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Bishops to debate future of controversial art by priest accused of abusing women

EXCLUSIVE

Fr Rupnik's Irish College mosaics may be axed

Chai Brady

Irish bishops are set to discuss the future of artwork in Rome's Pontifical Irish College by a controversial priest-artist accused of abusing several adult women.

The Jesuit Order this week confirmed that Fr Marko Rupnik has been expelled from the society, for "disobedience" and his future in the priesthood remains in doubt amidst the serious allegations.

The chapel at the Irish College re-opened in 2010 after extensive remodelling and mosaic work carried out by Fr Rupnik. The Slovenian former Jesuit is also responsible for artworks at the Vatican, Lourdes and San Giovanni Rotondo.

Earlier this year, Bishop Jean-Marc Micas of Tarbes and Lourdes said he is considering removing mosaics by Fr Rupnik at the famed shrine due to the potential harm their presence could inflict on victims.

This week, Fr Paul Finnerty, Rector of the Pontifical Irish College,

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Calming the flames...



A Greek Orthodox priest covers his face to protect from smoke as firefighters, volunteers and police officers prepare to tackle a wildfire approaching the village of Masari, on the island of Rhodes, Greece on Monday. Photo: Reuters

QUESTIONS OF FAITH

Why do Catholics wear crucifixes?

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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return in the autumn

Dublin city priest rejects Justice Minister's 'fatalistic' comments

Jason Osborne

A priest based in Dublin city centre has described his parishioners as "fed up" with the lack of safety on the streets, and described Justice Minister Helen McEntee's recent comments on the topic as "fatalistic".

This comes in the wake of a number of serious assaults in Dublin city centre which have left many hospitalised, including a tourist from the US and a woman in her 30s.

Minister McEntee said in response to questions about safety in the city centre that while Dublin is a safe place, people aren't going to be safe there all the time.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Fr Jim Campbell of Blessed Sacrament Chapel said that the deterioration of the city centre's safety was "predictable" and that in light of recent hardships, "certain people who were already a bit desperate have become

more desperate".

"I don't tend to go for walks in the town anymore, just maybe to go to the shops and back again," Fr Campbell said.

"I don't go out when there aren't any open facilities. When there are open facilities there are always people around, but when there's not, I don't go out that much at that stage."

Fr Campbell praised the Luas as a potential model for Dublin City to follow, saying that whereas the red line had previously been "rambunctious," the hiring of extra security helped the situation.

"That's what has to be done on the streets as well, to get things more under control," he said.

Fr Campbell said he disagreed "strongly" with Minister McEntee's statement, saying that while he understands she has both a human view and a ministerial view of the situation in the city

centre, she ought to be figuring out what can be done about it.

"I think certainly, as the minister, she should be saying we'll all be doing

everything that we can to maintain the safety of the people," he said, adding, she's possibly "more fatalistic, like so many other people [about the city centre]".

Clogher diocese facing severe clergy shortfall

Staff reporter

There will be fewer than 10 priests covering 85 churches across Clogher diocese in less than 20 years, Bishop Larry Duffy has warned.

Meanwhile, just one priest is due to be ordained for the diocese in the next seven years.

Writing to the people of the diocese in a pastoral letter, Bishop Duffy said that the "truth is that we cannot continue to operate and provide pastoral ministry across our diocese in the same way as we do now or as we did in the past".

As a result of the expected shortfall of priests in the coming decades, Clogher will have to move from a model "that is clergy-dependent and based almost solely on sacramental

provision to one that is broader in terms of recognising, utilising and honouring the vocation and varied gifts of all the baptised".

Over time, this will allow for "really effective and meaningful co-responsibility in the Church's mission," Dr Duffy said.

Clogher is to see a diocesan group established to "lead and guide" the planning process for the future, which will be made up mostly of lay men and women.

"We will be challenged to develop new ways of learning and celebrating our faith; new ways of gathering in our parishes for prayer in the absence of a priest, new ways of preparing for and celebrating funerals, new ways of assisting in parish administration and so on," Bishop Duffy said.

Vicars general appointed for Down and Connor

Ruadhán Jones

The powers of vicar general for the diocese of Down and Connor have been delegated to Fr John Murray and Fr Eugene O'Hagan, as the diocese awaits the appointment of a new bishop.

Apostolic administrator Bishop Donal McKeown conferred the powers of a vicar general to the two priests to assist in the ongoing governance of the diocese, a July 21 statement says.

Bishop McKeown also announced the clerical changes, which are to take effect from Saturday, August 19.

Four priests are to retire from their positions as parish priest, Fr Anthony Alexander, Fr Paul Alexander, Fr Anthony Curran and Fr Patrick McWilliams, with the bishop extending his "heartfelt thanks" for their many years of ministry.

"With the people of the diocese, I am very grateful to them for their willingness to be of continued pastoral service to the diocese as their circumstances permit," Bishop McKeown said.

The full list of appointments can be accessed on www.downandconnor.org.

Bishops to debate future of controversial art by priest accused of abusing women

» **Continued from Page 1**
confirmed to *The Irish Catholic* that Irish bishops are also considering the future of the artwork in Rome.

"The matter is under review and will be examined by the trustees at a future meeting," he told this paper. The trustees are the Irish bishops' conference.

Prominent campaigner and abuse survivor Margaret McGuckian said she believed the works should be removed from the college chapel.

"If there was art done by an abuser displayed for the world to see, should that still be in place? No, I would say not. Otherwise you're applauding him in his work, but not the real person as he was. It's giving the person a platform, he should have no acclaim whatsoever.

"It is showing that the victims have not got a voice

here, abusers are still being acclaimed if they are not coming out against it totally.

"In 2023, this shows disrespect, it shows they are not serious about the concern of victims when they're still having the likes of that on display. That would be, surely, showing an example of leadership and example for abuse victims by doing away with this and letting these abusers have no say, or no place in society," Ms McGuckian insisted this week.

Dr Paul Caffrey, a lecturer in the history of art at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin said that the issue is complex.

"Separating out the work of art from the artist [Marko Rupnik], that is the big question. There are big differences between what went on in the past and

something that is live and happening now that we can deal with, whereas looking back at things in history there's not much we can do about Michelangelo, or Caravaggio," he said.

Dr Caffrey insisted: "I think the fact it is a live issue that we have to make decisions about - the artist is alive and he can be interrogated - makes the difference".

Commenting on the Irish College, which apart from weddings is largely a private chapel, Dr Caffrey said: "If I was the Bishop of Tarbes, I'd be more worried [about Lourdes] because it is such a public place and millions of pilgrims go there.

"This is a live case that we have to make decisions about," he said.

'Who we love shapes who we become'



Happy couple Michelle Carroll and Martin Collevy are pictured in St Mary's Church, Mountbellew, on Saturday, July 22, with Fr Karl Burns, who celebrated the couple's wedding Mass.

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Irish expats excited by women's soccer efforts 'Down Under' says Irish priest

Ruadhán Jones

Irish expats living in Australia and many who have travelled over are "excited" to cheer on the women's soccer team as they take part in the world cup for the first time, an Irish priest based in Sydney has said.

"There's more than the usual excitement

for a world cup" around the Irish community, Fr Brendan Purcell told *The Irish Catholic*.

"I had lunch with a friend recently and his three girls have come over, they are so excited about it. That's mirrored in a lot of the community, he said.

There were "certainly a good number of Irish"

among the almost 80,000 that attended Ireland's 1-0 loss to Australia in the opening game, he said.

"There's a great buzz around the Irish community" the priest from Dublin diocese added.

"It's great, we know even on the men's side it's so hard to get to a world cup and the girls have

been knocking at the door for a while."

Although Ireland lost to the hosts, many people have recognised that they are "good competitors, the team are liked a lot", said Fr Purcell.

If it wasn't for a second-half penalty – which many Australians Fr Purcell have talked to believe to have

been a harsh decision by the referee – Ireland could have walked away with a respectable draw in their first ever world cup match.

Hopes remain high for the remainder of the team's fixtures, he said, though it will be an uphill tackle for Ireland to emerge from the group stages.

The one wish that Fr Purcell and other fans have is that Ireland add some goal-scoring potential to their competitive nature.

"We need to dig up someone who can get a dash on goal," said Fr Purcell. "Either way, I suspect the Irish will be pleased with how they've done so far."

Devout Limerick star leads team to four-in-a-row



Cian Lynch of Limerick with his nephew Ché after the GAA Hurling All-Ireland Senior Championship final match between Kilkenny and Limerick at Croke Park in Dublin. Photo: David Fitzgerald/Sportsfile.

Staff reporter

Cian Lynch, a devout Catholic who has spoken openly about the importance of his faith, led Limerick to a fourth triumph in a row as they beat Kilkenny on Sunday, July 23.

Mr Lynch in his acceptance speech praised John Kiely as a "spiritual guy" and the "spiritual leader" of the team, but he himself could lay good claim to title given his own deep spirituality.

The weekly Massgoer has previously said he would be "lost without it" and is often pictured wearing a cross and chain.

"A lot of people say that there is a massive relationship between faith and sport and I found there is," he told *The Sun* in 2018.

Also in 2018, he told *The42.ie* that faith for him is "a bit of a structure in my life. When you're on massive highs from winning or when you're on a massive low, I say a few prayers or go to mass and it kind of brings me to level ground."

Poet-convert to headline young adult conference in August

Staff reporter

Catholic poet and convert Sally Read will be among the guest speakers at a young adult conference on August 19 and 20, organised by the Legion of Mary.

Ms Read is to give a talk on her conversion from a committed atheist to a Catholic in the space of just nine months, sparked by research she was doing on female sexuality.

The award-winning poet,

who recently released her first collection of poems since converting, will also give a workshop on poetry and faith.

The two-day conference includes talks on vocation, poetry, Mary's role in the Liturgy and the sites of the Holy Land associated with Our Lady.

Guest speakers include Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Alphonsus Cullinan, theologian William A. Thomas and the Editor of *The Irish Catholic* Michael Kelly.

There will also be Mass both days, as well as Confession and holy hour, lunch and dinner and a social night on the Saturday.

The conference, aimed at Catholics aged 18-40, takes place on All Hallows campus, Dublin, on Saturday August 19 and Sunday 20. Its theme is 'Under the mantle of Mary'. Tickets can be purchased on Eventbrite.ie by searching for 'young adult conference for Our Lady' or else by contacting deusetpatria@gmail.com.

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Sr Briega McKenna set for Slane youth event

Chai Brady

The greatest need in Ireland is to “renew the Faith” and young people should not be “undermined” by negativity, according to best-selling author and nun Sr Briega McKenna.

Sr Briega, acclaimed for her healing ministry, will speak on World Youth Day in Slane, Co. Meath, in a ‘Light the Fire of faith’ service which will also feature Dana, who won Eurovision in 1970.

In the spirit of World Youth Day – taking place in Lisbon, Portugal – pilgrims from across Ireland have

been invited to join St Patrick’s successor, Archbishop Eamon Martin, at the hill of Slane, on August 6 for rosary, Mass, and a healing service.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about the ‘Light the Flame’ event, Sr Briega said: “I think it’s very important, because in 433AD St Patrick lit the Paschal fire of Christianity and Catholicism on the hill of Slane. In all my work I keep thinking that the greatest need is to renew the Faith.

“I know there are a lot of things in the Church that are wrong because it is human beings involved, but what Jesus brought to us, and what

St Patrick brought to Ireland and our ancestors laid down their lives for it, they died for it, because through the Holy Spirit they knew that it was worth dying for,” she said.

“It’s very difficult to rekindle what is lost, but there’s a lot of wonderful people in Ireland, a lot of young people – I’ve talked to many of them – and all they need is to be affirmed and challenged. I think pilgrimages like what is happening in Slane, and in Knock and in Medjugorje are really lighting a fire.”

She added: “If we’re negative about the Faith I think young peo-

ple are undermined, because there’s a hunger in them. I meet so many of them that are into all kinds of things, but they are looking for the truth. I’m praying that it will be a blessing in Slane.”

At the event songwriter Dana will sing her new song ‘Light the Fire’, an anthem inspired by St Patrick. The Paschal candle will also be lit as part of the ceremony on the Feast of the Transfiguration as pilgrims pray for a renewal of faith in Ireland.

Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, recalled St Patrick’s own experience: “Some-

times we forget that St Patrick came first to Ireland as a frightened teenager, forced into slavery. He knew he was a sinner, but he grew to know and love God through prayer and sacrifice.

“I look forward very much to celebrating the Eucharist on the Hill of Slane on World Youth Day, and praying for the young people of Ireland – that they may kindle in their hearts a love for Jesus Christ and become ambassadors for Christ all around the island of Ireland.”

US religious freedom body highlights ‘hate speech’ concerns

Jason Osborne

The United States Commission of International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has noted the trend towards ‘hate speech’ legislation as a cause for concern when it comes to religious freedom in Europe.

This comes as Justice Minister Helen McEntee continues to back a bill, The Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Act 2022, that would see so-

called hate speech criminalised. The bill has been delayed until Autumn.

Controversy around the bill has soared in recent months after it was revealed that the Government pushed ahead with the legislation despite a majority opposing it in the public consultation.

In a recent update, the religious freedom watchdog said that while hate speech “merits condemnation”, the legislation intended to deal with it is often “too broad”.

Hate speech legislation, it said, risks “criminalising speech that does not amount to incitement to violence and thereby encompassing expression protected under international human rights standards, including the rights to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression”.

The USCIRF said that from a religious freedom perspective, “overbroad” hate speech laws are “particularly concerning” when

they’re used against people for “peacefully sharing religious beliefs that others find offensive or controversial”.

“In one such case, in Finland, state prosecutors are appealing a case against Finnish Member of Parliament Päivi Räsänen and Evangelical Lutheran Bishop Jhona Pohjola, who were acquitted of hate speech charges for tweets that expressed religious beliefs about LGBTQ+ issues,” the statement read.

Renowned NI barrister awarded for anti-trafficking work

Ruadhán Jones

Barrister Caroline Haughey OBE KC, born in Northern Ireland, has been awarded an honorary doctorate by a Catholic college in recognition of her work tackling human trafficking.

Ms Haughey specialises in modern slavery and human trafficking cases and has supported the Bakhita Centre for Research on Slavery, Exploitation and Abuse, based in St Mary’s University Twickenham (SMU).

It was in honour of this work that she received her honorary doctorate from SMU at a ceremony in London’s Westminster Cathedral.

Ms Haughey prosecuted

the first modern slavery case in Britain and subsequently advised on the drafting of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

She has also prosecuted a number of firsts under the Act, including the first child sex exploitation, first child labour exploitation, and first ‘victimless’ prosecution.

The barrister also prosecuted the largest trafficking and labour exploitation case in Europe, Operation Fort.

A spokesperson for SMU praised “Caroline’s work to end these crimes and raise awareness of the challenges faced by people with lived experience of modern slavery”.

A commission of hope...



Bishop Michael Router is pictured with World Youth Day pilgrims and their leaders after the commissioning Mass which was held in St Patrick’s Cathedral Armagh on Saturday, July 22.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Rumours of green sacraments ahead of All-Ireland final debunked

Limerick nun Sr Patricia Coughlan has shot down rumours that there were plans to turn communion hosts green to mark the county’s role in the All-Ireland final.

“Contrary to the reports, there was no mention by me or anyone else to media of an intention to turn the host green in the run up to Sunday’s game,” *Limerick Live* reported Sr Coughlan as saying.

“Hurling means a lot but there is only one true altar, one true host, one body of Christ. This stands above all else,” she said.

Harry Clarke stained glass museum proposed for Parnell Square

Dublin City Council has proposed the establishment of a new museum to celebrate the work of the famed Irish stained-glass artist Harry Clarke.

The council hopes to locate the new museum in the former premises of the Dublin Writers’ Museum on Parnell Square that also houses the Chapter One restaurant.

The local authority plans to acquire the property from Fáilte Ireland to establish what will be called the Harry Clarke Museum of Irish Stained Glass.

The tourism body has agreed to sell the building to the council on the condition it be used for tourism purposes.

Acceptance and respect – not pride

A multi-coloured banner at Dublin's Heuston Station – one of a number celebrating 'Pride' – urges us to feel "Proud to be Myself".

It prompted me to ask myself if I was 'proud to be myself'. My answer to myself was that I couldn't really see why I should take any special credit for being myself at all.

Mé féin

Firstly, I was born as mé féin. As soon as I made my appearance in this world, I was baptised as myself, and from there on, I was acknowledged



Mary Kenny

by the family in which I found myself, as myself.

Personal pride didn't have anything to do with the DNA that formed myself since conception, the characteristics I inherited – from a small child I was told I was the image of my mother – or the habits I acquired. All these parts of myself were gifted to me, and I had no occasion to take any personal pride in

the self that was shaped by inheritance and environment.

Attribute

For example, I was told to be glad that I had curly hair, since that was an attribute much cherished in the world in which I grew up – ladies went to considerable trouble to have their hair curled and 'permed'. But since the

curly hair was natural, there was no reason to take prideful credit for it.

“The most admirable individuals are nearly always modest about themselves”

Over the course of my formation, I came to understand that pride was a sin, and sometimes the father of all sins. Pride went before a fall, went the motto in our copybook

headings. Lucifer was an angel before pride brought about his undoing.

The Greeks called pride 'hubris', and it was a sure sign of a character's ruination. Mrs Jones, in our neighbourhood, I heard it said, was so proud of being able to spend a lot of money at Brown Thomas on splendid items for her house, and her pride in her possessions made everyone else feel diminished. This pride was called boastfulness.

Actions

As time went on, sometimes I had certain attainments to feel gratified about, and mistakes to feel distinctly wretched about: but these were actions and choices – they didn't define 'myself'. We are not necessarily what we do.

And the experience of encountering many different people throughout the course of life imparted a further lesson: the most admirable individuals are nearly always modest

about themselves. Many an impressive achiever is quite self-effacing.

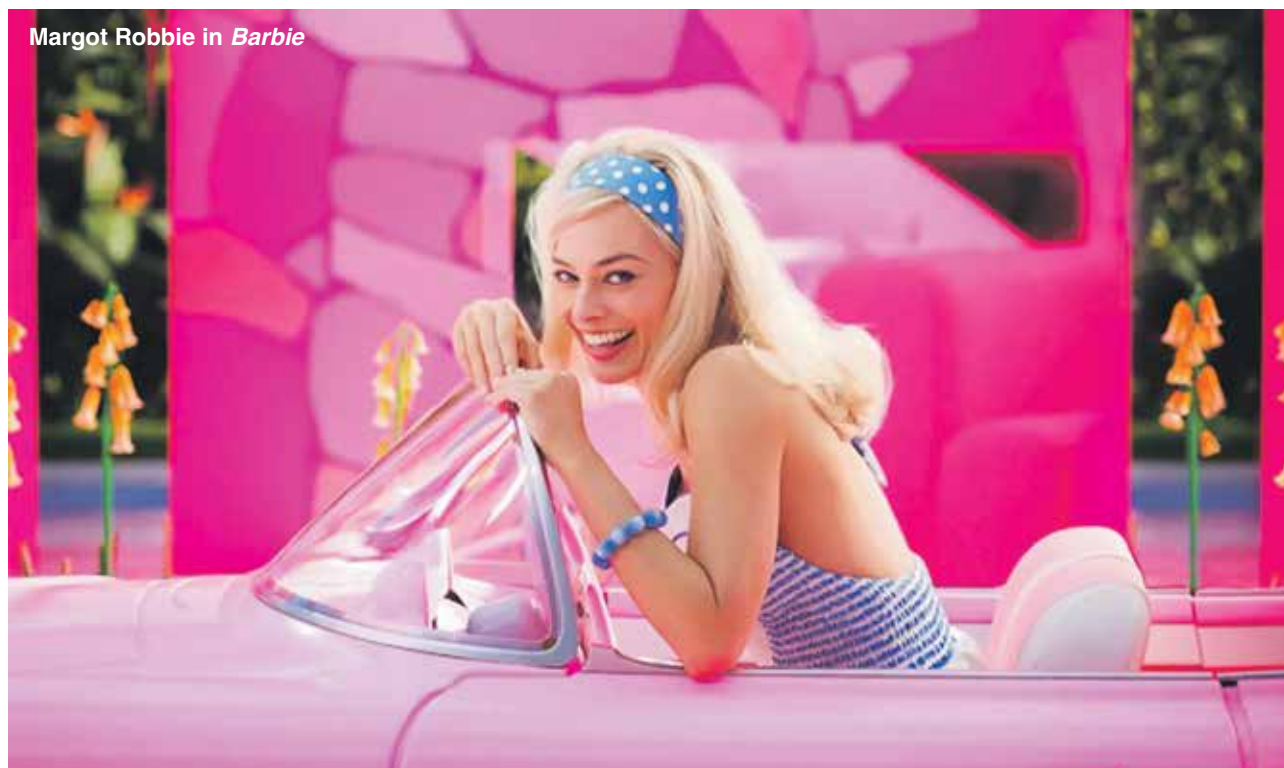
The people who have done great things will say they are grateful for the benefits and opportunities they had. The braggarts who think the world of themselves often seem like empty vessels. Doesn't the old Irish saying go: "Self-praise is no praise"?

