

The Irish Catholic

**AMERICANS GOT TIRED
OF BEING INSULTED.
ARE IRISH VOTERS
AT THIS POINT YET?**

Maria Steen
Page 12



**IRISH POLITICIANS
COULD LEARN
FROM AMERICA'S
EXPERIENCE**

Nuala O'Loan
Page 8



**TOO MANY
'LAY FAITHFUL'
DO NOT KNOW
THE FAITH**

Martina Purdy
Page 11



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

Exclusive

Chai Brady

There is a "crisis" among young people who "we are losing to self-harm, through addiction and reckless actions", the Bishop of Derry has warned.

Bishop Donal McKeown 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.

While some people say nothing about the issue, the bishop said, others ask, "how can we stop this?"

"They don't ask: 'How is our worldview actually nourishing dysfunctionality? How is it actually promoting a negative worldview that has no hope? 'Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die' really is not a terribly motivating ideal," Bishop McKeown said.

"If all you can tell young people is 'Have fun', 'Life is too short to say no', 'Let's feel good'... These are ads, slogans that are being churned out to them. If you keep telling them that, no wonder they will say 'what on earth's all this whole living thing about?' It's good for the market, but our job is to critique what the strong would like us to promote."

The bishop warned that the current dominant ideology in Ireland is as "intolerant as Catholicism ever was intolerant of dissidence".

"Our job is to ensure that for the sake of young people that we can offer this integrated view of who the person is and also an integrated worldview which helps them to make sense of science, art, music, literature, mathematics, physics and all of those things within a particular

» Continued on Page 2

Catechism class for Bishop Coll



The Bishop of Ossory Niall Coll recently joined members of the Syro-Malabar community for Mass and catechism class at St Canice's Church, Kilkenny.

**WHY THE GOVERNMENT STILL
WANTS TO FORCE MOTHERS TO
PUT THEIR BABIES IN CRECHES**

David Quinn

PAGE 16



**THE SACREDNESS OF ST
BERNADETTE'S VISIT**

Gerard Bennett

PAGE 30



**LETTER FROM A
FRONTIER CHURCH**

Garry O'Sullivan

PAGE 10



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

» Continued from Page 1

transcendental horizon, rather than just in terms of the one-dimensional 'liquid society' Pope Francis talked about recently in *Dilexit Nos* [the Pope's encyclical on the Sacred Heart]."

He added: "There's a whole crisis out there and I think our job, not being on the inside anymore, is that where possible as Christian churches together to be on the outside having a prophetic voice. Being a friendly critic."

The "tectonic plates" of politics are changing across the world, according to Bishop Donal, and with an election coming up in the south he

warned of having an "absence of principles".

"If there's no ground of principle on which you can actually argue, it becomes a sparring match, and that obviously rubs off on how we are as societies as well. If mocking people and tearing them to pieces becomes acceptable for leaders to engage in, then why do you expect the population to not believe that is an acceptable way of arguing? So yes, there is, in a context of fear, always attempt for retrenchment, pulling back behind the walls, and we have that temptation in Church as well," he said.

See full interview in upcoming edition

Passing the faith on in Co. Cavan



David Crosby. Photo: Paul Callaghan

Staff reporter

The community of Kingscourt Parish, Co. Cavan celebrated on November 7 the launch of a new edition of *Pass it On*, a book of prayers, inspirational poems, quotes and motivational words of encouragement to be 'passed on' from one generation to the next.

The first edition was published in 2012 as an initiative of the Parish Pastoral Assembly. This new edition was edited by Ann Burns and the Kingscourt Parish Assembly team over the past ten months.

"The previous book was a huge success and gave great comfort and consolation to the thousands who bought the previous edition. We feel this new edition will also touch people. The new edition has been kindly sponsored by LINK Credit Union," said parish priest Fr Gerard MacCormack.

The book was launched by local man David Crosby, "who himself is an inspiration, with an inspirational story of faith, hope and positivity having overcome major health challenges," Fr MacCormack said.

In his talk during the launch, Mr Crosby remarked that many of the prayers and inspirational words found in this book supported him through his double lung transplant and his recent kidney transplant.

The end of an Era: New monastic community born

Renata Steffens

The Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (O.C.S.O.) also known as 'Trappists', on a historic move, has found a new community merging three established ones.

The three communities are Mount Melleray Abbey from the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore, Mount St Joseph Abbey, Roscrea from the Diocese of Killaloe and Mellifont Abbey from the Diocese of Armagh.

The communities have been engaging in discussions of discernment and reflection about the union for some time. Finally, on November 3, following votes of the conventual chapters

of the three communities, Dom Rufus Pound (monastic commissary of all three communities) requested their union.

On the same day, acting in the name of the General Chapter, the Abbot General and his Council approved the union. With that, the three existing communities had their existence suppressed and a new community was established, with the rank of Abbey and called Our Lady of Silence.

Following the approval of Our Lady of Silence's foundation, Mother Marie Fahy, abbess of Glencairn was appointed to exercise the authority of Father Immediate of the community until the General Chapter of 2025.

Mother Fahy appointed

Dom Rufus Pound as superior *ad nutum* with permission of the Abbot General and advice of the brothers of the conventual chapter of Our Lady of Silence.

The three communities carry centuries of Irish history between them. Mount Melleray Abbey was founded in 1832, the Mount St Joseph Abbey was founded in 1878 and the new Mellifont Abbey established in 1938, with the old abbey dating from 1142.

At the moment, the brothers of Our Lady of Silence are still living in their original monasteries. They will come together in one of the three places to start the life of the new community, but the definitive location was not yet decided.



Inside the church at Mount Melleray Abbey

Bishop Hayes talks about climate change ahead of COP29

Illiana Ochoa Bravo

Global leaders have gathered in Baku, Azerbaijan for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) since November 11, the event will continue until November 22.

Ahead of the conference, Bishop of Kilmore and Laudato Si' coordinator of the Bishops' Conference Martin Hayes urged Irish negotiators in Baku "to be, on our behalf, generous of spirit in recognising the burden imposed on poor countries by rich countries like Ireland."

These UN Climate Change Conference

seek to agree on how much money should go each year to helping developing countries cope with climate-related costs.

In his statement, Bishop Hayes mentioned Pope Francis apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum* (Praise God for all his creatures). In that document, the Pope highlighted the use of fossil fuels causing climate change and the need to prioritising renewable energy measures.

"The intertwined climate and biodiversity emergencies require radical and carefully aligned actions to be undertaken. In this regard, I wish to highlight the Irish Catholic Bishops' Con-

ference initiative to return 30% of Church grounds to nature by 2030. It can be a positive first step on the part of parish communities. Similar initiatives are required on a global scale to respond to the call of *Laudato Si'*", the bishop said.

"The recent tragic events in Spain have demonstrated the vulnerability of even a well-developed European country to extreme events supercharged by greenhouse gas emissions...At COP29, global leaders have a chance to secure transfer of finance and support to those who are at the coalface of this climate crisis."

Tributes paid to Gabriel Doherty

Staff reporter

Historian and broadcaster Gabriel Doherty died at the age of 56 last Friday, November 8. Mr Doherty was a lecturer at the University College Cork School of History and a widely published historian, he edited two books and contributed to many articles and historical journals.

Mary E. Fitzgibbon, a spokesperson for Ireland Stand Up, a lay initiative that stands up for Ireland's Christian Faith and Heritage said "It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of our long-time supporter Gabriel Doherty." And added: "Gabriel supported us from the very beginning, 13 years ago, in our efforts to have Ire-

land's Embassy to the Holy See in Villa Spada reinstated.

The Irish Capuchin Franciscans said on a social media post they "were shocked and saddened by this news of the sudden passing of Dr Gabriel Doherty." The order said Mr Doherty "was a great friend to the Capuchin Friars in Cork and instrumental in bringing to life our Conference

and Commemoration in 2016 exploring the Capuchins and the Rebellion."

Mr Doherty's repose will be at the Temple Hill Funeral Home, Boreenmanna Road on November 14 from 5pm to 6pm. The requiem Mass will be at 11am on November 15 in St Columba's Church, Douglas and burial afterwards in St John's Cemetery, Ballinrea.

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Irish bishops in solidarity visit to Ethiopia



Renata Steffens

Bishops from six dioceses across Ireland are currently on a trip to Ethiopia with Trócaire, the agency of the Catholic Church. Trócaire says this visit has the primary aim to bear witness to the vital work that has been done in that country in the name of the Irish Church. The visit will last one week, from November 9 to 17.

The delegation is composed of Trócaire CEO, Caoimhe de Barra, Trócaire Church Manager, Jane Mellett, Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly Kieran O'Reilly, Bishop of Killoe Fintan Monahan, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kilmore Martin Hayes, Bishop of Ossory Niall Coll and Director of Communications of the Catholic Communica-

tions Office, Martin Long.

The Trócaire work in Ethiopia focuses on sustainable livelihoods for people and also empowering women and young girls. In the north part of the country, where the bishops are visiting, they work with farmers.

Trócaire has been working with them to improve the agriculture and create options for alternative sources of income.

Martina O'Donoghue, Head of Programme Impact and Learning at Trócaire, who was head of programmes for Ethiopia for eight years, told *The Irish Catholic* this visit is important for a number of reasons.

"To show the bishops, and by default their communities and members of the dioceses, the work that the Irish Catholic Church is doing in Ethiopia. We are the Catholic Church, we've been given that

task by the Church in Ireland."

Another reason is showing solidarity to Ethiopian people. "That's been hugely important to the Ethiopian Church over the years, particularly the Tigranian Church. Over the last few years, with the war, they've been isolated.

"At times, all communication was shut off in the area. But through all of that, the Church stood with them, the Catholic Church of Ireland, the bishops, Trócaire, we stood by them all through that and made sure that we put the Church and the people of Tigray in the centre of things.

"I think, they felt at the time the world was turning their back on them, but they knew that Ireland and the Church wasn't doing that, so I think it's just a huge significance for them to see the bishops, and this number of them coming in solidarity."

Increase in enquiries to diocesan priesthood gives 'hope' for future

Brandon Scott

Speaking ahead of the 'Come and See' retreat this weekend in St Patrick's College Maynooth, an event organised for men exploring a vocation and reflecting "more deeply on a call" to diocesan priesthood, the National Diocesan Vocations Coordinator for the Irish Episcopal Conference said that the rise in the number of enquiries discerning a vocation to diocesan priesthood gives priests involved in fostering vocations "great hope" and a sense "that the future for the Church in Ireland is good".

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, National Diocesan Vocations Coordinator Fr Willie Purcell said that the principle of the retreat weekend is to allow men who have been contemplating a vocation to diocesan priesthood to explore this idea in an official setting and with greater conviction.

"The 'Come and See' is really an invitation to men who are discerning with their vocations directors a call to diocesan priesthood,"

he said. "The weekend is bringing together these men to reflect more deeply on the call to diocesan priesthood and as well as that what it means to become a seminarian – that's why we hold it in St Patrick's College, Maynooth."

The recent rise in men beginning formation to the diocesan priesthood is also reflected in the number of enquiries that vocations directors are currently experiencing and Fr Purcell said that this rise in numbers making contact with vocations directors gives those involved at the centre of vocations in the Church "great hope" that "the future for the Church in Ireland is good".

"As National Vocations Coordinator, I would be in touch with vocations directors and what's coming back from the vocations directors is that there is an increase in the number of enquiries in relation to diocesan priesthood," he said. "These inquiries are men who want to explore it and this gives us great hope for the future because it gives us a sense that the future for the Church in Ireland is good."



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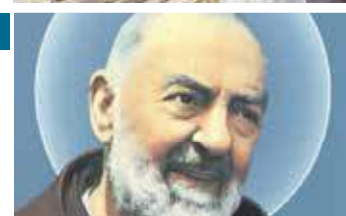


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Cost of living and housing to the fore as politicians start knocking

Brandon Scott

Politicians have reported that the main issues emerging at the doors of houses across the country as they canvass their way around country lanes and sprawling estates primarily concern the “incredible” cost of living and the lack of housing, issues that are contributing to an “overwhelming sense that the Government has lost control”.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín said that conversations on doorsteps have revolved almost solely around “the bread and butter issues”.

“It’s really been about the

bread and butter issues,” he said. “It would only be one in about 200 or 300 houses that you might get a question on culture war issues. The issues that are coming up are cost of living, housing, immigration, health, crime and anti-social behaviour, and transport.

“There has been an enormous amount of waste by this Government in terms of the National Children’s Hospital, the bike shed, the modular homes, etc. We’re saying to the people, ‘the Government has wasted your money, don’t waste your vote too.’”

Independent TD Carol Nolan said that the “incredible cost of living burden” is



A new estate under development. Photo: Business Post.

a major issue in her constituency of Laois-Offaly and is resulting in an “overwhelming sense that the Government has lost control”.

“The main issues revolve around access to housing and the incredible cost of

living burden, including exorbitant energy costs,” she said. “Also, lack of access to health services and the virtual disintegration of supports for special needs children, immigration levels spiralling out of control with a multi-billion Euro price tag and a growing trend of anti-social and criminal behaviour at a time of reduced garda visibility.

“There is an overwhelming sense that Government has lost control in everything, from housing to immigration to crime to the cost of living.”

Independent TD for Tipperary Mattie McGrath said that the decisions taken by a series of governments have led to the emergence of issues encompassing the cost of living, immigration, housing, and the treatment of Christianity and Christians in the country.

“Policies that successive

governments have implemented in recent years have just literally undermined our communities, our safety, and our prospects of getting houses or dealing with the homeless,” he said. “There’s also been a huge neglect of mental health in Tipperary.

“Cost of living, immigration, housing, and people living with the consequences of their children emigrating as a result of them not being able to get a house for themselves are the issues. There is also a huge concern about the attack on Christianity and the changing of our focus as a country.”

Independent TD for Kerry Michael Healy-Rae said that for people in Kerry the main issues concern “housing, health, homes, roads and infrastructure, employment, immigration” and also “the Assisted Dying Bill”.

‘Groundbreaker’ activist priest dies in Belfast

Staff reporter

Tributes have been paid to Fr Myles Kavanagh, who served the community of Ardoyne in Belfast for over 60 years and died last Sunday. Originally from Dublin, Fr Myles came to Belfast before the Troubles began and stayed throughout, dedicating himself to the people in Ardoyne and helping revitalise the area economically and socially.

Fr Gary Donegan, who worked alongside Fr Myles for years as a Passionist priest at Holy Cross Parish, said he will be remembered as a ‘groundbreaker’.

Fr Gary said: “His idea was of justice and peace

through employment and he was involved in the setting up of many cottage industries. He practised a form of radical religiosity, he lived his life in a form of liberation theology and he was groundbreaker.”

Fr Myles’ Funeral Mass will be held on Thursday November 14 at 11.00am.

Heroism hailed after terrorist attack on London Bridge



Most Rev. Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh, presents Joanne Saunsbury, native of Co. Wexford, with the Cross of Merit, *pro merito melitensi*, recognising her courage and skill in the face of the 2017 terrorist attack on London Bridge, where she provided a member of the public with life-saving care. Mrs Saunsbury was previously trained in first aid by the Wexford Unit of Order of Malta Ireland, and was awarded this at the Order’s Annual Requiem Mass. Photo: John McElroy/Maxwell.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Winter Faith Renewal programme at Knock Shrine

The Winter Faith Renewal programme at Knock Shrine offers a variety of events based on music, family, parish enrichment and spiritual retreats, to inspire and enlighten.

Over the coming weeks, renowned guest speakers will host a range of workshops on Scripture, the Sacraments and Christian art. Beginning on November 19, Holy Land expert Fr Benny McHale will provide a four-night introduction to St Luke’s Gospel, which is the Church’s Gospel for next year.

This gentle course would be ideally suited for those who would like to gain a better insight into their meaning, those who would like to start a Bible study in their parish or those who use the Lectio Divina approach to the scriptures.

No previous knowledge is needed. Bring a copy of the Bible with you and, if you do not have a copy, one will be provided. This free course will take place over 4 Monday nights from November 19 to December 10 in St John’s welcome centre, from 8pm to 10pm.

Preparations for Jubilee Year have begun

Renata Milán Morales

The Holy Door of St Peter’s Basilica will be opening in less than 40 days, marking the beginning of the Jubilee Year, an event that takes place every 25 years.

“The Jubilee Year 2025 offers us many opportunities. I think its central message of hope is important for our world,” explained Bishop Fintan Gavin of Cork and Ross to *The Irish Catholic*. Bishop Fintan Gavin is working on the preparations for this occasion on an Irish level, “the challenge is trying to bring a universal message back to the local Church. We’ll do that in various ways through our places of pilgrimage... One of the big events is the Jubilee of Youth, which we’ve already

begun preparing with various movements, and religious orders with youth ministries.”

The Irish Episcopal Conference has recently held a virtual meeting with over 40 youth representatives, “and it was very well attended,” shared Bishop Fintan Gavin. “The hope is to make the Jubilee of Youth accessible, especially since the next World Youth Day in South Korea is quite far and costly. We’re actively working on accommodations and flights, to make Rome a viable option,” said Bishop Fintan Gavin. The Jubilee Year is not only about Rome, “The goal is to strengthen the faith within the local Church and ensure these larger events support, rather than replace, local faith-building efforts.”

A sad student story

A very sad story emerged this past week about an Oxford student who killed himself: a story which revealed much about our times and values.

Alexander Rogers was 20 years old and a third-year student at Corpus Christi college, studying science, and predicted to get a First. He was described at an inquest as “kind, funny and an incredible friend to many”; it was said that he “spread joy and held the brightest smile in the room”.

But he took his own life by jumping into the Thames after he was boycotted – or “cancelled” – in the cur-



Mary Kenny

rent parlance, after a “sexual encounter” that elicited a complaint.

Cancelled

The young woman involved did not accuse Alexander of rape or of non-consensual relations, but she told friends she felt “discomfort” about this “sexual encounter” they had shared. Word got around, and Alexander was cancelled, ostracised and excluded by his peers and friends. Overcome with shame

and remorse, the student killed himself, leaving a note of “love and regret” for his family.

The Coroner, Nicholas Graham, found that the college was dogged “with a form of cancel culture, involving the exclusion of students from social circles based on allegations... often without a fair hearing.” Issues relating to sex or race often prompted these “cancellations”. The sociologist, Frank Furedi, an academic himself, says that he knows of many

Kathleen Watkins, as has been widely noted, was a lovely person, and her marriage to Gay Byrne must have been designed in heaven, for he couldn't have met a woman in the whole world who was better suited to him (and surely vice-versa).

Kathleen was a talented musician, a fine presenter

and performer, and in her latter years, a gifted and successful children's author. Yet she was never the kind of woman who might be seen as competing with her husband. Gay, for all his reputation for modernising Ireland (and indeed advocating the introduction of legal divorce) was quite an old-fashioned guy on the domestic front. He'd never have married a

full-on feminist. He liked “the mammy” to be in the home, not breaking glass ceilings in the corporate world.

Kathleen always remained her own person: she was secure in herself, and confidently developed her own gifts. But she was also a dedicated mother – and grandmother – as well as a well-night perfect wife. And a woman of faith.

cases where students are punished by their peers for alleged offences on everything from “cultural appropriation” to vegetarianism.

But the story of Alexander Rogers touches on a wider

scenario too. Young people have not been sufficiently acquainted with the fact – as Camilla Paglia has so often pointed out – that “sexual encounters” can involve risk, danger and hurt. Feeling “discomfort” after an unwise fumble is precisely what you should feel.

Yet if a person makes a mistake, that can be an occasion of apology, and forgiveness – not of social ostracism or vindictive revenge by peers.

Not only are some of these students highly judgemental, according to Professor Furedi, but they are thin-skinned to an extraordinary degree:

wearing a Japanese kimono can lead to an allegation of “cultural appropriation”; a student who identified as a witch wanted her whole college cancelled because a summer solstice party “offended her religion.”

Perhaps the young woman who prompted the boycott of Alexander Rogers now feels wretched about it: so she should. But college authorities should also take a firmer line with “cancel culture”. University is supposed to be about learning to be tolerant.

It is such a sad story, and once again, an illustration that suicide is always a tragedy.

The new movie, mainly for kids, “Paddington in Peru” is another installment – the third – in the beguiling narrative of the eponymous bear who has captured so many hearts. (My forty-something son thought “Paddington 2” one of the most moving films he'd ever seen, and he's no pushover for sentimental tales.)

