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# The Irish Catholic



# 2017 GUIDE TO RETREATS

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North may be facing prolonged direct rule Page 7



Thursday, January 19, 2017

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# Fine Gael accused of attack on Catholic parish schools

#### **Greg Daly**

Fine Gael have been accused of attacking parish-owned schools in a bid to distract from Government failures to tackle overcrowding in Ireland's primary schools.

Addressing a seminar organised by a campaigning group opposed to religion playing a role in school admissions, Education Minister Richard Bruton announced plans to abolish the so-called 'baptism rule' that allows oversubscribed schools to favour children from families that share their ethos over other children.

#### **Demand**

Since faith-based schools are established to fulfil the wishes of parents who want to choose a religiously-based education for their child, the law currently allows such schools to prioritise these children when there are too few places to meet demand.

The minister told the Equate seminar he believes the current situation is unfair. Mr Bruton did not address the

fact that the issue only arises where the Department of Education provides for too few places.

Independent TD Mattie McGrath said Mr Bruton was attempting "to divert attention away from the complete failure of his government and his department with respect to addressing the issue of over-subscribed schools".

The Tipperary TD said it was "far easier to characterise the rights of denominational schools as obstructive rather than face the real issue of funding for the construction of so called 'stand-alone' state schools".

The minister's proposal ignored how the Department of Education's own pilot survey on divestment found "no significant grassroots push" for religious patronage of schools to cease, he added, saying the proposal was continuing an "assault on denominational schools".

While broadly welcoming the minister's proposal for a consultation on schools

» Continued on Page 4

#### All creatures great and small



Horses and riders attend the annual blessing of farm animals and Italian military horses outside St Peter's Square at the Vatican. The traditional event is sponsored by the Italian livestock association on the feast of St Anthony the Abbot, known as the protector of animals. Photo: CNS

#### **DAVID QUINN**

**The Government** should value Catholic schools PAGE 9



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# Fine Gael ignores the real issue in education

hen it comes to education policy, Fine Gael seems to have adopted the policy of diversion as the best form of defence.

In seeking to ban parish-owned schools from prioritising Catholic children when the school is oversubscribed, the party is caving in to a small vocal lobby which really aims to try and push religious faith from public view.

Education Minister Richard Bruton is conducting a short consultation process on the issue. At the heart of the matter, of course, is that schools are forced to turn some children away because Mr Bruton's department has not provided enough school places – an issue that is only going to get worse as the school-going population increases.

#### Mr Bruton and his Fine Gael colleagues seem determined to make a mountain out of a molehill"

Catholic schools have always been inclusive places and have served the needs of people of all religious creeds and none. Where Catholic schools are not over-subscribed, they will accept all children. Where the school has more applications than places, it is forced to choose. It seems reasonable that since the school was established to serve the needs of a particular denomination, where there is a shortage of places, children from that particular denomination would be prioritised.



# **Editor's Comment Michael Kelly**

In truth, only a handful of schools are over-subscribed – and these schools are largely concentrated in some Dublin suburbs and in towns and villages close to Dublin where people commute to the capital for work.

Undoubtedly, for the few people that are affected by over-subscription, it's a disappointing scenario to have their children unable to find a place in the crowded local primary school. But, instead of a small, targeted approach to addressing a largely localised issue, Mr Bruton and his Fine Gael colleagues seem determined to make a mountain out of a molehill. There's an old saying that when all you have is a hammer, every problem becomes a nail.

It's telling that the advocates of change never mention the lack of school places in some areas that is at the heart of the problem. Actually trying to address what the real need is (greater resources) deflects from the wider campaign to weaken the rights of parents to choose a faith-based education for their children.

The Church has indicated that it is willing to participate in the consultation and is open to some shift in the current policy. But, the Catholic Church, as an extremely dominant player in education in Ireland also has a responsibility to advocate on

behalf of Protestant schools and schools established by other religious traditions such as the Jewish and Islamic communities.

#### **Bigger issue**

As Seamus Mulconry, General Secretary of the Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA) warns in this week's paper: "this is a much bigger issue for our colleagues in the Church of Ireland and in the Reformed tradition, and I was really surprised at how blasé Equate were on this issue." Non-Catholic faith schools are particularly vulnerable to their ethos being diluted by the very fact that they are minority communities and rely heavily on the sense of cohesion fostered by the schools.

Mr Mulconry warned that "everybody needs to be really careful that somebody who's taking a potshot at Catholic schools doesn't end up shooting the Protestants by mistake so they end up as collateral damage."

Having spent decades reassuring a fearful Protestant minority, the Republic would certainly do an extreme disservice to pluralism if it was to unwittingly dismantle the last-remaining protections around faith-based schools.

#### **Correction**

In a report in the edition of January 12, 2017 entitled 'Bishops won't ask Pope to permit married priests' (page two) the word 'bishops' was incorrectly substituted for 'deacons' at one point in the article. This was due to an error in the proofreading phase of production.

The sentence in question should have read: "In June 2015, Kilmore's Bishop Leo O'Reilly said he was liaising with other bishops about setting up a commission to discuss the possibilities of ordaining married men and of appointing female deacons, saying that the Pope encouraged individual bishops and bishops' conferences to be creative in looking at ways to do ministry in the future, and that Ireland's bishops must 'consider all options'."





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# **Brexit may push** North to consider economic future lies with united Ireland - bishop

Bisop Donal McKeown has said that British Prime Minister Teresa May's insistence on pushing ahead with a so-called 'hard Brexit' may cause many people in the North to consider the future as part of a united Ireland.

In a speech this week, Ms May indicated that she wanted to maintain the common travel area between Britain and Ireland. However, this seems increasingly implausible since she is also rejecting freedom of movement into the UK from the EU.

Writing in The Irish Catholic this week, Bishop McKeown warned that a hard North/South border on the island of Ireland could also increase the possibility that dissident paramilitaries might target border officers.

#### **Structure**

According to Bishop McKeown, "another possible effect [of Brexit] might well be a reconsideration of whether the economic future of Northern Ireland actually lies in the UK or in a new

tice – the North and the Republic have become increasingly linked as regards the agri-food sectors, tourism and flexible working practices"

"A hard border would also be quoted by some as proof that Northern Ireland is not actually a viable economic entity, cut off from the rest of the island," he

Looking towards fresh elections to the assembly due to be held on March 2, Dr McKeown said the poll points to the belief that "the war is over but the conflict between Irishness/Republicanism and Unionism is alive and well and that the Troubles were about political identity and not theological persuasion.

"It is important for outsiders to recognise that this election has been precipitated by Sinn Féin, not just because of one issue but in the context of the macro struggle between the two political and cultural traditions on the island," he writes.

See Nuala O'Loan page 7; Bishop McKeown, page 8.

## Limerick boy predicted to live two years was an 'inspiration'



Seán Holland with chief supt David Sheahan and Paul O'Connell.

#### Staff reporter

A family who was advised to let their seriously-ill infant son die in hospital rather than bring him home, has spoken of the joy he gave them through 15 years of life with them after confounding doctors' predictions

Seán Holland, who died last month, was given just two years to live when he was diagnosed with the rare brain formation disorder Lissencephaly and a consultant doctor told his parents Pearl and John: "Get on with your lives. Leave Seán in hospital."

The couple, however, instead brought their son to their home in Herbertstown, Co. Limerick, where they cared for him through 15 years, during which, according to Mr Holland at a eulogy given at Seán's funeral Mass last month, they "built a life of memories that no one can

Fr Roy Donovan said at the funeral that the love of Seán's parents and sister had kept him alive. "It was sheer love," he said, "They said he was the most kissed child in the whole world because he was so lovable. His smile was so disarming."

Although Seán suffered from a range of serious ailments, he continued fighting for life, travelling with his family to Disneyland on several occasions and even being a mascot for the Munster rugby team in Thomond Park.

Claiming that Seán had been an inspiration, Mr Holland said "It's not a bad legacy for a 15-year-old boy who was told he would never live.'

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# of targeting faith schools

#### » Continued from Page 1

admissions policies, the Catholic Primary Schools Manage-ment Association (CPSMA) denied that Catholic schools require baptismal certificates for entry, and called on the Government to tackle the issue of a shortage of school

#### Commuter belt

Oversubscription is the real problem in Íreland's primary schools, CPSMA General Secretary Seamus Mulconry said, especially in some parts of Dublin and the commuter

"It's an issue narrowlyfocused on areas where there is very high demand – it tends to be very, very localised," he told The Irish Catholic, adding, "one school received 402 applications for 208 places. It doesn't matter what you do with the admissions policy, you're going to have a lot of disappointed people."

Warning that the oversubscription problem is set to increase in coming years, he called for the department to address this as a matter of urgency, with a view to increasing the number of school places available.

"This is a much bigger issue for our colleagues in the Church of Ireland and in the Reformed tradition, and I was really surprised at how blasé Equate were on this issue," he

Pointing out that Protestant schools are at the heart of their communities, he said. "Everybody needs to be really careful that somebody who's taking a pot-shot at Catholic schools doesn't end up shooting the Protestants by mistake so they end up as collateral

#### Fine Gael accused Primate pays tribute to 'resilient' priests



Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor look on as Archbishop Eamon Martin speaks at a meeting with the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

#### Staff reporter

Ireland's most senior Churchman has assured priests that their dedication and resilience in difficult circumstances does not go unnoticed by the hierarchy and is a key point for discussion during meetings in

Speaking at the opening Mass for the bishops' ad limina pilgrimage to Rome, during which they will meet with Pope Francis and other senior Vatican officials, Archbishop Eamon Martin said the "ministry and wellbeing" of priests

"is dear to all of us".

Addressing his fellow bishops at the tomb of St Peter in the Vatican basilica, he said "we are aware that their smaller numbers, increased workload and ever more challenging pastoral situations has taken its toll on them.

'We thank God today for their resilience, dedication and generosity, and for the kindness and support offered to them, and us, by our people and religious," the Primate of All-Ireland said.

He said that the prayers of Ireland's priests and people would sustain them during their ad limina visit. The

bishops are due to meet Pope Francis tomorrow (Friday) as part of the process of reporting to the Holy See on the situation of the Church in Ireland.

During the January 15-25 visit, the bishops are also meeting with various departments of the Roman Curia as well as Irish religious communities working in Rome.

Discussions are expected to include the Pope's planned visit to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in 2018 as well as the ongoing fallout from Brexit in the North and the current political instability.



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## Protection of unborn will be key in Northern elections, pro-lifers promise

#### **Greg Daly**

Northern pro-lifers are determined to make the protection of unborn children a key issue in the North's coming election.

Northern Secretary James Brokenshire announced elections for a new Assembly on

March 2, following the collapse of the Executive after the resignation of Martin McGuinness as Deputy First Minister and the refusal of Sinn Féin to nominate a replacement Deputy First Minister. The last elections in the North took place in May.

The nationalist party's

refusal to nominate a fresh Deputy First Minister came after the 'cash for ash' scandal in which the DUP leader refused to accept responsibility for a renewable heat scheme that cost Northern taxpayers over €450 million, as well as a succession of disagreements between the North's two main parties.

#### Moral values

"In the pro-life movement we have prepared a pro-life campaign to ensure that we re-elect politicians because they are pro-life," Bernadette Smyth of Precious Life told *The Irish Catholic.* "The election will be for the moral values the people of Northern Ireland have continued to uphold for generations."

The new election will see

politicians competing for just 90 seats, instead of the current 108.

This could see smaller parties such as the Alliance struggling, she said, speculating on how this might affect attempts to prevent the legalisation of abortion in the North, with some in Sinn Féin keen to abolish petitions of concern, a constitutional mechanism signed by at least 30 MLAs that requires votes to have cross-community support.

Pro-lifers have hoped the DUP could use this as a blocking mechanism to prevent the legalisation of abortion.

Mrs Smyth predicted that there could be "a real battleground" around the Sinn Féin desire to have the mechanism abolished.

"Sinn Féin is very keen to have the law changed on abortion, and liberal issues like so-called marriage equality," she said, continuing, "Their concern is that that could be blocked by the DUP so that could cause a battle.'

#### **Protection**

"It's looking very likely that the battleground we face now is a battle for the moral values of equality, the upholding of the protection of the right to life, and for Christian marriage to be respected and upheld here in Northern Ireland," she said.



# Beware the unintended consequences of Minister Bruton's education plans

ne of Education Minister Richard Bruton's proposals – in removing what is called the "baptism barrier" from faith schools – is to base schools more on a neighbourhood model, so that a child has an entitlement to attend the nearest school to her home.

Sounds so basic and sensible, doesn't it? A child goes to the local school, where most of the friends and neighbourhood kids will be anyway.

That means neighbourhoods will be more integrated and develop a better sense of community too.

Well, it can work that way, and in many more rural communities it does. But watch for unintended consequences. In London, and in many other parts of England, it has led to fierce parental wars over access to the "neighbourhood" school. I have direct personal experience of this, both as a parent and a grandparent.

#### Reputation

Schools, like all institutions, vary. Some schools develop a reputation for excellence. Some Mary Kenny



schools develop a reputation for being less good. Some schools can be described as 'sink' schools, where, as I have been told informally, "the lads go into crime and the girls become single mothers" before they're out of their teens

But things can change and

improve. An inspiring head and some exacting inspection regulations can turn around a failing school.

An energetic set of parents can make their presence felt.

And there's something else that can

happen too: gentrification. A rundown area is gradually taken over by some trendy artists and designers who restore old buildings and attract more investment, bringing in smart restaurants and art galleries.

A major attraction in such an area is a school with a good reputation.

Parents not quite in the catchment area set up elaborate fictions which place them, technically, within the school's neighbourhood"

And then the turf battles start. The children of the neighbourhood are entitled to have first choice of their neighbourhood school.

Parents not quite in the catchment area set up elaborate fictions which place them, technically, within the school's neighbourhood (by hiring a bedsit or studio nearby and giving this is their main address, for example). There is increasing pressure on the

catchment area, and house prices rise accordingly.

Before you know it, the "neighbourhood" profile has altered, and poorer parents are squeezed out of the neighbourhood, and thus out of the neighbourhood school.

I don't say this always happens, but it certainly can do. Secularists complain that parents pretend to be religious so as to get their children into faith-based schools: but a parallel pretence goes on when schools are based on postal codes and location.

Paradoxically, while most secularists want to diminish the power and influence of the Catholic church over education, the Church of Ireland has been among the first to complain that their schools will be badly hit by 'neighbourhood first' regulations. Since their minority population is scattered over a wider geographical reach, many of the children at a C of I school do not live in the direct neighbourhood.

Educational change? Proceed with caution.

#### A small charge for a common good

I suppose it's inevitable – given the demographics, and the budgets – that free travel for pensioners in Ireland will eventually come under scrutiny.

The numbers eligible for free travel rise annually – from 637,000 in 2007 to nearly 800,000 in 2014, for example – and so do the costs.

In England, those over 65 qualify for a Senior Rail Pass, which allows a third off train fares, although you have to pay £30 annually for this. Bus travel is free (and for those resident in the London area, the tube is free – but not to seniors outside of London). On the trains, concessions cannot be used early in the morning (commuter time): an early morning train ticket from my part of Kent to London will cost over £60 sterling.

Later in the day, the senior railcard reduces it to

£23 and later again to £14. The priority in Ireland, surely, is to improve overall

transport systems, especially in rural areas. Sometimes the only practical way to get between A and B in some country places is by taxi. If public transport could be bettered by levying a €50 charge for a Senior Travel concession (with exceptions for those under a certain income) surely that would serve the common good?

• Fascinating to learn that Donald Trump's Scottish mother, born Mary Anne MacLeod [pictured], from the island of Lewis in the Hebrides, was a native Scots-Gaelic speaker. She grew up in the Gaelic-speaking village of Tong, near Stornoway, the youngest of 10 children.

Like many a young Irishwoman from Connemara, where circumstances were so similar, Mary Anne went to America to seek a new life in the 1930s.

But on her deathbed, in 2000, she reverted to her native language of Scots Gaelic, which is, of course, close to Ulster Irish. I'd like to see more analysis of the influence of Mary Anne MacLeod on the 45th President of the United States.





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# Suicide in Cork is now at crisis level claims local TD

#### Susan Gately

Eight people took their own lives in Cork last weekend according to a Dáil deputy from the city. "My phone was hopping all weekend. If it was a minibus with eight people killed it would be national news," Sinn Féin TD Pat Buckley told *The Irish Catholic*.

Deputy Buckley, who lost two brothers to death by suicide, said while Cork is particularly affected by this affliction it is a nationwide blight. "Society has changed so much in the last 10 years. With the internet, cyberbullying is on the increase.

"There is more pressure on young people. People on low pay find it hard to pay mortgages and this leads to marriages breaking up. Then people resort to drink and drugs to hide their shame."

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The Cork deputy believes the national suicide rate (put provisionally at 541 deaths for 2015) is much higher than reported.

"There is a huge stigma attached to mental health and families don't want people to know. So if a person takes an overdose, it's classified as 'accidental poisoning', a single vehicle crash is 'accidental death'. They don't call it suicide."

The Cork TD said there was need for 24/7 crisis intervention centres, pointing out that for every person who died by suicide, 42 others were directly affected. Among these, priests were in the front line, he said.

"They are at the forefront of the final journey. I have seen priests getting very upset.

"Faith should help people,"

he added

Prof. Ella Arensman, Director of Research at the National Suicide Research Foundation, disputes the figure of eight suicides in Cork last weekend. A young boy of 16 found dead in his home was "a case of suspected drug misuse", she said, and another death due to a drug overdose could have been "intentional or accidental".

"I'm very concerned that again the content of the tweets are not in accordance with the facts," she said.

There were 16 cases of

suicide in Cork City in 2014 for the whole year, said Prof. Arensman. "If eight cases of suicide were to happen in Cork city within two days, we would be dealing with a very serious problem of contagion."

#### Coroner

Statistics on suicide are compiled by the coroner and then sent to the General Register's Office, ending in the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Deaths by suicide hit a high of 552 in 2009 but have decreased slightly since then - 486 deaths in 2014 and down again for 2015 to 451 (although these figures have not been approved by the Gardaí). Fifty five of the suicide deaths in 2015 happened in Cork.

Statistics on self harming obtained from the National Self-Harm Registry Ireland, show the city had the highest self harm rate among males, in Ireland for 2015.

People seeking help for depression can get help from the Samaritans on 116 123, Aware on 1800 80 48 48, or Childline on 1800 66 66 66.

#### President leads tributes to John Hume

#### Staff reporter

President Michael D. Higgins has led tributes to Nobel peace prize winner John Hume [pictured] as the veteran peacemaker turned 80 this week.

President Higgins described Mr Hume as "the moral architect of an inclusive peace process" that delivered the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

The president said that Mr Hume – who turned 80 on Wednesday – "responding to the fault-lines of sectarianism and injustice which he encountered in his early adult life, John Hume always rejected the use of violence as an instrument of change, following the principle that an 'eye for eye' approach leaves us all blind. He stood resolutely for the transformational power of non-violence.



