

# The Irish Catholic

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not onlookers  
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# Children must be priority when marriages fail – top cardinal

Greg Daly

One of the Pope's closest advisers on the family has insisted that when dealing with marital breakdown, the Church must put the needs of children ahead of a simplistic application of rules.

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn told *The Irish Catholic* that in the past the Church too often focused on sexual sins to the detriment of the well-being of abandoned spouses and the children of both valid and 'irregular' unions.

He underlined the fact that when a divorced Catholic enters a second union, there is a responsibility to care for all others affected by marital breakdown.

## Justice

"It's very often a matter of justice in the family crises," said the cardinal, whose own parents divorced when he was in his teens, continuing, "what is due to the other, what is due to the children, what do they really need?"

The Austrian cardinal was in Ireland for a major conference in Limerick ahead of

next year's World Meeting of Families and to celebrate a Mass in Cork to mark the 25th anniversary of the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, of which he was General Editor.

His comments came against a background of heated debate within the Church since the publication last year of *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis' major document on marriage and the family, in which the Pope advised on how to help Catholics who have divorced and remarried back into Church life.

The Pope suggested that in certain circumstances, and with careful guidance, some such Catholics might be able to receive Communion.

This suggestion, building on Pope St John Paul's 1981 acknowledgement that clergy must honestly face how there are distinctions between, for example, those Catholics who had civilly remarried after divorcing their spouse and those who had done so after being abandoned, has been highly controversial.

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## Sri Lankans renew their trust in God's mother



Tamil Catholic youth pose before performing a Bharatnatyam dance depicting the heavenly angels during the Feast of Our Lady of Madhu as part of a pilgrimage in Ontario, Canada at the weekend. Sri Lankan Catholics have venerated the Mother of God under the title Our Lady of Madhu for more than 400 years. Photo: PA

MARTIN MANSERGH

Ireland must choose  
the type of society it  
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## Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment returns in the autumn



# Politicians can learn from peaceful Twelfth

### Mags Gargan

A leading peace campaigner has said politicians in the North could learn a lesson from the local communities, after last week's Twelfth of July parades season was hailed by the PSNI as the most peaceful in years.

While there was a heavy police presence in the area, all the Belfast bands abided by a Parades Commission determination to play only a single drum beat while passing St Patrick's Church in Donegall Street on July 12.

For the first time in almost two decades, the Orange Order parade passed the Ardoyne flashpoint in north Belfast

without protests and agreed not to hold its return evening procession in what local representatives said was a massive step forward for community relations.

"You can't create artificial tension," said Fr Gary Donegan CP, who has spent years working in Ardoyne. "It was the easiest and most peaceful Twelfth, and time and time again it shows you that you have to have experienced people on the ground, because it can all turn in the blink of an eye."

Looking to the future Fr Donegan said "what we have to do, instead of patting ourselves on the back, is just actually have an honest review".

"What needs to be shown is leader-

ship," he said, continuing that the peaceful parades could give politicians in Stormont "an opportunity". He said they should "use this" and "if the community can get through its most divisive, difficult and contentious time, then take the lead from there".

Meanwhile, the son of the late Deputy Minister Martin McGuinness has called for an end to "displays of hate" by loyalist bonfires after a coffin bearing a picture of his father was placed on one in Belfast.

Emmett McGuinness said he was "very thankful that I was raised by parents never to hate anyone or anything" and that the "annual display of hate must end".

## Children must come first when marriages fail

» Continued from Page 1

Last autumn, four cardinals sent the Pontiff a series of questions – termed dubia or 'doubts' – about issues they regard as problems in *Amoris Laetitia*.

When Pope Francis did not answer these questions, the cardinals published them, and have since called for the Pope to respond to them and grant them an audience, with one cardinal even saying the Pope may need to be 'corrected'.

### Examination

Explaining that *Amoris* contains an 'examination of conscience' similar to a pastoral programme that has been used in the Archdiocese of Vienna for some years, the cardinal said these questions are the Church's real programme to accompany divorced and remarried Catholics, reiterating that whatever happens the good of children must come first.

"The question of Communion can come after all this," he added.

"And not only look on one's own needs but on the needs of the others," he said, continuing, "that's the matter of justice, and therefore I think the Bible teaches us to be very attentive to justice."

## Carrying the Cross



Young people from St Patrick's College in Dungiven, Co. Derry took part in a Fatima Procession in St Patrick's Church in the town, reciting the Rosary during the procession whilst other students carried a statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

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# Bishop asks if it's time to drop civil part from Church weddings

Greg Daly

Ireland's longest-serving diocesan bishop has raised the question of whether it is time to separate the religious and civil aspects of Irish weddings.

Speaking at a Limerick conference, Clonfert's Bishop John Kirby told Austria's Cardinal Christoph Schönborn how "in Ireland there's a very close link between civil marriage and Church marriage", and asked whether the Church should acknowledge that the State's understanding of marriage has changed.

"We are now performing marriages that are not quite what we intended 40 or 50 years ago," he explained at the 'Let's Talk Family, Let's Be Family' conference in Mary Immaculate College, highlighting how the civil concept of marriage has been changed by "the introduction of civil divorce, and the more recent introduction of same-sex marriage as meaning exactly the same thing in civil law".

## Sacramentality

"I just wonder," he asked, "would it be better for the Church in Ireland to distance itself from the civil understanding of marriage, and celebrate our marriages as a sacrament and emphasise the sacramentality of Catholic marriages?"

Observing that in most countries there is a growing gap between sacramental and con-

tractual civil understandings of marriage, Cardinal Schönborn said the key difficulty with separating the two is that even civil marriages have 'natural' dimensions.

Asked by *The Irish Catholic* to expand on his concerns, Bishop Kirby declined to comment.

Dr Kirby's question echoed concerns first raised by the hierarchy during 2013's Constitutional Convention, when the bishops cautioned that any change to the definition of marriage in Irish law would create "great difficulties" which could bar clergy from carrying out their current civil roles as solemnisers of marriages.

During the referendum campaign two years ago, a spokesman for the bishops repeated this concern, observing that the passage of the referendum would mean the Church's view of marriage and that of the State would be "radically different", adding, "it's reasonable that the bishops may decide to separate the two".

2015 saw 56.7% of the State's 22,025 weddings being solemnised by Catholic priests, but in a Supreme Court ruling last month, Ms Justice Iseult O'Malley stated that following the introductions of no-fault divorce and same-sex marriage, the legal institution of marriage in Ireland can no longer be described in terms of traditional Christian doctrine.

## Faith-filled Marty Morrissey to debut at Knock Novena



Thousands of pilgrims attend the National Novena to Our Lady of Knock at the Shrine last year.

### Chai Brady

Charismatic RTÉ personality and "man of Faith" Marty Morrissey is set to make his debut appearance at the Knock annual novena next month. With the theme 'Living Life to the Full' the National Novena to Our Lady of Knock will run from Monday, August 14 until Tuesday 22.

Mr Morrissey will speak on Wednesday 16 and sport will be the topic of the day; the sports aficionado and commentator was chosen because he was described as a "man

of Faith" by a Knock spokesperson.

Fr Kevin O'Gorman, the author of *Saving Sport: Sport, Society and Spirituality*, will deliver workshops on the same day.

The diverse workshop-filled event will focus on family and the gift of life, with one of the highlights being the launch of the World Meeting of Families 2018 (WMOF) programme 'Amoris: Let's Talk Family: Let's be Family!' on Monday 21.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, President and Host of the WMOF, will highlight family life with a reflection entitled 'When Plates

Fly! Pope Francis on the joys and challenges of family life', and the Secretary General of the WMOF, Fr Timothy Bartlett, will deliver workshops on how to make technology more family-friendly.

The Parish Priest of Knock Shrine, Fr Richard Gibbons, said: "The novena is about embracing our spiritual selves and in today's world it is a valuable thing to take some time alone or with family and friends to experience the richness of our faith and to escape the material and fast-paced world."

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# Avoid ‘distorted’ story of Church State links, top academic urges

Greg Daly

Comments by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin at a conference in Germany are helpful neither to Irish Catholics nor to relations between Church and State in Ireland, a leading academic has said.

Describing as “distorted” the archbishop’s assessment of the origins of the distinctly Catholic character of independent Ireland and the reluctance within the Church to hand over Church-owned schools to the state, Prof. William Reville identified the “unhealthy entanglement” of Church and State in 20th-Century Ireland as “a two-way interaction in which the State was equally as complicit as the Church”.

Prof. Reville, who is Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry in University College Cork and a frequent contributor to *The Irish Catholic*, wrote in *The Irish Times* that he had been “dismayed” by Dr Martin’s July 8 comments in Würzburg.

Although he acknowledged the sincerity of the archbishops’s views, he contested the claim that “Catholic sectarianism frustrated the realisation of the new Ireland envisaged by the 1916 Proclamation”.

## Difficulties

Maintaining that Irish Catholics do not want Church leaders to deny either current and historical difficulties in

Church-State relations or abuses within the Church in the past, Prof. Reville called for bishops such as Dr Martin to emphasise also the good done by the Irish Church and the reality that both Church and State in 20th-Century Ireland were expressions of Irish society.

“Irish Catholics want their

leaders to provide wise, fair and courageous leadership, calling for public acknowledgement of the good done by the Irish church and for public acceptance that the way Irish Church-State relations developed over the 20th Century was an organic interaction between the two,” he wrote, adding that this simply

reflected the nature of Irish society as a whole.

## Backdrop

Against a backdrop of the ongoing controversy over the supposed ‘baptism barrier’, which has been shown to be a minor issue compared to a lack of places in oversubscribed schools, Prof. Reville

said: “Irish Catholics also want their leaders, when negotiating with the State about schools, to lobby for overall provision of increased numbers of school places and to take due account of the deep affection and loyalty that so many members of the laity feel for their Catholic schools.”

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### President praises church famine appeal

President Michael D. Higgins has paid tribute to the decision by the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference to organise special collections at churches across Ireland this weekend, to raise funds for people affected by the famine in East-Africa. He called on all Irish citizens and organisations to take this call as an example, and to respond with their traditional generosity.

“Irish Aid and the Irish NGO’s and missionary organisations are already providing highly effective assistance to millions of people across the region. But a greater response is required,” President Higgins said.

“We urgently need a renewed global effort to help prevent the deaths of millions of poor and marginalised people.”

### Sr Stan honoured for charity work

Homeless champion Sr Stan Kennedy received a special award at the weekend for her significant contribution to Ireland.

Sr Stan, who has been a member of the congregation of Religious Sisters of Charity since 1958, was presented with the 2017 Fitzgerald Bible Bruff Award at the Thomas Fitzgerald Centre in Co. Limerick.

She received the award in recognition of her lifelong contribution and work with and on behalf of “the poor, the homeless and the abused in Ireland”.

Committee chairman Paul Dennehy said “Sr Stanislaus Kennedy is a most deserving recipient”, adding that he was delighted that she accepted the award.

## Teen volunteers lend a hand at Knock



Over 100 young people aged 16-18 from a wide variety of schools have joined the VAKS (Volunteer At Knock Shrine) programme at Knock Shrine, which is a joint venture between the youth ministry office there and Tuam diocesan youth ministry.

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## Meeting could be D-Day for Irish Church

### Staff reporter

A senior barrister has called on Church leaders to speak out with confidence for Christian values in the run-in to next year’s World Meeting of Families in Dublin.

Writing in *The Irish Catholic*, Patrick Treacy SC praises Dublin’s Archbishop Diarmuid Martin for his outstanding leadership in tackling child sexual abuse, his ongoing

support for homeless people, and his determined criticism of gangland crime.

However, he argues, Catholic leaders must also speak out in support of marriage and the family before Dublin hosts the global Church gathering in August 2018.

Criticising the archbishop’s failure to engage in this month’s wide-reaching Würzburg lecture with the consequences of how the Irish

State’s legal understanding of marriage is now at odds with that of the Church, Mr Treacy said a visit by Pope Francis to Dublin could be a ‘D-Day moment’ for the Church.

“His arrival could launch the first proper, co-ordinated response to the secularist, ideological colonisation that has attempted to suffocate the great tradition of Christian faith in this country and turned it into mission territory,” he writes.

See Pages 14-15.

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# Dublin's future – big bucks but more inequality

**Y**ou only have to walk around the centre of Dublin to see that it is a city on the edge of booming future revolution. The cranes are flying – up everywhere. The buildings in the centre of town are being renovated and restored, and the hotels are full – not just of tourists, but of bankers, investment consultants, all kinds of smart money men and women sizing up Dublin as a place to do business.

Business location consultants – people who travel around investigating the conditions for business and investment – are saying that Dublin's future is looking terrific.

My prediction for the future is that the capital of Ireland will be, within about 10 years, almost unrecognisable. The population will double, perhaps treble.

If Brexit is bad for some aspects of the Irish economy – it is already hitting exporters, particularly in the agricultural section – it is a fantastic opportunity for Dublin. Paris and Frankfurt are both pitching to grab business from the City



**Mary Kenny**



Dublin's O'Connell Bridge.

of London – which will in future have the disadvantages of being outside of the single European market – and it's reported that Paris is even handing out bribes ('financial incentives') to bankers and brokers.

But Dublin has many advantages over Paris and Frankfurt: it's English-speaking, it's relatively crime-free (despite the appalling incidents of homicides that occur, statistically, violent crime is

low), it is free from terrorism, and the general quality of life is attractive.

Shouldn't any Dubliner be delighted that our native city is enjoying such a beguiling reputation?

Yes, positive news is always welcome. And yet, I also predict, there will be a real downside – some of which we are already seeing. The pressure on housing will become

intense. Rented property will rise astronomically – all those financial experts who earn big bucks will send up the price. There will be much more inequality, as rural Ireland will fall behind the zooming development of Dublin.

More social inequality will probably lead to more political divisions, too. More people will vote for hard-Left candidates and parties.

## Different country

The Dublin in which I grew up will be gone, and the Ireland that so many of us knew will be a different country.

Instead of lamenting and self-blaming about failings in the past – including the failings of Catholic Ireland – our moral leaders and pastors should focus on the challenges of the future. And curate the best of our heritage, too, so that those who dwell in Ireland in the coming times can remember the way it was, and many of the sweet and kind elements of old Ireland.

## Children are born with personalities

Little Prince George [pictured], son of Kate and William, seemed unwilling to walk nicely down the red carpet laid out for him in Poland on Monday. Oh-oh! Trouble ahead! George showed all the expressions of an obstinate little person.

Can you decide on a child's personality at the age of four? Steven Pinker, the world-renowned evolutionary psychologist, has written that personality is already formed – at birth. Babies are not "lumps of raw material," he writes in

*The Blank State*, "they are little people, born with personalities."

I was thinking that George's nanny will have to be firm with him and not allow him grow too self-willed.

Yet Pinker claims that most advice on raising kids is just

"flapdoodle". The personality they are born with will frame their characters.

And yet, early experience matters deeply.

The older you get, the more you cast your mind back to those early years, and what an impact they had on the course of your life.



## Advertisers ditching housewife stereotype

As a bad housewife myself, I suppose I should be pleased that the Advertising Standards Authority in Britain are to ban adverts which persistently show women in a housewifely role – forever cleaning, polishing, preparing meals and then washing up afterwards with wonderful Fairy Liquid.

The consumer corporation Unilever has already banned these stereotypes, which reinforce "outdated gender roles".

As a media veteran, I'm a little more cynical as to why this step is being taken. Showing women as ditzy little housewives probably doesn't sell the product these days – it's rather old-fashioned now. Advertisers go with the market not with Germaine Greer (who once said: "A housewife's work has no results. It simply has to be done again.")

Dyson, the new-fangled vacuum cleaner (which, by the way, is a terrific gadget, as even a bad housewife can

testify) sells their product with high-tech information about all the amazing stuff the yoke can do. And when Richard Dyson, the inventor who created it, promotes it himself, it's even possible that consumers have more confidence in the man – yes, the man – who invented it. For we have to face the fact that it was men who brought us nearly all these labour-saving devices.

Tactfully, nobody ever mentions this aspect of the patriarchy in an advert!

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Temporary relocation for Belfast parish

Masses will not be celebrated at the oldest Catholic Church in Belfast for a month, and will instead shift to a nearby building as extensive restoration work at the church continues.

St Mary's, in Chapel Lane in the city centre, where Mass was first celebrated in 1784, has been undergoing both external and internal restoration since May. Masses were celebrated as normal at the church until this week.

In a message to parishioners in the weekly bulletin, the parish administrator, Fr James Boyle, wrote that all Masses for "about four weeks" will be said daily at Living Youth, which can be accessed via Chapel Lane.

It will still be possible to enter the church to pray, light candles and make donations.

### Mill Hill Fathers bid farewell to Kilkenny

Tribute has been paid to the Mill Hill Fathers as they prepare to leave Kilkenny, having had a presence there and within the Diocese of Ossory since 1932.

"There is a deep regret in the diocese at the departure of the Mill Hill Fathers. I know the faithful will miss the quiet ministry that was characteristic of the house," said Msgr Michael Ryan, Administrator of Ossory diocese.

The Mill Hill Fathers moved to St Joseph's on the Waterford Road in Kilkenny in 1989, after a 60-year residency in the then Junior Seminary in Uppercourt, Freshford in 1932.

The move now is primarily due to the age profile of the members and the shortage of vocations.

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## Martin Mansergh

### The View



# Irish people should decide what type of society we have, free from the spectre of foreign funding

In the western world generally and in Ireland, it has become increasingly difficult for party politicians or office-holders to act on the basis that their religious principles take precedence over party loyalty. This does not just apply to Catholic legislators. The DUP are finding the same thing, as they come under increased scrutiny, now that they are pivotal to the Theresa May minority administration. Tim Farron resigned as British Liberal leader, because his evangelical beliefs were not compatible with his role.

The EPP Group, to which Fine Gael belongs, is the largest in the European Parliament. While professing a Christian Democrat orientation,

it is not bound to one Church, and the religious element is quite fluid and not overly-prescriptive. As the decision in Germany recently to open marriage to same-sex couples shows, political pragmatism before an election overruled personal convictions, even if Chancellor Angela Merkel voted against, like then Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave did on his government's contraceptive bill (which was defeated) back in 1974.

