

# The Irish Catholic

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# Call for inquiry into 'national scandal' of nursing home deaths

Staff reporter

Aontú leader Peadar Tóibín has insisted that the failure to protect residents in nursing homes from coronavirus must be fully investigated.

"The deaths in nursing homes and the failures of the Government is a national scandal and must be examined and investigated to ensure that they never occur again," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

Of the 1,743 Covid-19 deaths in the Republic, it is estimated that over 62% of those deaths occurred in nursing homes. According to the World Health Organisation the international average is 25%. WHO Special Envoy on Covid-19, Dr David Nabarro described Ireland as being in the "upper end" in terms of nursing home deaths.

"The families of those who have died and those still resident in nursing homes deserve more from the government," Mr Tóibín said.

Commenting on the swift investigation launched over allegations of a leaked Garda file about Minister for Agri-

culture Barry Cowen, Mr Tóibín warned that "many families of those who have suffered in nursing homes will be gobsmacked by the speedy attention received from the Fianna Fáil/Fine Gael/Green Government by a political leak in comparison to the complete lack of commitment to an investigation of what happened in our nursing homes.

### Fatalities

"Ireland has had a higher proportion of fatalities in nursing homes than most other countries," he said. Nearly one in five of the 30,000 nursing homes residents contracted coronavirus while one in every six who contracted it lost their life.

"It's clear that those most vulnerable in Ireland were most exposed," Mr Tóibín said.

"We need to learn serious lessons from this crisis and right now.

"We are by no means out of the woods. We need to make sure that we never let it happen again," he said.

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## Pilgrims progress



Ultra-runner and charity fundraiser Kevin Leahy of the Black Sheep Hostel, Killarney, with support runners Laura O'Driscoll and Dermot Dineen on the summit of Cnoc na dTobar, pilgrim trail and ancient Celtic site for the annual Lúghnasa Festival, Caherciveen. Kevin is fundraising for Down Syndrome Kerry. Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan

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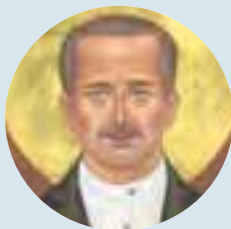
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Michael Kelly's Editor's Comment will return in the autumn

# Church to ensure 'urgent provision' of space for autistic students

**Ruadhán Jones**

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has assured the Minister for Education that schools under his patronage will meet "urgent provision" for units for autistic students, following a Government letter.

Former Minister Joe McHugh sent a letter instructing 36 Catholic schools on the southside of the city to open special classes this September for students with autism.

Archbishop Martin affirmed the schools' commitment to providing these resources, according to a statement from Dublin Archdiocese.

Dr Martin reminded former Minister McHugh of comments he made "in which he acknowledged the 'pivotal role' played by the officials of the archdiocese in ensuring that extra places were found in a similar situation in Dublin 15 last year.

"The minister referred to the fact that having a spirit of co-operation on the ground from management authorities is critical," the statement continues.

The archbishop has committed to giving the same level of co-operation

as before, but noted his frustration that the Government only sent the letter on the final day of the school year.

"Despite a process of consultation that had taken place over some months," Archbishop Martin said, "the Government communication was dispatched only on the day the school year closed, hardly facilitating cooperation with the management authorities."

## Requirements

Archbishop Martin "called for constructive cooperation so that the urgent requirements of children with special education needs and their families become a crucial priority on all sides".

He also stressed that autism units should have all necessary services to meet their requirements from the Department of Education and in particular their required supports from the Department of Health.

The letters were sent on foot of advice from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), which told the minister that while progress had been made in meeting the need of children in south Dublin there was still "insufficient special class capacity".

## Appointments in Kildare and Leighlin

Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty has announced a range of fresh diocesan appointments

Fr Ruairí Ó'Domhnaill Adm. cathedral to become PP Newbridge in succession to Fr Paul Dempsey, Bishop-elect of Achonry. Fr Liam Morgan PP Naas, Sallins, Two Mile House to become VF north deanery, retaining responsibility for parish renewal and development.

Fr Seán Conlon PP Ballinakill to become PE CC Ballinakill, Abbeyleix and Raheen. Fr Adrian Carbery PP Kildare to become PE CC Kildare. Fr Eddie Kavanagh PP Balyna to retire. Fr Paddy Byrne PP Abbeyleix and Raheen to become also PP Ballinakill. Fr Andy Leahy PP Tullow to become PP Kildare.

Fr Seán Maher CC Naas, Sallins, Two Mile House to become PP Balyna and diocesan scripture resource person. Fr Thomas O'Byrne PP Myshall and Clonegal to become Adm. cathedral and to assist at Bishop's House.

Fr Brian Maguire SPS CC cathedral to become PP Tullow while Fr Pat Hughes CC Emo and Portarlinton is to become PP Myshall and Clonegal.

Fr Joe O'Neill who was on loan to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to become CC Emo and Portarlinton.

Fr Gaspar Habara SVD CC Kildare to become CC cathedral and Fr Yanbo Chen SVD is to reside in the cathedral presbytery and to assist in the wider area. Fr Robert Petrisor (Archdiocese of Bucharest, Romania) will become CC Naas, Sallins, Two-Mile-House.

The appointments take effect on September 4.



Tributes have been paid to former Republic of Ireland soccer manager Jack Charlton who died at the weekend. Mr Charlton (85) often said that one of his proudest moments was meeting Pope John Paul II during the 1990 World Cup in Italy. Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty expressed sorrow and remarked on Twitter about "the joy sport brought to all our country at the World Cup in 1994". The official Twitter account of the Archdiocese of Dublin posted: "Thanks for all the joyful days you gave us, Jack. Rest in peace."

## Nursing home deaths: 'inquiry needed'

» Continued from Page 1

The Government has so far resisted calls for an inquiry into the handling of Covid-19 in the nursing homes sector. Last month, Church leaders pleaded for such an investigation.

The Council for Healthcare of the Irish bishops' conference warned that lessons must be learned. It said that "nursing

homes should be prioritised by the State to ensure that they have the personnel and equipment necessary to deal with such crisis situations as soon as they arise.

"Every resident is someone's mother, father, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle or friend. They have played their part over many decades in contributing to their commu-

nities and to the economy. The lives of those who live in such facilities should be valued, respected and enhanced," it said.

## Reasons

The council said "we would welcome appropriate inquiries into the reasons why nursing care facilities were so badly affected. Lessons must be learned."

Dr Marcus de Brun – a

GP who quit his role in the Medical Council over the issue – described the management of the Covid-19 crisis as "the biggest political blunders in the history of the Irish State".

Dr de Brun said those most at risk have "featured as something of an afterthought" to the HSE in the pandemic.

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# Psychiatrist calls plans for u16 gender change 'ludicrous'

**Ruadhán Jones**

Prof. Patricia Casey has described as "ludicrous" new plans by the Minister for Children to legalise the self-declaration of gender for children, and called for a proper, open debate on the issue. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Prof. Casey said that "it's ludicrous to be giving the choice of such a momentous procedure to children and teenagers".

"Children can't vote, they can't buy cigarettes, they can't make decisions about other procedures. Like, if they go in for an appendectomy, the parents have to give permission."

Minister Roderic O'Gorman has committed to introducing laws that would allow children aged 16 and 17 to change their gender without parental consent. He is also seeking the self-declaration of gender for children under the age of 16.

Green Party TD Mr O'Gorman views are in line with the conclusions of a review group for the Gender Recognition Act.

Prof. Casey questioned the level of research and expertise that went into the review group, describing it as "narrow and one-sided".

"I'm very concerned that no peo-

ple with expertise in the area [contributed to the review]," she said.

"There were people who were themselves transgender and there were NGOs who were committed to the transgender ideology. But we need more than that – we do need a proper, open debate about this."

Prof. Casey said that before any decision is made, there needs to be significantly more research conducted and voices heard.

"It is not something that should be done flippantly or lightly, without all the background information available," she said.

## Change

"We need the voice of specialists and parents, and indeed people who have de-transitioned. The evidence is that teenagers with gender dysphoria change and that it's really related to distress about their sexuality in their teenage years. That information is crucial."

Meanwhile, Minister for Education Norma Foley expressed her reservations about any plans to make it easier for children under 16 to change their gender, in an interview with *The Sunday Independent*.

"That's something I would have to consider further," she said.



Fr Matthew Farrell OP of Holy Cross Dominican Church, Tralee, giving the Communion Host to parishioners from the confines of a specially-designed perspex box installed as part of the church's coronavirus precautions. The box was designed by the Prior Fr Joe O'Brien OP. Photo: johnclearphoto.com

## Concerns over allegation of sexual violence in Direct Provision centres

**Jason Osborne**

Doras, a Limerick-based migrant and refugee support organisation, has raised renewed concerns over the safety of residents in Direct Provision following the report of alleged sexual assault in an accommodation centre.

"People fleeing harm should not be exposed to further harm when they arrive here in Ireland," said Doras CEO, John Lannon. "The lack of own-door accommodation in congregated Direct Provision centres creates conditions for perpetrators of sexual assault or of human trafficking – acts of sexual violence – to operate. The recent commitment to end direct provision in the new Programme for Government is welcome, but it could be a matter of years before the system is abolished – the safety and security of people seeking asylum needs to be prioritised now."

This comes following the allegation that a female asylum seeker was raped by another asylum seeker in a direct provision centre four months ago on March 1. Doras expressed concern that the reported response to the allegation was "inadequate and inappropriate".

"To simply move a person from one unsafe location to another shared accommodation centre is not an adequate response," said Lannon. "IPAS should have and still can treat this person with the respect and care needed," he said.



The Parishes of Naas, Sallins and Two Mile House are served by a single Parish Team. Our pastoral area comprises a population of approximately 31,000 parishioners. Incorporating nine primary schools and five secondary schools. We are currently seeking to recruit a suitably qualified person for the following position:

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- Actively promoting the mission and Gospel values of the Parishes in the service of all.

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- Be a self-confident, decisive personality whose interpersonal skills invite participation and engagement through effective communication.
- Be a natural networker with presence, who builds and nurtures relationships, with volunteers and all parishioners.

### Experience and Qualifications

The successful candidate will:

- Be educated to degree level in a theological or relevant discipline.
- Be experienced in Youth Ministry and have knowledge of Youth Ministry programmes in a Parish setting.
- Ability in music ministry and leading others in music would be an advantage.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office and Social Media is desirable.
- Hold a full clean driving licence and have use of a car.

Please see our website ([naasparish.ie](http://naasparish.ie)) for more detailed job description.

### How to Apply

To apply for this role please email your CV and a cover letter (not more than 500 words) outlining your suitability and experience to [office@naasparish.net](mailto:office@naasparish.net) by 5pm on Friday 31st July 2020.

Short listing of candidates will apply for the above position.

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World Missions Ireland is Pope Francis' official charity for overseas mission. We are committed to supporting overseas missionaries, through all challenges, struggles and hardships. Please, if you can, help us send financial support so that they have a chance at suppressing COVID-19.

To make a donation visit [www.wmi.ie/covid-fund](http://www.wmi.ie/covid-fund) or call Fiona on 01 497 2035. Thank You.



# Free speech specialist attacks North's 'hate crime' proposals

Ruadhán Jones

Free speech specialist and lawyer Ivan Hare has attacked proposals which could "suppress expression which is at the heart of political debate" in the North.

The proposals are set out in a recent review of the region's 'hate crime' laws, spearheaded by Judge Desmond Marrinan.

Mr Hare wrote in an article for The Christian Institute that proposals to extend those laws to the expression of disagreement on issues like marriage and transgenderism could have a "chilling effect".

"[There is] a very real risk that robust and uninhibited discussion of matters of great public importance will suffer a chilling effect," said Mr Hare.

"Such a chilling effect is particularly likely where the penalty is criminal and may include imprisonment."

Mr Hare's criticisms focused on the absence of a clause which protects the freedom of expression, a significant difference from English and Welsh law.

## Marriage

Mr Hare said that speakers who invoke "sincerely held Christian beliefs concerning marriage and homosexual conduct" could be prosecuted as a result.

"Some of the debate around, for example, accommodating transgender women in female prisons or in women's hostels may expose the speakers to the risk of criminal prosecution," Mr Hare said.

He added that the omission of such legal protection results in the "clear potential to infringe the right to freedom of expression".

## Freedom

Mr Hare argued that free speech clauses should be introduced as they are the only way "to ensure that religious freedom and conscience are protected in Northern Ireland can be made good".

Simon Calvert, Deputy Director for Public Affairs at The Christian Institute, said that Mr Hare's comments "confirms our fears that Northern Ireland law is already open to misuse by those who want to shut down debate, and that introducing swathes of new 'hate crimes' would make the situation much, much worse".

## Churches should get 'covid grants' – TD

Staff reporter

Churches should be treated like any other institution when it comes to covid grants, said Fianna Fáil TD Jackie Cahill.

Deputy Cahill told *The Irish Catholic* that Churches loss of income and expenses accrued as a result of lockdown should be taken into account.

"Like many other institutions, Churches' sources of income have been greatly restricted," said Mr Cahill.

"If you're spending money

providing a service, other organisations are able to avail of funds, so why should Churches be any different?"

Deputy Cahill believes that if Churches can show they have legitimate expenses from helping people through the covid crisis, they should have access to funding.

Deputy Cahill queried the availability of grant aid for Churches with the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphries. Ms Humphries said her Department is providing

assistance to organisations the Community and Voluntary Sector Covid-19 Stability Fund.

"This fund is intended to be a targeted once-off cash injection for organisations and groups currently delivering critical front-line services to the most at need in our society and in danger of imminent closure due to lost fund-raised or traded income as a direct result of restrictions to counter the spread of Covid-19," Ms Humphries explained.

## Taskforce of the Kingdom

The mission of Jesus was to establish the rule of God, the Kingdom of God, on Earth. The taskforce for the continuation of his mission would be the community of believers known as the Church. Today, in Matthew 13:24-43, three parables show how this Church is a mixture of human frailty and divine power.

The parable of the darnel applies to us as individuals. Darnel is a weed that winds itself around the stem of another plant. Really, there is no such thing as a weed. See the same plant in a forest and we call it a wild flower. Weeds are wild flowers, untamed, and in the wrong place.

We experience seven darnels, known as the seven deadly sins: pride, covetousness, lust, envy, anger, gluttony and sloth. When untamed, these wild energies give us a lot of trouble. Lord, take this lust out of my life! Take this anger out of my life! God is the wise gardener who knows that pulling up the weed will damage the root of the wheat.

Anger is an energy intertwined with the determination to act for justice or to correct what is wrong. Lust is an offshoot of interest in people, attraction and the ability to love. These untamed energies are wild flowers in the wrong place. Take anger and lust totally out of life and one is no better than a passionless

### The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



stone! Treat your wild energies with respect. Channel them in the right direction.

The Church is a home for imperfect people: a mixture of saintly people who are one step away from being sinners and of sinners who could yet be saints. By the way, if you find the perfect Church, you are bound in conscience to join it...but remember, once you have joined, it will no longer be perfect! "We are not wholly bad or good / who live our lives under Milkwood, And thou I know will be the first / to see our best side not the worst" (Dylan Thomas).

### Mustard seed and yeast

The parables of the mustard seed and spoon of yeast show how great movements can emerge from small beginnings. The tiny, yellow mustard seeds are so light that they are easily blown on the wind so that the plant spreads far and wide. What about the yeast, also known as leaven?

A housewife is baking bread, mixing the dough. She has kept some of yesterday's dough which is now going sour, fermenting, beginning

to bubble. A little of this bubbling stuff is mixed with today's baking. Without this bubbly stuff, the new bread will be flat and stodgy. But the bubbles of yeast allow pockets of air which make the new bread soft and light.

Like the tiny mustard seed, God can use some unknown person to start something great. And, like the fermenting dough, God can inspire somebody of dubious background to do great work.

### Background

Oscar Schindler, nominally a Catholic, was a man with a very shady background. Yet he became somebody who saved thousands of Jews from extermination.

Television shows us disturbing pictures of war, famine, homelessness and poverty. These dreadful images turn sour within us, making us cynical about politicians and negative about life. But the energy generated in fermentation can be used for a good cause, inspiring people to do something.

Mary's Meals is a charitable organisation which feeds over a million schoolchildren every day. It was started by two brothers in Scotland, inspired by the TV images of suffering children in Bosnia. They decided to take a week off their work in a fish farm to organise a collection.

The response was overwhelming.

Now over a million children, who previously were deprived of education because they had to work at home, every day get both food and education. The Kingdom of God is like a spoon of sour leaven which can bubble up into the best of bread. Never despair of what God can do from the most unlikely beginning. You are part of this human-divine Church, the taskforce of God's Kingdom on Earth. Do your little bit and let God do the multiplying.

Extract from *Silvester O'Flynn, Gospel Reflections and Prayers, Columba Press.*

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**R**obert Runcie, who died in 2000, was a well-liked Archbishop of Canterbury who had warm ecumenical links with the Archbishop of Westminster Cardinal Basil Hume. He participated in a joint service at Canterbury – on the spot where St Thomas More was murdered – with Pope John Paul II in 1982.

Dr Runcie's wife, Rosalind, was quite a character. Attractive, lively, 'feisty' was a word often used, she was a talented classical pianist who was once photographed draped rather seductively atop a grand piano. She was the opposite of the vicar's wife strait-laced stereotype. She once said "too much religion makes me go 'pop'!"

And now it has emerged that Lindy, as she was called, had a very special relationship with another man of the cloth, the Dean of Canterbury, Victor de Waal.

Now 91, Dr de Waal has publicly admitted that he had an 'inappropriate' relationship with Lindy Runcie, and indeed resigned because of it.

### Close

It is unclear how close this 'inappropriate' friendship was, but it seems as though the dean felt it was becoming too dangerously close. He too was

## Let's not imagine that a married clergy is a solution



### Mary Kenny

● I was due to speak at the Percy French Festival in Roscommon on July 22 and was much looking forward to participating in this engaging festival – interesting talk, lovely music – but quarantine regulations have prevented me travelling. The good news is that Declan Ganley will take my place and will speak on the theme of 'Is there a future for the western world?'

There is a great line-up, including Kevin Myers, Maria Steen, Profs Patricia Casey, Gerard Casey and Ray Kinsella, and Kevin Finnerty at Castlecoote has carefully organised events within health and safety regulations.

The Percy French is one of the few summer schools to stay operational this summer and bravo them. For bookings see [info@percypfrench.ie](mailto:info@percypfrench.ie)



Speaker: Prof. Patricia Casey.

married, and the father of four.

Who's judging? No decent Christian would: everyone is made of flesh and blood and can be tempted into relationships that aren't quite in the line of virtue.

Yet it's also a kind of

illustration that a married clergy is not necessarily the easy solution to a shortage of priests. Most Catholics in Ireland are in favour of married priests, and of ordaining married men – a practice already carried out in other parts of the globe.

But marriage can bring extra complications and problems as much as it can be a support. As we know, marriage can also be subject to breakdown and divorce.

### Investigation

More wives of Anglican clergy are now coming forward claiming domestic abuse and marital infidelity, according to an investigation by *The Daily Telegraph*.

The Rev. Margaret Wilkinson heads up a Church of England organisation 'Broken Rites' which deals with divorce and marital breakdown among the clergy, as well as domestic abuse.

In so many cases, she says, there is a real lack of support for the spouses and children when clerical marriages fracture.

The Runcies' marriage survived and the 'inappropriate relationship' seems to have been more of a renunciation of temptation than an indulgence. The only evident fallout was that the Dean of Canterbury lost his job. But don't let's imagine that a married clergy is an answer to all prayer.

### Painful but a return to origin

Pope Francis finds it "painful" that the famous Hagia Sophia in Istanbul is to revert to being a mosque, and the Greek Orthodox hierarchy is even more distressed. Turkey's strongman ruler Recep Tayyip Erdogan has ordered that this beautiful basilica change status from museum to mosque.

Hagia Sophia (or 'St Sophia' as it's called in Fr Prout's charming poem 'The Bells of Shandon') has been, over its long history, both Christian and Islamic. It was constructed under the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I in the 6th Century and turned into a mosque in 1453. In 1934, it was secularised by Atatürk, and made a museum.

### Deadening

I visited this exquisite edifice – one of the UNESCO's world heritage sites – in 2014, and to be honest, I found the 'museum' atmosphere rather deadening. Tourists traipsed around the interior perfectly respectfully (the Turkish authorities insisted on modest dress), but it struck me as just another tourist target to 'do'. They examined the holy artefacts just as people look at dinosaur bones in natural history museums.

I'm sure we share Pope Francis' pain (and the Greek Orthodox, who have been virtually extinguished from their historic roots in Turkey, have real cause for complaint), but is it better that Hagia Sophia should be a holy, and living, place of prayer rather than a building ordered by secular values to something past and gone? Discuss.

ADVERTORIAL

# Pope Francis: 'What am I leaving behind?'

## Pope stresses importance of reflecting on your 'final farewell'



Photo: Jeffrey Bruno / Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.

**E**veryone would do well to reflect on their "final farewell" from earthly life said Pope Francis during a morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"It will do us good," he added.

