

The Irish Catholic

MARY KENNY

Is the Leaving Cert an ordeal – or a privilege?
Page 5



LECTIO DIVINA

Making the Bible alive for us today
Pages 29-30



RORY FITZGERALD

'Hate speech' laws are undemocratic
Page 7



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Religion is a key ingredient to a healthy life – expert on ageing

Jason Osborne

People who take part in religious practices are less likely to get depression, see a slowing down of the ageing process and don't die as early as people who don't take part in religious services, according to one of Ireland's leading authorities on ageing.

Principal investigator of The Irish Longitudinal study on Ageing (TILDA), Prof. Rose Anne Kenny told *The Irish Catholic* that not only would there be social utility in churches reaching out to welcome Ireland's lonely, but that "it must happen".

Specialists are warning of an epidemic of loneliness, with US health authorities saying being lonely is as bad for you as smoking and a recent survey revealing that Irish people are now the loneliest in Europe.

"We've certainly shown in Ireland that people who take part in religious practices are less likely to get depression. They seem to have a slowing down of the aging process and they die later - they don't die as early as people who don't take part in religious services but also experience loneliness.

» Continued on Page 2

Marching for Christ...



Young boys who received their first Holy Communion this year join the Eucharistic procession for Corpus Christi in the parish of Aghaloo and Carneel on Sunday, June 11. Photo: Damien McAnespie. See pages 10-13

FIJI MISSIONARY

'I did 55 baptisms in one night'

PAGES 15-16



DAVID QUINN

Why is NASA suddenly admitting UFOs are real?

PAGE 8



EXAMEN PRAYER

God's presence in human experience

PAGE 31



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Inside this week

Film

A day in the death of 'King' Iver

Page 35



Letter from Rome

Pope Francis health and Pope Leo XIII

Page 26



Questions of Faith

Is faith purely private?

Page 32



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Religion is a key ingredient to a healthy life – expert on ageing

» Continued from Page 1

Prof. Kenny insisted: “definitely religious services make a difference to social engagement. We’re not sure if it’s the spiritual effect or whether the engaging with others and being involved in part of a community, because we are gregarious animals and we need other people”.

While it’s not clear what the element is that is good for physical and mental health when it comes to religious engagement, there’s enough evidence to warrant health services recommending it “if that’s what one needs,” Dr

Kenny said.

“Some people like solitude and appreciate solitude, but they are not the majority. The majority of us need other people, and we need the company of others, so it’s not clear what the element is that is good for your physical and mental health [in terms of engaging with religious services], but does that matter if it’s good for it?”

“Let’s recommend it, I think, if that’s what one needs,” Dr Kenny said.

The TILDA research from Trinity College Dublin involving over 6,000 adults

aged 50 and over found that a majority of over 50s in Ireland attend religious services regularly, and that regular religious attendance was associated with lower depressive symptoms in this population. Observations took place for six years, from 2010 to 2016.

The relationship between being religious and mental health was found to be complex. Although those with higher religious attendance had lower depressive symptoms, those who said that religion was very important to them but who did

not attend very frequently, had worse mental health. Religious attendance was also related to having a bigger social network, which in turn had a positive effect on the mental health of the population.

Over the first four waves of TILDA (January 2010 to December 2016), religious attendance declined slightly for both men and women, from 91% to 89% in women, and from 89% to 87% in men. At the same time, the majority of people reported religion as important to them (86% women and 76% men).

Govt should factor in religion when considering well-being

The Republic, apparently, has a national well-being strategy. To my shame, I never knew something existed until an email pinged into my inbox on June 9 from the Department of the Taoiseach telling me that later that very day the Government would publish *Understanding Life in Ireland: The Well-being Framework 2023*.

The report provided this year’s analysis of the 35 indicators, across eleven dimensions, in the Government’s well-being framework.

Framework

Further research revealed that the well-being framework “is a cross-government initiative to help improve our understanding of quality of life and to measure how we are progressing overall as a country.

“This can help us better align policy decisions with people’s experiences,” the blurb on the website revealed.

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said: “The development of a well-being framework is a major new initiative of this Government and is modelled on best practice from other countries. We know that no single measure can accurately capture how we are doing as a country. By bringing together economic, social and environmental statistics in an integrated way,

this framework helps us to assess where we are and to make better choices and decisions in future.

“It shows that Ireland is doing well when it comes to most things when we compare ourselves with the past and with other countries. We should never lose sight of the fact that Ireland is one of the best countries in the world in which to live, grow old, raise a family, pursue a career or run a business. It also shows that there is plenty of room for improvement too,” the Taoiseach said.

“Evidence from abroad has consistently shown that people of faith live happier, healthier and longer lives than people who report not being religious”

Of the 35 indicators used, ‘mental wellness’ is one of them. But this week’s comments from Prof. Rose Anne Kenny, a leading expert on ageing well, got me to thinking: shouldn’t the Government

put more focus on the importance of religious faith and religious practice in well-being?

A major flaw in the Government’s Covid-19 strategy was the almost-total exclusion of the importance of spiritual well-being in considering the balancing of risks. Evidence from abroad has consistently shown that people of faith live happier, healthier and longer lives than people who report not being religious.

The same has been borne out by our own TILDA research here in Ireland. The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing research, involving over 6,000 adults aged 50 and over found that a majority of over 50s in Ireland attend religious services regularly, and that regular religious attendance was associated with lower depressive symptoms in this population. Observations took place for six years, from 2010 to 2016.

Attendance

Although those with higher religious attendance had lower depressive symptoms, those who said that religion was very important to them but who did not attend very frequently, had worse mental health. Religious attendance was also related to having a bigger social network, which in turn had a positive effect

on the mental health of the population.

“It would be good if our politicians could lay off the relentless denigrating of religion and its near-banishment from the public sphere”

So, surely if so much time and focus is going into well-being, shouldn’t the Government also factor in religion? Of course, no-one expects the State to side on the claims of religion. I don’t expect Leo Varadkar to start addressing the Dáil on the reasons why apocatastasis is such an appalling heresy, but it would be good if our politicians could lay off the relentless denigrating of religion and its near-banishment from the public sphere.

If politicians of past generations were too confessional in their politics, the fault of our leaders today is that they seem to be allergic to anything to do with faith.

Even at a pragmatic level, this is very odd given the evident benefit religion brings to well-being in society.

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Catholic college slams 'unwarranted' attempts to influence interview process

Ruadhán Jones

Mary Immaculate College has slammed what it describes as "unwarranted attempts" to influence the interview process for appointing a new head of theology. This post has been vacant since last summer.

The college will not engage with any party making "unwarranted attempts" to seek information that might have the effect of "unduly influencing the course or outcome of such processes", a spokesperson told this newspaper.

The comment comes after *The Irish Catholic* sought comment after concerned academics raised queries over the involvement of Bishop Brendan Leahy in the interview process.

Bishop Leahy is chair of MIC's Governing Authority

and, sources claim, his presence on the panel may be in breach of the 'Code of Practice for Governance of Irish Universities 2019'.

This specifies that the chairman of a governing body "is not to be drawn into day-to-day executive management".

In this context, this paper queried with MIC whether it is appropriate that Bishop Leahy, as chair of the governing authority, is also on the interview board for the head of theology post.

This paper also asked if there is a potential conflict of interest for Bishop Leahy if an appeal is made against a decision made by the interview board, given that it will be made to the Governing Authority of which the bishop is the chair.

In response, MIC said it "does not comment on any recruitment and selection

processes that remain in progress".

Further, the spokesperson continued, the college opposes "unwarranted attempts" by any party to seek information that might have the effect of "unduly influencing the course or outcome of such processes".

Such enquiries "are not given consideration", the spokesperson said.

The college is onto its third round of interviews and *The Irish Catholic* understands that no local candidates have been shortlisted to be interviewed.

The Irish Catholic understands that at least one person who applied for the post in the course of the three rounds of interviews has made "informal contact" with union representatives with the intention of initiating a formal complaint about the interview process.

Irish runner grateful to God after record win

Staff reporter

Irish runner Rhasidat Adeleke said she is "grateful to God" after winning gold with a record run in the NCAA Championships in Texas.

The 20-year-old became the first Irish sprinter to win a NCAA title after she registered a meet-record time of 49.20, breaking her own Irish 400m record in the process.

"Grateful to God for how far I've come," Ms Adeleke posted on Twitter after the win. Straight after completing the race, she bowed to the ground and touched her forehead to the track.

Later, she posted on Instagram that "Words can't describe how grateful I am!" "I wouldn't have been able to do this without God, my coaches, trainers, team, friends, family and all the people who support me," the young runner said.

This was Adeleke's seventh national record of 2023. In April she demolished the Irish 200m record with a time of 22.34.

Ms Adeleke has previously spoken up about the

importance her faith holds in her life, telling *The42.ie* that "without faith, I don't know if I would have been able to believe that I could have done something".

In another interview, she said "Faith plays such an important role in my life. It gives me so much hope and a sense of strength knowing that God is with me."



Rhasidat Adeleke celebrates her win in the NCAA Championships in Texas on Sunday, June 11. Photo: Instagram.

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Barrister defends Catholic schools after teaching of RSE criticised

Chai Brady

Catholic teaching on sexuality is not about oppression but “ultimate happiness” a barrister in the North of Ireland has said following a report by the NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) criticising the delivery of relationship and sex education (RSE) in schools.

In the report the NIHRC noted that some schools were promoting abstinence before marriage as the most desirable and achievable option and that those who “engage in casual sex must bear the consequences of their actions”. The report claimed that schools were using language

that “shames and stigmatises” young people who had sex.

“Some schools actively contributed to the shame and stigma surrounding unplanned pregnancy and abortion, by making statements such as ‘abortion is not a means of contraception and those who knowingly engage in casual sex must bear the consequences of their actions’,” the NIHRC report said.

Barrister Mary Lewis, who is on the board of the Iona Institute, defended the teaching of RSE in Catholic schools saying: “The Catholic teaching on sexuality is actually for the happiness of people not for the oppression of them. We’re encouraging students to live

in accordance with Catholic teaching because the Catholic view is that that is the way to ultimate happiness and social cohesion and good family life. It’s not about oppression.”

Regarding the idea, communicated in the report, that RSE can be delivered in a value-neutral way outside school ethos, Ms Lewis said it is “a complete false flag”.

“No matter who teaches what, there will always be some agenda at play and Catholic parents choose Catholic schools. If you don’t want to attend a Catholic school there’s no obligation to attend, but those who attend should not be surprised to see Catholic teaching at play. Are they going

to infringe on our human rights to have the choice of education that we determine is most appropriate?” she said.

The Transferor Representatives’ Council (TRC), which represents the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church and Methodist Church in education issues in Northern Ireland stated that it was “very disappointing” that during the 16 month-long investigation the NIHRC did not speak to teachers, students, governors, or parents, or find time to observe the teaching of RSE in the classroom.

Dr Andrew Brown, Chair of the Transferor Representatives’ Council, said: “The recommendations put forward in

the report are based on a paper exercise and not at all reflective of the day-to-day reality in many of our schools, or of the professional competence and capabilities of our teachers.”

This comes after the decision last week by Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris to force all schools to teach about access to abortion and contraception, based on recommendations made by a UN report.

Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry diocese criticised the decision, saying that schools “want to offer pupils education, not just information”.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Health Minister: New abortion bill goes ‘miles beyond’ what people voted for

An abortion bill which passed its second stage in the Dáil June 7, “goes miles beyond what people voted for”, according to Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly.

Although an opposition Bill, it passed by 67-64, with eight abstentions.

Mr Donnelly told *Newstalk Breakfast* that he abstained because the Bill did not respect the will of the people expressed in the referendum of May 2018.

“I actually looked at the Bill in great detail. The Bill goes miles beyond what people voted for in repealing the Eighth. I made this point to Deputy Smith and to others who were supporting the Bill during the second stage debate.

“I campaigned very hard for Repeal, but the Bill does not respect that vote at all because it goes way beyond that vote,” he said.

New nuncio brings reminder to move towards renewal

The new Papal Nuncio to Ireland’s experience of the universal Church and building peace in conflict zones will help him deliver the Pope’s message to “transform society” by “embodying Christian values in the world”, the archbishop of Dublin diocese has said.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell welcomed Papal Nuncio Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor on June 11 at St Mary’s Pro Cathedral in Dublin at a liturgical reception.

Speaking of the growing multiculturalism in Ireland reflected in the results of the CSO’s 2022 census, Archbishop Farrell said of the nuncio: “Coming most recently from Columbia, you are familiar with the legacy of civil conflict and the challenges of building peace and reconciliation. In that same spirit you bring with you a reminder of Pope Francis’s call to move beyond being a self-referential Church towards renewal and conversion...”



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Thousands gather in Armagh to venerate Blessed Carlo’s relic

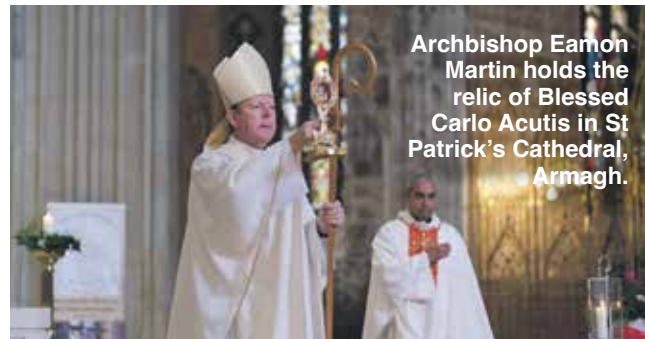
Staff reporter

Thousands of the Faithful, including many young people and families, descended on St Patrick’s Cathedral in Armagh to visit the relic of Blessed Carlos Acutis, who died of leukemia when he was 15 in 2006.

Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh archdiocese welcomed the relic to the cathedral on Sunday morning, where it stayed until Tuesday. Known for his devotion to the Eucharist and his computer skills, Blessed Acutis was beatified by Pope Francis

in October, 2020.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, the administrator of the cathedral Fr Peter McAnenly said: “We were expecting big numbers but certainly not on the scale people turned out and what was extraordinary was the



Archbishop Eamon Martin holds the relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh.

huge numbers of young people and young families. Obviously people here have been touched by the life and story of Carlo.

“He was a very human individual and he’s of our time, he lived so recently unlike so many other saints. People see him as being a very normal young bloke and they feel he is someone they

can identify with and relate to and I think people are just genuinely inspired by his life and story,” Fr McAnenly said.

While he grew up in Milan, Blessed Acutis was born in London to Italian parents. Despite his youth his showed an absolute devotion to the Faith and a deep love for the Eucharist.

Popular scripture school relaunched to reach wider audience

Jason Osborne

Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell will launch the new website of the Tarsus Scripture School Friday June 16 after those behind it identified that people are “hungry” for better catechesis.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, one of the founders, Sean Goan, said that those who’ve availed of the scriptural school so far haven’t “been fed in the normal routine”.

Prior to Covid, the founders saw 60-70 people attending the Bible weeks they organised, and when the pandemic arrived in Ireland and the course went online,

“nearly 400 people registered”. They’ve continued to see numbers around this level for their seasonal online courses, and now they’ve decided to make a return to in-person offerings.

“This year we’ve decided to come back in person because a lot of people who used to attend the in-person classes were asking if we could because of the dynamic that that creates. So we decided to move to Maynooth and we’ve something of a formal relationship with the college now through the Centre for Mission and Ministries,” Mr Goan said.

The Tarsus Scripture School website can be found at www.tarsusscriptureschool.ie

A summer of serenity



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Is the Leaving Cert an ordeal – or a privilege?

“I despise the Leaving Cert as an exam,” proclaims Ryan Tubridy. “I think it’s cruel and mean.” He says he despises the way that exams reduce books to bullet-points, while putting so much pressure on pupils and students. “There has to be a kinder way to test people’s knowledge.”

Would it surprise Ryan to be told that there were generations of school pupils who would love to have had the privilege of sitting the Leaving Cert exam? These included the



Mary Kenny

many youngsters who had to leave school at 16 (and before that at 14, and even at 12) because they were required to start earning their living.

Embrace

As it happens, I count myself among that group of people who would have loved to embrace the

Leaving Cert exam: but I never got to do so because my schooldays finished when I was 16. After that, mine was a working life. I envied the girls (and boys) who went on to do their Leaving Cert and I’ve remained envious of their academic opportunities ever since. And, honestly, I cannot understand why a

test of knowledge is cruel or mean. Surely, it’s just a straightforward way of finding out if one has done the work.

Pressure

And if exams put young people under pressure – well, so does life. The experience of living inevitably produces those life stresses that we all have to learn about sooner or later. Nearly every job has its deadlines and pressures – think of the sweat, anxiety and sometimes quite unbearable heat of a chef in a kitchen. Think of the

nurse who has to minister to a patient in extreme distress. Think of the bus driver – a job that requires both quick reflexes and saintly patience in exasperating traffic conditions – or the police officer, or the firefighter, or, indeed, the TV presenter. In our personal lives, too, there will always be obstructions and pressures.

“In life, also, these things can happen: sometimes you have to try to catch the ball even when you aren’t expecting it”

Exams teach one of the most important of life-lessons: preparation is essential in all endeavours. Exams aren’t just about testing knowledge. They are also about organising

your intellectual material, rising to a challenge, and marshalling the data methodically. They are not always fair, that’s true: the examinee may have an off-day, may be unlucky with the paper, may have far more competence than a narrow test can’t demonstrate. But in life, also, these things can happen: sometimes you have to try to catch the ball even when you aren’t expecting it.

Cruel?

The Leaving Cert is cruel? Not half as cruel, in my experience, as sitting with a group of educated people and realising you are an ignoramus. Not half as cruel as being consigned to a series of dead-end jobs over the best years of your life. And not half as cruel as the regrets felt later on that you never got a chance to acquire the education of which the Leaving Cert exam is evidence.

“The experience of living inevitably produces those life stresses that we all have to learn about sooner or later”



● The reports of the four Colombian children, aged 13, nine, four and a baby of just one who survived alone in a jungle for six weeks were inspiring. The three girls and a little boy, whose mother Magdalena died after a plane

crash, looked after each other and survived by eating berries and plants.

The eldest girl, Lesly, at 13, not only knew how to navigate the jungle, discerning which plants were safe, and which poisonous; she also knew how

to care for a one-year-old baby over the course of 40 days. The children avoided dangerous animals and constructed makeshift camping spaces to sleep. An extraordinary example of resilience and fortitude by young children.

‘Pills by post’ spells tragedy

During lockdown, the BPAS – Britain’s largest abortion provider – helped get through parliament legislation that enabled ‘pills by post’. That is, a woman could procure medication for a self-administered abortion (up to 10 weeks pregnancy) via a telephone conversation.

