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Pope puts Irish-born Rosary Priest on path to sainthood

Warm welcome for Fr Peyton elevation

Greg Daly

A step to sainthood for the famous Irish-born 'Rosary Priest' Fr Patrick Peyton has been welcomed by leading figures in promoting the Rosary in Ireland.

Mayo-born Fr Peyton moved to the USA at the age of 19 in 1928, joining the Congregation of Holy Cross, later founding the Family Rosary Crusade, organising massive Rosary rallies in cities around the world, and enlisting the help of Hollywood celebrities to promote the devotion across the mass media.

Fr Peyton died in 1992, and has now taken a step towards formal sainthood with Pope Francis having acknowledged his 'heroic virtues' and decreed him 'venerable'.

"He was the great apostle of the family Rosary," Fr

John Walsh OP, promoter of the Rosary in Ireland's Rosary Apostolate, told *The Irish Catholic*. "He was a powerful speaker among the Irish diaspora – he was the religious John F. Kennedy," he said.

Emphasis

Fr Peyton's emphasis on the family Rosary, where a mother and father would lead their families in saying the Rosary at home, offers a perfect model of a family as a domestic church, Fr Walsh said, suggesting that this could be worth emulating in this year when Ireland will host the World Meeting of Families.

"It has to start somewhere, and Fr Peyton was very strong on the mother and the father saying the Rosary in the home – the home is the

» Continued on Page 2

The giving continues



Ethan and Rebecca Moore from Dublin add gifts to the collection at the Pro Cathedral which is taking unwanted Christmas gifts and will pass them to Crosscare (the Dublin Diocesan Social Care Agency). These will be redistributed this time next year to people living in their homeless services. Photo: John McElroy

MICHAEL KELLY

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All change for the next 12 months **PAGE 20**



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An important year ahead for religious freedom

The issue of religious freedom will continue to be a major feature in public debate in the year ahead. Central to the discussion is the extent to which people ought to be free when there are what appear to be conflicting and competing rights. For example, where there is a legal right for a same-sex couple not to face discrimination because of their sexual orientation, how free is a businessperson to refuse them goods and services?

I don't think anyone would tolerate a situation where a same-sex couple might be refused a table in a restaurant because they are gay. But, how free should the restaurant be to, for example, refuse to be a venue for a same-sex wedding if the proprietor has a deeply-held conviction that marriage is a unique relationship between one man and one woman?

“How free should the restaurant be to refuse to be a venue for a same-sex wedding?”

Some of these arguments will be explored when the UK Supreme Court sits in Belfast for the first time in April to hear argument in the Ashers Baking Company case.



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Daniel and Amy McArthur who are at the centre of a court case in Belfast.

Supported by The Christian Institute's Legal Defence Fund, Ashers is defending itself from a lawsuit brought by the taxpayer-funded Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI).

The so-called 'gay cake' case began in 2014 when gay activist Gareth Lee asked for a cake to be decorated with the slogan 'Support Gay Marriage'. The McArthur family, who own the bakery, recognised that printing the campaign slogan would go against their sincerely-held Christian belief that marriage is between a man and a woman.

They declined the order, but the

ECNI sued on behalf of Mr Lee.

In May 2015, a District Judge ruled that Ashers broke sexual orientation and political discrimination laws by declining the order.

At the Court of Appeal hearing in October 2016, judges ruled that refusing the order because of its slogan "was direct discrimination", despite agreeing that the family did not refuse the service because Mr Lee was gay.

The Supreme Court hearing is an important case, and one that those of us who value the freedom to act according to one's conscience will watch closely.

Fr Patrick Peyton on path to sainthood

» Continued on Page x

school of prayer," he said.

Fr Peyton's elevation seems especially relevant ahead of the Church family gathering, according to Indiana-born Fr Stephen Gibson, who heads the Fr Peyton Centre in Attymass, Co. Mayo.

"It certainly gives us the impression that people are

listening to the message that he's trying to teach, especially in this year here in Ireland when the Pope is coming and celebrating the year of the Family," he said.

"Fr Peyton's famous phrases were 'the family that prays together stays together' and 'a world at prayer is a world at peace', so putting those two phrases and ideas together certainly fits in very

well with the theme for the visit of the Pope."

A member of Fr Peyton's Holy Cross community, and a collaborator of Fr Peyton in the last years of his life, Fr Gibson said locals in Attymass are "delighted" by the development, as are members of the Congregation of the Holy Cross.

Giant

"He's been a giant within our

community for as long as I can remember, and we're just delighted that people are finally recognising the fact that the man lived an extraordinary life and had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin and was convinced that he could and should help people pray and be together as best they could," he said.

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Clergyman collects €500,000, says he'll share with needy

Chai Brady

One lucky Irish priest who bagged half a million Euro said he would "share his luck around" and looks forward to giving something back.

Mayo-born Msgr John Delaney said it was a policy he learned from his late mother and his bishop, with Premier Lotteries quoting him as saying: "I am a big believer in what goes around comes around."

Kind-spirited Msgr Delaney won the EuroMillions Plus draw

after buying a quick pick ticket at Donnybrook Fair in Malahide, Dublin on December 22 – the same date as his niece's birthday. Back home for Christmas, Msgr Delaney is based in Florida, where he was sent after his ordination, but regularly visits family in Dublin.

Lucky

This isn't the first time the priest has won big, having previously received thousands in US lotteries and more recently €17,000 on the Garrymore GAA club lotto in

Mayo. "I suppose you can say I am lucky. But I have always had a policy of sharing my luck around," he said.

"I didn't get too excited when I heard this first. I went back to the shop and gave the ticket to the same girl I had purchased it from to be checked. Lo and behold, there was a message on the system to contact the National Lottery. So I knew at that stage I had won."

Msgr Delaney was ordained in Ireland in June 1964 and was sent

to the Archdiocese of Miami two months later. He has served in a variety of roles across the state of Florida including as a parochial vicar at the Immaculate Conception in Hialeah, then St Anastasia in Fort Pierce and St Edward in Palm Beach, and in 1971 was named administrator of Sacred Heart Parish in Lake Worth, then pastor of the Holy Family in North Miami in 1974.

He was given an Irish Diaspora Award in August 2017 for his work abroad.

Politicians must focus on helping families this year – church leaders

Chai Brady

Christian church leaders have called on politicians to focus this year on helping restore hope to families who are experiencing hardship, especially those who are homeless.

The New Year message was sent by several Church leaders including the Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin. They said they were shocked at the rising levels of homelessness in Ireland, and that too many people being left without adequate support is a symptom of a "broken system".

The need to protect children, who make up a third of the demographic who are homeless in the Republic of Ireland, was particularly stressed. In Northern Ireland it was highlighted that families with more than two children are most at risk from the combination of welfare changes, cuts to services and cuts to charities providing support to children.

"In our churches at Christmas time there is a particular emphasis on family as we come together to celebrate our appreciation for God's gift of hope to a suffering world in the birth of Christ," the message read.

"We are reminded that God did not choose the wealthy and the powerful to be the protectors of his Son, but a family that was vulnerable, without a home and forced to rely on the kindness of strangers."

They said it is deeply unfair that so many parents feel they are failing because they cannot provide security for their children, and that "many are reluctant to ask for help because of stigma and shame".

The other leaders are from the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church, the Irish Council of Churches and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church.

Hail Marys keep Katie in the fast lane

Catholic swimmer Katie Ledecky has been named Female Athlete of the Year by the Associated Press.

A ballot of US editors and news directors saw Ms Ledecky, who won five gold medals and one silver in July's world swimming championships, pip tennis star Serena Williams by 351 votes to 343.

Ms Ledecky, who has praised the "excellent, faith-filled education" she received in Washington DC Catholic schools, revealed ahead of the 2016 Olympics that she prays before every race, saying: "The Hail Mary is a beautiful prayer and I find that it calms me."



Katie Ledecky.

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Start 2018 with spiritual decluttering, Pope urges

Staff Reporter

With 'decluttering' a popular New Year activity, Pope Francis has urged Catholics to emulate Mary by leaving behind "useless baggage" and learning what truly counts.

"Devotion to Mary is not spiritual etiquette; it is a requirement of the Christian life," the Pope said in his homily in St Peter's Basilica on the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. "Looking to the Mother, we are asked to leave behind all sorts of useless baggage and to rediscover what really matters," he added.

Noting how the year begins in the name of the Mother of God, the Pontiff urged Catholics to start afresh as pilgrims from the centre of their Faith, focused on the crib without being burdened by the past.

Fragility

The crib reminds us of the fragility of the infant Christ and how service to our fellow humans serves God, he said, stressing that "all life, from life in the mother's womb to that of the elderly, the suffering and the sick, and to that of the troublesome and even repellent, is to be welcomed, loved and helped".

Silent reflection is key to remembering this, he urged: "To set aside a moment of silence each day to be with God is to 'keep' our soul; it is to 'keep' our freedom from being corroded by the banality of consumerism, the blare of commercials, the stream of empty words and the overpowering waves of empty chatter and loud shouting."

Three kings in St Peter's Basilica



Children dressed as the Three Kings walk to their seats after presenting the offertory gifts during Pope Francis' celebration of Mass in St Peter's Basilica on January 1, marking the feast of Mary, Mother of God. Photo: CNS

Irish experience 'key' to tackling migrant crisis – bishop

Greg Daly

Irish people are well-placed to understand and help migrants and refugees, Limerick's Bishop Brendan Leahy has said, describing Pope Francis' call for migrants to be welcomed into our communities as a 'pressing invitation' for Catholics.

In a homily in St Nessen's Church, Raheen, on January 1, the Church's 51st World Day of Peace, Bishop Leahy said Irish people have "a particular sensitivity to the theme of migration, emigration".

"We have a key to understanding migration," Dr Leahy told *The Irish Catholic*. "We ourselves have been a migrant people – lots of us

have relations who've gone abroad, and many of us have gone and come back."

This gives a special insight into the challenges, difficulties and opportunities migrants face in unfamiliar countries, he said, adding that Irish people should be aware of how "every migrant has their own unique story of who they've left behind and why they had to leave their homelands".

In his homily Dr Leahy urged Irish people to do all they could to welcome and integrate migrants, taking care to ensure vulnerable migrants are not taken advantage of or endangered in the process.

"We need to be on the

look-out to make sure migrants, especially women and children, are not exposed to risks or being exploited," he said, explaining how educational and other supports are crucial to this.

"In Ireland we need to support the human development of migrants and refugees, ensuring access to all levels of education for children and young people," he said, noting that "this will enable them not only to cultivate and realise their potential, but also equip them better in their turn to go out and encounter others in a spirit of dialogue

rather than confrontation".

Emphasising how enabling migrants to participate fully in society is "to the benefit of us all", Dr Leahy paid tribute to the work done by schools and others tasked with helping migrants integrate in Irish society but said these should be strengthened, and that many people still need help.

"Asylum seekers are living in dire circumstances not far from us. For each of us, personally but also as a parish and as a diocese, Pope Francis' message comes as a pressing invitation," he concluded.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Much-loved

Clogher priest dies

A priest described as a man who shared his Faith with passion, loved travel and had a kind and gentle manner, died following an illness he "bore with great courage and serenity", the Diocese of Clogher said. Fr Tom Finnegan, the parish priest of Magheracloone in Monaghan, passed away in St Francis' Hospice in Blanchardstown, Dublin.

At his funeral homily on Tuesday, chief celebrant and administrator of the diocese Msgr Joseph McGuinness said: "He was always willing to support diocesan events, and any priest needing help or support. He was a model of hospitality, his home being

a place of welcome, nourishment and celebration."

New online resource for Col newspapers

All editions of the Church of Ireland's weekly newspaper from when the paper began in March 1856 up to and including the end of the Revolutionary period in December 1923 are now available online.

In the run-up to marking 150 years since Disestablishment in 1919, the RCB Library is making more editions of the *Church of Ireland Gazette* freely available at <https://research.informa.ie/rcb/>.

Beginning this month historian Dr Miriam Moffitt will present a new series of online exhibits entitled: 'The News Behind the News'.

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Women’s health matters – we must stress that

It is inevitable that in 2018 there will be much public discourse on the subject of *Humanae Vitae* – it being the fiftieth anniversary, in July this year, of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical (‘Of Human Life’). After two papal commissions, and many committees of experts, Paul VI reaffirmed the Church’s traditional teaching against artificial contraception (and, of course, abortion). *Humanae Vitae* was a thoughtful, and even poetic document. The late Catholic peer, Lord Norman St John Stevas, wrote a fine book explaining it – *On Human Life* – which deserves to be re-issued this year. As a lawyer, St John Stevas elucidated the encyclical in a really accessible way.

Some of these mothers had such poor health themselves that they suffered from rickets”

I would hope, however, that the present Pope might revisit this subject now. It is evident, from the statistics of falling family size, that Catholic couples all over the globe, are practicing contraception: perhaps they are doing so in conformity with the natural law. But it is a probability that many are also using a form of ‘artificial’ contraception: and this is a nettle that should surely be grasped. Especially in the light of the upcoming abortion referendum in Ireland,



Mary Kenny



which, it is being claimed, is to support women’s health. Abortion is not health care. But it can be said that responsible family planning is. A review of fertility control should also focus on the health of women and mothers. Cast our minds back to the 1940s, when overseas doctors used to visit Irish maternity hospitals, such as The Coombe in Dublin, just to observe a multiparous mother give birth to a 16th, 17th or 18th child. Some of these mothers had such poor health themselves that they suffered from rickets, and trainee obstetricians would take a clinical interest in how such a mother, with a weakened pelvic structure, could be delivered of her 18th child.

Maternal health needed a lot more care: maternal mortality (and infant mortality) needed serious medical attention. It did happen, over the succeeding decades, and I think we should be proud of Ireland’s fine standard of maternal and infant care today – one of the lowest rates of mortality in the world. But family planning and the reduction in multiparous births played a meaningful part in that improved health picture. As did the general improvement of social circumstances. Important And it is vitally important that those who support the pro-life movement should be seen to be concerned for the health of women and mothers. Politicians like

Still in the rhythm of things

Interestingly, technology has now entered the realm of natural family planning, and an app called ‘Natural Cycles’ is helping some women control their fertility. The app monitors daily temperature (and hormone levels) which usually indicate when a fertile day occurs in the menstrual cycle.

In Britain, there’s been an appreciable drop in the number of young women taking the contraceptive pill between 2011 and 2015 (according to NHS figures) because of unpleasant side-effects, and perhaps a dislike of relying on chemicals among a generation embracing natural remedies. Back in 1968, what was

then sometimes called ‘the rhythm method’ of fertility control was the subject of much mockery – the American satirist Lenny Bruce even composed a jokey ditty, ‘Vatican Rag’. But it seems that many younger people like the idea of being in touch with the rhythms of their own bodies.

Senator Ned O’Sullivan are being led to believe that abortion is part of women’s health: that’s partly because the pro-abortion forces have lumped together all family planning under one umbrella. Pro-life must own and claim a stake in the health of women and mothers – health and healing are central to the Gospel. Lobby groups like ‘Love Both’ are making this point well, but it should be made all the more emphatically, right across the board. Maternal health really matters, and a new encyclical which might stress this point – as well as re-stating the spiritual teachings on marriage and *Humanae Vitae*’s “transmission of life” – could strengthen that ‘love both’ message.



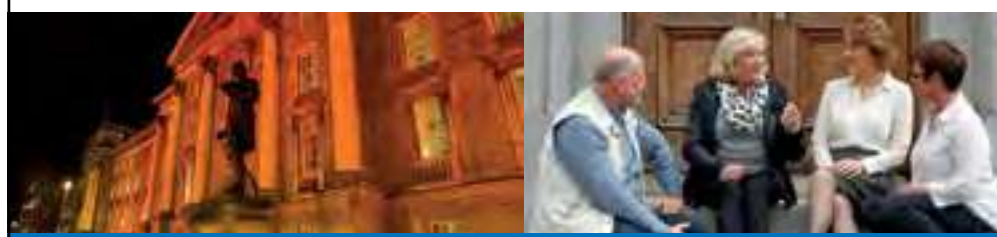
A painting featuring St Cecilia.

Music to my ears

At my christening, my mother gave me a middle name of Cecilia, hoping I might be musically gifted, by the intercession of St Cecilia, patron saint of music. Alas, I never showed any special aptitude for music, and indeed was excluded from the school choir (as I recall, for being too much of a fidget). However, over the last months of 2017, I’ve been having singing lessons for health reasons and my wonderful singing teacher tells me that I have a good ear, and can hold a note very nicely. This has encouraged me to start learning how to read music in a very basic way, and it’s so rewarding. It has also expanded my interest in music. So perhaps many decades on, St Cecilia is, after all, answering my Ma’s prayers. Never give up – because you never can tell what will happen!



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MIC lecturer presents ‘Exploring Family Life’ event

A dynamic presenter and lecturer from Mary Immaculate College will speak at Kerry’s Annual Diocesan Public Talk as part of the preparation for the World Meeting of Families this year. Dr Patricia Kieran, from the Department of Learning, Society and Religious Education, will present the free talk on January 9 at 8pm in the Gleneagle,

Killarney. Her insights into Faith and family are said to inspire, encourage and challenge. Dr Kieran is no stranger to Kerry Diocese as she was the key note speaker at the launch of ‘Be Christ’s Joy’, the diocese’s five-year Pastoral Plan 2016-2020. Her research interests include the teaching of world religions in Catholic schools.



