

The Irish Catholic

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Former Dublin Mayor 'shocked' at new plan to move cathedral

Jason Osborne

A former Dublin Lord Mayor has said he is "shocked" by a radical Church plan that would see the capital's pro-cathedral on the city's northside lose status as the mother church of the diocese in favour of another parish on the southside.

Proposals to move the seat of Dublin's archbishop from St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in the north inner-city to St Andrew's Westland Row on the other side of the River Liffey have been announced by Archbishop Dermot Farrell.

However, Cllr Nial Ring, who represents residents of the north inner-city, insisted that the pro-cathedral should be "enhanced rather than downgraded in any way, shape or form".

He told *The Irish Catholic* that he "wouldn't support anything where it would be in any way downgraded or relegated".

The archdiocese's proposal would see St Andrew's become Dublin's first Catholic cathedral since the Reformation, while St Mary's would be "raised to the dignity of a basilica". The proposal is now to be examined by a project group.

However, the potential loss of the cathedral status is a source of concern to north inner-city communities who have already suffered so much loss and depravation, Cllr Ring said. There are fears it could add to a perception

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Commencing college with Christ...



Students from St Mary's University College Belfast lead a procession at the beginning of Mass celebrated to mark the commencement ceremonies in the college on June 16.

Expert tells Oireachtas it can't legislate for 'assisted dying'

Staff reporter

Legislators debating the issue of assisted dying have been told by an expert on the Constitution that the Oireachtas does not have the authority to legalise the procedure.

Constitutional expert Dr Conor Casey, a law lecturer at Surrey University, told the Oireachtas Special Committee on Assisted Dying that he believed the Dáil and Seanad did not have the competence on the issue.

"Taking into account the text, history and moral-philosophical rationale for the affirmation of the right to life in the Constitution, and reflecting on the relevant case law, the most persuasive interpretation of the Constitution open to us in the absence of a determinative judgment of the superior courts, is that the Oireachtas is not competent to introduce a legislative regime that would permit intentional killing in the form of a statutory right to assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia," he said.

However, Dr Tom Hickey of Dublin City University disagreed. He claimed that: "The Constitution is not a bar or a block on the legislature from legislating as it sees fit in the public matter on this issue."

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Is praising martyrdom a relic of the past?

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Extraordinary faith in God during ordinary time

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Some of us didn't fully trust RTE anyway...

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Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Deputy Editor: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

Multimedia Journalists: Ruadhán Jones, ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie
Jason Osborne, jason@irishcatholic.ie

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

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Former Lord Mayor 'shocked' at plan to move cathedral

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widely-held in the northside that the area is neglected in favour of the southside.

"I would dispute the claim that that [southside] part of the city is more suitable. When you think of the northside of the city, or where the pro-cathedral is at the moment, you have the Parnell Quarter being developed, you have the Metrolink – even around the corner, probably most importantly, we're going to have the Magdalene laundry site redeveloped and that's within just a few hundred yards," Cllr Ring insisted, adding, "all of that area is being vastly more renewed and developed than St Andrew's."

A spokesman for the archdiocese told *The Irish Catholic* that the archbishop believes that both churches can be developed as "twin pillars of a renewed pastoral and missionary strategy".

"At the moment, this is a proposal to be discussed in a hopeful and synodal man-

ner. The project group that the archbishop is setting up will examine all aspects of the proposal and voices from partners in the community will be a valuable part of the group's work. If the project proceeds it will represent an upgrade for both churches – St Mary's to a basilica and St Andrew's to a cathedral," the spokesman told *The Irish Catholic*.

Cllr Ring insisted that "St Andrew's is in a business type area," while "you have a vibrant community there," around St Mary's.

"They [the southside] have Christchurch and St Patrick's now, they can't be getting everything," Cllr Ring said.

Asked whether there might be a southside bias at play, Cllr Ring responded, "that's what it looks like".

"Our area is on the up, and we'd see the pro-cathedral as an integral part of that and something that we want to protect and keep," the former Lord Mayor said.

Euthanasia debate filled with cynical doublespeak

In George Orwell's masterful novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – which I read every summer, and eerily seems more prescient each and every year, 'doublethink' and 'newspeak' are used to describe how the establishment uses intentionally ambiguous speech to distort and obscure reality.

It came to mind as I watched the hearings of the Oireachtas committee on euthanasia (or 'assisted dying' as campaigners in favour of the procedure prefer to call it).

“Firstly, what exactly does Deputy Kenny and Senator Seery Kearney think happens when someone is euthanised”

Dr Conor Casey, a senior lecturer in the University of Surrey School of Law and a Fellow of the Trinity College Dublin Centre for Constitutional Law and Governance, was asked to address the committee as an expert witness on Bunreacht na hÉireann (see page 9). Dr Casey was charged with offering his considered legal opinion based on his academic research on whether the Constitution conferred the right upon the Oireachtas to legislate for euthanasia or not.

During the course of his expert evidence, Dr Casey used the word 'killing' to describe what happens in the process of assisting someone to take their own life.

Socialist TD Gino Kenny, one of the main supporters of the push to legalise assisted suicide, was sharply critical of Dr Casey, saying that he used the word killing eight times, and that he should "refrain from using that kind of terminology".

However, Dr Casey said that he was trying to use the most anodyne language possible – and that the Supreme Court had used words such as 'terminated' to describe the ending of someone's life which he had sought to avoid.

Fine Gael Senator Mary Seery Kearney also scolded Dr Casey for using the word 'killing'.

The interventions raise a couple of piercing questions for me. Firstly, what

exactly do Deputy Kenny and Senator Seery Kearney think happens when someone is euthanised?

When I saw their objections, I reached for my dictionary which helpfully described killing thus: "to cause the death of a person, animal, or plant. To end the life of someone or something".

Neutral

Killing is, therefore, a perfectly neutral word that doesn't ascribe any morality to the act, but simply makes it clear that when you inject life-ending medications into someone who was alive, and then they die – they have been killed.

Even if one is in favour of assisted dying, one should not hide from the reality of what it is. People whose lives have been ended by the actions of another have not slipped into another room, they haven't moved away or decided to take their life in a different direction – they have been killed.

The unwillingness – or inability – to confront this basic fact really makes one wonder whether or not the Oireachtas members fully understand the seriousness of what they are debating and in many cases, advocating for.

Of course, the other conclusion is that they know exactly what they are proposing and the great Rubicon that would be crossed when



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Socialist TD Gino Kenny

“During the course of his expert evidence, Dr Casey used the word 'killing' to describe what happens in the process of assisting someone to take their own life”

doctors are asked to kill their patients rather than try to heal them. This is, perhaps, why we see the need for such tunnel vision where words like 'killing' must be rejected lest the public see what is really going on.

We've seen the same doublespeak when it comes to the abortion debate. Mainstream newspapers now frequently refer to the termination of the life of an unborn child as 'healthcare'. Doctors who are not onboard with abortion are accused of

denying women 'vital care'.

Politicians and the taxpayer-funded non-governmental organisations that write their speeches should at least be honest with the people about what they're proposing. If people like Deputy Kenny genuinely believe that at a time when we spend millions trying to stop some people taking their own lives, others should be aided in the act of suicide – he should say so boldly. And he should not be afraid to own what it is: killing.

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No consultation with Mary Immaculate staff who are 'in the dark' until November

Ruadhán Jones

Mary Immaculate College leadership will not be consulting staff until November 2023 regarding the historic negotiation between Mary Immaculate College (MIC) and University of Limerick (UL) for closer alignment.

MIC President Eugene Wall announced in an email that staff won't be consulted until after the first phase of negotiations conclude in September or October.

The first phase of meetings will identify "a viable model of closer structural alignment, inclusive of broad working principles", the memo says.

If consensus is reached,

a second phase of dialogue will begin "aimed at identifying the potential workings of the model in detailed form".

At the outset of this phase, management of both MIC and UL will consult with staff, on the details of the proposed model.

However, MIC's leadership have refused to reveal information regarding the first stage of MIC-UL linkage process to the local staff, correspondence seen by *The Irish Catholic* shows.

In response, branch leaders of MIC's union warned that "the lack of consultation has the potential to cause problems in the future and, as

such, could be detrimental to the process as a whole".

The correspondence also reveals MIC President Prof. Eugene Wall cancelled the annual staff meeting, despite complaints from staff that they were "very much in the dark" over the negotiation process.

"We had hoped that this year there would finally be a chance for staff to ask questions about the proposed MIC-UL Linkage discussions," the secretary for MIC's teacher's union Rory McGann told staff in the June 13 correspondence.

It also shows the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT-MIC) requested a chart that

itemised key issues to be addressed in negotiations and anticipated milestones in the process.

However, the college refused to share the chart, saying they had to balance the "public interest in transparency against the private interest in confidentiality", Mr McGann told IFUT members.

The college will not release the document "to any party not directly involved in the deliberative process", Mr McGann was informed.

The issue of a lack of consultation was raised during the branch's meeting with management on Monday, June 19. IFUT invited Prof. Wall to attend, but he did not, this paper understands.

Three formal complaints over Mary Immaculate recruitment process

Staff reporter

Three formal complaints have been lodged with Mary Immaculate College (MIC) over the recruitment process for the Head of Theology role, *The Irish Catholic* has learned.

There were "substantive issues" with the process, including the shortlisting for interviews, sources say, with three complainants formally contacting the college through their union.

It is unclear under which of MIC's policies the complaints can be received or processed under, this paper understands.

Staff morale is reported to be "very, very low", as the college has failed to appoint a new head of the theology department since the role became vacant in June 2022.

Communications between

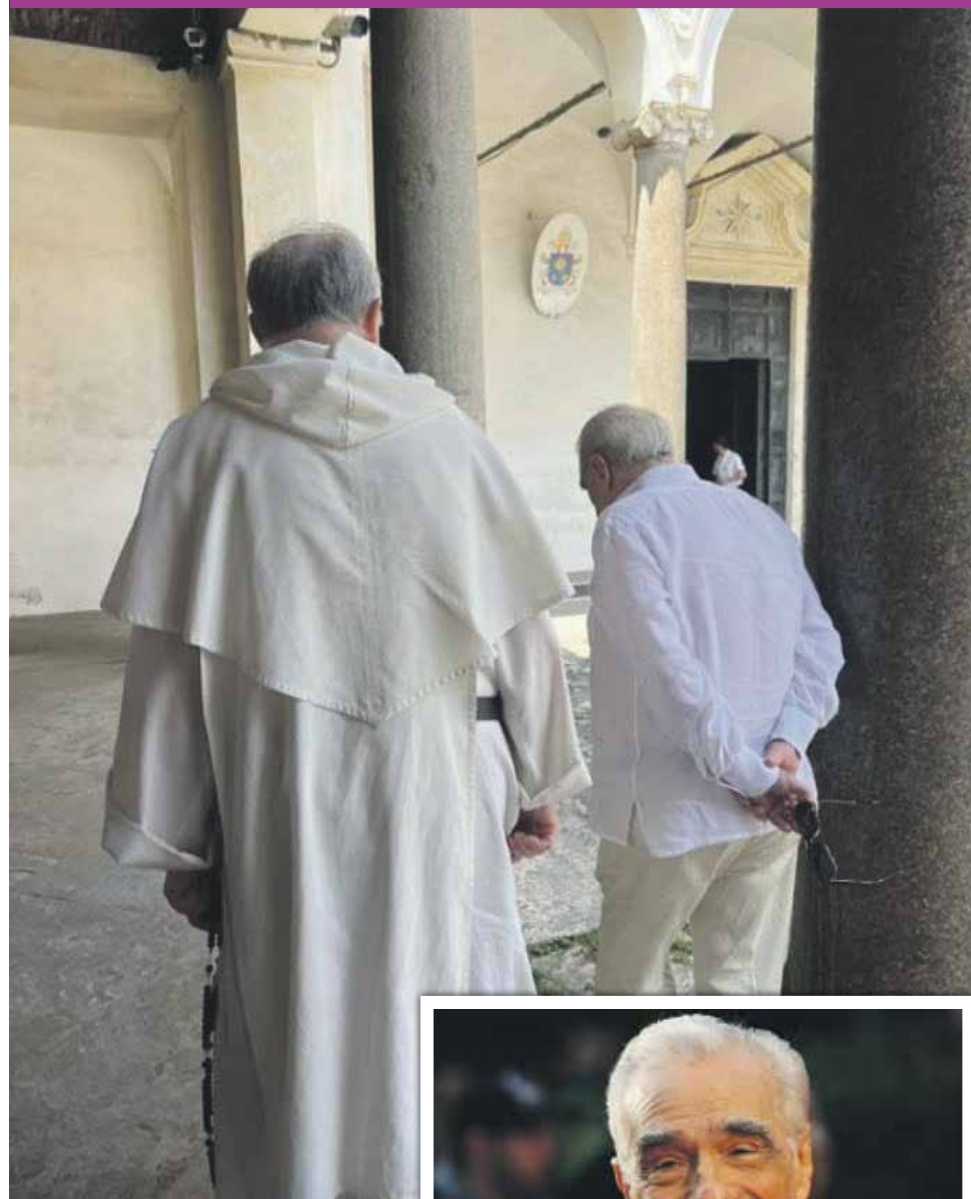
senior management and staff have been described as "extremely poor".

The college is into the third round of interviews for the position, and no local candidates have been shortlisted to be interviewed, *The Irish Catholic* understands. In the first round, two candidates were interviewed but neither were deemed appointable.

The second round also saw two candidates interviewed, and again neither were appointed, a source has said.

A senior lecturer Dr Catherine Swift previously wrote to this paper, saying many staff "find it worrying that, for whatever reason, these interview boards are experiencing such difficulties in what should be a straightforward, public service appointment".

Some Goodfellas...



Lauded director Martin Scorsese is pictured at the Basilica of San Clemente in Rome, Italy, where the Irish Dominicans are based. He is speaking to Fr Paul Lalor OP, the basilica's rector, who is an expert in Christian archaeology.



Martin Scorsese

US company announces 'baby bonus' for employees expecting child

Jason Osborne

US firm PublicSq recently announced that it will offer employees a bonus if they have a baby or adopt a child.

This comes as a number of companies in the US continue to pay their employees time off or travel expenses to get an abortion in the wake of last year's overturning of Roe v. Wade.

"We think that ultimately a company is only as strong as the families that built it, and then for us, we're a pro-family company," Michael Seifert, the company's founder and CEO told *Fox & Friends Weekend*, continuing, "We're unashamed about that. And we're actually the largest marketplace in the country of pro-family businesses."

Mr Seifert explained that he sees the world travelling in an "anti-family" direction, and criticised companies offering abortion benefits to their employees such as Patagonia, Amazon, and Target.

The company is to offer a \$5,000 bonus to any employee who has a baby or adopts a child, with the bonus being given upon the birth of the child or upon the initiation of the adoption process because, as Mr Seifert emphasised, "adoption fees can be exorbitant".

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Synod expert urges caution over irresponsible framing of sexuality discussions

Ruadhán Jones

An expert on synodality has urged caution in discussions of sexuality and gender, warning that partisan framing is "irresponsible", especially where the science is uncertain.

There is wisdom in knowing where Church teaching can and must be changed on sexuality, Prof. Massimo Faggioli said at a conference in All Hallows on Saturday, June 24.

"On other issues like the transgender – even the science is very uncertain," said Prof. Faggioli.

"I don't think it is helpful, honestly, to write columns saying the Church is doing this, or the Church has failed in this [and] next paragraph, you have these youth who are killing themselves. I think this is hugely irresponsible, totally irresponsible," the Church historian continued. "There is no pastorality there."

Prof. Faggioli said we shouldn't have a "partisan



Prof. Maria Cimperman RSCJ and Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ deliver a joint talk at the conference on synodality in All Hallows DCU, on Saturday, June 24. Photo: Ruadhán Jones.

view on this issue, where "either you are with me or this is the worst thing".

"It's a way of framing the issue which we should navigate with all possible wisdom and caution," the professor said.

Earlier, he warned against the "casual" use of acronyms like LGBTQ, saying the "LG is one thing, and then there's the rest".

Speaking at the conference on 'Synodality in a Liminal Time', Prof. Faggioli also said

that "we might have to check some idealistic and romantic visions on synodality".

At times a "purely sociological view of the Church" dominates, and "we fall into these temptations to say the society is free, is good, is dynamic – makes you what you want to be. And the Church is the opposite".

But "we will have to think hard about making synodality in the Catholic Church something that has a strong theo-

logical element and canonical", said the professor from Villanova University, Pennsylvania.

"In a global Church... using sociological models as the only model for the Church puts at risk any possibility of unity," he said.

The conference was organised by the All Hallows trust and included a wide array of national and international speakers.

See pages 10-11.

Religious freedom a 'barometer' of human rights in a country

Jason Osborne

A new Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) report has revealed that over 50% of people live in a country with serious religious persecution, with ACN Ireland director Michael Kinsella saying that religious freedom is a "very telling barometer" of the extent of human rights within a country.

The 2023 *Religious Freedom in the World* report put 28 countries in the "red" category for religious freedom, which indicates religious persecution.

Those countries are home to more than 4 billion people and make up about 51.6% of the global population.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Dr Kinsella said that the sources of persecution can be roughly split into three areas.

"The first is the competing religious claims, so Islamist countries, for

example, then next to that are the secularist or progressivist countries. Next to that are the overwhelmingly communist countries. The expression of religious freedom itself is something that is hugely limited," Dr Kinsella said.

"The first thing to bear in mind with regard to religious freedom is that it is a very telling barometer of the understanding and extent of human rights within a country.

"Religious freedom is a way of ensuring that the expression of one's humanity towards the transcendent as they see it is recognised as a fundamental right," he said.

The red category includes the two most populous countries in the world, China and India. All but one of the countries are in either Africa or Asia.

See page 25

THE RALLY FOR LIFE NEEDS YOUR HELP

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

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The 'brave new world' of the dramatic increase in egg freezing

The impact of the Covid-19 lockdown will probably be with us for years: an increase in working from home, the development of more Zoom screen technology, and indeed, the streaming of Mass are among these observed.

And now, another outcome is claimed: a record rise in the number of single women freezing their eggs, and opting for assisted conception through In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and donor insemination.

Statistics

According to the British Human Fertility and Embryology Authority, which tracks statistics on this subject, there has been a "dramatic rise" in egg freezing cycles linked to the pandemic – an increase of 64%, according to the latest data.

There was a 10% rise in IVF and donor inseminations between 2019 and 2021 – a 44% increase in single parents seeking assisted fertility treatment and a 33% increase in women in same-sex relationships requesting IVF. Egg freezing has also



Mary Kenny

increased in Ireland, where a central Dublin clinic will extract a woman's eggs for a fee of €3,000 (plus annual fees for storage).

“Behind all the statistics is often a woman desperate to be a mother, or the hope for a future chance of having a baby”

The pandemic is said to have accelerated this pattern by making women aware that their chances of finding a suitable man to father a child were diminishing – and so they are having recourse to freezing their eggs for future use.

The approach to parenthood does seem to resemble ever more Aldous Huxley's science fiction *Brave New World*, in which infants were gestated in laboratories. Some of the current attitudes to assisted fertility seem chillingly

clinical and devoid of human, let alone sacred, considerations: and that's not even counting the experiments done with laboratory-created embryos, which is surely crossing yet another ethical boundary.

Yet behind all the statistics is often a woman desperate to be a mother, or the hope for a future chance of having a baby.

Agency

Some women say they freeze their eggs to give them a 'sense of agency' – so that they retain the option of removing them from the freezer, and having them fertilised. It doesn't always work out: although 41% of younger women (between 18 and 34) achieve a pregnancy, only 16% of women over 34 succeed.

Baroness Ruth Deech, who ran the HFEA for some years, blamed men for the problems women encounter when wanting a baby. Too many men "won't commit" to marriage and parenthood



while a woman is in her best fertile years.

Interestingly, that is exactly what the Irish bishops argued back in the 1950s when there was a very low rate of marriage, and thus a low rate of couples starting families. It was these selfish boyfriends who dithered and wouldn't take the plunge! The means were very different but the reasoning strikingly similar.

● Yevgeny Prigozhin, of the Russian Wagner militia group is portrayed as a not very salubrious character, convicted on criminal charges in the past and apparently a violent warlord – “a thug” according to the BBC. Yet I think ‘Yevgeny’ is a beautiful Christian name – being the Russian for Eugene.

