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# The Irish Catholic

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# Irish Gaza nun calls on Govt to help restart stalled peace process

Jason Osborne

An Irish nun in the Holy Land has called on the Irish Government to use its influence to help restart the stalled peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

Sligo-born Sr Bridget Tighe told *The Irish Catholic* that the underlying problem beneath the current flare up is that "There is no peace process anymore" between both sides.

"Ireland with its own history - we surely have something to say to this long-standing conflict," Sr Brigid said this week speaking from Jerusalem, where she had gone from Gaza hours before Hamas started firing rockets at Israel.

Pointing to the fact that Ireland is currently a member of the United Nations Security Council, she said the Government "might be able to bring this to the table of the UN".

This comes following the second week of clashes between Israel and Hamas, the ruling power in the Gaza Strip, leaving over 200 people dead.

» Continued on Page 2

## Beaming bride and groom celebrate nuptials



Ruadhán Jones of *The Irish Catholic* newspaper and Kiley Britten are pictured following their wedding May 8, celebrated by Fr Micheál Ó'Loingsigh in St Joseph's Church, Courtbrack, Co Cork. Photo: Enda Guerin.

# 'I hope to live to see my brother a saint'

Chai Brady

There are growing calls for a priest who was killed while facing down a "hail of bullets" to anoint a wounded parishioner in Belfast to be recognised as a martyr.

Fr Hugh Mullan was one of the ten people shot dead by the British Army during the Ballymurphy Massacre in 1971. Last week an inquest ruled that all ten were "entirely innocent" and their killing had been unjustified.

His brother, Patsy Mullan (81), confirmed to *The Irish Catholic* that work towards his cause for canonisation is "in progress" and he should be considered due to "the circumstances of his death - helping somebody else - which was normally what he would do and always had done".

He welcomed the recent inquest, with the coroner dubbing Fr Mullan a "peacekeeper" who was killed "while performing his spiritual duties as a priest".

» Continued on Page 4

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**ENDING EXTREME POVERTY WHATEVER IT TAKES**

# We need to hear about the witness of those who point to a better world

**G**rowing up in the late 1980s, a staple of my childhood reading was magazines like the *Far East* filled with stories of the heroic work of missionaries in distant lands. I remember being enthralled by what I read about Irish priests, brothers and sisters and the risks they took in their ministry.

Whether it was standing up to the communist authorities in China or standing with the poor and marginalised in Latin America, it was obvious to me that our missionaries were there like beacons of light – potent witnesses to the Gospel of Christ in good times and bad.

**“We have rightly been sickened by the cases of priests who betrayed the trust of the Christian community”**

Every generation needs heroic witnesses who, inspired by the love of Christ, point to a better world and a better way to live.

The great heroes of our faith are not distant memories. We have seen them in our own times.

### Loggers

Think of Sr Dorothy Stand who was killed in Brazil in 2005 because of her outspoken campaign against loggers and landowners. Or Fr Ragheed Ganni (a former student of the Pontifical Irish College in Rome) who was killed in 2007 in Iraq because he defied an order from Islamists who wanted him to close the local church and give up his ministry with the people.



**Editor's Comment**  
**Michael Kelly**



Family members of victims of the 1971 Ballymurphy Massacre hold their pictures and a banner as they arrive at the inquest in Belfast last week. Photo: Clodagh Kilcoyne, Reuters

Closer to home, fresh attention is now being paid to the case of Fr Hugh Mullan who was shot dead by the British Army in Belfast in 1971. A fresh inquest last week confirmed what many of us have known for a long time: that Fr Mullan was shot dead while carrying out his priestly duties administering the Sacrament of the Sick under a hail of bullets.

**“The great heroes of our faith are not distant memories. We have seen them in our own times”**

Local people are keen that his heroic witness be recognised formally

by the Church and he be declared a martyr. There are similar calls about Fr Noel Fitzpatrick.

Both men did not shrink from what had been asked of them in their call to priesthood: to be willing to lay down their lives for God's holy faithful people.

### Saints

Of course, people are not made saints as a reward for a life well lived, or even for acts of heroic virtue. People are raised up as saints by the Church because they are proposed as models. Canonisation is not an individual honour for the person, but a formal recognition by the Church that they are signposts and exemplars of Christian living.

At a time when we have rightly been sickened by

the cases of priests who betrayed the trust of the Christian community and visited horrific crimes upon the most vulnerable, hearing about men who lived their priesthood in imitation of Christ is not only inspiring – it is vital.

These are our witnesses who tell us that despite all of our failings and sins, that love has the victory. They tell us that despite all its failings, the Church is still a place of holiness. We need to hear them time and again.

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

## Irish Gaza nun calls on Govt to help restart peace process

**» Continued from Page 1**

Sr Bridget pointed to the fact that when the latest cycle of violence inevitably comes to an end with a ceasefire, the “root cause” of the tensions is never addressed with the emergence of a Palestinian state seemingly as far away as ever.

“This will happen again,” Sr Bridget said, insisting that there will only be progress when “occupation and dispossession” is addressed “with proper peace solutions and borders [otherwise] this constant, every-few-years war will happen”.

Sr Bridget – who heads up the aid agency Caritas Jerusalem – said she

would like to see Ireland putting pressure on the United States to breathe new life into the moribund peace process where negotiations have not taken place for many years.

“This is the time to try to bring the international community in...to say this is unsustainable for the future of the state of Israel or for the Palestinians,” Sr Bridget said, warning that the situation could deteriorate further because “desperate people do desperate things”.

“And in a few years, if something isn't done, there'll be another uprising, maybe worse than this time because it'll be in the West Bank and it will be in

the state of Israel itself,” Sr Bridget said, cautioning that it could lead to a “civil war”, as alluded to by Israel's President Reuven Rivlin.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, head of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land said the only hope for the region is the “two people, two States” approach, advocated by the Holy See.

“A way must be found where all believers of the Holy City are equal citizens, guaranteed and respected and that they feel themselves an integral and constitutive part of the soul of the city and not just guests,” he said.

**i** See pages 12-13



# Catholic radio host criticises restrictions on maternity care

## Jason Osborne

Spirit Radio host Wendy Grace has hit out at the “unnecessarily cruel” restrictions on maternity care throughout the pandemic.

The restrictions include the exclusion of fathers from attending pregnancy appointments and the early stages of labour.

## Nervous

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Mrs Grace said she is seven months pregnant herself with her third baby, and that as a result she’s nervous about the “arbitrary ways of deciding whether or not your

husband or partner can be with you”.

She said the restrictions are indicative of “the attitude towards women in pregnancy”.

## Difficult

“I really especially feel for first-time mums and, you know, those who maybe are having a difficult pregnancy,” Mrs Grace said, continuing, “I just think some of the stuff has been so unnecessarily cruel.”

Mrs Grace described the situation one caller to Spirit Radio found herself in a couple of weeks ago:

“I had somebody call up the station a few weeks ago saying how her daughter



Wendy Grace

was pregnant, they knew that the baby had died, so she had to be scheduled to

be induced to deliver her now-dead baby.”

## Procedure

“In other words, that was a procedure that was happening in a day or two, and her husband could’ve easily gone, gotten a Covid test, hopefully gotten the all-clear and been with her.”

Mrs Grace said “that’s a practical thing” that would have kept everybody safe, but that didn’t happen and the woman “was by herself for the worst moment of her life”.

“For me, where there’s a will, there’s a way and the will hasn’t been there,” Mrs Grace said.

Chief Medical Officer Tony Holohan said there is no evidence that the restrictions should remain in place, while in the Dáil, Taoiseach Micheál Martin said he agrees with the CMO that hospitals should lift restrictions on fathers or partners attending maternity wards. However, restrictions remain unchanged in maternity hospitals.

# No date set for return to Mass in Irish prisons, Irish Prison Service says

## Ruadhán Jones

In-person Masses are yet to take place in prisons across Ireland, despite the Government reintroducing public worship May 10.

“A date for the resumption of religious services has not yet been set,” Alan Armstrong, press officer for the Irish Prison services said, following a request from *The Irish Catholic*.

Mr Armstrong said that chaplains continue to work “in all prison establishments, providing spiritual and pastoral support services”, but prisoners and staff may not attend in-person worship.

## Guidelines

“Revised guidelines and controls for the safe celebration of religious services have been developed and approved,” he continued.

## Resumption

“The Irish Prison Service is currently analysing the resumption of a wide range of services and programmes in prisons, including the resumption of religious services, following the Government’s recent announcements,” Mr Armstrong said.

However, he said “the Irish Prison Service must take account of the risks of Covid transmission in a congregated setting and the fact that most people in custody and most staff working in our prisons are not yet vaccinated”.

*The Irish Catholic* understands that there is great concern among the prison population and prison chaplains regarding the failure to resume in-person religious services.

# Brazil’s Becker gives glory to God after Liverpool win



Alisson Becker

## Staff reporter

Liverpool’s Alisson Becker dedicated his recent goal versus West Brom to his late father, who drowned near his home in Brazil in February, saying “I’m sure he was seeing, with God at his side, celebrating”.

The Brazilian goalkeeper displays great faith in God, regularly tweeting scriptural passages to his 1.2 million followers, his account reading “Belong to Jesus”.

Mr Becker has never been shy about his faith, sporting a t-shirt depicting “the cross equals love” shirt following Liverpool’s Champions League victory in 2019.

When asked if he had any advice for future goalkeepers, he responded: “If you want to be a great keeper, you need to work very hard. That’s what I do. You need to be very focused on football and I think faith is important too. If you believe in God, you know you have to do your best on the pitch and put love into everything you do in life.”

# AMPLIFYING VOICES OF CATHOLIC SISTERS AROUND THE WORLD



# GLOBAL SISTERS REPORT

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# Religious illiteracy ‘one of the challenges of our times’, says Bishop Noel Treanor

Ruadhán Jones

The bishop of Down and Connor's statement came after a representative from the Holy See warned the EU's security organisation that 'hate speech' laws are often used to "frighten or intimidate Christians".

Intolerance for public, faith-based opinions is "often advanced through accusations of 'hatred' or 'hate speech', equating religious beliefs to hate and thus depicting religion as a problem," Msgr Janusz Urbanczyk, permanent representa-

tive of the Holy See to international organisations, told the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Commenting on the monsignor's statement, Bishop Noel Treanor said religious illiteracy is "one of the challenges of our of times".

"Where faith and religion are either eroded in the public square or banished from it, they can sometimes be banished by what is effectively hate speech, total misrepresentation of religion and faith," Bishop Treanor told *The Irish*

*Catholic*.

He continued, adding that the equation of religious language with intolerance is problematic.

"We must be attentive lest the limitations of freedom of speech are used in a way that would erode the proper and appropriate place of religious faith or the expression of a religious voice from the public square," the bishop said.

He warned that the freedom to express authentic religious views is important "for the vitality of society" and that the media in particu-

lar must "play their proper role" in this regard.

"Clearly faith communities who are rooted in society to its very depths, these communities are communities of faith, of care and of civic action," Bishop Treanor said. "It's very important in today's society to recognise that the press and the media have a particular responsibility with regard to matters pertaining to faith, religion and moral issues, to present accurately – not prejudicial or confrontational – such ideas."

# Hospitals working in the dark following cyber attack – chaplain

Jason Osborne

Chaplaincy work is "slower, but hasn't stopped," according to Fr John Kelly of Tallaght University Hospital following the recent cyberattack.

The HSE's IT systems were brought to a standstill last week following a "significant" ransomware attack.

"Naturally, patients are anxious, but like the HSE we here in Tallaght University Hospital will be assuring patients that they will receive all their care, but it's a slower process," Fr Kelly told *The Irish Catholic*.

Chaplains are "challenged, but certainly not as challenged" as patients and nursing staff trying to access "important information".

"The whole system here is quite challenged now. The only cancellations are radiography, but basically the hospital, from an IT point of view, is working very much in the dark," Fr Kelly said.

# Return of crowds in NI boost for players and spectators

Ruadhán Jones

The absence of supporters at sports matches was "to the detriment of the game" and their return should prove a help to players, a priest who works with Derry City FC said.

Up to 500 people can attend sports matches in Northern Ireland from May 24, an announcement from the Executive's Communities Minister Deirdre Hargey revealed May 13.

Fr Chris Ferguson, who helps support player wellbeing for Derry City, said that "anybody who follows football or soccer will appreciate how different it is to watch a game without supporters, that atmosphere".

"The players, they are human beings, and they feed off it," he told *The Irish Catholic*. "It's that symbiotic relationship, players can inspire the crowd and on another level, the crowd lifts the players when things aren't going well."

He continued, saying attending a match is similar to a liturgy in that "as much as we have webcams and livestreams, it's a poor substitute for gathering together".

"I think it's been to the detriment to the game that the supporters aren't there," he said.

Spectators can only attend events where the sports governing body, club or venue operator can ensure compliance with social distancing, control numbers accordingly and have appropriate hygiene regimes in place.

## New deacons on the path to priesthood



Rev. Stephen Wilson and Rev. Colm Hagan are pictured after being ordained deacons in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh on Sunday May 16, by Archbishop Eamon Martin.

# Call for canonisation of slain priest

» Continued from Page 1

"I'm 81, I'm sure I don't have a terrible long time to live and sometimes Rome is very slow at moving," Mr Mullan said, "The news [from the inquest] was good so we're just hoping for more good news from Rome."

Fr Paddy McCafferty PP of Corpus Christi parish said there is a "growing impetus and there has been for some time".

"Fr Mullan didn't hesitate. All that morning, Fr Mullan was literally carrying children to safety and getting families to safety. He lost his life doing that," he said.

He added that both Fr Mullan and Fr Noel Fitzpatrick – who was shot dead 11 months later in the Westrock-Springhill Massacre – should be recognised as martyrs as they were examples of "what a true priest is and does".

"These two men who were selfless, who were good, devoted priests to their parishioners, died as they lived. They could have done nothing else but go into danger, they went out into a hail of bullets and they didn't think of themselves and they didn't think of their own safety – they thought of their parishioners and they wanted to be close to someone who was dying," said Fr McCafferty.

"The fact that they were shot dead in those circumstances, exercising their duties, they are martyrs to the priesthood and the Church doesn't require miracles for a martyr. There would be a lot of devotion, their memories are very revered and what they did made a deep impression on the people," he said.

At a time when the Church is praying for vocations, Fr McCafferty said these two priests can be looked on as "true examples of the priesthood".



# Individuals and communities...

England was merry this past week as bars, restaurants, cinemas, theatres and art galleries opened up – Church services had been available for weeks. But people were urged to be cautious. The message from the authorities was insistent: “don’t think as an individual: think of how your behaviour may affect others.”

## Cultural nudge

In its way, this is an interesting little cultural nudge in a new – or rather, older – direction. Individualism has been king, queen and emperor of modern thinking since the 1970s. Personal choice has been the prevailing mantra in everything from advertising to medical ethics. But now the powers that be have been urging us to think in terms of community, society, even the common good.

The pandemic may have been an agent of change on



**Mary Kenny**

**“This is so dangerous, especially for young people who may make terrible decisions impulsively”**

mindsets and mentality.

Not that there isn’t sometimes tension and conflict between the interests and desires of the individual, and the good of the community. I choose to drive my car to see friends and family because it’s convenient for me. But when I found myself sitting in a snarl of traffic for 50 minutes, I was told that I should have taken the bus, instead of contributing to vehicle congestion!

These tensions have arisen over the ethical and moral debates we’ve seen in our time,

and they are evident again in the current conversation about assisted dying.

It is understandable, in painful and distressing cases, that a person might wish their life to be brought to an end. People can get to a point in the last part of their lives where they really do want to die. And there have always been cases where ‘mercy-killing’ was compassionately regarded – it has occurred on the battlefield, when a mortal agony has invited quick dispatch, and the act forgiven, though not

sanctioned. Thankfully, better medical care today can greatly ease terminal pain, and should be used to the full.

But once assisted dying becomes an accepted social practice, it gradually moves towards euthanasia, and the common good of care for the dying, and respect for human life is diminished.

## Personal choice

It is my belief that assisted dying also promotes, even if unintentionally, the ideation of suicide as a ‘personal choice’. This is so dangerous, especially for young people who may make terrible decisions impulsively. In every case of suicide that I have known, the ripple effects have gone on for years.

Yes, maybe the pandemic has served to revive John Donne’s words: “no man is an island.” Everything we do affects others.

## Grammaticatical games

Josepha Madigan Tweeted that she was pleased to have done a reading “at mass”, to which I cheekily responded “at mass what?” The increasing use of lower-case ‘mass’ for ‘Mass’ introduces confusion, where language should clarify (‘mass demonstrations: mass military manoeuvres’ describes a collective quantity: ‘Mass’ refers to the Eucharistic rite.) To her credit, she apologised.

Actually, I’m not a good grammarian and I make regular errors of syntax. But I like to learn, and I’ve had an entertaining email which illuminates much about the use of English.

*“An Oxford comma walks into a bar where it spends the evening watching the television, getting drunk, and smoking cigars.”*

*“A dangling participle walks into a bar. Enjoying a cocktail and chatting with the bartender, the evening passes pleasantly.”*

*“A bar was walked into by the passive voice.”*

*“An oxymoron walked into a bar, and the silence was deafening.”*

*“Hyperbole totally rips into this insane bar and absolutely destroys everything.”*

*“A mixed metaphor walks into a bar, seeing the handwriting on the wall, but hoping*



Minister of State for special education and inclusion Josepha Madigan.

*to nip it in the bud.*

*“Three intransitive verbs walk into a bar. They sit. They converse. They depart.”*

*“The past, present, and future walked into a bar. It was tense.”*

*“A simile walks into a bar, as parched as a desert.”*

*“A synonym strolls into a tavern.”*

*“A gerund and an infinitive walk into a bar, drinking to forget.”*

*“The conditional would have walked into a bar, had it only known.”*

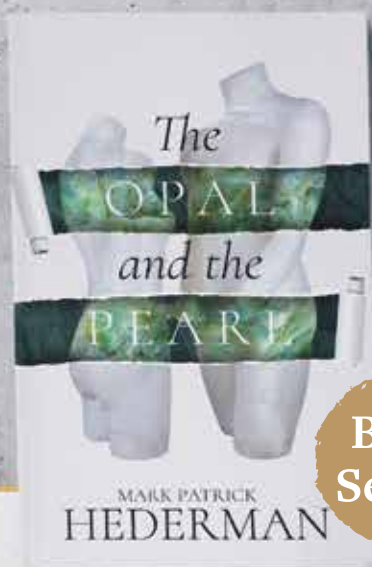
Schoolteachers: please pass it on!

● Senior moment! I referred last week to “the poet Augustus John” who spent holidays in Ennistymon in Co. Clare. Mr John was a famous painter, not a poet, as was his sister, Gwen. His frolics in Ireland are described in an autobiography by Nicolette Devas, *Two Flamboyant Fathers*, referring to Francis Macnamara, the local bard, and the painter Augustus John. It is now out of print, but I’ll gladly send my copy to Ennistymon local library - if they’d like this interesting glimpse of the 1930s in their locality, with its “active social life of dancing, singing, fiddling and story-telling”.

# Books from MARK PATRICK HEDERMAN

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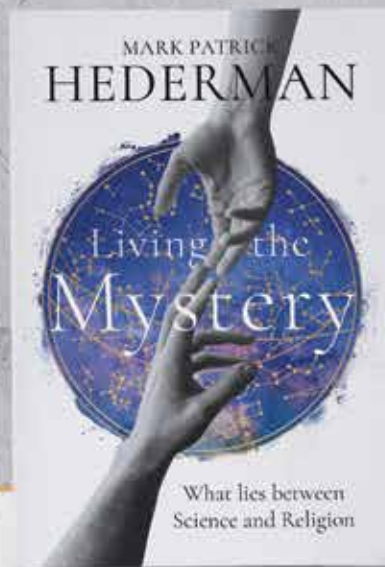


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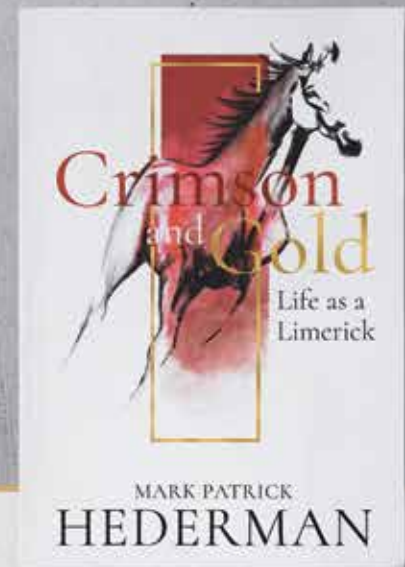
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Where is God to be found in the Ireland of today? Hederman examines this question and explores how we can hone in on the most precious aspects of our faith and cancel the surrounding noise.



## Belfast Jewish community receives 'very upsetting' threats of picket

Chai Brady

A synagogue in Belfast received "intimidating" phone calls telling them to condemn Israel or face a picket, following increased violence in the Middle East between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

Speaking in a personal capacity, Michael Black who is the Chairman of the Belfast Jewish community said some members of the community felt afraid to go to their place of worship to celebrate the Jewish festival of Shavuot, which ran from May 16-18.

"A group of people first of all threatened to picket the synagogue to try and prevent the service if we didn't issue a statement condemning Israel," Mr Black said, "They put out on social media a call for people to turn up. We have a very

elderly community and they didn't want to run the gauntlet of being abused.

"The idea – which is part of the IHRA [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance] definition of antisemitism – is that Jews are seen as a collective so anything that happens in Israel, we are held responsible for it," he said.