Out&About

Edited by Chai Brady
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Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



DUBLIN: Archbishop Diarmuid Martin greets Romao and Gleen Libuna after the Christmas morning Mass in the Pro Cathedral, which was attended by President Michael D. Higgins. Photo: John McElroy



▲ **LOUTH:** ‘Friends of Our Lady of Guadalupe’ Campaign presented over 1,393,245 rosaries and 256,542 visits to the Blessed Sacrament Pledges received from all over the world, for the protection of life and to save the Eighth Amendment, to Our Lady of Guadalupe at her shrine, Church of the Nativity, Ardee.

◀ **MEATH:** Bishop Michael Smith, Anne Crinion (exhibition curator), Provincial Leader of the Sisters of Mercy Sr Ann Brady and Fr Seán Henry PP of Trim at the celebration to mark 150 years since the sisters came to the town. Photo: Anne Crinion



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ROSCOMMON: Deacon Martin Reidy stands with his son John, wife Anne, daughter Orlaith and Bishop Kevin Doran after Bishop Doran ordained him to the permanent diaconate in Kiltoom's Church of the Risen Christ. Photo: Ann Hennessy



WESTMEATH: Deacon Tony Larkin, pictured with his wife Jean and Bishop Kevin Doran, on his ordination to the permanent diaconate by Bishop Doran in SS Peter and Paul's Church, Athlone. Photo: Ann Hennessy.

Maria Steen
The View



The humility of the Magi

On the day the Oireachtas Committee considering the Eighth Amendment recommended to the government to hold a referendum to legalise abortion in this country, a miraculous news story appeared across the water in Britain.

Vanellope Hope Wilkins was born a month premature with a condition that had caused doctors to advise her parents to 'terminate'. Her development in her mother's womb was not normal: her heart and part of her stomach grew outside her body. As reported by RTÉ news on its website, the condition, *ectopia cordis*, was discovered at nine weeks gestation.

Think about that. At nine weeks, it was possible for the doctors treating Vanellope's mother to identify the baby's major organs and see that they were growing abnormally.

Yet listening to the Oireachtas Committee that judged all babies up until 12 weeks to be worthy of no rights at all, one could be forgiven for thinking (as many do) that the baby isn't really a baby at that stage, that we're not talking about a child with limbs, a brain – a beating heart.

Indeed, if Vanellope had been older than 12 weeks, the Oireachtas Committee would still allow her to be aborted. Why? Because the doctors treating Vanellope and her mother stated clearly that she would not survive.

No chance

The Oireachtas Committee don't want to give babies like Vanellope a chance – they don't think she deserves a chance. They think that people should be allowed to end the life of such a child, rather than make the effort to save her. When our politicians and leaders take this kind of approach, the rest of society follows. Changes to our laws materially affect our culture and attitudes.

In relation to abortion, this can result in not merely a 'disposable' attitude towards aborting children, but can even create a kind



Bartolomé Esteban Murillo's 'Adoration of the Magi'.

of 'moral' pressure to terminate – particularly in cases of children with serious illnesses, whom doctors judge to have a slim chance of survival.

This was experienced by Vanellope's parents whose doctors – undoubtedly affected by the culture of abortion in the UK – advised her parents to abort her. Her parents were told that the chances of Vanellope surviving were "next to none" – much like the parents of those babies with so-called 'fatal foetal abnormalities'. They were told the only option was to terminate and that they could avail of counselling.

“The more difficult option is to make the effort to heal and look after the child”

But Vanellope's mother said that abortion was not an option for her, and that if her baby was to die naturally then she would accept it, but she wanted to fight for her baby's life.

The consultant paediatrician in Glenfield Hospital in Leicester who treated the child said that she had only come across the very rare condition once, 20 years before, but that that baby had been aborted.

Thanks to her parents' determination, the doctors did eventually rally around Vanellope and following her early delivery performed

three operations on her tiny body to get her heart and stomach back within her abdominal cavity.

The question that one can't help asking is: how many more miracle babies like Vanellope might be alive today if doctors had fought for them and sought to heal them, as is their duty, rather than advising and even pressurizing their parents to "terminate"?

The fact is, with a law as proposed by the Oireachtas Committee, babies like Vanellope would have an even slimmer chance of survival than they already do. For doctors, abortion in these instances is the easy option – the more difficult one is to make the effort to heal and look after the child. But isn't that what every child deserves?

This week, we as Christians remember the arduous trek made by three world leaders to seek the Christ-child. Although they had authority, power and wealth, Balthasar, Melchior and Caspar bowed down before an infant in a lowly manger, in humility – the most important character trait in any leader.

The power that comes with leadership is something that needs to be tempered with humility and a willingness to represent and protect the weakest and most vulnerable in our society. Our laws should protect those most at risk of having their rights ignored and our politicians and leaders should be guardians of those laws and defenders

those people.

Sadly, when given the choice, a majority of the Oireachtas Committee chose to do the opposite: to do away with a law that protects all human life and to turn their backs on the most vulnerable.

They voted for a proposal more extreme than that which exists in the UK, where one in every five babies are aborted.

They voted that a child can be killed because he or she is unwanted, up to 12 weeks' gestation – that's three weeks older than Vanellope Hope Wilkins when her condition was diagnosed.

They also voted that children can have their lives ended where a mother has an unspecified health

issue either physical or mental: the reason for 97% of abortions carried out in England and Wales in 2016 – that's 180,794 children lost on that ground alone in a single year.

They also voted for abortion in the case of rape, where the child is punished because her father is a criminal. But the most significant vote was not a vote on abortion. Rather it was the Committee's vote to repeal the Eighth Amendment.

Recognition

That amendment does not mention abortion at all. It is a law that recognises that a baby before birth has a right to live – just as his or her mother has a right to live.

Yet the Oireachtas

Committee seems to think that this is a bad thing. In trying to take away the rights and dignity of "unwanted" children before they are born, they would obliterate the constitutional rights of all children before birth. How sad that those who are strong and powerful would abuse their position of responsibility to attempt to take away the only legal protection that the most vulnerable members of our society have.

It is now up to us, as citizens and as Christians, to stand up for the rights of children like Vanellope Hope Wilkins, and of all children, using the only language our politicians seem to understand – the language of the ballot box.

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The 2017 Secular Scrooge Awards



David Quinn casts his eagle eye over who was hot and who was not in the secular world

In the run-up to Christmas, Pope Francis noted that out of a sense of “false respect” for non-Christians we are airbrushing Christ and Christianity from the festival.

The Pope said: “In the name of a false respect for non-Christians, which often hides a desire to marginalise the Faith, every reference to the birth of Christ is being eliminated from the holiday.



Fr Tony Flannery and, left, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar.

But in reality, this event is the one true Christmas!

“Without Jesus, there is no Christmas. If he’s at the centre, then everything around him, that is, the lights, the songs, the various local traditions, including the characteristic foods, all comes together to create the atmosphere of a real festival.”

He continued: “But if we take [Christ] away, the

lights go off and everything becomes fake, mere appearances.”

Francis might have had in mind what happened at Beaumont hospital just before Christmas. Senior managers there decided not to put the crib on public display despite it being a tradition for years and years. This has to make them the ‘Secular Scrooge’ of 2017.

Staff and patients

objected to the ban and a petition was started which gathered over 1,000 signatures.

Absurdly, hospital managers tried to justify the ban by saying, “the wider hospital community is multicultural and therefore multifait”, and because of this the hospital operates “on an interdenominational basis, with chaplaincy facilities shared among the accredited Churches assigned to the hospital, namely Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic.”

Executives

Perhaps the hospital executives never received the memo that other Christian denominations do as well simply because there are few things that resonate more deeply in human nature than the Christmas story. Even the atheist, Richard Dawkins, said he attended church on Christmas Day. Why? Because it is such a integral part of the Western tradition and one that only a true, secular Scrooge could object to.

Prof. Dawkins announced: “Lovely to listen to Kings College choir on Christmas Day in Peru. Attended part of the Mass in Lima Cathedral yesterday. Merry Christmas everyone.”

Someone else who was getting in on the ‘secular Scrooge’ act was Fr Tony Flannery who used a column in the *Irish Independent* two days before Christmas to tell us that much of the Christmas story is false and so, it would appear, is the idea that Christ rose

physically from the dead.

Fr Flannery’s intention is to lead us into a more ‘mature’ faith but apart from the fact that a man named Jesus was born somewhere in Palestine 2,000 years ago this more ‘mature’ faith seems to leave very little of the Christmas story (or much else in the Gospels besides) intact. His more ‘mature’ faith looks more and more like the vanishing of the Cheshire Cat, but in this case what is left behind is not a smile, but a big, quivering doubt.

Fr Flannery might believe that doubt really equals ‘maturity’. If so, then Fr Flannery should give more of his time to questioning the adamant and ferocious certainties of political correctness. Or does Fr Flannery share those particular certainties?

“Fr Flannery should give more of his time to questioning the ferocious certainties of political correctness”

Leo Varadkar was another secular Scrooge. He decided to follow the precedent of recent Taoisigh by neglecting to mention Christ or Christianity in his Christmas message.

This, no doubt, was also out of a “false respect”, as Pope Francis put it, for non-Christians. But is it really respect? How many Muslims, Hindus or Jews want to see cribs removed from public spaces or want our political leaders to excise

often simply using minority faiths as an excuse to attack the historic faith of their own countries. Multi-culturalism becomes a generalised attack on your own culture, especially its religion. You can have your faith, but it must be private, even if that means removing virtually all traces of Christianity from public view in its historic lands.

But even most secularists like Christmas and find little to object to in the public display of cribs and other such symbols of faith.

Selfless acts

Would any but the most hardline secularists really have been outraged had Leo chosen to mention Christ and Christianity in his Christmas message?

British Prime Minister, Theresa May, did mention Christianity in her Christmas message, as previous Prime Ministers of recent times have done.

May said Britain should be proud of its Christian heritage, adding: “As we celebrate the birth of Christ, let us celebrate all those selfless acts – and countless others – that epitomise the values we share: Christian values of love, service and compassion that are lived out every day in our country by people all faiths and none.”

The roof did not cave in on her head for saying this, despite the fact that Britain is a far more secular country than Ireland.

Leo is not a religious believer himself, but he could have said something along the lines of what Theresa May said, if need be stating “as Christians celebrate...” instead of “as we celebrate...”.

To leave out what Christmas in fact celebrates looks less like an act of tolerance and more like cravenness or else secular intolerance. I don’t believe Leo Varadkar is an intolerant secularist, so it looks more like a craven capitulation to the tenets of multi-culturalism. Why are our leaders so continually guilty of this?

Multiculturalism should not entail the denial of your own culture, but at Christmas time this is exactly what we get year after year whether it be from the management of our hospitals, or from our Taoisigh.

Leo, please try not to be a secular Scrooge next year.

David Quinn is author of *How we Killed God* (and Other Tales of Modern Ireland).

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Christ and Christianity from their Christmas messages? Would they want the equivalent to happen in their countries of origin? If you lived in India would you expect Indians to remove Hindu symbols from public spaces on your account? In fact, secularists are

Echoes of the past from the archives



Peter Costello

Official footprints carefully covered in 2017 files

Peter Costello reports from the National Archives of Ireland on the release under the 30-year rule of confidential state files from 1987

On Tuesday (January 2) the National Archive made available to the public under the 30-year-rule State files from various government departments from 1986 and earlier.

The most interesting feature of this year's releases are files dealing with aliens, emigration, and naturalisation in the Free State and Republic running from 1922 up to the 1960s. They contain the material for many new investigations into Ireland's treatment of emigrants and refugees over that long period, including, for instance, Jewish refugees from Russia, Eastern Europe, and Germany.

“The observer is struck by the narrow range of departments releasing files. Once again there is nothing from Health, Social Welfare and Agriculture”

Ireland's policy towards Jews fleeing the Nazi regime has long been a matter of contention, feeding as it does into the anti-Semitism that was so common in public and private life in the interwar years and after.

They will also cast light on the Germans, Bretons, Belgians and others who sought refuge in Ireland for various reasons after 1945 - many of these would have been supporters of Fascist regimes.

The files present a very large idea of the

problems facing the Irish Free State as it tried to cope with the presence of potential communist and even anarchist elements.

For the most part the general run of other files were, however, of restricted interest in many cases. Many files relating to North Ireland from the office of the Taoiseach have had documents removed from them.

These are not for immediate release because they might cause “distress or danger” to living individuals. So a large cloud of secrecy still hangs over the Northern Troubles, as perhaps is only to be expected.

But once again the observer is struck by the narrow range of departments releasing files. Once again there is nothing from Health, Social Welfare and Agriculture, large departments that affect very widely and intimately the lives of most people.

Titbits

The revelations of confidential titbits about some leading figures cannot disguise the fact that as an exercise in truly “open government”, and despite the excellent work of the staff of the National Archives, the politicians and civil servants have once again largely managed to cover their tracks.

The National Archives asks those writing about these releases to quote the file reference number, a request which nearly all the media ignore. These are the number at the head of article.

● **The National Archives is located in Bishop Street, Dublin D08 DF85, beside the Dublin Institute of Technology, Aungier Street. The opening hours are 9.15am-5pm Monday to Friday. The records from 1986 and earlier were available to the public from 9.15am on Monday, January 2. For further information telephone: +353 (0)1 407 2300; or email: mail@nationalarchives.ie**

A diplomatic view of Bishop John Magee



Bishop Emeritus John Magee.

Light is cast on the lives of others aside from politicians. For instance the career of Bishop Emeritus John Magee, which led from early distinction to eventual controversy and disaster on his return to Ireland.

After many years in the higher reaches of the Vatican as a figure of great standing, his appointment as Bishop of Cloyne 1987 came as a surprise.

But back in 1982, his appointment as Pontifical Master of Ceremonies gave rise to confidential comments by Irish diplomats which are revealed in one of the newly-released files, as “the appointment of a non-Italian Master of Ceremonies was almost unprecedented”.

Assessment

On his appointment the files of the Irish Embassy to the Holy See, now reveal a very confidential assessment of him by Irish diplomats in Rome.

A dispatch marked ‘Secret’ on March 4, 1982 remarked that “the Vatican is not a practitioner of ‘open diplomacy openly arrived at’ [an allusion to President Wilson’s 14 points of 1918 for a post-war world].

It is often hard to ascertain the truth; to learn the whole truth is even more difficult”.

However, Magee was seen as a person who had “considerable power in the Vatican”, as the Pope was “sadly short of Irish nationals at senior levels in the Secretariat”. (Though the British diplomats in Rome thought there were too many Irishmen there as it was.)

He was one of two men the Pope would turn to for advice on Irish affairs. The other was the Nuncio Alibrandi, distrusted in Iveagh House. Magee was later known to be

close to Cardinal Ó Fiaich in Armagh.

He was suspect of underlying anti-British feelings. Magee, who came of “a strongly nationalist family, retains much of the outlook of the northern minority. His attitude to ecumenism is almost certainly different from that of most southern Irish clergy, and *a fortiori*, from that of English Catholics.”

In the corridors of the Vatican, Magee was “respected but not popular”.

“From another source,” the report continued,” we learn that Cardinal Hume on his last visit to Rome had been incensed by some suggestions about the [upcoming 1982] visit [to Britain of the Pope] made to him by Fr Magee immediately before he entered the Pope’s study”.

Magee never worked in the Irish Church at home. Having formerly worked in Nigeria as a missionary, Fr Magee had arrived in Rome in 1969.

He was chosen by Pope Paul VI [pictured] to be one of his private secretaries and continued in this position under Pope John Paul I.

After his death (in controversial circumstances, which involved prevarications on Magee’s part), he continued in service as a private secre-

tary to Pope John Paul II.

“There was a lack of rapport between the [Pope’s secretaries] Magee and the long-serving Pole Fr Dziwisch and the Curia administration.” (In his later memoirs, published in 2008, by then Cardinal Dziwisch pointedly says nothing about Fr Magee.)

As private secretary to three Popes in sequence, Magee is the only man to hold such a position in Vatican history, which naturally received great attention in Ireland. He was sent on a private mission by the Pope John Paul to speak to Bobby Sands, which caused some dismay to the Irish and British governments.