### "What am I leaving behind?"

When Pope Francis asked this at the Mass, many may have been wondering about the impact their own lives will have. Perhaps you are too. One thing you can leave behind is a life changing gift to your preferred charity in your Will. This ensures your legacy lives on, while supporting the charity you care for and

helping save lives long into the future.

And it's clear many people do already generously give to causes close to their hearts. The Irish Catholic's own research shows 97% of readers regularly donate to charity.

However, with so many different charities carrying out so much good work, choosing one to support is certainly not an easy decision to make.

"Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons." – Pope Francis.

One charity fighting poverty is Ireland's own Concern Worldwide. In fact they state their mission is to: End extreme poverty – whatever it takes.

Concern was founded in 1968 by John and Kay O'Loughlin-Kennedy – in response to the famine in the breakaway province of Biafra in Nigeria.

On Friday 6th September 1968 the MV Columcille set sail from Dublin to Sao Tome – a Portuguese island off the coast of Nigeria. The 600 tonne ship was full of vital supplies of powdered food, medicines and other life sav-

ing items for the people suffering the horrific famine in Biafra. This single shipment was only the start of an aid mission which became one flight every day over the next 11 months.

Since then Concern has helped transform lives in 48 of the world's poorest countries, including:

- Rwanda, 1994: Concern was one of the first Irish charities to respond to the Rwandan Genocide.
- Haiti, 2010: Within 1 year of the earthquake, Concern had helped over 1,000,000 people in the country.
- Syria, 2013 – present: Concern's emergency programmes meet the urgent needs of people displaced by war.
- 2020: As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to spread globally, our teams are mobilising to support the most vulnerable.

As you can see, no matter what the crisis, Concern always helps those in the most desperate need no matter how hard they are to reach. Last year they responded to 102 different emergencies. And helped an incredible 27.4 million people around the world.

Fiona from Co. Louth has left a gift for Concern in her Will. Here she explains why: "I have two children and if they were in need, I would hope

that somebody, somewhere would reach out to help them. With my legacy, I will be that person for somebody's loved ones – you could be too."

If you join Fiona and leave a gift to Concern, your legacy can help end hunger, for good. And will help people like Nala\*.



Nala before and a few months after receiving therapeutic food sachets.

Photo Before: Jennifer Nolan / Concern Worldwide. Photo After: Mohamed Abdwahab / Concern Worldwide.

Nala lived with her mother and two brothers in a camp for displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia. Her mother was pregnant with Nala when she and her sons fled their village which was attacked. Even in the safety of the camp, Nala's mother struggled to find food for herself and her children. So Nala never gained weight properly.

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fading fast. She was immediately given therapeutic food sachets. As you can see after a few months of receiving help, Nala was thriving.

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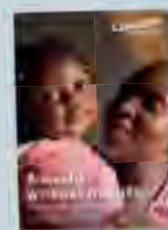
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\* Name changed for security reasons.



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## What Catholics can learn from a distant election



Going against the grain has earned Poland an international media rebuke, writes **Jason Osborne**

**P**oland has opted for the road less travelled by with its re-election of incumbent Andrzej Duda for a second term as president following a tight race against Warsaw mayor, Rafał Trzaskowski.

Mr Duda's victory was sealed with the reigning president securing 51.2% of the vote to Mr Trzaskowski's 48.8%. At the time of the announcement, the difference between the candidates amounted to around 500,000 votes.

The voter turnout for the final round of election was reportedly 68.2% – the highest of any presidential poll since the start of free elections in post-communist Poland, indicating the impassioned views held by those on both sides of the political divide that each candidate represented.

The heat of this passion is one felt all over the western world, with an increasing number of countries facing the same divide as Poland. The tension between tradition and modernity is played upon everywhere, with many countries and their electorate buying into the values that Rafał Trzaskowski came to represent to the Polish populace.

### Poor performance

Mr Trzaskowski is a leading figure in Poland's Civic Platform party, but he is best known to the Polish and international communities as mayor of Warsaw.

A late stand-in for his party after the poor performance of a previous candidate, Mr Trzaskowski quickly appealed to the appetites of those seeking change the likes of which has been seen in Ireland in



Andrzej Duda celebrates with family after his re-election as Polish president.

recent years. Advocating for increased acceptance of LGBT movements, and ambivalent on the question of abortion, Mr Trzaskowski performed well in Poland's large, cosmopolitan cities and in the western regions on the border with Germany.

Rafał Trzaskowski's positions are emblematic of the direction taken by many countries in Europe, and this has not been lost on the Polish electorate. The election came to be seen as a contest between two rival visions of Poland; one seeking to maintain a sense of national identity and tradition, the other looking to move forward into the global community while throwing off the perceived shackles of patriotism and religion.

It is along these lines that Andrzej Duda campaigned and won. Whereas Ireland and elsewhere have opted for the vision that Mr Trzaskowski represents, Poland has sought after the traditional values and social spending Mr Duda brought to the table.

A practicing Catholic and an advocate for Polish culture and traditions, Mr Duda performed well across the Polish countryside, particularly among the poor and disadvantaged.

His acceptance among impoverished voters is in part due to generous social programmes; the 500+ programme sees a monthly handout of 500 złoty (€112) for children, and a lowering of the retirement age.

Mr Duda is backed by Poland's governing Law and Justice party, and it is understood that this will allow them to resist many of the changes that have

swept other countries in recent years. At the top of their agenda is ensuring the protection of the family against competing ideologies, and defending the right to life of the unborn in the country's legislation. Andrzej Duda's election is a spark of hope for those seeking reprieve from the encroachment of increasingly liberal sentiments among the electorate.

**“I'm absolutely certain that nothing will beat us, because we've already won, regardless of the final result”**

This is not to say that the reigning government has smooth sailing ahead; many clashes with the EU await, particularly concerning its judicial reforms which place more power in the hands of the state. The government's relationship with the media has also come under fire recently, with the state-owned television being viewed by many as a mouthpiece for the ruling party.

Going against the grain has earned Poland the ire of many international media outlets, with phrases such as 'populist', 'authoritarian', and 'backwards' being levelled frequently at the triumphant candidate and his voters. Mr Duda was continuously attacked throughout the campaign on the basis of running an anti-LGBT and anti-immigrant platform. These charges fail to acknowledge the validity of his Catholic viewpoint or

the deeply-held beliefs of those who voted for him, and continue to marginalise Catholic voices in both politics and culture.

The current political landscape in Poland offers the Irish electorate an opportunity for reflection and insight. While the Church in Poland enjoys a mostly respected position in society, and its lessons remain deeply rooted among the majority of its people, its increasing proximity to the western world and its values has allowed views and policies contrary to those at the heart of the Church to pass dangerously close to the presidency.

Complacency allows ideologies opposed to the Gospel a foothold in society, and while Ireland has opened the door widely to these strains of thought, Poland has bought itself at least three more years to gather its breath and compose itself.

### New hope

They are not in the clear yet, however, as Mr Trzaskowski hinted that there was more to come in a public statement: "I'm absolutely certain that nothing will beat us, because we've already won, regardless of the final result. We have managed to wake up, we have managed to create new hope."

While Ireland has much to learn from Poland, and can look to them for an example of an unbending knee in the face of what is often seen as an inevitable wave of extreme liberalism, Poland could learn something from Ireland in return; if you give the forces of modernity an inch, they will take a mile.



## Martin Mansergh

### The View



# Eurozone role a real opportunity

**T**he last month has seen two remarkable diplomatic successes achieved against stiff competition, Ireland's election for the fourth time as a member of the UN Security Council for two years 2021-2, and the election of Paschal Donohoe as chair of the Eurozone Finance Ministers. Both results are connected to the contribution Ireland makes in the EU and the values it represents.

The cynics are always with us, those who in the words of Oscar Wilde know the cost of everything and the value of nothing, and they have been asking what is in it for us. We have world leaders who think that politics and life is all about putting oneself first. The truth is that benefit and respect are usually linked to contribution, given in a spirit of partnership and reciprocity.

A public talk was given last Friday to the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) by Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, on the campaign to win a seat on the Security Council.

The first point she made was about the importance of independence. There are 192 UN members, the majority of whom face an ongoing struggle to hold their own. In Ireland's case over the past century, we have come to realise that winning independence was not a one-off irrevocable achievement, but something that has regularly to be re-fought, albeit politically and economically, not militarily. Ireland knows what it is to be vulnerable and underdeveloped. That led to another point, the need for empathy with the different situations and problems faced by other states. There is also a need to practice partnership internationally.

#### Values

Among the values that are important are a commitment to peaceful solutions, to development, and to human rights and the environment. Quite often, Ireland has more peace-keeping soldiers abroad than wealthier or more populous countries. Development aid



Minister  
Paschal  
Donohoe.

is concentrated on African countries, and not tied to the purchase of Irish goods.

It is disappointing that we have not made more progress in the past 30 years towards actually achieving the UN development aid goal of 0.7% of GDP, instead of having constantly to recycle the aspiration and reset the clock, this time to 2030. Like Sisyphus' stone, every time we get within sight of the top of the hill, it starts to roll down again. However, great work is done with available resources, and private contributions to non-governmental development organisations, many of them Church-founded, are proportionately amongst the highest in the world.

**“With Britain now outside the EU, the only other EU partner in the Council will be France”**

Human rights are not an abstraction. According to Ambassador Byrne Nason, there are up to 30 conflicts ongoing round the world. Ireland has not only its own UN peacekeeping experience to draw upon, but also the Irish peace process. Most of these conflicts are on the agenda of the Security Council. With Britain now outside the EU, the only other EU partner in the Council will be France. Ireland will be there in its own right. On many issues there will be only an outline agreed EU position, and lots

of scope for an individual Irish input, including in areas such as nuclear disarmament not covered by the EU.

#### Grandstanding

Smaller countries are wise not to engage in grandstanding, when they have little power of their own. If one were to rely on moral reasons alone, there would be few countries with which one could maintain diplomatic relations, but we have no more a perfect record than most.

Sometimes bigger countries can force changes in behaviour through threatened economic or military sanctions, but not Ireland.

The situation of apartheid South Africa and Israel and the occupied territories is completely different. Enjoying massive US support and with no chance of Israel collapsing under external threats and pressures or internal divisions, a different approach is needed, without giving up on the substance of the two-state model that is internationally agreed.

Even though not formalised in the Treaties, the Eurozone Finance Ministers are one of the most powerful groups in the EU. Now that the Department of Public Reform and Expenditure has a separate cabinet minister, the Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe can take the time to attend to European duties that may prove onerous following the pandemic and the economic challenges that it has thrown up.

In the past, for good and ill, Ireland has been bracketed with the Mediterranean countries, but more recently has been loosely a member of the so-called Hanseatic League of northern countries, which favours a cautious and rigorous approach to both national and EU spending. Ireland is now a net contributor to the EU budget. Payments from it remain important, to Irish agriculture, large-scale infrastructure projects of strategic value to the EU, research, as well as cross-border and related peace funding. It is a tribute to Ireland's recovery from the crash 10 years ago that the Irish Finance Minister has been chosen to chair his Eurozone colleagues' deliberations in a situation at least as difficult.

If there had been a complete change of government or a new minister for finance, then this opportunity would have been lost. Both positions in the UN and the Eurozone reflect well on the Irish capacity for bridge building.

**“Political parties will lose more if they do not handle the Churches' responsibility in education sensitively”**

Bridge building is also needed closer to home. Immense social change has taken place with too little attempt to forge consensus or to build legislative

bridges between the views of faith communities and those of liberal secularist reformers. In choosing to join forces with the latter, the older political parties have lost voters in recent years. They will lose more, if they do not handle the Churches' responsibility in education sensitively. Citizens' assemblies will not circumvent the need to negotiate and compromise with all the partners involved in education.

Despite alarmist prognostications, parents will not be easily persuaded to give up their constitutional rights.

Since no one disputes the need for evolutionary reform and the enlargement of choice, a Church-State clash should be avoided, not least for the health of an inclusive democracy.



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As a Church, mourning is the very least we can do in response to the deafening silence from the media and the majority of politicians who have largely ignored the abortion statistics, writes **Fr Billy Swan**

**I**n commenting on the recently-published statistics on abortion for 2019 – the first full year of abortion being made legal in this country following the repeal of the Eighth Amendment – I wish to condemn or judge no one.

My intention is not to target the women involved, much less to shame them but to remind ourselves of our collective responsibility for these figures as Irish people, for the society we have become, for the values we hold and for signs of deep wounds that cry out to be addressed.

I wish to ask ourselves how we can help save lives, to reduce the carnage and to walk with those who are in crisis and alone. My aim is to discover the truth that the facts reveal and to acknowledge the human tragedy behind them. Its aim is also to hold up a mirror to claims and predictions by both sides of the abortion debate who passionately argued their case prior to the referendum.

### Voiceless

As a Church, it is imperative that we raise our voice for the voiceless – for those who have no voice or who are no longer able to speak. To speak for the thousands who have lost their lives is the very least we can do in response to the deafening silence from the media and the majority of politicians who have largely ignored the publication of these statistics.

One would have thought that the loss of life and the significant increase in number of abortions would have deserved a proper discussion as trends emerge



# Tragedy in the shadow of pandemic

**We rightly mourn the deaths of over 1,700 people from Covid-19 but the loss of more than 7,000 little ones from abortion passes almost without comment**

following repeal. But this debate did not take place, or it won't it seems. We seem too busy, too distracted by other things or simply ignore troubling questions that might disturb our settled conscience.

\* \* \* \* \*

First to the statistics. They reveal that in 2019, 6,666 abortions took place in Ireland. This figure rises to 7,041 if you count the abortions carried out in England by people with Irish addresses. That is 7,041 Irish lives that cry to heaven to be acknowledged, named and mourned.

**“One would have thought that the loss of life and the significant increase in number of abortions would have deserved a proper discussion as trends emerge following repeal. But this debate did not take place, or it won't it seems. We seem too busy, too distracted by other things or simply ignore troubling questions”**

Our tears are also shed for the people involved, the pain and hurt that they bear and their grief. We rightly mourn the deaths of over 1,700 Irish people from the coronavirus but the loss of 7,041 little ones from abortion last year passes almost without comment, except for voices from groups like Amnesty who want to widen the grounds for abortion.

We hear much in the media these days how 'Black Lives Matter'. Some would respond and say 'All Lives Matter'. But if the unborn could speak they might be justified in saying 'Every Life Matters More than Ours'.

In contrast, in 2018 there were about 5,000 Irish abortions, based on numbers who travelled to Britain and those who bought abortion pills illegally.

**“Choice is what now trumps everything, even human life. Having choice is associated with freedom and liberty...”**

That amounts to just under 14 per day in 2018. In 2019, that figure rose to over

19 a day. In the run up to the vote for repeal, the Government pushed for a 'Yes' vote mainly because we needed to care for Irish women who were forced to leave Ireland for the care they should have received at home.

Repeal would mean that these women would now have the care at home and have their abortions safely as they were going to have them anyway. It was just a case of location as numbers would remain the same. So the argument went. Leo Varadkar supported repeal and hoped that the change in the law would mean that abortion in Ireland would be “legal, safe and rare”.

The then Taoiseach made these comments knowing that in no other country that had introduced a liberal abortion regime did abortion become “legal, safe and rare”. And so it has proven in

Ireland too. In the run-up to the referendum, the Pro-Life Campaign warned that normalising and legalising abortion would increase the numbers significantly and that the change of law implied far more than a transfer of Ireland's problem from abroad to back home. And so again it has proven right. Sadly, the increase in the numbers has come about as predicted.

### Hard cases

The 'Yes' campaign also repeatedly claimed that abortion was required to protect women's lives or for very rare hard cases. They persuaded successfully that a liberal abortion regime was necessary on the grounds of healthcare. However, the statistics show that up to 98% of Irish abortions last year were elective and carried out for social reasons.

The best-known case used by the repeal campaign to argue that a change in the law was necessary was the tragic case of Savita Halappanavar, the young Indian dentist who died in Galway in October 2012 and who was pregnant at the time.

There was an outcry at the time of her death because it was thought that Ireland's ban on abortion had contributed to her death.

In several official inquests, the cause of Savita's tragic death was found to be sepsis caused by neglect. Her infection was not picked up soon enough due to a lack of care. Despite none of the official inquests concluding that her







death was caused by a denial of an abortion, this did not stop her death being used, dishonestly, as an argument for repeal.

In her native India, the *India Times* website led with the headline: 'Ireland murders pregnant Indian dentist.' But it is worth repeating – there is no hard evidence that Savita's life would have been saved had Ireland's abortion laws been different.

\*\*\*\*\*

But the main reason by far why most of the 66.4% of the electorate voted for repeal is because of the primacy of choice. Choice is what now trumps everything, even human life. Having choice is associated with freedom and

liberty as the name suggests. To vote 'Yes' for something is unquestionably seen as a good thing, something necessary and progressive. To vote 'No' smacks of conservatism and oppression. Yet these abortion statistics seriously question the assumption that repeal has made Ireland a kinder, more gentle and compassionate country.

Our lifestyles and our choices have resulted in the deaths of over 7,000 children in one year alone. Is this progress? Is this the new Ireland we should be proud of? As thinking citizens we must seriously question the narrative we are being asked to swallow.

The statistics just published lack the detail given

by other countries. For example in Britain, information on abortion like gestational weeks, procedure (drugs or surgery), marital status, ethnicity, etc. are all included as part of the reporting system for analysis. The information gathered is vital to address health inequalities and improvements in public health and commissioning functions. It is like the importance of knowing whether cases of Covid-19 are higher among some groups more than others and how imbalances can be addressed.

The lack of equivalent information in Ireland's report is deliberate as the Dáil voted against it. The Dáil did not want to know the stories and trends behind

the abortion tragedy and does not want the public to know either. This means that as a country we do not care if abortion is more common among poorer families, teenagers, single women or married women.

**“These statistics shows again how the tragedy of abortion is connected to the institution of marriage and how marriage lowers the chances of someone having an abortion”**

No questions can be asked or allowed. It seems that all attempts to raise the persisting moral ambiguities around the issue have been blocked and prevented. This is a form of State-sponsored censorship and a blanket silencing of voices who might raise concerns about the morality of trends that unfold.

This is an appalling attempt to mask the truth and to find out the real reasons why abortions take place.

According to the 2018 figures provided by the

British authorities, 80% of Irish women who sought abortions in there were single while 18% were married with 2% separated, widowed or divorced.

These statistics shows again how the tragedy of abortion is connected to the institution of marriage and how marriage lowers the chances of someone having an abortion. From 2019 onwards, this information of who is accessing abortion and why may never again be available to the Irish public.

The Irish State doesn't want to know and doesn't want us to know either.

I would like to conclude on a positive note and by highlighting the great work being done by organisations who are doing their utmost to protect vulnerable life, uphold a culture of life, support expectant mothers, offer alternatives to abortion and offer healing and support to women hurting after abortion. I am thinking here of groups such as the Pro Life Campaign, Gianna Care, Every Life Matters, Rachel's Vineyard and many more. The people working in these groups do so much we can be proud of and grateful for. Without them, the abortion tragedy would be even worse.

For us Christians, it is not

enough to talk the talk. We must also walk the walk. We must be clear on what the Gospel teaches but help each other to live it, too. This is what I admire most about these pro-life groups who offer alternatives to abortion and offer women real compassion and real hope that life deserves a chance. Included in this group are all advocates and supporters of family life and those who believe in the dignity and ends of human sexuality and marriage.

These are the people who offer good news to our country that there is another way and that help is available from people who care.

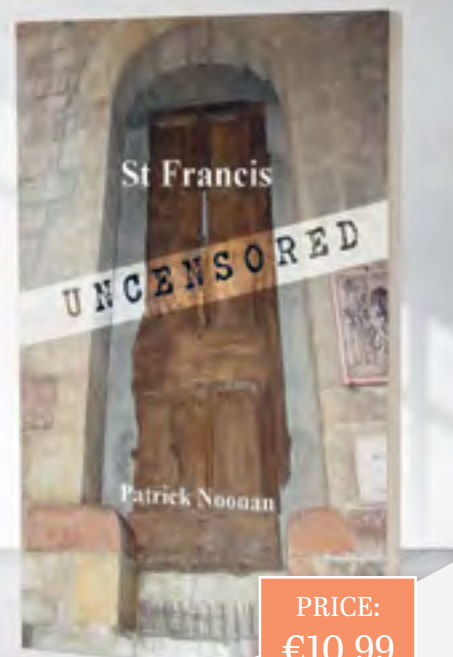
While there may be little public grief over the 7,041 deaths of unborn Irish babies, we know that there is much unexpressed personal grief. Let us take this opportunity to pray for and help in any way we can those affected by the tragedy of abortion. We mourn their deaths but pray that their parents might seek and find the sacramental and pastoral support they need and be welcomed without judgment and helped to find healing and peace.

**Fr Billy Swan is a priest of the Diocese of Ferns.**

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# The 1980s was not a dark and repressed time, whatever RTÉ says



What liberals really lament is that they didn't have everything their own way in the past, writes **David Quinn**

**J**ack Charlton was one of the most loved figures Ireland has seen in decades. It is a rare person who becomes a national hero to the extent that he did. He gave us the same sense of national pride that the moon landings gave America. It was that powerful and electrifying.