TS Eliot, one of the greatest poets of the 20th Century, wrote that "the only wisdom we can hope to acquire is the wisdom of humility".

I grasp what those 'Pride' banners are trying to express: that people should accept themselves as God made them, and derive their self-worth from their humanity. Everyone is entitled to respect. But 'proud of myself'? Isn't that what you'd say to someone who has just triggered some disaster: 'proud of yourself – are you'?

Better off without Barbie?

Margot Robbie in *Barbie*



The movie *Barbie* has taken records sums of money in America, and done very handsomely, also, at cinemas in Ireland. I'm glad to see cinemas thrive. But I found it a load of tosh, although prettily costumed, as well it might be, having cost around \$140 million to make.

It opens with a shot of young girls smashing the skulls of their baby dolls, and turning, instead to the Barbie model of an implausibly shaped, highly confected young woman (the girls are rejecting the role of

'being a mom').

Then there's a meandering story about the Barbie doll, played by the Australian Margot Robbie, going into the 'real' world (Los Angeles) where she finds, to her amazement, that the dreaded 'patriarchy' still dominates – even though this 'real' world is also cartoonishly implausible.

The message of the movie is confused, because Mattel, the doll's manufacturers, are trying to have their cake and eat it: trying to indict 'male-dominated capitalism', while also trying to flog a lot more 'Barbie' merchandise. They claim that Barbie

signals to young girls that "women can be anything they choose", from scientist to Nobel Prize Winner.

Ambition is great, but sister, hear this: Marie Curie didn't get to be a groundbreaking scientist by dress-

ing up in gorgeous pink frocks. It took long years of dedicated hard work, often under difficult conditions, and collaboration with a brilliant husband. Performance isn't the same as authentic achievement.

● I have my doubts about St Andrew's Church in Westland Row becoming Dublin's Catholic Cathedral. It's always struck me as a bit of an airport hangar – space, but not much beauty. Whereas the Pro-Cathedral has genuine spiritual loveliness. And surely Dublin's north inner city needs to retain the Pro-Cathedral's status.

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Church's safeguarding body moves to tackle 'level of bureaucracy'

Ruadhán Jones

The Church's safeguarding body is conducting a review of safeguarding policies to address concerns that the level of bureaucracy may deflect from good practice and to take into account changes in legislation and canon law, as well as practical experience.

Church personnel have expressed concerns about

the "level of bureaucracy associated with safeguarding practice", saying it has "become time consuming and may deflect from good practice", according to a paper from the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC).

The board believes that standards and guidelines remain important to tackling child sexual abuse in the Church, the paper con-

tinues, saying the NBSCCC wants to "move the Church's policy forward".

The comments come in a guidance, advice and practice (GAP) paper titled 'Framing a New Policy for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland' which was released in May, 2023.

The NBSCCC intends to update its safeguarding policy for the first time since 2016 in light

of a changing legislative landscape and to reflect the practical experience it has gained.

The body, which advises the Church in Ireland on safeguarding policy and practice, conducted listening meetings with children, youth leaders, victims of abuse and respondents to assess areas of practice and policy in need of review, the GAP paper shows.

"In order to make chil-

dren's rights a reality, a child's active participation in Church life is essential," the paper says.

"Many young people do wish to engage with Church, yet deficiencies in current pastoral practice have resulted in a marked disconnect between them and the Church. The question of how the Church might accompany them has emerged as an urgent one," the paper continues.

"However, there is a real opportunity, for those in leadership in the Church to demonstrate, through words and actions that the Church is a safe, welcoming place for children."

All adults in the Church, lay, clerical and religious, "need to be collaborators with and assist children and young people to be fully, and safely, part of the Catholic Church", the paper also notes.

Irish bishops stick to their guns as UK gets new lectionary

Staff reporter

As the bishops in England, Scotland and Wales got the green light for a new lectionary, the Irish bishops are to continue with their plans to link up with the bishops of Australia and New Zealand.

The Bishops' conference of England and Wales received the go ahead from the Dicastery for Divine

Worship to use a new lectionary, which includes Scripture readings for Mass, from Advent 2024.

Cardinal Arthur Roche, prefect of the dicastery, commended the bishops of England and Wales and the bishops of Scotland for their close collaboration.

The collaboration "is another notable feature of this project which highlights the importance of different episcopal

conferences within a small geographical area working together for the overall good of the Catholic population in the British Isles", he said in a letter to Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

Meanwhile, Ireland will continue with its plans to link up with Australia and New Zealand to introduce a new translation of the lectionary.

When asked if it would be of benefit to Ireland

to work with the bishops in the UK in revising the lectionary, Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ, a member of the council for liturgy, told *The Irish Catholic* that two years ago "the Irish bishops made a decision and made it very public that they were going to work with Australia and New Zealand" on revising the lectionary. The process is ongoing, the bishop explained.

Armagh clergy appointments announced

Jason Osborne

Archbishop Eamon Martin has announced the latest clergy appointments for Armagh Archdiocese.

Among those on the move are Fr Michael Murtagh, PP, Dunleer, who

is to be PE, AP, Holy Family, Dundalk;

Fr Seán O'Neill, PP, Termonmaguirc, to be PP, Keady and Derrynoose, while Fr John Gates, PP, Magherafelt, will also be be Adm, Newbridge.

Fr Peter McAnenly, Adm, St Patrick's Cathedral will move to be PP in Carrickmore while Fr Barry Matthews is to become Adm at the cathedral.

Fr Patrick Rushe, PP, VF, Monasterboice, is also to be Adm, Togher while Fr Paul Montague, PP, Tallanstown, to be PE, AP, Tallanstown.

A new chapter...



Pictured are the eight new lay Dominicans from the Chapter of St Mary Magdalene and St Thomas Aquinas, who were admitted to the Dominican Order in St Saviour's Church, Dublin, on July 22, along with one member who made temporary promises for three years. Also pictured are Provincial Fr John Harris OP, Fr Stephen Hutchinson and Catherine Carragher, president of Dominican Laity in Ireland. Photo: David Conroy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Historic 'papal bakery' in Rome closes

A bakery that provided bread and baked goods for popes for almost a century has been forced to shut its doors.

"We turned the oven off on Tuesday," said Angelo Arrigoni, 79, whose father opened the small shop, *Panificio Arrigoni*, in 1930 during Pius XI's papacy, and who would hand deliver bread to the papal household.

Each time a new pope was elected, the bakery on Borgo Pio, just a five-minute walk from St Peter's Square, would get ready to cater to the new pontiff's tastes.



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Drug decriminalisation is no answer to a lack of meaning

Recently, I got on a crowded Luas and sat down, delighted to find an empty seat. I then glanced at the other side of the carriage. My heart sank. I saw immediately why the seat had been free.

There were two tough-looking individuals with their feet up on the seats. Both had that malnourished look characteristic of drug abuse. Slurring his words, one of them started a monologue to the other, about how if Brian killed Johnny (names have been changed), that daddy would be very unhappy, because another family member would be dead.

Cocaine

The target of the monologue, slumped and clutching an indescribably filthy sleeping bag, seemed oblivious. Then the topic of the monologue changed, to giving punters a sniff of coke (cocaine) but giving them powdered paracetamol instead once money had changed hands.

While my neighbours on my left were somewhat scary, two tall young men sat opposite me, one of whom gave me a sympathetic grin. He then made the mistake of looking at the two with their feet on the seats.

Mr Monologuer immediately began to curse at him, telling him to keep his eyes to himself or he would box the head off him. The young man, who was tall and strong-looking, did not seem too worried.

I thought about moving down the carriage but I decided to stay in the only available seat. What happened next sounds exaggerated but it is not. The silent partner sat up and smiled. I have never seen a more terrifying smile in my life.

Within seconds, I was on my feet and getting off at the next stop, four stops before my own Luas station. To my shame, I was so shaken that I did not report the incident, although there is a dedicated number where you can text reports and also a help intercom



“While we need more visible policing, more arrests and more drug treatment centres, we also need to look at the reasons why drug addiction rates are so high”

at each ticket vending machine.

All the man did was smile but it was the smile of someone capable of anything. Whether the sense of menace was induced by drugs or some innate disposition, I do not know.

Open drug dealing

Recently, we have seen a teenager arrested for leaving an American tourist with life-changing injuries after an assault. People are openly dealing drugs on the main street of our capital city, and one could get high by inhaling second-hand smoke from weed in many

places in the city centre.

The heroin crisis of the 1980s is piling into insignificance in comparison to today. Crack cocaine is being used along with heroin, with crack being used to create a high, while heroin brings them back down.

The amount of human misery is staggering. There are predictable responses – some people calling for an increased Garda presence, while others are calling for the decriminalisation of drugs, or at least of drugs for personal use, as happened in Portugal in 2001.

Decriminalisation does

not mean legalisation. Drugs remain illegal in Portugal and drug dealers regularly go to jail.

The difference is that possession of drugs for personal use is seen as a public health issue, not a criminal one.

There is supposed to be a process whereby the drugs are confiscated and people appear before a commission, where treatment is offered.

But earlier this month, the *Washington Post*, hardly a conservative media outlet, acknowledged that there is deep unease in Portugal about the decriminalisation policy.

Increased drug use

A national survey suggests the percentage of adults who have used illicit drugs increased to 12.8% in 2022, up from 7.8% in 2001, though still below European averages (as it always has been – Portugal had lower rates to start with than the rest of Europe).

Overdose rates have almost doubled in Lisbon from 2019 to 2023. People who have the lovely job of sampling sewage have revealed that cocaine and ketamine rates are among the highest in Europe.

Portuguese police have given up referring addicts to the commission because they believe that it does not work. Waiting lists for treatment centres have lengthened.

Ireland is in no position to decriminalise drugs, given the dearth of treatment facilities. I know of people who were waiting

for eight months to begin treatment.

While we need more visible policing, more arrests and more drug treatment centres, we also need to look at the reasons why drug addiction rates are so high. Deprivation plays a huge role but even in leafy, middle-class areas, people are becoming addicted.

Cocaine use among some sectors of the middle class has almost been normalised. One has to ask why people are driven to experience chemical highs. It points to a deep crisis of meaning and purpose.

By and large, happy fulfilled people with meaningful, reasonably remunerated work are not tempted by drugs. Decriminalisation is no panacea while these underlying problems of lack of meaning and purpose remain.

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Religious charities in Ireland up by 300 in 2022



The Charities Regulator's report shows a rise in the number of religious charities, writes **Ruadhán Jones**

The number of religious charities registered with the Charities Regulator is up by 388, the regulator's report for 2022 shows.

In 2022, there were 1,590 charities whose main goal was

the "advancement of religion", up from 1,202 from 2021.

The majority of registered charities list advancement of education as their main purpose, with religion coming at fifth most common charitable purpose.

Registered

Some 163 new charities registered in 2022, down from 282 in 2021, while 82 charities deregistered, also down from 282 the previous year. "The top reasons given by those winding up during the year were changes to their legal form (for example a charity changing from an association to a company limited by guarantee); or that they had achieved their charitable objective," the report says.

The report shows that just 59% of charities filed their annual reports on their finances and activities in time to the regulator during 2022. All charities are required by law to file one within 10

months of their financial year-end.

By the end of 2022, a further 14% of charities had filed annual reports with the Regulator, bringing the total number of reports submitted to 73%, which was a 5% decrease year-on-year, a July 25 statement from the regulator says.

Some 746 (12%) declared themselves partially compliant, 481 (7%) declared themselves non-compliant and 504 (8%) preferred not to complete the compliance declaration, the report shows.

"It is very disappointing to see charities fail to comply with their obligations to complete and file an annual report on time with the regulator," said Helen Martin, Chief Executive of the Charities Regulator.

"This report provides a vital window into a charity's work for the general public and for potential donors and volunteers," she continued.

"And, for the many chari-



Patrick Hopkins, Chair of the Charities Regulators, and Helen Martin, Chief Executive, are pictured with Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities Joe O'Brien at the launch of the Annual Report 2022.

ties that file on time, it demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability to their supporters and the wider public."

Enforcement

The regulator is pursuing a "targeted compliance" and enforcement initiative to bring charities who don't file on time into line.

"We have signalled to the sector that we will deal decisively with those charities that have repeatedly failed to file annual reports in a timely manner," Ms Martin said.

Meanwhile the number of concerns registered rose to over 600, marking a 13% increase year-on-year.

Of the 642 concerns reported to the regulator, a third (232) of them related to governance, while a further third (226) related to questions relating to the legitimacy of a specific charity, the report shows. Some 566 of the concerns were closed during the year.

Other issues that were

raised by members of the public included questions around financial control and transparency and queries in relation to potential private benefit from charity activity. The Charities Regulator received an average of 12 concerns per week last year, with two statutory investigations being opened into charities during the year. The regulator has so far published one inspectors' report.

Ms Martin put the increase in reported concerns down to the re-opening of society post pandemic during 2022.

She added that "not all concerns raised with us relate to registered charities, the vast majority of which work very hard to meet their charitable purpose in compliance with charity law".

"However," she continued, "matters can sometimes arise which lead to concerns regarding a registered charity, and in these cases, it is essential that members of the pub-

lic know that they can raise concerns with the regulator".

Accuracy

The regulator's report shows that an audit was carried out of a "representative sample of charities to verify the accuracy of their declarations of compliance with the Charities Governance Code".

In 2022, the sampling found that 65% of the declarations of full compliance made during the year were accurate, a slight increase of 2% on 2021.

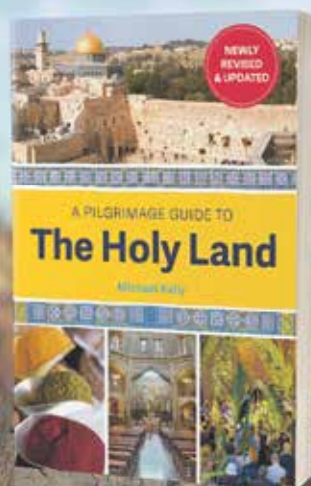
A new charity classification standard was introduced last year to enable register charities to identify themselves by their main activities, allowing for the categorisation of charities, the organisation's Chairman Paddy Hopkins announced in the statement.

"Publishing this classification information on the Register of Charities will make it easier for the public and funders to identify charities focusing on charitable purposes which are of interest to them," Mr Hopkins explained.

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Which counties have the most charities?



Knock basilica packed out for World Day for Grandparents

Ruadhán Jones

Knock basilica was packed out for celebrations for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on Sunday, July 23.

Many generations of families, great-grandparents down to little children, from across Ireland and the world were represented at the pilgrimage.

Bishop Denis Nulty of the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin celebrated Mass, while Dana Rosemary Scallan led the congregation in song, including a rendition of her new single 'Light the Flame'.

"Everyone leaving Knock

felt a great surge of joy," Catherine Wiley, founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association (CGA), told *The Irish Catholic*.

"The basilica was packed to the capacity and Bishop Nulty's homily was powerful."

Ms Wiley, a grandmother of 10 from Co. Mayo, added that there was a "powerful feeling of faith, felt by everybody".

This year marked the third celebration of the World Day for Grandparents since it was instituted by Pope Francis, after being petitioned by Ms Wiley and the CGA to dedicate a day to the elderly after the manner of World Youth Day.



Jenna (10) presents a bouquet of flowers to Dana Rosemary Scallan.



Sisters Aoihe, Doireann and Siùn Burns (Navan, Co. Meath), granddaughters of Frank and Noreen Burns (Dunmore, Co. Galway) are pictured after taking part in the procession and Mass in the 'Grandparents Pilgrimage' in Knock.



Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty is pictured with Dana Rosemary Scallan, her husband Damien, Fr Richard Gibbons (far right) and Betty Murphy (far left) who led the Carlow branch of the Catholic Grandparents Association on Sunday, July 23.



Jenna (10) and Calum (8) took part in the concluding tribute prayer during Mass for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.



Sally Lawlor Ballygowan, Co. Carlow, with her granddaughters Grace Lawlor and Sarah and Ruth Tunstead.



Bishop Nulty is pictured processing into Knock basilica with grandparents and elderly from Ireland and the world, before he celebrated Mass.



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The Church's 'doctrinal watchdog' takes a worrying new turn



The core of Catholic moral theology is under severe pressure from quarters within the Church itself, writes David Quinn

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) is one of the most important offices in the Vatican and in the Church worldwide. Its most famous recent prefect was Joseph Ratzinger.

He was appointed in 1982 by Pope John Paul II and ran the Congregation until his election as Pope in 2005.

John Paul appointed him because he was one of the Church's leading theologians, an intellectual of great standing, and because he wanted to do something about what he saw as the theological chaos that descended on the Church in the 1970s in the wake of the Second Vatican Council when many theologians went far beyond what that council authorised, especially in the area of moral theology.

Mandate

The DDF is sometimes described as the Church's 'doctrinal watchdog', its chief mandate being to ensure Catholic theologians do not wander too far from doctrinal orthodoxy and confuse and mislead the Faithful, and much worse than that, lead part of the Church itself into error and to deny parts of divine revelation.

As head of the department, Cardinal Ratzinger earned a very negative reputation in some circles for cracking down on leading liberal theologians such as Fr Hans Kung and certain liberation theologians in Latin America.

One of the most important encyclicals produced under Pope John Paul II was *Veritatis Splendor* ('The Splendour of Truth') in 1993. This would have strongly reflected the thinking of Cardinal Ratzinger also.

As mentioned, some of the biggest challenges to Catholic orthodoxy at the time were in the area of moral theology. There was a growing denial that some acts are simply wrong in themselves, of their very nature, and admit of no exceptions. (For example, no circumstances justify direct abortion).

“The moral theologians targeted by the encyclical did not like it one bit and they have had *Veritatis Splendor* in their sights ever since”

Veritatis Splendor targeted in particular two trends in moral theology, one called 'proportionalism' and the second called 'consequentialism'.

The encyclical said that while these schools of thought do acknowledge “that moral values are indicated by reason and by Revelation”, they also “maintain that it is never possible to formulate an absolute prohibition of particular kinds of behaviour which would be in conflict, in every circumstance and in every culture, with those values.”

In other words, the rightness or wrongness of a given act depends partly on circumstances.

Veritatis Splendor said quite clearly such theories “are not faithful to the Church's teaching, when they believe they can justify, as morally good, deliberate choices of kinds of behaviour contrary to the commandments of the divine and natural law. These theories cannot claim to be grounded in the Catholic moral tradition”.

Pope John Paul and Cardinal Ratzinger were firmly of the view that these theories were causing Catholics to doubt what is right and wrong and therefore had to be challenged.

But of course, the moral theologians targeted by the encyclical did not like it one bit and they have had *Veritatis Splendor* in their

sights ever since.

Now there is a man in charge of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith who seems to somewhat agree with them.

He is Archbishop Víctor Manuel Fernández, and like Pope Francis, is from Argentina. The two men have known each other for a long time.

In an interview with the American Catholic online publication, *The Pillar*, Archbishop Fernández was asked for his opinion about *Veritatis Splendor*.

He began by describing it as a “great document, powerfully solid”, but then said that because its main aim was “to set certain limits... it is not the most adequate text to encourage the development of theology”.

