Fr Paul Lawlor OP: A conversation with archaeologist & Prior of San Clemente — Pages 14-15



KEEPING THE BALANCE OF LOVE IN THE TWELVE DAYS **OF CHRISTMAS Martina Purdy** Page 4

CHURCH OPEN TO CHARGE OF ELDER CLERGY ABUSE Fr Martin Delaney Page 40

Thursday, December 26, 2024

f The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

● @IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

Ireland's success culture leaving many others 'behind as a form of roadkill' - Bishop Coll

Renata Steffens

Looking forward to the Jubilee of Hope in 2025, Bishop Niall Coll of Ossorv diocese says he thinks "It has a wonderful message that needs to be shared in the context of an Irish society which is presenting as increasingly materialistic, secular and anxious.'

Bishop Coll added: 'Many people seem to find life meaningless and have lost a sense of direction and purpose. For some this leads to addictions of one kind or another.

"Meanwhile loud voices in media, politics and culture trumpet a success culture which leaves many behind as a form of roadkill. Pope Francis sees clearly that whatever our state of life, we cannot live without three fundamental dispositions of the soul, namely, to believe, to hope and to love. He is absolutely correct," Bishop Coll said.

Bishop Coll said the Diocese of Ossory is "working to develop the Pastoral Areas around which our lives of faith and worship will cohere in the years to come." He has been the Bishop of Ossory for less than two years and

» Continued on Page 2

God rest ye Merry Gentlemen



(L/R) Students Tom O'Brien, Luke Davey, Daniel Lynam, Robert Beirne, Tom Jordan, Robert Powell and Colm Maloney of the Cistercian College Roscrea preparing for the Annual Carol Service held at Mount Saint Joseph Abbey. Photo: Brian Arthur.

WE ARE SINGULARLY FAILING TO NURTURE THE FAITH OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Breda O'Brien



JOHN MORIARTY - A TRUE INFLUENCER Mary Kenny



REVIEW OF THE YEAR IN THE MEDIA 2024

Brendan O'Regan



LOURDES PILGRIMAGES

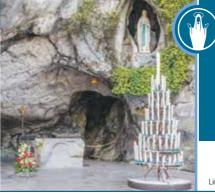
PAGE 5

Group Pilgrimages throughout 2025

DIRECT FLIGHTS TO LOURDES

FROM CORK & DUBLIN

• Return flights • All coach transfers to and from Lourdes • Hotel accommodation with breakfast, lunch & dinner • Services of guide throughout • Daily Mass & Religious program throughout • All airport & local hotle taxes





WWW.MARIAN.IE **DUBLIN - (01) 878 8159** BELFAST - (028) 956 80005







Ireland's success culture leaving many others 'behind as a form of roadkill' - Bishop Coll

» Continued from Page 1

is "keen to continue to get to know the people and places which make up the Diocese. Inviting people into a deeper commitment and service, together with the clergy, of their communities will be a top priority for me in 2025 as we work to develop a truly synodal and co-responsible model of church life," he said. "Inevitably, this will be slow and patient work, truly intergenerational work: as we know every journey begins with the first steps.'

Shared funeral ministry to develop nationally in 2025

Garry O'Sullivan & Brandon Scott

Dioceses are increasingly turning to shared funeral ministry as a consequence of priest shortages, with plans to develop the collaborative ministry at various stages of development in a number of dioceses.

The Archdiocese of Dublin is very much ahead of other dioceses in terms of funeral ministry says Patricia Carroll, Director of the Office for Mission and Ministry, speaking to *The Irish Catholic*.

"We've had funeral ministry teams for 20 years. Now we have added funeral prayer leaders who lead the burial rite and cremation prayers. In the past year Dublin has trained 100 funeral prayer leaders and these people always emerge from funeral ministry teams. In 2024 we had three rounds of training based on four modules.

"We are trying to strategically build up a mass of people who can lead funeral prayer rites. This is not replacing the priest. It is a shared ministry between priest, funeral team and funeral prayer leader. It will mean in these parishes which have trained prayer leaders the priest will still lead the main funeral liturgy in the Church."

But not everyone needs or wants a funeral Mass but for those who do, the priest will share the ministry with laity.

"Priests have always been able to pastorally offer an alternative to a Mass i.e., a service instead of a Mass, so this should be offered as many who present themselves are unchurched.

"So the model in Dublin is shared ministry, some prayers are said by laity but generally the priest presides. Other dioceses are looking at the Dublin model and some have adopted our four modules and implemented them in their dioceses."

Fr Joe Tynan is PP of Knocklong & Glenbrohane, Ballylanders in Limerick and says planning now is prudent.

"The first training programme has completed now. It's being rolled out in the pastoral areas on an ongoing basis. We are lucky that although we do have a vocations crisis in Ireland, we're not under too much pressure right now.

"What we're trying to do is take pre-emptive measures and these will be shadowed by clergy while they're still here to ensure that laypeople will not just be dropped in cold into these situations.

"Those involved have done three nights of training to outline what's involved in it. The hope is that for the foreseeable future they will come along and accompany the priests in bereavements situations and funeral liturgies and will grow into the role"

Achonry Diocese is also discussing a plan for funeral ministry teams. Unlike large cities it is believed that in smaller rural dioceses priests can cope with the number of funerals currently but planning for a future will far fewer priests is seen as unavoidable.

RE certificate is a qualification not a barrier

Brandon Scott

Two Catholic education stalwarts have called the Catholic Religious Education Certificate "necessary" and "not a barrier" after a recently published RTE article asked whether or not the certificate was a barrier to diversity in teaching while outlining the experiences of a Muslim trainee primary school teacher who did not take it as she doesn't want "to say something that is against" her own religious beliefs if assigned to teach classes about Catholicism.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Episcopal Vicar for Education for the Archdiocese of Dublin, Monsignor Dan O'Connor, emphasised that there are certain criteria that must be met to teach in Catho-

lic schools and these stipulations have never been an issue.

"The requirements are that any teacher who is hired in a permanent position in a Catholic school has to be qualified to teach religion to the children. It's a professional qualification in a Catholic school in the diocese ... it's not a barrier, it's a qualification and a requirement in a Catholic school

"There are teachers employed in this diocese who are not of the Catholic Faith but who are graduates of the training colleges and they have the diploma. There's never been an issue."

CEO of the Catholic Education Partnership Alan Hynes said that he "can't see how this is a matter of controversy", particularly when other denominational schools have employed the same policy.

"This is a necessary qualification to teach in a Catholic school," he said. "I don't see how this is a matter of controversy. Our colleagues in the Protestant schools have a similar qualification. These qualifications are open to anyone.

"The vast majority of teachers are professionals who do their jobs very, very well and

understand that it's not the role of teachers to determine the values taught to pupils, that is a role primarily for parents and they can be assisted by schools in doing so.

"This story comes up once every nine months and somebody has a run at it. There's nothing more dramatic than it just being the necessary qualification to teach in a particular type of school."

Laity and synodality to feature large in Kilmore in 2025

Renata Steffens

Bishop Martin Hayes says he is looking forward to the Lay Pastoral Worker Training Programme in St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth in 2025. "It will consist of a discernment period of six months, followed by a two-year part-time course," he said. "We have now selected 19 people from throughout the diocese."

These lay people will specialise in one of two areas. "One is pastoral care,

and the other one is nurturing faith. The unique feature about this course is that it is part academic, but also it consists of accreditation for pastoral reflection."

That is something, the bishop said, "that we've been preparing for over the last year. Something that we've been doing in consultation with our Synodal conversations of faith with parishes assessing the needs. We got a good confirmation from our parishes saying that 'yes', they would like to have lay people in these roles."

Bishop Hayes' expectations for the Year of Hope are also "around putting into practice the findings and the recommendations of the Synod and Synodality, and the whole emphasis there upon the fact that by the virtue of our baptism they're [lay people] are called to be protagonists on our mission."

The bishop hopes to continue "with our national Synod path and that those people who have been trained during the past year in different dioceses, in facilitating leadership, they will be enabled to accompany people, in particular our Parish Pastoral Council, in putting this Synodal method and spiritual conversations into practice. The whole idea of listening to each other carefully, responding to what you hear and allowing the Holy Spirit to speak."

Bishop Hayes wants to bring the Synod conversations to ordinary people into the parishes. "I prefer to use the term 'conversations about faith' rather than the term synodality." He believes the language used is important, as it can interfere with

people's understanding.

"I would like to see people given the opportunity to talk to each other quite simply about their faith, not about the Church, but about their faith and their journey. I would hope that, in doing that, they would encourage each other and become pilgrims together.

"Walking along and knowing that our faith is something that can sustain in the difficulties of life and help to rejoice in thanksgiving when there is something to give thanks for," Bishop Hayes said.

Deputy Editor: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie **Multimedia Journalists:**

Renata Steffens, renata@irishcatholic.ie

Brandon Scott, brandon@irishcatholic.ie

Renata Milan, renatamilan@irishcatholic.ie **Newsroom:** news@irishcatholic.ie **01 6874026**

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874027

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874095

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874024

General inquiries: info@irishcatholic.ie

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €199. Airmail €320. Six months €105. ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277. Printed by Webprint, Dublin.

Place an Advert

Phone 01 687 4027 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Capuchin Day Centre for the Homeless People 29 Bow Street, Dublin7





Every day The Capuchin Day Care Centre provides 1000 hot meals for people who are homeless and each week 1400 Food Parcels for those on the poverty threshold.

Help Fr. Kevin Kiernan to continue providing this caring service.

Fr. Kevin or Monica 01 8720770 www.capuchindaycentre.ie



Special Prayer Vigil for Life on The "Feast of Holy Innocents"

When: Saturday 28th December 2024

Where: St Marys Pro Cathedral, 83 Marlborough Street,

Time: 10:30am

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered by Bishop Donal Roche for the protection of life; followed by Holy Hour, Confessions, Rosary Procession and concluding with Benediction.

Followed by Lunch and Social in Wynns Hotel Abbey Street.

The Helpers of God's Precious Infants

The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024 News 3

Christmas conflicts are normal, resolving them an art - Accord head pilgrimage

Chai Brady

Following much discussion in the Irish media about avoiding conflict during the Christmas period the CEO of Accord has said that rows between couples is a sign a relationship is "alive".

The head of the Catholic counselling and marriage charity Tony Shanahan told The Irish Catholic that "it is a good thing if relationships have conflict", but that resolving the argument is the art.

erupted between a couple, they must be prepared to be vulnerable, he insists.

Mr Shanahan said: "Communication is really the key, and when we talk about communication in relationships we are really talking about emotional communication – how we feel about something as opposed to how we think about something - and there is a bit of a risk in that because we generally don't like feeling vulnerable: It feels uncomfortable.

"And yet sharing our vul-

and having that listened to and accepted and not judged, not criticised... that's what builds up real emotional intimacy. If you have real emotional intimacy you can go through all kinds of struggles and difficulties because you're then on the same page, you've got each other's backs," he said.

Dealing with conflict becomes easier over time, Mr Shanahan said, adding that "if you are not that long together there can be devastation, it's like the worst thing that ever

"I think the reality is that it is normal, and it is a good thing that relationships have conflict because it shows that they are alive and engaged," he said.

"The art really is to have the disagreement in a way that is mutually respectful and is resolved to each other's mutual satisfaction at the end. This doesn't mean you have to be in total agreement about everything, there may be something you will agree about, something you can compromise on, and there

may be some things you can agree to differ on."

Mr Shanahan added: "I think it is important to realise that in a relationship there is a trinity, there's the two partners, and there's the relationship itself and the relationship has a personality in the same way the individuals have a personality.

"So when you are feeling hurt or wounded by your partner, that wound and hurt is also being felt by the relationship... so the issue is: how do you come out of this painful situation in a win-win way? Because you want to be happy, you want your partner to be happy.

"Once you do come to a position in which the conflict has been diffused, there's a great liberation in that, there's a feeling of joy, it's like being let out of jail because the burden has been lifted off your shoulders - when there is joy in the relationship, soon there is romance, and a period of great happiness happens."

1 See accord.ie for couples and relationship counselling

Killaloe to emphasise in Jubilee

Renata Steffens

Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan is looking forward to the Jubilee 2025. "The whole Year of Hope gives me a great sense of joy and happiness. It is a wonderful theme to have and to develop with," he said.

The Diocese of Killaloe is trying to identify pilgrimage sites around the diocese and encouraging pilgrims to celebrate and go on tours to those sites, to celebrate the Jubilee of Hope in those locations" he said. The bishop also added that he "looks forward very much to go into the Youth Jubilee with 25 people from the diocese at the end of July and August, that will be a very joyful occasion." The diocese will also go on pilgrimage to Taizé and Lourdes in

"Those [pilgrimages] keep the spirits up. And despite all the different challenges and difficulties, and various different sad events, as well as funerals as losses, there are a lot of things to look forward to in 2025."

'Being the CEO of Trócaire taught me courage'

Staff reporter

Trócaire's CEO for the past six years told The Irish Catholic the job taught her courage and how individual actions are important.

Courage is one of Trócaire's five values, Caoimhe de Barra said. "Courage is the one that really stays in my mind, because as the leader of the organisation... you're responsible for the decisions that are taken at the most senior level and sometimes that takes courage. The CEO explains that she learned

how to make these decisions "in order to protect people at their most vulnerable".

"Another thing I've learned in my time in Trócaire overall is that sometimes we feel like we can do nothing, because we as individuals, we can't cause a war to end, we can't on our own as an individual end climate change,' she said. However, "there's lots of things we can do to contribute towards those. Sometimes we underestimate

the importance of just an individual act of solidarity, just reaching out and communicating to somebody that you haven't forgotten about them".

Ms de Barra said it's important to communicate to politicians "that you want them to make it clear that Ireland hasn't forgotten about people living in conflict, affected areas." The work Trócaire does "is about that human connection that [makes] people feel seen and heard as humans in their darkest times. That support is incredibly important".

Positive future for Church in Ireland say youth leaders

Renata Milán Morales

2024 saw Catholic Youth Ministry continue flourishing on the island. From Net Ministries, Youth2000, Alpha. Pure in Heart. Focus Missionaries, Living Water and chaplaincies among others. Ireland also is the home of Holy Family Mission, a Catholic residential community for young people aged 18-30 founded with the purpose to form young adults for lifelong mission, which has welcomed this year 15 young men and women. Last June over 160 Catholic lay youth-leaders gathered in Co. Kildare for the first event aimed to bring together the different ministries that are shaping the future of the Church in Ireland.

The Irish Catholic has asked youth leaders across Ireland what are their insights on youth ministry in 2024:

"In 2024, almost 3,500 young people experienced Alpha Youth across Ireland, with 8% of post-primary schools adopting the program. A big moment this year has been the launch of the brand the new Alpha



QUB Chaplaincy was represented at an international gathering of universities held in the Vatican. During their visit, Shannon - director of the Chaplaincy - met with the

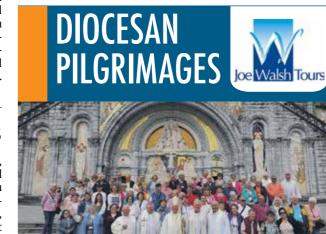
Youth Series, with training and premiere events held in Sligo, Dublin, Cork... Young people love it. With 114 courses run last year, Alpha is creating authentic spaces for young people to connect and discover faith in a fresh, relatable way," Gerard Han-ley, Director of Alpha Youth,

told this paper.
"The Young Adults Rathmines group has grown significantly over the past year, now with over 100 members. It's clear that young people today are seeking an authentic community, a space to explore their faith, ask questions, and find support. This year, events like The Way of Wonder', a collaboration with Pure in Heart featuring renowned Catholic speaker Bill Donaghy, brought over 200 young adults together for a spiritually immersive experience of beauty and music. Seeing so many young adult groups thrive across Ireland fills me with hope for the future of the Church," shared Roxana McCormack, organiser of YA Rathmines, Co. Dublin.

"We have much to be grateful for at the end of 2024. The summer festival was a success with numbers reaching about the

same as pre-Covid figures, and there were spring and autumn regional retreats. In Connacht, we had approximately 120 young people, at our most recent retreat in Sligo. It was heartening to see such an increase in attendance. Young people are looking to know more about their faith and to grow in relationship with God. It is ordinary young people who volunteer to help make these events happen each year, through the grace of God!" said Kath-ryn, Youth2000 Connacht regional leader.

"Jesus is still present among us, even among today's youth. Throughout the year, the diocese has been organising various youth events. From pilgrimages to faith-formation courses, and our bi-annual 'Connect' events. This work has been fruitful. As a chaplain, I can see that the faith of youth in the diocese of Cork and Ross has been increasing, and those who have wandered from the Church are coming back. May the Lord continue to guide and bless youth ministry in Ireland!" emphasised Jack Kennedy, Chaplain in UCC, Co. Cork.



OSSORY DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

19 MAY 2025 | FROM CORK | 5 NIGHTS | From €949pps

RAPHOE DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

19 MAY 2025 | FROM DERRY | 4 NIGHTS | From €899pps

CLOYNE DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

30 MAY 2025 | FROM CORK | 5 NIGHTS | From €929pps

67TH WATERFORD & LISMORE LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

4 JUNE 2025 | FROM CORK | 5 NIGHTS | From €969pps

TUAM AND KILLALA DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE 29 AUG 2025 | FROM KNOCK | 6 NIGHTS | From €995pps

TO BOOK VISIT JOEWALSHTOURS.IE

info@joewalshtours.ie | 01 241 0800 | 89 Harcourt St, DO2 WY88 Tours are operated by Petriva Limited t/a Joe Walsh Tours are licensed by the Irish Aviation Authority TA 0804 TO 273

Keeping the balance of love in the twelve days of Christmas



Martina Purdy

neighbour's Christmas display has been giving me a much needed smile, but perhaps not as he intended. His holiday garden features giant blow-ups of two cartoon characters. The Grinch Who Stole Christmas, and a snowman, I have dubbed Olaf, in honour of the Disney snow-

Every morning, in the runup to Christmas, I have come round the corner, and glanced to see if this pair were still standing. More often than not. the Grinch, or Olaf, or both, were lying face down on the ground, quite deflated. "Perhaps one too many in the local pub," I would chuckle to myself.