But amid all the commentary about the impact Mr Charlton had on the country has been a few digs at the kind of country we were in the 1980s, an attempt almost to turn that decade into the new 1950s, that is, a supposedly monochrome, miserable, repressed time which only Jack Charlton and the Irish soccer team added a splash of colour to.

A case can certainly be made against the 1980s. The economy was in a terrible condition, emigration was high, and the Troubles were still ongoing in the North.

Liberals lament the fact that they were heavily defeated in two referenda in that decade, namely the pro-life referendum of 1983 and the divorce referendum of 1986. But if these are indications of a 'repressed' time, then we were repressing ourselves given how we voted.

## Strain

What liberals really lament is that they didn't have everything their own way in that decade. Not to worry, they strained every sinew in their bodies in the years since and used all the mighty tools at their disposal, including RTÉ, to successfully overturn both results. Few peoples have been subjected to more sustained propaganda over a longer period to ensure we would vote the 'right' way next time.

I left school in the 1980s and went to Dublin City University (as it became known). The referenda of 1983 and 1986 did come up in conversation, but I don't remember the arguments being especially bitter. Maybe that's because I wasn't as interested in social issues



Not all bad: the heady days of huge concerts at Slane Castle (main photo) and the joy Jack Charlton (inset) brought to 1980s Ireland.

back then as I am now. Certainly, no-one I knew fell out over those referenda.

In addition, you were allowed to have a different view than the prevailing one without being made to feel like a pariah. This is despite the fact that students, even then, were a lot more liberal than the general population.

But maybe being in DCU made a difference. Most of the courses were practically orientated. There was student activism, but it was mainly laughed at by most other students, certainly in my course (business studies).

The lack of bitterness in those two referenda at DCU may also have been down to the fact that most of the students were from the country, not the liberal southside of Dublin like you would get at University College Dublin or Trinity College.

The political disagreements I mainly remember were about Charles Haughey versus Garrett FitzGerald, or about Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

We also spoke a lot about the state of the economy and the very high unemployment rate among young people. We wondered if we would get a job after graduation or

would be forced to emigrate for a few years.

That's what I did. I didn't even try to find a job in Ireland. As soon as I got my degree I headed over to Australia with a fellow graduate and stayed out there for more than six years. My friend is still there. We both married Australians.

**“We have far more drug abuse than was once the case. We have gangland violence and some really hideous killings. We have more people taking their own lives. We have more anti-social behaviour than we did”**

There wasn't any kind of atmosphere of repression at DCU. We would go out drinking, mainly on a Thursday night, because on a Friday most of the students went home to their families in the country.

The Dublin students might meet again on a Saturday night, or you'd

meet your friends from school. Very few felt miserable because they were living in some kind of moral 'police state'. The main obstacle to them doing whatever they wanted was a lack of money.

That lack of money meant there were few sources of entertainment aside from the pub. There was the odd concert, and Slane Castle began to host huge ones back then with massive acts like Bob Dylan or the Rolling Stones.

Painting the 1980s in darkest colours basically suits the narrative of persuading the Irish people that we now live in a far more sunlit country, so to speak, than even in the recent past.

This is certainly true economically speaking, but on other fronts the picture is far more mixed. We have far more drug abuse than was once the case. We have gangland violence and some really hideous killings. We have

more people taking their own lives. We have more anti-social behaviour than we did (on public transport, for example).

An awful lot of children now grow up without a father, or else they see their parents split up. Last year, 6,666 unborn children were aborted in Ireland.

## Anxiety

Levels of anxiety and depression, especially among young people, seem to be increasing all the time, especially since the advent of smart phones and social media.

The growing campaign for compulsory consent classes in universities shows that not all is well in the supposed sexual Garden of Eden we've created for ourselves.

So, is today better than the 1980s in every way? Economically, yes (despite the coronavirus-inspired downturn), but in other respects the picture is very, very mixed. We're better in some ways and worse than others.

Let's simply allow that Jack Charlton brought huge happiness and joy to the nation and not use him to point-score about the years he led the Irish football team. He'd have made us happy in any era.

**“The lack of bitterness in those two referenda at DCU may also have been down to the fact that most of the students were from the country, not the liberal southside of Dublin like you would get at University College Dublin or Trinity College”**



# Out&About

## Seminarians take another important step

**ARMAGH:** The Primate of All-Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin congratulated four of their seminarians who received Ministry of Lector, which he described as “another important step on their journey to priesthood”.



**CLARE:** Sheila Meaney, co-chairperson of Coolmeen/Cranry pastoral council sanitising St Mary's church, Cranry after a vigil Mass.

**ARMAGH:** Members of Armagh parish's pastoral council helped with stewarding at the first of their weekend Masses in St Patrick's Cathedral.



**KERRY:** Parishioners celebrate with Fr Francis Nolan the reopening of St Brendan's church Curraheen. Photo John Cleary

**DUBLIN:** Fr John Bracken of Dundrum parish showcases some of the signage used to inform parishioners of the separate zones used to maintain social distancing in his church.





Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**MONAGHAN:** Parishioners gathered to prepare St Patrick's church, Bawn, for the return to Mass in order to adhere to Government Covid-19 health guidelines.



**CORK:** Socially distanced Mass in St Colman's cathedral, Cobh parish. Photo: Dominic Finn



**MONAGHAN:** Churches in Clontibret parish – Annyalla, Clontibret, Doohamlet – being prepared for public Masses.



**CARLOW:** John Dunphy and St Clare's Hospitality Kitchen prepare food hampers for vulnerable people. The kitchen reopened on July 15.

**IN SHORT**

**Vatican Secretary of State to visit struggling Lourdes**

The Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, will travel to Lourdes next month, August 15, to celebrate Mass for the Feast of the Assumption.

Due to restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's national pilgrimage will take place without the presence of the faithful. They are, however, being invited to

unite spiritually with the event and to follow the Mass online.

In spite of the altered programme, Cardinal Parolin is making the trip to support the Marian Shrine, which has been particularly affected by the current health crisis.

It will also be the first official visit outside Italy by a senior member of the Curia since the pandemic began. Before arriving at Lourdes, Cardinal Parolin is expected to make a stop at the city of Ars, the town of the Cure d'Ars, St John Vianney.

This is the cardinal's third visit to Lourdes since

becoming Vatican Secretary of State.

In 2017 he visited the Shrine as Pope Francis' representative for the World Day of the Sick and in 2018 for the St Francis de Sales Days.

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes closed for the first time in over a century in mid-March following restrictions imposed in France to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Organised groups of pilgrims in large numbers are still a long way off, leading the famed shrine to organise an online pilgrimage and

crowdfunding drive to try to make up an €8 million deficit today, July 16.

'Lourdes United' includes a 15-hour live session, in different languages, with Masses, processions, Rosaries and other prayers. The date is significant as it's the anniversary of the last Marian apparition recorded in Lourdes.

According to a press statement released last week, Lourdes United will bring together all those who "from every corner of the world, see Lourdes as a beacon of Faith, commitment, sharing and hope".

**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.**





A pilgrimage steeped in religious, cultural, historical, and political significance writes **Jason Osborne**

**A** group of seven intrepid walkers set out beneath an overcast sky, guided by former BBC Northern Ireland Political Correspondent Martina Purdy. Drops of rain threatened to sour the occasion, but in keeping with the example of the saint they were following, they trusted God and pressed ahead anyway. Their faith was rewarded as the rain relented and allowed them to continue the walk without concern.

A new series of 'camino' style pilgrim walks were launched this month by the St Patrick Centre in Downpatrick, Co. Down. New pilgrim guides Martina Purdy and Elaine Kelly, former barrister, made headlines in 2014 when they left their high-powered careers behind in favour of religious life with the Sisters of Adoration. However, 2019 saw the closure of their convent due to too small a congregation size to satisfy the Catholic Church's governance standards. Not content to leave the story there, the former sisters developed this project during lockdown that others might encounter the spirituality they cherish.

"This is an exciting new project which was designed during the lockdown to encourage people to come and enjoy the countryside, and to experience the rich legacy of our patron saint and the beauty and history of Downpatrick," said Dr Tim Campbell, centre director.

### Inaugural

Launched on the afternoon of July 1, 10 pilgrims signed up for the inaugural walk but the number reduced to seven the night before it was to take place, a fact Martina took with good humour: "Seven is God's number, so that's good."

Out of the seven people who set out that evening, four finished, with three making it three quarters of the way. The rugged nature of the terrain is not to be underestimated. "Not for the faint-hearted, to do the whole thing in one day," Martina replied when asked about the reaction to the unveiled route, "but if you're a walker and you enjoy walking, yes, it's tough, it's a challenge, but you can do it."

Walkers enjoy a range of options here. Wednesdays and Thursdays are divided into morning and afternoon walks, with the morning walk stretching



Pilgrims at Inch Abbey.

# St Patrick's Way: 'The walk of your life'

8km (5 miles), and the afternoon walk spanning 13km (8 miles). "It's a matter of personal taste," Martina says.

"If you're reasonably fit and you want a more pedestrian walk with a pleasant morning and then lunch, that's the morning session. We're learning as we go on," Martina concludes. The possibility of doing the entire 22km (13 miles) in one go is available, but it's recommended those looking to take on the challenge are very fit or avid walkers.

**“An important aspect of these walks is their ecumenical nature. They're open to those of all faiths and none, in keeping with the tradition of the area”**

What can pilgrims expect to see along the walk? St Patrick's Way is designed to take in famous landmarks and monuments intimately associated with the patron of the land. Martina's group expressed their approval at the inclusion of so much Irish heritage: "The feedback was that people loved Inch Abbey. They found it a very tranquil place, I mean, there was 800 years of prayer there. That doesn't just go away. Inch Abbey is very impressive." Inch Abbey is one of seven major sites of religious and cultural importance along the route, and it continues to attract much admiration. "There's a sense

of prayer and peace there, and people were really taken with the fact that you could still see the wall with the preserved Gothic windows behind the high altar." Despite the age and importance of the surroundings, Martina was still aware of the small touches that graced their group on its opening walk: "Inch Abbey is beside the water, and the Lord sent nine or 10 swans to make the day," she laughed. "You usually only see one or two." The Quoile River also proved popular with the walkers, offering natural beauty alongside the man-made sights.

### Saul Church

Inch Abbey is not the only site along the way of major religious importance; Saul Church awaits pilgrims too. This church was built in 1932 in acknowledgement of St Patrick's first church in Ireland, on that very spot. It is understood that in the year 432, St Patrick's boat was swept ashore and he swiftly converted the local chieftain. This chieftain offered Patrick a barn for shelter, from which he went out and preached the message of Jesus Christ extensively until his death in 461. Another popular site sprang up here as a result of this history – Paddy's Barn. The footsore travellers proceeded to this famous waystation under Martina's direction for lunch to wrap up their walk.

Elaine Kelly operates the other half of the walks, and she's had opportunity to guide the pilgrims since they opened for business, too. She delighted in sharing St Patrick's Roman Catholic church with the walkers. Of particular



Martina Purdy and Elaine Kelly at Saul Church.

interest was the mosaic which this church boasts, depicting six scenes from the life of St Patrick. What's more, the church also contains a beautiful rose window, which Martina explains "is an example of Gothic French architecture". Between natural and man-made sights, pilgrims can be assured

that their appetite for beauty will be satisfied.

Martina shared one of her own favourites from the route: "Personally, I love Slieve Patrick because you get this incredible view." Those who sign up can be sure they'll get the full taste of pilgrimage: "It's an experience.





Elaine Kelly, Martina Purdy, Gillian Orr and Dr Tim Campbell with walkers who took on St Patrick's Way.



Journalist Ryan Sands from Newry, one of the first pilgrims to complete inaugural walk on July 1.

You're not going for a country stroll, you're going for the experience, the challenge," Martina asserts. While the range of options presented to those interested caters for all abilities, there is an element of challenge to all routes. "Elaine calls it the walk of your life," Martina jokes, "but I say you get the sleep of your life after it." This inclusion of 'challenge' is important for any walk that intends to model itself after a pilgrimage. Historically, pilgrimages were undertaken with the intention of drawing closer to God, and Christianity has never hidden the fact that struggle, suffering, and challenge were a necessary part of life with God. Ireland is a land designed for pilgrimage with barren peaks

like Croagh Patrick and ascetic sanctuaries like Lough Derg. Patrick realised this, popularising many of Ireland's harshest pilgrimage points.

### Challenges

Martina and Elaine's pilgrims didn't go out to meet these challenges unprepared. "The Dean of Down, Rev. Henry Hull, blessed everyone as we left. He did Patrick's Breastplate, which is part of the pilgrim's passport we've designed," Martina explained, Patrick's Breastplate being a prayer of global popularity among the faithful.

An important aspect of these walks is their ecumenical nature. They're open to those of all faiths and none, in keeping with the

tradition of the area. "There's great ecumenism now in Downpatrick," Martina says, "but in 1932 on the 1500th anniversary of the landing, there was a bit of a rivalry between the Catholics and the Church of Ireland. The Church of Ireland has the site of the first church and they refurbished it, the bishops of the Church of Ireland laying the foundation stone in 1932. The Catholics were a bit nervous about that, so they renamed the local hill from Slieve William to Slieve Patrick, and they built the largest monument to St Patrick in the world on top of it."

### “St Patrick's Way is designed to take in famous landmarks and monuments intimately associated with the patron of the land”

While Downpatrick and its numerous sites of importance are steeped in religious, cultural, historical, and political significance, it's not without its quirks. The statue at the top of Slieve Patrick, for instance, represents a "great Christian compromise," according to Martina. On it, you have the Roman Catholic garments of the archbishop of Armagh and the face of the Church of Ireland bishop of the time. If that wasn't enough hidden meaning, one shoe is a sandal, while the other is a boot, modelled after those the quarryman who built the statue wore. There is much for the attentive traveller to discover on the way.

### Downpatrick

As mentioned, Downpatrick is steeped in Christianity, history, and beauty, yet so much of it passes beneath our notice. St Patrick's Way aims to change that

little by little. "Along the way, I do talk about John de Courcy," Martina mentions. Few people know of this man or his actions, which changed the political, religious, and cultural landscape in the North enormously. He conquered large territories, building forts and enabling the religious to build abbeys during his time there. In fact, Inch Abbey itself was founded by de Courcy. The traces of influential figures such as de Courcy are passed over every day, but St Patrick's Way can only be fully appreciated with at least some understanding of just how much history, politics, culture, and religion has gone into making the land what it is. Fortunately, the tour guides are well equipped to grant those they take with them a glimpse into this long forgotten world.

"The history, the politics, and the Christianity are all in the mix," Martina says. So too is the language. An Irish language version of the walk will be running on Sundays, beginning with Sunday July 12. This is a Christian walk from Saul Church to St Patrick's grave led by Irish language enthusiast, Jean O'Neill. And it is hoped that Irish language enthusiasts turn out to join her. You don't need to be fluent in the Irish language to participate fully in this alternative; you need only have an interest in it and the way it relates to the land and all it contains.

Linda Ervine, a prominent Irish speaker, launched the walk on the 12th and walked part of the way with the group. The emphasis on Irish is important to Martina and Elaine: "The beauty of the Irish language walk is that the place names in Irish unlock the history of the landscape." A small insight into this is that the origin of the name 'Saul', with reference to Saul Church, is 'sabhall', which means 'barn' in Gaelic. Saul Church is built upon the site of the barn that the chieftain gifted St Patrick, but a knowledge of the Irish language

provides a more direct path to the acquisition of that knowledge.

Martina says: "Patrick succeeded because he knew the language, he understood the people having been enslaved here, and he understood the culture. And so the Irish language is very tied up in the success of Patrick's mission." St Patrick's Way combines all the strands held closest to the Irish heart: God, the land, and the language. It seeks to help us rediscover the sense of Irish mysticism right under our noses. Elaine adds: "St Patrick's Way is a journey of self-discovery. Walking in the footsteps of the great Apostle of Ireland, we taste the mysticism of Patrick, the great treasures he gave to the world, and we imbibe the beauty and history of the Christian faith. St Patrick's Way will go some way to help feed the malnutrition of our souls!"

### “While Downpatrick and its numerous sites of importance are steeped in religious, cultural, historical, and political significance, it's not without its quirks”

With the Covid-19 pandemic still looming over our heads, turning our gaze back to our own shores is worth considering. Martina shares that herself and Elaine were due to walk the Camino in Spain this May, but when their plans were cancelled, they found an "incredible alternative on our doorstep". As the tourism sector reels from the blow this year has dealt it, we must consider how we can help those closest to home. The St. Patrick's Way pilgrim walk is an effort bringing together multiple sources of Irish effort – from The Saint Patrick Centre itself, to Phoenix Natural Gas, who supplied the high viz jackets, to Paddy's Barn, and more, you'd be doing well to find so many sources of Irish renewal in one place.

It appears as though the walk is set to go from strength to strength into the future, too. Complying fully with social distancing guidelines, sixteen is the maximum party number they're currently allowing on each outing.

As we move out into an uncertain world, the one certainty is that spiritual nourishment will be more important than ever. The Christianity, the nature, and the experienced and informative guides seek to provide just that. Based on the review of the first group of triumphant pilgrims, the ruins of Inch Abbey, Saul Church, and the stirring panorama from the peak of Slieve Patrick go a long way towards undoing the stress and anxiety that the last couple of months have built up among us. Both Martina and Elaine are hopeful that their latest contribution to Ireland's spiritual landscape will go some way towards relighting the fire than St Patrick set burning so many years ago.



# Glimpsing the inner life of a city mystic

Matt Talbot's devotion to the Eucharist allowed him to make an offering of his entire life writes **Fr Hugh O'Donnell SDB**

**A**s the centenary of the death of the Venerable Matt Talbot approaches (2025), maybe it's time to recall one of Dublin's acknowledged - though somewhat neglected - holy people. When too narrowly represented as someone who beat his addiction to alcohol and thereby became a beacon of hope to others, we can overlook the fact that his 'unskilled worker' status hid a most refined spiritual life.

As I think about what we know of his 'inner' life it seems that Matt Talbot embodied many of the finer sentiments of Psalm 62. They could almost have been written for him as they attempt to express the inexpressible longings of the heart; "O God you are my God, for you I long, for you my soul is thirsting; my body pines for you like a dry weary land without water".

**“To those who were interested, he would talk about the many saints who inspired him like Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila or the Little Flower of Lisieux”**

Recovering from his addiction to 'drink', he discovered that this desert thirst could only be satisfied from "the fountain of living water" rising up inside him. All those hours spent in the company of Jesus the only way he could satisfy it; "so I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory."

## Appreciation

He was graced with a deep appreciation of the Eucharist as that total outpouring of the heart of God for creation. This enabled him in turn to make a 'eucharist' of his own life, an offering of himself in one prayer of praise - whether at work in the timber yard (he worked from the age of 12 until his death at 69), in spiritual reading or direction, in donating to various charities, supporting workmates, or at home with his mother.

"For your love is better than life". About this he had no doubt. And nothing could distract him from responding to that love, not even the social and political upheavals of the time - the labour disputes (though he was firmly on the side of the poorly paid workers), the dispatch of soldiers to the Great War, the 1916 Easter Rising, the War of Independence



An icon of Matt Talbot.

and the Civil War which followed. He met them all with genuine empathy and an unshakeable trust in God, carrying all those who had died in his heart. He feared no one and would go through any discomfort or military checkpoint to make his rendezvous with the One who had given his life for us.

The writer of this psalm touches on the essence of the mystical life

in the phrase; "my soul shall be filled as with a banquet". Matt, you feel, would have understood this, especially in terms of receiving Holy Communion which seemed to sustain him, in every sense, for the hard day's work ahead - and he was no slacker! He lived on very poor rations even by the standards of the time, (with a nice bit of fasting thrown in!), as though he

had taken to heart the words of Jesus: "so do not worry what you are to eat or what you are to drink, your heavenly Father knows what you need".

## Psalmist

Where the psalmist says: "on you I muse through the night for you have been my help", we can easily think of Matt rising from his hard bed long

before dawn to pray and converse with the Blessed Mother and her Son until it was time to leave the house for Mass some hours later. "In your name I will life up my hands" might well describe a gesture that Matt often made in those moments as he stretched out his arms in welcome, unaware of his own mother who on occasion observed him.

**“As I think about what we know of his 'inner' life it seems that Matt Talbot embodied many of the finer sentiments of Psalm 62”**

Like someone in love, there was always a spring in his step. He had found the object of his desire - "my soul clings to you, your right hand holds me fast". And like a child had realised that he must "cling" to the Father in whose strong hand lay his.

## Rejoice

That he would "rejoice" all his life in this comforting "shadow" is clearly what he did for he had found the pearl of great price beside which everything else seems worthless. To those who were interested, he would talk about the many saints who inspired him like Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila or the Little Flower of Lisieux. He read their lives and their writings like an athlete who wants to see how the great ones had "practised" in the past and draw inspiration from them. For like them he had fallen in love with God.

**“He was graced with a deep appreciation of the Eucharist as that total outpouring of the heart of God for creation”**

At a time when our hearts and souls are thirsting for the God of reality and for real nourishment, we might turn again to Matt Talbot, 'one of our own', who would probably say to us, "well if I can do it, you can do it too". The 'doing' of course is in letting go of the many substitutes that don't satisfy but which prevent us from acquiring a taste for 'the pure drop'.