Now a real tragedy has occurred. Carla Foster, aged

44, obtained abortion pills by post when she was between 32 and 34 weeks pregnant (claiming she was about seven weeks). Her daughter was delivered at this late stage in pregnancy, capable of living, but not breathing. Carla Foster has been sentenced at Stoke Crown Court to 28 months jail under the 1861 Act for procuring an ille-

gal abortion.

The mother – with three living children – has spoken of how she is haunted by her daughter’s dead face, and there is a case for exercising compassion in reducing, or suspending, the custodial sentence. There’s also a case for putting BPAS in the dock, metaphorically, for supplying ‘healthcare’ without proper

checks on legality. Abortions are not permitted in the UK after 24 weeks.

But instead, the BPAS and their supporters are condemning the 1861 legislation as antiquated. There’s a campaign afoot to legalise all abortion up to birth, perhaps through the convenient method of ‘pills by post’.

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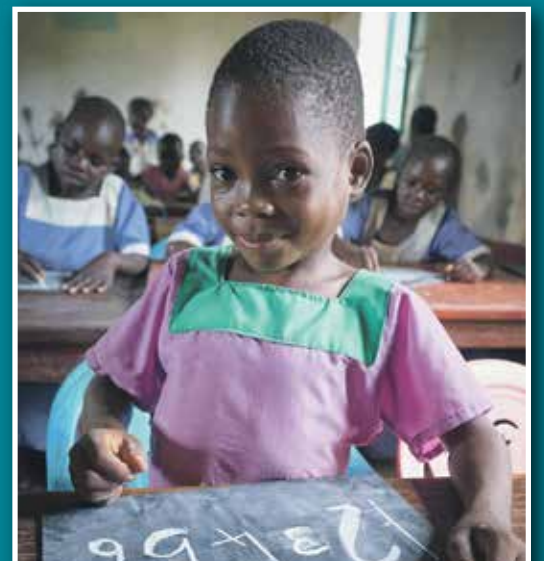


Photo by Paul Jeffrey.

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Significant rise in abuse allegations after Blackrock documentary

Staff Reporter

There was a "significant increase" in the number of historic abuse allegations made to the Church's independent safeguarding watchdog last year.

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) said that many of the reports relate to alleged abuse in boarding schools run and managed by male and

female religious, and came after high-profile media focus on such allegations.

A total of 251 allegations were reported between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023, according to the annual report published this week. However, because of data protection restrictions there is no ability to cross-reference to establish whether the alleged abuser is already known, or to check if the allegation may already have been reported to the National Board by

an alternative source.

The annual report notes: "this means that the national board cannot publicly report with the level of detail that it would like, in order to provide a detailed and transparent account of allegations received in any one year".

The report shows that the decade with most claims was the 1970s with 88 allegations, followed by 56 allegations in relation to the 1980s.

It also reveals that there was a surge in allegations following the

broadcast of the RTÉ radio documentary *Blackrock Boys* in early November. To this point, allegations had all been in single figures. However, November saw the number of allegations against religious rise to 14, 76 in December, 12 in January and 60 in February 2023.

Teresa Devlin, CEO of the national board said that the body has "consistently welcomed opportunities that give complainants a voice and a mechanism for sharing what happened to them as children.

"While we can be fairly confident that existing practice with children is well regulated, our work in safeguarding will not be completed until all of those who have been abused as children within the Church are enabled to come forward," Ms Devlin said this week.

The annual report also revealed a significant rise in the amount of safeguarding training provided to volunteers from Church bodies and institutions.

Dublin conference to explore healthcare chaplaincy

Staff Reporter

A major conference aimed at supporting the development of healthcare chaplaincy in Ireland is due to take place in Dublin later this month.

Stewarding the Mysteries: perspectives on healthcare chaplaincy, will be held in Croke Park on Thursday, June 29 and is a free event open to all, sponsored by Bon Secours Health System.

Organisers say that the conference will be of particular interest for anyone involved in or thinking of a career in healthcare chaplaincy.

It will share perspectives on chaplaincy in a healthcare setting and speakers will include philosopher Prof. Tom Casey on 'encountering the human being' and Dr Amanullah de

Sondy on cultural diversity in modern Ireland.

Bishop Michael Router will also address the conference and Julieanne Moran will reflect on the theme of synodality in the context of healthcare.

Doireann Ní Bhriain, former RTÉ journalist, will host an open forum on the challenges and opportunities

arising in the healthcare chaplaincy sphere.

Participants will have a chance both to share their experiences and hear of how others are navigating the space.

The symposium is free to attend, but registration is required in advance by contacting Jenny Collins at jcollins@bonsecours.ie

NEWS IN BRIEF

Beloved All Hallows matron passes

The death of former matron at All Hallows College Kitty Fahy has been met with great sadness.

Ms Fahy served as matron for 23 years in the former Dublin seminary up to her retirement in the late 1990s.

Ms Fahy was the only woman working in the college for much of this time. She managed housekeeping and staff, student welfare, accommodation, catering for students, staff and the conference centre.

The details of her funeral arrangements can be found at www.rip.ie/death-notice/kitty-fahy-marino-dublin/538512.

Ms Fahy's famous cakes and buns were a favourite for returning Jubilarians long after she had officially retired from All Hallows.

She lived the Vincentian values of justice, service and leadership in everything she did and served with great loyalty and respect under five All Hallows presidents during her time there.

Former IC journalist Ken Whelan dies

Well-liked journalist Ken Whelan (71) who worked for several papers including *The Irish Catholic* has died.

He was a leading advocate in the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and also worked for the *Irish Press*. He died on June 9 in the Mater Hospital in Dublin. Tributes were paid to the former political journalist at his funeral Mass at Mary Immaculate Church in Virginia, Co. Cavan.

Mr Whelan was born in Glasnevin and studied journalism at the College of Commerce in Rathmines. As well as spending a short time as a political advisor to Fianna Fáil, he held senior roles in a number of national publications.

Half of Killaloe parishes have priest over 75

Ruadhán Jones

Almost half the parishes in Killaloe diocese are ministered to by a priest over the retirement age of 75.

Some 27 of the 58 parishes in the diocese have

no resident priest under 75, Bishop Fintan Monahan said as he announced the diocesan appointments.

Meetings were held across Killaloe diocese earlier this year, with radical plans mooted to address the decline

in the number of vocations.

Killaloe will have one student for the priesthood attending St Patrick's College, Maynooth this coming September, having completed pre-seminary or propaedeutic year. In addition, two

students have applied to the Diocese to commence their propaedeutic year.

Vocations Director Fr Ignatius McCormack is to visit parishes to promote vocations during the Irish bishops' conference's Year for Vocations.

In addition to one retirement, two priests are taking further leave after completing a sabbatical, while a number of retired or semi-retired priests will continue to assist in ministry within the diocese.

The boys Doon good...



Boys from Doon CBS Primary School who received their First Holy Communion in St Patrick's Parish Church, Doon, Co. Limerick, are pictured with Fr Jimmy Donnelly PP and their class teacher, Ms Elizabeth Doherty.

Rory Fitzgerald

The View



'Hate speech' laws are undemocratic

The Irish Government is working to impose a new regime of censorship on its own people. Its proposed 'hate speech' legislation amounts to an unprecedented assault on the Irish people's long-standing right to freedom of expression. Yet democracy simply cannot function if people cannot air their concerns freely, or express controversial opinions.

“Ms von der Leyen's 'state of the union' speech of September 2020, took place in the wake of the death of George Floyd”

The effect of criminalising certain opinions is certainly anti-democratic, but the very origins of the current drive towards censorship are also worryingly undemocratic. Needless to say, censorship did not form part of any political party's recent election manifesto. The Irish people did not ask to be censored by their Government. The Government therefore have no specific democratic mandate for their 'hate speech' laws.

The Irish people are generally tolerant and decent, but also long accustomed to the rigours of robust debate. A tradition of free speech has existed in Ireland for centuries, even long before the foundation of the Irish State.

There is also no evidence that Ireland is plagued by hate speech. What's more, criminal laws exist which already rightly protect people from harassment and deal adequately with incitement to hatred.

Ireland's unnecessary and ill-defined hate speech legislation has its origins not with the Irish people, nor even with the Irish Government. The impetus for this chilling legalisation came from Brussels. The German president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, was not directly elected by the Irish

people, nor the people of the EU. They did not elect her, and they cannot remove her from power. Yet she is able to initiate drives for laws which profoundly impact Irish people's civil rights.

Ms von der Leyen's 'state of the union' speech of September 2020, took place in the wake of the death of George Floyd. In this fevered atmosphere, companies, governments and the great and the good were falling over each other to be seen to 'do something' about racism.

Mrs von der Leyen was no exception. In her 2020 speech, she essentially invoked American policing issues thousands of miles away to justify her intention to clamp down on what she called "hate speech".

She did so citing the words of John Hume, saying that he "used to say that conflict was about difference and that peace was about respect for difference. And as he so rightly reminded this House in 1998: 'The European visionaries decided that difference is not a threat, difference is natural. Difference is the essence of humanity'. These words are just as important today as they ever have been."

The Irish Government – ever deferential to the EU – nonetheless went ahead and opted in to the collective EU measures on 'hate speech'.

The resulting Irish legislation is poorly drafted and imprecise. It's hard to say precisely what statements in which contexts might merit investigation or prosecution. Experience of similar legislation overseas suggests that police reports, the threat of investigation, and the process of investigation itself, are all enough to stifle open debate on controversial issues – even where no offence is found to be committed.

Opinions

It has long been understood that hearing opinions you might find offensive is the price of living in a free and democratic society. What's more, an increasingly multicultural society requires greater tolerance for wider



range of views. That's because we now have wildly differing, but completely lawful, opinions on a wide range of issues across various religious, cultural, national and political groups.

People should not be criminalised for uttering a controversial opinion. In a diverse society, almost any opinion will inevitably offend one group or another. Almost any critical expression can arguably inspire hostility towards a particular group.

Will gardaí be called if a Muslim states his view that homosexuality is morally wrong? Will a gay rights activist be prosecuted for making a robust assertion of his view that Muslim or Catholic teachings are wrong? Will a feminist be able to argue that transgender males should be excluded from female changing rooms?

The testing of the merits of any opinion should occur in the heat of open debate. Yet the free and open debate that is fundamental to democracy simply cannot happen if the State puts its citizens in fear of criminal prosecution for saying the wrong thing.

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“The Irish Government – ever deferential to the EU – nonetheless went ahead and opted in to the collective EU measures on 'hate speech'”

Why is NASA all of a sudden admitting that UFOS are real?



We cannot rule out the possibility that intelligent alien life exists somewhere in the vast universe, writes **David Quinn**

An extraordinary press conference was held right at the end of May by NASA which attracted weirdly little commentary or attention, given the topic under discussion, namely Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOS).

Anyone over a certain age will have a vivid memory of NASA (the National Aeronautical and Space Administration) from the days of the moon landings when it was always in the news and every boy dreamed of being an astronaut, and the first man on the moon, Neil Armstrong was their hero.

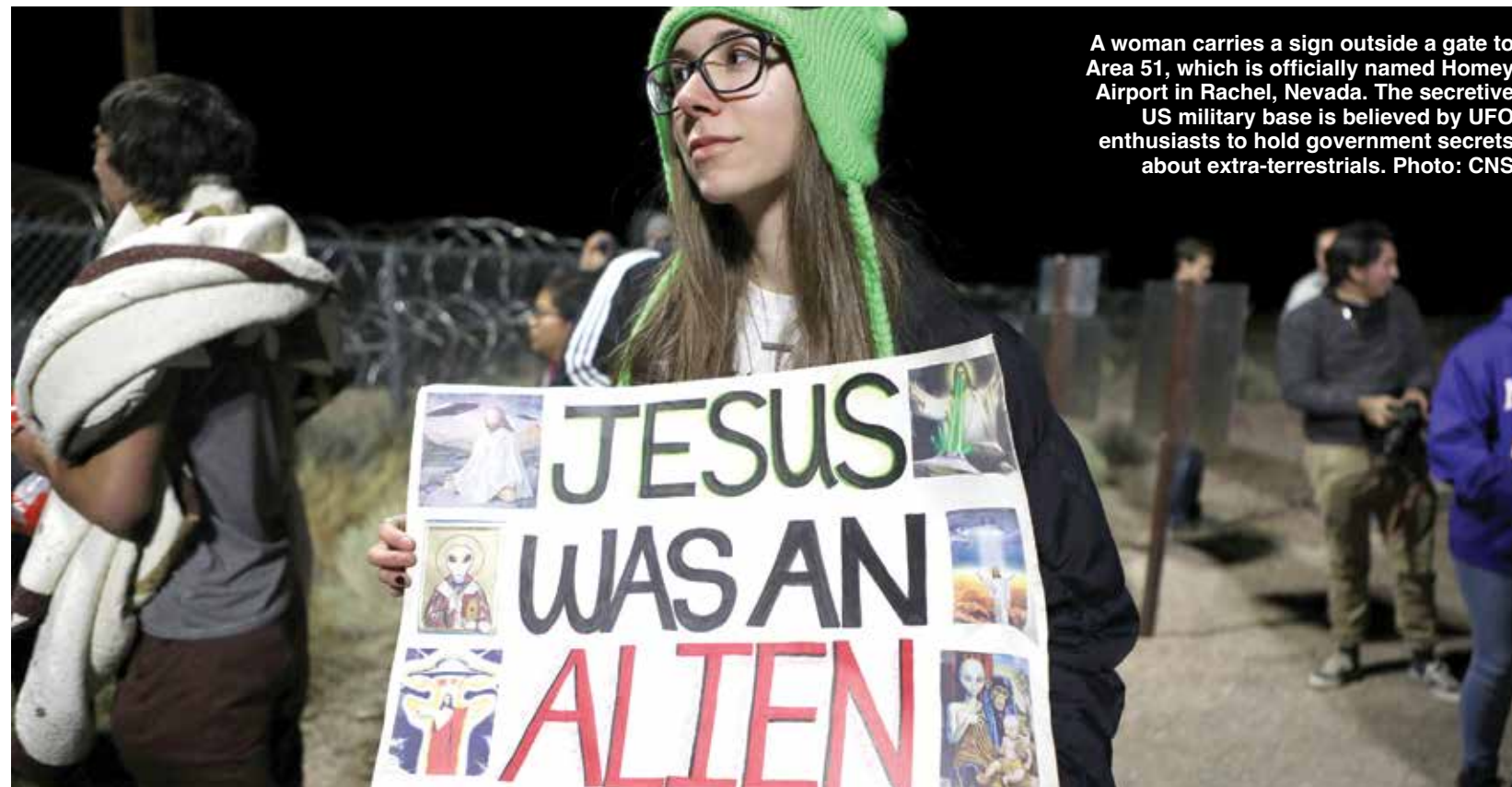
For decades, NASA has always denied the existence of UFOS, but then suddenly, at the press conference, they explained to the world that they might be real after all.

What is a UFO?

But first, let's explain what they mean by a 'UFO'. You are probably imagining something like a flying saucer. But they don't mean that, or at least not necessarily.

And the term 'UFO' has more or less been ditched in favour of 'Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena' (UAP).

What this means is a flying object that experts can't explain because they don't recognise it, and its movements are possibly strange and unexplainable, for exam-



A woman carries a sign outside a gate to Area 51, which is officially named Homey Airport in Rachel, Nevada. The secretive US military base is believed by UFO enthusiasts to hold government secrets about extra-terrestrials. Photo: CNS

ple it slows down and speeds up, or zig-zags in a way no flying object invented by humans can.

The exact definition of 'UAP' is a flying object "that cannot be identified as aircraft or known natural phenomena from a scientific perspective".

“For any intelligent life to cross the vast distances from wherever they are from to Earth would involve forms of technology that most physicists don't believe can exist even in theory, such as faster-than-light travel”

NASA had been building up to its press conference for a few years. For example, footage had been released of an incident recorded by fighter pilots that appeared to show one of these 'UAPs'. (To avoid confusion, I'm going to stick to the more common term 'UFO' from here on in, but keep in mind that it doesn't necessarily mean alien spacecraft!)

At the press conference, the NASA team said that the vast majority of UFO

sightings are later explained. They said they have 50-100 UFO sightings reported each month and that between 2% and 5% of these remain unexplained.

NASA cited a Pentagon report from 2021 that looked at 144 reports of UFOS made by fighter pilots since 2004, and remarkably only one of these has been properly explained. The other 143 have not been explained. The Pentagon has said: "we do not have sufficient information in our dataset to attribute incidents to specific explanations".

Again, this does not mean that they cannot eventually be explained although given the lack of "sufficient information" most of them probably never will be.

To cut to the chase, do the Pentagon and NASA absolutely rule out the possibility that some of these flying objects might be alien in origin, that is, from 'outer space'? No, they don't rule it in or out.

But how could they? Who could absolutely rule out the possibility that intelligent alien life exists somewhere in the vast universe, or that such life has been sending craft of some kind to Earth to observe us?

Scepticism

But frankly, I am sceptical about whether UFOS, in the science fiction sense, have ever visited Earth. Earth is unimaginably distant from

the nearest star after the Sun. We have picked up no signs of intelligent life in the parts of our galaxy we can so far observe with the most sophisticated sensors and telescopes. For any intelligent life to cross the vast distances from wherever they originate to Earth would involve forms of technology that most physicists don't believe can exist even in theory, such as faster-than-light travel.

This is emphatically not the same as denying that intelligent alien life exists. It is simply saying that it is very unlikely any has ever reached Earth.

I also wonder why these reports seem a lot more common in America than elsewhere. Yes, America is a big, technologically advanced country and is better able to detect UFOS than almost anywhere else.

But Europe is a big, technologically advanced place as well and UFO reports seem much less common (maybe I'm wrong) in our part of the world.

Why now?

Why is it only NASA and the Pentagon who are now talking about UFOS? Why not the French or British or German Governments or for that matter, the likes of China and Japan? Perhaps they will begin to hold their own press conferences in the future. We'll see.

NASA representatives

were asked at the press conference to explain why they completely dismissed UFO sightings in the past. Their answer was that they are making amends now and will be transparent from here on in.

“If God exists, then so does the supernatural and there is no reason in principle to deny the existence of supernatural phenomena, explained or not, including miracle cures”

Again, I wonder? And I wonder why the US Government has suddenly decided to start talking openly about UFOS after all this time and to encourage other people, especially pilots, to come forward and report when they see one and to assure them that they will not be dismissed as cranks. Some sceptical observers believe that maybe NASA and the Pentagon are simply seeking an excuse for new defence-spending.

The sightings of UFOS is not entirely dissimilar to the sightings of supernatural phenomena all over the world for millennia. In its own purview, the Church

tries to sift out which are false and which might be true. It leaves some up in the air. The Church could say that it investigates 'Unidentified Supernatural Phenomena' (USPs).