The late Senator Des Hanafin could legitimately be described as a Catholic politician in the sense that his fidelity to the Faith took precedence over the party whip, though he used his influence to minimise such conflict. His value to the pro-life movement and the anti-divorce campaign as a leader or mentor came not just from his political experience and contacts, but also the verbal moderation that he preferred, and the fact that he never claimed to be a saint.

Wisely, he steered away from conflict over the EU, not wanting to pit moral imperatives against material interests, preferring to focus on obtaining strong safeguards of Ireland's position, like the Maastricht Protocol. Although once associated with opponents of Charles Haughey, he later worked productively with him, untempted by the social liberalism of the PDs.

#### Brake

Partly thanks to him, even the second divorce referendum in 1995 passed only by a wafer-thin majority, and did not provide divorce on demand. Partly as a result, divorce levels here are lower than elsewhere. Politicians who want to remove the brake of a lengthy waiting period will have to go back to the people.

Relations between Church and State since independence have gone through three phases. Initially, the Catholic Church held wide sway over matters deemed to impinge on faith and morals. The second period from the 1970s was one of gradual change, then growing challenge. The third period since the 1990s has on the whole been one of retreat. Until now, the Church has tried to avoid direct clashes with the State that have occurred on the Continent in the past 30-40 years.

Potential confrontation looms over the Eighth

Angela Merkel: the German Chancellor voted against same-sex marriage being introduced in her country.



Amendment. When it was adopted in 1983, it was regarded as the *ne plus ultra*, beyond which the liberal advance would not proceed.

A ban on abortion was not in the 1937 Constitution, as the possibility of it becoming legal was unimaginable. Developments in Britain and America in the 1960s and 1970s changed the perspective. The 1967 legislation in Britain, introduced by Liberal MP David Steel with Labour government support, in theory contained significant restrictions, but in practice became abortion on request, since availed of by many women travelling from Ireland. A United States Supreme Court decision in 1973 opened the way to a similar situation there.

#### “What looked consensual turned out not to be so”

When the pro-life movement sought and were given a pledge by the two main party leaders to introduce an amendment here in 1981, effectively banning the introduction of abortion, they were concerned both about a future Oireachtas, and the

possibility of a decision by the Supreme Court, similar to their judgment in the McGee case in 1973 which allowed married couples a right to imported artificial contraception.

What looked consensual turned out not to be so. Garret FitzGerald, when he became Taoiseach, embarked on a liberalising constitutional crusade, in which context the promised Pro-Life Amendment became something of an embarrassment. Enough government backbenchers together with the opposition held him to the pledge, and the 1983 amendment was passed by a two-thirds majority. The wording was actually formulated by the 1982 Fianna Fáil minority government, after consultation with the Churches, the upshot of which was a positively-worded article protecting the equal right to life of the mother and the unborn.

#### Misunderstanding

One misunderstanding of the period was the notion that northern Protestant opinion was mainly on the liberal side of the argument, but the unionist position on the matter today shows otherwise.

There were skirmishes

in the late 1980s over the provision to students of abortion information, but the issue came to a head with the 'X' case in 1992, where a suicidal teenage girl sought and was initially prevented from travelling to England for an abortion.

The Supreme Court relieved intense political pressure by subsuming a suicidal tendency under the right to life of the mother.

The right to travel and information was established by referendum, but two attempts to repeal suicidal tendencies as grounds for a termination here were defeated by opposition coming from both ends, and in 2013 legislation was eventually enacted providing for it, with no one claiming it operates very satisfactorily. The need to travel is what is now being challenged.

#### “Is this an issue on which there is any tenable middle way?”

Conflicts of conscience have been relieved somewhat by a move towards free votes in the Oireachtas, but the Government still has to decide and stand over what legislation will follow repeal or revision of the Eighth Amendment. Is this an issue on which there is any tenable middle way?

In the event of repeal, do the people have no further direct say, and will it then be left entirely to the Oireachtas, the courts and of course the medical profession? My own abiding conviction is that the Irish people have a right to decide what society they want – that is what independence is for – without being browbeaten internationally or unconsciously swayed by a heavy imbalance in foreign funding.

A decisive battle between two very different visions of Irish society is not far off.



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# Focus on female priests an 'insult' to women

**Mags Gargan**

The Bishop of Meath has dismissed the issue of female priests as an "insult to women" that suggests there is "a lacking in women" because they are not priests.

Bishop Michael Smith said he "wouldn't put any bets on" women ever being ordained priests. "I'd say that will never happen, I don't think so," he told *The Meath Chronicle*.

The bishop added that he thought the issue was "an insult to women that they must be priests" because there is a charism in femininity and a charism in masculinity and "somehow you're saying it's a lacking in women because you're not a priest".

"Just because there's a shortage it doesn't mean women have to get on the altar," he said.

Bishop Smith also dismissed the issue of married priests saying, "I'm not so sure that would solve the problem either".

In a wide-ranging interview

discussing his 34 years as a bishop, Dr Smith – who at 77 is two years past retirement age – said he hoped his successor might be appointed next year.

"It's two years now and no, they're not rushing but maybe early next year. I'm happy enough to retire, 34 years is a long stretch," he said.

## Pain

Reflecting on his most challenging time as bishop, he pointed to the sex abuse scandal, saying "It's something that's very hard to get your head around".

"It was hard to deal with, historic cases kept showing up too, people long dead but you have to deal with it, recognise the pain people suffer," he said.

Asked about his regrets, he said he has none about the priesthood, "but you would certainly think there are things you could have done better along the way".

## Young people called to share their faith



Attendees at the Summit enjoy a chat during a break. Photo: Designaire

## Staff reporter

Some 300 young people attending a conference on evangelisation at the weekend have been challenged by the Irish primate to share their gift of faith.

Archbishop Eamon Martin said he longed for a New Pentecost in Ireland, "to transform and renew the Faith in this country" and asked the young people to "be open to finding yourself called and gifted for mis-

sion, impelled to get out there with your faith and your gifts and engage the world".

The conference in Croke Park was a lay-led initiative aiming to put a structure for evangelisation in place in Ireland. Speakers included FOCUS founder Curtis Martin; Vice President of the Augustine Institute, Dr Edward Sri; and Director for Evangelisation for the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, Fr Michael Gaitely.

Curtis Martin told *The Irish Cath-*

*olic* that although the Church has been "wounded deeply by the sins of people" it is now going through a renewal process.

He said his message to parishes is "don't be discouraged" because the Church is "becoming healthy again". "Many, many people have left and now is the time for those who have stayed to be alive in Christ and have the love and patience to go out to their loved ones and invite them to come back."

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# Trócaire



## The approach of Pope Francis to marriage builds on the work of St John Paul, writes **Greg Daly**



**T**he Pope is Catholic. It might seem a strange way for one of the Church's most eminent cardinals to begin a lecture, but these are strange times: just one day after Vienna's Cardinal Christoph Schönborn spoke in Limerick about how to read Pope Francis's exhortation on love and the family, Catholic websites, news outlets and commentators that boast of their orthodoxy were falsely claiming Pope Emeritus Benedict had said the Church is on the verge of capsizing and even that the former Pope had equated Pope Francis himself with a capsizing boat.

He had, of course, said no such thing, but incomplete and poorly translated texts had been leapt upon by a small but vociferous faction of Catholics whose online presence is grotesquely disproportionate to their significance in the real world and who have been convinced for some time that the Holy Father is a disaster for the Church, with *Amoris Laetitia*, his 2016 post-synodal exhortation, being nothing less than a betrayal of the Church's constant teaching.

For the Austrian cardinal, a Bohemia-born aristocrat whose parents divorced when he was in his early teens and who last year presented the exhortation to the media in Rome for the Pope, nothing could be further from the truth.

### Best tool

Describing *Amoris Laetitia* as the best tool for its own interpretation, he told the crowd, including five current bishops, at Mary Immaculate College's 'Let's Talk Family, Let's Be Family' conference, "there have been many comments, even episcopal comments, published about *Amoris Laetitia*, and that's good, but I think to receive the substance of the document, the best thing is to enter into the document."

The document, he continued, is Catholic, as is the Pope. "Some people are afraid he might not be fully Catholic," he observed, adding, "when Pope Francis asked me to present this document to

the media, I met him shortly afterwards and he said 'thank you, thank you for presenting the document,' and then he said to me: 'Is it orthodox?'

"And I said, 'Holy Father, it is fully orthodox.'"

Pope Francis would later send him a note saying his reassurance had given him comfort, a powerful testimony to the respect with which the Dominican friar who has served as Archbishop of Vienna since 1995 has been regarded by the last three Popes. St John Paul II appointed him in 1980 to the International Theological Commission of the Holy See and in 1987 picked him to serve as general editor, working alongside his former teacher the future Pope Benedict XVI, of the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Admitting the document's controversial nature, he alluded then to the notorious 'dubia', five questions about the document put to the Pope by four cardinals last September and subsequently published – something Cardinal Schönborn criticised in a press conference before his lecture – when the Pope did not respond.

**“Does Pope Francis question the indissolubility of marriage? The answer is ‘no’”**

About "the four cardinals who wanted to have clear answers", he said, "I think I have given personally an answer to one of them – but not in public – and I gave a clear answer to their questions. And the answer is very easy. To all the questions you can say 'yes'. Does Pope Francis question the indissolubility of marriage? The answer is 'no'. Does he teach the classical teaching on marriage and family? The answer is 'yes'."

At the core of the difficulty, he said, was the classical problem of how moral principles should be applied on the ground. Ahead of the lecture he had told gathered media how over 1,400 years ago, Pope St Gregory the Great had said the art of the

# 'The Pope is a Catholic'



Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leary, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna and Fr Chris O'Donnell pictured at the Let's Talk Family: Let's Be Family conference in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. Photo: Brian Arthur

pastoral accompaniment is the art of discernment, which requires training.

Cautioning against rushing to judgment in moral matters, he advised the press: "I fear those who have rapid, clear answers in politics and economy and also in religion. Rigorists and laxists have clear and rapid answers, but they fail to look at life. The rigorist avoids the effort of discernment, of looking closely at reality. The laxist lets everything possible go, and there is no discernment. They are the same but opposite."

Moral theology, he explained in the lecture,

stands on two feet, the moral principles themselves and then the prudential steps to application of the principles.

### Prudence

"This is the classical field of the virtue of prudence, and in moral theology the treatment of prudence has been gravely neglected; there was a great insistence on the principles, and that was right and it necessary, as principles must be clear, but then the question is how to come to practical judgment and practical action," he said, continuing, "That is the task of the virtue of prudence."

The Pope tends to favour different language when focusing on the same issue, he explained. "Pope Francis doesn't speak very often about the virtue of prudence; he speaks, as a good Jesuit, about discernment," he said, noting that the Pontiff sees discernment as the key question in these matters: "This is the key question for the right handling or right relation between principles and concrete application."

With that pointer, the cardinal then had the audience turn to the very end of the exhortation, as he began mapping out a skeleton guide

to the document he would later describe – and he said Pope Emeritus Benedict shares this view – as so complementary to St John Paul's 1981 post-synodal exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* that the two form a diptych, as though they're two panels of the same picture.

Section 325 of the text, he says, is a "great summary" of *Amoris Laetitia*, noting how one of the key ideas of Pope Francis throughout the document is that marriage is a journey. "We are *in via*, on the way, on the road," he said, describing this as an approach to things similar to St Thomas Aquinas' and continuing, "There's no family in a static way; each family is *in via*, as each of us is *in via* his whole life."

**“One of the main causes of failure is not asking too little of marriage, but too much”**

Quoting the exhortation's observation that no family drops down from Heaven perfectly formed, but must constantly grow in their ability to love, looking towards its ultimate fulfilment in the Kingdom to come, he summed this up as a caution not to demand of marriage a perfection a family cannot have, and said, "very often Pope Francis remembers that one of the main causes of failure is not asking too little of marriage, but too much".

### Deepest needs

Stressing that we are all on a journey, the cardinal noted that "imperfection is an essential part of our life" and turned to section 320, which says a couple's love reaches a healthy autonomy when each spouse realises God alone must be the centre of their life and only he – and not the other spouse – can satisfy their deepest needs.

He quoted the document's reference to how World War II Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer – described by the cardinal as "a really great man and a martyr of Faith" – said the spiritual journeys of couples needs to help them to "a





Maria Bucke, Patrickswell and Mary Mann, Croagh pictured at the conference. Photo: Brian Arthur

certain 'disillusionment' with regard to the other, to stop expecting from that person something which is proper to the love of God alone".

This recognition of earthly imperfection, picking up on how sections 72 and 73 describe marriage as of its nature an "imperfect sign of the love between Christ and the Church", seems to mark a fine-tuning of *Familiaris Consortio*; the earlier document taught, following Scripture and Tradition, that marriage is a sign of that union, and *Amoris* follows this, with the qualification that here on Earth this can never be a perfect analogy.

## Refuge

Moving through section 321, with its description of the family as a 'hospital' in which Christian couples act as co-operators of God's grace and witnesses of the Faith, the cardinal told how his mother and his infant self and toddler brother had fled Bohemia – now in the Czech Republic – following the Second World War and sought refuge with family in Austria, before returning to the very beginning of the document.

Reflecting on the document's opening section, the cardinal said if there is one central message to *Amoris Laetitia*, suitable to be shared in a mere online tweet, it is that "marriage and family are possible" – the exhortation, he said, is a great encouragement for marriage and the family, noting how the synod fathers of 2014 and 2015 had believed that even with all the challenges of today's world, there remains a profound desire for marriage throughout the world.

The synod process – the biggest single exercise in collective Church discernment since the Second Vatican Council – was a collective journey, the cardinal explained, detailing the "surprising

progress of the synods, with 2014's extraordinary synod being marked by tension and conflict, while 2015's synod saw every point in the synod's final text approved by at least two thirds of the gathered bishops. "That's really a sign that the synod was a common way," he said.

The biblical foundations of marriage and the family, he said, as outlined in sections 19-21, do not shy away from reality, with Pope Francis sharing this recognition. "For good reason," he quoted, "Christ's teaching on marriage is inserted in a dispute about divorce." Citing biblical examples, he explained that this realism warns us against idealising the family, and calls us to look mercifully upon reality.

Sections 35 to 37, then, show Pope Francis mapping out the main line of his approach, encouraging us to stand up for the values we can and must offer the world. It is not enough, the cardinal said, to reel off the problems of the world, or simply to impose rules by authority; rather the challenge is responsibly and generously to show why people should marry "and in this way", he quoted the Pope as writing, "to help men and women better to respond to the grace that God offers them".

Advising those gathered to underline this, he reiterated this – "trust in grace", he said, before noting how the Pope cautions against weighing marriage down with excessive idealisation, presenting it as an abstract phenomenon rather than a living and changing reality.

## Consciences

Elphin's Bishop Kevin Doran told *The Irish Catholic* last December that the most important thing Pope Francis was saying is that we can't be anybody else's conscience, and section 37 of *Amoris*

*Laetitia* spells this out, noting how we sometimes find it hard to allow for the consciences of the faithful and observing "we have been called to form consciences not replace them".

Explaining that he had been deeply moved by this passage, the cardinal asked whether we really trust in the consciences of people who respond as best they can in difficult circumstances, observing that "the *bonum possibile* (possible good) in moral theology – it has been so neglected". In what seemed an allusion to the famous parable of the widow's mite, he noted how Pope Francis has observed that "a little step towards the good done under difficult circumstances can be more valuable than a moral solid life under confident circumstances".

## The cardinal had witnessed the hardships suffered by the poor of Buenos Aires"

The key to understanding where Pope Francis comes from on this, he said, can be found in section 49, which outlines the difficulties faced by poor households, single mothers, and others in need to whom the Church must offer understanding, comfort and acceptance, rather than turning God's loving and healing message into stones to hurl at those in difficulty. The cardinal had witnessed the hardships suffered by the poor of Buenos Aires and the heroism with which they faced it when he visited the city – and met the future Pope – in the 1980s, he said.

Section 123 is another central text in the document, he said, noting with approval the fingerprints of St Thomas Aquinas in the passage which defines love as a kind of

friendship marked by concern for the good of the other and with marriage destined to last as it is rooted in the deepest inclinations of human nature. "We shouldn't be afraid too much about other kinds of relationship because this natural inclination will always be stronger," he observed.

Pope Francis' realism is clear in sections 220 and 221, detailing how a maturing love learns to negotiate in a way that everyone wins, with the development of this skill needing time and patience.

Expressing pleasure that Pope Francis did not get bogged down in the subject of same-sex marriage, he related how sections 250 and 251 focus on the Church's Christ-inspired approach to homosexual people, reiterating that everybody, regardless of their sexual orientation, is entitled to be respected in their dignity and treated with consideration and without even a semblance of unjust discrimination – and especially without aggression and violence. While same-sex unions are not analogous to God's plan for marriage, he said, "we always have to look at the person first, and not the orientation".

Chapter eight of *Amoris* has long been the most controversial part of the exhor-

tation, he said, turning to section 300 – while urging those gathered to read chapter seven carefully – to quote the key statement, "if we consider the immense variety of concrete situations such as those I have mentioned, it is understandable that neither the Synod nor this Exhortation could be expected to provide a new set of general rules, canonical in nature and applicable to all cases".

This statement relieved him when he read it, he said, as he had worried the document might contain new canonical rules: maintaining that the canonical dispositions remain valid, but that it's not true to say nothing has changed, he said *Amoris* recognises what's needed are not new rules but a renewed attitude to discernment.

## “Never ever, take your child hostage”

This need had been flagged by St John Paul in *Familiaris Consortio* 84, he said, which said pastors for love of truth are obliged to discern situations – to distinguish between cases – with section 298 of *Amoris* reeling off a range of different scenarios considered by St John Paul. Pope Francis, he says, has built on this.

"We do not speak about Communion," he said, explaining that this question comes later. "We speak about the moral qualifications of situations," he continued, "Pope Francis said at one point in the synod, that this question of Communion is a trap, because you put away the consideration of the situation, and you only want to have a casuistic approach: are they allowed or aren't they?"

