

The Irish Catholic

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Bishop: 'God can look after himself without needing blasphemy laws'

Gay Byrne blasts 'nonsense' law

Greg Daly

God is fully capable of standing up for himself and doesn't need blasphemy laws to protect him, according to Bishop Kevin Doran.

He was speaking to *The Irish Catholic* after a minor controversy when a complaint to gardai led to British entertainer Stephen Fry being investigated for blasphemy. Gardai quickly clarified that there would be no action, however it led to calls for the 2009 law to be revoked.

Bishop Doran said his "own personal view is that if people are rude or insensitive, that's not a criminal offence."

Logic

"I equally think that when it comes to standing up for God, I'm not sure there's an awful lot of logic in that: God is able to stand up for himself," the

Bishop of Elphin said.

Veteran broadcaster Gay Byrne [pictured], who conducted the interview with Mr Fry more than two years ago, described the probe as "ridiculous nonsense".

Mr Byrne said: "I attach very little relevance to it. I've had 60 years of it now".

Meanwhile, implying that the Church would be unlikely to oppose the repeal of the blasphemy law, Dr Doran distinguished between harsh criticism and comments intended to provoke hatred and violence.

"I think there's a difference between rubbishing people's beliefs on the one hand, and fomenting sectarian hatred on the other hand," he said, insisting that there was an important distinction to be made between critics and "someone who specifically agitates against one religious

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Aifreann Lá na gClubanna – a great day for the parish



Fr Robert McCabe with members of the three GAA clubs of St Mary's parish in Navan, Co. Meath, where he celebrated Aifreann Lá na gClubanna at the weekend for the local teams.

MARY KENNY

Fasting – the latest in health news from Japan [PAGE 5](#)



SKIN CANCER

Most common yet easily avoided

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DAVID QUINN

Secularists could destroy Ireland's identity [PAGE 9](#)



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Why let truth and facts get in the way of a good story?

Hardly a week goes by without more venom and innuendo against Catholics and their faith in the mainstream media. Now, here's where certain commentators try to accuse Catholics of media-bashing. But, that's often little more than a thinly-veiled attempt to deflect criticism and silence people pointing to media hostility. As a journalist, I can say, hand-on-heart, media do not do self-reflection very well.

Archbishop Eamon Martin reflected some of this when he spoke at a conference this week. "When we attempt as Church to speak in the public sphere about the right to life of the unborn, some are quick to point to the scandals and to shameful stories of the past.

"Decades of service by countless religious sisters and priests to the education and healthcare of the people of Ireland and all over the world is almost obliterated by a revised and narrow narrative that religious ethos cannot be good for democracy and stands against the progress and flourishing of society and the rights of citizens," the archbishop said.

“You’d want to be a fool not to be aware of the powerful forces that are at work”

While the faults of the past are well-documented and must never be denied, there remains an insatiable appetite for manufactured controversies about Catholicism and the motto seems to be 'never let the truth get in the way of a good story'. Take for example, the controversy about the proposed ownership of the new National Maternity Hospital (NMH) by the Religious Sisters of Charity.

This information was known (and reported in the media) as far back as November. Yet, controversy



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

only arose late last month after an article in a national newspaper erroneously claimed that the sisters had not discharged their financial responsibilities in relation to redress for people who alleged abuse while in State-funded institutions run by the sisters. This error was corrected by the Department of Education, but, as the saying goes, a lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.

False claim

The false claim has been repeatedly reported, and, where newspapers have published the correct information, it has been well-down the story.

Is this media bias? Well, you'd want to be a fool not to be aware of the powerful forces that are at work. It was interesting to note, for example, that the march ostensibly organised to support public ownership of the proposed hospital was largely notable for posters calling for the introduction of abortion. It's always wise to look at the wider agenda in any story.

This past weekend saw a similar outrage when it was reported that a non-religious person reported British controversialist Stephen Fry to gardaí for alleged blasphemy following a rather juvenile outburst on RTÉ some years ago. Media commentators and politicians professed themselves to be various shades of ashamed, embarrassed and angry about the probe.

Within 48 hours, gardaí announced that the probe was over and no further action would be taken. This was not before some media commentators hysterically claimed that Ireland was harping back to the 1950s.

Again, opinion-formers were tripping over one another to point to the archaic and anachronistic blasphemy law as a sign of undue Catholic influence. No-one bothered to point out that the Church, in fact, took no interest when the government of the day in 2009 decided to introduce the crime of blasphemy with a penalty of up to €25,000 upon conviction.

“That would spoil a narrative that sees the Catholic Church as the root cause of virtually every problem in Ireland”

Little or no attention has been paid to the fact that the law came after a prolonged period of controversy when many Muslim-majority countries banned imports from countries in Europe where newspapers had published cartoons considered by many Muslims to be offensive.

I don't know if there is a link, but given Ireland's strong trading relationship with many Arab and other Muslim-majority countries, it's certainly worthy of consideration. But, on the other hand, that would spoil a narrative that sees the Catholic Church as the root cause of virtually every problem in Ireland.

It's time for a more well-rounded analysis from media commentators – Catholics have a right to expect better. The history of Catholicism on this island hasn't always been covered in glory, but it hasn't been all bad either.

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Most Dublin parishes 'struggling to stay afloat'

Greg Daly

Most Dublin parishes are struggling to stay afloat and many are not sustainable in the long term, *The Irish Catholic* understands. It comes after the publication of the first of two sets of accounts the diocese will issue this year bringing unprecedented financial transparency.

A source told *The Irish Catholic* that based on current figures "many parishes look unsustainable going forward". The source added that while figures in the recent census are in many respects very encouraging, "the reality on the ground is that numbers are shrinking in terms

of Mass attendance".

This is having repercussions in terms of collection figures, as the latest diocesan accounts show, with the annual Share collection, which raised over €8.5m in the financial year ending June 30, 2009, raising little more than €10m over the 18 months to December 31, 2015. Parish family offerings similarly dropped over the period, from over €16m in 12 months to just over €20m in an 18-month period.

More broadly, changes in charity regulation will mean that traditional parish secretaries may need to be supplemented by parish managers, capable of handling standardised parish accounts and

complying with complex financial regulation.

Not viable

"There are 199 parishes in the Archdiocese of Dublin, but going forward from many different perspectives, a lot of parishes are simply not viable," the source said, continuing, "We have to spend the money that we have in a very prudent way, and this raises a number of questions in terms of what will the shape of parishes be going forward, how will they be structured in the sense of staffing, and who is going to pay for staffing?"

The Irish Catholic understands that financial pressures

may force groups of parishes to work together, sharing managers between them. "They don't have the money. The vast majority of parishes in the Archdiocese of Dublin are struggling to stay afloat," the source claimed.

Pointing out that this is not obviously the case in the accounts so far published, he predicted that future accounts would reveal this problem more clearly, noting that parishes which have sold off properties might appear financially healthy but lack future resources.

"We're not saying that parishes are failing, but there's a question mark over parishes in terms of sustainability," the source said.

Dublin drops dream of new cathedral... finally

Staff reporter

There are now no plans for Dublin to have a formally-designated cathedral to replace the 'Pro' almost 90 years after a fund for that purpose was established.

According to the financial statements of the 'Charities of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin', the Charities Regulatory Authority approved a proposal in July 2015 for money from the diocese's New Cathedral Fund to be used "for the purpose of the refurbishment, repair, maintenance and operation of St Mary's Pro-Cathedral as there is no intention to build a new cathedral in the diocese".

When St Mary's was consecrated in 1825 it was designated as a 'pro-cathedral' since Christ Church Cathedral, although in Anglican hands since the 16th Century, was designated by Pope Alexander III as the city's cathedral at the request of Dublin's then archbishop, St Laurence O'Toole.

New cathedral

The fund for building a new cathedral was established in 1930, when Archbishop Edward Byrne paid the Pembroke Estate £100,000 for Merrion Square Park. Plans to build a new cathedral there were, however, abandoned in 1974 when Archbishop Dermot Ryan gave the park to Dublin Corporation.

Although the diocese has no intention of building a new cathedral, neither does it intend for St Mary's to be formally classed as a cathedral in its own right. "The 'Pro' despite its 'Pro' status is considered the cathedral of the archdiocese," a diocesan spokesperson said, continuing, "there are no plans to change."

Chart topping rap artist Kendrick Lamar shares faith message

Rap artist Kendrick Lamar has said he believes God gave him a platform for a greater purpose.

With songs titled 'God' and 'Humble' on his latest album, the singer is not delivering the typical message from rappers but is instead focusing on his faith.

"God put something in my heart to get across and that's what I'm going to focus on, using my voice as an instrument and doing

what needs to be done," he said.

Church service

The 29-year-old artist said it was when he recently attended a church service that he realised a "simple truth" that brought spiritual satisfaction.

"Our God is a loving God. Yes. He's a merciful God. Yes. But he's even more so a God of disciple," he said.

"No one wants to hear

about karma from the decisions they make. It's a hard truth. We want to hear about hope, salvation, and redemption. Though his son died for our sins, our free will to make whatever choice we want, still allows him to judge us," the Grammy award-winning artist said.

"So in conclusion, I feel it's my calling to share the joy of God, but with exclamation, more so, the fear of god. The balance."



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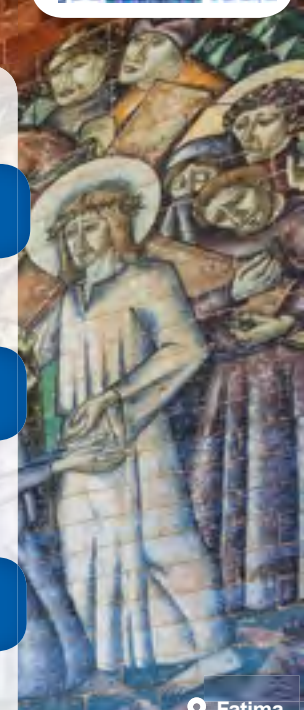
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Thousands set to attend Ireland's first beatification

Mags Gargan

Thousands are expected to descend on the Jesuit church on Dublin's Gardiner Street this weekend, as Ireland hosts its first ever beatification ceremony.

Fr John Sullivan SJ, a Catholic convert, will be named Blessed on Saturday in a ceremony led by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and attended by Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, representing Pope Francis.

Honour

In another first, the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Michael Jackson, will make the request for beatification alongside Archbishop Martin at the ceremony in St Francis Xavier Church, where Fr Sullivan is buried.

Parish priest at Gardiner Street, Fr Gerry Clarke SJ said it is "an honour" to host "this momentous day" and large crowds are expected.

"Unfortunately we have had to organise it by ticket in the church to accommodate the large numbers," he told *The Irish Catholic*. "But we have two large marquees in the garden right next door with screens and sound, and the ceremony will be live streamed there and in the O'Reilly Theatre in Belvedere College. It will also be avail-

able to view on the Jesuit website www.jesuit.ie/beatification at 11am."

Relatives

One of Fr Sullivan's relatives will take part in the readings during the ceremony and music will be provided by Clongowes Wood College, where Fr Sullivan spent most of his ministry. Also, world-

renowned soprano Celine Byrne, a native of Kildare, will sing the *Ave Maria* and *Panis Angelicus*.

Fr Conor Harper SJ, vice postulator of Fr Sullivan's cause, said there was "a huge devotion all around Co. Kildare, radiating from Clongowes Wood College, over the years from the time he was there to the time of his

death, and there is still huge devotion around the area".

Up to the papacy of Benedict XVI beatifications tended to take place in Rome and were presided over by the Pope.

This will be the first Irish beatification since Columba Marmion OSB in 2000.

See Pages 14-15.

Bishop 'honoured' to take part in Darkness into Light



Bishop Denis Nulty with members of Carlow's Fire and Rescue Services at the Darkness into Light event for Pieta House.

Staff Reporter

The Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin has said he was "honoured" to take part in the Darkness into Light walk at the weekend to raise awareness of suicide.

Beginning at 4.15am in towns and cities across the world, over 150,000 people walked from darkness into dawn light in a movement against suicide which

raises funds towards Pieta House's counselling services for those in suicidal crisis, people who engage in self-harm and those bereaved by suicide.

Bishop Denis Nulty cut the ribbon on the event in Carlow, which gathered 1,700 people for the walk.

"It's my third year doing it and I find it very fulfilling," Bishop Nulty told *The Irish Catholic*. "I find

myself walking with people who have been bereaved by suicide and living with family members in tense moments that are not easy. So it is great to accompany them on that journey and I am honoured to do it."

Big issue

Speaking of the importance of highlighting the issue of suicide, Bishop Nulty said in compiling his report for

the Irish bishops' *Ad Limina* visit with Pope Francis last January he spoke about the issue, "particularly the suicide of males in our diocese and the high percentage".

"It is a very big issue – a real issue – and I think sadly, as we know, death by suicide is not restricted to age or gender, it affects everybody," he said.

'God can look after himself'

Continued from Page 1

group in a way which is liable to create violence or sectarian hatred, that certainly has the capacity to destabilise society".

The Department of Justice says it has begun preliminary consultations on the question of having a referendum to amend the Constitution to remove the offence of blasphemy.

Dr Doran's comments are in line with the views of his fellow bishops, with a spokesperson for the bishops' conference confirming that a November 2013 submission to the Convention on the Constitution from the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church meeting continues to reflect the views of the Hierarchy.

That submission described the current reference to blasphemy as "largely obsolete", expressing concern at how similar measures "have been used to justify violence and oppression against minorities in other parts of the world".

Since then, according to Dr Doran, the subject has not been a priority for the hierarchy. "It's not something that we've talked about – let's say there are other referendums that might well be more our focus," he said.

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New editor for Cofl newspaper

Staff reporter

Rev. Earl Storey has been appointed as the new editor of the *Church of Ireland Gazette*. He replaces long-serving editor Canon Ian Ellis who is stepping down after 16 years in the role.

Rev. Storey, who was ordained for the Church of Ireland in 1982, will take up the new role on June 1. He is married to Bishop Pat Storey of Meath and Kildare – the first female bishop

appointed in the Church of Ireland. He has served as rector in parishes in the North as well as the republic. He brings to the role more than 30 years' experience in publishing, communications and public relations.

The Chairman of Church of Ireland Press Ltd, Canon John R Auchmuty said that Rev. Storey brings "many personal, professional, and spiritual gifts along with immense experience of our Church in both jurisdictions".

Fasting – the latest in health news from Japan



Mary Kenny



Like a lot of women (and many men), I'm an episodic dieter. There's always an ongoing battle of 'fighting the flab', as the late Sir Terry Wogan put it, and like many ongoing battles, some I win, some I lose. The scales are sometimes satisfactorily down: other times dismayingly up again. But like all battles of discipline, it must go on.

A cousin of mine has had much success with something called 'The Fast Diet' – where you fast for two days a week (that is, consuming only about 500 calories). But the benefits of fasting go far beyond mere weight maintenance, as the research work of the Japanese cell biologist, Yoshinori Ohsumi, has disclosed.

Full fasts

Professor Ohsumi, a Nobel prize-winner, has shown that the human body thrives on periods of 12, 16, 18 or 24-hour full fasts (water only). These fasting times act as a 'spring-cleaning' of the body, boosting

the immune system as the body cells, feeling starved, begin to burn up the diseased or damaged proteins floating around our anatomies. (This

Ohsumi calls 'autophagy'.)

In times gone by, either because of religious practice or through the natural cycles of harvests and lean seasons, the

human species always practiced periods of fasting. But now, because food is constantly available to us, through refrigeration and instant convenience, we have no disciplinary restraints on our appetites and snacking is ubiquitous.

Immune system

Fasting helps the immune system and the brain as well. More fasting, according to Yoshinori Ohsumi's research, could reduce cancer, diabetes, Parkinson's disease and strokes.

Everyone is recommended a 12-hour fast on a regular basis – no food after 7pm until after 7am the next morning.

Catholics once observed a regular Holy Communion fast of about 10-12 hours, until it was abolished. Once again, traditional religious practices were often in harmony with general health. The Japanese study has convinced me that, even leave aside diets, periods of fasting are natural, and cleansing, for body, mind – and spirit.

Eccentricity and protests votes

The French don't just passively abstain from voting when none of their electoral candidates appeal: they engage in the pro-active procedure of "civic abstention" – that is, visiting the voting booth, and depositing either a blank piece of paper, or a ballot paper on which they write their comments.

Some of these comments from the French voting public about the state of the nation are 'essay-length' in size, it seems. How I'd love to see the archive which contains these papers!

Abstention

Last Sunday, more than four million French voters engaged in this exercise in civic abstention – going to the polls, and writing whatever they liked on the ballot paper, but choosing neither candidate. By any measure, it's a very impressive number of civic abstentions.

My late husband, who sometimes endorsed the anarchist car-sticker saying – "Don't vote – it only encourages them" – used to have his own 'write-in' candidate during elections. This was Prince Norodom Sihanok of Cambodia, who was a royalist-socialist-republican-traditionalist and, apparently, an altogether good egg.

Democracy would be all the poorer if it didn't allow for protest, essay-like comments on ballot papers, and eccentricity.

Safety more important than ownership

As I have no expertise in hospital administration, I do not know how the ownership or management of the new National Maternity Hospital should be organised. I just think it should be the best, safest and cleanest location for mothers and babies.

But Katharine Zappone's [pictured] notion that the State is always the best guarantor of excellence may be challenged by British concerns about the number of blunders – and fatalities – in maternity care in the British National Health Service.

It is reported that maternity staff make more than 1,400 mistakes a week in NHS hospitals – and that midwives and nurses have recorded 305,019 errors in the last three years. It is suspected

that the real number could be higher than the recorded number.

Between 2013 and 2016, some 259 women and babies died due to "avoidable or unexpected" circumstances, according to figures obtained by the BBC under Freedom of Information legislation. In one hospital in Shropshire, there were at least seven avoidable deaths.

And the NHS has paid out millions in compensation over infants born with brain damage – which can occur when the baby is deprived of oxygen during the birth process, often arising from failure to monitor foetal

distress.

It's true that more complications have also arisen in maternity care due to older mothers and more obese women giving birth. But the Royal College of Obstetricians and Midwives has stated that it's an "urgent priority" that maternity services be made safer for women and their babies.

That surely is the point. In Ireland, too, more mothers are older and overweight, and bringing them safely through is more important than who owns a piece of land on which a building is constructed.

First things first.



Archbishop Thomas White RIP

The death has occurred of a former priest of the Diocese of Ossory and Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Thomas A. White. The former Papal Nuncio to Rwanda, Ethiopia and New Zealand, passed away on Sunday, May 7.

Archbishop White studied for the priesthood in St Kieran's College, Kilkenny, and later in Rome until his ordination in 1956, when he went on to a career in the diplomatic service of the Holy See which saw him posted to nunciatures across the world.

Following his retirement, Archbishop White returned to Ireland. Msgr Michael Ryan, administrator of the Diocese of Ossory, said "Archbishop White lived out his life and ministry in service of the Gospel".