I wonder if there's an explanation of why Eugene seems to be favoured in Cavan, and more widely in the north of Ireland – Derry's

Cathedral is St Eugene's – as well as in Russia.

St Eugene was a Seventh Century Pope, who was apparently a very holy Roman priest. The standard dictionary of saints also lists a Eugene of Carthage, who died in 505 after suffering hardships in Tunisia, and who wrote to St Gregory of Tours encouraging his people to “hold fast to their faith”. Of course, the Eugene for which Derry's cathedral is named is Eugene of Ardstraw, the 6th Century abbot.

A Titanic tragedy

The tragedy of the Titan submersible – when five men died after their vessel imploded on a 12,467-foot underwater dive on June 18 – probably won't deter those who still feel drawn to viewing the Titanic wreck on the Atlantic's seabed.

The Titanic exercises a global fascination: the Belfast Titanic Experience is one of the top tourist attractions in the world, and rightly so. (Although I've also heard critical remarks to the effect that no Catholics were employed at the Harland & Wolff dockyard back in 1912, being evidence of exclusion and discrimination.)

The Titanic story goes across the generations – my nine-year-old grandson has constructed a model Titanic ship, accurate in every detail, out of Legos. Historians recall that Fr Browne, SJ, who fortuitously alighted from the doomed ship at

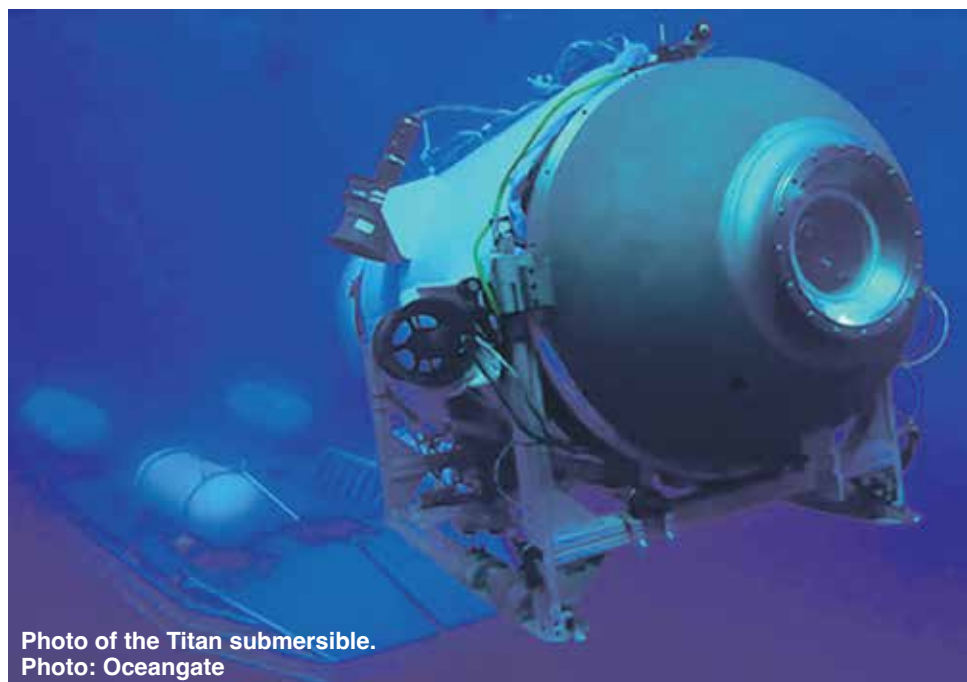


Photo of the Titan submersible. Photo: Oceangate

its last call at Queenstown (Cobh), left us a peerless photographic record of onboard life.

James Cameron's 1997 *Titanic* movie with Kate Winslet and Leonardo di Caprio was the most successful film of all time,

a measure of the story's magnetic pull. I thought the more modest, but equally moving, 1955 film *A Night to Remember*, with Kenneth More, had a deeper sense of spirituality, especially as the ship's orchestra played *Nearer*

My God to Thee at its sinking.

The American author Walter Lord, who wrote the book, re-awakened the world to the Titanic disaster in the mid 1950s when he tracked down over 60 survivors.

Mother Teresa

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Surge in abortions a humanitarian crisis says TD Tóibín

Ruadhán Jones

As pro-lifers around the country gear up for Saturday's Rally for Life, the Department of Health has revealed that 8,156 abortions took place in 2022.

Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín lamented the "heart breaking statistic", calling the surge in the number of abortions "a humanitarian crisis".

"Over 8,000 unborn children in Ireland had their lives ended legally

by the State last year," Mr Tóibín said in a June 22 statement.

"The number of abortions are so high that they are now significantly impacting the birth rate of the country."

This figure – the highest since abortion was legalised in 2018 – may be higher, as a parliamentary reply to TD Carol Nolan showed there were 8,876 claims paid in 2022 to doctors for performing abortions.

In addition, from January to

June 2022, 85 women with Irish addresses had abortions in England and Wales.

According to the department's figures, just 22 abortions were carried out due to a risk to life or health of the mother; four were due to a risk to life or health in an emergency situation; 88 due to a "fatal foetal anomaly"; and 8,042 in early pregnancy before 12 weeks gestation.

The months with the highest number of abortions carried out

were January (783), March (751) and December (752). The month with fewest notifications was July (487).

Dublin had the highest number of abortions recorded (3,005), followed by Cork (734) and Limerick (377). The county cited in fewest notifications was Leitrim, with only 48 noting it as the county of residence of the mother.

Northern Ireland was the place of residence notified in 12 cases, while five notifications recorded the place

of residence as another location outside of Ireland.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has also submitted a report on reviews carried out in 2022. Their report shows that four applications for review were received, with two applications subsequently withdrawn.

One of the applications was found to have met the requirements for a lawful termination of pregnancy and one did not meet the requirements.

Irish nun and education reformer dies in India

Audrey Bryce

Irish missionary Sr Cyril Mooney, whose work enabled thousands of disadvantaged girls in India to receive proper education, has died in Kolkata at the age of 86.

Sr Mooney was an "eminent educational reformer, social worker and friend of the poor", according to Chief minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee.

"Her contribution to State welfare schemes for the empowerment of underprivileged children was immeasurable," he said in a tweet.

Born in Ireland in 1936, Sr Mooney moved to India in 1956, where she lived and worked for the next 67 years at the Loreto Convent School in Sealdah, Kolkata.

Serving as principal of the school, she

reflected on her responsibility as both missionary and educator, observing the many poor families that lived in the area surrounding the school and convent. Sr Mooney decided it was her duty to care for them.

She was awarded the highest honour that can be granted to a non-citizen in India, the Padma Shri award in 2007. Other Loreto schools proceeded to mirror Sr Mooney's contributions, saving thousands more from poverty and degradation.

Sr Mooney "was a great soul. She was a well-known educationalist all over the world and was very closely associated with most of the priests and religious showing her care, concern, love, assuring them of her prayer," said the vicar general of the Archdiocese of Calcutta, Fr Dominic Gomes, in a statement.



Dr Abdul Kalam presents the Padma Shri award to Sr Cyril Mooney in 2007. Photo: Wikicommons.

Lack of act of contrition noted in manslaughter trial

Jason Osborne

An Irish judge has noted as a sign of a lack of remorse the fact that a man guilty of the manslaughter of his elderly aunt neglected to say the act of contrition in her ear as she lay dying.

59-year-old farmer Michael Scott

of Portumna in Co. Galway has been jailed for six years for the manslaughter of his elderly aunt, Chrissie Treacy, who died after she was run over by the teleporter he was driving.

He was found guilty of manslaughter by a jury after a trial earlier this year, on the basis of gross negligence.

The prosecution case was that Mr Scott had deliberately reversed over his aunt following a long running dispute about land, while the defence said that her death was a tragic accident while Mr Scott was reversing a teleporter across the yard outside Ms Treacy's home.

Ms Justice Caroline Biggs noted that Mr Scott had "shown no remorse or compassion for his aunt in the immediate aftermath".

"For example, he didn't say the act of contrition into her ear, even though he knew she was very religious. It was left to his neighbour...to do that."

Nuns in the sun...



Sr Catherine and Sr Faustina, sisters of the Poor Clares Galway, make the most of the sunny weather to do some summer cleaning on the convent grounds.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Questions over PSNI strip search of children

The police in the North of Ireland are said to have illegally stripsearched 27 children including 10 youths who identified as Catholic.

The Northern Ireland Policing Board said the PSNI has been ignoring the legal rules regarding the strip searching of children and young people in custody.

The review says that in the vast majority of the searches examined, the PSNI appeared to ignore the rules "and no-one was present to support the young person during this very invasive and humiliating use of power by officers".

It also analysed 11 strip searches of juveniles that have taken place under a new PSNI policy introduced in January this year and said they "are still problematic", with no appropriate adult present on six occasions.

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The Irish Catholic

Breda O'Brien

The View



It will be very hard for RTÉ to recover

The fact that RTÉ concealed additional payments to broadcaster, Ryan Tubridy, to the tune of €345,000 will undermine confidence still further in the public service broadcaster.

In a disturbing article in the *Sunday Independent*, an anonymous whistleblower claims that Mr Tubridy's salary is just the tip of the iceberg. Apparently, it is a dirty little secret among advertising agencies that RTÉ offers what amount to kickbacks to agencies that place more of their advertising with the national broadcaster.

“Is he so well paid that he never noticed the disparity between what RTÉ was announcing as his pay and what he was actually getting?”

This is not the same as a volume discount, that is, the more you spend, the steeper the discount. No, this is an incentive purely for the advertising agency, which generally speaking, the client paying for the advertising is unaware of.

RTÉ was allegedly making it financially attractive to advertising agencies to place more advertising with them, even when it might not be the best investment for their clients. The whistleblower claims that secret credit notes funnelled more than €50 million to agencies over the years.

If this allegation is correct, this kind of shady dealing brings the whole organisation into disrepute. The use of a barter account also damages Ryan Tubridy. As more than one commentator put it, is he so well paid that he never noticed the disparity between what RTÉ was announcing as his pay and what he was actually getting?

I worked as a lowly researcher on short-term contracts in RTÉ dur-

ing the 1990s. There was always a culture of 'mind the talent.' This meant that the stars were treated with great deference.

There were lots of tiers in RTÉ when it came to payment and respect. There were those earning the big bucks, most of whom either had their own media companies and/or highly effective agents. They were the household names, and were treated very well.

Then there were the staff members, who might also be household names but earned much more modest sums and who were subject to much more stringent rules about retirement, for example.

The people in the background, who were and are vital to the success of RTÉ, everyone from technical staff to producers, directors, researchers and production assistants, were also relatively modestly paid.

And then there were the people like me, moving from one short-term contract to another (sometimes as short as three months), who were treated with great cynicism by RTÉ. Such was the cachet of getting a foothold in RTÉ that it knew that it did not have to treat these contractors with much respect.

Trust

Irish people, until recent times, had a high level of trust in RTÉ. A Eurobarometer study around this time last year found that television dominates as the primary news source (62%) - for Irish people. This is particularly true for people over 55.

Overall, public television and radio stations were the most trusted news sources in Ireland (59%), followed by the written press (45%) and people, groups or friends on social media (18%).

I wonder if that trust held true for all groups of older viewers. Certainly, as a committed Catholic, I was deeply sceptical about some of RTÉ's coverage, particularly regarding contentious social issues.

Who can forget *Mission to Prey*, a hatchet job on Fr Kevin Reynolds, a blameless older missionary priest, who was accused of heinous abuse but was fortunate that DNA testing

could prove his innocence?

He would have been destroyed without a trace if he had been accused of sexual abuse alone rather than being the father of a child.

RTÉ has long been perceived to be a cold house for Catholics. This is not because of accurate coverage of clerical criminal sexual abuse scandals, which really is public service broadcasting. It is because of a perceived institutional bias against presenting anything except bad news about the Church.

This is not the case when it comes to business, where good news is regularly relayed about Irish companies.

There were other lapses of judgement unconnected to Catholicism. Mission to Prey was followed shortly after by a debacle during an important presidential election television debate in 2011. Pat Kenny read out a tweet on air purporting to be from Martin McGuinness' official Twitter account.

“Trust will not be easily restored in our national broadcaster, just as it wants an increase in the license fee”

The tweet claimed that evidence would emerge of shady dealings by Seán Gallagher (at the time way ahead in the opinion polls) in relation to fundraising for Fianna Fáil. RTÉ subsequently paid substantial damages to Mr Gallagher for these damaging, untrue allegations, long after Michael D. Higgins romped home to the Áras.

Trust is often compared to a horse - it walks up slowly but gallops away very quickly. Trust will not be easily restored in our national broadcaster, just as it wants an increase in the license fee.

It is a sad day for the many within RTÉ who work hard and try to be impartial. They, too, have been betrayed by this scandal.



Broadcaster Ryan Tubridy launches an appeal for the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

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Report lays bare reality of abortion in Ireland

Chai Brady

Abortion providers in Ireland have expressed moral doubts about the 'service', saying it can be "very, very difficult", according to a peer reviewed article published last week.

The article entitled "I suppose we've all been on a bit of a journey": a qualitative study on providers' lived experiences with liberalised abortion care in the Republic of Ireland" was published on June 19 in the journal *Sexual*

and Reproductive Health Matters.

In the study there were 13 interviews with people involved in abortion in Ireland which occurred between February 2020 and March 2021. Six GPs, three midwives, two obstetricians, and two nurses took part in the study.

While overall those interviewed "supported access to care", according to the study, "many, however, reported occasional moral doubts about their work".

Anonymously, a person involved in abortion in a

hospital setting said that "morally and ethically the hardest thing definitely is seeing the little foetus... they are formed so well, like even little fingernails and, you know, it's just unbelievable really the formation even... coming up to that 12-week mark".

They said: "A lot of the time, they just have their little hands underneath their chin, or their hands could be across their chest... On a personal level, you just have to try and forget about it as quick as you can, but there's certain

cases that you don't forget about, you know, as much as others and especially the babies that are... all older babies and babies that are, you know, practically formed in every way..."

Another person involved in surgical abortions said it was not a "pleasant procedure" but that over time they had "grown more comfortable" the more they had done.

A section is featured in which some of the practitioners expressed concern about abortion being used as

a contraceptive, and seemingly supporting the three-day wait period currently being challenged in Irish law, one person said: "Coming from the hospital that I trained in, where we were doing terminations at 24 weeks... and where women most definitely used it as a form of contraception, you know, I wouldn't like to get to that stage either."

"So, I think the way Ireland is safeguarding it is good, you know, and they're giving a lot of time to women to think about it

and not making it an easy decision... because it is a huge decision that can be made in anger, frustration, and you know without help sometimes."

Despite moral concerns, the report stated that those involved in abortion in Ireland did not consider "leaving abortion care and all were proud of their work".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Legion of Mary appoints new president

Declan Lawlor has been appointed president of the Legion of Mary at a meeting of the lay apostolate's world council in June.

Mr Lawlor succeeds Mary Murphy after she spent six years at the head of the 14 million members of the Legion worldwide.

Mr Lawlor previously served as vice-president of Concilium – the Legion's world council – and his tenure comes as the lay organisation seeks to build on the momentum of its 100th anniversary, which took place in September 2021.

The Legion was founded in Dublin in 1921 by Servant of God Frank Duff and is the largest organisation of its kind in the Church.

RE time in schools 'critical' – Bishop Nulty

Time dedicated to religious education in primary schools is "critical" to the formation of young people, Bishop Denis Nulty has said.

From the earliest days in junior school, children develop "a deep respect for who you are and how you are made in God's image and likeness", the bishop of Kildare and Leighlin said.

"That is why the time spent in Religion and Faith formation during school is critical to our timetable," he added.

Bishop Nulty was speaking at a Mass in honour of the 75th anniversary of Scoil Naomh Abban NS, Doonane, Co. Laois.

"The identity of schools is important, it's not about size, like the child in the Gospel, it's about culture, attitude, tradition," the bishop added.

Doctors concerned 'conversion therapy' bill may hamper medical help

Jason Osborne

Legislation to criminalise so-called "conversion therapy" practices in Ireland is unnecessary and could impede patients suffering with gender dysphoria from getting medical help, according to doctors

with the National Gender Service (NGS).

Responding to an announcement by the Children's Minister Roderic O'Gorman that he would bring forward legislation in the coming weeks with a view to passing it by early 2024, psychiatrist Dr

Paul Moran told *Newstalk Breakfast* that he had never come across a patient that has had any conversion therapy.

"Clearly there is a law to ban something which is not happening and has not happened in living memory," Dr Moran said.

Dr Moran expressed concern that the legislation could be weaponised against medical professionals, enabling people to make "spurious accusations" about a psychiatrist's work.

Meanwhile, clinical lead at the National Gender Service Dr Karl Neff expressed concerns about the Trinity College research justifying the need for the bill.

In that research, only 38 people responded to a survey, seven were interviewed, of which only five claimed they had experienced conversion therapy

in Ireland over the past 25 years. Of those, most were related to "conversations and/or interventions within families or religious settings".

Dr Neff said that the research paper "is weakened by significant recruitment, selection, and reporting bias. The political impetus for the study likely exaggerates these biases", with even the report's authors noting that there is "no empirical evidence of conversion therapies in Ireland in published research".

New vocations director for Ossory appointed

Ruadhán Jones

Fr Mark Condon has been appointed diocesan vocations director for the Diocese of Ossory, as Bishop Niall Coll released his first clerical appointments.

In addition to appointing a vocations director, the bishop of Ossory appointed a new director of ecumenism, Fr Brian Griffin, and vicar general, Fr Daniel Carroll.

Meanwhile, three of Bishop Coll's priests are to retire when the appointments come into effect on July 29.

In announcing the appointments, Bishop Coll

said he was "humbled and inspired" by the commitment of the people of the diocese.

The clergy and lay Faithful are committed to "ensuring, as we look to the future, that, in a truly synodal fashion, we will minister to each other in the most effective ways", the bishop said.

He acknowledged that priests have accepted "new and perhaps more onerous roles" in the diocese.

"Their willingness to respond to the needs of the diocese is reflective of the great generosity that exists among so many in our parishes," Bishop Coll said.

A champion returns...



Ballincollig parishioner Colm Monahan celebrates with his parents after winning gold at the Special Olympics, which took place in Berlin June 17-25. In total, Ireland won 24 gold, 22 silver and 29 bronze medals across a diverse range of sports.

Legal expert: Oireachtas not competent to introduce right to 'assisted dying'



Dr Conor Casey's Oireachtas briefing document makes clear the constitutional protection for life at all stages, writes **Jason Osborne**

The Oireachtas Special Committee on 'Assisted Dying' last week consulted three constitutional experts who attempted to shed light on whether or not the Oireachtas has the ability to introduce legislation that would see assisted suicide and/or euthanasia in Ireland.

Dr Tom Hickey, Assistant Professor of Constitutional law at Dublin City University (DCU), told the committee that the Constitution is "not a bar or a block" on the Oireachtas from legislating in the public interest, while assistant professor of law at Trinity College Dublin, Dr Andrea Mulligan agreed, citing a Supreme Court ruling from 2013 brought by assisted suicide campaigner Marie Fleming.

Not competent

However, Senior Lecturer in Public Law and Legal Theory at the University of Surrey, Dr Conor Casey offered a contrary opinion which is expounded in the briefing document he prepared for the committee. In it, he argues that "taking into account the text, history and moral-philosophical rationale for the affirmation of the right to life in the Constitution, and reflecting on the relevant case law, the most persuasive interpretation of the Constitution open to us in the absence of a determinative judgment of the superior courts, is that the Oireachtas is not competent to introduce a legislative regime that would permit intentional killing in the form of a statutory right to assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia".

Throughout his briefing document, Dr Casey makes extensive reference to Article 40.3 of the Irish Constitution, which places a duty on the State to protect the sanctity of human life, in whatever stage



A file photo shows a doctor's "suicide kit". Photo: OSV News/Stefan Wermuth, Reuters

or state of life a person is to be found in.

