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Vatican green light sought for GAA-Church land deal

Clonliffe site may attract large bids

Chai Brady

A Dublin land sale is on the brink of finalisation as the GAA and the Archdiocese of Dublin await Vatican approval for the lucrative deal.

The sale of more than 19 acres of land at Clonliffe College, Drumcondra, the site of Holy Cross Seminary, is at a critical stage with sources from both parties indicating the Holy See has not yet given the green light.

Developers

It is understood there have been discussions with developers and other interested parties but the GAA have not recruited or engaged anyone pending a final agreement.

Speaking at a conference regarding financial stewardship last month Declan McSweeney, General Manager and Financial Administrator of the Archdiocese of Dublin said their engagement with the GAA will bring significant urban renewal for the local community.

It is believed the site has potential to accom-

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Using only flour and water, Redemptoristine nun Sr Maura Walsh makes altar breads in the Monastery of St Alphonsus, Dublin. With the addition of two new members to the community over the last year, there is a growing interest in the carrying on of this tradition.

Jesuit schools set for cash windfall

Chai Brady and Colm Fitzpatrick

Jesuit schools have welcomed a commitment to use proceeds from a multi-million euro land sale to help poor children and ensure the "survival" of the order's mission.

With a price tag of €55m on the Jesuits' Milltown Park campus in Dublin, school ethos and bursaries were highlighted as being "critical" for future investment.

"As Jesuit numbers continue to decline in the Irish Province the society is very clear that the survival of Jesuit education will depend on lay staff taking ownership of its educational mission," said Brian Flannery, Education Delegate of the order.

"Critical to this will be their understanding and support for the principles of Jesuit education and its particular way of proceeding."

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Warm welcome for diocesan Alpha plan

Susan Gately

A call by the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore to roll out Alpha courses across his diocese has been warmly welcomed by Alpha's Teresa Cronin. "To have the Church from the top behind it has been an answer to prayer," she told *The Irish Catholic*. "Alpha is part of a bigger vision of renewal, moving parishes from maintenance to mission."

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan this week launched 'Go Make Disciples (2019 – 2024)', outlining a five-year diocesan



Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan launches the plan accompanied by Massgoers at the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Waterford.

plan calling for a missionary Church with its members as missionary disciples.

Key objectives of the plan include: becoming an evangelising Church, creating

faith communities, improving liturgies and remodelling leadership. Evangelisation is seen as key to the transformation of culture, and to this end, in a first, the bishop

suggested Alpha for parishes "to rekindle faith in Jesus Christ" and "rediscover what it means to be a disciple".

Several Alpha courses have already run in the diocese. "It changes people in the parish," said Ms Cronin, Alpha Ireland's Southern Coordinator. "It's not instant change, it's a process." Typically around 20 people do the 10-week course.

"It sets people on fire. You see it. Even though some are retired, they are like teenagers full of joy and energy."

Twenty-seven Catholic parishes ran Alpha for adults courses last year.

Older priests want pastoral work not paperwork – bishop

Greg Daly

Elderly priests are seeking to focus on pastoral work in the face of growing administrative burdens, Ossory's Bishop Dermot Farrell has said.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* after announcing this year's diocesan changes, Bishop Farrell said he had tried to support elderly priests.

"This year the men wanted to be relieved on the administrative side of being a parish priest, but they were very happy to continue in the role of, effectively, being a curate," he said. "In other words, whatever pastoral things they could do like celebrating Mass or looking after the sick or whatever, they were quite happy to do that."

Some priests wanted to continue their sacramental and pastoral ministry without also being burdened by administra-

tive work, Dr Farrell explained.

"That's becoming more onerous in terms of stuff that's coming down the line, particularly for older men who are finding it difficult for example with GDPR and that sort of area," he said, adding that increased accountability necessitated by recent charity legislation is good but sometimes challenging to deal with.

Problem

Part of the problem, he said, is that the diocese has an infrastructure fit for a different time.

"In some senses the issue is not the shortage of priests but is really the overabundance of infrastructure. Do we need four parishes and 10 churches in Kilkenny City? Probably not," he said.

"We did at one stage," he continued, "and we'd love to think that they're all full, but 10 churches and 25,000 people

– that's an overabundance of infrastructure, so what I'm trying to do and what I think most bishops are trying to do is create some new structures to support a sustainable ministry of both priests and people."

With a committee commissioned this weekend to promote Eucharistic Adoration across the diocese, Dr Farrell said prayer and adoration will be key for the diocese going forward.

"Prayer is the heart of every parish," he said, adding, "I'm trying to put adoration at the heart of parish community, encouraging parishes to encourage their parishioners to put it sometimes on a more formal basis."

Stressing the importance of prayer for helping the Eucharist to bear fruit, he said: "If you don't have prayer you can't sustain faith even in individuals. That's what sustains our relationship with the Lord."

Selling homemade solar power back to grid a 'positive step'

Chai Brady

Plans to allow homeowners with solar panels to sell excess electricity back to the grid with a potential to earn €400 a year have been dubbed a "positive step".

Trócaire's Niamh Garvey, who is head of policy and advocacy, welcomed the proposal which is going to cabinet this month.

"The announcement around solar panels and renewable energy is one element that has come out of a Joint Oireachtas Committee on climate action which has produced a report that has over 41 recommendations in it," she said.

"One of these is to allow communities to sell their micro-generated solar and other renewables back to the grid, she added, saying that it's a "very positive step and part of a broader package".

The 'feed-in tariff' would be one of the initiatives used to reach Ireland's 2030 target of producing 70% of electricity from sustainable sources. It is believed the plans could encourage a significant uptake in photovoltaic roof panels: there are currently Government grants up to €2,800 to install them.



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Our Father changes 'fake news'

Greg Daly

Claims that Pope Francis has changed the Lord's Prayer are overblown, a leading Irish ecumenist has said.

"I think there's an element of fake news surrounding the story of the Our Father in the Italian Missal," Fr Martin Browne told *The Irish Catholic*. "You'd think from some of the headlines that Pope Francis had wielded his full papal powers to order that the last line of the prayer be changed."

The reality, the Benedictine monk said, is far more ordinary, arising as part of the translation of the latest version of the Missal into Italian.

"It's not that the Pope arbitrarily

ordered the prayer to be edited. The Holy See simply confirmed what the Italian bishops had produced," he said, with the general assembly of Italy's bishops having decided last November to translate the penultimate line of Our Father as '*non abbandonarci alla tentazione*' – 'do not abandon us to temptation'.

Decision

The Italian decision to change the translation of the line conventionally rendered in English as "lead us not into temptation" follows similar decisions by the Spanish-, Portuguese- and French-speaking bishops.

"I see the point of what they have

done," continued Fr Browne, who is a member of an international group tasked with preparing texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. "God isn't a trickster who causes us to sin, and so translating the words so that the prayer doesn't give that impression makes sense."

Although Bishop Francis Duffy of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, who chairs the Irish bishops' Council for Liturgy, has said the English-language bishops will "give close attention to the reported change to the Lord's Prayer", Fr Browne believes Ireland's bishops should steer clear of following the Italian example.

"The Our Father has a life outside

the Mass that no other liturgical text does," he said. "When the Missal was first translated into English, the translators rightly decided not to try to force new words on worshippers because the older words were in the marrow of their bones."

Expressing concerns about damage to a prayer-language shared with other English-speaking Christians, Fr Browne said the Lord's Prayer is the one thing almost all Christians can say together. "I think it would be a disaster if English-speaking Catholics changed the text of this foundational prayer, thus erecting a barrier against praying together with our brothers and sisters of other traditions," he said.

Don't throw out Christ with clerical bathwater, honoured priest urges

Susan Gately

Popular Passionist priest Fr Brian D'Arcy has been awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to community relations. "I'm amazed," he told *The Irish Catholic*, "in many ways it gives you an opportunity to encourage community building and when you get that opportunity – take it in both hands."

Reaction to the OBE has been overwhelmingly positive, he said, describing as recognition for "the cross-community aspect of it – breaking down borders and work which I've been doing naturally for years, building bridges rather than breaking down bridges".

He does this through his weekly *Sunday World* column, which has run for 44 years, and his broadcasts on BBC Radio 2 and Radio Ulster. "As a human being I'd be open to decent conversation with anybody," he said, adding that he hopes that people who turn their back on the institutional Church will somehow hold on to their Faith.

"I think that's what has happened," he said. "People are rejecting the institution or the evil of an institution and also in the process, rejecting not only their Faith but the Sacraments, the availability of God in their lives – rejecting more than they have to."

"Think about what you are rejecting," he advised.



Famous Hollywood actor Chris Pratt has announced that he and his wife feel "blessed" after being wed before God and friends. The star, who married Katherine Schwarzenegger over the weekend and who has frequently spoken about his Faith, wrote on Instagram: "Yesterday was the best day of our lives! We became husband and wife in front of God, our families and those we love. It was intimate, moving and emotional. We feel so blessed to begin this new chapter of our lives," Pratt shared.

WMOF18 cost less than expected – Secretary General

Colm Fitzpatrick

Despite various reports last year that Dublin's World Meeting of Families would cost up to €40 million, the festival's Secretary General has confirmed that "it came in under budget".

Fr Timothy Bartlett told this newspaper that WMOF cost under its €20 million budget and that the final figures of the event will be available to the public in due course.

Fr Bartlett also thanked parishioners across Ireland for their donations and help which made the gathering a success.

Backbone

"We're very happy that it came in under budget and for the enormous support that came from parishioners around the country. That was the backbone of the fundraising effort which in all the circumstances was very successful."

The Diocese of Ossory has previously reported that last year's WMOF cost an estimated €19.4m. It saw Pope Francis arrive for a historic two-day visit to the country in August.

JOE WALSH TOURS | PILGRIMAGES 2019



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Religious vocations 'creeping up'

Susan Gately

While numbers entering seminaries and religious life across Europe have been in decline over recent decades, there is a slow rise now with young people coming into religious life "more prepared, usually from a spiritual direction point of view", according to the Director of Vocations Ireland.

Returning from a meeting in Rome for people working in the vocations field across the continent, Margaret Cartwright told *The Irish Catholic* the Irish delegation, which included Derry's Bishop Donal McKeown, Fr Eric Cooney and Fr Willie Purcell, had been heartened to see a common struggle for vocations across Europe.

Addressing the congress, Pope Francis warned participants not to avoid the word 'vocation', noting how some communities had done this, thinking the word

would scare young people away. "But this is a strategy doomed to failure," he said. What we need are men and women "set afire by their encounter with God" and "capable of proclaiming in their lives the happiness born of their vocation".

Promotion

Ms Cartwright said the Pope had stressed that those involved in vocation promotion should not be proselytising or focusing on vocations for individual congregations but rather should create a culture of vocation. This approach is very much in tune with how Irish vocations organisations work, she said.

According to Ms Cartwright, entries to religious orders are "creeping up", citing how orders which have recently welcomed new entrants are the Carmelites, Poor Clares, Redemptoristines, Mercy Sisters, Presentation Sisters and Order of Friars Minor

and the male and female Dominicans. Ms Cartwright believes the witness of religious themselves, telling their own stories is vital.

Citing how just last weekend four women went to a taster day at the Dominican Contemplative Monastery in Drogheda, Sr Breda Carollan OP said religious orders need to be more proactive about helping people answer their vocational calls.

"I think there are possibilities but we're not out to grab them," she said.

Fr Purcell, National Diocesan Vocations Coordinator for the Bishops' Conference, added that 19 young men attended a 'Come and See' discernment weekend at Maynooth looking at diocesan priesthood last month. "My greatest hope is that young people are still enquiring, still discerning, still asking and still engaging with the whole understanding of vocation," he said.

Welcome, Fr Thompson



Bishop Emeritus Willie Walsh (right), Bro. Matthew Farrell OP (left) and other religious gather to celebrate the ordination by Bishop Fintan Monahan of Fr Malachy Thompson in Mount St Joseph's Abbey, Roscrea.

Jesuit schools set for cash windfall

» Continued from Page 1

He said that programmes of induction and formation will be "enhanced" and developed so lay staff can avail of it throughout their careers. "Some of the money from the sale of property in Milltown will provide a wonderful fillip in this regard."

The land sale relates to 10.5 acres of the 18-acre site in Milltown Park, Ranelagh. According to a statement from the order, due to a "steep decline" in vocations and the aging profile of Ireland's Jesuits, the upkeep of the site became "an increased financial burden".

Secondary schools have embraced the plans to support their bursary programmes, which aim to increase "socio-economic diversity and multiculturalism".

Martin Wallace, Assistant Principal of Clongowes Wood College in Kildare, said: "The Jesuit community has been very, very generous in supporting a bursary programme in the school and the intention is that some of the proceeds from the sale will go towards building an endowment fund to maintain the current bursary programme and in a sense, ensure its continuation into the future."

Students

Their bursary programme began in 2007, and now 10% of the college's students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. "We have 100% progression to third level among our bursary students which is fantastic, given the fact that very often they're coming from communities where

progression to third level is almost unheard of," he added.

A spokesperson for Gonzaga College said: "Core to that ethos is educating young people to be 'men and women for and with others'. Gonzaga has a longstanding collaborative relationship with habitat for humanity where the boys and teachers spend two weeks of their Easter holiday involved in the construction of homes and medical centres in the Middle East and Africa."

There are currently no Jesuits directly teaching, however there are still 12 engaged in six of the schools, with two of those being principals.

In addition funds will be assigned for the care of elderly Jesuits, overseas missions and social justice projects including social housing and homelessness.

Decision to jail two women in prostitution case criticised

Chai Brady

Laws against prostitution should be used to "tackle" sex buyers and 'pimps', a charity has said after a ruling saw two women jailed in Kildare.

Dedicated to supporting people in prostitution, Catholic-founded Ruhama has criticised a decision to jail two women for nine months for running a brothel.

A premises in Newbridge was raided in November last year following complaints by locals, which resulted in two Romanian nationals aged 25 and 20 being charged with keeping or running a brothel. Both were involved in prostitution and lived in the house, one of whom is expecting a

child with her partner.

Policy and Communications Manager, Amanda Keane said: "We absolutely do not want to see women in prostitution being targeted under the law at all. That conviction, we don't condone that whatsoever."

"We always advocate for resources to be targeted at everybody around the women in prostitution, the sex buyers, the organisers, the profiteers of organised prostitution. Those are the people that the law is there to target, not the women themselves, they shouldn't be punished under the law."

There were no sex-buyers found at the premises when it was raided and no significant money was found either.

GAA-Diocese Clonliffe deal

» Continued from Page 1

modate 1,200 apartments, while the conversion of buildings already on-site could provide more residential accommodation.