Section 300, he said, details five questions for divorced and remarried, including how they treated their children as their marriage was breaking down, what efforts had been made at reconciliation, what had become of the abandoned party, what consequences had the new relationship had on the family and the wider Christian community, and what example it was setting for young people preparing for marriage.

Describing this as the real programme to accompany the divorced and remarried, he said whatever happens the good of children must come first. "Never ever, take your child hostage," he quoted the Pope as crying in section 245, adding: "The question of Communion can come after all this."

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## Christ's truth needs to be accessible to all, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn tells Greg Daly

**I**f Limerick's Mary Immaculate College last week managed an impressive prelude to next year's World Meeting of Families in Dublin through hosting two lectures and an academic seminar with the prelate the Pope has tapped as the key interpreter of his document on marriage and the family, Cork didn't let the side down.

Saturday saw Cardinal Christoph Schönborn spending the morning with catechists and clergy in Cork before celebrating Mass in the city's Church of the Sacred Heart, with Bishop John Buckley, Waterford and Lismore's Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, and the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland Eamon Martin concelebrating, along with a host of local clergy.

The day in Cork followed visits with 15 of the cardinal's seminarians to such sites as Clonmacnois and Glenstal Abbey, where he was reunited with his onetime classmate the former abbot Mark Patrick Hederman, and gave thanks for the contribution of Irish monks to the medieval re-evangelisation of central Europe, describing the visit to Ireland as a pilgrimage to their roots.

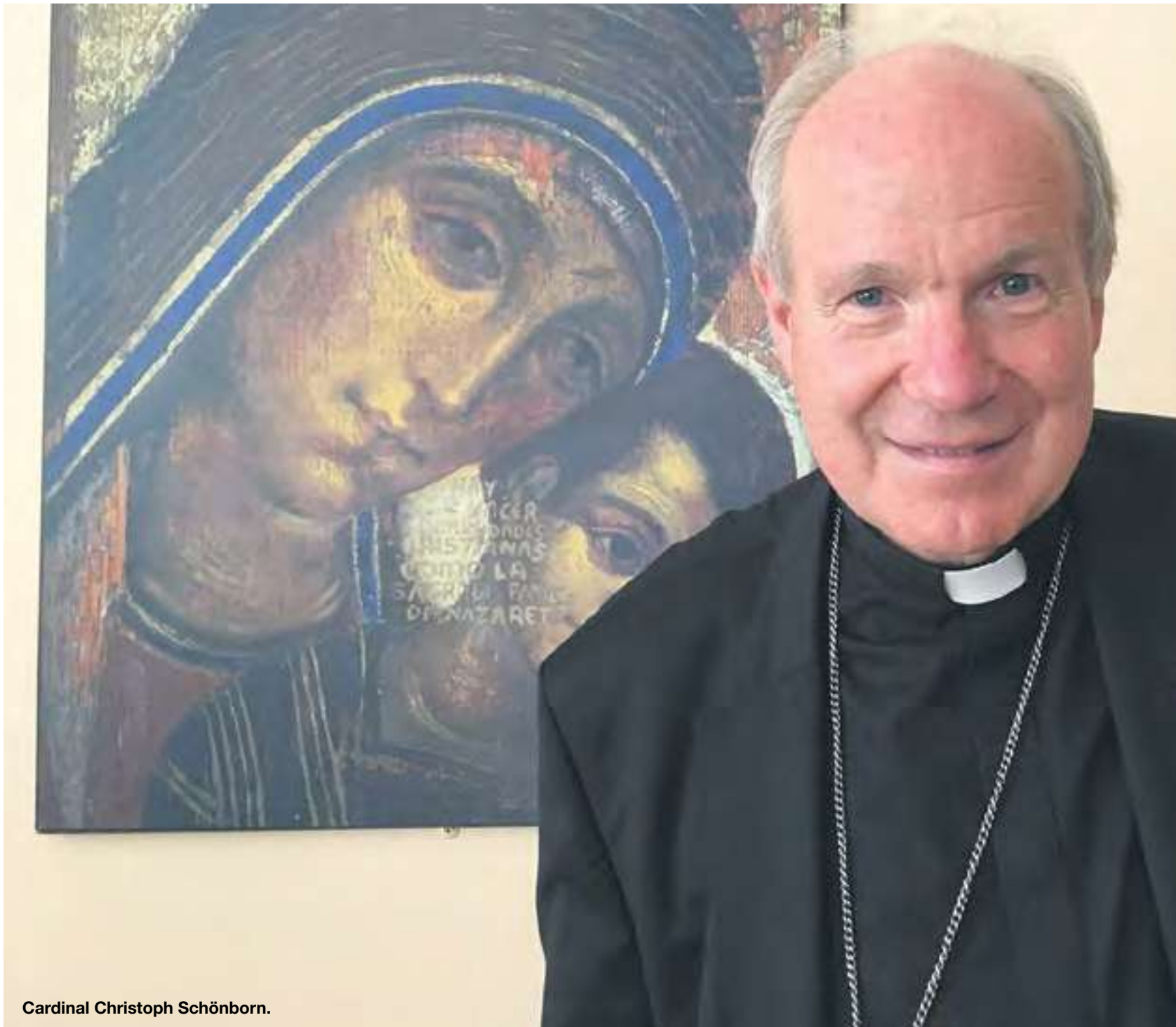
While the visits to Clonmacnois and Glenstal were in some senses about paying homage to the past, the trip to Cork was very much about the future. Organised by the Steering Committee of Adult Studies of the Catechism, it was intended to mark the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, on which the future Austrian cardinal had worked alongside the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as general editor.

### Further insight

The cardinal's visit, the committee's national coordinator Máirín Ní Shúilleabháin said ahead of the event, was well timed, coming during preparations for August 2018's World Meeting of Families as it would give further insight into the Gospel of the family at this moment in our history, helping to increase our knowledge of what we believe as Catholics and enriching our understanding of the dignity of the Christian family.

The *Catechism* is an invaluable

# Building on doctrine to real human situatio



Cardinal Christoph Schönborn.

tool for evangelising, the cardinal told *The Irish Catholic* after the Mass, explaining that, "Pope St John Paul said when he published the *Catechism* – he promulgated the *Catechism* on October 11, 1992 – that this is a secure guide for Catholic doctrine, and therefore it is the right tool for evangelising."

However, he adds, it is not the only such tool, and related books and resources might be better suited to individual situations. "Some countries have produced national catechisms," he says, continuing, "there have been published a good number of working tools to work with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for homilies, for catechesis – kind of instruments to use the *Catechism* practically, but it is a fact that the *Compendium* and I think

even more the *YouCat* became very important tools to popularise the *Catechism*."

**“The *Catechism* first, as it says in the introduction, is intended for bishops”**

The 2006 *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* follows the template of the kind of classic catechism with which older readers of this newspaper would have grown up, but 2010's *YouCat: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which the cardinal was involved in at its conception, follows the template of the full catechism, albeit in a way targeted at teenagers and younger adults.

Describing it as “a worldwide success”, the cardinal continues, “it’s a tremendous success – it’s I think a perfect example of what Pope St John Paul intended when he encouraged, so to say, ‘inculturated’ or ‘localised’ instruments for catechesis.”

An obvious question that arises from that is whether the language of the *Catechism* is suitable for ordinary readers, couched as it sometimes is in philosophical and theological approaches with which few in the modern Church are familiar, let alone comfortable.

\* \* \* \* \*

Indeed, this difficulty reared its head during 2014 and 2015's synods of bishops when concerns were raised about Church language sometimes coming across as

unintentionally hurtful, perhaps the classic example of which being the description of homosexual acts as “intrinsically disordered”.

The phrase, which is conspicuously absent from both the *Compendium* and the *YouCat*, is one that really only makes sense in the context of Thomistic theology and philosophy, rooted in the thinking of Aristotle.

“The *Catechism* first, as it says in the introduction, is intended for bishops,” the cardinal points out, stressing that they – and not general readers – are the target audience, something that has inspired some people to joke “are the bishops so ignorant that they now need their own catechism?”

“Of course,” he continues, “the intention was to say that catechesis is primarily a task of the



# that speaks ns

became aware that he needed a smaller sized book, and he published a kind of compendium, which is a summary of his 'Great Catechism'. That was not even enough and he published later the minimum – the very small catechism – as an appendix to a schoolbook he had published for the Jesuit schools."

## Parallel

The modern parallel should be obvious: "So he had published three catechisms, the 'Great Catechism' for the teachers, the medium-sized catechism for the popular reader, and the minimum catechism for learning by heart with short sentences."

Having mentioned the recent synods and given the previous day's talks and discussions in Limerick, another obvious question concerned how the cardinal's working group at the synod had ever reached agreement, including as it did such totemic figures as the cardinal himself, Cardinal Gerhard Müller who was then head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Church's doctrinal watchdog, and Cardinal Walter Kasper, whose proposed penitential path towards enabling the divorced-and-remarried to receive Communion had dominated public debate ahead of the first 'extraordinary' synod.

Other major figures in the group included Munich and Freising's Cardinal Reinhard Marx, president of the German bishops' conference and a member of Pope Francis' Council of Cardinal Advisers, and the Swiss Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

"There's always a period of time dedicated to the language groups," Cardinal Schönborn tells me, "so there was only one German language group – there were three or four English and French and Italian and Spanish speaking language groups."

**“The great surprise was that the text we presented to the synod we all voted for unanimously”**

These groups were drawn up to consider the midway reports of the first synod and again for the central week of 2015's synod. "In the German-language group there were, yes, some – as they say in Italy, *pezzi grossi* ('big shots') – there was Cardinal Müller, Cardinal Marx, Cardinal Kasper, me, Cardinal Koch and a good number of bishops, German bishops or neighbouring bishops," he says.

Commenting on how much attention was paid to the group, which was expected by many to be key to how the synod would go, he says: "Of course, we were looked at very attentively – how does it work with especially

cardinals who are considered as being rather controversial? And the great surprise was that the text we presented to the synod – to the secretariat of the synod – we all voted for unanimously."

\* \* \* \* \*

In their report, the group detailed suggestions for facing the challenge of divorced and civilly-remarried Catholics who want to receive the sacraments but acknowledged that this was an issue which had no simple or general solutions.

Recalling Pope St John Paul statement in 1981's post-synodal exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* that pastors "must know that, for the sake of truth, they are obliged to exercise careful discernment of situations" and that there are real differences in how Catholics have come to remarry after divorce, the group built on that to consider how that discernment might play out in reality.

They agreed that Catholics in such situations should be led by a qualified priest through a deep examination of conscience, reflection and repentance to consider a range of issues, with the outlined questions subsequently being adopted in *Amoris Laetitia*.

When one's situation is examined objectively in such a guided way, the group said, it would be possible to determine before God in the privacy of one's conscience – the so-called 'internal forum' – whether access to the sacraments would be possible.

## Real situation

"I think it was the result of a really careful consideration of both doctrine and the real situation of most families," the cardinal explains, continuing, "and this synthesis was well accepted by the majority of the Synod and was also partly integrated in *Amoris Laetitia* by Pope Francis."

During his public lecture in Limerick, the cardinal noted the similarity of the examination of conscience mapped out in *Amoris Laetitia* 300 to that recommended for almost 20 years in his own diocese, saying that he had been "very moved when I read in the papal document a very similar programme".

While the cardinal rejects the notion that Pope Francis took this idea from Vienna's 'Five Attentions', maintaining that he surely based it on his own experience, it is clear that the examination of conscience outlined in *Amoris* is strikingly similar to that in the Vienna programme, rooted as both are in the need to face the truth. As such, the cardinal must have experience in his diocese of what the kind of discernment Pope Francis – like the German language group – envisages, which invites the obvious question of what this entails on the clerical coalface.

## Discernment

Guided discernment would clearly be hard work, after all, requiring empathy, intelligence, knowledge, experience, courage, and – perhaps most importantly given declining clerical numbers in the West – time. How can priests fulfil such a challenging role in these

discernment processes?

"You are right – there is a question of time," the cardinal says. "May priests have time enough to really listen to difficult situations, and are they trained to counsel really in difficult situations? This is a very good question, which is certainly not easily resolved."

It may be a case where the load needs to be shared, he ventures. "But I think what Vatican II intended to say when the Council speaks about conscience – it doesn't speak about the conscience of the priest or the laity but the conscience of everybody, and for everybody it is necessary to have a careful formation of our own conscience, and this concerns mainly the people concerned by marital conflicts and family conflicts," he says.

**“In the Bible the sins against justice are counted more seriously than the sins against chastity”**

"Very often the best advisors may not be the priest," he continues, "but the parents, a cousin, an uncle, friends, a good parish – a living parish community where people are aware that there is a crisis in a family – and how often marriage has been saved because there was a good counselling perhaps not from the priest, but from prudent, wise people who helped this couple to find a new start!"

There is a logic to this: although it might be natural to think that spiritual guidance can really only be given by priests, it's hard to deny the value of the lived reality

of the marital experience of devout Christian couples, or indeed of holy Christian individuals such as the lay Carmelite Jan Tyranowski who did so much to form the youthful Karol Wojtyla in his path to becoming the future Pope St John Paul II.

In the public address, the cardinal noted that in the Church we have often focused on issues of chastity when considering questions of marriage and family while not giving sufficient attention to questions of justice, which are often more important, observing that, "in the Bible the sins against justice are counted more seriously than the sins against chastity".

He had already pointed out earlier that day that the only mention of Communion in the main text of *Amoris Laetitia* is in section 186 of the document which deals with questions of social justice and how those who receive the sacrament while turning a blind eye to the poor and suffering, or accept other forms of division, contempt and inequality, receive the Eucharist unworthily.

## Question

The obvious question, then, is where the focus on children – and indeed on the treatment and fate of abandoned spouses – comes from in the Vienna process and in the examination of conscience in *Amoris Laetitia* 298.

"Exactly," he says. "It's very often a matter of justice in the family crises – what is due to the other, what is due to the children, what do they really need?"

We must not only look on our own needs, he concludes, but on the needs of the others: "That's the matter of justice, and therefore I think the Bible teaches us to be very attentive to justice."

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and all those committed by them for catechesis. So you can compare the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*: it was the *Catechism ad Parochos* for the parish priests – it was not primarily intended to be the catechetical tool for everybody but for those who are in charge of catechesis."

The process of disseminating the Church's teaching through a series of simplified texts has an impressive pedigree, the cardinal explains.

"And somehow, we see a similar development as in the 16th Century, when St Peter Canisius wrote his 'Great Catechism' – he wrote it in Vienna – similar by size nearly as big as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*," he says, continuing, "he then rapidly





Irish-founded diocese fights to keep children safe on harsh Kenyan streets, writes  
**Chai Brady**

**W**hen there is tragedy anywhere in the world, it is usually children who suffer the most. Although the Catholic Church and Trócaire are helping to keep children in Kenya from disease, starvation and abuse, it is a problem that has deteriorated due to severe drought.

The Diocese of Lodwar was established in Turkana County, Northern Kenya in 1978. Before this, Irish missionaries were creating parishes, health centres and schools since the 1960s.

With poverty devastating the region – 80% of the one million strong population earn less than 90c a day – education has played a huge part in saving children from lives of destitution and crime.

Lomali Iria Charles Namorupus (36) works for Caritas, and has laboured for years with Trócaire to help the street children of Lodwar (the largest city in Turkana).

Charles was raised in a Catholic family from “a humble background” and was put through school and university by Fr Con Ryan of the Kiltegan Fathers, an Irish missionary who worked in the diocese.

He was educated in the first mission in Turkana in Lorugum, which he described as one of the “greatest schools” in Turkana. It began as a relief centre founded by the first bishop of the diocese, Bishop John Mahon from Ferbane, Co Offaly, whose main focus was education.

### Catechetical services

Charles went back to teach in his primary school in Lorugum after completing secondary school. When he had free time, he would do catechetical services and catechism and taught people the Bible.

He studied Social Work and Administration in Makerere University in Uganda. He told *The Irish Catholic*: “I used to work in a children’s institution, again supported by the diocese, that is the Street Children Programme.

“So I did my social work there which was more geared toward child protection. Aimed at the withdrawal of street children from the street, as well as child labourers from child labour.”

The Nadirkonyen Street Children Programme is supported by donations to Irish aid charity Trócaire, who help the diocese with its duty to these vulnerable children.

HIV is an issue amongst the children, many of whom are orphans.

Charles said that while working there the children regarded him as their teacher. There are success stories of children going on to university and work after being reintroduced to education, but not all of them are so lucky.

Due to drought, many are not able to stay in school, as their parents are pastoralists

who move too far away in search of water and food with their herds, and subsequently can’t access services.

**“Some of them have perished in the battlegrounds while raiding or protecting their livestock”**

Trócaire have been planting livestock fodder to stop

pastoralists moving too far from cities, and to stop conflict occurring due to scant resources.

“Most of them had to go without school, those who are unlucky become cattle rustlers, and some of them have perished in the battlegrounds while raiding or protecting their livestock,” said Charles.

“There are those who are survivors of raids, some are lame now and they stay in the village doing nothing, and

some of them have resorted to drinking the local brew and becoming alcoholics.”

“There are times even now I’m personally down because I’ve not been able to realise 100% of the dream, especially for children, so the only thing is to resort to prayer.”

Charles seeks guidance as to how they can respond as a Church to combat the crisis, adding: “Prayer as we know, can change a lot, and change things even in a direction that

we could not even imagine.”

He thanks Trócaire for helping in the formative stages of their emergency appeal in February, in which they helped supply clinics in Kalokol and Lokori, which a Unicef report found was where the acute malnourishment of children was most prevalent.

Things are set to get worse for the children of Turkana as the drought, caused by unpredictable weather patterns over the last number of years, shows no sign of stopping.

Data from a local weather station shows the temperature in Turkana has risen by 3C on average since the 1960s, compared to the global increase of 0.7C.

**“So many people have been rendered very poor and unable to meet their daily food needs”**

Climate change has been cited as the major contributor to this hike in temperature according to Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) such as Human Rights Watch.