While he cautions that the Constitution's protection of the right to life does not mean the State has an "absolute obligation" to preserve life at all costs, he does note that the Constitution does make a "categorical moral and legal distinction" between a competent adult patient making the decision not to continue medical treatment on the one hand – which is allowed by the Constitution – and the "taking of active steps by another to bring about the end of that life of the other".

"There is no constitutional right to the latter, whether in the form of assisted suicide or to voluntary euthanasia," Dr Casey writes, continuing, "the Oireachtas' current categorical statutory ban on both forms of intentional killing are constitutionally unimpeachable".

Left unresolved by Irish courts is the question of whether the Oireachtas has legislative competence to permit assisted suicide or euthanasia via statute. Applying the same reading to the Constitution as above, Dr Casey comes to the conclusion that "the Oireachtas is not competent to introduce a statutory regime that would permit intentional

killing in defined circumstances, whether in the form of a statutory right to assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia".

"It is difficult if not impossible to frame legislation that provides a statutory right to intentional killing as a good faith attempt by the Oireachtas to either respect, defend, protect or vindicate by its laws the right to life of every citizen as far as practicable," he writes.

Superior courts

Noting the view of the superior courts, Dr Casey says that they have "emphatically held" that there is no right to have one's life "terminated" or to intentionally have one's death "accelerated" by a third party – as in the case of physician assisted suicide or euthanasia. Citing the High Court in *Fleming v. Ireland* [2013], which noted that the "taking of active steps by a third party to bring about death is an entirely different matter" than respecting the idea that a competent adult cannot be compelled to accept medical treatment, he writes that "this is a distinction that holds 'even if this is desired and wished for by an otherwise competent adult who sincerely and conscientiously desires this outcome'".

Dr Casey notes throughout that, as noted in *Fleming*, the intentional destruction of human life is "deeply at odds with the social order envisaged by the Constitution", and its understanding of the obligations brought about by its understanding of human dignity and respect for the sanctity of life.

"As Denham CJ put it, the 'social order contemplated by the Constitution, and the values reflected in it...would be the antithesis' of any legal entitlement to intentional killing. It is unsurprising the Court would reach this conclusion, given the strong influence of the natural law tradition on the Constitution's Fundamental Rights provisions," Dr Casey's briefing document reads.

"In this tradition, the intentional destruction of life is regarded as an unreasonable and impermissible attack on our equality as human persons and the intrinsic, not instrumental, value of our lives."

Intentional killing

Extensive attention is paid to the concerns raised by the High Court in *Fleming* about the potential effects of laws that could be devised by the Oireachtas to permit "intentional killing," as these concerns are relevant to figuring out whether such legislative reforms as those being considered by the Oireachtas currently can "ever be consistent" with the State's duty to protect life under Article 40.3.2 of the Constitution.

Some of the High Court's

concerns included:

If the law were liberalised so as to allow for assisted suicide/euthanasia, "there would accordingly be the attendant risk that some patients who were...wrongly diagnosed might elect to opt for physician assisted suicide rather than endure the debilitating terminal illness which clinicians had, in fact, wrongly diagnosed".

Expert evidence suggested that relaxing the ban on

“It is difficult if not impossible to frame legislation that provides a statutory right to intentional killing as a good faith attempt by the Oireachtas to either respect, defend, protect or vindicate by its laws the right to life of every citizen as far as practicable”

assisted suicide would bring about a "paradigm shift" with unforeseeable and potentially uncontrollable changes in attitude, and therefore behaviour, to assisted suicide.

The "subliminal" messaging sent to vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and disabled, that in order to avoid taking up scarce resources, assisted suicide is a "normal" option which should be seriously considered.

Considering the Constitution and the case law in Ireland saw Dr Casey suggest that the most persuasive interpretation of the Constitution (in the absence of a determinative judgement from Ireland's superior courts) is that the Oireachtas isn't competent to introduce 'assisted dying' legislation. It remains to be seen if the Oireachtas is equally convinced.

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Challenges and hopes of the synod addressed in All Hallows

Ruadhán Jones

The challenges of and hopes for the Church's synodal pathway were addressed by a wide array of speakers before a packed conference room in All Hallows DCU on Saturday, June 24.

Speakers from Europe, America and Asia reflected on 'Synodality in a Liminal Time – Waiting on Synodality' in the former Dublin seminary.

Questions of Church governance and inclusion were raised by many of the speakers, while Prof. Massimo Faggioli warned against the view that the synod will lead to changes in Church teaching.

The conference was organised by the All Hallows trust, with past lecturer Dr Eugene Duffy opening the conference and Prof. Eamonn Conway delivering one of the eight talks.

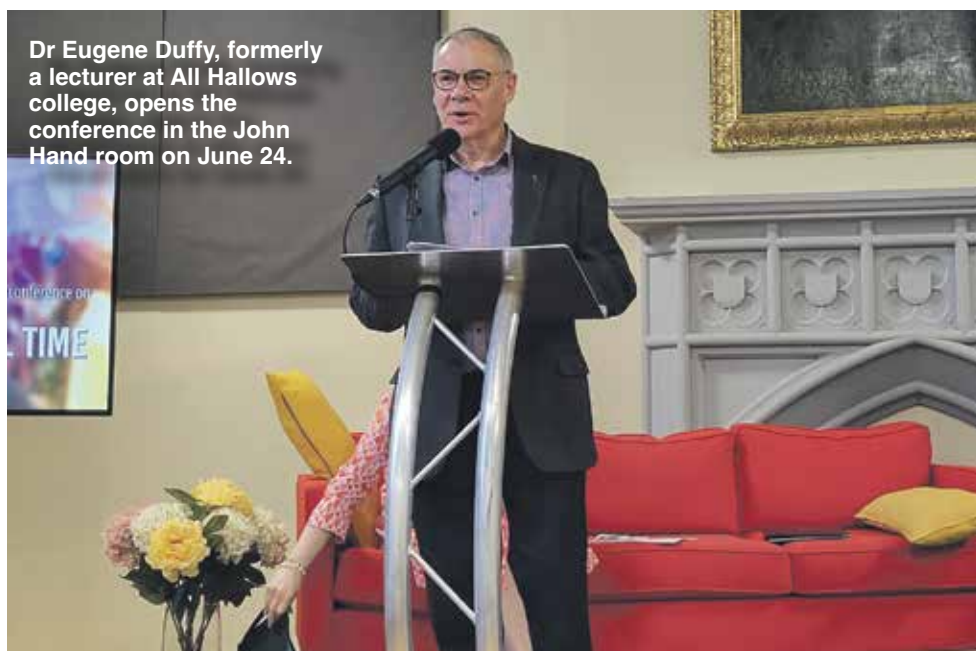


A full conference hall listens attentively. Photos: Ruadhán Jones.



Questions from the audience resulted in deeper conversations on the strengths and weaknesses of the synodal pathway.

Dr Eugene Duffy, formerly a lecturer at All Hallows college, opens the conference in the John Hand room on June 24.





Prof. Myriam Wijlens and MC Michael Kelly, editor of *The Irish Catholic*, are pictured at the start of the conference.



Prof. Maria Cimperman RSCJ.



Prof. Maria Cimperman RSCJ and Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ deliver a joint talk.



Prof. Massimo Faggioli speaks during the conference.



Chris Lambe, journalist with *The Tablet*, and Prof. Eamonn Conway share the stage at the All Hallows conference on synodality.



Why are we almost totally ignoring this latest child abuse scandal?



There is a clear pattern of very widespread sexual abuse of minors in the care of the State, writes **David Quinn**

The most important Irish story of last week was not the one involving Ryan Tubridy and RTÉ, nor the remarks from Michael D. Higgins about neutrality. Instead, it involved a new report on the way underage girls in the care of the State are being sexually exploited, abused and raped by 'gangs of men', something that appears to be happening to this day.

The story was less than a one-day wonder. There is a good chance you have not heard about it, or if you have, are only vaguely aware of it. I think it is safe to say that if nuns rather than social workers were in charge of these sexually exploited girls, then it would be a much bigger story and politicians would be demanding swift action and accountability. The media would also be all over the story seeking more details.

The study released last week is called *Protecting Against Predators: A Scoping Study on the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People in Ireland*. It has been produced on behalf of Túsla, the State's child and family agency, by the University College Dublin (UCD) School of Social Policy.

The report was commissioned several years ago when it emerged that girls were leaving care homes overnight with older so-called 'boyfriends' and then coming back the next day with gifts, and often having clearly taken drugs. A pattern began to emerge that the girls were being sexually exploited by gangs of men who were grooming them



and exploiting their vulnerability.

One thing that stood out for me from the report is the comparison it makes with similar child-grooming scandals in England in towns like Rochdale and Rotherham where, bit by bit, it emerged that underage teenage girls – some victims were even younger – were being sexually abused by gangs of men who would give them gifts and ply them with drinks or drugs in order to make it easier to exploit them.

“It [the sexual exploitation of children] was far more prevalent when we started the conversation amongst ourselves yesterday”

One reason these scandals in Britain were slow to emerge was that many of the men were of Pakistani origin. Social workers, teachers, police and local politicians who were aware of what was happening were reluctant to go public about it for fear of inciting racism. This means their fear of inciting racism was greater than their concern to protect girls from sexual abuse and rape.

We have no idea about the demographic characteristics of the gangs of men referred in the UCD report. Some might be from minority backgrounds, or none

might be. But we do not know, and we should.

The report speaks to social workers, staff from child welfare organisations, gardaí and even hoteliers. The hoteliers are relevant because some of the girls stay in hotels rented by Túsla, or are taken to hotels by the men.

Those interviewed admitted that the problem is widespread.

One interviewee said: “It [the sexual exploitation of children] was far more prevalent when we started the conversation amongst ourselves yesterday. We said, ‘Oh, my God—’ Like, we thought we might know one or two, but there’s twelve there now that I have listed and that’s just from brief conversations with my six colleagues, like...all of my colleagues were saying the same thing. This is certainly something that needs to be looked at deeper. We’re only touching the surface here.”

Vulnerable

These girls are intensely vulnerable. They are in care because of some severe family dysfunction so their families are in no position to protect them. Some girls and boys removed from their families are placed with foster families although this does not guarantee by any means that they will stay out of trouble. It can be hard enough to monitor your own children never mind a 14 or 15 year old teenager you are fostering.

When these children are in care homes, the problem becomes even worse. They are rarely locked up at night and therefore it is relatively easy for them to come and go as they please. During the day, if they are out and about, they can be approached by anyone.

“The report refers to men ‘hanging around hotel lobbies to sexually exploit children that they knew were being accommodated there as a temporary State care solution’”

This is the vulnerability the ‘gangs of men’ referred to in the report are exploiting. They approach the girls (some of them approach boys also), and shower attention and gifts on them. Some of the girls come to believe the men are their ‘boyfriends’ and go off with them at night.

Sometimes they will go to a hotel where several more men will be waiting and they all will have sex with the girl or girls, which means they rape them, because all sex with girls or boys below the age of consent is statutory rape, even if ‘consent’ seems to be present.

One of those interviewed for the report, says that they tried to lock up one of the

girls at night for her own protection. But men would come to the residence for her and “they were banging on the doors, banging on the windows and absolutely everything to try to get into the place. So it became a real danger and a flashpoint for everybody”.

The same interviewee said: “She [the girl in residential care] was practically running the centre as well because it was again inexperienced [social care] staff that was there. And they tried absolutely everything trying to keep her safe. Like [name of carer] was saying, there was curfews given to her. She was saying, ‘No, I’m going off there, my boyfriend is coming.’ Well, it ended up like there was a stream of cars outside there practically every night of the week, and worse at weekends.”

The report refers to men “hanging around hotel lobbies to sexually exploit children that they knew were being accommodated there as a temporary State care solution”.

Shocking

What is shocking from reading the report is that some of those looking after the girls were slow to properly recognise what was happening right in front of them. Given what we now know about sex abuse of minors, this is hard to credit. Will anyone be held accountable?

There is a lot more of this in the report and I cannot do it justice in an article of this

length. But what emerges is a clear pattern of very widespread sexual abuse of minors in the care of the State – something happening right under our noses today, and not in a fast-receding past.

“What has been revealed by the UCD study is worse by orders of magnitude and demands a full and thorough investigation”

The report authors now want there to be a full-scale investigation by the Health Information and Quality Authority (Hiqa) into the scandal.

But when will our politicians and media pay due attention to what is happening? So far, the report has been almost totally ignored. As I say, we know it would be a very different story if these children were in the care of the Church.

The controversy at RTÉ is bad, but what has been revealed by the UCD study is worse by orders of magnitude and demands a full and thorough investigation. If we care about protecting children from sexual abuse as much as we like to believe, we must get to the bottom of this, demand accountability, bring the gang members to justice and put proper protection systems in place.

Taking to the course to play for vocations



Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, Emma Coughlan (Allianz) and Alan Black (Allianz).



Bishop Cullinan, Matthew Puszczewicz, Cian Walsh, Adam Puszczewicz, Bishop Duffy, and Oisín Walsh.



Bishop Cullinan, Fr Pat Gorevan, Eugene Breen, Bishop Duffy, Dr Aidan O'Colmain.



Bishop Cullinan, 1st prize net Fr Brian Kavanagh, Fr Michael Murphy, Bishop Larry Duffy.



Sean Dwyer, Bishop Cullinan, Michael Dwyer, Bishop Duffy.



Bishop Cullinan, 1st Gross Prize Rev John Guiry, Fr Michael O'Mahony, Bishop Duffy, Fr Kieron O'Driscoll (in absentia)



Bishop Cullinan, Fr John O'Regan, John Donovan, Michael Morrissey, Bishop Duffy.



Allianz team on the first tee, Martin McKeogh, Alan Black, and Emma Coughlan.



Eamonn Clark, Rev. Mark O'Farrell and Donal O'Sullivan.

Deacon Mark O'Farrell

The summer solstice was a scorching day in the golf club of Birr, Co. Offaly this year. A golf team tournament was held to raise awareness for vocations to the diocesan priesthood, called 'Play for Vocations.' This event was part of the 'Year of Vocations' to the diocesan priesthood that was instituted two months ago by the bishops. There is a series of events this year highlighting the unique importance of praying for vocations to the priesthood, and also having conversations about this topic. Without the priesthood, the Eucharist, and the sacraments, 'Christ the rising Sun', would not shine as brightly in our lives.

'Play for Vocations' was inaugurated last year by Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, who came across the concept when visiting the US. It links together a fun team event with raising the profile of the diocesan priesthood. Bishop Phonsie said when inaugurating this special year in April: "A key objective of this Year of Vocations is to start conversations within families, with priests and in parish communities on the beauty of the vocation of priesthood."

The participants of this tournament increased significantly this year, with almost all the four corners of Ireland represented, a point that was alluded to by Bishop Larry

Duffy in his speech. Play for Vocations was generously sponsored by Allianz (who also fielded a team), IMC Mail Order, Tramore Golf Club, and Divine Mercy Prayer group, Dublin 18. This Divine Mercy prayer group has been praying for vocations to the priesthood for over 20 years.

A fine meal was served, and enjoyed by all the competitors after their exertions on the hilly course. The hospitality was second to none in Birr golf club, the second oldest golf course in Ireland.

The competition was fierce with Fr Brian Kavanagh's Kildare and Leighlin team winning the overall net prize, and the gross prize going to the Cork team led by Fr Michael O'Mahony.

This was a golf tournament with a difference. The event was conceived to raise publicity and awareness for vocations to the diocesan priesthood in Ireland.

Further initiatives for the 'Year of Vocations' were announced by Bishop Cullinan and Bishop Duffy. They announced that on 'Reek Sunday' there will be a climb of Ireland's Holy Mountain as a pilgrimage with the intention of promoting and praying especially for vocations to the diocesan priesthood in Ireland.

Save the date, July 30!

Rev. Mark O'Farrell is a deacon of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore.

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Big celebrations for Apostolic Work centenary

Josephine O'Boyle

The Diocese of Down and Connor, Co. Antrim, celebrated the centenary of Apostolic Work on June 17, marking their 100 years of supporting missionary priests, sisters and lay people in many countries around the world including Albania, Botswana, El Salvador, Malawi, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Zimbabwe to name just a few. As other diocesan Apostolic Work branches in Ireland may support missionaries in other countries this list is almost certainly incomplete.

Bishop Donal McKeown, our apostolic administrator, was chief celebrant at the Mass in St Malachy's church in Belfast, with representatives of all the missionary orders (priests and sisters) whom Apostolic Work have supported over the last 100 years. Our national president and council also attended as well as representatives from Apostolic Work branches throughout Ireland.

Although we have been in existence for 100 years, we continue to support the ideals and aims of our founder Agnes McCauley – a young woman who in 1903 came from Enniskillen in Co. Fermanagh to Belfast in search of work. Agnes, a devout Catholic, had privately supported local charitable causes while also supporting missionaries by fundraising, collecting donations and selling missionary magazines. Her charitable work had been well known and it came to the attention of the bishop at that time, Dr Joseph Mac Rory who supported her work financially.

Support

The money she raised was used to support medical, educational, and religious projects involving support for Church, school and hospital buildings. To continue to support these ever-increasing financial demands, Agnes realised that her work would require significant and better organised funding.

Bishop MacRory was supportive of this development stating: "I do not see how anything but good can come of it."

Agnes' commitment to missionary support grew and as her many friends financially supported this work, great things were achieved including providing vest-



ments for a missionary priest in Africa; helping a Franciscan sister Mother Marcella to build a much needed leper hospital in Uganda and setting up a £500 bursary for the education of students to the priesthood with the African missions in Cork. The first Apostolic Work group which consisted of ten girls from six different parishes took place on October 25, 1923. The second meeting took place on November 1, 1923, a meeting which was addressed by Fr Ross, a Mill Hill priest home on holiday from missionary work in Uganda. His theme 'What is not good enough for God at home, is not good enough for him on the missions' has endured as Apostolic Work policy throughout the years to this day – only the best are dispatched to the mis-

sions. At the third meeting the association was formally established with its aims set out and fundraising discussed. All funds are derived from donations, subscriptions and fundraising events.

Foundations

Unfortunately, Agnes McCauley had to step down from presidency due to ill health and left Belfast to return to Enniskillen where she died on December 23, 1925, but on the strong foundations laid by her the Apostolic Work Association grew and developed into the vital missionary support it is today. In 1926 Bishop MacRory applied for affiliation to the Central Council of Apostolic Work in Rome in line with similar affiliation granted to a French organisation. In March 1935, the prefect of the Sacred Con-

gregation for the Propagation of the Faith, wrote from Rome to Bishop Daniel Mageean, who was the bishop of Down and Connor at that time, praising the work of the Apostolic Work Association, granting it apostolic privileges and announcing that from then on it was directly aggregated to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, now known as the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.

After Agnes McCauley left Belfast, Mrs Mary McCall became President from 1924-1952. She was followed by Mrs Mary Nihill – 1952-1974. By 1967, at the first national council of the association in Dublin, nine dioceses were represented. In 1974, there were more than 500 branches and almost 800 active members and thousands of



honorary members. In 1988 Bishop Cahal Daly of Down and Connor acknowledged the accomplishments of the Apostolic Work Association as "A great Irish women's missionary force".

Branches

Today branches of Apostolic Work exist in many countries where they continue to follow in the footsteps of Agnes and her friends; supporting missionaries in their work, especially those who work in the poorest countries where poverty, poor medical care and lack of education lead to com-

munities with a poor living standard. In many situations like these, outside long-term help is required to support pre-school groups, young unemployed adults, single mothers supporting a family, and poorly equipped medical centres. As these needs are so diverse and challenging, many governments do not have the knowledge, skills or finances to implement long term solutions to these problems and situations. Apostolic Work provides funding to finance expertise in many fields which is essential to



promote self-help groups who encourage people especially young adults, to invest in self-improvement courses, learning skills eg. Better methods of farming, investing in better equipment or empowering mothers to learn a new skill like on sewing machines or computer skills which can lead to employment generating more income for families. These are long term aims and require significant investment to which underdeveloped poor rural communities do not have access. Apostolic Work receives many appeals each month from missionaries who are experiencing financial demands which are beyond local/individual finances. All such appeals are considered carefully by the diocesan apostolic council and as many requests as possible are met. One of Down and Connor's largest donations ever, was to Sr Geraldine Henry (from NI) co-ordinator with Fr Nicky Hennity, of a major project in Mombasa. This project comprised of building a church, a school and a medical centre in an area of severe depriva-

tion – an impoverished area in Bangladesh. As this is our centenary year, in conjunction with the national council in Dublin, Down and Connor Apostolic Work donated £40,000 to build these life changing facilities which can provide long term essential health, educational and social provision to this district which could not have raised the necessary finance to complete such a large-scale development.