"I think, with all people, they have to stand up and speak out against bigotry, prejudice and intimidation, for some people it has been frightening. I personally don't feel that but everyone responds to threats differently, for one or two people in our community it's been very upsetting."

He added: "Obviously I would like to see peace in the Middle East and I would like to see the Palestinians and the Israelis living side by side."

Despite the threats, Jewish services

went ahead as planned and there was no picket, but the PSNI were informed of what happened.

In a debate entitled 'Breaches of International Law in Palestine by Israel' in Stormont on Monday, SDLP MLA Matthew O'Toole warned that Jewish people should not be targeted due to issues in the Middle East.

He said: "We need the international community and those with power in the international community to de-escalate the situation and to finally deliver justice and a peaceful settlement. In closing, I say this to those who are protesting, legitimately, here: continue to protest legitimately and make your voices clear, but it is absolutely unacceptable that any violence or graffiti should be targeted at members of our Jewish community. That is absolutely wrong."

## DCU Chaplaincy raises €20,000 in a day for Covid-struck Indian diocese

Ruadhán Jones

The chaplaincy launched the campaign as a "sign of solidarity" with Indian students as India suffers a "catastrophic" Covid spike, Catholic chaplain Fr Seamus McEntee said.

The chaplaincy's campaign is linked to the Multipurpose Social Service Society (MPSSS) of Cuddapah diocese, Andhra Pradesh, India, a registered charity which works with local people irrespective of their caste, creed and religion.

Fr McEntee, who established the link, said the "catastrophic" situation in India sparked the idea for the campaign, which has raised more than €35,000 as of May 18.

"We had a Zoom call with

[a priest in Cuddapah diocese] – he had Covid – and the next day he went into hospital, in ICU," Fr McEntee said. "He says what's reported is only a tip of the iceberg. It is very bad."

Fr McEntee praised the response of students and staff of Dublin City University (DCU), adding that the chaplaincy's initial aim had been to raise €20,000 in a month – a figure they achieved in 24 hours.

"We wanted to show our solidarity with our students and with some of the universities we link up with in India," Fr McEntee said. "Within an hour we were up to 10,000. The minute it went live, you could watch it going up. An incredible response."

## Catholic actors Mark Wahlberg and Mel Gibson begin film on priest's life



Mel Gibson, Mark Wahlberg, Owen Wilder Vaccaro and Will Ferrell star in a scene from the movie *Daddy's Home 2*.

Catholic actors Mark Wahlberg and Mel Gibson are to star in a new film about an American priest, which has just begun filming.

In *Stu*, Wahlberg will star as Fr Stuart Long, a onetime boxer who became a priest and died in 2014, while Gibson will play his father.

*Variety*, a show business magazine,

reported Wahlberg has added a lot of weight to play the role.

It's not the first time Wahlberg and Gibson have appeared together on screen.

In the 2017 comedy *Daddy's Home 2*, Wahlberg reprised his role as Dusty from the original, and Gibson played his father – the same relationship to

be depicted in *Stu*.

Gibson's girlfriend Rosalind Ross, with whom he has a 4-year-old son, wrote the script – she's written two other films in the past decade – and is directing her first feature film.

Wahlberg is listed as one of the producers of the movie, which has no release date set.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Archbishop Farrell defends Church sex-ed in Catholic schools

Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell has defended the place of Church teaching on sexuality in Catholic schools, despite a backlash by politicians.

Dr Farrell insisted that the new sexuality and relationships resource *Flourish* affirms the "core of Judeo-Christian religion" and "celebrates life and love".

Dr Farrell was speaking at the annual conference of the Catholic Primary School

Management Association (CPSMA) last Thursday, and defended the programme against attack.

The resource has come under fire in recent weeks for promoting Catholic teaching, with Sinn Féin's education spokesperson Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire claiming in the Dáil that children risk being "othered" by the way sex-education is being taught in Catholic schools.

#### St Patrick Centre offers free entry as lockdown ends

To celebrate the end of lockdown, The Saint Patrick Centre Downpatrick are offering free entry from Monday May 24 to Sunday May 29.

"We want to celebrate in the spirit of St Patrick and invite everyone to enjoy our exhibition, our new-look shop and café," said Dr Tim Campbell in a statement. "This has been a dif-

ficult year for everyone and we want to give something back to the community who have been so supportive of us."

"2021 marks a significant milestone for the Centre. It's our twentieth anniversary year as the only permanent exhibition to St Patrick in the world. We look forward to opening our doors to everyone."

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**Martin Mansergh**  
The View



# Ecumenism helped shape the face of modern Ireland

It is often overlooked that a major contributor to the opening up of Irish society from the early 1960s was the Vatican, when Pope John XXIII soon after his election summoned the Second Vatican Council. It had many outcomes and effects, but one of them, the ecumenical movement, was warmly received by many Christians inside and outside of the Catholic Church. It came at an important time in Ireland.

**“Crucial to a healthy nationalism are decisions, in the legal and political sphere first, but preferably also reflected in popular sentiment, as to who belongs”**

Ecumenism created a shared space, involving mutual Christian recognition, however qualified, with an effort in subsequent decades, sometimes successful, sometimes not, to recapture common ground, without prejudice to the ethos, separate identity, and integrity of the positions and traditions of the Churches that participated. It meant that different churches and parishioners in the same locality were no longer required to respect mutual blanket exclusion and ‘no-go’ zones, when it came to the practice of religion, or, in theory at least, to believe the worst of the other faith.

Back in person in church on Sunday for the first time in five months, I took the opportunity after morning service to look again at a plaque on the wall of St. Mary’s, Tipperary, commemorating a joint service of nine lessons and carols on December 17, 1972, in which the Tipperary Choral Union played a central role. Its formation was the initiative of Thomas MacCormack, organist of St Michael’s, Tipperary. He had previously assisted in St Mel’s Cathedral, Longford. The service was conducted

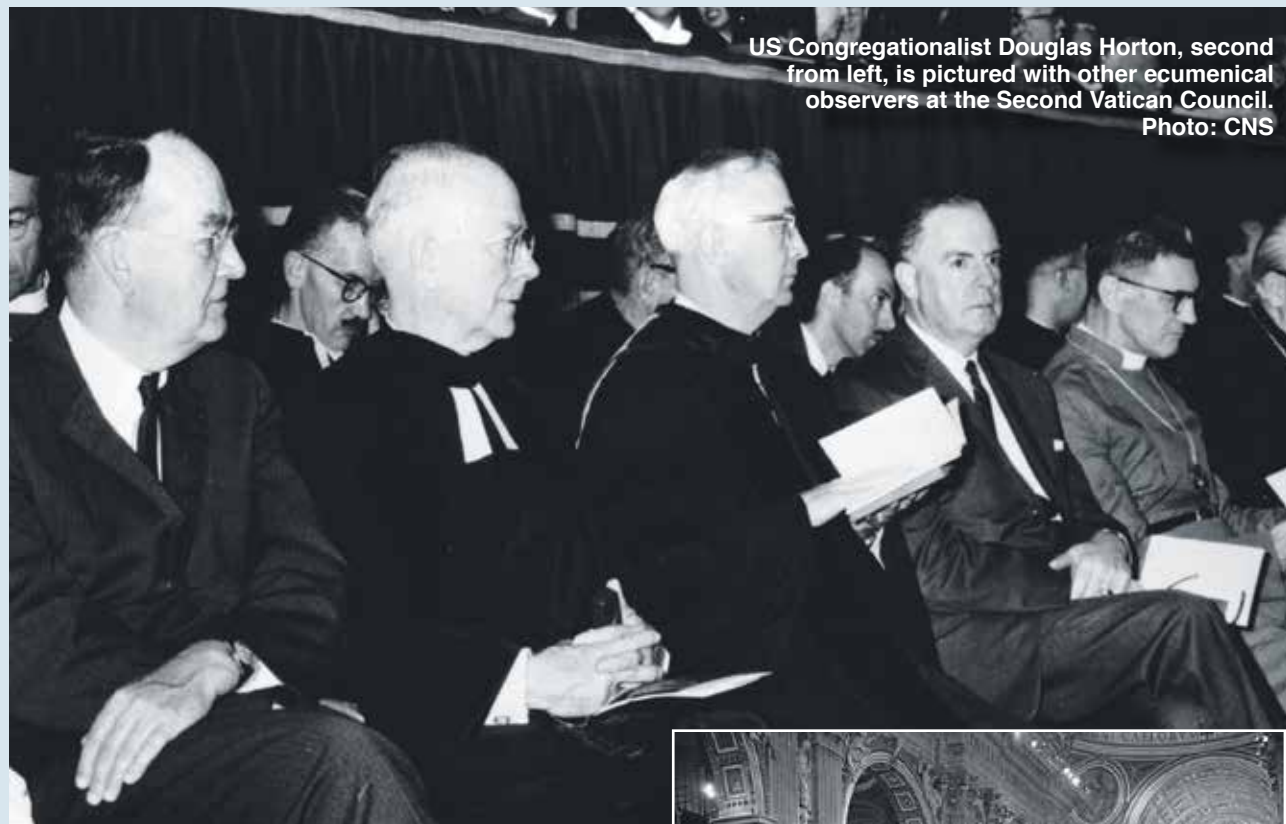
by Archdeacon Hogg, rector of St Mary’s with Msgr Frank Ryan PP, Tipperary, and Dom Bede OSB, popularly known as Fr Joe, from Glenstal Abbey (famous for its singing of Gregorian chant). My cousin Philippa was one of those singing that day. Long afterwards, when he was retired, I met Tom Mac Cormack on the doorstep at the 2002 general election. We had a lengthy conversation about everything except politics, ending up with a discussion on the respective merits of Bach and Handel.

At the outbreak of serious violence in Northern Ireland, the normalisation of relations between Churches in the Republic meant that generally, outside occasional serious incidents in border counties, the Protestant minority were not vulnerable to boycotts or other reactions on account of the conflict, that had occurred sporadically because of attacks on Catholics in Belfast in the early 1920s and mid-1930s.

Ecumenism was not welcomed by everyone. Despite this, there may have been a dawning realisation that being perceived as a monolith, was not necessarily to the long-term advantage of the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, mainstream Protestant churches in Northern Ireland found themselves under pressure from hardline anti-Catholic demagoguery, with every ecumenical act or gesture liable to be denounced as betrayal and used as an excuse for personalised harassment.

## Healthy nationalism

National feeling is not just legitimate, but essential to social cohesion and stability. Crucial to a healthy nationalism are decisions, in the legal and political sphere first, but preferably also reflected in popular sentiment, as to who belongs. In Ireland, nationalism historically has been strongly connected to religion. Since the 17th Century, Irish nationalism oscillated between the conviction that its foundation was an Irish Catholic nation, originally formed by a merger between the two nations of mediaeval Ireland, Anglo-Norman and Gaelic, under pressure from



US Congregationalist Douglas Horton, second from left, is pictured with other ecumenical observers at the Second Vatican Council. Photo: CNS

**“The Protestant population outside the future Northern Ireland was largely on the sidelines during the Irish revolution, its mainly unionist sympathies placing it on the losing side”**

Reformation and Plantation, and the more aspirational inclusive vision of the United Irishmen and Young Ireland. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, when, post-French Revolution, nations began to be invested with rights to independence and sovereignty, the Irish had to contend either with denials that it was a nation (“a country not a nation”, as Sir Edward Carson put it, debating the *Government of Ireland Bill* in 1920), or alternatively that it was two nations, two Irish nations as W.F. Monypenny put it in a book published around the time of the third *Home Rule Bill* in 1912, the implication being that the demands of one negated the demands of the other. Both Redmond and Pearse vehemently denounced the two-nations theory as heresy, because it blocked all-Ireland self-rule.

The 1916 Proclamation is a one-nation document, promising to cherish all the chil-

dren of the nation equally, and oblivious of differences carefully fostered between majority and minority in the past, leading my father the historian Nicholas Mansergh to comment in 1975 that “there was no easy going back on that”. However, there was a tension between ideal and reality, reflected in Connolly’s order in 1916 that there was to be no shot fired in Ulster. The leadership of the rebellion did not want accusations afterwards that the Rising had been a sectarian bloodbath, as was claimed by loyalist history post-1798. Fr Michael O’Flanagan, from 1917 vice-president of Sinn Féin, a Roscommon-based priest often in trouble with his bishop, defended going ahead without unionists, on the basis that they were different and had excluded themselves. His two-nations opinion was seized on by Lloyd George to challenge the Sinn Féin demand for a



Pope St John XXIII leads the opening session of Vatican II in St Peter’s Basilica on October 11, 1962. Photo: L’Osservatore Romano

united independent republic.

The Protestant population outside the future Northern Ireland was largely on the sidelines during the Irish revolution, its mainly unionist sympathies placing it on the losing side. When its future looked precarious, in May 1922 three of its leaders went to Griffith and Collins to ask whether they wanted Protestants to stay or to leave. Even if little could be done for their security short term, the official desire was that they should stay. In the 1937 Constitution, the minority churches were all recognised,

while the Catholic Faith was recognised as that of the great majority (a formula first used in the Concordat of 1802 between France during the Consulate and the Vatican under Pope Pius VII). While there was a good deal of ambivalence on both sides for a generation, one of the important achievements of independent Ireland as well as of the religious leaders of the minority was to secure the commitment and contribution of a small but significant community, assisted in the 1960s by ecumenism and later acceptance of pluralism.





There is a good reason to treat marriage differently than other family situations, writes **David Quinn**

**I**n the Dáil last week, Tánaiste Leo Varadkar described the current definition of the family in the Constitution as “out-of-date”. This might surprise you. Didn't we have a referendum on marriage in 2015 precisely to ‘modernise’ our view of the family and allow same-sex couples to marry?

But it seems we didn't go far enough because the Constitution still regards marriage (opposite or same-sex) as having more importance than other family forms, and this does not recognise ‘family diversity’. Furthermore, it is ‘discriminatory’.

We changed the definition of marriage in 2015 in the name of ‘equality’, but as some people pointed out at the time – this columnist included – the logic of the argument meant we would have to move towards ‘family equality’. It would soon be deemed unacceptable to privilege marriage over other family forms.

**“The question here is whether there is a good reason to treat marriage differently than other family situations?”**

The Tánaiste was responding to a question from Labour leader, Alan Kelly, about the rights of cohabiting couples, which are less than those of married couples.

Mr Varadkar responded: “the definition of family in Bunreacht na hÉireann, the 1937 Constitution, is out of date.

“It is based on a traditional, more Christian or Catholic view of a family, which is not wrong. It is a man and a woman, although that was changed to allow two men and two women. However, it is based on two married people, as it were, with children. That is what constitutes a family under the Constitution. If that were ever true, we all know it is not true anymore. There are many different forms of families in our society, and there is great diversity in what family means. I believe we should update, modernise and change that definition.”

In other words, we are due yet another referendum.

Here is what the Constitution currently says under the heading ‘The



Family’ (Article 41), even after the 2015 vote: “The State pledges itself to guard with special care the institution of Marriage, on which the Family is founded, and to protect it against attack.”

Guarding the institution of marriage with special care means not guarding other forms of the family with the same care.

On the face of it this is, indeed, discriminatory. But is discrimination in this instance justified?

It might seem appalling to say discrimination is ever acceptable, but in fact, we discriminate in all sorts of ways every day, and some of them are defensible, and some are not.

For example, it would be wrong to turn down someone's job application simply because of that person's ethnic group or sex. But it might not be wrong to turn them down on the basis of age. They might be only ten, or they might be 85. Would you employ a 10-year-old or an 85-year-old as a first-time pilot for a passenger airline? You would not, and no-one would consider this to be unfair discrimination.

### Situations

Different situations should be treated differently, and similar situations should be treated similarly. If there is a relevant difference between two situations, or individuals, it would be ridiculous not to take the difference into account.

The question here is whether there is a good reason to treat marriage differently than other family situations? That is, is there a good reason to guard it with ‘special care’?

Leo Varadkar says the Constitution in its original 1937 form contained a “traditional, more Christian or Catholic view of a family”, based on “two married people with children”. Of course, only a man and a woman in

**“Guarding the institution of marriage with special care means not guarding other forms of the family with the same care”**

a conjugal union can have children, hence the special place once given to the marriage of two people of the opposite sex.

**“It is a simple fact that the more ‘family diversity’ there is, the less marriage there is”**

But the view of marriage as a conjugal union directed towards children is not simply a Catholic or Christian one. It is to be found in all human societies everywhere through almost all of recorded history.

When something is so universal, it must have some very deep justification behind it. The justification is not mysterious; all societies have an interest in ensuring men and women

raise the children they bring into the world together and take responsibility for them.

It is a very strange society that gives up this aim. But we have done so, in the name of ‘freedom’ and now intend to go even further. Having declared that marriage between a man and a woman has no special characteristics, we are now pushing to say the same about marriage itself.

### Different types

Leo Varadkar is correct, of course, to say that there are now many different types of families in Ireland. There are single-parent families, cohabiting couples, divorced people who have remarried and so on.

But it is a simple fact that the more ‘family diversity’ there is, the less marriage there is, and then we

end up with fewer children enjoying the benefits of being raised by a good mother and a good father together, living under the same roof. Marriage more than anything else ties a father to his children and the mother of his children. When marriage weakens, so does that tie.

**“Family structure emerged as having a significant and consistent relationship with adolescent behaviour”**

Ironically, in the very same week Mr Varadkar flagged another marriage referendum, a report was published by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) which confirmed the importance of family structure.

It examines adolescent behaviour and says: “Family structure emerged as having a significant and consistent relationship with adolescent behaviour, with poorer behaviour across all domains for those in lone-parent families or families that experienced separation during...adolescence.”

This being so, shouldn't we still do everything possible to encourage men and women to raise their children together, and help them stay together?

Leo Varadkar says the thinking behind Article 41 is ‘out-of-date’, but in fact the evidence backs it up. Only a society that has become ideologically blind can fail to see that evidence, to the detriment of children.







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# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Jesuits prepare to celebrate Ignatian Year

● The roughly 15,000 members of the Society of Jesus, their collaborators and many people who draw on the spiritual heritage left by St Ignatius of Loyola are preparing to mark a special Ignatian Year beginning May 20 and lasting until the saint's feast day, July 31, 2022.

Anticipating the celebration, Father Arturo Sosa, the Jesuit superior general, hosted the launch May 11 of *Walking with Ignatius*, a book-length interview he did with journalist Darío Menor.

On May 20, 1521, the soldier Ignatius was wounded by a cannonball in battle; he spent months in bed recuperating and reading about Jesus and the lives of saints.

He decided he wanted to be one of them and set off on a journey to discern God's will for his life.

### California bill targets university healthcare links to Catholic hospitals

● A bill threatens to ban University of California health systems from partnering with institutions that follow Catholic ethics, prompting concern ideological motives on abortion and LGBT issues will damage partnerships and limit medical care access.

An organisation of Catholic hospitals has defended its efforts to adhere to Catholic ethics, but also defend the partnership on the ground that they or their network hospitals provide some procedures related to gender

transitioning and have won recognition from major LGBT groups.

"Currently there are many... contracts with the University of California and Catholic healthcare," Edward Dolejsi, interim executive director of the California Catholic Conference, told CNA. "[W]e provide services in a variety of underserved communities, and the University of California wants access to those communities and wants to train their physicians in those communities."

### Five bishops, 220 priests have died from Covid in Mexico

● According to a May 11 report from the Catholic Multimedia Centre eight women religious, six men religious, and 12 deacons have also died from the coronavirus in the country. A total of 24 bishops have come down with Covid-19, with 19 making favourable progress and recovering from the disease. Five bishops in the older age bracket have publicly shared they have received the Covid-19 vaccine.

The diocese hardest hit has been the Archdiocese of Guadalajara with 24 priests dying from the virus, followed by the Archdiocese of Mexico with 21 priests and one of its auxiliary bishops, Francisco Daniel Rivera Sánchez. According to the latest CMC report, the increase in deaths compared to its previous report was four priests, one male religious and one deacon.

### Former Coptic Orthodox monk hanged for bishop's murder

● Wael Saad, a former monk of the Coptic Orthodox Church, was executed Sunday, May 9 for the 2018 murder of Bishop Epiphanius, the abbot of St Macarius Monastery. Raymond Rasmi Mansour, another monk who assisted in the crime, has been sentenced to life imprisonment. Mansour had also been sentenced to death, but his sentence was reduced after winning an appeal. Bishop Epiphanius' body was found July 29, 2018, with injuries to his head and back that suggest that he had been hit by a sharp object.

Saad, whose monastic name was Isaiah al-Makary, was charged with the bishop's murder August 11, 2018, and confessed to the murder the following day.

The bishop's murder highlighted tension in the Coptic Orthodox Church over monasticism, ecumenism, and reform.

## As Covid-19 spikes, the Church in India strives for ways to help

Catholic officials in India are working to help citizens get help during the second wave of Covid-19 and the accompanying lockdown.

"Our priority now is to save as many lives as possible," Archbishop Victor Henry Thakur of Raipur told ucanews.com. He said with movements restricted, the archdiocese is reaching out to as many people as possible through neighbourhood networks to provide food and medical help, including getting patients admitted to hospitals.

Bishop Jose Chittooparambil of Rajkot told ucanews.com: "We are providing medical care to people under trees and makeshift tents, as our priority is to save as many lives as possible." Suspected patients who need home quarantine are provided accommodation in church buildings, he said, since most village families live together in small mud houses where quarantine is not possible.

