

The Irish Catholic

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Iraq's beleaguered Christians: emerging from the shadows?

Inside Christian communities finally liberated from ISIS

With the ongoing retreat of so-called Islamic State in the face of an Iraqi army offensive, many Christians are speaking of the horror they endured under the Islamist regime. This week, we report from northern Iraq which has been ravaged by violence and where Christians have been targeted for killing and forced conversions.

With ISIS apparently nearing defeat in Iraq, many Christians who have fled the area to the relative safety of camps in safer regions are making tentative plans to rebuild their lives.

It'll be a long road to recovery and anything

approaching a normal life, but there are signs that Iraq's Christians in the area once controlled by ISIS are taking the first steps forward.

Iraq's Christians have suffered persecution for centuries, yet their faith has survived and the community will remain, provided their material needs are met, a Chaldean Catholic bishop has said.

"The story of suffering of Iraqi Christians is an ongoing phenomenon," Chaldean Bishop Bawai Soro said this week.

"For 2,000 years, it's a story of suffering, a suffering Church," he added, a "Church of the martyrs."

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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment returns in the autumn

Medical experts pour cold water on latest Knock 'vision'

Mags Gargan

Medical experts have poured cold water on reports of a vision of the Virgin Mary at Knock shrine at the weekend, advising that staring at the sun can cause blurred vision.

The Association of Optometrists Ireland warned of the "very high risk of a retinal burn" after a video was posted on the internet of a large crowd in Knock allegedly staring at the sun dancing in the sky.

Members of the travelling community gathered at the Marian shrine at Knock on Saturday in the hope of a vision of Our Lady, after a 14-year-old boy from the community said he had seen visions of Mary while in Fatima in May and that she would appear in Knock to bless everyone present.

His father explained in an audio message posted on the internet that the boy had seen Our Lady in Fatima for two days and his son had received the message that she would appear in Knock on June 10.

In a video posted on Facebook on June 10 by Bidy Connors titled, 'Our lady appeared in knock today. Astonishing Never get over what i seen. Please watch', a crowd estimated at 2,000 are shown gathered at Knock and staring at the sun.

In the video, which has been viewed over half a million times, the crowd can be heard praying the Rosary and excited voices shouting "There's Our Lady. The blue light", "The sun is spinning" and "Thank you Our Lady".

Linda McGivney of the Association of Optometrists Ireland said staring at the

sun and "the overstimulation of the retina would cause an after-image type of effect and it's up to you to interpret what shapes you are seeing".

"Staring at the sun is not a good idea," she said "There is a very high risk of a retinal

burn with that and we would recommend people do not do it. Usually it will settle down within a couple of weeks, sometimes up to six months, but sometimes people are left with a little area of blurred vision permanently."



Archbishop Eamon Martin and DUP leader Arlene Foster attending a remembrance service in Armagh on Monday to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Messines. Photo: Cliff Donaldson

Parish structure 'not adequate' for youth ministry

Parishes that don't employ a youth minister reap the benefits of other parishes' investments according to a Galway priest.

Fr Brendan Kilcoyne spoke at a conference last week designed to showcase youth ministry options for parishes in Ireland.

He urged young people to engage in youth ministry, saying it is "urgent" and "profoundly meaningful" as well as "quite intimidating and difficult".

However he said the parish structure is not always helpful or adequate in facilitating youth ministry which crosses those boundaries frequently.

"So you'll find for instance that in one parish you'll have a youth minister operating, and are paying the youth

minister, and other parishes who wouldn't dream of doing the same thing are actually benefitting a lot from it - because their kids are going to the local school as well," Fr Kilcoyne said.

The priest, who is from St Mary's Parish in Athenry, added that a young person's peer group is extremely important, more so than parents or teachers.

He added that a great temptation with youth ministry is to give talks to adults, saying "the real power lies elsewhere".

The Fortify Youth Ministry Conference was held in St Paul's Church in Dublin on June 10, and featured Christian musician Matt Maher in concert.

Irish aid to help refugee crisis in South Sudan

Ireland is delivering 100 tonnes of humanitarian supplies to help refugees from South Sudan who are fleeing their homes. This includes tarpaulins, blankets, cooking sets and mosquito nets which are being airlifted to refugee camps in Uganda.

South Sudan has been embroiled in a civil conflict since December 2013 with refugees escaping to neighbouring countries. So far tens of thousands of people have been killed.

Over 20,000 Sudanese people will receive the supplies, which will be distributed by the United Nations' Refugee Agency. This will cost Ireland €500,000, and will go through the Irish Aid programme.

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Tory-DUP deal puts question mark over North's papal visit

Vatican officials question if this is the right time

Staff reporter

Theresa May's plan to govern with support from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) may jeopardise a proposed visit by Pope Francis to the North, according to diplomatic sources in Rome.

According to Vatican diplomatic sources quoted in the respected Italian daily *La Stampa*, "cooler heads in the [Vatican] Secretariat of State may be saying this is not the time for him to visit [the North]".

Citing fears that a deal with the DUP could alienate many Catholics in the North, the source said "to bring him [the Pope] into a situation like that, with all its religious undertones, could make him seem like a player within it".

Sources

According to *La Stampa*, which is credited amongst Vatican watchers with having first-rate sources in the Holy See, the official added: "one year ago a papal visit would have been timely and prudent and a recognition of the peace process. But after Brexit, the collapse of Belfast

government, and a British government in 'coalition' with a Protestant party it leaves a visit by the Pope looking more uncertain."

La Stampa cites the source as saying: "this is finely-balanced diplomatic decision... few can predict the climate of Northern Ireland in 2018 and the fraught negotiations ahead."

Peace process

Any visit by Pope Francis to Ireland that did not include a stop North of the border would be seen as hugely disappointing by northern Catholics as well as Church leaders and officials in both the Irish and British governments who have worked on the peace process.

St John Paul II had wanted to cross the border during his historic 1979 trip to Ireland. However, security fears prevented this. The Polish Pontiff often referred to his trip to Ireland as "unfinished" due to the absence of a stop in the North on the schedule.

The Vatican is unlikely to confirm any details of a trip by Pope Francis until early next year.

Fan the flame of faith in Derry



Some of the around 2,600 young people who enjoyed the annual Fan the Flame Mass for all the children who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Derry during the past year, which was celebrated in Celtic Park last week. Photo: Stephen Latimer

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The Church should 'scream from rooftops' about homelessness

Chai Brady

The Church needs to combat homelessness by lobbying politicians according to a well-known activist.

Fr Peter McVerry said that the homeless crisis in Ireland is a political problem, and no matter how many Catholic charities such as Focus Ireland, Crosscare and the Peter McVerry Trust get involved the fundamental issues won't be solved.

"The Church is a body that lives in Irish society and it has a right to have its say, not to demand, and I think on this issue it ought to be saying very, very strongly that homelessness, and particularly homeless families, is totally unacceptable," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

Fr McVerry said that

the Church has become embroiled in other social and political issues such as contraception, divorce and same-sex marriage, and that "it ought to be screaming from the rooftops about the problem of homelessness" in order to influence policy.

"It's not good enough for homeless people to depend on charity to have a home," he added.

The Peter McVerry Trust opened 11 apartments this week in St Agatha's Court, Dublin, for those who are exiting homelessness and are on the social housing list.

CEO Pat Doyle said their team will be encouraging residents to settle into their community and "to fully reintegrating into society through training, education and employment". So far the charity have provided 50 apartments by reusing existing buildings in Dublin.

Parents outraged abortion campaigners target children

Mags Gargan

Parents have expressed their outrage at the 'Repeal the Eighth' movement after campaigners handed out leaflets to children at the gates of a Dublin school.

Members of the 'Dublin North West Repeal the Eighth' group, a collection of pro-choice residents of Dublin 9 and 11 who say they are "committed to campaigning across our constituency to repeal the 8th", were reported to be handing out campaign

leaflets to schoolchildren leaving the Dominican College on Griffith Avenue, a Catholic secondary school for girls.

One father told *The Irish Catholic* his daughter received a leaflet when she was leaving the school last Friday following an exam. "I think it is outrageous that they would target children - it should be against the law," he said, continuing "a number of other parents have also complained about it."

"If it was pro-life people handing out leaflets under

the same circumstances there would be uproar," he said.

Cora Sherlock of the Pro-Life Campaign said "certainly giving out leaflets like that is questionable". "It is a very political way of addressing the issue and the repeal movement is a very political movement."

Opinion

She said if it was a pro-life group handing out leaflets at a school "then it would be all over Liveness, you'd have the school principal asked what was their opinion, you would

have a spokesperson from the group called in - you can imagine the outcry. It would be national news essentially.

"When it is one of the pro-choice groups then it either does not get reported on or if it does it just very much goes under the radar. I think the inequality of the two positions is the real issue," she said.

Deputy Principal at Dominican College, Marguerite Norris, told *The Irish Catholic* the school was "not aware" of the incident.



A picture of three Balinese footballers celebrating a goal has gone viral on social media as a symbol of religious tolerance. Standing in a row, Bali United's defender Ngurah Nanak (a Hindu), forward Yabes Roni (a Christian), and striker Miftahul Hamdi (a Muslim) were photographed celebrating Roni's second goal during a recent win against Borneo FC.

Americans to sing for Irish hospices

Dublin's Christchurch Cathedral is set to host 180 choristers from across the USA next month at a concert in aid of the Irish Hospice Foundation.

The second Dublin Choral Festival, to be held in the cathedral at 8pm on July 8, will see the American choristers from states as far apart as New Mexico and Maine performing a diverse programme of Celtic, American and European music, accompanied by two soloists, a traditional Celtic Band and musicians from the Irish Symphony Orchestra.

Festival coordinator Cindy Petty of Music Celebrations International, which runs festivals in several European capitals for non-profit choirs, said: "Last year's choral festival was such a hit that it was an easy decision to come back to Dublin again and build on that success".

The visiting choristers were "excited to be visiting Ireland" and be performing in so atmospheric and historical a venue, she said.

Tickets are available for €10 from christchurchcathedral.ie.



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The politics of the language wars

The choice of language, as I've often observed, is a hugely significant element of politics and culture.

An example worth noting emerged over last weekend in the wake of the British General Election: the use of the toxic phrase "socially conservative".

As it became clear that the Democratic Unionist Party would be the new Kingmakers in the House of Commons – enabling Theresa May's minority administration to govern – the no-no words was thrown around in the public realm that these people were – horrors! – "socially conservative". This was said by everyone from Jeremy Corbyn to Scots Conservative Ruth Davidson to former Tory Chancellor George Osborne.

'Socially conservative' is the code-word for being anti-abortion and not supporting gay marriage. It can also stretch to being a 'climate change denier'.

Demonstrations

The 10 DUP Members of Parliament (Emma Pengelly Gregory Campbell, Sammy Wilson, Nigel Dodds, Jim Shannon, Arlene Foster, Gavin Robinson, Jeffrey Donaldson, Paul Girvan and Ian Paisley Jnr) have been pilloried in demonstrations outside Westminster as "anti-gay, anti-woman, anti-green". 'Socially conservative', covers all that.

Jeremy Corbyn said, on BBC TV, "we have to challenge the DUP's socially conservative attitudes". (Had he won, of



Mary Kenny



DUP leader Arlene Foster (left) with Prime Minister Theresa May.

course, he would have imposed liberal abortion laws on Northern Ireland.)

The liberal-left hasn't won the British election, but it is winning the language war.

Irish Catholics may have little reason to support or respect the DUP, which has an historic anti-Catholic track record. It's regrettable, to many of us, that the SDLP lost its South Belfast

seat to Emma Pengelly (and lost two other seats - Mark Durkan in Foyle and Margaret Ritchie in South Down – to Sinn Féin, who are abstentionist).

Nevertheless, the DUP are entitled to uphold their traditional Christian values without being disparaged at every turn for being socially conservative.

Ironically, I believe that the DUP's presence at Westminster may be helpful to Ireland as a whole, in terms of facilitating a better deal about the border. And they'll get more Westminster investment in the North, too, as their price for supporting Mrs May.

Best interests

Sinn Féin could also have flown the flag for Ireland's best interests, but though they run for election, they will not take their seats in a British parliament.

Well, they too must follow their consciences, and if they believe that is the right thing to do, so be it. Yet there were many long decades when Sinn Féin wouldn't take their seats in Dáil Éireann, or would not recognise 'Free State' courts. They eventually changed their minds about all that, so anything is possible.

Mind you, Sinn Féin do not bear the stigma of being socially conservative, so – again, ironically – they'd probably receive a much warmer welcome at the Mother of Parliaments than the 'Bible-bashing' (another epithet used) DUP.

'Manspreading' a matter of manners

More language issues: the latest fad for putting manners on men is to object to 'manspreading' – that is, men sitting on public transport with their legs and posteriors taking up more public space than their fair share.

Public signs

Madrid's left-wing city authority now has public signs which forbid it. Honestly, this is what the fierce old Spanish socialist movement has come to – teaching Miss Manners rules to uncouth blokes on public transport!

Sitting selfishly in a public space is a matter of common consideration and proper manners. It's hardly a burning political or civic issue. In any case, obese people of either gender are apt to take up more space than they might.

Public transport authorities are entitled to ask all passengers to show consideration. But they should also enforce these regulations. Travelling on Iarnród Éireann recently from Tralee to Dublin Heuston, I heard constant reminders over the public address system to "keep feet off seats". Despite that, there was always some uncouth youth who insisted on putting his great big shoes on the seat opposite – and no one corrected him.

Unhygienic

Feet on seats is a rather more unhygienic practice than manspreading, so before manspreading is taken up by every city authority in the EU, I'd prefer if travel authorities would enforce their regulations on the former. Shoes and boots walk through all kinds of muddy conditions, including the remains of animal faeces, which can contain worm bacteria causing blindness.

Gardens conducive to spiritual reflections

My aunt used to have an idyllic garden painting on her wall, with the verse (by Dorothy Frances Gurney): "The kiss of the sun for pardon: the song of the birds for mirth/ One is nearer God's heart in a garden: than anywhere else on Earth."

Gardens are often conducive to spiritual reflections, but, at this time of the year of glorious gardens, I am more likely to be reminded of my failings and inadequacies, as I contrast the exquisite gardening accomplishments of others with my utterly hopeless tangle of overgrown grass, dandelions and weeds!

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MPs must represent all communities in the North – Bishop McKeown

Greg Daly

Derry's Bishop Donal McKeown has urged the North's newly elected MPs to serve all those in Northern Ireland, calling them to focus their efforts on those most in need. "The politicians, whatever their party, have been elected to look after the people, especially the weakest, and it doesn't matter what party they come from: that is their responsibility," he told *The Irish Catholic*, continuing, "It's important that care for the weak is their prime priority, and not just the party or other interests."

Reservations

Describing the election result as "democracy in action", Dr McKeown said, "these are the people whom the populace have chosen and it's important for all of us to accept that political reality, whatever reservations somebody might have about it. On the other hand, I think we from a Church perspective have to call our political leaders to offer wise leadership, rather

than just party political statements."

Dr McKeown's comments followed the June 8 general election, which saw the DUP and Sinn Féin winning 10 and seven seats respectively. The SDLP lost all three of its seats, while the Ulster Unionist Party lost both its seats.

The election has left Britain's Conservative Party needing DUP support for a narrow majority in Westminster, while the North's nationalist community is without any representation, as Sinn Féin ran on its traditional abstentionist platform.

Describing this as "very serious", Stranmillis College historian Dr Eamon Phoenix said this would be the first time since the 1870s that Westminster had been without a Northern nationalist voice.

"That is serious," he told *The Irish Catholic*, continuing, "It is a problematic issue, because it means now that not only does Arlene Foster hold the balance of power, with outworkings that we still await, but it also

means that it'll be down to the DUP to put the Northern Irish case, whereas before you had three SDLP MPs led by Mark Durkan putting a very sensible soft-Brexit cri-

tique."

The SDLP faces an immense challenge in regaining ground while distinguishing itself from Sinn Féin, he said.

"As Unionism has moved

bodily towards the DUP, you have the same phenomenon in nationalism," he continued, "People don't feel they have the luxury anymore of voting for a moderate alternative."

A priestly vocation is an 'adventure'



Billy Caulfield pictured with his family at his ordination in Horeswood Parish Church in Wexford. Photo: Mary Browne

Mags Gargan

Becoming a priest in Ireland today "can truly be described as an adventure",

according to the Bishop of Ferns. Speaking at the ordination of Fr Billy Caulfield in Horeswood Parish Church in Wexford on Sunday, Bishop Denis Brennan told the new priest a vocation was an adventure. He said at times "you will feel the appreciation people have for your presence and ministry" and at other times "you will feel the anger/hostility people have for the Church in general directed at you".

He said for most priests "the heroism of the ordinary" is the biggest challenge they face. "The strength to face every day, the routine, the repetition,

believing that what you do is meaningful for others. This is where the heroism of the ordinary becomes very real," Bishop Brennan said. "This takes a special kind of courage and plenty of staying power. Anybody can do it for a time, but to do it all the days of your life demands great strength of character and generosity of spirit."

Meanwhile the Diocese of Cork & Ross celebrated an ordination on Saturday. Bishop John Buckley ordained Evin O'Brien at his home parish of the Holy Cross in Mahon. He is the first priest to be ordained from the parish community.



Evin O'Brien with his parents and Bishop John Buckley at his ordination in Holy Cross parish in Mahon, Cork.

Top theologian heads Down Under

A leading Irish theologian has been awarded a prestigious visiting scholarship in Australia. Mary Immaculate College's Prof. Eamonn Conway, a regular contributor to *The Irish Catholic*, has been appointed the 2017 SSJG Visiting Scholar to Perth's University of Notre Dame, and will begin his 12-week appointment early next month.

The Limerick-based theologian's first engagement there will be to address the university's senior management team on leadership and management in a Catholic university context.

While in Perth Prof. Conway will also speak on Pope Francis' writings, the future of priesthood and ministry, and the challenges and opportunities of contemporary Catholic education.

Prof. Conway said it was "a privilege to be the first Irish scholar to be honoured in this way given the strong Irish associations with Western Australia".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Decline in Irish abortions continues

There has been a decline in Irish abortion numbers for the 15th consecutive year.