"By providing leadership to those who dedicated themselves to achieving peace, partnership and equality through dialogue and democratic engagement, John motivated and inspired many of the best men and women of his generation, and they in turn would go onto give so much of themselves in the promotion of the project of a peaceful and reconciled island," the president said.

As he turns 80, Mr Higgins said, "the many aspects of John's life and legacy – as a man of courage, a committed European and a dedicated and visionary peacemaker – serve as a much-needed inspiration to all of us.

"At a time when both the European Union and Northern Ireland face particular challenges, the values that John espoused – equality, respect, solidarity and partnership – are needed more than ever," he said.

Mr Hume was honoured by Pope Benedict XVI with a papal knighthood in 2012 in recognition of his contribution to peace and reconciliation.

# Heed Pope's call to help young migrants, says bishop

If you can help young migrants, you should do so immediately, Dromore's Bishop John McAreavey has urged communities.

Welcoming the Pope's message for 2017's World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Dr McAreavey, who chairs the Council for Justice and Peace of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, praised the Pontiff's focused on the theme of 'Child Migrants, the vulnerable and the voiceless', and commended Vatican efforts to focus awareness on the challenges facing young refugees and migrants.

"Unlike any time in our history, our collective duty of care towards migrants and refugees includes Irish society in a very significant way," he said, admitting that while this development can seem "overwhelming and disorienting", Catholics have a responsibility to show solidarity with "our new neighbours".

"There have been many changes in Irish society but the duty to love our neighbour no matter where he or she is from is unchanged and, thankfully, unchangeable," he said.





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#### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

#### Corrymeela asked voters to consider 'a worse alternative'

Inclusion and cooperation should be priorities in the North's upcoming elections, Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation centre has said. In a statement following the announcement of the March 2 election, Corrymeela community leader Pádraig Ó Tuama said that while reconciliation is difficult, "the alternative is worse".

Insisting that the people of the North deserve creative and hopeful leadership for the benefit of all, the community called on politicians to show gestures of inclusion and follow these gestures with action. It offered to host gatherings, both on and off the record, so community groups and political leaders can meet in a spirit of good will.

#### Vatican Order of Malta probe will go ahead

The Vatican has insisted that a papal investigation into the Order of Malta will go ahead, despite the order's protestations.

The order, with nearly 4,000 members in Ireland volunteering their time to provide first-aid medical services, has been in disarray since a senior official was dismissed in December.

Pope Francis announced on December 21 that he was appointing a panel to investigate the dismissal and other issues in relation to the order.

However, the head of the order rejected this commission as irrelevant insisting that it would undermine the sovereign status of the organisation.

Comment 7 The Irish Catholic, January 19, 2017

## Nuala O'Loan The View

# North may be facing





required that we would come to realise that it is possible to live together in harmony, that we could entrust our future to our elected politicians knowing that they would act in the common good, that we would learn that the basis of any civilised society is trust and cooperation. Once again, we have been disappointed; the Assembly is our legislature, the

he people of Northern Ireland have been through a very difficult time.

Yet time and again, they

For over 50 years (indeed longer) they have hoped for a better future and their hopes have appeared to be realised from time to time

over the decades.

Executive our government, they were elected in May 2016. I went to the Assembly website to see what legislation they have passed to secure a better future for the people of Northern Ireland since then

I found that in those eight months they have passed one bill, the Budget Bill which was passed on July 29, 2016. Not a great achievement. The alarm bells were ringing watching what was going on at the Assembly, I feared for our future. There seemed to be no capacity to make the important decisions which would improve people's lives. Now, once again, the Assembly has collapsed and we face another election on

#### **Deterioration**

I recently read an article on the front page of The Irish News which said that not one school budget submitted to the Education Authority had been approved in the current year.

Every school in Northern Ireland had had its budget plans rejected after what was reported to be a "serious deterioration" in school finances.

This week I read that

Northern Ireland's GPs are likely to leave the National Health Service (NHS). In December 2016, hundreds of doctors - 97%, according to the BBC - signed undated resignation letters because of funding concerns and workforce strain. If they do resign because a planned rescue deal cannot be implemented we will no longer have an NHS.

We are now in unchartered territory. We will have an election, but those elected may be unable to form a government"

I cannot believe that this will happen, yet it is an indication of the seriousness of our situation that the chairman of the NI General **Practitioners Committee has** said that "general practice is on the edge of a full blown crisis. It is catastrophic".

Our public services are clearly in a parlous state. The arguments between the DUP and Sinn Féin have been presented in terms of issues relating to the allocation of funding - £1.7m to an organisation reputedly led by a UDA leader; on October 19, 2016 it was reported at a launch in an Orange Hall that funding of £500,000 had been announced to enable minor works and improvements to community halls.

Yesterday it was reported that the funding had increased to £1.9m and it has been alleged that the money has predominantly been directed to one side of the community.

That is not all. We also have the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme, a UK-wide scheme which was specially adapted by the NI government, resulting in a cost to the taxpayer of an estimated £490m over 20 years. This, when we cannot afford to run our schools and hospitals.

It was this that ultimately led to the collapse of the NI devolved government. The underlying problems of mutual mistrust and consequential inability to work together are for more significant. We are now in unchartered territory. We will have an election on March 2, but those elected may be unable to form a government.

#### **Negotiations**

We may face a couple of years of negotiations (or longer) before some sort of a compromise is reached and those in power stumble back into government. That would mean at least a couple of years of direct rule from Westminster.

The last suspension of the Assembly lasted from 2002-2007, after which the DUP and Sinn Féin came into power. Over the last ten years, little has been achieved. It seems to have been generally accepted that the greatest achievement was simply keeping the

Assembly going, but that has not served us well.

Politics is never an easy business.

There are those who jeer at politicians, but the reality is that in our democracy it is we the people who make decisions about who will govern us, who will make the decisions about how best to use the resources available to us, whether we have a doctor to go to, whether there is an education system and employment for those who go through that system, whether our infrastructure will be developed to enable us to play a proper role in a modern industrial world.

The people of Northern Ireland are now faced with a very difficult decision. We need a government which is capable of planning for and providing for the future.

We need politicians who recognise the need to do all they can to secure the common good.

We need to be able to move beyond the politics of sectarianism.

We are in a time of austerity, though we no longer talk about it, and austerity requires that one focuses on securing the best possible return for all the people with the resources available.

We need to concentrate our efforts on enabling our people to develop, and providing for those who need help on their journey, for whatever reason.

We need politicians who recognise that it doesn't matter whether you are Catholic or Protestant if you are hungry, don't have a decent pair of shoes, or a warm home, or don't have the ability to provide for yourself, because you can't get employment.

#### Our divisions are the product of our history. They need not continue to define us"

**Catholics and Protestants** worship one God, and the ongoing divisions within our society are a scandal in the eyes of the rest of the world. Our divisions are the product of our history. They need not continue to define

Our parties could present us with manifestos and commitments to a future which is not determined by historic identity, but rather one which is predicated upon working out how to make the best of what we have for all our people.

Which party, or parties, in Northern Ireland will have the courage to do that, and to leave behind ancient distrust and division and build a society in which life is valued from conception to death, in which resources are shared out fairly to those who need them, in which respect and compassion and the determination to do our best to build a just society are the real motivators of those who govern?

It can be done. Will it be done?

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# An ancient struggle rears its head



The North's coming election is about a struggle between the two traditions on this island, writes **Bishop Donal** 

he entire Brexit project remains a step into the unknown for everybody. Thus we remain unclear as to the possible effects, especially on border counties.

McKeown

But what history tells us is that Belfast, from being the third industrial city of the UK before Partition (with shipbuilding, tobacco, linen and rope-making it lay behind only London and Liverpool), with the creation of Northern Ireland and the creation of the border, gradually became a relative industrial irrelevancy.

There is fear that the loss

of the European dimension – which helped to open up Northern Ireland in general and the border counties in particular – will again adversely affect the more recent growth in the North and relegate the whole area to an off-shore appendage of Great Britain.

However, another possible effect might well be a reconsideration of whether the economic future of Northern Ireland actually lies in the UK or in a new all-Ireland structure, as – in practice – the North and the Republic have become increasingly interlinked as regards the agrifood sectors, tourism and flexible working practices.

A hard border would also be quoted by some as proof that Northern Ireland is not actually a viable economic entity, cut off from the rest of the island.

On top of the above economic questions, the legal dimension also raises issues. The peace process in the North (along with the border counties) benefitted from major Peace I-IV investments from the European Union (EU).

#### Role

Furthermore, the role of Europe in the North helped to internationalise the status of the new institutions.

However, the current Brexit situation also coincides with a questioning of whether



The Harland & Wolff cranes at the docks in Belfast – once, city was behind only London and Liverpool in terms of its industrial importance.

the institutions that were set up on the basis of the Good Friday agreement are actually fit for purpose 20 years on. In other words, is the emphasis on equality of opportunity based on 'perceived religious affiliation' (i.e. the assumption that everyone could/ should be classified as Protestant, Catholic or other) a valid criterion in 2017?

The questioning of the

basis for the institutions established by the Good Friday Agreement may well be exploited by different groups, for example people like [Traditional Unionist Voice assembly member] Jim Allister arguing that we should have a majority government as in other jurisdictions rather than an enforced coalition which is in major difficulties, or Sinn Féin's

suggestion that we need to go further towards joint rule.

The maintenance of a hard border would raise a series of difficult questions, not just about how to organise the border checks, but how to protect those members of the customs service who would be working there.

It may be possible for there to be a much larger role for electronic control of the eventual border posts. But it would be no surprise if some groups chose to use the presence of UK border personnel as an opportunity for renewed violence.

The election, just called for March 2, supports the thesis that in the North the war is over but that the conflict between Irishness/Republicanism and Unionism is alive and well, and that the Troubles were about political identity and not theological persuasion.

It would be no surprise if some groups chose to use the presence of UK border personnel as an opportunity for renewed violence"

The prospective approach of the centenary of the foundation of Northern Ireland in 2022 may well be seen as a spur to both unionism and nationalism to ensure that the centenary is or is not reached.

However, it is important for outsiders to recognise that this election has been precipitated by Sinn Féin, not just because of one issue but in the context of the macro struggle between the two political and cultural traditions on the island.

# Bishops' absence adds to low-key unity celebrations in Ireland

#### **Susan Gately**

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity began yesterday (Wednesday) with an official inauguration service at the Church of Ireland parish in Taney in south Dublin. This year the event occurs while the Catholic bishops are in Rome at their ad limina meeting with the Pope, so no Catholic bishops will be present at ecumenical events during the week.

Although the Week of Prayer has been a lowkey event in recent years, according to ecumenist and Benedictine monk Fr Martin Browne [pictured] it "can still happen in your area" if there is the will.

"People can do the week of prayer without the showpiece marquee event in the cathedral," Fr Browne told *The Irish Catholic*.

With the demise of conferences like the Greenhills Ecumenical

Conference, focus on the Octave has reduced but the Benedictine priest insists that ecumenism is not "dead in the water".

"Relationships between [individual] Christians and Churches are better and there is more co-operation between Churches on social issues," he said. "The week of prayer can be artificial when people are [already] working together."

What counted, said Fr Browne, was for people to pray for Christian unity this week. "The materials are produced each year. I would like the week to be part of consciousness of individual parishes and for them to use the materials each day, at Masses etc."

#### **Theme**

This year's theme is 'Crossing Barriers' with a special emphasis on the 500th anniversary of the German Reformation and the call to reconciliation. Material for the worldwide Octave was produced by the churches in Germany with its theme taken from Corinthians: "The love of Christ compels us." (II Corinthians 5:14).

# In the northern hemisphere, it runs from January 18 to January 25"

Fr Browne, who is a member of the International Joint Editing Committee,

which signed off on the materials prepared by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said the octave was taken more seriously by other Christian Churches "perhaps"

because they are smaller and are more used to working together".

Another thing which may militate against the success of the Octave of prayer is its proximity to Christmas and the New Year. In the northern hemisphere, it runs from the feast of the Chair of Peter (January 18) to the feast of the Conversion of St Paul (January 25). But there is "no problem with changing the date if a particular country decides to do so" says Fr Browne. In the southern hemisphere the Octave is observed around Pentecost.

In Dublin, the week of prayer concludes on January 25 with an ecumenical Taizé prayer service in Christchurch cathedral at 7.30pm.

During the weekdays of the Octave, the Carmelite monastery in Kilmacud, Dublin will host an evening prayer service each day at 4.30pm with reflections coming from different Christian traditions.



Pope Francis arrives to lead ecumenical vespers at the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls in Rome in January of last year. Photo: CNS

The Irish Catholic, January 19, 2017



#### **David Quinn**

ruton set to pledge end of school 'baptism barrier", read the headline in one newspaper on Monday. It was typical of the headlines in a number of news outlets. Reading those headlines you could be forgiven for thinking that **Education Minister, Richard** Bruton, has decided to altogether abolish the right of Catholic schools to admit Catholic children first, and other children after that. But it's not so, even if it is one out of four options on the table.

On Monday, Richard Bruton gave an address at a conference held by Equate, an organisation dedicated to removing the rights of faith schools to serve children of their own faith community first, a policy Equate says is unjustified discrimination.

Defenders say faith schools must be permitted to carry out their founding purpose, and the founding purpose of a faith school is to serve children and parents who share the faith of the school, just as Irish language schools serve those dedicated to the Irish language.

The first of the four options Bruton outlined was a 'catchment area' approach. This would allow a Catholic school to admit Catholics from a school's catchment area first, but then would have to admit non-Catholic children from within the catchment area in preference to Catholic children from outside the catchment area.

The second option, a "nearest school rule" is similar to the first option.

The third option is a quota system. This would allow schools to set aside a certain percentage of places for children of the faith of the

#### **Support**

A ban on religious schools using religion as a factor in admissions is the final option, but parents would have to show some level of support for the ethos of the school.

None of the options is for the status quo, and the Minister has indicated a public consultation purpose lasting about 12 weeks. He wants to hear from minority faith schools, for instance. These would potentially be hit hardest

# Govt should see the real value of faith schools

Turning up the heat on

of turning down the heat on

faith schools is also a way

the Government itself for



Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, Diarmuid Martin, visiting Our Lady of the Wayside National School in Bluebell, Dublin. Photo: Clodagh Kilcoyne

by a change in admissions policy because even now, a minority of children in many Church of Ireland schools are actually from the Church of Ireland. It would almost completely defeat the purpose of a Church of Ireland school if it had to turn away Church of Ireland children out of preference to children of others faiths or none.

What's interesting is that the Minister has launched this process at all. Where is the demand for it? Certainly, the Labour party wants it. Various newspapers want it. Campaign groups like Equate want it. (Labour's Ruairi Quinn is on the board of Equate). But do the public really want it?

#### Ministers ought to devote their energies to the most pressing problems"

Equate produces polls showing they do, but when parents are concretely asked whether they want the faith school in their area to become another kind of school, there is little support.

A Department of Education survey conducted when Ruairi Quinn was Education Minister in 43 areas around the country and taking in several hundred schools, found little support for handing the local faith schools over to other patron bodies such as Educate Together.

In addition, outside of a handful of areas, mostly

on the southside of Dublin, TDs rarely hear complaints from constituents that they cannot get their children into their local school because of the 'baptism barrier' that is, because their children are not baptised into the faith of the school.

The reason they rarely hear complaints is because the vast majority of schools around the country have enough school places to meet demand from all parents. A survey conducted by this newspaper found that only 3% of schools don't have enough places, and again these are mainly in Dublin.

# British Prime Minister, Theresa May, has recently praised faith schools

Dublin archdiocese itself surveyed its 450 primary schools to find out how many children had to be turned down a place because of over-enrolment. Almost three-quarters of the schools replied (315), and only 12 children were refused a place last September, and eight of these were turned down by the one school. This does not indicate so big a problem.

So why is the Education Minister devoting such energy to it? Ministers ought to devote their energies to the most pressing problems. Perhaps it is because this Government, like previous Governments, often dances to the tune of pressure groups and the media, more than to public pressure.

areas.
The Government could say it is doing this simply

school places in certain

its failure to provide enough

say it is doing this simply as a matter of principle, so perhaps we shouldn't be too cynical.

However, it is very hard not to see this latest move as simply the latest in a series of attacks on the rights of faith schools. It is not only their admissions policy that is under attack.

Their employment rights have already been eroded, and there are continual attacks on their ethos and their right to handle religious education in their own way. Hence the pressure to teach 'Education about Religion, Belief and Ethics'.

As it happens the Catholic Church would be open to the first two of the options set out by Minister Bruton. Archbishop Eamon Martin has indicated before that he would favour something very like option one and probably option two as well, which would allow Catholic schools to admit local children from the Catholic faith first, and then non-Catholic children from the local area in preference to Catholic children from outside the

#### **Contrast**

But the contrast between the constant drumbeat of negativity emanating from Government circles about faith schools and the positivity from the British Government about them is stark.

British Prime Minister, Theresa May, has recently praised faith schools and says she intends building more Catholic schools.

The Government should bring itself to praise faith schools every now and again or we may be forced to conclude it doesn't like them very much at all.



religion and traditional marriage in Ireland.

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what the Trump presidency means for people of faith

opulism is the spirit of the moment," says R.R. Reno, editor of the American journal First Things, pointing to what he sees as key to the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency. "Populism has a cultural and spiritual dimension to it as well as an economic one," he continues "and my interpretation of populism is a desire for the recovery of something solid at the centre of civic life, so nationalism is the natural default because it's an attempt to recover the metaphysical meaning of the nation in an era that in which since 1989, the fall of the Soviet Union, globalisation – the nation has weakened as a point of loyalty and purpose.'

Recent populist votes in the West suggest a call for a "metaphysical strengthening" of civic life, he says, continuing: "This is both a peril and an opportunity for Catholics, a peril because the state has been cast as a competitor with the Church, but opportunity because it betokens a desire for some things that are solid and permanent, of which the Church, of course, has much to offer.'

At the same time, he cautions, there is a danger of making an idol of the nation, noting how Pius XI had warned of this in the 1930s, with the deification of the State being "the great peril and disaster of 1914 to 1945'

The danger of national idolatry aside, patriotic and communitarian urges are real things, he observes, adding that, "Many people have commented and rightly so that the postmodern age is an age of greater fragmentation, and I think what Trump voters are saying in part of course, there are many factors, but what they're saying in part - is they want to make sure they don't lose that sense of commonality and

Citing Lincoln's reference to the "mystic chords of memory" in his first inaugural address, given on what would prove to be the eve of the American Civil War, Mr Reno says, "Americans wrongly think we're a propositional nation, a nation of an idea, and we are that in part, but we're also a nation of shared memory and various traditions - my European friends are always shocked when they come to the US by how many flags

we have up, and after 9/11 they were everywhere!'

