

The Irish Catholic

VELVET REVOLUTION

Realising Pope
Francis' vision
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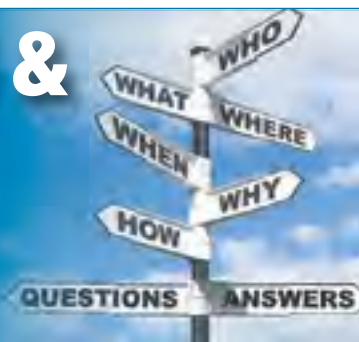
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Thursday, November 16, 2017

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Pope for the Park

Farewell Mass on course for Phoenix Park

Greg Daly and
Chai Brady

Pope Francis' farewell Mass to the Irish people next August is very likely to be held in the Phoenix Park, *The Irish Catholic* understands.

Discussions have been taking place between World Meeting of Families (WMOF18) organisers with State authorities and planners hope that when the Pope's visit is confirmed the Phoenix Park – one of the largest urban greenfield sites in Europe – will be unveiled as the venue for the closing Papal Mass.

Polls show that some 40% of Irish people say they would like to see the Pope during his expected visit showing an appetite for a large venue.

A number of political sources confirmed to *The Irish Catholic* this week that officials in the Department of the Taoiseach have already begun outline planning. A

memo obtained by *The Irish Catholic* under the Freedom of Information Act shows that officials are already making the case for additional staff to resource such planning.

It is understood a special liaison group will be appointed by Taoiseach Leo Varadkar within his department to co-ordinate efforts between Church and State to ensure the success of the visit.

Logistics are complicated by the fact that the Pope's presence is likely only to be confirmed next Spring leaving approximately six-months before the August 21-26 event.

Officials are hopeful that the re-opening of Ireland's Embassy to the Vatican under the leadership of Ambassador Emma Madigan will make planning easier. Ms Madigan is known to be well-regarded at the Holy See and is highly respected by senior Vatican officials.

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Giving childhood illness the lick



Fay Morrison enjoying some delicious Italian-style ice cream at Gino's Gelato, Grafton Street, Dublin to celebrate a successful fundraising campaign for Temple Street Children's Hospital. The campaign which launched in June, raised €10,057.44 for the hospital over three months with a donation made from the sale of every large gelato sold between June and August. Photo: Lensman

MARY KENNY

Single or married –
it's on the record

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MARIA STEEN

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Phoenix Park venue will be a sign of renewed confidence

News that the final Mass during the Pope's expected visit next year will almost certainly be held in Dublin's Phoenix Park is a welcome sign that Church leaders are thinking big. There has been precious little to be joyful about in the Church in Ireland in recent decades, and many people acutely feel the need for a shot in the arm.

It would be easy to avoid the Park given the obvious comparisons that will be made with both the 1932 Eucharistic Congress and the 1979 visit of Pope St John Paul II. The fact that organisers of the World Meeting of Families are looking at Dublin's largest greenfield site for the Mass is a sign of optimism winning out over caution.

Caution has never been a Christian virtue. Pope Francis' papacy is living proof of that – he embodies Christ's command to "put out into deep water" in his journeying to the existential peripheries. In a certain sense, his visit to Ireland with all the tumult in the Church in recent decades can be a moment to recalibrate Irish Catholicism and help chart a more hope-filled future.

“The International Eucharistic Congress in 2012 was a remarkable success given the pessimism that was coming from some”

Of course, everyone will want to avoid a sense of triumphalism, but Irish Catholics will also relish the



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

opportunity for a large gathering with the Successor of St Peter. It will be an opportunity to showcase the diversity of the Church and a moment for young Catholics to experience that they are not alone in their Faith.

The International Eucharistic Congress in 2012 was a remarkable success given the pessimism that was coming from some – including some Church leaders – in the run-up to the event. Fr (now Bishop) Kevin Doran and his team managed to pull-off an extraordinary event that saw Catholics from every corner of the island descend on Dublin to celebrate their Faith.

Celebration

But, it sometimes felt that it was a private event. With the exception of the Eucharistic procession through Dublin 4, there was little enough going on outside the RDS. The closing Mass in Croke Park stadium was a wonderful celebration, but also seemed a little bit hidden from public view.

There can be no mistaking that the Phoenix Park is a hugely ambitious venue. When the announcement is made public, there will be inevitable questions: one such question will surely be whether or not Church leaders expect a million people to attend like in 1979. We're not where we were in 1979, but as last week's story on the latest European Social

Survey (ESS) shows, the Faith remains remarkably resilient in Ireland.

As the countdown to the World Meeting of Families continues, organisers will intensify the engagement with local parishes and dioceses. The expected confirmation that Pope Francis will indeed attend the event is expected in the first half of 2018 – this will also intensify excitement about the World Meeting of Families.

“Francis conjures up memories for people of a faith they once had and now miss”

Francis is a hugely popular Pope. He is one that many people outside of the Church or those who choose not to practise their Catholicism look to for leadership. Austen Ivereigh – the papal biographer – has remarked that Francis conjures up memories for people of a Faith they once had and now miss. There are many people in that boat in Ireland; his visit might be the impetus that they need to re-connect.

A choice of a venue like the Phoenix Park represents a serious declaration of intent that organisers want the World Meeting of Families to be a vital milestone in the reform and renewal of the Church here.

Phoenix Park tapped as venue for Pope Francis WMOF Mass

» Continued from Page 1

A priest of the Dublin Diocese – Fr Colin Rothery – has also been seconded to the Vatican to help co-ordinate plans from Rome for the WMOF.

It had been thought that

officials might want to plan the Papal Mass for Croke Park. However, it is understood that the stadium will instead be considered as the venue for the concert-style 'Festival of Families' on the Saturday evening, with the focus moving to the Phoenix Park the

following morning.

Organisers will be keen to avoid comparisons with the 1932 Eucharist Congress and Pope John Paul II's 1979 visit – both of which saw hundreds of thousands pack into the Phoenix Park for the Masses. Nonetheless, the fact that the

Park is being considered will be taken as a sign that organisers expect the Pope to draw a huge crowd to the event.

However organisers are at pains to point out that no final decision has been made at this point.

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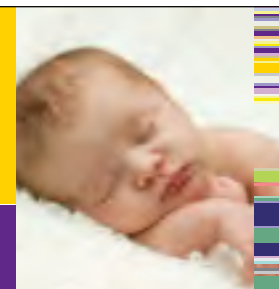
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Prayers for Irish footballer battling cancer

Chai Brady

Fellow sportsmen, sports organisations, friends and members of the public have offered their prayers to a prominent Irish footballer who is undergoing chemotherapy.

Liam Miller (36), who won 21 caps for the Republic of Ireland between 2004 and 2009 and played midfield for Celtic and Manchester United, is battling pancreatic cancer.

Social media was ablaze with well-wishers, who called for thoughts and prayers to be with Mr Miller.

Celtic Football Club wrote: "The thoughts and prayers of everyone at Celtic Football Club are with Liam Miller and his family at this time."

"Such sad news about my old room-mate Liam Miller, pray to God he pulls



Liam Miller (right), when with Cork City, in action against Derry City. Photo: Eoin Noonan/Sportsfile

through this battle with cancer, my thoughts and prayers are with him and his family," former Shamrock Rovers footballer Noel Hunt said on Twitter.

The Ireland manager Martin O'Neil said at a press conference this week that "we didn't know how bad it was".

"All our thoughts go

out to them. A very young man, 36 years of age, it puts things in perspective anyway."

He also praised the player for his skill.

Economic success claims unjust during homeless crisis – bishop

Staff Reporter

It is almost unjust and unchristian to speak of economic success at a time when homelessness has reached unprecedented levels in Ireland, Bishop Brendan Leahy has said.

In a letter read in Limerick churches ahead of the Church's first World Day of the Poor, Bishop Leahy noted how Irish homelessness has been a crisis for some years.

"But somehow, week in week out that crisis deepens and yet we hear at the same time boasts of how our economy is growing," he said, maintaining that this huge disparity needed to be dealt with.

Success stories

"It is almost unjust and unchristian for us as a nation to be aspiring to become one of the great economic success stories of Europe while at the

same time we have a hidden story, in many cases, of new forms of poverty and homelessness," he said.

Emphasising that while there are many initiatives in Ireland that reach out to the homeless, refugees, and others on the margins, he maintained that such outreach cannot be outsourced and that everybody has a part to play in tackling these issues, calling on people to "do our part to help our political leaders to address the various scenarios of neglect that our country still suffers".

The bishop's letter was published in the aftermath of Taoiseach Leo Varadkar claimed at the Fine Gael National Conference that Ireland has "a low level of homelessness compared to our peers".

According to Focus Ireland, 8,374 people are currently homeless in Ireland.

Plan could see two feastdays shelved

Greg Daly

There are set to be sharp divisions when members of the hierarchy discuss a plan that could see Irish Catholics absolved from the requirement to attend Mass on two traditional major feastdays, *The Irish Catholic* understands.

The Irish bishops' conference is currently considering a proposal that would reduce the importance of both All Saints' Day (November 1) and the Immaculate Conception (December 8).

It is understood that a number of bishops are opposed to the move seeing it as a concession to further secularisation.

Obligation

Currently, Catholics are required to attend Mass on both days as they are designated as 'Holydays of Obligation'. However, the plan – if adopted – would see the obligation removed.

While Canon Law prescribes ten holydays of obligation throughout the year, local bishops' conferences are entitled to suppress the

obligation for certain days with the permission of the Vatican. It is understood that some bishops feel that the fact that fewer practising Catholic attend Mass on both feastdays means their status should be reduced. However, this is expected to be fiercely resisted by other members of the hierarchy.

In addition to suppressing the holydays, consideration is also being given to returning the feast of the Ascension to the traditional Thursday rather than the Sunday celebration of the feast adopted by the Church in Ireland in 1996. This would return the tradition of the nine-day novena the apostles of Christ

kept between the Ascension of the Lord and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday.

The feast of Corpus Christi – referring to the Body and Blood of Christ – was also transferred from a weekday to a Sunday in 1996. There are understood to currently be no plans to restore this feastday.

In 2006, bishops in England and Wales decided to transfer the Epiphany, the Ascension and Corpus Christi to the nearest Sunday. However, this year they received permission from the Vatican to restore the traditional dates for both the Epiphany and the Ascension.

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The clock is ticking for Church youth questionnaire

Time is running out for young people to have their say ahead of next year's Synod of Bishops in Rome.

The October 2018 Synod of Bishops, following on recent synods on the family and on the New Evangelisation, is on the theme of 'Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment', and in connection with this youth.synod2018.va is hosting a questionnaire in five languages.

The anonymous questionnaire, directed to 16- to 29-year-olds, is intended to encourage the involvement of young people around the world in the assembly and help the Church better understand the lives, attitudes and concerns of young people.

Attitudes

Answers to the questionnaire, which consists of 53 questions on such issues as personal information, attitudes about oneself and the world, influences and relationships, life choices and religion will help provide the basis for the synod's working document.

The questionnaire will remain active until November 30.

First 'Red Wednesday' recognising Christian oppression planned

Chai Brady

Dozens of Churches across Ireland will be lit in red this coming Wednesday to highlight the suffering of Christians around the world.

This is the first time the event will be held in Ireland, and already 30 parishes have pledged to join the demonstration on November 22.

So far some of Ireland's largest Catholic buildings, including Armagh, Waterford and Carlow Cathedrals and the basilica of Knock, will be lit in red.

Organiser Michael Kinsella from Aid to the Church in Need said the event, entitled 'Red Wednesday', is primarily focused on showing solidarity with Christians suffering persecution for their Faith in the Middle East, but also the softer discrimination that occurs in the Western world – particularly due to secularisation.

Mr Kinsella said that dioceses across the country have embraced the initiative, especially now that many Irish people are aware of atrocities being committed against Christians by extremists such as ISIS.

Population

"The population of Christians in Iraq in 1980 was in and around 3.5 million, and now it's hovering around the 50,000 mark – this is genocide, and that's just in one country," Mr Kinsella said.

He added that many people don't believe Christians are the most persecuted religion in the world. "I've had people openly laugh at the concept of Christian persecution, it's about confronting those archetypal assumptions."

Some of the actions visited upon Christians would

include anything from denial of jobs, harassment, homelessness and physical abuse, to kidnap, false imprisonment, torture and murder.

Participants are encouraged to wear red, as it is the colour of Christian martyrdom, and at 12 noon and 6pm are asked to pray the Angelus

remembering the suffering of people for the Church. At each participant church the priest will give a homily on the theme of Christian persecution.

Living the Faith

"We will acknowledge it is, in many countries across

the world, a capital crime to profess living the Faith. In many countries across the world if you are caught professing a Christian Faith you will be killed, and these will be countries with Western allies, Pakistan in particular," he said.

Mr Kinsella said that in a

rush towards "progressivism and secularism" care should be taken that Irish Christians are not discriminated against for their Faith beliefs.

The hashtag for the event on Twitter is #RedWednesday, and parishes can pledge their support by emailing info@acnireland.org.

Double joy at double ordination



Fr James Daly from Shangarry, Co. Cork, and Fr Bill O'Shaughnessy, from Castledermot, Co. Kildare, greet well-wishers after their ordination at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral on Tuesday, November 14, the feast of Dublin's patron, St Laurence O'Toole. Photo: John McElroy

Mass-rosary pro-life prayer event on coasts gathers momentum

Staff Reporter

Over 150 locations to congregate have been identified for an event aimed at promoting the Faith and the protection of the unborn.

'Rosary on the Coast for Life and Faith', organised by lay people, will see Faithful from across Ireland gather to recite the rosary on the coast. It was inspired by similar gatherings in Poland and Italy, which saw thousands of people gather in prayer.

It will be held on the Feast of Christ the King on November 26.

According to one of the organisers, former MEP Kathy Sinnott, three bishops have said they would be attending: Bishop Ray Browne, Bishop

Phonsie Cullinan and Bishop Donal McKeown.

Mrs Sinnott said the event is a response to the "crisis that faces Ireland" in relation to proposed abolitions of legal protections for the unborn in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

"We're guessing there will be 200 sites as we get nearer the time," Mrs Sinnott said. "We are threatened with abortion, and abortion on demand especially."

Organisers say on Facebook that "Ireland, North and South, is facing an immediate threat to the protection of our unborn babies".

A prayer programme and hymn sheet have been arranged for the event.

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Single or married – it's on the record



Mary Kenny

If I were interviewing a candidate for private secretary, I would certainly ask her – or him – whether they were married, and if they had a family. It is a perfectly sensible question, and – in the public realm – it is a matter for the record.

All census forms, and all books of reference ascertain marital and family status. The standard reference book, *Who's Who* – regarded as the first port of call in researching those in public life, or in the employ of the State, when I was a rookie journalist – requires that those listed state whether they are married, and to whom, and if they have issue, also duly listed.

Public event

A marriage is a public event, which is recorded in the annals of the State. Every child born must be registered by the State. So why is it offensive to ask a person if they are married or single?

I don't, personally, think that

John Halligan, the Independence Alliance Minister, did anything wrong in asking a woman whether she was married or had children, and I don't think it is edifying that the lady received €7,500 in compensation on grounds of "discrimination". Many a plaintiff has received less compensation for a serious bodily injury.

“Family life is good for people, but it's not for everyone, and it is also a responsibility”

I believe Mr Halligan when he says that he merely wished to stress that he operated a 'family-friendly' policy, but that is not really the point. The point is that whether a person is married, or has children, is not just a private matter: it is on the public record.

