

The Irish Catholic

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FAITH & LIFE

Reflecting on today's challenges Pages 14-15



LIFE AFTER DEATH

Facing Church reality Page 13



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Pope chose Ireland to kick-start his pro-marriage 'revolution'

Missionary legacy inspired WMOF

Greg Daly

Pope Francis chose Ireland to host next year's World Meeting of Families to make sure Irish Catholics would take part in a 'revolution' promoting marriage and family life, one of the Pope's key advisors has said.

Dublin-born Cardinal Kevin Farrell, who heads the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, said that the Pontiff told him this June that it was Ireland's missionary history that had inspired him to choose Ireland for next year's global gathering of Catholic families.

"Do you know that I have read that Ireland sent missionaries – I even had Irish priests in Buenos Aires – all over the world? They Christianised many parts of Africa, some parts of Latin America, certainly North America," the cardinal described Pope Francis as saying.

"We need, Pope Francis said, to ensure that they be part of the revolution of promoting once again marriage and family life in our world today," the cardinal continued, describing how the Pontiff said the situation in Northern Europe was drastic, and that something needed to be done. "That's why he chose Ireland to be the centre of the next gathering of the families," he added.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* about the

» Continued on Page 2

Buzzy little bees blessed



Ballerinas of Phibsboro under the direction of Miss Eileene at the 'blessing of bees' ceremony at St Peter's Church, Phibsboro. Organised by Phibsboro Village Tidy Towns, the blessing of the church beehive by parish priest Fr Aidan Galvin was, according to committee member Gerard Meaney, something that was once common practice but is rarely if ever heard of in modern Ireland. Photo: Éilís Nic Aoidh

Church urged to consecrate unbaptised burial sites

Chai Brady

A renowned Irish songwriter has called on the Church to consecrate the ground at traditional sites where Ireland's unbaptised children are buried.

Brendan Graham, who won the Eurovision song contest twice with 'Rock 'n' Roll Kids' and 'The Voice' in 1994 and 1996, said it would be a "massive thing" for the Church to do.

The musician wrote a song called *Crucán na Bpáiste*, which is a place in Maamtrasna, in the Mayo mountains where the graves of unbaptised children are marked only with boulders. Mr Graham used to regularly visit the area, which has beautiful scenery.

"In my mind, I was thinking of the parents who had to bury these children and the beauty of the place was irrelevant. The song kind of became a claw in my gut, I just had to write it," he said on RTE's *Sunday with Miriam*.

» Continued on Page 4

MARY KENNY

Cervical cancer... facts and information

PAGE 5



WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES

The countdown begins PAGE 10



DAVID QUINN

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Inside this week

Medical Matters

A serious flu epidemic on the way?

Page 28



Youthspace

Buddy Benches building friendships

Page 30



Webwatch

Correcting the correctors, once again

Page 33



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The vocations crisis is rooted in a crisis of faith

The number of people coming forward to discern a vocation to the priesthood and religious life in Ireland is stubbornly low. There is some evidence that when vocation-promotion is prioritised, interest increases. A few years ago, after the Church hosted a 'Year of Vocations', Irish dioceses saw the largest number of ordinations in many years. Similarly, religious congregations that have put a lot of energy into vocations ministry usually see their efforts rewarded with a greater number of enquiries from potential recruits.

The hope now is that the new national office for vocations – which was launched earlier this year – will focus energy around initiatives to address what we have become used to calling the vocations crisis.

Deeper issue

There's a deeper issue that also needs to be addressed: the fact that the vocations crisis really has at its heart a crisis of faith.

Let me explain. We could see the vocations crisis in isolation if, for example, a high proportion of young Catholics were attending Mass regularly and engaging with their faith but simply choosing not to consider a life-encompassing



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

religious vocation. But, the fact is, with some exceptions, very few young Irish adults are engaged with their faith. That's not to say that they are not great people – they usually are. Lively social concern – what we might even call a commitment to Gospel values – is very much part of the lived experience of most young Irish people. But, from the Church's point of view, they don't translate this into something which leads to a meaningful relationship with Christ.

“In youth ministry, the key concern should be faith formation”

So, let's say one in every 100 young practising Catholics might consider a religious vocation, if the overall number of younger Catholics practising their faith is very low, it follows that vocations will continue to be very low.

This means that the vocations

crisis cannot be addressed in isolation. Unless the deeper drift away from the Church amongst young Catholics is addressed, numbers discerning a vocation will always be low. This is why youth ministry must be a priority, and in youth ministry, the key concern should be faith formation – helping young people to develop and nurture a personal relationship with Christ by which they know themselves to be loved and called.

Promotion

This is not to understand youth ministry solely as a vehicle for promoting vocations to the priesthood or religious life (though we should never shy away from asking young Catholics to consider such a vocation), but more as a way of ensuring that the Church mirrors the wider society.

Only a healthy Church that mirrors the demographics of the wider society will be a place where vocations to the priesthood and religious life can flourish.

Pope chose Ireland for marriage launch

» Continued from Page 1

Autumn 2018 event, the cardinal explained that Pope Francis is under no illusions about how family life in Ireland is changing in line with the rest of Europe.

“He understands that – he doesn't think that Ireland is some miracle,” Cardinal Farrell said. “Nobody thinks that, but he thinks there's a great spirit in the Irish people of

giving of themselves to others, and of taking leadership roles, and I think he would hope that Ireland would solve Ireland's problems first. I think that's the way that you project a positive message: you resolve your own issues.”

January's *ad limina* visit from the Irish bishops would have made Ireland's own difficulties clear to the Pope even had he had no aware-

ness of the issues in advance, the cardinal said.

“I believe he realises, like everybody realises, the problems that the whole world is facing, and he realises the problems that you're faced with. He met with all the bishops privately, where he had a free for all – Pope Francis is great for having discussions. It's not a lecture series,” he continued, explaining that the

Pontiff had wanted Ireland's bishops to raise and discuss the country's problems.

Calling for Catholics to come together for the World Meeting of Families, he said this was a moment when Catholics should focus on the Church's concept of the family, so the Church can do something as a whole to face to crisis of marriage and the family in today's world.

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‘Chilling effect’ is the aim of pro-choice bullies, TD warns

Greg Daly

Efforts to deny rape survivors who had refused abortions in speaking venues in Dublin are part of a concerted effort to shut down pro-life voices, Sinn Féin TD Peadar Kirby has said.

Mr Kirby was one of 11 members of the Oireachtas who last week signed a statement expressing concern about the increasing inability of businesses to facilitate presentations by pro-life groups.

Highlighting how an event hosted by Human Life International had been cancelled following “what seemed to be a concerted campaign by a small number of people to bully them out of that room”, Mr Kirby told *The Irish Catholic* “and then obviously the same happened the following week with the people who were rape victims”, he said of the Unbroken group whose bookings at the Gibson and Spencer hotels were cancelled.

Shocking

“That was even more shocking due to the fact that these women had already been victims of a horrendous crime and now were the victims of bullying by people who were claiming to be supporting

women’s rights,” he said.

Pressure on hotels to deny pro-life groups speaking venues seem of a piece with the tearing down of pro-life posters outside Trinity College and a campaign to impeach UCD Student Union President Katie Ascoug after she had material reprinted because it contained information on arranging abortions that she had been advised was illegal, Mr Kirby said.

“I wouldn’t be surprised at all if they were coordinated, because behind these actions you have a very small number of individuals on the extreme pro-choice side,” he said.

Such efforts, he said, were clearly intended to stifle debate. “I think what it’s trying to do is to create a chilling effect around anybody who tries to raise in public their experiences around abortion from this perspective,” he said.

“What this does is put the brakes on many people who may not have the confidence or the courage to swim against that tide, and that deletes their experiences and insights from that debate where they are sorely needed.”

“No matter what side of the pro-life debate you are on, freedom of expression and freedom of speech is critical to any discussion,” he stressed.

Church makes its point in Kilkenny



The annual blessing of hurls and instruments at the Opening of Year Mass at St Kieran’s College, Kilkenny – Ireland’s Oldest Catholic Secondary School – by College President Rev. Dr Dermot Ryan.



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Government proposed tax cuts favour higher earners

A social justice think tank has urged tax proposals being considered by Government should be rejected as they would favour “only those with higher incomes”.

Social Justice Ireland (SJI) makes the warning ahead of Budget 2018. A study conducted by the think tank focused on three proposals, which they say will cost the State roughly the same amount (€196 million–€202 million) annually.

The proposals entail an increase in the standard rate band of €1,000, a decrease of 0.5% in the 5% USC rate (which applies to incomes between €18,772 and €70,044) and an increase in the personal tax credit of €85 with equal increases in couple, widowed parents and single person child credit.

Director of SJI, Dr Séan Healy, said that increasing the standard rate band and decreasing USC would skew benefits towards those with higher incomes. However he said: “In contrast, increasing the personal tax credit spreads the benefits more evenly across all earners.”

Overall, SJI are against any tax reductions in Budget 2018, saying any money should be used to improve social services and infrastructure, increase the number of jobs and reduce poverty and exclusion.

Arts and leisure thrive without alcohol industry says bishop

Chai Brady

A Catholic Bishop has railed against alcohol lobbyist tactics which threaten the arts and leisure industry in reaction to a new alcohol bill that is now priority legislation in the Dáil, saying sports thrive regardless of their sponsorship.

Bishop Eamonn Walsh, vice chair of the Irish Bishops’ Drugs Initiative, said he had to admire the alcohol industry for their “tenacious determination to remain centre stage in the public eye

and market place”.

“Less admirable is their persistent raising of fears that without them the world of leisure and the arts would collapse without their sponsorship and advertising. Yet so many major sports are thriving without them,” he said.

This comes as the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill was identified as priority legislation by cabinet this autumn.

If passed unaltered the Bill will change the minimum unit pricing – making drinks with high alcohol content more expensive, it

will change health labelling, introduce the separation of alcohol from other products in shops, and there will be more regulation in relation to the sale and supply of alcohol in certain circumstances.

Regulations

There are also regulations that will severely affect the industry’s advertisements, as they will not be allowed to have storylines or show scenes with people, animals or locations.

The regulation will also affect sponsorship of events. Bishop Walsh said they

are like a “water leak” that constantly seeks new ways in.

“The latest is their own “backdoor” into the all-Ireland winning team’s celebrations with customised winning team labels on their produce,” he said.

“You have to be up early for the drinks industry who are so well-resourced that they can afford to take little sleep as they continuously glamorise alcohol in a way that easily induces its misuse wrecking so many homes and individual lives.”

Church urged to consecrate unbaptised burial sites

» Continued from Page 1

“I think that it would be a massive thing for the Catholic Church to do, all these cillíní around the country, would be to consecrate them because basically when those children were buried they were going to limbo and the parents knew that they’d never be re-united.”

“I think symbolically it would be a huge thing for the Catholic Church to do,” he added.

Crucan na Bpaiste was consecrated on Easter Sunday in 1996 by a local priest, according to Mr Graham, who said the priest felt it was the right thing to do.

He is now calling on Church leaders to follow this lead as a sign of goodwill and healing.

New show shines light on vital role of chaplains



Philip McKinley outside the DCU Interfaith Centre.

The work of hospital, prison, and university chaplains are the focus of *Ministry of Hope*, the second episode of which is screened on RTÉ One this Thursday.

The series concentrates

on Margaret Sleator, one of the first ever lay chaplain in Dublin’s Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Catherine Black, chaplain to Arklow, Co Wicklow’s Shelton Abbey Open Prison, and Philip McKinley of Dublin City University’s multi-denominational chaplaincy team.

Tasked with offering guidance and support, Margaret says she is there to “try to bring reassurance, hope, silence, a little prayer if they want”, while Philip says students value “welcome and warmth and a place where you are not judged”.



Bro. Robert and Bro. Jerge, both Polish members of the International Capuchin Fraternity outside Kilkenny’s City Hall, inviting passers by to share the celebrations of St Francis’ ‘transitus’ – the vigil of his death – and urging people to stand with their model and ask “can you see yourself in this habit?”. Photo: Bro. Alberto Vaccaneo.

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Cervical cancer... facts and information

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of Waterford and Lismore has made a graceful apology for his remarks criticising the HPV vaccine. His overall points had been that the vaccine against cervical cancer might not be completely safe; and it might also have the effect of encouraging promiscuity among young girls.

He has subsequently called his remarks "an error of judgement", and said that he put across his words "in a ham-fisted way". He was, of course, scalded in the media for any suggestion that there could be a connection between the incidence of cervical cancer and promiscuity.

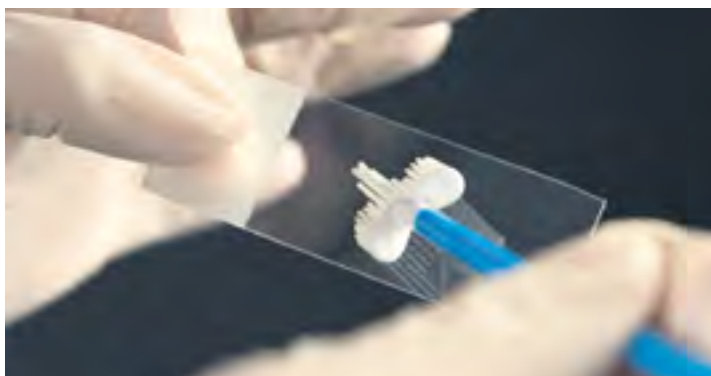
It's complicated. There can be a connection, but there isn't necessarily a connection.

Routine

The last time I had a routine cervical smear (at Charing Cross Hospital in London) I told the gynaecologist that a good friend of mine had recently died of cervical cancer. "Then she probably had a lot of sexual partners," he said. I thought



Mary Kenny



this rather judgemental of the medic, and I murmured something in defence of my friend.

He insisted. "The more sexual partners a woman has – and the younger she starts her sex-life – the more vulnerable she may be."

Yet, while the gyny presumably felt he was only doing his job of providing information, it is also true that a woman can get cervical

cancer having had only one sexual partner in a faithful marriage. Because it is the man who transmits the virus, albeit unknowingly.

And here's another interesting aspect of the matter. Orthodox Jewish women rarely get the disease. It is thought that this is because Jewish husbands are circumcised. So, there is a supposed link between the circumcision of boys and the medical health of their future

spouses.

One way to prevent cervical cancer would be to revert to the practice of male circumcision, which was sometimes carried out in the past on non-Jewish men (one of my brothers, in the 1930s, was circumcised as a new-born – it was recommended as a health measure).

Prevention

A vaccine is certainly part of health prevention, and if safe, it is a positive good. The New Testament is concerned with health, and St Luke himself was a doctor: health remedies are certainly part of the canon of Christianity.

However, on a separate point, it is worth exploring the facts and information about cervical cancer. We know, for sure, that it is not good health practice for teenage girls to have sexual experience too young, when that part of their body is still immature. So, it surely wouldn't be helpful to endorse multi-partner sexual experience for very young women – who are indeed more vulnerable in this sphere than young males.

When is a child not a child?

One of next year's referenda will ask whether young people should vote at the age of 16. A national discussion which we should perhaps approach with an open mind.

If young people get into the habit of voting at 16, then they'll probably continue to be active voters. Teens can be idealistic and well-informed, too, so they may often have quite high standards for public life.



But the young can also be dazzled by charismatic personalities who may lead them along questionable paths. It is now known that the human brain is not developed until the age of 25.

There are many inconsistencies in our laws and practices about who we consider 'a child' (any refugee under 18 is categorised as a child) and who an adult. There are also many variations among individuals. I've seen a boy of 13 handle a tractor with consummate skill. But should he be on the road at 13? All to discuss!

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Each year demand for our specialist palliative care continues to rise against a backdrop of on-going budget cuts. Despite that we are determined to meet that demand and maintain our vital services without compromise.

Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services has embarked on one of its most ambitious projects to date – to build, complete and fit out 36 new single state-of-the-art palliative care bedrooms in Harold's Cross.

These bright, airy, spacious bedrooms, all of which are en-suite, will enormously improve the quality of life for so many of our patients now and in the future. Each room will provide privacy and space and lead out to a private patio area with beautiful landscaped gardens. Overnight couches will provide the opportunity for a family member to stay with their loved one at night so they can always be close by.

We are so deeply grateful to have the support of patient's like Susan O'Keeffe that believe quality, life-enhancing facilities should be available to all who need them at the end of life.

Susan is such a courageous person and her honesty in sharing so much to help others – through Susan's Hospice Appeal – has been deeply felt by all. Despite her own challenges – she is thinking of all the other patients who need our care.

"The extraordinary people in the hospice have given me back parts of my life that I thought would be lost to me by now... the place is like a loving parent who wraps their strong and comforting arms around you and tells you everything will be alright... the staff are like guardian angels... at this stage even though I cannot speak they know the real me trapped inside this silent body," Susan said.



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"I've lost all my speech. I can only use one finger to type, so I'm always three conversations behind. But the hospice knows the real me trapped inside this body."

– Susan O'Keeffe



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Catholic charity launches Romero Award for WMOF

Trócaire has launched an award that gives Irish people the chance to learn about the lives of families in developing countries in preparation for the World Meeting of Families (WMOF).

The Romero award is separated into three categories, the first being families. The second is for schools/youth aimed at young people aged 4-19, and encourages them to explore social justice issues.

The international category will honour one of over 400 local organisations that Trócaire works with.

Those who register will be sent a workbook. Participants will receive a certificate, a gift from a country where Trócaire operates, and will be invited to a ceremony that will coincide with celebrations at the WMOF next year. More information can be found at trocaire.org/romeroaward.

The award was named after slain Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was assassinated in El Salvador in 1980.

Young are urged to find God's plan for their lives

Staff reporter

Young people trying to plan their future are being encouraged to take up the challenge to try and discern God's will for their lives in a new programme being pioneered by the Diocese of Elphin.

The Siena programme is aimed at young people who may find themselves at a crossroads in life having just finished school, university, a gap year or who find themselves working or unemployed.

The programme – inspired by St Catherine of Siena – encourages participants aged 18-35 to form a group, in which each person will be supported by the others in a process of discernment and discovery. Those taking part are asked to consider making a commitment to the whole programme.

Elphin says the programme is designed to help young adults “to discover

who they are meant to be and what path in life God may be calling them to”.

According to the organisers, the programme “will support your quest for happiness and help you become who you are meant to be, setting the world on fire with your gifts, talents and fulfilling your deepest desires in the process”.

Demand

The programme will begin on Saturday November 18 and involve an afternoon a month until May, 2018.

The programme is open to people from every part of the country and will take place in either Sligo, Roscommon or Athlone depending on demand.

Further information is available from Frank McGuinness, Director of Young Adult Ministry and Vocations on frank.mcguinness@elphin-diocese.ie or 087.988.0690.



Some of the over 200 young people who attended the Killaloe Youth Fest in St Flannan's College, Ennis.

Vocations and youth ministries join forces

Mags Gargan

The organisation tasked with promoting vocations to religious life has joined forces with a youth evangelisation group in order to reach out to young people. “We realised you need to have young people to network with young people,” Vocations Ireland Director Margaret Cartwright told *The Irish Catholic*.

The organisation is working in partnership with NET Ministries on a pilot project that will see a team of six young missionaries working with members of religious congregations who will speak to young people in parishes across the country.

“The NET team will go into the schools and get to know the young people and they will invite them to the parish events that NET and Vocations Ireland will run,” Ms Cartwright said. “We will send out someone from Vocations Ire-



Some members of NET Ministries.

land with the team and when NET missionaries share their testimony the religious will share their vocation story, so that we highlight a consciousness of vocation and young people can understand what a vocation is.”

Executive Director of NET Ministries Ireland, Tony Foy said the two organisations

have an “aligned mission” and that is “bringing the Gospel to young people and helping them to discover what it is that God has planned for them in their lives”.

The initiative will also ask parishes to host a mission which local young people can take ownership of as a legacy of the project.

Devout Catholic Coronation Street star dies

A much-loved Catholic soap star died aged 77 last week after 30 years on television.