Disease and poverty in Turkana is much worse than anywhere else in Kenya: HIV is twice as common, and the average household size is 6.9 people, which is 1.6 higher than the national household size, according to a report by the Kenya Inter Agency Rapid Assessment.

The most common economic activity is nomadic pastoralism, where farmers



# Famine is forcing rural children into the slums



Jessica Lomongin stands with street children Alan Ewesit (13), Itabo Esinyen (10), Marcus Ekamute (12), Francis Eskiru (11), Washington Esimit (14), Mark (12) and two unknown children.





The Turkwell river has not been dry for decades. In Lodwar, this is a sight that truly shows the severity of the drought.

young will resort to stealing, and it's one of the reasons we have people getting involved in highway robberies, whereby they stop cars and steal money from travellers," added Charles.

The Turkana people have also begun sand mining from river beds for use in the construction industry. The consequence is rivers are unable to absorb water and subsequently dry faster due to increased evaporation and soil erosion.

These activities are known as negative coping mechanisms, and humanitarian agencies are working to help people move away from these desperate choices.

### Shock

Trócaire is helping pastoralists develop better mechanisms of survival so that when a "shock occurs" such as this extremely severe drought, they don't have to choose between a slum and starvation, according to the Country Director of Trócaire in Kenya and Somalia, Paul Healy.

"For example, chickens who will produce eggs, they're more resilient and more hardy won't need as much water, and so they may get people through a crisis," he said.

"Goats will survive longer than cattle, so we try to encourage that, we try to do kitchen gardens and rediscovery of wild nuts and fruits that may be available, so building alternative responses. But when things get really really bad people will resort to negative coping mechanisms just to survive."

Paul continued: "They will also migrate to urban slums, like here in Lodwar you see for yourself the number of street children, their parents have given up hope, the parents can't look after them, they're arriving in the streets and they're open to all sorts of abuse, including sexual abuse. And we're talking about children from the age of eight to 13, 14. They just can't be supported, they're coming into town, hungry, they have nowhere to stay."

### Lives saved

Trócaire also funds supplementary feeding programmes in clinics run by the diocese across Turkana for children between six months to five years old.

Thousands of children's lives have been saved as a result, many of which could have ended up in horrific conditions in slums, but due to a lack of resources the centres can't cater for all the children that are eligible for the programme.

Paul added: "As a Catholic Church and a Catholic agency our faith demands an appropriate and just response



Even hardy camels struggle to survive as Turkana's drought destroys pasture and depletes water sources.

Left: Lomali Iria Charles Namorupus stands with street children Alan Ewesit (13), Itabo Esinyen (10), Marcus Ekamute (12), Francis Eskiru (11), Washington Esimit (14) Mark (12) and one unknown child.

to this, it is not as if this is a separate community living halfway around the world, we are as Christians bound to one another by our identity as the Children of God and our faith demands that we respond to this in a very proactive way, and the Irish Church has always expressed its faith in this matter."

### Basic essentials

Many street children still have to leave rural parts of the county in search of basic essentials.

In Lodwar a group of street children told *The Irish Catholic* about daily life.

Many of them are orphans, and live in Lodwar's slums. Alan Ewesit (13) is an orphan and has never been to school and smiles when asked questions, he says: "no one cares for me".

His friend Marcus Ekamute (12) is in school, he says "I am struggling to get materials", because there is no one to support him. He said that they get food by waiting at dumps for trucks with leftovers from hotels and restaurants. They can't afford a football so they make balls out of polythene bags.

The children try to make money doing petty manual labour such as sweeping or moving things, and sleep rough in dangerous areas.

Others have been forced into the child sex trade in the city, with some parents even encouraging the practice.

Jessica Lomongin is the Child Protection Officer in the Diocese of Lodwar, and

has rescued 38 children – 35 girls and 3 boys – from sexual exploitation so far. Some of the children were as young as 11, and would charge between 50-500 Kenyan Shillings, the equivalent of 40c-€4.20.

She was granted some space for these children for three months in the grounds of the Diocese of Lodwar's education centre for deaf children, with the support of the parish priest.

**“They are often mistaken for policemen and women”**

They are given psychosocial and trauma counselling, they also do health screenings as the children have been sexually active, and try to introduce them to education.

"So we are introducing something called back to school programmes, because some of these children have never been in school," said Jessica.

"They can't just be at the centre for three months and then we take them to the school, we need to introduce them to the system of education, at least to allow them to get used to the education system..."

### Obedying rules

Jessica explained how they approach these vulnerable children: "It's a bit tricky, what we normally do is we create a rapport with them, so we do something called night

street walks at around 10pm, that's when they'll be out on street".

They are often mistaken for policemen and women, but a trust is generated after a few visits, with Jessica adding that they realise "we are here to protect them and we're here to safeguard their needs".

Upon arriving at the centre, the girls and boys stream towards the jeep when they see Jessica, shouting "mother".

The girls are jubilant, and seeing their smiling faces, it is impossible to comprehend what they have been through.

Jessica is hoping to continue the programme, and extend it for another three months, but currently resources are low as she looks for more sources of funding.

Already over 60,000 children are at risk of death in Turkana unless they receive life-saving aid; 17,000 of these children are severely malnourished.

The suffering of children in Turkana is a symptom of severe weather and depleting emergency resources. They are exploited and abused, and there is little repercussion for the perpetrators. Humanitarian agencies such as Trócaire are fighting to give them the choice not to live a life of suffering to survive.

**📌 To make a donation or to find out more about Trócaire's response to the food crisis in Africa visit [www.trocaire.org/east-africa](http://www.trocaire.org/east-africa)**



Jessica Lomongin is the Child Protection Officer in the Diocese of Lodwar, and is committed to saving children abused in Lodwar's child sex trade.

bring their cattle, goats, or camels across the arid land in search of pasture and water – both of which are becoming almost impossible to find.

The Turkwell river flows across Turkana through Lodwar and is relied upon by many people as a failsafe in times of drought, but for the first time since Charles was born, it is dry. This has led to livestock dying – even resilient camels – leaving pastoralists with no livelihoods.

"So many people have been rendered very poor and unable to meet their daily food needs, and most of them have moved to urban centres to look for jobs to be able to get something to support their families," said Charles.

Those who have lost their livelihoods resort to means such as charcoal burning which requires chopping down trees that are integral to the eco-system.

"I know those who are



# Ireland is mission territory, leader rather than just an

In an address of unrelenting irony to the Diocese of Würzburg, Germany on July 8, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin spoke in honour of a great missionary monk, St Killian, "...who brought renewal in the Faith from Ireland right across Europe". He speaks as the second most senior figure of the Catholic Church in Ireland, a country which is now itself mission territory from a Catholic perspective.

Dr Martin tells us that "the Church in Ireland is very lacking precisely in 'keen intellects and prolific pens addressing the pressing subjects of the day'", a claim that he has made previously.

Delivered from his keen intellect and with his prolific pen, his lecture has, in truth, the character of a journalistic piece of a tourist to Irish Catholicism, a commentator, a bystander, rather than someone with the second highest level of responsibility for its witness in this country. This peculiar detachment explains why this address has elements more befitting of the "adolescent progressivism" (a phrase of Pope Francis) of *The Irish Times*, than of a lecture that offers inspiration to Irish Catholics.

One of the basic themes of this address is that the Catholic Church in Ireland must move "from monuments to movements" becoming "a much more monument-less one...which reaches out into hearts and becomes heart-driven through the conviction of those who feel touched and inspired by the message and teaching of Jesus Christ". This appears like engagement with the challenges of the Irish Church until one remembers that this lecture proposes no plan for its people.

## Movement

In fact, for a plan to emerge, the first thing that is needed is for the hearts of those who can conceive of a plan being encouraged by their leaders. They need a movement from leadership that is based on detached correction to one of engaged affirmation.

There is little time for a leader in a 'field hospital', inundated with casualties, to be maintaining an independent diagnostic laboratory or for giving papers at conferences abroad pouring forth on all of its deficiencies.

A field hospital also needs its leaders not to be in denial about when a war is on, particularly as the casual-



If the visit of Pope Francis is to contribute to a renewal of faith, the Archbishop of Dublin will have to step up to the plate, writes **Patrick Treacy**

ties enter its tents from every side.

Following the delivery of this address, the national media concentrated upon Archbishop Martin's comments about the "Irish religious education establishment" which he criticised as "fixated on questions of ownership and management and too little on the purpose of the Catholic school and the outcomes of Catholic education in terms of faith formation".

**“The systematic removal of Christian faith and religious education from Catholic and Protestant schools began six years ago”**

Archbishop Martin appears to state prophetically that "The risk now looms large that effectively it will become more and more difficult to maintain a true Catholic ethos in Catholic schools."

The reality, however, is that the systematic removal of Christian faith and religious education from Catholic and Protestant schools already began in earnest six years ago with the



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin.

establishment of Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in 2011 by the then Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn TD.

This has been followed by a range of secularist based initiatives by the Irish Government and by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment which, if unchallenged, will inevitably create a uniform model of publicly-funded schools in our country that is devoid of Christian spirit.<sup>1</sup>

It also does not require a keen intellect to see the disconnect between Dr Martin's address and an acknowledgment of his own power in the area of school patronage and corresponding responsibility. The Department of Education and Skills has carried out no proper, independent research to identify the location of primary schools which are oversubscribed, the extent of that oversubscription and the varied wishes of parents for the education of their children in these areas. It is commonly believed, however, that the unresearched extent of this problem is largely in the South Dublin area, that is amongst Catholic primary schools of which Archbishop Diarmuid Martin is the patron.

He claims that "There is a stubborn reluctance within the Church to allow the situation to change", that he has "advocated a process of divestment of a substantial number [of] Catholic schools to foster a more pluralist presence" and that he has been "relatively unsuccessful in pushing that idea into practice". Has there not been voting undertaken in Catholic schools in his own diocese in which parents have elected to retain the Catholic patronage of them? If so, why did he not inform his German audience of the extent of this election by Catholic parents and their reasons for it?

The media has concentrated upon Dr Martin's critique of "the Irish religious education establishment" while avoiding the incongruity that he is the most powerful and relevant figure within it.

## Redefinition

It is, however, what he said and, more importantly, did not say about the redefinition of marriage referendum in 2015 that is even more significant. For Archbishop Martin gave this address in



Germany, having become the President and host of the 9th World Meeting of Families to be held in Dublin from August 21-26, 2018.

In first remarking upon the result of the referendum on same-sex marriage, he says "the vote was not about doctrine". This view is not shared by even one of the seven judges of the Irish Supreme Court, in the case of *H.A.H v. S.A.A. and others* (June 15, 2017). In the judgment of Ms Justice Iseult O'Malley (with whom the six other Judges of the Supreme Court concurred), she said: "The combination of the introduction of no-fault divorce and, in particular, the amendment of the Constitution providing for the introduction of same-sex marriage have resulted in a legal institution of marriage that cannot be described in terms of traditional Christian doctrine."

While his address is laden with criticism of people who are dedicated to promoting Catholicism in Ireland, he cannot make a single observation that might begin to question the prudence of the decision to introduce same-sex marriage into our country through making provision for marriage, without distinction as to sex, in the Irish Constitution.

The timing of his silence on this subject is especially significant. Archbishop Martin prepared this address for a German audience when that country had legislated for same-sex marriage eight

days before his lecture on June 30, 2017.

The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, facilitated a free vote in the German parliament but she voted against it and in accordance with her conscience that marriage is between a man and a woman. Surely, for his German Catholic audience, having had their law on marriage radically changed eight days previously, contrary to the conscience of their leader, the President and host of the forthcoming World Meeting of Families in Dublin would have something more to say than why the majority voted for it in his own country two years previously.

**“Archbishop Martin prepared this address for a German audience when that country had legislated for same-sex marriage”**

His reticence underlines a denial of one key aspect of the difference between what occurred in the Republic of Ireland in 2015 and what has now occurred in Germany in relation to same-sex marriage. This is the difference between legislating for same-sex marriage as opposed to making provision for it in a written Constitution.

The latter path, which we adopted, means that the

rights of adults in same-sex marriages and the rights of children to know and be loved by a mother and a father, now compete against each other at the most fundamental level of the Irish Constitution, in relation to which all legislative provisions are subject. When the rights of autonomous adults compete against the rights of children, in legislative provisions, there is only one winner, unless the latter are grounded in the deeper protection of the Constitution and thereafter capable of being vindicated in the Superior Courts.

## Silent

In remaining silent about this profound difference, Archbishop Martin is in august company.

Three days before the referendum took place, on May 19, 2015, Dr Mary McAleese, with the weight of having been the President of Ireland for 14 years and then the primary person to protect the Constitution of Ireland, coupled with being an ongoing member of the Council of State, was able to emphatically tell the Irish public: "No-one in Ireland, whether heterosexual or homosexual, has a legal or constitutional right to procreation using surrogacy. This referendum if passed will certainly not create any such right. It is a nonsense to think it could."

The redefinition of marriage referendum gives two married men the same implied constitutional right



# and the Church needs a onlooker



can be criticised to a German audience by a Catholic archbishop but the Irish Government cannot be. What good is seed in rich soil if it becomes choked and overgrown by the conformist, secularist demands of our society?

Archbishop Martin has given outstanding leadership in relation to the horrendous problem of child sexual abuse within the Irish Church. He ceaselessly stands up for the dignity of homeless people.

He is a brave and constant critic of gangland crime. Most importantly, one can see in so much of his work a real, lived relationship with Jesus Christ.

This shone through, for instance, in how well he addressed us at the Eucharistic Congress in 2012 and in his intelligent, sensitive and convincing interview on RTÉ television two days before the redefinition of marriage referendum. When clarity is needed, he can be utterly precise. When sensitive issues need balanced responses, he can be masterful.

## Perspective

My own perspective of what he is saying, or more accurately, not saying, in relation to marriage and the family, is primarily informed by the statement of Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia* that “many countries are witnessing a legal deconstruction of the family, tending to adopt models based almost exclusively on the autonomy of the individual will”. (AL53)

Marriage and the family have been legally deconstructed in the Republic of Ireland in 2015 in a manner which is without parallel anywhere in the world. We now have a profound contradiction in this country, having inserted same-sex marriage into our Constitution, while it otherwise bases its entire understanding of the family upon marriage between a man and a woman. It is a masterpiece of ideological colonisation.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps Dr Martin would see my perspective as belonging to what he terms the “...integralist elements within the Church who see a Christian presence in a pluralist culture purely in terms of a negative culture war”.

It is unclear what he means by the term “integralist” and to whom he is referring, other than that it is meant to be pejorative. Yet, does his general description that follows the use of this word not also apply to Pope Francis?

Speaking in Tbilisi, Georgia on October 1, 2016, Pope Francis said “today there is a global war out to destroy

marriage”. He said “today you do not destroy with weapons, you destroy with ideas. It is ideological colonisation that destroys”. He also said “marriage is the most beautiful thing that God has created” for in marriage, man and woman became one flesh and “the image of God”.

**“Archbishop Martin has given outstanding leadership in relation to the horrendous problem of child sexual abuse”**

Three weeks later, however, at the launch of the World Meeting of Families at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Archbishop Martin had this to say: “Let me say something about which I feel strongly: do not allow ourselves to become entangled in trying to produce definitions of the family. Family is such a transcultural value that it cannot be defined simply. We may find it hard to define, but we all recognise what is family.”

When speaking in Rome about the World Meeting of Families on March 30, 2017, Archbishop Martin was asked about ‘ideological attacks’ on the family. He said it would be “foolish” to ignore such attacks but he then observed that this is something families rarely bring up with him when he meets them.

## Realism

Last month, on June 1, 2017, at a press conference at the commencement of a three-day meeting in Dublin to help prepare for the World Meeting of Families next year, he said “the World Meeting of Families will be a moment when we will speak of confidence but also of realism stressing both the challenges and the joys of family life. That is the reality of the life of every family: the ideal family does not exist. Great families do exist. They need the support of the Church.”

It is clear that Archbishop Martin is seeking to include and embrace every family in the World Meeting of Families 2018. He deserves to be complemented for facilitating this spirit of inclusion. In doing so, he rightly confirms that perfect families do not exist.

To say that an ideal family does not exist, however, is a fundamentally different matter and is in contradiction of *Amoris Laetitia*. The ideal is, in fact, precisely set out in this

Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, which says: “Christian marriage, as a reflection of the union between Christ and his Church, is fully realised in the union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other in a free, faithful and exclusive love, and are consecrated by the sacrament, which grants them the grace to become a domestic church and a haven of new life for society.” (AL 292)

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis also clarifies: “In order to avoid all misunderstanding, I would point out that in no way must the Church desist from proposing the full ideal of marriage, God's plan in all its grandeur...A lukewarm attitude, any kind of relativism, or an undue reticence in proposing that ideal, would be a lack of fidelity to the Gospel and also of love on the part of the Church for young people themselves.”

**“That is the reality of the life of every family: the ideal family does not exist”**

To show understanding in the face of exceptional situations never implies dimming the light of the fuller ideal, or proposing less than what Jesus offers to the human being.” (AL 307)

If the World Meeting of Families 2018 is to be a truly joyful and inspiring event, the beauty, truth and goodness of marriage between man and woman needs to be stated with the joy and confidence of a trumpet blast for it reflects the glory of God in the totality of the human person, male and female.

If the embracing arms of the Church are to have compassionate strength for all families, they must not be

unhinged from the spinal column of the full ideal of marriage as the union of man and woman. The trumpet must not have an uncertain sound.

If the day of the passing of redefinition of marriage referendum in Ireland was the ‘Dunkirk’ event for Irish Catholicism, the day that Pope Francis may arrive in Dublin could be a ‘D-Day’ moment for the ‘field hospital’ that the Irish Catholic Church is called to be. His arrival could launch the first proper, co-ordinated response to the secularist, ideological colonisation that has attempted to suffocate the great tradition of Christian faith in this country and turned it into mission territory.

If that is to happen, however, the one thing that cannot precede the arrival of Pope Francis is for the Archbishop of Dublin to be an uncertain trumpeter.

