

The Irish Catholic

MARY KENNY

And we all expected life to just go on as before... Page 5



IN GOD'S IMAGE

The Covid-19 crisis is calling us to arms Pages 12 & 13



DAVID QUINN

God has led us through tribulations before and will do so now Page 8



Thursday, March 26, 2020

€2.00 (Stg £1.70)

The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

@IrishCathNews

www.irishcatholic.com

Crisis helps parishes reach unchurched

Chai Brady and Aron Hegarty

The coronavirus crisis can be an opportunity for parishes to creatively reconnect with people who have lost touch with the Church, it has been claimed.

It comes as parishes up and down the country are finding new ways to offer liturgy and pastoral support due to the suspension of public Masses during the pandemic.

Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan told *The Irish Catholic* that "the engagement online has brought a lot of prayer initiatives that wouldn't normally get attention.

"It unifies people and gets more people involved as it reaches more people than normal," he said.

Bishop Monahan said that people are taking the State guidelines "very seriously and there is a huge community effort to look after each other and pray very hard".

Reconnect

Meanwhile, Tyrone GAA manager Mickey Harte has appealed to people to use the social isolation as a way to reconnect with the Faith. "Maybe when we have more time on our hands now, we should make more time to pray as well, because

I think that will have a big impact on how we can control the speed of the arrival of the worst of this virus," he said.

Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry said the Church must continue to be visible to everyone because many people are fearful.

"The primacy is the pastoral care of people whether they are in Church or not, as this is not a recruitment opportunity so much as an opportunity to pastor people," he said.

"We all know the huge numbers following religious services on webcams and so on, but I think it's important for the credibility of

the Church that we're maintaining a high level of visibility in whatever way we can be of service of people, it may be at a distance but being invisible is not an option," he said.

Uncertainty

Dr McKeown said that the Church is "doing a lot of work in different ways. Firstly, to ensure that we speak into the fear that very many people are experiencing with the uncertainty in the world. Secondly that we reassure people that the Church has not gone to ground."

Bro. Kevin Crowley OFM Cap. of the Capuchin Day Centre in Dublin

appealed to people to be calm and put their trust "in the Lord and Our Lady that everything will come to an end".

"I suppose there's a huge amount of fear and anxiety of the unknown and what's going to happen," he told *The Irish Catholic*.

"In this particular time what's needed most of all is prayer, and I think it is only prayer that will bring all of this to an end. I suppose naturally people are very concerned and rightly so about what's happening at the moment but please God it too will pass."

See Page 4.



May the Lord bless you and keep you

Fr Roland Colhoun gives Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament in his parish of Ardstraw East in Co. Tyrone as a blessing during the coronavirus pandemic. Fr Colhoun blessed the parish accompanied by parishioners in their cars. Over the two days, the blessing of the parish perimeter took four hours and spanned over 50 miles. Photo: Ashlene Canning

WE LIVE IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES...

Don't miss breaking news directly to your inbox or tablet each week with The Irish Catholic.

The Irish Catholic



SUBSCRIBE TODAY
3 MONTHS FOR ONLY

€9.99*

CODE: ICSRINGOFFER
*REGULAR PRICE €15

Inside this week

Notebook

Remember the promise...all will be well

Page 40



Maria Byrne

What's happening now can bring out the best in us

Page 32



Fr Ron Rolheiser

Love in the time of Covid-19

Page 30



Managing Editor: Michael Kelly, editor@irishcatholic.ie

Northern Correspondent: Martin O'Brien, martin@irishcatholic.ie

Multimedia Journalists: Chai Brady, chai@irishcatholic.ie

Róise McGagh, roise@irishcatholic.ie

Aron Hegarty, aron@irishcatholic.ie

Newsroom: news@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874026

Books Editor: Peter Costello, books@irishcatholic.ie

Layout: Declan Moroney

Advertising: advertising@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874094

Accounts: accounts@irishcatholic.ie 01 6874020

Magnificat: magnificat@irishcatholic.ie

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

9.30am-5.30pm

Shop: shop@irishcatholic.ie

Managing Director: Garry O'Sullivan

Annual Subscription Rates: Ireland €145. Airmail €250. Six months – €75.

ISSN 1393 - 6832 - Published by The Irish Catholic,

23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Printed by Webprint, Cork.

Place an Advert

Phone 01 687 4094 or advertising@irishcatholic.ie

Support Irish Missionaries



'NET helped me make my faith SO much stronger than it's ever been, and it's really helped me improve as a man of God.' – Michael (19), Dublin

Please help support young NET missionaries like Michael to minister to the youth of Ireland.

Phone 074 919 0606 to make a donation today.

The need for reliable sources of information – both material and spiritual – has never been greater

The Book of Exodus in the Hebrew Bible tells the story of the enslavement of the Israelites in ancient Egypt, their liberation from captivity at the hands of the Lord, their wandering in

the desert and the revelation of the Promised Land. Theologically, it is the story of God's abiding and eternal presence with his people.

This Lent more than most it has seemed that, like the Israelites, we are wandering in the desert. The suspension of public Masses has been acutely felt as people have been unable to gather together to experience God's presence par excellence in the Eucharist.

It is a time when many people are frightened and uncertain. So it is a time for cool heads and mature Faith. Parishes have responded remarkably by streaming Masses and moving a lot of pastoral ministry online. A few weeks ago, we could've never imagined a situation like this and yet people are making the most of a bad situation.

Mischief

Unfortunately, some people are also using it as an opportunity to make mischief and spread fear and even panic. We've all been made aware of rumours and half-baked stories doing the rounds about so-called cures and

remedies for coronavirus.

There's also the diabolical phenomenon of so-called 'chain prayers' where people are sending around emails and text messages insisting that a particular prayer must be recited a set number of times and then forwarded to a determined number of people or else doom will befall whoever breaks the chain.

This is superstitious nonsense. God does not visit misery upon his people because they do not follow a particular formula, or send a prayer to a certain number of people within an arbitrary time frame.

“We do not know how long this crisis will last, but we will continue to adapt and change the way we reach out”

Such things are not from God. And this is why the need for reliable sources of information – both material and spiritual – has never been greater. *The Irish Catholic* will continue to provide that information, support and solace for readers in the midst of this

Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



crisis.

This is an unprecedented challenge for all of us, and it is something that acutely affects this newspaper as we try to continue to be a glue for the Catholic community, giving hope in distressing times. The suspension of Masses has made it difficult for some readers to get a physical copy of the paper as they normally do. We have tried to help remedy this by making the digital copy of the newspaper more readily available and offering a special three-month subscription for just €9.99 (less than half price). I would appeal to you to consider taking up this offer and letting your family, friends and neighbours who may benefit know about it.

We work hard every week to try and ensure that *The Irish Catholic* is an unmissable conduit for Faith and inspiration. But, without the ongoing generosity and support of parishes, priests, promoters and readers we cannot do this.

We do not know how long this crisis will last, but we will continue to adapt and change the way we reach out to parishes and Faith communities to ensure that we will continue to

fulfil our mission of bringing comfort and inspiration.

As we look forward to the resurrection at Easter we know that our world is already changed by the empty tomb, but that the risen Christ still bears the wounds of his crucifixion. As Christians we carry our wounds but always in the hope of a brighter tomorrow and in the knowledge that God is with us.

“Our Faith teaches us that this horrible pestilence will pass”

The future is uncertain – but our Faith teaches us that this horrible pestilence will pass. Let's make the prayer of St Teresa of Avila our own: Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. All things pass; God never changes. Patience obtains all things. Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone is enough.

📌 If you would like to take advantage of the special digital edition and support the mission of The Irish Catholic at this difficult time you can do so online at www.irishcatholic.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

More than €675k donated to GoFundMe causes in past week

Around €677,000 has been donated to support GoFundMe causes during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the past week. Almost 20,000 people have supported a number of causes over the last seven days, with one in every two GoFundMe start-up campaigns in Ireland being in aid of those struggling due to the virus.

Hundreds of campaigns were started by people looking to reach out to those at risk and those on the frontline tackling the crisis. Among the highest profile campaigns is Feed the Heroes, a campaign designed to raise money to buy food for healthcare workers, guards and other frontline staff. In total, there are more than 200 COVID-19 campaigns in Ireland supporting a range of causes.

Pro Life group condemn call for unsupervised, self-administered abortion pills

The Pro Life Campaign has described PBP TD Brid Smith's call for the Government to dispense abortion pills for women to self-administer without medical supervision as “reckless and life endangering”. Smith made the call for home abortions by claiming the coronavirus crisis is making it harder for women to access abortions.

“Abortion supporters never miss an opportunity to promote abortion,” says Eilís Mulroy of the Pro Life Campaign on the timing of Smith's remarks.



LET'S WORK FOR A BETTER SOCIETY FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. LEAVE A LEGACY FOR LIFE.

Support the Pro Life Campaign in your will.

The Pro Life Campaign promotes pro-life education and defends human life at all stages.

For more info visit www.prolifecampaign.ie
Contact us today to order a copy of our Wills leaflet.

prolife
campaign



Pro Life Campaign, Suite 60, Clifton House, Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2
info@prolifecampaign.ie | 01 6629275

‘Superstitious, sacrilegious’ chain messages are an insult to God warns exorcist priest

Chai Brady

Messages that encourage people to pray a certain amount of times to avert harm are ‘sacrilegious’ and ‘superstitious’, according to a renowned Vincentian priest and exorcist who said people should put their trust in God at this time of crisis.

Dublin-based Fr Pat Collins CM has warned against chain letters or messages which are causing people anxiety particularly during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. They can be sent in many ways including by text, on social media or via email.

They may ask the receiver to say a certain amount of prayers and send the message to more people. Generally it will say something terrible will happen to an individual who ‘breaks’

the chain and doesn’t forward on the message and say the specific number of prayers.

Fr Collins said: “I’ve often seen it in the past, you’ve to pass this letter on to others and get five people to pray and if you do this a good thing will happen and if you don’t this bad thing will happen.

“That is totally against Catholic thinking. It’s superstitious, it’s an insult to God: that God works according to a formula. I am totally opposed to it.”

He urged people to “immediately have nothing to do with it” and ignore these messages. “It’s sacrilegious because it’s tying God down to formulas and we’re utterly opposed to that,” he said, adding that it comes from the “dark side”.

Fr Collins said: “The Divine Mercy

picture with its little saying at the bottom, ‘Jesus I trust in you’, can’t be bettered. I’m not trusting in any ‘chains’, I’m not trusting in numbers of prayers, I’m trusting in the Lord Jesus. That to me is what it’s all about, ‘into thy hands I commit my spirit.’”

Trust

Regarding the coronavirus pandemic, he said it’s more important than ever to have trust in God.

“When you’re in a crisis, and we are in one, this is what tests whether you trust in God or not. God doesn’t want the virus, but as we know many bad things are allowed by God in history and we believe as Christians that God will bring good from the evil one way or the other,” he said.

From the bells of Belfast to the churches of Ireland

Aron Hegarty

A pastoral worker in Northern Ireland has called on all the churches of Ireland to ring their bells as a show of solidarity and hope during the coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis.

Brian McKee, a Belfast native, wants all churches across the country to unite by ringing their chapel bells together for one minute at noon this Friday, March 27.

“The response we have received from both interfaces has been incredible,” he said. “We got over 15,000 hits then thought why stop at interface? Let’s do this nationwide across the country.

Idea

“The idea of bells ringing came about from a phone call from a member of the Protestant Loyalist Community, who were moved by the church bells of Holy Cross ringing on Christmas Day and asked why not do this now?”

From this phone call, the idea of all churches in Ireland ringing their bells at the same time came about.

The purpose of the act is to show a sign of solidarity and give hope at a time when people are isolated and need their spirits lifted.

“People have been saying it’s a brilliant idea,” says McKee of the responses to his church bell ringing suggestion. “It’s a sign of hope in our community.

“People are searching for something that will bring them together and this is an opportunity to do that.”

Differences

Over the past fortnight, members of both interface communities in Belfast have been setting aside their differences to reach out to those in need during the outbreak.

“We open our doors to anyone, it doesn’t matter creed, colour or religion. At times of need, we have to look after people,” said Joseph McCall of St James Swift GAA club.

Councillor John Kyle of the Progressive Unionist Party said local churches were coming together and “joining with other churches” to support the community.

It just takes two (or three)...



Emma Maher and Michael Newport are married by Fr Tom O’Gorman PP in Quin, Co. Clare on March 20. Their planned 250-person wedding celebration was cancelled due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) but they decided to go ahead with the marriage. Guests tuned in through a feed from the church webcam.

Pope grants coronavirus indulgence

Róise McGagh

Catholics who are suffering from or caring for people with the coronavirus will be granted a plenary indulgence, the Vatican has announced.

Pope Francis revealed at the weekend that he will deliver an extraordinary *Urbi et Orbi* blessing this Friday (March 27) at 5pm Irish time. Usually given only

immediately after a new Pope’s election and at Christmas and Easter, the indulgence will be granted for those who are confessed and follow on television, internet or radio.

“If, with a spirit detached from any sin, join spiritually through the media in the celebration of Holy Mass, the prayer of the Rosary, the pious practice of the *Via Crucis* or other forms

of devotion, of if at least they pray the Creed, the Our Father and an invocation to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, offering this trial with a spirit of Faith in God and charity to brethren.”

The Church defines an indulgence as remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven.



DCU School of Theology, Philosophy, and Music
Enduring Questions. Global Issues. Big Ideas.

Study Theology at Dublin City University
(All Hallows Campus, Drumcondra)

BA in Theology and Religious Studies
Part-time, flexible programme with evening lectures designed for mature students (23+)

MA in Theology and World Religions
Flexible full-time and part-time options with evening lectures

Key topics include:

- Catholic Theology and Church History
- Sacred Texts in Judaism, Christianity, and Other Traditions
- Faith and Justice
- Pastoral Ministry and Community Development
- Interreligious dialogue between Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism
- Politics and Religion in the 21st century

Undergraduate enquiries:

E: brad.anderson@dcu.ie P: 01 700 7048 W: www.dcu.ie/dc300

Postgraduate enquiries:

E: joseph.rivera@dcu.ie P: 01 700 7053 W: www.dcu.ie/dc693

Covid-19: The Faithful respond

Lighting a candle against coronavirus

● A Wexford priest will be lighting a candle every day at about 8pm for all those involved in the fight against the coronavirus (Covid-19) as well as those affected.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Fr Tom Dalton PP of Riverchapel parish in the Diocese of Ferns said he found "great solace in it".

"I've decided to light a candle every evening around the same time in solidarity with everyone affected by COVID-19 and I've invited friends and parishioners to join with me. Most of them have responded that they will," Fr Dalton said. He is encouraging others to do the same.

Cobh sings along to Mass at home

● In Cobh parish they have been receiving Mass via Facebook Live every morning at 9am.

On Sunday Bishop William Creen of the Diocese of Cloyne celebrated Mass with Cobh's clergy.

Jennifer Buckley of Cobh Parish said: "Our musical director Dominic Finn and Cantor Patrick O' Donoghue played and sang from our gallery. The combined choirs of St Colman's Cathedral are the Cathedral Choir and the Chamber Choir. In the last year, our pipe organ was restored in Padua in Northern Italy. Some members of both choirs decided to sing along at home this morning."

Mr Finn sent them what he would be playing and they used it at home to sing along.

Ms Buckley said: "This brought a sense of joy to many of our homes this morning. We will be doing this every Sunday from now on, until we can return to the gallery to sing as a choir."



NEWS IN BRIEF

Men's Sheds launch new campaign to tackle social isolation

The Irish Men's Sheds Association (IMSA) has launched a nationwide campaign this week calling on the public to call someone at risk of social isolation from the coronavirus pandemic.

The #CallThemForACuppa campaign, which was unveiled on March 23, encourages people, who cannot physically call in, to phone elderly who are self-isolating during the crisis.

"Whether it's a neighbour, family member or friend, we want people to pick up the phone," says Barry Sheridan, CEO of IMSA.

Primate's respect to Betty Williams

Betty Williams, Nobel laureate and co-founder of Peace People passed away on Tuesday, March 17.

Archbishop Eamon Martin said in a tweet: "We dedicate ourselves to working with our neighbours, near and far, day in and day out, to build that peaceful society in which the tragedies we have known are a bad memory and a continuing warning" (The Peace People Pledge 1976) Rest in Peace, Betty Williams."

Peace People was a protest movement against the violence during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. It was formed after the deaths of three children in west Belfast who were killed in a car crash.

The President's Award launches new 'Gaisce at Home' incentive

A new campaign encouraging young people to stay active and engage in personal development and community action has been launched by The President's Award this week.

'Gaisce at Home', or 'Gaisce sa Bhaile', was unveiled on March 24 and aims to encourage young people aged 15-25 to find alternative activities they can undertake at and from home.

"Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures – as well as an opportunity for all of us to be extraordinary in our response," says Yvonne McKenna, CEO of Gaisce – The President's Award.

"Young people are feeling the loss of social connections, group activities and the normal routine of their every day."

Those wishing to learn more about the 'Gaisce at Home' campaign, can visit www.gaisce.ie/gaisce-at-home/

An Tobar
Retreat & Spirituality Centre

ASHRAM EXPERIENCE
June 26th- July 26th 2020

Facilitator Korko Moses S.J.

Ashram comes from the Indian Spiritual tradition. A person would go to an Ashram to be immersed in Spirituality, Meditation and opening oneself to experience God. A typical Day in an ashram involves exercise, several sessions of meditation, deep relaxation, prayer, a lot of silence and reflection. A weekend retreat following the pattern of what occurs in an ashram

Cost: Residential €100.00/Non-residential €80.00 per day includes vegetarian meals

THE WONDER OF CREATION
May 8th-10th 2020

The mystery of life unfolding
"Make your life in me as I make mine in you"
In self-Discovery within *The Mystery of The Unfolding Universe*

A weekend in the beautiful surrounding of An Tobar

Facilitator: Nellie McLaughlin

Cost: €300.00 all inclusive

Booking Essential Ph: Jackie 046-9078973/0863917297
Email: antobarnavan@gmail.com

'Dial a prayer' in Waterford

● A community of contemplative nuns, the Sisters of Mary Morning Star, who came to live in Waterford in January last year have set up a new prayer initiative called 'Dial a Prayer'.

The sisters want to bring the intentions, thoughts and prayers of people in the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore to God in their adoration and daily Mass. This takes on new significance in the face of Covid-19. Other religious houses in the diocese will join in praying for these intentions. This initiative was launched on the feast day of St Joseph.

The sisters live a contemplative life in the heart of Waterford city, to be a visible presence of hope and joy. Their life is dedicated to prayer, fraternal charity and the search for truth. The community now has more than



250 sisters worldwide with Waterford as their only Irish community. In Waterford city the Franciscans have allowed the Friary on Lady Lane to be occupied by the sisters. There are six sisters living in the community, with one Irish person currently considering a vocation with the order.

In response to the Holy Father's call for a New Evangelisation, the sisters proposed the initiative. This also fulfils the direction of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, 'Go make Disciples'. Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Phonsie Cullinan, has praised the proposal stating: "It reminds people of

the importance of prayer and how important it is to ask others to pray for us."

The bishop also affirmed that, "the initiative shows that even though the sisters are contemplative and are not usually seen in the public yet, their role is right at the heart of the activity of the diocese; in the sense that they are bringing the prayers of the people before the Sacred Heart of Jesus".

The sisters of Mary Morning Star are available on 085 7611822. They are available for phone call between 2-3pm to receive prayer intentions each day.

Chat to Tallaght hospital chaplain online

● Although the work of healthcare chaplains is generally face-to-face, "listening compassionately, connecting immediately and loving unconditionally", the Director of Pastoral Care in Tallaght Hospital told *The Irish Catholic* they have updated how they connect with patients in light of the coronavirus crisis.

They will now be giving patients the option to speak to chaplains using live video chats online. Fr John Kelly said: "Like everyone else in the Hospital, Covid-19

has challenged how we do things. Wherever chaplains are, whether at the bedside or the other end of a video camera, it's about the human connection. That's what we are here for.

"Our hospital and its staff are known for their ability to rise to a challenge and thanks to support from ICT we now have a solution that will enable us to meet the challenge of providing for the spiritual needs of patients and staff in the midst of the pandemic.

"The Pastoral Care Ser-

vice is now being delivered via the Zoom App, we will provide virtual visits to offer spiritual support. Zoom is an easy-to-use web-based video conferencing tool that can be accessed through a mobile phone or by email," he added.

The 'TUH Chat with a Chaplain' service is now live. The pastoral care team remain on site providing a 24/7 service and the daily services in the Hospital Chapel will continue and are broadcast along with reflective music on the televisions throughout the wards.

For most of my lifetime, the material circumstances of our lives have steadily improved. The panic-buying of toilet paper – perhaps worse in Britain than in Ireland – illuminates just how spoiled, even decadent, we have become.

In my childhood, back in the 1950s, it wasn't unusual to enter a loo and find squares cut from old newspapers hanging on a hook. The lavatory paper commercially available wasn't particularly soft on the skin, either – it wouldn't measure up to the comforting items normally available at our supermarkets today.

Deprivation

Progress in small comforts is often a good thing – I'm not disparaging it. But it's a measure of how we have travelled from a time in which life wasn't always comfortable, and wasn't expected to be, either.

People put up with hardship and deprivation because that was the human condition, and fortitude in the face of life's challenges was a virtue. This was embedded in Christianity, but the thread of stoicism had also come to us from the ancient world of the Greeks and Romans.

But enormous social and technological progress

And we all expected life to just go on as before...



Mary Kenny



Dublin's Grafton Street in the 70s.

“The introduction of vaccinations in the 1950s and 60s made globalisation possible”

encouraged us to expect that life would get better, easier, richer and maybe fairer, too.

The introduction of vaccinations in the 1950s and 60s made globalisation possible – before that, those travelling far overseas had to risk malaria, yellow

fever, smallpox, typhoid; the graves of young Irish missionaries in Africa attest to the early deaths they often faced.

Refrigeration, the deep freeze and the jet-engine changed food habits. Budget airlines put flying within

the reach of most people, precision engineering and computer technology brought revolutions in convenience and medical care.

Capitalism, for all its faults, brought enterprise and innovation – the bright sparks of Silicon Valley were essentially entrepreneurs. Life, on many fronts, seemed to be consistently improving, and a generation grew up almost despising the limitations met by their predecessors.

But human nature always forgets the old lesson that you never know what is around the corner. You never know when the unexpected may come along and, in a trice, wipe out everything that we have taken for granted, and change, utterly, our way of life. Do not grow too pleased without yourself or too proud of what you possess, for it can all disappear in a trice.

Nobody would have predicted the shattering impact of the coronavirus, not only in terms of human loss, but in the virtual collapse, of the material world around us.

“If we had heeded old wisdoms...anything we possess can be taken away from us.”

We are facing no sport, no art galleries, no theatre, no cinema, no travelling, no trading, no 'unnecessary' commercial activity, no social gatherings and of course, no Church activities.

But if we had heeded old wisdoms, we might have been aware that anything we possess can be taken away from us. As the New Testament says: “You know not the day nor the hour.”

No show so nul points



It's 50 years since a fresh-faced Dana [pictured above in 1970] won the Eurovision Song Contest for Ireland with *All Kinds of Everything*, a sweet and harmless song; but I'm not sure Eurovision has produced much that is memorable in those five decades (although Mary Hopkin's *Those Were the Days My Friend* has endured).

