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The Irish Catholic

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Dublin Diocese is bracing for ‘radical change’ Mass attendance down by two-thirds in some parishes

Ruadhán Jones and Chai Brady

The country’s largest diocese is preparing for what has been described as “radical change” and consolidation of parishes. It comes as statistics reveal a steep decline in Mass attendance – even before the pandemic – with some parishes seeing a drop of almost two-thirds of regular Mass-goers over the period from 2014-2019.

Statistics from several parishes across the diocese seen by *The Irish Catholic* and shared with some congregations show that the number of baptisms and confirmations have also decreased in the same time period, with funerals generally on the rise.

The statistics show an uneven picture, with some parishes particularly badly hit. Donnybrook’s congregation fell by 64% in just five years, while Merrion Road parish fell by just 2%. Cabinteely fell by 45%, while St Gabriel’s in Clontarf saw regular Mass-goers fall by just 4%.

It comes as many parishes in the capital – home to almost 1.1 million Catholics – face an uncertain future as religious orders hand more parishes back to the diocese and Dublin is faced with a wave of retirements of parish priests as they reach the age of 75.

Next month will see the Augustinian Order leave parishes in Finglas and Meath Street while the Carmelites recently departed both Berkley Road and Knocklyon. *The Irish Catholic* understands

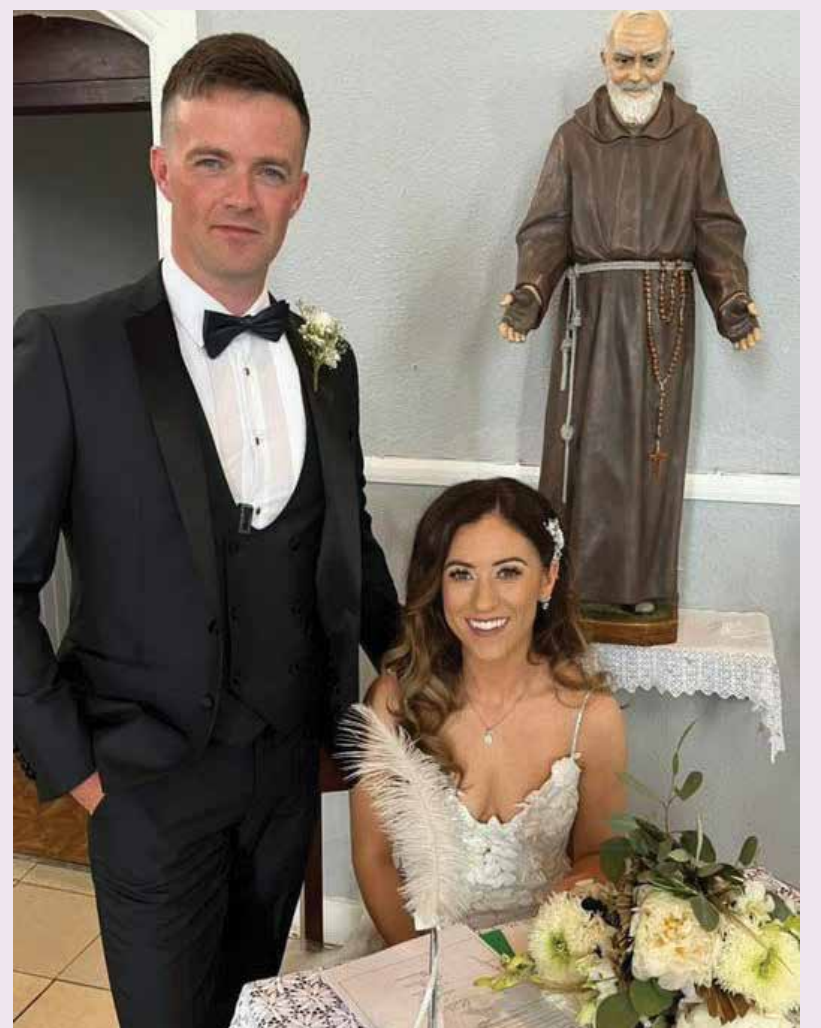
that other religious congregations – who have long served as a backstop staffing parishes in Dublin – are also poised to reconsider their pastoral future. This summer will also see a significant number of priests retiring following a backlog where appointments were on hold due to the pandemic.

“There aren’t replacement priests, so we’re trying to manage the best we can,” said Fr Seamus Ahearne OSA, outgoing parish priest of Rivermount in Finglas. “It’s happening all around really, people are very unhappy but it’s a necessity isn’t it,” Fr Ahearne told *The Irish Catholic*.

He warned that parishes without a resident priest will be a reality: “It’s a new challenge” and “in a way we have to adjust”.

» Continued on Page 2

Getting the Padre’s blessing...



Kirsty Gallagher and Philip Conlon are pictured receiving the blessing of Padre Pio after getting married May 21 in St Columba’s Church, Burtonport, Co. Donegal.

ROE V. WADE

Another reason to keep rallying for life

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LIVING A LEGACY

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JANE MELLETT

Responding to the cry of creation

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Parishes should be communities of service to those in need

Pope Francis is increasingly showing the signs of ageing, at least physically. The 85-year-old Pontiff has been increasingly moved around the Vatican in a wheelchair in recent weeks. He now regularly appears with a walking cane aimed at taking the weight off his knee which has been ailing him in recent months. According to the Holy See Press Office, Francis is receiving two hours of physical therapy every day in a bid to get him back to walking unaided.

One particularly vocal doctor who was working with the Pope – Nelson Castro – even told reporters that Francis would be helped greatly if he would lose some weight. I suppose speaking out of turn at the Papal Court is not the crime it once was.

I wish every success to the papal physicians, and in particular to Francis that he may get some respite from the pain that he was clearly experiencing when I met him last month at the Vatican.

“Francis is receiving two hours of physical therapy every day in a bid to get him back to walking unaided”

Mending an ailing Church is a taller order – and one that we would do well to heed the Pope's call for co-responsibility on.

The synodal process is gathering pace in parishes and faith communities across the world. In Ireland, many dedicated people have given their time and energy to articulate what a Church with a future would look like in the Irish context.

Undertaking

The global consultation is a huge undertaking with everything being fed back to Rome. And, of course, it makes sense that it is all fed back to Rome – for it is from the eternal city that Pope Francis governs the Church as Christ's Vicar.

“The global consultation is a huge undertaking with everything being fed back to Rome”

Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Pope Francis is pushed in a wheelchair by his aide, Sandro Mariotti, as he greets participants in the plenary assembly of the women's International Union of Superiors General (UISG) at the Vatican on May 5. Photo: Vatican Media

There is a danger inherent in this approach, however. The danger that the consultation process itself becomes overly-centralised rather than the decentralised model that the Pontiff so ardently desires. Francis has repeated his belief time and again that true reform in the Church comes not from the centre, but from the margins.

Lesson

There is a lesson in all of this for us – and the lesson is thus: stop looking upwards for an 85-year-old man with a sore knee to lead all reform and renewal within the Church.

It is vital, of course, that Francis set the mood music for the synodal pathway, but if we see our role in the reform of the Church as little more than attending meetings and sending a report to the diocese it is doomed to fail from the beginning.

Genuine reform in the Church will never happen by the stroke of a Petrine pen or by fine words in an encyclical from Francis. A top-down approach to reform will never achieve what we want: that is to be more authentically the pilgrim people of God walking together patiently listening

to the Word of God and discerning what the Holy Spirit is saying about the future of the Church.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Querida Amazonia*, Pope Francis proposed that the real reform that is needed in the Church is transcending traditional divisions and “finding other, better ways, perhaps not yet even imagined”.

“Genuine reform in the Church will never happen by the stroke of a Petrine pen or by fine words in an encyclical from Francis”

At the end of the day, this Easter season gives us

a wonderful example in the readings that the Mass sets before us – day after day we hear about the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles.

Communities

If our parishes can become communities where we gather together to share the Eucharist based on our common service to those in need and love for one another, then they will be Christ-centred communities of Faith. If not, we will have shown that we have nothing to offer people who are seeking a way to live our life marked by love for others.

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Mass attendance down by two-thirds in some parishes

» **Continued from Page 1** Saggart-based Fr John Gilligan said that priests are braced for “radical changes” in Dublin in the next few years due to the age profile and declining attendance.

The ‘Building Hope’ taskforce report released earlier this year showed that more than a third of the 312 priests in the diocese are over 70 years of age. A source told *The Irish Catholic* that Archbishop Dermot Farrell is keen that parishioners come to terms with the reality of the challenges the parishes are facing.