“We are sorry that the Holy See is losing an Irishman who has served with such distinction”

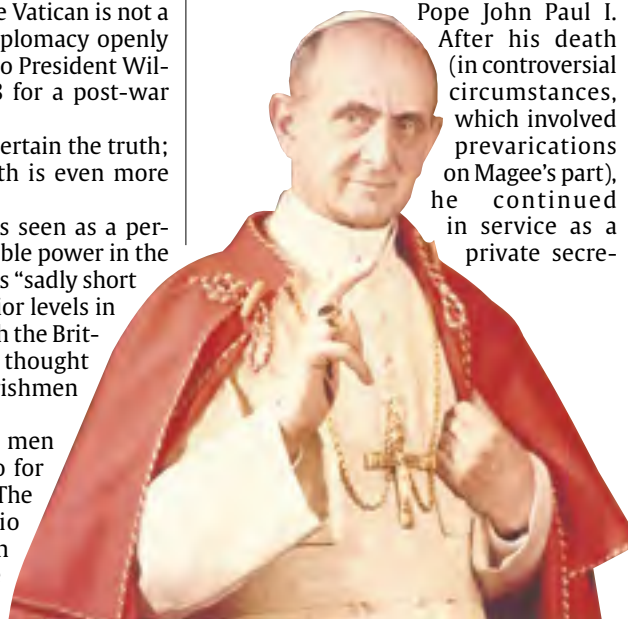
On February 17, 1987 he was appointed bishop of Cloyne. He was consecrated by Pope John Paul II on St Patrick’s Day 1987, in St Peter’s in the Vatican.

“For our part,” Ambassador Brendan Dillon wrote in a personal letter to Magee, “we are sorry that the Holy See is losing an Irishman who has served with such distinction in so arduous a post.”

His time at Cloyne was marked by almost continuous controversy about many matters, culminating in a scandal conceding the cover-up of the sexual abuse of children by clergy and the publication of an official report in which he was severely criticised.

As an Ulsterman, Magee’s only connection with Cork was that he studied Latin there as student.

When he got the appointment he was only 50, which was young, but it was seen by some as indicating the possibility of a later move to higher office - to Dublin, or Armagh, perhaps even to becoming the first Irish Pope. But that was not to be.



Secrets of the powers that be

The tastes of the nation's leaders...

One of the delights of these file releases are the curious side-lights that are cast by the documents on our leaders. In the files released from the President's office are some dealing with Douglas Hyde's term in office as First President of Ireland under the 1937 Constitution.

The personal tastes of Douglas Hyde

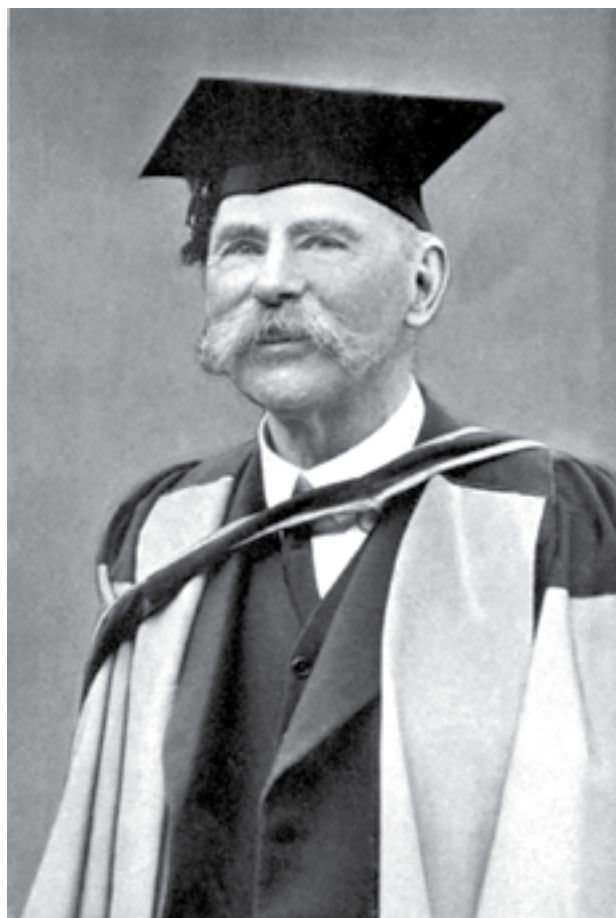
During the early 1940s one of His Excellency's most persistent correspondents was an American eccentric Cyril Clemens, a distant cousin of Mark Twain, who devoted his life to his famous relative. To hundreds of important individuals he offered life membership in the International Mark Twain Society, which he founded in 1930.

Clemens opened with a request for permission to name a street after the President. This was refused, as there were strict rules on this kind of thing. He then enrolled Hyde as an honorary member of the Mark Twain Society making him "Irish correspondent".

They exchanged books and literary lore. Clemens asked Hyde: "Did you know that late Thomas Hardy was a warm admirer of you and your work? He once spoke to me about you for over half an hour".

Questionnaire

In the course of their correspondence Mr Clemens sent Hyde a questionnaire on his personal tastes. This was in 1938. Though it was filled out by the President in his own hand, his office refused



to forward the document to Dr Clemens. However, it makes interesting reading:

My best virtue / That I have always answered letters.

My worst fault / I don't know they are so many

The virtue I admire most in men / good sportsmanship

My favourite actress / I don't know

My favourite actor / I don't know

My favourite hobby / shooting game

My favourite song / Some of Moore's melodies

My favourite book / Goethe's *Faust*

My pet vanity / Don't know.

Usual time of rising and retiring / 9-11

My favourite food / anything I can get

My favourite drink / uisce beatha & soda

My favourite sport (indoor) / reading

Favourite sport (outdoor) / shooting

My favourite characters in history / Wolfe Tone, perhaps

My favourite characters in fiction / ?

My favourite animal / Irish setter.

My earliest memory / A horse chestnut, lying in the pram

These responses give a delightful image of the easy-going scholar and President. What, one wonders, would de Valera's have looked like?

...And Mrs Lynch's taste in Irish art

When a new Taoiseach comes into the office he has the chance to change the decor in his own office, especially to have a choice of what State-owned art works to hang on the walls. What other earlier and later Taoisigh had done is not clear but from these releases we know what Mrs Lynch chose for Jack in office.

They all came from the National Gallery, arranged by director James White. The four pictures were as follows: 'Ann' by Margaret Clarke; 'Kilkee the Atlantic' by Nathaniel Hone; 'Lough Mask' by James Arthur O'Connor; 'W. B. Yeats' by Sarah Purser.

While these are very fine, they are also very worthy. But the choice of Margaret Clarke's charming portrait of her daughter

strikes a truly personal note, as Margaret Clarke was not then, I think, quite as appreciated as she is today. A nice touch by Mrs Lynch.

These smaller pictures are hung discretely, for in effect they are dominated by a large portrait facing the Taoiseach's desk: this is of De Valera when Fianna Fáil is in power; under Fine Gael a portrait of Michael Collins. These are totemic images, sadly to remind our forward looking leaders of their historical roots.

In the corridor outside hang smaller portraits of the presidents of the Executive Councils and former Taoisigh. Up to a very recent date this array did not include Mr Brian Cowan.

The mystery of Hugh O'Neill's grave

One of the minor mysteries connected with the centuries-long Irish connection with Rome and the Vatican is the location of the grave of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, who died there in exile in 1616.

This must once have been well known, but by the middle of the 19th Century it was lost. In a letter to Archbishop Cullen on February 19, 1851 Monsignor Kirby of the Irish College reported on his recent search.

"...Some time since in repairing the pavement of S. Pietro in Montorio the two inscriptions of our Irish chieftains had to be taken up.

"When they were up, the friars ordered them to be sawed by their thickness into two so that two *lapidi* of equal length and breath as the original and half its thickness might be had from each. Whilst they were in the process of being sawn one of our *camerata* called there on their evening's walk and saw the matter, complained of it, and on their return came to me about it.

"I went off to Cardinal Tosti, the Titular of San Pietro in Montoria, and explained to him the history of the two heroes, and that it might give rise to some unhandsome remarks in the papers were it known that such a thing was done in Rome.

It shows how the other graves in S. Pietro were being 'vandalised' in an effort to repair the Church"

"He entered at once and fully into the spirit of the remarks I made and told me to go at once in his name to the P. Gurdiano to have the sawing suspended, adding that he would at his own expense have them reclaimed and polished and put into their place.

"I went at once to the friars, and thus the whole thing was at once settled. The friars civilly excused themselves saying that the vault of the sepulchre under the *lapidi* had given way and that the fetta to be sawn off each was



Hugh O'Neill.

intended to cover expenses etc. I mention the matter in order that, if anything should appear in the *Times* or other journal giving an untrue version of the matter, Dr Cooper might at once get the matter righted.

"Perhaps it would be no harm in your letter if you could say to me to state that several Catholics felt obliged to C. Tosti for his *gentilezza* in the matter."

Vague

If all was well (in a sort of vague way) in 1851, by 1886 it was not. In September Cardinal Ó Fiaich wrote personally to Peter Barry, the Minister of External Affairs. He outlined that his involvement with the Friends of the Irish College in Rome had led him to try to find the lost graves. He enclosed the extract quoted above.

"It shows how the other graves in S. Pietro were being 'vandalised' in an effort to repair the Church and it is possible that the stone marking the grave of Hugh O'Neill was similarly 'vandalised'."

Peter Barry contacted the Irish Ambassador in the Vatican about the matter. But the reply to this revealed a more complicated state of affairs. Efforts in the recent past had failed "because of the lack of cooperation from the Church administrations".

The Spanish church of S. Pietro had had recently been given extra-territorial sta-

tus and was to be administered directly by the Spanish Academy. It was suggested an approach to the Spanish embassy about checking the slabs as well to the Father General of the Franciscans as the friars of S. Pietro had not been helpful in the past about the matter.

But the ownership became a matter of a legal action by the friars who claimed it had been illegally ceded to Spain by the Italian authorities. Irish experts, after going into the evidence, were now doubtful of a happy conclusion regarding the slabs and the location as the evidence such as it was seemed to them less reliable than had been thought.

Ownership became a matter of a legal action by the friars who claimed it had been illegally ceded to Spain"

The original simple tombstone was lost about 1849, but the text of the short inscription was copied: "*D.O.M. Hugonis principis ONelli ossa*" (Dedicated to God the Best and Greatest. The bones of Prince Hugh O'Neill).

In 1989, Cardinal Ó Fiaich laid a new marble plaque with the same inscription in approximately the original place.

More recent explorations of the vault failed to solve the mystery. But there is little chance that the bodies of the Irish leaders can be recovered from the litter in the detritus of the vault, according to Elizabeth FitzPatrick, an archaeologist at NUI, Galway.

They may still exist, but only further work will tell.



The new stone laid on Hugh O'Neill's grave.

Echoes of the past from the archives

The strange tale of 'the Prince of Abyssinia'

The files dealing with aliens contain in brief the life stories of thousands of people, some of Irish descent, who landed in Ireland either in transit, or wishing to stay, or even to become citizens. They reflect all the turmoil of the first half of the 20th Century. Among them are strange tales, none stranger than that from 1925 of the 'The Prince of Abyssinia'.

This person, "of doubtful nationality", came to the attention of the police and beyond them the Department of Foreign Affairs towards the end of May 1925. As he refused to produce a passport or to register as an alien he was something of a headache to the administration.

According to the Garda in Cork, he arrived in the port on April 19 on a boat from Liverpool. He failed to report as required to the Garda and was chased up by them for interview. He had no passport or identity card. He declared his intention of staying in Cork "for some time". The police contacted the Department to inquire whether "anything was known" about him in Dublin.

The Department knew nothing about him, but thought he might be "the same person who was refused admission to land in America some months before", observing that the likelihood was that "he is either a lunatic or an imposter". Dublin remarked: "There would seem to be no reason why he should not comply with the Aliens Regulations, even if he was a prince travelling incognito."

At this date, the Empire of Ethiopia was ruled by the Empress Zauditu, a daughter of Menelik II. The question of who exactly might call themselves a 'prince' (*ras* in the local language) was at this date a confusing matter, even for Ethiopians.

Proceedings

The Department said if he didn't produce a passport, proceedings should be taken against him. He appeared in court in July 1925. He was described in the local paper as "a coloured man giving the name of Prince Shevington de Abyssinia". It seemed he had previously been in Spain, studying artillery with a private tutor.



The Prince of Ethiopia, 1925.

He now claimed to be "a British subject". He had never been in Abyssinia and knew nothing of the country, beyond the fact that "a King named Menelik was reigning there". [Actually, Menelik II had died in 1916.]

He said he had been born in Jamaica, that he was a man of some wealth, with banana and fruit plantations there, but that "the bananas must have gone west", as he was very short of money.

He had been in the American Army, and then in the Spanish Foreign Legion, he said and had later lived in London for two months, but could not recall the name of the hotel he stayed in.

The prosecution claimed it was not for the Aliens Registrar to prove anything about him. He had to produce his papers to comply with the

regulations: "If he were ever proclaimed King of Abyssinia, he would have some paper to that effect." He had produced an interview with a Spanish paper. He had no discharge papers from any army.

There was much more said in court than we have room for here, but the prosecution suggested that he had never been out of these islands. He was fined £5, or in default sentence to six weeks in gaol. The magistrate recommended he be deported. He was given a week to pay. He failed to pay, and was lodged in Cork Male prison.

Deportation

While this was going on it was established that his name was Cyril Linton Mitchell and that he was indeed a British subject. No proceedings for deportation would therefore be

taken. There was no need for him to register as an alien in future.

According to the Secretary of State for Dominions in London, the prince had presented a memorial to George V – this six-page document, dated July 2, 1924, in the file – and was now recognised to be a British subject. This was on August 18, 1924. Acting for the king, the Governor-General on the advice of his Irish Minister of Justice, commuted the sentence and Mitchell was released from prison on August 18, 1924.

The British Minister told Dublin that the Governor of Jamaica had provided confirmation that as Mitchell was born in the island he was a British subject. Records now in the possession of the authorities corroborated "the main outline of his career as described in the memorial". This must have been a great surprise for the Cork police.

“In the case we have not just a lunatic or imposter, but an important historical development”

Mitchell had been issued with a passport from the Liverpool Office just as he had claimed. He was then staying with a Mr Collins on Boreenmanna Road, Cork.

"The gentleman might now be accepted as a British subject", but further inquiries by London in Addis Abba had entailed he had no right to style himself Prince of Abyssinia. On that note the files closes and the prince himself disappears into oblivion.

In this case we have not just a lunatic or imposter, but an important historical development. It would not be until after 1930 when Ras Tafari became the Emperor Haile Selassie (though he had been the effective ruler since 1916) that the

Rastafarian movement in Jamaica would begin. However, back in the 1880s, in Africa, the West Indies, and the US, black religious movements came into existence, generally called Ethiopianism. It was especially powerful among the Bantu nations of South Africa.

Mitchell's claims to be an Ethiopian prince derived from these movements, which are of increasing importance in Africa, where Africanisation rather than conservative adherence to European colonial norms will undoubtedly be the future.

However there was a political aspect to this too. Ethiopia was the only independent state left in Africa by 1916. (Liberia was a US colony in effect, Libya was under Italian rule, and Egypt under British influence.) This status inspired many Africans and black people elsewhere to begin to organise movements not just for a 'black Jesus', but also for African independence that took some 30 years or so to develop.

The prince can be seen in this larger context, not as a fraud but an omen of the decolonisation that has come to dominate the world in recent times.

If the aliens files reveal efforts to control the immigration of Eastern Europeans, largely Jews, it should also be recalled that there were also visa controls as well. For instance, Belgians and Spanish did not require visas to come to Ireland, but persons from what an official document calls "Belgian colonies" and "Spanish Colonies" did. Here was an operative colour bar.

The racism of the Irish Free State and the Irish republic are likely to be an area of increasing academic research that will reveal a shameful story in some parts, an encouraging one in others.

[File 2014/85/2013]

Getting to Lourdes in 1924

Whatever the difficulties of travel between Ireland and the US, UK and Europe in the post-Great War years, they did not affect Irish people making the Second National Pilgrimage to Lourdes on September 29, 1924.

Most of those going on the pilgrimage were not the sort of people who normally held a passport. The government of the Free State and the Republic of France recognised this. Identity cards, which had come into use in the war time years, were valid.

A memo from the Ministry of External Affairs to the secretary of the Department of Justice outlines the scheme.

An identity card was issued in four detachable sections, one of which was to be given up on embarking at Dublin, one on landing at Pauillac in France, one on embarking for the return journey at Bordeaux, and the main section to be surrendered on arrival back.

The cards were issued to both citizens of Saorstát Éireann and citizens of the

six counties of Northern Ireland. The Emigration Officer on the North Wall Extension was duly informed of the arrangement.

Reply

But the Department of Justice observed in reply to Emigration that Messers Cook & Son were making the arrangements and were the company running SS Chicago (of the French Line), which arrived to board passengers on September 29.

Emigration, with an eye on other aspects of external

relations, noted exception might be taken to the term "Citizens of the Government of Northern Ireland". The people there were not citizens, but subjects of the King. The phrase 'Address in the Government of Saorstát Ireland' is also obviously incorrect."

The status of the six northern counties would be a fixation of the authorities in Dublin for decades to come, whatever about the easy arrangements with France.

[File 2014/85/76]



Secrets of the powers that be

The case of Israel Hertz and others

The new files clearly reveal that large numbers of Russians applied to enter the Free State, but the granting of a visa to do so was guarded. This was the time when the authorities in the UK and the Free State were concerned about possibly undesirable entrants, including Soviet agents - the West was passing through a "red scare" phase.

(The first-ever Labour government in UK collapsed on November 4, 1924 as a result of the fake 'Zinoviev letter' and a series of anti-emigration acts became law in US.)