At the same time, he notes, neo-liberalism, both as an economic phenomenon and as a cultural-political ambition, has become more and more openly post-national, which is leading to such reactions as the Trump election, with people

wanting to have bonds of unity that matter, and not merely ones limited to market "People don't want to live

**RR Reno** 

an ever more fluid world," he adds, reiterating that this is both a peril and an opportunity for Catholics, 'and Catholicism is all about saying the sacramental life of the Church, the teachings of the Church - these are permanent things, they're rocks, they're anchors of stability."

#### **Benediction prayer**

New York's Cardinal Timothy Dolan will pray at this week's presidential inauguration - strikingly praying from Wisdom, a book that Protestants such as Mr Trump do not regard as part of the Bible - the first Catholic bishop to pray at such an event since Archbishop Roach prayed the benediction prayer at the inauguration of President Jimmy Carter in 1977.

"It's funny," says Mr Reno, "we have an officially secular system, with separation of Church and State – we're very clear about that - but we have a tradition of a kind of public piety

politicians cultivate.

"It's a bit of an irony with Trump - there's not a lot of piety there, but there wasn't a whole lot of piety in Bill Clinton either," he continues. 'Sometimes, as the old saying goes, hypocrisy is the compliment that vice pays to virtue.'

Among the group of religious leaders who will pray at the Trump inauguration is the televangelist Paula White, who advocates a 'prosperity Gospel' that claims God blesses true believers not just in Heaven but with material wealth here on earth, but Mr Reno plays down the significance of this, seeing Ms White as just one of a medley of American preachers.

"Our civil religion is a bastardised Christianity, it always has been," he says, distinguishing between the religion that people live in their ordinary lives and that on show at civic ceremonies. Noting that the Pilgrim Fathers failed in their attempt to build America as a pure Christian nation, he says this "should be a warning to us all that civic life will always be an extremely imperfect expression of our philosophical and theological convictions".

The Irish Catholic, January 19, 2017



Asked whether he thinks the Catholic Church in the US needs to use a long spoon if it intends to sup with Mr Trump, Mr Reno says. "I think it has that," adding, "I think one of the really good things for the Church with Trump is that he takes the pressure off in the religious liberty area, but there's no major Catholic leader who supported Trump."

#### He's a vulgar man – there's no way around it. Would I like a pro-nation, pro-patriotic, intelligent critic of globalism? Yes"

Not merely have no major Catholics supported Mr Trump, but in March of last year numerous prominent Catholic intellectuals signed a statement opposing him, describing him as "manifestly unfit" for office. This was a mistake, Mr Reno maintains.

"There are reasons to object to Trump, and not to vote for him: you may disagree with his policies, you may think he doesn't have the proper temperament for the office, but I think there became an anti-Trump hysteria, that I think is very counterproductive," he says, arguing that he was hardly more manifestly unfit for office than Hillary Clinton who, he believes, is involved in "globalised patronage".

"Trump clearly rejects globalisation as an ideology, and for me that was very important and that was a very good reason to want to support him," he says, adding that, "Clinton would have continued the progressive attack on religious institutions in the United States. Defeating her, I felt, was very important, so I think a lesser of evils arguments could be made – a very strong one – for voting for Trump, regardless of how flawed you thought he was as a candidate."

Originally opposed to Mr Trump's candidacy, Mr Reno changed his mind over time, even eventually signing a public statement in support of him. Key to his change of mind was an article by Walter Russell Mead in The American Interest called 'The Meaning of Mr Trump', which argued, in effect, that Mr Trump was the wrong answer to the right questions, maintaining that the 'baby boom consensus' had failed to create a healthy society that works for most Americans.

#### **Concerns**

Initially troubled by concerns about Mr Trump's temperament and his stoking of resentment, Mr Reno wondered too about those horrified by his coarseness, pointing to what he sees as a prominent coarseness in popular entertainment and media. "Are we surprised that one of our politicians adopted this more demotic, more crude approach to communicating with voters?"

Describing Mr Trump as "unquestionably a symptom of a vulgarised culture", he says, "he's a vulgar man – there's no way around it. Would I like a pronation, pro-patriotic, intelligent critic of globalism? Yes. But politics doesn't give us a choice between the perfect and the bad – it gives us a choice between the bad and the less bad."

Utopian thinking and the quest for perfection is a problem in modern political thinking, he observes, continuing, "The right's utopia is a frictionless free market in which the State withers away, and societies are organised by markets – they want to privatise everything. It is utopian – it's Marxism, withering away the State, except instead of withering away with the dictatorship of the proletariat, it's withering away with the dictatorship of the market."

On the other hand, he says: "The left has a utopianism that is a kind of multicultural world, baptised by human rights, in which peace and prosperity come to everyone through expert cultural management and political correctness, and our university campuses are very deeply in the grip of that utopianism and they are dysfunctional, unhappy places, as we see from student protests."

These modern utopian ideals



have seduced American political culture, he laments, adding, "we promote them throughout the world now, and that's just got to stop".

Mr Trump famously lost the popular vote in November's election, receiving almost three million fewer votes than Mrs Clinton who received more votes than any candidate ever with the exception of President Barack Obama, but won because of the US's electoral college system which effectively treats the national election as a total of 51 elections, each of which has a weighted value. The new President won by holding states won by the 2012 Republican candidate Mitt Romney and narrowly winning a few others, notably Pennysylvania, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

His gains there appear to have been, in the main, based on economic appeals to communities that have suffered in the face of mechanisation and global competition.

'This is where many of friends say they're going to be disappointed because he can't really do anything," says Mr Reno, who believes Trump voters in those states won't be so easily disenchanted. "These people" aren't stupid: they know there are these large secular trends. But I remember reading a quote from one of the workers at the Carrier plant in Indianapolis - she said, 'I've never voted for Republican in my life, but this is the first time in 20 years that someone's actually stood up for me'."

# Politics, as I say, is about dreams and fears – it's not just interests"

"Symbolism matters," he continues. "One of the perversions of our elite is that they think that being smart and having all the policy details in place is really what politics is all about. It's not politics is about dreams as well as about fears. These people would like economic prosperity - they may get it, and it may not take the form they would like and there's going to be dislocation and change but it just makes a big difference having a leader who says 'I'm going to fight for you as best I can', and not one who says 'You've just got

to suck it up, and move to North Dakota'."

The answers both Republicans and Democrats have hitherto given to economically beleaguered communities in the old industrial north simply weren't good enough, he argues, because they treated people as disposable and as impediments to progress. "Trump came in and said 'No, this is about vou, it's not about what's best for Wall Street, or what's best for Google, or what's best for Apple,' and I think that has a huge psychological influence. Politics, as I say, is about dreams and fears it's not just interests," he says.

#### **Price worth paying**

Given that politics is about fears as much as dreams, any analysis of Mr Trump must consider how, even if his rise was not – as Walter Russell Mead put it last spring – simply fuelled by racism, ignorance and hate, these all played their part. Asked whether Trump voters were willing to accept these as a price worth paying, Mr Reno disagrees.

"Interracial marriage rates decrease as you go down the social ladder," he says, observing that "rich, progressive people do not racially intermarry, working class people do at a higher rate."

Despite this, he says, racial jokes and other harshness are part of the reality of working class life with ordinary people living in a world that's less carefully policed than his own, without the politically correct etiquette about race he describes as "a very powerful class marker" in American life.

Fears stoked by Mr Trump have not simply been limited to matters of race, of course. Following the conflict between the Obama administration and the Little Sisters of the Poor over the application of the Affordable Care Act, it's understandable that American Christians of various denominations should have had concerns about religious liberty, but Mr Trump's proclaimed plans for registering Muslims raise the obvious question of whether it is legitimate to protect one's own religious liberty by supporting someone who plans to attack that

"You have to defend the Muslims when the rubber hits the road," says Mr Reno, continuing, "let's see what he does. We'll speak out against targeting Muslims. The idea of a registry, things like that – these are ideas that need to be resisted and rejected. I think that's for the future."

Observing that anti-Muslim sentiment is a real phenomenon in the US, Mr Reno says: "In my travelling and speaking to Church groups, I'm consistently shocked by very crude assumptions about Muslims trying to impose Sharia law, whereas actually in the United States our Muslim community is exemplary in terms of its assimilation and how they tend to be well-educated."

While stressing that this doesn't obviate the need to be vigilant against the possibility of domestic terrorism, he says this degree of assimilation must be acknowledged. "We're very fortunate in that regard, and we ought to build on that strength," he says, continuing, "I hope the Trump administration recognises that."

# I'm consistently shocked by very crude assumptions about Muslims trying to impose Sharia law"

Perhaps the most jarring moment in the election campaign took place in October, when tapes were released revealing how Mr Trump had, in effect, boasted of and advocated sexually assaulting women.

Given how the pro-life campaign has long argued that opposition to abortion is not merely prochild but pro-women, the obvious question is how it's possible that a man who would speak of women this way can be held up as offering any kind of hope for pro-lifers, and whether support for him risks jettisoning what goodwill the prolife movement has amassed.

"It's not good, but what can you do?", says Mr Reno, continuing, "You had to vote for one of two people, you had to support one of two people. People can make up their own mind – they could decide that they're going to be Pharisees, and be so pure that they're not going to soil their reputations by supporting someone who has rebarbative dimensions, or they can enter into the fray, and they have to make a choice."

Pointing out that he doesn't believe any of his Democrat-voting friends who supported Bill Clinton were in favour of taking advantage of young interns, he says. "I never found myself outraged by my liberal friends for defending Bill Clinton. There are no perfect vessels for advancing what you regard to be as the common good."

(†) R.R. Reno will be speaking on 'American Christians in the Age of Trump' at 8pm on January 26 in the Davenport Hotel, Dublin 2, in a talk organised by the Iona Institute and chaired by John Waters.

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## Out&About

#### **Edited by Greg Daly** greg@irishcatholic.ie







▲ CARLOW: Ursula Hayden (centre) and Fr John Dunphy PP (left) with current and former members of Graiguecullen Youth Choir after singing together at the parish's St Clare's Church before a 10-year reunion party.

◀ KERRY: Pupils and staff at Holy Cross Mercy, Killarney, having fully participated in the Christmas season are now looking forward to Catholic Schools Week.



**KERRY:** Tony Darmody and Sr Frances Day receiving a cake and thanks from the Diocese of Kerry on their retirement from the diocesan pastoral council after many vears' service.



DOWN: Maureen Gilmore with her son Fr Sean Gilmore, Fr Brendan Mulhall, Fr John Mc Manus, Canon Noel Conway, Derek Kearney and Fr Colm Curran after celebrating her 100th birthday with a Mass at St Malachy's Church, Kilclief. Photo: Bill Smyth.



CORK: Jerry O'Riordan, St Francis fraternity Cork, receiving his 50-year certificate from Denis O'Callaghan, President and Fr Edward O'Callaghan SA.

#### **ARMAGH**

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

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

#### **CLARE**

A service for 2017's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place in St Columba's Bindon Street, Ennis at 7.30pm on January 24.

#### CORK

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

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.

The papal nuncio, Archbishop Charles Brown, will launch a visitors' guide to St Patrick's Cathedral, the former episcopal seat of the diocese of Ross, in Skibbereen at 12:30pm on Sunday 22 January, with refreshments to follow

#### **DERRY**

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

#### DUBLIN

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

Join other young adults (20's & 30's) for a night of music, reflective prayer, and a talk on life, faith and purpose, followed by a social with refreshments at The Encounter, St Paul's Church, Arran Quay at 8pm on Friday, January 20.

Life to the Full (Jn 10:10) book club for young adults meets every Thursday from 7-8:30pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay (Smithfield) to meditate, share and discuss life & faith. Refreshments provided, www facebook.com/lifetothefullbook club

Embrace God in nature while building true friendships and getting fit with Ewe Thina: We Walk God's Way, joining other young adults (20s & 30s) for reflective monthly hikes around Dublin area. https://www. facebook.com/wewalkgodsway - contact siobhan.tighe@ dublindiocese.ie

#### FERMANAGH

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

#### **KILDARE**

A centring/contemplative prayer group continues to meet in the Old Baptistry of St Michael's parish church in Athy every Thursday at 8pm. Everyone

welcome. For more ring Dolores at 086-3474679.

Suncroft parish church: Fucharistic Adoration each Wed in the sacristy 10am to 6pm.

#### **KILKENNY**

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

#### LIMERICK

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

#### LOUTH

Annual candlight procession in honour of St Brigid will take begin from Faughart Hill at 8pm on Wednesday, February 1, preceded in some local churches with a triduum of devotions and prayers, with Mass in the oratory at St Brigid's Shrine, Faughart, on the three days before the procession.

#### MEATH

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

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

#### **OFFALY**

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

#### ROSCOMMON

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

#### **SLIGO**

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

#### WATERFORD

Monthly intercession for Marriages and Families will be held between 6 and 7pm on Friday January 13 in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, in the Edmund Rice Heritage Centre, Waterford.

#### **WICKLOW**

Beginners are welcome at a week-long course in Icon writing with Mihai Cucu hosted by Delgany's Carmelite Monastery over February 20-25. Contact: mihaicucu78@gmail.com

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

Holy Rosary for priests, Aras Lorcain, Fridays at 7.45pm. Holy Hour of Adoration, Prayer and Music continues every Wednesday, 8pm-9pm, in St Patrick's Church, Wicklow

Town. All welcome. You can also join us on the live stream: http://www.churchservices.tv/ stpatrickschurchwicklow

The Irish Catholic

# GUIDE TO RETREATS

"Come you yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while"

Mark 6:31

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# A history of **Christian retreats**

The main idea of retreats, that is leaving the world to contemplate one's thoughts and become nearer to God, is one that has been a part of Christianity since its beginning. The private escape provides an opportunity to refresh the soul and rekindle a personal relationship with the Father.

The first example of retreats in this sense is the forty days Christ spent in the desert. Mark 1:12 explains that after His baptism, 'the spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness'.

This isn't the only example in the scriptures of Christ spending time on His own in prayer. Luke 6:12 also mentions, in those days He departed to the mountain to pray, and He spent the night in prayer to God.'

Christ, both man and divine, knew that even amidst all that He was required to do during his ministry, private time in

prayer with the Father was a necessity.

Christians continued this version of retreats for hundreds of years. One prominent example is St Francis of Assisi, who at the start of his call to religious life, embarked on a retreat by leaving the privileged world he had been born into to embrace the natural world where he could become closer to God.



This tradition continued as St Francis, and later his order, were known to take respite in the wilderness to renew their devotion to Christ.

During the late 15th century the sense of a retreat as we know it today was beginning to take hold in another order on the continent. St Ignatius valued the importance of solitary prayer and a total reformation before an individual made a commitment to his order, the Society of Jesus.

To uphold this standard, he instituted a 30-day spiritual exercise regimen that men worked through before they took their admission vows.

Later, after taking their final vows, the men continued to repeat the routine every year in a shortened version lasting only eight days.

This tradition began with the Society of Jesus, but the spiritual routine was eventually passed on to other orders and individuals.

These practices continued until the early 1800's when

retreats became common for parishes, diocesan priests. and lay people.

These retreats were based on the instructions from St Ignatius and lasted anywhere from 20 to 30 days. The major difference in this style was that directors were typically involved to help guide the participants.

#### **Evolution**

This retreat evolution grew later on in the century when Pere Henry, a French Jesuit, pioneered a movement of retreats aimed at working men. This focus on a new group of people resulted in retreat houses being formed all throughout Europe, reaching their height in the early 20th Century.

From then until now, retreats have developed to fit the needs of the society they

However, the core remains the same as it did when Jesus ventured into the



desert, private reflection to better the soul's relationship with God. Retreats today have built upon that idea by providing spiritual development through scripture discussion and workshops.

They have also evolved to fit the busier than ever lifestyle of the church's laity. For example it is possible to take a weekend retreat or a daylong retreat.

Group or individual retreat options have also become available. Now more than ever, retreats serve to provide the faithful with a place of repose, an opportunity to rekindle a relationship with Christ, or even an escape to reflect on past transgressions and rectify the soul with God.

In Ireland there are over 40 retreat houses, all waiting to provide an experience of self reflection and strengthened bond with the Heavenly Father.





Ennis Lane, Lissenhall, Swords, Co. Dublin www.emmauscentre.ie

24-MAR 26-MAR

The Art of Allowing

with Fr. Louis Hughes

Residential - €210 | Non-Residential - €155

25-MAR 26-MAR

Life in Transition with Hugh McDermott and Donna McGuire

Residential - €180 | Non-Residential - €130

19-MAY 21-MAY

**Dreams Real Agenda** 

with Fr. Paddy Greene

Residential - €210 | Non-Residential - €155

18TH - 22ND JUNE

**A Retreat** 

with Father Jim Coglev

Residential - €400 | Non-Residential - €265

20-AUG 25-AUG

The Divine Beauty of Your **Human Heart** 

with Fr. Daniel O'Leary

Residential - €480 | Non-Residential - €330

27-AUG 1-SEP

The Divine Dance

with Bishop Brendan Comiskey

Residential - €330



For up to date information on all our Retreats: CALL us on 01-8700050 | Email: emmauscentre@emmauscentre.ie 5 Drumaroan Road Ballycastle Co. Antrim BT54 60U Tel: +44 2820 762626 ballycastle@corrymeela.org

#### **Drumalis Retreat and Conference Centre**

www.corrymeela.org

47 Glenarm Road Larne Co. Antrim BT40 1DT Tel: +44 2828 272196 drumalis@btconnect.com www.drumalis.co.uk

#### CLARE

#### **Seaside Retreats**

FCJ Ibricken Lodge Spanish Point Co. Clare Tel: 086 3423692 geraldinefcj@yahoo.ie

#### CORK

#### Ballygriffin

Mallow Co. Cork Tel: 022 26411 secretary@ nanonaglebirthplace.ie www.nanonaglebirthplace.ie

#### **Ennismore Retreat Centre**

Ennismore Montenotte Cork Tel: 021 4502520 ennismore@eircom.net www.ennismore.ie

#### **Myross Wood Retreat** Centre

Leap Co. Cork Tel: 028 33118 mscmvross@eircom.net www.myrosswood.ie

#### **DERRY**

#### **Columba House**

11 Queen Street Derry BT48 7EG Tel: +44 2871 262407 www.columbacommunity.

#### DONEGAL

#### **Ards Friary**

Creeslough Letterkenny Co. Donegal Tel: 074 9138909 info@ardsfriary.ie www.ardsfriary.ie

#### **IOSAS Centre**

Derryvane Muff Co. Donegal Tel: 074 9384866 www.celticprayergarden.

#### St Anthony's Retreat **Centre**

Dundrain Burnfoot Co. Donegal Tel: 074 9368370 sarce@eircom.net www.columbacommunity.com margaretaylwardcentre.ie

#### **St Patrick's Purgatory**

Lough Derg Co. Donegal Tel: 071 9861518 info@loughderg.org www.loughderg.org

#### DOWN

#### **Dromantine Retreat Centre**

Newry Co. Down BT34 1RH Tel: +44 2830 821964 www.dromantineconference.