Archbishop Thakur said that, during the first wave of the pandemic last year, Catholic activists helped migrant workers with cooked meals, drinking water and other basic requirements.

"The priority has changed now," the archbishop said.

Ucanews.com reported medical facilities are overwhelmed with more than 300,000 new infections across India daily.

Despite best efforts, "many people die for want of medical care as hospitals, including



A woman mourns outside the mortuary of a Covid-19 hospital in New Delhi May 12, 2021, after seeing the body of her son, who died after contracting the disease. Photo: CNS.

Catholic facilities, are unable to accommodate even seriously affected people," Archbishop Thakur said.

On May 12, India reported 4,120 Covid-19 deaths and 348,000 new cases, increasing total cases to 23.7 million.

"Our hospitals are full and we have no way to accommodate more patients," said Bishop Chittooparambil.

"We are now busy equipping our clinics in villages with the minimum needed facilities and medicine to attend to Covid-19 patients. Critical patients are referred to nearby government-designated Covid-19 hospitals," he said.

Rajkot Diocese is distributing cooked food to 100 families where all members are infected and unable to prepare food.

Delhi Archdiocese, also

badly hit by the pandemic, is in contact with families who have lost members and providing online counselling, said Fr Savarimuthu Sankar, archdiocesan spokesperson.

"We also distribute raw food to poor families through parishes to ensure they do not suffer because of job losses on account of the lockdown," he said.

The archdiocese is helping Covid-19 patients who cannot return to their homes with temporary accommodation.

The archdiocese in Mumbai has opened help desks to provide counselling, medical assistance and help in finding hospital beds and ambulances to those needing critical care.

These desks also provide free medical consultancy with doctors, said Fr Nigel Barrett, spokesman for Mumbai Cardi-

nal Oswald Gracias.

"Our effort is to provide every help possible to ensure that no one dies without medical care for want of information," said the priest, who is among those coordinating archdiocesan efforts in one of the hardest-hit cities.

"Our work is not restricted to Catholics. It extends to everyone irrespective of caste, creed or religion," Fr Barrett told ucanews.com.

Catholic hospitals in Kerala state have spearheaded a movement against private hospitals trying to exploit the situation by overcharging for medical facilities.

The Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council has instructed Catholic hospitals to set an example by providing affordable medical care to everyone battling the pandemic.

### Italian broker for Vatican's London property arrested in UK

Gianluigi Torzi, the Italian businessman who brokered the final part of the Secretariat of State's purchase of a London investment property, has been arrested in the United Kingdom.

The arrest, which took place May 11 in London, was requested by an Italian judge in Rome in April.

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police Service said: "Officers from the National Extradition Unit attended an address on Campden Hill Road, W8, on Tuesday, May 11."

"Gianluigi Torzi, 42 (16.01.79), was identified and arrested on a Trade and

Cooperation Act (TACA) warrant issued in Italy on Wednesday, May 5 and certified by the National Crime Agency on Thursday, May 6."

"He is accused in Italy of money laundering and fraud offenses."

"Mr Torzi appeared before Westminster Magistrates' Court for an initial extradition hearing where he was remanded in custody. His next appearance is on Tuesday, May 18."

Mr Torzi, who has denied wrongdoing, is being investigated by Italian authorities for suspected fraudulent billing, money laundering, and other financial crimes in

collaboration with three of his associates.

He is also under investigation by the Vatican for his role in facilitating the Secretariat of State's purchase of a London property on 60 Sloane Avenue in 2018. The Vatican alleges that in doing so, Mr Torzi was part of a conspiracy to defraud the secretariat of millions of euros.

Based on the investigation, Vatican prosecutors had requested the seizure of Mr Torzi's UK-based bank accounts earlier this year. In March, a British judge reversed the action, stating that Vatican prosecutors withheld and misrepresented information in their request to the UK court.

### Pope Francis accepts resignation of Polish bishop accused of cover-up

Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of Bishop Jan Tyrawa of Bydgoszcz, the latest bishop accused of covering up sexual abuse by clergy.

The bishops' conference said the Vatican had "conducted proceedings on reported negligence" in line

with the Pontiff's May 2019 *motu proprio*, *Vos estis lux mundi*, and had also taken account of "other difficulties" facing Bishop Tyrawa.

Poland's Catholic *Wież* bimonthly said Bishop Tyrawa had reappointed Fr Pawel Kania to Bydgoszcz's Divine Provi-

dence Parish after the priest had been detained by police and suspended from another diocese for propositioning boys and storing images of child abuse on his computer.

It added that Fr Kania had cared for altar boys and taught religious classes to children at

his new parish in from 2006 to 2009, before being jailed in 2015 for seven years.

In February 2020, a court ordered the Bydgoszcz Diocese to pay \$40,000 in damages to one of Fr Kania's victims, an order upheld on appeal in December.





Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
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## Fire spreads amidst Israel-Gaza unrest



A man moves a bundle of wheat as a fire burns on a field after a rocket launched from the Gaza Strip landed near homes in Moshav Zohar, Israel, May 13. Photo: CNS.

## Former Sri Lankan minister arrested for alleged links to Easter 2019 bombing

Two years after bombings in Sri Lanka killed hundreds at several churches and hotels on Easter, police on May 8 arrested a former cabinet minister and his brother for alleged links to the bombings. Their attorney claimed the arrests were politically motivated.

Rishad Bathiudeen, who leads an opposition party in the Sri Lankan Parliament and formerly served in the cabinet, and his brother Reyaj were arrested in Colombo April 24 for allegedly "aiding and abetting the suicide bombers who committed the Easter Sunday carnage", police spokesman Ajith Rohana said, according to the

Associated Press. The brothers were not yet officially charged, but Mr Rohana said there was direct evidence, circumstantial evidence, and "scientific" evidence for their involvement in the attacks.

"They were arrested after the scrutiny of bank accounts, cheque transactions and communication lines," Mr Rohana said, reported by the Indian newspaper *The Hindu*.

On April 21, 2019, nine suicide bombers targeted two Catholic churches, a Protestant church, four hotels, and a housing complex almost simultaneously. The church bombings occurred in the middle of Easter Sunday services. The bombings killed

more than 260 people and injured more than 500.

Two Sri Lankan groups who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group have been blamed for the attacks.

Foreign intelligence warned the government ahead of the bombings, but a power struggle and a communication breakdown between the then-president and prime minister reportedly led to a failure to coordinate a security response.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo has been an outspoken advocate for further investigations into the bombings. Some critics of the government's investigation fear that corruption or negligence

has prevented the prosecutions of collaborators.

May 8, Rishad Bathiudeen posted to Facebook that police were present outside his house since the early morning and were "attempting to arrest me without a charge".

"They have already arrested my brother. I have been in Parliament, and have cooperated with all lawful authorities until now. This is unjust," he said.

His attorney, Rushdie Habeeb, said the arrests were politically motivated. Mr Habeeb said the arrests aimed to "punish the political leadership of the Muslims, which had nothing to do with (April 21)".

## German foreign minister welcomes same-sex blessings

Ahead of an audience with Pope Francis last Wednesday, Germany's foreign minister welcomed a day of same-sex blessings held in defiance of the Vatican.

Speaking before he met with the Pope on May 12, Heiko Maas backed the blessing ceremonies held in around 80 German cities on Monday in protest at the Vatican's "no" to same-sex blessings.

"At least I see that there is a great deal of openness in parts

of the Catholic Church to social developments that one cannot ignore," he said, according to the newspaper *Die Welt*.

"I very much welcome the fact that these discussions are being initiated again and conducted in more depth."

Talking to reporters after his private audience with the Pope, Mr Maas said that the two men discussed the coronavirus pandemic, the future of Europe, violence in Jerusalem, Latin America, and the clerical abuse crisis.

The 54-year-old member of Germany's Social Democratic Party is a baptised Catholic who was an altar server in his youth.

German media reported that he was the first German foreign minister in almost 20 years to secure a private papal audience.

The audience took place just two days after a nationwide protest May 10 against the Vatican's declaration that the Church does not have the power to bless same-sex unions.



## 'A long line' of holy catechists have served the Church, Pope writes

● Throughout history and across the globe, lay catechists have been revered as saints, and many were martyred for their refusal to renounce their faith and their vocation to teach the Christian faith to others.

Formally instituting "the ministry of catechist" with a document published May 11, Pope Francis praised "the countless lay men and women who directly took part in the spread of the Gospel through catechetical instruction".

Men and women of deep faith, authentic witnesses of holiness," he said, some of those catechists founded churches and "eventually died as martyrs".

"The long line of blessed, saints and martyrs who were catechists has significantly advanced the Church's mission and deserves to be recognised, for it represents a rich resource not only for catechesis but also for the entire history of Christian spirituality," Pope Francis wrote in the document, *Antiquum Ministerium* (Ancient Ministry).

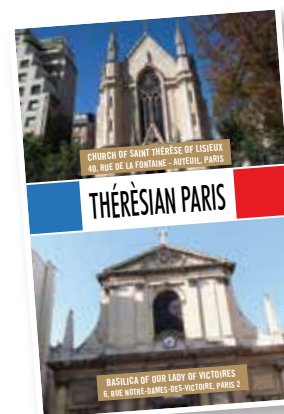
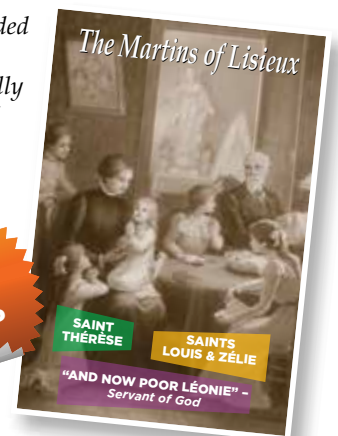
The brief document did not mention any of the beatified or canonised lay catechists by name, but many of the Catholic communities they served continue to honour them and keep their memories alive.

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The unrest wracking the Holy Land is mired in history, culture, religion and emotion, but the root causes remain unaddressed, writes **Jason Osborne**

**A**n Irish sister on the ground in the Holy Land has described as “desperate” the current conflict between Israel and Islamic militants in Gaza with little sign of a ceasefire on the horizon.

Sligo-native Sr Bridget Tighe of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood (FMDM) was mostly based in Gaza over the past two months, leaving last Monday unaware that within hours tension in Jerusalem would spill over with Hamas terrorists firing rockets at Israeli communities.

Israel’s reaction was swift and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have been targeting sites linked to Hamas and other militants ever since while the rockets continue to rain down on Israeli soil.

As General Director of Caritas Jerusalem, much of Sr Bridget and her team’s work sees them operating in Gaza. Covid-19 was challenge enough for them, as reported on by *The Irish Catholic* last September, but this latest conflict has made bringing aid to one of the most troubled patches of land in the world all the more difficult.

“I’ve actually been living in Gaza on and off much more than previous years...because during Covid, I wasn’t able to go into Gaza at all because Erez [border crossing] was closed, the border was closed,” Sr Bridget explained.

“So once Israel had got a quite high percentage of people vaccinated, I had my two vaccinations myself, it was possible to go in. It was more than a year that I hadn’t been in. It needed a bit of attention, so I’ve been in Gaza more than in Jerusalem for the past two months, coming out here [to Jerusalem] regularly.”

“I had already decided to come back to Jerusalem on Monday and stay until the following Monday, so I came on Monday out of Gaza, knowing there was a lot of tension and there was violence in Jerusalem. But I came out about 11-11:30, and by 12 o’clock, Gaza, the Erez Crossing, had closed in both directions and is still closed,” she said.

“So, if I was in Gaza, I couldn’t do much at this point, but I hope that I’ll soon be able to go back as soon as the active fighting ends.”

### Conflict

Need her there, they will, as Sr Bridget maintains contact with her team and others in Gaza, making her privy to the scale of the devastation the conflict is wreaking.

Providing context, she said, “the first thing that I think people in Ireland, or around the world, need to

# No winners as Palestinians and Israelis suffer in latest flare up



Streaks of light are seen as an Israeli Iron Dome anti-missile system intercepts rockets launched from the Gaza Strip toward Israel, as seen from Ashkelon, Israel, May 12. Photos: CNS.

know is that the Gaza Strip...has a population of now more than two million. It is about 40 kilometres long, and between 3.7-5 kilometres wide – 5 kilometres at its widest place, and it covers in the area of approximately 227 square kilometres. So, if you can imagine that with more than two million people”. For scale, it is about a quarter of the size of Co. Carlow.

The vast majority of people in Gaza have no way to leave, with the narrow strip of land under blockade by Egypt and Israel since 2007 when Hamas seized power in a coup. As a result, those caught in the conflict have nowhere to run.

**“They’re hugely bigger than before, heavier bombs than before, but more likely, something different”**

“These people have nowhere to hide. I don’t know if there’s any place else in the world where people under attack don’t even have the possibility to run. And so they’re trapped: two million people, trapped in this densely populated strip of land at the mercy of intense air and land bombardment.”

Since May 10, the day Sr Bridget left Gaza, conflict erupted to the surface. Following tensions, Hamas and other militant groups issued an ultimatum to Israel to withdraw police from the tense Temple Mount area of Jerusalem. That went unheeded by the Israelis, and Hamas began firing

rockets into the neighbouring state, with some rockets slipping through Israel’s famous ‘Iron Dome’ defence to land near Jerusalem. Sr Bridget says this move crossed “a red line” for the Jewish state. Israel immediately proceeded to return fire, and the conflict has continued since.

“There was very, very heavy bombing in the east of Gaza city and the north of the Gaza Strip, some in the south, and huge damage to the infrastructure, public buildings and private homes. On that day, there was a report of two multi-story apartment blocks destroyed – and it was probably true [reports that the buildings housed Hamas militants], the Israelis have very good intelligence, so they were probably offices of Hamas or other groups,” she said.

### Collateral damage

But there is also collateral damage, Sr Bridget says. “There were many, many ordinary apartments of people living there. I believe now there are several of those high-rise apartments destroyed, I don’t know how many. Somebody said to me there were three, somebody said there were six or seven – this was on the phone, so I really don’t know. But these are people’s homes, and of course, this is a densely populated area, so there are civilians everywhere.

“And Hamas is everywhere. I mean, Hamas isn’t just the fighters. Hamas are like a political party. The people that we work with, they may be affiliated to Hamas, but they’re not active,



A girl is helped at the scene of a rocket attack in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon, Israel.

so it’s hard to know. And many people will say they’re Hamas just so that they will get jobs or they’ll get assistance,” she says describing the group’s grip on the region.

**“I came on Monday out of Gaza, knowing there was a lot of tension and there was violence in Jerusalem”**

Hamas is currently the ruling power in Gaza, having seized control from the Fatah faction of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. Parliamentary elections due to be held were recently cancelled. The group is designated as a terrorist group by the European Union (EU),

the United States and Israel, as well as other powers.

Asked about the support Hamas has on the ground in Gaza, Sr Bridget said it’s hard to know, as many people will be reluctant to say they’re anti-Hamas, for a number of reasons.

“It’s difficult to give a genuinely true answer to that because people will be reluctant to say they’re anti-Hamas”. Yet, she believes the group has lost some of the popularity it had when it won more of the popular vote than Fatah in 2006.

“That’s when there was more or less civil war. It wasn’t quite civil war, but it was between Hamas and Fatah, and Hamas won [in the Gaza Strip]. Hamas had won the popular vote and there’s been no election since. And people in the West Bank, leaders in the West Bank, the PA [Palestinian Authority], are afraid that if there was an election, Hamas might win. So it’s hard to say. Many people in Gaza will say they aren’t anything, but some of them I’m told will say they’re Hamas because it’s easier to get jobs, if there’s social

**“Hamas is currently the ruling power in Gaza, having seized control from the Fatah faction of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas”**





Palestinians evacuate a body from the site of Israeli strikes in Gaza City, May 17.

**“There were many, many ordinary apartments of people living there. I believe now there are several of those high-rise apartments destroyed”**

help, humanitarian aid, you'll get it if you're that way.

“I'd say it has lost popularity in the last couple of years,” she said.

As the combatants war, ordinary people on both sides suffer. Sr Bridget is keen to communicate the scale of the fighting as experienced by those on the ground.

“It's been almost non-stop bombardment. Now what people have said to me...I talked to people on Tuesday [May 11], this was after the first attack, I talked to a few different people, some of our own staff, some people that I knew,” Sr Bridget said.

**“Israeli authorities later released footage of stones and other weapons they seized in the operation”**

“There's a 60-year-old man who has lived through many, many wars in Gaza, and he said that the bombing this time and the nature of the bombs, is something like he has never experienced before. A younger man took that up and said before – this other man is in his 40s so they've all lived through wars – he said before, with the Israeli bombs, you got to know the sound of the bombs coming, but this time, you hardly hear them until they explode beside you.

“And he said either they're hugely bigger than before, heavier bombs than before, but more likely, something different. As they talk, the recurring phrase was, ‘This is different to anything we've experienced before.’”

Sr Bridget said the people she's in contact with in Gaza described the way the “foundations of the buildings” are shaken by these bombs that “somehow dig into the ground”. At the same time, in Israel millions of people

have been forced to flee to bomb shelters with thousands of rockets being directed from Gaza.

Sr Bridget says that in Gaza, people have been seeking shelter in schools – either those run by the government or UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency). However, as of now, UNRWA schools have not opened their doors as shelter as they did in 2014 during the last major conflict.

“This is what's happening on the ground, it's absolutely desperate,” Sr Bridget said.

#### Source

Asked about the source of this present conflict, she said, “the root cause of all of this violence is well-known. It's not addressed, and it's never been solved: the root cause is occupation, dispossession and eviction of people from their homes.

“What caused the uprising this time – and I think it's all over the international news – was violence first at Damascus Gate, which is one of the main gates of the old city [of Jerusalem],” she said, continuing “in peaceful times, I used to often say you should sit at Damascus Gate and you'd see the world go by. In the past when there were tourists and vendors and beggars and everyone.

“So, traditionally, young men would gather outside of Damascus Gate, just socialising – it wasn't violent. And then they would walk through the old city towards the Al-Aqsa Mosque. For some reason, I don't know why, the Israelis put metal barriers around that area this year and would not let the people congregate, so that caused tension.

“Another thing that caused tension, and I think this is in the media, was the impending eviction of a few families from their homes in a suburb of the old city called Sheikh Jarrah. This is only one of many, many evictions

when Palestinian families, who have lived in their homes in other areas also around east Jerusalem – they may be in their homes for decades, and some of their families for centuries – but these very radical, right-wing settlers, with lots of money to support them have gone back and found maybe hundreds of years ago, evidence that these properties were at one time owned by Jews and they go to the courts and claim that this is theirs, and they always win. So, there are a few of these properties in Sheikh Jarrah that were expecting a court ruling,” she said.

#### Causes of tension

The Irishwoman insists: “That was one of the causes of tension. The other one was that because there was trouble and demonstrations by Muslims around the Al-Aqsa Mosque, objecting to their prevention from congregating at Damascus Gate, linked to the coming evictions, and then there was some violence and the Israeli army or police went up onto the Temple Mount and entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque and fired rubber bullets and tear gas inside the Mosque, which is absolutely anathema to Muslims.”

**“Many Arab Israelis identify as Palestinian, but they have grown up in Israel and attended Israeli schools and colleges and often served in the IDF”**

Israeli authorities later released footage of stones and other weapons they seized in the operation blaming some elements in the Muslim community for throwing the stones at Jews trying to pray at the Western Wall below.



Fr Gabriel Romanelli celebrates Mass under a light at the Rosary Sisters convent chapel in Gaza.



Sr Bridget Tighe FMDM

These incendiary factors resulted in a potent mix, and it comes as no surprise to Sr Bridget that they came to head. In attempting to “quell” tensions, they were made worse, she believes, and it was this that led to the ultimatum from Hamas and other militant groups to Israel.

#### Worrying aspects

One of the most worrying aspects, according to Sr Bridget, is the potential for “civil war” within Israel, as alluded to by Israel's President, Reuven Rivlin.

“I think everyone is very worried in Jerusalem because this, for the first time, has boiled over into Jewish-Palestinian – may well be Jewish-Muslim, but not all Palestinians are Muslim – but Jewish-Palestinian tension and fighting and mobs in mixed cities within the state of Israel, between Jews and Arab Israelis.

Many Arab Israelis identify as Palestinian, but they have grown up in Israel and attended Israeli schools and colleges and often served in the IDF.

“They [Arab Israelis] had, sort of, grown apart a bit from Palestinians in the West Bank, or in Gaza. But something has changed, and they seem to be now aligning themselves more – at least some of them – with their Palestinian brothers and sisters than previously, and this is a new development and for Israel a very serious development,” Sr Bridget said.

As for the way out of the conflict, Sr Bridget is unsure at the moment. “The will is not there,” she said of the attempts to reinvigorate the peace process.

“There is no peace process anymore,” she says pessimistically with hope in short supply in the seemingly intractable situation.

Pope Francis was among those world leaders lending his voice to the plea for peace. “Let us pray constantly that the Israelis and Palestinians may find the path of dialogue and forgiveness.

“Let us pray for the victims, in particular for the children; let us pray for peace,” the Pontiff tweeted.



# Praying for the fruits of the Holy Spirit

**M**ay I begin by wishing us all a very happy birthday. It is the birthday of the Church, the day when the coming of the Holy Spirit utterly transformed the apostles from being fearful and directionless into a community empowered to carry on the mission of Jesus. Jesus had promised them: "When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness. And you too will be witnesses."