To that end, thousands of Catholics across the diocese will be gathering over the coming weeks to discuss the findings of the taskforce.

“That’s why parishes are gathering now, asking how we can work alongside each other and support neighbouring parishes,” Fr Gilligan, moderator of Saggart, Newcastle and Brittas told *The Irish Catholic*.

“That’s going to be very much part and parcel of the discussions for next year,” he added. “We’ve got to be realistic, but in the next few years there will definitely be parishes that wouldn’t have a resident priest.”

Fr Bryan Shortall OFM Cap. warned that the current situation is unsustainable. Priests are “already being run off our feet,” and insisted that numbers “are going down exponentially and its beginning to be felt”.

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Coveney's response to Cardinal Zen arrest 'tame', says TD Carol Nolan

Ruadhán Jones

Minister Simon Coveney's response to the arrest of Cardinal Joseph Zen in Hong Kong is "tame" and displays a diplomacy that is "terrified by its own shadow", said TD Carol Nolan.

In a response to a parliamentary question from Ms Nolan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs did not specify if he will raise the Catholic prelate's arrest directly with China.

Minister Coveney said he was "concerned" about Cardinal Zen's arrest and added that it is "the latest in a series of actions under the National Security Law that impinge upon fundamental freedoms for Hong Kong".

"Ireland will continue to raise concerns directly with China and to address these issues in the appropriate multilateral fora," Mr Coveney continued in his response.

Commenting on Minister Coveney's statement, Ms Nolan told *The Irish Catholic* that "Ireland's response, and the PQ reply in particular, while welcome and better than nothing, is very much as tame

and muted a response as we have to expect.

"We seem more concerned with not saying anything remotely offensive than forthrightly and forcefully condemning such actions," the independent TD continued.

"Ireland needs to develop a powerful authentic human rights based vision and not just this, tread softly, diplomacy that seems terrified of its own shadow."

Ms Nolan said that Cardinal Zen's arrest is a religious freedom issue, adding that "the arrest of such a high ranking member of the Church speaks to an arrogance and a sense of immunity that the Chinese authorities feel they must have".

Cardinal Joseph Zen was among a group of four people arrested separately and detained by the Hong Kong National Security Police for alleged conspiracy to collude with foreign powers.

All four of those arrested served as trustees of the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund, which provided assistance to pro-democracy protesters during the 2019 unrest in Hong Kong.

'I'm Bono, what's your name?'



Pope Francis greets U2 singer Bono before a meeting of Scholas Occurrentes in Rome May 19. The event was for the launch of the *Laudato Si'* School, dedicated to the protection of the environment. Photo: CNS

Holy Land book set for Omagh launch

Chai Brady

A new book on the Holy Land aimed at encouraging pilgrims to follow in the footsteps of Christ will be launched in Omagh, Co. Tyrone next week.

An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to the Holy Land by Editor of *The Irish Catholic* Michael Kelly explores a variety of themes, from

an in-depth look at the important sites associated with the ministry of Jesus, to the culture, history, cuisine and more.

Mr Kelly has led more than a dozen pilgrimages to the Holy Land and the book is described as the fruit of painstaking research. The book will be launched by Primate of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin in the Cap-

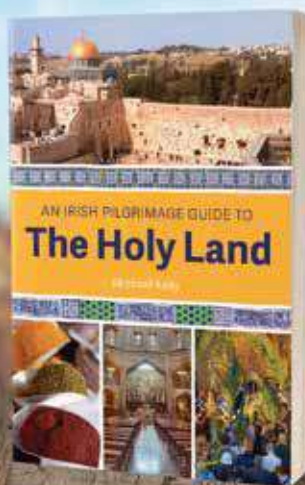
pagh Parish Centre, Killyclogher, Omagh at 8pm on Friday June 3. Mr Kelly said he hopes the book "will simultaneously serve as a resource for anyone going to the Holy Land, but also as a guide for anyone wanting to deepen their understanding of the holy places or even undertake an 'armchair pilgrimage' to the Holy Land".



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St Francis' vision restored by new papal ruling, say Irish Capuchins

Ruadhán Jones

The Irish Capuchins have said that Pope Francis' ruling that religious brothers can now be superiors of orders is "a return to the original vision of St Francis of Assisi".

The day the Pope published the change was a "day of great rejoicing" within the Franciscan family, Bro. Richard Hendrick OFM Cap. told *The Irish Catholic*.

Bro. Richard said that the Franciscan orders have continually petitioned the Vatican to allow them to restore the "foundational charism" of St Francis by allowing brothers to be a provincial superior or superior general.

"The Pope's ruling is a major, major step toward restoration," Bro. Richard said. "It allows a return to the original vision of St Francis of Assisi."

"The religious order he founded

was primarily a fraternity of brothers, where priests were outnumbered.

"In the early order, the title of Franciscans was simply 'brother', whether ordained or not," Bro. Richard continued.

However, over time the order became more clerical and it meant that only ordained brothers could take up those leadership roles.

After the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, religious orders were

encouraged to look back to their original inspiration, Bro. Richard said.

"All Franciscan male orders decided that it was very important to begin to put before the Holy See the idea that we really aren't being fully faithful to the charism and inspiration of Francis if we're not allowing the fullness of brotherhood to be present," he added.

"Orders have continually asked for that to be restored and this is a

major, major step towards restoration... It's a day of great rejoicing, not just for the Franciscans, but any religious order that includes both lay and ordained members."

The rescript from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, published by the Vatican May 18, said the approval for appointing or electing a brother to head a "clerical institute" would be given "discretionally and in individual cases".

SJI says 'flawed' response to Ukrainian refugees could cause problems

Staff reporter

Social Justice Ireland have warned that "flaws" in the Government's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis could lead to problems, as the cost of living crisis hits Ireland.

Fr Sean Healy SMA, head of SJI, told *The Irish Catholic* that while the Government have taken a good, human rights approach to the Ukraine crisis, "there are flaws in the way they're doing it".

"They have to resource it properly, because they have to deal with

migration on the one hand and similar problems among residents who are here already," Fr Healy said.

The situation in Ireland is already "pretty desperate", Fr Healy warned, as just under 600,000 people are living in poverty in Ireland as of 2021.

"People are having to make

choices between food or fuel," he said, adding that "the Government needs to act with more urgency and more strategically".

Everyone in Ireland has a right to "appropriate accommodation, basic healthcare, education and enough income to live life with dig-

nity... whether they have been here for decades or are refugees from Ukraine, Syria, Afghan or Iraq", Fr Healy continued.

"All of these people have a right to those kinds of basics and until they are in place, there will be problems with poverty."

Safeguard future generations bishop warns during Laudato Si' Week

Chai Brady

People must change their lifestyles to combat climate change for the sake of future generations, Bishop Martin Hayes said ahead of *Laudato Si'* Week, which is taking place this week from May 22-29.

Laudato Si' Week marks the seventh anniversary of the publication of the Pope's encyclical on the environment and care for our common home.

Bishop Hayes said, "The valuable guidance offered to society by *Laudato Si'* is once again evidenced by the report, in April, of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change, which shows that global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. It is past the time to call on others to begin to limit use of fossil fuels, we now need to make rapid transformation to avoid the worst effects of climate impact.

"For the sake of our future generations we cannot afford to be slow learners on the vital

issue of sustaining creation. But we can act now."

The bishop urged people at parish level to form eco-awareness groups to help the Church apply *Laudato Si'* in practice and encourage people to sign up to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform at <https://laudatosiactonplatform.org/>

Our Lady's Fatima flock



Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin blessed and dedicated the new grotto of Our Lady of Grace in Forkhill parish, Co. Armagh accompanied by parish priest Fr Emlyn McGinn VF and Deacon George Kingsnorth. The children of St Oliver Plunkett PS re-told the story of Fatima for those present.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Former nuncio to Ireland imitated for money in Philippines scam

Two Church groups have issued warnings to Catholics, telling them to beware of a fraudster seeking money by posing as apostolic nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Charles Brown.

The former papal nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Brown is being imitated by a man who, at least in one case according to ucanews.com, even celebrated a private Mass in a chapel.

The reports of the fraud come as the Philippines bishops' conference issued a warning about fake email messages circulating that claim to be from the nuncio, Archbishop Brown.

The San Lorenzo de Manila group in Cagayan de Oro Archdiocese on Mindanao said a Caucasian male in his 50s had sought donations from its members, claiming he was Archbishop Brown.

