

The Irish Catholic

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You can't turn a blind eye to hate says brave Cavan priest

Chai Brady

The conviction of three men for abducting and torturing businessman Kevin Lunney sends a "very strong message" to criminals who have been intimidating people for decades in the border region, according to a Cavan-based priest.

Fr Oliver O'Reilly PP of Ballyconnell, who received threats for condemning the attack from the pulpit, told *The Irish Catholic* the conviction in the Special Criminal Court was positive for "the harmony of the region".

He said he felt "relief that some people have been brought to justice because of the treatment of Kevin Lunney and the ongoing intimidation that has been part and parcel of these communities for the last 12-15 years".

"It's good to see the law being applied and people being convicted of their wrongdoing. It sends a very strong message," he said.

Fr O'Reilly told this paper he believes passionately that the Church must be a voice for peace, particularly on moral issues, saying "I would see that very much as our role, there's certain moral issues you have to take a stand on because otherwise, if you turn a blind eye, you're a hypocrite and I would feel very strongly about that".

He praised the non-jury Special Criminal Court, saying it was "probably

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Casting the net wide in Fermanagh



Fr Jimmy Mc Phillips PP of Aghalurcher parish, Co. Fermanagh is joined by a Net Ministries team who have joined the parish to work with young people. Team members include (from left): Kurtis Hemphill from Antrim, Faith Obi, Letterkenny, Anna Walsh, Cork City, Gemma Nootebos from Vancouver in Canada, Aileen Lynn, Alberta, Canada and Joshua Waldorf, Minnesota, US.

Calls for St Brigid to be saved from paganisation

Staff reporter

Former nun and pilgrim guide in Downpatrick, Co. Down and former BBC political correspondent Martina Purdy told *The Irish Catholic* that St Brigid "is an amazing figure for our times, she founded female monasticism".

"She had a lot of status at the time, people say women have always been subjugated but St Brigid was very much her own woman and she's a great role model," Ms Purdy said.

"People are creating a goddess because they are channelling this need for God in another way, in a negative way in my view. It's really twisted to say that somehow she practiced abortion, it just speaks volumes about where we are in society, her memory should be honoured and not distorted."

Moves to celebrate St Brigid as a Celtic goddess, following reports a new national holiday will be celebrated in the saint's name, have been described as "nonsense".

The founder of a monastery at the saint's birthplace, Sr Briege O'Hare, a Poor Clare sister based in Faughart, Co. Louth, said "St Brigid is no goddess".

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Scottish Catholic journalism enjoys revival PAGE 16



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It isn't sin we've forgotten about, it's forgiveness

We often hear the claim, sometimes in homilies, that contemporary culture has lost a sense of sin. But what if it's not so much the loss of the idea of sin, but the loss of the idea of forgiveness that we witness all around?

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche – famous for his oft-quoted phrase 'God is dead' – foresaw one of the consequences of the loss of the sense of God in a culture. He wrote that as a result of the 'death' of God as he put it, people would be left with the same sense of shame and sin aroused by Christianity, but be unable to do anything about it.

Cut off from the embrace of an all-loving God and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, sin and shame have the final word and there is no space for forgiveness and redemption.

“The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche [...] foresaw one of the consequences of the loss of the sense of God in a culture”

We see this most pronounced on social media. A politician who is tipped for high office, for example, would do well to delete his or her past posts on Twitter or Facebook lest one is resurrected to be used to pin some previously unknown misdemeanour on the individual judged to be guilty.



Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



England cricketer Ollie Robinson.

The same is true for virtually everyone in public life who face having every comment or utterance poured over by hoards of online archeologists.

Apology

During the summer England cricketer Ollie Robinson issued a grovelling apology for frankly revolting tweets of a sexist and racist nature that he had made. The tabloids had obviously mined his feed and helpfully decided to break the story on the same day as Mr Robinson made his first appearance for England. The storm around his terrible tweets took no account whatsoever of the fact that he was a teenager at the time. No mercy was shown and his critics certainly weren't buying the excuse that teenagers sometimes do stupid and offensive things that they regret as they mature.

People should apologise and show remorse for past actions, but as a society and as a people we should also

have a sense that sins can be forgiven.

“Such a person would be lucky not to have their worldview extensively excavated on Liveline – a modern form of having one's name read from the altar”

It's also increasingly true that the sense of sin doesn't really vanish, a culture just changes the goalposts about what is sinful. Sins of a sexual nature have decidedly taken a backseat in Ireland – anyone expressing the view that the ideal place for sex is within marriage (entirely uncontroversial only a short time ago) will quickly find themselves a laughing stock. Such a person would be lucky not to have their worldview extensively

excavated on Liveline – a modern form of having one's name read from the altar.

Categories

Newer categories of sin have taken over. There is, for example, an advertisement running almost constantly on radio at the moment which has the voiceover artist exclaim in stark terms that “binning is sinning” in a bid to persuade those less assiduous souls when it comes to recycling of the errors of their ways.

Restaurant menus now also come complete with calorie counts to ensure that people out for a well-deserved dinner don't enjoy themselves too much. And, carbon footprints are also on the way to let unsuspecting diners know just how much trouble their meal is causing the planet.

The sense of sin cuts across all times and cultures – different cultures just change what they view as sinful. The same is true about religion: people don't stop being religious, they just change what they're religious about and God is no longer in fashion in many contemporary western cultures. And if Nietzsche is right – about this at least – then we are storing up a lot of sin and shame with no avenue for redemption.

i To join Friends of The Irish Catholic and support Catholic journalism, please phone the office on 01 6874094 for more information or to make a contribution.

Criminals sent 'strong message' after Lunney abduction convictions

» Continued from Page 1

the best way in these circumstances because the background to this whole saga has been a background of intimidation and the only way you can get impartiality is by having this special court sitting, where there can be no intimidation of any sort. The judges are independent and hear the evidence and make the judgement”.

Mr Lunney, aged 51 at the time, was an executive at Quinn Industrial Holdings. In September 2019 he was forced into the boot of a car and driven to a horse trailer where his leg was broken, the letters QIH were carved into his

chest, he was doused in bleach and subjected to other acts of violence. He was told repeatedly to resign as the company's director during the attack.

Three of the four men before the Special Criminal Court were found guilty on Monday. All four had denied the charges against them.

After the 2019 attack Fr O'Reilly was warned to “watch yourself” after he condemned the targeting during Sunday Mass. He described the “prolonged torture, imposed suffering and life-changing injuries” on Mr Lunney as “a modern form of crucifixion deployed by terrorist groups such as Islamic State”.

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Celebrating Brigid as Celtic goddess dubbed 'nonsense'

Staff reporter

Moves to celebrate St Brigid as a Celtic goddess, following reports a new national holiday will be celebrated in the saint's name, have been described as "nonsense".

The founder of a monastery at the saint's birthplace, Sr Brieghe O'Hare, a Poor Clare sister based in Faughart, Co. Louth, said "St Brigid is no goddess".

"She is saint of the Kingdom of Heaven...who was able immediately to work the miracles that were needed for us to be able to build our monastery."

Sr O'Hare welcomed the proposal to have a national holiday on the Monday closest to the saint's Feast Day on February 1. "I would like to see Brigid celebrated for what she is, what every saint in the Church is - an icon of Christ," she told The Saint

Patrick Podcast in Dundalk.

Those pushing the Celtic goddess narrative were honouring a Christian saint "whether they like it or not", Sr O'Hare added.

“Sr O'Hare welcomed the proposal to have a national holiday on the Monday closest to the saint's Feast Day on February 1”

St Brigid was responsible for identifying one of the "greatest principles" of the Christian way of life, the idea of a soul friend or in Irish 'anam chara', Sr O'Hare said. "She always said no one walks the Christian path without a soul friend and it is intended that you always

have another Christian a friend of your soul to reflect back to you your own truth about yourself."

Pilgrim guide in Downpatrick, Co. Down and former BBC political correspondent Martina Purdy told *The Irish Catholic* that St Brigid "is an amazing figure for our times, she founded female monasticism".

"She had a lot of status at the time, people say women have always been subjugated but St Brigid was very much her own woman and she's a great role model," Ms Purdy said.

"People are creating a goddess because they are channelling this need for God in another way, in a negative way in my view. It's really twisted to say that somehow she practiced abortion, it just speaks volumes about where we are in society, her memory should be honoured and not distorted."

Footling in faith key for Marcus Rashford MBE



Marcus Rashford receives his MBE from Britain's Prince William.

Jason Osborne

Manchester United footballer Marcus Rashford, who this week was made an MBE for services to vulnerable children, has previously spoken of his family's faith in God.

Speaking to the *Guardian*, Mr Rashford said he's "definitely" religious, and that his faith

comes from his mum.

"My mum is very religious," he said, continuing "the faith we have in God is shown by the people that we are".

"For me and my family, that's definitely the case," Mr Rashford said.

"If you could see our lives 15-20 years ago to where we are now, it's impossible not to have faith in God and all he does for us."



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Green light given to development on Clonliffe site

Jason Osborne

US property group Hines has received permission for almost 1,600 build-to-rent apartments on Clonliffe Road in Drumcondra, Dublin, the site of the old Holy Cross Seminary.

Residents and locals have reportedly expressed disappointment over the move, feeling it ignores the sentiments of the community.

An Bord Pleanála in its decision acknowledged that the height and density of the proposed development breached the city development plan but referenced ministerial guidelines that allow for bigger developments in urban areas.

Profits

The €610 million development is possible following the GAA's sale of the site to Hines, for which the

archdiocese of Dublin received a proportion of the profits.

The archdiocese of Dublin's financial report for 2020 said that it received almost €3 million as the result of a clause in its contract with the GAA, which says that it would receive a share in the GAA's profits if it sold on any of the lands or buildings to a third party.

The GAA sold on a large portion of the lands they purchased from the archdiocese, which resulted in

the archdiocese receiving a share of the profits made by the GAA.

Finances

This injection came amid a continued fall in the archdiocese's finances in 2020, a trend which the report says was accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions.

"Collection income for the charity reduced by almost 80% in a three-month period," the report reads.

The 'Parishes of the Diocese of Dublin' report, covering the financial statements of the combined parishes, the clerical fund, the common fund and the share fund reported a deficit of €4.3 million for 2020, whereas 2019 saw a surplus of €7.7 million.

The report said this situation forced the diocese to consider a range of restructuring measures to mitigate the long-term impact of the pandemic,

"which came after years of steady decline in financial support for the charity".

Claim

The report also revealed that the archdiocese believes there is a valid claim to be made under the business interruption clause of their insurance policies for the parishes, and confirmed that a claim is currently being compiled and is due to be submitted.

See page 14.

Bishop of Derry defends bishops' relationship with priests

Staff reporter

Bishop Donal McKeown has defended bishops against the Association of Catholic Priests' (ACP) claims that they are targeting priests, saying that both he and the bishops he knows "are trying to ensure that they do the best for their priests".

Speaking on *Good Morning Ulster* alongside ACP priest Fr Roy Donovan, Bishop McKeown responded to claims that priests feel overworked, saying "I think priests are certainly under very

significant pressure. What many of them joined 30 or 40 years ago is not the Church that they're working in today".

However, Bishop McKeown said "the vast majority of priests" that he's come across in his own diocese and in Down and Connor where he spent 36 years, "really are prepared to do their damndest, even in challenging and difficult circumstances.

"And the bishops that I would be friendly with are trying to ensure that they do the best for their priests. I'm quite sure there are times when we get it wrong,

and I'm sorry for that."

The ACP also claimed that some bishops have banned gay priests from working in parishes, but did not name any specific diocese or cases of such behaviour.

Responding to this, Bishop McKeown said "All clergy have taken a vow of celibacy. I have no problem with what anyone's orientation might be - I'm asking people to live a celibate lifestyle, as I try to do myself.

"Orientation is never a problem, never was," he said, adding, "lifestyle may be".

Bishops to honour dead with special Knock Mass

Brandon Scott

The bishops will undertake a pilgrimage to the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine in Knock this Sunday in memory of those who have died in Ireland during the pandemic and their families.

All 26 dioceses will be represented at the pilgrimage to the National Marian Shrine and there will be a special reflection given to those who have sacrificed so much during the pandemic, particularly

those working in the healthcare sector.

These people will be directly acknowledged during the Mass as the liturgy will see prayers of thanksgiving offered for all those who the bishops said "so selflessly sacrificed so much during the pandemic".

The Mass will be concelebrated by the bishops and commences at 3pm. It will be broadcast on the RTÉ News Now digital television channel and live-streamed on knockshrine.ie.



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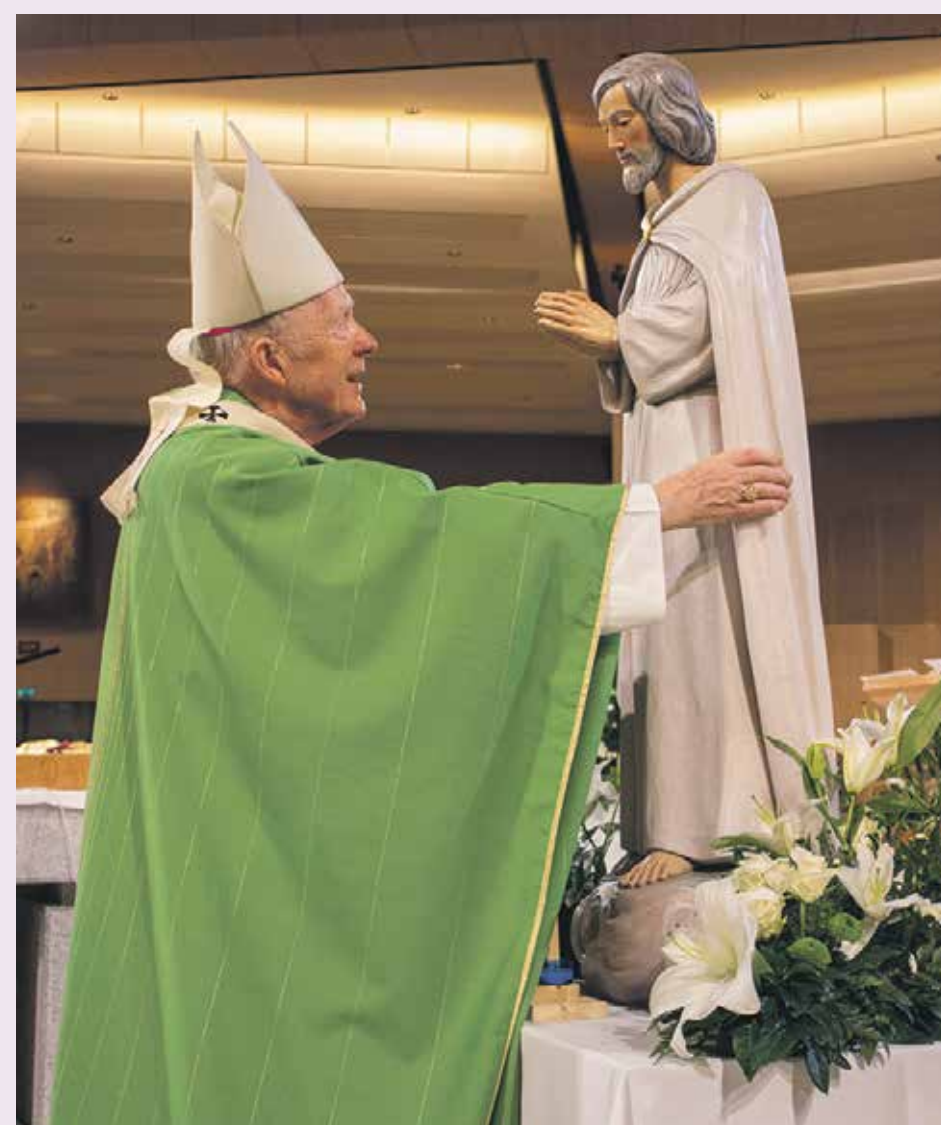
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Blessings at Knock



Archbishop Michael Neary blesses the new statue of St Joseph during the Triduum celebration at Mass on Saturday November 6 at Knock Shrine, Mayo. Photo: Sinéad Mallee.

I'll deal with Christmas in due time!

Because there may well be shortages in the shops come December – and even with on-line shopping – some prudent folks already have all their Christmas shopping, bar last-minute food, arranged, wrapped, and ready to deliver.

“A late Thanksgiving interrupted the space for Christmas shopping”

There has been a worldwide disruption of supply chains, largely, but not wholly, due to Covid: tankers have been held up everywhere from California to the Suez canal with their stacked containers. And there's a shortage of delivery truckies too.

Yet shopping early for Christmas isn't new: an American retail conglomerate started it all in 1936, when they got President Roosevelt to move Thanksgiving to an earlier date in November so as to give consumers time to “shop early for Christmas”. A late Thanksgiving interrupted the space for Christmas shopping.



Mary Kenny

Modern times have gone one better, by linking “Black Friday” with the Thanksgiving harvest festival – a fiesta of shopping opportunities and offers of special bargains.

We shouldn't be overly puritanical about the “commercialisation” of Christmas, it seems to me: shopping cheers people up, and shopping for gifts for other people helps to spread kindness and altruism. And those in the prudent school of Christmas preparations say that an early start in Christmas preparations helps them make more thoughtful choices.

Sensible people

The really sensible people have their Christmas arrangements all sorted by October, if not September – which expands the shopping-and-gifting Christmas into a quarter of the year.

I'm not of the plan-ahead school here. Except for assembling a few Christmas cards, I leave my Christmas plans well into December. Partly because I think we should mark Advent – starting on 28 November – before we start getting into Christ-

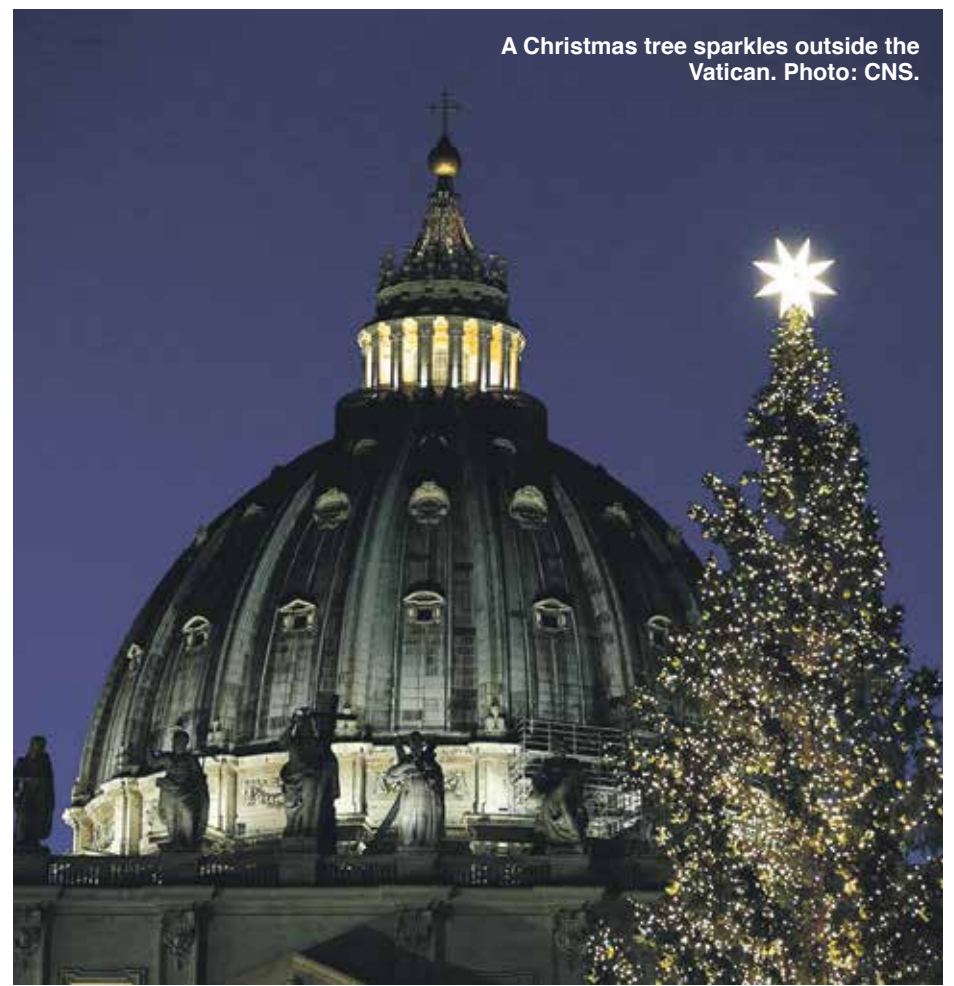
mas mode.