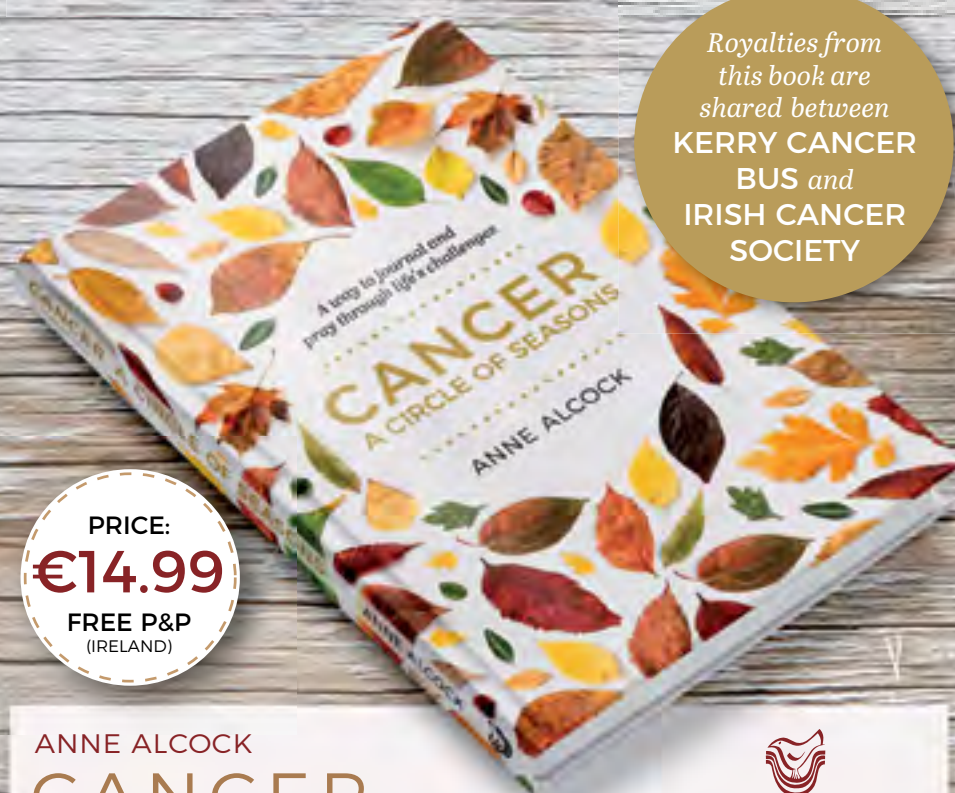
Galway to host gospel and choral festival

The eighth annual Gospel Rising Music Festival – Ireland's biggest gospel music and choral festival – heads for Galway City's West End from May 12-14. A jam-packed weekend of concerts, workshops and interactive events beckons with choirs, artists and world-class musical mentors visiting from Britain, Spain and all across Ireland.

Hosted by IGNITE Gospel Choir in Galway, some of the workshop leaders include Irish band Corner Boy, Rónán Ó'Snodaigh (Kila), Moises Sala (Gospel Viu), Grace Savage (UK Beatboxing Champion) and Gemma Sugrue.

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'I loved Pope John Paul II' – Dolores O'Riordan

Staff Reporter

Singer Dolores O'Riordan [pictured] has revealed how her mother's faith has helped her through tough times and one of the highlights of her career was taking her mum to meet Pope John Paul II.

After a whirlwind period at the tops of the charts with over 40 million in sales worldwide, the lead singer with The Cranberries has sometimes made headlines for the wrong reasons. When the band broke up and her marriage ended, she reached her lowest point in 2014 when she was arrested for an alleged assault on an air hostess.

Media

The Limerick singer told *The Irish News* that it was her mother who rushed to her aid, shielding her from the media.

"I'm very close to my mum. She has a strong faith that gives her this amazing sense

of peace. I admire her; she's a very strong woman," she said.

Her mother had hoped the young Dolores would consider religious life, but while she chose a music career instead, she was still able to make her mother's dream come true.



"I was invited to sing at the Vatican several times; it was a real honour," she said. "I was chuffed to see inside the place. But one of the best things was taking my mum to meet the late Pope John Paul II. She was blown away. He was such a good man, very kind and I loved him."

Over 450 teens take part in diocesan concert



Over 450 teenagers took part in the spectacular diocesan youth concert 'Awakening' organised by Tuam archdiocese last week.

Religion and music teachers from 18 different secondary schools throughout the diocese had been working on the project for the last few months, which attracted over 700 people to the Breaffy Arena in Castlebar.

Creative genius

Awakening 2017 was a celebration of modern church and contemporary music, which showcased the musical and creative genius of the young people, while also raising funds for Pieta House.

The MC for the night was Fr John Kenny, PP of Partry, and the musical directors were Mrs Siobhan Shaughnessy and Ms Ita Cunningham, both teachers in Presentation College, Headford. The gymnastic group 'The Tuam All Stars' also took part in movement and dance to two pieces on the night.

Left: Students from Presentation College Athenry at the Awakening 2017 concert in Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

Parishes showing 'new openness' to youth ministry

Mags Gargan

Youth ministries working on a national level in Ireland have reported a new openness from parish priests and pastoral councils to engage with young people.

Tony Foy, Executive Director of NET Ministries, told *The Irish Catholic* that in recent years they have had to send their youth evangelisation teams to Scotland because they couldn't find the work in Ireland, "such was the attitude in the Church". However

he said there has been "a big release of the Holy Spirit" as more and more priests are interested in doing something for their youth. "There is a realisation that what they are doing is not working and they have got to do something," he said, continuing that other youth ministries working on a national level, "have seen a marked increase in interest in what they are doing".

Lana Wilson, National Leader of Youth 2000, told *The Irish Catholic* they have also seen an increased inter-

est in youth ministry. "I think because in the parishes they don't necessarily have the funding to have their own youth ministry going on, people are more open now to tapping into what's already going on," she said.

Openness

"We would have a lot of people contacting our office and asking us to speak at parishes or send flyers. I think there is more of an openness. Parishes say we just don't know how to reach out to young people

or how to tap into their interests. A lot of people are open to seeing what is out there."

Net Ministries and TINE Network Ireland are co-hosting the Fortify conference in Dublin next month to showcase youth ministry options available to parishes in Ireland. Speakers include Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry and Gerard Gallagher from Dublin diocese.

It takes place on June 10 in St Paul's Aran Quay from 9-5pm.

See www.fortify2017.ie

NEWS IN BRIEF

Derry Rosary group marks 30 years

Members of the Rosary Group that has been meeting every month in Termonbacca in Derry since the Marian Year of 1987, gathered last week with Bishop Donal McKeown for a celebration of Mass to mark the milestone.

The group was the first to raise money to build what is now 'the big room' in the Iona Carmelite Retreat Centre (known locally as Termonbacca) used regularly by groups like Cursillo and COR.


At the Mass Bishop McKeown reflected on the power of prayer: "It is a meditation on the life of Jesus from the Bible using mainly words taken from the Bible. No wonder it is so powerful! And you have no idea how much good your faithful praying has done."

Church historian becomes papal knight

One of Ireland's leading Church historians has been appointed a papal knight. Dundalk-born Prof. Eamon Duffy, Emeritus Professor of the History

of Christianity at the University of Cambridge, was instituted last weekend into the Papal Order of St Gregory, along with his theologian colleague Prof. Nicholas Lash.


Prof. Duffy, a former member of the Pontifical Historical Commission, is perhaps best known for his award-winning and highly influential 1992 study, *The Stripping of the Altars: traditional Religion in England 1400-1570*, and *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, published in 1997 to accompany a TV series.



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Christianity must not quit public space, insists Primate

Greg Daly

Society will be impoverished if religion is barred from influencing public life, while Faith is impoverished if it is compartmentalised and treated as a purely private activity, Archbishop Eamon Martin has said.

Speaking at Norwich's University of East Anglia on the theme 'The Church in the Public Sphere – a perspective from Ireland', the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland cautioned against being tempted "into parallel culture wars" or withdrawing from the public space.

"I am completely convinced that the voice of Faith can and should remain engaged in the public square," he said, continuing: "Our faith is not simply for the privacy of our homes and churches. The Gospel is meant for mission. It is not to be cloistered away from the cut and thrust of public discourse."

Damage

Dr Martin acknowledged that the Church in Ireland has seen great damage to its credibility in recent decades, but said it was important to remember the remarkable witness of innumerable faithful Irish Catholics.

"Decades of service by countless religious sisters and priests to the education and

healthcare of the people of Ireland and all over the world is almost obliterated by a revised and narrow narrative that religious ethos cannot be good for democracy and stands against the progress and flourishing of society and the rights of citizens," he said.

Underlining how Catholic approaches to public policy are drawn from both faith and reason, the archbishop noted how the convergence of the two was central to the thinking of Blessed John Henry Newman, in whose honour the lecture was given.

Conversations

Dr Martin said that religion should continue to play an important part in national conversations, and said that rather than reacting defensively to legitimate criticisms, Catholics should be "thankful" that shameful chapters in our history have been exposed with the voices of those who had "been carrying a lonely trauma" being heard at last.

He advised, however, that past failures should not simply define us, but "should instead help all of us in the public sphere learn lessons for the present about where Church and society might today be similarly marginalising the poor, stigmatising the unwanted or failing to protect the most vulnerable".

Galway City Council cuts opening prayers

Galway City Council has voted to abandon its practice of opening its monthly meeting with a prayer.

The vote to scrap the prayer in favour of a moment of silent reflection was tied at seven votes each until the council's deputy chairperson, Fine Gael's Pearse Flannery, used his casting vote to back the motion to abolish it.

The vote came despite his party colleagues having voted to keep it.

Several councillors, including two Fianna Fáil representatives who it is believed supported keeping the prayer, were absent from the meeting.

Faithful asked to make a date for vocations



Margaret Cartwright, Director of Vocations Ireland, with members of some of the religious communities who took part in the broadcast of the annual Vocations Sunday Mass on RTÉ. Photo: John McElroy

Mags Gargan

A new vocations prayer initiative was launched on Vocations Sunday, which is asking the faithful to pray for vocations on Saturday, May 13 to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima.

Pope Francis will be in Fatima for the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima on Saturday, where he will canonise two of the visionaries of the Marian apparitions there – the young shepherds Jacinta and Francisco Marto.

Initiative

To coincide with this event the Bishops' Council for Vocations in collaboration with St Joseph's Young Priests Society, the Knights of Saint Columbanus and Vocations Ireland are asking people to pray the Angelus or a decade of the Rosary for vocations to the priesthood and religious life at 12noon and to continue the initiative on the 13th of each month until October.

Margaret Cartwright, Director of Vocations Ireland, said praying for vocations is "the most important aspect of vocation promotion and working together to create a culture of vocation is so important in our world today".

"Pope Francis has called for a fresh and courageous perspective when helping youth discern and discover their vocation, and prayer is key to that discernment process," she said.

ALL IRELAND ROSARY RALLY

KNÖCK

Saturday 3rd June 2017

25th Anniversary of Fr. Patrick Peyton, Servant of God – "The Rosary Priest" and in the centenary year of Fatima

2 p.m. Stations of the Cross and The Joyful Mysteries of The Rosary (Dedicated)

7 p.m. Holy Mass - Celebrant: Bishop Brendan Kelly D.D., (Bishop of Achonry)
Homily: Fr. Thady Doyle (The Carillon Diary)
Fatima Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (after homily); prayer to Our Lady of All Nations (after Holy Communion)

4 p.m. Eucharistic Healing Blessing of the Sick
Music by: Fr Peyton Cluster Choir

"The family that prays together stays together"

CONTACTS: N. Orla 0044-1545-452302, S. Jerry 007-2511885 or Nuala 007-2313162, E. Kay 01-8378504, W. Bernie 085-4405212, M. Nancy 061-384261 Fr. Peyton Centre, Mayo 015-45374

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Would you like to see your parish photos published in *The Irish Catholic*?

Email photographs to: mags@irishcatholic.ie
Photos in jpeg format are fine and please do tell us who is in the photo, the occasion and the parish.

Knock Shrine leads first pilgrimage to New York



The Kennedy family, Foxford.

Mags Gargan

In a role reversal, Knock Shrine sent out pilgrims on a charter flight to the US this week to take part in a ceremony that will see the remains of the youngest witness to the Knock apparition reinterred at Old St Patrick's Cathedral, New York.

The remains of John Curry will be brought from the current location at Pine Lawn Cemetery, Long Island to St Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday, for a special requiem Mass celebrated by Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

Witness

Fr Richard Gibbons, Rector of Knock Shrine, said the significance of the visit is two-fold "in that it will recognise John Curry's place as a witness and native of Knock and also pay tribute to others like him, the 'forgotten Irish' who faced the desolation of leaving home never to return".

"This unique trip provides an opportunity to take part in a special, once in a lifetime trip flying out from Ireland West Airport to New York and take in the various sights and places of significance and to be part of something very unique and special," he said.



▲ Pilgrims enjoying refreshments before they departed Ireland.

▲ Fr Richard Gibbons, Rector of Knock Shrine, with some of the pilgrims as they prepared to board at Ireland West Airport on Monday.



Linda Murphy and Sinead Malee, Knock.



Fr Richard Gibbons with Aer Lingus staff Hilary Horkan, Anne Wallace, Aine Gibbons and Michelle Murphy.



Joe Vaughan, Bridget Vaughan and Mary J. Dempsey, Balla, Co. Mayo.



John Moriarty

EPIC VISIONARY FOR CREATION'S UNITY

FRIDAY
JUNE 2
AT 7PM

A talk by
PROF. MICHAEL W. HIGGINS
Newman's University Church,
St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

To mark ten years since the death of writer and philosopher John Moriarty, *The Irish Catholic* and the Notre Dame Newman Centre for Faith and Reason are hosting an evening lecture.

Many regard Moriarty as a major writer, comparable to Yeats, Joyce and Beckett. The poet Paul Durcan has described Moriarty as "the original, radical, non-conformist questioner". John sought a rebirth of a Christianity that was inclusive of all religions and mythologies, and that took account of the deep and often dark dimensions of our turbulent humanity.

THIS IS A FREE EVENT, BUT PRE-REGISTRATION IS APPRECIATED.

To reserve a place, please call The Irish Catholic on **01 6874024** or email marketing@irishcatholic.ie.

The Irish Catholic



Notre Dame -
Newman Centre
for Faith and Reason



In trying to eradicate Ireland's Christian heritage, secularists could destroy Ireland's identity, writes **David Quinn**

Once French presidential candidate, Francois Fillon, was damaged by the scandal of paying his wife and family out of public funds for jobs that seemingly did not exist, it was inevitable that Emmanuel Macron would win the French election. Le Pen was just too unacceptable.

Fillon was the most Catholic-friendly of the candidates and was also a good half-way house between the stridently nationalistic tone of the National Front candidate, Marine Le Pen, and the globalist, internationalist, post-nationalist, multi-cultural policies of most of the other candidates including, I think, Macron. So, it was regrettable that Fillon's candidacy fell by the wayside.

In the end, Macron beat Le Pen by two-to-one. But that still means 11 million French people voted for Le Pen, a big constituency and illustrative of the new divide that has opened up in Western politics between globalism and nationalism. As always, you can be somewhere on the spectrum between extreme nationalism and extreme globalism.

Hostile

What does extreme nationalism look like? It looks like raising protectionist barriers against free trade and closing your borders to immigrants. It wraps itself in the national flag and very strongly emphasises national symbols, including sometimes religious ones. It is hostile to multi-culturalism and is anti-EU.

Extreme globalism is the opposite of this. It doesn't really believe in national borders at all, or in the nation-state. It dislikes national symbols and is very pro-immigration and pro-multi-culturalism. You might be for or against religion. Some globalists see a place for religion in their world



Glendalough.

and others do not.

As I say, you can put yourself anywhere between these two poles. A writer in the UK, David Goodhart, has written a very interesting analysis of Brexit called *The Road to Somewhere*. There are two roads a nation can follow, he maintains, a road to 'somewhere' or a road to 'anywhere', which can also be a road to 'nowhere'.

Voters who want to follow the road to 'somewhere' like the familiar, the customary, the traditional. They are not necessarily social conservatives by any means, or particularly or at all religious. But they do basically like where they live and they don't want to see it becoming something else. They have deep roots in a given place and they are not cosmopolitan in outlook.

“In Ireland today, there is a very strong attempt to make Ireland an ‘anywhere’ place”

The 'anywhere' people are cosmopolitan. They do not feel strongly attached to any particular place, local custom or traditions. They are very multiculturalist in outlook. In their hands, 'somewhere' quickly starts to look like 'anywhere' because, in the name of diversity, they tend to leech local communities of their own identities. The local culture becomes submerged.

In Ireland today, there is a very strong attempt to make Ireland an 'anywhere' place, to leech us of our particular colour and identity even when that is harmless and inoffensive to any reasonable person.

The main target at present is any public trace of our religious heritage. Ireland

has been a Christian country for 1,500 years but the people running this country at present want us to pretend that this is not true. Therefore, they are attacking the big and the small markers of our Christian heritage.

The TV version of the Angelus, for example, has been turned into a sort of 'art and crafts' item set to bells. Can it survive much longer? The restrictions on alcohol sales on Good Friday look set to go unless someone mounts some decent resistance.

Amazingly, the Dáil prayer has survived for now. Maybe the hard left TDs in the Dáil annoyed everyone else about it so much that the rest of the TDs opted to keep it, in common with parliaments in the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

These things are small, admittedly, but they are also symbolic. They give a place its particular colour.

The big things are also under ferocious assault. RTE's *Would You Believe?* last Sunday night asked 'Who's running our schools?' The non-denominational body Educate Together was delighted with the programme, and no wonder as it featured a preponderance of views criticising the present denominational system and praising the alternative.

This is all part of a general push against Catholic and other faith schools.

Catholic hospitals are also under enormous attack. We are led to believe that Catholic hospitals are an ever-present threat to the health of patients, especially women even though the proposal is to replace them with hospitals that are 'pro-choice', which is to say with hospitals that will abort

the unborn patient in the womb and eventually old and infirm patients as well, if and when we move towards assisted suicide.

A country that is so willing to jettison 1,500 years of history is a country that wants to become either anywhere or nowhere. If Ireland does this, it will be an entirely different place

compared to what it is now. Such a development would, of course, please some people enormously because they think no good came of our 1,500 years of Christianity, something only an ignoramus could truly believe.

Ireland is obviously becoming more secular and must adapt to that fact.

Changes have to be made. There ought, for example, to be fewer Catholic schools than at present.

Public traces

But to eradicate all public traces of 1,500 years of Christian history in this country goes much too far. A compromise suggests that we ought to keep some symbols of that history like the Angelus or the Good Friday drinking laws, as well as more substantive things like enough publicly-funded faith schools to meet whatever is the demand for them.

An unwillingness to compromise on the part of secularists begins to smack again of the sort of aggressive secularism that Bertie Ahern spoke of some years ago, of a deep-rooted antipathy to religion that ought to have no place in a supposedly pluralist country willing to recognise its deep roots.

British Prime Minister Theresa May is willing to praise and defend Britain's Christian heritage. As Dr Martin Mansergh asked in this newspaper last week, will any leading Irish politician do the same?

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Archdiocesan accounts:

On the face of it, comparing this year's financial reports from the Archdiocese of Dublin with its *Share Newsletters* of previous years is a case of comparing apples and oranges.

Previous practice in the archdiocese entailed the publication, typically in April, of a short newsletter consisting of a brief statement of incomes and expenditures and a longer statement of receipts and payments, accompanied by lists of parishes, one detailing how much had been collected from individual parishes and another showing which parishes had been helped and by how much.

The figures in these statements would relate to the year that had come to a close at the end of the previous June.

There was, however, no *Share Newsletter* last April, owing to changes relating to charity regulation following the Charities Act 2009 and a decision to release the 'Parishes of the Diocese of Dublin' report in tandem with the 'Charities of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin' report.

This April, therefore, saw instead the publication of accounts, not for the 12 months from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, but instead for the 18 months to December 31, 2015.

Henceforth, accounts will be issued in line with the new year-end date, and *The Irish Catholic* understands that a second set of reports is scheduled to be published this October, presumably with the intention that this will be the standard disclosure date from then on.

Consistent

Although retaining an April publication date would be consistent with established practice, it would mean that Dublin's parishioners would typically see accounts a full 16 months after the period they cover had ended, whereas October publications will see a 10-month lag similar to that which was the case until April 2015.