The morality of theft...

Is stealing wrong? I think most of us have been taught that it is, deriving from the Ten Commandments. Theft hurts not only the victim, but the common good, since it diminishes trust in society.



Mary Kenny

“But in Britain, Andy Cooke, chief inspector of Her Majesty’s Constabulary, has instructed his officers to ‘go easy’ on those shoplifters who are so desperate that they are stealing food”

Fear of theft creates anxiety and distrust of our neighbours. When in Dublin, I like to attend Mass at St Teresa’s in Clarendon Street, but it is somewhat dispiriting to see that almost everyone who goes to the altar clutches their bags and even shopping with them, for fear of leaving them on the pew, even momentarily. That shows what fear of theft can do to community feeling.

But in Britain, Andy Cooke, chief inspector of

Her Majesty’s Constabulary, has instructed his officers to “go easy” on those shoplifters who are so desperate that they are stealing food. The police should, he says, use their discretion and not necessarily prosecute people who are in genuine need during a rising cost-of-living crisis, and inflation at the highest since the 1970s.

Some have scoffed at Mr Cooke’s guideline, pointing to a disastrous experiment in San Francisco, when shoplifting was virtually decriminalised – prompting a 500% increase in theft in one chain of pharmacies.

And yet, Andy Cooke’s initiative is straight out of a strand of Catholic social teaching, which indeed decreed that, while theft was a sin, there were sometimes extenuating circumstances: if a mother stole food to feed a starving child, the transgression was mitigated. This was one of the bases of Victor-Hugo’s famous novel *Les Misérables*,

in which stealing for food was presented as more a forgivable necessity, less a deliberate crime.

“The French Marxist Proudhon argued that property itself was theft”

Perhaps the object of the theft is also part of the context: perhaps people feel it is less heinous to nick from a big supermarket than from a small family shop, which struggles to survive. Some left-wingers also advance the theory that there are other forms of theft – tax avoidance, disproportionate profits. The French Marxist Proudhon argued that property itself was theft.

There’s a delicate balance, for sure, between compassion for those in desperate need, and maintaining a rule of law which follows the Commandment: “Thou shalt not steal.”



● I went to see the acclaimed Irish-language film (some of it in English) *An Cailín Ciúin* mostly to check out how much of the language I could follow without reading the subtitles.

Claire Keegan, who wrote the original story, is a rather sombre writer, in my view, and I expected the movie to be one of those ochone-agus-ochone sad lamentations about a miserable childhood. I was utterly wrong, and the movie, directed by Colm Bairéad completely won me over for its delicate portrayal of the bonds of attachment, and how meaningful silence can be. (“Many lost the opportunity to say nothing,” one of the characters tells us, referring to blatherers.) Carrie Crowley, Andrew Bennett and the child actress – the “quiet girl” – Catherine Clinch, are superb.

The story, which had me in tears in the end, is a reminder of how the love for a child grows with care and ‘minding’. And yes, I grasped quite a bit of the Irish-language dialogue – *ceart go léir!*

Honoured housekeepers

There was a funeral Mass during the week, in our Kentish town, of the much-respected housekeeper to the (also deceased) previous parish priest. Announcing the event, the present PP ruefully reflected on the past era when priests would always have a housekeeper. “My housekeeper is called a microwave,” he quipped. Indeed, a sign of the times, and perhaps an indication of the solitariness of many

priests’ situation these days.

Frank O’Connor, the peerless Cork short-story writer, wrote an entertaining, and insightful (if mildly misogynistic) story about the category of priestly housekeepers in Ireland – often women with great local power. “But the most powerful among these are the housekeepers of bishops.” If the bishop banned a local dance, wrote O’Connor, it might well have

been at his housekeeper’s prompting. Nellie, the housekeeper in the story – called *Achilles Heel* – feels quite entitled to appear on the altar cancelling the eight o’clock Mass because she’s decided to confine the bishop to his sickbed – not his decision, but her’s. O’Connor suggests she’d have been perfectly capable of saying the Mass herself!

● I’ve been – optimistically – putting away my winter woollies, but no longer enfolded with traditional mothballs, since these contained naphthalene, a polycyclic hydrocarbon now banned by the EU as toxic and possibly carcinogenic. The hot tip is that a bar of soap, or several bars of soap, will do the job of deterring moths from eating up your jumpers and scarves, so I’m trying that. Although sometimes, thinking of “all creatures great and small”, I’m sorry for moths, who are the despised cousins of butterflies, and they have to live too!

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Bill 'huge step forward' from simplistic Boris Johnson NI legacy approach

Chai Brady

A bill aimed at tackling legacy and reconciliation in the North of Ireland must be focused on victim groups rather than on British army veterans the bishop of Derry has said.

Bishop Donal McKeown told *The Irish Catholic* the bill is "a huge step forward" as previously the British government was pushing for the ending of all Troubles-era prosecutions, effectively amnesty across the board.

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy

and Reconciliation) Bill was introduced to the House of Commons in Westminster by the Secretary of State Brandon Lewis last week.

Speaking about the bill, Bishop McKeown said: "It's a complex approach. I hope we can begin the conversation with many of the victims groups to ensure that they are prioritised rather than just the veterans of the British army, the focus has to be on those who suffered here because they were the main victims. It's gone a long way from the simplistic approach that Boris Johnson has all right."

One of the main elements of the bill is that those who co-operate with the investigations

of a new information body – the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery – will have immunity from prosecution. Bereaved families can request investigations, as can the government and others.

Regarding victim support through the process, Bishop McKeown asked: "What support is there going to be for people who asked to have truth about their families and now they're horrified at the truth? There will be a need for trauma support services, perhaps mediation services."

He also expressed concern that "since the whole Good Friday Agreement is an

international agreement, involving the Republic as well as the UK, we should have queried whether the Republic had any role to play in the formulation of this and we thought if we're going to ensure that – in the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement – everyone is on board, that this has to be something that looked at the international dimension of reconciliation rather than just the internal issues.

"We're seeking to move the process forward in a way that helps people, we're not looking to get political points, we're coming from a pastoral perspective," Bishop McKeown added.

Abortion push in NI 'ignores democracy and devolution'

Staff reporter

A push to speed up the availability of abortion services in the North of Ireland has been dubbed "undemocratic" by pro-life group Precious Life.

This comes after the British government's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis approved new powers allowing him to accelerate the widespread commissioning of abortion services, saying it was his "legal duty".

This will remove the need for the Department of Health to seek the approval of the wider Stormont Executive to commission the services.

Founder of Precious Life, Bernadette Smyth said: "What Brandon Lewis has done is ignored

democracy and devolution, by doing this he has undermined the Good Friday Agreement as well. Abortion in Northern Ireland is a devolved issue. He has run roughshod over the devolution set up here. Westminster's cruel and devastating abortion agenda is not supported by the people of Northern Ireland.

"This also exposes the hypocrisy of pro-abortion MLAs in Sinn Fein, Alliance and SDLP, who protest when Westminster tries to interfere on other issues – yet welcome and support Westminster's interference when they force abortion on Northern Ireland."

Bernadette Smyth added: "Precious Life will continue our campaign to Repeal Section 9 and restore full protection for all unborn babies in Northern Ireland."

Catholic Tenor Bocelli celebrates daughter's Communion

Jason Osborne

Renowned Italian Catholic tenor Andrea Bocelli took to social media to celebrate his daughter, Virginia's, First Holy Communion, writing that Communion means "growing in friendship with Jesus and wishing that others too can enjoy the joy he wants to give us".

Catholic faith

Well-known for his Catholic faith, Mr Bocelli took the occasion May 16 to write to his daughter about the meaning of the Sacrament she was receiving.

"Dear Virginia, how much grace (divine and earthly) filled this

day, when you first approached the Sacrament of Communion! That smile that enlightened you tells us how you yourself have perfectly understood the sweet responsibility and the reason for great joy that this ritual encapsulates and gives us: "the communion", wonderful word, communion with the world, in which it is my brothers, communion with heaven, of which we are children."

Joyful commitment

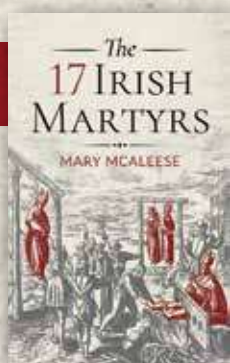
Mr Bocelli wrote that the celebrations are a "joyful commitment" and speak of the heavenly Father "that didn't give up on us".