Liz Dawn, who played the fiery Vera Duckworth in *Coronation Street*, realised one of her dreams when she met St John Paul II when he was Pope in the Vatican in 1998 after years of charity work.

The television star began her role in *Coronation Street* in 1974. Although she had no formal training she drew on her upbringing, in Leeds, to play the much-loved character. She was raised in a Catholic family, her father was a factory engineer and her mother worked in a tailoring factory.

In 2000 she was awarded an MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for her charity work raising hundreds of thousands of pounds for hospitals in Manchester and Leeds, and also fronted awareness campaigns for the British Lung Foundation.

“We are devastated and heartbroken at the passing of our much-loved wife, mother, sister, grandmother and great grandmother, the incredible Liz Dawn,” a statement from her family read.

She died peacefully in her sleep.

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My precious three-year-old was conceived during the darkest day of my life writes **Jennifer Christie**

Some stories make us uncomfortable. Mine is one of those stories, but I will tell it nonetheless, because I am a woman whose child was conceived in rape, and women like me will no longer be silenced.

I was travelling on business, staying in a little hotel in a college town, when it happened. It was so snowy and windy that I wouldn't have heard his footsteps even if he had been stomping. It happened so fast. I got the door open, turned around to close it, and he was there. My first instinct wasn't fear, just confusion. In an instant, he punched me in the face. I don't remember being dragged from the room, but I was found in the stairwell. I don't know why – maybe I was trying to go for help.

The rape kit came back

negative for HIV, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis, herpes, and dozens of other things I'd never heard of. The following month, I was scheduled to work on a cruise ship. Struck with dysentery on day two and not getting better with antibiotics, I was taken to hospital when we docked in Colombia. Concerned about intestinal obstruction, I was given an ultrasound. And then we saw it – I was pregnant.

Back on the ship, I told the medical staff my story, and I spent the next week listening to a team of very well-meaning doctors and nurses console me with how “easy” it would be to “take care of” the child.

There were a lot of things discussed over scratchy, tearful transatlantic phone calls home with my husband that week, but, against everything I was being counselled, I felt

protective of this new life, this child which had done me no harm, this child who was as innocent of the terrible crime as I was. The pressure to abort from the medical community and from well-meaning friends was always there. So many times, I was told how “simple” it would be and how quickly I could just “get on with my life” once it was over. But women's needs after rape aren't that simple. There is no quick-fix.

Nightmare

My precious three-year-old son was conceived during the darkest day of my life. It was the day that changed who I was forever – as a human being, as a woman, and as a wife.

During a nightmare I couldn't awake from, a child was conceived. This child had nothing to do with the attack on my body or the scars on my soul.

He had everything to do with my healing – giving me a reason to hope. I did not save my son – he saved me.

I am not raising a ‘rapist's baby’, I am raising my baby. He is the love that I pour into him. He is the love of my husband who is raising him and siblings who play with him and the grandparents who dote on him. He is all of these things and more. As unique as a fingerprint, he has something that is just him, and he's perfect.

Is he a reminder? He is. He's a reminder that, as women, we can be stronger than our circumstances. He's a reminder that beauty can come from darkness. And he's a reminder that how we began does not determine how we end.

I did not save my son...he saved me

Jennifer Christie.



Some members of the Unbroken Group outside Dáil Éireann with TDs.

Some may seek to dismiss me – to dismiss all women like me, and there are so many of us. They'll say we made our choice. But this is not just about choice, this is about the humanity of our children at their most vulnerable state. This is about protecting women and making them safe, and offering them a better answer than abortion.

“I am not raising a ‘rapist's baby’, I am raising my baby. He is the love that I pour into him”

Right now in Ireland, there's a huge debate around abortion, but, as in most other countries, rape survivors are rarely heard – even though the Rape Crisis Centre says most women pregnant after rape do not have an abortion.

‘Unbroken Ireland’ wants to give voice to women like me, women impacted by pregnancy from rape, or conceived in rape themselves.

Women who have been largely silenced by fear of what people will think, and how people will judge. Women who love their babies, because they are not a ‘monster's child’ – they are our children.

Too often, our trauma is used as a campaigning tool by those who want to legalise abortion, but now we are speaking up for ourselves, because offering abortion means we have failed women, and failed to understand that only light can relieve the darkness.

In Ireland, the Eighth Amendment protects both mother and baby: it protects both innocent parties. When we were raped, we had been unable to protect ourselves.

But for our children, we can and we will protect them

– and we will work to change a culture where rape sentencing does often not reflect the harm and trauma caused.

“In Ireland, the Eighth Amendment protects both mother and baby: it protects both innocent parties”

We strive to end the stigma and shame we, and our children, are made to feel, because the only person who should feel shame and stigma is the rapist.

The only person who should be punished is the rapist.

There are stories, like mine, which can be hard for people to hear. But we should be heard, because it is only by being heard, that we can remain unbroken.

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Returning our persecuted Iraqi brethren to their homes depends on us, writes David Quinn

Aid to the Church in Need is one of the most important organisations working in the Church today because one of the needs it meets is particularly keen, namely saving the Christians of the Middle East from extinction.

This is a forgotten story. Most times it is one that is never even told, not by the mainstream media at any rate. It is one that barely appears, if at all, on the radar screens of our politicians. It is a story that the Church in Ireland has for the most part neglected as well, despite the fact that Christians living under conditions of persecution have a right to expect a strong feeling of solidarity from their fellow Christians living in this part of the world.

The Middle East is, of course, the home of Christianity. In the early centuries of the Church, Christians were the majority across the Middle East and North Africa. The Arab invasions of the Seventh Century and subsequently put paid to that. But even as recently as a century ago, Christians made up around 10% of the population in many Middle Eastern and North African countries. This has now dwindled to about 2% on average, with Egypt still being the exception. About 10% of Egyptians are Coptic Christians, although they are under growing pressure from Muslim extremists.

Extremism

In Iraq, prior to the American invasion of 2003, Christians numbered about 1.5 million or around 4% of the population. Today, they number about half a million. They have been hit very hard by the rise of Muslim extremism.

Most recently they have been hit extremely hard by so-called Islamic State. In June 2014, ISIS

Helping an ancient Christian community facing extinction



A Catholic church destroyed by ISIS militants in Karamdes, Iraq, is examined by a priest following the predominantly Christian town's liberation. Photo: CNS

swept into northern Iraq seizing Mosul, Iraq's second largest city and taking over the surrounding Nineveh Plains on which lived many of Iraq's Christians, their presence there predating the Arab invasion by centuries. Christianity has been present in Iraq since the Second Century and Iraq's Christians are the descendants of the Assyrians, who appear in the Old Testament. 'Nineveh' itself is a name that appears in the Old Testament.

Presence

Indeed, one of the speakers at a conference organised in Rome last week by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) was the Patriarch of Babylon, a title that signifies how ancient the Christian presence in Iraq is. I was there as a guest of ACN.

The conference in Rome was held to discuss what should happen now that ISIS has been driven from the Nineveh Plains and from Mosul. According to ACN, "there are still 12,000 registered Christian families (approximately 95,000 people)" who fled as ISIS advanced in 2014, "and are presently living as internally displaced persons (IDPs)" in the nearby Kurdish region of Iraq.

ACN wants to help these Christians return to their homes. Their bishops do not want them leaving Iraq altogether as so many Christians have done over the last decade and a half, settling in countries like America, Canada or Australia instead.

ACN estimates the number of damaged or destroyed homes in the nine Christian villages of the Nineveh Plains at 13,000. The estimated cost

of rebuilding those homes is US\$250 million, which sounds like an enormous sum until we realise that in any one year, welfare spending in Ireland comes to something like €10 billion.

Unfortunately, the sum of US\$250 million is enormous when it has to be raised almost entirely from private donations. To date, governments have contributed very little towards helping the Christians of Iraq. One speaker at the conference ruefully noted that it was only when the Yazidis (who subscribe to a pre-Christian, pre-Muslim religion) were driven from their homes in Iraq that the world began to pay proper attention to what ISIS is doing to religious minorities.

“It may be that it is easier, spiritually speaking, to be a Christian in Iraq than in Ireland”

The fact that Christianity is disappearing from its ancient heartlands does not mobilise Western governments the way other causes do, including extending abortion 'rights' to the Third World. This receives plenty of money.

Another speaker noted that the only government that has put serious money into rebuilding the Christians villages is that of Hungary, and it is frequently reviled by the EU as far-right.

One speaker was rather scathing of UN efforts in the region.

Human rights lawyer, Ewelina Ochab, emphasised that Christians have a legal right to return to their

the Iraqi Christians.

Mark Riedemann told the conference that the EU and the US have no clear strategy about how to help. He contrasted this with the Hungarian government.

Stephen Rasche, another lawyer, repeated that were it not for money privately raised by, among others, the many ordinary people who donate to Aid to the Church in Need in various countries each year, "there would already be no Christians" left in Iraq.

Conference

One thing that struck me about the conference was the very obvious and deep faith of the Iraqi Christians who addressed it either in person or on video.

One young Christian teenager spoke in a completely unaffected way about her faith. A priest told delegates: "some Iraqi Christians who were not very active in their faith have now discovered their faith thanks

to their suffering. They have learnt to rely on their faith when there is nothing else to rely on".

These Christians may be undergoing great physical hardship and danger, but it may be that it is easier, spiritually speaking, to be a Christian in Iraq than in Ireland.

Our government has said and done almost nothing to help the persecuted Christians of Iraq and elsewhere. It cannot even bring itself to condemn as genocide what ISIS has done to Iraqi and Syrian Christians even though it is essentially what Cromwell did to Catholics here in Ireland.

So, it seems our persecuted brethren will have to continue to rely on the help provided by ordinary Christians in this part of the world and on organisations like Aid to the Church in Need. We have to be their main hope of survival in their ancient homelands.

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Countdown is on to the greatest show on earth

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Every three years the Church brings together the largest international gathering of families in the world. Ireland will have the joy of hosting the next World Meeting of Families on behalf of Pope Francis from 21-26 August 2018.

This week *The Irish Catholic* newspaper is bringing you the first in a series of new monthly news columns on WMOF2018 in order to keep you up to date with important information on the event next year and on how preparations are going around Ireland and around the world.

Registration and ticketing

Registration for the World Meeting of Families is now open. All events will require a ticket for entry. Some events are free while some are subject to a fee.

Children and young people under the age of 18 are free but they must be registered with family/group. Concessions are available for pensioners, unwaged and students over the age of 18.

Humans of World Meeting of Families 2018

You might be familiar with the phenomenon that is 'Humans of New York' which began as a photography project in 2010. The initial goal was to photograph 10,000 New Yorkers on the street, and to create a catalogue of the city's inhabitants.



Somewhere along the way, the man behind the idea, Brandon Stanton, began to interview his subjects in addition to photographing them. These portraits and the captions/stories that accompany them became the subject of a vibrant blog and Facebook page which now has over 20 million followers, and provides a worldwide audience with daily glimpses into



the lives of strangers on the streets of New York City.

The 'Humans of' phenomenon began to spread and here in Ireland we now have 'Humans of Dublin' and 'Humans of Longford' to name just a few. In more recent months we have had Humans of New York – the Refugee Stories. This involved Brandon Stanton travelling to Jordan and Turkey to talk to 12 different Syrian refugee families from which he shared some harrowing stories.

With next year's World Meeting of Families being hosted in Ireland, a new Facebook page has been set up to capture and catalogue family stories.

The Facebook page will feature stories and anecdotes about family life, past and present, from WMOF2018 staff, volunteers, diocesan and parish participants as well as those preparing to travel to WMOF2018 from other countries. These stories will be linked by the theme of faith.

The page has gone live and can be followed on Facebook as 'Humans of World Meeting of Families 2018'.

If you would like to be featured on the Humans of World Meeting of Families 2018 page please email Brenda.drumm@worldmeeting2018.ie.

The WMOF2018 Icon of the Holy Family

The icon of the Holy Family was specially commissioned by WMOF2018, written by iconographer Mihai Cucu, and assisted by the Redemptoristine Sisters of the Monastery of St Alphonsus, Iona Road, Dublin, as part of their

on-going prayer for families. The icon was unveiled and anointed on the 21 August 2017, during the launch of the one-year programme of preparation at the National Novena in Knock.

This icon takes the form of a triptych which looks, from the outside, somewhat like a house with front doors. On these outside doors, we are presented with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, who carry with them the desire of God to protect. Their heads are bowed in adoration and service of God, the Holy One. On the base is the inscription *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), the title of Pope Francis' post-Synodal exhortation on love in the family.

“An icon is not like a photograph... it is an image which invites us to prayer”

When the doors of this icon are opened we see in the centre the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph seated at table, sharing a meal and sharing their Faith. Their Faith was celebrated in their home. It is in our home that the reality of God-with-us is communicated and passed on to future generations. Their gathering around the table is reminiscent of the Three Angels in the famous 15th-Century Icon of the Holy Trinity by Andrei Rublev. Christian Marriage is sometimes compared with the Holy Trinity, as a communion of the giving and receiving of love that is life-giving. Indeed, the family is called to be the “living icon” of the Most Holy Trinity.

Similarly to the icon above, the Holy Family have a place at their table for us. They invite us to join them. They are no strangers to the trials of family life. They themselves have been refugees, fleeing the violence of Herod. They have known great anxiety. Hence the radishes and bitter herbs of the Passover meal represent the sorrows and trials of the people of Israel in their slavery also represent for us the trials and sacrifices of patience and love experienced in every family.

The presence of the unleavened bread and cup of wine on their table call to mind the Eucharist for us.

Flanking the Holy Family icon are those two Gospel narratives: the Raising of Jairus' Daughter and the Wedding Feast of Cana. These are passages in the Gospels in which we see Jesus' deep compassion and concern for marriage and for those living with burdens in their family life.

An icon is not like a photograph, nor is it a portrait. It is an image which invites us to prayer.

The Icon has now started to travel to each diocese in Ireland to encourage reflection and prayer as part of the journey of preparations to WMOF2018. The icon is accompanied by petition boxes, where families can write their intentions and prayers. Contemplative communities around Ireland will pray for the intentions collected during the coming year.

It is to be hoped that the Icon will invite people to prayer while we prepare our hearts for the World Meeting of Families 2018.

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Budget must meet commitment to global poor – missionaries



Mags Gargan speaks to the Misesan Cara CEO about a campaign to increase overseas development aid

For the first time faith-based organisations and missionary congregations have united to call on the Government to an increase Overseas Development Aid (ODA) in Budget 2018, which is due to be announced next week.

This coordinated effort has brought together the support of six of Ireland's well-known faith-based organisations – CBM Ireland, Tearfund Ireland, Team Hope, Christian Aid, World Vision and Trócaire – and 77 Misesan Cara member organisations, who have been lobbying the Taoiseach and the Department of Finance to put Ireland back on track to achieving the UN target of 0.7% of Gross National Income by 2025.

"In 2016 Ireland spent only 0.33% of the gross national income on ODA, this is down from a height of 0.59% in 2008. An increase in Irish ODA would reaffirm Ireland's stance as a world leader in the fight against poverty, hunger and injustice," says Heydi Foster, Misesan Cara CEO.

Progress

"Tremendous progress has been made, but we have to do more. Right now some 2.6 billion people have gained access to drinking water since 1990 and primary school enrolment rates now stand at 91% worldwide, so we have made some gains. Now is the time to invest to end poverty."

At a recent Fine Gael think-in, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced there would be an increase in ODA in the Budget, saying that "the problems of the world are our problems as well".

Ms Foster has welcomed the announcement as "positive and encouraging", but says it is still unclear what



that increase will be.

The Government has repeatedly restated its strong commitment to Ireland's overseas aid programme and its place at the heart of Ireland's foreign policy, and she emphasises that an increase in Irish ODA would reaffirm Ireland's stance as a world leader in the fight against poverty, hunger and injustice.

"There is so much happening right now and we don't have sufficient funds to support all the work that our members are doing and the work that they want and need to do," she says. "Our members are doing amazing work.

“The Irish know both parts of the story. They know what it is like to be displaced”

"If I could give you one example, the Good Shepherd Sisters are working with a mining company in Kolwezi in DR Congo where children as young as three are working alongside their parents in horrendous conditions. The Good Shepherd Sisters are one of 15 Misesan Cara members that have consultancy status at the United Nations Human Rights Council and three years ago they issued a statement to the council about poverty and social exclusion in Kolwezi, and put it on the international agenda."

When asked how she would address people who say that Ireland should look to its own citizens first, especially in the face of the homelessness crisis, Ms Foster says "it does not have to be one or the other".

"The Irish know both parts of the story. They know what it is like to be displaced and to be refugees, and they have also supported those in need. We understand what it is like to lose everything. I think Ireland has such a legacy and we are known for our gener-

osity. All our work in Misesan Cara and our members is grounded in love of humanity, love of God and simple rights that the West often takes for granted."

Misesan Cara was established in 2004 and is made up of 90 member organisations working in over 50 countries collectively and individually through the missionary approach to development.

Last year 55 member organisations working in 45 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia transformed the lives of over 1.4 million people through a series of development projects focused on education, health, sustainable livelihoods, human rights, and humanitarian emergencies.

This year Misesan Cara launched an ambitious strategy for 2017-2021 after a massive global consultation in 10 countries with over 1,000 people participating.

Ms Foster says the new strategy has a heavy human rights focus. "The strategy is going to represent an ongoing commitment to education, health, sustainable livelihoods and human rights, we are going to continue to target marginalised communities, but we are going to have more of a focus on women and children, refugees and displaced people, and on people with disabilities," she says.

"Our human rights focus is a thread through our five strategic goals. Now it is about upholding the rights to education, upholding the rights to clean water and sanitation, it is about upholding the rights to income generation. It is about rights for us. Of course it is also important to address climate change and this is connected with our continuing work on livelihoods and income generation."

Another one of the goals of the new strategy is promoting the particular "missionary approach to development".

What makes the missionary approach to development



Misesan Cara members and, left, CEO Heydi Foster. Photos: Jennifer Backer

distinctive according to Ms Foster is its "long-term commitment". "Our members walk hand-in-hand with beneficiaries. They rethink boundaries. They go beyond borders and see each individual as a brother or sister, as respected, rights-holding citizens of the world with equal inherent human dignity," she says.

"The missionary approach to development also means ensuring participation of the marginalised. It is about

empowering people as key actors in their own development, so they can use their voice and collective power at appropriate levels – local, national or international. It is also about influencing the policies and practices of governments and other development stakeholders."

She says missionaries are often first responders, "not because they are just the first to arrive, they are already there, they are part of the

community. They are often times there before, during and after a crisis or conflict."

While Irish missionaries are ageing and their numbers are declining, Ms Foster says the movement is alive and flourishing. "We don't see ourselves as declining and we don't see borders. For example the Good Shepherd Sisters have 21,000 members, how is that declining? We are a live, thriving, energetic and innovative missionary movement."

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Joshua Adido celebrates a hierarchical divine liturgy at the Antiochian Orthodox parish in Belfast.

Protestants are majority of converts to Ireland's Antiochian Orthodox

Originating in the Middle East in what is now Turkey, the Church of Antioch was founded by Ss Peter and Paul and is where the word 'Christian' originally comes from, according to the New Testament.

This developed into the Antiochian Orthodox Church. There are three parishes, in Belfast, Dublin and Kerry. The small community of just under 100 is set to grow, as Syrian refugees from the war-torn heartland where the Church was founded are relocated to safety in Ireland.

But so far the majority of current worshippers, particularly in Northern Ireland, are Anglican converts, according to Ireland's only Antiochian Orthodox priest.

Fr John Hickey [pictured], ordained in 2013, said: "In Belfast the majority of the people there would be Northern Irish people. Interestingly they are mostly from the Church of Ireland in Belfast, mostly Anglican converts."

Fr Hickey told *The Irish Catholic* that it was a huge difference for them, saying the attraction could be to do with the Orthodox liturgy which is chanted, adding "if you study the catechetics particularly around the notion of original sin, in the Orthodox tradition it's ancestral sin, so there's an enormous difference in the perception – it moves right away from the Augustinian notion of inherited guilt".

Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy are much more similar in theology and practice compared to Protestantism.

Chai Brady investigates
one of the oldest, and most persecuted, Christian Churches in the world



However, it's believed the future of the Antiochian Church won't be decided by conversion in Ireland.

With Christian Orthodoxy being the fastest growing religion according to the latest census, experts have said the increase in worshippers is mostly due to immigration rather than conversion.

Online conversions

There are exceptions however, and in one case, a young Belfast man of Evangelical origins was converted online.

Joshua Adido (24), said: "For me I think my conversion came through interaction with people online which led me to look at different resources, not really interacting with Orthodox people in person – that came a bit later in the conversion process."

"I don't think in Ireland there's an en masse conversion, maybe that's happening somewhere else."

Mr Adido, who is a Masters student of International Business originally from Congo, said people are bolder online, and that because it can be quite awkward to talk about matters of Faith in person, it's a place for people to discuss religion openly.

Coming from an Evangelical background he much preferred the structure

of Orthodoxy.

"The difference is that it's more written down and set in stone. We follow the Church calendar more strictly. So for example not everyone follows a particular apostle's celebration in an Evangelical Church, any Sunday can mean anything."

"Whereas here there are particular days for particular feasts and particular Saints. In terms of the style, in the Orthodox Church the entire liturgy is sung, in our Mass anyway there are no instruments it's a *cappella*, it's very responsive."

A lot of the chants would have Arabic and Middle Eastern tonalities due to the Church's origin. The East-West divide played a large part in the separation of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The fact the primacy of the Pope in Rome was not accepted by the Eastern Orthodox and the use of different languages, Latin in the West and Greek in the East, all contributed to the schism.

Mr Adido says fasting from all animal products on Wednesday and Thursdays has been one of the most difficult parts of being Antiochian Orthodox.

"We fast on a Wednesday and Friday, you basically become vegan essentially," he said.

"That's a really hard part

for me in Orthodoxy because I'm a student still learning to cook, so having to fast twice a week isn't something I'm very good at."

He added that there are a lot of fasting seasons, saying that for lent in Catholicism it tends to be that you give something up, while they have to be vegan for its entirety.

Syrian Refugees

Fr Hickey is now working towards helping Syrian refugees integrate into Irish society while also maintaining their own identities.

"We inherited, only a few weeks ago, 20 Syrian families, people coming from Syria, people fleeing the war. They're around Dublin, and some are in Limerick. What we're trying to do now is to get a bigger place, so that we can do the liturgy with them," he said.

Currently the parish in Blackrock is very small, and is not big enough to accommodate the families. Fr Hickey built it himself.

He learned some Arabic phrases – writing them down phonetically – so he can communicate with worshippers. He said Ireland is an "oasis" for the refugees.

"We have to understand as Irish people that we know what it's like when our families had to go to far off distant lands, and we had to maintain our culture, our identity, our language: who we are. Because if you strip that away you've got nothing."

"Basically the Syrian people lost everything, so what we're trying to do is to maintain their language, their culture, and in some way allow us to fuse it into an Irish culture and an Arabic culture, which improves everybody's culture."

They are working with the Romanian Orthodox Church to find a premises that would be big enough to celebrate Mass for the refugee families.

"You're talking about families that have experienced probably one of the horrendous wars of the 21st Centuries, and they would have known families and seen people who died the most horrendous deaths, and it's very easy to say that those people are martyrs and they're in heaven, that doesn't take away the pain."

"The trouble is they're in a country where their priest doesn't speak their language so it's very difficult for them to express how they're actually feeling. We need the prayers of this country, from the people of all Churches to help us to do this."

1 This concludes the Orthodox series.



Time is running out for the Irish Church, Fr Joe McDonald tells Greg Daly

Why the Irish Church Deserves to Die. Ballyfermot-based priest Fr Joe McDonald could hardly have chosen a more inflammatory title for his first book, calling for Irish Catholics to embrace the reality of a dying Church and work for a resurrection.

The title's not idly chosen, he says, explaining how there's a point in the book where, looking at the state of the Church in Ireland, he raises almost a medical question. "Where are we going with this body? Are we making for intensive care? Or have the lights gone out? Do we not take a bed in intensive care, and get this Church to the morgue?"

The situation is, he says, that serious. "And the bit that people will not like, which of course is contained in the word 'deserves' – it's a very different word than if you say 'the Irish Church needs', 'the Irish Church may', or 'will', or 'should', or 'could'. 'Deserves' is uncompromising, and some of my closest friends pulled back from that, saying they'd go with it all except for that, but the word is essential," he says.

Ordained

Born in Belfast in 1961, the eldest of four siblings, he was a Christian Brother before being ordained as a priest for the Archdiocese of Dublin, where he has been parish priest at St Matthew's in Ballyfermot for the last five years. Not, he necessarily thinks, that Ballyfermot's three parishes – like so many others across the archdiocese – have a sustainable future in their current form.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, he says, is "very very gifted, he has great talents, but I think his successor is going to be faced with some very, very hard decisions".

Things certainly can look hopeless on the ground. He described how someone recently asked whether, though he comes across as a happy priest, he is ever sad.

"They expected me to go



The Pro Cathedral and, inset, Fr Joe McDonald

down the road of maybe celibacy, life without a wife or all that," he says. "Sadness for me would be to meet people, the majority of whom have spent maybe 12, 14 years in Catholic school, primary and secondary, and some of them indeed third level in Catholic training colleges – sadness for me is to meet them and to realise they really have no sense of the person of Jesus."

It amazes and depresses him, he says, that despite years of one sort or another of Church involvement, people tend to lack passion and vibrancy about Jesus himself.

"I say things about cultivating a personal relationship with Jesus, and they say 'how can you cultivate a personal relationship with somebody who died 2000 years ago?' he says, stressing that people don't seem to get that it's a relationship that's given reality when you put work into it – when you try.

"The terrible thing in Church life, particularly for guys like me, is that we're unaccountable"

"If it wasn't a reality for me, I wouldn't last. I certainly wouldn't last as a priest," he says.

Fr Joe opens his book by drawing on the Canadian singer Neil Young's 1979 album title *Rust Never Sleeps* to point to how regardless of what's happening on the surface

there are undercurrents that are hitting the Church in unseen ways.

"In a way that's where things really kicked off, with this idea of rust. That idea that there's something going on, almost sleeping, that we're not quite tuning into," he says. "We talk about measurable things – there was a fall in Mass in that parish, and there's no vocation from that diocese in this year – and we talk about those things but don't really get into what's going on underneath.

"I describe that – the reason I like the rust image is that the rust is working away there unbeknownst sometimes behind paint or whatever, weakening a girder, weakening a key part of the thing. What I'm talking about is the whole underlying thing of the loss of the sacred, a loss of the mysterious."

There can be a real tendency, he says, to focus on measurable answers to questions about what is happening and when things happened, without going further and asking why. Instead of asking how many people go to Mass in a certain place at a certain time, he says, maybe we should be doing more to ask why – even if the answers might be uncomfortable for individual priests.

"Because the terrible thing in Church life, particularly for guys like me, is that we're unaccountable," he says. "I'm not even talking about an abusive clericalism. It's just: if I was really making a hames of it, would I know? Would I

really know? You'd like to think somebody would be flagging something with you, but people are very tolerant – I don't think it's that old style fear of the priest, but people don't want to hurt your feelings: they know that you're on your own, without the support of a wife and family and whatever, and they make allowances for it, for us. And that's a nice thing in one way..."

At a national level, he says, a serious problem is the bishop's conference and the nature of the hierarchical Church.

"I have no desire to be having a go at a particular bishop or a group of bishops"

"Don't get me wrong – I have no desire to be having a go at a particular bishop or a group of bishops. I know they're good guys," he says.

The problem, he says, is shown by things that aren't really controversial. "We have

been talking for 20 years, possibly 30 years, way before I was ordained as a teaching brother, we have been talking about the problem of confirming 80 children and seeing eight of them in the coming weeks, or giving Holy Communion to 60 children and seeing six of them," he says, pointing out that something as basic as this hasn't been tackled, adding that whenever answers are proposed at a local level, they're dismissed on the basis that solutions would have to be national.

Disparate group

"If you keep saying 'no we can't, because you need the bishops to agree', the problem is that they cannot. Not trying to sound harsh or judgmental, but because they're a disparate group and they meet a few times a year, and you know, they set up a sub-committee or whatever, it's dysfunctional in the sense that doesn't produce the decision, it doesn't produce the working thing that we need to do, so it becomes a catch-22 – we

can't do it without the bishops, and the bishops can't do it, so what do we do?

"And we keep spinning round and we've lost another generation and another generation."

Time, he says, is running out, with the days when you could "rely on the grannies" having passed and graduates of Catholic training colleges likely to define a Catholic ethos in generic – even humanist – terms. It's not enough, he says, to relax and point to Christ's promise that the Church will survive, since he never promised it would survive in any given place, or any given time, so action needs to be taken.

"Our time is limited. I'm saying that if we keep talking about it our time will pass us by. It'll get to the stage where what can be retrieved is minimal. If we think that this Irish Church can't die, then there's an arrogance and a denial.

"It died in France, clearly; people say there's a Church in France, and there is, but it's a very, very different Church," he says.

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Family was central to this year's Down & Connor conference, writes **Greg Daly**

With the World Meeting of Families now less than a year away, it wasn't surprising that this year's Faith and Life Convention in the Diocese of Down and Connor should have focused in large part on the theme of family, not least as expressed in *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis' exhortation on marriage and the family.

Now in its fourth year, the convention drew over 450 people last weekend to Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock, there to reflect on what Bishop Noel Treanor called "the interconnection between the challenges of our time – complex as they are, and becoming increasingly complex – and the inspiration, the community dimension, and the orientation that our Christian faith gives us, rooted in and sourced in the Word of God and also in our collective communal worship on Sundays and weekdays".

The convention's keynote address, by Dublin-born Cardinal Kevin Farrell, since last year head of the Vatican's new dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, focused on the papal exhortation, opening with the startling claim that no papal document has ever entailed as much consultation as *Amoris Laetitia*, whether this took the form of popular surveys – there were 15,000 consultation responses in his diocese of Dallas alone, a two-day consistory of cardinals, or two synods of bishops.

Simplicity

Stressing the simplicity of the document's language – despite its length, he said it was short on jargon and written for ordinary, everyday people – he urged people to read the whole document for themselves, and to do so in order, from beginning to end, without plucking footnotes and passages from the text out of context.

This, Bishop Treanor

Faith & Life Convention: building a toolkit to share the Gospel today



Cardinal Farrell with some of those attending the conference. Below, some conference volunteers.



remarked later, could be a lonely exercise for those who are not much into reading, "but it could become a fascinating thing to constitute a group of five or six people – it could be even done ecumenically, it could be done with people who are simply interested in family and spend time in the long evenings of November or of Advent or later in the course of the year, just exploring that document and chatting about it".

Describing Pope Francis as one of a triptych – a complementary trio – of successive great Popes, the cardinal said that while St John Paul had codified and clarified the Church's teaching, and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI had explained the reasons for the Church's teaching, Francis is now tasked with embodying this in person, as "a living parable of how we should live

what we believe".

He explained how witnessing poverty and family breakdown in his native South America had helped form Pope Francis, as can be seen in 2007's 'Aparecida Document', the pastoral manifesto of South America's bishops which the then Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio had been in charge of drafting.

“Cardinal Farrell stressed that *Amoris Laetitia* contains no doctrinal changes”

Among the things that became clear then was the extent to which the Gospel was not always preached with joy, and also how broken families could be marked by hopelessness. His response, according to the cardinal,

was to think "let's look at the situation, let's judge that situation, but let's do something to improve it".

This approach was carried forward into his papacy, the cardinal said, with the Pope constantly encouraging us to take this approach. "We all know there are difficulties, but don't come along and make the situation worse than it already is – improve it, make it better," he said.

Calling for all Catholics to open up the fruits of the synod in their homes and dioceses, Cardinal Farrell stressed that *Amoris Laetitia* contains no doctrinal changes, observing that the pastoral emphasis

on conscience in the – for some – controversial eighth chapter is rooted in the writings of St Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

The challenge, he said, was less to remind people about doctrine than to preach the word of God and accompany people in their struggles, describing the Emmaus story as a lesson in this, and adding that this is not a quick process but can take days, months, even years.

Other scriptural examples he cited as key to *Amoris Laetitia* were the episode with the woman caught in adultery and the parable of the Prodigal Son, with him later adding that the Samaritan woman at the well is significant too.

Overall, he later said, as part of a discussion with Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Sharon Haughey, and Julieann Moran, he said the imitation of Christ is our guiding principle and underpins *Amoris*, with a central point to be remembered being the fact that no one is truly worthy, and yet Christ came to save us.

There was, however, much more to the convention than the two main headline events, and two sets of hour-long workshops filled the afternoon. Many of the

workshops ran twice, and all told 25 topics were covered, ranging from 'The spirituality of the small child' to 'YOUCAT: A tool for evangelisation not a dust collector' and 'Gender theory: questions for Catholic theology'.

As Dr Treanor later observed: "The workshops were animated by people coming from all sorts of different backgrounds – people who've experienced the refugee camps in Calais, worked in universities, our parents, lived in monasteries, all sorts of different places reflecting the mosaic that is the People of God, the Church that we all belong to."

One of those who led a workshop was Fr Brendan McManus SJ, who, with Jim Deeds, ran a workshop entitled 'Finding God in the Mess'. "What we were trying to do was get people to reflect on the mess in their own lives – the difficulties, the challenges, the things that are not ideal – and get them to bring God into that," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

“We're trying to bring all that together in order that we can find what God wants”

"Often people have a tendency to separate things, as if I have God over *here*, and all the things that are going well, and I have my life over *here*," he continued. "We're trying to bring all that together in order that we can find what God wants for this, to bring God's healing, to bring God's light, to bring God's life into those situations."

Explaining how the workshop had explored meditations around the Sacred Heart and around Peter's encounter with the risen Jesus by the lakeside, Fr McManus spoke warmly of the transformation that can happen if people can get over their resistance to letting God in and bring God into their darker moments.

The problem of suffering was a big theme today, he added, noting, "Everyone wants to live on the mountaintop – one guy said 'I want the Transfiguration experi-

Paula McKeown, head of Down & Connor's Living Faith Office.





Julieann Moran, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Sharon Haughey in a panel discussion at the conference.

ence – why do I have to come down the mountain and walk through the valley, through the muck and the mess and all of that?”

Suffering, he said, is always very difficult, especially when linked with how people can find it hard to feel God's presence in their harder moments.

“It's a very difficult question to answer,” Fr McManus said, “so I was quoting the experience of Jesus on the Cross, and there's a moment where Jesus says ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Not that God has gone away but he experiences that very human experience of feeling God's absence. The irony is that this is the moment when God is working most powerfully – and then there's the Resurrection. This whole thing turns around, and all the transformation that happens through that, moving from death to life.”

Similarly, he added, God can transform things for us if we can persevere in faith during our moments of greatest suffering and God's apparent absence.

Such difficult moments are common both for those suffering from dementia and those caring for dementia sufferers, said Prof. June Andrews, who for 10 years headed the Dementia Centre at Scotland's University of Sterling and who was speaking on ‘Faith and dementia’.

“There's a lot of increased public awareness about dementia, though people are still confused, and although the awareness has risen, the fear is as high as it ever was. For some people the level of support hasn't increased at all, even though the awareness is up. They're still stuck,” she told *The Irish Catholic*.

As part of a ‘Reframing Dementia’ project she has been working with churches to listen to problems and gather ideas. Although the original plan had been to deal with a wide range of faith groups, the Dementia Services Development Trust, which she now works, decided instead to focus on Christians in the short term. “Dementia's really about the



Young people representing the diocese's pastoral areas bearing World Meeting of Families candles.

end of life, often, it's about questions of your personality,” she said. “There's quite a lot of ethical challenges in there which are looked at differently by different faiths, and we thought that at least by getting all the Christians together we'd be achieving something.”

Explaining how a resource pack for churches – entitled ‘A guide to supporting people with dementia in the local church’ – had been assembled, she said it could be used for personal reflection or in discussion groups.

“The thing about the rhythm of Church life is that it actually creates opportunities”

“The thing that your faith teaches you is that death is not the enemy,” she says, with the resource pack giving key advice on this and the whole area of end of life especially. “When facing a dread diagnosis, the person might fear that they will forget God, and must be assured that God will not forget them. If families feel the person they love has died because they stopped recognising their families, they must be assured that this is just the disease, and the person is still there.”

People of faith live in com-

munities and are called to care for each other, so family members and friends of people with dementia are given huge chances to communicate about the problems the illness might raise.

“The thing about the rhythm of Church life is that it actually creates opportunities,” Prof. Andrews says, adding, “you're going to get together at least once a week; what are you going to do when someone doesn't turn up, how are you going to tackle those sort of things?”

Dementia

Raising the question of how understanding of dementia can be raised in Church communities so people can best respond when things happen, she says that sometimes people with dementia or their families can withdraw from Church life. “In the course of talking to people we heard things like a lady saying ‘I didn't like to come to Church anymore because when my husband came with me he behaved inappropriately, so that meant I couldn't come’. So how can we, as Church people, accommodate that?”

“The key thing,” she says, “is how do you make people feel loved and wanted, even if they're on their knees with exhaustion caring for somebody? That's a really important thing.”

Similar points had been

made and phrased better a few weeks earlier, she said, by Fr Michael McGinnity in a talk at St Malachy's Church, which seemed fitting praise seeing as he was at the time leading a workshop of his own further along the corridor on the subject of ‘*Amoris Laetitia* – a road map for the pastoral care of families’.

Describing chapter four of the exhortation as the document's “engine”, and maintaining that it at least can be read in isolation, Fr McGinnity reminded the gathered audience that families are agents in the missionary work of the Church, and that when there are problems within families it is important to take the necessary time to help heal these problems.

In isolation this could easily have been a vague platitude, but Fr McGinnity then turned to the most controversial part of the exhortation – chapter eight, ‘Accompanying, discerning, and integrating weakness’ – and considered in detail what complex cases and discernment might entail, as a sincere search in line with a commitment to living the demands of the Gospel.

The convention's range went beyond various aspects of family life, with one of the more fascinating workshops focusing on a different type of discernment, with Francis Campbell, onetime Ambassa-

dor to the Holy See and now Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University, Twickenham, talking to a rapt audience on ‘Faith in an unstable world’.

Asking whether religion is a friend or foe in a time of turmoil, Prof. Campbell told those gathered that the members of such an audience would typically have a high degree of religious literacy, better positioned than most to evaluate the extent to which things like the Troubles were religious in nature and by extension better prepared than most to apply such intelligent critiques to news stories about various events in the Muslim world.

Religious literacy, he said, can help us see where religion is sincerely in play or when it's more a pretext or veneer, noting that over 20 years of diplomatic work he constantly found that religion was less likely to be an obstacle than a bridge or dictionary.

Drawing on a recent exploration of Margaret Thatcher's online archive, he said he found a long discussion between the then Prime Minister and Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich in 1981 utterly fascinating in how it showed how

profoundly Mrs Thatcher had misunderstood a conflict on her own doorstep. She didn't grasp, he described the cardinal as having said, how her military response was radicalising people who had never been radical, and then, noting how that someone so close could get something so wrong, asked what are we getting wrong that's further away.

In his concluding address, Dr Treanor commented on the New Evangelisation, and said how we often hear people saying we have to develop a language adequate for our times.

“That's very true,” he said. “But another thing that we have to do is develop the tools and the means to promote and achieve this process of presenting the good news of the Gospel, and presenting it in ways that are credible, yes, but that are also experiential.”

It's in this, he said, that much of the value of conferences such as the Faith and Life Convention can be found, drawing together and bonding together people of faith and goodwill in sincere attempts to engage with the challenges of our time.