This decision is a sensible one: transparency and accountability would seem to demand that ordinary lay parishioners, as the key stakeholders in the financial health of the archdiocese, should have as

The finances of Dublin archdiocese have never been so transparent, writes Greg Daly



up-to-date an understanding of the diocese's finances as possible.

* * * * *

That said, as things stand the new set of accounts reveal a lot – indeed, they reveal more than previously published accounts have ever done, for which ordinary parishioners should be glad.

The first challenge is how to relate the accounts to those previously published, and so far in this respect neither early media coverage nor diocesan summaries have been especially helpful.

"Share collections in Dublin's Catholic archdiocese, which fund its support services, dropped significantly in the 18-month period to the end of December 2015, ending with a deficit of €3.65 million," began the principal report on the subject in *The*

Irish Times, for instance, noting later that, "in the five-year period from 2010 to 2015, average weekly contributions to Share collections in the archdiocese dropped from about €140,000 to almost €128,000, a fall of more than 10%."

The latter point tallies with a claim in this year's *Share Newsletter* that there has been a "steady decline in Share contributions in recent years", illustrated with a chart [pictured on opposite page] showing the average weekly Share collection dropping from 2010 to 2015.

The reality, however, appears to be that Share collections have in fact risen slightly since June 2014, just as they rose slightly from 2012 to 2013. Assuming a 52-week year, the financial year that ended on June 30, 2010 saw a weekly share col-

lection of €154,000.

Average weekly collections in the following years were €133,558 for the year ended June 30, 2011, €129,788 for the year ended June 30, 2012, €130,077 for the year ended June 30, 2013 and €125,058 for the year ended June 30, 2014.

“The average weekly collection over the 78 weeks of this period was €128,692, an increase of €3,654 per week”

According to the *Share Newsletter*, the total Share collection across the diocese of Dublin for the 18 months to December 31, 2015 was €10,038,000; again assuming

a 52-week year, this means the average weekly collection over the 78 weeks of this period was €128,692, an increase of €3,654 per week, or 3% since the previous year.

While these figures don't, of course, take account of inflation or the changing value of money, they nonetheless suggest that while the Share collection dropped dramatically as the recession began to bite, it has neither recovered nor steadily declined since then, instead fluctuating within a fairly narrow range.

Expanding

The Share Fund, it should be understood, is one of four key elements in the 'Parishes of the Diocese of Dublin'. Primarily based on the second collection at Dublin Masses, its main purposes are to support disadvantaged parishes

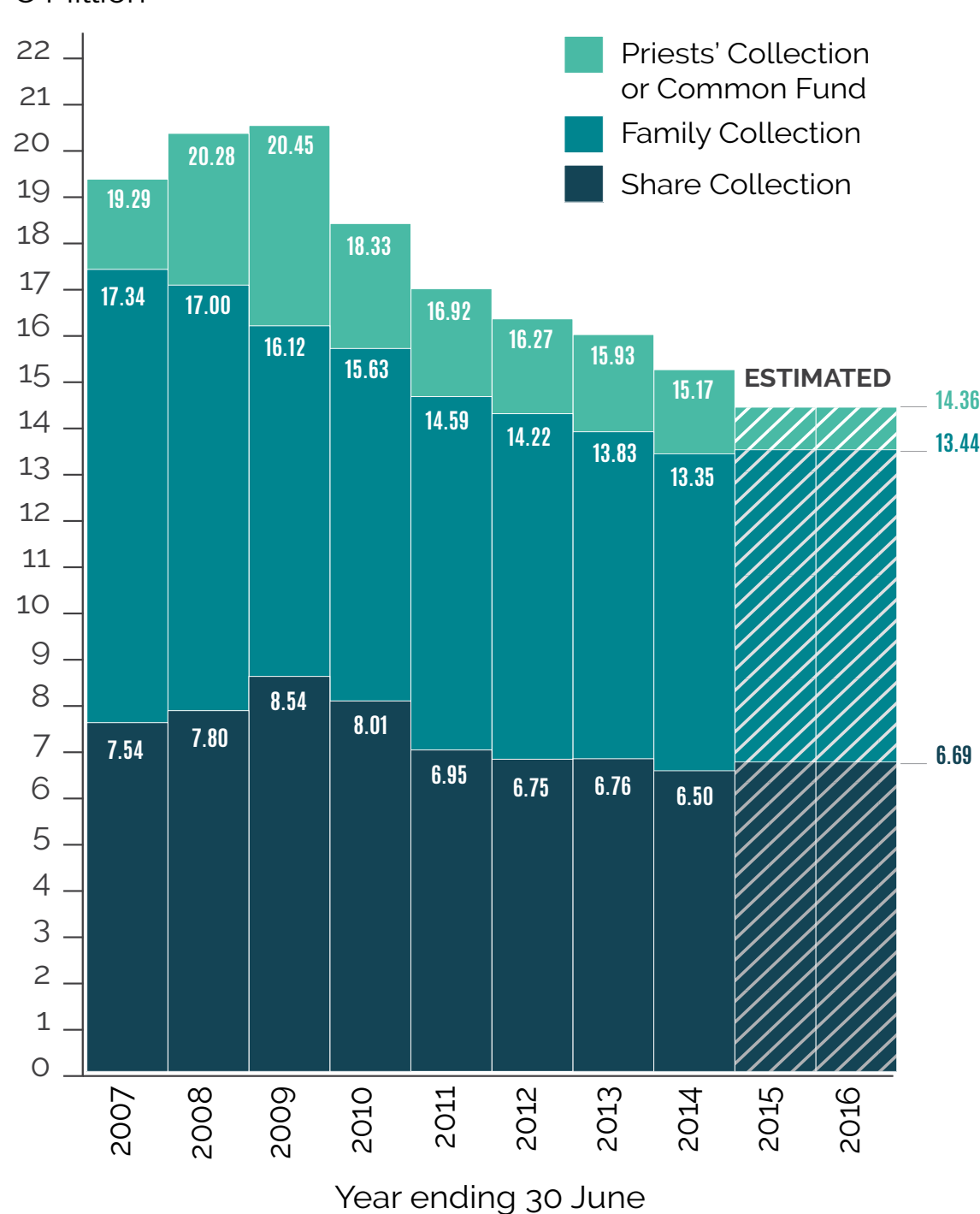
and to meet the diocese's administrative costs.

Originally intended in the main to build churches and schools in an expanding city, it nowadays is directed in large part towards strengthening Catholic communities and families, not least by training people for evangelisation, catechesis, safeguarding and financial management, as well as maintaining the schools of the diocese.

Whereas the Share Fund's total income – collections, donations, legacies, gains on investments, bank interest and other income – over the 18 months covered by the reports was €10,510,000, expenses over the period totalled €14,165,000, resulting in a deficit of €3,655,000.

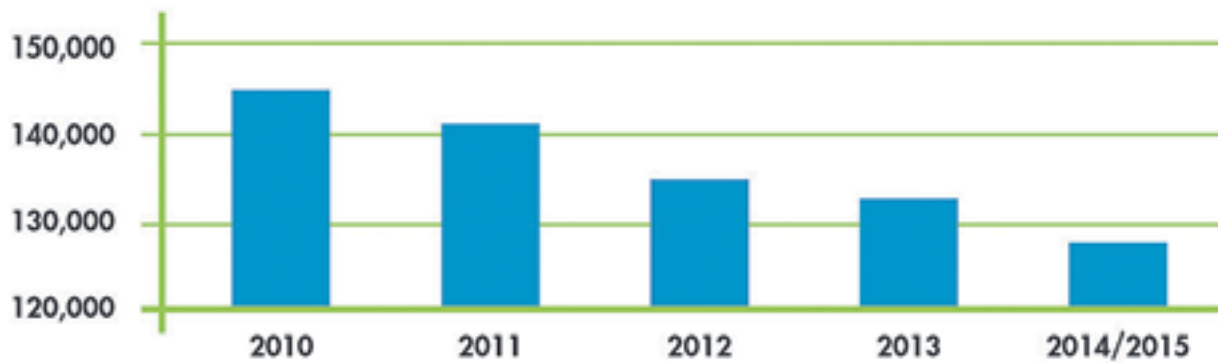
The fund, therefore, which had been almost €18m at the start of the period, was reduced to less than €14.5m

€ Million



opening up the numbers

Average Weekly Share Collection from 2010 to 2015



A chart on the diocesan newsletter which suggests Share collections have been in steady decline for some years.

by December 31, 2015.

Given how many things the Share Fund has to pay for, and how extensive training has been a hallmark of diocesan practice in recent years, it is perhaps not surprising that a modest increase in weekly collections has not been enough to maintain a healthy Share balance.

Indeed, diocesan support services increased from under €3.5m for the 12 months to June 30, 2014 to over €7.6m for the next 18 months: in practical terms, this suggests an increase from €67,135 per week to €98,128 a week, while parish pastoral workers, absent from the 2014 accounts, cost €2,240,000 or €28,718 a week during the 18 months to the end of 2015. The two expenses combined almost equal the amount received in Share collections during the period.

Offerings

The Common Fund, the second of the four elements in the Parishes report, is intended for the remuneration of priests serving in the diocese, and is funded by the first collection in Dublin's Sunday Masses as well as through dues and offerings for baptisms, funerals and weddings: separate figures are given for dues and for collections, with the latter figure for the period ending on December 31, 2015 being €15,376,000.

This might seem to suggest that financial support for priests has collapsed across the Archdiocese of Dublin. When considering trends relating to this figure, however, it's important to note not merely that the most recent figures relate to an 18-month period, but that in previous years' *Share Newsletters*, the figure labelled "collection for the support of priests" included both the collection proper and the dues and offerings.

In practical terms, then,

what was in the past informally classed as a collection for the support of priests is now formally identified as the Common Fund.

“€2,750,000 was transferred from the Common Fund to the Clerical Fund, which meets the care costs of elderly priests”

It's important to understand this, lest a crude comparison of the last two sets of collection figures might lead one to wonder if weekly collections for clergy had plummeted by almost a third, from €291,808 to €197,128. Instead it seems that average weekly collections for clergy, when dues and offerings are taken into account, have dropped by a rather less dramatic €15,731 to €276,077.

The fund helped pay for 390 priests to serve in the diocese. Readers of *The Irish Catholic* may recall that last year this paper established that the basic stipend for a curate in the Archdiocese of Dublin is €23,218 per annum, with medical insurance also being paid for. Parish priests, moderators and administra-

tors receive annual support of €27,873, while increments are also paid to the diocese's priests at five-yearly intervals from five to 45 years after ordination.

€2,750,000 was transferred from the Common Fund to the Clerical Fund, which meets the care costs of elderly priests and those who are out of ministry through illness – all told there are over 100 such priests in the diocese, 71 of whom received payments during the period.

The transfer from the Common Fund made up the bulk of the Clerical Fund's income during the 18-month period of the reports, this being supplemented by €559,000 raised through donations, legacies, investments and other incomes. Slightly over €2.7m was spent on nursing homes, homecare costs and insurance.

The fourth key element in the Parish accounts are the Parish Funds, which draw together the combined financial statements of all diocesan parishes with the exception of eight parishes, the assets of which are owned and managed by religious orders.

Total income for the parishes over the period was €44.9m, with the largest

portion of this being raised through the family offering collection, which at €258,436 per week on average was marginally higher than the equivalent weekly figure for the year ended June 2014.

While income and expenditure in the archdiocese is straightforward enough, in some ways one would expect the trickiest part of the accounts to be the valuation of assets.

Heritage assets like art and chalices are not recorded as assets because they're not held for investment or with any intent to dispose of them, and while the value of land owned by the diocese has not been included in the current accounts but should be determined for the next set of accounts, buildings – including churches – are reckoned as worth €91.5m.

“€400,000 was received by the Burse Fund, for the education of students to the priesthood and the permanent diaconate”

The diocese's schools are not, significantly, included in that figure. Although, strictly speaking, the charity is formally called the 'Schools and Parishes of the Diocese of Dublin', the financial statements relating to the operation of the 647 voluntary-aided diocesan schools are excluded from the report.

The school properties – both the buildings and the lands where the buildings are sited – are vested in the St Laurence O'Toole Trust on behalf, as a rule, of the parishes where the schools are located. Although the schools are owned by parishes and other religious bodies, the financial reports treat them as

being held in custody rather than owned, so like artwork, they are not recorded as assets in the accounts. The trust is not a charity.

* * * * *

The 'Charities of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin', on the other hand, is a charitable trust, and includes the financial statements of the diocesan offices and a number of charitable funds the diocese administers.

If the Parishes report is interesting mainly in terms of comparisons with reports from previous years, the Charities report's main value comes from the extraordinary number of details it reveals.

For instance, the report includes a mixture of unrestricted and restricted funds, with one of the former, the General Fund, comprising bequests and donations given for charitable purposes to be dispensed at the archbishop's discretion.

Beginning the period with a deficit of €7,366,000, the fund was still €6,250,000 in the red as December 2015 drew to a close. The major areas of expenditure for the scheme were the diocesan pension scheme and the need to provide compensation to survivors of sexual abuse by priests, which cost the diocese €1,355,000 during the period, with there being €15.8m set aside as a provision for possible future compensation.

The diocesan pension scheme, meanwhile, saw its deficit rising from €17.8m when the period began to €20.3m at the end of it.

Among the restricted funds, on the other hand, are the Irish Martyrs Fund, which had reserves of €2.1m as the period ended, and the New Cathedral Fund, which ended the year with almost €1.1m in the bank.

In July 2015 the Charities Regulatory Authority gave permission for the latter fund to be used for the refurbishment, repair, maintenance and operation of St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, as, according to the reports, "there is no intention to build a new cathedral in the diocese". One might wonder then whether the diocese should arrange for St Mary's to be formally classified as a cathedral at last, or whether Ireland's diocese should continue in perpetuity without its own formally-designated cathedral other than those taken from it during the Reformation.

As for the martyrs' fund,

established in the 19th Century and augmented by a major fundraising drive in the early 20th Century to help pay for expenses linked with promoting the beatification and canonisation causes of the Irish Martyrs, no grants were made from the fund during the period, and efforts are underway to have the terms of the trust altered so that should it be the case that not all funds in the trust be needed for the promotion of causes they can be used to help the needy.

This is a defensible, even a laudable aim, and one that Blessed Margaret Ball, for instance, would surely support.

Crosscare

During the period of the accounts, meanwhile, almost €1.1m was paid out from the Poor of Dublin fund, almost half of this going to Crosscare which also received most of the €437,000 issued from the De La Saussave Trust, while grants worth €666,000 were issued from the O'Brien Educational Trust Fund to aid the education of disadvantaged children.

While €400,000 was received by the Burse Fund, for the education of students to the priesthood and the permanent diaconate, €535,000 was paid from the fund during the period. According to the accounts, the diocese has 10 seminarians training to be priests and 14 candidates training for the permanent diaconate.

* * * * *

Among the financial gains by the archdiocese during the period three things stand out. Assets and net reserves worth almost €7.5m were transferred from Holy Cross College, while a further €148,000 was transferred from the Dublin Regional Marriage Tribunal. Most promisingly for the future, 'Living the Joy of the Gospel', a fundraising scheme piloted in just 10 parishes, cost €691,000 but brought in pledges of funding to the tune of €5.5m, eight times the cost of the project.

"A review of the pilot programme has subsequently taken place and it has been decided to establish a permanent funding office for the charity," the report says. With homeless numbers on the rise, a pension crisis stretching the diocese, and Dublin being mission territory in need of committed and intelligent re-evangelisation, it's not a moment too soon.



Statues of Dublin martyrs Blessed Francis and his god-mother Blessed Margaret Ball, who were beatified in 1992. With no grants made to promote their canonisations over the reporting period, the Archdiocese of Dublin is seeking to use some of the martyrs fund to aid the city's needy.



The attendance at Knocknagoshel parish mission in Co. Kerry; left, a tree-planting ceremony during a Redemptorist parish mission in Tralee.



Mags Gargan examines the continuing popularity of parish missions

Preaching to the parishes

Parish missions were a common feature in the Irish Church up until about the 1960s and for many the idea of a mission brings up the old stereotypical image of a judgmental, hellfire preacher. However, parish missions today are a gentler, communal affair and while they are less common, they still attract big crowds and are perhaps the very thing disheartened Catholics need to feel energised in their faith.

The traditional parish mission consisted of the installation of several priests in a particular parish for up to perhaps two months, to preach and teach the people in order to strengthen their faith.

Lively preaching is still a major factor in missions today, but they tend to only last a week or less and involve a lot of preparation and consultation with the parish priest and pastoral team in advance and a greater lay involvement in presenting the liturgy. There is also an element of reaching out to the community through visits to the schools and nursing homes.

Charism

In the 19th Century the Vincentian Community and the Jesuits were seen as pioneers of the parish mission in Ireland. This year actually marks the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Vincentian charism. "St Vincent de Paul regarded a mission he gave in the countryside of Northern France in January of 1617 as the foundation of the Vincentian community," says Fr Paschal Scallan CM, director of the Vincentian Parish Missions.

"The Vincentian mission has always had a reputation for an emphasis on reconciliation and the model has always been a very gentle approach," he says.

"We try to give people an experience of encountering Christ. We take very seriously the challenge of making that a real experience, whether it happens in the liturgy or in our preaching or in an element of a discussion or simple catechesis outside the liturgy or a social event. We look at how is this going to be an event that people can look back on and say 'that affirmed me in my faith in Christ'. That is the thing about a mission."

Building up faith

Fr Paschal says the key is the "building up of the faith of the local core community". "It is not about bringing back the lapsed. You may feel you are preaching to the choir but that is important because it is the regulars who are going to be there after the mission team leaves town. It is what radiates out of them afterwards that hopefully makes a lasting evangelisation on their neighbours."

Fr John Harris OP from the Dominicans also sees parish missions "very much as building on what's there already". "It is very much to encourage and renew the spiritual life of the people of the parish," he says.

The Dominicans are known for their preaching and Fr John says this is a strong characteristic of their missions. "It's the way we preach in the sense that it's more theologically-based than sociologically-based in the way we present issues," he says. "We put a big emphasis on personal Confession. We find a lot of people

just need to talk. One day of the mission is given over to Confession and one of the team will be available all day in the church.

"I would like to think from my own experience very often a mission gives parishes an opportunity to regroup and be more faithful to what they are about, their own identity. We want to give them a sense of purpose and the work being done. The gift of Church and God's grace is nowhere else but Church-based and our message is a positive message of what's good and what's happening in the Church. And it's an opportunity for people who have been away from the Church to reconnect. It's an excuse."

The Passionists were founded by St Paul of the Cross with a special emphasis on the Passion of Jesus Christ, so it is no surprise that the focus of a Passionist parish mission is the cross.

"It about a reawakening, rediscovery or a renewal, but the central focus is the cross and we bring in the mission

cross. We take the theme of the cross as the greatest work of God's love, mercy and forgiveness," says Fr Charles Cross. "It is basic Gospel, charismatic preaching.

“The parish mission has developed over time but the core elements have stayed the same”

"But a parish mission is not a cure all. People say what about the youth etc. But if something is not working in the parish, it is not going to work for the mission. We look at what is going on and we try to listen. We talk to the people about where they are at and what are the issues in their life."

In the case of the Redemptorists, who provide the most parish missions in the country at the moment, the approach has changed in recent years and lay involvement has

become a huge factor.

"The parish mission has developed over time but the core elements have stayed the same," says Fr Laurence Gallagher CSsR. "It is a celebration of faith and community. It celebrates the best that brings a community together. It is a renewal and a rekindling of faith. So it is an opportunity for people as a parish to step back and reflect on what it is that we believe, the values we hold and how important we believe God is in our ordinary everyday experience."