For a man who had truly 'emptied himself' as a disciple of the Lord for more than 40 years since the day he took the 'pledge' to abstain from alcohol, there is something fitting in that he died on his way to Sunday Mass and was buried on the Feast of Corpus Christi. A servant of God who blessed the streets of his home place by simply walking them, his holiness dressed in second hand clothes.

**i** Fr Hugh O'Donnell SDB is a curate in the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, Sean McDermott Street, where since 1972 the remains of the Servant of God now repose.

**“He was graced with a deep appreciation of the Eucharist as that total outpouring of the heart of God for creation”**



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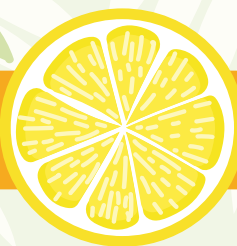
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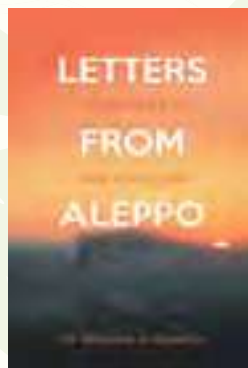
Pope Francis is offering a new inclusive, merciful model of Church. Fr Paddy Byrne has become one of Ireland's top advocates for this model of mercy, examples of which he shares here.

**The Celtic Songlines**  
David Forsythe



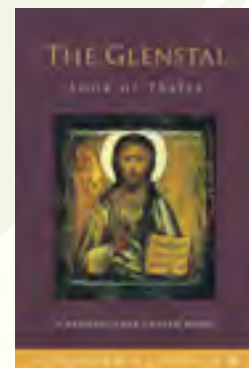
Is there such a thing as 'Celtic music' and if there is, what exactly is it? These are the questions that Dónal Lunny seeks the answers to in *The Celtic Songlines*.

**Letters From Aleppo**  
Ibrahim Alsabagh



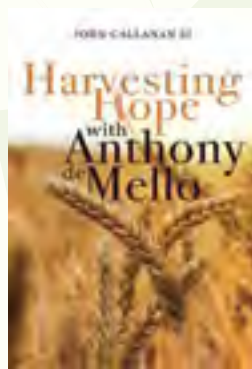
Often writing as bombs fell around his monastery, Father Ibrahim recounts how he and his besieged parishioners live everyday life, their joys, sorrows and cries that become prayers.

**The Glenstal Book of Prayer**  
Simon Sleeman



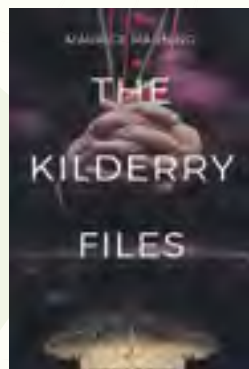
A rich nourishing resource for the dark, mysterious, but exciting journey which is prayer. It draws on passages of the Bible, the experience of modern monks, and the wisdom of the Church.

**Harvesting Hope with Anthony de Mello**  
John Callanan SJ



Using the wisdom of Anthony de Mello, one of the finest spiritual teachers of modern times, Fr John Callanan, an Irish Jesuit, outlines how to deal with life's darker moments.

**The Kilderry Files**  
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A fast-paced thriller, *Kilderry Files* brings together a rich cast of characters who take us headfirst into the heart and paranoia of troubled Ireland, and the hold of Church politics.

**Surprised by Fire**  
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This is not just another self-help book; it will take its readers on a powerful journey towards transforming and healing the blocks that hold us back from living our dream.

**Glendalough: History, Monuments & Legends**  
George McClafferty



Serving as a detailed guide to the monuments of Glendalough, this book will prove an ideal companion to the site, whether you are a recreational visitor or a pilgrim.

**Cancer-A Circle of Seasons**  
Anne Alcock



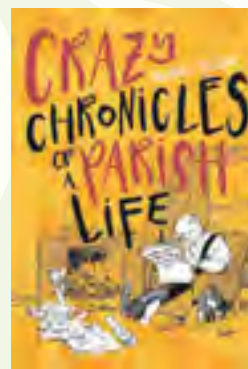
When Anne Alcock was diagnosed with breast cancer, she talked with friends, journaled, prayed and found resources. This book is her way of bringing it all together.

**Where I find God**  
Cora Guinnane & Joanne O'Brien



*Where I find God* is a thought-provoking book where many of Ireland's finest thinkers share where they have found, and continue to find, the divine in their lives.

**Crazy Chronicles of a Parish Life**  
Michael Collins



There is a touch of craziness in every life, and the clerical life is no different. This book is a conglomeration of the good, the bad, and the ridiculous experienced by Fr Michael Collins.

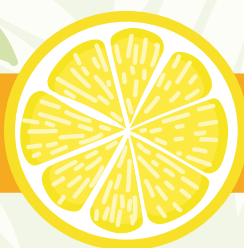
**Already Within**  
Daniel O'Leary



*Already Within* contains the best writing of Daniel O'Leary, a summing up of the main thrust of his books and articles from the past and present.



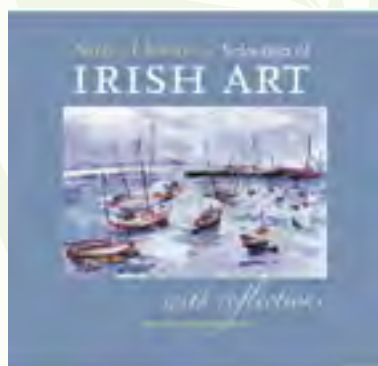
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Maureen MacMahon OP



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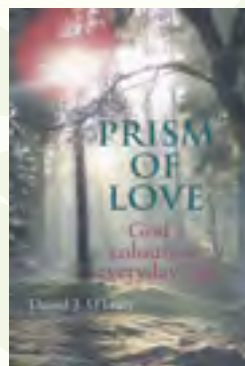
Sr Francesca Kelly



*Fifty Masses with Children* is an invaluable resource for all teachers and priests working with children who are now adapting their celebrations of the Masses to the new liturgy.

**Prism Of Love**

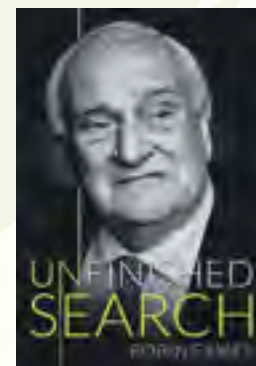
Daniel O'Leary



Daniel O'Leary continues to share his passion for enriching the lives of his readers by enabling them to delve a little deeper, below the surface of what is happening to them, and around them.

**Unfinished Search**

Robin Eames



In this deeply honest and personal account Robin Eames offers a glimpse into the pain and suffering that the Troubles brought to so many across the communities in Northern Ireland. He asks piercing questions about how to handle the past and possible ways forward.

**Best Loved Poems: South of Ireland**

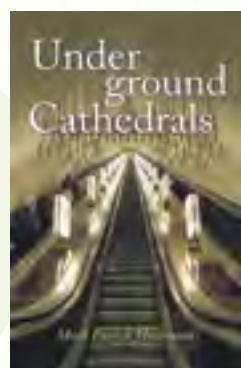
Gabriel Fitzmaurice



This collection of poetry, comprising of contemporary favourites, ninth-century poems, popular songs and ballads will delight the general reader and the poetry specialist alike.

**Underground Cathedrals**

Mark Patrick Hederman OSB



Coupled with very honest comments on the current state of the church in Ireland, and with a reflective meditation on the Murphy Report, Hederman offers a stimulating image of how things might be.

**Padre Pio of Pietrelcina**

Fr Francesco Napolitano



This revisited biography follows the saint from his humble beginnings through his life of profound sacrifice and goodness. It recounts stories of the obstacles he overcame and the people he touched.

**Treasured & Transformed**

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Begin to perceive yourself and the world in a shockingly delightful way. Explore the love and meaning in all your experiences, even the painful ones with Daniel O'Leary's *Treasured & Transformed*.

**A Treasury of Prayers**

Dinah Proctor



Despite our failings, God doesn't stop reminding us how much he loves us. *A Treasury of Prayers* is a gathering of special prayers for different occasions to help us ground ourselves in God always.

**Medjugorje and the Eucharist**

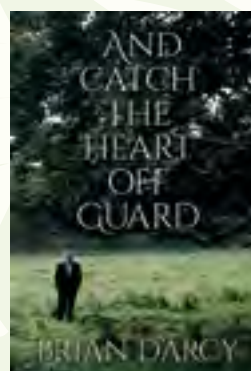
Wayne Weible



The incredible apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Medjugorje are intimately linked with the Holy Eucharist. The heart and soul of these pages are personal witness and experiences that will add to the reader's faith.

**And Catch the Heart Off Guard**

Brian D'Arcy



A quintessentially Brian D'Arcy book, these pages offer a collection of thoughts, reflections and stories from the heart, and look to both challenge and comfort the reader.

**Meeting with Our Lady of Medjugorje**

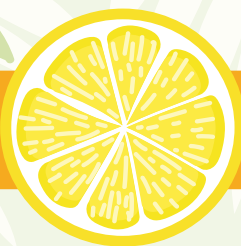
Finbar O'Leary



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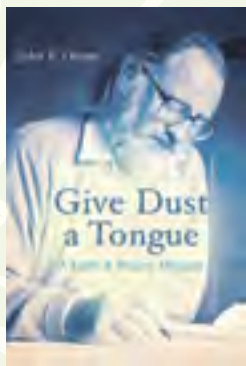
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**Becoming the Presence of God**  
Michael Ford



Wherever we find ourselves on the spiritual map, *Becoming the Presence of God* encourages us to become contemplatives in the world at large.

**Give Dust a Tongue**  
John F. Deane



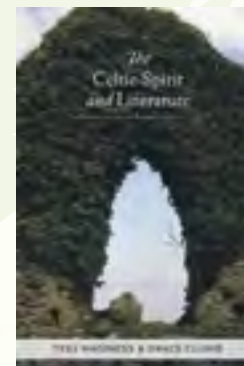
The book uses many of John F Deane's best-loved poems to directly face the question Christ asked: Who do you say that I am?

**Three French Saints – Thérèse of Lisieux**  
Críostóir Ó Floinn



Written in a very simple manner, this book gives a background to the times of St Thérèse and a full account of her life which gave rise to her canonisation by the Church.

**The Celtic Spirit and Literature**  
Grace Clunie & Tess Maginess



*The Celtic Spirit and Literature* offers a lively and thoughtful introduction to the rich and complex world of Celtic Spirit, past, present and to come. It explores many centuries up to the present day.

**Going Up the Holy Mountain**  
Gary Hastings



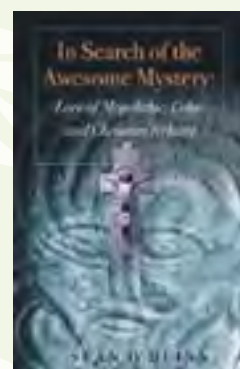
Pilgrimages to Cruach Phádraig, Croagh Patrick, or the Reek, in Co. Mayo are explained and other ways you might use the mountain as a spiritual resource are suggested.

**Martin Luther**  
P. Fintan Lyons OSB



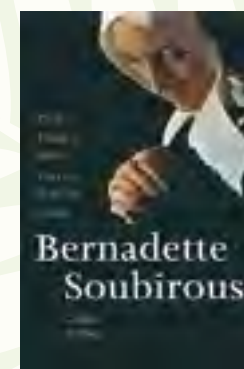
A study of the phenomenon of Luther, and his effects on church and society, leads in the end to recognising that issues which existed then are endemic to Christianity in every century.

**In Search of the Awesome Mystery**  
Seán ó Duinn OSB



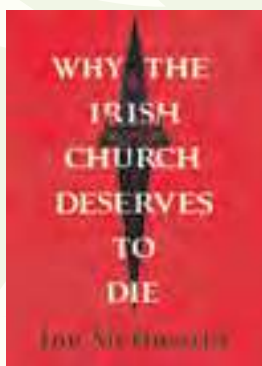
A masterly overview of the stories and continuing practices spanning religious living in Ireland from the earliest times. This adventurous book provides fascinating insights into the mindset and attitudes of the people of Ireland.

**Three French Saints- Bernadette Soubirous**  
Críostóir Ó Floinn



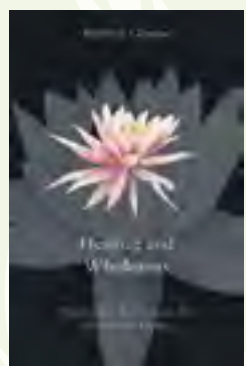
Written in a very simple manner, this book gives a background to the times of St Bernadette and a full account of her life which gave rise to her canonisation by the Church.

**Why the Irish Church Deserves to Die**  
Joe McDonald



Is there any hope for us as an Irish Church? It remains to be seen as to whether we can implement reform never mind renewal.

**Healing & Wholeness**  
Kathleen Glennon



This book is intended for those who are ill or for those who are dying and for their carers. It provides a variety of resource material for both groups.

**Medjugorje: The Last Apparition**  
Wayne Weible



*Medjugorje: The Last Apparition* presents a close examination of what will be the last apparition of the Mother of Jesus and how it will change the world forever.

**Eucharist Ministers**  
Brian Glennon



This little book of reflections for Eucharistic Ministers aims at deepening their commitment to that ministry and their response to the call of the gospel.

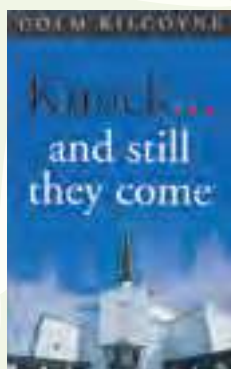


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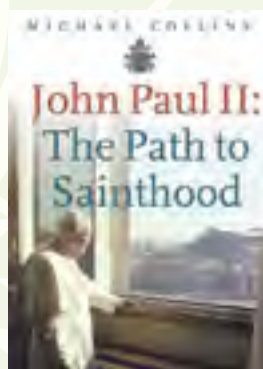
TWO FOR €10

**Knock...and still they come**  
Colm Kilcoyne



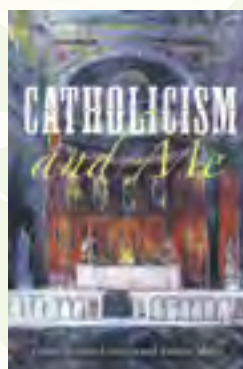
This unique collection of essays and insights includes the experiences of ordinary pilgrims to Knock as recorded in the shrine visitors book, and an interview conducted with the late rector of Knock Shrine, Fr Joe Quinn.

**John Paul II: The Path to Sainthood**  
Michael Collins



Beatified six years after his death, Pope John Paul remains an enigmatic figure. This book traces the life and legacy of the Polish pontiff, examining the journey which led to his beatification.

**Catholicism and Me**  
Eamon Maher & John Littleton



This collection of essays brings together contributors from various backgrounds who describe and critique how Catholicism has impacted both their professional and personal lives.

**Medjugorje: What It Means to Me**  
Editor Louise Hall



This collection of testimonies from Irish people contains deeply personal stories about how they found themselves visiting Medjugorje, their experiences whilst there and the impact it has had on their lives today.

**Apocalypse of Clay**  
Desmond Swan



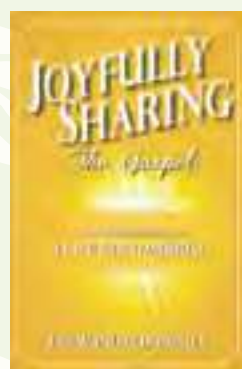
Patrick Kavanagh's epic poem "The Great Hunger", published in 1942, is regarded as his greatest achievement. Here Kavanagh's prophetic insights are illuminated through this bleak poem.

**Three Dancers, One Dance**  
James O'Halloran



A workshop on the vision and practicalities of small Christian groups. Any priest or pastoral worker could begin to build up basic Christian communities using this book.

**Joyfully Sharing the Gospel**  
Desmond O'Donnell



In his first apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis issued a powerful call to all Christians, reminding us of our common mission and our common faith. This book is your guide to Pope Francis' words.

**Thinking Anew**  
Gordon Linney



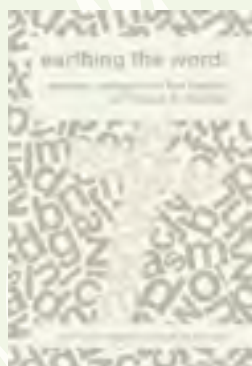
*Thinking Anew* explores the connection between living and believing, asking: What is the meaning of hope in a troubled world? It looks at the meaning and purpose of life from a religious perspective in a time of flux. There are no easy answers, but there is hope for the future.

**Joyce County**  
Ray Burke



Written in an accessible style for the general reader rather than the Joycean specialist, this book contains considerable new information on Joyce and his wife and muse, Nora.

**Earthing the Word**  
Thomas G. Waldron



Monsignor Tom Waldron became very well known as a writer and was considered the best preacher of his generation. This work comprises a selection of the sermons and articles written throughout his life.

**The Celtic Quest**  
Rosemary Power



Celtic Spirituality is a helpful response to the modern move away from traditional spiritualities which have left many in search of a new path. Here, you can find new applications for these practices.

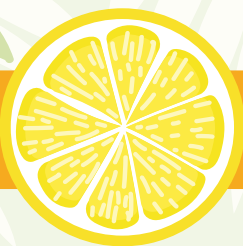
**Columbanus**  
Kate Tristram



St Columbanus is widely regarded as the first of the great Irish Christian missionaries to Europe. His is the earliest voice of Christian Ireland, and this is his story.



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**Eucharist: Enhancing the Prayer**

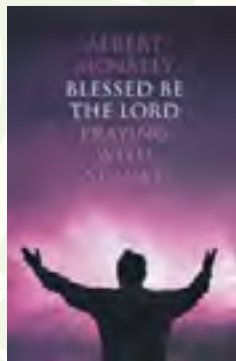
Donal Harrington



Resources offered here can be used to enhance the celebration of the Eucharist as an experience of prayer and contribute to the prayerful quality of the liturgy.

**Blessed Be The Lord**

Albert McNally



This is a workbook for the study, either alone or in groups, of the gospel of St Luke. It offers 21 sessions based on quotations from Luke. These sessions are to be used in a flexible way.

**Wisely Pray the Psalms**

Ambrose Tinsley OSB



A prayerful companion to reading the psalms divided into three sections: reflection on the prayers as a whole, psalm verses with individual reflections and deep insight into particular themes.

**Touched by God**

Anthea Dove



A book of random reflections on the touch of God where Anthea Dove invites us to share in her experience of the Lord through a series of thoughts, stories and poems.

**Three French Saints- Joan Of Arc**

Críostóir Ó Floinn



Written in a very simple manner, this book gives a background to the times of St Joan and a full account of her life which gave rise to her canonisation by the Church.

**Mary Mother of God**

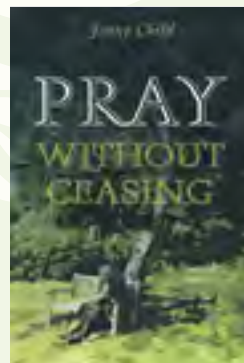
Chris O'Donnell O Carm



Chris O'Donnell takes 40 key references to Mary, from the gospels to the documents of Vatican II, and reflects on the wide range of ideas and presentations of Mary which are available to all of us.

**Pray Without Ceasing**

Jenny Child



A book filled with short inspirational prayers for every day of the year that will be treasured by anyone who likes to have a handy prayer book for reference.

**Being in Christ**

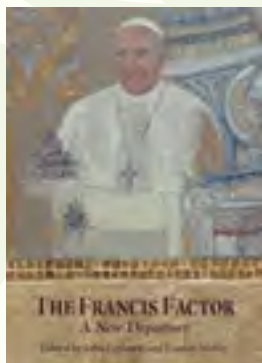
Rev Dr Peter Phillips



This short work is an attempt to explore the implications of God's presence in Christ and to reflect on how we might suitably experience the person of Christ today.

**The Francis Factor**

John Littleton & Eamon Maher



The extraordinary impact of Pope Francis has been phenomenal by any standards. This volume of essays assesses the first year of his papacy and seeks to discover what constitutes the 'Francis Factor'.

**Reaches of the Mind**

Niall Weldon



This book is at once a fascinating portrait of the unexpected memories and experiences that shape the course of our lives, as well as a blueprint for the reader of how to remain active after retirement.

**A New Vision for the Catholic Church**

Gerry O'Hanlon SJ



Theologian Gerry O'Hanlon reflects on the church's crisis post Ferns, Ryan and Murphy Reports. He discusses how the vision of Church as People of God in the Second Vatican Council failed to be implemented.

**Pope Benedict XVI: Successor to Peter**

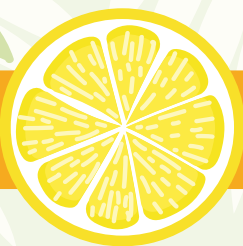
Michael Collins



Fr Michael Collins has an intimate knowledge of Vatican affairs and has written a balanced biography of the Pope Benedict XVI for those who would like to know him better.



