

# The Irish Catholic

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# Magdalen laundry 'myths' debunked in new history

A scene from the controversial *The Magdalen Sisters*.

**Greg Daly**

New research debunks the sensationalist myths surrounding the Magdalen laundries in Ireland, a leading historian has claimed.

Dr Jacinta Prunty, head of history at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, has painstakingly trawled the archives for a new book which aims to set the record straight.

Dr Prunty says she hopes her

new book – launched this week – will “bring the discussion back from sensationalist portrayals to real-world, specific settings”.

“The understandable but nevertheless unhelpful – and ahistorical – tendency to sweep all under a generalised ‘Magdalen laundry’ heading may be checked to some degree by this study,” she insists.

Referring to the official inquiry into institutions conducted by Dr Martin McAleese, Dr Prunty points out that the McAleese report has

“laid to rest some of the wildest accusations about the Magdalen laundries”.

### Records

“As Dr McAleese himself noted in the introduction to his lengthy report, fuelled by the absence of access to records, over the years ‘stories grew to fill these gaps’ in public knowledge, with even the basic facts of numbers and length of stay unknown.”

*The Monasteries, Magdalen*

*Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853-1973*, launched in Maynooth on Tuesday, seeks to fill these gaps in more historically substantial ways, based on over a decade's work on the Irish archives of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, who ran asylums in Dublin's Sean McDermott Street and High Park in Drumcondra, along with hostels and reformatory schools.

One thing that should challenge the popular narrative, Dr Prunty

told *The Irish Catholic*, is statistical analysis of women entering, leaving and returning to the laundries. Explaining that the vast majority of women in the asylums came and went repeatedly, she said, “that was something that really struck me – you wouldn't come back four or five times, which was fairly frequent, if things were that bad”.

For much of the laundries' history they were “cutting edge”

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**Managing Editor:** Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

**Features Editor:** Mags Gargan, mags@irishcatholic.ie

**Chief Reporter:** Greg Daly, greg@irishcatholic.ie

**Northern Correspondent:** Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie

**Newsroom:** news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874029

**Books Editor:** Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

**Layout:** Declan Moroney

**Advertising:** advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

**Accounts:** Elaine McNamee, elaine@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

**Magnificat:** magnificat@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874024

**Shop:** shop@irishcatholic.ie

**Managing Director:** Garry O'Sullivan

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

# Stalled martyrs' cause is to pick up momentum

**Greg Daly**

Fresh impetus is to be given to the cause of the Irish Martyrs, according to the Archdiocese of Dublin, with new people due to be appointed to promote their canonisation.

A statement in the archdiocesan financial reports to the effect that no funds were distributed from the Irish Martyrs Fund in the 18 months prior to the end of 2015, with efforts being underway for the terms of the fund to be changed to allow for the dispensation of funds to those in need, raised suspicions that the cause was to be put on the back burner.

## Suspensions

Dismissing such suspicions, a diocesan spokesperson has clarified that "there has been progress concerning the Irish Martyrs", explaining that efforts to expand the remit of the trust are intended to ensure that there should be flexibility around leftover monies should the entirety of the fund not be needed for the promotion of causes.

"Archbishop Martin has been in contact recently with the Congregation for Saints – the issue of Postulator and

Vice Postulator has been raised – and I understand different ways of looking at the process are being considered," the spokesperson added. Dr Martin planned to raise the matter with Cardinal Angelo Amato, who heads the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints, when the cardinal visited Dublin in May for the beatification of Blessed John Sullivan SJ.

Explaining that the cause

has been without a postulator since the end of last year, the spokesperson added that during the Irish bishops' *Ad Limina* visit to Rome in January the congregation had urged that the policy for appointing a postulator should be changed.

"This new method of choosing a postulator is underway and the postulator will be appointed by the congregation," the spokesperson

said, adding that documents found among the papers of the last vice-postulator, the late Msgr John Hanley, had been unattended for some years and are currently under inspection.

Twenty Irish Martyrs have been formally classified as 'Blessed' by the Church, 17 of these having been beatified as a representative group by St John Paul II in September 1992.

## Commemorating NY's first archbishop

Archbishop Eamon Martin unveiled a Blue Plaque commissioned by the Ulster History Circle to commemorate John Joseph Hughes (1797-1864) – first Archbishop of New York and founder of St Patrick's Cathedral, NY – on Saturday at St Macartan's Church in Augher, Co. Tyrone: Daniel J. Lawton, the American Consul-General; Chris Spurr, Ulster History Circle; Eileen McKenna, Clogher Historical Society; Archbishop Eamon Martin and Msgr Joseph McGuinness.



# Magdalen laundries 'myths' debunked in new history

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examples of women helping women at a time when the State and wider society would not support them, Dr Prunty said, observing, "they were doing what hardly anybody else in Dublin was. They were giving women a safe place and the freedom to come and go".

This persisted into the early decades of independence, she noted, when the asylums themselves were becoming

"archaic", but where the State was not addressing the real needs of vulnerable women.

Contesting popular myths about the cruelty and general vindictiveness of the sisters, of girls being taken in while pregnant, having their heads shaved and being barred from leaving, Dr Prunty said that television and cinematic interpretations of laundry life have created confusion.

"I think it's because the television and

film story took root in the popular mind before the historical research was done," she said, taking particular issue with the 2002 film *The Magdalene Sisters*.

"Almost at every point there's a misrepresentation," she said, continuing, "So much of that film *The Magdalene Sisters* is so far removed from the historical record that you almost wouldn't know where to start."

See Pages 11-13.

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Pro Life Campaign  
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Lower Fitzwilliam Street,  
Dublin 2  
info@prolifecampaign.ie  
01 6629275



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# Bumper weekend for Irish ordinations



Fr John Magner with his daughters Gemma and Emily, and Bishop William Crean, at his ordination in Cobh cathedral, Co. Cork. Photo: John Finn

## Mags Gargan

Last weekend saw four dioceses welcoming newly ordained priests, including the new holder of the title of Ireland's youngest priest.

Fr David Vard, 25, was ordained by Bishop Denis Nulty for the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin in his home parish of Newbridge on Sunday.

Fr David began his priestly studies immediately after his Leaving Cert in 2010, aged 18 and he has been appointed a curate in Portlaoise, taking up the appointment in August.

The Diocese of Down & Connor's first non-national priest was ordained by Bishop Noel Treanor in St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast on Sunday. Fr Manuelito Milo was born in the Philippines and entered a seminary there in 2006.

The following year he moved to Northern Ireland and commenced his seminary formation in St Malachy's Seminary, Belfast.

Fr John Magner was ordained for service in the Diocese of Cloyne on Sunday in St Colman's Cathedral, Cobh, Co. Cork.

A native of Castletown-



Family and friends attending the ordination of Fr Manuelito Milo pictured with Bishop Noel Treanor at St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast. Photo: Cliff Donaldson

roche, he entered the seminary aged 18 at St Patrick's College, Carlow in 1964, but did not complete his priestly studies.

He later met and married Maria O'Mahony and had two daughters, Gemma and Emily. His wife passed away in 2005 and he resumed his studies for the priesthood in 2012.

Meanwhile in Glenstal Abbey in Co. Limerick Bro. Denis Hooper OSB was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly on Saturday. Fr Denis has been a monk of Glenstal for over 30 years.



Fr David Vard and his sisters Rebecca and Charlotte recreate a childhood photo following his ordination in Newbridge, Co. Kildare. Photo: Brenda Drumm

Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly laying his hands on Fr Denis Hooper OSB at his ordination in Glenstal Abbey in Co. Limerick.



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## Cork priest creates Vatican GAA team

Mags Gargan

Thanks to the efforts of a Cork priest, Pope Francis may find a passion for the GAA, with young Vatican volunteers learning Gaelic football skills.

Msgr Joseph Murphy, from Dunamore, works in the Vatican Secretariat of State and is chaplain to the Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, the youth body of the Saints Peter and Paul Association. This is an association of the faithful set up in 1970 by Blessed Pope Paul VI after he dissolved the Palatine Guard, as a way to enable former guards to continue serving the Holy See on a voluntary basis.

The students engage in various religious, cultural, charitable and sport activities, and last year Msgr Murphy introduced them to the GAA with the assistance of the Lazio Gaelic Football Club.

As most of the boys were soccer players, Msgr Murphy said they found it difficult 'getting into the way of thinking of Gaelic football', but "once they got into it, they really enjoyed it".

While official members of Lazio Gaelic Football Club, because they have their own specific identity some friendly matches were arranged between the students and the more experienced Lazio team.

The final match was played in the presence of Ireland's Ambassador to the Holy See, Emma Madigan, who organised a reception and prize-giving ceremony to recognise the players' achievements.

See page 10.

# Catholic parish hosts Sinn Féin pro-choice campaign launch

Greg Daly

A Catholic parish centre was the location for the launch of Sinn Féin's campaign to abolish Ireland's constitutional protections for unborn children, *The Irish Catholic* understands.

The first 'Repeal and Enact' community meeting took place last week at Holy Family Parish Centre on Dublin's Prussia Street, with Sinn Féin deputy leader Mary Lou McDonald TD hosting the meeting and the National Women's Council of Ireland's

Orla O'Connor and Gerry Edwards from Termination for Medical Reasons present as guest speakers.

We've had a "lively discussion on the repeal of the Eighth Amendment, and a discussion around what kind of legislation would follow", Ms McDonald said after the meeting. Adding that Sinn Féin intends to roll the campaign out across the state with a succession of public meetings, she stressed "the need for unity to achieve this".

Commenting on the "good

attendance" at the meeting, local Sinn Féin Councillor Janice Boylan invited people "to come on board and join the party if they want to change the legislation that's there at the moment".

Mr Edwards thanked Sinn Féin for arranging the meeting, saying, "I think it's really important that we all get out into the communities, get talking to people at the grassroots level", with this being echoed by Ms O'Connor, who said, "it's really important to have conversations in local communities".

"That's what we're doing in the women's council all around the country at the moment" she said, "and just as we saw in the Citizens' Assembly, when people are given the facts and information, they will put women's lives at the centre and women's needs, and that's what we think in the end will win this referendum for women."

Representatives of Aughrim Street Parish and the Archdiocese of Dublin were not available for comment when contacted by *The Irish Catholic*.

## PLC pays tribute to Des Hanafin

The Pro Life Campaign has expressed deep sadness at the death of the campaign's Honorary President, Des Hanafin.

"Des was a great man who made an enormous contribution to Irish public life," said PLC spokesperson Cora Sherlock, who described the 30-year senator as "a wonderful raconteur" and "tremendous company".

"On the issues he is most identified with," she continued, "he took his stand out of a deep personal conviction and went to great lengths to make his point without causing offence to others. He made no end of personal sacrifices in helping the pro-life cause and was always prepared to go the extra mile."

"We are all very fortunate in the Pro Life Campaign to have known him so well and to have benefited from his advice and wisdom right up to the end of his life," she said.

Mr Hanafin died on June 22, aged 86, and was buried in Thurles, Co. Tipperary. He is survived by his wife Mona, daughter Mary, and son John.

See Page 9.

## New online prayer initiative launched

Prayer has gained a recent technological boost following the launch of myprayer.ie, which is a new and creative way of providing prayer online.

Archbishop Eamon Martin, who was involved in its development, said "I am absolutely convinced that at this time in Ireland, there is a need for a new apostolate of prayer", adding that through this "new outpouring of the Holy Spirit...we can find people with new charisms to help build up the Church."

The initiative was launched at a celebration of 50 years of Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Dublin's RDS at the weekend.

## Hosanna in the highest



Final touches being carried out to the renovation work at St Patrick's Church in Donegall Street, Belfast. Photo: Mal McCann

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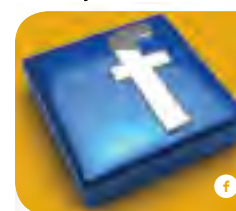
## Focolare promotes focus on unity

With recent terrorist attacks and anti-immigrant sentiment, "Universal brotherhood has never been more vital", says Catherine Burke, Co-Director of Focolare.

That's How the Light Gets In, Focolare's summer gathering, will meet July 5-9 in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

"At our gathering we want to bear witness that unity really is possible. We'll be sharing some of our own first hand experiences in regard to welcoming refugees and our discovery that God is waiting for us in every encounter," said Ms Burke.

Garret Hayes, an organising committee member, said: "The movement towards universal brotherhood has been challenged but not diminished by recent events, as is evidenced in the outpourings that have been seen in the various disasters recently in the UK."



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# My vision of a future Ireland

One of the most effective ways of transmitting an idea is to write a science fiction story: and I now have an outline for a dystopian view of Ireland in the near future.

A strongly secularised government has taken over after an emergency: the internet has been so infested by cyber attacks that much of it has been closed down. A strong and charismatic Taoiseach has emerged, who, in the style of Emmanuel Macron, has fashioned a new party, which governs with the support of radical independents.

The President of Ireland is Ivana Bacik: Ruth Coppinger, Brid Smith, Mick Wallace and Richard Boyd Barrett are all in cabinet.

## Privatisation

There has been a Privatisation of Religion Act, a Transgender Equality Act and a Prohibition of the Baptism Barrier Act. People of faith may practice their religion, but only in private. Schools, hospitals and any services in the public realm have been secularised. Faith-based charities are permitted, but controlled by the Minister for Secular Affairs. Judges appointed to the bench and to the Supreme Court must prove their secular credentials.

Some faith schools have been allowed to remain open, but only when funded by the parents and private donors – so only the wealthy can afford such schools.

Even so, the school curriculum is subjected to government inspection, and history lessons have to comply with the 'correct' government version. Historic Catholic Ireland is described as 'the Roman Occupation'.

Individuals can practice



Mary Kenny



John Hurt in a scene from 1984.

their faith discreetly, but it is seldom a wise career move. The Oireachtas Register for Secularism may monitor those seen going to Mass or church, and for public servants, it is usually a bar to career advancement.

Christians foregather and communicate with one another with extreme discretion. They may secretly carry a small symbol of a fish on their person, and, when it is deemed safe to do so, they may reveal the fish symbol to one another.

## Christians foregather and communicate with one another with extreme discretion

Some Christians, under the guise of being cigarette smokers, foregather in small groups, smoking or vaping to cover their tracks, to exchange information, samizdat publications and prayer meetings.

Because communications have been so reduced by the internet collapse, other means of messaging have to

be devised. We begin with the story of Declan and Louise, a couple who have an unblemished record of complying with the new regime. Declan is a civil servant and Louise is a teacher, so it is sensible to be seen to conform with the new order. They have two children, Conor and Maeve. Maeve has always been a lively and self-willed little girl, and when she is 11 years of age, she tells her parents that she has chosen to transgender to being a boy.

But suddenly, Declan and Louise both come to the conclusion that they really, really don't want their daughter to start on drugs to halt the onset female adolescence, with a view to surgery. Through a fluke encounter, Louise finds there is an underground Christian group which has ways of resisting the secular state...

So that's the opening of my dystopian novel, or drama, which I'll call *At the Sign of the Fish*. Maybe I'd better get it written and published before real life catches up with science fiction!

## Women in politics

All last week we heard nothing but "we need more women in politics". And yet when Arlene Foster of the DUP pulls off a stunning coup of winning £1 billion out of the tight-fisted HM Treasury – for schools, hospitals, infrastructure, and the socially marginalised – there is scarcely a word of acknowledgement for the negotiating skills of this particular woman in politics.

On the contrary, the Irish Twitterati are awash with condemnations of Arlene as 'anti-gay, anti-woman' because she adheres to traditional Christian views on marriage and

abortion. "More women in politics" seems only to mean "more of the kind of women we approve of, from the liberal-left and metropolitan elite". It escapes the modern know-nothings that supporting schools, hospitals and the marginalised, is left-wing. You don't have to be an admirer of the DUP – and I'm not – to acknowledge that as a political leader and tactician, Mrs Foster has done remarkably well for Northern Ireland, and, let's hope, with equal application for all Northern communities.

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"Pope Francis once famously described the Church as being like a field hospital, offering healing for the heart and balm for the spirit. If so, then Lough Derg provides some intensive care for the soul, and there are many, both believers and unbelievers who have found a real sense of restoration and peace on the Island.

Whatever one carries in their hearts...the joy of thanksgiving, or the pain of burden – Lough Derg is the place to bring it, where the needs of the body are disregarded and the yearning of the spirit are addressed.

Pilgrims to Lough Derg continue to find in this ancient place, as so many have done before, an increase in joy and thankfulness, and a relief from pain of heart and anguish of Spirit.'

– Monsignor Joseph McGuinness, extract from *Homily for Pilgrimage Opening Mass on Lough Derg June 2017*

**LOUGH DERG** is a place that is counter-cultural to modern society and the busyness of everyday living. One of the great benefits is the spiritual serenity that can be found in the Island sanctuary – long known as a place of welcome no matter where you find yourself on life's journey.

What the pilgrimage does is it pushes the boundaries of our comfort zone and that can be a good thing because it challenges us to be something we are not used to being. Being in touch with our true selves, facing ourselves at a deeper level and opening up to the grace of God's presence in our lives.

The Island shrine is a meeting place where God's healing grace is experienced in an intensity seldom encountered elsewhere, through the spiritual programmes, the companionship of fellow pilgrims and the sheer holiness of the Island.



## Gift yourself time

People often say of time... "when I have more time I must do that, go here and there". In truth we all know that time doesn't grow. God hands over the time we have on earth to us, we choose how we put it to use. Modern living gobbles it up one day after another... there is never enough of it to do all the things we want to do, nor does it stand still on Lough Derg.