Maybe it's no bad thing that the contest should take a pause, and a re-boot with less campy extravaganza, more sincere and melodious singing.

St Mochua –much travelled, long revered



For these exceptional times, it might be interesting to examine accounts of some of the early Irish saints (the information is mostly drawn on Pádraig Ó Riain's scholarly *Dictionary of Irish Saints*).

They were often associated with one location in Ireland, although they seemed to travel around the whole island quite nimbly.

St Mochua of Balla is associated with the barony of Clanmorris in Co. Mayo, though it seems he originated in north-east Ulster, with links to Aghaboe in Co. Laois. His mother was named Cuman (or Cuimne) from a diocese in Co. Down and it is claimed he had three sisters named Bruiúinseach, Lugaid (Luait) and Toidheall (Tuideall). He attended school in Bangor.

Powerful families

The saint's life was recorded in a homily dating probably from the 14th or 15th Centuries. There may have been a political element to this text, favouring powerful families, since the O'Flahertys of Iarconnacht and the O'Haras of Co Sligo are "placed in the saint's debt".

Mochua journeyed from Bangor to Balla along a winding route via the Louth/Monaghan area, passing near Durrow before crossing the Shannon. He was first met with hostility at Balla, but was subsequently accepted there. He spent the remainder of his life there, dying aged 66.

Many of the places visited by Mochua between Bangor and Balla were connected with the canons of St Augustine, and Augustinian friaries. St Mochua was long revered as a local saint in the Crossmolina area, and his feast day is March 30.



The Irish Hospice Foundation

The Gift Of A Lifetime

Dying is one of the few certainties in life but that doesn't mean we can't be there for others.

When you write a will, you can look after your family and loved ones even after you're gone. And if you also include The Irish Hospice Foundation, you can reach out to another family you've never met too.

Help us realise our vision that no-one will face death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

To find out how you can make a lasting difference:

Contact Anna Sadlier at 01 679 3188 or anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie
www.hospicefoundation.ie

162,000 tune in to RTÉ TV for Sunday Mass

Chai Brady and Aron Hegarty

A third of people watching television in Ireland on Sunday at 11am were watching Mass according to RTÉ's Head of Religious Programmes, with the number of viewers rising substantially.

Over 160,000 people tuned in to Mass celebrated by Fr Gabriel Kinahan on March 22 as the coronavirus (Covid-19) continues to hugely impact people's lives.

Roger Childs of RTÉ told *The Irish Catholic* that "it's about four times what our regular Sunday morning Mass would be".

"People simply can't practice their Faith in a way they would normally, therefore a lot of people want to connect in a virtual way, in this instance, with the Eucharist," Mr Childs said.

He added: "I'm sorry for the Athlone choir who had to be stood down despite the fact they rehearsed for weeks to lead the music, but that's responsibility for you."

On St Patrick's Day 142,400

people watched the Mass broadcast by RTÉ. Last year 60,000 people watched the broadcast.

Figures provided by Joe Brannigan, Managing Director of MCN Media, show there has been a 5-10% increase in the number of people watching Mass online compared to a week ago.

Approximately 19 million

people, according to Mr Brannigan, tuned in to watch Mass being streamed live online over the past week.

Statistics

MCN Media statistics also revealed that between 11 and 12 million viewers watched Mass being broadcast on the web over the weekend.

Tony Bolger, the Direc-

tor of Church Services TV which also assists churches in streaming Mass online for their congregations, said that they have received ten times more viewers on their lives streams over the past week and are "inundated" with calls from parishes enquiring about setting up webcams in their churches.



Mass is celebrated by Fr Padraig Walsh PP, Fr Niall Geaney and Fr Mario Jachym, at Our Lady and St Brendan's Church, Tralee, on Monday morning and for the past week to a church with nobody present, but streamed online to the people of Kerry. Photo: John Cleary

Priest remembers 'peace and forgiveness' seeking Kenny Rogers

Aron Hegarty

A Northern Irish priest has paid tribute to the late American singer Kenny Rogers as a man who "found his Faith" and "made his peace" for mistakes made earlier in his career.

Fr Brian D'Arcy, a Passionist priest based in Co. Down, said the late Rogers, who died on March 20 aged 81, embarked on his spiritual journey when he sought forgiveness.

"I only met him a couple of times, but he was a very friendly, helpful man who realised he made a lot of mistakes when he was younger in his career but made his peace later in life.

"His relationships were the cause of a lot of the mess which was made in his life. He married five times, his father was an alcoholic and his mother was a very strict Baptist."

He added: "People were very fond of him as a professional, despite what was going on in his personal life and he worked his way

through it."

Described by Fr D'Arcy as "an incredible performer" and "a greater unifier", Rogers was a country singer, songwriter, actor, record producer and entrepreneur.

Houston-born Rogers was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2013 and sold over 100 million records worldwide, making him one of the best-selling music artists of all time.

"He discovered his Faith later in life," says Fr D'Arcy of Rogers. "He was a man who realised his need for forgiveness but knew that is what God does, so decided to go on and enjoy his life."

Forgiveness

Fr D'Arcy continued: "No one is born perfect or lives life perfectly. He made mistakes, needed forgiveness and had to accept it as part of his spiritual journey.

"He was a human being, who accepted humanity, was given gifts, he misused those gifts, learnt from the error of his ways, asked for forgiveness and found his peace."

Celebrate Celtic Spirituality

This spring get to know a number of Celtic traditions, legends and prayers with these titles from Columba Books.

40%

FREE POST & PACKAGE IN IRELAND

Saltair

Price: €9.99

€5.99

Pray without Ceasing

Price: €9.99

€5.99

Where Three Streams Meet

Price: €17.99

€10.99

In Search of the Awesome Mystery

Price: €19.99

€11.99

The Celtic Quest

Price: €11.50

€6.99

The Celtic Spirit

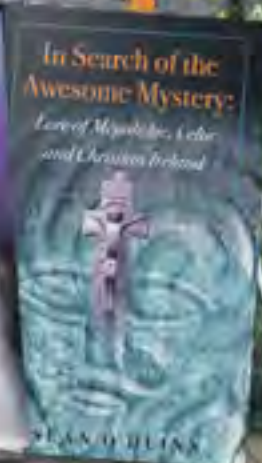
Price: €16.99

€9.99

The Music of what Happens

Price: €9.99

€5.99



Martin Mansergh

The View



They do things differently in Russia

They do things differently in Russia. According to newspaper reports (*Le Monde*, March 4), President Vladimir Putin intends to introduce a reference to God into the Russian Constitution, similar to the preamble to Bunreacht na hÉireann.

It will invoke 'the memory of our ancestors who have transmitted to us ideals and faith in God', notwithstanding that Russia is 'a secular State'. Putin has tried to combine the traditions of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. All reference to the Christian influence on Europe was resisted, mainly at France's behest, in the draft constitutional treaty rejected in 2005.

Another clause will state that "marriage is a union between a man and a woman", and affirming that families, fatherhood, motherhood and children should be defended by the State.

Until a few years ago, English registry offices had a notice saying that under the laws of England marriage was between a man and a woman, a definition still adhered to by most churches. Religious and civil liberty means that differences between civil and religious marriage coexist and have to be respected.

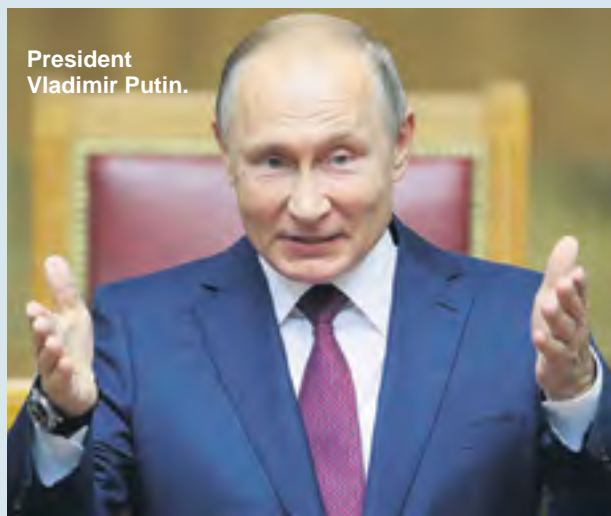
Background

The background to Russian constitutional changes is the need to make palatable the most important change, which will allow Putin, due to retire in 2024, to remain President till 2036.

The President of Ireland is limited to two terms or 14 years, while the US President's maximum two terms amount to eight years. Most elected heads of state or government are not subject to term limits, especially in countries with strong and long-established democratic traditions, where there are regular peaceful changes of government.

Another amendment will forbid the alienation of Russian territory (lest any Western country believes that continued sanctions might secure the return of Crimea to the Ukraine). It is of course one thing to

President Vladimir Putin.



lock the door on giving up 'national territory' that has just been taken under firm control, and another to cease using that expression about land remaining outside the jurisdiction, where the language is an obstacle to making progress, which is why the original Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution were re-worded in the Good Friday Agreement.

A further proposed addition to the Russian Constitution, in accordance with "the obligation to protect historical truth", a problematic concept, will be a prohibition on "denigrating the exploit of the people in defence of the fatherland", an obvious reference to the patriotic wars that repulsed the invasions of Hitler and Napoleon. This should not stifle criticism of the general failure to stand up to Hitler until too late.

Given persistent controversy over the role of the Papacy relative to the Holocaust, the Church has decided to open up its voluminous archives. Critics espousing a moral absolutism need to take into consideration two things. Pope Pius XII was a virtual prisoner of the Axis powers in the Vatican. If he had become an actual prisoner, as his predecessors Pius VI and Pius VII were during parts of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic era, would that have enhanced the Church's power to do good at that time?

“Critics espousing a moral absolutism need to take into consideration [that] Pope Pius XII was a virtual prisoner of the Axis powers in the Vatican”

Secondly, the criticism ignores the elephant in the room. The British and American Governments developed good intelligence systems in World War II, and knew, even if not in detail, about the death camps. Why did they neither highlight what was going on nor bomb the communications systems leading to them?

“In independent Ireland the Catholic Church acquired many characteristics of an established Church”

It is too easy to point criticism at the Pope, when those who had the necessary military power to do something about the situation did nothing right up to the end of the war. While post-1939 Hitler was not given a free hand to conduct a war of conquest, he in effect had a free hand throughout to exterminate the Jews.

Putin is without doubt an effective political leader. He provides an alternative to Western democracy, illiberal democracy with only token opposition and separation of powers, and has imitators and admirers in several countries. The serious reservation most people would have is the high human cost of ruthless power play in Syria, Ukraine, Georgia and originally Chechnya, not to mention

intelligence wars and the probing of weakly defended air space and territorial waters.

Mind you, we tend to turn a blind eye to ruthless power plays of the West.

Putin has gone some distance towards re-establishing the Russian Orthodox Church. There is a strong tendency in this country, although still a minority, to want, metaphorically speaking, to disestablish the Christian Churches and the important place of religion in Irish society.

Some reflection on this is taking place in the context of the 150th anniversary of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. As far back as 1810, the Catholic bishops turned down a proposal to allow the British

government some say in senior appointments as the price of emancipation. Ironically, it was the Church Temporalities Act of 1833 that halved the number of bishoprics in the Irish part of the United Protestant Church, and objection to the principle that parliament could interfere with apostolic succession started John Henry Newman, now a saint, on his path to the Roman Catholic Church.

While sore at the broken promise in the Act of Union that the United Church would be 'forever', because no parliament could bind its successors, by the 50th anniversary of disestablishment the Church of Ireland recognised that it never represented a majority of the people.

A strong affinity between

Church and state persisted in Northern Ireland, but in independent Ireland the Catholic Church acquired many characteristics of an established Church, with the State more subordinate to it than the other way round. Despite later reaction to that, a balance that respects the continuing value to society of religious practice and belief, not least in the present crisis, is the best way forward.

The Irish Catholic articulates an important strand of mainstream opinion, and with churches closed other ways of accessing it, whether in retail outlets or online, must be found to ensure that its voice continues to be heard.



The Dominicans

*A Passion For Truth
Spares Nothing*



"You never know how much you really believe anything until its Truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life or death to you."

- C.S. Lewis

Vocations Director - Fr Colm Mannion OP

Mobile: 086-0864420 | Email: colm.mannion@dominicans.ie

God has led us through past tribulations, and will do so now



The Lord provides us with the means to pass through the challenges that life provides, if we are willing to listen, writes **David Quinn**

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave



you nor forsake you." These comforting words from the Old Testament Book of Deuteronomy have

perhaps never seemed more necessary.

The word Deuteronomy itself is derived from the Greek word meaning 'repetition' or 'copy', because the book consists of the farewell address by Moses to the Israelites and he repeats the requirements of the new law given to them by God reminding them that they must keep it if they are to survive in the Promised Land.

In precarious times, it is absolutely vital that we hold on to what can help us survive. In times of plenty, we can be more relaxed about rules, but in a time of threat, to cast them aside might literally be the difference between life and death.

Relevance

Leviticus, which also contains the law given to the Israelites, is extremely strict about what the Israelites can and cannot eat. One stipulation, extremely relevant to the present crisis, is that they cannot eat animal such as bats. There is a strong theory that Covid-19 emerged from the food markets of China which sell live animals in horribly unhygienic conditions, including bats.

The Old Testament and its many rules are often strongly criticised today in

the entirely different world in which we now live and of course, Christians believe in the New Covenant, not the Old Covenant. Nonetheless, the present circumstances give us an insight into why many of these rules existed, and the deep, ancient wisdom that lies in them, which stands to reason, because they were given by God.

“Christianity compels us to help in the here and now because we are told to ‘love our neighbour as ourselves’”

In fact, T.H. Huxley, the Victoria-era critic of religion, was lavish in his praise of Deuteronomy: “Down to modern times, no state has had a constitution in which the interests of the people are so largely taken into account, in which the duties, so much more than privileges, of rulers are insisted upon, as that drawn up for Israel in Deuteronomy and in Leviticus; nowhere is the fundamental truth that the welfare of the State, in the long run, depends on the uprightness of the citizen so strongly laid down.”

The point of all this is that

God provides us with the means to pass through the challenges that life provides, if we are willing to listen to them. He tells us the right way to live, and the right attitude to have.

In fact, cast your mind back to the election of Pope John Paul II in 1978 when he appeared to the world for the first time on the balcony of St Peter's and said: “Be not afraid.”

This is not the same as saying we should not have a healthy fear of this virus. We must treat it with total respect, meaning we must take it extremely seriously because it is such a big threat. But we cannot be overcome by fear.

St John Paul II told the world to “be not afraid” because this phrase in various forms is the most common in all of the Bible. Again and again we can be overcome by fear of the challenges life presents us with, and this can be disabling. It can also be a sign of a lack of Faith that in the end, God is with us and in the end all things will be well, in the eternal reckoning of things even if not in the here and now.

Is this pie-in-the-sky? Obviously not, because even in purely secular terms, a disabling, despairing fear is disastrous.

Also, the Christian belief

that in the final reckoning all will be well does not stop Christians in the here and now offering help to those in need. That is why, from the very earliest times, as recorded as far back as the Acts of the Apostles, Christians help those in distress. The Acts tell us of Christians in Antioch (modern-day Turkey) sending help to famine-stricken Judea in the Holy Land.

Christianity compels us to help in the here and now because we are told to ‘love our neighbour as ourselves’ and that we must ‘do unto others as we would have them do unto us’.

The temptation for some will be to offer a crude theodicy at a time like this, meaning they might say that somehow this is something God is inflicting on us as a punishment of some kind. This sort of crude suggestion is to be avoided at all costs.

On the other hand, God is plainly letting this happen, just as so many disease outbreaks have occurred right through history.

This confronts us with the mystery of suffering. Even Christ suffered. Frankly, there is no totally satisfactory explanation as to why God permits suffering. An atheist has no such dilemma, of course, since they deny the existence of God, but then they have to face even bigger mysteries, such as explaining how everything which exists can come from nothing.

“We must continue to live faithfully and know that our ancestors... have come through much worse”

But God gives us the means to deal with suffering, to rise above it, to learn from it, to become better people as a result, to discover again what really matters in life.

In this present time, we must continue to live faithfully and know that our ancestors, including our spiritual ancestors out in the desert long ages ago have come through much worse. God led those spiritual ancestors of ours to the Promised Land and through many more tribulations, and he will do the same for us. Our job is to remain faithful to how he wants us to live.

“The Our Father is one of the most precious gifts Jesus left to us”

-Pope Francis

Bring the Our Father into your home with this beautiful hand carved cross from the Holy Land, which also includes earth from Bethlehem at the foot.

Price:
€29.99
Including
P&P!



LIMITED
QUANTITIES
AVAILABLE,
SO ORDER
YOURS TODAY.

The Irish Catholic

☎ 01 6874024

🌐 www.irishcatholic.com/shop

✉ The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square North,
Dublin 2 D02 XE02

“Again and again we can be overcome by fear of the challenges life presents us with, and this can be disabling. It can also be a sign of a lack of Faith that in the end, God is with us”

The Iona Institute

Please support
our work with a
donation today

What they say about us

"I see David Quinn and Breda O'Brien
[of The Iona Institute] as a
fundamental part of our democracy"
- Author, Colm Toibin.

"I don't agree with them [David Quinn and
Breda O'Brien], but I admire their guts"
- Sunday Times columnist, Brenda Power.



MARIA STEEN

Iona Institute

DAVID QUINN

Director, Iona Institute

**The Iona Institute promotes the place of
religion and traditional marriage in Ireland.**

You can help the valuable work of The Iona Institute by
sending a cheque or postal order in pounds or euro to:
THE IONA INSTITUTE, 23 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, Ireland.
or by making an online donation via ionainstitute.ie.

Email: info@ionainstitute.ie | Phone: 01 6619 204



The best of humanity has always shone brightest in the darkest hour

The virus has demonstrated that we still have the national capacity to come together and unite against a common threat, writes **John McGuirk**

This column is usually about criticising politicians and identifying all the things wrong with the country. No doubt, it will be just that again in the future, but it's been very hard to find anything to fault in Ireland over the past couple of weeks.

Most people of my relatively young vintage have never truly known the meaning of that ancient Chinese curse – “may you live in interesting times”. Even 9/11, that blackest of days, pales into insignificance, though we all remember where we were. I was in economics class, preparing for my Leaving Cert, for example.

In my old school, St Macartan's in Monaghan, the deputy principal wheeled the television right into the middle of Mr Murphy's class at about two in the afternoon, just in time for 30 of us to watch in horror, and a kind of morbid fascination, as the second plane struck its target.

The impact of that one event shaped the past two decades of global politics like no other, but the strange thing is that it left Ireland relatively untouched. It's hard to think of anything that might have happened, or not have happened, here, if Muhammed Atta and his friends hadn't boarded those planes.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) will not be the same. It's funny, when you live through a world-historical event, that sometimes you don't think about it being something that will be remembered hundreds of years from now, but that's what this is.

'Emergency'

When all of us – me writing this, and you reading it – are dead, there will be eight-year-old children alive today who will be telling their grandchildren that they lived through the coronavirus crisis. When I was a child, I asked my grandmother, God rest her, who lived through the last 'emergency' – World War II – what it was like. Our children and grandchildren will be the ones answering those questions



Chief Medical Officer Dr Tony Holohan (centre) addresses a Covid-19 press briefing.

in the future.

This country has undergone immense social and political change in the last 20 years. Some of it good, some of it not so good, and some of it downright terrible. But all of it pales into relative insignificance beside this thing. If coronavirus has a bright side, then this might be it.

The virus has demonstrated, at least, that we still have the national capacity to come together and unite against a common threat. The things that divide us – like politics – don't matter all that much. Which is why the general election feels like it happened two years ago, and not just seven weeks ago.

The sight of long-retired doctors and nurses returning to duty this past week has been something that embodies the very best of us, both as a country and a human race.

Here we have people, some of them elderly, all of them with families, deliberately walking into hospital wards to expose themselves to a bug that kills, in Italy at least, nearly one in 10.

“The people cancelling weddings and holidays and trips to Tayto Park, just to try and limit the spread, even though most of them have nothing to fear at all”

Teachers are finding new ways to teach classes, remotely, often spending hours emailing work to and from their students. Many businesses – and this isn't

being talked about enough – are shouldering the burden of paying their employees to stay at home, sometimes at risk to the business itself.

Throughout the history of our species, the best of humanity has always shone brightest in the darkest hour. On 9/11, there were firemen, with young children waiting for them at home, who ran into the fire to save others. Many of them didn't make it back out.

Advice

Then there are the ordinary people – millions of us – who aren't doing much except obeying medical advice from the Government and inconveniencing ourselves. The people cancelling weddings and holidays and trips to Tayto Park, just to try and limit the spread, even though most of them have

nothing to fear at all.

Most of us, remember, are doing these things for no selfish reason, because for most of us, the virus itself would be harmless. For someone my age, it might not even result in any symptoms at all. The damage that most of us will feel will be to our economic, not our physical, health.

“Our children will be able to answer that the whole world united, at enormous cost, to save the lives of the weakest”

But it all must be done, because – and this is what we've realised – life is precious, and worth defending.

The lives of the old, and the sick, and the vulnerable. The price tag for saving their lives will run into tens of billions in Ireland, and trillions around the globe. And yet, as a species, we've decided, without a second thought, that it's no price at all.

There's a lesson to pass on to your children, and for them to pass onto theirs – when they're asked, as they will be, what the coronavirus crisis was and what caused it, they'll be able to answer that the whole world united, at enormous cost, to save the lives of the weakest.

Though it may feel rough now, one day, this crisis will be an example to future generations of the very best of us.

Look after yourselves, and your families.

WE LIVE IN

EXTRAORDINARY TIMES...

Don't miss breaking news delivered directly to your home each week

FREE HOME DELIVERY

*geographical restrictions apply

Stay up to date with analyses that represent your voice on the national stage.

Regular contributors provide commentary to hot button issues of the day.

Local voices highlight the ongoing work of parishes and communities throughout the country.



THURSDAY MORNING DELIVERY GUARANTEED

For further details

Ph: 081 846 4465 | Email: info@newsdelivery.ie | www.newsdelivery.ie

This crisis calls us to be ongoing image of God in



Faced with coronavirus, the question is not so much why but how can we respond as people of Faith writes **Bairbre Cahill**

“Who do you say I am?” It is a question Jesus poses to the apostles in Mark 8:29 and which is being posed to us now too. I came across someone recently who nearly, but not quite, said that what is happening with the coronavirus (Covid19) is a consequence of how we have ignored God. The suggestion of a vengeful angry God behind such a statement appals me. What sort of image of God would we have to be working out of to suggest that God would choose to kill thousands around the world in order to gain our attention?

I do not believe that what is happening is God's will, but then I don't believe in a God who deliberately inflicts suffering. I understand it when someone says: “How could God give my mother/husband/child cancer?” I understand the fear and frustration, the helplessness and the anger – I've been there myself – but I do not believe that God has chosen to inflict that suffering.

God, who I encounter through Jesus, in the Gospels and in my own lived experience is God of tenderness and love, God of mercy and goodness.