According to the official statistics released by the British Department of Health, 3,265 women travelled from Ireland to England to have an abortion. This number stems from a continual drop since 2001 where the number of Irish abortions was 6,673.

"Reasons for decline are much more complex than abortion advocates suggest," said Cora Sherlock of the Pro Life Campaign.

She said abortion pills had a factor in the fall but that "the fall in the number of abortions has been happening for 15 years now, a period of time much longer than the abortion pills have been readily available online".

New National President for SVP

Kieran Stafford, newly elected National President of the Society of St Vincent De Paul (SVP), has promised to focus on alleviating the financial and emotional hurdles of struggling local communities.

Succeeding Geoff Meagher who held the position for the past five years, Stafford has reconfirmed that the Vincentian ethos will continue to be "committed to identifying the root causes of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland and advocate and work for the changes required to create a more just and caring society."

He acknowledged that this is a difficult challenge, and that new volunteers are necessary in ensuring that the charity organisation can respond to these requests for help.

Remembering those lost to farm accidents

Remembering those who have died or have suffered injury from accidents on Irish farms will be the focus an ecumenical remembrance service to be held in Co. Laois.

Around 120 families have contacted the directors of Embrace Farm, a bereavement support group, for their loved one to be remembered this year.

This annual event, which has taken place since 2014, will be held in the Church of the Most Holy Rosary in Abbeyleix at 2pm on June 25. The service will be led by Church of Ireland Bishop Michael Burrows with local Christian clergy in attendance.

Embrace Farm was founded by Brian Rohan and his wife Norma, in memory of his father Liam who died as a result of a farming accident.



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Now more than ever is the time to stand for life

On July 1, you, and as many other people as you can muster, are urgently required at the most important Rally for Life ever organised in Dublin.

This is the rally to Save the Eighth, and there has never been a more critical, more crucial, time for the pro-life majority to stand up and be counted.

The farcical and biased Citizens' Assembly has pushed for abortion "without restriction" to be legalised. George Soros and other outside parties are pouring millions of dollars into abortion campaigns.

The media is insisting that a referendum to smash the Eighth Amendment must be held – even though an RTE exit poll at the last election showed the issue was a priority for only 2% of voters. So this rally on July 1 will show the Government that saving lives, not ending them is the real priority for voters.

It will show the nation what a real Citizens' Assembly looks like, and put the Save the Eighth message centre stage as the campaign

This year's 'Save the Eighth' Rally is the most important yet writes **Niamh Uí Bhriain**



to protect life intensifies.

The media frequently tries to downplay major pro-life events, but it has always found the sheer size of the Rally for Life difficult to ignore. This year, the Save the 8th message of the rally needs to resonate loud and clear, and the bigger the crowd, the more that's likely to happen.

“ Keeping the Eighth in place then, could save the lives of up to 30 babies every single day”

At the rally, you can join with tens of thousands of people to show our Government, and the nation, that we are the pro-life majority, and we

are standing strong for life. In fact, the longer this debate goes on, the clearer it becomes that abortion kills a baby and hurts a woman, and that the truly compassionate and progressive answer to an unexpected pregnancy is to protect and love both mother and baby.

One thing is also increasingly clear from recent opinion polls: the Irish people are, by a very significant majority, opposed to abortion on demand, and they are increasingly concerned that Ireland would adopt the British model of abortion, where a shocking one in every five babies is killed before birth. In contrast, it is estimated that some 5% of Irish babies lose their lives to abortion.

Moreover, if we had Britain's abortion laws and Britain's abortion rates, we would have four times as many Irish abortions – up to 10,000 additional abortions every year, or 30 additional abortions every single day. That's a truly shocking scenario. Surely no reasonable, decent person should think that it would be a good thing to have more abortions?

In fact, much as abortion campaigners like to rail against the Eighth, they find it hard to deny that the pro-life amendment has been a life-saving measure. Keeping the Eighth in place then, could save the lives of up to 30 babies every single day. That's a goal that every reasonable, decent person should be able to support – fewer abortions, and increased support and compassion for mother and baby.

The message of the Rally for Life has always been one of celebrating life and seeking a better answer than abortion. The last Dublin rally launched the 'Every Life Matters' theme, and saw

people with disabilities take centre stage to explain why abortion discriminates.

Clearly the message, which continued after the rally in billboard, social media and media campaigns, resonated with the public: the most recent opinion poll for Ipsos/MRBI showed that support for abortion on disability grounds had significantly decreased from 50% to 36%.

“ The truly compassionate and progressive answer to an unexpected pregnancy is to protect and love both mother and baby”

The Rally for Life is always an amazing, colourful, celebration of life, but it won't happen without you, so we need you to commit to making this the most powerful rally yet – because this is the rally to Save the Eighth.

So we're asking you to come to the rally, and invite everyone you know along. You can also help with organising buses and local publicity efforts, and you can spread the word on social media using the #RallyforLife and #SaveThe8th hashtags. Abortion campaigners pushing to repeal the right to life of preborn babies may have total media support and massive funds from abroad, but they don't have you.

They don't have thousands of people of goodwill who are committed to protecting the most vulnerable of us from the real horror of abortion. The Rally for Life is a crucial part of the campaign to show the country why we must Save the Eighth. Be part of it on July 1. Join us to make this a gathering to remember at this crucial time for Ireland and for mothers and babies. See you there!

i Niamh Uí Bhriain is a spokeswoman for the Life Institute. www.thelifeinstitute.net

1.7.17 DUBLIN
RALLY FOR LIFE
#rallyforlife

We need **YOU** to make the 'Save the 8th' Rally happen!

It's time for pro-life people to stand up and be counted. Preborn children in this country are under constant attack from wealthy and powerful pro-abortion campaigners – and that's why the Save the 8th Rally needs to be the biggest and best ever.

We **urgently** need your help – **preborn babies and their mothers are relying on us** – so please, send what you can today to make the Save the 8th Rally happen!

This Rally cannot happen without your help!
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Be there! 2pm, Saturday, July 1st, Parnell Square, Dublin City Centre

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Colm Fitzpatrick

Tributes have poured in for the late Limerick priest, Fr Jack Finucane, who passed away last week at the age of 80. Alongside his elder brother and fellow priest Aengus, Fr Jack was instrumental in humanitarian relief efforts such as providing thousands of tons of food during the Nigerian famine in Biafra during the 1960s.

One of six children, Fr Finucane was born in 1937 and was later ordained in 1963 following his study in the seminary. An avid lover of sport, especially hurling and football, he was assigned a post in Nigeria with the Holy Ghost Fathers following his ordination. However, his Irish roots accompanied him throughout his life, a sentiment expressed by Bishop Brendan Leahy who said, "Despite leaving Limerick at the age of 18, Limerick never left him. He remained at all

Fr Jack Finucane: Death of a man who brought life



Fr Jack Finucane presenting President Michael D. Higgins with the Fr Aengus Finucane Award for Services to Humanity in 2016.

times in touch with what was going on here, not least on the sporting front."

He later studied in San Francisco for a Masters in Education and eventually

returned to Ireland to spend some time at Rockwell College where he was Dean of the Catering School.

Not only did Fr Finucane remain a prominent figure in Ireland, but he was also influential in aiding the starving population of a war-torn Biafra during the 1960s, using his diplomatic skills to help the NGO Concern in responding to the crisis. "In his deeds, he was a hero in that he dedicated his life to protecting and defending the weakest people on our planet," said Bishop Leahy, adding that, "there is no greater Christian calling and he took it up selflessly and courageously, often putting his safety at great risk but also completely indifferent to that risk."

Following the defeat of Biafra, Fr Finucane was captured and arrested by the Nigerian authorities, spending three weeks incarcerated

for his life-saving actions. This period of imprisonment, however, did not deter him from his humanitarian efforts as he continued to engage with poverty and injustice in Ethiopia, by, for example, advising Live Aid's Bob Geldof and bringing Bono to the impoverished country in 1985.

“He was a hero in that he dedicated his life to protecting and defending the weakest people on our planet”

In admiration of his work, President Michael D. Higgins stated: "His commitment to the ethical basis for, as well as the practical application of humanitarian principles

was exemplary. Jack Finucane's lifelong commitment to protecting the dignity of some of the world's poorest and most marginalised people will stand not only as a lasting tribute to all that is good about mankind, but is exemplary in its invitation not to avert our gaze from our current challenges of global hunger and poverty."

Concern

The Biafra aid campaign that he was so closely involved in led to the establishing of Concern Worldwide, of which he was a regional director until he retired in 2002.

Throughout this time, he responded to world-wide emergencies such as the Rwandan genocide in 1994 by visiting the city almost monthly and supporting resettlement programmes for the thousands of people who were imprisoned, or for unaccompanied children traumatised by the conflict. Indeed, his enduring commitment was such that he even returned to Sudan to alleviate the famine pandemic after his retirement.

“What Jack has achieved may never be fully quantified”

Concern Worldwide CEO Dominic MacSorley described him as "an unassuming leader" who "brought intelligence, drive and passion to what is now Ireland's leading humanitarian and development organisation".

"Along with his brother, Aengus, they were a bridge between Ireland's long tradition of missionary work defining contemporary humanitarian response characterised by professional, practical, compassionate

solutions on the ground. Together, they brought a nation with them."

He further remarked: "What Jack has achieved may never be fully quantified but he has saved and improved the lives of millions of people caught up in crisis and poverty. Sorely missed, he leaves behind a legacy of incredible humanitarian significance."

Fr Finucane remained deeply committed to his faith throughout his life, devoted to the Christian message of helping one's neighbour, able to balance his faith with the secular identity of Concern. He touched the lives of millions of people, and even towards the end, Fr Finucane walked with 70 Concern volunteers he had worked with over his lifetime, around the coast of Galway a few weeks ago.

Admiration

In admiration of Finucane's social justice pursuits, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan TD said: "In Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Rwanda, and indeed, in his work with Live Aid, he saved many lives and inspired others to join the struggle for global justice." He continued saying: "His legacy will endure in the work of the organisation he helped to found, Concern Worldwide. And his example will continue to inspire all those who champion the cause of global development."

He died suddenly last Wednesday in Kimmage Manor where he had been attending a retreat. His life is one that few could emulate, and his story will continue to inspire and embolden the millions of lives that he touched.



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Pope Francis taps Jesuit priest as a new bishop



Victoria Holthaus

The new Bishop of Raphoe has been described as a man of “dynamic service”. The Vatican announced on Friday that Pope Francis has appointed Fr Alan McGuckian SJ to succeed Bishop Philip Byoce OCD in Raphoe. He will be the first Jesuit bishop in Ireland in over 200 years.

“Fr McGuckian’s background in education and communications, as well as his recent immersion in pastoral planning and development with the Diocese of Down and Connor, indicate just some of the rich experiences and gifts that he will bring to his new ministry,” said Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland.

Bishop-elect McGuckian, 64, was born in Cloughmills, Co. Antrim, to the late Brian and Pauline McGuickian and as the youngest of six children. Two of his brothers, Frs Bernard and Michael, are also Jesuit priests. His other brother, John B. McGuckian, lives in Cloughmills while his sister, Mary Dynan, lives in Newry. His other sister, Paula Haughey, died in 2013.

He holds a love for the Irish language and studies various languages. He received a BA in Latin and Spanish from University College Dublin and an MA in Irish Translation from Queen’s University College, Belfast.

Training

His training for the priesthood involved Philosophy in the Milltown Institute in Dublin and Theology in the Toronto School of Theology. After being ordained into priesthood in 1984, he then worked in secondary education for four years at Clongowes Wood College.

After his work at Clongowes, he took a six-month period of spiritual renewal in southern India and experienced serving in a shanty town in Quezon City in the Philippines.

In the 1990s, he ran the Jesuit Communication Centre in Dublin. During this time, he helped in setting up websites like www.sacredspace.ie and www.catholicireland.net. He



Fr Alan McGuckian SJ.

also worked with Tony Bolger to set up Church Resources and Church Services TV. At the same time, he served as the editor for *An Timire* and *Foilseacháin Ábhair Spioradálta* for ten years.

His involvement in language continued when he translated the autobiography of St Ignatius Loyola from the Spanish original into the Irish language under the title *Scéal an Oilithrigh (Foilseacháin Ábhair Spioradálta)*.

While in Belfast, he served as chaplain to many of the Gaeolscoileanna in the Diocese of Down and Connor. For a few years, he was the Chaplain in the University of Ulster at Jordanstown and Belfast.

“ [Fr] Alan brought a spirit of dynamic service to various Jesuit Apostolates ”

For the last six years he has worked with the Diocese of Down and Connor on the ‘Living Church’ project. In 2011, a Listening Process aimed to hear the hopes and fears of the priests, religious and the lay faithful in all 87 parishes. This led to the Living Church Report, which evolved into the Living Church Office. Their goal has been to make concrete the hopes and aspirations expressed in the report and then in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan which was commissioned by Bishop Noel Treanor.

Bishop Treanor noted his work experience with Fr McGuckian, saying he was “deeply impressed by his grounded faith and his pastoral sensitivity”.

“The clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Raphoe, in

this appointment, have been graced with a man and a priest of outstanding experience and indeed with the historic appointment of the first Jesuit bishop in Ireland,” he said.

In recent years, Fr McGuckian and his team have worked with clergy and laity in the establishment of Pastoral Communities all across the Diocese of Down and Connor. A major part of their work is ‘Facilitative and Discerning Leadership’ training which aims to foster a culture of co-responsibility for the mission of the Church between clergy and laity.

Gifts

“[Fr] Alan brought a spirit of dynamic service and generous commitment to the various Jesuit Apostolates in which he ministered. I have no doubt he will now bring these same gifts to his new office in pastoral care of the priest and people of the Diocese of Raphoe,” said Jesuit Provincial Fr Leonard Moloney SJ.

Bishop-elect McGuckian will succeed Bishop Boyce who has held the position for nearly 22 years. His resignation was formally accepted ‘now for later’ in January 2015. He joined the novitiate of the Discalced Carmelites in Loughrea, Co. Galway, making his first profession in 1959. After completing his philosophical studies in Dublin, he went to the Teresianum in Rome to study theology. This is also where he was ordained on April 17, 1966.

His Episcopal motto ‘In the Service of Mother Church’ sums up the mission he sees entrusted to him in the episcopal ministry: one of service to the people of God in the Diocese of Raphoe and to the whole family of the Church.

Archbishop Eamon Mar-

tin described Bishop Boyce as “a prayerful and caring companion, especially when I was taking up my own episcopal responsibilities. I have always sensed his Carmelite charisms of service, contemplations and fraternity.”

The Jesuit bishops who almost were...

● Ireland has twice almost had Jesuit bishops in the past.

Born in 1727, **John Butler** was ordained as a priest of the Society of Jesus in 1758. In 1773 the Jesuits were suppressed as an order by Pope Clement XIV – they would not be restored until 1814 – and Fr Butler moved to England where he served as a priest in Hereford. To his surprise, and possibly due to his being related to Cashel’s Archbishop James Butler, he was appointed bishop-elect of Limerick in April 1778.

However, by January the following year he had resigned his appointment, and so was never actually ordained to the episcopate, with Bishop Denis Conway being ordained to head the Diocese of Limerick the following month. Fr Butler returned to England where he died in 1786.

Laurence Arthur Nihel, born in 1726, was a ‘scholastic’ or student with the Jesuits, but although he is believed to have been ordained in 1773, the year of the papal suppression, he appears not to have been ordained as a priest of the order.

Ten years later he was appointed Bishop of Kilfenora and Apostolic Administrator of Kilmacduagh, being ordained Bishop of Kilfenora in 1784.

He died in 1795.

– Greg Daly

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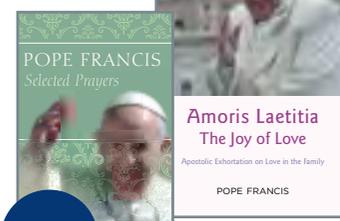
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As we prepare to celebrate the World Meeting of Families in Ireland in 2018, *Exploring Amoris Laetitia* offers timely and considered views on the joys and stumbling blocks facing families today.

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Martin Mansergh

The View



The DUP should pin down commitments that will outlast this temporary political arrangement

Changes in the political environment have occurred in the past 18 months with almost bewildering frequency, in many cases requiring radical reassessment of where we stand.

This week, a new Taoiseach Leo Varadkar is due to be elected. Our reaction, regardless of any political affiliations, should be to wish him well, as the country faces formidable challenges, and particularly since the basis on which the Government is formed allows for many constructive inputs. The possibility of an early election is likely to have receded as too much of a gamble, there being no guarantee that it would produce a fundamental

change or a more decisive result.

The advent of Leo Varadkar is being fitted into the dominant media narrative of the present time, another step forward for a liberal secular Ireland in the process of side-lining religious values from the public sphere. Why, in the current context, separation of Church and State is an assumed good, rather than, where appropriate, continuing co-operation

between Church and State, is never explained. Varadkar has, however, said that he would like to see his party become a warm house for social conservatives, which has not been the perception in recent years. A positive side-effect of his election will be the opportunity to strengthen Irish-Indian relations, including trade.

The outgoing Taoiseach Enda Kenny has at least four substantial achievements to his credit. Aply assisted by the outgoing Finance Minister Michael Noonan and the Labour Party, the most important was to see through the programme that put the Irish economy back on its feet, even if further repairs are badly needed.

“An Taoiseach provided good leadership with a sure touch in the lead-in to the opening of Brexit negotiations”

This did involve for both parties a substantial political cost. Secondly, he led a government for five years that restored stability, and then in very difficult circumstances put together a government that so far has not jeopardised hard-won progress, and that stakes out new ground in managing a complex and indecisive election result that may well recur.

Thirdly, Enda Kenny managed the Centenary Commemoration Programme in a way that satisfied nearly everyone and made people proud of our country, with sensitivity, a spirit of inclusion, but without triumphalism.

Fourthly, he provided good leadership with a sure touch in the lead-in to the opening of Brexit negotiations. Confirmation of Northern Ireland's EU status in the event of unity was valuable. The new Taoiseach will have to take



Theresa May.

personal charge of these negotiations, as only he will have access to fellow European leaders.