A document seen by the *Irish Times*, produced by agent Hooke and MacDonald for potential bidders describes the GAA as the vendor and says they will retain adjoining land to develop a hotel, sporting and recreational facilities. It is unclear how the archdiocese and the GAA will split profits from the sale.

According to the report, the property is expected to attract significant bids.

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Senator calls for investigation after improper burial

Staff Reporter

Independent Senator Rónán Mullen has criticised the circumstances around the burial of deceased asylum seeker, Sylva Takula, who died in 2018 and was buried by the State without ceremony last month, with no notice to friends and associates.

Senator Mullen said there should be an investigation to establish how such insensitive treatment occurred despite repeated requests from friends to be kept informed. He said: "This is yet another example of the many 'accidental cruelties' of the Direct Provision system. Nobody means to do harm

and everybody does their job, sort of, but things seem to happen to persons in direct provision that don't happen to other people because it's a system without a heart.

"In ordinary life, nobody is buried without a ceremony and some kind of notice to the public beforehand, because paying respect to our dead and expressing sympathy to their bereaved is one of the ordinary decencies and necessities of human existence."

Last month, Senator Mullen brought forward a motion in Seanad Éireann calling for earlier diagnosis of the mental health needs of asylum seekers.

Let's hear it for dad's day

Mother's Day is a very old tradition – linked both with 'Lady Day', being the Feast of the Annunciation, and 'Mothering Sunday', when apprentices had time off to return to their mother-village.

Father's Day is of more recent coinage, launched in America in 1910, by one Sonora Smart Dodd, wishing to honour her father, who brought up six children as a single parent.

Yes, it's been merchandised, as everything is now, with shops and internet outlets awash with suggestions for Father's Day's gifts. But despite the blatant



Mary Kenny

commercialisation, I reckon Sonora Smart Dodd – a Methodist stalwart of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union – did a good deed when she launched Father's Day in Arkansas that June day.

In our time, when men are often demonised with the accusation of "toxic masculinity", it's nice to recognise that so many men are good and conscientious fathers, loved and

honoured by their children all their lives.

My own father died 70 years ago, in 1949, and as it happens, he died on Father's Day, June 20. I was very young and scarcely remember him, and yet, my mother and my elder siblings kept his memory fresh, and spoke about him with such love and respect, that 70 years on, I still think of him. With the passage of time, thoughts about our parents even tend to increase.

“Some feminists are angry with men because they didn't have good fathers”

When I was growing up without a father, I certainly envied children with a dad. I still look at kids with their fathers in playgrounds and reflect that they are blessed to have a father who has time for them, cares and protects them.

I have also come to believe that some feminists are angry with men because they didn't have good fathers: their fathers were neglectful, or harsh, or absent, either physically or psychologically.

Father's Day is a universal reminder of all kinds of fatherhood – spiritual, biological, by adoption or fosterage – and it's a lovely opportunity to celebrate dads.

Language is power

Be aware that the new phrase to disparage anyone with pro-life views is now a 'forced birther' – as though they were some kind of tyrant from *The Handmaid's Tale* [below] coercing women to have sexual relations, conceive and give birth.

A person who is grateful they were born in unpropitious circumstances is now called a 'forced birther'. Someone who observes that the ultrasound scan is proof of life in the womb can be dubbed a 'forced birther'. Anyone with the most hesitant opinion about the ethics of abortion up to 40 weeks risks being described as a 'forced birther'.



It was actually an abortion counsellor who told me, during an interview, that "given different circumstances, money, the housing situation, a more supportive partner or family, a lot of women would want to continue with an unexpected pregnancy". But how do you express the complexities of that in a single catchphrase? Language is power.

The Chief's car a treat to see



Visiting Co Clare last week, I was treated to a viewing of Eamon De Valera's car, a 1947 Plymouth Dodge, which is encased in a transparent garage near the De Valera Library in Ennis.

It's a fabulous veteran motor, made by Chrysler, and first purchased for President Sean T O'Kelly. Dev then bought it in 1959 and often drove around in it for various functions, especially in his home constituency.

In 2011, Clare Councillor PJ Ryan restored the vehicle, with the technical assistance of David Browne, and a beautiful job they did, too.

Lord Mayor

The late Joe Briscoe told me that when his father, Robert Briscoe – twice Lord Mayor of Dublin, a Jewish Irishman who did so much good for Ireland when visiting America – was moving towards the end of his life, he lapsed into a comatose state, and was unresponsive to his family gathered around him.

Then they heard the sound of Dev's car – "ZH 1333" as Joe recalled it – as it came to a halt

outside the house. De Valera entered and came to the bedside. Robert Briscoe opened his eyes, smiled and said: "It's you, Chief."

He died soon afterwards.

Joe Briscoe never forgot the sound or registration number of that vehicle, which now resides, with all the stories that must be attached to it, in a glass garage in Ennis.



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Scholastica and her daughter, Francisca. Peter Caton, Kenya, 2017.

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Faithless couples are 'exploiting' church marriages – priest

Staff reporter

Couples with no faith who want a church marriage are exploiting a sacred service, a Cork-based priest has said.

Fr Tomás Walsh SMA of Gurrabraher said that couples who seek a Catholic wedding without having any faith themselves are taking advantage of the religious ceremony.

"I think that a lot of the church marriages that go on nowadays would be either to please mother or father or for grandparents," he told *The Irish Catholic*, adding that he encourages couples to make sure "this is what they want for themselves".

Fr Walsh also said that in cases where no religious belief is present, priests are just "providing a nice church or fine décor for what is otherwise a secular event for them".

His comments to this

newspaper come in the wake of remarks he made in a parish newsletter which criticised today's "widespread disrespect" for the sacred, particularly at church services.

"It is becoming increasingly impossible to conduct Baptism ceremonies with children running wildly around the church and adults, obviously only present for the celebrations afterwards, not caring about the disturbance they or their children are causing," the newsletter reads.

It adds that this irreverence is the direct consequence of little or no faith formation in homes or Catholic schools – and little moral direction.

"Still the Church in Ireland continues to dish out 'cheap grace' demanding nothing from anybody either in the way of faith commitment or allegiance," Fr Walsh wrote.

Online prayers and candles at religion's 'Munster finals'

Virtual candles and online petitions will be high-tech ways of giving Limerick's Redemptorist community a global reach.

Dubbed by one man "the Munster final of religion", the annual Novena in honour of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is expected to draw thousands of people from all over north Munster and beyond. In this multi-media age, people worldwide are also joining in online – submitting prayers and even lighting virtual candles on the website www.novena.ie.

The Novena runs from June 14 to 22 at the Redemptorist Church on Limerick's South Circular Road. There will be 10 celebrations on each of the nine days – the earliest at 7am, the last one at 10.30pm, with opportunities for Confession, counselling, a blessing for the sick and elderly and babies.

Fr Seamus Enright, Rector of the Redemptorists describes the novena as "a festival of Faith".



Kevin Nolan hanging new banners at Mount St Alphonsus, Limerick, in preparation for the Redemptorists' annual Novena in honour of Our Lady of Perpetual Help from June 14-22. Photo: Oisín McHugh True Media

Call for national synod amid Irish Church 'crisis'

Colm Fitzpatrick

A national assembly or synod which listens to the experience of the laity could help alleviate the current crisis the Irish Church is facing, a prominent Jesuit has said.

Fr Gerry O'Hanlon SJ said that the Church in Ireland is at a "crisis" point and that a national assembly or synod which draws together religious and laity would be a move in the right direction.

"The Church in Ireland really is in a crisis, it needs to address things very seriously and there are all kinds of con-

stituents like women, like disaffected Catholics, who need to be included in this process in a very important way," Dr O'Hanlon told *The Irish Catholic*.

The well-known priest added that it's too early to discuss practical outcomes related to particular issues, stressing that the Church should be focusing on creating "the kind of organisation where people are listened to, where views are exchanged" – which includes listening "very closely" to the experience of abuse victims. This process, he said, will gradually create a

whole new approach towards mission and allow practical policies to develop.

"The most important outcome would be a complete change in culture in the Church where it really would become a listening Church and we'd put in place the structures and institutions to make that a continuing reality," he said, noting that the synod wouldn't be a "one-off" event.

Aware

Acutely aware that the Church shouldn't be "subsumed" by the surrounding culture, Fr

O'Hanlon said there is still room to engage with others without compromising the orthodoxy of the Faith.

"The Church as well as teaching, learns, and learns not only from its members but from the surrounding culture. So, I do think there's a tendency because of the culture we're in to become rather defensive and to be focusing in on our rights, where I think a better approach is to be more generous and engage in an open discussion without being naïve of course and without throwing everything overboard."

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Marjó Oosterhoff will be facilitating a 2-day Loving Kindness Meditation retreat at the Sanctuary on Stanhope St, Dublin 7, on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th of June from 10am – 4pm each day, the total cost for the weekend is €100.

The loving kindness meditation is one of the most popular meditation techniques. Those who practice loving kindness meditation regularly are able to increase their capacity for forgiveness, connection to others, self acceptance, and benefit from the stress relief aspects of this form of meditation.

This retreat is suitable for beginners and nonbeginners, for people of all religious backgrounds, and offers a practical, and potentially life-changing introduction to mindfulness and compassion.

The line between Church and State

The summer has come and I am on holidays on a small island off the west coast of France. The landscape is a flat patchwork quilt of salt marshes criss-crossed with bicycle paths. Cycling from one village to the next, it is the landmark of the church spire that draws you to your destination. Village life bustles around the church, situated in the heart of each community: tourists gather in the local restaurants, elderly locals play pétanque in the square, while the church sits there, majestically looking on.

The churches – though of a historically-poor salt and oyster-farming community with a simple way of life – are beautiful, and easily the largest edifices in each village, dwarfing even the Mairie. As each church spire stamps the landscape from one village to the next, so also the churches have been stamped. Above the door of each one finds the inscription: *République Française: Liberté Égalité Fraternité* – a reminder to all who pass beneath the portal of God's house who is really in charge.

As those who followed the sad news of the Notre Dame fire will be aware, Catholic churches in France are owned by the State – a relic of the French Revolution and the doctrine of separation of Church and State, in which the State took possession of the Church's property and for many years even controlled the appointment of bishops and priests.

News cycle

Although determined, while on holidays, to remove myself from the depressing news cycle that fills the airways and clogs up our inboxes, news filtered through about Minister Simon Harris's most recent tweet and I was reminded of the separation of Church and State debate at home and how increasingly determined the Irish State is to encroach on the freedoms of her citizens and on the life of the Church.

Not satisfied with gloating over the part he played in the Referendum that heralded the deaths of thousands of Irish infants – including the recent abortion of a healthy baby whose parents were told he or she wouldn't live – he could not restrain himself from pronouncing on what he thinks other people's children should be taught in school about sex – whether or not they consent to it.

Maria Steen

The View



Minister for Health Simon Harris.

On June 8, Harris tweeted: "Positive news. Sexual and relationship health is integral to overall health and wellbeing. Important our children have access to unbiased information. We must respect religious belief but all health education must always be based on facts, not ethos."

This tweet was linked to an RTÉ article that detailed how parents at an Educate Together school in Castleknock protested against the Catholic agency, Accord, providing sex education to their children.

“Harris is appalled at the idea that sex education might in any way be influenced by a religious ethos”

One parent quoted in the article, who produces children's cartoons aired by RTÉ, said it was "totally inappropriate" for any religious body to deliver part of the curriculum in an Educate Together school, "especially to teach about relationships and sexuality". Twitter revealed photos of parents outside the school in question, accompanied by Ruth Coppinger TD, holding rainbow flags and slogans such as "separate Church and State" – despite the fact they were protesting outside a State-funded, non-denominational school that had itself invited Accord in – of its own accord.

What is clear from the images and the parents' tweets is that they are hostile to any religious

(specifically Catholic) influence over their children. They are not neutral about Catholic values – they are actively opposed to them. That is their business. In response to the parents' protests, Educate Together, the patron of the school in question, issued the following statement: "Educate Together will be writing to all schools under its patronage to ask them to ensure that relationships and sexuality education is delivered in a way that is consistent with its ethos and free from religious bias."

Ethos

Consistent with its ethos and free from religious bias. Here, at last, is an honest admission: that Educate Together schools will deliver sex education in a way that recognises its ethos – that the bias will be their secular bias, not a religious bias.

Contrast this with Harris's disingenuous tweet which states that "all health education must always be based on facts, not ethos". Is he going to prevent Educate Together schools from delivering sex education in line with their ethos?

Of course not. His bias is clear: he is appalled at the idea that sex education might in any way be influenced by a religious ethos, but in the next breath is advocating that other parents (those of whom he doesn't approve) should be forced to have their children indoctrinated in a State-sponsored sex education drive, the ethos of which is at odds with their own.

Never mind that this offends against these parents' religious rights,

their human rights – or indeed their parental rights. The difference in treatment stems from the fact that he clearly thinks Catholics are not the right sort of people and shouldn't be allowed to educate their own children as they see fit. Neither should they be allowed to prevent strangers – strangers who want to talk to their children about sex – from having access to them.

One priest, a Fr Pádraig Ó Cochláin, dared to point out that Harris was operating under his own ethos, which was, as he put it: "ABC – Anything but Catholic." In reply, Harris sniped: "Thanks Fr Ó Cochláin for message. Judging my morality is probably above your pay grade. I'm happy to leave that to the man upstairs. Spreading division & judging others so harshly without ever having met them is not the Christianity that I know & respect. Every good wish, Simon."

This is how the Minister, as representative of the State, treats a representative of the Church who refuses to

bow to the new orthodoxy. If indeed the Catholic Church refuses to bow to the new RSE syllabus that is coming down the line, which the State will seek to impose on Catholic schools, despite being completely antithetical to Christian values, how will bishops and priests and other Catholics be treated?

“How will brave priests and bishops who stand up and speak truth to power fare?”

Which brings me back to another local church here in France – that of St Martin de Ré, in which stands an altar, erected to the memory of the 1,023 priests deported under the laws of the Directory – the executive under the new French constitution during the Revolution – which hunted down "refractory" priests who refused to bow the knee to the new regime.

They were rounded up to be deported to Guiana for their treachery, and

those who were sent there perished quickly. However, due to the threat to French ships posed by the English Navy, many others were interned in the citadel of St Martin. There they were incarcerated between 1798 and 1801, in squalid conditions, suffering food shortages and little or no medical care.

The inscription on the altar describes how the good souls of St Martin smuggled in items that allowed them to celebrate Mass in the gaol. The altar is dedicated to the memory of the 61 priests who perished there and who were secretly buried without honour, dignity or record.