What happens on Lough Derg is something quite special – time just seems longer. The atmosphere of peace infuses a piercing peace within that enables the body and mind to take on the physicality of the pilgrimage while allowing the heart and soul to be soothed and nourished.

## Lough Derg is more than a thing to do on the bucket list of life

The sacred Island is not a destination but an oasis of calm



Monsignor Joseph McGuinness.

and safety we arrive at before we cross back to the everyday of life.

In the silence we can listen – listen to the interior voice, we can unburden ourselves from the expectations of others and the expectations we burden ourselves with. We come to be grounded in our reality, resilience and in our relationship with God.

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Pilgrims on the Three Day Pilgrimage connect their sole with the sacred soil while the soul within connects in a deeper communion with the life force that pilots our earthy way, as one pilgrim reflected after their pilgrimage: "As I left the car-park at the lake shore of Lough Derg, I drove in silence for most of the journey because I wanted to preserve the experience of the sacred space and sacred time that I had enjoyed on the Island.

"I wanted it to have as lasting an impact on me as possible. I wanted my experience as a Lough Derg pilgrim to infuse my roles of wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, neighbour, employee and colleague etc. so that I could return home a better person at one with God and God's people."

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# We have lost urgency of Gospel mission – bishop

**Mags Gargan**

This generation has lost the “urgency to spread the Gospel”, which was the drive for thousands of Irish missionaries, according to the Bishop of Derry.

Speaking at a Mass to celebrate the golden jubilee of St Aengus’ Church in Burt, Co. Donegal, Bishop Donal McKeown said the “community of disciples that gathers in our churches are to be formed, not to defend their fortress, but so that they can be a missionary people”.

He said that while “our parishes have been wonderful at supporting the missionaries who went overseas”, this generation “has lost much of that urgency to spread the Gospel which drove

thousands to go to mission lands”.

The bishop said there is a need to “rediscover that generous energy” and “direct all that we do in every parish to forming disciples and sending them out to bring Good News”.

Bishop McKeown warned that a church building should not be a museum to the past “but a pointer that we can look to the future”, and asked what legacy are we leaving to the next generation.

“Will they look back on us as people of courage, as we look back on hard times when faith was forbidden and there were no churches? Or will they regret that we failed to sow seeds of hope so that they could reap a harvest of grace?”

## Sitting pretty



Hannah O'Connell from Cappawhite, Co. Tipperary, rules the roost at the recent Solemn Novena at the Redemptorist Church in Limerick.

## Knock to help families face challenges

Events to help families confront and deal with challenging family issues will be launched by the Family Centre at Knock Shrine next month.

The programme from July 10–15 will cover keeping the faith in difficult times, coping with grief, overcoming addiction and more in daily, evening and morning workshops with guest speakers.

A Mass and reflection hour will occur each day to complement the activity. There will also be a special focus on *Laudato Si'* and looking at practical ways we can all respond to climate change in our daily lives.

Youth volunteers from Knock Shrine will talk about their experience of faith on Friday, July 14.

The event is open to all with no fee or booking necessary.

# Surprise expressed as politicians fall for baptism barrier cliché

**Greg Daly**

Catholic schools have expressed their surprise at an Oireachtas committee disregarding evidence indicating a lack of school places, and not religion, is the key issue affecting admissions to Ireland's primary schools.

The Oireachtas' Joint Committee on Education and Skills' report on the Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2016 noted that “It was submitted that there is a lack of action in the Bill in relation to the Baptism Barrier,” continuing, “It is imperative that the relevant legislation be amended so that no child is denied admission to a state-

funded school on the basis of their religion or beliefs.”

Writing to the committee, however, Seamus Mulconry, general secretary of the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA), expressed surprise that the report chose to make recommendations on an issue that the bill does not consider.

“More importantly,” he continued, “CPSMA was surprised that the committee chose not to make any reference to the evidence and arguments presented by CPSMA and others on the fact that over-subscription, not religion is the real issue in schools' admission, and the potentially grave impact on

minority faith schools of any change in the current legislation.”

Mr Mulconry noted that in their submission to the committee, the CPSMA demonstrated that just 1.2% of unsuccessful applications to schools – approximately 0.3% of all applications – are due to the lack of a baptismal certificate.

## Evidence

“None of this evidence found its way into your report nor was any reference made to it,” he wrote, adding that the report also omitted any mention of challenges faced by minority-faith schools, or how religious affiliation is only an issue when schools were over-subscribed.

Committee member Thomas Byrne TD, however, rejected such criticisms, saying, “I've huge respect for Mr Mulconry, but it's not our job to reflect the views of any organisation. It's really our duty to come to what we believe is the way forward as elected representatives.”

Admitting that “the ‘baptism barrier’ probably is overstated” the Fianna Fáil education spokesperson insisted it is a real phenomenon. “It does happen and it's something that has to be dealt with,” he said, continuing, “It's probably not going to be dealt with very shortly – it probably won't be dealt with in this legislation, but we'll see.”

## No change to electoral law, despite SIPO reservations

The Government has no intention to modify rules for third-party political fundraising ahead of the impending abortion referendum, despite questions being raised by the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO).

Under the Electoral Act 1997, a ‘third party’ is defined as someone who accepts for political purposes a donation exceeding €100 in value, with most donations from individuals – other than Irish citizens – who reside

outside the island of Ireland being illegal.

Although SIPO believes the current provisions could hinder charities in the conduct of their ordinary affairs and doubts that this is the legislature's intention, a government spokesperson has said there are no plans to amend the 1997 act.

Last November SIPO directed the Abortion Rights Campaign to return €23,000 of funding from the US-based Open Societies Foundation.



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# Concerns new Northern Ireland deal will not benefit both sides

Mags Gargan

Concerns have been expressed that a deal which will see the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) back the Tory minority government in Britain will not benefit both sides of the community in the North.

The deal, announced on Monday, two weeks after the UK election resulted in a hung parliament, will see the 10 DUP MPs support the Tories in exchange for £1bn extra funding for infrastructure, health and education in Northern Ireland over the next two years.

As part of the deal, the military covenant, which gives better treatment to former members of the armed forces, will be implemented in full in Northern Ireland, a move criticised by Sinn Féin.

Fr Gary Donegan CP, former parish priest in Belfast's Ardoyne area, who continues to take part in talks around parading disputes, said this year's talks about the Twelfth had been stalled by

the negotiations between Arlene Foster and Theresa May, and he hoped "with the deal being done there is possibly a better chance of movement".

"Things were moving until the election was called," he said. "Up until now all eyes were on Westminster and now people can concentrate on this."

**Community**

However, Fr Donegan said there were concerns over whether the funding received through the new deal will be used to benefit one community over the other. "That's always been the issue. It is in the hands of the DUP," he said.

Fr Donegan said that as the DUP have already negotiated a better deal for former soldiers, there may be a greater chance of funding going towards "historical enquiries to do with the legacy issue" and movement on the Irish language act.

"The big issue we don't end up having a deal that is going to last six months and then go wallop again," he said.



**Like cats that got the cream**

Young members of Yellow Walls Parish in Malahide, Dublin enjoy strawberries and cream in the new parish centre on Sunday, after Fr Frank Reburn celebrated the last Mass before the summer holidays with the Family Mass group at the Church of the Sacred Heart.

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# K&L diocese develops new blueprint for the future

Mags Gargan

Bishop Denis Nulty has laid out his blueprint for the future of the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin in the face of the growing shortage of priests.

"The present situation of the shortage of vocations, the age profile of the priests and the stress associated with such realities needs serious reflection," Bishop Nulty said at a diocesan gathering in Mt St Anne's in Co. Laois attended by over 150 people last week.

The bishop announced four steps to alleviate the stressful workload of priests and asked that every parish engage in the process of a diocesan consultation about the future.

From the summer of 2019, every priest in the diocese who has reached the age of 75 "can stand down from all parish administration work" and instead lay people will be trained up in all aspects of parish administration. Bishop Nulty said priests are obviously "most welcome to

continue celebrating Masses, working as chaplains in schools and hospitals, pastorally ministering in the parish" but not "carrying the burden of administration", which he said is "simply not fair".

Bishop Nulty's plan asks for every parish to have a team of lay people working towards the "shared goal of collaborative leadership by the autumn of 2018".

He said while Parish Pastoral Councils exist, they are not in every parish and can differ from parish to parish, and "it would be a big mistake simply to pigeon-hole lay people into an existing clerical model of leadership".

The bishop said that it was not his intention to close any churches, "but there may in some areas of the diocese have to be a reappraisal of Mass times in conjunction with neighbouring parishes or cluster groups".

Finally, Bishop Nulty encouraged priests to take sabbaticals as "a normal feature of diocesan life".

## Irish community in Paris celebrate Confirmations



Bishop Michael Smith celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation for five members of the Irish community in Paris on Sunday. He is pictured with Fr Dwayne Gavin, the Irish chaplain in Paris and a priest of Meath diocese, and Confirmation candidates Grace Alexander, Andre Gillotin, Samir Amriou, David Audebert and Evelyn Delaney.

## Writer reveals real priests inspired screen portrayal

Michael Kelly

Award-winning British writer Jimmy McGovern has revealed that he wanted to portray priests in a positive light in his latest hit show as a tribute to hard-working clerics.

*Broken* – which is currently airing on BBC television – tells the story of Fr Michael, a priest working in a deprived community who works to help people overcome their struggles.

Played by Sean Bean, Fr Michael portrays the daily work that priests do to try and give more meaning to their parishioners' lives.

## Dramas

Speaking on BBC Radio 4 this week, Mr McGovern, who has won a BAFTA award for his dramas, admitted that he no longer practises his Catholic faith. However, he said: "I have a lifelong fascination with Catholicism."

While he parts company with the Church on teachings around sexuality, Mr McGovern said he felt the need to show the reality of how priests spend their lives: "up here in Merseyside we have got some marvellous priests...you find them in food banks, they work with the homeless, they work with the alcoholic, the old, the sick".

"They are absolutely amazing priests," Mr McGovern said.

During the same interview, he appeared to lament the loss of his own Catholicism admitting that he would like to regain his faith.

## Bishop urges support for anti-drugs programme

Staff reporter

Bishop Éamonn Walsh of the Irish Bishops' Drugs Initiative (IBDI) has encouraged parishes to get involved with its latest youth-centred initiative.

"With the support of the IBDI many parishes are becoming self-sufficient in the challenge to prevent drug use," Bishop Walsh said. "The latest IBDI programme 'Leave your mark' is a youth-centred initiative which trains Transition Year students with facilitation and drug awareness skills so that they in turn can educate parents of younger

students entering secondary school as part of the Confirmation programme."

He said rather than adults speaking to young people about drugs, "it is young people sharing their street-knowledge with adults", which "leads to a new way forward where, together, adults and young people address the addictive culture of alcohol, drugs and gambling".

He encouraged anyone interested in participating in the programme to contact the IBDI Coordinator, Darren Butler on +353 (1) 5053044 or by email on [darren.butler@iecon.ie](mailto:darren.butler@iecon.ie)

## MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AT CLONARD MONASTERY

### Post: Youth Ministry Worker

**Essential qualifications:** A degree in Theology or Youth Ministry with experience of working with young people and the ability to relate well to them.

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Application forms and job description available to download online [www.clonard.com/job-opportunities](http://www.clonard.com/job-opportunities) or from Clonard Monastery Reception – 028 90445950 / [reception@clonard.com](mailto:reception@clonard.com). Closing date for completed applications: Wednesday 12th July 2017: Interviews to be scheduled for 20th and 21st July 2017

### Post: Pastoral Outreach Worker

**Essential qualifications:** An appropriate qualification in Theology or related area, with a good general familiarity with Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.

This role exists to provide support to the team of Redemptorists involved in the planning and delivery of Parish Missions and to work in collaboration with the Church Ministry teams in the development of services for those who attend Clonard.

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### Post: Redemptorist Lay Missioner – occasional

**Essential qualifications:** An appropriate qualification in Theology or related area, with a good general familiarity with Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.

To support of the development of Parish Missions through participation in mission weeks in collaboration with Redemptorists and lay co-workers. Successful candidates will commit to at least 2/3 weeks per year during the mission season.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Archbishop 'impressed' by Order of Malta

The Order of Malta has been commended by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin for its commitment to alleviating social and spiritual suffering throughout the world. "The care of the sick and the troubled and the marginalised is an essential dimension of the Christian life and of the life of the Church. The Order of Malta and its members are called to be special witnesses to that care," the archbishop said in a homily at a celebration in St Mary's, Haddington Road, for the feast of St John the Baptist, patron saint of the order.

The Archbishop of Dublin also said he was "impressed" by the humanitarian message of the newly elected Lieutenant of the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Fra' Giacomo dalla Torre.

### Clonard bars barbed wire

The grounds of Clonard Monastery in Belfast are about to undergo an "aesthetically pleasing" transformation, as the decades-old barbed wire on top of the exterior walls are to be replaced with a pallet-style fence.

The barbed wire, which was added to the walls during the Troubles in order to protect the Redemptorist community who live in Clonard, is "not appropriate in this day and age", according to the rector, Fr Noel Kehoe. "Of course, there is [a] security issue. We have 18 elderly men living here, all of us secure our home... There are better ways of doing it than barbed wire," he said.

The new fence will be one metre higher than the original wall to ensure safety, and the bell tower will also be strengthened.



# Des Hanafin: conviction politician and champion of the unborn



Many young Irish people owe their lives to the late pro-lifer, writes **David Quinn**

**D**es Hanafin will have been an extremely familiar figure to many of the readers of this newspaper down the years. He was a long-serving Fianna Fáil Senator and a founder and the long-time Chairman of the Pro-Life Campaign. Des died last week, aged 85. He had been unwell for a long time but was still as active in public affairs as his health allowed him to be.

He was fully engaged by all the issues of the day until close to the end, especially the two dearest to his heart; the right to life and the welfare of the family.

Des was described in some of the media last week as “deeply conservative”. It would be more accurate to say that he had a deep commitment to the right to life and the true nature of marriage as the union of a man and a woman that is child-centred, not adult-centred, which is what marriage became in 2015.

## Referendum

Des Hanafin rose to national prominence in 1983 when the pro-life amendment (the Eighth Amendment) became part of the Constitution via a two-to-one vote in the referendum of that year.

He had fought hard as a founding member of the Pro-Life Amendment Campaign (as it was called back then) to make this happen, alongside other stalwarts like John O'Reilly.

They feared that eventually the Irish Supreme Court, like the US Supreme Court 10 years before, would eventually create a right to abortion more or less out of whole cloth, that it would miraculously find this right in the Constitution as had happened in America.



Des Hanafin.

They sought to pre-empt this, and they succeeded. Since then, the ridiculous claim has been made by those on the pro-choice side that the amendment and debate of 1983 had the perverse effect of making abortion an issue in Irish public life. But there isn't the slightest doubt that this would have happened anyway. Are we seriously to believe that our extremely pro-choice media, our pro-choice politicians, the many pro-choice academics and feminist groups would not have sought to make it an issue in any case?

**“Even when he was down, this never disabled him for long because he was a doer”**

If the pro-life amendment was not in their way, we would probably have an abortion law of some kind on our law books by now, one that would be more permissive than the euphemistically named ‘Protection of Human Life During Pregnancy Act’ of 2013. The reason all these forces are so hell-bent on repealing the Eighth Amendment is precisely because it stands in their way. Des Hanafin helped to put it in their way and that was an achievement of which he could justifiably feel very proud.

The Irish abortion rate – taking into account those who travel to Britain each year for abortions – has been consistently far lower than

the British rate itself.

If our rate was the same as in Britain, the Irish abortion rate would not be one in every 15 or 20 pregnancies as it is now, it would be one in every five.

There can be no doubt that, thanks to the 1983 referendum, there are thousands upon thousands of Irish people alive today who would otherwise not be alive. (Perversely, some of these same people will be in favour of abortion, not realising their good fortune.) But it is no exaggeration to say that Des Hanafin helped to save very many lives through his actions.

Des Hanafin also took part in the 1986 divorce referendum helping to defeat that proposal in an almost two-to-one margin. The issue then was whether marriage should be considered indissoluble or not. He believed it should be.

He also played a role in the X-case referendum of 1992, the narrowly defeated attempt to repeal the X-case in 2002, as well as the 1995 divorce referendum which, by the slenderest of margins, passed divorce.

I can't say I knew Des Hanafin very well. I met him only a few times, but to borrow the *cliché*, he was larger-than-life. Even when he was down, this never disabled him for long because he was a doer. If something needed doing, he was the man to do it. With the help of his wife, Mona, and his strong Catholic faith, he even managed to overcome his self-admitted problems with alcohol.

he was a fund-raiser for Fianna Fáil. When it boils down to it, Des Hanafin was that rare thing; a conviction politician. His convictions were never popular with the Irish media, even though he was liked by the journalists he got to know in and around Leinster House because he was likeable.

**“When it boils down to it, Des Hanafin was that rare thing; a conviction politician”**

As time went on, his convictions weren't too popular with the higher-ups in Fianna Fáil either as his party became as eager for the good opinion of the media as it once was for the good opinion of the bishops. All that changed was who it tugged the forelock to. The forelock-tugging itself never

went away.

But Des stuck by his convictions in season and out of season. He took a very strong interest in the referendum of two years ago as well. I had some contact with him at that time because he wanted to know what was going on.

By then, of course, Ireland was very different from the Ireland of the referendum triumphs of 1983 and 1986.