The new Paddington, in which the bear returns to Peru, is evidently a par-

able about emigration and adaptation. Paddington hails from Peru originally, but proudly acquires a British passport with his adoptive London family. Now he is journeying back to Peru to find his Aunt Lucy and re-connect with his roots, and his bear tribe. Lots of adventures and stunning South American scenery ensue: but at the end of the story, Paddington decides that though he likes discovering his roots, he has now integrated into the

host society in London. And it's all right to have mixed feelings about this.

This third sequel also features some dancing nuns (in full habit, as nuns are always portrayed), although it turns out that Olivia Colman, as the Reverend Mother, has a somewhat gangster side. But the jolly sisters at least make a change from the regulation “evil nuns” now such stock figures on our screens.

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‘Everything we do reflects on God’, Fr Ron Rolheiser

Renata Milán Morales

The Newman Centre of Faith and Reason, based in Dublin, is hosting their Annual Newman Lecture. In this occasion, they are welcoming Fr Ron Rolheiser, who will be speaking on ‘not our tribal deity’.

In a recent conversation with *The Irish Catholic*, the author shared that he will be reflecting on “how we must free up our concept of God from tribalism, nationalism, legalism, false fear, false piety, and sometimes excused expressions.”

Expanding on this, Fr Rolheiser explained, “We’re always creating a God in our image and likeness who can serve our interests. We’ve got ourselves caught in legalism

– like the pharisees. Ideology plays into this one factor, but it’s not the only factor.” “Whatever you do, try not to make God look stupid because everything we do reflects on God,” he added.

Fr Rolheiser has observed throughout the years that “The world is just different. No Christian has ever lived like this before. We haven’t helped this generation find the forms to live the faith,” pointing out that “Faith isn’t too explicit anymore, but implicitly, underneath, there is faith, and we have to have new imagination that can help people articulate what they’re feeling and eventually moved them to Christ.”

What role could imagination have in Faith revival? Fr

Rolheiser, mentioning the Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, points out that “he [Charles Taylor] would look at Ireland and say, ‘you’re not experiencing a crisis of faith, you’re experiencing a crisis of imagination’. Faith is taking different expressions, and we still haven’t been able to articulate that.” Fr Rolheiser continued, “We have a Christianity that has an incredible intellectual imagination. We have a wonderful theology, and we have libraries of books that can save two worlds, but we can’t get people to fall in love anymore with Jesus and with the Church. We don’t have to be afraid of Church renewal.”

Fr Rolheiser mentioned that the Church has been in



this situation before, “if you go back to St Francis of Assisi, him and Clare. They reified the imagination of Christianity. Or later on, Dominic and Ignatius did this too. We need a new Francis, a new Clare. We need a new Dominic.”

Talking about the strengths of the Catholic Church the priest mentioned that “I can see Catholics dealing with somebody who comes to church, but we no longer know how to get somebody to come to church. The evangelicals light more fires under people, but they have trouble sustaining it. Whereas we [Catholic Church] can sustain it.”

Commenting on the recent synod and its role in Church renewal, Fr Rolheiser notes that “a lot of people are going to be disappointed with the synod. What did it accomplish? Pope Francis got peo-

ple of all ideologies into a room to sit down and talk to each other. This is what it accomplished. Pragmatically, doesn’t seem like much. It was more about changing a spirit and bringing a kind of a more of a dialogical model into the Church rather than just straight hierarchy. But if people are going to look at just the results, they’re not going to see a lot of practical results.”

“The Church is going through a phase,” noted the priest. “We always need to never get down or lose hope. The Church has been in this place before. It didn’t die. We must live in hope. Hope isn’t optimism, but God’s promise that the Church isn’t going to die. God is still alive, and Christ is still rising from the dead. And the Church will rise as well,” Fr Rolheiser concluded.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Irish priest author of unique St Martin of Tours Novena

A new novena prayer to St Francis of Tour has been composed by Fr Roland Colhoun, based in Co. Tyrone.

“For the last fortnight, I’ve been praying for a young fellow who is trying to make some important decisions for his future. In the closing days of October, he asked my advice and requested my prayers. He picked November 11 for his project. Since that is the Feast of St Martin of Tours, I suggested doing a Novena,” Fr Colhoun explained. However, they couldn’t find a satisfactory prayer, leading the priest to put one together.

Fr Colhoun is leading a pilgrimage to some of the shrines of France next year with a stop at St Martin of Tours Shrine. “Now I have a prayer to give to my fellow pilgrims,” he said.

Exploring Christian art in Knock Shrine

Following her engaging workshop earlier this year, Dr Nora Donnelly makes a welcome return to Knock Shrine for the third day of the explorative Christian art series, examining how artists have interpreted the Divine through artistic works. ‘Viewing and Reflecting - Presentations on the Nativity in Art and Scripture’ takes place on Saturday, December 7 in Knock Prayer Centre. She will be joined by Rev Dr Eugene Duffy.

Dr Donnelly is an educator, art critic and artist and has written extensively about the value of the experience of art to humankind. Nora will offer fascinating insights into some of the great artistic works that celebrate the birth of Christ, concentrating on minute details that we might otherwise overlook.

Dr Donnelly will show a number of paintings that depict the various views of some Renaissance artists while Fr Eugene Duffy will provide a scriptural reflection on each of the main themes displayed in the art.

Carlo Acutis relics visit a Gaeltacht Parish

Staff reporter

For the first time, a relic of Carlo Acutis, the soon-to-be saint, will visit a Gaeltacht Parish (Irish language speaking region). “Fáilte roimh chách go dtí an ócáid speisialta seo,” ‘All welcome to this special event’, expressed the host of this unique event, Fr Eoghan Ó

Cadhla, Parish Priest.

Monsignor Anthony Figueiredo from Assisi will bring this first-class relic to St Vincent’s Church, Ballyferrier parish, Co. Kerry on Friday November 22 and Saturday 23, 2024. This relic, of which only four exist, has already been displayed for veneration in various countries, most recently in Canada and the United States

of America. Monsignor Anthony says that “the life of Carlo is proof that you can do great things in ordinary life and make ordinary life extraordinary and his life is an example for the youth of the world.”

The theme chosen for the visit is a quote from the *Confession of St Patrick*, “We beg you, holy youth, to come and walk among us.”

The Church’s future



Young people, JPII Award Leaders and Clergy from the Parish of Clones pictured with Bishop Larry Duffy, Fr Leo Creelman (Diocesan Youth Ministry Chaplain), guest speaker Mickey Harte and Supreme Knight John Murphy, Knights of Saint Columbanus during the Award celebration of Clogher Diocese on November 8.

Diocese of Down and Connor contributes to abuse redress scheme

Brandon Scott

The First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland confirmed last Tuesday that a contribution has been received from the Diocese of Down and Connor towards the Historical Institutional Abuse (HIA) Redress Scheme.

This payment, which follows a contribution from the De La Salle Order in September, relates specifically to homes managed jointly with the order.

First Minister Michelle O’Neill said that she welcomes “this second payment relating to these

homes. While financial compensation can never address the pain suffered by victims and survivors of historical abuse, each contribution represents an acknowledgment of responsibility that is essential to the healing process”.

Deputy First Minister, Emma Little-Pengelly, said that “victims and survivors continue to live with the lasting impacts of abuse and trauma, and holding those responsible to account is vital in their journey towards healing. We appreciate the Diocese of Down and Connor’s contribution, and the De La Salle Order’s continued cooperation”.

Oliver and her family can see
a brighter future ahead.

Photo: Chris Gagnon/Concern.

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US Election - lessons for Irish politicians



Nuala O'Loan

Irish politicians may well be looking warily on the US election results as they move into the race for power. There can be no doubt that Donald Trump won the election because he was listening to what mattered to the people of the United States, and planning to address their very real concerns which echo many of the concerns of the electorate in Ireland. Immigration, the economy and inflation all figured very high on the American agenda, yet Vice President Harris had little to say on these matters. What she did say was that there was nothing she would change about Joe Biden's policies. This was clearly a massive mistake.

Ugly language is a hallmark of American elections. Trump uses words in a way which is very offensive to many on occasion, but there can be no doubt that the people of America

have embraced him regardless, as he won the Presidency, and Republicans have control of both Houses of Congress.

“Her running mate, Tim Walz signed a Law in Minnesota allowing the state “temporary emergency jurisdiction” in cases where a child had been unable to obtain gender-affirming care”

People were desperate for change. They had seen Democratic policies lead to spiralling levels of illegal immigration; cities where hundreds of people were living on the street in tents, where drug addiction had spiralled out of control fuelling the levels of homelessness; a 22% increase in grocery and fuel prices in the last few years; to crime especially shoplifting occurring on a massive scale, and prosecutions being very rare, leading small businesses into bankruptcy because they could not afford the scale of the losses they were experiencing; where “defunding the police” - i.e. making it impossible for normal policing to function - was the cry not just

of a few misguided souls but a cause trumpeted even by some politicians.

What did Kamala Harris offer? Hers was the language of “reproductive rights and “trans rights.” There seemed to be little more. In April 2023 her running mate, Tim Walz signed a Law in Minnesota allowing the state “temporary emergency jurisdiction” in cases where a child had been unable to obtain gender-affirming care. Camilla Long reported in the Sunday Times that 14,000 children in the US have had surgery to change their sex over the past five years.

Misinformation

Some of her rhetoric was clearly untrue. She conducted her campaign with massive emphasis on the fact that Donald Trump had deprived American women of “bodily autonomy”, of “the right to healthcare”, of how since Roe v Wade was overturned by the US Supreme Court women's lives have been in danger, even lost. She never alluded to the fact that Trump had made abortion a matter to be decided by individual states.

As was the case here in Ireland, facts were misrepresented.



A supporter of Republican President-elect Donald Trump celebrates at his victory rally at the Palm Beach County Convention Centre in West Palm Beach, Florida, November 6, 2024, after Trump was elected the 47th president of the United States. Photo: OSV News/Carlos Barria.

In 2012, in Ireland, Savita Halappanavar tragically died. She was widely reported to have died while pregnant because she was refused an abortion. A coroner's inquest found that the actual cause of her death was an infection with a virulent antibiotic-resistant strain of E.coli compounded by a series of system failures. HIQA and the HSE also found that her death was due to medical failures.

In America, Amber Thurman, the woman about whom Harris spoke, was approximately nine weeks pregnant with twins when she took abortion inducing drugs. Several days later she went to hospital having experienced an incomplete abortion.

There was no foetal cardiac activity - the twins were no longer alive. She was given antibiotics, and surgery was performed approximately 20 hours later. She died on the operating table during the procedure.

“The role of the traditional media during this election was extraordinary. There was lots of very limited reporting and much deliberately misleading reporting”

Harris said she died because she was refused treatment because she was pregnant. This was untrue. She was no longer pregnant. The evidence is that she died, having taken the drugs to induce an abortion, because of medical malpractice in not operating as a matter of urgency. Amber Thurman's death was undoubtedly a tragedy, but she did not die because she was refused an abortion.

The role of the traditional media during this election was extraordinary. There was lots of very limited reporting and much deliberately misleading reporting, individual instances of which were replayed repeatedly to portray Donald Trump as some sort of monster. He was, for example, called a “Nazi” and “Hitler”, a “fascist” as a consequence of misreporting of the incident in which, referring to a riot, he said “I'm not talking about the neo-Nazis and the white nationalists” and continued “there were good people on many sides”.

Criticism

This was reported as his saying that Nazis were good people by the simple technique of omitting the words “I'm not talking about the neo-Nazis and the white nationalists.” He subsequently said “Racism is evil. And those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and other hate groups that are repugnant to everything we hold dear as Americans.”

We are a nation founded on the truth that all of us are created equal. We are equal in the eyes of our Creator. We are equal under the law. And we are equal under our Constitution. Those who spread violence in the name of bigotry strike at the very core of America.”

They called him racist, yet many Latinos and Afro-Americans recognised that his policies would benefit them far more than Harris's would and voted accordingly.

They called him a warmonger whose unpredictability would make the world a less safe place. Yet as President, Trump did not take America into war, he is calling for the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine to be brought to an end. The

world needs those conflicts, like all others, to come to an end. It is to be hoped that he can be an influence for good in these conflicts.

The lawful movement of people across the world is necessary for societies to develop. We have international obligations to care for refugees. Yet, countries have borders to define their territory, and they need to protect those borders to protect their peoples. Illegal Immigration is a major problem in Ireland, in the UK and in most countries of the world, including America.

“His election came as a surprise to many in the media”

It enables organised crime such as drug smuggling and human trafficking, and even terrorism. Trump has said that he will deport those found by the courts to be illegally in America. In April he said, “I will be complying with court orders. I will be doing everything on a very legal basis. I have great respect for the Supreme Court.” He has spoken of his desire to unite the American people. This is not widely reported.

Some 75 million people voted for Trump. Republicans have control of both Houses of Congress now, which should facilitate Trump in his avowed aim to improve the lot of ordinary Americans. He has four short years to do this.

His election came as a surprise to many in the media. They could not see that woke issues were not as important as economic issues for people struggling to live in a world which has become increasingly difficult.

Irish politicians could learn from America's experience.

December
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The Irish Catholic

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'Through silence, we allow the Lord to speak,' Fr Barry White



Renata Milán Morales

In a society increasingly distracted by screens and fast-paced living, a growing number of people are finding meaning and purpose through the tradition of Eucharistic adoration. Fr Barry White, a parish priest based in Mullingar, pointed out the power of adoration, noting the impact of groups like Youth 2000 and Pure in Heart as he told *The Irish Catholic* prior to the yearly event, '40 hours Adoration', hosted in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar. "People have discovered their vocations through adoration," he said.

Fr Barry noted the need for faith among people today, describing the importance of sacramental life in offering hope and guidance. "There is a profound calling for people to live out their baptismal and confirmation callings," he added.

A central feature of the 40 Hours Adoration, hosted annually at the cathedral, is the sacrament of confession. "We encourage people to avail of the sacraments, to experience healing and forgiveness regularly as we journey through life," Fr Barry said. With confession available from midday to midnight on Saturday, participants can rediscover this sacrament. The priest observed that, last year, many visitors, especially those who might not have initially intended to confess, often found themselves moved to do so. "Things come to mind during adoration, and they go to confession," he noted, adding that many adults keep rediscovering confession after their initial preparation as children.

Reflection

Fr Barry described last year's atmosphere as "beautiful... very prayerful and silent." He acknowledged the popularity of secular practices like mindfulness, meditation, and yoga offer a sense of inner peace that many seek, yet "it is truly a desire for something that develop a deeper well-being... [yet Adoration] it's not just our

own well-being, it's actually our relationship with God." "40 Hours Adoration is an experience of this quiet peace and silence in front of the Blessed Sacrament," he said. To support the faithful, guides are available to offer direction for those who may be unfamiliar with the practice of adoration, allowing them to fully experience the moments of listening and quiet reflection.

Reflecting on his own spiritual journey, Fr Barry shared that adoration played a significant role in his own vocational discernment. He described how he would visit the adoration chapel in his town during secondary school lunch breaks. "As a teenager, I'd have worries... I always felt a deep sense of peace and direction in adoration," he said. "Adoration is a time of quiet prayer, to listen to the Lord and present issues or problems," he explained, describing it as an opportunity for guidance.

Fr Barry described the '40 Hours Adoration' process as beginning with praise, followed by giving thanks, and then moving into a time of listening. "There are different ways of doing a holy hour," he noted, adding that some may sit in silence, others may choose spiritual reading, and some might follow Ignatian steps of reflection. He compared this gradual approach to building physical strength, saying, "You can't just jump into lifting 30 kilos if you've never done it before. Prayer can be the same. It's gradual."

“He encouraged using scripture or the Rosary to aid in prayer, while also emphasising that silence and listening are key to developing a meaningful relationship with God”

Fr Barry also highlighted the importance of adoration groups within parish life, noting that these groups play a key role in helping people establish a deeper, more personal relationship with Christ. He expressed concern that the focus on increasing church activities can detract from the heart of faith. "Pope Francis' recent document *Dilexit Nos* warns against neglecting the heart," he explained. "Faith can't just



'40 Hours Adoration', Christ the King Cathedral, Mullingar, 2023.

be participating in Mass by doing a reading or singing... it has to be deeper than that." For Fr Barry, adoration is a way to cultivate this depth, placing relationship with Christ at the centre.

Many people, he observed, lack basic knowledge of faith and prayer practices, which are essential to building this relationship with Christ. He explained that a real connection with Christ comes "through silence, allowing the Lord to speak." While secular practices like mindfulness and meditation are popular, he believes that the Church's traditions meet this need on a deeper level. He noted that maintaining silence can be difficult for many, adding, "If I go into adoration, I might find silence hard to maintain. Two minutes can feel like a long time." He encouraged using scripture or the Rosary to aid in prayer, while also emphasising that silence and listening are key to developing a meaningful relationship with God.

Giving

'40 Hours Adoration' coincides with the Feast of Christ the King, marking the end of the liturgical year. Fr Barry explained that the feast is a "beautiful celebration" that acknowledges Christ's kingship at the conclusion of a procession of saints and feasts throughout the year. "It signifies trusting in Christ as our King," he said. The event has consistently drawn large crowds, with many people, even those unfamiliar with silent prayer, seeking an encounter with Christ in the quietude of adoration. Fr Barry cautioned against viewing religious practices as transactional, stating, "The danger is that people think 'I do something, and the Lord gives me something in return,' which misses the heart of faith. It's about bringing your heart to the Lord, giving thanks, seeking guidance, and forgive-

ness." While cultural traditions like lighting candles or praying for success are meaningful, he believes adoration offers a deeper, more genuine connection to faith.

Throughout the Diocese of Meath, each parish takes part in the '40 Hours Adoration', creating a sense of unity and pilgrimage as parishioners

from various communities participate in prayer. During night hours, groups from Mullingar often take shifts, and each parish is assigned a specific time slot, creating a spirit of communal prayer and solidarity.

The '40 Hours Adoration' follows a schedule reminiscent of the Easter Triduum, running from Friday to Sunday, and has

become a cherished tradition in the cathedral. Fr Barry noted the symbolism of the event as a fitting conclusion to the liturgical year, offering a moment of reflection and renewal for all participants.

Fr Barry's insights suggest that Eucharistic adoration offers people an alternative path: a place of peace, forgiveness, and purpose. As they discover and rediscover this practice, they may also find that it helps them to discern their vocations, nurture a deeper relationship with God, and embrace the gift of faith that grows in silence and community.

i Christ the King Cathedral, Mullingar, invites you to participate in these 40 Hours of Eucharistic Adoration, where faithful will come together as pilgrims of hope, seeking the face of Christ in the Eucharist beginning with the 7:30pm Mass on Friday, November 22, and concluding with Vespers and Benediction at 4pm on Sunday, November 24.



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Closing date for applications is Friday, 6th December, 2024 at 5pm.

Letter from a frontier church



Garry O'Sullivan

“Francis, Francis, go and repair My house which, as you can see, is falling into ruins”.

These words of Christ, spoken from a cross in the little church of San Damiano to St Francis of Assisi, crept into my mind when I took an old wooden pew in the little church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on Dublin's City Quay, a short stroll from O'Connell Bridge.

It was the Feast of All Saints and as Taizé music gently nudged us towards the 8am Mass, I was utterly distracted by the sheer extent of paintwork coming off all the walls, dull pastel colours tired and defeated, ripped and torn, rippled like faint watercolour waves along the walls that refused plaster in protest at their neglect. The altar area

looked cheap and dated, like something that came flat packed for a pop-up church at a music festival.

Repair

“Francis, go and repair...”.

St Francis restored several rural churches around Assisi, the most famous being the Portiuncula (meaning little portion), the little chapel of St Mary of the Angels, just outside the town of Assisi. It became the cradle of the Franciscan movement and Francis lived and died there.

“City Quay” as it is known, is also on a ‘little portion’ of land, squeezed in by large modern office blocks that block its light, and ugly development sites on the other. It was once a church for dockers and their working class families, many now long gone out to the suburbs but a community still exists, perhaps persists, despite efforts to shove them out.

When St Francis's father, a very successful businessman, demanded his errant son give him back all that he had given and invested in him, his son, Francis stripped naked before the bishop, his father and the town and declared he would serve God only now. (Hard not

to have some sympathy for the father of a stubborn son).

Man cannot serve two masters. Francis chose his. “Repair my House.”

A little bell rings and Fr Alan Hilliard, administrator of this little underdog, emerges to begin the Mass.

An apology – the large radiators aren't working this morning because of a ‘glitch’. The mix of Irish and foreign worshippers that make up the 30 to 40 strong early morning congregation don't seem to mind or are used to this at ‘St Mary of the Glitches and Peeling Walls’.