**Patrick Treacy is a senior counsel. He has written a book in anticipation of next year's World Meeting of Families Mission Territory: Pope Francis, Ireland the World Meeting of Families 2018 Towards a renewed understanding of marriage, the family and the domestic Church for Christian faith and society. It can be downloaded and read from [www.integritas.ie](http://www.integritas.ie)**

## References

1. An explanation of how the Irish Government and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment have incrementally sought to remove the Christian ethos from primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland, since 2011, can be found at the website of Faith In Our Schools ([www.faithinourschools.ie](http://www.faithinourschools.ie)).
2. This is explained more fully in a text entitled ‘Mission Territory – Pope Francis, Ireland and the World Meeting of Families 2018’ which can be downloaded from the homepage of the website of Integritas, a domestic centre of Christian spirituality, Ennisnag, Stoneyford, County Kilkenny ([www.integritas.ie](http://www.integritas.ie)). This centre also hosts the research and advocacy group Faith In Our Schools.

to procreate, as a married couple, as the Supreme Court has previously held is enjoyed by a married man and woman (Murray v. Ireland [1991] ILRM 465). By their very nature, constitutional rights are not absolute but nor are they ever meaningless. The implications of the implied constitutional (as oppose to legislative) right to procreate, which two married men now enjoy in the Republic of Ireland, will inevitably be endorsed by the Irish Superior Courts.

Their new, implied constitutional right of procreation cannot be held to be meaningless and it can only have meaning through conferring an entitlement to use the gamete of one woman and the womb of another through surrogacy.

This sets us on an entirely different course from the European Parliament which, in December 2015, called for an outright ban on surrogacy. It also makes us the leading international contradictor of the charter against surrogacy signed by feminist and human rights activists in Paris in February 2016, which again calls for its outright prohibition.

## Audience

Archbishop Martin also did not share with his German audience that the redefinition of marriage referendum gives a constitutional status to commercially selected human reproduction (referred to inaccurately as “donor-assisted human reproduction” in the Children

and Family Relationships Act 2015) and to the selection and purchase of gametes which is inherent in this industry.

One would have thought that his German audience would have been keenly interested in this as one of “the points of contact between the Church in Ireland and those areas where the future of Irish culture is being formed”.

He would also have been able to point out that even though the Irish Government rushed through the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 in March/April of that year, within two months of the redefinition of marriage referendum, it has not been possible to since commence Parts 2 and 3 of this Act.

**“What good is seed in rich soil if it becomes choked...”**

They had been promised by the Irish Government (with Leo Varadkar TD as the Minister for Health and Frances Fitzgerald as the Minister for Justice and Equality) to regulate the commercial selection of gametes for human reproduction before the redefinition of marriage referendum conferred an implied constitutional right to procreate upon same-sex couples once married.

One is now Taoiseach, the other remains as Tánaiste.

This commercial industry remains unregulated. The Archbishop of Dublin is silent. It seems that Irish Catholics



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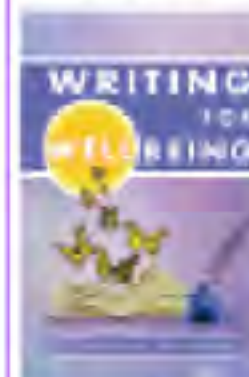
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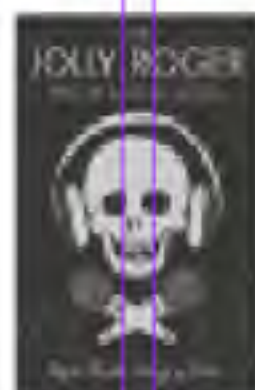
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# Out&About

## Dublin Mass for Brazilian Community



◀ **DUBLIN:** Participants at a Mass for the Brazilian community celebrated by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin at the Capuchin Friary on Church Street which was attended by over 350 people.

▼ **MEATH:** Participants at the Meath Diocesan Pioneer Spirituality Day in Kilbeggan, including Pioneer President James Shevlin, who was guest speaker.



**KERRY:** Fr Luke Roche, PP, Castlemaine Parish recently celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination together with his family and friends.



**CLARE:** Bishop Fintan Monahan pictured with members of the local Kildysart Choir at the annual pilgrimage to Canons' Island for Mass at the monastery ruins.



**CAVAN:** Knights of St Columbanus, who brought the relic of St Oliver Plunkett to the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt for the first time, with Fr Gerry MacCormack and the serving team.



Edited by Mags Gargan  
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**KERRY:** A special Mass was celebrated by Fr Padraig Walsh PP at Our Lady and St Brendan's Church, Tralee for couples who celebrated their wedding anniversaries in 2017. Photo: John Cleary



**DUBLIN:** The Irish Confraternity of Catholic Clergy hosted a summer talk, given by Shawn Carney, President of 40 Days for Life [www.40DaysForLife.com](http://www.40DaysForLife.com) and Christopher West speaking on Pope St John Paul II's 'Theology of the Body' [www.CorProject.com](http://www.CorProject.com)



◀ **MEATH:** Br Nathan Hart and Br Joseph Gryniewicz recently received the Benedictine habit bringing the total number of Silverstream Priory's novices to six: Br Ignatius Rahbek-Pedersen, Br Cassian Aylward, Br Irenæus Hart, Br Chrysostom Gryniewicz, Br Hildebrand Houser, Br John Baptist DeCant.

▶ **PORTUGAL:** Pilgrims from Derry diocese with Fr Roland Colhoun at the International Cenacle of the Marian Movement of Priests in Fatima.



## ARMAGH

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

Mass and delivery of first class relic of St Faustina and visitation of the St Michael the Archangel statue at St Patrick Chapel, Cullyhanna on July 28 and 29 at 8pm.

Mass and visitation of the St Michael the Archangel pilgrim statue on July 30 at 10am in the Church of St Michael, Newtownhamilton.

## CARLOW

The relic of St Teresa of Calcutta will be at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Carlow from July 24-26.

## CORK

Visit of the St Michael the Archangel statue and veneration of first class relic of St Faustina at Mass on July 27 at 7.30pm at the Church of Immaculate Conception, Mitchelstown.

## DONEGAL

John Pridmore, international speaker and author of *From Gangland to Promised Land* will be leading a Healing Retreat in Ards Friary, Creeslough from Friday, August 25 to Sunday, August 27.

Mass and visitation of the St Michael the Archangel pilgrim statue on July 31 at 7pm in St Mary's Church, Creggan.

## DUBLIN

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

Life to the Full Book Club for young adults (20's & 30's) each week to reflect and discuss a chosen spiritual book over a few weeks. Every Thursday from 7-8.30pm in St Paul's Church Arran Quay (Smithfield). Email: [michelle.manley@dublindiocese](mailto:michelle.manley@dublindiocese)

## FERMANAGH

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

## GALWAY

Visit of the St Michael the Archangel statue and veneration of first class relic of St Faustina at Mass on July 25 at 7.30pm with Our Lady of Mount Carmel prayer group, Finney, Clonbur. Contact Bredda Laffey: 086-3378429.

## KILDARE

Carbury Parish - Adoration in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Derrinturn takes place each Monday from 10.30am until 12 midnight. Adoration for priestly vocations takes place every Thursday at 8.45pm.

## KILKENNY

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

## LIMERICK

Enrolment is open for Autumn classes for children aged 3-12 for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: A Montessori based Religious Education Programme taught by the Dominican Sisters. To enrol your child or for more information, contact [limerick@op-tn.org](mailto:limerick@op-tn.org) or 085-2255796.

## MAYO

Visit of the St Michael the Archangel statue and veneration of first class relic of St Faustina at Mass on July 26 at 12.30pm at Adoration Chapel in Knock.

Holy Souls Society of Ireland annual pilgrimage to Knock Shrine – August 21 for a 3pm Novena Mass.

The 12th annual Charismatic Weekend Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, hosted by the Monaghan Charismatic Prayer Group, on August 25 at 6pm, August 26 at 9am and August 27 at 8.30am. Speakers: Fr Peter Casey, Sr Anne Maria O'Shaughnessy and Philip McArdle.

## MEATH

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday, July 21 and every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries: Dave 085-7746763.

## SLIGO

Visit of the St Michael the Archangel statue and veneration of first class relic of St Faustina at Mass on July 26 at 7.30pm at St Anne's, Cranmore Road.

## WATERFORD

The relic of St Teresa of Calcutta will be at the Cathedral of the Most Holy in Waterford from July 20-22.

Fr Colm O'Brien Memorial Cycle in aid of Laura Lynn on Saturday, August 12. Route 1 at 11am from Ss Peter & Pauls Clonmel to Tramore (60km). Route 2 at 13.30pm from The Kingfisher, Tramore Rd, Waterford to Tramore (10km). [www.frcolmobrien-memorialcycle.com](http://www.frcolmobrien-memorialcycle.com)

St Declan's Well, Toor, Aglish annual Mass on Thursday, July 27 at 12noon with Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan. Confessions at 11.30am.

## WESTMEATH

The relic of St Teresa of Calcutta will be at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Mullingar from July 26-28.

## WEXFORD

The relic of St Teresa of Calcutta will be at St Aidan's Cathedral in Enniscorthy from July 22-24.

## WICKLOW

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

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





# World Report



Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie

## IN BRIEF

### Religious leaders warn against violence in Kenya's elections

● Leaders from all faiths have called for peace and security during Kenya's August 8 elections, a time associated with severe acts of violence.

The Chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops' issued a joint statement with several religious leaders, urging security authorities to be extra vigilant.

"Anyone seeking to offer elective leadership must be held to account to respect and uphold the rights of all Kenyans, especially those who do not support them," they said.

The religious leaders told a press conference last week that they believed recent attacks across the country were orchestrated to look like terrorism or banditry, but were aimed at displacing populations so they can't participate in the elections.

### Catholics protest satanic monument

US Catholics are resisting an attempt by a Satanic Temple to build a monument in a public park. The sculpture is said to be a black cube with satanic symbols. It could be built in Belle Plaine's Veteran's Memorial Park in Minnesota, in which more than 100 people attended a protest against

the monument over the weekend. Commissioned by the Massachusetts-based Satanic Temple, the proposed monument consists of a 23-inch-by-23-inch steel cube engraved with inverted pentagrams on each side. On top of the box sits an upside down soldier's helmet, which memorialises fallen soldiers.

## Pope Francis prays for Venezuela as referendum sparks more violence

The Pope is renewing his prayers for the embattled people of Venezuela, after a reported seven million people voted in an unofficial referendum against government changes to their constitution.

The referendum was organised to put pressure on President Nicolas Maduro, in order to further weaken his legitimacy as a leader.

"I express a special greeting to the Venezuelan Catholic community in Italy, renewing my prayer for your beloved country," said the Pontiff during Sunday's Angelus in St Peter's Square, while groups of Venezuelans waved flags and flew balloons in their country's colours.

### Campaign

Venezuelan bishops supported the initiative, which was not recognised by authorities. President Maduro dismissed Sunday's poll as unconstitutional and is campaigning for a vote on July 30 to create a legislative super body that can re-write the constitution and dissolve



Demonstrators clash with security forces during a protest against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government in Caracas. Photo: CNS

state institutions.

Voters were asked three questions in the referendum, with 98% of them choosing to reject the proposed new assembly. They are also calling on the military to defend the existing constitution and for early elections to be held this year rather than 2018.

Venezuelan nationals living in Ireland cast their bal-

lots in Tallaght, Dublin.

This comes as men on motorbikes open-fired at people voting last Sunday in Caracas, killing one woman and wounding three others.

"Today, July 16, dignity won and tyranny lost," said opposition leader Maria Corina Machado according to Reuters, "we have given an indisputable mandate for

a new Venezuela starting tomorrow."

Since April almost 100 people have been killed in violent protests, and government agencies were criticised for their use of force by Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino, who described President Maduro's actions as "a government war against the people".

## A US vote could repeal assisted suicide law in Washington DC

New steps have been taken to repeal Washington DC's assisted suicide law, as the House of Appropriations Committee voted to repeal the legislation last week.

The day before the vote, New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan sent a letter to members of the committee urging them to "nullify the DC City Council's deceptively named 'Death with Dignity Act' that legalises the dangerous and unethical practice of doctor-assisted suicide".

The measure still has to be approved by the full House and Senate, and US

President Donald Trump, before it can be enforced.

It was introduced by Andy Harris who told the committee there is "nothing dignified about suicide".

Harris also called the act "bad policy" and said that "physicians were playing God".

Under the current legislation physicians can legally prescribe lethal drugs to patients who have been deemed mentally competent, and who have received a terminal diagnosis of six months or less.

In a letter to House Appropriations

Committee members, Cardinal Dolan said the law was "seriously flawed" and said it "poses the greatest risks of abuse and coercion to those who are poor, elderly, disabled, members of a minority group, or without access to good medical care".

The cardinal, who is chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, also told committee members that the law could cause the deaths of many people who are not terminally ill and it also "reflects a bias against persons with disabilities and serious illness".

## UN told religious leaders need help in battling atrocity crimes



Archbishop Bernardito Auza.

Religious leaders play a major role in preventing atrocity crimes by promoting peace around the world – but don't have the resources to combat it themselves.

Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See Mission to the UN, said that "religious leaders have much to contribute", but ultimately it was the responsibility of national

authorities to stop atrocity crimes.

Speaking at the launch of the 'Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes' last week, he welcomed the "spotlight" being put on religious leaders.

However he said: "While they can influence behaviour and mentalities, they do not possess the

resources and instruments for stopping mass atrocities that only states possess, like law enforcement agencies and armed forces."

Archbishop Auza also highlighted part of the Action Plan that says religious leaders have a heightened responsibility in preventing atrocities, as they can influence the behaviour of those who follow them and share their beliefs.

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**C**hristian pilgrims can once again visit one of the Faith's holiest sites. The restored tomb in which Jesus' body is believed to have been buried following his crucifixion has been reopened following extensive restoration and conservation work.

Housed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City, it was closed for the nine-month renovation project, which focused on a small structure above the burial chamber, known as the Edicule.

"If the intervention hadn't happened now, there is a very great risk that there could have been a collapse," Bonnie Burnham of the World Monuments Fund, which had oversight of the project, said. "This is a complete transformation of the monument," he added.

#### Restoration

The delicate restoration was carried out by a team of about 50 experts from the National Technical University of Athens, which had previously worked on the Acropolis in the Greek capital and the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. The conservators worked mainly at night in order to allow pilgrims continued access to the shrine.

As part of the restoration, a marble slab covering the rock-carved tomb was lifted for the first time in more than two centuries, allowing restoration workers to examine the original rock shelf or 'burial bed' on which Jesus' body is thought to have rested. A small window has been cut into marble slabs to allow pilgrims a glimpse of the rock.

#### “Six denominations share custodianship of the cavernous church”

The team also repaired and stabilised the shrine with titanium bolts and mortar, and cleaned thick layers of candle soot. The work involved the use of radar, laser scanners and drones.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in the heart of the Christian quarter of the walled Old City, covers the site of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection. It is a huge attraction for pilgrims and tourists from all over the world, many weeping and clutching precious mementos or



The restored tomb of Christ.

## Tomb of Christ re-opens to pilgrims



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

photographs of loved ones and forming long queues for the shrine.

Six denominations – Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Syrian Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox and Copts – share custodianship of the cavernous church.

The \$4m (€3.5m) cost

of the restoration came from contributions from the six denominations which share custody of the church, King Abdullah of Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and Mica Ertegun, the widow of Atlantic Records co-founder Ahmet Ertegun, who gave \$1.3m.

## HOLY LAND

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# Letters

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23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2,  
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## Letter of the week

### GAA is the new religion in Ireland

**Dear Editor,** I was born in Ireland and educated in Ireland as a Catholic. I worked all my life as a consultant in South Africa. When I retired some years ago I reflected on the Ireland we have today. Catholicism and Christianity is very much on the wane. Indeed, in 10 years we will have a very small amount of believers as most young couples rarely attend Church services. I feel it would be unwise

to repair churches or build new ones. The time is coming when all these churches should be sold off.

It would appear to me that the Church is useful for Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, marriages and funerals. In a few years, I think the Church will not be needed for the administration of the sacraments – this will disappear in 10 years' time. It would appear that the

GAA is the religion of today – all parishes in Ireland have a GAA lotto to finance clubs and members, besides the many 'Church Gate Collections' for clubs.

You would never hear of a Mass for a county team when or whether it triumphs, as it appears the Church is in the background and does not exist. I never hear of a president of the GAA give credit to the Church except for finding

money. Training is carried out with the blessings of players and parents and guardians during Church service times and the GAA officials never say stop. All the bishops of our land do not care or feel that it is irrelevant.

I would welcome views from your readers.

*Yours etc.,  
Dr Andrew Maxwell,  
Foxrock,  
Dublin 18.*

### Euthanasia will be the next topic for debate

**Dear Editor,** Abortion on demand is a bit like saying to an elderly family member with a disability, "We cannot look after you anymore, neither can we afford the outrageous nursing home fees, so, we have decided to book you in for a termination."

This analogy might seem a bit far-fetched now, but if abortion on demand is passed in this country then the next topic for debate on the agenda is euthanasia.

Babies and the elderly have a right to live out their lives for a short or long period of time in loving care of a family who will watch over them at the most vulnerable stage in their lives.

*Yours etc.,  
Breege Murray,  
Adare,  
Co. Limerick.*

### The human cost of abortion statistics

**Dear Editor,** Abortion advocates are fond of claiming that Ireland's abortion rate is the same as other countries. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. Laws surrounding abortion are like every other law – they guide the public in letting them know what kinds of actions are deemed acceptable. The more acceptable something is, the more likely it is to happen.

We only have to look to Britain to see the perfect example of this. Abortion was introduced there in 1967 under the Abortion Act. At that time, one in every 40 pregnancies ended in

abortion. Within just five years, that figure had risen to one in every seven pregnancies. Today, one in every five women who becomes pregnant in Britain will have an abortion.