Liberals would say that Ireland has become more ‘tolerant’. Des would put it another way. He would say we have weakened in our commitment to the right to life in the name of ‘choice’, and we have weakened in our commitment to marriage as a vital social institution, again in the name of ‘choice’.

From somewhere up above he will now be looking down with keen interest on how the right to life of the unborn will fare if it is put to voters next year. It would be the most fitting tribute to him if we manage to win it.

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# Vatican gets its first GAA team

Pope Francis is a well-known soccer fan. His favourite team is San Lorenzo de Almagro, one of the most important teams in Argentina, and the Pontiff still keeps his membership card for the team.

However, thanks to the efforts of an Irish priest, Pope Francis may find a new love for the GAA, with the Vatican putting together its own young Gaelic football team.

Msgr Joseph Murphy, from Dunamore in Co. Cork, has worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State for almost 20 years.

Back in 2007 he began to work with the Saints Peter and Paul Association, an association of the faithful set up in 1970 by Blessed Pope Paul VI after he dissolved the Palatine Guard, as a way to enable former guards to continue serving the Holy See on a vol-



**Mags Gargan** speaks to the Cork priest behind a new GAA initiative

untary basis. The members of the association must be residents of Rome or Vatican City State and must be at least 18 years of age.

"It's a body that is probably not well known outside of Rome," says Msgr Murphy, who is their chaplain. "It is more in the background than the like of the Swiss Guard. The work is more humble, basically voluntary service, but at the same time there are always a lot of requests from people to join."

He says his role as chaplain is mainly "the spiritual care and pastoral guidance

of the members of association". "So in practical terms it means celebrating Sunday Mass, organising catechesis, religious formation and other moments of prayer, sometimes retreats and pilgrimages. I am also the point of contact between the association and the Secretariat of State, which is the body on which the association depends."

The association also has a youth group, created in 2010, called the Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati or Student Group (*Gruppo Allievi*).

The *Allievi* engage in various religious, cultural, charitable and sport activities, organised by the association's chaplains and the group leaders, which are aimed at ensuring their overall human formation.

## Holy Year

"One of the big moments for the *Allievi* in the recent past was when they served Mass with the Pope for the opening of the Holy Year," says Msgr Joseph.

"Pope Francis is quite used to them at this stage. He always comes a little early and, maybe to put people at their ease, he speaks with each of them beforehand. We were lucky to have the possibility of various occasions over the past few years to serve with the Pope. So they have all had a chance to meet him and some have served quite often."

**“We got in contact with Lazio Gaelic Football Club and they were more than delighted to assist us”**

From a sporting perspective some of the *Allievi* have taken part in a training course organised every year by the Italian Referees Association and regularly referee soccer matches organised by the Italian Football Association (FIGC). However, last year a new sports activity was introduced with the assistance of the Lazio Gaelic Football Club. "It came about through a



The young Vatican students playing football against the local GAA team and, left, Msgr Joseph Murphy and Irish Ambassador to the Holy See, Emma Madigan with the *Allievi* team at their final match against Lazio.

a local team and after Gaelic training on a Wednesday night went off to soccer training. All we can say is that it is great to be young and to be able to do that!"

While officially members of Lazio Gaelic Football Club, because they have their own specific identity some friendly matches were arranged between the *Allievi* and the more experienced Lazio team. The fourth match was played at the end of April in the presence of Ireland's Ambassador to the Holy See, Emma Madigan, who organised a reception and prize-giving ceremony to recognise the players' achievements.

Msgr Murphy says that while it is too soon to speak of a Vatican GAA team, it is hoped that this young all-Italian Gaelic football team, closely connected to the Vatican, will continue to grow and attract more players in the years ahead.

"Those who played this year want to continue next year and if we get a few more signed up who knows where it will go from there," he says.

"One problem is that there are very few GAA teams in Italy and they are far apart, so the opportunities to play matches are few and far between.

"Here in Rome having our *Allievi* with the Lazio team, gives the Lazio players a chance to practise that they wouldn't otherwise have.

"We are hoping that in time it will catch on. A number of members have come to watch the matches and have been quite excited by it. There is also a hope that some Irish team could come over to Rome and it would be interesting to organise a match with Lazio, maybe in the form of a tournament."

The Ss Peter and Paul Association's traditional procession on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the Vatican Gardens.

providential set of circumstances and in part having an Irish chaplain helps," says Msgr Murphy. "Last summer at home in Cork, I saw that the GAA World Games were on in Dublin and I hadn't realised before that there were so many people, who are not of Irish background, who play the game in all parts of the world. Upon further investigation I found the game was already being played in Italy for the last five or six years by a number of clubs.

"So when I got back to Rome I talked to our young people to see if they were interested. It turned out that one of them had been on an exchange in Dublin a few years ago and had played it and was enthusiastic. As often happens when you have one young person who is involved in something, they usually draw others with them.

"So we got in contact with Lazio Gaelic Football Club and they were more than delighted to assist us, as they were also hoping to get new players as well."

The Lazio club was founded in 2012 as Rome Gaelic Football Club by a number of Irish players. On becoming part of the Lazio multisport society in 2015 it changed its name. In the space of just a few years, the men's team had become predominantly Italian, while the ladies' team is still dominated by English speakers.

A number of *Allievi* agreed to take part in the club's weekly training sessions and in the space of a few months succeeded in learning the basic skills and tactics of Gaelic football.

## Much faster

"Most of them were soccer players so the difficulty for them was getting into the way of thinking of Gaelic football, which involves use of the hands and is a lot faster. Once they got into it, they really enjoyed it," says Msgr Murphy.

"There was a fair commitment involved in terms of weekly training and preparing for matches. Some of our players play soccer with

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# Women helping women: the reality of the laundries

The asylums run by the sisters of Our Lady of Charity were radically different to the popular image, according to Dr Jacinta Prunty



"So much of the film *The Magdalene Sisters* [pictured] is so far removed from the historical record that you almost wouldn't know where to start," Dr Prunty says.

**D**uring the preparation of 2013's McAleese Report, Maynooth historian Dr Jacinta Prunty met with a panel where one of the men involved asked about shaving the girls' heads, one of the actions most commonly linked in the popular mind with Ireland's Magdalen Asylums.

"All I could think was that they were constantly buying combs every year," Dr Prunty says, continuing, "the accounts showed that they were constantly buying combs, shoes and underwear. They were kitting the women out."

One might expect that even if the women who spent brief periods in the asylums had not had their heads shorn, at least this would have happened with the 'consecrates', the Magdalen women in the most precise sense, who committed themselves to living permanently in the asylums.

"Even the consecrates didn't," Dr Prunty says, continuing, "we have pictures of them, with big heads of hair."

Pictures of the women of the asylums stretch back to the asylums' early years she says, with these being of all categories of women. While few of these pictures are now in the public domain, she emphasises that the photos are in the archives, there for researchers to consult.



Greg Daly

Now Maynooth's head of history, Dr Prunty is a Holy Faith sister and a historical geographer by training, who before moving to Maynooth worked in UCD for five years on the three overlapping areas of historical geography, history, and archives.

**"I knew the area, knew the period, and knew the key characters already from my own PhD work"**

Her PhD work entailed her working on her order's 19th-Century founder Margaret Aylward, which gave her a familiarity with the character, individuals, and details of north Dublin city in the second half of the 19th Century; this proved a very useful grounding for a major project, the roots of which were put down in 2003 and which sees fruition this week.

*The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reforma-*

*tory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853-1973*, launched in Maynooth on Tuesday this week, delves deep into the archives of an order that has become notorious – unfairly so in Dr Prunty's opinion – in recent years for its running of laundries in High Park and Sean McDermott Street.

Although the published book clocks in at over 600 pages, its genesis was in 2003 when two sisters told Dr Prunty that their order was 150 years in Ireland that year, and they thought it could be useful to publish a booklet commemorating that fact.

## Jubilee

"The jubilee had precipitated the interest, but also they had moved all their historical material onto one site in High Park," Dr Prunty adds, explaining how this – and the work of the sisters' first professional and professionally-advised archivists – had made a serious research project practical, since previously the archives had been scattered across standalone autonomous houses.

She had an interest in the topic anyway, having been born and brought up in Glasnevin with Drumcondra as her public library. "I had a childhood knowledge of the district," she says, continuing, "I knew the area, knew the period, and knew the key

» Continued on Page 12

## WORLD APOSTOLATE OF FATIMA IRELAND

Sunday 9th July 2017

National Celebration of the Centenary of Fatima.

Knock Shrine, Co. Mayo



**The faithful across Ireland are invited to celebrate the centenary of the Fatima Apparitions.**

**2.30 pm - Blessing of the Sick**

**3.00 pm - Celebration of the Eucharist**

MAIN CELEBRANT:

**Most Rev Eamon Martin DD**

Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland. National Patron WAF IRELAND

**All are welcome**

This celebration on 9th July will offer a time of prayer and reflection to coincide with the centenary of the apparitions and also to celebrate the canonisation of two of the visionaries of the Marian apparitions at Fatima Jacinta and Francisco Marto.



# “Look, if I found evidence of abuse or misappropriation or

» Continued from Page 11

characters already from my own PhD work. I had always been interested in the poverty and destitution and how women coped – how women helped each other, and how they made ends meet and got by.

“I’ve always had that interest in women and children – they are the piece of history that’s least written up,” she says, explaining that the 19th-Century women who built refuges, hospitals, and schools for Ireland’s poor “were really on the cutting edge”.

These women shouldn’t be thought of in isolation either, she adds, highlighting that when women were in religious orders, “all of their brothers and brothers-in-law, their married sisters, their nieces and networks, and all of these family networks contributed”.

Networks of support, including outside groups, are well-attested through the sisters’ meticulously kept archives, she says, highlighting how the Rathmines and Rathgar Musical Society would put on concerts

in High Park, and stressing overall that “when we talk about religious women, we should go back immediately to say the women and their co-workers”.

One of the most surprising aspects of her research on the book, Dr Prunty says, was the extent to which the asylums had a lively engagement with the outside world.

**“When the nuns came to Dublin in the 1850s, they were flabbergasted that there was no state support for poor women”**

Emphasising that the asylums weren’t “hermetically sealed”, she says: “Part of the reason for all this outside lay and family involvement was of course that the sisters of Our Lady of Charity were an enclosed order, so they weren’t leaving outside the fences of High Park so could only operate with networks of committees and benefactors and friends and relations

and collectors, so they were very much networked into the city.”

The sisters of Our Lady of Charity first came to Dublin from France in 1853, invited to the city by a Fr John Smith who had established a refuge in Drumcondra; the sisters and Fr John – who Dr Prunty calls “impossible to work with” swiftly fell out, so with support from Archbishop Paul Cullen they bought their own house at High Park and moved the refuge there over 1857 and 1858.

“When the nuns came to Dublin in the 1850s, they were flabbergasted that there was no state support for poor women and destitute children outside of the workhouses that had just started,” she says, continuing, “they couldn’t believe it. They were used to the state supporting refuges and supporting orphanages.”

During the early decades of High Park’s history, such asylums were cutting edge. “The women in them were people that nobody wanted anything to do with, and the closest parallel now is to a kind of women’s refuge

for battered and homeless and out-of-home women, and former prisoners, and women who had been driven to prostitution or who were in danger of ending up in prostitution,” she says, continuing, “This was a very big reality in the Dublin of the 1890s – one we maybe don’t like to face up to.”

Women could access these homes simply by showing up at the door, and presenting themselves, Dr Prunty says, emphasising that they weren’t cross-examined in any way. “Internally, the thinking was that if you came to the door and presented yourself as in need of overnight accommodation, if we have a bed at all, come in. Very many of them left within a day or two, as the statistics show,” she says.

“Like all of these asylums, refuges and charitable homes, it made a weekly income by laundry work,” she adds, describing this as “the standard way”, and pointing out that, “because they worked – and that was part of it – in the laundry, and the house, and the kitchens, and the sowing room, and in all parts of the domestic sphere, the idea was that if you came and looked for accommodation, you weren’t begging and were working towards your keep.”

## Dignity

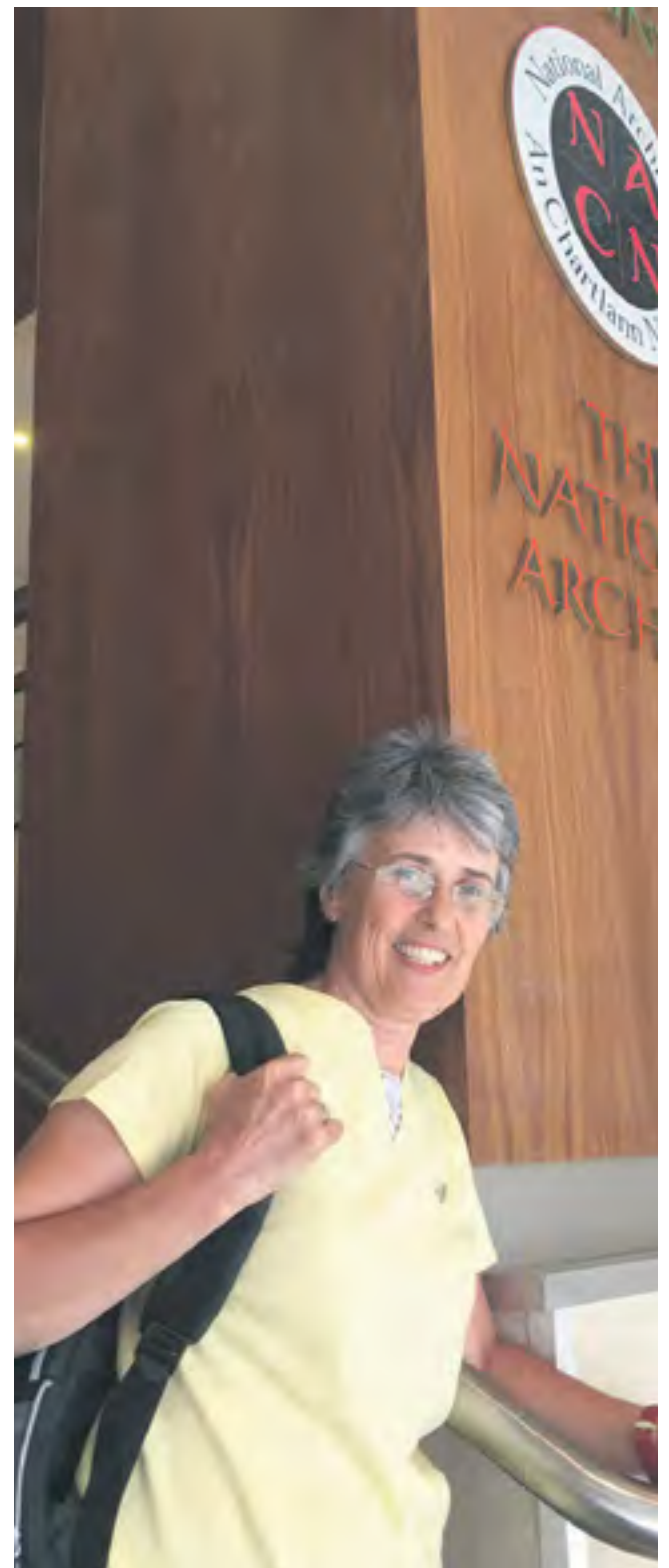
Even before Leo XIII launched the current era of Catholic social teaching with *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, the notion that there was dignity in work was key to the sisters’ thinking.

“It wasn’t begging – there was a thing they had about the dignity of work,” she says, continuing, “it was important that women felt they were genuinely contributing. Working in the laundries has been constructed as though this was a penitential exercise, but this was genuine in terms of the income of the house, and it was treating women – and the sisters – so that everyone contributed to their own upkeep.”

**“This emphasis on ensuring women had a safe space continued right through the 20th Century”**

Perhaps it wasn’t surprising then that among the many visitors the sisters’ asylums received from the 1890s were people who came from England to see “how well things were done in Dublin”, regarding them as offering “a kind of model asylum and refuge”.

Stressing that “They were doing what hardly anybody



Dr Jacinta Prunty.

else in Dublin was,” Dr Prunty observes that “they were giving women a safe place and the freedom to come and go, which is the statistical fact of the story. It was women giving for women.”

This emphasis on ensuring women had a safe space continued right through the 20th Century, she says, noting how though it’s not in the book, when the State advised the sisters that factory inspections would have to take place, “the nuns in High Park wrote back saying that factory inspections were fine but they only wanted women inspectors – you could see why they did that, as they didn’t want fellows coming in to leer at the women or take advantage, but they had no problem with female inspectors”.

By the 1890s, the sisters were investing a lot in mechanised equipment such

that they could boast of how modern their laundry was, and the laundry continued its work right through to independence, when refuges for women were still needed, with destitution still being a serious problem.

“It was still a huge reality in the 1920s and indeed the 1930s, and we have plenty of reports from the Free State that show this – it’s a part of Irish history we’d often prefer were not exposed, women ending up in prostitution out of destitution and homelessness,” she says.

## Mass migration

At this period, she says, the country was very poor in general, marked by mass emigration and with precious little new building and investment going on.

“I would regard those as periods when the sisters were



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# anything serious, you have no idea how fast I can move..."



just ticking over – they're maintaining what is becoming more archaic as an institution," she says, continuing, "they were still providing a safe place, but it was only in the mid-1950s that they got into modernising – we know a good bit about it because they had their centenary in 1953, and there was a lot of documentation around."

Incremental changes were the order of the day from the 1950s on, she says, explaining how gradual shifts saw days out and excursions, the ending of uniform dress – itself largely due to supplying clothes to women whose clothes were in poor condition, and in 1965 the ending of enforced attendance at daily Mass.