By evening they were usually back on their feet and I ture: "Stand erect, your liberation is at hand!'

Metaphor

Now, during these Twelve Days of Christmas, I am starting to think that the Grinch and Olaf are a metaphor for December 25. Perhaps they have something profound to teach us, something about our own deflated emotions when our expectations of the perfect Christmas fall flat, along with the false notion that we have to have it all together when it comes to love and family.

Christmas, like all great love stories, has been truly romanti-

St Francis gave us the crib in the Thirteenth Century and Frank Capra, It's a Wonderful *Life* in the Twentieth Century.

Of course, Christmas promises us a happy ending, but we forget the suffering in between this life and the next, and the reality that love is far from perfect in this fallen world. Maybe our sanitised stables celebrating the birth of true love should come with the scent of the first Christmas? In a cave with sheep and other animals, the smell

Christmas, without its true meaning, can leave us feeling deflated - and drive us to extremes. So can New Year's resolutions. This is especially true when we seek to fill ourselves with very poor substitutes for Christ, or aim, with our own strength, to build ourselves up"

was definitely not cinnamon and spice.

Disney's Olaf is the perfect cartoon snowman, who nobly declares:

"Some people are worth melting for!'

But sometimes, if we are honest, we can be more like the Grinch, desperate to flee up a mountain with only Max the dog for company.

One of the grimmest things ever read was that American family lawyers cynically call the first working Monday after Christmas, "Divorce Monday." It is apparently their busiest day ironic, given that Christ comes to reconcile us to God and to each other.

There is a reason Pope Francis gave us a prayer to the Holy Family, advising us to contemplate Jesus, Mary and Joseph"

Though Ireland still has one of the lowest divorce rates in Europe, it is on the rise. And, according to the experts, the roots of 'divorce Monday' are most likely found in financial pressures or feelings of deflation when relationship cracks get wider at Christmas. One

legal website suggested that these pressures - coupled with New Year's resolutions - "seem to push couples towards marital breakdown.

Christmas, without its true meaning, can leave us feeling deflated - and drive us to extremes. So can New Year's resolutions. This is especially true when we seek to fill ourselves with very poor substitutes for Christ, or aim, with our own strength, to build ourselves up, so we can become more perfectly balanced creatures in a world of unbalanced

There is a reason Pope Francis gave us a prayer to the Holy Family, advising us to contemplate Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

His prayer to the Holy Family is a plea that our own families will become places of communion, places of comfort and healing, so families never again experience violence, rejection and division.

True love

As the world moves on from Christmas all too quickly, it is easy to forget that New Year's Day falls on the eighth day of Christmas, when our true love, according to the traditional song, gives us 'eight maids a milking'. These represent the beatitudes, given to us by Jesus in Matthew Chapter 5, and point us to a beautiful life. But how many

his Christmas, in a world of martyrs, I've been contemplating just how strange Christianity really is. What other religion would celebrate the birth of a saviour one day, and the brutal murder of Stephen, one of his followers the next? Then there's the Feast of the Holy Innocents, slaughtered by Herod! How mysterious that Christmas joy and sorrow have been together from the start. Perhaps that's the point. Christmas is not meant just to be



of us would resolve in 2025 to be poor, or to be reviled?

Christ - who teaches us that we cannot live this blessed, beautiful life without him arrives on the first day of Christmas, sent by our true love. God. the Father. He sends his son so we can be filled with love, so we can live without limit, so we can be free.

I'm going to miss Olaf and the Grinch when they go, but as I round the corner each day, I'm hoping to remember the lesson of how to stand erect: the balance in my life depends on God's love, and how well I love God first and my neighbour as myself.

Let's face it, without the balance, we can become Grinch-like, puffed up with pride, and doomed to fall, like deflated creatures, face down in the dirt.

hope your church, like mine, was packed more than usual this Christmas. "C & E" Catholics is a rather sniffy term to describe those that come only at Christmas and Easter but they are very welcome! I recall a really committed parish priest, a man who had a wonderful sense of humour, and would tease the C & Es. "We do this every week you know," he would say with a smile before the final blessing. Cue nervous laughter. Venerable Fulton Sheen, the famous American bishop, once made a rather astute observation that the churches are most full when God is at his most vulnerable: at Christmas, when he is a helpless babe in swaddling clothes and on Good Friday, when he has just

Signs of hope for the future in Dublin

Bishop Paul Dempsey

I've experienced and I've seen a lot of great signs of hope as well, indeed, we have the building hope initiative in the diocese and there's very much a sense of working together in partnerships as parishes and that's synodality in action. Pope Francis obviously talks about synodality and I think that building hope, that sense of working together in partnerships is synodality in action. And again, it's been a great commitment of priests and people and religious and deacons to the mission of the diocese.

Pastoral Council

We have a new Diocesan Pastoral Council at the moment being set up and that will be up and running in the new year. So again, a lovely

sense of synodality in this new Diocesan Pastoral Council, really looking forward to being part of that. And I think that's a great sign and symbol of hope for the future

l think that's a lovely symbolism that even though there's a lot of change going on, what we're all anchored in is Christ"

And it's lovely that it's going to be set up in the year of pilgrims of Hope, the Jubilee Year. And I just looking at the logo actually of the of the Pilgrims of Hope year, the Jubilee year and there's an anchor in it. And I think that's a lovely symbolism that even though there's a lot of change going on, what we're all anchored in is Christ.

Many ethnic groups

I've also noticed a great sign of hope going around the diocese is the new Irish. I've been with many, many ethnic groups around the diocese, Brazilians, Filipinos, Indians and some from the African communities, and they're bringing great vibrancy and life to many, many parishes. And you know, they're so, so welcome. And it's lovely to see that life and that energy in the diocese as well. I think that's a great sign of hope for the future as well for the Church in Dublin and indeed in Ireland. The Church is not dying it it's a

model of Church that's dying at the moment. And obviously that's a difficult process.

Young people

Another great sign of hope is obviously young people. Now it's a huge challenge at the moment for the Church to connect with and to reach out to young people. But again in a number of schools and gatherings that I've been at. I've met a number of youth groups and in various parishes around the diocese and one of the big elements of the New Year is pilgrimage. And one of the moments during the year is the youth pilgrimage to Rome.

So we will have a representative of young people going to Rome the end of July, beginning of August. And again, a lovely symbol and sign of hope. I think in the new year there is the canonisation of Carlo Acutis. That young man who had a great love for the Eucharist. And I think he is there to inspire young people along the faith journey as well. And I think that's a great sign and a symbol of hope for the diocese and indeed for the Church into the future. I think that's a great positivity there. Yes they're challenging times. We all know that they're challenging times but I think it's how you look at things. I think there are great signs of hope. There are great signs of life. There are great signs of vibrancy, and I think it's important that we capture that and run with that as we go forward as a Church, it's going to be different obviously into the future. But I think it's going to be a strong Church and a faithful Church, and I think that gives my heart a great lift as I go forward as a servant, as in servant leadership.

A Kerry philosopher discovered

seem to play an important role in our world, although many of us know little about some of these influential individuals, who, via social media, have such sway over the lives of others.

But there are also "influencers" who have a quieter, yet profound and consistent, following, more through a network of personal admirers than through modern media.

Moriarty

One such, I discovered this year, is the Kerryborn philosopher and writer John Moriarty. He was born in Moyvane, North Kerry in 1938, and died in June 2007, leaving a dozen acclaimed books on themes both spiritual and philosophical (as well as a number of audio recordings.)

In my ignorance I hadn't known anything of John Moriarty until a collection of his writings "Grounded in Story", published by the respected Lilliput Press this year, was given to me by a friend some months ago.

What's special about Moriarty is the way he evokes an Ireland



that is now gone, and its relationship both to the spiritual and the hard realities of land and labour. Awe and wonder was partnered with the earthiness of that rural life. "Cutting turf every year in the bog, we worked our way down into a world no human being had ever set foot in," he recalled. They would reach a floor of pine forest from a prehistoric past.

How privileged we were, believing in something so ontologically superior to us that we vearned to praise it, to bless it, to adore it, to glorify it"

"Ours was a bleak parish, mostly," he wrote, of bad land and bogs, but parish it was, meaning that at the heart of the village... was the parish church.'

The rituals of faith enacted in that parish church "gave us the chief sense of ourselves.

The hardships and sometimes harshness of everyday agricultural life were in contast to the beauty and uplift of the religious rituals he remembered. Killing a pig was a necessary, yet horrible, task that had to be undertaken for the sustenance of life; people had to be grounded in very basic toil, involving blood and mire, soil and mud. Yet, he wrote, they felt privileged to have something better in their lives: "How privileged we were, believing in something so ontologically superior to us that we vearned to praise it. to bless it. to adore it. to glorify it." Religious rituals, Mass and the sacraments, "enshrined that praise and provided meaning".

Immortality

These rural smallholders of poor land and wet bogs nevertheless read by the

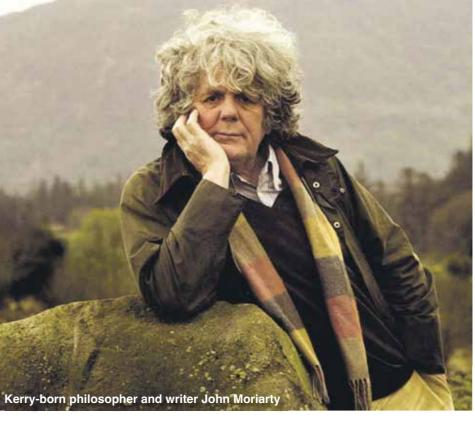
young John read from the Greek classics, he read the Odyssey, the Aenid, Moby Dick and Darwin's Origin of Species, People knew about Ptolemy and Plotinus, as well as the lore of the heron and brown trout and lapwing.

John Moriarty who studied philosophy at UCD, and spent vears in Canada teaching English literature - chose to return to the west of Ireland"

When someone died, he recalled, the people would say "Tá sé, tá sí, imithe ar shlí na fírinne - he or she has set out on the path of truth." This was "the adventure of our immortality".

John Moriarty – who studied philosophy at UCD, and spent years in Canada teaching English literature - chose to return to the west of Ireland and live as a gardener in his later years.

The book of his writings is edited by Amanda Carmody and Mary McGillicuddy, and beautifully illustrated. And he is, I believe, a true "influencer".



Supporting Mission Worldwide Missio Ireland is proud to be the Holy Father's official

missio

charity for overseas mission and missionaries. We are part of the global network of Pontifical Mission Societies, supporting some of the poorest and most marginalised communities in the world. Your generosity and prayers make our mission possible.

To find out more about our work or to make a donation, call 01 4972035 or visit missio.ie

64 Lower Rathmines Road Dublin D06N2H1 CRA no. 20205153 | CHY 22544

National Director Fr Michael Kelly SPS

66 The hardships and sometimes harshness of everyday agricultural life were in contast to the beauty and uplift of the religious rituals he remembered"

he re-opening of Notre Dame was surely one of the events of the year and a universal acknowledgement of France's Catholic heritage. The chief architect, Philippe de Villeneuve, said he kept his religious practice to himself while working on the project, as he wanted to remain professional

and objective, rather than personal. But after the reconstruction was unveiled, he said that "Notre Dame" - that is, Our Lady – had been an inspiration and a guide to

all his endeavours. The occasion helped to bring a new harmony to church-state relations in France, and something similar is needed in Ireland.

But if Ireland were to celebrate its historic Catholic tradition, it occurred to me that it would not be with a Mediaeval cathedral our cathedrals are essentially Norman but a Mass Rock in the middle of a boggy wilderness. For that is where the faith was sustained through the hardest of times.

t's my practice to spend St Stephen's Day working on my tax papers, due to be remitted in January. Not a fun pastime for the Christmas season, but there's something apt about auditing your life at the end of a calendar

year. "Accounts" also means accounting for decisions and choices, and there's a lot to be learned from the exercise: how money is organised and spent can be a branch of the counsel to "know thyself". Queen Victoria once

said that to have done one's duty is a satisfying feeling. And when the taxes are finally remitted, there can be a virtuous glow of having been a dutiful citizen. Or at least the absence of fear that one might be in trouble with the revenue!

Donation payment options

☐ PAY BY: CHEQUE/POSTAL ORDER

payable to: Missio Ireland

☐ PAY BY: CREDIT CARD

Card number:

Expiration date: CVV number:

Signature

The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024 6 | Feature |

A married priest's view on current debates



Renata Milán Morales

n a time when questions surrounding faith, tradition, and ecclesial renewal a time when debates around women ordination and married priests - echo across the Catholic world, few journevs capture these themes as powerfully as the story of Fr Joshua J. Whitfield, author of The Crisis of Bad Preaching: Redeeming the Heart and Way of the Catholic Preacher. Unlike most Catholic priests, Fr Joshua is married with four children. He and his wife Alli converted to Catholicism in 2009.

Fr Joshua grew up within an Anglo-Catholic context. He went to university knowing that he wanted to be a priest, "as I understood it," he recalls. His theological exploration led him to West Yorkshire, England, where he studied Anglican theology. After this time, he was ordained as an Episcopal priest back home in America. "I was very fortunate to be around people like Reinhard Hütter, who's a great convert and Thomist theologian," he shares, acknowledging that his conversion grew from these discussions and his study of Church history.

Journey

"It was very much a Newman journey, just like many of us who come from Anglicanism discover what Newman discovered - that the real organic Church can't be substituted by a Protestant reconstruction.' Once he recognised the Catholic Church as "the Church in communion with the successor of Peter," Fr Joshua knew he had to follow his conscience, even if it meant sacrificing his role as an Anglican priest. "Once you see that, you can't unsee it," he said.

After his conversion in 2009, Fr Joshua faced a significant personal and vocational crossroads. He accepted the implications of becoming a layman once again. He took a layman role while discerning his future path. Fr Joshua speaks with gratitude for the Church's compassion in allowing him to discern a second call to priesthood, "I began the process to discern ordination in the Catho-



lic Church, and that was thanks to the Pastoral Provision of John Paul II." This Pastoral Provision. established in 1980 by Pope John Paul II. allowed married former Anglican clergy, under special circumstances, to be ordained as Catholic priests without requiring celibacy. This exception serves as a pathway for Anglican clergy who convert to Catholicism to continue their ministry within the Catholic Church, supporting Christian unity while upholding the Catholic tradition of celibate priesthood.

If, for example, my wife was to pass before me, celibacy would automatically impose itself upon me"

"When people look at a priest like me, a married priest, they should think immediately of the Catholic Church's commitment to Christian unity." He credits the Pastoral Provision as an effort "for the sake of mending the body of Christ in unity" and is clear that his situation is not one meant to undermine the celibate priesthood. "If, for example, my wife was to pass before me, celibacy would automatically impose itself upon me," he notes.

Realities

Having served as an Episcopal and a Catholic priest. Fr Ioshua offers a comparison that speaks to the realities and challenges of each role. "When I was an Episcopal priest, it was the best part-time job I ever had," he jokes. "Being a Catholic priest is a far busier thing than being an Episcopal priest." In his view, the Episcopal Church lacks the numbers and structural vitality present in the Catholic Church. He explains that "the average Sunday attendance at the Anglican church was 68 people," whereas now he ministers to that many at a 6:25 am weekday Mass

Fr Joshua's opinion on the discipline of celibacy is respectful. "Theologically, I would be very cautious about removing celibacy," he shares. "It plays a very important role in the life of the Church at a spiritual and theological level." He notes that while celibacy is a matter of Church discipline rather than strict doctrine, it has deep theological roots and a longstanding history within the Church.

The Church couldn't afford it. A married priest with kids is expensive. Catholics do not give anywhere near the amount of money to make that a viable reality"

For Fr Joshua, the concept of celibacy finds value

not in being strict but in its role in the Church's life and witness. "St Ambrose certainly knew there were married priests in his time," he reflects, "but he considered them only backward churches. By the time it became canonical, it had already sort of de facto become normative." Celibacy, he argues, serves as a unique witness, one which contributes to the Church's call to holiness. Talking about the practicalities of being a married priest, Fr Joshua mentioned that "If the Church in Ireland, or the Church in general, wanted to open the priesthood to married men. First things first, the Church couldn't afford it. A married priest with kids is expensive. Catholics do not give anywhere near the amount of money to make that a viable reality.

Comparing the idea of

66When people look at a priest like me, a married priest, they should think immediately of the Catholic Church's commitment to Christian unity"

married priest in the Catholic Church to the reality of the Protestant church he declares that "What would happen is a few institutions or few churches who could afford married priests would probably do so, but my guess is that numbers would plummet... For example, in the Protestant world it has not resulted in increased numbers at all, in fact, the opposite is the

"We can talk about theology and tradition all we want, but the practical matter is that the Church doesn't have the logistics or the money to make that possible," Fr Joshua stated.

Discussing contemporary issues like the debates around ordination for women and married priests, Fr Joshua points to what he sees as a deeper misunderstanding of clerical and lay roles. "Only if you have a very distorted view of the Church, generally, would explain the current sort of debates over women deacons. Those debates are sort of twisted by all sorts of clericalism which we have not shaken off." He speaks out against a "clericalism" that misrepresents the

66I get very bored when people start asking questions about whether priests should be married or women should be ordained deacons, or about power and structure. I get much more interested when people start talking about Jesus"

hierarchy, emphasising that the only sort of valuable hierarchy people should be thinking about is holiness.' He observes that there are lav ministers in his parish who exhibit more holiness than he does, highlighting the importance of recognising the diverse callings within the Church.

Underappreciated

"Lay ministry is underappreciated, that is certain. When we do appreciate lay ministry, we often want to clericalise it because we misunderstand what clergy are. That to be an ordained clergyman somehow better ministry, which is just not true at all," Fr Joshua expressed when asked about the role of the laity in the Church. "I think it's legitimate to say that the conversations about ordaining married men to the priesthood or ordaining women to anything is what harms that conversation. It is a fundamental misunderstanding or misappreciation of lay ministry and its relationship to ordained ministry," he added.