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Join us at the following events

Glenstal Launch

Sunday October 15th 4:30pm

Glenstal Abbey Bookshop

Dublin

Monday October 16th 6:15pm

Bishop Éamonn Walsh will launch the book at the Newman Centre for Faith and Culture, University Church, St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.

Galway

Wednesday 25th October 5:30pm

Fintan Lyons OSB will deliver a paper 'Luther's Challenge' at the LUTHER 500 Conference in the Aula Maxima at NUI Galway

Martin Luther, His Challenge Then and Now is a study of the phenomenon of Luther, and his effects on Church and society. The author concludes that issues which existed in the 16th century are endemic to Christianity in every century. The book analyses Luther's challenge to the church and the world of his time and then asks the same questions of today.

Fintan Lyons OSB, a monk of Glenstal Abbey, has a doctorate in Reformed Theology and taught Reformation History in the Angelicum University and the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Rome. He has been a member of the International Pentecostal-Roman Catholic Dialogue and has published widely on ecumenical and liturgical topics.

Out&About

Students settle in for new academic year



◀ DUBLIN:

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin was the principal celebrant at Mass in St Patrick's College Drumcondra for the opening of the Academic Year. He is pictured with students and staff from St Paul's College in Raheny: Ms Pamela Mc Loughlin, Jack Welsh, Reece Scully-Long, Ben Murphy Zack Power and Ms Mary Curran. Photo: John McElroy

▼ CLARE: Bishop Fintan Monahan and Ennis Cathedral Choir with Michael Crimmins, Michael Collins, Michael Cullinan, between them they have served the choir for 150 years.



SCOTLAND: Fr Francisco Liporace of the Institute of the Incarnate Word in Argentina, with his Irish team: Fr Sean Bradley from Galway and Fr Nicholas Grace, Fr Stephen Kennedy and Bro. Paul Spaine from Dublin, on their recent parish mission at Barrhead in the Paisley diocese in Scotland, at St John the Evangelist RC Parish Church.



MEATH: Mullingar Eucharistic Adoration Committee from left John Menton, Margaret Hynes, Teresa Masterson, Chaplain Fr Joseph Naikarakudy, Maeve Clifford, Eithne Cornally and Jerry Clifford.



CAVAN: Fr Charlie O'Gorman with youth officers and Pope John Paul II Award participants at a presentation night.



Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



LOURDES: Oblates Youth Service recently return from a "brilliant pilgrimage" with 79 young volunteers.



WEXFORD: Acclaimed author Eoin Colfer opens the new library at Barntown National School. Pupils, Board Chairman Fr John Carroll, Principal Louisa O'Brien and Parents' Council Chairperson Niamh Doyle are pictured.



MAYO: St Patrick's Church, Newport was built by John Sisk & Son 100 year ago. Family members of John Sisk and Son Ltd at Newport church are pictured: (l-r) Owen Sisk, Stephen Bowcott, CEO of John Sisk & Son, Thomas O'Connell, Hal Sisk and JP Sisk. Pic: Michael Mc Laughlin



LOURDES: Almost 50 parishioners from Our Lady Queen of Peace in Bray travelled to Lourdes. For the last 17 years Ed and Bernadette Byrne have organised the pilgrimage.

IN SHORT

Westmeath Assembly to encourage more people to join holy hour

The Mullingar Parish Adoration Committee has planned a Eucharistic Assembly giving people a chance to "affirm their dedication".

The event will take place in Bloomfield Hotel, Mullingar on Saturday October 14, and is for people who take part in Eucharistic dedication in parishes across Westmeath.

"I am very excited that Mullingar parish will host this unique gathering in our locality", the chaplain to Eucharistic

Adoration Fr Joseph Naikarakudy said. "It is inspiring to see the dedication of parishioners who spend a holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament each week in the cathedral and I know this is replicated throughout Westmeath. These people pray for the intentions of everyone, especially for the sick, for families facing difficulties and for vocations. This assembly gives us a chance to affirm their dedication and, I hope, to encourage new people to join them in this beautiful devotion".

Centenary celebrations for historical Mayo church

A Mass marking the centenary of St

Patrick's Church in Newport, Co. Mayo was celebrated by Fr Tod Nolan.

Referencing the historical significance of the church, local historian Joe McDermott said: "St Patrick's Church on Barrack Hill dominates the town of Newport. The church was erected by John Sisk & Son at the request of the then Parish Priest, Canon Michael McDonald - who was responsible for the building of the oratory on the summit of Croagh Patrick."

He added that the church has a "fascinating history", saying that the renowned 'Last Judgement' window by Harry Clarke is a "big draw" as well as "superb western doorway and the beautifully restored altar".

NATIONAL

Powerful Catholic Bible study and healing through scripture with world renowned Johnson Sequa at various locations nationwide including Knock, Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny, Monaghan, Offaly, Tipperary, Wicklow, between September 26-October 10. Contact: Chris 085-2392207 or Eileen 087-2454697.

ARMAGH

Triduum of Prayer in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh from October 11-13 marking the centenary year of apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima. Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral at 10am and 7.30pm. Archbishop Eamon Martin will close the Triduum on Friday.

CLARE

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

CORK

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

A catechesis to more fully know God's personal care for each of us, will be given each Sunday and Wednesday night during October at 8pm, in the Sacred Heart Parish Centre Western Road, Farranree Church Family Centre, and St Mark's Centre, Ballincollig.

DUBLIN

Divine Mercy Devotions in the Church of Three Patrons, Rathgar every First Friday at 7pm. Mass, Benediction, chapellet & 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 Harts-town Church. For information 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.

Ceol agus Caint: Music and Musings, Friday October 6, at 7.30pm, 13 Geraldine Street, (off Berkeley Road). Refreshments. Organised by the Legion of Mary.

Mass with anointing of the sick Rathmines Church at 11.00am on Sunday October 8. Scripture talks at 7.30pm Thursday October 5 and 12 with Fr Martin Hogan, and Wednesday October 25 and November 1 with Sean Goan.

FERMANAGH

Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick every Wednesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly at 7.30pm.

GALWAY

Call to Fatima, an award-winning film produced by Thomas McCormack, will be shown in Abbey Church on Francis St, Friday October 6 at 7.30pm. There will also be blessing of the relics of St Francis and St Jacinta.

A 'Life in the Spirit' seminar begins October 11 in the Abbey Hall, Newtownsmith at 8pm,

and continues for the following seven Wednesday nights. Details at: ofsgalway.com.

Candlelight rosary processions will take place at Galway Cathedral throughout the month of October at 8pm on Sunday October 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29. It will feature live music.

KILDARE

A Mass of Thanksgiving for benefactors and missionaries will be held at St Joseph's Oratory, St Patrick's College, Maynooth on Sunday October 8 at 2pm, with an exhibition highlighting missionary work in Kenya. RSVP Fiona Walsh by email: fiona@wmi.ie or by phone: (01) 497 2035.

LIMERICK

Family Fun Day on October 8, from 1-5pm (Festival Mass at 4pm) in Mary I to launch Limerick diocese preparations for World Meeting of Families. Music, games, food and fun for all the family. See FB Limerick WMOF2018 or email wmo2018@ldo.ie for more info.

Janice & Moss Carrig will hold their monthly prayer meeting in the Desmond hall Newcastlewest on Sunday October 8 at 3pm.

LOUTH

A Holy Hour with music and reflections to be held in St Mary's Church James Street, Drogheda on Wednesday October 11 at 8:00 pm.

St Gerard's Solemn Novena - St Joseph's Redemptorist Church, Dundalk October 8-16. Weekdays: 7am, 9.30, 11.30, 1.10pm, 2.30, 4.30, 6, 7.30, 9, 10.30. Sunday: 7am, 8, 9.30, 11, 12.30pm, 4.30, 6, 7.30, 9.00pm. Confessions Available Every Day except Sundays.

The Limerick Charismatic Renewal Conference of prayer, song, reflection and healing takes place in the Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, October 14-15, starting daily at 2pm. Speakers include Fr Brendan Walsh SCA and Dymphna Sheehan. Contact Sr. Mary Bridget 061 454511 or Brian 086 3001027

MEATH

A 'Life in the Spirit' series of seminars begins on Thursday October 12 at 7.45pm in the Parish Centre, Trim. All welcome.

MAYO

Latin Mass in the Old Rite (Tridentine) will take place on Sunday October 8 at 5.30pm in the Shrine.

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.

WICKLOW

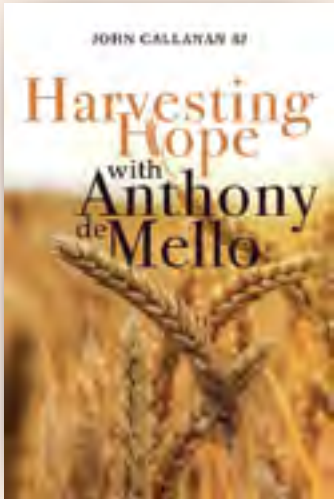
St Patrick's Prayer Meeting on Thursday evenings at 8pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre, Wicklow. Come for prayer, scripture, music and a cuppa.

On October 13, the Centenary of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima, ceremonies including first class relics of Ss Francisco and Jacinta will be held in Roundwood Church, beginning at 12noon with a Holy Hour and finishing at around 4.30pm following Mass.

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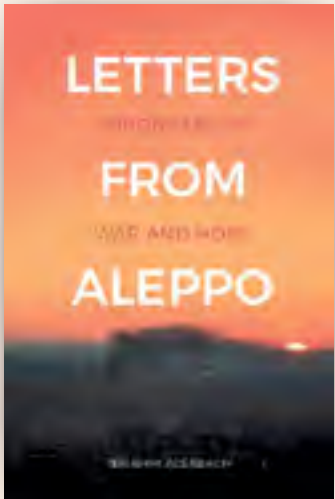
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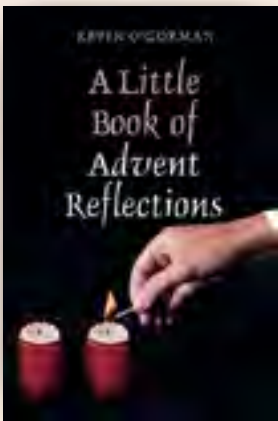
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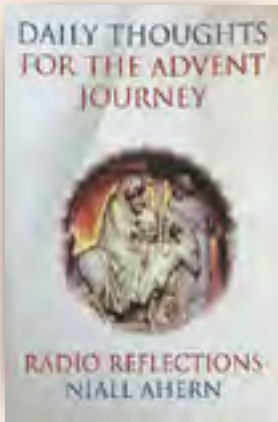
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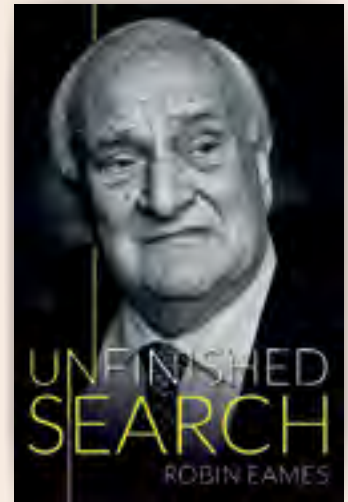
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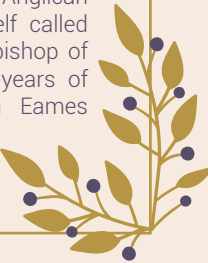
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World Report

IN BRIEF

Anti-government pastor faces 20 years

● A Zimbabwean pastor has been arrested and put on trial due to allegations of attempting to subvert the government. Fr Evan Mawarire, a prominent critic of Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe, was arrested as he stepped down from his pulpit on charges that could see him imprisoned for 20 years.

The state has accused him of circulating social media posts calling on Zimbabweans to demonstrate against fuel shortages and price hikes.

The clergyman pleaded not guilty to two charges of subverting the government in February and the latest two charges of inciting public violence. The latter carries a penalty of up to 10 years in jail. "He was exercising his constitutional rights of challenging the policies of government. This was done in a lawful manner," defence lawyer Harrison Nkomo told the court.

Freed priest meets Indian Prime Minister

The Indian Catholic priest who recently met the Pope after being freed by kidnappers in Yemen met with the Indian Prime Minister after returning home. Fr Tom Uzhunnalil returned to India last week after being freed after 18 months of captivity. He met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other government officials. India's foreign ministry stated in a release that they had been making all possible efforts to secure his release, and were in constant touch with countries in the region.

Fr Uzhunnalil was working as a chaplain at a retirement home before he was kidnapped during an attack by gunmen on March 2016 in which 16 people were killed including four nuns.

Church condemns 'deplorable' Catalonia referendum violence

Spanish bishops have dubbed the government's use of violence to stop a disputed referendum "deplorable" after hundreds of people were injured by riot police.

More than 800 people were injured and many detained after the regional government of Spain's Catalonia region attempted to hold an independence referendum. Catalan officials claimed that 90% of the votes cast were in favour of seceding from Spain, not counting the votes confiscated by police.

Cardinal Juan Jose Omella, archbishop of Barcelona, urged all parties to engage in "prayers and calm".

"The violence experienced in Catalonia is deplorable," he said. "We have to find a peaceful and democratic way out of this situation."

The cardinal's appeal came as Catalonia's regional President Carles Puigdemont said in a televised address after polls closed that Catalans had "won the right to statehood".

The vote went forward despite Spain's Constitutional Court suspension of a law passed by the Catalanian



Riot police clash with voters in an attempt to stop their partaking in Catalonia's disputed referendum. Photo: businessinsider.com

parliament that said if more than 50% of voters in the referendum supported independence, the state would secede. The paramilitary Civil Guard used batons and rubber bullets in a bid to close polling stations and seize ballot boxes, triggering violence with protesters.

The president of the Tarraconense Episcopal Conference, which includes prelates from the Barcelona and Tarragona archdioceses, urged Catholics to "trust the God of peace".

Catalonia, the wealthiest

of Spain's 17 autonomous regions, is home to 7.5 million people with its own language and culture, and separatist politicians promised the referendum after forming a coalition government in 2015.

Declaration

The vote was backed as conforming to "Gospel and humanistic values" by more than 400 Catholic clergy and religious order members, about 20% of Catalonia's total, in a late September declaration. The message was sent to Pope Francis, leading to a for-

mal protest by Spain's ambassador to the Holy See, Gerardo Bugallo.

Cardinal Omella urged citizens to "abandon their egotisms and think more about others".

Meanwhile, a group of Catholic public figures appealed for "the building of bridges not walls", and said Catalonia should reject a cultural identity "defined in opposition to others", recalling "disastrous periods of the past" when disputes were "resolved with violent force in civil wars".

"We consider it aberrant that an aversion to everything Spanish has been forming in Catalonia over successive generations," said the October 2 declaration, signed by Eudald Vendrell, president of Barcelona Archdiocese's Justice and Peace Commission, and Teresa Compte of the Pontifical University of Salamanca.

"Hispanophobia stands in the same mire as anti-Semitism, racism, Islamophobia and class intolerance," they said.

US shooting was 'night filled with unspeakable terror'

The President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has expressed his sorrow at the news of the most lethal mass shooting the US has seen.

A gunman killed over 50 people and hospitalised 400 in an attack on people attending a country and western gig in Las Vegas last weekend.

The suspect, Stephen Paddock (64), fired from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino and killed himself at the scene as police surrounded him.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo said the morning after: "We woke this morning and learned of yet another night filled

with unspeakable terror, this time in the city of Las Vegas, and by all accounts, the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history."

"My heart and my prayers, and those of my brother bishops and all the members of the Church, go out to the victims of this tragedy and to the city of Las Vegas," he said.

The cardinal said that we need to pray and to take care of those who are suffering. He added: "In the end, the only response is to do good - for no matter what the darkness, it will never overcome the light. May the Lord of all

gentleness surround all those who are suffering from this evil, and for those who have been killed we pray, eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them."

The weapon used is believed to be an assault rifle, which was fired at the crowd of 22,000 people.

In a telegram to Las Vegas Bishop Joseph Pepe, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, said Pope Francis was "deeply saddened to learn of the shooting in Las Vegas" and "sends the assurance of his spiritual closeness to all those affected by this senseless tragedy".

UK bishops discuss Brexit with EU officials

Bishops from England and Wales met representatives from EU institutions to address issues and key concerns for the Church regarding Brexit.

Bishop Nicholas Hudson led the delegation which discussed the importance of upholding human rights in trade deals, prisoner transfer rights, the North of Ireland and its border issues with the Republic of Ireland.

They also discussed the rights of EU nationals in the UK and vice versa.

Bishop Hudson said: "The UK is still part of the EU and during the transitional period before the UK leaves there are vital issues to resolve. We will also continue to have a relationship with the EU and its institutions in the future so these face-face meetings are invaluable."

"Essentially we must always promote the human and insist that the human is put at the centre of the European project and the policies adopted by

its institutions, affecting all European citizens. It is important to remember that we will remain part of Europe even when the UK leaves the European Union."

The delegation also met with the Apostolic Nuncio to the EU, Archbishop Alain Lebeaupin, Comece Vice President Bishop Jean Kockerels and general secretary of the Conference of European Churches Fr Heikki Huttunen.

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Edited by Chai Brady
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All creatures, great and small...



Scott Koenig holds his Yorkie, Yogi, as he receives a blessing during the Blessing of the Animals at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America in Washington. The prayer service was celebrated in observance of the October 4 feast of St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals. Photo: CNS

Persecuted Iraqi Christians must return as full citizens

Christians don't want to be a "protected minority" in the Middle East, and must be full citizens with full rights said Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State.

The return of Christians to Iraq's Ninevah Plain "must be the first and urgent objective of our efforts," the cardinal said.

"That will allow the Christian community to then face the other challenges that awaits it in being fully active and generous in building up the common good of the entire nation."

Cardinal Parolin spoke at a Rome conference sponsored by Aid to the Church in Need, an international

Catholic charity. The group's "Return to the Roots" campaign is trying to raise \$250 million (€213m) to rebuild 13,000 houses in northern Iraq and help their Christian owners return to their villages.

About 100,000 Christians – among them more than 60,000 Syriac Catholics – were expelled from the Ninevah Plain by the Islamic State group in the summer of 2014 as the militants campaigned to expand their reach into Iraq.

Stable

A Christian presence is fundamental for a peaceful, stable and multicultural Middle East, the cardinal said. For

centuries, the region has been home to Christians, Muslims and Jews, but recent waves of terrorism and war are destroying its identity.

Aid to the Church in Need's project, he said, "beyond expressing the solidarity of the universal Church – shown not only at the level of spiritual closeness through prayer, but also on the concrete level of charity – aims to restore to Christians that air of normality that is so necessary for overcoming fear and desperation and allowing them to look to the future with hope."

But the people also need guarantees of their security and their rights, Cardinal Parolin added.

Pope reappoints critic to Apostolic Signatura

Pope Francis has reappointed Cardinal Raymond Burke to the Vatican's highest judicial authority three years after he removed him from his position leading it.

Cardinal Burke will rejoin the Church's supreme tribunal as a member of the Apostolic Signatura, despite having been a prominent critic of the Pope's *Amoris Laetitia*.

The cardinal previously said he would issue the Pope with a "fraternal correction" over the family life document.

In November 2014, Francis moved Cardinal Burke out of his job allegedly for the cardinal's blocking of reforms to simplify – and speed up – the marriage annulment process.

Since then the 69-year-

old former Archbishop of St Louis, Missouri, has become the leading traditionalist critic of the Francis papacy. Last November he and three other cardinals submitted the Pope with a series of questions, known as *dubia*, about *Amoris Laetitia*, calling into doubt the openings it made to give some remarried divorcees communion.



Cardinal Raymond Burke.

Vatican roundup

Pope to focus on 'fake news'

Given the strong divisions sparked and fueled by 'fake news', Pope Francis is highlighting the importance of truth in his message for World Communications Day.

The message will call for studying the causes and consequences of baseless information and will promote "professional journalism", which always seeks the truth and therefore peace and understanding in the world, the Vatican Secretariat for Communication said.