And partly because I feel we should try and live each day as it comes to us, and not be constantly focused on planning forward.

“If the shops are emptier because the logistics are still entangled, well, I'll accept it, and make do”

When I first attended an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting I voiced the anxiety that I'd never be able to get through Christmas without a few drinks. “Don't focus on Christmas. Focus on today,” I was told. The veteran mentor added cheerfully “you could have fallen under a bus by Christmas!”

So I'll deal with Christmas, practically speaking, when it starts to arrive. If the shops are emptier because the logistics are still entangled, well, I'll accept it, and make do.



A Christmas tree sparkles outside the Vatican. Photo: CNS.

● One of our finest historians, J.J. Lee wrote that Ireland “was never a theocracy”. Malachi O'Doherty, who wrote a critical history of Catholic Ireland, also wrote that Ireland had never been a theocracy. Garret Fitzgerald said that Church and state in Ireland were more properly separated than in most other European countries.

Yet the influential Fintan O'Toole continues to refer to “theocratic Ireland”, and in this, he has many imitators. We know the Catholic Church was powerful – sometimes too powerful – but still, the Irish state was not a theocracy.

English is the modern lingo

Some commentators have suggested that “Climate Change Activism” is a new religion, and that Greta Thunberg is its Joan of Arc.

I hope not. Responsible environmentalism is admirable, but it is not a religious faith.

But what is so striking about Swedish Greta is her extraordinarily fluent grasp of English. She isn't a native English speaker, and yet to hear her chatter away so articulately, you might think she was a born Anglophone.

Only very occasionally do you catch a little Scandinavian inflection.

I'm told by a Swedish-speaking friend that English is linguistically accessible for Swedes – look at ABBA, who found it natural to sing in English. There is even a linguistic cocktail known as “Swinglish” – a mixture of Swedish and English.

The Swedes and the other Nordics were influential in making English a dominant working language in the EU. Which gives the Irish a great

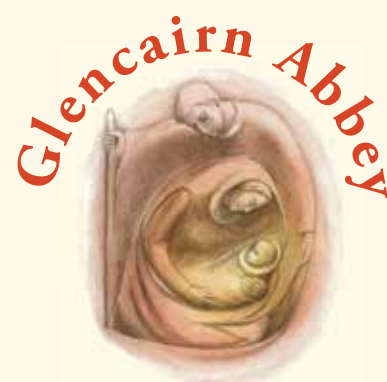
advantage – being native English-speakers (along with Malta, arguably).

If our dear Gaelgoiri campaigners – including Eamon de Valera – had succeeded we wouldn't be speaking English at all!

Irish, as a language, should be a labour of love, and a portal to the great Irish Christian civilisation of the past. But English, as Greta demonstrates, is the modern lingo of communication.

● Twenty-three million people in Afghanistan are now facing, not just hunger, but devastating famine. A drought has literally dried up agriculture and food is desperately scarce. Women on their own – especially widows with children – are particularly vulnerable. Political inhibitions about negotiating with the Taliban are apparently an obstacle to relief and aid.

Surely rescuing victims of famine should be the priority – not the politics of the situation? The Americans left over \$80 billion worth of military hardware behind in that country when President Biden so hastily withdrew in August. Contrast the astronomical sums spent on weaponry with the plight of so many people starving.



Christmas Cards 2021

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Support farmers to become more green, prelate says after COP26

Chai Brady and Brandon Scott

Farmers must be supported in their transition to more sustainable farming methods and the fact consumers want food as cheap as possible must be addressed, according to the bishop of Kilmore diocese.

Bishop Martin Hayes, who attended COP26 in Glasgow and is the episcopal coordinator for Laudato Si'

– the Pope's encyclical on the environment – told *The Irish Catholic* farming has become “a controversial issue”.

“We have to produce food, but we as consumers want food as cheap as possible. So we're not going to pay farmers for the cost of producing food in either the developed world or the developing world. That needs to be addressed,” Bishop Hayes said.

Farming in Ireland is “such a sensitive issue”, he said and because of this

it's not spoken about despite it needing to be.

“There must be a just transition for farmers as well. Just transition is this policy whereby you support people who have to give up their livelihood to survive,” according to Bishop Hayes, who added: “For example, when mines were closed there had to be something done to ensure miners' employment and their future and their livelihood. With farming, people

have to be helped and supported by the state to diversify into other areas so that people are not totally reliant on one type of farming.”

Speaking of the UN climate summit, COP26, the bishop said he attended side events in Glasgow which included inter-faith gatherings. He said it was “recognised generally that environmental groups and Faith groups have had an impact upon the politicians”.

Bishop Hayes said there have been significant commitments made at COP26 and “there is a sense of hope arising from the negotiations”.

He added that Trócaire were also present in Glasgow and were “advocating in the background” and that the charity has its own Laudato Si' office and “their initiatives, ideas and ventures need to be built upon so that people can become familiar with Laudato Si' and then act accordingly”.

Church's place in politics to help us 'find better part of ourselves', says EU commissioner

Jason Osborne

When it comes to the relationship between religion and politics in the future, it's the job of Churches to help people find “the better part of ourselves”, Irish EU Commissioner Mairead McGuinness has said.

Speaking recently on RTÉ's *The Meaning of Life with Joe Duffy*, Ms McGuinness said that the relationship the Churches have with politics has changed, but that

there is still a place there.

“We shouldn't go back to the way we were, where religion and Churches really imposed their will on politics and on people,” she said.

“Therefore I think what religion should remember is that it has a place in trying to get us to find the better part of ourselves, rather than the worst bits, that we're capable of.

“So I don't think Churches should interfere. I think you have to respect that

Churches and non-confessions have a view on policy, which they should be able to express.”

Ms McGuinness said she was “struck” by Pope Francis' vulnerability during their meeting in 2017, as he asked her while she was leaving if she would pray for him.

“I thought, 'I was going to ask the other way around'. So even those who are leaders of faith have a vulnerability that you perhaps don't think about until you meet them upfront,” she said.

Contactless collections to increase in Dublin diocese's parishes

Brandon Scott

200 parish churches in the Archdiocese of Dublin will now be equipped with “tap-and-donate” card machines.

The installation of card machines in parish churches was previously mooted and subsequently trialled by the archdiocese in 2019, with a spokeswoman for the

archdiocese saying that “later this year [2019] we plan to roll out the ability for the majority of parishes to accept card-based payments using a parish payments system. This will cover many transactions such as offerings, pilgrimage payments and will enable parishioners to sign up for recurring contributions”.

The recent increase of card machines

in the archdiocese comes after fears over the widespread transmission of the Covid virus and because there are less people carrying physical forms of currency than ever before.

The AIB-powered machines will be featured in selected parishes across Dublin, Laois, Carlow, Wexford, Wicklow and Kildare.

Celebration in Cavan



Kevin Conlan and Caroline Kieran celebrate their wedding at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan.

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Niamh Uí Bhriain

The View



Abortion pills at home: What the Government isn't telling you

Last year, then Minister for Health, Simon Harris – a man with a commitment to making abortion easily available – said that the abortion pill could be prescribed remotely during the Covid-19 crisis.

Previously, the HSE had said that pregnant women needed to attend a pre-abortion consultation in a surgery or clinic.

When this radical change to the regime was made in March 2020, pro-life doctors and nurses warned that dropping the requirement for a physical consultation could be dangerous. They pointed out that an ultrasound may be required to determine gestation – and can be crucial to determine if the pregnancy is ectopic, since an undiagnosed ectopic pregnancy can be life-threatening.

Referendum

In fact, during the referendum, voters were told that because women were putting their lives in danger by importing abortion pills and taking them without medical supervision. Then Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, said that if people voted 'No' it was "only a matter of time before someone haemorrhages or bleeds to death after taking one of these pills unregulated".

“The HSE confirmed ‘no analysis as such on remote consultation has been conducted in Ireland’”

It seemed strange, then, that no such fears were raised about women's safety when taking the abortion pill at home after a phone or Skype consultation. Sadly, we know that the HSE tells women to flush their baby's body "down the toilet" after using abortion pills. Clearly, they have no respect or regard for the child whose life has been ended. But since the Government spent so much time tweeting about a woman's right to abortion, and about women's wellbeing and safety, it was naturally expected that the use of abortion pills at home would be carefully monitored for any adverse outcomes and to ensure women were not endangering their lives.

That didn't happen. Instead, incredibly, the HSE has now admitted it is not collect-



ing any data on complications that arise from "at-home abortions" – even though it is considering whether to continue the remote consultations in place after the pandemic.

In response to a parliamentary question from Éamon Ó Cuív TD, the HSE confirmed "no analysis as such on remote consultation has been conducted in Ireland". However, it did add that "the department has requested the HSE to revisit the Model of Care to review its operation and consider whether it should be retained going forward".

This is astonishing. If the HSE hasn't bothered to examine the evidence – and, in fact, as previously acknowledged to Carol Nolan TD, it has no central system of collecting adverse abortion outcomes – how can they possibly know that it is safe to continue with remote consultations?

Noticed

You might have noticed that most of the information we have about the abortion regime comes from parliamentary questions asked by Independent or Aontú TDs. The HSE doesn't seem interested in gathering any data which might show adverse outcomes of abortion. What happened to women being fully informed?

The HSE, through Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager of the National Women and Infants Health Programme, says that Ireland is only using evidence from the UK. "There has been good feedback from providers

and patients and there is good evidence from published literature from the UK that remote provision of abortion care is very safe," she said.

Leaving aside the scandal that the HSE can't be bothered to gather its own data, let's look at some of the outcomes from the UK.

“It seemed strange, then, that no such fears were raised about women's safety when taking the abortion pill at home after a phone or Skype consultation”

In May 2020, just two months after at-home abortions were legalised, a leaked email from a Regional Chief Midwife at NHS England and NHS Improvement revealed that there had been "two maternal deaths linked to this issue". The email also revealed that women were presenting at hospitals after talking abortion pills for a range of incidents including "significant pain and bleeding related to the process through to ruptured ectopics", "major resuscitation for major haemorrhage", and incidents involving the "delivery of infants who are up to 30 weeks gestation".

An undercover investigation by Christian Concern

found that abortion clinics were not carrying out basic checks before sending women abortion pills for use at home.

Concern

In fact, such is the growing concern amongst medical professionals in Britain on the issue, in May of this year more than 600 medics demanded that the controversial 'pills in the post' scheme be scrapped, citing fears that abortion pills mailed after phone or online consultations were being used when the baby was beyond the ten-week limit stipulated – and might even be beyond the 24-week limit for surgical abortions. They also said that taking abortion pills at home made it easier for men to coerce women into abortions against their will – and failed to protect women who were being trafficked or abused.

That call has been echoed this month by two former presidents of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow who said the Scottish government "should reinstate in-person appointments at the earliest possible opportunity".

We also know – again thanks to a question asked by Carol Nolan TD – that here in Ireland some 94 claims have been made against the State in relation to adverse outcomes after abortion since it was legalised. Yet we are not being told whether abortion pills at home are a factor.

The Government, it seems, doesn't want women to have this information. Women need to start asking why that is.

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Out&About

Remembering the martyrs



KERRY: The annual Mass for the Beatification of the Martyrs Fr Thaddeus Moriarty OP, Fr Conor McCarthy and Fr Dermot O'Sullivanan OFM took place at the Mass Rock 'Poll an Aifrinn' in Keelacloghane Wood, Milltown and was celebrated by Dominican provincial Fr John Harris OP. Photo: John Cleary.



TIPPERARY: Parish of Moyne's Pope John Paul II recipients for 2021 Emma Buggy, Shauna Gleeson, Lucy Doyle, Emma Leahy and Helen Cleere are pictured with Fr Vincent Stapleton, Cashel and Emly Diocesan Award Co-Ordinator in the Church of the Sacred Heart, Templetuohy. Missing from photo is Lorna McGrath. Photo: Fiona Kelly.



LIMERICK: Fr Des McAuliffe PP Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Ennis Road, congratulates Frankie Naughton of Ardscoil Ris on his excellent Leaving Certificate results. Frankie is a Eucharistic minister in the parish church.



CAVAN: Pictured are Jackie Murray, Deacon John Taffee and Gwen McKenna of the Family Addiction Support Network, FASN, who organised a Mass of Healing at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt for all families who have suffered bereavement through addiction or suicide.

IN SHORT

New leadership for the Medical Missionaries of Mary

The Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) welcomed a new Congregational Leadership Team and Congregational Leader after "challenging delays" caused by Covid-19 restrictions.

Sr Ursula Sharpe, formerly community leader of the Motherhouse in Drogheda, was voted as congregational leader, taking over from Sr Siobhan Corkery who had served in the role for more than 12 years.

The decision came as delegates from the four areas the order presently serves – Europe, the Americas, East and Central Africa and West Africa – met in Accra, Ghana, the MMM said in a statement.

The delegates "came together for a

transformative meeting to discuss the future directions of the MMMs and decide who the future leaders would be", the order said.

The chapter was delayed due to Covid-related travel restrictions.

The new leadership team headed by Sr Ursula also includes: Sr Maria Gonzaga Namuyomba, assistant congregational leader; Sr Clara Chikwana, councillor; and Sr Rose Mogun, councillor.

Since they were founded in 1937 by Mother Mary Martin, the MMMs have been engaged in the delivery of services to the world's most needy populations in remote areas. This includes the prevention or relief of sickness, disease or human suffering in various ways.

Campaigners welcome call for online safety commissioner

The Children's Rights Alliance has welcomed calls from the Joint Oireachtas Committee for the Media for the Government to name the role of an Online Safety Commissioner in law.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media published its report November 2, with recommendations on the General Scheme of the 'Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill' (OSMR Bill).

In it, the committee recommended the Government explicitly name the position of the Online Safety Commissioner in law.

It also emphasised the need "to

sufficiently resource the office to ensure the Commissioner can effectively carry out their role", according to Tanya Ward, Chief Executive of the Children's Rights Alliance.

"We warmly welcome the publication of the Media Committee's Report today which sets out clear recommendations to Government that would help position the OSMR Bill as the gamechanger it can be – and needs to be – when it comes to regulating big tech and social media platforms," Ms Ward said November 2.

"If the Government is serious about its commitment to make the online world a safer space for children and young people, the Online Safety Commissioner must be equipped and supported to take action when services do not comply with safety standards," she added.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



KERRY: A Truck Run to Killarney in memory Hauley O’Sullivan, Tralee, took place with Garda escort in aid of Kerry Hospice. Luke Kelliher, Banemore, Listowel, joined his father Vincent Kelliher for the drive. Photo: John Cleary.



TYRONE: Pictured left to right are Fr Kevin McElhennon, PP, VF, Fr Donal Bennett SSC and Fr Declan McGeehan CC after Fr Bennett - a Columban missionary and native of Omagh - celebrated his final Mass while serving in the Parish of Cappagh before returning to the Columban community at Dalgan Park, Navan, Co. Meath.



TYRONE: Kathleen McConville celebrates her 102nd birthday with Ballygawley parish priest Fr Michael O’Dwyer. Kathleen is fit and well, and enjoys reading *The Irish Catholic*. Photo: Pauline Ball.

Events

● In the current Covid-19 crisis, it is clear that most (and perhaps all) Church events, other than some Masses, are suspended. Consequently, we are withholding the popular Events Listing column until normal activities can resume in our parishes. However, please do email us if you know of any parish event planned and we will publish details.



KILKENNY: In recognition of the many decades leading the parish choir, in Castlecomer, Pope Francis has awarded Mary Hester and Paula Brophy with Benemerenti Medals. Pictured at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Castlecomer are (from left) Fr Ian Doyle, Paula Brophy, Mary Hester and Msgr Michael Ryan PP.



WEXFORD: The Black family get into the festive spirit with an All-Saints party, with appearances from Pope St John Paul II and Methuselah.



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Fr. Donal O' Mahony's home-saving legacy

Fr Donal O'Mahony – an activist, advocate, peacemaker and negotiator – was an extraordinary man. For more than 30 years, he was on the frontline of homeless prevention. He had a unique vision, which was to improve housing rights for families and individuals. And he did something no one had done for tenants in Ireland before – gave them a voice. He had the courage and dedication to make a real difference. His legacy now lives on in Threshold, a charitable organisation dedicated to housing rights and homeless prevention, which he founded in 1978. At a time when housing has become one of our most scarce resources, Fr. O'Mahony's vision for a safer and fairer Ireland is more important than ever.

Hailing from Cork, Fr. O'Mahony was educated at CBC, Rochestown College. After initially working as a sports writer, he joined the Capuchin order in 1958 and travelled the world. Unable to remain a bystander to injustice, he fostered a role in peace-building. As a gifted and natural mediator, he achieved many outcomes where violence was averted and lives were saved.

Fr. O'Mahony acted as an intermediary in several high-profile kidnappings including that of Tiede Herrema, the Dutch-born industrialist who was kidnapped by an IRA splinter group led by Eddie Gallagher and Rose Dugdale in 1975. The case led to a long-running siege in Monasterevin, Co Kildare, which lasted for 35 days. It was eventually put to an end with the help of Fr O'Mahony and the safe release of Dr Herrema, who ran the

Ferrenka company in Limerick.

Fr. O'Mahony also worked in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, promoting and facilitating dialogue between opposing paramilitaries, as an alternative to violence.

Further afield, he was a member of an international team who successfully negotiated the release of 106 Nicaraguan university students imprisoned by the government in Honduras. He later successfully negotiated the release of an English-Jewish mother and daughter kidnapped in Italy. He also entered talks with Muslim leaders in order to protect Christian schools in Lebanon.

“People spoke of his modesty and his dedication, giving song to an ‘unsung hero’”

Fr. O'Mahony sought to achieve non-violence further internationally. As a visiting scholar in Berkeley University, California, he gave a series of public lectures on the subject.

In 2004, he founded the Capuchin Franciscan Peace Centre in Pretoria, South Africa. It was from this centre that emerged the major non-violence project for the continent of Africa: The Damiatta Initiative.

Closer to home, Fr. O'Mahony's greatest contribution in Ireland was the establishment of Threshold in 1978. He was appointed chaplain to Dublin's flat-dwellers by the Archbishop of Dublin in the 1970's. Throughout his work the employment conditions of returned emigrants and young people who had travelled

up to Dublin improved. Forced to live in squalor and sub-standard accommodation with no protection of tenancy, he was sympathetic to their plight. Fr O'Mahony knew that someone had to speak out for these young people. He was far ahead of his time in his approach to creating change – and redefined what we now understand homelessness to be. He believed that just because someone had a roof over their head did not mean that they necessarily had a home.

“A person may have an address and a door key but if they are living in overcrowded conditions, without basic facilities in unsanitary conditions, if they are cold because they cannot heat themselves, if they face eviction, if they are poor and can't reasonably afford rent, then it is only right to call that person homeless.”

Fr. O'Mahony turned his focus to housing

justice and through setting up Threshold, he put homelessness firmly on the political map. Since Threshold's foundation it has assisted half a million people on the cliff edge of becoming homeless.