Fr Laurence says the Redemptorists use a collaborative model where they "encourage the parish to take more ownership of the mission". "We would meet six months or a year in advance and share what is it we do generally, but also plan it with the parish team. They would begin to take ownership of the different areas of hospitality and promoting the mission, and some of the liturgical or ritual side."

Preaching is still a core element and the emphasis is on "the unconditional mercy of God", but also to "make it relevant to what people are going through in their lives. How our faith has something powerful to say to it, even now in the Ireland, the Church or the politics of 2017".

Fr Laurence says missions give people a wider and deeper experience of Catholicism that they wouldn't get every day. "You wouldn't have a mission every month. It is a

bit like Christmas, it is one of those special moments and it draws people like a magnet. They feel welcome, nourished and empowered, and blessed in a way."

The Redemptorists held a mission in the parishes of Conahy and Ballyragget in Co. Kilkenny in March. The parish priest Fr Eamonn O'Gorman has held a mission in every parish he has served in and says that while "it's tiring, it's well worth it".

“I think what struck me most was the amount of people who took on roles after the mission”

"It was a great success. We invited everybody. We sent out maybe 400 flyers in Cohahy, 800-1,000 in Ballyragget and it was advertised well on billboards and roundabouts," he says.

"It was 38 years since there was a parish mission in Conahy and sometimes there is a misconception that it is all brimstone and hellfire, but people were pleasantly surprised. They really enjoyed it. People were saying wasn't that a great tonic."

Participation

In Conahy, which is a small rural parish, the mission started with around 70 turning up, but this increased to 170 by the Friday as word got it, and it has greatly influ-



Redemptorist parish mission on the Aran Islands circa 1930s.



A youth mission in Limerick.



The attendance at Conahy parish mission in Co. Kilkenny; below, the Dominican mission team with Bishop Noel Treanor and the priests of St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street in Belfast.



enced the participation of lay people in the Church.

"The collaboration with lay people was very important," Fr Eamonn says. "I couldn't do it on my own. I played the music for both missions – guitar and keyboards – so it was a different role for me. One lady got up at 5am to bake biscuits for the 7am Mass for those heading for work, which was beyond the call of duty. Things like that you'd remember, apart from the preaching. It is well worth doing every 3-4 years for renewal."

Christine Kelly, a member of the liturgy group and pastoral council in Conahy, says the mission "brought new life to the parish and brought all the different sections of community together".

“The collaboration with lay people was very important,” Fr Eamonn says, “I couldn’t do it on my own”

"I think what struck me most was the amount of people who took on roles after the mission. It gave people confidence to become Eucharistic Ministers or Ministers of the Word and the liturgy group came alive. Also I think people want more now from their liturgies. They don't want it to stop at the mission. People were saying don't let the momentum die, keep the flow of good liturgies and involvement, and that's the challenge now for the parish."

Fr Seamus Enright CSsR says one of the things that has amazed him in his years of working on parish missions is the "amount of energy, talent and creatively" in par-

ishes that "we are not always as a Church tapping in to as much as we should". "I have seen extraordinarily rich and creative things going on in parishes during a mission. Preparation is key. There is a lot of hard work in it, but the more work that goes into the preparation and promotion – the more likely it is to go well."

He says a parish mission gives the faith community "a boost and uplifting experience". "It is an energising experience that shows the parish what it is capable of."

Challenge

The challenge for all the religious congregations who offer parish missions is the ageing profile of their members and the decrease in new vocations, which means there are less priests who can be called upon to offer a mission.

"We have a shortage of personnel. We used to have 4-5 men going out but we are so tied up in parishes ourselves we have to be booked far in advance. If we had more men, we would do more but there are many invitations that I have to turn down," says Fr Charles from the Passionists.

"It is more and more difficult to put a team in the field," says Fr Paschal of the Vincentians. "I am the only permanent member of the team now, which reflects on the diminishing numbers, but I do call on colleagues and lay people to come with me."

The Dominicans had been less active in parish missions until recent years, which have seen an increase in vocations. "In the last number of years our preaching band went down but with vocation numbers better than they were and younger men available to preach, we are more willing to accept invitations," Fr John says.

The Redemptorists have recently restructured their mission team and they are actively looking for lay people to join them in offering parish missions.

"The challenge is that there are less missionaries, so we are trying to pool our resources as much as we can," says Fr Laurence.

"We have moved to two central anchored teams for mission, one in Clonard, Belfast and one in Limerick. The Belfast missionaries under Fr Johnny Doherty cover the North and East, and I am in charge of part of the West and South with the missionaries based in Cork, Limerick and Esker."

The Redemptorists also have lay people working in partnership on the mission teams. "We had two women working with us full time on missions. They did everything except celebrate the sacraments. They visited the schools, they led the singing, they would reflect on the Word. They were full partners with us," he says.

"But they have moved on and we are looking for people who will have a background in ministry, in singing, in youth development, a background in faith or theology that would join us in partnership and commit to a few missions a year, so we can create a panel to work from."

“People are placing their trust in you and you meet them at their most vulnerable or their most joyous”

Sarah Kenwright worked on the Redemptorist mission team for over four years and says it was "the most rewarding and happiest in work that

I have ever been".

"When you are invited into a parish as part of a mission team, people are placing their trust in you and you meet them at their most vulnerable or their most joyous, and they share things with you. It is a great privilege. But you also have great craic. Every single week is different.

You're in schools, day centres, sometimes in people's homes and every week is a new challenge."

Sarah's experience of parish missions is that people are still engaged in their faith. "That engagement is not the same as 20 years ago, but they are still searching for some sort of nourishment and

a parish mission revitalises and rejuvenates not just parishes, but families and family homes. It is a real joyous time and brings back a sense of community and it also supports the priest. It gives them a sense of 'I'm not on my own'. That is what parish missions are doing, bringing people together."

Could this be You?

The Redemptorist Parish Mission Team in Limerick wishes to employ a number of people to work with them in ministry on a part-time/occasional basis.

We are interested in faith-filled people with a background in some of the following: Theology/ Liturgy/ Youth Ministry/ Chaplaincy.

Please contact missions.novenas@redemptorists.ie to arrange a preliminary conversation.

Please email your C.V. before May 29, 2017

Please apply to: missions.novenas@redemptorists.ie



A servant of the poor and sick

Ireland will host its first ever beatification ceremony this weekend, when Fr John Sullivan SJ will be named Blessed on May 13. (Up until the papacy of Benedict XVI beatifications tended to take place in Rome and the Pope presided over them.) Pope Francis will be represented by Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, at the ceremony in St Francis Xavier Church, on Dublin's Gardiner Street, where Fr John is buried.

As a Catholic convert, Fr Sullivan is a hero for both the Catholic and Protestant communities in Ireland, and in another first, the request for beatification at the ceremony will be made by the Church of Ireland and the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin together, reflecting the fact that Fr John was an Anglican for the first half of his life and Catholic for the second.

John Sullivan was born in Dublin on May 8, 1861. He was the youngest of five children. John's father, the future Lord Chancellor of Ireland, Sir Edward Sullivan, was a Protestant. His mother, Lady Bessie Josephine Sullivan, was a Catholic. It was the custom at the time that in a mixed marriage sons would follow the faith of their father and daughters would follow their mother's faith. So John was brought up in the Protestant tradition and lived a life of elegance and luxury.

Education

From the age of 11 John was educated at Portora Royal School in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. A star pupil there, he went on to study classics and then law at Trinity College. It was at this time that his father died suddenly. The shock had a devastating effect on John.

He left Ireland and continued his legal studies at Lincoln's Inn in London where he was called to the Bar in 1888.

At this time, due to his inheritance, he was very comfortable in financial terms, noted for his fashionable dress and handsome appearance. He



Ahead of his historic beatification ceremony, **Mags Gargan** looks at the life of Fr John Sullivan



Fr John Sullivan's grave at Clongowes became a place of pilgrimage before he was moved to Gardiner St in Dublin.

travelled extensively around Europe and was a keen cycling enthusiast. He stayed at the Orthodox monastery of Mount Athos in Greece and was friendly with the monks.

His mother's strength of faith had a huge influence on John and in December 1896, at the age of 35, he was received into the Catholic

Church. He carried on with his career in law but abandoned all the trappings of his life of luxury and devoted a lot of his time to the sick and the poor.

His mother's death in 1898 focused his mind and in 1900 he decided to enter the Jesuit order. Most of his priestly life was spent in Clongowes Wood College,

in Co. Kildare, except for five years as rector of Rathfarnham Castle in Dublin.

Fr John's life was characterised by acts of self-denial and a total commitment to the service of God and others. Every available moment was spent in prayer at the chapel in Clongowes. He was never without his crucifix, which was his mother's, and he blessed countless people with it. Today the cross is brought on request to the sick in hospitals and on house visits by a dedicated priest, Fr Paul Farquharson SJ.

“He had a great devotion to the sick and miracle cures happened to many with whom he prayed”

Fr Sullivan had a reputation for sanctity at Clongowes and was a kind and gentle father figure to the schoolboys. His reputation spread among the local people and others began to travel from far afield to ask for his spiritual guidance. He had a great devotion to the sick and miracle cures happened to many with whom he prayed.

“He was a man who was a servant of the poor, the sick and of anyone in any need,” says Fr Conor



Harper SJ, vice postulator of Fr Sullivan's cause. “He was always available and clearly in eyes of the people a very holy man. They often came to him not so much for cures but for comfort. Peace seems to come after the blessing and that still happens. Some people who want to be blessed with the cross – many are hoping to get better – but some are just praying for comfort and peace, and it happens often.”

Continual prayer

In 1933 Fr Sullivan became gravely ill and was admitted to St Vincent's Nursing Home in Leeson Street, Dublin. He spent the last two days of his life in continual prayer. He was buried in the grounds of Clongowes and his grave became a place of pilgrimage after his death.

“There was a huge devotion all around Co. Kildare, radiating from Clongowes Wood College, over the years from the time he was there to the time of his death and there is still

huge devotion around the area,” Fr Harper says.

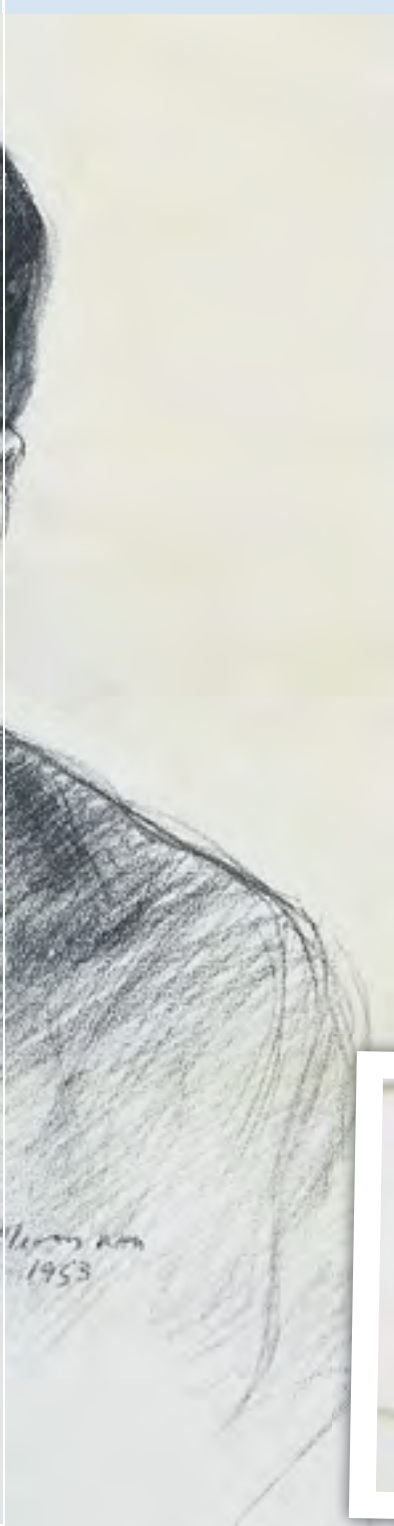
In 1960 Fr John's remains were exhumed as part of the process of his cause for canonisation and transferred to the Jesuit Church of St Francis Xavier in Dublin. Pope John XXIII declared Fr Sullivan a Servant of God in 1960 and he was named ‘Venerable’ in 2014 by Pope Benedict XVI. In April 2016 Pope Francis approved a decree that authenticated a miracle attributed to Fr Sullivan, thereby approving his beatification.

The miracle that has led to Fr John's beatification saw a Dubliner, Delia Farnham, make an incredible recovery from a neck tumour in 1954. Among the other healings attributed to him is of Michael Collins, nephew of General Michael Collins, founder of the Irish Free State, who was paralysed as a young boy but suddenly walked in 1928 after Fr Sullivan touched his leg and prayed over him.

Another well attested



A display case in the people's church in Clongowes showing photos of Fr Sullivan, his family and some personal belongings including books, certificates and awards.



healing was in December 1932, only two months before Fr Sullivan's death. It was that of a young married woman who was suffering from terrible vomiting. She was unable to retain any food and had become fatally thin. Fr Sullivan sprinkled her with holy water and said some prayers and over the next few days she made a full recovery.

On the third Saturday of every month at 1pm, a Mass is celebrated for Fr John in Gardiner Street, "which is normally a full church" according to the parish priest, Fr Gerry Clarke SJ. There is also an annual Mass at end of February, attended in recent years by Archbishop Michael Jackson, "which is very full and people come from all over Ireland". Fr John's Anglican relatives, Sheila and Peter Lloyd, also normally travel from England for the event.

Fr Clarke said the number of petitions to Fr Sullivan has increased since

the announcement of his beatification and there is a "great sense of hope and anticipation" for the upcoming ceremony.

“The saints are those who live holiness to such a degree that they truly go beyond human narrowness”

"Devotees attribute healings to Fr John and his cross. Soil from his tomb has even been brought abroad. Fr John was known for his simplicity, his humility and his deep prayer. He was just known always as a very holy man and people put great faith in his intercession," Fr Clarke says.

Each year on Fr John's birthday in May, a Mass is celebrated in the people's church in Clongowes. Celebrating the Mass last year, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin, Denis Nulty said he

has often heard stories of Fr Sullivan's holiness when he is travelling in the diocese.

"One person told me her family were personally acquainted with a woman from near the college whose incurable illness was healed through the intervention of Fr John Sullivan; another whose grandmother came from Ballinagappa, Clane knew that her arthritic grandmother's mother was attended to by Fr John, and the family continued to visit his grave, while it was here in Clongowes."

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, who will lead the beatification ceremony, has described Fr John as a "model of holiness". "The saints are those who live holiness to such a degree that they truly go beyond human narrowness and live a life of love that embraces everyone. That is the virtuous life that has been recognised by the Church in a special way in the life of John Sullivan," he said.



People line up to be blessed with Fr John's crucifix; left, Cofl Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin at the tomb of Fr John Sullivan in Gardiner Street Church in Dublin. Photos: Irish Jesuits

Archbishop Jackson, another former pupil of Portora, has spoken with a marked warmth of John Sullivan and of how the two traditions that he represented look to him as a model of personal holiness and of humble, priestly service.

The archbishop said the faith of Fr John was "the product of two traditions and always remained so and was enriched by that fact", explaining that "there is an important ecumenical transformation which comes through entering into the prayer traditions and the piety of other traditions". He said that "holiness knows no denominational boundaries" and explained how in our ecumenical reflection we don't pay enough attention to the fact that saints "can be a bridge between what is deepest and common in all our traditions".

Striking feature

Fr Harper said a "very striking feature" in recent times is the interest in the cause from the "Church of Ireland and especially from his old school, Portora in Enniskillen". "The former headmaster Neill Morton gave a very good statement when the beatification was declared, he said 'we in Portora are very proud of being the only Protestant school in the history of Ireland that can boast of having a Catholic saint'."

Fr Clarke describes Saturday's beatification ceremony as "the end of a long process of waiting" and the last few weeks have seen a hive of activity in the Irish Jesuit community.

"We have a committee which has been meeting

weekly for the last month and a half and we have mobilised the resources of the Jesuits in the city centre and Dublin diocese has been very helpful," he says.

Fr Clarke says it's "an honour that this is taking place at the Jesuit parish in Gardiner Street" and the community there is "really excited as we prepare for this momentous day for the beatification of a Jesuit priest born in Eccles St and known for his care for the sick and the poor".

“After the ceremony there will be a time for quiet reflection, during which attendees may receive a blessing from the Fr John Sullivan cross”

While this is the first beatification in Ireland, Fr John is not the first Irish Jesuit to be beatified according to Fr Clarke. "A number of years ago [1992] we had Blessed Dominic Collins, who was a Jesuit brother born in Youghal in Co. Cork and he was martyred in 1602. His beatification ceremony was in the Vatican and so a small delegation went to Rome."

"This time the ceremony is in Dublin and unfortunately we have had to organise it by ticket in the church to accommodate the large numbers. But we have two large marquees in the garden right next door with screens and sound, and the ceremony will be live streamed there and in the O'Reilly Theatre in

Belvedere College. It will also be available to view on the Jesuit website www.jesuit.ie/beatification at 11am."

One of Fr John's relatives will take part in the readings during the ceremony and music will be provided by Clongowes Wood College. Also, world-renowned soprano Celine Byrne, a native of Kildare, will sing the *Ave Maria* and *Panis Angelicus*. During the Mass, a large portrait of Fr John will be unveiled and a relic of his hair, which was kept by his barber, Charlie Barrett, will be brought to the altar. After the ceremony there will be a time for quiet reflection, during which attendees may receive a blessing from the Fr John Sullivan cross.

A Mass of Thanksgiving for the beatification of Fr John will take place in Clongowes Wood College on Saturday, May 20 at 7pm.

Beatification, which confers the title 'Blessed', means that a man or woman is considered to be truly holy and worthy of veneration at a local level. The next stage after beatification is canonisation – sainthood – which is a recognition of this holiness by the universal Church.

In the meantime, Fr Harper says "devotions will continue". "The next step would be canonisation, and for that to happen from the moment of beatification we are waiting for another miracle and if that is what the Almighty wants, we will get our miracle, and if it is not we carry on."

"Fr John Sullivan is still a great bond, a catalyst between the people and the Almighty," he says.

Out&About

Past vs Present seminary soccer match



KILDARE: Pictured at a Past vs Present Soccer Match which takes place annually in Maynooth Seminary for the Fr Adrian Porter memorial cup, won by the present students with a single goal, are: (backrow, l-r) Will Woods, Autun Pasalic, Shane Costello, Fr Derek Darby, Padraig Corcoran, Fr Chris O'Donnell, John McEaney, Charles Lafferty, Anthony Hartnett, Robert Mazewski, Fr Brian Whelan. Front: (l-r) Fr Kevin Heery, Ronan Costello, Theiventhran Pillai, Aidan O'Rourke, Rev. Declan Lohan, Mark Dillworth, Fergal Cummins, Fr Vincent Stapleton, Fr Michael King.



◀ **MAYO:** A newly formed Diocesan Eucharistic Adoration Committee for the Diocese of Achonry was commissioned at a special Mass celebrated by Bishop Brendan Kelly, and assisted by Msgr Thomas Johnston, PP and Monsignor John Doherty, PE in the Church of St James, Charlestown.

▶ **WEXFORD:** The community of Sisters of Eucharistic Adoration and two sisters from Kerala with similar apostolate, join with Sister Raphael Devitt in celebrating her 100th birthday. She is a native of Dualla near Caisheal in Co. Tipperary.



HOLY LAND: Meath pilgrims on the 16th consecutive pilgrimage trip in association with MAP Travel led by Fr Dwayne Gavin, Sr Consilio Rock and Fr Gerry MacCormack, at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Edited by Mags Gargan
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Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



WICKLOW: The parish of Kilnamanagh-Castleview in Dublin and the Diocese of Elphin are taking a group of young adults out on the Camino in June. On a prep walk from Arklow to Tara Hill, Gorey are: Fr Michael Murphy, Natalie Doherty, Thomas Allen, Tim Harden, Mary Escoto, Reilín Geoghegan and Kevin Toner.