Evil

So from whence does evil come if not from God? I do believe that in a world of infinite possibilities there is always the potential for chaos. So whether that is a cell going rogue and creating a cancerous tumour or a virus developing in a market in China because of the way animals are kept, there is always that potential to create chaos.



So I certainly wouldn't be saying God is trying to teach us something with the coronavirus and the unprecedented shutting down of society. However, I would definitely say that there is much for us to learn in this whole experience. For me the question is not “why has God done this?” but “how can I respond as a person of Faith?”

* * * * *

As in so many of these situations, I have been struck by the goodness and humanity of so many. There have been offers to do shopping for neighbours. Restaurants and cafés have provided food for those living alone. Supermarkets are

arranging times when just the elderly can shop so that they can do so in a safer and less crowded environment.

Even when we go out for a walk to a beach or out in the wilds of Donegal, I am struck by how people will keep their distance but still say hello, smile and acknowledge each other. Friends are sending on prayers, funny stories, memes – injecting that little bit of laughter and comfort into these stressful days.

Inevitably there are those who have struggled to step out of the ‘me, myself and I’ approach to life. They have continued to party, seemingly oblivious of the

damage they are doing to the most vulnerable within their own circle of family and friends. We do need to ask how it is that people can be so disconnected from a sense of responsibility for others.

Realisation

Children who now find themselves cut off from their school friends and after-school activities are coping with the new reality on the basis that it will help to keep their grandparents and others safe. If children can grasp that why do many adults fail to – or choose not to?

In all of this we face the challenging realisation that we

are one body. Individualism and self-obsessions have created weakness not strength. Watching Masses online from our cathedral here in Donegal I have been deeply aware that I am united in prayer with others and I derive enormous comfort from that.

Perhaps one of the most powerful lessons we are re-learning is how connected we all are. We are being reminded in a very stark way that we are all responsible for each other and that we hold the well-being of others in the palm of our hands. President Michael D Higgins called us, on St Patrick's Day, to a renewal of solidarity – and never has it been more needed.

“Children who now find themselves cut off from their school friends and after-school activities are coping with the new reality on the basis that it will help to keep their grandparents and others safe”

the the world



unnecessary risks. Beyond that, how do we still reach out and show our care and concern? Who needs a phone-call, a text message, maybe even the novelty of a letter just to say: "Hi, I'm sending you my love"?

Is there anyone around us who needs shopping picked up and left on their front doorstep? Are there charities which need extra support from us to keep going when their usual funding streams have been utterly disrupted by this lockdown?

* * * * *

People are losing jobs. People in jobs may find themselves on reduced income. How will we show solidarity and empathy for people around us who are struggling now and may take many months to recover.

When this is over – and that day will come – how will we put our money back into the economy and support the many small and medium sized businesses that have taken the hardest hit?

“When this is over... will we allow God to draw us into the quiet so that we can rest with him in prayer or will we try to keep manically busy and distracted?”

Who will we be? Fundamentally that is the question we face. When we are struggling with more face to face family time than we have had in years, if we are struggling to home-school children, if our anxieties are cross-pollinating – who will we be? Will we do our best to be people of patience and gentleness, people of empathy and love? Will we drip-feed ourselves one anxiety provoking news story after the next on social media or will we take a step back? Will we allow God to draw us into the quiet so that we can rest with him in prayer or will we try to keep manically busy and distracted?

Jesus asks his apostles and by extension us: "Who do you say I am?" What would you say in response? Is Jesus the image of the unseen God who wreaks havoc and destruction? Or is he one who images God for us as mercy and tenderness, utter, absolute self-giving love?

As people of Faith we are called upon now to be the ongoing image of God in the world, to be the body of Christ. In the face of this hugely challenging scenario let us make real in our care for each other the mercy and tenderness, the loving goodness of our God.

In this context it is vital that the big pharmaceutical companies work in solidarity. This is not the time for business interests to come to the fore. There needs to be a sharing of knowledge and expertise, a willingness to work together for the common good. That is a radical and revolutionary concept for business, but it is what will speed us towards an anti-viral drug or vaccination which then must be made available and accessible for all across the globe. We are one body and the whole body must be cared for.

Individualism will not win the day but individual responsibility is vital.

* * * * *

What does this situation ask of each of us? That we would take seriously – potentially for weeks or months – the medical advice about hand hygiene and social distancing, that we would accept the restrictions this places on our lives, that we would not take

The story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead begins with a puzzling situation.

When Jesus is told that his friend is seriously ill, he remains distant and aloof. It's so unlike him. When eventually he goes to the house, Lazarus has died. The sisters Martha and Mary seem to chide him: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Perhaps we can identify with this experience of God being distant from us. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 164, reads: "The world we live in often seems very far from the one promised by faith. Our experience of evil and suffering, injustice, and death, seem to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it."

Where is God now in this time of dread and helplessness under the cloud of coronavirus? Numbers of victims multiply daily. Churches, schools, sporting events, social centres and places of employment are closed. How can Faith survive?

“One of the great lessons to be learned before the crucifix is that Jesus did not avoid suffering”

Viktor Frankl wrote about his experiences in a Nazi concentration camp. He saw how the injustices being suffered acted like a breeze which extinguished weak Faith but fanned a sturdy Faith into a blazing fire.

We are only two weeks away from the liturgical celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus. One of the great lessons to be learned before the crucifix is that Jesus did not avoid suffering. He did not save us from a comfortable distance. He entered into solidarity with every sort of suffering; the

The raising of Lazarus



'The Resurrection of Lazarus' by Geertgen tot Sint Jans, ca. 1460.



Sunday's Gospel

Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.

God, why have you forsaken me?" There was a darkness over the earth. It seemed that evil had won. But three days later the stone was rolled back.

The tomb was empty and Jesus had risen from the dead.

Let us pray.
Crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen our Faith in this time of darkness, fear and gloom. May we know that you are with us.

Protect us from coronavirus. Lay your healing hand over those stricken by the virus. Keep safe all who work in the care of the sick.

May your light direct those who are searching for the antidote to the virus.

May our society be enriched as neighbours grow in kindness and care for one another.

injustice of a sham trial based on fake evidence; every sort of physical pain; the emotional pain of being betrayed, denied or deserted by his closest followers; the family pain of seeing his mother at the foot of the cross; and, perhaps the most severe suffering, his cry of dereliction: "My God, my

FASTING for LENT?

Learn the History Before You Start!

The demands of Christian life have traditionally required some degree of reflection and consequent action – fasting from food and abstinence from meat or alcohol. With Lent just beginning why not learn about the history of Christian fasting and reflection by perusing *Food, Feast and Fast*. Learn how Christians have negotiated the relationship between food and religion throughout the ages – the impressive, excessive, and even amusing ways.

Discover the compelling facts behind the tradition now.

Price: €19.99
Postage Included



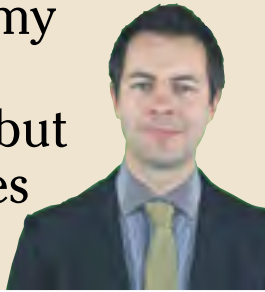
Phone 01 6874096 | Visit www.columbabooks.com
Post Cheque Columba Books, 23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2, D02 XE02



Bridging the gap in Ireland's

Young people have been dealing on their own long enough with an enemy that pre-dates the present viral fears – but help is at hand, writes

Aron Hegarty



Early intervention and bridging a gap between referrals and receiving support holds the key to tackling Ireland's youth mental health crisis, according to several experts.

The introduction of a national counselling programme, greater provision of resources and a more disciplined approach from parents and teaching staff were also pitched as factors to be considered for dealing with the matter.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* during National Brain Awareness Week (March 16-22), Lisa Molloy, CEO of the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP), says mental health problems with young people in Ireland is a "crisis issue" requiring "urgent" action.

"This needs urgent government attention and support," she says. "It's absolutely vital that we address mental health issues among young people in this country."

"Comparatively and internationally, mental health issues for young people in Ireland are being experienced at an alarmingly high rate and would be higher than people of the same age bracket in the US and UK."

Many issues arising through youth mental health are experienced at school which, if not spotted and attended to, can lead to much bigger problems later.

Access

In Irish schools, according to Ms Molloy, there is an "identifiable gap" between young people being referred and getting access to the required services.

"What is happening is when children are being referred on by the schools there is an identifiable gap in them being able to access the services that they actually need."

"While schools are trying their best to provide the support to children who are experiencing emotional distress, there is unfortunately still an absence of additional supports in the form of counselling and psychotherapy."

She adds: "Where children are being referred out of schools, we have a CAMHS service which is oversubscribed and is experiencing

very long waiting lists."

Co. Carlow, for example, has one of the highest rates of teenage suicide and self-harm in the country due to youth mental health problems.

Recent findings from the County Carlow Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) on Youth Mental Health show there are indeed 'gaps' in the system which need to be bridged.

The 'Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2019' report found that "statutory mental health services for those under the age of 18 have been falling short in providing adequate services to those needing support and treatment".

“The resources are not in place...there are no dedicated programmes for young people and we need to provide young people with better opportunities”

A case study on the Folláine counselling service, run by Carlow Regional Youth Services, says the practice is "overwhelmed" with "increased waiting times" which have left "vulnerable young people without support" for long periods.

Parents and other professionals, according to the report, identified the "need for more clarity on referral pathways" to mental health services.

The objective of the report suggested the "advocacy for improved mental health services", provide "information on services and how to access them" and "promote emotional wellbeing and resilience".

Dylan Thomas, a social inclusion worker at Carlow County Development Partnership, says youth mental health in Ireland is both a local and national problem.

"The resources are not in place," he says. "There are no dedicated programmes for young people and we need to provide young people with better opportunities."

"Individual schools have their own supports, but many schools don't have a dedicated councillor or



chaplains."

He adds: "There has been very little research done at level local and we in Carlow are one of the few counties in Ireland to do it."

Jigsaw, the national centre for youth mental health in Ireland, aims to provide tailored community-based help for young people's mental health needs.

The charity, recently visited by British Royals Prince William and Kate Middleton during a three-day state trip, and UCD School of

Psychology conducted the 'My World Survey 2 (2019)' – Ireland's most comprehensive study of young people's mental health and wellbeing to date.

Survey

The survey consulted more than 19,000 young people and found 58% of adolescents aged 18 to 25 in Ireland had depression or anxiety outside of the normal range.

Mike Mansfield, Director of Communications at Jigsaw, says the

findings show there is a "demand" for the development of youth mental health services in this country.

"There is a growth in the demand for more services," he says.

"We (at Jigsaw) feel we can make a significant difference if we can detect the onset of young people experiencing mental health problems as early as possible."

Mr Mansfield feels that a "collaborative approach" is required in order to deal with

“The survey consulted more than 19,000 young people and found 58% of adolescents aged 18 to 25 in Ireland had depression or anxiety outside of the normal range”

youth mental health crisis



place. What we are proposing is to develop secondary level school counselling supports for school children.

"We are seeking parity across Ireland for all children and young people so they can have access to counselling and psychotherapists as part of a school's mental health provision.

"The mental health support services that are currently available in Irish schools would greatly benefit from having an on-call counsellor and psychotherapist."

Fr Martin Smith, a chaplain at Carlow Institute of Technology, believes the greater volume of choices and challenges facing adolescents today causes confusion and puts more strain on young people.

"There is so much going on in young people's lives nowadays," says Fr Smith. "Young people are under huge stress, but there are lots of resources out there. The aim is to try to connect the two.

"Getting students to open up and engage with each other, without judgement, is the obstacle to youth mental health."

A lack of resilience in children due to being overpampered by modern parenting, according to Fr Smith, means many young people experience difficulty in coping mentally and emotionally with problems they encounter.

"Stress is part of life," he says, "but the issue (of mental health) lies in one's ability to be resilient; being able to deal with and come out of stressful situations which is most telling.

"It comes from early on in life at home. Children are being protected all the time and are not allowed to be disappointed or let down.

"If parents spoil or protect their children all the time, then they are not going to have that resilience when it's really needed at a later stage in their lives."

* * * * *

Joe Armstrong, a former school teacher, says a lack of discipline and poor school management of stressors like bullying leads to more mental health problems in children.

"There's always bullying and there always has been bullying," he says.

"It's inevitable that it's going to arise, but where you have a good management it will be nipped in the bud right away. Whereas in a poorly-run school, mental health issues arising from factors such as bullying will not be managed.

"I suspect in schools where there is a lot of mental health problems, it often goes back to the management. I am utterly convinced that you can almost tell when you go into a school whether it's being well run or not."

Mr Armstrong, who is now a chaplain, believes a school's "attitude" towards dealing with youth mental health issues will determine how well or not cases



Lisa Molloy, CEO of IACP (far right) in Leinster House with Deputy James Browne, Steve Mulligan (BACP) and Jo Holmes (BACP).

are managed, if at all.

"In cases where the issue is let run and the attitude of the school is 'there's nothing we can do about it' or 'look at the catchment area' etc that's not an excuse."

He adds: "I would ask 'How does management reply? Are they supported? How is it handled?' If that situation is just left be, then that points back to the people running the school."

“We really believe that early intervention is key and that these services could work with the chaplains and guidance councillors and staff in the schools to support and help young people become happier”

Dr Paul Downes, Associate Professor of Education (Psychology) at Dublin City University, feels too much responsibility is being put on teaching staff in schools to handle complex mental health matters.

"The big concern is that our national policy does not make provisions for emotional counselling or care in our schools," he says.

"We need a distinctive, specialised emotional counselling service with proper qualified staff, who have a professional counselling background. We also

need deep-rooted supports for trauma with user-friendly services both in and linked to the schools.

He adds: "Teachers cannot provide this service and aren't qualified for dealing with emotional or complex needs."

The IACP, established in 1981, is a registered charity representing over 4,200 members and aims to be a "link" between those who are looking for support services and those who provide it.

In terms of managing mental health problems in our young people, Ms Molloy says "early intervention" is crucial.

"Early intervention has been proven to be the best approach to dealing with these issues," she says.

"A lot of the research very much points to the evidence of the benefits of early intervention and that it has an impact, not only across the young person's mental health, but across their confidence, family relationships, school attendance etc."

She continues: "We really believe that early intervention is key and that these services could work with the chaplains and guidance councillors and staff in the schools to support and help young people become happier and better adjusted adults in the future.

"Achieving these vital supports, when they are needed, on a timely basis can really open the door for young people and can help them to flourish later in life."

youth mental health problems.

He explains how Jigsaw works with young people by setting realistic goals, which equips their staff to better support and give them the care they need.

"Our services are free and they are run by professional clinical staff," says Mr Mansfield.

"We provide one-to-one services in our 12 catchment areas around the country and we are accessible in locations on most high streets.

"Young people can either come to us directly or a parent, teacher or GP can contact or refer to us."

However, Mr Mansfield warns there needs to be a rebalancing of government funding from a system of care for acute services to early intervention services.

"The demand is too high for us," he says, calling for more government funding into

prevention initiatives.

"We have ambitions to do more, but it costs €15 million a year (€41,000 a day) to run our operations so we need donations and more funding to continue our work."

* * * * *

Over the past year, the IACP have been lobbying for government officials to back and establish a national school counselling and psychotherapy support service.

The IACP is seeking approval to run a pilot study to see how a "coordinated approach" would assist schools in tackling mental health problems.

"It's quite *ad hoc*," says Ms Molloy of the current structure of mental health supports at schools. "At the moment there is no national school counselling programme in



Fr Martin Smith.



The journey for some fleeing war to finding long-term safety in Ireland can be a long and tough one, writes **Róise McGagh**

Papy Kahoya Kasongo came to Ireland in 2015 from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Forced to flee due to his proximity to a controversial religious leader, he faced a long battle until him and his family were finally able to settle in a home of their own in Balbriggan in 2019.

"It was not easy to leave, because my wife was in jail with my children," said Papy in an interview with *The Irish Catholic*. Their journey within Ireland was a bumpy road that took over four years to end.

Paul Joseph Mukungubila was the leader of a politico-religious movement 'Ministere de la Restauration a partir de l'Afroque Noir'. In 2006 he ran for president of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Papy, who was his close friend and member of his Christian Church, helped him with his campaign.

Joseph Mukungubila wrote an open letter in 2013 expressing his displeasure with the then President of Congo, Kabila accusing him of being 'too close' to Rwanda.

Later that year, in December 2013 Mukungubila's supporters seized the headquarters of the Congolese National Radio and Television, the national airport in Kinshasa and the Tshatshi military camp. They were calling for the president to step down.

It was reported that Congolese security forces attacked his church in response, they killed between 40 and 214 people according to varying sources, and arrested supporters. Papy fled from where he lived in Lubumbashi to Kisangani where he was born. "When I ran, my wife and my two boys were arrested and then she was in prison."

Persecution

Christians in the Democratic Republic of Congo are not often

'The things you need to do again to be human': coming out of direct provision in Ireland



Peacekeepers drive past burning tyres as they patrol protests against President Joseph Kabila in Kinshasa, Congo.

persecuted. It is the majority religion there. But the political stance of Papy's Church was what put them in danger. Papy was known to be close to the religious leader. "I was too close to him, everyone knew that I was too close to him," he says. John Mukungubila had helped him a lot throughout the years while he was part of his Church.

"For me he was my leader, he helped me when I was at university, sometimes to pay my school fees, he was like my father because my father and my mum died when I was young.

"When I went to university it was really difficult to pay my fees, he was the one who helped me finish school."

His mother had died in Kisangani there when the First Congo War (1996-1997) broke out as Kabila fought against the then president Mobutu. Papy and his father went to Kinshasa. His father later died there. Papy ended up staying with his stepmother and brothers until he went to Lubumbashi university where he finished his studies in 2007.

There he met Nadine and they married in 2010. Papy had had a secure job as an accountant for five years until he was forced to escape, for a company that sold Guinness. Life had been going well when the carpet was pulled from under their feet.

While in jail Nadine was forced to tell the Congolese authorities

where Papy was, and they came and arrested him. She was in prison with their two boys, Baruch and Ethan, both under the age of three, for one year, all of 2014. Papy I was arrested in June 2014.

"It took my wife to bribe the security chief to get us out of the jail and then move somewhere until they organise for us to go out of the country," said Papy. Nadine's brother-in-law helped them leave from an agency in South Africa.

"You think everything is going good for you and because of just one thing, everything stopped and everything became dark.

"Even when we came to Ireland it was so difficult, the things you need to do again to be human, to have a life a proper life."

When Papy and his family arrived at Dublin airport in 2015 they could not speak any English, they were scared and unsure of what to do. They were taken from the airport to the Department of Justice.

After their their first night in Hatch Hall direct provision centre in Dublin – which is now closed – they were sent to Mosney, Co. Meath. There had been a chicken pox outbreak there the day after they arrived. They stayed there for two weeks before being sent to another direct provision centre in Tramore, Co. Waterford.

Confused and unable to communicate, they had to make their own way there. "That time you don't know how to get the bus. You can't speak English or anything, you have to find your own way. They give you just a voucher."

They applied for refugee status as soon as they arrived in Ireland. They were told after their interview that they did not have enough

“They were sent to Mosney, Co. Meath. There had been a chicken pox outbreak there the day after they arrived. They stayed there for two weeks before being sent to another direct provision centre...”



A priest runs as tear gas is fired to disperse demonstrators during a protest organised by Catholic activists in Kinshasa, Congo. At least six people were killed across the country in protests against delayed elections and President Joseph Kabila. Photos: CNS



The direct provision centre at Mosney, Co. Meath. Photo: RTÉ

evidence to prove their right to asylum. "The way we ran from Congo, everything was a mess. We don't know how to get this and those times when we came here there was no support.

"You don't know the language you don't know anyone who can help you to get the evidence from Congo, we didn't know anything."

While this process was ongoing, they lived all together in one room for six months in Tramore. Papy's family were then given two rooms for five months before being told to go back to Mosney.

Papy says that when they went back to Mosney in July 2016 it was a lot more liveable. They had a whole house to themselves, could cook and there was room for their kids to play. There was a bus provided for them to go to school, however they couldn't have play dates, and everyone had to check in or out if they were entering or leaving the centre.

Decision

They applied a second time for refugee status in 2017 and were told again they did not have enough evidence. They appealed the decision, which meant that they were assigned a solicitor. They told them what kind of evidence they needed to get and how they should build their case in order to overturn the decision. This was

their last opportunity at gaining asylum in Ireland.

Luckily, an NGO in Congo that was aware of Papy's circumstance was able to provide evidence. They were also assessed by Spirasi (Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative), a national centre for victims of torture in Ireland and managed to obtain a relevant newspaper from Congo.

"Since we came to Ireland our health was not good because we came from prison, they tortured us," said Papy. He had trouble sleeping and so the GP in Mosney referred him and his wife to Spirasi.

"We went there they gave us a counsellor, then they start to help us to talk with them. They gave us an appointment, they did an assessment and we meet one doctor, a physician who examined us and then wrote a medical legal report that attests that we were tortured."

Their appeal was accepted in December 2018 and Papy and his family were finally declared refugees in May 2019.

* * * * *

Papy set out looking for a home for him and his family with the help of DePaul, a homeless charity that also supports marginalised groups. They helped them sign up for the HAP scheme and showed them where to look. It was a gruelling

process with many viewings. DePaul sent the family links to house viewings, gave them advice and even drove them around Mayo and Roscommon looking for somewhere to live. They were faced with many rejections.

The rental market was getting more expensive in 2019, and not many people were willing to take HAP payments. "One house, you go to visit and there might be 40 or 50 people waiting in the queue to visit," said Papy.

Finally on December 11, 2019, seven months after they were granted refugee status, Papy and his family found their home in Balbriggan, Co. Dublin. "Without DePaul we would not have known how to get a house."

“Around 1,000 of those residing in accommodation centres have some form of status allowing them to remain in Ireland”

In 2019 DePaul helped over 300 people exit direct provision centres in Ireland; 160 children and 168 adults. They provide support through their Cosán Nua or 'New Path' service which was established with the Department of Justice.

At the minute there are over 5000 people living in direct provision centres throughout the country. Some are formatted like Mosney with independent living, and some have yet to implement this style of accommodation recommended in a 2015 report.

An additional 1,633 people were staying in emergency accommodation. Around 1,000 of those residing in accommodation centres have some form of status allowing them to remain in Ireland.

Initiative

David Carroll, DePaul's CEO recently said about the initiative: "We are aware through our own research that there are people who have previously been in direct provision accessing homeless accommodation. That is why we feel this initiative is so important as it mitigates the risk of people ending up in homeless services once they have been granted the legal right to stay in Ireland.

"There are challenges in sourcing accommodation for everyone in the current housing market, but those leaving accommodation centres face particular challenges including language difficulties, issues filling out forms and being aware of their rights. To see people and families finally have place to call home here in Ireland after many years of waiting and to know we played a part in that is a great thing."

Papy said that his family's quality of life has significantly improved since they moved in to their house in January. Since coming to Ireland him and Nadine have had two daughters who will now grow up in a stable household.

"You can't compare living in direct provision and being in your house," said Papy of his new home.

"Me, as a man, you feel like you are a man, you have a house, your wife and your children. You feel like you are a human being.

"You are not like an animal." He no longer has to walk in and out of gates or through security.

His children are now at school, they only have to walk five minutes down the road. They have friends they can play with after school and are part of a neighbourhood.