The *New York Times* columnist, Ross Douthat (who is a practising Catholic) has written: "[alien encounters] whether real or imaginary, are the same kind of thing as the fairy encounters of the human past — part of an enduring phenomenon whose interpretations shift but whose essentials are consistent, featuring the same abductions and flying crafts and lights and tricks with crops and animals and time and space, the same shape-shifting humanoids and sexual experiments and dangerous gifts and mysterious intentions."

A rationalist would say, of course, that there is no such thing as the supernatural. But if God exists, then so does the supernatural, and there is no reason in principle to deny the existence of supernatural phenomena, explained or not, including miracle cures.

Awe and wonder

People's fascination with UFOS is, in some ways, a religious impulse, stemming from the same sense of awe and wonder. The fascination shows that our religious instinct is, ultimately, ineradicable. If there really is a God, then that, of course, makes perfect sense.

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Corpus Christi processions bring faith communities to life

Ruadhán Jones

Parishes across the country turned out in force to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi, with colourful processions showing off the life of faith communities.

Instituted in the 13th Century, the feast celebrates the Holy Eucharist as the most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

Eucharistic processions traditionally mark the feast, with large crowds turning out for Mass, benediction and adoration before the Eucharist from Waterford to Armagh.



CORK: Faith communities from across Cork City joined the diocese's 97th Eucharistic procession for Corpus Christi, as it returned to the streets after Covid. Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin led the procession. Photos: Peter Pietrzak.



LOUTH: A large crowd gathered for the Corpus Christi procession in Holy Family parish, Ballsgrove, Drogheda.



CLARE: After Mass for the Polish community for the feast of Corpus Christi, attendees gathered for the traditional procession in the grounds of Ennis Cathedral on Sunday, June 11.



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KILDARE: Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty leads the Corpus Christi procession in Newbridge parish, which ended with benediction at St Eustace Dominican Friary.



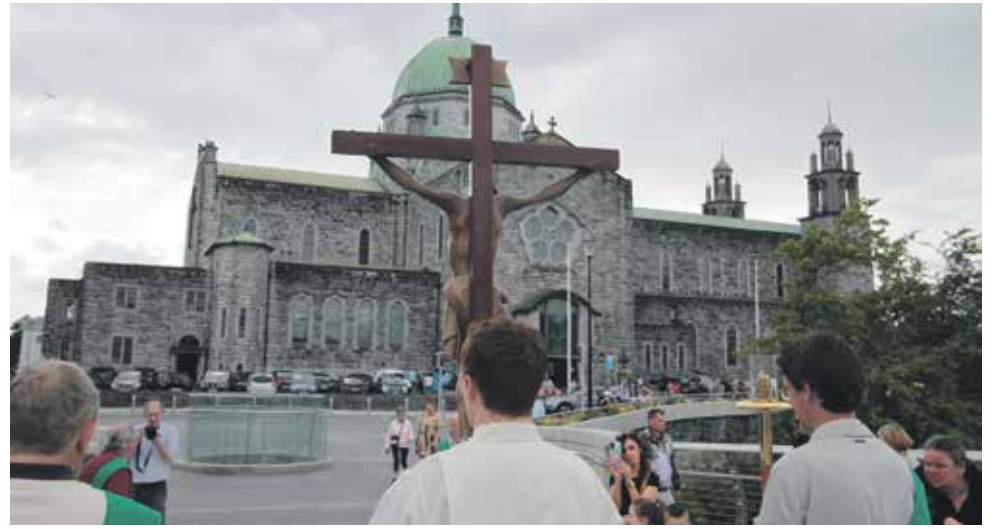
TYRONE: Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin leads the Corpus Christi procession in the parish of Aghaloo and Carnteel. Photos: Damien McAnespie.



WATERFORD: Waterford City was alive with colour as a packed Corpus Christi procession moved through the streets on Sunday, June 11.



DERRY: St Brigid's Carnhill hosted the Corpus Christi procession for the Parish of the Three Patrons, with local First Communion children who led the people following Jesus around the grounds.



GALWAY: Bro. Jacopo Pozzerle OFM leads the Corpus Christi procession in Galway City, from the new Salmonweir Bridge and finishing up at the Poor Clares Galway, where Mass was celebrated by Fr Adrian Peelo OFM, on Sunday, June 11. Photos: Jason Delaney.



MAYO: First Communion children from Scoil Íosa primary school scatter rose petals ahead of the Corpus Christi Eucharistic procession in Ballyhaunis, which was led by Fr Stephen Farragher and travelled from St Patrick's Church to the Augustinian Friary. Photo: Janapix.



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Prof. Massimo Faggioli

Professor of Historical Theology Villanova University USA. He is also a columnist for *La Croix International*, and contributing writer to *Commonweal*.

Prof. Myriam Wijlens

Professor of Canon Law Erfurt Germany. She is a member of The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, an advisor to ARCIC III and a Co-Moderator of the Peter and Paul Seminar.

Prof. Eamonn Conway

Is a priest of Tuam archdiocese and Professor of Integral Human Development in the School of Philosophy & Theology, University of Notre Dame Australia.

Mr. Christopher Lamb

Is a British journalist who is the Rome correspondent for *The Tablet*. He is a contributor to the Vatican Insider page of *La Stampa* and a regular commentator for the BBC on Vatican and religious affairs.

Dr Gemma Simmonds CSJ

Is a sister of the Congregation of Jesus, director of the Religious Life Institute and senior lecturer in pastoral theology at the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge. She teaches Christian spirituality at the Cambridge Theological Federation.

Prof. Maria Cimperman RSCJ

Is the Associate Professor of Catholic Theological Ethics. Founding Director, Center for the Study of Consecrated Life (2014-2022) and Associate Professor of Consecrated Life Catholic Theological Union (Chicago, USA).

Prof. Vimal Tirimanna CSsR

Is Professor of Moral Theology at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, Kandy, Sri Lanka and the Pontifical Alphonsian Academy, Rome.

3,000 young people fan the flame of faith

Ruadhán Jones

Around 3,000 young people packed out Celtic Park GAA ground in Derry for the 'Fan the Flame' Mass on Thursday, June 8.

Children from Derry City and counties Donegal, Derry and Tyrone who had received the Sacrament of Confirmation attended the Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown.

In preparation for attending the Mass, children completed a reflective journal and designed colourful t-shirts and flags on the theme of 'The Holy Spirit, Our Helper and Our Guide'.

Bishop McKeown, in his homily, referenced the young blessed Carlos Acutis and told the young people gathered that they too could be saints, strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit, their helper and guide.

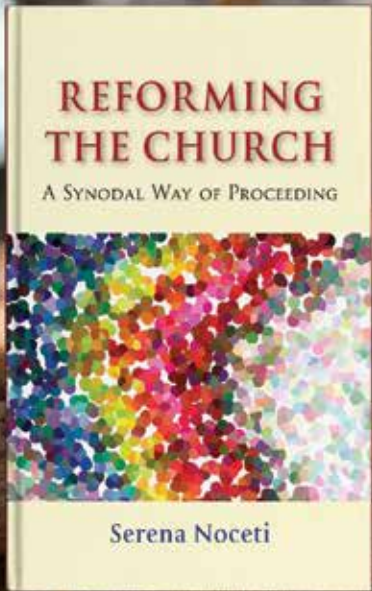


Photos: Stephen Latimer





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‘I did 55 baptisms in one night’



Missionary Fr Donal McLraith tells Ruadhán Jones about ministering in Fiji

What do the archbishop of Suva in Fiji and the cardinal in Tonga have in common? The same thing as many Fijian and Tongan clergy – they are all former students of Irish Columban Fr Donal McLraith.

Fr Donal has been ministering in Fiji for the past 35 years, all of them spent teaching at the Pacific Regional Seminary in Suva, “the Maynooth of the South Pacific”, as the Irish priest describes it. It is here that so many of the regions’ priests and bishops have passed through his hands.

Fr Donal’s contribution was celebrated recently when he visited the nearby island of Kiribati (pronounced Kir-e-bass) to give a retreat for the priests. They went on retreat for the whole week and, when they finished, “blow me down on Monday there was an invitation to a dinner at the presidential palace”, he says.

“They had singing and dancing, the traditional Kiribati dances, then a beautiful meal. And the chief guest was Fr Donal! I was astounded. I’m basking in the glory of it, never before and never again will the president of a country host me for a banquet.”

Fr McLraith hadn’t expected to spend his life in the South Pacific or as a teacher. “Perhaps I should have,” he jokes with me. The Columbans sent him to do a BA in University College Dublin and after his first year, his father sent a letter to his sister



Irish Columban Fr Donal McLraith pictured with fellow priests on the South Pacific island of Kiribati, where Fr McLraith was a guest of honour at a celebration given by the island’s president.

saying, “Lilly, Donal has just done his first arts. The Columbans will get him to teach in Peru or somewhere.” It wasn’t quite Peru, but after that prophecy, “I was stuck,” Fr Donal says.

“A big thing in Fiji is they name a child after you. This is my senior namesake. I have a half-dozen of them named after me – no children, but plenty of namesakes”

“I got an unexpected phone call from my superior saying, ‘Donal, would you please go to Fiji for one year and be ready to leave at the end of that year’. Now, I’m still waiting for that year to finish. I think they forgot I was here by the mercy of God, it’s a wonderful place.”

The strength of the local culture impressed the Irishman when he first arrived. He was particularly puzzled by the singing palm trees.

“Early in the morning I went for a walk and all the trees were singing,” Fr Donal recalls. “I couldn’t believe it. When I looked more closely, there were men on top of each tree and they were singing.”

He discovered later that the men were collecting sap from the tree, tapping the trunk and filling bottles with the nourishing sap.

Fr McLraith wasn’t the first Columban to minister in Fiji. The first Columban missionaries arrived in the 1950s, after the order was kicked out of China by the Communist government. One of the new priests made quite an impression on the locals. He was interested in building houses and he was so successful that the Fiji housing authority appointed him as head of its operations.

Housing

“He was head of the housing authority on one of Queen Elizabeth’s visits,” Fr Donal explains. “We have great pictures of Dermot [Hurley] showing them around a squatter area, around the new buildings.”

The Irish Columban keeps the tradition up, teaching the roughly 120 seminarians who come from all the islands in the South Pacific. “This year we had 31 first years,” Fr Donal says proudly. “I’ll be teaching the Hebrew alphabet to them soon, God help them – and God help me with them! I’m getting ready for it now.”

Our video call is disrupted briefly when he receives a phone call. Afterwards he tells me that it was one of his ‘namesakes’ calling him. “A big thing in Fiji is they name a child after you. This is my senior namesake. I have a half-dozen of them named after me – no children, but plenty of namesakes,” he jokes.

Fr Donal is just one of three ‘foreign’ lecturers left in the seminary. In fact, most of his peers are former students of his own and it was for that reason he was invited to give the priests a retreat in Kiribati, where he spoke to them about the priesthood and about synodality.

“The Japanese invaded and Sr McGaughey was on an outer island and they got along fine with the Japanese. They traded with them, they’d give them soap and the Japanese would give them stuff”

Even before the Columbans, there was an Irish Catholic link with the region. When Fr Donal arrived in Kiribati for the first time back in 1994, an Irish sister of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart greeted him. Sr McGaughey arrived on the island on the last boat from Europe in 1939, before the Japanese invaded the region at the start of WWII.

“There was a famous battle of Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati, when the American’s retook Kiribati from the Japanese,” says

Fr Donal. “The Japanese invaded and Sr McGaughey was on an outer island and they got along fine with the Japanese. They traded with them, they’d give them soap and the Japanese would give them stuff.”

“And then, in the last days of the war, a catechist arrived to the convent early in the morning and said come on, come on. The Japanese are going to kill you. The sisters said ‘nonsense, they’re very nice people, we’ve been trading with them all through the war’.

“He said no, he knew enough Japanese, he worked for them and heard them saying the war is ended we’ll kill the foreigners. He stuck Sr McGaughey and her companions in the boat and got them in to the top of Tarawa. A boat came out and said the Japanese are still here, so they went down to the South, and the Americans were there.”

Mother Teresa

Sr McGaughey wasn’t the only famous woman to cross Fr Donal’s path during his time in Fiji. When Mother Teresa visited, he was deputised to drive to the airport.

“I spent a quarter of an hour with her, drove her to the airport and then she asked me to write a prayer about the new catechism,” he says. “And I finally did that and sent a couple of thousand copies of it off to India and she wrote back to me. She wrote me two letters.”

The one overwhelming sensation that comes back to him from her visit was an experience of “complete goodness. In her presence you never wanted to do anything bad... Now she must have had original sin just like the rest of us but when I met her back in the 80s, it was an extraordinary sense of goodness”.

The region where Fr Donal is based – mainly on Fiji – has a small but robust Catholic population. While predominantly Christian, the majority of Fijian Christians are Methodist, due to the legacy of British rule. As





Fr McIlraith – like all the other guests wearing a garland of flowers – enjoys a lighter moment during the party in Kiribati.

he explains it, when the English colonised the South Pacific, they gave the Solomon islands to the Anglicans, Vanuatu to the Presbyterians and Fiji to the Methodists. The impact isn't only religious – 40% of the population of Fiji are descendants from Indians the British brought to work for them, Fr Donal says.

The first to evangelise for the Catholic faith were the Marists in 1840, when they arrived in Fiji, moving on to Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu. "In the North Pacific, where Kiribati is, the Sacred Heart missionaries evangelised that," Fr Donal explains. "Then over to the East it was the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary – St Damien of Molokai was one of them – they evangelised Tahiti and the Cook Islands."

He keeps the tradition of Catholic mission going, spending most of his holidays in parishes, the only time he can get away from his work in the seminary.

Baptisms

"I had nine baptisms in a parish last week," says Fr Donal. "My record is 55. About 20 years ago this year, there was a cyclone and when it came through I spoke to one of my seminarians on the phone and asked him how things are getting on and he said terrible."

"So I got \$3,000 (€2,700) from the superior and I took food out to them. I got a truck for four hours, got to an island, then we went by boat. Blow me down, but the blessed engine fell off and we drifted for two days. I thought my end had come but obviously it

hadn't.

"I had been able to set up a bit of a food chain. I wrote to every Columban I knew and gathered a bit of money for them. At Easter I went back to do the Easter ceremonies and there were 55 children. We started at six o'clock and finished at 12 at Holy Saturday night!"

With 35 years behind him, Fr Donal looks back with happiness at the time he has spent in his adopted homeland. He has come to see his coming there as the work of providence.

"It was the hand of God, I've no doubt at all. Jesus has a plan for all of us. He prepares us now for what's coming next. Our help is in the name of the Lord, the psalm says. He prepares us now for what is coming next."

Fr Donal McIlraith with the President of Kiribati Taneti Maamau.



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JUNE
2023 ISSUE

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Pilgrims on the path...



DUBLIN: A group of 35 women and men who successfully completed Pathways, a two-year part-time adult faith development programme run by Dublin diocese, are pictured after their graduation ceremony in DCU St Patrick's Campus with Archbishop Dermot Farrell, who presented the certificates. Also pictured are Sr Eileen Houlahan CHF, Pathways Programme director, and Patricia Carroll, Director of the Office for Mission and Ministry.



MEATH: President Michael D. Higgins greets local Church leaders during a visit to present the National Tidy Towns Award to Trim, Co. Meath. Pictured (from left): Paul Moore (Trim parish finance committee), Sabina Higgins, Fr Paul Crosbie PP, President Higgins, Pastor Ciaran Loughran (Trim Living Hope Church) and Dean Paul Bogle (Trim Church of Ireland Cathedral).



DUBLIN: Members of the Dominican Church Choir in Claddagh, Co. Galway, perform for President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina Higgins at Áras an Uachtaráin.

IN SHORT

SVP volunteers selfless service celebrated

More than 120 St Vincent de Paul members from across the North Region celebrated Volunteers' Week on June 8 at the society's annual members' day.

The occasion marked significant milestones for 12 members, who were presented with special commemorative certificates and medals. Between them they have devoted over 150 years of selfless service to SVP in their local community.

The SVP's regional president for the North praised the "incredible" compassion and commitment showed by the volunteers.

"They play an invaluable role in the

society and are the very fabric of the Vincentian family," said Ms Waide, adding "we are extremely proud of our volunteers".

Meanwhile, the national president Rose McGowan said, "our greatest strength is our volunteers", who show empathy for people in difficult circumstances.

Fota liturgy conference 2023 announced

St Colman's Society for Catholic Liturgy has announced that the 14th Fota International Liturgy Conference will be held at Ballyhea, Charleville, Co. Cork (Ireland) on July 1-2.

The conference's theme is 'The Sacrifice of the Mass' and it will explore aspects of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's

reflections on the centrality of sacrifice in understanding the Eucharistic liturgy.

Papers will be delivered by Prof. D. Vincent Twomey; Prof. Manfred Hauke (Lugano); Prof. Dieter Boehler (Frankfurt); Prof. Joseph Briody (Boston); Matthew Hazell (United Kingdom); Dr Thomas Lane (Ireland); Dr Sven Conrad (Germany); Fr Serafino Lanzetta (United Kingdom); and Dr Peter McGregor (Sydney).

Bookings are open and reservations may be made by contacting colman.liturgy2@yahoo.com.

Registration costs €25 and includes refreshments served at intervals during the conference and may be paid on opening day of the conference.

Irish nuns celebrate 70 years of religious life

Four Irish nuns in an American-based order, the Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia, celebrated 70 years of service in religious life on the weekend of June 3-4.

Jubilarians celebrating 50 and 70 years of religious profession gathered at Our Lady of Angels Convent in Aston, Pennsylvania, for a weekend of recalling memories and celebrating both the years past and the years to come.

The four Irish sisters, who all made their professions in 1953, were: Sr Marie Patrice Feeney, OSF, born in Sligo; Sr Eileen Hennessy, OSF, born in Kilkenny; Sr Nuala Kathleen Swan, OSF, was born in Kilmessan, Co. Meath; and Sr Mary Agnes Walsh, OSF, born in New York but grew up in Ireland.



CORK: Margaret O'Regan, a parishioner and volunteer at the SMA Church, Blackrock Road, is pictured after receiving the Benemerenti medal from Fr Malachy Flanagan, Provincial Superior of the Society of African Missions accompanied by Fr Jerome Anoumou-Sassou, parish curate.



DUBLIN: The Life Advocate Awards art competition winners for 2023 are pictured after receiving their awards from Senator Ronán Mullen. The three students are Nikola Wolkowicz, Julia Ubak and Sienna Alves from St Patrick's College, Dungannon.