In the Catholic Church, there has been a long and often thoughtful debate about celibacy, and the pros and cons of the single versus the married



Minister John Halligan.

state have been thrashed out repeatedly. You could even say it started with St Paul.

A single person can give his (or her) whole commitment to a vocation. A single person does not, usually, have the same amount of family responsibilities to juggle with, alongside a job. On the other hand, a single person may feel the need for the support of a

partner. Family life is good for people, but it's not for everyone, and it is also a responsibility. We have been over all these issues and we have seen that they can be relevant to a job, career or vocation.

Childcare is a huge focal point for parents, and whether a job fits with family responsibilities is, to me, an entirely fitting question.

'West Brit' is a very broad term

The Sinn Féin Lord Mayor of Dublin, Micheal MacDonncha, disparaged the "West Brits who still run Irish rugby", for not sticking with 'Amhrán na bhFiann' on the playing field. 'West Brit' is a term seldom used these days. It is sometimes explained as meaning "a person who thinks British culture superior to Irish culture".

But this was not the original meaning. 'West Brit' could be someone who was Anglophile, or it could be a traditional Irish Protestant. The late author Brian Inglis, who grew up in an Irish Protestant family in Malahide, wrote a memoir called *West Brit* – admittedly with a degree of irony, as Brian didn't identify with his own caste. But it could also apply to the group known as Southern Unionists – both Protestant and 'Castle Catholic' who, like Edward Carson, regretted Ireland's break with the Union of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Many a 'West Brit' could also be patriotically Irish – Irish Anglican clergy in England found themselves addressed as 'Paddy', and embraced the term. Identities can be fluid. Mayor MacDonncha, after all, wears the ceremonial chain of William of Orange around his own neck when the occasion calls for formality.

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Cleric corrects 'ill-informed' media info on memorial

Chai Brady

Catholic Church officials have quelled speculation that the placement of a memorial for the 1987 Enniskillen bombing on Church ground was blocked because there was a poppy in the design.

Monsignor Joseph McGuinness from the Diocese of Clogher said the memorial was a way to provide comfort and solace and bring the community together in "remembrance and solidarity", and that the Church has "no objection whatsoever to a permanent memorial being erected to the victims of the Enniskillen bombing".

Memorial

A temporary monument was unveiled on the 30th anniversary of the bomb that killed 12 people and injured 68 more. Family members connected to the attack have asked that a permanent memorial be

erected at the site of the blast, on land owned by St Michael's Diocesan Trust – a part of the Diocese of Clogher.

However Fr McGuinness has said that the proposal to build the memorial, which would be sited at the Clinton Centre, was brought to their attention in September this year, and that the Diocesan Trust had made clear they could not have made the necessary arrangements before November 8.

Fr McGuinness said that despite the "ill-informed" media coverage "...the Diocesan Trust is not trying to be in any way obstructive, but rather has had to begin to address complex issues which have only recently been posed to it. In doing so, the Trust is being conscientious in discharging its obligations, both as a church body and a charitable trust".

ACP welcome for pre-WMOF priests-bishops dialogue



Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo being presented with a cross by Fr Kieran Mc Dermott, Administrator of St Mary's Pro Cathedral, Dublin, at his solemn liturgical reception as Papal Nuncio to Ireland, which was attended by members of the Diplomatic Corps with Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin welcoming Archbishop Okolo to the pro cathedral. Photo: John McElroy

Greg Daly

The Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) has welcomed plans for a meeting between representatives of the ACP and the Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC). The meeting, proposed for Monday, January 15, follows a request from Fr Brendan Hoban for such a meeting ahead of next August's proposed visit by Pope Francis to the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) in Dublin.

The papal visit, Fr Hoban wrote, could "generate much needed energy and confidence in the Irish Church, encourage us to address some of the difficult issues we face and help to re-invigorate our dioceses and parishes".

As such, he wrote, the association wants to discuss how it might cooperate with the bishops' conference around such issues as the vocations crisis, Pope Francis' insights on marriage and the family, and the possibility of the Pontiff visiting refugees in direct provision.

At their October 2017 plenary meeting, conference

executive secretary Msgr Gearóid Dullea, wrote in reply, the bishops recommended that the ACP representatives meet with Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin and Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, chairman of the WMOF 2018 board.

Meanwhile, Fr Gerry O'Connor of the ACP leadership team has rejected criticisms of the association expressed by Fr Mark Patrick Hederman OSB in his keynote address to the association in Athlone last week.

Fr Hederman, until last year abbot of Glenstal Abbey, challenged the ACP for persistent criticisms of bishops, saying they would have little hope of achieving their aims without episcopal support.

Priests at the AGM felt Fr Hederman had "misread the ACP at several levels", Fr O'Connor told *The Irish Catholic*, adding: "He confused comments from individuals with comments from ACP about bishops, and came across as someone who had not done his homework."



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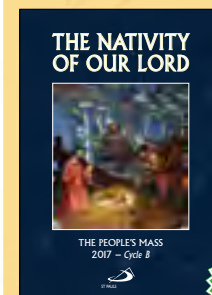


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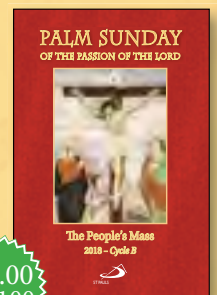


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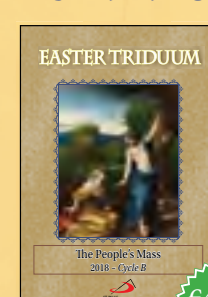
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Battering the beleaguered bishops is neither going to spur them into effective action nor is it going to hasten reconciliation, writes **Dom Mark Patrick Hederman**

In 2008 I was elected Abbot of Glenstal Abbey. This vote could not be ratified in Rome, however, unless I, who had been a brother monk for almost 50 years, was prepared to be ordained a priest.

As I believed the Holy



Spirit was asking me to take this step on behalf of my brothers, and as there were no impediments to my receiving the required sacrament, I

agreed to be fast-tracked to ordination one month after my election. About a year later I was invited to the inaugural meeting of the Associa-

tion of Catholic Priests and I was seriously pressed to join their ranks. I was sympathetic to this cause but I don't like being pushed too much in the space of a couple of months. Also I had both personal and objective reasons for not joining the ranks, and these have not diminished in the meantime.

Of course, how could anyone not feel sympathetic towards such a hard-working and dedicated group of people who had given their whole lives to the service of the Church and to its people, and who now found themselves in what has been described by objective outsiders as "a national trauma". From at least the year 1992, the "safe, secure and confi-

dent clerical world" had disappeared at speed because of seismic shifts in the institutional Church.

Pandemic

Although it is a recognised fact that the near pandemic of child abuse in Ireland during the 20th Century found most of its percentages and perpetrators within family life itself, this statistic never hit the headlines. The certainly horrific, extensive, and inexcusable crimes committed by however small a number of clergy became the scapegoat, the monster upon whom the understandably enraged public vented its spleen.

This, in turn, created a situation of uncertainty and terror for members of the clergy,

who found it difficult to trust that justice would be theirs in such a hostile atmosphere. Priests were losing confidence in Church leadership, who seemed ready to throw them into limbo at any allegation of sexual misconduct. Innocent until proven guilty became guilty until (sometimes even years later) integrity was upheld in court. By that time your reputation had been irreparably damaged, people surmising that there could have been no smoke without some fire.

All this added to a diminishing number of already ageing clergy; a complete lack of sufficient vocations in preparation; a huge increase in workload, which should nor-

» Continued on Page 8

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From Page 7 Pope Francis' velvet revolution and what priests can do about it

ally be getting lighter as one grew older; and the prospect of a lonely, perhaps comfortless old age, without affection or esteem. Where could priests turn to find sustaining company? The National Conference of Priests of Ireland (NCPI), set up by the bishops as an official Church body representing all priests, was to all intents and purposes, defunct, so the beleaguered clergy had no organisation they could turn to where they might hope to be treated with dignity and respect. Some found themselves ostracised pariahs, "often pitied, patronised, reviled, insulted, disrespected, ignored and resented".

So, it was perfectly understandable that this small group of pastors would seek some organised way of trying to establish solidarity and fellowship for the embattled loners in their ranks; nor was it surprising that they would soon be joined by over a thousand others. And so it was, and so it is. And I fully commend the ACP for this and would urge you to provide for your members all the care and community that you can. For myself, I had never had

any desire to be a priest and I was not ready, in the second year after my ordination, to become a member of what looked like to me a clerical trade union. Forming a group or confraternity for reasons of psychological security or social solidarity is one thing; turning it into a political organisation is another. My fear was that this group would become political and that my voice as a constituent member would be used by the leadership as part of a battering ram to attack the official leadership of the Church.

“Calling the bishops spineless nerds is not going to encourage them to adopt your point of view”

Critical appraisal and fraternal correction might be valuable and positive, but on each occasion I would need to be insistent upon consultation and consensus among the membership before any declarations or critiques

would be published in my name as a member of a whole group.

In this I believe that my misgivings were not unfounded. I give one small recent example which will be symptomatic. In September, Pope Francis issued a *Motu Proprio*, entitled *Magnum Principium*, in which he transferred responsibility for the translation of liturgical texts from the central authorities in Rome to the local bishop.

This means, hopefully, that we will not have to suffer for too much longer the texts of the new missal which were imposed upon the whole English speaking world – although, don't hold your breath in anticipation of much change here for some time.

The very next day a statement is issued by the ACP "welcoming the Pope's move on liturgical translations". My question here would have been: how is it possible to gather a consensus of approval from the members of the ACP overnight; and on whose authority was such a statement (no matter what its content) published on my behalf?

Even in a lightning world of 'text, twitter and tweet', who hears news on Saturday, so they can confidently speak on Sunday, in the name of 1,000 voices who have been personally canvassed and convinced? Especially when it continues that "the ACP hopes that our bishops will quickly take this matter in hand, so that Irish Catholics will no longer have to endure the very unsatisfactory translation of the liturgy currently in use".

Three swipes in one paragraph and all purporting to come from me, if I happen to be a member.

If you are a political organisation then you should definitely examine your methodology and your goals.

If the ACP is trying to change things and to galvanise the bishops of this country into positive action, then even the most junior politician and unseasoned diplomat would tell them that they are going about it in the wrong way.

Calling the bishops spineless nerds and sycophantic half-wits is not going to encourage them to adopt your point of view. Nor is the repeated accusation that they "made every effort to distance themselves from the ACP, to exclude it and diminish its effectiveness". Battering the beleaguered bishops is neither going to spur them into effective action nor is it going to hasten reconciliation.

Politicians, even, have to adapt their methods to achieve their goals. It must be clear to everyone by now that the bishops we have are the ones we are stuck with for the foreseeable future; and if we want to get anything done in the Church in this country we have to get them on our side.

“The fact is that both Fletcher Christian and Captain Bligh are now in the same life-boat”

And, I would have to say, they are not all as bad as painted by your leadership. In fact, for the most part, many of their flock would hold that they are more pleasant, less pompous, and more approachable than others from the past, whom alternative procedures put in place.

And so, my message to you, members of the ACP, is this: please understand that we love you dearly, we need you badly and never more so than now.

If it is true that Pope Francis is trying to effect a velvet revolution in the world-wide Church; and if this revolution

is to be carried out through the various synods which the bishops and priests are asked to convoke in every diocese, whereby the voices of all the faithful in the Church can be heard, we cannot do without you, we need your help.

If such initiatives, to consult with, and galvanise, the laity, are to be proliferated here in Ireland, this cannot happen without your enthusiastic commitment and support. In such an overall endeavour, the only possible logjams are where the priests fail to collect the data and the bishops fail to bring these to the attention of the Pope; you alone can prevent either hijack, if prevention is possible.

The Holy Spirit, this Pope is saying, can use any one of these voices to make known where the Three Persons of the Trinity want the Church to move, and his charisma, as Pope, is to discern which voice is the carrier, and where that voice is speaking the truth.

Discernment

How can he make that discernment unless as many voices as possible are heard and the substance of those utterances are brought back to him? As Pope Francis will be visiting Ireland next year, it is imperative that this work be completed, and you as priests are best placed to convoke your congregations and listen to them.

Whence you can be the carriers of our messages to the bishops in the first place, and then to the Pope, so that a renewed and more inclusive Church may grace us all in this country for the rest of this century. It is a new and daring exercise in infallibility: where the *Sensus Fidelium* [sense, or instinct of the faithful] that under-utilised source of truth in the Church, is activated and the Holy Spirit chooses from the multitude the one who will allow God's voice to be heard; and where the recognition of that voice, and the verification of its authenticity, belongs to the particular charisma of the Pope.

In such circumstances, it seems to me to be an unfortunate anachronism that the ACP choose to play Fletcher Christian to Captain Bligh in yet one more remake of *Mutiny on the Bounty*. The fact is that both Fletcher Christian and Captain Bligh are now in the same life-boat rowing for the shore for all they are worth, while the *Bounty*, like the *Titanic*, is gradually sinking.

As far as the general public are concerned, bishops and priests are in the same boat, they are all part of the problem, an oligarchy with all the power of the institution they

head up.

In other words, the plea is this: stop wrecking our heads and hoisting the Jolly Roger while sending shots across the bow of every passing schooner, as if you were pirates on an open sea.

Please help us to pull or to push together at this crucial time, so that all these well-meaning efforts don't collapse into helplessness.

I am reminded of the Hopi Elders, that Native American Tribe who now live on a reservation in North-eastern Arizona. They have passed on to us this message, so often quoted by the late John O'Donohue:

You have been telling the people that this is the Eleventh Hour.
Now you must go back and tell the people that this is The Hour.
There are things to be considered.
Where are you living?
What are you doing?
What are your relationships?
Are you in right relation?
Where is your water?
Know your garden.
It is time to speak your truth.
Create your community.
Be good to each other.
And do not look outside yourself for the leader.
This could be a good time!
There is a river flowing very fast.
It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid.
They will try to hold on to the shore.
They will feel they are being torn apart, and they will suffer greatly.
Know the river has its destination.
The elders say we must let go of the shore,
Push off into the middle of the river.
Keep our eyes open and our heads above the water.
See who is in there with us and celebrate.
At this time in history we are to take nothing personally, Least of all ourselves.
For the moment that we do, Our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt.
The time of the lone wolf is over.
Gather ourselves.
Banish the word 'struggle' from your attitude and vocabulary.
All that we do now must be done in a sacred manner and in celebration.
We are the ones we've been waiting for.

☛ Mark Patrick Hederman OSB is a monk of Glenstal Abbey. This is an abridged version of a speech he gave at the annual general meeting of the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) in Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

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Photo: Jennifer Nolan, Malawi, 2016

Manuel Steven, Peter James and Chifindo Kagons pose for a photo in their village of Jambawe in Lilongwe, Malawi, which is supported by Concern's Livelihoods programme.

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Maria Steen
The View

Imposing views on unborn lives

Marian Finucane interviewed Katie Ascough on her Saturday radio programme last weekend. The discussion focused on Ascough's recent impeachment as president of the UCD Students' Union.

The central issue in that impeachment was the fact that Ascough withdrew from circulation a booklet for first year students. She did so having been advised by the Students' Union's lawyer that it contained abortion information and was illegal under an Act of 1995. She decided to follow that advice. Had she done otherwise, she would have been risking a criminal conviction and fines for the union and herself.