We don't always realise the human cost of a statistic like one in five or reflect on what it means – the ending of a baby's life and the loss of a unique individual who would have meant so much to others if he or she had been given a chance at life.

Every abortion is a tragedy for mother and child. But the fact remains that the Eighth Amendment has meant

that the abortion rate in Britain is some 300% more than the rate of Irish abortions. Pro-life or pro-choice, we can surely agree that fewer abortions is a good thing.

The way to see that trend continue is to keep the Eighth Amendment and to work on increasing the supports for families in Ireland.

*Yours etc.,  
Mairead Fallon,  
Pro Life Campaign,  
Lower Fitzwilliam Street,  
Dublin 2.*

### Religious education should teach children love

**Dear Editor,** At its best religious education should inculcate a true understanding of love. Love includes: kindness, unselfishness, genuine care for others, mercy, forgiveness, empathy, gratitude, generosity, true justice – and so many other noble qualities to which, at our human best, we aspire.

Love can and must be taught in our schools and at home, not only as a single 30-minute subject, but as a way of life. Our world is hungry for the Spirit of Love. It is at our peril that we omit to teach it.

Modern methods of communication allow for several innovative approaches to teaching.

*Yours etc.,  
Angela Macnamara,  
Churchtown,  
Dublin 14.*

### K&L answering Pope's call

**Dear Editor,** I write to say well done to the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin for organising a family picnic for all their parishes (IC 13/07/2017). It is great to see a diocese thinking outside the box for ways to gather people together as a community and to see a bishop who is open to new ideas and keen to mix with his people. I'm sure that Pope Francis would approve of this endeavour, especially with the invitation being issued to refugee families living in the diocese.

*Yours etc.,  
Maureen Griffin,  
Templeogue,  
Dublin 6W.*



### Giving up schools is no answer

**Dear Editor,** Provocative is the best word I can use to describe Fr Seaver's letter (IC 06/07/2017), which poses some interesting and much needed questions in respect of sacramental preparation in the Irish Church, including his outlandish suggestion that the Department of Education should take religion out of schools.

Observing school and parish sacramental preparation of my grandchildren, I regret that I have seen very poor practice

with ever-declining numbers of First Communicant candidates attending successive parish 'Do This In Memory' Masses with no apparent concern. In this context I do share Fr Seaver's concerns.

But it would be so sad if Ireland gave up on its Catholic schools. Surely Fr Seaver should instead be challenging our schools to live up to the demands of the Gospel.

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

### Every person has a right to live

**Dear Editor,** I was really impressed at the great crowd of people who attended the pro-life rally in Dublin recently. I was happy to be there myself too. The unborn are helpless and vulnerable, they have no voice, so we, as a Christian people have a solemn duty to do what we can to protect the unborn. I believe that pro-life groups should be set up in every parish in this country and that prayer vigils and holy hours should take place so that the lives of the unborn can be saved and that the Eighth Amendment can be saved too in our Constitution. Every person has a right to live and enjoy the gift of life.

*Yours etc.,  
James Corcoran,  
Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo.*

### One hour with the Lord not too much to ask

**Dear Editor,** I disagree with Mary O'Brien (Letters IC 06/07/2017) when she says – "and so say all of us". She was referring to five-minute sermons.

She certainly does not speak for me. There are 168 hours in the week: is one hour too much to ask to spend with the Lord at Mass? It amazes me how people can stand for hours in the rain at concerts and sport events, in pubs, etc.

Here in Navan we must have brilliant orators as none of them have the "charisma of a cardboard box with poor oratory skills" – as some were referred to.

Thank God for them.

Also no matter how short or long the sermon is – there are certain people who leave Mass at Holy Communion.

*Yours etc.,  
Jane McGuire,  
Navan,  
Co. Meath.*

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world



▲ **USA:** Fr Christopher Sullivan, a recently ordained priest, and a camper play soccer during the Quo Vadis Camp at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, New York.

► **FRANCE:** Riders pass St Pierre Catholic Church during the 10th stage of the 104th Tour de France cycling race in Lalinde.



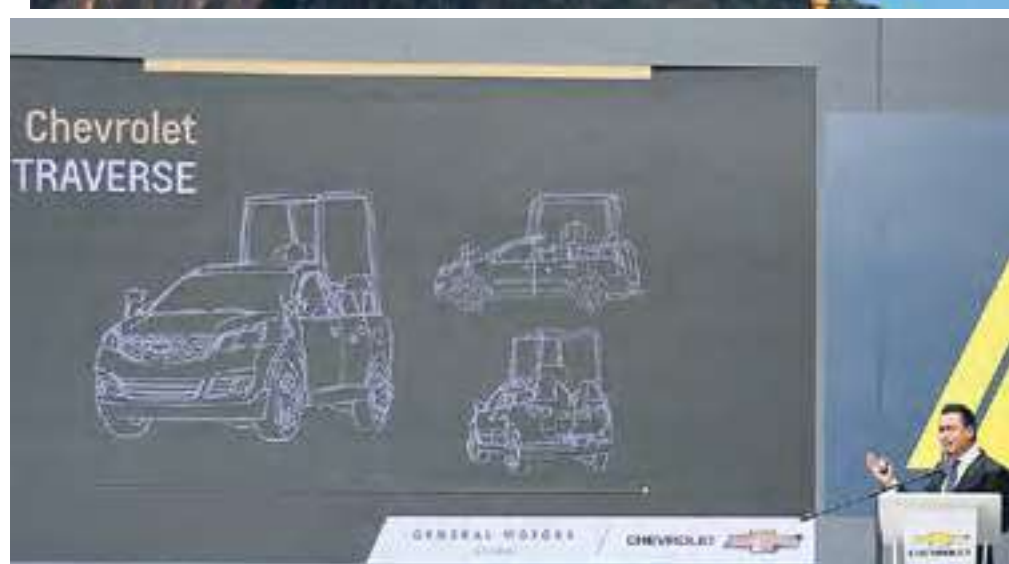
▲ **AUSTRALIA:** A member of the Australian Tibetan community places a candle near a banner during a candlelight vigil for the Chinese Nobel Peace Prize-winning dissident Liu Xiaobo outside the Chinese consulate in Sydney. Liu, who was recently released from a prison in China's northeast, died on July 13 aged 61.



**BRAZIL:** A vulture is seen in front of the moon with the Christ the Redeemer statue in the background in Rio de Janeiro.



▲ **USA:** Retired Bishop Gordon D. Bennett of Mandeville, Jamaica, takes a selfie with attendees during the 12th National Black Catholic Congress in Orlando, Florida.



▲ **COLOMBIA:** Keyvan Rahmani, chief engineer of General Motors Andina, Colombia, speaks in Bogota about some of the details of the popemobile that the Pope Francis will use during his September 6-10 visit to Colombia.



# Fostering friendship and fellowship

**Colm Fitzpatrick** learns about a growing form of parish faith group



scripture. The vivacious spirit of these churches, the participation, and the clarity of their mission, inspired Fr Eivers to implement this type of worship his own parish.

In 1987 Don Pigi Perini, parish priest in St Eustorgio in Milan, visited St Boniface with 10 parishioners to learn from this experience. Today, over a thousand people participate in cell groups in St Eustorgio and the parish has become a catalyst for parish cell communities throughout Europe.

In 1990, Fr Michael Hurley brought the method to the parish of Ballinteer in Dublin and there are now over 85 cells in Ireland stretching from Ballymena to Cork and Dublin to Galway.

The first cell meeting hosted in Leixlip, Co. Kildare was in 2004 with the help of parishioners from Ballinteer, and now there are 15 cells with some 140 parishioners participating.

Noel Thompson has attended his parish cell in Leixlip for over three years, which is composed of around 7-8 people. Speaking about his own experience of it, Noel says, "all my life I had been keeping the rules, but I didn't have an intimate relationship with God – this has helped me develop that".

## Teaching

Noel says people "don't read our Bible enough" and through the scripture reading and teaching, he has a renewed sense of faith and no longer sees Church practices as "going through a drill".

He also felt at ease participating initially in the cell after he realised that he was the same as everyone else, saying "it's easy to relate to others and share your faith".

Noel was particularly moved after he attended the Parish Cells International Seminar in Milan in 2014. "I was blown away by the experience, the joy and the witness...they welcome you with open arms," he says.

Parish cells have been growing rapidly throughout the world since the 1980s, and in 2015 it received permanent recognition from the Pontifical Council for the Laity. To bestow this recognition Pope Francis issued an invitation to all cell people globally to meet with him in the Vatican and over 5,000 people from all over the world attended, including 124 from Ireland. This milestone in the life of the Parish Cells was greeted with great joy by all in the cell communities worldwide, and there is a hope that parish cells will become more prominent across Ireland in the coming years.

**!** This year's National Seminar will take place in the Parish of St John the Evangelist, Ballinteer, Dublin, from October 2-4. For more information on parish cells in Ireland, visit: [www.parihccllsireland.net](http://www.parihccllsireland.net)

Some of the 124 members of Parish Cells of Evangelisation in Ireland who accepted an invitation to meet Pope Francis in the Vatican to celebrate their permanent recognition from the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 2015.



A group of Co. Clare women are turning old wedding gowns into dresses for premature babies, writes **Victoria Holthaus**



**I**n Shannon, Co. Clare, a group of women are working together to produce little dresses with big meaning. The Shannon Angel Sisters create 'Angel Gowns' for babies born too soon.

At a time when a family finds themselves thrown into the world of neonatal intensive care units (NICU's), their lives can be turned inside out. All of the ladies at Shannon Angel Sisters hope to aid parents during this difficult time as finding clothes for a child so small can be a major task. Parents have even resorted to buying doll clothes to find a decent fit.

"It's a problem that a lot of families face, sadly more than you would think," says Alice Myers, co-founder of the group.

So the seamstresses transform donated material into beautiful little dresses "handcrafted with love just to help even a little". They may be used for Christening or naming ceremony gowns or as burial gowns for those "babies who have gained their wings".

## Gowns

Material for these gowns come from donated dresses, such as wedding dresses or evening gowns, from women all across Ireland. Wedding dresses are used more for Christenings, while evening gowns may be used for occasions like the first time a child is placed in their parent's arms.

When it comes to using donations "nothing goes to waste, every precious

bit is used", Alice says. "It's a lovely thing for a bride to do and sometimes they dedicate their donation in memory of a specific baby. On a little tag attached to the dresses made from that bride's dress, it says 'in memory'."

Alice started the group with co-founder Michelle Hickey Legge, an old friend and expert seamstress who happened to teach a sewing class. The two ladies put their heads together to come up with the idea, called up a few of Michelle's old students and formed the Shannon Angel Sisters.

**Seamstresses transform donated material into beautiful little dresses"**

Names of families in need come from 19 different hospitals, typically from a backlog rather than request.

"Our dresses ship from us to the hospital, transported from the nurse's arm's in the NICU's straight to the parents," says Alice.

Recently a local family reached out in hopes of getting gowns for their two babies. According to Alice at the time of writing this piece, the two are thankfully still putting up a fight in the NICU's and have been baptised in the gowns.

When it comes to volunteers, they are currently only admitting those who know how to sew simply because of the time as "some dresses give you more trouble than others", Alice says.







While every dress is different, for every wedding dress donated, it takes five hours to make an 'Angel Dress' out of it. Twelve dresses can be made from a single wedding dress, depending on the size.

### Baby's weight

The group has made 120 gowns so far which come in four different sizes, depending on the weight of the baby: micro – 1.5 to 2.5lbs, tiny – 2.5 to 5lbs, preemie – 5 to 8lbs and newborn for 8lbs+. All of them are fully lined and the backs feature satin ties to help with dressing fragile infants. If there is material left over, the sisters have come up with a great use for it.



"We take the same material and embellishments that we used on the gown and make two identical hearts. One is to place with the baby and the other is given to the mum. It's a little keepsake that they can really hold

dear," Alice says.

At the moment, the sisters are coming up with a special keepsake specifically to give to the dads. Boys are not forgotten in the group's eyes either, as they have received donations of men's suits among the dresses. From this material they can make waist coats and bow ties for the special baby boys.

After the dress and a keepsake if there is still material left, it is used to make a burial quilt.

While these women work miracles to make every inch of the donated material count, they still have costs to pay. Time and effort given to this cause is all voluntary but the expenses are paid out of their pocket. The ladies have set up a go fund me page to help tackle these costs.

**"The sisters are coming up with a special keepsake specifically to give to the dads"**

According to the page the contributions will go "to buy items such as lining fabric, ribbon, thread, buttons, trimmings, Perspex patterns, embellishments etc. Packing and delivery costs are among our biggest expenses to date and we would love to receive any help with our associated costs". At the time of going to print the Shannon Angel Sisters page had raised €1,450 of their €2,000 goal.

"We are incredibly grateful to those who have contributed and supported us," Alice says.

**To donate to the cause visit:** <https://www.gofundme.com/shannonangelsisters> or visit their Facebook page to learn more about them at: <https://www.facebook.com/shannonangelsisters/>

# Inspired in my faith

## Emer McGlone

**M**y name is Emer McGlone I am 15 years old. I live in Boho, Co. Fermanagh and am a member of Cleenish Parish. I attend Mount Lourdes Grammar school in Enniskillen.

Clogher don Óige was launched in 2003 by the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Clogher. Its aim was to inspire young people to grow in faith, to provide activities, events and programmes. I first got involved in Clogher don Óige last summer (2016). I signed up for Assume summer camp after hearing brilliant reports from people who had previously attended and I decided it would be something I would enjoy.

I attended organised meetings to get to know others taking part and to get to know what the summer camp would involve. We went to Newcastle in Co. Down in August. I had a brilliant time and throughout the five days I learnt different prayers and developed my faith more, which was what I had hoped for from this experience.

### Experience

Also during my experience there I made a lot of new friends who I still keep in contact with today. It was a fantastic experience and I think every young person who is interested in their faith or interested in how to grow in faith should try to get involved in one of these sorts of camps. I will remember Assume summer camp forever.

In my parish I also got involved in a Youth Ministry Skills Course this year. When I heard of this



Caitlin McBrien, Patrice Murray, Emer McGlone and Laura Hughes who will be travelling to Taizé with Clogher don Óige in August.

opportunity I was eager to get involved. As a young person in the future I would love to be a leader for Clogher don Óige so I was interested in this opportunity.

Throughout the course I got to know people of my parish and the surrounding parish a lot more and made a lot of new friends. I also learnt how to work well as a group and about the important qualities needed for a good leader. I enjoyed the course and think it will be useful in the future.

**"Clogher don Óige is a great organisation and helps a lot of people to grow in faith today"**

This August I am going to Taizé with Clogher don Óige. I was delighted to be one of the 40 people selected to go to Taizé. I have always heard people talking about how good this place is so I was excited to find out I was going.

We have had a number of preparation days in order to prepare for this trip. By going to Taizé I hope to that my faith grows even more and when I return home I want to share the positivity and also help those in need around me. I cannot wait to be a part of the Taizé community for one week. It will be a great opportunity for me and one I will not forget. I think the long journey will be worth it!

In my experience Clogher don Óige is a great organisation and helps a lot of people to grow in faith today. Young people need organisations like this to encourage them to have faith and to do good deeds in the world today.

Clogher don Óige has impacted on me in many ways and has helped me to become more involved in my parish and to grow in faith. I am so glad that I got involved in Clogher don Óige and I hope to be able to inspire other young people in the future to grow in their faith.

## Camino companions



Waterford Camino group outside the former Irish college.

## Olivia Elliott

We began as 10 individuals travelling together on the Camino de Santiago, not knowing what blessings and adventures lay ahead; we ended up like family. Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan was our father-figure. As a Camino veteran, he alone knew the way. We all accepted that – trusting his gentle guidance.

We journeyed together for the week as equals – sharing, laughing, listening and supporting. We followed in the footsteps of countless pilgrims who had travelled before. We were led by the yellow arrows and shells; each pointing the way, just as Jesus does. The Camino, like our life's journey, had many stops, but we kept the final destination always in mind.

We travelled much of the way down laneways, along wooded paths, through vineyards, acutely aware of God's beauty all around. The stark contrast between carefully tended vineyards and overgrown

ones called to mind the need for the Vinedresser in John 15. We encountered numerous lovely people from all over the globe who will stay in our memories; each wishing us a 'Buen Camino'.

When we finally arrived in Santiago we rejoiced together. We joined hundreds who filled the cathedral for the daily Pilgrims' Mass. It was a precious moment to see the two deacons leading the long line of pilgrim priests, followed by Bishop Cullinan.

### Final Mass

At the final Mass we received a warm Irish welcome from the FCJ Sisters: Katherine, Susan and Marianne – the Camino Companions. Over tea, reflections and companionship, they presented our much coveted Pilgrims' Scrolls.

We are all pilgrim people, journeying towards our eternal home. God calls us to withdraw from the chaos, to live in the present, to slow down, returning home with a new heart.



# The Gospel challenge to enjoy our lives



**J**oy is an infallible indication of God's presence, just as the cross is an infallible indication of Christian discipleship. What a paradox! And Jesus is to blame.

When we look at the Gospels we see that Jesus shocked his contemporaries in seemingly opposite ways. On the one hand, they saw in him a capacity to renounce the things of this world and give up his life in love and self-sacrifice in a way that seemed to them almost inhuman and not something that a normal, full-blooded person should be expected to do.

Moreover he challenged them to do the same: take up your cross daily! If you seek your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life, you will find it.

On the other hand, perhaps more surprisingly since we tend to identify serious religion with self-sacrifice, Jesus challenged his contemporaries to more fully enjoy their lives, their health, their youth, their relationships, their meals, their wine-drinking, and all the ordinary and deep pleasures of life. In fact he scandalised them with his own capacity to enjoy pleasure.

## Raw character

We see, for example, a famous incident in the Gospels of a woman anointing Jesus' feet at a banquet. All four Gospel accounts of this emphasise a certain raw character to the event that disturbs any easy religious propriety.