**“I didn't realise that the vast bulk of the women in the asylums came and went, and came and went repeatedly”**

"You can track the modernisation from about 1955 – they start with the physical building – and it gathers pace from about 1965," she says, adding that after 1973 it simply "isn't historically correct" to speak of Magdalen asylums.

One of the more contentious aspects of 2013's McAleese Report was the report's observation that it found no evidence of the kind of brutality that is part and parcel of the popular myth of the laundries, but in

her research Dr Prunty has similarly found no evidence of such behaviour.

In connection with the report she was interviewed by members of An Garda Síochána, who asked whether there was anything she should be telling them.

"Look," she says, "if I found evidence of abuse or misappropriation or anything serious, you have no idea how fast I can move. Whitehall Garda station is on the corner, practically, of Grace Park Road. I'd have been up there like a hare, because ethically I'd have to be, as a historian. I've a university ethics committee and am part of the university community: people don't think of that, that it's an ethical profession.

"For example, if I found material I didn't like, or that was against my own order, I'm nearly conscience-bound to make sure it's in – nearly to go to the extreme of looking for and making sure there's no question that stuff is not

suppressed, because the suppression of information is unethical," she says.

## Historians

Pointing out that this can be a difference between university historians and amateur scholars, she says that university academics are in privileged positions that entail responsibilities.

"You're answerable to the ethics committee and you're meant to model good history and good research methodologies," she says, continuing, "and you also know the next person is going to go through what you worked on with a fine comb – and they're meant to!"

Admitting that other historians could reach conclusions different to hers, she says "at least what I've done should be a reasonable interpretation based on the evidence that I've had access to", describing her work as "a serious ethical undertaking, and one that as a university historian you're

trusted to do, by the public and by the college".

A clue to how the popular narrative is flawed, she says, is how the figures show that women came and went freely from the asylums, often coming back repeatedly.

"One of the things you have is for the first time ever we have statistical analysis – actual numbers showing entrances, exits, and returns," she says, continuing, "and that does change the narrative, even seeing how many came and went over a short period, and the fact that there were multiple entrants. And then working out that say, one or two stayed every year, and some were very young and stayed for very long periods of time."

This was startling to her, she says: "I didn't realise that the vast bulk of the women in the asylums came and went, and came and went repeatedly," she says, adding, "that was something that really struck me – you wouldn't

come back four or five times, which was fairly frequent, if things were that bad."

Noting that women were always taken back, she says: "You repeatedly find notes like 'not to be taken back again', and two weeks later she'd be back in. That struck me vividly. The thing was, if you refused her, were you putting her eternal salvation in jeopardy, so you'd give them the benefit of the doubt. I would push it and say that they really zealous about their vocation – their vocation was the salvation of souls, and there was no pussyfooting about it. They really did believe it."

Also new to her, she says, was how the refuges were run in parallel to the convent, so the whole rhythm of life in the woman's refuge was the rhythm of the convent. "If you were looking for how people were treated, you look at the way the novices were treated," she says, observing, "you'll see parallels with how the novices were treated and even the language used about the novices and the language used about the women."

In addition, she says, there was clearly a tendency among the women to think of the asylums as potentially like asylums. "Very many came back to die," she says, "that was a big thing all of the time – very many women came back to retire, in illness and to die in the infirmary where they were guaranteed comfort – they were very proud of their infirmary."

**“You repeatedly find notes like ‘not to be taken back again’, and two weeks later she'd be back in”**

Noting that medical expenses were high in the asylums, she adds that there was typically a high infirmary population, with the women there being seen as real members of the community: "The women in the infirmary weren't working but they were contributing to the house through their prayers and sufferings bravely borne."

Where women were permanent residents, she says, a tiny fraction took religious names like 'Magdalen of the Sacred Heart' and lived in parallel with the nuns, making promises of perseverance. These women, the 'Magdalen women' proper, were technically called 'consecrates' – a category that had gone by the 1950s – and would be buried in the convent grounds or in a small High Park burial site, with the other women – the vast majority – being buried at Glasnevin.

"All the women were buried properly, every woman who died in High Park is accounted for, without exception," she says, continuing, "the consecrates had obituaries the same as the nuns, printed in the internal circular letters, and some of the other women had short write-ups, depending on how long they were there."

**“The TV and film story took root in the popular mind before the historical research was done”**

While the documents in the archives need viewing with a critical eye, and with critical eyes also being needed for her book, she says, the statistics that have come to light, even if imperfect, should transform the popular narrative.

Unfortunately, she says, the myths persist.

"I think it's because the TV and film story took root in the popular mind before the historical research was done. In most cases you have history done first and then it develops into kind of docudramas – usually you have a historical basis first. In this case it's gone in reverse," she says.

"If I started going through them I wouldn't get any further," she says of the myths, in particular highlighting the depiction of the nuns as utterly vindictive, and such issues as girls entering the asylums while pregnant or being imprisoned there.

"Almost at every point there's a misrepresentation. So much of that film *The Magdalene Sisters* is so far removed from the historical record that you almost wouldn't know where to start," she says.

Not helping matters, she admits, is the loyalty the sisters feel to their former charges and the assurances they gave them.

"The sisters take to the extreme the promise of confidentiality that they gave the girls on entry – they have given a promise that anything that's said to them by a girl will not be divulged to anybody else including in the convent, and that has certainly tied their hands," she says, adding, "the myths persist and the nuns are not fighting it – I think they're leaving it to God."

**•** The Monasteries, Magdalen Asylums and Reformatory Schools of Our Lady of Charity in Ireland, 1853-1973 is available for €29.99 including p&p from Columba Press, phone (01) 687 4096 or email sales@columba.ie



Photo: RTÉ



# Out&About

## Ógra Beo Programme in Tralee



**KERRY:** Tralee Youth Ministry presentation of certificates for Ógra Beo Programme 2017 at Our Lady and St Brendan's Church Tralee. Pictured with certificates holders David Oba, Leon Shalemba, Niamh McMahon, Katie O'Carroll, Mary O'Connell, Clara Moran, and Laura Devane, are Fr Pádraig Walsh PP, Our Lady and St Brendan's Church, and Fr Bernard Healy CC, St John's Church, Tralee and helpers. Photo: John Cleary



**CORK:** The First Communion class at the Gael Scoil Ui Riada, Wilton making a presentation to Autism Ireland at the conclusion of the programme at St Joseph Church, with Fr Michael O'Leary SMA.



**DOWN:** Canon Michael Hackett celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination in Newry Cathedral on Sunday, June 18. Photo: Mark G. Byrne

## IN SHORT

### MSCs offer virtual candles for loved ones

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart's new 'Light a Candle' webpage makes it easier than ever for you to send a symbol of hope or encouragement to a loved one, wherever they are in the world.

"Lighting a candle is a beautiful way to let someone special know that you are thinking of them and on the new MSC website, you can send a candle to a loved one anywhere in the world with the simple click of a button," said spokesperson Karen Moloney.

When lit, the candle will burn in the online gallery for three days and your intention will be remembered in the prayers of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart during this time. You can also send your candle to friends or loved ones, with a special message of your own. See [www.mscmissions.ie](http://www.mscmissions.ie)

### Kilmore launches new 'Backpack Summer Camp'

The Kilmore diocese is sponsoring a summer camp called The Backpack-Essential Tools for Life for young people between the ages of 13-18. The five-day programme will run in Cavan Institute, Cavan Town from July 3-7; Ballinamore Community School from July 17-21 and in the Community Centre Manorhamilton from July 24-28.

The programme, developed by Kathryn Clarke and Margaret McGahon, was initially created at the request of Bishop Leo O'Reilly after a diocesan assembly identified a gap in meaningful and appropriate youth formation. Piloted over a period of five years in Kilmore diocese, the programme has been run successfully in many schools and parishes locally. The summer camp is designed to provide an introduction to the topics covered in the larger programme and

help young people to engage with areas of concern around their thoughts, relationships and wellness.

For more information see [www.thebackpack.life](http://www.thebackpack.life) or call 083 487 7325.

### Eucharistic Adoration Assembly in Tullamore

The Meath Diocesan Adoration Committee recently planned three Eucharistic Assemblies with the same programme in three different locations in the diocese to enable all weekly adorers to be inspired, affirmed and nourished spiritually.

The first of the assemblies took place in Tullamore to a packed conference room. Bishop Michael Smith attended, as well as priests, religious and hundreds of lay people from the 15 parishes around that area.

The day was broken up with prayer, talks, reflections, PowerPoint

presentations, testimonies, music, details of the Pope's visit and plans for WMOF2018 and then Mass.

The next assembly will take place in Navan on October 7.

### Dromantine to host SMA summer school

The Society of African Missions (SMA) has just announced the 2017 theme and line-up for its popular Summer School at Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre in Newry, Co. Down: 'Faith Responding to Changing Times'.

The will event will be facilitated by Fr Sean Healy SMA and the keynote speakers and workshop presenters include Justin Kilcullen, Mary Reynolds, Paul Vallyley, Dr Bryan McMahon, Dr Fainche Ryan, Fr Gerry O'Hanlon SJ and Dr Jessie Rodgers.

The summer school runs from July 7-9 and attendance must be booked in advance. See [www.sma.ie](http://www.sma.ie)



Edited by Mags Gargan  
mags@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**OFFALY:** Members of Meath Diocesan Adoration Committee with Bishop Michael Smith, helpers from Tullamore Adoration Committee as well as speakers and presenters at the Adoration Assembly which was held in Tullamore.



**DUBLIN:** The Corpus Christi procession moving through the streets of North Wall, Dublin. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin joined parishioners of inner city parish of North Wall (Seville Place) for the celebration and celebrated Mass in the church of St Laurence O' Toole. Photo: John McElroy



**KERRY:** Members of Clonkeen Youth Choir who this week launch their CD 'Clonkeen Choir Celebrate': Teacher Rosie Healey, Mairead Kelleher, Ellen Cronin, Alicia Cronin and Roisin Kelleher.



**KILDARE:** A section of the large crowd which took part in the Corpus Christi procession in St Conleth's Parish in Newbridge.



▲ **CORK:** Parish priest Fr Greg Howard and Bishop of Cork and Ross, Dr John Buckley welcoming Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Cllr Tony and Georgina Fitzgerald to their parish church, St Mary's on the Hill, for special celebratory Mass on Saturday night. Former priests of the parish, Canon Liam O'Regan, Fr Michael Regan, Fr Damian O'Mahony and Fr Paul O'Donoghue returned to concelebrate Mass with Fr Greg. Photo: Mike English

◀ **LIMERICK:** Members of the Board of Management of Scoil Iosagain CBS, Sexton St, Limerick on the occasion of the retirement of Patrick Hanley as principal for the past 24 years: Michael Keogh, Bro. James Dormer, Seamus Bermingham (chairperson), Patrick Hanley (principal), Regina Sheehan, Angela O'Flynn, (treasurer), David Neill and Michael O'Sullivan.

## ANTRIM

The First Saturday Devotions will take place each month in St Matthias Church, Glen Road, Belfast. Adoration/Confessions and Consecration to Our Lady at 3pm, Mass at 4pm.

## ARMAGH

Eucharistic Adoration in St Malachy's Church, Armagh daily from 6am to midnight, and all night on Wednesdays.

Adoration chapel, Edwards St, Lurgan, adoration weekdays, 9am-9pm.

## CLARE

Holy Rosary hour marking the centenary of the apparitions at Fatima at the square Ennis, first Saturday, July 1 at 2.30pm.

The first-class relics of St Padre Pio and the children of Fatima will be coming to Ennis cathedral on Saturday, July 1 from 1.30-4.30pm. Also present will be a pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima. Holy Rosary at 2.45pm.

## CORK

Busses running from Cork city and other locations in Co. Cork to the pro-life rally in Dublin on July 1. For details places contact Chris 085-2392207.

St Colman's Society for Catholic Liturgy has announced that the Fota X International Liturgy Conference, to be held in Cork from July 8-10, will be opened by Cardinal Raymond Burke. Contact colman.liturgy@yahoo.co.uk or 021 4813445.

The Alliance of the Two Hearts First Friday & First Saturday Vigil of Reparation and Adoration, Church of the Real Presence, Curraheen Road, Bishopstown. Rosary 8pm. Mass 9.30pm. First Saturday Mass at midnight Friday. Vigil ends 3.30am. Come for all or part of the night. All welcome.

A pro-life Mass is held on the last Friday of every month at the Poor Clares monastery, College Road, Cork at 7.30pm.

## DUBLIN

Our Lady of Knock prayer meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month in St Gabriel's Nursing Home, Glenayle Road, Raheny, D5, from 8pm-9pm. All welcome.

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

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

## FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Wednesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm. All welcome. www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly

## GALWAY

Padre Pio weekend in Our Lady of Clonfert Church, Clonfert from July 1-2: Saturday, Mass at noon with homily by Michael

O'Connor and Rosary and Benediction at 8pm. Sunday, Healing Mass at 2pm with homily by Olive Shaughnesy and Rosary and Benediction at 7pm. Blessing with first class relic at both Masses.

## KERRY

The Alliance of the Two Hearts First Friday and First Saturday vigil of adoration and reparation in Caherciveen parish church at 3pm: Divine Mercy chaplet, adoration, rosaries. Ends with Mass at 7.30pm.

## KILDARE

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

## KILKENNY

First Saturday Devotions, Adoration, Rosary, Divine Mercy and Prayer for Healing from 7-9pm in St Fiacre's Church, Loughboy.

Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday at 5pm in St Patrick's Church, College Road, Kilkenny (opposite St Kieran's College).

## LIMERICK

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

## MAYO

Holy Souls Society of Ireland annual pilgrimage to Knock Shrine - August 21 for a 3pm Novena Mass.

The next Latin Mass in the Old (Tridentine) Rite will take place in the Parish Church, Knock on Sunday, July 9 at 5.30pm.

## MEATH

Christ the King Prayer Group, Enfield, meeting every Monday evening, 7.30-8.30pm, Enfield Parish Centre.

## SLIGO

Latin Mass in Carraroe on the last Sunday of each month at 3pm.

## TIPPERARY

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

## WICKLOW

The Glenree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glenree on the First Saturday of every month.

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

Holy Hour of Adoration, Prayer and Music continues every Wednesday, 8pm-9pm, in St Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town. All welcome. You can also join us on the live stream: <http://www.churchservices.tv/spatrickschurchwicklow>







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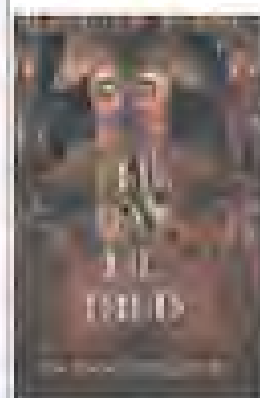
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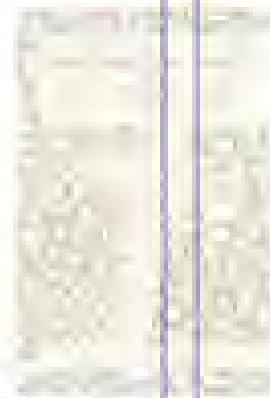
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# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Dignity of all is key to equal human rights

● Recognising that “all people are born with inherent equal dignity and worth and have a fundamental right to life” is at the heart of human rights, the Vatican’s UN nuncio has said.

Speaking to Latin American leaders at the Organisation of American States’ general assembly, Archbishop Bernardito Auza voiced concerns over how “the right to life of the unborn, of migrants in search of safety, of victims of armed conflicts, of the poor, of the handicapped, of the elderly and the right to life of those facing the death penalty continues to be ignored, dismissed and debated rather than prioritised”.

During the debate on ‘Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law’, Dr Auzo called for a “deeper understanding of the global human rights challenges we face today”, and said the rule of law is meant to be “an exemplary teacher”, rather than simply maintaining harmony and order.

### Cardinal condemns Islamist attack on Philippines chapel

The reported desecration of a Catholic chapel in the Philippines by terrorist gunmen has been condemned “in the strongest terms possible” by Cotabato’s Cardinal Orlando Quevedo.

About 300 members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, an ISIS-affiliated group known as BIFF, attacked Pigcawayan town on June 21, displacing about 1,700 people and destroying religious images in the chapel according to the local police chief.

of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ were destroyed while the sacred hosts were thrown all over the floor,” Chief Inspector Reylyan Mamon said.

Describing the desecration as “wicked” and “gravely sinful”, the cardinal described the acts as “similar to the desecration of a mosque and the sacred Koran by non-Muslims”, and called on BIFF leaders to punish the men who had desecrated the chapel, while urging local Catholics to restore the chapel’s sacredness.

“The crucifix and images

### Fear underpins move to create new Zambian dictatorship

● Zambia’s president is guilty of intimidating opponents and silencing the media, according to the head of the Zambian Catholic bishops’ conference and other religious leaders in the east African country.

Describing the country as being at a crossroads as it faces “many challenges related to governance, the muzzling of people’s freedoms and human rights violations”, Lusaka’s Archbishop Telesphore Mpundu of Lusaka said in a joint statement with leaders of the Council of Churches of Zambia and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia that he was saddened by the “blatant lack of political will” to tackle Zambia’s crisis.

“Only leadership that does not have the will of the people on its side, or thinks it does not have the will of the people on its side, uses state institutions to suppress that same will,” they said, expressing fears that President Edgar Lungu is “creating a new dictatorship”.