Under any normal circumstances, this would be regarded as the obvious and correct thing to do. But there was a problem. Ascough is pro-life and when you are pro-life, following the law is just a disguise for bigotry – or at least this is what many students of UCD who voted to impeach her seem to think.

Campaign

Earlier in the week, the UCD student who had led the campaign for Ascough's impeachment was interviewed for a news item on EWTN. In it she stated: "If you're going for a political position.... then you sign up to do that job and you leave your views at the door if there is conflict."

In the case of UCD, a rather extreme version of the "leave your views at the door" doctrine is in force. One in which deciding not to break the laws of the land is a matter of one's personal viewpoint.

However, in one form or another, the same criticism is frequently made whenever anyone in public life puts forward a policy or suggestion informed by Christian thinking.

There are two possible reasons for this approach: the first is that we don't mind electing Christians to public office so long



as they don't preach what they practice. The second – which I think is the more accurate – is that we would rather that Christians stay out of public life entirely. After all, the "leave your views at the door" demand never applies to those whose views happen to correspond to mainstream or even radically progressive political thinking (and it is increasingly difficult to separate the two).

“There is no recognition of this double standard in public life or debate by those who call themselves liberal and tolerant”

To illustrate the point, how likely is it that anyone would say the following? "When you are elected to this office, don't go trying to impose your feminist views on anyone. You must leave them at the door – better still at home where they belong. You mustn't let your personal views have any impact whatsoever on your work. Views on feminism are a private matter and personal to you. Your views are not representative, given half the population is male. Therefore you have no business seeking to impose them on anyone else. Feminism does not belong in the public sphere, but in the private."

And yet that is precisely what politicians are told and expected to do if they

are pro-life or Catholic or have any view outside the current liberal orthodoxy and worldview.

By contrast, in reality, a feminist is applauded for the progressiveness of allowing policy to be animated and informed by feminist theory, and indeed for unashamedly demanding it, where it is in conflict with the status quo.

There is no recognition of this double standard in public life or debate by those who call themselves liberal and tolerant, but who will not tolerate an alternative viewpoint.

Nor will they accept diversity if that happens to mean actual diversity of opinion, rather than diversity of skin colour, sex or socio-economic status.

While the same people are quick to call out as hypocrites those Christians who fall short of their espoused beliefs, they are happy to ignore the hypocrisy of their own position in this regard.

At the end of the day, secularism, which underlies much of the "leave your beliefs at the door" thinking, is itself a form of belief system, and many of its adherents are just as zealous – if not more so – than the religious person. This is a one-way street only and if you happen to be Christian, you are driving the wrong way.

Secularists always try to present policy informed by Christian thinking as an attempt to impose one's views on others. What this misses is the fact that,

in a democracy, everyone involved in the political process is trying to convince the public that their view on a particular issue is

better than the alternatives. It is also precisely what secularists try to do all the time. Christians are not trying to impose anything on

anybody. They are simply trying to win the battle of ideas, like everyone else.

Imminent

Nowhere is this battle more acute than in relation to the imminent referendum on the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, in which Christians, it is to be hoped, can be expected to, and it is to be hoped, will be allowed to, propose to the public that we are dealing with two lives in pregnancy, not just one.

And if they are right – as scientific and technological advances have made it so plainly clear that they are – then the question arises: in seeking to change the law so that it allows the destruction of an entirely innocent life, whose is the life on which other people's views are being imposed?

HOW WE KILLED GOD (and other tales of modern Ireland)



David Quinn
columnist and head of the Iona Institute



John Waters
commentator and author

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Fairness and impartiality were killed at birth



If the political will existed, there could have been a reasonable discussion about the Eighth Amendment, writes **Cora Sherlock**

It didn't have to be like this. But, unfortunately, the Oireachtas committee on abortion decided otherwise from the get-go. As each week passes, this becomes clearer as one abortion advocate after another presents to the committee.

The number of pro-repeal witnesses now stands at 24, with just four pro-life speakers invited to present. Just as with the Citizens' Assembly, no invitations have been extended to families who say their

children are alive today thanks to the 8th Amendment, even though pro-choice groups like the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, the Centre for Reproductive Rights and the Irish Family Planning Association have all been invited as 'impartial' witnesses.

Three weeks into the hearings, in a most bizarre and unusual move, the committee voted in favour of making sure the Eighth Amendment is not retained in full. After having heard from less than a third of the witnesses, they decided to give their verdict before hearing all the evidence.

“Slowly but surely, the public are starting to see through the charade”

When it dawned on them that this looked really foolish to members of the public, there was a scramble to invite pro-life speakers in an attempt to cover over the cracks. In recent days, some committee members have taken to attacking pro-life witnesses for not going along with the farce. It is the height of disrespect for the committee to now expect pro-life speakers to come before it and present when the committee has already given its verdict in favour of abortion.



Slowly but surely, the public are starting to see through the charade. Thanks to TDs like Mattie McGrath and Peter Fitzpatrick along with Senator Rónán Mullen, the public is being kept in the loop and can see up close how undemocratic and unjust the process has become. If these members of the Oireachtas weren't present, the farce that is taking place would never have been exposed.

Most of the media are still giving cover to the committee and are congratulating the chairperson, Senator Catherine Noone, in particular for the way she is chairing proceedings. But deep down they know the credibility of the process is in freefall.

Last weekend, Senator Noone said the Committee was having

difficulty finding pro-life experts to present as witnesses. But this isn't the full story, not by a long shot. The pro-life experts are out there – they always were. They just weren't invited at the critical time – at the outset, before the vote – and now they're not prepared to be used by the committee organisers who are running for cover.

“But that is not what this committee is about. It's about ideology before evidence”

It could have been very different but the committee organisers planned a one-sided, imbalanced process that would lead on to a referendum. The timeline proves

this and the committee's vote for abortion early on means there can be no going back. The committee's out of control imbalance must be further exposed to the wider public and any attempt to use pro-life individuals or groups as scapegoats for the panicking organisers must be vigorously challenged.

Guest speaker

Someone who should have been invited as a witness to the committee early on is Abby Johnson, who is guest speaker at the Pro Life Campaign's National Conference in the RDS on December 3. Abbey is a former director of a major Planned Parenthood clinic in the US, one of the largest abortion providers in the world. You'd think that any committee recommending abortion would first of all want to scrutinise closely what abortion legislation has led to in other countries.

But that is not what this committee is about. It's about ideology before evidence. It's wonderful that the public is starting to see through it all. Nothing at this point can restore the credibility of the committee which never had any intention of being fair and impartial.

i Cora Sherlock is a spokesperson for the pro-life campaign.

Fáilte Pope Francis!

What will Pope Francis' visit to Ireland look like?

To celebrate Ireland hosting the World Meeting of Families next year, *The Irish Catholic* is asking children to write a letter of welcome to Pope Francis, accompanied by a drawing, to win one of these fantastic prizes for their school.

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Out&About

Pro-life demonstrators take a stand



DUBLIN: Bridget Sorteberg, Victoria Isa-Daniel and Helen Kelly of the Pro Life Campaign outside the Dail challenging what they describe as the “totally one-sided” Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment. Photo: John McElroy.



CORK: Bishop John Buckley presents Mairin Ni Shuilleabhain with the insignia of Dame of Saint Gregory the Great, in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Carrig na bhFear.



LAOIS: Kyrle Delaney receives a Benemerenti medal from Fr Sean Maher PP at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Stradbally. Also pictured is former PP Fr Sean Kelly (left).

CLARE: Bishop Fintan Monahan thanks Gerard Gallagher and Jesse Rogers for “excellent presentations” at the Killaloe Diocesan In-service. Also pictured are Maureen Kelly, Ger Nash and Eamon FitzGibbon.



WEXFORD: Mr Simon Tu, representative of Taiwan to Ireland, visits Enniscorthy with Bishop Denis Brennan and TD James Browne. Mr Tu’s visit aims to strengthen economic, social and cultural links between his country and Wexford.

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



ANTRIM: Bishop Noel Treanor, Fr Charles Lwanga Kaweesi, Fr Derek Kearney, Canon Brendan Murray – Spiritual Director of Down & Connor Apostolic work – Fr Sean Emerson PP Antrim, Fr Felix McGuckin and Fr James O'Reilly with other priests associated with mission at the annual Mass in Down and Connor to celebrate the work carried out by the Apostolic Society for the Missions in Antrim parish.



◀ **DUBLIN:** Pat Doyle, Eoghan Murphy and Peter McVerry from the Peter McVerry Trust at the charity's Annual Report 2016 launch last week.

▶ **SLIGO:** Shauna Greene, from Roscommon, receives the St Asicus Award for excellence in Religious Education, from Bishop Kevin Doran, on her graduation from St Angela's College NUIG.



DUBLIN: Archbishop Eamon Martin launches the new publication by Dr John O'Keeffe entitled *The Masses of Seán and Peadar O'Riada: Explanations in Vernacular Chant*, which assesses the achievements of both composers measuring their work against the heritage discipline and compositional principles of western plain chant. Pictured are Archbishop Eamon Martin chatting with Dr O'Keeffe (centre) and Peadar O'Riada. Photo: John McElroy



ROME: A group of young people from the Dromore Diocese visiting the Irish Pontifical College where Mass was celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown as part of a trip connected to the JPPII programme.

ANTRIM

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

ARMAGH

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

Adoration chapel, Edwards St, Lurgan, adoration on week days from 9am-9pm.

CLARE

Matt Talbot Novena will take place in St Senan's Church, Kilrush on Mondays and Ss John & Paul Church, Shannon on Tuesdays at 7.30pm for the months of October and November.

A Concert on the Canticle of Creatures of St Francis of Assisi: A free "Concert of Thanksgiving" will take place at the Franciscan Church, Ennis on Thursday, November 16 at 7pm. The Franciscans have commissioned a new composition of the Canticle of St Francis of Assisi.

CORK

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

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

DERRY

Dungiven Parish: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Mon-Fri, 8am-noon and 3-9pm.

DUBLIN

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

Annual Ecumenical Walk of Light, an inter-church journey from Newman University Church St Stephen's Green at 4pm to Centenary Methodist Church at Leeson Park, ending at St Mary's on Haddington Road. Pilgrimage on Sunday, November 26, finishes at 6.30pm.

The Dublin 15 Faith and Justice Group welcomes new members and currently meet on the first Friday of the month in Hartstown Church. Contact Fr Joe 087 6632944.

Divine Mercy Mass and holy hour 7.30pm every Tuesday in St Saviour's Church, Dominick Street. Also daily Divine Mercy prayers at 2.30pm at the shrine with the relic of St Faustina.

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

Life to the Full (Jn 10:10) book club for young adults meets every Thursday from 7-8.30pm in St Paul's Church, Arran Quay (Smithfield) to meditate, share and discuss life & faith. Refreshments provided. www.facebook.com/lifetothefullbookclub

Holy Hour on the theme 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee' at St John the Baptist Church on Clontarf Road from 7.30-8.30pm on Sunday November 19 with Fr Martin Hogan.

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

GALWAY

Afternoon of prayer for Holy Souls in Purgatory, led by Eddie Stones in Emmanuel House, Clonfert on Sunday November 19 at 2pm.

KERRY

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

Janice and Moss Carrig will hold a prayer meeting in St Mary's Church in Knocknagoshal on Sunday November 26 at 3pm.

KILDARE

A centring/contemplative prayer group meets in the Old Baptistry of St Michael's parish church in Athy every Thursday at 8pm. For more info ring Dolores at 086-3474679

OFFALY

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre on Friday, November 17 and every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085-7746763.

LIMERICK

Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Friday in Raheen church following 10am Mass until 10pm, Crecora on Thursdays, following morning Mass until 12noon and from 6-10pm, and in Mungret Church on Wednesdays, from 10am to 12noon.

ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday 10-11am and Thursday 8-10pm. Also at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday 7.30-8.30pm.

SLIGO

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

WATERFORD

Exploring St John's Gospel with Fr Michael Mullins, Tuesdays 8pm-9pm in the Edmund Rice Centre.

WICKLOW

Blessing of Advent wreath and Evening Prayer with the Carmelite Sisters and the Maynooth College Choir in the Carmelite Monastery in Delgany on Saturday on December 2 at 4pm. Bring Advent wreath for blessing. Refreshments afterwards in the St Thérèse room.

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

Eucharistic adoration, St Mary & Peter Church, Arklow, every Tuesday & Friday 2-7pm & Sunday 2-5pm.

St Patrick's Prayer Meeting on Thursday evenings at 8pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre, Wicklow. Come for prayer, scripture, music and a cuppa.

World Report

IN BRIEF

3D tour of Jesus' tomb opens in US

● A 3D virtual tour of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem – the site of Jesus' tomb – opened this week in the National Geographic Museum in Washington DC.

The tour opened on November 15 and will continue until August 15 next year. Academic dean and theology professor at St John's Seminary in Camarillo, Dr Anthony Lilles, said a person's intention is key in making the experience a pilgrimage.

He said: "We must not, so to say, stay on the level of surface appearance, but instead allow our imaginations to be baptised by the places we are visiting virtually – thinking about the reality of Christ's historical presence and what it means for our lives now."

Catholic nun commemorated on Pakistan coins

● Pakistan will issue 50,000 commemorative 50 rupee coins in honour of German-born Catholic nun and physician Sr Ruth Martha Pfau who dedicated her life to eradicating leprosy in the country.

Known as Pakistan's Mother Teresa, Sr Pfau died in Karachi on August 10 at the age of 87. She was given a state funeral, an honour normally reserved for heads of state and soldiers. She was a member of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary and founded the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre in Karachi and in all provinces after arriving in Pakistan in 1960, aged 29.

"The entire nation is indebted to Ruth Pfau for her selflessness and unmatched services for the eradication of leprosy," said Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.

Gang robs and damages churches across France

Last month thieves in France robbed and desecrated ten churches in the Diocese of Annecy, in the France's Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region. The perpetrators are believed to be two men who gained access by forcing open the church doors with a crow bar.

In Sainte Marie Madeleine de Morzine parish, the criminals broke open and desecrated two marble tabernacles. In the other churches the robbers stole the poor boxes, ciboria, and chalices.

Bernard Bidaut, communications director for the Diocese of Annecy, told ACI Prensa: "We are careful about our statements. These are not acts of voluntary profanation."

At the same time, he said, "this is the theft of important liturgical objects (some with consecrated Hosts), but it's clear this is a classic case of stealing in order to resell the objects".

Proposed land laws in Holy Land rejected by top Christians

● Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, backed the Patriarch of Jerusalem in his campaign to preserve the place of Christians in the Holy Land as it exists now.

Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Theophilos III, warned Cardinal Nichols that the current 'status quo' agreement that protects land tenure in Jerusalem is at risk, as a new proposed bill would restrict the right of Churches to deal independently with their land.

"Jerusalem's status quo should be respected. It is a city holy to three faiths and Christians are an important and integral part of this community. The continuing presence of Christians as bridge builders across the Holy Land is essential for all who wish to live in peace," Cardinal Nichols told *The Tablet*.

Vietnam rebuilds church destroyed by US

● A diocese in northern Vietnam has begun construction of a church dedicated to Dominican martyrs, replacing the ruins of an earlier one destroyed during a US air raid in 1967.

Bishop Joseph Vu Van Thien of Hai Phong celebrated a special Mass to begin the construction of the new church at the Hai Duong Martyrs Shrine, about 35 miles southeast of Hanoi.