DUBLIN: Winner of the 2023 National Life Advocate Awards essay competition James Tourish, St Columb's College, receives his award from independent Senator Rónán Mullen.



WICKLOW: The May rosary group are pictured in the Church Garden of Clara Vale Church.



USA: Four Sisters of St Francis of Philadelphia who hail from Ireland, celebrated their diamond jubilee on the weekend of June 3-4, marking 70 years of service. Pictured are Srs Marie Patrice Feeney, Eileen Hennessy, Nuala Kathleen Swan and Mary Agnes Walsh.



BELFAST: Members of the SVP were congratulated for reaching a volunteering milestone for the society by Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the North Region and Rose McGowan, SVP National President at the north region members' day celebrating inspirational volunteers. Pictured on June 8 are: Ms Waide, Pat McCann (North Belfast), Ms McGowan, Martin Mailey (Limavady), Majella Savage (Kilmegan), Rosemary Devlin (Coleraine), Veronica Archer (Whiteabbey), Anne Cunningham (Kilmegan), Irene McBride and Sally MacNamee (Omagh) and Anne Irwin (Coleraine).



DUBLIN: Dublin diocese's Pathways graduates light candles during their graduation Mass.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
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Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



WEXFORD: Fr James Cullen CC celebrates Mass at Rocklands Shrine Wexford Town, on the Feast of Our Lady Mother of The Church, May 29.



CORK: Dominican Bros. John, Aidan and David are pictured with Novice Master Fr Philip Mulryne after completing the John Buckley 5km race on June 1.



DUBLIN: Pictured are transition year students from St Mary's Secondary School, Baldoye, who starred in their school musical *Matilda Jr*, directed by Amy White Lambe.



DUBLIN: Members of the Ukrainian Catholic community are pictured during celebrations for their first Holy Communion in Our Lady of Consolation Church, Donnycarney, on June 4.

ANTRIM

Blessing of the sick takes place at all Masses on Saturday, June 17, in Clonard Monastery, Belfast, as part of the solemn novena to our Mother of Perpetual Help. Blessing of children will take place at all Masses on Sunday June 18.

ARMAGH

Armagh parish blessing of the graves takes place on Friday, June 16, for Tullysaran Old Cemetery at 7.30pm and Sunday, June 25 at 12noon for Armagh Cemetery.

CARLOW

Cemetery Masses for Graiguecullen and Killeslin parish take place in Sleaty on Friday June 16 at 7.30pm and at St Mary's on Monday July 10 at 7pm.

CAVAN

Eucharistic adoration takes place daily between 11am to 7pm in St Clare's Chapel, Cavan Cathedral.

CORK

A healing service led by Fr Pat Colins CM takes place Saturday June 17 2-5pm in St Mary's Dominican Church.

A vocations afternoon at the Poor Clare Monastery, College Road takes place on June 17, 2-4pm, for young women interested in the contemplative life. For more information see www.poorclarescork.ie or email the sisters at: vocationspoorclarescork@gmail.com

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

DERRY

Rosary on the Coast takes place June 18 at 3pm on Benone Strand, Limavady. The Maghera Parish 'pray and play' for parents, grandparents and tots (three years old and younger) meets every Friday, in the Fairhill Youth Centre, after the 10am Mass. It runs from 10.30am until 12 noon.

DONEGAL

Young adult prayer meeting (18-40) takes place every Wednesday at 8pm in the meeting room upstairs in Mountcharles church.

DOWN

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed in Newry Cathedral every Thursday from 5-9pm, on Saturday after 10.30am Mass until 5.30pm and Sunday from after the 12 noon Mass until 5.30pm.

DUBLIN

A young adult night for prayer and faith discussion takes place in Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners, Rathmines, on Thursday June 29, from 8-10pm.

GALWAY

The Galway Diocesan Rosary Group meets every evening at 7.30pm for the rosary via Zoom. If you would like to join the rosary group, email galwaydiocesanrosary@gmail.com

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

KERRY

Pioneers celebrating 25, 50 and 60 years of membership will be presented with pins and certificates at the 6.10pm Mass in St John's Church, Tralee, on Saturday July 8. Those eligible should purchase their pins through the Parish Centre before Wednesday June 21.

KILDARE

A Mass of thanksgiving for the Diamond jubilee of the ordination of Fr Eddie Moore takes place in the Parish Church, Sallins Road, Naas on Saturday, June 24 at 6pm. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Denis Nulty.

KILKENNY

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

LAOIS

The Divine Mercy chaplet is prayed at 3pm every Sunday in Portlaoise parish church.

LEITRIM

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

LOUTH

A Novena to St Gerard takes

place every Wednesday at 9.30am and 7.30pm in St Joseph's Redemptorist Church, Dundalk.

MAYO

Lectio Divina in Westport parish takes place Mondays 11-11.30am in the choir room on the ground floor of the Parish Centre at the James St entrance.

MEATH

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

SLIGO

The annual St Maria Goretti Novena takes place in the Church of the Assumption Collooney from June 28 to July 6 inclusive with Mass each evening at 8pm, rosary at 7.30pm and Confessions available on request. For more information visit www.kilvarnetparish.com/novena-2023

TIPPERARY

Annual St Patrick's cemetery Mass takes place Friday June 23, 7pm, an opportunity to pray for our deceased family members and friends.

TYRONE

The annual St John's Eve anointing of the sick and infirm and Blessing of carers and those in the nursing and medical professions will be held at the Washingbay on Thursday June 22 at 7.30pm.

A baby and toddlers' group is held in Holy Trinity Church Hall, Dromore, "The Ark", every Tuesday morning from 10am-12pm. All babies and toddlers with their carers welcome.

WATERFORD

A men's prayer group led by the Home of the Mother takes place in St Saviour's Church, Bridge Street, Waterford City every Wednesday at 7pm, including exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction, faith formation and group sharing.

WEXFORD

Rosary and devotions take place every Tuesday at 2.30pm at Rocklands shrine to Our Lady of Wexford until the summer.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Nicaraguan dictatorship withholds over \$500,000 donated to Church

● A recent investigation by the Nicaraguan newspaper *El Confidencial* revealed that the dictatorship of Daniel Ortega has withheld more than half a million dollars that was donated to the Church in Estelí by the US bishops' humanitarian aid agency Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

The independent media reported June 2 that according to sources with ties to the diocese, the donation of \$563,206 was legally made on June 14, 2012, to Estelí Caritas when Abelardo Mata was diocesan bishop.

The charity, whose legal personhood was cancelled on February 7, 2022, by the National Assembly, agreed to a "total donation" of the money to the Diocese of Estelí, whose apostolic administrator is currently Bishop Rolando Álvarez. The prelate was unjustly sentenced in February to 26 years and four months in prison, charged with treason by the regime.

Priest saves 3 children after gang violence

● A priest rescued three abandoned children in a Mexican town following a confrontation between crime gangs that left one dead and a Catholic church riddled with bullets.

The church in the small settlement of Santa Anita (population 84) in the Diocese of Tarahumara in Chihuahua state was the scene of the confrontation between the rival gangs. The settlement is located

fewer than 125 miles south of Cerocahui, also in Chihuahua, where almost a year ago two Jesuit priests were murdered inside a Catholic church.

According to the Chihuahua state attorney general's office, at the scene more than 700 bullet casings, a grenade, 19 cartridges, and a Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck, "completely charred," were found.

California honours anti-Catholic drag group at state capitol

● Michael Williams, who goes by the name 'Sister Roma' and is a member of the San Francisco chapter of an anti-Catholic drag group known as the 'Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence', was honoured by the California state Legislature, June 5.

Outside the capitol, hundreds of Catholics and other Christians held a prayer vigil, and several members of the California Republican Caucus walked out of the capitol in protest while Mr Williams was honoured.

Inside the capitol, Mr Williams received a standing ovation on the assembly floor, and several lawmakers posed for photos with Mr Williams, who was wearing a black gown, heavy white makeup, and a large purple-blue wig.

A member of the drag group since 1987, Mr Williams is an activist, pornography filmmaker and one of the most well-known Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

Well-known US priest pleads guilty in child abuse imagery case

● Fr James Jackson pleaded guilty to a federal child abuse imagery charge on June 8 and now must wait to find out how long he might spend in prison.

In a plea agreement he signed ahead of his scheduled June 20 trial, Fr Jackson (68), a priest of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter (FSSP), admitted to a single charge of receipt of child abuse imagery. US District Court Judge William Smith, sitting in Providence, Rhode Island, set a sentencing date of September 11.

Prosecutors will seek the mandatory minimum of five years in prison and will move to dismiss a second count of possession of child abuse imagery, Jim Rosenberg, a spokesman for the US Attorney's Office, told CNA. Each charge carried a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and up to a \$250,000 (€232,362) fine.

The priest must still face pending criminal charges related to a child abuse imagery investigation in Kansas, authorities there have said.

French bishop laments knife attack in his diocese

Calling on Catholics to pray for the victims of a stabbing at a local playground, French Bishop Yves Le Saux of Annecy said the horrific attack was an indication of growing societal violence.

"This tragedy raises questions about the violence that runs through our society, and commits us to work even harder together to fight it," Bishop Le Saux said in a statement published on June 8 by the Diocese of Annecy.

"I would like to express my deep sorrow to the victims and their families, as well as to all the people of Annecy who have been affected by this tragedy," the bishop said. "I assure them of the prayers of the entire Catholic community."

According to Reuters news agency, the attack occurred in the morning of June 8 when a Syrian refugee, identified by several French media sites as 31-year-old Abdalmasih Hanoun, pulled out a knife and lunged at several toddlers and adults at Le Paquier park near the lake at the picturesque town close to Geneva at the Swiss border.

Authorities said Mr Hanoun inflicted life-threatening injuries on four children between the ages of 22 months and 3 years, as well as wounding two elderly adults while escaping the park. Witnesses said the attacker carried Christian insignia and shouted, "In the



Salih Ismail cries in front of messages and floral tributes at the children's playground in Annecy, France, June 9, the day after four children and two elderly adults were injured in a knife attack at Le Paquier park. Photo: OSV News/Denis Balibouse, Reuters

name of Jesus Christ".

Police shot and wounded the assailant before he was finally apprehended.

French prosecutor Line Bonnet-Mathis said Mr Hanoun was granted political refugee status and permanent residency in Sweden in 2013. However, he was denied citizenship twice in 2017 and 2018. Investigators said he had been living in Annecy since last fall.

A video of the attack, posted by several users on Twitter, was deleted. After Dutch conservative philosopher and pundit Eva Vlaardingerbroek tweeted a complaint and questioned why people were "not allowed to see what's really

going on in Europe," Twitter CEO Elon Musk responded to her, saying he was "looking into it".

The video also showed a young Catholic pilgrim using two backpacks he carried to block Mr Hanoun from attacking and then running after him. Hailed as a hero, the pilgrim met June 9 with French President Emmanuel Macron. In an interview with French news site *CNEWS*, the pilgrim, who identified himself as Henri, said that despite the danger, it would be "unthinkable to do nothing".

"I let myself be guided by providence and the Virgin Mary. I said my 'adieu' (goodbye). They would decide what would happen,"

the pilgrim said.

Although the assailant committed the barbarous attack in Jesus' name, Henri told *CNEWS* that "it is profoundly un-Christian to attack the vulnerable".

"The entire Christian civilisation on which our country is built upon is a chivalrous message to defend widows and orphans. I think that, on the contrary, something very bad inhabited him," Henri said.

The Diocese of Annecy announced that Bishop Le Saux would celebrate an evening Mass on June 9 for the victims and their families, followed by a time of prayer.

Spanish Jesuits hire law firm to address alleged abuse

The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) has announced it has hired a law firm and a specialised association to clarify the alleged cases of abuse that occurred in its schools in Catalonia, Spain, and to accompany the complainants.

The Jesuit delegate in Catalonia, Enric Puiggròs, has announced that the congregation has taken action in relation to the alleged cases of sexual abuse that may have been perpetrated in schools.

In order to clarify the allegations,

determine how they were handled, and identify those responsible for what reportedly took place, the Roca Junyent law firm has been hired.

For the pastoral care and accompaniment of the alleged victims, the Jesuits have turned to the Association for Mediation, Encounter, and Listening (AMEE), an organisation that specialises in this area and facilitates restorative justice processes.

In a statement, the Jesuits noted that

"with this initiative we want to respond to all those victims for whom it is difficult to turn to the institution where they suffered these abuses".

The Society of Jesus has also made itself available to the region's Ombudsman for Grievances to "verify this process and the planned actions and explore ways of collaboration".

The congregation founded by St Ignatius of Loyola has faced various complaints of abuse in Catalonia since 2018.

Conditions harden for Belarus Catholics as priests arrested

A Catholic parish priest accused of "offending state authorities" in Belarus said he understood the hardships facing prisoners of conscience after just four days in jail.

"I wouldn't wish this on anyone – not a single hour in such a place," said Fr Andrej

Kulik, rector of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish at Miory.

The 44-year-old pastor spoke after being arrested on May 25 with two other clergy in the eastern Vitebsk Diocese in connection with social media posts.

In an OSV News interview, he said he had been allowed to return home on May 28. He hasn't been charged with anything and his case was sent for revision.

Belarus's opposition-linked Christian Vision group said police had confiscated

computers and mobile phones while detaining Fr Kulik, along with Fr Vyacheslav Adamovich, from the nearby Our Lady of the Scapular Parish, and Fr Alexander Shautsov, a Greek Catholic priest from Polotsk, who was given a 15-day jail sentence.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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Fleeing the flood



Rescuers evacuate local residents from a flooded area in Kherson on June 7 after the Nova Kakhovka dam breached, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine. Photo: OSV News/Vladyslav Smilianets, Reuters

Fort Worth Diocese releases photos allegedly showing drug use at Carmelite monastery

Charges and countercharges of illegal activity have further escalated a bitter public dispute between the Diocese of Fort Worth and a monastery of Carmelite nuns in Arlington, Texas.

The latest salvo in what has become a protracted legal and public relations battle was launched by the diocese on June 7 when it released a pair of photographs that purportedly show cannabis and marijuana products inside the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity.

Diocesan spokesman Pat Svacina said in the June 7 release that the diocese "is in communication" with the Arlington Police Department regarding "serious concerns it has regarding the use of

marijuana and edibles at the monastery".

The monastery's attorney, Matthew Bobo, denied the allegations related to drug use, calling them "absolutely ridiculous" and "without merit".

The dispute between the monastery and the diocese began in April when Bishop Michael Olson launched a canonical investigation into an alleged sexual affair between the monastery's prioress, Reverend Mother Teresa Gerlach, and an unnamed priest from outside the diocese.

The diocese called the alleged misconduct "grave" but has not publicised the exact nature of the affair. On June 1 the bishop issued

a decree dismissing Gerlach from religious life.

Following the diocese's investigation, the monastery filed a civil lawsuit on May 3 seeking \$1 million in damages. The nuns further challenged Bishop Olson's authority to conduct the investigation, arguing they were subject only to the Vatican.

The monastery is alleging that Bishop Olson and diocesan officials abused their power and engaged in criminal behaviour during their investigation.

Hours before the diocese released the photos to the press, the monastery's attorney announced the Arlington Police Department and the Tarrant County Sheriff's Office

have launched a criminal investigation of the actions taken against the Carmelite Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity by the diocese and Bishop Olson.

Mr Svacina, in his press statement, denied that anyone with the diocese engaged in criminal activity during their investigation of the monastery, calling the accusation an "attempt to embarrass Bishop Olson and undermine his authority".

According to Mr Svacina, Mr Bobo's press release announcing the police investigation is "yet another transparent attempt to spread baseless and outrageous accusations regarding Bishop Olson's legitimate investigation".

Dam destruction a 'diabolical act' in Ukraine war

The destruction of a dam and hydroelectric power plant in a Russian-occupied area of Ukraine marks a "dastardly and diabolical act" that "defies imagination," Archbishop Borys Gudziak, metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the US, told OSV News.

On June 6, damage to the Russian-occupied Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant, located in Ukraine's Kherson region, released some 18 cubic kilometres of water from the Kakhovka Reser-

voir, one of the world's largest capacity reservoirs.

At least 29 towns and villages along the Dnipro River have been flooded so far, with 42,000 persons and some 80 settlements at flood risk. The dam destruction is the latest blow to Ukraine, which has been under Russian attack since 2014.

"We've seen an array of war crimes. This act of terrorism supplements it," said Archbishop Gudziak.

The "act of mass terror" is a call to

both political action and prayer, said Eugene Luciwi, president of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America's Philadelphia chapter and a member of Presentation of Our Lord Ukrainian Catholic Church in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

"Prayer is an absolute essential to accomplishing any goal that involves freeing Ukraine from this terror," he said. "Without it, none of the goals, military or otherwise, which are important in this conflict, will ever be accomplished."

Vatican roundup

Pope Francis making normal progress in recovery from abdominal surgery

● Pope Francis is "steadily improving" two days after he underwent abdominal surgery to correct an incisional hernia, a Vatican spokesman said Friday.

According to Matteo Bruni, the Pope rested during the night and on the morning of June 9 was able to eat breakfast and move from his hospital bed to an armchair.

"The medical team reports that the clinical picture is steadily improving and the post-operative progress is normal," he said in a brief statement released shortly before 1:00 pm Rome time.

He added that Pope Francis was able to read the newspaper and do some work.

Francis underwent a three-hour surgery for an incisional hernia on June 7. A team of surgeons removed scar tissue and operated on a hernia in the Pope's abdominal wall at the site of a previous surgical incision.

Dr Sergio Alfieri, the Pope's main surgeon, said at a press conference shortly after the operation that Francis had been experiencing increasing pain for several months due to the hernia and decided on June 6 to undergo the surgery to correct it. The 86-year-old Francis has been hospitalised three times in the past two years.

Papal envoy: Pope will never give up hope for peace in Ukraine

● When it comes to peace in Ukraine, Pope Francis is not giving up hope, said Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, the papal envoy recently returned from the war-torn nation.

The Pope is always asking everyone "to devote ourselves to peace. This is important because it involves all of us to never accept violence and war," he said on June 7, on the sidelines of a book presentation in Rome, according to *Avvenire*, the newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference.

"Pope Francis does not give up," he said. His

determination is so strong "that he wanted this mission precisely because he wants to seek out everything that might further the path of peace".

The Pope chose Cardinal Zuppi of Bologna, president of the Italian bishops' conference, to lead an initiative for peace in Ukraine. The cardinal, who was in Ukraine June 5-6, said the purpose of his mission was not "mediation," but to show the interest and closeness of the Pope and to listen "so that the conflict might find pathways to peace".

Pope plans to write document dedicated to St Thérèse of Lisieux

● Individuals become Christian because they have been touched by Christ's love, not because they have been convinced or coerced by someone else, Pope Francis said.