This is despite the fact that Pope John Paul explicitly sought a renewal of Catholic moral theology but knew perfectly well that if certain limits were breached, it would no longer be Catholic. In fact, were this to happen, it would degrade Catholic moral theology, rather than renew it.

Revelation

What John Paul wanted was a Catholic moral theology capable of rising to the challenges set by the modern age while being faithful to divine revelation. Without that, it would have nothing valuable and unique to say to our contemporaries.

Veritatis Splendor was extremely concerned that some moral theologians were too inclined to concede to criticisms of Catholic morality and therefore water it down in a way that was ultimately neither faithful to the Church nor pastorally useful.

Archbishop Fernández told *The Pillar*: “Today perhaps a text will be needed that, collecting everything valuable from *Veritatis Splendor*, has another style, another tone, which at the same time allows for encouraging the growth of Catholic theology, as Pope Francis asks of me.”

Neither John Paul II nor Benedict XVI were opposed to “the growth of Catholic theology”, but they were concerned that it had to be authentically Catholic.

Archbishop Fernández has had little to say on this score so far.

It is absolutely clear from his letter to Archbishop Fernández making him pre-



Cardinal-designate Víctor Manuel Fernández, appointed prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith by Pope Francis on July 1 is pictured with the Pope at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

fect of the DDF, that Pope Francis did not like how the office operated in the past. The criticism of both Pope Benedict and Pope John Paul is barely veiled.

In his letter, Pope Francis says: “The Dicastery over which you will preside in other times came to use immoral methods. Those were times when, rather than promoting theological knowledge, possible doctrinal errors were pursued. What I expect from you is certainly something very different.”

If he is thinking back to when the office was known commonly as ‘the Inquisition’, then who could dis-

agree with what he says? But that is long ago, so it seems fair to conclude that Pope Francis is thinking of much more recent times, for example, about complaints that the office did not allow the theologians it censured proper due process. There is probably some truth in that.

Nonetheless, it still seems clear that Pope Francis did not like how the CDF was run by Cardinal Ratzinger under Pope John Paul.

Allowance

There is little to no allowance made for the fact that the core of Catholic moral theology really was (and is)

under severe pressure from quarters within the Church itself.

Moral theologians who inclined towards ‘proportionate’ and ‘consequentialist’ ways of thinking about morality will be in little doubt that the new look DDF under Archbishop Fernández will be much less inclined to act against them now than in the past.

What does this mean for Catholic moral theology? It is very hard to believe it will lead to its renewal. It is far more likely to have the opposite effect which will be bad for the Church, and bad for the world.

Getting our facts straight on Africa



Russia has been identified as the main culprit of information manipulation on the continent of Africa, writes **Sofia Zate**

An expert panel on African disinformation has sounded the alarm on media manipulation and interference on the African continent during a press briefing in Dublin this month.

Dr Dinesh Balliah, director of the Wits Centre of Journalism, provided the opening remarks, noting how important it was to “bring a local African context to a European setting”. Jean le Roux, research associate at the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab, firstly clarified that Africa was not “monolithic” and the disinformation situation varied in each country and region because differing “local political issues...get exploited through disinformation”. For example, in central and western Africa, Russia is most active. This includes countries like Mali and Niger. The panel was quick to point to Russia as the main culprit of information manipulation on the continent. In particular Dr Sam Ramani, geo-political commentator and author of *Putin’s War on Ukraine: Russia’s Campaign for Global Counter-Revolution*, pointed to the Wagner Group, a private military group led

by Russian warlord Yevgeny Prigozhin, as contributing to instability in Africa. One of the ways that the Wagner Group has achieved this is through undermining UN peacekeeping missions by calling them “useless” according to Thierry Vircoulon, an independent consultant and Research Fellow at Ifri’s Observatory of Central and Eastern Africa. In addition, the Wagner Group alleged that UN peacekeepers abused local communities despite there being no evidence of this occurring. The Wagner group also took aim at the EU by falsely claiming that they were attempting to block the lifting of an arms embargo that had been in place against the Democratic Republic of Congo since 2003. The lifting of this embargo would be in Russia’s interest because an armed DRC would ally itself with Russia.

Social Media

Another avenue of disinformation is through social media like Facebook and the popular messaging app WhatsApp. The ultimate goal for Russia and the Wagner Group in Africa is to sow distrust of outside forces such as the EU and UN and to create instability within countries that they can take then advantage of. Dr Ramani provided another example of Russian disinformation when they created a fake massacre in Mali. Russian mercenaries allegedly buried bodies close to a Malian military base, accusing France’s departing armed forces of being behind these mass graves, implying a large-scale massacre by the French. Again, there is no evidence of any massacre occurring. Instead, Russian mercenaries were attempting to draw attention away from the alleged atrocities they had perpetrated in Ukraine.

Although, Russia is not the only country that has been trying to interfere and spread misinformation on the African continent, a fact



that the Russians have seized on. Countries like France have long histories of colonising African countries such as Mali, Benin, and Cameroon.

“As the world becomes more interconnected and digital, disinformation and foreign influence are becoming a bigger and bigger problem”

Russia has used France’s colonial past against them to create a contrast between them, having never colonised Africa, and France, who has. However, it seems as though Ireland’s role in this issue is minimal. When I asked about this, Dr Balliah simply told me “There was no way to know”. Though it is unlikely that Ireland holds any sway on either side of this issue, Dr Balliah’s comment underscored another important point, that so many of these disinformation campaigns are shrouded in mystery and we will never know with certainty who is involved.

Not only is Russian interference in Africa negatively

affecting the UN and the EU, but also NGOs and non-profits. In particular French NGOs have been pushed out of countries like Mali and told that they are not wanted.

Entity

Because of disinformation, some Africans believe that the government, army, and NGOs from the same country are one entity and collaborating together to undermine African sovereignty and rights.

This is obviously not true

and an example of disinformation at work. When asked about whether disinformation is forcing people to immigrate, Jean le Roux said that wasn’t the case. Instead, disinformation creates instability within countries, sowing distrust in the government and foreign organisations. That instability can in turn cause migration but disinformation does not cause migration in and of itself. As the world becomes more interconnected and digital,

disinformation and foreign influence are becoming a bigger and bigger problem.

Fledgling

Countries in Africa, many of whom are new or fledgling democracies, need to be protected from outside nefarious influence. Also present at the briefing was Theo Tindall a researcher and expert on the former Soviet Union, North Africa, and the Middle East.

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12 dames and knights invested for the Holy Sepulchre Order

Ruadhán Jones

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem - Lieutenancy of Ireland gained 12 new members at its annual investiture ceremony on Saturday, July 22.

The four dames and eight knights were invested by the order's Grand Prior Cardinal Sean Brady GCHS at St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth.

In attendance were Mr Sami El-Yousef, CEO of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem; Prof. Bart McGettrick, President of the Holy Land Commission and representatives from the Lieutenancies of England and Wales, Hungary, Poland and Scotland.

The Order has at its heart an individual commitment to personal spiritual development with the collective endeavour of supporting the Church and Christian people across the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem - which includes Cyprus, Jordan and the Holy Land.



Michael Victory (Kingscourt) being invested a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.



Bernadette Sweeney (Headford) being invested as a Dame of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.



Dames and Knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem at the Investiture Ceremony in Pontifical University College Maynooth on Saturday July 22: Anthony Fay (Dublin), Joseph Kane (Stratford on Slaney), Mary Murphy (Drogheda), Caroline Naughton (Stackallen Slane), Bernadette Sweeney (Headford), Fr Gabriel Burke (Cork), Michael Victory (Kingscourt), James Sweeney (Headford), Oliver Mac Donnagh (Sligo), William Fitzpatrick (Holywood) and Donnacha Fahy (Burren).



Karen Van Vlierberge (Donnybrook) being invested as a Dame of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.



Joseph Kane (Stratford on Slaney) being invested as a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.



Chevalier Richard Hearn (Burren) and Chevalier Donnacha Fahy (Burren).



Chevalier Damian Walls (Toomebridge), Dame Mairéad Walls (Toomebridge), Dame Mary McGivney-Nolan (Blackrock) and Chevalier Thomas Kilduff (Cavan).



Dames Caroline Naughton (Stackallen Slane), Mary Murphy (Drogheda), Lynda McGivney-Nolan (Bray), Aine Fitzgerald O'Reilly (Ashbourne) and Margaret Sinnott (Belfast).



Knights of Malta H E Patrick Downes and Dr Colm Brady with Mr Eric Dumas.

Parish turns out to thank 'people's priest'

Ruadhán Jones

Parishioners of St Laurence O'Toole, Kilmacud in Dublin gathered to celebrate and give thanks to Fr Paddy O'Byrne, CC on the occasion of his 80th birthday and to mark his retirement from full time ministry.

A native of Rathdrum in Co. Wicklow, Fr Paddy was

ordained in Clonliffe Holy Cross College, Dublin, by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid on May 28, 1967.

In 2011 he 'retired' to Kilmacud, where he was expecting a quieter life, but soon found himself at the forefront of parish life, quickly becoming known as the 'people's priest'.

Fr Joe Mullan, Adm.,

Mount Merrion, Kilmacud and Clonskeagh was joined in celebrating mass for Fr Paddy by Kilmacud priests Fr Donie O'Connor, MHM, Fr Peter Ewaoche and Fr Brian O'Reilly, AP Mount Merrion. Expressing thanks to Fr Paddy on behalf of parishioners Fr Mullan said; "Paddy, there are no words enough to express

our thanks, but please know how much you are appreciated and loved by this community".

Mass was followed by a reception in the Kilmacud Parish Centre where parishioners had the opportunity to show their appreciation to Fr Paddy for his many years of ministry in the parish.



Fr Joe Mullan, Adm. and Fr Paddy O'Byrne.



Rev. Kevin Conroy, St Brigid's Stillorgan, Fr Joe Mullan Adm. Mount Merrion, Kilmacud and Clonskeagh, Fr Paddy O'Byrne CC, Fr Peter Ewaoche and Fr Donie O'Connor MHM.



Pat, Kay and Paul Lynch with Fr Paddy.



Sinead Carey and Roy Goggin with Fr Paddy.

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Countdown to World Youth Day for Dublin

Ruadhán Jones

Dublin diocese's 53 pilgrims for World Youth Day gathered together one last time before they make the trip to Lisbon in August.

Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell celebrated the commissioning Mass on July 17 and the young people were given their pilgrim packs.



Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell holds Oisin the Otter, the mascot of the Archdiocese of Dublin's World Youth Day group. Oisin has his own Instagram and TikTok accounts – both are @OisinTheOtter.



The 53 pilgrims from Dublin diocese who are heading to World Youth Day, which takes place August 2-6, are pictured after the commissioning Mass.



A centre that promotes human dignity and respect



The Capuchin Day Centre continues to save lives, the new CEO tells Audrey Bryce

“One of the primary values here is nonjudgment,” says Brian Friel, newly appointed CEO of the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin.

Brian Friel entered the public recruitment campaign and says he is “very thankful” to have been named the centre’s CEO upon Bro. Kevin Crowley’s retirement just last year, having formally begun the position just a couple weeks ago on July 1.

Previously, Mr Friel worked for 15 years as part of the senior management team at the Peter McVerry Trust, a charity that provides pathways out of homelessness to the young and vulnerable – so he brings years of valuable experience to the centre. He even was a Capuchin friar himself, for 13 years.

“It’s about basic human dignity and everyone deserves that”

The centre, founded in 1969 by Bro. Kevin of the Capuchin Franciscans, provides more than 700 meals each day and 1,500 food parcels each week to the needy, receiving without question all people who enter through their doors.

Still acclimating to the centre and its day-to-day operations, Mr Friel attests to his commitment to the position and the services provided by the centre, saying that “Bro. Kevin did fantastic work in his lifetime to build and ensure that the centre provided for the people who needed it, and that work continues now without disruption”.

Last Tuesday the centre provided 872 dinners, Mr Friel told *The Irish Catholic*. Breakfast service each morning consists of roughly 500 – 600 meals prepared by the centre’s dedicated and hardworking staff.

Many people rely on the Capuchin Day Centre for support, from various communities around Ireland.

“We have a very broad spread of different service users”, says Mr Friel. “From people suffering from food insecurity to those disadvantaged and suffering from poverty, also those who are homeless as well as uptake from international protection and refugees,” he says.

Regardless, “the profile of those who use the services is very much that they wouldn’t survive without it”, Mr Friel says.

He describes the centre as a community, a safe haven for all. While meal service is a significant element of the centre’s services, staff are also committed to granting holistic care for both the physical and mental health of all service users.

On-site at the centre is a general practitioner, nurse, dentist, chiropodist, and optician to aid service users with any health problems or simple concerns.

This on-the-spot medical service is important for those who “are removed from standard services or don’t have easy access”, he says.

Issues

There are many underlying issues faced by the homeless population including drug and alcohol abuse, issues that are prevalent within the centre. “These underlying issues often cause homelessness or are a result of or are associated with it,” says Mr Friel.

He describes the centre as a source of “bridging” support, as staff members work diligently to connect service users with the appropriate medical and mental health resources that they need.

The presence of a nurse has been especially crucial for families who arrive at the centre with children. Families are able to approach the nurse with any questions or concerns that they may not be entirely familiar with or aware of, which provides great comfort to them.

A separate family area lies within the centre for families and children to enjoy their meals comfortably and with a sense of security.

Currently, there are approximately 250 families registered to receive support from the centre.

The nurse’s presence “allows us to make sure they have all of their needs met”, Mr Friel assures.

Aside from meeting the needs of nourishment, something even as simple as a shower can be enough to make

a difference in someone’s day.

Every morning, as many as 30–40 people utilise the shower facilities at the centre where they can also receive new and donated clothes, undergarments, and personal hygiene products.

Bro. Kevin Kiernan, Director of the centre, joined in conversation alongside Mr Friel to assert “taking a shower is a basic human need we often take for granted”.

“The idea for us as Capuchins is to hope that there would be no need for a centre like this, but the reality is, the situation is actually getting worse”

“It’s about basic human dignity and everyone deserves that,” he says.

Bro. Kiernan told me about a woman at the centre who had to go into the hospital the following day for an overnight stay. She had approached him timidly, fretful that she didn’t have pyjamas to wear.

The woman was granted a voucher to buy whatever she needed for the duration of her hospital stay.

“When you have no place to live, the impacts aren’t just physical, but emotional too,” says Mr Friel of the people who rely on the centre. “There’s human contact and a connection here that is also a need that is being met by services, not just the basic levels of food and health, but also the human connection that makes people feel that they’re of value,” he stated.

Mr Friel wants all who enter to believe that “they’re not just another figure coming through the door”.

And that applies to all people of all backgrounds and histories, including that of religious belief, who seek sanctuary in the centre.

Bro. Kiernan reminded me that “you must go back to Jesus in the Bible. He sat down with people, he listened to their stories, he made that human contact with them, and then there was the process of moving on from there”.

Jesus’ model is emulated at the centre as “whoever comes has a need”. No one is turned away.

A clearly demonstrated value of every relationship between service users and staff is that of mutual respect. No questions are asked, as per founder Bro. Kevin’s policy.

“The idea for us as Capu-

chins is to hope that there would be no need for a centre like this, but the reality is, the situation is actually getting worse”, says Bro. Kiernan, who will have been at the service for three years come August.

Needs

As the situation worsens, the centre will continue to respond to the needs presented at the door. “Some things will change in terms of increasing and diversifying the provisions but what won’t change will be the values that underpin those service provisions,” assures Mr Friel.

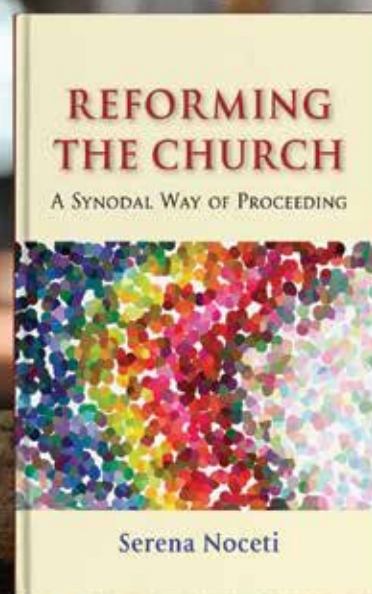
The Capuchin Day Centre remains steadfast in its service to the underprivileged and welcomes all people despite “what they believe or have, or don’t have”, finishes Mr Friel.

We are reminded that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, deserving of the basic human dignity and mutual respect that the centre faithfully provides.



Capuchin Day Centre CEO Brian Friel and Bro. Kevin Kiernan, Capuchin director.

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The joy of finding the way home...

Mixed-religion marriages often present unique challenges in passing on the Faith.

In a mixed marriage someone has to compromise, and that someone was me. I married a Muslim man in 1995 oblivious to the challenges our religions would present in the future. I was living and working in Spain at the time. We met in 1992 and returned to live in Ireland shortly after an Islamic marriage ceremony in Morocco. I didn't have the whole three day wedding celebrations as I don't like fuss and was certainly not going to be paraded around and gawked at by the whole neighbourhood.

It wasn't until I was expecting our first child that the first serious difference became apparent. I assumed our as of yet unborn child would be baptised a Catholic, since we were living in Ireland. My husband was adamant the child would be Muslim. Eventually, after many arguments I capitulated and agreed. Also, there was no ceremony in order to be indoctrinated into Islam, whereas I was never going to get him to agree to a Baptism. I wasn't a good Catholic myself at this time as I had lived in Spain and Morocco and drifted from attending Mass.

A religion

I reassured myself that my children would at least have a religion and a moral code of conduct to follow and that when they were older, they might change their religion. After all there was only one God and there were some similarities between Islam and Christianity. Surely it didn't matter once they worshipped God.

“I was feeling like a lost sheep. I started to attend Mass again, but the connection was lost”

Well, this might have been true if only their father practised his own religion, the religion he insisted his children enter into. While I had known he didn't attend the mosque or do the five daily prayers, I assumed he would teach his children about Islam and how to pray. He didn't. So, when they were older I started to take them three times a week to an Islamic centre to learn their prayers, which had to be performed in Arabic. By this time I had decided to accept Islam as my own religion as I felt if it was good enough for my children, it was good enough for me and then at least we could learn together.

Unfortunately, we did not have a good experience at the Islamic centre. We didn't feel accepted, and the children were bullied and spat at



by other children. These particular classes were not well managed, but I'm sure other proper Islamic centres are different.

We had to abandon this idea. I tried to bring them elsewhere, but they started to lose interest and then were saying that they did not want to go.

So the children had no religious education, I was not equipped to teach them as I didn't speak or read Arabic. I tried to pray at home myself, but I felt isolated and had no community. I was starting to realise my mistake.

Lost sheep

I was feeling like a lost sheep. I started to attend Mass again, but the connection was lost. Outside one morning the priest greeted me and thinking I was new to the community asked if I was free to attend a coffee morning in the community centre the next day. I wasn't as I was

working, but I desperately wanted to blurt out “I made a big mistake, I want to come back, can I please come back?”

I was ashamed to admit what I had done so I said nothing. Anyhow, outside the church on a Sunday after Mass wasn't the place, but I hadn't the courage to contact a priest. I didn't know any, so what if I told him my situation and he thought I was a terrible person? I wanted God to send someone to find me and I prayed this would happen.

Then, one Sunday afternoon while in the city, I was approached by a member of the Legion of Mary who was trying to recruit members and spread the word of God. I immediately knew that God was answering my prayers. I was quite nervous about attending their meeting the following week but knew I had to. I could not refuse God's offer of help that I had asked for. I had been a member in my teenage years

and knew what it was all about. I am still only finding my way back, slowly but surely. I am grateful for the opportunity that was presented to me.

As for my children, I regret very much that they were not baptised as Catholics. They would have had a good religious education in their schools. They are good young adults but do not think much about religion. I hope this will change as they mature. I am praying for them. I feel responsible for their lack of faith.

Way back

I am still working on finding my way back fully. I have yet to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and therefore this has prevented me from attending Mass regularly, as I feel I cannot fully participate. I am rehearsing what I will say in my head when I attend, and I am afraid of how I will be received. I will not be able to correct my Islamic mar-

“As for my children, I regret very much that they were not baptised as Catholics. They would have had a good religious education in their schools”

riage with a Catholic ceremony as my husband will not agree. He is already concerned by my return to my own religion. I am concerned this will be a barrier and that the Church will view me as living in sin. I hope I soon find the courage.

