

The Irish Catholic

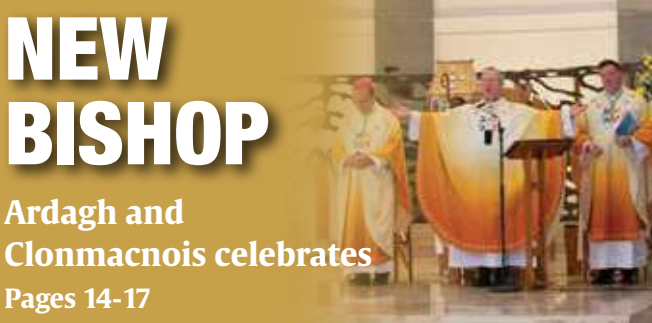
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Whole parish system in need of reform – Bishop Connell

Chai Brady

The Church in Ireland is in serious need of radical restructuring, the country's newest bishop has warned.

Paying tribute to the heroic work of priests, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois Paul Connell also insisted that more focus needs to be put on encouraging young men in parishes to consider a vocation to the priesthood.

"Obviously, a Church without priesthood just doesn't exist," he told *The Irish Catholic*. "We need priests and religious within our Church community," he insisted. However, he said, "the situation we find ourselves in, where there is a much smaller cohort of priests, is one that we have to look at and understand, and discern and we have to try and talk to our people in parishes to see how we can do things in a different way."

"But obviously it's very important to pray for vocations because we still need priests, we need young people and other people who are not so young to answer the call to come forward for priesthood," Bishop Connell (65) said following his ordination in St Mel's Cathedral, Longford on Sunday.

On the need for structural reform he said, "we need to do

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Ad multos annos!



Ireland's newest prelate Bishop Paul Connell of the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, whose episcopal ordination took place on Sunday in St Mel's Cathedral in Longford, is greeted outside the cathedral by parishioners after the Mass. Photo: Chai Brady

Female deacons debate key part of Rome synod

Staff reporter

The possible ordination of women as deacons and the admission of married men to the priesthood will be key themes during a month-long synod gathering in Rome in October, the Vatican revealed this week.

The preparatory document, known in Latin as an *instrumentum laboris*, brings together a number of themes and concerns that have emerged during a three-year consultative process, which has focused on how the Church could become more synodal, focused on greater listening and participation of all of the baptised, not just the hierarchy.

When prelates and lay delegates gather in October for the upcoming Synod of Bishops, they will be asked to directly confront a number of questions – including the possibility of women deacons, access to the priesthood for married men, the integration of gay and lesbian Catholics and greater care for migrants.

The document is cautious to note that "a synodal assembly cannot be understood as representative and legislative, analogous to a parliamentary structure with its dynamics of majority building" and anchors the synod process in a spiritual foundation, saying it is best to be understood as a liturgical assembly.

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The synod takes on tough questions

The Vatican on Tuesday released the working document for the much-anticipated synod to be held in Rome in October.

Known in Latin as an *instrumentum laboris*, the 60-page document will guide the month-long Vatican summit on a number of themes and concerns that have emerged during a three-year consultative process, which has focused on how the Church could become more synodal, focused on greater listening and participation of all of the baptised, not just the hierarchy.

Emerged

Over the last decade, synodality has emerged as a key theme of Francis' pontificate and as a vehicle of implementing the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and instilling them into the practices and structures of the Church today. Earlier this year, Francis dramatically expanded participation in the synod to include lay men and women, for the first time granting them a right to be appointed as full voting members of the Church's primary consultative



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

“The Pope’s synodal journey has been the largest consultation in human history, but at one level it is only beginning”

body.

The document is cautious to note that “a synodal assembly cannot be understood as representative and legislative, analogous to a parliamentary structure with its dynamics of majority building” and anchors the synod process in a spiritual foundation, saying it is best to be understood as a liturgical assembly.

“Many Catholics interested in synodality do in fact see the synodal process as something akin to a parliament or an assembly”

The task at hand for the Pope and his advisers, ultimately, is managing tensions in the Church. And a key, maybe necessary, tension within the Church is the co-responsibility of the Church shared between clerics and laypeople.

This was an element that was arguably lost and which the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) sought to give fresh focus to with ideas like the universal call to holiness and the priesthood of all believers.

Francis has spoken of his desire to make the Church more participatory and more synodal. He has said that he wants everyone to be able to feel included within the Church.

Another tension that the Pope and his close aides will have to navigate is an idea that has already

managing the synodal process in Irish dioceses.

Journey

The Pope's synodal journey has been the largest consultation in human history, but at one level it is only beginning. It is fraught with potential difficulties, but it also has endless potential to help the Church calibrate itself more closely to its mission: namely to proclaim the Gospel in word and action.

Endless meetings, documents and assemblies will not do this in and of themselves – the key question that all synodal participants should keep at the front of their mind is: how is what we're doing serving the mission of the Church to bring people into relationship with Christ?

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Whole parish system in need of reform – Bishop Connell

» Continued from Page 1

things in a different way - we need to restructure our whole parish system and the diocesan system to a great extent,” he said.

On his own priesthood, Bishop Connell said: “I have found it a very fulfilling life, and I’ve never regretted my decision and I just think there are people out there who really are being called [to the priesthood] and I think if they take courage and accept the challenge, I think it would be a huge benefit for themselves and of course for the Church in a wider sense”.

On the issue of non-Irish

priests coming to Ireland as missionaries, Bishop Connell said that these men have hugely enriched the Church, but that their presence is not a solution to our own vocations crisis.

“We have the assistance and help of many African priests, and it is much appreciated - and it's something that we need.

“But, at the same time I think that a vibrant Church must produce vocations within itself and so, just as Africa produces vocations for its own Church, we too need to do it here,” he insisted.

Speaking during the ordi-

nation ceremony, Bishop Connell paid tribute to priests. “I want to acknowledge on your behalf the incredible commitment and service of our priests. This diocese has been so blessed with their ministry.

“We are however an ageing priesthood and the model of Church we have been living with will not survive what is happening now. And so, we, together, as a listening Church, must try to understand and discern that somehow in the midst of this necessary change, that God is speaking to us,” he said.

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Minister of Religion visa scheme update warmly welcomed

Jason Osborne

Amendments to the Minister of Religion visa scheme that address criticisms have been warmly welcomed by missionary bodies and congregations that often bring religious overseas to Ireland as part of their work.

This paper previously reported that religious and missionary bodies involved in negotiations with the Department of Justice were dissatisfied with the scheme, and frustrated with the "disruptive" delays in visa renewal for ministers of religion.

Inflexibility in the process and short periods before visa renewal was required were cited as primary concerns with the process.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Secretary General of the Association of Leaders of

Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI) David Rose said that the Department of Justice "seems to have taken on board what we were looking for".

Amendments such as allowing a minister of religion to enter the State with one year's post-ordination experience as opposed to the previous requirement of three years, and increasing the permissible period of residence as a minister of religion to 9 years are a "good improvement" on the previous scheme.

"I don't think it's completely there yet, but I think they have a much better understanding of the needs of religious congregations and where we're coming from," Mr Rose told this paper, adding, "I think it's changing for the better".

Mr Rose said that AMRI has already seen evidence that the changes are "feed-

ing through the system" and making the process easier.

"For example, AMRI runs the religious formation ministry programme and we usually take about 20 students, mainly from Africa and Asia every year. They would report it's far easier for them to get their visa than heretofore," he said.

"We'd had a number of meetings with the immigration section of the Department of Justice... just highlighting the needs of religious and they have issued a new Minister of Religion policy and they seem to have taken on board what we were looking for. I think the feeling is that it is becoming easier for congregations to bring their people in, whether it's a priest or a sister or a brother into the country to minister in their particular ministries here."

Irish mother of Nottingham victim asks for 'prayers for my baby girl'

Staff reporter

The Irish mother of Nottingham attack victim, 19-year-old student Grace O'Malley-Kumar, has appealed for prayers for her daughter and for people not to harbour hate in their hearts during an emotional tribute to her daughter.

Addressing the crowd at a vigil in Nottingham's Market Square, Dublin-born Dr Sinéad O'Malley asked those gathered to "say prayers for my baby girl".

"I'll echo what my husband said yesterday: Be kind to each other, look after each other. Don't have hate in your hearts. Say prayers for my baby girl. I can't say any more, but she did love Nottingham," Dr O'Malley said.

Dr O'Malley told those assembled: "She wanted to be a doctor, she wanted to play hockey with her pals, she wanted to have fun because that's what all students want, they want



Dr Sinead O'Malley addressing the vigil.

to enjoy themselves and all they were doing was walking home. They were just walking home after a night out."

19-year-old students Grace O'Malley-Kumar and Barnaby Webber were found stabbed to death on Ilkeston

Road at around 4am, June 13.

Caretaker Ian Coates, 65, who was described by his sons at the same vigil as "everyone's friend", was found dead in Magdala Road after his van was allegedly stolen by the suspect.

THE RALLY FOR LIFE NEEDS YOUR HELP

The biggest pro-life event of the year is on JULY 1st when thousands march to STAND FOR LIFE in Dublin city centre.

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SCAN ME

Rally for Life urges TDs to listen to public on 3-day wait

Staff Reporter

Organisers of the Rally for Life, scheduled for Dublin next week, have called on TDs to listen to growing public concern from voters about a push to scrap the three-day wait before abortion.

The three-day period of reflection was described by pro-life doctors last year as

giving women "time to think". Data released to Carol Nolan TD shows that up to 4,000 women over a four year period did not return for an abortion after the waiting period.

"As part of the Rally for Life promotion this year, we also drove a strong 'Time to Think' campaign," according to Megan Ní Scealláin of the Life Institute and Rally for

Life committee. "We know that increasing numbers of voters are getting in touch with TDs to say the three-day wait must be retained, and that's reflected in some of the reporting we're now seeing around the issue."

She said she felt that reports of TDs relaying concerns to Cabinet that voters would see scrapping the three-day wait as reneging on

promises revealed that the issue was being taken seriously at constituency level.

"We can see that opposition to plans to scrap this vitally important waiting period is gaining traction, and that voters would see it as a betrayal," she said. "The Rally for Life, the biggest pro-life event of the year, will also be a focal point for this campaign and for urging TDs to

listen to the public and keep the three-day wait."

Ms Ní Scealláin said that tens of thousands of leaflets would be sent back from the Rally to constituencies around the country for a summer campaign which would also highlight what she called the "shocking proposals" in the recent Bill from Bríd Smith TD which sought to legalise abortion without restrictions to

six months gestation.

"We're now seeing increasing numbers of 'yes' voters saying online, or in letters pages, or on radio that changing the law would be a breach of promise," she added. "TDs need to stop listening to extremists in NGOs and listen to the public instead."

The Rally for Life takes place in Dublin on Saturday July 1.

Ukrainian Catholic community pins hope on counteroffensive

Jason Osborne

The Ukrainian Catholic community is hoping and praying for peace and justice amid the long-awaited spring counteroffensive in the ongoing war according to the chaplain to Ukrainians in Ireland, Fr Vasyl Kornitsky.

"We still pray for hope, for peace in Ukraine," Fr Kornitsky told *The Irish Catholic*.

"What I noticed recently is that people are getting very emotionally and psychologically drained and exhausted and I think when people are so drained and exhausted from reading

all the news and always hoping for the better, people cling to any kind of good news," such as the counteroffensive, he said.

Aware of members of his congregation who have returned to Ukraine to be with their husbands, some of whom have lost limbs in the fighting, Fr Kornitsky said that people are also "very upset" and "very, very emotional" at this time.

Speaking also to this paper, Apostolic Visitor to the Ukrainian community in Ireland Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski said that July 8 marks the 500th day since the beginning of

the full-scale invasion, and that the day will be marked by expressions of thanksgiving out of the gratitude for their host countries.

"Of course, I'm hoping that that 500th day will see us being able to proclaim peace and victory, but regardless, I think that day will be marked by people in western Europe and I'm sure in Ireland as well... as an opportunity

for the Ukrainian community in Ireland and throughout Europe to actually pause and thank the people of Ireland in the way that they've supported Ukraine and also those Ukrainian citizens who have fled and have been welcomed so warmly by the Irish people," Bishop Nowakowski said.

Bishops warn of 'extremist views' against refugees

Audrey Bryce

Irish bishops have warned that "extremist views" causing fear and racism towards refugees undermine Ireland's culture of welcome, and the State should dialogue with local communities.

In a statement on World Refugee Day, June 19, the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference encouraged parishes and churches to continue the "great efforts to support our new residents with pastoral and charitable support".

"Even when it stretches resources and facilities, we

are called to go the extra mile, despite the sacrifices involved," the bishops said.

The statement comes after a recent Government announcement claiming it plans to accommodate all international protection applicants. However, the bishops said the State must also be prepared to provide healthcare, medical care and educational resources for the new arrivals.

"In doing so the State must work with local communities to underpin solidarity and social cohesion by way of local dialogue and with an

emphasis on safety. Leaving people to sleep in tents or on the streets is cruelty before our eyes, it is not an option in a country that is one of the richest in the world. We can do so much better. There is a danger that extremist views and actions can come to the fore causing fear and racism undermining our culture of welcome," they stated.

The bishops continued by saying that racism seeks to "divide and to exploit anxieties by spreading fear, often through misinformation" and has no place in Ireland.

A labourer from the Lord...



Fr Christopher Garrett is pictured (on the right of Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin) after his ordination in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Co. Sligo. Photo: Jimmy O'Brien



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Dr. Eugene Duffy

Is a priest of the diocese of Achonry and Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Renewal and Development; formerly lecturer in Theology and Religious Studies at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick.

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 CJ

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.

Pagan Ireland was primitive Ireland...

This is the time of year – the summer solstice – when we usually see various homages to pagan Celtic Ireland, with druidic figures revering the turning of the seasons on the longest day. The remarkable Newgrange tomb – 5,200 years old – in the Boyne Valley becomes a focus for marking the solstice event.

Rituals

Rituals are encouraged by those who advocate



Mary Kenny

a return to old pagan traditions, notably at the solstice. The gathering of herbs, the lighting of bonfires, and the erecting of an altar to 'Mother Earth' are encouraged, to be adorned with summer flowers, lavender, mint and basil. Solstice is a time for 'renewal, rebirth and self-love' – to honour the

human body. Observance of sunrise and sunset are recommended, as is 'leaving flowers for fairies'.

Midsummer

Anything wrong with this? No: midsummer festivals have a long tradition in Ireland, and Christianity built on plenty of pagan folklore. Worship of 'the

earth' was common to our primitive ancestors – and to many early peoples around the world. Worship of the sun was elemental, and the midsummer bonfire is an old symbolic rite of seeking to prolong the sun's warmth and fire as the daylight cycle reaches its zenith.

“Where is the music, the poetry, the literature, the development of philosophy and science bequeathed to us by the Celtic pagans?”

But still, nature-worship and sun-worship were just that – primitive. They were rituals devised by earlier humans who observed the wonder, and the power, of nature. Christianity was something different:

it aligned with natural cycles of humans and the seasons, but it was a quantum leap into a new consciousness.

Where?

Where is the Book of Kells (and the many other extraordinary Irish Christian manuscripts) of the druids? Where are the

cathedrals built by fairies? Where is the music, the poetry, the literature, the development of philosophy and science bequeathed to us by the Celtic pagans?

Paganism may be part of our ancient heritage, but had we adhered to it, we would still be living in caves.

“Solstice is a time for ‘renewal, rebirth and self-love’ – to honour the human body”

Postcards from the past



A classic John Hinde image.

Isuppose we have grown accustomed to Ireland's recent past being depicted as doleful and depressing.

Yet there was glossier portrait of Ireland in the 1950s and early 1960s which had a big impact on the country's image – and did wonders for the tourism trade.

This was the image projected in the famous John Hinde picture postcards. By the time the photographer sold his business in 1972, some 50 million John Hinde postcards had been mailed internationally. Everyone will have been familiar with these panoramas of the breathtaking Irish countryside, delightful seaside beaches,

and snaps of darling little donkeys bringing home the turf.

Hinde, an Englishman (with an Irish mother) who came to Ireland in 1944, travelled all over the country with circuses, and tried to launch his own circus, too.

He failed, but learned a lot in the process, and brought his topographical knowledge of Ireland to the now classic postcards he produced. He enhanced, technically, the ordinary colours of the landscape so that Skerries looked like St Tropez and Dublin's O'Connell Street a glamorous boulevard with bright green buses. The cards were hugely popular, and projected Ireland

as a beguiling, sunny and happy place, both traditional and modern.

John Hinde's Dublin is the subject of a special exhibition of his postcards currently at the Little Museum of Dublin – and there are also books on sale illustrating his photos from all around the country. It's a fascinating visual social history of streets as I remember them.

Mr Hinde married a circus artiste, Antonia Falnoga, and they had five daughters, one of whom was a recent tourist visiting the Little Museum on St Stephen's Green, unaware of the tribute to her late father.

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● Seán MacBride, nationalist and internationalist, always said that Ireland should join NATO – once partition is ended. So surely the question arises: if and when Ireland is united, will NATO membership be part of the agreement?

Head chaplain questions report Catholics face prejudice in high-security NI prison

Chai Brady

The lead chaplain for prisons in the North of Ireland has said they have found no grounds for a report that Catholic prisoners are experiencing prejudice from members of staff in a Co. Antrim prison.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, the lead chaplain to the Northern Ireland Prison Service Fr Stephen McBrearty said that in chaplains' experience Catholics have not been "victimised" in the high-security

Maghaberry prison.

Despite a damning report by the Criminal Justice Inspection and HM Inspector of Prisons, which highlighted that Catholic prisoners stated they faced prejudice from staff, Fr McBrearty said this is not "a true reflection" of chaplains' experience.

"A lot of the people come in expecting to be victimised against and they put it down to 'because I'm a Catholic', and it's not a reality. In saying that we are obviously pur-

suing this ourselves, in the light of what was said," he said.

"I don't think it's a true reflection of our experience within the prison itself and the reason for that is because we are very much on the ground, we do deal immediately with circumstances that may come up, if it's from an officer or another resident towards any member due to race, colour, religion or sexual discrimination, we are on top of it."

The unannounced inspection of the prison was published last

week. It stated that while relations between staff and prisoners were good, "there was evidence from a number of sources that some Catholic prisoners had experienced prejudice from some staff members and there was also a disappointing reluctance among officers to report poor behaviour by their colleagues".

They noted reports of "derogatory sectarian comments towards Catholic prisoners" and called on the prison to "explore this further and deal with it robustly".

Fr McBrearty said that while he believes there is no "pandemic" of sectarianism in the prison, "individual officers can pass comments and if they have passed comments, and we are told by chaplains that 'x, y and z was said' to them and it has been repeated to them once or twice, we would be on to that officer like a light. And we would be raising that with our governors and we would be bringing that to the highest levels".

Significant cost increase of basics of life - SVP

Audrey Bryce

There has been a considerable increase in the cost of maintaining a basic living across all household types, according to the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

In a new report, SVP says the cost of what is known as a Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) has revealed a significant increase in the twelve months to March 2023.

The results come amidst the cost of living crisis, which has placed pressure on defining the socially-acceptable basic standard of living.

At an average increase of 10.6% nationally, 12.9% for urban based households and 5.7% for rural households, these numbers reflect the

rising cost of the minimum basket of goods necessary for people to live respectably and with dignity.

The MESL criteria for suitable living costs primarily account for housing, childcare, and secondary benefits which are then included in calculation for the total cost of six different household types. Considering employment status and extent of State support, the MESL then determines the income sufficiency and insufficiency for each group before determining an appropriate MESL cost.

Rising gas and electricity prices have forced urban home energy costs up an average of 67.8%. Rural home energy costs, on the other hand, are only up by 6.7%.

Taoiseach says he would like to see fewer abortions take place in Ireland

Jason Osborne

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has said that while in his view abortion is "sometimes necessary," it is "not a good thing" and would like to see fewer abortions take place in Ireland.

In a recent interview with *The Irish Times*, Mr Varadkar was asked about the independent review of the State's abortion law, which recommended a number of changes including an end to the three-day wait period to access an abortion.

He said: "One thing that I'm kind of sorry wasn't explored more in the report...that came out during the hearings was there wasn't really a proper exploration of the decisions made by women who didn't go ahead with the termination. So, it is those numbers who attended for the first appointment and didn't go back. It's not a small number. That wasn't really properly explored."