“Fr. O'Mahony acted as an intermediary in several high-profile kidnappings including that of Tiede Herrema”

Fr. O'Mahony passed away in 2010 at the Marymount Hospice in Cork at the age of 74. The announcement of his death was met with golden tributes. People spoke of his modesty and his dedication, giving song to an “unsung hero”. It is thanks to him that in Ireland today, Threshold is still working to end homelessness, in all its forms.

THRESHOLD: WHO WE ARE

When a family, couple or individual suddenly find themselves at risk of homelessness, Threshold takes immediate action to help keep them in their home.

- We offer free, confidential and expert housing advice.
- We challenge unreasonable rent increases and illegal evictions.
- We act as point of contact to provide guidance and negotiate solutions between landlord and tenant.
- We are a frontline service for those most at risk of losing their privately rented accommodation.



Threshold's vision is an Ireland where everyone has access to affordable, secure, suitable and good quality housing.

A legacy still going strong

A significant legacy was left by Fr O'Mahony on the housing sector in Ireland. Threshold has continued with his work and pioneering ethos, expanding to serve the needs of communities all over Ireland. Threshold is still fighting for the most vulnerable; to improve standards in rented accommodation and ultimately helping to protect families from the nightmare of homelessness.

Today, we are in the midst of Ireland's worst ever housing crisis. Rents are higher than ever, and there are fewer houses than ever available. Sadly, after 40 years the demand for Threshold's services has never been higher.

Irish society is moving towards a return to “normal” after the difficult events of the last two years. But for people struggling with the housing crisis, “normal” isn't good enough. The lifting of restrictions has been accompanied by the lifting of special protections for renters, and evictions have come back.

Threshold remains a front line service, and is often the first point of call for anyone worried about losing their home. People from all walks of life are dialling Threshold's number, and finding help at the other end of the line. Threshold is more determined than ever to do everything possible to ensure families can stay safe in their homes, the homes they have come to know and love.

Because once a person or family falls into homelessness, it's a frightening spiral that is incredibly difficult to break out of. So Threshold acts before that happens,

preventing homelessness, and fulfilling Fr. O'Mahony's mission in Ireland. Still to this day, Threshold remains the only charity dedicated to homelessness prevention and keeping families in their homes, proof of the remarkable vision of the late Fr. O'Mahony.

Keeping families in their own homes is also incredibly cost-effective. The average family who enters emergency accommodation in Ireland will remain there for 10 months, costing the state €31,000. In comparison, Threshold can protect that same family from homelessness for a mere €340. Anyone who chooses to support Threshold can be confident that their gift will be put to work, efficiently and effectively, to stop homelessness before it starts.

How Threshold works

Threshold runs a nationwide Freephone service for all those seeking assistance. There are eight drop-in centres for face-to-face guidance and support, and offices in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Threshold helps 30,000 people across Ireland each year with housing problems.

A team of Housing Advisors work 9am to 9pm, taking calls and operating weekend emergency lines when needed. In addition to a phone line, the public are invited to email in queries or questions, or to use our Webchat live on www.threshold.ie. Threshold has also launched an online video chat service, so anyone who can't travel to our offices can still see and speak to a Housing Advisor “face to face”. Our team has been working solidly to understand the effect of the housing crisis on renters, and amplifying their voices to government to protect their rights and to create lasting change.

When a person contacts Threshold, a specialised Housing Advisor gets to work – taking every

BETWEEN MARCH 2020 AND JULY 2021, THRESHOLD'S HOUSING ADVISORS:



Protected 4,509 households who were at risk of losing their home – that's 3,332 children and 6,163 adults saved from homelessness



Supported 18,889 households in total



Responded to 5,611 Webchats



Completed a staggering 129,097 home-saving and practical actions



Worked on 2,081 cases where private renters faced an illegal eviction

possible action – offering sound and practical advice; negotiating with landlords; representing the person or family; finding ways for them to meet their rent and keep their home; helping them find an alternative home when needed; bringing sensible solutions to government.

Student or family, retired or working, there's no criteria – Threshold is here with a listening ear, with the know-how and experience, the enthusiasm and determination to help every person who needs help.

Eddie's story

Eddie, now 81 years old, relies on his social welfare pension of €240 a week and had never been in arrears with his rent, until last year. Eddie's rent was €900 per month, made up of €850 rent and a €50 service charge per month. As you can imagine, Eddie was struggling. And his landlord refused to sign the relevant forms to allow him to access the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).

“Becoming homeless is like falling into an abyss – and Threshold is the safety net”

Frightened of losing his apartment and becoming homeless in the middle of a pandemic, Eddie contacted Threshold for advice and support. Our team of housing advisors pursued a case on the grounds of housing discrimination. The landlord accepted HAP, Eddie was able to stay in his home and no longer has to struggle financially.

It's thanks to the kindness of people like you that Threshold can continue to support and protect vulnerable people like Eddie who are at risk of losing their homes.

In the words of one client, “Becoming homeless is like falling into an abyss – and Threshold is the safety net”.

Making a Will, leaving a gift for future generations

Making your Will is a personal, sensitive and

I called the Helpline and both advisors I was in touch with were the absolute best. November was a really tough month for me emotionally... but having Threshold by my side was very reassuring and helpful in ways I couldn't even imagine.

I still think of them to this day. I am truly grateful for their help and I cannot recommend it enough to people.

“Private renters don't need handouts, we just need to be able to sleep at night - and it's Threshold that has helped me to sleep at night. It's the knowledge that you have someone to rely on and someone on your side, waiting to advise, that really helps.”

- Noirin, Threshold Client

important thing. It's a decision you make in your own time, when you're ready. Naturally, your loved ones will come first when you're making your Will. But all of us want to leave the world a better place – not just for our family and friends – but for people who have been hit by traumatic events, by bad luck or unfairness.

A gift in your Will to Threshold can help to deliver hope for children and families into the future. It can help Threshold to answer more calls, support more families to keep their homes, improve the rights of tenants and ensure their voices are being heard. Your legacy will be the gift of a safe, secure home for generations.

Your gift is a foundation for life

We all know that homelessness is not just the absence of a home. It takes away the foundation for life. It damages health, emotional health and childhoods. So your gift will truly be a foundation for people's lives.

It's a wonderful promise to future generations

Your gift is like a wonderful promise to people, families and future generations. It will mean that no matter what homelessness problems and challenges

arise in the future, Threshold can be there for those who need us most, when they need us most. Even a small gift in your Will can save people from homelessness for generations.

You define your own legacy

Through your kindness, and by standing up for your values in this way – you are shaping your own legacy and how you wish to be remembered. But you are also being a powerful role model for family, friends and future generations of your family.

“It's part of my own modest personal legacy – how I want to be remembered by those that matter most to me – Legacy Donor”

“For me making my Will was about three things that matter to me. Firstly, and most importantly, it was about the legacy I leave to my loved ones. The second thing was more about who I am today – making a promise to my family and a charity now while I'm still living life. And third, it's part of my own modest personal legacy – how I want to be

remembered by those that matter most to me.”
– Legacy Donor

Our gift to you

We know that making or amending a Will can

feel daunting and can be costly. This is why we have partnered up with LawOnline (www.lawonline.ie) to offer you a free Will making service. This free and simple-to-



Our special emergency Helpline service responded to 11 calls every day over the Christmas holidays.

A gift in your Will is the precious gift of a warm secure home - for generations



If you know of anyone who is facing an eviction or struggling to pay the rent – please tell them to contact Threshold straight away by calling our National Freephone Helpline on **1800 43 44 45**

use service means you can make a Will for free or amend an existing Will for a significantly reduced price.

Call us today, in confidence, to avail of this service. There is no obligation to leave a gift to Threshold to use the service, but of course if you do, your support will help to protect families from homelessness for generations.

To avail of this offer or to find out more about leaving a gift to Threshold in your Will, just contact Catherine Murray on 01 6353 605 or at legacy@threshold.ie.

! If you enjoyed learning about the life of Fr. Donal O'Mahony, and would like to know more about the work of Threshold please send a message to catherine.murray@threshold.ie or write to us at **Threshold, First Floor 25-28 Strand Street Great, Dublin 1 D01 XP04**. You can also find out more about our work at www.threshold.ie.



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Threshold
Solving housing problems,
preventing homelessness

Post-Covid Confirmation is an opportunity for faith development

Frank Browne

Many of our parishes across the country have been busy undertaking Confirmation ceremonies for all those young people who have been waiting for up to two years. Our parish ministry team in Ballyroan thought about how we could make the sacramental preparation meetings and ceremonies both meaningful and an enjoyable experience for our young people and their families.

“To our delight over 90% of families responded positively”

We realised that we would have little or no input from our primary schools other than a contact email address, as these young people had moved on to secondary schools. So, for the first time, it really was up to our parish team to prepare our young people as best we could, while we realised that the majority may not have been to Mass or even inside our church since the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

Our parish secretary Mary McDade sent emails to over 200 families inviting them to acknowledge if they would like their children to be confirmed now that the Government restrictions were lifted. To our delight over 90% of families responded positively.

Some people outside of the parish team suggested a large outdoor ceremony where all 200 plus children could be confirmed within a simple ceremony, others suggested having two short ceremonies within our church and get the ceremonies completed quickly and then move on to the children waiting for Holy Communion.

Led by our parish priest Fr Michael Murtagh, we agreed that we wanted to have a series of preparation meetings with no more than 50 young people and their families present. We wanted to organise a preparation event that would have both parents and young people together, one that would include an opportunity for the parents of the young people to share their own experience of their Confirmation day. We also wanted to have a faith development element that included an understanding of why the Church celebrates



Children enjoy their Confirmation day in Ballyroan parish in Rathfarnham, Dublin, at the Church of the Holy Spirit.

the Sacrament of Confirmation but most importantly we wanted a prayer experience for all present.

Commitment

During each of our four preparation evenings we had prepared reading material for everyone in the audience to borrow a well-known phrase. Firstly, a Confirmation commitment certificate, asking our young people to commit to trying to pray each day and attend Sunday Mass, secondly, the Confirmation card with all the required informa-

tion for our Confirmation register and finally the booklet 'Your Child's Confirmation', published by Redemptorists Communications.

We took time to highlight the important parts of the Confirmation booklet such as the history behind the ceremony of Confirmation and explained that all the three special ceremonies of Baptism, Eucharist (or Holy Communion) and Confirmation are part of an initiation or journey to becoming a Christian within our faith community.

We told the young people that while we cannot see God, we can experience God's presence at special moments in our life and we use signs or symbols called sacraments to acknowledge this. At Confirmation we are asking the Holy Spirit to be part of our lives. We also used the booklet to offer suggestions for prayers and a way for our young people to pray with some of readings from the New Testament about the life of Jesus and his message of love and forgiveness. We explained that

praying is being open, from our heart or emotions to having a relationship with God, taking a moment of silence, asking the Holy Spirit to be with us, to guide us, to love us, so we can place ourselves in a position to experience God's presence.

“We used the opportunity to recruit some wonderful young people who have now become regular readers at our Sunday Mass”

The most important moment during our preparation evening was when we had a few minutes of silence after we heard the famous story from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2:1-13, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the terrified disciples of Jesus, who were lost without him. You could hear a pin drop as the Taizé music 'Veni Sancte Spiritus- Come Holy Spirit' was played. We really wanted to convey to our young people that the experience of the Holy Spirit changed Jesus's life at his Bap-

tism by John. It was then that Jesus began his wandering ministry that would change the lives of many and the course of history. The Holy Spirit changed the lives of the early followers of Jesus after he had been executed, when they too experienced the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and this gave rise to our Christian Church community.

Confirmation ceremony

Finally, we asked for volunteers to read the Scripture readings and prayers of the Faithful at the at the Confirmation ceremony and we arranged a practice evening for those who volunteered. We used the opportunity to recruit some wonderful young people who have now become regular readers at our Sunday Mass.

All our Confirmation ceremonies were an enjoyable, meaningful, and prayerful experience for those who attended and Fr Michael's last words to all our young people were that "Christ needs your youth so that his message will never grow old".

i Frank Browne is a Permanent Deacon at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Ballyroan in Dublin.





KNOCK

Ireland's International Eucharistic
and Marian Shrine

Events during November & Advent

Scripture Reflections - Online (Monthly)

In conjunction with St Louis Community School, Kiltimagh
Tuesday 7th December at 8.30pm



Students will take their favourite passage of Scripture and reflect on it through video, providing their own written narrative and imagery. You can join us on our website www.knockshrine.ie/watch-live to end the day in a prayerful and peaceful way and to enjoy a quiet time of reflection through various aspects of Scripture. The reflections will take place on the first Tuesday of each month until June 2022.

In November, We Remember

As the day grows darker and draws to a close we invite you to light a candle in memory of those who have gone before us.

For those who are unable to come to Knock in person, you can place a candle request online and our sacristans will light your candle for you at the outdoor candelabra. See www.knockshrine.ie/light-a-candle/



Advent Talks

Thursday Evenings: 2nd, 9th & 16th December at 8.15pm

Location: St John's Rest & Care Centre, Knock Shrine and live-streamed on www.knockshrine.ie/watch-live



With Fr Eamonn Conway, Head of Theology & Religious Studies, MIC, University of Limerick and Julie Kavanagh, member of the National Synodal Steering Committee, Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.

As the initial phase of the Synodal Pathway for the Catholic Church in Ireland is now underway, these talks will offer the opportunity for discussion and reflection to help deepen our understanding of this important subject.

Thursday 2nd: Fr Eamonn Conway – Synodality: What does it mean?

Thursday 9th: Julie Kavanagh – Synodality: How does it work?

Thursday 16th: Fr Eamonn Conway – Synodality: Why does it matter?



National Memorial Mass

Sunday 14th November at 3pm

The Bishops of Ireland will undertake a pilgrimage to Knock Shrine this November and celebrate the National Memorial Mass in memory of all who died on the island during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To pastorally support everyone who has suffered during the pandemic, and in the context of November being the traditional time when we remember our dead, on Sunday 14 November at 3pm, the Bishops of Ireland will concelebrate Mass for all those who have died on the island of Ireland, and for their families, during the pandemic.

During the Mass, Bishops will offer prayers of thanksgiving for all those who so selflessly sacrificed so much during this time.

The main celebrant is Most Rev. Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland.

This Mass will be live-streamed from Knock Basilica on www.knockshrine.ie/watch-live and broadcast on the RTÉ News Now digital television channel and online.



Dublin diocesan finances paint a dire picture



The pandemic and ensuing restrictions continue to cast a long shadow on Dublin diocese finances, but a big sale proves lucrative, writes **Jason Osborne**

The archdiocese of Dublin's 2020 financial report details a continued fall in the diocese's finances over the last year, a trend accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions put in place to slow its spread.

The Archdiocese of Dublin files two financial reports annually with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA), with both reporting drastic decreases in income over the past year.

The 'Parishes of the Diocese of Dublin' report, covering the financial statements of the combined parishes, the clerical fund, the common fund and the share fund reported a deficit of €4.3 million for 2020, whereas 2019 saw a surplus of €7.7 million.

The results for the 189 parishes of the diocese are combined in the report, but the "net movement in the funds" for the parishes worked out at €1.5 million in 2020, compared to €6.3 million in 2019.

Total income for the Dublin parishes for the year ending December 31, 2020, was €27.4 million, a drop of near €4 million on 2019. Income from charitable activities, such as family offering, donations and shrine income was down, as was income sourced from legacies.

“This situation forced the diocese to consider a range of restructuring measures to mitigate the long-term impact of the pandemic”

However, the parishes expenditure was also down, amounting to €29.3 million, compared to 2018's €32.6 million, a figure which shows how much was spent on operating and maintenance costs of the combined parishes over the past year.

The clerical fund, which mainly supports elderly priests and priests suffering from illness, saw a deficit for the year of €508,000. 2019,



on the other hand, the net movement in funds was a surplus of €1.5 million. The contribution received from the common fund to the clerical fund was down in 2020 as a result of the "sharp decline" in the first collection at Mass, which the report attributes directly to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The common fund, meanwhile, experienced another deficit - €1.7 million compared to 2019's €1.3 million, but this was after benefiting from a donation of €1 million from the archbishop's general fund during the year. The common fund, through the first collection at Mass, supported the income of 420 priests in Dublin archdiocese during 2020.

In decline

The share fund, which has been "in decline" since 2009, primarily derives its income from the second collection every weekend, and is used to finance "central support services for parishes and to provide financial assistance to low income parishes". This fund also experienced a deficit in 2020, of €3.6 million, which stands in contrast to 2019's surplus of €1.1 million.

As a result of the fall in the share collection, "it was necessary to reduce the long-term fixed costs of the diocesan offices as there is currently little optimism that the collections will go back to the pre-

pandemic amounts for some time". A voluntary redundancy programme was introduced, which 40 staff availed of by the end of 2020.

The parish pastoral services fund supports lay ministry, and a new collection was introduced for this in 2019, securing proceeds of €137,000 towards lay ministry. However, this collection wasn't held in 2020 due to the closure of churches for public worship, in connection to the pandemic.

“It was necessary to reduce the long-term fixed costs of the diocesan offices as there is currently little optimism that the collections will go back to the pre-pandemic amounts for some time”

The archdiocese's building fund was also in deficit of €996,000, compared to 2019's €225,000.

The report's review of the period identifies the church closures of 2020 as having had a severe impact on these diocesan funds.

"Collection income for the charity reduced by almost 80% in a three-month period," the report reads, continuing, "Numbers

attending Masses were restricted to 50 people when churches reopened for worship on 29 June. Churches in Dublin were subsequently closed again in September 2020 and churches in the rest of the Diocese were closed in October 2020 and did not reopen until 10 May 2021".

Restructuring

This situation forced the diocese to consider a range of restructuring measures to mitigate the long-term impact of the pandemic, "which came after years of steady decline in financial support for the charity".

This saw the eligible parishes apply for the economy-wide state support, while over 170 parishes implemented online donation facilities on their parish websites as well as on main diocesan website.

As a result of the dip in diocesan finances over the years, and particularly last year, the income review group was established in 2020 as a sub-group of the Dublin Diocesan Finance Committee, the role of this group being to make recommendations regarding how the more "significant income streams" of the diocese can be best increased and organised into the future.

One source of positivity and optimism in the financial records

was the receipt of nearly €3 million last year from the GAA as the result of a deal the association struck with the US property group Hines in 2019. The archdiocese sold a plot to the GAA for €95 million, which included the 19-acre site at Clonliffe.

The GAA is reported to have received €105 million for the lands it sold to Hines. However, the archdiocese's financial report for 2020 says that it received €2,918,000 as the result of a clause in its contract with the GAA, which says that it would receive a share in the GAA's profits if it sold on any of the lands or buildings to a third party.

“Collection income for the charity reduced by almost 80% in a three-month period,' the report reads”

The GAA sold on a large portion of the lands they purchased from the archdiocese, which resulted in the archdiocese receiving a share of the profits made by the GAA.

The financial report revealed the second tranche in the archdiocese's deal with the GAA closed last year, which saw 6.51 acres at Clonliffe transferred to the GAA, for which the archdiocese received €31,248,000.

The archdiocese has retained ownership of the archbishop's house at Clonliffe, as well as the former Mater Dei college building, which is leased to Dublin City Council and used as a centre for 50 homeless families, which is managed by Crosscare, one of the archdiocese's agencies.

“The report's review of the period identifies the church closures of 2020 as having had a severe impact on these diocesan funds”

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The Irish Catholic

Scottish Catholic journalism enjoys revival with new magazine



The launch of *The Scottish Catholic* heralds a rebirth of Catholic journalistic integrity and ethos in Scotland, hears **Jason Osborne**

The pandemic took a toll on all aspects of the Church and Church-related life, Catholic media being no different.