◀ **DUBLIN:** Bro. James Eivers O.Carm at his ordination to the priesthood in Terenure College Chapel, Dublin with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Fr Richard Byrne, Carmelite provincial.



CORK: Bishop John Buckley visits Anne O'Regan, at her home in Belgooly, on the occasion of her 100th birthday – to honour the occasion she attended Mass in her local church with family and friends celebrated by her nephew Fr Charles Kiely.



KERRY: As a special thank you from the priests and congregation of Ballyferrier parish, in West Kerry, the Bene Merenti Medal was presented to Siobhán Uí Fhathaigh, Caitlín Ní Shé-Sears and Peigí Ruiséal, for their hard work and dedication to the priests and people of the parish over many years. Pictured: An tAthair Tomás Ó hIcheadha, Siobhán Uí Fhathaigh, Caitlín Ní Shé-Sears, Peigí Ruiséal and An tAthair Eoghan Ó Cadhla.



MAYO: At the launch of the book *The Lamb Will Conquer* by Fr Nigel Woollen in the bookshop at Knock Shrine are: Sr Patricia Lynott RJN, Léonie Scott-Boras, Pamela McLoughlin, Bishop Fintan Monahan, Fr Nigel Woollen, Fr Richard Gibbons, PP and Derek Distall.

ANTRIM

Dr Johnston McMaster to give a seminar on 'Returning to the Public Square: Developing Public Theology and Practice' on Sunday, May 28 from 2.30-5.30pm in Drumalis Retreat & Conference Centre in Larne. Bookings through maura@drumalis.co.uk

CLARE

Feast of Our Lady of Fatima Public Square Rosary Crusade in O'Connell Square Ennis on Saturday, May 13 at 3pm.

CORK

To celebrate the centenary of Our Lady in Fatima, Mitchelstown Parish Pastoral Council presents 'A night in Fatima' on Friday, May 12 at 7.30pm in the Presentation Primary school hall (behind the parish church). Presentation by Fr John McCarthy and Fr Patrick Winkle followed by light refreshments and live link to Pope Francis saying Rosary in Fatima.

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

DUBLIN

Feast of St Rita of Cascia at John's Lane Church, Thomas St, on Monday, May 22 with Mass and Devotions at 11am and 7.30pm. Triduum from Friday to Sunday, May 19-21: Mass and Devotions at 7.30pm only. Homelist: Fr Noel Hes-sion, OSA.

On the 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima 1917-2017, Our Lady Help of Christians, Navan Road, D7 invite all to The Call to Fatima Presentation on Monday, May 15 at 7.30pm.

The Encounter Dublin City: Join other young adults (20's & 30's) for a night of live acoustic music, reflective prayer in adoration, with Cormac Buckley and band; guest speaker Bro. Philip Mulryne (ex-Man United football player), followed by pizza & refreshments, Friday, May 26 at 8pm, St Paul's Church, Arran Quay st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie

Want to get fit? Embrace God in nature and build true friendships? Join other young adults (20's & 30's) for reflective hikes around Dublin area. Monthly event. Contact: siobhan.tighe@dublindiocese.ie

FERMANAGH

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

Divine Mercy Devotions every Monday night in St Nilles Church, Kinawley beginning with Mass at 7pm, Divine Mercy holy hour 7.30-8.30pm, followed by blessing with first class relic of St Faustina.

GALWAY

May Masses and Devotions in Our Lady of Clonfert Church,

in Clonfert from each evening during month of May at 8pm except Sundays. Information from 090-9675113 or stbrenseyrecourt@eircom.net

KILDARE

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

KILKENNY

Novena to Our Lady of Fatima May 12-20 at 7.30pm at the Dominican Black Abbey Kilkenny, with blessing of the sick on Sunday, May 14 at 3pm.

LEITRIM

Padre Pio Healing Mass in St Patrick's Church, Ballinamore on Thursday, May 25 at 7pm. Celebrant: Bro. Sean Kelly OFM Cap. from Kilkenny and native of Ballinamore. Blessings after Mass with the relics of St Pio.

LIMERICK

Our Lady of Limerick Triduum and Festival from Thursday, May 25 – Saturday, May 27 with Fr John Harris, OP celebrating Mass each day at 1pm followed by devotions. On Thursday and Friday night the Dominican Sisters will offer reflections followed by night prayer. The Triduum will conclude with an outdoor festival on Saturday afternoon with games and music.

Janice and Moss Carrig will hold the usual monthly prayer meeting in the Desmond Hall, Newcastlewest on Sunday, May 14 at 3pm.

MAYO

The next Latin Mass in the Old Rite (Tridentine) will take place in the Parish Church Knock, on Sunday, May 14 at 5.30pm.

MEATH

Trim Prayer Group meeting every Thursday evening, 8-9pm, in Trim Parish Centre.

TIPPERARY

Fatima Apostolate, Thurles three-hour vigil in honour of Our Lady of Fatima in the Pallottine Chapel on Friday, May 12 at 7.30pm.

TYRONE

Life in the Spirit Seminars in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher continues on Thursday, May 18 at 7.30pm with Fr John Keane.

WATERFORD

Monthly Intercession for Mariages and Families, in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament on Friday, May 12 in the Edmund Rice Heritage Centre from 6-7pm.

WICKLOW

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

World Report



Edited by Greg Daly
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IN BRIEF

Irish-American friar set for beatification

● An Irish-American Capuchin friar is set to be the second US-born man to be beatified. Fr Solanus Casey, born Bernard Francis Casey in Wisconsin in 1870 to an Armagh mother and a Monaghan father, spent most of his adult life and ministry tending to the sick and poor in Detroit, Michigan.

A multitude of healings were attributed to Fr Casey during and after his lifetime, with the miracle accepted for his beatification involving a woman with an incurable genetic skin disease who stopped at Fr Casey's tomb while visiting friends.

Pope backs Venezuela's bishops during national turmoil

Pope Francis has urged Venezuela's bishops to remain close to the poor and needy at a time when violent protests are continuing to break out in the country's streets after years of food shortages and economic turmoil.

Protests began after a ruling in March by the Venezuelan Supreme Court that the country's parliament,

in which the opposition had a two-thirds majority, should be dissolved. Although this decision was reversed, protests against Nicolas Maduro's government have escalated.

The Pope said that he is following the situation with great concern, and thanked the Venezuelan bishops for their "continued call to avoid any form of violence".

Welcoming the election of Emmanuel Macron as president of France, the head of the French bishops' conference has said he hoped elections next month to the National Assembly will not place the country "in an ungovernable situation".

Elected last weekend with 66.1% of votes in the second-round presidential ballot, former economy minister and head of his own 200,000-member movement En Marche! (On the move), Macron is, at 39, France's youngest head of state in over 200 years.

Although raised in a non-religious family, he was baptised as "a personal choice" at the age of 12 and was educated by Jesuits in Amiens. Since then he has by own account practiced his faith less, but is constantly reflecting on it, tending, in the words of French writer Samuel Pruvot, who has interviewed the president-elect at length, to view it "more intellectually than spiritually".

Banker

After school Macron studied philosophy and worked as an editorial assistant to the prominent phenomenological philosopher Paul Ricoer

French bishops welcome Macron's landslide election victory



before studying in Paris' prestigious Ecole Nationale d'Administration and joining Rothschild & Cie Banque as an investment banker.

He subsequently worked as an economic adviser to President Francois Hollande, becoming economy minister in 2014, as which he deregulated some branches of industry and liberalised Sunday trading before resigning last August to pursue his presidential bid.

His victory against the far-right candidate Marine Le

Pen, head of France's National Front, who took 33.9% of votes in the poll, was on a pro-market platform entailing support for the European Union and cuts to public administration, as well as lower corporation taxes and measures to defend secular values.

During the election, Marseilles' Archbishop Georges Pontier said, French Catholics had been "divided like the rest of French society", but he said he is counting on Macron and his new government "being able to function."

"Macron has been elected in an important manner," he said, continuing, "we must hope he succeeds for the good of our country, otherwise it will be catastrophic. Priorities for his new five-year term must include struggling against unemployment, which is so destructive for families, for prospects and for projects, as well as the necessity of staying in Europe – and giving this Europe the means of retaining the respect of every people."

Belgian brothers' euthanasia plans face Vatican scrutiny

The Vatican is investigating the decision by a group of Belgian psychiatric care centres run by a religious order to allow doctors to perform euthanasia of "nonterminal" mentally ill patients on their premises.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, is personally examining the situation, according to Bro. Rene Stockman, superior general of the Brothers of Charity, who complained directly to the Holy See after the Brothers of Charity Group rejected his formal request that they reverse the new policy.

Expressing a hope that clear

directions would come from Belgium's bishops and the Vatican, he said the new policy could force the brothers from providing psychiatric care in Belgium, where the group – which runs 15 psychiatric care centres – serves 5,000 patients every year and are considered the country's most important providers of mental health care services.

Patients

The group announced it would allow euthanasia on its premises in a nine-page document in March, about a year after a private Catholic rest home in

Diest, Belgium, was fined for refusing the euthanasia of a woman with lung cancer. It is understood that over the past year about 12 of the brothers' psychiatric patients have asked for euthanasia, with two patients being transferred elsewhere to receive lethal injections.

Observing that for the brothers, in line with Church teaching, "respect of life is absolute and cannot be offered for the autonomy of the patient", he said, "The whole mentality in Belgium is changing very fast and there is pressure from the government against any refusal of euthanasia."

Scrap or mend healthcare bill – US bishops

The American Health Care Act the US House of Representatives passed by a four-vote margin has "major defects" according to the chairman of the US bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Social Development.

Venice, Florida's Bishop Frank Dewane said it was "deeply disappointing that the voices of those who will be most severely impacted

were not heeded", warning that "vulnerable people must not be left in poor and worsening circumstances as Congress attempts to fix the current and impending problems with the Affordable Care Act".

He called on the Senate, where the Republican party has a majority of just two and the bill faces an uphill battle, to act decisively either to begin reform efforts

afresh, or remove its aspects that will affect people on low incomes while adding vital conscience protections.

"Our health care policy must honour all human life and dignity from conception to natural death, as well as defend the sincerely held moral and religious beliefs of those who have any role in the health care system," he said.



Bishop Frank Dewane.

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Letter from Rome

Despite it all, Francis and Trump may just hit it off



The Pope and the American president are surprisingly similar, writes **John Allen Jr.**

Pope Francis recently met with the Vatican's communications brain trust, urging them to use "a little violence, but good, good violence" in order to create new and more effective ways of getting the Church's message across.

If the Vatican really wants to think outside the box, here's a suggestion: Instead of doing it behind closed doors like normal, turn the looming May 24 summit between Pope Francis and President Donald Trump, their first-ever encounter, into a massive global Pay-Per-View event.

First of all, Trump would love it – his first question in the presidential limo after it was over no doubt would be what kind of share he pulled in that time slot – and second, you could probably retire the Vatican's annual deficit in one fell swoop, because this has "must-see TV" written all over it.

Granted, that's unlikely to happen. However, we now know the meeting itself is on, as the Vatican confirmed it last Thursday – Trump and Francis will meet in the Vatican on Wednesday, May 24, at 8.30am Rome time.

In the run-up, the coming weeks will likely be dominated by reporting and commentary on Francis and Trump as a study in contrasts – Francis the third-world progressive, a man of peace and dialogue, and Trump the fiery apostle of "America first".

Lists of issues upon which the two men do not see eye-to-eye will circulate: immigration, poverty relief, climate change, the arms trade, and so on, all of which offer fairly obvious contrasts between the president and the



Pope Francis waving as he leaves a general audience in the Vatican's St Peter's Square on May 3. Left, US President Donald Trump speaking at a rally in Nashville, Tennessee.

Pope. Moreover, Francis recently told reporters aboard the papal plane returning from Egypt that he supports a negotiated diplomatic solution to the crisis surrounding North Korea, one based on "the force of law, not the law of force" and one imagines that may surface in his talks with Trump as well.

Another obvious contrast is that while Francis continues to bask in strong popularity in most parts of the world, Trump is setting records for the lowest approval ratings ever recorded for a new president early in his term.

“Trump and Francis share some surprising similarities...both were considered implausible long-shots prior to coming to power”

Meanwhile, spokespersons and officials with a vested interest in putting a polite face on things will emphasise ways in which the US and the Holy See already cooperate – and they do, on a wide range of fronts – and also stress issues where Trump and Francis can find common ground, such as the pro-life agenda, religious freedom, the defence of persecuted Christians in the Middle East, and so on.

Relationships, however, are not

composed solely of issues, but also personalities. Here, too, at first blush, Trump and Francis seem polar opposites – Francis the man of simplicity and humility, Trump an icon of bombast.

Examination

Upon closer examination, however, Trump and Francis share some surprising similarities.

First, both were considered implausible long-shots prior to coming to power, but both defied the odds.

Both, too, ran as anti-establishment figures promising to shake up entrenched ways of doing business. (Granted, papal candidates don't "run" in the same way presidential candidates do, but go back and read the address then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio delivered during the general congregation meetings before the conclave of March 2013, and you'll find a vision statement not utterly dissimilar to a campaign speech.)

Both Trump and Francis have also discovered that constantly taking potshots at the bureaucracies you're trying to lead is a tricky business, a bit like trying to change horses mid-stream, and both have run into a degree of internal resistance with which they're still struggling to cope.

Both Trump and Francis are populists, seeing their legitimacy as

coming from the people rather than elites, and both take a certain pride in the fact that elites tend to view them with alarm – in Trump's case, that's the media establishment and the liberal intelligentsia, while for Francis it's theologians, canonists, and liturgists, especially those attached to the fine points of the law.

Both Trump and Francis are also determined, and, in many ways, stubborn leaders. Granted, when explaining his apparent about-face on Syria, Trump praised himself for his flexibility – attempting, in other words, to turn inconsistency into a virtue. Yet both men are fully capable of digging in their heels and refusing to rethink a decision once made, regardless of the case for doing so.

(With Francis, for instance, consider his appointment of a bishop in Chile who turned out to be an apologist for that country's most notorious paedophile priest. Despite an avalanche of protest, not only did Francis not rescind the appointment, he accused his critics of being "dumb" and led around by the nose by "leftists".)

To say the least, both Trump and Francis are captivating public personalities, and whether you like them or not, you just can't look away. Arguably, only Vladimir Putin right now could give them a run for their money as the world's

most fascinating, and controversial, leader.

Finally, both Trump and Francis are polarising figures, who generate a remarkably sharp division of opinion within their own domains.

In Catholic circles at the moment, many conservative Catholics spend their days waiting for the next papal outrage upon which to pounce, competing with one another on social media to see who can provide the snarkiest bit of commentary. More liberal Catholics, on the other hand, have so thoroughly drunk the Kool-Aid that any criticism of Francis whatsoever automatically qualifies the critic as a member of a "vast right-wing conspiracy" to subvert the Pontiff.

“Both Francis and Trump likely recognise that the US is the world's most important hard power and the Vatican its leading soft power”

Likewise with Trump, admitting any virtue at all to his administration is considered material cooperation in evil by most American liberals, while spotting any vice is anathema to Trump's supporters (and, it must be said, often to Trump himself.)

None of this, of course, changes the fact that in most respects, Trump and Francis are wildly different men – different backgrounds, different agendas, different views of themselves and of others.

Despite all that, both Francis and Trump likely recognise that the US is the world's most important hard power and the Vatican its leading soft power, so it's in everyone's interests for these two players to be on good speaking terms. Further, Trump has a clear political motive for being seen to take the papacy seriously, since religious voters were part of the reason he prevailed in November.

At the personal level, if they're not quite two peas in a pod, the parallels in their circumstances and personalities also suggest that they might just be able to hit it off, despite all the ways in which Trump is from Mars and Francis from Venus.

John L. Allen Jr is Editor of *CruXNow.com*

Letters

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

Letter of the week

Dangers of a secular, politically-correct Gospel

Dear Editor, Your use of the word “cowardice” in your Editor’s Comment (IC 27/04/2017) in relation to the Church and the increased likelihood of a referendum on abortion in 2018, certainly struck a chord with me.

It came during a week when Pope Francis had mentioned to us the case of a young mother in Syria who chose to forfeit her life rather than agree to trample on a crucifix as demanded by her two ISIS murderers. In that same week, the Irish media quoted the reasons given by two separate religious sisters for not wearing their veils as “a fear of appearing odd” and “not wishing to be spat on”.

My criticism is not at the removal of the veils but rather the reason for

removing them – for fear of offending! It called to mind also the silence from many Sunday pulpits during the recent debates on ‘limited’ abortion and gay ‘marriage’. Again, often for fear of offending or in the name of ‘compassion’.

We are, I believe, in danger of replacing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a secular, politically-correct gospel. The secular gospel avoids all reference to repentance and the way we live our lives, for fear of giving offense while dressing it up in the compassionate language of the lamb as God’s mercy and love for all, regardless.

On the other hand, Jesus Christ, who is mercy incarnate, calls us to

“Repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mark 1:15) thus making a direct connection between God’s parental love for us and repentance, that is, the way we live our lives as his children.

This disconnection in our witness and preaching between the Gospel and the need that we all have to repent (by adjusting our lives to the compass of the Gospel), is, I believe, turning our dwindling congregations into passive audiences of entitlement. But it is also killing the Faith and killing the Church in Ireland.

Yours etc.,

Fr Freddy Warner SMA,
Portumna,
Co. Galway.

Don’t support contraception ban review

Dear Editor, I must say I was more than surprised at Mary Kenny’s suggestion that the ban on artificial contraception should be reviewed, and this is after she admits that she has read *Humanae Vitae* (IC 20/04/2017).

The Church does not teach that women should have unlimited children. Pope Paul VI asked scientists to research and come up with more reliable methods of natural family planning and the result was Natural Procreative Technology (NaPro), which seems to be as much a secret among Catholics as in the wider

society and this despite the fact that it is as effective as artificial contraception and, more importantly, not harmful to a woman’s health.

I wonder if Ms Kenny has read much on the side-effects of artificial contraception. I have done some reading on this issue and it certainly should give pause for thought to the very many who employ these methods of birth control. It must be added that in every country in which artificial contraception is available, abortion follows, as stated by the late Fr Marx many years ago.

The Church puts the ideal before us and very few of us can live up to it but we are encouraged to try. Removing the ideal is not the answer, especially when it means a devaluing of women and the necessity for abortion as the ultimate contraception.

It is somewhat ironic that Ms Kenny combines contraception and women’s health as the one thing that contraception does is adversely affect women’s health. We are all aware that pills and potions have side effects and it is strange that women are willing to endure these in order

that they do not become pregnant. Motherhood is an immense privilege which no longer seems to enjoy the appreciation it merits, as evidenced by the push for contraception and abortion.

Therefore, I can in no way support Ms Kenny’s call for a review of the ban on artificial contraception, but rather would thoroughly recommend that everyone read Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae* and appreciate its wonderful wisdom and foresight.

Yours etc.,

Mary Stewart,
Donegal Town.

There is no necessity for contraceptives

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny (IC 20/04/2017), is unimpressed by *Humanae Vitae*, she omits mention of Pope John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*, and calls for new thinking on contraceptives. This is my perspective.

Firstly, it is important to note that with the exception of condoms, the Health Service Executive tells us that all forms of ‘contraceptive’ are abortifacients. In other words while they may be perceived as acting as fertility suppressants, they are designed to prevent implantation, thus leading to the expulsion and death of the newly conceived baby.