“It seems right for this little diverse gathering of office workers, immigrants, lost souls, even stray journalists that at least, here amid the frontier poverty they have the promise of Heaven”

It feels and looks like a frontier Church, in the heart of inner city Dublin with its



Fr Alan Hilliard outside City Quay church on the Feast of All Saints



A replica of the Cross of San Damiano

homelessness, sense of danger, lingering intergenerational poverty, flanked by immense wealth, disdain and indifference, yes this is a frontier alright. “Repair My house...”.

The pews are littered with copper plates with dedications and remembrances for parishioners long gone, this is a sacred space with a lot of history. Afterwards Fr Hilliard tells me it was built by a priest, mostly out of his own pocket (his family had a few bob) for the poor people of the area, as Westland Row church was seen back then as upmarket and unwelcoming. I wonder how they would react if they knew Westland Row was now becoming a Basilica and across the river the Pro-Cathedral was being elevated to a full Cathedral. The plaques with the names of dead parishioners are still and silent, just the paint and plaster keeps peeling, unwilling to stay still in its protest.

Blessed

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven”-the Gospel is on the Beatitudes for the Feast day. It seems right for this little diverse gathering of office workers, immigrants, lost souls, even

stray journalists that at least, here amid the frontier poverty they have the promise of Heaven.

The priest gives a homily, he quotes the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner – (the Church might be falling down but theological standards are being kept up) – “The Feast of All Saints strengthens and encourages us to create that path by walking it.”

In other words – ‘walk the walk, don't just talk the talk’. The saints, says the priest, are among us and are walking the walk.

“A local lady with a kind face approaches the priest at the back door and says to a few of us gathered: ‘He's a saint’

At the sign of peace, we all turn to each other and nod, or gently bow, you never know there might be a saint or two here. As signs of peace go, it's silent, reverential and respectful of each other; we're in this together.

As Mass concludes Fr Alan announces that he'll be away on business for a few weeks but a Jesuit will be filling in, “to protect the congregation from heresy” he quips.

He adds that because it's a feast day Mass, normally they would have two collections but he understands people are rushing off to work so the collection basket is at the back- “and we will still let you out if you haven't got change.” Nothing is asked in this church but everything is given, poured out till the cup overflows. The congregation know it.

A local lady with a kind face approaches the priest at the back door and says to a few of us gathered: “He's a saint”.

When God called Francis he drew him to a tiny dilapidated old church and said ‘go and repair My house which, as you can see, is falling into ruins’. The little spaces, among the meek and poor, the glitches and the peeling walls, encircled by high rise office blocks blocking out the light, forgotten by the great Basilicas and Cathedrals, these are the places that God chooses to speak, and make his will known.



A fresco on the Church of Saint Mary of the Angels in Assisi

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The new evangelisation



Martina Purdy

An Irish stonemason, with little education, became one of the great evangelists of the last century. And his story is now entwined with the famous American bishop Robert Barron, himself the son of Irish emigrants, whose Word on Fire network has gone global.

I heard the story at St Comgall's School on the Falls Road school the other day, where the new Bishop of Down and Connor, Alan McGuckian, had gathered priests and laity for a networking lunch, aimed at encouraging Catholics to share their faith with others.

Mission

The story goes back to November 14, 1940, when John Forbes, a Belfast-born stonemason at Coventry Cathedral was on nightwatch.

Hitler's Luftwaffe was raining down bombs, killing six hundred people and injuring thousands and Forbes saw that an incendiary bomb had smashed through the roof of the Cathedral. His thoughts turned to his wife and children.

Forbes tore through the city, ignoring an order from a policeman to go to the bunker - where he almost certainly would have perished as the bunker suffered a direct hit.

When Forbes arrived at his bomb-damaged street, heart pounding in his mouth, he was grateful to find his own house still standing, his wife and family safe inside.

The next day he went to work at Coventry Cathedral and found a ruin.

Where others found despair, Forbes saw only hope.

Although the Cathedral had no roof, Forbes got to work, declaring: "Every church needs an altar." He saw that two charred pieces of timber formed the shape of a cross and fashioned them with string alongside a makeshift altar of rubble.

His works still stand today, along with the words of Christ which he wrote: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do..."

Forbes' grandson, Brenden Thompson who told the story, is himself now a full-time evangelist as UK Programme Director for Word on Fire.

Thompson's tale was tailor-made for the Belfast event - where two questions dominated: why don't more Catholics share their faith - and how

do we get them to evangelise?

Bishop McGuckian told delegates this was vital. "The fundamental mission of the church isn't to transform us into 'pious catechetical know-it-alls' who stand at a distance and wag their fingers at the world," he said. "Whatever we do must transform us into captivating Christians. We have to have God make Christians of us so we have something to share with other people"

He said evangelisation must be attractive and creative, done with an open heart, a heart that burns so other hearts can burn also.

“One of the lessons of the Covid lockdown, from which the Church is still recovering. Post-covid, around 40% of mass-goers did not return”

Bishop McGuckian's own encounter with Bishop Barron's new evangelisation came in the year of faith, 2012, when he was given his DVD set, entitled *Catholicism*. "I was just blown away," he said.

Soon 72 people from Down and Connor were sent out to share the series with 2,000 parishioners. "It made a big difference," said Bishop McGuckian.

But anyone who has ever kindled a fire knows, it needs constant attention, one of the lessons of the Covid lockdown, from which the Church is still recovering. Post-covid, around 40% of mass-goers did not return.

One of the luncheon speakers, Dr Gladys Ganiel, a sociologist from Queen's University Belfast, said fewer women than men returned.

She spoke about the decline in church attendance and the rise of the 'nones' - those who do not identify with any faith.

In fact, Dr Ganiel said there are indications that women are becoming less religious than men. One theory is that men are seeking answers in a shifting world where roles are changing and phrases such as "toxic masculinity" are increasingly common.

A survey of the Chaplaincy at Queen's University in turn showed women were also more likely to disagree with the church on hot-button issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage.

There was some intriguing news though. A 2023 survey by the Evangelical Alliance in Northern Ireland revealed a new trend among Catholics,

particularly young Catholics. Almost 40% of Catholics now are "evangelical" - something almost unheard of 20 years ago. The figure rises to 70 percent among younger Catholics, aged 18-24.

So what is holding the others back? Some say a lack of confidence, a lack of awareness, and a lack of knowledge.

"How can you evangelise what you don't know?" asked Brenden Thompson.

Belief

Vatican II made changes to the way the catechism was taught. My own Irish Catholic mother, who was born in 1942, left school at 14. She learned the doctrinal rules by rote and shared her 'penny catechism' with her children.

But when I discovered feminism I had no real understanding of Church teaching on issues such as women's ordination. A child of Vatican II, I was not given even a 'penny catechism' and was in high school when the bishops formally decided to publish the official new Catechism. I was too busy

reading newspapers as a working journalist by the time Pope John Paul II published the Catechism of the Catholic Church in 1992.

This is one of our problems as a Church. Too many 'lay faithful' do not know the faith and are formed by the media. A recent column in *The Irish News* by Bronagh Diamond, highlighted the disaster.

“When the roof caves in, the fire of love, which cannot be quenched, is a good place to start”

This young woman had the gift of a 'penny catechism' granny and said she believed in God, but saw no reason to leave the comfort of her home on Sunday to go to mass (so that we *living stones* can be transformed in love and become more Christ-like). I won't repeat what Ms Diamond wrote about the Eucharist. Forbes' makeshift placard "Father forgive..." suffices.

“White Christians were among those being blamed for Donald Trump's stunning victory in the US election. Christians have long been handy scapegoats.

The fact is many Christians of all races were divided sharply between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris - though she dismissed Christians pretty quickly from her pre-election rally.

The 'Social justice' left-leaning Catholics in particular seem to champion Harris, prizing 'feeding the poor' over 'life for the poorest of the poor', the children in the womb. The Democratic can-

didate, Kamala Harris was a very weak candidate who lost for complex reasons, despite having so many advantages (positive press coverage, massive funding and Trump's many failings).

But Harris lacked vision, and was unable to articulate values that resonated with the American people. Her main platform often focussed on access to abortion, and she celebrated the choice to destroy small children in the womb for any reason up to birth in the name of 'freedom'. This should be abhorrent to all, not just Christians.

Does the left hand even know what the far left hand is doing?

But this young woman recounted a telling anecdote about a classroom of children who were asked if they believed in God. Only three hands went up.

Perhaps they were asked the wrong question. Perhaps the

question needs to be: Do you believe in love?

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Will Ireland follow the US' back to basics approach?



Maria Steen

As the politicians of Ireland take to the streets in preparation for the forthcoming election, the fallout and post-election analysis from the US continues. A resounding victory for President Elect Donald Trump, and ignominious defeat for current Vice President Kamala Harris, have made for pages and pages of political post-mortems.

While there are major differences between the United States and this country, there are certainly some observations that may be of use, and even lessons that can be learned, in the Irish context.

To begin with, it is necessary to identify why the Trump campaign won, and the Harris campaign lost. Undoubtedly, there were hardcore Trump supporters who voted in their droves because they love his belligerent attitude towards the establishment, his siding with the little guy (even though he is incredibly successful in his own right), and his injection of irreverent humour into a customarily grey, stale, and dour political scene.

However, my sense is that many voted to reject what the Democrats were offering; the feeling of frustration – and even anger – with the incumbent administration should not be underestimated.

Harris

According to the figures, Kamala Harris did not outperform Joe Biden in a single county in the whole country. She also lost ground with Hispanic voters and black men, and lost outright in areas that

haven't voted Republican in a century.

Among New York Jews, Trump increased his share of the vote by 50%. Trump made big gains with Generation X (aged 44-59) and Gen Z voters (aged 18-27) too. Finally, 52% of the Catholic population voted for Biden in 2020, but Trump succeeded in securing 56% of the Catholic vote this time around. In other words, typical Democrat voters flocked to the Republican candidate in 2024.

There are broadly three reasons why Trump won and Harris lost: 1) the economy; 2) immigration; and 3) the "woke" agenda. These are all hot button topics in Ireland too.

On the economy, inflation and the soaring cost of living contributed to ordinary Americans' frustration with the Biden/Harris administration, from which Harris—despite repeated opportunities presented to her—was unable or unwilling to distance herself. Men voted for Trump; he made



Republican President-elect Donald Trump gestures alongside his wife, Melania, during his rally at the Palm Beach County Convention Centre in West Palm Beach, Florida, November 6, 2024, after being elected the 47th president of the United States. Photo:OSV News/Brian Snyder, Reuters

significant gains among non-white men in particular, who might have been presumed to be Democrat voters.

Misogyny

Many commentators suggest that misogyny is at the root of their rejection of Kamala Harris. However, I think their analysis is wrong, or at least incomplete. My own feeling is that many working class men reacted against the idea that a woman would "look after them" by giving them hand-outs and favouring them in her party's DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) policies.

I think it was less the fact that she was a woman, and more Harris's condescending attitude and infantilising "maternalistic" policies that irked the male voter. Harris's implicit promise read something like: "I'll look after you." This was a fundamental misunderstanding of the male psyche, something which Margaret Thatcher, by contrast—whose message to men was to get out there and provide for themselves—understood much better.

Immigration was a big issue for voters too, and here there are strong parallels with Ireland. Being told you are racist for raising concerns about hundreds of young men from a foreign country with no family ties, no prospects, and no ID or records, being bussed into your neighbourhood has gone down badly with Irish people, and Americans are no different.

Voters concerns are not about race, but rather about resources and security. People are already struggling to meet the needs of their own families, with difficulties finding a GP, accessing care in A&E hospital departments, getting their children into already oversubscribed schools, and finding affordable housing – it

would threaten their access to pornography. In this, they (again) misjudged the male psyche.

While use of pornography may be widespread among young men, most know deep down that it is wrong – and they don't care to be reminded of their weaknesses. Although Harris herself spoke repeatedly of appealing to the "aspirations" of the people, her supporters' targeting of young men as fundamentally degraded was a tremendous own-goal.

Religious freedom was a big issue for many voters too. The Amish, who usually rebuff the ballot box, registered to vote in unprecedented numbers in order to protect their traditions, and overwhelmingly supported Trump, helping to secure the Pennsylvania vote. This was echoed among other religious communities too, including Catholics.

The increasingly deranged alliance between feminism, socialism, DEI proponents and trans-ideologues eventually reached the tipping point, at which the ordinary voters were finally willing to say: "Enough!"

For a time, the campaign of intimidation led by the unholy trinity of politicians, media and academics proved incredibly effective across all layers of society, so that people would either self-censor and keep their (unfashionable) opinions to themselves, or submit and not merely tolerate, but celebrate, whatever new madness was proposed: whether men competing in women's sports, or teenage boys using girls changing rooms, or operating on young girls and castrating young boys in the name of "kindness".

Insulted

But, eventually, people got tired of being insulted. President Joe Biden's comment that Trump's supporters were "garbage" played out badly and served as a reminder of Hillary Clinton's "basket of deplorables" comment in 2016. In the Irish context, the tendency of the parties in power to label anyone who disagrees with them on matters such as these as "far-right" carries more than an echo of the failed Harris campaign.

When everyone is a misogynist, or a racist, or far-right, the term in question loses its sting and people begin to think: perhaps I shouldn't care what you think anymore. The question is: are Irish voters at that point yet?

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'Faith and science need each other' says astrophysicist priest

Renata Steffens

"Many theologians are intimidated by scientists and many scientists are disdainful of theologians," Fr Michael Connolly, astrophysicist and parish priest Oughterard told *The Irish Catholic*.

Fr Connolly believes that discussing the relationship between 'faith' and 'reason', "or particularly faith in the scientific field" is imperative. The priest gave a talk in September in Oughterard when he discussed the Catholic faith's compatibility with science.

"It's a very important moral aspect because technology companies are becoming major shapers of culture and it's amazing what they're doing, but also it could be harmful. I [would] like to get more educated lay Catholics to dialogue and critique what's happening with their Catholic faith, but also technology and science, and

where it's all going."

There is a new 'industrial revolution' being planned, Fr Connolly said, so it is important to have a new generation of Catholics forming part of that revolution. "Because if we're not in the discussion, then it's going to be decided by people who have no faith, with different values, [who] have a different worldview, and it can go very wrong."

Calling

Fr Connolly's career path started in the 1980s when he got his first degree in science at the University of Galway, but he didn't get an honours degree, which made him decide to leave the sciences for a while and work as a lay missionary. "I went working in electronics and industry and then my vocation came along," he said.

"But after my vocation, to my surprise, the door opened for me to go back to my old university, and I did a master's degree in high energy astrophysics." Later, Fr Connolly did a doctorate with the Har-



vard Smithsonian.

His main goal with that degree was to speak on faith and science, "because at the time there was a very strong movement called 'The New Atheist', they were inspired by the cultural fundamentalists," explained the priest.

The New Atheists believe "all religions should be banished because it just caused trouble and wars". And I said, 'No, that's not the truth. What it does is, it gives people legitimacy in the name of God, to do things that God certainly

doesn't want, so we need to find good religion and find the people who aren't false prophets".

The best way to speak in those arguments is to have credibility, Fr Connolly said. "Scientists, they're quite arrogant sometimes, they won't really respect people commenting on science unless they have a science background. If you have that background and you also have the faith background, that has much more credibility".

The astrophysicist priest is

doing his second doctorate in philosophy of science. He is now studying the semantic nature. "From the first book of John 'and all was created through the world'. It's actually true because it is a language based on all of nature and mathematics."

"The next step in Fr Connolly's career is to share his knowledge, share the idea that faith and science can and should work together"

The priest believes there must be a bridge between faith and science. "I think it's dangerous if they're separate, because we need each other, to inspire and keep each other in check."

"Once you remove an objective morality from science, 'can do' means 'should do'. Without looking at the long-term consequences,

they can be very fluid. The morality, we need that.

"And faith, religion, needs a strong grounding in creation and physics and science because it just makes us more grounded. Otherwise, it's just all spiritual. So we're body and soul. It helps religion from being too superstitious, and it also stops science from believing in false absolutes. That's John Paul, he said that. We need each other. It's a difficult dialogue, we have to learn to respect".

The next step in Fr Connolly's career is to share his knowledge, share the idea that faith and science can and should work together. "I would hope to engage with professional young adults who are open to this dialogue," he said. The priest also wants "to do in-person school visits for young teenagers seeking another input".

"I would like to get people [who] can come together in faith, but also in faith and reason, and science, and to be the yeast in the leaven. That's it."



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Out&About

Faith on fire



ANTRIM: The Catholic Chaplaincy at QUB attended the Word on Fire evangelisation networking event 'Proclaiming Christ in our Culture' at St Comgall's Centre. Photo: Fr Brian Watters.



LAOIS: After recording their EP in St Michaels Church, the Timahoe Male Choir went to the Brewery Pub, Rathdowney and sang for a fundraiser for Christmas lights.



ANTRIM: Bishop Alan McGuckian, Brendan Thompson, Prof. Gladys Ganiel and Fr Billy Swan at the evangelisation networking event 'Proclaiming Christ in our Culture' at the St Comgall's Centre. Photo: Fr Brian Watters.

IN SHORT

Gathering discusses evangelisation in today's culture

Word on Fire in collaboration with the Pathways to the Future Team organised a networking event at St Comgall's Centre, Belfast with theme 'Proclaiming Christ in our Culture'.

The event gathered parish and diocesan leaders for a discussion with focus on renewed opportunities for evangelisation in today's culture. The group reflected on how to share Christ's message while navigating cultural challenges. The event aimed to share the message that evangelisation must

be Christ-centred.

Bishop of Down and Connor Alan McGuckian opened the event with a prayer. The Master of Ceremonies was Fr Billy Swan, from the Diocese of Ferns. During his talk on the principles of evangelisation, Fr Swan reminded the attendees that evangelisation must always be rooted in Christ.

Prof Gladys Ganiel, Professor at Queens University Belfast in the Sociology of Religion, shared recent statistics and trends in religious practices in Ireland. The Word on Fire's UK Programme Director, Brendan Thompson, shared practical insights on supporting lay Catholics in bringing Christ into the world.

Primary schools' management gather in Cork

Recently appointed primary school principals in the Diocese of Cork and Ross recently gathered with Bishop Fintan Gavin in Cork International Hotel. At the event, the bishop assured the present of his support for their role through the Diocesan Education Secretariat.

School principals, staff members and the Board of Management members are facing challenges in the changing faith landscape in families. Bishop Gavin said that with those challenges, the Catholic ethos of schools cen-

tered on Christ is even more needed.

The Diocesan Co-ordinator for Faith Formation, Susan O'Hanrahan talked about initiatives to support the faith formation of children and sustaining the faith of school staff. Speaking to the attendees, the Diocesan Education Secretary, Fr Michael Keohane, who mentioned the role of the patron in primary schools and the establishments of special classes as part of the Catholic ethos.

Also speaking was Regina O'Sullivan, Diocesan Co-ordinator for Primary Schools mentioned the Diocesan Education Secretariat's important role in providing support to the Board of Management and schools' management. A prayer moment led by Bishop Gavin concluded the event.

Edited by Renata Steffens
Renata@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in
advance of publication



OFFALY: The November Novena of St Brendan's Church, Birr included the music of multiple choirs in the Pastoral area. On Friday, the choirs combined efforts to deliver the liturgical music.



KILDARE: Sr Margaret with the items for the raffle organised by the Holy Family Sisters, carers and friends to raise funds for Share Food, Newbridge Parish food bank.



ANTRIM: Bishop of Down and Connor Alan McGuckian opened the event 'Proclaiming Christ in our Culture' at St Comgall's Centre with a prayer. Photo: Fr Brian Watters.



CARLOW: Graiguecullen/Killeslin Parish celebrated their cemetery Mass on November 3. During the occasion, a plaque to honour babies buried at the cemetery who died before baptism was performed. Photo: John J. Bradley.



CARLOW: The Graiguecullen/Killeslin Parish community gathered for a cemetery Mass on November 3. Photo: John J. Bradley.



LAOIS: The Timahoe Male Choir professionally recorded their new EP in St Michaels Church, Timahoe. On a post on Facebook, the group thanked Fr David Vard for the permission to record inside the church.

ANTRIM

The Glenavy Branch of the Apostolic Work are holding their Annual Christmas Sale in St Clare's Hall on Sunday, November 24 after 9.30am and 12pm Masses. Cakes, tombola, ballot, bric a brac stalls, tea/coffee available. A church door collection for Apostolic Work funds will be taken up outside both Masses in St Joseph's Church that weekend.