Good and faithful servants



Mary Neary and Tom Neary pictured with Fr Richard Gibbons, rector of Knock Shrine, as they were invested as a Dame and Knight of the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St Gregory the Great awarded by Pope Francis for their many years of service to Knock Shrine on Sunday, June 18.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New MIC research explores relationship between youth mental wellbeing and religion

New research from Mary Immaculate College (MIC) into the relationship between adolescent, Irish students and religion suggests that religion has the potential to influence students' mental wellbeing, depending on how it is used by the adolescent.

The new findings come from MIC Lecturer and Educational and Child Psychologist, Dr Lydia Mannion, who has conducted research with over a hundred students in Transition Year, Fifth Year and Leaving Certificate classes across ten post-primary schools in Ireland.

The research conducted by Dr Mannion investigated the correlation between mental wellbeing and religion and indicates that those with more positive mental wellbeing lean on more positive religious coping methods, whereas those with lower levels of mental wellbeing may interpret difficulties as being divinely attributed or may hold negative feelings towards God.

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Niamh Uí Bhriain

The View



Michael D Higgins is strangely muted on some subjects

As most voters will know, the President of Ireland is a role that is supposedly above politics – whatever that phrase actually means. As has been noted, the practice of the president refraining from political commentary was more of a convention than a constitutional obligation, but in many ways it made sense.

The president, the argument goes, represents the country and the people, both here and abroad, and, as such is expected to be above the fray – above the political jousting and policy clashes that arise. In return, with some rare exceptions, criticism of the president and the office has largely been frowned upon.

“So he stays quiet on Covid-19 lockdowns but speaks up for open borders, to acclaim from media commentators and those pushing the same agenda”

Michael D. Higgins, is now in his second term in office. Therefore, politically, he has nothing to lose and that seems to be guiding his attitude towards any perceived restrictions on what he can or cannot say. Similarly, his wife Sabina raised a few eyebrows when she wrote a letter to *The Irish Times* on the Ukraine war and had it posted to the President's website.

This week, the president had to apologise for what he has now described as “throwaway” remarks that he made when commenting on a Government forum which President Higgins felt was part of a “dangerous drift” towards NATO and away from what he called “positive neutrality”.

In an interview with the *Business Post*, he drew attention to the composition of the panels at the Government's Consultative Forum on International Security Policy, and described chair Prof. Louise Richardson as “a person with a very large DBE – Dame of the British Empire”.

“I think it's grand, but, you know, I think that there were a few candidates I



Pope Francis greets President Michael D. Higgins during a private audience at the Vatican in 2021. Photo: Vatican Media

could have come up with myself.”

As it happens, I agree that there seems to be a drift of sorts towards a political push to abandon neutrality and I also believe that very often the consultations and supposed public debates on this and many other issues are actually a sham. Look at the charade that was the public consultation on hate-speech: when my colleague on *Gript media*, Ben Scallan, analysed all of the 3,600 responses received, he showed that more than 73% of the public submissions opposed the hate speech bill. The Government ignored that inconvenient result.

But, as John McGuirk also pointed out this week, the president didn't have much to say about that particular ‘dangerous drift’ towards a crackdown on free speech and free expression.

That's the thing about President Higgins: he's not really a rebel at all. He seems to choose very carefully the issues on which he will suddenly be outspoken – and his views are almost always in perfect alignment with the mainstream media.

Lockdowns

So he stays quiet on Covid-19 lockdowns but speaks up for open borders, to acclaim from media commentators and those pushing the same agenda. There was no expression of understanding for people in areas like East Wall or Inch who are demonised for raising objections to having migrant centres imposed on their areas without consultation – and the suggestion that the palatial Áras might be able to host a refugee family or six was shrugged off.

Last year, Mr Higgins was sharply criticised by Nige-

rian bishop, Jude Ayodeji Arogundade, after the president seemed to suggest that climate change played a role in a horrific massacre of 40 people attending a Pentecost Sunday Mass at the church of St Francis in Owo.

His remarks were “incorrect and far-fetched”, the bishop said. “Alluding to some form of politics of climate change in our situation is completely inappropriate.”

Clashing with a bishop is always safe ground for an Irish politician, whatever the context, so there was minimal pushback for those comments, as was the case when he made his absurd remarks praising Fidel Castro, a dictator, as a “giant among global leaders, whose view was not only one of freedom for his people but for all of the oppressed and excluded peoples on the planet”.

Those remarks are, perhaps, significant, in that Mr

Higgins likely sees himself in the same mould: speaking for those who are oppressed and excluded. And everyone likes a rebel – someone who will speak up against the establishment and in defiance of convention if that's what is needed.

“But the stage had been already set by her husband in 2012, when he also spoke out on the issue”

But it's easy, especially when you are the president, to speak out about climate change (nothing but bouquets from the media there) – while staying silent on the things that really hurt the most vulnerable.

You couldn't get a more oppressed and excluded minority than unborn babies, for example, so helpless that they can't even raise their eyes in their own defence. Yet when Sabina Higgins called for access to abortion to be made available for babies with severe disabilities, she received ample

positive coverage because she was singing the same tune as her friends in the media and those in power.

It was, as the Life Institute said at the time, an “attack on the Constitutional right to life of unborn babies” and, given that it came from the president's wife, it was “an absolute abuse of power and privilege”. But the stage had been already set by her husband in 2012, when he also spoke out on the issue.

Similarly, Mr Higgins has always styled himself as a champion of women's rights, yet he is strangely silent on the madness of placing violent male rapists in women's prisons. He found his voice when he said that schools must teach “sexuality in the fullest sense” – widely seen as referring to transgenderism.

It seems that our ‘outspoken’ president only finds his voice on issues that chime with the editorials – Not much of the rebel about that.

“Therefore, politically, he has nothing to lose and that seems to be guiding his attitude towards any perceived restrictions on what he can or cannot say”



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Synod document sets stage for wide-ranging debate on women and structures



Pope Francis greets participants at a Vatican conference, 'Pastors and lay faithful called to walk together,' on February 18 in the Vatican Synod Hall. Photo: Vatican Media



Issues long thought to be taboo will be central to the October gathering in Rome, writes Christopher White

When prelates and lay delegates gather in October for the upcoming Synod of Bishops, they will be asked to directly confront a number of pressing questions including the possibility of women deacons, access to the priesthood for married men, the integration of LGBTQ+ Catholics and penance for sexual abuse and the abuse of power, conscience and money — in consideration of how the Church might transform and expand its structures to become more welcoming of all of its members.

In a much anticipated document released on Tuesday, the Vatican's synod office set the stage for a wide-ranging discussion for the first session of a high-stakes meeting that is attempting to respond with "missionary urgency" to the challenges of Church life in the modern world.

Known in Latin as an *instrumentum laboris*, the 60-page document will guide the month-long Vatican

summit on a number of themes and concerns that have emerged during a three-year consultative process, which has focused on how the Church could become more synodal, focused on greater listening and participation of all of the baptised, not just the hierarchy.

Among the issues and considerations that can be found in the document are how a synodal Church recognises and values the central role of the poor, the experience of migrants; victims of sexual abuse, violence and other injustices, the disabled, divorced and remarried Catholics, the need for greater commitment to ecumenism and learning from other faith traditions, and the role of women in the Church today.

Culmination

The newly-released document is the culmination of worldwide listening sessions through local Churches that took place throughout 2021-2022 and seven continental gatherings held in early 2023.

Over the last decade, synodality has emerged as a key theme of Francis' pontificate and as a vehicle for implementing the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and instilling them into the practices and structures of the Church today. Earlier this year, Francis dramatically expanded participation in the synod to include lay men and women, for the first time granting them a right to be appointed as full voting members of the Church's primary consultative body.

The new document — which is framed around three interwoven themes of communion, mission and participation — aims to offer an honest account of the key ideas, difficulties, aspirations and fears faced by Catholics from every corner of the globe. They will now be up for discernment and discussion by an estimated 300 synod partici-

pants in the synod's first session from October 4-29.

While past synod working documents have primarily been published to serve as an initial draft for a particular synod's eventual final report, the newly-released document is structured in a novel format, with an introductory section that offers a vision for what it means to be a synodal Church and a second section which poses three overarching questions are that meant to guide the synod discussions.

The text is accompanied by 15 worksheets — five for each of the three priority questions — that pose a series of open questions for synod participants to reflect upon individually and collectively.

“How can we discern the baptismal ministries necessary for mission in a local Church, whether instituted or not?”

The three questions that will serve as the framework for this synod are:

A communion that radiates: How can we be more fully a sign and instrument of union with God and of the unity of all humanity?;

Co-responsibility in mission: How can we better share gifts and tasks in the service of the Gospel?; and,

Participation, governance and authority: What processes, structures and institutions in a missionary synodal Church?

The document is cautious to note that “a synodal assembly cannot be understood as representative and legislative, analogous to a parliamentary structure with its dynamics of majority building” and anchors the synod process in

a spiritual foundation, saying it is best to be understood as a liturgical assembly.

“Ancient tradition tells us that when a synod is celebrated it begins with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, continues with the profession of faith, and arrives at shared determinations to ensure or re-establish ecclesial communion,” the document states.

But while underscoring the spiritual dimension of the synodal process, the document does not shy away from demanding synod delegates to consider concrete responses to a number of neuralgic topics in Church life today. Becoming a synodal Church, the document notes, requires the participation of all of its members, including the Pope, bishops, clergy, consecrated life and the laity alike.

Communion

Among the more than 100 specific questions that are posed as a way of offering concrete responses to the questions of communion, mission and participation are:

What concrete steps are needed to welcome those who feel excluded from the Church because of their status or sexuality (for example, remarried divorcees, people in polygamous marriages, LGBTQ+ people, etc.)?

How can we discern the baptismal ministries necessary for mission in a local Church, whether instituted or not? What spaces are available for experimentation at the local level? What value should be attributed to these ministries? Under what conditions can they be received and recognised by the entire Church?

What concrete steps can the Church take to renew and reform its procedures, institutional arrangements and structures to enable greater recognition and participation of women, including

in governance, decision-making processes and in the taking of decisions, in a spirit of communion and with a view to mission?

What new ministries could be created to provide the means and opportunities for women's effective participation in discernment and decision-making bodies?

Most of the continental assemblies and the syntheses of several episcopal conferences call for the question of women's inclusion in the diaconate to be considered. Is it possible to envisage this, and in what way?

“How should the role of the Bishop of Rome and the exercise of his primacy evolve in a synodal Church?”

Could a reflection be opened concerning the discipline on access to the priesthood for married men, at least in some areas?

How does the exercise of the episcopal ministry solicit consultation, collaboration, and participation in the decision-making processes of the people of God?

On the basis of what criteria can a bishop evaluate himself and be evaluated in the performance of his service in a synodal style?

How should the role of the Bishop of Rome and the exercise of his primacy evolve in a synodal Church?

In addition to the specific questions, the document calls for consideration of the ways in which the Church's preparation for ministry, particularly its seminaries, might need to change in order to become more synodal, as well as for a consideration of how the Church's canon law may need to be revised.

Church can't afford this tardy return to children's ministries



A slow restart of children's ministries since Covid risks the Church's future life, writes
Ruadhán Jones

We should read with concern last week's National Safeguarding report. Aside from the rise in the number of allegations of abuse reported, the safeguarding body makes two references, small but significant, to children's ministries. Twice the report states that, while 2022-23 saw the return of some children's ministry, "in some places, this has been slow".

Although the report doesn't add any more detail, it certainly gels with my experience of parishes around the country. In many places, we no longer hear the traditional children's choirs or see young altar servers working with the priest. This is both a terrible shame and a concerning pattern.

Restart

If we are slow to restart children's ministries, we risk losing thousands of young people. The issue is only heightened as we watch children gather in our churches for communions and confirmations, knowing that many won't darken the door again.

We see a lot of talk about youth ministry, mainly meaning young adults. It's dispiriting that so many of them don't care about the Church or faith or God and as a result, we desperately want to win them back.

We see less talk about the other side of youth ministry, that being what we do for



Altar servers and children's choirs have been slow to return in parishes after Covid. Photo: CNS

young children. How we are to form them so they don't go the way of their older peers is a question of ever-increasing urgency.

When we do talk about children's ministry, it's usually with a narrow focus on the sacraments of Communion and Confirmation. Particularly, we complain about the inefficiency of their formation, with many never seen after they have received the sacraments. We argue about who should be doing what, apportioning blame to parishes or schools or parents.

“The children read the prayers of the faithful and sing occasionally, a pleasant reminder that the Church has a future”

But the sacraments, while significant as signs of faith, are small in terms of the amount of contact-time they foster with the parish community. For that, other apparently less significant ministries play a bigger role, the likes of altar serving and children's choirs.

Altar serving in particular

kept children like my own younger self engaged with the Faith in a very practical way. There were occasional clangers – dropping the hot thurible or ringing the bell at the wrong time – but the rhythms of the Mass and some of its ritual elements were ingrained. Faith wasn't abstract to me; it was something tangible.

For the rest of the congregation, children's choirs and altar servers are a sign of important life and vitality. In the parish I attend in Dublin, we're blessed with several large families. The children read the prayers of the faithful and sing occasionally, a pleasant reminder that the Church has a future. Their evident joy, and our sharing in it, shows the importance of children's ministries.

Reinvent

We don't need to reinvent the wheel to get children's ministries going again. Already in some parts of the country I see signs of hope, parishes with altar servers, children's choirs, faith camps, Bible clubs, Catholic scouts and girl guides, the junior Legion of Mary and many more activities and apostolates aimed at forming young people in the Church.

But it is difficult for parishes. Covid knocked the wind out of so many, with loyal volunteers not returning, others passing away. Then there were the families who once attended regularly but got out of the habit and haven't been seen since. We

have more outreach to do and less to do it with.

“They want to reach out to young people and they want to do safeguarding properly, but the two together are simply too much”

In addition, the thought of the extra paperwork required for children's ministries puts them off. They all understand the importance of safeguarding, but know that with resources increasingly thin, administrative burdens quickly pile up.

It puts them in a bind: they want to reach out to young people and they want to do safeguarding properly, but the two together are simply too much.

Given how important both are, dioceses will have to consider focusing resources to lighten the administrative load. Already Dublin diocese has mooted employing new staff to free up priests and pastoral workers from some administrative work for their vital evangelical mission.

The signs of hope are there, however widely interspersed. But tardiness now simply isn't an option; children's ministries lay the foundation for a growing and vibrant Church with happy and well-formed young Catholics. And that's what the Church needs if it is to survive in Ireland.

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“Tardiness now simply isn't an option; children's ministries lay the foundation for a growing and vibrant Church with happy and well-formed young Catholics”

A highly authoritarian move in the North on abortion



A move to impose controversial sex-ed on secondary schools in the North is highly sinister, writes David Quinn

The Irish Government is radicalising how sex education is taught to the country's pupils bit by bit, but not even it has yet been as bold as Chris Heaton-Harris, the Northern Ireland Secretary, who has issued an order that all secondary schools in the North must teach pupils how to access abortion. This includes pupils in Catholic schools. The Catholic bishops of Northern Ireland have said they will not comply. This could set the scene for a showdown if Heaton-Harris insists on the full implementation of his demand.

“The UK, like Ireland, is a signatory to CEDAW and we are bound to implement it in our legal systems”

Heaton-Harris says his hands are tied. He is simply implementing a legally binding instruction from the United Nations and specifically the UN committee that oversees the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

When announcing the measure earlier this month, he said: “I have today laid regulations in Parliament to implement the CEDAW recommendation to ‘make age-appropriate, comprehensive and scientifically accurate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, a compulsory component of curriculum for adolescents, covering prevention of early pregnancy and access to abortion in Northern Ireland, and moni-

Westminster would see all secondary schools in the North teach pupils how to access abortion.



tor its implementation.”

The UK, like Ireland, is a signatory to CEDAW and we are bound to implement it in our legal systems. But the convention is wide open to interpretation and nothing in the document, which dates back to 1979, mentions either abortion or ‘reproductive rights’ (a phrase often interpreted to include abortion).

But since CEDAW itself mentions neither abortion nor reproductive rights, how do we get to a situation whereby the Northern Ireland Secretary insists that document compels him to impose a requirement on all schools to teach pupils how to access abortion? The answer is, essentially, through bluff.

Implementation

The bluff starts with the UN itself. Even though CEDAW does not create a right to abortion (if it did, far fewer countries would have signed it), the UN committee that oversees implementation of the convention consistently pretends that it does.

There are many UN treaties and conventions, and each has a committee that oversees it. All countries that have signed these documents appear before the relevant committees from time to time and report on how well they are implementing this or that treaty or convention.

The members of the committees are almost always

radical on issues like abortion, and do not hesitate to pretend that UN conventions create a ‘right’ to abortion and this ‘right’ is legally enforceable. They pretend the committees have the status of a court handing down binding judgments. But it simply isn’t true.

“This is why Heaton-Harris is (wrongly) insisting that the UN obliges him to force the teaching of abortion on all secondary schools in the North”

Any country can easily call their bluff, but many don’t. Western countries in particular, and that includes the Republic of Ireland, apart from Northern Ireland, are happy to go along with the bluff because they want to give themselves the cover of the UN when implementing a controversial measure.

This is why Heaton-Harris is (wrongly) insisting that the UN obliges him to force the teaching of abortion on all secondary schools in the North. It does no such thing because it can’t. It doesn’t have the power.

Maybe Heaton-Harris believes otherwise. If that is so, then he is receiving terri-

ble legal advice.

Aside from anything else, he must know how desperately undemocratic such a move is. If the recommendation by the CEDAW committee really was legally binding, then our countries are much less sovereign than we think they are because it means that a UN committee, that almost no-one has ever heard of, has the power to impose radical policies on our countries without any real say-so on our part.

The huge irony is that it is a representative of the same Conservative Government that supported Brexit under the slogan ‘take back control’ that is so willing to sheepishly cave into a UN committee when it has nothing close to the power of the EU.

Stormont

One line of thought is that he is doing this in order to force the DUP back into Stormont. If the Northern Ireland Assembly was back in operation, direct rule from London would cease and it would be up to the Assembly, not London, to decide what should and should not be forced on schools in the North. The Catholic Church is being caught in the crossfire.

But so are the Protestant Churches. Responding to the Heaton-Harris move, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Dr John Kirkpatrick, expressed his

objection. He said: “The consistent outworking of the CEDAW recommendations by the Secretary of State and his predecessors, has been a patronising imposition of a series of measures on the people of Northern Ireland with little or no consideration of their wishes and views.”

In a statement headlined: ‘Bishops reject Westminster regulations to make teaching on abortion access compulsory in NI secondary schools’, the Catholic hierarchy in the North called for the wishes of parents to be respected.

“The Human Rights Commission attacked Catholic schools for saying sex should wait until marriage, the long-standing teaching of almost all Churches”

They added: “We also encourage parents and teachers in schools in Northern Ireland to challenge the unjust presentation by the Secretary of State, and the NI Human Rights Commission, of the outstanding, ethically responsible and scientifically balanced work they are doing in our schools in regard to Relationships and Sexuality Education.”

The Human Rights Commission attacked Catholic schools for saying sex should wait until marriage, the long-standing teaching of almost all Churches. The Commission said such a teaching causes “shame”.

So on two fronts, the State is attacking the right of the Churches, and indeed of parents, to impart a vision of sexual morality and relationships to children that they think is right and proper.

Undermining religious freedom and the rights of parents in this way is highly authoritarian.

The State might respond that it is acting in the ‘best interests’ of children. But that is not for the State to decide ultimately, nor even the Church. The Church has always said that parents are the primary educators of children. The State no longer seems to believe this.

The State now believes that it gets to override parents, and rather pathetically, is using the UN as cover. That simply makes it even worse, and also gives the UN far more authority than it really has, or deserves.

In the end, I doubt if what Heaton-Harris is insisting upon will be imposed on Catholic schools because I don’t think he has the power to do so. But the fact that he would even try is appalling, and frankly, rather sinister.

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Embrace synod to become ‘listening Church’ – Bishop Connell

Staff Reporter

Ireland's newest bishop has said that the synodal path inaugurated by Pope Francis is an opportunity for the Church to become more participatory.

Speaking after his ordination in St Mel's Cathedral in Longford on Sunday, Bishop Paul Connell, new Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, said: "Placing our faith and trust in God involves, above all, listening to what he is asking of us. We do this by listening to his Word but also by listening to the Church as well as the world around us.