'The truth will set you free: fake news and journalism for peace' will be the theme of the Church's celebration of World Communications Day 2018. The day's theme is announced every year on September 29, the feast of the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

The theme Pope Francis chose "relates to so-called 'fake news'. Namely baseless information that contributes to generating and nurturing a strong polarisation of opinions," the announcement said. "It involves an often misleading distortion of facts, with possible repercussions at the level of individual and collective behaviour."

With so many key players in the world of social media, internet and politics beginning to face the phenomenon, it said, "the Church, too, wishes to offer a contribution".

'Pray for protection'

The archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael help encourage and accompany Christians on life's journey and defend them from the devil, Pope Francis has said.

While the three archangels serve the Lord and contemplate his glory, God also "sends them to accompany us on the road of life", the Pope said in his homily at morning Mass in the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

They have "an important role in our journey toward salvation," he said. For instance, Michael has been tasked with waging war against the devil, who is a "nuisance in our life".

The devil seduces everyone, like he did Eve, with convincing arguments and temptations, the Pope said.

"The Lord asks (Michael) to wage war," he said, and "Michael helps us wage war, to not be seduced."

Gabriel, on the other hand, is the bearer of good news, the news of salvation. He, too, is with the people and helps when "we forget" the Gospel and forget that "Jesus came to be with us" to save us.

Raphael, the Pope said, is the one who "walks with us," protecting people from the "seduction of taking the wrong step".

Vatican advises on UN compacts on refugee crisis

While encouraging Catholics to reach out to migrants and refugees, the Vatican is reaching out to governments as they struggle to work out international policies and principles for dealing with the large number of people fleeing violence and poverty.

The involvement of the Church and Church agencies in the UN process for drafting the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees goes hand in hand with the much more personalised effort to encourage individual Catholics to meet a migrant or refugee and listen to that person's story.

Pope Francis launched Caritas Internationalis' 'Share the Journey' campaign inviting all Catholics to extend a hand of welcome to a migrant or refugee.

The Pope himself oversees the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, and he has approved specific 'action points' or concrete proposals the Vatican wants to see incorporated into the global compacts.

The 20 points, drafted in consultation with several bishops' conferences and Catholic organisations working with refugees and migrants, are explained in separate notes.

Francis in the lions' den



A new collection of interviews with the Pope contains fascinating details, writes **Austen Ivereigh**

It is not hard to guess why the Vatican's communications supremo, Monsignor Dario Viganò, thought it was a good idea for Pope Francis to have 12 meetings with a French atheist sociologist over much of 2016. The Catholic Church's commentariat can be an echo chamber, and Francis needs to reach out beyond its walls.

Dominique Wolton is smart and well-read, clearly fascinated by one he calls the "first Pope of globalisation", and bowled over by Francis' simplicity and directness ("so lively, comprehensible, and informal", he gushes at one point).

In his book-length 'dialogue' he asks the kind of questions Catholics probably wouldn't, such as: "Why don't you issue an encyclical on the challenges of human and technical communication?" Or "what do you say to those who bang on about the Church's atrocities and crimes?"

Patience

With exemplary patience, Francis gently points out that he has addressed this or that topic in his daily homilies, or this or that document. At other times he humbly takes the point: "We should talk about that more, yes."

Wolton's real interest is in communications, a topic about which he has written a great deal. "Please read the five pages I gave you summarising my theory of communication," he airily tells Francis at one point. "It's exactly what I've been writing for 30 years."

"So why are we doing this book?" Francis shoots back,



Pope Francis boards the plane in Italy for his trip to Colombia last month. Photo: CNS

teasingly.

"Because it will mainly be of interest to the secularists, because you are often more liked by the secularists and the atheists than the Catholics," Wolton ripostes, laughing.

A lot of the book – a hefty tome, with the numbing title of *Politique et Société* – is like that. Although Francis gets the larger word count, we are not spared Wolton's at times lengthy, and not always interesting, thoughts on the state of the world.

As an interviewer, he is not much good at pressing Francis to clarify or dig deeper, so that many ideas are left hanging, unresolved.

But he is the kind of interlocutor a certain sort of secular intellectual would trust, and therefore a good way of introducing the Pope to a wider world. Wolton's focus, appropriately, is on the Church's social and political engagement, rather than on what he calls "the political and institutional conflicts at the heart of the Church".

Given that the Pope has often shared those thoughts, in press conferences and interviews, there is little he can say on war and peace, religion and politics, Europe,

culture, communication, dialogue with non-believers, mercy, tradition and so on, that has not been already rehearsed.

So, to anyone who follows his thinking, Francis says little that is new or startling. But he does so at times in greater detail or in ways that he hasn't before.

“There is ‘a lot of pressure’, he says, and ‘there have been some slip-ups’”

In terms of his life story, there are few revelations beyond the one that made the news when the book came out – that he went to a Jewish woman psychiatrist after ending his period as provincial in 1979.

But there are nuggets. As his biographer I was interested in a story involving his little-mentioned maternal grandmother, Maria Sívori. (His paternal grandmother, Rosa, of course looms large in any account of his childhood.)

The young Jorge Mario, aged 16, was with her when Prokofiev died in March 1953

and remembers the moment clearly: he was interested in music, he says, and had begun to dream about being the director of an orchestra.

His grandmother Maria listened to him patiently, he tells Wolton, before telling him that this would require a huge effort of work – something the young man hadn't grasped.

The anecdote itself isn't significant, but its timing is.

Given that only a few months later Jorge Mario had the experience in the confessional that left him convinced he should be a priest, it confirms that his vocation came *ex nihilo*, the result of a gratuitous encounter with God's mercy. Before then, he had been fantasising about living rather different lives.

Here are three other sections in the Wolton interview that throw some new light on Francis' thinking and inner life.

Although he says he is never anxious, Francis clearly regards the airborne press

conferences on his return flights as a big deal. He feels like he is going into the "lions' den", he tells Wolton – something he had laughingly told the Vatican press corps on his first flight with them – and always begins with a prayer because, he says, "I try to be very precise."

There is "a lot of pressure", he says, and "there have been some slip-ups".

Wolton doesn't ask which, not even when he repeats the admission a few sentences later. "I have made a mistake two or three times in my way of saying things," adding: "On the plane. Two or three times, I've made a mistake."

Instead, Wolton asks if his direct style helps him to communicate better.

Francis answers that his is "the pastoral style" of communication. "I try not to speak like a professor but as a pastor." Asked if he is happy, the Pope says: "Yes, I'm happy. I'm happy. I'm

happy. Not because I'm Pope, but the Lord has given me that, and I pray not to do anything too stupid ... But I do!"

Francis has drawn on his unfinished thesis on Romano Guardini before, in many ways, and in greatest detail of all in an address to the 1994 synod. But he has never applied it to politics in such detail as he does here, as a means of holding in tension unity and identity.

The political craft in its deepest sense – meaning not something just practiced by politicians, but as a form of human service – is "to accept that there is a tension that we cannot resolve", he tells Wolton.

Rejecting the Hegelian notion of synthesis, in which one party is annihilated in favor of the other, Francis draws on Guardini's *Der Gegensatz* (meaning dynamic contrapositions) to suggest the idea of a unity that develops from the holding together of differing positions – the result of a gift of the Holy Spirit, as he has said elsewhere.

True politics, he tells Wolton, means that "there



Dominique Wolton.



can only be a higher resolution, on a superior plane, where both parties give the best of themselves, resulting not in a synthesis but a common path, a walking together”.

The obstacle to this in both religion and politics is fundamentalism, which clings to identity and refuses to learn from the other, which in politics is expressed in ideology. As result, says Francis, “ideologies cannot do politics. They help you to think...but they are not capable of doing politics.”

As a result of ideology, he says, politics in the 20th Century has frequently broken down and led to war.

The Church's political and diplomatic role, he says, is to create bridges that allow people to walk together, mirroring God's action in sending His son to bridge the divide between God and humanity.

“With the reform of the curia, there will be many women who will have decision-making powers, not just in an advisory role”

Wolton asks Francis, at one point, if he has “won the battle” against the Vatican maladies he famously identified in his Christmas address to the Curia in December 2014.

Francis, who was then (end of 2016) preparing his new Christmas address to the Curia summarising his reforms, answers: “Yes, it hasn't gone badly, not just in the organic reform of

the organisation, but also the reform of attitudes” – suggesting that, for the Pope, the second is at least as important as the first.

Governance

At the end of the book Francis touches on the curia again in relation to amplifying the voice and presence of women in the Church's governance.

“With the reform of the curia, there will be many women who will have decision-making powers, not just in an advisory role. Because you don't need to be a priest to head an education department. In the curia, there is already a second-in-command (vice-directrice) in the Vatican's press office.”

After discussing the influence of women in the Pope's life, Wolton presses him again, asking if in the curia he will give women more of a role.

“Yes yes, I think so,” Francis answers. “Because there's not so much misogyny as all that. That's not the problem. It's elsewhere.”

Wolton asks if the problem is one of timidity or “lack of communication,” and Francis agrees. “When they (i.e. the curial bureaucracy) see to what point women can do things better, there's no problem,” he says. “It's not that that poses the problem, but something else.”

After Wolton for once presses him, he answers eventually: “A problem of power. We're working on it.”

① Austen Ivereigh is author of *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*.



A woman takes a selfie with Pope Francis as he visits a migrant reception center during a pastoral visit in Bologna, Italy.

Politicians should encourage acceptance of migrants



Pope Francis focuses on the obligations of both citizens and politicians, writes Cindy Wooden

Politics as service to the common good and the need to create spaces where citizens and migrants can meet and overcome fear were topics Pope Francis repeatedly returned to.

Arriving in Bologna at mid-morning this week, Pope Francis went directly to the “Regional Hub”, a government-run processing centre for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. He was given, and wore, a yellow ID bracelet with his name and a number, just like the migrants and refugees in the facility wear.

Just four days after he kicked off Caritas Internationalis' “Share the Journey” campaign to encourage Catholics to meet a migrant or refugee and listen to his or her story, Pope Francis told the 1,000 people at the hub: “Many people don't know you and they're afraid.”

The fear “makes them feel they have the right to judge and to do so harshly and coldly, thinking they see clearly,” the Pope said. “But it's not true. One sees well only up close, which gives mercy.”

Terrible phrases

“From far away, we can say and think anything, like easily happens when they write terrible phrases and insults on the internet,” the Pope said. But, he told them, “if we look at our neighbour without mercy, we run the risk of God looking at us without mercy.”

Pope Francis, after shaking hands with each of the migrants and refugees, said he saw “only a great desire for friendship and assistance”.

The integration of newcomers begins with knowing one another, he said. “Contact with the other leads to discovering the ‘secret’ that each person carries and also the gift that he or she represents.”

“Each of you has your own story,” he said, and “this story is something sacred. We must respect it, accept it and welcome it, and help you move forward.”

“Do you know what you are?” the Pope asked them. “You are fighters for hope!”

Too many of their peers never made it to Europe's shores because they died in the desert or in the sea, he said. “People don't remember them, but God knows their names and welcomes them to him. Let's all take a moment of silence, remembering them and praying for them.”

Pope Francis had begun his Sunday early, arriving shortly after 8 am in Cesena to mark the 300th anniversary of the birth of Pope Pius VI.

Meeting the public in the main square of the city of 97,000 people, Pope Francis focused on the obligations of both citizens and politicians in working together for the common good.

“This discomfort can be overcome by offering spaces for personal encounter”

Cities and nations need “good politics”, which is a form of governance not enslaved to “individual ambitions or the highhandedness of factions”, he said. Authentic politics promotes collaboration and requires a balance of courage and prudence.

It “increases people's involvement, their progressive inclusion”, he said, and it “does not leave any category at the margins” nor does it “sack and pollute natural resources – these, in fact, are not a bottomless well but a gift given by God for us to use with respect and intelligence”.

The social teaching of the Catholic Church sees politics, when motivated by concern for the common good, to be “a noble form of charity”, he said.

Being a good politician means

carrying a cross, he said, “because many times he or she must set aside personal ideas and take up the initiatives of others, harmonising and combining them so that it really will be the common good that is promoted”.

A good politician, he said, must be morally upright, patient and strong enough to live with the fact that very little will be perfect. “And when the politician errs,” he said, he or she should be strong enough to say, “I made a mistake, forgive me.” And go forward. This is noble.”

The Pope had spoken about politics and immigration the previous day as well, meeting at the Vatican with mayors and other members of Italy's national association of municipalities.

Pope Francis urged them to oppose “one-way streets of exasperated individualism” and “the dead ends of corruption”, as well as cities that move at two speeds: the express lanes of the rich and privileged and the barely passable alleys of “the poor and unemployed, large families, immigrants and those who have no one to count on”.

Cities should not be raising walls or towers, he said, but enlarging public squares, giving each person space and helping them “open to communion with others”.

“I understand the discomfort many of your citizens feel with the massive arrival of migrants and refugees,” the Pope told the mayors, many of whom lead cities and towns that have welcomed hundreds of people.

The fear, he said, “finds its explanation in an innate fear of the ‘stranger’, a fear aggravated by the wounds of the economic crisis”, but also by a lack of careful preparation for welcoming so many people throughout the country.

“This discomfort,” the Pope said, “can be overcome by offering spaces for personal encounter and mutual knowledge. So welcome all those initiatives that promote the culture of encounter, the exchange of artistic and cultural riches and knowledge about the homes and communities of origin of the new arrivals.”

① Cindy Wooden is a journalist with Catholic News Service.

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

Sinister side to abortion debate

Dear Editor, The sinister and illegal activities of pro-abortion advocates over the last two weeks have been shocking and outrageous. Where is the condemnation from public figures? The fact that three hotels were forced to cancel pro-life events because of threats and intimidation of staff members should be investigated by An Garda.

I also find it astounding that people

who describe themselves as advocates of women's rights would take down posters advertising an event where brave survivors of rape were offering to give their perspective on pregnancy following that terrible trauma.

This is really about freedom of speech and a militant side to the abortion who wants to silence any voice that they disagree with. The repeal of the Eighth Amendment is a

complex issue and should be debated thoroughly from all sides. The fact that some elements of our society want to shut down that debate is deeply worrying. What's more, I think things are only going to get worse as we get closer to a referendum next year.

*Yours etc.,
Clodagh Murphy,
Bray,
Co. Wicklow.*

Permanent singleness must be God's will

Dear Editor, I note with great concern your views on life as a single person as expressed in your Editor's Comment on September 28. I note particularly your closing concession that "uncommitted single people must never be regarded as anything less than full members of the Church".

To what are these "single people" uncommitted? As members of the Church – the Body of Christ – they are, like everyone else, integral parts of that body and therefore

committed to the other parts of the body, especially to its head.

I draw your attention to paragraph 158 of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, where, opening the section on 'Marriage and Virginity' he asserts that many single people "are not only devoted to their own family but often render great service in their group of friends, in the Church community and in their professional lives. Their dedication greatly enriches

the family, the Church and society".

As for 'vocation', that comes from God, and not from the Church. Admittedly God's call to single life may be unwelcome, denied, resisted, or difficult to recognise, but for those who have found that their life's journey led them to permanent singleness, there can be no explanation other than that this was God's will for them. The large number involved in Ireland alone (as evidenced

by the 2016 Census returns) demands that their vocation be acknowledged, and that they be accorded parity of formation, support and affirmation with other groups. Single people are valuable and self-giving members of the Church, and of society in general, and it is time that this was acknowledged and respected.

*Yours etc.,
Mary Keane,
Ranelagh,
Dublin 6.*

Being single is just a fact of life

Dear Editor, I thoroughly agree that there cannot be a vocation to a single life. God does not call people to be single, it is just a circumstance of life. God has given us free will to live our lives. If we do not find someone suitable to share our life with or something goes wrong and a relationship does not last, we cannot blame God. That is just life. It happens. Unfortunately, some people end up alone, but this is a calling from a loving God.

*Yours etc.,
Patrick Williams,
Drogheda,
Co. Louth.*



Stand up for the Church

Dear Editor, So another TD has attacked the Catholic Church (IC 28/09/2017). While Joan Collins' ridiculous claim that the Constitution is rubbish because a priest wrote it is not on the same level as Brid Smith's desire to throw the Church in the "dustbin of history", it is another example of how Catholics are viewed as an easy target in today's culture.

Church-bashing has become so common in public rhetoric now that it sometimes passes me by unnoticed, and I'm sure it must be the same for others. We've become so used to it

we no longer react. But we need to snap out of this spell. It is up to ordinary Catholic voters to call our TDs out when they are wrong and unjust. It is also up to ordinary Catholic citizens to complain when the media is wrong or unjust towards the Church. We can't leave it up to the bishops or organisations like this newspaper. We need to remind public figures that when they bash the Church, they are attacking the grassroots faithful, not just the institution.

*Yours etc.,
Maureen O'Sullivan,
Ennis, Co. Clare.*

WMOF should commemorate the dead of 1918

Dear Editor, "What are we doing in July 2018 to commemorate the centenary of the deaths of our uncles and aunt?" was an out of the blue email enquiry from a first cousin. Shortly afterwards he emailed me copies of memorial cards with details of the deaths of our uncles and aunt. I hardly knew of their existence.

I suspect that there are a great many other families who have forgotten their ancestral victims of the 1918 black flu. In the meantime as a family we have researched the descendants of our grandparents who must have suffered greatly at the time. We agreed to have a gathering in July 2018 starting with Mass for our ancestors.

This leads me to suggest that it might be a good idea for a similar Mass at the forthcoming World Meeting of Families in Dublin, which is where my ancestors and so many others died in July and August 1918.

*Yours etc.,
Alan Whelan,
Killarney, Co Kerry.*

Catholics must understand reasons for Church's rules

Dear Editor, I write regarding your comment on Jacob Rees-Mogg's recent media interviews (IC 21/09/2017). I agree that Jacob Rees-Mogg is to be admired for standing up for his belief in the teachings of the Catholic Church on same-sex marriage and abortion under all circumstances. However if he wishes to publicly defend his beliefs it is not enough to simply reply, when asked why he is opposed to these issues, that "it is the teaching of the Catholic Church".

In order to defend a belief, when challenged, you must be able to provide the evidence to support your argument. The only way this can be achieved is to ensure that adults are catechised so that they not only know but understand the reasons why the Catholic Church opposes these issues; after all parents should be the main catechists in passing on the Faith to their children. When Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch: "Do you understand what you are reading? The eunuch replied: "How can I unless someone guides me" (Acts 8: 30-31).

*Yours etc.,
Christina Coakley,
Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo.*

Catholics cannot secretly vote against God's word

Dear Editor, On the subjects of same-sex 'marriage' and abortion there is much written in *The Irish Catholic* of September 21. St Paul (1Thess 2.13) puts it simply: "Accept God's word for what it really is, God's word and not some human thinking".

God's word (Mt.19) is that marriage is an exclusive and life-long contract between one man and one woman: "so that they are no longer two, but one". On abortion God's word is given in the Fifth Commandment: "You shall not kill."

As practising Catholics we stand in church to individually and collectively affirm our belief in the Gospel (God's Word) – and stand again at The Creed, affirming belief in the teaching of "the Holy Catholic Church".

Jesus taught an unconditional love for truth. "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'." Without being hypocritical can I publicly pass myself off as a practising Catholic, while also regarding myself as 'progressive' Catholic, who sometimes secretly votes against God's word and the teachings of his Church?

*Yours etc.,
Brian Rooney,
Downpatrick, Co. Down.*

Who is really listening?

Dear Editor, Your lengthy interview with Green Bay's Bishop David Ricken (IC 28/09/17) invites a question: the recently-approved National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help at Champion, Wisconsin, is just one of many Church-approved shrines, so why do pilgrims flock to Medjugorje, which lacks Church approval? Don't we have a duty to listen to our Church?