Andrea Bocelli with his wife Veronica Berti and their daughter, Virginia, celebrated Virginia's First Holy Communion with their parish priest. Photo: Instagram.

ON THE FEAST DAY OF THE IRISH MARTYRS
A TALK ON

The 17 IRISH MARTYRS



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SPEAKERS



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'Walking the Synodal Pathway together'

Many Christian Churches already enjoy a long history and rich experience of synod. Perhaps the most significant innovation of Pope Francis is the recovery of synodality within the Roman Catholic tradition. In terms of potential for change, this world-wide consultation is on a par with the Second Vatican Council, with the added key dimension of all the laity in the Church. Nothing quite like this on such a scale has ever been attempted before. These are exciting times — who knows where the Spirit will lead us? There is much learning to be done and, in particular, the wisdom of other traditions more familiar with synodality will be a key ingredient. The wisdom of the Bible will also furnish essential wisdom, spirituality and discernment.



Seán Goan is the coordinator of Spiritan Mission Animation Ireland and a lecturer in biblical theology. A retired teacher who has worked in the area of Catholic Education and Adult Faith development for over thirty years.



Fr. Kieran J. O'Mahony OSA is an Augustinian friar and a biblical scholar. Recently, he completed a nine-volume project on the Sunday readings entitled *Hearers of the Word*.



Daily Schedule;

Thursday 16th June: 3 presentations

Presentations: 9.30-10.30am, 11am-12 noon,
2pm-3pm

Eucharist: 5pm

Evening Lectio: (optional): 7pm

Friday 17th June: 4 presentations

Presentations: 9.30-10.30am, 11am-12 noon,
2pm-3pm, 3.30pm- 4.30pm

Eucharist: 5pm

Evening Lectio (optional): 7pm

Saturday 18th June

Finishing with Q&A session
9.30am-1pm

In order to facilitate people all over the country and further afield, we are delighted to offer participants the option of joining online or in-person.

Location to attend in person: St John's Rest & Care Centre, Knock Shrine

To book online:

www.knockshrine.ie/scripture-summer-school

Fee: €40

*Note: Regardless whether you are attending in person or online, you must book your tickets online at **www.knockshrine.ie/summer-scripture-school**

Niamh Uí Bhriain

The View



Demise of Roe v. Wade is another reason to keep rallying for life

The Supreme Court of the United States looks set to overturn the ruling in Roe v Wade which legalised abortion on demand across the country. Although this will likely mean that some states will keep abortion legal while others will ban or restrict it, the decision has enormous symbolic significance in the US and elsewhere.

It should also give us fresh hope and defiance as we plan to meet for the first time since the Covid lockdown at the All Ireland Rally for Life in Dublin on July 2.

The Roe decision was made in 1973 - almost 50 years ago - and the Court ruled that abortion was a right under the privacy clause of the constitution. This was, obviously, nonsense: the decision ignored the humanity of the baby and was, according even to the last Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg who was an avowed supporter of abortion, wrongly decided.

Different judges

The Supreme Court now has a different set of judges, and they have a very different view on this issue. Justice Samuel Alito, in a draft ruling for the Court which was leaked and may yet change, said that the judges had decided that Roe "must be overruled". And he didn't pull any punches about why.

“The Supreme Court now has a different set of judges, and they have a very different view on this issue”

“Roe was egregiously wrong from the start. Its reasoning was exceptionally weak, and the decision has had damaging consequences. And far from bringing about a national settlement of the abortion issue, Roe and Casey have enflamed debate and deepened division,” the draft ruling says.

The good tidings come after a wave of bills have been enacted or proposed seeking to restrict or abolish abortion in America, including heartbeat legislation in Texas which has already caused abortions to drop by 60% in that state.



Norvilia Etienne, of Students for Life in the US, holds a sign outside the Supreme Court of the United States on May 3. Photo: CNS

What do these developments mean now for Ireland, a country which held the line against abortion for decades after others had fallen, but has now, sadly, repealed the 8th amendment and seen a shocking subsequent rise in abortion rates? What can we learn from those who are turning the tide, even as we work to rebuild our broken culture?

Firstly, what is evident, not just from the US but from other jurisdictions such as Poland and Croatia, is that the power of perseverance is key. Change comes slowly, but change is also driven, it doesn't simply happen by itself. For almost 50 years, the

pro-life movement worked and prayed ceaselessly in order to overturn Roe, but also to change the culture.

Perseverance

It was always a multi-faceted approach, and it was powered by that same determination that is keeping the flame alive here in Ireland. Almost 50 years of perseverance culminated in three pivotal, change-making outcomes for America:

- Under Donald Trump and other prior conservative presidents, pro-life judges were appointed to the Supreme Court. This shift in the legal landscape is key to overturning Roe.

- Polls show that a majority of Americans now want, at the very least, to restrict the grounds for abortion, and reduce the numbers. That cultural change was driven by years of education and awareness campaigns from the pro-life movement, and by the rise of conservative media.

- Initiatives which sought to elect and support pro-life politicians have grown, and produced results such as the Texas heartbeat bill which has already reduced abortions by 60% in that state.

Throughout the past 50 years then, the pro-life movement never gave up, despite years of trial and disappointment, because the life of a

child is worth fighting for. They kept the path lit, and the flame alive. That's what's driving those who believe in the right to life of every person forward in Ireland too.

“Polls show that a majority of Americans now want, at the very least, to restrict the grounds for abortion”

On July 2, it's vital that we join with thousands of other pro-life people, activists, and families for the All Ireland

Rally for Life in Dublin. It's Ireland's biggest pro-life event, now in its 16th year, and it's where we stand together for life, and call this cruel abortion regime to account.

Shocking

This year, as the government drags its heels on actually examining the shocking outcomes of the abortion law, it's vitally important that the rally is as visible and vibrant as possible.

Join us, as we take heart from the end of Roe, and welcome the changes that are happening throughout the world as the culture slowly changes. Just this month, we learned that almost 60% of doctors in Croatia said they would refuse to do abortions on conscience grounds.

The pro-life message is rising. Be part of making it heard, be part of the change that will save lives and rebuild the culture.

“The good tidings come after a wave of bills have been enacted or proposed seeking to restrict or abolish abortion in America”

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Let's have a little bit of charity



The sisters started their work in the most desperate of situations.



Religious sisters feel they can't even be listened to respectfully, writes **Garry O'Sullivan**

"The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones," William Shakespeare writes in *Julius Caesar*.

“You would think we were evil” a source close to the Religious Sisters of Charity told *The Irish Catholic* last week. “We’ve been treated like monsters. In no way do they want the Church involved in any way. Yet many, many peo-

ple experienced the care and the work the nuns had done, many in the Irish population experienced care and concern and compassion. Yes, there were some exceptions but for the most part the good that was done was amazing.”

But nobody in the media or body politic wants to hear about the good that was done.

Bishop William Crean, speaking on Vocations Sunday, got it spot on when he said: “The odium of the nation has been poured out on virtually all religious women and men from previous generations.”

Frontlines

It is still being poured out today and the sisters, founded by Mary Aikenhead, are on the frontlines. The nuns are bewildered that they can be painted in such a negative light and are apparently terrified of the Irish media, feeling that there is no point engaging as whatever they say will be misconstrued or vilified. Isn't that an extraordinary state of affairs in our modern public sphere, where a tiny minority group are demonised to the point that they feel their voice won't

be listened to or treated respectfully as another point of view?

“But nobody in the media or body politic wants to hear about the good that was done”

No one is saying the Religious Sisters of Charity are all saints – although I'm sure people who were on the receiving end of their care and compassion since they first started caring for cholera victims in 1832 would say they met many who were – they are Irish citizens who for the most part have given their lives to make our country a better place. As Bishop Crean said: “All who responded to a vocation did so with generosity and humility

and having expended their lives in nursing, teaching or social outreach they left the world without a cent in the pockets of their shrouds. They gave of their all for others. But they were like all humanity earthen vessels subject to failure and imperfection.”

Contribution

He went on to say: “From Penal Times we have a well-documented history of the contribution of priests diocesan and religious who dedicated their lives to the service of people spiritual and temporal. Priests and religious as ones who had the benefit of education were the voice of the people who had no voice. So many of the educational and healthcare structures of the nation were laid down by those in Church leadership in service of the poor and under privileged. While

through the decades of the 19th and 20th century so many left our shores because of the lack of opportunity at home, they still distinguished themselves by their dignity, sense of values and initiative, despite their difficult backgrounds”.