A typical case and how it was dealt with occurred in September 1924. In August 1924 at the Irish Free State Passport Control Office in New York, Mr Israel Hertz applied for a visa to come to Ireland. He was intending to visit Mr and Mrs B. Cowan living on the South Circular Road.

The visa was delayed, while the Dublin police were asked to look into the status of Mr Cowan (who must once have once been a Cohen, one supposes).

The Superintendent of A Division reported that Mr Benjamin Cowan was a Russian-born commercial traveller, who had lived in Dublin

since 1900.

The applicant's father actually lived in Glasgow, and Hertz junior, who gone alone to the US, was a jeweller and watch maker.

His visit was to see his family and friends and would last a matter of weeks. "Cowan is a respectable man, and the police here have no objection to put forward to reject the visas," New York was informed. Israel Hertz got his Irish visa.

(The 1911 census reveals that Benjamin Cowan was a draper. He then lived with his family at 33 Synge Street, where his brother was a "financial agent", and they employed a Catholic servant girl.

Their old father was a retired tailor; neither he nor his wife could not read or write. On paper they seem very typical of lower middle class Jews in Dublin then, even down to their callings.) [File 2014/85/72]

Passports

Irish government actions in the matter of visas were constrained by the British practice, which was to grant Russians visas only when on business, and not for mere "travel".

However, they also recognised the passports of the

Tsarist regime and of the liberal Kerenski government too. [File 2014/85/333]

Entry

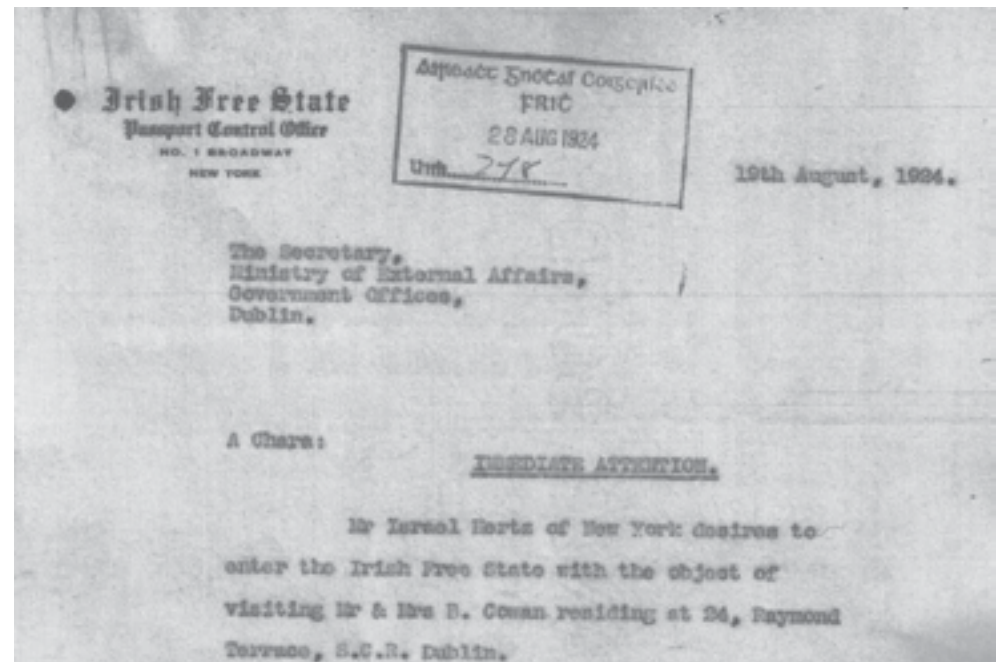
The entry of aliens was still governed by the Aliens Order of 1920. When an alien arrived at Cobh or Moville, the only two approved ports in the Free State, he would be interviewed by an Immigration Officer and was required to show that he fulfilled the conditions set out in the Aliens Order.

Irish government actions in the matter of visas were constrained by the British practice"

Those arriving at British ports were interviewed there, but not again on reaching Ireland.

In 1932 the alien was still required to give his full name and address, the proposed address he would visit in Ireland, the reason for taking up residence, whether for employment or to enter into business.

The names of two citizens of the Free State were to be given as referees and also details of the alien's financial standing. Only when all



Moville port.



this was furnished would any consideration be given to the application. [File 2014/85/18]

Neutralised

Yet there was also a more humane side to the process. Again in 1932 Albert Siev, who had lived in Ireland since

1911, and was naturalised in 1917, wished to bring into Ireland to join his family an eight-year-old Lithuanian girl of Jewish origin.

Siev, the police reported, had house property throughout the city, and was "reputed to be in affluent circumstances".

Because she was "of tender years" there was no official objection to granting permission for her to come and live in Ireland. (Eight years later the country was forcibly united with the Soviet Union.) [File 2014/85/18]

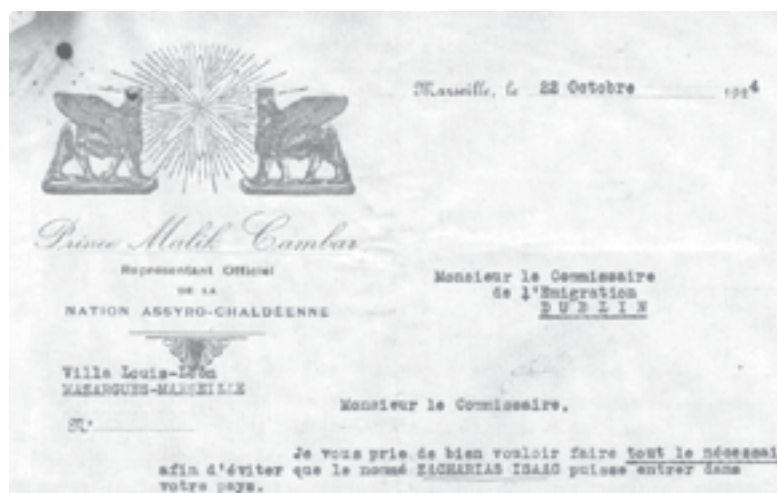
Yet another bogus Prince?

In the decades after the Great War Europe and North America were awash with bogus princes and aristocrats of all kinds. But in the Free State they received short shrift.

In late October 1924 "Monsieur le Commissaire de l'Emigration Dublin" received a letter (in French) from Prince Malik Cambar's office in Mazargues-Marseille. He claimed to be the official Representative of the National Assyro-Chaldeans Nation.

The prince was trying to prevent the entry into Ireland of an individual named Zacharias Isaac. This person was a bogus collector of funds in aid of Assyro-Chaldean refugees, but was "appropriating these funds for his own use". The Prince would be able to furnish more information if this person was detained.

Emigration was informed by the Department of External Affairs that these Assyro-Chaldeans "have



been giving us a certain amount of trouble already". They were divided up into groups along tribal lines, the official remarked, all in dispute.

He suspected that Zacharias Isaac was "quite as respectable of 'Prince Malik Cambar'. In any case

it's best to ignore their communications.

"If Zacharias does come to Dublin he will find our citizens anything but sympathetic." But the aliens office thought they would nevertheless flag him up with a

"catch card" so they would know of his arrival.

The divisions were less along tribal lines, though these are important, but between Nestorian Chaldeans and members of the Chaldean Catholic Church. The latter would have felt that donations would be forth coming in Ireland, but for them and not for the heretical Nestorians.

This person was a bogus collector of funds in aid of Assyro-Chaldean refugees, but was 'appropriating these funds to his own use'"

Though unknown to Irish officials, Prince Malik Cambar de Varda was the last Assyrian king in Mesopotamia before the

destruction of his homeland in a jihad called by the Ottoman Turks in 1915. He formed the Assyro-Chaldean Battalion in Syria under the French Mandate, where he was appointed General in the French army.

Prince Malik Cambar addressed to the Secretary-General of the League a petition in favour of the Assyro-Chaldeans asking that the League of Nations recognise the Assyro-Chaldeans and stating that the Assyro-Chaldeans desired to be grouped as a united people, and to return to their pacified country and live in peace.

In 1935 he joined the Ethiopian Army to resist the Italian invasion. He remained the leader of the Assyro-Chaldeans in exile until his death in 1969. In his life is reflected the history of the racial and religious turmoil of the Middle East since World War I.

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An Endangered Species

Jerry Daly

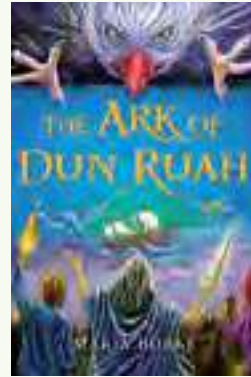


The memoir of Fr Jerry Daly, a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Order active for over fifty years and his views on topics as diverse as marriage, alcoholism and most importantly, the state of the contemporary Catholic Church.

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The Ark of Dun Ruah

Maria Burke

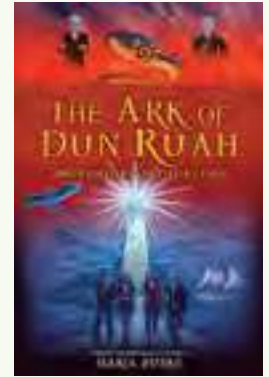


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The Ark of Dun Ruah II

Maria Burke

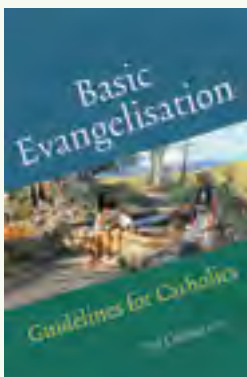


This sequel to *The Ark of Dun Ruah* follows Simon, Kerry and their friends into a new adventure as they unwittingly become the Protectors of the Flame against the Black Viper Gang who wants to possess the secret of Platinum Fire.

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

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Bishop James Moynagh of Calabar

Colman M. Cooke



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

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Ed. Eugene Duffy

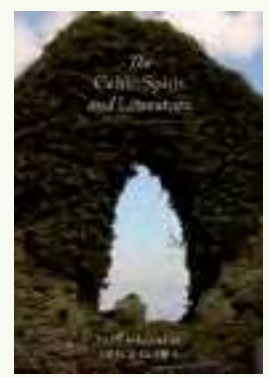


In a society so preoccupied by economics that it is increasingly losing sight of its more deeply rooted values of freedom and empathy, the very nature of education faces great challenges. This collection of essays is a significant contribution to the debate around the role of Catholic primary schools.

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Celtic Spirit and Literature

Tess Maginess & Grace Clunie

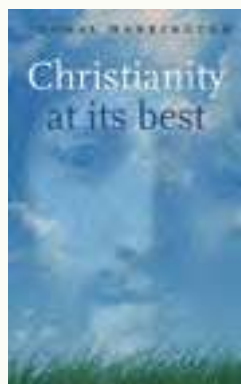


This book offers a lively and thoughtful introduction to the rich world of Celtic Spirit, past, present and to come. The book considers how the Celtic Spirit can still operate in our lives, enabling us to be a welcoming people, respectful of the gifts of nature, and imaginatively open to 'otherworlds'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

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Christianity at its Best

Donal Harrington

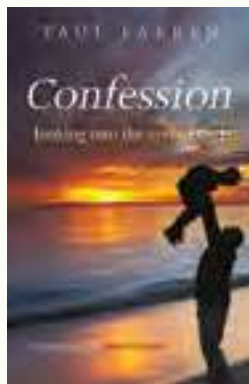


At its best, Christianity is filled with hope. It is positive and attractive and relevant to life. It is what Christians believe and what is the heart of their belief. How Christians are to live from that hope is the matter of this very positive book.

was €16.99 **€6.79**

Confession

Paul Farren



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

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Confraternities and Sodalities in Ireland

Editor Colm Lennon



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

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Dancing with Dinosaurs

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

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Going Up the Holy Mountain

Gary Hastings



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

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Mark Patrick Hederman



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Aidan Troy



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

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Ireland and Vatican II

Ed. Niall Coll



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

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Our Lady of Charity in Ireland

Jacinta Prunty



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

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Fr Francesco Napolitano



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Pray Without Ceasing

Jenny Child



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

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Praying Body and Soul (A. de Mello)

Gabriel Galache



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

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



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

was €24.99 **€9.99**

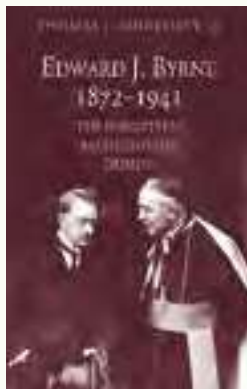
Earthing the Word
Thomas G. Waldron



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

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Thomas J. Morrissey



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

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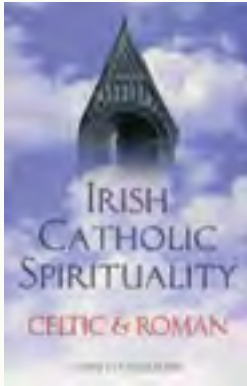
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Noreen Mackey



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

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

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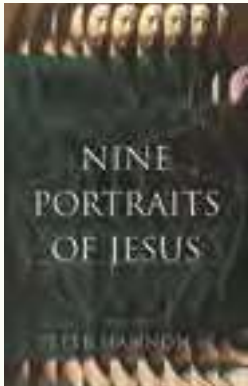
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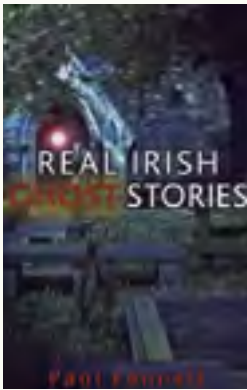
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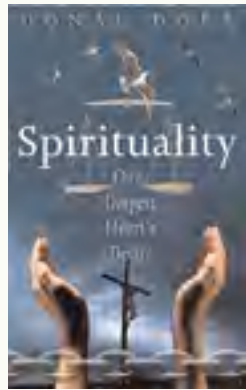
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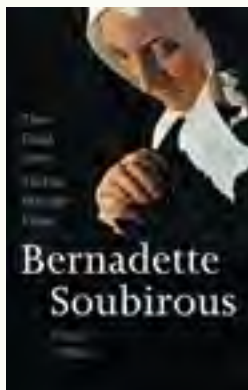
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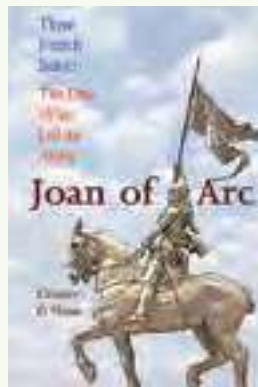
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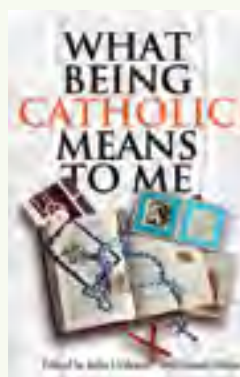
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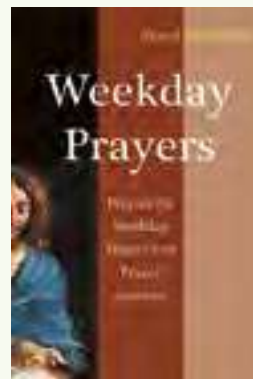
Three French Saints - Thérèse of Lisieux - Críostóir Ó Floinn



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

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

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Echoes of the past from the archives

Desmond Fitzgerald's private hoard of state papers

Desmond Fitzgerald, the father of future Taoiseach Garrett Fitzgerald, was a minister holding a series of portfolios in the Free State Government. He was involved in many controversial matters, the least of which was his effort to nominate James Joyce for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

However, it was then the practice for ministers to keep papers in their private ministerial offices, and when they left office the papers went with them. There was nothing illegal about this.

But it clearly reveals fears on the part of Free State ministers that an incoming government of another colour might search for and destroy sensitive files, just as members of the opposition suspected opponents of doing exactly the same.

Role

The current crops of files reveal a curious matter. The then Taoiseach Garrett Fitzgerald TD at the releasing of Cabinet Minutes and supporting files (1848-51) in the State Paper office in the Lower Castle yard on December 20, 1982, spoke

about his government's role and his own interest in the matter of open movement. These were taken down verbatim by a state officer.

In the course of these he paused and said "going off the record for the moment" that he had at home in Palmerston Road "papers which my father brought from his private office in 1932 and for many years before becoming a Minister I made them accessible to historians, which was very heavily used by David Harkness in his book *The Restless Dominion*, a very large proportion of footnotes which were the basis of those papers.

“You can't even go to the lavatory in the cloakroom at present because of the tin boxes which came out of the '32 files”

“And then I was made Minister of Foreign Affairs refusing access to historians to current Foreign Affairs papers while at the same time being asked by the historians to continue to look at



Desmond Fitzgerald.

my fathers' papers.

“All I could do was decide to continue the previous practice of my father's papers but could do nothing about the ones which were still in foreign Affairs which he hadn't taken with him,” Fitzgerald said.

He said that he still had the papers and the family were anxious to have them

deposited and made available in UCD with the other papers there.

“And I have just spent this weekend moving from the top floor to the ground level floor. Our space requirements are such that we will have to take early action on this. You can't even go to the lavatory in the cloakroom at present because of the tin

boxes which came out of the 1932 files.”