DONEGAL

The Annual Raphoe Diocesan Society Mass will take place on Monday, November 18 at 7pm in Teach Pobail Mhuire, Doiri Beaga/St Mary's Church, Derrybeg. Celebrant will be Msgr Kevin Gillespie, diocesan administrator. To enrol a person in the RDS contact rds@raphoediocesan.ie. Enrolment is €15.

CORK

'Connect 5' is a faith gathering for young people aged 18-35 in the Diocese of Cork and Ross. With theme 'In a troubled world, dare to hope', the events happens on November 17 from 9.30am to 4pm in the Student Centre, University College Cork. €10 ticket includes food and refreshments.

DERRY

2024 Men's Adoration happen on November 23 in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, Fairview Rd. Adoration is from 2.30pm to 5.30pm, talk from 6pm to 7pm and Vigil Mass of Christ the Kind at 7.15pm. Confessions available during adoration. Parking and refreshments available. More info on menofstjosephireland@gmail.com.

DONEGAL

Bowling in the Mevagh Parochial Hall happens on Thursdays at 8pm. New members are always welcome.

DUBLIN

The Rock From Which You Were Hewn – a book which contains, in 44 chapters, a biography of every Irish person whose cause for canonisation is currently open – edited by Parick and John S. Hogan and with a foreword by Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin will be launched on November 21 at 6.30pm at Ely House, 8 Ely Place, Dublin 2. Guest speaker in the

event is Archbishop Eamon Martin.

LIMERICK

The Advent Market will happen on December 1 at 12pm. Enjoy tea/coffee in the Priests' Residence then support local artisans and vendors at the Sacred Heart Church. For more info and to register as a vendor contact McKenzie at 0870942594.

LOUTH

Prayer hour takes place every Tuesday from 7-8pm in St Peter's Church, Dromiskin. Join for reflection on the word of God and adoration of the blessed sacrament.

MAYO

Introduction to the Scriptures with Fr Benny McHale happens on Tuesdays from November 19 to December 10 from 8pm to 10pm at St John's Welcome Centre, Knock Shrine. To book and further info contact 0949388100.

TYRONE

Mary's Meal's Zero Hunger documentary about the hunger crisis in Ethiopia will be shown in the 1st Tyrone Scout Hall, Charlemont St, Dungannon on November 15 at 8pm. Free admission. Tea/coffee available. Not suitable for children due to distressing scenes.

WATERFORD

Celebrate the Feast of Christ the King on Sunday, November 24 in the Tower Hotel from 2pm to 5.30pm. Prayer, music, testimony, scripture, sharing and prayer ministry. All welcome! For more info contact Síle at 0868590394.

WESTMEATH

40 Hours Adoration in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar takes place from November 22-24. The event starts with opening Mass on Friday at 7.30pm. On Saturday confessions happen from noon to midnight and on Sunday the conclusion with Solemn Vespers and Benediction at 4pm.

WICKLOW

The Parish of Rathdrum's Annual Remembrance Mass will take place in Rathdrum Church on November 16 at 6pm.

Needed: a new deal for mothers



David Quinn

It is as though the two referendums in March never happened, that is, the one on so-called 'durable relationships', and the other on removing the protection the Constitution tries to give to mothers in the home.

That second one was long the target of feminist groups in Ireland, above all the lavishly State-funded National Women's Council whose chief aim seems to be to ensure that as many mothers as possible are out in the workplace whether they like it or not.

This suits both the Government, and employers. The Government wants as many people turned into tax-payers as possible, and employers want to expand the workforce as much as possible, while the economy is booming at any rate.

Forced

The Constitution says that mothers should not be forced out of the home by economic necessity. It never said that mothers should not go out to work. What it sought to do is protect the home from the demands of the economy.

In any event, the 'People Who Matter', that is, politicians, those who run the big NGOs, academics, journalists and so on, have long been appalled at this provision and finally they thought it would soon be removed from the Constitution. They were fully confident they would get their way in the March referendum, but they were resoundingly defeated, by a margin of nearly three to one.

But has this massive defeat made any difference to Gov-

A mother kisses her baby. Photo: OSV News/Bob Roller



ernment thinking, or to that of any of the other main parties? You must be joking. It's like the referendum never happened at all. It has been 'memory-holed', that is, forgotten about. They do not talk about it.

“Repeated polls down the years show that only a minority of parents want to put their children into day-care”

Instead, all they talk about is day-care. The main parties have big plans to put yet more money into daycare in order to make it cheaper for parents to put their children in a creche all day while they go out to work, perhaps precisely because economic necessity is forcing them to do so.

At one level, this might seem fair enough. Daycare is expensive and lots of parents do use it. But is putting so much money into daycare actually fair and is it what most parents actually want?

Repeated polls down the years show that only a minority of parents want to put their children into daycare. A big majority want to either look after them at home while they are very young, or else have a family member or a childminder to do. They do not relish putting their children into a daycare centre for hours every day.

Politicians

But nearly all of our politicians seem to assume this is what they want, and they never seem to think to actually ask them, and they seem to imagine that the referendum result in March has absolutely nothing to say to them. During that referendum,

an Amarach research poll was published (it was commissioned by The Iona Institute which I run) and it found that more than two-thirds of mothers (69%) with children under the age of 18 would prefer to stay at home with their children rather than go out to work if they could afford it.

A much fairer way to allocate public funding in this regard is not to put more and more into daycare, but to put it directly into the hands of parents of young children so they can spend it on the choice that suits them.

“Currently, the State is allocating around €1.1 billion per annum towards day-care with that figure certain to keep increasing”

In Ireland, we have Child Benefit which is paid to mothers with children under 18. But for a few short years we also had something called the 'Early Childcare Supplement' which was paid to mothers with children under the age of six in addition to Child

Benefit. When it was abolished in 2008 during the era of austerity it came to €1,000 per annum.

Why not restore that? Why not increase it? Currently, the State is allocating around €1.1 billion per annum towards day-care with that figure certain to keep increasing.

Maths

In Ireland, there are around 370,000 children aged 5 or under, so let's do a bit of maths. If you divide €1.1 billion by 370,000 you arrive at a figure of almost €3,000. This means that if the €1.1 billion was reallocated from daycare and the Early Childcare Supplement restored, the supplement would come to almost €3,000 per child aged 5 or under per annum, not €1,000 per child per annum when it was abolished back in 2008.

On top of Child Benefit, a sum of €3,000 would go quite a long way. Parents could then decide whether they want to use that money to help pay for daycare, or a childminder, or to help one of the parents stay at home for a few years. Restoring and increasing the Early Childcare Supplement is certainly much fairer than simply putting all the money

into daycare regardless of what parents really want.

“Successive Governments believe every mother belongs in the workplace and every child in day-care, like it or not. How is that not sexist, by the way?”

Something else the Government could do is increase the Home Carers' Credit. This was introduced at the time of tax individualisation in 2000 because tax individualisation was so obviously biased in favour of working parents and against stay-at-home parents. It caused a big backlash at the time that the then Finance Minister, Charlie McCreevy, introduced the Home Carers' Credit as a sop. It has never amounted to much. Why not? The answer is that successive Governments believe every mother belongs in the workplace and every child in day-care, like it or not. How is that not sexist, by the way? It assumes they know where a woman's place is.

Here's another idea. Set up a National Mothers' Council with State-funding to represent the clear majority of mothers who would rather mind their children at home in their early years. It is obvious that the National Women's Council is never going to do that, and therefore another organisation is needed to represent the women the NWC won't represent.

And here is a final idea. Putting so much money into day-care and ignoring stay-at-home mothers so badly would seem to be against the spirit if not the letter of the Constitution. Putting all the money into daycare does nothing to prevent mothers being forced out of the home by economic necessity and probably has the opposite effect. So perhaps one day some brave mother should take a Constitutional case having sought good legal advice and some financial support to enable her to take such a case.

One way or another, we need a 'New Deal for Mothers' given that the political system seems to care so little for them. Keep this in mind ahead of polling day on November 29.

“Putting so much money into day-care and ignoring stay-at-home mothers so badly would seem to be against the spirit if not the letter of the Constitution. Putting all the money into day-care does nothing to prevent mothers being forced out of the home by economic necessity and probably has the opposite effect”



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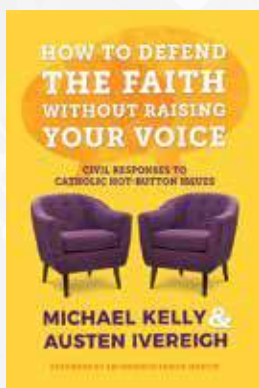
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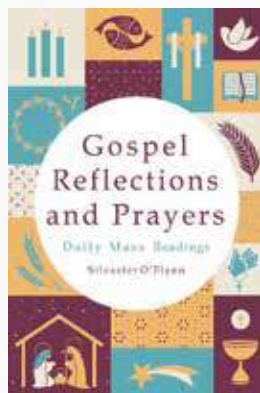
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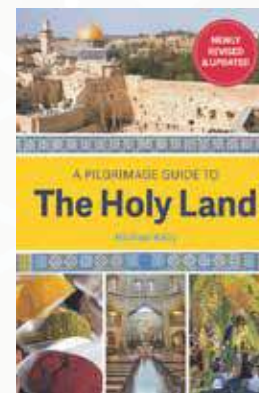
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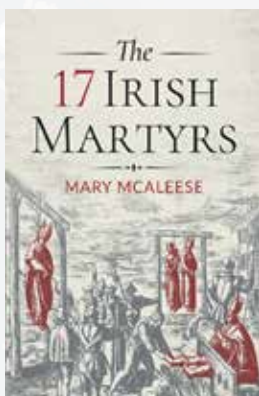
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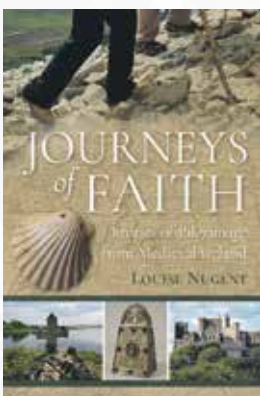
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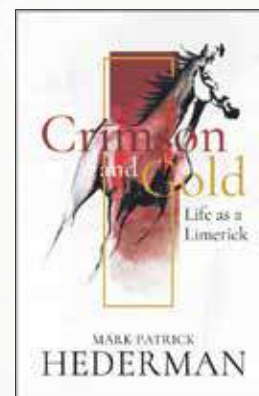
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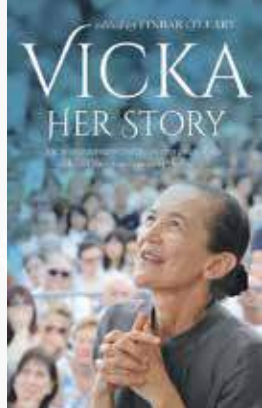
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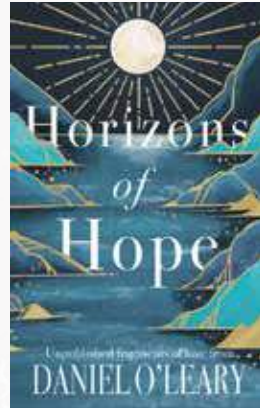
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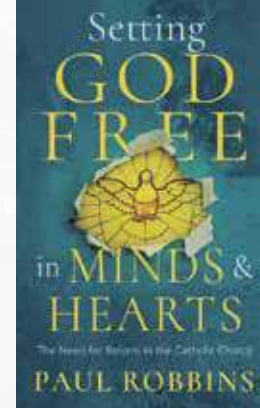
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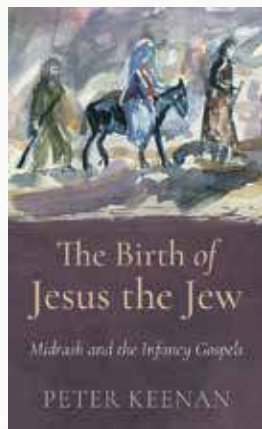
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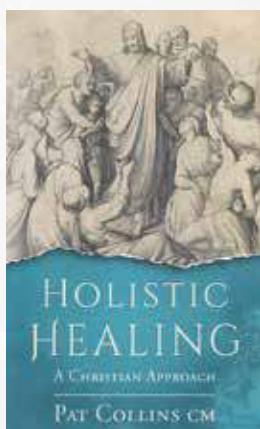
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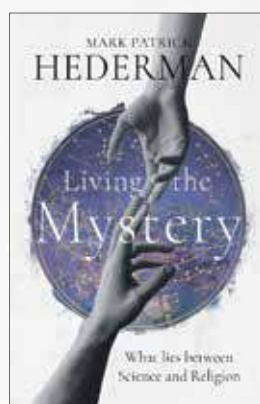
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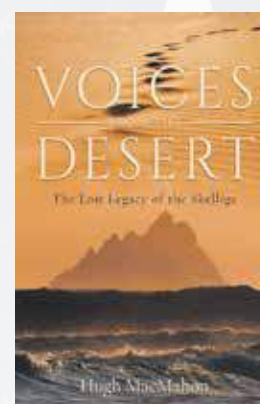
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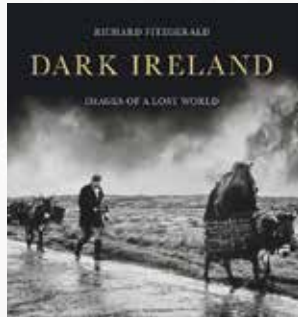
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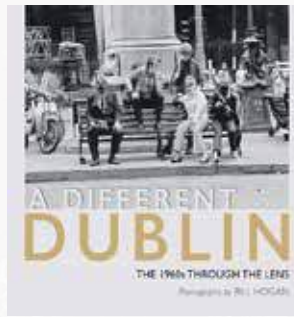
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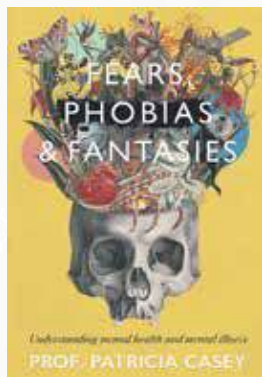
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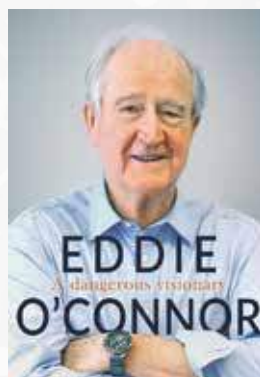
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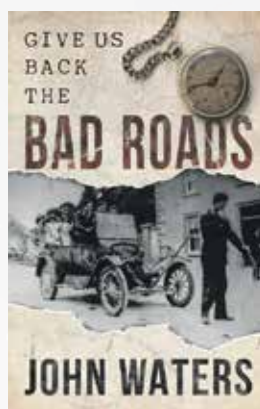
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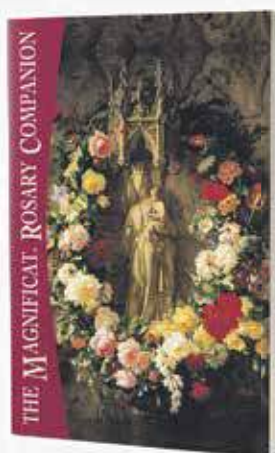
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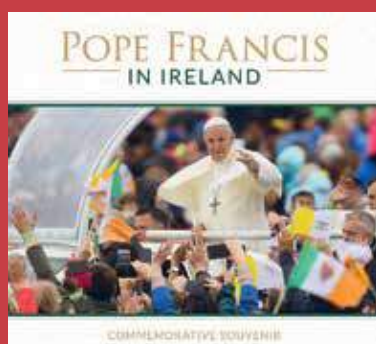
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Letter from Egypt

From a monk in Murroe to a mosque in Cairo



Justin Robinson OSB

So many people walk across the courtyard of Al Azhar mosque in Cairo that its white marble has become highly polished, the floor below reflecting an almost mirror image of the mosque's architectural wonders that tower above. I'm sitting in the carpeted arcade around the vast courtyard, watching worshippers milling around in the cool of the evening as the sun sets and the time for maghrib prayers fast approaches.

It has been just over one month since I arrived to begin a master's degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American University in Cairo. This city is the ideal place for my studies, and I'm privileged to be living in the heart of the Arab world and a place long considered the seat of Islamic learning. To escape the demands of my lectures and books, I often come to this mosque to sit and watch the world go by and try to experience and understand something of the religion lived by nearly a quarter of the world's population.

History

I'm a very long way from my monastery in rural Limerick, but I remind myself that these studies might be considered a continuation of the long history of Benedictine engagement with Islam—

“I'm a very long way from my monastery in rural Limerick, but I remind myself that these studies might be considered a continuation of the long history of Benedictine engagement with Islam”

ment with Islam. It was the Toledo School of Translators (founded by the city's Benedictine archbishop Raymond de Sauvetât) which was responsible for translating many works of Islamic philosophy and science from Classical Arabic into Medieval Latin, and it was there that Peter the Venerable, the famed Benedictine abbot of Cluny, commissioned the first Arabic to Latin translation of the Qur'an in the 12th century.

“The city is hot, dusty, noisy, and packed with people. Egyptians aren't lacking in confidence – they're from the ‘mother of the world’, after all”

Peter was very much aware of the need to study and respond to Islam, but bemoaned how “there was no one who replied to Islam because there was simply no one who knew about it” as few had the linguistic skills to study the religion's source materials. It is this monastic heritage that encourages me along my current path, and pushes me forward to engage in some sort of dialogue which is informed by serious study, personal experience and knowledge of the Arabic language.

So, here I am settling into Egypt. It's a fascinating country to live in, though Cairo is a constant assault on the senses. The city is hot, dusty, noisy, and packed with people. Egyptians aren't lacking in confidence – they're from the ‘mother of the world’, after all – and whatever their difficulties in recent years they consider them to be only a small blip in the long civilization of which they are the heirs.



The morning ride to the university is ever eventful. Cairene driving is not for the faint hearted, but I'm thankfully kept distracted from the motoring chaos by fellow passengers who inevitably turn to the *agnabi* (foreigner) to start a conversation with their characteristic friendliness. They're always delighted to hear about Ireland, a country which has become much admired throughout the Middle East and North Africa for its boldness and leadership on the issue of various regional conflicts. Their dialect of spoken Arabic is a little challenging, as are their many idioms, but misunderstandings simply add to the fun.

The call to prayer is sounding now, signaling that it's time to sign off my letter home and leave the precincts of Al Azhar before the evening crowd fills the courtyard. Back at my desk a stack of books awaits, reminders of the work that brought me here. But before I go, I pause



to reflect on the history that surrounds me and urges me on – of Islamic learning and Benedictine scholarship, intertwined across the centuries. Enough, I'd better get

a move on or as the Egyptians would say ‘*ana halbes fi heta*,’ I'll be wearing a wall—whatever that means! Perhaps the mysteries of language, like those of faith, are best under-

stood by living them.

i Justin Robinson OSB is a monk of Glenstal Abbey in County Limerick currently residing in Cairo.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Over 15 Catholic parishes close amid ongoing violence against Christians in Nigeria

● Bishop Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe of the Diocese of Makurdi in Nigeria has called for action to address escalating insecurity in Nigeria's Benue State, which has led to the closure of over 15 parishes in his diocese.

In an interview with *ACI Africa*, CNA's news partner in Africa, during the seventh International Theological Conference organised by the Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa, Bishop Anagbe urged the Nigerian government to prioritise security to restore hope and enable displaced persons to return to their ancestral homes.

"Benue state is like the epicentre of what is happening. In my Diocese of Makurdi, I have lost about 14 to 15 parishes now," the bishop said.

Cardinal calls on Catholics in England and Wales to defeat assisted suicide bill

● Catholics across England and Wales were urged to unite in prayer the evening of November 13 following a plea from their cardinal to oppose the proposal to legalise assisted suicide.

In a video message released last Friday, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, archbishop of Westminster, announced that during their usual November plenary meeting, the bish-

ops of England and Wales will hold a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament and encouraged Catholics to join them in prayer.

In his video statement, Nichols said: "On Wednesday the 13th of November, in the evening, your bishop — all the bishops of England and Wales — will kneel before the Blessed Sacrament praying for our country".

Indonesian prelate: Catholics feel 'profound sorrow' after volcano eruption

● Indonesian Bishop Fransiskus Kopong Kung says the Catholics in the Diocese of Larantuka "are really sad" after the volcanic eruption on the island of East Flores.