The Catholic Church needs missionary disciples who have hearts like St Thérèse of Lisieux and who "draw people to love and bring people closer to God," he told people at his weekly general audience in St Peter's Square on June 7.

"Let us ask this saint for the grace to overcome our selfishness and for the passion to intercede that Jesus might be known and loved," he said.

The Pope continued his series of talks about "zeal" for evangelisation by focusing on St Thérèse, the 19th Century French Carmelite nun who is patron saint of missions and a doctor of the church.

Before beginning his general audience talk, the Pope walked with his cane to a large reliquary containing the relics of St Thérèse that was placed on a table near where he sits to deliver his catechesis. He placed a large white rose before the ornate reliquary and stood a few moments in prayer.

During his catechesis he announced he was planning to dedicate an apostolic letter to her to mark the 150th anniversary of her birth this year.



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

If you're worried about Pope Francis' health, consider Pope Leo XIII

A new pope is elected with a history of health issues, who tells people early on he doesn't expect to have a lengthy papacy. He reigns longer than anyone expected, but eventually faces a health crisis that requires a serious surgery, and which leads many people to assume the end is finally at hand.

In fact, however, the surgery is a success, and he ends up sitting on the Throne of Peter another four years, which is a full presidential term in the United States. Indeed, so remarkable is his longevity that Vatican insiders joke: "We thought we were electing a Holy Father, instead we elected an Eternal Father!"

“Right now, Pope Francis at the age of 86 is the oldest reigning pope since Leo XIII died 120 years ago”

That might easily be a description of the 86-year-old Pope Francis, who right now is recovering from his second surgery in two years at Rome's Gemelli Hospital.

In reality, however, it's a reference to Pope Leo XIII, who was elected in 1878 and served until his death in 1903 at the age of 93, making his the fourth-longest papacy in history behind St Peter, Pius IX and John Paul II.

Right now, Pope Francis at the age of 86 is the oldest reigning pope since Leo XIII died 120 years ago.

It was March 1899 when Leo seemed gravely ill, and many people, including some members of the College of Cardinals, believed that his death was imminent. Doctors examining the pontiff, however, eventually determined that his symptoms were the result of the inflammation of a cyst which had been bothering the pope for years, but had never been treated.

Though reluctant to undergo surgery, Leo XIII finally was persuaded to do so, instructing a cleric in the papal household to say Mass in his private chapel while the operation was underway. In the end, an orange-sized cyst was removed, the pope staged a full recovery, and he proceeded to continue to govern the Catholic Church until 1903.

Leo XIII, in other words, is a cautionary tale for anyone tempted to get overly carried away by Pope Francis' current struggles.

The analogy between Leo XIII and Francis extends beyond resilience in the face of health challenges. Both men, while hardly political radicals, were nevertheless considered

Pope Leo XIII is depicted seated in an official Vatican portrait circa 1878. Photo: CNS/Library of Congress



“He issued *Annum Sacrum*, consecrating the entire human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and promoting the First Friday devotions that have become a characteristic feature of Catholic spirituality”

reformers and moderates-to-progressives by the Catholic standards of their day.

Modern tradition

Famously, it was Leo XIII who launched the modern tradition of Catholic social teaching with his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. It was also Pope Leo who repositioned the Catholic Church vis-à-vis the rise of modern democracies and the separation of Church and state, shifting from absolute rejection under Pius IX to a cautious opening which would eventually lead first to the Lateran Pacts in 1929, and eventually to Vatican II's declaration on religious freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*.

It's worth briefly recording what Leo XIII accomplished between that 1899 surgery and the end of his papacy four years later.

In 1899, he presided over the First Plenary Council of Latin America in

Rome, an assembly that promoted consciousness of a continental solidarity among the various local churches in Latin America that would flower in the creation of CELAM, the Latin American Episcopal Council, after Vatican II.

“He created 32 new cardinals between 1899 and 1903, forming half of the cardinal-electors who would choose his successor”

He issued *Annum Sacrum*, consecrating the entire human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and promoting the First Friday devotions that have become a characteristic feature of Catholic spirituality.

He canonised St John Baptist de la Salle, founder of the Christian Broth-

ers, overriding opposition from traditionalists who regarded La Salle's model of consecrated laypeople running free schools without direct ecclesiastical control as a dangerous innovation.

He warned against "Americanism," a supposed heresy based on individualism and congregationalism that some European Catholic thinkers detected in the United States of the late 19th Century. Though largely invented, the controversy nevertheless reminded American Catholics of their links to Rome and the universal Church.

New cardinals

He created 32 new cardinals between 1899 and 1903, forming half of the cardinal-electors who would choose his successor. (Though in a warning to popes of all times about their capacity to control things after they're gone, those cardinals, all of

whom were Leo appointees, nonetheless chose Pius X, who launched an "anti-modernist" crackdown to squelch some of the very reforming energies Leo had unleashed.)

Leo XIII also presided over the Great Jubilee year of 1900 after his surgery, issued an encyclical reconciling advocates of democracy and its opponents in Italy, promoted unity within the Eastern Catholic Churches, and became the first pope to be both filmed and audio-recorded, thereby inaugurating the modern tradition of pope as pop culture celebrity.

It's entirely possible Pope Francis may leave behind a similarly impressive post-surgical legacy. In addition to trips to Portugal for World Youth Day, Mongolia and Marseille already on the books, he's got two synods on synodality set for this October and October 2024, not to mention another Great Jubilee in 2025.

Of course, there are no guarantees in life and anything could happen. Given this Pope's track record, however, it's doubtful that the smart bet right now would be to count him out.

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

Abuse claims and outrage mount against Jesuit order and Church in Bolivia



David Agren

Revelations of rampant sexual abuse by deceased Jesuit Fr Alfonso Pedrajas have prompted dozens of people in Bolivia to come forward with similar accusations of atrocities in the South American country, where the Catholic Church confronts a reckoning over the criminal acts of paedophile priests.

An investigation by Bolivian newspaper *Página Siete* found more than 170 victims of clerical sexual abuse being raised since early May, when the Spanish newspaper *El País* published its exposé into Pedrajas – a Spanish Jesuit who kept a record of his abuse of children by writing a diary.

“What *El País* has achieved has been the victims connecting with each other, interacting with each other, daring to speak out. Many of the victims are more than 50 years old,” Raphael Archondo, an academic and former director of *Fides*, a news outlet supported by Bolivia’s Jesuits, told OSV News.

“There’s a wave of complaints and it’s opened a lot of spaces for complaints to be filed,” he said.

Condemned

The bishops’ conference has condemned the actions of paedophile priests, while acknowledging they failed victims, who “found a Church deaf to their sufferings”.

The Jesuit province in Bolivia apologised and expressed “shame” and “regret” for what happened and promised to seek justice for the victims. The Jesuits have suspended eight former provincials who failed to act against Fr Pedrajas.

The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) opened a “listen and care” channel for receiving complaints in May – it allows for complaints to be received via email or WhatsApp messages – but said in a June 4 statement it had received only four accusations, one each against a pair of deceased Jesuits and two against a priest in the Diocese of Tarija.

The statement identified the Jesuits as Fr Alfonso Pedrajas – whose diary contained descriptions of sexual abuse over four decades of



Activists protest against the Catholic Church following abuse allegations, in La Paz, Bolivia, June 2, 2023. Photo: OSV News /Claudia Morales, Reuters

working in Bolivian and Latin American schools – along with Fr Jorge Vila, who was accused of abusing a 13-year-old student at a Jesuit school in the early 1990s.

“The Society (of Jesus) is inviting victims to file complaints. Of course, if a new case is filed, the Society will notify the prosecutor’s office immediately”

The Jesuits died in 2009 and 2012, respectively. Fr Vila had become known in Bolivia for his defence of children’s rights, according to an obituary. He was a founder of *Defensa de Niños and Niñas Internacional* (DNI Bolivia – Defense of Children International).

Only channel

The unidentified priest in the Diocese of Tarija was not a Jesuit, but the Jesuits said they have “supported the handling of two other cases of sexual abuse against a priest from the Diocese of Tarija, since

for now it is the only channel of its kind that operates in the Bolivian Church and cannot neglect the victims of persons from other ecclesial settings”.

The Diocese of Tarija has been among the dioceses hit with accusations of clerical sexual abuse.

Fr Otto Strauss, 83, a German-born priest in the Diocese of Tarija, was scheduled to appear at a preliminary hearing in Tarija on June 6 – which was postponed due to the priest’s health – for a sexual abuse accusation dating back to 1988, according to local media.

Carmelite Fr Milton Muriilo, was ordered held in jail for three months on accusations of sexually abusing seminarians in Tarija and La Paz, Bolivian media reported May 18.

The Society of Jesus has recognised that four Spanish-born Jesuits have been accused of sexually abusing minors in Bolivia. They also include the late Archbishop Alejandro Mestre of La Paz, who died in 1988, and Fr Luis María Roma Padrosa.

Fr Roma is accused of abusing an unknown number of children between the ages of seven and 12 in Charagua, a town in eastern Bolivia. The

Jesuits first learned of the accusations in 2019 from the Spanish news organisation *EFE*, according to a May 14 statement.

He was suspended from ministry in 2019 at age 84 – already suffering from dementia. The Jesuit curia delivered the results of its investigation into Fr Roma to prosecutors on 9 May. The evidence included “alarming photographic material,” according to the statement.

“The Bolivian bishops’ conference has promised to establish a National Listening Commission and a national investigation to determine wrongdoing and improve transparency”

Two elderly Jesuits, Frs Carlos Villamil (called ‘Vico’) and Francesc Peris (called ‘Chesco’), who both worked with Fr Pedrajas at the Juan XXIII Collegiate in Cocha-

bamba during the 1980s, face accusations of sexual abuse from former students, according to *El País*.

The Jesuits said on May 16 that they had not received any complaints against Frs Villamil and Peris.

“It is true that other names have been mentioned recently in the press and it is likely that there will be a complaint, but the Society (of Jesus) does not know anything more about it regarding allegations of abuse,” Gabriel Chávez, a spokesperson for the Jesuit curia in Bolivia, told OSV News.

Inviting victims

“The Society (of Jesus) is inviting victims to file complaints. Of course, if a new case is filed, the Society will notify the prosecutor’s office immediately.”

The publication of Fr Pedrajas’ diary has caused outrage in Bolivia – with the government proposing strict child protection laws in response and calling for a revision of agreements between Bolivia and the Vatican.

Protests have erupted outside of churches, while the words “rapists” are spray painted on the outside walls.

Some of the Jesuits accused

of abuse had become prominent in the country.

Listening

The Bolivian bishops’ conference has promised to establish a National Listening Commission and a national investigation to determine wrongdoing and improve transparency.

Meanwhile, the education arm of the Bolivian bishops’ conference, along with groups representing parents of Jesuit schoolchildren and Jesuit school alumni, issued a June 1 statement urging the government to respect the rights of families to choose Catholic education.

The statement said: “We ask that the freedom of choice of education that each family chooses be respected, let us remember that the country is governed by a democracy in which the form of educating constitutes a human freedom, generating human beings capable of living and coexisting together, guided by respect for others and avoiding confrontations and unnecessary damage.”

i David Agren writes for OSV News from Mexico City.

Letters

Letter of the week

Call on TDs to strenuously oppose new abortion bill

Dear Editor, Are people aware of the extended abortion 'care' bill, tabled by Deputy Brid Smith PBP, that has passed its second stage by a narrow majority in the Dáil? If this bill becomes law, it means:

Abortion on demand up to 6 months, no anaesthetic of course, as Ms Smith states that since a baby is not viable before 6 months, it feels no pain.

Abortion on demand up to the date of birth for those with fatal foetal abnormalities. No anaesthetic, same as now.

The 3-day wait gone and the decriminalisation of abortion provision.

This is a savage bill but nobody in Sinn Féin, the Greens or the left parties voted

against it.

Meanwhile, the recommendations of Marie O'Shea, who chaired an independent review of the State's abortion law, are for a 'full abortion care service'. She states there is no medical or legal reason for the 3-day wait, while ignoring the moral, humane and common-sense reasons for why it was inserted in the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act in 2018.

For a comprehensive service, she recommends a mandatory requirement for the provision of abortion services in the contracts of hospital staff. This eliminates the rights of conscientious objectors and

discriminates against them in their search for a job, as well as placing the rights of those already employed, in jeopardy.

Ms Smith, for whom the abortion count can never be high enough, is delighted with the O'Shea Report and the success of her own bill to date and is determined to fight on for more of the same.

Experts say the bill can fall yet. People must request politicians to strenuously oppose this bill in its coming stages and many thanks to those who have recently opposed and voted against it.

*Yours etc.,
Mary Reynolds
Dublin 6, Dublin*

Community spirit on smartphone bans needed

Dear Editor, Breda O'Brien [*The Irish Catholic* – June 1, 2023] raises the issue of smartphone use among children and how primary schools in Greystones have banded together to ban them. A wonderful venture. Decisions like this can only be made as a group because if some children have smartphones the children who don't will feel hard done by – more of this community spirit is needed!

*Yours etc.,
Fiona Burn
Athlone, Co. Westmeath*



Religious imagery in hospitals provides comfort and peace

Dear Editor, I am writing to express my concern regarding the removal of Catholic imagery from St Vincent's University Hospital [*The Irish Catholic* – June 8, 2023]. Catholic imagery has long been a comforting and inspiring presence in our healthcare institutions, providing solace and hope to patients, their families and medical staff alike.

These symbols represent more than just religious iconography; they embody the values of compassion, healing, and faith that are deeply rooted in the Catholic tradition. They serve as a reminder of the spiritual dimension of healing and offer a sense of comfort and

peace to those who are suffering or in distress.

In a multicultural society like ours, it is essential to respect and celebrate diversity. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the historical and cultural significance of Catholicism in Ireland. The presence of Catholic imagery in hospitals reflects the rich religious heritage of our country and provides a sense of continuity with our past. Despite the State taking over the hospital, why should this mean we whitewash the hospital's history and the memory of its founder Mary Aikenhead? The State are bowing to a very small group, extremely hostile

to the Catholic Church, who seem to be hugely influential. The majority of people of other religious traditions, including Muslims, Hindus and others, have absolutely no issue with the imagery – this has been shown in the public statements of religious leaders. Catholic imagery in hospitals does not exclude or discriminate against individuals of other faiths or those who do not adhere to any religious beliefs. Rather, it serves as a symbol of universal values such as love, compassion and hope, which transcend religious boundaries.

It is vital to recognise that healthcare encompasses not only physical healing but also

emotional and spiritual well-being. The presence of Catholic imagery contributes to a holistic approach to healthcare, supporting patients in their journey towards recovery.

I urge the authorities responsible for these decisions to consider the profound impact that Catholic imagery has on the well-being of patients, their families, and healthcare professionals. Let us preserve these symbols of faith, compassion and hope in our hospitals, ensuring that future generations can benefit from their enduring presence.

*Yours etc.,
Bridget Healy
Limerick City, Limerick*

CSO stats show cracks forming in Irish society

Dear Editor, I would like to express my agreement with the thought-provoking article by David Quinn [*The Irish Catholic* – June 8, 2023] regarding the changes in Irish society outlined in the CSO's 2022 statistics. Mr Quinn raises important questions about the true nature of progress and challenges the prevailing narrative that paints these changes as unequivocally positive.

While it is often touted that Ireland has become more tolerant and compas-

sionate, Quinn rightly questions whether these shifts truly represent progress. The emphasis on personal autonomy and choice, regardless of the potential personal and societal consequences, raises concerns about the values we prioritise as a society.

The increasing rates of divorce, out-of-wedlock births and declining fertility rates underscore the cracks in our societal foundations.

While economic growth and popula-

tion increase are often used as indicators of success, it is crucial to consider the quality and sustainability of our society. The weakening of social bonds and the erosion of traditional institutions like marriage should be cause for reflection.

I appreciate Mr Quinn's courage in addressing these sensitive topics and challenging the prevailing narrative.

*Yours etc.,
Seán Doherty
Newbridge, Co. Kildare*

Power of the rosary to challenge a secular society

Dear Editor, I am writing to express my deep appreciation for the power of the rosary prayer and its potential in countering the growing tide of secularism in Ireland. In this context I applaud Bishop Oliver Doeme who spoke during the All Ireland rosary Rally in Knock on Saturday, June 3. He outlined how the power of prayer and the rosary helped his diocese in north-east Nigeria which faced terrible persecution by terrorist group Boko Haram [*The Irish Catholic* – June 8, 2023].

In Ireland we face different challenges. I firmly believe that the rosary is a powerful spiritual tool that can unite us in our faith and help us overcome the challenges posed by a secular society.

Secularism, with its emphasis on materialism and the exclusion of religious values from public life, has been gaining ground in our beloved country. It is crucial for us, as Catholics, to assert our beliefs and actively resist the erosion of our religious heritage.

The rosary is not just a mere set of prayers; it is a profound contemplative practice that enables us to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ and the mysteries of our faith. Through the repetition of the Hail Mary, we find solace and draw strength from the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Moreover, the communal aspect of the rosary is equally powerful. When we come together as a community to recite the rosary, we reinforce our collective faith and support one another in our journey towards God. In a society increasingly fragmented by individualism, the rosary can foster a sense of unity, reminding us that we are part of a wider spiritual family.

By fostering a deep personal connection with our faith and nurturing a sense of community, the rosary empowers us to confront the challenges posed by secular ideologies. It reminds us of our shared spiritual heritage and strengthens our resolve to live as faithful witnesses of Christ's teachings.

*Yours etc.,
Isabel Flynn
Portmarnock, Dublin 21*

Twinning regional St Vincent de Paul with one in a low-income country

Dear Editor, The practice of the twinning of a regional St Vincent de Paul here in Ireland with a St Vincent de Paul in a low-income country is excellent. It shows that we are all part of the same worldwide family with similar needs and goals. In my opinion, it would be good for every parish in Ireland to be twinned

in this way with a parish overseas where there is acute poverty. A corner of a parish church could show some photos and stories of a twinned parish overseas. Twinning might also allow a visit from one parish to another by a group from either community.

*Yours etc.,
Andrew Kieran
Omagh, Co. Tyrone*

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.