Deprived

Unfortunately in Ireland, and in other developed countries around the globe, missionary support for such projects and the other basic needs of many of the world's most deprived peoples is reducing today as the number of missionary priests, sisters and laypeople coming from wealthier nations is shrinking, while vocations to the priesthood and religious orders of sisters from African, Indian, South American and other less developed countries is increasing significantly. This change has had a detrimental influence on funding as such missionaries may not be as well supported by their

homeland and families as in the past, so the current situation could probably deteriorate even more in the future. The global financial crisis also means that donations to Apostolic Work and similar groups will continue to decrease. Fortunately this situation has been considerably improved by the introduction of gift aid – a Government initiative which increases all donations to charitable causes by 25% if the donor is a taxpayer and has signed an agreement giving their consent to this. The amount that can be reclaimed by this method cannot be more than the tax paid by the donor in the relevant year.

Bishop Donal congratulated Apostolic Work for their work in supporting the spread of the faith and for their financial assistance in helping so many groups and individuals during the past 100 years.

Built on the foundations laid and achieved by those inspired to initiate this great work, our two main targets remain as they were in 1925:

To provide Missionaries with the material needs required for their work of evangelising in impoverished communities in the developing world – achieved by fundraising.

To pray for the success of Missionary work in spreading the Gospel to all people.

Let us pray and hope these two missionary objectives continue for the next 100 years.

i Josephine O'Boyle is the secretary to Apostolic Work in the Diocese of Down and Connor.

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Thousands turn out for Clonard Novena

Ruadhán Jones

Thousands of people attended the annual Clonard Novena in west Belfast over nine days.

Held in honour of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the Novena consisted of six sessions a day up to the final day, June 22.

The days of prayers and petitions brought together the faithful from far and wide to the Redemptorist monastery, the first for newly appointed rector Fr Brendan Kelly and also the first Covid restriction free novena since the pandemic ended.

Special sessions for the blessing of the sick, the blessing of children, a youth Mass and inter-Church day were held over the course of the nine days.





THE SYNODAL TIMES

JUNE
2023 ISSUE

In the latest summer special edition of The Synodal Times, we roundup the best news pieces from the past 12 months:

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Out&About

Faithful flock to Fatima



PORTUGAL: A 44-strong pilgrimage mostly from the dioceses of Galway, Clonfert and Killaloe are pictured in Fatima, led by Clare photographer James Treacy.



GALWAY: On Friday, June 16, there were celebrations in Scoil Íde to mark school's handing over from the Religious of Jesus and Mary to the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust. Pictured are members of the Jesus and Mary Congregation with Marie Therese Kilmartin, CEO of the Le Chéile Trust, members of the Scoil Íde Board of Management and Parents Association, together with the school principal and staff members.



DUBLIN: Newly ordained permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Dublin, Rev. Norvil Caguioa is pictured with Archbishop Emeritus Diarmuid Martin and friends and family after his ordination.

IN SHORT

Targeting asylum seekers 'unacceptable'

The Irish Inter-Church Committee has spoken out against "the targeting of people seeking protection in Ireland" in a statement released on World Refugee Day.

Following multiple incidents of protests aimed to intimidate of asylum seekers, the committee, which represents 16 Churches in Ireland, made an appeal calling for an end to these anti-immigrant sentiments. The Irish Inter-Church Committee stated: "The targeting of people seeking protection in Ireland is unacceptable and wrong. As Christians we are called to love our neighbour."

"The scriptures again and again specifically command us to care for the stranger in our land", the Church leaders said, high-

lighting how these recent incidents run counter to traditional religious values.

Additionally, the committee took aim at the impacts of the recent cost of living crisis on parishes and people alike.

They said: "As a wealthy country we have the means to provide for the fundamental needs of the population. Government policies need to give greater priority to the common good."

Because of this lack of Government support, local congregations have had to step in to support those affected by the crisis, both immigrants and locals alike, the committee said in the statement.

Finglas church marks centenary

To commemorate the centenary of St Can-

ice's Church in Finglas, Fr Michael Shiels has commissioned a pair of stained glass windows.

Fr Shiels chose to depict St Canice, an Irish saint who lived during the 6th Century on one of the pair of windows and a Nether Cross, a local symbol, along with the seven sacraments represented by medallions underneath the cross on the other.

These sacraments have been administered by the priests of the parish for over 100 years. The church itself was built in 1922 and underwent major expansions in 1955.

The stained glass is to be manufactured by Abbey Stained Glass Studios in Kilmainham who also contributed to the stained-glass windows during the expansion in the 1950s.

Last Irish Capuchin in Zambia dies

The last Irish Capuchin in Zambia Bro. Noel Brennan died on June 14 at 1.50am, accompanied by three friars.

Bro. Brennan faithfully served as a missionary in Zambia for 53 years. The Irish friar was born in Kilkenny on December 22, 1941, baptised in St Mary's parish Church and attended Rochetown College from 1955 to 1959.

He then entered the Capuchin novitiate in October 1959. He professed in the same friary before moving to St Bonaventure's Cork in 1963 and was awarded a BA degree in UCC.

He was ordained priest at Ards friary in Donegal before being sent to the Capuchin Mission in Zambia in 1970 where he served as pastor, teacher and director.



BELFAST: St Mary's University students process into the College Hall for Mass celebrated by Fr Eugene O'Hagan.



SLIGO: Bishop Paul Dempsey joins Fr Farrell Cawley and Canon Jim Finan to celebrate their jubilee Mass in Collooney on June 18. Fr Cawley was ordained in 1961 and Canon Finan in 1963.



LONGFORD: Fr Pat Lennon is pictured after celebrating his Golden Jubilee on Sunday, June 11, in St Mary's Church, Legga, Moyne. He is pictured with Fr John and Fr Francis.



LIMERICK: Sixth class students from St Brigid's NS, Singland, are pictured with their teacher Harriett Flanagan and Principal Sarah Ryan, after graduating from primary school.



LIMERICK: Sixth class pupils from Scoil Iosagain, CBS Sexton St, are pictured with their teachers and Mr Denis Barry (school principal) as they graduate after eight years in primary school.



ROSCOMMON: Fr John McManus PP leads Castlerea parish's Corpus Christi procession on June 11.



WESTMEATH: Fr William Coleman PP is pictured with parishioners Declan Fletcher, Christine McAuliffe and Gerry O'Connor after celebrating the annual cemetery Mass in Milltownpass.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



WICKLOW: Fiadh Cooney, a pupil from Blessington junior school, reads her award winning poem on saving our seas from plastic pollution during Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell's visit to Blessington parish to present the community with an award on behalf of Eco Congregation Ireland.



TYRONE: A cheque was presented to Trócaire recently by Dean Maguirc College, Carrickmore, following its annual fundraising campaign for the charity. Pictured are Principal James Warnock, pupils Aoife Kelly and Eilis Loughran, Mrs Patricia McQuaid of Trócaire, pupils Tatiana Tracey and Marcus Conway and Mr Paddy Toner, Head of Religion.



LOUTH: Fr Peter Hassan (centre left) is pictured with Bishop Michael Router and some of his brother priests after celebrating Mass on June 20 to mark Fr Hassan's silver jubilee for his ordination to the priesthood in St Patrick's parish, Dundalk.



ROME: Rev. Brian McNally from Cookstown in the Archdiocese of Armagh is pictured with friends and family after being ordained a deacon in Rome on Wednesday, June 14.

ANTRIM

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

ARMAGH

Guided tours of Newry Cathedral are available on the following dates: Wednesday, July 5, 2pm and Wednesday, July 19, 7pm. Each tour will take approximately 90 minutes. Please meet at the main door of the cathedral.

CARLOW

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

CAVAN

'Mother Teresa: Her Love of Ireland and Lessons on Aging Well' event takes place on Wednesday, July 19, 7-8.30pm at Kilmore Diocesan Pastoral Centre.

CORK

The Diocese of Cork and Ross will host a special 'Come and See' event for men considering the priesthood on Sunday, July 2 from 2-5pm at Mardyke House in Cork City. An opportunity to take an initial step and to pray, share and explore if the Lord might be calling you to the priesthood. To register please contact vocations@corkandross.org.

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

DONEGAL

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

DOWN

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

DUBLIN

Rathmines parish young adult ice cream and prayer hike to Bray Head takes place Saturday, July 22. For more information contact

eoin@rathminesprish.com.

FERMANAGH

A Divine Mercy holy hour takes place every Thursday in Newtownbutler adoration room from 8-9pm.

GALWAY

A day of prayer including first Saturday Fatima devotions at Emmanuel House, Clonfert led by Eddie Stones and team takes place on Saturday, July 1 from 11am with talks, adoration, music, healing service, confessions and Mass. Please bring a packed lunch.

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

KERRY

Pioneers celebrating 25, 50 and 60 years of membership will be presented with pins and certificates at the 6.10pm Mass in St John's Church, Tralee, on Saturday, July 8.

KILKENNY

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

LAOIS

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

LEITRIM

The rosary is prayed daily at 6pm in St Joseph's Church, Leitrim Village.

LIMERICK

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

LOUTH

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

MAYO

Pro Life Mass in Apparition Chapel Knock Shrine on Saturday, 8 July at 12.30pm. The Celebrant is Fr Vincent Twomey SVD, Professor Emeritus of Moral Theology. The Mass intention is the renewal of the Gospel of Life.

Achonry diocese's 'reek challenge', a hike up Croagh

Patrick for young adults (aged 18-35), takes place Sunday, July 9, at 3pm. For more information, contact achonryreekchallenge@gmail.com.

The Grandparents Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine takes place on Sunday, July 23 from 2-3pm.

MEATH

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

MONAGHAN

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

ROSCOMMON

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

SLIGO

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

TIPPERARY

Relics of Padre Pio coming to St Mary's Church, Cahir on Saturday, July 29 at 6pm. Healing Mass followed by blessing with St Padre Pio's relics.

TYRONE

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

WATERFORD

Join Fr Kilian Byrne and the Foyer of Charity at Dunmore East, x91 FC65 as they journey into the 'Secret of Mary' by St Louis de Montfort. takes place Saturday July 1, 22 and 29 from 11am-12.30pm.

WEXFORD

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



World Report

IN BRIEF

400-year-old church emerges from the waters in Mexico

● Due to an intense heat wave and drought that has spread throughout various parts of Mexico, a more than 400-year-old Catholic church has completely emerged from the waters in the state of Chiapas.

The church of the disappeared town of San Juan Quechula, dedicated to the apostle James the Greater and built by Dominican friars who evangelised the region, headed by friar Bartolomé de las Casas in the 16th Century, was flooded in 1966 with the construction of the Nezahualcóyotl hydroelectric dam, also known as the Malpaso Dam.

In recent years, the upper part of the church has remained visible and tourists can approach it using boats.

Nigerian priest freed after torture but hospitalised by wounds

● Fr Marcellus Nwaohuocha of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who was kidnapped on June 17 from Nigeria's Jos Archdiocese, has been freed.

In a June 20 statement shared with *ACI Africa*, the superior of the order in Nigeria, Fr Peter Klaver, announced Fr Nwaohuocha's release from captivity after having been tortured, adding that he "has

deep wounds on his head".

Fr Klaver expressed gratitude to God for the release "of our confrere Fr Marcellus," whom he said was released the night of June 19–20 and is currently in the hospital for treatment.

Fr Nwaohuocha was kidnapped when unidentified gunmen stormed St Paul Bomo Parish in the Archdiocese of Jos, where he serves as a parish priest.

Pope Francis appoints new permanent observer to the UN in Geneva

● Pope Francis appointed Archbishop Ettore Balestrero as the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations in Geneva June 21.

As the Holy See's Switzerland-based representative to the UN, Archbishop Balestrero will also be the Holy See's observer at the World Health Organisation, World Trade Organisation, and other Geneva-based organisations.

The 56-year-old Vatican diplomat most recently served as the apostolic nuncio to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where he has been based since 2018.

Archbishop Balestrero was also the Vatican undersecretary for Relations with States from 2009 to 2013 under Secretary Dominique Mamberti. In this role, he was the Vatican's representative to Moneyval, the Council of Europe's anti-money-laundering watchdog.

He succeeds Nigerian Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu, who was recently appointed to a leadership role in one of the most important dicasteries in the Roman Curia as a secretary for the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelisation.

Human rights leaders: 'Religious cleansing' threatens Armenian Christians

● The ongoing war between Azerbaijan and Armenia threatens the existence of Christian communities in the near east, former ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom Sam Brownback and other Christian leaders warned in a June 20 press briefing.

Mr Brownback's statements were delivered just days after he returned from a fact-finding trip to Armenia with the Christian human rights group Philos Project.

Mr Brownback, who is a Catholic, called Islamic Azerbaijan's invasion of Armenia and its ongoing blockade of the Nagorno-Karabakh region the latest attempt at "religious cleansing" of the Christian nation.

"Azerbaijan, with Turkey's backing, is really slowly strangling Nagorno-Karabakh," Mr Brownback said. "They're working to make it unliveable so that the region's Armenian-Christian population is forced to leave – that's what's happening on the ground."

Prayer plea after 46 die in tragic Honduras women's prison massacre

Catholics in Honduras prayed for the victims of a horrific massacre in a women's prison – an attack underscoring the power of the country's criminal gangs and their control over correctional facilities. Many Catholic clergy expressed outrage while demanding an overhaul of the country's prison system.

"Tragedy repeats itself," tweeted Bishop Ángel Garachana of San Pedro Sula. "Who doesn't shudder with pain for them and their families? Who doesn't indignantly wonder when the radical and comprehensive transformation of a corrupt and failed prison system is going to be undertaken?"

Jesuit Fr Ismael Moreno, director of a human rights centre in the city of Progreso, tweeted, "Massacres are an epidemic in Honduran prisons. To combat and eradicate it, a new prison system is required with audacious public policy proposals and implemented by an interdisciplinary commission with the presence of international agencies."

The massacre occurred June 20 at the women's prison in Támara, about 19 miles from the capital, Tegucigalpa, with authorities attributing the violence to an attack by the Barrio 18 gang.

Authorities considered the attack premeditated. Gangsters pushed toward their rivals' part of the prison, spraying their victims with bullets and hacking them



Relatives of a victim of the deadly prison riot at the Centro Femenino de Adaptacion Social women's prison load a casket with the body into a truck outside a morgue in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, June 21. Photo: OSV News/Fredy Rodriguez, Reuters

with machetes. They locked some of the survivors in cells where they were doused with a flammable liquid and incinerated. At least 46 women were killed in the atrocity, though many of the bodies were too badly burned to be easily identified, according to press reports.

President Xiomara Castro called the attack "monstrous" and "planned by maras (gangsters) in full view of security officials". She promised she "will take drastic actions".

President Castro subsequently replaced her security minister and tasked military police with taking control of the nation's 21 prisons, according to *The Associated Press*.

The Barrio 18 gang and rival Mara Salvatrucha, called MS-13, control neighbourhoods, recruit teenagers by force and extort businesses large and small – forcing owners to flee if they can't make the payments.

Gang control often extends into Honduras' prisons. Self-government on the inside and overcrowding were also to be blamed for the tragedy, according to a June 20 statement from the Archdiocese of Tegucigalpa's prison ministry. The prison in Támara housed seven pregnant women and 22 inmates' children in a separate section, according to the news outlet *Contracorriente*.

"We join the pain of the relatives who are currently demanding answers to the many questions hanging over this sad event: the abuse of power, self-government within penitentiaries (and) doubts about how firearms ... are brought in," Oblate Fr Agustín Lara Parrales, archdiocesan prison chaplain, said in the statement.

"We demand that the authorities explain this cruel event that leads to an answer to what happened, and reinforce security that works effectively and promptly, respecting the rights of those deprived of liberty and ensuring human dignity," the statement said.

Brazilian president to ask for release of jailed Nicaraguan bishop

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said he will speak with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega about releasing a jailed Nicaraguan bishop currently serving a 26-year prison sentence.

Speaking to reporters in Rome June 22, a day after meeting with Pope Francis, the Brazilian president, commonly referred to as Lula, said there is "no reason for the bishop to be impeded from carrying out his functions in the Church," and that he intends "to speak to Daniel

Ortega with respect to liberating the bishop".

Bishop Rolando Álvarez was sentenced to more than 26 years in prison after he was convicted of treason and undermining national security for his position critical of the Ortega government.

Although the president's comments came the day after his meeting with the Pope, it was not clear if his initiative to intervene in freeing Bishop Álvarez was

coordinated with the Vatican.

Lula said he and Pope Francis discussed war, both in Ukraine and more generally. The Pope, he said, has a vision of "creating consensus" among "a group of people that can build peace".

The president said "Pope Francis is, today, the most important political authority that exists on planet Earth, not only because of what he represents but because of his posture and what he says."

Report: English bishop put people at risk by promoting sexual abusers

An English Catholic bishop put people at risk by promoting a priest with a history of grooming children as his cathedral dean and by cultivating an "inappropriate" friendship with a convicted paedophile, a report has said.

The 57-page report by the Catholic Safeguarding Stand-

ards Agency, the Catholic child protection agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, said Bishop Robert Byrne, an Oratorian, demonstrated leadership that was so "poor" that he undermined safeguarding professionals "to the degree that people were put at potential risk".

Bishop Byrne was appointed Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle in northeastern England by Pope Francis in 2019 but resigned in December 2022 at the age of 66, nearly a decade before he reached the age canon law requires bishops to submit their resignation to the Pope, saying the demands

of his office were "too great a burden".

But the CSSA report published June 12, along with the findings of a separate Vatican inquiry that concluded in May, revealed that his term of office was blighted by major errors of judgment in his leadership.



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

Little blessings...



A woman smiles while feeding her baby at the New Church of God of Deliverance camp for displaced people in Port-au-Prince, Haiti June 19. The camp harbours 120 families from various hard-hit neighbourhoods. Gangs have expanded their turf and now control communities where some 2 million people live. Photo: OSV News/Ralph Tedy Erol, Reuters

Report: Over 50% of people live in a country with serious religious persecution

More than half of the global population lives in a country in which state or non-state actors actively persecute people for their religious beliefs, according to the 2023 Religious Freedom in the World report.

Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic charity, published the report, which put 28 countries in the "red" category for religious freedom, which denotes religious persecution. Those countries are home to more than four billion people and make up about 51.6% of the global population.

The red category includes the two most populous countries in the world. China and India, which the report found to be among the worst reli-

gious persecutors. All but one of the countries are in either Africa or Asia. Some of the offenders include Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, and North Korea.

Nicaragua, which ranked in the less severe "orange" category in the 2021 report, has since moved into the "red" category in the 2023 ranking. This was caused primarily by President Daniel Ortega's persecution of Catholic clergy and religious orders as a means to consolidate power and silence dis-

"The worst surprise was Nicaragua," Marcela Szyman-ski, the editor of the report, told reporters on Thursday,

June 22.

In most of the previous reports, states levied persecution against minority religions, but in this case, the state is persecuting a majority religion — nearly three-fourths of the country is Catholic.

The report noted that Bishop Rolando Alvarez, an outspoken critic of Ortega, was arrested, stripped of his citizenship, and sentenced to 26 years in prison for "conspiracy against national integrity and spreading fake news". More than 200 political prisoners, including priests and seminarians, were charged with "conspiracy" and deported to the United States in February. The state

also nationalised a Catholic university and shut down Catholic television and radio broadcasts.

A lot of countries saw worsening conditions for religious freedom over the past two years. The number of countries in the "red" category increased from 26 to 28 since the 2021 report, with Nicaragua and Sudan entering the category. In 23 of the "red" countries, religious persecution worsened since the previous report and, in the other five, the persecution remained about the same. None of the countries saw an overall improvement.

French 'backpack hero' will be special guest at Notre Dame reopening

Earlier this month the story of a 24-year-old French man named Henri, who is being called the "backpack hero," went viral for stopping a knife attack at a playground in southeastern France by chasing the attacker with a backpack.

