



Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



Titles and entitlement – a gentle warning!

HE WAS AT a wedding the day before. I caught up to him as he walked towards the door of our local church for the Vigil Mass. He was telling someone about the wedding – a great do with plenty of food and, of course, drink. I smiled as I caught up to him and he could not have been any more unaware that I was within earshot.

“Maloney was there! I was telling him I’d have to come here tonight to give Sherlock a few pound!” Maloney was the other priest in the parish; he had been moved and I was now the regular priest for Mass in this church too.

The Gospel that weekend was apt. It was about Jesus warning people against those who like to be “greeted obsequiously” in the market square and who are given to wearing clothes and robes that distinguish them. It’s a Gospel passage that always makes me feel uncomfortable. I wonder where we fit in to it all – with titles and robes, and places at top tables!

The man at the door left no room for doubt. A letter to my house might very well be addressed to “Very Reverend Father” but the man was coming to the church that night to “give Sherlock a few pound”.



Insult was neither intended or taken. There was a fondness there and a good-natured heart that lifted mine. This man had my back as he had Maloney’s! He spoke freely to and about us. Chances are he’d call me Father. He’d mean that too. But I couldn’t have liked him any more than I did outside the church that evening.

Still Jesus’ points were well made. We must constantly avoid getting caught up in titles, pomp or any notions of grandeur. Not just priests – all of us.

There can, all too easily, creep into our lives a feeling of superiority that might have its origins in the family of our birth and the place in society’s self-

made pecking order to which that seemingly entitles us. Maybe a degree and the letters/title associated with it makes us feel a step or two above the next.

Absolutely a mistake. We all bleed, we all have doubts and, at days’ end, we all need the support of people around us. We all need to feel loved, cherished and respected not for what we are but who we are. Not for what we do but for what we mean.

Wise priest

Years ago, a wise priest who taught me many lessons in life, told me of a woman running down a beach, screaming frantically for help. She was in total distress but managed, nonetheless to choose her words:

“Help! Help!” she cried. “Help! Help! My son, the engineer, is drowning!”

Sherlock was glad of the few pound – it helps keep the church open – he was glad this man chose to come and worship God with his neighbours and friends and, truth told, was especially glad this man felt he could make his own of him.

I need not have worried about being greeted obsequiously after all!

Fishers and fishing

I recently attended the funeral of a priest. He lived his retirement in our diocese, choosing to move to Foxford because he had come there many years earlier on a fishing holiday and returned regularly.

I like to think he found peace there and met peaceful people through his fishing. Fishing seems to call for great patience, respect for what lies beneath the surface, the ability to cope with disappointment and the belief that the tug on the line is all that’s needed. The reeling-in can then begin.

It’s no wonder four fishermen were among the first called by Jesus.



Please help the poor, needy and abandoned

This man in Ghana was wrongfully imprisoned, abandoned by his family and nearly starved to death. Happily, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart were able to help him with food which The Little Way Association enabled them to buy. There are still millions of people without the basics of life, some because of natural disasters and others because of war and social unrest. Priests and religious are there to help the victims, and the Little Way can channel your donations to them without deduction of any kind.

Today, please remember those in gravest need and make a gift to The Little Way Association’s fund for the hungry, sick and deprived. You can use the coupon below or give online at tinyurl.com/lwadonations. Thank you, and may God reward your generosity.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:
€..... **HUNGRY, SICK AND DEPRIVED**
€..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**
€..... **MASS OFFERINGS**
(Please state no. of Masses _____)
€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to
tinyurl.com/lwadonations

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.

IC/01/18



Your gift will mean a chance of health and happiness, perhaps even the difference between life and death, for someone who is suffering.

EVERY EURO YOU SEND WILL BE VERY GRATEFULLY RECEIVED AND FORWARDED WITHOUT DEDUCTION.



“Love can accomplish all things. Things that are most impossible become easy where love is at work.”

- St Therese

In our modern age of materialism and selfishness when so many are searching for an authentic spirituality, Therese’s little way of simple love for God and others has a powerful appeal. Perhaps we too can join her on the ‘little way’.

May St Therese reward you in a special way for the sacrifices you make to support our work, and may she obtain many graces for all our benefactors during 2018.

All Little Way benefactors share in a daily Mass offered for their intentions in the Missions.