The moral argument: it is immoral to reject a God-given gift. Here, the

marital-act as designed by God is deliberately frustrated, placing us outside God’s plan doing something entirely different, less worthy, less wholesome, less holy.

The Christian lives by Providence; having come to believe the Good News – that God loves us more than we can imagine – we place our trust in Him. So whether we have six children or 16 children, we no longer live by fear.

There is no necessity for contraceptives; where it is perceived to be unsafe to have a child right now, the couple can opt to engage in fertility monitoring, so as to postpone the possibility of conceiving.

This is every bit as sure as

‘contraceptives’. It is not a repudiation of God’s gift of fertility, unlike temporary or permanent sterilisation which affects the proper workings of the healthy body which God endowed us with.

Finally, while we should never do something that goes against our conscience, nobody is entitled to ‘follow their own conscience’ when to do so flies in the face of the prayerful reflection of our fellow Christians as proclaimed by the Pope.

Yours etc.,

Gearóid Duffy,
Lee Road,
Cork.

Issues around national maternity hospital

Dear Editor, Suppose I own a site as well as a building which I have allowed to be built thereon, then, it seems to me that I cannot avoid some responsibility for what happens in that building.

If I know that abortion on demand, embryonic stem cell research, IVF etc. may well, in due course, be legally carried out, then as a Catholic, morally before God, I

have a responsibility to take action.

Thus, before construction starts, I must have a binding contract that no such (or similar) practices will take place. I could gift the site without strings, but in that case I do not know what legal and moral problems would then arise.

Yours etc.,

Anthony Mangan,
Milltown, Dublin 6.

Lay-led liturgies could be solution to priest shortage

Dear Editor, The present development and discussion on lay-led liturgies does indeed have to be conducted in line with adequate knowledge of catechesis and Church teaching, as pointed out by Declan Cooney (Letters 20/04/2017).

This awareness is fully appreciated and followed by most dioceses undertaking the task of supplying for the priest-shortage, and is fully endorsed by the Vatican II Council Fathers in the establishment of the permanent diaconate wherein ordained men, even married, are trained and vetted for a new ordination function as an auxiliary service to parishes.

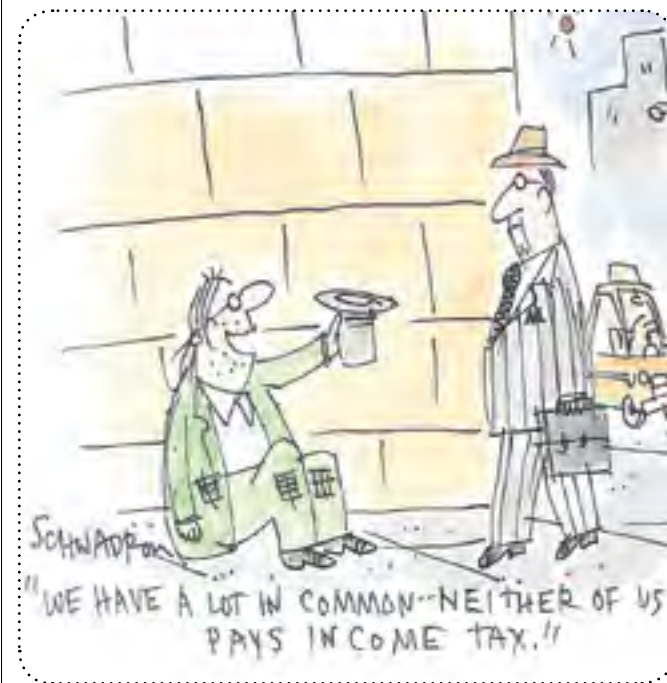
Could this be one solution the Spirit is advising where priest numbers are short?

Yours etc.,
Patrick Morgan,
Wexford.

The habit of nuns going around incognito

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny’s comment piece in your issue of April 27 questioning the prevalent habit of nuns going incognito reminds me of the old story of the nun in Rome, who having been accosted by a man rushes over to a policeman. She points a finger in the direction of the man saying “that man has just pinched my bottom” and added “and I’m a nun”, to which the policeman tersely replied, “how did you know I was a policeman?”

Yours etc.,
Roger Garland,
Rathfarnham,
Dublin 14.



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.

HSE site choice a tribute to Sisters

Dear Editor, In the determined drive by the Health Service Executive to locate the new maternity hospital at Elm Park lies an unspoken tribute to St Vincent’s Hospital and the much maligned Sisters of Charity. They both must have been doing great medical and efficient services.

Yours etc.,
Fr Con McGillicuddy,
Raheny,
Dublin 5.

Around the world



▲ **VATICAN CITY:** A Swiss Guard recruit takes an oath during the swearing-in ceremony for 40 new recruits. New recruits are sworn in every year on May 6, the date in 1527 when 147 Swiss soldiers died defending the Pope.

▲ **VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis exchanges gifts with Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Myanmar (also known as Burma), during a private audience. Photos: CNS



PUERTO RICO: A man dressed as Spider-Man walks past a burning barricade in San Juan during protests against the Government's austerity measures in the face of mounting debt. An oversight financial board has filed paperwork to protect the US territory from creditors, allowing it to begin to restructure its \$72 (£66) billion debt.



BRAZIL: Gamela Indians react after members were injured in a dispute over land in Viana in southeast Brazil.



USA: Parishioners at the Los Angeles parish of Our Lady Queen of Angels observe the Day of the Holy Cross at a Mass, celebrated by Archbishop Jose Gomez, that is traditionally observed in Mexico.



USA: President Donald Trump prepares to sign his Executive Order on Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty during the National Day of Prayer event at the White House in Washington.

Despair as weakness rather than sin



Classically, both in the world and in our churches, we have seen despair as the ultimate, unforgivable sin. The simple notion was that neither God, nor anyone else, can save you if you simply give up, despair, make yourself impossible to reach. Most often in the popular mind this was applied to suicide. To die by your own hand was seen as despair, as putting yourself outside of God's mercy.

But understanding despair in this way is wrong and misguided, however sincere our intent. What's despair? How might it be understood?

The common dictionary definition invariably runs something like this: despair means to no longer have any hope or belief that a situation will improve or change.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which sees despair as a sin against the First Commandment, defines it this way: "By despair, man ceases to hope for his personal salvation from God, for help in attaining it or for the forgiveness of his sins. Despair is contrary to God's goodness, to his justice – for the Lord is faithful to his promises – and to his mercy."

But there's something absolutely critical to be distinguished here: there are two reasons why someone might cease to hope for personal salvation from God and give up hope in having his or her sins



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

forgiven. It can be that the person doubts the goodness and mercy of God or, and I believe that this is normally the case, the person is too crushed, too weak, too broken inside, to believe that he or she is lovable and redeemable.

But being so beaten and crushed in spirit so as to believe that nothing further can exist for you except pain and darkness is normally not an indication of sin but more a symptom of having been fatally *victimised* by circumstance, of having to undergo, in the poignant words of Fantine in *Les Misérables*, storms that you cannot weather.

“Nobody goes to hell out of weakness, out of a broken heart, out of a crushed spirit, out of misfortune and unfairness”

And before positing such a person outside of God's mercy, we need to ask ourselves: what kind of God would condemn a person who is so crushed by the circumstances of her life so as to be unable to believe that she is lovable? What kind of God would condemn

someone for her brokenness? Such a God would certainly be utterly foreign to Jesus who incarnated and revealed God's love as being preferential for the weak, the crushed, the broken-hearted, for those despairing of mercy.

Mercy

To believe and teach that God withholds mercy from those who are most broken in spirit betrays a profound misunderstanding of the nature and mercy of God who sends Jesus into the world, not for the healthy but for those who need a physician.

Likewise this too betrays a profound misunderstanding of human nature and the human heart. Why would a person deem herself so unlovable that she voluntarily and hopelessly excludes herself from the circle of life? It can only be because of a deep, profound wound to the soul (which no doubt is not self-inflicted).

Obviously, unless it is a case of some clinical illness, this person has been deeply wounded and has never had an experience of unconditional love or indeed of faithful human love. We are facile and naïve when, because we ourselves have been undeservedly loved, we cannot understand how someone else can be so crushed and



broken so as to believe himself or herself to be, in essence, unlovable.

To paraphrase a painful question in the song, *The Rose*: are love, and heaven, really only for the lucky and strong? Our common understanding of despair, secular and religious, would seem to think so.

But, nobody goes to hell out of weakness, out of a broken heart, out of a crushed spirit, out of the misfortune and unfairness of never having had the sense of being truly loved. Hell is for the strong, for

those with a spirit so arrogant that it cannot be crushed or broken, and so is unable to surrender.

“We owe it to God to be more empathic. We also owe this to those who are broken of heart and of spirit”

Hell is never a bitter surprise waiting for a happy person, and neither is it the sad fulfillment of the expectation of someone who is too broken to believe that he or she is worthy to be part of the circle of life.

We owe it to God to be more empathic.

We also owe this to those who are broken of heart and of spirit. Moreover, we have a Christian doctrine, expressed inside of our very creed that challenges us to know better: he descended into hell.

Spirit

What Jesus revealed in his life and in his death is that there's no place inside of tragedy, brokenness, sadness, or resignation, into which God cannot and will not descend and breathe out peace.

God is all-understanding. That's why we're assured that "a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out".

You can bet your life on that. You can bet your faith on that. And you can also live in deeper empathy and deeper consolation because of that.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, May 11, 2017

Youth Space

Munster youth
celebrate faith in
Mount Melleray

Page 26



15 ways to make every day better



“I’m just having a bad day.” I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard people mutter those words (or muttered them myself). Traffic is backed up, you spill your coffee before you even get a sip, the kids are driving you crazy, the kitchen tap is dripping, your boss is in a mood, and the car is making that funny noise again. I’m just having a bad day!

While there aren’t many days when all of those things happen at once (thankfully), you and I both know that any one of those challenges can test our temperament, pollute our perspective, or hijack our joy. Far too often, we write it off as a ‘bad day’ and give up until tomorrow. Tomorrow will be better, we



Joyce Meyer shares actionable advice and encouragement on how to start enjoying the life God created for us

hope, while subconsciously waving the white flag of surrender on today.

But the problem with ‘bad days’ is they tend to pile up – have you noticed that? A bad day becomes a bad week. A bad week becomes a bad month. And before you know it, a bad month becomes a bad year.

Many of us spend the last week of every December saying the exact same thing: “I can’t

wait until this year is over!”

But I don’t believe for one moment that you have to go through life held hostage by your circumstances.

Sure, there are going to be tough days when things don’t go as planned. We all know what it’s like to deal with difficulties over the course of the day.

Sometimes it’s minor (the interview goes poorly, the baby is teething, you cut yourself

shaving), and sometimes it’s major (you get laid-off from work, the doctor orders a CT scan, your marriage is in trouble). But whatever challenges each day brings, you don’t have to let those challenges determine your outlook on life. There are things you can do to make your day better!

1. HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH GOD

Foundations are important. And trust me when I say: A conversation with God every morning is the very best foundation you can lay! As a matter of fact, I have discovered in my own life that the only way I can have a good day is if I take time to have a conversation with

God before I begin trying to ‘do’ anything else.

2. DREAM BIG

I think one of the best things we can do in order to make every day better is to start dreaming again – dreaming about what the future can hold or dreaming about what new things we can accomplish with God’s help.

3. DECIDE TO HELP OTHERS

When we are not having a great day ourselves, we rarely feel like helping someone else. Our tendency is to focus on ourselves. But that is actually the worst thing we can do, because it increases our misery instead of eliminating it.

» Continued on Page 25

Children's Corner

ERIN FOX



Celebrating the centenary of Our Lady of Fatima

The Feast of Our Lady of Fatima is this weekend on May 13. This year, the feast day carries extra significance as it is the centenary and Pope Francis is preparing to canonise the three children Our Lady appeared to.

Between May 13 and October 13, 1917 she appeared to three shepherd children, Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco in the little village of Fatima in Portugal.

Her reason for appearing was to send a message from God for every man, woman and child living in the 20th Century. The Blessed Virgin told Jacinta, Francisco and Lucia that Heaven would grant peace to all the world so long as her requests for prayer, reparation and consecration were obeyed. During her six visits to them, she also stressed the importance of reciting the Rosary.



May is the month of Our Lady, Queen of Heaven and it's traditional to pray the Rosary daily throughout May. Our Lady of Fatima's feast day falling on the middle of the month is like a reminder to us to keep praying the Rosary – much like Our Lady's reminder to the three children each time she visited them.

Miracle

During the sixth and final apparition, the Blessed Virgin had promised to reveal who she was and to perform a great miracle to make all believe in her.

The final apparition took place on October 13, when she said to the children she wanted a chapel to be built on the land in her name. And as promised, she performed the miracle of the sun.

The sun appeared as a wheel of fire, spinning in the sky, flashing different colours. This was witnessed by around 35,000 people. While it may have happened on October 13, you can still make crafts this weekend related to the miracle.

“Light card will make the sun sway in a light breeze”

You can even add the sun decoration to your May grotto with the portrait or statue of Mary.

Make the sun out of any materials of your choosing. If using card, pick a yellow tone as the base and then from the centre, draw spirals in different colours with your colouring pencils or felt tip pens.

Light card will make the sun sway in a light breeze and this will recreate the image of the spinning sun in the sky.

Pierce a hole in the card and hang this up above your May grotto.



Skin cancer most common yet most preventable

Skin cancer is the commonest cancer worldwide accounting for about 30% of all cancer diagnoses and affecting 10,000 people in Ireland every year. The lifetime risk of developing skin cancer is about 15% in males and 10% in females, yet remains one of the most preventable cancers.

The vast majority of skin cancers (90%) are caused by over exposure to UV radiation from sunlight or sunbeds leading to redness, burning or tanning but causing ultimately damage to skin cells. Unfortunately, in Ireland, it is predicted that the number of skin cancer cases will double by 2040 which reflects in part increasing sun holiday travel.

In spite of this, as the old adage goes prevention is better than cure and avoiding excessive sun exposure as well as checking for skin lesions is important. If spotted early, up to 90% of cases are curable and crucially detecting melanoma early can be life saving.

Pale skin

Risk factors for skin cancer include having pale skin that burns easily, previous sun burn in the past (especially with blisters and occurring in childhood), chronic or intense episodic sun exposure, use of sun beds, having multiple or unusual moles, previous skin cancer or a family history of melanoma.

In particular, those in occupations with outdoor exposure have greater risk and indeed about 25% of skin cancer deaths in Ireland are from the outdoor, construction and farming sectors. Those involved in outdoor activities like golf and sailing also have

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



an increased risk. Skin cancers frequently occur in areas which are often unknowingly exposed such as on the nose and ears and can also be easily missed when they occur on the back.

Crucial to preventing skin cancer is minimising sunlight exposure particularly between the hours of 10am to 3pm between March and October when there is the greatest risk of burning. Sunscreen should be used when directly in the sun and needs to be applied generously when out (and every two hours if in contact with water).

“It is also important to remember that it's possible to burn on a cool or cloudy day”

It should have at the very least a protection factor of 15 and ideally 30 to protect against both UVA and UVB. However, sunscreen alone is not an alternative to covering up with suitable clothing, seeking shade, wearing sunglasses and protective hats. It is also important to remember that it's possible to burn on a cool or cloudy day.

While there has been some

controversy about avoidance of sun exposure and sunscreen use as contributing to vitamin D deficiency, in reality about only 15 minutes in the sun at any one time is needed for cutaneous vitamin D synthesis. In fact, exposing for longer will not boost your vitamin D level any further.

Skin cancer lesions are usually painless and may grow slowly over months to years. The most common (basal cell) rarely spreads to other parts of the body but left untreated can cause ulceration and in particular damage to eyes, nose and ear. It usually presents as a red patch or irritated skin area, a shiny bump or pink nodule or as a scar like lesion.

On other hand, squamous cell lesions (which tend to occur on the back of hands, balding scalp, forearms, shin and face) often appear as red or scaly but also as a flat sore causing pain and can grow relatively quickly over weeks to months. In particular, they can spread to other areas especially if they occur on the lips or ears.

Suspicious skin lesions are usually surgically removed or treated with freezing using liquid nitrogen, though topical creams may be used instead.

Melanomas are the most serious of skin cancers, can be life threatening and account for about 10% of all cases. It ranks as one of the most aggressive of all cancers and has been previously described as the tumour that used to give cancer a bad name. It results primarily from damage to the skin's pigmented cells (melanocytes) and may arise from within moles but also on normal-looking skin.

Sun exposure in childhood and adolescence leading to early skin damage is a big risk factor.

When diagnosed early it can be cured with simple surgery, though lesions that have spread deeper below the skin are often incurable.

Melanomas usually look like a freckle or mole that is changing or growing. Concerning features also include moles that are asymmetrical, have irregular borders, or more than one colour (blue, brown or black) and are greater than 6mm in size, cause itch, pain or bleed.

“Suspicious skin lesions are usually surgically removed or treated with freezing”

Most moles are acquired early in life and will usually not change in appearance so if you detect any variation it is important to get it checked out. It's also important to check skin areas like your back where it is easy to miss lesions.

Sunbed use is a very high risk for melanoma as well as other skin cancers. They may emit radiation up to 15 times as strong as that from peak midday sun and their use before the age of 35 appears to increase the risk of malignant melanoma by 60%. Indeed, sunbed use in those aged under 18 is banned in Ireland and most health bodies recommend avoiding their use altogether.

So remember to keep your skin well protected and be vigilant for any new or changing skin lesions. If you have any doubts, go to your GP to get checked out.

i Dr Kevin McCarroll is a Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine, St James's Hospital, Dublin.

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4. RE-EXAMINE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

The next time you are having a bad day, examine your expectations, and if you find they are not what they should be, you can quickly make an adjustment that will bring joy back into your life.

5. DON'T GIVE IN TO DREAD

Dread is the precursor to fear. When dread creeps in, that's when you can practice preventive maintenance. You can deal with the issue before it becomes full-blown fear or worry. You don't have to let it drain your joy.

6. LEARN SOMETHING NEW

You don't have to stay stuck in the same routines, dealing with the same frustrations day in and day out. One of the easiest (and most enjoyable) things you can do to enjoy your life is make the decision to start learning new, exciting, different things.

It's torture to have hateful thoughts toward another person rolling around inside your head"

7. REFUSE TO SETTLE

It is entirely possible that you could make your day better by refusing mediocrity and making a decision to be excellent in all you do today and every day.

8. INVEST IN YOURSELF

Much like financial investing, the more you invest in yourself, the longer you invest in yourself, and the better you invest in yourself all determine what kind of return you are going to get on your investment.

9. BE ADVENTUROUS

If you view each day of your life as a big opportunity rather than a boring obligation, adventure comes alive! Keep in mind that you are on a journey with God, and what could be any more exciting and adventurous than that?

10. DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY

I love keeping things practical, and it doesn't get more practical than this: If you want to make every day

better, don't be complicated; just do something you enjoy! Go outside and take in the sunshine, go for a jog with a friend, have a cup of coffee and relax - have some fun and enjoy the life Jesus came to give you.

11. SAY NO TO WORRY

I've often said that worry is like a rocking chair - it's always in motion but it never gets you anywhere. Worry is in direct contradiction to faith - useless because it never makes anything better.

12. SLOW DOWN

The busy, hectic pace of life is one of the major culprits that lessens our joy and decreases our peace. But the truth is that many times the blame lies with us. We're the ones tied to our phones. We're the ones pressing for more. We're the ones texting, calling and emailing all at the same time. We're the ones speeding from one appointment to another.

13. FINISH A PROJECT

It is possible that the reason you're having a bad day is because when you got up this morning, what you saw was unfinished projects, and your thoughts were about goals that you never completed. That can be very discouraging to anyone, but there is an answer. We need to be determined to be 'finishers'!

