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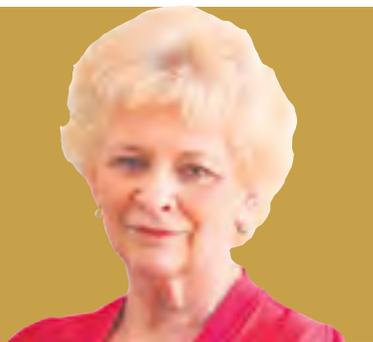
GIFTS THAT MATTER

Eight-page guide to Advent and Christmas presents Pages 17-24



NUALA O'LOAN

Does the Church deserve to die? Page 8



SPIRITUALITY

When we just cannot pray Page 30



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Boost as research reveals Irish are 'astonishingly religious'

Greg Daly

Organisers of next year's World Meeting of Families in Dublin – which Pope Francis is expected to attend – will be buoyed up by new research which reveals that Irish people remain among the most religious in Europe.

Despite a fall-off in church attendance, more than one in three Irish Catholics still attend Mass weekly leading one number-cruncher to describe Irish people as "astonishingly religious" by the standards of the western world.

Commenting on the release of new figures from the European Social Survey (ESS), Prof. Stephen Bullivant told *The Irish Catholic* that "Ireland being remarkably religious once you look at any other western modern nation really does stand out".

Social attitudes

The survey found that in 2016, 36% of Irish adults still attended a religious service at least once a week, this figure being only slightly down on the 2014 figure of 37% and second only to Poland among the 18 countries surveyed.

The ESS, which is one of the biggest surveys of social attitudes across Europe, is conducted every two years.

Across the 18 countries surveyed, the percentage who attend religious

» Continued on Page 2

Forever blowing bubbles...



A perfect sunny day as Sr Marie Therese Brosnan delights Caitlin Barry, blowing bubbles with her in the garden of St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn, Co. Waterford. The picture is contained in a new book, *A Year in the Life of Glencairn Abbey*, which – through a series of images and words – offers a rare insight into the daily life of the only Cistercian monastery for women in Ireland. The coffee table-style book is published by Columba Press with accompanying photographs courtesy of photographer Valerie O'Sullivan, Killarney. See www.columba.ie

Paradise Papers reveal 'immoral' tax avoidance as homeless suffer

Chai Brady

Elaborate tax avoiding methods used by wealthy Irish people and companies revealed in the Paradise Papers have been condemned by Catholic charity workers who are fighting the homeless crisis.

After 13.4 million records were leaked to German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* some of Ireland's wealthiest businessmen and celebrities were linked to valuable assets stashed in offshore holding companies.

Fr Peter McVerry dubbed the findings "absolutely appalling and scandalous". He said that although the wealthy are able to afford the services needed in order to find loopholes that allow them to retain large amounts of their assets, "in many cases it's probably legal, but totally immoral".

The records reveal the financial interests of hundreds of politicians worldwide, links between Russia

» Continued on Page 4

DAVID QUINN

Mere consent is not enough PAGE 9



IRELAND GETS READY

Registration milestone for WMOF2018 PAGE 13



MARY KENNY

A once-banned song may be banned again PAGE 11



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Inside this week

Heroic virtue

Risking all to save children from the Holocaust

Pages 31 & 33



WMOF Countdown

Reaching the 1,000th registration milestone

Page 13



Green Fingers

It's time to get your garden ready for winter

Page 34



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Tragedies raise profound questions for people of Faith

When bad things happen to good people – what philosophers and theologians call the problem of evil – is one of the most troubling and persistent questions facing religious believers. How does one reconcile belief in the existence of a God who is all-loving and all-powerful with the reality of evil in the world?

It's a question that echoes down the centuries and was asked at Auschwitz, Rwanda and Srebrenica, to name just a few places that have become bywords for man's inhumanity to man.

This week marks the 30th anniversary of the Enniskillen bombing when a Provisional IRA explosion killed 12 people attending a Remembrance Day ceremony. We might well ask: "Where was God?"

Mass shooting

The same thought comes to mind in the aftermath of the mass shooting at the church in Sutherland Springs in Texas at the weekend that saw 26 worshippers lose their lives.

How – as people of faith – do we make sense of such senseless tragedies?

There are no easy answers, and pious phrases do little to soothe the reality of the heart-aching pain that provokes the question. In fact, overly-simplified book-learned answers can often put the final nail in the coffin of a faith that a bereaved person is struggling to hold on to by their



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

fingertips.

We need to be honest and admit that religious faith does not automatically make the questions any easier to answer. How often have we heard people of faith utter the clumsy phrase "it was God's will". It's a well-meaning phrase, but how could such barbaric acts be the will of God? Who would ever want to know such a God, never mind love and serve him?

“You lean in to the Lord...whatever life brings to you, lean on the Lord rather than your own understanding”

No, there are no easy answers. But, we do know that God is there in the heartbreak and suffering. We saw in Enniskillen when Gordon Wilson – who had just seen his 20-year-old daughter Marie die as he held her hand – react not with anger, but with love. "I bear no ill will. I bear no grudge. Dirty sort of talk is not going to bring her back to life...she was a pet. She's dead. She's in heaven and we shall meet again. I will pray for these men tonight and every night."

They were the words of a man of extraordinary and heroic faith and are among the most-remembered from the decades of conflict.

I thought about them again this week when I watched the Texas Pastor respond to the shooting that had left his 14-year-old adopted daughter among the dead in Sutherland Springs.

As he was finishing his tribute to his daughter, Frank Pomeroy was asked by a reporter: "What do you tell the other grieving families?" His response was as swift as it was honest, "I'm still working on that," he said. He then turned back to face the camera saying: "Christ is the one who is going to be lifted up, that's what I'm telling everybody: you lean in to what you don't understand – you lean in to the Lord...whatever life brings to you, lean on the Lord rather than your own understanding.

"I don't understand, but I know my God does, and that's where I'll leave that," he said.

It is a remarkable testimony of faith and trust in the midst of the most appalling tragedy.

Faith is, above all else, the overwhelming trust that – in the end – all will be well. Even when we can't see it.

Boost for Church with survey results

» **Continued from Page 1**
services at least once a week was 12.8%.

Prof. Bullivant, who is director of the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society at St Mary's University, Twickenham, said there are two very different ways of

looking at the data.

"If you compare it to Ireland 30 years ago, there's obviously a significant decline there, but if you compare Ireland to any other modern western country, it's astonishingly religious," he said.

"It's perfectly natural for

people in the Church in Ireland to see decline," he continued. "But from anybody on the outside, the remarkable story is how long Irish religiosity – especially for an Anglophone society – has held up."

According to the 2016 survey, 26.3% of Irish people claim not to belong to any particular religion or denomination, a slight increase from the 2014 figure of 25.2%, while the number of Irish people who say they pray at least once a week has dropped from 60% to 55.3%.

Even these figures compare favourably to Ireland's neighbours, where the average number of people across

the 18 countries saying they belong to a religion is 43.4%, with just 30% of people praying at least weekly.

Prof. Bullivant added that even people in Ireland's least religious age group, those aged 15 to 34, are more likely to adhere to and practice their religion than almost any of their peers in Europe.

"Even if you're looking at the youngest generation who are notably less religious than parents or grandparents, compared to their peers they are remarkably religious," he said, adding that "to have got this far into the 21st Century with economic growth etc, and to still be so religious is remarkable".

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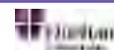
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Married priests may be gaining momentum with synod proposal

Greg Daly

The prospect of having married priests is looking more likely, the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) has said, following the Pope having given permission for the issue to be discussed at a synod of bishops.

Commenting on reports that the possibility of married men being ordained to the priesthood would be on the agenda of a special Synod of Bishops for Latin America's Pan-Amazon region to be held in Rome in October 2019, the ACP said: "It is an issue that is gaining momentum".

It is understood that Pope Francis agreed to allow the issue to be considered following a request from Brazil's Cardinal Claudio Hummes, president of the Episcopal Commission for the Amazon, who asked the Pontiff about the possibility of ordaining so-called 'viri probati' – mar-

ried men of great faith – to enable the Church's ministry in the region.

The main purpose of the Amazon gathering, the Pontiff has said, will be to identify new paths for evangelisation in the region, which covers Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Peru, Venezuela and Surinam. Particular attention, he said, should be paid to the region's "often forgotten" indigenous people.

Challenge

The challenge of ministering to such remote communities is particularly acute in a region where there is just one priest for every 10,000 lay people and where evangelical and Pentecostal Christians and pagan sects challenge Catholicism.

The Pontiff has previously said ordaining married men could help address such situations, recalling that clerical

celibacy is a discipline of the Church rather than a dogma, and telling Germany's *Die Zeit* newspaper earlier this year that: "We must consider if *viri probati* is a possibility. Then we must determine

what tasks they can perform, for example, in remote communities."

Others have expressed concerns about whether married priests are a real solution to vocational shortages,

with Meath-based priest and EWTN contributor Fr John Hogan, for example, noting that the first responsibility of married priests is to their marriage and family, rather than their parish.

"If a priest has his hours he does them as with other jobs, but outside of that, family," he said, adding, "If I were married, my priority would be my wife and children, as it should be for any married man."



Loreto nun Sr Orla Treacy, with a statue of Msgr Hugh O'Flaherty in Killarney after being awarded the 2017 Hugh O'Flaherty International Humanitarian Award at the weekend. Sr Orla is principal of the Loreto school in Rumbek, South Sudan, where she has been a missionary since 2006. Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan

Irish nun's assault spurs internet wave of support

Chai Brady

After an Irish nun revealed she was spat at by a member of the public in Dublin there has been an overwhelmingly supportive response.

The nun, who is a former principal of a Catholic school in the capital, lamented that many people's attitude towards nuns drastically changed in Ireland after the "horrible" abuse scandals. Her experience was published on social media and had huge traction, with thousands of people offering encouragement on several online platforms.

According to 'Humans of Dublin', a Facebook page set up to make people more attentive to the lives of others, she said that after the incident: "I never thought I would have to deal with this sort of treatment at my age. I don't think people like us anymore and it makes me very sad..."

A former pupil posted online: "This lady was the principal at my school. You couldn't meet a more inspiring, selfless, forward thinking, modern nun. This breaks my heart."

Another said: "I'm terribly sorry this happened to you. The actions of the few do not reflect the many. You are the first memory I have from school (the 8 times tables are still my favourite) and still inspire me to this day. Actions

not words."

Many others decried her treatment, saying no one should be subjected to such abhorrent behaviour.

The Irish Catholic visited the nun in her Dublin convent this week, but she declined to comment.

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Despite NI peace, many Catholics intimidated from their homes

Staff reporter

Some 10,000 families – the vast majority of them believed to be Catholic – have been intimidated from their homes in the North since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, according to new figures. However, the figures, compiled by the Belfast-based investigative website Detail Data, may be much higher since many incidents allegedly go unreported to the authorities.

Between 2012/13 and 2016/17 alone a total of 2,060 incidents of housing intimidation were accepted by the region's Housing Executive. The Executive spent £6.7million (£7.6million) buying 57 houses from homeowners forced out of their property by paramilitary activity, sectarianism or because of their race, sexual orientation or disability. The executive also paid out £808,174 (€918,776)

in emergency grants to more than 1,000 householders who had to move from their rented homes.

However, court figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show just 32 convictions were secured for the offence of "intimidation – causing person to leave residence/occupation" between March 2011 and August 2016.

The location of many of the reported incidents suggests the involvement of loyalist paramilitaries – a sample of data from the past two years showed the overwhelming majority were recorded in Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Ards and North Down and the Antrim and Newtownabbey council areas. The PSNI does not record housing intimidation in its own right, rather including it in an overarching category encompassing all forms of intimidation offences.

New abbot at Mount Mellaray



Bishop Fintan Monahan, Bishop William Lee, Bishop Phonsie Cullinan, Dom André Barbour, Bishop Kieran O'Reilly and Bishop Willie Walsh with Mount Mellaray's Abbot Richard Purcell (centre) ahead of a Mass to invoke God's blessing on the new abbot and his ministry. Photo: Oisín McHugh/True Media

Drowning out pro-life voices in Oxford

Staff reporter

An Oxford University pro-life group has expressed dismay at "a deliberate attempt to shut down discussion and dialogue" during a talk by Irish Catholic columnist Breda O'Brien [pictured] and barrister Lorcan Price.



The two speakers addressed an Oxford Students for Life (OSFL) event in St John's College on November 1, but shortly after Mrs O'Brien began to speak a group of about 15 students from the university students' union's women's campaign began shouting her down, continuing this for about 40 minutes.

Security hired by the college asked the protesters to leave, and called the police. Eventually the speakers completed their presentations in another room.

Veritas returns to profitability

Greg Daly

The publishing wing of the Church in Ireland has returned to profitability after some turbulent years, according to latest figures filed with the Companies Registration Office.

Veritas, the Irish bishops' publishing arm, has been struggling for years, battling with an uncertain retail climate, but 2016 saw the company making a small net profit of €15,801.

However, given that the company's annual turnover is €6,515,277 the profit is extremely modest raising serious questions about how efficient Veritas can be at keeping its costs under control.

The latest accounts show that for every €10 spent in Veritas shops or on Veritas publications, just 2c ultimately counts towards the company's profits.

Improvement

But, 2016 shows a marked improvement in the company's fortunes given that 2015 had ended with its balance sheet burdened with a cumulative loss figure over recent years of €5,431,423.

That this has been reduced, even just to €5,417,239, by the close of 2016 shows a real improvement, and one that stands in stark contrast to how that same cumulative figure had risen by €496,580 over the previous year.

Key to the improvement is the long-heralded impact of the 'Grow in Love' series of primary school textbooks. Last year's accounts claimed that Veritas had performed strongly in the second half of 2015, owing to the launch of the new school programme and improved sales in books and gifts, and although this wasn't obvious in the 2015 accounts it appears to be paying off now.

Almost wholly absent from this year's accounts is any reference to Veritas' dealings in the USA, something that as late as 2014 was still leeching money from the company owing to the "continued investment costs arising on the establishment of the Credo programme", which by December 31 2014 had been adopted by 139 schools.

Expensive

On the face of it, the programme is still proving expensive to run – among the company's administrative expenses, only salaries and PRSI contributions are more expensive than 'US selling and distribution costs', but without figures for US turnover, it's difficult to assess these costs.

See Page 11.

Paradise Papers tax avoidance

Continued from Page 1

and US president Donald Trump's commerce secretary and even Queen Elizabeth II's offshore interests.

Offshore companies are often used by drug traffickers and money launderers as fronts, as it is almost impossible to track the owners.

Bro. Kevin Crowley of Dublin's Capuchin Day Centre, however, thought such developments are nothing new.

"That's always the case – the wealthy will always be exempt from various problems, as though they're no problem for them, whereas the poor will always suffer," he said.

Describing the exploitation and ill-treatment of tenants by landlords as a "scandal", he said the number of people having to turn to the Capuchin Day Centre continues to rise.

"It's a crying shame," he added, pointing out that "until houses are provided, we're going to have problems".

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A once-banned song may be banned again



Mary Kenny

I was chatting with a group of friends, and the conversation turned to the mood of the times – with particular application to the new sensitivities around sexual harassment and those who prey on young girls.

“Remember that song that Maurice Chevalier used to sing, *Thank Heavens for Little Girls*? It would be banned if it were published nowadays. The implication is downright paedophile,” someone remarked.

I then recalled that it was banned on what was then called Radio Éireann, when it first came out in the 1950s. And it was withdrawn from the playlist for that very reason – it was considered ‘suggestive’ of something unwholesome.

Innocent

I was a schoolgirl at the time, and, as far as I remember, we didn’t “get” any paedophile allusions – possibly because we were fortunately innocent of such notions.

The lyrics were part of the movie *Gigi*, which came out



Maurice Chevalier.

in 1958. Neither, I think, did we fully understand the drift of Colette’s original story: the young girl Gigi is being trained up by her aunts to become the mistress of a wealthy man.

Then the wealthy man – the scrumptious Louis Jourdan – surprises them all by wanting to marry her. The original French narrative was rendered a little bit more respectable by Hollywood, which, at that time,

complied with a code of screen morals.

But isn’t it interesting how things often come full circle? Critics of Radio Éireann thought it prudish to ban certain songs (*Oh Dear, What Can the Matter Be?*) also came under a prohibition, as there was a vulgarised version suggesting an impropriety, but we have returned to an age where what is ‘lewd’ and ‘inappropriate’ can attract not just a prohibition, but can ruin an entire career.

The permissive society shook the roots of post-Victorian decorum – and many of us eagerly joined in with the shaking process – but it then went way, way too far.

And so, as Kipling writes in his poem ‘The Gods of the Copybook Headings’, human society is wearily brought back to re-learn some of the old lessons once again.

A politically-correct phrase too far

Words are significant and it intrigues me that, increasingly, the word “death” is being replaced in everyday usage by the euphemism “passed away”. In broadcast media, in newspapers, in everyday speech, we are told that someone who has died has “passed away”.

Originally, I believe, this phrase was of American, even perhaps Californian, coinage, where it was introduced by funeral parlours – along with the practice of applying cosmetics to the deceased – to minimise the awe of death, and to prettify its

impact. “Passed over” was also used by spiritualists, who, in their séances, would claim to contact those who had “passed over” to the spirit world.

Perhaps people have always used euphemisms to soften the sorrow and grief that accompanies death. Cemeteries have been described as “gardens of repose”, and those buried there as “sleeping”.

Christians who look to the afterlife of eternity may speak about “departing this world”, which I like.

Death notices remain unflinchingly moving, and I love the Irish coda often

added: “Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dilis.” It evokes the soul.

Older people have their own jesting references to life’s end. “Falling off the perch.” “Handing in the dinner pail.”

“Let’s face it,” I heard one olderster say to another, “we’re in the departure lounge.” “Frankly,” the other replied, “we’re on the tarmac!”

But “passed away” is increasingly the common currency, and I don’t, for some reason, feel easy with it. Perhaps it’s a little too redolent of the Californian funeral parlour.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pupils reunite priest with long-lost medals

The young pupils of a Limerick school surprised a grateful priest with replicas of his long-lost All-Ireland winning medals.

The Confirmation class of Caherline National School were asked to choose an act of kindness, and decided to help Fr Par Currivan after he mentioned he had lost the medals from the minor finals in 1952 and 1953.

“The pupils read out pieces describing what Fr Currivan meant to them. The medals and photographs were then presented to an emotional and gracious Fr Currivan. He was overwhelmed at the effort the pupils went to. We are extremely proud of the pupils and their project,” Principle Michael McCarthy told the *Limerick Leader*.

Fr Currivan has served the Caherconlish/Caherline parish for 39 years and thanked the children for their kindness.

100,000 saved by NI pro-life laws

The North’s pro-life laws should be supported, a leading member of the SDLP has said. Noting how almost nine million children have been aborted in Britain since the passage of the 1967 Abortion Act, Alban Maginness, Belfast North MLA from 1998 to 2016, wrote in *The Belfast Telegraph* that over 100,000 babies in the North have been spared a similar fate over the same period.

Mr Maginness criticised the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission for wanting to water down pro-life protections.

‘The sick? Hug them anyway...’

There’s currently a public notice at Dublin Airport alerting passengers to the MERS virus (Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome), which originated in camels. Travellers are instructed

to “avoid contact with sick people or animals”.

This is sensible, but it did occur to me that many of the saints deliberately chose to maintain contact with sick and contagious people, to

care for the leper, not to shun him.

While avoiding contact with sick people or animals is prudent, it probably isn’t what Mother Teresa of Calcutta would have done.



Chuffing and puffing its way towards your local cinema.

● A detective story is basically a morality tale. At the beginning of the luscious new production of *Murder on the Orient Express*, Hercule Poirot is heard to announce firmly: “There is right and there is wrong!” Poirot is the avenging angel of justice who restores the world to moral order.

But the star of this movie, for me, is the 1930s locomotive as

it wends its way from a colourful Istanbul right through the snowy Balkans, its great axles turning and smoke belching from its funnels. The film is high on glamour but somewhat lacks pace and Poirot finally finds that allotting justice can be a complex task.

But how gorgeous were those high Continental choo-choos!



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Children leaving State care face immediate homelessness

Chai Brady

A huge proportion of young people leaving State care are becoming homeless as social workers scramble to find accommodation, according to several Irish charities.

The Department of Youth Affairs offers an aftercare service which aims to offer guidance and practical supports with regards to education, financial support, social network support and training for young people leaving care, but charities have said the service is woefully overstretched.