At least in the Legion I feel part of something, and this is helping me to remember that our God is a merciful God, and he is always ready to forgive us.

A mixed race marriage has additional obstacles compared to a marriage of two people of the same race, but, when two people have different religions it can be extremely contentious in the long term, and presents many problems in relation to children unless both are active in teaching their children one faith, and as long as one person does not feel forced to comprise their own religion for the benefit of the marriage or their children.

School curriculum

This might be something worth adding to the religious curriculum in secondary schools, especially now as Ireland has many new immigrants of different faiths and nationalities, and some are likely to integrate and marry Irish Catholics and indeed I am sure there are already many mixed marriages already in this country.

Most children from Islamic marriages where one parent is Irish, end up with no religion because I believe without the help of schools it is very difficult for a parent alone to fully pass on the Faith. The schools in Ireland have a huge role in preparing children for the sacraments and keeping the Faith alive in children. That is why even though I converted to Islam, I never really lost my own religion, and that is why I know I can return.

The author is known to the Editor and wished to remain anonymous.

Out&About

Homeless lives matter...



DUBLIN: Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín and homelessness campaigner Fr Peter McVerry attend a vigil outside the Dáil on July 12 in remembrance of the 400 plus homeless people who have died in Dublin since 2018.



LEBANON: Members of the Chaplaincy Service of the Irish Defence Forces lead a remembrance ceremony in Tibnine for the late Pte Philip Grogan and Tpr Paul Fogarty. Prayers were also offered for the late Pte Ignacy Sokoluk at the July 18 gathering.



TYRONE: Pictured is David Hurst, Newtown Stewart who was solemnly received into full communion with the Church by Fr Roland Colhoun, in St Eugene's Church, Glenock on Sunday, July 16. His wife Anne, his son Mark and his daughter Rebecca celebrated the occasion with him.

IN SHORT

Govt development goals 'out of touch with reality'

The Government's sustainable development goals (SDG) are "out of touch with reality", according to a group of charities including Trócaire and the Vincentians.

A coalition of Irish civil society groups has criticised Ireland's claims to be reaching 80% of the SDG targets, as the Government made a presentation to the UN on July 19.

The coalition called for increased ambition from the Government to reach the SDGs by 2030.

The Government's targets are "completely at odds with the lived experience of thousands of people across Ireland," said coalition coordinator Meaghan Carmody.

"Key to achieving the SDGs is ensuring that

those on the margins of society are reached first," she continues. "But we know that there are vast swathes of Irish society being left behind."

Eight years after the goals were agreed "we are still waiting for the kind of urgency, ambition and cross-governmental leadership from the State that would drive progress".

Tuam diocesan changes announced

The Archbishop of Tuam Francis Duffy has announced the clerical changes for the archdiocese, effective Friday, August 18.

Two priests, Fr Bernard Shaughnessy and Fr Michael Gormally, are to retire.

Fr Denis Carney PP Balla-Mayo Abbey to be PP Ballinrobe-Kilmaine, while Fr Brendan Kilcoyne PP Athenry is appointed PP Balla-

Mayo Abbey.

Fr Charlie McDonnell Adm. Westport, Kilmeena, and Clare Island-Inishturk, to be PP Athenry.

Fr John Kenny PP Partry to be Adm. Westport, Kilmeena, and Clare Island-Inishturk.

Fr Britus Kaddavunkal Francis Adm. Aughawater to be, in addition, Assistant Priest Westport, Kilmeena, and Clare Island-Inishturk.

Fr Jarlath Heraty PP Killarney to be PP Partry, with Fr Ronnie Boyle PP Abbeyknockmoy to be, in addition, PP Killarney.

Fr John O'Gorman is appointed PP Lackagh, in addition to his pastoral responsibilities to the parishioners of Brooklodge church area in the parish of Abbeyknockmoy.

Fr Eugene O'Boyle PP Glenamaddy-Williamstown to be PP Letterfrack and Adm. Inishbofin Island.

Fr Anthaiah Pudota Adm. Letterfrack and Adm. Inishbofin Island, to be Adm. Glenamaddy-Williamstown.

New exhibition on St Columba in Derry

St Columba's Long Tower and Áras Cholmille, Derry, have partnered to create a new religious and cultural tourism experience to reflect the legacy of one of Ireland's patron saints, St Columba.

The exhibition in the St Columba Heritage Centre is an invitation "to reflect on Colmille's remarkable legacy and get an insight into monastic life through interactive displays, exquisite artefacts and stories that stir the soul", a spokesperson for the parish said.

The exhibition is open six days a week. The entrance fee is £4 per person.



WICKLOW: Some 32 couples from St Patrick's parish attend the annual wedding anniversary Mass held in St Patrick's church, celebrated by Fr Donal Roche and Fr Pat O'Rourke, as they marked 60, 55, 50, 40 and 25 years of marriage.



KILDARE: Bishop Denis Nulty joins the Carmelite community in White Abbey as they celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.



WEXFORD: Fr Billy Swan is pictured with his brother Brendan, mother Eileen and sister Roisin on his silver jubilee, celebrating 25 years since his ordination to the priesthood.



WEXFORD: Fr Swan cuts into his jubilee cake.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



MAYO: Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey joins the Sisters of Charity as they unveil a plaque commemorating the centenary of the foundation of Foxford Music School by the sisters. The sisters contributed to Foxford through education, industry (the Foxford Woollen Mills) and music.



TIPPERARY: Pilgrim guide and author John G O'Dwyer is pictured on the Rock of Cashel with a group from Waterford Camino Tours as they set out on their five-day pilgrim journey to Ardmore on July 17.



CLARE: At the 94th anniversary Mass for Fr Timothy Leonard, the first Columban martyr – who was murdered in China on July 17, 1929 – at the Poor Clare monastery, Ennis are Fr Gerry Neylon SSC, Dalgan Park Centre with Carmel and John Leonard, Limerick.



LOURDES: Queen's University Belfast's choir director Marcella Walsh is pictured with Bishop Donal McKeown, administrator of the diocese of Down and Connor, as Ms Walsh was awarded a special honour for five years service to the Down and Connor Lourdes Pilgrimage on July 18.

ANTRIM

A 24-hour vigil of prayer for vocations to the diocesan priesthood is to take place from 6pm Thursday, August 3, to 6pm Friday, August 4, in St Columcille's Church, Ballhackamore, 191 Upper Newtonards Road, Belfast.

ARMAGH

An outdoor festival for families is to take place in the Shambles Yard on Thursday, August 24, from 5-7pm. It will include music and a wide range of entertainment for families throughout the diocese and beyond.

CAVAN

Cavan parish blessing of the graves to take place in Urney on Saturday, August 5, at 7.30pm and Butlers-Bridge on Sunday, August 6, after 10.30am Mass. Families are asked to prepare their plots in advance and to bring their own holy water.

CLARE

A memorial to deceased residents at St Michael's Villas Grotto will be unveiled Saturday, July 29, at 4.30pm followed by 70th anniversary Mass at 5pm and refreshments and music later.

CORK

The rosary is prayed at the Grotto in Dripsey every night of the year at 8pm, either outdoors or if the weather is inclement, from the car.

Rosary followed by Divine Mercy devotions take place at 8pm every night year-round at the Grotto in 'Carraig an Aifreann' Mass rock, Glenville.

DONEGAL

Buncrana parish is to host a family fun day on the grounds of Scoil Mhuire on Sunday, August 27, from 3-6pm.

Weekly rosary for priests takes place every Thursday evening at the Grotto beside the Pius X Adoration Chapel, Letterkenny, at 7.40pm.

DERRY

Coleraine parish will host a parish family picnic on Sunday, August 20, from 2pm in the grounds of Chapelfield House. Families are to bring their own rug and picnic.

DUBLIN

Donnybrook parish hosts coffee mornings in the

pastoral centre after 10am Mass on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Candlelit adoration takes place 6.30-7.30pm on Friday nights in Gardiner Street parish.

FERMANAGH

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place after 10am Mass until 1pm every Tuesday in St Michael's Church, Enniskillen during July and August.

GALWAY

A Youth 2000 prayer meeting for young adults (18-35) takes place in the Church of St Oliver Plunkett, Renmore on Fridays at 8.15pm.

KILDARE

An eight kilometre walk on the Curragh Plains led by Bishop Denis Nulty takes place on Saturday, July 29. The walk begins at St Anne's School, the Curragh at 12 noon and concludes with a prayer service in St Brigid's Church at 4pm. To register contact Aras Bhríde on 045-521352 or email kildareparish@gmail.com.

KILKENNY

St John's Parish Scripture group meets in the presbytery at 7.30pm each Thursday to reflect on Scripture texts for the following Sunday's Mass.

LAOIS

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Michael's Church, Portarlinton after 10am Mass each Tuesday, with rosary at 7pm followed by prayers to the Holy Face. The rosary is prayed each night at 7pm live on the webcam.

LEITRIM

Daily rosary is at 6pm in St Joseph's Church, Leitrim Village.

LIMERICK

Adoration is held every Friday during the summer in the Adoration Chapel Abbeyfeale. It starts after 10am Mass and continues until 7pm.

MAYO

The next Latin Mass will take place on Sunday, August 13, at 6pm in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel Knock Shrine.

Reek Sunday, the national

pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick, takes place July 30, with Masses every hour from 8am-2pm and Confessions from 7.30am-2pm.

MEATH

Navan parish novena in honour of the Sacred Heart takes place Fridays in St Oliver's Church with 7.30pm Mass and devotions.

MONAGHAN

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every Tuesday from 2-4pm in Muckno parish, St Mary's Church.

OFFALY

Clonminch Cemetery Sunday in Tullamore Parish takes place on Sunday, August 20 at 1pm.

ROSCOMMON

Eucharistic Adoration takes place the first Friday of each month in Drumboylan Church (Ardcarne Parish) from 9am-10pm.

SLIGO

Tobernalt holy well weekend of prayer takes place Friday July 28 to July 30. Begins 10am on Friday. A camino from St Anne's church takes place before dawn Mass on Sunday, beginning at 4.45am. Dawn Mass takes place at 6am.

TIPPERARY

Relics of Padre Pio coming to St Mary's Church, Cahir on Saturday, July 29 at 6pm. Healing Mass is followed by a blessing with St Padre Pio's relics.

WATERFORD

The annual Mass at St Declan's Holy Well, Toor, Aglish, takes place on Thursday July 27 at 12 noon. Confessions will be held before Mass.

WESTMEATH

Cemetery devotions for Mullingar parish take place on Sunday, July 30 in Kilronan after 11am Mass in Gainstown; Marlinstown at 12.15pm; and Ballyglass at 2pm.

WEXFORD

The annual Grantstown rosary takes place in the Augustinian Priory, Grantstown, Wellington Bridge, on Sunday, August 13 at 3pm.



World Report

IN BRIEF

US bishops warn against changing definition of brain death

● The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and a key Catholic bioethics group are both warning of a potential rewriting of US law to broaden the definition of brain death, a revision they claim relies on “deficient medical criteria”.

The USCCB and the National Catholic Bioethics Center said in a joint letter this month that the Uniform Law Commission was moving to revise the definition of whole-brain death without relying on “compelling scientific evidence” to do so.

Among potential revisions is a proposal to replace the brain-death standard of “irreversible cessation” of key brain or respiratory functions with one in which permanent “coma” and “loss of brainstem reflexes” could be counted as death.

Brazilian politician launches rosary campaign

● Brazilian federal legislator Christine Nogueira dos Reis Tonietto, a member of the Liberal Party (PL), launched a campaign July 17 to pray the rosary live on Instagram “for Brazil and for life”.

Bishop Fernando Rifan of Cedamusa and Bishop Adair Jose Guimarães of Formosa are scheduled to participate in the live event as are priests, artists, intellectuals and Catholic politicians.

Known simply as Chris Tonietto, the

congresswoman will transmit a total of 14 live broadcasts through August 3 on her Instagram account, always concluding with a prayer for unborn children.

Ms Tonietto describes herself on her Instagram channel as a Catholic lawyer, wife, and mother who is pro-life, pro-family, and against judicial activism and corruption. She concludes her profile with *Ora et labora* and the prayer emoji.

Young Spanish Carmelite dies on eve of feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

● A 21-year-old Carmelite friar who had been admitted to a Carmel in Spain *in articulo mortis* (at the point of death) died July 15, the eve of the feast day of Our Lady of Mt Carmel.

“We inform you that this morning in the Carmelite Convent of St Andrew in Salamanca, Friar Pablo María de la Cruz Alonso Hidalgo has given his life to the Father,” prior provincial Friar Salvador Villota Herrero said in a statement.

“I am the Resurrection and the Life,” says the Lord. Those who have died with Christ, our love and our hope, will rise with him,” Fr Villota wrote.

Alonso was diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer, when he was 16 years old, but he still felt the call to religious life, reported the Spanish news outlet *La Gaceta de Salamanca*.

‘The Chosen’ series gets waiver to continue filming during strike

● Filming of the fourth season of *The Chosen*, the popular Christian television series about Jesus and his disciples, will continue after a union granted the production an exemption from its strike against major Hollywood studios.

The strike was announced July 13 by the SAG-AFTRA, the union of the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists that represents more than 160,000 members such as actors, journalists, and singers.

Responding to questions online, the show said that it requested an exemption because it is privately funded.

The show said on Twitter that it had been granted a “waiver” and filming would continue. *Deadline* confirmed that filming continued and “is due to wrap in two weeks.”

Vatican to investigate lay society in Peru

The Vatican has commissioned a new investigation of the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae (Sodality of Christian Life), a lay society of apostolic life founded in Peru.

The investigation will be led by Archbishop Charles Scicluna, assistant secretary of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and an expert on sexual abuse, the Peruvian newspaper *La República* reported on July 20.

Archbishop Scicluna will be accompanied by Msgr Jordi Bertomeu, an official of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Years ago, both Vatican officials were sent by Pope Francis to deal with the sexual abuse scandal that rocked the Church in Chile. Msgr Bertomeu was recently commissioned to study the progress being made in Bolivia in the prevention of clerical sexual abuse in the midst of complaints against Jesuit priests such as the late Fr Alfonso Pedrajas, known as “Padre Pica,” whose diary indicated he sexually abused as many as 85 minors.

Sources close to the case told *ACI Prensa* that the specific assignment of the Vatican envoys is unknown as well as whether they will arrive with any decision from the Holy See.

Daniel Calderón, assistant general for Sodalitium communications, sent a statement July 21 to *ACI Prensa* to clarify that the institution has not yet received official notification from the Holy See regarding the details of the investigation.

“First of all, we want to clarify that, although the apostolic nunciature in Peru yesterday extended an invitation to some members of our institution for a meeting, to date we have not received any official notification about the initiation of an investigation, as mentioned in said news,” he said.



Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta is pictured alongside Jesuit Fr Hans Zollner. Photo: CNS/Paul Haring

Mr Calderón noted that its members are “attentive to any official communication in this regard and, as soon as it is received,” they will act “responsibly and openly to cooperate in whatever may be necessary”.

Mr Calderón also expressed “respect and a cordial welcome to the persons sent to Peru by the Holy Father”.

“As has been our constant disposition, we welcome with the greatest availability and willingness to cooperate [with] any initiative that comes from the Holy See. Our institution maintains a constant commitment to the Catholic Church,” he assured.

Mr Calderón reaffirmed that the members of the Sodalitium “deeply value” the closeness of the Holy See, which is accompanying them “in the renewal process” that the community has “been working on for so many years together with the papal delegates appointed by the Holy See”.

Founded in 1971 by the

Peruvian layman Luis Fernando Figari, and with pontifical approval since 1997, the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae (SCV) has been involved in various accusations of sexual abuse and the abuse of power.

In 2011, the SCV confirmed that its late vicar general, Germán Doig, Figari’s right-hand man, had engaged in sexual misconduct.

In November 2015, the book *Half Monks, Half Soldiers*, by Peruvian journalists Pedro Salinas and Paola Ugaz, made allegations of abuses committed by Figari himself.

UK releases woman jailed for aborting her baby

An English Catholic bishop has praised a court for releasing a woman jailed for aborting her baby eight months into pregnancy. Auxiliary Bishop John Sherrington of Westminster, who leads pro-life efforts of the bishops’ conference of England and Wales, said he welcomed the decision of the Court of Appeal in London to free Carla Foster because it was showing “mercy and compassion”.

On July 18, three judges reduced Ms Foster’s prison sentence to a 14-month suspended sentence so the mother of three could be released immediately.

They concluded that “it is a case that

calls for compassion, not punishment,” and that “no useful purpose is served by detaining Ms Foster in custody”.

Ms Foster was sentenced June 12 at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court to 28 months, half of which was to be spent in prison and the rest under license, because she took abortion pills to end the life of her baby girl, Lily, when she was between 32 and 34 weeks pregnant.

The upper time limit for legal abortions in the UK is 24 weeks, with additional exceptions made for cases such as disability.

The case comes just weeks after UK

government figures indicated that a record number of abortions took place in England and Wales last year.

Statistics released June 22 by the Department of Health and Social Care show that 123,219 abortions for residents of England and Wales took place in the six months between January 1 and June 30, 2022.

The figure is 17,731 higher than the total recorded for the first six months of 2021, which was 105,488 for residents of England and Wales.

Marko Rupnik can no longer appeal dismissal from the Jesuits

Fr Johan Verschueren, a Jesuit official and the superior of Fr Marko Rupnik, announced June 15 the expulsion of Fr Rupnik from the Society of Jesus due to his “repeated refusal” to address the allegations of sexual abuse and to comply with the restrictions placed on him.

Fr Rupnik had according to canonical norms until Friday, July 14, to appeal the decision. By not having done so, the priest, who was also briefly excommunicated for admittedly giving absolution to one of his accomplices in a sin against the Sixth Commandment, is officially

out of the order.

Various media reported that the Slovenian priest would move to live in Croatia in the Diocese of Split-Makarska. *ACI Prensa* contacted his superior to confirm this information but did not receive a response by press time.

Fr Rupnik, who alleg-

edly physically and psychologically abused numerous women religious during his stay with the Loyola Community in Slovenia and also in Rome, has left the order without giving any explanation to either his superiors or the alleged victims.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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A boatload of faithful



Pope Francis greets children of Vatican employees attending a summer camp in the Vatican's Paul VI audience hall July 18. Photo: CNS/Vatican Media

Church leader warns of 'moral chaos' as Iraq president revokes recognition

Cardinal Louis Sako, patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, announced July 15 that he is withdrawing from his seat in Baghdad after Iraqi President Abdul Rashid revoked a decree recognising him as head of the Christian Church in Iraq.

Cardinal Sako said he will be taking up residence in a monastery in Kurdistan, an autonomous region of Iraq, where he will continue to lead the Chaldean Church.

In a statement issued July 15, Cardinal Sako called the president's

action — which calls into question his ability to control Church assets in the country — “unprecedented” and “unfair”.

“It is unfortunate that we in Iraq live in the midst of a wide network of self-interest, narrow factionalism, and hypocrisy that has produced an unprecedented political, national, and moral chaos, which is rooted by now more and more,” Cardinal Sako wrote. “Therefore, I have decided to withdraw from the patriarchal headquarters in Baghdad”.

“I call on Christians

to remain in their faith, which is their consolation, strength, light, and life, and on their national identity until the storm passes with the help of God,” Cardinal Sako added. “May God help the helpless Christians and Iraqis.”

Cardinal Sako, 75, is a member of the College of Cardinals, patriarch of Baghdad, and head of the Chaldean Catholic Church, which has hundreds of thousands of members across the world.

The Chaldean Catholic Church is an Eastern rite Church in full communion

with the Holy See.

There are an estimated 300,000 Chaldean Catholics in Iraq, and, according to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom report, they make up 80% of the Christian population in the country.

When ISIS invaded Iraq, many Chaldeans left their homes to seek safety elsewhere in Iraq or abroad.