"One way in particular that he does speak to us, is in and through the people that surround us, our families, neighbours, friends, acquaintances, those whom we live with, meet with and work with.

"The synodal process inaugurated by Pope Francis gives us an opportunity to become a listening Church," Bishop Connell told the congregation in the packed cathedral.

Reflecting

Reflecting on the Gospel passage 'the harvest is rich but the labourers are few', Bishop Connell said: "we know the harvest is rich but certainly at this time very difficult. As a Church we live in interesting times, facing many challenges. Our society is in danger of losing the

sense of the sacred, above all the truth that we come from God, and that some day we will return to God.

"Its moral compass is imperilled with an increasing stress on the rights of the individual to the detriment of society as a whole," he said.

“We are however an ageing priesthood and the model of Church we have been living with will not survive what is happening now”

Referring to the Covid-19 pandemic, Bishop Connell warned that: "Faith and practice too are affected when people lose touch with community worship".

Dr Connell said that the Church must become more participatory with laypeople understanding themselves as co-responsible for the life of the Church.

"For too long we have seen the labourers as priests and religious," he said. "Yes, we need priests and religious and we need now more than ever to pray for vocations and encourage people, young and older, to accept the invitation that Christ is extending to them.



Bishop of Elphin Kevin Doran takes the opportunity to film members of the clergy entering St Mel's Cathedral for the ordination. Photos: Brian Farrell

"I want to acknowledge on your behalf the incredible commitment and service of our priests...We are however an ageing priesthood and the model of Church we have been living with will not survive what is happening now.

"And so, we, together, as a listening Church, must try to understand and discern that somehow in the midst of this necessary change, that God is speaking to us," he said.

Reform

Underlining the fact that true reform in the Church only comes from God, Dr Connell asked: "How shall we change our world?"

Answering his own question, he insisted: "We shall not. God will do it or it will not happen. But he will not do it without us. Through men and women whose dynamism for change is not theirs alone but the power and work of God.

"God has chosen each of us; he is the source of our life in Christ Jesus. In this time of change, we, the laity and clergy of this diocese, guided by the Spirit of holiness, openness and truth, have to discern the future direction of our Church.

"This is our responsibility as disciples of Christ, listening to each other and also those beyond our comfort zone," he said. In his homily at the Mass Fr

Michael McGrath also took up the theme of co-responsibility.

Challenging

"We have begun walking that challenging path here in Ardagh and Clonmacnois. For a number of years we have tiptoed along the synodal pathway, praying in our assembly prayer that we would reflect the face of the Good Shepherd, to bring back the stray, look for the lost and bandage the wounded of our world; that we would build a Church of solidarity with the haunted faces of refugees, the wounded of war, and the voiceless victims of injustice in every land, and

that we would be united as a family of lay and religious, young and old, women and men with you our bishop to guide us, and that together we would all reflect God the Father's dream of a Church as a 'Mother Hen' who gathers all under the wings of shelter and protection. "Identifying our pastoral priorities going forward as outreach to young people, families and formation of people for mission, we are like the Twelve [disciples] of today's Gospel trying to model our lives on Jesus and so like him reach outward to heal, raise, cleanse, and cast out," Fr McGrath said.



Bishops and a cardinal watch on during the ordination of Bishop Paul Connell.



St Mel's Cathedral in Longford is filled to watch the ordination of Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois Paul Connell.



Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin places his hands on Ireland's newest bishop, Paul Connell, during the episcopal ordination.



Bishop Paul Connell (centre) is pictured smiling after the ordination with, from left to right, Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan, Bishop Michael Smith, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty and Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell.



Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland Eamon Martin addresses the congregation during the episcopal ordination of Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois Paul Connell.



Bishop Paul Connell is pictured with Frasciscan Sisters of the Renewal, who are based in Drogheda.



Bishop Paul Connell (centre) is pictured with Bishop of Kerry Ray Browne, left, and Archbishop of Tuam Francis Duffy, (right).



Bishop Paul Connell is pictured with his cousins (from left) Pat Begley, Sharon Kirby, Martin Kirby, Celia Byrne, Pater Kirby, Ann Byrne and Regina McGarel.

A summer of serenity



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Saint Mel's Cathedral Choir performs the music throughout the liturgy under the direction of Fintan Farrelly.

Becoming a bishop amid Church contraction and flux



Ireland's newest bishop is well aware that the challenges the Church is facing provide plenty of opportunity for renewal, hears **Jason Osborne**

Change is always difficult, the new Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois Paul Connell tells me. Whether it's the substantial societal shifts the Church is facing, or the personal upheaval Bishop Connell himself experienced upon accepting his appointment to Ardagh and Clonmacnois, change is never easy – but it's ripe with opportunity.

Surprised

Conscious that he's "of a certain age" himself and seen all of his colleagues in education retire, a desire for rest wouldn't have been a great reason to turn the Pope's request down, Bishop Connell tells me with a laugh as he reflects on his reaction to the latest development in his ministry.

"Obviously I was very surprised to be asked by the Holy Father to take on the task, it's something I was not expecting at all, so in a sense I'm still coming to terms with that," he begins.

"I find myself in a rather new and, as you say, challenging position. We're all aware of how challenging the situation is for the Church at the moment. I think we're in a time of transition and we need to be looking to the future and to try and secure the Church for the next generation and that's something that very much the next generation has to be part of."

With his installation making him the 15th bishop of the diocese, which has existed since the union of the sees of Ardagh and Clonmacnois in 1756, Bishop Connell is stepping into an old seat facing new conditions, as the Church throughout both Ireland and the world is. The bishop knew of which he spoke when he referenced the difficulties of change – for everyone – as he himself is leaving behind a life of 47 years, in one form or another, at his beloved St Finian's College in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.



Bishop Paul Connell of Ardagh and Clonmacnois greets people outside St Mel's Cathedral following his episcopal ordination.

"My experience is education, really as teacher and principal in St Finian's College in Mullingar where I was the principal and president... well, the president literally until this week," he tells me. Dr Connell describes his work in St Finian's as a "very important part in my life," and says that his work forming and educating the young people of Ireland was a "great privilege". Aware that they're the future of the Church in Ireland if it's to have any, he's keen to encourage the youth of Ardagh and Clonmacnois to get involved in the Church and contribute to the new form the Church is taking in the 21st Century.

"I think to have any part or role in the lives of young people and helping them and educating them is really a privilege and one that I really enjoyed. Young people are great. Over 40 years of dealing with young people, I have to say that they're so positive and so willing to learn new things," Dr Connell says.

Future

"I really think the future of the Church is important and it's in their hands as well. It's important that we encourage and look after young people and that we do the very best for them in terms of education, in the widest sense of that word. Just

as it's equally important that we look after the vulnerable in our community, particularly our older people."

"I think that going forward the labourers are going to have to be much wider than just the clergy and religious. I think there's a very important role for lay people here going forward"

While his "whole background" has been in education, Bishop Connell has also done considerable pastoral work in a variety of settings – in the States, in various parishes and in hospital chaplaincy. During that time, it'd be impossible not to notice the change that's taken place on the ground, and that Dr Connell, along with the priests and people of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, are going to have to address. Foremost among these is a change in emphasis, which now rests on the individual, rather than on community.

"It's not hard to see that things

have changed quite considerably over the last few years and I think it's part of a societal change, really, where there's a growing emphasis on the individual and less on community. I think we've heard a lot of commentary about how voluntary groups are finding it difficult to get people and I think people are perhaps a little less focused on community than they are on the individual and on themselves," Dr Connell says.

"That's a challenge for the Church as well and we're aware that people, practicing and going to Mass publicly has declined quite considerably and I think the Covid crisis has accentuated that to a great extent. I think things are recovering, but I think things are recovering so much slower than perhaps we would expect or would like."

Rather than being disheartened by this, though, Dr Connell says that the way to look at it is that "the Spirit is always moving in these things".

"I think that we're being told something and we just need, as Pope Francis says, to be a listening Church, to listen to each other and to listen to maybe those we're not comfortable with and to see in what direction we can lead. It is a very challenging time – indeed, the model of Church we have at

the moment is simply not going to survive going forward. That would have been a message that was given to people a lot over the last number of years but I think now people are beginning to see just the reality of how things are going to have to be different."

Honest view

Taking an honest view of the situation both in Ireland and in his own diocese, Bishop Connell says we have "very, very few seminarians in the country", and that at the moment, the diocese of Ardagh doesn't have a seminarian, but rather plenty of ageing priests.

"There are very, very few young priests available for ministry and so that poses great challenges for a system that was designed for a very different way of doing things," Dr Connell says.

Bishop Connell is very much on the same page as his brother bishops, though, in acknowledging that the current state of affairs represents a prime opportunity to implement that vision so present in Vatican II, and echoed in Pope Francis's call for a synodal Church, for a deeply involved laity. The model of the Church enjoyed in Ireland for some time is phasing out day by day – one in which priests and religious



Bishop Paul Connell is pictured sharing a laugh alongside Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop Francis Duffy and Bishop Tom Deenihan.



Bishop Paul Connell of Ardagh and Clonmacnois greets people outside St Mel's Cathedral following his episcopal ordination.

were the primary points of contact for the spiritual seekers among us – and being replaced by a Church in which the laity and clergy are encouraged to work hand in glove to re-evangelise their country.

Bishop Connell sees little coincidence in the Gospel read out the day of his installation: Jesus asking his disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into the harvest. “The harvest is rich but the labourers are few,” Bishop Connell remarks.

“I think for too long we have interpreted that as being religious and clerical labourers, you know, who are obviously essential and it's very important that we have an emphasis this year encouraging people to think about vocations and to be of courage and come forward if they feel that they're called, that is vital and very, very important,” the bishop reaffirms.

“I think that going forward the labourers are going to have to be much wider than just the clergy and religious. I think there's a very important role for lay people here going forward and, you know, we've seen in other jurisdictions where this model that we've had has had to change. I would be familiar from meeting people involved in other dioceses, places like Australia, where they had maybe 100 priests at one stage and now they're down to 25. Their whole structure has had to change, but that has very important positives too because it brings people front and centre into responsibility for their Church.

“I think that is where we are going to have to lead our people into that area, and I think people will be very willing to do that. We have an enormous number, still, of very, very committed and loyal people who are willing to give up their very best to their Church and I think we need to give them every encouragement to do that because that is the future,” he says.

Dr Connell says he believes the bishops and priests of his generation have “one last opportunity as a group of priests to put something solid in place for the future,” which can't be the same as what we have now.

“Change is very difficult, for everybody. None of us – least of all myself – like change. That's an important thing in my head at the moment, because I've been 40 years in one place pretty much and here I am at this point in my life moving on and going to a new challenge. Change is challenging, but there's also a certain excitement about it and reinvigoration that you get from the sense of doing something different and something new.”

Wonderful welcome

A Westmeath man “through and through,” Bishop Connell says that the change was eased for him by the wonderful welcome he's received in his new, nearby home.

“I'm really looking forward to getting to know the diocese and to getting to know the people and the priests. I know some of the priests already because we would

have served together in seminary in Maynooth and so on,” he says, adding that he feels very fortunate to be going to a diocese “so close to my own home.”

“There would have been a connection already between the Meath and Ardagh priests and so, from that point of view, I've no fears. I really have been struck by the enormous welcome I've been given, especially by people and the priests. Obviously, for the next few months I'm going to be getting myself into the position in the sense that one of my priorities will be to get to know the priests in particular and then to get to know the parishes and the people. So I hope to be able to do that over the next few months.”

A big task to be sure, but one that he feels well equipped to handle with God at his side. Choosing his alma mater's motto as his own episcopal motto, *Deus spes mea* (“God is my hope”), Bishop Connell says he feels empowered to carry out the task assigned to him.

“The motto I chose was ‘*Deus spes mea*’ – ‘God my hope,’ and to be honest, the reason I picked that was fairly simple: It is the motto of St Finian's College. I figured that seeing as I had spent 47 years of my life working in that institution or being a student, one or the other...I didn't really feel that I needed a different motto. I thought, ‘God is my hope’ is just a wonderful expression of what we're all about, and everything we do and everything we live through comes through the help of God, so that's why I picked that.”

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JUNE
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Armagh takes to the Reek

Staff reporter

About 150 of the Faithful from parishes across Armagh archdiocese tackled Croagh Patrick, Co. Mayo, on a pilgrimage aimed at marking the 150th anniversary of the dedication of St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh.

The enthusiastic parishioners made the climb on Saturday. It also helped raise funds to help the cathedral into the future.



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Out&About

A diocese discerning the future



ROSCOMMON: A gathering of parish pastoral councils in Achonry diocese took place on June 10 as the diocese enters into a moment of “discernment and dialogue” about the future.



KILDARE: Bishop Michael Duignan, chair of the council for immigrants of the Irish bishops' conference is pictured with Ukrainian refugee Albina Polyshchuk, Ballinasloe, and Eugene Quinn of the Jesuit Refugee Service at the Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, after a conference highlighting the Church in Ireland's work with migrants on Friday, June 9. Photo: John McElroy.



KERRY: A Corpus Christi Procession winds its way the past Presentation convent and school on Saturday evening, June 10, after Mass at St John's Church, Tralee. Photo: John Cleary.

IN SHORT

Our culture ‘despises the body’ – bishop

Our modern culture claims to emphasise body over spirit, but it actually “despises the body”, Bishop Donal McKeown has said.

While “modern ideology” says bodies are “just a thing to have fun with, to be altered as my fancy takes me”, the Church teaches that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, said Bishop McKeown in a homily for Corpus Christi.

“Our culture claims to emphasise the body over the spirit,” the bishop said in St Eugene's cathedral. “But it ultimately teaches us to despise the body, reducing relationships to passing fancies. The body, we are told, plays little role in who and what I decide to be.”

If the adult human being becomes the “infallible angry little god whose word must not be contradicted”, then we become a “jungle where the dignity of the little ones is sacrificed on the altar of the strong who assert their rights”, Dr McKeown warned.

240 million people need urgent aid charities warn

Dóchas, an Irish network of NGOs, urged the Irish Government to tackle the critical issues of conflict, climate change and hunger, in their pre-budget submission launched on June 13.

With a “staggering” 240 million people in 69 countries requiring urgent humanitarian assistance, representatives of several Irish NGO's including Catholic charities like

Trócaire and Concern, highlighted the “devastating impact” of conflicts in Sudan and Ukraine, and food crises in the Horn of Africa and West Africa.

Key recommendations from Dóchas' pre-budget submission include: the Government makes tangible progress to its commitment of spending 0.7% of gross national income on overseas development aid; urgently scale up Ireland's humanitarian funding to conflict-affected and fragile states; and showcase leadership through global initiatives to combat hunger and enhance cooperation across all departments.

Bishop Nulty to lead Grandparents Day celebrations
Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty

has been announced as principal celebrant for Knock shrine's Mass for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.

The chair of the bishops' council for marriage and the family will join grandparents from across the island of Ireland on Sunday, July 23, the Catholic Grandparents Association has announced.

Music at the Mass will be provided by the combined choirs of Knock Parish under the direction of Una Nolan, while Dana will make a return to sing the hymn she composed to Our Lady of Knock.

The schedule for the day is as follows: anointing of the sick at 2.30pm and pilgrimage Mass beginning at 3pm, followed by the rosary.



ARMAGH: Priests of Armagh diocese are pictured with a relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis, which was venerated by hundreds of people in Armagh cathedral on June 11.



DUBLIN: Some of Ballyroan parish's first communicants join the Corpus Christi parade in the parish on Sunday, June 11.



ARMAGH: A baby receives a blessing with a relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis at Armagh Cathedral on June 11.



TIPPERARY: The reopening Mass in the recently renamed "Abbey House of Prayer" in Clonmel was celebrated on June 13, in honour of St Anthony of Padua. People came from all over with their lilies to be blessed, rejoicing to see their much-loved church re-opened. Mass in the former Friary will be celebrated at 10am every Tuesday.



CORK: Young adults from all over the diocese of Cork and Ross gather with Bishop Fintan Gavin for a Connect summer barbecue.



DERRY: Holy Family PS's school choir and Mrs Doherty are pictured after giving a lovely performance at Mass on Sunday, June 11.



KERRY: The Corpus Christi procession from Our Lady and St Brendan's Church, Tralee, makes its way to St Brendan's Park Estate on Sunday, June 11. Photo: John Cleary.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



DUBLIN: Cardinal Wilfrid Napier of the Archdiocese of Durban, South Africa, presents the Benemerenti Medal to Mrs Goretti Newell, in the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Foxrock on Sunday, June 11. Also pictured is Mrs Newell's husband Johnny. She was awarded the medal for her services to the parish community of Foxrock, to Catholic education and to social justice initiatives over many, many years.



GALWAY: Fr Michael Connolly PP leads Oughterard parish's Corpus Christi procession in the grounds of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Oughterard on Sunday June 11.



KILKENNY: Students from the Boys NS, Firoda NS and Presentation Convent NS who received Confirmation in Castlecomer, in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, are pictured after the celebration. Photo: Brenda Murtagh.



KERRY: Fr Pdraig Walsh PP Our Lady and St Brendan's Church, Tralee, leads the Corpus Christi procession from Our Lady and St Brendan's Church to St Brendan's Park for Benediction. Photo: John Cleary.

ANTRIM

An evening of adoration, worship, Confession, prayer ministry, testimony and benediction takes place 6-8pm on the third Sunday of every month at St Joseph's Church.

ARMAGH

Armagh parish blessing of the graves takes place on Sunday, June 25 at 12noon for Armagh Cemetery.

CARLOW

Cemetery Mass for Graiguecullen and Killeslin parish takes place in Sleaty at St Mary's on Monday July 10 at 7pm.

CAVAN

Christian meditation takes place every Thursday at 7pm in the conference room at the back of Cavan Cathedral.

CORK

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

Long Tower parish family fête takes place in Long Tower Primary School playground from 2-4pm on Saturday, June 24.

DONEGAL

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

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. A Catholic film club takes place on Saturday, June 24, in 263 North Circular Rd at 7pm. Film to be shown is *The Sacrifice* by Andrei Tarkovsky, chosen from a Vatican film list.

FERMANAGH

A Divine Mercy holy hour takes place every Thursday in

Newtownbutler adoration room from 8-9pm.

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.

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.

LIMERICK

Eucharistic adoration takes place on Friday from 4.30-5.30pm in St John's Cathedral.

LOUTH

A Novena to St Gerard takes place every Wednesday at 9.30am and 7.30pm in St Joseph's Redemptorist Church, Dundalk.

MAYO

Achonry diocese's 'reek challenge', a hike up Croagh Patrick for young adults (aged 18-35), takes place Sunday, July 9, at 3pm. For more information, contact achonryreekchallenge@gmail.com. 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.

MONAGHAN

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

ROSCOMMON

Annual cemetery Mass in Killeevan Cemetery, Sacred Heart Parish, takes place on Saturday, July 1, at 7.30pm.

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

Praise and worship Mass to take place Sunday, June 25, at 2pm in Saint Joseph Equestrian Centre, 23 Drumnacross Rd, Cookstown, BT809DT. 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.

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

Pope Francis expresses 'shame' over Bolivian abuse crisis

● Pope Francis has sent a letter to the president of Bolivia expressing "feelings of shame and dismay" and a firm promise to work with the government of the South American country to end clerical sexual abuse of minors.

The letter, released Friday according to the *Associated Press* but signed on May 31 and addressed to Bolivian President Luis Arce, is a response to another letter sent to the Pontiff on May 22 by the South American president. The Pope's letter was made public on May 15 on the official Twitter account of the Bolivian president.

"Dear Mr President: I have read your letter and I thank you for the clarity and deference with which you share with me your concern, outrage, and condemnation and that of the citizens of that beloved nation, due to the deplorable events that have affected and continue to affect individuals sexually abused by members of the Church," the Pope wrote at in his letter.

'Fake priest' hears workers' confessions in US restaurant

● A California restaurant had an individual impersonate a priest to encourage employees to confess their "sins" against their employer, but the man has no links with the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento, a diocese spokesman said.

"Our own investigation found no evidence of any connection between the Diocese of Sacramento and the alleged priest in this matter," Bryan Visitacion, director of media and

communications for the Diocese of Sacramento, told CNA on Friday.

"While we don't know who the person in question was, we are completely confident he was not a priest of the Diocese of Sacramento."

The US Department of Labour on June 12 said the use of the supposed priest was "among the most shameless" of corrupt actions employers have used against employees.