Seventy priests concelebrated at the Mass, attended by 7,000 people from throughout the country. Representatives from government agencies and Buddhists were also present, with many offering congratulatory flowers.

Church charity calls for prayer as hundreds killed in Middle East quake

The Church's charitable agency in the Middle East and Africa has called on people to pray for all affected by a devastating earthquake that occurred on the border of Iran and Iraq in which more than 500 people have been killed.

The majority of the victims of the 7.3 magnitude quake are from Iran. Altogether about 7,000 people were injured.

Caritas MONA posted on Twitter on November 13, the day after the quake, saying: "Earthquake on the Iran-Iraq border: please join Caritas Iran and Caritas Iraq in prayers for the victims and the affected population."

"Our thoughts and prayers are with our brothers and sisters in Iraq and Iran following yesterday's devastating earthquake that hit the border region."

in nearly identical messages, released on November 13 to the affected countries.

"In expressing his sorrow to all who mourn the loss of their loved ones, he offers his prayers for the deceased and commends them to the mercy of the almighty," said the telegrams, signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state.

As he often does in emergencies, Pope Francis also asked for the "blessings of consolation and strength" for first responders and civil

authorities.

The US Geological Survey said the quake was centred 30km outside Halabja, Iraq. It was felt as far west as the Mediterranean coast.

The hardest-hit area was Iran's western Kermanshah province, which sits in the Zagros Mountains that divide Iran and Iraq. The Associated Press reported residents in the rural area rely mainly on farming to make a living.

Caritas MONA, the regional branch of the church's charitable aid agency in the Mid-

Condolences

Pope Francis has offered condolences, saying he "assures all affected by this tragedy of his prayerful solidarity",

US bishops' focus on racism, abortion, immigration

Defense of the unborn, racial division and immigration were the prominent topics of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops this week. The Church in the US has at times been a part of the problem of racism despite fighting it for many years, according to one bishop.

Bishop George Murry, head of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, said that racism "lives in a particular and pernicious way in our country, in large part because of the experience of the historic evil of slavery".

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the bishops' conference, made the first address, saying that the nation seemed more "divided than ever".

He lamented that abortion continues despite the existence of alternatives and that "hospitals and health care workers "deserve conscience protections so they never have to participate in the taking of a human life".

He also encouraged the enactment of immigration reforms and protections for young migrants.

Tensions high as Bangladesh strains with Rohingya refugees

Although Bangladesh has welcomed a massive influx of Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar, a Catholic aid official is worried that the welcome may be wearing thin.

James Gomes, regional director of Caritas, the Church's charitable agency, said Bangladesh responded quickly to the surprise arrival of more than 600,000 Rohingya.

"As a Bangladeshi, I'm proud of my people and my government. Even though we're densely populated, we made the quick decision to open the border and host the Rohingya. Without

that solidarity, many more people would have died," Mr Gomes said.

However, he said that people in host communities are saying the presence of the Rohingya is having a negative impact. For instance, day labourers are being undercut by Rohingya who work for half the price.

Caritas Bangladesh has hired dozens of local residents to aid with assessment and food distribution. Gomes said half of the temporary hires are refugees and half are from the host community. They are paid 900 takas (€9.27) a day.

The humanitarian crisis has also pushed up the local cost of living. "Bus fares have gone from 10 to 20 takas, and at times you now have to wait a long time for a bus that has space. Even inexpensive foods like bananas have doubled in price, and that's causing problems for local people," Gomes said.

He added that although tensions have grown, they have not yet reached tipping point. The UN are putting pressure on the Myanmar government to begin a programme to help the displaced Rohingya return to their homes.

Philippines prelate defends Duterte's war on drugs

The incoming president of the Philippines Catholic bishops' conference has caused a stir after saying fighting the proliferation of drugs should take precedence over narcotic related killings.

The senior prelate's statement last week was a change in Church dialogue relating to the issue, which has condemned President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs. At a Mass offered to save children from drugs Archbishop Romulo Valles said Filipinos should "push,

inspire and not condemn" the country's police force.

Most of the close to 12,000 killings of suspected drug users and peddlers have been blamed on the national police's "all-out war" against illegal drugs in the past year.

"We will not forget the killings. That is terrible. But one side of it is we will inspire the police to do their jobs according to the book," Archbishop Valles told reporters in Davao.

The incoming leader of the country's Catholic bishops,

who is known to be a friend of President Rodrigo Duterte, said: "I think we have to first address the problem of drugs. Drugs kill, not only [extrajudicial killings]. That comes in second," said the prelate who will take the helm of the bishops' conference on December 1.

Carmelite priest Gilbert Billena said the statement was not what he expected, adding that the Church should always "side with the poor and victims of the many senseless killings today".



President Rodrigo Duterte.



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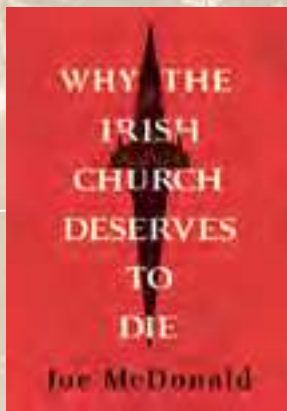


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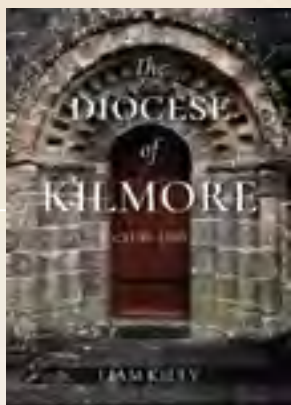
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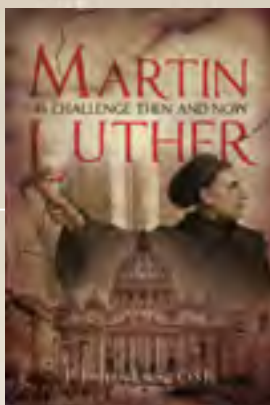
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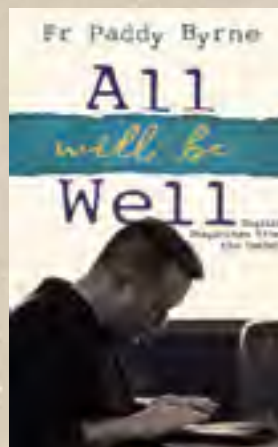


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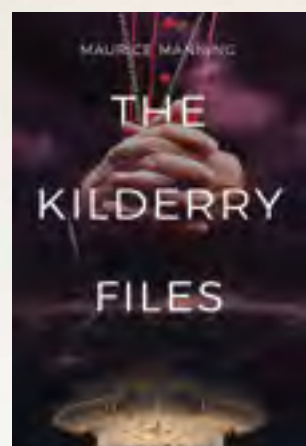
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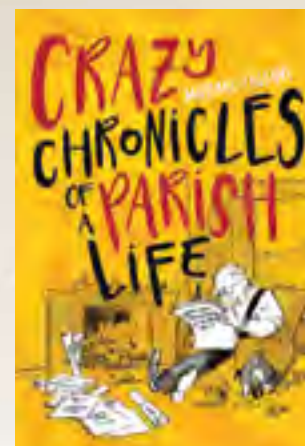


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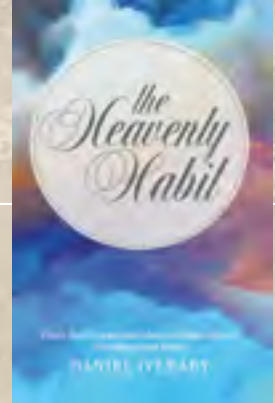


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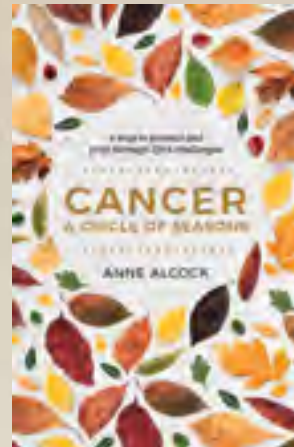
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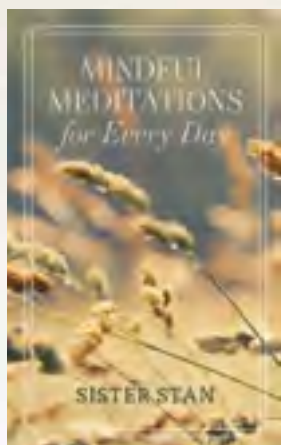
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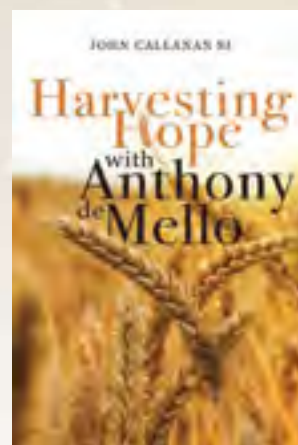
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Photography by Valerie O'Sullivan



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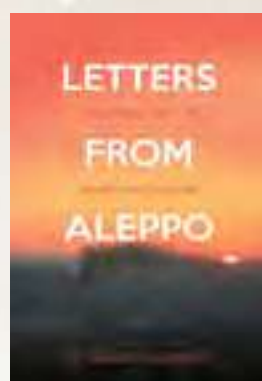
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Heartbreak in Iran



A woman mourns next to a dead body following an earthquake in Sarpol-e Zahab. The earthquake killed more than 400 people and injured over 6,000 in Iran and Iraq.

Kenya bishops plan dialogue forum amid violence and political unrest

Plans to convene a national dialogue forum in the face of a political crisis were announced by Kenya's bishops, as they say the country's people are on the brink of despair.

The forum will assemble all sectors to set an agenda for honest discussions and resolutions for the country.

Urgent matters to be addressed include difficulties of the elections and reforms, national healing and reconciliation, good governance challenges, transparency, poverty, employment, economic inequality, conflict resolution and injustices, among other issues.

"This is the forum we believe will offer an opportunity to all Kenyans, especially the key political players, to engage constructively in a bid to chart the way forward for Kenya," said Bishop

Philip Anyolo, chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The bishops met in Nakuru ahead of the burial of Eldoret Bishop Cornelius Arap Korir, who died suddenly on October 30. Bishop Korir was buried in a small chapel inside Sacred Heart Cathedral in Eldoret on November 11.

"We know how much he sacrificed and risked his life to maintain peace, harmony and justice," said Bishop Anyolo.

Dubbed "the peace bishop," Bishop Korir was trying to help resolve the political crisis. Since the Supreme Court's nullification of President Uhuru Kenyatta's re-election, the country has faced political pressures.

Raila Odinga, the National Super Alliance leader, boycotted a re-vote October 26 and urged street protests

and economic boycotts. Although Kenyatta was declared the winner of the October election, the decision is again being challenged in the Supreme Court.

The bishops said everyone is required to promote unity and reconciliation.

"We...will spearhead peace initiatives and invite our brothers from other religious faiths and people of good will to join us," said Bishop Anyolo.

While applauding the tremendous hope the citizens have shown, the bishops warned of growing inequality, extreme poverty, uncontrolled looting of public resources, political manipulation of citizens and radicalisation of politics.

Pontiff to celebrate World Day of the Poor

Pope Francis will celebrate the Catholic Church's first World Day of the Poor this Sunday by celebrating a morning Mass with people in need and those who assist them.

After Mass, he will offer lunch to 500 people in the Vatican audience hall.

As the Year of Mercy was

ending in November 2016, Pope Francis told people he wanted to set one day aside each year to underline everyone's responsibility "to care for the true riches, which are the poor".

The result was the World Day of the Poor, which is to be marked annually on the 33rd Sunday of ordinary

time on the Church's liturgical calendar.

Message

An admonition from St John Chrysostom "remains ever timely," Pope Francis said in a message for the 2017 celebration. He quoted the 5th-Century theologian: "If you want to honour the

body of Christ, do not scorn it when it is naked; do not honour the Eucharistic Christ with silk vestments and then, leaving the church, neglect the other Christ suffering from cold and nakedness."

The Pope chose 'Love not in word, but in deed' as the theme for 2017.

Vatican roundup

No dialogue while nuclear weapons are threat – Pope

The existence of nuclear weapons creates a false sense of security that holds international relations hostage and stifles peaceful coexistence, Pope Francis said.

"The threat of their use as well as their very possession is to be firmly condemned," the Pope told participants at a conference on nuclear disarmament hosted by the Vatican.

For years, Popes and Catholic leaders said the policy of nuclear deterrence could be morally acceptable as long as real work was underway on a complete ban of the weapons. In condemning possession of the weapons, Pope Francis seemed to indicate that deterrence is no longer acceptable.

Nuclear weapons "exist in the service of a mentality of fear that affects not only the parties in conflict but the entire human race", he said

Pope Francis bans sale of cigarettes in Vatican

Concerned by the damage caused by smoking, Pope Francis has banned the sale of cigarettes in Vatican City.

Starting in 2018, the Vatican "will cease to sell cigarettes to employees," Greg Burke, Vatican spokesman said.

"The Holy See cannot contribute to an activity that clearly damages the health of people," he said. "According to the World Health Organisation, every year smoking is the cause of more than seven million deaths throughout the world."

While cigarette sales "are a source of revenue for the Holy See, no profit can be legitimate if it puts lives at risk", he said.

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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

Synod of Bishops never more timely

Dear Editor, Your lead story 'Boost as research reveals Irish are "astonishingly religious"' (IC 9/11/2017) was a real shot in the arm, especially given the constant moaning and gloating we hear about our Church being in decline. Sure, the picture's not great – in many ways the European Social Survey figures seem to tell us that of 18 countries across a continent where religion is in decline, Ireland is just doing less terribly than almost all the rest.

This seems undeniable, but I think

we already knew that the Irish Church and the Church across Europe are struggling, with other Christian bodies – the Anglicans, say, or the Lutherans or Methodists – barely on life support.

What is new, though, is the notion that despite everything, despite the pressures, despite the seductions, despite the constant drone of commercial secularism that is the air we seem to breathe nowadays, even then the Church in Ireland can't be written off.

Perhaps the most encouraging

detail in your report was Prof. Stephen Bullivant's comment that Ireland's youth, even if irreligious by the standards of their parents and grandparents, are still remarkably religious when compared to their European peers.

This is the base from which the Irish Church can build for the future – the coming Synod of Bishops on young people may be not a second too late!

Yours etc.,

Barbara Madden,
Swords, Co. Dublin.

Good intentions don't always pass to future generations

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny (IC 21/10/17) described some of the founding figures of the movement that became known as first-wave feminism as pro-life and pro-motherhood. This group included Josephine Butler, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. While their efforts are seen by many to have put forward a challenge to chauvinistic attitudes at the time, I think the legacy of their ideas and movement has given rise to the feminism we see today which clamors for access to abortion as part of the

framework of equality with men. It is a litmus test for membership of almost every single feminist political organisation.

Every woman who has considered an abortion due to the obstacle the baby represents to her career, can trace that idea to the central tenet of feminism – that the only differences between men and women are accidents of biology, history and social conditioning and that they should achieve whatever status or rank a man attains in society.

The introduction of contraception was brought about by feminists as a tool of liberation from childcare and the domestic scene.