"We are in a profound sorrow," he said about the event, that left at least ten people dead, including one religious sister, on November 3.

Flores Island is one of the Lesser Sunda Islands, and the island is nearly 85% Catholic — the majority of Indonesians are Muslim.

Holy Spirit Missionary Sr Nikolin Padjo died after Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki erupted.

Austrian bishop says antisemitic incident a 'deeply alarming sign'

● After a group of Israeli soccer fans were beaten and taunted for being Jewish by groups of young men after a game in Amsterdam, an Austrian bishop condemned the violence, saying it evokes, referring to Kristallnacht, "the darkest and most shameful days of our own history."

Following a soccer match last week between a Dutch and an Israeli team, at least 10 young men on scooters sought out Israeli fans, verbally and physically assaulting them with punches and kicks, and then quickly fled the scene.

Archbishop Franz Lackner of Salzburg, president of the Austrian bishops' conference, described the event in a November 8 interview as a "deeply alarming sign". "We must stand up against this," he said.

Mexican bishops mobilise against legalisation of abortion

● As a legislative measure that "seeks the total decriminalisation of abortion" in Mexico City moves forward, the Catholic Church in the country is expressing its opposition and concern, with Mexico's bishops pointing out that, as pastors, they cannot remain silent in the face of what they consider a threat to the fundamental right to life.

The Administration and Procurement of Justice and Gender Equality Committees of the Mexico City Congress voted November 4 in favour of the proposal that seeks to eliminate the articles of the Penal Code that penalise voluntary induced abortion, maintaining only forced abortion punishable by law.

In a November 6 statement, the Mexican Bishops' Conference warned that, contrary to what those defending the measure claim, eliminating the current limit of abortion at 12 weeks of gestation — already permitted in Mexico City — "would open the door to the termination of pregnancy at any time".

Priest slain by Nazis to be inducted among 'Righteous of the World'

A Catholic priest executed by the Nazis in 1944 who's today a candidate for sainthood will be memorialised in November, along with four other figures, in a "Garden of the Righteous of the World" located on the island of Sicily.

Fr Alcide Lazzeri will be honoured in a ceremony on November 29, which will feature the installation of a star bearing his name in the garden, which was launched in 2015 as a joint project of a cultural institute based in Agrigento, Sicily, and local park authorities.

The idea of the garden is to honour moral heroes of humanity, and, given the location in Sicily, it's no surprise that anti-mafia campaigners figure prominently on the honour roll. Among the first honourees was Fr Giuseppe "Pino" Puglisi, gunned down in 1993 for his success in persuading youth in his Brancaccio neighbourhood of Palermo to reject organised crime.

Fr Puglisi was beatified by Pope Francis in 2013, becoming the first figure to be officially recognised as a martyr to the mafia.

Among others memorialised in the garden are Khaled al-Assad, a Syrian archaeologist beheaded by ISIS in 2015 for hiding historical artifacts so they couldn't be destroyed; Alganesh Fes-saha, an Eritrean human rights activist known for her protection of migrants both in African and on the Italian



Fr Alcide Lazzeri. Photo: Vatican Media.

island of Lampedusa; and Jakob and Elizabeth Künzler, a Swiss couple who aided countless sick and injured persons during the Armenian genocide of 1915-1917.

Now Fr Lazzeri will join the list, honoured not only for his death at the hands of German troops but also for attempting to save the lives of his flock.

It was June 29, 1944, the feast of Sts Peter and Paul, when the "Hermann Göring" division of the Germany Luftwaffe, then in retreat

from the Allied campaign in Italy, arrived in the small town of Civitella in Val di Chiana, located in the north-central region of Tuscany. Fr Lazzeri was saying Mass for the community when troops stormed into the church and ordered everyone out.

According to witnesses, Fr Lazzeri told the soldiers, "Kill me and let me people go free".

Unfortunately, it was not to be. The troops did indeed execute Lazzeri, but they also proceeded to kill 243

other people in and around Civitella, representing one of the worst atrocities of the Second World War in Italy. The massacre was carried out in reprisal for an earlier raid by Italian partisans that left three German soldiers dead.

A beatification cause was opened in 2018 by the Diocese of Arezzo-Cortona-Sansepolcro on the 75th anniversary of the priest's death.

Priest stabbed in Singapore is in stable condition

A priest in Singapore was stabbed by a knife-wielding man during Mass last weekend.

Fr Christopher Lee, 57, is the parish priest of St Joseph's Church, and is in stable condition. The 37-year-old attacker was restrained by parishioners

and later arrested.

"This incident has not only grievously injured a religious leader in a place of worship, but has sown fear in the community," said Cardinal William Goh, the Archbishop of Singapore.

A spokesperson from the Communications Office of

the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Singapore said Lee is "well-loved by the parishioners and known for being kind and compassionate to everyone".

"He is a dedicated pastor to his flock, and an integral part of the parish community. He also serves as

a member of the Archdiocesan Liturgy Commission and is school chaplain for De La Salle School," the spokesperson told *Crux*.

Police said the attacker has past antecedents "for serious hurt and misuse of drugs offences".

German bishops urge stability amid political turmoil in country

Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich has sought to calm fears about political instability in Europe's largest economy.

"No civil war is threatening us," Cardinal Marx said last week during the closing press conference of the Bavarian bishops' fall

assembly in Munich.

"Rather, we can make a new beginning in an orderly way," the cardinal said, according to *CNA Deutsch*, CNA's German-language news partner.

"I believe we underestimate in our country what it means to have functioning

institutions that can also deal with difficult situations," Cardinal Marx added.

The comments came after Chancellor Olaf Scholz dismissed Finance Minister Christian Lindner last week, leading to the withdrawal of all ministers from Lindner's Free Democratic Party (FDP)

from the governing coalition.

Deutsche Welle reported that the move ended the three-party alliance between Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD), the Greens, and the FDP, which has been mired in controversies.



Edited by Brandon Scott
brandon@irishcatholic.ie

Paris' restoration of faith



Cranes are seen around the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris November 7, 2024, which was ravaged by a fire in 2019, as restoration work continued before its reopening. The iconic cathedral is scheduled to reopen December 8, to be followed by six months of celebrations, Masses, pilgrimages, prayers and exhibitions. Photo: OSV News/Sarah Meyssonier, Reuters.

Synod on Synodality undersecretary: Deposit of faith doesn't change and cannot change

Bishop Luis Marín de San Martín is one of the key figures of the Synod on Synodality. Pope Francis appointed him undersecretary of the event, which the Spanish prelate says he has experienced as "an offer of grace" and a call "to personal conversion".

With the recent meeting in Rome already concluded and the final document issued, the bishop emphasised in a conversation with ACI Prensa, CNA's Spanish-language news partner, that synodality "is a constitutive dimension of the Church," so that, despite the fact that the assembly is over, "the process continues".

The prelate noted that this dimension "is not an achievement" or something that is acquired, but "it exists

and has always existed". He affirmed that "the Church 'is' synodal" and that in this stage of "implementation" it is therefore intended to develop this dimension, "to draw out consequences and to make it concrete in the life of the Church".

For the Augustinian, the final document "is not a recipe book for measures or a code of laws," but rather "it opens doors, indicates paths to travel, and encourages processes" with "diverse speeds, developments, and concrete expressions, because there are geographical and cultural differences," although with the same "deposit of faith: one Lord, one faith, one baptism".

During these four years, he

explained, he has tried to "listen to the voice of the Spirit to discern how to be faithful to the Lord and how to live and bear witness to the Gospel in today's world".

He also envisages it as an opportunity for profound renewal, which "comes from the experience of the risen Christ" and is also oriented toward the mission in today's world, taking up cultural diversity and different challenges, "but always in communion".

As for those who, "with goodwill, feared a change in doctrine, they have already seen that this is not the case. The deposit of faith does not change and cannot change. It's a matter of going deeper into it, formulating its expres-

sion and developing it in the time at hand, as the Church has done throughout its history," Bishop Marín affirmed.

"The synodal process arises from the action of the Holy Spirit and necessarily requires conversion of the heart. If not, we will understand nothing. The common thread that links the different parts of the document is, in fact, an invitation to conversion: called by the Spirit to conversion; conversion in relationships; conversion in processes; conversion in interconnectivity; conversion for the mission. For this, it is necessary that love be, truly, the common thread," he concluded.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby resigns after report into sexual abuse of children

The Archbishop of Canterbury has resigned after a report found the Church of England covered up sexual abuse by a barrister.

The independent Makin review into John Smyth QC's abuse of children and young men was published last week.

Across five decades in three different countries and involving as many as 130 boys and young men in the UK and Africa,

John Smyth QC is said to have subjected his victims to traumatic physical, sexual, psychological and spiritual attacks, permanently marking their lives.

The report concluded he might have been brought to justice had Mr Welby formally reported it to police a decade ago.

In a resignation letter Justin Welby said: "Having sought the gracious per-

mission of His Majesty The King, I have decided to resign.

"The last few days have renewed my long-felt and profound sense of shame at the historic safeguarding failures of the Church of England. For nearly 12 years I have struggled to introduce improvements. It is for others to judge what has been done."

Vatican roundup

Microsoft president to unveil 'AI-enhanced experience' of St Peter's Basilica

● Microsoft President Brad Smith unveiled an artificial intelligence-enhanced project focusing on St Peter's Basilica during a press conference at the Vatican.

This initiative, titled "The Basilica of St Peter's: AI-Enhanced Experience", is a collaboration between Microsoft and the Fabric of St Peter, the organisation responsible for the conservation and maintenance of St Peter's Basilica.

Since Smith launched Microsoft's AI for Cultural Heritage program in 2019, the tech company has worked on a number of projects that provided digitally enriched ways to explore art, architecture, and historical sites through artificial intelligence.

Microsoft developed the Ancient Olympia project in Greece, which used AI to digitally reconstruct the birthplace of the Olympic Games, offering an immersive exploration of the ruins.

Pope Francis urges people to pray for Spain flood victims

● Opening his Wednesday general audience in St Peter's Square with a prayer to Our Lady of the Forsaken (Virgen de los Desamparados), the patroness of Valencia, Spain, Pope Francis asked people to pray for the victims of flash floods in Spain.

"I wished to greet the Virgen de los Desamparados," the Pope told the crowds of pilgrims at the Vatican after placing a white rose before her statue. "Today, in

a special way, let us pray for Valencia and for the other areas of Spain that are suffering because of the water," the Holy Father said.

More than 200 people have been confirmed dead in Valencia since heavy rains hit the eastern province of Spain last week. An additional 90 people were reported missing after severe floods swept through the city, destroying homes and personal property, businesses, roads, and other public infrastructure.

Key papal aide says Vatican will seek dialogue with Trump

● Despite conflicts with Pope Francis on matters ranging from immigration and climate change to China and the Middle East during Donald Trump's last stint in the White House, a senior Vatican official has said that during his new term, Rome intends to "seek dialogue".

Italian Jesuit Fr Antonio Spadaro, under-secretary of the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and a close advisor to Pope Francis, spoke last week in interviews with Italian news agencies.

Fr Spadaro said that the Vatican hopes for dialogue with Trump on matters both domestic and international.

Dialogue is needed, Fr Spadaro said, first of all "for a better American society, where it's obvious that many people don't feel at home, where they don't feel recognised and protected, and there's a cry to be heard".

Vatican's top diplomat says Trump won't change Pope's line on China

● While congratulating Donald Trump and wishing him "much wisdom" in his second term, the Vatican's top diplomat also bluntly declared last week that a controversial deal with China on the appointment of bishops will continue regardless of reactions that may come from America during a new Trump administration.

Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's Secretary of State, spoke to reporters on the sidelines of an event at Rome's Jesuit-run Gregorian University on artificial intelligence and international humanitarian law.

Asked about tensions that arose between the White House and the Vatican over China during the previous Trump administration, which included then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warning that the Vatican risked "losing its moral authority" for its approach to Beijing, Cardinal Parolin indicated there would be no change of course.

Pope Francis and the Jubilee Year of Hope



Bishop Niall Coll

There is a long tradition in the Church that each new bishop picks a motto, normally chosen from Scripture, which seeks to encapsulate his thoughts, prayers and priorities as he begins his new ministry. When I arrived in Ossory in January of last year, the one I chose was 'Christ Jesus our hope,' taken from the opening salutation of the First Letter of St Paul to Timothy. You can imagine how confirmed I felt in adopting that theme when at much the same time Pope Francis announced that the next Holy Year (which happen every twenty-five years) due in 2025 would be a 'Jubilee Year of Hope'.

“Amid this malaise, it often feels as though joy is slipping through our fingers like sand. So how can we talk about hope in a time like this?”

Without doubt we find ourselves in a world today where hope is desperately needed, especially in the individualistic and secularised societies of the West, where many people have drifted from faith and from the Church. Lacking spiritual rootedness, and not just among the young, many struggle to find meaning and purpose in life.

Research by prominent international scholars like Jonathan Haidt in the United States, and survey after survey here in Ireland (see, for example, mentalhealthireland.ie) find that mental health crises, not least those

Bishop of Ossory Niall Coll
Photo: KCLR/Pixabay

associated with and overreliance on technology and social media, and also gambling and the abuse of drugs are on the rise. Amid this malaise, it often feels as though joy is slipping through our fingers like sand. So how can we talk about hope in a time like this?

Pope Francis

Pope Francis, never a man to shrink from a challenge, declared the 2025 church year as a Jubilee of Hope, precisely because hope is not a luxury or frill—it is essential to life and human flourishing. It is not to be confused with mere optimism or wishful thinking: it is a deep and grounded belief that God is present, even in the darkest moments of our lives.

The Pope knows that in today's world, many feel disconnected, lost, and overwhelmed by the pressures of modern life. Anxiety and depression have become all too common, particularly among our young people. The values of a completely secular outlook on life, so promoted by the commercial world, politics and the media, seem to promise freedom and self-fulfilment, but in fact often deliver isolation, confusion and unhappiness.

Many are searching for meaning, but the paths they take leave them more empty, more anxious and more alone.

Many loud voices tell us today that faith is outdated, that it has no place in the lives of modern people. But the truth is, the human heart has not changed. We are still searching for the same things that the generations before us sought: love, belonging, meaning, purpose, peace and hope of eternal life.

“This Jubilee Year is an invitation—not just to those who are already in the Church, but to all people—to rediscover hope”

These things, alas, cannot be found in material wealth, social status or endless entertainment. As our better selves know well already, true meaning comes from knowing that we are loved by God and that we are called to love others in return: that's the great double commandment of Jesus as he calls his followers both to love of God and love of neighbour (Mark 12:30-31).

Back to Pope Francis: this Jubilee Year is an invitation—not just to those who are already in the Church, but to all people—to rediscover hope. For those who

have drifted away from faith, it is an invitation to come home, to find rest in God's love and mercy. For those who are weighed down by the burdens of life, it is an invitation to lay those burdens at the feet of Christ. And for those who feel there is no meaning to life, it is an invitation to discover the profound truth that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, and that each of our lives has infinite value.

Being signs of God's love

This Jubilee Year of Hope is not about going through the motions of religious practices, but about a radical transformation of our hearts. More to the point, it is about living out the hope we proclaim—not just in our words, but in our actions. When we live with hope, we become beacons of light in the darkness. We become signs of God's love in a world that desperately needs it. That is why Pope Francis is his fourth and latest encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*, published recently, counsels us that 'our heart is the ultimate judge, not of what we show or hide from others, but of who we truly are'. (No 6)

So, brothers and sisters, let us here in Ireland and in the wider Church everywhere, take up this call from Pope Francis. He will begin the Holy Year on Christmas Eve in St Peter's Basilica, Rome and then, the following Sunday, it is to be initiated in every diocese throughout the world at Masses in the respective cathedrals.

i Letters to the editor will return next week.

The voiceless have the loudest say

Despite 54% of Catholic – and 60% of non-Catholic Christians – voting for Donald Trump, according to exit polls, it would be naïve to rely on him to preside as a Christian leader of the world's most powerful country.

However, the voting trends which saw the President-elect win the election with a popular vote surplus of four million surprised even the most optimistic of supporters. Surprising many, he gained a 10% increase in Hispanic voters, a growing and increasingly important voting bloc, despite perceptions that his stance on immigration would count against him.

Kamala Harris, having campaigned on a strongly gendered female position, failed to gain from this block compared to Joe Biden four years ago.

Harris made no gains at all in any significant category, while Trump made many small, but significant gains which contributed to an effective landslide. If any lessons are to be learned, it is that a failure to recognise that people vote on concrete issues that affect them directly rather than voting on concepts and ideals.

Harris focused on reproductive rights (abortion) in her final push, an issue that directly resonates with only a subset of the population, reflected in exit polls which showed she fared best with the demographic of reproductive age, while Trump's focus on immigration and the economy resonated with the wider population. It is hard to tell whether his vacillation on abortion – and Melania's biography standing directly in the 'reproductive rights' camp – gained or lost him support.

Since the 2022 decision to reverse *Roe v Wade*, delegating decisions on abortion to the State level, the subject is less of a critically decisive issue – although it remains divisive. The Dobbs v Jackson decision – and the denationalising of abortion – is a direct result of Supreme Court appointments made by Trump between 2016 and 2020, putting in place a slim 'conservative' majority, even if his appointees don't always live up to their conservative credentials.

It is somewhat ironic that on the same day as Trump was returned to power, that the pro-life cause suffered a number of losses in 7 states, only partially offset by victories in 3 states. Colorado, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, Missouri and Arizona – states where abortion was already very liberal, voted to enshrine some form of right to abortion in their State-level constitutions. Efforts to extend abortion rights in Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota were rejected.

Catholics moving to majority support for a Republican candidate is a significant shift in US politics – and with the Catholic population increasing primarily through immigration through its Southern border and a higher fertility rate amongst recent immigrants, the Catholic vote is becoming increasingly important and increases in the Hispanic vote for Trump highlight not so much that he is friendly towards Catholics and Christians – but that he is not ideologically hostile to what the Catholic faith holds valuable.

Some may argue that his stance on immigration is at odds with Christian values to welcome the stranger, this entreaty towards individual values is often conflated with what is sound public policy. Voters in the States have become tired of being gaslit by their elected representatives, celebrities and the wealthy establishment who live insulated from the impact of the disruption caused by unregulated and uncontrolled immigration.

The response of the Hispanic community surprised many who failed to understand that alongside poorer Americans, it is the first- and second-generation immigrants to the US, who feel the impact of the disruption, dislocation and criminality that comes with the chaos of porous borders.

Just as the residents of Beverly Hills or Silicon Valley are immune to the negative aspects of illegal immigration and gain all the benefits of cheap labour, they tend to be on the opposite side of the culture wars from those same communities who chose Trump's message that focused on the practical aspects of the daily lives of the voters.

Politicians, journalists and celebrities have louder voices and greater access to the platforms that inform debate for 365 days a year, year after year, but one day, every four years, the voiceless have the loudest say.

If they are not being listened to, if they are rendered powerless and their concerns unheard, the bubble of the echo chamber can be rudely burst. Not just in America, it is happening in Europe, and could happen in Ireland yet.

“This Jubilee Year of Hope is not about going through the motions of religious practices, but about a radical transformation of our hearts”

Your Faith

My words
will not pass

Fr Joshua J. Whitfield

Page 33

The Irish Catholic, November 14, 2024



The desire to be a priest

I was born in Recife, capital of the state, the youngest of three children, and lived most of my life in a town called Escada, 61km away. I was raised in the Catholic religion from the cradle, having very fond memories of a childhood spent in contact with the Holy Eucharist, the catechism and the sacraments. At nine years of age I joined the Legion of Mary (an Irish organisation which is very popular in Brazil, of which I am still a member and spiritual director), and I also had the wonderful opportunity to be in contact with a small congregation of Camillian Sisters whose convent is located behind our residence, thus being able to work as a volunteer in their Nursing Home and as an altar boy in the Parish's Main Church, currently the Archdiocesan Sanctuary of Our Lady of Escada. My vocation arose out of a desire for intimacy with the Lord, from the impulse to give my life to help others, and from the admiration I felt for the Church. For this reason, when I was thirteen years old, I expressed to my mother a desire to be a priest and began to participate in vocational meetings at the Archdiocesan Seminary.

Rosy

However, not everything in life was rosy. My parents



**I was living for my circumstances, but not for what I was called to live, says
Br Luiz Otavio S. Silva, O. Carm**

Unfortunately broke up, which was an extremely painful episode for our family and a turning point for my life and vocation. My mother suffered a lot and had to overcome a depression that lasted six months, and only then she could move forward and become even more the pillar of support for our family.