Nigerian priest abducted on Corpus Christi Sunday regains freedom

● Fr Jeremiah Yakubu, who was kidnapped from his parish residence in Nigeria's Diocese of Kafanchan on Corpus Christi Sunday, June 11, has regained his freedom, the diocese has announced.

In a statement shared June 13 with *ACI Africa*, Fr Emmanuel Uchechukwu Okolo, the chancellor of the diocese, said: "With hearts filled with joy, we raise our voices in a symphony of praises as we announce the return of our brother, Rev. Father Jerry Yakubu."

Fr Okolo said Fr Yakubu was abducted "by armed persons" from the rectory of Holy Trinity Parish in Karku June 11. The diocese said he was released the next day, June 12.

Pro-life and family office in Rome vandalised

● The Italian association *Pro Vita & Famiglia* (Pro Life and Family) denounced an attack on its office in Rome after being called "b*****ds" by the leader of the LGBT Pride demonstration in Italy, Mario Colamarino.

This incident, along with statements by the leader of the LGBT lobby in Italy, have been the breeding ground for "a climate of hate" that materialised in the attack

on the office of *Pro Vita & Famiglia* June 12, according to the association's president, Jacopo Coghe.

The office's security gate was covered with messages such as "abortion on demand," "fascists should be hanged," and "transfeminist revenge". The remains of eggs thrown against the entrance of the premises could also be seen.

Prayers sought for dozens of children massacred in Ugandan school

Ugandans woke up June 17 to the shock of a school massacre in which at least 39 students and two community members were killed.

Just before midnight local time June 16, rebels suspected to be members of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) swooped into the Lhubirira Secondary School in the town of Mpondwe, near the border with Congo.

Children educated in the school were between the ages of 13 and 18. Some victims were shot, many were hacked with machetes and others burnt to death when the dormitories where they lived were set ablaze, according to Fr Sunday Augustine Masereka, director of the communications office in the Diocese of Kasese, located near the site of the recent attack.

"There were 62 children in the school," Fr Masereka told Vatican Radio.

Pope Francis, in his first public appearance and Angelus prayer after returning from Gemelli hospital on June 16, prayed for the victims of the attack on June 18: "I pray also for the young students, victims of the brutal attack against a school in the west of Uganda. This battle, this war everywhere ... let us pray for peace!"

"On behalf of the Ugandan government... I extend



Locals gather at the cordoned scene outside the Lhubirira Secondary School June 17 after militants linked to rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) killed and abducted multiple people overnight in Mpondwe, western Uganda. Photo: OSV News/Reuters

heartfelt condolences to the families, students, staff of Lhubirira Secondary School and the broader community affected by this tragedy," said Uganda's First Lady Janet Museveni in a statement on Twitter June 17.

"We call upon everyone to offer prayers for the affected families and community while also urging vigilance to uphold the safety of our children in schools," Ms Museveni added.

Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United

Nations, extended "heartfelt condolences" to the families of the victims and called for the release of those abducted. "Those responsible for this appalling act must be brought to justice," his statement read.

At least six students were abducted in the attack and forced to carry food that the rebels stole from the school's stores.

Guterres called for the immediate release of those abducted and underlined "the importance of collective efforts to tackle cross border

insecurity between Congo and Uganda and restore durable peace in the area." The ADF is a shadowy rebel group linked to the Islamic State. It was established in the 1990s by some Ugandan Muslims who felt that President Museveni had sidelined them in his policies. The Ugandan military launched attacks on the rebel movement, forcing it to relocate into Eastern Congo, where the absence of state authority has allowed several rebel groups to operate and thrive.

Nicaraguan dictatorship freezes priests' bank accounts

The dictatorship of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, has ordered the bank accounts of several priests in some Nicaraguan dioceses to be frozen, according to the Nicaraguan lawyer and researcher Martha Patricia Molina.

In a statement to *ACI Prensa*, Ms Molina, the author of the report *Nicaragua: A Persecuted Church?*, reported that priests from dioceses such as Granada, Jinotega, León, Matagalpa, and Estelí had informed her "about their bank accounts being blocked" on June 14.

"At first, some of them thought the

system was down. They then went to the branch bank and [the bank] verbally notified them, without giving them any documentation, that their accounts had been suspended," Ms Molina said June 15.

For Ms Molina, "this is one more arbitrary action of the dictatorship against the Nicaraguan Catholic Church" and "it's something that is going to be common for more priests and even laypeople".

"Although they were not charged at the time their accounts were frozen, the priests are being investigated and possibly in the future they will be charged

with the crime of money laundering, which is what the police are investigating at this time," she said.

On May 27, the Nicaraguan National Police published a statement in which it accused the Catholic Church of various crimes, including money laundering, a charge that would have no basis, according to human rights defenders.

Ms Molina noted that the day before that accusation, the dictatorship ordered the bank accounts of several dioceses and the Archdiocese of Managua to be frozen, as well as parochial schools, formation houses, and parishes.

Franciscans return to US military hospital after controversy

Franciscan priests have returned to pastoral ministry at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, two months after the centre decided to end their contract.

The priests and brothers of Holy Name College Friary of Silver Spring, Maryland, resumed their service at the medical centre June 13,

according to a June 15 press release issued by the US Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, which exercises pastoral jurisdiction over the centre.

The US Defence Health Agency (DHA) has awarded a five-year contract to the Franciscans that is renewable annually.

On March 31, the Francis-

cans had been advised their contract – which was set to expire but had routinely been upheld for close to 20 years – would not be renewed. The move, announced hours ahead of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday services, was labelled "incomprehensible" at the time by Archbishop Timothy Broglio, who heads the military arch-

diocese and also serves as president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The DHA reopened bidding in May and awarded the contract to the Franciscans June 8. As before, a team of five friars will alternate service at Walter Reed six days a week, ministering to hospitalised patients.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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Flying high in the Faith



A newly ordained Catholic priest is thrown into the air by friends and family after the ordination ceremony, outside Milan's Duomo Cathedral June 10. Photo: OSV News/Claudia Greco, Reuters

Fr Rupnik dismissed from Jesuits

The priest and artist Fr Marko Rupnik, accused of the physical and psychological abuse of numerous religious sisters, was dismissed from the Jesuits this month, according to the religious order.

The Society of Jesus said in a June 15 statement Fr Rupnik was expelled due to his "stubborn refusal to observe the vow of obedience".

Fr Rupnik had been asked to change communities and "accept a new mission," the statement said. "Faced with Marko Rupnik's repeated refusal to obey this mandate, we were unfortunately left with only one solution: dismissal from the Society of

Jesus."

According to canon law, Fr Rupnik has 30 days to appeal the dismissal after receiving the decree on June 14. The decree was issued June 9, the Jesuits said.

Fr Johan Verschuere, SJ, Fr Rupnik's superior whose name the statement was in, said no further comments will be made until after this period has concluded.

In February, the Jesuits said they had opened a new internal procedure against Fr Rupnik after receiving accusations against him spanning from 1985 to 2018. The "highly credible" accusations, they said, included claims of

spiritual, psychological, and sexual abuse, and abuse of conscience.

The latest statement said the team investigating the accusations delivered its dossier the same month.

Fr Rupnik's superiors imposed certain restrictions on his ministry at the recommendation of the investigators.

The restrictions, according to the Society of Jesus, were "to change communities and accept a new mission in which we offered him one last chance as a Jesuit to come to terms with his past and to give a clear signal to the many injured people who

were testifying against him to enter a path of truth".

According to media reports in recent months, Fr Rupnik defied these orders and others, such as the direction to remain in central Italy and to not participate in public artistic activities.

According to recent information released by the Italian newspaper *Domani*, Fr Rupnik, who was also briefly excommunicated for absolving in Confession an accomplice in a sin against the Sixth Commandment, travelled this June to the city of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to Hvar Island in Croatia for art projects.

Another Anglican bishop becomes Catholic

A sixth former Anglican bishop has announced his decision to become a Catholic in just the last four years.

Bishop Richard Pain, who retired as bishop of Monmouth in 2019, is the first Anglican bishop from Wales to join the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

He will be received into the full communion at the Church of St Basil and St Gwladys, Rogerstone Newport, Wales, on

July 2, by Msgr Keith Newton, the leader of the Ordinariate.

Msgr Newton said: "We are delighted that after much prayer Richard has asked to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church."

Bishop Pain said in a June 12 statement that he decided to become a Catholic when reflecting on his future following his retirement.

"The process of discernment contin-

ues throughout life and is constantly shaped by context but more importantly by the whisper of God's voice," he said.

"The Benedictine understanding of obedience – hearing the Lord – has been significant to my personal formation," he continued. "The call to conversion which follows has led me to becoming a convert to the Catholic Church through the Ordinariate."

Vatican roundup

Chief surgeon: Pope returns to Vatican 'better than before'

● Pope Francis has returned to the Vatican after a nine-day hospital stay and intends to go ahead with his planned trips abroad in August and September, according to his chief surgeon.

"The Pope is fine. He's better than before," said Dr Sergio Alfieri, the chief surgeon who operated on the Pope June 7 to repair a hernia; he also operated on the Pope in 2021.

"The Pope has confirmed all his trips," the doctor told reporters outside Rome's Gemelli hospital June 16, right after the Pope was released.

The Pope was scheduled to attend World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, August 2-6, and to go to Mongolia August 31-September 4.

"As a matter of fact," Dr Alfieri said, according to *Vatican News*, "he will be able to embark on them better than before because now he will no longer have the discomfort of his previous ailments. He will be a stronger Pope."

When asked about the Pope's "convalescence" to fully heal from abdominal surgery, Dr Alfieri said, "he doesn't convalesce; he has already started working".

When the Pope emerged from the hospital in a wheelchair the morning of June 16, he greeted well-wishers and journalists who asked him how he was. "I'm still alive," he said, smiling.

Vatican: Archbishop Gänswein to return to home diocese in July

● The Vatican confirmed June 15 that Pope Francis has asked Archbishop Georg Gänswein to return to Germany as of July 1.

The long-time private secretary of Pope Benedict XVI has been told to return to his home diocese of Freiburg in southwest Germany "for the time being," according to a brief statement June 15.

The Vatican also said Archbishop Gänswein's role as prefect of the Papal Household concluded on February 28. It did not indicate that he had been given any new assignment.

The news about the 66-year-old archbishop was first reported by a German newspaper in early June.

According to *CNA Deutsch*, the *Welt* newspaper reported that

Pope Francis had informed Archbishop Gänswein of his decision during a private audience on May 19.

The future role of the late Benedict's secretary has been the subject of rumour and gossip across Rome and the Church in Germany for months. Previous speculations included the claim that Archbishop Gänswein would serve as papal ambassador in Costa Rica. The prelate is fluent in several languages, including German and Italian.

According to the German media report, Pope Francis "referred to the custom that the former private secretaries of deceased popes did not remain in Rome".

UN Security Council discusses Pope and imam's human fraternity proposal

● The UN Security Council convened a high-level briefing June 14 to discuss the role of "human fraternity" in promoting peace, inspired by the fraternity declaration co-authored by Pope Francis and a leading Sunni imam.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres told the council to look to the human fraternity declaration signed by the Pope and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, Ahmed Al-Tayeb, in Abu Dhabi in 2019 as "a model for compassion and human solidarity".

Following the briefing on June 14, the security council unanimously adopted a resolution condemning hate speech, racism, gender discrimination, and acts of extremism that was co-authored by the United Arab Emirates and the UK.



Letter from Rome



Justin McLellan

The Latin language in the Catholic Church faces two major hurdles: the increasingly exclusive access to Latin instruction worldwide and the difficulty of transmitting the ancient language's modern value to seminarians from non-European backgrounds, said the new president of the Vatican's Latin academy.

Though it is fighting an uphill battle, the Pontifical Academy for Latin, the *Pontificia Academia Latinitatis* in Latin, is the Vatican body charged with promoting the knowledge and use of Latin in its written and spoken forms in the Church. The academy, promoted to its current status by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012, has its roots in the Latinitas Foundation established in 1976 by St Paul VI who already saw Latin decline during his pontificate.

"We live in a world in which everything is valued by its utility," said Mario De Nonno, who was appointed president of the academy by Pope Francis May 31. "We are oppressed by those who ask, 'What is it good for?'"

Meeting with *Catholic News Service* June 13 in his office at Roma Tre University where he is a professor, Mr De Nonno said his response is that the patrimony of the Church expressed in Latin "is part of a tradition that is wholly part of our lives" as Catholics.

History

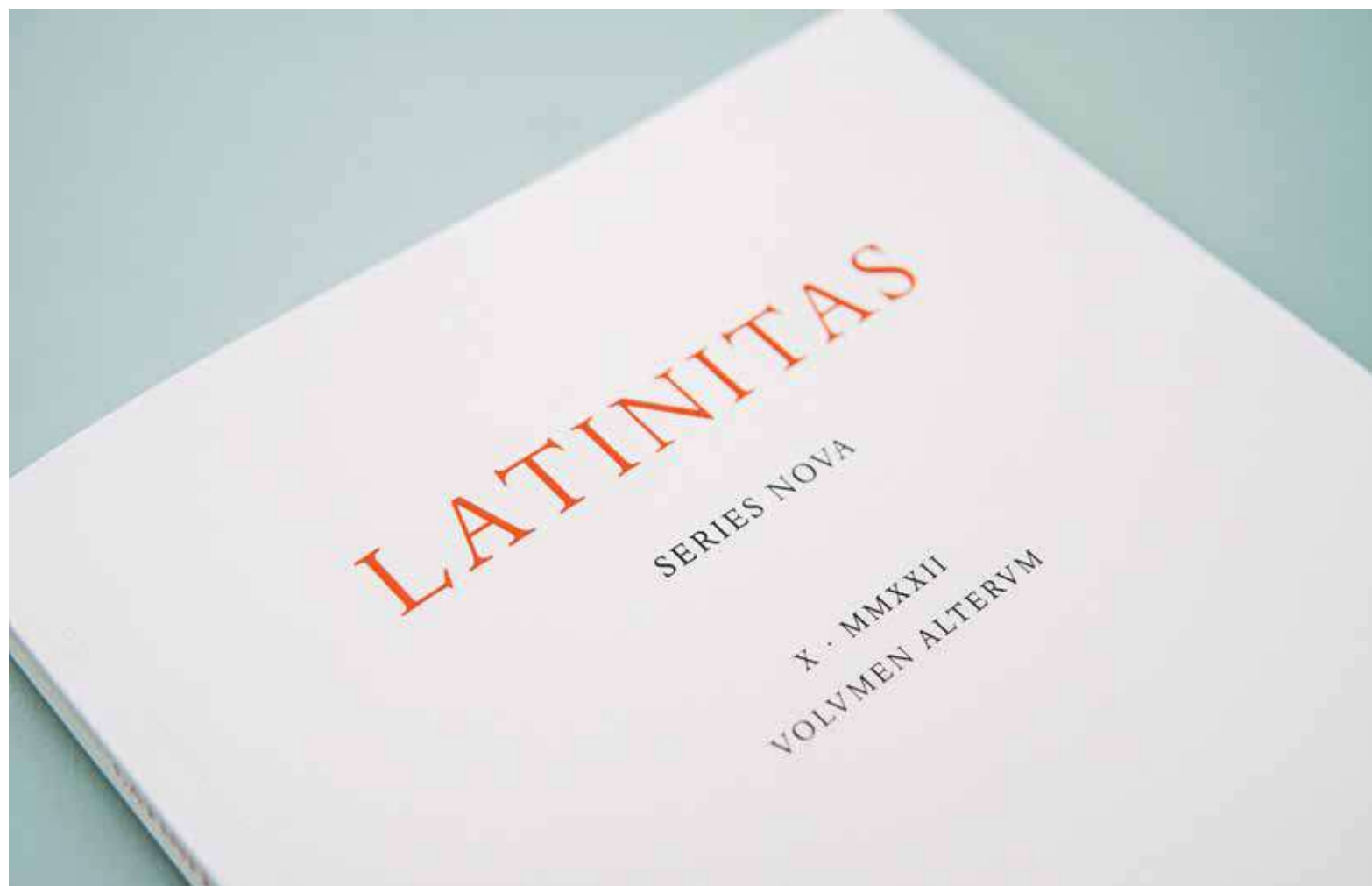
"Christianity is a religion deeply immersed in history. Jesus Christ is a God who was incarnated in time, he entered into history; he was not an idea or a concept outside of time," Mr De Nonno continued. "If this is true, then the perception of time is an essential element of this religion."

Learning Latin, he said, is a way of "entering into the lives of the ancients" and understanding the "many shades of their thinking, which can only be understood in the context of their original language".

While the Gospels were written in Greek, many "fundamental, interpretive theological concepts were born and developed in Latin," he said. The first prolific Christian theologian to write in Latin was Tertullian, born in the 2nd Century, and Latin became the language of the Church in the 4th Century. After that, saints from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas wrote and preached in Latin.

For that reason, Latin, "the instrument by which this religion was diffused and developed its ideas, cannot be totally put aside," Mr De Nonno said. "A language is never just an instrument of commu-

'Lingua omnium': Vatican academy promotes 'inclusive' image of Latin



Latinitas, the journal of the Pontifical Academy for Latin, is pictured in the office of Mario De Nonno, president of the academy, at Roma Tre University in Rome June 13, 2023. Photo: CNS/Justin McLellan

nication; it is a way of interpreting the world."

"It's not a question of quantity, of how many people can speak a very good Latin, but of quality: How do we spread this awareness that we weren't born yesterday?"

"To realise ambiguities and different interpretations of even sacred texts you have to go back to the original," he told *CNS*. "If they are just taken at face value, if we don't go back to these texts after they have been translated, we risk saying truly scary things that might have nothing to do with the word of God or what Jesus said. This goes for both the Greek in which the gospels were written and for

the Latin of the tradition of the Church."

However, Mr De Nonno acknowledged, the study of Latin today in many places, such as the United States, has been backed "by political currents" emphasising a heritage connected to classical Western culture. When this image of Latin is propagated, "people are turned off by [it] because it is seen as the language of the slaveholders," he said.

Expensive

Another problem is that Latin instruction in many places is offered only in expensive private schools. "Clearly, this makes the rest feel excluded or left out, and they can't help but see it as an oppression," he told *CNS*.

The Pontifical Academy for Latin seeks to counter those conceptions of the language within the Church by teaching that Latin

belongs to anyone who professes the Catholic Faith.

"It's about creating a dialogue between the past and present, and each one of us has a past"

"It's not a question of quantity, of how many people can speak a very good Latin, but of quality: How do we spread this awareness that we weren't born yesterday?" Mr De Nonno said. "Christianity wasn't born yesterday, these 2,000 years of history continue to be present, and they are present as they were expressed in Latin."

Canon law states that seminarians should "understand Latin well" and have a "suitable understanding" of foreign languages that could be useful in their formation or pastoral ministry.

While Mr De Nonno said he thinks

bishops and cardinals should have a "sufficient level" of Latin "in their pockets," he admitted that "they're not going to speak Latin to the homeless".

Declining

With declining rates of Latin instruction worldwide – the number of students taking the Advanced Placement exam for Latin in the United States fell from 6,523 in 2010 to 4,832 in 2022 – the Pontifical Academy for Latin aims to increase awareness of Latin's "formative value" in the Church, Mr De Nonno said.

To that end, the academy publishes a biannual journal of scientific and pedagogical articles on Latin instruction worldwide as well as contemporary Latin literature. In his office June 13, Mr De Nonno pointed to a Latin translation of *Macbeth* – *Machbettus* – in the journal's latest edition.

These efforts, he said, aim to develop a Catholic *forma mentis*, a "shape of the mind" marked by contact with the ancient language to help modern Catholics engage with the greatest thinkers of Christianity's past.

"It's about creating a dialogue between the past and present, and each one of us has a past," he said. For Catholics that past is written, at least in part, in Latin.

"If we don't go back to these texts after they have been translated, we risk saying truly scary things that might have nothing to do with the word of God or what Jesus said"

Church in France reels from new abuse and cover-up allegations



Jonathan Luxmoore

Leaders of the Church in France have appealed for patience and fairness in establishing the truth, after two more bishops were accused of sexual abuse while heading the Church's main missionary organisation.

"The charges are serious, and both categorically deny them," said Archbishop Éric de Moulins-Beaufort of Reims, the bishops' conference president.