#### **Tobar Mhuire Retreat** and Conference Centre

**Downpatrick Street** Crossgar Co. Down BT30 9EA Tel: +44 2844 830242 secretary@ tobarmhuirecrossgar.com www.tobarmhuirecrossgar. com

#### DUBLIN

#### **Avila Carmelite Centre**

Bloomfield Avenue Morehampton Road Donnybrook Dublin 4 Tel: 01 6430200 info@avilacentre.ie www.avilecentre.ie

#### **Benildus Pastoral Centre**

160a Kilmacud Road Upper Dublin 14 Tel: 01 2964195 benilduspastoralcentre@ eircom.net www. benilduspastoralcentre.com

#### **Dominican Retreat** Centre

Tallaght Village Dublin 24 Tel: 01 4048123 Retreathouse@eircom.net www.domsrc.com

#### **The Emmaus Centre**

**Ennis Lane** Lissenhall Swords Co. Dublin Tel: 01 8700050 www.emmauscentre.ie

#### **Iona Pastoral Centre**

Idrone Avenue Dublin 16 Tel: 01 4943712 ionacentre@knocklyonparish. www.knocklyonparish.ie

#### **Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality**

426 Clontarf Road Dollymount Dublin 3 Tel: 01 8331352 www.manresa.ie

#### **Margaret Aylward Centre**

**Holy Faith Sisters** Glasnevin Dublin 11 Tel: 01 7879364 mcfdglasnevin@gmail.com

## **Directory** of Irish Retreat **Centres**

#### **Orlagh Retreat Centre**

Gunny Hill Kilakee Road Dublin 16 Tel: 01 4958190 info@orlagh.ie www.orlagh.ie

#### **Stella Maris Retreat** Centre

Carrickbrack Road Baily Howth Co. Dublin Tel: 01 8322228 stellamarisretreatcentre@ gmail.com

#### **GALWAY**

#### **Emmanuel House of Providence**

Clonfert Ballinasloe Co. Galway Tel: 057 91551552 contact@emmanuelhouse.ie www.emmanuelhouse.ie

#### **Esker Retreat Centre**

Esker Athenry Co. Galway Tel: 091 844549 info@redemptoristsesker.ie www.redemptoristsesker.ie

#### KERRY

#### **Ardfert Retreat Centre**

Ardfert Co. Kerry Tel: 066 7134276 ardfertretreat@eircom.net www.ardfertretreatcentre.org

#### LAOIS

#### **Mount St. Anne's Retreat** and Conference Centre Killenard

Portarlington Co. Laois Tel: 057 8626153 msannes@eircom.net www.mountstannes.com

#### **LIMERICK**

#### **Glenstal Abbev**

Murroe Co. Limerick Tel: 061 386328 events@glenstal.com www.glenstal.org

#### LOUTH

#### Monastery of St Catherine of Siena

The Twenties Drogheda Co. Louth www.dominicannuns.ie

#### **MAYO**

#### **Ballintubber Abbey**

Ballintubber Claremorris Co. Mayo Tel: 094 9030934 info@ballintubberabbey.ie www.ballintubberabbey.ie

#### **Knock Shrine**

Main Street Knock Co. Mayo Tel: 094 9388100 info@knock-shrine.ie www.knockshrine.ie

#### **ROSCOMMON**

#### **Ard Chiarain Prayer** Centre

Shannonbridge Athlone Co. Roscommon Tel: 090 9674305 www.ursulines.ie

#### SLIGO

#### The Spiritual Life Institute

Holy Hill Hermitage Skreen Co. Sligo Tel: 071 9166021 holyhill@eircom.net www.spirituallifeinstitute.org

# SCULPTURE GARDEN

This tranquil and inspirational sacred space is ideal for one day retreats. Suitable for individuals or small groups.

Facilitation/Conversation

Open Spring to Autumn.

Booking essential:

#### **Star of the Sea Retreat**

Mullaghmore Co. Sligo Tel: 071 9176722 staroftheseacentre@gmail. com www.staroftheseacentre.com

#### **TIPPERARY**

#### Glencomeragh House of

Kilsheelan Clonmel Co. Tipperary Tel: 052 33181 info@glencomeragh.ie www.glencomeragh.ie

#### WATERFORD

#### **Mount Melleray Abbey** Mountmelleray

Cappoquin Co. Waterford www.mountmellerayabbey.

#### WESTMEATH

#### La Verna Centre

Franciscan House of Spirituality & Hospitality Ballinderry Mullingar Co. Westmeath Tel: 044 9352000 lavernacentre@gmail.com www.fmolireland.ie

#### WEXFORD

#### **Ballyvaloo Centre**

Blackwater Enniscorthy Co. Wexford Tel: 053 9137160 office@ballyvaloo.ie www.ballyvaloo.ie

#### **WICKLOW**

#### **An Tairseach**

Bayview Wicklow Town Tel: 040 461833 info@ecocentrewicklow.ie www.ecocentrewicklow.ie

#### **Shekina Sculpture** Garden

Glenmalure Valley Glanmalure Co. Wicklow Tel: 01 2838711 shekinasculpturegarden.com

#### **Tearmann Spirituality** Centre

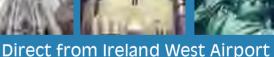
Glendalough Co. Wicklow tearmannspirituality@gmail. www.tearmann.ie

# KNOCK TO NEW YORK PILGRIMAGE

8 MAY | 2017 | 6 Nights







Return Aer Lingus Private Charter

and historic pilgrimage from Knock!

Saturday 13 May: Special Requiem Mass 11am Old St. Patrick's Cathedral, NY celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Dolan for the re-internment of the

remains of John Curry, (the youngest Knock Witness)

Sunday 14 May: Mass of Thanks 10.15am New St. Patricks Cathedral (prior to departure to JFK International)

#### Package Includes:

- ~ Transfers to and from the Airport
- ~ 6-Nights room-only accommodation in centrally located NH New York **Madison Towers Hotel**
- ~ Fully Planned Itinerary

For details of rates and full itinerary Contact Joe Walsh Tours

#### T: (01) 241 0800

E: bronwyn.clinton@joewalshtours.ie W: www.joewalshtours.ie/holidays/pilgrimages



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# "Come away and rest a while..."

rom the time of Genesis the reality of rest has been an essential aspect of the spiritual journey of God's people, having its origins in God's own resting (Genesis 2:2). This the origin of resting on the Sabbath, resting on Sunday as a way of keeping holy the day of the Lord.

The disciples returned to Jesus after their missionary work and they told him all they had done and taught and it is here that He invites them to "come away and rest awhile" (Mark 6).

It is their retreat with Jesus and it is one of the central purposes of going on retreat – resting after the labours of work, resting with the Lord with whom we find our whole being refreshed and restored.

The Song of Songs speaks of being in a state of alert restfulness –"I sleep but my heart is awake!" (Songs 5:2) - alert to how I am in the moment, alert to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit who seeks to equip us for the journey ahead, taking us further on our pilgrimage of new Life.

Retreat is solitary and it is communal. "Alone with none but thee my God I journey on my way" – words from a hymn in the Divine Offices, words that express something which is part of every

#### The many benefits of taking part in a retreat in Ireland



person's life, though we often ignore our need of solitude or else we simply cannot find the time or space for it due to pressures of family, work or education. But our lives are greatly enhanced when we get periods of solitude in a

safe environment such as a retreat centre – even for a few hours if we cannot manage a day, weekend or longer.

When you come to a place like the Pallottine Retreat Centre you connect with a community,

its spirit of hospitality, its long tradition of prayer. The building itself and the gardens hold a palpable spirit of Peace. There is time for personal prayer, meditation, reflection as well as community prayer, healing, celebration of the Mass in a more intimate setting than is possible in our larger churches. It is a Cenacle experience in which Mary prays with us for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives and community.

# There are retreats throughout Ireland to suit every age group and every form of Christian prayer"

Catholic retreats are centred on the person of Jesus who leads us into a more profound experience in our personal relationship with God. The Mercy of God which we experience in the Sacrament of Reconciliation liberates from all that holds us back from knowing and believing the love which God the Father has for us. There are retreats throughout Ireland to suit every age group and every form of Christian prayer. Not all are located in a particular building. Walking Pilgrim retreats are available in places such as Glendalough, Ballintubber Abbey, Croagh Patrick. Lough Derg is a unique form of penitential retreat in which there is a real sense of cleansing and being united with the Passion of Jesus.

#### **Silence**

The silence of contemplative and monastic retreats is a particular grace in an age where noise dominates. It is in silence that God is best heard. It is significant that our national Shrine at Knock was born out of a vision that was silent, a wordless but nonetheless powerful apparition.

Youth retreats are held in many places throughout the country and these testify to the fact that the faith is energetically alive among core groups of young people whose numbers are greater than might be thought. There is hope!

- Fr. Eamonn Monson SAC www.pallottines.ie



#### JESUIT CENTRE OF SPIRITUALITY

426 Clontarf Road Dollymount Dublin D03 FP52 Ireland +353 1 833 1352

reception@manresa.ie

www.manresa.ie

Manresa - Ireland's Jesuit retreat house - welcomes hundreds of people annually as they come to seek renewal and rest. In addition to the regular retreats, many courses and events draw on the rich heritage of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Ideally located within easy reach of Dublin city centre, Manresa is a choice location for quiet and reflection whether joining an organised event, coming with a group or seeking some personal time for prayer in the modern building with its 40 en suite single rooms.



#### Oasis Days - one-day retreats

A one-day retreat (9:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.) offers time to step aside from the ordinary. Taking place in an atmosphere of silence, an Oasis Day comprises a number of elements: reflections, guided meditations, prayer and an opportunity to meet with a spiritual director. The day concludes with the celebration of the Eucharist. Lunch and refreshments are provided.

➤ Saturdays 28 January, 11 February, 11 March, 1 April, 27 May, 10 June, 22 July, 19 August, 16 September, 14 October, 11 November, 9 and 16 December

#### **Weekend Retreats**

Weekend retreats offer reflections, group prayer, with plenty time for silence and meetings with a spiritual director.

- > Friday 10 March Sunday 12 March 2017
- Thursday 27 July Sunday 30 July 2017
- > Friday 1 December Sunday 3 December 2017
- > Friday 29 December 2017- Monday 1 January 2018

#### **Exercises in Daily Life**

A retreat carried out 'in situ' over nine months or so, in which a person is guided through the Spiritual Exercises in weekly or fortnightly meetings with an experienced director. Contact Manresa to find out about how individual arrangements might be made.

Details of more retreats, events and courses are available on our website. Sign up for our newsletter or consult www.manresa.ie
We will be happy to send you a printed brochure - just call 01-8331352.



#### **Preached Retreats**

These three and five-day preached retreats at Manresa have daily talks and liturgies with ample time for prayer and reflection.

#### Praying mindfully, loving discerningly, living reflectively

The Examen considered by Laurence Murphy sa

> Sunday 19 February - Saturday 25 February 2017

#### Jesus amongst women

Mike Drennan su reflects on how the Gospels portray Jesus' interactions with women.

> Sunday 30 April - Saturday 6 May 2017

#### **Faith Lives**

500 years after Wittenberg, Brendan Comerford su examines the faith and prayer of contemporaries such as Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Ávila, Erasmus and Martin Luther.

Sunday 2 July - Saturday 8 July 2017

#### Advent Tridua 2017

- Monday 4 December Friday 8 December 2017
- Monday 11 December Friday 15 December 2017

#### **Directed Retreats**

Manresa offers a comprehensive selection of individually guided retreats, listing 5-, 6-, 8- and 30-day retreats on our website - www.manresa.ie



Legacy 17 The Irish Catholic, January 19, 2017

# Going the extra mile for inclusion

People living with a disability need to be at the heart of development, Catrina Sheridan tells Michael Kelly

organisation on a mission. When we meet, the recently-appointed CEO of Sightsavers Ireland Catrina Sheridan is brimming with enthusiasm about plans for the year ahead.

At heart, the work of Sightsavers is quite simple: to work with those people in developing countries who are needlessly and avoidably blind and give them the gift of sight. And Catrina is very frank about where Sightsavers fits in to that equation: "We rely on the people of Ireland, people are great with their support, but without that support, we can't do our vital work," she insists.

It's no secret that parts of the charity sector have suffered a loss in public confidence due to a small number of scandals in a couple of charities. Sightsavers takes public trust and confidence very seriously. In this context, Catrina tells me that Sightsavers Ireland is proud to have been shortlisted for the Good Governance Awards.

#### **Good practice**

Launched by The Carmichael Centre, supported by the Charities Regulator, Volunteer Ireland, ICTR and Davy, the Good Governance Awards are designed to facilitate the promotion and recognition of good governance practice and help to increase much-needed public trust in the sector.

'One of the things we're proudest of is the value for money and the effectiveness of what we can do with donations," Catrina says. "What donors may perceive as little money goes so far in the developing countries we work in."

But, Sightsavers is not just looking at the treatment of diseases, but also the ultimate elimination of these diseases. To this end, Sightsavers is a leader in the ambitious Global Trachoma Mapping Project (GTMP). Trachoma, which is responsible for 3% of the world's blindness, is caused by the bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis and is spread through personal contact and by flies that have been in contact with discharge from the eyes or nose of an infected person.

After repeated infection it can develop into trichiasis - where the eyelids turn in and the lashes scrape the eyeball, causing great pain and scarring, eventually leading to permanent blindness.

"Over 200 million people are at

risk of suffering from trachoma. What has been interesting about the mapping project has been the collaboration between different

It used to exist in the tenements in Dublin up until 60 years ago, so it is a real 'poverty disease'. But, it's so preventable, that's why the

#### **Proeict**

where exactly the issue lay. The result is, different countries now have a timeline on eradication and different funders came forward to put the resources behind it. "It's

Highlighting and tackling global inequality is also a key pillar in Sightsavers' policy objectives. "For too long the voices of people with disabilities have been ignored in the fight against global poverty. So, we're working hard to ensure that people living with a disability are put at the centre of the development agenda to ensure that their specific needs are met and their voices heard,"

Advocacy is a newish aspect of the work of Sightsavers Ireland, but it's an area that Catrina and her colleagues are embracing with gusto to ensure that disability is always a consideration in targeting

"Living with a disability in a developing country can almost be a 'double whammy'," Catrina says.
"Not only are they poor and living in an unequal society, they are often marginalised because of their disability as well."

Catrina Sheridan, CEO Sightsavers.

Photo: Chai **Brady** 

Stigma continues to be an enormous issue, where people feel a sense of shame around disability. "Part of that stigma is coming from a lack of awareness and education on the subject of disability and inclusion," she believes. So, one of Sightsavers' priorities is about raising awareness not just of disability, per se, but also the fact that disability is something that can potentially affect anyone.

While Sightsavers will continue to prioritise pragmatic interventions like eye operations, increased activity around advocacy is in a sense going back to basics. When Sir John Wilson first founded the organisation in 1950, it was about ensuring that people with blindness lived as fulfilling lives as possible. "So, in a sense, we're continuing that, and trying to expand it," Catrina says.

"If I had to sum it all up, it's

about ensuring that we, as a development community, see everything through the lens of disability.

The challenge is great, But Catrina comes across as someone who in undaunted. "It's an audacious goal, but it's one I'm confident, working together, we can achieve.

The support we receive from the Irish public and from readers of The Irish Catholic in particular, makes it possible for us to transform the lives of people in developing countries."







18 | Legacy |



#### "Can you think of a better New Year resolution, than knowing you have left the miracle of sight in your will?"

Obviously, nobody likes to think about making a will, but it is one of the most important things we all need to do. Naturally, taking care of your loved ones is your first priority. But once you've done this, it is also an opportunity for you to leave a lasting reminder to the causes you cared about and supported during your lifetime.

By choosing to leave an additional gift to Sightsavers, you will be making a decision that could help thousands of people regain their sight for years to come. Can you think of a better gift to leave behind?

#### Your goodwill can help keep Sightsavers vision alive

By leaving a gift in your will to Sightsavers, you can help achieve their goal of eradicating avoidable blindness. Legacies are vital in helping Sightsavers plan ahead and fund the muchneeded expense of training more surgeons and eye care workers, buying expensive equipment and distributing sight-saving medications.

With your kindness, more men, women and children will see in the New Year and for every new year to come. Your generosity will help Sightsavers and their partners reach people living in darkness needlessly, in some the poorest and most isolated parts of the world. With your support, more children like Itibo will get the sight-saving operations they need before it's too late!



#### Itibo's Story

Thanks to their generous supporters, Sightsavers was able to answer the prayers of eight-year-old Itibo, from Uganda. Having developed cataract in both his eyes as a young baby, Itibo's family knew he needed surgery to save his sight, but they couldn't afford to make the journey to the hospital to get the treatment he so desperately needed.

So, for the first eight years of his young life, Itibo had spent most of it in darkness - needlessly! Can you imagine not being able to afford to save your child's or grand-child's sight? It doesn't bear thinking about. But that's exactly the situation Itibo's family and many others face.

As an Irish Catholic reader, you are probably aware that Sightsavers trained surgeons can preform sight-restoring operations. But what you may not know, is that for hundreds more children like Itibo who develop cataract at a young age, there is a race against time to save their sight. You see, at around the age of eight, the brain finishes learning to see. So if we don't reach these children at an early age, they will be blind forever!

#### "At eight years old, it was almost too late to save Itibo from blindness"

Thankfully for Itibo, his family heard on the radio that a Sightsavers outreach clinic was coming to their community and he finally got the help he needed. After screening he was transferred to a hospital in Soroti, where he received a sight-saving bi-lateral cataract operation. Itibo was extremely lucky, left any longer, there is no doubt he would have been left blind - forever.

Giving sight back to anyone, whatever their age is a miraculous experience. But seeing a child's face light up as they see their loved ones, often for the first time, is truly wonderful. When you give sight to a child like Itibo, you also give them back hope for a brighter future. For years, Itibo carried his schoolbook everywhere - he even brought it to the hospital. But as his sight got worse, he was unable to write in it. And so the first thing he did after the bandages were removed was take out his schoolbook and with a shaky hand, he wrote his name in big bold letters -

#### "When you give sight to a child like Itibo, you also give them back hope for a brighter future."

Unfortunately, there are hundreds more children like Itibo waiting and praying for a miracle before it is too late to save their sight. It



The Irish Catholic, January 19, 2017

#### HOW LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL TO SIGHTSAVERS CAN CHANGE LIVES:

Whatever size of gift you doclde to leave to Sightsavers, you can be sure that it will make a lasting difference to the lives of thousands of people. (or generations to come.)

Thank you.

risk of running out of time

every day, your support is

help, we can ensure that

urgently needed. With your

more parents don't receive

the devastating news that

it is too late to save their

child's sight.

€560 Provides 10 children like Itibo with sight-restoring cataract operations

€3,600 Provides 100 adults will sight restoring cataract operations

€10,000 Provides 20 schools (nearly 6,000 children) with eye screening camps for a range of potentially blinding eye conditions

€15,000 Provides cataract training for six eye surgeons to save the sight of thousands of men, women and children



# Is only with the generous support of people like you, that Sightsavers can reach children living in remote areas, And with thousands of children at you help? Just €56 can provide a sight-restoring operation to save a child's sight. Will you help?