The pronouncement recognising Sako as head of the Church in Iraq is known as “Republican Decree No. 147.” It was issued in 2013 by former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

Bishops condemn EU's drafting of 'right to abortion'

European bishops July 18 released a statement condemning the drafting of a right to abortion in the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights, arguing that the proposed amendment would run afoul of European Union law and human dignity.

The enshrining of abortion rights in the EU's rights charter has been a prolonged subject of debate there. Abortion activists have for years pushed for the modification to union law, with initiatives such

as the Simone Veil Pact calling for broad abortion rights throughout the continent.

In its statement, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) argued that the measure would constitute an “ethical indefensibility” against human rights and European law.

Stating that “human dignity is an overarching value in the EU Treaties and Charter,” the bishops wrote that “respect for the dignity of every human being in every stage of its life,

especially in situations of complete vulnerability, is a fundamental principle in a democratic society”.

Furthermore, they argued, “there is no recognised right to abortion in European or international law”. Limits on European Union authority, meanwhile, proscribe the governing body from enacting such a measure.

“There are no competences at the EU level for regulating abortion,” the bishops wrote, “and it must be seen that fundamental rights cannot establish competences of the Union”.

Vatican roundup

Argentine priest is Pope Francis' new personal secretary

● Archbishop Jorge García Cuerva of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on July 17 announced that Pope Francis has appointed a priest from the Buenos Aires Archdiocese, Fr Daniel Pellizzon, 40, to act as his personal secretary. Fr Pellizzon will replace Fr Gonzalo Aemilius in the position.

Archbishop García said Fr Pellizzon will travel to Rome at the beginning of August to begin his new role. The archbishop offered his prayer for the priest as he begins “this new mission entrusted to the service of the Church”.

Fr Pellizzon was born January 24, 1983, in Buenos Aires.

In 2011 and 2012 he collaborated with Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio — the archbishop at that time — in organising his personal archives.

Fr Pellizzon was ordained a priest on November 3, 2018.

He began his ministry first as a deacon and then as parochial vicar, serving pilgrims at St Cajetan Shrine in the Liniers neighborhood of Buenos Aires for five years. In March, he was assigned as vicar to Our Lady of Mercy Parish, where he continues to work to date.

Cardinal Zuppi meets with Biden to discuss Ukraine

● Italian Cardinal Matteo Zuppi met with President Joe Biden July 18 evening to discuss the Vatican's humanitarian efforts in war-torn Ukraine.

Vatican News reported that the Holy See Press Office said July 19 that the cardinal also handed Biden a letter «emphasising the Pope's sorrow for the suffering caused by the war”. A statement from the White House following the two-and-a-half-hour meeting read:

“They ... discussed the Holy See's efforts providing humanitarian aid to address the widespread suffering caused by Russia's continuing aggression in

Ukraine, as well as the Vatican's advocacy for the return of forcibly deported Ukrainian children.”

The Ukrainian government says that Russia forcibly deported thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia after the invasion last year.

In April, Pope Francis said the Holy See intends to help facilitate the return of Ukrainian children.

“It is a question of humanity before it is a question of the spoils of war or a displacement caused by war,” the Pope said. “All human gestures help, but gestures of cruelty do not help. We must do everything humanly possible.”

Vatican prosecutor accuses cardinal of orchestrating failed investment

● The Vatican's chief prosecuting attorney began his closing arguments outlining final charges against 10 defendants, including a cardinal, stemming from an investigation launched in 2019 by internal reports of suspicious financial activity.

Now, Alessandro Diddi, the prosecutor, was set to present his case over the course of at least six hearings starting July 18, marking the final stage of a two-year-long Vatican trial investigating the mismanagement of Vatican funds.

Among the defendants are some former officials of the Vatican Secretariat of State, “who did not know how to interpret the spirit and ideals of the Church,” which includes being bound by canon law to administer Church assets with care, vigilance and due diligence, Mr Diddi told the Vatican tribunal July 19, according to Vatican News.

Mr Diddi referred specifically to the defendant, Cardinal Angelo Becciu, who held the No. 3 position in the Secretariat of State as the substitute secretary for general affairs from 2011 to 2018 — the time period when the failed investment in a property in London was made.

Mr Diddi said Cardinal Becciu was the “mastermind” behind the investment and “passively” watched the “dissolution” of Vatican resources.



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

80 years ago, a pope defied bombs to become 'Defender of the City'

Rome is a city that prides itself on having seen it all over the course of its millennia-long history, so much so that "Been there, done that" might well be the unofficial civic motto. Here's how journalist Fabrizio Roncone summed up Roman reaction to the record heat this week, which reached an official peak of 42.7 degrees July 18.

"Romans don't get burned, they don't melt, they don't evaporate. The Romans resist. They're used to it ... not to the heat, but to much worse," Mr Roncone wrote in *Corriere della Sera*.

Yet even by that world-weary standard, the events of July 19, 1943, 80 years ago, shocked and scarred the city like little else in its long history – and, for precisely that reason, a virtually unprecedented papal reaction that day still lives in the civic memory.

Bombing

It was 11:03 am on July 19, 1943, when some 500 American planes under the command of General James "Jimmy" Doolittle began dropping more than 4,000 bombs on the Eternal City, altogether amounting to more than 1,000 tons of explosives. The worst damage came to the Roman neighbourhood of San Lorenzo, home of the famed Basilica of *San Lorenzo fuori le mura* (St Lawrence Outside the Walls), which is adjacent to the massive Campo Verano cemetery.

American forces had landed on Sicily just a few days before the bombing raid and would soon begin making their way north, so the idea of the raid was to weaken Mussolini's grip on power and encourage Italy's partisans to rise up and support the Allied effort.

In the end, the raid of July 19 would leave 3,000 people dead, 11,000 injured, 10,000 houses destroyed and at least 40,000 Romans homeless.

Basilica

Most dramatic for Roman consciousness was the near-destruction of the basilica, which, in various forms, had occupied the spot near the traditional tomb of St Lawrence since the 4th Century. Prior to that point, Romans had believed the city would be spared the worst of the war's carnage because of its artistic and spiritual patrimony, but the raid shattered that illusion.

Romans were left dazed and terrified, feeling suddenly vulnerable. Into that mix stepped Pope Pius XII, Eugenio Pacelli, the last native Roman to be elected pope, and thus someone who could instinctively read the mood of the city.

Pius XII immediately decided to set off to visit the site of the destruction at San Lorenzo, arriving at 2:00 pm, according to a local pastor who saw the pontiff's car pull up. The timing is important, because according to after-action reports by American pilots, the last bombs weren't dropped until 2:30 pm, which means the pope showed up while the raid was still underway.

Danger

This was an era in which popes rarely left the Vatican for any reason, and certainly not in the middle of an active bombing campaign. Adding to the risk, Pius XII did not arrive amid a scrum of security personnel, but was accompanied by only two people: Count Enrico Pietro Galeazzi, a Roman architect, diplomat and personal friend of the Pacelli family, who drove the pope in his Fiat 500, and then-Msgr Giovanni Battista Montini, an aide to Pius XII who would go on to become Pope Paul VI.

(As a footnote, Galeazzi would later design the chapel at the Pontifical North American College, the residence for American seminarians in Rome, and his tomb is located there.)

How dicey was the decision to travel the four miles between the Vatican and San Lorenzo while the bombers were still in the sky? Consider that another car carrying the head of the *Carabinieri*, Italy's military police, who was also trying to visit the site at San Lorenzo, was struck by a stray bomb and General Azolino Hazon was killed trying to make basically the same journey.

Among other things, Pius XII undoubtedly was motivated to visit the site in part because the Pacelli family crypt is located near the entrance to the Campo Verano, and it too was damaged.

The pope's visit was not announced, but word quickly got out and a massive crowd of survivors and residents of the neighbourhood formed around him. Witnesses reported seeing the pope's white cassock stained with blood as he prayed with the crowd and blessed them, consoling them for their losses.

A photograph of Pius XII standing in front of the crowd with his arms stretched out, as if imploring heaven to spare them and the city further anguish, quickly became the iconic image of the visit, and is memorialised in a nearby statue in the Campo Verano. (Today historians believe that particular photo was actually from a later moment, but it's still passed into the popular mind as the day's defining moment.)



Pope Benedict XVI visits a statue of Pope Pius XII during a pastoral visit to Rome's Basilica of St Lawrence Outside the Walls for the 1,750th anniversary of the martyrdom of St Lawrence. Photo: CNS/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters

“So moved was Pius by the experience that he actually hoped to be buried at the Basilica of San Lorenzo, which proved impossible in the end because of the damage the basilica had endured”

Courage

More than any other single factor, it was Pius XII's courage and pastoral presence on July 19, 1943, which earned him the epithet of *Defensor Civitatis*, "Defender of the City". So moved was Pius by the experience that he actually hoped to be buried at the Basilica of San Lorenzo, which proved impossible in the end because of the damage the basilica had endured.

Pius XII would repeat the gesture a month later, on August 13, 1943, when Allied bombs again fell on another section of Rome, in

the San Giovanni neighbourhood. (Ironically, Pope Pius was already in the area to celebrate a previously scheduled Mass for the victims of July 19.) Aside from those two bombings the city was spared further ruin, a result many Romans to this day attribute to Pius XII's public displays of concern.

In his Angelus address Pope Francis recalled the remarkable gesture by his predecessor.

"I want to recall that 80 years, on July 19, 1943, certain neighbourhoods of Rome, especially San Lorenzo, were

bombed, and the pope, the Venerable Pius XII, wanted to be in the middle of his shocked people," Francis said.

"Unfortunately, even today these tragedies repeat themselves," Francis said. "How is it possible? Have we lost memory? May the Lord have mercy on us, and free the human family from the scourge of war. In particular we pray for the dear Ukrainian people, who are suffering so much."

In other words, that unplanned, unscripted and clearly risky moment from 80 years ago lives on, as a permanent reminder that while war may still be with us, so too is a dramatic papal witness for peace.

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

US endures 'staggering' record number of mass killings in first half of 2023



Kate Scanlon

The United States endured a record number of mass killings in the first half of 2023, according to a new analysis. The report came in tandem with news that at least four people were killed in a mass shooting in Hampton, Georgia, south of Atlanta, on July 15.

A database maintained by *The Associated Press* and *USA Today* in partnership with Northeastern University defines a mass killing as an incident where four or more people are slain, excluding the assailant, within a 24-hour period. The database has tracked such violence dating back to 2006.

Displaced

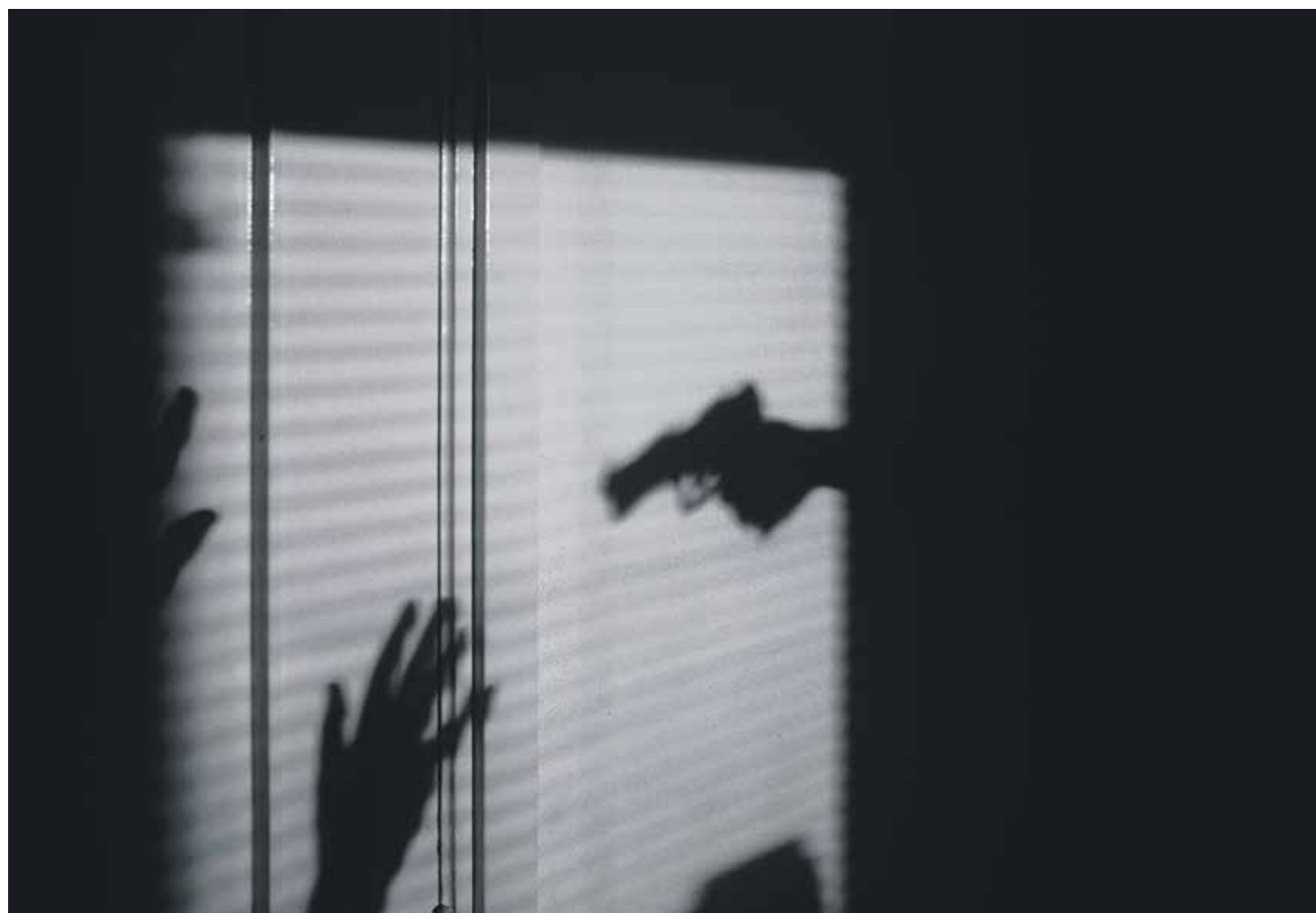
The 2023 record displaced the previous record set in 2022 of 27 mass killings, set in the final half of the year, continuing a record pace for such events. James Alan Fox, a criminology professor at Northeastern University, told *The Associated Press* that when he began overseeing the database about five years ago, he never thought the numbers would increase as they have.

"We used to say there were two to three dozen a year," Professor Fox said. "The fact that there's 28 in half a year is a staggering statistic."

According to the report, with only one exception, each of those mass killings in the first half of this year involved guns. The lone exception was a fire set by an arsonist in Monroe, Louisiana, that killed four people.

The database covered mass killings up through June 30. The Hampton mass killing was the 31st mass killing in the US for 2023, underscoring the pace of these slaughters in American public life.

The mass shootings events are just some of the violent events with multiple casualties involving guns that have become more common in the US in recent years. In May 2022 at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, a gunman armed with an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle killed 19 children and two teachers. In response to the Uvalde shooting, Congress passed a modest gun safety



bill – the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act – that expanded the background check system for prospective gun buyers under 21 years old, closed a provision known as the 'boyfriend loophole,' banning domestic abusers from purchasing firearms regardless of their marital status, and funded new investments in mental health resources.

“Professor Liebell said that in the eight hours prior to the interview with OSV News, 121 people were killed with guns while 317 were injured in the US”

While President Joe Biden has touted that legislation,

he also has called for additional measures, including an assault weapons ban and universal background check legislation. Either measure faces unlikely odds in a divided Congress, where Republicans hold a narrow majority in the House, and where Democrats have a narrow majority in the Senate and would have to overcome a potential filibuster.

Nationwide

Susan Liebell, a professor of political science at St Joseph's University in Philadelphia, told *OSV News* that mass killings make up just a small part of nationwide gun violence that is taking its toll on the population.

"They are about 1% of all shootings in the United States," she said.

Citing data from the gun violence archive, Professor Liebell said that in the

eight hours prior to the interview with *OSV News*, 121 people were killed with guns while 317 were injured in the US.

"They're from everywhere," Prof. Liebell said of the victims. "They're not from just large cities. They're all over."

“A shooter with a semi-automatic weapon could discharge a fully loaded 100-round magazine at a steady rate within 30 seconds”

Prof. Liebell said Americans' understanding of the Constitution's Second Amendment has shifted through the country's history. It was originally crafted in response to early

Americans' concerns about standing armies following the Revolutionary War.

"We have, or some portion of the public has decided, that guns equal freedom; that there's some sort of a right to bring a gun into the public space, private spaces," she said. "And that narrative of mixing liberty with the Second Amendment is something very, very new."

Ban

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for a total ban on assault weapons, a term that refers commonly to military-style semi-automatic rifles, shotguns and pistols fed by ammunition magazines of various capacities. For instance, most AR-15 rifles, the civilian version of the M-16 military rifle, come with 30-round magazines, but manufacturers have developed larger capacities for the semi-automatic platform, including capacities up to 40, 60, or even 100 rounds. These tactical-style weapons allow a shooter to maintain a steady rate of fire uninterrupted by the need to reload until the magazine

is depleted.

A March 27 *Washington Post* demonstration showed how a shooter with a semi-automatic weapon could discharge a fully loaded 100-round magazine at a steady rate within 30 seconds. A shooter with a 10-round magazine could discharge 30 rounds within the same timeframe, with magazine changes taking 7-8 seconds, before the shooter resumed firing.

The US bishops have said they support an assault weapons ban similar to the one they supported in the 1994 crime bill, which Congress allowed to expire in 2004. They also support limitations on civilian access to high-capacity ammunition magazines. The same expired crime bill previously banned ownership of magazines with capacity for more than 10 rounds. Other gun regulation measures the bishops support include universal background checks for all gun purchases.

i Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for *OSV News* covering Washington.

“‘We used to say there were two to three dozen a year,’ Professor Fox said. ‘The fact that there’s 28 in half a year is a staggering statistic’”

Letters

Post to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277 or email: letters@irishcatholic.ie

Letter of the week

Valuing the voice of youth in the Church

Dear Editor, Congratulations to the bishops for leading young pilgrims to World Youth Day in Lisbon, an event which serves as a beacon of hope and unity, fostering the Faith among the youth of Ireland and beyond. It deserves recognition and celebration.

World Youth Day holds profound significance for young people and provides them with a unique opportunity to come together from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and traditions.

The event is a powerful reminder that the Church is not confined to geographical boundaries but stretches far and wide, embracing the

hearts of young people seeking a deeper connection with their faith.

As these young pilgrims return to Ireland, they carry with them the flame of faith that has been kindled in Lisbon. By sharing their encounters and the spiritual insights gained during their pilgrimage, they have the potential to invigorate their peers and ignite a ripple effect of faith.

While celebrating the accomplishments of the bishops and these young pilgrims, it is essential to address the concerns surrounding the future of youth ministry in Ireland. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been profound, lead-

ing to the suspension of many youth ministry groups and activities. The disruption caused by the pandemic has raised questions about how to rekindle the interest of young people in actively participating in the life of the Church.

A concerted effort is required from the entire Church community. Firstly, we must create safe and inviting spaces where young people feel welcomed, valued, and encouraged to explore and deepen their Faith. By providing platforms for open dialogue and genuine companionship, we can foster a sense of belonging and purpose.

Secondly, embracing technology and social media can play a pivotal role in reaching out to young people.

Lastly, involving young people in decision-making processes and leadership roles within the Church is vital. By empowering them to take ownership of their faith journey and engage in shaping the future of the Church, we show that their voices are not only heard but genuinely valued.

Yours etc.,
Declan Kelly
Clara, Co. Offaly

Pope Francis' flavour of the month

Dear Editor, No red hat for Ireland.

I was very disappointed that once again the island of saints and scholars has been snubbed by the Holy See. We are not flavour of the month with Pope Francis.

Yours etc.,
Michael Francis O'Gara
Boyle, Co. Roscommon



Drug decriminalising often seen as legitimising

Dear Editor, I managed an addiction treatment centre in West Belfast for 23 years. We focused on all levels of substance use from recreational to addiction. Not all users become addicted but all who become addicted begin with recreational use. In recommending the "possession of drugs for personal use" be decriminalised they did not appear to make any clear distinction between these two behaviours. They were pretty loose in their use of the expression "possession for personal use".