"The voice of complainants must be heard, the rights of defendants respected, and it is now up to the investigations to ascertain the whole truth... My thoughts and prayers go out to all those who may be suffering," he said in a June 13 statement.

“The latest accusations showed the Church in France was still not ‘cleansed’ of sexual criminality, despite much-publicised countermeasures”

The bishops' conference president was reacting to June 13 joint reports in three Catholic newspapers that prosecutors were investigating alleged offenses by Bishop Georges Colomb of La Rochelle-Saintes and Auxiliary Bishop Gilles Reithinger of Strasbourg during their time heading the Society of Paris Foreign Missions (MEP).

Archbishop Beaufort said that Bishop Colomb had asked the Vatican to suspend him during the investigations "to allow him to prepare his defence calmly", adding that anyone with information on the case could contact the Vatican's nunciature.

However, a clerical abuse victim and activist for survivors' rights told *OSV News* the latest accusations showed the Church in France was still not "cleansed" of sexual criminality, despite much-publicised countermeasures.

"A fuller accounting of conscience is needed in line with the Biblical message and the duties and pledges of the Church," said François Devaux, co-founder of the Parole Libérée (Liberated Word) association, formed in 2015.

"The Church hasn't only made mistakes – it's also perpetrated deceptions, lies, insinuations and dissimulations, hampering the truth and avoiding what is said in



Bishop Gilles Reithinger is ordained a bishop in 2021. Bishop Reithinger has been accused of allegedly covering up abuse. Photo: Claude Truong-Ngoc/Wikimedia Commons.

the Gospel. Once again, we see people in authority embodying all the Church's shortcomings," he said.

In coordinated reports, the three newspapers – *La Croix*, *La Vie* and *Famille Chrétienne* – said Bishop Colomb had been under investigation since May 24 for "attempted rape" while he was superior-general of the MEP 2010-2016. The organisation has sent over 4,000 missionary priests to Asia and the Indian Ocean since its founding in 1658, of which 23 became saints.

They said a lay Catholic, identified as Nicolas, had reported an act of "sexual aggression" which happened in 2013 at the MEP's Paris headquarters by then-Fr Colomb, but added that the then-Fr Reithinger, Fr Colomb's successor as superior-general, to whom the case was reported, had taken no action.

Another MEP priest, Fr Aymeric de Salvert, had been suspended from ministry in France's Angers Diocese after being arrested April 5 for allegedly abusing a French expatriate while serving in Japan, the newspapers reported.

Stupefied

In an April 13 message to his La Rochelle-Saintes Diocese, Bishop Colomb said he was "stupefied" by the allegations, which he "totally denied", but also feared the "trouble and suffering" they would cause.

The 70-year-old Bishop Colomb said he would remain head of the diocese while an administrator took charge, and would cooperate with

investigators while helping local Catholics "continue living in communion and bearing witness to the Good News".

Meanwhile, the MEP's current superior-general, Fr Vincent Sénéchal, told *La Vie* seven MEP clergy, living and deceased, had been investigated for abuse, adding that he believed it was unfair to speak of a "network" of wrongdoing.

The priest said that after its July 2022 general assembly, the MEP had commissioned an independent inquiry into the files of 1,247 priests working in its missions since 1950, which it would report by the end of 2023.

“Besides an inventory of any past and present abuses, we also want an analysis of our practices and the systems we've put in place to fight against abuse”

The inquiry, by GCPS Consulting, which also investigated France's L'Arche International community and its leader, Jean Vanier, would complement investigations by the Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church (CIASE), and also look at "dichotomies" between rules and protocols applied in France and those of mission countries, Fr Sénéchal said.

"Our missionaries, sometimes

posted for more than 20 years in another culture, are not always aware of the dangers," the MEP superior-general told *La Vie*.

"Besides an inventory of any past and present abuses, we also want an analysis of our practices and the systems we've put in place to fight against abuse."

Measures

Firmer anti-abuse measures throughout the Church in France were recommended in October 2021 by the CIASE commission, which estimated 330,000 children had been abused by Catholic priests and Church employees since the 1950s.

French dioceses are selling assets to finance compensation payments in line with the CIASE's 45 recommendations, as well as ensuring judicial verification for anyone working with minors.

In December, the bishops' conference set up the world's first major national Church court, tasked with judging "canonical offenses by clergy and laity", while at a March 28-31 plenary it outlined additional investments in an endowment fund for victim reparations.

In a June 13 statement, Archbishop Pascal Wintzer of Poitiers, whose province includes the La Rochelle-Saintes Diocese, said a canonical investigation, parallel to the state one, had been launched against Bishop Colomb, which also would be subject to "judicial confidentiality".

He added that he trusted France's

judicial system to "shed light" on the bishop's case, but said Catholics should remember he was also "legitimately entitled" to a "presumption of innocence".

In a June 14 editorial, *La Vie* said the "unprecedented collaboration" by Catholic newspapers in bringing abuse to light reflected "the seriousness of the alleged facts and their possible systemic nature", adding that many Catholics had "expressed anger" via social media, but also relief "at finally seeing clarification of rumours long circulating in Church circles".

Meanwhile, in his *OSV News* interview, François Devaux said he was also confident the case highlighted a "new determination" by Catholic media to "expose abuses, uphold the full truth and act as guardians of the Christian message".

"Things have clearly evolved and Church members are no longer inactive today – Catholics are expressing anger, taking responsibility and appealing to consciences, while also becoming expert critics and pushing for change," the Parole Libérée co-founder told *OSV News*.

"There has been a profound spiritual corruption, even as the Church seeks to act as a guide for its people. It's these Catholic people who are now reminding the Church of the values it should be promoting and highlighting what it still needs to do."

i Jonathan Luxmoore writes for *OSV News* from Oxford, England.

Letters

Letter of the week

Corpus Christi processions offer a powerful witness

Dear Editor, Corpus Christi processions have a tremendous impact in bolstering the Faith. These processions, with their vibrant display of faith and devotion, serve as a powerful testimony to the enduring strength and unity of the Catholic community.

They provide a unique opportunity for believers to come together in prayer, adoration and celebration of the Holy Eucharist. As the faithful gather in the streets, their united presence not only reaffirms their shared commitment to their Faith but also serves as a visible reminder to the wider community of the enduring values and traditions that underpin Irish society.

Moreover, the very public nature of these processions serves as an invitation to those who may be searching for a deeper connection with their faith. The procession, with its clergy, religious orders, and devoted laity, can be a powerful beacon of hope and inspiration for those in need. It offers an opportunity for them to witness first-hand the beauty and richness of the Catholic tradition and, perhaps, be moved to explore their own spiritual journeys?

Furthermore, the processions provide an avenue for the Faithful to express their gratitude and reverence for the gift of the Eucharist. This sacred sacrament lies at the heart of our worship and belief, and the pro-

cessions allow believers to publicly demonstrate their deep devotion to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The grandeur and solemnity of these processions create a fitting backdrop for the adoration and worship of the Blessed Sacrament, reinforcing its central role.

The processions foster unity, inspire the Faithful and offer a powerful witness. Let us continue to cherish and support these processions, recognising them as an invaluable means of strengthening the spiritual fabric of our society.

Yours etc,
Grace Boyne
Carlow town, Carlow

Euthanasia a consequence of atheism

Dear Editor, It seems to me that euthanasia is a consequence of atheism. If people had a belief in the afterlife or a spiritual world beyond this one, they wouldn't be in such a hurry to end this life. Life would have some meaning. The Bible's exhortation that there is a time to reap and a time to sow, a time to be born and a time to die, is a lovely way to express the value we attach to life. For an atheist there is nothing beyond the material world. Maybe, even then they see no value in the physical facts of their environment, so it doesn't matter whether they live or die. Just a thought.

Yours etc.,
Brid Fitzpatrick
Terenure, Dublin 6W



Thanking parents for bringing kids for sacraments

Dear Editor, Having read your comment page 'Serious conversations about 'bouncy castle Catholics'' [The Irish Catholic – June 8, 2023] I attended a First Holy Communion ceremony on June 10, where the priest spoke to a very large congregation (many of whom might be perceived by some as 'bouncy castle' Catholics). He said

that he was going to keep his homily very short and that he was going to say something very important to them.

And what he said was that God loves each and every person present unconditionally and with a deep love that is beyond our understanding.

He said that he saw no one at the door with a

stick beating the people in. He said that like the priests who are here to pass on the Faith, parents who want what is good for their children, want to be here today, and to bring their children, because they want to pass on the Faith to their children. And he thanked them for that. And he thanked them for being there. He said that

everyone was welcome to receive Holy Communion. I think that many who may not come to the church very often felt welcomed and that they felt that it was OK for them to be there, and I think blessed. And I want to thank him for that.

Yours etc.,
Grace Fayne
Clonsilla, Dublin 15

Mass-going abandonment due to unhelpful homilies

Dear Editor, Fr Martin Delaney's 'Serious conversations about 'bouncy castle Catholics'' article [The Irish Catholic – June 8, 2023] was fine as far as it went. His 'serious conversations' plea stopped short of the one thing that only Mass celebrants can change. It is the homilies on First Communion and Confirmation occasions.

About 50 years ago, Maynooth Prof.

Fr Peter Connolly said: "I can see us Irish discarding Catholicism within a generation. We Irish are an unsentimental, calculating lot. We rightly discard what doesn't help us. We have largely discarded our inherited Gaelic language as being unhelpful. We will do the same with Catholicism that we find unhelpful. We are already doing so for that reason."

The incontrovertible fact is: People would not have abandoned Mass-going – as over 95% of Dublin Catholic males now have – if they found Mass homilies helpful; they would queue up to be in the pews and be seminar-

Yours etc.,
Joe Foyle
Ranelagh, Dublin 6

Create safer environments for children online

Dear Editor, Breda O'Brien outlined well the dangers of smartphones and internet access [The Irish Catholic – June 1, 2023].

In today's digital age, it is imperative that we, as parents and guardians, take proactive measures to protect the well-being and innocence of our children.

Smartphones have become ubiquitous in our society, and while they offer numerous benefits and conveniences, they also expose children to a myriad of potential risks. The internet, with its vast expanse of information, presents a double-edged sword for young minds. While it can provide valuable educational resources, it also exposes children to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, online predators and potential addiction to social media platforms.

Children are still developing emotionally and mentally and their exposure to the unfiltered world of the internet can have detrimental effects on their development. They may encounter explicit or violent content that can distort their perception of reality and negatively impact their psychological well-being. Furthermore, unrestricted access to smartphones can lead to sedentary lifestyles, hindering their physical health and social interactions.

We are called to protect and

nurture the innocence of children, fostering an environment that enables their spiritual growth. Excessive exposure to the internet at a young age can erode their moral and spiritual compass, as they are bombarded with conflicting messages and values. It is our responsibility to guide them towards wholesome, uplifting content that promotes virtue and nurtures their Faith.

By setting limits on children's access to smartphones and closely monitoring their online activities, we can create a safer environment for their growth and protect their precious innocence. It is crucial to establish open lines of communication with our children, educating them about the potential dangers they may encounter online and equipping them with the tools to make wise choices.

The importance of limiting children's access to smartphones cannot be overstated. We must be vigilant in safeguarding our children from the dangers of unrestricted internet access, ensuring their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Let us prioritise their innocence and guide them towards a healthier and more balanced use of technology.

Yours etc.,
Emma Taylor
Navan, Co. Meath

A bold step towards inclusivity and progress

Dear Editor, How absolutely shocking it is to hear that St Vincent University Hospital in Dublin has dared to remove Catholic religious imagery from public display – so brave.

Clearly in order to make people comfortable there's a need to whitewash the hospital's history and remove all religious imagery, spitting in the face of all the hardworking sisters who gave their lives to help the most needy when no one else would. Bravo, St Vincent University for taking such a bold step towards progress and inclusivity!

Yours etc.,
John Fagan
Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow

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

Faith in film
Redemptive suffering
rescues a dying man

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The Irish Catholic, June 22, 2023



Solanus Casey: A model for the value of caring

Blessed Solanus Casey was beatified during a Mass November 18, 2017, at Ford Field in Detroit. The Capuchin Franciscan friar is pictured in an undated photo. Photo: OSV News/The Michigan Catholic

Fr Solanus Casey, a Capuchin Franciscan, moved closer to recognised sainthood with his beatification November 18, 2017, in Detroit, Michigan. Declared venerable in 1995, Fr Solanus (1870-1957) and his cause for canonisation remain important to many US Catholics. A soft-spoken Capuchin priest and son of Irish immigrants, he is one of the currently few native-born North Americans beatified. His feast day is July 30, the eve of the anniversary of his death.

Though Fr Solanus died many decades ago, Detroit has never forgotten him. Authentic and approachable, Fr Solanus was devoted to the Detroit Tigers. He loved hot dogs with onions, shooting pool, family reunions and practical jokes. Most of all,



A saint who understood the power of prayer and listening, writes Catherine Odell

as others knew, he loved God and helping others. In 1929, four days after the Stock Market Crash, Fr Solanus helped start a soup kitchen. All too soon, as automobile factories closed, it was feeding between 1,500 and 3,000 people a day.

Legacy

Even with this great legacy, in the eyes of many it was undoubtedly his ministry of

prayer and healing that made him a saint.

However, it requires more than a legacy and life devoted to prayer and healing to be officially recognised by the Church as a blessed or saint. In September 2016, the Vatican approved a miracle attributed to Solanus' intercession involving a Panamanian woman with an incurable, congenital skin disease. She was visiting friends

in Detroit and asked to go to the Solanus Centre to pray at the tomb of Fr Solanus. She wanted to pray for others who needed healing. While praying, she heard a voice within saying, "Pray for yourself". She did, and was instantly cured of a lifelong skin ailment.

Scientific

Back in her own country, she went to five doctors. They all agreed that there was no scientific explanation for her cure. She wished to remain anonymous for a time, the archbishop said, because she didn't want to draw undue attention to herself – a consideration that mirrored Fr Solanus' own qualities. Bernard Francis Casey Jr was

born November 25, 1870, in Oak Grove, Wisconsin. "Barney" was the sixth child of Ellen and Bernard Casey Sr, and, after three boys, the couple decided to give this son his father's name – Bernard Francis. More Casey children followed, and eventually there were 16 children in the close-knit Casey clan. They farmed on the Midwestern frontier, and every young Casey child helped to support the family.

Farming was a risky business, and the nightly Casey family rosary often ended with prayers for good harvests and protection from prairie fires, locusts and drought.

There was a spiritual depth in Barney that stood out, even in his large, busy family. He

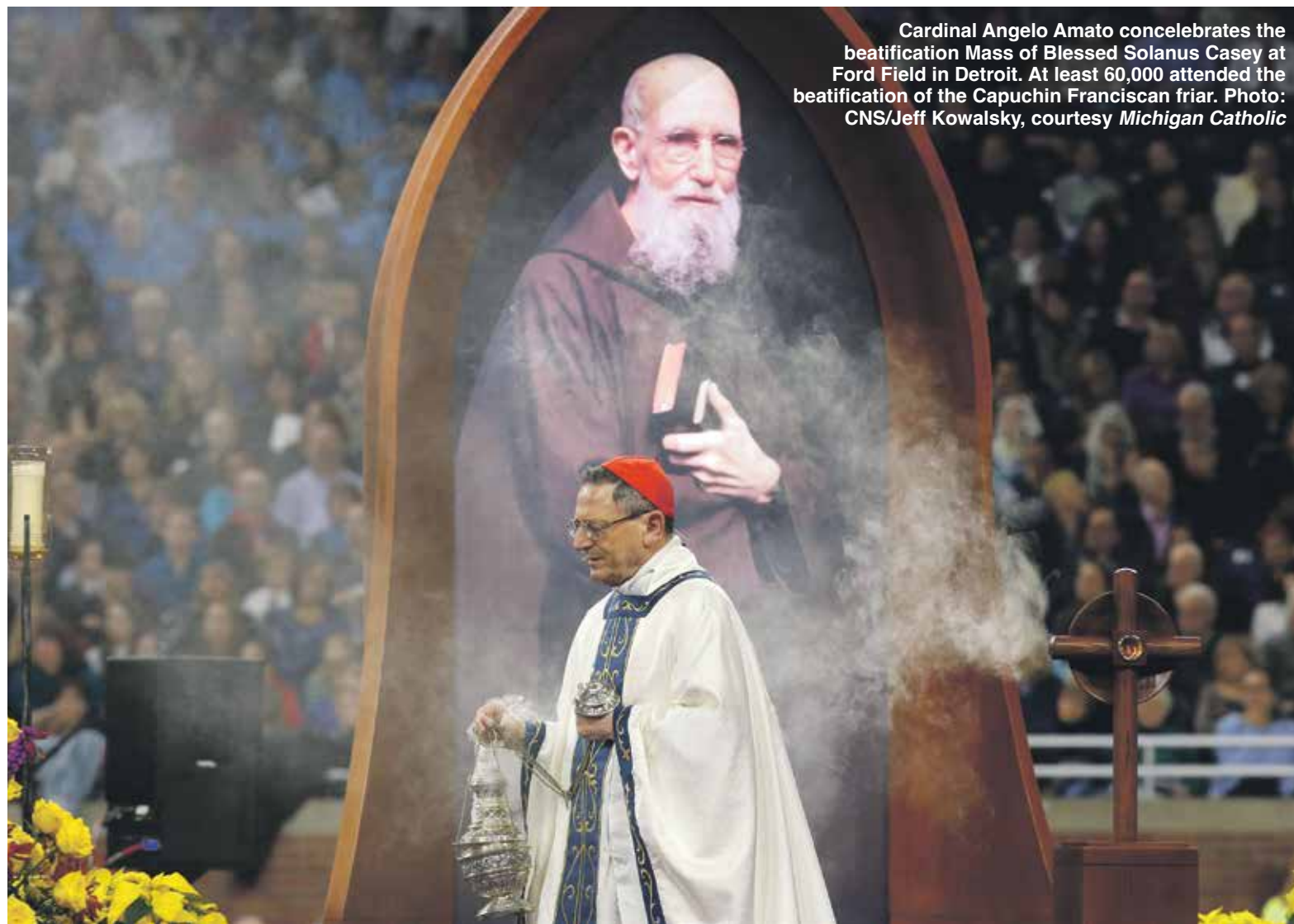
was deeply committed to prayer, especially the rosary. At the same time, he was witty, handsome, athletic and strong. He was a fearless catcher for family baseball games, but he wouldn't participate in the amateur boxing matches his brothers organised, apparently because he didn't like the idea of hitting and hurting an opponent.

At 18, he fell in love with Rebecca Tobin. After he proposed marriage, Rebecca's mother refused to give her consent and sent Rebecca away to boarding school. Shaken and sad, Barney continued working for some years as a streetcar conductor, first in Stillwater, Minnesota, and later in Superior, Wisconsin. And yet he remained unsettled.

“Parishioners were soon drawn to Fr Solanus – finding that the doorkeeper was compassionate, wise and patient – and sought his pastoral care”

After years of prayer and soul-searching, Barney felt that God was calling him to be a priest. He entered the seminary of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee but had to leave because of academic problems. At age 26 he again entered the seminary in Detroit, joining the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, a branch of the Franciscan order. Since the seminary faculty spoke mostly German, Barney was at a disadvantage again. His superiors were eventually concerned with his theological knowledge and understanding. When ordination finally came in 1904, Barney – by then “Solanus” – was ordained as a simplex priest, meaning he couldn't exercise the priestly faculties of hearing confessions or preaching homilies – ordinary responsibilities for a parish priest.

What limitations these were for a 34-year-old priest who wanted to give everything to God. Though it surely humiliated



Cardinal Angelo Amato concelebrates the beatification Mass of Blessed Solanus Casey at Ford Field in Detroit. At least 60,000 attended the beatification of the Capuchin Franciscan friar. Photo: CNS/Jeff Kowalsky, courtesy Michigan Catholic

him, Fr Solanus was completely obedient and ready for any role. His first pastoral assignments were at Capuchin parishes in New York. Solanus was given simple jobs: acting as doorkeeper, training altar boys, serving as sacristan, moderating the Ladies Sodality.

“‘Thank God ahead of time,’ he counselled. ‘His plans for us are always the best’

Ironically, parishioners were soon drawn to Fr Solanus –

finding that the doorkeeper was compassionate, wise and patient – and sought his pastoral care. Unburdened by the usual responsibilities of a parish priest, he had time to listen. God used that. Within a year or two, the lines of visitors wanting to talk with the doorkeeper about their family, medical and financial problems were long – every day.