*Yours etc.,
Geraldine Kelly,
Drogheda, Co. Louth.*

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



BANGLADESH: Rohingya refugees from Myanmar wait to receive aid at a camp in Cox's Bazar. Immigrants and refugees need to be respected and assisted, not treated like an enemy, a panel said during a news conference at the Vatican launching the Caritas 'Share the Journey' campaign. Photos: CNS



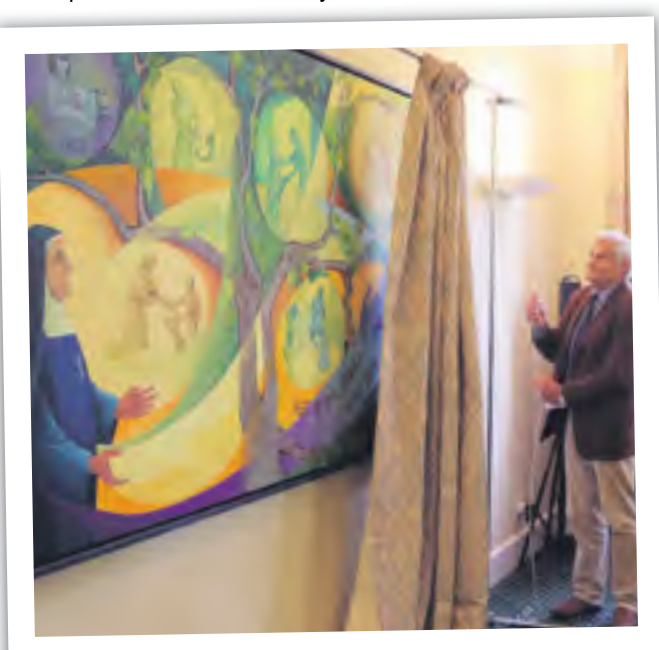
MEXICO: A man carries a statue of St Jude during a September 28 Mass outside Mexico City's St Hippolytus Church following the city's earthquake. The 28th of each month is set aside in parts of Mexico to celebrate the life of the patron saint of difficult and impossible causes.



CANADA: Bishop Lionel Gendron of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Quebec, pictured during a news conference, has been elected president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. He will serve a two-year term.



USA: Volunteers with the Archdiocese of Miami's missions office inspect the grounds at the Church of St Peter the Fisherman in Florida's Big Pine Key. Hit hard by Hurricane Irma, the church has been deemed unusable and is expected to be rebuilt.



BRITAIN: A man unveils Mother Joanna Jamieson's mural of Venerable Magdalen Taylor at the Kairos Centre in London.



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis poses with a group of dancers from Mexico during his general audience in St Peter's Square.

Healthy & unhealthy

FEAR OF GOD



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

As a theologian, priest, and preacher, I often get asked: “Why isn’t the Church preaching more fear of God anymore? Why aren’t we preaching more about the dangers of going to hell? Why aren’t we preaching more about God’s anger and hellfire?”

It’s not hard to answer that. We aren’t preaching a lot about fear because to do so, unless we are extremely careful in our message, is simply wrong. Admittedly fear can cause people to change their behavior, but so can intimidation and brain-washing. Just because something is effective doesn’t mean it is right. Fear of God may only be preached within a context of love.

“When we love someone our love will contain a number of healthy fears”

Scripture, itself, seemingly gives us a mixed message: On the one hand, it tells us that “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”, even as it tells us that virtually every time God appears in human history, the first words from God are always: “Don’t be afraid!” That phrase, coming from the mouth of God or from the mouth of God’s messenger, appears more than 300 times in scripture. The first words we will hear every time God appears in our lives are: “Don’t be afraid!” So we must be careful when

we preach fear of God. Fear of punishment is not the real message we hear when God enters our lives.

Then how is fear of God the beginning of wisdom? In our relationship with God, just as in our relationships with each other, there are both healthy and unhealthy fears. What’s a healthy fear?

Healthy fear is love’s fear: When we love someone our love will contain a number of healthy fears, a number of areas within which we will be healthily cautious and reticent: We will fear being

disrespectful, fear despoiling the gift, fear being selfish, fear being irreverent. All healthy love contains the fear of not letting the other person be fully free. Reverence, awe and respect are a form of fear. But that kind of fear is not to be confused with being frightened, intimidated, or dreading some kind of punishment.

Burning bush

Metaphorically, love’s fear is the fear that God challenges Moses with before the burning bush: take off

your shoes because the ground you are standing on is holy ground.

How are we to understand fear of God as the beginning of wisdom? We are wise and on the right path when we stand before the mystery of God (and of love) with our shoes off, namely, in reverence, in awe, in respect, in unknowing, without undue pride, humble before an infinity that dwarfs us and open to let that great mystery shape us for its own eternal purposes. But that is far different, almost the antithesis, of the fear we experience when we are frightened of someone or something that threatens us because the person or thing is perceived as being mercilessly exacting or as being arbitrary and punitive.

“A God who is to be feared for his punitive threats is a God with whom we will never find a warm intimacy”

There is too a healthy fear of God that’s felt in our fear of violating what’s good, true, and beautiful in this world. Some religions call this a fear before the ‘law of karma’. Jesus, for his part, invites us to this kind of holy fear when he warns us that the measure we measure out is the measure that will be given back to us. There’s a moral structure inherent in the universe, within life, and within each of us. Everything has a moral contour that needs to be respected. It’s healthy to be

afraid of violating any goodness, truth, or beauty.

We need to preach this kind of healthy fear rather than that God needs to be feared because of the punishment he might eventually deal out in some legalistic and exacting fashion. Whenever we preach this kind of fear, of a God who deals out hellfire, we are almost always also preaching a God who isn’t very intelligent, compassionate, understanding or forgiving.

A God who is to be feared for his punitive threats is a God with whom we will never find a warm intimacy. Threat has no place within love, except if it is a holy fear of doing something that will disrespect and despoil. To preach hellfire can be effective as a tactic to help change behavior, but it is wrong in terms of the Gospel.

Fear is a gift. It is also one of the deepest, life-preserving instincts within you. Without fear, you won’t live very long. But fear is a complex, multi-faced phenomenon. Some fears help you stay alive, while others deform and imprison you. There are things in life that you need to fear. A playground bully or the arbitrary tyrant can kill you, even if they are all wrong. Lots of things can kill you, and they merit fear.

But God is not one of those things. God is neither a playground bully nor an arbitrary tyrant. God is love and a perpetual invitation to intimacy. There is a lot to be feared in this, but nothing of which to be afraid.



Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, October 5, 2017

Project Profile
Buddy Benches
building
friendships

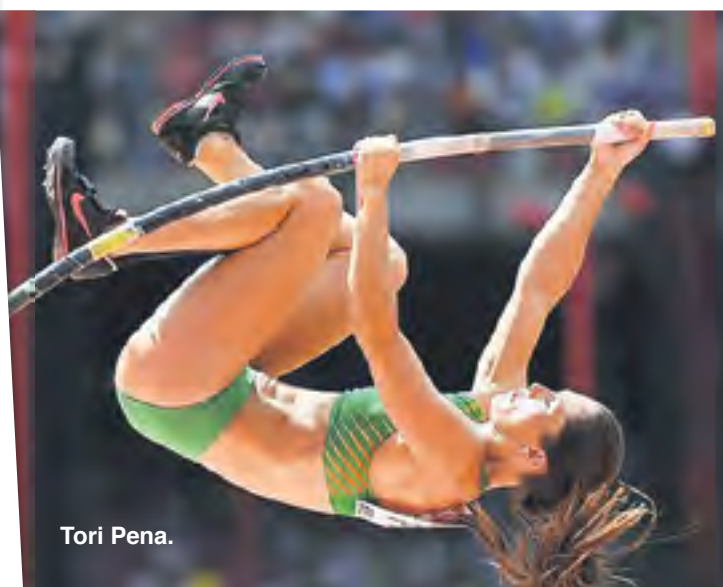
Page 30



Girl power in sport on the up



Annalise Murphy.



Tori Pena.



Sinead Aherne.



Louise Galvin.



Fiona Doyle.

Women's sport in Ireland has been shattering records in terms of audience viewing this year. The Ladies All-Ireland Football final between Dublin and Mayo had an attendance of over 46,000 in Croke Park and an average of 303,800 people tuned in to watch it on TG4 – the highest figure since the Irish language station started broadcasting ladies football finals in 2001.

Ireland's hosting of the Women's Rugby World cup this year was the best attended competition to date. It was the most viewed on television and it was also the most viewed online and most spoken about in history on social media.

This seems to point to a



While research shows a continuing high drop-out rate for girls in sport, interest in female games is increasing, writes Mags Gargan

trend of greater interest in and recognition of women's sports, but we still have a long way to go in terms of participation, with recent research commissioned by Lidl and the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) showing that by the age of 13, one in two girls will have given up sport completely.

Most girls that quit do so in secondary school, with 47% of those saying their main reason for quitting was that their friends

weren't playing.

"We would always have said that we felt that transition from primary school to secondary school and even secondary school to college are big transitional periods for females and there is a big drop-off level there," says Paula Prunty, National Development Officer with LGFA. "We piloted a programme, Gaelic for Teens, last year where we were trying to look at what we could do to keep more teenage

girls in particular involved in our sport and to look at the reasons why they were dropping out."

Research

The research found that encouragement for girls in sport was low, and parents are more likely to discourage their son from giving up sport than their daughters, which Paula says surprised her. Three in four girls agreed that male sports are taken more seriously than women's sport.

"The findings that parents were more likely to encourage their sons to stay on in sport did surprise me a bit, maybe because of my own background. I'm the only girl with three boys and my parents would have encouraged all of us to play sport," she says.

The other finding that shocked Paula was in relation to role models. When presented with a list of female celebrities and asked who they would most like to be the most popular answer was Emma Watson followed by Kendall Jenner and Saoirse Ronan in third place. Girls who played sport rated Irish sports stars Annalise Murphy and Katie Taylor higher than those that don't, but neither reached the top three.

"The fact that they went for the likes of Saoirse Ronan, and even the Kardashians are in there, shocked me. I thought some of them might have put a Katie Taylor in there," she says.

Paula thinks there needs to be more recognition of the role sport in particular plays for females.

» Continued on Page 29

Family News

AND EVENTS

Mental Health Week promotes wellbeing

Mental Health Week 2017 takes place from October 9-14. The World Health Organisation's theme for World Mental Health Day on October 10 is Mental Health in the Workplace.

This week is a great opportunity for individuals, workplaces and communities to bring awareness to and highlight mental health and wellbeing where you work, rest and play.

Mental Health Ireland, a national voluntary organisation, will be promoting The Five Ways to Wellbeing throughout Mental Health Week culminating in the 5,000 Steps to Wellbeing Walk on October 14 at 2pm in UCD's Belfield Campus in Dublin.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing are simple actions you can do in your everyday life to feel good and function well: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.

A number of other events will take place at venues across the country.

See www.mentalhealthireland.ie

TOP TIPS FOR FUSSY TODDLERS:

It is perfectly normal for toddlers to go through their 'fussy eating phase' at some stage. Mealtimes can become a bit of a nightmare for you and your toddler, with lots of tantrums and frustration. Fortunately, most toddlers grow out of their fussy eating phase and normal mealtimes are eventually restored. Here are some tips from *First 1000 Days*:

- Offer your toddler a variety of foods and tastes.
- Praise your toddler when they finish their meal or try a new food.
- Include them in food preparation and food shopping.
- Make meal times more fun using colourful plates, having a picnic, or having dinner outside.
- Eat together as a family and make mealtimes relaxed, happy occasions.
- Remove uneaten food without comment.
- Don't force-feed your toddler as they will eat according to their appetite.



Life with No Limits fundraising campaign

Enable Ireland's 'Life With No Limits' campaign runs until October 14. The public can support the charity's services for over 5,500 children and adults with disabilities by purchasing wristbands, trolley discs or balloons from Enable Ireland charity shops, TK Maxx stores and volunteer sellers nationwide.

Séan Nelson (10) is a Life with No Limits champion. He was born with Spina Bifida and is a wheelchair user. He recently completed his first triathlon. His mum, Sharon, explains: "Through his involvement in wheelchair sports, Séan has seen first-hand how that needn't be a barrier to participating fully in life. His ambition now is to represent Ireland in the Paralympics."

Funds raised through the campaign will assist the organisation to maintain and build its services, such as the new Children's Service Centre planned in Cork and the refurbishment of the Hydrotherapy Pool in Dublin.

For more call 1850 204 304 or email campaigns@enableireland.ie

Ireland could be facing a serious flu epidemic

Winter is fast approaching and the time has come once again for many of us to get the flu vaccine. In fact, it may be all the more important this season as predictions suggest we may be facing one of the most significant flu outbreaks in decades.

In Australia, rather strikingly there has been a more than a doubling of new cases of influenza in the past two months (over their winter period) when compared to last year. This has also been matched by a doubling of cases requiring hospitalisation and also reports of deaths in younger people including an eight-year-old girl and a 30-year-old man.

The virulent strain (H3N2) appears to be responsible for most of the severe cases and has put considerable pressure on Australia's health service, raising concerns that a similar trend may follow suit in Ireland.

So who should get the flu vaccine? In the US, annual vaccination is recommended for everyone aged six months or older. In Ireland, UK and other countries a more targeted approach is taken focusing on high risk groups.

"This year's vaccine is estimated to be about 60% effective in preventing the flu"

The HSE recommends vaccination for everyone aged over 65 and in those with chronic heart or lung conditions such as heart failure, bronchitis or asthma. In addition, you should also get the flu jab if you have diabetes, are pregnant, have chronic liver or kidney disease or a weakened immune system.

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



It's also crucially important that healthcare workers and those in regular contact with older adults who are more vulnerable to complications get vaccinated.

The vaccine should ideally be administered by the end of October before the flu season begins and takes about two weeks to provide immune protection.

This year's vaccine is estimated to be about 60% effective in preventing the flu

milder and help prevent flu related complications. As the vaccine contains inactivated or killed virus particles, it can't actually cause the flu. However, about 1-2% can develop a fever and mild soreness or swelling at injection site may occur.

"The virus significantly increases the risk of secondary bacterial infections such as pneumonia"

Influenza is highly contagious and is spread by dispersion of virus particles from coughing and sneezing. Indeed, the virus can be shed from as early as two days prior to developing symptoms and for up to five days after. Simple strategies like avoiding people who are ill (where possible) and washing your hands regularly will reduce your chance of contracting

high fever, chills, muscle pains, lethargy and headaches.

The virus significantly increases the risk of secondary bacterial infections such as pneumonia, which in at risk groups is the main complication. It can also rarely cause infections elsewhere such as meningitis.

If you are unfortunate enough to get the flu this winter make sure to keep warm and adequately hydrated.

Taking regular paracetamol and ibuprofen as needed will help with fever and pain. The anti-viral 'tamiflu' can be considered within the first 48 hours particularly if you have severe illness, as it may reduce the risk of complications

'At risk' groups

So make sure to get your flu vaccine if you are in any of the mentioned 'at risk' groups. For those aged over 65 and at risk, the vaccine is provided free of charge by the HSE to both GP practices and pharmacies where you can also get vaccinated. Do bear in mind, however that an administration charge may apply if you don't have a medical or GP visit card.

Finally, if you are over 65, it's also important to make sure you've got the pneumonia vaccine at some point. This provides immunity against one of the most virulent causes of pneumonia due to the pneumococcal bacteria and in most people only needs to be given once in your lifetime. Booster doses in some may be required after five years so you should check with your GP.

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



and is based (as predicted by the WHO) on the three virus strains most likely to cause infection. Importantly, even when infecting viruses are not exactly matched with the vaccine, some degree of 'cross protection' may be provided which may make the illness

milder. Covering your mouth or nose when coughing or sneezing (with your elbow) will also help to prevent its spread.

While the common cold is a milder illness resulting in a sore throat and blocked nose as the main symptoms, the flu is much more debilitating giving rise to a

» Continued from Page 27



Team captains pictured at the launch of the Womens Rugby World Cup 2017 which was held in Ireland.

"It is a massive thing for a young girl and has an impact when she is older," she says, adding girls need to know that there are opportunities for them in sport, "which is what we are concentrating on in the LGFA, to open as many doors as possible".

Claire Rowley played ladies senior football for Leitrim from the age of 13 until she received an injury two years ago. She stills plays with her local club, Fenagh Ladies, which she says is just as competitive.

"I was interested in football from a young age and I was around seven when I started playing with my club," she says. "In terms of sports for girls in my club Gaelic football was the only option. My family were also quite fond of it and my dad played football as well."

In terms of life skills, Claire says she has reaped huge benefits from learning social skills, how to work in a team and the importance of determination, drive and a willingness to learn.

The Lidl/LGFA study also revealed that playing team sports helps women build a strong set of life skills, like better mental wellbeing, dealing with pressure and self-confidence. Girls who play sport say they are much happier, more supported and less lonely and depressed, with 68% saying they feel happy daily.

“It is easy to get girls to start playing sports when they are young, but the drop-out rate becomes significant as girls reach puberty”

This also carries into later life, as women who play sport rate their body confidence, mental wellbeing and ability to cope with life's pressures as much higher than those that don't play sport.

Claire says in her experience it is easy to get girls to start playing sports when they are young, but the drop-out rate becomes significant as girls reach puberty. "I can see that with my little sister, everyone her age was playing and then they started dropping off," she says.

Claire feels the onus is on the grassroots, the clubs, to retain players rather than leaving it to the

larger organisations.

FAI Aviva Soccer Sisters has been one of the driving forces behind the increase in numbers in participation of grassroots soccer in girls over the past number of years.

This is an FAI Programme created under the 'Introduction to Football' banner, with the aim of increasing the number of girls playing soccer and utilising facilities countrywide. It is also designed to attract new volunteers into soccer, i.e. parents and guardians who it is then hoped may get involved in the game in some capacity.

Played at venues countrywide girls can learn to play soccer in a fun, friendly and safe environment. The children are introduced to basic movement and soccer skills. They will learn the disciplines and fundamental rules of the game and will also be encouraged to forge new friendships and develop interpersonal skills.

“Women aged between 16-19 years continue to be the most likely to take part among women”

As girls' soccer continues to grow each year, more and more clubs have developed new teams as a result of being involved in the Aviva Soccer Sisters Programme (soccersisters@fai.ie)

Sport Ireland developed a 'Women in Sport Initiative' in 2005 on foot of research by the ESRI showing a significant gender difference in active and social participation in sport in Ireland.

According to the latest results from the Irish Sports Monitor, since

2011 participation in sport among females has increased by 2.5%. There has been an increase in participation by females aged 25-34 years since 2013. Women aged between 16-19 years continue to be the most likely to take part among women, increasing by nearly 8% since 2011.

The gender gap with regards to volunteering has narrowed from 4% in 2013 to 1.7% in 2015. The gender gap with regards to club membership has narrowed from 18.5% in 2013 to 11.7% in 2015.

“Mothers are more likely to say that they participate in more sport since having children”

Mothers are more likely to say that they participate in more sport since having children, and females aged 35 to 44 are now more likely to volunteer for sport than males of the same age.

Paula Prunty agrees that the situation is improving, citing that this year was the first time since she began working with the GAA in 2003 that the upper tier in Croke Park was opened for the ladies' football final.

"I definitely do think there is more work being done looking at women in sport and how can we drive it, but I think nearly every sport has now gotten behind their own and started doing their own promotional work as well, and it has definitely driven on women in sport," she says.

"Don't get me wrong, we have a lot of work to do but at the same time it is definitely much better now than from where it has come."



Katie Taylor.

Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



I went to the gym this morning. Actually, I went twice, not because I am wildly enthusiastic about it but because I forgot my pass key first time and couldn't get in.

On the way home to pick it up the temptation not to bother, to curl up on the couch with a cup of coffee for half an hour was huge. I resisted – with a struggle – and headed back to the gym. Why? I knew I needed to go. I want to look after myself and the gym is an important part of that. Often however, it is the last place I want to be and I can find plenty of reasons – I'm tired, I'm busy, I need to go somewhere else – to avoid it.