Today, abortion is mainly used as a back-up contraception. Many of the early suffragettes and feminists would likely not have approved of abortion but pro-abortion feminists of today certainly approved of the social changes those women brought about. Though many exalted motherhood and children, the changes of the time brought women further

away from the domestic scene, from motherhood and from children. Sooner or later, these things would get in the way in the assertion of equality with men, denying any special roles, natural differences or mutual interdependence between the sexes.

Many early feminists may have had good intentions, but good intentions are difficult to pass on to future generations.

Yours, etc.,

Mark Hickey,
Irishtown, Dublin 4

A mobile solution?

Dear Editor, After visiting a friend in Direct Provision at Lissycowen, Athlone a few weeks ago, I have been wondering whether a temporary solution to the homeless crisis would be Mobile Homes attached to a centre catering for the social needs of the residents?

The day I visited Lissycowen, it was freezing cold and wet but my friend's mobile home was warm, inviting and clean, and a place offering privacy.

Yours etc.,

Mrs Judith Leonard,
Raheny, Dublin 5.



Pray for the Lord's Supper

Dear Editor, Fr Pat Seaver's letter (IC 26/10/17) states, "I am constantly disappointed at the way the 'Our Father' is usually recited during Mass". The 'Our Father' recited at Mass is Thomas Cranmer's (1490-1556) poor translation. No Bible uses the words 'trespass' or 'trespasses' (see Mt. 6:9-13 and/or Lk. 11:2-4).

In the Latin language the words are 'debita' and 'debitoribus' and in the Spanish 'deudas' (debt) and 'deudores' (indebted) are used.

We ask God not to lead us into temptation, when we know that he

leads us out of temptation. We can find our own ways into temptation. We should ask not to be put to the test. We continue to use archaic words like 'thee', 'thou', 'shall', instead of 'you' and 'will'. All honours and glory should be, 'Are yours' not 'is yours'. Finally, God is not the font of all holiness but the source of all holiness as Satan is the source of all evil. We should pray for the Lord's Supper and not the supper of the lamb.

Yours, etc.,

Liam Duffy,
Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Higgins is anti-Trump

Dear Editor, The byline at the end of the article 'Trump renders language meaningless' (IC 2/11/2017) states that Michael W Higgins is Distinguished Professor of Catholic Thought at Sacred Heart University, etc. It could alternatively have said "Michael W. Higgins does not like President Trump".

Yours etc.,

Sean Grace,
Malahide, Co. Dublin.

Diagnoses of 'fatal' are not always correct

Dear Editor, We would like to put on record our appreciation of the statement from the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, who have pointed out that labels such as "fatal fetal impairments" and "incompatible with life" should not be used as grounds for abortion.

The Committee noted that diagnoses made in regard to preborn babies with disabilities were frequently incorrect in regard to describing conditions as 'fatal', and added that justifying abortion on disability grounds was a violation of the human rights guaranteed under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We are parents whose babies were diagnosed with severe disabilities such as anencephaly and trisomy 13. Our children's lives were severely impacted by these life-limiting conditions, but they were held and cherished for every moment, and they brought us nothing but love.

In 2015, we held a conference at the UN in Geneva for policymakers and medical experts, where parents explained how hurtful and misleading phrases such as 'incompatible with life' and 'fatal foetal abnormality' were, and argued that all children had a right to life, however severe their disability.

We asked that these labels be recognised as a form of discrimination because it undermined the humanity of our babies, and misled parents very often nudging them towards abortion. We are delighted that the UN Committee has now rejected these labels.

As the Committee pointed out, even if the diagnosis of a life-limiting condition was correct, the label "perpetuates notions of stereotyping disability as incompatible with a good life".

It is interesting to note that the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are now in conflict with other UN bodies who are pushing abortion to be legalised on disability grounds – but that it is the Disability Committee that is actually sticking to the letter of international law.

It is our view that a disability should not take away a child's right to life, and that disability rights advocates must be listened to. We believe that all children are compatible with love.

Yours etc.,

Tracy Harkin,
Every Life Counts, Dublin 1.

Say it to the people

Dear Editor, Your series of articles on Martin Luther (IC 26/10/2017) was excellent, impressive. In the same edition, Fr Pat Seaver sent in a letter referring to the lack of conviction of his parishioners in reciting prayers. I have no doubt he accurately describes what was before him. However, he himself was appointed to preach and teach, and to challenge. I would have thought this would be done by direct and personal communication with his parishioners and not by letters to the papers about them.

Yours etc.,

J. Monaghan,
Dunboyne, Co. Meath.

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world

INDIA: A woman in Delhi sits amid the rubble of her home destroyed by local authorities in a bid to relocate the residents. Pope Francis will celebrate the Church's first World Day of the Poor this Sunday.



POLAND: Nationalists in Warsaw light flares and carry flags to mark Poland's 99th anniversary of independence. Photos: CNS



KENYA: A protester shouts in front of a burning barricade in a slum area of Nairobi. Kenyan Catholic bishops have announced plans to convene a national dialogue forum in the face of a political crisis



VATICAN: Pope Francis pats the head of a young relative of Paraguayan President Horacio Cartes during a private audience with the president at the Vatican.



USA: A helicopter drops water on a fast moving wildfire in Orange, California. A Catholic Climate Covenant webinar explored the connection between global warming and extreme weather events.



MEXICO: Children play near the border wall in Ciudad Juarez.



A threat to our decency



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

Jesus tells us that in the end we will be judged on how we dealt with the poor in our lives, but there are already dangers now, in this life, in not reaching out to the poor

Here's how Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*, teases out that danger: "I've come to believe that the true measure of our commitment to justice, the character of our society, our commitment to the rule of law, fairness, and equality cannot be measured by how we treat the rich, the powerful, the privileged, and the respected among us."

The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavoured, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned. We are all implicated when we allow other people to be mistreated.

An absence of compassion can corrupt the decency of a community, a state, a nation. Fear and anger can make us vindictive and abusive, unjust and unfair, until we all suffer from the absence of mercy and we condemn ourselves as much as we condemn others.

What needs to be highlighted here is what we do to ourselves when we don't reach out in compassion to the poor. We corrupt our own decency. As Stevenson puts it: An absence of compassion corrupts our decency – as a state, as a church, as family, and as individuals. How so?

St Augustine teaches that we

can never be morally neutral: either we are growing in virtue or falling into vice. We never have the luxury of simply being in some neutral, holding state. There's no moral neutrality. Either we are growing in virtue or sliding into virtue's opposite. That's true for all of life. A thing is either growing or it's regressing.

“We need to be alert not just to our conscious attitudes but to what we are actually doing”

So too with our attitude towards justice and the poor: Either we are actively reaching out to the poor and being more drawn into concern for them or we are unconsciously hardening our hearts against them and unknowingly sliding into attitudes that trivialise their issues and distance ourselves from them.

If we are not actively advocating for justice and the poor, it is inevitable that at a point we will, with completely sincere hearts, downplay the issues of poverty, racism, inequality, and injustice.

It's interesting to note that in the famous text on the final judgment in the Gospel where Jesus describes how God will divide the sheep from

the goats on the basis of how they treated the poor, neither group, those who did it correctly and those who didn't, actually knew what they were doing. The group who did it right state that they didn't know that in touching the poor they were touching Christ; and the group got it wrong, protest that, had they known that Christ was in the poor, they would have reached out. Jesus assures us that it doesn't matter. Mature discipleship lies simply in the doing, irrespective of our conscious attitude.

And so we need to be alert not just to our conscious attitudes but to what we are actually doing. We can, in all sincerity, in all good conscience, in all good heart, be blind towards justice and the poor.

Elitist

We can be moral men and women, pious church-goers, generous donors to those who ask help from us, warm to our own families and friends, and yet, blind to ourselves, though not to the poor, be unhealthily elitist, subtle racists, callous towards the environment, and protective of our own privilege. We are still good persons, no doubt, but the absence of compassion in one area of our lives leaves us limping morally.

We can be good persons and yet

fall into a certain hardness of heart because of kindred, ideological circles that falsely affirm us.

Within any circle of friends, either we are talking about ways that we can more effectively lessen the gaps between rich and poor or we are talking, however unconsciously, about the need to defend the gaps that presently exist.

“A truer mirror is how those who are politically, racially, religiously, and temperamentally different from ourselves assess us”

One kind of conversation is stretching our hearts; the other is narrowing them. Lack of compassion for justice and the poor will inevitably work at turning a generous heart into a defensive one.

We all have friends who admire us and send us signals that we are good, big-hearted, virtuous persons. And no doubt this is substantially true. But the affirmation we receive from our own kind can be a false mirror.

A truer mirror is how those who are politically, racially, religiously, and temperamentally different from ourselves assess us. How do the poor feel about us? How do refugees assess our goodness? How do other races rate our compassion?

And what about the mirror that Jesus holds up for us when he tells us that our goodness will be judged by how we treat the poor and that the litmus test of goodness consists in how well we love our enemies?

An absence of compassion in even one area subtly corrupts the decency of a community, a state, a nation and that eventually turns our generosity into defensiveness.



Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, November 16, 2017

Youth Space

A rocky hill, full of untold stories

Page 30



More than just a game

Galway hurler Joe Canning.

Gambling addiction, mental health awareness, the role of comedy and fond memories of our sporting past were among a vast array of talks and discussed at a conference this month exploring the relationship between ethics and sport.

"Sport is a huge part of the fabric of Irish society," said Dr John Scally, organiser of the conference hosted by the Department of Religion and Theology in Trinity College Dublin.

"The ethics of sport has not got the attention it deserves. There are issues in sport that need to be critiqued and seen from a new perspective."

This was the fourth Ethics and



Colm Fitzpatrick reports from a conference dealing with the complexities of ethics in sport

Sport Conference organised by Dr Scally, an Assistant Professor in Ecclesiastical History and author of a variety of sports and ethics books. The line-up this year included key figures in the sporting industry, Irish sporting legends, academics and broadcasters.

Oisín McConville, former Armagh Gaelic football player, was the first speaker, addressing the issue of mental health in

sport and giving a painfully honest account of his own struggles with gambling. He made clear that his gambling was not a result of any financial gain following his success in sports but was part of his life beginning in his teenage years. Gambling was his 'drug of choice', and the addiction became more progressive.

"I was financially and emotionally bankrupt, I hid

behind my career", he said. "There was a lot of pressure of keeping up a persona. I felt people thought I should be a certain way and I didn't want to let them down."

Support

After his gambling addiction spiralled out of control, he turned to sport and to the help of others for support. "The only thing that was giving me direction was football. When I was training I didn't have to gamble. Sport kept me alive, and gave me new opportunities. It changed my life".

Oisín also expressed concern about the culture of gambling in Ireland, especially in online gambling and in the sporting

context. Perhaps surprisingly, most people who gamble online are women between 25-45, and those who play competitive team sports are three times more likely to gamble, he said.

Gareth O'Callaghan, broadcaster and author of the book *A Day Called Hope* expressed some of his reflections on depression and addiction, including the importance of mental health in sport. A recent head injury he experienced gave him an insight into injury in sport, he said, and made him realise how serious this issue actually is.

"Vulnerability is something we should remind ourselves of every day," he said. His lasting message

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Family News

AND EVENTS

Worried about your kids' texts? There's an app for that!

Parents worried about their children sending and sharing inappropriate texts and images may have a helpful answer in the form of a new app.

The Oyoty app, developers claim, detects when pictures show too much exposed flesh, when texts use abusive or bullying language, and when sensitive private information like phone numbers is used. When such material is identified, a 'chat bot' addresses the user, suggesting that they reconsider sending or sharing it.

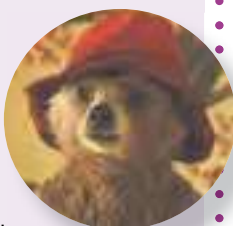
Originally launched in the UK last year, the app, which is aimed at children who are starting to use social media, can also be set to send alerts to parents, and sends parents a weekly 'report' telling them how their children have progressed in responsible social media use.

Its main purpose, however, is to help children train themselves to use social media responsibly by asking them to think again before engaging in risky behaviour.

TIME FOR TEA: With afternoon tea undergoing a resurgence in popularity of late, younger members of the family can join in as a special treat this month at Dublin's Shelbourne Hotel.

The Children's Paddington Bear Afternoon Tea, which is on offer until November 22 to coincide with the *Paddington 2* film in Dublin cinemas, costs €28 per child, and includes Yummy Orange Marmalade and Chocolate Cup, an Orange Marmalade Sponge Sandwich, a Paddington Chocolate Suit Case, Paddington Raspberry Red Macaroon and a Paddington Bear Brownie.

As drinks, children can have a 'Lost and Found Strawberry Shake', and the dainty finger sandwich selection includes ham, cheese and Nutella. Advance booking essential.



Misneach part of the Christmas countdown

Misneach, a non-denominational event run by the suicide crisis and support centre Pieta House, is set to take place around the country on November 26.

Intended to nourish hope, lift spirits and help welcome the Christmas season with a sense of optimism and promise by creating a space to honour and celebrate lost loved ones, and to reconnect with them.

The event will be held in Galway's Augustinian Church, Limerick's Mungret Church, St John's Rest and Care Centre in Knock, Pieta House Cork, Edenderry Parish Centre and Unitarian Church, Dublin. Pre-booking is needed – through Eventbrite – for the Dublin event only.

"Misneach is also for those who have come through our services, or for anyone who has overcome or is going through their own struggles, as a celebration of their strength and courage, said Pieta House CEO Brian Higgins.



Motherhood should be a very special time filled with joy and love but many new mothers can labour under such a burden of expectations and pressure to perform to certain standards that they end up feeling bad about perceived underperformance or failure.

This phenomenon is very marked in America and is well described by Claire Howarth in *Time* magazine, October 10, 2017. The phenomenon also exists in Ireland although to a markedly lesser degree than in America. However, such fashions have a habit of migrating eastwards across the Atlantic.

Howarth describes the aspirations that build up so strongly in the minds of American women who are expecting a baby. Basically these aspirations are to ideals of perfection. These include making ideal preparations for birth beforehand, eating all the right things and avoiding all the bad things, doing all the right exercises; having the perfect birth, ideally at home and medication-free, attended by your midwife, doula and your partner; breastfeeding your baby for at least six months and ideally for up to two years, and so on.

Delivery

A doula (a word of Greek origin) by the way is a non-medical assistant hired by the pregnant woman to help her to prepare for the labour, to be with her during the labour and delivery and to help her settle down with her new baby after the birth. Doula services are now available in Ireland.

Of course there is nothing at all wrong with a pregnant woman having these aspirations but the problem in America is that many women feel that



Science of life

Prof. William Reville

they are failures if they cannot fulfil them. And of course, circumstances over which the woman has little or no control arise in many cases and dictate that one or more of these aspirations will not be fulfilled. This is nobody's fault and no legitimate reason for feeling bad but nevertheless many women do feel bad.

Time magazine carried out a survey of over 900 mothers and found that half the women experienced regret, shame, guilt or anger, mostly because of unexpected complications and a lack of support.

Over half said natural birth was very important but 43% ended up needing drugs or an epidural, and 22% had unplanned C-sections. Breast-feeding posed unexpected difficulties for many. Twenty percent planned to breast-feed for at least a year – less than 10% did so. The women surveyed felt under pressure with the majority identifying "society in general" as the source of pressure, followed by doctors and other mothers.