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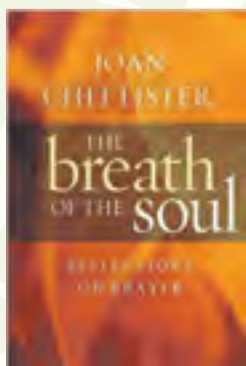
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**Brendan Book Of Prayer**  
James O'Halloran SBD



*The Brendan Book of Prayer* is tailor-made for religious groups helping them to engage constructively with the gospel and base their prayers, spontaneous and other, in the word of God.

**The breath of the soul**  
Joan D. Chittister



This simple little book attends to what we human beings are most inclined to forget, preparing for and engaging in prayer. It is an examination of what we ourselves must bring to the discipline of prayer.

**A Bishop Could Not Do Otherwise**  
Compiled & Edited Míceál O'Neill



An intimate view of the man who became a champion of human rights, the voice of mission at the Second Vatican Council and a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

**I Am Mary, I Am Woman**  
Caroline Renehan



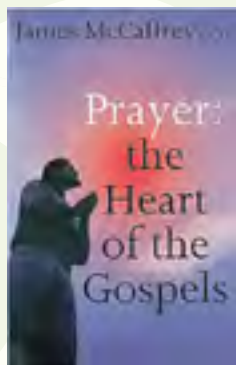
Caroline Renehan writes about Mary of Nazareth in terms of the doctrine, images and practices ascribed to her, while also examining Marian theology as a whole.

**Shadows on the Journey**  
Alan Abernethy



Faith is understood by Alan Abernethy as a journey with Jesus. During a period of extended sick leave, he reflected on this journey lived out in the context of ordained ministry in the Church of Ireland.

**Prayer: The Heart of the Gospels**  
James McCaffrey



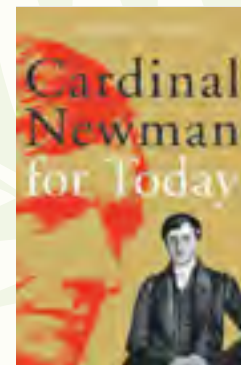
After a substantial preface on how to read the gospels, there is a chapter on each of the four gospels, showing how prayer features in each and highlighting the similarities and differences that arise.

**At Playschool with Mary my Mother**  
Jack McArdle



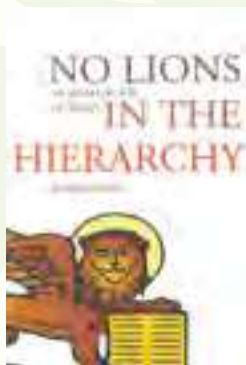
Fr McArdle writes: As someone who spent many years as a teacher, I appreciate the treasure of having a good teacher. I could think of no greater teacher than Mary my Mother.

**Cardinal Newman for Today**  
Thomas Norris



*Cardinal Newman for Today* presents John Henry Newman's life, his encounter with the wisdom of antiquity, his discovery of divine revelation and his encounter with the Fathers of the Church.

**No Lions in the Hierarchy**  
Joseph Dunn



In the course of Fr Dunne's work in film production, he had to think carefully about the major issues facing the Church today, often with the input of interesting people from all walks of life.

**The Day he Died**  
Mathew Byrne



This is a rich and very informative companion to the passion story of Jesus in the gospel of Luke. Mathew Byrne brings the story to life in all its horror and sadness.

**Endangered Species**  
Fr Jerry Daly



The memoir of Fr Jerry Daly, a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart order who was a priest and missionary for over fifty years.

**A Christmas Truce Carol**  
James O'Halloran



Jim O'Halloran's novel is set in the trenches of World War I and tells the story of Irish soldiers in British uniforms, fighting Germans, to win Home Rule for Ireland.



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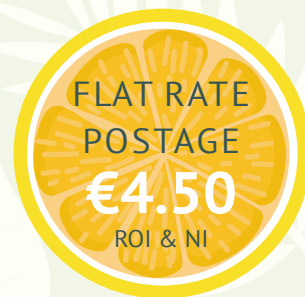
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# Letter from Rome

## Virtual Renaissance...



Junno Arocho Esteves

As museums and historical sites in Italy slowly begin opening their doors after several months of lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, technology may prove to be the 'Renaissance' the country's tourism industry desperately needs.

Recently, countries within the European Union have opened their borders following months of lockdowns and restrictions. However, nonessential travel from countries still reeling from the increasing number of infections – including the US, Brazil and Russia – is still barred.

The travel restrictions, consequently, have caused once-bustling tourist hotspots in Rome during the summer months to be practically empty.

Nevertheless, as the saying goes, necessity is truly the mother of invention.

The pandemic dramatically changed the way in which people communicate, purchase and sell goods and services, as well as engaging in activities, like visiting museums, all with a click of a mouse or a swipe on a tablet.

Already in 2018, the Vatican Museums worked on developing seamless virtual walkthroughs of its vast collections with a 360-degree, high-definition view available through its website, [www.museivaticani.va](http://www.museivaticani.va).

Originally conceived as a way of temporarily resolving accessibility issues, particularly for visitors using wheelchairs, the virtual tours have become a way for would-be tourists unable to travel to take in the breath-taking masterpieces on display in the museums' hallowed halls.

Yet, the concept of virtual tourism may also provide a much-needed boost to Italy's ailing tourism industry post-lockdown, especially for many guides who have been left on the wayside.

### Livelihood

According to a statement by Federturismo Confindustria, a national association of Italy's travel and tourism companies, the first four months of 2020 saw a 40% drop in international tourism and the loss of an estimated €175 billion in tourism in the country.

While the Italian government has taken a measured approach in allowing groups to visit museums and public sites, ensuring the health and safety of visitors and

A visitor wears a mask for protection from the coronavirus while touring the Vatican Museums in February. Photo: CNS



...online tourism breathes new life into ailing industry

residents, it also threatens the livelihood of tour guides as well as an industry that makes up an estimated 13.3% of Italy's gross domestic product.

"It's kind of funny to find out that as far as the government is concerned, we are sort of 'less than the less than,' and so I think it's been very difficult for us to find ourselves not only out of work, but with really no plan of how to bring us back into the picture," Rome-based art historian Elizabeth Lev told *Catholic News Service*.

However, Italy's lockdown prompted Dr Lev to create the Masters' Gallery Rome, a new virtual tour website where visitors not only contemplate the beauty and wonders of Rome's artistic heritage, but also learn their origins from experienced historians and scholars.

"So far, there's really nothing on the horizon to suggest that there's any plan to put forth our work, our expertise, our years of study, which doesn't seem to be something that the government or the tourism industry in Italy seems to value in any way," she said. "So, we thought

we would show people what we're worth."

Visitors of the new website, <https://mastersgalleryrome.teachable.com/>, can enrol in courses where they can discover the wonders of St Peter's Basilica, unearth the archaeological marvels of the Roman port city of Ostia Antica or learn about the inspiration behind the works of Caravaggio.

**“The benefits of the Masters' Gallery Rome go beyond the practical reasons of being able to see and learn about historical sites”**

Dr Lev told *CNS* that what separates the Masters' Gallery Rome from most virtual tours already available online is “the idea of really breaking down the information, breaking down what it is you're seeing, explaining it, sharing it, pulling out the bits of knowledge that you need to know in order to understand the image”.

The benefits of the Masters' Gallery Rome, she noted, go beyond the practical reasons of being able to see and learn about historical sites and artistic depictions in a time when access to such things are greatly limited.

It also serves as a preparation that allows future tourists and pilgrims to truly appreciate Rome's vast heritage and “stimulate a hunger on the part of visitors to see parts of Rome that are not on the Top 10 TripAdvisor reviews”, she said.

“Tourism began really in the 18th Century as ‘The Grand Tour,’ where people prepared before they came because travelling was a

privilege, travelling was an honour, travelling was something that was very difficult, often dangerous,” Dr Lev said. “So, in order to get the most out of that experience, people went to the trouble of reading and learning; many of them learned Latin and Greek to begin ‘The Grand Tour’.

### Tsunami

“I'm not suggesting you need to learn Latin and Greek, but a little bit of getting ready and knowing what you're going to see will only make your experience greater and allow you to really move beyond the tsunami of information you receive once you get here and begin to open yourself up to how the art, the history and the Faith all work together,” she said.

As many parents are confronted with the prospect of continuing to home-school for the rest of the year, Dr Lev said the Masters' Gallery Rome can also be helpful in presenting “history, humanities, art, the things that are being dropped by the wayside and to be able to instil them in the next generation”.

For more information on Masters' Gallery Rome: <https://mastersgalleryrome.teachable.com/>

Junno Arocho Esteves is a writer with the Catholic News Service.

**“It's kind of funny to find out that as far as the government is concerned, we are sort of 'less than the less than'”**



Dr Elizabeth Lev.





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Man charged in arson attack on Catholic Church in Florida

● A man accused of setting a Florida church on fire is being held without bail on charges that include attempted second-degree murder and arson.

The Marion County Sheriff's Office charged Steven Shields, 23, on Saturday, hours after detectives say he rammed a minivan through the front door of Queen of Peace Catholic Church in Ocala, doused the foyer with gasoline and set it on fire, causing extensive damage.

Several people were inside preparing for Mass when the attack occurred early on Saturday, but no one was hurt.

According to court documents, Mr Shields told detectives he is mentally ill but had stopped taking his medication, the Ocala Star-Banner reported.

Mr Shields told detectives what he did was "awesome" and he smiled and laughed, the affidavit said. He told detectives he was "on a mission", called himself "king" and that he has problems with the Catholic Church and referenced passages in the Bible's Book of Revelations.

### Virgin Mary statue at Boston church scorched

● Police in the US city of Boston say they are investigating vandalism to a statue of the Virgin Mary outside a Catholic church in the city.

Officers responded to St Peter's parish in the city's Dorchester neighbourhood on Saturday evening, according to a post on the department's website.

Fire investigators at the scene told police that someone had set fire to plastic flowers, which were in the hands of the statue, causing the face and upper body of the statue to be burned and marred with scorch marks [photo above].

No arrests were announced.



### Mass celebrated after fire damages centuries-old mission church

● Mass was celebrated on Sunday on the grounds of a historic Catholic church in Southern California that had been heavily damaged by fire a day earlier [above].

The blaze early on Saturday destroyed the rooftop and most of the interior of San Gabriel Mission, which was undergoing renovation to mark its upcoming 250th anniversary celebration.

Archbishop Jose Gomez presided over Sunday's Mass at a chapel near the burned sanctuary.

Parishioner Licia Beck said she was saddened by news of the fire at her home parish.

She was among a crowd of worshipers which arrived early to pray the rosary before the Mass.

"I'm hoping that more people will show up throughout the day," Ms Beck said. "We need to pray for our churches and our people that they're safe."

Parishioners wore masks and kept a distance from each other because of the coronavirus epidemic.

## EU is 'complicit' in persecution of Christians warns MEP

A Hungarian Christian Democrat member of the European Parliament has warned that growing secularism is to blame for Europe's silence on human rights violations against religious minorities.

As the parliament debated the 2019 human rights annual report, György Hölvényi MEP insisted that "if Europe, guided by extreme secularism, is silent on violations against religious minorities, it commits complicity in the persecution and death of millions of people around the world".

### Progress

The EPP Group politician – the same bloc as Fine Gael – insisted that "we can assess as a substantial progress that the discrimination and persecution of religious minorities receive special attention in the report.

"It is also a result of the persistent work of several of my fellow colleagues that we have come this far. However, there are unfortunately differences between the report



György Hölvényi.

and the reality as well."

Mr Hölvényi warned that it is long-time experience that EU does not put enough pressure on governments that violate religious freedom in the world. Therefore, he said, repressive regimes simply see the EU attitude as a consent. As a result, the governments concerned are free to con-

tinue violations, including against religious minorities.

"What needs to be done is clear: Europe must be strong and consistent. EU diplomacy must speak up whenever possible to protect persons and communities persecuted for their religious beliefs, both bilaterally and multilaterally," he said.

He said that "for Europe, taking action to protect persecuted Christians is not only a religious but a human rights issue. Persecuted communities and strangely also their persecutors, simply see Europe as their potential main supporter worldwide, the carrier of the Christian heritage."

## Hard-hit Italian hospital has no more Covid-19 patients in intensive care

Staff at the Pope John XXIII hospital in Bergamo – once the epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic in Italy – have announced that they have no more patients with coronavirus in their intensive care unit.

After 137 days of trying to keep critically ill patients alive, staff gathered for a moment of silence to remember those who passed away in their wards, followed by applause for the more than 400 hospital workers in the department.

Maria Beatrice Stasi, director general of the hospital, told reporters they had discharged the last patient to recover from Covid-19, marking "a moment of great emotion" and relief as the intensive care unit can now

accommodate other patients and staff can return to their regular uniforms.

At the worst point of the crisis, which began with their first patient being admitted on February 23, the ICU had more than 100 patients intubated.

### Exceptional effort

Luca Lorini, head of the intensive care and reanimation department, told reporters that the exceptional effort and teamwork by staff led them to the "great result" of having no more Covid-19 patients in their unit.

"We had the courage to tell the truth" about the numbers of critically ill people they were treating, he said, and "what we did during this [early] phase saved a piece of the world," he

told *Bergamo News*. "We showed we could do it with the little information and resources we had" at the start of the outbreak, but now "we must not be unprepared, we must prepare for a future that no scientist can foresee, but we must be ready for another return of Covid," he said.

"People must maintain an attitude of caution; it will do no harm to keep washing hands or wear a face mask until we get to zero infections, zero patients and zero dead" from the coronavirus, he told the newspaper.

Meanwhile, staff at the San Donato hospital in Milan, which cared for 600 Covid-19 patients, has reported no new positive cases admitted to the hospital in the past three weeks.

## Venezuela bishops denounce 'general chaos' under Maduro

Venezuela's bishops say they can't stand by while the government of President Nicolas Maduro strengthens its "dictatorial line" and the country's people suffer hunger and unemployment, feeling "more unprotected" every day.

"We live immersed in general chaos at all levels of social and personal life," the bishops wrote in a statement at the end of their general assembly, held online to prevent the

spread of coronavirus.

They denounced that public services are "often non-existent;" that political action is "divorced from the common good;" that insecurity and helplessness continue to grow; that family life is broken by the fact that most cannot meet basic needs; that an inflationary and dollarised economy hurts "almost the entire population;" and that education is paralysed.

The bishops wrote that the Covid-19 pandemic is "expanding exponentially" and that it's been a paralysing element of a substantial part of ordinary activities.

### Crisis

It highlights, they said, "the crisis already present, notably aggravated by the weakness of the health system, the sad situation experienced by emigrants who return to the

country without resources or a safe life expectancy, as well as the shortage of gasoline."

"Each day, the people feel more unprotected, due to... the lack of institutions that give fair answers to human rights violations," they argue.

According to the bishops, the people of Venezuela want to live in a democracy, and for this to be possible, it's necessary to hold elections that are impartial.





Edited by Chai Brady  
chai@irishcatholic.ie

## Water world



Children cool off during hot summer weather in a public fountain in Toulouse, France. Photo: CNS

# Survey of bishops reveals how pandemic has shaken parish life

Nearly every US bishop responding to a survey said the coronavirus pandemic has seriously affected the celebration of the sacraments and rites and sacramental preparation programmes in their dioceses.

Confirmations, first Communions, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and other sacramental preparation were the ministries most often cited by the bishops as being affected, according to the survey conducted by the Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University.

In addition, six out of 10 bishops said that since March when restrictions on ministry and Mass attendance were put in place, the morale of priests, lay ecclesial ministers, deacons and chancery staff has been at least somewhat affected, according to the findings released on July 9.

Titled Ministry in the Midst of Pandemic, the survey asked bishops about six areas of concern that have arisen in dioceses since the pandemic caused public Masses to be suspended and the celebration of sacraments to be restricted or postponed.

### Provisions

The questions focused on the pandemic's effect on dioceses; special pastoral provisions issued by dioceses; financial concerns raised by the pandemic; actions to address a diocese's financial health; the pandemic effect's on parish assessments; and diocesan technological assistance to schools and parishes.

When it came to specific sacraments, 99% of bishops said confirmation had been very much or somewhat affected; 99% said that about first Communion;

92%, about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process; and 94%, about other sacramental preparation programmes.

Similar numbers of respondents said the celebration of marriages (98%), baptisms (91%) and funerals (93%) also had been at least somewhat affected.

In addition, the survey found the morale of church staff members has been very much or somewhat affected. Sixty percent of bishops said their morale had been affected. Higher numbers of respondents said the morale of lay ecclesial ministers (71%), priests (68%), chancery staff (67%) and deacons (62%) had been affected.

Meanwhile, 54% of bishops said the ability of Catholic Charities to serve people in need had been impacted as well.

## South African church attack: Five dead after 'hostage situation'

Five people have been killed after attackers stormed a South African church, reportedly amid an argument over its leadership.

South African police said they had rescued men, women and children from a 'hostage situation' on the outskirts of Johannesburg on Saturday morning. They

have also arrested at least 40 people, and seized dozens of weapons. Eyewitnesses say the men who stormed the International Pentecostal Holiness Church were part of a splinter group.

The church's leadership has reportedly been the subject of infighting since its former leader died in 2016.

Police had previously been called to the church following a shoot-out between members in 2018, South Africa's IOL reported.

The year before, the church's finances had come under the spotlight, amid allegations some 110m rand (€5.7m) had gone missing, according to The Sowetan

newspaper.

On Saturday, police were called to the church in Zuurbekom in the West Rand at 3am local time.

According to national police spokesperson Brigadier Vish Naidoo, a group of attackers indicated to those inside "that they were coming to take over the premises".



## Vatican roundup

### Pope 'pained' as landmark church to become a mosque

● Pope Francis has said he is "pained" by Turkey's decision to convert Istanbul's Hagia Sophia back into a mosque.

Speaking at the Vatican on Sunday, the Pontiff added that his "thoughts go to Istanbul".

Hagia Sophia was built as a Christian cathedral nearly 1,500 years ago and turned into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of 1453.

The Unesco World Heritage Site became a museum in 1934 under Turkish Republic founding father Mustafa Ataturk.

But late last week, a Turkish court annulled the site's museum status, saying its use as anything other than a mosque was "not possible legally".

Pope Francis confined himself to a few words on the issue: "My thoughts go to Istanbul. I think of Santa Sophia and I am very pained."

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the first Muslim prayers would be held in Hagia Sophia on July 24.

Shortly after the announcement, the first call to prayer was recited at the site and broadcast on all of Turkey's main news channels. Hagia Sophia's social media channels have also been taken down.

### Vatican: Seafarers deserve 'esteem and gratitude' during pandemic

● The Vatican is highlighting the plight of maritime workers during the pandemic, saying bans on shore leave are severely stressing crews stuck aboard ship, some to the point of suicide.

Cardinal Peter A. Turkson, who heads a Vatican office dealing with issues of human development, said in a message on Sunday that maritime workers "really

deserve our esteem and gratitude" for ensuring movement of goods for a "healthy global economy" while much of the world is in lockdown to combat spread of Covid-19 infection.

He said that tens of thousands of seafarers who were due to fly home for leave between long stints at sea were prevented from doing so due to lockdown rules.

### Francis puts five candidates a step closer to sainthood

● Pope Francis has authorised the promulgation of decrees concerning five candidates for sainthood. Among the five decrees promulgated at the weekend, one is regarding a miracle and the rest are on heroic virtues.

A miracle has been recognised through the intercession Venerable Servant of God Maria Antonia Samà, an Italian layperson. She was born on March 2, 1875, in Sant'Andrea Jonio and died there on May 27, 1953. This clears her for beatification. As a child, Venerable Maria was struck by a serious illness. Bed-ridden, she bore her suffering with faith and invited those visiting her to have faith in God.

Pope Francis also authorised the promulgation of four decrees regarding the heroic virtues of the following candidates:

● Servant of God Eusebio Francesco Chini (known as Kino), an Italian Jesuit priest who was born on August 10, 1645, in Segno, and died in Magdalena, Mexico, on March 15, 1711.

● Servant of God Mariano José de Ibarguengoitia y Zuloaga of Spain, a diocesan priest who co-founded the Institute of the Servants of Jesus of Charity. Born in Bilbao on September 8, 1887, he died there on January 31, 1888.

● Servant of God Maria Félix Torres of Spain, the foundress of the Company of the Saviour. She was born on August 25, 1907, in Albelda, and died in Madrid, on January 12, 2001.

● Servant of God Angiolino Bonetta of Italy, a teenager belonging to the Association of Silent Workers of the Cross. He was born on September 18, 1948, in Cigole, and died there at the age of 14 on January 28, 1963.



# Letters

Post to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic,  
23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2,  
or email: letters@irishcatholic.ie

## Letter of the week

### By preserving life society is 'truly progressive'

**Dear Editor,** If we want an image of pure innocence and joy just look at lambs as they prance around without a care in the world in our fields. Picture this. You're in a restaurant enjoying your meal and, as you are about to put a piece of succulent, tasty lamb into your mouth, the person besides you whispers to you: "Do you know how they slaughter lambs?"