He sees hope in the simplicity of Catholic faith, describing it as a "genius" that resides in its direct connection to Christ and the sacraments"

Fr Joshua's vision for the future of the Church aims to return to basics, a call to renewal through foundational practices. "If any part of the Catholic Church, in any part of the world, wants renewal, it's simply going to have to

Spirit," he declares. Structural changes alone, he argues, will not bring the transformation needed to revive the Church. He sees hope in the simplicity of Catholic faith, describing it as a "genius" that resides in its direct connection to Christ and the sacraments.

Reflecting

Reflecting on his sense of vocation, Fr Joshua recalls the profound influence that priests had on him as a young man. "My sense of vocation was sparked because around me, as a young man, was a collection of very impressive men who were priests. They were different. And that was attractive to me.' For him, the priesthood is a calling to stand apart - not in self-righteousness, but as a "window into Heaven."

The role of the priest, in his view, is to inspire this same attraction to holiness within the laity. "The priest should be a person who stands apart, someone vou wonder about, asking, 'What world does this person live in?'" he explains. The priest, he believes, is not simply a leader but a guide, a "sheepdog" leading others to the Good Shep-

Joshua's journey speaks to the challenges and beauty of a life given fully to faith. His story resonates as a call to return to the foundations of Christian life, to embrace tradition while recognising the Church's ultimate dependence on the Holy Spirit. In a world full of distractions and debates over structural reform, Fr Joshua's words offer a perspective grounded in simplicity and trust in God's grace.

"I get very bored when people start asking questions about whether priests should be married or women should be ordained deacons, or about power and structure. I get much more interested when people start talking about Jesus," Fr Joshua said. His hope for the future is rooted in a return to Jesus and the transformative power of the Gospel - a hope that, for Fr Joshua, is the essence of the Catholic faith.





The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024 8 | Comment

Christmas calls for reflection



Breda O'Brien

love the time after Christmas Dav. preparations that take up most of December are over. It's a time to relax with family and a good

The quieter days of the Christmas season lend themselves to reflection. For our family, it has been a momentous year. In August, our elder daughter, Robyn, got married to her beloved Shane.

It was the first wedding of one of our children, a milestone in any family. Without wishing to be sexist or stereotypical, I believe that it affects women differently than men. My husband and I could not be happier about our daughter's choice but I also felt a tinge of melancholy long before my husband did.

I was simultaneously so happy that she was making this transition to founding a family of her own and feeling a pang that her relationship with her family of origin was changing forever.

Feelings

Those mingled feelings were responsible for the only moment during the whole wedding day when I cried. On the way to the church, suddenly all I could think about was the day that Robyn was born.

It only lasted a few moments. I had tears in my eyes at other moments.

tears of pride and happiness, but that was the only

The average spend on an Irish wedding has returned to pre-Covid levels of more than €36,000"

The upcoming wedding led to other, less exalted moments as well. We were exposed to what Robyn calls the wedding-industrial

complex, which she hates with a passion, particularly the ostentatious waste that couples are encouraged to indulge in.

The average spend on an Irish wedding has returned to pre-Covid levels of more than €36.000. Robyn and Shane were determined that the sacrament would be their central focus instead.

Intent

They were intent on keeping everything else as simple as possible. Robyn wore a 70 year-old vintage dress. made all the bouquets for herself and

Roughly a quarter of all wedding ceremonies are now what might be

Obviously, it is in the interests of a venue that everything takes place under its roof but it does put

her bridesmaids, and her sister, voung couples under pres-Eva, did her hair on the day. sure not to choose a religious wedding ceremony. Venues will even suggest

wedding celebrants in the

same way as they provide

lists of florists, wedding

Quinn of the Iona Insti-

tute then asked me to pre-

pare a paper on the rise of

alternative spiritual wed-

ding ceremonies. Roughly

a quarter of all wedding

ceremonies are now what

might be called New Age.

This is a controversial term

and probably none of the

celebrants would describe

themselves as that.

Coincidentally, David

bands and photographers.

They did choose a lovely venue for the reception but that was partly because the groom is American and wanted to allow the US guests to experience something of Ireland outside Dublin.

We only visited a couple of wedding venues but I was fascinated by how politely insistent each one was about showing the hotel's own wedding ceremony room to my daughter and her fiance, even though they had explained that they were having a Church wedding.

Convenient However, there is no other convenient name for what are eclectic, individualistic, spiritualities drawing on everything from Budcalled New Age" dhism to Wicca to the more photogenic aspects of Celtic

spirituality. For example, a relatively recently formed entity, the Spiritualist Union, which came into being to promote mediumship, that is, communication with the dead, last year carried out 7.8% of all wedding ceremonies in Ireland. This is an extraordinary development.

It has significant repercussions. The key reasons are not just convenience, being able to write your own vows or skip marriage preparation. It is that people no longer have a deep Christian faith, the kind that comes with the need to mark the union of a husband and wife with awe, wonder and worship.

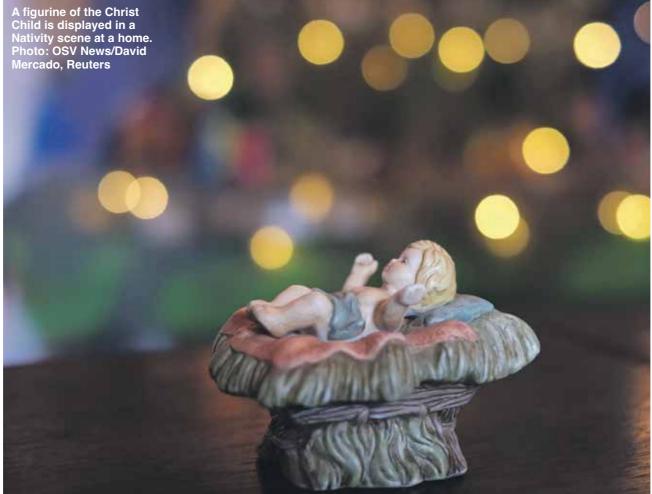
The price of housing is a block to returning home. Yet the Irish people voted to return more or less the same government"

We are singularly failing to nurture the faith of young people and families. Until that changes, more and more people will choose alternative spiritual weddings, and the 40% combined who choose civil or humanist ceremonies will also continue to rise.

Robyn and her brother, Ben, are also living abroad. This brings us up against another failure, this time a secular one. The price of housing is a block to returning home. Yet the Irish people voted to return more or less the same government, which has not made housing for all a pri-

The only bright spot of the general election was seeing so many pro-life TDs returned, and that Aontú finally achieved the amount of votes needed to secure Government funding for political parties, along with a second TD. Seeing our niece, Melissa Byrne, run for Aontú was another highlight.

As a family, we have much to reflect on and be thankful for at this time of year. May you and yours continue to be blessed through 2025.



•• The only bright spot of the general election was seeing so many pro-life TDs returned, and that Aontú finally achieved the amount of votes needed to secure Government funding for political parties, along with a second TD"

It's been said that if your name is held in the hearts of others, you will never truly die.

hen you set aside a gift of any size in your Will to Trócaire, your good and generous name will never die.

Every year after your passing, we'll honour your name in gratitude and love at a special Remembrance Mass where all faiths are welcome.

We'll keep your name safe and warm in our Books of Remembrance, too, where all the people who've loved you can come to see it.

Simple bequests of <u>any size</u> by Will are some of the greatest,

most everlasting gifts of all made by caring people just like you across Ireland.

So whether you ultimately include Trócaire in your final legacy – or another worthy cause – we have a free and easy planner you can bring to your solicitor to get started. We're happy to post it to you, discreetly, and with our heartfelt thanks for your consideration and for being a faithful Irish Catholic reader.

For the relief your legacy will bring to people living in fear from poverty, injustice,

indifference, and exploitation worldwide, we believe that even though you pass on, your good name should never die.

Request your free and confidential legacy planner from Trócaire today. Then bring the planner to your family solicitor for an open and honest conversation.

We'll remember your name.



To request your free legacy planner now, including bequest wording and a simple 4-step worksheet you can share privately with your solicitor, ring Grace Kelly on 01 5053 221, or email grace.kelly@trocaire.org

Charity Regulatory Authority No. 20204842; Revenue Number CHY 22508

10 | News feature | The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024

Joy in Omagh as faithful continue celebrations of their historic churches



Chai Brady

he Papal Nuncio and the Bishop of Derry visited Omagh, Co. Tyrone to join the faithful who flocked to Sacred Heart Church to celebrate both its 125th year anniversary and the 260th anniversary of St Mary's Church, Drumragh.

Drumragh parish welcomed the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, and Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry to celebrate the noon Mass on December 8.

The 260th anniversary of St Mary's Church's was marked by the rehoming of the Lourdes Grotto that once stood in the grounds of Loreto

Convent Brook Street, and there, children on their way to school would stop and pray – now future generations of people coming to church or to visit the graves of their loved ones can stop at the grotto to pray.

The papal nuncio and Bishop McKeown met with Sr Anne O'Toole IBVM to bless the Grotto when they visited. During their visit they also launched the re-publication of an historical book entitled Five Years Tour in America first published in 1906.

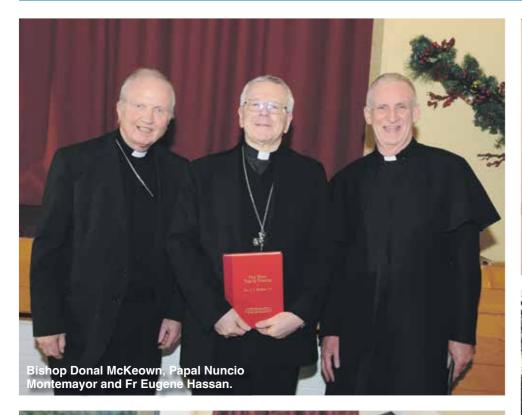
Fr John J. McGlade - a curate in the parish of Drumragh, where his uncle Msgr Bernard McNamee was parish priest, was sent to America between 1890 and 1895 to raise funds for the neo-gothic style church that can be seen from every entry point to the town of Omagh. Very few of the original books exist. Great efforts were made to have the book prepared and printed for the anniversary. It is now available from the Drumragh Parish office Brook Street for



















MEDJUGORJE

"Come with us and experience Medjugorje's abundant spiritual fruits" as approved by Pope Francis



Limited spaces available

To reserve your place: Call Dublin **(01) 878 8159** or Belfast (028) 95680005 or email info@marian.ie



NOT INCLUDED

Travel Insurance Lunches Optional Excursions 12 | Feature | The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024

'When I woke from a coma the first thing I did was pray'



Renata Steffens

ccording to Beaumont Hospital, Ireland has one of the highest rates of donations in the world: 20.3 donors pmp (per million population).

The Irish Catholic invites you to learn the story of a Cavan man who had both of his lungs and one kidney transplanted.

David Crosby is the oldest of five children. When he was about one year and a half his parents had a second child, a girl called Regina, who got sick with a breathing problem ten days after birth and died at seven months. The third child, Paul, also got sick after ten days and died at the age of two. However, at that point there were no medical connections for both deaths.

The fourth sibling came when Mr Crosby was seven, Ann Marie. The family was very apprehensive about Ann Marie's health, but everything went well. Three years after that, the fifth child arrived, Kieran. But again, at the ten days mark he got sick and died aged eleven also from a lung disease.

"Kieran was a very special person in our family...He instilled an awful lot of positivity into me, especially learning how to fight and never giving up. I was 21 at the time." That positivity would be an impor-

tant fuel to Mr Crosby later in life.

He was living in America with his then still girlfriend Katie, when he had an accident "Fr Gerry [MacCormack] lit candles for me, we prayed in a Mass and my parents had to come over just in case things didn't go right, but I survived that."

They moved back to Kingscourt, got married, had three children and life seemed to be going smoothly. When Mr Crosby turned 40 in 2015 everything was going well, until he got a cough that wouldn't go away.

There was a bit of a cloud on the lungs that they were a bit concerned about. They said it wasn't cancerous, but they needed to do further investigation"

"I went into my local GP and he put me on an antibiotic, because he knew the history with my siblings. About a week after the antibiotics, I still had the cough, and it got really bad." Mr Crosby went back into the GP and he changed the antibiotic to no avail, the cough wouldn't go away. "He said he was going to send me to Navan for an X-ray to check it.

"We went to Navan and they did the X-ray on the lungs and on the chest. There was a bit of a cloud on the lungs that they were a bit concerned about. They said it wasn't cancerous, but they needed to do further



The Crosby family in 2023.

investigation."

He was then sent to the Matter Hospital in Dublin, where they tested his lungs function, which measures the capacity of how much air the lungs can hold. "The average is between 80 and 120% of lung capacity. Mine was down at 73 at the time, so it was below normal and with my history" that was not good.

Biopsy

The doctors took a sample of his lung for a biopsy. "They brought me in in September 2015, and they said IPF, Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis, probably the same my two brothers and sister had that passed away."

They "said if I wasn't treated, I'd probably [have] a year and a half to two years to live... It was pretty devastating, after losing already all the children we lost."

After receiving the news and telling his family, he caught himself wondering why. "Why did this disease come back and hit our family again, after taking so much devastation already?" Those were hard days, Mr Crosby said. "A lot of praying," and he decided he was going to fight the disease. "I just said 'I'll do whatever it would take to survive."

With all the history the family already had with lung disease, it was like they knew the end of the story, but Mr Crosby was determined not to let the disease win. "I wasn't going to be a fourth headstone for my parents," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

Going into Christmas in 2015, Mr Crosby got sick again and was invited into the Matter Hospital to have his lungs checked. In the three months since his first lungs test their capacity dropped to 62%. After those results, he was told he

would need a double-lung transplant as soon as possible.

Preparing for the transplant, Mr Crosby had to do many tests, which he passed all but one: his BMI. "I was on the heavier side than I should have been for [a] transplant."

The Head of Transplants in Ireland "told me that I wasn't getting on the transplant list unless I lost two and a half stone. This is kind of hard to take after being told I had IPF, a year and a half to live... I need a transplant and then I was told I was overweight."

I remember we pulled the kids out of school early, and I got into the ambulance, and it was a very hard feeling thinking that you might never see out there again"

He was put on a strict diet and lost two stone and a half in two months. "So I was on the list, but instead of being ecstatic... I was kind of deflated, because I knew that there was a bigger challenge ahead of me."

Three days later, "I got a call, they said it was a possible match... They said the ambulance [will] be there in 20 minutes...And I remember we pulled the kids out of school early, and I got into the ambulance, and it was a very hard feeling thinking that you might never see out there again. You might never come back."

At the hospital, they started doing tests, which took a few hours. While Mr Crosby was getting prepared for the transplant, the donor lungs deteriorated, and the transplant didn't



Mr Crosby with his wife (right) during the marathon in New York in 2017.

go ahead. He started wondering, "was my change gone? How long would I be waiting?" But surprisingly, he didn't have to wait much.

"Thirteen days after, coming into March 2016, I got a second call. Now I was more relaxed...I went up to the Mater and this time everything was go, [it was] the beginning of March."

But even with the successful transplant, Mr Crosby couldn't relax, and he "couldn't sleep, thinking about my brother. That [he] didn't survive." After dealing with the weirdness of the new organs and doing some relaxing exercises the healthcare workers told him, he "was able to control my breath. I was able to just be me, and I knew that the lungs were part of me now.

"Unfortunately, somebody had to pass away to give me the lungs... Then, I promised that I would never stop trying to do good with them. Trying to do the right thing with the lungs." During a visit, a cousin "suggested he's going to [do the] Dublin Marathon to raise money for the Mater, and I said 'well, if you're doing it, I'll do it'... Because we lived in New York, I said [if] I was going to do a marathon, it might as well be the one in New York."

Marathons

Asking his physiotherapist about marathons, they were surprised, "as they never really heard of anybody with lung transplant doing marathons." Because of that, Mr Crosby had to do his own research about the safety of running a marathon after having lungs transplanted.

In the end, 14 people expressed interest in running the marathon with him, including "the local chemist and one of the surgeons in the Mater". They set training groups and organised a 5-miles, a 10k and half-marathon events, until eventually it was time to go to New York.

For the marathon, the chemist and a fitness doctor went with Mr Crosby and stayed with him the whole time. "It was an amazing feeling, after all we went through."

Life will throw stuff at you. You can turn the other way, or sit in the corner, or you can face it and hopefully get through it"

"We were ready to go to Tokyo in 2020, and unfortunately, I got a bit of rejection on my lungs. I had to go to St James's for radiation. My lung function after the transplant had gone up to 94, which was really good. But then, when I had the radiation, my function dropped down to 56, so it was actually lower than what it was before my trans-



Mr Crosby and his children in the hospital in 2021 after he woke up from coma.

plant."

"Life will throw stuff at you. You can turn the other way, or sit in the corner, or you can face it and hopefully get through it. I think it's very important to have that fight, that's what my brother Kieran said. He installed that into me because he was a big fighter."

Covid

In August 2021 Mr Crosby got Covid and "it was devastating. It was just my worst nightmare," he said. "I went straight up to the Mater Hospital because they knew everything about me."

In the hospital, the doctors "kept everything under control", and even when his temperature went up to over 40°, they managed to bring it back down. With the temperature under control, Mr Crosby thought the problems were over and he would go home soon. However, his battle was not even close to an end.

"My organs started to go into failure and the doctors tried everything, but they couldn't stop the Covid. They told me they had to put me into a medical induced coma."

Before putting him into coma, the doctors called Mr Crosby's family. "I had to say my goodbye to my wife, my kids, my mam, my dad, my sister. It's a very hard thing to do."

"I know people call me an 'inspiration' and all that. But I'm only as strong as the people around me. I have great support, especially my wife... [When] I was in the hospital getting all the care, she was up and down the roads on her own and all these thoughts. That's not easy."

He was in the coma for three weeks, and during that time his family was informed twice that his situation wasn't looking good and there was a chance he wouldn't survive.

"I got through it, I did survive." "I remember when I woke up from the coma, and I asked her [his wife] to pray. I just said, I'm gonna pray."