## Leaving a gift in your will is easy and straightforward.

Whether you want to make a will, or update an existing one, it is simple and straightforward. Once you've done it, you can relax. in the knowledge that you have put your affairs in order and provided for the people and causes you cared about during your life. All you have to do is simply contact your solicitor and they will guide you through the steps. you need to take to draft or amend your will, if you don't already have a solicitor, you can contact the Law Society of Ireland and they will direct you to a recommended one in your area.

By including Sightsavers in your Will, you could change the future for generations of people in some of the world's poorest countries.

#### Your gift could help Sightsavers:

operate on thousands of people whose slight loss is reversible.

- protect whole communities against blinding diseases.
- train surgoons, eye health workers, teachers and community volunteers
- support blind and visually impaired children to go to school.
- equip people with irreversible sight loss or other disabilities to live independently.

After you've taken care of your nearest and dearest, we'd love it if you'd consider including Sightsavers in your will. To find out more, contact Sightsavers on 01 6637666 or visit www.sightsavers.le to obtain a free guide to leaving a gift in your will.

SIGHTSAVERS
VISON IS OF A
WORLD WHERE
NO ONE IS BLIND
FROM AVOIDABLE
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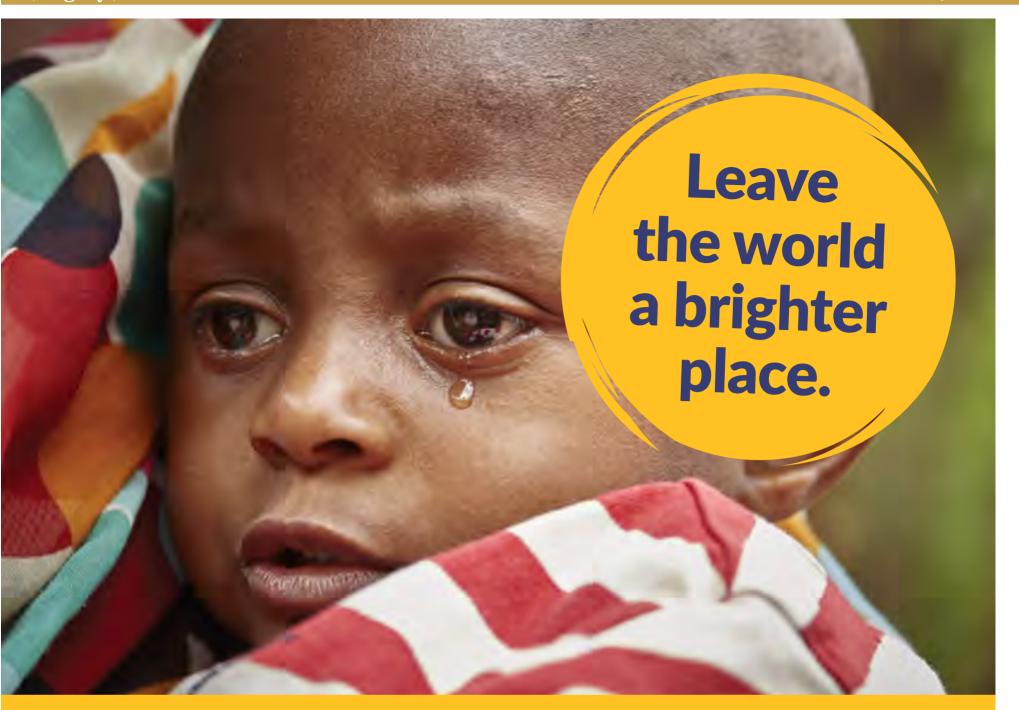
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20 | Legacy



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#### 11th March 2017

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Fr. Neal and Josephine Time: 2 - 7.30p.m.

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# Reading to complement your retreat

The columba press

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These four books are inquisitive, insightful and reflective, offering you a deeper experience on your retreat. They invite us to look mindfully inside ourselves, and to explore the reasons behind any changes that may arise within.



24 | Foreign news | The Irish Catholic, January 19, 2017

# **World Report**

#### IN BRIEF

#### Algerian Christian sees blasphemy sentence reduced

A Christian man imprisoned in 2016 for five years in Algeria for posting cartoons offensive to Islam has had his sentence reduced to one year.

Samir Chamek, a convert from Islam, was originally detained by police investigating allegations that he has breached a law prohibiting "writing, drawing, statement or any other means" which insults the Prophet Muhammd or Islam.

A subsequent court hearing ruled against Chamek, who was unrepresented and unaware that he was in fact facing a trial, and sentenced him to prison.

However, having secured a lawyer since his imprisonment, Chamek has been able to convince the court that his original sentence was overly harsh for the display of artworks on his Facebook page and he secured his term reduction, with a hope that he can have the struck out entirely at a future hearing.

## Catholic teaching on marriage equated with Islamic extremism

A civil servant in Britain overseeing issues of integration has compared Catholic teaching on marriage to the Islamic extremism exposed in schools in Birmingham.

Present for a sitting of the Communities and Local Government Committee, Dame Louise Casey was dealing with her report into the so-called 'Trojan Horse' schools affair when she asserted that the issues uncovered about extremism were "not okay, in the same way that it is not okay for Catholic schools to be homophobic and anti-gay marriage. That is not okay either - it is not how we bring children up in this country". Dame Louise went further, alleging that opponents of same-sex marriage use religion to cover their anti-equality views. "It is often veiled as religious conservatism, and I have a problem with the expression 'religious conservatism', because often it can be antiequalities," she said.

# Bishops of Malta allow for Communion for divorced-remarried

The bishops of Malta have issued guidelines allowing for people living in "irregular" unions to receive Communion.

In a new 35-page document dealing specifically with implementation of the section of the papal exhortation Amoris Laetitia on divorcedand-remarried Catholics (Chapter VIII), the bishops go beyond the language of the exhortation to stress to their priests that it may be impossible to deny Communion to such Catholics if they believe themselves to be "at peace with God".

#### **Process**

"If, as a result of the process of discernment, undertaken with 'humility, discretion and love for the Church and her teaching, in a sincere search for God's will and a desire to make a more perfect response to it' a separated or divorced person who is living in a new relationship manages, with an informed and enlightened conscience, to acknowledge and believe that he or she

are at peace with God, he or she cannot be precluded from participating in the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist."

Further, in answer to a previous call for remarried Catholics to abstain from sexual activity so as to be allowed receive Communion, the Maltese guidelines insist "there are complex situations where the choice of living 'as brothers and sisters' becomes humanly impossible and give rise to greater harm".

In an introduction to the guidelines on the website of the Malta diocese, the bishops state: "Although [divorcedremarried Catholics] may have lost their first marriage, some of these persons have not lost their hope in Jesus. Some of these earnestly desire to live in harmony with God and with the Church, so much so, that they are asking us what they can do in order to be able to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist."

Significantly, the Maltese

document, co-authored by Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna, a former Promoter of Justice in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has been republished in the Vatican's own newpaper, L'Osservatore Romano, suggesting a seal of approval for it in Rome.

The Maltese document can be read in full at www.thechurchinmalta.org/en/



Archbishop Charles Scicluna.

#### Bishop appeals for clemency in church shooting case

Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone, in whose Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina, the killer Dylann Roof launched his deadly gun attack on a Baptist church has issued a message on the sanctity of life after the murderer was handed a death sentence by a court.

"The Church believes the right to life is paramount to every other right as it affords the opportunity for conversion, even of the hardened sinner," Bishop Guglielmone said. "Sentencing Dylann Roof to death conflicts with the Church's teaching that all human life is sacred, even for those who have committed the most heinous of crimes. Instead of pursuing death, we should be extending compassion and forgiveness to Mr Roof, just as some of the victims' families did."

Roof was found guilty on 33 charges, including hate crimes, in relation to his killing of nine worshippers at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in June 2015.

#### Indonesian Catholics launch blasphemy case

A case of anti-Christian blasphemy levelled against a prominent Muslim in Indonesia is being backed by Muslim activists as well as members of the Catholic community.

The case stems from a Christmas day message issued by Rizieq Syihab, leader of the hardline group the Islamic Defenders Front, in which he questions the birth of Christ, asking "If God gave birth, then who would be the midwife?" A complaint

was subsequently lodged with police in the capital Jakarta by the Indonesian Catholic Students Association, prompting a blasphemy investigation.

Since earlier this month, a growing number of Muslim bodies have added their backing for the Catholic action, stressing that Syihab's words not only offend Christians, but cause division among Muslims. Among those standing in solidarity with the Catholic community

are the Indonesian Islamic Students Movement, the youth wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, and Muslim members of the Interfaith Student Forum and the Student Peace Institute.

"Radicalism is like a virus, and if not eradicated it will undermine religious life in Indonesia," said Doddy Abdallah, a spokesperson for the Student Peace Institute.

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#### Sicily's Great Synagogue revitalised by Church gesture

A chapel built over the ruins of the Great Synagogue of Palermo in Sicily has been transferred to the Jewish community to renew Jewish worship on the site for the first time in 500 years.

An official ceremony on January 12 saw the Oratory of Santa Maria al Sabato transferred from the control of the Archdiocese of Palermo on the anniversary of the day a decree ordering the expulsion of Jews from Sicily in 1493 (then under the control of Spain). It is thought there were between 37,000 and 50,000 Jews living on the island at that time, possibly the

descendants of slaves brought to Sicily after the fall of Jerusalem in the 1st Century.

The process to restore the Great Synagogue was begun with a request from the Sicilian Institute of Jewish Studies and finalised by Archbishop Corrado Lorefice, who described the transfer as "the product of a genuine friendship and ongoing dialogue between the Church and Palermo's Jewish community".

Noemi Di Segni, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities said the move served as "a gesture that will recover centuries of history".

#### Over 100 places of worship destroyed by ISIS – report

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Autonomous Region of Iraqi Kurdistan is set to report that at least 100 places of worship have been desecrated or completely destroyed in the territories of Mosul and Nineveh Province since falling to so-called Islamic State (ISIS) in 2014. The vast majority of those destroyed structures are Christian, the report is expected to show, with temples of the Yazidi community also suffering damaging attacks.

Foreign news | 25 The Irish Catholic, January 19, 2017



**Edited by Paul Keenan** paul@irishcatholic.ie

#### **Cold comfort for migrants**



Migrants wrapped in blankets wait in line to receive a plate of food during snowfall outside a warehouse in Belgrade. Serbia. At least 70 people across Europe have died as a result of the severe weather striking the continent. Photo: CNS

## Venezuelan prelate pleads for urgent distribution of emergency aid

The head of the Venezuelan Bishops Conference has issued a plea to his government to open humanitarian channels to allow the Church's aid agency Caritas to distribute desperately needed medicines and basic goods.

Addressing a gathering of his fellow prelates in Caracas, Archbishop Diego Rafael Padrón Sánchez said the ongoing economic crisis in the nation was having a devastating effect on ordinary citizens, where the national currency is now virtually worthless.

Cataloguing the suffering in the country, Archbishop Padrón Sánchez said: "Almost 29,000 violent deaths; hunger and malnutrition; lack of medicine and the resurgence of

epidemics; over 120 political prisoners unjustly and illegally detained; rampant corruption; the systematic attack against private businesses and the independent media; the anticonstitutional attempt to ignore directives issued by the National Assembly...never in the history of the nation had a Government caused so much suffering to its people due to its actions and omissions.

Making his plea for the acceptance of immediate aid via Church sources, the archbishop warned that over 10% of Venezuela's three million children under the age of five will suffer malnutrition in 2017 if the government does not alter its approach to the crisis.

#### Le Pen criticises election opponent's Catholic credentials

French presidential contender Marine Le Pen has criticised her main rival for linking his political credentials to his Christian faith. The far-right candidate Le Pen, who has scored political points in criticising the nation's Muslim community, stated that Francois Fillon's referencing of his Catholic faith is at odds with France's secular tradition.

The French are of course very attached to their religious beliefs," Le Pen stated, "but the opportunistic use of that faith, to defend a certain political line, I find is contrary to the principle of laïcité and contrary to our values.

Laïcité is the accepted French term for the separation of church and state. Ms Le Pen turned her argument to France's Muslims, asking how the country could convince members of that religion to pursue the secular traditions

of France if the Catholic Fillon did not.

## Egypt to construct nation's largest church by 2018

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al Sisi has pledged to construct the nation's largest church as part of the massive project to create a new capital city.

During his official visit to St Mark's cathedral in Cairo to join with Pope Tawadros II and other members of the Coptic Church for the January 6 Christmas

celebrations, the president announced his intention to simultaneously build the largest church and mosque by 2018 at the site of the new capital, to the east of congested Cairo. The opening of the church, he vowed, would be in time to mark the 50th anniversary of St

Acknowledging the

suffering of the Coptic community, most recently through the December 11 suicide attack on St Mark's which claimed 28 lives, President al Sisi said: "We are one. Ugliness has no place here. Only beauty has a place among us...I am here in a house of God, and I say please God, keep Egypt safe."

Just days after the

Egypt's official body for pronouncements on and resolving disputes regarding the Koran, Dar al Ifta al Misryah (the House of Fatwa), ruled that the construction of Christian churches in Islamic lands is both permissible and just in terms of equality between people.

church announcement,



#### Vatican watchdog raised concerns about Amoris Laetitia

Just days after the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) insisted there was no threat of a 'fraternal correction' of Pope Francis in connection with his exhortation Amoris Laetitia, it has emerged that the Congregation itself had raised issues relating to the document which were dismissed by the Pontiff.

After Cardinal Gerhard Muller was interviewed by Italian television and insisted that Amoris Laetitia "is very clear in its doctrine", The National Catholic Register revealed that the CDF "had clear misgivings about the document before it was published". The newspaper goes on to state that "one informed official recently told the Register that a CDF committee that reviewed a draft of Amoris Laetitia raised similar' dubia to those of the four cardinals. Those dubia formed part of the CDF's 20 pages of corrections [while] another senior official went further, revealing to the Register last week that Cardinal Müller had told him personally that the CDF 'had submitted many, many corrections, and not one of the corrections was accepted'. He added that what the cardinal states in the interview 'is exactly the contradictory of everything which he has said to me on the matter until now' and he had the 'impression of someone who was not speaking for himself but repeating what someone else had told him to sav'

The claims made are set to add fuel to the row surrounding Amoris Laetitia in relation to the question of offering communion to divorced-and-remarried Catholics, and may keep alive the threat issued by Cardinal Raymond Burke to pursue a formal correction of the Pontiff in relation

#### Synod to focus on youth

The young will be the focus of the 2018 Synod of Bishops, the Vatican has confirmed. The 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will work to the theme 'Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment', and towards this, both Pope Francis and the organisers have called on young Catholics to become actively involved in the consultation process that precedes the actual Rome aatherina.

Speaking at the press conference to announce the synod. Bishop Fabio Fabene of the Synod of Bishops said: "It is important to involve the young in the preparatory stage of the Synod Assembly because the next Synod wishes... to listen to the desires, plans and dreams that the young have for their lifes, as well as the difficulties they encounter in realising their plans in the service of society, in which they ask to be active agents.

#### 'Vatileaks' figures publish new books

Two figures who were at the heart of the so-called 'Vatileaks II' scandal have separately promised further Vatican revelations in forthcoming books.

Former consultant Francesca Chaouqui, who received a suspended sentence in July for conspiracy to leak Vatican documents while she served on an economic reform commission at the Vatican is currently promoting a book that deals specifically with the drive to reform the Vatican's finances, in which she claims to offer documentation proving wasteful spending and bureaucratic intrigue.

Meanwhile, journalist Emiliano Fittipaldi, who was cleared of all charges in connection to the leaks, has turned his attention to the legacy of clerical sexual abuse in a book released in Italy today.

The other prominent personality at the heart of 'Vatileaks II', Spanish Msgr Lucio Angel Vallejo Balda, received an 18-month sentence from a Vatican tribunal for his part in the case. He was released in December after Pope Francis opted to commute his sentence.

# Congo still awaits its 'Happy New Year'



**Paul Keenan** 

t was the stuff of high drama and historic import. As the final minutes of 2016 ticked away in an expectant Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), New Year spectacles could do little to distract the eves of the nation from talks taking place in the capital Kinshasa, the outcome of which would dictate the chances of peace or continued violence in 2017.

Nearly a full month into negotiations between representatives of President Joseph Kabila and his disgruntled opposition, led by Etienne Tshisekedi, word had it that, against the odds, an agreement was immi-

So it proved to be when, just before midnight, it was announced that an accord had been reached. satisfactory to both sides and one to get the democratic process back on

The crisis that had been sparked claiming multiple lives in protests by the apparent refusal of Mr Kabila to end his second and final term in the presidential palace in November, will now ease with the terms of the agreement that the president will remain in place until the delayed



Archbishop Marcel Utembi Tapa (centre), flanked by Bishop Fidele Nsielele Zi Mputu (left) and Bishop Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, pictured in December as they arrived to mediate the political talks in Kinshasha.

elections take place in November 2017 (not 2018 as his supporters had hoped), while an opposition politician yet to be named will serve as his prime minister in the interim, hopefully bringing a balance against any political shenanigans Mr Kabila may get up to with the 'breathing space' he has gained.

And so DRC breathed too in a collective sigh of relief at the prospect of a peaceful run towards said elec-

Singular credit for the 'quiet interlude' must go to the Church mediators in this Congo affair, those led by Archbishop Marcel Utembi Tapa of Kisangani who acted as a mediating force throughout the talks.

Only the most begrudging would seek to detract from the prelates' stubborn persistence in keeping the (repeatedly) with the natural effect while the al lazeera news network had no difficulty in lauding the Church's role as "crucial", it was largely ignored by the secular media

For all that, however, it is correct to describe the achievement of Archbishop Utembi and his brother bishops as an interlude - he recognises this himself.

President Joseph Kabila. Photos: CNS

Mindful, perhaps, that no leader of DRC since independence has departed office peacefully (Mr Kabila gained the leadership when his own father and presidential for its backing and support in getting DRC across the final few months to the elections.

"I ask one thing of the interna-

tional community," the archbishop said. "Help the people do everything to ensure the success of this accord, from its implementation to the organisation of presidential and legislative elections according to the agreed timetable."

With agenda-driven voices on both sides quietly grumbling about the deal, Archbishop Utembi's extra measure of caution may yet prove a sage tactic, effectively placing the UN's peacekeeping force in DRC on alert against forces who care nothing for the people and everything for the

For all the December 31 parties elsewhere, DRC will wait until November to celebrate 2017.



#### **Paul Keenan**

It says something of the state of the nation when a quiet day of non-events gains more column inches with the international media than a 5.3 magnitude earthquake just days before.