"The problem is in Mosney you don't have neighbours, the kids they don't have friends from

outside that can come they can play with them but now here you feel like you are in the community in the life of the country."

* * * * *

Papy has applied to do a course in logistics and had also applied for several jobs. He hopes he can begin to fill his days and provide for his family.

"I would just like to be busy you know, you wake up you are at home, you don't know what to do."

While fluent in four other languages, of which French is the first, Papy is still working on his English. He began at Tramore and continued in Mosney and then in Spirasi. He said English fortunately has some similar words to French, his first language, making it slightly easier.

“What I realise in Ireland is, everything you need, there is people who will help you. You will get support”

Papy said he feels lucky that he was able to eventually receive so much support.

"Spirasi, I feel like it is home when I go there. It's home and you know they make us to feel really like we will get a better future, they are like my parents. They help us with our mental health, they help us with everything."

He said the one thing he would like to let people know, who are in the same position he was in now, is that there is hope and there is help waiting for them. He explained that it can be very difficult, not being able to read or write in English, and having to fill out reams of forms that are sent your way.

"Is very difficult all of those times. What I realise in Ireland is, everything you need, there is people who will help you. You will get support, it's just for you to know which door to go to knock to get the support you need."

The road back to normality was long difficult for Papy Kahoya Kasongo and his family. However charitable services like Spirasi and DePaul help people find their way every day. The asylum system in Ireland is also slowly reforming, hopefully making the way a bit smoother for those who follow Papy.



Pope Francis meeting President Joseph Kabila.



Chai Brady speaks to Fr Patrick Devine SMA about tackling conflict in Africa

Conflicts caused by religious extremism are on the rise across Africa and are more difficult to deal with than violence between tribes, according to an Irish missionary priest who established a charity focused on peace-building and reconciliation.

Fr Patrick Devine SMA had been serving in Africa for decades before deciding he didn't want to deal solely with the symptoms of conflict and poverty, but also tackle root causes.

The native of Co. Roscommon received an award in 2013 for his ongoing conflict resolution and reconciliation work in Kenya through the Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (SCCRR). Previous recipients of the award include the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, Senator George Mitchell and former US president, Jimmy Carter.

Speaking about his time working in several leadership roles in Africa, Fr Devine says: "In my time particularly with the religious superiors, because there was orders working in so many diverse areas, I had so much interaction with conflict and killing and maiming and displacement. I became aware I didn't want to spend another 25 years just dealing with the symptoms, the band aid treatment, where there was hunger giving food, we needed to address the underlying issues."

Dislocation

This led him to establish the SCCRR in 2009 in the wake of persistent widespread violence and dislocation across northern Kenya, and in the aftermath of the disputed Kenyan elections.

The centre has mainly dealt with conflict between different tribes, this includes conflicts along the border of Ethiopia, South Sudan,

Building a path from



Inset: SCCRR's Judith Akedi presenting textbooks to Kariobangi North Primary School pupils. Main: Fr Patrick Devine SMA pictured outside Government Buildings in Dublin recently. Photo: Chai Brady



Uganda, Northern Kenya and veering over towards the Somali population in Eastern Kenya. However, extremism connected with religion has become an increasingly serious issue.

"For the last number of years we were very conscious of this issue of religious ideological extremism and how much that was influencing the philosophy of organisations like Al-Shabaab, so it was necessary to develop the skillsets in terms of analytical skills and peace building techniques to try and address issues of religious ideological extremism," Fr Patrick explains.

He cited two major attacks in recent years. The Westgate Mall shooting, which was an attack by the Somalia-based Al-Shabaab Islamist militant group on a shopping centre which saw 67 people killed. The other was an attack on the Garissa University College in 2015. Almost 150 people were killed. Muslim students were allowed to leave while Christians were targeted. Some of the victims were forced to call their parents before being executed.

"Around Nairobi there is huge slum areas. These slums are considered to be areas where there are breeding grounds of Al-Shabaab cells, for planning attacks and all

that. That's the nature of Al-Shabaab's presence in eastern Africa," says Fr Patrick.

* * * * *

He has written a paper on radicalisation and extremism in Eastern Africa. In it he sets about distinguishing the different terminology used to describe a person's path from "tolerance to terrorism".

This continuum starts with a tolerance to other people's fundamentally different beliefs. It then morphs due to a "negative radicalisation, to non-violent extremism and finally to a further radicalisation which manifests itself in violent extremism operationalised in terrorist acts.

"Everyone is aware here of what's gone on with ISIS. People are aware further back of Al-Qaeda, then you have al-Shabaab, you have Boko Haram, then across the Sahel from West Africa over to East Africa, south of Libya, Tunisia, that's a real breeding ground at the moment too for religious ideological extremism," Fr Patrick says.

"It was in the last

"Slums are considered to be areas where there are breeding grounds of Al-Shabaab cells for planning attacks"

120 years really that development, modernisation has taken place south of the Sahara and institutions are still weak and institutions of course are very important for helping people meet their basic human needs and actualise their potential.

"There was an attack in the village and the bodies were splayed out. I had two guys with me from the tribe that had attacked... these guys weren't involved but as soon as they saw them they wanted to kill"

"A lot of these countries are at very early stages of development and there's huge areas that are still not developed and education is very, very important for people to counter issues of bad ideologies and so on in any society.

"Religion itself it has to be looked at, because in my opinion anyhow, religion

isn't the underlying cause of conflict but it becomes a major factor when the institution becomes more important than the message, the values of the message."

He says that when peace, truth, justice and mercy are sacrificed for the sake of protecting institutions, or for other institutional goals, and when the divine revelation isn't lived out in all its fullness, "then religion becomes a major factor" in conflict. "Because that's really what's underpinning a lot of the religious ideological extremism, the drive in it," he adds.

"The rationale for setting up Shalom was that in African conflict environments, where people are killed and maimed and displaced persistently, social and religious values could not take deep route.

"People couldn't live normal lives or experience true peace, neither could you have any sustainable development in those conflict environments because periodically schools and religious institutions and hospitals and other development projects, they became inoperable. So where we forever going to keep pouring the money through the sieve addressing the symptoms, or do we tackle the underlying causes? This has been the challenge all along. To really transform those conflicts from manifest

violence first of all to negative peace, which is only the stopping of the violence. That's what we got in 1998 in Northern Ireland - that's all it is."

The negative peace, he says, must then be transformed to a positive peace, "where all sides become mutually interested in the development, security and well-being of each other and that really is what reconciliation is about".

* * * * *

He describes the work that SCCRR does to bring about reconciliation as "extremely dangerous".

When he was starting the SCCRR he was "caught behind the lines one time".

"There was an attack in the village and the bodies were splayed out. I had two guys with me from the tribe that had attacked," Fr Patrick says.

"Now these guys weren't involved but as soon as they saw them they wanted to kill them there and then.

"So I got them into a little room with the help of a man and his wife from that village, but the mob that was in front of them... particularly families that had lost their husbands and sons and all that, it was very, very tense.

"It took an hour and a half, two hours, and then a woman came out of the crowd and she helped me

terrorism to tolerance



SCCRR's executive director Fr Oliver Noonan, presenting solar panels to an intertribal school being further developed by Shalom in Samburu County. The area doesn't have electricity.

and explained that they had been attacked because they had attacked another village four of five days early. So we got the two guys saved anyhow."

He says that last week he received a message from some colleagues who had met the two men who were saved, one had become an assistant chief and the other became a chief and a catechist.

Fr Patrick says no one who works for SCCRR has ever lost their life on the job. "We are very careful too in a sense, we don't cross lines, we sometimes have to go in convoys. If we see in real danger we have to pull out our personnel sometimes. They're in dangerous situations so fortunately we haven't lost anyone in

Shalom.

"Over the years I have witnessed priests killed in other circumstances. I went out during the night to one of my colleagues who was from Co. Clare and he had been killed during the night."

Danger

However, it's not the interethnic or intertribal conflicts that he believes to be the most difficult and dangerous to tackle.

"It's more dangerous working with religious ideological extremism," he explains, "because it's not as apparent. You're dealing with very secretive organisations. This is where an organisation like Shalom - because it has very highly qualified people - can do something as distinct from

a lot of organisations that are just into development projects, without addressing the conflict issues."

Fr Patrick says that all SCCRR staff have Masters Degrees in peace studies, development, political science, comparative religion and associated education. Their first method is to "insert" qualified staff into communities where there is conflict and build up trust with influential members of that community. This could be the chiefs, elders, warriors, women and youth leaders and more.

Secondly they enter the community with an attitude "that you are in the process of empowering them" - the local influential opinion-shapers - to be the architects of their peaceful future of

co-existence, he says.

This means training them with the analytical skills on what's causing the conflict and the peace-building techniques, and even though they may have to work with people who have a very limited education, their intelligence is not to be underestimated. Fr Patrick explains: "They already have assets that no one from the outside can ever bring in, because they are in the fibre of the communities."

Then the SCCRR worker is tasked with doing research into what is causing the conflict, which is expected to stand up to any rigour of academic interrogation. "An awful lot of pseudo analysis goes on," says Fr Patrick, "stuff that's done just to suit organisational needs or

to suit the management's interests of NGOs just to justify their existence and that can often be a problem. I think it's an issue that has to be addressed."

He says it's very important for development organisations to do their analysis well before they enter into a region. They must look at the whole religious, socio-economic, political situation, and not ignore the cultural traditions and cultural traditional conflict management.

If a charitable organisation doesn't do this and decides to build a well, he says "the water source may become the biggest centre of killing, maiming and displacement and inter-ethnic conflict tension, because they're fighting for the water".

"So you really have to have your analysis done well, set up the systems, the governance and the mechanisms for dealing with conflictual issues that may arise."

Last year the charity report, among other achievements, completing 106 conflict transformation and peacebuilding workshops. Over 60 school educational projects emerged where they agreed to interethnic and interreligious education. Almost 3,000 men and women were equipped with conflict transformation and peacebuilding skills and techniques through SCCRR workshops and 219 community facilitators were trained to support the charity's peace forums in 28 project areas.

"Sometimes you're building classrooms, sometimes you're just rehabilitating, sometimes you're just helping the institution to get on a more firm footing, but it has to be agreed on by everybody, that's the secret," Fr Patrick says.

“Those who have the reins of power have the greatest opportunity to be tempted into corruption”

"It's the same as with Northern Ireland, you're dealing with issues of dissidence and then there's issues of spoilers who have an interest in the conflict from a different perspective and then you have the commercialisation of conflict in the sense

that people have political-economic interests in the conflict.

"Even interethnic conflicts, you're looking at the commercialisation of cattle raiding, the commercialisation of gun-running and the proliferation of small arms.

"It's at a local level but of course it has to have antenna out to the suppliers and how they're crossing the borders, and most borders in Africa are porous, there's always larger interests at play. They're trying to control the proliferation of small arms around the world, but of course most of these arms originate in developed countries of course."

He says during his time working to prevent conflict, he has never met a parent who didn't want a better future for their children, adding that the majority of people want to have peace.

"People often forget that these countries are really struggling to develop and they're carrying the baggage going back to colonialism, they're carrying the corruption within their own countries, but corruption is always only a symptom of weak institutions," says Fr Patrick.

"It'll be the same here in our country or any other country if the institutions can't stop it. Those who have the reins of power have the greatest opportunity to be tempted into corruption, because they understand the symptoms, the methodologies so that's always the problem. International institutions are being set up as well, regional institutions, all trying to bring about security and peace and governments are trying as well.

"We often talk about structural violence. You have manifest violent conflict, which is the physical, direct, the visible, but then the structural violence exists in the lack of structures and institutions to help people meet their basic human needs, the inequity the disparity, the discrepancy in the distribution of resources and even knowledge to help people address those needs."

Last year Fr Patrick made a submission to the public consultation on the Irish Aid White Paper mirroring many of the points in this article. He believes the UN and Irish Aid would be more effective if there is more of a focus on conflict transformation and peacebuilding, and that in the coming years this is where they will put their focus.



Dr Peterlinus, a National Strategy Coordinator, on the ground with local community representatives during a mediation session.

Beautiful Books to Lift Spirits

With regular church liturgies disrupted around the country, your parishioners will be seeking spiritual guidance now more than ever. Let us help you be there for them in this time of need.

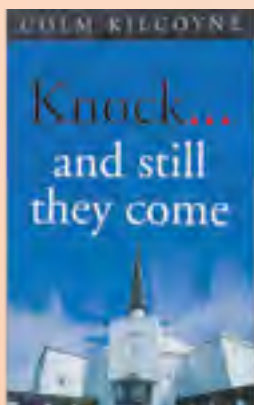
**We're offering
these books FREE
to parishes for their
congregation.***

*Only pay postage

To order, please phone **01 6874028** or
email **mahak@gracecommunications.ie**



Knock and still they come
Colm Kilcoyne



RRP: €9.99

Where I find God
Cora Guinnane & Joanne O'Brien



RRP: €24.99

Fifty Masses with Children
Sr Francesca Kelly



RRP: €15.99

Tomorrow's Parish
Donal Harrington



RRP: €14.99

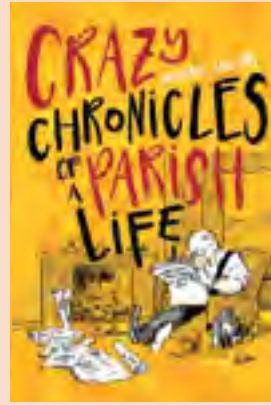
FREE FOR PARISHES

Awakening Inner Peace: A Little Book of Hours
Sister Stan



RRP: €12.99

Crazy Chronicles of a Parish Life
Michael Collins



RRP: €14.99

Daily thoughts for the Lenten Journey
Niall Ahern



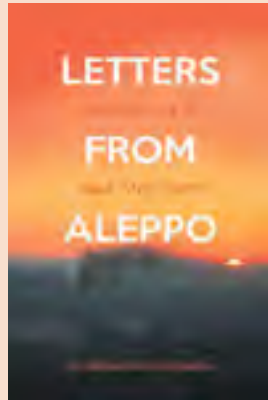
RRP: €6.99

Hallelujah: Memoirs of a Singing Priest
Fr Ray Kelly



RRP: €16.99

Letters from Aleppo
Fr Ibrahim Alsabagh



RRP: €14.99

Friend of the Poor: Mary Aikenhead
Rosaleen Crossan



RRP: €12.99

Lent for the Not-So-Holy
Anthea Dove



RRP: €8.99

Lent with Saint John's Gospel
John Mann



RRP: €9.99

Liturgical Resources for Lent & Eastertide
Thomas O' Loughlin



RRP: €19.99

Pray Without Ceasing
Jenny Child



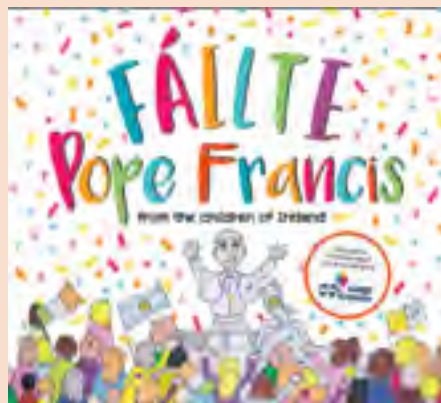
RRP: €9.99

Praying at Easter
Donal Neary SJ



RRP: €5.99

Fáilte Pope Francis
Children of Ireland



RRP: €14.99

Pope Francis in Ireland
Edited by Mags Gargan



RRP: €24.99

The Francis Effect
DVD



RRP: €9.99

Out&About



CAVAN: Kilmore diocesan Pope John Paul II Award recipients pictured following the recent (before the coronavirus outbreak) presentation ceremony with (centre) Francis Keaney, Diocesan Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, guest speaker Fr Peter McVerry SJ and Msgr Liam Kelly, Diocesan Administrator.



DUBLIN: Rosaleen Byrne from Ballybough lights a candle at a shrine after Mass in St Mary's Pro Cathedral Dublin on St Patrick's Day. Photo: John Mc Elroy.

INSHORT

Clogher provides list of online Mass times

To enable people to participate in Mass across the Diocese of Clogher during the outbreak of Covid-19 the diocese has compiled a list of the times of Masses that will be celebrated via webcam. Some details on radio and TV Masses and various links have been provided at <https://www.clogherdiocese.ie/2020/03/online-radio-celebrations-of-mass-other-links/>.

The diocese states: "Christian community in each parish and throughout the diocese should unite in prayer at this time. All of us are encouraged to join with each other online, in local or neighbouring parish and with parishes elsewhere across the diocese and the world, in prayerful solidarity via webcam, radio broadcasts and TV, using whatever devices are available.

"Please check with your own local parish as times/circumstances may change. Some parishes are offering us an opportunity to join in the Vigil Mass to anticipate Sunday or Holy Day."

World Vision Ireland extends children's essay deadline over Covid-19

The christian charity World Vision Ireland has extended the deadline for their Climate Change Essay Competition so that children can write essays in their homes, while schools are closed during the COVID-19 shutdown.

The charity is calling on children across the country to put pen to paper and enter their Climate Change Essay Competition, which will be judged by Ryan Tubridy. The winner will get the chance to meet Ryan

DERRY: Liadhan McCourt of the Simon Community (middle), is presented with a cheque for £750 from Lizzie Rea of the Derry Youth Ministry team and pupil Zara Schindwein of Lumen Christi College in Derry following a Sleep Out–Stay Awake in Saint Eugene's Cathedral which raised £3,700 for homeless charities and involved 75 young people aged between 15-18 from across the Diocese of Derry. The money was split equally between five charities.



DERRY: Yvonne Rooney of the Derry Youth Ministry team and Zara Schindwein of Lumen Christi College in Derry present Ellen Harper of DePaul a cheque following a Sleep Out–Stay Awake in Saint Eugene's Cathedral which raised £3,700 for homeless charities.

Tubridy in the RTÉ studios (when schools and businesses reopen) and will also win a €500 Smyths voucher. World Vision Ireland's Climate Change essay competition 2020 is opened until April 30 for children between the ages of 8 and 18.

The entries will be narrowed down to the final 10, and Tubridy will choose the winning essay.

Deadline

"We decided to extend the deadline for this competition to accommodate parents who have little ones at home during the Covid-19 shutdown," said Fiona O'Malley, Director of Communications at World Vision Ireland. "Climate change is a great topic to explore with children while they're spending time at home. We don't want to cause anxiety, but rather set a positive example of what daily steps we can take to live more sustainably. Our children will face the impacts of climate

change more than any previous generation.

"Today's children are tomorrow's business leaders, decision makers and politicians. They will be the ones shaping the future of the country, our economy, and our transport systems, so it's important that they are equipped with the knowledge of the impact of global warming, and how to tackle it. We believe this essay competition is a great way to start the climate change conversations in homes across the country, in a positive and creative way."

The theme of the competition is 'How We Can Save Our Planet' and should be 800 words or less and should be sent, with a €2 entry fee (per child) to: Essay Competition, World Vision Ireland, Rathmines, Dublin 6, by April 30. Further information on the competition can be found on <https://www.worldvision.ie/essay-competition>

Edited by Chai Brady
chai@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



▲ **DUBLIN:** Gerard Gallagher from the Office of Evangelisation and Ecumenism of the Archdiocese of Dublin, Fr Séamus McEntee, DCU Chaplain, members of NET Ministries and some DCU students attended a reflective reading for Lent at the last Mass in DCU before closure due to the coronavirus.

► **DOWN:** Three Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal who are based in Drogheda but originally from the US attend a ceremony on St Patrick's Day at the St Patrick's Centre in Downpatrick.



▲ **TIPPERARY:** St Patrick's Day Mass celebrated by Fr Michael Toomey in Ss Peter and Paul's church in Clonmel. The people of Clonmel were represented by the Mayor Garret Ahearn who sits alone at the front.

CLARE

Cloughleigh Oratory will continue to pray the Novena Prayer to St Anthony every Tuesday morning at the 9.30am Mass.

CORK

Medjugorje prayer meeting in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament every Wednesday night at 8pm in Holy Trinity Church, Fr Matthew Quay. Prayers for healing first Wednesday of every month.

A Pro-life Mass is held on the last Friday of every month at the Poor Clares Monastery, College Road, at 7.30pm.

DERRY

Dungiven Parish: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Monday to Friday, 8-12pm and 3-9pm.

St Maria Goretti Prayer Movement: Prayer for healing for victims of abuse and reparation for the Church. First Holy Hour of prayer in the Immaculate Conception Church, Trench Road, at 8.15pm led by Fr Sean O'Donnell on the third Tuesday of every month.

DONEGAL

Holy Face of Jesus prayer meeting: The oratory St Mary's Buncrana, Tuesdays following Rosary after 10am Mass. Contact: 085 252 5612.

DUBLIN

Our Lady of Knock prayer meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month in St Gabriel's Nursing Home, Glenayle Road, Raheny, Dublin 5 from 8-9pm.

Adoration Hour for Healing during Lent in St Laurence O'Toole Church, Seville Place, Dublin 1 at 8pm every Tuesday in Lent. Periods of silence, reflective music, individual prayers for healing all in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament www.northwallparish.ie.

The Dublin Diocese youth pilgrimage to Knock will take place on Saturday April 25. There will be a youth programme with activities, prayer, games and more in the Hub from 11am-2.15pm. For more information and to book your place email st.pauls@dublindiocese.ie.

FERMANAGH

A Mass to St Peregrine for all the sick is prayed each Tuesday evening in St Patrick's Church, Derrygonnelly, at 7.30pm: www.churchservices.tv/derrygonnelly. There is also a St Peregrine Novena Mass in Holy Cross Church, Lisnaskea on Tuesday nights at 7pm. www.churchservices.tv/lisnaskea

GALWAY

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday, 10-11am and Thursday, 8-10pm.

KERRY

Weekly Monday prayer meetings led by Ben Perkins, from 8-9.30pm in the Ardferret Retreat Centre.

KILDARE

Praying, reading and sharing the following Sunday's Gospel in Resurrexit, Kilmeague, every Wednesday from 8-9.30pm. See www.resurrexit.ie for details, or ring 087-6825407.

KILKENNY

Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday

● **In the current climate, readers are advised to check with local organisers to ensure events will take place.**

at 5pm in St Patrick's Church, College Road, Kilkenny (opposite St Kieran's College).

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church of the Assumption, Urlingford, every first and third Friday, from 2.30-5.30pm.

LOUTH

Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Friday in Raheen church following 10am Mass until 10pm, Crecora on Thursdays, following morning Mass until 12pm and from 6-10pm, and in Mungret church on Wednesdays, from 10-12pm.

Mass in reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary will take place at 10.30am every first Saturday of the month in St Malachy's Church, Anne Street, Dundalk. Organised by the Legion of Mary, Presidium of Our Lady of the Listening Heart. Spiritual Director: Fr Bede McGregor OP.

A Centre Prayer Meeting is held at Mount Oliver (near Ballymascanlon, Dundalk) every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm. Contact 00353 863623361 from the North of Ireland or 0863623361 from the Republic of Ireland.

MAYO

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the Church of St Joseph and the Immaculate Conception Bohola every Wednesday from 10am until 10pm.

MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday afternoon from 2.30-3.30pm in the Oratory, Enfield, for Adoration, Rosary, Chaplet and petitions. Also once per month a Lay Apostle meeting. However, all meetings are presently suspended because of the coronavirus threat.