"I always had faith. It was always there. I probably had to rely on it more when I was sick...When I was told [I had] a year and a half to live, I talked to whoever's up there, somebody 'listen to me, give me a chance to live and I'll never stop helping others...I will always try and help because there's so much good out there, and I know I have it inside me and I would give it back in spades if I got a chance to life.' I probably called on my faith, more the last nine years.'

Mr Crosby believes his faith "is probably stronger. It's always been there, but I call Him more [now]."

When he woke up from the coma, he "couldn't move a finger, I couldn't walk, I couldn't talk." Being in coma for three weeks made him "lose an awful lot of muscle weight," and the doctors said the only way he would be strong enough again was to build muscle back. That would not be a problem for a healthy person, however, Mr Crosby had another challenge added to his recovery.

I was on dialysis for three days a week for this last three years... for three hours and a half each day"

"My kidneys had failed when I was in the coma," because of that, he was not allowed to eat anything with salt. "It was a renal diet, which is a very hard diet, and it's very hard to put weight when



Mr Crosby exercising in 2024.

you're on a diet like that."

The challenge was big, but step-by-step Mr Crosby got strong enough to be sent home. It was a great feeling being able to breathe fresh air again, but the battle was still not over.

"I was on dialysis for three days a week for this last three years... for three hours and a half each day... It was very restrictive for our family, because we couldn't plan anything. Everything revolved around the dialysis."

"I was put on the kidney transplant list about a year and a half ago. It's a long wait... There's another option, which is your family member can offer a kidney to you." His parents and sister tried but weren't compatible.

Perfect match

In the end, Mr Crosby's wife, Katie was a perfect match. They talked to the children and explained there were no risks to her life. The couple were aware the children needed somebody in their lives "they need a parent." Everybody can survive with only half a kidney, they told the children.

However, the doctors needed to make sure that she was more than sure before going on with the transplant. Throughout the preparation process, between discover-



David Crosby and his wife Katie in the hospital in 2024 after the kidney transplant.

ing she was a match until the actual transplant surgery, the doctors said to Mrs Crosby numerous times: "there is absolutely no judgement" in case she had any doubts and decided to stop the donation.

I think this did bring us closer together... I have part of Katie inside of me. We couldn't get any closer than that"

She decided to go ahead and share a part of herself with her husband. Mr Crosby got his kidney transplant on July 1, 2024. "I'm off dialysis now and we're back to normal"

"I think this did bring us closer together... I have part of Katie inside of me. We couldn't get any closer than that."

The Crosby family's challenges are now, hopefully, over. That does not mean the faith that accompanied them in the past nine years will decline. "When you bless yourself, you should do it for the right reason," not only when you need to thank God for something, or when you're sick, or need something. "It's important to just take a moment when everything is calm, just thank [Him] for being in a good spot."



Crosby family during the Organ Donor Awareness Week 2017 launch.

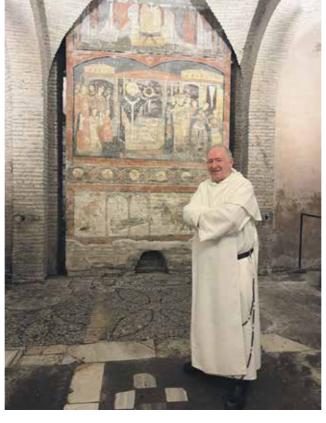


The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024 14 News

Rome's Hidden Gem Underground & the Irish Connection

A conversation with archaeologist & Prior of San Clemente Fr Paul Lawlor OP









Eoin McCormack

you have ever visited Rome, you'll know around almost every corner is a Church or ruin with some significant story to tell. San Clamente, which lies just some hundred meters from the Colosseum and has been under the care of the Irish Dominicans for the past 350 years is not just 'another' Church with historical interest, however, it is in fact one of the most fascinating historical and archaeological sites in all of Rome. For tourists or passersby who might frequent this quite unassuming Basilica from the outside, they are immediately awestruck by the magnificent mosaic above the main altar which many art historians and theologians have studied for centuries - including the late Pope Benedict XVI who's published reflections are now proudly available in the basilica shop. But while the famous 12th Century mosaic of the crucifixion surrounded by

vines is indeed a magnificent sight, the real historical and archaeological significance of this site lies underground and was discovered just some 170 years ago by a Longford man, Fr. Joseph Mullooly.

Under the patronage of the first century Pope and martyr St. Clement, who is said to have been ordained by St. Peter, San Clemente Basilica was granted to the care of the Irish Dominicans in 1677 as many priests and religious fled persecution in Ireland. Today, San Clemente is now home to some dozen Irish Dominicans with a number of other international students at various stages in priestly formation and study. One such caretaker of the site and very much following in the footsteps of Fr. Mullooly, is Prior Fr. Paul Lawlor – a native of Co. Kerry and chief archaeologist today. Fr. Lawlor's passion for the history of the site is infectious and his knowledge on the basilica unmatchable. This week I had the opportunity to tour the site

with him and discuss the significance of San Clemente for the universal Church as well as his own role and vocation both as a priest and archaeologist.

Underground

As we exited what is now called the 'upper basilica' after Fr. Mullooly's discoveries underground, we proceeded downstairs underneath today's street level to enter what is now understood to be the original basilica dating from the 4th Century. The street level of the time is some 20 meters below today having been built upon after the destruction of the devastating fire in Rome during the time of Emperor Nero. Walking around the dimly lit tunnels underground, remnants of the original basilica frescos stand beautifully intact and bring to life the historical continuity of Catholic worship for 2,000 years. Reflecting on this, Fr. Lawlor recounted a story of a protestant tourist who when encountering the depths of the archaeological findings

- it was one of the great Churches of Rome"

came to a realisation of the historical continuity of the Catholic Church and later converted having encountered the "bricks and stone of Christ's true Church."

Another story, Fr. Lawlor quips as we take a walk around the underground basilica, is of a visit from the late Queen-Mother of England who when finishing the tour remarked: "it's wonderful, but why are the Irish here?" - to which the priest giving the tour quickly responded: "for historical reasons Ma'am"

The historical significance of **San Clemente** does not end with the 4th Century **Basilica unearthed** underground by Fr Mullooly"

While it's true to say the

Irish Dominicans might have acquired the site fleeing per-**66** Beyond St Jerome's writings, San Clemente is mentioned right throughout Christian history Gregory the Great preached here, Leo the Great also, and a Papal election was held here

secution from Cromwell, the treasures unearthed many years later by the curious Fr. Mullooly may have never been discovered had it not fallen into the hands of the Irish province. What's more. the historical significance of San Clemente does not end with the 4th Century Basilica unearthed underground by Fr. Mullooly. Further excavations in the early 20th Century have uncovered a 1st Century pagan Mithras temple which tourists and visitors can now access as a part of the fascinating tour.

How did you join the Dominican order and moreover, how did you end up becoming an archaeologist?

I grew up in Tralee, Co. Kerry where the Dominicans have a parish, and I got to know them attending Mass there as a family. But there was also a connection with San Clemente from the beginning. My parents came here (San Clamente) in 1950. They drove from Tralee to Rome, and they came to visit San Clemente. So, as a child I grew up hearing stories of the 'lower church' (underground). So, for years I heard about this old Church and the ancient ruins and I was always interested in history and archae-

I came out here in 1976

initially to study Arabic to go to a mission in Iran and I worked there until 79/80 when the revolution occurred. After that, I came back to San Clemente and did my degree in Christian Archaeology and taught this for many years in the Angelicum University. At the same time, I had the opportunity to take part in a number of excavations in the Middle-East, Georgia and the Holy Land, but the main excavation I took part in was here in San Clemente in the 80's and 90's. I was also very lucky to study under some of the great people of Christian Archaeology; people like Antonio Ferrua who excavated the tomb of St. Peter and Testini who wrote the great Manual of Christian Archaeology.

Could you explain the layered history of San Clemente? How does it reflect the evolution of

Up until 1857 was believed that the current 'upper basilica' was the original Church, making it one of the oldest Churches in the world because St. Jerome talks about it in 384AD. This changed however when Fr. Mullooly began his excavation work and discovered the ruins below. But the extraordinary thing about San ClemThe Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024













66 The Irish Dominicans are here because of the Cromwellian persecutions, priests we being executed back home and they began to flee to Rome. In 1677 this site and San Sisto Vecchio (also still under our care) was given to the Irish province"

ente is the continuity of life. Underneath the 4th Century Basilica is again another layer the 1st Century Mithras temple. You've got a visible history going back to 40AD and you can see something from every century - the marbles, the partings, the brickwork, every century has added something.

The great treasure of the Church is the 12th **Century mosaic** which a number of significant people have done commentaries on - including G.K. **Chesterton and** more recently Pope **Benedict XVI**"

Beyond St. Jerome's writings, San Clemente is mentioned right throughout Christian history - Gregory the Great preached here, Leo the Great also, and a Papal election was held here it was one of the great Churches of Rome.

The great treasure of the Church is the 12th Century mosaic which a number of significant people have done commentaries on - including G.K. Chesterton and more recently Pope Benedict XVI. It's a powerful image where Christ on the cross appears to have died but is displaying a sense of peace - pointing to the resurrection.

What are the most significant archaeological discoveries at San Clemente, and what do they tell us about early Christian worship?

The Christian origins of San Clemente are actually shrouded in mystery. The Basilica dates from the year 400. but as I mentioned. St. Jerome already talked about a 'San Clamente' Church in the 300's. So where was the earlier Church? Before the actual basilica, there was a 3rd century building which I believe was a 'House Church' - a large hall but not yet in the style of a roman basilica.

Discovered even further below the original basilica building is a Mithraic temple. What do we know about Mithraism?

We know very little about this ancient religion. Mithraic temples have been discovered in a number of locations right across the Roman empire even as far as England - but this one in San Clemente is

one of the best preserved because it was filled-in and abandoned when the apse of the basilica was built over it. Studies as recent as 1971 have postulated that it (Mithraism) was a Roman religion and that it is linked in some way with astronomy. One of the problems is that there is practically no documents or sources about it, we know it was condemned by Justine Martyr because their ritual meal was seen as a mockery of the Eucharist. Later, people were more tolerant of it because it's ideals aligned with Christian Virtues like courage, truth, authenticity and strength – so it was very popular within the military. What challenges have

archaeologists faced in preserving and studying San Clemente's different

Water is the big challenge which flooded everything. In 1914 huge works were done to re-route the water around the site to make it accessible as it is today.

Also, one of the big challenges with archaeology is that people come with preconceived ideas - often if you are looking for something the problem is that you'll find it. i.e. You'll attribute what you find to what you wanted to

Have there been any recent discoveries or ongoing excavations that are particularly exciting?

In order to save some of the frescos, we done some excavation works recently which uncovered a corridor behind. We went further and discovered it led to a great 6th Century Baptistry and within it we discovered 11th century frescos! This obviously tells us that the baptistry was used all the way through the 6th to 11th centuries. That hasn't been fully published yet and is not yet open to the tourists. We hope to find someway of making it accessible for people in the future.

How did the Irish Dominicans come to own San Clemente and what are the visible contributions of the Irish to the site today?

The Irish Dominicans are here because of the Cromwellian persecutions, priests we being executed back home and they began to flee to Rome. In 1677 this site and San Sisto Vecchio (also still under our care) was given to the Irish province. To give you an idea of the impact of persecution, in the 1500's we had 44 Dominican houses in Ireland, in the 1600's we had 3 houses in total and none in Ireland - one in Lisbon, one n Leuven and one in Rome.

There's nothing directly visibly Irish in the Basilica today but if it wasn't for the continuous restoration and excavations work by the Irish, the Church wouldn't be there. In our libraries we have collections of works in Irish also, when the friars were here first, they would have prayed and read through the Irish language.





16 | Feature | The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024

The life of a late tattoo artist, 'a window to the infinite'



"He started to draw himself as a 'saint'. He was seeing himself in a different world," hears **Renata Milán Morales**.

short documentary was premiered at the end of this year, In God's Hands. Originally from Roscommon, Niall Sheerin, director of the film explains to The Irish Catholic the meaning of it. In God's Hands is dedicated to Niall's late brother Michael, who was a recognised tattoo artist who died in 2022 at the age of 42 from pulmonary hypertension.

Michael was a tattoo artist who worked all over the world from Dublin to Helsinki, Holland, Germany and Los Angeles. He was diagnosed with sarcoidosis in 2020, but his health worsened, turning over time to a branch of pulmonary hypertension.

Michael's life was an example of creativity, resilience, and faith. As an artist, brother, and deep thinker, he left behind a body of work that inspires those who knew him. Michael's story is an example of the power of faith and the nature of art.

Expression

The tattoo artist and illustrator's journey evolved over the years. As his health declined, his art grew more reflective, touching on ideas such of mortality, eternity, and faith. "Michael used art to express his inner thoughts and emotions as he was getting sicker. I found that interesting - that his art changed as well. It became deeper, more profound. And it was interesting looking at that after he died as well," his brother Niall explained.

The film director's purpose behind his work was not only a tribute to his brother's life, but also an exploration of his spiritual and artistic evolution. He told this paper that "the main goal [of the documentaryl is putting something out there in the world to commemorate Michael. I have a lot of video footage from Michael's phone, and from documentaries that would have been made on Michael in the past as well. But [I] also [have] a lot of artworks. I decided to make a short documentary based around those portraits... As well [as how] Michael used art as well. Michael used art to express his inner thoughts and emotions as he was getting sicker.'

He had faith that he was in safe hands, even as he grew increasingly ill, and that brings myself and my family a lot of comfort"

The title comes from a drawing Michael did a couple of weeks before he died. "He was in the cafeteria in Galway University Hospital, probably drinking a coffee. He loved coffee! But the drawing is interesting in that it has the

face of Jesus in the froth of the coffee cup. It has written in the sugar sachets 'HOPE' and 'FAITH' and the cup is being held by his own hand," described Niall Sheerin.

Michael's brother continued, "written around it is 'IN GODS HANDS'... He had faith that he was in safe hands, even as he grew increasingly ill, and that brings myself and my family a lot of comfort. Nobody realised Michael was dying but maybe he sensed it himself."

"The function of all art lies in fact in breaking through the narrow and tortuous enclosure of the finite, in which man is immerged while living here below, and in providing a window to the infinite for his hungry soul," shared In 1952 Pope Pius XII on an address to a group of Italian artists on the sixth Roman Quadrennia. Michael's later works, featuring angels, saints, and depictions of the afterlife displayed his preoccupation with eternal life

Faith

Though Michael was not a conventional churchgoer, his faith was strong. It shaped his worldview and his art. "Faith gave him immense comfort... As he grew older, he became fascinated by religious art -angels, saints, the

Michael Sheerin



afterlife. During his illness, he found solace in drawing these images, which reflected his strong belief that he was going somewhere better," his brother told this paper.

In Catholic tradition, suffering is not a just a struggle but a way to participate in Christ's redemptive work. Michael's art became a way for processing his pain and finding peace during his illness. His representations of divine figures symbolised hope, grace, and the presence of God, even in moments of darkness.

Michael's spiritual journey was "personal," yet his faith was evident in his art, his conversations, and his approach to life"

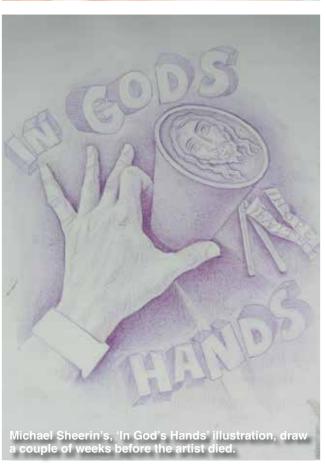
"He started to draw himself as a saint. He was seeing himself in a different world which wasn't apparent when he was alive. It's only when you look at it now and you think, 'he was looking at himself from a from a different point of view. I suppose that was maybe him coming to terms with his illness. Coming to terms of his own mortality," shared his brother.

Michael's spiritual journey was "personal," yet his faith was evident in his art, his conversations, and his approach to life. One of the most important moments in his journey came during a trip to Canada, which his brother describes as "a kind of religious awakening."

Michael's faith found its voice in his art, his fascination with religious imagery. "Michael was always very interested in Renaissance art... which is a lot about afterlife and angels and religious iconography. He used to love going to museums and cathedrals. When he got sick, which I found interesting, he was obsessed with drawing angels and Saints," expressed Niall Sheerin. From Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel to the stained-glass windows of churches, Catholic art has been a bridge between the human and divine.

"Michael's art is still alive in the world. On walls, on skin, and in people's lives. That's the blessing of it all. His work carries his essence for-





Since his passing, I've felt his presence. In a strange way, he's never left. It's as though he knew he'd die, and he drew himself as a saint, as if he knew his place in our lives after he was gone"

ward, giving comfort not just to our family but to everyone touched by his creativity," his brother shared.

Inspiration

As we move from Christmas Day into the New Year – a time of reflection and of new beginnings - Michael's story reminds us of the importance of faith, creativity, and gratitude in our lives. His philosophy of life was, "life is yours to live. He taught me to be positive, and to believe in compathing."

something." Niall Sheerin, Michael's brother and film director finds inspiration in his art and his approach to life. His legacy reminds us that even in the face of adversity, it is possible to find beauty, express hope, and leave an impact on the world.

"I found that interesting that his art changed as he went over the course of life. After getting sick, I suppose, it became deeper, more profound. It was interesting looking at that after he died. That is kind of the essence of what this documentary is – an exploration of his art."