How will Catholics who refuse to have their children indoctrinated according to the new orthodoxy be treated? How will brave priests and bishops who stand up and speak truth to power fare? Will we live to see our own Catholic institutions branded with the new motto of a triumphant and vindictive state?



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Sacha: an indomitable spirit

Dear Friends of Sacha,
We are not here today to bury our beloved. That happened, most appropriately, some months ago at Barons Court, the place on this earth she loved the most. We are here in St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast at the end of May, when every part of these islands is in resurrection mode, to celebrate Sacha Abercorn alive.

As she says herself in *Feather from the Firebird*: "We stood by those seven small coffins in the centre of the towering Cathedral...the choir was assembling and rehearsing...time was put on hold and in the stillness of that second, I heard her say: Have no fear for us, it is we who pray for you. Love is never ending."

While a larger world mourns the death of Sacha, Duchess of Abercorn, her family and friends have a much deeper and more lasting kind of sorrow to endure. The general public knew her as an icon of elegance and nobility, a tireless promoter of creativity, a catalyst for

In a homily delivered in Belfast's St Anne's Cathedral, Mark Patrick Hederman OSB, reflects on the life of the Duchess of Abercorn Alexandra Hamilton – known as Sacha – who died on December 9, 2018.

peace and reconciliation, but you, her dear ones, who had the privilege of knowing her as sister, wife, mother, grandmother, friend, nothing I can say will ease your pain or your loss. Nothing can efface her memory or replace her person. And it is good that this is so: Sacha will remain forever and for always wherever her memory is kept alive.

Those who might have been tempted to lose their faith in humanity, seeing, as they do, the hateful stories that fill our screens and newspapers every day, had only to come in contact with Sacha to renew their faith in the beauty, dignity, and delight of human beings at their best. She was 'grace' in person – and even those who might object to aristocracy or to titles, were forced to recognise 'her grace' when they met her in person.

Sacha is alive in some

other dimension, and her indomitable spirit is guiding us. I can sense her right behind me now, saying: "Patrick, be short and don't be foolish. James is already looking at his watch."

The wisdom she worked for all her life, the values she embodied, the ideals she cherished, these must be nurtured and maintained. The Pushkin Trust, which she founded and promoted for over 30 years, provides hope for every child everywhere, to receive an education worthy of the name.

Purple flower

The four-petaled purple flower, which was her signature, stands for vital aspects of who we really are: one petal each for body, mind, spirit and emotions; all four linked at the stem to creativity. Under the umbrella of the Pushkin Trust, Baronscourt valley



Duchess of Abercorn Alexandra Hamilton – Sacha.

welcomed over 50,000 children from 28 of the 32 counties in Ireland. They met there, in a stunning natural environment, so many other children from differing backgrounds and traditions.

The tried and tested blueprint, which she elaborated over the years, must not be lost. The present board of The Pushkin Trust is firmly committed to carrying on this work, to ensuring that it is preserved and, furthermore, seeing that it is incorporated into whatever system of education we devise for our children in the future.

Russia was deep in Sacha's heart. Descended from the Romanovs, she was great, great, great grand-daughter of Alexander Pushkin. She saw Ireland and Russia as sister souls: places where art, poetry and storytelling take pride of place. Northern Ireland became her second home when she married James, Duke of Abercorn, in 1966 and gave birth to Jamie, Sophie and Nicholas, her nearest and her dearest.

Meeting

At a meeting in Luton Hoo, her ancestral home in Bedfordshire, on the 150th anniversary of Pushkin's death in 1986, Sacha found the inspiration of her life. She recognised the power of art to bring together irreconcilable enemies.

She gathered seeds from a tree around Pushkin's grave and planted them as saplings in Barons Court Valley. She saw the children of the world, North, South, East and West, climbing high into this tree where peace can come and make its home through

friendship. She saw this tree, grown from seeds she had planted, becoming a massive oak spreading wide its branches in huge inclusive shade.

When the Omagh bomb tore the heart out of Co. Tyrone in August, 1998, Sacha was there in her quiet and effective way, visiting families of victims, Trustee for Northern Ireland's Centre for Trauma and Transformation.

“She saw Ireland and Russia as sister souls: places where art, poetry and storytelling take pride of place”

She was recognised and celebrated for her life's work: an honorary doctorate from the University of Ulster in 2003; the Princess Grace of Monaco Humanitarian Award in 2006; the OBE for service to charity and education in 2008.

But, even more deeply touching for her was her appointment as Honorary Consul to the Russian Federation in Northern Ireland in 2014.

This gained her, a year later, the Pushkin Medal for outstanding contribution to cultural heritage. Nor did she neglect her Northern Irish compatriots, insisting that those who played a pivotal role in the Arctic convoys of the Second World War be awarded the coveted Ushakov Medal in 2014.

In February, 2003, she returned to her birthplace in Arizona and spent six days in the Chiricahua Mountains

near New Mexico. She was determined to offer herself to whatever evolutionary Spirit is working for the benefit of our universe. She experienced there a spiritual transformation, something utterly transpersonal; something which mirrors a change taking place in our world today.

She recognised that such a change was both necessary and was happening: "We need to exchange", she would say, "the love of power for the power of love."

*Dearest Sacha,
Silent friend of many
distances, feel
how your breath enlarges all
of space.
Let your presence ring out
like a bell
into the night. What feeds
upon your face*

*grows mighty from the
nourishment you offer.
Move back and forth into the
change.
If drinking becomes bitter,
turn yourself into wine.*

*In this immeasurable
darkness, be the power
That rounds our senses in
their magic ring,
tell us the meaning you
discovered there.*

*And if this earthly world no
longer knows your name,
whisper to the silent Earth:
I'm flowing.
To the flashing water, say:
I am.*

1 Mark Patrick Hederman, former Abbot of Glenstal Abbey, Co. Limerick, is a Benedictine monk, teacher, lecturer and writer. Formerly headmaster of the school at Glenstal, he was later named academic dean.

Minding Our Children

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**FOCUS
Ireland**



This year's EU elections gave no sense of a clear national voice, writes Pól Ó Muirí

There was a united Ireland of sorts in May when the electorate on the island's two jurisdictions, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, cast their votes in local and European Union elections.

Ironically, it was the party most associated with a united Ireland, Sinn Féin, which did worst at the ballot box. The party lost two of its three MEPs, over half of its local councillors and a shedload of votes in the South. It also lost 33,000 first preference votes in the EU election in the North but retained its one MEP, Martina Anderson, with ease and polled solidly in the council elections. The Northern election might have provided some solace were it not for the fact that the Alliance Party's candidate, Naomi Long, stole the headlines with her unexpected victory and Sinn Féin found itself having to share the lime light.

Fortunate

Sinn Féin are fortunate in that there is still much electoral meat on the Northern bone.

However, given that they have invested so much time and energy in pushing abortion in the Republic and attempting to liberalise Northern Ireland's abortion regime and bring in same sex marriage in the same jurisdiction, the party leadership might be asking itself where the electoral bounce was from tying itself to the social issues of the day.

Indeed, having sacrificed their former president Gerry Adams, like Iphigenia, to ensure a fair wind for Mary Lou McDonald, they may well wonder if they have not made a disastrous miscalculation.

Adams is roundly loathed by many in the Southern media where being suspicious of Northern nationalists of any hue is the default position. However, the voters who Adams

A fractured nation



attracts are not the sort who 'take' respectable Dublin dailies. McDonald is just as middle class as Fine Gael leader, Leo Varadkar, and has none of Adams's street cred. Where is the revolutionary act in voting for someone who belongs to the ruling class?

Varadkar too has his problems. He leads a minority government, propped up by irascible and egotistical independents, and has never led his party in a general election. Fine Gael performed solidly in the local and European elections but Fianna Fáil crept in front of them in the local elections to become the biggest party on Southern councils. That will please Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin, but both parties are still locked in the death grip (or dull grip) of mediocrity.

There has been little backlash from the electorate over abortion with Peadar Tóibín's new party, Aontú, securing enough hurlers to form a full-back line but nowhere near enough to field a full squad. Aontú can legitimately point to many issues as to why they did not do well but, in the dog eat dog world of contemporary politics, time may not be on their side.

If you belong to the school of thought that believes that you need to make a show first time out, then they are in trouble. If you believe in building the squad up slowly for next year's championship, then, well, maybe, just maybe, Aontú may find some traction. However, given that Aontú's unique selling point was their pro-life platform, are we to understand, in

the light of Fine Gael's and Fianna Fáil's returns, that that subject is now a dead issue for most of the electorate?

The Greens' wave turned out to be just a splash in the Republic and little more than a drip in the North where the main unionist party, the DUP, battered but still belligerent, held on to their policy of being pro-Brexit and opposing both same sex marriage and abortion. Consequently, they held their European seat comfortably and maintained a strong presence in Northern council chambers. They offered no surrender and they were rewarded by their voters.

Big question

The big question remains what happens when Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil finally go head-to-head in a general election. Neither party inspires the voters nor seems to have captured 'the vision thing'. Fine Gael has become the party of amoral money while Fianna Fáil has lost the common touch. It is instructive to remember that both parties have names in Irish and that those names actually encapsulate very profound visions of their founder members.

In Fine Gael's case, Gael is self-explanatory; it is an old name for Irishman or woman. 'Fine' however is much more nuanced. The dictionary defines that as "family group", "racial group", "race" and "racial territory". They were the party who, rightly or wrongly, fancied themselves as the founders of the State.

Yet, in these days of ever closer integration in

is now confined to usage in literary matters. The Fianna of course are inextricably linked to the mythical fighter Fionn Mac Cumhaill. Yet where is the fight in Fianna Fáil now? What exactly do they defend? They support many of Fine Gael's social and economic policies; their appeal to undecided voters seems just to be: "We will be better managers than the other crowd."

“No one speaks for Ireland, north or south. The island is fractured physically”

Further, the party's link-up with the moderate nationalists of the SDLP in the North was an attempt to add, belatedly and reluctantly, an all-Ireland dimension to their portfolio. It turned out to be the dampest of squibs with the policy launch having all the romance and razzmatazz of a first date in a chip shop.

In this age of *Game of*

Thrones, allow me to stretch a point. One of the most basic units of governance in ancient Ireland was the 'tuath' which could be a tribe, territory or petty kingdom. The tuath no longer exists in any meaningful way but we do see it at work in the election results, locally and on a 32-county basis.

A bewildering number of tribes are fighting for power: unionists, nationalists, republicans, socialists, Blue Shirts and independents. Some politicians manage to clamber to the top and become a virtual 'rí tuaithe', a territorial king, but none can gather enough support to proclaim themselves Ardrí, high king.

In truth, no one speaks for Ireland, north or south. The island is fractured physically, politically and morally and all this takes place against the backdrop of Brexit, a process that will have very profound implications for everyone from Coleraine to Cork.

the European Union, of globalisation and mass immigration and emigration, can they make the claim to be a family, let alone a loving family, to the State's citizens? And as for race and racial territory, good luck redefining and defending that in these days.

Fianna Fáil, of course, take their name from the warriors of old and Fál is a very, very old word for Ireland which

David Quinn's column returns next week

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Focusing on a national emergency

The State is failing nearly 4,000 children who are homeless, writes **Conor Culkin**

It is shocking that there is now a record number of nearly 4,000 children homeless and the problem is getting worse. One child becomes homeless every four hours in Ireland. Focus Ireland is working every day to support these children and their families while they are homeless to lessen the damage done by not having a home.

This work is invaluable and helps so many but it is not enough. The Government must do more to end this crisis as these children are being robbed of their childhoods.

A key value of Focus Ireland is empowerment and the charity has worked for many years now to ensure the voice of the child is central to highlighting the injustice of homelessness in our society.

Focus Ireland was delighted to see the publication of the excellent new report by the Ombudsman for Children, 'No Place Like Home', which gave children who are homeless a vital chance to have their voices heard.

The report combined a careful review of the legal and policy development of Family Hubs with a close attention paid to the voices of the children who have to live there. The result is a damning indictment of this Government's primary response to family homelessness. Focus Ireland hope that one day we will look back at the publication of this report as a turning point in Government policy.

When you read of the difficult lives which the children living in Family Homeless Hubs are experiencing, it is important to remember there are also many families living in worse conditions – up to 600 of the 1,700 families that are officially homeless are accommodated in hubs while the remainder are in hotel rooms and lodging houses, which are universally recognised as even less appropriate. Furthermore there over 400 families living in hotel rooms that do not even have a case manager to help them deal with the challenges they face and assist them in moving into a new home.

Hubs

Many families who face homelessness in hubs or hotels have no space to cook and find the lack of privacy difficult to accept. This can add to the shame and stress that many families suffer from being trapped in this situation. One child who was



According to the 'No Place Like Home' report over 400 families living in hotel rooms do not even have a case manager to help them deal with the challenges they face
Below: Focus Ireland Coffee Shop Chef, Paddy Markey.



interviewed for the report said: "I don't like to tell my friends that I live in a hotel because they might make fun of me. I don't like the room because it is for three people and I don't like the food."

The report also paints a picture of the hard work and commitment of the organisations and staff running the hubs but also conveys that hubs have emerged with no underlying policy objective, no standards and no long-term plan. These findings echo Focus Ireland's long-term reasons for its opposition to the use of family hubs.

Focus Ireland has always said that the solution to homelessness is providing more homes not more emergency accommodation. The charity has repeatedly maintained that a major shift in government policy is required to end this crisis. Focus Ireland supports families to leave homelessness every day, but without an effective national policy

this problem will not be solved.

Focus Ireland fully supports the recommendations in the Ombudsman for Children report and renews its own call for a coherent cross-department strategy to tackle family homelessness. In the absence of a dedicated family homeless strategy, the interests of children will be neglected. At present we are repeating the dreadful mistakes of the past – leaving children to grow up in institutions and jeopardising their futures. As a society we should not have to wait for 50 years for an enquiry about what the decisions, we all know what is happening now and an effective policy must be put in place to deal with it.

What is the solution?

As Focus Ireland has repeatedly stated, the only solution for these families who are homeless is the provision of secure homes.

Permanent social housing offers a clear path towards a secure home. At a local and national Government level, a review of the allocation of housing stock must be made and more ambitious targets need to be set.

Local authorities also need to issue guidelines to staff about how to respond to the very specific issues faced by families who are homeless. A framework to keep children safe and support families out of homelessness must be introduced urgently to prevent children and parents experiencing additional trauma during an extremely difficult time. Local authorities are improving their services but more needs to be done.