The woman breaks an expensive jar of very costly perfume on his feet, lets the aroma permeate the whole room, lets her tears fall on his feet, and then dries them with her hair. All that



**Fr Rolheiser**

[www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)

lavishness, extravagance, intimation of sexuality and raw human affection is understandably unsettling for almost everyone in the room, except for Jesus. He's drinking it in, unapologetically, without dis-ease, without any guilt or neurosis: leave her alone, he says, she has just anointed me for my impending death. In essence, Jesus is saying: when I come to die, I will be more ready because tonight, in receiving this lavish affection, I'm truly alive and hence more ready to die.

In essence, this is the lesson for us: don't feel guilty about enjoying life's pleasures. The best way to thank a gift-giver is to thoroughly enjoy the gift.

We are not put on this Earth primarily as a test, to renounce the good things of creation so as to win joy in the life hereafter. Like any

**“As we see from the life of Jesus, self-renunciation and the capacity to thoroughly enjoy the gift of life, love and creation are integrally connected”**



loving parent, God wants his children to flourish in their lives, to make the sacrifices necessary to be responsible and altruistic, but not to see those sacrifices themselves as the real reason for being given life.

Jesus highlights this further when he's asked why his disciples don't fast, whereas the disciples of John the Baptist do fast. His answer: why should they fast? The bridegroom is still with them. Someday the bridegroom will be taken away and they will have lots of time to fast.

His counsel here speaks in a double way: more obviously, the bridegroom refers to his own physical presence here on Earth which, at a point, will end. But this also has a second meaning: the bridegroom refers to the season of health, youth, joy, friendship, and love in our lives. We need to enjoy those things because, all too soon, accidents, ill-health, cold lonely seasons, and death will deprive us of them. We may not let the inevitable prospect of cold lonely seasons, diminishment, ill-health and death deprive us of fully enjoying the legitimate joys that life offers.

## Pulpits

This challenge, I believe, has not been sufficiently preached from our pulpits, taught in our churches or had a proper place in our spirituality. When have you last heard a homily or sermon challenging you, on the basis of the Gospels, to enjoy your life more? When have you last heard a preacher asking, in Jesus name: are you enjoying your health, your youth, your life, your meals, your wine-drinking, sufficiently?

Granted that this challenge, which seems to go against the conventional spiritual grain, can sound like an invitation to hedonism, mindless pleasure, excessive personal comfort and a spiritual flabbiness that can be the antithesis of the Christian message at whose centre lies the cross and self-renunciation.

**“When have you last heard a homily or sermon challenging you, on the basis of the Gospels, to enjoy your life more?”**

Admittedly there's that risk, but the opposite danger also looms, namely, a bitter, unhealthy stoic life. If the challenge to enjoy life is done wrongly, without the necessary accompanying asceticism and self-renunciation, it carries those dangers; but, as we see from the life of Jesus, self-renunciation and the capacity to thoroughly enjoy the gift of life, love and creation are integrally connected. They depend on each other.

Excess and hedonism are, in the end, a bad functional substitute for genuine enjoyment. Genuine enjoyment, as Jesus taught and embodied, is integrally tied to renunciation and self-sacrifice.

And so, it's only when we can give our lives away in self-renunciation that we can thoroughly enjoy the pleasures of this life, just as it is only when we can genuinely enjoy the legitimate pleasures of this life that we can give our lives away in self-sacrifice.



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Heroes, role models and flimsy stereotypes

Films from the 1960s tend to look very dated – what with garish colours and embarrassing haircuts – but I find the film **Man For All Seasons** (RTÉ One, Saturday) still held up well. Paul Scofield, whose work was more on stage than on film, turns in an Oscar-winning performance as St Thomas More, in dispute with Henry VIII.

There are lots of absorbing set pieces but two scenes in particular stand out for me. The last meeting between More and his family in the Tower of London dungeon is a poignant farewell, working well on an emotional level regardless of the history.

In particular the relationship with his wife is tense but respectful. His daughter tries to get him to rationalise his position to get out of prison, but tough as it is he chooses to go with his conscience. In an age when anti-heroes are so common in films and TV drama, it's good to have good role models, especially to inspire young people.

Then there's the trial sequence – an education in the finer points of law, conscience and church-state relations that has plenty of resonance for our times. Interestingly More is no rabid campaigner, he doesn't publicly object to Henry's carry on, but remains silent rather than swearing assent.



Robert Shaw and Paul Scofield in *A Man for all Seasons*.

If anything, he says in his defence, silence implies consent, but it's not enough to save him. There's that striking moment when he subtly upbraids Richard Rich for committing perjury in return for a new title – "what does it profit a man if he gives his soul for the whole world...but for Wales?" Sadly, the days of people compromising conscience for political gain are not over yet.

Could one get farther from the artistic and religious merit of that film to the mockery of **Brigid and Eamon** (RTÉ 2, Tuesday nights)? The series

pokes fun at an 1980s couple who are sporadically religious. One could take this as a send up of religious hypocrisy and superstition, but to me it seems like a flimsy premise on which to hang some unsavory stereotyping.

In last week's episode there was allegedly a moving statue in their living room – the gullible locals were impressed, the camp gay priest was dismissive and the whole thing was mildly crude, mostly flat, with an occasional smile (the Gerry Adams caricature was mildly funny). The fact that they were using a statue of

Our Lady as a coat rack says a lot. It was made for RTÉ by Pure Class Productions, but it was neither pure nor class. Sad to think Government grant money was spent on this.

### Ups and downs

Philip Mulryne was earning tons of money as a professional footballer with Manchester United and Norwich but found it all very unsatisfying. He craved flash cars but soon tired of the latest model – he realised he was 'made for much more'. On **Today with Seán O'Rourke**, (RTÉ Radio 1, Thursday) he told



Fr Philip Mulryne.

of the ups and downs of his life which led him recently to be ordained a priest with the Dominicans.

Like many vocation stories there was influence from faith inspired family members in the background. Now he feels liberated in his new vowed lifestyle, believes it's a great time to be Catholic and is looking forward to his role as chaplain in Newbridge College.

Meanwhile I've been following a podcast (like radio on demand), **Up and Vanished**, which is investigating the 2005 disappearance of Tara Grinstead, a young teacher and beauty queen from Georgia in the US. Host Payne Lindsey declares that he is motivated only by a desire for truth and justice, which is fair enough, but over the last few months suspicions have been aired liberally. I doubt if this would happen under Ireland's libel laws.

An update, Tuesday of last week, was a 'Case Evidence' special which featured a long social media exchange between one of the suspects arrested and an online contact. The crime scene details were disturbing but at least one bizarre detail surfaced for the first time. As this suspect described how he had helped a friend (the only one indicted on a murder charge) to dispose of Grinstead's body he told of saying the Lord's Prayer as they set the fire.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

**PRAYING AS A FAMILY**  
EWTN, Sunday, July 23, 8pm

Families share how they have made their homes into sacred spaces of peace and love.

**DOCUMENTARY ON ONE: POLAR OPPOSITES**  
RTÉ Radio 1, Tuesday, July 11, 1pm

With a referendum on abortion in Ireland in the pipeline, Documentary on One travels to Iceland to get a snapshot of a country which has a vastly contrasting legal situation to Ireland.

**YOUTH AND CULTURE WITH JEAN VANIER**  
EWTN, Thursday, July 27, 9pm

Humanitarian and L'Arche founder, Jean Vanier, shares his thoughts and discusses the challenges the youth face from his retreat centre Trosly, France.

He knew she was a Christian and wanted to show some respect!

The story is ongoing.

[boregan@hotmail.com](mailto:boregan@hotmail.com)



Aubrey Malone

# Film

## A selection of 'blockbusters' for the summer season

'Blockbuster' is the word that springs to mind as one surveys the raft of films being rolled out in the so-called 'silly' season to pique the interest of younger viewers enjoying a break from school.

We recently saw films like *Wonder Woman* and *Transformers: The Last Knight* making their pitch for this lucrative target audience. The 'Big Movie' craze continues with *War for the Planet of the Apes* (12A), the third chapter of the much-hyped primate series. Caesar (Andy Serkis) and his apes engage in a tussle with an army of humans led by a ruthless colonel played by Woody Harrelson (the poor man's Brando from *Apocalypse Now?*) to deter-



A scene from *Dunkirk*.

mine who will finally rule the planet.

*Despicable Me 3* (G), in gentler vein, has Steve Carell voicing the formerly nasty but now reformed character Gru. Gru tried to steal the moon in

a previous *Despicable Me* outing. Here he meets a mysterious stranger, Dru. Dru claims to be his long-lost brother. The pair of them team up to try and foil a diamond thief. Kristin Wiig voices Gru's wife

and the much-loved minions are also present and correct. A bevy of energetic musical interludes rounds off the wholesome package.

### Sequel

*Cars 3* (G) is another animated sequel that will be gobbled up by younger viewers. By now they will be well acquainted with the travails of Lightning McQueen (voiced by Owen Wilson). When we meet him this time he's suffering from a crisis of confidence on the race track. He's being humiliated by 'new kid on the block' Jackson Storm.

Not willing to take it lying down, he re-evaluates his career with the help of a new sponsor and trainer, voiced

by Nathan Fillion and Cristela Alonzo respectively.

The most welcome voice in the film, however, is that of Paul Newman. Newman featured in the first *Cars* film but died shortly after it was released. Now, thanks to the wonders of technology, they've managed to 'resurrect' him for this third instalment of the franchise.

The *Cars* movies have always seemed to be in the shadow of the *Toy Story* ones, probably because people are more interesting to look at than vehicles. *Cars 3* may change that perspective, at least if audiences aren't put off by the elegiac tone of the film, featuring a Rocky Balboa character facing into the

autumn of his career.

One of the most eagerly anticipated releases of the summer is Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* (12A). It comes to us hot on the heels of *Churchill*. The latter film catalogued the prelude to one of the great victories of World War 2. *Dunkirk* gives us the other side of the coin – a nightmare scenario.

It focuses on the traumas suffered by the Allied Forces on the eponymous French beach in 1940 when they found themselves surrounded by the German army on every side with nowhere left to turn. The star-studded cast includes Tom Hardy, Mark Rylance, Kenneth Branagh and our own Cillian Murphy.



# BookReviews

**Peter Costello**



## ‘A docile lot’ – Irish journalists in the 20th Century

**The Fourth Estate: Journalism in Twentieth-Century Ireland**  
by Mark O'Brien  
(Manchester University Press, £80)

**Felix M. Larkin**

This book is about “the conditions under which journalism was practised” in Ireland in the 20th Century, with a focus on “how centres of power related to journalists” – to quote the author, Mark O'Brien, lecturer in journalism history at Dublin City University.

The centres of power in question are, unsurprisingly, political, ecclesiastical and business – and O'Brien endorses the wholly dismissive assessment of Irish journalists by Michael O'Toole, himself a journalist, in 1988 as “a docile lot, anxious to please the proprietor, the advertiser, the prelate, the statesman”.

The distinguished American journalist, Walter Lippmann, once wrote that “the function of news is to signalize an event”.

### News

The media, however, have enormous discretion in deciding which events to note and which to ignore. In short, they decide what is the news. News, therefore, should not be regarded as an objective concept; it is not the same as truth.

Truth is what actually happens, whereas news is what is

reported. O'Brien's argument in this book is that the media in Ireland have all too often failed to report the truth – the full truth – about what was going on in the country, either because they were too deferential or timid and self-censored the news or because the centres of power were simply too strong and could block critical reportage.

In other words, Irish journalism – with few exceptions – has not lived up to the ideals of “speaking truth to power” and “holding power to account”, two of the most common definitions of the responsibility of the Fourth Estate. We have been short-changed by the domestic providers of news. By contrast, British tabloids sold in Ireland were much less restrained – but they were condemned for it, and O'Brien gives several examples.

**“Gageby ‘basically didn’t want stuff that was ‘damaging’ to Haughey to appear in the paper”**

In fairness, this is not just an Irish problem – and O'Brien might have acknowledged that in his text. As the recent Oscar-winning film *Spotlight* showed, the press in Boston was every bit as slow to expose the child abuse prob-



Former Taoiseach and Fianna Fáil leader, Charles J. Haughey. Photo: RTÉ

lem among Catholic clergy and the institutional cover-up of it as were the media in Ireland. It was only after the *Boston Globe* newspaper hired a new editor from outside the Boston area that the investigative team at the *Globe* was given free rein to research and publish the story.

Even the best and brightest among Irish journalists were not immune to the culture of suppression. O'Brien highlights, for instance, that Douglas Gageby – the revered editor of *The Irish Times* – frustrated various attempts by his journalists to uncover the sources of Charles Haughey's wealth. According to one such journalist, Frank McDonauld, Gageby “basically didn't want stuff that was ‘damag-

ing’ to Haughey to appear in the paper”.

As O'Brien records, it was a “freak incident” in Orlando, Florida, involving Ben Dunne – and not Irish journalism – that “eventually exposed all”. Legal documentation arising in the subsequent struggle for control of the Dunnes Stores business revealed that Dunne had given money to Haughey – and from that the whole cat's cradle began to unravel at last.

### Irish television

O'Brien argues that the advent of Irish television in the 1960s initiated a transformation in Irish journalism. Its more aggressive and critical journalism was, in O'Brien's words, “a strong counterblast

to the existing media and the constrained journalism that then existed”. The process of transformation was, however, fitful – and it remains incomplete in the face of continued resistance from the centres of power.

O'Brien is right to conclude that recent Irish journalism is “not altogether free from the constraints of church and state, but [is] establishing ever greater distance...thus upping the ante in terms of challenging institutions to be accountable and transparent”.

The most ludicrous manifestation of these constraints was the establishment by the government of a three-judge tribunal of enquiry into a 1969 television programme on illegal money-lending in

Dublin – the tribunal's role being to examine the journalistic practices followed in making the programme, rather than the real scandal of money-lending.

The tribunal's report was predictably critical of the programme, with the result that – as later recalled by the programme's editor, Muiris Mac Conghail – “an edge had been dulled in the area of investigative reporting”.

More controversial – and heavy-handed – was the action of the government in 1971 in invoking Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act in order to ban RTÉ from reporting “any material that could be calculated to promote” paramilitary political activity. That ban was part of what O'Brien has elsewhere termed “the silencing project in the South”, a range of legislative measures responding to the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

While no sane person likes censorship, it must be said that these measures reflected a fear in official circles in Dublin that Irish journalism would too easily be intimidated out of challenging militant republican propaganda. As this book demonstrates, it had failed to confront other powerful interests in the preceding years – so perhaps that fear was justified.

One must, in conclusion, regret that the exorbitant price of this book will deprive it of the wide readership that it richly deserves.

## Newbridge celebrates Hopkins: priest, poet and visionary of nature

**Peter Costello**

The Hopkins Festival will be opened tomorrow by the British Ambassador, H.E. Robin Barnett in Newbridge College Theatre, Co. Kildare (at 7.30pm).

Directed by poet Desmond Egan, who founded it 30 years ago, it celebrates the life and work of the Jesuit poet Gerald Manley Hopkins, now recognised as one of the great literary figures of the Victorian era, who passed the last years of his too brief life in Ireland, where he taught at the Catholic University College and died in the summer of 1889.

It runs from Friday, July 21 to Thursday, July 27, and offers an event filled programme that has something for everyone, from classical recital by the distinguished Swedish pianist Hans Pålsson to activities for young people.

The focus this year is (in part)

on the great Japanese interest in Hopkins, with the Hopkins Society of Japan being honoured to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ireland and Japan. Hopkins' intense catholicity seems to present no barrier to his appreciation across the world's cultures.

**“There are book launches, poetry readings, and talks on aspects of Hopkins' life and work”**

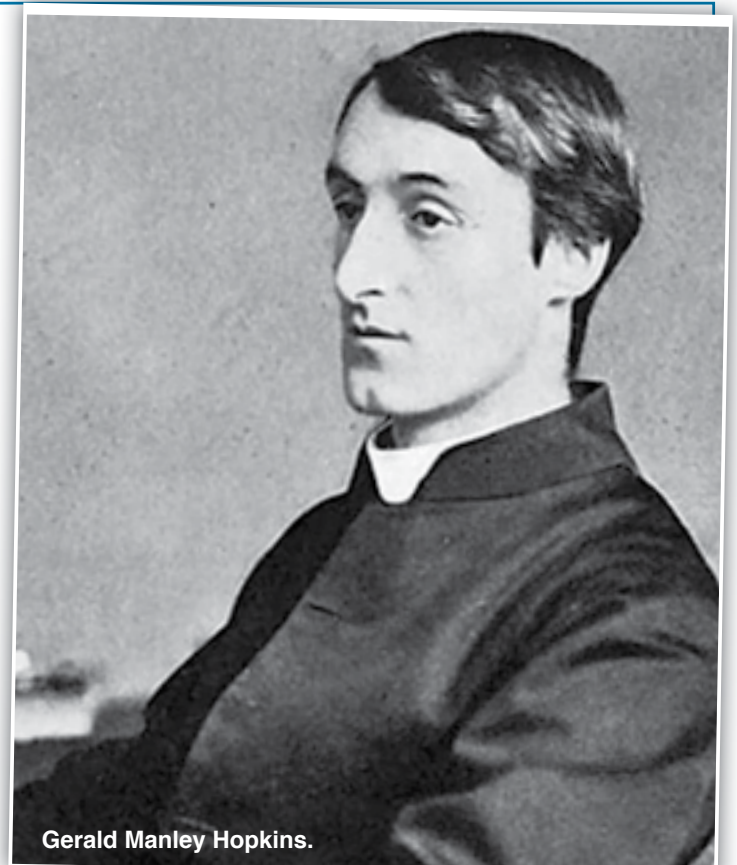
But as usual there are book launches, poetry readings, and talks on aspects of Hopkins' life and work. Every year too there are contributions as well on John Henry Newman, the poet's mentor.

Alone of all the summer schools and festivals now held across the

summer in Ireland, the Hopkins Festival concentrates on the relations between poetry and spirituality; but in the case of an artist such as Hopkins that encompasses nearly everything you can think of, which gives the director great scope.

With creative flair and energy Desmond Egan has kept the festival going over the decades, though this has involved the transfer of the venue from Monasterevin with which Hopkins has a special connection, often staying there with friends, to the larger facilities at Newbridge, provided by Newbridge College. The town provides opportunities for socialising among those attending after hours.