He then went on the record again. This meant that he was prepared to tell the assembled press and government guests something that he did not want the press to print. But it was largely due to Garret Fitzgerald that the present legislation was enacted.

Armageddon: Ireland's plans for an atomic war

The 'Cold War' that followed World War II, and some of the events connected with it such as the Korean War (1950-1953) and the testing of atom bombs by Soviet scientists convinced the Irish government in the early 1950s that preparation had better be made to prepare for a coming war.

All government departments were asked to prepare a 'War Book' for what would need to be done by way of planning and resourcing. A file relating to the preparations by the Stationary Office casts a little light on the background to this.

The move dated back initially to September 1944 with the creation of a war book to cover matters of public safety and the preservation of the State prior to, at the outset of war and “at various stages in the course of any similar emergency in the future”. These documents were to be kept secret.

In August 1950 (just weeks after the beginning of the Korean War), the Taoiseach (then J. A. Costello) established an Inter-Department Emergency Preparation Committee to plan for “the dangers which would confront this country in the



event of the outbreak of a world war”. This work continued under later governments

At the start of September 1962 a document laid out the basic assumptions about the future event.

It was assumed that “any major war in the near future will be fought between Western Nations and the Communist Bloc”; that “In a major war, this country might be (a) neutral, or (b) a forced participant, or (c) a willing belligerent.

The admission that Ireland would be “a willing belligerent” ran counter to the strident claims always made of neutrality.

It was assumed that the “most likely hazard to the country “is liable to be subjected to, in varying degrees, to radioactive fall-out – particular account being taken of the probability of deliberative nuclear attacks on targets in Britain and the Six Counties. There was a direct danger too from nuclear devices up to one-megaton yield and conventional high explosives or incendiary devices”.

The constitution (art 28, 3:3) laid out the declaring of a “time of war” as a matter for the Dáil. But external war was not the only worry. Thought was to be given also to

the matter of “armed insurrection” within the State – this seems to have been conceived as coming from the far left, and from illegal organisations of a republican kind which had become very active in the early 1950s, and became a reality again after 1969 in Northern Ireland.

Protection

The documents do not however reveal what the plans were to protect the members of the government of the day.

These papers hint at the existence of an Irish 'Secret State', of the kind later discussed by Peter Laurie (Beneath the City Streets, 1981) and Duncan Campbell (War Plan UK, 1982) both of whom claimed that when Armageddon came “the select few” would be the ones with privileged protection. The rest of us will be left to die, to be shot by the security forces if we caused trouble, or starved when essential supplies run out.

The general plans now in force to protect Leo Varadkar and his colleagues doubtless still follow the same lines.

Greedy plunderers of Ireland's early Christian heritage

In previous centuries, perhaps even down to the 1950s, local traditions and what were called then ‘superstitions’ prevented Irish country people interfering with ancient sites from prehistoric, Celtic and early Christian periods. ‘A fear of the fairies’ went along way to prospering field monuments, raths, and tombs.

But the discovery of such things as the Broighter Hoard in 1896 suggested that there was money to be made out of ancient objects. The finders of that got £600 from the British Museum. Later treasure hunters naturally hoped for more as greater scientific interest raised the value of finds as treasure trove, despite legislation north and south that was aimed by the new administrations to preserve the past from plundering.

The releases this year provide examples of this plundering relating to the Tully Processional cross and the Derrynaflan Hoard. These make for sad and also shocking reading, especially for those with a particular reverence for or scientific interest in the relics of our Christian past.

[Files 2017/4/662; 2017/2/73]

Secrets of the powers that be

Celebrating the 1916 Rising in 1966

Early in 1966 Seán Lemass signed “a message from the government” to the school managers and teachers of Ireland and to the children under their care.

He wrote that it was fitting that the Irish people celebrate the Jubilee, and the government take pride and pleasure in calling on all citizens to do honour to the men of 1916.

“Our youth have a special part to play, for they were born into freedom under an Irish government and no other...the Government’s message to our citizens whose freedom is the fruit of the Rising, and especially to those to whom falls the forming of the younger generation, is a request for them to instil into our youth an appreciation of the values of their heritage and the sacrifices made for it.

“Among matters which might be specially stressed to our young people is that they too as citizens will be called upon to use our native institutions in the interests of the community and the country. The present is a very suitable time to prepare them for the responsible exercise of their rights and duties in that regard.”

Pamphlet

To forward these aims the government issued free to all schools a pamphlet, *Oidhreacht*, on the events and men of 1916 free to all school children from fifth class, primary schools, upwards.

The 1966 celebrations at Dublin’s GPO.



The achievement of these ambitious aims were, as files now reveal, dogged by ill luck and mismanagement. This government pamphlet for instance had production difficulties, and when arrangements were made for its distribution through *An Post*, many teachers said they never received it, or got too few.

But the authorities faced difficulties; one national school in Dublin which was on the official list could not be traced because there was confusion about its address. One doubts if this booklet became a treasured item, as copies of it are so rare this writer has never seen one.

Naturally most of the arrangements were for a single event and ephemeral exhibitions but there was also to be a more formal book. This was *The Making of 1916*, edited by Kevin B. Nowlan of UCD. The essays

in this were first broadcast in the early months of 1966 as the Thomas Davis Lectures on Radio Éireann – under a motto derived from that patriot, “educate that you may be free”. This was a large book of 338 pages covering the period from 1910 to 1912; the civil war and the aftermath of the revolution was studiously avoided. 1916 was history; and the Civil War was still politics.

“Back in 1966 scholarship was of less importance to the government”

But instead of being published at once, later in 1966, when the essays would have had maximum impact and probably been read with enthusiasm, they only appeared a full three years later due to delays in both the final editing and pro-

duction from The Stationary Office. (A similar strange delay beset the state sponsored volume on the Famine, which was intended to mark the centenary of the Great Hunger in 1946 – but only appear later, an American edition in 1957, and Irish edition in 1962.)

This is in stark contrast to 2016 when innumerable books from publishers in several countries appeared, and Irish readers were perhaps overwhelmed now by an oversupply of information, often of a startling and revisionary nature. But this freedom of expression perhaps was an essential part of the country’s achieved freedoms.

But back in 1966 scholarship was of less importance to the government, intent on the creation of a grand patriotic event. There were free copies of the Proclamation (but none of the Constitution), which was to be displayed prominently.

There was to be a formal unveiling of this document. And “possibly a local IRA veteran” or other local dignitary would give an address.

The proclamation would then be read and the national anthem played (or sung). It was hoped parents would attend, and that the National Flag be flown at the school “for the occasion” – implying it need not be flown at other times.

[File 2017/12/2]

Celebrating 1916 in Chicago

Chicago has long been a city dominated by Irish and Irish-American politics. It was inevitable that that the commemoration of Easter Week in 1966 would give rise to concern for the government in Dublin.

Certainly they called the Consul General Brian Ó Ceallaigh and the Department back in Dublin some anxious moments.

Plans were announced locally that representatives of some 15 Chicago Irish-American Clubs attended a meeting convened by Mr Eoin MacNamee to discuss arrangements. Seán Ronan in Dublin wrote to the Consul General about the matter the following months.

“If anything like 15 local organisations are going to participate in a programme of this magnitude under McNamara’s auspices, it would not

only be an unwelcome departure but could be a serious one which would diminish the prestige of this country in Chicago and perhaps give an impetus to fund raising activities for illegal organisations in Ireland,” Ronan said.

“Seán Ronan in Dublin said it would be “undesirable” that the Irish Consulate would be involved”

Ronan was referring to the revived IRA (whose activities was covered in April by the foreign press, notably a long article with photographs of hooded armed men in the *London Telegraph Colour Magazine*, ominous of the years to come).

Eoin McNamee was “a local IRA veteran” an IRA man of the old school and (in Chicago) local dignitary as long-time member and former head of its Northern Command. He died in August 1986.

During World War II, he was in contact with a German secret agent in Ireland. Later in his life, he lived in the Chicago area where he supposedly acted as the go-between for the IRA leadership and its weapons suppliers in the US.

Seán Ronan in Dublin said it would be “undesirable” that the Irish Consulate would be involved. “No doubt you will advise City Hall that the Mayor or other prominent Irish personalities should not be involved in functions under the auspices mentioned.”

[File 2017/17/15]



Early in 1987 the staff of the national Museum in Dublin became aware of an effort by a set of individuals in Ireland and the US to sell on a medieval artefact found in a lake in Roscommon.

This was what is now called the Tully Processional Cross, a rival to the Cross of Cong, the only two crosses of their kind to survive. The metal parts from which the wooden staff had rotted away were found by divers on the bed of Lake Tully.

With the help of a lady friends in the US, Rosemary G---- (of Everett, Massachusetts), the finders hoped to sell the pieces of the cross to the J. P. Getty Museum in Brentwood California. The suggested price hoped for was one and three quarter million US dollars. This was in a letter to the curator of the museum. Ms G---- sent him, aside from a letter written oddly on lined paper taken from a jotter pad, two very poor and indistinct photographs.

No interest

The curator told them the items were of no interest to the Getty. Later he told the National Museum that he received perhaps 19 or 20 such letters a day, from people offering antiquities to the museum, which (according to its website), “seeks to inspire curiosity about, and enjoyment and understanding of the visual arts by collecting, conserving, exhibiting, and interpreting works of art of outstanding quality and his-

torical importance.” One division of the museum displays, among other things, art from the middle ages.

It is an institution with a shadowy reputation for dealing in stolen art works with a fund of US\$1.2 billion. It is inevitably an attraction to the dubious people who haunt the higher echelons of the art business.

Surprises

The National Museum eventually came into possession of the Tully cross (as related last year in these pages), but the attempted transaction with the Getty revealed in this year’s release still surprises. The full name of the lady who approached the Getty can be read in the papers [file 2017/4/6623] but the libel laws being what they are in this country it will not be given here.

And perhaps it would better too that those who plunder our antiquities and attempt to sell them for the highest commercial price should not be further characterised.

However, both the state and the museum recognised that unless finders were rewarded with something approaching the market value, as was the case with the Derrynaflan Hoard [File 2017/2/73] historically important items would be lost in private hands, forever shorn of any exact knowledge of where they were found. And that would be a tragedy for science and scholarship.

[File 2017 / 4 / 6623]

Letters

Letter of the week

Church can't indulge media prejudices

Dear Editor, Thank you for the excellent article by Fr Andrew McMahon on the Church and the media (IC 14/12/17). As Fr McMahon states, the media is generally hostile, sometimes very hostile, to the Church. In particular, the incessant pro-abortion propaganda in much of the media, most notably the *Irish Times*, which stands in contrast to the pro-life position of the Church.

What is equally repugnant to Christians is the sanitised, euphemistic, and sometimes Orwellian language used by pro-

choice activists. When people talk about choice in this context, it is not a question of choosing from a dessert menu, but the choice of permitting the unborn baby to live or to kill it in the womb.

Of course, they make a point of never using the term 'unborn baby' lest one becomes aware that abortion entails the killing of a living entity. Further absurdities include the term 'reproductive rights'.

Against this background, as Fr McMahon notes, it is not helpful for Church leaders to indulge media

prejudices against the Church. While the number of committed Catholics is down, anyone involved in Church activities is aware of the strong commitment of a large number of Catholic to their Church. It will be some time yet before the secularists and humanists see the happy day for them of an irrelevant Church. In any event, those same people have nothing to offer in dealing with the big issues in life.

*Yours etc.,
Tom O'Connell,
Howth, Co. Dublin.*

Women's health is everyone's priority

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny's article on women's health (IC 14/12/17) included reference to Senator Ned O'Sullivan's claim that he had changed his stance from being pro-life after serving on the Oireachtas Committee considering the Eighth Amendment.

I would like to point out that the senator voted in favour of the 2013 abortion legislation introduced by the Fine Gael-Labour coalition permitting abortion in cases of the threat of suicide.

As Mary Kenny pointed out, pro-life people should

be as concerned for the health and welfare of women as anyone else, and indeed they are, offering every assistance to women with crisis pregnancies except abortion, and with no vested interest, as happens with those who gain from abortion provision.

Women deserve better than abortion and I cannot think of anything more insulting to a woman as to insinuate that she will not suffer after an abortion, as claimed by those promoting abortion, and who do women no service and are

sadly lacking in assistance after an abortion. There is no such thing as an unwanted baby, someone will always be delighted to be given the chance to adopt, and, may I ask, why is there practically no promotion of this as a solution?

Why is there rightly much lauding of anyone who donates an organ to enhance another person's life, but almost complete dismissal of allowing a baby the gift of life and adoptee parents the joy of raising a child.

How sad in the days of Christmas when we

celebrate the birth of the most important and famous baby of all, Jesus, that our politicians are willing to deny the right to life to unborn babies. Hopefully, our people, if presented with a referendum, will vote to cherish and protect all life from conception until natural death, recognising that it is the most wonderful gift of all.

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

The Faithful remain

Dear Editor, Far from being a dying breed as described by the Archbishop of Dublin, today's Irish churchgoers are more akin to the biblical *hasidim* and *anawim* – the loyal and faithful remnants, the lowly and poor (in spirit) who in the Old Testament continued to respond with fidelity to God the eternal father in very difficult times.

Despite repression and the powerful opposition of 'peoples, nations, leaders and nobles', the remnant remained loyal, faithful and inspirational.

The remnant of today will do the same. Despite the powerfully hostile forces that are arrayed against the Catholic Church and engaged in sustained onslaught, it is certain that just as in times past, today's faithful *anawim* will remain loyal and poor in spirit and thus ensure that truth will triumph and Faith will never die.

*Yours sincerely,
Con Lynch,
Macroom, Co. Cork.*



A respectful and reasonable debate?

Dear Editor, Mr Charlie Flanagan TD, Minister for Justice and Equality, speaking in favour of introducing abortion into Ireland, is quoted as saying that he wants "respectful, calm and reasoned debate" on the issue.

The difficulty I have with this advice (which echoes secular newspaper editorials) is that an impression is created that abortion – the deliberate destruction of unborn human life – is

not a matter of profound importance, but rather a run-of-the-mill subject, that can be discussed with equanimity.

Also, Mr Flanagan appears to be forgetting that he is supposed to be promoting 'equality' as part of his ministerial brief – the unborn too possess humanity.

The legal introduction of abortion in Britain in the 1960s has given rise to the destruction of some nine million

unborn humans; in the US the abortion figure is around 50 million; surely the folly of this unimaginable massive destruction of unborn humanity (in the UK and US) provides a stark lesson for Ireland which should make even the suggestion of introducing abortion unthinkable.

*Yours etc.,
Micheal O'Cathail,
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.*

The challenge of the covenant

Dear Editor, *The Irish Catholic* (IC 14/12/17) presented the pessimists with a challenge. Now this may seem cynical, but one of the advantages of having fewer parishioners at Mass these days, is that more priests may be tempted to take Christ's words literally when, at the Last Supper, he offered the chalice to the disciples and said: "Take this, all of you, and drink from it..." One of the reasons that most priests do not offer the Sacred Blood is that they are unaware that they are celebrating a covenant renewal ceremony, and that it is Christ's Blood that seals this covenant. The aim of every covenant is to establish a relationship between the two parties.

The animal that was sacrificed and eaten during the covenant supper plays an important part. In ancient times its blood was spattered over the two parties as a way of sealing the covenant. This symbolic action showed that the two parties were now united almost like blood relations. In our case, Jesus asked us all to drink the Blood of the new and eternal covenant.

Many priests react to this, by saying that when we receive the Host we receive the living Christ – body, blood, soul and divinity. But it is the resurrected Christ, not the historical Christ of skin and bones who is present in the breaking of bread and who gives himself to us in Holy Communion? This is a spiritual action made real for us in the symbols used (the bread and wine). Not to offer the chalice omits one of the symbols that underlines the reality of our sealing the covenant in Christ's blood – the covenant that makes us God's children.

*Yours etc.,
Fr Pat Seaver,
Farranshane,
Co. Limerick.*

Scandal of the Committee on the Eighth Amendment

Dear Editor, It is scandalous, that the Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) was invited to address the Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment, together with other organisations whose only expertise is that of campaigning for abortion, while at the same time organisations which actually empower women to progress through unexpected pregnancies were excluded.

Only a few years ago this HSE-funded organisation was found by undercover reporters to be advising clients on how to illegally import and take abortion pills.

It is also noteworthy that in the US, Planned Parenthood, the sister organisation of the IFPA, was found by undercover reporters to be illegally harvesting and selling body-parts of aborted babies.

That the Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment chose to be so partisan in its choice of speakers, leads one to conclude that the whole process was one drawn out media event designed to pave the way for abortion.

*Yours etc.,
Gearóid Duffy,
Lee Road,
Cork.*

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.

Green Fingers

Paul Gargan



Gardeners must do their bit to preserve the ecosystem

A recently published study from Germany is cause for great concern. It was a study of butterfly and diurnal moth species and was conducted in nature reserves over a 40-year period. It showed that of the 117 species recorded in 1840, just 71 could be found today. That is a 40% decrease. Butterflies and moths are widely used as model organisms; they indicate how well the ecosystem they live in is doing. If their numbers are declining, then the populations of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and other insects are also declining.