In the recent British election, the British Prime Minister Theresa May sought a mandate for a hard Brexit, and failed to obtain it. The old precept ‘keep calm and carry on’ is not going to work. She is now essentially a caretaker prime minister, as British Conservatives will not want to fight another election under her leadership.

Dependence on what, taking a leaf out of the Irish political book, is called a “confidence and supply arrangement” with the DUP is unlikely, initially at least, to enthuse the British public, most of whom know precious little about that party. Under the Good Friday Agreement, the British Government is committed to exercising its sovereign jurisdiction in Northern Ireland “with rigorous impartiality”, and must avoid taking sides on partisan issues.

Positives

There are two potential positives. The DUP, unlike in the past, do not want a hard border. Secondly, they are likely to want to mitigate the financial and economic impact of Brexit in a way

that could benefit the whole community. If they are wise, they will try to pin down commitments that will outlast temporary political arrangements. A new Executive would strengthen the hand of Northern Ireland and confidence in the peace process.

“The less compromising attitude to Stormont has paid off for Sinn Féin handsomely”

For the first time, the DUP will have a central role in sustaining a UK government, and this will require their close attention. It should not affect their willingness to restore the Northern power-sharing institutions.

The attitude of Sinn Féin is equally important. The less compromising attitude to Stormont has paid off for Sinn Féin handsomely in two elections this year, but has produced an equal and opposite reaction on the unionist side, which has also consolidated the DUP's position.

One positive by-product of Sinn Féin's strength is that it greatly reduces their exposed flank. In recent

weeks, two of the dissident armed factions have announced that they intend to wind up their activities. Sadly, parties representing more the middle ground, and to whom a lot of political progress achieved to date is owed, the UUP, SDLP and Alliance, have again been squeezed.

Political realism is required. A second Scottish independence referendum is off the agenda, and Scotland is not going to break up the UK any time soon. There is no evidence of any significant shift of opinion towards a unified Ireland that would justify a border poll. Demanding special EU status for Northern Ireland is all too often a transparent attempt to loosen the union. A co-operative approach will be more beneficial than a confrontational one.

It is difficult to assess at this stage the effect of the election on the Brexit negotiations. Those in Britain who want a more flexible approach will be emboldened. Younger voters were a force in the election that they were not in last year's referendum. In a remarkable letter published in *The Times* (June 5), former cabinet secretary under Margaret Thatcher, Lord Armstrong, who was chief British negotiator of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, warned that it was young people who would pay the price of Brexit. Where were the leaders, he asked, who had the courage to say, not that the decision had been taken and must be proceeded with, but “we are on the verge of making a dire historic mistake; let's put it right before it's too late”?

Seen in the context of the Anglo-sphere, Ireland is wedged between two powers, the US and Britain, that temporarily succumbed to populism and have gone off the rails politically. Fortunately, the Republic remains a committed member of an EU that is recovering politically and economically.

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Calling anti-Catholicism exactly what it really is

Catholics must be more willing to defend ourselves, writes **David Quinn**

The report into the country's mother and baby homes is due out next February. I think that points very strongly to an abortion referendum within weeks of that, in other words in March or April of next year. The Government won't want public anger at the mother and baby homes to go to waste. Those who back repeal of our pro-life law will hope the abortion referendum will be in the minds of many voters as a referendum about the Catholic Church. They will calculate that this will increase their chances of victory.

There is a huge amount of public anger at the Catholic Church in Ireland at present. This has been noted very recently by the Bishop of Ferns and the Bishop of Kilmore, Denis Brennan and Leo O'Reilly respectively.

Bishop O'Reilly noted "the hostility to the Church that is now a settled part of our society's culture".

He said: "It takes the form of gradual exclusion of Church people or activities from the public space. There is denigration of religious beliefs, practices and institutions on radio, television and on social and other media. There is often a focus on bad news about the Church to the almost total exclusion of any good news."

Bishop Brennan referred to "the volume of criticism and negativity directed at the Church over recent times".

Indication

Can we quantify the amount of anger at the Church? The sheer volume is not on its own an indication of some kind of universal feeling against Catholicism.

In 2011, a few months after the publication of the Cloyne Report and following the closing of the Irish Embassy to the Holy See and Enda Kenny's thundering denunciation of the Vatican, Amárach Research conducted an opinion poll on behalf of



A scene from the film *The Magdalene Sisters*.

The Iona Institute (which I head) to ascertain attitudes towards the Catholic Church in the wake of that outburst of public anger.

Among other things, it found that 47% of the public had an unfavourable attitude towards the Catholic Church, while only a quarter of the public had a favourable view (the remainder had no view).

In addition, it found that 23% of people agreed that Ireland would be better off if the Church disappeared from Irish society completely. This might be called the 'Brid Smith view'. To put it in Deputy Smith's terms, the Catholic Church belongs in the "dustbin".

“What major film of recent times has been about a heroic priest or nun?”

Thus, as at November 2011, almost a quarter of Irish people could be classified as very anti-Catholic and this section of the population generates an awful lot of noise.

Would this percentage have dropped between now and then? It might have for a while, but given the torrent of negative stories about the Church lately, it seems likely that it is back at the 2011 figure.

In recent weeks, we have had huge public controversies over the Tuam Mother and Baby Home and the decision to give ownership of the proposed new national maternity hospital to the Sisters of Charity (who have now announced their decision to quit all their hospitals).

This has led to massive vilification of the nuns, as though they have never

offered anything positive to society in all their years.

I've written before that there is the no major religion or organisation or ideology or culture or country that does not have dark chapters in its history. Human nature makes that unavoidable. But when we see only the dark chapters being highlighted, then we have reason to raise an eyebrow.

What major film of recent times has been about a heroic priest or nun? Instead we have had *A Love Divided*, *Song for a Raggy Boy*, *Philomena* and *The Magdalene Sisters*, repeated seemingly endlessly. Netflix is to air a programme about mother and baby homes set in Ireland, even though many societies had similar institutions and by no means were they all run by the Catholic Church.

A movie like *Philomena* could as easily been about the search of an English or American woman for her long-lost adopted child. Instead there is a relentless fixation on Ireland, and specifically Catholic Ireland. Why is that?

The Magdalene Sisters was made by a Scottish director and set here even though there were Magdalene homes in Scotland. Are films of this kind set in Ireland more marketable?

Film-makers, if they were so minded, could find many heroic nuns and priests to base movies on. They don't, and therefore we get one side of the story only and this gives the public an incredibly unbalanced picture of the history of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

There must be people under a certain age who have never met a nun and whose only image of nuns

comes from the likes of the *The Magdalene Sisters*. Is that fair? Would it be fair if every portrayal of some other group in society was uniformly negative?

It was obvious during the British General Election that the Tory press was ferociously anti-Corbyn.

They never gave him an even break - the criticism and ridicule were relentless. Everything was done to destroy him.

If it is fair to say the Tory press was anti-Corbyn, isn't it fair to say that large sections of the Irish media are anti-Catholic, and that

some politicians and groups are anti-Catholic? Of course it is.

What's to be done? For one thing, we have to call it what it is. We can't be scared to call something by its proper name. We have to be willing to call out anti-Catholicism when we see it. It's good to see some bishops getting to this point.

“There should be an inventory of all the good the Church has done in the past”

Secondly, there should be an inventory of all the good the Church has done in the past and is still doing today. If we Catholics don't remind people of the great good done by many Catholics - priests, religious and laity - who is going to do it for us, especially in the present climate? We must be more willing to defend ourselves.

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Out&About



Edited by Mags Gargan
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First Communion in Clonmel's Irishtown



TIPPERARY:

The First Communion class with Fr Billy Meehan at St Mary's, Irishtown, Clonmel. Photo: John Kelly



DUBLIN: The 19 people who completed Pathways: Exploring Faith and Ministry - a two-year part time course which is part of the Adult Faith Development courses offered by the Archdiocese of Dublin - are pictured with Bishop Ray Field in Clonliffe College and Sr Eileen Houlahan, Director of the Pathways Programme. Photo: John McElroy



LUXEMBOURG: Cofl Bishop Michael Burrows, Bishop Denis Nulty, Cllr John Murphy, Cathaoirleach of Carlow County Council and some of the Carlow pilgrims at the market square in Echternach, Luxembourg on a joint ecumenical diocesan pilgrimage in honour of St Willibrord.

IN SHORT

Carlow pilgrims attend 'Hopping Procession' in honour of St Willibrord

Last week Archbishop Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg presented the specially commissioned 'Relic of St Willibrord', Patron Saint of Luxembourg, to Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare & Leighlin to honour the historical links between the town of Echternach in Luxembourg and Co. Carlow. St Willibrord is one of the most important saints in Europe, having spent 12 years in County Carlow being trained and ordained before he led a mission to the continent in AD690.

Both Bishop Nulty and Cofl Bishop Michael Burrows led a joint ecumenical diocesan pilgrimage of nearly 60 people from Carlow to Echternach, to not only accept the relic but to also partake in the UNESCO World Heritage Status annual

'hopping procession' in honour of St Willibrord.

St Willibrord's Carlow connection had been forgotten for the most part, but through academic research by Professor Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, Department of History, NUI Galway over the past 30 years this connection has been re-established.

In 2002 Henri, the Grand Duke of Luxembourg paid a state to Ireland and in 2009 President Mary McAleese, as part of her state visit to Luxembourg, visited Echternach and spoke of the connection. Since then an active relationship has developed between organisations in both Carlow and Echternach in particular between the Willibrord Foundation and Carlow County Museum, operated by Carlow County Council. Over the coming weeks the museum will open a special year-long free exhibition about St Willibrord.

In late June, a group of 30 will travel from Echternach to Carlow and on June 24, as

part of their stay, the relic will be walked in a public procession along the Barrow Way from St Lasarian's Cathedral, Old Leighlin (Church of Ireland) to the Cathedral of the Assumption, Carlow (Roman Catholic) where it will be permanently housed.

Visit of relic of St Teresa of Calcutta to Ireland

The Knights of St Columbanus have received a first-class relic of St Teresa of Calcutta from the Postulation Office (c/o The Mother Teresa Centre of the Missionaries of Charity) and arranged a national itinerary across the island of Ireland to facilitate its veneration by the public.

The relic began its journey this week in Belfast, visiting St Patrick's church where a soup kitchen has recently been opened, part-funded by the local councils of the Knights of St Columbanus. In addition the relic visited

Corpus Christi church in Ballymurphy where St Teresa once visited and where two of her fellow sisters of the Missionaries of Charity worked.

St Martin magazine now available online

After 65 years, St Martin Apostolate has announced the launch of the digital version of the *St Martin Magazine* - the publication of this digital version was launched in conjunction with Magzster.com. www.stmartin.ie/subscriptions

Since 1952, St Martin Apostolate, as well as being home to the Moving Crib, has published the monthly *St Martin Magazine*. The apostolate is a registered charity with the aim to support the Dominican order in Ireland and spread the word of God and St Martin.

Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



TIPPERARY: Philip Dodd was baptised into the Catholic Church as an adult on Pentecost Sunday in St Mary's parish, Irishtown, Clonmel. Philip, a native of Wales, often visits Clonmel and stays with Ben and Finola O'Connell, Marfield Road, who acted as his sponsors. He is pictured with Fr Billy Meehan and the Coro Travirgolette Choir.



WEXFORD: Some of the participants, with Bishop Denis Brennan, at the recent 'Creative Spirit Awards' event in the Pastoral Centre at Saint Peter's College in Wexford

CARLOW: In celebration of the Feast of St Willibrord, Patron Saint of Luxembourg, and his Co. Carlow connection 5th and 6th class pupils in primary schools in Co. Carlow were invited to take part in an art competition. Pictured: Bishop Denis Nulty, Hannah Kehoe (first place), Cllr Fergal Browne, Mary Behan, Principal of Borris N.S., CofI Bishop Michael Burrows and Seamus O'Brien, 6th Class teacher.

MONAGHAN: Pictured following the Pentecost Ecumenical Service at St Sillian's, Tyholland were (l-r) Bishop Noel Treanor (Down & Connor), Catherine Wilson, Bishop John McDowell, Rev. Betty Thompson, Msgr Joseph McGuinness (Clogher) and Niall Hughes.



MONAGHAN: At a Mass of remembrance and thanksgiving in St Patrick's Church, Bawn for members of the Latton O'Rahilly Football Club are (l-r) Patrick Hamilton (chairperson), Packie Boyle, Ben McGeough, Fr Tom Quigley PP, Seamus Coyle (chairperson of events committee), Christina Weldon, (secretary) Martin Brady and Kevin Gartlan.

CLARE

Ennis parish walk on Sunday, June 18 at 2:30pm commencing at the Old Jail Road, outside Madden's Furniture shop.

CORK

Cork Eucharistic Procession on Sunday, June 18 with participants assembling in the grounds of the North Cathedral at 2.30pm and procession leaving the North Cathedral at 3pm, concluding with religious ceremony in Daunt's Square at 2.45pm. Preacher: Bishop William Crean.

Annual novena in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Sacred Heart Church, Mogeely until June 23 with Rosary, novena prayer and benediction at 8pm. Mass on final night.

Medjugorje prayer meeting in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament every Wednesday night at 8pm in Holy Trinity Church, Fr Matthew Quay, Cork. Prayers for healing first Wednesday of every month.

DUBLIN

Mass celebrating the 36th anniversary of the apparitions in Medjugorje, in the Church of Our Lady help of Christians, Navan Rd, D7 on Friday, June 23 at 7.30pm. Rosary, Mass and Adoration, Celebrant: Fr. Michael Duffy OFM. Choir: Glas Mira. Buses: 37, 38, 39, 70 and 122.

The parish of St John Vianney, 95 Ardlea Road, Artane, will be celebrating a Novena to the Sacred Heart until June 23. Mass with invited celebrant and preacher each day at 10am, except Sunday, as well as a Holy Hour on Thursdays at 7.30 pm. Confessions after each service. Blessed Sacrament Procession on Wednesday, June 21 after the 10am Mass.

Divine Mercy Devotions in the Church of Three Patrons, Rathgar every First Friday at 7pm. Mass, Benediction, chaplet & blessing with relic of St Faustina. Confessions available.

Agape Charismatic prayer meeting in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, Tuesdays, 8pm (Mass last Tues of the month), Disciples of the Divine Master Oratory, Junction of Newtownpark Av/Stillorgan Rd. Bus: 46A/C/D or 58C. Tel: 087-6509465.

Join other young adults (20s & 30s) for a reflective hike on Saturday, June 17 from Bray to Greystones, followed by food in the Happy Pear. Meeting at 11am at Bray Dart Station. Contact: siobhan.tighe@dublindiocese.ie

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

On Sunday, June 18 Archbishop Diarmuid Martin will celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi in the Church of St Laurence O'Toole, North Wall (Seville Place), Dublin 1 at 12noon and will then lead the Corpus Christi procession around neighbouring streets.

GALWAY

National Holy Wells Day, Sunday, June 18: Prayer service at 3pm at St Augustine's Well, 4-26 Lough Atalia Rd, Galway to pray for protection of water worldwide. Info: 091 725363 / 086 877 6537 or jesuitcentregalway@gmail.com www.loving sisterearth.com

A traditional Corpus Christi procession will take place on Sunday, June 18 in Galway City, beginning with Mass at the Abbey Church, St Francis Street at 3pm. As part of the procession, rose petals will be scattered and petal donations can be dropped at Abbey Church or the Cathedral that morning.

KILDARE

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

Corpus Christi procession in Newbridge on June 18 from St Conleth's Parish Church, down the riverside and concluding with Solemn Benediction in the Dominican College Grounds.

LAOIS

An Ecumenical Remembrance Service will be held in the Church of the Most Holy Rosary at 2pm on June 25 in Abbeyleix to remember loved ones who have died or have suffered injury from accidents on farms.

LIMERICK

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

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday, June 16 and every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085-7746763.

MAYO

Holy Souls Society of Ireland annual pilgrimage to Knock Shrine - Third Sunday in June (3pm) Mass in Basilica and August 21 for a 3pm Novena Mass.

TIPPERARY

'Intercession for Priests' prayer meeting (as established by Sr Briege McKenna) at 8pm every Tuesday at 4 Nash Place, Cahir. Enquiries to 086-3002951.

WICKLOW

The Carmelite Nuns, Delgany invite you to join them for their Corpus Christi procession, after 9.30am Mass on Sunday, June 18. First Communicants specially welcome to lead the procession. Refreshments afterwards.

St Patrick's Prayer Meeting on Tuesday evenings at 8pm in the Scout Hall, South Quay, Wicklow. All are welcome to get together for prayer, scripture, music and a cuppa.



Iraqi Christians liberated from Islamic State are optimistic, writes **James Mahon**, but there's a long road to recovery

What does the end of the world look like? Matthew, Luke, Timothy and the Book of Revelations all address this question in the Bible. Hollywood answers it with movies like *World War Z*, *Deep Impact* and *I am Legend*. Novelists portray this era in *The Road*, *Z for Zachariah* and *Children of Men*. For me the closest I have ever seen to the end of humanity is in Mosul, Iraq.

Roads covered in craters and potholes from airstrikes, bombs and tanks, standing lost and dazed on shattered footpaths, dust and dirt covered lost souls selling bits of old furniture, car parts and pieces of bent metal. Grills of trucks, vehicle exhausts and tyres stacked high into the sky as sandstorms wrap furiously around bullet ridden concrete buildings with not a shard of glass remaining in the windows.

The rumble of gunfire every few seconds is broken only by the gentle thud of explosion after explosion coming across the river Tigris from the stronghold of the so-called Islamic State terror organisation. Cars old and new rattle around these damaged roads, beggars shuffle amongst the remains of shops and stores and all around us the air is dry and sandy. You feel like you are choking, even when you know you can breathe.

Support

Our morning started at a refugee run by British and American charity the AMAR Foundation with support from the United Nations (UN). Its name: Qaqmawa. Our little pale blue four door Chevrolet ground across the hot gravel as we entered this large Roman-military-style camp.

Rows and rows of tents with the UN logo on the side made from the material I had only ever seen being used to carry bags of turf when living in the west of Ireland. Rough, coarse and strong domed white shapes sectioned off, their occupants sitting on concrete floors. In the middle sat four prefabs under what first appeared to be a petrol station forecourt structure.