Henri was in the town of Annecy during a pilgrimage visiting France's cathedrals when he witnessed the attack.

Two adults, men over age 70, and four children, all three-years-old and younger, were seriously injured and later

hospitalised due to the attack.

The Frenchman joined EWTN News *Nightly* on June 20 to share his experience and the latest developments.

He recalled walking on his way to a cathedral when he saw a man trying to attack some children and said, "For me it was not possible to just see that and not try to stop him".

"I'm thinking that maybe I was not there without a purpose. Maybe it's the Holy Spirit who laid my foot towards this

man," Henri, a Catholic, added.

After receiving a message of gratitude from French President Emmanuel Macron for his heroic act, Henri was invited by the president to attend the grand opening of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris taking place in December 2024.

Henri said it's a "great ending" for his pilgrimage, as Notre Dame is one of the most important cathedrals in the world.

Vatican roundup

Pope Francis and Brazil's President Lula embrace during visit

● Pope Francis said a meeting with Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at the Vatican June 21 took place in an atmosphere of "great sympathy and friendship," the Vatican said.

The two can be seen embracing in photos shared by the Brazilian president's photographer.

Pope Francis and President Lula have known each other for years. Francis wrote a letter to Lula in May 2019 when the influential statesman was imprisoned on corruption charges of which he was later cleared.

According to the Vatican, the 45-minute meeting, which included Lula's wife, took place in a study next to the Paul VI Hall rather than in the apostolic palace. The Paul VI Hall is closer to Francis' residence, where he is currently convalescing following an abdominal surgery earlier this month.

President Lula also spoke with Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, the No. 2 in the Secretariat of State, during the visit.

The topics of conversation included the socio-political situation in Brazil, the promotion of peace and reconciliation, the fight against poverty and inequality, respect for the indigenous population of Brazil, and protection of the environment, the Vatican said in a brief statement.

Papal almoner returns to Ukraine for sixth time

● Pope Francis has asked Cardinal Konrad Krajewski to return to Ukraine for a sixth time to bring humanitarian aid to people suffering from the war.

The Polish cardinal, who serves as the papal almoner, will travel to Ukraine's southern Kerson region, where a recent dam collapse caused deadly flooding.

"Cardinal Konrad Krajewski's mission is to be with the people, pray with them, and bring an embrace and concrete support from the Pontiff," the Vatican Dicastery for

the Service of Charity announced June 22.

Cardinal Krajewski will travel to Ukraine in a car filled with the most needed medicines. During his drive, the cardinal plans to stop along the way to visit Catholic parishes and Orthodox religious communities.

A second truck will deliver medical supplies directly to the areas most affected by the flooding caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam. Many of the medical supplies were donated by South Korea, according to the dicastery.

Pope Francis advances the cause of Fatima's Sr Lucia

● Pope Francis has advanced the sainthood cause of Sr Lucia dos Santos, the eldest child to witness the Fatima apparitions.

In a decree signed on June 22, the Pope recognised Lucia's heroic virtue and declared her "venerable". The Church will now need to approve a miracle attributed to her intercession before she can be beatified.

Pope Francis already canonised the two other Fatima visionaries, Jacinta and Francisco Marto, in 2017. The two shepherd children, who died at 10 and 11 respectively, are the youngest non-martyr saints in the Church's history.

Lucia, who was 10 years old at the time of the 1917 Marian apparitions, outlived the other visionaries by decades, surviving until age 97.

She spent the final 50 years of her life in a Carmelite convent in Coimbra, Portugal. As the only Fatima visionary who spoke with the Virgin Mary during the series of apparitions, her written memoirs have provided an important account of the Fatima message.

Lucia's canonisation cause opened in 2008, three years after her death, after Benedict XVI granted a dispensation for the usually required five-year waiting period. More than 15,000 letters, testimonies, and other documents were collected during the diocesan phase of her cause, which concluded in 2017.



Letter from Rome



John L. Allen Jr

Pope's move has implications not just for Gänswein, but also Germany

A terse two-line statement from the Vatican on June 15, announcing that Pope Francis has decided to send Archbishop Georg Gänswein back to his home diocese without any indication of a new assignment, has been widely interpreted as a papal rebuff to the 66-year-old German prelate.

“It is indeed striking that Francis didn't bother with the usual face-saving manoeuvre of finding some official role for Gänswein, however nominal”

In effect, it makes Archbishop Gänswein the most famous unemployed Catholic bishop in the world. One Italian political journalist summed up the Pope's message this way on national television: “I may have a bum knee, but by God, I'm still in charge.”

It's a completely reasonable reading of events, since Archbishop Gänswein made himself a lightning rod through a tell-all book after the death of his mentor, Pope Benedict XVI, as well as with a series of media interviews, all of which highlighted various ways in which he's been at odds with the Francis papacy.

Gänswein now is set to return to the Archdiocese of Freiburg where he was ordained in 1984. If nothing else, that's perhaps a small mercy for the conservative Archbishop Gänswein, given that Archbishop Stephan Burger is among the minority of German bishops opposed to the blessing of same-sex unions and in favour of maintaining celibacy for priests.

It is indeed striking that Francis didn't bother with the usual face-saving manoeuvre of finding some official role for Archbishop Gänswein, however nominal. While critics of the Pontiff may simply chalk that up to vindictiveness, others have wondered about the wisdom of it all, under the heading of keeping one's friends close and enemies closer.

Why wouldn't Francis try to tether Archbishop Gänswein a bit more tightly to his authority, by placing him in a role that would require at least some measure of discretion?

In that light, it's worth pondering the implications of sending the heir to Benedict XVI back to a country with arguably one of the most progressive internal Catholic cultures in the world, as reflected in its über-controversial “synodal way,” and without any encumbrance that would oblige him to pull his punches.



Pope Francis meets Archbishop Georg Gänswein, personal secretary to the late Pope Benedict XVI, in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican on May 19, 2023, file photo. Pope Francis has directed Archbishop Gänswein to return to his home diocese of Freiburg in southwest Germany without an assignment by July 1. Photo: CNS/Vatican Media

“Why wouldn't Francis try to tether Gänswein a bit more tightly to his authority, by placing him in a role that would require at least some measure of discretion?”

Let's bracket off for a moment the question of how much of this was intentional on Pope Francis' part, and focus just on the likely consequences.

First German pope

To begin with, Archbishop Gänswein returns to Germany as the *de facto* keeper of the flame for the memory of Pope Benedict XVI, the first German pope in a millennium, at a time when the Church in Germany seems almost systematically committed to undoing his legacy.

During its “synodal path,” the Church in Germany defied repeated Vatican yellow lights, adopting measures such as the blessing of same-sex unions ahead of Pope Francis' own synodal process. In effect, the Germans appear to have embraced the time-honoured strategy of attempting to influence negotiations by creating facts on the ground.

However irritated Francis may

be by all that, the fact remains that German prelates have been key supporters of the Pontiff at several important moments, including his controversial synods on the family – the original impetus for opening up communion to remarried divorcees, for example, came from German Cardinal Walter Kasper, and is a fruit of the pastoral experience of the Church in Germany.

Moreover, because of the Church tax system in Germany, the Church in Germany has vast resources at its disposal and sometimes almost single-handedly keeps local churches afloat in parts of what was once considered mission territory. No one understands that better, probably, than history's first pontiff from the global south.

So, Archbishop Gänswein enters the scene at a time when the Pope doesn't seem to want a full-blown confrontation with Germany, but

may not be entirely delighted with its “go-it-alone” philosophy either.

Sure, Francis could have sent Archbishop Gänswein home as a diocesan bishop.

Both the Archdioceses of Paderborn and Bamberg are currently vacant, so it would have been a fairly easy thing to do. In all probability, Francis didn't want to appear to reward someone he regards as having created a public embarrassment at the time of Benedict's death.

Resistance

However, sending him back without such a role may turn Archbishop Gänswein into an even more formidable source of resistance to the Church in Germany's prevailing liberal consensus. As a member of the bishops' conference, Gänswein might have been influenced by the gentleman's club ethos to bite his tongue.

As it is, he's a free agent, and one with a huge megaphone.

Now for the \$64,000 question: Is this what Pope Francis had in mind, or is just an ironic illustration of the old rule, “Be careful what you wish for, because you will surely get it”?

First, we probably shouldn't rule out that Francis indeed considered the implications of sending Archbishop Gänswein back under these circumstances. Never forget that beneath his humble, simple exterior

stirs the mind of an extremely crafty Jesuit politician, so the prospect of both snubbing a perceived foe and creating a new speedbump in the Church in Germany at the same time may well have appealed.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, it really doesn't matter what Francis intended. The fact of the matter is that like ex-papal secretaries before him, Archbishop Gänswein likely will see it as his role to foster his pope's legacy. In today's German Catholicism, doing so inevitably will inject a new and alternative voice in the country's debates.

In that light, here's the lay of the land: A transitory committee of 74 people, clerics and laity, is currently examining the establishment of a permanent German synodal council in the wake of the synodal way, and is due to complete its work in three years.

While it's hard to say what might come out of that effort, one thing seems certain: The German conversation should be much more interesting with Gänswein in it. And, for better or worse, Francis will be the Pope who put him there.

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

Indian bishop urges seven days of prayer to end violence in Manipur



Barb Frazee

A bishop in north central India urged Catholics throughout the nation to spend time before the Blessed Sacrament for seven days to help end the worsening ethnic violence in Manipur, a state in the country's northeast, bordering Myanmar.

The situation "is worsening day by day in Manipur ... it's literally burning," Bishop Chacko Thottumarickal of Indore told OSV News June 21.

"Yes, we are all praying ... praying earnestly. But now only God can do something there," the bishop said.

Since early May, Manipur has been plagued by fighting between the ethnic Kuki and Meitei communities, triggered by a decision to allow special status granting additional rights for the Meitei, sometimes also referred to as Meithei or Meities.

In a June 15 statement circulated by Bishop Thottumarickal, Archbishop Dominic Lumon of Imphal, the capital of Manipur, said more than 50,000 people had been displaced and were homeless because of the violence.

Collapse

"There is a complete collapse of the constitutional machinery in the state," Archbishop Lumon said. "There is fear, uncertainty and a general sense of hopelessness and desperation."

The Asian Church news agency ucanews.com reported June 20 that two justices of the Indian Supreme Court's vacation bench denied a request to send in federal troops (the court takes two long vacations each year, the summer and winter breaks, but is technically not fully closed during these periods).

"This is purely a law-and-order situation, and the court is not required to pass orders for army intervention," they said. However, they scheduled the matter for

“Two communities are warring, but it has affected all the people of Manipur. ... With the complexity of issues that has given rise to this situation, there seems to be no clear-cut reason for the present crisis”



A man rides scooter past a destroyed water tanker in Manipur, India, May 4, 2023, that was set on fire during a protest by tribal groups. Photos: OSV News photo/Reuters

a hearing July 3, when the full Supreme Court returns from vacation.

In addition to encouraging people to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, Bishop Thottumarickal urged them to pray the rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the litany of the saints for "a solution to all the issues".

“He also said although confirmed deaths were more than 100, the total was more than officially published”

Referencing multiple Bible verses, including this line from the Gospel of St Matthew – “if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father”

– the bishop suggested prayer for mercy upon the people and Church in Manipur and “for wisdom and strength for the Church authorities to hold the people in faith in these troubled times”. He asked that those fighting experience God's love, and he urged prayers for those affected and those who have died. He also prayed that the government and its officials “function effectively for the good of all the people”.

Issues

In his statement, Archbishop Lumon cited a series of issues that had been building, including deforestation, poppy cultivation funded by rich outsiders, and labelling of Kuki Christians as poppy cultivators or immigrants from Myanmar. He noted that internet connectivity has been shut down and media platforms disabled. He also said although confirmed deaths were more than 100, the total was more than officially published.

“Two communities are warring, but it has affected all the people of Manipur. ... With the complexity of issues that has given rise to this situation, there seems to be no clear-cut reason for the present crisis,” he said.

The archbishop also questioned the role of security forces, wondering why in all

cases, state forces were unable to prevent “things from running amuck for prolonged time”. He said in some cases, police stood by and watched as mobs attacked.

“Why is it that vulnerable places, even after attempted attacks, were left unguarded?” he asked.

“In the midst of these orchestrated propaganda, subtle attacks on Christianity seem to have found a clean and unsuspecting space”

The archbishop indicated outside forces were involved, comparing the situation to 2002 riots in Gujarat state and 2008 anti-Christian violence in Kandhamal district of Odisha state. He said officials use “narratives like ‘war against drugs’ or ‘fight against illegal migrants from Myanmar,’ but “in the midst of these orchestrated propaganda, subtle attacks on Christianity seem to have found a clean and unsuspecting space”.

The archbishop noted that both sides had destroyed private homes and property, and he listed 10 Catholic churches

and institutions attacked by mobs. Although the Kuki are primarily Christian and Meitei are predominantly Hindu, the archbishop noted that “many churches belonging to Meitei Christians” also were burned.

Fanatical

“The number of attacks on churches that had nothing to do with the conflict indicates the strong and active involvement of some fanatical groups in the pretext of preservation of Meitei customs, cultures, tradition and Indigenous religion,” the archbishop said. He said some of the attacks seemed well planned and “smacked of fanatic elements out to disrupt the existence of Christianity, in the pretext of preservation of culture”.

The archbishop did not name the extremist elements, but some Catholic advocates have blamed past violence on the extremist ideology of Hindutva, which proposes establishing India as a nation based on one culture, one language and one religion. Several people said much of the funding for extremists was coming from groups outside India, including groups in the United States.

i Barb Frazee writes for OSV News from Virginia.

Letters

Letter of the week

Better a deacon-led parish than no parish

Dear Editor, It is worrying to see the statistics for the Killaloe diocese that half the parishes are served by priests over the age of 75 [*The Irish Catholic* – June 15, 2023]. It is a matter of grave concern that parishes may be closed.

The parish is the centre of the Christian Community where people join together expressing their faith-based identity. It was by regular renewal of the covenant that the people of Israel formed their identity as God's people. Christians

have done likewise for two millennia.

I believe parishes should be kept open and served by deacons that organise and lead services of prayer, reflection on the mysteries of our faith and share in the Eucharist. It is through community reflection the faith is passed on, and with community support we can withstand the influences of secularism, materialism and Godlessness.

Isabel Flynn in her letter [*The Irish*

Catholic – June 15, 2023] stressed that the rosary has a unifying effect. It is a great source of reflecting on the mysteries of our faith. In the absence of priests, parish services reflecting on these mysteries can become our celebration of our identity as God's people. Better a deacon-led parish than no parish.

*Yours etc.,
Brendan Kennedy
Belfast, Co. Antrim*

The importance of pilgrimage for Irish Christians

Dear Editor, The idea of pilgrimage for Irish Christians has a long history. Many dioceses now offer an annual group pilgrimage to Knock, Lourdes or even the Holy Land. In my opinion, it would be good to offer the youth of every diocese the opportunity to do two weeks of the Camino de Santiago in Spain. In my opinion, the budget accommodation, long walks and comradery with people their own age from other nationalities would be the most suitable pilgrimage for any young adult.

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



A commitment on behalf of children

Dear Editor, I hope and pray that Fr Martin Delaney continues to 'beat his drum' until there is indeed a serious and honest conversation around what is happening with these sacramental encounters (first Holy Communion and Confirmation) in every parish in Ireland [*The Irish Catholic* – June 8, 2023]. I think it is well time that action is taken to ensure the integrity of the Sacraments

and it is unbelievable that public promises were made by both the candidates and their parents regarding a commitment to their faith but are completely disregarded with very, very few even attending weekly Mass afterwards. The hypocrisy is sickening and should be named for what it is. I believe in some countries children who are out of the parish for Sunday Mass after receiving the Sacraments

have to produce proof that they attended Mass elsewhere.

How could there be respect for the Eucharist when such disrespect is shown by parents, and what example are they giving their children when they make promises which they have no intention of fulfilling? No one is forced to receive the Sacraments but surely it is not too much to expect that when they make a commitment on

behalf of their children they have the decency to adhere to it.

Well done to Fr Delaney and hopefully it will inspire others to have the courage to follow his example and work for the return of respect and love for the Holy Eucharist and the Mass.

*Yours etc.,
Mary Stewart
Ardeskin, Donegal Town*

Rallying to defend the right to life

Dear Editor, This is an urgent call for all people of goodwill in Ireland to actively participate in the upcoming Rally for Life in Dublin on July 1, 2023. It presents a unique opportunity for us to join together in solidarity, affirming our unwavering commitment to the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.

In recent years, the issue of protecting and defending the unborn has become increasingly vital. Our Faith compels us to be staunch advocates for the rights and dignity of every human person, regardless of their stage of development. We are called to be a voice for the voiceless, standing up for those who cannot defend themselves.

The pro-life demonstration in Dublin serves as a powerful platform for us to collectively raise our voices and make a bold statement. It is an occasion to peacefully

express our firm belief that every life is precious and deserving of protection. By attending, we demonstrate our commitment to building a culture that respects and upholds the intrinsic value of human life, a culture that cherishes the vulnerable and safeguards their right to exist.

Moreover, our participation in this event sends a resounding message to our legislators and policymakers. We are urging them to recognise the inherent worth of every unborn child and to enact laws that safeguard their right to life. By coming together in large numbers, we demonstrate the strength and determination of our pro-life convictions, calling upon our elected representatives to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

Let us unite in prayerful solidarity, donning the cloak of compassion and empathy,

as we strive to promote a culture that truly values life in all its forms. This demonstration is not merely a momentary gathering, but a significant step towards fostering a society that embraces life, supports mothers and fathers facing difficult circumstances, and offers alternatives to abortion.

I implore everyone to mark their calendars and attend the pro-life demonstration. Let us stand united, boldly proclaiming our commitment to defend the sanctity of human life and advocating for a society that cherishes and protects every precious gift that God bestows upon us.

*Yours etc.,
Lisa O'Hara
Blanchardstown, Dublin 15*

Nurturing young men interested in priesthood

Dear Editor, Regarding the Year for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood launched by the bishops on April 30, there is a pressing need for fervent prayer for an increase in vocations. We are well aware of the challenges the Church in our country has faced in recent years. Amidst declining numbers of priests and the loss of many faithful, it is imperative that we unite in prayer for a renewed influx of dedicated men to answer the call to the priesthood.

The priesthood holds a sacred and indispensable role. Priests are entrusted with the solemn duty of shepherding and nourishing the faithful, offering the sacraments, and leading the community in worship. They are the conduits through which God's grace flows into our lives, providing spiritual guidance, administering the sacraments, and imparting the teachings of Christ.

The priestly vocation is a beacon of hope in a world plagued by moral relativism and spiritual emptiness. A dedicated and dynamic priesthood can inspire and invigorate the faithful, guiding them toward a deeper relationship with God and helping to revive the Church's influence within society.

By praying earnestly for an increase in vocations to

the priesthood, we demonstrate our faith and trust in God's providence. Through our prayers, we invite the Holy Spirit to touch the hearts of young men, leading them to consider the possibility of dedicating their lives to Christ and His Church. Let us remember the words of Jesus: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Our prayers can help sow the seeds of this harvest, allowing the Church to flourish once again.

Furthermore, by actively promoting and supporting vocations to the priesthood, we create an environment that encourages young men to respond to God's call. Parish communities, families, and educational institutions should play a vital role in fostering an atmosphere of discernment, providing guidance, and nurturing young men who express an interest in the priesthood.

Let us unite in dedicating ourselves to prayer for an increase in vocations and may we witness a revival of the Church's mission, a rekindling of the Faith, and the emergence of a new generation of dedicated priests who will lead us into a brighter future.

*Yours etc.,
Daniel Connolly
Fairview, Dublin 15*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Your Faith

The Irish Catholic, June 29, 2023

Saint of the week

Pillars of the Church:
Saints Peter and Paul

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Rome's underground: Ancient hidden histories



In Rome, the churches are legion. Little parishes and great basilicas alike meet travellers on every block of the ancient city, their facades mingling with shops and restaurants, apartments and ancient ruins.

Although unique visions of beauty and faith greet all those who cross the thresholds of these churches, on the outside precious few stand out, their sheer number often giving architectural wonders the appearance of sameness. For the most part, these churches are simply part of the city's fabric, woven in as tightly as the government building to the left and the cappuccino bar to the right.