They seemed to presume the distinction between decriminalising and legitimising drug use is clear to all. When there is no penalty attached to a behaviour, many tend to presume the behaviour is legitimate. Decriminalising is often seen as the same as legitimising. After all, the fear of being caught is often a determining factor preventing many from using drugs. I think the bishops may be overestimating peoples' psychological resources when it comes to choosing good over

satisfaction in situations where satisfaction carries no adverse outcome.

Bishop Ruter claimed that "research shows that decriminalisation does not increase drug use and other crime" [*The Irish Catholic* – July 6, 2023], David Quinn [*The Irish Catholic* – July 13, 2023] doubts this, pointing to Portugal where the mayor of Porto decries the fact that drug use has been normalised, and to the state of Oregon where overdoses increased by 46% since decriminalisation in 2021.

Motivated by compassion they do not want people to be stigmatised for "possessing drugs for personal use", but I agree with Damian Richardson who suggested we should be putting resources into learning, "why the young people of Ireland need to take drugs to block the world out". I believe this is the true face of compassion the Church and State should be following.

Yours etc.,
Brendan Kennedy
Belfast, Co. Antrim

Watering down the teachings of the Gospel

Dear Editor, Prof. Eamonn Conway is in a celebratory mood in his page 6 article [*The Irish Catholic* – June 6, 2023] regarding the "new doctrine czar" in the Vatican. For me alarm bells started ringing with the article title 'Putting doctrine firmly at the service of mission' – which, in my opinion, means giving theologians licence to operate outside the limits of Catholic orthodoxy.

Nobody will argue about the importance of the Church's mission and a due allocation of resources such as time, personnel, financial and material assets, etc. But is doctrine which expresses the key truths of our Faith just another commodity to be adapted for optimising results or popular appeal?

The Church has no authority to modify or water-down the teachings of the Gospel, not even those teachings that are out of step with the modern world. Jesus' Ascension Thursday mandate to the apostles (not to a cartel of clever theologians) was "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19-20)

A considerable part of the life work and energies of Popes St John Paul II and Benedict XVI was expended on safeguarding the deposit of Faith from the distortions sought by liberal theologians intent on compromising with the modern world – key issues being the foundations of moral theology, the

sexual revolution and the LGBTQ agenda, women's ordination, etc. This movement to accommodate the spirit of the age was aptly labelled "the dictatorship of relativism" by Pope Benedict XVI.

The consequences of this approach to mission can be seen clearly in the rapid decline of the Church in Germany and its teetering on the brink of schism.

GK Chesterton, the great Catholic thinker of the last century warned us of such temptations: "He who marries the spirit of the times will soon find himself a widower."

Yours etc.,
Andy McMahon
Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare

Depriving babies of their God-given right

Dear Editor, On radio and television, climate change is top of the agenda. I agree, it is most important, so I do my bit. I water my plants, dispose my rubbish properly, walk and not drive wherever possible. I haven't taken my one trip abroad since Covid.

Why, I ask, isn't abortion getting the same coverage? Surely the protection of life is more important. Millions of babies have been

aborted, in 'Holy Ireland' almost 30,000 in the first three years since it was approved.

Legislation is being demanded by pro-abortionists to extend abortion regulations further. Restrictions put in place are now being targeted. More babies must die.

I wonder what these little Irish babies, who were deprived of their God-given right to live and breathe,

would have been: Doctors, scientists, farmers, aid workers, mothers, fathers? We will never know.

God's creation is beautiful. We must do all we can to preserve all of it, we will answer, in judgement, if we don't. I think human life takes priority. What of a world, with beautiful trees, and no people?

The Criminal Justice [Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences]

Bill 2022 is going to restrict objections and freedom of speech. We need to do what we can now to protect the Christian ethos. The sixth Commandment tells us "Thou shall not kill".

Life is hard, and often very difficult, but I am glad I got my chance to live it. Don't deprive another of that right. Live and let live.

Yours etc.,
Nuala Doran
Raheen, Co. Limerick

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.



A spirituality of summer

Does it make sense to write about a spirituality of summer? At one level not at all, if it is to suggest that the spiritual life is subject to seasonal fluctuations, or that there is something about the summer that is more or less spiritual or spiritually-significant than any other time of the year. But the liturgical life of the Church has always been firmly governed by a sense of times and seasons. One of the most disconcerting things about modern travel is the way that it can transport us from one season and climate to another within so short a space of time that our own bodies and inner senses of rhythm become completely disorientated. One day I



This time of year brings a change in the way we experience the world around us, writes Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ

am in a British midsummer, the next I am in an Australian midwinter. The liturgy tells us that times and seasons do matter. Our bodies are attuned to the onset and passing of seasons of the year. Our whole cycle of life as Catholic Christians is dominated by liturgy and sacrament – the embodied signs of what it means to be worshippers of the incarnate God. So, in that sense, we can

talk about a spirituality of summer and be making sense as we talk.

Extravagant

Liturgically, then, summer is ordinary time, when we let go of the drama of Lent and Passiontide and Easter and can begin to wallow in some of the big, extravagant feasts: Ascension, Pentecost, the Sacred Heart, Corpus

Christi. All of these are, in some measure, feasts of the body, where we begin to come to terms with the absence of the earthly body of Christ and begin to get the measure of what 'This is my body' means in day-to-day terms. The Body of Christ is discovered in the body of believers, in the other who believes and lives out a similar faith in Christ – or indeed whose articulation and

mode of living is challengingly different from mine. The Body of Christ is revealed and savoured in the human, loving, passionate heart of Jesus and in my own capacity to love and be loved in and through the Eucharist.

Safety rail

This is where we let go, spiritually-speaking, of the safety rail, and swim out into the deep. The scripture readings and the structure of the liturgy are less directive and leave us to make what we can of the mysteries of Faith embodied in the incarnate and glorified Jesus. This is the time of the flowering of Faith, when we set about making sense of the earlier seasons of

catechesis in the mysteries of the Incarnation. Now we walk by faith and not by sight, growing into a deeper awareness of how the everyday is redolent of the presence of God. Perhaps this goes as well with the sense that summer is a time when our own bodies are more apparent. One of the delights of summer lies in being able to shed layers and carry round fewer protective barriers between our bodies and the cold and damp of the external world. Behaviour becomes less guarded – people sit in parks picnicking over lunch breaks, taking coffee outside, sitting at pavement cafes instead of huddling indoors.

Summer becomes a time for reconnecting with the natural light, the greater opportunities for communal living afforded by being able to sit out of doors for longer, watching children playing and people talking outside instead of sitting enclosed. There is a sense of a general relaxing into the present, a willingness to linger over meals or encounters, savouring the moment, allowing the time to flow by. Summer takes us into holiday time, when in families the rhythms of work change. Children and adults may spend more time together, positively or negatively as such an experience may be. Holidays can take us into different environments, giving opportunities for exploration and expansion of horizons. 'This is my body' becomes an invitation to contemplate the risen Jesus in the other, to experience the presence of God in human encounters.

“A positive embrace of the bodily, the incarnate, frees us from negative judgment of the flesh, born of fear and self-hatred”

In the Ignatian tradition, the application of the senses is a way of praying over material for prayer that allows what has surfaced to be savoured and tested through the medium of the senses. It is a more contemplative type of prayer and one that allows the body to verify what the mind and heart have groped towards during the day. The warmth and light of summer bring



so much enrichment in sight and scent and touch and taste. Perhaps part of the spirituality of summer is an invitation to a more contemplative approach to ordinary things: the feel and scent and taste of food, of flowers and plants, sea air, sunlight and warmth, fresh wind and the sound of cities, streets and gardens unusually alive.

Problematic

But if bodies come alive in summer, they can also become problematic. One of the recurrent themes in women's magazines, as soon as Easter is over, is the offer of radical diets to enable us to look good in swimming costumes and more revealing clothing. If summer signals the liberation from woollies, it also signals the threat of being seen with the bulk of winter still upon us.

Every aspect of the female body becomes a potential fashion threat. Hair: the wrong colour, wrecked by the sun, in the wrong places. Skin: too white, too dark, too dry, at risk of cancer. Curves: too much, too little, in the wrong place, in fashion, out of fashion. What does it mean to have a spiritual approach to summer that copes with and challenges the tyranny of the fashion and diet industries, laden as they are with the doom-filled message that women's bodies are

only acceptable if they conform to a standard of beauty achieved by few? 'This is my body' becomes an invitation to accept and honour our own embodiedness and to live more at ease within our enfleshed selves. A positive embrace of the bodily, the incarnate, frees us from negative judgment of the flesh, born of fear and self-hatred. We learn to thank God for what is, here and now, for the flowering and fruition of our own bodies and lives, whatever their stage and shape.

“Wasting time with the God whose times and seasons are full of generous wastefulness can remind us of what truly matters”

Whether in the country or just passing neighbours' gardens or public parks, summer reminds us of the insane generosity of God. Trees and plants flower and fruit in a way that can seem almost criminally wasteful. Bumble bees amble past, drunk on nectar. Neither animals nor humans can eat and use all the fruit that emerges

from the trees and bushes. If a spirituality of summer tells us anything, it is that the fruition of the earth, the fruit of time spent contemplatively going about our daily tasks, is always going to be more than we can calculate and make use of in obvious ways. A sense of the sacrament of the present moment can liberate us from the tyranny of time, dominated by market forces and the idolisation of work, of cost effectiveness, of productiveness as value. Wasting time with the God whose times and seasons are full of generous wastefulness can remind us of what truly matters. The God who is with us always to the end of time is not limited to any season. God is both within and beyond times and seasons, but invites us in the summer, perhaps more vividly than at other times, to hear 'this is my body' as an invitation to savour the beauties of creation. This includes ourselves, the other, whether family, friend or stranger and the earth in full flower and fruit as the power of the risen Christ liberates all creation from bondage.

i Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ is a sister of the Congregation of Jesus. She teaches at the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology in Cambridge.



World Youth Day is about Christ or it's about nothing at all



Fr Patrick Briscoe OP

World Youth Day (WYD) brings together young people from every corner of the globe to celebrate their Catholic faith. Away from home and buoyed by the witness of their peers, it becomes possible for many to have a transforming encounter with Jesus Christ. But it is not friends, travel or universal embrace of the human spirit that make WYD a life-changing, transcendent experience. Only Jesus Christ is capable of that.

In fact, ultimately, WYD cannot be about anything other than Christ the Lord. Even noble aims like service or expressions of diversity are insufficient organisational principles. And that is because, as Pope Francis has reminded us many times, the Church is not a mere bureaucracy. The Church is the People of God, the very body of Christ! And WYD, a visible and beautiful coming together of the Church, must have Christ as its centre and focus. Otherwise, it's not worth hosting.

“The Pope told us, ‘Jesus has taken upon himself our humanity and his heart will never be separated from us’”

I'll never forget the evening of worship that I was privileged to participate in as a newly-ordained priest in Krakow. Hosted by the Knights of Columbus at Tauron Arena, over 20,000 young people gathered for catechesis, music and Eucharistic adoration. The evening included a Eucharistic procession, which passed several times around the arena. Leading the procession, I recall the delight and emotion expressed by one pilgrim as we turned and began to head in her direction. Seeing the monstrance draw near, the young girl whispered just loud enough for me to hear, “He is coming to me”.

WYD serves as a catalyst for a



A Portuguese flag is seen near Pope Francis as he greets the crowd before celebrating Mass for World Youth Day pilgrims at St John Paul II Field in Panama City in 2019. World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, will be during the first week of August. Photo: CNS

more profound relationship with Jesus Christ. As young Catholics gather to worship, learn and pray together, the joy and energy present opens hearts and minds to the reality of Christ's presence. Engaging in spiritual exercises that might not be a regular part of parish life for many young Catholics, pilgrims are invited to experience the living presence of Jesus in a tangible way. They meet Jesus in a privileged way in the confessional, in the Eucharist, and in catechesis. This encounter fosters a deep sense of intimacy and love for Christ, often igniting a desire to seek him with passion and commitment.

Nourish

For many young people, World Youth Day offers an opportunity to nourish their Faith. That means, first and foremost, discovering their identity in Christ. In Krakow, Pope Francis pointed to the encounter Jesus had with Zaccheus, urging young people to remember their identity as God's beloved sons

and daughters. The Pope told us, “Jesus has taken upon himself our humanity and his heart will never be separated from us”.

The encounter with Jesus Christ, especially through the witness of the Pope and other inspiring Catholics, reinforces the call to live a life centred on Christ. Through catechesis sessions, pilgrims receive guidance and inspiration, equipping them to face the challenges of the modern world with unwavering faith. I have seen over and over again how this encounter renews their commitment to be witnesses of Christ's love in their communities and empowers them to live the Faith confidently.

When the focus is unabashedly on Christ, young people can hear the Lord's voice more clearly and begin to know the plans of love he has for them. How many young people have discovered their vocation at WYD? How many have given their first ‘yes’ to Christ to pursue his invitation to priesthood, religious life or marriage?

If WYD is misunderstood as a global gathering to demonstrate diversity or human fraternity, it's not worth the time or the money. But an event that proposes Jesus Christ to hundreds of thousands of young people who are dying from not knowing him? Now, that's worth everything.

1 Fr Patrick Briscoe OP is a Dominican friar and the editor of Our Sunday Visitor.



A priest hears confession from a World Youth Day pilgrim in 2016 at Park Jordana in Krakow, Poland. Photo: CNS

“As young Catholics gather to worship, learn and pray together, the joy and energy present opens hearts and minds to the reality of Christ's presence”

Ignatian prayer: imagination brings the Gospels to life



Effie Caldarola

Today, I spent time with the Gerasene demoniac.

At least I did so in my imagination. I journeyed there in prayer and then stood with Jesus, watching the tortured and screaming man descending the hillside and identifying his demons as “legion”.

Praying with the imagination is a hallmark of Ignatian spirituality. It's an active form of prayer, used in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. It's used particularly when we explore the life of Jesus in Scripture. In Ignatian parlance, it's called contemplation, but instead of keeping our mind free of thoughts as one would in some forms of contemplative prayer, in the Ignatian tradition the mind, heart and memory are fully engaged.

Wonderful

Since July 31 is the feast day of St Ignatius, July – the 31 days of Ignatius – is a wonderful month to take a deep dive into this intimate form of prayer.

The demoniac's story is one of Scripture's most captivating. Jesus arrives “on the other side of the sea” (Mk 5: 1), having sailed into pagan territory on the Sea of Galilee, directly across from the Jewish town of Capernaum. We have reached the land of Gerasenes.

Jesus is immediately confronted by a frightening man who emerges from the cave-like tombs among the rocks. A version of this story appears in all three synoptic Gospels, but Mark's version, which runs to 20 verses, is powerful, simple and direct.

My imagination lets me take in the heat of the day, the oppressive dust, the strangled cries of the tortured man who cannot be restrained, even by chains. As I sink into my imagination, I note my reactions to what is before me. Am I afraid? Instead of standing back, terrified, today I feel great empathy for this tortured man. I feel confident that Jesus has things in hand. I look up in amazement as the man descends the rocky incline towards me.

“With him, you confront an unwelcoming vista where empty tombs sheltered a besieged man. And you are led into prayer”

In Jesuit Fr James Martin's book, *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, he recounts his own journey to Israel and his attempt to find the real sites of many Scripture stories. He devotes an entire chapter to this confrontation with the man besieged by evil spirits, and shares expert opinions on the story and its possible true-life location. With him, you confront an unwelcoming vista where empty tombs sheltered a besieged man. And you are led

into prayer.

Jesus knows who the demons are and does not fear them. Instead, they fear him, and ask to be sent into the pigs grazing on the hillside.

In my imagination the pigs feature strongly because I grew up on an old-fashioned family farm with pigs – chickens, milk cows, feral cats – we had them all. Let me tell you that 2000, which is Mark's report, is an enormous number of pigs. Can you imagine what that many dead pig carcasses would do to the ecosystem of the Sea of Galilee? Who was counting pigs anyway?

So, in my imagination, there's a herd of pigs, a realistic number. Praying with my imagination allows me to be creative with the environment. I watch in amazement as Jesus sends the demons into the pigs and into the water.

Compassion

I feel great compassion for the man possessed. Who of us has not been overtaken by our own failures and sinfulness? Who has not felt alone, rejected? Who has not withdrawn in anger or torn at chains we feel binding us? Demonic possession may be a rare thing, but everyone has suffered from the results of evil in this world.

Tomorrow I'm going back to the hillside to spend more time with the man freed by Jesus. I will ask Jesus to help me with the chains that bind me.

Effie Caldarola is a wife, mother and grandmother who has received her master's degree in pastoral ministry.



Questions of Faith?

Jenna Maria Cooper

Who is condemned and why do Catholics wear crucifixes?

Q: Since the Church teaches that God is a forgiving God, how could he banish a person to Hell? It is very difficult for me to believe that God would make that an eternal habitat for anyone.

A: According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Hell's principal punishment consists of eternal separation from God in whom alone man can have the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs” (CCC 1057). So hell isn't so much of a place or ‘habitat’ as it is a state of freely chosen estrangement from God.

As Catholics, we believe that God created us with free will, meaning that we decide for ourselves to love God and seek to follow his commandments; or we can choose to reject or ignore God. If we freely choose to distance ourselves from God through seriously sinful actions and a lack of repentance, God will respect our agency in making this choice and will not override our decision or force himself on us. If a person knowingly and willingly persists in a state of unrepentant grave sin right up until the time of their death, they are essentially sending themselves to Hell.

But God does not actively want hell for any of his creatures. As the catechism also tells us: “God predestines no one to go to hell; for this, a wilful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her Faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want ‘any to perish, but all to come to repentance.’” (CCC 1037)

Q: I know many Christians wear a cross necklace, but why do Catholics wear a crucifix? Displaying Jesus hanging from a cross, as jewellery, seems both cruel and a bit dark, even bizarre.

A: My thought is that our Catholic cultural emphasis on crucifixion imagery comes from Catholicism's focus on the saving power of Christ's Passion. Catholics are keenly aware that Jesus was not merely a wise moral teacher, he was the lamb of God who offered his life and was slain for the redemption of the world. Crucifixion imagery helps keep this central facet of our faith readily before our eyes.

Crucifixion imagery also reminds that Christ freely took on our human nature and had a human body that was subject to suffering and death, just as we are. When we are in pain, a crucifix can help us remember that God himself knows and understands what we are going through. It can also remind us of the possibility of uniting our sufferings to Christ's, filling us with the hope that our suffering in this life might also bear fruit for the salvation of souls.

Yes, a crucifix can be a jarring image. If you look at the history of Christian art, it seems to have been a bit ‘too much’ for the early Christians, which is why other kinds of imagery – such as Christ the Good Shepherd – were much more common in the Church's first few centuries. Even in the early Middle Ages, when crucifixes were more widely used, the crucified Christ was most often portrayed as a serene and victorious king rather than as a frankly suffering victim.

More ‘graphic’ crucifixes, where the intention of the artist is to show Jesus in agony, didn't become typical until the Counter Reformation era in the 16th Century. This period of the Church's history was focused on correcting abuses and other forms of corruption within the Church, in addition to deepening the personal spirituality of the Faithful. So perhaps during this era the more intense crucifixion imagery was intended to serve as a kind of spiritual ‘wake up call’ to a Church needing to rediscover its centuries-old foundation.

Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News.

What we do in secret

In a 1990s movie, *City Slickers*, there's a scene that sheds light on the importance of private integrity. Three men, New Yorkers, close friends, have gone off together for a summer to ride on a cattle drive in the hope that this experience will help them sort through their respective mid-life issues.

“There is no such a thing as a secret act. One person always knows. We know. And we hate ourselves for it”

At one point, riding along on the trail, they are discussing the morality of having a sexual affair. Initially their conversation focuses mostly on the fear of getting caught, and two of them agree that an affair isn't worth the risk. You're too likely to get caught. But their friend poses the question again, this time asking them if they would have an affair if there was the absolute assurance that they wouldn't be caught: “Imagine,” he says, “that a spaceship touches down. A beautiful woman emerges from the spaceship. You make love and she returns to Mars. There are no consequences. Nobody can possibly know. Would you do it?”