“They were like all humanity earthen vessels subject to failure and imperfection”

The bishop continued: “In the current narrative ‘round the place of the Catholic Church in Ireland there is a real imbalance. Because of our skewed populist and inadequate historical perspective, a whole dimension of our culture and identity is being denied at our peril. What is at stake is the

inclusion or exclusion of the ‘community of believers’ from participation in key dimensions of society”.

He adds: “That selective narrative which conveys a message of negativity ‘round all things religious and spiritual is the fruit of a commentariat group think that operates in self-referential silos. As an entity it exercises great influence. Even the representative political apparatus is on the run before them. Our citizens assemblies are a fabrication of controlled selectivity to which unaccountable authority has been ceded.”

Heroes

We’ve come so far from the days when priests and religious were heroes to Irish society. With Covid-19 fresh in our minds, let's jog the collective memory a bit and go back to the work of the Religious Sisters of Charity

“From Penal Times we have a well-documented history of the contribution of priests diocesan and religious who dedicated their lives to the service of people spiritual and temporal”

during the Cholera Epidemic of 1832/33, two years before the founding of St Vincent's Hospital in 1834 - when they and other religious and priests and clergymen and doctors all risked their lives in the full knowledge that it would likely kill them.

Cholera, a highly infectious disease, spread from India to Russia and then on into Europe reaching Ireland in early 1832. From 1832 to 1833 it claimed 50,000 lives. It killed people very quickly and very painfully. Hugh Fenning OP wrote an article in 2003 published by the Catholic Historical Society of Ireland documenting - from sources such as death notices from newspapers of the day - the number of priests, ministers and doctors who died having come into contact with the disease through their work and or ministry.

Obituary

Here are a few obituary entries:

1832, Before May 3. A medical gentleman who came to Dublin to see some cases of the distemper was himself a patient in a few hours and his life is now despaired of. From *The Dublin Times*.

1832, May 3. Long tribute to the clergy of Dublin and the Sisters of Charity for their attention to cholera victims. Text of a letter from one of the nuns to a friend describing their work in the Hospital at Grangegorman Lane. Even the nurses are terrified (WC 3 May, from *The Freeman's Journal*).

1832 May 17. On the 17th instant in the 76th year of his age, the Rev. Nicholas Kearns, many years parish priest of Rathfarnham, in the county Dublin... Briefly arrested in 1798 while curate in Meath Street.

1832, May 19. John Ryan, bishop of Limerick, addresses a circular letter from Park House to the clergy. On the adjustment of Church services during the outbreak of cholera. Sermons and Vespers are forbidden. Communion to be given only after Mass. Benediction to be given seldom and as briefly as possible. He repeats the directives of the Central Board of Health on the washing and cleaning of churches; their windows should be left open and chloride gas be used every day (*Connaught*, 24 May).

The article lists numerous RC and CofI clergy who suffered and died from the disease as well as doctors. People were terrified of the disease and in one instance a protestant clergyman has to dig graves because no one else would.

In June of 1832 the role of the Sisters of Charity in Cork hospitals is mentioned. Another entry says that the "poor were abandoned by all" except for a Rev. Mr

James O'Rafferty and his assistants in Tullamore.

1832, July 23. Death of the Catholic Primate due to cholera.

1832, October 5. A Rev. P. Downey died of cholera in Kilkenny aged 27. "During the day he attended persons ill of cholera, of which he had a natural and unconquerable dread...with Christian fortitude, delivered himself up a voluntary sacrifice, having a premonition that he would not escape the mortal contagion." (from *The Kilkenny Journal*).

“We’ve come so far from the days when priests and religious were heroes to Irish society”

1832, October 17. Cholera. Since April, 3,600 have died in Dublin

1833, March 10. The Rev. Robert Connell, for many years the worthy parish priest of Hospital in the county [Limerick], was seized with cholera last Sunday, shortly after celebrating the second Mass, and was a corpse before evening. Eleven of his parishioners died the same day of the fatal malady, and the mortality since is most appalling.

1833, November 15. The Sisters of Charity. During the frightful visitation of the cholera, the services rendered by these ladies to the cause of humanity surpass all praise (*Freeman's Journal* November 15).

Interesting

One of the most interesting obituaries seen by this writer was an editorial comment beneath the obituary of a young priest (27) who distinguished himself in care for the victims of cholera but caught the disease and died. The editorial writer says: "With such devotional zeal and attachment, for religion and their flock, can it be a subject of astonishment why it is that the people - particularly the Irish people - evince such reverence and respect for their priests?" (*Kilkenny Journal*, October 10).

In 1833 the work of the Sisters of Charity surpassed all praise. In 2022, it seems no amount of criticism is too much.

“All things that we ordained festival/turn from their office to black funeral--/our instruments to melancholy bells/ Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast;/Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change;/Our burial flowers serve for a burial corse.” *Capulet - Romeo and Juliet - Shakespeare.*

Festival of theology marks 10 years of Loyola Institute

Ruadhán Jones

The Loyola Institute at Trinity College Dublin marked 10 years since its founding with a 'Festival of Theology', May 19-22, which brought Irish and international theologians together to discuss theology and the university.

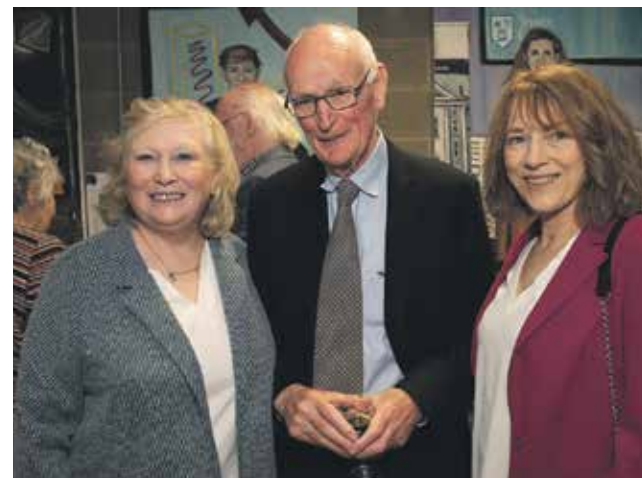
There was a full house in the Synge Theatre, TCD, May 19, as the festival opened, with the speakers focusing on the importance of theology in a university.

Prof. Sharon Rider of the University of Uppsala began the day discussing the claim that universities have

betrayed their founding mandates, while the institute's first director Dr Con Casey delivered a talk on 'Theology in a conversation about hope'.

Dr Casey, who is retiring from his academic post in Trinity, was commended by Prof. Fáinche Ryan for his rapport with students, while Fr Tom Laydon remembered Dr Casey's enthusiasm during negotiations to establish the institute.

Prof. Massimo Faggioli (Vilanova University) explored some of the challenges to theology coming not only from the outside but also from the inside of the Catholic Church.



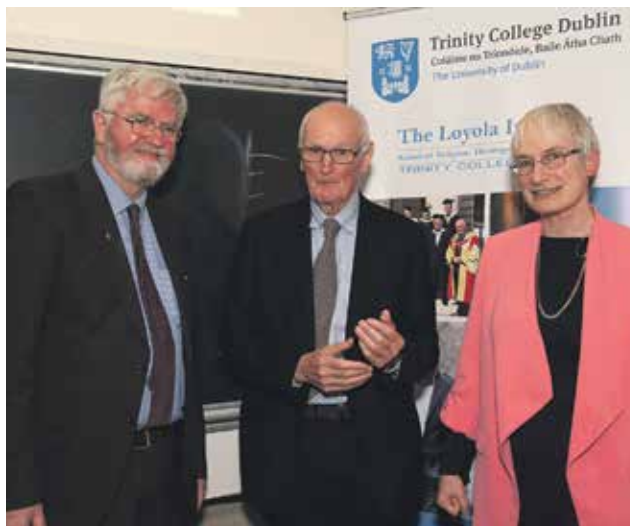
Loyola Institute Alumni Mary Egan and Dorothy Glennon are pictured with Dr Con Casey.



Loyola Institute alumni Ciara Gaffney, Colm Fitzpatrick and Imanni Keogh.



The Synge Theatre, Trinity College Dublin, was full as the festival of theology opened May 19.



Dr Con Casey (centre) is pictured with Fr Tom Layden SJ, Chair of Loyola Institute Trust and Prof. Fáinche Ryan.



The Loyola Institute's first director Dr Con Casey speaks during the festival.