What's true above is also true below.



The mysteries beneath Rome's streets are a treasure trove for those of faith, writes Emily Stimpson Chapman

Beneath the great basilicas of Rome, beneath the masterpieces of Raphael, Michelangelo and Bernini, are the ruins of temples and domiciles, shops and baths. The same white marble remnants of the pagan past that lie scattered about Rome's city centre also lie buried in the basements of cathedrals. Upon them, the churches were built.

A journey down into the dark, humid corridors that snake

below Rome's houses of prayer reveal some surprising Christian foundations.

Consider the Basilica of Sts John and Paul.

Originally constructed in the early 5th Century, the basilica pays tribute not to the apostles John and Paul, but rather the martyrs John and Paul, saints of the Roman Canon. Today, its interior bears few traces of its paleo-Christian beginnings. But

below, it's a different story.

There, more than 20 interweaving rooms tell the tale of the church's origins.

The tale is a layered one.

It begins in the 2nd Century AD when two apartment complexes were constructed near the Roman Forum. Joined by a courtyard, the buildings' windows afforded the families who dwelt there a bird's-eye view of military parades and the travels

of the great.

Decades later, in the 3rd Century, the lower level of the complex was converted into an arcade of shops.

Later still, in the early 4th Century, Rome's population waned and the complex was once more restyled, this time into a single, noble dwelling. The home's first owners are unknown, but eventually two eunuchs of the emperor's court, the imperial guards John and Paul, took up residence there.

For a time, they served the emperor and practiced their Christian Faith freely. But that changed with the accession of Julian the Apostate. Julian's reign was short, from 360-363, but not short enough for John and Paul. Someone betrayed their secret,



Pope Francis walks through the crypt of St Peter's Basilica as he visits the tombs of deceased popes at the Vatican on All Souls' Day in 2020. Photo: OSV News/Vatican Media

soldiers were sent to their home, and when they refused to worship Julian, they were murdered on the spot.

Fellow Christians buried the martyrs in the home's walls. Soon afterward, three of them, Sts Crispus, Crispiniano and Benedetta, were caught praying at the tomb. More martyrs were made, and they too were buried inside the home. Eventually, Christians arranged for the purchase of the building, and under the auspices of the senator Bizante, remodelled the space for worship.

“It's possible they got the idea from the Irish Dominicans, who had done some exploring of their own on the opposite side of the Forum”

A few decades later, Bizante's son Pammachio undertook the building of the great basilica above, using the pillars of the martyrs' home as his foundation. The rooms beneath and the story they told were forgotten. The martyrs alone were remembered until, in the late 19th Century, the Passionist fathers who ran the basilica went exploring.

It's possible they got the idea from the Irish Dominicans, who had done some exploring of their own on the opposite side of the Forum.

In 1857, they went poking around the foundations of the Basilica of St Clement, discovering not only the original 4th Century basilica, but also

another, lower level, which formed the foundation of the first basilica. That basilica was destroyed in 1084 when Norman soldiers sacked the streets of Rome. Rather than restore the original, builders filled in the lower level with rubble and dirt and used its walls as the new building's foundation.

Christian empire

Historically, it's important. From its beginnings as one of the first churches of the newly Christian empire to its more recent history as a shelter for Jewish refugees during World War II, its walls have many stories to tell. But the most interesting stories may lie one level deeper.

There, archaeologists have uncovered two more ancient buildings, which hint at the reason why the Basilica of St Clement was built on that spot. The first building appears to have been the home of a wealthy Roman family, built shortly after Nero set fire to Rome, in AD 64. Later, the home's owners donated it to pagan worshippers.

There's always something appropriate about building a Catholic church over a pagan temple, but the real reason for the location of the Basilica of St Clement may have more to do with the adjacent building, which was at first thought to be a government building.

But later research turned up evidence of a much different history. That evidence suggests that a wealthy Christian named Clement bought the property from Nero and there built an office for his freed slave, a Jewish convert to Christian-

ity. That slave had taken his former master's name, and now shepherded the church as its fourth pope: St Clement. In short, the building upon which the Basilica of St Clement was built may have been nothing less than the first Vatican.

“Each of these underground worlds through which privileged pilgrims now pass, shed light on a different aspect of early Christian history”

The modern-day Vatican has an underground story of its own, a story of buildings and bones uncovered at the height of World War II.

At the same time Pope Pius XII was hiding Jews in the Basilica of St Clement, he also commissioned digging beneath the main altar of St Peter's. There, archaeologists found narrow streets paved with brick and lined with mausoleums. It was a necropolis, a long forgotten burial ground of ancient Rome hidden from view since the early 4th Century, when Constantine, needing flat ground upon which to construct the first Basilica of St Peter, razed the hill upon which the mausoleums sat.

It had to be that hill, of course, because Christian tradition held that St Peter was crucified and buried there. Instead of an elaborate mausoleum, his resting place was a humble hole in the ground, marked at first by the hidden tributes of Christians,

then later by a small marble monument, the Trophy of Gaius.

Above that Trophy, Constantine was said to have placed his basilica's altar. And in that same spot, more than a millennium later, Bernini too placed his altar.

Some believed the stories. Others thought them to be pious legends. But when Pope Pius XII's archaeologists went exploring, they found the Trophy of Gaius right where it was supposed to be, directly under the main altar of St Peter's Basilica. They also found a wall covered in early Christian graffiti, marked again and again with one name: Peter. Most importantly, they found, wrapped in an ancient purple cloth, what likely are the skeletal remains of the fisherman Pope.

Each of these underground worlds through which privileged pilgrims now pass, shed light on a different

aspect of early Christian history. But each in its own way tells the same story, a story of a faith so vibrant, beautiful and true that it permeated the very stones of a wayward world.

And in that, they not only have a story to tell, but also a reminder to give. They remind all Christians that it's not enough to have penetrated the past. The Faith must also penetrate the present. It must penetrate what lies all around its churches – the streets and shops, offices and souls of the postmodern world. It happened once before. And with grace, it can happen again.

i Emily Stimpson Chapman is a bestselling Catholic author of nearly a dozen books, and a former contributing editor to Our Sunday Visitor. Her writing can be found at <https://substack.com/@emilystimpsonchapman>.



Testament of a Catholic journalist



David Gibson

The real world that we experience firsthand and every day is a real setting in which faith really is meant to take form and grow. But does our firsthand acquaintance with our real world leave us wondering how it possibly could serve as an authentic faith environment?

Think about it. Does your real world bear a full share of chaos, conflict and mind-boggling confusions? Does it sometimes appear inhospitable to faith's presence as a life force?

Yet, isn't it in our own very "real" world that we pursue the goals of our basic lifestyles and struggle to discover their fullest possibilities. I should clarify that, viewed through a Christian lens, a lifestyle may well come into focus as a vocation in God's eyes.

Vocations

Family life, friendships, workplaces and schools all are the settings for lifestyles that could be practised as vocations in this sense. A vocation, Pope Francis said in his 2019 apostolic exhortation *Christ Lives*, guides "your many efforts and actions toward service to others" (No. 255). He remarked:

"Your vocation inspires you to bring out the best in yourself for the glory of God and the good of others" (No. 257).

During my long career as a Catholic journalist, I served both as an editor and writer. Thankfully, my writer's role offered countless opportunities to explore points of intersection between everyday life and faith. I often was asked to write on ordinary life and, in particular, family life.



I always knew that family life's challenges were not only challenges for others. My faith needed to intersect with my real life as a husband, father and, ultimately, grandfather. I could not write from "on high," so to speak.

Here is one fascinating aspect of all this: Everyday-life vocations expand. They grow. The seeds of a vocation sprout in its early days,

but no actual vocation leaves people as it found them.

Historical journey

Pope Francis spoke of family life's dynamic character in 2016's *The Joy of Love*. He said:

"No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love."

He called this "a never-ending vocation". In fact, he noted, a family has embarked on a "historical journey". He urged families never to "lose heart because of (their) limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion that God holds out before" them (No. 325).

I believed journalists ought to identify with readers, avoid

arrogance and always be honest and clear. Could a journalist become one of those Pope Francis frequently speaks of who accompany others, walking alongside them and communicating some measure of support and hope?

"No one can face life in isolation," the Pope wrote in his 2020 encyclical on fraternity and social friendship, titled *Fratelli Tutti*.

He insisted that a community "in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead" is essential. It is important to realise that dreams "are built together" (No. 8).

Faith and real life

Something along those lines underpinned my writing on the intersections of faith and real life. Writing on fatherhood for *The Catholic News Service's* "Faith Alive!" package in May 2017, I commented:

"Children are a constant revelation to parents. This can be wonderful and surprising, and, yes, it can sometimes feel like a lot to accept, absorb and handle."

Why did I write that? I considered it important to acknowledge and confess that faith can be at home in real-life situations, some of which feel like tremendous blessings and some of which appear to require a type of clarity and patience that we aren't certain we possess yet.

In writing about faith's many points of intersection with real life, I never thought of myself as someone with all the answers. I knew how much I didn't know about the workings of all this.

I hoped, however, that sharing with others whatever experience I had might spark their own further, constructive reflection.

What more could a journalist ask than that?

i David Gibson served on Catholic News Service's editorial staff for 37 years.

“My faith needed to intersect with my real life as a husband, father and, ultimately, grandfather. I could not write from ‘on high,’ so to speak”

Saint — of the — week

By Jason Osborne



Ss Peter and Paul

Pillars of the Church: Saints Peter and Paul

Arguably the most famous of the Church's saints on June 29 we celebrate the feast of Sts Peter and Paul. Their influence permeates the entire Church and the world – Peter being the 'rock' upon which Christ chose to build his Church, Paul's letters of guidance and encouragement being read out to us so many days of the year at Mass – so much so that book after book could be written about the effect these men continue to have on the lives of billions throughout the world.

We have a much more limited space than that, though, so the most important points will have to suffice. As early as the 3rd Century, there's evidence of a tradition celebrating these men on the same day. It's fitting that they should be held up together, for together, they hold up the Church in many ways – their preaching, ministry, martyrdom and, ultimately, love of Christ shaped the Church we inherit today.

Peter, who was initially Simon, was a simple fisherman of Galilee who was introduced to Jesus by his own brother, Andrew. Bold by nature, Peter was the first to acknowledge Jesus as "the Christ,

the Son of the living God," and as a result of this confession was given the name 'Cephas' (*Petrus* in Latin), which means 'Rock,' because he was to become the rock upon which Christ would build his Church.

Despite his many flaws – abandoning Christ during his passion being proof of these – Peter was chosen by God to lead his flock – the Church. The Acts of the Apostles details extensively his role as leader of the early Church following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

St Peter spent his final years in Rome, leading the Church through persecution before eventually being martyred. He was crucified upside-down at his own request, claiming he was not worthy to die as Christ did, buried on Vatican Hill, St Peter's Basilica stands over his tomb today.

St Paul, meanwhile, who was initially Saul, was among the most zealous persecutors of the nascent Church. A pharisee, Saul is listed in the Acts of the Apostles as being present at, and condoning, St Stephen's martyrdom.

He wasn't to continue along that way, though. Saul's conversion took place as he travelled to

Damascus to persecute the Christian community there. Journeying along the road, he was blinded by a light from heaven. Stunned, he fell off his horse before hearing a voice calling to him on the ground: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He answered: "Who are you, Lord?" Christ said: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

Realising that in persecuting the Church, he was persecuting God himself, Saul continued to Damascus, where he was baptised and his sight was restored. He took the name Paul and spent the rest of his life preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles of the Mediterranean, earning himself the title the 'Apostle to the Gentiles'. It's from this period that Paul's letters in Scripture originate, that we read to this day.

Imprisoned and taken to Rome, Paul too was ultimately martyred, and a basilica (St Paul Outside the Walls) erected to mark the location as with St Peter.

The contributions of Ss Peter and Paul to the Church cannot be overstated, and that is why we celebrate them June 29.

St Charles de Foucauld: Opening the doors to all



Effie Caldarola

St Charles de Foucauld became one of Catholicism's newest saints on May 15, 2022. This Frenchman was murdered in Tamanrasset, Algeria, in 1916 where he lived in a hermitage among the remote Tuareg people.

At this point, eyes may glaze over. A saint who was a hermit? In the Saharan desert? What possible relevance does this have to my life?

Actually, it may be quite relevant.

For example, for the many parents concerned about a child who has left the Faith, one might consider the young Charles de Foucauld, a man who called his Jesuit boarding school "detestable," who was known for his wild ways with food, drink and women, and was kicked out of his first overseas assignment with the French army because he had brought his mistress along with him, among other infractions.

Or how about those who worry that their efforts in life and faith are producing little fruit? Here was a saint who hoped to establish an order of followers but never did in his lifetime. And in the Muslim village where he lived and offered Mass, he converted not a single soul.

Dorothy Day

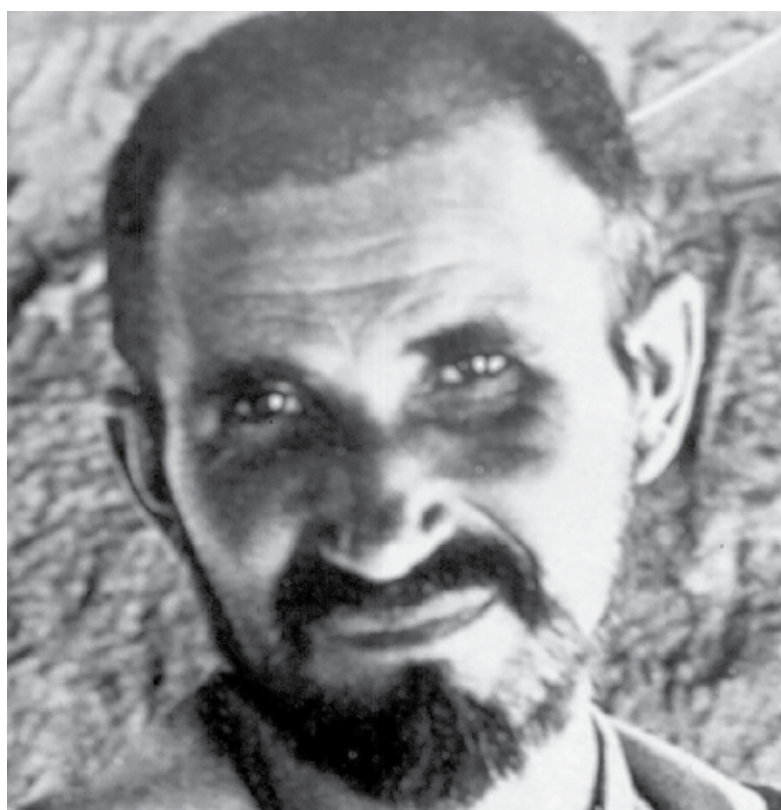
It was Dorothy Day who famously remarked, "Don't call me a saint. I don't want to be dismissed so easily". Day had great respect for saints, but she realised that often we put them on marble pedestals, giving us an excuse to believe we could never be like them.

“When Pope Francis canonised St Charles de Foucauld, he called attention to the universality of his faith, living as a brother to all”

St Charles de Foucauld invites us to rethink some of our assumptions.

Born into an aristocratic family in France in 1858, Foucauld was orphaned as a six-year-old. He was brought up by an indulgent grandfather; some biographers think perhaps a little too indulgent, resulting in an arrogant and wilful young man who inherited sizable wealth when his grandfather died.

One of his biographers called Foucauld "a boastful, lazy and dissipated second lieutenant".



Eventually leaving Mimi, his mistress, Foucauld was able to re-enlist in the French army. But after failing to gain permission for a project he planned, he left the service and began a one-year scientific exploration of Morocco that resulted in a well-received book.

After returning to France, Foucauld remained intrigued by the Jewish and Muslim peoples he had encountered in his travels in North Africa, and by the faith he had witnessed.

Along with that, and perhaps another point of relevance for Catholics today, was the attention and determination of his cousin, a woman named Marie de Bondy, who saw a spiritual depth in Foucauld and didn't give up on him.

She invited him to visit a priest, Henri Huvelin, who eventually became his spiritual director. Would Foucauld be a saint today without his cousin's persistence?

By 1886, Foucauld had returned to Catholicism, citing an "interior grace" that called and motivated him. If he believed in God, he wanted God to be the sole focus of his life.

It was still years before the future saint entered religious life. In 1890, he became a Trappist. But his searching wasn't over.

In 1897, he left the Trappists and journeyed to Nazareth where he worked as a gardener and sacristan for the Poor Clare Sisters. From there, he returned to France where he was ordained a priest in 1901.

His attraction to the people of North Africa led him to Morocco where he hoped to establish a community that would be welcoming to people of all faiths or no faith. He attracted no followers to this community, and eventually went to Algeria, where he lived as a hermit among the Tuareg people.

He learned their language well enough to write poetry and translate the Gospel.

Today, there are about two million Tuareg people, descendants of Berber tribes who live across wide swaths of North and West Africa, particularly in Saharan regions. They are semi-nomadic and predominantly Muslim.

When Pope Francis canonised St Charles de Foucauld, he called attention to the universality of his faith, living as a brother to all. In another example of St Charles' relevance to our time, he gave the example of one who is not a proselytiser, but rather a witness to the simplicity and love of Christ.

"His goal was not to convert others," the Pope said, "but to live God's freely given love, putting into effect 'the apostolate of goodness'".

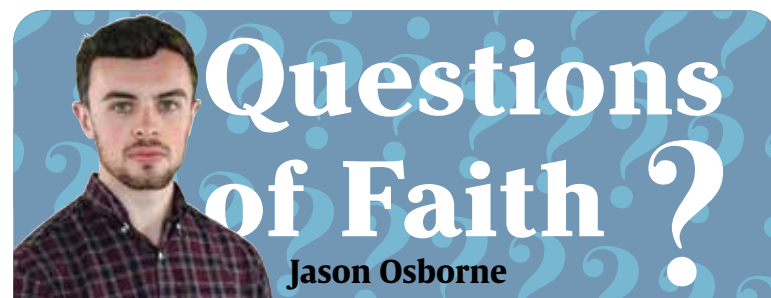
The Pope said St Charles wanted "Christians, Muslims, Jews and idolaters" to consider him their brother by opening the doors of his house to all.

The saint was not martyred for his faith. Instead, he was one of millions of victims of World War I. When French soldiers stopped at his hermitage, the enemy descended in hopes of finding weapons and Foucauld was shot.

People of faith say that we plant seeds of faith and often do not experience their fruition. This was true of St Charles de Foucauld, who was not able to establish a religious community.

Today, at least five religious congregations, associations and spiritual institutes draw inspiration from his life and work. Among these are the Little Brothers of Jesus, Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Little Sisters of Jesus.

Effie Caldarola is a columnist for Catholic News Service.



Questions of Faith?

Jason Osborne



The Church has a long history of celebrating martyrs – those who died "in a supreme act of love, witnessing to their faithfulness to Christ, to the Gospel and to the Church" (Pope Benedict XVI, apostolic letter to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints). That logic is somewhat incomprehensible today, though. A certain amount of religion is usually considered fine (as long as you keep it to yourself), but too much is considered extreme. To die for something as abstract as faith? You would have to be a fanatic.

And yet, unknown thousands have done just that and continue to do just that in places like Nigeria, for example. Just recently, Pope Francis announced that 21 Coptic Orthodox martyrs killed by ISIS in 2015 will be added to the Catholic Church's official list of saints. These men were famously lined up on a Libyan beach in orange jumpsuits and beheaded for refusing to compromise on Christ. Had they converted to Islam, they may have been spared – we can't know for certain – but they refused in any case, and were killed for it.

These were ordinary people, just like you and me, as have been most martyrs throughout the Church's history. In this case, men who had families and friends who'd have loved nothing more than to welcome them back safely from captivity and put that whole sorry, scary episode behind them. Indeed, that outcome would have been a very good thing, too – but not at the cost of betraying Christ, who is goodness, truth and beauty. Is it possible that God could ask such a thing of someone? Is martyrdom not just a relic of a pious past that lacked the sensitivity we possess today?

To answer both questions, I would say that God can and does ask that of people, even today, and following on from that martyrdom is just as profound and meaningful a death as ever it was. The reasons for this remain just as solid today as they ever did, and so just because it may seem archaic to us in our present, largely comfortable, context doesn't mean that it's any less important an act or witness.