Not getting caught

Billy Crystal, who plays the lead role, answers that he doubts that this is ever possible. “You always get caught,” he submits, “people



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

smell dishonesty on you”. “But,” his friend protests, “what if it was really possible to have an affair and not get caught. What if nobody would know? Would you do it?” Billy Crystal's answer: “But I'd know, and I'd hate myself for it!”

His answer highlights an important truth. What we do in private, in secret, has consequences that are not dependent upon whether or not our secret leaks out. The damage is the same. What we do in secret moulds our character and influences how we relate to others in more ways than we suspect. There is no such a thing as a secret act. One person always knows. We know. And we hate ourselves for it, hate ourselves for having to lie. And this gives off its own scent.

What we do in secret ultimately shapes what we look like in public. Dishonesty changes the way we

look because it changes who we are. That's the reason why so often those around us will intuit the truth about us, smell the lie, even when they don't have any hard evidence on which to suspect us.

Hypocrisy

Doing something in secret that we can't admit in public is the very definition of hypocrisy, and that forces us to lie. And, among all sins, lying is the most dangerous. Why? Because we hate ourselves for it, stop respecting ourselves, and when we stop respecting ourselves we will, all too soon, notice that other people stop respecting us too. That's the intuitive place where we 'smell' each other's lies.

Worse still, lying forces us to harden ourselves so that we can live with our lie. Sin doesn't always make us humble and repentant. We have the all-too-easy, popular

image of the honest sinner, like the sinners in Gospels who more easily accepted Jesus than did the religiously upright. That's sometimes the case, but not always.

The biblical image of the honest sinner humbly turning towards God is predicated on honesty, on a sinner not hiding or lying about his or her sin. But sin can have a very different effect on us. When we don't honestly admit our sin, we move in the opposite direction, namely, towards rationalisation, hardness of attitude, and cynicism. Moreover, it's the lying, not the original weakness, that then becomes the real canker and constitutes the real danger.

“The quality of our person depends upon the degree of our private integrity. We are as sick as our sickest secret”

When we hide a sin, we are forced to lie, and with that lie we immediately begin to harden and reshape our souls. There's a

moral axiom that says: You can do anything as long as you don't have to lie about it. That's quite different than saying that you can do anything as long as nobody finds out about it.

The quality of our person depends upon the degree of our private integrity. We are as sick as our sickest secret, and we are as healthy as our most hidden virtue. We cannot be doing one thing in private and radiate something else in public. It doesn't matter whether others know our secrets or not. We know and, when those secrets are unhealthy, we hate ourselves for them and our hearts harden so to live with our lie.

Trust

We should never delude ourselves into thinking that the things we do in private, including very small actions of infidelity, self-indulgence, bigotry, jealousy, or slander, are of no consequence since no one knows about them. Inside the mystery of our interconnectedness as a human family and as a family of faith predicated on trust, even our most private actions, good or bad, like invisible enzymes inside the blood stream, affect the whole. Everything is known, felt, in one way or another. There is no such thing as a private act, inside the family of humanity or inside the body of Christ.

Others know us, even when they don't exactly know everything about us. They smell our vices, just as they smell our virtues.

“What we do in private, in secret, has consequences that are not dependent upon whether or not our secret leaks out. The damage is the same”

Faith is the pearl of great price



17th Sunday in Ordinary Time
 I Kings 3:5, 7-12
 Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77,
 127-128, 129-130
 Romans 8:28-30
 Matthew 13:44-52

Antiques Roadshow is a long running, popular television programme that evokes the treasure hunter in all of us. The show features art experts and appraisers who see people from all walks of life bring their family heirlooms and treasured objects for review and appraisal. Some visitors are delighted to learn that their treasures are valuable beyond their expectations, while others discover the actual worth of their possession is not what they thought it would be. The appeal of the show is in the element of surprise,

The Sunday Gospel

Jem Sullivan



as appraisers disclose their final estimation of the value of a treasured object. Often, even when an object is given low appraisal, it still holds a treasured place in the hearts and memories of its owners. There's something in us that likes to discover and hold on

to treasures, whether we find them in our attics, basements, at yard sales or among long forgotten personal or family belongings.

In the Gospel, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a treasure buried in a field — one that a person finds and hides again. Out of joy he goes and sells all he has to buy the field. The kingdom of heaven, says Jesus, is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When the merchant finds one pearl of great

price, he sells everything he has in order to buy that one treasure.

Ponder

As we ponder his words we might ask, what is the treasure that the Lord speaks of? Of all the gifts we are given, God's word invites us to see our faith in Jesus as the treasure of incomparable worth. Faith is the pearl of great price, for it transforms our lives as we grow in friendship with Jesus. Faith helps us

overcome the challenges of life and recognise the joys and graces we have received as disciples of the Lord. In Faith, we begin to live with gratitude as children who are loved unconditionally by God in his kingdom that is eternal. St Paul directs our minds to the incomparable treasure of faith when he reminds the Romans that, "we know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." Faith brings us into the circle of divine love, to entrust ourselves to God in confident hope.

The psalmist also invites our recognition of the precious gift of Faith as he sings to God a hymn of praise, "The law of your mouth is to me more precious than thousands of gold and silver pieces."

God's Word invites a

deeper question; what do I search for in life? What do I treasure the most? Is belonging to the Kingdom of God my pearl of great price? Is friendship with God the treasure I long for each day? Jesus invites us to recognise and to give thanks for the gift of faith today. And as we remain close to the treasure of God's word, we discover in faith the true meaning and purpose of life as we pray, "speak to me, Lord." Question: How do Jesus' words invite you to deeper faith today?

i Jem Sullivan holds a doctorate in religious education and is an associate professor of Catechetics in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose”

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Pondering gardens and forgiveness

I've often thought that if all the Twitter warriors, rough coots and autocrats would just get gardening the world would be a far better place. It's one of the best interests parents can pass on to their children, but it takes time and patience.

Gardeners' World (BBC Two, Friday) is always full of inspiration, and last Friday's episode from the Tatton Park Show was one of the best. One of the standout show gardens was one based on Psalm 27, created by garden designer Ollie Pike. He had engaged with themes of hope and protection, and I was only sorry the programme didn't spend more time on this one. Also impressive were the sensory gardens, especially important for people with disabilities. I learned lots about nocturnal pollinators – e.g. moths, whose pollinating exploits are more extensive than was previously realised. I had never thought much about begonias before but the wide variety of colourful specimens on display took my breath away. Apart from the beauty of creation on display, there was a strong sense of the importance of community – there were examples of back alleys, scenes of much anti-social behaviour, being converted into narrow gardens, bringing transformation to the neighbourhood. One community in Liverpool had a row of old houses being redeveloped. Two terraced houses were



beyond remediation and were turned into a marvellous winter garden under a high glass ceiling – all to offer the community a wonderful nature space in the city. There was even a chandelier! Right then, away with the keyboard and out with the shovel.

OK, I'm back. It's hard to garden in the dark and rain of a July evening.

Apart from gardening, forgiveness is something else that would improve our world immeasurably. Every night we learn on the news of the latest cruelties and tragedies, and sometimes forgiveness is the only cure, or can be the start of a cure. It can be fiercely

difficult despite our virtuous aspirations, but it can be even harder if people see it as just an emotional thing, thinking they can't be forgiving if they don't feel forgiving. For some people moving on into the future is hugely challenging, and sometimes forgiveness is a key component. This was the theme of **I Forgive** (EWTN, Wednesday), a new series reflecting on the theme but more importantly telling personal stories. Last week it was the turn of Jennifer Hubbard whose daughter Catherine was killed in the notorious Sandy Hook school shooting in Connecticut USA. She had a vibrant family life

and was developing her relationship with God when the tragedy struck. She went through all the expected emotions including anger with God – when she expressed her feelings to God one night at a traffic light she felt the relationship entered a more authentic phase.

The show is presented by Immaculée Ilibagiza, herself a survivor of the Rwanda genocide, and so, ideally placed to understand what Jennifer went through. She gave some insights into her experiences, but I would like to have heard her in conversation with Jennifer – the latter's contributions were just to camera,

PICK OF THE WEEK

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC One Sunday July 30, 1.15pm

Claire McCollum visits the Corrymeela Community, the North's oldest peace and reconciliation organisation.

WORLD YOUTH DAY: PORTUGAL

EWTN Tuesday August 1, 6pm

Preview show starting coverage of World Youth Day from Lisbon, Portugal.

TROID AR SON NA SÍOCHÁNA

TG4 Wednesday August 2, 9.30pm

The story of the Irish Defence Forces' first mission overseas, from 1960 to 1964, to the newly-independent, war-ravaged Democratic Republic of the Congo.

and accompanied irritatingly by bland generic background music. Some broader and useful reflections were provided by psychologist Timothy Locke and Fr Thomas Berry who wrote the book *Choosing Forgiveness*.

Calling positivity out of tragedy is so important and impressive. Over a year ago Poland was overwhelmed but incredibly generous in receiving two and a half million refugees from Ukraine in the early days of the war. The **Six-One News** (RTÉ One, Friday) had a report from a border area by Paul Cunningham about how things are today, preceded by depressing scenes of grain stores on fire after Russian missile attacks. Some refugees are still fleeing the war, but some are returning, despite their country still

being a war zone. One young woman spoke of wanting to get back to her wider family, but especially to reunite herself and her children with her husband, grandmother and dogs! An older woman wanted to return to where she had many family members in the cemetery. The Church in Poland has worked with the refugees, providing for shelter and other needs through a Pastoral Family Care Centre. A youthful and enthusiastic Fr Merek Machala spoke of efforts to get the refugees thinking of and planning for the post-war future.

At the moment that seems a long way off and initiatives to bring about peace seem stalled or non-existent.



Pat O'Kelly

Music

Summer thrills at the concert hall

Following the conclusion of its 'subscription concerts' at the end of May, the National Symphony Orchestra continued to be engaged in a number of Tuesday lunchtime and Friday evening programmes at the National Concert Hall. These have also come to an end as the orchestral members have embarked on their holidays. For most of August these NSO slots will be filled by the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

Lasting about an hour, the lunchtime concerts can accommodate a number of short works, which might be misplaced among longer and, possibly more 'profound', pieces.

The lunchtime events fulfil a positive purpose. Occasionally they do branch out to

offer a 'stand alone' occasion, as will be the case on Tuesday August 15 when there will be just one work – Ulsterman Neil Martin's *Sweeney* – filling the bill. With its English and Irish texts taken from Seamus Heaney's *Sweeney Astray*, the RTÉCO will be conducted by David Brophy with soloists Iarla Ó Lionaird, vocals and Ciarán Hinds, narrator.

The following Tuesday – August 22 – will find Gavin Maloney conducting harpist Anne-Marie O'Farrell as soloist in her own *In Light Anew*. Commissioned by RTÉ Lyric fm, the piece, a concerto in all but name, had its first performance in July 2022 at the triennial World Harp Congress in Cardiff.



Harpist Anne-Marie O'Farrell

Composer/harpist Anne-Marie O'Farrell has a long list of commissions to her credit and was for three years composer-in-residence at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick.

Dr O'Farrell holds a PhD in composition from Queen's University where she studied under Prof. Piers Hellawell and has a first class honours MA in composition from Maynooth. Anne-Marie O'Farrell lectures in composition at TU Dublin Conservatoire with her music featured on examination and composition syllabi around the world.

Looking a little further on, the lunchtime concert on Tuesday August 29 has three Russian composers – Lyadov, Glazunov and Stravinsky –

surrounding two works by France's Camille Saint-Saëns. As neither French piece rarely makes it into our concert programmes nowadays, this inclusion by stalwart conductor Robert Houlihan and brilliant young pianist Rowel Friers is most welcome.

Born in Paris in 1835, Saint-Saëns died in Algiers on December 16 1921 following a heart attack. His body was returned to France and following a state funeral at the Madeleine, where he had been organist for many years, he was buried in the cemetery at Montparnasse.

At school Saint-Saëns showed a keen interest in French literature, Latin and Greek, divinity and math-

ematics. He entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1848 where he was encouraged to study the organ because a career as church organist was seen to offer more opportunities than that of solo pianist.

Following a short period as organist in Saint-Merri in Paris, Saint-Saëns was appointed to the high profile Madeleine in 1858. Liszt, who heard him playing there, declared him to be 'the greatest organist in the world'.

The NCH programme on August 29 includes his fantasy *Africa* that has elements of North African music running through it while his *Valse-Caprice*, for piano and strings, was a wedding present to one of his friends.

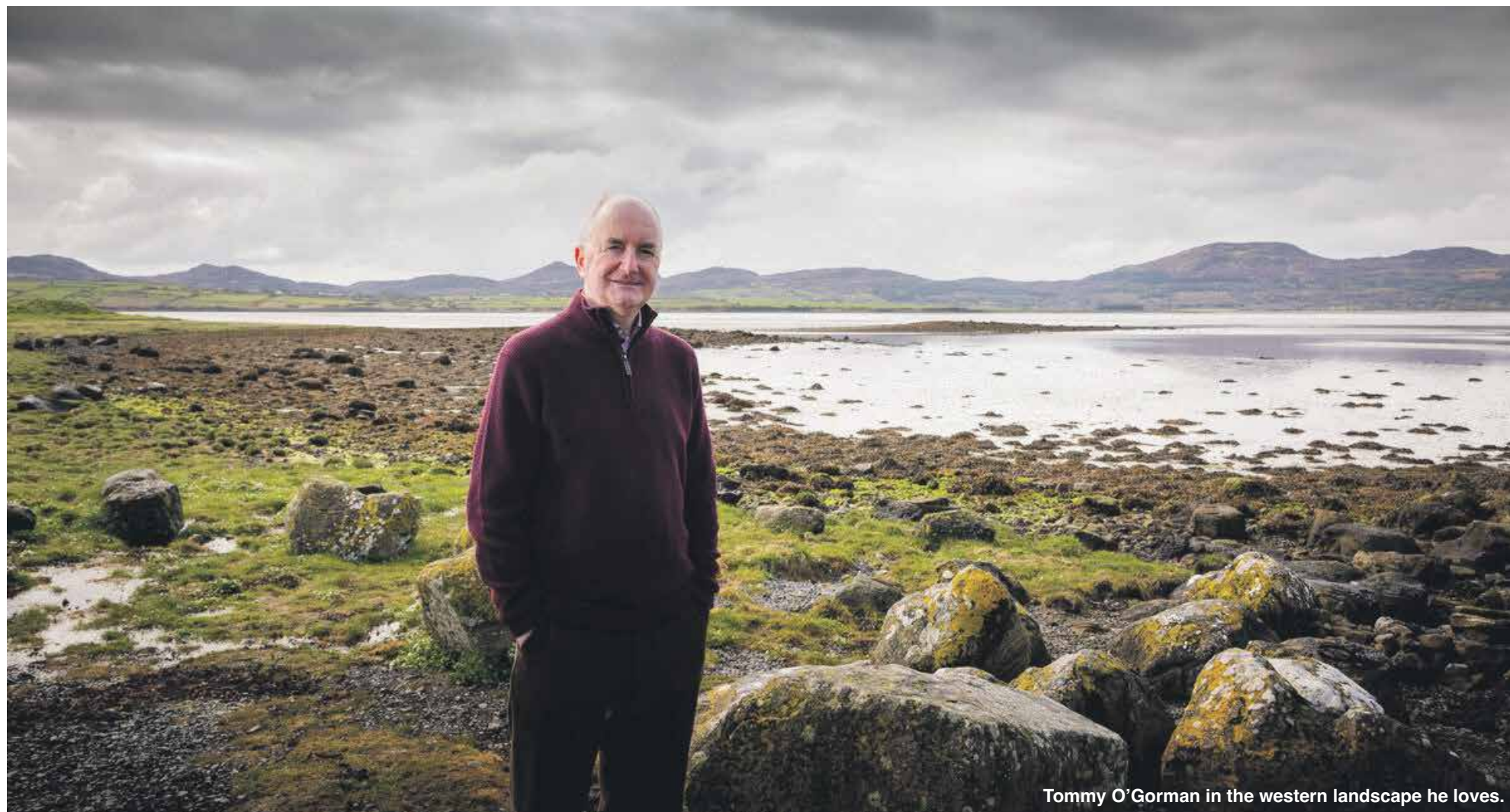


BookReviews

Peter Costello



His mild Connacht voice reported on raucous Ulster



Tommy O'Gorman in the western landscape he loves.

Never Better: My Life in Our Times, by Tommie Gorman (Allen & Unwin/ Atlantic Books, €28.00/£20.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This fascinating memoir by Tommie Gorman provides a most informative account of the civil and political events in Ireland – North and South – during his time as a journalist and broadcaster.

It follows the course of a very varied life. Tommie was born at Hazelwood, near Sligo, in April 1956. He received his early education at the Convent and Marist Primary Schools and Summerhill College. In 1975-77 he attended the Rathmines School of Journalism. Towards the end of the course, he visited John Healy, who resided nearby in Terenure.

Healy was a legend in Irish journalism. At that time with his long-time friend,

Jim Maguire, he was planning to launch a new weekly provincial newspaper with the title: *Western Journal*. At the interview Healy told Tommie there would be a place for him in the new enterprise.

Appointed

In due course Tommie was appointed as the *Western Journal's* Sligo correspondent. Two years later he became the editor, and he recalls the herculean efforts the 30 strong staff had to make to keep the paper financially viable.

Tommie joined RTÉ in 1980 as its North West correspondent. Subsequently he was the station's Europe editor in 1989-2001 and its Northern editor in 2001-2021.

As RTÉ's north west correspondent his beat included Derry City and its hinterland. There he witnessed at first hand the atrocities, killings, mayhem and riots of the so mildly called 'Troubles', the

conflict between the Crown forces and the Provisional IRA.

“He adds back stories which make intelligible the hard-line attitudes of both Nationalist and Unionist leaders”

In happier, or at least less sad times, he reported on the 1994 IRA ceasefire, the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and the 2007 decision by the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin to enter a power-sharing government. In his final years he covered the torturous and never-ending efforts being made to ensure that the Good Friday Agreement produced an administration which would be acceptable to and benefit both the Unionist and Nationalist communities.

Tommie was tenacious in seeking out and interviewing persons who were significant in the public discourse and events of his time as a journal-

ist. He recalls some of those important interviews; he does so in positive terms and without a hint of the cynicism one associates with some journalists.

He acknowledges that, while Gerry Adams's denial of his past membership of the IRA was a fiction, if Adams varied from his stated position, he was likely to be arrested and prosecuted. He found Martin McGuinness to be fair-minded, helpful and personable.

Good Friday

Tommie highlights the contribution of David Trimble to the achievement of the Good Friday Agreement and is equally commendable in his comments on Peter Robinson's efforts to see it implemented. In each instance he adds back stories which make intelligible the hard-line attitudes of both Nationalist and Unionist leaders.

For instance, in the case of Arlene Foster, her father barely survived an assassination attempt by the IRA, and

the school bus (note school bus) in which she was travelling to school was blown-up by an IRA bomb. However, few readers will agree with his non-judgemental treatment of the Rev. Ian Paisley.

“Tommie's memoir is a wonderful overview of his life and times and exudes his natural optimism and firm belief in the goodness of humanity”

Like most Irish people, Tommie is a keen follower of sport. His predilection is for soccer. This is owing to the fact that a member of staff, Fr Michael Devine, introduced the game to Summerhill College.

Tommie's favourite team is his home-town Sligo Rovers and he writes lovingly about their wins and defeats.