On Pentecost day when the Holy Spirit came down to the disciples, it began with a powerful wind that rocked the house. This wind recalled the breath of God hovering over the chaos in the biblical account of creation. Then came tongues of fire, coming to rest on each of them. Fire is an agent of light, heat, purification and transformation. The apostles became people transformed. Their tongues were now so inflamed with God's word that people from a multitude of nations could understand them in their own language.

## Two hands of God

St Irenaeus, who as a child had known the evangelist John, became a very important theologian who developed the message of the Gospels in response to questions that had arisen. While meditating on the parable of the prodigal son, he visualised the two hands of the father welcoming back his lost son. One hand in front of the son was visible, while the other hand, behind the son's back, could not be seen. The visible hand represents Jesus Christ who came to us in human form. The unseen hand represents the Holy Spirit, the unseen power of love drawing the son back into the embrace of family love.

## How the Spirit is seen

Speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus compared the Spirit to the wind which cannot be seen in itself though it is recognised in its effects, the slanting of smoke, clouds scudding overhead, the pointing of flags. While the Holy Spirit is not seen, the effects of the Spirit are clearly discernible. In the second reading at Mass today, St Paul contrasts the life of self-indulgence with the qualities of a life inspired by the Spirit. A great temptation is to replace the one, true God by making a god of me... becoming totally self-indulgent. The fruits of self-indulgence are clearly seen in sexual irresponsibility, orgies, arguments, bad temper, quarrels, disregard of the rights of others, abuse of drink, jealousy, etc. Not the sort of society that any sensible person would desire.

## Fruits of the Spirit

In contrast to self-indulgence, St. Paul then lists nine beautiful fruits which adorn a life transformed

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn  
OFM Cap.



by the Holy Spirit. The nine fruits may be seen as three qualities of a healthy relationship with God, three about our relationship with other people and finally, three virtues supporting inner personal strength.

The three fruits of a relationship with God are love, joy and peace. Love, in its manifold expressions, is the greatest sign of a healthy relationship with God. Great charisms without love are empty, according to Paul. St John tells us that God is love and whoever lives in love lives in God and God lives in that person.

**“Most of the prayers and hymns to the Holy Spirit invite the Spirit to come”**

Joy is the second fruit of Spirit. Pope Francis continually reminds us of the joy of the Gospel and the harm done by doom and gloom religion, seen on sourpuss faces. In contrast, he writes that Jesus wants evangelisers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transformed by God's presence. Pope Francis urges us to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. There is the key to joy in the Spirit.

Next comes peace, an inner strength drawn from the confidence that God is still in charge, that he has the whole world in his hands.

Paul then mentions three virtues which manifest Christ-like relationships with other people: patience, kindness and goodness. Patience is a strength to remain calm with somebody who is making life difficult. Kindness helps one to overcome selfishness by being generous in thought, word and action. Inner goodness enables one to focus on what is good in somebody rather than what is bad. As the poet Frederick Langbridge put it: "Two men look out through the same bars:

One sees the mud, and one the stars."

The third trio of virtues support inner personal strength: trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. Trustfulness can be described as an inner backbone which continues to support a person with hope, even when the going is very tough. Gentleness is the antidote to violence. It begins in being gentle with oneself. In some religious communities this virtue is promoted



A scene from Pentecost is depicted in a stained-glass window at St Therese of Lisieux Church in Montauk, New York. Photo: Gregory A. Shemitz, Long Island Catholic

by learning how to close a door. Gentleness needs to be nurtured. This leads towards the ninth fruit of the Spirit, self-control. At this stage of maturity, self-control is really Spirit-control.

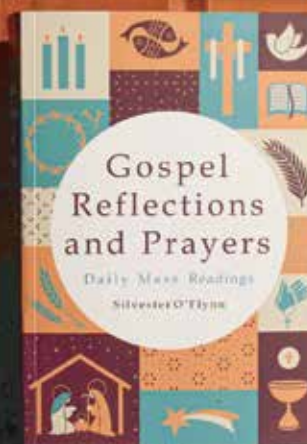
Most of the prayers and hymns to the Holy Spirit invite the Spirit to come: to come to the whole Church and to ourselves as individuals. Words of prayer have to be backed up with action. So, we pray.

*Come Holy Spirit, renew the heart of the Church, renew the face of the earth and enkindle within us the fire of your love.*

**“Jesus compared the Spirit to the wind which cannot be seen in itself though it is recognised in its effects”**

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The Irish Catholic  
SPRING LEGACY 2021

*A Last Act of*  
*Mercy*







Through legacy donations Concern helps families in Africa and Asia move towards self-sufficiency and education, preparing them for shocks like the pandemic, **Chai Brady** hears

**L**evels of extreme poverty have increased by 7% for the first time in 20 years due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic according to Concern, who are continuing to prepare people to “absorb a shock” by offering sustainable livelihood methods which help them through difficult times.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Concern Worldwide’s Regional Director for the Horn of Africa, Carol Morgan, said although inequality has been an issue in developing countries prior to Covid, since the pandemic “it’s the first time that we see that we’re not progressing in reducing or eliminating extreme poverty”.

In order for countries to get past and recover from the effects of the pandemic, a comprehensive vaccine programme is needed but this is difficult for developing countries who don’t have the same financial clout to make this happen compared with the western world. Despite charitable efforts to get vaccines to poorer parts of Africa, the rollout is still slow.

**“It’s about helping the household to ensure they have enough to support their food needs”**

“Across African countries it’s about one or two people per 100 of the population that are vaccinated. If everyone is not vaccinated, then no one is safe. Where’s the equality in rolling out vaccines? We really have to look at that. There’s a lot of discussions going on around the control of patents, and maybe more local production, it really is a challenge,” says Ms Morgan.

“I think the first country in Africa maybe got vaccines in February, and again, it was very much a drip, drip – very small amounts. The capacity in these countries to roll out the vaccine, and the uptake

**Carol Morgan International Programme Director, Concern Worldwide.**

# Helping impoverished households achieve education and sustainability



Sakra Mohamed and Maryan Abilah draw water from an underground water tank near Shirwac in western Somaliland. The tank harvests and stores rain water and can hold 310,000 litres.

too, is quite a challenge because they don’t have the same level of education programmes that we’ve had around the vaccines. They don’t have access to the information in a format that they can understand it because again you have very high levels of illiteracy in these countries.”

## Patents

Hailing Pope Francis’ call to remove patents for vaccines, Ms Morgan said: “I’m glad to see Pope Francis taking that initiative. Of course, it is about money for these companies. A lot of investments have been made in producing these vaccines, and they want the return on this. I suppose they’re afraid of losing that and the impact of that if the patent goes out but it

happened in the case of HIV and AIDS, with the antiretrovirals eventually the patent was released.”

Two of the major issues faced by people in Africa due to the pandemic are education and economics. Both are essential for people to be lifted out of poverty, with Concern focusing particularly on the schooling of young girls.

Ms Morgan says: “About seven million primary and secondary school students have dropped out of school. In these contexts, it’s quite a challenge, especially for girls. Sometimes we see very low levels of enrolment for girls, partly because of early marriage, or else they have household chores – there’s things that they have to do at the household level that prevent them from going to school.

“Also because of a lack of hygiene facilities in the schools, a lot of girls drop out for those reasons as well,” she explains, “With the lockdown in many of the countries we work in, the schools are closed, it’s going to be really challenging to get those girls back into school. And of course, that’s going to impact their long-term prospects.”

There are several positive knock-on effects when girls are educated says Ms Morgan, one of them being that when women

are educated they are less likely to have a malnourished child and they’re more likely to have children and get married when they are a bit older.

**“I think the first country in Africa maybe got vaccines in February, and again, it was very much a drip, drip – very small amounts”**

She says: “There’s so many positive things for a community when children are educated. It will be a challenge working with the families and the community leaders to help influence the communities so that the children can return to school. A big part of that is if the girls have been involved in some aspects of livelihoods, or have been contributing in a way financially to households, how we can support that and how we can increase the household income so those children can go back to school?”

“So it’s not just saying that children must go to school, you really have to work with the family in a holistic way because in most cases, it’s not that families don’t want to send their children to school, but sometimes it’s a necessity. But if you’re able to somehow enable that family to keep the children in school, especially the girls, it’s really important, because the genuine, positive impacts of girls receiving education; they just can’t be underestimated.”

## Health

Health systems have been “totally overwhelmed” in developing

countries, with poorly developed infrastructure which is unable to deal with the Covid-19 crisis. On top of this at household level, when poor countries in Africa went into lockdown, many people were left without means of income.

“That’s more challenging in their context because they don’t have social welfare. It’s not as though the government are going to give them any money to survive on, so they still have to make a living,” says Ms Morgan.

“Many people are dependent on what we call the informal sector, such as day labour, or selling some excess produce in the market. So when they shut down, it meant many people no longer have access to food.”

This has led to a reduction in the amount impoverished people are eating as well as the quality of food, which has led to children who are “very vulnerable” becoming malnourished, according to Ms Morgan.

To tackle this, Concern is involved in livelihood programmes aimed at educating people how to sustainably farm, which is part of their ‘Climate Smart Agriculture’.

For the charity, there are three elements to successfully implementing Climate Smart Agriculture. Ms Morgan says: “It’s about really looking at sustainable productivity. We’re working in a context where people are reliant on rainfall. And of course, we know that with climate change that’s very unpredictable. We have very erratic rains; you can have extended dry spells and we also then have heavier than usual rainfall. They are key challenges that we face.

“It’s about helping the household to ensure they have enough to support their food needs, but





Students study in a classroom in Obosibo Halane, a slum area in Mogadishu, Somalia. The girls are a part of an accelerated education program supported by Concern.

also maybe that they can sell excess in the market. We do crop diversification, that's where they have mixed cropping or sow different crops at different times, so maybe they get to two crops instead of one during one rainfall season.

"Then you have drought tolerant seeds, maybe early maturing ones, so seeds that maybe take three months instead of six months, then you have seeds that are fortified with vitamins and minerals, that helps with the nutrition levels in the household, and in particular for children.

**“In order for countries to get past and recover from the effects of the pandemic, a comprehensive vaccine programme is needed”**

"We have rainwater harvesting, so they can use the rainwater for irrigating the crops, and then small irrigation schemes as well that will help people to produce crops outside the traditional growing seasons. We've continued to do this work, because the long-term work will help the family to absorb a shock. So when there is shortage of rain or some crisis, they have enough food saved that they can get through that period."

An example of the charity's efforts on the ground is in Northern Ethiopia, where they have been operating for 48 years. The country is particularly vulnerable to weather-related shocks, such as droughts and floods, with over 80% of the rural population dependent on rain-fed agriculture. It faces the added challenge of hosting almost 750,000 refugees from other countries.

Ms Morgan says due to a large amount of poor soil and soil erosion in northern Ethiopia they use an approach known as 'watershed management'. It is aimed at land

## “Two of the major issues faced by people in Africa due to the pandemic are education and economics”

and water resources, and is applied to an area of land that drains to a defined location along a stream or river. Watershed management aims to care for natural resources in a way that supports human needs for water, food, fibre, energy, and habitation, while supporting other agreed attributes linked to recreation and/or ecologic function.

"We look at the water, whether rainfall, rivers in that area, and we track that and then we work with the communities to prevent soil erosion," she says.

### Grow

"Once the soil is eroded then the families are not really going to be

able to grow anything, the fertility of the soil will be very low. What we do is work with the communities to protect the areas that have been degraded, so we prevent the animals from grazing on these areas. The communities do this, they cut off this land and they leave it for a season or two and then we see that the land regenerates, we see trees start to grow, crops, the grasses. That's really important because it prevents the soil from eroding.

"At the household level we use what we call garden sacks. Soil is put into sacks and vegetables are grown in these. This is really good for household nutrition level.

It's not labour intensive, which is really handy in particular for the women in the household who are able to do this and they also have access to vegetables all year round. The amount of water needed is minimised using this approach. That has been really quite successful in reducing the levels of malnutrition in the community."

Often during drought people turn to selling charcoal. Mass charcoal burning is catastrophic to the delicate eco-system, the trees are essential for the land but desperation leaves no other option. This negative coping mechanism is among several that humanitarian agencies are working to tackle.

### Mechanisms

Ms Morgan said in order to tackle negative coping mechanisms such as these, there needs to be a holistic approach because "there's no point in saying to extremely poor people: 'don't chop down trees for charcoal', because maybe that's their livelihood, and that's all they have".

"Concern has quite a good approach – what we would call the graduation model," says Ms Morgan. "We work with extremely poor households, and we provide stipends, we provide an amount of money that they can live off, it's like a social welfare scheme.

**“Due to a large amount of poor soil and soil erosion in northern Ethiopia they use an approach known as ‘watershed management’”**

"At the same time, we work with them on ensuring they have a sustainable livelihood. So whether that's around your crop diversification, whether there's some off-land work that they can do, and again, it's very much an approach which protects the environment.

She adds that Concern is involved with a lot of tree planting, with fruit trees being part of this as while they assist in anchoring and protecting the soil, they also provide sustenance for families, while forested areas can be used for building houses.

Regarding mitigating the harmful effects of charcoal burning, she says: "We do try to work to prevent or minimise the use of charcoal. A way we do that is promoting the use of fuel-efficient stoves. In communities lots of people still cook on open fires, the amount of firewood or charcoal you need for that is quite large, but if you have a stove you can minimise the amount of fuel needed. We also promote the use of cowpats. So, if you dry out cowpats, they can be used for burning and for cooking. So, it's looking at alternatives to charcoal, because charcoal is so damaging for the environment."

Legacy donations play a huge role in the myriad of programmes Concern is involved with, as 10% of all donations from the public are legacy.

Ms Morgan explains: "That fund is there so that when there is a crisis, or a problem in a country, the funds can be allocated immediately. We can do that in 24 hours. The flexibility that gives us is key."

In the Horn of Africa there has been an outbreak of locusts. They have destroyed at least three seasons of crops in areas around Northern Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. Ms Morgan said legacy donations allowed the charity the flexibility to replace the seeds they had distributed which were lost.

"Without legacy donations we wouldn't be able to do the work that we do, they're really key to helping us with the long-term work and also, with those funds, we can plan those longer-term programmes as well, which are key to help people get out of poverty," she adds.

**i** Those with questions or queries about gifts in wills can contact [siobhan.oconnor@concern.net](mailto:siobhan.oconnor@concern.net) or call 01-4178020.



A group of women learn fabric dyeing techniques as apprentices in a garment making training in Mogadishu, Somalia.



# Pope Francis: Climate change 'causing immense hardship for the most vulnerable among us'



Extreme weather causing widespread droughts and floods, destroying crops and food supplies in world's most vulnerable countries.

**T**he Pope expressed concern over the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather phenomena and the desertification of the soil. With climate change related hunger and malnutrition increasing, Pope Francis warned, "We have caused a climate emergency that gravely threatens nature and life itself, including our own."

The Pope made his comments as part of a written appeal for the 'World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation'.

**Worldwide, droughts and floods have more than doubled since the early 1990's with Africa particularly badly affected.**

An increase in droughts – combined with ongoing conflict and unemployment – means dry spells have an increasingly destructive impact on people living in already vulnerable communities. Such as those in Niger, Western Africa where 80% of the population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods.

This year droughts and floods have already caused a 12% drop in cereal production in Niger compared with the already poor yields of 2018/19. 2.7 million people are now projected to be in severe acute food insecurity – urgently needing food if they are to survive.

**“Listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, who suffer most because of the unbalanced ecology.”**

**– Pope Francis**

Since 1968 Irish charity Concern Worldwide has worked around the world helping alleviate hunger caused by natural or man-made disasters. Over this period climate change has become one of the key drivers of hunger.

In 2019 alone, Concern helped 28.6m people in 24 of the world's poorest

countries – including Niger.

Concern doesn't just provide emergency food to those affected by hunger. The charity continues to work alongside communities so they are able to feed themselves long into the future.

*People's lives are transformed when they are equipped and empowered to do it for themselves. This is how real progress is made.*

One of Concern's most vital funding sources – on which it absolutely depends – is gifts in the Wills of its supporters. These gifts ensure Concern will always be there for people in need of a helping hand.

## What Concern's help looks like

In Niger life is a *constant* struggle for survival. A struggle which becomes almost impossible during the annual 'hunger gap'.

*Causing untold suffering, the annual hunger gap is a desperate period.* Food from the last harvest has run out and it will be months until more is available.

During this time, normal life grinds to a halt. Children leave education to help with agricultural chores at home. Adults travel anywhere they can to find work to earn even the smallest amount to support their families.

Every day becomes a terrifying battle to find food.

The hunger gap used to last 3 months, ending when the harvest was ready. But *climate change has made this terrible problem much worse*, with infrequent rainfall and rising temperatures drastically reducing crops.

As a result this torturous period now lasts 5 months from April to September, with people spending almost half their year struggling to stay alive.

And Covid-19 has further exacerbated an already dreadful situation. Restricted movement and border closures are impacting supplies to local markets, pushing prices up. Now even those who manage to work can't buy food because it's too expensive. Seeds for next season's crops are also being affected by these shortages. This means the pandemic's

deadly effects will be felt next year too.

**Vulnerable families, who already have little to eat, are in grave danger.**

But thanks to gifts in Wills, Concern is able to immediately support families in desperate need and equip them to support themselves long into the future.

For families affected by climate change in countries like Niger, one of the ways this is achieved is by providing communities with drought-resistant seeds, *proven* to yield more food ... the tools needed to farm their land ... and training to adopt climate-smart techniques. For example, crop rotation and composting to keep the soil in the best condition. And methods to capture and keep as much rain as possible.

Thanks to generous people leaving Concern a gift in their Wills, families can now grow their own food in their own vegetable gardens. The food they're growing now will feed them this year. **The knowledge and skills they gain will make sure they have enough food to eat every year from now on.**

Chawada Aboubacar is a mother of five. Thanks to her own hard work and support from Concern, she now has a thriving kitchen garden of her own. Her family own a small piece of land where they grow the grain, millet. When it runs out between harvests, it used to be a struggle to provide the food they needed to survive.

But Chawada now grows tomatoes, onions, cabbage and carrots in her kitchen garden. This garden will provide nutritious food for her family this year and for years to come. Keeping her children safe from hunger so they can thrive.

*"We will start eating cabbage, carrot and lettuce in one month and then the onion in about six weeks. This garden helps me and my family. It makes me happy."*

– Chawada Aboubacar  
Having enough food prevents life threatening malnutrition, meaning Chawada and her children have the opportunity to live long and happy lives. What's more, any surplus food from

the kitchen garden can be sold, giving the family money to buy other nutritious food and essential items.

Best of all, a regular, dependable source of food means Chawada's children don't have to work on the

Your gift ensures your legacy lives on, supporting Concern to help people like Chawada and her family long into the future.

Many who do leave a gift in their Will have been so affected by the suffering of



With Concern worker Mounkaïla's help, Chawada can now grow food to help her family survive.

land and can go back to school. Getting the education essential for a brighter future for them.

By passing on the skills she has gained to her children, Chawada is ensuring they will be self-sufficient in the future; able to provide for both their own families and the wider community – helping to pull everyone out of poverty.

## Be part of a world without hunger

**“What would induce anyone ... only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was so urgent and necessary to do so?”**

**– Pope Francis**

As you've just seen, gifts in Wills transform lives both immediately and long into the future.

Won't you help Concern fight poverty and hunger – to end it in some of the world's poorest communities – by leaving a life changing gift in your Will?

To receive your free, no obligation booklet – in complete confidence – please contact Concern's Legacy Manager, Siobhán O'Connor. Call **01 417 8020**, email [siobhan.oconnor@concern.net](mailto:siobhan.oconnor@concern.net), or visit [www.concern.net/bequest](http://www.concern.net/bequest)



**CONCERN**  
worldwide

**ENDING EXTREME POVERTY  
WHATEVER IT TAKES**



A LASTING GIFT OF A SMILE IN YOUR WILL CAN  
**CHANGE LIVES**

Arlyn was born with a cleft lip, but after receiving surgery during an Operation Smile medical mission, she's now a happy child with a brighter future. Her mother Dominga is filled with gratitude.

**“ I pray to God that he will help those who helped me and my child.”**

Every three minutes, a child is born with a cleft lip or cleft palate and may suffer from hunger and thirst, difficulty with speech and social isolation.

Operation Smile provides children and young adults in low and middle income countries free cleft surgery and medical care they could not otherwise afford.

**Operation  Smile**

CRA No. 20054588 Charity No. CHY15661



**Arlyn, Philippines**

**For advice on how you can make or change your Will to include a gift to Operation Smile, please contact our Legacy Manager, Mairead O'Callaghan.**

**t.** 01 667 66 59

**e.** [mairead@operationsmile.ie](mailto:mairead@operationsmile.ie)

**w.** [operationsmile.ie/lastingsmile](http://operationsmile.ie/lastingsmile)

**YES, I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LEAVING THE GIFT OF A SMILE IN MY WILL.** A gift in your Will can support our ongoing work providing cleft care in over 30 countries, giving a brighter future to our patients, their families and communities.

Name

Address

Eircode  Phone no.

Email

**CAN WE STAY IN TOUCH?** Your gift is changing children's lives and we would like to show you the impact you are making. We will send you information about our work, campaigns and fundraising:

- Yes please, I'd like to hear from you by email
- Yes please, I'd like to hear from you by phone
- Sorry, I don't want to hear from you by post

Please detach this form and return it to:

**Operation Smile Ireland, 31 Pembroke Road, Dublin 4, D04 V8N9.**



## FOCUS Ireland

# Planning ahead so everyone has a place to call home



**Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy**  
(Founder & Life President of Focus Ireland)

**C**ovid-19 has caused unprecedented challenges and hardships for so many people across the country, particularly those facing homelessness. I know that feelings of loneliness and isolation have been widespread. But I also have faith in Ireland as a country; we are overcoming this. And as we remain conscious of the situation that we are all in, it is also important to remain aware and compassionate to those who are even less fortunate than us.