“I identified strongly with the charism of the Carmelite Order, which involves Prayer, Fraternity and Mission”

We also faced difficulties financially due to the decrease in our family income, which led me to divert my focus from a possible vocation to the priesthood and dedicate myself to studies so that I could work and help my mother.

That was how, at the age of seventeen, I passed a public exam and at eighteen I started working at a public bank in Brazil called Caixa Economica Federal. It led to five and a half years of work and learning, during which time life went on, I gained two nieces and a nephew, I studied mathematics and business administration, I built my first assets, a car, land on the beach, a small studio apartment on the first floor of our house; but there was always something missing and I didn't feel like I was truly myself.

And so it was that, at the

age of 23, I felt as if I was living because of my circumstances, but not for what I was called to live. That life was good and just, but it was not really what made me feel happy and accomplished. So, I began to reflect again on my vocation to the priesthood. I remember some key moments in my discernment, such as the encounter for young people in my town, which brought us together for a weekend of prayer and religious talks, in which I felt very strongly the Lord's call in my heart through the verse in the gospel of St Luke “from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (12:48). Or the opportunity I had to meet the Carmelites through Fr Rinaldo Francisco, a friar from the Pernambuco Province who was born in Escada. At that point, I identified strongly with the charism of the Carmelite

Order, which involves Prayer, Fraternity and Mission. In addition to being fascinated by the writings of Saints such as St Therese of the Child Jesus and St Teresa of Jesus/Avila.

Acceptance

Then I became a Carmelite at the age of 24, and now I count almost ten years of a happy religious life, with its ups and downs, full of the consolations and challenges of those who follow the path of Christ Jesus, but also one full of life, faith, hope and love. Having left behind my career and possessions, I have often received many blessings aware of the Gospel regarding those who leave ‘houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother...’ (MT 19:28), and I hope to enter eternal life. Many other events have profoundly marked my life story, such as the death of my dear mother and my coming to Ireland, but these are stories for a further chapter, or perhaps for a conversation between friends with a good cup of coffee.

In Christ, your Brother.

Br Luiz Otavio, O. Carm., is a Brazilian Carmelite from the state of Pernambuco, currently living in Dublin and studying theology at Pontifical University Maynooth.

“Having left behind my career and possessions, I have often received many blessings aware of the Gospel regarding those who leave ‘houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother...’ (MT 19:28), and I hope to enter eternal life”

The sacredness of St Bernadette's visit



Gerard Bennett

Every now and then, you realise that you are part of something historic, quite possibly, a once-in-a-lifetime moment. In that situation, you don't want to miss anything; you know you want to recall each part of this special time.

So it was when the relics of St Bernadette visited the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Inchicore, Dublin in October 2024. They arrived just before lunch on Wednesday, October 23 and left for the Franciscan church of Adam & Eve's on Merchant's Quay in Dublin, before lunch on Friday. And between those two times, the arrival of the relics and their departure, was one of the most beautiful times ever in Inchicore.

It all began, of course, a long time ago! Initially, it was planned that the relics would visit Ireland in 2020, but Covid struck and like most things, the visit was cancelled. The rescheduled date of the visit of the relics to Ireland commenced in September 2024. Over two months, it travelled to every diocese in Ireland and to two one order, the Franciscans, and one congregation, the Oblates.

Crowds

The reality of the visit struck home when I arrived at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Mullingar, to collect the relics and drive them to Inchicore. I always knew that this would be a special trip but from the moment that I sat behind the wheel, with the relics, and a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes securely stowed behind, I was aware of the sacredness of this time. Usually, when in a vehicle alone, I turn on the radio – but not that day. Initially, I was



silent, taking it in, the incredible privilege of the journey that I was making, and as the journey began, and I left Mullingar behind, I started to pray! And when I had finished the Rosary, I just talked to St Bernadette!

People began to gather outside the closed doors of the church from about 1pm; already, the feeling in the air of something very special taking place and it never left the place. The church was never quiet and certainly, never empty. For the liturgies, the church was standing room only, with people standing in the aisle and every available seating place (including extra seating installed for the visit) fully occupied. And no-one complained; there was always that feeling of the

privilege felt by being present. Standing, or waiting in a queue, was a small price to pay for the opportunity to be there during those days.

And it wasn't just the people of Inchicore and the nearby areas of Bluebell, Kilmainham, Ballyfermot, and other neighbourhoods. People came from all parts of the city and indeed, beyond the city, from parts of Kildare, Meath, and Wicklow. I even heard of people who came from Galway, as they wanted to visit the relics when they were in the "Irish Lourdes" as the Grotto in Inchicore is often called!

Special

Everything about this visit was special. The primary purpose

behind the visit of the relics was to give those who have not been able to go to Lourdes, the opportunity for a 'Lourdes pilgrimage experience' at home. For this reason, we had the water gesture, replicating the baths experience and which took place at the Grotto in Inchicore, we had the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and blessing of the sick, following the example of the Blessed Sacrament Procession and adoration that takes place every afternoon in Lourdes at 5pm. And of course, we had the Torchlight Marian Procession, echoing the same procession that occurs in Lourdes every night of the week at 9pm.

The Torchlight Procession was a profound experience of the presence of God and of the love for Our Lady. The church was crowded, now in darkness of course. And once the opening prayers were recited, the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, carried by a team from the Oblate Youth Service and accompanied by a local Scout troop, made its way from the church door, through

the school grounds, around the basketball centre, and on to the Oblate garden that adjoins the Grotto. We processed past the Community Cemetery, the final resting place of so many Oblates. And of course, there was a certain poignancy in this for those of us who are associated with the pilgrimage itself as on the previous Monday, only three days earlier, the former Director of the pilgrimage and a wonderful friend to so many, Fr Vincent Mulligan OMI, was laid to rest in that same cemetery. He would have been so thrilled with this moment!

Lourdes

It was almost possible to believe that this is the same Torchlight Procession in which we have participated in Lourdes for decades.

All too soon, this visit was over. But in those days, thousands of people came to venerate the relics, to have those few moments of personal quiet and person prayer standing next to the reliquary containing the relics. Who

can imagine the prayers said there? And those who came were the old and the young, families, the sick, the infirm. And what was inspiring throughout was that, even for the young, without being told, there was the unspoken realisation that this was not an 'Instagram' moment – no! It didn't need to be said.

“This was, truly, a visit for which words cannot do justice. It was a visit that was felt deep inside, and one whose memory will live on”

There were so many situations, conversations, over the days of the visit but one stands out and tells its own story. On the second day of the visit, I took a phone call from a woman who wanted to have Mass cards sent to her. So, I went to the post-box. The box was full; it was impossible to get my envelope into the box – and it wasn't a big envelope. I spoke with one of those managing the car park for the visit, a man very familiar with Inchicore, and told him what had happened, and I speculated that with the business park across the road, the school adjoining the Oblate house, perhaps this is always a busy box? No, he said. He told me that all day, people were buying Mass cards, writing the address on the envelope, putting on the stamp, and placing it in the post-box! Not alone were people making a visit themselves to the relics but there was the overwhelming response of those same people joining those who could not be there, by sending them a Mass card. And doing so in such big numbers that the post-box was full to capacity (and beyond)!

This was, truly, a visit for which words cannot do justice. It was a visit that was felt deep inside, and one whose memory will live on.

“He told me that all day, people were buying Mass cards, writing the address on the envelope, putting on the stamp, and placing it in the post-box! Not alone were people making a visit themselves to the relics but there was the overwhelming response of those same people joining those who could not be there, by sending them a Mass card”

① Gerard Bennett, from Co. Westmeath, is the President of the Oblate Lourdes Pilgrimage Hospitality. Gerard has been travelling to Lourdes as a volunteer with both the Oblates and as a hospitalier for many years.

Newman on conversion

Russell Shaw

Lately I've had occasion to read two books by St John Henry Newman. One is Newman's first novel, *Loss and Gain*, while the other is that classic "history of my religious opinions" (Newman's words), the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*.

Although the two volumes could hardly be more unlike in most respects, both are of considerable interest for what they tell us about the process of religious conversion.

Let's start with *Loss and Gain*. Published in 1848, just two years after Newman's own conversion, its central character is an Oxford student named Charles Reding whose religious journey, from Anglicanism to Catholicism, parallels Newman's. The story is by no means autobiographical, but the process of conversion is much the same in both cases.

Both conversions, the one in the story and Newman's in real life, are what might be called Oxford conversions. Reding's occurs in the heyday of the Oxford Movement, the Anglican renewal effort that sought to make English Anglicanism more Catholic and ended - for those like Newman who, after much prayer and study, finally took the step of 'crossing the Tiber' and became Catholics themselves.

And the key to conversion? Above all God's grace of course, but, paradoxically, in human terms the key is



John Henry Newman

often the objections raised by others against what is for Reding, as it was for Newman, no easy decision. Time and again this obstacle moves the young man to persist even though persisting means breaking with family and friends and even his beloved Oxford.

Parting

On the morning of his final parting, Reding bids an intensely personal goodbye to the university, described in lyrical terms. "The morning was frosty, and there was a mist; the leaves flitted about; all was in unison with the state of his feelings... There was no one to see him; he threw his arms round the willows

so dear to him and kissed them; he tore off some of their black leaves and put them in his bosom."

In the case of the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* the spur lay in the very circumstance that led to the book ("How great a trial it is to me to write the following history of myself," Newman writes at the start). The story is familiar. An Anglican clergyman and popular writer named Charles Kingsley took an unprovoked cheap shot in a journal review at Newman and Catholic priests generally, alleging something very like habitual untruthfulness on their part.

Newman demanded a public apology, Kingsley hedged, and the upshot was a series of pamphlets by Newman putting the whole episode on the record. The pamphlets were the basis for what became the *Apologia*.

These two books together point to a surprising conclusion: Often, as here, despite significant opposition, someone persists in a life-changing decision at least partly because the opposition has the unanticipated consequence of reinforcing the determination to persist. Although that may seem like a banal conclusion, in the hands of a master like Newman it sheds helpful light on what might otherwise look like incomprehensible stubbornness.

i Russell Shaw, a veteran journalist and writer, is the author of more than 20 books, including three novels.

A view from the Quays



Fr Alan Hilliard

Several years ago, I attended a conference in Melbourne Australia. It related to world religions and there was a specific section on Indigenous people. I was enthralled by a leader from the Inuit community. Though they live simple lives, it has its complexities. They are herders and nomadic, so they walk with their animals, caribou, more commonly known as Reindeers as the move from feeding ground to feeding ground. He was particularly incensed about one thing that happened into his tribe a few years previously. Because people are herder and tribes people, we often fail to give them credit for their incredible intelligence. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is admirable. For instance, because they are nomadic he spoke five languages so they could speak to people in the various countries they passed through while herding their deer. Their tribe has travelled the same lands for centuries, knowing where to stop, start, feed and rest.

There was one spot that they crossed over the years. It was a frozen lake that was part of the trail. One time, they were crossing the ice gave way and they lost hundreds of deer in a most tragic and frightening way. This had never happened before...if it did it would have been in the folklore of his people. This was, as far as he was concerned, the impact of global warming and he was worried for his people as their leader. But it was how he spoke about his people and his role as leader that intrigued me more than anything.

Another indigenous man turned to him and spoke a little more about leadership and its burdens saying that he was not yet a leader and he wished he would not become one. When asked why he replied that when you are a chief you don't own anything - if one of my people walks by me and they have no coat, and it is cold I have to give them mine.

Leadership

We've come to associate leadership with power, status, influence and privilege and reward. There is much goodness among many of our leaders but across our world the important quality for leadership is the one spoken about in the Gospel. We are told 'that Jesus spoke with authority'. Did he bang the pulpit, did he quote his qualifications, did he tell them how much money he had, or did he boast about the number of connections he had in Jerusalem or back in Galilee, did he tell of his pension fund? His

authority was unlike that which people experienced from the scribes and pharisees - his authority was his integrity and authenticity. For the Christian, leadership is somehow becoming the word of God, being Christlike in our world today. It is not to seek after self - it is not to chase after power and privilege or to be empire building in a material sense. However, our present world has us more venerable so we may find ourselves being nervous and anxious about these things. We must watch this because it can do us great damage. As the psychologist Eric Fromm says, "Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction."

Christianity holds the greatest model for leadership in our world. It starts with the integrity and authenticity of those who step into power, be they Inuit or world presidents.

Jesus' inner world was manifest in his teaching and his actions. People say his inner and outer world was one and the same - this is precisely what authenticity and integrity is. The worst type of leader we can have is one whose inner world is committed to power, privilege, greed or destruction and yet their outer world present something different.

So, let's think about it, let's pray about it and let's do something about it.

Questions of Faith?

Jenna Marie Cooper

What is an indulgence?

Q: Please explain what an indulgence is and how it can reduce or eliminate the time a soul must spend in purgatory.

A: Indulgences are perhaps one of the more misunderstood parts of Catholic practice. But indulgences are deeply rooted in several key Catholic theological concepts, such as the nature of purgatory, the Church's authority, the spiritual power of prayer and sacrifice and the communion of saints.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church gives us a quick working definition of an indulgence when it states: "Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory" (CCC, No. 1498).

Canon 992 of the Code of Canon Law further tells us: "A member of Christ's faithful who is properly disposed and who fulfils certain specific conditions, may gain an indulgence by the help of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, authoritatively dispenses and applies the treasury of the merits of Christ and the Saints."

Breaking this down into more practical terms, an indulgence is a spiritual benefit attached to certain pious acts specified by the Holy Father - such as, for example, visiting a designated pilgrimage site during a Jubilee year - which can eliminate (in the case of a "plenary indulgence") or reduce (with a "partial indulgence") the amount of time a soul spends in Purgatory.

In addition to devoutly completing the pious act in question, the one seeking to earn a plenary indulgence must also: 1. Pray for the Pope's intentions; 2. Make a good confession and receive Holy Communion close to the time of earning the indulgence; and 3. Be sincerely repentant of their sins, to the point of no longer having any sense of attachment to sin.

While the process of earning an indulgence is relatively straightforward, the spiritual mechanics of how and why indulgences work can be a bit more subtle.

First, it's important to keep in mind that souls in purgatory are all destined for Heaven, and thus that they have already repented of and been forgiven for their sins.

We also need to understand that, strictly speaking, purgatory is a state outside of linear time as we experience it on Earth. So even though we speak of purgatory as a time of "temporal punishment," this does not mean that purgatory is akin to a jail sentence with indulgences being like a sort of parole.

Recalling the catechism's reminder that "every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on Earth, or after death" (CCC, No. 1472), we can more accurately understand purgatory as a phase of spiritual purification to prepare souls still affected by the spiritual consequences of their sins to enter eventually into the full presence of God in Heaven.

Just like our prayers and sacrifices can help ourselves and others grow closer to God in this life, the Church teaches that we can help the souls in purgatory move farther along on their spiritual journey even after their deaths. While our simple prayers can always help the souls in purgatory, indulgences are an especially powerful means of providing this kind of spiritual assistance.

Indulgences work because we believe that many of the Church's saints already prayed, sacrificed and patiently suffered enough during their earthly lives to have already have been purified enough to enter Heaven; and that all their additional good deeds on top of what was needed for their own salvation created a kind of "surplus" of grace which the catechism refers to as "the Church's treasury" (CCC, No. 1476).

Because the Holy Father, as the successor to St Peter, shares in St Peter's power to "bind and loose" (Mt 16:19), the Pope therefore has the power to distribute the extra grace in the Church's treasury to souls that need it. Indulgences are essentially how the pope distributes these spiritual goods.

i Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.

Bread and wine



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

At the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Eucharist, He chose to use two elements, bread and wine. The images are now so deeply ingrained in our consciousness that we never stop to ask, why bread and wine? Among all the things Jesus might have chosen, why these two? What do they carry in themselves that make them particularly apt to give expression to the body and blood of Christ? What, more particularly, does each represent?

As they are used in the Eucharist, bread and wine symbolise very different aspects of our lives, of our world, and of Jesus' life.

Bread. What is bread? What did it represent for Jesus at that first Eucharist? A loaf of bread is made up of many kernels of wheat which when ground up lose

their separate identity and become a single loaf. In the Eucharist, the bread represents us, many individuals, now together as one body, the Body of Christ. But it also represents a particular aspect of our lives, namely, our lives insofar as we are joyous, healthy, in community with each other, and thriving as God's children. The smell of fresh bread speaks of life. So does the bread at the Eucharist. It becomes the bread of the world's achievements and holds up for God's blessing all that is young, healthy, creative, and bursting with life.

Metaphorically

Metaphorically, the bread celebrates the Galilean period in Jesus' life and in our own lives – the time of youth, of miracles, of walking on water, of raising people from the dead, of the joyous energy of life, of

falling in love, and of the birth of new life.

“I offer you everything that is healthy and thriving in our world – the joy at our tables, the joy of children, the hopeful dreams of the young”

The wine. What did it represent for Jesus and what does it represent in the Eucharist? Wine is made from crushed grapes and represents blood. And as the blood of Christ, it represents all that is broken, fragile, not whole, sick, suffering, and dying in the world. It is the wine of the world's mortality and inadequacy, the blood of all is crushed as the world's achievements take place.

Metaphorically, the wine commemorates the Jerusalem

period of Jesus' life and that period in our own lives – the time of misunderstanding, of being the victim, of mental anguish, of physical anguish, of being ostracised, of the loneliness of dying when others can't help us.

Balanced

And the two together make for one balanced whole, life in all its aspects. In effect, when the presider at a Eucharist holds up the bread and wine, this what is being said: 'Lord, what I hold up for you today is all that is in this world, both of joy and suffering - the bread of the world's achievements and the blood of all that's crushed as those achievements take place. I offer you everything that is healthy and thriving in our world – the joy at our tables, the joy of children, the hopeful dreams of the young, the satisfaction of achievement, and everything that's creative and bursting with

life, even as I offer you all that is weak, feeble, aged, crushed, sick, dying, and victimised. I offer to you all the pagan beauties, pleasures, and joys of this life, even as I stand with you under the cross, affirming that the one who is excluded from earthly pleasure is the cornerstone of the community. I offer you the strong, along with the weak and gentle of heart, asking you to bless both and stretch my heart so that it can, like you, hold and bless everything that is. I offer you both the wonders and the pains of this world, your world.'

Spirituality might take some lessons from this. Too often spiritualities are one-sided and need balance.

On the one hand, a spirituality can centre itself too one-sidedly on human thriving to the neglect of human inadequacy: suffering, sin, mortality, and of Jesus' invitation to take up his cross. It celebrates only youth, health, prosperity, and good-

ness – and presents a Jesus who offers us a 'Prosperity Gospel' rather than a Whole Gospel.

Conversely, a spirituality can centre itself too one-sidedly on human inadequacy: sin, mortality, asceticism, and the renunciation of pleasure. It celebrates the old but not the young, the sick but not the healthy, the poor but not the prosperous, the dying but not the living, and the next world but not this one. This strips the Gospel of its wholeness and presents a Jesus who is an unhealthy ascetic and frowns on natural human happiness.

Voice

The bread and wine in the Eucharist give voice to all aspects of life. In the words of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the words of consecration at a Eucharist in essence read like this: "Over every living thing which is to spring up, to grow, to flower, to ripen during this day, I say again the words: 'This is my body'. And over every death-force which waits in readiness to corrode, to wither, to cut down, I speak again your words which express the supreme mystery of faith: 'This is my blood.'"

“Over every living thing which is to spring up, to grow, to flower, to ripen during this day, I say again the words: 'This is my body'”

Catechism of the Catholic Church



By Renata Milan Morales

Our capacity and desire for God

Faith is our response to God, who reveals himself to us, bringing us light as we search for the ultimate meaning of his life. The desire for God is written in the human heart. God never ceases to draw man to himself.

Our dignity rests above all because we are called to communion with God as soon as we came into being. We are created by God and for God. Only in God will we find truth and happiness. This search for God demands of us effort of intellect, a will and the witness of others. There are universal expressions to our quest for God in our beliefs and behaviour: prayers, rituals, meditations...

This bond can be forgotten or rejected because of different causes: revolt against evil in the world; ignorance or indifference; the cares and

riches of this world; bad example on the part of believers; hostility; the attitude of sinful person which hides from God out of fear.

Ways of coming to know God

The person who seeks God discovers certain ways of coming to know him – proofs for the existence of God – which allow us to attain certainty about the truth. They have a twofold point of departure: the physical world and the human person. In all this we discern signs of our spiritual soul, the seed of eternity we bear in ourselves.