The programme and full details of events and charges can be found online (at [www.geraldmanleyhopkins.org](http://www.geraldmanleyhopkins.org)) or by contacting the organisers (at [abbottviv@gmail.com](mailto:abbottviv@gmail.com)). Conference office 9am to 6pm, speak with Viv at 085 273 2568, or (045) 433 613.



Gerald Manley Hopkins.



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 late Jackie Healy Rae.

# The national power of the parish pump

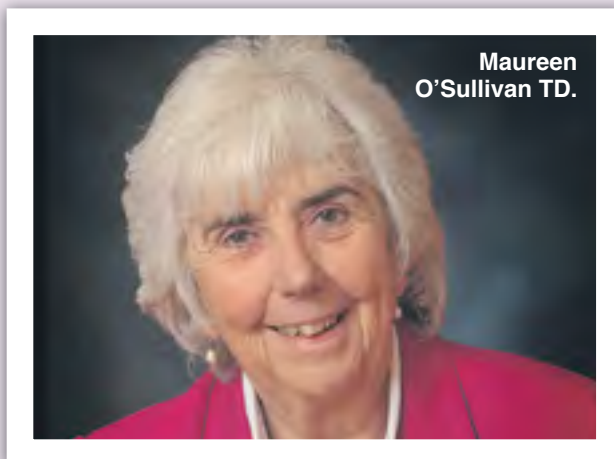
**Independents in Irish Party Democracy**  
by Liam Weeks  
(Manchester University Press, £80)

**Peter Hegarty**

Michael O'Leary once dismissed them as "local lunatics", but UCC political scientist Liam Weeks takes a more favourable view of our independent TDs, in a thorough and well-informed book.

He begins in Kerry on count night in February 2016 when independents and brothers Michael and Danny Healy-Rae not only took seats, but also won two and a half electoral quotas in first preferences alone, "a vote total that suggested had another member of the family run, he or she could also have been elected".

Independents such as the Healy-Raes enjoy great political space, freedom from what independent senator Sean Barrett calls the "military-style discipline" to which party backbenchers are subject. The votes some attract reflect their ability to get closer to their electors than party politicians. In many countries politicians



Maureen O'Sullivan TD.

do not knock on doors. Here they do. Irish politics is, as the academics would say, 'localised' and 'candidate-centred'. That voter-politician proximity partially accounts for the success of independent candidates in this country.

**“What seems to be a sop to an independent may not be one at all”**

Maureen O'Sullivan TD is one of the seven independents, or former independents, who have contributed chapters on their political careers. She affectionately recalls her

mentor, Tony Gregory, a principled, tireless politician who consistently made a priority of the needs of his electors in inner-city Dublin. The price of his support was always investment in his constituency.

**Dead hand**

Party membership would have been a dead hand on Gregory's shoulder. It would have involved more party meetings and fewer community meetings. Whips might have tried to rein him in, have him cut out the controversial stuff, or allow one of the rising stars in the party to share in the credit for his achievements. Independence suits

such 'activist' politicians, O'Sullivan suggests. Finian McGrath, another protégé of Tony Gregory, agrees.

Dr Weeks mounts a solid defence of independents. Yes, the constituency is their primary concern, but the constituency also figures large in the thinking of party politicians and ministers. The author cleverly illustrates the point with reference to RTÉ's analysis of the allocation of private housing grants in 2015: "Mayo and Limerick, home of the Taoiseach and Minister for Finance, received double the national average of such grants."

What seems to be a sop to an independent may not be one at all. Sometimes a government party dresses up a scheme long in the pipeline as a concession to an independent TD, on whom it relies for support, to make him look good back home.

Weeks rejects the widely-held belief that independents are fickle: they tend to be reliable political partners, reliable because they hear at the doors that people want stable government and plenty of time between elections. Local they may be, lunatics they're not.

## The World of Books

By the books editor

### Were the 'Blue Men' the first Muslims in Ireland?

Writing recently about the Dublin connections of the romance of Tristan and Isolde I had no room to mention that one of the paintings decorating the frieze of the foyer of the City Hall is of Tristan asking for the hand of Isolde (who stands nearby) on behalf of King Mark of Cornwall.

Also standing by is a figure in Eastern dress, who represents King Palomides the Saracen, a character in Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, the high point of the Arthurian epic in literature. Palomides is deeply enamoured of Isolde and says he will convert from Islam if she marries him.

The tale went otherwise, of course, but this strange figure set me thinking about the earliest Muslims in Ireland. Palomides as a literary image belongs to the time of the crusades of the 12th Century, when much of the Arthurian literature took on its literary form. But there was hardly likely to have been a Muslim in these islands then, or earlier. Or so one might think.

Aside from the rare individuals, a Muslim community in Ireland first emerged in the 1950s with the Malayan students at the Royal College of Surgeons. Later there were a large number of Libyan aero engineers associated with Aer Lingus.

But these were, it seems, far from the first Muslims. Everyone will have heard about *The Annals of the Four Masters* assembled by Michael O'Clery and his colleagues from earlier annals. Their work was translated in the 19th Century by John O'Donovan, the great scholar who was a pioneer of modern Celtic studies.

However, there were other annals, and fragments of annals. O'Donovan himself translated *Annals of Ireland: Three Fragments* (1860), created for Donnchad mac Gilla Pátraic, ruler of Ossory and Leinster in the early 11th Century. In these there is a curious passage.

The annalist is recording the struggle between rival Viking groups. One of these is described as mounting a raid on the sea coast of what is called Mauretania. This is not the present day Saharan republic, but rather the northern coast of Morocco and Algeria, the old Roman province.

Their landing is opposed by a local king and his tribesmen. In battle the Viking leader struck off the king's hand. He fled, his followers scattering behind him. This took place at N'kor in Al Hoceïma Province of the Kingdom of Morocco, across the Alboran Sea from Malaga, in or around 860 – in the annals the next entry relates to an eclipse of the sun that took place in 865.

However, many of the Maurs – or Moors – were taken prisoner and carried back to Ireland. There we are told they became serfs, known as the "Blue men of Erin" – or 'the Black men'. The annalist writes as if these were a well known population group – rather like the travelling tinsmiths in the 19th Century. Given the connection of these fragmentary annals with the Kingdom of Ossory, it is likely that the "Blue Men" were found there between Leinster and Munster in what is now largely Co. Kilkenny and part of Laois.

These Blue Men were undoubtedly Muslim Berbers. John O'Donovan, however, notes that the Blue Men are not mentioned elsewhere. Given the immense damage and destruction to Irish records done by all sides over the centuries this should not surprise us.

These first Muslims in Ireland must have married in due course – probably among those other semi-submerged populations of the original prehistoric Irish that the Gaelic overlords claiming descent from Milesius kept in servitude. But DNA survives, which means that among many Irish Catholics of the old Norse area of influence in Ossory the Moorish blood of the followers of the Prophet must still flow. As the annalist, writing about the time of the Battle of Contarf, says, "long indeed were these Blue Men in Erin".

Perhaps in the conditions of the new and emerging multi-cultural Ireland we need to know a great deal more about these 'Blue Men of Erin': where they came from in North Africa, and where they were settled in the midlands. But then this is just one of the myriads of mysteries about early and medieval Ireland that scholars have yet to resolve.





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N.H.

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# Leisure time

**Crossword Junior**

Gordius 191



- ACROSS**

1 Chuckle (5)  
4 Not heavy (5)  
7 Vanish (9)  
9 The only mammal that can truly fly (3)  
10 Simplest (7)  
12 You sleep in this (3)  
14 Big city in Northern Ireland (5)  
17 Person giving out the cards (6)  
18 Ahead of everyone else (5)  
19 Says "Yes" to (6)
- 3 Take place; occur (6)  
5 You might grow flowers here beside your house (6)  
6 Heat bread to make this (4)  
8 A chocolate treat at the end of Lent (6,3)  
11 You use it to sweep the floor (5)  
13 These creatures have feathers (5)  
15 Sign over the way out (4)  
16 The colour of the sky on a nice day (4)

**LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS**

**GORDIUS No.307**

**Across** – 1 Antecedent 6 Brew 10 Salem 11 Aggressor 12 Drought 15 Acres 17 Roan 18 Albs 19 Diego 21 Pen-pals 24 Scut 25 Acne 26 Ambit 28 The salt of the earth 33 Brigadoon 34 Rabbi 35 Tyke

**Down** – 1 Also 2 Tolerable 3 Cymru 4 Death knell 5 Nags 7 Riser 8 Wordsworth 9 Demands 13 Gape 14 Triplet 16 Jack rabbit 20 Excalibur 21 Plateau 22 Like 27 Brick 29 Hunch 30 Surge 31 Wolf 32 Sikh

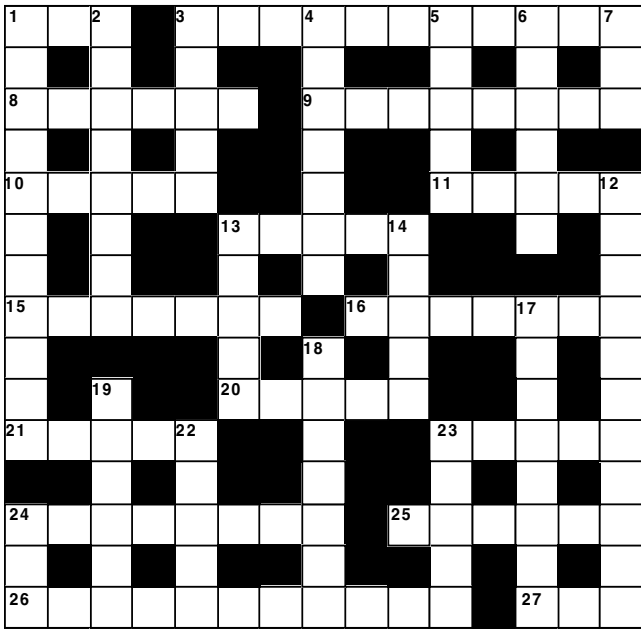
**CHILDREN'S No.190**

**Across** – 1 Architect 7 One 8 Servant 9 India 10 Onion 11 Rat 13 Get 14 Mel 16 Free 17 Errors 19 Alarm 20 Idol 21 Hot

**Down** – 1 Answer 2 Carrot 3 Imagine 4 Eating 5 Toadstool 6 Reward 12 Afraid 14 Medal 15 Legal 18 Suit

**Crossword**

Gordius 308



- ACROSS**

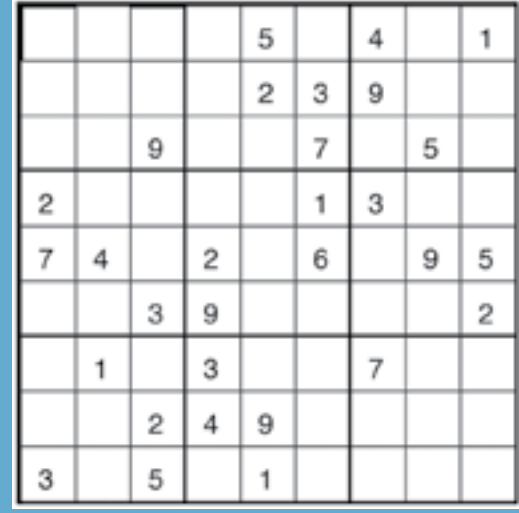
1 Mongrel (3)  
3 How Pippin hails the recipients of a letter from Paul and Timothy! (11)  
8 Male relative (6)  
9 Powered cutting implement (5-3)  
10 Tune I deconstruct and put together (5)  
11 Looking at (5)  
13 Touring bus (5)  
15 & 25a The cobbler's tool's certainly not lower, by the look of it, where this biblical meal for thirteen is concerned! (3,4,6)  
16 Over-economised, having raced around Ms Cattrall (7)  
20 Undertook some espionage (5)  
21 & 5d Pile bronze up to achieve Scandinavian recognition (5,5)  
23 Rich dairy product (5)  
24 Makes damp (8)  
25 See 15 across  
26 Fictitious feline with a cheesy grin? (8,3)  
27 It denotes a lady's maiden name (3)
- DOWN**

1 Part of speech used by a trickster at the crossroads? (11)  
2 Get a let-off, ere viper moves (8)  
3 Segment (5)  
4 Tetanus (7)  
5 See 21 across  
6 Make an offensive donkey sicken (6)  
7 Stitch together (3)  
12 In France, one may find them very arresting! (11)  
13 Many requests for barrels (5)  
14 Walked cross-country (5)  
17 J M Barrie's most famous creation (5,3)  
18 Delicate skill (7)  
19 Necessitate one to do a favour (6)  
22 Fastening found in a flat chamber (5)  
23 Enumerate (5)  
24 Waterproof coat (3)

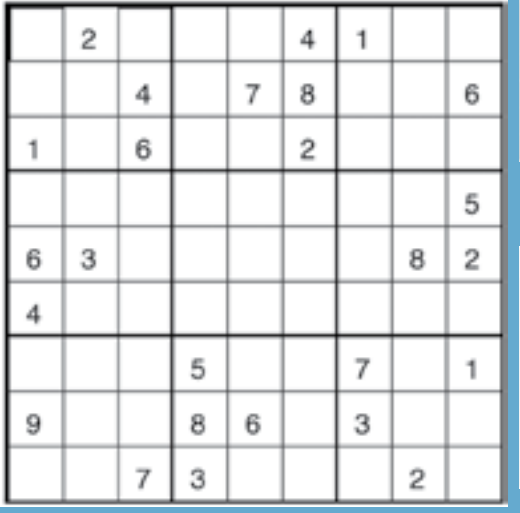
**Sudoku Corner**

191

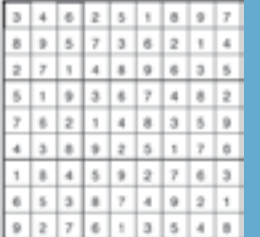
**Easy**



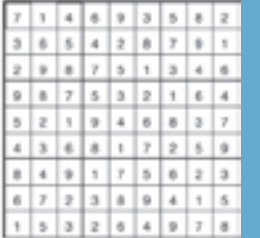
**Hard**



**Last week's Easy 190**



**Last week's Hard 190**





Notebook

Carol Glatz



**WHAT DO THE** Sistine Chapel, a used car with 186,000 miles on the odometer and a statue of Our Lady of Luján made out of metal from an abandoned factory have in common?

Besides being found in the Vatican Museums' collections, the 1984 Renault, the Renaissance frescoes and the recycled scrap all help showcase Pope Francis' concept of art, according to museum officials.

Blessed Paul VI's close relationship and active outreach to artists is well-known, as is St John Paul II's love of theatre and poetry and retired Pope Benedict XVI's passion for music.

But not many people know about Pope Francis' love of film, literature, music and the role he believes art can play in evangelisation, social change and spiritual transformation. A new documentary produced by the Vatican Museums and Vatican City State aims to fill that void.

Titled *My Idea of Art*, the 45-minute film is based on the book of the same name, authored by Pope Francis after Italian journalist Tiziana Lupi transcribed it from a sit-down interview with the Pope in May 2015.

While the book is available only in Italian, the documentary film aims for a global audience,

# The artist is a witness of the invisible

with subtitles in six languages and yet-to-be-announced theatrical releases worldwide.

Like the book, the film presents "the ideal art gallery" of Pope Francis, offering stunning visuals of selected masterpieces in the Vatican's collections to colourfully illustrate the Pope's vision for art.

**Details**

Using high-resolution 4K cinematography and state-of-the-art drones, filmmakers provide panoramic bird's-eye views of St Peter's Square, the basilica and

Vatican Gardens and close-up details of hard-to-see pieces like the hieroglyphics on the 85-foot tall Egyptian obelisk in St Peter's Square and the Sistine Chapel's frescoed ceiling.

The images are layered with insight from Lupi, explanations of the artwork by Sandro Barbagallo, curator of historical collections at the Vatican Museums, and snippets of Pope Francis speaking about the culture of waste and how art and evangelisation exalt the beauty of God's creation and seek to recover what others have

thrown away.

For example, one of the 11 works chosen as exemplifying Pope Francis' "gospel of art" is the 'Belvedere Torso' [pictured] from around the time when Christ lived. The contorted and damaged marble figure is missing arms, head and lower legs, which prompted Pope Julius II to ask Michelangelo to fix it.

But Michelangelo was so taken by its beauty, he dared not touch it, making it, instead, his model for the Sibyls in the Sistine Chapel, Barbagallo said in the film's narration. "Many other artists saw beauty in this nude's brokenness, too, and Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker* was inspired by this rejected piece of marble," the curator said.

"The artist is a witness of the invisible," Pope Francis says in the film's narration, "and works of art are the clearest proof that the incarnation is possible." Which is why, the Pope says, artists can counteract today's throwaway culture and evangelise, because art reveals "what cannot be seen; for some it's an illusion. Instead it is hope which we all can believe in".

**Thinking like an artist**

"Pope Francis thinks like an artist, without a doubt," Argentine sculptor Alejandro Marmo told me at the documentary's debut at the Vatican Museums.

The same way artists find beauty in and shape the materials right there before them, Pope Francis welcomes and gives form or direction to the malleable heart in his midst, he said. It's a hands-on, artist's approach in offering pastoral care,

he said.

"He combines intelligence, humility, human labour and his closeness to people who have no power. For me, this is the way to create real beauty," said Marmo, who got to know the Pope when he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires.

Then-Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio and Marmo - at the time a troubled and disgruntled young man - found they were both

alarmed by the culture of waste and hopelessness in their city, which was facing severe economic and social crises, Marmo has said.

Marmo approached other Church leaders with a desire to use art as a way to have a positive impact on people and society, but Cardinal Bergoglio "was the first bishop who listened" to his angry and "abstract" rantings, Marmo said.

While Church leaders are usually very well-educated and cultured, "to speak with an artist, listen to his ideas is difficult, and I believe that this was what was so important for me, because he opened up the spiritual world for me," Marmo said. He said the cardinal showed him that Jesus - broken and discarded - was present in the real world, "in the peripheries".

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