### Regulator rows back on limitations

Catholic pharmacists in Britain should not be obliged to dispense lethal drugs against their consciences, Britain’s pharmacy regulator has declared.

Backing away from proposals to abolish the rights of people with religious convictions to conscientiously object to dispense the morning-after pill, contraceptives and hormone-blocking drugs for transsexual patients, the General Pharmaceutical Council

has said “Professionals have the right to practice in line with their religion, personal values or beliefs as long as they act in accordance with equalities and human rights law and make sure that person-centred care is not compromised.”

The regulatory body urged pharmacists to work in partnership with their employers and colleagues to ensure that patient care is not compromised.

## British doctors oppose abortion without restrictions proposal

Over 1,000 British doctors and medical students have publicly opposed efforts to persuade the British Medical Association (BMA) to back abortion up to birth.

Ahead of the association’s annual representative meeting, the doctors and students have signed a letter to Dr Anthea Mowat, the doctors’ union representative body chairwoman, warning that plans to decriminalise abortion would threaten the reputation of the BMA.

Under British law, abortion is technically illegal although doctors are exempt from prosecution if certain criteria are met, notably in cases where the unborn child is under 24 weeks gestation age and two doctors state that abortion would be less harmful for a woman’s health than the pregnancy’s continuation.

### Signatories

Cautioning that “if these measures were to be implemented, it would mean the introduction of abortion for any reason, to at least 28 weeks and possibly up to birth”, the signatories, who hold a range of positions on



Dr Anthea Mowat.

the general issue of abortion, urge the BMA to reject this “extreme motion”.

They describe the motion as at odds with their duties as “responsible professionals” and “the expressed wishes of British women with regards to the legality and regulation of abortion”. Pointing to how polls consistently show that most women want more restrictions on abortion, rather than fewer, they cited a ComRes poll from last month which found that just 1% of women wanted to see

the time limit for abortion extended through to birth, while 70% wanted to see the abortion time limit reduced to 20 weeks or below.

Warning against allowing a “small group of campaigners with extreme views on abortion” to “impose their agenda on the BMA and risk severely damaging our reputation as a professional body,” the signatories said that British law, however imperfect, attempts to recognise “that the life and health of both mother and baby need legal

protection”.

Lord Alton of Liverpool praised the doctors, who come from a wide range of areas of expertise including obstetrics and gynaecology, for speaking out, saying, “More than most, doctors know that abortion involves the deliberate killing of another human being.”

He congratulated those “who have had the courage to stand for the scientific truths against those who pursue the dark ideology that babies in the womb should have no rights.”

## Follow Vatican’s lead to save Venezuela, former Latin leaders say

Time is running out to solve Venezuela’s problems, two former Latin American leaders have announced, calling for the international community to follow the Vatican’s lead in tackling the crisis.

Speaking in the Vatican, Bolivia’s former president Jorge Quiroga said that President Nicolas Maduro’s attempts to “put a group of his friends in what is called a ‘constituent assembly’ would be the end of democracy and the annihilation of the Republic of Venezuela”. He warned that this would “install a Soviet state in Venezuela, liquidate democracy, end the Congress, cancel elections and

turn Venezuela into a sort of Caribbean ‘North Korea’.

Columbia’s former president Andres Pastrana [pictured] asked whether support for Mr Maduro from other Latin American leaders was tantamount to saying “keep killing, continue slaughtering youth who are raising their voices in Venezuela”, and said, “I think dialogue has ended in Venezuela, that word has been stricken from the Venezuelan dictionary.”

Protests and conflict have racked the South American country since March, when Venezuela’s supreme court ruled to dissolve the country’s opposition-

dominated parliament and transfer legislative powers to the Maduro-backed court.

Thanking Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin for his call for humanitarian aid, free elections and the release of political prisoners, Mr Pastrana said he hoped the international community would follow the Vatican’s proposals

“The Vatican has enormous moral and political weight and its position – in the name of Cardinal Parolin and the Holy Father – would be a determining factor to reel Venezuela back in toward the path of democracy,” he said.



## Church says protests are response to government failure

Campaigns by the ethnic Gorkha people for a separate homeland in a separate area of eastern India are based in real grievances, according to the local Church.

The area has witnessed violent clashes since June 8, and although Darjeeling’s

Bishop Stephen Lepcha said: “The Church is not directly involved in the protest,” he has added, “but the Church is with the people.”

Explaining that the locals want autonomy as the West Bengal government have not attended

to their needs, Dr Lepcha said: “The problem arises here again because people do not see the government helping with any development in this hilly region. People suffer unemployment and poverty. The administration has failed miserably.”

Although Catholics are a small minority in the area, he said they were in a good position to work for peace. “We are in a process to find out some ways to help bring peace back to the region,” he said.





Edited by Greg Daly  
greg@irishcatholic.ie

## Fair play in Missouri



Activists rally outside the US Supreme Court after the court sided with Trinity Lutheran Church in Columbia, Missouri, which had sued after its preschool was denied access – just because it was a religious entity – to a state grant programme to refurbish its playground surface. Photo: CNS

# US Senate healthcare proposals endanger poor, Church warns

Healthcare proposals before the US Senate contain and even compound “many of the fundamental defects” that marred the healthcare act that was passed by the House of Representatives, according to the head of the US bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

Responding to the publication of the discussion draft of the Better Care Reconciliation Act, Venice, Florida’s Bishop Frank Dewane [pictured] said: “As is, the discussion draft stands to cause disturbing damage to the human beings served by the social safety net,” continuing, “It is precisely the detrimental impact on the poor and vulnerable that makes the Senate draft

unacceptable as written.”

Dr Dewane especially criticised caps on Medicaid funding, which he said would “wreak havoc on low-income families and struggling communities, and must not be supported”.

Further work is needed in the area of conscience rights as well as for care of immigrants, he said, criticising the proposals’ failure to move the US towards real access for immigrants in health care policy”, and adding “It fails, as well, to put in place conscience protections for all those involved in the health care system, protections which



are needed more than ever in our country’s health policy.”

Other negative reactions came from Larry Couch, director of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd’s National Advocacy Centre, who warned that under the proposals, “millions of children living in poverty, people with disabilities, and older people in nursing homes will be denied life-saving medicine and care”, while

Sr Simone Campbell, a Sister of Social Service who heads the Network Catholic social justice lobby, who said: “My faith challenges me to heal the sick and care for the widow and the orphan. This Republican bill does the opposite.”

## Ordinary South Sudanese victims of politicians on all sides

Church leaders in South Sudan have criticised the country’s political leaders on all sides for driving economic decline, famine and violence by placing political and personal interests above the needs of ordinary people.

Juba’s Archbishop Paulino Lukudo Loro and other members of the South Sudan Council of Churches said in a statement

concluding a meeting in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa that South Sudan’s problems were “a result of mismanagement, blatant corruption, insecurity, lack of governance and the rule of law”.

### ‘Losers’

Describing ordinary people as the losers in South Sudan’s conflicts, the clerics related

how they had met with South Sudanese refugees in camps in Ethiopia, and had come away saddened by the refugees’ tales.

While emphasising that they could not give “detailed political recommendations”, they nonetheless maintained that “as pastors and shepherds, our first priority is the suffering of our people”.

It is thought that about 3.8 million people have been displaced by recent violence in the country, while at least 28 million are in need of food aid. A trip to South Sudan by Pope Francis and Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury was indefinitely postponed earlier this month over security concerns.

## Vatican roundup

### Pope Francis to attend Colombian peace events

Pope Francis is to attend reconciliation events in Colombia, the Vatican has said, just days after Colombian rebels announced that their last remaining weapons had been handed over to international observers.

The Pope is scheduled to visit four cities in his September trip to the war-torn South American country, starting with the capital Bogota before day trips to Villavicencio and Medellin and final Mass in Cartagena. The Pope will take part in several acts of reconciliation on September 8, including a Mass and prayer in Villavicencio.

Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos had said the Pontiff had promised he would visit Colombia if the government and the rebel group FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias) signed a peace accord. Though Colombian voters last year voted down a referendum on the initial peace agreement, Mr Santos negotiated a modified deal with opposition leader and former president Alvaro Uribe. The process came with help from the Vatican, with the Pope meeting the two men late last year.

Weapons handovers began in early June, with all intended to have been surrendered by June 20, ending 52 years of war in which by some estimates more than 220,000 people have been killed.

### Take risks, Pope urges

It is better to take the risks that go with carrying the freshness of the Gospel to others than to be a “museum Christian” afraid of change, Pope Francis has said,

Speaking to members of Serra International, a 15,000-strong group that works across 46 countries to promote and foster vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, at a Rome conference to mark its 75th anniversary, the Pope said “when Christians go about their daily lives without fear, they can discover God’s constant surprises”.

The Pontiff urged the group to remember the example of St Junipero Serra, after whom they

are named, calling them to reflect on how St Junipero “made his way, limping, toward San Diego to plant the cross there”.

“I fear those Christians who do not keep walking, but remain enclosed in their own little niche,” he said, continuing, “it is better to go forward limping, and even at times to fall, while always trusting in the mercy of God, than to be ‘museum Christians’ who are afraid of change.”

To enter into the transformative power of God’s love, the Holy Father said, Christians must be “open to new possibilities, and not tied to their own plans and cherished ways of doing things”.

### Deeper thought needed on drugs legalisation – cardinal

While some countries debate the legalisation of marijuana, its effects and impact on possible dependency need to be further understood, the Vatican’s head of Promoting Integral Human Development has said.

In a letter published by the Vatican to mark the United Nations’ International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson said while scientific studies on the therapeutic uses of marijuana need to be evaluated, the debate on the subject “tends to neglect any ethical judgement of the substance, in itself negative like with any other drug”.

Noting how in recent years, “drugs have become a consumer product that has become compatible with daily life, with recreational activity and even in the pursuit of health”, Cardinal Turkson commented that those grappling with legalisation needed to consider what factors pushed the growth of illegal markets, and warned of how the legalisation of gambling, though intended to expose criminal management, “eventually increased the number of compulsive gamblers”.



# Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

## An unexpected periphery: Francis' Scandinavian strategy

While it's probably too much to say that Pope Francis has an explicit 'Swedish strategy', it's becoming increasingly clear that Sweden has both a place in the Argentine Pope's heart and a role to play in his vision of a 'Church of the Peripheries'.

In some ways, the plates had already been shifting in the direction of Sweden as the lead actor for Catholicism in the Nordic countries well before Francis came along. In 2002, for instance, the residence of the papal nuncio for Scandinavia was transferred from Denmark to Sweden, a sign of the growing centrality of the latter in the Vatican's vision for the region.

Under Francis, however, the indicators of interest and favour have multiplied.

Last year, Francis travelled to Sweden to join the World Lutheran Federation in commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, becoming the first Pope to visit the country since St John Paul II in 1989 – who was himself the first Pope ever to make an official visit to Sweden, though Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear, the future Pope Adrian IV, did stop off in the summer of 1152 for a meeting.

This week, Pope Francis also will create Sweden's first Prince of the Church, in fact the first cardinal in all of Scandinavia – not just since the Reformation, but ever. The consistory ceremony in which it happened took place in Rome this Wednesday, June 28, the vigil of the feast of Sts Peter and Paul.

### Personal factor

Given that Sweden has just around 113,000 Catholics, representing roughly 1.15% of the national population, what is Francis up to?

To begin with, one can't discount the personal factor when it comes to popes picking cardinals. By all accounts, Francis was charmed and impressed by Bishop Anders Arborelius of Stockholm during his brief, October 31 to November 1 visit in 2016.

According to those who know Arborelius, he's easy to like.

"The Bishop of Stockholm is a very good man, very competent and open, he gets on with everybody," said Bishop Czeslaw Kozon of nearby Denmark, a fellow member of the Scandinavian Bishops Conference, in a June 15 interview with Crux.

"He'll be a very good



Pope Francis talks with Swedish Bishop Anders Arborelius of Stockholm, before the canonisation Mass of St Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad of Sweden and Stanislaus Papczynski of Poland Rome last June. Photo: CNS

representative for the church here," Kozon said.

Beyond personality, however, the Pope may have three big-picture aims in mind by trying to raise the profile not just of Arborelius, but the Catholic Church generally in this part of the world.

First, Francis knows that while the Catholic population of Sweden may still be small by the standards of traditionally Catholic nations, it's nevertheless growing, with more Catholics in Sweden today than at any time since the Reformation. Arborelius himself is a Catholic convert from Lutheranism, and the first native Swede to hold his office since the era of Martin Luther.

Further, Scandinavian bishops say they sense a growing interest in the Catholic message among parts of the younger generation in their nations, despite the overwhelmingly secular ethos. Younger Swedes, Finns, Danes and so on, largely came of age after the cultural battles against ecclesiastical authority were more or less over, they say, and thus sometimes look on the Churches with curiosity rather than hostility.

The possibility of a 'Catholic moment' in Scandinavia is compounded by the fact that established Churches across the region have been hemorrhaging membership, often driven by people looking to avoid paying the state-collected annual Church fee.

### Francis always has great affection for underdogs struggling against tall odds

As a champion of the peripheries, Francis always has great affection for underdogs struggling against tall odds, and may see in the Church in Sweden and across Scandinavia a little guy facing what may be a period of opportunity. After all, Scandinavia may not be the 'periphery' in terms of measures such as development and per-capita income, but in Catholic terms, it certainly is.

"This puts us a little more on the Catholic map of the world, that we have a cardinal," Kozon said. "That's very important for us."

Second, Francis also knows

that much of the Catholic growth in the region today is being driven by immigration. Across Scandinavia, influxes of Poles, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Sri Lankans, Eritreans, Syrians and others have been boosting the ranks of the local Church.

The reality of leading an increasingly immigrant church has given Scandinavian bishops a deeper sensitivity to the challenges facing those newcomers, at a time when Francis sees the migrant and refugee crisis as perhaps the most pressing humanitarian drama in the world.

That transformation of the Church is happening at a time when Scandinavian nations appear to be drifting in a more anti-immigrant direction. Denmark already has some of the most restrictive policies in the world, a policy broadly shared by left and right, while Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven recently declared the country "will never go back to the days of mass immigration" after it emerged the Stockholm attacker in April was a failed asylum seeker.

As a result, Francis may be seeking to strengthen the Church's hand in Scandinavia to defend immigrant rights, at a time when the political and social winds aren't exactly blowing in that direction.

Third, Francis has made clear since the beginning of his papacy that ecumenism, meaning the press for greater Christian unity, is a towering priority.

### Francis is also keenly interested in outreach to the world of the Reformation

Like his predecessors, St John Paul II and emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, Francis has shown a 'preferential option' within the ecumenical field for the Orthodox, which is logical enough given that the split between East and West is the primordial Christian schism, and also because Orthodox theology and ecclesiology, as well as their understanding of both ministry and the sacraments, often are closer to the Catholic Church.

However, Francis is also keenly interested in outreach to the world of the Reformation, which was the point of his trip to Sweden. He undoubtedly believes that the small Catholic minority in Scandinavia has an ecumenical vocation to build bridges with the Churches of the Reformation, much like he along with previous Popes have seen the Eastern Catholic Churches in places such as the Middle East, the Balkans the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe having a natural ecumenical vocation with the Orthodox.

And of course, Francis knows that giving Sweden a cardinal will help the Church play that role with greater authority and visibility.

Naturally, a Pope charged with leading a global Church with almost 1.3 billion members scattered in every nook and cranny of the planet can't afford to concentrate all his attention, or even much of it, on any one locale.

Still, if Sweden isn't quite what Pope Francis thinks about when he gets out of bed every morning, recent evidence would suggest it may nonetheless cross his mind at some point during the day.

John R. Allen is editor of CruxNow.com





# Under the radar

## South Sudan needs media attention

People continue to find material and spiritual help in the Church, writes **Carol Glatz**

**P**ope Francis is first of all a shepherd who makes seeking out the lost and forgotten his top priority. But he also knows that wherever he goes, the cameras and news coverage will follow.

He leveraged his pull on the media spotlight early in his papacy when he went to Lampedusa for his very first trip as Pope, tossing a funeral wreath onto the vast, unmarked cemetery known as the Mediterranean Sea – where thousands of migrants die each year escaping from economic distress, political crises or persecution.

His visits to the Central African Republic, refugee centres, prisons, homes for the elderly and ill have all been key stops in his mission to reach out to the neglected peripheries, encourage those who are suffering and the hidden heroes helping them, and wake up the world to their presence and plight.

### Displacement

South Sudan was meant to be next on that list, to red-flag the disastrous effects of civil war – millions of people facing violence, displacement, chronic hunger and mass starvation – and to nudge conflicting parties toward peace.

However, mounting doubts over security and how ready those parties may be for negotiation have put a boots-on-the-ground Papal visit on hold. And now some Catholic aid and development agencies are wondering, with no Pope, how does this tragedy get on the world radar now?

**“It’s really off the radar in terms of the world caring [so] the Pope raising awareness is absolutely crucial”**

“With Donald Trump, Brexit and terrorist attacks happening in the news,” outlets that are usually very receptive to covering humanitarian crises and efforts “don’t have the space to cover them”, Patrick Nicholson, director of communications at Caritas Internationalis, told Catholic News Service.

Despite the immensity of the tragedy, “it’s really off the radar in



A UN peacekeeper keeps watch as children gather in a camp for displaced civilians in Juba, South Sudan. The heads of the member churches of the South Sudan Council of Churches criticised the country’s political leaders “on all sides” for placing political and personal interests above the needs of ordinary people. Photo: CNS

terms of the world caring”, he said, which is why “the Pope raising awareness is absolutely crucial”. Everybody’s efforts to get the word out is still key, and Nicholson and his Caritas colleagues created southsudan.caritas.org after a recent visit to South Sudan to better show the human stories and lives at stake.