Confessions

In New York parishes and later back at St Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit and at St Felix Friary in Huntington, Indiana, Fr Solanus reminded people that he couldn't hear

confessions. He did assure them of God's mercy and unbounded love. “Thank God ahead of time,” he counselled. “His plans for us are always the best.”

“On the morning of July 31, he sat up and stretched out his arms as if on the cross. ‘I give my soul to Jesus Christ,’ he said before falling back and taking his last breath”

As well as providing a listening ear, Fr Solanus continued to demonstrate his devotion to prayer, healing and the Church. He asked those who could afford it to make a contribution to the Capuchins' Seraphic Mass Association, which supported Capuchin missions around the world. While Fr Solanus was still in New York, his Capuchin superiors asked him to keep a record of prayer requests. He also took notes when a healing or an unexplainable turn of events was reported.

Eventually, Fr Solanus filled seven ledger-style notebooks with notes on more than 6,000 “cases”. On about 700 of those case notations, he later went back and added amazing endings. Among them:

- “Papa went to Confession and holy Communion for the first time in 49 years,” Solanus penned at the end of an entry about a woman asking for

prayers for her father who had left the Church.

- “Walking out of the monastery without assistance” followed his notations on a 46-year-old man who suffered a fractured skull and broken back several weeks earlier in a car accident. The man was carried in to see Fr Solanus.

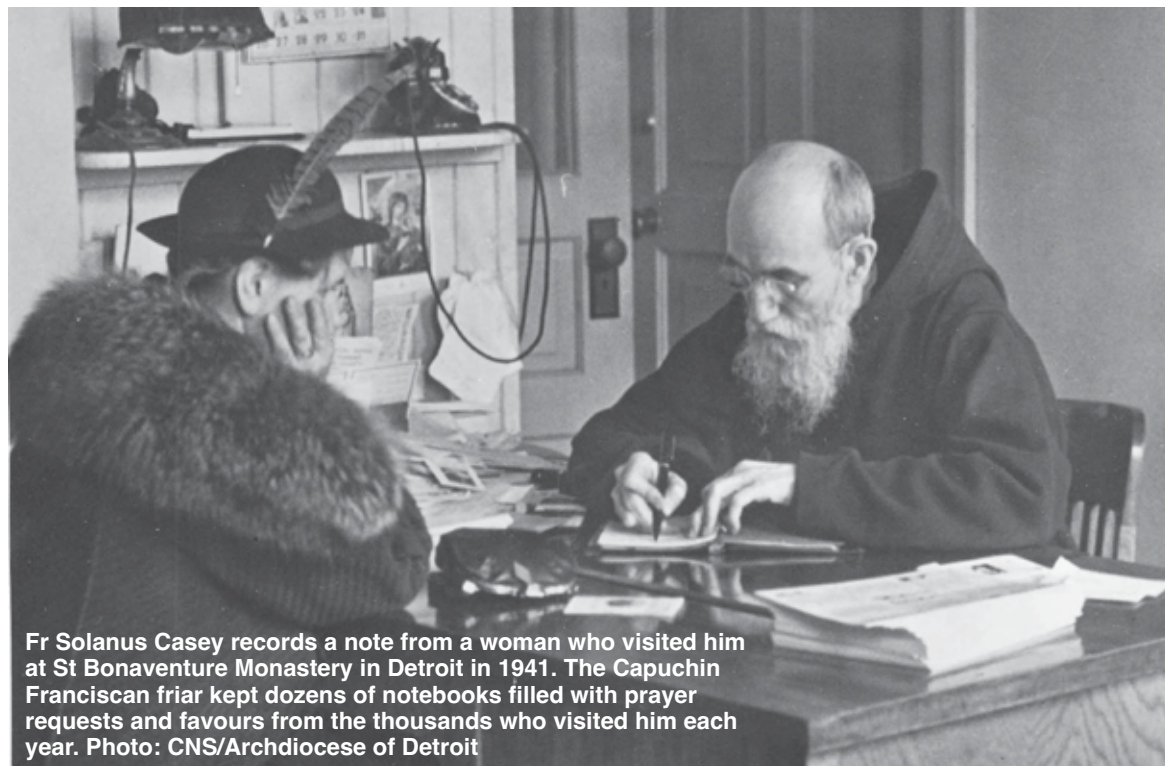
Cured

- “Declared entirely cured July 2 without having any operation.” Fr Solanus added that note to data recorded about 59-year-old Bertha Smith, who'd been diagnosed with stomach cancer. She'd already had four operations at Detroit's Ford Hospital.

A terribly painful skin disease plagued Fr Solanus in his last years. In the summer of 1957 he was hospitalised. On the morning of July 31, he sat up and stretched out his arms as if on the cross. “I give my soul to Jesus Christ,” he said before falling back and taking his last breath. Fr Solanus was 86. An estimated 20,000 people came to the doorkeeper's wake and funeral.

Today, people come from all over the world to see his tomb. They leave tiny slips of paper with prayer requests there. He is a model for the value of caring and continues to teach us the power of listening.

i Married with two grown children, Catherine Odell is a freelance writer and editor and a committed organic gardener, baker, walker and reader in South Bend, Indiana.



Fr Solanus Casey records a note from a woman who visited him at St Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit in 1941. The Capuchin Franciscan friar kept dozens of notebooks filled with prayer requests and favours from the thousands who visited him each year. Photo: CNS/Archdiocese of Detroit

Redemptive suffering rescues a dying man

Faith in film



Ruadhán Jones

A Christian vision of the good life includes the reality of suffering, making it central to our flourishing; if we want to live a good life, we must follow Christ's example and take up our cross. Perhaps surprisingly, a film from a culture (Japan) largely unfamiliar with Christianity offers a beautiful example of this truth of the Faith.

“Kanji Watanabe is a small cog in the public affairs department of a Japanese town”

Ikiru (1952) by Akira Kurosawa – most famous for his homage to the western in *Seven Samurai* – is a film with many different layers. For instance, it is a critical commentary on heartless bureaucracy; a moving meditation on justice and courage; and a playful artistic triumph, visually stimulating, with a cleverly structured story.

But what more than likely got it on the Vatican's 1995 list of important films is the poignant character study of a man who is forced to confront the meaning of his life when he is diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Kanji Watanabe is a small cog in the public affairs department of a Japanese town. He has a son and daughter-in-law, neither of whom appear to love him, and he has his job. His work consists in doing nothing at great length, to set



The expressive face of Takashi Shimura as Kanji Watanabe in *Ikiru* (1952).

himself up to climb the rungs of his company and earn his keep.

As the film's narrator notes, this can hardly be described as 'living' at all, scrimping and saving, while dying inside. As one character says later, he is like a mummy. But when he is diagnosed with stomach cancer, he is forced to reconsider his life and ask the question, what has it all been worth?

Truth

While his suffering draws him towards the truth, he has to go through two more experiences before he fully understands. First, he joins a wannabe novelist on a night of drinking and carousing, searching desperately for 'life', as it seems. But he doesn't find it in the nightclubs or the bars, symbolising the fleeting pleasures of this world.

Then, by chance, a young woman from his office comes to

seek him out. She wants to quit, being too lively – an important word – to stick such a lifeless job. Captivated by her youthful vigour, Watanabe becomes obsessed with her, taking her for dinners and buying her gifts.

“What drove him to suffer so patiently in the cause of a small park that nobody cares about, they ask?”

Eventually she rebukes him, driving the dying man to press her for an answer: what is the secret to your life? She is confused and showing the toys she produces at her new job in a factory, she says simply: “All I do is make these little

things... Why don't you try making something too?”

It seems impossible that he could wrestle some life from the heartless, bureaucratic world he inhabits. But that is just what Watanabe sets out to do. “It's not hopeless. Even there, there's something I can do. I just have to find the will.”

The second half of the film is given over to his coworkers and family reflecting on the meaning of his life's last months, when he became obsessed with building a park for children. What drove him to suffer so patiently in the cause of a small park that nobody cares about, they ask?

For the answer, we can go back to the vibrant night-time sequence, when the novelist expresses the film's core theme: “*Ecce homo*,” he begins in a monologue. “Behold the man”. This man bears a cross

called cancer. He's Christ. If you were diagnosed with cancer, you'd start dying right away. But not this fellow. That's when he started living.”

He is Christ is a funny phrase. How can he *be* Christ when clearly he is Watanabe? You might think he means it metaphorically, but the novelist is explicit: Watanabe with cancer “is Christ”. What drives him to suffer is the example of Christ. And as he suffers, he is crucified with Christ so that, as St Paul puts it, no longer I but Christ lives in me.

“It is a beautiful shot, lit by a low, watery sun that casts the young bureaucrat in relief”

The film's final shot is a striking depiction of this truth, although loosely. Without spoiling the film, let me describe it to you. One of Watanabe's colleagues is standing silhouetted on a bridge overlooking the park built through Watanabe's suffering love.

He is faced with a choice, either to follow Watanabe's example or else to become a wizened bureaucrat like the others.

It is a beautiful shot, lit by a low, watery sun that casts the young bureaucrat in relief. It mirrors an earlier one with Watanabe in roughly the same place wearing an almost identical coat and hat. As the young bureaucrat turns so that we see him in profile, it is eerily like we are looking at Watanabe.

When you look at him, you see Watanabe. And you know that for him are two choices: Watanabe or the grave. Just so was it for Watanabe, however little he knew it: Christ or the grave. And just so it is for us. Either we become transformed in his image or we face a living death.

Saint — of the — week

By Jason Osborne



St Irenaeus depicted in stained glass.

St Irenaeus: Bishop of the early Church and martyr

This mysterious, yet illuminating, figure of the early Church is heralded for two reasons: his writings in defence of what would come to be established Church teachings and his martyrdom. Strangely, we know much more about his writings than we do about his martyrdom – about which we know next to nothing, other than that there's a long history of his veneration within the Church as such.

Born in Asia Minor somewhere around the years 120/140, Irenaeus was most likely born into the city of Smyrna to Greek parents. Most biographical details come from his own works, such as the fact that as a child, he encountered another saint (and martyr) of the early Church, St Polycarp – a man widely regarded as the last known living connection to the Apostles, as he had heard and received the Gospel from John the Evangelist himself.

A Christian during times of ongoing, violent persecution – in his case, under Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius – Irenaeus became first a priest, then a bishop, of the Church

in Lugdunum in Gaul (today Lyon, France). According to Christian bishop and historian Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote a history of the Church in the fourth Century, before becoming bishop, Irenaeus had served as a missionary to the region and as a peacemaker among the various Churches of Asia Minor that had been disrupted by heresy.

A period of peace followed the persecutions of Marcus Aurelius, and it was during this time that Irenaeus sat down to his writing and famously tackled the persistent heresy that he would devote almost all of his writing to: Gnosticism. A philosophical/religious movement that covers a variety of beliefs, it ultimately rejects the Church's view of God and creation in favour of an alternative mythology, and two of Irenaeus' major writings confronting it have come down to us: *Against Heresies* and *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*.

In his *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus made the central point that the Faith, and the Church, is unified:

“The Church, having received this preaching

and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world.”

Writing during a time of tension and flux in the Church, when alternate ideas regarding the Faith were manifold, Irenaeus' contributions were essential in steadying the ship. The Church commemorates this bishop, who is believed to have been martyred at the end of the Second or beginning of the Third Century, June 28.

The direction love points us in



The Wisdom of Pope Benedict

Nowadays Christianity of the past is often criticised as having been opposed to the body; and it is quite true that tendencies of this sort have always existed. Yet the contemporary way of exalting the body is deceptive. *Eros*, reduced to pure 'sex', has become a commodity, a mere 'thing' to be bought and sold, or rather, man himself becomes a commodity. This is hardly man's great 'yes' to the body. On the contrary, he now considers his body and his sexuality as the purely material part of himself, to be used and exploited at will. Nor does he see it as an arena for the exercise of his freedom, but as a mere object that he attempts, as he pleases, to make both enjoyable and harmless.

Debasement

Here we are actually dealing with a debasement of the human body: no longer is it integrated into our overall existential freedom; no longer is it a vital expression of our whole being, but it is more or less relegated to the purely biological sphere. The apparent exaltation of the body can quickly turn into a hatred of bodiliness. Christian faith, on the other hand, has always considered man a unity in duality, a reality in which spirit and matter penetrate,

and in which each is brought to a new nobility. True, *eros* tends to rise "in ecstasy" towards the Divine, to lead us beyond ourselves; yet for this very reason it calls for a path of ascent, renunciation, purification and healing.

“Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved”

Concretely, what does this path of ascent and purification entail? How might love be experienced so that it can fully realise its human and divine promise? Here we can find a first, important indication in the Song of Songs, an Old Testament book well known to the mystics. According to the interpretation generally held today, the poems contained in this book were originally love-songs, perhaps intended for a Jewish wedding feast and meant to exalt conjugal love. In this context it is highly instructive to note that in the

course of the book two different Hebrew words are used to indicate "love".

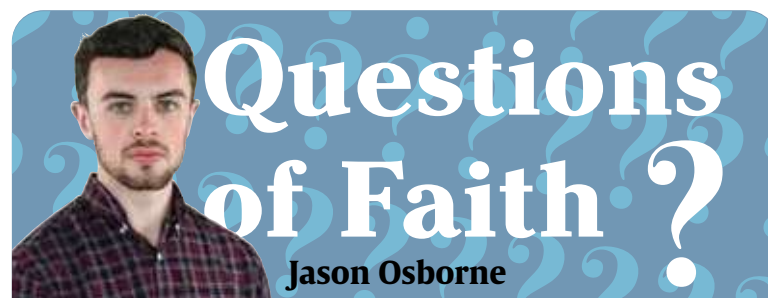
First there is the word *dodim*, a plural form suggesting a love that is still insecure, indeterminate and searching. This comes to be replaced by the word *ahabà*, which the Greek version of the Old Testament translates with the similar-sounding *agape*, which, as we have seen, becomes the typical expression for the biblical notion of love. By contrast with an indeterminate, 'searching' love, this word expresses the experience of a love which involves a real discovery of the other, moving beyond the selfish character that prevailed earlier. Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice.

Purification

It is part of love's growth towards higher levels and inward purification that it now seeks to become definitive, and it does so in a twofold sense: both in the sense of exclusivity (this particular person alone) and in the sense of being 'for ever'. Love embraces the whole of existence in each of its dimensions, including the dimension of time. It could hardly be otherwise, since its promise looks towards its definitive goal: love looks to the eternal.

Love is indeed 'ecstasy', not in the sense of a moment of intoxication, but rather as a journey, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it" (Lk 17:33), as Jesus says throughout the Gospels (cf. Mt 10:39; 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24; Jn 12:25).

In these words, Jesus portrays his own path, which leads through the Cross to the Resurrection: the path of the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, and in this way bears much fruit. Starting from the depths of his own sacrifice and of the love that reaches fulfilment therein, he also portrays in these words the essence of love and indeed of human life itself. (*Deus Caritas Est*)



What does the Church mean by 'love'?

It is taken for granted these days by those of every political and religious persuasion that love is a very good thing, and rightly so. This is so taken for granted that it's one of those things that has become invisible, a truth that goes without saying. We usually learn about 'love' by osmosis, rather than by explicitly examining the topic: watching movies and tv shows, reading books and articles that deal with it, listening to our friends and families talk about it and so on inform our understanding of love.

The only – but as we shall see, quite considerable – trouble with this is that when a thing "goes without saying," it often grows undefined, and deeper meaning can be lost in the mists of time. 'Love' today means, for the most part, two things: first, the feelings that accompany a romantic relationship; second, acceptance. While these are undoubtedly elements that make up love in its entirety, they don't necessarily get to the heart of what love is – sacrifice.

"To love is to will the good of another." So wrote arguably the most famous of the Church's theologians, St Thomas Aquinas, and so reaffirms the Catechism:

"To love is to will the good of another." All other affections have their source in this first movement of the human heart toward the good. Only the good can be loved. Passions 'are evil if love is evil and good if it is good'" (CCC 1766).

To approach the same idea from a different angle, Jesus says to his disciples (and to us) in John 15:13, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". While this certainly includes the obvious sense – dying for others, as Jesus shortly went on to do – it also includes the sense implied in the Catechism passage above: dying to yourself, for the good of others.

Based off of this idea, then, we see that a conception of 'the good' is essential to the

Church's understanding of love, which is what puts it at odds with the widespread understanding of love so often in the 21st Century (although not always). 'The good' is commonly understood to mean that which a person wants, which they've identified as good for them, and at least not hurtful to others, if it's not good for others, too. This is why 'acceptance' is so touted as a form of love, as it accommodates the desires of others without judgement, and so allows others to pursue their 'goods' freely.

The Church, meanwhile, doesn't see people as being fulfilled by the pursuit of their different, individual goods – it sees people fulfilled by worshipping God, who it identifies as 'the Good' itself; our highest good individually and communally. To love, in the Church's view, is to pray and work to direct others in God's direction, which is done by serving God, others and following his commandments. This of course takes different appearances depending on what a person is called to, but these are the pillars upon which the Church's understanding of love rest.

Naturally, then, an age that – for understandable reasons, in many cases – doesn't recognise the legitimacy of the Church's moral authority is going to chafe at the Church's understanding of love. It's not going to understand when Catholics say that they approve or disapprove of things in a manner opposed to the popular consensus 'out of love'. This is no excuse to stop loving, though, just as Christ didn't, and doesn't.

The desire to love and be loved is etched into every human heart – it's God's signature upon his creation – but while some forms of love come easy (romantic, familial, etc.), others take some practice – such as sacrifice.

Post-sophistication

A generation ago, JD Salinger wrote a novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, which became immensely popular, as well as becoming required reading in most undergraduate literature programmes. It deserved both. It's a great piece of literature. Here's the image: A man is watching children playing in a rye field with an exuberance and delight that only innocent young children can have. He thinks ahead, picturing how each of them will eventually lose the joy of that innocence and will, like the rest of us adults, become jaded and unhappy. He imagines how wonderful it would be if he could protect these children from growing up and just keep them there forever, innocent, playing in a rye field, spared of all the mess, sin, compromise, and unhappiness of adults. A fantasy which touches the heart.

It also touches something at the heart of the tension between conservatives and liberals. Conservatives and liberals disagree on most everything, except one thing: both are unhappy with the direction in which things are going.

Conservatives

For conservatives, the present moment is seen as a falling away, from a faith, a stability, and a happiness that supposedly we once had. Their instinct is to return to what once was, to what once (in their view) held things together. What would fix things, they believe, is a certain retreat to a past innocence. At the root



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

of that lies that exact nostalgia inside the man watching those children playing in *The Catcher in the Rye*, namely, that leaving behind the innocence of childhood for the sophistication of an adult, brings with it instability, mess, and unhappiness. Sophistication comes at too high a price, and so we need to be protected from certain kinds of learning and experience.

Liberals

Liberals tend to have the opposite instinct and proclivity. For them, we live in a social, religious, moral, and technological milieu that sets us above the past, irrespective of the mess this sometimes brings. We are simply advanced in ways that past generations, whatever their values and sincerity, were not. Any retreat would be a regression, an intellectual and moral loss. The path towards maturity is forward, and we must have the courage to travel that road, notwithstanding

the upheavals that come with it (you can't make an omelette without scrambling an egg). The road forward leads through adult experience and learning, beyond the shelter of the rye field. That's the road that leads to maturity and gets us beyond the narrowness, bigotry, racism, sexism, and ignorance that undergird much false fear, rigidity, injustice, and violence in the world.

Who's right? In what direction should we be moving? What's the way forward?

Neither

My own hunch is that we will get to where we should be going by following neither the instinct of the liberal nor that of the conservative fully. While both emanate from a healthy intuition, both have shown themselves inadequate vis-a-vis the road to maturity, peace, and happiness. Liberals are right in intuiting that moving back to the

past is not the answer, just as conservatives are right in believing that simply becoming ever more sophisticated is no answer either. Both are partially right and partially wrong. Where should we be going?

“Where is happiness found? In that place where it is possible again to believe in Santa and the Easter Bunny, in a place of post-sophistication”

We must move forward, though not in the way popular liberal ideology tends to conceive of this, that is, as salvation through sophistication alone. We must move forward, but in a way that ultimately takes us beyond sophistication to a second naivete. What is meant by this?