Your Faith

Questions of Faith

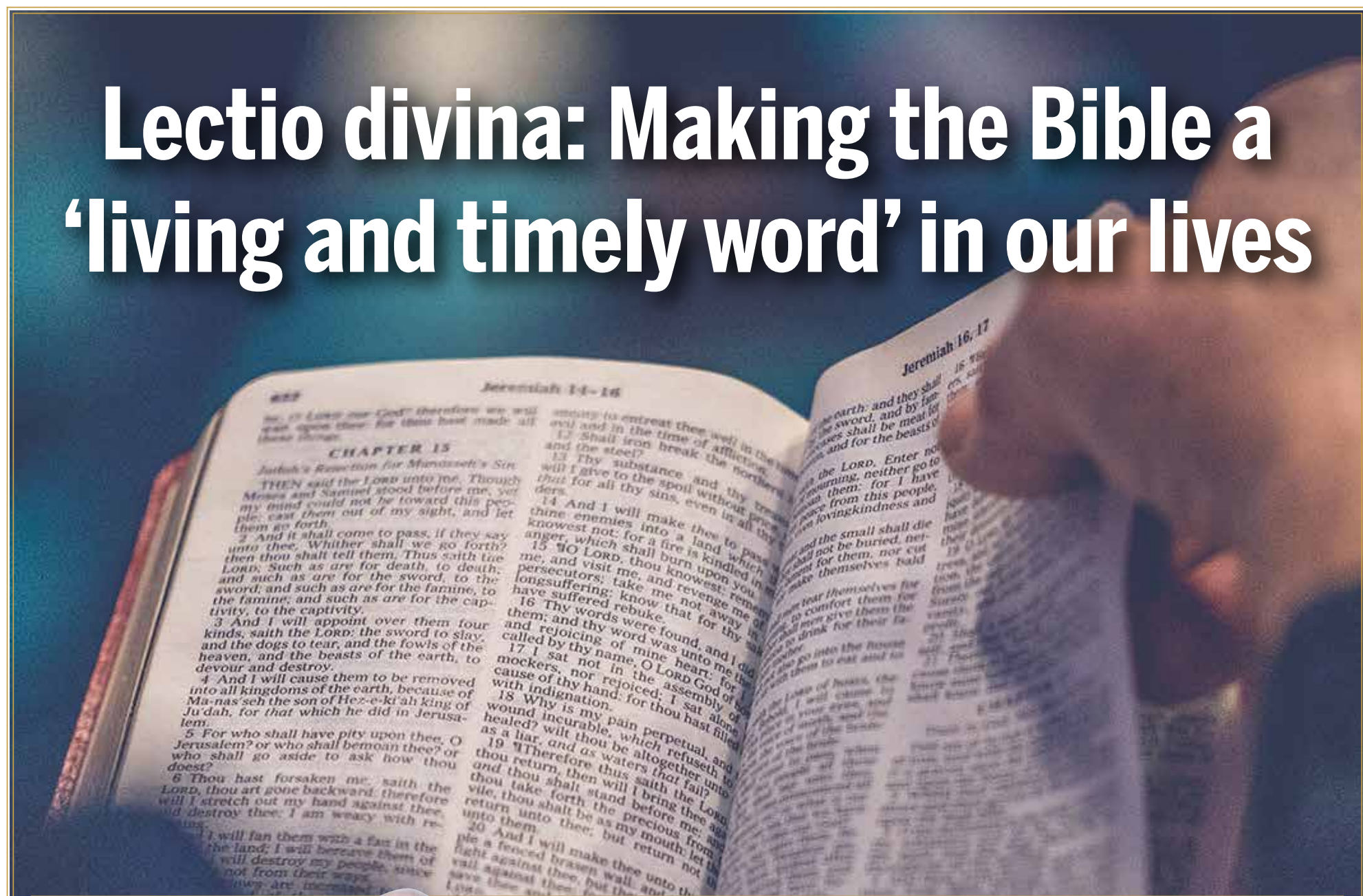
Is faith purely private?

Page 32

The Irish Catholic, June 15, 2023



Lectio divina: Making the Bible a 'living and timely word' in our lives



The Bible is the “word of the Lord”: an inspired library of narrative, poetry, letters and literature that God has spoken to us, to benefit our lives. So why is it that many Catholics encounter Scripture only during the readings at Sunday Mass? Pope Benedict XVI understood the challenge of making the Bible an intimate part of our daily lives, which is why he issued a personal plea to each of us to live more fully and consciously in the word of God, “so that the Bible may not be simply a word from the past, but a living and timely word”.

In his apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* (“The Word of the Lord”), Benedict emphasised three things: individual Bible reading, using Scripture in liturgy



Praying with God’s word will lead to the renewal of the Church, writes Stephen Binz

and teaching, and employing the word in the Church’s expanding mission to the world.

Salvation

He recognised that looking at the historical nature of salvation in what is called “historical-critical research” is important, but he also stressed that the divine element of Scripture is essential. He reminded us that we must avoid a split between scientific

exegesis and lectio divina, as well as between the literal sense and the spiritual sense, so that we may experience the word of God, living and addressed to each of us in the here and now.

The ancient practice of lectio divina (holy reading) consists of establishing a dialogue through reading of God’s word and responding to that word in prayer. As St Augustine said, “When you read the Bible, God

speaks to you; when you pray, you speak to God”.

Scripture

The process involves several movements: a person reads a passage of Scripture, meditates on the words, prays in response to God, contemplates God’s gift of a changed heart and finally arrives at some self-giving action. Origen, one of the earliest masters of lectio divina, encour-

aged people studying the Bible to “search diligently and with unshakable trust in God for the meaning of the divine Scripture, which is hidden in great fullness within”.

Benedict encouraged prayerful Scripture reading for individuals, along with actions that he hoped would deepen their relationship with Jesus. Those actions include having a Bible in every home. The New American Bible is most often used during Mass in the United States, while the English Standard Version (Catholic Edition) is gaining ground in other countries such as the United Kingdom and India. The Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition) or Second Catholic Edition and New Jerusalem Bible are also widely used. Catholic



Bibles – from which all other Bibles have emerged – contain certain books that are not in the Protestant canon, so be sure to use a Catholic edition.

“The Bible is the Church’s book, and our faith recognises it as God’s own communication, rendered through the human words we need”

Pope Benedict recommended knowledge of biblical personages, events and sayings, including memorisation of some key verses. Practicing lectio divina exposes us to many verses that can become part of our personal spiritual treasury. Some verses to commit to memory might include: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Mt 22:39); “Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31); and “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105).

Benedict suggested Catholics use Scripture as a source of guidance to problems, a response to our ques-

tions, a broadening of our values and the fulfilment of our aspirations. He also encouraged the whole Church to realise the movements of the Holy Spirit, explaining that the same Spirit who acted in the incarnation of the Word in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and guided Christ throughout his mission, continues to sustain and guide the Church in both proclamation and action. This Spirit of Truth inspired the authors of sacred Scripture to commit the message of salvation to writing, and this same divine Spirit reveals the fullest meaning of the sacred texts to the Church.

The Bible is the Church’s book, and our faith recognises it as God’s own communication, rendered through the human words we need. It is written by the people of God for the people of God, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the Church is the primary setting for the interpretation of sacred Scripture.

In *Verbum Domini*, Benedict encouraged the Church to use the Bible unsparingly, permeating pastoral activity and catechesis with the spirit of sacred Scripture through reading. He encouraged attentive contact and application of the biblical texts, and he suggested training

for catechists and pastoral ministers at institutes for biblical studies and centres of formation, where they can be prepared to understand, live and proclaim the word of God. He urged that the Bible be given a visible place of honour in churches, even outside of liturgical celebrations.

Missionary

Pope Benedict also exhorted the Church to recover its missionary nature, reminding us that the word engages us not only as hearers of divine revelation, but also as its heralds. He called for an increase in ecumenical study amid discussion and celebrations of the word of God. He reminded the Church of Jesus’ prayer to the Father that his disciples might be one, so that the world may believe (Jn 17:21), and promoted the shared listening to Scripture in ecumenical work.

Benedict wrote: “Listening together to the word of God, engaging in biblical lectio divina, letting ourselves be struck by the inexhaustible freshness of God’s word which never grows old, overcoming our deafness to those words that do not fit our own opinions or prejudices, listening and studying within the communion of the believers in every age: all these things represent a way of coming to unity in faith as a response to hearing the word of God.”

i Stephen J. Binz is a biblical scholar and an award-winning author of over 60 books.



“Pope Benedict also exhorted the Church to recover its missionary nature, reminding us that the word engages us not only as hearers of divine revelation, but also as its heralds”

Prayer focusing on God's presence in human experience



Jim Manney

A few years ago, I started to pray using the Examen of St Ignatius Loyola. Everything changed for me. Prayer took on a new, refreshing character. I became an evangelist for the Examen.

I buttonholed friends, wrote blog posts and a book, and recorded guided Examen on the Internet. I did everything I could to spread the news about this way of praying.

All of this almost didn't happen. For years, I had occasionally heard people talk about the Examen as a good way to pray. But I wasn't interested, because I thought they were talking about the examination of conscience, the self-inventory of sins that I was taught to do as a boy in Catholic schools in the 1960s, which I didn't think of as 'prayer'.

Then I learned that the Examen is not the old examination of conscience. Quite the opposite. The Examen is a prayer that focuses on God's presence in the real world. It looks to a God who is near, present in my world and active in my life. It told me to approach prayer with gratitude, not guilt. It helped me find God in my life as I lived it. The Examen had me take myself seriously, as I am, not as I wished I were or thought I could be someday so long as I worked hard enough.

It's no exaggeration to say that the Examen changed everything. It might change things for you, too.

There's nothing complicated or mysterious about making the Examen part of your life. The subject matter of the Examen is your life – specifically the day you have just lived through. The Examen looks for signs of God's presence in the events of the day: lunch with a friend, a walk in the



St Ignatius Loyola.

park, a kind word from a colleague, a challenge met, a duty discharged. The Examen likes the humdrum. God is present in transcendent 'spiritual' moments, but he's also there when you cook dinner, write a memo, answer emails and run errands.

Conscious

The Examen looks at your conscious experience. The ebb and flow of your moods and feelings are full of spiritual meaning. Nothing is so trivial that it's meaningless. What do you think about while sitting in traffic or waiting in a long line at the grocery store? What's your frame of mind while doing boring and repetitive chores? You'll be surprised at how significant such moments can be when you really look at them.

I was surprised. But then, on reflection, the Examen made intuitive sense. I am God's creature living in God's world; of course God would be

present in my everyday experience. If prayer is making a connection with God, it makes perfect sense to spend some time finding God in my conscious experience of daily life.

“God's project of saving our world involves God becoming personally caught up in the lives his creatures lead”

Five hundred years ago, St Ignatius Loyola designed the Examen to sustain and extend the intense experience of conversion to the cause of Christ that is advanced in his book *The Spiritual Exercises*. He saw the Examen as a way to develop a reflective habit of mind that is constantly attuned to God's presence and responsive to God's leading.

I told my friends about my

discovery. It wasn't long before one of them injected a sceptical note. “Why is sifting through our memories of the past 24 hours a sound way to pray?” she asked. Our memories aren't reliable. She told me a story about discovering that something she remembered very vividly never happened at all. She pointed out that we all filter our memories through our preconceptions and desires. She thought the Examen sounded very self-centred. What's to keep it from becoming a play starring myself as the hero of a one-person show?

Theological

Good questions. The 'theological' answer is that God really is present in our world. He is here, not simply 'up there'. God's project of saving our world involves God becoming personally caught up in the lives his creatures lead. This is the doctrine of the Incarnation – the fact that the

God who created men and women is personally involved in their lives, because through the Son, Jesus Christ, he is human as well as divine.

Personal is the key word. God is a community of three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and the relationship we have with God is a personal one as well. The word for it is friendship, explained the late Jesuit spiritual director, Fr William Barry. Nothing in our lives is so insignificant that it doesn't deserve God's attention. In fact, the mundane and the humdrum parts of our lives give depth and texture to the relationship with God. The Examen focuses on God as present in our human experience. This is part of our relationship with God. It's not the whole of it, but it's a vital part of it.

i Jim Manney is the author of *What Matters Most and Why: Living the Spirituality of St Ignatius of Loyola* (New World Library, 2022).

Saint — of the — week

By Jason Osborne



St Anthony of Padua

The Saint of Padua: Canonised in less than a year

On 13 June, the Church calls to mind one of its Doctors – St Anthony of Padua. This remarkable man, but a very ordinary one, too, in so many ways, is one of the most quickly canonised saints in the Church's long history, with Pope Gregory IX canonising him less than a year after his death. As we'll come to see, Anthony's reputation preceded him, and made such a move inevitable.

One of the Church's most popular saints, many of us invoke him when we lose something, and we'll definitely have seen statues of him in many churches which depict him holding the child Jesus, a lily, a book – or all three. We're often ignorant about the historical background of some of the Church's most famous saints, probably as a result of just how familiar they are. St Anthony's is a story worth hearing though, one that even briefly intersects the path of another of the Church's greatest sons – St Francis of Assisi.

Born into a noble family in the year 1195 in Lisbon, Portugal, Fernando Martins de Bulhões lived a hidden life (much like Christ and most of us) for

the duration of his earliest years. When he was 15, he entered the Canons Regular of St Augustine. Trained for the priesthood in Coimbra, in the monastery of the Holy Cross, and ordained at the age of 24, every indication suggested he would follow an academic path – life as a theologian. While this would factor into his life later on, the call to intense religiosity struck his ears around 1220, when the remains of five Franciscan missionaries tortured and killed in Morocco reached the church he was based out of.

Inspired by the faith of the dead missionaries, Fernando left the canons to follow in St Francis's footsteps, taking the name of a great Desert Father – Anthony – as he did so. Setting out for Morocco, with a desire to preach to those who didn't know Christ and die for his faith, if needs be, he never made it. Falling ill on the journey, he was rerouted to Sicily where he was treated for his illness.

Providence was at work in his life as in all of ours', though, and in 1221, he reached Assisi, where St Francis had summoned all of his friars. Only a simple encounter, if was enough to encourage

Anthony in the path he'd chosen. He was sent forth from there to “do the Lord's work,” in the forms it has so often taken throughout the centuries: pray, work, preach and teach.

He began to garner a reputation in his first postings, before setting out as an itinerant preacher in northern Italy and southern France. Recognised for the work he was doing, he was appointed at the age of 32 superior of the Franciscan fraternities of northern Italy, where he visited and strengthened the houses under his jurisdiction and opened a number of new ones.

It was during this time that he chose to reside in Padua, in the small Franciscan community of the church of Mater Domini, the town that would become synonymous him throughout the ages. It was here that his famous *Sermons* was written, which is a treatise for the formation of Franciscans.

He lived a relatively simply life for the rest of his days, and died en route back to Padua after having taken a trip elsewhere. Such is his presence in the city today that he is simply referred to as ‘the Saint’ there.

Have the missionary zeal of St Therese



The Wisdom of Pope Francis

Here before us are the relics of St Therese of the Child Jesus, universal patroness of missions. It is good that this happen while we are reflecting on the passion for evangelisation, on apostolic zeal. Today, then, let us allow the witness of St Therese to help us. She was born 150 years ago, and I plan to dedicate an Apostolic Letter to her on this anniversary.

“The first concerns the day that changed her life, Christmas 1886, when God worked a miracle in her heart”

She is patroness of the missions, but she was never sent on mission. She was a Carmelite nun who lived her life according to the way of littleness and weakness: she defined herself as “a small grain of sand”. Having poor health, she died at the age of only 24.

But though her body was sickly, her heart was vibrant, missionary. She recounts in her “diary” that her desire was that of being a missionary, and that she wanted to be one not just for a few years, but for the rest of her life, even until the end of the world.

Therese was a “spiritual sister” to several missionaries: she accompanied them from her monastery through her letters, through her prayer, and by offering continuous sacrifices for them. Without being visible, she interceded for the missions, like an engine that, although hidden, gives a vehicle the power to move forward.

However, she was often not understood by her fellow nuns:

she received “more thorns than roses” from them, but she accepted everything lovingly, patiently, offering even these judgments and misunderstandings together with her illness. And she did this joyfully, for the needs of the Church, so that, as she said, “roses might fall on everyone,” especially the most distant.

Now, I ask, where did all this zeal, this missionary strength and this joy of interceding come from? Two episodes that occurred before Therese entered the monastery help us to understand this.

The first concerns the day that changed her life, Christmas 1886, when God worked a miracle in her heart. Shortly after that, Therese would turn 14 years old. As the youngest child, she was pampered by everyone at home. Returning from midnight Mass, however, her very tired father did not feel like being there when his daughter opened her gifts, and said, “Good thing it’s the last year!”

Therese, who was very sensitive and easily moved to tears, was hurt, and went up to her room and cried. But she quickly suppressed her tears, went downstairs and, full of joy, she was the one who cheered her father.

What had happened? On that night, when Jesus had made himself weak out of love, her soul became strong: in just a few moments, she had come out of the prison of her selfishness and self-pity; she began to feel that “charity entered her heart, with the need to forget herself” (cf. Manuscript A, 133-134). From then on, she directed her zeal toward others, that they might find God, and, instead of seeking consolations for herself, she set out to “console Jesus, [to] make him loved by

souls,” because, as Therese, Doctor of the Church, noted, “Jesus is sick with love and [...] the sickness of love cannot be cured except by love” (Letter to Marie Guérin, July 1890).

This then was her daily resolution: to “make Jesus loved” (Letter to Céline, October 15, 1889), to intercede for others. She wrote, “I want to save souls and forget myself for them: I want to save them even after my death” (Letter to Fr Roullan, March 19, 1897). Several times she said, “I will spend my heaven doing good on earth”.

Following the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd, her zeal was directed especially toward sinners, to “those far off”. This is revealed in the second episode. Therese learnt about a criminal, Enrico Pranzini, sentenced to death for horrible crimes: he had been found guilty of the brutal murder of three people, and was destined for the guillotine; but he did not want to receive the consolations of the Faith.

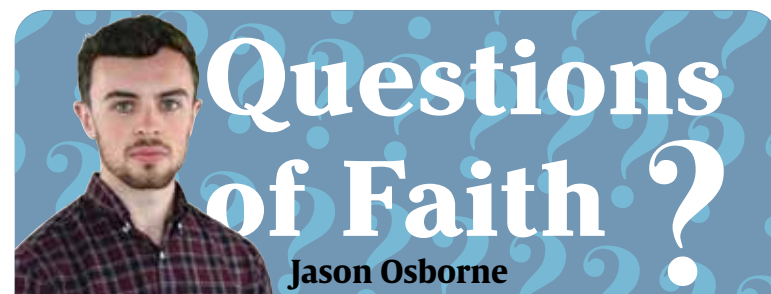
“Missionaries are those who do everything so that, through their witness, their prayer, their intercession, Jesus might pass by”

Therese took him into her heart and did all she could: she prayed in every way for his conversion, so that he, whom, with brotherly compassion she called “poor wretched Pranzini”, might demonstrate a small sign of repentance and make room for God’s mercy in which Therese trusted blindly.