Many of the women spoke of their introduction to motherhood in terms of failure – the women who had unplanned C-sections were all disappointed, the women who couldn't breastfeed for "selfish reasons" such as returning to work or suffering from chronic lack of sleep all felt guilty, women who planned to have medication-free births but "gave in" to an epidural felt they had failed, etc.

Almost all these women had given birth to a healthy baby, the whole point of pregnancy, but their natural enjoyment of the beauty of motherhood was severely diminished by all this needless anxiety and guilt.

“Over half said natural birth was very important”

American society as a whole has conspired to establish a vision of motherhood that is away over-precious but women have bought into this vision on a widespread basis. This vision proclaims that pregnant women should strive hard to be completely compliant with nature throughout the entire process of pregnancy, labour, birth and subsequent nursing of the baby.

They should strive to have intervention-free births and, of course, should breastfeed their baby. There is nothing wrong with these aspirations of course but they should be tempered by the realisation that individual circumstances frequently intervene to prevent their attainment.

Circumstances

The desirability of breast-feeding is probably the single most canvassed practice advocated for the new mother. There undoubtedly are good reasons to favour breast-feeding – it offers some health advantages to the baby and helps mother to bond with her baby. All this is widely accepted by women and 80% of American mothers try breast-feeding. However, complicating circumstances often arise.

For example, some women can't breastfeed because of blocked ducts or bleeding nipples or having to return to work a couple of weeks after giving birth – 87% of American workers don't have paid

maternity leave.

Also some women cannot breastfeed because they do not produce enough milk to feed the baby. The pressure on women to exclusively breastfeed has inadvertently contributed to a number of cases where nursing mothers accidentally starved their babies to death.

A pushback against the relentless pressure to breast-feed is developing with many people feeling that breast-feeding is now being over-promoted just as bottle feeding with powder formula once was.

Organisation

Howarth points out that it is not so long ago when bottle feeding was hailed as one of the boons of feminism. A new organisation called Fed is Best advocates advising women on all the options for feeding baby and not neglecting to mention the under recognised risks of exclusive breast-feeding ranging from jaundice to starvation.

Hobarth sensibly emphasises that there is no such thing as a single golden template for the perfect birth. Of course women should pay close attention to medical guidelines, should consider medication-light births and should plan to breastfeed baby if that is feasible. But there is nothing at all wrong with a woman availing of more pain relieving medication during labour or of opting to bottle feed the baby.

Personally, I am so squeamish about pain that, if I were a woman, I think I would opt to sleep my way under heavy sedation through the entire labour!

i William Reville is an Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry at UCC.

» Continued from Page 27

for the audience was, "What would you say if no one was listening?"

Also tackling the issues of head injuries was Dr Kate Liston, lecturer in Sociology of Sport at the University of Ulster and former top Kerry ladies footballer, who discussed the concussion crisis in Ireland and its prominence in a growing number of sports. She pointed out that concussion isn't taken as seriously as other physical injuries and that it is often trivialised in the sporting environment.

Concussion

"The diagnosis of concussion is avoided so that sport can be continued. It's diagnosed in a frame unique to sport," she said, explaining that it's always in the context of the minimum time the player will be unable to play.

Dr Liston also emphasised that our sporting culture normalises "pain and injury", meaning that players can feel shamed or stigmatised for sustaining injuries and taking time out. Dr Scally said that she engaged with these topics in a "critically significant and humanising way".

Fintan Drury, founder and Chief Executive of Platinum One, gave a robust talk on the ethical dilemmas and corruption behind the scenes in the corporate environment of sports. He spoke about his joy in representing players but also the challenges that it can involve.

There's this notion that footballers live glamorous lives, but players deal with anxiety and depression."

He said that wholesome players don't need to be just physically fit but also mentally healthy.

The ethics of sport was also the focal talking point for Mike Cronin of Boston College, sports historian and co-author of a number of books including *The GAA – An Oral History*. He discussed whether there are ethical limits in sport, and if Ireland has a distinct ethic. He argued that sporting players in Ireland are put on pedestals and so criticised more for actions in their own personal lives. People in ordinary jobs are not held to the same degree of accountability as these players, he said.

“He warned against the drink culture in the GAA, maintaining that there are unhealthy attitudes towards alcohol”

Galway hurler Joe Canning also mentioned this problem, saying that it is difficult, as a player, to drink alcohol in the public sphere without being questioned. In the same respect, he warned against the drink culture in the GAA, maintaining that there are unhealthy attitudes towards alcohol. He also touched on several topics including his relationship with the media, his parents' diagnoses with cancer and the difficulty in dealing with the tragic death of his friend and teammate Niall Donoghue in 2013.

"It's difficult to know how to react – it was difficult – you don't realise what's going through people's heads," he said.

He is now Ambassador for UNICEF



Garth O'Callaghan and, left, Colm Rourke.

and communal values of the game. "By mixing up commercialisation and sport, you lose what the GAA is about", he said.

Amid these serious conversations, RTE commentator George Hamilton and comedian PJ Gallagher brought some levity to the discussions, jovially reflecting on some of their funny sporting experiences.

“We believed in winning. It's easy at a distance to moralise, but not so much in the heat of the battle”

Hamilton, best known as the chief football commentator for RTÉ, delighted the audience with some captivating anecdotes, with topics such as the Seoul Olympics, Italia 90 and the 2010 World Cup. He also addressed some ethical quandaries in sport, drawing upon the example of Paulo DiCanio who was banned from football temporarily after pushing over a referee, as well as Thierry Henry's handball in 2009 against Ireland.

PJ Gallagher also lightened the mood with his endearing personality and jokes, including conversations about his early comedy career and his adventures on *Naked Camera*, the most famous of which was his encounter with the late Bill O'Herlihy. Bursts of the laughter filled the room as the video clip of it was watched, with Gallagher remarking that he was the "only man to make Bill O'Herlihy curse in private".

Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



November is not my favourite month. I don't mind the darker evenings so much but the prospect of walking the dog on cold, dark mornings does little to cheer me. The new year will be well on its way before I find myself walking in the light again.

That is not a great prospect but however cold and dark and wet it is these mornings I remind myself that eventually the seasons will change. We are people of the light and it is no wonder that we yearn for it.

November is also the month when we remember our loved ones who have died. It is a sombre month. For our family this year it has an added poignancy. At the end of October my uncle died. He was one of 13 children. Only one of the 13 is left and I am very conscious of the deep loneliness she must be feeling.

My father, his sister and now his youngest brother have all died within less than 18 months. It has been a tough time for our extended family. Too many of our gatherings now are prompted by sad events. Thankfully many of us gathered about six months ago for a family reunion, a celebration of simply being together.

My uncle was a character. He delighted generations of children within the family with his ability to wiggle his ears in a most amazing way. He used to grin with delight at our mad, cross-eyed, concentrated efforts to wiggle our own.

When my little nephew in England was told that his great uncle had died he asked: "Is that Uncle Enda with the wiggly ears?"

“We remember our dead, but I would suggest we need to guard against being overwhelmed by loss”

Enda has made a lasting impression and it strikes me as being very important that we celebrate that.

A traditional wake, a funeral and time afterwards over tea and sandwiches gave time for story-telling.

Enda was a young teenager,

far from home at boarding school, when his mother died. He was put on a train to Dublin and sent from the station to a hotel for some dinner before getting the bus to Strabane. A lovely lady in the hotel noticed him, asked him what was wrong and when she heard the reason for his journey she took him under her wing.

She made sure he ate his lunch, sat and talked to him, arranged for him to be accompanied back to the station and gave him some money in case he needed anything. It was only some time later, upon seeing a poster, that Enda realised the 'lovely lady' had been the actress Maureen O'Hara.

Family

In November we remember our dead, but we also need to celebrate life. Our lives are shaped by those who went before us. It matters that our children know about family and friends who have gone to God, not just as names on a November list but as real people who lived real lives. So,

it is important that we talk about them, tell stories about them, celebrate the lives they had and the impact they made on our lives.

We remember our dead, but I would suggest we need to guard against being overwhelmed by loss. In a sense we need to develop quite a defiant attitude to death, refusing to let it have the final word. As the priest at my uncle's funeral said: "We are an Easter People."

That may seem like a strange statement to make at the tail end of October, but the priest was not talking about calendars.

He was affirming that we are people whose understanding of life and death is shaped by belief in the resurrection. Ultimately life is stronger than death.

There was a lot of speculation at the funeral about what the family reunion would be like in heaven.

My father's family is a fascinating bunch of strong, funny, assertive men and women. I'd say there has been some craic in heaven!



A rocky hill, full of untold stories

Youth Space

Mairead Duffy reports on a trip to Medjugorje by Holy Trinity College, Cookstown and St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon

It has been said that when our Lady wants you to go to Medjugorje she will call you. She most certainly called each and every member of our group. It has also been said that obstacles will be placed in the way as you endeavour to make the pilgrimage, and this was most certainly the case for our group, both going and returning. All of that aside, our pilgrimage to this beautiful place, which most of us had to hunt down in an atlas prior to travel, was, for all, transformative.

The peace of Medjugorje is very hard to express in words. It is something that you feel, and for some of us, we felt it immediately. Within hours of arrival, many felt like they did not want to leave, and that was before we even saw Apparition Hill! Daily Mass in English was at 10am and receiving the Eucharist was grace-filled for many.

It was wonderful to be part of a truly universal congregation, where everyone sang at the top of their voices. We had the honour of leading the liturgy of the Word and preparing the Prayers of the Faithful for one of the Masses. All of our students wanted to participate, finding courage and strength from deep within, becoming the voice of the youth of Ireland whilst there.

Conversion

Our spiritual director, Deacon John Taaffe, organised for us to meet Patrick and Nancy in their 'castle' while we were there. As we listened to their conversion testimonies you could not but

be moved. The parents in our group were struck by handing our children over to our Lady, consecrating them to her. In a very impromptu moment Nancy spoke to us about how Ireland needed each and every one of us. She spoke passionately about the consecrated hands of our priests and how their hands were Jesus on earth. She was truly on fire with the Holy Spirit and touched us all deeply.

Our first ascent of Apparition Hill took place on a warm afternoon. "A rocky hill, full of

many untold stories" is how one of our students described it. As we climbed the hill we paused at each bronze plaque, which marked each of the joyful mysteries of the rosary. We reflected on these mysteries together, singing as we climbed. Indeed much of our week was marked by spontaneous singing. It is difficult to find the words to describe the feeling of reaching the top of the hill.

Many remarked on a peace like no other, of wanting to stay there forever. Grace-filled tears flowed

for many. It made such an impact that we returned to climb the hill in the dark, with most of us choosing to climb barefoot, on two more occasions.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is very important in Medjugorje. Queues form in late afternoon as pilgrims fill the area to the left of St James'. Our Lady has said to some of the visionaries that if we knew how much she loved us, we would cry tears of joy.

“As we return to our daily lives, some of us know why we were called by Our Lady”

Many of us, both young and old, cried these tears throughout the week, and particularly around the confessionals. The opportunity to feel Jesus' forgiveness for the times we have failed to follow him, is an important part of the pilgrimage experience.

We visited the Cenacolo community, founded by Mother Elvira, and listened to powerful

testimonies from two young men who, prior to joining the community, had literally reached the end of their chosen roads. Whilst there, we bumped into a pilgrimage group from St Brigid's in Derry. Their spiritual guides were the Friars of Franciscan Renewal, who have a community in Derry. Our students were immediately drawn to these men and when we met them again at Kravica waterfalls more chats were had. Since returning home many of us have been following their Living Disciples podcasts on Soundcloud.

Good time

When asked to describe the experience of Medjugorje the same words recur throughout the group: fun, faith and laughter. We had such a good time together, be it sitting in the rain at the Blue Cross on our first evening together, where we shared our private intentions with one another; swimming or paddling in the gorgeous Adriatic after Mass in the Lourdes grotto near Makarska; hiking up and down Cross mountain, knowing we were very late for dinner; being part of thousands of Catholic faithful at evening Adoration where you could hear a pin drop or simply sitting on the bus about to go home, not really wanting to.

As we reflect on our time in Medjugorje, as we return to our daily lives, some of us know why we were called by Our Lady. For many it has been an opportunity to deepen our relationship with Jesus, through his mother.

For others a call to vocations was affirmed. Our rosaries are alive in both of our schools in the hope of continuing to nurture the seeds that have been planted on pilgrimage. In the words of one of our pilgrims: "I have strengthened my faith and found peace with myself. I realised I have nothing to worry about in my life. You do not need a WI-Fi password to climb Apparition Hill."



Above and below: Students and teachers from Cookstown and Dungannon on pilgrimage in Medjugorje.



Sweet Treats

Erin Fox



Coffee, cardamom, pear and walnut cake

Inspiration for this recipe came from musing about which flavours best go with pears in the autumn. You can't beat pear and walnut, or pear and cardamom, and funnily enough, these two also bond wonderfully with coffee. So why not make a cake combining all four!

You need to be keen on cardamom to enjoy this cake. But if you find it too strong, then use just 10 cardamom pods instead of 15. Or you can leave the cardamom out altogether.

The cake will keep for three days wrapped up in baking parchment in an air-tight container.

For the cake:

- 225g self-raising flour
- 15 green cardamom pods
- 225g butter at room temperature
- 225g light soft brown sugar
- 4 medium eggs lightly beaten
- 2 tbsp coffee syrup — Camp or Irl
- 1 tbsp milk
- 50g walnuts
- 2 large ripe pears peeled, cored and diced
- 1 x 8-inch-square or 9-inch-round baking tin greased and lined with baking parchment

Preheat oven to 180 degrees. Scatter the walnuts on a baking tray and roast in the oven for eight minutes, giving them a shake half way.

Remove from the oven and allow to cool before roughly chopping them. Wash the pears and then peel and core them. Dice into small squares and set aside in a bowl covered with cling film.

Pods

Slice open the cardamom pods with a knife and place the seeds into a mortar bowl. Grind to a fine powder with the pestle. Sift the flour with the ground cardamom into a bowl and set aside.

Cream the butter with the sugar for five minutes until light and fluffy. Gently whisk the eggs in a separate bowl and with the mixer still running, gradually add the eggs to the butter and sugar, beating well after each addition.

If the mixture starts to curdle, add two

tablespoons of the flour mixture to rebind the batter.

Once all the eggs are incorporated, gently fold in the rest of the flour and then the coffee syrup and milk.

Fold in the toasted walnuts followed by the pear chunks.

Pour the batter into the prepared tin and bake in the oven for 50 to 60 minutes. Insert a wooden skewer into the centre and if it emerges clean, the cake is done.

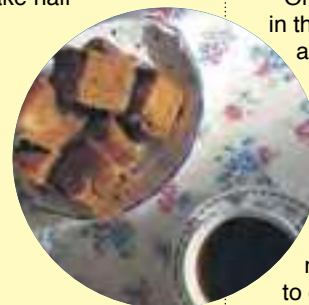
Leave the cake to cool in the tin for 10 minutes before turning it out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Slice into squares or triangles and enjoy with a cup of cardamom coffee.

Cardamom coffee

To make the cardamom coffee, gently crush two cardamom pods and place these in a warmed percolator or cafetiere. Make the coffee as usual and leave to brew for a few minutes before plunging and serving.

Scoop a dollop of cream on top.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



BBC's Maze leads to intelligent debate

I've long admired the media work of Michael Buerk, and his show **The Moral Maze** last Saturday on BBC Radio 4 was a most thorough, insightful, and civilised discussion – people were listening to each other!