In Scotland, the combined difficulties of the pandemic and ensuing restrictions saw the closure of the venerable, 135 year-old *Scottish Catholic Observer*. Founded in 1885, it had been Scotland's only national Catholic newspaper, covering events and stories internationally, nationally and locally. Suffice to say, its loss was a painful blow to the country's Catholic community.

Integrity

However, October saw the rebirth of, if not the *Scottish Catholic Observer*, a publication looking to move forward in the same spirit of Catholic, journalistic integrity. *The Scottish Catholic* launched in the able hands of former editor of the *Scottish Catholic Observer*, Ian Dunn, and those of Mary and Dan McGinty of *The Irish Voice*, a mother-son team with both Catholic journalistic and publishing experience.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mr Dunn told of the "opportunity" they saw in the void left by the closure of the *Scottish Catholic Observer*.

"Myself and a few others, Mary McGinty and Dan McGinty, they're a mother-son team who had both been involved in the [Scottish Catholic] *Observer* days, and also they run a monthly newspaper/magazine for the Irish in Scotland called *The Irish Voice*, so they've experience of launching something, because that's about 10 years old now," Mr Dunn tells this newspaper.

"Obviously it's a smaller thing, but they knew the nuts and bolts of that kind of thing. So the three of us got together and said, 'Well, maybe this is an opportunity'. At that point,



we're in the heart of a second lockdown, we don't know what's happening, but we thought, 'Right, let's see if this is a goer'.

"So we started to feel around and see what people are looking for, we talked to the bishops, we talked to the priests, talked to the Lord and his wife sort of thing. They really felt there was a hunger," he says.

“There’s a need for a voice that’s trusted, that’s dependable, that people will trust to tell them the truth”

The "hunger" among Scotland's Catholics is "merely" for journalistic integrity and a Catholic ethos, Mr Dunn explains, saying that they saw people engaging with Catholic content online – but that much of it "comes from elsewhere", and that they saw people having "very American arguments".

"There were good things in various dioceses and good people doing things, but without that trusted local source, a lot of it is American, a lot of it comes from

elsewhere, so we started to see folk having American arguments, you know?

"A lot of that 'culture war' kind of stuff coming in waves that seem quite venomous, and that was something that really – we saw there was a real need for this. There's a need for a voice that's trusted, that's dependable, that people will trust to tell them the truth. But also simply not to be wild. Not to be coming out saying all sorts of crazy stuff, but having that journalistic integrity. Merely that and a Catholic ethos. There's a need for that," Mr Dunn says.

Mainstream papers

During the heyday of the *Scottish Catholic Observer*, Mr Dunn says the "mainstream papers" would regularly pick up their stories at the weekend, and it's that sort of reporting that he's looking forward to getting back to. Getting to the heart of issues and telling people the things no one else will is "at the heart of what you want to do" as a journalist, he says.

"I would still be a big believer that society needs journalists, we need journalists who can hold people to account. Who can tell you what's really going on, who can cut

through all of the nonsense on Facebook and social media and give it to you straight. Now as much as ever. Societies need it.

"Catholicism and journalism often seem like they're at odds, but fundamentally, they have something in common, which is: Journalism is about, if it's done right, uncovering the truth, trying to get to some kind of truth, and I would very much be of the opinion that if you dig deep enough and you look hard enough, you come to some truths which are pretty fundamental, and ultimately, Catholic," he says.

“There’s going to be that balance...we are going to do that bit of news, that’s going to be there for sure, but at the same time, faith comes in through the heart”

Launching this magazine because they believe it's "necessary" in the Scottish landscape, Mr Dunn and his team are under no illusions that it'll be easy, predicting a "roll-

ercoaster ride" and a "few bumps" in the magazine's first months, but they're sustained by a sense of need and the knowledge that they're "on to a winner".

"We believe we've got a good product, a good magazine, there's going to be lots of exciting stuff in there...it's going to be a lot of graft, but we're excited for the challenge," Mr Dunn says.

Talking a lot about the digging and searching that are part of a journalist's career, Mr Dunn doesn't neglect the gentler side of the job – "unveiling" and "shining a light" on things and people that "are good and worth celebrating".

Faith

"There's going to be that balance... we are going to do that bit of news, that's going to be there for sure, but at the same time, faith comes in through the heart. A key aspect for us is to put Scottish Catholics at the heart of *The Scottish Catholic*."

"I mean, how many people in our parishes, in Ireland as well as Scotland, are absolute heroes, quietly going about their business, just living lives of virtue, you know? Telling some of those stories is really important to us."

Merchants Quay Ireland

A Merchants Quay Ireland Christmas – through the eyes of Brother Pat

“When I look at Merchants Quay Ireland today, the work that the friars began, it’s still about seeing the face of Jesus in the people who you meet every day – reaching out to the people who are marginalised because of homelessness and addiction. That’s what St. Francis did.”

Today Brother Pat Lynch volunteers as a member of the board of Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI), but his involvement started in the early 1970’s with a summer placement. He shares his recollections of the beginning of MQI and the ethos of St. Francis that still governs the work of the charity today:

“It all started when Brother Sebastian Tighe and Brother Salvador Kenny had the tea-rooms at the friary. It was just tea, sandwiches and shelter from the weather, a place to come inside and dry your clothes. I was here for four years on a summer placement, and it was all voluntary work. Br. Sebastian and Br. Salvador had great wisdom, they knew how to handle people very well and had a great way with the people who came for help.”

In those times, clients would have been mostly involved with alcohol, but since the 1980’s drug addiction has become more commonly problematic for people – and far less understood.

“There’s a great understanding nowadays, that alcoholism is a disease. Drug addiction is similar and if we could recognise it as such too, then perhaps

“There’s a great understanding nowadays, that alcoholism is a disease. Drug addiction is similar and if we could recognise it as such too, then perhaps we’d have more compassion towards those who suffer and struggle with it”

we’d have more compassion towards those who suffer and struggle with it. Like we do for other people who are battling chronic and terminal illnesses.”

The legacy of a hot Sunday dinner

The tea-rooms eventually moved to MQI’s Riverbank crisis drop-in centre, just next door to Adam and Eve’s church on Dublin’s quays. Every new beginning still starts with a kind word and a listening ear over a cup of tea. Far from being the end of the road, MQI offers the start of a new one. The journey of recovery begins here for many people, with the basic comforts of a hot shower, the dignity of new underwear and a nourishing meal. Brother

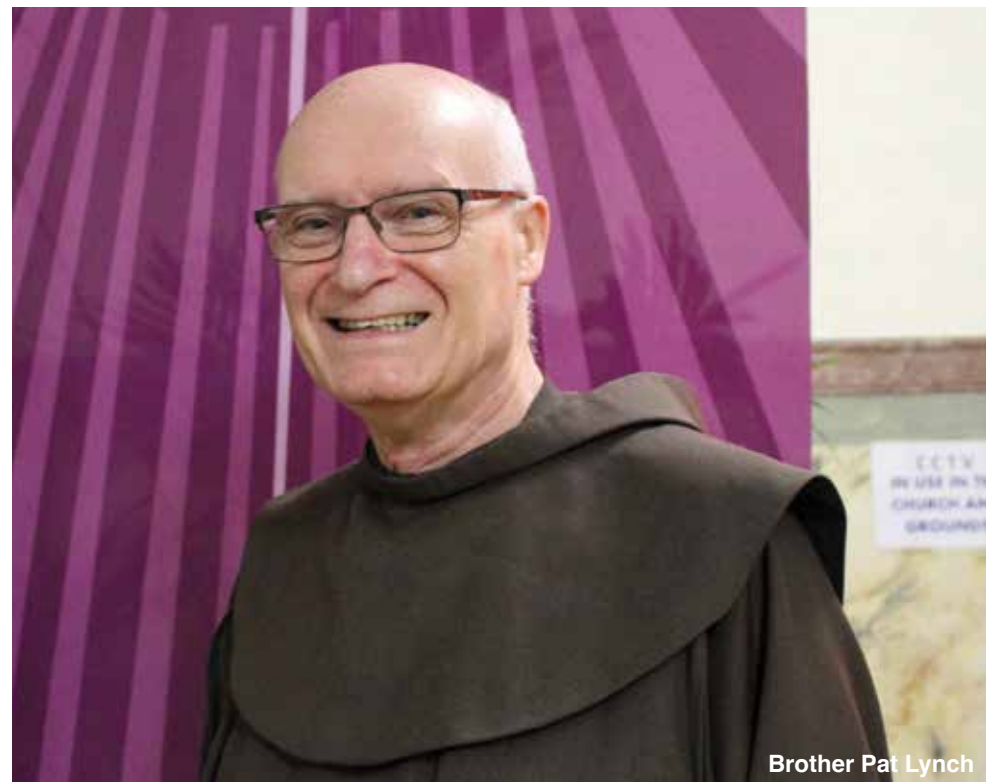
Pat remembers well how the tradition of a hot Sunday dinner for MQI clients began in the tea-rooms with an anonymous act of kindness.

“One day there was a lady who came into Brother Sebastian and she was wondering why they didn’t have a proper dinner on a Sunday, because there was such a large number of people. From that day on, she said that she would be contributing chickens for a Sunday roast dinner. So, rather than just tea and sandwiches there were chickens to feed 50 or 60 people who came in and had a proper roast dinner on a Sunday. When she passed away, she’d made sure the chickens would continue to be delivered. They were brought in on a Saturday evening, just as she had wanted. It was the first legacy gift to help MQI continue reaching out to people who are marginalized.”

Spirituality at work

The Franciscan ethos that governs Merchants Quay Ireland is evident in the welcome that greets every client. Brother Pat describes the spirituality he sees in each warm smile, every kind gesture, every hug.

“It’s all about hope. God is present in a very special way in everything, in all of nature and in all of creation and in all people. When we smile at some-



Brother Pat Lynch



MQI’s Riverbank crisis drop-in centre

“When we smile at somebody or we greet somebody, recognise somebody on the doorstep and just don’t walk over them – we follow in the footsteps of St Francis – who himself followed the footsteps of Jesus”

body or we greet somebody, recognise somebody on the doorstep and just don’t walk over them – we follow in the footsteps of St Francis – who himself followed the footsteps of Jesus.

“Jesus was homeless, born in a stable. The Gospel refers to the fact that Jesus says that he had nowhere to lay his head. The rabbits have holes, the foxes have dens and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. So, He is homeless, He is crucified, He is spat upon, He is mocked. In many ways that happens to people in our society today. Those who are living on our streets, they’re excluded.”

There’s a bittersweet festive feeling in MQI’s Riverbank crisis drop-in centre. The dining

area is decorated with hand-written messages from MQI supporters for clients to read. Carols play softly in the background. The Christmas tree is adorned with twinkling lights and garlands. Staff wear Santa hats to brighten the atmosphere. Even so, they empathise with the trauma and loneliness that lie beneath the smiles on clients’ faces. There is always sadness around Christmas for people who have nowhere to go. For such reasons as addiction, mental ill-health, violence or abuse – whatever issues are in the family, many don’t have the choice to go back home.

Christmas dinners and care packages are given out at Riverbank during December. Help is needed through all seasons and all weathers, as well as at

Christmas. **You can read more in your enclosed insert about the work of Merchants Quay Ireland, and how you can help this Christmas and every day.**

“Christmas is a time for all of us to become aware of those in need,” says Brother Pat. “People who are homeless and suffering from addiction need our help. That would motivate me to see Christmas as a time of giving to help people who are marginalised in society.”

Keep our most forgotten close to your heart this winter. To donate please call 01-5240139, visit www.mqi.ie or return the donation form included in your enclosed insert pack. Thank you.



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New Irish research backs up Christian teaching on the family



David Quinn

For many years, I have taken part in debates about the family. In all that time, I have focused on the importance of both mothers and fathers being closely involved in the raising of their children. It is why I have always argued for the importance of marriage, because marriage has evolved in practically all societies going back thousands of years as the main vehicle by which we encourage men and women to raise their children together.

“Last week, Labour’s Ivana Bacik said she wants Ireland to hold yet another referendum on the family”

This has been my basic argument whether I have been debating lone-parent families, divorce, cohabitation or same-sex marriage. It is also the basic argument used by Christians ever since the very beginning of the Church.

In each case you face the accusation of being hard-hearted and intolerant, that is, intolerant towards those raising children alone, or have been through a divorce, are living together outside marriage, or towards same-sex couples who wish to marry.

This makes it a tricky debate to take part in and it is probably why the Churches now tend to avoid commenting on the family, or if they do, adopt ‘family-diversity’ language and say they respect all families equally.

Last week, Labour’s Ivana Bacik said she wants Ireland to hold yet another referendum on the family. We might have redefined marriage, but the Constitution still commits the State to guarding marriage with ‘special care’. She thinks this is discriminatory. Instead, she believes, the State should protect all families equally, especially now that the family in Ireland has become much more diverse.

Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar, has



made a similar argument. I predicted at the time of the 2015 marriage referendum that this would be the next step.

The problem is that as the family becomes more ‘diverse’, it means in practice fewer children being raised by their two married parents. The parents might have divorced and separated, or only lived together for a few years without marrying, or might never have married or cohabited at all, meaning the child has never lived in the same house with both parents at the same time.

Family diversity

In practice, ‘family diversity’ often means family break-up, or the failure of a family consisting of mother, father and child, to form at all.

In the years I have spent arguing this issue I have often cited international studies which show that children tend to benefit in various ways when raised by their mother and father under the same roof.

But now we have a growing body of Irish research showing the same thing. This is mainly thanks to the ‘Growing Up in Ireland’ study, which is tracking thousands of Irish children through their childhoods to find out how they are faring.

One thing the study allows us to do is look at child out-

comes by family structure, meaning whether the family is a lone-parent one, a two-parent one and so on.

For example, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) produced a paper in May looking at adolescent behaviour. One of the things it found was that family structure makes a difference.

“An earlier ESRI report from 2016, called ‘Cherishing all the children equally’, found something similar”

It reported: “Family structure emerged as having a significant and consistent relationship with adolescent behaviour, with poorer behaviour across all domains for those in lone parent families or families that experienced separation during the young person’s adolescence.”

It said this held true even after taking into account factors like the education level of the parents.

An earlier ESRI report from 2016, called ‘Cherishing all the children equally’, found something similar. Again, it

looked at family structure and discovered it makes a difference in the lives of children.

It stated: “family structure does indeed represent a source of inequality in children’s lives, and places children in single parent households at risk of poorer developmental outcomes” compared with children raised in two parent households.

These findings are almost never trumpeted, probably for fear of causing controversy or upsetting ‘family diversity’ ideology which insists there are no real differences between family types from a child’s point of view, and therefore we need not worry about the fact that fewer Irish children are growing up with a married mother and father living in the same household.

Children benefit

Now we have a brand new ESRI study called ‘Fathers and infancy from infancy to middle childhood’, and this finds that children benefit when their father is actively involved in their lives. The children in this report are tracked till the age of nine.

The press release accompanying the report says, “children who have a good relationship with their father are happier, feel less anxious and are more engaged in physical activity”, than their

counterparts who do not have a good relationship.

Unsurprisingly, it finds that children who are not living with their fathers are less likely to report that they get on very well with them (65% versus 79% of those living with their fathers).

The number of children not living with their fathers increased as time went on, which is not very surprising.

“This highlights the importance of government and employer support for the kinds of working arrangements that would help foster this early involvement”

The report’s authors concentrate very much on policies that encourage fathers to spend more time with their children during early childhood because of the benefits this has later on for children. They favour more flexible working hours and more parental leave for fathers.

Emer Smyth, the lead

author, says: “Early involvement and bonding with the baby sets the tone for father-child relationships later in childhood. This highlights the importance of government and employer support for the kinds of working arrangements that would help foster this early involvement.”

As with earlier ERSI reports on broadly the same topic, what is notable is what is missing, namely any recommendation that the Government should do more to encourage marriage because it increases the chances of a child being raised by their mother and father under the same roof.

Remarkable oversight

This is a remarkable oversight, but not surprising given the strength of family diversity ideology.

Nonetheless, the growing body of research about the family in Ireland and the lives of children greatly strengthens the argument that both fathers and mothers matter in the lives of their children, and marriage is still the best way of getting them both involved together. We should not be scared to highlight this, nor should Christian leaders.

Purgatory: Therapy of divine love

November is the month when we remember those who have died and we pray for the souls in purgatory. Purgatory is not specifically mentioned in the Bible but the doctrine of purgatory is a beautiful development which holds in unity two ideas that might appear to be contradictory.

The doctrine of God's holiness reminds us of God's majesty, unique otherness, glory and light, far beyond anything we might imagine, much less deserve. The other doctrine is of God's loving mercy. The all-holy God whom we could never deserve is also the God of mercy who gives us a process of purification, namely purgatory. St Paul tells us that eye has not seen, ear has not heard, it is even beyond our imagination all that God has prepared for those who love him. Purgatory is the bridge across the deep chasm between our unworthiness and the dazzling light of the beatific vision.

Punishment or purification?

Many of us grew up with a Catechism which told us that purgatory was a state or place of punishment where some souls suffer for a time before they go to heaven. The current Catechism of the Catholic Church, published in 1994, under the watchful eye of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, paints a very different picture. "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven" (Catechism 1030). The old Catechism spoke of punishment and suffering. The new Catechism speaks of assured salvation and a process of purification.

Seeing God

St John gives us this beautiful, uplifting insight into our future. "My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is. Surely everyone who entertains this hope must purify himself, must try to be as pure as Christ" (1 John 3:2-3).

So, what has to be purified? Any way of thinking or behaving contrary to love of God and love of other people. Hands up anybody who

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



thinks that he/she is 100% perfect in charity.

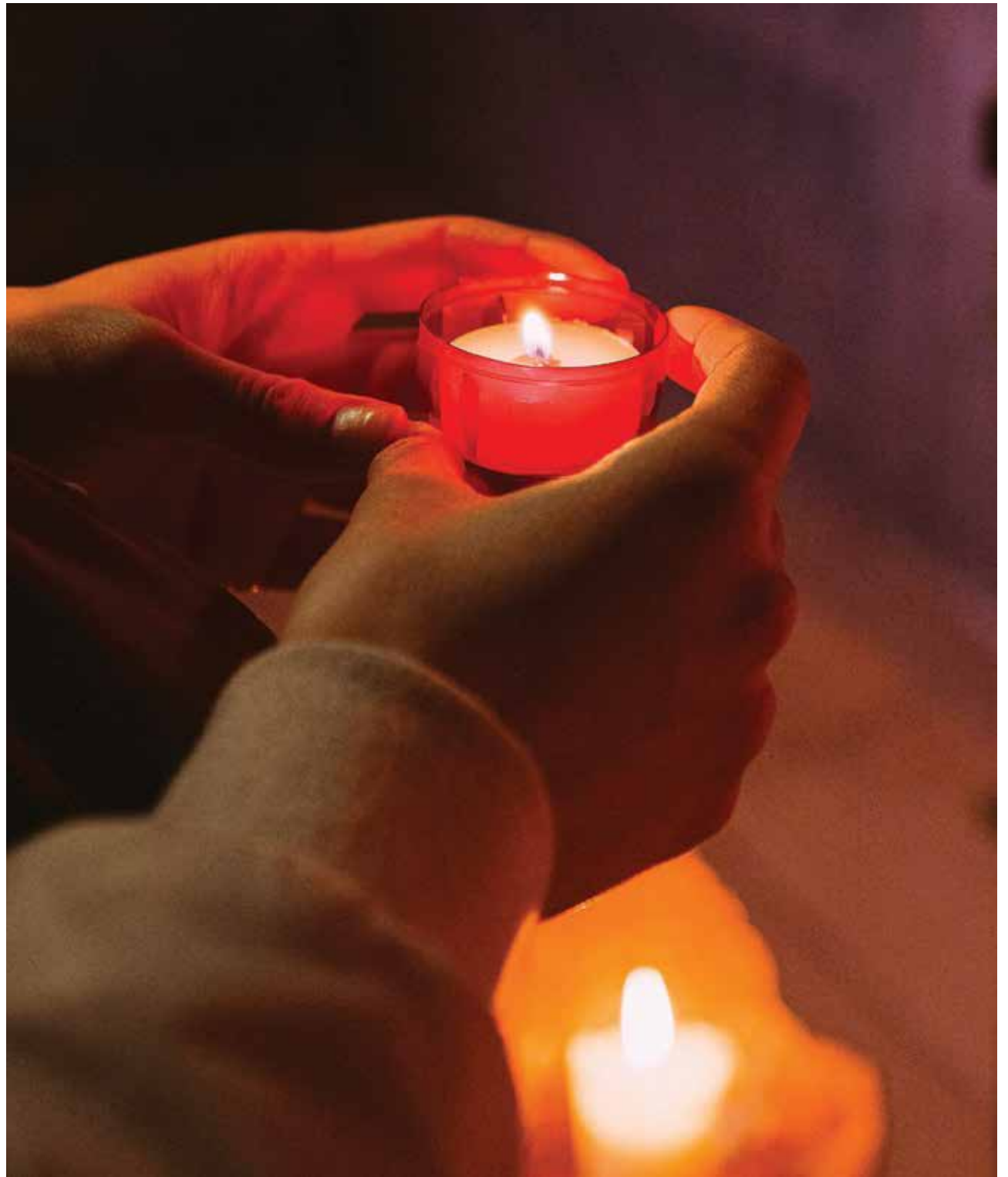
Great spiritual directors down the ages have listed seven deadly sins or fault lines in our make-up: pride (glorification of me), covetousness, lust, envy, anger, gluttony and sloth (laziness). These are roots of thought and behaviour which are contrary to the light of Christ. They are like cataracts, a sort of fog that gradually grows over the lens of the eye. Nowadays a cataract can be removed and replaced in a brief surgery. A lady who had cataracts removed from both eyes told me, "I had forgotten what colour was like". A person who has allowed sinful behaviour to develop has lost the colourful memory of God's love and human dignity. Some people refer to the loss of one's moral compass. One of the psalms reads: "Sin speaks to the sinner in the depth of his heart. There is no fear of God before his eyes."