The execution took place. The next day, Therese read in the newspaper that Pranzini, just before laying his head on the block, “all of a sudden, seized by a sudden inspiration, turned around, grabbed a Crucifix that the priest handed to him and kissed three times the sacred wounds” of Jesus.

The saint remarked, “Then his soul went to receive the merciful sentence of the One who declared that in Heaven there will be more joy for a single sinner who repents than for the 99 righteous who have no need of repentance!” (Manuscript A, 135).

Such is the power of intercession moved by charity; such is the engine of mission! Missionaries, in fact – of whom Therese is patroness – are not only those who travel long distances, learn new languages, do good works, and are good at proclamation; no, a missionary is anyone who lives as an instrument of God’s love where they are. Missionaries are those who do everything so that, through their witness, their prayer, their intercession, Jesus might pass by.



Questions of Faith?

Jason Osborne



It’s widely held today that faith, or spirituality as it’s more commonly put these days, is a private matter. Rightly perceived as an important element of the inner lives of individuals, our culture’s view of the topic is this: faith or spirituality is an expression of the individual’s relationship with God, the universe or some other higher power.

Prescription

Unfortunately (as we shall see) for us, though, our present age goes a step beyond this prescription; while believing that spirituality is a matter for individuals to sort out on their own, it also says that you should never impose your beliefs on another. That is considered, by our present standards, to be highly intolerant, and so is thought to be quite unacceptable. The trouble with this, though, is that – from the Catholic point of view – not only is it impossible to sequester our faith away from our engagements with others, it’s not even right to do so. Our Faith informs our entire relationship with ourselves, with others, with the world and with God.

To take an example of where this expectation that faith remain in the private sphere might come to the fore: Imagine a close friend, family member – or anyone really – asks you to approve of something contrary to your Catholic Faith. By denying it, and so denying them the approval they sought, you’re accused of being judgmental towards anyone who doesn’t share your faith, or your way of seeing things. You’re condemned for not having left your faith at the door, and allowing it to come into your dealings with another.

I would be surprised if you haven’t found yourself in a situation like this by 2023 in Ireland. Whenever an unyielding faith bumps or rubs against the constraints of secularity, it causes issues, for the reasons outlined above – faith and spirituality are fine, as long as they’re purely personal and not imposed on anybody else.

This presents a difficulty for

Catholics because ultimately, the Faith is not a purely private endeavour. Yes, the heart of faith for us is an intensely personal relationship with God, but that’s followed closely by a commitment to put others before ourselves – the Catholic Faith has a social component that cannot be ignored. This doesn’t mean that we can’t love and help others without heavy-handed proselytising, but it does mean that our Faith influences how we interact with others and why we behave as we do in relation to them.

The demands of modern secularity – which desires that the public forum should be free of religion, or neutral with regards to different faiths – makes impossible demands for those of faith, but especially of those who adhere to the Catholic Faith. It grants that the consciences of individuals may be informed by religion (although even that is coming under pressure, with legislators examining ways in which conscientious objection might be circumvented so as to allow for greater provision of abortion), but insists that religious convictions be kept to oneself or not influence one’s conduct in public.

Catholicism

This is one of the uncomfortable areas in which Catholicism diverges utterly from one of the guiding principles of the present world. The Church understands that faith is not just a matter for individuals, but for families, communities and ultimately for societies. That necessarily involves an understanding of faith that does not consign it to the private sphere, but gives it a hearing in the public. This does not conflict with the beliefs of others being heard – it merely asserts the right to faith-based views in the public square.



Pope Francis with some of the relics of St Therese following his general audience on June 7. Photo: CNS.

The taste of banter and wine



Elizabeth Poreba ends a poem, *No Good Company*, with these words:

I've got no banter,
I'm all judgement and edges, an
edgy white lady
Wondering what to do, what to do
next
As in Jesus is coming, look busy.

At the wedding feast in Cana, Mary tells Jesus, they have no wine, asking him to create some. What do wine and banter have in common? Both bring a needed extra into our lives.

Let's start with wine. Wine is not a protein, something the body needs to be nourished and kept alive, part of an essential diet. It's an extra that provides something special for one's health. Taken with the right spirit and in moderation, wine can help lift the mood, lighten the heart, and warm the conversation, even as it helps (at least for the moment) lessen some of the tensions among us. It's a grease that can help make a conversation, a family dinner, or a social gathering flow more pleasantly.

Banter

Banter? Well, like wine, if taken with the right spirit and in moderation, it can also lift the mood, lighten the heart, warm a conversation, and lessen tensions at a gathering. Classical Greek thought suggested that love has six components: *Eros* –



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

emotional and sexual attraction; *mania* – emotional obsession; *asteismos* – playfulness and banter; *storge* – care and solicitousness; *pragma* – practical arrangement and accommodation; *philia* – friendship; and *agape* – altruism.

Normally, when we think of love, we think of each of these components, except the aspect of banter and playfulness. Our romantic selves identify love very much with emotional obsession and sexual attraction. Our religious and moral selves identify love with care, friendship, and altruism, and our pragmatic selves identify it with practical arrangement. Few speak of the place and importance of banter, or playfulness, of healthy teasing, of humour, but these are often the grease that keeps the others flowing more smoothly.

Here's an example: For all of

my adult life, I've lived in various religious houses, in community with other vowed religious (in my case, men). We don't get to pick with whom we live, but are assigned to a community, along with everyone else who lives there. And we come together with our different backgrounds, different personalities, and different eccentricities. This can be a formula for tension and yet, for the most part, it works, is pleasant, and provides life-giving support and fellowship. What makes it work? Why don't we end up killing each other? How do we live (for the most part) pleasantly together beyond our differences, immaturities and egos?

Well, there's a common mission that keeps us working together and, most importantly, there's regular common prayer that helps

us see each other in a better light. But, very importantly, there is banter, playfulness, healthy teasing and humour which, like wine at a table, help take the edge off things and ease the tension inherent in our differences.

A community that doesn't stay light-hearted through banter, playfulness, and healthy teasing will eventually become everything that light-hearted is not, namely, heavy, drab, full of tension and pompous. In every healthy community I've lived in, one of the things that made it healthy (and pleasant to come home to) was banter, playfulness, loving teasing and humour. These are rich wines that can enliven the table of any family and any community.

Harder conversations

This, of course, like drinking wine, can be overdone and be a way of avoiding harder conversations that need to be had. As well, banter can keep us relating to each other in ways that actually hinder genuine community. Humour, banter, the joker and the prankster need to know when enough is enough and

when serious conversation needs to happen. The risk of overdoing banter is real, though perhaps the greater risk lies in trying to live together in its absence.

Banter, playfulness, loving teasing and humour don't just help us relate to each other beyond our differences, they also help deflate the pomposity that is invariably the child of over-seriousness. They help keep our families and communities grounded and pleasant.

I grew up in a large family, with each of us having strong personalities and plenty of faults; yet, save for very few occasions, our house, which was physically too small for so large a family, was pleasant to be in because it was perennially filled with banter, playfulness, humour and healthy teasing. We seldom had wine, but we had banter! When I look back on what my family gave me, I am deeply grateful for many gifts: faith, love, safety, trust, support, education, moderation and moral sensitivity. But it also taught me banter, playfulness, healthy teasing and humour. No small gift.

At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus' mother noticed that, even though a wedding celebration was happening, something wasn't right. Was it a heaviness? An over-seriousness? Was it an unhealthy pomposity? Was there a noticeable tension in the room? Whatever. Something was missing, so she goes to Jesus and says: "Son, they have no banter!"

“A community that doesn't stay light-hearted through banter, playfulness, and healthy teasing will eventually become everything that light-hearted is not, namely, heavy, drab, full of tension, and pompous”

Growing in love of the Good Shepherd

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ex 19:2-6a

Ps 100:1-2, 3, 5

Rom 5:6-11

Mt 9:36-10:8

The Sunday Gospel

Jem Sullivan



The Roman catacombs are unique, unlike any other place, where the faith, courage and love of the early Christians is evoked powerfully. In these ancient networks of tunnels and chambers deep beneath the eternal city of Rome one encounters early Christian images of Jesus. One remarkable third century fresco in the catacomb of Priscilla portrays Jesus as the Good Shepherd, a theme woven through this Sunday's readings. We are led to wonder why the early Christians were so drawn to this image of Jesus.

“Jesus’ heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd”

For the first Christians, the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd served as a visual summary of faith in Jesus' identity and his mission. It expressed, in visual form, what the first Christians accepted in faith as the meaning of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. They had come to believe that Jesus was divine, the one sent to reconcile the world to God, and so, they painted the Son of God as a simple, strong shepherd carrying one lost sheep on his shoulders, while other sheep remained close to their master. They believed that in Jesus, the incarnate God drew close to his flock to rescue and restore them to the joy and peace of divine friendship.

In the first reading, God speaks tender words to Moses and the people of Israel, “You have seen for yourselves how I treated the Egyptians and how I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself”. Moses and the Israelites are reminded that God was like a gentle shepherd. It was God who rescued Israel from slavery into the freedom of living as children of God.

So, the psalmist invites

us to sing, “we are his people, the sheep of his flock”. And as we sing these words our trust in God grows to, “know that the Lord is God; he made us, his we are; his people, the flock he tends”.

As our good shepherd, Jesus desires to stay close to us. He longs to rescue us from the power of alienation and sin that is part of human living. And Jesus was willing to do that with his very life. As St Paul teaches the Romans, “God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us”.

Inspired

In the Gospel we hear words that must have inspired the early Christians – certainly enough to depict Jesus as the Good Shepherd on the walls of the ancient catacombs. Matthew tells us that, “At the sight of the crowds, Jesus’ heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd”. After calling his 12 apostles and giving them spiritual authority to drive out unclean spirits and to cure every disease and every illness, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, gives them the ministry of shepherding all people in need when he says, “Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”.

As we journey through these weeks of Ordinary Time may we encounter and trust in the extraordinary care of Jesus, our Good Shepherd, who guides us to the loving mercy of God, both personally and as members of his body, the Church. In him we find the providential care, protection, and guidance we long for, as we say in faith, “speak to me, Lord”.

Question: What does the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd mean to you?

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



A detail of the 'Good Shepherd' fresco, dated to the second half of the 3rd Century and located on the ceiling of the 'Velatio' cubicle in the catacomb of Priscilla, in Rome. Photo: OSV News

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



A mix of panic and sensible concerns on AI

This week I'm reflecting on themes of reason, artificial intelligence (AI) and journalism – all related for sure.

Sunday Morning Live (BBC One, Sunday) is back for its 14th series, and the main discussion for the first episode was the power and intrusiveness of the press, issues highlighted by Prince Harry's ongoing civil action against the Mirror Group. Neil Wallis, formerly of the *Sunday People* and the now defunct *News of the World* said there were powerful people that needed to be investigated, but presenter Sean Fletcher suggested that people may have lost trust in the press because of scandals like the phone hacking. I thought Mr Wallis was too inclined to conflate the press, social media and outlets like the BBC. Of course, boundaries are very blurred nowadays but 'the press' is still a distinct entity. Owen Jones of *The Guardian* argued for balance, but thought public figures in particular were fair game if there was hypocrisy. Social and political commentator Bushra Shaikh said the press was a powerful tool and we needed to maintain that, but they did have a duty of care towards the people they wrote about. Author and historian Tessa Dunlop said the press was in the business of making money, and, with the electronic media breaking the actual news first, the press often ended up "feed-



Serbian Land Rover Defender towing a trailer with 'Miloš' tracked combat robot. Photo: Wikimedia

ing the ever more voyeuristic consumer".

Of course, *The Irish Catholic* would never be described in such terms! Last week's edition led with the story of religious iconography being removed from St Vincent's Hospital, a story that led to a spirited but respectful discussion on **The Hard Shoulder** (Newstalk, Friday). Senator Rónán Mullen wasn't happy about developments, though because the planned new, and linked, maternity hospital was willing to do pregnancy terminations, he felt having religious symbols

created a conflict – in a way, he said, you didn't get what it said on the tin. Normally he'd go for a 'live and let live' approach, letting things evolve, rather than having a minority forcing change and not respecting past traditions of quality healthcare provided by people of faith. He reckoned even those who weren't very religious still respected and found comfort in the religious aspects and said that the Christian churches invented compassionate care. He said "you don't achieve a good diversity by rubbing out other people's traditions".

Jillian Brennan of the Humanist Association denied this was what she was trying to do. But she did support the removal of religious symbols, and even wanted the name changed – said it was inappropriate in modern and increasingly secular Ireland to have the hospital named after a Catholic saint. She suggested patients could bring in their own religious symbols and then others would not have such symbols "in their face". I hope she feels the same about the rainbow themed flags, pedestrian crossings and public vehicles

PICK OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY SEQUENCE

BBC Radio Ulster Sunday June 18, 8.30pm

In-depth discussions on topical religious and ethical issues.

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC One Sunday June 18, 1.15pm

To celebrate Father's Day, Sean Fletcher heads to Stockport to visit Heaton's Mens Sheds, an initiative that targets social isolation in men.

LIGHT OF SOLEDAD

EWTN Sunday June 18, 9pm

A film on the origins of the Servants of Mary, a religious order dedicated to the care of the sick and poor around the world.

in our faces for June.

Senator Mullen asked what values would fill the vacuum if Christian values were not applied. Ms Brennan suggested the core values of the humanists – compassion, equality and reason, which of course are core values in Christianity too. Senator Mullen reckoned there was a "kind of allergy" towards Christianity in some quarters.

Few things have been talked about so much in the media recently as AI – artificial intelligence. A discussion on **Times Radio Breakfast** (Tuesday) was prompted by a warning from the UK AI advisor Matt Clifford (of the Advanced Research and Innovation Agency) – he had said in a *Talk TV* interview that within two years AI could "kill many humans". Mind you, it's much more definite that cars, guns and even family pets will

do likewise! Whatever about robots taking over the world, there are serious moral issues at stake.

Sarah Porter, an AI advisor to the UN wasn't alarmist in terms of a threat of human extinction, but she had sensible concerns about 'lethal autonomous weapons' and a general lack of control or regulation. She also pointed out the problem of people not being able to tell what was fake or real...could a country order a retaliation because someone in power believed a provocative fake story?

Yet AI is primarily, for now, a useful tool, and I suspect we'll have to get used to it and adapt. But just because it's a tool doesn't mean we shouldn't worry. I find my chainsaw very useful, but I wouldn't want it to get a mind of its own.



Aubrey Malone

Film

A day in the death of 'King' Iver

Iver (Liam Carney) has motor neurone disease. He wants to die. Maria (Maureen Beattie) is the carer entrusted with the task of ending his life. As she's about to do so, a visitor arrives.

Leon (Barry Ward) has had a heroin problem in the past. Now recovered, he's trying to get a music career going. Iver helped him get his life back. Leon is shocked that he now wants to end his own.

He tells Iver he'll back his decision if he suspends his plans for a day. He wants him to go to a pub with him and then watch a tribute film he's made for him. Iver reluc-

tantly agrees. Leon merrily transports him up and down staircases in his wheelchair as if it's a wheelbarrow.

Can a decision to end one's life be changed this casually? It's almost like, "I was going to kill myself but I might as well have a day out – especially if there's a pint of Guinness involved."

The "change of plan", as Iver jocosely puts it in *Sunlight* (15A), is symptomatic of a very weird script in the film. It trivialises euthanasia.

A sub-theme has Iver cast as a kind of reconstructed Viking monarch in Dolphin's Barn. There's also a supposed

romance between Leon and a girl called Anita (Lydia McGuinness) which goes nowhere.

I'm sure Claire Dix, the director, will one day make her mark on the film industry but here, in her debut feature, she mixes her drinks too much. She wants to eulogise Iver. Leon wants him to rage against the dying of the light.

Such an ambition is underscored by a flippant tone. Things aren't helped by pretentious lines like Leon's to Iver: "You gave me life; I'll give you death."

We've all been recently blown away by Charlie Bird's

heroic fight against his horrific MND diagnosis. Iver is more like a figure of fun. This, remember, is a man on his way to 'Valhalla'.

Maria, meanwhile, bobbles around the sidelines, ranging between confusion and amusement at Iver. When he expresses a wish to send a message of goodwill to his ex-wife before he dies, she asks him what typewriter font he wants.

Are we meant to take lines like this seriously? I found myself expecting her to say something like, "Would you like a cup of tea before I pull the plug?"



A scene from *Sunlight* (2023)

Irish films don't generally do dark comedy well. This one falls between too many stools. Iver is more of a Pythonesque *Life of Brian* character than a reconstructed Brian Boru.

Dix's uneasy oscillation between profound and trivial unbalances the film. The fact that it retains any kind of credibility is down to a strong

performance from Ward. His manic energy keeps you from concentrating too much on the fact that life and death issues are being subsumed under a carapace of buffoonery.

Carney, meanwhile, croaks his way to a ritualised destiny with an expression of benign resignation.



BookReviews

Peter Costello



The real role of the Church in the emergence of modern European states



Prof. Anna M. Grzymała-Busse

The Religious and Medieval Roots of the European State,

by Anna M. Grzymała-Busse
(Princeton University Press, €98.00/ £84.00; also in paperback)

Peter Costello

The initial reviews of this book, albeit in a context of academic notices for other academics, were very warm. And rightly so. But among some possible Catholic readers they sowed a little confusion.

They read the roots of the European state in a positive way, and as an endorsement, so to speak, of Augustinian City of God. But that is not quite what the author had in mind. She does not refer to the spiritual dimension of the state, but to the actual mechanics of administration.

She lectures on history and international studies at Stanford and was the author in 2015 of an earlier book, *Nations under God: How Churches Use Moral Authority to Influence Policy* (Princeton, £18.00 PB).

In that book she argued “that Churches gain the greatest political advantage when they appear to be above politics. Because institutional access is covert, they retain their moral authority and their reputation as defenders of the national interest and the common good”.

Interestingly, she shows that “Churches allied to political parties, such as in the United States, have less influence than their notoriety suggests”.

This new book explores the long historical background to the role of religion in the governance of Europe. To put it even more simply, she sees the Church as the only pan-European power that existed at the collapse of the Roman Empire, and the creator of what many deeply conservative people today find dismaying, such measures as the rise

of ever-increasing taxes.

The problem arises from the fact that very few people outside universities read accounts of basic research. They prefer their research to come in the recycled form of such books as *How the Irish Saved Civilisation* or the swiftly moving uncomplicated accounts of Tom Holland that sell so well.

They, after all, are hardly original, but pleasantly related summaries of what has long been known, but it is now not always taught at school. Once every school child knew the significance of Caesar crossing the Rubicon and what it meant: the first strike of a tyrant. But not today. It has to be explained more simply.