Alan Neary of Focus Ireland told *The Irish Catholic* that: "Every young person at risk needs a dedicated aftercare worker. However, many services are stretched to breaking point as staff often have caseloads of over 30 young people."

"In our experience each worker should have a caseload of no more than 15 to 20 young people."

Focus Ireland call for a greater emphasis on employment and training so young people can sustainably exit the service into housing, and that there should be "targeted mental health support".

Merchants Quay Ireland youth worker Antoinette Peel said that from January to September of this year 55 of 136 (40%) of the 18-25 year olds she has worked with came from State care.

She said that many aftercare workers are hitting brick walls as affordable accommodation is almost non-existent, particularly in Dublin.

"All of these kids don't asked to be put into care, so when they come into adults homeless services it's quite frightening for them, you try and keep it on the short term."

"A lot of people think homelessness is related to drugs, a good percentage of my clients are drug free," said Ms Peel, who motivates and assists young people to pursue their goals, adding that

many young people never had someone who believes in them.

In 2016 MQI supported 204 young people, an increase of 24% compared to 2015.

The Peter McVerry Trust operates a special 18-25 year old hostel in Dublin, and last year, out of 74 people who accessed the service, 50% had a history of State care.

Spokesman Frances Doherty said: "In the development of Rebuilding Ireland we secured via Minister Zappone ringfenced funds to provide housing for young people leaving care. The scheme has only just rolled out and we will be buying a significant number of properties in Dublin and Kildare to house care leavers."

The charity began providing the first aftercare housing in Kildare and have housed five young people this year with plans to increase numbers in Dublin, Kildare, Limerick and others areas that we now operate."

Homeless children are everyone's responsibility – Sr Stan

Almost 300 families have been helped out of homelessness this year by Focus Ireland, the charity has said at the launch of its annual Christmas Appeal.

Highlighting how over 3,000 children are homeless nationwide, the charity said that while Ireland's homeless crisis continues to worsen, with a record total of 8374 people now homeless, things would be even worse without the lifeline services and housing Focus provides.

The charity revealed that in the first nine months of this year it supported 12,318 people who were homeless or at risk of losing their home compared to 11,744 in the same period in 2016. Over the same January to September period it helped 290 families – including 556 children – out of homelessness, up from 230 families over the same period last year.

"They are our children too and we have



Sr Stan with Sean Wade, Sarah Moran and their children Zoe and Summer at the launch of Focus Ireland's Christmas Appeal. Sean and his family were homeless for over two years when they lost their home in the private rented market.

a duty as a society to provide a safe home for them," Sr Stan said.

Government urged not to rely on private renting

Using public funds to pay private landlords to house homeless people is not sustainable due to the increasing cost and lack of housing according to Fr Peter McVerry.

In the Peter McVerry Trust's Annual Report 2016 the accommodation team stated that throughout 2016 there was a need to secure

"exceptional payments" above the rent supplement and Housing Assistance Programme (HAP) rate, which they said 'demonstrated the lack of available affordable accommodation within the rates set by the Government'.

Fr McVerry said it was a "flawed" government policy to rely too heavily on schemes like the HAP.

"We have to provide social housing, we can either build them or use the empty building, the 183,000 empty houses and apartments that lie around the country, some of them not suitable but many of them are suitable," said Fr McVerry, adding that Compulsory Purchase Orders should be pursued.

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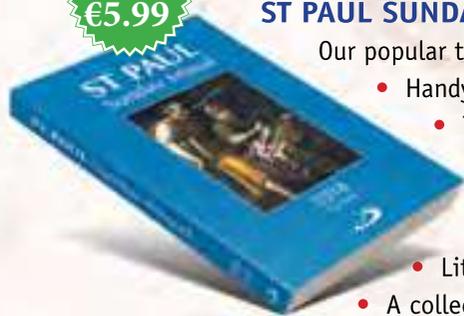
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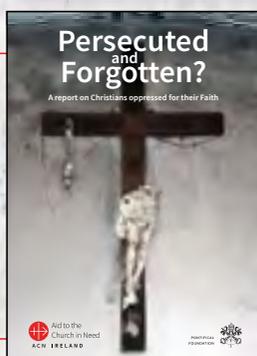
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WEAR RED - LIGHT RED



Nuala O'Loan

The View



Does the Church deserve to die?

I recently spent a morning with religious education teachers and diocesan workers from the Diocese of Derry talking about the teaching of relationship and sex education. I met a wonderful group of lively, compassionate, caring, interested and dedicated young people.

The following day in Galway, I met priests, brothers and sisters who belong to religious congregations. The eldest, Sr Alberta, was 92 and approaching the 70th anniversary of her profession as a Dominican nun, the youngest, Fr Eddie, was a Jesuit who looked as if he was in his thirties. Two very different groups but united in two ways - their common



Catholic faith and their understanding of what it meant and why it mattered.

Both the young people in Derry, and the religious in Galway were contemplating the fundamental call to holiness and the living of

lives in the world today. The religious were looking back to how it was for them as they answered the call to vocation in the Church, what they had done and continue to do in that vocation, and how they continue to live the

call to holiness in a world which has changed so much.

Holiness

The young teachers from Derry were contemplating how best to help young people to grow in Faith, and to understand the Church's teaching about their call to holiness so that they know that they are loved by God, made to love God and one another and know how to live their lives as Catholics today. This is a real challenge, for what they teach is very often so far away from the experience of many of their students.

On occasions like these I am always humbled by the goodness I encounter, and I can learn so much so fast. It was like that this weekend.

In a world in which there is so much talk of the decline of the Catholic Church, it was good to hear about the work done over decades in Ireland, England, Brazil, Kenya, Uganda, Pakistan and many other countries.

All of us - young and old - face significant challenges to Faith. It is not fashionable now to believe in God. Many sneer at Faith, call it naive, (and worse) and reject it. Yet I do not think that many people who do so really understand what our Faith teaches.

Do they understand that the basis of our Faith is not just going to church on Sunday, but rather it is about that most fundamental of relationships - that which each of us have with God. We believe in God, and we believe that God made us in his own image and likeness. Believing that God loves us and that he lives in each of us, we learn to love him, and so we can come to love ourselves, and if we do that we will be able to love others as we are called to do.

“We believe that love of God is the basis for all the other relationships in our lives”

Do they understand that we believe that love of God is the basis for all the other relationships in our lives, especially the personal ones? It's about being able

to see our blessings, and be grateful for them, and about developing the ability to be strong and courageous when things don't go right, learning to trust God, and to discern that what we want, or what we want to do, is not necessarily right. It's about having the courage to face the fact that the purpose of life is not to enjoy one long party, and that those who portray it thus, as so much of social media does, are actually wrong. It's about working out how to live positive, fulfilled lives, and understanding that we can do so, even with very little. It's about turning away from the cult of the body perfect - how many people, male and female, suffer because their body is not exactly as they would wish it to be. How many carry false images of themselves, and live wanting to be like those whom they see in social media, on TV, in magazines etc.?

Bizarre message

Our Church teaches that love-making is for those who are married only. Almost a bizarre message in today's world, this belief that God made man and woman who may commit themselves to each other exclusively for life, to have and to hold, to love and to cherish, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, all within the wider family of the Church.

We believe too that is within the most intimate expression of human love inside family, that children are to be conceived, born, provided with love and stability, whatever the economic circumstances, that they too may grow in the love of God, as they journey home to him who made them and loves them.

It is because we believe in this love, that we believe that all life is sacred from conception to its natural end, and that each person is created by God. We do not believe that it is right deliberately to terminate a life. Abortion involves killing babies: there is no other way to describe the act of injecting chemicals into a baby's heart to stop it beating; of cutting babies

up in the womb in order to extract them limb by limb; of inducing the birth of babies who might well live if they were left to grow in the one place where they should be safe, and, where they survive induction, leaving them to die. The pro-choice lobby argues for safe abortion. There is no safe abortion, just clinical management of the death of a baby.

We believe that God made each of us for a purpose which is part of his divine plan for the world. We believe that we have a calling to live in love, with total generosity as Christ did, giving all we have for others.

It is a fact that members of our Church, some Catholics, have done wrong, sometimes terrible wrong, but the essential teaching of Christ is as real, as valid and as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago when that young man, who was the son of God, walked the dusty roads of the Holy Land.

“Many people in Ireland understand what St Teresa of Avila was reminding them of”

500 years ago, St Teresa of Avila wrote: “Christ has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he is to bless his people now.”

Many people in Ireland, like the young people from Derry and the slightly older people from Galway whom I met, understand what St Teresa of Avila was reminding them of, and they live it, giving generously with the love that never fails. That is why our Church does not deserve to die, as has been suggested. Jesus told us: “Be not afraid, and do not let your hearts be troubled. I am with you always.”

Believing this, we know that our Church will not die.



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Mere consent is not enough



Separating sex and love has been a disaster for men and women, writes **David Quinn**

Even Freud believed a certain amount of repression of our instincts was necessary to civilisation. Freud was the 'patron saint' of anti-repression but he saw that a certain amount of repression, or to put it another way, of 'civilised behaviour' was a sine qua non for, well, civilisation itself.

This belief of Freud's, and it was by no means original to him, comes to mind as we read about the sexual predations of the likes of Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein, various Hollywood actors, and at the lesser end of the spectrum, the former British Defence Secretary, Michael Fallon.

Each of these men acted on instincts they ought not to have acted on. Thousands of women have now come forward using the hashtag #metoo on Twitter to describe the ways in which they have been sexually harassed or abused at work and elsewhere.

Weinstein's behaviour, which includes allegations of rape, is at the extreme end of the spectrum. Fallon's behaviour (that we know of) involves a complaint, which he has basically admitted to, that he inappropriately and repeatedly touched a woman on the knee.

Speculation

It is interesting to speculate upon the reasons why Fallon felt he had to go and Bill Clinton managed to survive in office despite the far more serious complaints against him. Most famously there was his relationship with a much younger intern, Monica Lewinski that involved a huge imbalance of power between the two even if it was, on the face of it, consensual.

But much more serious allegations were made



against him by other women, including Paula Jones, Jaunita Broderick and Jennifer Flowers. Bill Clinton was nothing if not sexually predatory and yet for the most part feminists remained silent when these allegations surfaced in the 1990s.

They are not silent now, not about Weinstein or Fallon or any of the other sexual abusers and harassers whose names are coming to light. Women are being encouraged to fight back and show zero tolerance towards this kind of behaviour whether it is of the worst kind (which is obviously criminal as well), and the milder, Michael Fallon-kind.

“With the advent of the pill, the sex revolution dawned”

They are being urged to do this on behalf of all the other women who might become victims of these men and to make the workplace and all other places of interaction between the sexes, safer places.

What are Christians to make of this? Insofar as feminism seeks to make male sexual behaviour more civilised, they will be with them every inch of the way. Christianity, like all of the major religions, seeks to civilise the behaviour of both sexes. They have strict rules of sexual behaviour and for a long time had cruel sanctions, especially for women, when anyone stepped badly out of line.

Even leaving aside these cruel sanctions, Christianity's rules of conduct were still criticised, especially as the 20th Century progressed,

for being overly repressive. Christianity said people had to wait until marrying before having sex. This was also a way of saying marry before you have children.

But people didn't want to wait until they married before having sex and so, with the advent of the pill, the sex revolution dawned, and new rules of sexual behaviour had to be found.

In the end there was only one rule; consent. So long as the adults were consenting, no objection would be raised to them having sex, and that included 'casual sex', which is to say, having sex with someone you don't know, or barely know.

In fact, one of the leading feminists of the 1970s, Erica Jong, encouraged casual sex (which she described by a name I won't burden you with here) because she thought it could be the best and purest sex ('pure' as in the encounter would be about nothing but the sex).

But life is an awful lot more messy and complicated than that. 'Consent' alone does not a civilised society-make.

Confusion

To begin with there seems to be an awful lot of confusion about what is and is not 'consent'. For example, is there consent when both parties are drunk? Universities are now running consent classes to try and clear up the confusion.

Also, what if one of the consenting partners is married? Shouldn't the principle of consent give way to the higher value of fidelity?

The sex revolution basically told both sexes that

they did not have to be in a relationship, never mind married, to have sex. This communicated to many men (encouraged by the likes of *Playboy's* Hugh Hefner) that women were constantly

sexually available and it was worth your while seeing how far you could get with them.

Even if we lived in a world of perfect consent, one in which women's sexual boundaries were perfectly respected, it would still be a cruel and exploitative world because this kind of sexual morality still encourages us to objectify the other sex, with men doing most of the objectifying. (No female Harvey Weinstains have been revealed to date, for instance.)

“Untold numbers of women will still find themselves with an unwanted pregnancy”

A world of casual, consensual sex, will still result in many women feeling used (studies indicate that women are much more likely than men to feel 'used' after a casual sexual encounter). Untold numbers of women will still find themselves with an unwanted pregnancy,

hence the vast numbers of abortions that take place worldwide every single year.

No matter what a person's position is regarding the morality of abortion, that still represents a huge amount of emotional pain because who, in their ideal life plan, would ever want an abortion?

This is why Christianity insists that a sexual morality which rests only on consent simply isn't good enough. It still wants us to connect sex with marriage, but at a minimum to connect it with a strong and loving relationship. That way, the potential for exploitation is greatly diminished and the chances that a pregnancy will be carried to term rather than aborted greatly increased.

Separating sex from marriage was seen as very liberating, but for very many people sex was also disconnected from love as the price of 'liberation', and that has been a disaster. This is why feminist sexual morality based only on consent is so inadequate and fails women as well as men.

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A film made to inspire Faith



Mary's Land spreads across Ireland with Catholic message, writes **Chai Brady**

Although box office success seems to be the driving factor behind many of today's high-grossing films, one man would be happy if his creation touched just one person's life.

Being cynical about the film industry isn't hard. As sequel after questionable sequel appears on Irish screens, it's difficult to believe their production is anything other than shameless money-grubbing.

Juan Manuel Coteló says the film he spent three years of his life on, as a director, actor and producer, is a success if it provokes one person to have a personal meeting with God.

The Spanish filmmaker has toured all over the world with his film *Mary's Land*, and Ireland became the 30th country this month.

With the help of an Irish UCD student the film has been screened in cinemas across Ireland.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mr Coteló said: "In my case, success is doing the film, that's where my responsibility finishes, I know I have to do it so I do it. Then what happens afterwards, it depends on every viewer and God himself."

Success

"After 30 countries I know He has success, He has success not the film. Success is not numbers."

The film follows Mr Coteló, who plays the 'Devil's Advocate', a character who is given a mission to find Mary (the Virgin Mary) and to discover the truth about God. It doubles as a documentary, as he interviews people who he believes will help him find Mary.

Interviewees include those who claim to have seen apparitions of Mary in Medjugorje – a commission established

Children act as Adam and Eve in *Mary's Land*.



Juan Manuel Coteló interviews a doctor who used to perform abortions before finding his Faith in *Mary's Land*.



Juan Manuel Coteló in Medjugorje.

by the now-retired Pope Benedict XVI is still investigating the legitimacy of these visions – and others who say they've experienced miracles.

"It's about searching for the truth with no fear of finding the truth," Mr Coteló said, "So if you find that this is all a fairy tale: no problem. If you find that it's not a fairy tale, that it's true, that we have been created and can talk to God, that we are his children and so on and so forth – do not mind the truth."

The film was shot in 12 countries with the final scenes being in Medjugorje, it cost €1 million to create and distribute.

Mr Coteló himself was raised a Catholic, and has worked in the film industry for 30 years, but said it was a split second decision when he endeavoured to create *Mary's Land*.

"I realised the beauty of my Faith and God and everything when I was 40, and it was such a big impact, I

decided I have to think about this, because nobody speaks about this.

"So that was the turning point in my life."

When asked about his opinion on the decline in Catholicism in Ireland, particularly among young people, he said: "The challenge is not them, the challenge is me; the challenge is my transformation."

“We Christians haven't been real Christians, we haven't done our homework properly. We have put the Sacraments inside”

"Probably, one of the main forces (for the decline) is that we Christians haven't been real Christians, we haven't done our homework properly. We have put the Sacraments inside, we have prayed less,

we have lived a kind of cultural religion, social religion, intellectual religion, but not a personal relationship with God."

However, the film is for everyone regardless of faith or belief the director said, adding that it can inspire anyone.

Artificial

"It's artificial to say: 'This is for believers and this is for non-believers' or 'this is for people who suffer and people who don't suffer'. Who doesn't suffer? And who can say I'm a believer I have no doubts?"

Mary's Land should be viewed as a tool, he said, the film itself is not important at all, but perhaps God will use the tool to touch one heart, "that is the important thing".

Catholic UCD student Ruth Brennan was responsible for bringing the film to the Savoy Cinema in Dublin on Friday October 29, and then to IMC Galway, IMC Ballina and IMC

Athlone on November 3, saying that it was her intention to bring it nationwide.

She said: "I wanted this film to be screened in Ireland because it is clear to me that God is very present in, and working through, this film."

After a personal prayer to God she listened to a friend who was inspired by *Mary's Land* after viewing it in a cinema in Germany (it was screened in 200 cinemas in Germany over a 10-month period) and decided to facilitate it being brought to Ireland and contacted Mr Coteló.

“At many large social events or similar settings, it often appears as though being Catholic is irrational”

"The film has deeply touched the hearts of thou-

sands of people in other countries and has brought people closer to God through personal prayer and the sacraments."

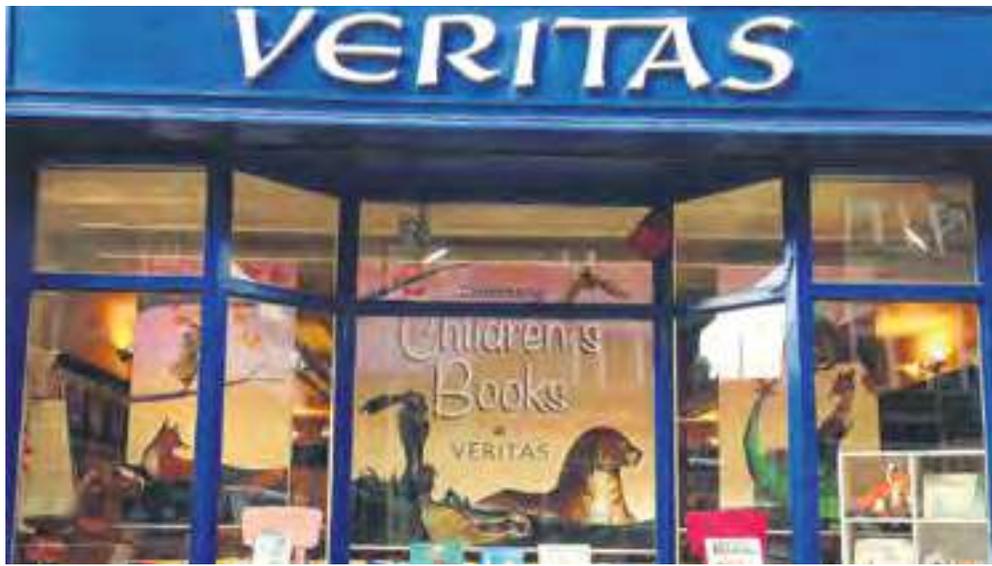
When asked about her own experience being a practicing Catholic student in Ireland, she said other students are generally respectful as well as curious about her Faith, saying: "At many large social events or similar settings, it often appears as though being Catholic is irrational, foolish and perhaps crazy, but on a personal level, at a one to one level, or in smaller groups, this is not the case – in fact young people in Ireland are very open to the truth."

Currently Mr Coteló has finished shooting another film called *The Greatest Gift*, which is now in the editing stage, and should be finished in the next six months. The film is about forgiveness, which he says is "a weapon that can bring an end to any war".

Credit where it's due



Veritas is finally profitable again, but that's no reason to rest easy, writes **Greg Daly**



The Veritas flagship store on Dublin's Abbey Street.

It's taken a long time, but Ireland's biggest religious publishing and retail company has finally – and tentatively – returned to profitability.

Veritas, the Irish bishops' publishing arm, has been struggling for years, battling with an uncertain retail climate that's been anything but friendly to religious publishing, but 2016 saw the company making a tiny net profit of €15,801.

Granted, given how the company's annual turnover is €6,515,277 this is a pitiful figure, raising serious questions about how efficient Veritas is at keeping its costs under control – for every €10 spent in Veritas shops or on Veritas publications, just 2c ultimately counts towards the company's profits.

At the same time, it would be churlish not to applaud the profits when 2015 had ended with its balance sheet burdened with a cumulative loss figure over recent years of €5,431,423. That this has been reduced, even just to €5,417,239, by the close of 2016, shows a real improvement, and one that stands in stark contrast to how that same cumulative figure had risen by €496,580 over the previous year!