How Focus Ireland supports children and families who are homeless

The work of Focus Ireland's Family Team has expanded in

recent years to help respond to the growing numbers of families becoming homeless. It was a great achievement to help 400 families out of homelessness and into a home last year. This is really life-changing as all these families and children now have a place to call home and can move on in life.

Focus Ireland has recently added extra impetus to our work to prevent youth homelessness. Teenagers can become homeless because they fall out with their families and this can often lead to long term homelessness which seriously damages their adult life. In response to this problem we provide a 'family mediation service', in collaboration with Tusla which has resulted in a number of young people reconciling with their family and moving back home. Additionally our Focus Ireland Coffee Shop helps many families and individuals who are homeless – open every day, this service provides quality, affordable meals in a safe and warm environment.

Ultimately we believe homelessness is wrong. Wrong because it is a failure of society that creates victims out of ordinary people and robs them of their potential. Wrong because it can be prevented and solved but is allowed to continue, thereby undermining our society.

Focus Ireland believes the long-term response to homelessness is the provision of homes and fixing our failing housing system. A new vision for housing is imperative but in the meantime, we need to do better for all those forced into homelessness.

Helping the homeless to find their way home



Sr Stan speaking at the recent launch of John's Lane West which provides 31 homes in Dublin.

Summer always brings a sense of optimism as the days stretch longer with a few extra minutes each evening and hopefully we get some sunshine too.

While most of us can look forward to enjoying the Summer the harsh reality is that a lot of people are struggling in society. It can be hard for the record number of 10,378 people who are currently homeless in Ireland to be lifted by the spirit of Summer. But it is our job to give them hope. It is our job to support them while they are homeless and to help them to find a way home.

I am proud to say that Focus Ireland helped over 400 families to secure a home last year and escape the nightmare of being homeless. We help at least one family a day to secure a home every single day. However, sadly two to three more families became homeless every day so the crisis continues to deepen.

Since I first founded Focus Ireland in 1985 I have never seen homelessness so bad. The fact there are nearly 4,000 children without a home is heart-breaking but what is even worse, is that many more will be born into homelessness.

As a country we have a duty to look after all our citizens especially those who are most vulnerable. We must cherish all of our children equally and ensure no child suffers from being homeless for long periods of time.

We must work towards ensuring every child has a place to call home.

“We need a detailed sub-strategy on family homelessness that would include a guarantee that no family would be homeless for more than six months”

How can we stand by while families who are homeless are forced to live in one hotel room for months at a time? There is nowhere safe for the children to play, do their homework or even for families to cook a meal. Unless



Sr Stan pictured at John's Lane West with Minister for Housing Eoghan Murphy and Focus Ireland CEO, Pat Dennigan.

there is more action – the damage done to families and children will not just affect this generation but also many generations to come. It must not continue.

Our Family Team in Dublin and services across Ireland work hard to secure a home for one or two families every day, in partnership with the Dublin Region Homeless Executive and local authorities. Each family has a case manager who assesses their needs, provides support and works towards helping them to secure a home. Focus Ireland also gives specialist support for families who are experiencing stress and we also facilitate ‘family days’ which help children escape their troubles.

Building homes, changing lives

I am proud to say that Focus Ireland continues to develop realistic policy solutions to help end homelessness. We do this work through over 80 frontline services across the country and our commitment to building homes. While the crisis is continuing, the situation would be even worse without the vital services and housing we provide.

I was delighted to recently attend the launch of Focus Ireland's new housing unit in John's Lane West which provides 31 homes in Dublin.

The new apartment complex was

built with the great support from the Department of Housing, Dublin City Council as well as financial support from the Housing Finance Agency and also with some assistance by generous donors to Focus Ireland.

This building was designed to ensure that each home has its own front door.

This is not only a great design it also means so much to people who have been homeless or moving from place to place for many years at risk of becoming homeless. I know from speaking to some of our new tenants how much it means not only to have their own home but to also have their own front door.

It is something none of us can quite put our finger on but at the same time we all know its great importance at a very human and emotional level.



John's Lane West is part of the 1,200 homes around the country that Focus Ireland has provided. We have delivered 507 of these since 2015 and are on track to deliver 750 homes over the course of our current five-year plan to 2020. That's a doubling of long term homes provided over this five-year period. This feels me with great pride that we are making a difference.

Government needs a change of strategy

While Focus Ireland work with The Government in delivering homes like John's Lane West, we must also acknowledge that their overall strategy is not working.

There is no clear plan to tackle family homelessness; all it has is an outdated promise in Rebuilding Ireland and a stack of press statements.

We urgently need a more ambitious strategy to tackle this issue. This includes actively building social housing, ensuring that bank restructuring does not come at the cost of mass homelessness, taxing those who hoard building land and protecting the rights of tenants facing eviction.

I am very concerned about the Government's continued focus on the delivery of family hubs rather than permanent homes. The Government admits that hubs are only a ‘first response’ but there is still no sign of them delivering a long term second plan to deal with the crisis we are facing.

We need a detailed sub-strategy on family homelessness that would include a guarantee that no family would be homeless for more than six months.

This crisis must be ended. We must continue to provide a voice for the many people and families who are voiceless. Focus Ireland will not rest until they are heard and we must not rest until they find a home.

Donate to Focus Ireland

We rely heavily on donations from the public to ensure we are always there when people need us most. We have to raise half of our annual budget from fundraising to help over 14,500 people each year who are homeless or at risk.

I am asking you – if you are in a position to do so – to please support our work challenging

homelessness and changing lives.

Any donation will help us to directly support these families and also help fund our work to prevent other families, children and individuals from becoming homeless in the first place. People can please donate at www.focusireland.ie or by phoning 1850 204 205.

Restoring hope and equipping youth with the Good News



Fr Shane Sullivan, Castlebar parish, with Annika Hausl and Lilly Pirrung (Castlebar parish NET team 2018-19).



Damien and Rebekah McDonough (NET Ireland staff) with their two children, Jacob and Isaac.



Archbishop Eamon Martin, Bishop Alan McGuckian and Bishop Emeritas Philip Boyce greet Pdraig Ó Laimhín and his son Seosamh.



Chai Brady

Even though this year's Thanksgiving Mass organised by NET Ministries Ireland at the beginning of this month was the official ending of a year of mission for 46 young missionaries, it had the dual purpose of celebrating 15 years of "restoring hope" through their work with Irish young people.

This year's cohort of 46 missionaries and 20 staff were joined at Letterkenny Cathedral by Archbishop Eamon Martin, Bishop Alan McGuckian and Bishop Philip Boyce, as well as priests, religious, host homes, benefactors, friends and family. Archbishop Martin praised the young missionaries, he said: "NET demonstrates how the Spirit can call and equip young people for the service of the Gospel."

Having travelled from 10 nations last summer to begin their year, many of whom are Irish, the missionaries saw some of the fruit of their work in the youth that gathered to celebrate with them.

Meeting youth

With five local teams serving in parishes in Castlebar, Booterstown, Meath, Cork, and Letterkenny, along with the Vocations Ireland and Road Teams, who travelled the country meeting youth in schools and parishes, youth they befriended and journeyed with over the year also travelled to Letterkenny for Mass and a celebration afterwards.

Tony Foy, the Executive Director of NET Ireland, paid particular tribute to Bishop Emeritus of Raphoe, Philip Boyce, who was instrumental in bringing NET to Ireland from Canada in the very beginning, saying: "He saw something in NET that was good and that would reach people."



Tony Foy, Executive Director of NET Ministries Ireland, addresses the congregation.

For NET (National Evangelisation Teams) in Ireland, their main focuses are school retreats, Confirmation programmes, youth groups, and even surfing retreat weekends at their training centre in Rossnowlagh, Co. Donegal.

Below: NET Ministries Ireland 2018-19 missionaries, staff, bishops and priests.



Sam Pitcailley (NET Ministries Ireland Missionary from the Booterstown parish team 2018-19).

Letters

Letter of the week

Teach the truth or re-evaluate vocation

Dear Editor, Regarding Fr Gerry O'Connor's criticism of an American bishop's remarks on the unsuitability of Gay Pride Marches for children (IC 6/6/2019), I would like to ask him if he ever witnessed a Gay Pride March.

In my opinion not even a self-respecting homosexual person would approve of them

Fr O'Connor does not see how these marches are unsuitable for children even though they are usually of a vulgar nature and they promote gay marriage, which is contrary to the

natural law and the vision of marriage given by Christ, of one man and one woman. They are also primarily sexually focused and thus not suitable for children.

Fr O'Connor refers to the sensitivities of his congregation who may have gay sons or daughters. The priest is an apostle of Christ and should preach the Gospel regardless of the sensitivities of the congregation. That means priests should preach that divorce, fornication, co-habitation, abortion, etc., all controversial

subjects, are contrary to the teachings of Christ.

When a priest preaches the Gospel on a controversial topic they will no doubt be confronted after Mass by people who are annoyed at what they have heard.

Nonetheless priests must preach the truth or re-evaluate their vocations as apostles of Christ.

*Yours etc.,
Winifred Collins,
Newry, Co. Down.*

Heaven for animals? Don't be so sure

Dear Editor, Your columnist Colm Fitzpatrick has recently (IC 16/5/2019) considered the question 'Do Animals go to Heaven?'

I would like to respectfully disagree with his conclusion and present an alternative analysis.

Science is increasingly demonstrating the remarkable capabilities and types of consciousness in various kinds of animals.

The importance of all God's creatures in fulfilling God's plans is clearly emphasised in *Laudato Si'*, building on the insights of Teilhard de Chardin and

many others, not least the great St Francis. Our anthropocentric view of the animal kingdom reflects the arrogance, violence and ignorance of our species, has contributed much to the destruction of species, and actually has no basis in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

That great poet and Christian Alfred Tennyson encapsulated a more openminded view in his 'In Memoriam', expressing the hope
*"That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That not one life will be destroyed,*

*Or cast as Nothing on the void,
When God has made the pile complete"*

We know nothing about Heaven, or life after death, but we trust in Jesus Christ and hope for a continuation in some way of our existence, in the love of God, somewhere beyond space and time, and there we hope to meet our loved ones with God in love.

This hope, shrouded as it is in uncertainty and mystery, is a great support to Christians at times of bereavement. There is no good reason to deny

ourselves the possibility and the hope that God might allow us also to experience the continued company of animals we loved, and who loved us during our brief sojourn in space-time on planet Earth.

If you have lost an animal dear to you, be comforted, pray and hope that you will meet again in a land beyond time.

God is close to the broken-hearted and will surely listen.

*Yours etc.,
Martin Clynes,
Clontarf, Dublin 3.*

Wrong word, Taoiseach

Dear Editor, You report a Dáil debate in which the question of a new 'covenant' between Church and state was discussed and you request suggestions on what that might involve (IC 30/5/2019).

The phrase "new covenant" was, of course, used by Leo Varadkar in his speech during last year's papal visit. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin last March was reported as complaining that the Irish government had made no further suggestions concerning this "new covenant".

But, as the Archbishop of Dublin must surely be aware, in the Scriptures a Covenant is made between God and man, not between humans alone. In the Old Testament Covenants were made with Noah, Abraham and David and with the Jewish people as a whole. In the New Testament Our Lord spoke at the Last Supper of the Eucharist he was instituting as a Covenant; the author of Hebrews called him the mediator of a new Covenant.

Leo Varadkar is not God and talk of a covenant between the Church and his Government is therefore hardly appropriate. Perhaps some people have confused 'covenant' with 'concordat' (the term appropriate for agreements between the Holy See and state) but if that is the case then such confusion ought to cease.

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



Politicians must examine Article 43

Dear Editor, When Eamon Gilmore was appointed Tánaiste in 2011 he proclaimed that the most important social issue of our time was marriage equality despite the fact that hundreds of families were losing their homes as a result of the downturn in the economy. As this matter has been done and dusted along with the Eighth Amendment and the recent divorce amendment, the most important social issue now is the supply of housing.

To that end, I would refer readers to Article 43, sub section 2.1 of the Constitution which states: "The State recognises, however that the exercise of the rights mentioned in the foregoing provisions of this article (sub section 1.1 and 1.2) ought, in civil society, to be regulated by the principles of social justice."

Sub section 2.2 states: "The State

accordingly, may as occasion requires delimit by law the exercise of the said rights with a view to reconciling their exercise with the exigencies of the common good."

It is now incumbent on the Government and all the political parties to examine Article 43 of the constitution with a view to amending it to limiting the distress caused by the cuckoo and vulture funds since 2008. If half of the commitment put into the marriage equality and repeal the eight referenda by all parties in the Dail and Senate was applied to an amendment of Article 43, it would do a great service to the ordinary people of Ireland. Article 43, 2.2 enables the state to do just that.

*Yours etc.,
Herbert Eyre,
North Strand, Dublin 3.*

facebook community

Each week we publish a selection of comments from *The Irish Catholic* Facebook page

Nashville Sister lets God's plan lead the way

Orders like these are growing in the US. One Franciscan order has a nun who was an Olympic skater. – Ronnie Pryor I hope and pray that they might attract and encourage young girls in to their order as I find them very serious in their vocation. I'll keep them in my prayers. – **John Long**

Accompanied by Mary

The greatest consolation is with Mary – our heavenly mother never fails. – **Patricia Dempsey**

Beautiful story. – **Margaret Berry**

Tackling 'gangland funerals' could lead to 'serious confrontation'

There are a lot of show funerals apart from those gangland related. – **Eilín Glynn**

A movement disheartened but certainly not defeated

After the referendum no one on either side can claim ignorance of the facts. Pro life Ireland is sadder but wiser. – **Charles Glenn**

Mothers need support when in a crisis, someone to talk to. It wouldn't be easy to feel desperate if you were on your own and had to give birth without someone being there. Speak out and be counted for Mother and Baby because two lives count – mother and baby. – **Joanne Lehtihet**

We must support mothers and babies, and in doing so abortion will not be required – ever! Babies are depending on us so we must defend the right to life of every baby – no exceptions! – **Philomena Gorman**

How can it be that two-thirds of the Irish voters supported two things that are intrinsically evil? My Irish ancestors would be appalled! – **Russell Morrissey III**

Don't pigeonhole unbelievers as hard atheists

"... there's a huge diversity of ways of being an unbeliever.... There's a whole spectrum of belief in spiritual realities, in a universal life force, in underlying forces of good and evil, in fate, in astrology – these (unbelievers) people are not living in a wholly disenchanting materialistic world." Well, they may as well be. If they're not hard atheists then, at best, they are soft agnostics. Either way, they are not believers. – **Louise Nolan**

What do you think? Join in the conversation on *The Irish Catholic* Facebook page

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

📷 Around the world



▲ **USA:** A clergyman kisses the hand of Metropolitan-Archbishop Borys Gudziak during Archbishop Gudziak's enthronement as head of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

◀ **HONG KONG:** Thousands of people take part in a candlelight vigil at Victoria Park to mark the 30th anniversary of the crackdown on a pro-democracy movement at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989. Photos: CNS



▲ **AUSTRALIA:** Cardinal George Pell arrives at the Supreme Court of Victoria in Melbourne. Cardinal Pell was at the court for a two-day hearing to appeal his conviction on five counts of child sexual abuse.