An Iraqi flag fluttering from the top of the forecourt and lines and lines of families, young, old, headscarf-covered women, tired-looking men and boys peered at our car. The prefabs were labelled

pharmacy, reception, optometrist and doctor. Our little car shuddered to a halt outside and a team of white coats appeared from all the prefabs.

“He continually glances out the window during our conversation aware that he needs to help those in need”

“Welcome, busy day here, acute gastroenteritis, asthma, tonsillitis.” Dr Ayuoub standing at no more than five foot and looking like a clean-shaven teenager took control of our visit, but his energy levels were already down. He explained how his team deal with 150 patients a day from East Mosul.

“Qaqmawa has 1,100 tents in total” mutters Zana the camp director as we walked between the hot prefabs as the eyes of small children follow us, sullen and lost, looking yet still retaining some of that childhood curiosity.

“There are some patients they have dental problem, it is not my specialty but I cannot deal with them I am not a dentist,” adds Ayuoub as we step into his prefab, one desk, piles of medication and a few pens. He tells *The Irish Catholic* this is a struggle for him not just as a medical practitioner but as a man.

“There are many psychological problems here, because they are in a camp, it is not so nice for them, many of their problems come from the overcrowded area.”

You can see he is torn: he continually glances out the window during our conversation aware that he needs to help those in need. Cries of children in weathered clothes, some old football jerseys, concerned parents sitting on the concrete under the forecourt or on plastic chairs await him.

* * * * *

Flitting between the prefabs it's obvious this is a well-oiled medical machine, servicing the needs of patients in the best way it can with such limited resources. The pharmacist, Walid Uousif, older and more weathered than Ayuoub with a chin strap beard, proudly opens his prefab door and boasts he has a decent stock of medicine to help.

“Doxycycline, iron, Panderum, tablets for suppository and aspirin”. Waiting for his advice and pills are the Mathur family of eight.

Their five children – all aged under 10 – share one of the small tents nearest the medical centre.

Their father lifts the tent flap and welcomes us in to their concrete-floored wind-blown tent home. Its hot, the ground burns your shoes, the children pop in and out from playing outside while we are told of their struggle to flee Mosul.

“Here there are no bombs, it's not perfect, but we are safe.”

“This place is barren and bare, a few exposed buildings have been converted into military outposts after being recaptured from ISIS”

They want to return home. Dozens of families in the camp are hoping to get strong enough to head back – to return to the lives I described earlier on. It is a choice between a rock and a hard place. Some of these families will go, the remaining tents and the ones they vacate are awaiting an influx of refugees from IS-controlled west Mosul in the coming weeks.

This is one of 10 camps – it's one of the better ones. There is running water, security fences and guards and most importantly there is the medical centre.

Back to the road we join a dirt track running for 20 kilometres along the Kurdistan and Iraq border. Small grey stones fly up from the road hitting the bumper and wind screen as Peshmerga makeshift guard towers lie to our right every half mile or so. They glance up as we sped past and then carry on staring across the empty dry space to a city the world is

watching.

This place is barren and bare, a few exposed buildings have been converted into military outposts after being recaptured from ISIS. The road snakes along beside these little guard towers and outputs, a cloud of dust roars towards us and from it emerges a large oil tanker, stained grey and black, its driver struggling to control the tractor trailer as 18-wheels skid on the loose road surface searching in vain for traction, finally it regains some control and careers away from us hurtling towards Erbil in Kurdistan.

In Erbil there are hotels, shopping malls, nightclubs, restaurants, tourists and a life nothing like Qaqmawa or Mosul. They are just 80 kilometres apart but are two very different worlds. The dirt road ends by intersecting a highway, along which are tanks, cars and some sheep. We join this odd flow by turning right and within minutes hit a checkpoint.

It's like a garage in the middle of nowhere, open at both ends flags flying from its roof, Iraqi army soldiers stopping cars and trucks from both directions. Tanks sitting ominously facing us, their guns trained on the flow of traffic struggling to get through the questions, the stern faces, the passport-checking and then we were finally through.

It was one of half a dozen, more and more, every time my chest

To the end of the world and back

An Iraqi Federal police member walks next to a destroyed house after clashes with ISIS fighters in Mosul.



Fr Salar Boudagh finds burned holy books among the ruins of the church grounds in Batnaya, Iraq. Photos: CNS





tightened, my passport taken, pawed, flipped, scanned and handed between towering soldier after soldier, guns on hips and on shoulder glistening in the sun while eyebrows were raised and my driver and translator explained I am here to reflect and share the stories I hear, not change them.

Bartella, a small war-stricken town, appears on our right-hand side and I know I'm safe. We pull over off the road, the cars are now less frequent, the sun's rays piercing the dry air.

A police officer walks slowly towards us, boots dragging in the sand, his hands outstretched carrying small plastic water bottles and in broken English asks for my passport. His brown hairy hands covered in scars, he touches the harp on it running his fingers down and across it and smiles. He grabs my hand and points to his neck.

Underneath his bulletproof vest, something glistens, he contorts his body and a small gold crucifix pushes between the buttons of his shirt. He points a finger to his chest and exclaims: "Christian, Christian, Christian."

* * * * *

Nine miles from Mosul city centre, Bartella is free. It has been now for a few months but this man has not met many others from across the world to share the joy. Encouraging us out of the car he rushes to a little hut and behind it grabs colder

water bottles for us to drink.

Bartella had suffered, ISIS drove thousands of its Christian occupants out, many died, others fled to Erbil. The town has six churches and one very proud Orthodox Christian policeman. His eyes smiled as he led us through his hometown. Pro- and anti-Islamist graffiti and bullet holes were everywhere on abandoned buildings.

“We stop across the road from Mosul University whose buildings have been bombed, burned and hit with air strikes”

Cars can't drive here, the roads are trenches. We shuffled along as downed power lines and bits of tanks and heavy artillery guns lay strewn across the town's streets. Pointing to a large yellow building he smiled even wider. He ushered us inside and a wall of noise met us. Students, refill pads, old classrooms and timetables everywhere. Male and female students huddled together in groups, looking at their phones, smiling and laughing. Students bringing us into their classrooms.

“We suffered for three years with ISIS now the people need the general society to support

them” says Sami, who is studying IT management. He explains we are at the Masawat school, an old building being used as one of six satellite campuses for the bombed University of Mosul.

Other students who explain this is not their campus but a temporary one are just happy to be back in education

“While we stayed in Mosul we lost two years of education and now new we are going to start again,” one said.

Others are not so impressed by the facilities which have limited running water and electricity, no wireless internet and simple used or broken children's school desks to work.

“Small space, as you see, it's loud, do you see this, class very small,” a student tells me.

Ahmed is studying business management and wants the world to know his classmates are not giving up despite the conditions and limitations. “Ask them for their support, so we can recover from this war and get rid of ISIS,” he says.

We leave the school, waving at our police officer as we get back in the car and head straight for Mosul's heart. Sand blows from right to left obscuring our view as faded hooded figures trudge along the sides of the road. It's flat, there are no tall buildings just bruised-looking apartment buildings, more abandoned cars and those street

sellers with little to offer. We stop and talk to one who explains he makes less than six dollars a day selling old tools and bits of furniture.

But he is optimistic: “The electricity is back mostly, the authorities they have given us some running water, things are changing.”

We enter a market square where exposed pipes are leaking into the middle of the intersection. Pools of water and skidding cars, motorbikes and fruit stalls greet us and in the corner – a small café.

Basma Abdul Karim – slicing and dicing cucumber and tomatoes – strides forward, his little moustache maintained impeccably, a man confident in middle-age. He owns cafés in both east and west Mosul.

“The west is better for me, there I can get a \$1,000 here I can only get a quarter of that money.”

Karim claims the quality of his falafels make them sell regardless of which side of the warring city his customers come from.

“I have experience in this work, a driver is coming to me, they want traditional food, even city government official come to buy from me,” he says.

Struggling

While Karim's cafés are doing well, other Mosul businesses are struggling – yet he claims reputation helps. “I am famous even in Erbil, Dohuk, all Iraq I am famous for this type of food”.

Another helicopter whirrs overhead making its way back across the fading light of the city sky to one of those congested heavily-armed checkpoints we came through.

We stop across the road from Mosul University whose buildings have been bombed, burned and hit with air strikes: skeleton structures heavily-guarded. Cables and girders bent and broken hanging exposed. Lecturers fled, library books burned as the so-called Islamic State frowned on education. Here the sounds of the bombs and gunfire can be heard clearly; we are within 700 metres of the Al-Nuri mosque where the Islamic radicals are making their last stand.

As darkness creeps across the sky Iraqi army soldiers gesticulate calmly that we need to move along and get out. Accelerating out of the city fleeing the covering of night we meet traffic at every corner. The checkpoints emerge again and this time it's a waiting game. Every truck is checked: cabin, inside compartments in the trailer area, trailers, all for ISIS terrorists who may be intent on getting out to nearby peaceful Kurdistan or beyond. Lines of Iraqi soldiers walk amongst vehicles peering inside curious and concerned.

We clear another checkpoint, this time after a 40-minute wait. Our driver Sardar pulls the car off the main road and we arrive at a small church. It too has a little checkpoint, guarded by soldiers of the Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU), these are armed Assyrian Christians who liberated towns surrounding east Mosul from the so-called Islamic State just before

Christmas, including Bartella. They invite us out of the car and welcome us into the stunning stone building, its cross standing prominently over the arched gateway.

Before we enter the church we are brought to a large rusted metal sheet, the soldiers drag it back and a huge tunnel opens up – an ISIS tunnel, it weaves its way underground surfacing inside the beautiful old church where the terrorists have dug another hole the size of a centre circle on a football field. The stained glass windows have been broken but soldiers busy themselves sweeping the tiles and making this place of worship respectable, and their home.

“As darkness creeps across the sky Iraqi army soldiers gesticulate calmly that we need to move along and get out”

There are half a dozen NPU soldiers here. They total between 500 and 1,000 with some sources claiming they may have up to 5,000 reserve troops in the region and are trained by the US armed forces to overthrow ISIS from their Christian hometowns surrounding Mosul.

They proudly tell us of ringing church bells, celebrating Christmas and Easter and looking to the future as they drink small cups of tea and offer some sweet cake inside the church compound. The sun is now setting fast as we walk away from the smiling happy faces. As we pass under their checkpoint a crucifix stands sentinel over the little village its shadow falling on the deserted road and the silence.

As darkness consumes the roadway, Sardar gets a call from another journalist staying in my hotel. He's British and sounds distressed. He is stuttering and agitated, talking about how near Mosul University his friend was shot in the abdomen by ISIS fighters and is bleeding out. He is asking Sardar to turn around and come back to collect him as the friend has been flown by helicopter to Baghdad but will probably die. He asks me can we turn back and I respond with, “I don't mind”.

At that same second the English journalist gets another call, puts us on hold and when he returns explains he has a transport out of the city.

I take the phone and talk to him about his childhood, about Warwick, Sheffield, middle England and about football, distracting him and trying to make him laugh, he bids farewell and offers a ‘thank you’ and our little car rolls onto Erbil on a deserted road with just the pale moon and lines of white refugee tents for company.

i James Mahon is an international multimedia journalist, university lecturer and author from south Galway covering human interest stories and conflict situations in the US, Europe and Middle East.

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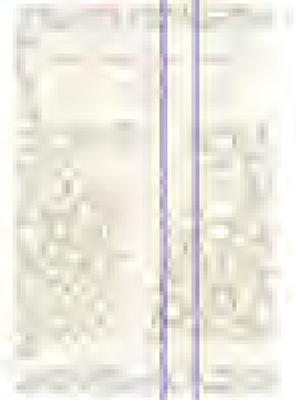


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IN BRIEF

Bishops' symposium calls for peace treaty in Korea

● Calls for a peace treaty between North and South Korea were made last week as the countries are still technically at war.

A symposium organised by South Korean bishops saw several speakers calling for a new peace agreement to replace a 64-year-old truce.

Hak-jae Kim, a researcher at the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies at Seoul National University, told the symposium that a peace accord would help usher in better relations with North Korea.

He said it remains shocking that Koreans continue to live under a truce put in place at the end of the Korean War in 1953. The truce was originally seen only as temporary measure.

Bishop Peter Lee Ki-heon of Uijeongbu, president of the bishops' committee, said that the past two South Korean administrations had suppressed the Catholic Church's activities for the reconciliation of the Korean people.

"We could do nearly nothing," Bishop Lee said. "I hope the new government led by Timothy Moon Jae-in solves the inter-Korean problems very well."

Scottish Episcopal Church votes in favour of same-sex marriage

A large majority of bishops in the Scottish Episcopal Church have voted to allow same-sex marriage.

The vote removed the condition that marriage is between a man and a woman, amending canon law last week.

Clergy are allowed to choose to officiate at gay marriages, meaning that they would not have to act against

their conscience.

It required the backing of at least two-thirds of bishops, clergy and laity, with 80% of bishops voting in favour and 68% of clergy.

Members of the Anglican community in Africa and Asia have put pressure on the head of the Anglican Communion, the Archbishop of Canterbury, not to budge on the issue.

Church officials call for dissolution of South African government

● Following its own findings of severe corruption in government, the South African Council of Churches called for the dissolving of parliament and new general elections.

The government "has lost its moral legitimacy" and new polls are needed, the South African Council of Churches said in a statement. The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference is a member of the council.

In April 2016, the council set up an "unburdening panel" for anyone who had participated in or knew of corrupt activities.

The report reveals an elite group "that parcels out contracts and other opportunities for their circles against the interests of good governance and against the common good of the South African citizenry", the statement said.

Members of parliament display "complete moral bankruptcy in the execution of their responsibilities in upholding the laws of the land", it said.

General elections are needed "to secure a fresh mandate based on acceptable values and on integrity", it added. South Africa's next elections are due in 2019.

Catholics shelter in Churches as violence rages in Myanmar

Civilians in Myanmar (Burma) are seeking shelter in churches following an ultimatum made by the country's army.

The military dropped letters warning residents to leave an area called Tanai, by June 15, or else they would be considered to have links with a rebel army it has been reported. Church social workers

have said that more than 600 civilians, who are mostly Christians, have sought refuge in churches so far.

The pastor of one of the churches said that "children, elderly and women are severely affected by the renewed fighting" between the rebel Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and government forces.

Nigerian priests threatened with suspension by Vatican

The Pope has ordered priests in Nigeria to accept the appointment of a new bishop or they will be suspended.

Pope Francis has given priests 30 days to send letters promising obedience to him. Anyone who doesn't will lose their current office.

Bishop Peter Ebere Okpaleke was appointed Bishop of Ahiara by then-Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. However it is believed that the majority of priests protested his appointment as Bishop Okpaleke was not a local priest, making it difficult for him to take control of the diocese.

After a meeting with Nigerian Church leaders on the issue the Vatican last week described the situation in the diocese as "unacceptable".

"The Holy Father, after a careful evaluation, spoke of the unacceptable situation in Ahiara and reserved the right to take appropriate measures," the Vatican said.

It was written on the blog of Archbishop Ignatius



Bishop Peter Okpaleke, who stood in for Bishop Paulinus Ezeokafor, receives the Oil of Chrism from the deacon at the Chrism Mass and Catedraticum for Adazi Catholic Region. Photo: Fides

Kaigama of Jos, president of the Nigerian bishops' conference, that Pope Francis had considered "suppressing the diocese".

However he decided against it as the Church "is a mother and cannot abandon her many children".

Each priest's letter, he said, "must clearly manifest total obedience to the Pope" and indicate a willingness

"to accept the bishop whom the Pope sends and has appointed".

The letters must be sent within 30 days, with a deadline of July 9, and it applies to priests residing in Nigeria or abroad.

When Bishop Okpaleke was appointed to the diocese, the announcement was met by protests and petitions calling for the appointment

of a bishop from among the local clergy. Nevertheless, he was ordained a bishop in May 2013, however the ordination didn't take place in the Ahiara diocese, but at a seminary in the Archdiocese of Owerri.

The controversial bishop met the Pope last week, and was joined in Rome by Nigerian bishops and several priests.

US annual audit of clerical abuse allegations sees rise in cases

There is still work to be done to help the victims of clerical abuse find healing a US report has found.

The 14th annual report on diocesan compliance with the US Catholic Church's "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" shows that Church leaders have taken steps to help many find solace and justice.

The charter was established this month 15 years ago to address allegations of sexual abuse against minors by Catholic clergy.

Introductory remarks in the 2017

report urge Church leaders not to assume that "sexual abuse of minors by the clergy is a thing of the past and a distant memory," wrote Francesco Cesareo, who is part of the board that oversees the audits.

The newly released report - based on audits conducted between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016 - shows that 1,232 survivors of child sexual abuse by clergy came forward with 1,318 clerical abuse allegations in 132 Catholic dioceses and eparchies.

The allegations represent reports of

abuse that occurred from the 1940s to the present.

There is an overall increase of 730 allegations compared to last year's report. The majority of new cases come from six dioceses in Minnesota, because the state in 2013 opened its civil statute of limitations for such claims until May 2016, giving victims aged over 24 a three-year window to sue for past abuse.

These six dioceses reported 351 more allegations than they did in the 2015 audit year.

Vatican official demands better policies for refugee children

National and international policies leave migrant children at the mercy of traffickers and sexual predators a Vatican official told the UN.

Policies that involve criminalising and detaining child migrants "are an insult to human dignity" and are "the dramatic evidence of existing inequalities and failing systems," said Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic, Vatican observer to UN agencies in Geneva.

"The grave error of the

detention model is that it considers the children as sole, isolated subjects responsible for the situations in which they find themselves and over which they have little, if any, control," the archbishop said.

"This model wrongly absolves the international community at large from responsibilities that it regularly fails to fulfill."

Archbishop Jurkovic spoke about the plight of child migrants during a UN Human

Rights Council panel discussion on "Unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents and human rights".

Children forced to flee without the protection of their parents or family members, he said, are given no options for a better life and are often "left at the lower levels of human degradation" due to lack of education and health care.

"They must be considered children first and foremost,



Archbishop Ivan Jurkovic. and their best interest must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning them," he added.