A gradual therapy

Sometimes an unexpected happening, a moment of grace, can be a sudden eye-opener resulting in a conversion of life. But this sudden experience will need further development. Purgatory, meaning purification in God's merciful love, is a gradual process. Step by step, as one is increasingly overwhelmed by the experience of God's love, the cataracts of selfishness, lust, anger, injustice etc. are cleansed from one's vision. The journey to God is completed when the eyes of the soul are completely cleansed. This is the beatific vision. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." A person is then like a mirror, returning a perfect reflection of God. As we have heard from St John, "we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is".

Is there suffering?

Is there suffering in purgatory? Yes, but not physical pain or burning in fire. Purgatory is God's therapy of mercy. Psychotherapy or physiotherapy can cause a stab of pain when an injured part is touched, but this is a step towards healing. "The truth shall set you free." The therapy of God's love which we call purgatory confronts one with the painful truth of how one falls short of perfection. It is the pain you



feel when you recognise how much you have hurt others, or when you have allowed selfishness govern your life, or when you realise how much God loves you and how poorly you have loved in return. That's the pain of love which is beautiful because it only comes in experiencing an overwhelming divine love.

Are the souls happy?

Next question, are the souls in purgatory happy? Yes, intensely happy. As the Catechism says, they are assured of their salvation. They are coming ever closer to the vision of God's glory. Not for one moment would they come back to this lesser level of life and love. Would the butterfly return to its former existence as a slimy grub?

The oldest document in the New Testament is Saint Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians. There we read the belief of Christians from the earliest times. "We want you to be quite certain about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Christ: God will bring them with him" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

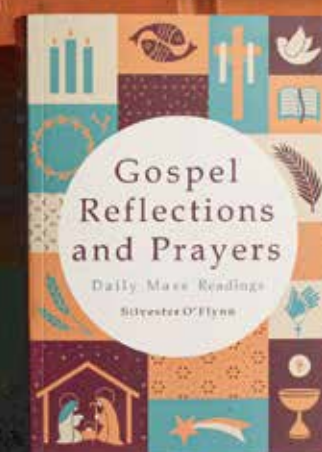
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World Report

IN BRIEF

Spanish bishop dismisses Joe Biden's claim that Pope said he can receive Communion

● Bishop José Ignacio Munilla of San Sebastián, Spain, strongly criticised US President Joe Biden's claim that Pope Francis personally encouraged him to continue receiving Communion despite his open support for abortion.

"These incredible statements reveal the moral character of those who are capable of compromising and manipulating the Pope with the intention of washing their conscience stained by the blood of so many innocent lives unjustly eliminated," Bishop Munilla said.

Bishop Munilla's statement comes after the Pope received the US President in the Vatican for 75 minutes and according to Mr Biden Pope Francis told him "to keep receiving Communion".

Bolivian lay council condemns attacks on Catholic Church

● The Jurisdictional Council of Laity of the Archdiocese of Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia, condemned the recent attacks on church buildings in the country and called on the authorities to restore order and civility.

"The Jurisdictional Council of Laity of Santa Cruz, emphatically repudiates the acts of intolerance that have resulted in violence against our Holy Catholic Church," the council's statement read. The vandalism occurred

after the Church was falsely accused of intervening to prevent a pregnant 11-year-old rape victim from obtaining a legal abortion.

In recent weeks, a group of female activists have "interrupted the Eucharistic celebration" in the Basilica of San Francisco in La Paz which was aggravated by "damaging the infrastructure of the church", according to the council.

Suspect who vandalised church in US is identified

● Denver Police in Colorado announced that the individual who allegedly vandalised the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception earlier in October is Madeline Ann Cramer, who supports abortion rights.

Ms Cramer used red spray paint to vandalise Denver's Cathedral with anti-Catholic slogans.

Photos shared by local news reporters showed slogans such as "Satan Lives Here," "White Supremacists," and "Child Rapists, LOL",

as well as swastikas, written in bright red spray paint on the outside of the cathedral building, sidewalks, and on the base of a statue of St John Paul II.

The graffiti has since been cleaned off with the help of parishioners and other volunteers. It has also been reported that Ms Cramer referred to herself as a satanist when speaking to a deacon of another Catholic church she attempted to vandalise amid an ongoing Mass.

Twelve bishops under investigation by Church in Mexico for covering up sexual abuse

● Archbishop Franco Coppola, the apostolic nuncio to Mexico, said that to date there are 12 bishops being investigated by the Catholic Church for allegedly covering up cases of the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults in the country, but that nothing has been determined so far.

The investigations, carried out on the basis of the principles established by

Pope Francis in his motus proprios "Come una madre amorevole" and "Vos estis lux mundi" are in various phases. While some cases are still being studied in Mexico, others have already been referred to the Vatican.

In the wake of these revelations, Archbishop Coppola said that "sensitivity, care and efforts to prevent these crimes from being repeated has increased a lot".

'Peaceful coexistence' emphasised as Pope hosts Palestinian President Abbas

The Pope met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the Vatican last week, where the Secretariat of State stressed the need to restart direct dialogue to achieve a two-state solution with Israel, while also recognising the need for peaceful coexistence among the various faiths.

Addressing the meeting between the two leaders, a Vatican statement announced that: "With regard to the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, it was stressed that it is absolutely necessary to reactivate direct dialogue in order to achieve a two-state solution, also with the help of more vigorous effort on the part of the international community."

According to the Vatican, the secretariat of state reiterated that Jerusalem must be recognised as "a place of encounter and not of conflict", and that its status as "a Holy City for all three Abrahamic religions" must be preserved.

"Finally, attention turned to the urgency of working for peace, avoiding the use of weapons, and combating all forms of extremism and fundamentalism," the Vatican statement said.

Wafa, the news agency of the Palestinian National Authority, reported that President Abbas briefed the Pope on "the importance of jointly confronting the attempts to seize Palestinian property



Pope Francis is pictured with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during an audience at the Vatican November 4. Photo: CNS.

and church property, including through fraudulent sales, particularly in the Old City of Jerusalem".

The meeting came a week after Israel approved about 3,000 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank.

According to Vatican News, the meeting was the Pope's sixth encounter with Presi-

dent Abbas at the Vatican. The two met for the first time at a prayer for peace in the Vatican Gardens together with then Israeli President Shimon Peres.

President Abbas, 85, has been president of the Palestinian National Authority since 2005 and the chairman of the Palestinian Liberation

Organization (PLO) since 2004. He previously served as the first prime minister of the Palestinian Authority in 2003.

The Holy See has long supported a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. The Holy See made official its recognition of the State of Palestine with an agreement signed in 2015.

Report details experience of Christians detained in North Korea

A report compiled by Korea Future, a non-profit organisation whose mission is to investigate and document human rights violations in North Korea, has exposed details relating to the detention and torture of North Korean Christians in the past decade including all documented human rights violations that occurred as recently as 2019.

The report is the result of interviews with North Korean defectors conducted between November 2019 and August 2021 and features the account of a prisoner held in a cell in North Korea for two months who noticed a distinctive pattern

of behaviour among some of the fellow detainees who called themselves Christians owing to the persecution that they faced whilst incarcerated.

They "would pray in the corner of the cell that was hidden from the CCTV camera ... They would escape a beating if their prayers went undetected by the correctional officers, but they would be beaten if they were caught," the former prisoner testified.

"On one occasion when they were caught praying, they were beaten every morning for 20 consecutive days," the witness said.

The report also disclosed multiple cases where a person was arrested for being in possession of a Bible. In one case, a young woman arrested for having a Bible was "beaten with a wooden stick until a superior intervened after hearing the victim screaming", while in the custody of the North Korean Ministry of State Security Central Command.

North Korea has long been identified as the worst country in the world for Christian persecution, yet the closed-off nature of the country has made it difficult to get concrete data on the existence of underground Christian practice.

Report on handling of abuse cases in Germany's Munich archdiocese delayed

A report on the handling of abuse cases in Germany's Archdiocese of Munich and Freising is unlikely to be published before January 2022.

Westfahl Spilker Wastl, the law firm compiling the report, announced the delay last week. The Munich law firm said that the delay was

caused by "new findings obtained in the recent past" that required an "intensive review".

The study's official title is "Report on the Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults by Clerics, as well as [other] Employees, in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from

1945 to 2019".

The report will cover 1977 to 1982, the period when the future Benedict XVI led the archdiocese, as well as the tenure of Cardinal Reinhard Marx, who has served as archbishop of Munich and Freising since 2007.

The law firm produced a

report in 2010 on the archdiocese's handling of abuse cases that has never been published.

The Munich archdiocese, in Bavaria, southern Germany, dates back to 739 AD and serves more than 1.7 million Catholics in 758 parishes, out of a total population of 3.8 million people.



Edited by Brandon Scott
news@irishcatholic.ie

A wounded world



A protester who lost a leg during an anti-coup protest walks on a street with his 2-year-old son near Yangon, Myanmar. Photo:CNS.

US state approves comprehensive protection of religious services after impact of Covid

Texas have voted to prohibit the state from taking any action that would prohibit or limit religious services.

SJR 27, otherwise known as Proposition 3, is an amendment to the state's constitution that bars "the State of Texas or a political subdivision from enacting, adopting, or issuing a statute, order, proclamation, decision, or rule that prohibits or limits religious services".

The proposition also says that the amendment "would apply to religious services, including those conducted in churches, congregations, and places of worship, in the

state by a religious organisation established to support and serve the propagation of a sincerely held religious belief".

Opponents of the proposition said it was overly broad and warned that it would hamstring public officials during natural disasters and other emergencies.

According to still-unofficial results, Proposition 3 garnered about 63% of the vote, while about 38% of voters cast their ballots against the measure. The vote is widely seen as a response to the closing of churches and religious services during the Covid

pandemic by public officials.

The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops (TCCB) tweeted their support for the amendment. They wrote: "Yesterday, Texas voters took to the polls. Two constitutional amendments to the Texas Constitution that the TCCB supported (Proposition 3 & 6) passed. Protect religious liberty and guarantee access to essential caregivers at nursing homes and assisted care facilities."

Proposition 6, also known as SJR 19, says that "residents of certain facilities have the right to designate an essential caregiver with whom the

facility may not prohibit in-person visitation".

The amendment, which received nearly 90% of the vote, applies to nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, intermediate care facilities for individuals with an intellectual disability, residences providing home and community-based services, or state-supported living centres.

The measure authorises the state legislature to provide guidelines for these facilities to follow in establishing essential caregiver visitation policies and procedures.

Italian archbishop laments lack of burial space as pandemic takes toll

As the Catholic archbishop of Palermo paid a visit to the Sicilian city's largest cemetery on All Souls' Day, he passed through a tent filled with stacks of coffins and blessed the 800 bodies still awaiting burial.

"Palermo needs new cemetery spaces where we can bury or cremate our dead, to keep them with dignity, visit them, commemorate them. No more coffins piled up," Archbishop Corrado Lorefice said in his homily.

The archbishop offered Mass in the cemetery chapel on the grounds of Palermo's Santa Maria dei Rotoli cem-

etry. He lamented that "hundreds of our dearly departed have not even found a decent burial place for a long time because of human neglect and the ignominy of those who want to make money even in the most decisive and disruptive moment of the mystery of life, which is death."

The Rotoli cemetery has a large number of unburied coffins due to an administrative backlog and a spike in Covid deaths, according to Italian reports.

Archbishop Lorefice expressed dismay that after the outbreak of the pandemic, a time when so many people

experienced "a lonely death" the people of Palermo now also experience "the drama of a failure to give a decent burial to so many of our dear departed fellow citizens, our relatives, and friends".

Archbishop Lorefice added that we "must care for our cemeteries that hold the bodies of our loved ones awaiting this redemption, life, and fullness of freedom. We must make them welcoming, usable, spacious.

"Let us rest our dead with dignity and in peace while we await the resurrection, waiting to be able to embrace each other again in eternal life," he said.



Pope Francis names Franciscan sister to second-highest position in Vatican City State

● Pope Francis has appointed Sr Raffaella Petrini to the second-ranking position in the government of the Vatican City State.

Sr Petrini is the first woman and non-clergy member to be secretary general of the Vatican's governorate.

The appointment makes her one of the highest-ranking women at the Vatican, alongside Sr Alessandra Smerilli, "ad interim" secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, and Sr Natalie Becquart, an under-secretary of the Synod of Bishops.

Sr Petrini replaces Bishop Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, who was promoted to president, effective from October 1.

Sr Petrini, 52, is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist. Since 2005, she has been an official in the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.

The religious sister, who is from Rome, is also a professor of the economy of welfare and sociology at Rome's Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas (the Angelicum), where she received a doctorate in social sciences.

She also has a master's degree in organisation behaviour from the University of Hartford in Connecticut.

Pope Francis offers Mass for souls of 208 deceased clergy

● Pope Francis celebrated Mass last Thursday for the repose of the souls of 208 cardinals and bishops who died in the past year.

The live-streamed Mass, celebrated at the Altar of the Chair on November 4, was offered for 17 cardinals and 191 bishops and archbishops who died between November 7, 2020, and October 25, 2021.

The elevated number of deaths this year reflects the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the Catholic Church's leadership as last year's Mass commemorated six cardinals and 163 bishops who died between October 2019 and October 2020.

The year before, the Mass was offered for 13 cardinals and 147 bishops.

In his homily during the Mass, the Pope reflected on the first reading, from Lamentations 3:17-26, in which the author describes his sufferings before concluding: "It is good to wait in silence for the Lord to save".

"This attitude is not a point of departure, but a point of arrival," the Pope said. "In fact, the author arrives at it at the end of a journey, a bumpy path, which has made him mature. He comes to understand the beauty of trusting the Lord, who never fails to keep his promises."

Vatican to open contemporary art gallery in historic papal library

● The Vatican's historic library has created a new space for hosting temporary art exhibitions.

Pope Francis inaugurated the gallery and visited its first exhibit on November 5.

The Vatican's librarian Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça said in a press release that "the Vatican Apostolic Library inaugurates a new exhibition hall to support the culture of encounter".

"Our challenge is to strengthen the cultural role of the Vatican in the contemporary world," he added, describing the contrast between ancient works and contemporary art as "history meet[ing] the present".

The modern iteration of the papal library is believed to date back to the 14th century, though there is evidence that the Catholic Church has preserved a library and archive from as early as the fourth century.

The building that houses the library today was built in the latter part of the 16th century.

From November through the end of February, the new exhibition hall will display unpublished works by the contemporary artist Pietro Ruffo in an exhibit called "everyone: Humanity on its way."



Letter from Rome



Elise Ann Allen

Effort being made to create conditions for papal visit to North Korea

After South Korean President Moon Jae-in invited Pope Francis to visit North Korea, a prominent archbishop indicated that the Vatican is working to foster conditions in which a papal visit to the Asian nation is possible.

Archbishop Lazarus You Heung-sik, prefect for the Vatican Congregation for Clergy and who is originally from Daejeon, South Korea, told reporters that “as with the [South Korean] government, the Vatican also makes efforts to foster conditions for the Pope to visit North Korea through various channels.”

“In response, Pope Francis, who visited South Korea in 2014, said he would go if he received an invitation from North Korean authorities”

Noting that Pope Francis said he was willing to visit if he received a formal invitation from North Korea, Archbishop You said the Pope’s remark “should be digested just as it is,” and that he would not elaborate further on the matter, “as it could be understood as the Pope’s thoughts.”

A visit depends on the response from North Korea, he said, insisting that when it comes to international relations, both sides must respect each other with a “give and take” approach.

The Vatican could play this role if they are asked, Archbishop You said, noting that the Catholic Church already has a footprint in North Korea through organisations such as the Community of Sant’Egidio – the Pope’s favourite of the so-called ‘new movements’, which is dedicated to charitable and social work and is also helping to negotiate the peace process in South Sudan.

A delegation from Sant’Egidio visited North Korea in 2018 to promote its humanitarian work in the country, delivering food, medicines, and medical equipment to the Wonsan Pediatric Hospital, among other things. They also met with high-level authorities during their visit.

The invitation to visit North Korea was made during a private October 29 meeting between Pope Francis and President Moon while the latter was in Rome for a G20 leaders’ summit.

On that occasion, President Moon asked the Pope if he would consider visiting North Korea to help foster peace between the two nations, arguing that a papal visit to Pyeongyang would give momentum to the



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is seen in North Korea in this undated photo. Photo: CNS.

“The Pope is from Argentina, which is a warm country, so my understanding is that it’s difficult for him to travel in the winter”

whole peace process.

In response, Pope Francis, who visited South Korea in 2014, said he would go if he received an invitation from North Korean authorities.

This was the second time President Moon has asked Pope Francis to visit North Korea, which has yet to receive a papal visit.

Promote peace

A spokesman for South Korea’s Unification Ministry, Lee Jong Joo, voiced hope to journalists during a November 1 briefing that the North would consider the visit, saying, “we hope to see the North respond and secure this opportunity to promote peace on the Korean Peninsula.”

“A papal visit to North Korea could be a great opportunity to promote peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula,” he said, adding, “If related discussions between the Vatican and North Korea show progress, the Ministry will make efforts to ensure that the Pope’s visit can be

an opportunity to gain international consensus and actually promote peace on the Korean Peninsula.”

November 2, presidential spokeswoman Park Kyung-mee told Korean broadcaster KBS radio that “various efforts are under way” to make a papal visit to North Korea possible, “but it’s difficult to predict the timing.”

Responding to questions on when a possible trip might happen, Ms Park said it would likely not happen during winter – which lasts from roughly the end of November to the end of February – because “The Pope is from Argentina, which is a warm country, so my understanding is that it’s difficult for him to travel in the winter.”