Adoration in St Patrick's Church, Stamullen, after 10am Mass every Thursday until 5pm, and in St Mary's Church, Julians-town, on Wednesdays from 9am and after 10am Mass.

Trim parish – 'Life in the Spirit' seminars postponed for the time being.

ROSCOMMON

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Drumboylan Church on the first Friday of the month from 9am-11pm.

WESTMEATH

Holy Face of Jesus prayer meeting: La Verna retreat centre beside private hospital Ballinderry, Mullingar. Thursdays at 7.30pm. Contact: 085 2525 612

WEXFORD

Taizé prayer services every first and third Friday at 8pm in Good Counsel College Chapel, New Ross.

WICKLOW

The Glencree Parish Group hold a special Mass for healing in St Kevin's Church, Glencree on the first Saturday of the month.

World Report

IN BRIEF

Indian parish sews and distributes free face masks

● A Catholic parish in India has stepped in to distribute free face masks in response to a huge shortage and surge in prices due to the panic caused by the coronavirus.

Little Flower Latin Church is on a mission to provide materials free of charge to other parishes and dioceses to curb the supply shortfall in Kerala.

"We have stitched and distributed more than 30,000 masks and 17 parishes have joined the movement," says Fr Sebastian Karukapally. "Some people provide sewing machines, others provide materials for the masks, others offer free services and others provide food and drinks, making it a truly community-cum-family affair."

Lourdes closes for the first time in France

● The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes has closed for the first time in its history following new restrictions in France to slow down the spread of the coronavirus.

"The sanctuary will close its doors for a while," said Lourdes sanctuary rector Msgr Olivier Ribadeau Dumas last week.

Following the closure, French Auxiliary Bishop Antoine Hérouard of Lille called on Catholics to participate in a novena to Our Lady of Lourdes until March 25 to pray for the sick.

The date also marked the anniversary of the Virgin Mary's 16th apparition at Lourdes where Our Lady declared to St Bernadette Soubirous "I am the Immaculate Conception".

Chinese diocese donates face masks to Vatican

● A Catholic diocese in China's Shaanxi province has donated thousands of face masks to communities in the Vatican and Italy to help them fight the coronavirus.

Xi'an Diocese has donated around 24,000 disposable medical masks to religious communities and dioceses in the country as a gesture of goodwill.

"When mainland China experienced the epidemic, the Holy See and the Italian Church group helped by sending medical masks," said Fr Chen Ruixue of Xi'an.

"We sincerely hope that these donations will help people, and that it will help promote the friendship between China and the Vatican."

Pope appoints new bishop for diocese in Kenya



● Pope Francis has announced the appointment of Fr Joseph Mwangela [pictured] as the new Bishop of Kitui in Kenya last week.

Fr Mwangela, who will turn 52 on April 7, will become the fourth bishop of his home diocese, having been born in Kakumi.

He was ordained a priest in 1996 and has been the Vicar General of Kitui since 2015.

The Kitui diocese became vacant in April 2017 when Archbishop Anthony Muheria was transferred to the Archdiocese of Nyeri.

Archbishop Muheria, however, continued serving Kitui as Apostolic Administrator.

Celebrations for anniversary of first Argentine Mass suspended

● The 500th anniversary of the first ever Mass held in Argentina at Puerto San Julian has been postponed until further notice.

The event, which was scheduled for March 31 to April 2, was cancelled following provisions issued by the government of Santa Cruz province and the National Ministry of Health last week.

"Let us be inspired by this time of lived communion, so that the 500 years of the first Mass may be a sign of unity that spurs us to continue building a Church to whose table everyone feels invited, especially the poorest and most excluded," said Bishop of Santa Cruz, Msgr Jorge Garcia Cuerva.

Coronavirus kills more than 50 priests in Italy

Dioceses in Italy have reported the deaths of around 50 priests as a result of the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, according to official Church sources in the country.

Avvenire, the Italian newspaper owned by the Italian bishops' conference, attributes the majority of these priests' deaths to Covid-19.

The publication also noted two cases where Fr Guido Mortari and Fr Giorgio Bosini died before they could be tested.

The vast majority of the priests were aged 70 and above. The oldest, Fr Mario Cavalleri, was 104 years old while the youngest, Fr Sandro Brignone, was 45 years old.

Of the deceased priests, at least 15 of them came from the Diocese of Bergamo.

"Pope Francis has promised that he will carry us in his heart and in his daily prayers," said Bishop Francesco Beschi of Bergamo in video message to his diocese.

"The Holy Father was very affectionate, showing his paternal closeness to me, to the priests, to the sick, to those who care for them and



An Italian soldier on the streets of Milane as Italy tried to get to grips with its coronavirus outbreak

to our whole community. He wanted to ask for details on the situation that Bergamo is experiencing, on which he was very informed."

He added: "In particular, he asked me to bring his closeness to the sick and to all those who in different ways are doing heroically for the good of others: doctors, nurses, civil

and health authorities, law enforcement."

Bergamo, which has become the "martyr city" of the coronavirus in Italy, has so many dead that army trucks last week had to deliver supplies of freshly-made wooden coffins, with mortuaries no longer being able to hold them all.

Fr Remo Rota, a 77-year-old priest who served as a missionary in the Democratic Republic of Congo for 38 years, was among those who died in Bergamo after testing positive.

In Cremona, priest and print journalist Fr Vincenzo Rini, 75, who was head of the Federation of Catholic Weekly Newspapers was a notable casualty.

Parish

At least six priests have died in the Diocese of Parma. Among them was Fr Franco Minardi, who served the same parish for 70 years, and Fr Nicola Masi, who served as a missionary in the Amazon.

In the Diocese of Piacenza-Bobbio, 87-year-old twin brothers Fr Mario Boselli and Fr Giovanni Boselli died within a day of each other.

Other Italian dioceses with coronavirus deaths are Milan, Lodi, Brescia, Casale Monferrato and Tortona.

Private funerals are being offered for the deceased priests, as all public religious ceremonies are banned by the Italian government.

Brazilian diocese offers shelter for homeless with coronavirus

The Archdiocese of Sao Paulo has offered their House of Prayer as a community centre for the city to lodge homeless persons who get the coronavirus (Covid-19).

Homeless communities throughout the country are among the most vulnerable to the virus, Church officials in Brazil said.

"The House of Prayer is already used for activities with the city's homeless population," said Fr Julio Renato Lancellotti, coordinator of the episcopal vicariate for the homeless.

"We have activities and courses and also provide meals, like breakfast. It is not a hospital, so it needs to be adapted,

with beds, etc. but it is a viable place to put those who have nowhere to go."

Church officials said the home would be able to accommodate up to 50 hospital beds.

The House of Prayer was built with money from the Niwano Peace Prize won by Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns, former archbishop of Sao Paulo.

The prize was awarded to Cardinal Arns for "his interfaith collaboration to promote development, conserve the environment and create a world of peace".

Diseases

Many homeless have or have had

tuberculosis and other diseases; many are elderly with no place to go.

On the street, according to Fr Lancellotti, it is difficult to ensure even basic hygiene, like washing hands, wearing clean clothes or having a clean place to sleep.

Fr Lancellotti, who has worked with the city's homeless population for more than 40 years, said the homeless population in South America's largest city has been vastly underestimated by authorities.

"Officially they say there are 24,000 living on the streets of Sao Paulo, but I believe that there are more than 30,000," he said.

All public Masses in Britain are suspended

Public Masses across England, Wales and Scotland have been suspended indefinitely amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The bishops' conference of England and Wales announced last week that, as of March 20, there will be no public acts of worship.

However, they said that

churches would remain open for private prayer.

"During these disturbing and threatening times, the rhythm of the prayer of the Church will continue. Please play your part in it," said the bishops of England and Wales.

"The effort of daily kindness and mutual support for

all will continue and increase. Please play your part in this too.

"For your commitment to this, we thank you."

Obligation

Catholics are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass for the duration of

these measures.

Bishops have encouraged the Faithful to watch the live-streaming of Mass and make a spiritual communion.

The Scottish bishops also announced that public Masses will be suspended as of March 19, but that churches would remain open.



Edited by Aron Hegarty
aron@irishcatholic.ie

Misery heaped upon misery



Croatia Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic stands in front of Zagreb's Cathedral of St Stephen, which was damaged during an earthquake on March 22. Photo: CNS

New Zealand bishops criticise new/liberal abortion law

Bishops in New Zealand have criticised the decision to pass a new abortion bill approved by the country's legislature last week.

The country's House of Representatives passed the Abortion Legislation Bill on March 18, legalising abortion throughout the first 20 weeks of pregnancy.

"There is no longer any recognition of the rights of the unborn child in this new law," said Cynthia Piper on behalf of the Catholic bishops of New Zealand's six dioceses.

"That is a travesty of human rights," continued Piper. "To hold that the fetus is not a legal person ignores the reality that a genetically unique human life has begun which is neither that of the mother or the father."

She added: "That the law fails to recognise this does not change what is

a biological and human fact."

The bill passed on its third reading by a vote of 68 to 51, and now only needs royal assent – the approval of the governor-general – to officially become law.

Abortion had previously been illegal in New Zealand, except in cases where two doctors decided that a woman's physical or mental health would be in "serious danger".

Pregnancy

After 20 weeks in pregnancy, abortions were only allowed in cases where the mother's life was at stake, or to prevent serious injury.

The new bill removes legal restrictions on abortion before 20 weeks of pregnancy, decriminalising it and treating it as a health issue.

The legislation also allows for

abortions after 20 weeks, under certain circumstances.

The bishops' conference had previously argued these circumstances would "significantly widen" cases of abortion on basis of the child's disability.

For cases later than 20 weeks in pregnancy, a "qualified health practitioner" must consult another practitioner, and deem an abortion to be "clinically appropriate" given the physical and mental health of the woman.

The bishops' conference also said that "a host of sensible amendments" were rejected by members of the legislature, including protections for babies who survive abortion attempts and bans on sex-selection and disability discrimination abortions.

Indonesian Catholic launches fundraising site for churches

A Catholic from Indonesia has launched a crowdfunding portal to support the construction of churches and chapels in remote areas of the country.

The portal, *Jalakasih.com*, was launched last week at Our Lady of Carmel Church in Jakarta by the Vine Dei Foundation, a non-profit organisation founded by Albertus Tan in 2017.

Tan is assisted by 29

Catholic volunteers in running various Church outreach programmes and also provide scholarships to support the education of children from poor families.

"The purpose of the site as a crowdfunding platform is to enable more people of goodwill to share and donate for the construction of more Catholic churches in Indonesia," says Tan.

"I hope this programme

can help Catholics in villages because they need to develop their Faith and education."

The new site, according to Tan, will provide greater transparency with donors being able to access information more easily and see how their money is spent along with the progress of projects.

To date, the foundation has helped build more than 125 churches and chapels, facilitating prayer for around

115,000 Catholics in deprived regions.

Fr Ferdinandus Fahik of Maria Magdalena Church in Weetabula Diocese says Catholics in his parish have benefited from Tan's support with the construction of three mission station chapels.

Fahik believes Tan's new site will help Catholics in areas "facing economic challenges" to "develop their Faith".

Vatican roundup

Pope establishes a new law for the Vatican

● Pope Francis has created a new law that will regulate the judicial system of the Vatican City State.

The new law, announced last week, will provide greater independence for the judiciary and simplify judicial processes.

According to a statement from the Holy See Press Office, the new law is intended to meet the current needs for greater efficiency from the previous law issued by Pope St John Paul II in 1987, amended by Pope Benedict XVI in 2008.

The law allows more freedom of judicial bodies and magistrates dependent on the Pope, specifying the requirements for the appointment of judges and increasing the staff of the court.

Additionally, it provides a head for the Office of the Promoter of Justice and sets out a standardised procedure for possible disciplinary action against certified advocates.

The legislation, according to the press office statement, comes in the wake of regulatory reforms at the Vatican in relation to economic, financial issues and criminal law.

The law is also a response to the Vatican's accession to various international conventions.

Vatican law is unique in that it recognises the canonical system as the primary source of legislation and criterion for its interpretation.

Vatican offices, services for the poor to remain open

● The Holy See Press Office has announced that Vatican offices will remain open in order "to ensure the essential services to the Universal Church".

In addition, the Vatican will continue to offer shower facilities, sleeping quarters and food assistance to the poor and homeless, who sleep rough around St Peter's Square. "Don't ignore the poor Lazarus who knocks at your door," said Cardinal Konrad Krajewski last week.

The Almoner of the

Office of Papal Charities said the Vatican would continue to heed the cry of the poor despite the coronavirus outbreak.

"Though we maintain a safe physical distance, put on gloves, and avoid assemblies, we can still help those who are right beside us," he said.

The Papal Almoner said his office would continue to offer food assistance services and added that the newly-opened 'Palace for the Poor' will still offer a warm bed and breakfast for those who come calling.

Vatican official sees opportunity for Easter despite lockdown

● Vatican Cardinal Beniamino Stella believes Catholics can still turn the tragedy caused by the coronavirus pandemic into an experience of Faith and hope this Easter.

In an interview with *Vatican News* last week, Cardinal Stella says the lockdown during Lenten season is a call to prepare for Christ's resurrection in people's own homes.

The prefect of the Congregation for Clergy says despite the prospect of thousands of Catholics celebrating Easter without a large parish or Vatican liturgies, there are "possibilities" and "opportunities".

"There are still possibilities to transform this tragedy into an opportunity for Faith," said Cardinal Stella.

"I believe that technology truly allows us to live a communion that would seem virtual. But, in fact, it is not just virtual."

He added: "I believe that the Holy Spirit also passes through these new things in today's world and speaks to hearts, speaks to consciences, speaks to little ones and speaks to great ones."

Cardinal Stella said it was important for everyone to be in touch with friends and loved ones in order to "create a beautiful network that unites us in this moment".

Letter from Rome

US child protection pioneer to receive Church honour



Christopher White

A leading trailblazer in the fight against clergy sexual abuse is to receive the highest honour in the US Church.

On March 22, the University of Notre Dame announced that Dr Kathleen McChesney, who worked for decades in law enforcement before being tapped to establish and lead the Office of Child Protection for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), will be awarded the 2020 Laetare Medal; the nation's oldest and most prestigious Catholic award.

Her career in law enforcement dates back to the 1970's, where she first worked as a police officer and then a detective in Washington State, investigating homicides and sex crimes, including that of the serial killer Ted Bundy. She then entered the FBI, eventually reaching the third highest position in the bureau until she was recruited by the US bishops to parlay that experience into helping restore trust in an institution struggling to respond to the escalating scandals of clergy abuse and cover-up.

"It is often the Church's darkest moments that call forth great faith and courage," said Notre Dame president Fr John Jenkins in a statement announcing McChesney's section as this year's prize winner.

"In awarding Dr McChesney the Laetare Medal, we recognise her courage, tenacity and love for the Church in a tireless pursuit of justice for victims, accountability for abusers and measures that prevent this crisis from continuing. Her example reminds us of Jesus' words, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice,'" Jenkins wrote.

Uphill battle

During her time at the USCCB, McChesney was responsible for helping every US diocese implement the newly adopted Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, often referred to as the 'Dallas Charter' – where she, at times, faced an uphill battle of implementing best practices for accountability



Dr Kathleen McChesney will receive Notre Dame's Laetare Medal – the highest and oldest US Church award – in May.

and transparency, yet ultimately gained widespread respect for her persistence.

Upon hearing the news of her selection, John Carr, a long-time colleague of Dr McChesney's at the USCCB, said that her leadership in responding to clergy sexual abuse is unmatched by anyone.

"What she has given the Church is a unique example of principled leadership, persistence, credibility and integrity," said Carr, who now serves as the director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Teaching and Public Life at Georgetown, which is playing a leading role in responding to the crisis.

"Everyone says we need lay

leadership to overcome the clergy sexual abuse crisis," said Carr. "Kathleen has been providing it for two decades. No one has done more to protect the young and vulnerable in our family of faith than Kathleen. As a parent, survivor and Catholic, I am enormously grateful for her moral leadership."

Dr McChesney said she was "stunned" to learn of her selection, but said that she considers it to be "symbolic" and "a recognition that so many people have had the courage to come forward and report their abuse and that they weren't ashamed to do it and were willing to discuss some of the most horrible things that have happened to them".

"It's not about me," she insisted, adding that it's an acknowledgement of the work of many people who have been "trying to right the ship...so that people can participate in Catholic ministries safely and confidently".

“It took a lot of tragedy to convince some in church leadership that this was a horrible problem of abuse”

"This has been a daily effort by literally thousands of Catholics in this country for a number of years," she continued, adding that

she hopes her selection helps to recognise the many lay people committed to the cause, especially victim survivors, victim assistance coordinators, and the loved ones of those who have been abused.

She said that she also hopes that this shines a spotlight on those "who weren't believed or were ignored."

"This recognises that all of them were trying to do the right thing," she added. "It took a lot of tragedy to convince some in church leadership that this was a horrible problem of abuse and abuse of God granted power that went awry."

The Laetare Medal is announced each year on the fourth Sunday in Lent, known as Laetare Sunday and dates back to 1883, when Notre Dame established the award to serve as the American counterpart to the Golden Rose, an honour that goes back to the 11th Century.

The award has a rich history in American Catholic life, with previous recipients including President John F. Kennedy, Dorothy Day, Vice President Joe Biden, former Speaker of the House John Boehner, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Sister Norma Pimentel and Hollywood actor Martin Sheen.

The Laetare medal bears the Latin inscription *Magna est veritas et praevaleret* ("Truth is mighty, and it shall prevail") and recipients of the annual award are honoured for their distinguished work "whose genius has ennobled the arts and sciences, illustrated the ideals of the Church and enriched the heritage of humanity".

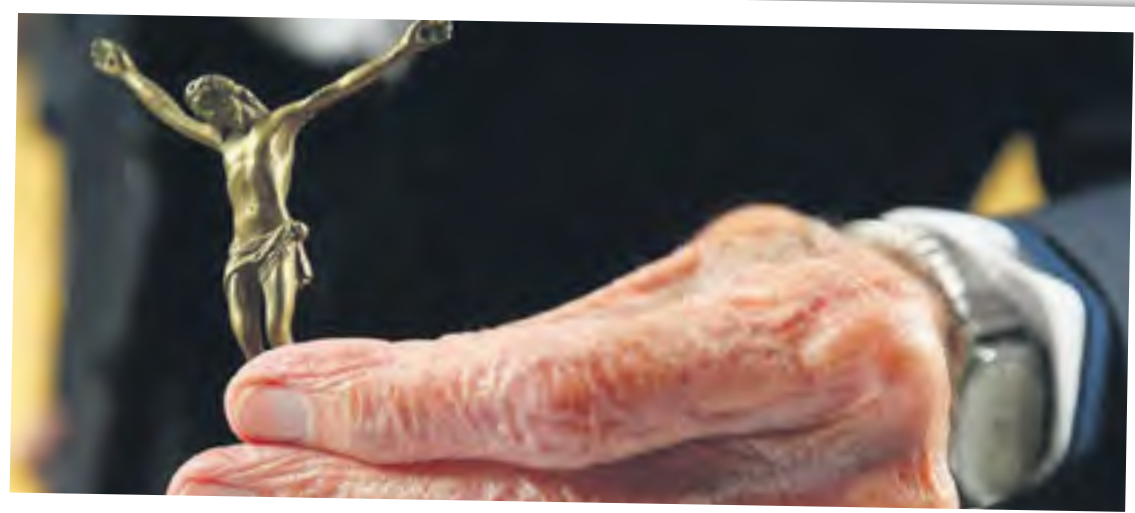
Dr McChesney continues to work with dioceses and religious organisations around the world on issues related to child protection through Kinsale Management Consulting, which she founded.

Earlier this academic year, Dr McChesney participated in the opening event of Notre Dame's presidential forum, "Rebuild My Church: Crisis and Response".

"It is so critical for the men and women who have been abused to know that someone is responsible, that someone is taking responsibility for what has happened to them," she told the audience of an estimated 500 students, faculty, and staff in September.

Dr McChesney will receive the award, along with an honorary degree at the university's 175th commencement ceremony in May.

i Christopher White is a National Correspondent for Crux





Medics treat a patient infected with the coronavirus at a hospital in Tehran. On average nine out of 10 cases of the virus in the Middle East come from Iran.

Falling fertility, *Humanae Vitae* and the coronavirus

Amid the scramble to find a cure for the coronavirus and enforcing restrictive measures to try to slow down its expansion, there has been relatively little attention to the underlying factors which explain why some places have been harder hit, more quickly, than others.

One emerging hypothesis is that there may be a correlation between declining fertility rates and rapidly rising elderly populations in many societies around the world, and the extent to which those societies have been impacted by the coronavirus.

For the Church, which has sounded alarms about declining fertility for decades, the situation could offer a grim confirmation of its diagnosis that a rapidly aging society places its future in jeopardy – though no one's likely to celebrate that it's required a global pandemic to put the issue back on the table.

Data

By now, it's become well-established that older people are the most at-risk group in terms of death from the coronavirus. A study by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention found an overall fatality rate of 2.3% for the general Chinese population, but it's 3.6% for those 60 to 69, 8% for those 70 to 79, and 14.8% for those 80 and older.

Chinese data show the median age of a coronavirus fatality is 75,



John L. Allen Jr

and data from Italy put its median age for a death due to the virus at 81.

Though it's not yet clear if older people are disproportionately more likely to acquire the disease.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) reports that research does show the elderly are more susceptible to the respiratory illness, which can cause pneumonia and symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath.

The US Center for Disease Control also reports that in recent years, between 70% and 85% of seasonal flu deaths have occurred in people age 65 and above.

Demographers say that the total fertility rate needed to maintain a stable population in a society is 2.1 children for each woman who has completed her childbearing years. That's the number of children it takes for a woman to replace herself with a female who will live to the age of childbearing, taking into account that slightly more boys than girls are born, and that not all children survive.

Among demographers, the shorthand term for that rate of 2.1 is 'replacement level'. It's a striking statistical fact that among the 10 nations hardest hit by the coronavirus to date, not a single one has a total fertility rate above replacement.

“A society with a higher share of younger people probably is in a better position to absorb the shocks of a public health crisis”

China's one-child policy from 1979 to 2015 is the primary explanation for its low fertility

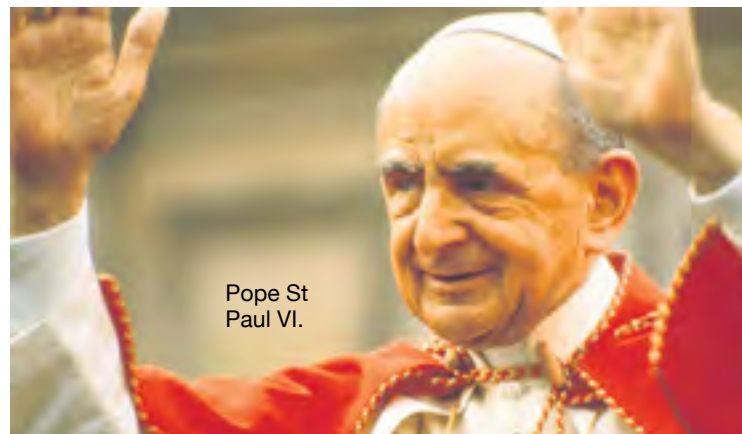
rate and mushrooming elderly population.