An understanding of this apparent skewing of priorities comes when El Salvador is identified as the source for both stories. On January 4, media reported with bored brevity that the Central American nation had been rattled by a quake with its epicentre some 21km below the Pacific off the coast of the municipality of La Libertad. No fatalities, no damage, hence no need to stop the digital presses.

#### Rare blip

In similar fashion, on January 11, no-one died violently, yet now the press sat up and took keen notice of matters and began to churn out copy and update internet feeds with this startling fact.

## El Salvador glimpses peace in a single day

simple as it is depressing The January 11 zero bodycount was the result of a rare blip in the activities of El Salvador's rampaging gangs when, for one day only, no-one was the target of their murderous pursuits.

Up till that date, 2017 seemed only moderately improved on recent years in terms of crime, with a rate of 10 people per day falling victim to gang assassins since New Year's Day. (The activities of the Mara Salvatrucha 13 (MS13) and Barrio 18 gangs have featured more than once in these pages.) Horrendous though the 10-daily figure is, it actually does stand as an 'improvement' when set against the daily rate of 16 murders across the early part of 2016, falling to 14 late in the year. The 'free day', meanwhile, while striking, is not unprecedented, with 2012,



Observers of the criminality that plagues El Salvador can argue at length about it and the recent causes of the downturn. Government figures continue to laud Plan El Salvador Seguro, the hardhitting security programme rolled out in July 2015 to tackle the sky-rocketing murder rate, insisting that this, combined with specific targeting of gang 'cells' and

Others scoff at this, insisting that the gangs are a far more powerful reality in the life of the nation and it is through their own decision to downscale on certain actions that has brought results reflected on the crime reports.

A seed of truth for this latter element lies in an all-too-brief truce brokered between MS13 and Barrio 18 by the Church in 2012 which saw a dramatic 53% reduction in homicides virtually overnight when **Bishop Fabio Colindres** announced that agreement had been reached between the gangs. The government of President Salvador Sánchez Cerén would later insist it had no hand or part in making the truce a reality. It has since hailed the success of the vast Seguro programme in bringing a

20% reduction in murders

No fan of the gangs, Archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas of San Salvador, openly suggested in November that the Seguro was not working and called for a government review of the initiative. The prelate did not dispute the murder reduction, but pointed out that other serious crime rates were virtually unchanged.

#### Gang leaders

Ironically, a chance to deal with all came on the same day as El Salvador experienced its murderfree period when it was revealed that the largest of the country's gangs, MS13, had made an offer to end all its activities - and possible dissolve – if it could enter into negotiations with government on helping members to reintegrate into

A spokesman for MS13

went so far as to reference Colombia's FARC rebels and the peace process there in seeking to describe what his gang seeks to achieve (something gang leaders utterly rejected just four years ago, it must be added).

The government thus far has baulked at the suggestion of a negotiated peace, calling on MS13 to 'step down' from its criminality as a precondition for any future talks.

As The Irish Catholic went to press, the Church, perhaps via Archbishop Alas, was yet to add its own voice to this latest development.

It is tempting to believe it this point that, prompted by that earlier FARC reference, prelates have spotted a new mediation role to be played in bringing intransigent politicians and wary gang members closer to the negotiating table towards making every day January 11 in El Salvador.



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

Letter of the week

## Unwise to abandon clerical celibacy

**Dear Editor**, The Bishop of Kilmore has said the question of ordaining married men to the priesthood may be raised during the *ad limina* visit to Rome (IC 12/1/2017). As a convert from Anglicanism, I should like to make a number of points as to why any such proposal should be regarded with caution.

First, it would be unwise to abandon the long-standing discipline of clerical celibacy in the Catholic Church – a discipline held to with only the exception of the Uniate Churches, the Ordinariate and former Anglican clergy not in the latter body – in response to a crisis in vocations which may be temporary.

Second, the experience of Anglicanism with respect to clerical marriage has always been mixed. Permission to marry has always resulted in some delinquent married clergy committing adultery rather than fornication; not all married clergy are models of fidelity. In recent decades clerical divorce and remarriage has become an increasingly visible problem in Anglicanism, especially in the northern hemisphere.

The Catholic Church is in turmoil over the admission to communion of divorced and remarried laity; the problem of divorced and remarried clergy is one that we would do well to avoid

Third, even clergy who are faithful in their marriages will experience conflict between their calling to ministry and the demands of married life; it would unfair to expect clergy always to place family life in second place – an expectation that would only result in their marriages being placed under undue strain.

Fourth, the single-minded devotion of celibate Catholic clergy to their calling continues to impress me as a convert to the Church; I am convinced that that devotion stems from the sacrifices they make in being unmarried

The Church in other countries is experiencing a more modest decrease in vocations; it would be better to learn from them than to abandon the practice and blessing of clerical celibacy.

Yours etc., **C.D.C. Armstrong,** Belfast, Co. Antrim.

#### Turn to daily prayer

**Dear Editor,** This country at the present time is going through the greatest crisis of faith. For a long time I prayed for another papal visit to this country – now Pope Francis is coming in 2018, and please God there will be a healing of the wounds of the past and a great revival of faith.

I believe in the power of prayer and over the years a lot of my prayers have been answered – I was cured of a lifethreatening illness and recovered from two serious accidents.

I urge people to spend a while in prayer daily and to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Hopefully the Pope's visit will cause an increase in vocations and this country will have a great revival of faith again.

> Yours etc., **Seamus O Cochrane**, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.

#### Meryl, look closer to home

**Dear Editor,** We sat watching Meryl Streep's tearful reproof at the Golden Globe Awards: "Violence begets violence."

This was followed, on television, by the trailers of two forthcoming films from Hollywood, depicting the most brutal violence on screen.

Perhaps her speech could have profitably been directed towards some of her own colleagues or towards some of the hidden violence, present within American society.

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

## Don't dismiss optional celibacy

**Dear Editor**, The basic idealism that prompts a young man to be a priest can often be the very quality that a similar young woman longs to find in a prospective partner.

Few fellows today are looking for a chaste girl, so most girls, not primarily motivated by sexual desire, may feel obliged to 'get into sex' if they want to be in the running for a partner.

The girl of idealism and courage decides that what matters in love is to have a friendship first before

getting into the commitment of a physically intimate relationship (not always marriage nowadays).

The thoughtful, idealistic, chaste young man – even the one who hopes to marry – may quickly be jeered and taunted by his mates and may drop his standards in order to be acceptable to 'the gang' rather than be an outcast. It can be extremely difficult for the guy, testing his secretly held possibility of being called to the priesthood, to remain a lone ranger

But if he meets a girl who has the courage to build a friendship before 'getting into' full sexual expression, he will be encouraged to pursue that relationship for the joy of sharing thoughts at a deepening level.

Will he be able to tell her of his prompting to be a priest?

The complementariness they now share points to a deep value should they marry and have a family. The temptation can be intense. One can be saddened by the fact that he cannot make

the decision to be a married priest. This young couple would seem to be such an asset to the Church and have the potential to be ideal parents.

Optional celibacy suggests itself as an answer.

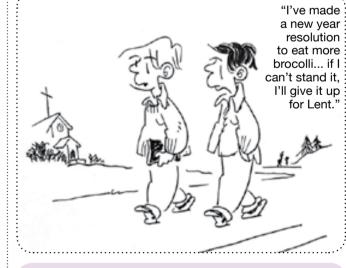
Is the imposition of celibacy (as against the free choice of it) yet to be seen as a huge block in the development of the modern Church?

> Yours etc., **Angela McNamara,** Churchtown, Dublin 14.

#### No half measures, please

**Dear Editor,** While I can appreciate our bishops' reluctance to make a martyr out of the supposedly silenced priest Fr Tony Flannery, it is still depressing to read that they are unwilling to take any action to prevent him from saying Mass publicly within their dioceses. Fr Flannery is out of ministry for good reason, after denying that Jesus founded our priesthood and after being willing only to uphold an understanding of the Eucharist any Protestant could have proclaimed.

Yours etc., **Susan Doherty,** Derry, Co. Derry.



## Just what is a 'post-truth world'?

**Dear Editor**, I have written to *The Late Late Show* to complain about an item that appeared on the January 6 edition of the show when in a discussion about a "post-truth" world, we had to endure sneering and mockery of Jesus and the Blessed Eucharist, which Ryan Tubridy seemed to find amusing. The Eucharist was referred to as "haunted bread".

There was not a word of protest from any member of the studio audience and there was nobody on the panel to present an opposing viewpoint. I found the entire thing in very bad taste and very ignorant.

Can you imagine what the result might be if it was the Islamic faith or

Judaism that was being sneered at on a chat show?

What is a post-truth world? One guest, Michael Harding, seemed to believe that there is no objective truth and everything is relative. Really? There are no self-vindicating moral values? Is love not objectively better that hatred? Is cruelty not morally wrong? Is rape not objectively wrong? Was there no objective moral difference between Hitler and St Vincent de Paul? Harding's view makes no sense. And without an infinitely loving God morality has no intrinsic meaning. It all comes down to just a matter of opinion and taste. Even Nietzsche, who was an atheist, said that without God moral

values have no meaning. It is God who gives meaning and purpose to our lives. Without God everything is just chaos and despair. As Dostoyevsky said: "If God does not exist, then everything is permitted". Yet, many atheists are good people with sound moral principles. Why is this if life has no meaning or purpose? It's all merely a matter of opinion, isn't it? Everything is relative, according to the atheist.

I considered this item totally onesided and distasteful. It was sheer bad taste and a sneering attack on the most sacred aspect of my faith.

> Yours etc., **Anthony Redmond,** Drimnagh, Dublin 12.

#### There's a lot to be said for 'fish on Fridays'

**Dear Editor,** At a time when we are being asked by Pope Francis among others to rethink our relationship to our God-made environment, we are asked to examine our consumption patterns. One aspect of consumption is the food we eat.

As Church, we are also called upon to make acts of

personal sacrifice including special efforts on Fridays, the day each week when we commemorate the sacrificial death of Jesus on the Cross.

In May 2010 the Bishops of England and Wales revisited that subject and reintroduced the ancient practice of Friday abstinence as a most clear and obvious way of fulfilling this duty.

Catholic institutions were called upon to respect the new dispensation and school kitchens successfully adapted their menus accordingly. As a former school principal I am very aware of how powerful an impact this 'fish on Friday' has become. It brought

into weekly focus our twice yearly CAFOD Family Fast Days, which had become so distinctive of English Catholic schools.

Perhaps as Irish Church it is time to consider a 'fish on Friday' option.

Yours etc., **Alan Whelan,** Killarney, Co Kerry.

#### 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.

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to me, asking for help. He carried some deep wounds, not physical wounds, but emotional wounds to his soul. What surprised me initially was that, while he was deeply wounded, he had not been severely traumatised either in childhood or adulthood.

He seemed to have just had to absorb the normal bumps and bruises that everyone has to absorb: some belittling, some bullying, never being the favourite, dissatisfaction with his own body, unfairness within his family and siblings, career frustration, unfairness in his workplace, the sense of being chronically ignored, the sense of never being understood and appreciated and the self-pity and lack of self-confidence that results from this.

But he was a sensitive man and the combination of all these seemingly little things left him, now in late mid-life, unable to be the gracious, happy elder he wanted to be. Instead, by his own admission, he was chronically caught-up in a certain wounded self-absorption, namely, in a self-centred anxiety that brought with it the sense that life had not been fair to him. Consequently he was forever somewhat focused on self-protection and was resentful of those who could step forward openly in self-confidence and love.

"I hate it," he shared, "when I see persons like Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II speak so with such easy self-confidence about how big their hearts are. I always fill with resentment and think: 'Lucky you!' You haven't had to put up with what I've had to put up with

This man had been through some professional therapy which had helped bring him to a deeper self-understanding, but still left him paralysed in terms of moving beyond his wounds. "What can I do with these wounds?" he asked.

My answer to him, as for all of us who are wounded, is: Take those wounds to the Eucharist. Every time you go to a Eucharist, stand by an altar and receive Communion, bring your helplessness and paralysis to God, ask him to touch your body, your heart, your memory, your bitterness, your lack of selfconfidence, your self-absorption, your weaknesses, your impotence.

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#### Strength

Bring your aching body and heart to God. Express your helplessness in simple, humble words: Touch me. Take my wounds. Take my paranoia. Make me whole. Give me forgiveness.

**Mother Teresa with** Pope John Paul II.

Warm my heart. Give me the strength that I cannot give myself.

Pray this prayer, not just when you are receiving communion and being physically touched by the body of Christ, but especially during the Eucharistic prayer because it is there that we are not just being touched and healed by a person, Jesus, but we are also being touched and healed by a sacred event.

#### We should not allow ourselves to be paralysed by hyper-sensitivity and self-pity"

This is the part of the Eucharist we generally do not understand, but it is the part of the Eucharist that celebrates transformation and healing from wound and sin. In the Eucharist prayer we commemorate the "sacrifice" of Jesus, that is, that event where, as Christian tradition so enigmatically puts it, Jesus was made sin for us.

There is a lot in that cryptic phrase. In essence, in his suffering and death, Jesus took on our wounds, our weaknesses, our infidelities, and our sins, died in them and then through love and trust brought them to wholeness.

Every time we go to Eucharist we are meant to let that transforming event touch us, touch our wounds, our weaknesses, our infidelities, our sin, and our emotional paralysis and bring us to a transformation in wholeness, energy, joy and love.

The Eucharist is the ultimate healer.

value in various kinds of physical and emotional therapies, just as there is immeasurable value in 12-Step programs and in simply honestly sharing our wounded selves with people we trust. There is too, I believe, value in a certain wilful self-effort, in the challenge contained in Jesus' admonition to a paralysed man: Take up your couch and walk! We should not allow ourselves to be paralysed by hyper-sensitivity and self-pity. God has given us skin to cover our rawest nerves.

But, with that being admitted, we still cannot heal ourselves. Therapy, self-understanding, loving friends, and disciplined self-effort can take us only so far, and it is not into full healing. Full healing comes from touching and being touched by the sacred.

More particularly, as Christians, we believe that this touching involves a touching of the sacred at that place where it has most particularly touched our own wounds, helplessness, weaknesses, and sin, that place, where God "was made sin for us"

That place is the event of the death and rising of Jesus and that event is made available to us, to touch and enter into, in the Eucharistic prayer and in receiving the body of Christ in communion.

We need to bring our wounds to the Eucharist because it is there that the sacred love and energy that lie at the ground of all that breathes can cauterise and heal all that is not whole within us.



Brendan O'Regan

# Up from the underground and into the light

launched a new documentary, Hostage to the Devil, about the legendary exorcist and former Jesuit Malachi Martin. My appetite had been whetted by an interview with one of the producers, Sharon Lysaght, on The Ryan Tubridy Show, Wednesday morning of last week.

As documentaries go it was excellent, a fascinating story well told, and leaving it up to the viewer to make up their own minds about the

Martin apparently left the Jesuits when they took what was described as a 'hard left' turn at the time of Vatican II. Dispensed from the vows of poverty and obedience, it wasn't clear if he remained a priest in good standing, or if he had the permission of the relevant bishops to do exorcism in the USA. He described himself as part of an underground exorcism movement, some bishops not being very enthusiastic about this kind of work.

He had his detractors, including author Robert Blair Kaiser (also an ex-Jesuit) who was interviewed, but most contributors were fans. including his friend Robert Marro, who was listed as an executive producer, and some 'religious demonologists'.

Scenes and stories of actual exorcisms were disturbing and challenging, and Martin, in his lifetime, was



Fr Malachi Martin in Hostage to the Devil (Netflix).

very keen to decry the evil behind an anti-life ideology, including legalised abortion, contraception, endemic hunger, fermented civil wars and floods of refugees.

Back on traditional media, last Friday night **The Leap of Faith** (RTÉ Radio 1) marked the birthday of Martin Luther King Jnr with guest Rev. Eileen Cremin.

It was well worth doing, and we got some interesting information (like King scoring only a C grade in preaching when training to be a Baptist minister!). We got a flavour of King's impressive speechmaking and his combining of religion with a political cause.

I'd like to have heard some exploration of how much King is admired, and yet how religion tends nowadays to be banished from political discourse.

#### **Plans**

The NCCA's plans for religion in primary schools was also discussed, and presenter Michael Comyn asked some searching questions of the NCCA's Patrick Sullivan and of Seamus Mulconry of the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association.

Mulconry is an asset to the Association, well informed and on top of his brief, as he also showed in a discussion on admission policies in Catholic schools on last Monday morning's Pat Kenny Show on Newstalk.

I had a look at some programmes on the new be3 channel and while generally underwhelmed by the schedule, I did enjoy a few of their programmes. Aerial Ireland (last Sunday night) was worth a look, and while the narration was bland it was impressive to see aerial shots (mostly from drone footage) of some of our best known sites of historical or cultural interest.

Religious sites figured prominently - sweeping flyovers of Lough Derg, Glendalough, the Rock of Cashel, Skellig Michael and more. The continuity between segments seemed rather random at times - they need to brush



Martin Luther King.

The new channel started a re-run of **Ballykissangel**, also last Sunday night, and I really enjoyed it all over again. It was whimsical and thoughtful, with some colourful characters, all the better because it wasn't trying too hard to be a comedy.

The first series is definitely the best, written as it was by creator Kieran Prendiville. My memory is of later series losing the deft touch of these early episodes. And so, in last Sunday's opening episode we had the arrival of the hi-tech Confession box, complete with fax machine! The Confession scenes were very funny, though the moral advice given by the young priest was decidedly dodgy.

#### New drama

Launching a new drama series called **Bull** is inviting trouble, but be3 tried it anyway, last Thursday night. A few minutes in and I was disliking it already - the main character, Dr Jason Bull, played by Michael Weatherly, was a psychologist - smug, arrogant and complete with silly grin (I was reminded of the Mentalist series).

When we got to the opening credits I wasn't surprised to see Weatherly as one of the producers, as it had the feel of a vanity project, but I definitely was surprised to see Steven Spielberg listed as executive producer.

The plot centred around Dr

## THE WEEK



THE BIG QUESTIONS BBC 1, Sunday, January 22, 10.00am Nicky Campbell (pictured) presents topical religious and ethical issues live from

MARCH FOR LIFE **EWTN Friday**, January 27, 2pm Live and complete coverage of the annual March For Life in Washington DC.

LEAP OF FAITH RTÉ Radio 1 Friday, 27 January, 10.02 pm (repeat Sunday 10.30 am, Radio 1 Extra) Topical religious affairs with

Michael Comyn.

Bull analysing jury members to suss out their reactions in court (I was reminded of the Runaway Jury film).

It was all rather cynical and full of itself.

**b**oregan@hotmail.com



## Aubrey Malone

## Slaughter and mayhem in 1920s America gang wars

#### **Live By Night** (15A)

The 'myth kitty' - if I may borrow Philip Larkin's famous phrase - of this atmospheric crime flick ranges from The Godfather and Goodfellas through Scarface, The Road to Perdition and Chris Cooper's

A more immediate reference point might be Ben Affleck's The Town, which mirrors it in its gratuitous displays of violence if not its historic sweep. Not only does Affleck take the main role, he also directs, produces and writes the (brilliant) screenplay which he partly delivers in a very effective worldweary voiceover.