The request for a papal visit to North Korea comes as President Moon is seeking international support for a declaration formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War, which concluded with an armistice, rather than a peace treaty, meaning the two nations are technically still at war.

President Moon, who only has six more months in office before his term comes to an end, believes that an “end of war declaration” is needed in order to establish trust, to begin denuclearisation talks, and to secure a lasting peace agreement.

However, critics of the proposal have voiced fear that a declaration could undermine the US-South Korea relations and potentially weaken international pressure on North Korea over its weapons programs, with many observers noting that both Koreas in the past have failed to follow through on previous efforts to end the war.

“We would like it to be viewed on its own, rather than in connection with an end-of-war declaration or the Beijing Olympics”

“A visit to North Korea by the Pope, who is constantly praying for peace on the Korean Peninsula, is not a (publicity) event but a noble action in its own right,” Ms Park said.

Referring to speculation that the government is seeking to use a papal visit to draw North Korean

leaders to the table for an inter-Korean summit on the margins of the Beijing Winter Olympics in February, Ms Park said, “We would like it to be viewed on its own, rather than in connection with an end-of-war declaration or the Beijing Olympics.”

While in Rome for the G20, South Korea’s Unification Minister Lee In-young met with senior UN and Vatican officials to discuss issues related to North Korea.

Food situation

During the meetings – held with Executive Director of the United Nations Food Agency David Beasley and Ghanian Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Vatican department for Integral Human Development – North Korea’s food situation was assessed, and the parties discussed ways to address humanitarian concerns in the North, according to a statement from the ministry.

This meeting included discussion on what role the Vatican could play on both the humanitarian front, and in the peace process, the ministry said.

i Elise Ann Allen, senior correspondent for Cruxnow.com

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Letters

Letter of the week

Funerals must be conducted with proper respect

Dear Editor, I read with interest Jason Osborne's article 'The changing face of funerals' [*The Irish Catholic* – October 28, 2021] arising from his interview with Joseph Behan (Hibernian Funerals), in particular Mr Behan's comments on cremation.

For hundreds of years cremations were frowned upon and even illegal going back as far as Charlemagne in 789. It was not until 1885 that the first legal cremation took place in England and the Cremation Act of 1902 removed all legal ambiguity around cremation. Even so cremation was still not acceptable for Catholics and indeed some other Christian denominations until quite recently. The first crematorium in Ireland was

only opened in Belfast in 1961 and the first one in Dublin as recently as 1982 in Glasnevin.

Mr Behan addresses the issue of disposal of ashes following cremation. He refers to novel ways of distributing ashes flooding the market and the article says, "With regards to ashes, everything that people can think to do with them is done, from tattooing the ashes, to having them launched into space for a princely sum, to having the ashes incorporated into a diamond." It is increasingly common for bereaved families to scatter the ashes of a bereaved person in some place with special meaning for them, for example a favourite beauty spot,

a river, a football pitch or a golf course. Catholic teaching however is that ashes should be treated with the same level of reverence accorded to a person's body. Ashes should therefore not be scattered, launched into space or incorporated into a diamond! Nor should they be shared out among family members but should be buried in a grave or placed in a columbarium.

The way we conduct funerals needs to be with proper respect and reverence in accordance with Church teaching and not according to secular market forces.

*Yours etc.,
Paddy Shannon
Newcastle, Co. Down*

George III's treatment of Catholics

Dear Editor, Mary Kenny writes that George III "was so prejudiced against Catholics that he couldn't bear to hear the words Catholic Emancipation uttered" [*The Irish Catholic* – October 14, 2021]. It is true that George III opposed William Pitt's plans for Catholic Emancipation in 1801 but he assented to earlier Catholic Relief Acts in Great Britain (1778 and 1791) and in Ireland in 1793 as well as to the foundation in 1795 of what is still the Royal College of St Patrick, Maynooth.

*Yours etc.,
C.D.C. Armstrong
Belfast, Co. Antrim*



Coincidences with the opening of COP26

Dear Editor, The first reading from the book of the Apocalypse on the Feast of all Saints gave us this message: "I, John, saw another angel rising where the sun rises, carrying the seal of the living God; he called in a powerful voice to the four angels whose

duty was to devastate land and sea, 'Wait before you do any damage on land or at sea or to the trees, until we have put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.'"

By coincidence, the Feast of all Saints this year, coincided with the opening

of COP26.

What the reading above is telling us is: what is holding back the devastation of the earth, are the lives of God's servants or the saints. The Church should take the pastoral opportunity to drive this message home.

In *Laudato Si'* Chapter 6, Pope Francis says: "The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognise any higher instance than ourselves."

*Yours etc.,
Judith Leonard
Raheny, Dublin*

Latin Mass attendees bring sense of 'peace'

Dear Editor, There is a weekly Latin Mass in my parish, which I have never attended. Not for ideological reasons but because my parents worshipped at another Church and I like to keep up that tradition.

But it baffles me as to why Pope Francis has made a recent ruling which seems to be gratuitously offensive to those who like the Latin Mass. It

seems to me that the reasons given for this decision were unconvincing in the extreme.

If the experience in this parish is typical, it's not as if Latin Mass attendees and their pastors were going around the place spreading discord and disharmony. Far from it. They seem to bring a sense of peace and tranquility to proceedings.

One would have thought that the Pope and his advisors would be preoccupied with more pressing issues. For example, the very serious question of so-called Catholic politicians publicly and unapologetically promoting abortion.

*Yours etc.,
Eric Conway
Navan, Co. Meath*

Pick up the phone and check on your neighbour

Dear Editor, Covid-19 has taken so much from us, yet it has given back to us our sense of community. Values once near extinction before we entered the reality that we are no longer too busy for our neighbour.

Memories get blurred with time just as time gets blurred by memories. Yet the lines of sacrifice remain uncovered behind our masks as we certify ourselves into a new world and wash our hands of the old.

Where do we go to from here? I wish I knew. All I know is, I am mesmerised by the silk hands and shiny suits generating words constructed into making us feel grateful not for what we lost, but for what we had. We are all in this together, so the chorus goes. The lyrics that keep us together yet in reality have kept us apart.

It may be the authority that built the houses but it is the people who built the communities. The carpet of society I say, and when you lift it up from time to time you get to see the real foundations of who we are.

Long Covid is something that affects the whole community with a disproportionate effect on the elderly. The realisation that a new normal remains and proposes to replace an existence for many with a virtual reality for life must be properly addressed by Government.

Many will only cry for help when they think there is help to cry for. We must let them know we are here and not only for when they need us.

Paul Byrne, a great friend and colleague recently told me, "the greatest sin in life is not to be curious". And there's plenty to be curious about. Discretion, that form of self-censorship must be uncovered and abandoned. Let people know how you feel.

Illness doesn't come by appointment. Neither should our sense of community. Pick up the phone – check in on your neighbour. I just know you'll be glad you did.

*Yours etc.,
Darren Lalor
Dublin 8*

A last request at a grandparent's funeral

Dear Editor, We often hear our elderly relations, friends or neighbours lament, that few of their children or grandchildren attend Mass anymore. We hear, it takes the youth to evangelise the youth, however, God can use anyone to bring any of us back to the Faith. What if the elderly were to request in writing, text, verbally, or in

'serious jest', their children, grandchildren and friends go to Confession before they receive Holy Communion, on the day of their funeral Mass. This may help those left behind appreciate what granny or grandpa appreciated all their life.

*Yours etc.,
John Donohoe
Cork City, Cork*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

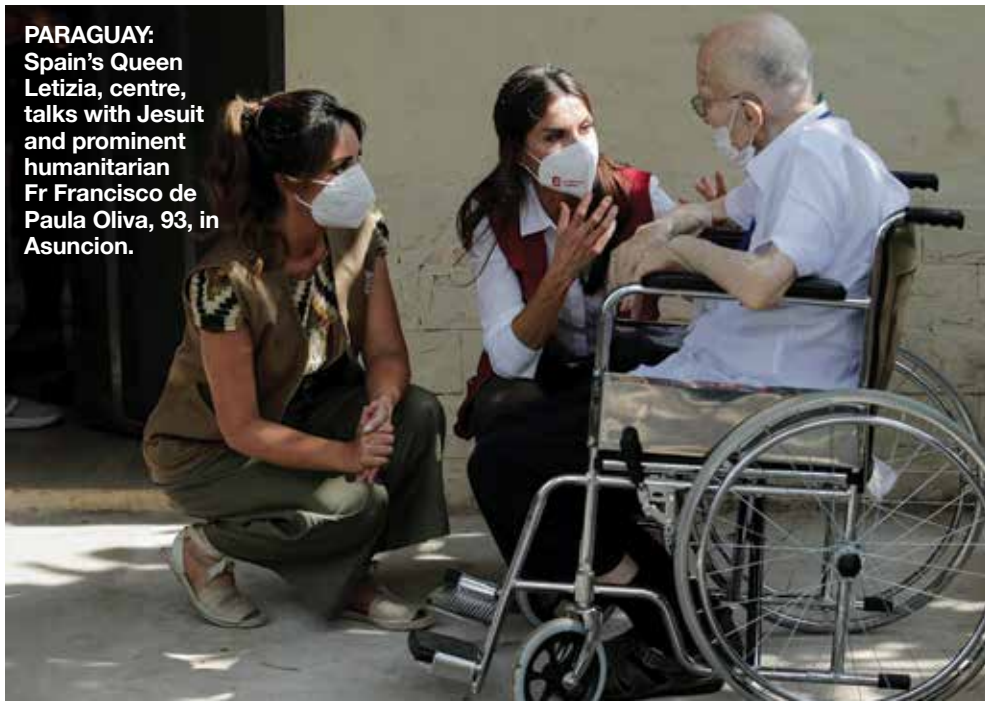
merits of letters. We do not publish pseudonyms or other formulae to conceal the writer's identity, such as "name and address with editor". We do not print letters addressed to someone else, open letters, or verse. Letters to the Editor should only be sent to *The Irish Catholic*, and not other publications.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

📷 Around the world



▲ **AFGHANISTAN:** Anne Bousquet, Afghanistan country representative for Catholic Relief Services, poses with a teacher in a CRS community-based school on the outskirts of Herat. Photos: CNS.

◀ **ROME:** Pope Francis gives the homily as he celebrates Mass to commemorate the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Rome's 60th year of having a faculty of medicine.



PARAGUAY: Spain's Queen Letizia, centre, talks with Jesuit and prominent humanitarian Fr Francisco de Paula Oliva, 93, in Asuncion.



HOLY LAND: Franciscan Fr Melvyn Gomez of India poses in the Milk Grotto in Bethlehem, West Bank.



USA: Fr James Gardiner, a Franciscan Friar of the Atonement, looks at a piece of art in the Purgatory Chapel at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington after celebrating All Souls' Day Mass.



MEXICO: Migrants rest near a church in Pijijapan.



Adam and Eve.

Giving ourselves a better story

In a recent book, *Living Between Worlds*, James Hollis offers a piece of wit that carries more depth than is first evident. A therapist says to a client, “I cannot solve your problem, but I can give you a more compelling story for your misery”. That’s more than a wise-crack. Whether we feel good or bad about ourselves is often predicated on what kind of story we understand ourselves as living within.

“A bigger story brings us this dignity because it helps us differentiate meaning from happiness. We invariably confuse the two”

I remember a seminar some years ago where one of the keynote speakers was a young French Canadian priest, Pierre Olivier Tremblay. Tremblay began his talk with words to this effect: I am a chaplain at a university, working with young college students. They are full of life, dreams, and energy; sadly, however they are mostly devoid of hope because they have no meta-narrative. They suffer a lot because they do not have a bigger story within which to understand themselves and make more sense of their own story. Their own stories, precious though they are, are too small and individualistic to give them much to draw on when pain and heartache beset them. They need a bigger story within which to situate



Fr Rolheiser

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themselves, a meta-narrative. While this wouldn’t necessarily take away their pain and heartaches, it would give them something bigger within which to understand their suffering.

Generation

Hearing this, I think of my parents and the spirituality that helped sustain them and their generation. They had a meta-narrative, namely, the Christian story of salvation history and of how, in that story, at the very beginning of history, Adam and Eve committed an ‘original sin’ that has ever since skewed reality so as to leave us with the impossibility of ever attaining the full symphony in this life. When their lives got hard, as is the case with all of us, they had a religious perspective as to why they were frustrated and in pain. They understood themselves to be born into a flawed world and a flawed

nature. Hence, their prayer included the words, “for now we live, mourning and weeping in a valley of tears”.

Today we might frown on this and see it as unhealthy and morbid, but that narrative of Adam and Eve helped give some explanation and meaning to all the shortcomings in their lives. While it didn’t take away their pain, it helped give dignity to their miseries. Today I see many sincere parents trying in new ways to give a bigger narrative to their young children through stories like *The Lion King*. That might indeed be helpful for young children; but as Pierre Olivier Tremblay points out, eventually a much bigger and more compelling narrative is needed.

Pain

The story within which we frame our pain makes all the difference in the world vis-a-vis how we cope

with that pain. For example, James Hillman tells us that perhaps the biggest pain we experience with aging is our idea of aging. This is true too for many of our struggles. They need the dignity of being seen under a larger canopy. I like what Robertson Davies says when he laments that he doesn’t want to struggle with a “growing edge”, but wants rather to be “tempted by a demon”. He wants to accord a higher dignity to his temptations!

“Adam and Eve committed an ‘original sin’ that has ever since skewed reality so as to leave us with the impossibility of ever attaining the full symphony in this life”

A bigger story brings us this dignity because it helps us differentiate meaning from happiness. We invariably confuse the two. What we need to seek in life is meaning, not happiness. Indeed, happiness (as we

generally understand it) can never be pursued because it is always a byproduct of something else. Moreover, happiness is ephemeral and episodic; it comes and goes. Meaning is abiding and can co-exist with pain and suffering. I doubt that Jesus was particularly happy as he hung dying on the cross, but I suspect that inside of all the pain, he was experiencing deep meaning, perhaps the deepest meaning of all. Not incidentally, he found this deepest of all meaning because he understood himself as being inside the deepest of all stories.

Problems

At the end of the day, faith, religion, community, friendship, and therapy, cannot take away our problems. Most times, there isn’t any solution; a problem must be lived through. As Gabriel Marcel famously put it, life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved. The story within which we frame our pain is the key to turning problem into mystery.

Art Schopenhauer once wrote that all pain can be borne if it can be shared. The sharing he was referring to doesn’t just have to do with friendship, community, and intimacy. It also has to do with story. Pain can be borne more generatively when it finds itself inside a larger story than our own, when it shares a meta-narrative, a horizon wide enough to dwarf idiosyncratic loneliness.

Hollis is right. No therapist can solve our problem, but he or she can help us find a bigger story that can give more meaning and dignity to our misery.

“The story within which we frame our pain makes all the difference in the world vis-a-vis how we cope with that pain”

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, November 11, 2021

Personal Profile
60 years of service
to Our Lady

Page 34



How to protect ourselves online



Recent news surrounding Facebook's rebrand as 'Meta' has prompted many people to reflect on the increasing intrusion of the online and virtual into the offline and physical. A couple of years ago it was possible to draw a neat line between our online activities and the rest of our lives. Sometimes, the extent of my online interaction consisted of a video or two a week and a couple of emails, if even.

Now, however, many of us have jobs entirely dependent upon the internet and an online presence, and in some cases, our socialising is dependent upon these things, too. The nature of our lives is changing, for better or worse, and whereas once upon a



As the virtual world becomes more a part of daily life, the necessity of protecting ourselves online increases, writes Jason Osborne

time it was possible to 'opt out' by not availing of online services and insisting on offline options, that choice is being increasingly encroached upon.

Safety

This being the current lay of the land, it's more important now than ever that safety and privacy online are taken seriously. The old-fashioned advice that "turning

it all off" solves your online problems doesn't really fly anymore – not when the virtual increasingly affects the physical. I'm thinking here of online banking; turning off your devices won't help you if a nefarious agent gains access to your account through some means or other.

The descent into fully-fledged winter is in full swing now, and that's sure to see an increase in

time spent on the internet as the weather grows less hospitable. As such, it's helpful to touch up on tips that will help to keep both us and our families safe online.

Privacy settings

At an absolute minimum, these days making use of privacy settings is a must. Once upon a time, there was an assumption that the sheer number of people online resulted in some sort of protection via anonymity, but recent waves of scams in which the fraudsters possess personal information show how important it is to make use of the privacy settings on offer.

We can control the information we put out there in a

number of ways. Web browsers and mobile operating systems have settings available which allow you to protect your privacy online. Major social media websites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram also have privacy-enhancing settings available, although many people don't avail of them.

This is sometimes because they just haven't considered putting them on, but also because traditionally privacy settings haven't been that easy to find on the websites themselves. However, turning on privacy and security settings has been streamlined on most social media

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Family News



AND EVENTS

STUDY SHOWS ENDANGERED SPECIES CAN REPRODUCE WITHOUT MATING

California condors, a critically endangered species, can reproduce without mating, according to a study by conservation scientists at the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance.

During a routine analysis of biological samples from the California condors in the zoo's breeding programme, the scientists found that two condor chicks had hatched from unfertilised eggs.

"It came as a big surprise, to be honest. We didn't expect to find any of this," said Cynthia Steiner, associate director for the alliance's conservation research division.

Dr Steiner is also the co-author of the study published last week in the *Journal of Heredity*, the official publication of the American Genetic Association.

Scientists confirmed that each condor chick was genetically related to its mother but neither bird was genetically related to a male.

The two birds represent the first two instances of asexual reproduction, or parthenogenesis, to be confirmed in the California condor species, the zoo said.

AUCTION OF 'AUSCHWITZ TATTOO KIT' SUSPENDED BY COURT

An Israeli court suspended the auction of a partial tattoo kit billed as having been used on inmates at the Auschwitz death camp, following outcry from Holocaust survivors.

Obtained from a private collector, the eight fingernail-sized steel dies, each lined with pins to form numerals, would have been pressed into prisoners' flesh with ink to brand their serial numbers, according to auctioneer Meir Tzolman.

His website had deemed it "the most shocking of Holocaust items", with a projected sale value of \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Bidding had reached \$3,400 (€3,100), when Tel Aviv District Court granted a request by survivors to order the auction halted pending a 16 November hearing on whether it should proceed.

Mr Tzolman's website was amended to show the sale had been suspended.

More than 1.1 million people, most of them Jews, were killed at Auschwitz, among a number of camps run by Nazi Germany on occupied Polish soil during World War Two.

FACEBOOK TO SHUT DOWN FACIAL RECOGNITION SYSTEM

Facebook, which last week renamed itself Meta Platforms, has confirmed it is shutting down its facial recognition system which automatically identifies users in photos and videos, citing growing societal concerns about the use of such technology.

"Regulators are still in the process of providing a clear set of rules governing its use," said Jerome Pesenti, vice president of artificial intelligence at Facebook, in a blog post.

"Amid this ongoing uncertainty, we believe that limiting the use of facial recognition to a narrow set of use cases is appropriate."

The company said more than one-third of Facebook's daily active users have opted into the face recognition setting on the social media site, and the change will now delete the "facial recognition templates" of more than one billion people.

Advent – A call to live life to the full

We are all called to live life to the full. That calls us to live beyond the limita-

tions of the ego. Psychology teaches us that in the first part of our life we need to develop the 'ego', as part of our survival instinct. We need a healthy and balanced ego, which provides a strong sense of 'self' if we are to navigate both our external and internal worlds realistically. The ego serves a function – it's a vehicle. In Sanskrit the word closely related to ego is 'ahamkara' which comes from two words or two senses, one of which is 'I am' (aham), and the other is kara which gives us the word 'carriage' or 'car' or 'vehicle'. Vedic philosophy says that when one's mind is in a state of *ahamkara*, one is in a state of subjective illusion.