I know also that when I do go I come out feeling better. I have more energy. I have worked out any frustrations on the punch bag! The natural endorphins which the body produces during exercise give me a buzz and I come away glad that I have made the effort.

So, there is the combination of a certain amount of discipline and the knowledge that it is worth it.

I was the speaker recently at a conference in Ballymena which Nuala O'Loan and members of the All Saints Parish organised. Our theme was Faith in the Family and one of the issues which I was asked to address was how we can keep our teenagers and young adults engaged in faith and Church.

I certainly don't have any magic answers for that. It does seem important to me however, that we explore what it is we want for our young people. I am not convinced that simply insisting on them going to Mass is going to work.

Comment

I was very struck by the comment of one woman who said that she was grateful for the rebellion of her teenagers because it has made her question why she does what she does. I think it takes a lot of courage to open up that conversation. It is easier to simply say 'You have to go because I say so.' This woman's teenagers were clearly asking, 'Why?'

When I was preparing for

the conference I decided to get some ideas and opinions from two of our own. I waited until I had put their dinner in front of them at the table – knowing that I then had a captive audience at least until they had finished their dinner!

I wanted to know what was it that kept them involved in their faith and in the Church. I didn't get much out of them then other than the need for good liturgy, decent music and most importantly for faith to be something that clearly matters at home.



Interestingly my daughter came back to the conversation a few days later in the car (some of our best conversations happen on journeys). She wanted to know how I would feel if I missed Mass.

“I told her, I know that it is part of who I am, that I am the better for being at Mass”

Thinking about it I told her that if it was for a reason that I had no control over then I wouldn't feel guilty but I would feel lonely, that I was missing out on something I value. I admitted that there are occasionally times when I am at Mass more out of a sense that I should be there rather than really wanting to be. At a deeper level though, I told her, I know that it is part of who I am, that I am the better for being there, that it is a vital part of how I look after myself.

We all need self-discipline in life but religious practice is not about blindly following rules. It is about living out a relationship in faith that matters to us. When others question us, rather than becoming defensive we could take it as an opportunity to think more deeply about why we do what we do.

Buddy Benches building friendships

Project Profile



Colm Fitzpatrick examines a project aimed at improving children's mental health

Although schools are all too often associated with academic and sporting achievement, a new school-based Irish initiative is beginning to place mental wellbeing and health on the radar.

Buddy Bench Ireland is a child-led positive mental health programme in a schooling environment that promotes emotional resilience and mental wellbeing, through supporting the core competencies of empathy, creativity, self-awareness and communication. As part of the programme a colourful Buddy Bench is placed in the schoolyard as a visual tool and as a safe space, where children are encouraged to de-stress, speak openly about how their feeling and make new friends.

Buddy Bench Ireland reflects other international models such as the first American Buddy Bench which was created after a boy named Christian saw a special bench in Germany that children would sit on to indicate that they wanted someone to play with, so that their peers would invite them to play. Christian realised that this would be a great solution to alleviate the isolation among classmates in his own school, and so Roundtown Elementary in Pennsylvania implemented the Buddy Bench in 2013, which is now a successful global movement.

The Irish version was founded by Sam Synott and Judith Ashton, who realised that



Five happy schoolchildren share the Buddy Bench in Castletown and, below, the Buddy Bench in Churchill.



early intervention into mental wellbeing was vital to preventing childhood issues from spiralling out of control. Together, they were convinced that the mental health of Ireland's population could be vastly improved if children were taught how to talk about their emotions at a very young age.

Pertinent

This was particularly pertinent for Sam who discovered the full extent and impact of the issues children face after her marriage broke down when her daughter was just six years old. With the help of Barnardos, Sam's daughter was enrolled in a 12-week programme, where she learned how to cope with her parents' split, and how to

communicate effectively with her mother, friends and those around her.

Speaking about the effect of the split on her daughter, Sam says "I couldn't communicate with her and she couldn't communicate with me. Why does a child need to go through a loss to gain these coping skills?"

This personal situation was an impetus for Sam, with Judith, to introduce the Buddy Bench programme into Irish schools.

The multiple award winning organisation has devised programmes for schools which promote emotional resilience and introduces children and young people to a shared vocabulary for expressing emotions, through

visual tools, learning and role play.

It aims to help children to cope with ordinary everyday problems that are sometimes overlooked in the adult world such as homework stress, as well as issues which cannot be controlled like natural disasters.

“We listen to the child and we listen to their needs”

“Our children embrace the programme,” Sam explains, “we can't solve the problems, we can help, we can plant the seed in the child. But we have to reach behind the child to the parents. Parents usually push for schools to get the programme. Parents are the driving force.”

“One of the most positive pieces of feedback we've received is that because we're new faces, and new voices, children pay much more attention to us.”

Research has shown that anxiety is the most common form of psychological disorder, affecting up to 20% of children and teenagers. If left unattended, anxiety significantly interferes with a child's development and

can cause detrimental problems in later life, such as social isolation, underachievement, depression and even suicide.

The Buddy Bench Aware Programme offers four age-appropriate programmes to combat these mental health problems, which include workshops and workbooks that the children can engage with.

The programme itself is making a huge impact on children's wellbeing and the team is always redevising new ways to better the model.

“We listen to the child,” Sam says, “and we listen to their needs. We go back to the drawing board constantly.”

Sam explains that one of her aims was to change the “culture” in schools, so that the environment was one of empathy and friendship, which is now becoming a reality in many schools throughout Ireland.

To date Buddy Bench Ireland has delivered their programme to over 100 schools and reached around 22,000 children, and it is extending the programmes daily both to the North and South of Ireland.

Although the programme is changing lives, Sam believes that Buddy Bench Ireland is not quite a “success” yet because plenty more children still need to be exposed to initiatives that cater to their mental health.

“There are five million children that we need to reach out to and we've only reached 22,000,” she says.

Buddy Bench Ireland will continue to improve the mental wellbeing of children with their aim being to deliver the Buddy Bench Aware programmes to 2,020 schools by the year 2020. Until then, their motto will be passionately expressed until ears all across Ireland have heard it: “Look Up, Look Around and Look Out for Each Other.”

i For more information on Buddy Bench Ireland, visit: <http://www.buddybench.ie/>



Children's Corner

Erin Fox

Time to get making spooky Halloween decorations

October is here which means that Halloween is coming and it's time to dig out your stack of black card to get making spooky decorations. Everyone has their own favourite Halloween symbol; whether it's a pumpkin, a bat, a black cat, or a wicked witch with vibrant green skin.

These teeny tiny witch cones are quick and easy to make and are a wicked decoration for a Halloween party. Place them on surfaces with their legs sticking out, or hang them in mid-air to let their legs dangle down.

You can make the witches' stripy legs in different colours such as red and white, purple and orange, or purple and green.

You will need: black card, green paper, orange paper, scissors and PVA glue.

Start by cutting out all the pieces you need to make the witch before you assemble her.



For the body: Using a compass, draw a circle on the black card measuring 20cm in diameter.

With a ruler, draw two intersecting lines across the circle to divide it into quarters.

Cut out the circle and then cut into quarters.

For the hat brim: Use the compass again to draw a smaller circle measuring 4cm in diameter, and cut out the circle

For the face and hands:

Draw a face and hands onto the green paper (or leave it blank for a creepier effect) and cut these out. Colour in the features on the face with some pencils or felt tip pens.

For the arms: Use the hands as a guide when drawing the arms. Draw them onto the black card and cut out.

For the hair: With the orange or purple card, cut out a wavy shape.

For the legs and feet: Draw a leg with a shoe onto the black card. Cut this out and then repeat so you have two. Cut little strips of the orange paper and stick these onto the legs to create the stripy tights.

To assemble the witch: Take one of the quarters and brush the edges with some PVA glue and roll the quarter into a cone. Pinch where the edges meet to secure them in place. Leave to dry.

Next stick the face on about halfway down the cone. Turn the witch around and glue the hair onto the back.

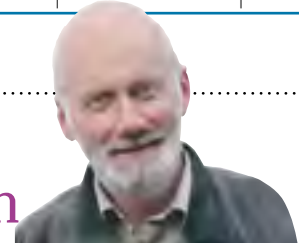
Glue the hands to the arms and then attach these to either side of the cone.

Cut a hole in the centre of the hat brim and then pull this down over the tip of the cone to create the hat.

Attach the legs inside the cone with some glue and lay them flat on the surface in front of the witch. Make two more if you like, for a full coven.

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Hope and reassurance of new RTÉ show

It's quite a while since I saw a documentary as moving and impressive as **Ministry of Hope**, RTÉ's new series on the work of lay chaplains.

The programme concentrated on Margaret Sleator in the Mater Hospital, Catherine Black in Shelton Abbey open prison and Philip McKinley, Church of Ireland chaplain at DCU. Margaret Slater's work was catering to people of all faiths and none, offering reassurance, hope, silence and prayer on request.

There were plenty of prayers from the family of Margaret O'Keefe, a young mother in a coma – these scenes were the most touching and emotional. Her husband Sean and son Jack were regularly at her bedside, and their faith remained strong even at the most difficult of times.

At DCU, Philip McKinley worked at the new Interfaith Centre, but mostly with students of minority faiths. He found that Irish students from traditional faith backgrounds weren't getting involved as much though the previews of the second episode suggested this was about to change.

The son of a Protestant minister, he felt it was ironic that he had eventually become a chaplain, as he would have thought at 18 years of age that this was not an attractive career path. Significantly he found a need



A scene from RTÉ's *Ministry of Hope*.

to get away from it all once a month to visit his spiritual advisor, Fr John Byrne at Orlagh Retreat Centre.

Catherine Black was proud to be a Catholic chaplain but worked with many prisoners who had no involvement in religion.

Practical help

Much of her work was being of practical help. Very much in favour of prisoners getting a second chance, she was also conscious of the sufferings of victims. She stressed that being a good listener was an essential part of the work and

we saw her putting that into practice.

Also it was wonderful to see the prisoners training 'buddy dogs' to work with children who had disabilities. Kudos to all who worked on the programme.

The Leap of Faith (RTÉ Radio 1), with Michael Comyn, made a welcome return without any fanfare last Friday night, with an in-depth discussion on whether religion causes war and conflicts.

Actually, at the start the focus was on people being persecuted because of their

religious identity – e.g. the Rohingya fleeing from Myanmar. Barbara Walsh of the Glencree Centre for Reconciliation warned against scapegoating and urged us to look at underlying issues when there were seemingly religious conflicts. Jude Lal Fernando of the Irish School of Ecumenics wanted to avoid generalising and favoured dialogue as did Walsh, so we could see the humanity in 'the other'. Colm O'Gorman of Amnesty thought it was a tragedy when religion takes us away from humanity rather than towards it, but all agreed in the end that religion had the potential to act as a unifying force.

O'Gorman referred to "the dressing up of an act that is the violent killing of another human being which is obviously worrying on lots and lots of levels".

He criticised how "we have to 'other' the person against

whom we are going to offend in some way, so we need to make them 'not of us'". Spot on, but then I thought isn't that exactly what he does when promoting easier access to abortion?

That issue surfaced in really worrying ways last week, especially in reports of pro-choice bullying leading to Dublin hotels cancelling pro-life meetings – including a meeting that would give voice to a group of women affected by rape – ironically in an initiative called 'Ending the Silence'.

Controversy

Tellingly, unlike the related Hook controversy, media coverage was low key. Last Friday the women in question were interviewed on the **Pat Kenny Show** (Newstalk) and they were hugely impressive – moderate, articulate and convincing. Kenny gave them a courteous interview but did press them on their attitude to women who had made a different choice, a question they handled very well.

However there was no mention of the hotel cancellations, effectively attempts to silence them.

On that evening's **Last Word** (Today FM) a false equivalence was created between these high profile cancellations of major public meetings and a few local Repeal the Eighth meetings being cancelled by local com-



Matt Cooper

PICK OF THE WEEK

PAGANS AND PILGRIMS: BRITAIN'S HOLIEST PLACES

BBC 4, Tuesday, October 10, 7.30 pm

Uncovering the stories and rich history behind many Britain's most sacred places.

QUEEN OF HEAVEN

EWTN Wednesday, October 11, 9 pm

How Mary revived the Faith in France by appearing before a peasant girl named Bernadette in Lourdes in 1858.

MINISTRY OF HOPE

RTÉ 1 Thursday, October 12, 10.15 pm

Last episode of this series about the work of lay chaplains.

munity halls.

Presenter Matt Cooper seemed concerned that free speech was being stifled on both sides. He said that a Life Institute spokesperson was due on but wasn't answering the phone. Hmm...couldn't they have got someone else, for balance?

boregan@hotmail.com



Aubrey Malone

Film

Reigniting the embers of an ancient tryst

Return to Montauk (PG)

Max (Stellan Skarsgard) is a writer from Berlin. He's doing a promotional book tour in New York. Seventeen years ago he had a brief romance with Rebecca (Nina Hoss). Neither of them realised how much they cared about each other at the time.

He meets her again now. You don't have to be Einstein to figure out where this is going. They'll be thrown together to see if *l'amour* is still in the air.

It's set in New York but it has 'European film' written all over it. Think *'nouvelle vague'*. Never trust anything



Stellan Skarsgard and Nina Hoss star in *Return to Montauk*.

with *'nouvelle'* in it, including *'nouvelle cuisine'*. You never get as much as you want.

I normally tend to praise continental films for their nuanced approach to emotional entanglements. Not here. Hollywood would have

handled it better. It's well written (by our own Colm Toibin) and capably directed by Volker Schlöndorff but for a lot of the time it's curiously lacking in atmosphere. That's a cardinal sin in something like this, which is all about that.

Max and Becky go through their various agonies of yearning for 106 minutes. I kept thinking of Humphrey Bogart saying to Ingrid Bergman in *Casablanca*: "We'll always have Paris." It was a corny film but nobody could deny its magic.

Claude Lelouch's *A Man and a Woman* reprised some of that magic with the help of a moody soundtrack and a beach. There were also slashing windshield wipers and foggy windowpanes and Jean-Louis Trintignant telling Anouk Aimée he loved her about 500 times. You wanted him to tell her 500 more times. You were crying your eyes out. You had to restrain yourself from running home

to get your Kleenex.

In *Return to Montauk* we get the moody soundtrack and the beach but no slashing windshield wipers. They tell one another they used to be 'world champions at happiness' but they look more like they've just come through two particularly painful gall bladder operations.

Inscrutable

Skarsgard is too inscrutable. He manages the occasional elegiac tone but not enough to convince us he's still carrying a torch for his lady love. Hoss looks like she doesn't know how she feels. I was reminded of those Scandinavian films I used to watch in the IFT in the old days where everyone

contemplated the meaning of life for two hours and then went fishing.

Maybe some day a less capable director than Schlöndorff will re-make this promising story and pull out all the stops. I'm talking violin music, poignant stares and, yes, lots and lots of foggy windowpanes. (This time I won't forget the Kleenex.)

Make no mistake – *Return to Montauk* is still an impressive film. It's just that it takes too long to get to the point. And when it gets to it you wonder what it is.

You leave the cinema feeling you've eaten a bowl of caviar when all you really wanted was some bangers and mash.

Good
★★★★

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Shaking hands with the dead

Grave Matters: Death and Dying in Dublin from 1500 to the Present
ed. by Lisa Marie Griffith and Ciarán Wallace
(Four Courts Press, €24.95)

Peter Costello

One of the stranger experiences of my childhood was a visit to the vaults of old St Michan's [pictured] where it was then possible not only to see the coffins of the patriot Sheares brothers, but also to shake hands with the mummies of a supposed crusader and a nun.

This is no longer done and in any case the bodies were not quite as advertised, being rather more modern than medieval.

In fact they fell into the period of modern Dublin covered by this most interesting book. Death is an event where pain, joy, pride, unsettling hopes for the future, and regret for the past all come together.

Experience

It is the common experience of mankind, but every culture, indeed every Christian culture has their own way of dealing with it.

This is true of Ireland, and as this book reveals, especially true of Dublin, which has always had its own ways (however much they may be overlaid with rural customs and modern American ways of doing things imported, like so much in our society, from the US).

It consists of some

14 papers given at a conference in Glasnevin back in 2014. One of the papers deal with post-mortem memorial photography - though



not quite as graphically as that remarkable book *Wisconsin Death Trip* (1974) by Michael Lesy - which laid bare the urgency to preserve something of the living in a permanent way, when mere faith seems not to answer.

Theme

But the theme of any book such as this must be the conflict between our hopes and fears, between the inevitability of change, decay, and death, and the striving for permanence, summed up in Shelly's 'Ozymandius'.

This book touches on many themes of life and history in Dublin and can be highly recommended to all readers, grim and haunting though the topics covered are.

A different kind of Irish politician

Life is a Funny Business: A Very Personal Story
by Alan Shatter
(Poolbeg, €16.99)

Peter Hegarty

In a candid affecting book Alan Shatter takes us into the "deep recesses of my mind". The deepest, darkest recess holds the memory of the cold December afternoon in 1965 when he returned home to find his mother Elaine dead on the kitchen floor, beside an open oven in a room full of gas, her head resting on a pillow.

He grew up in the close Jewish community living around its heartland of Clanbrassil Street in south-central Dublin. Jews were and are a tiny minority - they numbered around 3,300 when Shatter was growing up - and regularly encountered hostility. "Sure he only killed Jews" said the man beside young Alan on the bus, reading an article on the trial of Adolf Eichmann.

Such talk baffled the "dirty Jew" - as a neighbour once called him - and whetted his curiosity about the world around him.

From an early age he was clear about the ills besetting the country. One of these was outdated legislation. Another was the "suffocating" influence of the Catholic Church. He regarded the GAA, for its part, as the sporting wing of the Catholic Church,



and thought its antipathy to his beloved soccer plain "daft".

As a young lawyer he campaigned energetically for an overhaul of family law in the 1970s. One of the necessary and overdue reforms he fought for ended the days when husbands could legally dispose of property without consulting their wives.

Shatter's energy and industry quickly won over the doubters"

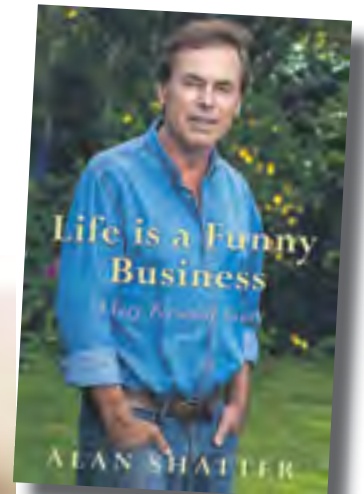
The young legal activist was looking for a political home by the late 1970s. He concedes that Fine Gael was a strange place for a Jew to find himself. His co-religionists tended to keep their distance

from the party that had added to the gaiety of Irish life by spawning the pseudo-fascist Blueshirts in the 1930s, and numbered among its ranks Oliver Flanagan TD, who had warned the Dáil in 1943 of the need to 'rout' the Jews from Ireland.

(To many "national-minded folk" if the Masons and such were "secret societies" dominating big business, the Jewish community were "aliens" to whom the poor were indebted.)

Jews had always found Fianna Fáil more congenial, and were grateful to Dev for the reference to 'Jewish Congregations' in his 1937 constitution.

But despite its history, Fine Gael now looked quite attractive. Garrett Fitzgerald's progressive rhetoric



impressed him while the loathing he felt for Charles Haughey would probably have caused him to rebuff any approach from Fianna Fáil.

He delightedly recalls writing his first best-seller *Family Planning Irish Style*, a satirical send-up of CJH's confused and confusing legislation regarding the importation and possession of condoms.

Authority

The book established Shatter's ascendant as a national authority on the importation and use of barrier contraceptives. On the *Late Late Show* Gaybo and he sagely discussed condoms over a table strewn with the devices.

He wasn't to everyone's taste in Fine Gael - there were mutterings within the party regarding the infliction on it of the "Jew abortionist" - but his energy and industry quickly won over the doubters.

By concluding the book with his successful outing in the 1981 election he cleverly leaves his readers hanging on, in eager anticipation of the next volume.