One positive the pandemic has given us is the self-knowledge and recognition of ourselves, not as millions of individuals operating separately, but as members of communities and interconnected groups. It is with this recognition that we need to work together to look after the wellbeing of those most vulnerable in our communities. When we come to see ourselves as responsible members of

the human race, that changes everything – the way we live, the way we think, the way we structure our society. Now is the time to think of those who have been struggling most and will continue to struggle long after COVID-19 ends.

**“Supporters of Focus Ireland can be assured that their impact will live on and that they will be remembered as a valued member of the community”**

The families and children that Focus Ireland work with have been navigating this pandemic whilst also suffering through homelessness. They have been experiencing those same feelings of isolation, loneliness and despair for much longer than you or I. Families forced to reside in emergency accommodation hubs across the country are often subject to very restrictive conditions, with or without the threat of Covid-19. This extraordinary health crisis has compounded the already adverse circumstances – families were unable to stray more than 5km from hotel rooms that are often in remote locations, rendering them utterly secluded and segregated. I wonder how hard that must be; children in completely unsuitable spaces with no outlet, the situation is truly terrible.

Focus Ireland is working more closely than ever with the State and partner organisations to protect people who are homeless. Welcome steps, such as the temporary ban on evictions and the rent freeze while level 5 restrictions were in place, have had a big impact in cutting the numbers becoming homeless. We have moved record numbers of families and individuals out of homelessness, helping over 1,100 households to secure a home in the last year. This work must continue.

As Ireland moves towards a reopening of society, we must not let homelessness be a part of our new normal. We need to move on from short-term measures and hubs to providing more social and affordable rental housing. We need to start planning ahead, planning to protect future generations, to ensure everyone has a place to call home.

As part of our efforts towards ending homelessness for good, Focus Ireland recently presented its #End-Homelessness petition with over 10,200 signatures to three Government parties to set a target date for ending homelessness. The #End-Homelessness campaign is urging the government to make a clear plan to end the ongoing crisis. In repeated elections, people have declared that they care deeply about housing and homelessness, and we must hold the government accountable to put a clear plan in place to end homelessness. It is our belief in Focus Ireland that the Government must have a very clear vision of ending homelessness, oth-



erwise the State will be abandoning these people to a very bleak future.

### Legacy Giving

People always ask me how they can help support Focus Ireland's mission to #EndHomelessness. One way that we can plan for the future is through legacy planning.

Having a will ensures that what you own goes directly to the people and causes you care most about. Leaving a legacy to Focus Ireland in your will ensures that we are able to strategically plan for the future so that we can continue to be there for society's most vulnerable people. By leaving a gift in your Will, you are giving someone the greatest gift – hope. Legacy giving

allows us to have a planned income stream, helping our team to make changes before issues arise, and ensure every customer we assist receives the best possible help, with kindness, dignity and independence.

Focus Ireland has been extremely fortunate in the last number of years to receive a number of gifts carefully left by kind people in their wills. We have also received pledges, a promise from a supporter that they will leave a gift. All these gifts, from the smallest to the largest, from a cash gift to an entire estate are gratefully received by us as being equal in generosity. These gifts are so important in ensuring our vital work towards





ending homelessness continues. A promise of a gift in your will is generosity and vision at their most powerful. One woman who left a plan and a lasting gift was Margaret Dowling.

Margaret was deeply saddened by the homelessness crisis following an interaction with a homeless woman on O'Connell Bridge on a particularly icy afternoon in Dublin. She stopped and spoke to her, human to human, gifted her dry clothes and did her best to help her in that moment. Margaret's friend, Anne Comiskey tells us how that one interaction left a lasting impact on her, "this woman really

touched Margaret's heart, and she thought that nobody should be on that bridge in the freezing cold, or any street for that matter. Margaret wanted everyone to have a home of their own and she reached out to Focus Ireland to ask how she could have a lasting impact."

**Gratefully recorded**

Margaret informed her solicitor and the fundraising team that she wished to include Focus Ireland in her Will and her wishes were gratefully recorded. Margaret shared Focus Ireland's values that homelessness is fundamentally wrong, "she was heartbroken see-

ing people on the streets, she really believed everyone should have somewhere safe and warm where they can switch their own kettle on" Anne tells us. Through legacy giving, supporters of Focus Ireland can be assured that their impact will live on and that they will be remembered as a valued member of the community working towards ending homelessness.

Margaret's gift has made a huge difference in preventing families from entering homelessness and ensuring that when people leave

homelessness, they leave it forever. On hearing how Margaret has changed so many lives for the better, Anne says "she would have been thrilled to know she can give hope to people to get their own home. It's terrific what's happening with legacies, to think that you can help others you've never met - I think that's marvellous."

Margaret is just one of our amazing supporters who has ensured that her legacy will make a big impact for some of society's most vulnerable people facing home-

lessness. We need to offer help and the chance for a brighter future to people who are struggling to keep a roof over their children's heads in a market-driven housing system; to immigrants, to people who are marginalised and excluded; to people who are displaced, stressed and without a home, without a front door to close on a sometimes hostile world. Leaving a legacy gift will help Focus Ireland be there for people who need us most during some of the most difficult times in their lives for years to come.

# Continue to make a difference.

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.

**Please Support Focus Ireland in your Will**



To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact [cian.dikker@focusireland.ie](mailto:cian.dikker@focusireland.ie) or phone 1850 204 205

**FOCUS**  
Ireland



# Leave a priceless gift.

## Please remember GOAL in your will



GOAL

You do not need to re-write your will, you just need to include us in it. Doing so will help us respond to global health crises, continue to provide life saving support for families and communities struck down by disaster or conflict and to feed the hungry. Founded in 1977 GOAL continues to make the world a better place. You too can help change lives.

**Talk to someone  
in confidence.**

**Contact Courtenay on  
01 2809779 or via email  
at [cpollard@goal.ie](mailto:cpollard@goal.ie)**

Registered Charity No. 20010980; CHY 6271, Carnegie House, Library Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland



# Planning a funeral in exceptional times



By Rebecca Kelly, Irish Hospice Foundation

**F**or those who have had to say goodbye to someone close over the past 15 months, it's been incredibly hard. Continuing restrictions on funerals mean people all over Ireland haven't been able to say farewell in the way they would have liked.

If you're caring for someone who is very sick and are worried they may die, or someone you love has sadly died, you might be worried about what might happen at a funeral during this COVID-19 response period.

In Ireland, funerals are how we celebrate and commemorate those who have died. As you navigate this new reality please remember, death ends a life not a relationship and your connection with the person who has died will remain.

**“In Ireland, funerals are how we celebrate and commemorate those who have died. As you navigate this new reality please remember, death ends a life not a relationship”**

In these difficult times, everyone is working together to help each other. But, we can support ourselves and each other in different ways right now.

## Planning a funeral during this current physical distancing phase

Physical distancing requirements make grief and having to plan a funeral for a loved one even more difficult.

But there are immediate steps you can take to plan the funeral of someone you love or care about.

- Do contact your preferred funeral director as soon as you're able. They'll have with the most up-to-date information and procedures during the pandemic and will guide you through the process, ensuring you're cared for and minded.
- Do ask as many questions as you need to.

- Do let people know of the death – you can still place a death notice, but no times or venues of the funeral will be published online, by radio or in print.

- Do remember the funeral will be planned as private, for close family and friends only. However, you can request a reading or poem to remember them by, even if the service is short.

- Do remember that everybody will understand how difficult a funeral is at this exceptional time – people will respect and support you as best they can.

**As it's not possible during this time to have public repose or wakes in funeral homes, there are ways you can keep the funeral personal and beautiful and involve others in remembering your loved one.**

- Do make use of RIP.ie online condolence book to record messages of love and appreciation.

- Do think about hosting a memorial service at a later time, and plan that, in time, when you feel able.

- Do ask people to send you a letter with their memories of the person who has died.

- Do encourage children to draw pictures or write poems.

- Do talk about the person who has died, within your household and beyond through telephone calls.

- Do seek to keep in contact and try to be open to others contacting you – **we can still be together when we are not together.**

- Do seek out the latest technology to help. You can use videoconferencing (Google hangouts, WhatsApp, Zoom etc) to come together with special people who cannot physically be with you.

- Do stay in contact. But be mindful of the amount of contact you are able for.

## How can I honour someone who has died without attending the funeral?

We are a nation of great culture and tradition and we can honour the person who has died in many ways.

We are seeing examples of how Irish people are finding new and innovative ways to



You are not alone in your grief. Irish Hospice Foundation is here for you. We have a number of supports available for those grieving right now. Call our freephone Bereavement Support Line 1800 80 70 77. Available Monday-Friday, 10am-1pm. Our free bereavement pack, Support for Grieving in Exceptional Times, is also available from [www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

support each other. Some of the 'old' ways are also being revived.

## Here are some of the ways you can help:

- Be the person who organises friends and neighbours to stand at their gates (observing physical distancing) to show support to the grieving family.
- Do post condolences and messages of support online on RIP.ie or on social media.
- Do take time to write letters of support and condolences – expressing your thoughts is very meaningful.
- Do phone/text the bereaved person to keep in touch – not just immediately but in the weeks and months ahead.
- Do share photos memories, and stories virtually with each other.

**“One of the greatest gifts a person can give another is support”**



**Will you make a lasting difference today?**

When you write a will, you can look after your family and loved ones. If you include Irish Hospice Foundation, you can reach out to families in a crucial time of need.

Email [clare.martin@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:clare.martin@hospicefoundation.ie) or call 01 679 3188

A gift of just 1% of your estate can help us ensure no-one faces death and bereavement without the care and support they need.

[hospicefoundation.ie](http://hospicefoundation.ie)

At Irish Hospice Foundation we believe no one should face death, dying or bereavement without the care and support that they need. We rely on the generous support of the public to help us reach families across Ireland at end of life and during grief. Every death matters and we only have one chance to get it right. By remembering us in your will you help ensure the best end-of-life and bereavement care, for all.



# Going back for those left behind

## – A Special Report from Merchants Quay Ireland

MQI's Outreach team share how people living on our streets can begin to rebuild with kindness, compassion and practical help.

**Y**ou can imagine how easy it is for people who are homeless to fall ill. Being outdoors in all weathers can bring on a deep chest infection. Wearing rain-soaked, dirty clothes for days will chafe the skin raw. The longer days of summer only bring a new set of agonies for those without shelter who must spend more hours walking, risking dehydration and blisters, still avoiding summer rain. As the pandemic wears on, the team at Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) is tirelessly working to safely open Riverbank drop-in centre for food, showers and medical help. All the while tending to increasing numbers of men and women – newly-homeless people who aren't registered for services, sleeping outside in doorways and on pavements. Their health worsens day by day.

We found Liam sitting beside the dirty, flimsy tent he calls home. Running grimy fingers through his hair, he's numb from the trauma of homelessness. Just in his 20s, his quiet voice cracks with pain as he opens his heart to MQI's Outreach Team:

"I can't believe this is happening to me. I had a good job, but I got made redundant when the pandemic hit. Everything went downhill and I just feel so ashamed. To tell you the truth, I don't know how much longer I can take it..."

Liam hasn't slept much since three men attacked and robbed him a few nights ago. He winces as he shows the gash he received on his hand, already turning black with infection. His shoes are wet, his few possessions kept in a plastic shopping bag. He really needs to see a doctor.

"I hate not being able to stay clean properly," he whispered. "The way some people look at me when they go past, it's like they're disgusted. I feel I'm not even human anymore."

The despair in Liam's voice fills my heart with worry. Because MQI's Outreach Teams know that, for people who are sleeping rough, summer can be just as cruel as winter.

Longer days mean people like Liam will spend more time walking the streets. His tired feet will blister. He'll have to go days without washing. Because again this summer, coronavirus still means limited access to even the basics like toilets and showers. It will be so much harder to stay clean and hold onto even a shred of dignity... of hope.

As we look forward to a summer of lifted restrictions, Ireland's homeless face the isolation of longer days and busier streets.



Merchants Quay Ireland's Outreach Team brings comfort and hope to wherever they lie.



The world has turned upside down since the pandemic. For Liam, the shock couldn't be more profoundly felt. He lost the life he'd built. His job, his home, his prospects were all gone.

And while better days lie ahead for many of us, the summer will bring no respite to people who've become homeless. As the restrictions lift and the streets fill up with people again, Liam's isolation will only grow deeper. The return to 'normal' life will be a painful reminder of the life he no longer has.

Busier streets bring more dangers – more risk of being beaten-up, more chance of catching coronavirus. And the summer months bring new agonies. Longer hours of daylight mean more walking the pavements. Weeks of coping with sunburn, blisters, abscesses and infections.

MQI's Outreach Teams use this moment to gently start a conversation with lonely men and women sleeping rough on the streets. Every check-in, every chat -- can link a homeless person to medical care.

**“God help our homeless people, they have so many other things to deal with.”** – Marguerite, MQI nursing team

Mental health counselling. A bed for the night.

**Keeping body and soul together**

In line with public health advice, observing social distance, MQI's Riverbank centre is a lifeline connection to practical and emotional support. Whether it's the staff who are flat-out giving food at the door, the mental health crisis service comforting those in despair, or the nurse and GP giving desperately urgent primary health care.

MQI teams are working Trojan hours day after day, tending to people who are sicker and with wounds in worse condition than ever seen before. But it's the brokenness inside that's harder to reach. In their own words, key staff

describe the reality of this winter pandemic.

"There's still anxiety about the virus and at MQI we are seeing so many people whose immune systems are low from being homeless and from other medical conditions just like you or I might have. But imagine not having a home, or your own bathroom. God help our homeless people, they have so many other things to deal with. Straight away, we can give them the prescriptions and the wound care, but they are just so shattered and drained and there's nowhere for them. Since COVID-19 came we can't give walk-in appointments, but we have been treating the most ill people without interruption, people who have nowhere else to go. Our homeless women and men

are at such a dangerous, lonely, and vulnerable time in their lives."

**Chef Dave prepares hearty, nourishing meals.**

He keeps the stove hot and the pots warm though the pandemic whilst the food service is on a take-out basis. "All of us in the MQI kitchen crew really miss the clients. It was such a comfort for so many at once to be able to eat inside together. Handing them a cup of tea and having that one-to-one banter, seeing how they're getting on. But we're still providing hot takeaway meals twice a day – be that curry, shepherd's pie, chili or lasagne. Good, hearty food, nutritious and warming with plenty of carbohydrates for energy. We prepare it all here from scratch and package it up to be handed out. So, whatever our clients must face into, at least there's a home-cooked hot meal still here for them – along with the health and emotional support."

**“No matter how dirty their clothes, or the tragedy of their past”** - Mental Health Nurse Sarah shares how just talking saves lives.

"We had one man, in his forties who came to our door in crisis. Imagine the courage it took him to tell us he was terrified he'd become suicidal if he didn't speak to someone. He left that day knowing he could come back to MQI, come down to our food service, and with a connection to the mental health team so he wouldn't ever have to face a crisis like that alone again. He told us the meeting had really helped him and he was so thankful. Support that makes a person feel seen and heard and cared for, no matter how dirty their clothes or the tragedy of their past.

**An outstretched hand**

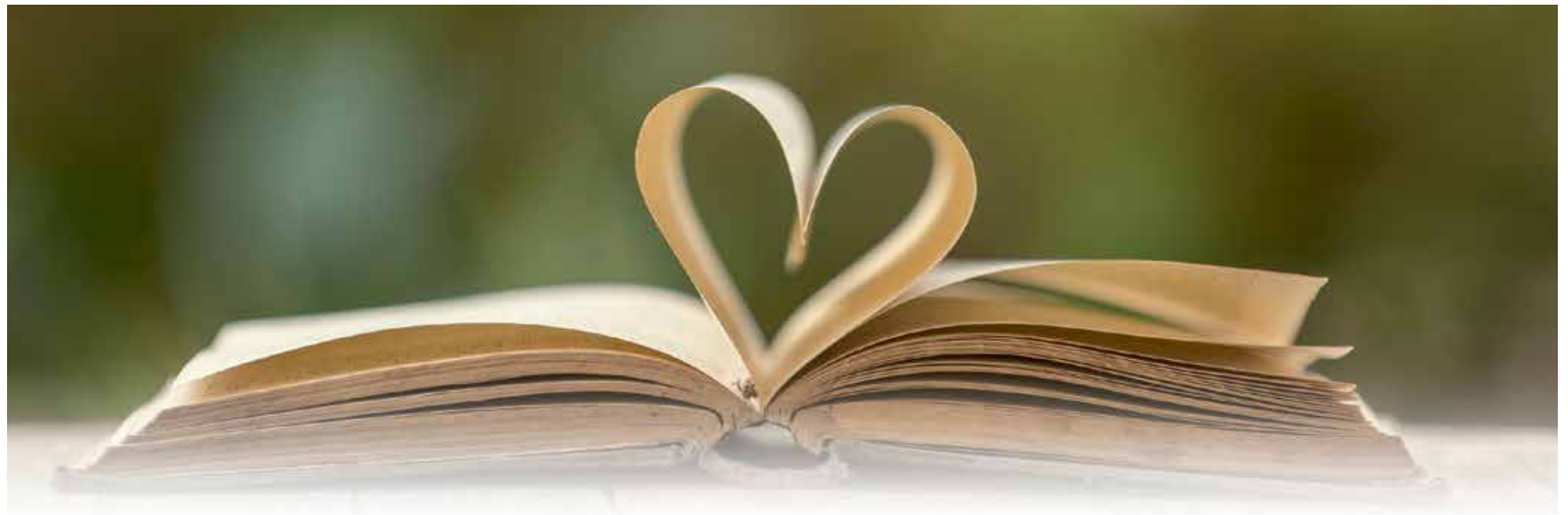
I was with our Outreach Team that morning I met Liam. And when I told him all this – that we could replace his threadbare shoes and our Nurse Marguerite could tend to his infected hand – his face flooded with relief.

To see what else we could do for Liam, I asked him about his plans. "I just want four walls," he said. "I just want a place where I can feel safe and get myself set up again."

Liam has a whole future ahead of him and his potential is right before your eyes. You can hear it in his well-spoken voice. You can see it in his determination to keep up his appearance – to feel decent.

The pandemic dealt him a cruel blow, and the summer will bring yet more hardships. But it is possible for Liam to turn his life around. And it starts with an outstretched hand.





# Write your page in the Merchants Quay Ireland Book of Love

You will not only be remembered.  
At the heart of Merchants Quay Ireland, your story will live on.

**W**hen you remember the work of Merchants Quay in your Will, your legacy ensures that Ireland's homeless and those who battle addiction will always have a place to turn.

*But your words, your story - your testament – can also be a powerful force for good through the generations.*

**Sometimes the greatest healing comes in the gentle words of a stranger.**

Someone we've never met touches our heart and mind with their story.

The **MQI Book of Love** is written by you for clients of Merchants Quay Ireland's homeless and drugs services to read. It is your enduring moment to offer them hope and encouragement. To inspire them with your insight and words of wisdom, gained through your own life's experiences: your struggles, lessons and victories.



The **MQI Book of Love** will be cherished here forever, always growing as more of our supporters add their pages. It will be kept and read here at Merchants Quay Ireland by people who are homeless, struggling with mental health problems and addiction, year after year.

*Send your message through the generations to raise them up when they need it most.*

Help them to always remember that they are loved.

Fill their hearts with your message of understanding and compassion.

Inspire them in the knowledge that you cared enough to think of them in your quietly amazing way.

This is your chapter in MQI's history – your outstretched hand to the homeless.

## A simple guide for your solicitor

When you leave a gift in your Will, the legacy of your story will also be shared with future generations. To remember MQI's work, here's information for your solicitor:

*"I give to Merchants Quay Ireland of 24 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8, Registered Charity Number 20026240, X% of the residue of my estate whatsoever and wheresoever, and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or other officer for the time being of the said Organisation shall be a full and sufficient discharge of the same."*

To receive your information pack on how to leave your legacy and your unique story in **MQI's Book of Love**, speak privately with **Emma Murphy** at 01-5240965 or [Emma.Murphy@mqi.ie](mailto:Emma.Murphy@mqi.ie)  
You're never under any obligation and Emma is happy to help.



Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services



A hot meal. A helping hand. A fresh start.

[www.mqi.ie](http://www.mqi.ie)



# Despite pandemic pains Trócaire's work rolls on



Covid-19 has made Trócaire's work more difficult, but Irish donations have ensured they adapt and continue to do it, writes **Jason Osborne**

**T**he pandemic didn't come at a good time for anyone, but still less for Trócaire. An organisation that is built upon the goodwill of people, both donors and staff, the pandemic struck right as the exhortations to almsgiving were at their loudest: Lent 2020.

Despite this, their work has continued unabated. Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Head of Programme for Learning and Impact Eoin Wrenn said the "generosity" of the Irish public was essential in enabling them to continue carrying out their "multifaceted" work.

"There was a 'philanthropic moment' last year when people rallied behind the charities," Mr Wrenn says.

"The legacy donations that we get really allow us to meet the needs of the poorest people in the countries where we work and just seeing, even in east Africa at the moment with increased drought, Covid cases on the rise again, ongoing conflict – there are actually 20 million more people living in poverty in 2020 than there were in the previous year of 2019 and I'd expect that to go up again.