Improvement

Key to this improvement is the long-heralded impact of the 'Grow in Love' series of primary school textbooks. Last year's accounts claimed that Veritas had performed strongly in the second half of 2015, owing to the launch of the new school programme and improved sales in books and gifts, and although this wasn't obvious in the 2015 accounts it really seems to be paying off now.

The bishops – the company's ultimate owners – will doubtless be interested to see a more precise breakdown of where Veritas is profitable and where it is not.

Almost wholly absent

from this year's accounts, for instance, is any reference to Veritas' dealings in the USA, something that as late as 2014 was still leeching money from the company owing to the "continued investment costs arising on the establishment of the Credo programme", which by December 31 2014 had been adopted by 139 schools.

On the face of it, the programme is still proving expensive to run – among the company's administrative expenses, only salaries and PRSI contributions are more expensive than 'US selling and distribution costs', but without figures for US turnover, it's difficult to tell whether these costs are reasonable or not.

“Current assets, it's thought, should generally be about double the value of current liabilities”

It's striking, for instance, that the 2016 US selling and distribution cost of €149,086 is significantly lower than the previous year's €172,609: what's not clear is whether this is due to more efficient distribution systems or to reduced sales.

While Veritas is heading in the right direction in terms of profitability, it's striking, however, that the company's ability to tackle its short-term obligations – its liquidity – is going in the wrong direction.

One basic way of measuring this is with the so-called 'working capital ratio' or 'current ratio', calculated by dividing the value of the company's current assets – as distinct from buildings, machinery, and vehicles etc. – by the value of its debts due for repayment over the next year.

Current assets, it's thought, should generally be about

double the value of current liabilities, but Veritas's current assets aren't even half that value. Indeed, 2016's ratio, at 0.8:1, is worse even than 2015's 0.9:1, and resumes a pattern of decreasing liquidity that had marked the previous few years.

'Quick ratio'

More troubling, though, is how the company's 'quick ratio', which is arguably a better way of measuring capacity to tackle short-term debts, has also slipped and remains terrible.

The 'quick ratio' or 'acid test' is worked out by excluding stock – which it might not be possible to sell quickly – from the current assets figure, and dividing what's left by the value of current liabilities. This 'quick ratio' should be at least 1:1, a figure Veritas can only dream of, with 2015's 0.19:1 having dropped to below 0.17:1.

To put this in plain language, as 2016 ended, Veritas was capable of paying back just 16c out of every €1 it owed – were it not for the security provided to the company by the Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC), it would not be a viable operation.

It's worth bearing in mind too that among those current liabilities was a debt of €1,020,320 owed to the IEC from when the bishops bolstered Veritas a few years ago: such a repayment cannot but have a whiff of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' about it.

Distinguishing between 'current' and 'quick' ratios is far from being an academic accounting exercise, since one issue that seems to be blighting Veritas nowadays is stock that will not sell. It's staggering, after all, that a company with a turnover of €2,718,771 could have ended the year with €3,034,893 in stock, more than three quarters of this being finished goods for resale, rather than work in

progress.

It's worth bearing in mind that Veritas's average monthly inventory throughout 2016 was €3,041,295, which means that in an average month last year, Veritas sold goods costing €259,974 while sitting on stock worth almost 12 times that amount.

The obvious suspicion is that this stock is egregiously overvalued.

Granted, the accounts record that the directors are "of the view that an adequate charge has been made to reflect the possibility of stocks being sold at less than cost", but more telling is the admission that "this estimate is subject to inherent uncertainty".

“Credit where it's due, though: years of decline appear to have been halted”

'Uncertainty', it's worth pointing out, has a precise meaning in finance, and one which stands in sharp contrast to 'risk': risk is measurable, whereas uncertainty, of its nature, cannot be measured, and is essentially not something that can be known. In acknowledging that the selling value of the company's stock is inherently uncertain, Veritas is effectively admitting that it has no idea how much its stock is worth.

One detail of this that the bishops will want to know

more about will concern the distinction between 'finished goods' and 'work in progress'. On the face of it, Veritas takes about a year to sell its stock but it's difficult to escape the suspicion that this inventory turnover figure masks how the vast majority of goods sold in 2016 were newly-made or newly-purchased goods, rather than dated biographies and other books gathering dust in warehouses and storerooms.

Overall, Veritas remains far from being an efficient company, with pitiful returns on assets and investment, and with meagre profits that don't look open to being significantly increased. With the much-vaunted 'Grow in Love' programme already boosting sales, and with no other major revenue-boosting projects obviously in the pipeline, it's difficult to see what else the company can do to improve things.

Credit where it's due, though: years of decline appear to have been halted. The challenge now is 'what next?'

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Adapting well-loved books is a minefield



With fantasy fiction set to dominate television again this Christmas, **Niall Gooch** regrets that filmmakers often get it so wrong

I've known some pretty crushing cinematic disappointments. There were the *Star Wars* prequels; two total disasters and one that occasionally rose to the level of watchable mediocrity (fortunately the series seems to be recovering now that George Lucas has more or less ceased his involvement).

Then there was the fourth *Indiana Jones* film, a leaden, mostly charmless CGI-ridden slog which appeared to have forgotten all the things that made at least two of the earlier films so good.

Nevertheless, on reflection I think the one let-down to rule them all was Peter Jackson's *Hobbit* trilogy. The curious thing is that Jackson's *Lord Of The Rings* films were rather good, both on their own terms and as adaptations of the books. Although flawed, they were attuned to most of Tolkien's important themes; the dangers of power, the surprising strength of goodness and humility in the face of evil, the mysterious workings of Providence, and the enduring importance of loyalty, beauty and friendship.

Nevertheless, by the time that *An Unexpected Journey* was released in 2012, Peter Jackson's understand-

ing of Tolkien and his world appeared to have gone backwards.

The Hobbit is basically quite a light-hearted book, with a wry tone – witness the early remark about how the beheading of a goblin chief led to the invention of the game of golf. Much of its comedy and drama arise from the mismatch between the homely, complacent Bilbo, preoccupied with food and pipeweed and other home comforts, and the characters and creatures he encounters in the vast, strange world outside the borders of his home in The Shire.

Comedy

Jackson swamps this whimsy and charm with an excess of action, noise and broad humour. Some of the 'funny' scenes are agonisingly bad, completely out of kilter with the spirit of the book.

The addition of a romantic

subplot – an understandable attempt to add some female perspective to the story, which actually worked quite well in the *Rings* trilogy – fails miserably, not least because of the terrible dialogue given to Kili and Tauriel and the poor characterisation of the latter. She doesn't really exist as a distinctively female character.

Of course, what Jackson was really trying to do was to create prequels to his *Lord Of The Rings* films, with a similar epic style. This means that many of the little hints and allusions about the wider world of Middle Earth found in *The Hobbit* are developed and fleshed out. Characters and incidents described briefly in the book are expanded. Radagast the Brown, mentioned once in the book, becomes an important character.

Confrontation

The confrontation between the White Council and the sinister presence in Dol Guldur is shown at some length. The Battle of Five Armies, which in my edition of *The Hobbit* is described in less than three pages (out of 279), takes up most of the final film.

There are serious problems with this approach. For one thing, much of the above is poorly executed. Radagast is portrayed with cartoonish crudity. The Battle of Five Armies lacks any real excitement, with Jackson's love of scale and spectacle overwhelming his ability to portray an intelligible battle with dramatic weight.

The misadventures of Bilbo and his companions in the goblin caves under the Misty Mountains are stretched into a long, loud, overdone fight sequence that resembles nothing so much as a boring computer game. In addition, Jackson doesn't quite manage to get a hold of all his various narrative strands, meaning that the films ultimately feel disjointed and chaotic rather than being an organically extended story.

“It is through wit rather than force that Bilbo acquires the Ring”

A more fundamental issue is that *The Hobbit* is in many ways a paean to littleness, a parable about the importance of small folk and the futility of wealth and power.

Although Tolkien pokes gentle fun at Bilbo's bourgeois



Martin Freeman

sensibilities, he also contrasts Bilbo's lack of worldliness quite favourably with the ambition and scheming of other characters, notably the ultimately self-destructive pride and acquisitiveness of Thorin Oakenshield. Was he perhaps thinking of I Corinthians 1:27, “to shame what is strong, God has chosen what the world counts weakness”?

“The tone of the films is set by the dreary and overlong action scenes”

It is through wit rather than force that Bilbo acquires the Ring – indeed, his refusal to strike down Gollum in cold blood is a moment which Tolkien imbues with great moral significance. In *The Fellowship Of The Ring*, Gandalf suggests to Frodo that Bilbo has proved largely resistant to the evil of the Ring because – unlike so many others – his ownership of it began with pity and mercy, not violence.

Similarly, it is thought and reflection that enable Bilbo to open the secret door into the Lonely Mountain, and through quick-wittedness that he holds his own when Smaug the Dragon tries to bewitch him.

To be fair to Jackson, he does make a good fist of portraying some of these incidents. The films are at their best in quieter moments, often when Bilbo and his dilemmas and worries take centre stage (Martin Freeman was an inspired piece of casting).

is genuinely suspenseful, at least until Jackson turns it into yet another action scene.

The various interactions between Bilbo and Thorin, and the latter's internal struggles, come across well. The problem is that these moments are few and far between, rare exceptions to the films' overall feel. Jackson refuses to let quiet interludes last long, before the screen is filled with the next interminable set piece battle or fight.

This means that the tone of the films is set by the dreary and overlong action scenes – scenes so excessive and so obviously special effects-based that I struggled to care about what was happening, and started worrying about whether I'd fed the cat and locked the front door when I left the house. It's as if Jackson had partially glimpsed the heart of the story but didn't trust it to generate its own drama.

Adapting well-loved books to the screen is a minefield. Whatever Jackson had done with *The Hobbit*, he could not have pleased everyone. And yet the films were still a huge missed opportunity.

One need not be too much of a cynic to see the hands of the studio money-men behind the decision to split quite a short and narratively straightforward novel into three sprawling films. Even this, however, was not the main source of my frustration; what was truly disappointing was that the makers had so signally failed to understand why *The Hobbit* is such a charming and wise book.

1 Niall Gooch is a Catholic writer.

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1,000th registration milestone for WMOF2018

As Ireland prepares to open its arms to welcome families from across the world to the 9th World Meeting of Families, the 1000th registration for next year's event in Dublin has just been recorded.

Amongst those registered for the events from August 21-26, 2018, are families from Ireland and from 70 countries across the world including: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, China, England, France, Germany, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Scotland, Spain, Uganda, USA and Wales.

Attendance at all World Meeting of Families 2018 events will require tickets/registration and while some events are free, others will be subject to a fee.

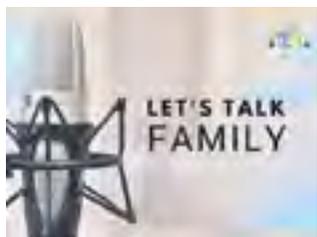
The following categories of registration/tickets are available:

- Individual Adult Registration
- Clergy Registration
- Family Group Registration (any number of adults, any number of children)
- Group Registration (Parish/Diocese, Organisation)

Those interested in attending any of the events are invited to register now at www.worldmeeting2018.ie/en/Tickets.

New weekly podcast from WMOF2018

'Let's Talk Family' is the title of a new weekly podcast from the World Meeting of Families 2018. The podcast features interviews and news about how preparations are going for the 9th World Meeting of Families. The podcast also features discussions about the joys and challenges of family life as we journey towards next year's event.



'Let's Talk Family' is presented by Brenda Drumm, Media and Communications Manager for WMOF2018.



Richard Brennan (far right) with some other WMOF2018 volunteers.

The podcast can be subscribed to on the Soundcloud app or you can listen on the WMOF2018 website www.worldmeeting2018.ie. The podcast is also available on the home page of the website of the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity Family and Life.

With podcast consumption on the rise each year, this is a welcome initiative from WMOF2018.

Invitation to design the vestments for WMOF2018 liturgies

The World Meeting of Families 2018 has extended an invitation to students of Irish art and design colleges to submit a creative design for consideration for the vestments that will be used for WMOF2018.

WMOF2018 is seeking



a unique and inspirational design for the vestments that will be used in different liturgical contexts during the week of celebrations taking

place from 21 to 26 August 2018.

Elizabeth and Lilly Yeats, sisters of the poet William Butler Yeats, crafted vest-

Volunteers needed for WMOF2018

The World Meeting of Families 2018 will attract thousands of Irish and International pilgrims. Organising it and seeing it through will only be possible with the help of thousands of volunteers.

Approximately 2,000 volunteers gave their time, abilities and service to help organise and run the 50th International Eucharistic Congress which took place in Ireland in 2012. If you volunteered for IEC2012, the team at the WMOF2018 would love you to sign up and be part of next year's gathering in Dublin. If you have not volunteered before, the WMOF2018 team would be delighted to have you.

Volunteer roles will include stewards, welcoming and information teams, photographers, media support, logistics, programming support and all the general day to day roles involved in running an event like the WMOF2018.

There are currently 1300 volunteers signed up for WMOF2018. The first training event for volunteers took place in Dublin on October 19. Speaking after the event, Richard Brennan, WMOF2018 Volunteer Project Manager said: "Our volunteers are vital to the success of the World Meeting of Families. We are inviting people to sign up now so we have time to work with them and to offer them the necessary training to deliver next year's gathering in Dublin.

"One of the things we are looking for volunteers to do is to help deliver the famous Irish welcome – the C ad M ile F ailte. So join us. You can sign up on our website, email us at volunteer@worldmeeting2018.ie or you can contact us by telephone (01) 5676800."

Elizabeth's time in the circle of William Morris are still in use in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Dublin today.

Commenting on the design call, Brenda Drumm, Media and Communications Manager for WMOF2018 said, "This is an opportunity for an up-and-coming Irish designer to follow in the footsteps of the Yeats sisters by designing the vestments for use as part of the liturgies for next year's World Meeting of Families.

"The winning designs will be chosen by an independent panel and will feature at the heart of next year's event which is expected to have an international audience of millions of people."

You can find out more about the vestment design competition on worldmeeting2018.ie

ments used in the Eucharistic Congress held in Ireland in 1932. Their cloth-of-gold creations with intricate Celtic embroidery influenced by

Pope Francis highlights importance of family in address to (Re)Thinking Europe Conference

Pope Francis recently highlighted the importance of family in his address to participants at a conference on the theme "(Re) Thinking Europe – A Christian Contribution to the Future of the European Project".

The conference, sponsored by the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), brought political and religious leaders together

at the Vatican for the high-level dialogue.

Pope Francis said: "The first and perhaps the greatest contribution that Christians can make to today's Europe is to remind her that she is not a mass of statistics or institutions, but is made up of people.

"Christians recognise that their identity is primarily relational. They are joined to one another as members of one body, the Church

(cf. 1 Cor 12:12), and each, with his or her unique identity and gifts, freely shares in the common work of building up that body.

Relationship

"Analogously, this relationship is also found in the areas of interpersonal relationships and civil society.

"By interacting with others, each one discovers his or her own

qualities and defects, strengths and weaknesses. In other words, they come to know who they are, their specific identity.

"The family, as the primordial community, remains the most fundamental place for this process of discovery. There, diversity is valued and at the same time brought into unity.

"The family is the harmonious union of the differences between

man and woman, which becomes stronger and more authentic to the extent that it is fruitful, capable of opening itself to life and to others. Secular communities, likewise, are alive when they are capable of openness, embracing the differences and gifts of each person while at the same time generating new life, development, labour, innovation and culture."

Out&About

That's the way the cookie crumbles...



DUBLIN: Dragon's Den Alison Cowzer of Eastcoast Bakehouse pictured at the launch of Irish Girl Guides' National Cookie Month with (from left) Keri Russell (age 9), Lauren Collier (9) and Isabella McGaughey (8) of Boyne Valley Brownies, Drogheda. Photo: Jimmy Weldon



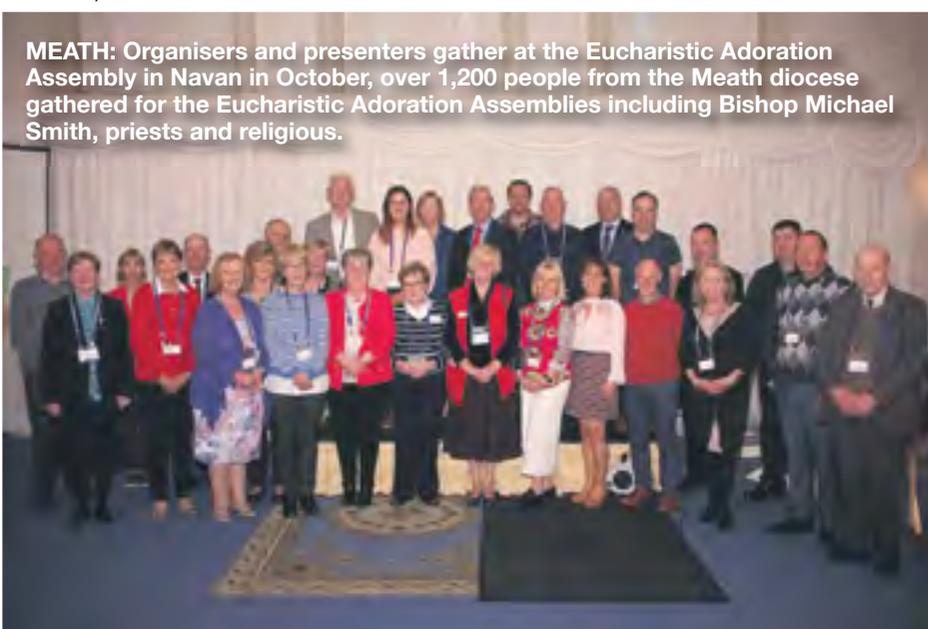
DUBLIN: Former DCU student Grainne Power wins the St Vincent de Paul Award at her BEd (Primary) graduation last week.



MONAGHAN: Fr Tom Quigley (centre), and Redemptorists Fr Brendan Keane (left) and Fr Johnny Doherty (right) pictured in St Patrick's Church, Bawn during a parish mission. The mission lasted a week and took place in St Mary's, Latton, and St Patrick's, Bawn.



VATICAN: The Irish delegation pose for a photo during the 'Rethinking Europe – A Christian contribution to the future of the European project' conference, organised by the Holy See and COMECE (the Communion of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community).



MEATH: Organisers and presenters gather at the Eucharistic Adoration Assembly in Navan in October, over 1,200 people from the Meath diocese gathered for the Eucharistic Adoration Assemblies including Bishop Michael Smith, priests and religious.



MAYO: Priests of the Archdiocese of Tuam gathered to concelebrate Mass with Archbishop Michael Neary to mark the Silver Jubilee of his episcopal ordination.

Edited by **Chai Brady**
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



MEATH: Organisers and presenters attend the Eucharistic Adoration Assembly in Mullingar.



◀ **KERRY:** Pictured after the blessing and unveiling ceremony of the Window of Reconciliation at St John the Baptist Church Tralee, (back) John Griffin, Micheal Ó Suilleabháin, artist Tom Denny, Fr David Monteeith, Dean of Leicester (Homilist), Cllr Norma Foley, Mayor of Tralee, Col Bishop Kenneth Kearon, Bishop Ray Browne, Fr Tadgh Fitzgerald, Bill Looney Pastoral Council and members of the cast for *The Prodigal Son*. Photo: John Cleary.

▶ **WEXFORD:** Bishop Denis Brennan of Ferns congratulates Wexford hurling legend Tony Doran on the publication of his autobiography *A Land of Men and Giants*.



ITALY: Pilgrims from the Kingscourt parish arrive at the Basilica of St Frediano in Lucca.

IN SHORT

Franciscan fraternity launch prayer campaign for unborn

The Seven Joys of Our Lady Secular Franciscan Fraternity (Clonoe/Coalisland) have organised a prayer campaign up to Christmas at least, in view of an expected abortion referendum in the Republic of Ireland. Each member of the fraternity has undertaken to recite a daily Rosary for life and is inviting as many people as possible to do the same. The prayer campaign also includes the potential introduction of abortion legislation in Northern Ireland. There will be two Holy Hours for Life; the first on Sunday November 12

at 6 pm in Brocagh, and the second on Sunday December 10 at 6 pm in Kingsisland. A spokesperson for the fraternity wrote: "If you cannot commit to a full daily rosary, perhaps you could pray a decade." "As this is a vital issue, especially for those babies who are in danger of not seeing the light of day, it is fervently hoped that people will respond generously to this cause."