Guest speakers and lecturers are pictured in Trinity College Dublin for the conference.



Prof. Sharon Rider of the University of Uppsala gives her talk to the full house.

Out&About

Fire from the embers



DUBLIN: The Ember programme leadership team for the Catholic University Secondary School are pictured following the Ember graduation day.



DUBLIN: The Ember programme leadership team for Loreto Secondary School in Dalkey are pictured in DCU, following the Ember graduation day.



DOWN: Pupils and teachers of St Mary's Primary School Barr who raised £328.43 for the Trócaire Lent Appeal are pictured with the cheque they presented to the Irish charity.

IN SHORT

Dublin parish wins European climate change award

St Anne's Parish, Shankill, Dublin, was a joint recipient of the European Christian Environmental Network prize for 2022, recognising and affirming Christian environmental action in local churches across Europe.

In awarding the prize the jury noted "the complex approach covering practical steps in energy saving with prayers, liturgy and further promotion of climate justice.

"The committee appreciated the engagement with the wider community, both locally and nationally, as part of its mission,

and promoting the Church commitment for protection of creation within the Church setting."

Fr Derry Murphy PP of Shankill said "this award is a great encouragement to us all to take up the challenge of climate change.

"Pope Francis has told us that this work is central to what it means to be a Christian today, and is not optional," he continued.

"It is important that we reflect this reality in our prayers and in our liturgies. We have made a good beginning but much more needs to be done."

St Anne's Parish launched its Shankill Action for a Green Earth (SAGE) project in 2016 in order to promote Pope Francis's encyclical letter *Laudato Si*.

Francis really gets grandparents, says CGA

"Pope Francis really gets us grandparents", said the founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association as she welcomed the release of Pope Francis' message for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on July 24.

In his message, Pope Francis "is reminding us of the importance of us persevering in hope and of our great power to transform the world through prayer and a revolution of tenderness", said Catherine Wiley.

"I have always believed that Pope Francis really gets us grandparents," she continued.

"He had a really close bond with his own grandparents and he speaks of them often in his catechesis.

"He understands the importance of us grandparents carving out a role for ourselves that is meaningful for us and for those around us."

The theme for the second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is, "In old age they will still bear fruit" (Psalm 92:15).

In his message, the Pope said that aging is a blessing, adding that "we ought to take care of ourselves and remain active in our later years. This is also true from a spiritual standpoint".

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



OFFALY: First Holy Communion class from St Rynagh's National School, Banagher, are pictured in St Rynagh's Church having made their Communion, May 7. The 26 pupils were taught by Lorraine Higgins and Fr Patrick Kiernan PP was the celebrant, while Sr Maura LSU made a beautiful cake in their honour.



ARMAGH: Archbishop Eamon Martin presented Sr Nora Smyth RSCJ from Castleblayney with a medal of St Patrick and certificate to mark her "outstanding commitment to the life and ministry of the Church in Archdiocese of Armagh". The presentation followed a Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral celebrated by Fr Peter McAnenly ADM. Sr Nora has moved to Dublin to be closer to Mount Anville, where she made her first profession in the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1957. Photo: Michael Fisher



ARMAGH: Volunteers from SVP Armagh and Craigavon Area gathered May 12 for their area gathering. Pictured are SVP Regional President for the North Region Mary Waide, Bernie McNeice, Peter McVeigh, SVP Regional Manager, Pauline Brown, Brendan McKernan, SVP Area President for Armagh and Craigavon, Mary Davis, SVP National Membership Support and Development Officer and Shauna Murray, SVP Membership Support Officer. Photo: Edward Byrne.



LAOIS: The new leadership team for St Patrick's Missionary Society are pictured following their election at the order's recent chapter. Pictured (from left) are Fr Richard Filima, the new society leader; Fr Seán Cremin the assistant leader; Fr Patrick Esekou and Fr Raphael Mwenda, elected to the central leadership team, May 16.



CLARE: Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan is pictured with the Christian Brothers in Ennis, who are celebrating their 195th anniversary on the site, May 11.



DOWN: SVP North Down and Ards Area President Anne McLarnon is pictured with Conference Presidents and SVP staff, Mary Davis, SVP National Membership Support and Development Officer, and Shauna Murray, SVP Membership Support Officer during the SVP North Down and Ards Area Gathering, May 13.



Bishop of Achonry Paul Dempsey (centre) visits his home diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, meeting Bishop Denis Nulty (left) and Fr John Dunphy in Graiguecullen/Killeshin Parish during the parish novena, May 16.



If Irish bishops believe in a strong pro-life witness they should look to the US for leadership, writes David Quinn

The Archbishop of San Francisco, Salvatore Cordileone, has written a letter telling one of America's most powerful politicians, Nancy Pelosi, that she cannot receive Holy Communion in his archdiocese.

Ms Pelosi, a Democratic Congresswoman, is the Speaker of the House of Representatives, making her the most senior figure in Congress.

“Roe v. Wade is what prompted leading pro-life campaigners in Ireland to push for the Eighth Amendment”

She is both a practising Catholic and an outspoken and long-term campaigner for one of the most permissive abortion laws on the planet.

The issue of abortion has been catapulted back into the headlines in the United States because it looks as though the US Supreme Court is going to reverse Roe v. Wade. This is the 1973 ruling that forced all 50 American states to permit abortion on extremely broad-ranging grounds regardless of what local voters and legislators wanted.

Roe v. Wade is what prompted leading pro-life campaigners in Ireland to push for the Eighth Amendment. They feared the Supreme Court here might at some stage in the future impose a similar ruling on this country. The Eighth Amendment was an attempt to forestall that. While pro-lifers deeply regret its repeal four years ago, we can have little doubt that it saved many unborn lives in its 35-year existence.

If Roe v. Wade goes, it will not mean that abortion becomes illegal in the US. Instead, the power will be restored to each individual state to decide what its law should be. Some will have strict laws, and some will have very liberal ones.

But this is not good enough for politicians like Nancy Pelosi, and the Democratic party in general. They want a new law passed in Washington DC, at a federal level, that would force all 50 states to comply. What they have in mind would be one of the more liberal laws anywhere, more so than in almost any European country, where permissive laws are the norm anyway, like here in Ireland.

Ireland allows abortion for any reason up to 12 weeks (90% of terminations take place before this point).

Archbishop Cordileone's bold, pro-life move against Nancy Pelosi



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone. Photo: CNS

The proposed US law (it failed to pass in the Senate) would permit abortion for any reason up to 24 weeks, and after that when “in the good-faith medical judgment of the treating health care provider, continuation of the pregnancy would pose a risk to the pregnant patient’s life or health”.

As we know ‘health’ can be very broadly interpreted. In Britain, strictly speaking, abortions take place overwhelmingly for ‘health’ reasons, but in practice abortion-on-demand exists.

In other words, Nancy Pelosi supports a law that would permit terminations right up until birth.

Communion

This is the background to the decision by Archbishop Cordileone to write to Ms Pelosi telling her she cannot receive Communion in the Archdiocese of San Francisco – where she is from – until she has altered her position.

In his latest letter, he refers to an earlier letter to her in April in which he said she should either “publicly repudiate” her advocacy for abortion, “or else refrain from referring to your Catholic Faith in public and receiving Holy Communion.” He said

if this did not happen, he “would have no choice but to make a declaration, in keeping with canon 915, that you are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.”

He has now made that declaration. He has told her: “you are not to present yourself for Holy Communion and, should you do so, you are not to be admitted to Holy Communion, until such time as you publicly repudiate your advocacy for the legitimacy of abortion and confess and receive absolution of this grave sin in the Sacrament of Penance.”

Many other Catholic politicians support legalised abortion, including ones from San Francisco Archdiocese, and they have not been publicly banned from receiving Communion by Archbishop Cordileone, so why is she being singled out?

The reason seems to be threefold. One is her very high public profile, another that she is such a consistent, outspoken advocate for such an extreme abortion law, and a third is that she insists she is a faithful Catholic despite this.

Archbishop Cordileone obviously believes that continuing to allow her to receive Communion in his archdiocese would tell other Catholics under his pastoral care that there is

no incompatibility between being a practising Catholic and being a consistent, outspoken campaigner for abortion.

The Democratic party itself has almost no room anymore for pro-life members, or at least not in prominent positions, and certainly not at anything like Ms Pelosi’s level of seniority. The Democratic party is now radically pro-abortion and regards being pro-life as essentially deserving of ‘excommunication’ from its senior ranks. If a political party can draw a red line on the matter, then why not the Church?