Edited by Chai Brady
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Protesters clash with police in Caracas as Venezuela's political and economic crisis turned violent after the country's president claimed he had the support of Pope Francis. Photo: CNS

Venezuela bishops look to Pope to highlight growing crisis

Top Catholic representatives from Venezuela are hopeful Pope Francis will highlight the crisis their country faces.

The leaders of Venezuela's bishops' conference met the Pope in the Vatican last week to discuss the suffering their people are experiencing.

"The Pope was truly moved by the situation and well informed about everything," said Archbishop Diego Padron Sanchez of Cumana, conference president. He added that he hoped the Pontiff would speak out "so the world

will know its gravity".

The bishops requested the meeting as Venezuela's political and economic crisis becomes increasingly violent, and after the country's president tried to claim he had the support of Pope Francis.

Inflation

Nearly 70 people have been killed by both government supporters and the opposition during anti-government protests since April, according to a

document provided by the bishops.

They also shared with the Pope a report compiled by Caritas Venezuela illustrating the dire situation many Venezuelans are facing because of exploding inflation and a lack of food and medicine.

On the eve of their meeting with the Pope, Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino of Caracas told Vatican Radio that "the repression" exercised by the government of President Nicolas Maduro "has been increasingly cruel".

Philippines' Independence Day "a farce" – bishop

Martial law in the southern Philippines and security forces' clashes with a local terrorist group made a mockery of Independence Day celebrations, a bishop based in the Philippines said.

"As long as there is martial law and unrest in Marawi City, the 'independence' of our nation is a farce," said Bishop Arturo Bastes of Sorsogon.

Independence day was

celebrated on Monday three weeks after hundreds of Islamist militants overran Marawi City, the capital of the island Mindanao. The militants abducted Christians and burnt a cathedral in the mainly Muslim town.

Bishop Bastes said by declaring martial law, the government "tramples on the freedom of citizens".

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte declared

martial law across the southern region of Mindanao on May 23, after a local terrorist organisation claiming to have ties with the Islamic State group attempted to occupy Marawi.

"People are not in the mood for celebrating," said the bishop, adding that he supported the demonstrations against the declaration of martial law "in my own little way".

Bishop Ruperto Santos of Balanga said the crisis in the southern Philippines is a call for all Filipinos to be "more patriotic, to be truly one, and united to love and labour for the good of the country".

"We should work together to build our country, not to break it, to do our best and be a blessing to one another, not to divide nor destroy," he said.

Vatican roundup

Pope defends women's right to participate in society

Pope Francis has defended the right of women to participate in social, economic and political life in all levels of society. The Pope was speaking to members, consultors and guests of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, which was holding its plenary assembly in Rome last week. Participants discussed the role of women in teaching universal fraternity.

Pope Francis told the assembly that unfortunately the ability of women to teach these values is "obscured and often unrecognised because of the many evils that afflict this world and that, in particular, damage women's dignity and their role".

"Women are fully entitled to actively take part in all settings, and their rights must be affirmed and protected, including through legal instruments wherever it may prove necessary," he said.

It was pointed out that women and children are often the victims of "blind violence", and that hatred and violence tear families apart and stop women carrying out their mission as educators.

He also urged all groups involved in interreligious dialogue to invite women to participate in all aspects of their discussions, not just when a topic or a gathering is about women.

Cardinal warns of pollution

The acidification of oceans will have drastic environmental consequences, speakers told a UN conference last week.

Over 3,500 people representing countries, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations attended the conference on sustainable development.

Cardinal Peter Turkson from Ghana said that effective regulations to safeguard the world's oceans are being blocked by "those who are profiting most

from marine resources, and who are intent on maintaining or increasing their advantages to the detriment of the poorer peoples and countries".

He also raised concern about the destruction of eco-systems, which would have "serious consequences for all of us".

Certain human activities were cited as the main cause of ocean pollution including over-fishing and pollution from oil, sewage, fertiliser, detergent, plastic and marine debris.

Italian president and Pope discuss country's challenges

Pope Francis discussed natural disasters, refugees and jobs with the Italian president last week. With recent earthquakes causing havoc in central Italy and large amounts of refugees entering the country from the Middle East the Italian administration have been under intense pressure.

There has also been a scramble to create jobs, especially for young people.

Pope Francis made a formal visit last Saturday to the Quirinal Palace, Italy's presidential residence. He said that "the dignity of the person, family and work" have inspired generations of Italians. Using those values to "transform challenges into occasions for growth," the Pope told the President, is seen particularly in "the welcoming of the numerous refugees who have landed on your shores", the rescue work in the Mediterranean carried out by Italian ships and the vast network of volunteers who assist the newly arrived migrants.

However the Pontiff added that there needed to be international cooperation to re-settle refugees.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella invited 200 young people from regions devastated by earthquakes to join him for the Pope's visit.

Letter from Rome

Francis flexes papal muscle in Nigeria



Pilgrims from Nigeria wait for the start of Pope Francis' celebration of Mass in St Peter's Square and left, Bishop Peter Ebere Okpaleke.



Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos, president of the Nigerian bishops' conference, on whose blog Pope Francis' message was posted. Photo: CNS



John L. Allen Jr

Here's a papal pop quiz: When's the last time you can remember a Pope openly demanding that all the priests of a specific diocese, whether they currently live there or not, write him a personal letter within 30 days pledging their loyalty, and threatening them with suspension if they don't comply?

If your answer is "I can't remember one," join the club. Yet that's precisely what Pope Francis has done in the southern Nigerian diocese of Ahiara.

It's been clear for some time the situation in Ahiara is toxic. Benedict XVI appointed a new bishop in 2012, Peter Ebere Okpaleke, an outsider who doesn't belong to the Mbaïse ethnic group that dominates the diocese. That produced a strong backlash from the clergy in Ahiara, who suspected tribal bias and demanded that one of their own be named.

The Mbaïse, legendarily ferocious about their Catholicism, are sometimes called the "Irish of Nigeria" because of their penchant for generating priests and dispatching them as missionaries. Yet they've long complained that their fidelity goes unappreciated, charging that the country's

hierarchy is dominated by rival ethnic groups from a neighbouring state that forms the ecclesiastical province of Onitsha, which includes Okpaleke's home diocese.

Many Mbaïse say they've been subjected to a form of "ecclesiastical colonisation", in this case not by Europeans but by other Nigerians. When the appointment was announced, some 400 priests and laity led a protest march while Mbaïse youth locked the doors of the cathedral to prevent the new bishop from entering.

For five years now, Ahiara has essentially been a diocese adrift. Cardinal John Onaiyekan of Abuja, the national capital, was appointed the apostolic administrator in July 2013, with the idea that he'd solve the problem by soothing some ruffled feathers, but so far, attempts to get the clergy to back down have proved fruitless.

“He said he was doing it ‘because the People of God are scandalised’”

Having tried the carrot, Francis decided this week to bring out the stick.

Following a meeting with Nigeria's bishops last Thursday, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos, president of the Nigerian bishops' conference, posted a text from Francis on his blog, which was subsequently picked up by Fides, the news agency of the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples that oversees traditional mission territories.

The Vatican eventually released the text of the missive on Saturday.

Francis lays out his demands, accusing the recalcitrant priests of wanting "to destroy the Church", and saying he'd even considered suppressing the diocese. Instead, he's demanding they all write to "clearly manifest total obedience to the Pope", including their willingness to accept the bishop he appoints.

No matter how you slice it, it's a dramatic show of papal muscle. Even Francis conceded, "this seems pretty harsh", but said he was doing it "because the People of God are scandalised, and Jesus reminds us that whoever causes scandal has to face the consequences."

"Maybe," he said, "someone was maneuvered without a full awareness of the wound inflicted on ecclesial communion."

Injustice

It remains to be seen how the priests will react, although just a few days ago during a Mass staged by the Mbaïse Catholic Priests Association, the group's president, Fr Augustin Ben Ekechukwu, described the Okpaleke appointment as an "injustice and malicious conspiracy" against the people of Mbaïse.

While we wait to see how things play out, here are three ironies about the situation worth pondering.

First, in other parts of the world, the Vatican quietly often takes the ethnic and linguistic composition of a diocese into account when naming bishops. In Quebec, for instance, there's been an emphasis on naming bishops from the Francophone majority, especially since the rise of Québecois

consciousness in the 1960s. In Belgium, there's long been a delicate balance between Flemish and Walloon bishops, and so on.

In Africa, however, since the era of Pope Paul VI, the preference often has cut the other way, in favour of naming bishops from outside the dominant ethnic group. The idea has been that the Church in most parts of Africa is still very young, often barely past the first generation, and it's important to drive home the universality of the faith by showing how it transcends conventional tribal loyalties.

“Pope Francis may consult widely and bide his time”

In other words, the practice is designed as a challenge to racial prejudice. Yet the Mbaïse clergy clearly don't see it that way, viewing what's happening as another chapter in their own suppression.

Assuming Francis gets the show of submission he's demanded, good Church politics going forward may counsel finding an acceptable Mbaïse priest to name to a high-profile gig somewhere else fairly soon, as a way of proving the deck isn't stacked against them.

Second, it's become a staple of the Western Catholic view of the world to presume that Africa represents a powerful conservative force in Church affairs. That's become a core part of the narrative, for instance, surrounding debates over *Amoris Laetitia*, the Pope's controversial document on the family.

However, if by 'conservative' one

means always inclined to defer to ecclesiastical authority, the Ahiara standoff clearly shows things aren't quite that simple. Africans are every bit as capable of being rambunctious and rebellious as, say, German Catholics, or, for that matter, Americans.

Third, the situation also confirms a key insight about Pope Francis.

Popularly, he's seen as a lovey-dovey man of dialogue and peace, including calling for a more decentralised and collegial Church, always counselling restraint and "tenderness". Yet beneath the surface still beats the heart of a classic Jesuit superior, and when the time comes for obedience, he fully and completely expects to get it.

If he doesn't, he's also prepared to make heads roll. We've seen that before, for instance with his interventions in a couple of religious orders and movements, and we're seeing it again in Nigeria. Francis may consult widely and bide his time, but once a decision has been made, there's no looking back ... and, if necessary, he'll just steamroll whomever stands in his way.

Time will tell if Francis' tough love finally unties the knot in Ahiara. However, there's probably a lesson in all this about the consequences of obstinately resisting a Pope's will, especially when the handwriting is on the wall, and that's a lesson with implications far broader than one Nigerian diocese.

John Allen Jr is editor of CruXNow.com

British election has the makings of a Greek tragedy



Austen Ivereigh

Ever since the election results were confirmed, we Brits have been speaking a lot of ancient Greek.

For a start, there's the hubris of the prime minister, Theresa May, in calling an election to secure a strong, stable government to better negotiate with Brussels, only to find herself weak and wobbly in a hung parliament, 12 seats down and dependent on the DUP to form a government.

The Conservatives won, of course, in the narrow sense that theirs is the largest party (316 seats to Labour's 265), but it's a Pyrrhic victory, entailing a toll so devastating that it is tantamount to defeat.

Indeed, the one doing the victory lap is May's nemesis, Labour's Jeremy Corbyn, whose bolt to the left, promising billions in extra spending, galvanised young voters and millions of ordinary people concerned about social services – above all health – creaking under the strain of years of spending cuts.

This was a realignment election in an age of political realignment, a reverberation from last year's Brexit vote that was badly misjudged by May and successfully read by Corbyn. Her plan was to reach out to Leave supporters in the poorer north who had voted UKIP – a single-issue party which led the campaign to leave the European Union – in previous elections while his was to create a new coalition of public sector workers, urban liberals and young people.

“Brexit is beginning to bite, and people are feeling the pain”

Labour's new voters turned out to be real, but May's were not. As she predicted, the UKIP vote collapsed, but it went to Labour. On the largest voter turnout (close to 70%) since the early 1990s, Labour experienced the biggest swing in its direction since World War II.

There are two big reasons behind this extraordinary political upset, and some smaller ones.

Both Leavers and Remainers are deeply concerned about Brexit: the massive impact it will have, our unpreparedness for it, and the apparent willingness of the Conservatives to drop out of the European Union without a sensible arrangement to remain part of the single market.

“No deal is better than a bad deal,” was May's refrain. It went down badly with Tory Remainers,



A makeshift memorial in Manchester, two weeks before the general election, following Britain's worst terror attack since 2005. The attack, and a subsequent one, drew attention to how Mrs May (right) had as Home Secretary cut back on police numbers; far right, Jeremy Corbyn.

who fear a future of isolation as well as years of economic uncertainty.

Although their election statements got little play in the media, the Catholic and Anglican bishops had emphasised this issue of Britain's future place in the world, expressing anxiety about its openness to refugees and the threat to its alliances of solidarity. Britain's voters and its bishops appear to have been in sync.

The second big factor is the background of real wages falling and property prices slumping; Brexit is beginning to bite, and people are feeling the pain. (To add insult to injury, the EU is coming out of its low-growth trough.) At such times, people feel extra concern for safety nets and social services.

Anxiety

The Tories offered no real response to this anxiety, claiming vaguely they would seek the best possible trade deals with Europe and the rest of the world. It sounded complacent, and unreal. At the same time, they offered little by way of public spending boosts to meet the needs of the health service.

Labour's offer was unreal, too – a massive tax hike that would surely scare off investment – but at least it was an offer: for long-term infra-

structural spending to create jobs, and serious increases in state spending.

Corbyn's sub-Marxist economics may not withstand serious scrutiny, but that mattered less than showing he was in touch with people's concerns and had a plan.

Landslide

May, conversely, was punished for staying in her soundbite bubble. The second poll in just two years – not including last year's referendum – it felt like an unnecessary election, called to serve the interests of the Conservative Party, not the country. Voters felt they were being taken for granted, their only purpose to give May a landslide she didn't deserve.

Her disastrous campaign, which her strategist Lynton Crosby tried to make all about her, rested on the simple idea that faced with a choice between her and Corbyn to negotiate with Europe, the nation would fall at her feet.

The election did become about her, but about her hamartia or fatal flaw. Under the spotlight, she came over as robotic, complacent, and patronising, endlessly repeating the same slogans (“strong and stable” and “coalition of chaos”) and never answering direct questions.

She helicoptered from one stage-

managed photo op to the next, even neglecting to take part in a TV debate with other leaders, for which she was excoriated. Corbyn, by contrast, took trains everywhere and was greeted by rapturous young crowds, to whom he explained his manifesto in nerdy detail.

“The election did become about her, but about her hamartia or fatal flaw”

May's biggest mistake was to announce, early on in the campaign, a major shift in funding long-term elderly care by including the value of people's houses.

It wasn't a silly policy, but announced so badly that it quickly span out of control, allowing opponents to deride it as a “dementia tax” and leaving old people – a natural Tory constituency – feeling insecure. By the time May had corrected the policy, the “strong-and-stable” slogan looked massively silly.

Then came the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London. She should have benefited: normally, emergencies benefit incumbents, allowing them to look statesman-like.

Instead, as news emerged of the

extent of the threat represented by 3,000-odd jihadists in Britain, May's Home Secretary record of cuts to police numbers came under scrutiny. By the time she was threatening to rip up human rights laws to better pursue ISIS, she had begun to look desperate.

Oddly, Corbyn's own record of opposition to anti-terrorism laws – delightfully picked over by the right-wing press – didn't seem to do him any harm. People preferred to judge him not on his past but what he was going to do now. When he called for significant real-terms increase in police spending so jihadists could be properly monitored, that made sense.

The other story of the night was the collapse of the centre. Between May and Corbyn was a vast, 1970s-style classic choice between right and left that should have bolstered the Liberal-Democrats.

“MPs will now need to find a cross-party consensus on a more moderate approach to Brexit”

But despite some gains – four seats, bringing them to 12 – they lost some high-profile figures, including former deputy prime minister Nick Clegg, and failed to benefit massively from the Remain vote.

Clegg rightly points out that MPs will now need to find a cross-party consensus on a more moderate approach to Brexit or the UK faces more elections until one party wins a majority, which would devour much of the two-year negotiating window.

May is determined to avoid that, convinced she can form a minority government with the ongoing support of the pro-Brexit DUP.

But if she is in league with the DUP, can Westminster any longer claim to be a neutral presence in Northern Ireland at a time when the power-sharing deal between Sinn Féin and the DUP has broken down?

On the other side of the channel, of course, the longstanding partners from whom we now need to negotiate our divorce look on in bewilderment. It is hard to imagine a modern democracy putting itself into such a vulnerable position.

May went to the country looking for a mandate, and was refused it. She remains, but as a massively diminished figure. The Tory party is already sharpening its knives. Many say she'll be gone by Christmas.

Meanwhile, the future of the UK's place in the world looks even more bizarrely uncertain than it already was.

1 Austen Ivereigh is author of *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*.

Letters

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

Letter of the week

Catholics today are afraid to stand up for themselves in hostile society

Dear Editor, Your front page story last week (08/06/2017) about Bríd Smith's comments that the Church should be thrown in the "dustbin", depressed me more than anything else. I have gone past the stage of anger and outrage, at how easy and popularly acceptable it has become to attack the Catholic Church. I would imagine I am not alone in this.

Anti-Catholicism is so pervasive now in Irish society that I feel worn down by it and more than a little nervous of putting my head above the parapet to voice a different opinion. In your editorial you rally Catholics to become better at standing up for ourselves and to call it out when we see bias and unfairness. You are right,

of course, but I think we need a little boost or advice in how to go about this correctly.

It would be good to have the bishops lead the charge, but I understand their reluctance to engage with a hostile media who will probably portray them as the bad guy. Maybe it is time for priests who have a good relationship with the media to stand up for Catholics. Fr Brian D'Arcy and Fr Tony Flannery always seem to get a sympathetic ear when they speak to the media, could they not speak out against anti-Catholic prejudice?

It would also be good to hear more lay voices – who are trained in dealing with the media – to speak up in defence of their faith as well. What

ever happened to Catholic Comment? This group seemed to disappear after the same-sex marriage referendum. I would suggest now is a good time for them to be contacting the media to give a different perspective and to be looking for volunteers to get involved, especially with an abortion referendum expected next year and possibly clashing with a papal visit for the World Meeting of Families.