**“Everything had to be reimaged. There was a huge, we use the term, ‘pivot’”**

"I saw a figure this morning, there's 155 million people globally relying on humanitarian assistance at the moment. That's a massive number," he said.

With figures on the rise, Trócaire's work is more important than ever. Mr Wrenn explains their approach to tackling the many issues people face, which is based upon a number of "strands": humanitarian response, longer-term livelihoods work, women's empowerment and human rights.

"In our humanitarian responses we supply the basic needs of people, so it could be the provision of emergency food aid, it might be the provision of clean and safe drinking water. For example, in Somalia, we do a lot of work with malnourished



Thioncote Twagurumuhire, Water Field Officer for Trócaire partner UNICOOPAGI, and Marie Louise Umuhire, Trócaire Resource Right Project Officer, working together at a community kitchen garden in Nyamagabe, Rwanda. Photo: Alan Whelan/Trócaire.

children and mothers. We'd have a school and therapeutic feeding programmes, and a lot of that," Mr Wrenn says.

## Humanitarian work

Much of this humanitarian work is funded by legacy donations Trócaire receives from the Irish public, coupled with general donations. These sources of income also fund the other prongs of their work.

"Our, what we call, longer-term development work, so when you're not really in an immediate humanitarian situation but still working with people who are very vulnerable and very poor and marginalised," is another important aspect of Trócaire's work, according to Mr Wrenn.

This is also known as their "livelihoods work" as it's oriented towards helping people establish themselves in their own communities and settings. Mr Wrenn says this might involve providing agricultural training, or supplies such as "drought-tolerant" seeds that will survive in climates that get erratic rainfall. As much of Trócaire's work takes place in Africa, this is often much needed.

"And we do a lot of training like moving people away from chemical inputs, what we call 'agro-ecology'. So, again, working with rural men and women, particularly from a

farming perspective. That'd be one aspect," Mr Wrenn says.

"Another big area that we have is the area that we call women's empowerment. A lot of the context where we work, women really would be viewed as second-class citizens and girls wouldn't have the same access to education that boys have, so we do a lot of work with women at a local level, looking at women's role in the household, in the community, working with women to bring women together in self-help groups or women-only fora," Mr Wrenn explains.

"There we would do, again, skills training, maybe vocational skills training so that women have an opportunity to earn a little bit of an income to have a little bit more say over how the income they earn is used."

## Human rights

The final key area Trócaire is focusing on in the midst of the pandemic, in an attempt to alleviate people's long-term suffering, is human rights. Working in settings such as Central America, Zimbabwe and Palestine, Trócaire has encountered many instances of human rights abuses.

Asked what their strategy is behind the varied approach they take to their work, Mr Wrenn says it's

"intentional" as "people face a multitude of challenges in their own lives".

Many of the 17 countries Trócaire are operating in see people grappling with a number of issues at once, and so an "integrated response" is called for if people are ever to attain a decent standard of life.

Of course, Covid-19 has complicated their work, with donations affected since the pandemic's advent, but also in terms of their on the ground work.

"It's been hugely challenging because, I suppose not only did Ireland go on lockdown but most of the countries where we went into lockdowns as well," Mr Wrenn says.

**“There was a ‘philanthropic moment’ last year when people rallied behind the charities”**

A lot of their work came to a "standstill" for a time, the lockdowns impacting their ability to work hand-in-hand with their partners in each country and visit the communities directly.

"Everything had to be reimaged. There was a huge, we use the term, 'pivot'. There was a huge pivot in all of our programmes this

time last year to say, 'Ok, what does Covid now mean?' But I must say, our teams and our partners really responded and again, using technology and being imaginative, the work continued."

## Health programme

Mr Wrenn tells of the health programme which Trócaire set up and runs in Somalia, which was adapted during the pandemic to include Covid isolation wards and a testing programme, but it has since developed to include a vaccination programme.

"Covid did drive a lot more people into poverty" and more, Mr Wrenn tells, continuing "from malaria cases that weren't being treated and other sicknesses – we had a lot of reports of pregnant women dying in childbirth because they weren't able to get to hospitals because transport had closed down. So obviously Covid itself was a major driver of poverty just by people getting sick, by people losing their jobs, but it had the knock-on effect then of people suffering from non-Covid related issues".

Through it all, Irish donations have been a bulwark of aid, with Mr Wrenn saying legacy donations are more important than ever, "to allow organisations like Trócaire to journey with and meet the needs of the world's poorest who are still living in the middle of this crisis," and who are unlikely to emerge from it for another "12-18 months", even as the rest of the world races ahead.

**“The final key area Trócaire is focusing on in the midst of the pandemic, in an attempt to alleviate people's long-term suffering, is human rights”**



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

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

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

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

Simple bequests of any size by Will are some of the greatest,

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

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

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

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

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

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*We'll remember your name.*

**Trócaire**

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# Protecting what is most vital – a home for life



**T**hreshold has been at the heartbeat of communities for more than forty years helping families to keep their precious and beloved homes. Because like our supporters, we believe in stopping homelessness before it happens.

## “At Threshold we support families and individuals of all ages”

For so many renting in Ireland, Threshold is the first line of defence. **From every corner of Ireland, Threshold receives 300 requests for help a day.** Requests to stop illegal evictions, prevent illegal rent increases, or help get the heating fixed in the cold winter months.

### Protecting renters – a changing story

At Threshold we support families and individuals of all ages. But the number of renters aged 40 and over is increasing and will continue to increase in years to come.

Karina Timothy, Western Regional Services Manager at Threshold says: *“This speaks to a key societal challenge that the entire country will face in the very near future. There is an increase in the proportion of older people who are renting, living with little security of tenure and paying high rents. These renters are vulnerable to the risk of homelessness that is inherent in the current instability of the private rented sector.”*

### Frank's eviction

Renters like Frank who is in his seventies. He worked his whole life as a post-man. He has a wicked sense of humour and loved nothing more than to stop and chat on his rounds. But now in his retirement, his rented house was sold suddenly to a new landlord, that's when his problems started.

*“He wouldn't deal with any issues I had in the house. He'd be angry if I contacted him. Over time, the roof*

*got worse and worse – it started leaking badly. The most serious problem was when the heating system broke down at the coldest time of the year – it was freezing for months. I didn't even have hot water.”*

Then an eviction notice dropped through the letterbox. And Frank's world dropped to rock bottom:

*“I knew I couldn't do it anymore. Covid had me isolated. I felt so alone. I was trapped – I couldn't live in the house with no heating and all the other problems. And now I was being thrown out – with nowhere to go – in the middle of a pandemic. I knew I badly needed help.”*

A neighbour told Frank about Threshold. He phoned us and explained what was happening. With the help of our Housing Advisor, Roisin, things started to change immediately.

### Offering a helping hand – for as long as it takes

*“No one knows the hours and hard work Threshold puts in for you. They stayed with me for over 9 months answering all my worries whenever I called. Roisín was there for me until I found a new suitable home. They gave me back my confidence. The feeling that I had the right to demand basic standards and conditions for*



*the home I paid rent for. That I could fight an illegal eviction.”*

Thankfully, Frank has left all the stress, hurt and fear behind. Today, he is now happy in a warm, well-maintained, mobility-friendly home.

### A gift in your Will – and our gift to you

Legacy gifts are an extraordinary way for you to help Threshold stop homelessness and create a better

and more secure future for people like Frank.

To find out more about leaving a Legacy gift to Threshold in your will – and how you can make your will for free with LawOnline ([www.lawonline.ie](http://www.lawonline.ie)) – contact us in confidence today on 086 8411297 or at [legacy@threshold.ie](mailto:legacy@threshold.ie).

**Your support will help to protect families from homelessness for future generations.**



A gift of €250 saves a home. For an average stay, it is estimated that it costs €31,000 for a family to live in emergency accommodation.



300 requests a day. Threshold's Housing Advisors are helping someone on the brink of homelessness every 3 minutes.



36,000 men, women and children at risk of homelessness supported in the last year alone.

## Leaving a Legacy – Remembering the Hospice in your will.

**Our specialist palliative care teams** working from our hospices in Harold's Cross, Blackrock and Wicklow, and increasingly within people's own homes, bring comfort, professional support and quality of life to thousands of patients and their families every year.

As a charitable organisation we are determined to be there for as many people as possible to bring peace of mind, comfort, reassurance and dignity to all making the most of their final years. With your support we hope to be able to do so for many years to come.

To find out more about Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services or to discuss the simple steps involved in leaving a gift of any size, please contact us in complete confidence, and with no obligation.

**Thank you.**



Jackie Slattery  
**Legacy Officer**

Tel: (01) 491 1072 Email: [jslattery@olh.ie](mailto:jslattery@olh.ie)

Find us on [f](#) [in](#) [t](#) [v](#) Visit: [Olh.ie/legacy](http://Olh.ie/legacy)

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Respite Rehabilitation Reassurance  
**Harold's Cross Blackrock Wicklow**



# Childhood stops for seriously ill children.

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we **Press Play**.



**Without Paul Newman:  
Barretstown would not exist.**

**Without our supporters:  
Barretstown won't continue to exist.**



Be part of Paul Newman's legacy for future generations of children living with serious illness. One of the most powerful and lasting ways a person can support Barretstown is by considering leaving a gift in their will. In 2021 it will cost over €5.8 million to run our therapeutic camps and programmes. We must raise 98% of the funds needed from public sources. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the families we serve and our income, your support has never been more vital.

**Will you help to Press Play on childhood?**

**Would you like more information about leaving a gift in your will to Barretstown?**

Please feel free to make a no obligation phone call, or pop in and visit us here in Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare.

If you are leaving a gift in your will to Barretstown you don't need to tell us, we know it's a very private matter. The only reason we like to know, is so we can say thank you!

**Please contact Ciara Doyle**  
on 045 864 115 or email  
[fundraising@barretstown.org](mailto:fundraising@barretstown.org)





It is because of the spiritual and financial generosity of Irish Catholic readers like you, that Missio Ireland can continue to support overseas missionaries in some of the most remote and marginalised corners on the planet. Missionaries like Sr. Félicité Sampo (pictured left) who serves communities in Niger, West Africa, which is one of the poorest countries in the world.

She, and thousands of missionaries worldwide, are calling out for your kindness. Help them to continue to share the beauty of your faith by remembering them in your prayers or if at all possible by making a donation or by leaving a gift in your Will to Missio Ireland.

To learn how, or to find out more about Missio, please call Fiona on **01 497 2035** or go to **[www.missio.ie](http://www.missio.ie)**

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I hope that, one day,  
my grandchildren  
will ask,  
“What WAS  
cancer?”

You can help make cancer a thing of the past by leaving a gift to the Irish Cancer Society in your Will.

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or speak to your solicitor.  
[www.cancer.ie/legacy](http://www.cancer.ie/legacy)





# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Parents should be sceptical of politicians on sex ed

**Dear Editor,** Recent statements by politicians regarding Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are very revealing. In effect they are demanding that the Government devise a RSE programme which would be imposed on all schools, irrespective of the school's values and ethos. I wonder how they would feel if the same logic were applied to politics, i.e., that all but one party would be banned, thus eliminating voter choice, after all, what need has the public for political alternatives!

Over the years parents have voted with their feet to support their parish schools. Indeed, secondary schools founded by religious, are typically greatly oversubscribed. Parents of all

backgrounds really appreciate the values that these schools offer.

Given their record on so many matters, parents would be wise to be sceptical of politicians setting themselves up as the arbiters of what is good for our kids. Both Government and opposition politicians have abjectly failed to shut down porn sites, while advocating abstract 'objective' sex-ed programmes, deprived of a value system, which objectify women, emphasise consent in a legalistic way over commitment to a caring personal relationship, and may even consider the unborn child to be a disposable inconvenience. In short, they promote the consumerisation of our sexuality,

relationships, and even our lives.

In the Scripture readings at last Sunday's mass, there were 20 references to "love". This is what makes Christianity distinctive; that we believe that God is always loving us, and that our happiness comes from being enabled to see this, and to allow this love to flow and flourish in our lives.

Removing love and hope from our relationships and our sexuality education can only make it harder for our young people to embrace the life of meaning and personal responsibility our very humanity yearns for.

*Yours etc.,  
Gearóid Duffy,  
Lee Road, Cork.*

### 'Barbaric' to hide truth of Ballymurphy Massacre

**Dear Editor,** It was wonderful that your newspaper gave such prominence to the vindication of the 10 people unjustly killed by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971 on your front page [IC 13/05/2021].

The families have been through so much, waiting almost half a century for the truth about their loved ones to be told – this was not good enough. It was absolutely barbaric of those to maliciously hide the truth and then describe these innocent people as terrorists. The truth will set you free!

*Yours etc.,  
John Delaney  
Waterford City, Waterford*



### Protecting precious lives of unborn babies

**Dear Editor,** On the 105th anniversary of the 1916 Irish Rising and the shedding of Irish blood for Irish sovereignty, and in light of almost three years of legalised abortion in Ireland, I wish to reflect on the sacrifice, the reasons and the requests of those who gave their lives for our dear county. Presented on April 24, 1916, after an 800-year fight for freedom, Pádraig Pearse declares to the Irish people from the GPO, Dublin: "We hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a sovereign independent State,

and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations. "He continues, "The Republic promises to cherish all the children of the nation equally."

These promises are the very reasons why those who paid the ultimate sacrifice of laying down their lives did so, promises that it extends to each and every precious Irish life, including the precious lives of unborn Irish babies. Lest we forget the price that

was paid for Irish sovereignty, let us think twice before we continue to deny those unborn voiceless babies their right to life, all of whom are endowed with this very right to life. With no exceptions. Rather than choosing to end their lives, let us reconsider the price that was paid for our freedom, and our duty in ensuring every life is cherished equally.

We have got to remember that true power protects the powerless. True feminism as well as authentic masculinity, not only cares for and protects

life, but cherishes life even in its littlest form. As Mahatma Gandhi highlighted, "a nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members". For Ireland to be great again and "exalted among the nations", like it once was, we must return to valuing, cherishing and protecting every life, including those of our weakest members.

*Yours etc.,  
Úna MacBride Walsh  
Westport, Co. Mayo*

### We must approach RSE from a more positive angle

**Dear Editor,** Reading David Quin's article about Catholic RSE teaching [IC 29/04/2021] I could see the difficulty in teaching this subject. Maybe it could be approached from a more positive angle? I think Catholic interpretation of the sixth commandment, properly understood, is the jewel in the crown of our Faith because it is really about true love. All of our Faith, is based on true love, true happy-ever-after love.

Why did God make us and the world if not that he loved us all and wanted

us to be happy with him ever after in Heaven?

I believe that this subject should be taught from this basis. True self-sacrificing love could first of all be explained by the love of God who allowed his son to suffer so terribly for our sake and this might help in understanding martyrs who die for love of God. Maximillian Kolbe gave his life for another man and firemen and health care workers are among those who risk their lives for others. People who give up various

things in order to care for their children or sick relatives could also be put forward as examples of true unselfish love. And of course, the reverse would be explained as well in how selfish love can ruin things.

With this understanding it might be easier to explain that there needs to be great care in human relations.

*Yours etc.,  
Brid Ní Rinn  
Naas, Co. Kildare*

## facebook community

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

### Catholics in Republic welcomed back to Mass

So great to be back in The Church of Our Lady and St David's Naas at 7.30am this morning. Beautiful Mass. Cannot describe how special it was. – **Caroline Ennis**

About time, wonderful news. – **Jilly Smyth-Gannon**  
Fantastic to be back again. – **Teresa Connor**

Back this morning at 8am Mass in St Mary's Drogheda, how special to be back as a congregation and church community again, even our priest said "Wow! So good to say Mass where I can see and hear the congregation again". Amen. – **Pauline Kerr Savage**

Back this morning 10am inside the Sacred Heart Church. Tears in my eyes being allowed back inside, really is great to be back in God's house. – **Bernadette Burke**

So blessed to be back at Mass and receive the holy Eucharist this am. Felt so privileged. Thank God for all our wonderful priests. – **Agnes Cannon Rice**

This is wonderful. We should remain on guard against a Government that believes it has the right to shut churches down and persecute reception of the Sacraments. – **Séamus Na Gaeilge**

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

### Gifting TD's pension to State each year

**Dear Editor,** Oliver Maher asked whether my Green colleagues or I gifted our salaries or pensions back to the State to alleviate the social housing or homelessness crisis [TDs should gift salary to help homeless rather than make 'cheap shots' IC 13/05/2021]. I cannot speak for my colleagues, but since I lost my Dáil seat in 2011 I have gifted my TD's pension to the State each year.

*Yours et  
Ciarán Cuffe ME  
Stoneybatter, Dublin*

### Objecting strongly to use of cell lines from abortion

**Dear Editor,** In response to a previous letter entitled 'Pro Life people spreading anti-vax myths' [IC 29/04/2021], it is indeed sad to think of all the people who have suffered and prematurely died from complications arising from the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) virus. However, the author of the letter does not refer to specific information that is put forward by 'pro life people' as false. We are all called to be pro life as Christians. There are also valid ethical concerns relating to the four vaccines currently being used in Ireland, i.e., the AstraZeneca and the Johnson and Johnson vaccines used cell lines derived from abortions in their development and BioNTech and Moderna vaccines used them in some lab testing. The author quite rightly points out that we have a duty to point out our displeasure, but if we do not object very strongly then it is likely that pharmaceutical companies will do any different?

*Yours et  
Dr Diarmaid O'hAimhirg  
Terryland, Co. Galwa*

### 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.



# Family & Lifestyle

## Family News



### AND EVENTS

#### ENNISTYMON PÚCA STATUE SIDELINED AFTER CRITICISM

Plans to erect a púca statue in the Clare town of Ennistymon have been put on hold following criticism from local people, who described it as “grotesque and scary”.

Clare County Council had proposed placing the six foot tall piece on a plinth at the end of Lower Church Hill, in an attempt to encourage more people to stay as part of extra tourism and visitor measures.

The ‘Púca of Ennistymon’ sculpture was to form part of a €500,000 investment programme by Fáilte Ireland, which is aimed at increasing visitor stays in the town, as well as improving some infrastructure.

The statue was said to be inspired by the town’s horse-heritage, as well as by Irish folklore. However, feedback to images released on social media revealed widespread dismay and outrage among the local population, with many saying it was not an appropriate image for the town, coupled with belief that the púca can bring bad luck.

#### NO ONE DENIED ACCESS TO BIRTH DATA UNDER NEW LAW

Adopted people will now be able to access their birth certificates under new legislation published last week, even if a parent indicates they don’t want to be identified.

The Minister for Children Roderic O’Gorman said that nobody will be denied access to their information under the proposed new law. He believes the law strikes a “fair and compassionate” balance between the rights of adopted people seeking their past, and parents’ right to privacy.

This move was shot down by the previous Attorney General who advised it was infeasible under the Constitution, but the Government believes it is possible to do using an approach based in GDPR.

People will be able to access birth certs, as well as early life information and medical records where than information is available.

#### IMF RECOMMENDS TAX INCREASES POST-COVID

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said more tax will be needed in Ireland to fund investments in physical and human capital, according to RTÉ.

In a review of the Irish economy, the IMF said an increase in tax revenue should be considered after next year, once recovery efforts after Covid-19 are well underway. Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe and Public Expenditure and Reform Minister Michael McGrath welcomed the IMF review, with both saying that Ireland is the only country in the EU with positive GDP growth. They acknowledged that many challenges remain as Ireland emerges from the grip of the pandemic, however.

Such challenges include adapting to post-Brexit trade arrangements, potential changes in international taxation, reducing the country’s national debt and getting people back to work.

## Steering children from the seven deadly sins



One of my childhood Catholic children’s books, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, always attracted my interest with its dramatic depictions of errant children. There was Eileen who was envious, Clare the covetous and a range of other boys and girls who had failed in one area or another. I remember feeling a bit superior to the bold boy in one illustration who was so immersed in the sin of gluttony that he wouldn’t even share his treats with his hungry little dog. I didn’t feel quite as virtuous when reading about Mary who was lounging slothfully on the couch with her cat, thinking of my own long hours spent reading comics instead of tidying my bedroom. My dedication to the weekly Saturday scrubbing and cleaning left a lot to be desired. It was easier to read about the shocking transgressions of imaginary children than to work on my own shortcomings.

**“Even as adults, we may be very good at identifying where we’re going wrong or how we have failed but we still struggle to actually develop the positive habits we so desire”**

That old tattered booklet that described the sins of pride, covetousness, envy, anger, lust, gluttony and sloth did a very good job of describing in vivid detail the various vices involved. I’m not too sure how effective it was in inspiring children to grow in goodness and virtue. Even as adults, we may be very good at



### A parent’s perspective Maria Byrne

identifying where we’re going wrong or how we have failed but we still struggle to actually develop the positive habits we so desire. As parents, teachers and guardians, we can be great at seeing what’s wrong with the children and young people in our care, but at a loss sometimes to know how to gently lead them in a different direction. We’re well aware of the damaging effects of sin in our lives and in the lives of our children but, are we effective in helping them to fight sin by growing in the corresponding virtues? Growing in virtue helps us to grow away from sin.