A famous saying has it that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church". What does that mean, and how does it illuminate the questions of martyrdom's relevance today? It means that the genuine, unshakable faith in Christ that makes a person willing even to die rather than renounce him is the sort of faith that inspires others and sees the Church thrive. As proof positive of this, we can look to the example of Nigeria, which I mentioned earlier. A recent report revealed that over 50,000 Christians have been killed there by Islamic extremists in the past 14 years. Another, more recent report claimed that 700 Christians were killed as "farewell gifts" to the country's former president Muhamadu Buhari.

Despite this, it was widely reported recently that the Church in Nigeria is thriving beyond all secular understanding. The Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University (USA) reported how many Catholics attend Mass on at least a weekly basis. The very highest rate in the world was for Nigeria, where 94% of Catholics reported going to Mass at least once a week.

In a country where it's so dangerous to be Catholic or Christian, a higher proportion of that population wear their faith on their sleeve than anywhere else in the world. While there are probably multiple factors at play in this, one of them surely must be the tested and true quality of the faith held there – a faith that sees people willing to die out of love of God.

Of course, to acknowledge this as good requires acknowledging the Catholic worldview, which confesses that God is our highest good and that no amount of devotion to him is wasted, even if it costs us our lives. Martyrdom is unyielding commitment to that good – not a desire to die. Christians seek to love God and their neighbour and if that leads to death then so be it, but Christians are not to seek to die.

As has been said elsewhere, Jesus did not seek to die but he did accept it as a consequence of doing the will of the Father (Matthew 26:39).

The therapy of a public life

More than 50 years ago Philip Rieff wrote a book entitled *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. In it, he argued that widespread reliance upon private therapy today arose in the secularised world largely because community has broken down.

In societies where there are strong families and strong communities, he contends, there is less need for private therapy. People can more easily work out their problems through and within the community.

If Rieff is right, and I suggest he is, then it follows that the solution to many of the things that drive us to the therapeutic couch today lie as much, and perhaps more, in a fuller and healthier participation within public life, including ecclesial life, than in private therapy. We need, as Parker Palmer suggests, the therapy of a public life. What is meant by this? How can public life help heal us?

Public life

In caption: public life (life within community, beyond our private intimacies) becomes therapeutic by immersing our fragility into a social network which can help carry our sanity, give us a certain rhythm within which to walk, and link us to resources beyond the poverty of our private helplessness.

To participate fully in other people's lives links our lives to something bigger than ourselves and this is its own therapy because most



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

public life has a certain rhythm and regularity to it that helps calm the chaotic whirl of our private lives which are often racked with disorientation, depression, psychological fragility, paranoia and a variety of obsessions.

Participation in public life gives us clearly defined things to do: regular stopping places, regular events of structure, a steadiness, a rhythm. These are commodities the psychiatric couch does not provide. Public life links us to resources that can empower us beyond our own helplessness. What we dream alone, remains a dream. What we dream with others can become a reality.

An example

But all this is rather abstract. Let me try to illustrate with an exam-

ple. While doing doctoral studies in Belgium, I was privileged to attend the lectures of Antoine Vergote, a renowned doctor of both psychology and the soul. I asked him one day how one should handle emotional obsessions, both within oneself and when trying to help others. His answer surprised me. He said something to this effect:

"The temptation you might have as a priest is to simplistically follow the religious edict: 'Take your troubles to the chapel! Pray it all through. God will help you.' It's not that this is wrong. God and prayer can and do help. But most paralysing obsessional problems are ultimately problems of over-concentration . . . and over-concentration is broken mainly by getting outside of yourself, outside of your own mind

and heart, life, and room. Have the emotionally paralysed person get involved in public things – social gatherings, entertainment, politics, work, church. Get the person outside of his or her closed world and into public life!"

He went on, of course, to qualify this so that it differs considerably from any simplistic temptation to simply bury oneself in distractions and work. His advice here is not that one should run away from doing painful inner work, but rather that doing one's inner work is sometimes very dependent upon outside relationships. Sometimes only a community can stabilise your sanity.

Inner pain

As a corollary to this, I offer this example: I have been teaching theology in a number of colleges for over 40 years. Many is the emotionally unstable student, fraught with every kind of inner pain and unsteadiness, who shows up at these colleges, hangs around its classrooms, cafeteria, chapel, and social areas and slowly gets steadier and stronger

emotionally. And that strength and steadiness come not so much from the theology courses, but from the rhythm and health of the community life. These students get better not so much by what they learn in the classrooms as they do by participating in the life outside of them. The therapy of a public life helps heal them.

Further, for us as Christians, the therapy of public life also means the therapy of an ecclesial life. We become emotionally healthier, steadier, less obsessed, less a slave of our own restlessness, and more able to become who and what we want to be by participating healthily within the public life of the Church.

Discipline

Monks, with their monastic rhythm, have long understood this and have secrets worth knowing: Programme, rhythm, public participation, the demand to show up, and the discipline of the monastic bell have kept many a man or woman sane – and relatively happy besides.

Regular Eucharist, regular prayer with others, regular meetings with others to share faith and regular duties and responsibilities within ministry not only deeply nurture our spiritual lives, they also help keep us sane and steady.

Robert Lax, who greatly influenced Thomas Merton, suggests that our task in life is not so much finding a path in the woods as of finding a rhythm to walk in. Public life can help us find that rhythm.

“Participation in public life gives us clearly defined things to do: regular stopping places, regular events of structure, a steadiness, a rhythm”

Extraordinary faith in God during ordinary time

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time
2 Kgs 4:8-11, 14-16a
Ps 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19
Rom 6:3-4, 8-11
Mt 10:37-42



After Pentecost the Church returns to Ordinary Time in the liturgical calendar. The outpouring gift of the Holy Spirit begins a graced time of renewal in the power of God's divine life and love that we each first received at Baptism. As we experience the living presence of the Holy Spirit, we see, with eyes of faith, that the mission of the Church, founded and sustained by Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, is anything but ordinary!

Evangelise

The Church exists to evangelise – to proclaim in love the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the path of reconciliation with God and the human family. This age of the Church, in which we live, is an extraordinary extension of Jesus' earthly ministry of healing that transformed his disciples and the world around them.

“Do we consider the renewing action and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?”

Through the Church's sacramental life and mission in the world, the extraordinary power of God continues to work in the ordinary moments of our lives, in the world around us, and in human history.

The first reading reminds us that the prophets of Israel were instruments of God's living and renewing spirit for the people. The generosity of the woman of Shunem in providing food and a comfortable place of rest for Elisha opened the way for God's providential action in her life as she was blessed with a longed-for child.

Holy Spirit

Do we consider the renewing action and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Are we aware that the Holy Spirit desires to work in and through our actions for the good of our family, workplace, neighbourhood and society?

We can only attend to the gentle voice and the inner working of the Holy Spirit when we silence our hearts and minds. And our smart phones, too.

“This extraordinary truth of faith makes it possible for us to join the psalmist's praise saying, ‘forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord!’ as we pray, ‘speak to me, Lord!’”

This Sunday, the word of God points to the extraordinary reality of our most profound relationship – our relationship to God. Paul's words to the Romans are relevant today, more than ever, when he writes, “are you unaware that we who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? ... So that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.”

In the Gospel, Jesus reminds his disciples, and us, of the primacy of our relationship with God when he says, “whoever loses his life for my sake will find it”. We find the meaning and purpose of our life in our relationship with God and our service of others.

Amid ordinary routines in our ordinary days, one extraordinary truth remains constant: in Jesus Christ we have received newness of life, the dignity of being sons and daughters of God, loved by God into existence and sustained at every moment, especially in times of difficulty or distress. This extraordinary truth of faith makes it possible for us to join the psalmist's praise saying, “forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord!” as we pray, “speak to me, Lord”.

Question: How do you find joy and peace in the name of Jesus Christ?

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



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Some of us didn't fully trust RTÉ anyway...

Media stories go through several phases – at first a story can make a minor impact (the slow-burn phase); then it gets legs (the leggy phase); then the controversy gets intense and finally there's the fizzling out phase. Other stories just blow up unexpectedly scattering news shards all over the place.

Controversy

The controversy over the secret payments to Ryan Tubridy falls in the latter category, with shards still scattering. The blow up started last Thursday and the fizzling out will take a while. It would have been futile to downplay it, but RTÉ tackled the story prominently and with gusto. On the **Six-One News** (RTÉ One, Thursday) David McCullagh questioned RTÉ Board chairperson Siún Ní Raghallaigh. On the **Nine News** arts correspondent Sinead Crowley made an unflattering contrast between what its website said about RTÉ's mission and values and what had happened in this case, particularly in relation to trust. Seamus Dooley of the NUJ was annoyed that in union negotiations RTÉ was pleading poverty. Immediately after on **Prime Time** (RTÉ One) former minister Shane Ross said the whole thing was "not good enough for the champion of transparency". Ouch!

On **Morning Ireland** (RTÉ



RTÉ headquarters in Donnybrook, Dublin.

Radio One, Friday) we got the unusual phenomenon of an RTÉ journalist getting comments from other RTÉ staff as they went into work that morning. Presenter Áine Lawlor said they were doing their best to cover the story transparently. By **News at One** time there was the shock news that RTÉ's Director General Dee Forbes had been suspended back on Wednesday (by Monday this had become a resignation). Union rep Emma O'Kelly was extremely critical of the "top brass" and said the ordinary workers were feeling "completely betrayed" by RTÉ.

Trust was constantly raised during interviews, and RTÉ is constantly self-congratulating about high standards. The cringy preaching might stop now. And it would be useful for RTÉ to realise not everybody trusted it fully anyway, even before this.

Neutrality

By contrast the beginning of last week saw the fizzling out phase of the controversy surrounding President Michael D. Higgins' words about neutrality. As part of **Morning Ireland** (RTÉ Radio One, Tuesday), 'It Says in the Papers' referenced a large amount of letters to the editor of *The Irish Times* poring over the entrails of the issue. Though I agreed with the thrust of what I heard the president reported as saying about

security issues and neutrality, I thought he compromised his own neutrality in the process. If he is to be a president for all the people, he should probably be more careful about such forays into the political arena. I thought it was doubly ironic to see his left-wing followers supporting him – if he had said something perceived as right-wing they would, I suspect, be up in arms, taking a very wobbly high ground.

There was a slow burn story last week and like lots of stories it started on social media. This concerned a widely shared recording from a classroom in Sussex where a female student disputed with a teacher over another student who identified as a

PICK OF THE WEEK

SONGS OF PRAISE

BBC One Sunday July 2, 1.15 pm

Exploring the history of the temperance movement and reflecting on sobriety and moderation. With music for worship and performances from across the country.

Faith and Life

EWTN Tuesday July 4, 10pm

Marion Carroll suffered from MS for 17 years, but on September 3, 1989, she was healed at Knock. In this interview, she recalls what happened on that special day.

HIDDEN FIGURES

Film Four Sunday July 2, 6.30pm

(2016) Fact-based drama about three extraordinary women, who made a significant contribution to the space race. Themes of racism and sexism with positive view of religion.

cat! Now, it's hard to know how widespread or significant this problem is. The first I heard of it on TV or radio was on **Nick Ferrari** (LBC, Wednesday). Some teachers that called criticised, rightly I think, the idea of recording classroom conversations. Like in the case of the president, this was a case of crossing the line, whatever useful outcomes there might be. The student on the recording was, I thought, overly confrontational, though her binary approach was clear, concise and scientific – you are either a boy or a girl. The teacher referenced several genders and even more than two sexes – intersex was number 3! The teacher came across as too high handed, even threatening to report the student

to higher authorities in the school.

Mental health

Not unrelated, the show also featured an item on increasing mental health problems among children, especially teenage girls. In this case it was anorexia, and one caller became upset talking about his daughter who has been struggling with this. I'm not sure it was wise to speak about her on the airwaves, but the sympathetic host did promise that the show would try and do something to help her – public waiting lists for her to see a medical practitioner were very long.

Unfortunately, the health services often have to be prompted into action by the media.

Film

Aubrey Malone



Wild Wes in Dead End Gulch

Ensemble casts behaving weirdly? Outlandish things being said by people who don't seem to think they're outlandish? Cartoon-like characters cast adrift in a comic book world?

Yes, folks, it has to be Wes Anderson.

When Robert Altman died, I wondered where I'd go for my fix of familial dysfunctionality. There was no need to worry. Mr Anderson had brought out *The Royal Tenenbaums* by now. It set the stage for a cornucopia of like-minded vehicles.

Mr Anderson's latest is *Asteroid City* (12A). Maybe all his films could have this title. It's set in a 1950s desert facility boasting a gas station, a diner,

a motel and a gigantic crater where a meteorite exploded millennia ago. A bunch of prize-winning teenage scientists – 'brainiacs' – converge with their parents for the annual Stargazer beano.

Steven Spielberg meets Noah Baumbach in this warped Disneyesque post-modern fable. Mr Anderson's camera lens seems to be stripped of its filter, giving everything a day-glo look.

We're in ghost town Pleasantville.

The film is billed as a science fiction romantic comedy but it's much more than that. The cast comprises a hodge-podge of A-listers, many of them familiars from Mr Anderson's reper-



Jason Schwartzman and Scarlett Johansson star in a scene from the movie *Asteroid City*. Photo: Focus Features

tory company of cherishable oddballs.

Tilda Swinton is a scientist, Matt Dillon a mechanic, Scarlett Johansson an actress. Edward Norton writes the play within the film. Rupert Friend is a singing cowboy, Jason Schwartzman a photographer. They drift in and out of Mr Anderson's

sub-spectral *mises-en-scenes* with a beguiling lack of self-consciousness.

Tom Hanks is Schwartzman's father-in-law, Brian Cranston plays a TV host. Liev Schreiber and Hope Davis also appear. The only Anderson regular missing is Bill Murray. He tested positive for Covid-19

when the film was being made so had to drop out.

Mr Anderson said he couldn't have done it without the pandemic. The manner in which it strips life down to its essentials gave him the inspiration to create characters who are as parched as the landscape.

They ponder the meaning of life. Try to keep a straight face as they come out with their howler like "I'm a widower but don't tell my kids".

Don't expect it to make sense. The secret is not to overthink anything. Mr Anderson certainly doesn't – at least on the surface. It's only when you leave the cinema you get that "eureka" experience.

He says more about the fig-

aries of contemporary society by his looney asides than most directors do with full frontal assaults on its sacred cows.

I was once asked if I believed there was intelligent life on other planets. I replied that I was having a hard enough time finding it on this one. *Asteroid City* made me recall this exchange. It also made me recall the description of David Lynch as "James Stewart from Mars." Maybe Mr Anderson is James Stewart from Jupiter.

If a Martian arrived on Earth and saw *Asteroid City*, I wouldn't be surprised if he got back into his capsule and went straight home. I'd find it hard to blame him.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



The Irish mind in a time of great stress and strain

**More Book Reviews
1896-2023**

by J. Anthony Gaughan
(Kingdom Books,
€24.00/ £21.00)

Peter Costello

J. Anthony Gaughan is one of our regular reviewers and has been for many years. This is the second and concluding collection of his book reviews of all over the years since 1975.

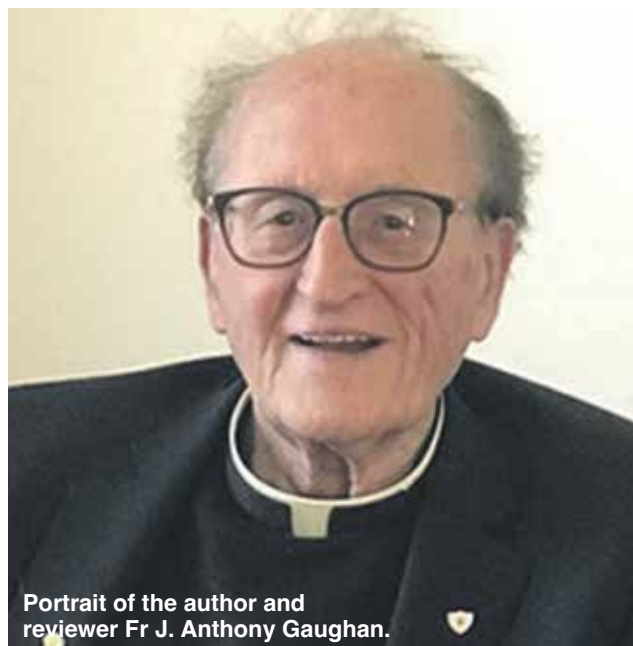
Many of these reviews appeared in these pages, but by no means all, for he has also been invited to contribute to a great many other journals, such as *Studies*, *The Furrow* and the *Sunday Press* over a wide range of subjects.

Indeed they are arranged in this volume into 25 topics, the only things missing, it seems, being literature and poetry. But then even with a polymath you can't have everything.

Practical

Fr Gaughan is a practical reviewer. He aims at telling his readers who the writer is, and what the book is actually about. His comments are precise and focused. Unlike some of us, he never waffles. He tries always to be to the point, but also open the topic to the ordinary reader: an ideal penman for an editor. These pages are a reflection of the great service he has given his fellow readers, and re-readers, over the years.

A few days before writing this review I remarked to a literary friend that it was an illuminating collection in that it brought back to my memory, at least, so many much-praised and widely read books of the past that few now seemed to read



Portrait of the author and reviewer Fr J. Anthony Gaughan.

and none to praise.

My friend remarked, "But I never reread a book."

Now I myself am a dedicated rereader, indeed for me rereading is one of the great pleasures of life. He went on to tell me that in his final year at college he mentioned to his tutor that he was rereading some books in preparation for his finals. That distinguished man replied: "Never reread a book. Always read a new one on the same subject."

This I now find seems to be the actual attitude of many, many others across society, from the university down to the local parish. At jumble sales – so important as fund raisers for some parishes – I gather people will not buy a second hand-book ("pre-loved" is the preferred word of today) that they have even a suspicion of having themselves already read before.

We hear people talking all the time about Ireland's literary and intellectual heritage, of Dublin as a

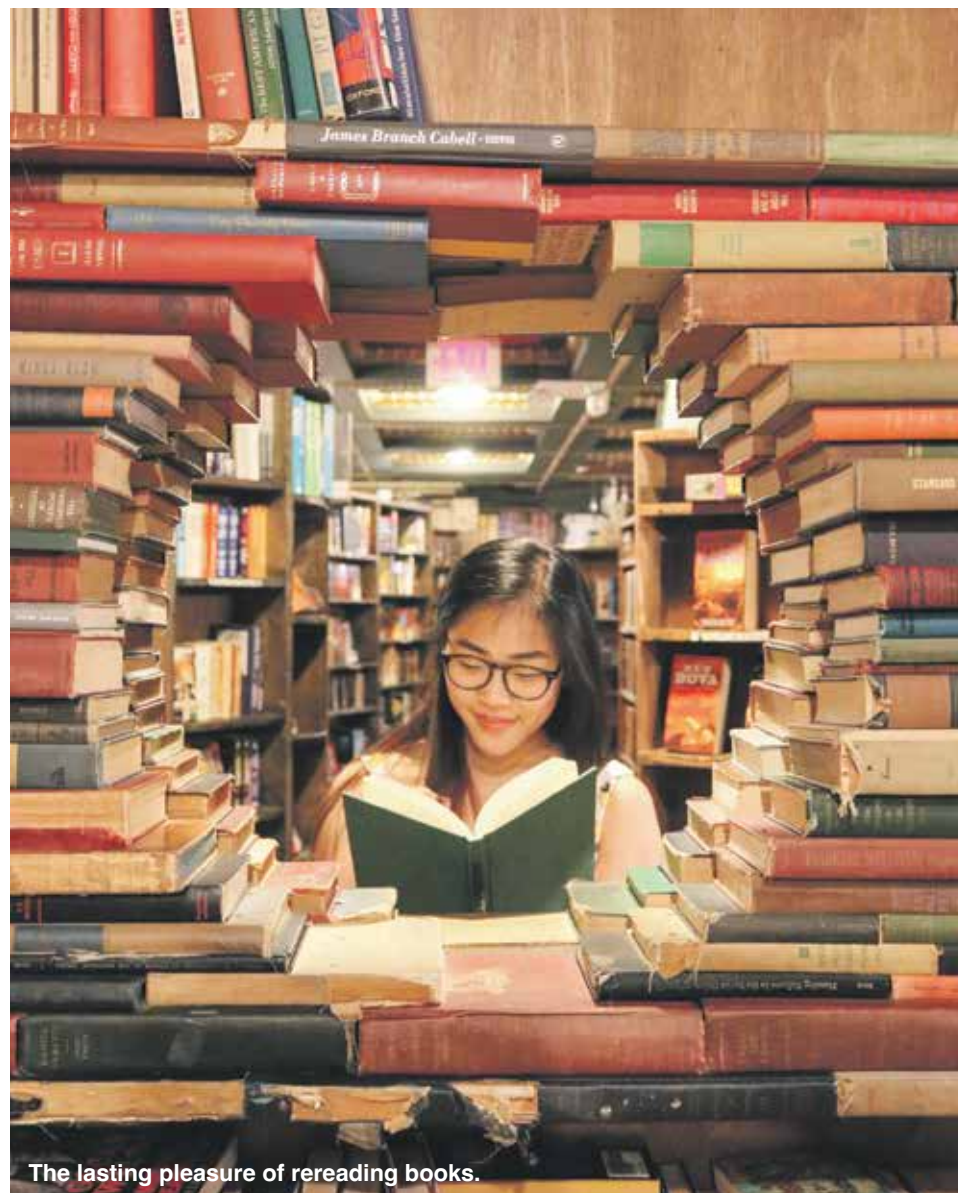
'city of literature', and so on. But this literary heritage we are all so proud of seems in reality to consist often enough of books published in the last two years. The rest is never touched, merely admired.