The study also counted the total insect biomass and it showed that insect abundance has fallen by over 75% over the last 27 years, even higher in summer with 82%, when the insects should be at their peak.

This means that insect biomass is falling by 60% per year.

A way for us to count insects is car windscreens and that has often been anecdotally used to suggest a major decline.

Older people would tell you that in the not too distant past they had to stop on journeys to clean insects off the windscreen.

In Ireland, the Department of Environment's red list of Irish butterflies, which details species, shows that of the 33 resident and regular migrant species of Irish butterflies, 18% are in danger of extinction, 15% near threatened, one species – the Mountain Ringlet – is extinct, six species are endangered and five species are near threatened.

The reason for the decline remains uncertain. Climate change is unlikely as warmer climates are more favourable for insects, therefore it should have led to an increase in populations. The more likely causes are modern large-scale agriculture, habitat loss/fragmentation and pesticides.

“The single easiest way to add wildlife value to your garden is to have a pond”

Large fields with only one crop growing is of no use to most wildlife, it's barren. Fertilisers change the biology of soils and plants.

Habitat loss/fragmentation is where there is less space for wildlife and what there is left is too fragmental to make any difference. Pesticides kill insects indiscriminately.

As gardeners, we must do our bit to stop and reverse this downward spiral. The single easiest way to add wildlife value to your garden is to have a pond. The size of your garden is no obstacle. It can be a large or small pond, a tub, a large pot or even an upside-down dustbin lid, in an out-of-the-way place will do.

The majority of insects need water at some stage of their life cycle. If your garden has a wet area, turn this into a bog garden, even a damp shaded area can be turned into a marsh garden. Leave a log pile of dead wood in a shady spot. Don't be too tidy. Allow wildflowers (weeds) to grow in your lawn, allow a patch of grass to grow long and wild. It will eventually turn into a wildflower meadow.

Even the smallest garden can make a difference.



Every January, I have great plans for how wonderful the year ahead is going to be. They usually involve a multitude of new projects that encompass all sorts of areas and include the whole family.

One year, I made out a detailed list about how all aspects of a person's life need to be attended to. I went as far as writing out what exactly we all had to do to attend to our physical, mental, spiritual and a host of other needs. Of course it wasn't long before the list was cast aside and we were slipping back to our old habits and patterns.

It was a bit too much to expect to learn new musical instruments, master several languages and become avid gardeners while juggling all the other work and leisure pursuits. Of course, this would go hand-in-hand with several weekly trips to the gym and all the while striving to become a saint. I don't know if I'm in a minority but being another St Thérèse of Lisieux or St Bernadette of Lourdes was always on my radar.

Support group

My recent self-improvement project has centered on something called FlyLady, a self-help support group that offers advice to people on the subject of housekeeping. It's well worthwhile looking it up online.

Founded by Maria Cilley, the original FlyLady, it's really all about decluttering, the value of routines, weekly and monthly cleaning, increased self-esteem and letting go of perfectionism. Housework is never an easy sell, but the idea is to have systems that deal with the

A parent's perspective



Maria Byrne

endless chores while not getting overwhelmed and still having time to focus on your family. Having a slightly addictive nature, I spent hours looking at FlyLady videos on YouTube. I tried the hard sell with the rest of my family but they didn't seem quite as enthused about scrubbing and scouring and found a video about the perfect way to clean a sink to be a source of great hilarity.

“Why do we feel such a distinct lack of satisfaction with the results of our labours?”

After a very energetic start, I seem to have slipped back a

resolutions that invariably accompany a new year, I think I'm finally beginning to see where I've been going wrong. It's all to do with how I've been sold the idea that, out there somewhere, is the blueprint for living the perfect life. We've all been led to believe that there has to be a plan or a formula that would work well if only we could stumble on the right one. And, so we struggle on, buying more self-help books, signing up to more fitness classes and adding more and more to our to-do lists.

At the end of it all, why do we feel such a distinct lack of satisfaction with the results of our labours? What is it that we're getting wrong and why do many of us feel snowed under with feelings of inadequacy and failure?

What's lacking from a lot of the modern approaches to becoming a new man or woman is any real understanding of the nature of human beings and the spiritual element of life.

My father once gave me a lovely book for my birthday. In fact, he gave the same little book to all my siblings. It was a book that my mother used in the 1950s when she lived in Edinburgh in Scotland and it was a great spiritual support to her. *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis is a spiritual gem. Written 500 years ago, it still encourages and inspires today. Since I started dipping into it more and availing of its timeless wisdom, I realise more clearly that the true secret to the happy life we all keep searching for is to forget all about our endless plans, that are often very focused on ourselves and our

own narrow focus, and to put our trust in God.

It's all about reframing our outlook and realising that we need to stop trying to control everything including the people around us. I love this particular quote by à Kempis: “Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.”

“If we would overcome one fault a year, we would soon be perfect”

His whole focus, which is as relevant today as it was when the book was written, is on improving the world by improving yourself.

He doesn't beat around the bush when in a chapter titled ‘The Peaceful Person’, he talks about how we are always so ready to excuse ourselves and to put the best possible construction on our own behaviour while refusing to listen to the excuses of others.

As we face into 2018 and all those expectations that we place on our own shoulders and on the shoulders of others, we should take the advice of à Kempis.

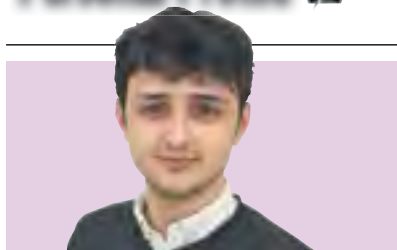
He suggested a much slower pace when journeying towards self-improvement writing that “if we would overcome one fault a year, we would soon be perfect”.

A good start is to ease off on trying to be a superhero, start each day with a prayer and look at how we can better change the world by changing ourselves.



Perfect crochets, sublime quavers

Personal Profile



Colm Fitzpatrick talks to an Irish band that worships God through music

Pope Benedict XVI once remarked that music's origins lie in the experience of love, sadness, and the encounter with the Divine. Through music, we can, in some way, hear God speaking.

One Northern-Irish band has taken on the challenge of spreading the message of the Gospel globally, so the voice of God can be heard and praised.

'I AM' is a Derry-based worship band exploring faith, life and harmonies. Formed in 2016, their unique style of music has captured the attention of audiences throughout Ireland.

Describing the origins of the band, Marie-Therese Martin said: "I went travelling to Australia when I was 28, and explored my beliefs. I wanted to make sure that I hadn't been programmed or conditioned."

When there, she attended Hillsong, a Sydney-based mega-Church which welcomed different religions, cultures and ages, which contrasted with her experience of attending church in Northern Ireland.

With a dynamic atmosphere of praise and worship, alongside emotive music, Martine had a burning desire to bring this type of service back to the North.

"Derry is a musical city, it's part of our culture," she explained, adding that we are all able to express our faith through music.

Motivation

Equipped with this musical environment, the band was initially formed with six singers, and five other band members, all of whom perform voluntarily.

Martine explained that the band's motivation is their love for God, and their aim is to bring people back to Jesus, especially in a time when many young people are frightened by the Church. By engaging in worship through innovative ways, the band hope to reach out to those on the margins.

"Music is simple and approachable. Through music,



people are worshipping, praying and dancing," she said.

"The key is to meet people where they're at and that can bring about spiritual growth. Be open to where people are in their own spiritual journey."

The band itself reflects this attitude, which has a multi-denominational composition including those with no belief. Although we may all have different beliefs, Martine believes love connects us all and music is one of the ways in which this fundamental essence is revealed.

“Most people are drawn to the more sombre songs which can have a visceral effect on the listener”

"Music is a gift from God. It's the language of love. It's how international people can communicate and it's what we all have in common," she said, adding that God created our hands and voice so that we could clap and sing in worship.

Although worship bands are popular in America and Australia, some in Ireland have found it strange. The biggest battle, Martine said, was trying to get into the doors of the Catholic Church, due to the band's ecumenical ethos. In spite of these setbacks, they have been able to perform in areas of religious conflict, transforming fragmentation into unity.

"It's pretty ground-breaking, especially with the Catholic and Protestant divide in Derry. We're praising and worshipping together."

Although this type of music can make audiences rekindle their relationship with God and reshape their lives in a faith-filled way, the band, too, experience development in their faith.

"The band members are voluntary

for the greater good and for the love of Jesus. We always have to remember who we're doing this for," said Martine.

"I literally believe we can move mountains, and I don't believe we should approach this half-heartedly. An unshakeable faith makes all things possible."

Travelling together in a band and spreading the message of God's love is rewarding for all of the band members, but it still comes with many challenges that are difficult to face. Maintaining a sense of humility, ameliorating conflict between one another and remaining steadfast with a strong work ethic are just some of the battles that the band encounter.

"You have to take the ego out of the equation. Also, there are personality clashes, and so decisions need to be made for the development of the group. If people aren't on the same wavelength or journey, we have to let them go."

"Some people are more lackadaisical. It's hard work and you have to stand your ground."

Although it can be difficult working with multiple people in a creative atmosphere, the band have been successful in not only singing worship songs, but also writing them. In Martine's experience, most people are drawn to the more sombre songs which can have a visceral effect on the listener.

"You can literally change people's lives," she said, adding that some people approach the band after a worship performance to explain the impact it has had on their lives.

With the journey of the band still in its infancy, Martine lives by a faith-inspired lyric to keep pushing her and the band in the right direction: "Burn in me your desire. A passion worthy of your name."

For more information about "I AM", see <https://www.facebook.com/IAMWORSHIPBAND/>.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



Time is our most precious commodity. As we get older, the years pass by like days. Suddenly, it's 2018 – which is strange, since just yesterday it was 2008, or 1998 or perhaps even 1968 – depending on how long you've been around. For us adults, time passes quickly, and we don't change dramatically from year to year. Our slide into decrepitude is slow and imperceptible.

For children, a year is an eternity. Everything about them changes in that time. Their height, their abilities, their skills, their understanding of the world and their emotional acuity all undergo complete metamorphoses.

Looking back at photos taken just two or three years ago, it's obvious that the kids have changed completely. My heart aches to see the disappearance of those small, babyish faces, never to return. Yet how exciting to see these innocents replaced with the more knowing – but no less happy – faces of big boys and girls.

I can already now see glimpses of the adults to come.

Our world is undergoing changes, like a child growing rampantly. Each year brings new political and technological realities, which are amazing and unsettling in equal measure. I interviewed one of the first men to walk on the moon a few years back. Apollo astronaut Edgar Mitchell told me: "My great grandparents came across the southern United States after the Civil War in the 1870s to start a new life in the western territories. They were in a covered wagon drawn by horses, driving a few cattle to start a new herd."

Electric light

"The railroads had not been completed, automobiles had not been invented, the electric light had not been invented. My father was born shortly after the Wright brothers made the first airplane flight – and I went to the moon... In less than 100 years we went

from covered wagons to going to the moon." The incredible process of change he witnessed is only accelerating in our time.

Much of this change is exciting. In our house, I we speak to devices, and they will put on the radio, turn on the lights, turn up the heating, or make a video call, as instructed. This was in the province of science fiction just ten or twenty years ago.

I asked the television to play *The Wizard of Oz* for the children the other day. It obliged. Although released in 1939, the kids loved that movie as if it were the latest Netflix offering. I remember watching it as a kid their age, as did my own parents in the 1950s. In some ways, little has changed, and yet everything has changed.

Devices

So much has changed for the better, yet our new technological devices with their sparkling addictive always-available entertainment are absorbing our minds and our energies – and, above all, our time.

People spend much of their lives online, in social media realities where interactions and "likes" provide addictive dopamine hits.

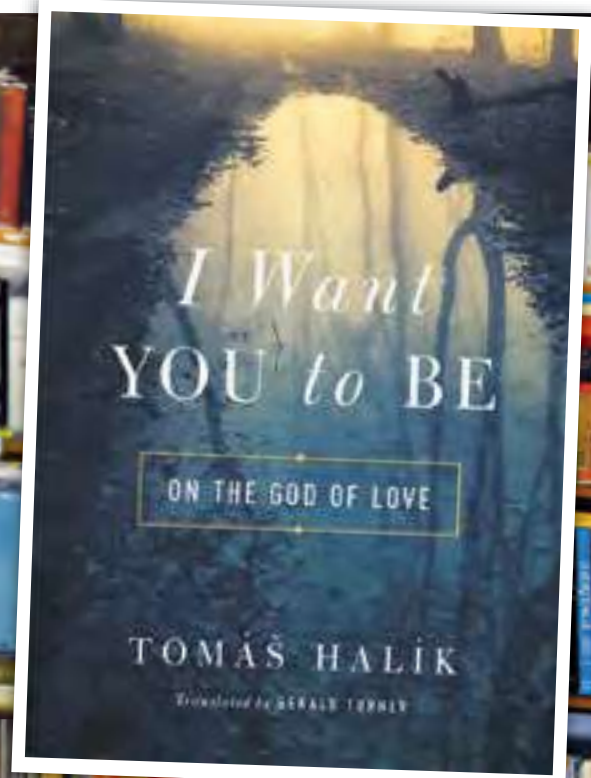
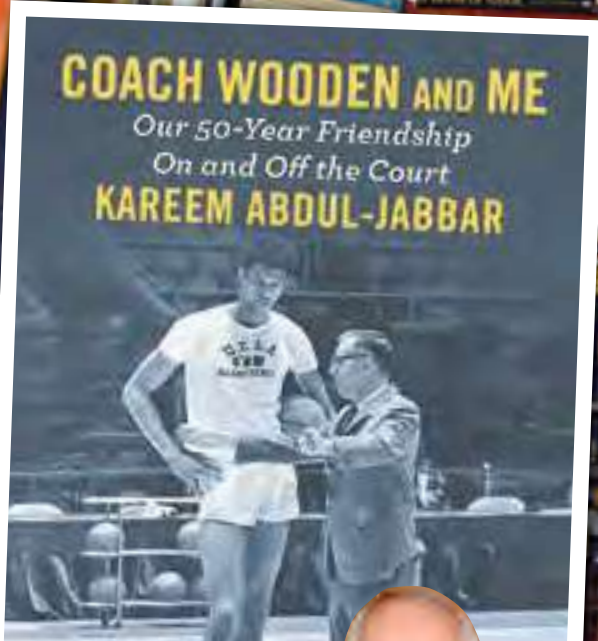
I've recently read that scientists have found that overuse of technology can alter people's perception of time.

This means that if we are too engaged in our smartphones, time really does fly by. This provides me with a huge incentive to unplug more, and to redouble my efforts to keep the kids screen time to a minimum. The days of childhood are finite, and that special time of life should be savoured. We parents need to be with them, not merely bodily, but mentally present and attentive to them, and their stories and their small needs.

My New Year's resolution is therefore to unplug and switch off devices more often. Each day, and each hour, is precious and I want to be in it. I want to slow down time, and savour each moment.



My top 10 books of 2017



Fr. Ron Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

Taste is subjective. Keep that in mind as I share with you the 10 books that most touched me last year. That isn't necessarily a recommendation that you read them. They may leave you cold, or angry at me that I praised them. Be your own critic here and one who isn't afraid to be critical of my taste. Nobody buys everything that's advertised in a store.

So, what 10 books most touched me this year?

First, I single out some wonderful religious biographies:

● Kate Hennessey's *Dorothy Day: The World Will be Saved by Beauty*. To my mind, this book is a treasure. As Dorothy Day's granddaughter, Kate Hennessey had a privileged, intimate relationship with Dorothy, but that relationship also had its headaches and heartaches. Dorothy was a complex person who when called a saint, reacted by saying: "I don't want to be dismissed that lightly!" This book captures both the saint and the woman resistant to that label.

● Jim Forest, *At Play in the Lion's Den - A Biography and Memoir of Daniel Berrigan*. A great insight as to who Daniel Berrigan was as a man, as Jesuit, as a friend, and as a prophet. There will be numerous biographies still

written on Berrigan, but none, I venture to say, will surpass this one. Forest knows his subject well.

● Suzanne M. Wolfe, *The Confessions of X, A Novel*. This is fictional biography, a story of St Augustine's mistress, Augustine's love for her, their child, and St Monica's role in breaking up that relationship. Not historical, but researched well enough to make it credible.

“This isn't a sports book, but a book that reflects deeply on life, meaning, friendship, race and religion”

Next, some religious autobiographies:

● Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, *Coach Wooden and Me, Our 50-Year Friendship On and Off the Court*. You may wonder why I list this book as religious autobiography, but it only needs to be read to answer that question.

This isn't a sports book, but a book that reflects deeply on

life, meaning, friendship, race and religion. Raised a Roman Catholic, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar shares very candidly on what prompted his religious move to Islam.

There are lessons to be learned here. This is a wonderfully warm story amidst all the pain it shares.

● Macy Halford, *My Utmost, A Devotional Memoir*. As an Evangelical Christian, Halford grew up with a deep faith, but one that wasn't strongly challenged in her youth.