#### Virtue

Some children may not know what exactly we mean by virtue in a Catholic context. It’s good to utilise a lack of knowledge in our children to engage in a teaching moment. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes a virtue as a “habitual and firm disposition to do good”. It explains that developing virtues allows a person “not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself”. The virtuous person actively pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions. I think when we just focus our efforts on avoiding doing wrong, we can fall at the first hurdle. On the other hand, if we form the habit of doing good, we’ll be less likely to habitually do the opposite. While it all sounds great in theory, how can we assist our children in striving to be the people that God wants

them to be? A good start could involve taking the capital sins and encouraging children to act in ways that are the opposite to the negative behaviours they are associated with. A natural pride in one’s success or talents is totally normal but the sin of pride



can lead to a go-it-alone attitude. An excessive obsession with one’s own excellence, maybe even looking down on others, can be remedied by helping a child to develop the virtue of humility. It’s great to be blessed with many gifts and abilities but an appreciation of abilities as gifts from God helps children to stay grounded. In today’s world the self-made man or woman, overly independent and self-reliant can be viewed as a positive role model. The humble person knows that we can do nothing on our own, and is less focused on being in the limelight, but works for the benefit of others in a spirit of service.

#### Patience

Parents are the best example for children when they practise

patience instead of giving into anger and irritability. We can’t model self-control and restraint if we blow our top at the smallest annoyance or inconvenience. To foster kindness and gentleness, families should remember the three important words that Pope Francis urged us to use please, thank you and sorry. During the last year, many of us have turned into couch potatoes and may have gotten a bit lazy and lethargic while also overindulging in food and drink. The sin of sloth is described by St Thomas Aquinas as “a sadness arising from the fact that the good is difficult”. This leads to a spiritual apathy which we can overcome by an enthusiastic embrace of all that brings us closer to God. At last public Mass is back – what better time to commit to attending more Masses as a family, going to Adoration and putting God first, instead of last, on our schedules? Being busy pleasing God and focusing on God helps us to dispel any sense of gloom as we banish the envy and greed that can arise by comparing ourselves to others. This can particularly apply to social media where the grass is always greener and where people can sometimes be reduced to clickbait to gain likes or, treated as objects rather than individuals made in the image and likeness of God. We can finally ponder on Pope Francis’ words in his third Apostolic Exhortation, *Rejoice and Be Glad*: “The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland or mediocre existence.”



# Putting faith in the ‘Angel of the trenches’

## Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

In the late 1980s, Pat Sweeney and his family travelled to France for their daughter, who wanted to improve her French. They spent three weeks going around the country, including a fateful visit to Lisieux, the home of St Thérèse Martin. From that moment on, Mr Sweeney's life was to revolve more and more around the Little Flower – now, he is manager of St Thérèse's National Office in Ireland.

**“In 2001, Mr Sweeney was the main driver for the visit of St Thérèse's relics to Ireland, when 3.7 million people witnessed their travel across the country”**

“When we got back from Lisieux then to Kildare town – Fr Ryan was the prior in White Abbey in Kildare,” Mr Sweeney tells *The Irish Catholic*. “He was a great man with great devotion to St Thérèse. It went from there, he knew everyone in Lisieux. Through that then we were visiting people – the Masses, the feast days. That was basically how I got involved.

“It got bigger then. We started to join the pilgrimages, which have been going to France for the last 60 years, with the exception of the last two of course. We had a pilgrimage to Lisieux every year, to where St



Pat Sweeney, manager of St Thérèse's National Office Ireland, is pictured with the reliquary containing relics of the Martin family.

Therese was born, to the Carmelite convent where she was a nun, entering at 15 and dying at 24. She was a saint, they all were. The father and mother were canonised in 2018.”

### Devotion

Mr Sweeney's devotion to the Martin family grew quickly. Having been a regimental sergeant in the Irish army, the importance of St Thérèse to soldiers in WWI struck him deeply.

“I was serving as a regimental sergeant major in the army,” he begins. “One of the great things that struck me a couple of times when I went to Lisieux was that Thérèse was very, very popular during the first world war. She used to appear to the soldiers in the trenches. She became known as ‘the Angel of the trenches’.

“Thérèse was buried in the graveyard outside her convent before being exhumed and returned to the

Carmelite's for her beatification. St Pius X beatified her and called her the greatest saint of modern times. It's unbelievable – I could go on and on. We've gone out there on a regular basis, an annual event that we love to take on. It's a bit like Lourdes. The week prior to October 1, St Thérèse's feast day, there's lectures on her life and all that sort of thing – there's so much stuff on her.”

**“Mr Sweeney now manages a set of first class relics from the Martin family, which were presented to him by a friend of the family”**

In 2001, Mr Sweeney was the main driver for the visit of St Thérèse's relics to Ireland, when 3.7 million people witnessed their travel across the country.

“I drove the relics around and was in every cathedral in Ireland,” Mr Sweeney explains. “I drove 13,500 miles in 2001 to every Carmelite order, all the diocesan cathedrals, I met all the bishops, the nunciatures, everything. In 2008, we did the same thing because that was the first time we brought the relics of Louis and Zélie (her parents). Their coffin was a replica of what was in Lisieux.

“There were radio stations from all over the place, French Television and what have you. It was an outstanding success. Then in 2008 we brought them back again and in 2018 I brought them back from France again for the Pope's visit to Dublin.”

Mr Sweeney now manages a set of first class relics from the Martin family, which were presented to him by a friend of the family. As part of his role as manager of the national office, he brings them out to churches and families who request them.

“They are first class relics and I have travelled all up the country with them,” Mr Sweeney says. “I've been to the Aran Islands, to the North of Ireland, I've been in practically every cathedral in Ireland. There's a massive, massive interest in them. Our mission is to visit the lonely, the sick and the dying, I've constantly phone calls for them. It's all based around that.

“They're normally brought in procession. We have a group of people called the Knights of St Thérèse. I look after them and when the relics go out – they've been all over Ireland – anywhere they go, they are accompanied by some of the knights in uniform. We have a special uniform.

“That's basically what we do, we'll go to schools, we'll give talks, we'll give lectures. It's such an interesting family, they're no different from anybody else, middle class people. But every evening when they finished their dinner, Louis and Thérèse went to the back gate where they'd have a big pot of food to give to the poor. She was a great character in her own way.”

### Miracles

Mr Sweeney has been blessed to witness the effects of the Martin family's miraculous intercessions, one of which in particular sticks out in his memory.

“I've been at a lot of bedsides of little children who have died – it's very, very hard. And then we've had some marvellous miracles. We had a fella cured by Léonie Martin, through her intercession with God,” he says. “The thing about it is that the doctors trying to write a report on it, they have no explanation. He had a bleed on the brain and he had coronavirus. He also had a thing with the immune system. He was in a very serious condition – he's at home now and there's no sign of anything.”

Mr Sweeney finishes by saying he's looking forward to the end of lockdowns, being able to bring the relics of the Martin's to people once more.



## Children's Corner

Chai Brady

# Living it up with a homemade lava lamp

The pandemic has been a stressful time with everyone not being able to socialise or go to school for so long. Despite Ireland beginning to reopen, it can be tough to get back to normal life.

Why not make something that helps people relax? Lava lamps are undoubtedly satisfying to observe, there's something quite calming about the way the floating blobs in the lamp move.

Using simple household items such as vegetable oil, food colouring, Alka-Seltzer and a bottle to create chemical reactions and globules of colour, it's easy to create a tranquil space with your very own lava lamp.

### Apparatus:

- Water
- A clear plastic bottle (or jar)
- Vegetable oil
- Food colouring
- Alka-Seltzer (or other tablets that fizz)

### Method:

- Pour water into the plastic bottle until it is about one quarter full.

- Pour in vegetable oil until the bottle is nearly full.

- Wait until the oil and water have separated.

- Add a dozen drops of food colouring to the bottle (choose any colour you like).

- Watch as the food colouring falls through the oil and mixes with the water.

- Cut an Alka-Seltzer tablet into smaller pieces (around 5 or 6) and drop one of them into the bottle, things should start getting rather dramatic, just like a real lava lamp!

- When the bubbling stops, add another piece of Alka-Seltzer and enjoy the show.

### What's happening?

Previously in this column we looked at the relationship between oil and water and how they just don't like to mix. The oil and water added to the bottle separate from each other, with oil on top because it has a lower density than water.

The food colouring falls through the oil and mixes with the water at the bottom. The piece of Alka-Seltzer tablet dropped in afterwards releases small bubbles of carbon dioxide gas

that rise to the top and take some of the coloured water along for the ride.

The gas escapes when it reaches the top and the coloured water falls back down. The reason Alka-Seltzer fizzes in such a way is because it contains citric acid and baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), the two react with water to form sodium citrate and carbon dioxide gas (those are the bubbles that carry the coloured water to the top of the bottle).

Adding more Alka-Seltzer to the bottle keeps the reaction going so the lava lamp can be enjoyed for longer.

When your Alka-Seltzer stores are depleted, you can take the experiment a step further by tightly screwing on a bottle cap and tipping the bottle back and forth, what happens then?





# Rich kids growing up without money – or understanding

**G**loria Steinem once confessed that, while never having been overweight, she has always been concerned about her weight because the genes she inherited from her parents predisposed her in that direction. So, she says, “I think of myself as a fat woman who is slim at the moment”. Her comment helped me to understand something I misunderstood years before in a classroom.

Early on in my seminary studies, taking a course on the sociology of poverty, I was struggling to accept our professor’s explanation as to why poverty isn’t always the consequence of personal failure, but is often the product of unchosen circumstances, accidents, and misfortune. Many of us in the class weren’t buying it, and this was our logic. Most of us had come from very humble economic backgrounds and believed that we had pulled ourselves up by our own bootstraps. Why couldn’t everyone else do the same?

**“Success isn’t predicated only on personal character, hard work, and dedication”**

So we protested: we grew up poor. We didn’t have any money. We didn’t get free school lunches. We had to work to pay for our clothes and books. Our parents never took any handouts. Nobody helped them – they took care of themselves. So have we, their



**Fr Rolheiser**

[www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)

kids. We resent those who are getting things for nothing. Nothing came to us free! We’ve earned what we have.

## Sociology of poverty

Our professor answered by telling us that this is precisely why we needed a course on the sociology of poverty. He wasn’t buying the notion that we had grown up poor and had earned things by our own hard work. Then, this surprising phrase: “None of you were poor as kids; you were rich kids who grew up without money; and where you are today isn’t just the result of your own hard work, it’s also the result of a lot of good fortune.”

It took me years (and Gloria Steinem’s comment) to understand he was right. I was a rich kid who grew up in a family without money. Moreover, so much of what I naively believed that I’d earned by my own hard work was in fact very much the product of good fortune.

**“What really makes for the separation of rich and poor in our world? Is everyone really on equal footing?”**

I doubt our society understands that. A number of popular clichés have us believe that one’s background should never be an excuse for not being a success in this world, that success is open equally to everyone. We’ve all inhaled the clichés. Any poor kid can grow up to be president of this country! Any poor kid can go to Harvard! Anybody industrious can make a success of his or her life! There’s no excuse for any healthy person not having a job!

**“We see those who are poor as having only themselves to blame”**

Is this true? Partially, yes; kids from poor economic backgrounds have become president, thousands of poor kids have found entrance into the best universities, countless kids who grew up poor have been highly successful in life, and people who are motivated and not lazy generally

do make a success of their lives. However, that’s far from the whole story.

What really makes for the separation of rich and poor in our world? Is everyone really on equal footing? Is it really virtue that makes for success and lack of it that makes for failure?

## Privilege

In a best-selling book, *Elderhood*, Louise Aronson, makes this comment about her mother and Queen Elizabeth, both who aged wonderfully and gracefully: “They both were born into privilege: white, citizens of developed countries, wealthy and educated. Both were gifted with great genetic DNA, and both had the good fortune of not ever having been assaulted, abused, felled by cancer, or in a debilitating car accident... These advantages are not a matter of character. Indeed, willpower and capacity for wise decisions are often by-products of fortunate lives.” (Emphasis, mine)

Success isn’t predicated only on personal character, hard work, and dedication. Neither is failure necessarily the result of weakness, laziness, and lack of effort. We aren’t all born equal, set equally into the same starting blocks, have equally

gifted or abusive childhoods, are allotted equally the same opportunities for education and growth, and then are parceled out equally the same measure of accidents, illness, and tragedy in life. However, it’s because we naively believe that fortune is allotted equally to all that we glibly (and cruelly) divide people into winners and losers, judge harshly those we deem losers, blame them for their misfortunes, and congratulate ourselves on what we have achieved, as if all the credit for our success can be attributed to our own virtue. Conversely, we see those who are poor as having only themselves to blame. Why can’t they pull themselves up by their bootstraps? We did!

**“A number of popular clichés have us believe that one’s background should never be an excuse for not being a success in this world”**

But... some of us have genes that predispose us to become fat, some of us are rich kids who grow up without money, and willpower and capacity for wise decisions are often the products of a fortunate life rather than a matter of character. Recognising that can make us less cruel in our judgments and far less smug in our own successes.



# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Too often in the media it's either pro-Palestinian or pro-Israel

The issue of the homeless got something of extra profile when Covid-19 kicked off, with extra efforts being made to make sure they had shelter and protection. It showed we could move on the problem when there was enough motivation.

On **Times Radio Breakfast** last Saturday morning presenter Jenny Kleeman covered an aspect of homelessness that doesn't often get an airing – what the homeless do with their minimal possessions. The charity Street Storage provides secure, free and accessible storage in London. Ms Kleeman appropriately started by interviewing a homeless man who welcomed the facility to store important items, especially clothes and documents. Founder Rachel Wolfe explained how she hoped to expand the initiative to other British cities. She got all sorts of unusual items to look after and as a matter of security and dignity everything was itemised and photographed so that everything could be returned correctly.

Earlier on the show Ms Kleeman and co-presenter Ayesha Hazarika explored the current flare up in the Middle East, a situation, like homelessness, we always seem to have with us. Last week's news coverage was grim, especially with the inter-community violence between Israelis and Palestinians living in the



Members of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) carry artillery shells in a field next to the border with the Gaza Strip. Photo: CNS

same areas, and of course the awful deaths of children in bomb and rocket attacks. Too often in the media it's either pro-Palestinian or pro-Israel, with sides being taken when an across the board disgust and even-handed peace effort would have more chance of a better outcome. Ms Hazarika explained that she was Muslim while Ms Kleeman was Jewish but they weren't going to take entrenched positions based on their ethnic heritage. Middle East expert Michael Stephens and Israeli-Palestinian negotiator and columnist Gershon Baskin teased out the historical and political background, a useful exercise in providing context. One thing that galled me was the amount of money being spent on all these bombs and

rockets – such a scandalous waste when there is so much poverty, and indeed fresh homelessness created by the destruction. In fact, the right to homes and a homeland is partly the source of the conflict.

Objectivity and even handedness has not always been a hallmark of coverage of the election of Edwin Poots as leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The mainstream news coverage I heard was factual enough but on **Andrew Pierce** on UK radio station LBC last Friday the host was scathing about Mr Poots, regarding him as having "bigoted views" (he's socially conservative). His guest Sean Woodward, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, was more

nuanced. There's an attitude which has marked and marred coverage of the North recently, with the notion being pushed that promotion of abortion, even over the heads of the people of Northern Ireland, is somehow progressive. I fail to see how taking away people's right to be born is even remotely progressive.

Myanmar, formerly Burma, is another of the world's conflict zones and seems nearly as intractable as that in the Middle East. **Unreported World** (Channel 4, Friday) returned last week for a new season with a short but hard-hitting documentary on the upheaval in that country. Unusually, instead of the team making it, they accepted a film from someone local who was tak-

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### MASS FOR PENTECOST

RTÉ One, Sunday May 23, 11am

A Eurovision broadcast of Mass on the feast of Pentecost from the medieval Swiss town of Saint Ursanne, on the banks of the River Doubs, in the mountainous Jura region. Commentary by Michael Kelly.

#### MARIA GORETTI

EWTN Sunday May 23, 9pm

An Italian film on the life of St Maria Goretti. Despite growing up in poverty, Maria devoted herself to Christ, becoming one of the Church's youngest martyrs.

#### COMHRÁ

TG4 Thursday May 27, 7.30pm

Fr Brian Ó Fearraigh has been the parish priest in Gaith Dobhair in Donegal for nearly 20 years as well as the school chaplain in Pobalscoil Ghaith Dobhair.

not the same", he declared.

Though many of the protestors' banners featured deposed and democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi, currently in some form of detention, I don't recall one mention of her in the script or any concern expressed as to her whereabouts. Media coverage in general has also lacked any evident concern. Once a hero in human rights circles, she fell from grace because of Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya Muslims.

Nevertheless the silence about her is still deafening.

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[@boreganmedia](https://www.instagram.com/boreganmedia)

# Film

## Times are a-changing for Bob Dylan

It's hard to believe Bob Dylan will be 80 on the 24th of this month. He's ingested so many substances into that hard-travelling body of his over the years.

There was a time I didn't think he'd even make it to 50. To quote Kris Kristofferson, another singer-songwriter who has no right to be alive at his great age after how much he's drunk over the years: "God must love poets and alcoholics."

Nobody could be more poetic than the man who was born Robert Zimmerman in Hibbing, Minnesota. As he grew up he made it his business to debunk every sacred cow both inside and outside music. When I was going through my 'teenage

rebel' phase in the 1970s, like many university students of the time, he was music's pre-eminent prophet to me.

Readers of *The Irish Catholic* may be interested in Dylan's 'born again' phase in the 1980s when he seemed to renounce Judaism for evangelical Christianity. He produced three classic albums at that time: *Saved*, *Slow Train Comin'* and *Shot of Love*.

Films featuring Dylan online include *The Last Waltz*, the farewell concert of *The Band*. It's one of the greatest movies of its kind. I can never see it enough times.

There's also Martin Scorsese's monumental 2-DVD work, *No Direction*



*Home* and D.A. Pennebaker's fly-on-the-wall documentary *Don't Look Now* featuring his 1965 London concert. Scorsese also made the 1975

documentary *Renaldo and Clara*. A recent 'mockumentary' spin-off, *Rolling Thunder Revue*, is now on Netflix. Dylan appeared in two

Aubrey Malone



dramatic roles, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* and *Hearts of Fire*. The less said about these the better.

Once described as an anti-Christ, some years ago he met the Pope. He continues to re-invent himself even as he's "knock-knock-knockin' on heaven's door". The voice is wispier since the days it sounded like a dog with his leg caught in barbed wire but it's still compulsive.

The material has also morphed. This is evidenced by recent re-treads of old Frank Sinatra standards on his 'retro' albums. He refuses to retire. If it wasn't for Covid I'm sure he'd even be gigging. For many years now he's been on what he calls 'The Never Ending Tour'. It seems to be just that.

Six different stars played him in Todd Haynes' 2007 film *He's Not There*, includ-

ing a woman (Cate Blanchett). There's no better testimony to his chameleon nature than that. As he once said, "He who's not busy bein' born is busy dyin'."

He recently sold his entire publishing catalogue – that's 600 songs spanning 60 years – to Universal Music Publishing. He got a reputed \$300 million for it. That's not a misprint. Today he's tangled up in green.

Three of his paintings also went under the hammer recently at Whyte's auction house. The music legend recently launched his own whiskey brand. He doesn't like being called a legend. "That means you're past it," he says. Happy birthday, Jimmy. May you stay forever young.



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Off to Philadelphia in the morning...or maybe not

**Unintended Consequences: The story of Irish Immigration to the US and how America's door was closed to the Irish**

by Ray O'Hanlon  
(Merrion Press, €19.95)

Joe Carroll

For over 150 years the Irish crossed the Atlantic to make a new life in the United States and nobody shouted 'stop'. Then in 1965 the open door narrowed to a crack and since then a struggle has gone on to get more American visas or green cards and legalise the thousands of Irish who ignore the rules and stay on in the US illegally.

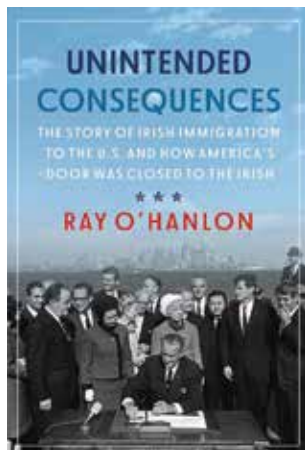
The story is full of ironies and the author, who has covered the saga for many years as a reporter and editor for *the Irish Echo* in New York, tells it well. In 1963, President John F Kennedy made a triumphant tour of Ireland extolling the feats of Irish emigrants like his own family in the land of hope and glory. Yet a month later he sent congress his plan for a total reform of immigration policy which had the 'unintended consequence' of reducing the Irish traffic across the Atlantic to a trickle.

### Change

After his assassination, the baton for change was taken up by his brother, Senator Edward Kennedy, who shepherded the legislation through the senate and was there when President Lyndon Johnson signed it into law on the hallowed soil of Ellis Island on October 3, 1965.

Another irony is that Senator Kennedy was to spend much sweat until his death in 2009 trying to undo the parts of the law that were keeping the Irish out. Successive Irish governments from the 1980s on would strive to get bigger quotas for the Irish and an amnesty for the 'illegals' or 'undocumented' whose estimated number would vary wildly from 40,000 to over 100,000 as nobody knew the correct figure.

Another irony is that the legendary Tip O'Neill, onetime speaker of the House of Representatives, would later reveal that the then Irish ambassador William Fay had urged congress members to vote for the 1965 act. There was fear in Dublin of a 'brain drain' of qualified Irish to the US just as the Irish economy was having its first expansion since independence. Even American bishops, many of Irish origin, favoured the reform as it would



mean more Catholic arrivals from Latin America.