Our faculties make us capable of knowing of the existence of a personal God. To be able to access real intimacy with him, God willed to reveal himself to us, and to give us the grace of being able to welcome

this revelation in faith. The proofs of God's existence can predispose us to faith and help us to see that faith is not opposed to reason.

The knowledge of God

God can be known with certainty from the created world by the natural light of human reason. We have this capacity because we are created "in the image of God". Only by being enlightened by God's revelation we can exceed our understanding.

The truths that concern the relations between God and us transcend the visible order of things. If they are translated into human action and influence it, they call for self-surrender and abnegation. We struggle to comprehend these truths by the impact of the senses and the imagination and by disordered appetites –

consequences of original sin.

How can we speak about God?

Since our knowledge of God is limited, our words fall short of the mystery of God.

All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, especially us, created in the image and likeness of God. The perfections of creatures reflect the infinite perfection of God.

God transcends all creatures. We must purify our language of everything in it that is limited if we are not to confuse our image of God with our human representations. We can't grasp what God is, but only what God is not, and how other beings stand in relation to Him.

i Next week we will explore paragraphs 50 to 74, 'God's revelation

My words will not pass

Dn 12:1-3
Ps 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11
Heb 10:11-14, 18
Mk 13:24-32

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Joshua J. Whitfield



Jesus is on the "Mount of Olives opposite the temple area" talking about the end of the world (Mk 13:3).

That's significant because according to prophecy it is from the Mount of Olives that the Lord will begin the last battle against Israel's enemies (Zec 14:14). Jesus - having just come from the temple, having foretold its destruction - is casting his conflict with the day's religious and secular authorities in prophetic, cosmic and eschatological terms.

No mere peasant uprising, no mere religious squabble, Jesus' struggle (and in short order his suffering and death) should be understood in grander terms. That is, what is about to happen in Jerusalem will involve no less than the covenantal promises made by God himself. It will also involve the final meaning of history.

Vision

There is a vision in the Book of Daniel of the arrival of one "like a son of man," a mysterious figure who will stand before the "Ancient One" to receive "dominion, glory,

and kingship." The kingdom he will receive "shall not be destroyed" (Dn 7:13-14).

We Christians believe this "Son of Man" to be Jesus, for Jesus himself seemed to say so. "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds and with great power and glory," he says in this passage (Mk 13:26).

“Despite appearances to the contrary, Jesus is the one who will rule a kingdom without end - not the Romans or their petty clients”

Jesus often spoke of himself in terms of the "Son of Man" (Mt 17:22), and so it's reasonable to believe here that Mark is knowingly identifying Jesus with the one like the son of man in Daniel. Jesus' listeners and the original Jewish readers of Mark would have certainly picked up the allusion



Christ and the barren fig tree, Giandomenico Tiepolo (1727-1804)

at least; they would have understood.

Claim

So, what is the claim being made? It's that this Galilean preacher, scorned and crucified, is the one to whom God promised an eternal kingdom. Despite appearances to the contrary, Jesus is the one who will rule a kingdom without end - not the Romans or their petty clients.

The destiny of Jesus is the

destiny of history. Temples, empires, kings and caesars all will pass but not Jesus or his words. All kingdoms are going to become the kingdom of God and of his Christ; that's what John heard at the blasting of the seventh trumpet (Rv 11:15). That's what Jesus and Mark are saying, that however it looks on the surface - the appearance that worldly power won out in the end - the truth is that Jesus is king, that he is victorious, that the world, the universe and history are his.

Which is a dangerous idea - especially if you misunderstand it. Read a certain way, this passage could fuel what Friedrich Nietzsche called resentment; that is, it could lead to hatred, the sort of hatred one finds among the marginalised or among those who perceive themselves to be marginalised.

Seeing Jesus play the underdog and to suffer and then to conquer, one could imagine oneself doing the same - yet often with a bit of hatred and revenge and a little violence added. It's normal to brood about the wrongdoings we bear; it's normal to dream of vindication. Reading this passage, we may think that it is a good and spiritual thing to do. But it isn't.

Vindication

And that's because the vindication Jesus achieved was not vengeance; it wasn't born of hatred or violence as we often so tragically imagine it. Rather, Jesus proved his "dominion, glory, and kingship" by means of the cross. Later in Mark when the high priest asks if Jesus is indeed the Messiah, he says what he said here on the Mount of Olives: "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated

at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of Heaven'" (Mk 14:62). Except here these words lead directly to Jesus' condemnation and to the cross.

“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me”

Jesus' victory would only come at the resurrection, not before; there would be no conventional triumph, no victory as we usually understand it. The crown, you see, is made of thorns.

So, what does this mean for us? In short, this: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mk 8:34).

Yes, indeed, Christ has conquered and will conquer; he will inherit the gifts of the heavenly Jerusalem, and the faithful will follow (Rv 21:7). But not without first imitating the Lamb, not without seeking to wage war peacefully like he did. In this time of instability and division and hatred, this is a frightening message to hear. Surrounded by enemies real or even imagined, who wants to entertain non-resistance, love and suffering, or a cross? But what if that's genuine Christianity? What if that is what Christ is calling you to do?

Fr Joshua J. Whitfield is pastor of St Rita Catholic Community in Dallas and author of The Crisis of Bad Preaching and other books.

“Surrounded by enemies real or even imagined, who wants to entertain non-resistance, love and suffering, or a cross? But what if that's genuine Christianity? What if that is what Christ is calling you to do?”

Saint — of the — week

By Renata Milan Morales



St Laurence O'Toole

St Laurence O'Toole: A model of virtue

St Laurence O'Toole, known in Irish as Lorcán Ua Tuathail, born in 1128 at Castledermot, Co. Kildare, Ireland, became renowned as a reformer, peacemaker, and man of deep faith. Laurence's early life was marked by hardship; at just ten, he was handed over as a hostage to the King of Leinster, a political practice intended to secure peace between ruling clans. Despite his noble birth, Laurence endured cruelty in captivity, often going hungry, cold, and neglected. This experience profoundly shaped his values, teaching him empathy and resilience. Eventually, he was entrusted to the Bishop of Glendalough, where he was warmly welcomed. Enchanted by the monastic life, Laurence chose to remain, dedicating himself to God and the service of others.

By the age of 25, Laurence was

elected Abbot of Glendalough, becoming known for his wisdom and compassion. He led his monastic community through times of hardship, including a famine, during which he sold valuable monastery items to provide food for the hungry. In 1162, Laurence was appointed Archbishop of Dublin, becoming the first Irish-born man to hold this post in a city still largely influenced by its Danish and Norse inhabitants. As Archbishop, he aimed to strengthen the faith in a community where religious observance had weakened. He invited French monks to help restore devotion, especially at Christ Church Cathedral, where he also started building in stone. A man of unyielding charity, Laurence opened his doors to the poor and homeless children, sharing his meals and shelter with them.

In 1169, the Normans arrived in Ireland at the invitation of his brother-in-law, Dermot MacMurrough, who sought Norman aid to regain his throne. Laurence attempted to mediate between the Irish and the Normans, seeking peace for the city and its people. When the Normans besieged and captured Dublin, he bravely intervened, saving many lives. His peace-making extended beyond Ireland; in 1175, he played a significant role in negotiating the Treaty of Windsor between Henry II of England and Rory O'Connor, High King of Ireland. His reputation as a mediator grew, and he often risked perilous sea journeys to England in his attempts to secure peace.

Laurence's spirituality and dedication led him to participate in the Third Lateran Council in Rome in 1179, where he was tasked by Pope

Alexander III with reforming the Irish Church. He strove to address declining religious observance in Ireland and to restore respect for the clergy. Yet his final years were marked by increasing tension with Henry II, who distrusted Irish bishops and refused to allow Laurence to return home from a diplomatic mission. Laurence followed Henry to Normandy, determined to continue his peace efforts, even though he was ill.

In 1180, at the age of 52, Laurence passed away at the monastery in Eu, Normandy. His tomb in the Collegial Church at Eu became a place of pilgrimage, a tribute to his saintly legacy of peace and compassion. He was canonised in 1225. St Laurence O'Toole is remembered not only as a reformer and protector of the poor but as a symbol of resilience and dedication to peace in a time of conflict.

‘Hope Concert’, lights up the flame of Faith



Renata Milán Morales

The Hope Concert organised by Shalom's prayer group spreads gratitude for God's love and mercy. "Every song, prayer, and moment of reflection is chosen with one goal in mind: to remind everyone of God's profound love and the comfort, joy, and renewal He brings," explained Meggie Teixeira, one of the organisers. The concert aims for each person to feel "refreshed in spirit, especially as we embrace the meaning of the Christmas season."

Inspiration

Meggie shares that the team has made an atmosphere of warmth and inspiration, with every detail designed to help attendees feel close to God and part of a supportive community. "Christmas holds a cherished place in the hearts of many in Ireland, and this concert draws on that seasonal spirit, sharing the peace and rest that Jesus

offers. Inspired by the words of Matthew 11:28, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,' the Hope Concert extends an invitation to all who may feel weighed down to come and find renewal," pointed out the organiser. The evening will be filled with moments of reflection, lively worship songs, and even a bit of dancing.

This concert is designed to invite all, especially youth, into an experience of faith that goes beyond music alone. Alongside worship and festive Christmas music, a 'Life in the Spirit Seminar' offers an opportunity for those attending to explore the depth of God's love and grace. "Like last year's concert, priest will lead reflections on God's love, salvation, and the promise of the Holy Spirit. It's an event where everyone, no matter where they are in their faith journey, can feel embraced by God's presence and find hope," explained Meggie.

"Faith will be woven into every part of the concert, making it more than just an event. Attendees will experience a Life in the Spirit Seminar, complete with inspiring music, preaching on God's love, and a testimony of salvation. There will also be a special time of adoration, where people can reflect quietly and connect with the Holy Spirit," said Meg-

gie. "After a short break, the event will return with uplifting songs, dancing, and beautiful Christmas music, ensuring the evening is both joyful and deeply meaningful."

The concert team hopes that every attendee, especially the youth, will walk away feeling inspired and uplifted. With hearts full of hope and gratitude, the goal is "for everyone to leave feeling closer to God, with a renewed understanding of the love and peace that Christmas represents." Meggie shares their vision of seeing people leave as "true friends of Jesus, their hearts touched by His love and their faith renewed by the Holy Spirit, ready to carry that light into their lives beyond the concert."

Impact

The Hope Concert's positive impact is already clear. Feedback from past concerts has been encouraging, with attendees expressing how blessed they felt and how deeply the event touched them. The team has been inspired to build on what worked so well, such as the mix of worship music and dedicated time for prayer and adoration. "Last year's concert had a wonderful turnout, and with this year's expanded program," the team anticipates even more people will join to celebrate together.

"Whether you're taking the first steps of faith or seeking a fresh encounter with God, this evening promises to be an inspiring, unforgettable celebration," Meggie and the team look forward to welcoming everyone.

i The 'Hope Concert' will be held in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, in Dublin, at 7pm on November 23.



“With hearts full of hope and gratitude, the goal is ‘for everyone to leave feeling closer to God, with a renewed understanding of the love and peace that Christmas represents’”

A Eucharistic Word: Fruitfulness

Michael R. Heinlein

What do we do when we return to the pew after receiving Holy Communion? Having welcomed the Lord of the universe into our own corner of it, in the humblest yet profound of ways, how should our prayer be directed?

For years, I'd attempt various strategies hoping to make the most of this most intimate time with Jesus. But I was always left wanting. Trying to find a balance between giving and receiving, I was often unfocused and distracted, more than I'd like to admit.

But, as a member of the Pauline

Family founded by Blessed James Alberione, I was struck immediately upon using the prayer book he authored by the prayers proposed for after Communion.

The 'Act of Adoration' directs my mind, will and heart in welcoming Christ's Eucharistic gift but also in returning it and sharing it. Phrases like "make me an ardent apostle" or "let the light of your Gospel shine to the farthest bounds of the world" help better to attune me to the reality that Christ is alive in me so that I might enliven the world through him. Praying the words "may there be eternal praise, thanksgiving and supplication for peace to all people" sharpens my attentiveness to

the work that Christ puts before me in the circumstances and undertakings of my daily life. Our prayer after Communion should certainly include a longing to worship God more fully by our lives, for the life of the world.

The 'Act of Resolution' directs me to allow Christ to shape my mind, will and heart more fully and completely. The phrase "make me similar to you" in the prayer emphasises what should be the longing of our hearts, that we should not receive the Eucharist, we should not leave Mass, without this fundamental desire. We must be resolved, having been nourished by Christ's body and blood, to want to live

more like him in every facet of our lives. The Eucharist truly is the gift that shapes our character into his. We pray, as St. Augustine preached, that we will ever more fully become who we receive.

The 'Act of Supplication' directs the longings, desires and petitions I bring to Christ. This prayer offers the opportunity to ask Christ to open my mind, will and heart to loving him more and more, but also all those he loves. At this moment of sacramental union with Christ, we beg him to keep us united with him more fully and to keep his grace alive and active within us and bear fruit for the coming of his kingdom and a multiplication of

those who work to bring it about in the apostolate. Our prayer should be shaped to make Christ's own desires our own.

Gifts are given for a purpose. If we want to more fully find the Eucharist's purpose in our lives, I believe the roadmap laid out by these prayers help us to do so. If nothing else, praying for that grace itself can certainly help us more abundantly receive Holy Communion and shape our lives accordingly.

i Michael R. Heinlein is author of *Glorifying Christ: The Life of Cardinal Francis E. George, O.M.I. and a promised member of the Association of Pauline Cooperators.*

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



The constant conflict of ideas

When Donald Trump was first elected President of the USA, I wrote that I had a feeling of dread. This time I have that same feeling, but it is mixed with curiosity – Trump is so unpredictable that anything could happen, from World War 3 to World peace. Worrying and intriguing times ahead!

A few general points about media coverage – I found the Irish stations biased to varying degrees against Trump and in favour of Harris. Yes, they had a few token Republicans from time to time, but even presenters made little attempt to hide their contempt for Trump. Harris made 'reproductive rights' so central to her campaign, and, in the coverage, the existence of a valid and coherent pro-life point of view was virtually ignored, while it was casually assumed that woman in general were pro-choice and anti-Trump. Well, that assumption was blown out of the water. Many commentators felt that Harris alienated moderate Democrats, including Latinos, who were largely Catholic. In one CNN exit poll I saw reported on **Sky News**, on the Wednesday of the result, it was an important issue for only 14% of the voters. Democracy was



Donald Trump. Photo: OSVNews, Brendan Mcdermid

the prime concern (interestingly) while the economy came second (predictably).

I couldn't stay up all night watching results programmes, but was very surprised next morning to find it was pretty much a done deal by 8am our time. I was expecting days of tension. The rapid and decisive nature of Trump's victory probably dampened much of the expected post-vote conflict. This time I didn't find as much evidence in the coverage as I thought I

would of Trump Derangement Syndrome.

Generally, I preferred *Times Radio* for my coverage – I find the presenters cheerful and mostly free from axe-grinding. On the **Times Radio Breakfast** on the Wednesday morning, I thought presenter Stig Abel hit at least one nail on the head when he suggested that while the left used to be for the working class, they now favoured the university educated elite, while the right had gone in the

opposite direction.

One of the better discussions on Irish radio was on **The Last Word** (Today FM, Wednesday). There was quite a bit of the usual cheerful sparring between Marian McKeone, very anti-Trump, but admitting she got her forecasts wrong, and Cal Thomas, very much a conservative but not a Trump fan. He thought success would be the best revenge for Trump. Though he generally leans Democrat, Larry Donnelly of NUIG provided a moderate and well-balanced commentary on this show and others that day. He thought the Democrats had lost votes by drifting to 'the hard cultural left'.

The same good humour in disagreement that we could all benefit from was also evident on **Press Preview** (Sky News, Thursday) when liberal leaning Jenny Kleeman jostled with conservative Alex Deane about the US election and other stories of the day. The good-humoured sparring between those of different perspectives is generally a feature of this show, while it reviews the events of the day and nicely tees up the next day's agenda.

Still on life in America, **Father Stu** (Channel 4, Saturday) featured Mark Wahlberg in the true story of a boxer turned priest. This was

PICK OF THE WEEK

THE DIVINE SPARK

RTE Radio 1 Friday November 15, 10:05pm
New religious affairs series with Dearbhail McDonald.

TURLEY TALKS

EWTN Monday November 18, 7am, Wednesday 20, 10pm and Friday 22, 2pm
Scottish composer and conductor, Sir James MacMillan, speaks to Kevin Turley about his vocation as a classical composer and the important role that Catholic artists can play in society.

YOUNG, BRITISH AND ANTI-ABORTION

BBC One Wednesday November 20, 10:40pm
Film-maker Poppy Jay meets the Gen-Zers leading anti-abortion campaigns. Online, on campuses and on the streets, she finds a movement growing in confidence.

no preachy and sentimental faith story, but it took religious faith very seriously and treated it positively as we followed Fr Stuart Long's rather unusual vocation story. As the film tells it, he was born into a rather dysfunctional family where alcohol played rather too central a role. He was deeply affected by the death of his young brother and had a fractured relationship with his father Bill (Mel Gibson). Self-destructive behaviour led to a motorcycle accident, and that, along with his love for a Catholic teacher caused him to reassess his life, which ultimately led him to the seminary. There was also

an encounter with a mysterious Christ figure in a bar and a possible vision of Our Lady as he lay injured after the accident.

The constant use of foul language by Stu and his mother and father is off-putting – his confessor suggests he tone it down. It features even in sacramental scenes, which is jarring. There is a lot of hostility towards religion in the early part of the film, but this changes thoroughly. It is certainly not family viewing, but mature religious viewers will find it rewarding, which non-religious viewers may find food for thought if they stick with it.



Aubrey Malone

Film

Feast of fascinating French festival fare

It's that time of the year again. The French film season at the Irish Film Institute runs from November 13 to 24.

France knows a thing or three about making movies. Sometimes, admittedly, they're too talky. (Eric Rohmer, anyone?) There's also a danger of pretentiousness. You may come out of a cinema shaking your head and going, "What was all that about?" as you ponder the vision of Juliette Binoche or Isabelle Huppert gazing into a psychic abyss.

But when they're good they're very good. There's a particular style to French films just as there is to French fashion and French cuisine. They exude atmos-

phere even when there isn't much happening. If that goes too far in a triumph of style over substance it's often a price worth paying.

This year there are four films directed by someone known more for her novels, *Marguerite Duras: Destroy, She Said*, (17th), *India Song*, (18th), *La Musica* (23rd) and *Agatha and the Limitless Readings* (24th).

Two films involve a subject most of us have been engaged with during the year: immigration. Across the Sea deals with a 27-year-old man who leaves Morocco for Marseilles. He doesn't have the right papers but his path is smoothed by a kindly police officer. *Souleymane's Story* (19th and 24th) con-

cerns an illegal immigrant (Abou Sangare) who's worried about a forthcoming interview regarding his asylum approval in Paris.

Being Maria (15th and 24th) is a biopic of the actress Maria Schneider, here played by Jessica Palud. Schneider claimed she was abused both by Marlon Brando and director Bernardo Bertolucci on the set of her landmark film *Last Tango in Paris*.

Her story is resonant of stars like Frances Farmer, Jean Seberg, Tippi Hedren and countless others who also felt objectified in Hollywood, Hedren most notably by Alfred Hitchcock, as was captured in the 2012 film *The Girl*. Matt Dillon plays

Brando.

Not many people know that Charlie Chaplin made a French film, *A Woman of Paris*, in 1923. I remember being astounded by this when it turned up on a Chaplin box-set I bought some years ago. It was a critical success but a commercial disaster. Chaplin subsequently disowned it. It has now attained a certain cult appeal. It's worth a look if only for the sharp contrast it provides to all his other work.

You may also like to see *Suspended Time* (14th and 17th), a film about two brothers using the Covid lockdown to re-discover precious memories of their youth. Or *This Life of Mine*



This life of mine.

(15th and 21st), a tale of mental illness directed by Sophie Fillières. Fillières was seriously ill while making it. She died before it was finished, leaving her two children to complete it.

The festival closes with

Marcello Mio. This has the daughter of Marcello Mastroianni and Catherine Deneuve deciding to facially resemble her father rather than her equally famous mother for an upcoming role. How odd is that?