"Synodality is what the Lord expects from the Church of the third millennium" - Pope Francis

When the Pope wanted a woman to talk to him and the cardinals, he chose Sr Pocher



Luca **Attanasio** speaks with the theologian and lecturer

he Church is a woman,' Pope Francis had said exactly one year ago in his audience to members of the International Theological Commission. "And one of the great sins we have had," he had added, "is 'masculinising' the Church. In a concrete attempt to reduce the prevailing male chauvinism, Francis had inaugurated an absolutely innovative format in the history of the Church: in the months between the two sessions of the Synod on Synodality, the Pontiff had entrusted Salesian nun and theologian Linda Pocher with the direction of a cycle of formation meetings on the topic and had wanted three women to be constantly present at the C9 meetings and

66 I would say that those meetings, on the contrary, started a path of great openness and constant presence in the debate"

role of women as well as on various other crucial topics. The experiment seemed very successful and appreciated and opened a debate that, between ups and downs, is finding its way more and more clearly. The recent controversy that emerged during the Synod sessions in October concerning the choices made by Cardinal Fernandez, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, have contributed to bringing the issue of the diaconate to the forefront, and reopened old diatribes that clearly polarise positions within the Church. But the issue is alive, as demonstrated by the Holy Father's words: "We have not listened enough to the voice of women in the Church" and his decision to have the C9 cardinals reflect on the women's tions and clashes, indicative pope and the Church in genChristology and Mariology at the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium in Rome. She is, as mentioned above, the theologian whom the pope asked to organise a series of formation meetings on the theme of women for the Council's cardinals and to invite as speakers, women.

Since there was a lot of polarisation among theologians on the subject, they decided to entrust the issue of the female diaconate to the doctrine of



LA CHIESA?



given great visibility, even beyond the pope's intentions

The development we experienced with the debate during the Synod is proof of transparency, it is a sign that something is changing"

There was a lot of controversy at the Synod, do you think there was any backtracking on the subject of women and their role?

"Cardinal Fernàndez's move was not very correct. I am not a conspiracy theorist but I got the idea that instead of creating a working group, since there was a lot of polarisation among theologians on the subject, they decided to entrust the issue of the female diaconate to the doctrine of the faith. This is an unfair move from the point of view of the synodal path, and this choice led to a revolt from the synodal assembly, which called Fernandez to account. At that point, I must say, the cardinal handled it well: despite being under

ONNE E MINISTE

LA CHIESA



pressure he played his cards close to the vest. He convened a new conference in which he himself spoke and asked for it to be made public in full. In a way the synodal assembly won. The subject of the diaconate for women is much feared, because, as is clear, it is perceived by one

DONNE E UOMINI:

QUESTIONE DI CULTURE

part of the church as the first step towards the ordination of women priests. Paradoxically, one can grant everything to women, even the cardinalate as long as there is no talk of ordination. But the development we experienced with the debate during the Synod is proof of transparency, it is a sign that something is changing and I think I can say that it is a fruit of the Synod. Enough of the old logic, it is time for transparency'.

There is a lot of talk on the subject and we must continue to do so without documents that could limit its development"

In the Synod's final document on synodality it says that the question of the female diaconate 'remains open' and Cardinal

66 As long as there is no open discernment and no freedom to speak, even to argue, the risk is to close oneself off again. And the subject will not mature"

Fernàndez has said that an ad hoc document will be drawn up on the specific subject, what do you expect?

'I cannot say, I certainly hope that the document will be published as soon as possi-

Why?

"Because at the moment the situation is too polarised and there is a risk of factions clashing, even bitterly, without any reflection moving forward. Instead, in my opinion, the moment is propitious, there is a lot of talk on the subject and we must continue to do so without documents that could limit its development.

Last month I was in Verona for a debate, the bishop was next to me, and the topic was openly discussed. At the end, the bishop himself said: 'The good thing about this is that we are getting over the fear a little bit'. Not only do people get used to hearing about it, but they can talk about it, pray about it, reflect about it, maybe one day a third possibility will emerge from this reflection. As long as there is no open discernment and no freedom to speak, even to argue, the risk is to close oneself off again. And the subject will not mature'.

What are the concrete signs emerging in the meantime?

'Well, there are signs, perhaps small ones, that may sound like an afterthought, but they are there. It is important, for example, that there are women in seminaries for teaching as well as in diocesan offices, and I remain convinced that in this transition, many things can be done. Certainly, an extraordinary thing happened recently: three women per session had a lot of space in the C9 meetings and the pope and the cardinals spent a lot of time listening to them. Perhaps nothing has changed, but the time devoted remains - as do the books - an obvious fact in the history of the Church'.

«SMASCHILIZZARE LA CHIESA»? IL POTERE E LA VITA

US theologian: Ordained women deacons existed until the Middle Ages

n international expert in deaconess research would like Pope Francis to have the "correct his torical awareness" that he himself has called for. Because she recognises mistakes in his understanding of history.

US theologian Phyllis Zagano accuses Pope Francis of having forgotten the history of the ordination of women deacons. In a guest article for the church internet portal domradio.de on Wednesday, she writes that he

said in an interview that women have always had the function of deaconesses without being dea-

The international expert on research into women deacons (Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York) explains that for more than 1,000 years, women have served as deacons or deaconesses, depending on the language. "The only person in the Holy Scriptures who is referred to as a deacon is St Phoebe, who travelled to Rome as an emissary of St Paul and delivered his letter to the Romans," adds the former member of the first papal commission to research the diaconate of women.

Deaconesses: ordained like their male colleagues

As the church developed, female deacons were ordained just like male deacons. She explains: "The rules for the ordination liturgy used by bishops over the centuries to ordain women as deacons

correspond to the standards for sacramental ordination laid down by the Council of Trent in the 16th century." These women were named in written documents and their names were engraved on tombstones throughout the countries of early Christianity.

In the Middle Ages, the Church finally stopped ordaining people to the diaconate as a permanent profession because the male diaconate had become a stumbling block for ambitious priests. Zagano goes on to write that Pope Francis appears to have slammed the door shut on the restoration of the church's deacon tradition, thereby accelerating the withdrawal of women and men from the Catholic Church worldwide.

The theologian recommends applying the Pope's words: "A proper awareness of history can help each of us to develop a better sense of proportion and perspective in order to understand reality as it is, and not as we imagine it or would like it to be.'

2024 Review of the Year

JANUARY

igerian priest Fr Innocent Sunu CC spoke to The Irish Catholic about the attacks on 20 Christian villages in Plateau State, saying that they have been "left alone to survive" by international countries.

Fr Denis Carney PP of Ballinrobe-Kilmaine told *The Irish Catholic* that people should only provide accommodation for 'asylum seekers' if they did not have the resources to support them. He claims the Government needed to have peaceful conversations to solve this problem and applauded the conversations that had already been occurring to resolve this

Consultant Obstetrician Dr Trevor Hayes spoke to The Irish Catholic on the removal of paragraph 46.9, the loss now allowing the deliberate killing of a patient, in the Medical Council's 'Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners'. He agreed with the scrutiny this removal was facing by saying that "they want doctors to just press the 'kill button'. They're not interested in doctors asking, 'Should I be doing this'?".

Call were made for the Government to expand their inquiries about abuse at education to the whole Department of Schools instead of the only the Catholic schools "in the interests of fairness and iustice". Sr Mary Hanrahan PBVM stated that "engagement with survivors is central to the work of the scoping inquiry,' and how important it is for people to cooperate with this new inquiry so they could gain justice for the victims.

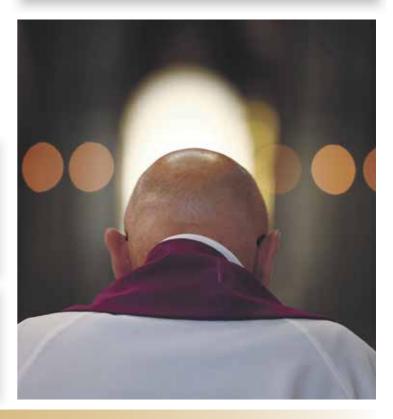
Priest warns Christian plight 'ignored' following Christmas killings in Nigeria



Resource issues remain warns Ballinrobe PP after protests

Doctors rally against removal of 'killing prohibition' from ethics code

Govt must examine State's role in abuse at schools 'in interest of justice'



FEBRUARY

ope Francis called for the 'global ceasefire" of the war between Israel and Hamas and said there are private conversations discussing a plan for an end. He also mentioned Ukraine, stating that they were working on "the return of Ukrainian civilians" and that many Ukrainians had already returned home.

Sr Helene Culhane said that it was "very disappointing" that women religious, a group who made many great contributions to the Catholic community, were underappreciated and overlooked by the Government.

Veritas was closing and many customers and staff were saddened by this loss of jobs as well as the closing of a beloved religious publications store.

Head of the Christian Blind mission charity Dualta Roughneen told The Irish Catholic that the "Government has forgotten to continue work on disability inclusion in Ireland". He claimed that it is important to invest in the lives of the disabled and how the lack of strategy to make them feel included "needs to change"

80% of Northern Ireland's population claimed to be Christians, many with different views on topics such as faith in education and prayer schedule than the Catholic community. There was much debate on how Catholics should approach Northern Ireland considering their Christian views: 77% saying "radical action" was needed on climate change and 64% believing they should be supported in practical ways.

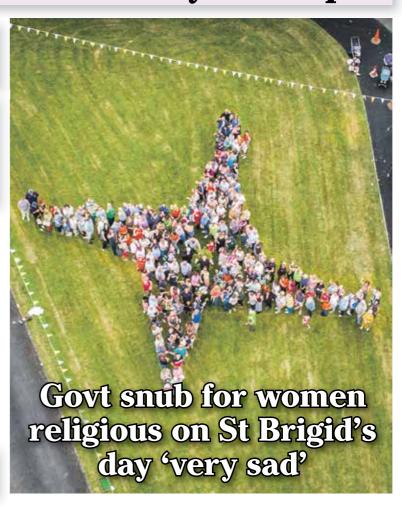
World is on the brink of the abyss - Pope

Govt 'forgetting' people with disabilities charity head warns

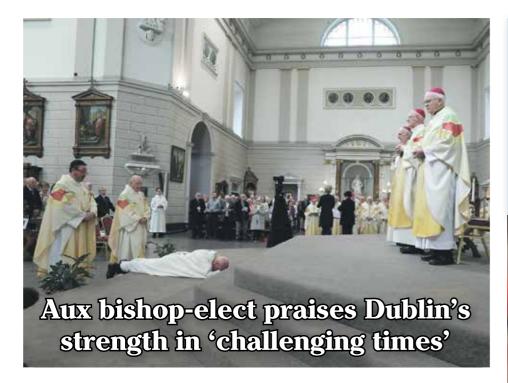
80% of NI identify as Christians 'Distinct' role of faith must be respected in policy



Veritas a 'huge loss'



2024 Review of the Year



'Pay back to carers the money you wasted' - Senator

Married priests not answer to vocations crisis, cardinal for clergy says in Knock



Easter hope needed for 'fearful and anxious' youth

n March, Fr Donal Roche was appointed into his position at Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin and gave a statement commending Dublin on their "commitment and faith" during hard times.

Senator Rónán Mullen wanted the government to give €20 million to carers and the people that they take care of. Barrister and campaigner Maria Steen claimed that the referendum that did not allow families to obtain money from the government was "a further step in the erasing and degradation of women and of motherhood," and needed to be protested.

Cardinal Lazzaro You Heung-sik, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Clergy said that a true witness to faith is the best way to respond to decreasing vocations in Ireland instead of married priests. He claims that although people say that they want to allow priests to be married, their families will stop the growth of faith since these families will not "promote the priesthood in their own families" and their future children would then not "pursue a religious life"

In March Bishop-elect Donal Roche spoke to The Irish Catholic about how he hopes the Easter holiday could help young people who are "suffering from anxiety" and "swamped with social media" saying, "I think it is so sad that joyful message just does not seem to be getting through to a lot of them". He hoped that Easter would bring these young people happiness and relief.

Easter converts 'fabulous' for Ireland's parishes



Short window to save **Catholic education stark** report warns

Priest will continue blessing planes despite airport ban



'Delight' after airport U-turn on banning plane blessings

APRIL

any of the diocese were happy to report that many people made their homes in the Catholic Church over the Easter weekend, especially since most of those new members were young adults.

Fr Des Doyle of Dublin Airport Church, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, responded to the Dublin Airport Authority's ban of airside blessings of airplanes. Although Fr Doyle was happy that security in the airports is "tightening up" he said that "If an airline asked me to bless a plane, I'll bless the plane - delighted to do it – I've been doing that since I came, so that will continue"

The banning of airside blessings of airplanes, covered in the previous weeks' The Irish Catholic, was overturned and Fr Des Doyle of Dublin Airport Church, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, was contacted by the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) and asked if he could continue to bless the planes like what had been done for the past 75 years. Fr Doyle shared that he was delighted to keep working with the DAA and staff at Dublin Airport.

Catholic Schools in Ireland warned that teachers and school personnel within Catholic Schools are losing their level of commitment to their faith with Prof. Eamonn Conway reporting that on a faculty under 50 years of age, only 56% are committed to their religion. Prof. Eugene Duffy said that "if we don't act now, we're going to be pushed by demographic change," and the schools need to "retain greater control over the curriculum".

The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024



'Major roadblocks' to synod in Ireland dioceses warn

MAY

anon Law and a lack of formation were reported to be major road-blocks to the progression of Catholic parishes, and that lay people needed to be more co-responsible, or these roadblocks would keep young people out of the Church.

Councillor John Kingsley Onwumereh told *The Irish Catholic* that people needed to be compassionate in response to the welcome of immigrants into Churches and when giving them accommodation, especially since they are so committed to their faith.

Chairman of the Christian charity Tiglin, Aubrey McCarthy, reported that his charity has been receiving multiple online threats recently. Richard Williams, project worker for Merchants Quay Ireland, said that these threats came from Irish service users who were angry at the uprise surge in homelessness, feeling like the homeless were keeping them from being their service's first choice.

Archbishop John McDowell addressed Ukranian families who began to panic due to their supports and accommodations being pulled by the government by saying that the people of Ireland must "plan ahead and ensure stability and support," to these families to make them feel welcomed.

Bishop Donal Roche told *The Irish Catholic* that he hoped the laity would allow priests time off from their busy schedules and says they needed to "recover and recuperate from their work". He then approached the topic of engaging young people by saying "it's not just about getting people to do things or to come to things, it's getting them to have an encounter first with Christ."

Chaotic Govt policy should not diminish Christian welcome to migrants

Restore goodwill says archbishop as 'panic' among Ukrainians sets in



Laity must allow priests rest says new Dublin bishop



Charity staff face threats and abuse

JUNE

atholic youth groups in Ireland said they are experiencing a resurgence of young people to faith-based activities and community service. Bishop Fintan Gavin of Cork and Ross stated that the resurgence gives him 'hope' and that the Catholic communities "need to find a way where young people can be in the culture of today and be a life-giving force within that culture."

Founder of the Immigrant Council of Ireland Sr Stan Kennedy told *The Irish Catholic* the charity has been helping immigrants take part in the election as part of their work towards integration. She said many migrants are being integrated, working and contributing to society and "it's important to highlight that."

The new auxiliary bishop of Dublin, Bishop Paul Dempsey said he is struck by the large size of parishes and the generosity of priests.

Bishop Fintan Gavin of Cork and Ross said the bishops are trying to create "a vision, and to work together so that the whole Church flourishes." He stated that the whole Irish Church needs "a rigorous intellectual formation that challenges us and provides formation in Catholic tradition, which is broad and deep, and not frozen in any one historical expression."



Election results a 'good omen' for migrants – Sr Stan

New Dublin bishop struck by generosity of priests

Bishop outlines vision for youth so 'whole Church will flourish'



The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024

2024 Review of the Year

Cardinal says human slavery getting worse



God is making a huge comeback with the young - PussyCat Doll Star



Do you want to be Catholic or not?

JULY

ardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster told a top-level summit of police chiefs, Irish bishops and justice personnel that the crime of human trafficking is getting worse. He states that we must "encourage each other, deepen our relationships and deepen our sense of common purpose.'

Former Pussycat Dolls singer, Kaya Jones, told The Irish Catholic that "God is making a huge come-back with the youth." Her message to the young is clear: embrace your inherent value, seek community, and don't be afraid to stand up for your beliefs.

Cloyne priest, Fr Gabriel Burke, told The Irish Catholic that he refused Communion to Cork North Central TD and Minister of State Colm Burke "because the salvation of souls is at stake.'

Celebrated runner Mageean who represented Ireland in the Paris Olympics has been described as a "natural evangeliser" who is not ashamed to speak of her Catholic Faith.

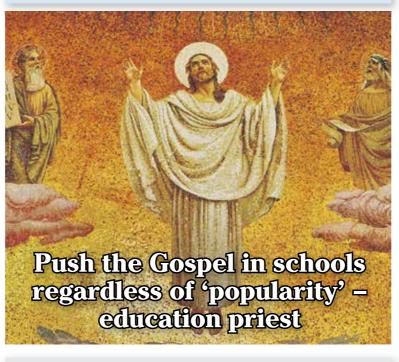
Star athlete an 'evangeliser' and role model for youth

'A national disgrace' - Tribunal of Inquiry needed to investigate state and ministerial neglect of kids



£25m projected for **Dublin Pro Cathedral** refurbishment

Cork hurling legend priest saving children from abuse



More religion please say school children

AUGUST

Sean Barry, of the St Patrick's Missionary Society is part of important children safeguarding projects today in Kenya. He stated to *The Irish Catholic*, "We deal with all sorts of abuse. Sexual, physical, emotional.

Speaking to The Irish Catholic, Fr Patrick Moore PP of Castlepollard in Co. Westmeath and Vicar Forane said it would be "terrible negligence" to allow children not to receive faith formation regardless of changing demographics.

A children's Ombudsman survey reveals school children want more religion in their classrooms and not less. Alan Hynes of the Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) and Fr Patrick Moore PP of St Michael's Parish Castlepollard voiced their support for faithbased education in the country and argued that young people's responses need to translate into a new appreciation for religious education, where its "life-essential element" is recognised anew.

100,000 children or almost twice the number of children who will do the Leaving Cert this year will be referred to Tusla, the State-run Child and Family Agency, amid chronic underfunding, missing children, lack of beds, in the ongoing crisis of State care of children in Ireland.

The Archdiocese of Dublin is set to spend €25 million approximately on the much-needed refurbishment of St Mary's Pro Cathedral in the heart of Dublin City Centre. However, direct queries to the archdiocese from The Irish Catholic about the strategy were vague, particularly around financing.