A Ulster Protestant Republican

The Belfast Jacobin: Samuel Neilson and the United Irishmen

by Kenneth L. Dawson
(Irish Academic Press, €22.99)

Ian d'Alton

This biography of one of the lesser-known founding members of the Society of United Irishmen is engaging, readable and impressively researched. The stories of United Irishmen like Tone, Drennan and Lord Edward Fitzgerald are well-known - but they were, in many respects, the tip of a very substantial iceberg indeed.

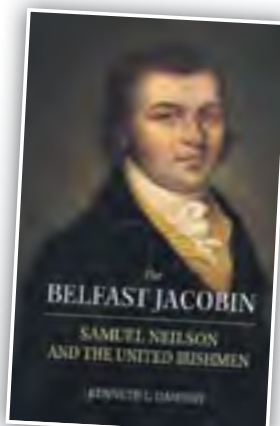
Samuel Neilson (1762-1803) was part of that iceberg, a son of the manse, one of 13 children born to Presbyterian minister Rev. Alexander Neilson. He moved from near Rathfriland, Co. Down

to Belfast as an apprentice in his older brother's woollen business.

The author paints a short but illuminating picture of the town at the end of the 18th Century, pointing up its radical credentials as a "product...of its free-thinking, democratic Presbyterian tradition".

Sympathy

Significantly, Dawson associates this with the fact that there were very few Catholics in Belfast at this time, "allowing the town's dissenting majority to express



sympathy for the plight of Catholics without feeling threatened in any numerical sense".

While it was easy to be non-sectarian when there were few to be sectarian against, there was evidence that moderates amongst the liberals were already wary of Tone's aggressive pro-Catholic stance, preferring gradualism.

Samuel was at the first meeting of the Society of United Irishmen in 1791, along with Wolfe Tone and Thomas Russell. He was one of the movers in a newspaper to rival the *Belfast Newsletter* - the *Northern Star*, which commenced publication in January 1792, and which he edited.

In the years to 1797, when the

paper's presses were destroyed by elements of the loyalist Monaghan Militia, Neilson's editorials became more radical and republican, using France as focus. Arrested in late 1796, he remained in custody for 17 months. His health and finances were under severe strain in this period.

Dawson's account ably demonstrates the complexity of these revolutionaries' lives"

After his release, living with a friend in Dublin, he continued to be involved in preparations for a rebellion; but his reputation suffered when it was alleged that, drunk, he had left a door ajar that enabled the Castle authorities to

storm the safe house in which Lord Edward Fitzgerald was staying, and in which fracas he was mortally wounded.

In June 1798, Neilson was again arrested and arraigned for high treason. After a protracted quadrille with the authorities, he - with other detainees - were sentenced to banishment. He chose the United States, which seemed to offer the prospects of being congenial.

After a final visit to Ireland, he set sail in October 1802, but did not survive long - he died at Poughkeepsie, New York, in April 1803, and was buried there. Dawson's account ably demonstrates the complexity of these revolutionaries' lives, in an environment in which higher motivations and beliefs were sometimes difficult to disentangle from the everyday journeys of life.

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.



Rorke's Drift.

The 'scum of the earth' stand fast for the Empire

A Bloody Night: The Irish at Rorke's Drift by Dan Harvey (Merrion Press, €14.99)
A Bloody Day: The Irish at Waterloo by Dan Harvey (Merrion Press, €14.99)

J. Anthony Gaughan

These are interesting accounts by the same author of two very different battles, but which had one thing in common – the participation of Irish soldiers.

Rorke's Drift is located on the border between Natal and Zululand in South Africa – 'drift' is the Boer word for a ford. Here in 1849 two buildings were erected by Irishman Jim Rorke, a hunter, trader and farmer.

Later on the buildings were used by Otto Witt, a Swedish missionary. When the British army invaded Zululand in 1879 they established Rorke's Drift as a forward operational base with stores of food, military supplies and a small garrison to protect it.

Soon after the British army entered Zulu territory it was surrounded by a huge army of Zulu warriors and suffered a catastrophic defeat at Isandlwana with the loss of 1,300 officers and men. Elated by their victory the Zulus next set about wiping out the garrison at nearby Rorke's Drift.

Carnage

The garrison, realising that their only chance of surviving was to successfully defend the base, fortified a small square, which incorporated the two buildings in the area. During a night of carnage, with superior firepower – rifles against assegais and animal-hide shields – and exceptional courage they managed to fend off tens of thousands

of Zulu warriors. It was the stuff of Thermopylae and became a legend in the British army. The defenders were subsequently the recipients of VC's and other medals for bravery. It became in time a celebrated film by Cy Enderfield, much repeated on TV, and became the centre of a mini tourist business in its own right, which celebrated both the British soldiers and the Zulu warriors.

Dan Harvey lists and in some cases profiles the Irish-born, those born of Irish parents in Britain and those with Irish names and connections who distinguished themselves at Rorke's Drift. He notes that all the eye-witness accounts and the official report singled out James Langley Dalton, who was born in London to Irish parents, as having played the key-role in ensuring a successful outcome to the 'bloody night'.

“Harvey profiles a number of the Irish who fought in the battle of Waterloo”

The village of Waterloo in Belgium is famous as the site of one of the most significant battles in European, if not world history. Here on 18 June 1815 on one side was the Grand Army of Napoleon, on the other the armies of Britain, Belgium, Holland and Prussia under the command of the Duke of Wellington. The British army comprised one third of the allied army and 40% of its soldiers were Irish.

The battle was a long day of appalling savagery and butchery. Harvey provides a blow for blow account of it as it swayed to and fro. His

account is not for the faint-hearted.

Austrian, British, French, German and Russian historians all have their own take on the battle.

But two facts are clear. Wellington won the day because of his defensive talents and tactics, his troops' tenacity, Field Marshal Gebhard von Blücher's arrival with his Prussian forces and indeed some of Napoleon's own tactical mistakes. The battle brought a definite conclusion to the struggle against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France.

“The garrison managed to fend off tens of thousands of Zulu warriors”

Harvey profiles a number of the Irish who fought in the battle of Waterloo. Among those was Maurice Shea from Co. Kerry. He was credited as being the last serving British veteran of the battle of Waterloo, dying in March 1892 at the age of 97.

Then there was the Duke of Wellington who, allegedly when reminded that he was Irish because of his birth, replied that one could be born in a stable and not be a horse. The author urges his compatriots to take pride in the Irish involvement at Waterloo.

However, it should be remembered that the main reason for the large numbers of Irish in the British army in the 18th Century (Wellington called them “the scum of the earth”) was the same as that for the disproportionate number of Afro-Americans who have fought and died in the US army's foreign wars during the last 70 years: an escape from poverty and social exclusion.

WebWatch

Correcting the correctors, not for the first time

The pseudo-traditionalist website rorate-caeli.blogspot.com has become perhaps stranger than ever in the aftermath of the much-ballyhooed 'filial correction' of Pope Francis.

It's getting attention, as Roberto de Mattei says on the site, though it's hard to justify his claim that it's had an “extraordinary impact”, even if it's been widely reported even in Russia and China, with the ever-temperate Steve Skojec of onepeterfive.com reporting that there were 100,000 visits to correctiofilialis.org within just 48 hours.

Perhaps so, but a petition in support of the correction has, at time of writing, gathered little more than 12,000 signatures. Sure, truth isn't dictated by majority vote, but a few thousand signatures backing a document signed by a few dozen fringe figures isn't quite as earthshaking as the correctors and their cheerleaders evidently believe.

Not that declarations that the Pope is wrong are unprecedented for those teetering on the edges of the Church. As Andrea Tornielli points out at lastampa.it, St John Paul was accused of no fewer than 101 heresies by one group. Indeed, in 1989, 162 theologians wrote to challenge him on one issue, with their open letter being signed by over 17,000 priests and lay people in the Netherlands and almost as many from Germany, and with 63 Italian theologians publishing a separate public letter criticising Rome for other reasons.

Over at patheos.com/blogs/markshea, Mark Shea relates how one reader, Michael Liccione, finds the so-called 'filial correction', to be “mostly a massive exercise in question-begging”.

He continues: “Thus, e.g. while it's true that unrepentant adulterers and fornicators should not receive the Eucharist, the



real question is whether every irregular marriage or cohabiting relationship constitutes unrepented adultery or fornication. The Pope thinks not, and I agree with him. But the text never addresses that question.”

Early reactions to the 'correction' focused more on the authors than the text, but as the days passed, people had time to engage with it, with Scott Eric Alt, for instance, systematically working his way at scottericalt.wordpress.com through the seven heresies the Pope is supposedly propagating. What he keeps finding is that nothing the Pope has said or done supports the allegations of the signatories, and often is utterly contrary to them.

“The Correctors do not say where, specifically, in the text, this heretical idea is to be found”

“Nowhere – nowhere – does Pope Francis say that those who have ‘full knowledge’ and ‘voluntarily choose’ to commit adultery within an irregular marriage are not in mortal sin. He Does. Not. Say. That. Search as long as you like; you won't find it,” he writes of one of the charges, for instance.

“At best,” he continues, “this notion is read into the text. At worst, it is simply made up. The Correctors do not say where, specifically, in the text, this heretical idea is to be found. “They quote a number of

passages, but they don't say which particular ones, or which particular words, are supposed to support each of the particular heresies they list.”

Omissions

At ncronline.org, Stephen Walford sweeps through the text, pointing to conspicuous and important omissions in documents the signatories cite, accusing them of not abiding by standards they've previously claimed, and noting that the charges indeed omit precise references to *Amoris Laetitia*.

“All seven are based on a fantasy, as if the signatories have collectively dreamt up some parallel text,” he says, noting the perversity of the authors having ignored or missed how the papal exhortation contains clear rejections of the heresies they cite, and demonstrating this point by point.

It is worth remembering, as is pointed out at primacyofreason.blogspot.com notes, that just two months after *Amoris Laetitia* was published Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI told Francis: “My true home is your goodness. There I feel safe. Thank you for everything. We hope that you will continue to go forward with all of us on this road of Divine Mercy, showing us the way of Jesus, toward Jesus, toward God.”

It would be nice if those who attack the Pope would listen to his predecessor, since a fair few of them claim to respect him.

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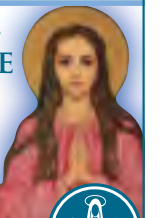
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This time I ask for a
special one. (mention here)

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.

G.C.

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to find out more visit www.mqi.ie

Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included on the guest list for the October 12th tour.



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Family & Life

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email: fandl@iol.ie

26 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1

www.familyandlife.org

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Tel: 021 - 4543988

www.msccireland.com

Trócaire is working for a just world and an end to poverty.

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If you would like further information please contact Trocaire, Maynooth, Co. Kildare



01-629 3333

info@trocaire.ie

www.trocaire.org

Crossword Junior

Gordius 202



ACROSS

- 1 Bomb blast (9)
6 Some people think this number is unlucky (8)
7 Secret agent (3)
9 Come back (6)
11 Not as difficult (6)
13 Skinny, not broad (6)
15 The hottest season (6)
19 Happy (4)
20 Big (5)
21 Don't go (4)

a river (5)

- 4 A thought (4)
5 Take part in a game (4)
8 Bit, section (5)
10 Headlines (4)
12 A problem in Maths (3)
14 Cars may drive along them (5)
16 Like Cinderella's two stepsisters (4)
17 Female horse (4)
18 Wind a fishing line on this (4)
19 Weapon you shoot (3)

DOWN

- 1 Going in (8)
2 Artist (7)
3 This animal lives in and near

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

GORDIUS No.318

Across – 1 Wad 3 Harpsichord 8 Elaine 9 Blue chip 10 Liege 11 Tunic 13 Quest 15 Back pay 16 Sleight of hand 20 Story 21 Sodom and Gomorrah 23 Widen 24 Parental guidance 25 Branch 27 Ebb

Down – 1 Wheelie bins 2 Diabetic 3 Hinge 4 Pebbles 5 Cleft 7 Dip 12 Captain Ahab 13 Quays 14 Telly 18 Cobbler 19 Adored 22 Mango 23 Worth 24 Pea

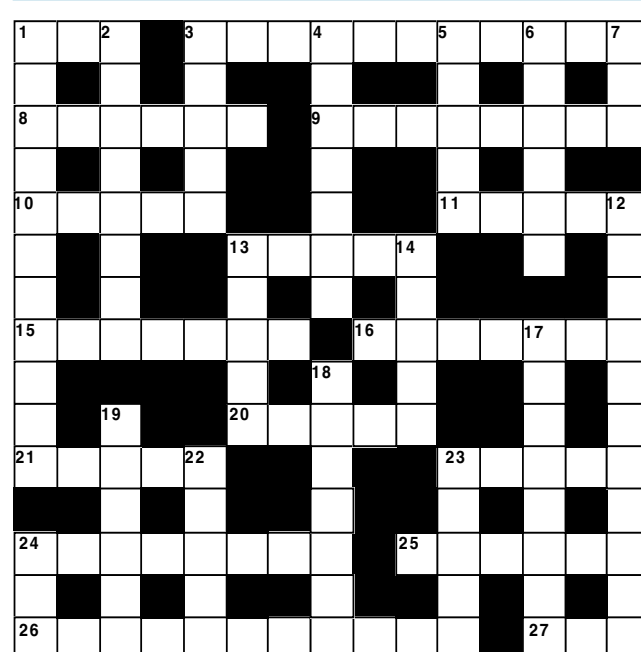
CHILDREN'S No.201

Across – 1 Caterpillar 5 Long jump 6 Oops 8 Unfair 10 Athens 11 Acid 13 Changed 15 Owls 16 Brought 17 Boy

Down – 1 Calculator 2 England 3 Lap of honour 4 Rags 7 Pence 9 Rashers 12 Igloo 14 Date

Crossword

Gordius 319



ACROSS

- 1 Large (3)
3 If plasters met with destruction, the public could find them very enlightening! (6,5)
8 Citizen in a Greek epic, found among some Metro janitors (6)
9 Pampered the firm's broken-down steed (8)
10 Perfect - exactly as imagined (5)
11 Complains intemperately; raves (5)
13 Fold put in a skirt, for example (5)
15 Parachute jump from a disreputable pilots' haunt? (7)
16 Looks like an accountant's garment is a priest's garment (7)
20 Ruse (5)
21 A trace of something bad or offensive (5)
23 Donald is always well suited for cards (5)
24 This year, perhaps, emotional outburst is in order? (8)
25 Ointment applied to help heal bruises (6)

26 Wow, no phrase can identify this large bird! (7,4)

27 Owing (3)

DOWN

- 1 Tugs in habit, somehow - and gets on swimmingly in such attire (7,4)
2 Shapely branch of Mathematics! (8)
3 Escargot (5)
4 Thrilled (7)
5 Powerful light beam used in certain types of surgery (5)
6 Mother cans morning prayer (6)
7 Unhappy (3)
12 The Bard of Avon (11)
13 Turn - on the spot - with a utensil (about four) (5)
14 Express gratitude (5)
17 Busy (8)
18 Noddy's friend might make the brie sag (3,4)
19 Farcical disaster (6)
22 Moor has neckwear aloft (3,2)
23 Italian city that is shrouded in mystery (5)
24 It's a question of method! (3)

Sudoku Corner

202

Easy



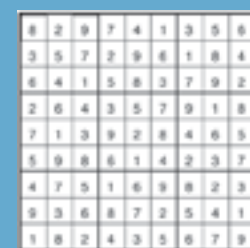
Hard



Last week's Easy 201



Last week's Hard 201



Student loans: a system that's worth embracing

I GREW UP in Co. Armagh – one of nine children: eight boys and a girl, which as anyone can imagine placed serious financial pressure on my parents growing up.

This was especially true as I come from a working-class background and grew up on a council estate marked by all the challenges you would expect from such an environment such as anti-social behaviour, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and lone-parent families.

The word 'struggle' probably best epitomises the day-to-day lives of people in an environment where, for example, some parents aren't sure how they're going to afford a school uniform for their child. These worries don't abate as the children get older and are finishing their secondary school exams in the hope of securing a place at university.

Anyone who has been to university, or has had family members who has attended college, is acutely aware that progressing to third level is expensive – the whole package of academic fees, accommodation costs and travel expenses adds up

to a hefty amount. In my case then, given my social and economic background, and for most of my peers, student loans have been not a convenience but a necessity in the attending of university. Without them, I would not be where I am today – a fourth-year theology student at Trinity College Dublin.

I receive means-tested loans from Student Finance NI, which are to be paid back in small instalments once I earn over a certain amount of money, currently £17,775 (€20,142) pre-tax per year.

These loans have alleviated countless financial burdens for both my parents and myself. This is not to evoke pity of course, but to simply affirm that without student loans, many bright people with potentially brighter futures would never get to see that future realised, through no fault of their own.

Employment

Obviously, having a job would help with the monetary situation, but if a student is travelling to a new city for the first time, the loan is needed to pay multi-layered fees before employment can be secured. Even then, working a job often is still a financially inadequate option

considering full-time employment isn't possible and minimum wage is a given.

Also, student loans don't just provide mere sustenance, but enable students to have an active and social life in the university environment.

It allows students to go beyond just paying rent on a house (an over-priced house if it's in Dublin), with cheap noodles as an affordable food source, but to explore the city they're in and be able to make and nurture new friendships.

The university does not exist just to cater to academic achievement but to form well-rounded individuals who will be

making a huge impact on the world in the future. Student loans, in part, create the opportunity for this formation to actually be possible.

All of these various points lead to one conclusion: student loans are needed for the not-so-well-off to actually attend university, enjoy university and complete university.

They create an academic environment that is not wholly exclusive to a particular elite or class, but one where meritocracy is extolled and factions between social standings are ameliorated.

As ongoing discussions about the efficacy of a student loan system in Ireland take place, I think that the Northern Irish model is a worthy conversation point, because what's at stake is not just money but a society based on justice and care.

WHY STUDY THEOLOGY...

I'm often amused by the bewilderment on people's faces when they find out that I study theology. I get shot-gunned questions such as: "Are you going to be a priest?", "What job can you get after that?" and even "What is theology?"

Although theology was once recognised to be the

queen of the sciences, it has now unfortunately been de-crowned. Despite its dwindling popularity, due in part to secular priorities, I think theology still remains one of the most informative and vital subjects one can pursue as it draws upon not only religious concepts but linguistics, history, law, philosophy as well as a multitude of

other disciplines.

With just a perfunctory glance of theology, one may not see the relevance of it today, but on closer examination it is evident that the subject runs along all the crevices of our society. Think of some contemporary global issues today: Islamic extremism, the right to life, same-sex marriage,

the refugee crisis and euthanasia. These questions at their root require theological input, without which, can lead to stagnant discussions and conclusions. So, I'm studying theology because I'm curious; curious about myself, people and the world, and how I can make a real difference within it.



PLEASE HELP NEEDY ORPHANS IN INDIA

The Salesians in Tamil Nadu, India, have asked The Little Way Association for help with a project to benefit children orphaned because of HIV/AIDS. Fr Antony Joseph SDB, provincial, writes that many of the children are child-labourers, have become socially stigmatised, and are at risk from the drug culture. He says: "These children often lack hope for the future and have low self-esteem." He wants the children to be able to "live peacefully, and receive education, care and guidance for their future employment."

The scheme involves running an orphanage for 60 street-children at Namakkal and providing support for a further 100 children living nearby with grandparents or foster-families. All the children (aged 10 to 18 and not themselves HIV/AIDS sufferers) will receive healthcare and education. Those at home will receive visits from counsellors, while those in the orphanage will need to be fed and clothed.

Please help give these children and teenagers practical help and hope for the future. Donations to our children fund will support the Salesians' work in Namakkal, and similar projects.

EVERY EURO YOU SEND WILL BE VERY GRATEFULLY RECEIVED AND SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION.



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"The Marian shrines are like the Mother's home, places for rest and refreshment on the long road which leads to Christ." – Pope John Paul II

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THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
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