14. FORGIVE AND FORGET

If you've held a grudge or harboured resentment in your heart, I'm sure you can agree. It's

torture to have hateful thoughts toward another person rolling around inside your head. I can't even imagine how many bad days I have had in my lifetime simply because I was angry with someone who hurt or offended me. I refuse to live like that anymore and you can, too. We can choose forgiveness and enjoy every day of our lives.

We're the ones texting, calling and emailing all at the same time. We're the ones speeding from one appointment to another"

15. BE GRATEFUL

The truth is that we've been blessed with so much, and yet we are often so ungrateful. We often concentrate on the things we don't have, rather than the things we do have. But gratitude is born out of a heart of recognition - a heart that understands how much it has received.

Joyce Meyer is a best-selling author and one of the world's leading practical Bible teachers. This is edited extract from her new book 20 Ways to Make Every Day Better, published by Hodder & Stoughton.



Faith IN THE family



Bairbre Cahill

I'm doing some work at the moment tutoring students who are training to be catechists. As a result, I have been re-reading *The General Directory for Catechesis* and *Share the Good News* which explores what that means in an Irish context.

In the past when people talked about catechesis they often thought of the Catechism and the sheer terror of having to know answers off by heart if the priest came in to the classroom. Knowing about our faith is part of it, but there is more to it than head knowledge.

Growing in relationship with God and encountering the merciful love of God the Father are central to it. Catechesis is about formation, about becoming more and more like Jesus Christ - and then living that reality in our everyday lives.

It is about having a sense of shared responsibility for the mission of the Church - that we should be good news for the world, be the ongoing presence of Jesus in society. We cannot do this without having a love for those who are on the margins. This is where the gospel commitment to justice takes root.

Importance

Pope Francis has talked about the importance of 'integral human development' - the development of every aspect of the human person. *The General Directory* tells us that means the right to life, work, education, foundation of a family, participation in public life and to religious liberty (GDC 17). I have always felt that faith has to engage with every aspect of who we are, our desires and our dreams, the mundane and the wonderful realities of our lives.

For many of us the reality that shapes our lives more than anything else is family. Whether we are married or single, old or young, family - nuclear and extended - shapes so much of who we are, how we engage with the world and what our priorities are.

And so, I have found myself wondering how good we are in the Catholic Church about really engaging with that powerful and profound reality of people's lives. Over the next

month hundreds of children in parishes all over the country will celebrate their First Holy Communion. Some parishes have been very involved in the preparations with parish-based programmes.

Other parishes have been less involved. The challenge though is what happens next?

Families

There are many families who will walk away now, reappearing in time for another First Holy Communion or Confirmation, perhaps a Baptism. But there are other families who continue to be part of our parish communities. How much do we nurture and support family life - not just for sacramental preparation but

for that integral development that Pope Francis talks about?

I've recently started working a few days a week as the coordinator of a service

which seeks to bring together all the available information parents may need - courses, resources, support groups, events and networks.

Research has shown the importance of supporting and equipping parents with good skills, information and confidence in their own ability and that children reap the benefits of this.

The more I read about parenting courses and the importance of informal networks like toddler groups, the more I see opportunities for parishes to engage in this work. I'm not suggesting at all that 'Father' has to start running parenting courses but maybe as parishioners we could suggest that community space in the Church be made available to local services for parenting talks, courses, toddler groups or indeed youth groups.

Maybe those of us who are more seasoned parents at this stage could consider getting trained so that we can volunteer to help with such courses and groups.

Perhaps we could do a little informal research into what the needs of families are - not just the ones who come to Mass but in the wider community - and then explore how we as a parish could respond to those needs. To act in faith and respond in love to the needs of others is catechesis in action.



Gillian Doherty
reports from
a retreat for
Transition Year
students

Munster youth celebrate faith in Mount Melleray

The hills were alive with the sound of music, prayer, and praise in the Knockmealdown Mountains, Co. Waterford last week, as more than 350 Transition Year students from across Munster gathered for the Mount Melleray Youth Day 2017.

The event was organised by Máirín Ní Shúilleabháin, a national coordinator of catechism study groups for adults, who was ably assisted by students of the Catechism, the NET Ministry team from Waterford and young adults of Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh, Co. Waterford.

The sun shone, the abbey was resplendent, the students were in great form, and there was a palpable sense of the joy of the occasion.

The event was warmly presided over by Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of Waterford & Lismore, and hosted by the Cistercian monks, who welcomed young people, teachers and guests, with the gracious generosity for which they are renowned. St Teresa of Calcutta's Sisters of Charity graced the day by their continuous Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and the presence of the Cistercian Sisters of St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn was an additional blessing.

Proceedings

The Master of Ceremonies for the day was a young nurse from Co. Cork, Eilish Butler, who did a wonderful job of guiding students through the proceedings. She gave a poignant testimony about her faith journey, rejecting and returning to faith while in university, as did Áine Blake, an occupational therapy student from Co. Tipperary.

Áine gave a deeply-moving testimony about her love of God, and her gratitude for how her family and the Church nurtured her faith, and how she has grown in faith and friendship with other

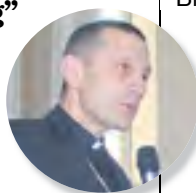
young people in prayer groups such as the Catholic Society in UCC.

Fr Denis Luke, Guest Master in Mount Melleray Abbey, gave a fascinating talk on the life of a monk – one of hard work and routine and peace-in-prayer – which gave students a rare insight into a world that is little known in modern Ireland.

The keynote speaker was Bishop Frank Caggiano [pictured] of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who is renowned for his charismatic addresses at World Youth Days, and closer to home, at Youth 2000 events in Ireland.

“He urged students to embrace their baptismal calling”

He has a great love for Ireland and for its young people. Bishop Caggiano electrified students with his deeply-personal and highly-engaging style, challenging students to ask themselves what they want in life, and to consider



what God wants for them.

He urged them to question the secular and material values of society, and to seek out instead Truth, and in choosing Christ and the cross, to gain a peace that the world cannot give. He urged students to embrace their baptismal calling, and to consciously follow Christ, one day at a time, one choice at a time.

The high point of Mount Melleray Youth Day was the Mass celebrated by Bishop Caggiano, and assisted by Bishop Cullinan and a group of 12 priests.

Confessions were available throughout the day and students and teachers alike availed of the opportunity to avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The choir of Pobalscoil na Tríonóide,

Youghal, directed by Fr Damien Lynch, sang superbly and contributed to the joyful reverence of the celebration of the Eucharist. All in all, Mount Melleray Youth Day 2017 was a memorable, holy and happy occasion, and one that will, we hope, leave a lasting impression on those who attended.



Teachers and students from St Aidan's Community College in Cork.



A group arriving for the Youth Day from CBS Midleton.



Bishop Phonsie Cullinan with students from Ardscoil na nDeise in Waterford.



Green Fingers
Paul Gargan

Your May garden will burst with colour

May is the start of the summer and with it comes longer evenings and warmer weather. It seems every time you look at the garden, something new is in flower. Buds are bursting open to soak up the sun's energy.

Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as ribes and forsythia now that they have finished flowering. Both are pruned in the same way. Start with a shoot that has dead flowers at its tip.

Follow it back until you find a young side shoot that hasn't flowered and cut the main stem just above it. Keep going until you have done the whole shoot.

Check climbers on trellises or walls. They will be making lots of new growth. Tie in the shoots you want to keep to extend the framework and cut out any that are growing away from it. Check all your variegated shrubs. Sometimes new growth on them may be green.

This is the shrub reverting back to its original colour. If left, the shrub will soon be mostly

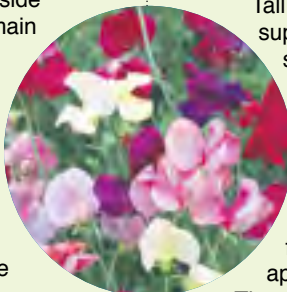
green as the green shoots grow faster than the variegated ones. Simply pinch the shoots out at the bottom.

“Buy bedding and plant up your hanging baskets, tubs and window boxes – but do not put them out until June”

Tall and floppy perennials will need supporting. The trick is to put in the supports before they are needed. This means that the plant will grow and cover the support. Use supports that are one third to one half the eventual height of the plant.

Dig up and divide primroses and polyanthus when they have finished flowering. Simply pull the clumps apart with your hands and plant them.

The mother plants have a short life span and division rejuvenates them. Plant sweet peas 15cm/6in apart at the foot of the trellis or netting.



Tie in the first shoots after this they will do it themselves. Cut back aubrieta alyssum and arabis by simply trimming them with scissors after the flowers have gone over.

Shops are now, and have been for many weeks, selling summer bedding. By all means buy it and plant up your hanging baskets, tubs and window boxes. But do not put them out until June. There is still the possibility of frost. Any temperature under 3°C will kill summer bedding. If you can't resist the temptation, plant them up and keep in a frost free glasshouse or poly tunnel. If you don't have these you can put them out during the day, if it's warm enough, and bring them in at night.

When planting up summer bedding, don't penny pinch. They will flower from now until the first frost, which can be in November. That is amazing value. Empty out the containers completely. Fill with new (decent) potting compost. Fill the container with as many plants as you can fit into it without squashing the rootballs. The finished container should have a gap of 2.5cm/1in between the rim of it and the top of the compost to allow room for watering.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Corny dramas and unnecessary Church bashing

Last week I wrote about some good British dramas on TV. They tend to put American dramas in the shade – the latter are marred too frequently by embarrassing corniness.

I've been following **Designated Survivor** on Netflix and after a promising start, dramatically speaking (US President and Congress blown up in a terrorist attack), it has dwindled substantially into a humdrum political drama. It feels more and more like a vanity project for Kiefer Sutherland, who, as the new inexperienced President, takes off his glasses for significant moments more than is artistically healthy, and while he's independent of party affiliation the Democrats come out best, wouldn't you know.

Natascha McElhone is shamefully wasted as his wife and in fact she didn't appear at all in a few recent episodes.

It's often uncannily topical, as in an episode that was partly about difficulties in appointing Supreme Court judges. I dozed during last Thursday's episode when one of the main plot lines was controversy over an arts grant!

They also fitted in a political demagogue addressing an alt-right rally, and the President attending a children's choir recital where they sang a Gospel song.

Very much Gospel-connected, last Sunday night's



Kiefer Sutherland in *Designated Survivor*.

Would You Believe? (RTÉ One) was a special about denominational primary schooling, but while there were some efforts to be balanced, the main thrust of it was, I thought, either antagonistic or unsympathetic to Catholic education as it is currently.

A considerable number of parents were interviewed, but only one was positive about Catholic schooling. We didn't learn how few were the cases where schools were oversubscribed.

We heard almost nothing about the concerns of Church

of Ireland schools, and while there were several contributions from Paul Rowe of Education Together, there was nothing from bodies that support denominational education, e.g. the Catholic Schools Partnership, Catholic Primary Schools Management Association or the Iona Institute. The section on Gaelscoil patronage was interesting and I'd like to have heard more about that.

Education

Education was one of the topics discussed when Maria Steen of the Iona Institute was

on **Brendan O'Connor's Cutting Edge** (RTÉ One) Wednesday night of last week. She had lots of interesting things to say about Montessori and home education and ably promoted a pro-life perspective in the relevant segment of the show.

Comedian Tommy Tiernan was all over the place on the issue. He reassured us that if abortion was legalised it wouldn't be compulsory (he didn't note that it would be compulsory for any baby targeted) and thought that we should base our approach on a position of compassion – can't argue with that, but why didn't that get him to a position of disapproving of abortion? With stunning lack of logic he suggested that because it's done abroad we should have it here.

Journalist Alison O'Connor was upfront about accepting that the unborn baby was actually a child. Some

might admire her frankness, or what nowadays is often called 'honesty', but in a way it was therefore all the more disturbing that she supported the pro-choice position.

She said the right to bodily autonomy trumped the right to life – how have we come to this?

The right to life is the most basic of all and enshrined in all major human rights documents while other claimed rights (like 'choice' and 'autonomy') are dependent on it. In fact you'll struggle to find those latter 'rights' in these human rights documents at all.

Blasphemy

Finally, last weekend reports emerged about the possibility of Stephen Fry being fined for blasphemy over his appearance a few years ago on *The Meaning of Life With Gay Byrne*. I thought this was a peculiar story and wondered what agenda was being served. On **The Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) last Monday morning Fr Vincent Twomey also thought it was rather strange that it had surfaced now.

He couldn't remember any outrage at the time, and thought the original Fry comments were part of the ongoing debate about evil and suffering in the world and pointed out that Jesus was originally condemned on a blasphemy charge.

He suggested that in Ire-



Tommy Tiernan.

PICK OF THE WEEK

LEAP OF FAITH

RTÉ Radio 1, Friday, May 12, 10.02pm

Last episode in the current series of the religious affairs show, with Michael Comyn.

THE INQUISITION

EWTN, Tuesday, May 16, 11.30am and Friday 9.30pm

Church historians discuss the Waldensian heresy and reveal the real reasoning behind Galileo's interrogation.

EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND

Channel 4, Wednesday, May 17, 8am

Debra challenges Ray on why he doesn't go to church on Sundays.

land we were 'punch drunk' from attacks on the Church and he criticised fellow guest, Michael Nugent of Atheist Ireland for mockery of Catholic beliefs in some satirical fantasy of a religion, complete with wafers, dedicated to former Minister Dermot Ahern. It was about time someone called him out on that.

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Aubrey Malone

Film

Ruthless lobbyist takes on the big guns

Miss Sloane (15A)

Think General Schwarzkopf in a trouser suit. Failure isn't an option for her. She's Madeleine Elizabeth Sloane and she's going up against the top dogs of the Senate, Samson-style, in a pitched battle about gun regulation.

As we all know, this is a heavily divisive issue in America. The 'doves' say the right to bear arms in a post-frontier culture makes about as much sense as the right to arm bears. The 'hawks' tell us a gun is simply something a 'good guy' uses to kill a 'bad guy'.

Jessica Chastain – all blood-red lipstick and sleek

hair – plays Sloane with a spikiness that chills to the bone. She's a cynical idealist – if that doesn't sound like a contradiction.

Her crusading is compromised by a mindset where the end always justifies the means. Is this do-goodery or self-aggrandisement? Maybe a bit of both.

Julia Roberts was far too cute in *Erin Brockovich*, that other high-profile film about a woman going head-to-head against the powers-that-be. (Meryl Streep, for my money, epitomised the gold standard of the genre in *Silkwood*).

Chastain dominates the film by her ubiquitousness. In the early scenes her speeches have a kind of learned-off



Jessica Chastain is *Miss Sloane*.

quality to them, despite – or maybe because of – their whip-smartness. But she grows into the performance as it goes on.

A smear campaign starts to bring her down. This isn't too difficult to mount. She's blotted her copybook on a number of fronts, cutting corners

in her uncompromising odyssey up the corporate ladder. She's also used a male escort for sexual purposes.

This should have been an Oscar-worthy performance from Chastain. All the ingredients are there to create a modern-day epic of a flawed icon. But the film has a flat-

ness about it, a neutral vibe. It's over-long. At times it plays out like an extended CNN documentary about a pill-popping insomniac.

Emphasis

We needed to know more about what makes Sloane the woman she is. John Madden, directing, tilts the emphasis instead towards courtroom hearings – presided over by the inevitable John Lithgow.

Madden highlights the issue rather than the woman behind it. He should have downplayed the agitprop angle. Charles Bukowski once said that making a 'message' film takes about as much bravery as "hitting grandma on the neck with a 2x4". It's a

moot point.

Notwithstanding its longeurs this is a revealing porthole into the quagmire of American politics.

It gives us the tripwires and Trojan horses and double crosses and compromises and sacrificial lambs. It's these more than anything else that we take away from *Miss Sloane*. Which is a pity because what we wanted to take away from it was Miss Sloane herself.

Chastain should have won us over in the final scenes. She could have if she pushed the emotional boat out a little more. Instead she becomes a very defused martyr, as much Rebekah Brooks as Karen Silkwood, a riddle even to herself.

Good
★★★★

BookReviews

Peter Costello



The heroic virtue of John Sullivan

A Man Sent by God: Blessed John Sullivan SJ

by John Looby SJ
(Messenger Publications,
Beatification souvenir
hardback edition, €14.95,
paperback €9.95)

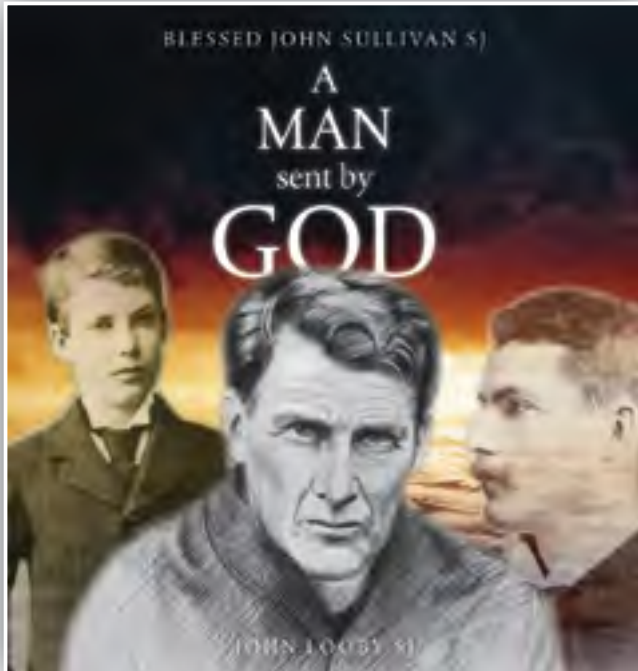
Peter Costello

This Saturday in ceremonies at the Jesuit church in Gardiner Street, the Venerable John Sullivan will be raised to the status of Blessed, another stage on the path to his eventual canonisation.

This is the first time that a beatification has been held in Ireland. And more: the public request for his beatification will be made by both the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and his Anglican counterpart, in what is being called an unprecedented act of ecumenism, John Sullivan having been born into a Church of Ireland family.

This has been a long route for his devotees. John Sullivan was not a spectacular man. Teaching in Clongowes for so many quiet years, one might have thought him cut off from the world.

But the People's Chapel



Left, the cover of John Looby's *A Man Sent by God: Blessed John Sullivan* and, on right, John Sullivan's simple room at Clongowes Wood College.



McGrath's biography of 1941; but that is a long time ago and there is much to be said about John Sullivan that was not apparent then, but which is clear now.

His span of years fall into two parts: he was born and reared an Anglican, educated at Portora in Fermanagh and at Trinity College, and was called to the English Bar. Outwardly it was an arc that many followed; but his interior life took another direction. He converted to Catholicism, which many have also done, but he also entered the Jesuit order, and it was this that shaped his spiritual life.

Though he served elsewhere as well, John Sullivan is especially associated with Clongowes. He served the boys who were students, there but it was his ministry

to the local people, as I have suggested, that made a special impact on the memories who knew him in life.

“John Sullivan's life was a remarkable one, one filled in its way with examples for today”

And it was this that may have led Pope Francis to accept that he is a person of heroic virtue worthy of beatification – and his admirers hope eventual canonisation.

But somehow it is the quiet, deeply working nature of his spiritual life that is the most influential. The ceremonies this Saturday will be a crowning moment for Irish Jesuits, but also for all Irish

people, for John Sullivan is the sort of man with admirers in many walks of life, and many or no faiths.

The miracle that has served to bring about John Sullivan's beatification transpired at the Royal Hospital in Donnybrook. In my childhood we knew this as the “Royal Hospital for Incurables” – a name that was changed, or rather softened, in recent times. Some find it striking that the miracle in question demonstrated that there is, for those of faith, no such thing as an “incurable” condition.