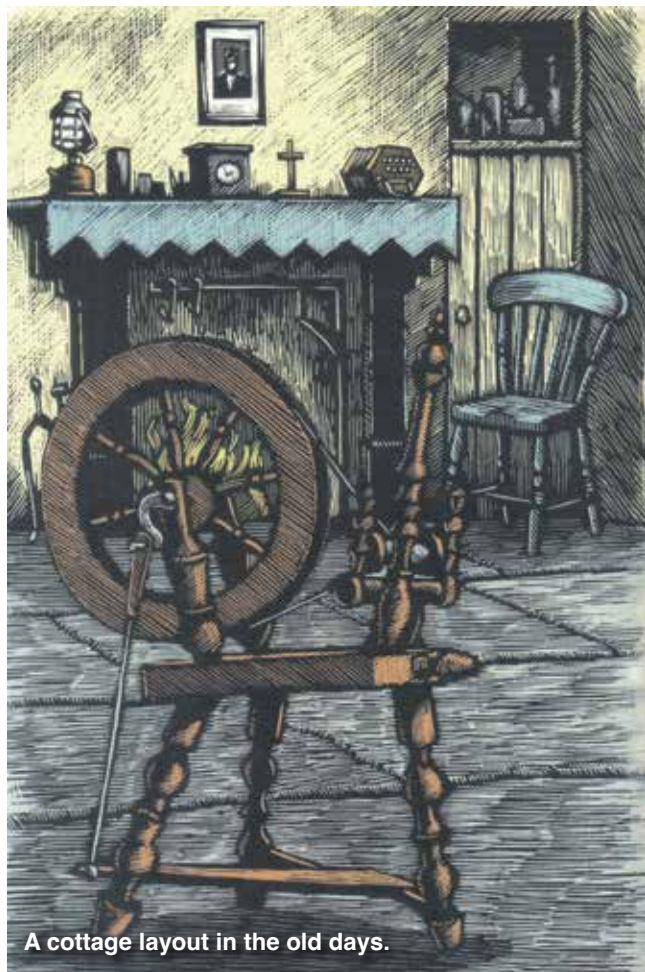
He made his own the story of the débâcle surrounding the Republic of Ireland team's participation in the 2002 World Cup.

At the age of 37 Tommie discovered he had a rare form of cancer, neuroendocrine tumours (NETs). He describes in considerable detail the extensive treatment he has had to cope with it. Proactive as ever, with others he set up a support group to assist the 3,000 other Irish people who are struggling with that rare medical condition. He himself still requires a monthly injection. His work to educate us all in this area has been tremendous.

Tommie's memoir is a wonderful overview of his life and times and exudes his natural optimism and firm belief in the goodness of humanity. His book, and life, is a reminder in these days of RTÉ bashing just how much the nation owes RTÉ, especially those who work in news and current affairs.

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.

What our grandparents knew can inform our modern outlook



A cottage layout in the old days.

An Irish Folklore Treasury,
by John Creedon
(Gill, €24.99/ £18.99)

Peter Costello

A little while ago, prowling in one of the few remaining second-hand book shops in Dublin, I picked up by chance a little pamphlet which I had long known about, but had never seen.

Called simply *Irish Folklore and Tradition* in a plain grey wrapper, it was issued in March 1938 by the Department of Education, in a small edition (1,000 copies printed by Cahill's, according to the colophon at the end of the text).

It was intended for the principals of Ireland's national schools and was to be used to prime them and their older students to take part in a folklore survey for the Irish Folklore Commission. (In effect it is a micro version of Seán Ó Súilleabháin's landmark publication *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* issued in 1942.)

The students were requested to ask their older folk at home, basically their grandparents, but also aunts and uncles, what they could remember locally about specific topics of folklore and folklore.

These were written out

in school copybooks like an extra special school essay. The copies ended up in an archive where they have long been consultable. Now they are all on line, and they make for some of the most interesting reading we have about our local parishes.

John Creedon, so well known as a popular broadcaster, has selected from these records an array of tales and topics from the old days. Artist Brian Gallagher has provided a set of lovely chapter openings which add greatly to the attraction to the book.

Rigour

The Folklore Commission often seemed only to be interested in collecting folktales in Gaelic, but having been trained in Sweden where these things of the past were treated with true scientific rigour, their handful of workers were also interested in the details of daily life, in houses, chairs, beds, carts, gates, local legends, everything in fact pertaining with how people lived in the countryside.

John Creedon's new book is a selection of what is in the collection for the entertainment of a now largely urbanised readership. To learn more about Irish folklife as a whole the very best books to read are those of E. Estyn Evans of Queens University,

such as *Irish Heritage* and *The Mourne Country*, true classics of Irish literature, some of the most important books of our recent culture.

John Creedon's purpose is to present a selection of the material, arranging them by a different set of topics from those in the booklet. He frames each section with an introduction which sets it up for the present day readers, most of whom will be quite unconnected with the life being described in the extracts that follow.

They certainly make fascinating reading, when one considers the age of the reporters. But there is also something deeply moving in these young voices of nearly a century ago, some of whom may be from your parish.

In the booklet, about a seventh of the topics concerned religion. Creedon devotes only one of his chapters to religion, proportionally less than the booklet. But the topics are well covered. "While there is no shortage of humour and wild claims amongst the entries, the collection underlines the deep commitment of the Irish to matters of faith."

This, we are told, is about how "the Irish lived long ago". But in reality this is not so long ago at all; it is certainly within the framework of five generation blocks in which human

memory seems to move.

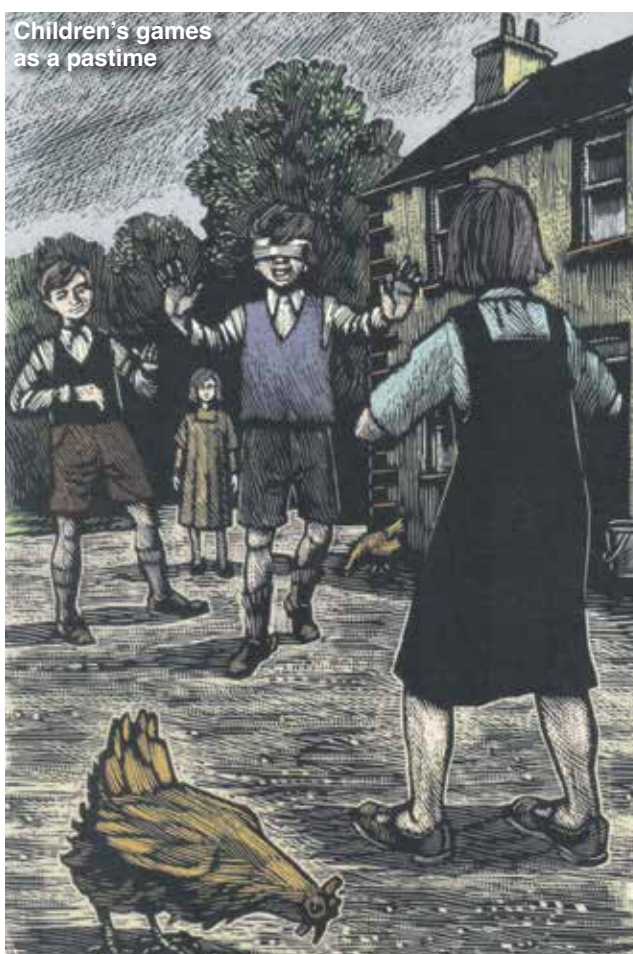
Prof. Evans in his work is said to have "focused on the underlying continuities of history as opposed to the common historical focus on institutional change". He saw this continuity as going back beyond the Iron age of the Celts to the Bronze and Neolithic ages.

Now that was the life of Ireland long ago. The DNA of the nation reveals it, in all its complexity. But what our folklore reveals today is the last fragments of that Irish culture of prehistoric times when farmers first established themselves on the land that became Ireland, the stock from which some 80% of the present population are descended.

Flavour

A flavour of this can be found in Creedon's pages, but that continuity deserves more attention to make the readers of today aware that they too belong, not so much to the old days of their great-grandparents, but to something far more ancient, indeed to 'the working classes' in the days of the Celtic nobility, whether they like to accept it or not.

❶ *The 'Schools Collection', archived in UCD, can now be accessed parish by parish on the site of Dúchas at www.duchas.ie.*



Children's games as a pastime

A new camino: 'The Ignatius way'

Brothers in Arms: Camino Ignaciano,
by Brendan McManus SJ with James Fullam
(Messenger Publications, €12.99/ £11.50)

Peter Costello

Every summer sees the publication of numbers of books about the Camino, taken of course, to mean the 'The Way of St James'.

These days this has to some extent ceased to be religious, as for many it does not now end at the Shrine of St James in the Cathedral at Compostela, but in the sea at Cabo Finisterre, at 'the earth's end' so to speak. For some this seems a more appropriate end, than standing on the cold stone of a church. The books are inevitably a mixed lot, and many have no real heart to them.

But this book, to counter all that, is not about that Camino at all, but a new one created around that walk Ignatius made in 1522 from Loyola to Manresa, that had such important consequences.

I think that it will provide those many readers who have failed to enjoy recent books about the road to Compostela with something very different, something powerful, very moving and very instructive. It reveals a way of going that can be applied to other pilgrimages.

This small and compact book recounts in surprising detail a walk that Brendan McManus made with his friend James Fullam. They set off from Logroña and end a hundred pages later at Manresa.

It was not an easy journey, indeed it had (like so many things in life) difficulty even getting started, and the difficulties continued to the end,



Brendan McManus and James Fullam on the road to Manresa.

but were resolved, as is not always the case in life.

But essentially what makes this book so very different is the deployment of Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*, to reflect upon, scrutinise and benefit from every step they do manage to take.

It is this use of the *Exercises* that makes this a real spiritual experience in the way that so many books about the Way of St James do not. At the same time it overflows with a deep sense of humanity.

The chapters that deal with the walk end with one called appropriately 'A meeting of hearts and minds'. Making it to Manresa is a finale, not the real end. For in fact there is a sense in which such a journey, such a careful examination of conscience, such soul searching, never ends.

If one intends to take to this new Camino this is the book to read to prepare one. But remember because your life has been very different from Brendan McManus's or James Fullam's, your harvest at journey's end will be very different too.

Anthony Redmond, an amendment

In the issue dated July 20, the review of *The Philosophers' Daughters*, edited by Peter Vardy (Darton, Longman & Todd, £12.99/€15.50) was misattributed due to an error. It should have carried the name of our long-time reviewer Anthony Redmond, to whom apologies are due for any embarrassment caused.

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The Irish Catholic

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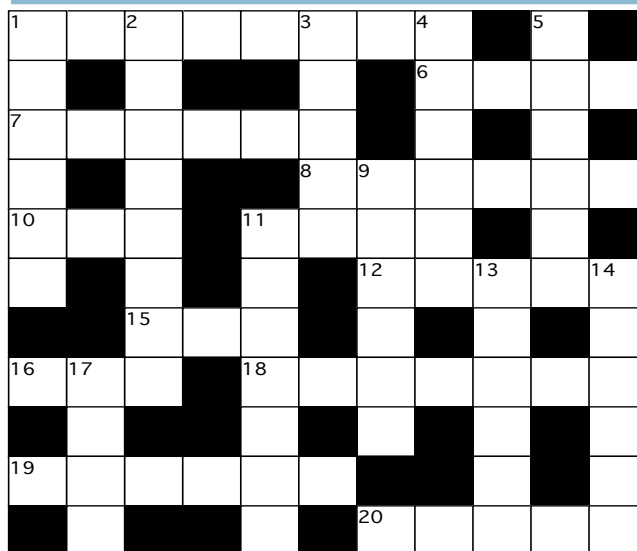
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Crossword Junior

Gordius 493



Across

- 1 There are blue signs on this huge road where cars may travel at speed (8)
- 6 You see with these (4)
- 7 City road (6)
- 8 There is a sweet called a chocolate _____ (6)
- 10 Flying saucer (1,1,1)
- 11 Group of three musicians (4)
- 12 Two children born together (5)
- 15 A half-dozen (3)
- 16 You put a golf ball on this before hitting your first shot (3)
- 18 Bugle (7)
- 19 Putting a question (6)
- 20 The language of Ancient Rome (5)

Down

- 1 Here you might see a lot of old and historic things (6)
- 2 This pet has a thick 'shell' (8)
- 3 It falls from the sky as rain (5)
- 4 The colour of custard (6)
- 5 Pattern (6)
- 9 Oranges and lemons are type of _____ fruit (6)
- 11 Sending written messages by phone (7)
- 13 Bring something into the country (6)
- 14 Planet noted for its rings (6)
- 17 Not difficult (4)

SOLUTIONS, JULY 20

GORDIUS NO. 620

Across - 1 Now and then 6 Wind 10 Motel 11 All Things Bright and Beautiful 12 Grandee 15 Largo 17 Mali 18 Heap 19 Cabin 21 Utilise 23 Relit 24 Talc 25 Rust 26 Title 28 En route 34 Elfin 35 Eggs 36 Metropolis

Down - 1 Numb 2 Waterfall 3 Nylon 4 Trade 5 Eels 7 Inner 8 Disconnect 9 Chalice 13 Duet 14 Emulate 16 Charitable 21 Utrecht 22 Spur 27 Thing 29 Nadir 30 One up 31 Vase 32 Onus

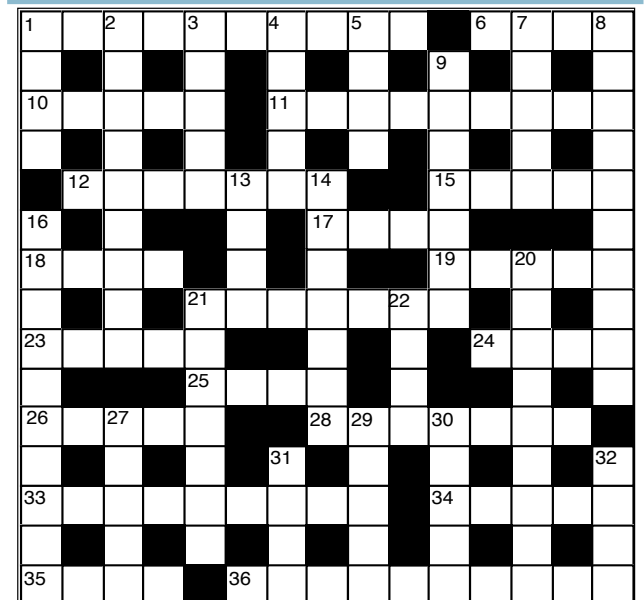
CHILDREN'S No. 492

Across - 1 Polar bear 6 Bigger 8 Skating 10 Lands 12 Eerie 14 Bann 18 Teacher 19 Bambi 20 Lid 21 Leitrim

Down - 1 Pebble 2 Lagan 3 Bark 4 Aunt 5 Pink 7 Essential 9 Animal 11 Den 13 Scream 15 Aimed 16 Cheer 17 Abel

Crossword

Gordius 621



Across

- 1 Speed up (10)
- 6 Priest of Islam (4)
- 10 & 34a He played Rhett Butler in "Gone With The Wind" (5,5)
- 11 Hard (9)
- 12 Pens ran around to find a tool (7)
- 15 Midday meal (5)
- 17 Exaggerated publicity (4)
- 18 Large black bird or a castle in chess (4)
- 19 Shinbone (5)
- 21 Small, rounded stones (7)
- 23 Eye-protector (5)
- 24 Bazaar (4)
- 25 Above or finished (4)
- 26 The time of darkness (5)
- 28 Rich mass of precious ore (7)
- 33 Lack of guilt (9)
- 34 See 10 across
- 35 Requirement (4)
- 36 Senior member of the Jewish community (5,5)

Down

- 1 Curved structure (4)
- 2 The winners of the tournament (9)
- 3 Compare (5)
- 4 Line of high ground or of high pressure (5)
- 5 Petty quarrel (4)
- 7 Grieve, lament (5)
- 8 The forerunner of computer dating services! (10)
- 9 Edible offal of a fowl (7)
- 13 The main part of a church or cathedral (4)
- 14 Popular tart filling (7)
- 16 They say it's better than a cure (10)
- 20 The Devil (9)
- 21 Safeguard (7)
- 22 Adam and Eve's garden paradise (4)
- 27 Aladdin's powerful helper (5)
- 29 Overweight (5)
- 30 Wrath (5)
- 31 Tau cross from Egypt (4)
- 32 Traditional gendarme's hat (4)

Sudoku Corner

369

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 368

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

Last week's Hard 368

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

Sunday obligation: Do I have to go to Mass?

In this 'Notebook' section of last week's *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Bernard Cotter raised some very important points about the need to renew the Sacrament of Baptism in our parishes [*The Irish Catholic* – July 27, 2023]. He made a few suggestions of how this might happen and invited us to share any ideas we might have to begin the conversation.

Fr Bernard rightly picked up on the truth that for too long we have been facilitating a false impression that the celebration of Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation are just occasions or moments that come and go rather than rites that initiate a believer into a community and a committed way of life. The bitter fruit of this skewed understanding that we have seen now for decades, is a massive retention problem we have in the Church. The vast majority of young people and families coming through our parish sacramental programmes don't stay with us after these rites have been celebrated. This leads to serious knock-on effects, not least the declining numbers of vocations to marriage, priesthood and religious life.



A question struck me while reflecting on this problem. When it comes to the sacraments, have we collectively bought into the spirit of the age that leaves it up to the feelings and whims of the individual whether we participate or not? Recently, I was with a group of people as we debated whether the 'Sunday obligation' was a good thing or a bad thing.

Some opined that in the age of choice and freedom and since Covid, re-imposing the Sunday obligation is counter-productive and comes across as authoritarian. Others felt strongly that priests and bishops should make it clear to people that Sunday Mass is not optional but obligatory.

But perhaps the real issue is the reason we offer why Sunday Mass is indeed obligatory. Any sense that the Sunday obligation is coming from the hierarchy as a way of pulling people back into line will certainly not be received well. The mature approach is to see such a law as protecting what is most valuable and that which we want to pass on to future generations. So, when young Catholics ask us the common question: "Do I have to go to Mass?" we should reply

with a resounding "Yes!" not because we demand it but because it points to the great desire of Christ at the Last Supper that we gather each week and "Do this in memory of me". We are all welcome, not on our terms but on God's.

The renewal of Baptism is a great starting point to address the great retention problem we have in the Church in Ireland today. However, any impression we give that our Faith commitment is one commitment among many or that the celebration of the sacraments are just occasions or optional extras, will only lead to further dwindling congregations and communities. We need to place a higher value on what we have to offer to be motivated to share the gift that we have received.

Stained glass windows and the confessional

In last Sunday's Gospel, Jesus gave us the parable of the weeds and wheat, holding up a mirror to us of our human condition – on one hand graced and holy and on the other hand broken and sinful. In every Church, the two symbols that represent both the weeds and wheat in human nature are to be seen. The stained glass windows depict Christ, the saints and our call to holiness; the confessional is a visible reminder of our brokenness, wounds and sins. But it is also the place of forgiveness and healing where Christ leads us closer to where we belong in the company of the saints, full of God's light and grace.

● As many commentators rightly point out, we can only understand Pope Francis in the light of his Jesuit formation. For Francis, the synodal pathway has a destiny or end point which is full communion with each other and with the Holy Trinity. In the words of St Ignatius of Loyola whose feast we celebrate next Monday July 31: "We must always remind ourselves that we are pilgrims until we arrive at our heavenly homeland, and we must not let our affections delay us in the roadside inns and lands through which we pass, otherwise we will forget our destination and lose interest in our final goal."



Impoverished Catholic community in D.R. Congo badly needs our help to build a solid and dignified chapel



Fr Cesar Balayulu, a Consolata priest working on the outskirts of Kinshasa, has told us about his Catholic faithful at serie Dix, about ten miles from his parish church. "The people live in small houses often made from metal sheets or straw. Because of their poverty our people cannot help us financially with the cost of building the chapel dedicated to Our Lady Consolata which we wish to construct. At present Mass is offered under a large metal sheet on poles, this becoming impossible in bad weather.

"The new chapel, when completed, will help our Christians to participate with dignity in the Holy Eucharist, no longer having to carry chairs from their homes every Sunday. It will enable them to focus more on prayer and not to be distracted by noise from outside. It will promote the social life of the Christian community. We turn to you, Little Way, with great confidence that you will support us with your aid."

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Fr Eamonn Gowling is a Redemptorist priest working in a favela/shanty town in the Brazilian city of Fortaleza. He reports of the great poverty there and how more than 200 children benefit from a feeding programme he has started which provides a nutritious meal each day. For many of the children it is the only regular meal they receive. Fr Eamonn is one of the many missionaries The Little Way Association supports with funds to feed hungry children.

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