Girl Guides to sell 30,000 packs of cookies

Irish Girl Guides (IGG) across Ireland are set to sell 30,000 chocolate chip cookies this month as part of their

inaugural Irish Girl Guides' National Cookie Month. Taking up the US tradition it will be the first time the IGG will sell their tasty treats to friends, families and neighbours – all the while honing their entrepreneurial skills. By deciding how many packets to order, how to go about selling the biscuits and how they will spend the proceeds of their sales, it's believed the girls will develop money management and business skills. "The initiative has been given the hashtag #FutureCEOs, which stands for Creating Entrepreneur Opportunities, and it is hoped that all girls who get involved will develop and strengthen teamwork, communication, money management and goal-setting skills," said IGG Commissioner Helen Concannon.

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.

Cemetery service and Blessing of Graves on Sunday November 12 in Clareabbey at 3pm.

Remembrance Mass for beloved infants, children and babies who died during the early stages of pregnancy or birth. Sunday November 12, at 12 Noon in Ennis Cathedral.

A Concert on the Cantic 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 Cantic 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.

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

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.

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.

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland's Annual Service of Remembrance to honour all

babies who sadly died before, during or after birth will take place on Sunday November 12 at 3pm in St Theresa's Church, Donore Ave, South Circular Road, Dublin 8. Refreshments after the service.

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

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

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.

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

LOUTH

A Holy Hour with music and reflections will be held in St Mary's Church on James Street in Drogheda, on Wednesday November 8 at 8pm.

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.

MAYO

The next latin Mass in the Old Rite (Tridentine) will take place in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel Knock Shrine, on Sunday November 12, at 5.30pm.

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

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.

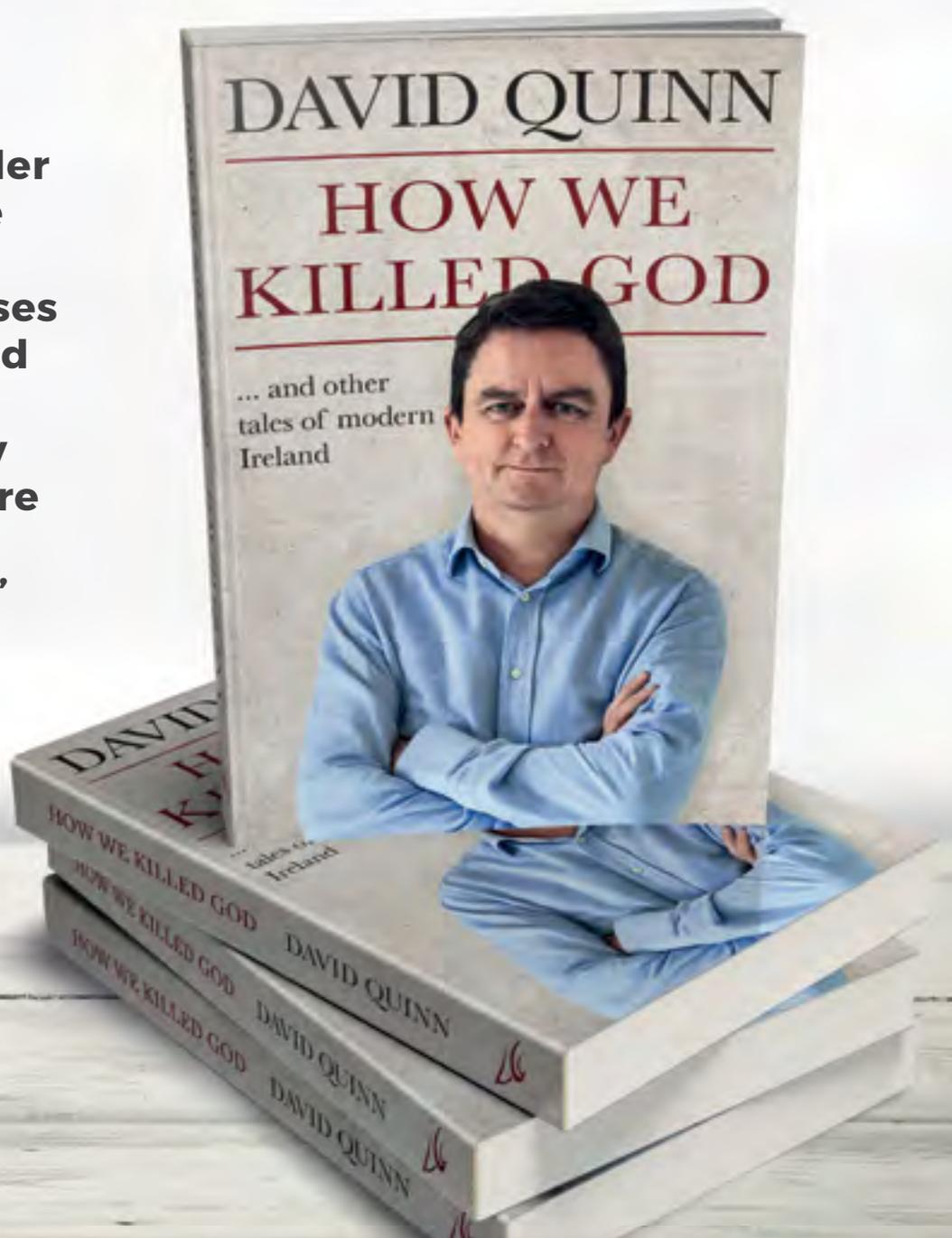
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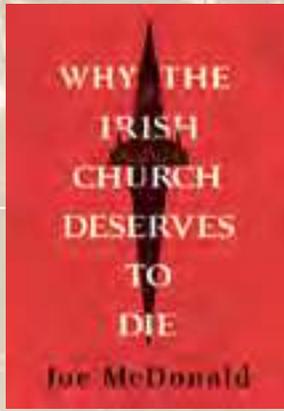


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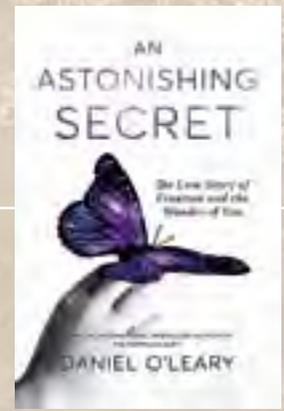
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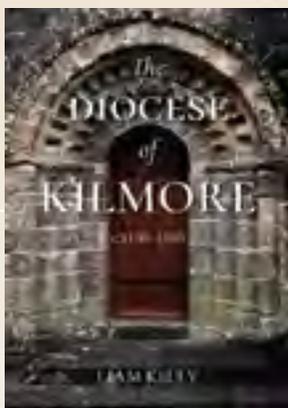
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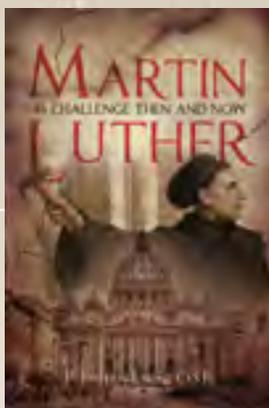
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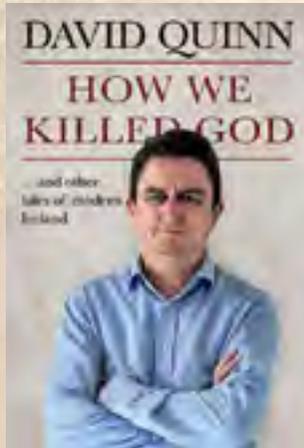
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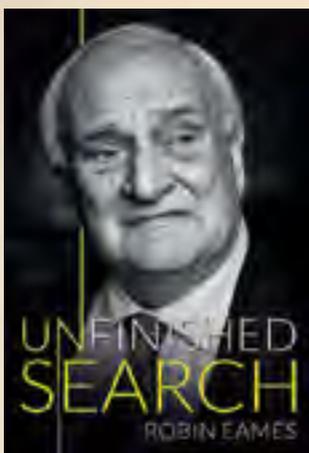
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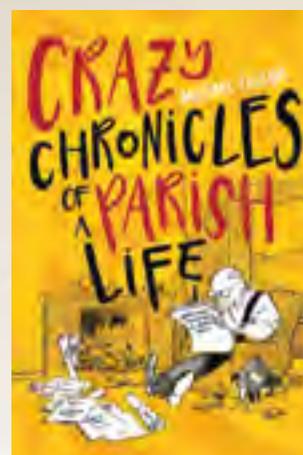
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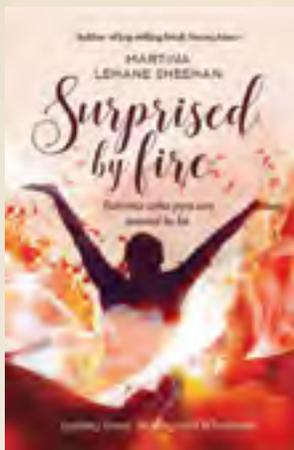
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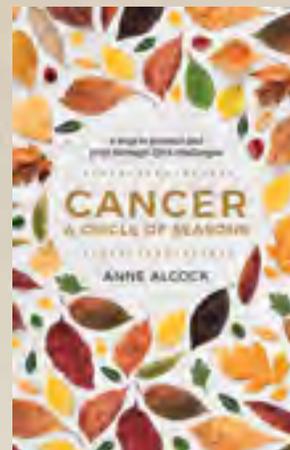
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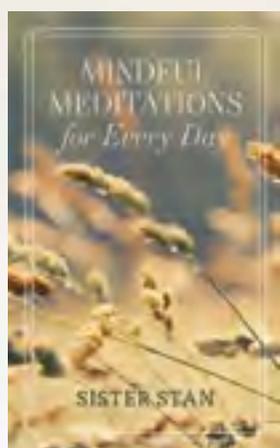
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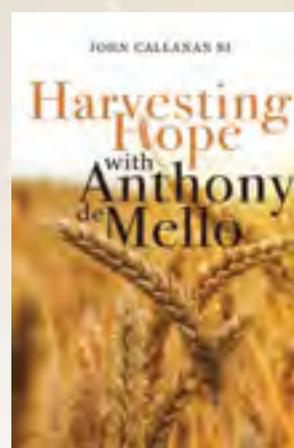
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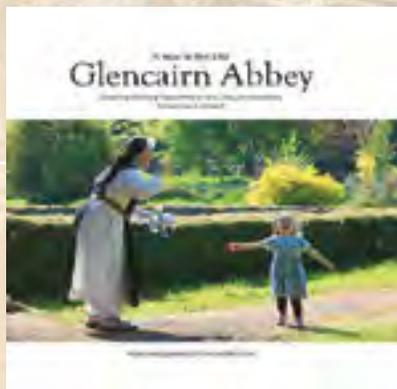
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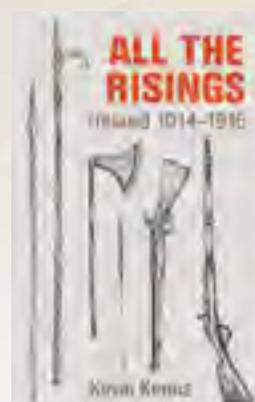
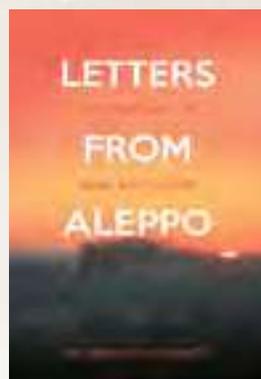
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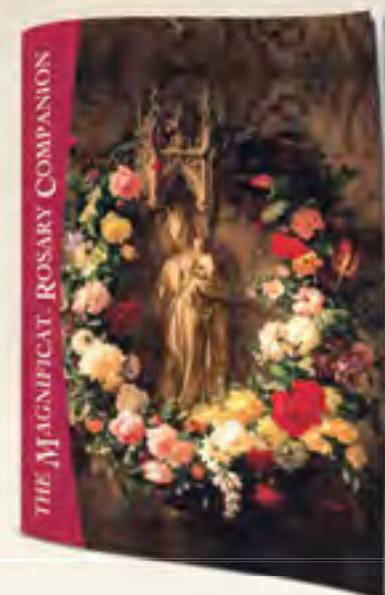
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Putting to rest the mystery of the 33-day Pope

While the Vatican assesses potential miracles attributed to the intercession of Pope John Paul I, a new book sheds light on events surrounding his death, writes **Michael Kelly**



It's no coincidence that Dan Browne – author of *The Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons* – chose the Catholic Church as the backdrop for his books. A combination of intrigue with the mysteries of the Faith and a preoccupation with secrecy ensures Catholicism provides fertile ground for the imagination.

The extent to which people will believe outlandish things about the inner workings of the Church speaks to the extent of the ignorance that often exists about the Church in the public imagination – particularly of non-Catholics. This is particularly true of the Vatican which often appears impenetrable to the outside world.

Take the case of Pope John Paul I, for example. Cardinal Albino Luciani had been Pope for only 33 days when he was discovered dead in his apartment in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican. The fact that the Pontiff was aged only 65 at the time of his death in September 1978 did little to dampen speculation that he met a grisly end.

Enemies

Rumours swilled around of a masonic plot at the heart of the Apostolic See. Others saw alleged reforms at the Vatican Bank as enough to provoke enemies of the man who became known as 'the smiling Pope'.

The story provoked considerable interest in Ireland at the time given that one of the Pope's closest collaborators was Irishman Msgr John Magee (later Bishop of Cloyne).

A new book reveals that the truth of the situation is more sober than the wildest of the speculation, showing that the Pope had in fact been ill the evening before his lifeless body was discovered. Unfortunately, it seems that John Paul – along with everyone else – underestimated the seriousness of his situation.

The journalist Stefania Falasca in her new book *Papa Luciani: Cronaca di Una Morte* (Pope Luciani: Chronicle of a death) published this week sheds light on never before seen evidence.

“Some light is shed on the sudden illness that the Pope had that evening, just before dinner”

With a preface written by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, in the book she has questioned witnesses and has had access to Vatican files on the case as well as the late Pope's own medical records.

One of the witnesses is Sr Margherita Mari. Now 76 years old, at the time she was the youngest of the Venetian nuns working in the Pope's private residence. According to the book, it was Sr Margherita who entered the bedroom of John Paul I at dawn on September 29, 1978, immediately after Sr Vincenza Taffarel, the elderly religious who had been assisting Luciani for over 20 years.

It was she who had witnessed what happened in the hours prior to the sudden death of the Pope. She denies that he was fatigued if not

crushed by the burden of the new responsibility has been claimed by some: “I have always seen him calm, serene, full of trust, confident.” She insists that he did not follow any particular diets and that he was eating what the others ate.

She recalls the last hours of the Pontiff's life. “I was ironing in the wardrobe with the door open and I saw him walking back and forth. He was walking in the apartment holding some papers he was reading...I remember him seeing me ironing and saying, ‘Sister, I make you work a lot...don't bother ironing the shirt so well because it's hot, I sweat and need to change them often...just iron the collar and wrists, that the rest is not seen, you know...’”

From another of the witnesses, the Pope's assistant Angelo Gugel, some light is shed on the sudden illness that the Pope had that evening, just before dinner, while praying with Msgr Magee.

It is all described in a

document drawn up in the days after his death by Prof. Renato Buzzonetti – the first doctor to be called to the bedside of the dead Pope.

In the detailed report addressed to the Secretariat of State on October 9, 1978, Prof. Buzzonetti spoke of an “episode of pain localised at the third superior of the sternal region, suffered by the Holy Father around 7.30pm on the day of death. The episode lasted for more than five minutes, and occurred while the Pope was seated and intent on the recitation of evening with Msgr Magee and it regressed without any therapy.”

Testimony

In his testimony, Msgr Magee claims that no-one informed Sr Vincenza – who was a nurse – about the episode. According to Msgr Magee, it was the Pope himself who insisted on no fuss and didn't want a doctor to be called. It was only the following morning in the presence of the dead Pope that Prof. Buzzonetti was made aware of the sudden bout of illness

the evening before.

Ms Falasca's book, thanks to the new testimonies, brings to light some contradictions in the stories of the two secretaries of the Pontiff; Fr Diego Lorenzi, the priest who had followed Luciani from Venice, was not present at the time when the Pope had the chest-pain in the chapel. And on the evening of September 28, immediately after dinner, he left the apartment.

“Many Roman observers are of the belief that the beatification of John Paul I is only a matter of time”

On the morning of September 29, it was not the secretaries who found the body of the Pope, but Sr Vincenza and Sr Margherita. The Pope had not touched the coffee that had been left for him in the sacristy at 5.15 that morning, and so Sr Vincenza, after knocking several times, entered the room and said, “Holiness, you shouldn't joke with me!”

“Then she called me, coming out shocked,” Sr Margherita recounts, “I immediately went in and saw him too...I touched his hands, they were cold, I saw and I was struck by my his slightly dark fingernails”.

Among the unpublished documents in the book are the medical records from which it can be seen that already in 1975, during a

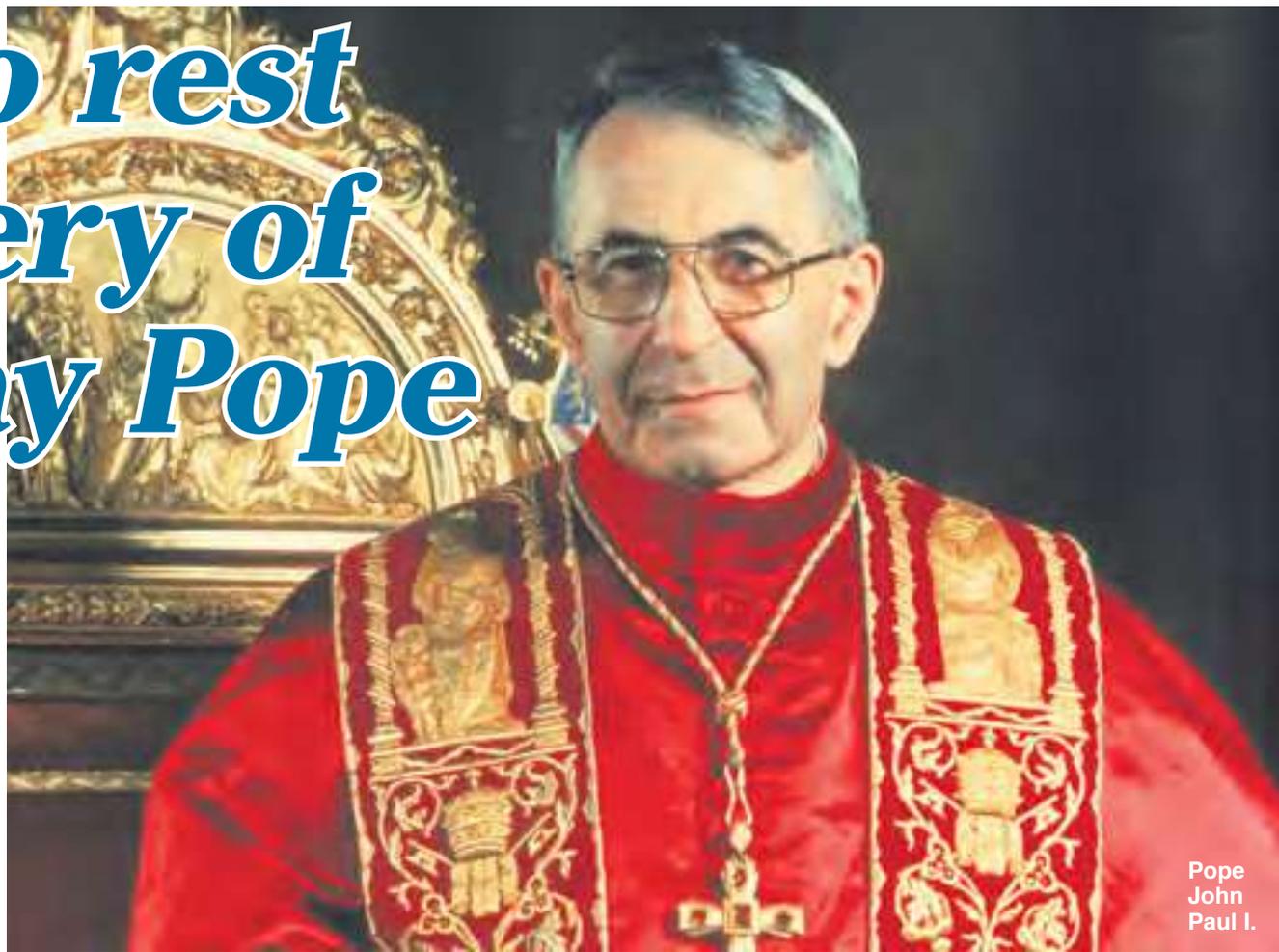
hospitalisation, a minor cardiovascular pathology was reported, that was treated with anticoagulants and considered resolved.