BookReviews

Peter Costello



‘Ask the fellows who cut the hay’: rural life and the making of Irish society

Inside Rural Ireland: Power and Change since Independence, edited by Tomás Finn & Tony Varley (University College Press, €30.00 / £25.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

It was a maxim in medieval times when a social problem arose to “Wait a bit: let us ask the country folk” – “Sustine modicum: ruricolae melius hoc norunt.”

This was transformed by the poet Ezra Pound into the more succinct expression: “Wipe off that smile, and / Ask the fellows who cut the hay.”

What would past generations really have said about the clergy living their midst? To many hay makers in the past the clergy were at least alive to issues on the land in a way urban civil servants were not, as *Inside Rural Ireland*, at least to my reading, suggests.

This is a collection of essays on the development of rural Ireland in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It records the remarkable contribution to this end by a number of charismatic figures. Not least among these was Canon John Hayes of Bansha.

John Hayes (1887 - 1957) was born and raised in a Land League hut. His impoverished childhood helped shape his sense for the need for social justice and to care for the under-privileged. He attended the Jesuits Crescent College, Limerick; St Patrick's College, Thurles; and the Irish College, Paris.

Ordination

Following his ordination for the Archdiocese of Cashel in 1913 he was assigned to the parish of Kilbeg in Co Meath. He upset the local ranchers with his preaching and came to public notice when he insisted in ending the practice of wealthier families having reserved seating in the church. He was sent to minister in Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish in Liverpool in 1915. There he exhibited initiative and leadership qualities, establishing a slew of Catholic organisations and flourishing youth clubs.

After his return from Liverpool he ministered in Castleiny in Co Tipperary from 1927 to 1934. The area was severely economically depressed and struggling to

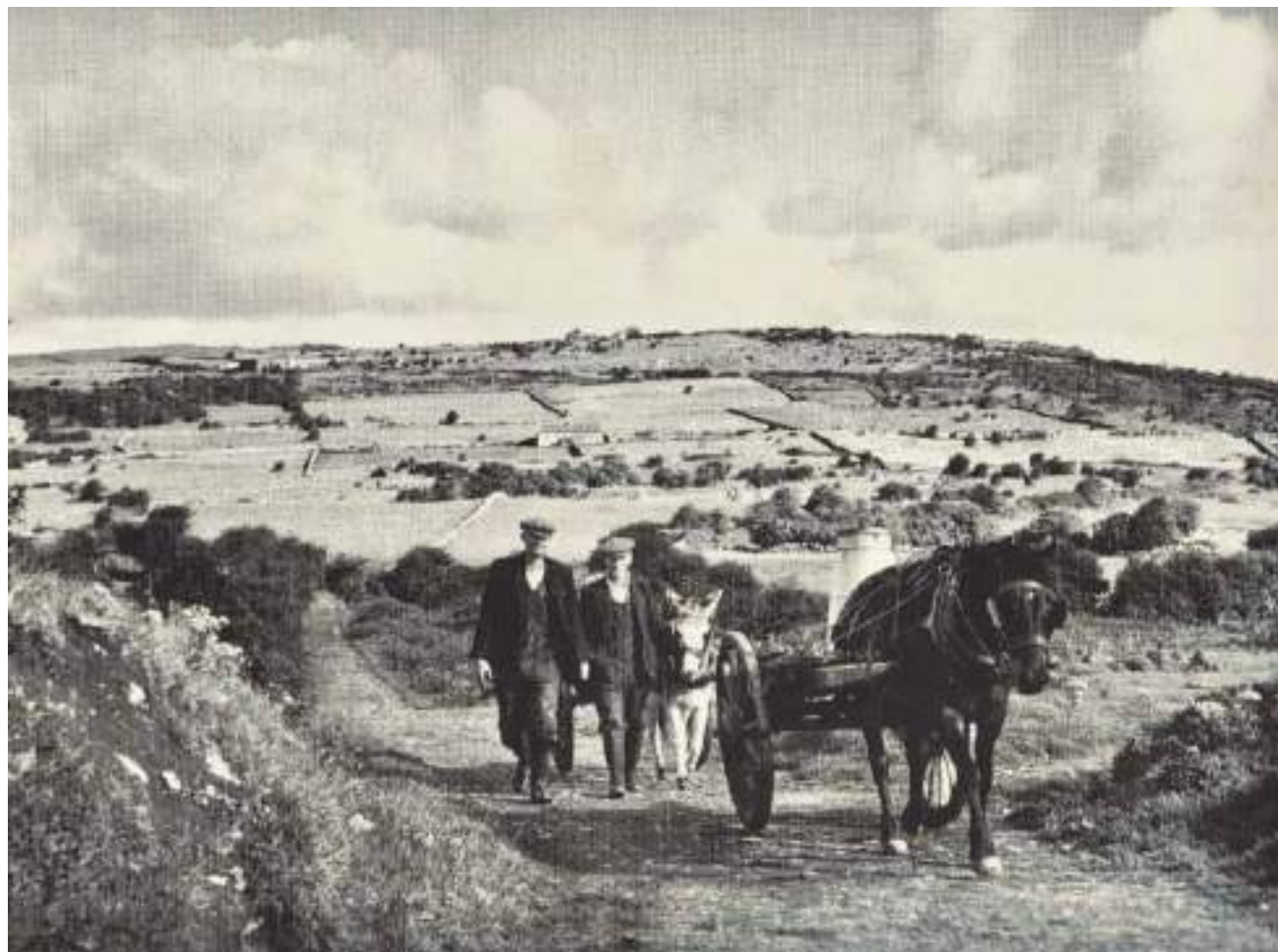
cope with the effects of the civil war. As part of his efforts to improve the social and economic environment of the parish, he established Muintir na Tire in 1931. Its aim was to build up a sense of unity between farm labourers and farmers. It extended its range of activities in 1938 with the adoption of a new Constitution which described it as “An Association for the promotion of the true welfare, spiritual, cultural and material of Ireland and in particular its rural peoples through the application of Christian Social Principles.”

Muintir na TÁre carried out its programs by organising public meetings, seminars, rural weekends and an annual Rural Week. As a result of the efforts of its most active members, many communities were enhanced by new parish halls, a local job creation centre, water schemes, sports days and adult education classes. But their most important contribution was to bring to the communities a positive can-do attitude.

“Throughout the 1970s, with the assistance of Mayo County Council, he transformed the area and had a beautiful Basilica built”

Canon John Hayes was not the only priest to have had a remarkable role in rural development. Msgr James Horan (1911-1986), native of Co Mayo and priest of the archdiocese of Tuam, was also outstanding in this regard. After a period of ministering in Scotland, he was appointed to a number of parishes in his own diocese, where he embarked on projects, including the erection of parish halls, to improve the social circumstances of each locality.

In 1963 he was transferred to Knock, the site of a Marian Shrine. Throughout the 1970s, with the assistance of Mayo County Council, he transformed the area and had a beautiful Basilica built. Then he went on to have an airport built in one of the most deprived areas in the country,



Taking the milk from a small farm to the local creamery in rural Clares in the 1950s

this provided a western access point not only for pilgrims but also foreign tourists.

Fr Harry Bohan, priest of the diocese of Killaloe and a native of County Clare, has been a campaigner for rural development across his native county from the beginning of his ministry. Wherever he served he set up the Rural Resource Centre which provides access to knowledge and useful networks for those working on the land. He established the Ceifin Centre in 1998 to reflect, debate and direct value-led change and to this end organises an annual conference.

Important

This is an important publication. It has eleven articles on every aspect of rural development by distinguished academics and scholars. Each article provides expert analysis and prompts serious reflection. Hence, it is with regret that it must be pointed out that the print is too small for reading comfort, the book lacks an index (a strange lapse in a book from an academic press), and the cover illustration could not be more unsuitable.



Fr. John Hayes, who devoted much of his life to rural development

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.

Due praise at last where praise is due



Desmond O'Grady, limerick born poet with an international reputation

Questioning Ireland: Essays and Reviews, by Thomas McCarthy (Gallery Books, €17.50 / £14.50)

Gabriel Fitzmaurice

Thomas McCarthy's latest book, *Questioning Ireland*, is, like its predecessor, *Poetry, Memory and the Party*, magnificent. McCarthy, poet, novelist, essayist and critic is at once a Waterford man, a Munster man, an Irishman and a man of the world.

A fine poet and critic, he casts a clear and loving eye on poetry and other literary works as well as film and the visual arts in this collection of essays and reviews, reprinted from such varied sources as *The Irish Times*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Poetry and PN Review*, a gathering of fifty years' work.

Substantial

In substantial sections that deal with "the Irish Question" from the poet-dreamers of 1916 to the Celtic Tiger and beyond, an Ireland he proposes that "must continue to be a task for great journalism as well as a source for poetry"; the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, its Big Houses, Molly Keane and Elizabeth Bowen, "two great Anglo-Irish novelists tossed ashore by the receding waves of Anglo-Ireland just as Irish Nationalism achieved its great victory of an independent State"; and the Ulster Question with its politics and poetry, its Paulin and Longley and Carson, its Heaney and Hewitt, MacNeice, Montague, Mahon, McGuckian and Muldoon, his knowledge of Irish

culture, particularly poetry, is unrivalled.

A champion of women's writing long before it was popular or profitable, his essays on Eavan Boland, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Annamarie Ní Churraí, Sara Berkeley and others who are now household names are lucid as they are perceptive.

“McCarthy's essays are intelligent and intelligible, lighting our way into his world of language and literature, celebrating the wholesome and the worthwhile”

A Waterford man living in Cork, he celebrates his adopted city remembering the fiery and troublesome artist James Barry, a native of Water Lane, now Redemption Road, born in 1741, died 1806, whose art, McCarthy contends, is "as European as anything by David and as vulnerable as anything by James Joyce"; the great Cork circle around Fraser's Magazine that was published in London from 1830 to 1882 and included Crofton Croker, Francis Sylvester Mahony, aka Father Prout, and others; twentieth century poets including Sean Ó Riordáin, Sean Dunne and Theo Dorgan; Gerald Y Goldberg, Lionel Cohen and the Cork Jewish community; and Frank O'Connor who, though for instance, a visit-

ing professor at Stanford University teaching students like Ken Kesey, remained a disciple of Daniel Corkery and Turgenyev, and who wrote with "the trenchant eagerness of a master".

Further afield, his readings of Heaney, Montague, Hartnett and Michael D. Higgins, to mention but a few, are brilliant and generous.

Overdue

In a welcome, and overdue, tribute to Desmond O'Grady and Federico Fellini, he reminds us that O'Grady, the Irish poet in *La Dolce Vita*, was at the centre of high European Cinema at a time when Irish men and women were "the talking fools of Disney's *Darby O'Gill*" or in later times "the violent, drunken mobsters, thugs and robbers ... of British and American cinema", and, later still, terrorists.

McCarthy's essays are intelligent and intelligible, lighting our way into his world of language and literature, celebrating the wholesome and the worthwhile.

In considering the great he is munificent in his praise. In rescuing the neglected or in introducing the reader to some lesser known poets whose voices are too often drowned in the cacophony of contemporary po-business, McCarthy has done the art some service.

Like the late, lamented John Jordan of whom he writes so affectionately, McCarthy's voice is clear and beautiful. *Questioning Ireland* shows him to be that rarest of treasures, a generous and discerning reader, a true man of letters.

A long neglected biography of St Patrick emerges from its German obscurity



The fire damaged pages of Prof. Zimmer's biography of St Patrick which are being restored

Peter Costello

Henrich Zimmer, along with other Germans over the last two centuries such as Rudolf Thurneysen, Kuno Meyer and Ludwig Bieler, was one of the scholars who did so much to establish the foundations of modern studies into the Celtic languages of Europe.

Their publications were not only respected in their own day, they still remain essential sources, widely referred to.

In the last years before his death in 1910, Prof. Zimmer devoted much of his time to researching and writing a 575 page biographical study of St Patrick. But this was never published, partly due to his own illnesses, and also to the effect of his own research library going on fire in 1903, during which the manuscript of his great work was greatly damaged.

What remained of his library was purchased from his widow by UCD; but the Patrician manuscript remains in Germany. But now, thanks to an arrangement between the Irish government, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Science and the Humanities, where it is preserved, and Trinity College, the manuscript is to be carefully restored and digitalised.

This will mark an important development in Celtic studies.

Neglected

Zimmer's long neglected important work has been drawn out of obscurity by a Dublin-based academic, for this work is largely being undertaken by German scholar Dr Immo Warntjes, Ussher Assistant Professor in Early Medieval Irish History at TCD. It is hoped it will be completed in 2025, all going well.

The manuscript will then become widely available online and is certain to be influential. Though unpublished it formed the basis of much of what Zimmer wrote at the time in debates with other scholars.

As it was, two years after the fire, in 1905, Professor J. B. Bury, who had moved from TCD to the University of Cambridge, published his influential life of St Patrick.

Bury was an historian of later Rome - a man who refused even to use the word "Byzantine", as he considered the Eastern Empire was not part of the true history of Rome. He claimed broadly that his book was "the first scientific biography of Patrick." This disposed of all those others who had written about the saint in the previous half century and more.

His rigid views gave his book on St Patrick

a very "imperial view" -- the Roman missionary bringing the gift of civilisation to Ireland. Not all agreed with this denial of the validity of Celtic culture, among them Zimmer, Éoin MacNeill and others since.

Yet it is a view that persists to this day. Recently Dr Flechner of UCD has suggested that Patrick supported himself, at least for a time, by slave trading between Ireland and Britain: for many an unprecedented idea.

“Zimmer's biography of St Patrick should be considered the foundation document of modern scientific research on Ireland's national saint”

Zimmer would have taken a different view. He was also a man of strong opinions on various aspects of Celtic and early Christian Ireland. He published (in German) the Celtic Church in Britain and Ireland in 1899, which appeared in an English version in 1902. This drew on his Patrician research.

His emphasis would have been less on the converter and more on the converted, on the Gaelic speaking natives of Ireland to which his research was so long dedicated. The point of view would be less focused on Patrick as a person of the late Roman world and more on the Irish as a Celtic nation which had remained unconquered by Rome. His research is a sweeping reply to Bury's dismissive stance regarding both the scholarship of others and the cultural standing of the Irish.

"Zimmer's biography of St Patrick should be considered the foundation document of modern scientific research on Ireland's national saint," Prof. Warntjes told the *Irish Catholic* last week. "Restoring the manuscript would make this pioneering biography of Patrick available to the public for our time."

Zimmer's own biography remains to be written, though just over 100 letters are available through the same institution that houses the St Patrick manuscript.

These could also be made available as well, forming perhaps the nucleus of such a book.

When the present restoration work is finished, and the manuscript made available to modern readers of all kinds, we can expect it to give rise to both sharp controversy and to fertile responses among scholars in Ireland and Germany.

It seems that an exciting era of developments in Patrician scholarship may well be opening.

Classifieds

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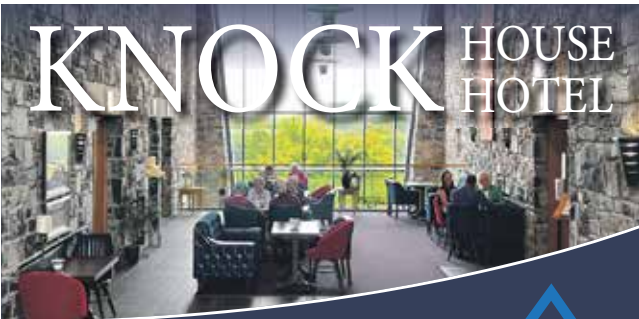
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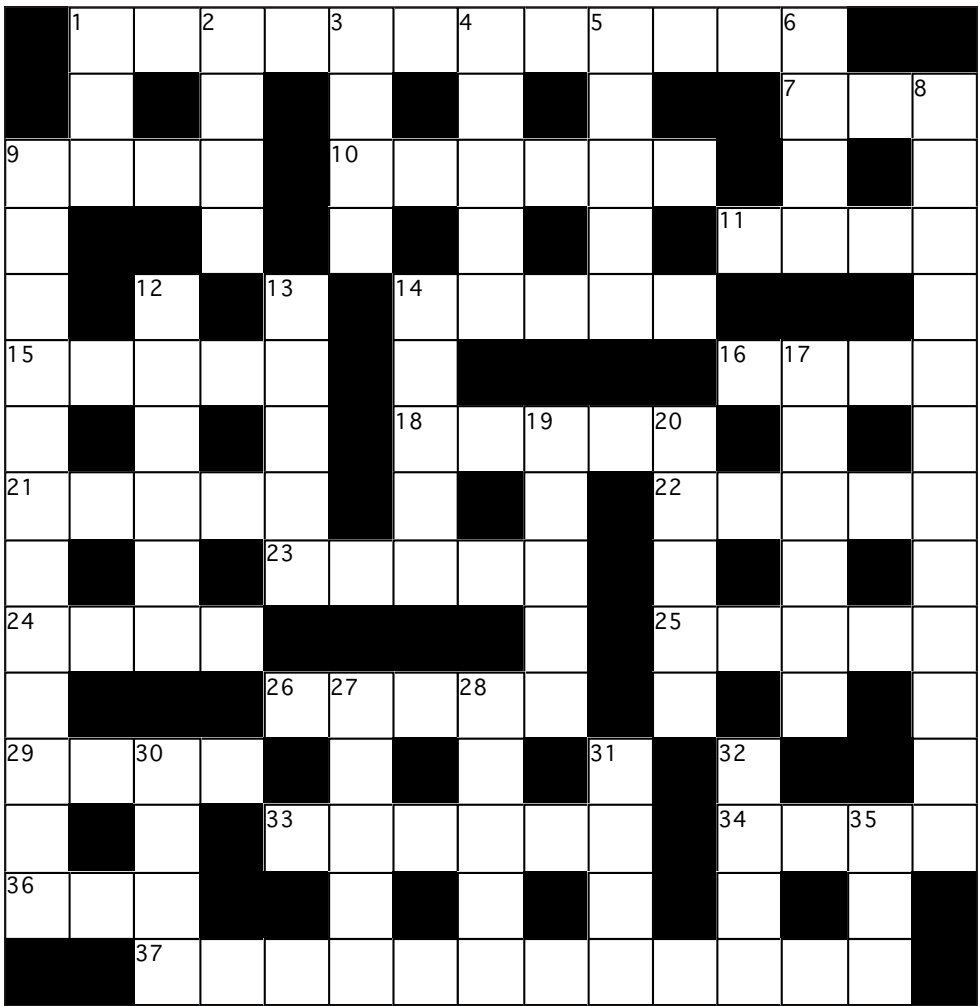
Gordius 689

Across

- 1 You'll need this to get on a commercial passenger plane (8,4)
7 Female pronoun (3)
9 Feeble (4)
10 This insect is a voracious eater (6)
11 Informal potato (4)
14 Twelve (5)
15 The longest river in France (5)
16 Type of fruit (4)
18 Cape (5)
21 Clan (5)
22 Grown-up (5)
23 Recalibrated (5)
24 Biblical garden from Genesis (4)
25 Rage (5)
26 Chasm (5)
29 American State, capital Des Moines (4)
33 Royal mansion (6)
34 Inventory (4)
36 Block of writing-paper (3)
37 Go-between (12)

Down

- 1 Insect (3)
2 Enquires (4)
3 Variety of herb (4)
4 Mexican snack (5)
5 Weak glue (5)
6 Retail outlet (4)
8 Such a member of the religious may add the



letters CSsR to his name (12)

9 Jack o' lantern

(4,1'3,4)

12 Limited (6)

13 The first pope (5)

14 Mallards, for example (5)

17 Part of a pub (6)

19 Solemn vows (5)

20 Canoe (5)

27 Fire, conflagration (5)

28 Group of insects (5)

30 Dry riverbed (4)

31 Metal whose chemical symbol is Pb (4)

32 Bone in the arm (4)

35 Secret agent (3)

SOLUTIONS, NOVEMBER 7

GORDIUS No. 688

Across

- 1 Votive candle 7 Add 9 Beau 10 Recipe 11 Bloc 14 Gable 15 Count 16 Warm 18 Opals 21 Creek 22 Trawl 23 Evens 24 Rank 25 Cello 26 Squat 29 Adam 33 Banana 34 Post 36 Tea 37 Red letter day

Down

- 1 Vie 2 Tout 3 Verb 4 Cocoa 5 Nepal 6 Earl 8 Decimal point 9 Blackcurrant 12 Tureen 13 Stake 14 Grove 17 Arable 19 Asset 20 Stick 27 Quail 28 Await 30 Ajar 31 Bake 32 Aped 35 Sty

Sudoku Corner 559

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 558

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

Last week's Hard 558

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