This: If you ask a naive child: “Do you believe in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny?”, she answers: “Yes.” If you ask a bright child the same question, she answers: “No.” But if you ask an even a brighter child that question, she answers: “Yes”. But for a different reason.

Post-sophistication

The task in life is to move from naivete through sophistication to post-sophistication. Both conservatives and liberals need to challenge themselves (and each other) in the light of this truth (which is found both in the gospels and in the best insights in anthropology). God and nature do not intend for us to remain as children all our lives. We are meant to grow, to experience life, to sort out the critical questions that are inside us, to become sophisticated. Admittedly, in that process we will lose much of our innocence. And, as Adam and Eve found out after they ate the fruit, when our eyes are opened, happiness does not exactly follow.

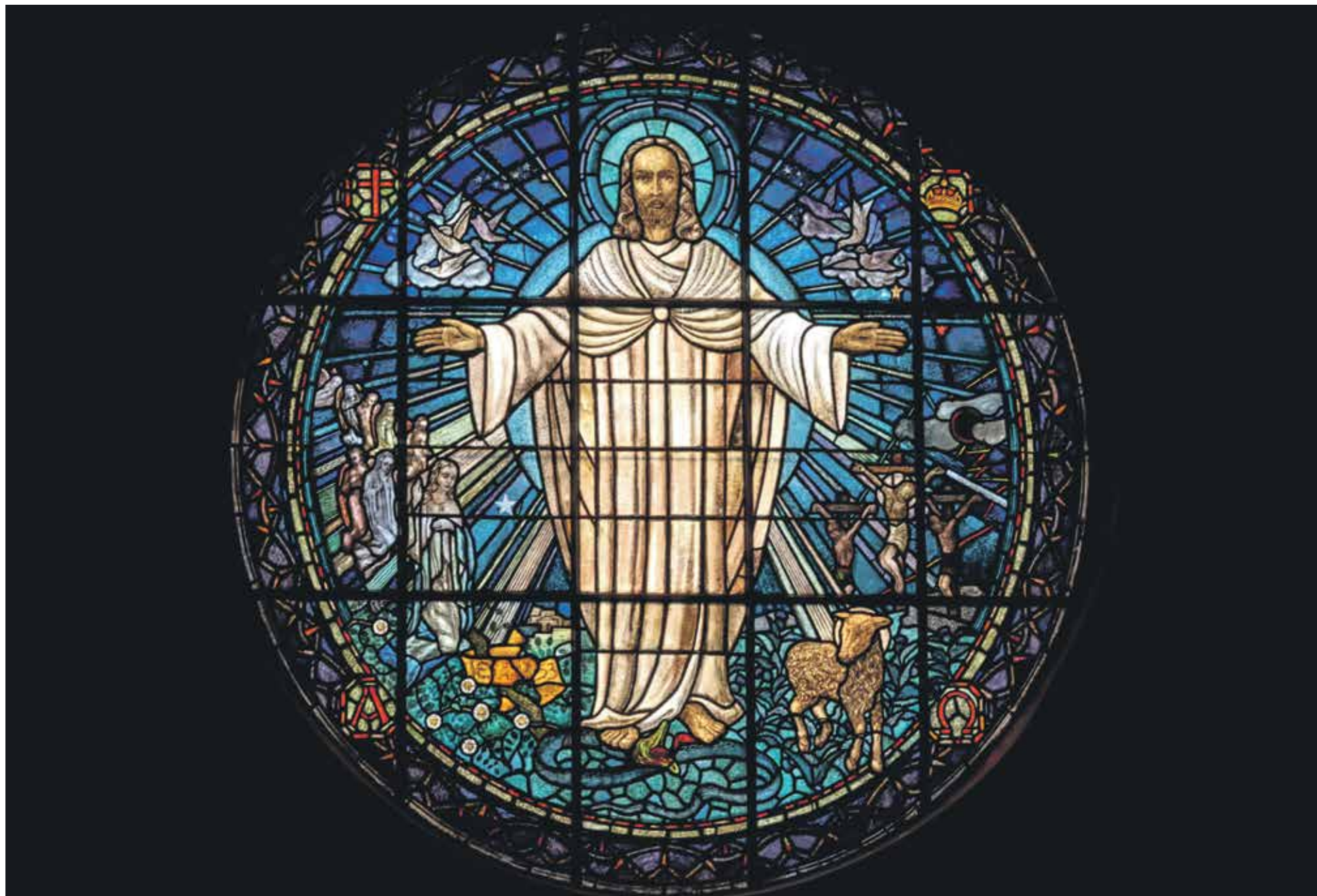
Where is happiness found? In that place where it is possible again to believe in Santa and the Easter Bunny, in a place of post-sophistication. There are various vocabularies within which to express this, but they all point to the same thing. They all have the same progression:

- Naivete, sophistication, second naivete
- First fervour, disillusionment, mature love
- Pre-critical, critical, post-critical
- Innocence, lost innocence, revivified
- Childish, grown up, childlike
- Happy, disenchanted, peaceful
- Naive fool, sophisticated fool, holy fool

We once were naive fools. Then we became sophisticated fools. It's time to become post-sophisticated fools.

“The task in life is to move from naivete through sophistication to post-sophistication.”

Being fearless in our Faith



Jer 20:10-13
Ps 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35
Rom 5:12-15
Mt 10:26-33

How is your Ordinary Time going? After the intensity of Lent and the jubilation of Easter we may think this period is relatively uneventful, but think again.

On the 12th Sunday of a time we call “ordinary,” we find ourselves facing something extraordinary. We are struck at the beginning of the first reading, as Jeremiah proclaims: “I hear the whisperings of many: ‘Terror on every side! Denounce! Let us denounce him!’” Danger and death hang in the air.

Yet as we come to the Gospel, Jesus’s own words offer a startling change of tone with the first words he speaks: “Fear no one.”

In fact, in this passage, no less than three times

The Sunday Gospel

Deacon
Greg
Kandra



Jesus tells his disciples “Do not be afraid”.

Tenacity

Again and again in this Sunday’s readings we hear a message of tenacity, courage, boldness and conviction. “What you say in darkness, speak in the light,” Jesus announced. “What you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.”

For the early Christians, this was nothing less than their marching orders – and we can understand today that this might have been something they needed to hear as people faced persecution, punishment, imprisonment and even death. They needed to be fearless. The risks were great. Suffering was real. Martyrdom wasn’t out of the

question.

But what about us today? We don’t have to look far to find tales of discrimination and persecution against Christians in our own age, in countries as varied as Nigeria and Nicaragua; even in the United Kingdom, praying in public might lead to an arrest.

“Do not be afraid to love your neighbour as you love yourself and to understand that your neighbourhood encompasses the whole world”

But I think proclaiming faith goes deeper than all of that. It is not just what we say, shout, announce or teach; it is how we live. It is how we proclaim Christianity with what we do.

This is, in so many ways,

countercultural. Being a believer in Jesus Christ means, among other things, loving the unloved. It means being boldly compassionate in a world that is cruel. It means giving in a culture that teaches people to take.

It means caring for those no one else cares about. It is embracing the leper, feeding the hungry, praying for your enemies, forgiving your persecutors. It is sheltering the refugee, defending the weakest and giving a voice to those who are voiceless – including the frail, the elderly, the unborn.

Afraid

When Jesus tells his followers “Do not be afraid,” we should consider all that idea entails. He is saying more than “do not be afraid to declare what you believe and speak the truth”.

I think he is also saying, “Do not be afraid to love”. Do not be afraid to show mercy. Do not be afraid to forgive what seems unforgivable. Do

not be afraid to love your neighbour as you love yourself and to understand that your neighbourhood encompasses the whole world”. And he showed by his own example, through how he lived and how he died.

“For you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone”

He taught fearlessness and reassured anyone who heard him: trust that God is on your side. We hear it in the first reading, from Jeremiah: “The Lord is with me, like a mighty champion”. Jesus himself declares, “Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father”. The psalmist understood as much. “Bounteous is your kindness,” we hear. “In

your great mercy, turn toward me.”

Fear

1900 years after Jesus assured his followers that they shouldn’t fear affirming their faith and living what he taught, another disciple offered this humble testament of fidelity:

“I will not fear,” Thomas Merton wrote in his most famous prayer, “for you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone”.

We may consider this just another Sunday in Ordinary Time. But, amid a call to courage and boldness, God’s Word reminds us of his steadfast hope and extraordinary love.

i Deacon Greg Kandra is an award-winning author and journalist and creator of the blog, “The Deacon’s Bench.” He serves in the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Sounding the alarm on proposed hate laws

The hate crimes legislation was discussed in the Seanad last week, with spirited contributions circulating on social media – especially from Senators Rónán Mullen and Michael McDowell (both raising serious concerns) and Senator Pauline O'Reilly (Green Party) supporting the legislation on the grounds of the common good.

This didn't get much coverage in regular media, but on **The Hard Shoulder** (Newstalk, Friday) we got an interesting discussion between Senator O'Reilly and political commentator Keith Mills. Senator O'Reilly argued the legislation was for the safety and security of vulnerable and protected groups. She mentioned skin colour, race and sexual orientation but no mention of religious affiliation, which is also one of the nine characteristics protected in law. If I am offended by insults to my religious affiliation, will I be able to invoke the proposed legislation? Is it a kind of secular blasphemy legislation? She said people would still be able to express controversial views that some people may find offensive, but Keith Mills described it as "a charter for stopping people from expressing genuinely held views". Considering the growing concerns from left and right, he said alarm bells



Senator Rónán Mullen

should be ringing.

Alarm bells rarely ring on UK media in relation to abortion, and we get few pro-life voices. On **Times Radio Breakfast** (Tuesday) it was different. The jailing of a woman for carrying out a home abortion after misleading the authorities during Covid-19 about the gestational age of her unborn baby has stirred up a hornet's nest in the UK, but the coverage on this show was reasonable. Rachel Clarke of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) debated with Madeleine Paige of the Alliance of Pro-life Students and Catholic Voices UK. I thought Asmah Mir did a good job as neutral presenter, asking gentle but

challenging questions of both sides. I've never heard pro-life spokespersons calling for the jailing of women who have had abortions, and Ms Paige wondered why the finger wasn't being pointed at BPAS for pushing DIY abortions during the pandemic and even since. The debate got sidetracked over whether the baby whose life was ended in the womb was an 'eight-month-old baby', but the reality of how late this abortion was certainly hit home – as Ms Paige pointed out this was well past the age of viability.

Later, on **Ali Miraj**, (LBC, Tuesday) there was a detailed discussion with special guests and callers on the phone. Andrea Williams of Christian

Concern flew the flag, very ably, for the pro-life argument. In the UK presenters of shows on independent radio are not required to keep their own views to themselves when dealing with controversial issues, which I think is a pity in terms of media neutrality. What surprised me was how the presenter blew many pro-choice arguments out of the water – something that very rarely happens over here. His main concern seemed to be against extending time limits on abortion access – for the most part it was set at 24 weeks, and as was pointed out many were arguing for this to be limited further, because babies were surviving earlier out of the

PICK OF THE WEEK

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC One Sunday June 25, 12.25pm

Aled Jones is on the Isle of Man to discover how the roots of Christianity stretch back over 1,500 years.

HOPE – OUR LADY OF KNOCK

EWTN Sunday June 25, 9pm

A historical docudrama that covers the events leading up to and following the apparition of Our Lady, in Knock in 1897.

FATHER BROWN

BBC One Friday June 30, 1.45pm

The Final Devotion: Father Brown joins forces with Flambeau to search for a lost treasure in a 15th-Century castle.

womb. He thought it would be 'bizarre' and 'barbaric' to allow abortions up to birth. One caller criticised the court decision but was very vague when questioned about what limits she'd suggest. A male caller was concerned about the rights of fathers, though he had been involved previously in an abortion. I was pleasantly surprised by how many callers were against any liberalising changes. It was as if they could just about tolerate the current situation but thought any more would be a step too far.

The issue was revisited on **Sunday Morning Live** (BBC One) and as usual there was a balanced debate. Madeleine Paige once again did well representing the pro-life perspective. She stressed the name given the baby in

the court case ('Lily') and that the mother was eight months pregnant. Broadcaster Michelle Dewberry declared she was basically pro-choice, but was very critical of the law-breaking actions of the mother in this case and described late abortions as 'killing children'. Comedian and activists Kate Smurthwaite saw an unwanted pregnancy as a woman's body being 'requisitioned' and talked vaguely about 'having the conversation' when asked by Ms Dewberry if she'd favour abortion up to birth. Manna Mostaghuth of Abortion Rights UK favoured decriminalisation, but said it wouldn't mean deregulation.

Now where have I heard that language before?



Pat O'Kelly

Music



June brings its quota of music festivals. Among these Dublin International Chamber Music brought a number of home and visiting artists to its various locations while the current Pipeworks Organ and Choral Festival opened at the National Concert Hall last Tuesday and continues at selected venues until Sunday next June 25 at St Michael's Church in Dun Laoghaire.

This concluding recital is part of St Michael's own

annual summer Sunday organ music series that continues until September.

Besides its concerts and recitals, Pipeworks festival introduces Meet the Organ – a number of talks and interviews by and with the musicians taking part. The festival also conducts a number of master classes led by some of the performing artists.

Following the opening NCH event with the NSO con-

A June full of music festivals

ducted by festival director, David Leigh, and soloist David Goode heard in music by Marcel Dupré and Camille Saint-Saëns, the festival's education officer, David O'Shea, gave a talk on the Hall's magnificent Kenneth Jones instrument installed in 1991.

Yesterday found David Leigh on home ground in St Patrick's Cathedral where his recital celebrated the sesquicentenary of Liege-born Joseph Jongen with his substantial Eroica Sonata and that of Max Reger through his significant Op 135b Fantasia and Fugue.

This evening June 22 the festival focus moves to Dublin's other venerable cathedral – Christ Church – for what will be a further high-

light through the visit of the internationally acclaimed choral group, The Tallis Scholars. Entitled Reflecting Byrd, their concert commemorates the 400th anniversary of the composer's death on July 4, 1623.

There will be a lunchtime recital tomorrow Friday June 23 in Sandford parish church by Birmingham-born Francesca Massey, who is also a fellow of the distinguished Royal College of Organists. Her varied programme will be preceded by a chat between herself and Trevor Crowe, the man responsible for the recent restoration of Sandford's organ.

Tomorrow evening brings a return to St Patrick's Cathedral and David Goode, described

as "one of the leading organists of his generation". Fulfilling an international schedule of solo and concerto appearances, Goode's wide-ranging discography includes a complete Bach series and major works by Max Reger. His programme will "showcase the many facets and colours" of St Patrick's magnificent 1902 Willis instrument.

On Saturday afternoon in TCD's Public Theatre, once called the Examination Hall, Edinburgh City Organist John Kitchen converses with Andrew Johnstone. Both highly enthusiastic scholars of early English music, they will discuss the life and works of William Byrd (c.1540-1623).

On Saturday evening Kitchen's TCD recital will be

devoted mainly to Byrd but inserts pieces by the latter's contemporaries Orlando Gibbons and Thomas Tomkins. The idea is to demonstrate the varied possibilities of the TCD instrument, "recently reconstructed in historic style" by the Nottingham firm of Goetze and Gwynn.

A recital by Matthew Owens, who has held posts in Edinburgh, Manchester, Wells and Belfast, ends the festival on Sunday June 25 in St Michael's Dun Laoghaire. His programme offers the Irish première of Howard Skempton's Preludes and Fugues, a work, it is said, that shows the Chester-born composer's "colossal intellectual status and communicative capability".

BookReviews

Peter Costello



We are where we pray



Liturgy Room at Carlow, conceived by Richard Hurley.

Shaping the Assembly: How our buildings form us in worship, ed. by Thomas O'Loughlin (Messenger Publications, €25.00/£23.23)

Peter Costello

Thomas O'Loughlin is a distinguished scholar who has taught at several institutions in England, retiring as a professor emeritus at the University of Nottingham. This book brings into focus several of his long standing concerns.

It is a compilation of some 18 essays by 19 writers, including the late Richard Hurley, which explore the theme "that liturgy and liturgical space are too often considered as separate unrelated entities". He has assembled a group of contributors who have nicely varied approaches to this theme.

In our different ways we are all aware of something not right. We will have sat on a Sunday in a church which is only filled with a fraction of the people who would have been there a generation or so ago. The sense of disconnection will have left many feeling only too deeply a sense of isolation which they would love to replace.

If we are to have fewer people at services, surely we can make better use of the

space, or create a new kind of space. This is only partly a matter of formal function, or aesthetic considerations. To reuse an old building in the old way may not find the answer. To reuse it in a new way presents its own problems. These essays will present readers, lay and clerical, with a series, not of answers, but effective suggestions.

Heart

At the heart of the matter the editor suggests were two aspects of the new Christian faith that moved the very earliest Christians: the need for a place where they could assemble as a group was important; but also, quite separately, a need to celebrate "the supper of the lamb".

These carried already cultural echoes of the paschal celebration, itself taking place within a familial group, and a gathering in the synagogue, which was of a different ceremonial character. Today these two aspects still need to be provided for: intimacy of devotion and the social needs of people working together. Those creating a place for Christians today still have to recognise and differentiate these needs – which in fact is not always done. The gathering is not always social, the sharing of the broken bread not always intimate.

The changes after Vatican

II from 1970 onwards tried to accomplish much, though there was a large number of both priests and laity who wondered why the old ways would not do: they got the job done. But perhaps something more than "getting the job done" is needed.

“This is a book which must be read in a sympathetic frame of mind, with a willingness to hear some new and different but thought-out ideas in line with Scripture”

But these essays are, as I say, suggestive rather than prescriptive. They seem to be seeking a way not of recreating a glorious past of the middle ages, but drawing new life from what the Gospels themselves actually say and illustrate. Sometimes preserving tradition gets in the way of carrying out the sense of the Gospels.

To pick out for comment individual contributors might be unfair. Nor does a series of 18 summaries give much help.

But having mentioned the late Richard Hurley, a chain of connection from his work on the Liturgy Room at the then

Easter Vigil being celebrated in the Philadelphia Episcopalian Cathedral.



Carlow Liturgy Centre, a place whose influence is referred to here by others (pages 215-217). For instance it was the inspiration for what was done at the refitting of the Episcopalian Cathedral in Philadelphia, a pre-Civil War building, of national importance.

Another connection was with St Mary's Abbey in Waterford, established by English Cistercian nuns in 1932 with help from Mount Melleray (all pictured).

Willingness

This is a book which must be read in a sympathetic frame of mind, with a willingness to hear some new and different but thought-out ideas in line with Scripture. Perhaps it is all a matter of Christians thinking more about what it is they are doing, and indeed need to do. With a new movement in the air, this may well be the time to catch hold of the ideas in these pages.

The architect Frederick Debuyst is quoted very appositely on the currents of ideas in this book: "The coming to life of most Vatican II churches can be summed up in one phrase, *serving the assembled community in the simplest form.*"

The contributors come from Europe and New Zealand. But perhaps this is due to the fact that other social, customary and even colonial matters have influenced Asia, Africa and South America in different



St Mary's Abbey church, Glencairn, Co. Waterford.

ways. However that may be, the perhaps inadvertent outcome gives the text a certain cohesion it might not otherwise have had.

But what we do have is richly insightful and full of interest, and for many, full also of new ideas. (Also some insights into the past. A footnote reveals that Romano Guardini, laying out an establishment at Rothenfels, had one part as a chapel to meet the regulations, and another part as a more flexible and creative way (p 3, ft 4). Even in the 1920s, it seems, a certain amount of

guile was needed to achieve what one wanted).