He plays Joe Coughlin, a 'bandit in a suit' who becomes a fully-fledged killer after runins with the Mafia and the Ku Klux Klan in a cavalcade of underworld adventures during America's Prohibition era. These take him from Boston to Florida. Here he runs a number of 'speakeasies' and seeks revenge on Irish-American gangster Albert White (Robert Glenister). White tries to kill him after he has an affair with his girlfriend Emma Gould (Sienna Miller).

An attempt to expand his operations to gambling in Florida runs into stumbling blocks both from a ruthless mobster and also, more curiously, the daughter of



the local police chief (Chris Cooper) who turns to God after curing herself of a drug habit.

If there's a fault to be found in a film of such convoluted aspirations it rests, surprisingly, on the shoulders of Affleck himself. His low-key style of acting usually serves him well but it's misguided here. For a larger-than-life character like Coughlin we needed a star with the acting chops of someone like Al Pacino or Robert de Niro in their prime.

Affleck is too pretty in the

role. There should be volcanic outbursts from him considering what he goes through. Instead we just get pursed lips or minor shows of temper.
The film would have

worked better if it maintained its intensity throughout. It loses its way after a blistering start before picking up the threads again in the bloodsoaked climax.

Aristotle spoke of pity and fear as the two emotions one should experience watching his tragedies unfold. With Affleck, I felt neither of these, just a kind of neutral admiration for his brilliant evocation of the period. We're meant to feel a kind of catharsis in his heart-wrenching final scene but he doesn't scrub up to it enough. Ironically, I felt more for Cooper here.

Miller also disappoints. Her character hails from Cork but the accent is a stage-Irish Dubbelin/Noo Yawk hybrid.

And yet this is a film that demands to be seen. One is never quite sure where it's going – from bootlegging to Bible Belt evangelism - or who's going to double-cross

It exudes an elegiac poetry even as it rides roughshod over every moral compass imaginable

The epilogue speaks of Heaven but by the time we get to it we've been through the seventh circle of hell. It takes a director of some panache to deliver both parameters.

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## Children's Corner **ERIN FOX Make something**

# to fill bare spaces!

ith the Christmas decorations long gone and packed away until next December, the home can feel a little bare without some festive spark. And it's a long wait before you can start making Easter decorations.

January can be a miserably long month, especially when Spring is yet to arrive. But you can welcome Spring into your home early with some decorations that aren't quite Christmassy and aren't quite Eastery.

This bird in a tree is inspired by "a partridge in a pear tree" and also by the promise of new

And because the days are still dark and gloomy, it's safe to get away with adding a few tiny fairy lights to the tree!

For the bird perching in a tree you will need a tin can or a jam jar, washed and dried, with string, burlap, twigs, glue and scissors.

Measure the length and circumference of the tin can or glass jar. Use these measurements to cut out a piece of burlap to fit around the can or jar. Give the length an extra centimetre so you can fold this inside



Brush the perimeter of the bottom of the glass or tin can, and the inside of the rim of the container can with a little glue and then wrap the burlap around it, folding it inside the brim. Smooth the burlap with your fingers to secure it to the glue.

Next roll out some play dough or clay and put this inside the container. While it's still damp, insert the twigs into the jar.

Leave to dry and start making the bird. Trace the outline of a bird onto some coloured paper and cut these out. Dab the back of the silhouettes with a little glue and fix them onto the branches.

#### Tissue paper

If you like, scrunch up some tissue paper to make little blossoms to attach to the branches. You can do this right away or you can wait a few weeks when real flowers are starting to bloom so you can mimic the beginning of

Tie a piece of ribbon around the top of the container and wind the fairy lights around the branches if using.

Use larger twigs and branches to create a bigger tree if you wish, and choose a different coloured material instead of plain burlap, or a patterned piece of fabric

# Internet Cold



Taking a retreat from the internet can play a big role in reaching a happy medium in life, writes **Annmarie** 

O'Connor

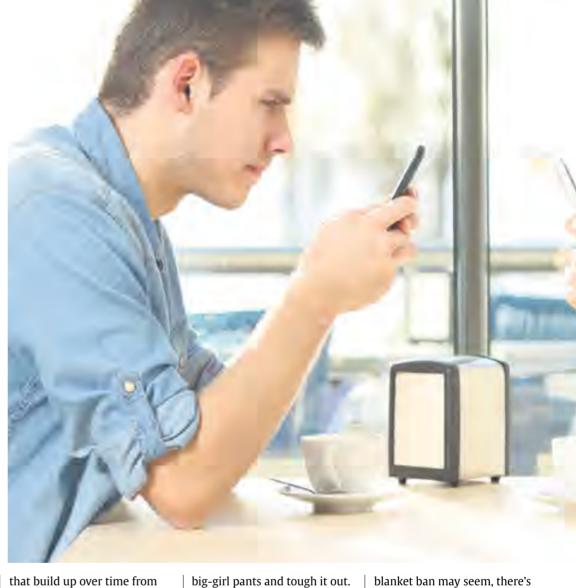
entertainment is a guilty pleasure - but when it creates a mental muffin top, then it's time to cut back on the cognitive calories. A low-tech fast may appear gimmicky until you take a look at your browser history. Do I hear a whistle blowing? That's the irony about gadgets: they know all of our juicy search secrets, but they also facilitate our fetishes.

It's no wonder we can't think straight. Our hyper-connectivity is what has us permanently poised in a runner's lunge, ready to dash at the first incoming notification. Still think you're immune to the temptation? Let's play a little game.

- Have you ever suffered from 'ringxiety' – the overwhelming urge to check your smartphone regardless of where you are and whether it is even ringing?
- Have you ever felt a buzzing sensation in your pocket only to discover it was a fauxcellarm?
- Have you ever experienced phantom limb - that strange sensation when you forget your phone and feel like something is missing?
- Have you ever walked into a lamppost/bollard/another person/oncoming traffic (delete as appropriate) while texting, browsing or snapping?
- Have you ever tried to swipe or scroll through menus, magazines

If you answered yes to even one of these questions, then you, my friend, might be suffering from nomophobia (the fear of being out of mobile phone contact). My advice? Consider giving this digital detox a try.

The aim of this process is to kickstart your mental metabolism. By releasing the pesky toxins (brain fog, forgetfulness, distraction)



that build up over time from repeated gadget use, you'll not only increase your attention span but improve its quality and direction too. What's more, you'll begin to regain that crucial online-offline balance the Holy Grail we'd all follow, if we weren't already following it on Instagram.

Here's the drill. There are two options: the master cleanse and the mini cleanse. In an ideal world, you'd supersize it with a two-week master and top up on a regular basis with the mini cleanse to reap the sustained benefits of a tech time-out.

#### Regime

A few things to bear in mind: as with any withdrawal regime, the initial elimination phase can be a humdinger. Expect what's commonly referred to as a 'healing crisis'.

In other words, prepare to feel cranky, fidgety and or/ fit to be tied. These feelings. although anti-social, are key to understanding how you've been allocating your attention. The stronger the sense of unease, the more you'll benefit from easing offline, so put on your

big-girl pants and tough it out.

A small caveat: don't embark on this detox if you are currently dieting, planning a wedding, playing host to long-lost relatives or doing anything that requires a full-frontal display of your mental and emotional faculties. The second you hit a speed wobble, your willpower levels will clap out and you'll be trolling celebrity gossip sites in a moment of weakness.

So effective is the basal ganglia at office admin, she keeps track of everything - for life"

Likewise, if you work in an industry that requires regular online usage, travel a lot or are expected to be on call, be realistic and opt for a mini cleanse – a mere 48 hours of your time. Unless, of course, you've planned a week's getaway, which would be the perfect opportunity to

Finally, let me clarify one more thing. As drastic as a

a method to my madness. Habits are formed and stored in a part of the brain called the basal ganglia, which dates back to our cave-people days, This prehistoric PA keeps the cognitive cogs in motion by making habits 'automatic' once they've been mastered. She then files them away under 'unconscious', allowing the conscious mind to get on with being the big boss.



So effective is the basal ganglia at office admin, she keeps track of everything – for life. In other words, habits never disappear. Ever. Which means those sneaky hours updating your Pinterest boards are on your permanent record.

The good news? The brain can't distinguish between a good and a bad habit, which

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# Turkey



means it holds your peerless PowerPoint skills in equal esteem. Score! Over time and with repetition, habits happen without our permission and often with little persuasion.

The bad news?
These habits become so unconscious that it only takes the smallest trigger to access them from our memory, the smallest distraction to catch us on the hop and – BAM!

Remember when your mother would take away a toy so you could "think about what you've done"? Well, the principle of the digital detox is more or less the same. Mothers are smart like that. By disrupting the reward cycle that is holding your attention captive to the internet, your conscious mind is given more space to consider the ramifications of its less salubrious habits.

This detox really does rely on you to do the graft, which is why you have to want to do it and why you have to have a juicy award at the end of the process to make this worthwhile. It's a tough one, but if you're serious about creating balance and finding that middle ground for yourself, it all starts here.

#### The Master Cleanse: Abstinence

Objective: To put the kibosh on multitasking and create more conscious internet usage patterns; to eliminate distractions and increase attention spans.

Best for: Heavy or habitual

users. **Timeframe:** One week.

#### You'll need: A notebook and a pen

- A notebook and a pen to record the experience.
- To remove every app from every device (including email unless it's essential to your word). This means putting headphones on ice too.
- This detox really does rely on you to do the graft, which is why you have to want to do it"
- To install a site-blocking extension on your laptop/

desktop browser for a seven-day period.

- A task team to keep you accountable. In other words, tell everyone you know. There's nothing people like more than to play bad cop, given half a chance and a bag of peanut M&Ms.
- A 'competing response' (psychology-speak for an alternative behaviour with personal resonance) to keep you occupied along the way. For example, reading a book, regular walks or embarking on a pet project you've put on pause.
- A reward for successfully completing the process. This will motivate you to focus on the bigger picture. Aim for something super sensory like an aromatherapy massage, killer seats at a sold-out concert or a slap-up meal at your favourite restaurant.

Process: Keep a daily record of the experience in your notebook. Notice how it makes you feel (nervous, irritable, empty, relieved) and how these emotions evolve throughout the week.

Pay attention to any behaviours pursuant

- Pay attention to any behaviours pursuant to not achieving your desired reward: minimising, bargaining, gnashing and grinding of teeth.
- Keep tabs on any rewards you thought you would miss:
- Did you survive without checking Facebook every six minutes?
- How does the new sense of mental space feel: liberating, calming, excruciating?
- Did it make you more or less anxious not to hear notifications on your phone?

# It also creates space for reconnecting with those pursuits that add layers to our day-to-day existence"

- Jot down the new things you notice, paying attention to the five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. For example, the smell of coffee, the sounds of the city.
- At the end of the week, replace the removed apps and disable any site-blocking extensions. Honourably discharge your family and friends.

• Keep your notebook for another week, but skip journaling for the first five days. Allow your conscious mind to regain its usual focus and routine before checking in on day six. When you do, pay attention to the following:

- How do you feel now? Are you calmer? Is decision-making easier or more difficult? Were you forced to satisfice more or rely on your intuition without having a search engine at hand?
- Has your usage changed? Did you decide to evict any pointless apps that were occupying your digital real estate? Have you determined which ones give your life ease and flow? For me it's online banking, Uber or Hailo taxi booking services, Google Maps (I have zero sense of direction) and Mindbody (a wellness app that allows me to book into local yoga or gym classes around the country). Everything else is negotiable.
- Are you more conscious of when, where and why you reach for your phone or tablet, multitask or mindlessly browse?
- Did you find an opportunity for doing and noticing other things or was it just a drag?
- Did you rely more on your competing response to help you? How did it feel to realise the potential in something you'd neglected?
- Did you quit the cleanse? If so, why? Was the habit too ingrained or was the social anxiety just too much?

\*\*\*\*

Allowing for time offline lets us upgrade our attention with intention – applied mindfulness in action. It also creates space for reconnecting with those pursuits that add layers to our day-to-day existence.

By becoming more conscious of what you expect from your time, you're better positioned to make more deliberately satisfying choices and approach your happy medium.

**1** Edited extract from The Happy Medium: Swap the Weight of having it all for Having More with Less by Annmarie O'Connor, published by Gill.

# Faith JIN THE family



#### Bairbre Cahill

here are times in the Sunday liturgy when the priest has the option to read a shorter version of the Gospel. This Sunday is one of those times but I find myself hoping that priests around the country will opt for the longer version.

Why? This Sunday we find ourselves in the early chapters of Matthew's gospel as Jesus is setting out on his public ministry. In the shorter version of the gospel we hear that Jesus goes and settles in Capernaum after he hears that John the Baptist has been arrested. Here, far from Jerusalem, along the shores of the Sea of Galilee Jesus begins to preach about the kingdom of God.

What happens next – and this is the bit that could be left out – is that as Jesus walks by the Sea of Galilee he spots Simon and Andrew. Jesus calls them, telling them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men".

Then he sees James and John and when he calls them they leave their father Zebedee in the boat and follow Jesus.

Why does this seem so important to me? We have just celebrated the birth of Jesus, the visits of shepherds and wise men and the baptism of Jesus which marks the beginning of his ministry. These weeks now of 'Ordinary time' give us the opportunity to explore what that ministry is about, who Jesus is and how he lives. These weeks invite us in – as individuals and as families – and offer us a chance to get to know Jesus.

# What is it that Jesus sees in these scruffy fishermen? "

In January, people can often be left feeling cash poor and somewhat deflated wondering what all the buzz of Christmas was about. The gospels of these coming weeks offer us a response to that question. They tell us – "this is why Christmas matters, why the birth of a baby over 2000 years ago is still so important today, why Mary's courageous yes was vital".

How do we enter into and respond to what these weeks offer? Well for example, take that call of Simon, Andrew, James and John in this week's Gospel. Imagine the scene

as if you were there. What is it that Jesus sees in these scruffy fishermen? And what do they see in him? Why on earth do they leave their livelihood behind and follow him? If I was there and he called me, how would I respond? Imagine! Would I busy myself with nets to mend, ignore his voice, avoid eye-contact? Would I be able to say 'Ok I will give it a go and see where this takes us'?

Scripture can be opened up easily like this with children, get them thinking and talking about what is happening in the gospel and how they would react if they were there.

Another possibility is to ask children after Mass on Sunday to draw a picture of what happened in the gospel – and it challenges them to



Christ calls the disciples Simon and Andrew, mosaic in Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna.

listen at Mass! The details that children include offer lots of opportunities for conversation about the gospel.

#### Message

I cannot help but wonder how poor Zebedee felt, abandoned in his boat when James and John left. Wondering about the gospel is a great way to pray at any age! Scripture opens up in fresh ways, helping us to engage our hearts as well as our heads and to get to know Jesus and his message more deeply.

Next Sunday's Gospel is the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). Now there is a wealth to wonder about! What would it have felt like to be there listening to Jesus? Which of the Beatitudes appeal to me, confuse me or challenge me? Are there people in my life who seem to live out some of those Beatitudes, people who are committed to mercy, peace and the cause of right? What do these gospels ask of me, of us as a family? Let yourself wonder - and in wondering, follow him.

() For details of Sunday readings see http:// www.catholicireland.net/ readings/?feature=sunday 32 | Reviews



# BookReviews

## **Peter Costello**



# A failed quest for a Catholic Ireland

The Ireland of Edward Cahill SJ 1864-1941: A Secular or a Christian State?

by Dr Thomas J Morrissey SJ (Messenger Publications.

#### Michael McDowell SC

r Thomas Morrissey, himself a Jesuit priest, has chosen for his latest work of historical biography one of the foremost Jesuit proponents of the Catholic Action Movement in Ireland between the War of Independence and the Second Ŵorld War. His choice is justified.

Cahill's role in that era is well known as a founder of An Ríoghacht (The League of the Kingship of Christ) and as a member of the Jesuit committee established to have an input into the drafting of the 1937 constitution, Bunreacht na h-Éireann.

But much less is known of Cahill the man and Cahill the thinker. Morrissey's title is indicative of the books perspective - an examination of the Irish society in which Cahill found himself and which he sought to Christianise rather than an intimate portrait of Cahill himself.

His life's aim was to create in Ireland a fully Christian state – which for Cahill meant a fully Catholic state. Protestantism was part of Ireland's problem and not part of the solution in any sense. Cahill saw a pure Christian Ireland under siege from all sides - from atheistic bolshevism, from liberal capitalism, from ideological socialism, and from a Judaeo-Masonic world conspiracy against Christianity.

Cahill himself believed in an atavistic, agricultural Ireland where materialism and immorality would be kept in check by a Catholic Church in close alli-

ance with a Catholic corporatist state of the type envisaged in Quadragessimo Anno. In this view-point, Cahill was by no means alone. Perhaps he was highly unusual in the intensity of his commitment to Catholic social doctrine and in his intellectual belligerence towards those who opposed the implementation of the Church's social think-

The claims made by Cahill for pre-eminence of Catholic social teachings and their right to be implemented in societies in which the Catholic Church was influential were, of course, standard orthodoxy of their time.

Thus, Cahill urged De Valera to make a "definite break with the Liberal and non-Christian type of state" that had been "forced on us by a foreign, non-Catholic power".

His target in that request was the Constitution of the Irish Free State, a document drafted by a team which included Michael Collins. Few commentators, then or since, have acknowledged the radical republicanism (even allowing for the trappings of dominion status) of the 1922 Constitution which scrupulously avoided any



hint of Catholic confessionalism, prohibited state endowment of any religion, and asserted that all powers of government and all authority, legislative, executive and judicial, in the

state were derived from the people of Ireland to whom all lawful authority comes from God.

No attempt, such as that clumsily made in Article 44 of the 1937 Constitution, was made in 1922 to acknowledge any special position for the Catholic Church.

Alfred O'Rahilly, another noted Catholic thinker, had unsuccessfully attempted persuade his fellow members. of the drafting committee in 1922 to "catholicise" the Free State's Constitution.

Cahill, for instance, was deeply disappointed by the failure of the 1937 Constitution to acknowledge the Catholic Church as the "One, True Church", and even went so far as to describe the use of the term 'Church of Ireland' in Article 44 in reference to the Anglican Christian church as "authoritative approval of a piece of lying propaganda". Cahill's disappointment was not unique; it was shared in the Vatican and by Archbishop McQuaid.

But De Valera's Catholicism was tempered by his republicanism. He inscribed his gift to Cahill of the text of the 1937 Constitution with a note which very politically referred to the same tensions

"To Father Cahill, with regards and thanks for his kind help and inspiration and regrets that the Draft could not be nearer to the Framework of a Christian State. Eamon de Valera, 1.V.37".