The topic was 'moral progress', especially in the light of current Westminster controversies. The format was unusual enough – a panel of four discussing the topics to start with, followed by a series of 'witnesses' who were who were quizzed by the panel. Even Buerk's introduction was striking, with lots of probing questions, e.g. did the 'current bout of moralising' show 'heightened ethical sensibility' or a "moral mood swing that cannot distinguish between the harassment and assault that was always deplorable and a clumsiness that is embarrassing but essentially harmless".

Melanie Phillips of *The Times* thought there was a 'moral confusion' in society, with some recent revelations 'appalling' and some 'exaggerated'. Matthew Taylor, CEO of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts (RSA), thought the effects of the controversies were mainly positive and that in the long term our morality improves.

Anne McElvoy of *The Economist* agreed that overall there was moral progress despite bumps and 'three-



Melanie Phillips appeared on BBC's *The Moral Maze*.

point turns' in the road. Claire Fox of the Institute of Ideas was wary of confusion between moral progress and "puritanical intolerance".

First witness Peter Hitchens said he always disapproved of the predatory behaviour currently in the news and of the increasing coarseness of society and media in general, but thought recent reactions smacked too much of the "pleasant occupation" of criticising the wrongdoings of others, a desire to appear to be good rather than to be good.

Former MP Matthew Paris agreed reaction was over-

done, but was more optimistic about good outcomes. The pendulum swinging too far either way was partly the price of moral progress. Prof. Roger Trigg of Warwick University thought there was too much aggression and selfishness, with society not so cohesive anymore.

Dr Clare Carlisle of King's College thought we lived in a fairer society, but also that speaking in terms of decline or progress was too simplistic. She saw herself in a position between absolutism and relativism, but, as Buerk later pointed out, that in itself is relativistic!

Other debates, interviews and discussions are worth catching up on. On Tuesday of last week, on **Today With Sean O'Rourke** there was an absorbing interview with Amy Barrett (*née* O'Keefe), whose father had just been jailed for abusing her and her sister Melissa. It was a harrowing case, but what shone through was her calm confidence, her love for her own husband and children, her religious faith, and, despite all, her ongoing love for her father.

Protest

A few independent voices figured on Newstalk programmes. I don't always agree with journalist Ian O'Doherty, whether because of tone or content, but sometimes he plays the useful role of the boy who cried 'the emperor has no clothes'. On **Today With Pat Kenny** on Wednesday of last week, he reviewed



Newstalk's Ciara Kelly.

PICK OF THE WEEK

EVIL – A WOULD YOU BELIEVE? SPECIAL
RTÉ 1, Sunday, November 19, 10.35 pm

Mick Peelo and Alan Robinson examine the meaning and nature of evil.

CATHOLIC LIVES

EWTN, Monday, November 20, 10 am

David Kerr speaks to Dame Nuala O'Loan about her role as Police Ombudsman in Northern Ireland.

KNOCK AIRPORT

be3, Wednesday, November 22, 10.00 am

Series going behind the scenes at Ireland West Airport Knock featuring secular and religious matters.

the US President's first year. He reckoned Trump, whom he described as 'a bull in a china shop', had done better than expected and not as bad as some had hoped. He identified 'Trump derangement syndrome', especially in the Irish media, and decried a liberal anniversary protest event 'scream helplessly at the sky day'!

Also on Wednesday, Anne Widdecombe, columnist and former Conservative Party MP, turned up on Newstalk's new **Lunchtime Live**. Interviewed by Ciara Kelly, she saw a lack of proportionality in the current 'Sexminster' controversies and didn't think it useful to conflate trivial sexual advances with sexual assault, which always had to be taken very seriously.

The most controversial of the controversialists, Katie Hopkins, appeared on the same show last Thursday,

promoting in a rather ironic and self-deprecating tone her new book, the aptly titled *Rude*. I was expecting sparks, but surprisingly it was a calm, interesting discussion for the most part, about, among other things, Brexit and the rise of nationalism, though I think she was simplistic about the consequent prospects of a united Ireland. The discussion got a little frosty only when the immigrant issue was discussed.

Finally, it was good to see Peadar Kirby TD on **The Week in Politics** (RTÉ 1) last Sunday, calling out the Oireachtas Committee on its bias in relation to the Eighth Amendment. Looks like he's on a collision course with his party, Sinn Féin, on this one.

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Music

Pat O'Kelly



Knock's *Messiah* marks 275th anniversary of *première*

History will be made this weekend with Handel's *Messiah* heard for the first time in the Basilica at Knock on Saturday evening. Under Proinnsias Ó Duinn, the occasion commemorates the 275th anniversary of the oratorio's *première* in Neal's Musick Hall in Dublin's Fishamble Street.

The current event unites Our Lady's Choral Society, Cór Mhaigh Eó and Ballina Chamber Choir with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. The four distinguished international soloists are soprano Claudia Boyle, Co. Mayo-born and based mezzo Anne Marie Gibbons, tenor Julian Hubbard and bass Christopher Coll.

Born in Halle, near Leipzig,



Anne Marie Gibbons.

in 1685, Handel possessed exceptional musical talent from an early age. His family wished him to follow law but eventually gave their blessing to his preferred path.

From 1703 he worked in Hamburg's Opera Theatre where his first stage work – *Almira* – had considerable

success in 1707. Deciding to hone his art further, he travelled to Rome where leading musicians – among them Arcangelo Corelli and, father and son, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti – adopted him. His fame spread rapidly and his opera *Agrippina* ran for an unprecedented 27 performances following its St Stephen's Day *première* in Venice in 1709.

Throne

Returning to Germany, Handel became Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover and when the latter assumed the English throne as George I in 1714 the composer moved with him to London, where his operas and oratorios proved remarkably

popular.

Handel came to Dublin in November 1741 on the invitation of Lord Lieutenant, William Cavendish. With the manuscript of *Messiah* in his luggage, he was soon part of the city's thriving music scene. He introduced a number of his works to Dublin

● Newman University Church on Dublin's St Stephen's Green is next Tuesday's venue for the first performance here of Patrick Cassidy's *The Mass*. With New Dublin Voices and the All Ireland Symphony Orchestra under David Brophy, Cassidy's setting celebrates the official opening of the Notre Dame-Newman Centre for Faith and Reason, based in University Church.

Living in California, the self-taught Claremorris-born composer is renowned for his film and TV scores including *Hannibal*, *Veronica Guerin* and *Calvary*. Patrick Cassidy came to prominence in the 1990s with his choral symphony *The Children of Lir*.

audiences before *Messiah* had its first performance on April 13, 1742, during Holy Week.

The chorus was drawn from St Patrick's and Christ Church cathedrals and, while the three female soloists came from England, the five men were local vicars choral. Handel directed with the

profits going to the relief of prisoners, Mercer's Hospital and the Infirmary on Inns Quay.

Messiah has been part and parcel of Our Lady's Choral Society's repertoire since its inception in 1945 and, following Knock, it brings the oratorio to the National Concert Hall on December 6, 7 and 8.

The smaller vocal group Resurgam and Irish Baroque Orchestra, under Peter Whelan, take *Messiah* to Christ Church Cathedral on December 7 and 8 while Belfast's Philharmonic Choir and Ulster Orchestra, conducted by Paul Daniel, perform it at the Waterfront Hall on the December 8 and 9.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



The Pope's hopes for the only planet we have

Laudato Si': An Irish response, essays on the Pope's Letter on the Environment
edited by Seán McDonagh
(Veritas, €14.99)

Eamon Ryan

The papal encyclical *Laudato Si'* has been described as "a most dangerous book". It attempts a giant leap forward in the church's social teaching by calling for a profound ecological conversion, which brings a renewed understanding of the true meaning of life on earth.

Pope Francis is making this ecumenical leap with Patriarch Bartholomew of the Eastern Church. They are forthright in condemning the destruction of God's creation that is taking place across our world and have become flag bearers for a transition onto a more just and sustainable economic path.

The encyclical also reflects a growing realisation that religion and science, while distinct, can enhance each other. They are no longer



sworn enemies. This is an historic document in every conceivable way.

This 'Irish response' to the encyclical is edited and introduced by the Columban priest Fr Seán McDonagh. He saw at first hand the destruction of the natural world in the Philippines, and came home to write passionately and accurately about the related issues of biodiversity loss, climate

change, and water pollution. His interconnection of those issues is mirrored in the approach that Francis takes. You get the sense he could have written some of the lines himself.

Urgency

Having fought for years the lack of urgency in the Church to this ecological crisis, Seán is perfectly placed to set out the theological history leading to

this new turning point.

He calls for a three-year synod where every parish in the country would first engage in understanding their own local environment and consider the questions raised by Pope Francis. As the debate then moves to the national and international level he argues it offers the prospect of local groups developing new liturgies and a spirituality to honour

their relationship with God, with fellow humans, with other creatures and with the natural world.

One parish priest who has already started such an approach is Fr Dermot Lane from the parish of Ballaly. He offers here a theological response on *Laudato Si'* and argues that the encyclical gives us the ingredients for a "chastened anthropology" where the *dictum* "I think therefore I am" is replaced by the proverb "we relate, therefore I am".

“Our response in this country has been slow and small in scale”

Such relationship starts in the physical world as explored by the Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin who wrote: "All that exists is matter becoming spirit. There is neither spirit nor matter in the world; the stuff of the universe is spirit-matter." Such inspiration allowed later writers such as Elizabeth Johnson and other Congregations of sisters to grasp this

quality of seeing the world with attentive and loving care, as being profoundly religious.

The climate activist Lorna Gold describes reading *Laudato Si'* as akin to opening Google Earth and panning out far into space. Like what Copernicus did in the 15th Century and the Apollo mission did in the 1960s, Pope Francis restores our capacity to see the whole. He does not spare us from the dire consequences that will come from our lack of care for the natural world but he also sets out a clear path where we can address this immense challenge we all face.

To date our response in this country has been slow and small in scale. In truth we need 100 Sean McDonaghs, 1,000 Dermot Lanes, and hundreds of thousands more Lorna Golds.

Are you out there? I pray you are, you who are ready to transform and radicalise the Church in this exciting and urgent new way.

Eamon Ryan TD is leader of the Green Party.

An Irish legend in his local landscape in Co. Kerry

Murtaí Óg: Murtaí Óg Ó Súilleabháin (c. 1710-54): a life contextualised
by Gerard J. Lyne
(Geography Publications, €25.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

Here once again this author writes with authority about his local area. His *The Lansdowne Estate in Kerry under the agency of William Steuart Trench, 1849-72* was a classic account of an Irish landlord's agent in the 19th Century.

Murtaí Óg, however, was quite a different kind of person, but he was also a central figure in the history and legends of the far south-west.

Murtaí Óg was born near Eyries in Co Cork c. 1710. A member of the O'Sullivan Beare Clan, he was sent to the continent to be educated.

It is likely that he attended a military academy in Spain. He fought in the War of the Austrian Succession on the side of Empress Maria Theresa. For his service he was rewarded by the queen



and promoted to be a captain in Lord Clare's regiment of the Irish Brigade.

He later served under Lord Clare at the battle at Fontenoy. A life-long Jacobite, it was claimed that he was at the battle of Culloden in 1746. On his escape from Scotland he married and

was engaged in smuggling and recruiting for the armies of France.

In the former enterprise he was in league with a local loyalist named John Puxley. Eventually Puxley was 'turned' by the government and commissioned to curb smuggling in the Beara Peninsula.

“Murtaí Óg escaped to France. However, he returned occasionally to visit his wife and son”

It was alleged that Puxley was then responsible for the deaths of two members of the O'Sullivan Beare Clan. Murtaí Óg publicly stated that he would exact revenge for the killings. With his manservant, Domhnall Ó Conaill, and a giant, known as Little John Sullivan, he ambushed and shot John Puxley as he was on his way to Divine Service in 1754.

The government issued a proclamation that Murtaí Óg and his fellow assailants be brought

to justice. For the government Murtaí was already a marked man because of his extensive recruiting activities.

These even threatened the loyalty of members of the crown forces. Thus on one occasion he poached no less than forty-nine members of the Cork City garrison as recruits for the Irish Brigade in France.

Murtaí Óg escaped to France. However, he returned occasionally to visit his wife and son. On one such occasion with the assistance of a spy a 50-strong detachment of soldiers from the Cork City garrison surrounded his house.

He and 20 of his followers resisted their attacks, but his house was set on fire and as he rushed out he was shot dead.

The soldiers returned to Cork bringing with them Murtaí Óg's body and Ó Conaill and Little John Sullivan, both of whom were soon afterwards executed and the decapitated heads of all three were spiked over the south gate of the city jail.

In this study Gerard Lyne

demonstrates the importance of oral tradition in fleshing-out the biography of persons, such as Murtaí Óg.

One of his major sources is 'Marbhna Dhomhaill Uí Chonaill'. This was the lament by Murtaí Óg's manservant for his master, which he composed in Cork jail as he awaited his execution. A chapter is dedicated to the analysis of this Marbhna and others on John Puxley.

Economic conditions

Gerard Lyne succeeds admirably in contextualising Murtaí Óg. In so doing he provides an expert analysis of the socio-economic conditions of the period, and the curious interface between the old Gaelic chieftain families and the local representatives of the new regime.

And in achieving this he reveals what remained in the Beara Peninsula of what Daniel Corkery once famously called 'The Hidden Ireland'.

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

A stalwart lady of the new Ireland

Hanna Sheehy Skeffington: Suffragette and Sinn Féiner, Her Memoirs and Political Writings by Margaret Ward (University College Dublin Press, €35)

Sonja Tiernan

The memoirs and political writings of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington is an extensive and valuable collection that makes for a thoroughly engaging read. Publication of this book provides a tremendous primary resource to support the still neglected, but growing, area of Irish women's history and gender history more broadly.

It is evident that the collection has taken considerable time and research skills to collect and compile. The content of this material is remarkable, comprising of writings by a radical political activist on such a broad range of issues including nationalism, pacifism, the formation of the Irish Free State, the murder of her husband Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, her prison experiences and her political activities in Europe and America.

Ward describes Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington as "the most significant feminist in 20th-Century Ireland". This is a rather grand claim but it is a justifiable one.

Feminist

Hanna was also the most resilient feminist campaigner having formed the first militant suffrage organisation in Ireland, the Irish Women's Franchise League, in 1908. She continued to be an outspoken feminist voice during harsh times for gender equality in Ireland in the decades ahead.

While the provisional government of Ireland promised equality for women in a country free from British rule, the reality of positioning women as inferior in the 1937 Constitution drafted under Éamon de Valera still resonates with Irish feminists today.



Hanna, a former member of the Fianna Fáil party, was quick to take de Valera and his party to account, noting in her article on the Irish Constitution published in *Prison Bars*, that "there is no woman in Mr de Valera's Cabinet and but two in his party".

“The material is well structured and the division into 17 sections is effective”

While the Decade of Centenaries in Ireland has ensured that even more primary source material is readily available relating to the nationalist movement in Ireland through such resources as the Military Archives, there are fewer resources available about topics covered in this volume.

Women's writings about, the often complex area of suffrage in Ireland, women's access to education and feminist reflections during the interwar years are not readily available. This collection is original in that it focuses on the political writings of a woman who was involved in numerous significant campaigns in Ireland and negotiated with key characters in Britain, America and across Europe during turbulent political times.

The material is well structured and the division into 17 sections is effective and follows a clear chronology that also maps the development of Sheehy Skeffington's political concerns.