Beginning around mid-century, China is expected to lose 20 to 30% of its population every generation, despite returning to a two-child limit four years ago.

China is also expected to age as much in one generation as Europe in the last 100 years, prompting the quip that it may be the first Asian nation to get old before it gets rich.

Iran may seem a more surprising case, but it too adopted aggressive family planning policies in 1993 in the wake of the Iran/Iraq war, when the country was dealing with massive unemployment and an increasingly restless youth population.

Contraception prevalence in Iran rose from 49% in 1989 to 74% by 2000, and the total fertility rate dropped from a peak of 6.6 in 1980



Pope St Paul VI.

to the current level of 1.6.

In light of Iran's soaring elderly cohort, demographers joke that by 2050, the most popular grassroots organisation in the country may not be Hezbollah but the AARP.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the top 26 countries in the world in terms of the highest total fertility rate are all in Africa, led by Niger with a rate of 7.2 and Somalia at 6.1.

For the Church, this is undoubtedly not the time to shout 'ah-hah' or strike notes that could be construed as triumphal. For one thing, the epidemiological data is incomplete, there's real concern some countries may be significantly under-reporting their infection rates, testing is uneven, and it's far too early to draw definitive conclusions from the coronavirus.

On the other hand, there's a common-sense instinct that says a society with a higher share of younger and basically healthy people probably is in a better position to absorb the shocks of a public health crisis, whereas a society with a disproportionate share of people at higher risk will face greater challenges.

“The risks of overly aggressive efforts to limit population growth also have become apparent on practical grounds”

When St Paul VI sounded an alarm about the spread of artificial birth control and a growing closure to life in his controversial encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968, the argument was largely couched in moral and spiritual terms. Paul argued that the “unitive” and “procreative” purposes of marriage are intrinsically linked, and it's a moral mistake to attempt to separate them.

Since that time, however, the risks of overly aggressive efforts to limit population growth also have become apparent on practical grounds.

Economists Nicholas Eberstadt and Hans Growth, for example, have argued that falling birth rates “portend ominous change in economic prospects, major increases in public debt burdens, and slower economic growth”, largely because they produce a shrinking workforce.

It may be that when the dust settles from the coronavirus pandemic, public health will be added to economics as part of the case for stronger pro-natalist policies such as those adopted by France, which has managed to maintain one of the highest birth rates in the EU in part due to generous social policies, such as subsidised child care, extended paternity leave and tax breaks for larger families.

That won't have much to do with the Church's moral arguments, of course, but it may at least mean they'll get a different sort of hearing.

John L. Allen Jr is the editor of *Cruce*.

Letters

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

Letter of the week

Facing the invisible enemy

Dear Editor, The local and global responses to the coronavirus are interesting, in that, here we have an invisible but real threat seen by its effects. Large efforts and vast resources are being deployed to counter this.

I believe Christians and the Church particularly can learn a great deal from this fervour and realisation of danger in our midst. For, we too, face an invisible enemy whose effects are more far reaching than a flu virus. Can anything other than the full message and application of the authority Jesus extended to it, counter and protect humanity from such an enemy?

At a time in history when humanity is being assaulted simultaneously on multiple front lines, there seems to be

a muted or bewildered response.

Whereas every diocese is required to have its own exorcist for example, those in need of one might have to travel half way around Europe to find one nowadays, we are no longer equipped for the times.

But it goes beyond this. Wishy-washy preaching turns the good news into the good advice, the demands of holiness and a fierce devotion to a baseline of mediocrity and complacency.

There is a need to look back and see that what worked for the saints in the centuries gone by, it was not sophisticated reasoning but simply telling the truth about God, about our need for him and the salvation he

offers, how desperately he is reaching out to us in love to ransom us and shield us from the clutches of the evil that surrounds us. We must take it seriously.

The legions of the enemy camp take their work very seriously, have undivided hearts as they assault the world. Our response cannot be to offer a peace treaty of tolerance and fear but on the contrary to see it for what it is and push back with the full force of the truths of the Gospel, for the healing of souls and the liberation of those who fall into the power of the Devil.

*Yours etc.,
Stephen Clark,
Malate, Manila.*

Keep the churches open for prayer

Dear Editor, At times like these when we are facing a worldwide pandemic that will take the lives of so many, its imperative churches are kept open [IC 19/03/2020]. My church is my place of solace, where

I feel God's presence more than anywhere else.

There are risks when it comes to celebrating Mass, and I have reluctantly come around to the necessity of this after I spoke to a few of my friends. As long as

there isn't too many people congregating for private prayer, I couldn't see why they would need to be closed. We need prayer now, we must pray particularly for those who have contracted the coronavirus, those in

mortal fear of it and those who are fighting it. There is no better place, in my opinion, to do this than in a church.

*Your etc.,
John Williams,
Carrigaline, Co. Cork.*

Young people must become Church leaders

Dear Editor, The article on Knock's new youth leadership programme was wonderful to see [IC 12/03/2020]. Right now, we need to give young people the supports and knowledge not only to lead other young people in their Faith and take part in parish life, but also to defend the faith and grow more confident in what they believe.

I definitely have a few people in mind to whom I will be recommending this programme.

*Yours etc.,
Margaret White,
Tallaght, Co. Dublin.*



Fresh air in dearth of alternate voices

Dear Editor, I found Michael Kelly's interview with Jonathan Sacks [IC 12/03/2020] stimulating and interesting.

There is a dearth of 'alternative voices' now in a media which is unwilling to question or

criticise modern practices. More of the same please!

*Yours etc.,
Mary O'Donovan,
Rathkeale, Co. Limerick.*

Real virtue has become much harder to find

Dear Editor, I thoroughly enjoyed the interview with Rabbi Sacks in one of your recent editions [IC 12/03/2020], it was wide-ranging and covered a myriad of interesting topics and Mr Sack's proves himself to be excellently well-read, thoughtful and a man of great virtue. Although the word virtue is bandied about these days, often used critically in phrases like 'virtue signalling' which many of our politicians are certainly guilty of, it is very hard to find in the world today.

One of his messages that stuck with

me over the past week was when he said this in the interview: "Do a search and replace operation in your mind, and every time you see the word self, delete it and write other. So instead of self-esteem, other-esteem. Instead of self-respect, other-respect. Just do that, and you'll find that you will be much happier, your relationships will improve, and you will feel that your life is meaningful in a way that it wasn't before."

If people could take this message to heart and break away from the rampant

individualism in modern society, the world would be a much better place. There is far too much selfishness in Irish society, we see this trait reflected in the panic buying happening because of the coronavirus. There are people out there that already live virtuous lives, and we see that in the actions of our health service and frontline workers helping Ireland through this crisis. I just hope the virtuous outnumber the selfish.

*Yours etc.,
Aaron Murphy,
Longford Town, Co. Longford,*

facebook community

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

Lourdes closes for first time in history

So sad; dear Mother Mary help the world in our time of need. – **Mary McCormick**

Let us all pray the Holy Rosary of Our Lady for this all to end and for humanity to see its need for God through this. – **Darren Buskirk**

Our Lady please put an end to this pandemic and listen to our prayers. – **Peg Hanafin**

RTÉ to broadcast daily Mass during the Covid-19 emergency

Yes, well done RTÉ and to *Churchservices.tv* and the many parishes throughout the country that are broadcasting online. – **Ian O'Cinneide**

Well done RTÉ. People need to lean on their Catholic Faith now more than ever. Pray for all priests, nuns and all people who need our help. – **Eamonn O'Sullivan**

It will bring a lot of comfort to many. – **Seán Connolly**

Have courage and put trust in God to fight 'modern plague' says bishop

There is daily access to many Masses online during these unprecedented times and thanks to all the priests for doing this. For the safety of everyone we have to practice social distancing. Surely our prayers will be heard wherever we pray them at this difficult time, Jesus is everywhere after all. Wise decision to close the churches in my opinion. Closed churches won't make us turn away from our Faith – in fact it may do the opposite, I think. – **Carmel Cotter Clifford**

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

NI abortion overlooked due to virus

Dear Editor, In all the coronavirus panic it seems one of the most brutal abortion regimes that is soon to be brought into Northern Ireland is being overlooked. The new abortion framework is set to be enforced in Northern Ireland at the end of this month and in all the confusion and fear regarding this deadly virus people have forgotten about the lives of the unborn.

Those who value life should be trying to make their voices heard over this crisis. Many more children will die in the North than those who lose their lives due to the coronavirus on this island. Perspective is needed in these matters.

*Yours etc.,
James Delaney,
Belfast, Co. Antrim.*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

📷 Around the world



▲ **ITALY:** A homeless person is treated by a Red Cross worker during the coronavirus outbreak in Rome.
◀ **BOLIVIA:** A vendor hawks face masks in La Paz. Bishops and government officials are calling for solidarity as the number of coronavirus cases increase.



USA: Fr Scott Holmer, pastor at St Edward the Confessor Church in Maryland, offers drive-through Confessions in the parking lot of the parish.



NIGERIA: Firefighters in Lagos deliberate how to put out a pipeline explosion last week. A nun and female security guard died while rescuing students from a burning chapel.



TURKEY: A worker in a protective suit disinfests the St Antuan Catholic Church in Istanbul last week. Photo: CNS



AUSTRALIA: A nurse speaks with patients at the door of a new clinic opening at Mount Barker Hospital in Adelaide.



Love in the time of Covid-19

In 1985, Nobel Prize winning author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, published a novel entitled, *Love in the Time of Cholera*. It tells a colourful story of how life can still be generative, despite an epidemic.

Well what's besetting our world right now is not cholera but the Coronavirus, Covid-19. Nothing in my lifetime has ever affected the whole world as radically as this virus.

Whole countries have shut down, virtually all schools and colleges have sent their students home and are offering classes online, we're discouraged from going out of our houses and from inviting others into them, and we've been asked not to touch each other and to practice 'social distancing'.

Ordinary, normal, time has stopped. We're in a season that no generation, perhaps since the flu of 1918, has had to undergo. Furthermore, we don't foresee an end soon to this situation. No one, neither our government leaders nor our doctors, have an exit strategy. No one knows when this will end or how. Hence, like the inhabitants on Noah's arc, we're locked in and don't know when the flood waters will recede and let us return to our normal lives.

Uncertainty

How should we live in this extraordinary time? Well, I had a private tutorial on this some



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

nine years ago. In the summer of 2011, I was diagnosed with colon cancer, underwent surgery for a resection, and then was subjected to 24 weeks of chemotherapy. Facing the uncertainty of what the chemotherapy would be doing to my body I was understandably scared. Moreover, 24 weeks is basically half a year and contemplating the length of time that I would be undergoing this 'abnormal' season in my life, I was also impatient. I wanted this over with, quickly. So I faced it like I face most setbacks in my life, stoically, with the attitude: "I'll get through this! I'll endure it!"

I keep what might euphemistically be termed a journal, though it's really more a daybook that simply chronicles

what I do each day and who and what enters my life on a given day. Well, when I stoically began my first chemotherapy session I began checking off days in my journal: day one, followed the next day by: day two. I had done the math and knew that it would take 168 days to get through the 12 chemo sessions, spaced two weeks apart.

“I began to welcome each day for its freshness, its richness, for what it brought into my life”

It went on like this for the first 70 days or so, with me

“I don't know what specifically triggered it, a grace from above, a gesture of friendship from someone, the feel of the sun on my body, the wonderful feel of a cold drink, perhaps all of these things, but I woke up”

checking off a number each day, holding my life and my breath, everything on hold until I could finally write, day 168.

Then one day, about half way through the 24 weeks, I had an awakening. I don't know what specifically triggered it, a grace from above, a gesture of friendship from someone, the feel of the sun on my body, the wonderful feel of a cold drink, perhaps all of these things, but I woke up, I woke up to the fact that I was putting my life on hold, that I wasn't really living but only enduring each day in order check it off and eventually reach that magical 168th day when I could start living again.

I realised that I was wasting a season of my life.

Moreover, I realised that what I was living through was sometimes rich precisely because of the impact of chemotherapy in my life. That realisation remains one of the special graces in my life. My spirits lifted radically even as the chemotherapy continued to do the same brutal things to my body.

I began to welcome each day for its freshness, its richness, for what it brought into my life. I look back on that now and see those three last months (before day 168) as one of richest seasons of my life. I made some lifelong friends, I learned some lessons in patience that I still

try to cling to, and, not least, I learned some long-overdue lessons in gratitude and appreciation, in not taking life, health, friendship and work for granted.

It was a special joy to return to a normal life after those 168 days of conscripted 'sabbatical'; but those 'sabbatical' days were special too, albeit in a very different way.

The coronavirus has put as all, in effect, on a conscripted sabbatical and it's subjecting those who have contracted it to their own type of chemotherapy. And the danger is that we will put our lives on hold as we go through this extraordinary time and will just endure rather than let ourselves be graced by what lies within this uninvited season.

“I can truly say that I have a great grief and that I am a happy man.”
Words to ponder...

Yes, there will be frustration and pain in living this through, but that's not incompatible with happiness. Paul Tournier, after he'd lost his wife, did some deep grieving but then integrated that grief into a new life in a way that allowed him to write: "I can truly say that I have a great grief and that I am a happy man." Words to ponder as we struggle with this coronavirus.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, March 26, 2020

Personal Profile

More than words: what music means to this Mercy Sister

Page 34



Ethical investing

The environment has been a topic that has really been heating up over the last couple of years. Protecting the planet is a value that many hold dear, including Pope Francis. *Laudato Si'* outlines the importance of the issue in detail, and in Ireland with the Fridays for Future, Friends of the Earth, Christian Aid and many more campaigning for action, things are slowly beginning to change.

You might notice a few more reusable bottles sitting around tables in the office, or that the neighbours have recently installed an electric car charger on the house. Everyone has begun to make their small effort.

This can come with a lot of pressure, making a change from the ground up is no easy task. Of



What is socially responsible or ethical investing? Róise McGagh writes how the ordinary person can drive change

course, you want to be able to do as much as you can. Reusing and recycling is manageable; however, buying products that are locally sourced, organic, fair-trade, vegan, zero waste, and ethically sourced that also suits your budget is a lot more difficult. It might not be possible all the time.

The Jesuits in Ireland recently announced that they are focusing on aiding the world's switch from fossil fuels to

renewable energy by divesting from companies lagging in this area and investing in oil companies that are transitioning to renewables. Could this be an innovative way of making a change for the better?

The International Energy Agency estimated in 2014 that \$37 trillion of investment will be needed in the world energy supply in order to move from fossil to mostly renewable energy by 2035.

The Jesuits reasoned that current governments or new investors aren't likely to be able to put up this amount of money so a large amount of it will have to come from the oil companies themselves. Many large companies have already committed to transition from fossil fuel to renewable energies such as Total, Shell, BP, Eni, and Statoil. In 2011 Total spent €1.4 billion acquiring a 60% majority stake in US solar specialist SunPower.

Fr Arturo Sosa SJ said: "Every Jesuit Province around the world is responding to this call in ways they discern to be fruitful for 'caring for the earth, our common home.'" They feel they maintain more leverage in promoting the switch to renewable energy.

This is a very interesting idea, that not only can you influence the world through your personal life choices, but you can also back larger organisations that actively drive the change you wish to see from the top down – as well as reaping some benefit.

Renewable energy investment is just one example of something that could fall under ethical investments or Socially Responsible Investment (SRI). It is not very popular in Ireland at the minute but is, in fact, not something very new at all.

Shariah-compliant funds are investment funds that follow the requirements of Shariah law and the principles of the Muslim religion. Developed around the 1960s the funds

» Continued on Page 33

Family News

AND EVENTS

INSIDE THE BOX

Now more than ever you might wish there was something happening to keep you and your family occupied. Since almost everything is cancelled due to the coronavirus (Covid-19), museums are closed and it's looking like all schools and colleges will be closed for the foreseeable future, it's time to get creative. Walking is a great way to get everyone's daily exercise in. Think about where you can go for a stroll together or where you could bring a ball, ideally not somewhere too busy or somewhere that involves taking public transport. If you need to self-isolate, try getting everyone involved in redoing the garden. Spring is an ideal time for planting and repainting fences as long as the dry weather holds up. And if you're confined indoors it could be a great time to draw, paint, redecorate or bake. Try and recreate the things you do outside of the home, inside! Kids could write and act out a short play, parents could try out some at home workouts. You just have to think inside the box!

KEEP IT PRIVATE

A recent study from Trinity College Dublin (TCD) has shown which browsers allow you to maintain the most privacy. Prof. Douglas J. Leith ran a number of tests to find out whether selected browsers tracked users' IP addresses over time and if they leaked details of the websites visited. The less popular browser, Brave, came out on top of the group. There were no identifiers that would let the browser track an IP address over time and there wasn't any sign of the browser sending details of visited webpages to background servers. Google Chrome, Safari, Firefox, Microsoft Edge and Yandex Browser were also examined in the study. The first three, which account for over 85% of the browser market, were found to track IP addresses and share details about the pages visited with the background servers of the browser's maker. The Microsoft Edge and Yandex Browser were ranked the worst in the group.

VIRTUAL PARTY

Do you happen to be some of the unlucky few that are stuck at home with little company? Luckily in this digital age there are plenty of ways to connect with friends and family. If you feel like you've exhausted Facetime and WhatsApp, and are just craving some chill out time with your loved ones, this might be for you. There is a Google Chrome Browser extension that you can get called Netflix Party. You can finally resume the series you had promised you would only finish with a particular person. The extension, once downloaded allows you to watch Netflix remotely with friends. It synchronizes the video playback so that you're all at the same point. It also adds group chat so you can talk (or joke about) the newest episode.

Bad circumstances can bring out the best in us

Driving through Dublin on St Patrick's Day was a surreal experience. Normally, the city would have been thronged with people bedecked in green, white and gold; practically every town in Ireland would have had some version of a St Patrick's Day parade and the pubs, restaurants and hotels would have been bursting at the seams with revellers. What a different scene it was with the sun shining down on the deserted roads and pavements, the odd seagull hovering over the River Liffey, deprived of its yearly discarded crumbs and scraps. It was almost like a scene from some post-apocalyptic film if it wasn't for the few lone joggers or optimistic children hopefully waving their Irish flags while out on family strolls. We are in very strange times. We're all accustomed to seeing famine, war and unrest beaming into our living rooms every day. When Covid-19 was ravaging China, it all seemed very distant as we watched from our armchairs not really comprehending what lay ahead. We felt sorry for those trapped on cruise ships that had changed overnight into floating infirmaries, but as the coronavirus tracked across Europe, we realised that it was only a matter of time. Almost everyone I encountered experienced a peculiar sense of the calm before the storm; my son said to me after his college closed down "It's like waiting for a tsunami to hit". Many felt confused and ill-prepared. Everyone could identify with the words of Prof. Michael Baker of the University of Otago in New Zealand when he stated: "No one alive today has really been through a pandemic like this



A parent's perspective

Maria Byrne

where we have to think about all these new approaches."

In uncharted territory, how will we navigate through this in our families, communities, towns and villages? To echo a message I heard on St Patrick's Day from a wise Dominican priest: "Be not afraid." In the midst of all this upheaval, financial stress, sickness and threat of sickness or death, how we can act with courage and fortitude?

St Catherine of Siena said once: "It is not the hour to seek one's self for one's self, nor to flee pains in order to possess consolations; nay, it is the hour to lose one's self." What is more applicable to our present trials? Many of us are shell-shocked, worried and in fear for our future and we are seeking comfort but now is the time to trust in the love of God and to have faith that, even in the worst circumstances, we can rely on his loving care. Being people of faith, what can we do to help our families and others in real, practical and faith-filled ways? I asked some of my children, siblings, nieces and nephews and extended family for suggestions. My 9-year-old son suggested saying the Rosary every day for those who have the coronavirus. Start new prayer routines like tuning in to online Masses or prayers and reciting spiritual communions at a set time every day. Keep in touch with parish life. Priests may feel very lonely at this time so drop in a cake or a card to show them that they're not forgotten.

One of my nephews thought it was particularly important to remember older people suggesting something as simple as offering to do a neighbour's shopping. There are many national initiatives but we can never underestimate the importance of looking after those who are in our street



and neighbourhood and our nearest and dearest. There have been calls to act together as a community, something that was the norm when I was a child. Sometimes, the worst circumstances demonstrate the strength of the human spirit and bring out the best in us. Doctors, nurses and hospital staff are working night and day but we see thousands of acts of

charity and love every day. My daughter-in-law is a carer and created a St Patrick's Day quiz for the residents in her care, playing songs and hymns to cheer them up. My daughter is eager to volunteer in a shelter for homeless women, something that worries me, but our Christian faith is about forgetting about oneself and going the extra mile. On our own it seems impossible, but with the grace of God, we can be the heroes that are now so badly needed.

Some in our immediate circle need more support. My close friend works in a busy Dublin hospital. She lives alone and can't visit her mother in Kerry until all this ends. A relative of my husband also lives alone and has lost his job in a pub. A virus can damage the body, but isolation and loneliness can afflict the spirit. We are not meant to be alone so anything that can be done to help those who'll feel cut off from society is beneficial. Overnight, many parents have become reluctant or overwhelmed home schoolers. Instead of trying to replicate school at home, they should be kind with themselves. The work that was sent home is more of a guide than a strict requirement and writing to a self-isolating grandparent, Facetimeing a lonely aunt or uncle or baking biscuits for an exhausted health care worker will teach more about Christian values than a list of algebraic equations. Through all this, remember the words of St Teresa of Avila: "Let nothing perturb you, nothing frighten you; all things will pass away." You are all in my prayers.

» Continued from Page 31



are considered to be in the category of SRI as they screen potential portfolio investments for requirements desired by followers of the Muslim religion. These requirements include the exclusion of investments which gain a majority of their income from alcohol sales, pork products, pornography, gambling or weapons. Shariah-compliant funds can also include an appointed Shariah board, a yearly Shariah audit and purifying certain prohibited income, such as interest, by donating them to a charity. Debt is shunned in the Muslim world, so they have tried to create a financial plan without bonds.

"One of the most well established and quite successful ethical investment funds in Ireland, which is kind of reasonably mainstream comes from Friends First which is obviously Quaker in origin so it stems from Christian sort of starting point as well," says Ralph Benson, co-founder and head of financial advice at Moneycube, an Irish investment intermediary company.

Most investment funds in Ireland are signed up to the United Nations (UN) Global Compact, which is a baseline of ten principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

However, you can easily go beyond this baseline by underpinning investments with your own set of values. Above that investments can be made in 'make a difference stuff', into funds that perhaps focus on advancing women through gender diversity in senior leadership positions, lowering carbon exposure, or helping social issues.

These kinds of SRI funds that aim to positively impact the world are more established in the US and the UK. This may be why the Jesuits are leaders in Ireland, they have the partnership of their UK cohorts who have equity investments of around £400 million used to finance works and projects in Britain and around

the world. They began divesting these funds from fossil fuels in 2018.

"You can tell that the fund providers in Ireland recognise that this is the direction to travel in," says Ralph. People who are close to retirement tend to have more large sums of money. However, this push is coming from a younger generation which might be why it is taking a longer for life insurance companies to open up SRIs as options.