The words 'Framework of a Christian State' were intended to refer back to Cahill's magnum opus published under that title in 1932, a tome of more than 600 pages, setting out the historical and doctrinal basis of the Catholic Church's social doctrines. It was very much a work of its time. I printed down the text of The Framework and found it a fascinating companion while reading Dr Morrissey's biography of Cahill.

#### The colleges of the NUI were only just about acceptable for Catholics"

In The Framework's pages, Cahill expounded the dangers of Modernism, Liberalism, Protestantism, Capitalism, Bolshevism Socialism. Judaism and Freemasonry both internationally and to the Irish state. These threats to Catholic Christianity underlined the need for Ireland to adopt a new social system based largely on peasant proprietor agriculture in a vocationalist social order.

Interestingly, The Framework attacks contraception as "race suicide" and asserts a model of the family as that propounded in the encyclical Casti Conubii, an institution in which the husband was by nature the head.

The Framework also asserts the educational rights of the Church (itself a "perfect society") within civil society, condemning non-Catholic education for Catholics and supporting the hierarchy's ban on Catholics attending Trinity College. The colleges of the NUI were only just about acceptable for Catholics notwithstanding their nondenominational character. and only because of special arrangements to safeguard the faith and morals of Catholics attending them.

Fr Edward Cahill SJ.

#### **Authority**

Dr Morrissey follows the Jesuit career of Cahill, in all its trials and tribulations and brushes with ecclesial authority, from his days in Mungret, his chronic illhealth, his sympathy for the Volunteers, his regard for De Valera's side in the Civil War, his founding of An Ríoghacht, and his political campaigning for Catholic Action.

Although Cahill was perhaps slightly less extreme in his very real obsession with Judaism and Masonry than his Holy Ghost counterpart, the infamous Fr Denis Fahey, it is clear that he, like so many Catholics of his day, identified Jews, Masons and Communists as allies in an onslaught on Christianity. In the post-1929 crash world of the 1930s, anti-semitism was

Franco was not the only Catholic in Europe to identify Liberalism with the Judaeo-Masonic-Communist conspiracy against European Christianity.

Dr Morrissey touches on the slightly intellectually snobbish and condescending attitude adopted by the Jesuit establishment to Cahill's sometimes simplistic enthusiasms; they saw perhaps that he was a man whose education was limited in scope and, in their view, that he was lacking in savoir faire.

Dr Morrissey acknowledges that, from a 21st-Century perspective, Cahill may have achieved little. But he also points out that Cahill was a remarkable man for his time and of his time.

This biography is a good and rewarding read. It reminds us of the dramatic changes that have swept away so much of Cahill's world which was at its hey-day just a life ago.

Michael McDowell SC served 11 years in government, and is currently a member of Seanad Éireann.

## Irish and Queen Bess

The Nugents of Westmeath & Queen Ĕlizabeth's Irish Primer by Denis Casey (Four Courts Press, €9.95)

#### J. Anthony Gaughan

The Nugent family trace their beginning to Gilbert de Nugent of Normandy, the 1st Baron of Delvin, who arrived in Ireland in the 12th Century. By the middle of the 16th Century they were well and truly Anglo-Irish.

At that time their lands – present-day County Westmeath were situated on the frontier with

the Pale, where English law and customs prevailed.

The family also straddled the two cultures on the island, that of the Irish-speaking Gaels and the New English colonists.

Christopher Nugent (1544–1602), 14th Baron Delvin, was involved in the frequent outbreaks of violence in the border area. His lovalty to the crown was frequently under review in London. However, for the most part he was successful in facing down his detractors.

On one occasion to a complaint he protested his loyalty claiming

that, apart from litigation over disputed lands and serving the queen at the local assizes, his time was entirely spent devoted to books and building!

#### While studying at Cambridge, he produced the oldest surviving primer"

Eventually after he had agreed to parley with the earl of Tyrone he was arrested by the Lord Deputy Lord Mountjoy, but died in Dublin Castle before his trial.

Christopher Nugent claimed his own footnote in history in a unique manner. While studying at Cambridge, he produced the oldest surviving primer – beginners guide to the Irish language.

He presented it to Queen Elizabeth when she made a formal visit to the University in 1564. It consisted of 18 pages and included the alphabet and words and phrases in Irish, Latin and English.

Denis Casey points to the irony of Oueen Elizabeth's interest in the Irish language as her ultimate aim with regard to Irish was its extinction.



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.

# Sr Stan and the peace of God



#### Mindful Meditations for Every Day by Sr Stan

(Columba Press, €12.99)

#### Peter Costello

In Ireland, Sr Stanislaus Kennedy has long been much admired. One of the surprises among the releases of State papers at the turn of the year, as least to this reviewer, was a file dealing with the proposal put to the government that it should support the nomination of Sr Stan for the Nobel Peace

The government said that as a matter of long standing custom, it did not make such nominations, as it would open it up to future complications.

But whatever about the Nobel Prize, in Ireland Sr Stan's true and essential nobility has long been recognised.

Her new little book

epitomises what it is that reaches the hearts and minds of so many people. This is not a long book, but it is filled, indeed overflowing with good things. It is intended to provide a thought for the day to be used in a daily 15-minute session, of prayer, reflection and meditation.

Here is the thought for this very: "A frantic, busy life muddies the water of our inner wisdom and understanding, when we rest and still the mind, we experience a new energy and a gradual clarity of perception."

She links this with the theme of mindfully waking. "Each morning when you wake, before you get out of bed, bring your attention to your breathing. Observe five mindful breaths."

These, in turn, are linked to four Scripture passages for each month which readers are urged to memorise, such as "be still and know that I am God".

The call to peace, calm and contemplation is not a new notion it has been made by teachers in all ages.

But as we allow our lives to be constantly filled with extraneous activities promoted by others we have less and less time for ourselves.

# Here is self-help indeed that depends on working...with one's inner self"

Notice people's constant activity on their phones. They seemed to be in touch, but in fact the constants change, the constant movement, leaves people less and

less time to be truly themselves, and to truly connect with others.

They become, or rather present to the world not what they are, but what they want the world on the internet, their friends, links, and followers, to think they are.

This book, by such a calm and focused person as Sister Stan, provides every reader with an antidote to this.

Here is self-help indeed that depends on working, not with a guide, or guru, or trainer, but with one's inner self.

As a further Scripture passage for this month expresses it (Philippians 4:7): "The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your thought in Christ Jesus."



# The magnum opus of Olaus Magnus

hese days we have little expectation of astonishing works of literature or scholarship from a bishop. They are all too busy with mere administration to have the mental energy to expend on scholarship or literature. It was not always thus. Look for instance at the writings of 19th-Century Irish bishops, such as Dr Healy of Tuam or Cardinal Moran.

In earlier ages too it was different. A bishop merely by the qualities of education and mind that brought him to his high position might be expected to write with some distinction.

There are numerous examples down the ages. But the most astonishing of all, in some respects, are the works of Olaus Magnus (1490-1557), the last titular Catholic Archbishop of Uppsala in Sweden. He was forced by religious, social and political changes in Sweden to exile himself in 1530. Seven years later he settled permanently in Rome, where he devoted himself to writing. But his time there, along with his brother, the functioning bishop of Uppsala who died in 1544, was not wasted.

Olaus Magnus was a devoted patriot. His creative and scholarly life was devoted to the history, antiquities, and geography, zoology, folklore and religious traditions not just of Sweden but of Scandinavia in general from Finland to Iceland. He was especially admiring of the early Swedes, the Goths as he called them.

#### **First creation**

His first great creation was an elaborate *carta magna* or great chart of the Northern Seas. This was published in 1555; but it unaccountably lost to sight soon after and was even thought by some never to have existed. However, a copy was recovered, in a German library of course, hiding in plain view, so to speak. A facsimile published in the 1880s. It transformed the ideas that historians and naturalists had of the Scandinavian seas.

It seemed to some idle minded folk, a state of mind sometimes found even among academic, that it was a work of the imagination; the seas fill with images of monsters.

But in fact the images are largely of whales of various kinds, fishes and mammals. There is indeed a version of the giant squid, but that is now an accepted creature; and the sea serpent too is also more acceptable to some today.

But this map when it was originally published was merely a preliminary to a far greater work. In

1590 he produced in Rome, its copyright guaranteed by the Pope for 10 years, his *History of the Northern Peoples*.

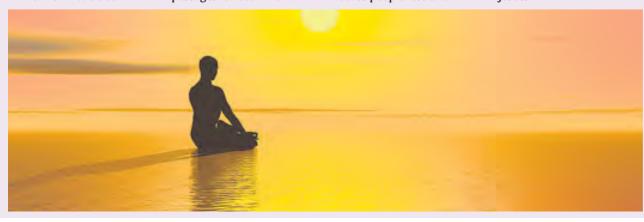
Just before Christmas, I happened to pick up for what seemed to be a derisory price a pristine second-hand set of the Hakluyt Society edition of the first complete English translation of this book, three long volumes running to nearly 1,000 pages, published between 1996 and 1998. This history was for Magnus not just a labour of love, it was intentionally a work of Catholic scholarship, of a kind that seems almost unique.

#### **Excesses**

Dismayed, not just by the excesses of the Reformation, but by its very existence, Magnus wished to preserve forever the true nature of medieval Catholic Scandinavia and its pagan background. These countries lay outside the Roman Empire, as Ireland did. But nothing like this was ever written about Ireland, or Scotland.

The History of the Northern Peoples represents the epitome of a lifetime's research and reading. It is one of the great works of European historiography. The text and its remarkable woodcuts preserve a world that is largely lost forever. For Irish readers it presents the reality of the medieval achievements of people who appear in our own tales and legends as mere murderous pirates.

But because Sweden has effectively passed from the ken of most Catholics, their eyes fixed on Rome and the Renaissance, its true status is largely unknown. But as a recent Sunday reading reminded us, according to St Peter himself, "God has no favourites" – but one suspects that that if he did for Olaus Magnus the Scandinavians would be at their head.



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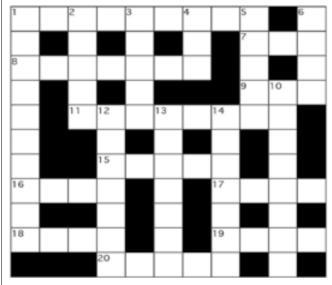


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# Leisure time

#### Crossword Junior

Gordius 165



#### ACROSS

- 1 It has two wheels and an engine (9)
- 7 Tear (3)
- 8 Officer in charge of a ship (7)
- 9 Unhappy (3)
- 11 Find something new; find out (8)
- 15 Cartoon magazine (5)
- 16 Egg-shaped, like a rugby ball (4)
- 17 Exam (4)
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_ Blyton wrote the Famous Five and Noddy books (4)
- 19 Wind a fishing line on this
- 20 Someone you fight against

in a war (5)

#### DOWN

- 1 A pop star often holds this while singing (10)
- 2 Recorded on a cassette (5)
- 3 Cars may drive along them (5)
- 4 There was no room here the night Jesus was born (3)
- 5 Rub out (5)
- 6 Nickname for a potato (4)
- 10 Captured by the police (8)
- 12 Count in (7)
- 13 Write a piece of music, like Beethoven or Mozart did (7)
- 14 A great win (7)

#### ACROSS

33

35

1 What the pilot submits is a scheme for refugees (6,4)

Crossword

- 6 A grand part of the circle for painter Chagall (4)
- 10 In the Bible, the only son of Abraham and Sarah (5)
- 11 Fraudster, quack (9)
- 12 Own the pole of the sheriff's helping group (7)
- 15 If this is what you do, then on your bike! (5)
- 17 Stroll (4)
- 18 The shape of an Australian Rules pitch (4)
- 19 Rims, peripheries (5) 21 Stockpiled (7)
- 23 Be quiet and get a mineral
- at the seaside (5) 24 Paul Hewson of U2 (4)
- 25 Stubborn item of footwear
- (4)
- 26 How to cook one's brother
   with lubricant (5)
- 28 City in Michigan nicknamed Motown (7)
- 33 Loth to break up the nut cartel (9)
- 34 Corn (5)
- 35 Star Wars character encountered in a Mayo
- dance (4)
  36 Twenty seventeen. That's
- so very long ago! (3,4,3)

#### DOWN

1 Type of sword (4)

34

- 2 A male sweetheart can be an airman too (9)
- 3 & 4 Ouch! So cups break as part of the conjury (5-5)
- 5 Greek hero of the siege of Troy (4)7 & 8 The embracing of a
- religion by the top of the house? (5,10)

  9 Made the sound of a hen
- (7) 13 Trans-national currency
- (4) 14 Veered sharply (7)
- 16 Get some fruit for the
- chaperone (10) 20 Praised the new fridge
- oil (9) 21 Poisonous plant (7)
- 22 Way out (4)
- 22 way out (4)
- 27 Leered at the state of the lodge (5)
- 29 Ingress (5)
- 30 Drink, bachelor then dance (5)
- 31 Wound, nasty cut (4) 32 Nuisance (4)

#### Sudoku Corner 165

1

2

4

8

1

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

**GORDIUS No.281** 

Across - 1 Mezzo-soprano 7 Lop 9 Howl 10 Shinty

11 Halo 14 Mends 15 Flute 16 Wide 18 Lifts 21 Aspic

22 Masks 23 Heave 24 Hurt 25 Radio 26 Stuck

29 USSR 33 Galley 34 Wool 36 ETA 37 Ballpoint pen

Down - 1 Moo 2 Zola 3 Ouse 4 Olive 5 Rated 6 Olga

Melba 17 Inside 19 Fleck 20 Smirk 27 Trawl 28 Cello

30 Swab 32 Swap 35 Own

**CHILDREN'S No.164** 

Across - 1 Hurricane 7 Pages 8 March 9 Yacht

11 Nicest 14 Egg 16 Hum 17 Gemini 18 Aims 19 Mass

20 Lose

Down - 1 Hippo 2 Rugby 3 Insects 4 Admit 5 Earring

6 School 10 Cinema 12 Exits 13 Think 14 E-mail 15 Games

Processional hymn 9 Halfway house 12 Jumper 13 Peach

Easy

6

2

3

6

2

4

7

8

3

6

1

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4

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7

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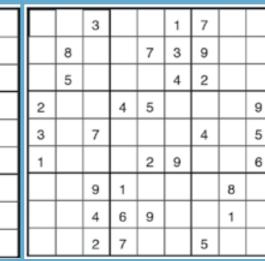
6

6

5

3

Hard



#### Last week's Easy 164

2 9 1 7 4 0 0 5 5 3
3 5 6 2 1 8 7 9 4
4 0 7 9 3 5 2 0 1
5 2 3 8 7 9 4 1 6
1 6 9 5 2 4 3 8 7
8 7 4 1 6 3 5 2 9

Last week's Hard 164

36 | Comment The Irish Catholic, January 19, 2017

#### **Greg Daly**

## Listening to those who've earned the right to be heard

VHEN CARDINAL Raymond Burke wrote in April that Pope Francis' post-synodal exhortation on the family did not change Church teaching, he was predictably condemned by those who had been casting aspersions on the document released just three days earlier.

**Notebook** 

"This is nothing less than a betrayal from one who should have offered hope," tweeted one fanatically anti-Francis blogger, continuing, "we have been thrown to the wolves.'

It was the kind of kneejerk response, devoid of charity, that has blighted the current papacy, such that those who claim Amoris Laetita is causing confusion in the Church might do well to reflect on whether their own actions might in any way be part of the problem.

Last week saw perhaps the most egregious examples of this kind of behaviour yet, when hardly had Malta's two bishops issued guidelines on applying the section of Amoris Laetitia dealing with Communion for the divorced and remarried, before they were being shouted down across the internet.

One prominent canon lawyer promptly said the document could only be called "disastrous", declared that the bishops



succumbed to a classic error, and questioned their understandings of basic canonical language observing, "the Maltese bishops do not seem to know what the word 'conjugal' means".

Others have been less charitable, claiming for instance that the bishops had "rejected the perennial teaching of the Church", wondering whether they understand little of Catholicism, casting them as modern Pharisees, and misrepresenting the guidelines as saying they allow the divorcedand-remarried to receive Communion as long as they "feel at peace with God".

#### Watchdog

Truth deserves better than this, and so too do Malta's Archbishop Charles Scicluna and Bishop Mario Grech of Gozo.

Archbishop Scicluna, after all, is

AN EMPHASIS ON conscience is at the heart of the Maltese bishops' guidelines, with the bishops concluding that a divorced-and-remarried Catholic cannot be denied Reconciliation and the Eucharist if, as a result of a suitably sincere and thorough discernment process, he or she "manages, with an informed and enlightened conscience, to acknowledge and believe that he or she [is] at peace with God".

In no way should this be equated to a merely subjective 'feeling'. On the contrary, time and again in recent decades when liberal Catholics have sought to justify disobedience to papal teachings, they have done so on the grounds of 'conscience', only to be rightly rebutted by more orthodox Catholics pointing out that only a properly formed conscience has such authority.

Now, though, too many are reacting to the Maltese calls for their clergy to enlighten consciences and for enlightened consciences to be respected, by saying this would mean a sacramental free for all. We can't have this both ways. Either we respect properly formed consciences or we don't

one of the world's leading canon lawyers. A one-time doctoral student of Cardinal Burke and the author of a 400-page academic tome on the definition of marriage, he spent five years as a canon lawyer in Malta before working for 17 years in Rome, initially in the Apostolic Signatura and then under the then Cardinal Ratzinger in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In the CDF, the Church's doctrinal watchdog, he was the future Pope's right-hand man in the struggle against clerical abuse, and was famously tasked with gathering information necessary for the prosecution of the disgraced Fr Marcial Maciel. He continued this role through Benedict XVI's papacy, being promoted away from Rome to Malta and appointed a member of the CDF scarcely months before the then Pope announced his resignation.

The Maltese guidelines may prove misguided, but Dr Scicluna's credentials and record are such that he shouldn't lightly be dismissed as lacking knowledge, fidelity or integrity.

Would that the same could be

the Maltese guidelines notes that while some couples in which at least one partner is divorced and remarried manage, with God's help, to live as brother and sister rather than as husband and wife, in other "complex situations" this can become "humanly impossible and give rise to greater harm".

It's worth considering whether the guidelines necessarily envisage couples discussing this matter with their priests, or if they might envisage individuals doing so, explaining that while they would wish to live "as brother and sister", their partner might not be so amenable to this, with any children the couple have paying the price should such efforts harm or end their relationship.

This might seem extreme, but the bishops have complex situations in mind: this isn't intended as guidance for everyone.





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#### 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.littlewavassociation.com

I enclose € to be allocated to:	DONATIONS FOR				
€ REFUGEE MOTHERS AND CHILDREN	THE MISSIONS ARE				
€NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES	SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR				
€ HOLY MASSES (Please state number) € LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES	ANY EXPENSES.				
to donate online go to tinyurl.com/lwadonations					
Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)	Block letters please)				

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

#### Could you help?

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



#### LITTLE WAY HOUSE **FATIMA AVAILABLE FOR GROUP BOOKINGS**

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

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

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

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

Ph: 00 44 207 622 0466