Sr Judith Pereira-Rico, associate executive director of Solidarity with South Sudan, told CNS in Rome that her organisation is promoting the hashtag #SouthSudanWeCare on social media to show the South Sudanese people that they will not be overlooked.

“The people there feel they are forgotten. There is no media attention and they always tell us, ‘Please, don’t forget to speak about us.’”

A member of the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, Sr Pereira-Rico said she has spent the past two decades working in the poorest parts of West Africa “and yet I’ve never see the poverty like there is in South Sudan”.

“My first time in South Sudan, in Malakal, I wasn’t able to sing ‘Hallelujah’ in church” having seen the situation

of the people. “Now, more and more, I can see that God is here.”

Sometimes she and her colleagues can feel so powerless when faced with so many people in need, “but just being there” can offer comfort, she said. “A challenge we have as Christians is believing in the resurrection in these situations, knowing that there is a good end for human history.”

### Congregations

Solidarity with South Sudan is an international network of religious congregations that was formed to train primary school teachers, health care workers, pastoral agents and sustainable farmers from all ethnic groups, learning tolerance and reconciliation along the way.

The NGOs do the emergency relief, “and we do development, teach values”, Sister Pereira-Rico said.

The 28 nuns, priests and brothers from 20 different congregations and 20 nations living and working together in four different communities across South Sudan are a living witness of what harmony

in diversity and collaboration look like, she said.

Sr Judith Pereira-Rico.

“We’re like the United Nations,”

she smiled, and “we show people a new model of living”.

The local Church also provides the credibility, networks and infrastructure that relief agencies need to reach the most vulnerable, said Jerry Farrell, country representative in South Sudan for Catholic Relief Services.

“The Church has an incredible reputation. It is battered and weary,” like its people, but it never shuts down, it always sticks by its people, which is partly why it’s so respected, he told CNS by Skype from Juba. By working directly with parishes and religious orders, like the Comboni sisters, CRS can get food to 5,000 to 6,000 families in places where no one else has access, he said.

**“The people here are incredibly resilient and one of the main reasons for that is they go to church”**

No matter how bad things get, the Catholic Church still is operating its schools, hospitals, clinics and programs all over South Sudan; the facilities may not look as nice as those in the West, “but they work”.

“Peacebuilding is quiet, but relentless,” he said, and it often does not make for an exciting or visual story.

Media often like to cover things such as the highly complex emergency airdrops to those who are stranded, but Farrell said reporters should be looking at the Catholic schools, like the ones run by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

“It’s not visually catchy, but that’s the real story, that’s where the future of South Sudan lies,” as these schools provide basic care, nutrition and even vegetable gardens for the mothers to grow healthy food.

The other real story that should get coverage, he said, are the survivors. “The people here are incredibly resilient and one of the main reasons for that is they go to church” and are deeply spiritual people.

With aid from partner agencies, the Church becomes a place people go to find basic supplies, safety, sanctuary and “spiritual nourishment because without that, aid is just a pat on the back”, Farrell said. “Things will be better. It will just take time because peacebuilding is meant to help South Sudan heal itself,” he said.

As the Catholic, Episcopalian and Presbyterian Churches work for peace from the bottom up and the role of political leaders is to help from the top down, he added, someday they will all meet in the middle.

**1** Carol Glatz is a writer with Catholic News Service based in Rome.



# Letters

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

## Letter of the week

### Facts around suicide and detention orders

**Dear Editor,** The recent media and political reports about the young pregnant mother detained under the Mental Health Act 2001 show a large lack of knowledge of what suicidal ideation is and how mental health law works around it.

If any person arrives to A&E in an actively suicidal state they are assessed quickly and admitted for psychiatric care. If they are unwilling to stay voluntarily in psychiatric care, there is a thorough process of medical reviews to determine if the person's suicidality is based on a psychiatric illness.

Suicidal ideation is not a mental illness. It very frequently is a symptom of an underlying illness, a mood disorder or a psychotic episode.

Psychiatric care would be negligent if it did not identify this illness and treat it even against the patient's will. The law in this regard makes no reference to whether the patient is pregnant or not – the issue is whether the person is mentally ill as defined under the Mental Health Act.

When the young mother presented as suicidal, the consultant in charge assessed her as having a mental health disorder, and in that situation rightly put the mental health legislation in action by initiating a detention order and starting to treat her. Pregnancy is not a mental illness but if it was causing her severe anxiety or depression, the correct course of action is to treat the anxiety or depression. When she was then

assessed subsequently as not being mentally ill, she was discharged.

It is very misleading for media reports to suggest she was detained because she asked for an abortion. It is unreasonable to demonise psychiatrists who provide appropriate psychiatric treatment for patients who present as suicidal while pregnant – as a lot of evidence has shown, abortion is not a treatment for suicidal intent. I say all this as a psychiatric nurse who believes in the human dignity of all life, at all stages of life, regardless of the circumstances of that life.

*Yours etc.,  
James Kevin Foley, BSc, RPN,  
Counselling Dip.  
Clondalkin,  
Dublin.*

## Time for silent majority to be heard

**Dear Editor,** I couldn't agree more with Mickey Harte (IC 22/06/2017) that the Irish public still holds unborn life dear. Despite the push for abortion from the media and political circles, the vast majority of Irish people are at heart against or at least very uncomfortable with the idea of abortion. The various polls that have been carried out in recent weeks all agree

that Ireland is against abortion on demand.

It is sympathy for people in difficult cases, a girl pregnant as a result of incest or a couple told their child will not survive outside the womb, that stirs people to consider legalising abortion. The Repeal the Eighth movement know this and constantly cite these examples. But if we allow for

abortion in this country, the majority of the babies killed as a result will be perfectly healthy, or will have conditions which are not life threatening such as Downs Syndrome. As Mickey Harte said the exception should not make the rule and once you cross that line, it will be very difficult to stop abortion on demand becoming an inevitability.

There will be a rally for life in Dublin on Saturday, July 1. We have heard enough from the pro-abortion media and politicians. This is an opportunity for the rest of Ireland to have its voice heard.

*Yours etc.,  
Bernie Buckley,  
Douglas,  
Cork.*

## Another UN attack on Irish abortion law

**Dear Editor,** The UN Human Rights Committee's claim that Ireland's abortion law is a "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" of women is an incredible statement. Our law protects both the life of the mother and the unborn baby. What is more fair and balanced than that? Considering the terrible torture, slavery and persecution that is being committed throughout the world, and state controlled in some countries, I don't understand why the UN keeps attacking Ireland over abortion.

*Yours etc.,  
Maeve Walsh,  
Bray, Co. Wicklow.*



## Right to life is the most fundamental

**Dear Editor,** Fr Rolheiser's article (IC 08/06/2017) is thoughtful: "The protection of life and promotion of justice are all of one piece."

He offers a long list of moral issues and concerns – abortion, nuclear war (non-nuclear war?), lack of ecological sensitivity, refugees, racism, sexism, poverty and inequality

etc. Political correctness is conspicuous by its presence no doubt.

The principle, I can see where he is coming from, yet practical reality remains relevant. Prioritisation is vital. The natural hence universal right to life belongs to all.

There is a natural hierarchy of human rights.

Simply, some are more important than others. The invisible right to life of all human beings is fundamental, for without it, all other rights are rendered redundant. This seems self-evident.

*Yours etc.,  
Seán Bearnabhail,  
Drumcondra  
Dublin 9.*

## Gratuitous line in book review

**Dear Editor,** The last line in Ian D'Alton's excellent review of *County Louth & The Irish Revolution 1912-1923* (IC 22/06/2017) is gratuitous, irrelevant and unworthy of him.

*Yours etc.,  
J. Anthony Gaughan,  
Blackrock,  
Co. Dublin.*

## Bríd Smith TD is just playing at semantics

**Dear Editor,** Bríd Smith TD is now playing lexical semantics trying to explain her statement – the Church should be put in the dustbin of history – made in Dáil Éireann on June 1. Her statement was no surprise because, as a far left radical, she has been a perpetual protester, and one who shows a deep disdain for the Catholic Church.

Whilst things happened in the past that are regrettable and should not have happened through the Church, they cannot blight out the record of great service and delivery by so many branches of the Church to the Irish people, and to the poor in the developing world to this day.

As Deputy Smith pursues banishing the Church from the public square in the disguise of separating Church and State, so many Catholic-inspired organisations are at the forefront in the development of innovative and creative approaches to overcoming housing problems and supporting the poor. Examples are Focus Ireland, Peter McVerry Trust, Sophia Housing, De Paul Housing, Crosscare, Respond Housing, and SVP. In 2016, Crosscare provided 127,750 bed nights to over 1,600 people in six residences for people experiencing homelessness in Dublin. Starting in the 1970s, Fr Harry Bohan built hundreds of houses through the Rural Housing Organisation. This is delivery in housing that is faith-inspired.

It would take a large book to document delivery by the Church in health, education and social services. But, Deputy Smith simply wants that record "put in the dustbin of history". Her words speak for themselves, and illustrate her values and lack of fairness or recognition.

*Yours etc.,  
Matt Moran,  
Waterfall,  
Cork.*

**Dear Editor,** What Bríd Smith (IC 22/06/2017) fails to recognise is that the state socialism she espouses has long been consigned to the dustbin of history. It was imposed in Russia and a swathe of Eastern European nations who managed to escape from its shackles after decades of tyranny. Even China has quietly crept away from state socialism and has embraced capitalism.

In contrast, the influence of the Catholic Church in the development of this country has been overwhelmingly positive, despite the well-ventilated shortcomings of which it has been guilty.

Bríd Smith must be worried when she has taken to writing to *The Irish Catholic*. Perhaps she realises that, in a country that is 78% Catholic, at least some of her electorate might not share her views. I'm sure they will be relieved at the 'clarification' of her gratuitously offensive remarks.

*Yours etc.,  
Gabriel Meehan,  
Bailieborough, Co. Cavan.*

**Dear Editor,** Does Bríd Smith TD really think that saying the Church belongs in the "dustbin of history" is any less insulting to Catholics than just an ordinary bin?

*Your etc.,  
Noeleen Lynch,  
Enniscorthy,  
Co. Wexford.*

## Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world



**USA:** Supporters of Detroit's Chaldean Christian community rally outside the federal courthouse to protest the US government's arrest of dozens of Chaldean Christians and others who are scheduled to be deported. Photos: CNS



**VATICAN:** Pope Francis greets Bishop Eusebio Ramos Morales of Caguas, Puerto Rico, during a private audience at the Vatican.



**ROME:** Fr Arturo Sosa Abascal, superior general of the Society of Jesus, presents King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands with the commander's baton attributed to William of Orange during a meeting at the Vatican. The king and his wife, Queen Maxima, also met with Pope Francis.



**INDIA:** Protesters supporting ethnic Gorkha people carry signs and shout slogans during a demonstration in Mumbai, India. Church leaders have expressed solidarity with ethnic Gorkha people who are on an indefinite strike protesting for a separate homeland in the Darjeeling area of eastern India.



**CANADA:** Film director Martin Scorsese speaks with *New York Times* journalist Paul Elie in front of an audience at the Catholic Media Conference in Quebec City following a screening of his movie *Silence*.



**VENEZUELA:** Opposition protesters clash with Venezuelan government forces in Caracas. A Venezuelan military police sergeant fatally shot a protester who was attacking the perimeter of an airbase, the interior minister said, bringing renewed scrutiny of the force used to control riots that have killed at least 76 people.



## Family & Lifestyle



Modern life has ‘adultified’ young girls, but parents can fight back to give their daughters a proper childhood, writes **Steve Biddulph**

“**T**hey’re growing up too fast,” you’ll hear those words everywhere girls are discussed. Girlhood – before puberty comes along – can be a wonderful time of life. Unworried by concerns about the opposite sex – or totally dismissive of them – free in her body, bold in her actions, able to be creative without fearing judgement, loving the world of animals and nature, affectionate with friends of both sexes, enjoying her parent’s company. How we wish this time would last for ever. And there is no reason why it shouldn’t.

Mothers and fathers everywhere say that ‘14 is the new 18’. With the massive changes the brain undergoes in those four years, girls are ill-equipped to deal with it all. Their brains are not developed and their confidence is often just a veneer. So a big part of raising a happy girl today is making sure she has a childhood, and it isn’t cramped or curtailed by growing up too fast.

What a girl needs is to be strong, in tune with her own nature, trusting her instincts and feelings. And growing slowly, with her abilities – mental and physical – unfolding as they were intended to. This is where we can sow the seeds of a girl who enjoys being the age she is, and isn’t rushed into fake grown-upness.

Let’s be clear – most girls will turn out fine. We help them, support them and arm them against the excesses

of the culture, and they turn into wonderful strong women. Three out of five girls still do this. But one in five will go so far off the rails, their adult life is really impaired. Another one in five goes through some sort of crisis, which galvanises her family to action, and she pulls through. But that still means way too many girls having way too hard a time.

### Toxic messages

We have to encourage and nurture a girl’s exploratory and wild self, so that it grows strong and lasts all her life. We have to fence out the toxic messages that have sprung up around girls in recent years. The age range from two to five is where this needs to begin, but it can be corrected at any age. It’s important

to think about how great girlhood can be, and not settle for less.

During this time is where sexism really sets in. We teach them to be neat, clean, quiet, well-behaved and high-achieving (in ballet or music or schoolwork). We create uptight, cute, little conformity machines, and wonder why they often implode into anxiety, self-harm and binge-drinking by mid secondary school.

Writers such as Oliver James in Britain and JoAnn Deak in the US have expressed serious concern about girls’ growing perfectionism about their own performance – about being essentially, too good.

The ideal of the neat, tidy, pretty, domesticated girl of times gone by still seems to be hanging on in our idea of girlhood. And in fact it is being made worse by the new

fashion-frills dressing habits of our crazy consumerist time. Dressing our kids up to be cute can be fun for adults, and a little won’t kill you, but it’s the razor’s edge of turning a girl (or boy) towards self-consciousness and focusing on how they look, which in this era of massive anxiety about looks can be harmful to their mental health.

“**The world is hers to explore, it is a rich and beautiful place”**

At this age, your daughter needs to feel free. That the world is hers to explore, that it is a rich and beautiful place and she can gain competency to navigate it freely. A girl should emerge from this age full of energy

# How to raise a happy girl



and confidence, and bursting to get into the larger world. By the age of one or two, she will be ready to venture out into the world of nature and get in touch with her inner self.

This is what childhood is for. In the complexity and richness of the natural environment, a child’s senses begin to work at a significantly more redefined and detailed level.

When this begins to occur, then your daughter’s brain also perceives more holistically, and sees the relatedness of the environment. Girls need wilding so encourage her to be messy, uninhibited, and alive and moving about.

### Dieting

Try not to make a big thing of clothes shopping or make-up, or dieting. If her clothes are cutesy, pink and fluffy and cost a bomb, then she isn’t going to be playing in mud. Dress for action.

Choose clothing that is dirt-proof and damage-resistant, water-excluding or so sturdy it doesn’t matter. Do not fence her in with

ideas of being neat, girly, cute or compliant. Never complain about the state she gets in.

Get outdoors into natural places and let her run free, even if it’s just for the holiday, weekend or whenever you can. A surprising number of the world’s best thinkers and researchers were immersed in nature to an unusual degree, and their brains are different and better as a result.

We also have to be choosy about what media we bring or let into our own home. To avoid this, stop the media tsunami right at your door. This means you must limit the amount of screen time your child receives. Toddlers and small children don’t even play properly if a TV show is playing in their earshot. Their attention span and their imagination both fail to develop. At home, people are not talking to their children enough. And watching TV, even though it’s all talk, isn’t the same. It’s not interactive. It doesn’t involve them responding. So they don’t learn.

With a TV playing, couples don’t



Advertisers successfully focused millions of marketing dollars onto 'pre-teen girls.' As if being 11 is only about wanting to be a teenager, and not a worthwhile age on its own. (Children are not pre-anything. They are who they are, and should be allowed to be.)

Forty percent of 10-year-old girls now worry about their weight and actively modify their food intake in unsuccessful and harmful attempts to change their size and shape. Girlhood has lost four precious, creative, confidence-boosting years. You can see this everywhere you go – 'adultified' girls of 12 or 13 with cleavages self-consciously displayed and faces covered in make-up dressed to kill (possibly from pneumonia), stressing out over how boys might judge them. And being neither happy nor free.

With thousands of images of women looking pretty, decorative, cute, groomed, sleek and thin every day, a girl begins to make comparisons about how she looks. After quite a short time, the messaging of the ads mean that she sees herself as a product, and she sees products – the things you buy in shops – as being the key to being a better product yourself. She makes comparisons with how she looks, and slowly, gradually, feels despair. She decides that visuals – how others see you – matters more than how you feel, or act.

### “She decides that visuals – how others see you – matters more than how you feel, or act”

Along with fencing out these messages, we must have our own house in order. We have to think about how our own attitudes can affect her without us knowing it. In fact you may need to do some remedial 'rewilding' of yourself to be really happy as a mum or dad, and pass on this permission to your daughter as well.

One day your daughter might come to you and say “I hate my body”. You're going to want to say “You are beautiful! You look great!” But you won't have much credibility if she has seen you worrying about your own weight, skin, hair, looks and clothing all her life. So you must also abandon any looks obsession and start making your life about more important things.