Your look-away moment has arrived. Forehead frowns appear and your taste buds look south as you ponder the question. Your conscience peeks over the horizon.

We all experience such 'I don't want to know' moments in our daily lives but surely the latest statistics that

over 7,000 abortions were performed last year in Ireland for social reasons should give us pause for thought.

These reasons are not because of any possible life-limiting or similar medical conditions in the unborn baby but rather for reasons of simple inconvenience, e.g. having a baby now would adversely affect my career, my physique, my lifestyle, my financial condition, my relationship with my boyfriend, husband, etc.

Just 7,000 reasons to terminate the most joyous celebration of bringing a completely innocent human being into the world.

Of course, such negative feelings can occur in pregnant women but

have we ever met a woman who is not grateful that she did not give in or surrender to them and have an abortion?

GPs are paid €450 by our State for every abortion they perform...no doubt, this is all in the name of 'liberty and progress'.

If we think about it, a truly progressive society is one which treats each of its citizens, born or not yet born, with an inherent value and not as something devoid of value, that can be discarded as someone's else's choice.

*Yours etc.,  
James Maher,  
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.*

### Some see abortion as a 'done deal'

**Dear Editor,** Every time I turn on the radio, I hear about the 2,300 people who have sadly lost their lives due to the coronavirus pandemic on the island of Ireland. This is a terrible tragedy for their families, and communities will acutely feel the loss of cherished members of society.

In marked contrast, 7,041 unborn children lost their lives due to Ireland's new abortion regime in just one year and the figures barely merited a mention in the mainstream media.

As far as our betters are concerned, abortion is a done deal and the killing of unborn children is just one of those things. Those of us who disagree must stand up and speak for those who are unable to speak for themselves.

*Yours etc.,  
Mattie O'Donnell,  
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.*



### Walls built around women with crisis pregnancies

**Dear Editor,** The report [6,666 abortions in Ireland last year] was welcomed by both Amnesty International and the Irish Family Planning Association as an indication that Ireland was moving in the right direction in the provision of reproductive services.

However, they both cautioned that there was more to do to ensure that abortion was as accessible as possible throughout every county in the country.

As followers of Christ, many of us believe that every human being was created in the image and likeness of God with a unique dignity. Everyone must surely admit to the truth of the following statement: "None of us is responsible for our own existence."

Ponder that for a moment. I had no hand, act or part in my coming into being. Logically the same must hold true for my parents and so on and on back along

the generations. Every new existence from conception is a new universe. He or she is going to last forever. The frightening reality in cases of abortion is that the new lives are not being terminated, but rather are being dispatched prematurely to eternal life, where they will live forever.

Undoubtedly nobody embarks lightly on the path to having an abortion without suffering enormous stress and doubts. For whatever reason there is a

sound wall put in place in this country when it comes to women who have suffered emotionally after having abortions.

As a society we can do so much more to support women in crisis pregnancies. Unfortunately, what this legislation has also achieved is to succeed in closing that door just another bit tighter.

*Yours etc.,  
Don Cahalane,  
Beaumont,  
Co. Cork.*

### New inspiration for Catholic married couples

**Dear Editor,** Louis and Zeilie Martin were the first married couple to be canonised together in the history of the Catholic Church. And although they lived 150 years ago, they are in some ways a rather romantic couple. Louis was a watchmaker and Zeilie Geurin became a successful lacemaker, as well as being a homemaker for their children.

The family lived a comfortable lifestyle, but they also suffered the loss of four children at an early age and had to deal with a rebellious daughter. Their devotion never wavered, however. The couple lived modestly, reached out to

the poor and the needy, and led daily prayer in the household.

In 1877, at age 45, Zeile Martin died of breast cancer after only 19 years of marriage, leaving Louis a widower and having to look after his children by himself.

They are saints because through their married life, they grew together in holiness. While living a normal and happy life, Louis and Zeile showed their children the path to holiness and gave them space to become what God was calling them to be.

The miracle that allowed for their

canonisation was the curing of a little girl called Carmen, born prematurely and with multiple life-threatening complications.

Carmen suffered a major brain haemorrhage, which could have caused irreversible brain damage.

Her parents prayed for the Martins' intercession and the result was that Carmen recovered completely. Pope Francis canonised the Martins in 2015. Their feast day is July 12.

*Yours etc.,  
Malachy Doyle,  
Toome, Co. Antrim.*

## facebook community

Each week we publish a selection of comments from The Irish Catholic Facebook page

### New Govt could 'kick Church out of education' warns Senator

It's time for Church get out of education and start evangelisation. – **Jayan Joseph**

It's becoming a very sad Ireland. – **Colette Divers**

Education is a form of evangelism. Not so much through the curriculum but also through witnessing to the way of life. No well educated country with civil rights denies religions a right to create schools and educate children whose parents wish to send them there. That narrow-minded view is not multicultural and is dangerous. Quite frankly, that view is totally ignorant. Yes the State funds Catholic education but the reality is in many cases the land is owned by the Church. The State needs to build its own schools. It also needs to allow for freedom of religious expression and religious education. That senator sounds like an ignorant power-crazed fool. Those imposing views do not belong to a modern, open democracy. Frankly, history tells us that people who are very narrow-minded and controlling are dangerous and bring misery to others. – **Pamela Foley**

It's time for people to stop interfering in Catholic education that was provided for children in Ireland by those whom the parents choose. Stop interfering. – **Jacinta Newell**

What do you think? Join in the conversation on The Irish Catholic Facebook page

## Protecting integrity of Catholic schools

**Dear Editor,** On your front page [IC 08/07/2020], the danger facing Catholic schools from this new Government was unequivocally revealed.

The Programme for Government's section on education is concerning to say the least. There has long been a push to create a one-size-fits all model of sexual education and religious education and how better to implement this than by a Citizens' Assembly, which has proven in the past to be a pseudo democratic process with an obvious agenda – if we have learned anything from the one that led to the abortion referendum in 2018.

Catholic schools, which have proven themselves to be some of the finest in our country, are constantly unfairly demonised. Parents who want to preserve the integrity of Catholic schools must make their voices heard and show their willingness to protect what many have taken for granted, as there could be an uphill battle forthcoming.

*Yours etc.,  
Mark O'Donoghue,  
Clontarf,  
Co. Dublin.*

## 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



**FRANCE:** Mass is celebrated in the grotto at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes – the shrine will hold a worldwide virtual pilgrimage today (July 16), the anniversary of the last apparition of Mary.



**USA:** A statue of St Kateri Tekakwitha is seen at Our Lady of the Island Shrine in Manorville, New York. The saint's feast day was celebrated on July 14; she was first Native American to be canonised and was elevated to sainthood by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. Photos: CNS



**ISRAEL:** A worshipper wearing a protective mask lights a candle as she visits the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem's Old City.



**ITALY:** A mural depicting a nurse embracing the shape of Italy is posted on Pope John XXIII Hospital in solidarity with the health workers in Bergamo. Staff at the hospital, once the epicenter of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country, announced there were no more patients with coronavirus in the intensive care unit.



**USA:** Young people wait to go to Confession outside St Anthony's Catholic Church in North Beach, Maryland.



**USA:** Fr Albert Ranallo, coordinator for Pastoral Care for Health Facilities in the Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island, gets an update on the status of patients to whom he will administer the Sacrament of the Sick.



# Some coping

## SECRETS

# worth knowing!



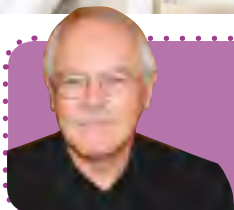
**M**onks have secrets worth knowing, and these can be invaluable when a coronavirus pandemic is forcing millions of us to live like monks.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, millions of us have been forced to stay at home, work from home, practice social-distancing from everyone except those in our own houses and have minimal social contact with the outside. In a manner of speaking, this has turned many of us into monks, like it or not. What's the secret to thrive there?

Well, I'm not a monk, nor a mental health expert, so what I share here isn't exactly the rule of St Benedict or a series of professional mental health tips. It's the fruit of what I've learned from monks and from living in the give-and-take of a religious community for 50 years.

Here are ten counsels for living when we are, in effect, housebound, that is, living in a situation wherein we don't have a lot of privacy, have to do a lot of living within a very small circle, face long hours wherein we have to struggle to find things that energise us and wherein we find ourselves for good stretches of time frustrated, bored, impatient and lethargic. How does one survive and thrive in that situation?

**1. Create a routine** – That's the key. It's what monks do. Create a



## Fr Rolheiser

detailed routine for the hours of your day as you would a financial budget. Make this very practical: list the things you need to do each day and slot them into a concrete timetable and then stick to that as a discipline, even when it seems rigid and oppressive. Resist the temptation to simply go with the flow of your energy and mood or to lean on entertainment and whatever distractions can be found to get you through your days and nights.

**2. Wash and dress your body each day**, as if you were going out into the world and meeting people. Resist the temptation to cheat on hygiene, dress, and make-up. Don't spend the morning in your pajamas, wash and dress-up. When you don't do this, what are you

saying to your family? They aren't worth the effort? And what are you saying to yourself. I'm not worth the effort? Slovenliness invariably becomes lethargy and acedia.

**3. Look beyond yourself** and your needs each day to see others and their hurts and frustrations. You're not in this alone; the others are enduring exactly what you are. Nothing will make your day harder to endure than excessive self-focus and self-pity.

**4. Find a place to be alone for some time every day** – and offer others that same courtesy. Don't apologise that you need time away, to be by yourself. That's an imperative for mental health, not a selfish claim. Give others that space. Sometimes you need to be

**“On the schedule you create for yourself, mark in at least a half hour or an hour each day for some contemplative practice: pray, read scripture, read from a serious book, journal, paint a picture, paint a fence...”**

apart, not just for your own sake but for the sake of the others.

Monks live an intense community life, but each also has a private cell within which to retreat.

**“Tensions will arise when living in a fishbowl. Monks have community meetings to sort out those tensions. Talk tensions through honestly with each other, but carefully”**

**5. Have a contemplative practice each day that includes prayer.**

On the schedule you create for yourself, mark in at least a half hour or an hour each day for some contemplative practice: pray, read scripture, read from a serious book, journal, paint a picture, paint a fence, create an artifact, fix something, garden, write poetry, write a song, begin a memoir, write a long letter to someone you haven't seen for years, whatever; but do something that's freeing for your soul and have it include some prayer.

**6. Practice 'Sabbath' daily.** Sabbath need not be a day; it can be an hour. Give yourself something very particular to look forward to each day, something enjoyable and sensual: a hot bath, a glass of wine, a cigar on the patio, a rerun of a favorite old

sitcom, a nap in the shade in a lawn chair, anything – as long as it's done purely for enjoyment. Make this a discipline.

**7. Practice 'Sabbath' weekly.** Make sure that only six days of the week are locked into your set routine. Break the routine once a week. Set one day apart for enjoyment, one day when you may eat pancakes for breakfast in your pajamas.

**8. Challenge yourself with something new.** Stretch yourself by trying something new. Learn a new language, take up a new hobby, learn to play an instrument. This is an opportunity you've never had.

**9. Talk through the tensions that arise within your house – though carefully.** Tensions will arise when living in a fishbowl. Monks have community meetings to sort out those tensions. Talk tensions through honestly with each other, but carefully; hurtful remarks sometimes never quite heal.

**10. Take care of your body.** We aren't disembodied spirits. Be attentive to your body. Get enough exercise each day to keep your body energised. Be careful not to use food as a compensation for your enforced monasticism. Monks are careful about their diet – except on feast days.

Monks do have secrets worth knowing!



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, July 16, 2020

**Personal Profile**  
Building  
community spirit  
and connection

Page 34



## Dealing with dyslexia during lockdown



**M**any parents have struggled to effectively help their children with schoolwork during lockdown; for parents of children with dyslexia, it's even more challenging.

Experts suggest that around 10% of children in Ireland are affected by dyslexia. This suggests that there are many school children in Ireland struggling with basic reading and spelling skills.

Even teachers struggle to deal with this 'high incident' issue within mainstream classes. In fact, recent research found that 97% of teachers agree



**Ruadhán Jones**  
discusses how children  
can improve their  
word skills at home

they need and would benefit from training on dyslexia.

Given the prevalence of dyslexia and the difficulties teachers find in dealing with it, it's not a surprise that parents face an uphill challenge. The current Covid-19 restrictions and long summer break only exacerbate this issue.

### What is dyslexia?

Given how fundamental reading and writing skills are for most walks of life, being aware of how to identify and address dyslexia is important. Dyslexia is a common type of learning difficulty that mainly affects the skills involved in reading and spelling.

It is a spectrum disorder, which means that symptoms can range from very mild to very severe. It's important to remember that there's no connection between dyslexia and intelligence; how difficult a child finds reading and spelling is determined by how severe their dyslexia is.

According to the HSE, there are three main areas people with dyslexia have difficulties:

- Phonological awareness
- Verbal memory
- Verbal processing speed.

Phonological awareness is the ability to identify how words are made up of smaller units of sound. Changes in the sounds

that make up words can lead to changes in their meaning – e.g. replace the 'p' in 'pat' with an 's' and you get 'sat'. This is thought to be a key skill in early reading and spelling development.

Verbal memory is the ability to remember a sequence of verbal information for a short time period, while verbal processing speed is the time it takes to process and recognise familiar verbal information, like letters and digits.

### Signs of dyslexia

Each person with dyslexia will have a unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses. It can

» Continued on Page 33



## Family News



### AND EVENTS

#### LIVE MORE AT LISMORE CASTLE GARDENS

Exploring and playing outdoors is proven to be beneficial to children's development and there's a lot to be said about doing this while learning about places with rich histories. Lismore Castle Gardens & Gallery in Co. Waterford have announced they are "delighted" to welcome back visitors via a new entrance, and with very limited numbers this August. There are two time slots daily and advance booking is essential. The time slots are 11am-1.30pm or 1.30pm-4pm (last entry 3.30pm).

Entrance is via a new gate on the pathway towards the rear entrance of the castle. Those attending are asked to park at the town car park and follow the signs on foot to the gate. Handwashing facilities are available at the entrance gate. Their gallery café is currently facilitating a take-out service only. People are asked to ensure they can pay by card, to ensure a cashless payment system and bathrooms will be open. Only one customer/couple are allowed in the building at any one time.

For more info visit websites [www.lismorecastlegardens.com](http://www.lismorecastlegardens.com) or [www.lismorecastlearts.ie](http://www.lismorecastlearts.ie)

#### TRAINING FOR THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

Thinking of doing the Camino de Santiago at some point? Practice makes perfect, so why not get some experience in by doing a few walks in Ireland first?

Join the CaminoWays.com team for their Camino preparation walk. They will be heading to Killiney Hill in Dublin on August 30 for a moderate walk, with tickets (€8) available from July 19. There will be views of Dalkey and Killiney. It should take approximately two hours to complete the 8km walk.

Highlights include: The Metals, Dalkey, Coliemore Harbour, Vico Road, Killiney Hill, Dublin Bay.

The meeting point is Glenageary Dart Station with attendees asked to arrive in plenty of time for the 9.30am start.

Those interested are asked to bring: Picnic (sandwich, fruit, chocolate bar, water bottle), walking boots (lights and airy), light rain jacket and walking sticks.

Registration must be done through Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/walk-camino-preparation-8km-walk-around-killiney-tickets-112334814454?aff=ebdsbdestsearch> Tickets are not refundable but they are transferable.

#### DOGS: A TODDLER'S BEST FRIEND?

Toddlers from dog-owning families are 30% less likely to have conduct and peer problems in comparison to preschoolers from families who don't own dogs, according to new research.

The study, published in the journal *Pediatric Research*, found that owning, walking and playing with a family dog could encourage a toddler's social and emotional development. "Regular physical activity plays an important role during early childhood, contributing to young children's development and decreasing their risk of developing chronic diseases including obesity," said the study's senior author Hayley Christian, an associate professor and senior research fellow in the Centre for Child Health Research at The University of Western Australia. Dog ownership has been linked to responsibility, positive identity, empathy and trust.

# Suffering in union with Christ



Some years ago, I invited a woman to get involved in some pro-life activities. She'd been very involved in campaigning in the past but was adamant that her days of active involvement were over. I think she felt that as the aches and pains of advancing age took their toll, she didn't have the energy and resilience to be an ongoing contributor in the pro-life battle. It's not unusual for people to take such a position when faced with chronic illness, pain or a deterioration in physical or mental health. Our society can focus a lot on the burden of illness which has a very negative effect on how people see themselves. From feeling unable to engage physically in community life, it's a short step to disengaging completely and feeling stripped of any definite role. This is also a risk in relation to matters of faith and involvement in the Church. We can be guilty of placing the physically and mentally strong on a higher plane, admiring their ability to push themselves to the limit and endure, long after others would have given up. If we're sick, in pain or mentally fragile, the commitment and dedication of other Catholics and their faithful, enthusiastic involvement in numerous projects may seem like a slight to our own seemingly inadequate efforts.

**“I sometimes suffer from severe migraine and get a little insight into the challenging world faced by those coping with chronic illness”**

One of my sisters has developed severe arthritis in her hands and, in her early fifties, has a level of pain that interferes with many basic



## A parent's perspective Maria Byrne

functions. So many activities that she took for granted and enjoyed are now impossible for her. It's sad as, of all my siblings, she's the one who most enjoys the creative arts and is upset that she probably won't ever be able to do all the knitting she'd planned for any future grandchildren. Her own suffering and pains have given her a new ability to identify with all arthritis sufferers. She was commenting recently that she'd never thought much about the pains of those with the condition until she got it herself. One of the benefits of suffering is how it can expand our ability to empathise and put ourselves in another's shoes. That gift alone is of great value in our interactions with others. Every Christian community has the movers and shakers and the doers but, to have the true spirit of Christ, we also need those who are the listeners and the carers, always ready with the sympathetic word of encouragement. It's because of their pain that these members of our Christian communities may have more, not less, to offer.

While praying, I often use the excellent *Conversations with God* by Francis Fernandez. This series of books contains meditations for each day of the year aimed at the ordinary man or woman who wants to deepen his or her friendship with God. Writing about suffering, Fernandez says that suffering and tribulation are the lot of everyone here on earth. However, he observes that suffering of itself alone neither transforms nor purifies.

It can sometimes even lead to a sense of rebellion against God or even hatred. Some Christians turn away from God when they encounter the Cross in their lives. The happiness they seek to find is merely human happiness free from any pain or hardship. St John Henry Newman preached how human beings place so much importance on the world of business, politics and entertainment as if these were what mattered most. He pointed to our embracing the Cross as giving the true meaning to all the shifting sands of our earthly existence and described it as "the tone into which all the strains of this world's music are ultimately to be resolved".



Francis Fernandez

I sometimes suffer from severe migraine and get a little insight into the challenging world faced by those coping with chronic illness. It's difficult to deal with looking after children, working and running a home while in good health and feeling strong and well. Trying to operate while under the haze of

a migraine attack is practically impossible. It's at times like this that I have to embrace the apostolate of suffering, a topic eloquently addressed by St John Paul II in his apostolic letter on the Christian meaning of human suffering, *Salvifici Doloris*. In this letter, Pope John Paul II appealed to all those who suffer to become a source of strength for the whole Church praying that "In the terrible battle between the forces of good and evil, revealed to our eyes by our modern world, may your suffering in union with the Cross of Christ be victorious!" Rather than feeling useless or unable to contribute, our patience and prayer in times of suffering are a means to grow in virtue and share in Christ's redemptive suffering.

**“We can be guilty of placing the physically and mentally strong on a higher plane, admiring their ability to push themselves to the limit and endure”**

We're not less of a mother or father or contributing member of the Church because we're incapacitated or ill. We can use our suffering to help transform our own life and the lives of others and use it to grow into the person God created us to be. That's no small contribution. St Padre Pio said: "The more you are afflicted, the more you ought to rejoice, because in the fire of tribulation the soul will become pure gold worthy to be placed and to shine in the heavenly palace." What great encouragement for those, who the world views as less able to take an active role, but who have so much to give to the life of the Church.



» Continued from Page 31



be difficult to identify, especially in young children, because the signs and symptoms are often subtle.

Younger children might have problems learning names and sounds of letters, issues with spelling and problems copying written language. As children with dyslexia grow older, it becomes more apparent, with signs such as slow reading and writing speed, poorly organised written work which lacks expression and problems understanding and recognising new words.

If you have a concern, you should consult with your child's class teacher first. If you have a continuing concern, you could also seek the advice of your GP. The main thing is not to jump to conclusions and to seek expert advice. There are ways to help your child cope and then grow, so diagnosis can be helpful.

### How can dyslexia be treated

It's not clear what causes dyslexia and there is no cure, but a range of educational programmes and interventions have proven effective in improving reading and writing skills in many children with dyslexia.

According to the HSE, there is evidence that suggests the best ways to teach phonics to children with dyslexia contains a number of features. Some of these key features are structure, multisensory, and breaking down emotional barriers, though this list is not exhaustive.

Some features, such as structure, are almost self-evident – teaching needs to be structured, developing in small steps and logically following what has been learnt already. Reinforcement is an important step in this process, as children with dyslexia frequently have to 'overlearn' a skill they have already mastered.