“The Jesuits in Ireland recently announced that they are focusing on aiding the world’s switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy.”

As well as being ethically led, many people in their 30s realise that it's risky at their age to be pushing your money into an oil and gas firms. Ralph explains how there is the potential for things to look very different in 30 years' time, "So this is not just 'snowflake' millennial stuff, it's also hard-headed financial thinking if you're at that stage in your life".

Charities are also coming under pressure to – and many of them



want to - invest their staff's pensions into companies that fall in line with the ethical standards they have set. Due to increased levels of transparency for funds, companies and charities, it is expected of them and is also a lot easier for them to be aware of where all of their money is going and how it is used.

"You are sort of expected to pay a premium for it (SRI) so that it costs more, and it really shouldn't," says Ralph.

"In Ireland since the global financial crisis people are much more engaged with their money, they don't necessarily just trust experts to do it all for them. They want to understand what it's invested in and that's the general mood."

Internationally, most investment companies charge a very small amount more for SRI funds than others but in Ireland the price is hiked to almost double of that.

"I would say there is very little evidence to say that you are sacrificing because of your decision to invest ethically. You can certainly make money by doing this, you can certainly avoid risks," says Ralph. The old rules still apply to these different kinds of investments too; make sure you're not overexposed in one sector, invest in a measured way over time and keep control of any costs.

This could be a way to make an impact on the issues, companies or ideas you feel passionate about from the top down rather than the ground up. Of course, not everyone is totally literate in how to invest in these kinds of funds, or any for that matter. But if you are regularly putting money into somewhere to be invested, like a retirement or life insurance company, it may be worth it for you to inquire into whether there is the option to choose where exactly your money is invested.

So maybe reusable bottles, electric cars and diet changes aren't the only ways that we can be the change we wish to see.

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



We decided to triple my wife's potential exposure to the coronavirus. It seemed like the sensible thing to do. This decision saw my wife go from working one to three shifts per week in the emergency department of our local hospital. This is on top of her normal GP work. As a doctor, she can make a real difference as the pressure piles onto the health service as this epidemic unfolds.

The downsides of this either brave or foolish decision – depending on your perspective – are obvious.

They include the risk that my wife catches the virus, or brings it home to our four children. I could also do without catching it, especially since I have asthma. We risk becoming sick and, in the worst case, we could die. With grim common-sense, the night before she went in for her first extra shift, my wife anxiously asked if we should make a will – even though we know the statistics are in our favour.

For those of us in our 30s and 40s, the risk of dying from the virus is thankfully quite low – but not negligible. It's estimated that somewhere between 0.2% and 0.4% of this age group who catch it could die. Yet the risks for healthcare workers appear to be somewhat higher, perhaps due to the greater exposure they can receive. Hopefully, the treatments already being discovered will soon hugely improve all such grim reckonings. Thankfully, the risks to children already appear to be extremely low.

My wife's mother, who is in her 70s, is now cocooned in an apartment to the side of our house. Her welfare is our greatest concern, and we are taking every precaution. We also bade my parents farewell, knowing that the kids might not see them in person for weeks, or perhaps months. The fears of the older generation are entirely rational, given the higher risks they face. We owe it to them, and to others who are already unwell, to be as careful as possible. A daily chore for our kids is to disinfect the door handles and other items around the house.

When my wife comes home from work, myself and the older kids distract our one year old – who would be unable to understand why her returning mother could not cuddle her as normal. We stay in one room, playing with her, while my wife sneaks upstairs for a shower,

before putting the scrubs she wore at work in a hot wash. Only then does she embrace the kids.

Just last week, I overheard English tourists loudly dismissing the whole coronavirus thing as a media invention, a thing of nothing, akin to the winter flu. They are on a journey towards reality. For we all saw this virus as something distant, abstract and uncertain until recently.

Now, the risks from this malevolent virus are undeniable to all but the most obtuse. Just this week, the news came that a first cousin of mine had tested positive for Covid-19 having contracted it here in Cork. This thing spreads with great ease, shutting down modern civilisation as it goes.

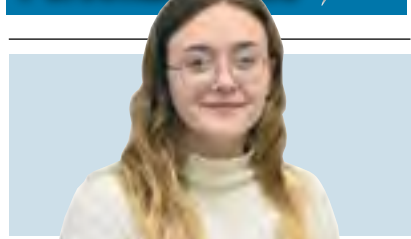
The kids' lives have been turned upside-down. They are now removed from their beloved grandparents. Their school is shut, and playdates are banned. The first day of home schooling came after St Patrick's Day. They kids set up their desks carefully. I went onto the app, where their teachers had already designated work. The older two settled into their new routine with relative ease, but our five-year-old struggled with this strange new reality. Break time came and I joined the kids for a race up and down the laneway that leads to our house.

After 'big lunch', my eldest daughter finished her work and then took on the role of schoolteacher to her little sister with some relish. She adeptly helped her with reading and writing. Her little sister relished the attention, and suddenly it all seemed like a game to her, with her older sister playing teacher. They even started calling me the principal. Yet a home school principal's life can be hard, especially when working from home – or trying to.

Our local town is now eerily quiet, with closed pubs, restaurants and playgrounds. Once bustling supermarkets have become desolate places where a few nervous shoppers coyly avoid proximity, as warning messages blare out on the loudspeaker. Flights are grounded and holiday plans are shelved, while stock markets implode and fear gains ground. Our family's world has shrunk to our house and garden. We have cheerfully met this adversity so far. It's best to roll with it, and welcome this reminder that humans are not masters of our destiny, but supplicants to it; fragile creatures who need the medicine of hope.

More than words: what music means to this Mercy Sister

Personal Profile



Róisie McGagh

Sr Marie Cox holds music close to her heart. It brought her to where she is today and has connected her to people all over the world since she joined the Mercy Sisters in January 1979.

Hailing from a small village called Arney in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, Marie was introduced to music the way many young Irish children are; the tin whistle. "Music would have been very important in the family," says Marie to *The Irish Catholic*.

One of her brothers, Gerard, has recorded several albums with Marie and including her first CD titled 'The Water is Wide'. Marie's most recent album was recorded in 2019. Her brother also taught her to play guitar at the age of nine after she had learned the tin whistle and picked up violin.

“She says it wasn't only the music that appealed to her, but she felt that religious life was calling her”.

For Marie, music and faith have always been intertwined. It was actually music that made her consider joining the Mercy order in the first place.

"For about five years before I entered, when I was in school, I played in a band then I became enthralled with the Charismatic Renewal. Again, it was the music I suppose that drew me into that



Left to right: Srs Frances Kennedy, Patricia O'Donovan, Marie Cox

because I used to go regularly to the Charismatic Renewal, once a week, and I used to play for it and sing."

She says it wasn't only the music that appealed to her, but she felt that religious life was calling her, and she had to do something about it. So, a year after she left school and with a year of administration experience under her belt, she joined.

"To be totally honest I didn't really think I would stay. As I say I entered in January 1979 and I'm still here."

Marie was encouraged to continue with music as she trained. At one stage she spent two years in music college in Dublin. On a part time basis, she would go every week for piano and violin. "At the time the sisters hoped that I would go teach music, but I never really wanted to teach music, so I don't. I never felt my calling was to teach," she says.

She has always worked as a secretary or in administration. Including the four years when she

worked on the Mercy mission in Kenya. "I went out for six months and I ended up staying four years," says Marie. She had gone out to visit a friend also named Marie (IC 06/02/20) who was working in Our Lady of Lourdes Mutomo Hospital in Kenya.

"I had no interest in going out on the mission, but I went out to visit her with a friend and I just felt it was a place where I could actually do something," says Marie.

"The hospital had been gifted at that time was a small petrol generator and the first computer which was still in a box, so I decided to go back out for six months just to see what I could do."

At that early stage the hospital wanted to start putting their records on a computer, "I used to have to go and start the generator outside the window and then go in, but I mean that was high tech at that time," says Marie.

The area, at the time she was there between 1993 and 1997, was impoverished, there was no running water or electricity apart from those petrol generators and that was only on for a few hours daily for the hospital.

"It was very tough for the people, but it was a great experience to have been there I suppose."

Marie felt that there was no end of help to give to the people there and there was no question of whether any job was useful because any help made a big impact on the area.

"Here sometimes it's a bit harder to know what to be doing to be meaningful," she says

Music followed her to Kenya too, some of the volunteer doctors and nurses would gather with her to play music. If there was a St Patrick's Day or Christmas Day there would always be a gathering of missionaries, "Then they

always ended up having music and singing and that so that was great," says Marie.

When she returned home in 1997 she began her current administrative role in the diocese of Clogher and continued with her music.

"Being able to sing and play particularly at eucharistic celebrations on thought is something I value a lot.

"You never know how it affects people and from time to time people will come up and express their thanks and how much it means. That means a lot to me because then as long as I think that people are getting something from the music.

“Marie has made 11 albums, seven of those were more religious albums on the women mystics.”

"I know personally when I go to something and the music, if it's good, very often that means more to me nearly than words," she says, explaining how really, to her it is prayer.

Marie says she would love to inspire people the way she felt inspired by the music at the Charismatic Renewal meetings.

"I'm hopeful that people get something that means something to them, and I may never hear that. But it doesn't matter, as long as it means something to people and people take something away from it."

Marie has made 11 albums, seven of those were more religious albums on the women mystics. These were composed by Sr Brieghe O'Hare who is a Poor Clare sister and asked Marie to sing her pieces.

On December 4 her and two fellow Mercy Sisters, Frances Kennedy and Patricia O'Donovan launched an album titled, 'May hope be yours', of which all the proceeds will go to The Society of St. Vincent de Paul.



Children's Corner

Róisie McGagh

Creative crafts with unexpected items

Iam sure you are bored out of your mind from hanging around at home. There's no school (although for some that's a positive), no work, and some online classes that really aren't holding anyone's attention span for too long.

Luckily, there are plenty of crafty things you can get up to with very minimal materials and all that extra time.

For the first, you'll need an old lamp from which you can remove the lampshade and a magazine. What you'll do is roll up loads of pages from the magazine and tape them at the edge so they stay rolled. Once you have plenty of these you can build your shade by gluing them together.

You can make them into any shape you want by stacking layers of the rolls on top of each other; a square, a dome or even a pyramid. Just make sure it is large enough so that it doesn't touch the bulb and also has spaces in between each roll to let heat out. A good way to do this is to start off by laying two rolls parallel to each other and then stack the next two on top in the

same way but perpendicular to the lower layer, sort of like a hashtag #.

If that sounds like a little too much effort or all your old lamps are broken, you could try out a new kind of painting. We know already that painting rocks, but can rocks paint?

Go outside to your back garden and see what kind of rocks you can find. Try and gather some large ones that are all different shapes and sizes and varying textures, smooth and rough.

Bring them in and give them some TLC with some soap and water in the sink so there's no dirt left. Dig out whatever paints you have and see how many ways you can use the rocks. Will they be your smooth fast drying canvas? Or maybe your paint brush that gives you the perfect windy grass effect. The possibilities are endless.

Something else that you can do really easily with very little materials is make a pine cone bird feeder. All you need is a pine cone from the garden (or the old Christmas decorations box), some ribbon or string, some peanut butter and some bird mix. Tie the string around the top of the pine cone, smoother it in peanut butter and roll it around in some mix. Then hang it up on a tree and grab some binoculars so you can watch the birds from afar. These are just a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing, but if you look around the house for old and unwanted things, there is always a way to make it into something new!



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



The 'digital parish' finds its feet in a crisis

Well, who would have thought that RTÉ would move to broadcasting Mass on a daily basis, and yet, in these strange times, that's what happened last week.

With the most unusual St Patrick's Day in living memory I'm sure Catholics were very grateful to RTÉ for broadcasting the St Patrick's Day Mass – slimmed down but with some beautiful music in traditional style led by Gerard Lillis.

By Thursday, daily Mass through webcam was being broadcast on RTÉ News Now every morning at 10.30am – kudos to RTÉ and Head of Religious Programmes Roger Childs for this timely initiative.

A variety of churches will be used but the first two came from St Peter and Paul's in Clonmel, where Fr Michael Toomey made the viewers feel very much a congregation, not just a viewing audience.

Last Monday the live streaming moved to Letterkenny and Bishop Alan McGuckian, with some minimal but welcome music. After the Masses there's a short reflection, *With You in Spirit*, from representatives of other faiths – on Thursday a Muslim perspective was given by Imam Dr Umar Al Qadri who was very keen to show harmony between Islamic teaching



The response to the coronavirus threat is getting good coverage on Ryan Tubridy's *Late Show* (RTÉ1).

and Government guidelines, on Friday, Rev. Gillian Wharton spoke of how she saw the presence of God in all the good work, service and kindness being practiced by so many people in the current virus crisis, while last Monday there was a Hindu reflection from Swami Purnananda.

The challenges faced by priests in the crisis were highlighted on **This Week** (RTÉ Radio 1) last Sunday – it was pointed out that many, being older, were in the vulnerable category, and had to be creative in responding to parishioners' need as they followed new protocols as regards Sacraments, especially the anointing of the sick. Bishop Kevin Doran saw

lots of good work being done and contrasted virus and virtue, being hopeful that when the virus was gone the virtue would remain.

Positive

This new phenomenon of online Mass and prayer was discussed by Ivan Yates with guests Nick Parke from the Evangelical Alliance and Fr Tom Ryan from Ennis on the *Hard Shoulder* (Newstalk) last Friday evening. They were both positive and enthusiastic about the new interest in online services. Parke reckoned that people were tuning in online who might be reluctant to attend in person for now. Fr Ryan spoke of the "digital parish" and reminded

us that these online services were nothing new, though understandably numbers were increasing.

Ivan Yates (*Hard Shoulder*, Newstalk) is one of those staying cheerful during the crisis, and that does help. Too much listening to the onslaught of bleak news can have a detrimental effect on one's mental state, and while broadcasters have a responsibility to report what's going on, it can be factual without being given an apocalyptic spin.

On Thursday evening's show he interviewed author Alice Taylor who is keeping to herself for the duration and was a rock of sense with a positive but realistic outlook. She spoke of how she practised physical distancing as she continued to engage with family members.

It is a source of pride to hear of all the volunteering going on at the moment and



Ivan Yates (Newstalk).

PICK OF THE WEEK

FATHER SPITZER'S UNIVERSE

EWTN, Saturday, March 28, 10am and Thursday, March 26, 9.30pm

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

EWTN LIVE

EWTN, Wednesday (night), April 1, 1am, Thursday, April 2, 8pm, Friday, April 3, 11am

Uju Ekeocha speaks about her new book, *Target Africa*, and the negative impact that ideologically-driven humanitarian aid has had on African nations.

THE LEAP OF FAITH

RTÉ Radio 1, Friday, April 3, 10.05pm

Topical religious issues with presenter Michael Comyn.

the hugely intense service being given by front line staff in the fight against Covid-19. This was acknowledged widely, including on last Friday's **Late Late Show** (RTÉ 1) when Ryan Tubridy gave a demonstration of coronavirus testing and interviewed some of the main leaders in this fight.

One can always find fault with Government strategies but I was impressed by the calm and rationality of Chief Medical Officer Tony Holohan, Paul Reid of the HSE and Phil Ní Sheaghda of the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation.

I was even more proud when **Sky News** (Thursday night) gave positive coverage to the Irish doctors coming out of retirement or coming home to serve from faraway

places. Mind you, that was also the programme that featured a special report from inside one of the hospitals under most pressure in Northern Italy. If there was any complacency creeping in, the distressing sights here would cure it.

The entertainment side of the media is important now too, to help keep people's spirits up. And so viewers and listeners root through the more obscure corners of Netflix and the like, while families will very likely be pleased at this week's timely launch of yet another streaming service Disney Plus. More of that anon.

boregan@hotmail.com,
[@boreganmedia](https://twitter.com/boreganmedia)



Pat O'Kelly

Music

No *Carmen* but NCH highlights still enough to relish

I had intended writing about Irish National Opera's new production of Bizet's *Carmen* due at Dublin's Bord Gáis Energy Theatre this week but, alas, Covid-19 stepped in and brought the curtain down.

It promised to be an interesting staging with Kerry's Paula Murrphy as the sultry gypsy temptress of the title role and Kildare's Celine Byrne as the demure, and somewhat awkward, country girl, Micaela. The two are, of course, in love with corporal of the dragoons, Don José.

Both singers were interviewed on RTÉ Radio 1's *Arena* programme recently and it was intriguing to learn of a connection between the two opposite characters. Celine Byrne maintained both had a



Daniel Kharitonov, common bond – courage.

Due to future commitments of the artists involved

it seems unlikely, but hopefully not impossible, that INO will be able to reschedule the four performances. It is unfortunate that, following several weeks of intense rehearsals, *Carmen* has had to be shelved.

However, let me go back to earlier this month and the latest RTÉ NSO concert at the National Concert Hall. It was an all-Russian affair directed by Moscow-born (1945) maestro Michail Jurowski. Twenty-one years old Daniel Kharitonov, who hails from Russia's far eastern region, was the exceptional soloist in Rachmaninov's *2nd Piano Concerto*.

Musical family

Jurowski, by the way, comes from a highly-talented musi-

cal family. His father, Vladimir, was a composer and two of his own sons – Vladimir, who made his debut in Wexford in 1995, and Dmitri – are both conductors. The family left Russia in 1989 and settled in Germany.

Although not the first prizewinner of the 2015 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition, Kharitonov emerged as one of its brightest talents.

Certainly his playing here was immense. He brought intoxicating flair to his performance of Rachmaninov's familiar masterpiece with playing of solid weight, without ever being harsh or brash, and produced an array of delicate pianistic colours when the music demanded.

At one with conductor Jurowski, the NSO's commitment was superb.

The rest of the programme had a legendary element to it that began with Sofia Gubaidulina's attractive 1971 piece for small orchestra *Fairy-tale Poem* and ended with extracts from Prokofiev's *Cinderella*, first performed at the Bolshoy in Moscow in November 1945.

Original score

The ballet's *première* was not an entire success, partly due to conductor, Yuriy Fayer, altering Prokofiev's orchestration on the grounds that it was too light for the Bolshoy. The following April another production at the Kirov in Leningrad restored Prokofiev's

original score and was enthusiastically received.

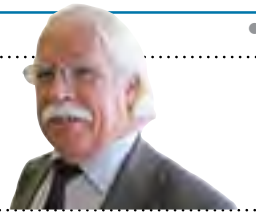
The ballet, more or less, follows the pantomime as we know it although, when Cinderella disappears from the Ball at midnight, the prince magically travels around the world before dawn to find her.

Prokofiev recorded his intentions: "The main thing I wanted to convey in the music was the poetic love of Cinderella and the Prince – the inception and flowering of the emotion, the obstacles in its path and the final fulfilment of the dream."

Maestro Jurowski and the NSO expressed the 20-odd excerpts we heard with a marvellous blend of sensitivity and panache. I loved it.

BookReviews

Peter Costello



The extraordinary life of activist Sr Helen Prejean

River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey
by Sister Helen Prejean
(Hodder & Stoughton,
£16.99)

Peter Costello

Helen Prejean is the well known author of that massive success as book, film, and even opera, *Dead Man Walking* (1993). She is one of the most powerful advocates for the abolition of the death penalty, not just in the US, but everywhere. The abolition of the death penalty she rightly sees as a leading “pro-life” issue, but very often it is not. Her point is that respect for human life has greater dimension than many people will accept.

More than that she now realised that a significant number of those executed had been wrongly convicted in the first place. As a result she wrote *The Death of Innocents: An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions* (2004), another important book.

Here in her new book, Helen Prejean tells her own life story and relates just what happened in her life that has brought her to where she stands today, and how her faith and her spirituality are dedicated to a deep sense of service to others.

This book is an *apologia pro vita sua*, a justification of the Faith she finds within her.



Helen Prejean with Pope Francis in Rome; right, Sr Prejean in her more traditional youth.

It is (to echo St John Henry Newman again) “an account of her religious opinions” since her adolescence. As such it is never less than an engaging and dynamic read, filled with interest to all who recall or would want to know about how the Church was changed by Vatican II. But it becomes

stronger and more intense as it reaches the present day, as she finds the earlier turmoil’s of Faith and feeling are settled, and the last chapters are the most deeply affecting of all. In these she finds herself increasingly engaged with the need to work for social justice as a necessary foundation for

Faith. Jesus, she believes, calls us every day to see justice is done for all.

Helen Prejean comes from a Catholic family of Louisiana – a state whose French heritage belies the claims so often made about what it is to be an American. This background is very different to the Irish-American

background to Catholicism we are too accustomed to have in mind here in Ireland; it reminds us that there were more ways of being Catholic than the Irish way.

The first part of the book deals with her life as a novice nun, and what that meant in the 1950s and 60s. She was

assigned to work as a teacher and this opened up her experience, but she later realised she was very limited in the sort of students she taught at her Catholic schools: few Black people came her way.

From the Deep South she moved north into Canada to London Ontario – and thus

Ireland’s quest for its true place in the modern world

A History of Ireland in International Relations
by Owen McGee
(Irish Academic Press,
€24.95/£21.99)

Joe Carroll

In this book the author takes up the challenge of the late Garret FitzGerald to future historians that “the international economic context behind Irish political history” should be “fully integrated into the narrative of both the Irish state and its international relations”.

Dr McGee rises to the challenge. There are 14 pages listing books and archives consulted and the footnotes to each chapter show an awesome range of research. There is a danger



here of not seeing the wood for the trees and the reader has to toil to make sense of some convoluted arguments.

That said, the effort to put Ireland’s political

history into an international economic context is a valuable exercise even if we have to begin briefly with early Irish Christianity and the Middle Ages.

The author is clearly influenced by the ideas of Arthur Griffith about whom he has written a biography. For Griffith and early Sinn Féin a new Ireland could only flourish free from British economic as well as political bonds.

Unfortunately the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty tying the Free State into the British Commonwealth and sterling zone was a brake on any attempt by the new Government to widen international trade relations;

a situation which would not really ease until the early decades of membership of the EEC.

Balances

The conservative Department of Finance was quite happy with this dependence seeing that London held the Irish sterling balances and, so the author claims, Belfast limited our banks’ freedom through its close link with the Bank of England.

In the post-World War II period the book reveals the behind the scenes manoeuvres of Irish civil servants including diplomats. They were trying to push their

political masters into fuller engagement with the United States’ efforts to use the Cold War to oversee western European economies. Ireland only reluctantly accepted Marshall Aid.

Irish post-war governments were more interested in burnishing their international credentials through membership of the United Nations, promoting nuclear disarmament and an aid programme for the Third World following Irish missionaries’ footsteps.

A theme is the secrecy surrounding the making of Irish foreign policy, especially under Frank Aiken in the 1950s and 1960s. This

was an area mainly for the *cognoscenti* – diplomats, civil servants and the few interested politicians.

The invasion of the Bogside in August 1969 and the subsequent 29 years of violence both north and south is covered in a rather summary fashion as it distracts from the economic themes.

Membership

The period also coincides with the first three decades of EEC membership which saw Ireland using its new freedom from economic dependence on Britain to connect with the wider world. Dublin governments had the twin tasks of

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.

Catholic



part of her formation was outside the culture of the modern US.