If you demonstrate a free and exuberant nature, laugh, sing, dance, love nature, love music, love life, then she will catch that as naturally as breathing. She will see a competent, caring, protective person who is nonetheless unfettered, unconventional, untamed. Who takes joy in the moment and draws her out of reticence into exuberance. If she has heard you say “I love my body”, she will say the same to any boy who calls her fat or ugly in the schoolyard.

She'll already be so strong in her self-belief that she will be happier and more free, possibly for life.

① *Steve Biddulph is a retired psychologist. This is an edited extract from his book 10 Things Girls Need Most, published by Harper Collins.*



communicate. Kids don't confide. Topics don't get discussed. News isn't shared. There are kids coming to school who can barely speak.

The difficulty a lot of kids have in learning to read is now being reframed as an inability to actually string words together. Short utterances, that aren't grammatical, don't lead anywhere, and have no sequencing, are all that is left of the ability most five-year-olds once had to tell long stories and do so interestingly. And if a child can't do that, they can't think or reason either.

### “If you demonstrate a free and exuberant nature, she will catch that as naturally as breathing”

Media also affects how your daughter views herself. Advertising can accidentally impact our girls or be very deliberately targeted at them so we have to be alert about the media that floods our homes.



Fr Ger Godley, a name most fitting for a priest, has sparked the interest of many because of his bewildering magical talents. All starting with a magic set that he received for Christmas when he was a child, the native-born Kerryman has pursued the craft that has brought fame to legends such as Paul Daniels, David Copperfield and Tommy Cooper.

The second-eldest of seven children, Fr Ger who attended secondary school in Tralee and later in St Patrick's College, was ordained in 1981 and has been active in both Kenya and in the Diocese of Kerry. When asked why he became a priest, Ger replied that many people in his school would have considered the vocation, but personally, he wanted to “help people and give back to the community in some way”. He further added that his “sense of spirituality was important” and his understanding of faith has been “deepened” and “enriched” over time.

Alongside his attraction to religion, Ger also mentioned that the art of magic was a formative part of his youth. His love for magic initially began when his grandfather would perform tricks such as cutting and restoring a piece of rope.

### Magical skills

As a devout family, they also often offered hospitality to missionaries such as the Capuchins who would stay at the guesthouse and show some sleight-of-hand to Ger. Combined with a children's encyclopaedia and a few tricks that he received at Christmas, Ger has honed his magical skills, becoming an adept and well-rounded entertainer.

Influenced by other Irish magicians such as Patrick Page and Billy McComb, Fr Ger performs classic illusions such as the linking rings or the colour-changing handkerchief and continues to learn at Southern Brotherhood of Magicians in Cork, of which he is a member.

Over the years, perfecting his art has required both patience

## Colm Fitzpatrick talks to a Kerry priest who's a part-time magician



and practice, especially before the days of YouTube where his primary sources of information were books.

“It was a time when you ordered from a hard copy catalogue and waited for the parcel to arrive by post- no instant downloads,” he says.

This older style of learning is a clear testimony to his dedication and passion to the ancient craft. His particular field of magic requires props and sleight-of-hand, a path which he conscientiously chose to avoid mind-reading or psychic displays that would prevent any misconceptions about his abilities.

### “Although magic remains a passion for Fr Ger, he's grateful not to be a full-time magician”

Fr Ger further went on to say that although some evangelisers often integrate magic into their sermons, he prefers to keep the two professions separate. Instead he uses the art form to connect with people in his diocese which complements his studies in community development and his interest in community youth work. Magic acts as a “good icebreaker”, he says, which helps him to connect with young people in conjunction with his work delivering magic workshops for a variety of organisations e.g. youth services, family resource centres and community development groups.

“The purpose of the workshops is to empower young people through the medium of magic. By participating in the workshop, the young person learns new skills as well as develops personally and socially,” he says.

When asked whether anyone has ever been hostile to his magic

because of his priestly vocation, he replied that everyone he performs for understands that it is only for fun and entertainment, and that he never claims to possess mystical or hidden powers. However, on one particular occasion, when presenting a workshop in a Mercy School in Kenya, he had to explain how he magically removed one of his fingers after the entire room of 60 people fled out the doors, and even windows, after seeing his performance.

Although magic remains a passion for Fr Ger, he's grateful not to be a full-time magician. He says that he would not want his “hobby to become work”, and is excited to pursue the priestly ministry and his work with the diocese's Pastoral Development Team, which is based in the John Paul II Pastoral Centre in Killarney, with magic continuing to remain another important part of his life.

He did, however, maintain that priests should be given more opportunities to develop their talents such as singing or playing guitar. As a result, the clergy will be enabled to interact with the laity through innovative and attractive ways.

This will allow for the possibility of communities and parishes to become more enriched and stronger connections to be established between priest and laity.

This is especially pertinent in regards to the younger generation whose presence within the Church is in continual decline.

Priests are people with interests outside of their vocation. Fr Ger is an example of how nurturing one's own talents in an ecclesial background can lead to a more fulfilling profession, and he will continue to inspire the people of Tralee, with both his sermons and his silks.



# To whom else can we go?

**T**o whom else shall we go? You have the message of eternal life." Peter says these words to Jesus. But they are spoken in a very conflicted context: Jesus had just said something that upset and offended his audience and the Gospels tell us that everyone walked away grumbling that what Jesus was teaching was "intolerable". Jesus then turns to his apostles and asks them: "Do you want to walk away too?" Peter answers: "To whom else can we go?" But that's more a statement of stoic resignation than an actual question.

His words function at two levels. On the surface, they express an unwanted humility and helplessness that sometimes beset us all: "I have no alternative! I'm so invested in this relationship that now I have no other options. I'm stuck with this!"

## Humble place

That's a humble place to stand and anyone who has ever given himself or herself over in an authentic commitment will eventually stand on that place, knowing that he or she no longer has another practical choice.

But those words also express a much deeper quandary, namely, where can I find meaning if I cannot find it in faith in God? All of us have at some point asked ourselves that question. If I didn't believe in God and had no faith or



## Fr Rolheiser

[www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)

religion, what would give meaning to my life?

Where can we go if we no longer have an explicit faith in God? A lot of places, it seems. I think immediately of so many attractive stoics who have wrestled with this question and found solace in various forms of what Albert Camus would call "metaphysical rebellion" or in the kind of Epicureanism that Nikos Kazantzakis advocates in *Zorba the Greek*. There's a stoicism which offers its own kind of salvation by drawing life and meaning simply from fighting chaos and disease for no other reason than

that that these cause suffering and are an affront to life, just as there is an Epicureanism that meaningfully grounds life in elemental pleasure. There are, it would seem, different kinds of saints.

There are also different kinds of immortality. For some, meaning outside of an explicit faith, is found in leaving a lasting legacy on this earth, having children, achieving something monumental, or becoming a household name. We're all familiar with the axiom: plant a tree; write a book; have a child!

Poets, writers, artists and artisans often have their own place

to find meaning outside of explicit faith. For them, creativity and beauty can be ends in themselves. Art for art's sake. Creativity itself can seem enough.

And there are still others for whom deep meaning is found simply in being good for its own sake and in being honest for its own sake. There's also virtue for virtue's sake and virtue is indeed its own reward. Simply living an honest and generous life can provide sufficient meaning with which to walk through life.

**“For some, meaning outside of an explicit faith, is found in leaving a lasting legacy on this earth, having children...”**

So, it appears that there are places to go outside of explicit faith where one can find deep meaning. But is this really so? Don't we believe that true meaning can only be found in God? What about St Augustine's classic line? "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

Can anything other than faith and God really quiet the restless fires within us?

Yes, there are things that can do that, but all of them – fighting chaos, curing diseases, having children, living for others, building things, inventing things, achieving goals or simply living honest and generous lives – leave us, in

an inchoate way, radiating the transcendental properties of God and working alongside God to bring life and order to the world. How so?

Christian theology tells us that God is one, true, good and beautiful. And so, when an artist gives herself over to creating beauty, when a couple has a child, when scientists work to find cures for various diseases, when artisans make an artifact, when builders build, when teachers teach, when parents parent, when athletes play a game, when manual labourers labour, when administrators administrate, when people just for the sake of integrity itself live in honesty and generosity and, yes, even when hedonists drink deeply of earthly pleasures, they are, all of them, whether they have explicit faith or not, acting in some faith because they are putting their trust in either the oneness, truth, goodness or beauty of God.

Lord, to whom else can we go? You have the message of eternal life. Well, it seems that there are places to go and many go there. But these aren't necessarily, as is sometimes suggested by misguided spiritual literature, empty places that are wrong and self-destructive. There are, of course, such places, spiritual dead-ends; but, more generally, as we can see simply by looking at the amount of positive energy, love, creativity, generosity and honesty that still fill our world, those places where people are seeking God outside of explicit faith still has them meeting God.

**“Poets, writers, artists and artisans often have their own place to find meaning outside of explicit faith”**





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## No slim pickings on the small screen

**T**he summer used to be regarded as the silly season for current affairs, but I don't think that holds true anymore.

**Sunday Morning Live**, back on BBC 1 on Sunday mornings, has no shortage of topical religious and ethical issues to cover. Last weekend's episode started with an illuminating discussion prompted by the recent attack on Muslims outside a mosque in London.

Prof. Ben Carrington suggested that far-right extremism was nothing new and didn't like people denying the existence of Islamophobia. Journalist Ruth Dudley Edwards was impressed by British tolerance. She criticised the media for "concurring in covering up discussion" and thought that to say terror episodes related to Islamist extremism had nothing to do with Islam was "rubbish".

Tom Slater of *Spiked Online* thought there wasn't a strong far-right threat and that, in fact, the far-right was "in terminal decline". He was uneasy about verbal abuse being conflated with violent attacks under the hate crime category. Comedian and writer Shaista Aziz thought there was an increase in hate crime and she was concerned about inflammatory coverage in the media.

Later there was coverage of a bizarre solstice event in



The presenters of *Sunday Morning Live*, Emma Barnett and Sean Fletcher.

the Shard in London – a sort of alcohol free disco featuring sun welcoming, group hugs, gong meditation, flowers and glitter, and the honouring of the four directions. Quote: "Without north, south, east and west we don't exist!"

### Experience

A discussion on the report 'Abuse of Faith', about child abuse and related cover up in the Church of England rather uncomfortably echoed our own experience, but there were indications that effective child protection measures were now in place. But

strangely enough the concept of child protection didn't get a mention in the later discussion on abortion, prompted by the British Medical Association discussion on increasing term limits, even to due date, for any reason.

Comedian and writer Kate Smurthwaite, despite not being 'comfortable' with late abortions was entirely pro-choice, while Catholic commentator Caroline Farrow stressed the humanity of the unborn baby and usefully pointed out that the majority of women in a recent ComRes survey thought that the

current limits were too high. Importantly, she also got to mention recently revealed abuses in abortion clinics. Ruth Dudley Edwards said she hated everything about abortion but wouldn't insist on her view prevailing in cases like rape.

However she thought that a "viable baby" should never be aborted, that this was "atrocious" and she could see no difference between that and murder.

The otherwise intelligent Ben Carrington made a peculiar point – he assumed everyone was against abortion in the same way that everyone was against heart attacks! (A small matter of choice there professor!)

I must return yet again to the drama series **Broken** (BBC 1, Tuesday nights). I wrote very positively about the first two episodes, but I'm less enthusiastic after episodes three and four. Episode four



Sean Bean in *Broken*.

felt more like a crime drama and featured an uncharacteristic rant by Fr Michael against the Church's treatment of women and its teaching on women priests. This felt like a wad of someone's agenda crammed uncomfortably into the character's mouth, ideology trumping art.

Last week's episode, focusing on a suicidal gambler, was quite disturbing. Touchingly Fr Michael tried to persuade this woman of God's love for her, but it was a tough challenge.

She was portrayed sympathetically at times, presented in part at least as a victim of gambling addiction, yet she was proud in the worst sense, not particularly sorry about her wrongdoing (including large scale theft from her employer) and unwilling to face the shame of being found out, of people knowing what she had done.

She was careless of the pain she might cause to others and at one stage made a very crude suggestion to the priest as he tried to help her. Another problem was the way Fr Michael, in his efforts to save her, treated the seal of Confession, and the way he tried to rationalise his actions. Nevertheless the episode was absorbing and brilliantly acted, especially by Sean Bean as Fr Michael and Paula Malcomson as Roz, the woman in question.

Finally, on **Morning Ire-**

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### GOD

**EWTN, Saturday, July 1, 9pm**

Matt Fradd, former agnostic, details how his search for the meaning of life eventually led him to Christ and the Catholic Church.

#### THE BETRAYED GIRLS

**BBC 1, Monday, July 3, 8.30pm**

Documentary about the child abuse revelations in Rochdale and other towns.

#### CADET ABUSE

**COVER-UP – PANORAMA BBC 1, Tuesday, July 4, 10.45pm**

This investigation shines a light on the cover-up of sexual abuse in the Cadets across Britain.

**land** (RTÉ Radio 1) last Monday there was an item on First Communions – though not on the spiritual aspects. It seems a survey has shown that parents on average spend around €800 on the celebrations, while the young communicants rake in about €500. Something amiss somewhere!

✉ [boregan@hotmail.com](mailto:boregan@hotmail.com)



Aubrey Malone

# Film

## Cross-cultural fable from the West of Ireland

### Halal Daddy (15A)

Derek Davis once said that being Irish today meant "driving a German car to an American-themed pub for a Belgian beer and then grabbing an Indian curry on the way home before sitting on Swedish furniture to watch British programmes on Japanese TVs".

This is a well-intentioned comedy that does its best to unite different cultures as well. However, as often happens in these feelgood films full of slaphappy souls, such cultures often become reduced to one-dimensional stereotypes in the process.



Good  
★★★

Nikesh Patel in *Halal Daddy*.

The Irish, we see, like alcohol, feisty women and indolence. But they have Big Hearts. If strict Muslims could loosen up and learn to embrace these 'values,' maybe the East-West divide could be truly eradicated.

Within these broad parameters Conor MacDermott, directing, features

British Muslim Raghdan (Nikesh Patel) as a young man who's run away from his dad Amir (Art Malik), a Bradford executive who's been trying to organise a marriage of convenience for him. He gets succour in the Sligo home of Amir's brother Jamal (Paul Tylak) and his easygoing wife Doreen (Deirdre O'Kane).

He starts dating Maeve (Sarah Bolger). Maeve delivers pizzas and swears a lot. (This is another stereotype of the Irish that Mr MacDermott highlights: our devotion to expletives.)

Colm Meaney is Maeve's father Martin. He's just lost his job and is none too happy about it. Martin seems permanently perplexed by life. You're reminded of Miley from RTÉ's late-lamented *Glenroe*. All he's short of saying is "Well holy God!" as yet another conundrum assails him.

The storyline proper begins when Amir arrives from Bradford on Raghdan's 21st birthday and gives him a present of an abandoned

abattoir. Cue lots of gags about the different ways to slaughter an animal depending on what corner of the globe it hails from.

Interviews are conducted for jobs in the abattoir. Eccentric members of Sligo's dole queue present themselves at them. The director's sister Maria (a *Glenroe* veteran) chews the carpet. Some of the others look like they should be sectioned.

Martin starts working in the abattoir with Raghdan but gets elbowed out of the top job by Amir. He becomes angry about this and so does Maeve. Things start to look bad for Raghdan's relationship with her – not to mention that with Amir. The

abattoir's future doesn't look too bright either.

Doreen and Jamal now give Raghdan money to tour the world. Isn't it just the time for a nice global holiday when your life has reached crisis point in Sligo? Martin, meanwhile, tries to prettify the abattoir but runs into money problems.

If you like films about 'rock 'n' roll Muslims' (Raghdan) and Irishmen who don't know the difference between Arabia and India (Martin) then this is for you. It's a mostly pleasant adolescent attempt to cure (or at least hibernicise?) Islamophobia. It's at its funniest when it doesn't lapse into irreverence and/or farce.



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Religion v science: the selective views of Richard Dawkins

**Science in the Soul: Selected Writings of a Passionate Rationalist** by Richard Dawkins (Bantam Press, £20)

Peter Hegarty

A public atheist who is by profession a biologist, Dawkins writes assuredly and movingly about the wonders of life. The human eye is one of the marvels of evolution, but intricate as it is, it is not nearly as complex as the compound eyes of insects, which use the moon as a navigational tool. Honey bees impart information to each other about the location of a source of food by dancing on the side of the hive.

He is convinced that life exists elsewhere in the universe. We will make contact with extraterrestrials, exchanging radio signals first, then later, much later perhaps, make physical contact with them. When we do we will find that we have a good deal in common with them, for the same laws of nature that govern our world, will also govern theirs.

### Perplexed

Dawkins writes of 'natural selection as an alternative to the miraculous'. Nature is full of mystery, he says – scientists are still perplexed by consciousness – but mystery is not the same as supernatural magic. There is imaginary magic, but there is 'real magic' all around us.

Dawkins has gained an



Left: Richard Dawkins.

example.

He appears to believe that Jesus did exist and urges atheists to look to him for inspiration: didn't Jesus make a point of opposing established beliefs and oppressive religious authority? Didn't he make a nuisance of himself to draw attention to his cause? Isn't that precisely what atheists should be doing? Were Jesus to return, Dawkins mischievously claims, he would embrace atheism.

He concentrates his fire on Christianity and doesn't consider Islam, or indeed

other religions, in any detail, which is one of the book's shortcomings. Islam is more challenging for an atheist than Christianity.