The others are more complicated. Multisensory relates to the different ways in which people learn – listening, looking and touching. Children with dyslexia learn best when all these different methods are engaged. For example, when teaching a dyslexic child the alphabet, show them the letter, let them say it and also trace it in the air.

Lastly, it is important to recognise the emotional barriers that children with dyslexia can develop, such as anxiety, frustration and low-confidence. Stress has been proven to impact negatively on memory and learning in general, and can make issues associated with dyslexia more acute.

When teaching children with dyslexia, it's important to address these potential barriers and break through them. This is best achieved through encouragement, empathy and fostering self-esteem.

### Practical tips to remember

You have some background now, but how can you put it into practice as a parent? Explaining to your child what it means to have dyslexia is an important step. In explaining, highlight that it is not the child's fault and that there are ways to overcome it.

Once you are both aware of what's happening, there are some simple practices that you can do to help. There's an obvious beginning and that's to read to and with your child, as often and as long as possible.

The benefits are manifold, helping to develop vocabulary, learning pronunciation and punctuation, and creating positive associations with reading. It is a way to learn without pressure and with enjoyment.

Playing games together is another sure-fire way of learning in a way that's enjoyable. From 'I spy' to memory games, draughts and chess, games give context to the words children learn and this helps to reinforce them.

Don't underestimate the amount of learning a child does simply by being with you and observing. Parents are the most important teachers of their children, not necessarily formal teaching, but informal teaching – through singing, playing and simply talking.

### Promoting visual learning

Over recent years, there has been an international drive to recognise the strengths those with dyslexia have, rather than emphasising the difficulties they face. For example, many people with dyslexia have highly developed visual skills.

However, most early years reading and spelling is taught

through small-detail, linear processes of separating out the sounds of language. This predominantly auditory way of learning to read has proved to be difficult for those with dyslexia.

People who are proficient at spelling and reading will have automatically developed what is known as a 'visual word bank' that allows them to quickly recognise words. Despite many people with dyslexia having highly effective visual skills, they are rarely encouraged to use these skills to visualise letters and words in a stable and consistent manner.

**“According to the HSE, there is evidence that suggests the best ways to teach phonics to children with dyslexia contains a number of features”**

For people with dyslexia, encouraging the use of their strong visual skills is one way of overcoming their issues. For example, many older children with dyslexia are more comfortable working with a computer than an exercise book.

This may be because the computer uses a visual environment which corresponds more closely with their way of thinking. Through a different type of learning, they can develop their 'word bank', making it easier to read and spell.

### Useful resources

If you are looking for help in this area, a new process, The Jumpstarting system, developed by learning diversity expert Sara Haboubi seeks to help a child to use their natural visual strengths to overcome their learning challenges.

By helping students with dyslexia harness their visual skills for reading and spelling, they are able to master basic literacy skills in a way that suits how their brains are wired. It can also be used alongside any phonics programme that a child is following.

The jumpstarting system is available for parents to aid them under lockdown at <https://www.jumpstartinglearningskills.com/online-dyslexia-course-for-parents/>. This course furnishes parents with the knowledge, understanding and practical tools for helping their children acquire the fundamental skills that lead to proficient spelling and fluent reading.



# Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



**T**he littlest person in our house turned two this week. Just a year ago, she could barely walk or talk. Now, she can not only walk, but she can dance, jump and run. She can not only talk, but she can sing, shout and make jokes.

Just two years ago, we beheld for the first time a new-born baby, in all her fragility. Now, we have a beautiful little blonde toddler, who bumbles merrily about the house, being perpetually doted upon by her older brother and sisters. She has established a special relationship with each of her siblings, and she loves to play particular games with each.

**“As it was her birthday, she led the way, and so we strolled around at her pace, stopping to look at the creatures she loved most”**

She's too young to fully understand the whole concept of birthdays, but she was vaguely aware that this meant a party and presents. On the morning of her big day, she was greeted with hugs by everyone in turn. Then she was permitted a little bowl of coco-pops – a mandatory birthday treat in our household. Her presents were given out piecemeal during the day, so as not to overwhelm her.

At her request, the whole family headed off to the beach for the morning. The older kids went swimming while she paddled on the edge of the water, and splashed in the warm pools. After a picnic, it was time for the main outing of the day – a trip to the wildlife park. Lions – or “raa raas” as she calls them – are her favourite creatures. She has lion teddies and t-shirts. When we arrived she ran excitedly towards the lion enclosure, and spent a long time gazing at them and talking to them. One cub even approached the fence and looked curiously at her, returning her intent gaze.

As it was her birthday, she led the way, and so we strolled around at her pace, stopping to look at the creatures she loved most. She gazed in equal awe at the giraffes, the cheetah cubs and the wild ducklings crossing the path.



Later, her grandparents and uncles came laden with dishes of food for her birthday party. More presents were opened and more treats were had. Her older brother put together one present, which was a little slide, she played delightedly on this in the sunshine, climbing up with the aid of her older sisters, before announcing “look at me!” and sliding down with a delighted shriek.

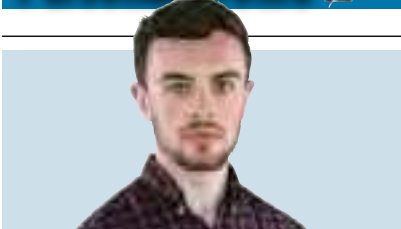
**“Just two years ago, we beheld for the first time a new-born baby, in all her fragility”**

At last, the time came for her birthday cake. I carried it towards her amid a rousing rendition of “happy birthday”. Suddenly, her face turned into a little pout, as she became overwhelmed at the singing and the attention, but just momentarily. Her mother whispered to her, to blow out the candle. Delighted with the flame's sudden disappearance in a puff of smoke, her smile returned. She then patiently and intently made her way through a whole slice of cake, before looking up at me contemplatively with her big blue eyes and saying: “Daddy, I like my birthday.”



# Building community spirit and connection

## Personal Profile



Jason Osborne

It was perhaps more than a little symbolic that Fr Michael Toomey should be ordained on June 14 in 2009, the feast of Corpus Christi. It makes sense that a man who would do so much to bring communities together should enter his ministry on the day celebrating the oneness of those in the Church.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, the Tipperary based Fr Toomey said: "I was ordained on Corpus Christi, which was Sunday the 14th of June, 2009, here in St Peter and Paul's. My first appointment was in Tramore, and I replaced Fr Colm who sadly died three months afterwards. Fr Colm's last public engagement was my first Mass here in Clonmel.

**“Despite the overwhelming presence of technology and online connection, the profundity or depth of the lockdown experience was an opportunity for reflection”**

"Back in 2003, I was very good friends with Fr Colm O'Brien, who was just a legend. He was only 36 when he died of cancer. A lot of people would know Colm around the country, he was big into Focolare."

### Priesthood

Fr Colm proved important in pushing Fr Michael definitively into the priesthood: "We had a conversation where he basically just said, 'Are you going to do it or not?'"



Fr Michael Toomey stands with Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of Waterford and Lismore promoting churchservices.tv

As Fr Colm passed away, Fr Michael picked up and continued his ministry in Tramore, which got off to a rough start: "So I was in Tramore where Colm had been. My first year was a shock, in one way, because I was actually knocked down here in Clonmel and I ended up with two broken arms, so I was out of ministry for about four months. I ended up in a nursing home and a hospital. It was just a pure, freak accident; knocked down crossing the road one evening."

Despite the blunt nature of his introduction to the priestly life, he took it in good humour: "A very heavy start to the ministry, but the thing was there's a humorous side to it as well. There's a big statue in Tramore on the beach called 'The Metal Man', and of course I have plates and pins in now so I say that Tramore now has two metal men

when I came back. I lightened it as best I could."

And so, Fr Michael's ministry began with six years in Tramore, involving extensive work in the local community and schools. "I still connect with Tramore," he says. "You make the connections and you never really leave a place. There's always that connection there." The six years soared past, and then in 2015, he was sent to Clonmel: "A very unusual appointment, to come home." He wasted no time and set about bringing the church forward into the world of today: "We set up Church Services TV, which is an absolute Godsend in the last few months with the pandemic." He couldn't have predicted at the time what an important role this innovation would come to play. "With the pandemic, the big thing has been Church Services TV. I have Mass every Monday now on RTÉ as well,

so I'm doing that every week," he tells me.

### Connection

Connection has been a cornerstone throughout Fr Michael's ministry, and technology has only made those links easier to establish: "It's been amazing the way we've reached out. It's not been the same, obviously. It's better to have people, but it's been a way of reaching out and it's the new evangelisation in one way.

"I know people are saying it's not the same thing, of course it's not the same thing, but we've been able to reach out to people that we wouldn't normally have reached. The figures we were getting on the Church Services TV were in their thousands every day, which we'd never seen before because people were actually tuning in."

It's quite possible that this Easter touched more people than

ever before, despite the obvious drawbacks. To back up this point, Fr Michael points to his Easter Sunday broadcast: "Over 7000 people on Easter Sunday were watching Mass in St Patrick's cemetery from around the world, so we're going to do that again." This deeper engagement with technology has not been lost on the priests: "I think the funny thing has been, between myself and the priests who've been doing this, is that we're all up for the best director award this year, and sound engineers and producers, because we're all learning these different things," he says.

**“It's quite possible that this Easter touched more people than ever before, despite the obvious drawbacks”**

Despite the overwhelming presence of technology and online connection, the profundity and depth of the lockdown experience was an opportunity for reflection: "During the lockdown, the most striking thing was I said Mass on St Patrick's Day with just the mayor. It really summed it up. That was the start of the pandemic; where you only had the mayor representing the whole of the town in a church that would have been full," he says.

"It's great to welcome people back but it's an experience I, or any of us, will never forget." Despite the harm the virus did, and the unpleasant side effects that followed it, Fr Michael sees growth and renewal having the last word here: "It's a community spirit. I've seen the community spirit in Clonmel increase about a 1000 percent, with different people looking out for one another and helping one another. Not just religious-wise but community-wise, and I think that's been the biggest plus of the lockdown." He added: "I think we've reached out and connected with a lot of people than we would have done, but for the lockdown."



## Children's Corner

Chai Brady

## Creating your own tornado in a bottle

Tornados are one of the world's scariest natural phenomenon but they are also hugely interesting and much can be learnt by observing them from a scientific perspective. Fortunately in Ireland these powerful vortexes don't develop on the scale they do in other countries.

To make a tornado, you need just the right mix of ingredients: Warm, humid air near the ground, cold air higher up in the atmosphere and wind that overlaps while moving at different speeds or directions.

Believe it or not, few places on Earth check all of these boxes. And none compares to the Great Plains of the United States, also known as tornado alley. On average, the US has upwards of 1,200 tornados a year, mostly in the Midwest and Southeast.

Possible warning signs that a tornado could be forming are a dark, greenish sky and then black storm clouds gathering. Sometimes large hail begins to fall.

A misty funnel appears, as though descending from a cloud, and when that funnel

hits the ground – depending on the size of the tornado – it roars forward with a sound like a freight train approaching. A particularly powerful tornado can destroy everything in its path.

Using easy to find items such as dish washing liquid, water, glitter and a bottle you can make your own mini tornado that's a lot safer than one you might see across the pond. Follow the instructions and enjoy the cool water vortex you create!

### Apparatus:

- Water
- A clear plastic bottle with a cap (that won't leak)
- Glitter
- Dish washing liquid

### Directions:

- Fill the plastic bottle with water until it reaches three quarters full.
- Add a few drops of washing-up liquid.



- Sprinkle in a few pinches of glitter (this will make your tornado easier to see).
- Put the cap on tightly.

- Turn the bottle upside down and hold it by the neck. Quickly spin the bottle in a circular motion for a few seconds, stop and look inside to see if you can see a mini tornado forming in the water. You might need to try it a few times before you get it working properly.

### What's happening?

Spinning the bottle in a circular motion creates a water vortex that looks like a mini tornado. The water is rapidly spinning around the centre of the vortex due to centripetal force – an inward force directing an object or fluid such as water towards the centre of its circular path. Vortexes found in nature include tornadoes, hurricanes and waterspouts (a tornado that forms over water).



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Answering the call for quality mainstream TV

At the end of every year I look back to see what outstanding religious programmes were broadcast on mainstream media and usually there's not a huge lot, but last week there was one strong contender.

**Priest School** (BBC Two, Tuesday) was an endearing insight into the training of priests in the Scottish College in Rome. We got to see an impressive bunch of young men: confident, cheerful, enthusiastic, devout, modest and very human, all at various stages of their seven-year priestly training.

Distinctive in their blue soutanes we saw them getting to meet Pope Francis, along with the eight Scottish bishops on their *ad limina* visit to Rome in 2018. We got some vocation stories though I'd like to have heard more of those.

These were distinctive but familiar in a way – an invite to Mass from a practising Catholic friend, an experience of service on a trip to the developing world, an interior questioning about the meaning of life, a persistent sense of a calling that wouldn't go away.

Most had held down other jobs in their adult lives (one had been a disc jockey, one had studied law) and they seemed all the more mature for having that life experience before joining the seminary.



Time for reflection for one of the seminarians who features in BBC Two's *Priest School*.

We did learn however that there was around a 70% dropout rate, and the one student, Mark, who was in his final year was the only one of his starting group to make it to ordination – quite a moving ceremony at the end in Motherwell, Scotland, when we briefly got to meet his family – actually, I would like to have seen more of the families of the seminarians.

### Visible

Such strong people of Faith are rare enough when it comes to TV drama, though so many other groups have

to be made 'visible' in TV and film dramas these days. One noticeable exception was the film **Greyhound**, which landed on Apple TV on Friday with very little fanfare. Tom Hanks played a navy captain escorting a merchant fleet across the Atlantic during the Second World War, and in an early scene we saw him praying by his bedside.

Right through the drama he was a man of Faith and honour. He fought against the German submarines attacking the fleet in mid-ocean, too far out for air support, but was conscious of the unfortunate

casualties when they sank a sub.

He said grace before several meals that he never got to enjoy because some crisis distracted him. In an emotional scene he conducted a dignified and prayerful service of burial at sea but was also a calm, competent commander.

The violence was not graphic, and while there was one 'f'-word it was apologised for immediately.

The sea battle scenes were tense and exciting, though the digital effects were rather obvious. As often in war films it was hard to distinguish some of the young navy men from each other but I did like the way camera focused on their worried expressions. Hanks wrote the script himself and it was rather minimalistic, with lots of technical detail about radar, sonar and the like.

The inclusion of Elizabeth Shue as the love interest was



Tom Hanks in *Greyhound* (Apple TV).

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### QUEST FOR SHAKESPEARE

EWTN, Sunday, July 19, 9am

Themes of freedom and choice are seen as moral backbones in Shakespeare's dramas.

#### MASS

RTÉ One, Sunday, July 19, 11am

Fr Luuk Jansen OP celebrates Mass marking the 30th anniversary of Youth 2000, an evangelical group that promotes faith among young Catholics.

#### STORIES OF US

BBC Two, Sunday, July 19, 1.50pm

Rev. Kate Bottley and broadcaster Ashley John-Baptiste reveal the inspiring stories of how people around the country lead spiritually and emotionally fulfilling lives.

also minimalistic – she had little to do, and perhaps a longer lead in to the sea voyage might have been helpful for more effective character development.

So, while some trends see certain groups of people being made more visible, there are other trends that find certain groups of people being made more invisible.

So it is with 'cancel culture', a phrase surfacing a lot in the media of late, largely due to the welcome fight back from various writers including J.K. Rowling and Noam Chomsky.

The issue was discussed on **The Hard Shoulder** (Newstalk) Wednesday of last week, when presenter Ivan Yates discussed the issue with journalist Brenda Power and UCC lecturer Amanullah De Sony.

Power was strong on the

fundamental right of free speech and warned against the new intolerance that could lose people their jobs overnight, while De Sony stressed the importance of considering the impact on others of how we exercise this right.

I was uneasy about her use of the word "we" (who exactly?) and her vague concept of "a moral and ethical reckoning". Both seemed to agree that free speech was important but that ideas needed to be "interrogated" (De Sony) and bad ideas defeated by "exposure, argument and persuasion" (Power).

An important discussion.

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# Film

Aubrey Malone



## Cinemas reopen but there's a river of quality online

As cinemas – like churches, bars, restaurants, hair salons etc. – begin the arduous process of trying to accommodate the public and still keep them safe during the time of Covid-19, we're promised a rehash of old classics as the new releases are pushed back to mid-August at least.

At home we can watch our own material. One director I've been sampling a lot of recently is Jim Jarmusch. He makes films about the ordinary lives of ordinary people. Most of our lives are ordinary so they have a direct appeal. He always shows great sensitivity. Even when he makes a film about vampires, like *Only Lovers Left Alive*, it becomes poignant.

One of his most recent

works is *Paterson*. It's about a bus driver of that name who writes poetry. The poems seem ordinary too but, like Jarmusch's films, they have a sense of deep profundity.

His wife is eccentric. She paints everything, even her dress. Her efforts at mastering the guitar are hilarious. Then there's the dog who goes out to the garden every morning and knocks the postbox askew. The most exciting part of the film is where the bus breaks down.

Jarmusch captures the slow life of his town, also called *Paterson*, to perfection. This is one of his most beguiling films. I urge you to see it.

Another director I've grown attached to over the years is Stephane Brize. He



Adam Driver stars in Jim Jarmusch's beguiling *Paterson*, available from Amazon.

made a film years ago called *Not Here To Be Loved*. It's a beautiful story of the May-December romance between

a bailiff and a woman who's engaged to be married to a man she doesn't love.

It's set against a backdrop

of a tango dancing class. There's a subplot about the man's relationship to his father who's in a nursing home. He appears not to care about his son but he does. Just how deeply is revealed in the film's heartbreaking finale.

### Dignity

One of Brize's most recent films is *The Measure of a Man*. It's about how unemployment strips people of their dignity. It centres on a character played by Vincent Lindon. After losing his job he has to take a more menial one as a security person in a supermarket. He's manifestly unsuited to this. We wait for him to crack.

I've been an admirer of Lindon for years. His face is

like that of an Irish farmer. You should see him in *Mademoiselle Chambon*, a moving story about a doomed romance, or *Anything For Her*, a brilliant thriller about a man who springs his wife (Diane Kruger) from jail after she's wrongfully arrested for murder.

He doesn't do much but in his small gestures he captures all the longing of the human heart.

All of these films are available from Amazon. Another one I bought recently from here is *Elena*, Andrei Zvyagintsev's incredible story of a woman driven to a desperate act when her ailing husband decides to disinherit her child by a previous marriage. It's icily powerful.





# BookReviews



Peter Costello

## Yarns of Kylemore Abbey's

### The Benedictine Nuns & Kylemore Abbey: A History

by Deirdre Raftery and Catherine KilBride  
(The Benedictine Nuns Kylemore Abbey Centenary/  
Irish Academic Press,  
€19.95/£17.99)

Peter Costello

**T**his book is the story of an Irish success, but it is much more than that. It also encapsulates, in the story of Kylemore Abbey, a history of Connemara over some two centuries, an account of the development of Irish education since the days of the Free State, but more especially of the extraordinary acumen of a Catholic congregation in changing to cope with new times, and moreover to survive, to survive and to flourish in a different way than was originally envisaged when the community settled in Connemara a century ago.

His book tells the whole history not just of the Benedictine nuns themselves, but of the extraordinary mansion in the wilderness in which they are based.

It was quite the thing in Victorian times for rich Englishmen to build themselves 'a shooting lodge' in the wilder parts of Scotland and Ireland for shooting and fishing.

The builder of Kylemore, Mitchell Henry, was a typical



Teacher and pupils in the 1970s.

specimen as were his family.

From them the house passed to the Duke of Manchester, but debts forced them to sell it off, and so in 1920 it became a final refuge for the community of nuns known as the Irish Dames of Ypres. The Great War destroyed their part of France, and the nuns were, so to speak, rescued by the Munster Fusiliers.

### Familiar

So here they came in 1920 to open a school. This is the familiar part of the story for many, but the authors tell it in detail, following as they

do, how education for girls changed over the decades, the aim moving on from creating young ladies into turning out accomplished young citizens.

**“The heart of the Kylemore nuns' vocation is a Christian call to serve others”**

Social changes affected many other schools – families no longer wished to send their children away, and as costs rose only a selected

number could afford the fees.

The college closed in 2010, but the nuns remained. And today visitors can enjoy the peace and one might rightly say the spirituality of the Abbey and its estate. The nuns provide a haven for visitors, and for other retreats and focused religious events.

The last time my wife and I were there one recent summer, it was a rainy day in the west, a really rainy day, when the Victorian Garden (some way from the house) was closed for safety reasons, with water flooding down the paths. We promised ourselves



we would return another finer day. And so we will, later this summer God willing, and see that too.

All this is related by Deirdre Raftery, of UCD, who has made nuns in education her special field. Catherine KilBride brings her special skill as a writer.

Their text is greatly enhanced by a lively gallery of images from the Abbey archives, covering the earliest days of the Mitchell fam-

ily, and the nuns at Ypres right up to the very latest activities and projects of the present centenary year.