A Mass a day keeps the blues away

SEPTEMBER

Trinity College Dublin (TDC) study found that regular Mass going protects feelings of lone-liness and suicidal thoughts, with weekly attendance being better than monthly. The study found that attending Mass can "protect against these negative thoughts about one's own life."

The Government's SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) curriculum has been criticised for its extreme ideological stances and ignoring traditional values such as love, marriage and commitment and the understanding of male and female. Carol Nolan TD of Laois-Offaly, and a former school teacher, told *The Irish Catholic* that issues with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) curriculum go deeper than the cartoon which negatively caricatured a 'traditional Irish family'.

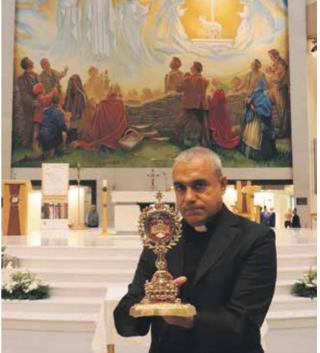
National coordinator of the Syro-Malabars in Ireland, Fr Joseph Mathew Oliakkattil, said the Indian Catholic community have "a responsibility to revive the Faith" in Ireland since the Irish were missionary pioneers in India. He highlighted the impact of secularism on Faith practice in Ireland and how "Government politicians and new ideologies" are one of the reasons for the decline.

Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap. Of Priorswood parish in Dublin called on whoever took a much-lived relic of saint-to-be Carlo Acutis during the Ploughing Championships to give it back so it may "give consolation to a wider scope of people."

School kids under ideological attack – TD



Indian Catholics geared up to revive Faith in Ireland



Holy relic pilfered at Ploughing

OCTOBER

omelessness campaigners Fr Peter McVerry and Sr Stan Kennedy have insisted that pointing the finger at asylum seekers is "very wrong" and that it is up to the Government to respond appropriately to growing demand for emergency accommodation.

Br Richard Hendrick OFM Cap told *The Irish Catholic* the Church needs to teach "the richness and the depth of our prayer tradition" during catechism. He said that praying could take away a lot of stress of modern life and allow people to trust in God so they could "begin to live our life from a position of fundamental trust."

The Primate of All Ireland has said he is "alarmed" by the ongoing debates around school SPHE textbooks and training which include controversial lessons around gender ideology and sexuality, adding the Church has not approved the use of these resources. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Archbishop Eamon Martin said that no SPHE or RSE resources "should be in any school without the consultation with parents."

Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin told *The Irish Catholic* that some dioceses and parishes will not survive financially in the future and while there is "pain in letting go" passing on the Faith is more important. He said simply "ensuring that the next generation of Irish people believe in God" is the reality the Church is facing, not the expensive upkeep of buildings.

Administrator of Wexford parish Fr Billy Swan

Administrator of Wexford parish Fr Billy Swan has warned that "there is evidence that Ireland is 're-paganising' or reverting to the worship of false gods" He said that Ireland is "Moving away from the light of Christ and into darkness is inevitably leading to a breakdown of civilisation, the family and chaos in society in general."

Catechesis needs to teach the depth and richness of our prayer tradition

'Do not blame asylum seekers'



'We must ensure the next generation believe in God'



Catholic Primate 'alarmed' at unapproved school texts

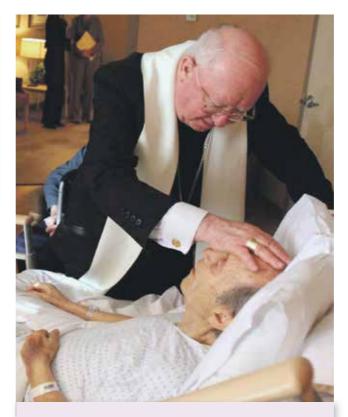


'Our priests are constantly burying young people who die for want of a reason for living' - Bishop of Derry

'Trust in Faith in difficult times' -**GAA All Star**



New Government must listen to people of Faith



Ask politicians where they stand on assisted suicide, Bishop Crean urges

yrone man Niall Morgan, a GAA All-Star, was open and frank about the ups and downs of living a life of Faith. He opened up about the sorrow of miscarriage and said that people should "trust in Faith" during difficult times.

There is a "crisis" among young people who "we are losing to selfharm, through addiction and reckless actions", warned the Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown. He told The Irish Catholic that "our priests are constantly burying young people who die for want of a reason for living", while also saying the Church must be a "prophetic voice" and critic of Government.

Bishop William Crean, Bishop of Cloyne issued an appeal to Catholic voters that when being canvassed over these days to ask prospective TDs to indicate clearly where they stand on assisted suicide/assisted death. Bishop Crean said, "How we care for the weakest and most vulnerable goes to the core of our moral fibre and integrity as a society.

Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin, told The Irish Catholic that politicians must listen to the "voice of Faith" in Ireland and create a functioning dialogue between Church and State. Archbishop Martin said that the current model of Church-State dialogue is "tired" and "unused." "I think it hugely impoverishes the Church if we are not able to engage in that dialogue, and equally I think it hugely impoverishes democracy if the voice of faith is not heard," the archbishop said.

Bishops Concerned Over Derry/Raphoe **Merger Plan**



Don't burn out this **Christmas bishops** urge very busy priests



DECEMBER

ishop Donal McKeown of Derry flew to Rome in recent weeks to meet the head of the Dicastery for Bishops, Bishop Francis Provost O.S.A. (Augustinian), to petition for a change in Vatican policy towards plans to merge the diocese of Derry and Raphoe. With only three bishops in the North of Ireland, it is believed that Archbishop Eamon Martin would be left alone to administer the amalgamation of the two dioceses while also looking after the Diocese of Armagh and Dromore

Auxiliary Bishops of Dublin and Armagh have urged that priests should reach out for support if they are feeling stressed as Christmas approaches. Bishop Donal Roche expressed concern for priests who are busy all year round and particularly the increased pressure they face in the run up to Christmas. He said that for next year, people should perhaps "combine forces, get people to help" and for the priests not to deal with preparation all on themselves. "If it is too much, tell somebody.'

Christmas generosity of Catholic school kids hailed The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024

YourFaith | 33

Look to Our Lady



Áine Blake

he season of Advent has been a time of preparation for the great Feast of Christmas. The feeling of anticipation built as we got ever closer, week by week. The candles on the Advent wreath got lit, one by one. Their glow became ever brighter. What was it that we anticipated? The celebration of the birth of Jesus: our Saviour coming into the world - an event that changed everything. In the seasons of Advent and Christmas, Jesus is front and centre. There is another special and distinct figure however, a most important presence whom we should appreciate particularly and have recourse to: Our Lady. At the Annunciation an angel appeared to Mary and revealed that she would be the mother of Jesus. From this point until that most special night in Bethlehem Our Lady was expecting the birth of Jesus. Already He was within her womb, present to her in the most intimate way.

Hope

Those nine months of pregnancy when Mary bore Jesus could be related to our weeks of Advent when we have been called to prepare for the celebration of the coming of the Lord Iesus into the world as an infant – given the name Emmanuel which means 'God with us'. Like Mary, we too were called to live in expectant hope of the fulfilment of God's promises. We were called to draw as close to Jesus as we can, with the sacraments of the Eucharist and Confession being most powerful means to do so. We were called to recollect ourselves interiorly, to seek out some quiet time, to become aware of the presence of Jesus within us, and have our actions be influenced by this fact. Our Lady pondered in her heart and must have marvelled greatly at the most mysterious happenings and realities she was

Mary accepted God's will and offered Jesus to the world to fulfil the great mission and purpose for which He came to the Earth"

While pregnant, she went to assist her cousin Elizabeth who, moved by the Holy Spirit recognised at once the Lord within her"

witness to and an indeed an intrinsic part of. Like her, we too have been called to reflect with wonder and awe on the incredible mystery that is the incarnation, its significance for all mankind and for each of us individually. Whilst Mary bore Jesus within her and had a personal relationship with Him that could be unparalleled, she did not keep Him to herself. Her soul proclaimed the greatness of the Lord, as we read in the Gospel account of Luke in the beautiful Magnificat. While pregnant, she went to assist her cousin Elizabeth who, moved by the Holy Spirit recognised at once the Lord within her.

Humility

Later in Bethlehem Mary humbly presented her infant son to those visitors of the crib: the shepherds and the wise men. Thirty years later, when Jesus would undertake his public ministry, although she knew it would involve tremendous sacrifice, Mary accepted God's will and offered Jesus to the world to fulfil the great mission and purpose for which He came to the Earth. Like Mary, we too should acknowledge the holy

name of God and His mercy for generations to those that fear Him, and we should endeavour not to keep Him just to ourselves, but to bring others to Him so that they too may come to know Him. to love Him, and to serve Him. Imagine the scene at that stable in Bethlehem. The loving tenderness with which Our Lady held her infant son. St Joseph at her side as a strong, resolute and prayerful guardian and protector. The Holy Family: a picture of prayerful unity, with Mary and Joseph in reverent awe of the newborn King. Let us appeal to Mary to help bring about in our own homes this unity and peace in our families. Let us pray through her intercession for the healing of any brokenness, woundedness or division. May she bestow upon us particular graces to help orient us and our families and friends to Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: the true meaning of Christmas.

f) Áine Blake is a Catholic from Co. Tipperary living in Dublin and is a member of the Legion of Mary.



Our Lady pondered in her heart and must have marvelled greatly at the most mysterious happenings and realities she was witness to and an indeed an intrinsic part of"

Glory to the newborn King



Scott P. Richert

family never watched It's a Wonderful Life when I was growing up. I saw it for the first time when I was around 30 years old, at a special Christmas. I found myself in tears at the end, and not because I had been emotionally manipulated. The film is a near-perfect representation of certain realities of community that I had always felt instinctively and which, at that time, I had been writing about for the better part

of a decade.

I have watched *It's a Wonderful Life* at least 25 times since, and perhaps a few more, most recently with my family at another restored cinema. Unlike other favourite films of mine, it gets better with each viewing. I prefer to see it on the big screen, surrounded by people, rather than in the comfort of our own home, precisely because it is a film about community.

Redemption

It's become fashionable in recent decades to argue that George Bailey, the protagonist of the film, is nevertheless not the movie's hero. I have no argument with that. George is a flawed character, and his redemption, in the end, is a very Christian one, not wrought through his own efforts but very much in spite of himself - hardly the classic definition of a hero.



More recently, some Catholic writers have argued that George's wife, Mary, is the true hero of the movie, and I have found myself drawn to that interpretation. Her patience and quiet resolve throughout most of the film, and (during George's downward spiral) her implied Christian faith, make her a very attractive character indeed - more so, in many

ways, than George

But watching It's a Wonderful Life again through that lens, I noticed that Mary, too, has her moments of selfishness. They may be less frequent than George's, but they end in the same way: Recognising, in spite of her own desires, what she should do in that moment, and stepping up and doing it. And she does so for the same reason that George continues, in crisis after crisis, to do the right thing. She recognises that her life is a thread woven into the fabric of the community of Bedford Falls, and that pursuing her own desire and will to the detriment of others would mar that fabric irrevocably.

Desire

The reason It's a Wonderful Life remains so powerful nearly 80 years after its release is, I would argue, not because George or Mary (and certainly not Mr Potter) is a 'hero', but because director Frank Capra tapped into the desire for community that beats in every human heart and that is so essential to the Christian vision. Even today, when our virtual 'connections' have led to the widespread destruction of face-to-face and day-to-day literal connections, our hearts still long

for the ties that George Bailey strained so long against.

Despite our manifold sins and failings, we desire to be woven into the tapestry of something bigger than ourselves, to love and be loved, to respond to the sacrifices of others with a sacrifice of ourselves.

That desire of each human heart finds its fulfilment in the manger in Bethlehem and on the cross at Calvary. It's a Wonderful Life ends with a rendition of Auld Lang Syne, but as the entire community of Bedford Falls (with the notable exception of Mr Potter) gathers in George and Mary Bailey's living room, they are singing a very different hymn: Hark the herald angels sing / Glory to the newborn King.

OSV Scott P. Richert is publisher



Mixed celluloid blessings in 2024

he year began prom-isingly with *Priscilla*, a stylised study of how Elvis Presley's wife became trapped in the same goldfish bowl as Elvis after fame struck

Priscilla Beaulieu is the forgotten person in the many films that have been made about Elvis. In Sofia Coppoloa's mood-piece she shared the stage with him. Jacob Elord was a good likeness for Elvis and Cailee Spaeny for Priscilla.

My choice for best biopic of the year was Sam Taylor-Johnson's Back to Black. Amy Winehouse was the Judy Garland of our time, a diva who couldn't deal with fame and paid the price. Vitality shone out of both women so scintillatingly it made their fall from grace all the more heartbreaking.

Mrs Robinson also impressed me, despite verging on hagiography at times. This was also a problem with the Bob Marley biopic One

A Complete Unknown captured Bob Dylan at the beginning of his career. Maria showed us Maria Callas facing the end of hers.

This is a year I'll remember mainly for its female performances. Saoirse Ronan again showed her Oscar potential in both The Outrun and Blitz. Anne Hathaway and Jessica Chastain were both astounding in A Mother's Instinct.

Great inspiration was shown by director Benoit Belhomme in this revenge fable, making it into an almost operatic experience"

I rarely go to a film in a general cinema after seeing it for review but made an exception for the latter. Before seeing it I was lukewarm about Hathaway. I wondered why people made such a fuss about her. No more will that be the case. She parlayed her descent into neurosis with chilling fascina-



The Outrun

Great inspiration was shown by director Benoit Belhomme in this revenge fable, making it into an almost operatic experience. The attention to detail, the capturing of the period, the build-up of tension to the shocking finale made it the most engrossing film of the year for me by a mile. For atmosphere The Critic ran it a close second.

After seeing these two films I bought the novels from which they came. Both disappointed me. A Mother's Instinct was melodramatic and The Critic too longwinded. Adversely, they made me admire the films based on them even more.

My second favourite film of 2024 was probably Strangers All of Us. This was like a ghost story morphing into a romance as we watched both Andrew Scott and Paul Mescal awkwardly grappling with their sexuality.

Mescal stretched himself in a different direction in Ridley Scott's Gladiator 2. Toga movies have been graveyards for many stars. (Remember Colin Farrell in Alexander?) It remains to be seen what this does for (or against) Mescal.

The most challenging film of the year was Ceylon Nuri Bilge's About Dry Grasses. It was also the most rewarding, for that reason.

For authenticity I would nominate King Frankie, an enigmatic treat that confused me right up to the last frame. Best sequel was a toss-up between Joker: Folie a Deux, Dune: Part Two and A Quiet Place: Day One.

The Joker phenomenon has fascinated me ever since Jack Nicholson got a whopping \$90 million for essaying the role in Batman in 1989. How has this villain slid into the comic myth psyche so seamlessly since then? The way he's eclipsed the Caped Crusader makes one think: If Hollywood released a series of Lex Luthor films, maybe they could forget about Superman.

Most outrageous film of the year? I'm torn between such diverse works as Thelma and the hip-hop extravaganza, Kneecap"

Scary films that resonated with me were Heretic and Oddity, both intriguing in their way. The world of fantasy got imaginative outings in Wicked and The Wild Robot, Jon Chu's re-imagining of The Wizard of Oz. The African-American experience received traction in Nickel Boys and Sing Sing. The latter, with its designer prisoners, underwhelmed me.

Most outrageous film of the year? I'm torn between such diverse works as Thelma and the hip-hop extravaganza, Kneecap. Longevity award? Let's give this to Clint Eastwood. He's tipping ninety now and still churning out nail-biting thrillers like Juror

We've seen so much of Donald Trump in the past year it was like bringing coals to Newcastle to have his younger self foisted on us in The Apprentice. This harked back to him climbing to the top of the business world in New York. It was well made but Sebastian Stan didn't bear a good enough resemblance to him.

If they make a film about the president-elect as he is now, Alec Baldwin would be an obvious candidate though he's hardly of a mind to. Rust has just been released. It will bring back the tragic shooting that took place on that set with a vengeance.

The Church didn't have a good year in films. It was carpeted for powerplay in Conclave and had its nose rubbed in Magdalen laundry abuse in Small Things Like These. The latter film was, as many people commented, set in the eighties but looked like the fifties.

Many people conflated it with other things that were going on then, like the Kerry Babies scandal and Ann Lovett's death, thereby making it into a kind of indictment of the time. It was a powerful film right up to the moving



Juror #2



Conclave



About Dry Grasses

expression of Bob Dylan's, a "finger-pointing" one. Messages compromise plots.

Such emphases are tempting for directors but they indicate agendas. That's not to demean the fine performances of Ralph Fiennes and Cillian Murphy in these films"

Something similar could be said of Conclave. Here the gentlest papal candidate turns out to have both male and right boxes for the politically correct on the issue of transsexuality. Such emphases are tempting for directors but they indicate agendas. That's not to demean the fine performances of Ralph Fiennes and Cillian Murphy in these films.

John McGahern was a man who suffered from the religious intolerance of his time without becoming bitter. One of his most admired books, That They May Face the Rising Sun, was filmed during the year. I didn't admire it as much as most critics. It gave an elegiac portrayal of rural Ireland but never took off for me, trying too hard to be casual. In its depiction of vacuums in people's lives, I thought it became vacuous

The Church didn't have a good year in films. It was carpeted for powerplay in Conclave and had its nose rubbed in Magdalen laundry abuse in Small Things Like These. The latter film was, as many people commented, est in the sightine but leaded like the fifting"

The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024 **Reviews** | 35

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Review of the Year

exposed to the media as I am, in the line of duty of course, there are so many highs and lows - material that is depressingly grim or uplifting and inspiring. I thought it would be good to start on a positive note.

In broad strokes, there have been engaging documentaries, well-crafted and very human dramas, current affairs programmes that deal with issues fairly and thoroughly. Nationwide (RTE One) continues to provide interesting and low-key stories from around the country - e.g. in February they covered how well Ukrainian refugees were integrating into Irish communities. Sunday Morning Live (BBC One) is a magazine type show which has lots of lifestyle items but also serious debates on the controversies of the day, e.g. episodes on assisted dying and 'buffer zones' around abortion clinics. Most importantly, it tries hard and succeeds at having well balanced discussions, with conservative and liberal voices getting parity of treatment. I listen a lot to UK-based Times Radio via phone app or internet radio and it features a wide range of views with excellent presenters and journalists. Political anoraks will never be stuck as there is talk radio all day and repeats all through the night.