▲ **FRANCE:** US President Donald Trump greets World War II D-Day veterans at a commemoration ceremony for the 75th anniversary of D-Day at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, Normandy.



▲ **AFGHANISTAN:** People pray in Kabul. On May 28, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing August 22 as the Day to Commemorate Victims of Violence Based on Religion.



▲ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis kisses a baby during his general audience in St Peter's Square.



Rachel Held Evans.

No community should botch its deaths. Mircea Eliade wrote those words and they're a warning: if we do not properly celebrate the life of someone who has left us we do an injustice to that person and cheat ourselves of some of the gift that he or she left behind.

With this in mind, I want to underscore the loss that we, the Christian community, irrespective of denomination, suffered with the death of Rachel Held Evans who died, at age 37, on May 4.

Who was Rachel Held Evans? She defies simple definition, beyond saying that she was a young religious writer who wrote with a depth and balance beyond her years as she chronicled her struggles to move from the deep, sincere, childlike faith she was raised in to eventually arrive at a questioning, but more mature, Faith that was now willing to face all the hard questions within Faith, religion and church.

Opposition

And in this journey, she was beset with opposition from within (it's hard to courageously scrutinise your own roots) and from without (Churches generally don't like being pressed by hard questions, especially from their own young). But the journey she made and articulates (with rare honesty and wit) is a journey that, in some way, all of us, young and old, have to make to come to a Faith that can stand up to the hard questions coming from our world and the even harder ones coming from inside of us.

Carl Rogers once famously said: "What is most personal is also most universal." The journey Rachel Held Evans traces out from her own life is, I submit, by and large,

Rachel Held Evans, 1981-2019



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

the universal one today, that is, the naïve Faith of our childhood inevitably meets challenges, questions, and ridicule in adulthood and that demands of us a response beyond the Sunday School and Catechism of our youth.

Not least among these questions and challenges is the one of Church, of justifying belonging to one, given the propensity within our churches for infidelity, narrowness, judgmental attitudes, reluctance to face doubt, and the perennial temptation to wed the Gospels to their favored political ideology.

“In the end, she found her way back to a mature Faith (which now can handle doubt)”

Rachel Held Evans struggled to make the journey from the naiveté of childhood, with all its innocence and magic, where one can believe in Santa and the Easter Bunny and take biblical stories literally, to what Paul Ricouer calls “second naiveté”, where, through a painful interplay between doubt and Faith, one has been able to work through the constrictive sophistication that comes with adulthood so as to reground the innocence

and magic (and Faith) of childhood on a foundation that has already taken seriously the doubt and disillusionment that beset us in the face of adulthood.

The Irish philosopher John Moriarty, whose religious story played out along similar lines as Rachel's, coined an interesting expression to describe what happened to him. At one point in his religious journey, he told us: “I fell out of my story.”

The Roman Catholicism he had been raised into was no longer the story out of which he could live his life. Eventually, after sorting through some hard questions and realising that the faith of his youth was, in the end, his “mother tongue”, he found his way back into his religious story.

Rachel Held Evans' story is similar. Raised in the Southern USA Bible Belt inside a robust Evangelical Christianity she too, as she faced the questions of her own adulthood, fell out of her story and, like Moriarty, eventually found her way back into it, at least in essence.

In the end, she found her way back to a mature Faith (which now can handle doubt), found a Church (Episcopalian) within which she could worship, and, in effect, found her way back to her mother tongue. The Church and faith of her youth, she writes, remain

in her life like an old boyfriend...where, while not together anymore in the old way, you still end up checking Facebook each day to see what's happening in his life.

“She was a young religious writer who wrote with a depth and balance beyond her years”

Many Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants, I suspect, may not be very familiar with Rachel Held Evans or have read her works. She wrote four best-selling books, *Inspired*, *Searching for Sunday*, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* and *Faith Unraveled*. The purpose of this column is therefore pretty straightforward: read her! Even more important, plant her books in the path of anyone struggling with faith or Church: loved ones, children, spouses, family members, friends, colleagues.

Rachel Held Evans arose out of an evangelical ecclesial tradition and out of the particular approach to Christian discipleship that generally flows from there. She and I come from very different ecclesial worlds. But, as Roman Catholic priest, solidly committed to the tradition I was raised in, and as a theologian and spiritual writer for more than 40 years, reading this young woman, I haven't found a single line with which to disagree. She's trusted food for the soul.

She's also a special person that we lost far too soon.

QUESTIONS of faith

Each week Colm Fitzpatrick looks at interesting and sometimes controversial questions people have about Catholicism...



Why do Catholics call priests 'Father'?

While for Catholics, calling a priest 'Father' seems like a non-issue, for many other Christian denominations, this practice is seen as unbiblical. The accusation is an understandable and thought-provoking one, given that Jesus says: “Call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven” (Matt. 23:9). These words couldn't be any clearer, so how are Catholics to respond to the accusation that referring to priests as 'Father' is theologically inaccurate?

It seems strange to think that Jesus was literally forbidding his Jewish audience from calling anyone father. The word is used to refer to our biological fathers or legal guardians, and there's also a precedent in the Bible for those with a special relationship with God being described as father.

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, for example, states that man leaves his father and his mother to be united with his wife, indicating that biological references using the word are permissible. Likewise, Abraham is referred to as 'our father' in the Acts of the Apostles.

Are we to believe that Jesus was condemnatory of these passages? Such a view would undermine our own trust in the Bible, and cause serious confusion. What's more likely is that Jesus didn't literally mean that we shouldn't refer to anyone as father except God. If that's the case, what did he mean?

Context

It's important to remember the context in which Jesus made this remark; he was criticising the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees who were overly focused on burdensome rules and regulations rather than focusing on the spirit of the law.

“The teachers of the

law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.”

For the same reason, this is why Jesus later says in the same passage that we are to call no one instructors except God; this admonition doesn't literally mean we can't refer to anyone as an instructor, but to remember that ultimate sovereignty rests solely in God.

“Jesus didn't literally mean that we shouldn't refer to anyone as father except God”

This hyperbolic (exaggerated) language is used to emphasise how far the Jewish authorities had fallen astray from their faith by arrogating to themselves paramount power, forgetting that God was their true teacher and father figure. This is reinforced when Jesus says: “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness.”

By reading this passage in its full context, it's hard to argue that Jesus was literally forbidding people from referring to others as 'Father', but reminding us not to forget who our true father is: God. If that's the case, we should have no qualms in calling priests 'Father', as through ordination, they establish a special relationship with God.

Got a question or comment?
Email colm@irishcatholic.ie

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, June 13, 2019

Personal Profile

Encouraging
courageous Mothers of
the Church

Page 34



Life or death



When disaster strikes it can be difficult not to freeze, to become motionless in a moment when action is needed immediately to save a life. It's one thing overcoming this fear or anxiety, it's another to know what to do in a situation in which a person's life is on the line.

Whether this is a family member, close friend or even a stranger, knowing basic first aid can assist someone long enough for emergency services to arrive, or for them to get to a doctor or hospital.

Over the summer some first aid tricks and tips can be particularly useful. Anything from knowing what to do when someone has an allergic reaction



Chai Brady discusses the value of learning first aid

to how to administer CPR if someone is unresponsive can be learned quite quickly.

According to Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Sandra Cregan, first aid is "a practical life-saving skill" that everyone should have.

Their First Aid Response (FAR) course is recognised by the Irish Health and Safety Authority. It's a foundation level first aid course which teaches participants to

provide first aid assistance to a person who becomes suddenly unwell or injured until the arrival of the emergency medical services.

It is estimated that 5,000 people die from sudden cardiac arrest in Ireland every year and 70% of these happen out of hospital, usually at home, so knowing CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) can save a loved one's life.

Sandra says: "If the person isn't breathing, then the lifesaving skill for that would be CPR, which is there basically for when the heart stops and the lungs stop and you're going to bring both back to life, and that's the reason for your resuscitation.

If there's a defibrillator available and you know how to use it, it could save someone's life she says.

"If the patient has been suffering with pains in the chest, by doing that FAR course it will also allow the first aider to administer aspirin to the patient in the hope it will prevent the cardiac arrest. Aspirin itself will help to break the clot down and it will prevent other clots from forming.

"The hope is that you're treating the cause rather than waiting until the patient goes unresponsive and unconscious, then you'd have to do CPR," she says.

Knowing CPR could be particularly important over the summer when thousands of people gather at beaches to bask in the sun – when it appears – and swim.

The lifeguard season began at the start of this month with Water Safety Ireland (WSI) saying there are many reasons to swim under supervision. Lifeguards administered first aid over four thousand times last year. They located 300 lost children and rescued more than 300 people nationwide.

» Continued on Page 33

Family News



AND EVENTS

UNCORKING SCIENCE

Christianity has always been a strong proponent of merging faith with science so that we can learn more about ourselves, the world around us, and our origins. Promoting the importance of empirical inquiry this month is the Cork Carnival of Science at Fitzgerald Park, which features non-stop, family-friendly experiments, interactive activities, games, street cuisine and a packed line-up of live entertainment. Participants include shows by London Science Museum and W5 Science and Discovery Centre (Belfast), workshops by the Royal Society of Chemistry, Imaginosity and Bubbly Maths, mobile classrooms from the Road Safety Authority and Bord Iascaigh Mara and many more. Activities will include making slime, meeting live zoo animals, checking out the inner workings of robots and extracting DNA. It runs from June 22-23 and sets about creating and delivering an event that encourages families to interact with science in new and engaging ways.

FAST FOOD FATALITIES

Most of us have a penchant for unhealthy foods like take-aways or sweets, but unfortunately these are usually ultra-processed items. While they are delicious and satisfy our cravings, it turns out they're causing significant harm to our health. A new study led by Anaïs Rico-Campà, from the Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain, has revealed that mortality rate increases depending on the amount of ultra-processed food people consume. As part of the study, the 19,899 participants completed a food questionnaire of 136 items and the scientists followed them up for 10 years and grouped the foods they ate according to how processed they were. The study found that people who consumed more than four servings of ultra-processed food each day were 62% more likely to die from any cause compared with those who consumed two servings or fewer.

BUYING A BAMBOO BRUSH

In the last few years, the world has become more aware of the climate crisis facing all of us, and the need to be more active in preventing looming disaster. This isn't just the responsibility of large corporations or businesses who are the key culprits, but also ourselves. Small environmental acts every day can make a big difference in the grand scheme of things, so recycling, avoiding using plastic and making green purchases all help in making the world a better and more habitable place. One small change that can be made in your life is swapping out your plastic toothbrush for an eco-friendly bamboo one. Not only are they cheap, but the soft bristles are great for your oral health as they don't upset or irritate your gums. The next time your toothbrush needs replacing, consider purchasing a bamboo one – it'll make all the difference!

Morals and movies: lessons from the silver screen



Towards the end of Sam Raimi's first Spider-Man film (released 15 years ago now, so I hope the statute of limitations has passed on spoilers), the villainous Green Goblin confronts our titular hero with a moral dilemma. He engineers a situation where Spidey's beloved Mary Jane Watson and a cable car full of schoolchildren are dropped off a bridge at the same time, forcing the webhead to choose one to save.

Undaunted, Spider-Man performs some impressive acrobatics and manages, just about, to catch both Mary Jane and the children. Hanging suspended in the air holding both, he desperately fends off an aerial assault from the Goblin long enough for the citizens of New York to intervene: bystanders on the bridge hurl objects to drive off the Goblin, while a passing rubbish barge manoeuvres under Spidey, allowing him to lower the kids and Mary Jane to safety.

“The sort of moral philosophy that's taught to most university undergraduates shares this dim view of third options.”

This sort of scene is everywhere in Hollywood, especially in family films. A villain presents the hero with a terrible choice, but the hero outwits her and takes a third option. The general critical consensus on these scenarios is that they are lazy, unchallenging storytelling. Instead of forcing the protagonist to choose the



Everyday philosophy Ben Conroy

lesser of two evils and live with the consequences of their actions, the filmmakers conveniently arrange things to avoid having them choose. It takes what could be a fascinating character moment and turns it into a cop-out.

“The ultimate aim of moral philosophy is to figure out how to live and act well.”

The sort of moral philosophy that's taught to most university undergraduates shares this dim view of third options. Think of the trolley problem, in which you have to choose between taking no action and allowing five people to be killed by a runaway trolley-car, and throwing a lever to move the car onto another track and kill only one person. Or the sort of 'ticking time-bomb' thought experiment used to decide whether torture is ever justified. In these thought experiments, the possibility of a third option is ruled out by definition: responding with something like "I'll jam something into the wheels of the trolley" or "torture doesn't work" is to miss the point. The poor undergraduates faced with these dilemmas have to pick a side.

At least when it comes to moral philosophy, I think the cheesy Hollywood movies have it mostly right, and the 'Intro to

Ethics' courses have it mostly wrong.

The ultimate aim of moral philosophy is to figure out how to live and act well. It is concerned with practical knowledge. And practical knowledge is knowledge about our actually existing world – a world in which the overwhelming majority of



apparent moral dilemmas actually do have third options, and a world in which being a good person involves learning to imagine, notice, and recognise them. As a teacher of mine once said, the way ethics is taught often makes us dumber, teaching us to rule out third options as irrelevant when in fact they're critical.

Take the ticking time bomb scenario. In a 2005 debate on torture between John Yoo, George Bush's deputy assistant attorney general from 2002 to 2003, and Jeremy Waldron, then a philosophy professor at Columbia, Waldron insisted that 'would you torture a terrorist in a ticking time bomb scenario?'

was a "corrupt question."

"It supposes," he went on, "that torture is capable of getting accurate information... The nature of the relationship between torturer and victim means that the victim will tell the torturer what the torturer thinks he wants to know." And he pointed out that even if torture did sometimes work, institutionalising it as a practice would almost certainly lead to greater evils than it would avert. Opposing torture is not only a matter of biting the bullet and refusing to do evil that good may come of it – it is also a matter of recognising the real-life factors at play and realising that the same aims can be achieved better with other means anyway.