“The great majority of American bishops will not follow Dr Cordileone’s example”

Ms Pelosi knows that if she repudiated abortion, her party would repudiate her, instantly. But she will not do that because she appears to value communion with her party more than Communion with her Church.

Some will argue this is unfair. They will assert that you can be

faithful member of both. But Archbishop Cordileone is now saying this is impossible and is a classic example of trying to serve two masters at once, each making incompatible demands.

Others will argue that the archbishop should not have forced the issue. But in a way, she is the one who has done so. She keeps upping the ante.

The great majority of American bishops will not follow Dr Cordileone’s example. While Ms Pelosi is a member of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, she spends much of her time in Washington where she can still receive Communion.

Public campaigning

What would an Irish Archbishop Cordileone do? He would certainly not ban every Mass-attending politician who has voted for abortion from refusing Communion. Instead, he would save the sanction only for those politicians who are practising Catholics and are also well known for their consistent, public campaigning in favour of abortion.

Few enough fall into this category. But if the bishops of Ireland believe in a strong, pro-life witness, then they should not rule out in principle an Archbishop Cordileone-style measure, even if it received a strong backlash, which would undoubtedly happen.

“The Democratic party itself has almost no room anymore for pro-life members, or at least not in prominent positions, and certainly not at anything like Ms Pelosi’s level of seniority”

A LEGACY BESTOWED, A FUTURE RESCUED

The Irish Catholic
2022 LEGACY SUPPLEMENT



‘It is a Christian duty to house the stranger’



Lack of policing and policy change in the rental sector is leading to multiple abuses and increased struggle for housing, Threshold tells **Chai Brady**

There are many, many people across Ireland doing all within their power to assist people keep a roof over their heads and make it through the worsening housing crisis but there are those, as there always is, profiting on human suffering.

Unscrupulous landlords have been able to raise rents illegally and dodge planning permission laws for short let accommodation such as AirBnB without rebuke, priest-founded housing charity Threshold has warned.

It is becoming more difficult for them to help people in tenancy disputes as many tenants are too afraid to challenge their landlord for fear of being evicted, particularly as available housing reached record lows this year.

In addition, with the moratorium on rents ending along with Covid-19 restrictions, landlords who were planning to sell and leave the rental sector are doing so causing more people to search among the scant and increasingly expensive rental supply.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, CEO of Threshold John Mark McCafferty said despite all the challenges, there is still a “chink of light” which is the introduction of cost rental properties but much more are needed on the market “because you have a housing provider with a social purpose, providing rented accommodation lower than market rent – now it’s not much lower but it is lower than the prevailing market rent”.

“It also broadens supply and the more we see the likes of cost rental the more we see the likes of short lets being limited in their availability – I’m talking about the likes of AirBnB,” Mr McCafferty said.

He said there is a lack of regulation in the short-term



letting sector in Rent Pressure Zones (RPZ) – a designated area where rents cannot be increased by more than 4% per annum unless an exemption is being applied – and this has led to suspect activity.

“According to the law, if you’re letting an entire property for more than 90 days a year in an RPZ, that house or apartment needs to get planning permission from the local authority and yet we’re seeing far more short lets available on the market in RPZ than we are long term rental leases,” he said.

“Something is not right, there is a disconnect there in relation to what the statute says and what’s happening on the ground, there has to be houses and apartments in RPZ letting the entire apartment or house for more than 90 days of the year and they do not have a change in planning permission, I just don’t accept that they have received that planning permission in all those circumstances from the local authorities so action is required from the local authorities.”

Inspection

Mr McCafferty said local authorities could do “an awful lot more” both in terms of inspection regimes for the physical quality of the rented sector but also in terms of policing short lets and letting of entire properties in RPZ areas. “That is simply not being

enforced, local authorities, or whichever body is best placed to do that, needs to be on top of that,” he added.

These inspections are particularly important in the context of the effects of Covid-19 on the housing sector. The virus brought construction to a halt for an extended period, slowing down progress on new residential builds. While this was one issue, the moratorium on rents gave many tenants a false sense of security as many landlords decided to sell their properties – a legal reason to evict a tenant – when it was lifting.

“Despite all the challenges, there is still a ‘chink of light’ which is the introduction of cost rental properties”

Mr McCafferty explains: “With the moratorium on evictions landlords couldn’t progress those evictions and I suppose once all of that was lifted there were probably properties landlords had planned to sell, had planned to have a family member moving in or for other reasons and they acted on that, so there was a momentum in the sector that was suppressed so we’re seeing that now.

“We’re also seeing, I think due to tax reasons and finan-

cial reasons and also the prices of houses selling, landlords moving out of negative equity. There are still landlords whose rented properties were in negative equity until very, very recently. They’re now trying to realise that asset and in doing so the tenancy is coming to an end.

“We’re seeing this rebound, and it’s a negative rebound as it’s landlords leaving the market, it’s sustained increase in rents and the dearth of supply at a time of increased demand for housing and that is borne out by the homeless figures which are beginning to increase as people can’t source alternative accommodation in the private rented sector and have to move to emergency accommodation provided by the NGOs and the statutory bodies so all in all a very, very challenging picture, coupled also with the increased cost in living.”

Rising rents

Mr McCafferty warned that while rents were rising, since about 2013, the inflation rate was low at about 1-2%. The Central Statistics Office revealed in April that the inflation rate has now reached 7% – the highest rate in 22 years.

“On top of that then you’ve got a cost of energy crisis and that is more acutely felt in the private rented sector than in any other tenure because private rented sector housing

on average has lower BER ratings than owner occupied or social housing and secondly the tenant themselves has less authority over making the house more thermally efficient and sometimes they can’t choose the energy provider. The energy provider contract is maybe in the landlord’s name so they can’t shop around,” he said.

“There’s a whole rake of issues there that we’re trying to untangle and work with people in the private rented sector on because it’s a particularly challenging time.”

“The Central Statistics Office revealed in April that the inflation rate has now reached 7% – the highest rate in 22 years”

Threshold reported in April that its advisors intervened to prevent 1,166 households from entering homelessness in the first three months of this year. In all, 1,582 adults and 1,002 children were able to stay in their homes or were supported to secure alternative housing.

Two-thirds of Threshold clients were put at risk of homelessness in the same period when their landlord gave them a notice of termination. More

than half of these landlords sought to end the tenancy as they intended to sell the home, with 15% stating they required the home for their own use.

While Threshold can assist a tenant to challenge an invalid notice of termination and so hold onto their home, 53% of notices were valid.

Challenges

In light of the many challenges renters face, Threshold has recommended a number of policy changes to assist private renters to pay their rent and address rent arrears. These include an increase in the Housing Assistance Payment limits, the provision of a rent arrears fund and a change to the legislation on rent arrears.

“Since we were founded by Fr Donal O’Mahony [OFM Cap] in 1978 a big emphasis was on advising tenants in relation to their unique situation in the rental sector, but the backbone of what we do in conjunction with the advice is tenancy protection so even in these dire circumstances we’re still saving tenancies we’re just not necessarily saving as many but there are some we simply can’t save.

“If a landlord wishes to leave the market by selling then they can, and they do, and we’re seeing that experienced, but we can ensure that the full notice period is being adhered to by the landlord, which gives a tenant a bit more of a chance to secure alternative accommodation, albeit much more difficult nowadays given the lack of supply.

“It may be that the tenant is eligible for rent supplement

“Unscrupulous landlords have been able to raise rents illegally and dodge planning permission laws for short let accommodation”

and it could be that the tenancy is under threat due to a rent increase, we can get a rent supplement increase, now obviously there are fewer people on rent supplement now than there used to be," he said.

"We advocate and we look for policy change in relation to increases in the HAP (Housing Assistance Payment) levels and currently we're pushing a HAP protocol in agreement with the Department of Housing, to increase, or augment HAP levels for individual cases in order to ensure that individual families and people can remain in their tenancies through this HAP increase and failing that then a more broad, more general payment increase across the population who are in receipt of HAP and I guess that's important because there hasn't been an increase in those HAP levels since 2016 and we know that rents have increased very, very significantly since 2016, so there's time for movement there," he said.

Discrimination

Asked about reports of landlords not accepting people who are in receipt of HAP, he said while it's against the law due to it being discriminatory, unless landlords have expressed that reason in a way that can be documented it's very difficult to prove.