On the home front the religious affairs programme Witness (RTE Radio 1), ably presented by Siobhán Garrigan, had a short run early in the year I remember an episode in which Fr Tod Nolan gave presenter Siobhán Garrigan a guide to the Stations of the Cross at Ballintubber Abbey, Co. Mayo. This show has just recently been succeeded in the Friday night slot by Our Divine Sparks presented by Dearbhail McDonald. The signs are promising so far - e.g. an interview with Fr Aidan Troy about the revival of Notre Dame Cathedral. I wish such shows were more regular - similar programmes like Sunday Sequence (BBC Radio Ulster) and Sunday



(BBC Radio 4) manage to keep going the whole year. Songs of Praise (BBC One) continues every Sunday afternoon with a relaxing combination of spiritual stories and music. with a prayer sequence at the end featuring the contributors from earlier in the show. They frequently visit holy sites in Northern Ireland (e.g. for St Patrick's Day). It's good to see mainstream channels taking religious programming seriously, but if you want it more often there's always the excellent output of Spirit Radio, Radio Maria or EWTN.

Mr Bates v. the Post Office (UTV/ITV and Virgin Media One) was a fine drama series based on the UK Post Office scandal, and it had a huge social and political impact"

Some drama series have impressed. Back in May the second series of Blue Lights (BBC One), a police show set in Northern Ireland, wasn't

bbWe do need to be concerned with the rise of

the far-right. The Dublin riots in particular were

cause for huge concern. But I feel the media has

labelling, and giving the far-left a free pass"

been over-obsessing about this, too quick with the

quite as good as the first, but that had set a high bar. I'm looking forward to the third series. Both major and minor characters are welldrawn and appealing - vou care what happens to them. That's not always the case, especially with the homegrown drama. I also hope there will be another series of The Turkish Detective (BBC One, July), a most enjoyable crime series set in Istanbul. Showtrial (BBC One) was a riveting drama series about a possible miscarriage of justice but had so many twists and turns. ambiguities and multi-layered characters. Mr Bates v. the Post Office (UTV/ITV and Virgin Media One) was a fine drama series based on the UK Post Office scandal, and it had a huge social and political impact. It was dramatic evidence of the power of story, as this injustice had been explored and exposed previously in podcasts and articles without anything like the same impact.

Young Sheldon (RTE One) has often had a jaundiced attitude to religion. but the last three episodes. which brought the drama

to an end in August, were

wells of Ireland, presented by Manchán Magan" On the Documentary front early in the year there was

outstanding, with brilliant

acting and an emotional

impact you'd rarely find in

a comedy series. Douglas is

Cancelled (ITV, May; RTÉ,

November) was a sharp and

witty satire of the media

world, with nicely ambigu-

ous attitudes to wokeness.

At heart it was deadly seri-

ous, with a highly emotional

last episode, but was at

times too crude and profane

I enjoyed what

I saw of Ag Triall

ar an Tobar (TG

4), a documentary

series on the holy

for its own good.

The Last Priests in Ireland and The Last Nuns in Ireland (RTÉ One). I had a few issues with these, but they were thought-provoking and generally respectful to religious faith. The latter show was the better, I thought, but what was most enjoyable was listening to the variety of priests and nuns recounting their experiences. Pilgrimage: The **Road Through North Wales** (BBC Two) was the latest addition to this series where a motley crew of celebrity believers and non-believers travel on traditional pilgrimage routes. It can vary from irritating to deeply moving. I

enjoyed what I saw of Ag Triall ar an Tobar (TG 4), a documentary series on the holy wells of Ireland, presented by Manchán Magan. TG4 continues to be home to well-made documentaries, while the TG4 Player offers a fine service but many people I know have never heard of it! Better Off Dead? (BBC One, May) was a strong authored piece against assisted suicide by disability right campaigner Liz Carr. It didn't help achieve a majority against the idea in the recent House of commons debate, but at least the opposition was considerable, measured and very articulate. There is some hope on the issue for the new year as the bill faces several hurdles in Parliament.

A lot of media debate during the first half of the year was taken up with the familyrelated referenda at home, and so the nation agonised over 'durable relationships' and 'unforeseen consequences'. The great and good were in favour of change, but enough diverse and dissenting voices surfaced to defeat the proposals and there was a palpable shock among media folks when the 'No' result became clear in the results coverage.

It was also the 'Year of Elections' worldwide and again the political anoraks had a field day - so much coverage on the current affairs shows and we have so many of these shows across so many channels and platforms. One of my favourites is the daily Press Preview (Sky News), which acts as a review of the current day and a heads-up for the next day's stories. Two journalists, often one liberal and one conservative, tease out the stories in a good-humoured way - they get on with each other in a way that could teach the rest of the body politic a lesson.

Media bias in current affairs is still a problem. One of the worst examples was an RTÉ Investigates programme back in April on the state of our abortion laws. It should come as no surprise that the extreme bias favoured the pro-choice or pro-abortion side. Bias is often shown in interview style and tone. It strikes me that the people who get the most hostility on Irish programmes are prolifers. Northern Unionists. Trump supporters, Brexiteer Tories and Israelis. There were quite a few RTÉ documentaries hitting out at past abuses perpetrated by the Catholic Church, such as Bishop Casey's Buried Secrets, and Leathered: Violence in Irish Schools. The abuses were disgraceful, but at times it seems relentless and over the top, while more modern abuses that we could do something

about get neglected. That's more than a bit worrying.

Coverage of the awful goings on in Ukraine and the Middle East varied in intensity, but unfortunately was never absent, though I sense a few faint glimmers of hope for the new year"

As regards the US Presidential election the anti-Trump bias was so evident over here, though when Biden blotted his copybook, he got plenty of negative coverage as well. As I wrote at the time the election of Trump made me feel both scared and curious and it certainly acted as slap in the face for the liberal establishment. Coverage of the awful goings on in Ukraine and the Middle East varied in intensity, but unfortunately was never absent, though I sense a few faint glimmers of hope for the new year. Recent events in Syria might seem hopeful, and the celebrations of Syrians abroad that featured heavily in the news programmes in mid-December were quite moving – I was struck for example by a CNN report showing the release from a secret prison of a bewildered and grateful man who was left alone for days without food, water or light. I just hope that their hope will be justified. We do need to be con-

cerned with the rise of the far-right. The Dublin riots in particular were cause for huge concern. But I feel the media has been over-obsessing about this, too quick with the labelling, and giving the far-left a free pass. I hope the coming year will see more nuance and balance in the coverage, especially after their candidates didn't make much of an impact in our recent general election. There's also an obsession in the media about 'disinformation' and 'misinformation'. Yes, it's a problem, what with extremist agitators and bots originating in rogue states, but we'd want to be alert to dodgy 'information' or lack of pertinent information from Government and the media as well.

Finally, on a more trivial note, I really miss the weekend editions of It Says in the Papers (RTE Radio 1) especially on Sunday mornings. They disappeared without fanfare sometime mid-year. Write to RTE and demand it back now! Include a Happy New Year note.



BookReviews Peter Costello



Dressed for the occasion in high style: creating the vestments for the renovated Notre Dame

Peter Costello

atching the ceremonies from Notre Dame, whether in the congregation or on television (where the view was better), for the occasion of the rededication of the great cathedral, many must have had their attention caught over the two days by the vestments worn by the participating clergy. These certainly struck a very different and new note.

Their creator was Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, a marauis of the old French nobility. a leading figure in the world of modern fashion design working for the great stars of the secular cosmos, is also a fervent Catholic.

Back in 1997 he dressed Pope John Paul II, the bishops and the priests for the World Youth Day held in Paris.

For the recent inauguration Jean-Charles de Castelbajac was chosen by the diocese of Paris to create the vestments for the 700 celebrants. composed of the Archbishop of Paris and bishops from all over France with their deacons and priests. A feature of his design were its primary colours, which have become a signal feature of the event.

"At Notre Dame I discovered the penitential shirt of St Louis, a kind of 'tee-shirt' of the XII century, which I recreated. It was this that launched my success," he told Paris Match, discussing the vestments.

Since he came to live in Paris at the age of 17 in 1966 he has not liked to worship in his parish church, which he found to "classical", but went always to Notre Dame, so his attachment to the place was of long date and deep appre-

Since the 17th century a pieta, a sculpture of the mother of Christ holding her crucified son, created by Nicolas Coustou, dominated the high altar. This masterpiece was flanked statue was flanked by images of Louis XIII on the left offering his crown and sceptre to her, and on the right Louis XIV praying. The cross, from which Jesus had just been taken down, in this setting had to exist only in the imagination of the devout.

🧀 Jean-Charles de Castelbajac was inspired by the post-fire press images of Marc Couturier's cross. A golden cross appears on each of the white vestments"

However in 1994, the sculptor Marc Couturier won a competition to design a cross to be installed above this group. And this gold cross, which does not have the figure of Christ hanging on it, has become the centre of attention after the disastrous fire. Surrounded by the charred wreckage of the fallen roof beams, it shone out in the gloom of post-conflagration Notre Dame with startling glory.

Jean-Charles de Castelbajac was inspired by the postfire press images of Marc Couturier's cross. A golden cross appears on each of the

66 At Notre Dame I discovered the penitential shirt of St Louis, a kind of 'tee-shirt' of the XII century, which I recreated. It was this that launched my success"



white vestments - white being a colour traditionally linked to the liturgical season of holidays (Christmas, Easter, Ascension and so on).

This cross leaps out in the midst of bursts of yellow, red, blue and green – intended by the artist as an evocation of the stained glass windows of Notre-Dame, which remained in place.

Simplicity

He described his overall aim in straight forward terms. He hoped for a certain combination of beauty and humility, ornament and simplicity.

"A noble simplicity, refined yet almost epical. I aimed at the most beautiful but also the most humble... Something that would be at once medieval and ultra-contemporary. Rather than using the methods of the Middle Ages, I gave precedence to the artisa-



nal techniques of today".

In what he did he was conscious all the time of the role of what he was making in the rites, rituals and processions which are so important to the life of the cathedral.

In the event the vestments were certainly notable. They served, some observers felt, to demonstrate that the restoration was in fact a renovation, that they indicated that rather than shelter the past the Cathedral would inspire new developments in the understanding and appreciation of the Catholic faith.

The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024

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.

Many more feasts than famines

An Irish Food Story by JP McMahon (Nine Bean Rows Press, €25.00 / £20.75)

Irish Food History: A Companion, by Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire, Dorothy Cashman and others (Royal Irish Academy, €45.00 / £38.00)

Peter Costello

his holiday season of feasting and drinking, quite in the ancient fashion of the Fianna some might say, seems to be a good time to give some thought, glancing back over all too human activity of eating, or perhaps more scientifically, food consumption in Ireland.

All too often many Irish people in doing so seem to invoke scene of famine and hardship. But the truth is very different, Irish history was, on the whole, a matter more of feast rather than famine.

However, the trouble these days is that much Irish food is not Irish at all. A walk around a supermarket will reveal the huge proportion of food we import. We should eat, some say, only what can be reared or grown within 20 miles of our home

Yet the best land for markets gardening, for growing all kinds of vegetables, lying to the north of Dublin, has been built over in the last quarter century or so, all in the name of development. An old fashioned moralist, of the kind now in short supply, would have called this a sin.

So Irish food is deeply problematic. The first of these books is an accessible easy read about amusing or interesting aspects of Irish eating and cooking.

Gourmet

But it is, as is so often the case these days, written by a professional cook. Whatever became of those teachers of "domestic science" who encouraged for boys and girls skills of home cooking, all those dedicated users of *All in the Cooking*.

Instead of a welcoming dinner, home cooks are now encouraged to eat every day like a gourmet, whatever the pain and cost. This book will not meet the real needs of real people, it belongs in foodie fantasy land. In reality we live in a land were some 700 dinners and 350 breakfasts are provided every in the Capuchin Day centre in Bow Street,



An Irish cottage kitchen about 1888, from Theodora FitzGibbon's classic *The Taste of Ireland*



Jacob's biscuits were shipped around the world

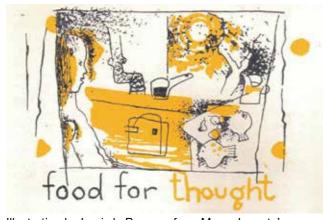


Illustration by Louis le Broquay from Maura Laverty's cookbook

not to forget the Little Flower Penny Dinners in Dublin, and the Penny Dinners down in Cork and other groups all over Ireland.

I suppose we should be cheered in some obscure way that this once famine ridden land can now taken such extravagance in its stride"

The second book comes from the press of the Royal Irish Academy. It runs to nearly 800 pages and is written by some thirty odd contributors, surveying in magisterial manner eating in Ireland since the earliest days of human culture here.

It seems that most of the 2500 copies printed have been already sold, at a price of €45.00 - which isn't so much really, much being only a third of so of what a review in a certain newspaper of record would pay for a meal for two in the latest restaurant in vogue.

I suppose we should be cheered in some obscure way that this once famine ridden land can now taken such extravagance in its stride.

Famine

The Famine was so disastrous because large areas of the west had become dependent on

The Dark Green corners of Paris

Irish Paris: Stories of famous and infamous Irish people in Paris through the centuries by Isadore Ryan (€19.00; reach

(€19.00; reach irishmeninparis.org for details of purchase)

Peter Costello

his is an interesting and entertaining book by a Paris based Irish economic journalist with a passion for the past. He is the author of two previous books, *No Way Out*, about the Irish in wartime France between 1939 and 1945, as well as *Roman Imbroglio*, dealing with the Irish in Italy during the same tumultuous

In this book though he widens his cast to deal with a broader canvas of Irish people in Paris in recent centuries. There was time when the Irish fleeing abroad from persecution at home went to Madrid or to Rome. But since about the time of the French Revolution they have largely preferred to go to Paris.

It was a destination for those patriots, artists and writers who saw themselves with a future in Ireland, and did not want to become emigrants. Rather they were émigrés in a more or less friendly nation, near enough to allow them to make a quick decent in the Emerald Isle for social or political rea-

Identity

Victor Hugo is quote as suggesting that those who would try to get down to the heart of Paris will suffer vertigo. And indeed there are collected in these pages a head-spinning number of Irish people of all kinds.

Irish people of all kinds.

Ryan arranges his characters not by date, but social identity, making a start with a selection of notorious Irish women, beginning with the notorious Louise O'Morphy, before proceeding quartier by quartierthrough philosophers, revolutionaries, soldiers and politicians. In between though he finds space for Saints and Churchmen, including the Abbé Edgeworth.

The second half of the book moves on to artists and writers and journalists active in the city since

potatoes for their food source. The Inuit are said to have no one word for snow, but a multitude of names for its different forms. So to in Ireland there were 72 words for potatoes.

One has to pick and choose in a book this length in a short notice. I was fascinated by the chapter on Maura Laverty, an extraordinarily energetic woman who transformed life in the 1850s - many of these are familiar, as they include Joyce, Beckett and John Montague, but in among these are still any number of people in the distant days of the Second Empire and the Third Republic who had to be left out - one cannot have everyone after all, without a book beginning to seem like a catalogue. But those who are included are often wonderfully interesting and colourful and well worth reading about.

One of the most intriguing passages in the book is deals with two men who not Irish people at all, but to two grand reporteurs of the French press"

The author provides, however, for devotees of the Left Bank such as myself and my wife - who always stay in small hotel close to the ever-appealing museum of medieval life, the Musée Cluny.

In a final closing movement he deals with composers and musicians, a interesting chapter indeed, covering Thomas Moore, Michael Balfe and the O'Kelly family.

But oddly enough, one of the most intriguing passages in the book is deals with two men who not Irish people at all, but to two grand reporteurs of the French press, Henri Béraud and Joseph Kessel, who arrived in Dublin to cover the "Irish troubles" for Le Petit Parisien and La Liberté - their adventures are quite worthy of a film - Kessel wrote a short novel Mary of Cork (1925) drawing on what he saw of the Irish revolution, and that was made into a French telefilm. Incidentally when she died Kessel's widow, who had an Irish father, bequeathed all the royalties on his many bestselling books to the Irish Red Cross

The Irish in Paris, and France generally, were not such a distinctive community as they were in America and Australia; they were a congerie of active and vital people spreading across many areas of life from religion to poetry. They left a mark on France through their varied creativity and imaginative responses to life.

A most enjoyable and informative book all round. With so many of us concentrated on Irish-America, it would be as well to recall that a man of direct Irish decent, General Patrice MacMahon, became President of the French Republic in 1873, a full ninety years before an Irish-American President was elected.



the 1940s and 50s. But read to about the nature of Irish State dinning in the 20th century: a great contrast to home cooking, as much of it was supplied by the then famous restaurant in Dublin Airport, where many chose to have their wedding

receptions.

The book rounds off with a chapter, as equally fascinating as that on Maura Laverty,

about the life work, legend and heritage of Myrtle Allen down at Ballymaloe. But contrast this with what we know: that all too many families survive today on takeaway Italian piazzas, Indian curries and Chinese stir-fry, a striking indication of the changing nature of Irish society. But this cosmopolitan topic is not for this resolutely "Irish" focused book.

Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4028 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Leave a Lasting Legacy to Rehab Group: Empower others through your will.

RehabGroup

Investing in People, Changing Perspectives

Leaving a gift in your will to Rehab Group enables people to pursue opportunities, be more independent, participate in society and live the life of their choosing.

To learn more about the difference your legacy will make.
Call: (01) 2057200
Email: fundraising@rehab.ie





Hundreds of men and women at their darkest hour, come to Merchants Quay Ireland for food, showers and support when there's nowhere else to turn.

A gift in your Will in any amount, will change lives. And we'll always remember your kindness.

You can decide a specific amount or give a percentage after taking care of your loved ones. Even 1% is enough to help.