None of this is to deny that artificially constructed dilemmas have their place in moral philosophy – they can sometimes be useful for testing the consistency and plausibility of moral theories – it's just a much less prominent place than the one they're currently given. Nor am I excusing lazy writing: 'third options' in stories ring hollow when they're pulled out of nowhere or come at no real cost to the characters.

(For a dramatically satisfying third-option resolution to a superhero's moral dilemma, see the finale of Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight*. Orson Scott Card's science fiction classic *Ender's Game* and its sequels, and the animated series *Trigun* also make fascinating use of moral dilemmas and third options.)

But in spreading the idea that morality is more about imagining and choosing hidden yet glorious possibilities than it is about about grimly settling for the lesser of two evils, Hollywood is doing something right.

» Continued from Page 31



WSI say: "Stranding will also be a risk for many walkers as lower tides will expose even greater areas of the coastline. Walkers should always carry a mobile phone to call 112 in an emergency. Parents should provide constant uninterrupted supervision as 30 children aged 14 and under drowned in 10 years."

They added that those going afloat should always wear a lifejacket and carry a portable Marine VHF and/or a personal locator beacon.

"CPR can't be performed while they're in the pool or in the water, it's got to be done on a hard solid surface," Sandra says.

"So it will go back to the point of checking to make sure that that patient is not breathing and there are no signs of life and then you will continue with your CPR."

She added that although water safety is important for the summer, bee stings and other allergic reactions can be dangerous – particularly if the warning signs aren't known and the response isn't fast enough.

Although intervening in a perceived emergency when a person's life could be in danger is an honourable action, some may be concerned about the legal implications if something is to go wrong.

“It generally provides legal protection for those who provide assistance in the event of an emergency.”

In 2011 the Government introduced the Good Samaritans law, which states that “good samaritan” means a person who, without expectation of payment or other reward, provides assistance, advice or care to another person in an emergency...”

It generally provides legal protection for those who provide assistance in the event of an

emergency. Summing it up Sandra says: “If you are a first aider and you do the treatment to the best of your ability regarding the training you've been given, you can't be sued.

“Realistically if you're looking at a person who's not breathing and who's got no signs of life, if you don't do anything they've got no chance of surviving, if you do a little bit there's a possibility that what you do may be just enough to keep them going until the medical services arrive.

“They have a membership of 4,000 volunteers across 81 local communities north and south of the border, including cadets (10-16 years).”

“There is an element of CPR where we would class it as hands on CPR, CPR tips without the lips, compression only CPR, meaning you just press on the chest, you don't have to breathe into the patient, you just continually press on the chest until the ambulance arrives.”

The Irish Red Cross recommend that for every 20 employees, three are trained as First Aid Responders, adding that it's worthwhile training a group of staff members in this



area to ensure there is cover when employees are on leave. The charity also provide first aid training to schools, generally for students in Transition Year.

The FAR course covers a huge area. Everything from patient assessment, incident procedure, common medical emergencies, injury management and shock, care of the unconscious patient, burns and electrical injury care, hypothermia and hyperthermia, information management, communications and the wellbeing of the first aider.

The Order of Malta Ireland also provides first aid courses. They have a membership of 4,000 volunteers across 81 local communities north and south of the border, including cadets (10-16 years). It offers a range of course options for anyone interested in gaining life-saving skills, from Transition Year students to community groups and health care workers.

“Knowing what to do can go a long way in helping anyone keep a cool, rational head and to respond quickly and efficiently in a tense situation.”

The need for first aid sometimes only becomes truly apparent after an emergency has occurred. No one wants to be in a position in which they'll need to administer care to someone waiting for emergency services or who has to be brought to the hospital. Knowing what to do can go a long way in helping anyone keep a cool, rational head and to respond quickly and efficiently in a tense situation.

For more information on first aid courses near you check www.orderofmaltaireland.org or www.redcross.ie

Faith — IN THE — family



Bairbre Cahill

I've had a few 'Feeding the 5,000' experiences lately.

The first was a Guest Tea at our GAA club – afternoon tea and a variety of entertainment from Traditional music and recitations to the short play or 'Leiriú' which our club got through to the All-Ireland Scór final this year. People hosted tables, providing everything needed for the afternoon tea.

As with so many of these things there was an element of stepping into the unknown. People asked me how many we expected and all I could say was, "Somewhere between 50 and 80". In reality we had over 100 people, but extra tables materialised, table cloths were provided, food was passed along and a motley collection of cups and saucers found. The Clubhouse had been transformed with fairy lights, vases of flowers and pretty china but it was the atmosphere that really struck me. There was such an energy, such a strong sense of ownership of who we are as a club. Not everyone would have been aware of what Scór is about but there was a real pride and a realisation that this is an important part of our identity.

Then last week I was involved in a training day on 'Supporting parenting in situations of complex and additional need'. The speakers came from Community Psychology, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health team, the Early Intervention team and the Community Facilitator for Disability.

The participants – more than 50 of them – came from a variety of social work departments, Family Resource Centres and community-based services. Every person who attended – speakers and participants – came with knowledge and experience but also with an awareness that there was more to learn. Each person knew the challenges families face and wanted to be better able to support parents in tough situations.

So, there was a hunger for information, a readiness to listen, to explore, to share experience and learn from others. Again, that image of the feeding of the 5,000 came to mind. Each person brought their own contribution but together it created a wealth of wisdom and a powerful sense that we are all on the same page, energised

by the desire to support parenting and family life.

Then yesterday I was involved in organising a family fun day to celebrate International Parents Day. It seemed like everything was going against us. Services which helped out last year were not



available. Our storyteller was sick. Our face painters were not available. The weather conspired against us and we had to move out of the park and into the hall. I worried that it was all going to look a little flat, that people would not come, that we wouldn't be able to occupy and entertain those who did.

But you know people are wonderful and they muck in and help out. The face painting may have looked a little ropery but the kids were delighted. We had invited people to follow the balloons we had put up in the park – and they did, in their droves! It was certainly a celebration of International Parents Day because we had parents and children from many different places around the world including some of our newly arrived Syrian families. People were delighted to be offered a cup of coffee, a sandwich, some games for their children while they had a chat. The atmosphere was mildly chaotic and fabulous!

And it all makes me think – people together create something wonderful. I'd say Jesus knew that when he fed the 5,000 it wasn't just about the food. It was also the being together, sharing the experience. Surely as parishes we need to do more to bring people together, to create that sense of belonging, of caring, of knowing we are part of something that matters. Community does not happen by accident. We need to invite, to welcome, to engage. When we do, something powerful happens.

Encouraging courageous Mothers of the Church

Personal Profile



Chai Brady

The subject of women's role in the Church has been a hot topic in recent years, in Kilmore diocese one talented individual has been key in organising a group of women who are keen to learn more about modern human and spiritual formation.

Originally from Chicago and of Irish parentage, Kathryn Clarke is passionate about helping women who share an interest in serving the community.

Although born in Chicago, Kathryn has strong links with Ireland. Her mother was from Castleisland in Kerry and her father spent a lot of his childhood in Ireland.

"I would say my parents were what everyone would recognise here. We were Catholics, it was important to us, we said the family rosary every night. I would say I was deeply spiritual, I was a practicing Catholic, but I wouldn't say I was desperately religious," Kathryn said.

It was when she was in her early 20s she joined the Secular Franciscan Order, and a few years later married an Irishman. Wanting to bring up their six children – four daughters and two sons – in a countryside environment they moved to Bailieborough in Cavan, where her husband was from.

Kathryn began her career in domestic violence prevention, where she developed the first programme in Illinois for use of evidence based prosecution. As

supervisor of a court advocacy programme in Cook County Criminal Court, she developed protocols for 35 suburban police departments which increased the effectiveness of multi-organisational efforts.

A Certified Law Enforcement Instructor with North East Multi-Regional Trainers, she transitioned into consulting and provided training and policy development to dozens of police departments and private organisations.

Well-educated and with a demonstrated history of policymaking and training, Kathryn now uses her skills to support the faithful. She said: "Every skill I ever was trained in or I used in my first profession I am using now in my service to the Church: adult education, policy development, programme development.

"We are a diocese of 32 parishes and in order for goals to be met there has to be consistent application of safeguarding for example, we have a great safeguarding children policy in our

diocese, and we have to make sure the lay people serving the Church in five years' time understand and use the policy properly, things like that - that interests me."

“After relocating to Ireland, Kathryn provided consulting and training and developed policy for the domestic violence community.”

As the author of a novel *The Breakable Vow*, published by Harper Collins in 2002, Kathryn created and advanced a domestic violence prevention programme for Catholic High Schools known as DV-PEP. Initially piloted in 10 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago, Kathryn also provided training and implementation of the programme in several public schools including the Chicago Public School District and the Cleveland Public School District.

Kathryn Clarke



from Bishop Leo O'Reilly.

Currently one of the Church projects she is working on is the 'Mothers of the Church' course with women involved doing their first formation year last year.

“The methodology of formation includes elements from psychology (human formation), spiritual formation and also Catechism and Scripture.”

Geared to all women, the group aims to develop the role of Mary, the mother of the Church and to establish a structure to both form women and receive them into service for the diocese.

Women participating in the two year formation programme are taught a contemplative prayer practice and receive skills for healthy thinking patterns.

The methodology of formation includes elements from psychology (human formation), spiritual formation and also Catechism and Scripture.

Kathryn says: "Underpinning our efforts is the reality that you cannot have a healthy Catholic if you do not have a well-adjusted human being. When women assemble to develop and contemplate their service to the faith family and to all of society, initiatives and roles tend to become clear because they are based on the most pressing and urgent needs of people. We promote a shift from a sin-based spirituality to a virtue-based spirituality."

Speaking of her hopes for the future she adds: "Our hope is that women will continue to assemble and receive formation, allow themselves to develop and then be equipped to help form other young people in programmes that can represent the Gospel message in a contemporary way."



Children's Corner

Chai Brady

Spread your wings to create a DIY birdfeeder

Inspiring an appreciation for nature and care for animals is what many parents strive to foster in their children.

With one activity you can check this box as well as so many others. Building a bird feeder using a cardboard carton is a good way of recycling, being creative as well as helping local wildlife flourish.

When it comes to cardboard cartons as long as they're the right shape and they haven't stored any toxic or potentially poisonous substances, you can use anything really, but tried and tested containers are milk or juice cartons.

All you need is a scissors or craft knife (make sure young children are supervised), a pencil or stick to use as a perch for the birds, some durable string and your chosen carton.

- On the side of the carton, about a quarter of the way up, draw a door shape large enough for a small bird to fit through, then cut it out.
- To make the perch, pierce a hole below the door opening (with scissors or a craft knife) and another

at the same height on the opposite side of the carton to feed a pencil or stick through.

- The birds can then balance on the perch as they nibble on the birdseed. Make the roof by piercing three holes into the top of the carton. To hang your bird feeder, thread some string through the holes in the roof and tie in a loop.
- Then decorate the bird feeder any way you like.
- Finally, fill the bottom of the carton with birdseed and hang it wherever birds can access it.

The fun doesn't end when you completed your bird feeder and filled it, now you can keep a look out for some local visitors! Picking up a book on birds and learning how to identify it could be the beginning of a new hobby.

Depending on where you place your bird feeder it's probably best to get a pair of binoculars, this way you can get a better look at your winged friends and, if you want, figure out the species that is most prevalent in your area, and who knows, maybe you'll even spot some rare and beautiful specimens.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



'Pop-in Pastor' & Co. seek connections

I was puzzled to see a warning about strong language for a religious programme, and even more puzzled to find no strong language in the programme after all!

So it was with **Young, Welsh and Pretty Religious** on BBC1 on Tuesday of last week. In this episode the focus was on a young Catholic priest, a Hare Krishna monk and a mediation practitioner, all in Wales. Fr Ross was newly ordained, had been through the care system due to family problems and had the Faith as his bedrock. He appreciated the support of his community and was particularly enthused by Baptism. We saw him carrying out one such joyful ceremony and he felt privileged to do so.

After that he was off to give a Confirmation preparation course and then home to watch *Dr Who*!

Later we accompanied him on a visit to a faith school where he was part of the 'Pop-In Pastor' scheme. With the second level students he was showing a Christian perspective on social issues – this day it was finding a religious connection with the 'Show Racism the Red Card' initiative.

He reckoned the students "get" the Gospel message, though they mightn't call it that. He could see the young people's commitment to social equality, including,



The main characters who featured in BBC1's *Young, Welsh and Pretty Religious*.

curiously, what he called "equal marriage".

One of the contemporary problems in this area of religious belief is the mistaken assumption that science and religion are in conflict. You get people quoting the 'Big Bang' theory as if it contradicts religious belief without realising that the theory was developed by a Jesuit priest – Fr Georges Lemaitre – and that Soviet scientists rejected it because they thought it came too close to supporting a religious view of the world and creation.

The false polarisation between religion and science was evident in comedy drama **Young Sheldon** (E4, Monday) which, ironically, is a spin off from another show, *The Big Bang Theory*. In this episode

Sheldon declares he doesn't believe in God but accepts the challenge of the pastor (who says he has "the coolest boss") to do some research, like a good scientist would do. The mother is not too happy when he starts exploring other religions for his database: "Your database is Baptist – that's all the data you need!"

Comments

Sheldon takes to the study with his usual thoroughness and makes some learned comments about the Gospel of John. His discussion with a young Catholic, student, Tam, is less enlightening, though of course these are little children talking about religion, always interesting even if the theology is a bit off.

This Catholic says Jesus is

not God, but "the Son", and adds that there's a "ghost" as well, but not the scary kind, more like Casper (the friendly ghost). Sheldon says he doesn't have any sins, but Tam says therefore he has the sin of pride.

Eventually Sheldon invents his own religion, Mathology, where the only sin is stupidity. This is after



Carol Malone.

he has a dream about binary code being God. This version of God says that without evil and suffering there can be no good and happiness.

Though very funny at times, and the mother is certainly a likeable character, some Christians might have several reservations about a somewhat negative attitude to religion in the show.

Finally, there were so many programmes last week relating to the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy. I found **Day of Days: June 1944** (PBS America, Saturday) a nice combination of history and emotion as veterans of that day remembered the harrowing events.

Elderly men were moved to tears as they remembered how scared they were and how upset they were as their friends got killed around them. One said there were no atheists on those landing crafts, as people prayed and called out for their mothers.

Also moved to tears was Carol Malone, regular panelist on **The Pledge** (Sky News) last Thursday as she watched a video of one veteran who had parachuted into occupied France re-enacting that jump in a tandem sky dive at the age of 94.