Canon

Even those who teach what has come to be called 'The Irish Literary Canon' – those few selected texts alone that are worth studying, those few books, which as our children say, will be 'on the exam'. If it's not going to prove useful at the water cooler, as the Americans say, or at a dinner party, no-one wants to be bothered. Even those doing a PhD are advised to confine their reference to works published in the last decade or so, and in conformity to current critical theories.

Perhaps they are right: Perhaps I am clinging to the known and loved, out of a fear of the new and uncertain.

But the past is impor-



The lasting pleasure of rereading books.

tant. To a critic and literary historian like myself they are always of interest. So these reviews are of less interest for what they might or might tell us about Fr Gaughan's opinions, but more for what they reveal about the changing quality of that elusive entity the 'Irish mind'.

Nowadays that may seem to be a very elusive subject indeed, for at times in public and private life it seems quite absent. Years ago the philosopher Arland Ussher wrote a book called *The Face and Mind of Ireland* (London: Gollancz, 1949). That makes a good beginning to such a pursuit. It is about the Irish mind, and not merely about Irish opinions of the day.

The wonderful works of genius announced every week are on trial, and some of them will be quite vanished in a year or two – in this respect an examination of the Booker Prize winners list is interesting. And books from the past will be pushed back from the present, and eventually fall into the abyss of time. And then we will wonder how we ever came to forget them.

Surrender

We should not surrender ourselves too quickly to the market values of today, when we are already in possession of the true cultural values of the past.

Yet there are some 25 subject categories covered in these reviews, so that in effect they record the

changing nature of Irish thought in a period of great stress, domestically, locally, and philosophically. The merely political is covered in its place and all the other topics because they ought to be.

In a way the book reminds me of those literary chronicles that Edmund Wilson assembled through the course of his life out of the reviews he wrote, and in a lesser way of the collections of Graham Greene and Anthony Burgess that I enjoy rereading still. As I say, rereading is the greatest of pleasures and so the reminders of the past in this book will benefit the dwindling happy few who agree with me.

We at least will never be short of something to read.

“Books from the past will be pushed back from the present, and eventually fall into the abyss of time. And then we will wonder how we ever came to forget them”

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

Women achieving fulfilment for themselves and society



Pope Francis greets representatives of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations during an audience with the group in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican May 13, 2023. Photo: CNS.

The Contemporary Woman: Can she really have it all,
by Michele Guinness
(Hodder, £10.99/ €12.99)

Peter Costello

Author Michele Guinness is one of the Guinness clan, the Anglo-Irish brewing family of longstanding fame, but only by marriage. Back in 1999 she wrote a widely selling family history called *The Guinness Spirit*, which many found both entertaining and revealing.

Devoted

She in fact is married to an Anglican vicar who is one of the lesser known branches of the family devoted to Christian missionary work, a line less concerned with commerce than salvation. Now she tells, in part, an even more interesting tale.

She herself was born into the Jewish faith, which deepens the nature of the story she has to tell. Her theme is basically the notion that "sometimes it's hard to be a woman".

One has only to read the news, or just look around your own town to see how true that is, just about everywhere in the world. She wants to explore this situation through her own experiences of both family and society in the mingled forms known personally to her.

She starts with the "Hebrew Woman". The Jew-

ish mother is a celebrated character, especially among Jewish comedians in both America and Britain. Taken off with finality by Maureen Lipmann in those 1988 advertisements British Telecom – "If you got an 'ology' you're a scientist" – it is hard to know also where television and film as a whole would be without her.

In the chapters in the first part of the book she is characterised as life giving, manipulative and assertive, all which Michele exemplifies through the mothers of childhood. But what magnificent people at times were produced in the process!

However, she met and married Peter Guinness and encountered another female archetype, "the Christ following woman". Here the traditions were different. By contrast the Christian woman wanted to stand in the background, be silent and submissive. Not notions, she agrees, that are much admired today by many. (Somewhere in this range the 'Irish Mammy' is to be found, but she is not alluded to here.)

But what of today, what of 'the contemporary woman'. Here we have the notion of the sexual woman, the mothering woman, and especially today, the working woman, who is often the single mother.

Yet at the end what ought to emerge from childhood and the events of growth, should be a 'Woman of expe-

rience and maturity'.

One of the troubles with so much Christian writing today is that it tends to assume that Western models are the summit of all things. So where is the majority of the world? Where is the Japanese Empress, the Indian woman politician speaking across the chamber of the Indian parliament, where is the market lady of Nigerian society, the Chinese farmer's wife?

Overlook

How easily we seem to overlook the real complications of the totality of humanity as God looks down on it...

But Michele Guinness is alert to this. "We don't always recognise the opportunities and powers we have," she writes in almost the last words of the book.

As a result "...If industry, institutions and governments, not to mention the Church, want to rise up and fly, they desperately need the voices of women. Otherwise they will have only half the expertise, half the capability, half the potential and half the achievement."

It seems that in the Vatican, for example, the Pope realises this. Since May 2021 there have been a series of appointments to important senior and managerial posts at Rome. Other women followed in other roles.

Perhaps now the human potential of the Vatican will be better achieved too.

The role in history of British Martyrs



Contemporary image of the Douai Martyrs.

The Douai Martyrs,
by Gerard Skinner
(Gracewing Publishing,
£14.99/ €17.99)

Peter Costello

Gerard Skinner, who once studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and later at the Venerable English College in Rome. He is the author of many books, including the valuable *Newman the Priest*. Here, however, he turns to a theme which should perhaps have a special interest to Irish readers.

Connections

Many people here are aware, because of local connections often enough, of the histories of our select number of Irish martyrs beatified by Rome. But from those grim days of the 16th and 17th Century only one saint emerged.

We are less familiar with the British martyrs, as they are more numerous, except for special exceptions such as Gerard Campion and John Gerard, who are helped to prominence by their own books. So this theme will

be of special interest to Irish readers

They are of that cohort of faith, the 159 people who were martyred for their Catholic faith in England and Wales from 1577 onwards – let it not be forgotten that there were another set of martyrs in the Kingdom of Scotland, then of course a quite separate country. Though on that point one might add of course, though many English people seem to always forget that north of the Tweed, so to speak, the land and people are not English.

The martyrs in this book are called the Douai Martyrs because of the association with the Catholic college of Douai in France where the accepted Catholic translation of the Old Testament was issued in 1609 to follow the Vulgate which came from Rheims in 1582.

These men passed over into their native England under the shadow of arrest, trial and execution. Some like Campion have always had a prime place in the historical memory of the Church. But here are the

details of the individual stories of all those lesser known figures, the story of where they came from, who they knew, where they went and how they died.

Secret agents

They were in their way the secret agents of the Faith. But rather than seeking information and knowledge, they brought it. With them we are never far from the scenario in these tales of the same tale of furtive men passing from place to place, with secret passwords and special codes, those who were courageous, especially as messengers of the Catholic Church.

All those thousands who enjoyed the Hilary Mantel trilogy, all those who watch with fascination yet another documentary on the glories of the civilisation of England in the days of the Tudors, will need to read this book as a counter-balance.

The essential truth is that these brave people were not so much the victims of Protestantism, as might have been said by Catholics in the past, but of the exertion of state power.

They were martyrs not only to the cause of religious tolerance, but the rise of democracy and the freedom of the individual to believe. Though not a ground breaking work of historical scholarship, Mr Skinner's book is a worthy and readable one, accessible and sensitive of a tragic era for the ordinary readers.

“The essential truth is that these brave people were not so much the victims of Protestantism, as might have been said by Catholics in the past, but of the exertion of state power”

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The Irish Catholic

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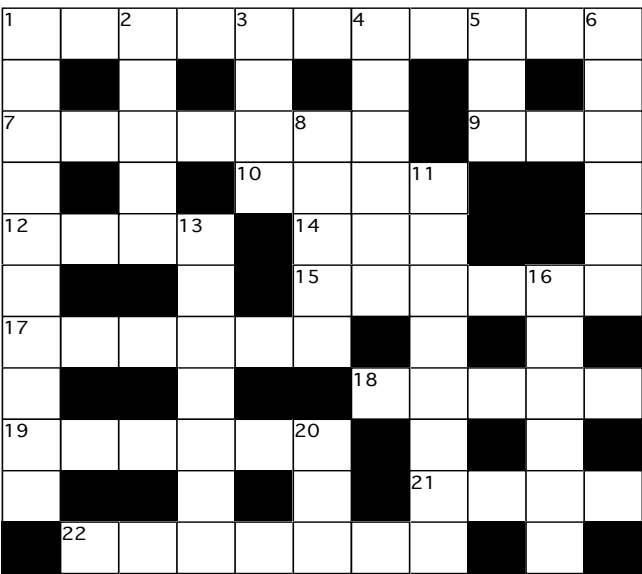


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Leisure time

Crossword Junior Gordius 489



- Across**

1 'Jack be nimble, Jack be quick Jack jump over the _____' (11)

7 Trucks (7)

9 Friend (3)

10 The fifth of May, for example (4)

12 These parts of your body include your toes (4)

14 Hot drink (3)

15 A message you might go on (6)

17 Come back (6)

18 She is often shown flying on a broomstick (5)

19 Ask someone to a party (6)

21 Happy, pleased (4)

22 A deer's horns (7)
- Down**

1 Los Angeles and San Francisco are in this American state (10)

2 This person often works in a hospital (5)

3 Produced an egg (4)

4 She has the same parents as you (6)

5 Little devil (3)

6 Murdered (6)

8 'Is there any food left, or have you _____ it all?' (5)

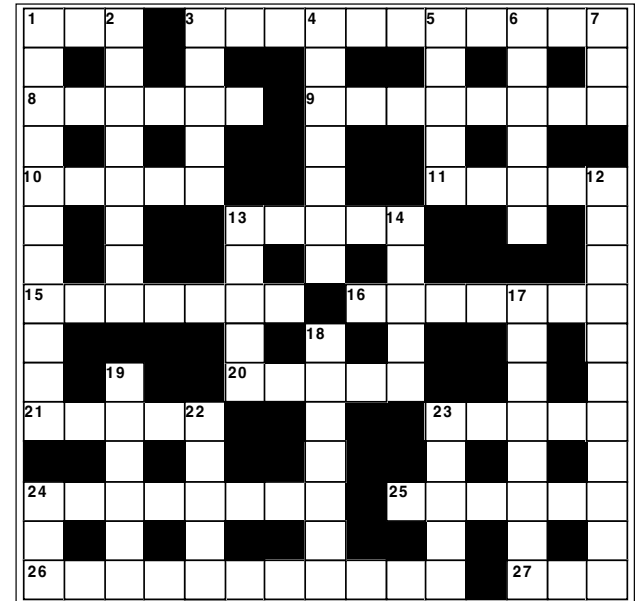
11 Pieces of jewellery you usually buy in pairs (8)

13 A person travelling around on holiday (7)

16 Bees gather this to make honey (6)

20 The first woman in the Bible (3)

Crossword Gordius 617



- Across**

1 Poisonous snake (3)

3 Young butterfly or moth (11)

8 & 15a Diocese that approximates geographically to Co Tipperary (6,3,4)

9 Competitor deemed unlikely to win (8)

10 Not as high (5)

11 Precipitous, sharply inclined (5)

13 Deluge (5)

15 See 8 across

16 Violent attack (7)

20 Joyful (5)

21 Use it to secure one plate of metal to another (5)

23 Leather strap or Australian flip-flop (5)

24 Impeded the alteration of a dried hen (8)

25 Graduates, former students (6)

26 Can dumber crabs be coated in these before being deep-fried? (11)

27 Mesh (3)
- Down**

1 Pedal you depress to make a car speed up (11)

2 Say or write this to be allowed access (8)

3 Encourage noisily (5)

4 Imaginary line, at zero degrees latitude (7)

5 You will find them on an agenda (5)

6 Climbing device with rungs (6)

7 Scrap of material (3)

12 Destructive ghost (11)

13 Squalor (5)

14 Unclean, disorganized study (5)

17 Rare (8)

18 Historic prison in Berlin (7)

19 Tree-lined driveway (6)

22 What gives a tyre grip (5)

23 Negotiations (5)

24 Central part of a wheel (3)

SOLUTIONS, JUNE 22

GORDIUS NO. 616

Across – 1 Run 3 Cholesterol 8 Quebec 9 Browsing 10 Inlet 11 Drink 13 Hired 15 Mustang 16 Parasol 20 Hilly 21 Swift 23 Corfu 24 Nestling 25 Warm up 26 Town planner 27 Sir

Down – 1 Requiem Mass 2 Needless 3 Cheat 4 Library 5 Towed 6 Raisin 7 Leg 12 Kuala Lumpur 13 Hunch 14 Diary 17 Supremes 18 Klingon 19 Jigsaw 22 Tulip 23 Chair 24 Nit

CHILDREN'S No. 488

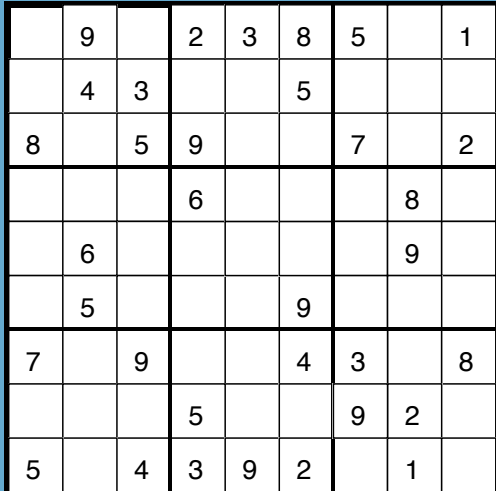
Across – 1 Neapolitan 7 Wallpaper 8 Emu 9 Earns 10 Inside 12 Lit 13 Embers 16 Nine 18 Ale 19 Damsel 20 Sure

Down – 1 New Zealand 2 All-Ireland 3 Opposite 4 Impossible 5 Agreed 6 Plug 11 Easter 14 Mask 15 Eels 17 Ear

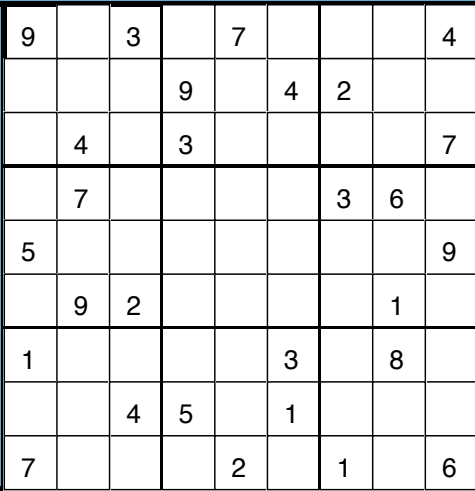
Sudoku Corner

489

Easy



Hard



Last week's Easy 488

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

Last week's Hard 488

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

Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



A letter on the fright and wonder of a blank screen

Dear Notebookers!

I am not exactly sure who you are. Well, that is not altogether accurate, since I spoke with a priest friend in Raphoe last week with whom I had not been in contact for a while. “The only place I see you”, he told me “is on the back page of *The Irish Catholic*!” It was a connection. We chatted about other days and it was good to catch up. We chatted about these days too – these days of uncertainty that must be mixed with hope or we are going nowhere.

Back to you though! I just want to say thanks for reading these words and the other words that I have put on a blank page, roughly once a month now for the past few years. I remain thankful to the Editor and the team at *The Irish Catholic* for putting the trust in me and the others who share this space each week. I enjoy doing this. There is something that is, at once, both frightening and wonderful in an empty screen and fingers searching for letters on a keyboard. That is usually where I start – a blank page, an empty screen, and an open mind.

It is not a bad place to start, whatever about the blank page, there is opportunity in the open



mind. I believe we need to be open-minded. There is so much we can do from there. We can reach out to people, welcome them, and allow people to be people. With an open mind, we can allow for change and hope for the very best in us.

Express

I try to express myself and my own few thoughts in the language that I best understand. Given the chance, I would love to be more at home with Irish since it has so much wonder in its expressions. A priest in Derry Diocese told me

that he once went to anoint an old woman who was dying. Her sister went ahead of the priest and announced that he had come to see her and was going to anoint her with ‘Ola an bhisigh’ – which literally translated as ‘the oil of improvement’. The priest who shared this with me, a fluent speaker and deeply rooted in his love of the language, took the time to share this story with me though sadly the language is not one I speak freely or easily understand. The openness to take time to explain and to share are at the heart of our faith and the

belief that there is a message to be remembered.

Divides

Recently Pope Francis spoke around the issue of divides in the Church – traditionalist at odds with modernist, liberal at odds with conservative, right at odds with left and so on. He was asking, hoping and praying that there might be less of this and, in its place, a togetherness in faith and a willingness to work as one for the promotion of the Gospel. These divides are very real and very damaging. We do not all need to be clones and there is always room for variety, but we must be wrapped in the one ‘white garment’ of Baptism and, as I heard my own bishop recently remark in an online message to the Confirmation classes of the diocese, know that in that garment we are wrapped in Christ.

So, back to the priest in Raphoe and our conversation around where we are going – the reality is we cannot stand still – our Church is called to be open, and the key is in our hands.

Blessings, peace, strength, joy and a sense of humour to you all!

The Sacred Heart...

My brother had a car for sale many years ago, it was a Citroen 2CV and was in great shape. A lady came to look at it, really liked it but was unsure. My brother told her to have a think about it and if she wanted it fine, if not, he would look for something else that might suit her. He left her to look at the car and she continued to wonder. There was another man there – a character for sure – and she looked to him for advice. “What do you think of it?”, she asked “I really like it but it is not the nicest looking car, but they tell me that the 2CV is very economical. Do you think it is?” He looked at her, smiled and said, “It would be cheaper to run than a Sacred Heart lamp!” Just thought of that again, after all these years so, in the month of June, maybe we might consider “running the Sacred Heart lamp”.



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



Fr Amanuel Mulatu CM, a Vincentian missionary in Ethiopia has written to ask for our help in enabling a solid and strong chapel building to be built to replace the grass-roofed one which was put up over a decade ago. The local bishop, Markos Gebremedhin, fully endorses this appeal and says that a modest but a permanent chapel will support evangelization and encourage the spiritual growth of the parish. It will be a worthy place for celebrating the Divine Liturgy and for Eucharistic Adoration. The faithful people are very poor, depending on rainfall for the growth of maize, beans, coffee and root crops, which in good times they can sell and use themselves. The Manja ethnic minority earn a living partly from the sale of charcoal, firewood and honey. Fr Amanuel has many outstations to take care of and is asking The Little Way for the sum of €9,200 for the new chapel building.

Can you spare a small gift to build this chapel?

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



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

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