As a young woman she moved to New York and then later to Paris to become a writer. Surrounded now mostly by friends and colleagues who consider faith a naïveté, she struggled to root her childhood faith more deeply so as to withstand the challenge of the new world she lives in.

Her struggle and her eventual solid landing within the faith of her childhood can be a help to all us, regardless of denomination, as we struggle to keep our faith in an overly-adult world.

● Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy, A Story of Justice and*

“She faces both life and death with a courage, buoyancy and wit that will make a saint envious”

Redemption. Bryan Stevenson is a Harvard-educated lawyer who has chosen to put his talents to work in helping the poor, in this case, prisoners on death row who don't have any means of helping themselves.

The issues of racism, poverty, inequality, and how we blind ourselves to them, are front and center in this powerful book.

● Nina Riggs, *The Bright Hour - A Memoir of Living and Dying*. Nina Riggs died in February and this book shares her blogs as she, a young mother with two preteen children, journeys through terminal cancer, alongside her best friend, also a young mother, who is dying of cancer as well.

They died a week apart. While Riggs doesn't write out of an explicit faith, she faces both life and death with a courage, buoyancy and wit that will make a saint envious. A delightful, deep book: you'll laugh, you'll cry – and you'll learn how death can be faced.

Accessible

A fine book in the area of Existentialism:

● Sarah Blackwell, *At the Existentialist Café, Freedom, Being and Apricot Cocktails*. This is one of the best books written on existentialism that's accessible to a non-

professional reader.

It will introduce you to the giants of Existential philosophy: Sartre, Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Camus, Husserl and Jaspers. Bakewell believes you will understand a thinker's philosophy much more accurately if you also have a picture of his or her life: "Ideas are interesting, but people are vastly more so."

Those without a background in philosophy will get lost occasionally but if you continue reading you will soon find yourselves again fascinated by the lives of these famous, colorful thinkers.

Finally, two books in spirituality, where the author's pedigree is sufficient recommendation:

● Tomas Halík, *I Want You to Be - On The God of Love*. Halík, a Czechoslovakian priest, is a renowned spiritual writer and winner of the Templeton Prize. This is a book of rare insight and depth.

● Henri Nouwen, *Beyond the Mirror, Reflections on Death and Life*. Nouwen needs no introduction, though this is a unique book within his corpus, chronicling his near-death experience after a serious accident.

Taste may be subjective, but these are good books!

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Decent tidings on the flat screen

Over the Christmas period you expect lots of feel-good movies and carol services, which is all very good, but every year I look out for something new, something different, a programme that engages in a creative and contemporary way with the Christmas story of the Gospels. Happily I found a few such programmes this year.

The Alternativity (BBC 2), which started with a 'making of' documentary on the Sunday of Christmas week, was an unusual piece of work – the artist known as Banksy had asked film director Danny Boyle to direct a nativity play in Bethlehem, in the car park of his 'Walled-Off Hotel', billed ironically as having the worst views... of the huge security wall erected by the Israelis.

It was most enjoyable watching the play take shape – finding a suitable donkey and making artificial snow were two of the most entertaining sequences.

Predictably there were political undertones to all of this, but Boyle said he didn't want to exploit the children for adult concerns, and it was all sweet and innocent, though under the watchful gaze of an Israeli guard tower, which made some parents uneasy about their children taking part. The plight of the

PICK OF THE WEEK

THE BIG QUESTIONS • BBC 1, Sunday, January 7, 10 am

New series: Nicky Campbell presents topical debate from the University of East London.

WHEN THEY SAY, YOU SAY • EWTN, Tuesday, January 9, 9 pm; also Wed 8 am

Olivia Turner analyses the language used to dehumanize unborn children, and demonstrates how the pro-life movement can deal with this.

ROME UNPACKED • BBC 2, Friday, January 12, 9 pm

Exploration of Rome off the beaten track, including its Papal, Renaissance and Baroque history.



Baz Ashmawy.

Palestinians in this divided Bethlehem was highlighted but Boyle also understood that security measures followed from shocking acts of terror.

Concerns

Banksy wanted it to be a Nativity for everyone, so consultations were conducted with Muslims and Christians.

It was harder to engage with the Jewish settlers due to security concerns, but that was a pity considering the origins of Jesus.

On the Wednesday following we got to see a film of the impressive live performance. The Palestinian children were excellent, the young girl playing Mary especially so. In a nod to contemporary concerns the characters had to pass through a metal detector ('Herod's Checkpoint') and the annunciation was Mary getting a text from an unknown number with the crucial news! It was great to see the joy and wonder on the children's faces, especially when the artificial snow fell on them. There were tears from proud parents.

The original story was respected and if it got too political at any stage it was

in the song by rap group the Shorug Girls as three wise women ('behind every wise man...'), especially when they revealed a babygro with the slogan 'Free Palestine'. Banksy, as always, remained unseen, but Danny Boyle and local director Riham Isaac were like little children themselves as they enjoyed the show from the audience.

Also on the Wednesday, I thought I might get another heart-warming show in **Baz and Nancy's Holy Show** (RTÉ 1), but I didn't warm to it. Yes, the idea was quirky – Baz and his mother Nancy (from *50 Ways to Kill Your Mammy*) were trying something tamer but more challenging – Baz trying to get a meeting with the Pope as his Christmas present for his mother.

Visit

There was an interesting visit to Knock, where Fr Richard Gibbons showed them the striking new mosaic in the revamped basilica, and in Rome there was background information on Pope Francis and Rome from Bishop Paul Tighe and Fr Thomas McCarthy OP.

The highlight was being in St Peter's Square during one of Pope Francis' tours of the square. Nancy was a woman of strong faith, and Baz was mostly respectful, but there were unnecessary profanities,

Angela from the delightful *Angela's Christmas* which was broadcast on RTÉ 1.



a questionable photoshoot (a family nativity with bearded Baz playing the role of Our Lady) and a kind of ironic commentary that left a bit of a sour taste for me.

I had no such reservations about **Angela's Christmas** (RTÉ 1, Christmas Eve). Based on a short story by Frank McCourt, this short animation came from Brown Bag Films who brought us the marvellous *Give Up Yer Aul Sins* animations. It told the story of a young Limerick girl, Angela, who didn't want the Jesus in the crib in her local church to get cold. She wanted to warm him up "like a little holy sausage" so she brought him home, leading

to some consternation.

The animation was gorgeous, the storyline simple and the characterisations excellent. Baby Jesus is said to hold his arms out to the world, and there was a great quote from Angela's mother – "that's what families do – they shelter each other from the storm, they bring joy where there is sadness and warmth where there is none".

One for the World Meeting of Families!

boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

There's no business like snow business

Molly's Game (15)

When Molly Bloom (Jessica Chastain) has a freak accident in the snow at an Olympic skiing event, she tries to build an alternative career as a cocktail waitress, a real estate agent and, finally, running high stakes poker games for VIPs. Aaron Sorkin trades heavily on Martin Scorsese's scattergun style of directing *Goodfellas* in a series of lengthy voiceovers.

Chastain carries the narrative tone of them into her live scenes as if she's forgotten she's now actress rather than a commentator. This prevents us becoming as involved in the film as we

should be.

It shows off too much. The more it does that, the more annoying it becomes. Why should we care about the sad sacks who lose their vast fortunes as Bloom networks behind their backs?

Sorkin tries to make us laugh at her machinations and then 'feel' for her when our darling of the *glitterati* falls foul of the taxman, the Russian Mafia and the FBI. The mix doesn't work.

By the time we get to the marshmallow finale, where psychologist dad (played by Kevin Costner, the king of marshmallow) tells her that her problems go back to that freak fall in the snow and that he really loves his



Jessica Chastain and Idris Elba star in *Molly's Game*.

precocious little girl (even if she isn't into Freud) it's time to say: "Aaron, you blew it." Sorkin isn't being Martin Scorsese now. He's being Steven Spielberg.

The lack of originality in *Molly's Game* doesn't end

with the lead character's (Joycean) name. It's far too reminiscent of *Miss Sloane*, that other Chastain vehicle where she also got in above her head, becoming a mover and a shaker in the political field before losing herself

in a blizzard of pill-popping and candle-burning. Here too she bites off more than she can chew before eating humble pie in an anti-climactic finale.

This one also takes place in a courtroom. The 'surprise' verdict is hardly surprising. Molly morphs into the kind of character that makes the film cuddly. Maybe the studio told Sorkin it wouldn't 'fly' without this cop-out. If that's the case I say: shame on you.

Chastain is one of the few women in a male-dominated industry who can "open" a movie but she needs to push her ruthlessness home, not renege on it in sanitised last reels.

Another problem is Idris Elba, her lawyer. Elba is an ordinary actor. He gets his big scene towards the end but for most of the time he's just window dressing. You know Chastain could wipe the floor with him any time she wanted to.

She could also wipe the floor with Chris O'Dowd. He persists in telling Molly he's Irish...and then does his best to disguise his (Irish) accent. Strange. Neither does he know his Joyce. Dim but not funny.

Without Chastain the film is a busted flush. She rescues it somewhat so let's give her a Molly Bloom style affirmation for that. Yes, she does yes, she does yes.

Fair
★ ★



Lighting a candle of hope in the Balkan darkness

Journey of Ten Thousand Smiles
by Patricia Keane
(Rebuild for Bosnia, Monasterevin, €16.95; for over the phone sales call 045 532 410)

J. Anthony Gaughan

In November 1996 I accompanied Fr Kevin Doheny, CSSp, on a journey from Medjugorje to Sarajevo. He had been a missionary in Biafra, where there were thousands of displaced people and refugees after the civil war.

This experience prompted him to establish Refugee Trust International in 1989 to assist them. When the Bosnian civil war (1992-1995) concluded with the Dayton Peace Agreement there were 2.2 million displaced people in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In answer to a general appeal for assistance Fr Doheny opened up centres of Refugee Trust in Mostar and Sarajevo.

While on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje Fr Doheny availed of the opportunity to observe the work of these centres. As we drove along the road between Mostar and Sarajevo the evidence of ethnic cleansing could be seen on both sides.

“She learned about the massacre at Srebrenica when more than 8,000 men and boys were serially murdered”

The Serb (formally the Yugoslav) army had crashed through the area and systematically destroyed all the buildings in their path to ensure that those who had fled before them would never return.

The roofless, windowless burnt-out houses were gaunt reminders of their ruthlessness. The appearance of Sarajevo was no less shocking. It looked like the cities in Germany at the end of World War II.

I was vividly reminded of that first-hand experience of ethnic cleansing by two recent events. There were the life-sen-



The symbolic broken bridge at Mostar.

tences for war crimes handed down by the United Nations International Court of Justice to the Serb general Ratko Mladic and to the Croat commander Slobodan Praljak (who took poison in the dock as the verdict was rendered, and so dying, avoided the sentence).

More significantly than these there is Patricia Keane's account of Rebuild for Bosnia and Friends of Rebuild for Bosnia, and the remarkable humanitarian work for which they are responsible. This is

a true labour of love, rather than an act of hate.

Patricia Keane was born in Suncroft, Co. Kildare, in 1961. She was educated locally and qualified as a clinical nutritionist. After a number of unhappy experiences at the suggestion of a friend she went on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje in 1998.

While there she visited a Centre for Displaced People which was nearby. She was shocked at the conditions in which the inmates were attempting to survive.

On her return home, with others she established Rebuild for Bosnia, a charity, the objective of which was to build homes in Bosnia-Herzegovina for displaced families of Catholic Croats, Muslim Bosniaks, and Orthodox Serbs driven from their homes during the civil war.

Project

Subsequently she and her colleagues set up Friends of Rebuild for Bosnia to raise funds for the project. In a period of five years it raised

€2.5 million. Ninety per cent of that money was spent on having 78 houses built with the remainder funding the repair of schools as well as supplying the sick with life-saving medicines and devices.

Patricia was determined that homes would be made available to the most vulnerable persons, such as widows and others who had the responsibility of caring for children with mental and physical disabilities.

To this end she met and heard the tragic life-stories of



many of the Bosnian refugees.

She learned about the massacre at Srebrenica when more than 8,000 men and boys were serially murdered and buried in mass graves. And she became aware of other less well-known massacres carried out by the same Serb army at Tuzla and Vukovar.

“Patricia was determined that homes would be made available to the most vulnerable persons, such as widows”

She records some of her interviews verbatim – horrifying accounts of murders, rapes, torture, and deliberately degrading incarceration. Presumably to lighten her dark narrative of man's inhumanity to man she includes an account of a seemingly miraculous case of healing, following prayer to Our Lady at Medjugorje.

Patricia concludes with a number of very useful reflections: on knowing your limitations, prayer, true forgiveness, and trusting in God. This book is not just interesting; it is inspirational, and it splendidly illustrates Patricia's mantra that 'It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness'.

Sarajevo when hostilities ceased.



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

The last of Ireland's postmen now forever in print

The Post Office in Ireland: An Illustrated History
by Stephen Ferguson
(Irish Academic Press, €26.99)

Peter Costello

At this time of the year over Christmas and the New Year we come to appreciate the post, which brings messages of love and peace and presents from relatives and friends all over the world, some not seen in person for decades.

But this inestimable service, which we too easily take for granted over the rest of the year, is under severe pressure, threatening many towns and villages, and indeed parts of the capital, with reduced service and post offices closures.

So this lovely book on the history of the post office in Ireland is published very appositely. It is richly illustrated in colour and monochrome with a viral gallery of all kinds and types of Irish people engaged all of them on important work. But it is also filled with fascinating side lights and far more on Irish history and social life.

Stephen Ferguson is Assistant Secretary of An Post, curator of its Museum and Archive, and author of *Business as Usual: GPO Staff in 1916* (2012) and other publications on the history of the GPO and Irish postal history.

Let us hope that this new book of his finds as many readers as possible, for it is filled with the stuff of human life in Ireland over three centuries.

“The chapters dealing with the employees of the post office are also enlightening”

This began back in the 16th Century with the very first efforts to establish a postal communications system in a realm almost without roads and means of transport. These early days depended on the carrying of letters often not to individuals' homes, but to inns and public houses.

In the course of this we moved from post boys to mail coaches – the mail coach of De Quincey's musings and Dickens' imagination – and here in Ireland the enterprise of Charles Bianconi. But the author also describes how the mail was



carried elsewhere by post barque and by packet steamer across the Atlantic, and effectively around the world.

It was the railway that came to Ireland in the 1830s that really altered the system. Readers may recall the celebrated film with Auden's poetic commentary and Benjamin Britten's music, *The Night Mail*. In Ireland the system was, as Ferguson describes in detail, just as integrated. The increasing speed of communication by letter, by telegram and later by telephone, all of which came under the same state aegis, had profound consequences for the political developments. With the development of speedy communication it became harder to hide things (a phenomenon we have seen repeated with the mobile phone and the internet).

Integration

Of course the postal service served also to a greater integration with the UK, and then to break it, thanks in part to the pioneering work of the novelist Anthony Trollope. In Ireland he found not only a wife and began his family, but became very much his own man, and became a writer.

The Post Office through its employment of many to carry the mail did the same for thousands. The postman became an essential character in communities in all across the country.

Ferguson does not fail to deal with the technical developments of the telegraph and then the telephone, but alas neither in the event provided the “bond of perpetual peace and friendship” the pioneers hoped for. Technical developments rarely do – as we know too well in this age of atomic power.

But the chapters dealing with the employees of the post office are also enlightening. The development of the system, or rather its decline in the eyes of many, is dealt with in the last 50 pages.

But local historians will find information and inspiration in

the appendices which deal with the base of the whole affair, the local postmasters (and mistresses) bringing to mind for readers old enough the celebrated ‘Battle of Baltinglass’ recounted by the American Lawrence Earl, in which present day readers will find echoes of the shenanigans of politicians relating to local affairs that will awake present day echoes.

Security

Are we entering into the last days of a great Victorian institution? Many concerned for the social foundations of rural and inner city Ireland will hope not.

The post office over the more recent part of our history described by the author became an essential component of the rural, indeed parish scene. Just as the Garda represented the security guaranteed by the State at the local level, so the branch of the post office represented the social reach of the government into the parish.

The post office that flourished in the last century was where the pension (introduced in 1911) was collected, where government warnings about noxious weeds could be read with care, the money orders from Boston, Massachusetts, cashed, and where forms of all kinds including dog and gun licences were to be obtained. If the parish churches were the soul of the district, the post office was its heart.

If parishes want to preserve their post offices they must act now, in the city and the countryside. The internet has drained away much of that government business; so surely it is time that every village had in its post office a computer terminal dedicated to the needs of those who are not internet savvy. This is a very necessary social subsidy, and to hell with cost efficiencies.

The post office in the last three centuries moved with technology for the benefit of the people, as Stephen Ferguson describes in these altogether splendid pages. It must continue to do so.

The World of Books

By the books editor

Was St Patrick our first archaeologist?

The notion that the Apostle of Ireland was also the country's first archaeologist is not, I should hasten to admit, an aberration of my own.

It was the idea of my late friend Glyn Daniel [pictured], Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge. When the very suggestive evidence is laid out the claim may not seem quite so strange and outlandish, for it also reveals something of the way in which Early Christian Ireland related to the country's long pagan past.