I want to be able to stand up for myself as a Catholic, but I need help and I don't want to feel like I am fighting alone!

*Yours etc.,
Bridie Buckley,
Douglas,
Co. Cork.*

We have given birth to a cold-blooded political class

Dear Editor, David Quinn's article of May 25 makes for a hugely interesting reading – 'Enda Kenny was the best secular Taoiseach since Ireland ever had'.

Basically he seems to be saying that Mr Kenny has no principles beyond that basic one of holding on to power. In other words he is

the first outright disciple of Niccolo Machiavelli it seems, to emerge in the politics of this state. This is without doubt an event of historic importance for Ireland.

Equally important to note is that the electorate as a whole does not seem to be greatly bothered! Fine Gael, itself, as David Quinn

mentions, experienced no qualms in expelling the seven TDs and Senators who voted against his abortion law of 2013.

Lucinda Creighton got short shrift when she founded Renua as a party in Dáil Éireann opposed to the introduction of a regime of abortion on demand.

So what have we got? It seems we have given birth to as cold blooded and as determinedly atheistic a ruling class as ever haunted the corridors of power of the old Soviet empire!

*Yours etc.,
Roger O'Donnell,
Glenealy,
Co. Wicklow.*

Congratulations to new bishop

Dear Editor, Congratulations to Fr Alan McGuckian SJ on his appointment as the new Bishop of Raphoe. I'm delighted to see an Irish speaker come to the fore and I hope he will promote the Irish language as much as possible in his new position.

I note that Fr McGuckian will be our first Jesuit bishop in Ireland. With an SJ in the highest office possible in Pope Francis and Blessed John Sullivan recently beatified, it really feels like the Jesuits are on the rise!

*Yours etc.,
Rachel O'Raghailigh,
Salthill,
Galway.*

DUP in good company in their pro-life attitude

Dear Editor, It was hardly surprising to see Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) stance on abortion being identified by parts of the media as a 'problem'.

As Arlene Foster's party settles down to its 'temporary little arrangement' with the Conservative party, there are attempts to cite its anti-abortion belief as being backward-thinking, old-fashioned or socially unacceptable.

So, too, is its opposition to same-sex marriage being put forward as a

reason why the DUP are not acceptable to play any role in government, even in a supply-and-confidence situation as now exists with the Conservatives.

Whatever about the past behaviour of the DUP – and that is questionable – its *right* to oppose abortion should be upheld by all democrats, and its opposition to same-sex marriage leaves it consistent with the views of 17 of the EU's 28 states and with 74 of the world's states.

The print media in Britain was

quick to label the DUP as being 'religious' with faint chuckling from commentators at how modern democrats could possibly have faith in a creator. Some within the DUP have even been labelled 'creationists' because they believe the book of Genesis and, indeed, the rest of the Bible too.

It seems the DUP is going to have to rely on its faith since the British media already has it condemned.

*Yours etc., Declan Rankin,
Donnycarney, Dublin 9.*



Galway mosque attack a cowardly act

Dear Editor, I sincerely hope that the recent attack on the Galway mosque by cowardly stone-throwers is not a sign of what we can expect in the future.

We were all left disgusted by the terror attacks in Manchester and London and it is frightening to see these events happen so close to home. However, our answer must be to throw our support behind those communities in any way that we can, not be to lash out at innocent Muslims at prayer.

It was a malicious, unprovoked attack carried out by criminals and does not represent the attitude of the general Irish population.

*Yours etc.,
Rose Kennedy,
Sandymount, Dublin 4.*

Blasphemy laws are actually far from being nonsense

Dear Editor, No one can dispute, "The Almighty God does not need blasphemy laws"; laws are for us mortals (IC 11/05/2017). If the three great monotheistic faiths, the Jews, Christian and Muslims could agree to respect each other's concept of God it would have great benefit for mankind. I do not know enough about the Eastern religions to say if it could be added to the fold but I suspect they might. Blasphemy laws are far from nonsense! The atheists will always be a problem.

*Yours etc.,
John N. Walsh,
Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.*

Another attempt to quash Catholic ethos in our schools

Dear Editor, I wonder if Ruth Coppinger's Bill (Equal Participation in School Bill) is designed to achieve what Oliver Cromwell and his successors tried and failed to achieve, that is, to quash Irish/Catholic ethos by banning the teaching of Christian doctrine in our schools.

That old adage comes to mind, "Man/woman dressed in a little brief authority, most ignorant of what they are most assured, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep".

*Yours etc.,
Liam Duffy,
Bray, Co. Wicklow.*

Angelus bell has gloomy tone

Dear Editor, The Angelus bell as broadcast on RTÉ has tones of doom and gloom, so unlike the beautiful angelus prayer which announces the Good News and honours the Mother of God. A change of bell and background of scenery from sunrise to sunset might be the answer.

*Yours etc.,
Frances Smith,
Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny.*

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



▲ **VENEZUELA:** Nuns join a vigil honouring 17-year-old protester Neomar Lander, the latest fatality during anti-government demonstrations and clashes with security forces in Caracas.

▶ **ITALY:** Pope Francis stands alongside Italian President Sergio Mattarella in the Chapel of the Annunciation at Rome's Quirinal Palace.



USA: Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, speaks during a dialogue on minimising and addressing ocean acidification at the UN Ocean Conference in New York City. The high-level conference, held June 5-9, coincided with World Oceans Day, observed June 8.



BRITAIN: Nuns leave a polling station after voting in London's Hyde Park area. Voting across Britain opened for national elections amid heightened security as one senior police official said the country was living through "unprecedented times" following a series of terror attacks in recent weeks.



PHILIPPINES: Activists carry an illuminated sign reading "Stop the Killings" during a protest rally to mark Philippines Independence Day in Manila. The protesters condemn the government's policies on the declaration of martial law and US military intervention in Mindanao.



VATICAN: Pope Francis greets people as he arrives to inaugurate the new Vatican office of the Scholas Occurrentes Foundation, which promotes the interface of education, art and sport.

Family & Lifestyle



Mags Gargan examines why breastfeeding levels are so low in Ireland

I was at an anti-natal class where the mid-wife was discussing breastfeeding. She asked the room of expectant parents why they thought breastfeeding levels are so low in Ireland. Immediately one of the dads piped up with “because of the Catholic Church”. The midwife replied, “Ah now, the Catholic Church has its faults but we can’t blame it for everything”.

This exchange came to my mind when a recent study found a negative correlation between the proportion of Catholics and breastfeeding initiation rates in western countries.

While Ireland’s breastfeeding rates are indeed one of the lowest in Europe, with just 46% of babies being exclusively breastfed on discharge from hospital, this dropping to 14% at two months, it is difficult to see how this can be blamed on the Church.

“I think levels are low because of the lack of support in hospital at the critical time (first day or two). Most wards don’t have nurses with the capacity to assist everyone. There is also a lack of services providing support after hospital,” says Hazel, a mother of two from Dublin. “I do think there is an element of shyness and embarrassment about breastfeeding in public. As a society I don’t think Irish people are fully supportive.”

Kerry, a mother of two from Mayo, says part of the reason is that we are more used to seeing bottle-fed babies in Ireland.

“Women are so used to seeing bottles, whether it’s from their mother, aunt or sister. And it’s a natural thing. If you’ve grown up seeing it, that’s what you’re going to do. But I also think there is nowhere near enough support.”

Support element

Sue Jameson, President of the Association of Lactation Consultants, agrees that it is “the support element that is lagging way behind”. “There is help available in the hospital but women are there for such a short time, and the help isn’t necessarily there when they really need it, which is day three to five. And so that is where the private and voluntary sector pop up to sort of fill the gap between what should be there.”

A lactation consultant is a paid health professional who specialises in the clinical management of breastfeeding. They come out to the home and offer advice and assistance to a mother who is finding breast feeding challenging. There are also voluntary organisations such as Cuidiu and La Leche League, who have support groups across the country where

women meet to get advice and exchange ideas.

Kerry suggests that expectant mothers should go along to these meetings while they are pregnant, to find out about the reality of breastfeeding so they know what to expect.

“Everybody says it’s the most natural thing in the world and you really should do it,” says Kerry, “but they’re not told how hard it is. I think that’s a massive mistake. You need to know. I went into it without the information and that’s why I found it so difficult.”

“Breastfeeding is an incredible bonding experience for mother and child, which can begin immediately after birth”

The World Health Organisation recommends that babies should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months, and for mothers to continue to breastfeed along with solid food until the child is two

years of age and beyond. According to the HSE, breastmilk contains essential enzymes, hormones and immunoglobulins vital for a baby’s normal growth, development and good health.

Breastfeeding is an incredible bonding experience for mother and child, which can begin immediately after birth with the child instinctively latching on. It is very convenient (no need to make up bottles at night and you will always have a food supply with you wherever you go) and low cost (no formula, bottles or steriliser needed).

However, breastfeeding is a skill that a mother and baby must learn together and like any other skill, it takes time to master. In the early days babies can cluster feed, bunching feeds close together, and it sometimes feel like they will never stop. There is a possibility of cracked nipples, blocked ducts or even mastitis (painful inflammation of the breast).

Kerry says if women are not informed about this, they may think they are doing something wrong and turn to bottle feeding.

“You might not get the latch right at first, it can be painful, babies can breastfeed for hours. People don’t know this,” she says. “And then they also expect that babies are going to sleep for four hours at a time, then five hours at a time, then six hours at a time during the night and that doesn’t happen either, especially with breastfed babies. So I do think information and support is key.”

“Get the message out that it’s not disgusting and it’s as normal as feeding a baby any other way”

Hazel says she struggled to breastfeed her first baby and stopped after two months. “I decided to try to breastfeeding again as I know of the benefits for baby - and mum - and really wanted it to the work this time,” she says.

Normalisation

Louise, a mother of two from Dublin, says she had “nobody on my side of my immediate family to gain support from so I did as much reading as I

could from the internet and books”. As well as more support in hospital and aftercare, she thinks there needs to be more normalisation of breastfeeding in Irish society.

“I guess it could start with more posters, stories in the press, more coverage on TV, people seen breastfeeding in TV shows and more facilities in shops or shopping centres. Get the message out that it’s not disgusting and it’s as normal as feeding a baby any other way,” she says.

Sue Jameson agrees. “Yeah, that is exactly where we would be going, trying to stop using the bottle as being a symbol for all infant feeding. Even if you go to buy a birth greetings card, it’s really hard to find one that doesn’t have a pink or blue bottle on it. Even if you pick up a kids story book. I saw one the other day where the mommy teddy was feeding her baby teddy a bottle.”

“The imagery is all set up in a way so that you’re first thought won’t be to breastfeed, because the images culturally are not there. Whereas in other countries you see billboards with breastfeeding mothers on it,

Breaking the breastfeeding barrier



Feeding tips for new mums

BREASTFEEDING PILLOW: You could surround yourself with pillows and cushions to make a little nest, or a good breastfeeding pillow can provide great support for your arms when cradling a baby during feeding.

ENTERTAINMENT: Once you are comfortable in your 'nest' make sure the TV remote control, a water bottle and your mobile phone are within easy reach. There is not a lot else you can do while breastfeeding, except read and binge watch on something like Netflix.

CLOTHING: Get sized for a few nursing bras. It's good to have a few breastfeeding tops for when you are out and about, but layers are also your friend.

GOOD DIET: Just like during pregnancy you need to eat well while breastfeeding and take a vitamin supplement. Drink plenty of fluids and rest as much as possible.

PAIN RELIEF: Soothe and protect sore nipples with Lansinoh lanolin cream (€14.99). It is safe for baby and does not have to be removed before a feed. Multi-Mam Compresses (12pk €15.99), can be used after a feed to ease any discomfort. In severe cases silicone nipple shields (2pk €10.49) are also an option.



EXPRESSING: The Medela Swing and Ardo Calypso are both hospital grade electronic breast pumps for expressing large quantities of milk as your baby gets older. The Haakaa Silicone Breast Pump, (€19.99), is a one-piece pump that uses the power of suction (no manual pumping needed) for expressing milk for relief if engorged.

you see normal cultural imagery featuring breastfeeding."

Support from fathers is also essential to encourage mothers to continue to breastfeed when it becomes challenging and the two weeks paid paternity leave for fathers, which came into effect last year, may make a difference in those early days when breastfeeding can take over a new mother's life. When you are feeding for seven hours a day you need someone to do everything else – cook healthy meals, bring you water when you are literally stuck to the chair, change the nappies, wash the clothes and let you nap.

“I’m seeing more women having second, third, fourth babies who are considering breastfeeding who never did on their first one”

Sue feels that Irish mothers have already started to turn the corner on improving breastfeeding rates.

“My generation is about to have a rollover, because we’re becoming the grannies. So all of our children are having babies and we all breastfed. So there is a generation now of breastfeeding grannies coming on stream,” she says.

“I have been working in a paid and professional capacity at this level for 28 years and we have seen breastfeeding rates rise from under 20% to well over 45% and way up higher than that in certain areas. So there is a big change.

“I’m seeing more women having second, third, fourth babies who are considering breastfeeding who never did on their first one. We’re seeing a huge amount of people getting online support, which is a big change. There is now the ability for people in the middle of the night to talk online and just hang out with people who think like you and who are going through the same situation as you are.”

1 For invaluable questions and answers on all issues related to breastfeeding, check the HSE’s website www.breastfeeding.ie

Holy Family Mission, working under the auspices of the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore, opened its doors officially on October 23, 2016, when 10 courageous young people from across the country committed a year of their lives to be formed in their faith, in order to share this with others. It is a response to the great hunger and desire that we have seen, and continue to see, in young people across Ireland – a longing for truth, meaning and purpose.

Holy Family Mission is a residential Catholic community for young people aged 18-30 who want to become effective Disciples of Christ in the world. We desire to see our parishes and schools renewed, families transformed and youth missionaries set on fire with love for the Gospel! It is the first of its kind in the country and is an exciting new project that is unveiling the mysteries of the Catholic Church to young hearts. Our primary focus at Holy Family Mission is to be a place of formation, while also facilitating retreats and ministry opportunities for youth and families.

As we prepare to end our first year in August, we are busy preparing our final school retreats and family days, while also eagerly looking forward to five weeks of summer faith camps in Munster.

As is to be expected with any new venture for the Lord we have certainly learned so much in the initial year, and what an adventure it has been! Numerous people who have worked with our community over the year have commented on the joy with which we serve. The growth that we have seen in our community members is testament to the fruit that is born when one centres their life on the Lord, while being supported by a faith community.

It has been such a blessed and fruitful time for us and we are so grateful to our many supporters over the last number of months.

Our mission and outreach opportunities have included everything from youth retreats to street outreach, from face painting to drama! We have set out to help train and equip youth missionaries for schools and parishes across the country.

Goal

Our lofty goal to form young people for mission in today’s somewhat hostile culture has been challenging, rewarding and we hope successful. We

have actively and intentional engaged with families, both within and outside the diocese.

Our family days happen monthly (usually the last Sunday of the month) and between 25-30 families join us each month. The feedback from this outreach has been extremely positive and have been a source of blessing for all those who have attended. Our community members are also nearing completion of their Certificates in the Catechism as part of their formation.

One of the greatest fruits by far in Holy Family Mission is the growth we have seen in our youth community in terms of their personal development. Through the gift of living in community and through daily personal formation, they have grown in skills and virtue. They have gained valuable experience that we trust will equip them for life after this year of



Members of Holy Family Mission and, left, Maura Garrihy.



formation and service, and thus help them respond more fully to the vocation and mission God is calling them to. “Holy Family Mission has helped me to live a balanced life, with prayer at the centre. Living with other people has helped me to learn more about myself and has challenged me to grow in striving to be a more loving person,” one of our community shared.

“We plan to grow our youth ministry initiatives and our outreach to families”

What does the future have in store for us? Some of this year’s community will commit to another year of service and formation next year and form a full time

‘Mission team’. This will help us to reach even more young people and families through different outreaches, while also enabling this hub of formation to run in parallel for new community members. We hope to continue to build up relationships with those locally and nationally.

We plan to grow our youth ministry initiatives, and our outreach to families going forward. We look forward to assisting families to prepare for the World Meeting of Families in August 2018 and being able

to support the diocese in its plans for this.

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore said he has “no doubt that Holy Family Mission is a word of God, and will bring many blessings from God on the diocese and far beyond”.

“I have seen first-hand the joy of the young people and the core members.

It is a living testimony to their search for Jesus and his desire to spread his joy to others. Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh, is a place where people can come to experience that joy,” he said.

If you are interested in joining our joyful community of young adults, and being part

of this wonderful adventure, please contact us directly at info@hollyfamilymission.net

We have opened our application process for the upcoming year, starting in September, and we welcome expressions of interest from 18-30 year olds. Holy Family Mission not only trains young people for youth ministry, but for a life long journey with Jesus. If you feel called to support our unique mission financially, or to find out more information about us, please view our website www.hollyfamilymission.net. Please keep our mission in your prayers.

YOUTH SPACE Transforming hearts for Christ

Maura Garrihy describes the work of Holy Family Mission in Waterford



Members of Holy Family Mission.



Christianity and 'noon-day fatigue'

There's a popular notion which suggests that it can be helpful to compare every century of Christianity's existence to one year of life. That would make Christianity 21 years old, a young 21, grown-up enough to exhibit a basic maturity but still far from a finished product. How insightful is this notion?

That's a complex question because Christianity expresses itself in communities of worship and in spiritualities that vary greatly across the world. For instance, just to speak of Churches, it is difficult to speak of the Christian Church in any global way: in Africa, for the most part, the Churches are young, full of young life, and exploding with growth, with all the strengths and problems that come with that.

In Eastern Europe the Churches are still emerging from the long years of oppression under communism and are struggling now to find a new balance and new energy within an ever-intensifying secularity.

Liberation

Latin American Churches have given us liberation theology for a reason. There the issues of social injustice and those advocating for it in Jesus' name and those reacting against them have deeply colored how Church and spirituality are lived and understood.

In Asia, the situation is even



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

more complex. One might talk of four separate ecclesial expressions and corresponding spiritualities in Asia: there is Buddhist Asia, Hindu Asia, Muslim Asia, and a seemingly post-Christian Asia. Churches and spiritualities express themselves quite differently in these different parts of Asia.