And there is also the note that the cardinals before the new conclave that would elect Karol Wojtyla, wanted to address in complete secrecy to the doctors who had dealt with John Paul I on the occasion of the embalming.

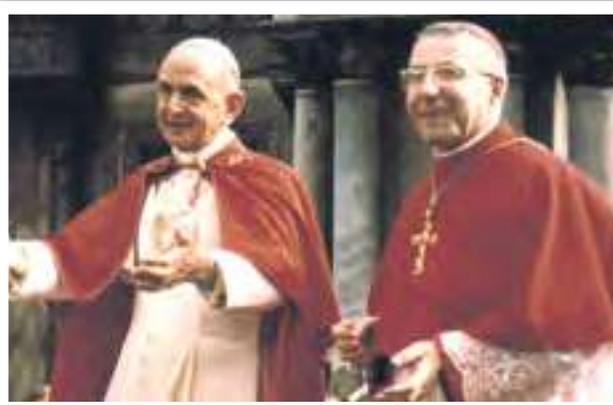
Through the Secretariat of State, the cardinals asked if “the examination of the body” allowed to “exclude traumatic lesions of any kind”; if the diagnosis of “sudden death” was ascertained and finally they asked if “sudden death is always natural”. These were, the book asserts, serious and significant doubts: with the cardinals not excluding a priori the hypothesis of an unnatural death. However, the doctors insisted this was not the case.

The new book comes as it is reported that the Vatican is currently investigating two alleged miracles attributed to the intercession of the Venetian Pontiff. Many Roman observers are of the belief that the beatification of John Paul I is only a matter of time.

Of 20th Century Popes, Pius X, John XXIII and John Paul II have all been canonised. Paul VI has been beatified while Pius XII has been declared ‘Venerable’ by the Church. In the previous century, Pius IX is the only Pope to be raised to the altars of the Church having been beatified by St John Paul II on September 3, 2000.



Pope John Paul I.



Pope Paul VI with then-Cardinal Albino Luciani in 1972.

World Report

IN BRIEF

Caritas criticises Aung San Suu Kyi's response

● The visit by Myanmar's civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to Rakhine State failed to calm anger and frustration felt in the strife-torn state or in neighbouring Bangladesh, where more than 600,000 Rohingya have fled over the past ten weeks.

During her one-day visit, Suu Kyi met both Rohingya and Rakhine villagers, telling them to "maintain peace" and "not to quarrel", reported local media.

Ranjon Francis Rozario, assistant executive director of Caritas Bangladesh, criticised Suu Kyi for what he sees as "a visible lack of sympathy for the Rohingya".

"Suu Kyi is a Nobel laureate and she must take concrete actions to end violence against Rohingya and to repatriate them peacefully," he said. "Instead, she sums up 'Rohingya genocide' into a silly term like 'quarrel'."

Cursillo celebrate 50 years in Korea

● The Cursillo movement recently celebrated the golden jubilee of its presence in South Korea with local members affirming their dedication to renewing the church and spreading Christian values.

Some 4,700 'Cursillistas' attended a Ultreya gathering at a gymnasium in Seoul's Olympic Park where the jubilee was celebrated.

The event was organised by the Seoul Archdiocese and included a Mass. During the homily, Auxiliary Bishop Benedict Son Hee-song of Seoul urged the Cursillistas to be activists spreading the message of the Gospel.

Pontiff wades in on controversial liturgy battle

Pope Francis appeared to side with his predecessor Benedict XVI by saying Christ died "for many", rather than "for all".

It has been a contentious debate in Catholicism in recent years.

"The 'many' who will rise for eternal life are to be understood as the 'many' for whom the blood of Christ was shed," Francis said.

"They are the multitude that, thanks to the goodness and mercy of God, can experience the life that does not pass away, the complete victory over death brought by the resurrection."

Francis argued that "for many" better captures the sense that human beings have to make a choice during this life, either for or against God.

Puerto Rico still ravaged after hurricanes

● The people of Puerto Rico still face "an unprecedented level of need" because of hurricanes Irma and Maria, which devastated the island in September, the chairmen of two US bishops' committees said. Bishop Frank Dewane of Venice, Florida, and Archbishop Paul Etienne of Anchorage, Alaska called for "meaningful action" through legislative means and emergency funds to address "both the immediate and long-term needs of the Puerto Rican population".

Irma hit Puerto Rico on September 7 and Maria hit it on September 20, creating even more destruction than the first hurricane. To date, more than 70% of Puerto Rico is without electricity and running water. Other islands, including the US Virgin Islands, are also facing challenges in their recovery.

Victims of ISIS need support and security – Holy See

● Religious and ethnic minorities who were victims of atrocities committed by Daesh (so-called Islamic State) need to be supported in rebuilding their lives, the representative of the Holy See to the UN said. Speaking at the conference on 'Peace, Reconciliation and Justice: The Future of Religious and Ethnic Minorities Victimised by Daesh' on November 2, Archbishop Bernadito Auza said the international community were "justly repelled by the horror stories" about the so-called Islamic State's actions.

"The international community must respond to the outrages systematically committed by Daesh also with a rock-solid resolve to prevent similar future abominations from recurring," the archbishop said.

US Catholic bishops say 'senseless' gun violence must end

The US Catholic Church has decried continual severe gun violence while spreading a message of unity with the First Baptist Church in Texas, after a shooting that took the lives of 26 people and injured several more.

"A Culture of Life cannot tolerate, and must prevent, senseless gun violence in all its forms," said Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"We stand in unity with you in this time of terrible tragedy – as you stand on holy ground, ground marred today by horrific violence."

He added that the "incomprehensibly tragic" event joins an ever growing list of mass shootings, some of which have been at churches while people were praying. Worshippers in the First Baptist Church, in Sutherland Springs, 55km southeast of San Antonio, were targeted during Sunday service.

A 14-year-old girl, Annabelle Pomeroy, was among the dead. Her father, Frank Pomeroy, is pastor of the church but he was not at the



The First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs.

service.

Donald Trump stated after the incident that the attacker's mental health was to blame, not the US's permissive gun control laws.

San Antonio Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller said: "I extend my prayers and the prayers of my brother bishops for the victims, the families, the first responders, our Baptist brothers and sisters, indeed the whole community of Sutherland Springs."

The shooter was named as Devin Kelley, a 26-year-old white male who received a bad conduct discharge from the US air force.

He joined the Logistics

Readiness department of Holloman Air Force in New Mexico in 2010.

He was court martialled in 2012 for assaulting his wife and child and spent a year in military prison. Kelley was not legally permitted to own the weapons he was discovered with, a rifle and two handguns.

Services

Law enforcement officials said Kelley entered the church at about 11.20am Central time while 50 people were attending Sunday services.

Almost everyone in the congregation was shot, with the victims ranging in age

from five to 72.

Kelley was challenged and shot by a local man, who was armed, outside the church, and was found dead in his car surrounded by his illegal weapons after trying to flee. He was seen in social media posts days before the attack with an AR-15 semi-automatic weapon, the rifle used in the massacre.

The state governor Greg Abbott called it the worst mass shooting in Texas history, while Freeman Martin, the regional director for the Texas Department of Public Safety, said he believed the attack was not racially or religiously motivated.

Poland blasts France decision to remove Catholic cross statue

The Polish Prime Minister has pledged to save a cross set to be removed from beside a statue of former Pope John Paul II in a French town, because it breaches the rules of secularism.

This has sparked a diplomatic feud as Poland says it will save the work from the "dictates of social correctness" by having it shipped to John Paul II's native country.

Gifted in 2006 to the mayor of Ploërmel, western France, the 7.5 metre-high statue depicts John Paul II in prayer,

standing beneath an arch adorned with a large cross.

However, after a decade-long battle, the Conseil d'Etat, France's top administrative court, has ruled that the cross must be removed from the public space as it violates a 1905 law imposing the strict separation of Church and State.

The argument has been raging ever since the statue by Russian artist Zourab Tsereteli was erected in 2006, with strong feelings voiced on both sides.

The Church has called the court's decision balanced, but many Conservative politicians reacted strongly.

The mayor of Ploërmel, Patrick Le Diffon, was opposed to removing the large cross from the arch over the statue, which he called a work of art. But rather than "rekindle a war of religion" he came up with a solution to sidestep the problem by selling the public land to a private investor.

Prominent US priest resigns after criticising Pope



Fr Thomas Weinandy.

After publication of his letter to Pope Francis questioning the Pontiff's teachings, Fr Thomas Weinandy has resigned from his position as consultant to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine.

The Capuchin Franciscan priest is former executive director of the US bishops' Secretariat of Doctrine and Canonical Affairs, serving in the post from 2005 until 2013. He expressed loyalty to the Pope, but at the same time said "a

chronic confusion seems to mark your pontificate".

He released his letter to several Catholic and other media outlets.

"After speaking with the general secretary of the conference today, Fr Thomas Weinandy, OFM, Cap., has resigned, effective immediately, from his position as consultant to the USCCB Committee on Doctrine," said James Rogers, chief communications officer for the USCCB.

"The work of the committee is done in support of, and in affective collegiality with, the Holy Father and the Church in the United States. Our prayers go with Fr Weinandy as his service to the committee comes to a close," Rogers said.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, USCCB president, said the departure of Fr Weinandy as a consultant "gives us an opportunity to reflect on the nature of dialogue within the Church".



Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Lights in dark times for Texas



A man and woman attend a candlelight vigil after the mass shooting on November 5 at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Photo: CNS

Pontiff condemns conflict and remembers victims of war

Pope Francis celebrated the Feast of All Souls Day by commemorating all those who have died in war, reminding humanity not to forget past lessons and warning that the only fruit yielded by conflict is death. His words of warning and his powerful condemnation of warmongers came during his homily at the Sicily-Rome American War Cemetery some 50 kilometers south of Rome.

Taking the occasion to reiterate his deep conviction that “wars produce nothing more than cemeteries and death”, the Pope said he chose to visit a war cemetery as a sign “in a moment when our humanity seems not to have learned the lesson, or doesn’t want to learn it.”

The Nettuno US War Cemetery and Memorial is the final resting place for thousands of men who died during military operations carried out to liberate Italy from Nazi Germany.

Pride is great danger for religious

Hypocrisy, like that of the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ time, is not the only temptation that continues to plague religious communities, Pope Francis said. Pride also is a great danger. “We disciples of Jesus should not seek titles of honour, authority or supremacy,” the Pope has said. “I tell you, it personally pains me to see people who psychologically live running after the vanity of honours.”

Before reciting the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis spoke about the day’s reading from the Gospel of St Matthew, in which Jesus tells the people to “do and observe” everything the scribes and Pharisees say, “but do not follow their example, for they preach but they do not practice”.

Educating about and helping migrants is task for universities

Catholic universities need to study the root causes of forced migration and ways to counter the discrimination and xenophobic reactions it provokes in so many traditionally Christian nations, Pope Francis has said.

“I would also like to invite Catholic universities to teach their students, some of whom will become leaders in politics, business and culture, a careful reading of the phenomenon of migration from the point of view of justice, global co-responsibility and communion in cultural diversity,” he said.

The Pope made his remarks during an audience with members of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, who were attending a world congress in Rome from

November 1-4 called “Refugees and Migrants in a Globalized World: Responsibility and Responses of Universities”.

Pope Francis praised the organisation’s efforts in the fields of research, formation and promoting social justice.

Study

He called for more study “on the remote causes of forced migrations with the aim of finding practical solutions” because people have a right to not be forced to leave their homes.

“It is also important to reflect on the basic negative – sometimes even discriminatory and xenophobic – reactions that the welcoming of migrants is provoking in countries with

a long-standing Christian tradition” in order to develop programmes and ways to better form consciences, he said.

Pope Francis also called on Catholic universities to develop programmes that would allow refugees living in camps and holding centres to take distance-learning courses and to grant them scholarships.

Efforts also are needed, he said, to recognise the academic degrees and qualifications migrants and refugees have earned in their homelands so that new countries may benefit from their knowledge. Catholic universities, as leaders in promoting the social good, must do more, he said, for example, by encouraging students to volunteer to assist refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants

Extremism still threat in liberated Philippines city

The threat of violent extremism remains in the predominantly Catholic Philippines even after the end of a five-month siege by terrorists in a southern city, said Catholic and Muslim officials.

Father Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of the Philippines bishops’ Public Affairs Committee said that

according to some analysts and the president, “terrorist cells are already everywhere. It’s not only concentrated in Marawi, but there is a presence also in other parts of Mindanao.”

The historically peaceful Marawi on Mindanao Island in the South was the site of a sustained siege by so-called Islamic State loyalists, who

wanted to claim it as an ISIS caliphate. More than 1,100 people – mostly ISIS fighters – died in the battle where the fighters, fortified with munitions and provisions, withstood a military offensive backed by intelligence and special training from the United States, Australia and other countries.

The military killed two local leaders who headed the fight, prompting the president to declare the siege over.

Days later, Mindanao’s Cardinal Orlando Quevedo of Cotabato told reporters “the threat of terrorism is still there” and that extremist ideology and plans for a caliphate continue.

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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

Fake news and getting the right proportions

Dear Editor, At a time when other news outlets – including, sadly, other Catholic ones – fill their online and paper pages with ‘fake news’ about the Vatican, it’s reassuring to see *The Irish Catholic* holding the line for responsible journalism.

Only this week the Vatican had to quash rumours irresponsibly reported across certain elements of the Catholic media claiming Rome has had a ‘secret commission’ working on an ‘ecumenical Mass’ in which Catholics and Protestants could take Communion together. Supposedly it reported directly to Pope Francis, and operated without the knowledge of Cardinal Robert Sarah, head of the Congregation for Divine Worship. Vatican spokesman Greg Burke has

said these rumours are simply not true, with the congregation’s deputy head, Archbishop Arthur Roche, a supposed commission member, saying they are “utterly false”.

Last week also saw reports that Pope Francis had asked for a synod of South American bishops to consider – as something to help tackle vocational shortages in the Amazon region – the possibility of priests being able to marry. Again, this was rubbish: a Brazilian cardinal had apparently asked the Pope if the bishops at the synod could consider the possibility of whether married men of great faith could be ordained, and the Pope had allowed this to be included on the agenda.

That week saw too many Catholic

media outlets – but not *The Irish Catholic!* – glossing over the news that the Church’s former doctrinal watchdog Cardinal Gerhard Müller has joined Vienna’s Cardinal Christoph Schönborn in saying how *Amoris Laetitia* is orthodox and the dubia can be answered, focusing instead on how one American theologian published a letter – written, he said, with divine approval following a strange sign – rejecting the orthodoxy of the Pope’s teaching.

In your Reformation issue (IC 26/10/2017), Prof. Richard Rex quoted Hilaire Belloc saying truth lies in proportion – I’m glad *The Irish Catholic* gets its proportions right.

Yours etc.,

Louise Clarke, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.

Luther’s anniversary a good time to clear the air

Dear Editor, The 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s challenge to debate (allegedly) on the church door in Wittenberg has overshadowed a more significant anniversary. 2017 marks the 1950th anniversary of the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul in Rome.

Anniversaries characterised by ‘50th’ are normally celebrated. But has there been any reference in 2017 to this anniversary at

any level of Catholicism?

Sts Peter and Paul could have created a split in Christianity on the question of circumcision as it related to spreading the Gospel to the Gentiles. But like the subsequent great reformers St Catherine of Sienna and St Bridget of Sweden the interaction between Peter and a mildly Hellenised Paul enhanced Church unity and enriched doctrine.

There is always need for the elimination of abuses and blasphemies in Catholicism but efforts to undo its sacramental foundations cannot be regarded as reform. Catholicism has seen off the efforts of Martin Luther in this regard, and despite its weaknesses and current confusions retains an intellectually rich theological tradition better able to negotiate the acids

of the broader culture.

Moreover the Martin Luther anniversary provides a great opportunity to explain properly and correct the misconceptions regarding the wonderful reality of indulgences and encourage their incorporation into everyday Catholic life.

Yours etc.,

Neil Bray,

Cappamore, Co. Limerick.

Opinions are only for some

Dear Editor, When I read at the weekend of Katie Ascough’s impeachment as President from UCD’s students union because of her pro-life stance, I was dismayed.

Then I thought, why should I be dismayed at the behaviour of people who are willing to kill unborn babies?

As I was distributing pro-life materials at the weekend I detected a marked aggression from some pro-choice sympathisers. Sadly, it now appears in this country that if you are not pro-choice you are not entitled to your opinion!

Yours etc.,

Anne McGrath, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.



Parents unaware of guilt after abortion

Dear Editor, Further to Chai Brady’s article (IC 26/10/2017), I fully agree with Bishop Doran that no health professional should be legally forced to participate in any procedure to which they conscientiously object to on religious or moral grounds.

Although health professionals should always ensure that their personal values and opinions do not stand in the way of their patients receiving any available medical care or treatment, they should be aware of their right to refrain from providing, or participating in, treatments to which they conscientiously object. A health professional’s

autonomy, as well as that of their patients, should be respected.

Julian Savulescu argues that “a doctor’s conscience is of little consequence when caring for a patient; if they are not prepared to offer treatments and care that are in conflict with their conscience, they should not be doctors”.

However a pro-life doctor is no more likely to apply for a position in an abortion clinic than a vegetarian would apply for a job in an abattoir! Are arguments like these simply part of a campaign to deprive a health service of dedicated professionals who dare to respect the

sacredness of human life?

It is commonly believed that having an abortion to avoid having a child with a foetal abnormality will, so to speak, ‘solve the problem’. However research has shown that women can suffer long-lasting physical and emotional consequences.

Parents are frequently quite unprepared for the grief, guilt or depression experienced following an abortion for a foetal abnormality.

Yours etc.,

Christina Coakley,
Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo.

Would a congregation be prepared to pay for a married priest’s family?

Dear Editor, As Michael Kelly says (‘Priestly celibacy is a discussion that will rumble on’, IC 19/10/2017), the requirement for celibacy “is not dogma”. However, this omits how Pope Francis was formerly the Ordinary to the Eastern Rite Catholics in Argentina – and they do allow married priests (though not married Bishops). So Pope Francis may permit a married priesthood in the western Church – but that is unlikely to stem the catastrophic fall in vocations. Would a falling congregation be prepared to pay for the upkeep of a married priest’s family? Would married priests be prepared to uproot their whole family and move to the other end of a diocese at the order of their Bishop?

Whatever about married priests, this has nothing to do with women priests. The distinction must be drawn: celibacy is a matter of Church discipline which is only eight centuries old. Women priests are a matter of doctrine. In the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, only a baptised man may validly be ordained.

And as St John Paul II said in his 1994 apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*: “The fact that the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, received neither the mission proper to the Apostles nor the ministerial priesthood clearly shows that the non-admission of women to priestly ordination cannot mean that women are of lesser dignity, nor can it be construed as discrimination against them.”

Yours etc.,
Kieron Wood,
Rathfarnham,
Dublin 16.

Keep calm and relax – it’s only Christmas!

Dear Editor, What’s all this talk about ‘dreading Christmas’? How we spend Christmas is our choice. Some people have chosen to make the season a time for excess: too much of everything. Trying to keep up with the display of wealth of others drives the market to dizzy heights of greed.

No one is forcing you or me to follow trends. So why not choose independently how we are going to celebrate? I choose to create a peaceful, affordable, happy season without excesses. Explain this cheerfully and meaningfully to the children and to friends.

Have a warm, cosy house in which everyone will be welcome; Christmas tree and Crib if that’s what your heart tells you. Have the kettle on the hob and open arms to callers to share a cuppa, a chat and a laugh (no need for a crate of bottles in the back kitchen!).

Now relax and plan in peace; it’s your choice.

Yours etc.,
Angela Macnamara,
Churchtown,
Dublin 14.

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

📷 Around the world



ITALY: Pope Francis greets the crowd outside the Ardeatine Caves Memorial in Rome November 2, the Feast of All Souls. The site honours 335 Italian citizens who were killed there by the Nazis in 1944.



USA: A cyclist passes a memorial on West Street last week, two days after a man driving a rented pickup truck mowed down pedestrians and cyclists on a bike path alongside the Hudson River in New York City.