Another panellist Nick Ferrari remarked on how modest these heroes were when interviewed. During the show it was good to see the ticker tape telling us of the words of

PICK OF THE WEEK

CATHOLIC ENLIGHTENMENT: GIFTS OF CATHOLICISM TO CIVILISATION
EWTN, Saturday, June 15, 8.30pm

Fr Marcus Holden and Fr Andrew Pinsent explore how Catholics influenced educational systems, pioneered women's roles in teaching and politics, and revolutionised theories in ethics and philosophy.

SUNDAY MORNING LIVE
BBC1, Sunday, June 16, 11.30am

New series: Seán Fletcher, Ría Hebden and panel discuss religious and ethical stories from the week.

THE SIMPSONS
Channel 4, Sunday, June 16, 2pm

Homer has a vision from God and decides to start his own religion.

Pope Francis delivered by Cardinal Marc Ouellet during the ceremonies, a tribute to the effect that D-Day had been "decisive in the fight against Nazi barbarism".

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@boreganmedia

Film

Aubrey Malone



Confessional reform of abrasive talk show hostess

Late Night (15A)

I've often wondered when they'd get around to doing a millennial version of Sidney Lumet's *Network*. Here it's crossed with *The Devil Wears Prada*. It's the story of how Katie Hopkins becomes Ellen DeGeneres, how Margaret Thatcher becomes Theresa May.

Emma Thompson is misogynistic chat show hostess Katherine Newbury, a televisual dinosaur. She's political incorrectness personified, a woman who talks at you instead of to you. She's been getting away with it for decades but now the long knives are out. The Youtube generation is catching up on her.

Her ratings are falling. Her boss wants her head on a plate. Then she becomes embroiled in a sex scandal.

Her humanisation comes about through default. This dilutes its cathartic element.

The film moves in fits and starts. She makes a few stabs at reformation early on but then reverts into her more customary sniping. I liked that about it. Life mirrors such inconsistency.

The downside is that we feel we're constantly being thrown narrative curve balls. Twice, for instance, she fires the "diversity hire" comedy writer Molly (Mindy Kaling). Molly is ethnic and a woman – two things that have formerly been anomalous within the waspish all-male milieu over

which Katherine has presided since Adam was a (white) boy.

For a comedy writer I only recall hearing two of Molly's jokes in the film. Where are the rest of them? When she's fired the first time she doesn't seem to mind but when Newbury tells her she's surplus to requirements the second time she goes into a meltdown. This kind of inconsistency rankles.

Newbury lacks a heart most of the time. The effort of director Nisha Ganatra to give her one in the last reel is perhaps too little too late. Her relationship to her husband (a Parkinsons disease-afflicted John Lithgow) is also underdeveloped.

Thompson's most endearing quality has always been

her likeability. There's not enough of that in evidence here to make the film hum. And can we really believe she hasn't met her writers despite working in the same building as them for 27 years?

The fact that the film can intrigue and amuse us for 100 minutes despite these stumbling blocks is a tribute not only to Ganatra but also to Kaling's script.

A panegyric to writers themselves, those fifth wheels of most aspects of the arts, it fizzles with quotable quotes.

Some of you might find it too smart-alecky (or vulgar) but it captures the dog-eat-dog world of TV to a 't'. If Newbury is a reincarnated Howard Beale (the deranged



Emma Thompson stars in *Late Night*.

prophet of *Network*), she's a cold-blooded version of him. For a comedic performer she lacks humour – unless it's of the iconoclastic variety.

Maybe this is where humour is at today. Maybe

it's where it's always been at. Whatever, Ganatra and Kaling nail it.

This will make *Late Night* very appealing to a generation weaned on the laceration of sacred cows.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Why is Irish not our spoken

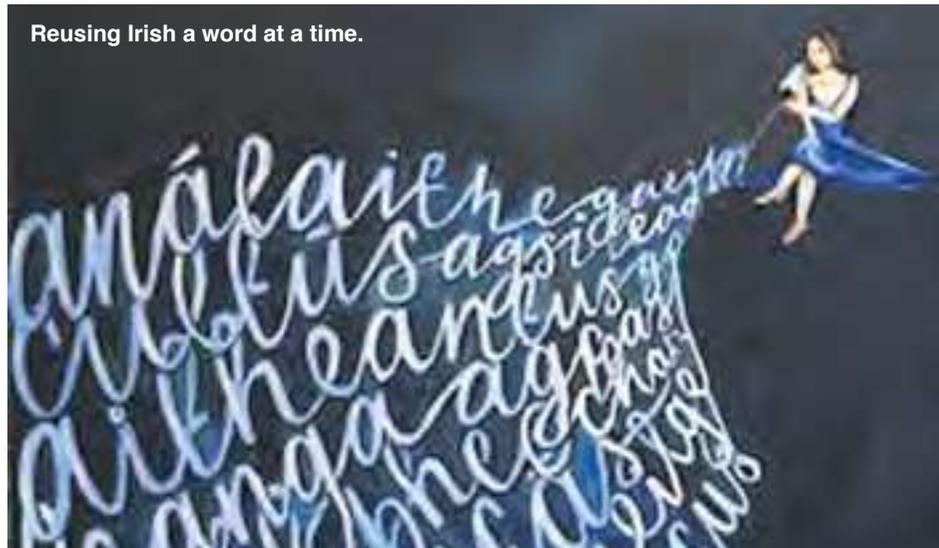
Gaeilge: A Radical Revolution
by Caoimín De Barra
(Currach Press, €14.99)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This is an interesting polemic which argues that Irish should and could be restored as the generally spoken language of most people in the Republic of Ireland.

In the introduction the author acknowledges that most people have already made up their minds on this issue. However, he forges ahead with his thesis.

He begins with his experience learning Irish. He rates the teaching of the subject at the schools he attended in Cork – Cloghroe National School and Christian Brothers College – as satisfactory. Yet



Reusing Irish a word at a time.

when he ended his secondary education his knowledge of Irish was unsatisfactory. However, it was the opposite with regard to other subjects,

particularly English and History. Significantly he notes that his father had frequently impressed upon him the importance of English and

that he and his father shared a keen interest in Irish history.

De Barra sets out the main stages in the decline of Irish. The 17th Century saw the lin-

guistic balance of power in Ireland shift sharply in favour of English as a result of political developments. The battle of Kinsale in 1601 marked the end of the independent Gaelic lordships and the Irish-speaking elite that had held sway over the island.

“In 1919 the first Dáil Éireann made it clear that the revival of Irish was one of its priorities”

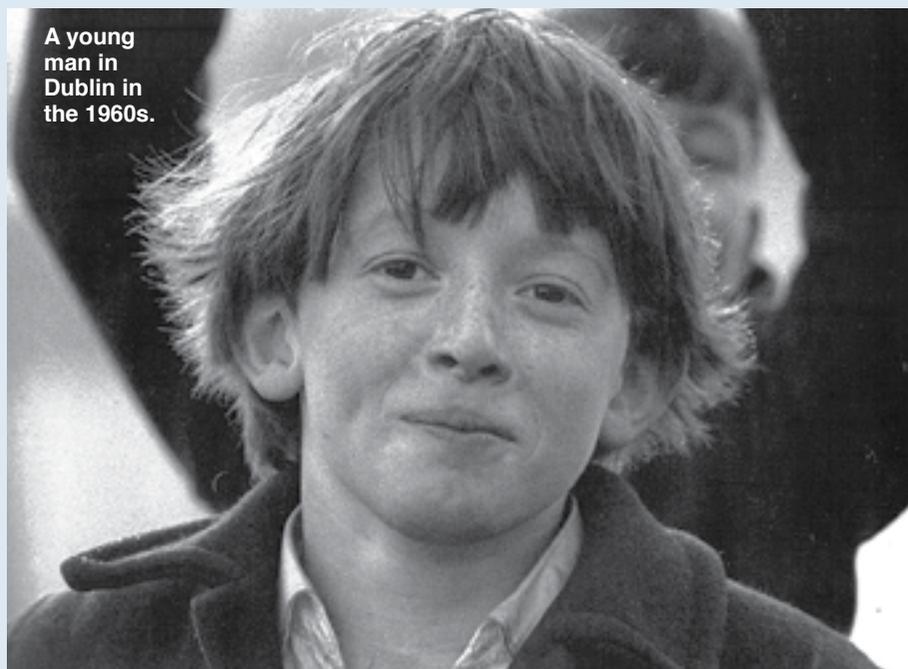
The Cromwellian campaign of the 1650s and the Williamite wars later in the century brought about a massive land transfer from the native Irish to settlers from England and Scotland.

The Irish who managed

to keep their lands found it politic to speak English rather than Irish. But the Great Famine (1845-49) was arguably the primary reason for the decline of Irish. Within six years one third of the Irish-speaking world had vanished – these speakers had either died or fled overseas.

Efforts were made by the independent Irish State to promote the language. In 1919 the first Dáil Éireann made it clear that the revival of Irish was one of its priorities. It declared Irish to be the ‘first official language’ and it was made compulsory in primary and secondary schools. Also, in most schools other subjects were taught through the medium of Irish. Arrangements were made whereby all government business could be conducted in the vernacu-

A young man in Dublin in the 1960s.



Dublin way back then

A Different Dublin: The 1960s through the lens, photographs
by Bill Hogan
(Currach Books, €19.99)

Peter Costello

Bill Hogan was a cinema projectionist in different cinemas across Dublin in the 1960s. He worked largely at night, so most of the daylight hours were his own to indulge his developing interest in street photography. He was largely inspired by Henri Cartier-Bresson.

His images have fortunately been rescued and are now published. They quite rival the more famous Fr Browne's. Though he came from comfortable working class people, what Bill Hogan saw and recorded on the streets of Dublin moved and troubles him. “I will never forget the emptiness and loneliness on the faces of some of the

homeless that I photographed.”

In one image a protester holds up a sign: “10,000 homeless in Dublin.” The current figure is 10,378 (Peter McVerry Trust), so no improvement there. This book is not a social study of that kind. But the images of the elderly, the poor and those scraping a living are matched by images of well-fed young people in good jobs or at college. Yet the dominant feeling is not of an ageing worn out city, but one teeming with vital and active young children at active and hearty play.

However thinking about the images one realises what is missing: working men in their 30s and 40s: emigration was still cutting deeply into the society of both Dublin and rural Ireland.

This is a moving and thought provoking book, one by a Dubliner who knows his city and its people.

What to read about Medjugorje

Peter Costello

Medjugorje, which has grown into one of the most popular pilgrimages for Catholics around the world in recent decades, lies in the southern Herzegovina region of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which Catholics make up a mere 14% of the population.

For many centuries, this area of Eastern Europe was under Ottoman rule, and the region has long been an area in which Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholicism – and more lately Communism and religious indifference – have struggled with each other. The Balkan wars of the 1990s was no real surprise to students of history.

This long history of division and conflict and cultural and regional discord has to be borne in mind by all visitors to the town. They are not in a country where norms they are used to exist. Here it is different.

Here even the word ‘peace’ carries different meanings in the various communities. For some it might mean living in harmony with your neighbours, whoever they are. For others peace is only to be ensured by getting rid of those neighbours, by one means or another.

Under the Ottomans there were no secular parishes as we are familiar with in the West. It was the Franciscans who oversaw the local churches. The Austrians attempted to change this after



Dusk falls on Medjugorje.

one of the Balkan wars, and the Franciscans were ordered to hand over their parishes, a move they strongly resisted.

This long standing conflict between the Franciscans and the Bishop of Mostar has had its effect on the events at Medjugorje.

Medjugorje is not so far either from Sarajevo, where the Crown Prince of Austria was murdered by agents of Serbia, acting as local patriots. This led to the intended conflict with Austria, but also to Russia siding with Serbia in the conflict with, throwing the whole continent in the Great War.

Anniversary year

In this anniversary year of the end of the Great War we have to reflect that it still casts its shadow over Europe.

These facts are part of the deep background to Medjugorje; they are not

immaterial to trying to understand local attitudes and the Balkan approach to truth. Truth is what ‘our side’ wants to believe.

Those interested in studying the Balkans as a whole in this light cannot do better still than read *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* [1941], by Rebecca West (Penguin Classics, \$30). This is still relevant to understanding anything about Medjugorje.

The events that have been occurring in the town since 1981 have become so involved in claim and counter-claim that an ordinary reader is often left totally perplexed. But Catholics have only to realise that the final pronouncement has not been made on these events by Rome. They are quite free to believe what they want, but sound judgement is a difficult process.

Here are examples of

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.

language?

lar.

Fluency

There were many other incentives, including a wide range of scholarships, to promote the language. The results are not encouraging. According to the 2016 census just under 40% of Irish people claimed to be able to speak the language. But experts question the level of fluency with which they are able to do so. A more realistic figure about the health of the language is that just 1.7% of the population are daily speakers of Irish.

De Barra discusses the challenges faced by other minority languages. He describes the travails of these promoting Welsh in Wales, Scots-Gaelic in Scotland, French in Canada and Spanish in the US. Yet Israel made

Hebrew – a dead language – the State's official and generally spoken language. And Bahasa was successfully established as the official language across the hundreds of islands that constitute Indonesia (though this is not such a good example as it is an example of Javanese internal colonialism over minority groups).

The author rightly says that the main reason why Irish people do not speak Irish is because they have no need to do so. Thus to have Irish spoken more generally a situation has to be created where it is necessary to speak it.

To this end he suggests a radical transformation of the government bureaucracy, whereby all its business would be conducted in Irish with only exceptional arrangements for those who

wish to access its services in English.

In theory this could lead to more Irish being spoken, but in reality it is most unlikely that it will ever be realised. The Irish electorate would have none of this.

Internet

The internet and the world wide web have sounded the death knell for many minority languages across the world. Some are extinct. The aphorism *tír gan teanga, tír gan anam* is a truism.

Hence it is incumbent on all who love the language to be strongly supportive of the Irish language enthusiasts who are diligent in ensuring that this crucially important element of our national heritage is not lost.

any scientific denomination seems to us capable of describing these phenomena, we will define them willingly as an active, intense state of prayer disconnected partially from the external world which we will call, a state of contemplation and communication, objective or subjective depending on whether the person with whom they are in communicating is external or not."

In contrast to this were the stark views of Bishop Andrea Gemma in May 2008, expressed to the influential Italian Catholic journalist Gianluca Barile, were stark: "It is an absolutely diabolical event, around which numerous underworld interests revolve. The Holy Church, which alone can make a pronouncement, through the words of the Bishop of Mostar, has already said publicly and officially that the Madonna never appeared in Medjugorje and that this whole production is the work of the Devil."

He went on to speak of "underworld interests" being involved, and of the personal financial interests of the visionaries in the multitude of businesses that had sprung up there: "At Medjugorje everything happens for the sake of money: pilgrimages, overnight stays, the sales of trinkets.