All your solicitor will need is this:

- Merchants Quay Ireland of 24 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8
- Revenue CHY Number: 10311
- Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20026240

Just ring 01 5240139 if you'd like more information, or to let us know about your legacy. Thank you for the good you leave behind.

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

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

- Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

trōcaire

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.



A Gift in Your Will to GOAL Means We Can Be First There When Conflict and Crisis happen



GOAL.IE/GIFTINWILL

Your Lasting Legacy Many people are choosing to include a loving gift in their Will to support families, children and young people experiencing homelessness. You can make a real difference by helping future generations find a place called home. For more information, please contact Assia: 086 103 3130 assia.buono@focusireland.ie Focus Ireland, 9 - 12 High Street, Christchurch, D08 EIWO Focusireland.ie

Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork. Tel:021-4545704 Email:info@mscmissions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Anna Sadlier at anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie or call 01 679 3188



www.hospicefoundation.ie

Remembering MEMORIAM CARDS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CARDS & NOTELETS BOOKMARKS

Samples / Information KENNEDY PRINTERS

BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND

Tel. 027 50102 www.kennedyprinters.ie email: info@kennedyprinters.ie

SERVICES

ALL UNWANTED

home waste removed. Cookers, fridges, beds, suites, wardrobes, carpets etc. Removed and disposed of in a proper manner. No job too small or big. Contact Tommy, 087 6406015.

SOLUTIONS, DECEMBER 19 CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

.....

Across

1 A partridge in a pear tree 6 Sweetshops 11 Chamber 14 Genoa 15 Pedal bin 17 Mary's Boy Child 19 Ready 20 Egghead 23 Par 24 Treason 25 Rip 26 Bee 28 Foal 30 Static 33 Step 36 Ferret 37 Levee 38 Frame 39 Hallowed 40 Rascal 42 Nevada 44 Ask 45 Trenches 47 Field 48 Parcel 49 Inch 50 Ambled 53 Austerity 56 Winter 57 Errand 58 Cave 59 Visit 61 Due 62 Cream 65 Cue 66 Cos 67 Nurse 68 Ego 70 Entry 74 Slur 75 Pillar 77 Poncho 78 Elaborate 79 Meagre 80 Espy 83 Bolero 84 Cycle 86 December 88 Wax 89 Tissue 93 Basset 95 Airtight 97 Brief 98 Eland 100 Towing 101 Heed 103 Kettle 105 Goal 106 Tag 108 Own 110 Marimba 111 Oil 112 Cleaver 113 China 116 Carrier pigeon 117 Truncate 118 Deign 119 Kitchen 120 Lobster pot 121 Forty winks

Down

2 Abnormal 3 Teabag 4 Imply 5 God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 7 White Christmas 8 Time 9 Hark the Herald Angels Sing 10 Suburb 11 Coyote 12 Achieved 13 Balustrade 14 Gold, frankincense and myrrh 16 Logic 18 Gnat 21 Drums 22 GPS 23 Plea 27 Elope 29 Leda 30 Seraphim 31 Tea 34 Three French hens 35 Pluck 36 Fez 41 Struts 43 Vice versa 46 Sister 51 Dry 52 Fancy 53 Adds 54 Idealists 59 Veils 63 Remove 65 Cope 69 Ham 71 Turn a deaf ear to 73 Throttle 76 Rear 77 Profane 81 Weigh 82 Abate 85 Crown roast 87 Extra 91 Wig 92 Franc 94 Eel 96 Heal 99 Donation 100 Tame 102 Don 103 Kevin 104 Tornado 106 Tavern 107 Gospel 109 Mildew 113 Cheat 115 Knee

Sudoku Corner

Last week's Easy 564

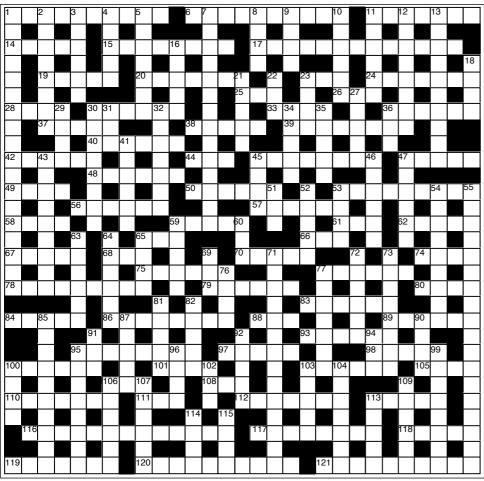
4	3	9	1	2	8	6	5	7
8	7	6	3	9	5	4	1	2
5	1	2	7	6	4	9	3	8
1	2	8	4	5	6	7	9	3
7	6	4	8	3	9	5	2	1
3	9	5	2	1	7	8	6	4
6	4	1	9	7	2	3	8	5
2	5	7	6	8	3	1	4	9
•	_	_	_				_	

Last week's Hard 564

6	4	9	/	3	1	8	2	5
2	3	5	4	8	6	1	9	7
8	1	7	9	5	2	6	4	3
9	8	1	2	6	5	3	7	4
5	7	2	3	1	4	9	6	8
4	6	3	8	7	9	2	5	1
1	5	8	6	2	7	4	3	9
7	2	4	1	9	3	5	8	6
q	a	6	5		я	7	1	,

Leisure time

New Year's Crossword



Across

1 Phrase used as an ultimatum (3,2,5)

6 One makes predictions based on the stars (10) 11 Holes made by meteor-

ites (7)

14 Religious principle (5)

15 Journalist (8)

17 Supremely eco-friendly (6-7)

19 Retrieve (5)

20 Takes what is offered

23 A pair of people (3)

24 Illicit, against the law (7)

25 Great wonder (3)

26 Floor covering (3)

28 Statuesque, physically

eminent (4)

30 A score (6)

33 Half a quart (4)

36 Items of orchard fruit (6)

37 Beer (5)

38 Extreme pain (5) 39 Scornful (8)

40 Method or organization

42 Feel aggrieved (6)

44 Spherical symbol of

monarchy (3)

45 That part of the Middle East associated with Scripture (4,4)

47 Woodland deity such as

48 Make out of nothing (6)

49 Cassette (4)

50 Type of song (6)

53 Quilt (9)

56 Get away from confine-

57 Wretched, forlorn (6) 58 College in the Ivy

League (4) 59 Stoneworker (5)

61 Part of a circle; curve

62 Bereaved woman (5) 65 Vegetable found in a

pod (3) 66 Male offspring (3)

67 Detest (5)

68 Everyone (3)

70 Item of furniture (5) 74 Signal a greeting; tidal

movement (4) 75 Come to ground (6)

77 Faddish (6)

78 A conifer, probably (9) 79 Foolish and unrefined

80 Use a spoon (4)

83 Extremely thrifty (6) 84 Place of storage (5)

86 Relic, historic item (8) 88 Japanese sash (3)

89 Seem (6)

93 Cut into halves (6) 95 One with the experience that comes with age

97 Rod (5)

98 Pleasant smell (5) 100 A dozen (5)

101 Mentions (4)

103 A conduit for blood (6) 105 The highest male

voice (4)

106 Informal name for Father; a fizzy drink (3)

108 Female bird (3)

110 Inherent, to be expected (7)

111 Dried grass (3)

112 Mathematical propo-

sition that needs to be

113 The Royal County (5) 116 Took the wrong meaning (13)

117 Illicit lover (8)

118 Jewish teacher (5)

119 In earnest (7)

120 Denizen of the catwalk

121 The first US president

1 Intelligent as well as good looking (3,4,1,6,4) 2 Fortuitous supply of 36 across (8)

3 Turn (6)

4 Soil (5)

5 Clarify (7)

7 Competition for working farm canines (8,6)

8 Sound of pain (4) 9 Plant with edible pods,

also called lady's-finger or gumbo (4)

10 Payment demanded by

Children's Christmas Crossword

Across

1 Christmas song about riding on a sleigh (6,5)

5 Put them on your feet before you put your shoes on (5)

9 When there's an extra day in February, like in 2024 (4,4) 12 Mix black and white to get

this colour (4) 13 Santa's favourite colour (3)

15 Not as old (7)

17 How you usually cook the turkey (5)

19 Falsehood, fib (3)

20 You might say this if you make a small mistake (4)

22 Immediate - you might see this kind of coffee (7) 24 Where to get on a train (7)

26 You go to church to attend this (4) 28 His name means 'Christmas'

in French (4)

29 Spinning toy (3) 30 Take part in a 43 across, for example (3)

31 Fantastic (5)

34 Meaty sauce you might pour over your Christmas dinner (5) 35 Australian bird that can't fly

37 Cars, lorries, buses etc, all together (7)

40 Remain, don't go (4) 43 Drama about the very first

Christmas (8,4) 45 Heavenly creatures who sang to the shepherds (6) 46 Meat that comes from a pig

47 Carol about the animal that carried Mary to Bethlehem (6,6)

Down 1 Wobbly treat (5)

kidnappers (6)

11 Believe (6)

or springbok (8)

Stallone (5)

18 Charity (4)

22 Energy (3)

29 Hobbling (4)

edent (4-4)

plays, etc (7)

Latin (3,5)

43 Tomb (9)

body (4)

46 Infer (6)

41 Teeter-totter (6)

21 Holy person (5)

2 Put down, or produce an egg

12 Animal such as impala

13 Writer of a gospel (10)

16 Boxer Balboa was

played by Sylvester by

23 Partake of a meal (4)

30 Lawsuit which is taken

in order to establish a prec-

27 Criminal burning (5)

31 Twisted, ironic (3)

32 In which to perform

34 Picturesque scene (5)

35 Vibratory birdsong (5)

45 Uppermost part of the

36 & 59d The Hail Mary, in

infants Tiny _ 21 Join in with a carol (4) 23 It's usually the last word of a

3 Huge snake that crushes its

4 You might put a candle in a

6 Holy Christmas songs (6)

7 All at once, without warning

8 To do with Christmas and the

10 Tall tree that has cones (4)

16 Rudolph is the most famous

18 People sometimes call

11 A female sheep (3)

prey (3)

New Year (8)

14 Gift (7)

one (8)

Yule

praver (4)

25 You get this to show you

52 Entertain (5)

(4)

55 Determination to

twelve months (3,5,10)

60 Fishermen in a trawler uses it (3)

64 Photographic device (6)

69 Time travelling doctor

71 It says when consumption is recommended (4,6,4)

ing, etc (6)

73 The worship of statues, etc (8)

76 Pastry product (4) 77 A Jack Russell, for example (7)

81 Contractual conditions

27 It guided the three Wise Men (4) 32 What you see with (3) 33 Get something by paying

have paid in (6)

for it (3) 36 "Away in a

37 Shiny decoration (6) 38 Painter, or sculptor perhaps

39 How many gold rings in the 'Twelve Days of Christmas

song? (4) 40 Make sure stick it on the envelope when posting a Christmas card (5)

41 Madrid and Barcelona are in this country (5)

42 Move to music (5) 44 Made a bow when wrapping

a 14 down (4)

47 Write in a careless way

51 A quick swim (3)

53 Panache, French flair

54 Town in Meath (9) improve over the coming

59 See 36 down

63 Shiny or intelligent (6)

65 Stratagem (4)

72 Dog bred for fox-hunt-

82 Take a spouse (5) 85 One travelling on foot

87 Proportion (5)

90 Great cat, or Argentine Rugby player (4) 91 Beer (3)

92 Showy daredevil act (5)

94 Automobile (3)

95 Opening piece of music

96 Not difficult (4) 99 Set of the letters in a

language (8) 100 Armoured fighting

vehicle (4)

102 Bashful (3)

103 Large 103 across (5) 104 Type of lottery (7)

106 Promise (5)

107 This lighthouse was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (6)

109 Colony of rabbits (6) 113 Gaiety, glee (5) 114 Fall into a brief sleep

115 Dutch cheese (4)

The Irish Catholic, December 26, 2024 40 | Comment

Notebook Fr Martin Delaney



Church open to charge of elder abuse

described their recent election experience as being spat out by the Irish people. It is somewhat ironic that while there is general agreement that climate change is the great issue of our generation, the one political party dedicated to highlighting the problem and coming up with solutions is the one that gets completely rejected by the people. The Green Party and other climate activists desperately try to get home the message that we are in a dire situation. They have tried all kinds of ways to shock us with statistics in order to get us to change our ways. Are they being successful?

The result of the election and indeed the return of Mr 'drill baby drill' Trump might suggest not.

I find a striking parallel between our attitude to climate change and how so many in our Irish Church approach the realities and challenges facing us today. We are heading into a new year, a Jubilee Year, so I'd like to revisit some aspects of our present reality. I do this, conscious that there will be many who will want to spit me and what I have to say out with the Greens!

Everyone knows that the number of active priests is dwindling rapidly. An article in this newspaper a few

weeks ago highlighted the fact that in Dublin Archdiocese, the largest in the country, there will only be a few dozen priests to lead almost two hundred parishes in the next decades. This situation is reflected proportionally in every other diocese in Ireland. Not so long ago in our own diocese, all parish priests were obliged to retire just after their 75th birthday. That seems a distant memory now as priests feel they cannot retire at 75.

There are also priests who cannot imagine a life beyond their identity as a parish priest and therefore wish to hang on even though they find the role overwhelming at times"

Many bishops who asked for retirements in the past are now hoping, or even expecting, priests to go on administering large parishes and increasingly more than one parish. Elderly priests themselves, coming from years of serving others, feel obliged to stay on even when they are tired and dealing with various health challenges. Some men feel they are letting their younger colleagues down if they choose to retire. There are also priests who cannot imagine a life beyond their identity as a parish priest and therefore wish to hang on even though they find the role overwhelming at times. There are priests who fear financial insecurity if they

Situation

None of this makes a happy situation. In the first instance I believe it is unfair and unjust to expect men who have given over 50 years of service to continue working. I would go so far as to say that the Church may be open to the charge of elder abuse if it continues this approach. Secondly, I fear that the practice of parish priests staying on in administrative roles, for whatever reason, is frustrating the move towards necessary Church reform at parish and diocesan level. The role of a parish priest is canonically one of the Church. We are the gatekeepers and quite simply, when it comes to new thinking and reform parish priests have the power to open the gate or close the gate.

Many of our dioceses have embarked on creative journeys to look for new ways to be Church in this time of change. It is difficult to measure the success of such initiatives and one of the huge challenges is to get buy in from the various stakeholders. Having participated in countless 'listening sessions' and various other forms of consultation over three decades I sense a certain paralysis and fatigue with that process. There are many dedicated people in our communities who are tired of being asked their opinion but then see little effective action. At some point we have to realise that the process is not the destination. Something more is needed!

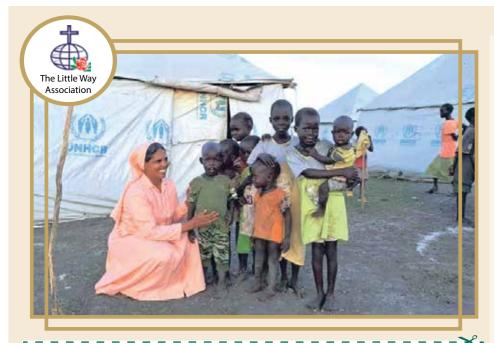
A prayer at the beginning of a **New Year**

God of this New Year, we are walking into mystery. We face the future, not knowing what the days and months will bring to us or how we will respond. Be love in us as we journey. May we welcome all who come our way. Deepen our faith to see all of life through your eyes. Fill us with hope and an abiding trust that you dwell in us amidst our joys and sorrows. Thank you for the treasure of our faith life. Thank you for the gift of being able to rise each day with the assurance of your walking through the day with us. God of this new year, we praise you. Amen. (Joyce Rupp)



Blame the bishop!

A priest leaving the parish, addressed his saddened parishioners and tried to console them by revealing that the bishop had promised he would send a good man as a replacement. One woman, however, was inconsolable. "Why?" enquired the concerned but departing priest "Didn't the bishop say he would send a good man in my place? that's just it," she cried. "He said that the last time too!



Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to

THE LITTLEWAY ASSOCIATION Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR (Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466 www.littlewavas

...... CLASSROOMS FOR CHILDREN **DISPLACED BY WAR** HUNGRY, SICK AND DEPRIVED WELLS AND SANITATION PROJECTS . **MASS OFFERINGS** (please state no.) We ask for a minimum of €7 or more for each MassLITTLEWAY ADMIN. EXPENSES

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

☐ Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

To donate online go to ww.littlewaysassociat

DONATIONS FORTHE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT **DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES**

(Block letters please)

Address IC/12/26

Sisters in Kodok, South Sudan urgently need our help to build three simple classrooms for children displaced by war

The Daughters of Mary Immaculate in 2022 sent 12 Sisters, at the request of the local bishop, to help rebuild part of the diocese of Marakal. The town of Kodok was destroyed by warfare in 2013 and many survivors fled to UN camps or other countries including Ethiopia and Eritrea. These people are now gradually returning to Kodok, and the DMI Sisters plan to erect a primary school for 180 disadvantaged children, saving them from child labour, violation and abuse.

Please will you help the Sisters

The sum of €10,000 will enable an engineer and skilled labourers to be chosen, construction materials to be purchased, the building work be done, and five volunteers from the community to be trained as teaching assistants to the DMI Sisters. 180 boys and girls will then be registered and primary education be set in motion. The Sisters will also help the children with simple health needs.

Your gift to The Little Way Association will make this project become a reality, ensuring a good, basic education and a better future for these children. Whatever you can spare will be sent without deduction and will be gratefully received. Thank you and may God reward your generosity.

If we receive additional funds we will allocate them to similar projects for children.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul." - St Therese

We wish all our friends and benefactors a peaceful and blessed New Year.

May St Therese reward you in a special way for the sacrifices you make to support our work, and may she obtain many graces for all our friends and benefactors during 2025.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

The Little Way Association regularly receives appeals from bishops and religious superiors on the Missions for Mass stipends and intentions for their poor priests. Such payments help them to meet basic needs such as food. clothing and shelter. Also, the poor and deprived people, whom the clergy serve so faithfully, often turn to their priests for assistance.

We like to send a minimum of €7 or more for each Mass.