“Meditation deepens our understanding and acceptance of levels of consciousness beyond the egoic”

Modern psychology might describe it as being imprisoned by our own ego, and its needs, desires and attachments. This can happen when our life circumstances lead to an unbalanced ego which closes off any sense of being beyond the confines of the ego. By contrast, there are periods in our life where 'ego-development' goes hand in hand with a growing awareness that there is more to our being than the ego. We become keenly aware of the primordial, spiritual 'self' and a heart-felt desire to deepen that awareness. This desire to go beyond does not come from the 'ego' which may in fact strive to resist this inner call. Instead, that call arises from the deepest aspect of our being, from a deeper level of consciousness seeking to make its presence felt.

Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



For some, this call may be experienced by the ego as irrational; but is in fact trans-rational. Meditation helps us to move beyond the illusion of the ego as ultimate reality and to see it as a vehicle or a platform for enabling the discovery of the true self, when we are ready. As human beings in development we are always a work of maturation in progress. A healthy ego allows us to detach from our attachments, even though such a process inevitably involves suffering.

Understanding

Meditation deepens our understanding and acceptance of levels of consciousness beyond the egoic. As the psychologist William James wrote: "Our normal waking consciousness is but one special type of consciousness, while all about it parted from it by the flimsiest of screens there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different." An important step then is to appreciate that we live both in a material and spiritual reality. Meditation deepens our awareness of wholeness, of this holistic reality. It helps us to connect with our spiritual nature and leads us in the direction of wholeness and integration.

Meditation awakens us to the true-self that lies beyond the ego; it makes us aware of the stranglehold that the ego can exert on us. When the ego

has a hold on us we tend to react to situations in life from that false sense of who we are rather than respond from our deepest, truest self.

For Christians, the season of Advents [beginning November 28] is a time for reflecting on this call because our faith tells us that the spirit of Christ dwells within every human person. It is a common misunderstanding to see Christmas as the celebration of a once-off event – the birth of baby Jesus, the 'coming' of Christ – that happened two thousand years ago. But in reality, Christmas and Advent are a call to prepare to give birth to Christ, to make him visible to others and within ourselves.

“As human beings in development we are always a work of maturation in progress”

Yet we find it difficult to comprehend that we are called to give birth to Christ today, where we live. Mary, who



Richard Rohr OFM

allowed herself be open and vulnerable to receive spiritual gifts—in fact, the spiritual gift – offers us a profound model. We learn from her how to let

go and receive freely, to let go of our attachment to the ego, to our small separate self to make room for the birth of Christ within us and to allow whatever that asks of us in our lives, without trying to manage or manipulate the spiritual energy that flows from that birthing within. Meditation helps us to let go and receive what is given freely.

Remind

Richard Rohr reminds us that in the Gospels there is no mention of any moral worthiness or egoic achievement in Mary, only humble trust and surrender and so, she gives us all hope that we can do likewise. Rohr warns, however, that "if we ourselves try to manage God or manufacture our own worthiness by any performance principle whatsoever, we will never give birth to the Christ, but only more of ourselves".

When we recognise that we live in a material and a spiritual reality simultaneously, we are enabled to find the Christ in every moment, in any event, and in every person. This is how God continually breaks into history – through you and me. May our meditation practice make us vulnerable and open to that happening in us, over and over again, so that we may live life to the full with ever greater authenticity.

After 40 years in the education sector Noel Keating was awarded a PhD for his research into the child's experience of meditation and its spiritual fruits. Noel now leads, in a voluntary capacity, a project which offers free in-service to primary schools who may wish to consider introducing meditation as a whole-school practice. Noel is author of *Meditation with Children: A Resource for Teachers and Parents*.

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websites, and is easily accessible through the settings menu. You can tailor to a precise degree how much or how little of yourself you share, and with whom.

You wouldn't start freely sharing your personal information in a physical public forum, and neither should you do so online. It's much better to tailor your audience to your preferences.

Browse safely

Just as you mightn't walk through a dangerous neighbourhood, neither should you subject yourself to unnecessarily risky content online. This often comes in the form of scam emails, texts or messages from unknown senders, or from suspicious advertisements on websites. Flashy or base content is often used to catch the eye, and once clicked on can lead to dubious websites.

“Don't download anything that looks suspicious or gives you pause, or that comes from a source that you can't be sure of”

As hard as it is to believe, one click in the wrong place can be all it takes to infect your device with malware or expose your personal information and data. This is what happened to my poor, unassuming teenage self a number of years ago, when clicking on every link that took my fancy led to my computer contracting a virus. Fortunately, this was before my internet banking or social media days, so there wasn't much of value for anyone to gain access to there!

Be careful of downloads

In a similar vein to browsing safely, be careful what you download and open on your computer, or any device. Cybercriminals and fraudsters often try to trick people into giving them access to their devices through seemingly important or necessary looking emails, texts or apps. Downloading or installing anything they contain can be another way into your personal data for someone with ill-intent.

Don't download anything that looks suspicious or gives you pause, or that comes from a source that you can't be sure of.

Choose strong passwords

We live in a world of passwords, with the number we need seeming to multiply year on year. I remember back when the only password I had was to get into my computer – only a few short years ago. Now passwords are required for all of our social media accounts, email, as well as our various online applications and services.

From speaking to people about this, it seems that despite the best advice, many of us continue to choose easy passwords (such as “password123”) or to use the same password for most, if not all, of our accounts. This is poor practice, as it makes it easier for fraudsters or hackers who gain access to our devices to make their way to the heart of our personal data.

A “strong” password is one that is complex and unique – likely to be a mix of letters, numbers and special characters, of 8-16 words long (or however many the service or device allows, as that varies). These passwords are much harder for criminals to bypass, and should keep your online activity yours' alone.

It's also a good idea, at least in my opinion, to write down the passwords and keep them in a safe

location, whether that be in a book, hidden anonymously on a shelf, or wherever else you might hide them. As mentioned, passwords are multiplying, and it's all too easy to lose track of them without a record.

Only buy from secure sites

We've done a previous column on staying safe while buying online, but the basics bear repeating. Any time you make a purchase online, you need to provide some form of payment, whether that be a credit card, bank information or a paypal account.

“It's also a good idea, at least in my opinion, to write down the passwords and keep them in a safe location”

This is a vulnerable moment, as that's exactly what cybercriminals are most keen to get their hands on. Only supply this information to sites that are secure and reputable, which should be easily discernible after some research.

You can identify secure sites by looking for a website address that starts with ‘https:’, the ‘S’ standing for ‘secure’, rather than simply ‘http:’. They may also be marked by a padlock icon next to the address bar.

Be careful what you post

This piece of advice moves from the technical to the pragmatic. Be very careful of what you, or your family posts. The internet retains things forever, so that even if you delete something on a social media site, there's no way to guarantee it's gone forever – there may be screenshots.

Internet conversation often lacks the nuance of regular, offline discourse, so making a risky comment online comes with double the risk it normally would. Don't say or post anything you think might be unnecessarily bold, or that you'll wish you could take back. It's likely to hang around for longer than you intend.

Faith — IN THE — family



Christina Malone

Do you remember Summer 2018? Ed Sheeran came to Ireland and played ‘Galway girl’ to hundreds of thousands of people (including me) in a series of concerts.

In Cork the English Market celebrated its 230th birthday.

Storm Emma hit Ireland in early 2018 and during the summer Storm Hector left many households without power.

In June 2018 ‘Newbridge or nowhere’ found some momentum in the GAA world.

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle got married in May and they began a two-day visit to Dublin in July 2018.

And while the Summer 2018 was one of the hottest and driest in years, the sun never showed up on one particular Sunday in Phoenix Park. The sun was hidden behind the clouds and the rain came pouring down on many of us in the early hours of that famous Sunday on the August 26, 2018. It was the day Pope Francis celebrated the Eucharist in the Phoenix Park to celebrate the World Meeting of Families. Many prefer not to be reminded about it. However, something magical happened on the Sunday. A group of young people met Pope Francis in person after the Mass. They were the altar servers from different parishes in Ireland. They met Pope Francis because of their ministry and that was the beginning of a vision for altar servers in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Over the past 10 years as a parish pastoral worker for the Archdiocese of Dublin I have been spending a lot of time and energy preparing children and their families for the sacraments. I love journeying with those families and helping them to experience a welcoming and loving Church. I am under no illusion for some it is only a day, many are using the word “conveyor belt” to describe the reality. However, I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit and I minister to every family in the hope that this might be a new beginning for them to experience God in their lives. At the same time, I have to admit, as much as I love it and I try my best, it sometimes drives me mad. We spend a lot of time and energy reaching out to those astray that sometimes we overlook those

that are here every Sunday or maybe twice a month. We all know those families that are there because they want to be there. Not because it is their child's first Holy Communion, a welcoming Mass or part of the preparation, they are there because they believe that is where they are meant to be on a Sunday.

If a child decides to become an altar server at a young age they need the support of their family. Often the parents might be involved themselves in some kind of ministry. While you are reading this you probably have a family in your mind from your own parish.

The Mass with Pope Francis on August 26, 2018 was a wonderful experience for the altar servers, maybe once in a life time. That encouraged me to dream and create a vision for the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Maybe your parish has two or three altar servers, maybe there are 20 or 50. Either way, your parish is blessed because the ministry of altar servers is important because what would the liturgy look like without them?

In order to celebrate this ministry and to give it the recognition it deserves, I am delighted to be part of a committee that is going to celebrate the 4th Altar Servers Day for the Archdiocese of Dublin. The day is about giving something back to them. It is to tell them how wonderful their ministry is, that we value that they make an effort to be there. We try to connect those one or two altar servers from one parish to the group of 20 from another and most importantly we try to create a moment for them to encounter Christ. Those children, teenagers and indeed adults who are giving their commitment on a Sunday morning deserve to be seen and recognised.

There was nearly 40 years between the visits of St John Paul II and Pope Francis to Ireland. No doubt the Church has changed a lot between those two visits but I encourage you to dream big: Imagine a Pope visits Ireland in 30 years' time and your daughter, son, niece, nephew, granddaughter or grandson is the one sitting next to the Pope as an altar server!

Photo: RTÉ



60 years of service to Our Lady

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

Timmy Manley admits that he was initially roped into joining his local Legion of Mary praesidium – but now, 62 years later, he continues to serve in the lay apostolate.

The Watergrasshill and Glenville branch of the Legion was started in 1952, one the earlier ones to start in Co. Cork, Mr Manley reckons.

“The man that started it, he’s only dead with five years, he was 93 when he died,” he tells me. “We would be one of the earlier praesidium started in Cork. I don’t know how many were started before and there were plenty started after us. But most of them have been and gone.”

Mr Manley himself joined in 1959, persuaded by his brother and friends: “Ah sure, my brother was in it at the time. Other fellows then told me to join, and this fella pulled me into the meeting one night and I’m there since,” he finishes, laughing.

“We visit the patients in hospital and around the place. Anyone that’s sick, we’ll try to go and see them”

Only a small few of those legionaries who began with him are still around, Mr Manley explains. “Most of them are dead and gone, though there might be one or two still. The man that started it was the longest in it, he



Timmy Manley being presented with the Benemerenti medal by Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin (right). Fr Donal Cotter PP is on the left.

was in it for 63 years. I’m nearly catching up with him now!

Before he joined the Legion, Mr Manley was already involved in work in his local parish of Glenville as an altar server, and helped the Legion out from time to time.

Altar server

“I used to be an altar server, and I’d often give the Legion a hand before I joined them,” Mr Manley says. “I was always around to do what was to be done. I suppose at the time we were farming at home and our father died when I was only 10 and you know now, it was a struggle for a while until I got going. My brother was only 12 like. But I always gave them a hand, as often as I could.”

After he joined, Mr Manley took part in all the activities the Legion carried out: “We were visiting the hospitals, then we’re

doing work around the parish, then we’re at the church cleaning and we’ve a Mass rock alongside us that we look after. We do a newsletter as well. We send that to all the parish during the year. We look after the processions then and put up bunting. We visit the patients in hospital and around the place. Anyone that’s sick, we’ll try to go and see them.”

Changed

The Church in Ireland has changed greatly since Mr Manley first joined. He says it’s “a different scene now”.

“Oh yeah, the Church has changed a lot now you know,” he begins. “There’s a different scene now because the Church has changed so much, and the Mass has changed so much. There was no minister of the Eucharist or anything. When I was serving at Mass, you couldn’t touch the

chalice or anything at that time.

“When I was an altar server, I used to be learning the Latin. The altar servers now have nothing to learn. It’s a different scene altogether. It’s easier to get on with the priest now than it was at that time. You can talk to the priest better now, I think.”

“I used to be an altar server, and I’d often give the Legion a hand before I joined them”

“The schoolmasters and everything that time were different altogether. Corporal punishment was there when I was going to school. Most of the priests were alright. Glenville is the same parish as Watergrasshill, it’s the one priest doing the two. The

parish priest that time when I was an altar server, he’d come down and say Mass once a month. He was a tough man. We had a curate that time in Glenville, we had a parish priest in Watergrasshill, which was the parish church.

“There’s only one priest now, the way things are going. We’ve only one Mass in Glenville now and that’s every Sunday at 10am.”

Joined

When Mr Manley first joined the Legion, there were 14 or 15 in his local branch, he says. “Now, we’re down to six. After 69 years, six is not bad, it’s good to see it going with only six of us. There’s hardly anyone under 50, out of the six of us, there’s no one.”

He is hopeful that the 100th anniversary of the Legion will spark a renewed interest in the apostolate, he says. “We’ve asked several people to join over the years. It’s a different scenario these days because people, they don’t seem to have time. We were at an advantage when I was growing up around Glenville. There was little to do that

time. Saturday night that time was a night you’d be getting ready for Sunday. Now Saturday night is when everybody is going out.”

For Mr Manley and his fellow Legionaries, the weekly meetings provided a social as well as prayerful aspect to their lives. He is looking forward to celebrating their 70th anniversary next year.

“Years ago now, when the Legion meeting was all over, there’d be a few lads starting to play cards,” he says. “It was kind of a social night as well as a meeting. We’ll be 70 years next year, please God we’ll be all around for it. It was August 1952, I think it was August 7, that we started. Hopefully we’ll have the 70th anyway, some kind of a celebration. We had our 60th, our 50th, our 40th - we even had our 21st. We had those kinds of social nights. You’d hope by that stage we’d be over the worst of this.”

Sweet Treats

Kiley Britten



Mini apple tarts with butterscotch sauce

Apple pie is my favourite dessert to eat in the winter, and I always choose apple pie over pumpkin at Thanksgiving. This recipe has the wonderful tartness of apples and the warmth from cinnamon and mixed spice which makes it perfect for a cold night. The butterscotch sauce is optional, but who could say no to the buttery, sweet indulgence that is butterscotch? By all means make your own pastry instead of using pre-made like I did here – I just felt it was worth it to have more time to sit by the fireside and it certainly tastes just as good!

Ingredients:

1 package shortcrust pastry
450g apples after peeling and coring
70g brown sugar
Juice of ½ a lemon
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp mixed spice
1 tbsp flour
200ml double cream
50g sugar
25g butter

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to the instructions on the shortcrust package. Roll out the pastry to be slightly thinner than it comes in the package (probably 200°C), and cut out four circles to fit in your pie dishes. Re-roll pastry leftovers and cut out four tops from these.

2. Bake the pastry in the oven, weighing it down with baking beans on top of parchment paper, for 10 minutes.

3. While pastry is baking, slice the apples very fine. Place into a bowl with the lemon juice, cinnamon, mixed spice and flour, then give it a stir to combine.

4. When pastry comes out of the oven, let it cool for about two minutes before spooning apple filling in. Place prepared tops on the pies, making

sure to cut some holes or lines for air to escape.

5. Brush with a beaten egg or buttermilk and bake at 200°C for 20 minutes.

6. Make the butterscotch sauce by melting the butter in a saucepan, then adding the sugar and letting it melt for a minute or so until it starts to become a bit golden in colour. Slowly add in the double cream, stirring all the while. You will have to stir this for about ten minutes at a simmer, so just be patient with it! Remove from heat when it coats the back of a spoon without all sliding off immediately.

7. When pies are finished baking, allow to cool for a little bit before drizzling on the butterscotch sauce. Serve with some whipped cream and enjoy!



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



Polish ambassador called to principal's office

When a person who holds opinions not beloved by media folk is called onto a current affairs show, it can feel like being called to the principal's office for a ticking off. I've been there.

It felt like that when Mary Wilson interviewed Anna Sochanska, the Polish Ambassador to Ireland, on **Morning Ireland** (RTÉ Radio One, Wednesday). I thought summoning the ambassador was only a function of Government! I felt Mary Wilson was too inclined to interrupt, and came across as imperious, even scolding, though she did say "apologies for interrupting you" before proceeding to do it several more times. The item was in the context of the EU threat to fine Poland €1 million per day until they got rid of a judicial disciplinary body that in the opinion of the European Court of Justice was a threat to judicial independence. But there was also an issue in relation to minority rights, including, as Wilson suggested ('it is said'), of people who were 'LGBTOnePlus' (sic). Other minorities didn't get highlighted for some reason. The ambassador accepted that some independent local councils had declared support for the traditional one man/one woman family, but that some of these declarations had been struck down as discriminatory.

The ambassador's key point was that some com-



Climate protests in Glasgow, Scotland, during COP26.

petencies were reserved for nation states, and some belonged to the EU – ongoing discussions were aimed at resolving any disputes. Wilson used a journalistic tack that I'm not fond of: "Do you condemn...?" and was too much in principal's office mode, "Do you accept the primacy of EU law?"; "How are we [!] going to resolve this?"

If they don't like viewpoints of a conservative nature, they certainly have no time for demons! I saw *The Exorcist* years ago and had no inclination to see it again, but I was very interested in the documentary **Fear of God: 25 Years of the Exorcist** (BBC Four, Thurs-

day). The background to the film was intriguing – on an artistic level it's always interesting to see how a novel becomes a film script, how actors are chosen for various roles. When it all works it can often seem to be a result of happy accident. Linda Blair, who plays the possessed girl Regan (definitely no relation!) wasn't even proposed for the part originally. The adult Blair, describing herself as a Christian, told of the foul language she had to speak to convey the demonic possession and I felt there was something decidedly dodgy about having a young child actress doing this. The film had two theological advisors,

and at least two priests acting in the film (one told of getting his provincial's approval). The director William Friedkin said he could only get such sanctity from a real priest! Friedkin told of how some regarded the film as a great recruiting tool for the Catholic Church, while others saw it as a monstrosity with the devil embedded in the fabric of it. There were stories of movie goers rushing to churches afterwards or getting medical treatment! The writer William Peter Blatty had been to the Jesuit Georgetown University and based his story on newspaper reports of a real possession case in Washington D.C. – we were shown

PICK OF THE WEEK

WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE

RTÉ One Monday November 15, 9.35pm, BBC One NI Wednesday 10.35pm, BBC Two NI Friday 11.05pm

Former President Mary McAleese meets politicians and peacemakers, perpetrators and victims of violence, to ask what role religion played in creating, and resolving, conflict in Northern Ireland.

SPOTLIGHT

BBC One NI Tuesday November 16, 10.35pm

Mandy McAuley investigates how rising energy prices and limits on government support may mean a winter of hard choices for the deprived.

FATHER SPITZER'S UNIVERSE

EWTN Thursday November 18, 6am

Fr Spitzer answers viewer questions on a wide range of subjects, including: Reason, faith, suffering, virtue, and the existence of God.

the newspaper headlines of the time – the boy, as it was in the real case, had been messing with a Ouija board, his Lutheran pastor was very disturbed by the accompanying phenomena and referred him to a Catholic priest for exorcism.