John Looby will be familiar to many, many thousands as a former editor of the *Sacred Heart Messenger*, and this is a book which many people will want to have. His deeply understanding, but accessible, portrait will perhaps introduce many younger people to John Sullivan; one suspects that will result in interesting developments.

John Sullivan (and his biographer) helps us to understand what heroic virtue is and what it can achieve. He gives to our 21st Century Ireland an image of effective piety that cannot help but be moving.

“Hot martial music”: The Proclamation deconstructed

The Easter Proclamation 1916, a comparative analysis

by Liam de Paor
(Four Courts Press, €14.95pb)

Felix M. Larkin

The words “Easter Proclamation” in the title of this book are singularly ill-judged. They evoke the sacred Easter Proclamation, the *Exsultet*, sung at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night and so they reinforce the identification of the 1916 Rising with Pearse's notion of the sanctity of his blood sacrifice leading to the redemption and resurrection of the Irish nation.

This notion was memorably and rightly criticised by Fr Francis Shaw SJ in the essay ‘The canon of Irish history’ belatedly published in *Studies* in 1972.

Scholarship

The original title, when the book was first published in 1997, was *On the Easter Proclamation and other Declarations*. It was decided to simplify that somewhat cumbersome title for this new edition, but I cannot help feeling that a more fundamental revision of the title would have been in order – one that reflected the demythologising of the 1916 Rising as a result of solid historical



scholarship since the 1960s, of which Fr Shaw's essay is the best known example.

Nevertheless, this is a work of great import – and I commend Four Courts Press for re-issuing it, and in an affordable format. The original text, written by the eminent historian and public intellectual, the late Liam de Paor, is reproduced verbatim. It is supplemented by a spirited introduction by W.J. McCormack and by an affectionate appreciation of de Paor by Michael Ryan, sometime director of the Chester Beatty Library.

De Paor himself wrote that his text is “an essay on words”, and it represents what Michael Ryan has elsewhere described as “an

elegant deconstruction of the Proclamation”.

“The Proclamation has the tone of hot, martial music, whereas the Covenant is a cooler, less visceral composition”

It is in two parts: the first, an examination of the antecedent documents that influenced the content of the Proclamation; the second, a painstaking analysis – almost phrase-by-phrase – of the Proclamation's six paragraphs and its headings.

McCormack observes in his

introduction that “de Paor's book about the document is the most thorough I have encountered, unique in its combining exposition and critique”.

Also worthy of mention in this context is Liam Kennedy's *Unhappy the Land: the Most Oppressed People Ever, the Irish?* (Merrion Press, €24.99pb), in which he devotes a chapter to comparing and contrasting the Ulster Covenant of 1912 and the 1916 Proclamation. Kennedy argues that “the Proclamation has the tone of hot, martial music, whereas the Covenant is a cooler, less visceral composition”. While de Paor refers to the Ulster Covenant, it is considered more fully in Kennedy's work.

One thing in the Proclamation that has always intrigued me is the claim that “six times during the past 300 years” the Irish people had taken up arms to assert “their right to national freedom and sovereignty”.

It is not obvious what the episodes in question are. De Paor suggests the Confederation of Kilkenny (1641), the Jacobite wars (1689/90) and the rebellions of 1798 (United Irishmen), 1803 (Robert Emmet), 1848 (Young Ireland) and 1867 (Fenians).

He comments: “If so, it is a very

stylised and rhetorical history”. The first two he categorises as “dynastic and civil wars”. He concedes that the uprisings of 1798 (note the plural!) “were both popular and widespread”, but Emmet's was “limited and local” and those of 1848 and 1867 were “at best ... aborted uprisings”.

Distortion

The history of Ireland was thus distorted by the Proclamation in order to portray the 1916 Rising as part of a glorious tradition of fighting, killing and dying for Irish freedom – and that distortion was propagated by the independent Irish state after 1922 and was central to the teaching of Irish history in schools up to relatively recently.

The advances made in Irish historical scholarship since the 1960s have revolutionised our thinking about the Rising and the distortion of Irish history that it engendered. It has been a slow process. However, as McCormack remarks in his introduction, de Paor's work on the Proclamation has “contributed its own mite to this process”.

That makes it all the more regrettable that this book has now been re-issued under such an anodyne yet entirely specious title.



Some images of ordinary lives

Ordinary People: Dennis Dinneen's Photographs at the Douglas Hyde Gallery
Denis Dinneen: Small Town Portraits

text by Kevin Barry, with 32 monochrome plates (Douglas Hyde Gallery, €10.00pb)

Dennis Dinneen (1927–1985) earned his living as a publican and taxi driver in Macroom, Co. Cork. But as a side line he also acted as a local photographer, making images of the local people to mark family events, communions, weddings, emigration, and for official purposes – he lived into the era of photo ID, alas.

But these images were as often as not taken against a backcloth, then enlarged and trimmed to meet the customers' needs, from the family sidebar to a passport.

The images now on display in the Douglas Hyde Gallery however are made from the full negatives, and as result they have a strange effect. Surrounding by the bits and pieces of everyday living in a pub, the reveal very ordinary people in an extraordinary situation.

Small town

Dinneen's photographs, taken largely during the 1950s–70s, depict local people in Macroom, fairly typical of the Irish small town. As the catalogue says: "His kind and humorous perspective allowed his sitters to appear at ease as they posed within the informal studio in a room adjacent to the bar of the main street pub".

The recently produced enlargements from the original negatives and careful hand printing reveals many aspects of life little more than half a century ago, a relatively recent but now for many lost past.

Certainly some images

reveal anxiety, over economic matters and emigration largely, but by no means all. There is a charming family group [above], the daughter making sure that her dolly is part of the group; a touching picture of a boy in his altar boy vestments; a 20-year-old in her best party frock [below]; one too of an informal snap of a group after an evening in the pub; and a portrait of a rather well fed parish priest, perhaps a little too fond of himself in those days of clerical confidence. What we see is not nostalgia, but the realities of ordinary life.



Those who are old enough to remember the 1950s and '60s will find these images deeply moving. Those to whom they are merely history or stories of the grandparents, they will be a revelation. The exhibition is accompanied by the first publication devoted to Dennis Dinneen's 'Small Town Portraits'. **P.C.**

📍 The exhibition 'Small Town Portraits' from the Dennis Dinneen Archive, runs until May 27, 2017.

The World of Books By the books editor

Judging a book by its cover

There is an old saying that one should not judge a book by its cover. But that is exactly what I propose to do. Or rather to judge the publishers and promoters of the volume, rather than the author of the text. That will be left to another hand.

The book in question is the current choice for the "One City, One Book" celebration in Dublin run by Dublin City Council. When this event was begun it seemed to be aimed at reviving current interest in a classical title, in danger of being forgotten by the rising generation.

That was a very worthy aim. But lately the scheme seems to have changed course, and to become yet another aspect of the books promotion industry which pre-selects the books that will be made into 'best sellers', in effect removing the chance for readers to discover a new masterpiece for themselves. Indeed, many of these over-promoted titles are always going to be well and truly as dead as doornails in a year or two.

The present book, *Echoland* (New Ireland) by journalist Joe Joyce, by all accounts an intelligent effort to recreate an era, is being promoted nationwide with posters and leaflets. Indeed the image cannot be escaped by most of us, wherever we go. Yet whatever about the historical truth of the text, the cover is in effect a lie.

Emergency

The book, as many readers will be aware, is set in the years of the Emergency, as the Second World War was calmly called by the Irish government and people. But the cover shows, unbelievably, not, O'Connell Street as it was in 1940, but as it was some 14 or 15 years later in the mid-1950s.

The cars may have a war time look, but the lamp posts do not. More importantly, in 1940 the Dublin city trams were still running in all their glory – the last of the Dublin tramway services ceased to operate with the running of the last car to Dalkey on April 18, 1948, after which the tracks were ripped up.

This is not a simple mistake. It arises from

a notion that it doesn't matter, the past is dead and gone, no-one is really over concerned to get the details right. Many of the books from Irish publishers make use of images from the great collections in the National Gallery of Ireland.

But these are used for their aesthetic quality rather than their relevance – for instance the painting by Harry Jones Thaddeaus, *The Wounded Poacher* c.1881, on the cover of Liam O'Flaherty's deeply troubled novel about the Great War (1914–1918).

Even worse in my opinion is the almost universal habit of using early films to illustrate the past. I have

seen in documentaries about the great Tudor tyrant clips from either *Henry VIII* (1911, directed by Arthur Bouchier) or *Cardinal Wolsey* (1912; directed by Tefft Johnson). Images taken about 1900 have been used in supposed documentaries to illustrate Paris under the Third Empire, over a generation before. I have wondered if five-year-olds now think there were movie cameras in the time of the Pharaohs to record the suffering of the Jews building the pyramids – a sort of layer cake of historical inaccuracy.

Illustrations

On that point, many of the films clips relating to 1916 and the events in O'Connell Street in Easter Week were illustrated by shots of the

Free State National Army in the summer of 1922 firing on the Republicans in the Fours Courts from the bottom of Bridge Street. To a picture researcher whatever is on the index card or the computer tag is the truth, and they are unable to tell the difference between the two very different events.

As a result I am increasingly wary about TV documentaries, let us say on abuse in industrial schools, and the images used. But as these also include dramatic 'reconstructions' of recent events, a presentation of actual reality is not being aimed at. These are the ethics of the Hollywood blockbuster.

It almost seems that we are now moving, in this 'post truth' era, from fake news to fake history.

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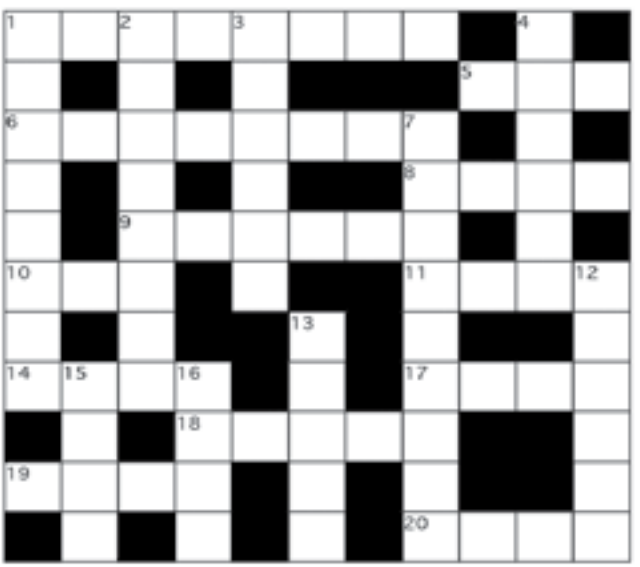


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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 181



- ACROSS**

1 Three babies born together (8)

5 A pig lives here (3)

6 This person works at fixing machines and keeping them in good working order (8)

8 Was in debt (4)

9 Handy (6)

10 Fishing stick (3)

11 In a position behind everyone else (4)

14 Walk through water (4)

17 It's just below your mouth (4)

18 Come to call (5)
- 19 Cab (4)

20 Bird that coos (4)

DOWN

1 The day after today (8)

2 Counted in (9)

3 These fall from trees in the Autumn (6)

4 The capital city of Greece (6)

7 Gathered (9)

12 Jumble up - some string, perhaps (6)

13 Play instruments to make this (5)

15 The first man in the Bible (4)

16 Wicked (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.297

Across – 1 Experimented 7 Orb 9 Mean 10 Galaxy 11 Flaw 14 Dowse 15 Okapi 16 Bali 18 Ripen 21 Hoist 22 Young 23 Spear 24 Iron 25 Phial 26 Islay 29 Take 33 Borage 34 Edgy 36 Col 37 Pope Emeritus

Down – 1 Exe 2 Pant 3 Rugs 4 Malmo 5 Naxos 6 Doll 8 Bowling alley 9 Monotheistic 12 Calico 13 Fists 14 Dirge 17 Anubis 19 Parry 20 Nymph 27 Smoke alarm 30 Kelp 31 Weir 32 Vest 35 Gas

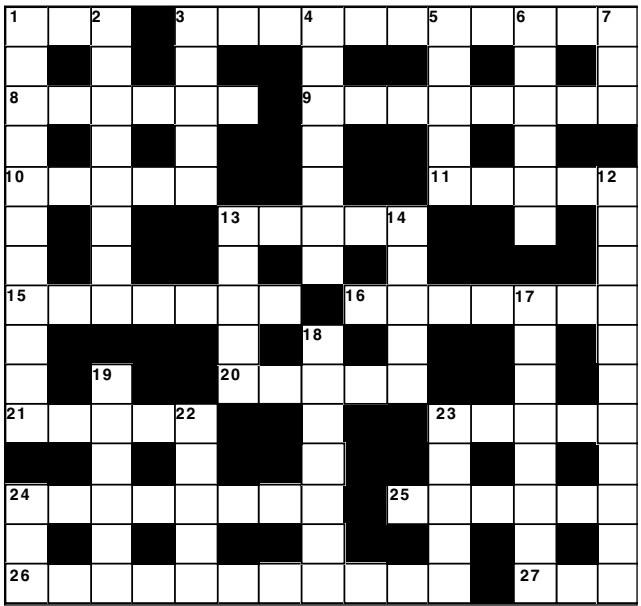
CHILDREN'S No.180

Across – 1 Newspaper 7 Ewe 8 Ali Baba 9 Yacht 10 Nephew 12 Assist 14 Street 16 Caught 18 Torch 19 Eels 20 Bakers

Down – 1 Neatness 2 Whisper 3 Plane 4 Pray 5 Reaching 6 West 11 Watches 13 Totals 15 Eerie 17 Ugly 18 Tea

Crossword

Gordius 298



- ACROSS**

1 One's offer at an auction (3)

3 Hay fever sufferers should take heed of this, when the ballot points to an aristocrat (6,5)

8 I'm left at sea with what's brought into the country (6)

9 Creature that consumes in volume! (8)

10 Rot (5)

11 & 15a Spotless (5,3,4)

13 Removes skin for the sleepover (5)

15 See 11 across

16 Mention what you do with your child (5,2)

20 Strike an object with the fist (5)

21 Jewelled headgear (5)

23 Elementary, fundamental (5)

24 Sounds like one is allowed change this annual Marian shrine (3,5)

25 See 5 down

26 Share lotion around - it's refined in Scotland! (5,3,3)

27 Asian beast of burden (3)

DOWN

1 One can't see how a duck
- shooter's haunt could be similar to some cricket equipment (5,2,1,3)

2 Portrayed (8)

3 Shindig (5)

4 Let's rob a different crustacean! (7)

5 & 25a It seems baking and brewing produce the good things in life (5,3,3)

6 A More perfect place! (6)

7 & 19d Twain's young hero becomes involved in a steamy row! (3,6)

12 A castle in tartan pattern? Don't lose control! (4,2,5)

13 It is made by weaving the strands of someone's hair for them (5)

14 Denude (5)

17 List of technical words, focussed vocabulary (8)

18 Capone leaves the Antipodes to find a European country (7)

19 See 7 down

22 The God of Islam (5)

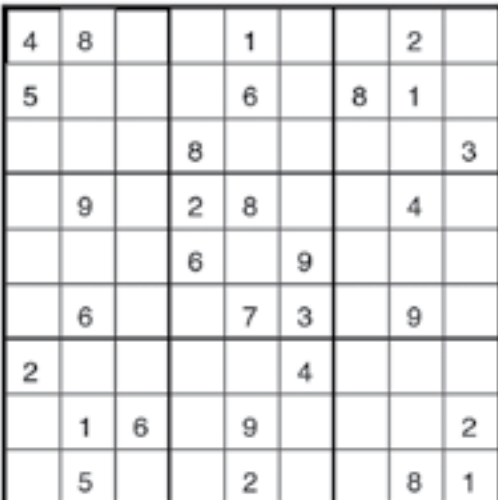
23 Trite (5)

24 Adult males (3)

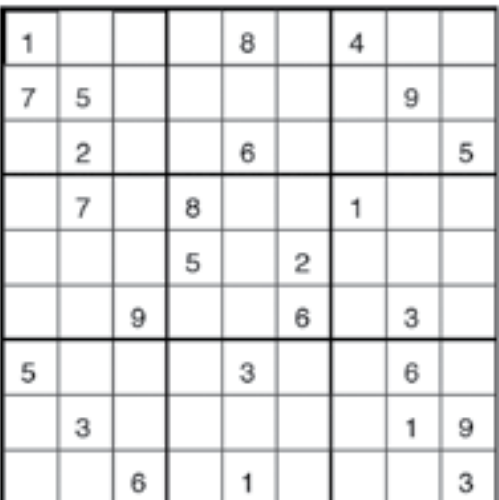
Sudoku Corner

181

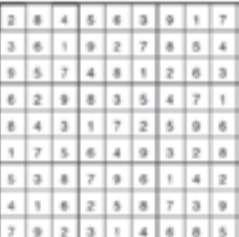
Easy



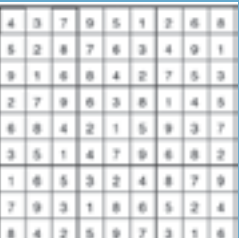
Hard



Last week's Easy 180



Last week's Hard 180





Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter

The parish is the primary religious community

OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS or so, I've noticed that many with a vocation to priesthood have headed for religious communities like the Dominicans or Franciscans rather than diocesan life. Mothers have expressed their relief that this was their sons' choice, rather than what they perceived as the loneliness of diocesan life. I've often wondered if religious life turned out to be as supportive as these young men had hoped.

It seems strange to me that those with vocations forget that the basic (and I would say best) religious community is the parish. This fundamental Church structure is where it all happens. Religious communities, deprived of the messiness of human life, seen especially at baptisms, anniversaries and marriages, can sometimes seem a little sterile and falsely perfect to those of us who work in parish life.

Organism

The parish is an organism that Irish people instinctively 'get'. We Irish want to know the people around us, we bond through social occasions and we pull together in sad times.

If you live in an Irish parish,



particularly a rural parish, it's important that you know the people around you, and that you let yourself be known. High walls and electronic barriers aren't acceptable, unless you want to be known as "that odd crowd with the gates". We may need our neighbours; they may need us.

Local social occasions help us

to get to know each other better. Being part of the parish GAA club (in those lucky parishes where there is only one) and supporting the parish team is a key part of parish life.

Funerals best express what parish life is to Irish people, because if you are part of a parish, you have to turn up for a funeral.

Knowledge of the person who has died or closeness to their family might be reasons for funeral attendance elsewhere: in Ireland, membership of the same parish is enough. At funeral times, Irish parishes come into their own.

Good animator

Of course, a priest isn't the only one who could draw parishioners into unity. A social worker could make a good animator, as could a committed local teacher or a Garda. But the one who presides over the major parish gathering in the church has a key role (currently the local priest).

There he sees before him those known to him from sad times, as well as participants in happy occasions. Meeting people in the yard after Mass, or in the shop, or on the road, the priest is a central part of a significant religious community.

Perhaps in the past, the priest confined to his parochial house and protected by his housekeeper was an isolated figure, but not now. Parish life stimulates, supports and satisfies priests. It's sad that clustering parishes together could deprive priests of their community and risk turning

● You may be wondering who I am and where I live. I was born in Dunmanway, where Sam Maguire (of All-Ireland fame) was born and is buried. Since being ordained for Cork & Ross diocese in 1984, I've worked in seven parishes, including Newcestown, my current one. I enjoy writing, reading and preaching, most Sundays anyway (except when the Gospel is hard to make sense of!). I love parish life. And just last year I co-wrote with Diana Klein a little book called *How to Survive Working in a Catholic Parish* (Redemptorist Publications). I am still trying to figure that out...

them into sacrament-dispensing machines. Priests need to be part of a community. Religious communities can attract for that very reason. But the Church's best community is the parish: a thought from Vocations Sunday.



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