Prof. Grzymała-Busse indeed begins where most modern historians begin, with the archives of small towns and units of administration across the continent. What exactly was happening, and not what people later thought had been happening. This is the conflict around which all historical disputes revolve. But what the general public wants today are not the discussions that are a joy to the historian, but the straightforward facts that seem to tell them a story that encourages them in their own point of view.

This is a book which deserves to be widely read, as it explains a great deal about the nature of the Church; it was not just a religious and spiritual organisation. It was a powerful administrative engine, that did the things that governments all do today, and which many of those they rule deeply repent.

Those who read this book and take it slowly, will learn a very great deal. It may well not make them happy, as it deals very much with the City of Man rather than the City of God, but they will learn a great deal about how Europe came to be the way it is today, the European Union and all.

Coming of age in Victorian Kerry



Bertha Beatty's childhood home, now the Kerry Writers Museum.

Kerry Memories, by Bertha Beatty, edited by Pádraig de Brún (North Kerry Literary Trust, Listowel, €15.00; copies from the Kerry Writers Museum, 24 The Square, Listowel, Co. Kerry, V31 RD93; Tel: 068 22212; kerrywritersmuseum@gmail.com.)

J. Anthony Gaughan

Local memories are always a delight to read. They are of human interest, of course, but also always a revelation of how varied and often fascinating life can be in the rural places of the world, and the criss-crossed streets of cities.

This book in hand is one of these memorable books, and is the work of a lady worth remembering. She belonged to a particular time and place. Bertha Beatty, nee Creagh, was born in Listowel, Co. Kerry, in November 1878.

She was educated by a series of governesses, Irish and English, several

of whom she mentions in her book. In her early 20s she left home and worked as a governess and companion in the English West Country until she married Dr Robert Pouden Beatty, a prominent medical practitioner in Swindon in Wiltshire, England.

First edition

The first edition of *Kerry Memories* carried a notice from the publishers of another book by her, *West Country Thoughts*. This is largely a collection of pieces which she had contributed to the local Swindon newspapers. She was thus a practised writer when she wrote *Kerry*

Memories between 1936 and 1938.

“The hotel was told to provide him with breakfast, but only if he had been successful in selling the calves!”

The present second edition, edited by Pádraig de Brún, was prepared in 2007. It includes numerous incisive and informative comments by Maurice G. McElligott. He had a medical practice in Wigan in Lancashire, England, and was a prominent member

“I remember being on a walk and seeing a group of men talking together at a crossroads. I remarked of their seriousness. Later on that evening a man was shot, a tenant farmer”

of the Irish Genealogical Research Society. He was a neighbour and close contemporary of Bertha. Dr McElligott's comments are taken from his extensively annotated first edition of *Kerry Memories*.

Second edition

This second edition of *Kerry Memories* also includes hundreds of scholarly footnotes which provide a treasure trove of information on the Anglo-Irish who resided in North Kerry in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Bertha begins her narrative with an account of her early years. She describes her Irish nurse and first lessons in Scripture. Next she devotes a chapter to her parents and their 'Pedigree'. Visiting relatives and friends was a feature of their lives. Bertha particularly enjoyed visiting Mrs Cooke of Tanavalla House, just outside Listowel.

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.



Kerry author Bertha Beatty.

Kitchener, the famous field marshal, was her godson and a frequent visitor. It was known that he had had a very harsh upbringing. In a note, Dr McElligott states: "Herbert Horatio Kitchener when a boy used to drive his father Colonel Kitchener's calves [from Tarbert] to be sold at Listowel fair, the hotel was told to provide him with breakfast, but only if he had been successful in selling the calves!"

“John Foran, I assisted at the autopsy. He was shot in July 1889 for taking over a ‘boycotted farm’”

Bertha lists her co-residents in the Square, Listowel. Typical Victorian elite, these were the

rector of St John's and the parish priest of St Mary's, and three bank managers residing over their offices. There were also two solicitors and George Sandes, an agent for a number of landlords. Bertha wrote of him: "one rarely saw him, except at Church, he must have been a shy man"! To this McElligott added: "Not where women were concerned. They were the cause of his downfall, and he was deprived of the 'Commission of the Peace'!"

Wild Kerry

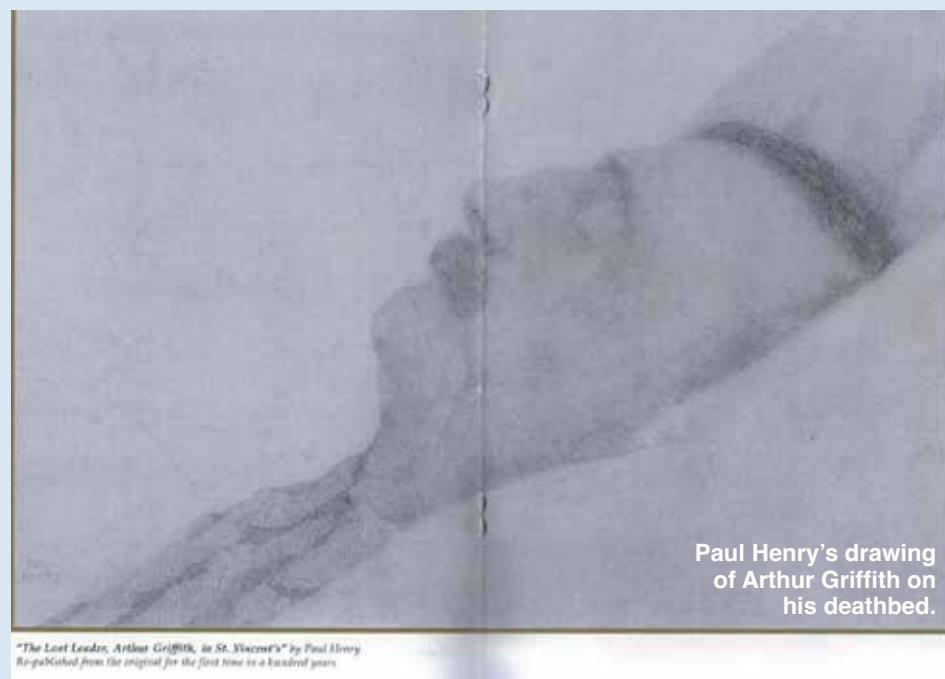
Bertha recalled that the "disturbed" state of the county had it become known as 'Wild Kerry'. She wrote: "I remember being on a walk and seeing a group of men talking together at a crossroads. I remarked of their

seriousness. Later on that evening a man was shot, a tenant farmer".

McElligott added: "John Foran, I assisted at the autopsy. He was shot in July 1889 for taking over a 'boycotted farm'". Bertha notes that all those associated with the law, Captain Massey, the Resident Magistrate, and the Solicitors, including her father, had to have the protection of the RIC and sometimes a detachment of soldiers. Of Massey, McElligott wrote "Richard Albert Massey, late of the 60th Rifles, archetype of everything unpleasant in the administration of English law in Ireland".

Pádraig de Brún and the North Kerry Literary Trust are to be congratulated and thanked for this splendid local history, though I now learn that the association has been dissolved.

Preserving the memory of Arthur Griffith



Paul Henry's drawing of Arthur Griffith on his deathbed.

Cut & Paste 2023: 'Remembering Arthur Griffith'

ed. Cormac O'Hanrahan, March 31st, Volume 6 (Printwell Books, 5 Upper Eden Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin; www.printwell.ie)

Peter Costello

The significance of the date, for those not perhaps as steeped in national lore as others, is that it marks the birth of Arthur Griffith in 1871. He died, as many more will remember, on August 12, 1922, of sudden heart failure; to be closely followed 10 days later by the death in action of Michael Collins. Their demise marked the climax of the Civil War.

Cut & Paste was the title of one of those fugitive little papers that Griffith edited in the years when the police continually harassed his activities, and is very suitably revived for the kind of collective journal that this is.

This is an assembly of nicely varied pieces about Griffith, but the most important item historically in these pages is a post-mortem drawing of Griffith on his deathbed in St Vincent's Hospital.

Revolution

Having years ago surveyed the literature of the revolution, I thought then, and still think, that the most moving passage in all those many books and

poems was surgeon Oliver St John Gogarty's passage in his memoirs about what he witnessed when he arrived in the hospital to find Griffith's dead body lying neglected on a passage floor. He was shocked. In a burst of anger he snapped at the staff, "Pick up that body." But a moment later he cooled, and continued: "Pick up the President."

Ireland's first administrative head of state was carried into a bedroom and was laid on a bed for him to examine. There, a little later the President's remains were drawn by Paul Henry, an artist indelibly connected with the very image of Ireland as kept in mind by other nations.

He drew two pictures, a large one of a simple head and shoulders, so much more expressive than a photograph, and another smaller sketch, more from the front. The making of these drawings, and their later suppression for political reasons, are explored in an article by Cormac O'Hanrahan.

It was widely published only once, in a memorial volume on Griffith and Collins issued that year by another fugitive publisher of the day named Martin Lester, with premises on the Quays. He is said to have been bankrupted by the project, as so few copies were disposed of; but surely, rather than taking only a few copies, the government must have bought up all of them to distribute at

home and abroad. As collectors know the hardest item to find strangely enough is the bestseller, not the rarity.

(It would be good to know more about Lester, short lived though his firm was. I suspect that the general amateurism of so much Irish publishing was more to blame than anything the government did. One failure would not kill a firm, but several would. The few books of his I am aware of are very interesting, choice items, but not perhaps the stuff of best-sellerdom.)

Commemorative

There was a copy of this commemorative brochure, among the books in our old Dublin home, but I never discovered how exactly it came to be there; it was not I think in 1922, but sometime in the 1950s. It may have been picked up by one of my older brothers from one of those numerous book barrows and book dealers along the Quays.

I had not seen *Cut & Paste* before this; but I will look out for it again next year, as I imagine many others will. Certainly in writing about Griffith there is no shortage of topics; his time in South Africa – an Irish patriot in a colonial situation – cries out for exploration and deserves more attention.

That account of Gogarty ended with an allusion to a fragment of poetry on the death of another Arthur, King Arthur himself no less, at the battle of Camlann: "I perish by this people that I made". But that line, which could have been said of Parnell as well, was not by an Irish poet, but ironically by Lord Tennyson.

Did Gogarty feel that no Irish poet of the day was worthy to truly mourn such a noble figure as Griffith?

“The President's remains were drawn by Paul Henry, an artist indelibly connected with the very image of Ireland as kept in mind by other nations”

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For contact details:
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Trócaire

Leisure time

Crossword Junior Gordius 487

1		2		3		4		5	
6							7		
		8					9		10
11	12			13		14			
15				16					
18									

- Across**

1 It is hit at Centre Court in Wimbledon (6,4)

6 Performers like Eminem and Jay Z (7)

7 Huge wall that holds back water (3)

8 The time between yesterday evening and this morning (4,5)

11 Elephant tusks are made of this (5)

15 Tin (3)

16 Tiles on a roof are made to _____ so that the water won't get in (7)

17 Not man-made (7)

18 Be careful - that bee might _____ you! (5)
- Down**

1 Great, fantastic (8)

2 Historic French emperor Bonaparte (8)

3 Thoughts (5)

4 There is one in your bathroom for when you wash your hands and face (5)

5 Use it for control when walking the dog (5)

9 Where you can look at paintings and other works of art (7)

10 Baby frog (7)

12 There is an athletics event called the pole _____ (5)

13 Not old (5)

14 Exams (5)

SOLUTIONS, JUNE 8
GORDIUS NO. 614

Across – 1 Successful 6 Tint 10 Sushi 11 Briefcase 12 Voyages 15 Growl 17 Tory 18 Leap 19 Prang 21 Pendant 23 Witch 24 Hake 25 Avon 26 Acorn 28 Theorem 33 Microwave 34 Glean 35 Rare 36 Maisonette

Down – 1 So-so 2 Cosmonaut 3 Evita 4 Sabre 5 Unit 7 Idaho 8 The Plagues of Egypt 13 Gape 14 Student 16 Claw-hammer 20 Amazement 21 Phantom 22 Name 27 Occur 29 Heeds 30 Organ 31 Lava 32 Ante

CHILDREN'S No. 486

Across – 1 Train tracks 7 Meant 8 Emerald 10 Rake 12 Amber 14 Tablet 16 Wrote 18 Abroad 20 Aesop 21 Taste

Down – 1 Tomorrow 2 Alaska 3 Note 4 Rice 5 Cream 6 Sawdust 9 Meet 11 Emotion 13 Rabbit 15 Looks 17 Reed 19 Dye

Crossword Gordius 615

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
										9				
10							11							
		12				13		14		15				
16							17							
18										19		20		
				21						22				
23												24		
				25										
26		27						28	29		30			
								31						32
33											34			
35								36						

- Across**

1 Building in which cases are tried (10)

6 Male deer over five years old (4)

10 Juices often served with a roast (5)

11 Characterised by a distinctive taste (9)

12 Gun (7)

15 & 25a Upright feature at the top or bottom of a staircase (5,4)

17 Part of the vehicle upon which wheels spin (4)

18 Woodwind instrument (4)

19 Proportion (5)

21 Integrity, right-mindedness (7)

23 Such sauce may upset poets (5)

24 The Holy Father (4)

25 See 15 across

26 Savoury jelly (5)

28 Most difficult (7)

33 Legally witnessed (9)

34 Singer of the 'Skyfall' theme (5)

35 Partake of a meal (4)

36 The first five books of the Bible (10)
- Down**

1 Toothed wheels (4)

2 Such a decision has the backing of all who voted (9)

3 Herb of the mint family (5)

4 Bid, tender (5)
- 5 & 9d He played James Bond in seven official movies and won his only oscar for 'The Untouchables' (4,7)**

7 It's fired from a bow (5)

8 Renewable energy generated by sea movement (5,5)

9 See 5 down

13 Attest (4)

14 Actors refer to this as 'The Scottish Play' (7)

16 Moaned, gave out (10)

20 Clothes and linen collected by a bride for her marriage (9)

21 Treat often bought at the cinema (7)

22 Scandinavian god of thunder (4)

27 Russian politician who ordered the invasion of Ukraine (5)

29 An examination of one's business records by accountants or tax officers (5)

30 Gave out cards (5)

31 Arthur, 1975 Wimbledon champion after whom a US tennis stadium is named (4)

32 In the Bible, Jacob's first wife (4)

Sudoku Corner 487

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 486

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

Last week's Hard 486

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

Notebook

Fr Billy Swan



Resist modern efforts to shrink world filled with mystery

Since Pentecost, I have been thinking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the last of the gifts named is that of 'Awe and Wonder' also known as 'Fear of the Lord' (para. 1831). Here I share a few thoughts on how the Spirit can give birth to 'Awe and Wonder' within us as we contemplate the mysteries of creation and all reality.

Marvel

The Spirit's gift of 'Awe and Wonder' leads us to marvel at a night sky and the felt immensities of the universe we inhabit. It is to gaze in contemplation on the beauty of creation and allow our hearts and minds to be raised up to the God who is responsible for it all. Writing about St Francis of Assisi, St Bonaventure recalls that for Francis, contemplation of creation is like ascending the rungs of a ladder on which his spirit is lifted up towards praise of God. Although creation contains the spirit of the living God, God is not contained by all that he has made. God is present in all he has made but is beyond all he has made.

The spirit of awe and wonder fills Psalm 8 where the psalmist prays: "When I look upon the heavens, the work of your hands,



what is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you should care for him. Yet you have made him little less than a god. You have crowned him with glory and beauty, made him lord of the works of your hands, put all things under his feet".

Looking deep into the heart of reality captures the imagination with the truth that the same Creator God who made the planets, moon and stars is the same God and Father who knows us and loves us. How insignificantly small we are and yet how precious we are in God's eyes! Here is awe, wonder and the holy fear

that keep our spirits alive.

Enchantment

Training ourselves and our children to have a sense of awe and wonder is becoming increasingly important in today's culture where there is a loss of enchantment as we no longer stand before life with a sense of freshness. This loss of enchantment is certainly one of the reasons for the decline of religious faith. In response to this, writers like CS. Lewis and JRR. Tolkien create works of fantasy, not to escape from reality but from the illusion of small worlds that we built for ourselves. In works like *The Chronicles of Narnia* and

Lord of the Rings, readers are reconnected to the categories of meaning, love, suffering, mission and vocation – categories that are increasingly eclipsed by the dominance of the will to construct worlds of our own liking and desire.

Summer is a good time to look at the world with fresh eyes of awe and wonder at the beauty of all things. Looking at things as they are with a contemplative heart resists modern efforts to flatten, shrink and empty reality that is filled with mystery and where God waits to meet us.

Furnace of love

Recently, I came across a wonderful poem by Tadhg Gaelach Ó Súilleabháin, where he describes the presence of Christ "as a furnace of love within us burning" (*Poem of Jesus*). For tomorrow's feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I can think of no better image to capture the meaning of this devotion where the love of Christ's heart floods our own hearts and causes them to burn in charity and mercy. It's another reminder of how poetry can capture a truth and be a wonderful source of inspiration to help teach and preach the Gospel.

Duc in altum

The recently published census data is certainly a wake-up call for the future of the Catholic Church in Ireland as those who identify as Catholics continue to drop in number. However, what we must avoid is a sense of panic and to keep in mind why we exist in the first place. As a Church, we don't evangelise primarily in reaction to secularism or to restore lost ground, or to be relevant or to keep consumers happy. We evangelise because this is what the Lord asks us to do: 'duc in altum...put out into the deep'. It is always in response to his Word that new pastoral initiatives take place.



A poor rural community in Ethiopia need our help to build a solid chapel in place of a grass-roofed one



Fr Amanuel Mulatu CM, a Vincentian missionary in Ethiopia has written to ask for our help in enabling a solid and strong chapel building to be built to replace the grass-roofed one which was put up over a decade ago. The local bishop, Markos Gebremedhin, fully endorses this appeal and says that a modest but a permanent chapel will support evangelization and encourage the spiritual growth of the parish. It will be a worthy place for celebrating the Divine Liturgy and for Eucharistic Adoration.

The faithful people are very poor, depending on rainfall for the growth of maize, beans, coffee and root crops, which in good times they can sell and use themselves. The Manja ethnic minority earn a living partly from the sale of charcoal, firewood and honey. Fr Amanuel has many outstations to take care of and is asking The Little Way for the sum of €9,200 for the new chapel building.

Can you spare a small gift to build this chapel?

Your gift will be gratefully received and sent without deduction to Fr Amanuel for the chapel building. You may be sure of the prayers of Father and the people who will pray and worship in their new chapel. (If we receive more funds than are required for this project they will be used for similar chapel projects).



"My life is but an instant, a passing hour. My life is a but a day that escapes and flies away. O my God! You know that to love you on earth I only have today." - St Therese

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€..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES

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(Block letters please)

Address

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