Thinking about the hysteria occasioned by the Exorcist in its day made me wonder if there wasn't some element of hysteria in the current climate change activism. I suppose like with any good cause there will always be some who go to extremes, and I'm conscious that today's extremists may be tomorrow's moderates, heroes or even prophets. Last week I mentioned Pope Francis' positive contribution for the COP26 Conference. This week I heard a media report

of President Joe Biden saying we have a moral obligation to future generations – I agree entirely but I'd be more impressed if he supported the right of those generations to be born.

Watching the youth protests in Glasgow on the **RTÉ News: Nine O' Clock** (RTÉ One, Friday) I was torn between admiration for their enthusiasm and concern over the climate anxiety being stirred up among the young, which can lead to a sense of doom and depression, pessimism and paralysis – not good for anyone's wellbeing.

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Pat O'Kelly

Music

Multiple revisions until complete success

Following Wexford Festival Opera's conclusion on Halloween, Irish National Opera (INO) raised its curtain on Beethoven's *Fidelio* at Dublin's Gaiety Theatre earlier this week with further performances tomorrow and Saturday, November 12 and 13.

Around 1802 Beethoven became acquainted with the play, *Léonore*, by French author Jean Nicolas Bouilly. Reading it in a German translation by his lawyer/musician friend Joseph Sonnleithner, Beethoven asked him to prepare a libretto.

Sonnleithner obliged and, with Beethoven conducting, the three-act opera – *Leonore* – opened at Vienna's Theater an der Wien on November



Wexford soprano Sinéad Campbell-Wallace 20, 1805. A failure, it was withdrawn after three performances much to the composer's chagrin but, when respected friends prevailed upon him, he reluctantly agreed to make changes.

Stephan von Breuning, one of the composer's close circle, took to truncating the text

while Beethoven made cuts in the music. The now two-act opera was relatively well received on March 29, 1806 but, when Beethoven had an altercation with the theatre's manager, its scheduled performances were abruptly cancelled.

Revisions

Following further revisions to the text by practical librettist Georg Friedrich Treitschke, Beethoven made additional incisions in his score. Renamed *Fidelio*, and suffused with heroic character, the opera was a complete success at Vienna's Theater am Kärntnertor on May 23, 1814. For it, Beethoven had composed the last of the work's four overtures.

The original one, now known as *Leonore No 2*, was written for the first production in 1805 while *Leonore No 1* was intended for a Prague staging that never materialised. The more powerful *Leonore No 3* dates from 1806.

The one commonly called the '*Fidelio* overture' is now the opera's standard introduction with the *Leonore No 3* sometimes inserted into Act Two. However, this magisterial piece is really better regarded as a stand-alone tone poem.

Set in Seville, nobleman Florestan is incarcerated by sworn enemy, Don Pizarro. Posing as the man *Fidelio*, Florestan's wife, *Leonore*, manages to secure the position of chief jailer Rocco's assistant.

True identity

As Florestan is about to be executed, *Leonore* reveals her true identity. The timely arrival of king's minister, Don Fernando, leads to Florestan's release and reunion with his beloved. Light relief in the tense drama comes through Marzelline, Rocco's daughter and her fiancé, Jacquino.

Directed by Annabelle Comyn, Fergus Sheil conducts *Fidelio* at the Gaiety with INO cast led by Wexford soprano Sinéad Campbell-Wallace in the title role and English tenor Robert Murray as Florestan.

Australian bass Daniel Sumegi takes the part of Rocco with US baritone Brian Mulligan as Pizarro. Irish

singers Kelli-Ann Masterson, Dean Power and David Howes complete the ensemble.

Away from opera, the Irish Baroque Orchestra (IBO), under director Peter Whelan, celebrates its silver jubilee with Bach's six demanding Brandenburg Concerti at the National Concert Hall on Sunday, November 14.

Maestro Whelan and IBO also appear at the Ardee Baroque Festival in the town's St Mary's Church on Saturday, November 20. An evening of Handel and Bach includes the latter's jubilant *Jauchzet Gott* in allen Landen cantata with Aisling Kenny, soprano and Darren Cornish Moore, trumpet. Full details at www.ardeebaroque.com.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Artists' visions inspired by Dante's

The Doré Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy, by Gustave Doré (Dover Art Library, £12.99)

Gustave Doré (1832-1883): Master of Imagination Hardcover, by Erika Dolphin and others (Flammarion, £31.96)

William Blake: Dante's 'Divine Comedy', the Complete Drawings, edited by Sebastian Schutze (Taschen, £29.00)

Four centuries ago Italy, indeed the whole of Christian Europe, was absorbing the news that the eminent Florentine poet Dante Alighieri had died on September 14, 1321.

This year Italy has been celebrating - as well as it can in a time of plague, in itself a very medieval experience - the life and achievement of one of the world's greatest poets.

In the 14th Century Italy was a network of minor states, including the territories of the Papacy. The greatest of these states was Florence. Dante played a part in public life, but was driven into exile, and it was in exile that he wrote the *Divine Comedy*.

It has been said that Dante gave some shape to the idea of Italian literature, which was finally resolved through the work of Manzoni and others after the unification of all the territories south of the Alps as the Kingdom of Italy.

“Dante played a part in public life, but was driven into exile, and it was in exile that he wrote the *Divine Comedy*”

The Christian vision which he created of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise have over the centuries inspired many poets and writers. But they also posed a challenge to artists of many kinds to give graphic realisation to Dante's verse which is itself highly visual.

Two of the most notable achievements in illustrating the *Divine Comedy* were by the Frenchman Gustave Doré and the Englishman William Blake. Their visions have enabled many readers of Dante to realise for themselves in very different mediums something of the extraordinary vision of the poet.

Gustave Doré (born Strasbourg, 1832-Paris, 1883) was a very singular artist.

Some years ago my wife and I went to see the exhibition of the immense canvases on religious themes that Doré exhibited in Europe and America in the years before his death.

These had once had a museum gallery of their own but were dis-



Gustave Doré, *Paradiso canto 34*, 1868.

persed in 1947. Many students of 19th Century art still flocked to see those now in the Grand Palais in Paris. But for myself I felt immense as the achievement was, they were almost too large. In no way did they displace the central importance of Doré's work as a graphic artist to be seen still in the more portable *London* (1872), and in the albums which he devoted to Dante's epic. A canvas such as *Vallée des larmes* (1883) was, we found, just too big to take in.

But the vision of *Hell, Purgatory and Heaven* (three volumes, 1866-1867) are still powerful, especially

the first two - the illustrations of the *Paradiso*, are I think, less effective.

Doré had a strong graphic line which gave to the verse a solidity and a menace which is still powerful, still fearful indeed, as fearful as Dante hoped it would be. For heaven perhaps something different was needed, and this William Blake had already supplied.

William Blake (London, 1757-London, 1827) lived and died a Christian, a Dissenter but one with unorthodox views, a man who strenuously disliked the Church of England. He was

working still on his Dante illustrations on his very death bed, tiring at last he laid down his tools and composed himself to death, singing hymns.

Angel

As a child Blake had seen an angel descending in glory on a tree. All his life in his own poetry and some of his graphic work he expressed the vision that filled his soul. But he had been trained as an engraver of illustrations in a realistic manner, working for instance in Westminster Abbey. But it was his visionary creations which are most admired today and which are alive in a way mere



illustrations never are. What he drew was everywhere informed by his religious ideas, which made him ideal to give graphic life to Dante.

The images selected on these pages give only a very partial view of what Blake and Doré attempted. I can only urge readers to obtain the listed books in which the complete range of their engravings and paintings are presented. Only in this way can the full majesty of Dante's creativity be explored. There are many versions of Dante's *Divine Comedy* available: that by Dorothy L. Sayers was once the most popular but more recent ones provide more academic information. But to engage with Dante would be the finest way of celebrating this anniversary.

The aim of Blake and Doré was to imagine for others the actually unimaginable. It may well be that if, in this day and age, Christianity is to survive it will have to depend more on its poets and artists rather than on its theologians and preachers, much less on dogmatic views and far more on inspired visions.

“The Christian vision which he created of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise have over the centuries inspired many poets and writers”

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.

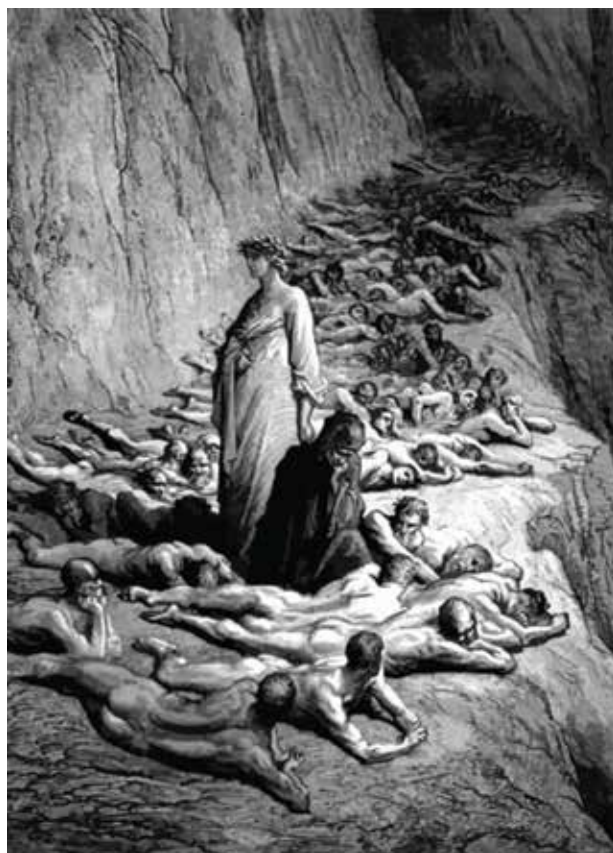
Divine Comedy



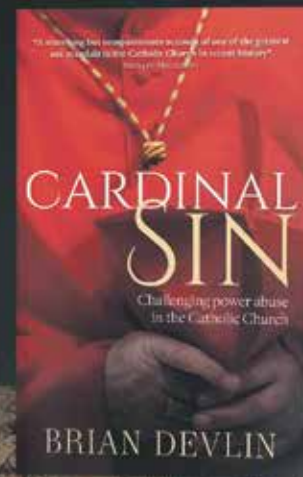
▲ (Top) Blake's vision of St Peter and St James. (Bottom) Blake's vision of the Inferno.

◀ Blake Dante Inferno canto I.

▼ (Left) Dante and Virgil make their way through Purgatory. (Right) Portrait of Dante.



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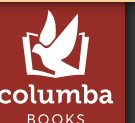
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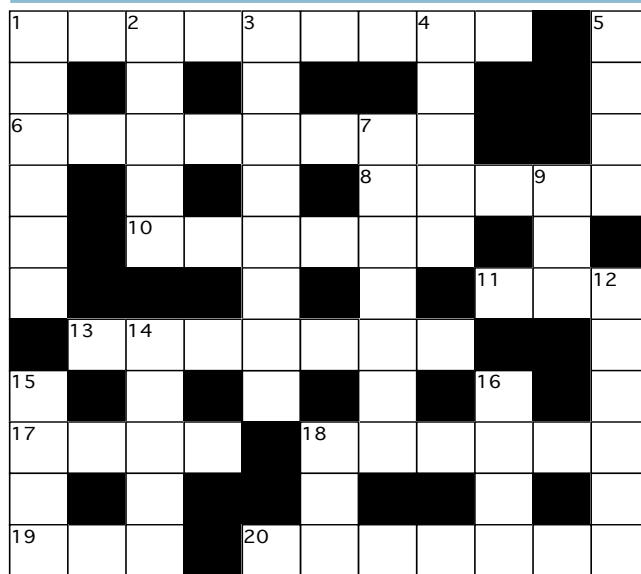
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Crossword Junior

Children's 408



Across

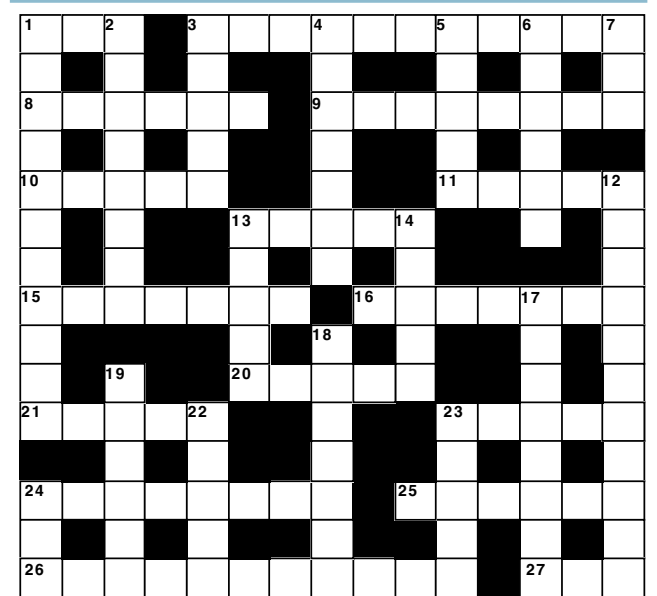
- 1 This creature of the sea has a long sharp point in front (9)
- 6 You might take it if you are sick (8)
- 8 You roast meat or bake bread in them (5)
- 10 You might change channels with the _____ control (6)
- 11 Insect which lives in a colony (3)
- 13 It happens when there's absolutely no sound (7)
- 17 Robin _____ lived in Sherwood Forest (4)
- 18 Finding the total (6)
- 19 Hand over money (3)
- 20 A referee blows this (7)

Down

- 1 In the Bible, he lost his strength when his hair was cut (6)
- 2 A person who was born before you were is _____ than you (5)
- 3 Christmas is in this month (8)
- 4 Use it to get lumps out of flour (5)
- 5 You might find jam or marmalade in them (4)
- 7 Spotted, saw (7)
- 9 Lady who is a member of a religious order (3)
- 12 You use it to lick a stamp, for example (6)
- 14 Elephant tusks are made of this (5)
- 15 Cut with an axe (4)
- 16 Some people say sucking this sweet will give you fresher breath (4)
- 18 Its wood is used to make hurleys (3)

Crossword

Gordius 533



Across

- 1 Large container (3)
- 3 With which to write when you're gushing with ideas? (8,3)
- 8 The second-largest town in Carlow (6)
- 9 Jumped higher than (8)
- 10 Items of luggage (5)
- 11 Serious injury (5)
- 13 Groom oneself, as a bird may do (5)
- 15 Weight certain to identify a monk's bald patch (7)
- 16 Sack a canine and make an andiron (7)
- 20 The Greek underworld; Hell (5)
- 21 Happening, occurrence (5)
- 23 There is a racecourse at this cathedral city in North Yorkshire (5)
- 24 The 'A' of A&E (8)
- 25 & 3d Oral hygiene product (6,5)
- 26 This idyllic time in one's youth involves an alternative name for the kingfisher (7,4)
- 27 Possessed (3)

Down

- 1 The business of growing grapes (11)
- 2 Lucky charm (8)
- 3 See 25 across
- 4 Ribbon-shaped pieces of egg dough, often served in soup (7)
- 5 One's relative by marriage (2-3)
- 6 One of the ten disasters visited by God on the Egyptians in Exodus (6)
- 7 Immature louse (3)
- 12 Unhappy at having to grid-dle nuts like this (11)
- 13 Veranda (5)
- 14 Cuticles (5)
- 17 Send (8)
- 18 Legally brought someone into one's family (7)
- 19 Writing implement (6)
- 22 On this date (5)
- 23 The original Moses basket was made of these (5)
- 24 Wood traditionally used for making hurleys (3)

SOLUTIONS, NOVEMBER 4

GORDIUS NO. 532

Across – 1 Despondent 6 Wash 10 Ouija board 11 La Sagrada Familia 15 Kitty 17 Loch Ness 18 Iraq 19 Argue 21 Typhoon 23 Tenor 24 Cana 25 Arum 26 Rapid 28 Yankees 33 Guerilla 35 Toys 36 Tweedledee

Down – 1 Doom 2 Spin a yarn 3 Okapi 4 Delhi 7 Await 8 Heavy metal 9 Aga Khan 13 Lazy 14 Alchemy 16 Birthright 20 Graceland 21 Traders 22 Open 27 Piety 29 Aware 30 Kabul 31 Slow 32 Adze

CHILDREN'S No. 407

Across – 1 Sunday lunch 6 Chips 8 Include 9 May 10 Athletes 12 Reins 14 Arch 15 Perfect 16 Oslo 17 Hammer

Down – 1 Sycamore 2 Noisy 3 Assists 4 Lincoln 5 Hive 7 Butter 10 Antrim 11 School 13 Deer 14 Atom 15 Pea

Sudoku Corner

408

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 407

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

Last week's Hard 407

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



Fr Bernard Cotter

Notebook

Perspective can be lost when priests need to rest

I SPENT FOUR DAYS on retreat last month. I wasn't alone. The retreat was organised by our diocese (Cork and Ross) and most of us who were able went along.

Our retreat took place outside the diocese, so we had to cancel weekday Masses in our 68 parishes. This wasn't universally popular; it seems some people have gotten quite addicted to 'their' daily Mass. Sometimes it seems that perspective can be lost and the greater good forgotten.

The greater good in this case was not just our spiritual renewal (though it did help with that), but the restoration of the fraternity between us as diocesan priests. In the pandemic, it seemed we were very much left to our own devices, to sink or swim as best we could. Most of us coped well enough with this, but the loss was of our reliance on and friendship towards each other – which our retreat went a long way towards restoring.

Fortunate

We were fortunate to have a group of religious and other priests who stood in for us in ministering to families at the funerals that occurred while we were away. This



too annoyed some people – they were hurt that 'their' priest was missing at such a sensitive time and that the funeral of a loved one was left to a stranger. Priests are supposed to be all things to all people, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but not even the Lord managed that. And while people theoretically support rest-times for priests, when these times coincide with times of need in their lives, their understanding can be diminished.

The incident in the Gospel that comes to mind was that frenzied scene in Mark's gospel where Jesus noticed his disciples were overwhelmed (Mark 6:31). They didn't even have time to eat. His response to this human emergency was not to urge them to even greater heights, but to "come away and rest

awhile" – a bit like what we Cork and Ross priests did for those four days in Garryvoe.

Retreat

We were very fortunate in our retreat giver, Hugh Lagan SMA. His reflections were very much of the post-Covid world and Church, a place we are all struggling to get used to. Just one phrase stuck with

me: "The pandemic did not change us: it revealed us".

It's true, I think: so much of what has changed in the pandemic was happening anyway, but this enormous break has drawn everything into sharper focus.

We were fortunate that our retreat-giver also took our very human needs into account. His early announcement that it would not be a silent retreat was welcome ('What priests' retreat ever was?', commented the wags). And his use of Powerpoint to illustrate his words meant sleep during talks became impossible, even among those most in need of it. A snore-free retreat is rare, and this was one such. Going home spiritually and physically refreshed, and with our fraternity restored, was a good result from four days by the sea.

Parishioners revealed during pandemic

"The pandemic did not change us: it revealed us" – this phrase from my recent retreat is reflected in the parish where I minister:

- The people who were going to Mass out of convention have broken the habit and haven't come back.
- The people who were devoted to the Mass are more devoted than ever, and keener to become involved than ever.
- The central role of funerals, First Communion and Confirmations has been proven.
- We have lost a generation of people – through illness, death and increasing debilitation.

More about this anon. What do you think?

Limiting meetings drastically

I wrote some months ago about those meetings that go on forever. We have all been there: meetings where the chairperson has obviously lost the will to live, and the participants soon share the sentiment. My musings brought a wise word from the midlands, where my correspondent knew a priest who limited meetings drastically. He avoided them if possible, and when forced to have meetings, limited them to half an hour, and no more. The result, she wrote, was a group of parishioners who were happy to be consulted and happy to get home. There may be something in that!



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