UGANDA: Refugees from South Sudan are seen in the Palabek Refugee Camp in northern Uganda. Salesian missionaries have opened five chapels in the camp and minister to the refugees who have fled violence in their homeland.



PHILIPPINES: Marines stand at attention in Manila after arriving from Marawi City, which is still believed to be under threat from Islamic extremists.



USA: Novices of the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara are seen at Holy Comforter St Cyprian Church in Washington prior to the start of their profession of vows. National Vocations Awareness Week in the USA is November 5-11.



PAKISTAN: Pakistani children pray near graves of their loved ones as they observe All Souls' Day on November 2 in Karachi.

Paralysis, exasperation, and helplessness as prayer



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

Several years ago I received an email that literally stopped my breath. A man who had been for many years an intellectual and Faith mentor to me, a man whom I thoroughly trusted and a man with whom I had developed a life-giving friendship, had killed both his wife and himself in a murder-suicide.

The news left me gasping for air, paralysed in terms of how to understand and accept this as well as how to pray in the face of this.

I had neither words of explanation nor words for prayer. My heart and my head were like two water pumps working a dry well, useless and frustrated.

Consolation

Whatever consolation I had was drawn from an assurance from persons who knew him more intimately that there had been major signs of mental deterioration in the time leading up to this horrible event and they were morally certain that this was the result of an organic dysfunction in his brain, not an indication of his person. Yet... how does one pray in a situation like this? There aren't any words.

And we have all experienced situations like this: the tragic death of someone we love by murder, suicide, overdose, or accident. Or, the exasperation and helplessness we feel in the face of the many seemingly senseless events we see daily

in our world: terrorists killing thousands of innocent people; natural disasters leaving countless persons dead or homeless; mass killings by deranged individuals in New York, Paris, Las Vegas, Florida, San Bernardino, Sandy Hook, among other places; and millions of refugees having to flee their homelands because of war or poverty.

And we all we know people who have received terminal sentences in medical clinics and had to face what seems as an unfair death:

young children whose lives are just starting and who shouldn't be asked at so tender an age to have to process mortality and young mothers dying whose children still desperately need them.

In the face of these things, we aren't just exasperated by the senselessness of the situation we struggle too to find both heart and words with which to pray. How do we pray when we are paralysed by senselessness and tragedy? How do we pray when we no longer have the heart for it?



Poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) with his wife, sculptress Clara Westhoff.

St Paul tells us that when we don't know how to pray, the Spirit in groans too deep for words prays through us. What an extraordinary text! Paul tells us that when we can still find the words with which to pray this is not our deepest prayer. Likewise when we still have the heart to pray, this too is not our deepest prayer. Our deepest prayer is when we are rendered mute and groaning in exasperation, in frustration, in helplessness.

“That Spirit lives deep within us, placed there by God in our very make-up and put into us even more deeply by our baptism”

Wordless exasperation is often our deepest prayer. We pray most deeply when we are so driven to our knees so as to be unable to do anything except surrender to helplessness. Our groaning, wordless, seemingly the antithesis of prayer, is indeed our prayer. It is the Spirit praying through us. How so?

The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, is, as scripture assures us, the spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, longsuffering, fidelity, mildness, faith and chastity. And that Spirit lives deep within us, placed there by God in our very make-up and put into us even more deeply by our baptism.

When we are exasperated and driven to our knees by a tragedy which is too painful and senseless

to accept and absorb our groans of helplessness are in fact the Spirit of God groaning in us, suffering all that it isn't, yearning for goodness, beseeching God in a language beyond words.

Advice

Sometimes we can find the heart and the words with which to pray, but there are other times when, in the words of the Book of Lamentation, all we can do is put our mouths to the dust and wait. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke once gave this advice to a person who had written to him, lamenting that in the face of a devastating loss he was so paralysed that he did not know what he could possibly do with the pain he was experiencing. Rilke's advice: give that heaviness back to the earth itself, the earth is heavy, mountains are heavy, the seas are heavy. In effect: Let your groaning be your prayer!

When we don't know how to pray, the Spirit in groans too deep for words prays through us. So every time we are face-to-face with a tragic situation that leaves us stuttering, mute and so without heart that all we can do is say, I can't explain this! I can't accept this! I can't deal with this! This is senseless! I am paralysed in my emotions! I am paralysed in my faith! I no longer have the heart to pray, it can be consoling to know that this paralysing exasperation is our prayer – and perhaps the deepest and most sincere prayer we have ever offered.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, November 9, 2017

Youth Space

Let's Talk:
Conversations
That Matter

Page 34



Going the extra mile to save children from the Holocaust



On a clear, bright morning in late June 2014, Prof. Ronald Friend set out along the Rue du Nord to find the school where he and his brother had been hidden in plain sight, along with other Jewish children, in the latter years of the Second World War. He was looking for landmarks on the quiet road that goes down to the Tarn, the river that gives Marssac-sur-Tarn in south-west France its name, but he had no real memories to speak of.

Yet, despite the passage of time, he had flown from his home in Portland, Oregon, specifically to recall those dark years. A few days earlier he had attended a ceremony to honour Mary Elmes, the Irishwoman who had extricated him and his older brother from a notorious detention camp in 1942, saving their lives. She played a vital role in rescuing hundreds of Jewish children from the cattle wagons that were destined for the Nazi death camps that year. Later the Gestapo arrested and



The remarkable story of a heroic Irishwoman during World War II is only now coming to the fore writes Clodagh Finn

imprisoned her for six months, but she continued to work to help refugees of all nationalities. Her work went unheralded for decades, but, thanks to Ronald Friend's nomination, she had just been awarded Israel's highest honour for risking her life to save Jews during the Holocaust.

Now Ronald, his son Sean and a French friend were revisiting the community that had protected them as children while the occupying Germans held their parents.

Escape

He reached the town square and went into the church, where he took photographs of a plaque honouring Resistance fighters. It was signed by Fr Louis Bézard,

a name familiar to him. The local priest had played a big part in his escape. When Ronald first revisited France, in 1956, Fr Bézard had been able to recount, in great detail, what had happened. He had described how, in November 1942, Ronald (then three years old) and his brother (aged six) were smuggled to a safe house in Toulouse and taken to Marssac.

In a six-page written account, the priest described how he and his colleague André Violier hid the children on that perilous journey. He wrote: "The return [to Marssac] was difficult...in particular going across Toulouse and at the train station, which was under heavy Gestapo surveillance. We had to hide

the children in our luggage and under a big overcoat." By the time they got to Marssac the little boys were "upset, frightened and starving".

They were not the only Jewish children taking refuge there: five others had found refuge at the presbytery too. After a few days, when they had regained their strength, the Freund brothers were placed with foster families and they were soon absorbed into daily life in the town.

They were baptised as Catholics and mixed in with local children at the school that Ronald had just rediscovered seven decades later.

Documents

Over the years he has gathered a number of documents that have helped him piece together what happened after his parents were forced to flee an increasingly anti-Jewish Berlin in 1933. His father, Dr Hans Freund, was German and worked as a consulting engineer at Dresdner Bank (which was, ironically,

Hitler's bank). His mother, Eva, a physician, worked at a Jewish hospital before they were forced to move to Milan. The couple's first son was born there in 1936. They called him Mario, in the hope that he might get Italian papers.

But with the rise of fascism the family was forced to move again, this time to Paris, where Ronald was born on October 28, 1939. He was given a French name, René, and again his father tried, unsuccessfully, to get him French papers. There was a step-daughter too, Suzanna (Sanne).

Her mother, Hans's first wife, had died. Sanne had been sent to relatives in England before the war but was very unhappy to be separated from the rest of the family, and sent postcards saying so, although in a letter written in June 1942, five months before her father was deported, she sounded rather cheerful, describing life at an English school, hiking with the Girl Guides, and a

» Continued on Page 33

r1

Family News AND EVENTS

Bracelet can tell if a woman is pregnant

Traditional home pregnancy tests could soon be a thing of the past, with scientists announcing a new smartwatch system that alerts women when they have conceived.

Swiss researchers, presenting research in Texas at the annual congress of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, said that conception leads to minor changes in skin temperature, breathing rate, pulse and heart rate. These subtle physiological changes can be detected by existing technology, the researchers said, explaining that they plan to begin real-world tests with their 'Ava' bracelet before the end of this year.

The team are currently working on algorithms to enable the bracelet to recognise the characteristics of individual wearers' signals, indicating not merely the start of pregnancy but also the best windows in which to try for a child and the presence of early indicators for such serious conditions as pre-eclampsia.

The Ava bracelet is expected to cost around €225.



GET IT CHECKED: November is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, and cancer.ie is a resource well worth checking to boost awareness of the most common cancer for men in Ireland: each year, 3,400 Irish men are diagnosed with the disease, with one in seven Irish men being diagnosed with prostate cancer over their lifetime.

Most men diagnosed with prostate cancer are aged over 50, and doctors believe that men of that age should discuss with their GP whether they should undergo prostate screening. Men over 40 with a family history of prostate cancer should similarly consult with their GPs. Common symptoms of prostate cancer include slow urine flow, difficulties in stopping or starting urine flow, pain when passing urine, blood in urine, and a feeling of not having fully emptied one's bladder.

Repayments on tap

Families who have paid water charges and are due their money back will be able to do so through a refunds page Irish Water has put on its website.

The company has said that refunds worth €173 million will be paid to 990,000 customers across Ireland.

While legislation to enable refunds is passing through the Oireachtas, customers will be able to log onto water.ie/refunds to check how much they are due and when they are likely to receive their refunds.

Customers who have changed their addresses should contact the company on 1850 448 448 to update their details, while those who have not changed their address will be refunded by cheques sent to the account holder at the address held by Irish Water.



Showing love for all God's creatures



My 11-year-old daughter has been using pester power for several years now to encourage me to get her a pet. My 16-year-old was also on the case, presenting me with appealing Facebook pictures of cute, furry kittens and crazy cat antics on YouTube.

My husband and I discussed it on many occasions but always felt that our lifestyle was too busy for the demands of a pet. We were reluctant to take on the responsibility of welcoming a little animal that might have to be left home alone for long periods of time. I was never that impressed with smaller animals as pets and while I might have considered a goldfish, fish just aren't responsive enough for my liking.

My daughters must have been praying hard because the week-end of Hurricane Ophelia changed everything.

“We all know the stories about never getting rid of a cat once you feed it”

It's not every day that Ireland experiences the sort of extreme weather that Hurricane Ophelia brought. It's also not a common occurrence to have a hungry little cat appearing out of nowhere looking a bit lost and bedraggled. We all know the stories about never getting rid of a cat once you feed it and how clever cats can use their feline charms to get a few tasty morsels at several doors. It all meant nothing to my kind-hearted daughter who just saw a vulnerable creature in need of refuge.

I kept hoping that the lovely tortoiseshell cat would

A parent's perspective



Maria Byrne

disappear. I was convinced that a cat with a collar, a bell and a shiny healthy coat must have a worried owner waiting for her to come home, but every morning, the little dark bundle was there huddled up on the doorstep. Then the storm arrived and all my steely resolve went out the door with the first few gusts. As the gales rattled the windows, Shadow, as she was now called, slept smugly in an old crate by the heater. It looked like she was here to stay.

Stray

Two weeks later and “that stray cat” has become “our cat”. We've dished out several hundred euros to get the best of cat care; all cat vaccinations have been taken care of and the poor cat is recovering from the recommended surgery. I actually managed to locate her owner and a wave of relief was followed by sleepless nights when I realised that she wasn't really in a position to look after a seven-month-old kitty.

I was very tempted to bid our lost friend a fond farewell; a cat had definitely not been on the agenda. I wasn't even a cat person and my husband always said that he hated cats. It was a late night chat with my 16-year-old daughter that tipped the balance in the cat's

favour. All my arguments about not knowing anything about cats, not wanting a cat and the fear of being tied down were demolished. One thing was clear: this little animal needed a home. I'd heard stories about Pope Benedict feeding the stray cats of Rome and about how much he loved cats. I said a few quiet prayers to St Francis of Assisi who once said that: “If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.”

It took less than two weeks to fall head over heels for little Shadow and, in that length of time, I see all the benefits



to children of having a pet. Whether it's caring for farm animals, a dog or a cat or even a goldfish, the responsibility of a pet teaches children about commitment. When our overgrown kitten was settling in, my 16-year-old slept downstairs to keep an eye on her.

As she waddled around backwards trying to escape from her post-operative plastic collar, my children fussed around sympathetically. There were a few stressful nights when, in typical young cat style, Shadow was having a few moments of cat madness.

The children suddenly

developed the realisation that pets aren't like video games; you can't just turn them off when you're tired or bored. Pets can help children to develop virtues like kindness and respect.

“Pets like cats and dogs teach children about loyalty and trust”

I was impressed at how a child whose bedroom looks like it's been ransacked was so dedicated to administering cat medicine, bathing the cat and even the lovely job of cleaning the cat's litter box.

Pets like cats and dogs teach children about loyalty and trust. In a sometimes confusing world, a pet is a trusted friend that children can confide in. Caring for pets requires empathy and sensitivity which helps smaller children to learn about treating others as you'd like to be treated yourself. I noticed my seven-year-old son being very gentle with the new addition after a bit of lively play resulted in a minor scratch.

Pets teach children about long term plans and permanency; once you take on the job, you stick with it until the end. With pets that's a long term commitment.

Many Catholic parishes around the world have an annual blessing of the animals. A lot of our well known saints had a particular love for animals. When we are kind to our pets and all animals, we're demonstrating our appreciation and love for all of God's wonderful creation including all our furry friends and especially those that appear from nowhere on dark stormy nights.

» Continued from Page 31

ballet performance in Oxford by the Sadler's Wells Ballet. "I think ballet is like acting, only everything is arranged symmetrically," she wrote, before adding that she hoped the family would all be able to go to America soon.

They would never make that journey, although Dr Freund did receive a job appointment from the Stevens Institute in New Jersey. However, his attempt to get an exit visa for the United States failed. He tried Mexico too, and a number of countries in South America, all without success; yet he continued to explore every possible avenue while interned at Rivesaltes.

Efforts

Ronald Friend had always known of his father's efforts, but for decades he wondered why his mother was eventually freed but not him. He also wondered who had taken him and his brother from the camp to safety in September 1942. The answer to that question would eventually come in an email many years later when, in January 2011, Katy Hazan, historian and archivist at the Jewish aid organisation O'uvre de Secours aux Enfants provided a name. The woman who rescued the Freund boys was a Miss Elmes.

In fact this was Mary Elmes, who, Ronald Friend would discover, had saved many lives but had quietly turned down any recognition for it when the war was over. He went on to uncover several references to this forgotten aid worker. In 1942 she risked her life several times by hiding Jewish children in her car and driving them to safe houses in the Pyrénées-Orientales region. In a two-month period in the autumn of that year, some 2,289 Jewish adults and 174 children, some as young as two, were herded onto cattle wagons at Rivesaltes and taken to Drancy transit camp outside Paris and then on to Auschwitz.

An estimated 427 children were saved from the convoys, thanks to the work of Mary Elmes and other women working at the camp.

It is impossible to calculate precisely the number of lives Mary Elmes saved, but she "spirited away nine children" from the first convoy on August 11, 1942, according to one surviving document.

After the war she also mentioned in passing that she had hidden a family in her flat in Perpignan

After that she made several trips to and from the camp, loading her car with the Jewish children most at risk of deportation. Many years later she would tell her son, Patrick Danjou, that on one occasion she managed to hide six children in her car.

After the war she also mentioned in passing that she had hidden a family in her flat in Perpignan. However, she never made much of the work she had done as head of the Quaker delegation in Perpignan, when she helped hundreds of people to secure exit visas from France. She also made sure that hundreds more, mostly children, got out of the camps to take refuge in one of a number



“In 1942 she risked her life several times by hiding Jewish children in her car and driving them to safe houses”

Mary Elmes.

of Quaker convalescent homes she helped to establish all over the south-west of France. Some of the children she placed there were saved from deportation and death.

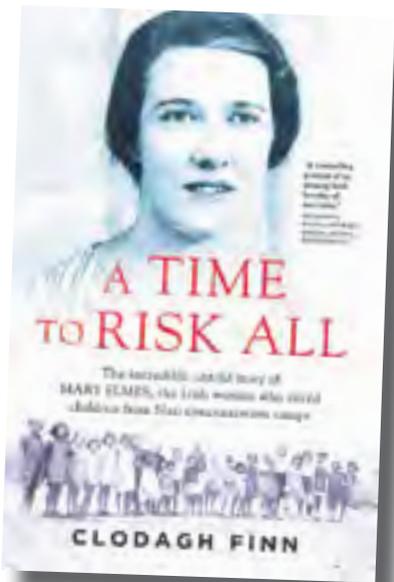
By the time Ronald Friend found out who had saved his life it was too late to thank her in person. Mary Elmes died in 2002, aged 93, in Perpignan, where she had lived the rest of her life after the war.

To honour her memory, Ronald nominated her for inclusion in the 'Righteous Among the Nations' at Yad Vashem, an award conferred by Israel on non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Oskar Schindler and his wife, Emilie, are among its more famous recipients, recognised in 1993 for saving the lives of an estimated 1,100 Jews.

Honoured

Ronald Friend was determined that Mary Elmes would also be honoured for what she had done. "Mary Elmes was clearly a figure who had not been given the recognition that she deserved. She was head of the Quaker delegation in Perpignan with up to 30 people working directly under her. She had been given a prominent role and she showed the way. She was obviously a woman of great intelligence, strength and character."

If Ronald Friend had been in any doubt about that, the remarkable character of the woman who saved his life began to emerge when he started the long, taxing process of nominating her for the award at Yad Vashem. He enlisted the help of two



British Quakers, Bernard and Janet Wilson, who had an interest in the work done by the Quaker delegation in the south of France during the war. Together they uncovered details of the life of an extraordinary woman who left a brilliant academic career behind to volunteer to work with children during the Spanish Civil War.

When more than half a million refugees fleeing Franco's forces poured over the border into France in 1939, Mary Elmes followed them. From her base in Perpignan she helped set up schools, canteens, workshops, travelling libraries and convalescent homes for children. When the Second World War broke out she helped refugees from that war too – displaced Belgians, Germans and, increasingly, Jews who had been rounded up and interned.

When she was finally released she made little of the experience

In 1943 her work in the camps brought her to the attention of the Nazi authorities. She was arrested and jailed, first in Toulouse, then in the infamous Gestapo-run Fresnes prison outside Paris. The Quakers, and her mother in Cork, mounted a hard-fought campaign to get her out. Her neutral Irish nationality worked in her favour, and when she was finally released she made little of the experience. When a Quaker official, Howard Wriggins, asked her about it after the war, she remarked: "Well, we all experienced inconveniences in those days, didn't we?"

Even though Mary Elmes spoke little of her work, the Quakers had archived hundreds of thousands of documents that allowed Ronald Friend and the Wilsons to collect enough hard evidence to prove that she had saved the lives of the Freund brothers. On June 27, 2014, she was posthumously honoured at an award ceremony in Canet-en-Roussillon in the south of France. Ronald Friend was proud to be there to see her become the first, and only, Irish person to be named Righteous Among the Nations.

1 Clodagh Finn is author of *A Time To Risk All* – the Incredible Untold story of Mary Elmes, the Irishwoman who Saved Children from Nazi concentration camps.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



One eccentric feature of parenthood is that your holiday dates are chosen for you by the Department of Education. Left to their own devices, few parents would spontaneously elect upon the dreary weeks of late October as the ideal season for a family holiday.

Yet we must make the most of what we are given, and so this year for mid-term break we booked ferries across the Irish Sea, and clamped the roof box to the top of our dishevelled old seven-seater for an odyssey through England, Wales and Ireland to visit family and friends and see the sights.

I did all the dad things before we left: checked the oil and tyre pressures, and packed the essentials for emergencies: jump leads, a first aid kit and a bottle of Powers. Storm Brian wreaked havoc with our ferry schedules and we had to leave home at 5 am to catch the rescheduled crossing. With the engine running we placed three dazed children in the car in their pyjamas and set out, sleep deprived, onto the eerily quiet pre-dawn roads.

We had barely pulled out of our driveway on this 1,500km expedition when our three-year-old, in whining tones, inevitably enquired, "are we nearly there yet?" There is a reason that doctors creating programmes to relax and de-stress people have not yet recommended a long car journeys with three small children.

There is a sense of continuity across the four old nations

Before long, sporadic squabbling began to erupt in the back seats, necessitating the first dose of "digital valium". The kids were duly administered their tablet device. As this electronic remedy began to take effect, all three were soon staring blankly at screens in the back and a strange quiet enveloped the car, punctuated only by digital beeps and blips.