Finally there is still Western Europe and North America, the so-called 'west'. Here, it would seem, Christianity doesn't radiate much in the way of either youth or vitality, but appears from most outward appearances to be aged, grey-haired, and tired, an exhausted project.

How accurate is this as a picture of Christianity in Western Europe, North America, and other highly secularised part of the world? Are

we, as Churches, old, tired, grey-haired, and exhausted?

That's one view, but the picture admits of other interpretations. Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx, along with many Enlightenment figures, saw Christianity as a spent project, as a dying reality, its demise the inevitable death of childhood naiveté.

“What we are experiencing today is not so much a crisis of faith as a crisis of imagination and integration”

But Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, looking at the same evidence, saw

things in exactly the opposite way. For him, Christianity was still “in diapers”, struggling still to grow in maturity, a child still learning to walk; hence its occasional stumbles. Contemporary spiritual writer, Tomas Halik, the recent winner of the prestigious Templeton Award, suggests still another picture. For Halik, Christianity in the West is undergoing a “noon-day fatigue”, a writer's block, a crisis of imagination.

In this, he is very much in agreement with what Charles Taylor suggests in his monumental study, *A Secular Age*. For Taylor, what we are experiencing today is not so much a crisis of faith as a crisis of imagination and integration. Older Christian writers called this a “dark night of the soul”, and Halik suggests that it is happening to us not at the end of the day but at noontime.

My own sympathies are very much with Halik. Christianity, the Churches, and the spiritualities in Western Europe and North America aren't old and dying, a spent project. Rather they are young, figuratively speaking only 21 years old, with still some growing up to do. But, and here is where I agree with conservative critics, growth into that maturity is not guaranteed but is rather contingent upon us making some clear choices and hard commitments inside a genuine faith.

As any parent can tell you, there are no guarantees that a 21-year-old will grow to maturity. The opposite can also happen, and that's true too

for Christianity and the Churches today. There are no guarantees.

But, inside of faith and inside the choices and commitments we will have to make, it is important that we situate ourselves under the correct canopy so as to assign to ourselves the right task. We are not old and dying.

We are young, with our historical afternoon still to come, even as we are presently suffering a certain “noon-day fatigue”.

Task

Our afternoon still lies ahead and the task of the afternoon is quite different than the task of the morning or the evening. As James Hillman puts it: “The early years must focus on getting things done, while the later years must consider what was done and how.”

But the afternoon years must focus on something else, namely, the task of deepening. Both spirituality and anthropology agree that the afternoon of life is meant to be an important time within which to mature, an important time for some deeper inner work, and an important time to enter more deeply our own depth. Note that this is a task of deepening and not one of restoration.

Our noon-day fatigue will not be overcome by returning to the task of the morning in hope of refreshing ourselves or by retiring passively to the evening's rocking chair.

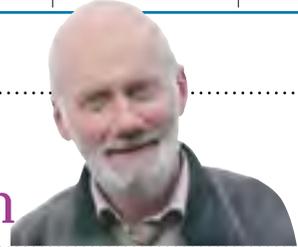
Noon-day fatigue will be overcome by finding new springs of refreshment buried at deeper places inside us.



In Africa, the Churches are young, full of young life and exploding with growth.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



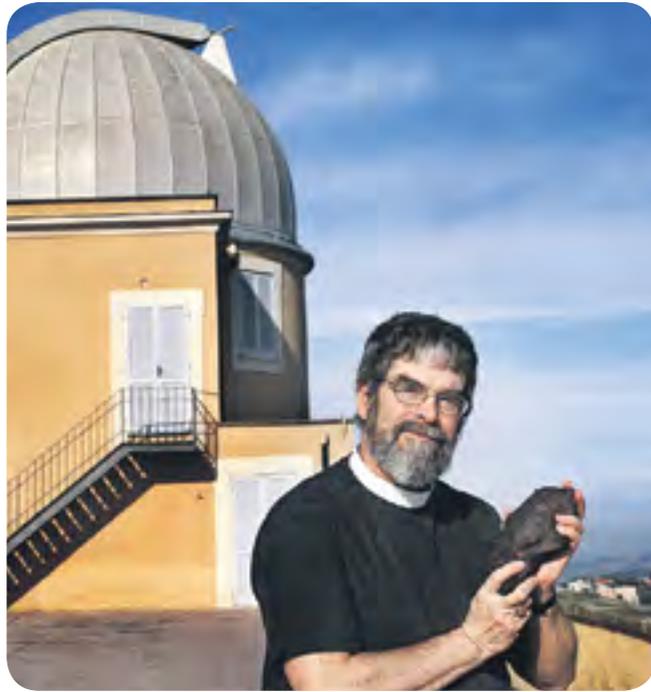
You can experience God 'in the data'

One of the most prevalent myths about the Catholic Church is that it has either no interest in science or is antagonistic towards it.

The Sky at Night: Inside God's Observatory (BBC 4 last Sunday night) blew that one comprehensively out of the water. The programme was introduced as "the highlight" of an evening of astronomy programmes and the Church was described as "one of the most influential organisations in the history of astronomy".

We got to see the 16th Century Meridian Hall in the Vatican where experiments were done to investigate slippage in the calendar, which led to Pope Gregory XIII scrapping 10 days that October to recalibrate the calendar. The Galileo controversy wasn't glossed over but obviously it wasn't as simple as we are often led to believe – the Church was at the cutting edge of astronomy before and since. Bro. Guy Consolmagno, director of the Observatory, outlined the history of this affair and the attendant misunderstandings right up to the public apology of Pope John Paul II in 1992.

We were introduced to key figures from the history – e.g. Fr Angelo Sacchi was a passionate priest-scientist and pioneer in the development of the application of



Bro. Guy Consolmagno at the Vatican Observatory.

spectroscopy in the study of the stars. Pope Pius XI set up a new observatory in Castel Gandolfo, the Popes' summer residence and this became a centre for one of the biggest astronomical projects, the 19th Century 'Carte de Ciel', for the photographing and mapping of the stars in the whole sky.

I'm glad that one of the Church's best-kept secrets was mentioned – that the 20th Century Jesuit scientist George Lemaitre was a pioneer of the big bang theory. The presenters were impressed by the "cutting

edge physics" still practised at Castel Gandolfo.

I was impressed by the wonderful enthusiasm and cheerful energy of Bro. Guy. He said it was a shame if religious people closed their eyes to science, where you could experience God in the data – it was, he said, a rich way to experience the creator. However I'd suggest he overstated the idea that "religion is not in the business of answering questions" but rather is in the business of "suggesting questions".

Back from the stars, the media was dominated last

weekend by coverage of the UK elections. It was one of the topics of last weekend's **Sunday Sequence** (BBC Radio Ulster), when one contributor questioned the morality of calling an election in the first place. Worthwhile question – there should be broader questioning of morality in politics – too often morality is invoked only when the hot button social issues are raised.

Discussion

That show also featured a timely discussion of the radicalisation of young Muslim men. Nazir Afzal, former Crown Prosecutor, said it wasn't just about religious conservatism. In fact the young jihadists were often ignorant of their religion (one ordered *Islam for Dummies* from Amazon!), uncertain in their identity and thus more easily manipulated by those who offered them possibilities of redemption through martyrdom for lives often marked by petty crime and drug taking.

To finish, I don't normally revisit a programme the week after first reviewing it, but I must again admire the new drama series **Broken** (BBC 1, Tuesday nights), with Seán Bean excellent as city priest Fr Michael. Last week's second episode featured a beautiful and extended First Communion sequence, as well as some emotionally intense Confes-

sion scenes with Fr Michael and a suicidal gambler.

The priest's troubled past keeps resurfacing in disturbing flashbacks and this latest episode hinted at his mother having had a backstreet abortion...it will be interesting to see how this plot strand develops. Everything rings emotionally true, though the incident with a knife-wielding young man who has mental health issues might have been a tad melodramatic, but no less heart-breaking.



Nazir Afzal.

It puts to shame that other priest-centred drama **Redwater** (RTÉ Sunday nights). A few weeks ago I wrote positively about the first episode, but since then it has taken a severe nose dive into amateur dramatics.

The dialogue is dire, the acting stilted and the plot convoluted as it moves around at snail's pace. Last

PICK OF THE WEEK

FATHER SPITZER'S UNIVERSE

EWTN, Saturday, June 17, 10am

Fr Robert Spitzer and Doug Keck discuss Fr Spitzer's new book, *The Light Shines on in the Darkness*, which affirms the unconditional love of God.

SUNDAY MORNING LIVE

BBC 1, Sunday, June 18, 10am

Return of the topical religious and ethical debate show.

MASS

RTÉ 1, Sunday, June 18, 11am

Mass with congregation and gathering from the Church of the Annunciation, Parish of Clonard, Co. Meath.

Sunday night's Baptism scene was downright creepy, and the increasingly awkward and passionate gay couple's country jaunt in a Nissan Micra to collect a Baptism cake was laughable, reminding me of Basil Fawlty's expedition to collect a duck dish for his gourmet night. 'Nuf said.

📧 boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

Exemplary evocation of a prime minister on the edge

Churchill (PG)

I interviewed Gay Byrne once and asked him what he thought was the main reason for his success in broadcasting. He replied tartly: "Events, dear boy, events!" What he meant was that he'd simply been in the right place at the right time.

Perhaps the same could be said of Winston Churchill. Churchill had a relatively quiet political career before World War II and an equally quiet one after it but when it was raging he seemed to be the fulcrum of people's hopes with his high-flown rhetoric.

He also had a delightfully arrogant personality. When he was on his deathbed he

was asked how he felt about the hereafter and replied, "I am prepared to meet my maker. Whether my maker is prepared for the great ordeal of meeting me is another matter!"

It's his 'black dog' depression more than anything else that Jonathan Teplitzky's film focuses on, his sense of himself as a "clapped-out, moth-eaten old lion". It covers only a short time frame, the days leading up to Operation Overlord (D-Day) in 1944 when the allies landed in Normandy and liberated western Europe from the Nazis.

Churchill disapproved of the offensive because of a similarly botched invasion of Gallipoli which he'd overseen



Very good

★★★★

Brian Cox as Winston Churchill.

in 1915. His tormented efforts to bring the other D-Day proponents – Field Marshal Montgomery, General Eisenhower, even King George – around to his way of thinking form the main business of this beautifully modulated film.

When he eventually

decides the landing might be a good idea after all we get the famous radio speech he made which lifted the hearts of all who heard it.

Unfortunately, the actor playing him, Brian Cox, delivers this without the expected passion, which means the

film ends on something of an anti-climax.

If you're going to make a movie about war that doesn't have bullets or battlegrounds you need something to fill that vacuum.

Cox's speech could have easily done that but he underplays it rather boringly. It's a huge opportunity for a 'wow' ending and he blows it. Why?

Lapse

The only reason I can come up with for such a lapse is that Teplitzky wanted to make an atmospheric moodpiece. He might also have felt that the energy demonstrated by a fire-and-brimstone finale would have had too many echoes of that other

recent British hit, *The Kings Speech*. By going for a muted approach he continues the tone of refined gentility that has been the film's keynote up to this point.

Its only other fault, I thought, was that Cox didn't always look enough like Churchill. But he's an excellent actor and what he lacks in facial resemblance he makes up for in his expressions, his girth, his apparel, his cigar-chomping.

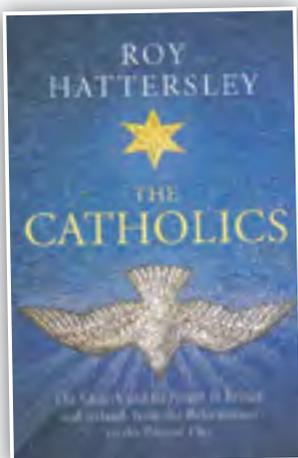
And of course that inimicable gruffness he showers on his wife, his secretary and indeed anyone else he brushes up against in those angst-ridden days leading up to the moment when Hitler's military meltdown began.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Explaining papists to the British



The Catholics: The Church and its People in Britain and Ireland, from the Reformation to the Present Day
by Roy Hattersley
(Chatto & Windus, £25.00)

Peter Hegarty

Roy Hattersley, a former MP and Minister in Britain, prefaces his congenial history with a fascinating autobiographical fragment in which he recalls the ease with which his father could translate Latin inscriptions during their frequent visits to historic churches.

After his death he discovered that his father had once been a priest. During his ministry he had instructed a young woman for admission into the Church in anticipation of her marriage to a young collier, which he performed. Two weeks after the ceremony priest and bride ran away together.

The Catholics opens in



The Dowry of Mary pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Virgin at Walsingham, Norfolk.

the 16th Century amid the clamour for reform of the Church. Then as now most priests lived simple lives, but too many were corrupt, venal and ignorant. This period was also the dawn of nationalism, an age when European sovereigns were becoming increasingly likely to defy papal authority.

One, Henry VIII of England, established a national church after the Pope refused to dissolve his marriage to pious Catherine of Aragon. Henry wished to cast her aside for not having borne him a male heir.

Henry had no great theological differences with Rome, but English Protestantism soon acquired an intolerant

streak. Zealous converts were given to iconoclastic rage and righteous persecution. To suppress the new faith Catholics resorted to rack and pyre. But even then both sides were learning to coexist.

“With the age of cheap steamship travel, large-scale Irish emigration to Britain began”

Hattersley, politician turned historian, makes the good point that people, always and everywhere, “will float with the tide”. Catholics went to Protestant services, as required by law, paying atten-

tion to those elements that derived from the old beliefs, and ignoring reformist innovations. But they remembered their martyrs and were determined to defend their faith.

A pattern set then, in the 16th Century, would repeat itself often over the next 300 years. Anti-Catholic pogroms and riots would follow revelations of papist plots, or the passing of legislation slightly improving the lot of Catholics, or Spanish sabre-rattling. But these paroxysms of violence merely interrupted long periods of leniency, during which the penal laws were ignored, and Catholics worshipped openly.

Toleration even temporar-

ily gave way to sympathy for the priests and nuns expelled from revolutionary France in the 1790s. The decline of Spain further smoothed the hard edges of anti-Catholic prejudice.

With the age of cheap steamship travel, large-scale Irish emigration to Britain began, and British Catholics regularly came across their Irish coreligionists. Enjoying their hard-won acceptance in society, loyal and industrious, they felt little affinity with the tatterdemalions wandering the streets lamenting their misery in their strange language, begging and prostituting themselves.

British Catholics were protective of their faith, acutely

aware of the need to keep it alive through prayer and attendance at Mass. The Irish Catholics largely lacked their fervour, and were much less observant.

Hattersley praises the welcome the Church in Ireland and Britain has given to the migrants who have arrived in great numbers in the last 15 or so years, and reinvigorated Catholicism in both countries.

One of the intended consequences of Britain's vote to leave the EU will be a significant reduction in the numbers of migrants entering Britain; an unintended consequence of the vote to leave the EU will be the enervation of the Church in Britain.

Joycean books for Bloomsday

Peter Costello

Best-Loved Joyce

written by James Joyce with an introduction by Bob Joyce. Edited by Jamie O'Connell (O'Brien Press, €12.99)

Joyce Unplugged

by Anthony J. Jordan (Wesport Books, €15.00)

Tomorrow, during the now ever-expanding festivities recalling the day in 1904 on which James Joyce's *Ulysses* is set, will see a host of events of all kinds for all tastes, from sit-down breakfasts at the Joyce Centre to esoteric playlets performed by one actor.

This year, though, Dublin City Council has ensured that what are now called “the Villages of Dublin”, those outlying suburbs which were in the past so often over-

looked when cultural sprees were being planned, will have events of their own.

Bloomsday is a focus for publishers to bring out Joyce-related books. The little book from the O'Brien Press is intended as a taster for those hesitant to bite into Joyce directly. It has been edited by rising litterateur Jamie O'Connor. But readers should be careful: not all the words attributed here to Joyce were actually written by Joyce. *Ulysses* is, above all, a novel rich in allusions and quotes from other writers.

However, the real value of the book lies in the introduction by Bob Joyce, one of the family by blood. His insights and comments are of a special kind and a even confirmed Joycean will find them of great interest.

Anthony Jordan's book is not based, as books about Joyce ought to be these days, on original research. It is more an extended commentary on Joyce's place in the Ireland of his time, Mr Jordan having written many other brief books about many of the personalities of the day, such as Griffith, MacBride, Yeats and others.

“This book is an extended commentary on Joyce's place in the Ireland of the time”

His effort to make out Joyce as a Republican is a little off the mark. Joyce was a socialist and attended meetings of Connolly's party in its Abbey Street rooms. He was later an admirer of Arthur Griffith

as many Irish people were. But he gave up revolutionary politics when he himself was very nearly the victim, twice over, of anarchist bombs planted under the Roman bank where he worked and the Vatican where he visited in 1906.

It should not be overlooked that many of his friends and acquaintances were executed or murdered in the Troubles. He was truly terrified when his own family, travelling on the Galway train, were fired upon by Irregulars. He never returned to Ireland because he rightly feared for his own life in a country where philosophical differences were all too often settled by a bullet.

Nor could he live in a country where the Governor-General was the very Tim Healy who had betrayed his true political hero Charles Stewart Parnell.



James Joyce as a young man.

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.

Mental relics

Buried Lives: The Protestants of Southern Ireland

by Robin Bury
(History Press, €20.00)

W. J. McCormack

In 1965, Michael Viney published an influential pamphlet, *The Five Percent: A Survey of Protestants in the Republic*, reprinting a series of articles from *The Irish Times*. The title gave its name to a sociological anxiety: will the five percent shrink to four or even three; will the Masonic Five subvert the comfortable majority?

When Jack White's book *Minority Report* appeared in 1975 (not 1987 as Robin Bury would have it), the political landscape had changed drastically. Considerations of the southern minority had merged with concern for Protestants living on the border and the fate of the Catholic minority in Belfast.

Murder

The IRA's murder of Senator Billy Fox in Monaghan (March 1974) was only the most outstanding exception in a campaign of low-grade genocide aimed at five-percent farmers in south-west Northern Ireland.