### No doubt

That Mohammed existed is not in doubt. Unlike the Bible, the Koran is tight and precise. What is the Koran? "The word of God", believers would say, implicitly challenging Dawkins and his like to prove otherwise. And what does an atheist make of Buddhism, a religion without a God? It would have been interesting

to know.

Dawkins praises scientific method, the pursuit of objective knowledge without considering how we use it.

Why, for all our advances, do war, want and hunger still shorten and diminish the lives of hundreds of millions? The more we know, the more havoc we seem to wreak: knowledge and technology are the indirect causes of the environmental degradation that is leading to the extinction of many of those marvels of evolution.

In his discussions of sci-

ence Dawkins hymns method, but ignores application. He might have considered why some of the best scientific minds in the world willingly apply themselves to the development of ever more lethal nuclear weapons, surely the most pointless task ever devised.

**“He might have considered why some of the best scientific minds in the world willingly apply themselves to the development of ever more lethal nuclear weapons”**

Sometimes Dawkins' passionate rationalism blinds him to the bleak realities. His assertion that religion is on its deathbed is absurd. Belief is flourishing in Africa, a continent that can spare priests to send to Europe; it is rock solid in the US; the Pussy Riot girls did their thing in a newly-built Orthodox cathedral in Moscow, once the capital of a great atheist empire.

It might be more accurate to say that 'rationalism is on its deathbed', as Dawkins darkly suggests, recalling November 2016 and his despair as he digested the news that Americans, like the British before them, had voted against their own best interests. It's tough out there for rationalists.

## A Parnellite down under

**Hugh Mahon: Patriot, Pressman, Politician (Vol. 1 – 1857-1901)** by Jeff Kildea (Anchor Books Australia, €25)

Felix M. Larkin

Nobody reading this review is likely to have heard of Hugh Mahon. So why does he merit a biography – in fact a projected two-volume biography? The book to hand is the first instalment, with the second to follow in the not-too-distant future.

Mahon was born near Tullamore in 1857, and lived in Canada and in the United States with his family for about ten years from 1869. He began work as a young man in a

printing and newspaper business in Albany, New York. Then, after the family returned to Ireland, he became editor of the *New Ross Standard* in 1880.

He also wrote for the *Wexford People*. This led to his active involvement in the Land League, and in late 1881 he was imprisoned in Kilmainham gaol – when Parnell and other leading Land League figures were incarcerated there. Released on health grounds in January 1882 (he had tuberculosis), he emigrated to Australia so as to avoid being re-arrested.

### Journalist

In Australia, he found work as a journalist initially in New South

Wales and in Victoria, but later in Western Australia – in the newly-discovered goldfields region east of Perth. Appointed editor of the *Kalgoorlie Sun* in 1899, that newspaper became a formidable organ of investigative journalism under his management.

After two unsuccessful attempts to enter politics, he was elected in 1901 to the first Commonwealth parliament following Australian federation. In the course of a parliamentary career spanning 20 years, he would serve in four Labour governments – most notably, as Minister for External Affairs during the First World War.

His claim to fame, however, rests on the fact that he is the only

member of the Australian House of Representative to have been expelled from parliament.

**“Both brothers had Australian wives whom they met while in Australia in 1883”**

The reason for his expulsion was an incendiary speech he made near Melbourne in November 1920 protesting against British rule in Ireland after the death on hunger strike, Terence McSwiney. In that speech, he referred to the British Empire as “bloody and accursed” – a sentiment that clearly had its roots in the earlier phase of his life

as a Land League agitator in Co. Wexford.

It was anathema to the Australian political establishment in 1920, and Mahon was defeated in the by-election that followed his expulsion from parliament.

That incident, and indeed the full period of Mahon's service in parliament, will be covered in the second volume of this biography. The present volume deals with his life up to 1901. It is of interest particularly because of the light it sheds on the visit to Australia in 1883 of John and William Redmond to drum up support and raise money for the Parnellite cause. Mahon, recently arrived in Australia, assisted the local



**Messines to Carrick Hill: Writing Home from the Great War**  
by Tom Burke  
(Mercier Press, €19.99)

**J. Anthony Gaughan**

Young Irishmen joined the British armed forces for many reasons. For the sons of Protestant and Unionist families it was practically *de rigueur* and they rallied to the colours to fight for king and empire in one generation after another.

For most others joining the British army was a better alternative to unemployment and frequently destitution. Some Irish Nationalists, such as Willie Redmond and Tom Kettle, fought in World War I in the belief that it would ensure the implementation of Home rule.

At that time also, many a youngster was beguiled by the jingoism and recruitment campaign fronted by one of Kerry's famous sons, Field Marshal H.H. Kitchener. Then there was the vision of war presented to boys in magazines such as *The Boys Own*, *Pluck* and *The Boy's Friend* which mythologised war with romantic and chivalric stories. They promoted patriotism, manliness and a simplistic imperial world view that emphasised duty and the need for sacrifice if the British empire was to endure.

These influences and a desire for adventure, it seems, prompted Michael Wall to join the British army before reaching the age of 18.

### Residence

Michael was born at Howth, Co Dublin, on March 21, 1898. Following his father's death, aged 45, the family lived at the residence of his aunt at Carrick Hill near Portmarnock. He was educated at two

# A lost soul on the western front

Christian Brothers' Schools, first at St Joseph's, Marino, and later at O'Connell's, North Richmond Street.

In his early years he witnessed the drill practice and life under canvas of the boys from the Royal Hibernian Military School in the Phoenix Park as they spent their summer camp in the fields around Carrick Hill.

Michael joined the British army in January 1916. His training was conducted at Ballykinlar, Co Down; Templemore, Co Tipperary; and Aldershot in Hampshire. He arrived at Boulogne in France on 23 October 1916.

### Shells

Two days later he was assigned as a lieutenant to the 16th Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment which was positioned near the Flemish village of Loker on the southern edge of the Ypres salient.

After serving with his battalion at the front for just seven and a half months, he was killed quite possibly by shells falling short of their target – so-called friendly fire – during the attack on Messines Ridge on 7 June 1917. He was 19 years old.

Tom Burke was a member of the committee behind the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Messines opened in 1998. Later he was also awarded an MBE for his contribution to the Northern Ireland peace process.

In 1999 he was given access to a collection of letters written by Michael mainly to his mother from the trenches. Owing to censorship, they were largely anodyne.

However, they do provide glimpses of the slaughter

suffered on both sides of the battle lines caused by shelling and the deaths and horrific injuries of comrades.

They referred to the physical hardship – water-logged trenches, sea of mud, rats, the cold and trench fever.

Apart from the abiding fear, service in the trenches was boring and lonely. It took just two weeks for Michael to become totally disillusioned with his lot in Flanders.

Before he joined the army and while at the front Michael corresponded with Fr Francis Gleeson, a friend of the family. He met him shortly before he went 'over the top'. Fr Gleeson completed two terms as a chaplain on the Western Front.

### Iconic figure

He became an iconic figure when he was featured in a picture, by the famous war illustrator Fortunino Matania, of him astride his horse and giving General Absolution to a battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers before they went into action.

Tom Burke brilliantly contextualises Michael's service in Flanders. However, despite the gloss he places on the narrative of that service, it remains essentially a sad and tragic story in which it is difficult to find any glory.



The Chapel of the Irish Saints in Sydney's St Mary's Cathedral. The altar in this chapel was donated by a member of the Dalton family into which the brothers John and William Redmond both married. The bust on the right hand side of the chapel is of Cardinal Moran, Bishop of Ossory 1872-1884 and Archbishop of Sydney 1884-1911.

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organisers of the Redmonds' tour.

The detailed account in this book of their tour is timely, this year being the centenary of the death of William Redmond and next year being the centenary of John's death. It is good to be reminded of their great work for Ireland.



Both brothers had Australian wives whom they met while in Australia in 1883.

John married his first wife, Johanna Dalton, in Sydney in 1883. She died in 1889, and John remarried in 1899. William's wife, Eleanor, was Johanna's half-niece; they were married in London in 1886.

### Awareness

The author of this excellent book, Jeff Kildea, is director of the Irish Anzacs Project at the University of New South Wales. In 2014 he was Visiting Professor of Australian History at University College Dublin, and in that role was conspicuously successful in encouraging greater awareness of Australian history, and of Irish links with the Antipodes.

**i** This book is available in Ireland from Books Upstairs, 17 d'Olier Street, Dublin 2 and from [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com)



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J.C.

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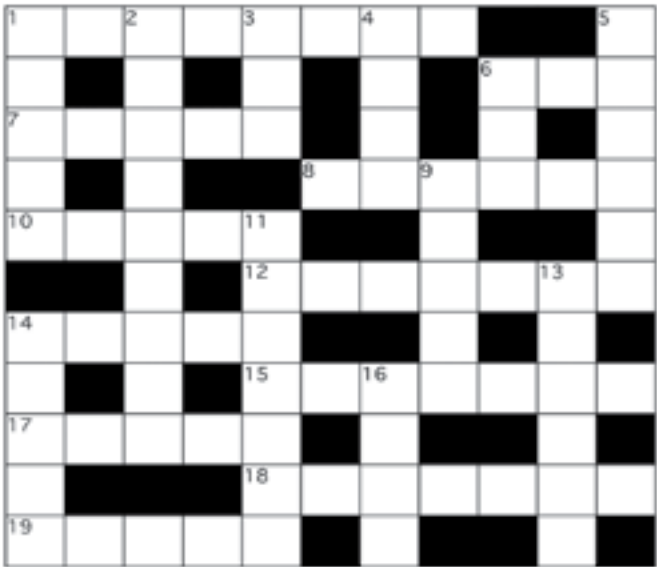
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# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior Gordius 188



- ACROSS**

1 You should always fasten it when being brought for a drive (4,4)

6 Automobile (3)

7 Go around a planet (5)

8 In this position, you may win a silver medal (6)

10 Flower, or a shade of purple (5)

12 Thirteen is said to be this kind of number (7)

14 Curves (5)

15 Trying out for flavour (7)

17 It involves fine singing and acting (5)

18 One in charge of a game of rugby, for example (7)

19 Plunged into the swimming pool (5)
- DOWN**

1 This kind of seat usually has three legs (5)

2 It brings people to hospital in an emergency (9)

3 Hit the ball with this in cricket (3)

4 Green kind of fruit (4)

5 The last schoolday of the week (6)

6 Sound a dove makes (3)

9 The edge of a slice of bread (5)

11 Tasty yellow dessert (7)

13 Doghouse (6)

14 It flows through your veins (5)

16 Out of danger (4)

**LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS**

**GORDIUS No.304**

**Across** – 1 Row 3 Pearly gates 8 Bronte 9 Basement 10 Imply 11 Macaw 13 Riled 15 Unkempt 16 Traffic jam 20 Staid 21 Hours 23 Visor 24 Jubilant 25 Retina 26 Mark my words 27 Gus

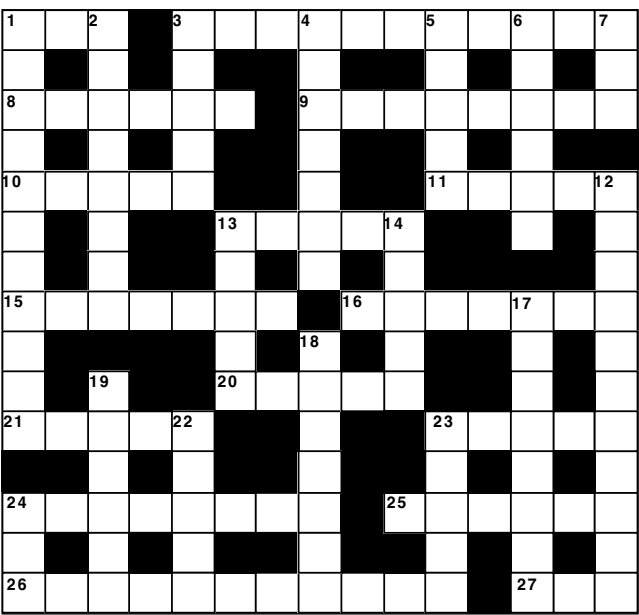
**Down** – 1 Rabbit punch 2 Woolpack 3 Petty 4 Rubella 5 Gleam 6 Trench 7 Sit 13 Ropes 14 Dared 17 Feasting 18 Maestro 19 Number 22 Salem witch trials 23 Views

**CHILDREN'S No.187**

**Across** – 1 Hairdresser 6 Shot 7 Proverb 9 Anger 13 Saves 14 Ski 15 Obeyed 17 Allow 19 Italians

**Down** – 1 Harp 2 Impossible 3 Deserve 4 SOS 5 Elope 8 Baseball 10 Grey 11 Road 12 Escape 16 Eden 18 Wet

## Crossword Gordius 305



- ACROSS**

1 Popular beverage (3)

3 How to address a priest in the police (according to your spouse's parent) (6-2-3)

8 Peers (6)

9 Kind of animal identifying drink in a worker (8)

10 Finger found in the back of the book? (5)

11 Reverie (5)

13 Remove feathers from a bird (5)

15 Food allocation given in proportion to cardinals (7)

16 Applauded (7)

20 Investigate (5)

21 Wetland (5)

23 The dunce gets Herb back for a French artist (5)

24 Craft venue or practical session of a course (8)

25 Ravel's most famous composition (6)

26 Imprimatur given to what's stuck to an envelope leaving an eraser factory? (6,5)

27 I get between cardinals? That's wrong (3)
- pop out to get Bunyan's great book (3,8,8)

2 Structure built to carry water over a long distance (8)

3 & 12d The minx fondles heels? That upset the 'Fingal's Cave' composer (5,11)

4 Port or marina (7)

5 Greek epic poem (5)

6 The chief spilled red ale (6)

7 Comedian (3)

12 See 3 down

13 Photo of a desirable person (5)

14 Ms Minogue provides Kentucky with an alternative fact (5)

17 See 1 down

18 Where the pilot sits in a plane (7)

19 Graze distractedly beside a bighead? Capital! (6)

22 Adhesive (5)

23 Sag, giving the doctor no work (5)

24 Has the West a right to wage this? (3)

## Sudoku Corner 188

**Easy**

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

**Hard**

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

**Last week's Easy 187**

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

**Last week's Hard 187**

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





Michael Kelly

# Notebook

## Portraying priests as positive role models

**WHEN WAS** the last time you saw a priest portrayed positively on television or in the cinema? The question from a friend of mine struck a chord with me. And, after a few minutes, I had to admit I couldn't think of a recent example.

It got me thinking about the fact that when I go to the cinema to see a movie and a clerical character is introduced, I slide down my seat a little bit with a prevailing sense of dread about which particular peccadillo or weakness of the human condition the writer will choose to explore with the priest.

Growing up in rural Co. Tyrone my experience with priests was universally positive. I was an altar server from the moment I made my First Holy Communion and was an eager volunteer for more Masses around the time of visits from missionaries and solemn novenas.

The men I met as a child had as many peculiarities as the rest of us. Some were grumpy in the mornings, others were perfectionists almost to the point of obsession. Still others were tediously long-winded preachers. But, the one thing all of these men had in common was that they lived their lives for others. To a



Sean Bean.

man, it was obvious to me that they wanted nothing more in life than to serve the people God had entrusted to them.

They had taken Christ at his word and embraced that Christian paradox that losing one's life for others is the only way to preserve one's life.

The same is true today. One of the privileges in the work that I do is that I often get invited to address groups of priests. Are they disheartened? Often, yes. Do they feel overwhelmed by the challenges facing the Church? Sometimes, yes. But, that same universal theme remains: a desire to serve to the best of their ability the people entrusted to them.

### Narratives

So, where are these priests on television and cinema? Media is so powerful at shaping narratives. In fact, with all the talk about adding subjects to the school curriculum, I've often thought that media literacy would be an invaluable tool in helping young people understand how their perceptions and opinions are being formed by the media without them even realising. How, in appearing edgy, the media is, in fact, pushing a

cosy consensus where all people think alike.

*Broken*, a new drama currently airing on British television, has received early positive reviews. I haven't seen the programme, but my colleague Brendan O'Regan was positive about the early episodes, but is now less so (see page 27).

*Broken* was written by self-described lapsed Catholic Jimmy McGovern. The main character is Fr Michael, played by Sean Bean. Mr McGovern describes Fr Michael as "a good priest". The writer was interviewed on BBC Radio 4 this week about the programme and asked about his portrayal of the cleric ministering to a deprived community in Liverpool. "I have a lifelong fascination with Catholicism," Mr McGovern says.

While he admits that he parts company with the Church on teachings around sexuality, he felt the need to show the reality of how priests spend their lives: "up here in Merseyside we have got some marvellous priests...you find them in food banks, they work with the homeless, they work with the alcoholic, the old, the sick.

"They are absolutely amazing priests," Mr McGovern says. More of this kind of thing.

### Crass and tasteless

Some pictures emerged on social media over the weekend of revellers at Saturday's gay pride parade in Dublin draping their rainbow colours around a statue of the crucified Christ and posing for a 'selfie' outside a city centre Church.

It says something about the tone deafness when it comes to matters spiritual that the image of Christ dying on the cross would engender such high jinks.

At the very least, it's behaviour that is crass and tasteless.

**IT'S A SIGN OF THE ESTEEM** she was held in during her life that St Teresa of Calcutta will always be 'Mother Teresa' [pictured]. She knew a thing or two about spending her life for others, even at a time of immense spiritual darkness on her own journey. Reflecting on the mystery at the heart of the Faith she writes: "I have found the great paradox, that you love until it hurts – then there can be no more hurt, only more love".



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