"This is it," I said to my wife as the dawn broke grey, the sun attempted vainly to puncture the October gloom. My heart rate fell slightly, "we're on holiday". We gave

thanks that it had, thus far, only been mildly traumatic.

Yet we soon got into the swing of life on the road. We caught the first ferry with ease and before long we were cruising through the majestic mountains of Snowdonia. Wales is familiar. It's Wales alright, but it could easily be Kerry, Wicklow or Connemara – just with a higher concentration of rugby clubs. The houses and castles even are similar across the Irish Sea.

We stopped at Pembroke Castle where the Irish-Welsh connections were made all the more evident. Gerald – the ancestor of the Fitzgeralds – had lived there in the 11th Century. The kids love castles, but it was especially fascinating for them to think of an old family connection. Better yet, his wife Nest, also an ancestor, was a Welsh princess. No wonder Wales had felt so familiar.

There's hard wisdom to be gained on the M4.

There's nothing like a British motorway journey to make you realise that nothing in life is certain. We are once again like ancient peoples, subject to the caprice of mysterious forces like lightning and thunder. For no reason at all, the whole motorway can grind to a halt without notice. Yet even across the congested Severn Bridge, and on into England, there is a sense of continuity across the four old nations of these islands.

After a few days visiting cousins and castles via Dublin, Cork and London we set off homeward. Our last journey involved another 4.30am start, a four-hour crossing and a five-hour drive. I'm sure I spent more time driving than sleeping on this 'holiday'. Yet despite the sleep deprivation, many happy memories were made.

The happiest moment of all for me personally came when the 'holiday' ended, and I collapsed back into my own bed, in my own house, safe in the knowledge that only the comparatively restful sanctuary of work lay in wait for me the next morning.



Let's Talk: Conversations That Matter

Youth Space



Colm Fitzpatrick

Nestled away in a quiet corner of Ballycastle, people of all backgrounds and ages are letting their voices be heard loud and clear through a unique initiative that promotes discussion of key Irish issues.

Conversations That Matter is a dialogue process between young adults from across the island of Ireland with the aim of surfacing issues deemed important to the present generation of young people and leaders. The topics are inspired by and drawn from the life experience and desires of the young people who take part, such as mental health awareness, conflict resolution and environmentalism.

"I think the programme equips the young people with life skills that they can take forward to become engaged active leaders in their community", said Lisa Mooney, coordinator of the programme.

"The fact that the young people are co-architects of the programme gives them a unique insight and opportunities to really hear and be heard."

Former chaplain

The conversations take place on three weekend residential in Corrymeela, Northern Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation organisation. Corrymeela was founded by a former chaplain in World War II, Ray Davey, who was



Participants of 'Conversations That Matter' discuss key issues in Ireland today and how they can be resolved.

a prisoner of war in Dresden. After returning to Belfast to continue his work as a chaplain, the political, religious and ideological differences in Northern Ireland compelled him along with a group of students from Queens University to establish Corrymeela to address these conflictual issues.

“It was a privilege to walk alongside the young adult participants and to see them grow in confidence”

It began before 'The Troubles', and still continues in Northern Ireland's changing post-conflict society to ameliorate national and local problems by providing a space for an analysis of the underlying dynamics of conflict, fracture, scapegoating and violence that is found in so many spheres of the world today. The organisation is composed of a dispersed Christian community, with almost 40 full-time staff and dozens of volunteers

who make the work possible with around 80,000 volunteer hours every year. Together this community is committed to engage with the world at its points of fracture, faith and potential.

Kerry Logan, a volunteer at Corrymeela and participant in Conversations That Matter, said: "From living in an international community of volunteers to facilitating group activities and everything in between, I have learnt a huge amount during my time volunteering at Corrymeela."

"Working with Conversations that Matter has been one of the highlights of my year. It was a privilege to walk alongside the young adult participants and to see them grow in confidence as they took ownership of the programme, the conversations they engaged in, the sessions they stepped up to facilitate and the goals they took home."

Those who take part in the programme are drawn from different socio-economic, religious, educational, geographical and political positions which allows for

the provision of well-informed and even opposing viewpoints to the various issues being discussed.

One of the central questions from which all the conversations emerge is 'What does it mean to live well together?' Those who complete the programme will leave with a greater awareness of 'the other', and with a greater sense of responsibility toward the wider issues of reconciliation, justice and peace.

“The seminar was an action-packed and enriching experience that I will reflect and draw on for a long time to come”

Aisling Connolly, a fourth-year Trinity College student said that the programme is important because "it brings the Northern and Southern youth together to discuss and subsequently learn how to take action on issues affecting us all."

The conversations are not predetermined which allows every

participant to share and shape the content and format of the discussions. Every issue raised is given considerable attention and is further developed during the residential, with particular goals set mind at its conclusion.

Questions

In August, participants in Conversations That Matter attended a conflict resolution programme in Germany, along with other international groups. It addressed some of the fundamental questions that are relevant globally today such as democracy and the future of Europe. Activities involved interrogating the rumours and stereotypes embedded into our perceptions of other countries, as well as reevaluating our moral values by deciding where human worth lies.

John McCaul Jnr, who attended the programme, said: "Without doubt, the seminar was an action-packed and enriching experience that I will reflect and draw on for a long time to come. In addition to learning about the welfare of refugees in continental Europe, I learned from and shared knowledge; experiences and culture with my German; Lithuanian and Polish counterparts."

The participants were able to inform and present to the international groups on specifically Irish issues too, including poverty and Brexit.

By providing an accessible platform for young people to discuss the vital issues of today, their voices will begin to reverberate throughout their communities so that real and positive differences can be made.

i For more information about *Conversations That Matter*, and how to get involved, email lisamooney@corrymeela.org



Green Fingers

Paul Gargan

It's time to prepare your garden for winter

With autumn now stretching well into November and – weather dependent – possibly December, and winters getting milder and wetter, the jobs to be done to winterise your garden are changing. Waterlogging and strong wintery gales are more likely to be the problem, rather than snow or soil frozen solid.

Constant heavy rain can kill plants such as lavender, rosemary, summer flowering bulbs and alpines that can normally survive a cold winter, without any problems simply because of waterlogging. To prevent this, grow plants that need good drainage in pots or in a raised bed.

To prevent compaction, which will cause you problems in summer, stay off the lawn as much as possible when ground conditions are wet. This doesn't mean you ignore it. You must rake up and remove fallen leaves. If there is only a small amount, compost them, if there is a large amount, bag them and make leafmould. If leaves cover the

grass for weeks, they starve it of light and it may develop a fungal disease or leave bare patches.

Grass still grows in winter, so cut your lawn at least once a month with blades set a notch or two higher than usual. This will keep it from getting long and falling down on itself.

Winds

Strong winds are a problem in all but the most sheltered gardens. If you have a fence with wooden posts, check the bases of them for rot, replacing them now may save you having to replace half your fence, plus whatever of it that breaks during high winds.

Check latches and hinges on gates and shed doors, replacing where needed. Check the ties and stakes on newly planted trees, they are there to stop the tree moving in the wind. Remove after 2-3 years. After strong winds, check newly planted shrubs, as they may have lifted slightly out of their

planting hole with windrock.

All planted pots should be raised off the ground using pot feet (bricks or just pieces of timber). This prevents waterlogging and also freezing as air can circulate around it. Large pots that are top heavy with shrubs must be secured to something solid like a fence or wall. Even though our climate is changing to milder, wet winters, you must still prepare for frost.

Draw, roll up and store your garden hose. Outside taps must be lagged. Use bubble wrap, this is the easiest way to prevent it freezing as it is both waterproof and insulating.

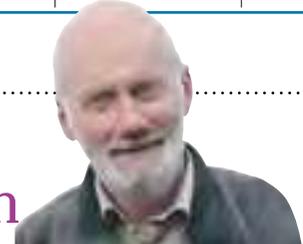
Feeding

Continue feeding garden birds, but you can supplement the usual food with bird pudding. This is made by melting lard or dripping and adding breakfast cereal, uncooked porridge oats, crushed peanut butter, seeds and grated cheese. Any or all of the above will do. When set hard, turn out in a solid mass on a bird table or pack into a small flower pot and hang upside down. Always have clean, fresh water available for birds.



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



TV3 show a real example of an Irish welcome

A few Sundays ago one of the readings at Mass was about welcoming the stranger. The exhortation came back to me when I was watching **Ireland's Refugee Hotel**, a TV3/BBC co-production shown last Thursday on TV3 and last Tuesday on BBC 1.

The focus was on the small town of Ballaghaderreen in Co. Roscommon, where Muslim refugees from Syria were accommodated in a disused but modern hotel.

The film was moving, thought provoking, even inspiring, but I particularly liked the low key approach of the film makers and how there was no canonisation of the refugees and no demonisation of those locals who were less than enthusiastic about the venture – it was just a very human story, well told, and one that had respectful faith elements relating to the local Catholics and the visiting Muslims.

Considering the indifferent attitude to Massgoing among many Irish Catholics, I was tickled by the irony of some of the Muslims being upset that they missed the Easter celebrations in the local Cathedral. It seems that at home they often celebrated major religious feasts with their Christian neighbours.

The parish priest was surprised and invited them for a visit to the Cathedral where



Locals and Muslim refugees pictured in Ballaghaderreen.

there were some prayerful and tearful moments.

Some locals were not fully behind the idea of the refugee initiative. An uneasy neighbour who lived across the road from the hotel admitted she was afraid of them, especially when groups of young men were around the town together, and thought it was unwise to put so many in such a small town – better to spread them more widely.

There were some sad stories – one young man missed his mother back in Syria, another had been with his mother when she was shot

dead, a young mother didn't know whether her husband was dead or alive after a bomb blast. But whatever the case they were so grateful for the welcome they got in Ireland, far exceeding their expectations, and most locals were hugely welcoming.

In a touching moment we learned that the fears of the uneasy neighbour, now receiving cancer treatment, were allayed once she got to know the visitors.

With so much ugliness and polarisation featuring daily in the media it was a relief to find a programme so uplifting

– catch it at tv3.ie.

Meanwhile, **Sunday**, BBC Radio 4's religious affairs programme, covered a very different kind of location, but also a place of refuge in its own way, the Abbey House retreat centre in Glastonbury, shortly due for closure. Margaret Morris felt a sense of loss – “when I Come to Abbey House I expect to meet with the Lord here” – and she feared Christian heritage ‘being shaved away’.

Attention

Some attention was given to the loss of retreat houses in general and the problems caused by high maintenance costs and declining religious orders, but Alison McTier of the Retreat Association said there was still a high demand for retreat experiences, though there was trend towards smaller venues.

In the case of Abbey House, a former trustee, Nick Denni-

son, said that finance wasn't the problem at Abbey House, but that the landlord, the Glastonbury Abbey Trust, had given notice to quit. He was saddened by this, and thought the trust's actions incompatible with their charitable purpose “to advance religion”.

He pointed out that the nearby ruins were of a Benedictine abbey, a place of great spirituality until the dissolution by Henry VIII, a tradition revived by Abbey House 80 years ago.

Finally, the current furore over sexual harassment is an unexpected controversy. Some say media hysteria, some say a long overdue exposure of the mistreatment of women by men abusing positions of power. One of the best debates I came across was on last weekend's **Sunday Morning Live** on BBC 1, where there was a welcome diversity of opinion.

No one defended the inappropriate actions we've been hearing about, but there was divergence over how to approach it.

Sophie Walker of the Leader Women's Equality Party saw this as women taking back control and saw talk of a ‘witch hunt’ as a diversion. Journalist Naomi Firsh on the other hand feared a ‘moral panic’ and thought it unhelpful to put everything from flirty text messages to sexual assault on the same spectrum – she found it



Sophie Walker.

PICK OF THE WEEK

REASONS TO BELIEVE
EWTN Sunday, November 12, 11.30 am, also Thursday 9.30 pm

Biblical scholar Dr. Scott Hahn and co-host Mike Aquilina debunk the common misconception that faith and science are opposed to one another.

THE SIMPSONS

Channel 4, Sunday, November 12, 3.20 pm
Homer the Heretic: Homer has a vision from God and decides to start his own religion.

THIS WORLD: KILLING CHRISTIANITY

RTÉ 1 Friday (night), November 17, 4.30 am
Jane Corbin travels across the Middle East to some of the holiest places in Christendom and finds that hundreds of thousands of Christians are fleeing Islamic extremists, conflict and persecution.

was denigrating the serious offences.

I suspect the dominoes will continue to fall on this issue.

boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

Exposing an RUC cover-up of pub massacre in 1994

No Stone Unturned (PG)

The euphoria experienced by six people in a bar in the village of Loughlinisland, Co. Down, shortly after Ray Houghton scored an unforgettable goal against Italy in a World Cup match on June 18, 1994, was short-lived. Soon afterwards three UVF men burst through the door and mowed them down mercilessly.

The atrocity signalled the end of the ‘tit for tat’ killings that had been the hallmark of The Troubles up until then. Not too long afterwards the Good Friday Agreement drew a line in the political



Very good
★★★★★

sand. But that didn't make it any easier to take.

What hurt almost as much as the killings was the fact that nobody was ever charged with them. Compare that with the treatment meted out to innocent people who were wrongfully arrested for violence from the republican side like

the Guildford Four or the Birmingham Six.

No doors were battered down to apprehend these thugs. Arrests were made but those arrested were advised of such matters beforehand to allow them to destroy any evidence the RUC might have ‘discovered’ on their premises. The arrests were

tokenistic sops, so much cosmetic red tape.

The killers' getaway car broke down on the way from the pub. It was abandoned in a field as they made their escape on foot. They left a gymbag behind them with guns and balaclavas in it. And a hair follicle. They also left the murder rifle.

This was a forensic scientist's banquet but it went for nothing. Evidence from the field was either ignored or disposed of. More worryingly, the car itself was destroyed, thereby sacrificing the kind of DNA material that would surely have tied the perpetrators to the crime.

Why? Because the RUC

was in cahoots with the UVF. So was the British government. “This went all the way to the top,” says one of the bereaved in Alex Gibney's compulsive documentary. She reminds one of a character from the Woodward & Bernstein *exposé*, *All the President's Men*.

Like that groundbreaking film, this bears all the hallmarks of a whodunit. When the ‘who’ is finally revealed, we learn that it was his conscience-stricken wife who ‘shopped’ him. But even then nothing was done. He continues to walk the streets today. (With a heavy sense of irony we learn he now runs an “exterminator” firm.)

The fact that this man (and his partners) have been named and shamed goes some way towards mitigating the grief of those traumatised by the slaughter. In another way it compounds the agony.

Their lives were changed, changed utterly on that fateful night when a hail of bullets wiped out their loved ones' lives in cold blood. The failure to apprehend those responsible was an epic failure on the part of the powers-that-be. To date nobody has been willing to come out with their hands up and say “*mea culpa*”.

The stone remains unturned by those with blood on their hands.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Chris Patten: A modern Catholic statesman

First Confession: A Sort of Memoir
by Chris Patten
(Allen Lane, £14.99)

John Bruton

I have just finished reading with very great interest this most absorbing memoir of a modern politician of a special kind.

Chris Patten was a Minister in Margaret Thatcher's and John Major's governments, and was the Director of Elections for his party in the 1992 General Election, when the Conservative Party under John Major won an unexpected victory. But Patten himself lost his seat in Bath in the same election.

Patten writes in an easy, conversational style. I particularly liked his description of his childhood, his parents, and his school years. He received his secondary education in St Benedict's in Ealing, from which he won a scholar-

ship to Oxford.

His father's family came from County Roscommon shortly after the Famine, and Chris Patten, to this day, identifies strongly with his Irish and Catholic roots. His childhood was a happy one and his love for his parents shines through in this book, as does his devotion to his wife and his daughters.

“He is a political ‘conservative’ in the sense that he is uneasy with grand theories and overarching generalisations”

Chris Patten is comfortable in his identity, and sees no need to bolster it by any form of hostility to people with a different identity. Unfortu-

nately the Brexit vote shows that not every English person is so at ease to the same degree.

He is a political ‘conservative’ in the sense that he is uneasy with grand theories and overarching generalisations, whether of the Left, or of the Right.

Natural order

He served as the last British Governor of Hong Kong, and is not flattering about China. While its rate of economic growth continues to be remarkable, this is, in a sense, a return to the natural order of things.

After all, in 1800, China was the largest economy in the world. He believes the Chinese version of Leninism has allowed the rich to get richer, and that it has had to “fall back on nationalism to justify its control of everything”.

On the other hand, he has



Lord Patten in a philosophical moment.

a very high opinion of India, reminding his reader that India “had already established a rich tradition of tolerance and debate when Europeans still believed in the divine right of Kings”.

“Science deals with empirical issues, whereas religion deals with values”

This may explain why Indian democracy has sur-

vived so well.

Chris Patten served as EU Commissioner for External Relations. He argues that the UK blames the EU for failings closer to home, that have reduced British productivity below its potential, like poor second-level education and unduly restrictive planning laws. But he seems to be opposed to the Euro, and claims the results have been “terrible” for most members of the Eurozone...a view I believe to be seriously exaggerated, if not simply wrong.

He is comfortable, as I say,

in his Catholic faith, and says “as a Christian, I believe in an afterlife”, and that this life is not the end of the story. He says that the attempt to use science to discredit religion often assumes that science itself is infallible.

Science deals with empirical issues, whereas religion deals with values, morality and meaning.

There is no necessary conflict between them, he argues. I would certainly agree.

This a good book and well worth reading.

The Great Hunger in the hills of North Kerry

The Great Famine in Tralee and North Kerry
by Bryan MacMahon
(Mercier Press, €35)

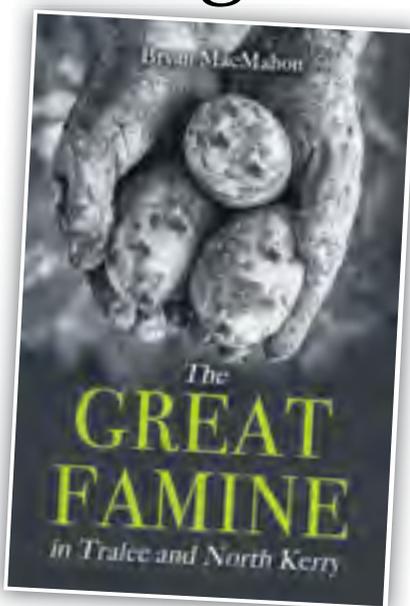
J. Anthony Gaughan

The Great Famine, or ‘Black ‘45’ as it is known in the oral tradition, was a seminal event in the modern history of Ireland. It initiated the great emigration to the ‘New World’. Regrettably it also grafted on to the folk memory a far from friendly attitude to our English neighbours.

By contextualising the famine and analysing the many complexities associated with it, historians thankfully help to moderate that attitude. In this meticulously researched study, while not absolving the authorities in London of their responsibility, MacMahon describes the roles of many other villains and heroes in that cataclysmic event.

The statistics on the Great Famine are stark. Between 1845 and 1851 the population fell from eight-and-a-half million to six-and-a-half million; one million died of starvation and disease, another million fled from the country.

Kerry was the fifth in the list of counties hardest hit by the famine and had the unenviable distinction of coming second only to Antrim



of a line from Fenit to Tralee, Castleisland and Brosna. His main sources are the *Kerry Evening Post* (Tory and Protestant), *Kerry Examiner* (Nationalist and Catholic), *The Tralee Chronicle* (liberal and neutral in politics), and the *Cork Examiner*. Making generous use of reports in the Kerry newspapers and the *Cork Examiner* the author takes the reader through the years 1845 to 1848.

Mixed messages

Initially in 1845 there were mixed messages with regard to the success or failure of the potato crop. When it became clear that the crop had failed the government purchased Indian meal and distributed it to the needy. Also a Relief Commission was established and public works were begun.

In 1846 so as not to interfere with market prices Indian corn was not freely distributed but sold at reduced prices. By March 1847, 714,000 people were employed in public works. At this stage soup kitchens were set up to replace the public works. By July 3,000,000 people were in receipt of food through food kitchens. In 1848 following another general crop failure a cholera epidemic began. Throughout those years the workhouses in Listowel and Tralee

were not able to cope with the large numbers of the homeless and destitute.

There were villains galore in the *dramatis personae* of the Great Famine. Food was continually exported from Ireland during the famine period. Moreover, there is no doubt that, if a comparable crisis had arisen in England, the government would not have allowed the socio-economic structure of the time to stand in the way of supplying food to areas, where it was urgently required.