"In this way, abusing the good faith of the poor people who go there with the idea of meeting the Madonna, the false seers have set

themselves up financially; they have married and live a wealthy life, to say the least."

This may seem to be overheated language. But his strong words give one a feel for how the sides are now drawn up.

This is no simple matter of 'modern-minded secularists' automatically opposing the seemingly miraculous. John Anthony Foley is a recognised expert of traditional outlook who writes mainly about Fatima, which with Lourdes retains its status as a major pilgrimage. His book is called *Medjugorje Revisited: 30 Years of Visions or Religious Fraud?* (Thetokos, £13.95). This 438-page critique met with a very hostile reviews from devotees of Medjugorje.

There are, as other pages of this issue will demonstrate, many other books which might be read. But might I suggest as an initial step, one which many cradle-Catholics would have taken perhaps automatically in the past, to see what the Catholic Truth Society says.

David Baldwin's *Medjugorje: What is happening there, and what the Church has said about it* (CTS, Kindle edition available, £2.62) provides a basic guide and a clear account of the official position of the Church.

With Baldwin in hand a reader could begin to explore, with very great care, the mountain of materials that are already in print and online, with more to come every year.

Web Watch

Greg Daly



A very modern divine comedy

"I always have an issue with people who say 'it's much more fun to play [someone] bad,'" Michael Sheen tells the *Sydney Morning Herald* at smh.com.au. "Is it? I think we've failed as a species if good is boring. If we made good boring then we are doing something wrong. Goodness is about sharing, joy and being generous and connecting, and that's the best thing we have in the world. That's what makes life living. So if you can't make that interesting or fun, you might as well pack up and go home."

Interviewed as part of an article about the Amazon-BBC adaptation of Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's apocalyptic comedy *Good Omens*, he explains that in working out how to play the angel Aziraphale he decided that it would be the angel's nature to love other characters, including David Tennant's demon Crowley.

"There's a lazy way of playing goodness and I didn't want to do that. I'm always trying to look for moments that will allow an audience to feel for what he's doing in a way that is authentic, that connects."

Book

At syfy.com Neil Gaiman maps out why he made changes he did when adapting the book, while at colldier.com David Tennant explains why Crowley, as played by him, looks rather different to how he is described in the original book.

"You know we started with a much more sort of clean cut look because that's...if there is any description of Crowley, it's that, it's that he wore a sort of three-piece suit and his hair is slicked back," he says. "But that's very much



David Tennant and Michael Sheen in *Good Omens*.

a Crowley born of the late 80s, 90s, I think, which is when the book came out. And he should be of now. So, we kind of had to slightly expand with that. If you are doing that kind of yuppie, *American Psycho* thing then, what's the 2019 equivalent? I think he feels like he's really cool. So, what does somebody who thinks they're really cool in 2018 look like?"

"There's a lazy way of playing goodness and I didn't want to do that"

Another fascinating detail in that article is that it features both lead actors commenting on how, in a depressing way, the adaptation feels rather more timely than the original book did.

"Well, because it was

written 30 years ago," Michael Sheen says, "Neil and Terry had to introduce a line into the book, which was to say it was something along the lines of it was ironic it was the end of the time when everyone was getting along so well. Which they were, then."

"The Berlin Wall had come down, the world was a very different sort of place at that point," he continues, "and, so, Neil talked about the idea that they felt kind of odd to be writing about the apocalypse when we were at the end of history as people were calling it at the time. The Cold War had come to an end and it seemed like we discovered the answer to everything. Now, 30 years on with the TV adaptation, we're in a different position. So, it feels more prescient now."

"Knee-deep in history suddenly," David Tennant interjects, and Sheen agrees: "Too much history."

US comedian's ring of truth

Meanwhile, over at patheos.com/blogs/deaconsbench, Deacon Greg Kandra highlights a fascinating *New York Times* interview with comedian and presenter Stephen Colbert, who talks of being raised Catholic and what he has learned about loss from multiple readings of the last century's great Catholic epic *The Lord of the Rings*, and how he understands Faith.

"Faith is not trying to change the

world," he says. "Faith is not trying to change God. Faith isn't trying to change the order of things. Faith isn't trying to maintain your position. Faith isn't trying to make less of the other. Faith is asking God to change you. You are the subject of God's love, and in accepting that, you can transform yourself and release yourself of these appetites that are almost always at someone else's expense."

“This long history of division and conflict and cultural and regions discord has to be borne in mind by all visitors to the town”

conflicting views from which a careful reader will derive some close idea of what has been said.

Medjugorje Unfolds: In Peace and in War (Gracewing, available online), by Robert Faricy SJ, represents the views of an eminent Marianologist, who has made a lifelong study of the subject and whose careful books have enlightened many readers. In support of this are the works of René Laurentin, such as *Is the Virgin Mary Appearing at Medjugorje?* or *Apparitions de Marie a Medjugorie: Oú est la verité?* (Giubert, €16.50), and others, based on his study of the visionaries.

He, too, was a much respected figure and his personal conclusion was clear: "In Medjugorje the raptures are not pathological and there is no trickery. Not

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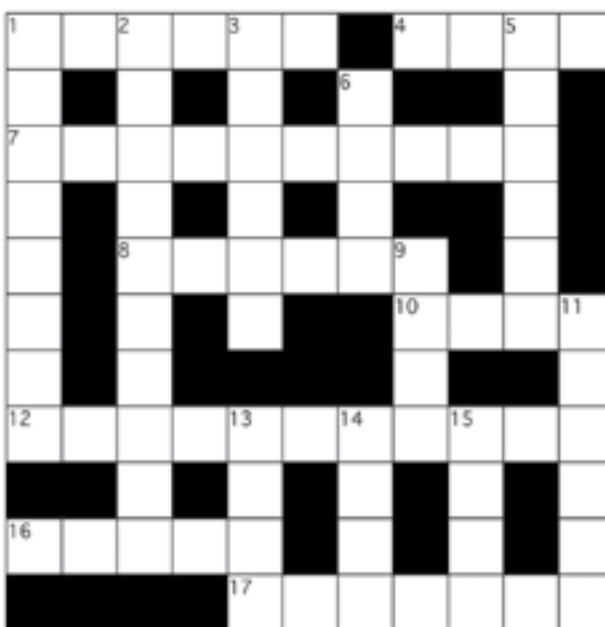
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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 286



ACROSS

- 1 This top has a part to keep your head covered (6)
- 4 Meat we get from cows (4)
- 7 Putting on your best outfit, or putting on adults clothes for fun (8,2)
- 8 'Don't tell anyone - it's a _____!' (6)
- 10 You see with these (4)
- 12 She's the Mum of your mother or father (11)
- 16 Smash (5)
- 17 This part of what you hear with seems like musical instrument! (7)

DOWN

- 1 You may leave milk out for this spiky creature (8)
- 2 Password used to get into the cave in 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' (4,6)
- 3 Creepy-crawly (6)
- 5 Area ruled by an emperor or empress (6)
- 6 "_____ upon a time" (4)
- 9 Exam (4)
- 11 Small river (6)
- 13 'The grand old _____ of York, he had 10,000 men' (4)
- 14 Above (4)
- 15 It is made up of sixty minutes (4)

SOLUTIONS, JUNE 6

GORDIUS No.406

Across - 1 Apt 3 High command 8 Rained 9 Southern Cross 10 Dates 11 Logic 13 Ducks 15 Amnesia 16 Citadel 20 Trait 23 Blest 24 Motor car 25 Dreamt 26 Draughtsmen 27 Doh

Down - 1 Aerodynamic 2 Thirteen 3 Heeds 4 Hassock 5 Motel 6 Avenue 7 Din 12 Cable-stitch 13 Drift 14 Saint 17 Dives and Lazarus 19 Portia 22 Shrug 23 Byron 24 Mud

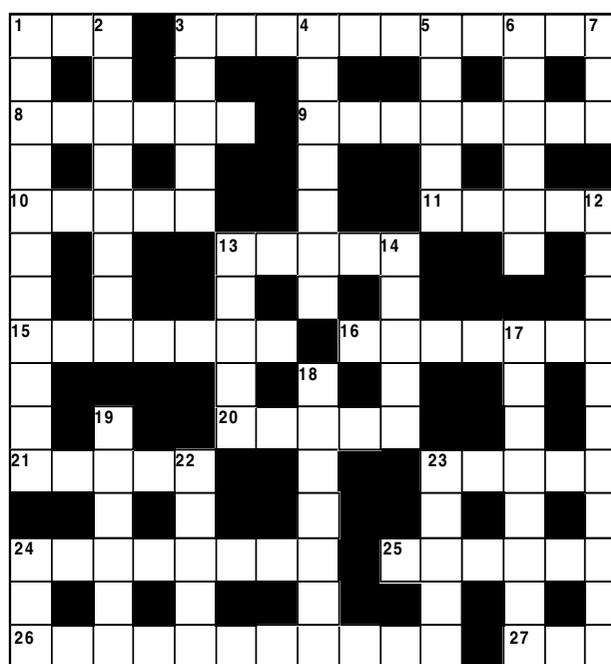
CHILDREN'S No.285

Across - 1 High chair 6 Loose 7 Jelly 8 Trespasser 12 Trousers 13 Echo 15 Pisa 16 Goose 17 Tadpole

Down - 1 Half-time 2 Gloves 3 Cheaper 4 Ideas 5 Sky 9 Sausage 10 Eyebrow 11 Asleep 12 Top up 14 Cola

Crossword

Gordius 407



ACROSS

- 1 So many can provide a piece of turf (3)
- 3 One whose activity is always linked to cigarettes (5-6)
- 8 "A question came first!", one roared (6)
- 9, 24a & 25a Strangely disaffact a hotter hermit for a long awaited Marian revelation (3,5,6,2,6)
- 10 The language of ancient Rome (5)
- 11 Newly-baked or newly-picked (5)
- 13 Estimate the width of the railroad (5)
- 15 It helps you write letters to agitated clients (7)
- 16 Let on, feign (7)
- 20 Burn with hot water or steam (5)
- 21 Pieces of fruit to get you out of a slump? (5)
- 23 Filled with tedium (5)
- 24 See 9 across
- 25 See 9 across
- 26 Was Sherlock's hat a spokesperson for Bambi? (11)
- 27 Dine (3)

DOWN

- 1 Bursary for a student vessel (11)
- 2 When work stops in the era of feathers (8)
- 3 Hygienic (5)
- 4 HMS Suit goes around a narrow strip of land (7)
- 5 Distinctive design element (5)
- 6 Historically, the title of the German emperor (6)
- 7 Crimson (3)
- 12 Rigidly laid down specification for an armour-piercing bullet? (4,3,4)
- 13 Profits as gin is distributed (5)
- 14 Was mistaken (5)
- 17 Drive the demons out of a deranged, cerise ox (8)
- 18 Odious (7)
- 19 Traditional savoury tart from Lorraine (6)
- 22 Paces (5)
- 23 Might Al rib politician Tony thus? (5)
- 24 Unhappy (3)

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Sudoku Corner

286

Easy



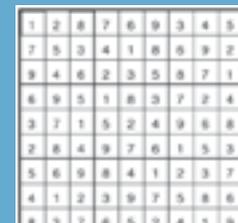
Hard



Last week's Easy 285



Last week's Hard 285





Notebook

Fr Bernard Healy

Rome's call for us to develop a deeper perspective

I RECENTLY CELEBRATED early-morning Mass for a group of American seminarians. They were heading to the airport so as to fly back to their home dioceses after spending the past semester living in the Pontifical Irish College and attending classes at Rome's Angelicum University.



During the homily I reminded them of the college's motto, a phrase taken from the writings of St Patrick: *Ut Christiani ita et Romani sitis* – As you are Christians, so may you also be Romans! That was St Patrick's prayer for the little flock of Christians that he evangelised on the edge of the known world.

Extremes

But what does it mean to be a Roman? People can have some strange ideas about the life of students in Rome. I've met more than one person who thought that we all live cheek by jowl with the Holy Father in the Vatican Palace or in some kind of monastery.

At the opposite extreme, other people see the city as the home of the worst kind of clerical venality, politicking and immorality. The sins and failings of some along with the inevitable faults of any

bureaucracy make Romanitas into a dirty word.

As I explained to those young men, I hoped that they would look back on their time in Rome as

- Rome is also the place where one can learn what it means for the Church to be apostolic. The diversity of the Church's 'Catholic' dimension, would be meaningless without the common faith and hope we receive from the teaching of the Apostles. In 117AD, St Ignatius the Bishop of Antioch was being brought to the city of Rome to be martyred. As he was taken through Turkey he wrote

strengthening their priesthood by helping them know the Church as both Catholic and Apostolic.

By Catholic, we mean universal. During their time in Rome they got to know priests, seminarians, religious and lay people from every continent, some here temporarily for studies or other duties, others here permanently helping the Holy Father with his mission.

From their new friends they learned that the work and mission of the Church is much more varied than the experience of their own diocese or country. (This is something we also learn from our returned missionaries in Ireland.)

If you have the ears to hear, in Rome you will soon appreciate that the strengths and weaknesses of the local Church look very

different in the context of a worldwide communion, and that the Pope's ministry of teaching and service is directed, not at this or that individual country or problem, but at upholding and supporting the preaching of the fullness of the faith throughout the whole world.

“We in Ireland can warn the Catholic world about the importance of vigilance”

The Mexican Archbishop Jorge Patrón Wong who has a special responsibility for seminaries made the point during a recent visit to the Irish College that our time in Rome is perhaps the one opportunity we have of learning from our brother priests what

challenges the Church faces worldwide and what we ourselves might learn from each other's experiences.

It should be clear that we have much to learn from the joy and intensity of the Faith as practised in so many other parts of the world, and that we in Ireland can warn the Catholic world about the importance of vigilance in safeguarding and the need to be prepared for the questions posed by secularisation.

That experience of dialogue also makes it clear how complicated a mission the Holy Father has in trying to keep up with the situation of the worldwide Church and how what might seem obvious in Dublin makes no sense to the Christians of Dar-Es-Salaam. Rome always invites us to take a broader and deeper perspective.

letters to the churches of various cities advising them on doctrine and discipline.

However, writing to Rome, he saw no need to teach, for he knew that they had already been fully instructed by St Peter and St Paul just a few decades previously.

Despite all the changes that come with time and circumstance, the history of Christian Rome,

with her heroes and villains, her saints and her sinners, ultimately testifies to the strength of faith that is rooted in what the Apostles have passed on, and that learns from the experience of the whole Catholic world.

For all its flaws, Rome is a unique opportunity to see what it is for many nations to be called into a genuine communion.



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