Prof. Daniel was a world authority on European megaliths. In the course of a Walter Neurath Lecture on ‘Megaliths in History’ (privately published in 1972 for the Neurath family by Thames and Hudson), he discussed some of the curious stories from early Christian legends recorded in medieval Irish manuscripts. This passage is from the 9th Century *Vita Tripartita Sancti Patricii* (translated by Dr James Carney).

“And Patrick came to Duchuil to a great grave, of astounding breath and prodigious length which his familia had found. And with great amazement they marvelled that it extended 120 feet, and they said, ‘we do not believe this affair, that there was a man of this length’. And Patrick answered and said, ‘if you wish you shall see him’, and they said ‘we do.’

“And he struck with his crozier a stone near its head, and signed the grave with the sign of the cross, and said ‘Open, O Lord, the grave’. And the holy man opened the earth and the giant arose whole and said: ‘Blessed be you, O holy man, for you have raised me even for one hour from many pains.’

“This is the sort of puzzled that makes one regret the tremendous losses of medieval manuscripts”

“Speaking so, he wept most bitterly, and said, ‘I will walk with you.’ They said, ‘We cannot allow you to walk with us, for men cannot look upon your face from fear of you. But believe in the God of Heaven and accept the baptism of the Lord, and you shall return to the place in which you were. And tell us of whom you are.’

“ [And the man said] ‘I am the son of the son of Cas, son of Glas, and was swineherd to King Lugal, king of Hirota. The warrior-band of the son of Mac Con slew me in the reign of Coirpe Niorth Fer, 100 years ago today.’

“And he was baptised and confessed God, and he fell silent, and was placed once more in his grave.”

It was O. G. S. Crawford, writing in *Antiquity* back in 1936, who first drew the attention of archaeologists to this remarkable passage. He had no doubt what it meant: “It is not generally known”, he wrote, “that the first recorded opening of a Long Barrow was carried out by St Patrick”. Paul Ashbee, writing in 1969,

supported this interpretation.

Glyn Daniel did not accept the view that Patrick was dealing with a long barrow, but thought the saint was exploring some old, and possibly megalithic tomb.

Daniel talked over this question of the contacts of Patrick with the pagan past of Ireland with Dr Kathleen Hughes, a well-known specialist in the field.

She pointed out that raisings from the dead are a common hagiographical theme, but she also thought that some beliefs current in Ireland at that time went back to the megalithic age.

Studies

From her own studies she was convinced that the ancient sites were not merely taken over for Christian use, but with them also came the lands that supported the old Druid colleges. The rentals now went to support the new churches.

This paganism both Crawford and Daniel surmised was not Druidic. Seán O’Riordain, who excavated Tara, and died sadly young, held that at the time of St Patrick there was a mere veneer of lordly Celtic-speaking chieftains, craftsmen and poets. But that the Irish population were basically the same as the “people of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age who built the great megalithic tombs”.

And it was with the rites and rituals and the ancient heroes of these people that Patrick had some sort of contact.

This is the sort of puzzle that makes one regret the tremendous losses of medieval manuscripts in which so much ancient lore was recorded.

We simply don’t know the half of it.



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“May God enrich with every blessing all those
who recommend frequent Communion to little
boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model”

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

The Irish Catholic

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Please help us continue and donate what you can on our website www.LFPD.ie

or by post to
Little Flower Penny Dinners, 11 Meath St, D8


Phone 01 4536621 or 01 4546795
e-mail: srbrigid@littleflower.ie

Reg. Charity
No. 6179

BÓTHAR

PLEASE REMEMBER BÓTHAR IN YOUR WILL.
€1,800 will allow us to give an Irish, in-calf, dairy heifer to a struggling family in Rwanda, completely transforming their lives. Your gift will live on for generations. Phone the office on 061 414142 or info@bothar.ie

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**Let us know
by writing to:**
Letters to the Editor,
The Irish Catholic,
23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, or email:
letters@irishcatholic.ie



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Please print your advertisement in the coupon, placing **ONE** word in each space. Below, please print your name and address. Do you require a Box Number? YES ☐ NO ☐ (Please tick ✓) Box Number €6 extra.

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Name and contact detail form **MUST** be filled out

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Landline Mobile

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Leisure time



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you are homeless.
Hungry. You have no
money and no phone.**

Join us for Tea and a private Tour of our homeless centre. See confidentially how Merchants Quay Ireland uses donations and legacies to bring relief and hope. All welcome.

to find out more visit www.mqi.ie

**Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included
on the guest list for the January 11th tour.**



**Giving Family & Life a gift in your Will is a
hugely inspirational, lasting and dignified way
to leave a loving mark on countless lives.**

**A gift in your Will ensures that the most effective
pro-life/pro-family organisations will continue
working for the kind of society we all desire.**

**Remember, everything we do to save babies
and strengthen the family relies on you and our
other generous friends.**

For further advice or to avail
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service, please contact us
today on

01-8552790

Family & Life
Ph: 01 8552790
email: fandl@iol.ie
26 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1
www.familyandlife.org

Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart work in poor parishes
in Africa, Russia and Venezuela

Please remember them in your Will

Contact:

**Mission Support Centre, Western Road, Cork.
Tel: 021 - 4543988**

www.mscmissions.ie

**Trócaire is working for a just world
and an end to poverty.**

**Please remember this work
when making your will**

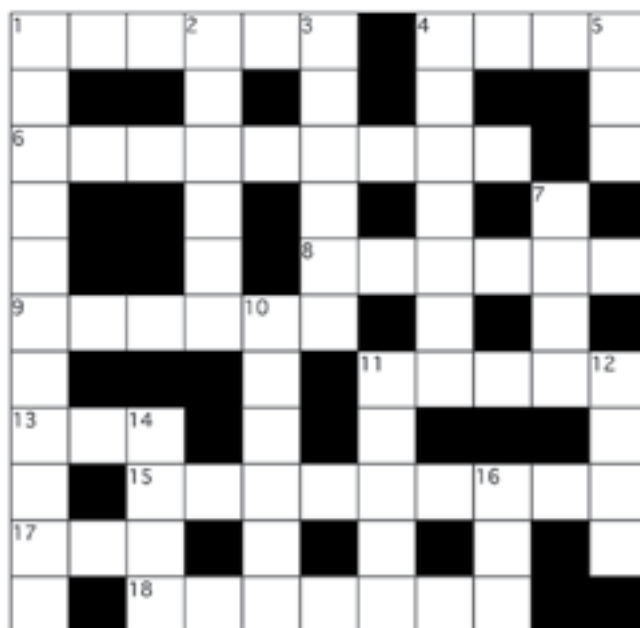
If you would like further information please
contact Trocaire, Maynooth, Co. Kildare



01-629 3333
info@trocaire.ie
www.trocaire.org

Crossword Junior

Gordius 213



ACROSS

- 1 You might like this drink
instead of tea (6)
4 Cut with an axe (4)
6 Put them on to have fun on
a rink (3-6)
8 You can climb on its rungs
(6)
9 Oak nuts (6)
11 Not right (5)
13 Where you'll see animals
in captivity (3)
15 A cabbage or carrot,
perhaps (9)
17 What you see with (3)
18 Comes back (7)

that is often shortened to
'chimp' (10)

- 2 Quicker (6)
3 Messages sent on the
internet (1-5)
4 A popular type of cheese (7)
5 A baby dog or seal (3)
7 One of the straps used to
steer a horse (4)
10 Zero (6)
11 It falls from the sky as rain
(5)
12 Mix black and white to get
this colour (4)
14 Above (4)
15 It might be a double-decker
(3)

DOWN

- 1 These animals have a name

SOLUTIONS FROM DECEMBER 14

GORDIUS No.329

Across – 1 Meg 3 Speculation 8 Kitten 9 Pheasant 10 All up
11 Draco 13 Grasp 15 Right of way 16 Foresee 20 Lucky dip
21 Emend 23 Alias 24 Dreams up 25 Chill 26 Parishioner

Down – 1 Make a virtue of necessity 2 Get along 3 Sheep
4 Copycat 5 Award 6 Isaiah 7 Not 13 Growl 14 Peony
17 Son-in-law 18 Scorpio 19 Meteor 22 Dumps 23 Abhor

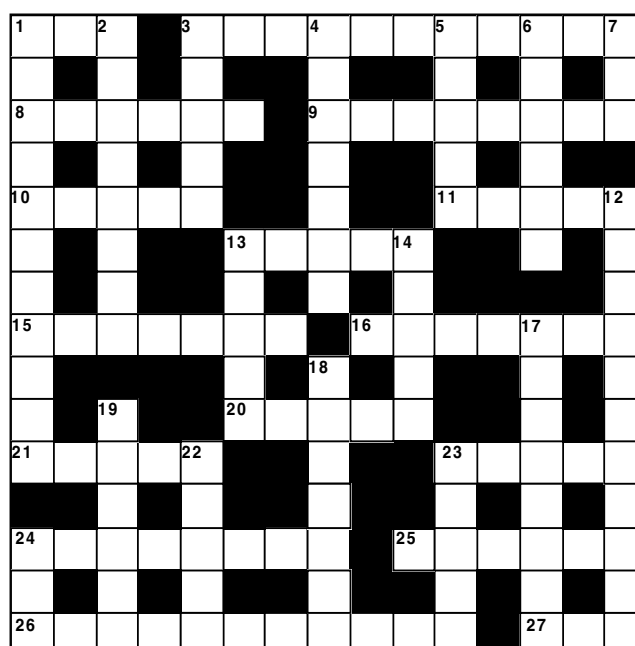
CHILDREN'S No.212

Across – 1 Mountain 6 Roses 7 Latin 9 Frying-pan 11 Ice
14 Gospel 16 Tool 17 Clown 18 Dragon

Down – 1 Marching 2 Unsafe 3 Tasty 4 Ill 5 Friday
8 Argentina 10 Ireland 12 Apron 13 Alien 15 Once

Crossword

Gordius 332



ACROSS

- 1 Item of headgear (3)
3 The messier bulb can be used
to make a diving bell (11)
8 Bigger (6)
9 Such wine may make a goat
pine (8)
10 & 6d Will a nasal cob act
strangely in this Spanish
resort area? (5,6)
11 Walked up and down,
nervously (5)
13 The man with a salty wife
gets us a flower (5)
15 & 19d Domestic exemplars
from Nazareth (3,4,6)
16 Headgear unsuited to the
jumping season? (4,3)
20 Golf equipment (5)
21 Run-down house, hut (5)
23 Graduates find an artist in this
Iraqi city (5)
24 Versatile liquid (5,3)
25 & 24d This bird is not big on
hunting, to judge by its name!
(6,3)
26 Such an inducement to
continued custom may make
the lady cry a lot (7,4)

27 Cathedral city in
Cambridgeshire (3)

DOWN

- 1 Choppers or sycamore seeds
(11)
2 Tedious (8)
3 A biblical queen is essential (to
establish e-banking) (5)
4 Jim Henson's greatest creation
(7)
5 Exclusive story (5)
6 See 10 across
7 Adam's mate from the night
before (3)
12 Dealer-types reform - before
seeking Susan? (11)
13 Shade of purple, or a flower
(5)
14 A jockey's colours (5)
17 Video or audio tape (8)
18 Poetically rustic way to make
the cub coil up (7)
19 See 15 across
22 A cardinal in part of the ship
will assume a position of
prayer (5)
23 Construct (5)
24 See 25 across

Sudoku Corner

213

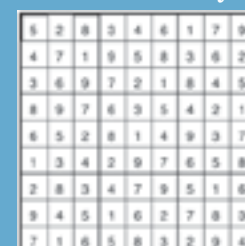
Easy



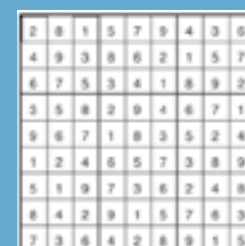
Hard



Last week's Easy 212



Last week's Hard 212



Notebook

Fr Bernard Healy



Remembering legends that remind us of truth

THE RELEASE of an animated movie called *The Star* caught my attention. The premise of the film – an imaginative telling of the Nativity focusing on the donkey and his animal companions reminded me that we have a plethora of traditions about various animals associated with the Christmas story.

Back in 2012, Pope Benedict XVI's book *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives* came in for some unfair criticism. The then-Pope pointed out that the Gospels themselves make no direct reference to the donkey or the ox in the stable. Some journalists suggested that Benedict wanted us to banish the animals from our cribs forthwith!

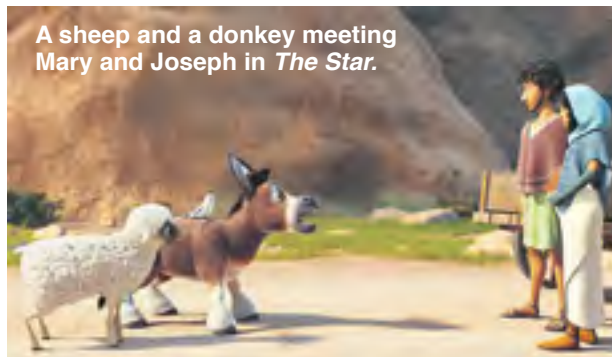
Nothing could have been further from the truth. A few sentences after pointing out their absence from the Gospels, Pope Benedict wrote: "No representation of the crib is complete without the ox and the ass." He noted that the prophesy of Isaiah 1:3 "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand," gives ample biblical justification for their presence.

Pope Benedict also suggests that the presence of the ox and ass – traditionally symbolising the Jews and Gentiles, points to the ultimate recognition of Christ by all humanity. The camels who accompany the Magi also receive scriptural warrant when we look at Psalm 72 and Isaiah 60, whilst the presence of the flocks with their shepherds can be found in the second chapter of Luke.

Traditions

Our own Irish folklore tradition adds a number of legends about the animals related to the Christmas story. Pádraig Ó Héalaí's 2012 book *An Slánaitheoir ag Siúl ar an Talamh* is a collection of all manner of tales and traditions touching on the events of the New

A sheep and a donkey meeting Mary and Joseph in *The Star*.



Testament.

He records a tradition that when Our Lady and St Joseph had to flee Herod's persecution and head to Egypt that the cow and the horse refused to carry them. The penance levied on the cow is that she would have to chew her food twice, thus explaining why cows chew the cud. Likewise, the horse was cursed with an insatiable

appetite, eating at every chance he can. The fact that he refused the Holy Family is also said to explain why the horse must sleep standing up and why a horse's broken leg refuses to heal!

The humble donkey, on the other hand, willingly carried the Holy Family to safety.

The cross on his back is a reminder of that good deed. It is also said that donkeys have a black mark on their feet, showing the spot where Our Lady rested her hand in the stable in Bethlehem.

The tendency of the donkey to lie down when a hand is placed on his back is said to be a reminder that he lay down when Mary placed her hand on his back.

BIRDS ALSO HAVE an amount of Christmas folklore about them. Marking St Stephen's Day with 'the wren' is still the custom in many places. It is said that the wren betrayed St Stephen. Thankfully the hunting of an actual wren on this day is no longer part of the tradition.

The robin is the quintessential Christmas bird. Some say that his red breast is due to the blood falling from the Cross landing on him. However, there are other stories

more closely connected to Christmas.

One states that as the Holy Family fled Herod, either Mary or Joseph cut a foot on brambles leaving a trail of blood. The robin mopped up this blood to prevent their being followed. Another story says that the robin was the only bird to recognise the Infant Jesus as King, and so the Child Jesus touched his breast.

The robin blushed scarlet on account of this honour!

It's important for us to remember our own folklore

UCD's Irish Folklore Commission Collection, the repository of much of our religious folklore, was recently recognised by UNESCO as part of its Memory of the World Register.

It would be well for us to remember our folklore too! The religious stories of our ancestors challenge us to remember that the events of the New Testament flows into our own reality, and that the sacred is always breaking through into the mundane.

Even if the tales aren't true, they are worth repeating.



Please help the poor with a New Year's gift

This man in Ghana was wrongfully imprisoned, abandoned by his family and nearly starved to death. Happily, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart were able to help him with food which The Little Way Association enabled them to buy. There are still millions of people without the basics of life, some because of natural disasters and others because of war and social unrest. Priests and religious are there to help the victims, and the Little Way can channel your kind donations to them without deduction of any kind.

In this New Year, please remember those in gravest need and consider making a gift to The Little Way Association's fund for the hungry, sick and deprived. You can use the coupon below or give online at tinyurl.com/lwadonations. Thank you, and may God reward your generosity.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

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www.littlewayassociation.com

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IC/01/04



Your New Year's gift will mean a chance of health and happiness, perhaps even the difference between life and death, for someone who is suffering.

EVERY EURO YOU SEND WILL BE VERY GRATEFULLY RECEIVED AND SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION.



"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself as it were at our mercy; He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart, and the very least trifle is precious in His sight."

- St Therese

We wish all our friends and benefactors a very happy and peaceful New Year.

May St Therese reward you in a special way for the sacrifices you make to support our work, and may she obtain many graces for all our benefactors during 2018.

In our modern age of materialism and selfishness when so many are searching for an authentic spirituality, Therese's little way of simple love for God and others has a powerful appeal. Perhaps we too can join her on the 'little way'.