“A few of the local landlords were actively involved in efforts to help the people in distress”

The landlords – those who were not absentees – lived luxuriously in their mansions, while the tenants on their estates were dying of starvation. Trinity College, Dublin, was the owner of huge tracts of land in North Kerry and the Provost and the College were as heartless in dealing with their tenants as any of the other landlords in the area. There were those who sought to exploit the dire situation, such as greedy merchants and shopkeepers and an over-zealous evangelical

preacher who stirred up sectarianism.

The Great Famine also produced its heroes. A few of the local landlords were actively involved in efforts to help the people in distress. The local Church of Ireland clergy were to the fore in all such efforts. There was widespread praise for a number of government and local officials.

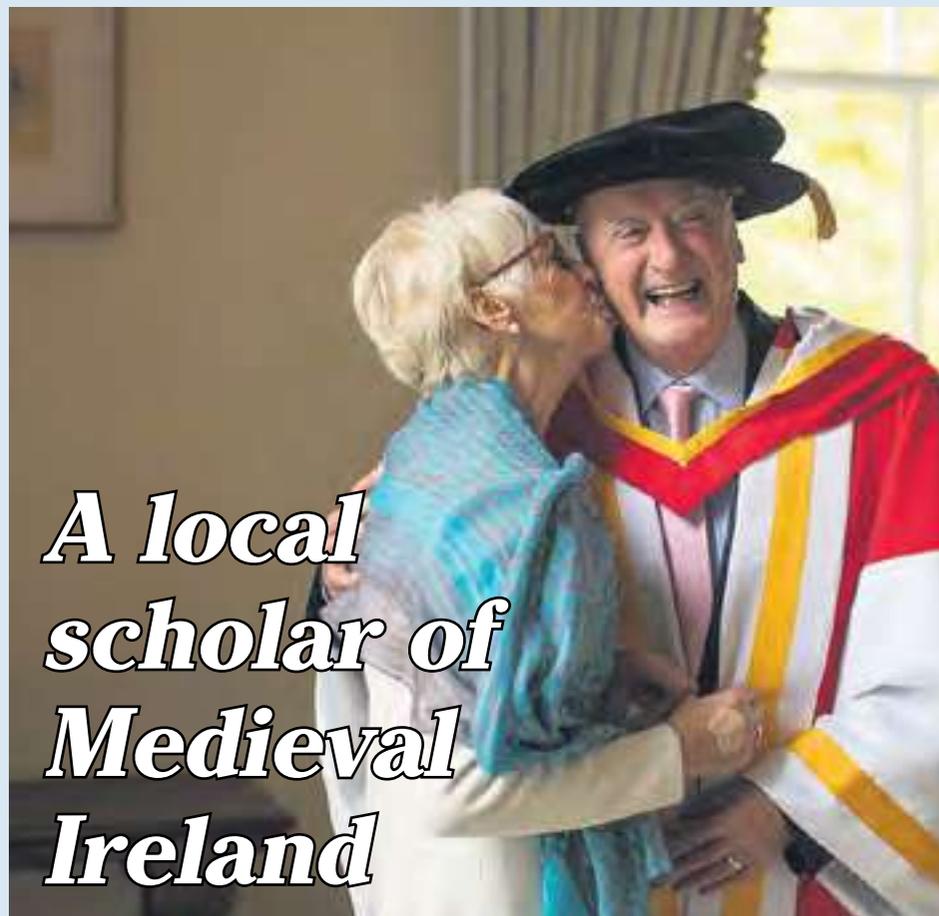
Evidence

MacMahon provides a wealth of evidence showing that the priests of the area were indefatigable in their efforts to assist the starving people. As a result of their ministry to the sick and dying, four young priests in the area contracted the cholera and died. For their dedicated services during the darkest days of the famine the names of Jeremiah (Darby) Mahony (PP, Listowel), John McEnery (PP, Tralee) and Eugene McCarthy (PP, Ballyheigue) were ‘in the mouths of the people’. The result was an exceptional bond in the area between priest and people which lasted for more than a hundred years.

There is scarcely a topic more challenging than the Great Famine, but Bryan MacMahon's splendid monograph is a wonderful template for other historians and scholars to replicate across the country.

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 local scholar of Medieval Ireland



George Cunningham celebrating his honorary degree.

60 at Roscrea: Celebrating the Roscrea Conference at Mt St Joseph Abbey, 1987-2017

edited by George Cunningham
(The Roscrea People; 300 copies numbered and signed; nos 1-150 h/b, €40, and 150 Card covers, nos 151-300, €20; p/p €5 within Ireland.)

Terry Barry

Ireland is truly lucky for a small island to have so many excellent local historians/archaeologists, and George Cunningham of Roscrea in North Tipperary is undoubtedly one of the finest.

Not only did he complete a successful M.Litt. on the Anglo-Norman advance in the South West Midlands, supervised by me in 1985 in Trinity College, Dublin, followed few years later by an Honorary Masters in NUI Maynooth, and he has just been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Limerick.

Monastery

He has presided over one of the most successful local conferences in contemporary Ireland at the Cistercian monastery and school at Mount St Joseph, Roscrea.

This volume celebrates 60 of these meetings, from 1987, when George retired from teaching, until this year. This is a remarkable

achievement by any reckoning, and nearly everyone working in medieval studies in Ireland, in addition to many medievalists in Britain and beyond, have had the honour of speaking at different Roscrea conferences to a jam-packed audience.

The book itself is richly illustrated, with many coloured photographs on nearly every page of its 186 pages of text. It is divided into six sections, each one fascinating in its own right.

“The book itself is richly illustrated, with many coloured photographs on nearly every page of its 186 pages of text”

There is so much of interest throughout these sections that it is not possible to cover each of them in the same detail in this current review. But the present author found the early history of the monastery in Part One particularly illuminating, illustrated by many historic photographs.

It was particularly interesting to see the earliest black-and-white photographs of the interior life of the community from its foundation in 1878 up through the early years

of the twentieth century, and to marvel at the size of the community in 1946, of around 146 members.

There has also been a run of publications associated with the conferences, too, including *A Carnival of Learning* in 2012 made up of 22 essays in honour of George Cunningham, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of the conference.

The wonderful review by Aideen Ireland of this book, and copied in this current volume, indicates the really wide remit of the papers that have been given at the different conferences to date.

In the medieval world the Church, and particularly the religious orders, would have been the main centres of education and learning. So it is remarkable that this has been continued into the present century at the Cistercian community at Mt St Joseph in Roscrea, led by this remarkable visionary George Cunningham, ably supported by his dear wife, Carmel. There is so much in this book that anyone who has an interest in medieval Ireland, social and religious, should not hesitate to purchase it immediately.

Terry Barry, emeritus professor of history at Trinity College, Dublin, is a leading authority on medieval Ireland.

A once in a lifetime exhibition



Frederic William Burton (1816-1900), the poet Mangan on his deathbed 1849. Photo: © NGI

Frederic William Burton: For the Love of Art exhibition curated by Marie Bourke, with essays by Patrick Duffy and others, edited by Claire Crowley (National Gallery of Ireland, €15.95)

Peter Costello

Thanks to RTÉ we know that 'The Meeting on the Turret Stairs' is Ireland's favourite painting. Yet experience tells us, too, that many who admire it are unclear about what it shows – an illicit love blighted – or about the great achievements of its creator, William Frederick Burton, born two centuries ago. Now thanks to a once in a lifetime exhibition at the National Gallery, the first since soon after his death in 1900, many admirers of the painting will be enlightened.

Intimate

The picture is in fact not as large as many people imagine. It is a relatively small water colour. As Burton worked largely in that medium most of the paintings on display are on the small scale. They are this intimate and sensitive, especially the studies of women and children. But even an ancient stone altar on the Aran Islands is painted in close up in an intimate way. The grandiose did not appeal to him.

Starting as a painter Bur-

ton ended his life as the director of the National Gallery in London, an onerous post that left little time for painting. In his early years in Ireland he associated with people like Thomas Davis, Whitley Stokes and George Petrie, who are often seen as contributing to a new idea of what Ireland had been, was, and could be in the future.

Burton's pictures of the west are indeed important anthropological and historical documents in their own right: the Aran fisherman at the wake for his drowned child looks straight out of the painting, as if asking: "Why do these things have to be?"

When he moved to London his work changed. But it was his travels through Europe especially Germany and the countries to the south that opened his eyes to new images. One of the pieces here, of an Albanian bandit testing the sharpness of his knife, summarises what was then thought about the romantic Balkans.

Marie Bourke, by showing Burton's work alongside pictures he saw and places he visited, achieves a depth to his imaginary world which provides interesting contrast with his earlier work in the West of Ireland. Some of these such as *The Last of the Brotherhood* by Herman Dyck, which contrasts with Burton's own small watercolour of people at a confessional in

South Germany in an interesting way. Her curatorial taste is well matched by the scholarship of the accompanying catalogue.

But it is that sense of intimacy that leaves the greatest impression. The best things are the images of women and young children. Burton never married, but one of the finest things in the exhibition is a quietly moving portrait of the Irish lady he was betrothed to – in the painting she wears a large ring which was his gift to her. But she died before he spoke

Technician

He was a marvellous technician. As a water-colourist he had very expert skills to achieve his affects. But with a pencil he was also effective, as his self portrait sketch as a young man shows.

Burton learnt a great deal from the Renaissance drawing he collected. One drawing of his own should not be overlooked though.

When the poet James Clarence Mangan died in 1849 Burton was summoned by the attending surgeon to his bedside, where he drew the late poet's head. Though only a sketch, it is of miraculous delicacy, and one of the great icons of the European Romantic movement.

National Gallery of Ireland 25 October, 2017-14 January, 2018. Admission charge. Ticket booking: www.nationalgallery.ie

Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie



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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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For more information please contact 087-4407990

Closing date for applications Friday, 17th November, 2017.

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Dear Heart of Jesus,
In the past I have asked for
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This time I ask for a
special one. (mention here)
Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and
place it within your own broken
Heart where your
Father sees it.

Then, in his merciful eyes,
it will become your favour,
not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

A.C.

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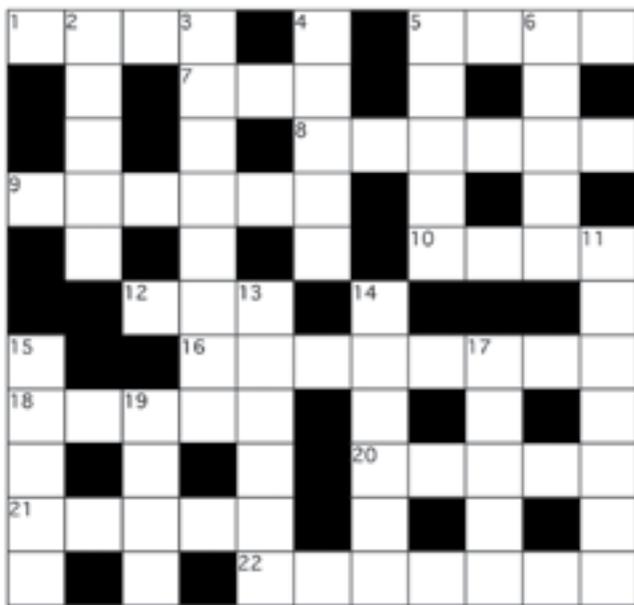
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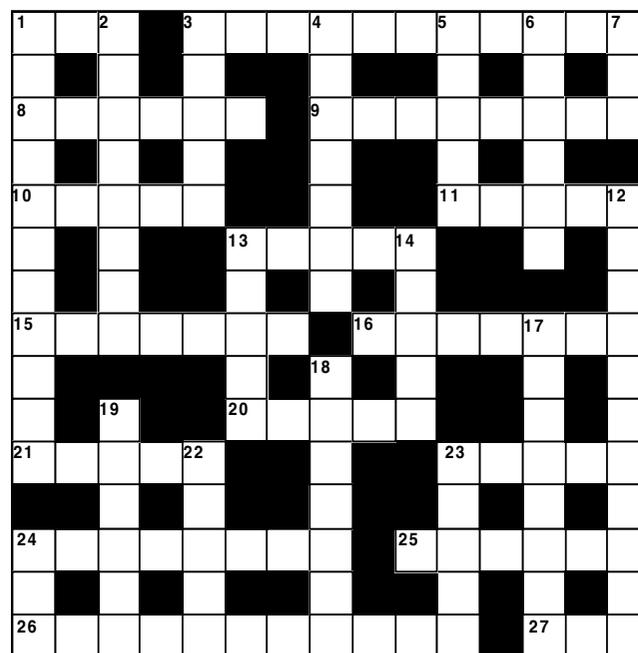
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Crossword Junior Gordius 207



- ACROSS**
1 Ache (4)
5 Fierce, not tame (4)
7 The first woman in the Bible (3)
8 Season which follows summer (6)
9 Pail (6)
10 Your fingers form part of this part of your body (4)
12 Science room, in short (3)
16 Refreshing hot drink (3,2,3)
18 Bart Simpson's Dad (5)
20 The short name for a thick-skinned, horned animal (5)
21 What is being carried by a ship, for example (5)
22 It goes from Friday to Monday (7)
- DOWN**
2 You might put photographs or stamps in this (5)
3 There are sometimes pearls in this piece of jewellery (8)
4 Warms something up (5)
5 She is often shown flying on a broomstick (5)
6 Yellow fruit (5)
11 Precious stone usually found on an engagement ring (7)
13 Rabbit-hole (6)
14 There are usually 18 holes on a golf _____ (6)
15 Baby bird (5)
17 Two times (5)
19 This planet is nicknamed the Red Planet (4)

Crossword Gordius 324



- ACROSS**
1 Evergreen tree (3)
3 Where one may haggle for things of only one colour? (5,6)
8 Design something completely new (6)
9 Such divine food might make Maria sob (8)
10 Make haste (5)
11 Impurities found at the bottom of a liquid (5)
13 Gleam (5)
15 External financial examiner (7)
16 See 19 down
20 From what we hear, it's healthy (5)
21 & 18d Not fair - or not fairway that's totally frozen? (5,7)
23 Indian cooking style seen in tribal times (5)
24 The capital of Finland (8)
25 Fight occurring when a pioneer gets between a character and beer (6)
26 Steer TS this way (away from busy thoroughfares) (4,7)
27 Drink in tiny amounts (3)
- DOWN**
1 One whose 'cure' does not help Hope or Charity? (5,6)
2 Title of a minister of religion (8)
- ACROSS**
3 A song would suggest she tells fibs whatever kind of salt water she's over! (5)
4 French castle (7)
5 Mooted (5)
6 One used the lips, and now the desk is broken! (6)
7 Popular beverage (3)
12 Style of fried egg with an elevated solar profile? (5,4,2)
13 Moves as a liquid does (5)
14 Gave exaggerated publicity to part of the dinghy-pedalo franchise (5)
17 Pumps up (8)
18 See 21 across
19 & 16 Literally no bionic pupil can form this widespread view (6,7)
22 Calls out a greeting (5)
23 Alloy found right inside a fish (5)
24 Central part of a wheel (3)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.323

Across - 1 Dispensary 6 Draw 11 Eucharist 12 Crumble 15 Sheer 17 Plea 18 ASAP 19 Gecko 21 Massage 23 Tosca 24 Pier 26 Relic 28 Earlobe 33 Alchemist 34 U-boat 35 Keep your chin up

Down - 1 Daft 2 Side roads 3 Epsom 4 Shell 5 Rock 7 Rhine 8 Water board 9 Sausage 13 Bona fides 14 Episode 16 Natterjack toad 20 Climbdown 21 Matches 22 Gear 27 Lucre 29 After 30 Laugh 31 Biro 32 Stop

CHILDREN'S No.206

Across - 1 Lunch-box 6 Pie 7 Mouse 8 Leopard 9 Travels 11 Dry 12 Egg 14 Sty 17 Blind 18 Cleans 19 Agree

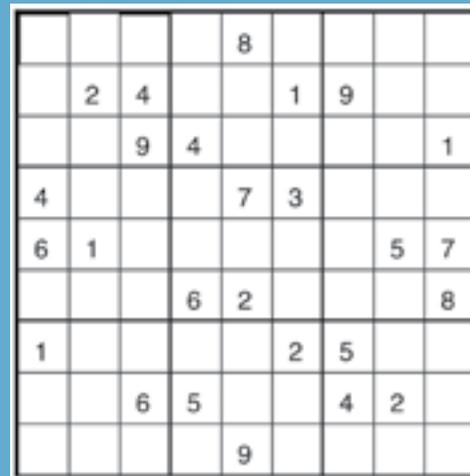
Down - 1 Lemonade 2 Naughty 3 Heel 4 October 5 Mends 6 Praise 10 Acting 13 Genie 15 Plug 16 Peg

Sudoku Corner 207

Easy



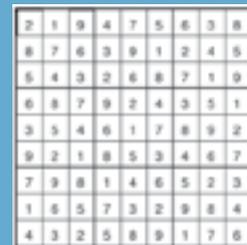
Hard



Last week's Easy 206



Last week's Hard 206





Fr Vincent Sherlock

Notebook

Inviting God into our lives

I LISTENED RECENTLY to *Playback* on RTÉ Radio 1. It's an enjoyable show that gives snippets from the previous week's programmes. Of course, Player and Podcasts have, in many ways, rendered it a less than vital piece of radio time but there's still something engaging about it.

I heard a piece about a woman from Patrick Kavanagh's *Inniskeen*, who had been a childminder for Jacqueline Kennedy. She spoke of when she went to interview for the job. She was shown into a room and told Mrs Kennedy would be with her shortly. Too nervous to sit, she stood and waited.

A few minutes later a small boy entered with his dog. "I'm John," he said, "what's your name?" She said her name was Kathy and he asked if she'd like to see his dog do a trick. She said "yes" and he hid a bone under a cushion and said, "Shannon, fetch". The dog rushed to the couch, rooted under the cushions and returned with the bone. "Do you want to see another?" he asked. "Yes," she said, "that was very good", so the boy got his dog to roll over.

Then Mrs Kennedy walked into the room; "I am Mrs Kennedy," she said, "and you are Kathy. When can



● She left me unscathed but caused heartbreak to at least three families and immeasurable damage to property and infrastructure across our land.

There was no shortage of warnings and people seemed to take them seriously. By now the winds have gone, Ophelia will drift from our minds again, becoming once more the Shakespeare character many may never read of, or have forgotten. It's only if we are personally affected that the memory and heartbreak of Ophelia will stay with us.

There's something about life going on here. Not sure how to name it or write about it but it seems to be about acknowledging storms that are more powerful than ourselves, preparing for them and doing our best to stay safe.

The risk is we forget all this until the next storm comes...

you start?"

Shocked, Kathy said she had another job and didn't want to say anything to her current employer until after the interview. Jackie Kennedy assured her the interview was over! The job was hers - when she could start? She had been standing in the hallway

and noticed the exchange between Kathy and her young son: that was the interview.

I thought it a lovely story and my mind wandered to that evening's Mass and the Gospel that would be read throughout the world - the story of the vineyard owner sending his servants to the

vineyard. They were mistreated and killed, as were all who followed them. Eventually he sent his son, thinking, "They will respect my son". Alas, this was not so and he too was thrown out of the vineyard and killed.

I thought of the young Monaghan woman getting the job of her dreams without ever answering a question: a mother had seen how she engaged with her son and that was interview enough. "They will respect my son." What a difference that respect makes.

Vineyard

You can see where the vineyard owner is coming from. There's something about respect for Christ. We would like to think most people have it but reality suggests otherwise. Maybe we should think about this, and how we can bring him into our daily conversations - not just when we hit our thumb with a hammer!

A pause for a prayer when the Angelus Bell rings. A sign of the Cross when passing a church or cemetery. "God bless you" when somebody sneezes. "With the help of God" tagged on to "See you tomorrow" or "We will do

A ROSARY IS TOLD It's a powerful explanation of the Rosary. Did Dick Farrelly intend it as such when he included in the 'Isle of Innisfree' the recollections of an emigrant child seeing in his mind's eye, his home and his family by the fireside where "on bended knee, a Rosary is told"? He doesn't say "prayed", "recited", "given out". The word is "told" - for the Rosary is at its very core, the telling of a story. The sacred story of the Lord's journey into and through our world. It remains a story to be told and the Rosary gives it joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious shape.

that next week". Countless ways of involving God in our lives and each one a sign of respect for Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Nothing new in this, I know, but if only we could show more respect for His Son, there's a difference to be made.



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"True glory is that which will last eternally, and to reach it, it isn't necessary to perform striking works but to hide oneself and practice virtue in such a way that the left hand knows not what the right is doing." - St Therese

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