The introductions by Ward to each section are concise, clear and effective. The chronology at the beginning of the volume is extremely effective in situating not only key points in Sheehy Skeffington's life but offers a wider context by including dates in which women's organisations were founded or when related legislation was introduced.

A foreword written by Hanna's granddaughter, Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, is wonderful on many aspects. Micheline is a highly respected feminist campaigner in her own right having won a landmark case against NUI Galway for gender discrimination in the promotion of academic staff. It seems most appropriate to include her writing in such a volume.

Essential guide

Margaret Ward is a pioneer of women's history having written publications that paved the way for others to expand on what was an ignored aspect of Irish history. This publication builds on Ward's previous works, most obviously on her landmark biography, *Hanna Sheehy Skeffington: A Life* (1997).

The biography has become an essential research guide on this radical feminist campaigner and this new publication complements and extends on this. Having read this book in production, it is a pleasure to read the beautifully produced final publication.

WebWatch

Greg Daly

Discerning truth among the noise and the bluster

At times one wonders about the loudest voices on the Catholic internet – the old adage about empty cans making the most noise can seem alarmingly apt. Andrea Tornielli surely has a point on lastampa.it when he observes: "Too many are causing unceasing confusion in their self-referential media circles and then say that today in the Church 'there is confusion'."

Last week saw the Vatican flatly denying rumours – originating, it seems, with a firstthings.com piece by Marco Tosatti, previously responsible for risible stories about Cardinal Gerhard Müller – that a commission is working on an 'ecumenical Mass' where Catholics and Protestants can take Communion together.

Not that such denials will stop speculation about what was behind this rumour. Writing at catholiceraid.co.uk, for instance, Fr Alexander Lucie-Smith says the idea would always have been a non-starter not least because there was never any hint that there were Protestant or Orthodox theologians on board.

"However," he continues, "the suspicion that will not go away is that this was some sort of kite-flying exercise by the certain elements in the Church." Maybe, but if so, it's worth noting it has primarily been those who've made a show of parading their orthodoxy while flaunting their antipathy towards the Holy Father who published and gave oxygen to this rumour.

Commission

Strikingly, Fr Ray Blake, a Brighton-based priest prominent on the English Catholic internet, wondered on his Twitter account [@rayblake](https://twitter.com/rayblake) whether even if there was no 'commission' working on such a project, there might be a 'group', 'individuals', 'committee', 'junta' or even 'commissariate' doing so.



Prof. Rocco Buttiglione.

It is hard to see how such behaviour contributes towards truth, trust or indeed tranquility, in contrast to former CDF chief Cardinal Müller's attempt at "restoring peace in the Church" through comments on Pope Francis' family encyclical *Amoris Laetitia* in an introduction to a book by Prof. Rocco Buttiglione.

“Amoris Laetitia must be read in terms of established Church teaching”

Prof. Buttiglione, a philosopher and onetime collaborator of St John Paul, had, the German cardinal said, offered a "reasoned and not controversial" answer to the *dubia* or 'doubts' four cardinals put forward last year, and also shown how a thesis "similar to the '*correctio filialis*' text...does not correspond to the reality of the facts".

The introduction can be read at lastampa.it, and while Prof. Buttiglione's book is not online there, the recent seal of approval should prompt us to revisit his earlier *Amoris Laetitia* comments, especially given how Vienna's Cardinal Christoph Schönborn has previously praised his work in this regard.

Key among Prof. Buttiglione's interventions on *Amoris* are a May interview for lastampa.it where he said *Amoris* was taking a "step forward" on a path mapped out by St John Paul, a July article for the Vatican's own osservatoreromano.va entitled 'The joy of love

and the consternation of theologians', an August essay for firstthings.com entitled 'A Pastoral approach', and – crucially – his response to the *dubia* in lastampa.it last November.

Cardinal Müller's introduction should be read too, of course, perhaps accompanied by the interview from the Italian website LaNuovaBQ.it that is translated – complete with a typically misleading headline and introduction – on the ever unreliable lifesitenews.com.

Interview

In the interview, the cardinal reiterates – as the likes of Cardinal Schönborn and Prof. Buttiglione have done elsewhere – that *Amoris Laetitia* must be read in terms of established Church teaching, and cites how there are nominal Christians who are married in Church to please family members, years later returning to the Faith and questioning whether their marriages had been sacramental.

"The issue here is not about the indissolubility of sacramental marriage, but about the validity of many marriages that aren't really valid," the cardinal said, stressing that this is not a matter of granting free access to the Sacraments, but of establishing the validity or otherwise of things that might appear to have been indissoluble sacramental marriages.

We can say with the Pope, he says, that discernment is needed. The challenge, clearly, is to discern the nature of situations, and how best they should be handled.

Classifieds

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Ard Fheis - AGM

Nov 19th @ 2.30pm

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Dublin 1

Newcomers are welcome
Fáilte

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

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No. 6179

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If you would like to contact me, please feel free to do so.

Michael Collender

Tel: 0876873265

Email: michaelcollender@eircom.net

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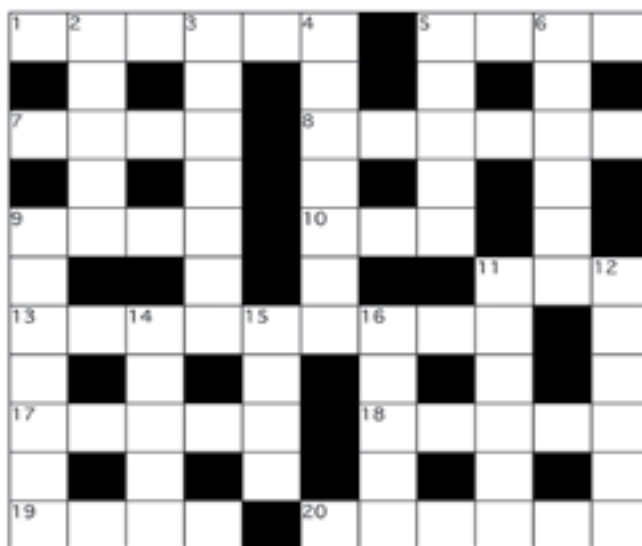
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Leisure time

Crossword Junior

Gordius 208



ACROSS

- 1 Black and white bears (6)
 5 Out of danger (4)
 7 Use a kettle to do this to water (4)
 8 Creature (6)
 9 You can relax in this while getting lovely and clean (4)
 10 Babe was one (3)
 11 You might find this moisture on the grass early in the morning (3)
 13 Machine for cutting the grass (9)
 17 The nut of an oak tree (5)
 18 Get onto your feet (5)
 19 Golfers put them in the ground before hitting their first shots (4)
 20 When you play on this, one person goes up while the other goes down (6)

DOWN

- 2 The lovely smell of some foods (5)
 3 Friendly sea mammal (7)
 4 Use it when you wash your hair (7)
 5 Be careful - that bee might _____ you! (5)
 6 Paris and Lourdes are in this country (6)
 9 The biggest city in Northern Ireland (7)
 11 You might have these when you are asleep (6)
 12 Part of your house that is made of glass (6)
 14 Used a pen or pencil, perhaps (5)
 15 Hair on a horse's or lion's neck (4)
 16 You should recycle _____ paper (5)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.324

Across - 1 Fir 3 Black market 8 Invent 9 Ambrosia 10 Hurry
 11 Dregs 13 Flash 15 Auditor 20 Sound 21 Rough justice
 23 Balti 24 Helsinki 25 Battle 26 Back streets 27 Sip

Down - 1 Faith Healer 2 Reverend 3 Bonny 4 Chateau 5 Aired
 6 Kissed 7 Tea 12 Sunny side up 13 Flows 14 Hyped 17 Inflates
 19 Public opinion 22 Hails 23 Brass 24 Hub

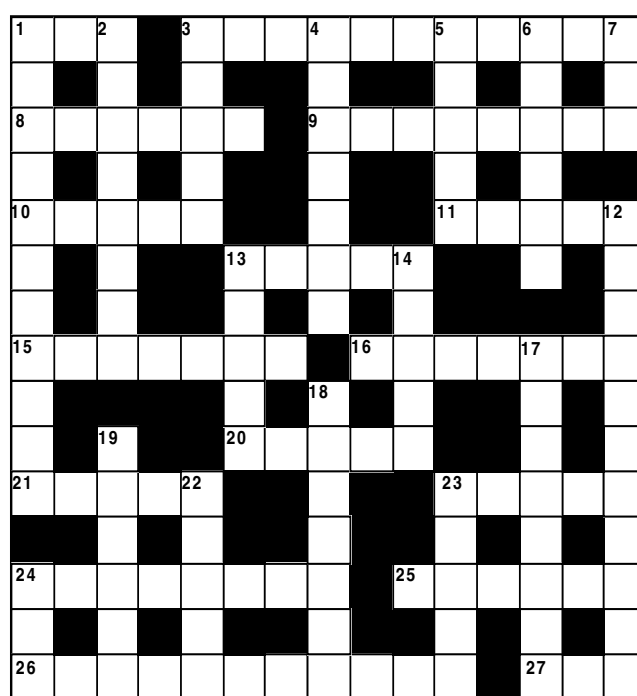
CHILDREN'S No.207

Across - 1 Pain 5 Wild 7 Eve 8 Autumn 9 Bucket 10 Hand 12 Lab
 16 Cup of tea 18 Homer 20 Rhino 21 Cargo 22 Weekend

Down - Album 3 Necklace 4 Heats 5 Witch 6 Lemon 11 Diamond
 13 Burrow 14 Course 15 Chick 17 Twice 19 Mars

Crossword

Gordius 325



ACROSS

- 1 Variety of lettuce (3)
 3 Regulation for hitchhikers? By and large (4,2,5)
 8 After the return of cuts, the firm manufactures plaster (6)
 9 & 24a I sang to a comedian about a walk in Spain (6,2,8)
 10 & 13a The smallest mammal native to the British isles (5,5)
 11 The longest river in France (5)
 13 See 10 across
 15 Walked in military fashion - grand and bowed (7)
 16 Six-sided plane figure (7)
 20 Repairs with needlework (5)
 21 Bronze medal position (5)
 23 The time it takes to get a word into letters! (5)
 24 See 9 across
 25 Glasgow football club, known as the Bhoys (6)
 26 It might make for a merry garden, but it creates an unfair constituency! (11)
 27 Everyone (3)

DOWN

- 1 Money to be given the late Johnny? No cheques then (4,7)
 2 One who 'imports' a horse among riotous lemurs (8)

- 3 Descriptive of a mountain range played by Stallone? (5)
 4 They engrave the crest he repositioned (7)
 5 Legal proceedings, or an experimental test (5)
 6 Place of perfection written about by Sir Thomas More (6)
 7 Cricket extra (3)
 12 Leaving lace around makes one zealous regarding Scripture (11)
 13 Splash out (5)
 14 Not KS, but ks, these periods of time! (5)
 17 Beverage to drink while putting? (5,3)
 18 This soldier finds love in a monster! (7)
 19 The main meal of the day (6)
 22 Lacy table mat (5)
 23 Guide or navigate (5)
 24 Droop (3)



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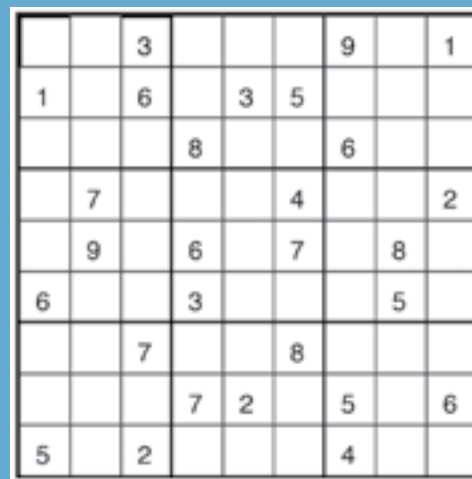
Sudoku Corner

208

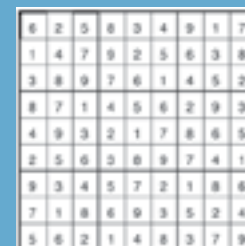
Easy



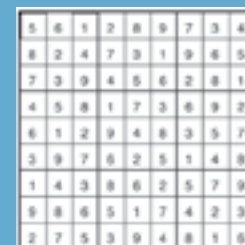
Hard



Last week's Easy 207



Last week's Hard 207



Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



A reflection for the month of November

SOME YEARS AGO while living in the Washington DC area I had an opportunity to visit the Vietnam Memorial Wall. The monument is a long black granite wall with thousands of names of those who lost their lives in the war. As I walked slowly through the memorial site a number of things struck me.

Firstly it was the silence. Even though there were crowds of people a hushed reverence imbued the atmosphere. Secondly, I noticed a number of people obviously searching for a particular name. When they found their loved one they moved very slowly as if approaching something very sacred and would then touch the name. As if to embrace their loved one some very gently moved their fingers over the letters. Some just wept while others even knelt in prayer.

Rituals

As I reflected on this scene and the sacred intimate rituals that were unfolding before my eyes, I wondered about the relationship that had existed between the living person and the name on the wall. It had to be something very special or it would not have created such a reaction.



Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington DC.

There were hundreds of people at the memorial that day, most of them just spectators or tourists like myself. They could touch lots

of names and have no reaction whatsoever. But to others, those names, or rather, this name was a cause for emotion and many tears.

A FULL CONFESSION: In the days when many people went to confession a priest turned up late to celebrate the sacrament with his parishioners. There was quite a queue waiting for him and as he had Mass in a short while he did his best to hurry along the penitents. One older lady was taking her time over her sins and the priest was becoming agitated as he looked at his watch. In his frustration he said to the penitent: "Are there many after you?" The woman answered with some surprise: "Well Father, not now that I'm 80 years of age but when I was in my 20s, half the parish was after me!"

I was reminded of this scene a few weeks ago when we had our annual Memorial Mass here in the parish. We were remembering eighty people who had died in the last year, either in the parish or connected to someone in the community.

As each name was called a loved one came forward and placed a lighted candle bearing the name of the deceased before the altar. Just as at the Vietnam memorial many had tears in their eyes as they came forward. I was particularly struck by one woman who came forward to light a candle for her brother. Michael had gone to England 40 years ago and lost all contact with his family.

Circumstances

By an extraordinary set of circumstances, the family discovered this year that Michael had died in 2012 and his ashes had sat on the shelf of an undertaker's office in London for almost five years. Just a few months ago Michael's family were able to bring him home and reunite him with his parents in the family grave here in the parish. As I watched his sister come forward to light Michael's candle there were tears

*Is there a leaf upon the tree
The Father does not see.
Leaves fall, so do we all
Return to earth, to sod.
Sparrows and Kings,
And all manner of things
Fall, fall into the hands
Of the living God.*

of sadness yes but also tears of joy that her beloved brother was being remembered with reverence in the place of his birth.

The month of November is the month when the Christian community throughout the world remembers its dead. We do not remember to be sad or nostalgic about those whom we have loved and lost.

We remember in hope and in faith a hope and a faith which allows us to know that the death of those we love is not the end of their story or the story of our relationship with them.



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Please help The Little Way to relieve the pangs of starvation of countless children and adults throughout the world. Each year millions die of hunger and disease. According to some estimates, somebody dies from hunger every 10 seconds. Recent decades have seen remarkable economic progress worldwide, but there are still many poor people - perhaps as many as one billion (1,000,000,000).

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