### Recession

By the 1980s, the Irish economy was in recession and the jobless were again heading for New York and Boston. President Kennedy's reform was a liberal effort to correct the often racist prejudice that inspired the immigration laws biased towards white English-speaking Europeans from Britain and Ireland. Because such large numbers of Irish had been entering the US in the 19th Century, Ireland was to be greatly favoured when a first reform of the laws in 1924 brought in quotas based on 'national origins'. The Irish had a quota of almost 30,000 while the Italians had only 6,000. African, Asian and Latin American countries need not apply.

By 1965, the Irish and British were not filling their generous quotas. The 1965 act changed all that. National quotas were replaced by qualifications and 'family reunification' which favoured Italians, Poles, Greeks, etc. The author documents the long struggle by Irish-American organisations to get in more Irish compatriots. There were 'Donnelly visas', 'Morrison visas', 'Berman visas' and other ploys to increase the Irish quota marginally but there was to be no amnesty for the 'undocumented' who were increasingly liable to be rounded up and deported. Bertie Ahern when Taoiseach in 2008 said bluntly in Washington that "an amnesty is not on". Recent ministers have been more diplomatic.

Teddy Kennedy died regretting the 'unintended consequences' to the Irish of what he and his brother had done. His efforts to undo them were thwarted by the byzantine rules needed to get reforms through both houses. Immigration became an even hotter potato during the Donald Trump years. Ray O'Hanlon's account is a valuable history of a reform gone wrong, at least for the Irish.

'For weeks now it has been evening...'



**Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?: The World Facing the Pandemic. The Statio Orbis of March 27, 2020**

by Pope Francis  
(Libreria Editrice Vaticana, €17.25; available through Knock Shrine Online Store)

Peter Costello

"For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes

**“Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives”**

by; we feel it in the air, we notice it in people's gestures, their glances give them away.”

These are the words of Pope Francis on the pandemic, written well over a year ago. But now, as the feeling rises that the pandemic may be moving to a close and our spirits rise, we should recall them as part of the permanent

lessons to be learned about the moral nature of the whole global experience.

### Service

That singular Good Friday service by Pope Francis back in March 2020, at the now seemingly far distant early days of Covid-19, was a most memo-



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.

## History turning into poetry

### Rhyming History: The Irish War of Independence and the Ballads of Atrocity in the Valley of Knockanure

by Gabriel Fitzmaurice  
(North Kerry Literary Trust, €15.00; can be ordered from the Kerry Writers' Museum, info@kerrywritersmuseum.com, 24 The Square, Listowel, Co. Kerry V31 RD93)

#### J Anthony Gaughan

G.K. Chesterton once famously rhymed: "The great Gaels of Ireland are the men that God made mad, for all their wars are merry and all their songs are sad."

There was not much merriment in North Kerry in April and May 1921. On April 7, Mick Galvin was fatally wounded during an IRA ambush on a party of British soldiers as they cycled back to their billets in Listowel after a visit to the residence of Sir Arthur Vicars in Kilmorna.

On April 14, Kilmorna House was raided by the IRA. They led Sir Arthur to the end of his garden and shot him, allegedly for having provided information to the British authorities. They also burned down Kilmorna House.

#### Captured

On May 12, the crown forces captured four unarmed members of the IRA at Gortaglanna, Knockanure, near Kilmorna. They took them into a field and lined them up to shoot them. Although wounded, one of them – Con Dee – made a miraculous escape. This is the incident encapsulated in the ballad *The Valley of Knockanure*.

The most popular version of the ballad is attributed to Bryan MacMahon. In this interesting monograph Gabriel Fitzmaurice describes its provenance.

In 1946 Pádraig Ó Ceallacháin, principal of Knockanure National School, provided Mr MacMahon with a few verses on the incident at Gortaglanna together with a sworn statement by Con Dee, the survivor, and requested that he compose a ballad that would be historically accurate.

This Mr MacMahon did and he had the first copies of the ballad printed.

Mr Fitzmaurice sets out other versions of the ballad by local well-known rhymers: Tim Leahy, Dan Keane, Paddy Drury and Thade Gouran. He compares them to the MacMahon version and assesses the accuracy of their narrative of the event at Gortaglanna. He notes how the ballad is printed in *The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem Song Book* and how it is recorded by Paddy Tunney, the well-known Irish traditional singer.



Poet Gabriel Fitzmaurice

Mindful of the influence a ballad can have on public perception over a very long time, he is scathing in his comment on a version recorded from Joe Heaney by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, in which "history and poetry part company".

#### Profiles

Mr Fitzmaurice concludes with profiles of two of those who were executed at Gortaglanna and the musical score for the various versions of the ballad, as well as providing a compact disc of its renditions by Karen Trench, Christy Goulding, Jim Lyons and Jimmy Herbert.

On a personal level this affectionate treatment of the ballad struck a chord. One of my most vivid memories of growing up in Listowel was listening to the ballad singers on fair-days. *The Valley of Knockanure* was one of their favourite ballads. And ever etched in my memory is the line "And the banshee cried when our heroes died in the Valley of Knockanure".

A salute to the North Kerry Literary Trust and the gifted Gabriel Fitzmaurice for this insightful and deeply moving publication.

well as texts, prayers and comments by others. The impactful photographs capture the mood of the moment and are for once a real part of the book's overall impact.

Many will want to have this publication, not merely as a record of that most memorable event, but because the homily and the other texts give a concise epitome of Pope Francis' thinking on the state of the world today, and how it bears down upon creation of which we are all a part, and for the preservation of which we must all work together. In the Pope's words are important lessons that should not be forgotten.

rable event, one which was felt to be deeply moving by people of all cultures.

**“As the feeling rises that the pandemic may be moving to a close and our spirits rise”**

The image of the Pope, all in white, alone in the bleak grey loneliness of St Peter's Square, was strangely symbolic of the status of the individual in such a crisis.

This volume is a record of the ceremonies, containing the Pope's own words as

## The World of Books

# Martial airs as an aid to peace

### The National Anthems of the EU Countries

by Liam Murphy  
(Kingdom books, €18.00)

#### J. Anthony Gaughan

Though World War II was an Armageddon of evil, it had at least one good result: what became the European Union (EU) emerged from its embers. This historic union was formed by European statesmen who were determined that their countries would never again go to war with each other. Despite all the differences of opinion among the countries of the union since, this highest aim of all has never been forgotten about.

The first practical step towards uniting the continent was taken with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. There followed the Treaty of Rome in 1957 which created the European Economic Community. The European Union and European citizenship was established when the Maastricht Treaty came into force in 1993. Thereafter the European Union continued to be enlarged until 2004 when it consisted of twenty-eight countries.

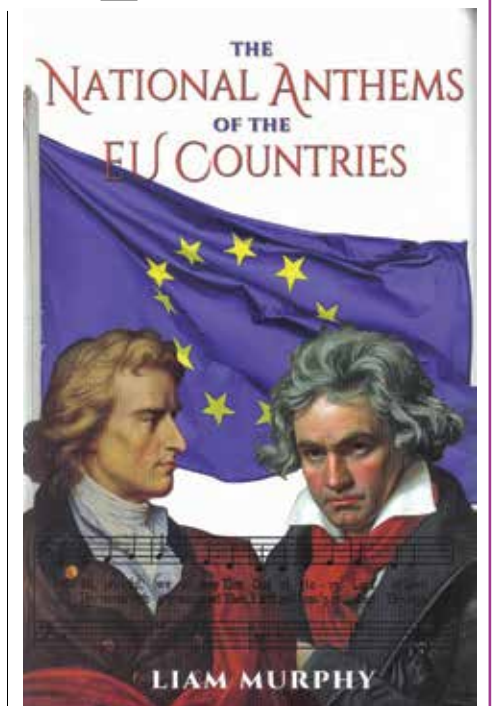
From 1985 onwards the entity had its own anthem with words from Friedrich Schiller and music from Ludwig van Beethoven. However, each of the countries of the bloc also retained their national identifying symbols, including their national anthems. These were the songs they had adopted to promote patriotism and instil loyalty to their country.

#### Survey

In this fascinating survey of the anthems of the EU countries, Liam Murphy describes the origin of the lyrics, and records who provided the melody for each anthem. He narrates when and where they were first rendered in public. He also examines the significance of the main verse or verses of each anthem. And he deals with the subsequent history of those national anthems from the date of their composition until the present day. Mindful that whenever a national anthem is played the national flag is not far distant, he also illustrates his commentary on each with the appropriate flag.

Some of the anthems were associated with seminal national events. None more so than France's *La Marseillais*. The song was written in April 1792 by Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle in Strasbourg after the declaration of war by France against Austria and it was adopted as the Republic's anthem in 1795. Originally entitled *Chant de guerre pour L'Armée du Rhin* (War song for the army in the Rhine), it acquired its name after being sung by revolutionary soldiers from Marseille as they marched to Paris in August 1792.

The United Kingdom was part of the European project for 47 years. So it was right



for the author to include its anthem, if only in an appendix. It is one of the oldest national anthems in Europe. However, the two versions of its origin are based on equally tenuous authority.

#### Lyrics

The French version attributes the lyrics to the Marquise de Créguy, a French literary scholar, who composed a motet giving thanks for the survival of King Louis XIV of France after a painful operation involving the removal of a polyp from his backside. The motet was set to music by the French composer Jean-Baptiste Lully, the king's composer, and enjoyed success in France. The composer George Frideric Handel, was said to have had Henry Carey, an English rhymers and musician, translate the text and to have it then orchestrated before submitting it to his mentor, King George II of England.

Proudly taking its place among the national anthems of the EU is *Amhrán na bhFiann* (*The Soldier's Song*). It was written by Peadar Kearney in 1909 or early 1910 and the music was supplied by Patrick Heaney. The words were published in *Irish Freedom* in 1912 and thereafter it became the marching song of the Irish volunteers.

Following the Easter Rising in 1916 it supplanted God save Ireland as the generally accepted national anthem. It was informally adopted as the national anthem of the Irish Free State in 1924 before it was officially adopted in 1926, replacing God save the King.

This meticulously researched study is a treasure trove of information on an important aspect of the culture of the EU. It will be prized by all who appreciate and admire the historic European project.

**“Liam Murphy describes the origin of the lyrics, and records who provided the melody for each anthem”**



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

[www.mscmissions.ie](http://www.mscmissions.ie)

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

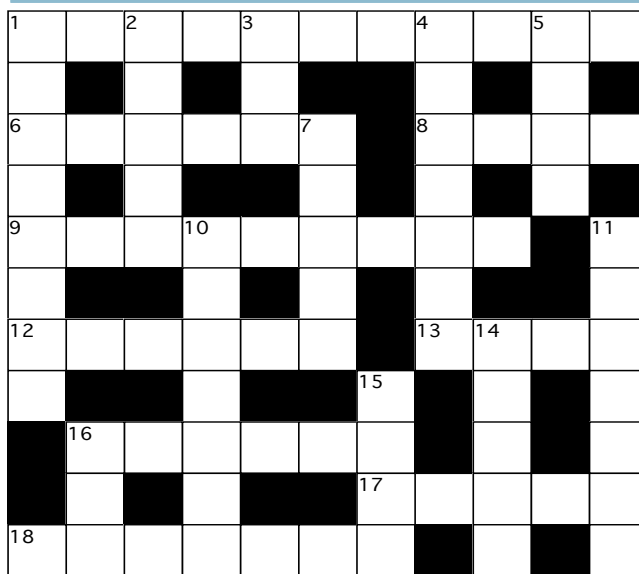
**Trócaire**

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](mailto: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 383



#### Across

- 1 People who are walking, not driving or cycling (11)
- 6 Go on a journey (6)
- 8 You tie it when you put on a shoe (5)
- 9 This kind of tree does not shed leaves in Autumn (9)
- 12 Shut (6)
- 13 You can build a castle with it on the beach (4)
- 16 Uses money to buy things (6)
- 17 Big (5)
- 18 A painting or photograph (7)

#### Down

- 1 You play this card-game on your own (8)
- 2 Male duck (5)
- 3 A short name for Susan (3)
- 4 Sickness (7)
- 5 You wear a scarf around it (4)
- 7 Tempted into a trap (5)
- 10 Politeness and attention we should show to other people (7)
- 11 Small pools of rainwater (7)
- 14 Cross, very annoyed (5)
- 15 Ireland is often called the Emerald \_\_\_\_ (4)
- 16 One way to travel over snow (3)

### SOLUTIONS, MAY 13

GORDIUS NO. 507

**Across** – 1 Hop 3 Stock market 8 Gotham 9 Rasputin 10 Sepal 11 Erect 13 Cower 15 Imbided 16 Agonise 20 Poise 21 Yawns 23 Blair 24 Fontanel 25 Candle 26 Day and night 27 Ron

**Down** – 1 High Society 2 Put-up job 3 Snarl 4 Curlews 5 Apple 6 Kitten 7 Ton 12 Tree surgeon 13 Cheep 14 Rogue 17 Islander 18 Vivaldi 19 Twenty 22 Spain 23 Blast 24 Had

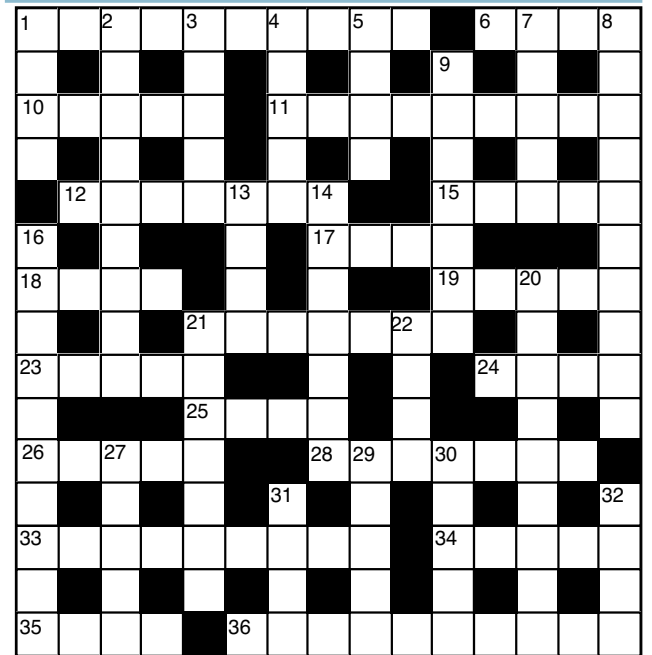
CHILDREN'S No. 382

**Across** – 1 Star sign 7 Obama 8 Apron 9 Paddled 11 Arch 12 Ointment 15 Eerie 18 Editor 19 Venus 20 Seville

**Down** – 1 Scorpion 2 Abandoned 3 Snail 4 Guard 5 Nenagh 6 Error 10 Eye 11 Ate 13 Metal 14 Nerve 16 Ring 17 East 18 Ewe

### Crossword

Gordius 508



#### Across

- 1 Consecutively, from defender to defender (4-2-4)
- 6 She is centrally involved in airmail (4)
- 10 Tempest (5)
- 11 Letter that is not a vowel (9)
- 12 Agree (7)
- 15 Long for twelve months with a cardinal (5)
- 17 Troubles (4)
- 18 Ms Lane, Superman's girlfriend (4)
- 19 Tests (5)
- 21 A female horse swallowed a taxi? How gruesome! (7)
- 23 Greek island, centre of the Minoan civilization (5)
- 24 Out of danger (4)
- 25 Asian garment (4)
- 26 See 2 down
- 28 V-shaped motif (7)
- 33 Performing surgery (9)
- 34 Race involving a baton (5)
- 35 Name which means 'Christmas' (4)
- 36 Wielded, waved in threatening manner (10)

#### Down

- 1 Deep singing voice (4)
- 2 & 26a False show of remorse - from a reptile? (9,5)
- 3 Burial places (5)
- 4 Salted meat (5)
- 5 Tins (4)
- 7 Tear a form of lasso (5)
- 8 Amazed to see a hedonist's reformed (10)
- 9 The Pope's own diocese (4,3)
- 13 Napoleon was imprisoned here (4)
- 14 It sank tragically in 1912 (7)
- 16 Bush from which you get sloes (10)
- 20 With a new hat, a loyal Islamic leader appears (9)
- 21 Saviour (7)
- 22 Wander over, somehow (4)
- 27 White poplar (5)
- 29 Important stand in Croke Park (5)
- 30 Drive out a composer of operas (5)
- 31 Jetty (4)
- 32 Looked at (4)

## Sudoku Corner

383

### Easy

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

### Hard

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

### Last week's Easy 382

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

### Last week's Hard 382

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



Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



# Jesus has gone to the Father and is working from home

**A CONVERSATION** between a grandfather and his grandson went like this: “Grandad, what happens when you die?” Grandad explained as best he could. Still puzzled, the boy asked, “Does that mean you won’t be here anymore?” Grandad nodded: “Yes, that is true”. “Does that mean you won’t be able to play hurling with me anymore?”, “Yes it does”. “Does it mean you won’t be able to fly a kite with me anymore?”, “Yes, son it does”. “Does that mean you won’t be able to take me fishing anymore?”, “Yes it does”. “Well grandad, when that time comes, who is going to do these things with me, if you’re not here?”



also the time for his disciples to be Jesus’ voice, his hands, his feet, his presence, his Church.

It took time for them to absorb the meaning of it all, to wrestle with doubt about whether they were up to the task. Could they let go of everything they thought was necessary to walk into a different future? Could they really be ‘another Christ’? With such worrying thoughts and fears they just stood there numb as Jesus disappeared until they were brought back to earth with the angel’s sharp words; “Boys, why are you looking up to heaven? It’s time now to get on with it.”

So, unsure and hesitant, they trekked off to the upper room, to quarantine and cocoon, awaiting the Spirit who would be their guide and comfort. The power of that Holy Spirit was a power they were going to sorely need, because they, and those followers that would come

after them would be subject to misunderstandings, betrayals and failures that would shake them to their core. And yet as 2000 years of history has shown, by the help of that same Spirit, they would repent, renew and recover each time to reaffirm their mandate and get on with being Church.

**Transition**

The Feast of Ascension celebrates the transition from Jesus to the Apostles, to us. The scriptures last weekend helped to drive home the message: “You will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth”, “Go therefore make disciples of all nations”.

St Teresa of Avila, way back in the 16th Century put it beautifully in her famous prayer:

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

Christ has no body but ours, no hands, no feet, no eyes but ours. Jesus has gone to the Father and is working from home. Ascension says, Let the service begin!

**Prayer for vocations**

Lord Jesus we believe that you continue to scatter the seeds of vocation in the hearts of young people today. Help us to nourish those seeds with encouragement and support so that they will take root, grow, and bear fruit. Give to all who are called the courage they need to take a first step on a journey of discovery which will lead them to that place where they will encounter you Lord and discern the road you invite them to follow. Lord fill young hearts with a spirit of loving service care and respect for themselves and others. Provide your Church with humble shepherds who will work with their sisters and brothers in a spirit of co-responsibility for your Church. Amen.

The wise grandfather explained, “When that time comes, it will be time for you to do those things for another little boy.”

**Ascension**

Last weekend’s feast of The Ascension is the official statement that says, “The time has come”. Yes, it was the time for Jesus to go to the Father. In the words of a WhatsApp message I got last weekend: “Tomorrow is the feast of the Ascension. To those who wonder what it is about; it’s the day when Jesus started to work from home.”

Well if it was the time for Jesus to physically leave his disciples it was

**God be with the days...**

● The local butcher sent his apprentice to deliver meat to the bishop’s house every Friday evening. The young lad dreaded meeting the bishop. One evening he pressed the doorbell and assumed the housekeeper would answer as usual. Unfortunately, the bishop was coming out the door and the young apprentice was so nervous that he almost threw the meat at the bishop and said; “there’s the meat” and took to his heels. “Wait” said the bishop, “That is not the way you address a bishop. I will

show you. You go inside and act as me and I will take the meat and act as you.” So he rang the doorbell and the young lad opened from inside. Then the bishop, acting the boy, said “Good evening your Lordship, I have meat for you that has been sent up from the butcher’s shop. I hope you have a very enjoyable weekend.”

“God bless you, young man,” said the young lad, and taking a pound note from his pocket, gave it to the bishop and said, “here is a pound for yourself”.



## The Little Way Association HELPING PEOPLE AFFECTED BY VIRUS

India is bearing the brunt of a new wave of the pandemic. A doctor in Mumbai has described a covid ward there as resembling a scene from Dante’s Inferno. Priests are among those dying from the illness, crematoria are overloaded, and at least one diocese has been offering its facilities to be used for treating covid patients. Even those who have not contracted the virus are suffering from the disease’s impact on the Indian economy and society.

**Can you spare a donation for covid-stricken India?**

The Little Way Association is in touch with the church in India, gathering details of the most pressing needs there. Many of our supporters in Britain and Ireland have themselves been affected by the pandemic but, if you can spare a donation for India, it will be forwarded to clergy and religious there without deduction.

**Every penny that you donate goes intact to provide basic sustenance, water, medicine and housing for the children, families and individuals who need them.**

**Please give what you can. Thank you and may God reward your generosity.**

**All our donors are remembered at Masses offered for their intentions and the missionaries always promise prayers for their benefactors.**



“Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself as it were at our mercy; He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart, and the very least trifle is precious in His sight.” ~ **St Therese**

**MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS**

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

**We like to send a minimum of €5 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:

**THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION**  
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR  
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

- I enclose €..... to be allocated to:
- €..... **POOR AND NEEDY PEOPLE OF INDIA**
- €..... NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES
- €..... WELLS AND CLEAN WATER
- €..... MASS OFFERINGS  
(Please state no. of Masses \_\_\_\_\_)
- €..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

To donate online go to  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**