The last two parts of her book, though they emerge seamlessly from her earlier years, reveal her state of life and belief in the post Vatican decades. She was one of these nuns who took the Council at its word, and worked for a

new vision of what it meant to be a Catholic Christian. For her, Jesus became more than words on a page, but a living person, a friend rather than a distant figure of piety.

As I say, the last three chapters of this book are the most powerful, for in them she becomes fully aware of how great is the injustice in the culture she has grown up in. She embraced actively the option for the poor.

“Do not wait for the paperback next year. Buy this book now. It may well change your life”

On the way she encountered many great difficulties: the most emotionally bemusing was her relationship with a Catholic priest, which he wanted to move onto a more highly charged level, leading to them both leaving their orders. This, though it pained her, she resisted. She preserved her female integrity, and put that integrity to work for others.

A review of this kind of book, which is so deeply moving, cannot really do more than urge readers to follow her path vicariously with her, as she has described it far better than a mere critical summary can achieve.

Do not wait for the paperback next year. Buy this book now. It may well change your life, whatever age you are. This is a classic of the future, read it now.

engaging with London on solving the Troubles and seeking a new future in North-South relations while also expanding economic and political relations with Western Europe that EEC membership opened up.

“The author marvels at the transformation from the time of the Griffith dream of real independence”

EU enlargement to the former Warsaw Pact countries opened up even wider areas in international relations, political and

economic, for Dublin to exploit. The Department of Foreign Affairs added 'Trade' to it title and expanded its diplomatic coverage to almost 60 countries. The author marvels at the transformation from the time of the Griffith dream of real independence.

"In effect, within the combination of these two forums of the UN and the EU, the Irish State professed to have found a means to discover a fully aligned place within the world of international relations that could match the historic, political and cultural traditions of the Irish nation itself."

Mainly About Books

By the books editor

St Roch and prayer in times of plague

In times of crisis it's natural that people should look to their Faith for reassurance. During the days of the 'mad cow disease' (Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease) the prayer in time of plague associated with St Roch was much sought. Now, with a new kind of plague striking fear into the nation, it is being requested again.

So what is the story of St Roch and his prayer? In 1414, during the course of the deliberations of the Council of Constance, the German city on the shores of Lake Constance, the plague broke out in the city. The Council ordered public services in St Roch's honour, the saint having been long associated with relief in times of plague. The plague faded, and devotion to the saint spread across Europe.

Pope Paul III instituted a confraternity of St Roch, one of a number that were part of the Counter-Reformation initiated after the Council of Trent.

From then on the confraternities spread and the devotion to St Roch developed. He was the focus of popular novenas and prayers.

The story of the devotion to the saint in recent centuries is clear enough. But the life of the saint himself belongs to the Middle Ages of the Golden Legend and is a most confusing matter, as is the case with many saints before the time of Urban VIII, and the later researches of modern hagiographers.

“He soon passed on to visit other cities and Rome. Everywhere his apparent holiness seemed to abate the disease as he spread his example of Christian care”

The tradition was that he was born in Montpellier in the south of France around 1295 and that he died there in 1327. The city at this time was a possession of Aragon, and was quite the most important city in the Occitanie region.

St Roch had a livid red cross as a birth mark. His parents died when he was twenty. He gave up his rich inheritance to the poor, and set out as a simple pilgrim to visit Rome; but made a stay at Aquapendente, a plague-ridden commune in Lazio. He devoted himself to the care of the stricken whom he blessed with a sign of the cross.

Disease

He soon passed on to visit other cities and Rome. Everywhere his apparent holiness seemed to abate the disease as he spread his example of Christian care.

At Piacenza in the north of Italy, becoming infected, he retreated into 'self-isolation' in a forest hut. There, again according to *The Golden Legend*, he was brought a daily supply of bread. St Roch is now the patron saint of

dogs, hence his companion in pictures is a hound with a loaf in its mouth.

Recovering at last, he was said to have returned to Montpellier. As he refused to tell the authorities who he was, he was thrown into prison by order (some say) of his uncle the governor. There he lingered to death for five years.

The famous birthmark of the cross was then uncovered and he was acclaimed, not only for who he was, but as a popular saint.

He was given a public funeral, and many miracles were inevitably attributed to his intervention.

Robbery

Some scholars now think that all this happened in fact at Voghera, in Savoy, from where a little over half a century later in 1485, the agents of Doge stole his relics, where he had come to be buried and carried them away to Venice where he is now enshrined. Such pious robbery was a habit of that powerful city which had already removed the relics of St Mark, its own patron saint, from Egypt.

There is an Irish literary angle to the

The shrine of St Roch in Venice.



legend of St Roch. In Luke Wadding's *Annales Minorum* (Rome, 1731), an essential work on the early history of the Franciscans, there is an account of St Roch, who some thought was member of the Third Order of St Francis – though this is still an open question.

Wadding, an important scholar in the Irish tradition, remains, after the Golden Legend, a prime source for the life of St Roch.

Currently the Diocese of Cork and Ross and the parish of Greystones are both promoting payers to St Roch as part of their spiritual support to the Faithful in this present time of plague. Others will doubtless follow.

THE PRAYER TO ST ROCH IN TIMES OF PLAGUE

O Blessed Saint Roch,
Patron of the sick,
Have pity on those
Who lie upon a bed of suffering.
Your power was so great
When you were in this world,
That by the sign of the Cross,
Many were healed of their diseases.
Now that you are in heaven,
Your power is not less.
Offer, then, to God
Our sighs and tears
And obtain for us that health
we seek

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(Repeat the following three times.)

Saint Roch, pray for us,
That we may be preserved
From all diseases
of body and soul.

● This prayer can be cut out and mounted on light board to make a devotional card



Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email advertising@irishcatholic.ie



A beacon of hope to shine, because of you...

For Ireland's homeless and hungry, Merchants Quay Ireland's Riverbank Centre is first to open in the morning and among the last to close at night. Those with nowhere to turn can find a good meal, medical care, a helping hand, and a fresh start, thanks to donations and legacies.

Come for Tea and a Tour, in private while Riverbank is closed for a couple of hours. See confidentially how Merchants Quay Ireland uses donations and legacies to bring relief and hope. All welcome, bring a guest if you wish.

Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included on the guest list for the April 9th Tour.

Follow The Irish Catholic on Facebook
 The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper

By remembering World Missions Ireland in your Will you are leaving a gift of hope for all God's children

World Missions Ireland is the Church's official charity for overseas mission
 Please help your Church to survive & flourish

To learn how, call Eimear on 01 497 2035 or email eimear@wmi.ie



LITTLE FLOWER PENNY DINNERS
 Little Flower Penny Dinners have been providing meals and services to the homeless and the elderly for over 100 years.
 Please help us continue and donate what you can on our website www.LFPD.ie or by phoning us with your credit/debit card details or by post to Little Flower Penny Dinners, 11 Meath St, DB
 Phone 01 4536621 or 01 4546795
 e-mail: sbrigid@littleflower.ie

SERVICES

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

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.



To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact eve.kerton@focusireland.ie or phone 01 881 5917

FOCUS
Ireland

BÓTHAR

PLEASE REMEMBER BÓTHAR IN YOUR WILL. €1,800 will allow us to give an Irish, in-calf, dairy heifer to a struggling family in Rwanda, completely transforming their lives. Your gift will live on for generations. Phone the office on 061 414142 or info@bothar.ie

Remembering
MEMORIAM CARDS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
CARDS & NOTELETS
BOOKMARKS

Samples / Information
KENNEDY PRINTERS
 BANTRY, CO. CORK, IRELAND
 Tel. 027 50102
www.kennedyprinters.ie
 email: info@kennedyprinters.ie

New Titles from Veritas

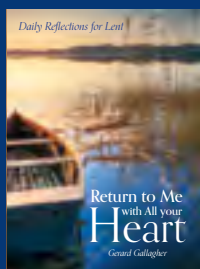


Behold The Lamb Of God: Praying Before The Blessed Sacrament
 by Fr Tom Mulligan €7.99

This invaluable collection of themed scripture readings, prayers, poems and quotations will assist worshippers in deepening and sustaining their prayer lives as they ponder the mystery of the Eucharist.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Father Tom Mulligan holds a Masters of Divinity Degree from Loyola University, Chicago. He is the author of *The Rosary Priest: A Biography of Patrick Peyton*.



Return To Me With All Your Heart
 by Gerard Gallagher €7.99

This inspiring collection of Lenten reflections is designed to prompt the reader to effect change in their day-to-day lives. A perfect companion for this essential period in the Church calendar.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gerard Gallagher works as a pastoral coordinator in the Archdiocese of Dublin. He is the author of *Are We Losing the Young Church?* (Columba Press), *Your Child's Confirmation* (Redemptorist Publications) and *Making Your First Holy Communion: A Guide for Parents* (Amazon)



Querida Amazonia - Beloved Amazon
 by Pope Francis €4.99

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Of The Holy Father Francis To The People Of God And To All Persons Of Good Will

Born out of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region, *Querida Amazonia* (Beloved Amazon) is Pope Francis' impassioned celebration of this unique area of South America and a rallying cry to nurture the entire planet.

Abbey Street & Blanchardstown Centre, Dublin
 Cork • Derry • Letterkenny • Newry



Do stay in touch!

If world wars couldn't stop *The Irish Catholic* from keeping its Faithful readers informed, then a pandemic won't either. Today there are many ways of staying in touch with your newspaper. Apart from the actual newspaper, which can be delivered to your door every week if you wish (see Page 11), you could contact us via:

- **Facebook:** The-Irish-Catholic-Newspaper
- **Twitter:** IrishCathNews
- **Online** via irishcatholic.ie
- **By mail/letter** to: The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2.
- **E-mail:** letters@irishcatholic.ie

In these difficult times, let us know how you and your community are coping with things, tell us the ways you have come up with to stay and pray 'together' and how your journey of Faith continues.

The Irish Catholic
 132 years unbroken service

Leisure time

Please pray for the beatification of

Little Nellie of Holy God

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

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

Legacy for Life



There is no greater legacy that will leave a mark on future generations than supporting our pro-life and pro-family work.

With your legacy commitment today we will Rebuild a Culture of Life in Ireland.

Call for our free brochure today to find out how you can save countless lives for years to come.

For further advice or to avail of our Solicitor's free Wills service, please contact us today on

01-8552790

Family Life

26 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1
Ph: 01 8552790 | email: fandi@iol.ie

www.familyandlife.org
www.prolife.ie

Will the MSC Missions

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

Please help us with a gift in your Will

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.

Tel: 021-4545704 Email: info@mscmisions.ie

www.mscmissions.ie

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

Trócaire

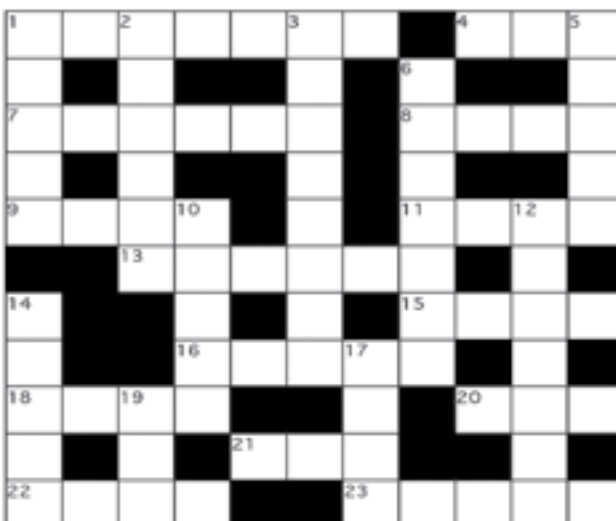
It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email grace.kelly@trocaire.org or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives.

Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 325



Across

1 Feed it to a pet that purrs (3,4)

4 A baby wolf or bear (3)

7 This might hang down in freezing weather (6)

8 One of Aesop's Fables is called "The ___ and the Tortoise" (4)

9 You read it (4)

11 Bird that goes 'quack' (4)

13 Do the best performance ever to break this (6)

15 In science, a tiny particle of something (4)

16 Afterwards (5)

18 Not as much (4)

20 "I don't want to be seen by all those people - I'm too ___" (3)

21 One way to travel over

snow (3)

22 Performed a song (4)

23 Use it for control when walking the dog (5)

Down

1 Go to the top of a mountain (5)

2 This person will make a suit just for you (6)

3 You wear it on top of your other clothes when you go out (8)

5 Smash (5)

6 A popular type of cheese (7)

10 The Book of ___ is in Trinity College Dublin (5)

12 Garments (7)

14 Book of maps (5)

17 Wicked (4)

19 It shines from the sky on a nice day (3)

SOLUTIONS, MARCH 19

GORDIUS No. 447

Across – 1 Excitement 6 Grow 10 Mambo 11 Cormorant 12 Emperor penguin 15 Ketch 17 Oven 19 Erato 21 Seventy 23 Eat up 24 Apse 25 Asti 26 Elder 33 Microchip 34 Linda 35 Node

Down – 1 Elms 2 Camembert 3 Trove 4 Macho 5 Nerd 7 Roast beef 8 Watchtower 9 Cockney 13 Rome 14 Rosehip 16 Able seamen 20 Appliance 21 Sparrow 22 Town 27 Diced 29 Expel 30 Gulch 31 Shoe 32 Fast

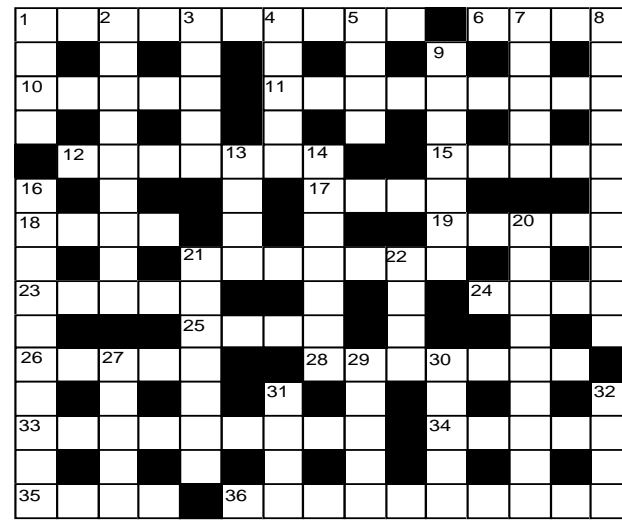
CHILDREN'S No. 324

Across – 1 Second-hand 7 Ali-Baba 8 Toe 9 Rat 10 Tide 11 Dessert 13 Rye 14 Nightmare 18 Doc 19 Holidays

Down – 1 Scattered 2 Children 3 Near 4 Hearts 5 Nettle 6 Beast 11 Dug 12 Rarely 15 Inch 16 Howl 17 Mend

Crossword

Gordius 448



Across

1 Do material differently so that what you create won't be just off-the-peg (6-4)

6 It covers the body of Southern relatives (4)

10 Kiosk (5)

11 Rent cable out to the one at the altar (9)

12 Musical instrument providing the aria Con arranged (7)

15 American state, capital Boise (5)

17 A letter is a travel document (4)

18 Besieged city of some decadent royals (4)

19 Chucked (5)

21 Rock tearing around (7)

23 Evaluate a precious metal or its ore (5)

24 Many get the chap dressed (4)

25 & 32d A sum went astray for this large bird (4,4)

26 Ben is about to become a famous playwright (5)

28 Somehow, I'm great at providing music like Scott Joplin's (7)

33 More than just a flurry of moving worms - tons! (9)

34 Make a substantial donation (5)

35 Key college of the Ivy League (4)

36 Athletics event involving seven disciplines (10)

Down

1 The name of Punch and

Judy's dog (4)

2 Historic German decoration that could make a golf club get annoyed (4,5)

3 Not the same headless parent (5)

4 Make Mother study a region in France (5)

5 Herb makes many sick (4)

7 Tree-dwelling marsupial (5)

8 Might one want iodine to be found throughout the country? (10)

9 Render unnecessary the change above it (7)

13 & 16d That 'Firebird' composer could create risky TV, signora! (4,10)

14 Eve rang around for an agent of retribution (7)

16 See 13 down

20 Exemplary type found in the ode Mellor reworked (4,5)

21 My angst is dispelled by this graceful competitor (7)

22 The taste of gnat turnover (4)

27 Three legged seat (5)

29 Own up to bringing up Timothy and Father (5)

30 Larceny by the foot (5)

31 Note the Spanish cheer for part of the tree (4)

32 See 25 across

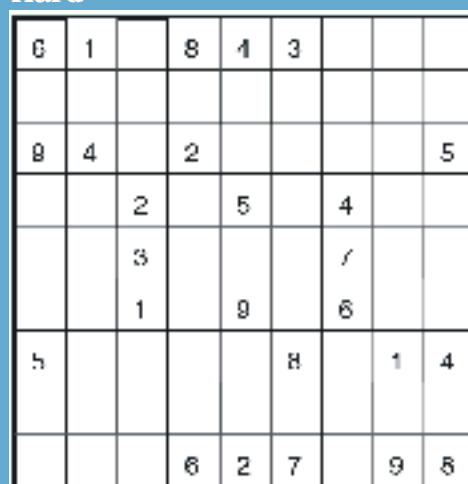
Sudoku Corner

325

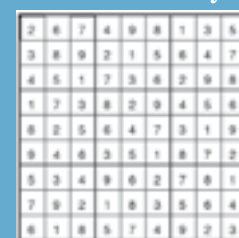
Easy



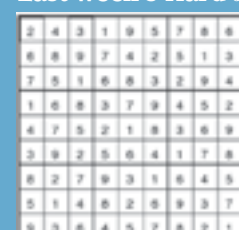
Hard

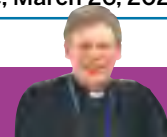


Last week's Easy 324



Last week's Hard 324



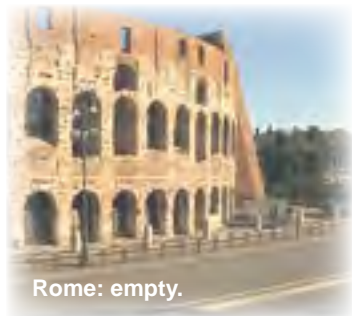


Fr Bernard Healy

Notebook

Remember the promise: *tutto andrà bene* – all will be well

AS I WRITE from a preternaturally quiet Rome, Italy is about to enter the third week of her coronavirus lockdown and Ireland is ramping up her own quarantine measures to slow the spread of disease and avoid the harrowing experience of the North of Italy.



Rome: empty.

That word quarantine has religious roots. It comes from the Italian *quaranta giorni* (40 days), and originated in the city-state of Venice. Since the 14th Century it was Venetian law that the passengers and crew of ships coming from plague-infected areas would serve a so-called *quarantena* of isolation before they were allowed on-shore.

That 40-day period comes from Scripture. Whether one thinks of the 40 days of purification that Noah passed on the Ark, the 40 years of wandering that the Israelites spent in the desert, or the 40 days of fasting that Christ endured in the wilderness, the same logic that gave us the 40 days of Lent, led the Venetians to settle on a 40-day period of isolation in order to test those who might bring disease into their city.

In Italian the link is easy to see – the word for Lent (*quaresima*)

is close to that for quarantine (*quarantena*).

In Rome this lockdown has very much been linked to Lent. The news of Venice's famous carnival being shut down was an omen that things might be more serious than previously understood.

Precautions

Extra precautions around the reception of Communion started happening when Rome's English-language community gathered for its Ash Wednesday Mass at the Basilica of Santa Sabina. News from Lombardy showed that they were dealing with a full-blown crisis, and the restrictions placed on the so-called 'red zones' in the North were extended to the whole country. Schools and universities

were closed in the middle of the first week of Lent, whilst the parish Masses for the second Sunday of Lent were the last public liturgies in the city.

Although churches remain open for prayer, the people can no longer gather for public Mass. This Lent is a prolonged Holy Saturday in more ways than one.

I wonder at the nature of this trial, when so much is being stripped away from people by this awful virus. One thing is clear: this Lent of loss, this time when so much relies on the careful discipline of the many, and the heroic efforts of the few, is forcing us to place ourselves in God's hands as we also depend on the actions of so many other people.

Even though we live as individuals, our shared physical and spiritual welfare depends on an invisible communion of care, responsibility and love.

Italian school children are encouraged to place posters in their windows reading *tutto andrà bene* – all will be well. Whatever happens, Lent always promises the arrival of Easter, and carries with it the sure hope that whatever the darkness faced, that all will indeed be well.

As one door closes, another one opens

My professor, Fr Joseph Carola SJ, drew my attention to an event in the life of St John Henry Newman.

On Christmas Day 1832, as a young Anglican clergyman touring the Mediterranean, Newman was humbled by the faith of a Catholic layman who, like many in these days, could not attend Mass. Although the poor fellow was in quarantine on a small island in the harbour of Valletta, Malta, he devoutly followed the Mass which was being celebrated in a chapel onshore.

This form of devotion was foreign to the Anglican tradition and Newman's heart was touched. He saw the man "saying his prayers with his face to the house of God in his sight over the water", and he told his sister Harriet, "it is a confusion of face to me that the humblest Romanist testifies to his Saviour as I, a minister, do not".

Although physically cut off from the Mass, the prayer of those who hunger for the Lord

are powerful.

One side-effect of the current situation is a re-discovery of the history and folklore associated with the Spanish Flu outbreak in the wake of World War I. In my first parish of Dingle there are two holy wells that stand side-by-side in a place called Kinard. One, dedicated to St Fionán, bears a cross dated 1918 that was erected at the start of the outbreak. It is said that the water there had a cure for the flu. The second, dedicated to Our Lady, has a Marian statue, erected in thanksgiving after the pandemic.

It is said that no one from that part of the parish perished from influenza. May St Fionán and Our Lady pray for us!



Please give Lenten alms for poor children

Countless missionaries throughout the world ask The Little Way Association for help to feed, clothe and house deprived children. They tell us of orphaned children left alone with no one to love or care for them, and of street children, totally abandoned, hungry and homeless, experiencing much anguish and hardship during their most tender years. Many of these children's future depends upon whether a missionary can find sufficient funds to care for them.

Shocking as the facts of child poverty are, things would be even worse were it not for the generosity of people like yourself.

Could you save the life of one child by giving alms this Lent? Simple measures such as providing a proper diet could avoid many tragic deaths.

Your Lenten gift will be gratefully received and sent WITHOUT DEDUCTION to the missions, to enable a missionary priest or sister to carry the love, care and compassion of Christ to a deprived, abandoned or orphaned child.

EVERY EURO YOU SEND WILL BE VERY GRATEFULLY RECEIVED AND FORWARDED WITHOUT DEDUCTION.



In 1893, St Therese of Lisieux wrote to her sister Celine:

"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. The very least trifle is precious in His sight."

The three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

The Catechism says: **"Giving alms to the poor is a witness to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God."**

In Lent, we can serve Christ and help the destitute with our almsgiving.

The Little Way Association uses the world's network of missionaries to help those in the direst need. Priests, Sisters and Brothers work in some of the world's poorest areas and in political trouble-spots. Our policy is never to deduct anything from donations earmarked for the relief of poverty or for missionary work.

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

- I enclose €..... to be allocated to:
- €..... **HUNGRY AND DEPRIVED CHILDREN**
- €..... **NEEDS OF MISSIONARIES**
- €..... **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 tinyurl.com/lwadonations

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.