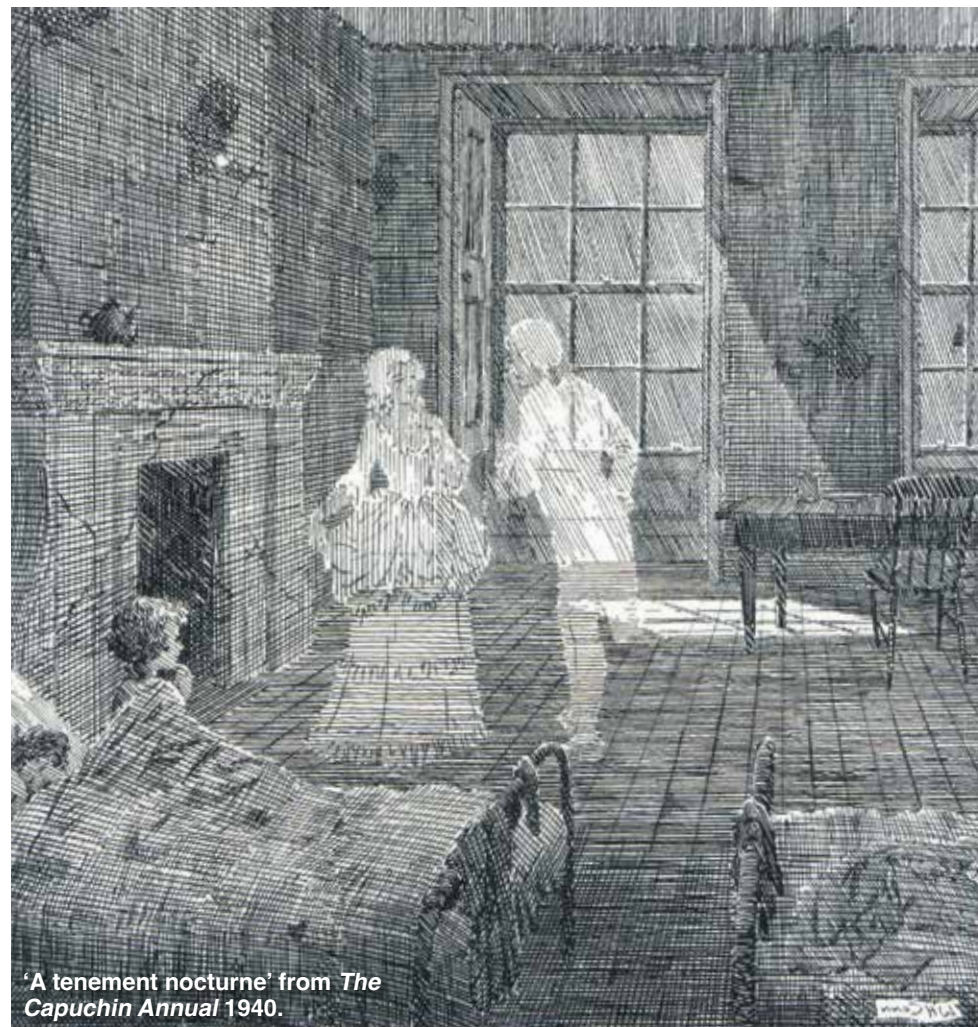
Participated

Many Christian churches have participated in this project and the book is issued also in association with the Alcuin Club. Some five years went into its making, but it is the outcome not of a single conference, but of long periods of sensitive discussion and arrangement.

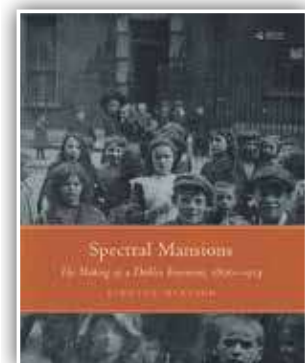
A brief review can only give a taste of such a book. Nothing will replace the real enrichment of mind and spirit that will come from reading it.

Readers should note that *The Irish Catholic* circulates throughout the island of Ireland and the book prices listed are the retail price recommended by the Irish or British publishers, in either euros or sterling, as a general indication of what purchasers may expect to pay.

The Slums of Dublin: a changing but continuing social problem



'A tenement nocturne' from *The Capuchin Annual* 1940.



Spectral Mansions: The Making of a Dublin Tenement, 1800-1914, by Timothy Murtagh (Four Courts Press for Dublin City Council with aid from the Heritage Council, €30.00/ £26.00)

Peter Costello

To those familiar only with the ever-rebuilding Dublin of today, there is in this book a strangely prophetic cartoon from a Dublin comic paper of July 1914, captioned 'Town Planning (Latest Scheme)'. It shows a city expert explaining his latest plan: "Certainly abolish the tenements. Each family a cottage. Suburbs being too far for workers, central ground

rent too dear, there being no charge for sky space, the higher the air the purer, we'll build the cottages on top of each other."

It shows a 13 story "high-rise", composed of cottages, such as indeed we now have all over the inner city, some only built the other day. Yet poverty still stalks the city, what with the tented poor, the newly homeless, the refugees without a place.

This book explains much about how we got where we are for good or bad. Timothy Murtagh, a TCD graduate, was an historical consultant to the 14 Henrietta Street Museum and is now a research fellow with the Virtual Treasury of Ireland.

Slum

When I first saw his title, there came into my mind a drawing from *The Capuchin Annual* in its great days in the 1940s: in a slum house, clearly meant to be in Mountjoy Square or Henrietta Street, a small girl sitting up in its iron framed-bed observing with awe the ghosts of two Georgian dancers, modern squalor haunted by Georgian graciousness. It poses the question Murtagh wants

to answer: how are they connected? He tells, in vivid and exact detail, of the consequences of changes to a city, deserted by an elite who had ruthlessly exploited it, early and late.

As a result these pages themselves are indeed a rich treasury of images and maps from the 18th Century down to 1981, many in full colour. Many of the maps, on which various degrees of inner city desperation and squalor are marked on in colour washes, show all this amazing revealing detail. Here for once the visual documents are treated not as decorations, but as a real part of the evidence, by someone who is fully aware of their meaning.

Do not let the dates in the title which conclude in 1914, lead the reader to think that all this horror was well into the Imperial past. A full seventh of the text is devoted to the period after British rule, with all its vagaries of approach to poverty and housing.

Also this too is the old Dublin, the Dublin moated by the two canals. But since 1930 the city has also owned the former townships of Rathmines and Drumcondra. Those were always thought



'Town Planning (Latest Scheme)', *The Lepracaun* July 1914.

of as the reservations of the prosperous, they also had their pockets of poverty and neglect. Murtagh does indeed discuss these places, but they are not obviously his main brief.

Shades

The book will remind readers of all shades of opinion that poverty "hasn't gone away, you know". There are other kinds of poverty too, mental, spiritual and even social, that we cannot expect 'the authorities' to mend. Others have been inspired to act though. Murtagh gives a good account of the literary reactions from Joyce and others down to James Plunkett. One fact that stands out is the courage and resilience of Dubliners in adversity.

Over all he has explored the multifarious sources with great thoroughness. One feels this book ought to find future place in every school library. As many people are beginning to lose any sense of what history really can give us, his book will show them.

Henrietta Street, once the abode of the city's elite, is I suspect only known by those of us who have business with the King's Inns and the Deeds Office in the little park at the top of it. After this it will have many more, a sort of urban counterpart to the EPIC exhibition down on Custom House Quay what was suffered here in the past. Both need to be seen.

Comments on the margin

By the books editor

Early Christian Arabia



Surveying a *mustatil* site in Saudi Arabia

Changes are coming to Saudi Arabia, some of which may have interesting outcomes for all those interested in the past, present and possibly future of Christianity in the region.

As is well known, the central desert of Arabia, where the capital Riyadh is located, is only part of the ancient classical divisions of the peninsula, which never came under the Romans.

In the south was *Arabia Felix*, Happy Arabia, along the coasts of Oman, Hadhramaut and Yemen, which were the sources of spices, fragrances, coffee and, of course, slaves. To the north bordering on what we think of as the Holy Land was *Arabia Petra*, Stony Arabia.

Taking their cue from Egypt, Israel, Palestine and Turkey, Saudi Arabia has decided to exploit its history and prehistoric past, but only really in an area with little else to exploit.

Currently work is going on with the aid of French, Australian and British archaeologists to investigate the mysterious *mustatils*, sites that are 50,000 years old, a thousand or so very mysterious stone rectangles whose ritual use is unknown. In cultural terms, the sites mark the transition from pure nomadism to pastoralism.

Their location is in the north-west of the country which has little else to interest visitors as there are so far no known ancient cities. This is an area of the Red Sea where other countries' coastal resorts, those of Egypt and Israel, are located.

Saudi interests see some sort of development along those lines, with the geology and archaeology and classical heritage to

the hinterland providing tourist excursions. They will have seen the great success of Abu Dhabi.

But it is this point that raises the really intriguing point. Once they begin the archaeology survey, the Saudis are going to have to deal with late classical, post classical, urban and early medieval. And that means dealing with whatever traces of the early Christians in the region still survive.

These traces would most likely be found in the cities, in Jeddah, Mecca and down in Yemen along the south coast. There were certainly Jews in all those places, and where you had Jews in the first centuries of our era you would have had Christians, later of various kinds, Nestorians and so on, but Christians nevertheless.

Age of ignorance

What will the Wahabi Saudis do, who in the past saw such things as relics of "the age of ignorance" before the advent of the Prophet? Undoubtedly Christians, as "a people of the Book", have the Prophet's blessing, but will the Archaeological Commission in Riyadh really want to preserve and open to tourists such early relics of Christianity?

It is a problem to ponder. But it shows the dimension of the ideation that may need to change, perhaps on all sides. Little is known about the Arabian aspect of late classical Christianity. In developing their archaeology the Saudis may well bring very great changes and indeed movements towards tolerance and freedom of expression. Then again, stubborn human nature being what it is, they may not.

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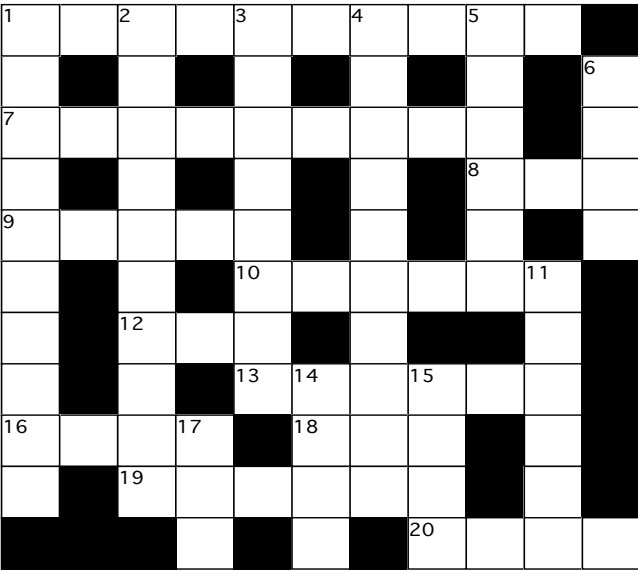
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One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 488



- Across**

1 This variety of ice-cream has three colours and flavours (10)

7 You buy rolls of this to paste up in a room (9)

8 Australian bird that can't fly (3)

9 Deserves because of effort or work (5)

10 Not outside (6)

12 Set fire to (3)

13 Ashes and other bits left after a fire (6)

16 The number of counties in Ulster (4)

18 Beer (3)

19 Knights of old tried to help a _____ in distress (6)

20 Certain (4)
- Down**

1 The All Blacks come from this country (3,7)

2 The _____ finals are usually held in Croke Park in September (3-7)

3 High is the _____ of low (8)

4 "That's _____, it can't be done" (10)

5 Said "Yes" to (6)

6 You put it into a socket to make an electric item work (4)

11 Time when you might receive a chocolate egg (6)

14 You might put it on your face at Halloween (4)

15 These fish look a bit like snakes (4)

17 You listen with this (3)

SOLUTIONS, JUNE 15

GORDIUS NO. 615

Across – 1 Courthouse 6 Hart 10 Gravy 11 Flavoured 12 Firearm 15 Newel post 17 Axle 18 Oboe 19 Ratio 21 Probity 23 Pesto 24 Pope 26 Aspic 28 Hardest 33 Notarised 34 Adele 35 Dine 36 Pentateuch

Down – 1 Cogs 2 Unanimous 3 Thyme 4 Offer 5 Sean Connery 7 Arrow 8 Tidal power 13 Aver 14 Macbeth 16 Complained 20 Trousseau 21 Popcorn 22 Thor 27 Putin 29 Audit 30 Dealt 31 Ashe 32 Leah

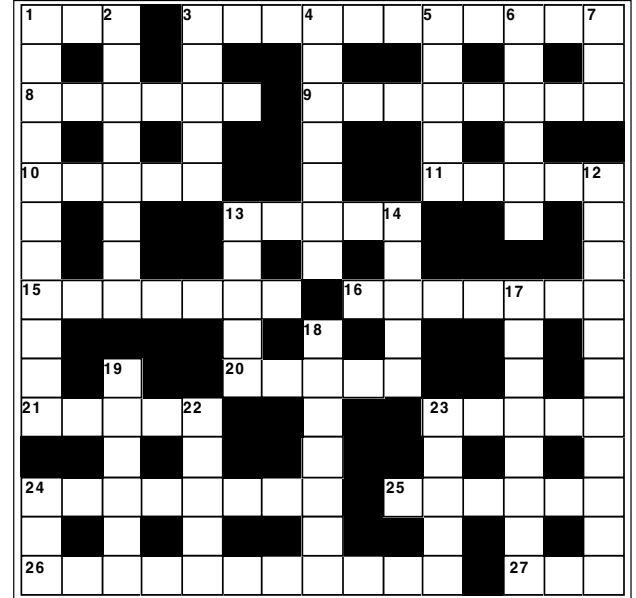
CHILDREN'S No. 487

Across – 1 Tennis ball 6 Rappers 7 Dam 8 Last night 11 Ivory 15 Can 16 Overlap 17 Natural 18 Sting

Down – 1 Terrific 2 Napoleon 3 Ideas 4 Basin 5 Leash 9 Gallery 10 Tadpole 12 Vault 13 Young 14 Tests

Crossword

Gordius 616



- Across**

1 Sprint (3)

3 Fatty substance found in the body (11)

8 Province in Canada that is predominantly French-speaking (6)

9 Just having a look through the stock in a shop (8)

10 Cove, bay (5)

11 Imbibe (5)

13 Took on workers (5)

15 Wild horse with some kind of a smug tan (7)

16 Umbrella-like protection from the sun (7)

20 Not quite mountainous (5)

21 Writer of 'Gulliver's Travels' (5)

23 Greek island known as Kerkyra to the Greeks (5)

24 Snuggling up (8)

25 Have some moderate exercise before becoming considerably more active (4,2)

26 Urban spatial designer (4,7)

27 Military term of address to a superior (3)

Down

1 Eucharistic sacrifice relating to a funeral (7,4)
- 2 Unnecessary (8)

3 Play unfairly (5)

4 You may borrow books here (7)

5 Pulled by another vehicle (5)

6 Dried grape (6)

7 Lower limb (3)

12 The capital of Malaysia (5,6)

13 Intuition (5)

14 Personal journal (5)

17 Motown group of the 1960s and 70s associated with Diana Ross (8)

18 Alien species featuring in Star Trek (7)

19 Game with pieces to be made into a picture (6)

22 Flower associated with the Netherlands (5)

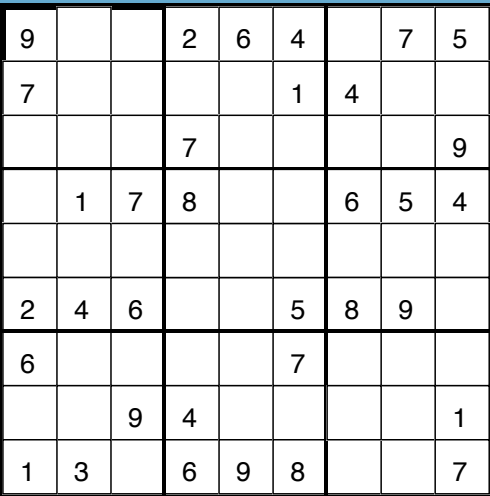
23 Item of furniture found broken in Cahir (5)

24 Immature louse (3)

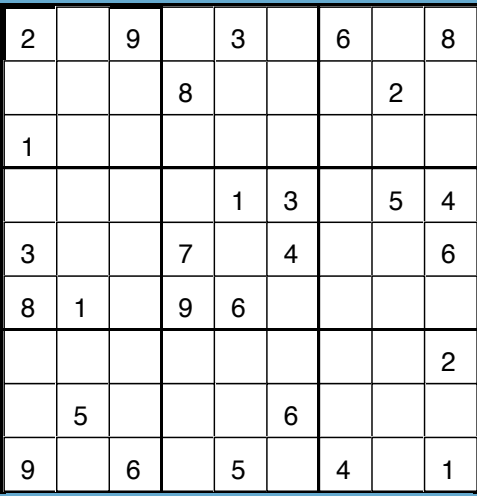
Sudoku Corner

488

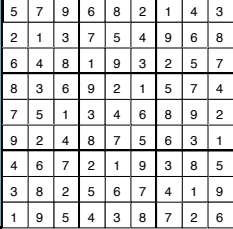
Easy



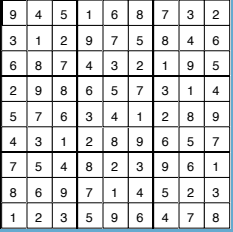
Hard



Last week's Easy 487



Last week's Hard 487



Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



Lessons to be learned from Germany's faithful

I spent a fortnight driving round Germany earlier this summer, taking in many interesting spots in central and northern Germany. These included the birthplace of Bach (Eisenach, where Martin Luther also studied), Buchenwald (with the remains of the WWII concentration camp) and Weimar. In northern Germany, I saw Kiel and the nearby Kiel Canal (which accommodates up to 60,000 ships each year), pretty Luebeck, and Bremerhaven, from which port 7.2 million people emigrated from Germany, many entering the USA via Ellis Island along with their Irish cousins.

I also attended a couple of masses while in Germany, which I naturally found interesting. All were, of course, in German, in which I am not tremendously proficient, but I could observe — and take notes. The first Sunday morning I was there, I was staying in a settlement called Betzenstein, not far from Bayreuth. The church bells rang and the inhabitants of this tiny village headed to church so I joined them — only to find that their local (and only) village church was Lutheran! A brass band supplemented the



choir and organ this Pentecost morning, and a service strong on the Word followed, led by a rather stern-looking (lady) presider. The church was beautifully decorated but fairly empty, so I was glad to support the collection and help keep the place going. Later I found a Mass for Pentecost, in Bayreuth, with an almost full church; young and old, married and single. Though the priest preached for over 15 minutes, he seemed to use an accessible style, which held people's attention for the duration (my German wasn't of high enough standard to know what he was saying; all I noticed was that he preached with passion and captivated his audience). At each Mass I attended, what

was most noticeable was the congregational participation in the singing. Each church in Germany has two standard features: a substantial hardbacked hymnal which everyone picks up on entering the church, and a system of electronically communicating the page number of the next song to be sung. These numbers are displayed prominently, in red, on the sanctuary wall, appearing just ahead of the start of the song, so

everyone reaches for their hymnal when a number appears. What's more, the organ then launches into a light tune which lasts just long enough for everyone to find the page — a clever innovation which keeps everyone on the same note. Full-throated singing naturally follows. German Catholics do not necessarily sing all the verses of everything. The page number is displayed, and also the verses to be sung, which may not start with the first verse and rarely includes more than two. And everyone sings, they realise it is part of worship. In fact, no Catholic church I attended had a choir; a cantor led the psalm from the ambo and occasionally a soloist was heard, but the bulk of the singing was provided by those who gathered — an ideal towards which we are still on the journey here in Ireland.

The creation of new communities
Our five parishes here in West Cork (Community of St Ciarán & All Saints) have taken another step towards working together, organising just one Easter Vigil for all five parishes. Priests in small parishes know what a challenge it can be to organise the complex Easter triduum liturgies in each church. For Holy Week 2023, we celebrated separate parish services on Holy Thursday and Good Friday, but came together in our local cathedral in Skibbereen for the Easter Vigil. Each parish took responsibility for a part of the service, lessening the burden for each: onwards and upwards in 2024...

● I wrote a few months ago about my father, mentioning especially his teaching career, including the 13 years he spent in the new suburb of Crumlin in Dublin. I was amazed to receive a letter from a 95 year-old *Irish Catholic* reader who was in school at that side of Dublin in those times and recalled the young teachers of his childhood, one of whose names was Mr Cotter. Could it have been my father? My correspondent did not draw that conclusion, but given that my father taught in Crumlin from 1940 to 1953, it's possible. It is a small world!



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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The Little Way is constantly receiving requests for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs in mission lands. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk approximately three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Every euro you send will be sent direct.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **MISSION CHAPEL IN ETHIOPIA**

€..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**

€..... **WELLS AND WATER**

€..... **MASSES (please state no.)**
(We ask for a minimum of €6.50 or more for each Mass)

€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)..... (Block letters please)

Address.....

IC/06/22

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION

To donate online go to www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.