It is interesting to see what a multicultural place it has been, with Indian students in saris at the school, and Nigerian nuns now part of the community.

But at the heart of the Kylemore nuns' vocation is a Christian call to serve others. Over time the best way to answer that call has changed,

## A Mayo town lost in the mists of time recalled to life by

### Ballina Remembered

by Aubrey Malone  
(Lapwing Publications, Belfast,  
€9.99; ISBN 978-1-9163457-1-3;  
copies can be ordered direct from  
the publisher marymannion@  
hotmail.com)

### Noel Monahan

Here we have a collection of memory poems to take you back in time to Ballina, Co. Mayo. It's about memory and images from the past, a view from the inside with the outside world flashing in and out. Like much memory poetry, the metronome of the past is forever beating to music: Roy Orbison, Buddy Holly and Elvis. There is much talk about films: John Wayne's speech from *The Alamo* and *The Guns of Navarone*.

This book gives poetry a good name. The creative hand is light and free in the best sense of the art of writing poetry. It is not deliberately ornamental or trying to force images on the reader. The poems flow with the ease of your breathing.

Characters abide with striking

realism: the nun whose face you could hardly see, 'The Cottrells' from England who owned a garage and had one of the first televisions in Ballina, and of course there has to be an 'Auntie Nellie':

She didn't marry. / She would have been too much / for any man / and any man / would have been too much for her.

### Direction

This is a poet who points the reader in the direction of all the interesting places in the Ballina district: The Font, The River Moy, the corner / outside Cafolla's, St Muredach's Cathedral, Keohane's Book Shop...and close by 'Enniscrone' where the sheep look up at you / as if nothing could bother them.

Surely the tourist bodies in the West of Ireland, local radio and the local press have all spotted this unique publication.

Aubrey Malone can be satirical at times, especially with regard to language and its usage in more recent times. The long poem 'Then and Now' is direct with its list of

our strange *clichés* of today: people didn't tell you / to, 'have a nice day' / they knew it was your business / what kind of day you had /... closets were things / you kept your clothes in, / not things you came out of / to declare your sexuality...

Some poems figure out the poet's close observation of his father and mother. The poem 'Opposites' is a finely-constructed poem dealing with both his parents: she was at ease with herself / but not the world / he was at ease with the world / but not with himself. The poem 'To My Mother' has a ring of Patrick Kavanagh's about it: you're not gone / you're here / cooking, mending, / tending hopes and fears...

At another level the collection of poetry deals with the social and cultural changes in Ireland over the last 70 years or so. Take the poem 'Confessional': in Ballina in the 50s / priests were gods / now they are spat at / on the streets...

The poem 'Sins' gives the same topic further attention: we went on retreats / we did sodalities / we got

miraculous medals / we got plenty of indulgences / ...Ireland moved / from being a Catholic country / to a post-Catholic one...it was a label we wore / we liked it more...

**“The poet identifies himself alongside memories of ghosts from the past and the realisation of the upheaval of change today”**

And Malone observes further on: you don't see children / playing outside their homes now / you don't see hool-a-hoops / or skipping ropes /

*Ballina Remembered* by Aubrey Malone is published by Lapwing, a poetry press based in Belfast. It is a tome of 137 poems, spread over 300 pages.

The subject matter is constantly on the move. The poet identifies himself alongside memories of

ghosts from the past and the realisation of the upheaval of change today.

It is a collection of rural and urban poems with a sad note of disappointment when the poet leaves Ballina and heads to Dublin. The poem 'Presidential Ambitions' has an interesting Dublin twist. The poetry collection is interspersed with many photos: of streets and places, film stars, TV personalities and family relations.

I feel the poems speak with their own strong images and don't need the photographs but that is just a personal opinion and I'm sure many readers will delight in them.

Aubrey Malone's poetic thoughts, narratives and observations flow easily with wordplay and self mockery. *Ballina Remembered* has magic and charm and will get you thinking. It is well worth reading.

**i** A Cavan-based poet and teacher, Longford-born Noel Monahan's latest publication is *Chalk Dust* (Salmon Poetry).



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.

# colourful past



The splendid Kylemore Abbey.

but it remains a calling which carried with it a true sense of vocation which is admirable in every way.

At the heart of all these enterprises lies in fact a deep spirituality from which all, no matter what their own way in the world takes them, might learn.

## Recent negativity

The book underlines what many historians have tried to explain in the face of so much

recent negativity about 'the nuns' just what the country really owes these remarkable women from the 18th Century onwards.

A relative of mine used to say that the country would be better run in the charge of a Christian Brother and a Reverend mother – whatever about the Brother, on the evidence of this book Ireland as a whole would certainly have benefited from the example of the Irish Dames of Ypres,

“A relative of mine used to say that the country would be better run in the charge of a Christian Brother and a Reverend mother...”

or the Kilmore Benedictine as they became.

Long may they continue to flourish.

Still available is the delightful cookery book, *The Flavour of Kylemore*, by Marguerite Foyle (Columba Books, €24.99).

📍 *The Abbey, Victorian Garden and grounds at Kylemore reopened on July 3; for visitor information contact tel: +353 95 52001; email info@kylemoreabbey.*

# poetry that free-flows like the Moy



St. Muredach's Cathedral, Ballina.

# 'We are Rangers' – inside Ireland's military elite

**Shadow Warriors: The Irish Army Ranger Wing** by Paul O'Brien and Wayne Fitzgerald  
Mercier Press (€12.99/£11.99)

**Joe Carroll**

Back in the 1980s, there used to be an advertisement on RTÉ showing a squad of soldiers in battledress, holding rifles jogging along a road while singing lustily: "We are Rangers, mighty, mighty Rangers." And then the Rangers seemed to disappear from public view. Had they been disbanded?

Far from it, as this slim book reveals. The Irish Army Ranger Wing (ARW), often just called 'The Wing', is still the elite unit of the Defence Forces since it was formally set up in 1979. At home it is used discreetly to protect important foreign visitors, such as Queen Elizabeth, and it conducted intelligence operations along the Border during the Troubles. It could still be doing that, but we would not know.

The Rangers' main duties now are abroad serving with United Nations missions in often fraught situations in countries such as Somalia, Mali, Chad, Liberia and East Timor. Four Rangers have died on these missions but their names are not made public.

Rangers are also used to protect Irish ministers on visits abroad.

## Toughening-up

The emphasis in the book is on the rigorous training the applicants for the ARW have to undergo. Over 80% fail the first time and drop out or try again. The latest course lasts 38 weeks and is usually preceded by a toughening-up course of 15 weeks to weed out those who would not make it through the punishing 60km route marches, often at night, carrying 60lbs of equipment and averaging four kilometres an hour.

Over the years, new skills have been added such as parachuting and underwater operations. Urban warfare is practised with live ammunition in the 'kill houses' at the Curragh. Anti-terrorism skills are high on the list as terrorist attacks have increased since 9/11.

The idea of an elite unit first

took form when 12 officers were chosen for special training in July 1969, just weeks before the Bogside in Derry erupted and soldiers were rushed to the Border to set up field hospitals. Earlier that year two officers were sent to Fort Benning in Georgia, USA, to train with the famous US Rangers. Three more officers were sent later that year to do a Commando training course in the UK.

Later still, two officers were sent to France for counter-terrorism training. This core of officers, trained volunteers from the different Irish Commands in specialist skills over five weeks after which they went back to their barracks as there was no specialist unit yet in existence.

This changed in March 1980 when Commandant Richard Heaslip was appointed the first commanding officer of the Army Ranger Wing.

“The authors clearly received help from past Rangers and the current Defence Forces upper echelons”

Those who completed the course now got a shoulder tab with the word Fianóglach on it. Now you were a 'mighty mighty Ranger'. Later came badges for combat divers, snipers and parachutists.

The authors clearly received help from past Rangers and the current Defence Forces upper echelons, but we are told that "it is Army Ranger Wing policy to neither confirm nor deny the information contained within this book". However, there is much detail about the arms and equipment used in training and operations.

The ARW motto, translated from the Irish is: "The cleanliness of our hearts, the strength of our limbs and our commitment to our promise."

The authors have given us a partial, but instructive glimpse into the secret world of the Rangers; they even provide tips to help the reader to apply if they feel a call to the flag and the service of their country.





# Classifieds

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




**Your heart for the homeless**

Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone. Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you. This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

**To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering**  
Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email [emma.murphy@mqi.ie](mailto:emma.murphy@mqi.ie)

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

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**PLEASE REMEMBER BÓTHAR IN YOUR WILL.** €1,800 will allow us to give an Irish, in-calf, dairy heifer to a struggling family in Rwanda, completely transforming their lives. Your gift will live on for generations. Phone the office on 061 414142 or [info@bothar.ie](mailto:info@bothar.ie)

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when making your will so that everyone in Ireland will have access to hospice care one day.

Contact: Anna Sadlier at 01 679 3188 or [anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie) [www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)



**By remembering World Missions Ireland in your Will you are leaving a gift of hope for all God's children**

World Missions Ireland is the Church's official charity for overseas mission. Please help your Church to survive & flourish

**To learn how, call Eimear on 01 497 2035 or email [eimear@wmi.ie](mailto:eimear@wmi.ie)**



Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.



To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact [eve.kerton@focusireland.ie](mailto:eve.kerton@focusireland.ie) or phone 01 881 5917

**FOCUS Ireland**

**The Miracle Prayer**

Dear Heart of Jesus, In the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask for a special one. (mention here)

Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken Heart where your Father sees it. Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.

Say this prayer for three days.

M.G.

*Remembering*

**MEMORIAM CARDS  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
CARDS & NOTELETS  
BOOKMARKS**

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Landline ..... Mobile .....  
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# Leisure time

Please pray for the beatification of

## Little Nellie of Holy God

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

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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www.mscmissions.ie

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

Trócaire

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

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

### Crossword Junior

Gordius 341



#### Across

- 1 Chamber in a school building (9)
- 7 Hatchet (3)
- 8 Clapped (9)
- 9 'Yo ho ho and a bottle of \_\_\_' (3)
- 10 Design (7)
- 11 Helped (5)
- 13 Striped cat, or the nickname of a golfer called Woods (5)
- 15 Have to have (4)
- 16 '\_\_\_\_\_ right of way' (5)
- 18 Have some food (3)
- 20 To do with the area around the North Pole (6)
- 21 A child of your aunt or uncle (6)

#### Down

- 1 Bubbly wine (9)
- 2 'I'm really hungry, I've a huge \_\_\_\_\_' (8)
- 3 A cobra or adder, perhaps (5)
- 4 Normal, not special (8)
- 5 The capital city of Spain (6)
- 6 Appeared (6)
- 12 There is a sweet called a chocolate \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
- 14 Thoughts (5)
- 17 It makes you want to scratch (4)
- 19 You have one when your skin turns brown (3)

### SOLUTIONS, JULY 9

GORDIUS No. 463

**Across** – 1 Civil servant 7 Rub 9 Peel 10 Donald Trump 11 Stye 14 Ditty 15 Tiger cubs 16 Used 18 Fumes 21 Claim 22 Huron 23 Pored 24 Note 26 Oxbow lake 26 Spill 33 Quinoa 34 Lice 36 Nun 37 Disagreement

**Down** – 1 Cue 2 Vale 3 Lady 4 Ennui 5 Valet 6 Trot 8 Bread and wine 9 Pantehnicon 12 Aghast 14 Defer 17 Scrubs 19 Medal 20 Shoot 27 Paula 28 Loner 30 Band 32 Sloe 35 Cot

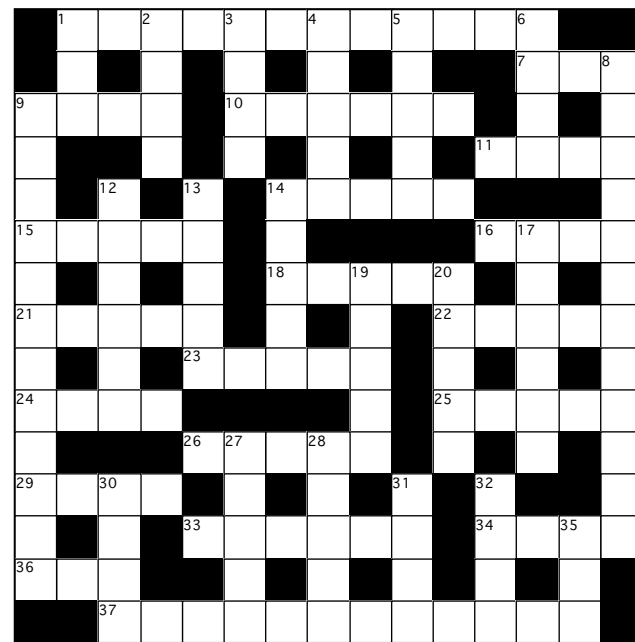
CHILDREN'S No. 340

**Across** – 1 Mountain 6 Oink 7 Cactus 8 Shrek 10 Obey 12 Elephant 15 Heel 16 Limerick 18 Net 20 Gun 21 Orange

**Down** – 1 Microphone 2 Uncle 3 True 4 Noah 5 Knee 9 Reading 11 Yell 13 Please 14 Taking 17 Iran 19 Tar

### Crossword

Gordius 464



#### Across

- 1 A relaxing hit, if remixed, can be thrilling (12)
- 7 Unit of electrical resistance (3)
- 9 Type of seaweed (4)
- 10 & 26a Engaged Norm to reconstruct an outdoor figure (6,5)
- 11 Viking god of silence? (4)
- 14 Woodland space (5)
- 15 Leapt about a dish (5)
- 16 Group of three (4)
- 18 One who acts on your behalf (5)
- 21 Dwelling (5)
- 22 & 33a Working dog not found on the fairway? (5,6)
- 23 Connections with a seaside golf course (5)
- 24 Tumble in autumn (4)
- 25 Many take it easy at the summit (5)
- 26 See 10 across
- 29 Small imperial unit of length (4)
- 33 See 22 across
- 34 Wary, confused and distorted (4)
- 36 Sing wordlessly (3)
- 37 Is this cultivated with intense feeling? (7,5)

#### Down

- 1 If it's Number Seven, Adam's mate is in there (3)

- 2 Virtue symbolised by the anchor (4)
- 3 Chunks of wood for the fire (4)
- 4 Rustic routine, upset rarely (at least at first) (5)
- 5 What gives a tyre grip (5)
- 6 & 31d Decorative material taken from Midas' tree? (4,4)
- 8 May Guy match none of this relish? (5,7)
- 9 Stay loyal to the castle - the religion? (4,3,5)
- 12 A mule's running around some prophet! (6)
- 13 Look at it up and down, either way it's not bumpy (5)
- 14 Cereal, or a wood pattern (5)
- 17 Get awakened like this? Sure do (6)
- 19 Follow on from (5)
- 20 Lorry (5)
- 27 Crannies, niches (5)
- 28 A Swedish city can be seen some dismal mornings (5)
- 30 Stay in a tent (4)
- 31 See 6 down
- 32 To the capital of Azerbaijan from part of Cuba? Kudos! (4)
- 35 Really excellent technique initially is needed to soak flax (3)

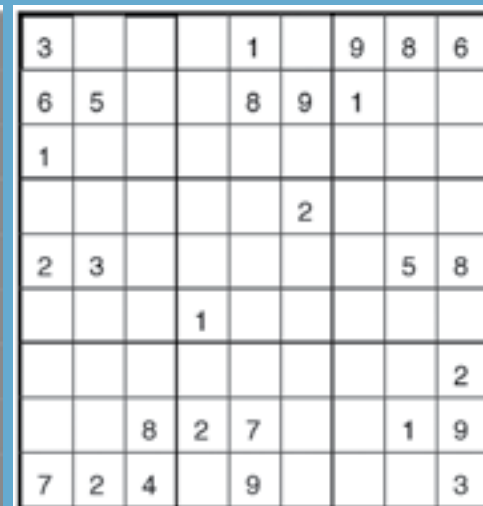
## Sudoku Corner

341

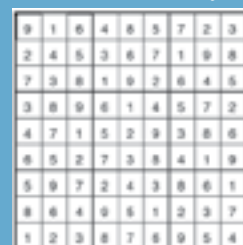
Easy



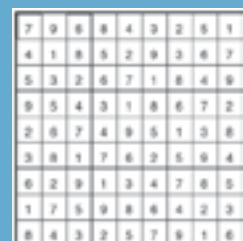
Hard



Last week's Easy 340



Last week's Hard 340





Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



# When a new 'normal' is really anything but!

**I KNOW IT'S EARLY DAYS** and we have had just two weekends of congregations back at Mass but I have to confess the whole experience is leaving me as a priest somewhat cold. Like most people I was relieved when the authorities gave us the green light to begin to open our churches for worship again.

I am fortunate to have a great group of volunteers who together with our parish council, worked very diligently to prepare for the re-opening. Initially I was somewhat daunted by the pages of regulations and systems to be put in place but when that work was shared with a team everything came together very smoothly.

**Challenge**

Our biggest challenge was how to ensure that no more than the maximum number allowed would come into the church for any one Mass. I did not want to have to turn away anyone who arrived and I certainly did not want our volunteer ushers to have to ask their neighbours and friends to leave the church. We devised a system of 'reserving' a place in the church based on alphabetical lists of parishioners. The first week



it was surnames A, B or C, the second week it was D to G and so on. The system has been working very well but the numbers showing interest in coming is so far very low. The biggest number is coming from families who have anniversary Masses booked. We have more people attending weekday Mass than at the weekend and we have encouraged those who can come during the week to leave the weekend Masses for those who cannot be there on weekdays.

While I'm reasonably happy with how we have planned this

**THE MENU!** A parish decided to have four separate Masses each Sunday. One was for those new to the Faith, another for regulars who preferred a more traditional liturgy. The third was for those who lost their Faith and wanted to find it again and the fourth was for those who had unfortunate experiences with other Churches and had some complaints. The four divisions were named: finders, keepers, losers, weepers!

re-opening there are a number of issues that concern me and I'm sure many others as well. Looking at less than 50 people scattered around our large church huddled in small family groups or just isolated couples and individuals is not a happy sight.

The fact that most have their faces partially covered with masks adds to the distressing vista. I have no sense of an expression on their faces other than that most mask wearing people look somewhat frightened.

**Nostalgic**

I find myself becoming nostalgic for the back one-third of the church being full every weekend. I'm not in any way seeking to challenge any of the requirements or procedures here. I'm simply trying to articulate what the experience of the new reality is like for me as a priest.

There are of course other questions which occupy my mind. Why are so few people interested

in coming back to Mass? Have we lost many people from our congregations for good? There is evidence that many people, including those who did not attend Mass regularly, were tuning into Mass online from various churches.

They shopped around until they found a liturgy that somehow met their spiritual needs and far from being a poor substitute for physically attending mass, they actually found it an uplifting experience and the fact that they did not have to leave their own home, or even get dressed, was an added attraction.

I am acutely aware that not being able to receive Communion during the months of closed churches was a significant hunger for many people. I also know that our Church leaders from the Pope down, constantly remind us that 'virtual' liturgies are no substitute for being together as a community. However, I hope some professional research will be done around broadcast Masses and celebrations and the impact they are having in Faith lives.

Whatever about times of pandemic, the decreasing number of priests and the consequent smaller number of Masses will

**A church**

'Let there always be quiet, dark churches in which we can take refuge. Places where we can kneel in silence, houses of God, filled with his silent presence. There, even when we do not know how to pray, at least we can be still and breathe easily. Let there be a place somewhere in which you can breathe naturally, quietly, and not have to take your breath in continuous short gasps, a place where your mind can be idle, and forget its concerns, descend into silence and worship the Father in secret. There can be no contemplation where there is no secret place!' – **Thomas Merton**

continue to encourage many people to access liturgies online.

In the meantime I can only hope and pray that the new normal begins to look and feel a bit more relaxed and life-giving.



## YOUR GIFT WILL HELP PROVIDE FOOD FOR THE POOR AND MARGINALISED

The Little Way Association has received many urgent appeals from missionaries asking for help for desperately poor families and for sick and needy people who are struggling in the midst of the present covid-19 crisis.

Sr Bernadu Mary from the Franciscan Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary, Pondicherry, India, writes: "The situation is very grave here for migrant workers, small vendors, daily wage earners and people affected by diseases. (We have people living with leprosy, and 1st and 2nd generation families). The stigma and the type of work – scavaging and begging – they have been engaged in, make them more vulnerable to cope with the disease. Please enable us to help the families affected by leprosy."

**Families are battling against hunger**

Heidi Caluori of Arco in Sao Paulo, Brazil, writes: "The people from the slums are the hardest hit by the virus. Not being able to work anymore means people do not receive a salary and have no money to buy food. Families are battling against hunger. We want to continue to distribute food to the people in the surrounding slums. We need your donations!"

**Every cent that you send for our "hungry, sick and deprived" fund will go intact to those who look after the very poor**

Mass is offered daily for all our supporters' intentions. Thank you so much for your prayers and your continued practical support.



**MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS**

Your Mass offerings help to provide the missionary priest's maintenance and assist him to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth.

**We like to send a missionary a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass.**

**WELLS NEEDED**

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

**Can you help provide a well?**

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

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