The Troubles scotched the sociological anxiety; its re-emergence in Robin Bury's doleful meditation comes as a surprise.

The author commences his history (rather, selective memory) before the Civil War. In once-pastoral Cork, fourteen co-ordinated murders

in April 1922 were indeed horrific and untypical; alongside post-Great-War Italy, Germany, the Baltic States, and elsewhere, they hardly registered. Efforts to turn the Bandon Valley killings into a latter-day 1641 do nothing for sustaining peace on this island.

Gravity

Buried Lives uses well-tailored interviews to good effect. Chapter 7, 'Some Don-egal Voices', provides a hearing for border Protestants; but the book's true centre of gravity lies in the once-planted province of Munster. Tipperary features, and the Beamish family—though not the Cork Beamishes who paid court to Herman Goering in 1937.

In 1950s' Cloyne, the author "mixed with our own faith [sic] at whist drives in the Deanery, parish fêtes, and private [sic] tennis parties". He invokes a venerable bishop, but I fear the philosophical George Berkeley engaged more energetically and positively with his neighbours. A later Cork celebrity, Elizabeth Bowen, shrewdly noted differences between her sort of landed people and small-town protestants.

Unlike the *Big House* novelist Mr Bury rarely looks down. He as rarely distinguishes between the former established Church and other communions – the Presbyterian pharmacist, Methodist motor mechanic, the Dippers and the Swaddlers.

Nowadays, 50 years after

Viney's initiative, the percentages count for little. West African immigrants swell evangelical choirs. Mosques have their respected place in urban settings, one of them (at least) a former Presbyterian church; the old cinema in Sandymount is now a Sikh temple. And the "majority" is acutely racked with discomfort, with a sense of betrayal by its leadership, and outrage at the compact between State and Catholic Church.

Mr Bury's scenario is a distressed mental relic he relies on more than he may realise. He writes of "an apartheid I experienced as a child", but can cite no effort to break rank. The Fethard-on-Sea boycott of 1957 is meat and drink to him, of course, though that was snuffed out by Eamon de Valera, slowly.

"History is a nightmare which I am quite enjoying" might be the motto of a wimp tipping his bowler and tugging his sash – metaphorically of course. Yet an ever-wakeful project lurks behind all this flummery – Ireland should re-join the Commonwealth. But which Ireland—that of 1957, or that of 2017; Mr Bury's, or yours and mine? Emphatically, I am not one of the "buried lives", though hand-reared in the Cofl and puritan to a fault.

i An authority on *Le Fanu*, historian and literary critic W. J. McCormack held a personal chair in *Literary History at Goldsmiths College, University of London*.

legate at the diet of Nuremberg in 1523." (Sadly Rome's action repeated its failed diplomacy at the time of the Schism with the Eastern Churches.)

But Kaspar believes that in an ecumenical age such denominations will come to an end.

He goes on to discuss Luther's relevance to the spirit of the modern era. He sees these times as rich in the possibility for the rediscovery of Catholicity, that is the true universal nature of the Church. Here again Luther will be of increasing relevance to ecumenists.

"The most important contribution of Martin Luther to the furtherance of ecumenism does not lie in his still open ecclesiological approaches, but in its original starting point with the gospel of grace and the mercy of God and the call to conversion."

These remarks echo many ideas of Pope Francis. Cardinal Kaspar's is also a message of hope. He recalls a remark attributed to Luther: "If I knew the world would end tomorrow, I would still plant a little apple tree today." Central to this is the need for a common witness by all the Christian Churches, especially at a time where their faith is under daily siege in some parts of the world.

Web Watch

Test Acts and modern politics

The dust hasn't yet settled from the UK general election, and debate across Britain is febrile over the wisdom and propriety of Theresa May's Conservatives placing themselves in debt to the DUP.

Astonishingly and – one might think – irresponsibly, the controversy is but rarely over whether Britain's governing party should be beholden to the only Northern Irish party in Westminster, especially at a time when the North is in a state of constitutional crisis following the Brexit vote and the collapse of the Executive.

Few seem willing to engage with the morality of destabilising and undermining the Northern peace, and fewer still seem prepared to think about whether the possible consequences of that for Britain and the North is a reasonable price for a supposedly stable government ahead of the Brexit talks.

Instead, almost all online discussion relates to the social conservatism of the DUP, with English secularists and liberals taking issue with the unionists' opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage, while English Catholics and conservatives defend them on these issues.

“It is hard to escape the suspicion that a lot of frantic googling is taking place”

Given the eerie silence from both groups on the North during 2016's Brexit debates, and how the North was only a live issue during the election campaign when questions were raised over Jeremy Corbyn's 1980s support for the IRA, it is hard to escape the suspicion that a lot of frantic googling is taking place. Michael Gove may claim the British people are tired of experts, but it rather appears that instant expertise is something with which a lot of them are



Tim Farron, leader of the Liberal Democrats in Britain.

quite comfortable.

One of the more thoughtful British interventions has come from the 'All Along the Watchtower' blog at jessicahof.wordpress.com, which in a post entitled 'The new Test Act' asks whether anyone holding orthodox Catholic views can hope to hold high office in British public life.

"During the recent General Election, the attitude taken towards the Liberal Democrat leader, Tim Farron, an Evangelical Christian who had expressed orthodox Christian views on same-sex marriage and abortion, was forced to recant them, which led to the question of whether we have a new Test Act," it observed, explaining that "The old Test Acts, a product of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, were designed to bar Catholics from public life by requiring of voters the 'test' that they were loyal Anglicans."

The acts, of course, were finally wiped from the statute books with Catholic Emancipation in



John Charmley.

1829, though suspicion of Catholics remained a feature of British public life.

One thinks of how Hilaire Belloc, running for parliament as a Liberal in 1906, was challenged for his faith. He responded in typically fiery fashion, launching his campaign at a Catholic school, and proclaiming: "I am a Catholic. As far as possible I go to Mass every day. This is a rosary. As far as possible, I kneel down and tell these beads every day. If you reject me on account of my religion, I shall thank God that He has spared me the indignity of being your representative!"

He was elected, which might give some of today's more spineless representatives cause to reflect on the wisdom of compromising and concealing their religious beliefs.

“It ‘seems clear that anyone holding orthodox Catholic views cannot confess them and hold high office’”

In any case, the post's author continues, "The new Test Act can be seen from the reaction to the fact that Prime Minister May is forming a pact with the Democratic Unionist Party. It has given British liberals a terrible shock to learn that there are those who oppose abortion and same-sex marriage, and that they have seats in parliament."

Leaving aside the fact that DUP comments on same-sex marriage often went rather beyond Catholic teaching, the author observes that based on this reaction, it "seems clear that anyone holding orthodox Catholic views cannot confess them and suggests that the Conservative Party is joining the Labour Party, the traditional home for British Catholics, as an increasingly cold house for them

It's an important post, for Ireland as much as Britain, and one we would all do well to ponder.

Luther in a kindly light

Martin Luther: An Ecumenical Perspective

by Walter Kaspar, translated from the German by William Madges
(Paulist Press, £14.99)

Peter Costello

This is a brief but very significant pamphlet by an important theologian. Walter Kasper is a German cardinal and the president emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, whose continuing programme of reconciliation emerged from Vatican II.

Here he provides a German Catholic perspective on how, at this time of history, we should see Martin Luther, the energiser of the Evangelical churches of Europe and elsewhere. Luther, like us, lived in an era of decline and new beginnings.

It is all too easy to set against Luther's discredit the emergence of religious denominations. However, Cardinal Kaspar writes: "Rome bears its fill of complicity in the fact that a church-dividing reformation developed from out of the reform of the Church. Pope Adrian VI already acknowledged this complicity through his

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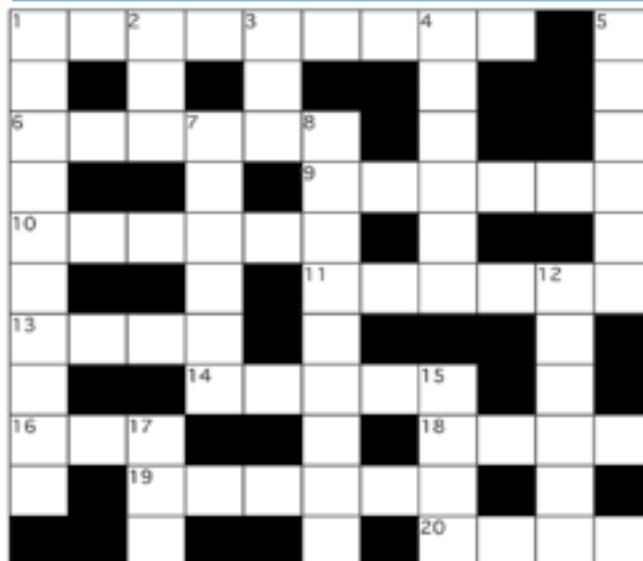
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Crossword Junior

Gordius 186



ACROSS

- 1 Buzz _____ was in the Toy Story movies (9)
- 6 You might put things in this at the supermarket (6)
- 9 They may have spokes in them (6)
- 10 Baby's toy (6)
- 11 This plant might sting you (6)
- 13 A Manx cat is missing this (4)
- 14 Country where the pharaohs once ruled (5)
- 16 Sprinted (3)
- 18 Baghdad is in this country in the Middle-East (4)
- 19 Unlocked (6)
- 20 Finishes (4)

DOWN

- 1 Science room (10)
- 2 What Americans call petrol (3)
- 3 You put a golf ball on this before hitting your first shot (3)
- 4 What a police officer may do to a criminal (6)
- 5 Paper hankie (6)
- 7 You boil water in it (6)
- 8 Add nineteen and two to get this number (6-3)
- 12 This reptile usually has four legs (6)
- 15 The coming and going of the sea (4)
- 17 Signal 'yes' with your head (3)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.302

Across – 1 Father figure 7 Cup 9 Leek 10 Random 11 Feud 14 Wyatt Earp 15 Tweak 16 Will 18 Dig up 21 Evoke 22 Anjou 23 Reset 24 Owls 25 Torah 26 Strap 29 Rust 33 Israel 34 Opus 36 The man in the moon

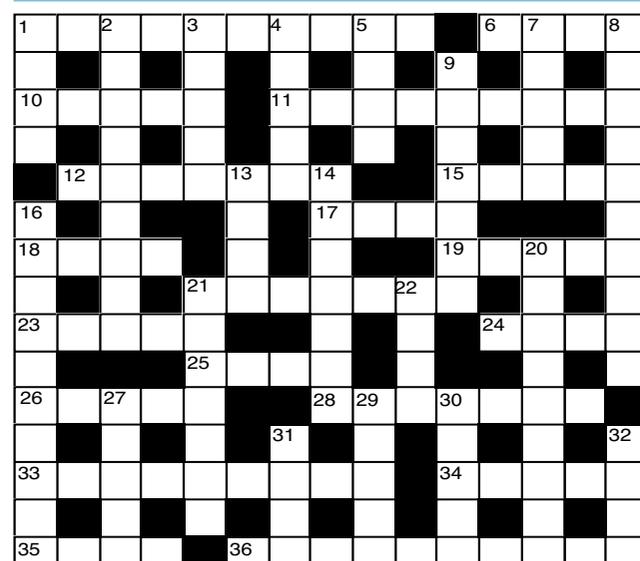
Down – 1 Foe 2 Take apart 4 Fancy 5 Gloat 6 Ecce Homo 8 Pedal pushers 9 Little Dorrit 12 Recoil 13 Skier 14 Wades 17 Injure 19 Get up 20 Pasty 27 Tisri 30 Seem 31 Sloe 35 Urn

CHILDREN'S No.185

Across – 1 Spongebob 6 Awful 8 Apron 9 Earache 10 Ace 13 Cygnet 16 Cuckoo 17 View 18 Fierce 19 Runway
Down – 1 Snake 2 Oxford 3 Bravery 4 Bargain 5 Canoe 7 Lock 11 Tulip 12 Skirt 13 Cover 14 Green 15 Tasty

Crossword

Gordius 303



ACROSS

- 1 Mark cattle with a reversed flower? That takes the biscuit! (6,4)
- 6 Moist (4)
- 10 Oriental sleeping mat (5)
- 11 It's exactly the same in dialect, strangely enough (9)
- 12 Elevate in rank; advocate an idea (7)
- 15 Fewest or smallest (5)
- 17 & 5d One must stay in this lawless district, it seems (2-2,4)
- 18 Cow! (4)
- 19 Cast votes into a cooker (5)
- 21 Tills the soil (7)
- 23 Has the offspring a right to detect with this? (5)
- 24 Unearthly vehicles cause of the confusion of us (4)
- 25 Periphery (4)
- 26 Visits everyone within the borders of Laos (5)
- 28 How to stink up a pioneering satellite (7)
- 33 Peculiar, odd (9)
- 34 Clerical accommodation of alternative means (5)
- 35 Twelve months (4)
- 36 How bids issued and provided funding (10)

DOWN

- 1 Light yellow (4)

- 2 Part of the day that allows for no neat rearrangement (9)
- 3 Material used in making jeans (5)
- 4 & 27d This Caribbean island nation is nautical, perhaps (5,5)
- 5 See 17 across
- 7 The capital of Ghana can be seen from part of a lilac craft (5)
- 8 Belief in many gods can spoil thyme, literally (10)
- 9 A 'thank you' financial failure has one totally perplexed (2,1,4)
- 13 Stone with no friend? (4)
- 14 Makes certain (7)
- 16 & 20 Quakers somehow deny historic toffees (3,7,2,7)
- 21 To be tense at this moment is a gift! (7)
- 22 An African ethnic group uses some Honshu turmeric (4)
- 27 See 4 down
- 29 Selects digging tools (5)
- 30 Unassertive (5)
- 31 Father gets gold for a German woman (4)
- 32 Provide a loan (4)

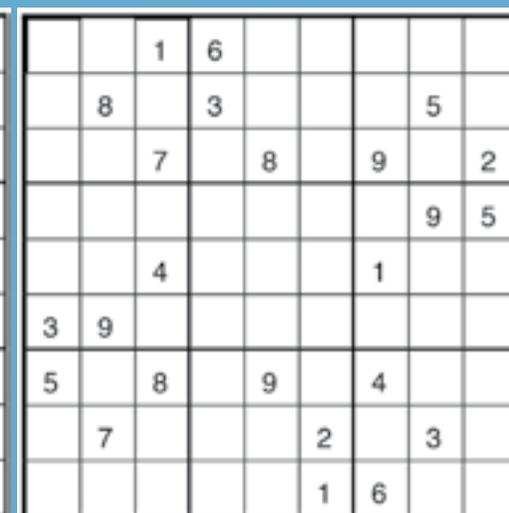
Sudoku Corner

186

Easy



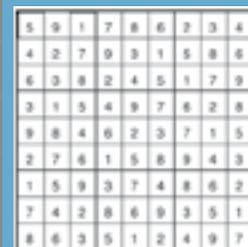
Hard



Last week's Easy 185



Last week's Hard 185





Fr Martin Delaney

Notebook

Is Katherine Zappone the minister for all children?

RECENTLY I FOUND myself surprisingly grateful to Alison O'Connor, journalist and regular contributor to radio and television panels. Ms O'Connor was a member of the panel on Brendan O'Connor's *The Cutting Edge* on RTÉ One. One of the items discussed was abortion.

Ms O'Connor's contribution was as follows: as a woman who found it particularly difficult to become pregnant and stay pregnant, she spoke about how she would never forget the sound of her baby's heart beating. She went on to say that she had no difficulty believing that an unborn baby was a human being but...she also believed that a woman's right to choose termination of her pregnancy trumps that.

I'm grateful to Ms O'Connor because in my memory this is the first time I have heard someone from the so called pro-choice constituency acknowledge publicly that an unborn baby at any stage is a human being. To acknowledge this, while also holding the view that a woman's right to choose a termination of that baby's life, means that the forthcoming debate about abortion in our country will be much clearer.



Katherine Zappone.

Previous debates have often been caught up in arguments about when a foetus becomes a human being creating at least a sense of confusion and doubt as to whether termination always involved the taking of a human life. Ms O'Connor's clearly stated position is presumably shared, if not always as clearly articulated, by most people in our country who would like to see a much

greater 'liberalisation' of our abortion legislation.

Availability

One of the most high profile people in our country who wishes to see a much more liberal approach to the availability of abortion is independent cabinet minister Katherine Zappone. Minister Zappone believes that only offering abortions in cases

of incest, rape and so-called fatal foetal abnormality would "do nothing at all for most women in Ireland". At the time of writing this piece Ms Zappone is the Minister for Children in our Government. The minister correctly received a lot of public praise for her prompt response to the Tuam Babies scandal in March.

At the centre of that scandal in Tuam is the claim that hundreds if not thousands of infants who died in a mother and baby home were buried in unmarked mass graves. This caused outrage in Ireland and around the world.

However, all this leaves me, and many others as well, with some uncomfortable and uneasy thoughts and questions. Clearly Minister Zappone shares Alison O'Connor's views on the need for abortion to be more widely available. Does Minister Zappone share Alison O'Connor's understanding of the unborn as a human being, a child?

If she does will there not be a difficulty for her as the Minister for Children? Does she see herself as minister for all children or only those whose mothers have willingly brought them to full term?

SHOCK TREATMENT: The parish priest was given a gift of a parrot. The bird had a foul mouth and could swear for five minutes straight without repeating himself. No matter what the priest did the parrot's language got worse. In his frustration one day he threw the bird into the freezer. For the first few seconds the bird kicked and thrashed. Then it suddenly gets very quiet. At first the priest just waits, but then he starts to think that the bird may be hurt or worse. He's so worried that he opens up the freezer door.

The bird calmly climbs onto the priest's outstretched arm and says: "I'm awfully sorry about the trouble I gave you. I'll do my best to improve my vocabulary from now on."

The man is astounded. He can't understand the transformation that has come over the parrot. Then the parrot says, "by the way, what did the chicken do?"

Prayer at a Cemetery Mass

May God bless all the company of souls here,
May God and Mary bless you.
You too spent a while here just as we are now
And we too will join you soon.
May we all be adorned in the beauty
Of the bright King of Heaven
(From *The Glenstal Book of Prayer*)



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