Threshold, while helping people in front of the Residential Tenancies Board, also represent people at the Workplace Relations Commission which would adjudicate cases such as discriminatory practices, and have reached successful conclusions.

Average rent

According to a Daft.ie report into the Irish rental sector published this month, the average market rent per month rose from just over €1,400 a year ago to €1,567 in the first quarter of 2022. A decade ago the average rent was €765 per month.

“While Threshold can assist a tenant to challenge an invalid notice of termination and so hold onto their home, 53% of notices were valid”

On May 1 this year, there were just 851 homes available to rent nationwide. The report stated: "The average number of homes available to rent nationwide at any point in time over the fifteen-year period 2006-2021 was nearly 9,200 – over ten

times the supply available currently."

While eviction can always be a gut wrenching experience, Mr McCafferty said even five to 10 years ago there was a much greater chance of people starting a new tenancy elsewhere. The extreme lack of supply is leaving people with little or no options.

Mr McCafferty said: "The Rent Pressure Zones, they work in certain circumstances but some landlords have always tried to flout them or ignore them. Others either try their luck or misinterpret the legislation and give an invalid rent review.

"We'll often see the letter seeking the rent increase is invalid for a particular reason, maybe a technical reason, and the tenant generally has fought that on that basis. We're seeing more that tenants are more likely to accept it because they don't want to get into a row, or any kind of conflict, because they feel the risk of losing their home and not being able to source any alternative accommodation is too high a risk."

Refugees

With many Ukrainian refugees arriving to Ireland to flee the war at a time there is so much stress on the housing sector, there has been



CEO of Threshold John Mark McCafferty

some difficulty finding them suitable accommodation.

Asked about this, Mr McCafferty said: "I think there was already a housing crisis and I think obviously it's our duty, it's a Christian duty to house the stranger and to open our homes and to do everything in our power to welcome and accommodate

people who are fleeing the aggression that we're seeing.

"I think Ireland has a big heart and we can do both, but in order to do both, we need a lot of effort and a lot of concerted coordination by both State and civil society and indeed the private sector to ensure we're both meeting our existing housing targets and

also ensuring that we're providing shelter, accommodation and housing for our Ukrainian friends and family."

Threshold are continuing to operate in a complex environment but are determined to fulfil the mission of their founder, Fr O'Mahony, to house the stranger and keep a roof over their head.

Will you make a lasting difference today?

Like you, Mary knows how it feels to lose someone you love. She lost her husband, her sister and her parents. But they live forever in her heart, just like your loved and lost.

After making sure her nearest and dearest are taken care of, Mary's chosen to leave a parting gift in her will to Irish Hospice Foundation. For her, it means she can carry on caring for people who are dying and their loved ones lost in grief, even after she's gone.

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

For more information on leaving a gift in your will, contact Anna Sadlier on 01 679 3188 or anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie.



hospicefoundation.ie

Registered Charity 20013554



**A gift in your Will can secure homes for generations.
Including Threshold is a meaningful way to support those
at risk of homelessness.**

To find out more information on how to include Threshold in your Will,
please email catherine.murray@threshold.ie or call **01 6353 629**.

*We would like to thank the Irish Catholic readers who kindly donate to us to help those
at risk of homelessness. Your support means everything.*

Leave a priceless gift.

Please remember GOAL in your will



GOAL

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

**Talk to someone
in confidence.**

**Contact Courtenay on
01 2809779 or via email
at cpollard@goal.ie**

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



Loss of jobs, hunger and poverty are pushing girls and women out of education and into forced marriage and prostitution due to a prolonged dry period, **Chai Brady** writes

Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia are facing a severe drought which is affecting the poorest communities most in a climate change-driven crisis they are unable to tackle without support.

While the effects of climate change can be seen across the world through scientific measurement, ranging from the barely noticeable to easily observable, it is in these fragile states that the true human cost of the crisis exists.

Regional Director of the Horn of Africa for Irish charity Concern, Amina Abdulla, spoke to *The Irish Catholic* from Nairobi, Kenya, about the work being done on the ground and the disproportionate challenges the countries face.

Resources

Ms Abdulla said: “The resources at the disposal of many countries in the west and even some countries in the global south to deal with some of the challenges presented by changing climate is not available to these countries, so the impact is severe. It is borne by the poorest people living in this region, from destroying their livelihoods to deepening the levels of hunger experienced.

“It is further exacerbated by the fact that we have other crises that are ongoing in the region, including conflict. Many of these countries are



Regional Director of the Horn of Africa for Concern, Amina Abdulla. Photo: Ed Ram/Concern Worldwide

Horn of Africa wracked by climate change-fuelled drought



Dead livestock lie on the outskirts of North Horr, Marsabit, Kenya. Photo: Ed Ram/Concern Worldwide

considered to be fragile states... So there's a combination of crises.”

Pastoralists, who have been working the same job their whole lives, are having to sell their cattle to survive and there is evidence across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia that huge numbers of animals have died due to the drought.

“For pastoralists, their way of living revolves around their livelihoods, it's not just a source of food, it's tied to traditions, it is tied to status and social capital,” Ms Abdulla explained.

Loss of livelihood is leading to “deepening levels of hunger”, with people resorting to mechanisms that would “definitely strip them of their dignity and their capacity to get out of poverty – deepening the intergenerational poverty for these communities”.

“What Concern is doing at the moment is actually responding to the immediate needs of affected families”

Families and communities are generally then forced to move out of their traditional homes and into the towns closest to them in search of employment.

Ms Abdulla warns there are major risks for children in this scenario, saying: “Of course you will have kids in the streets, either working polishing shoes for people, as errand boys or girls for traders in the market and that puts them at risk of being abused, being exploited and there are unfortunate instances where some of these kids, particularly girls, end up in prostitution... or even mothers, finding that prostitution is the only option they have to be able to provide for their families.

“The protection risks are huge for families that have taken the decision to move out of their traditional areas because of the drought in search of other means of income or livelihood.”

However, the risks associated with staying at home are enormous, even leading to family members dying of starvation.

Education for girls

The risks to young women in particular are heightened with Ms Abdulla saying they have seen an increase in female genital mutilation (FGM) in certain regions and more girls being pulled out of education.

“FGM is considered as one pathway to marriageability for some of these communities, so we've seen an increase of FGM amongst girls,” she said. “We've seen an increase particularly of girls being taken out of school to be married off because unfortunately this is one way that the family can get something to sustain them but it is also the reality of one less mouth to think of in terms of food.

“It is a negative coping mechanism and it is a future destroyed if you have a girl taken out of school and subjected to forced early marriage. It has limited her opportunity and probably subjected her to a life of poverty.”

Concern take a three-layered approach in order to make people more resilient to shocks such as the current drought, this is at household, community and local authority/government level.

Ms Abdulla said: “What Concern is doing at the moment is actually responding to the immediate needs of affected families by providing cash transfers that allow them to buy food and other household needs, but also looking beyond cash transfers.

“We make sure that health and nutrition services are available to these communities. While we may think that the immediate need, the

immediate risk, is food, there are others services and other needs that actually make them vulnerable.

“So if you're providing food but they don't have access to clean and safe water that makes them vulnerable to other issues, diseases, but it also presents other protection issues for women and girls because they're the ones who would traditionally go out in search of water, so we provide this basket of services as a way of dealing with their immediate needs.”

“We make sure that health and nutrition services are available to these communities”

Thinking six months down the line regarding what is needed to get communities to the point in which they are able to withstand future shocks and build resilience includes focusing on diversifying their means of livelihoods, Ms Abdulla explained, saying “we are, in parts of Kenya, in parts of Somalia, working with pastoralists to look into crop production as part of that diversification.

“Of course this means employing climate smart, climate sensitive production techniques and putting the infrastructure in place required to allow them to engage. Some of these practices are very simple.

“Of course where it is possible we also look at a system wide approach not just at the household level but also at a community level in terms of what mechanisms need to be put in place – working with communities on setting up simple early warning mechanisms around their traditional system.”

Authorities

Looking at local authorities, or government institutions, where they exist, Concern work with them to set up the relevant systems around pro-

visional health and water services, strengthening whatever system that already exists around education and making sure the protection of young children, specifically girls, is strengthened.

“We have great success stories in some of the countries but unfortunately this current crisis comes at a time where we have had to deal with Covid as well so the capacity that would have been there had we not have had a pandemic, would have been different from our current capacity responding to this crisis,” Ms Abdulla said.

Although preventative responses are much more effective, with Ms Abdulla saying one dollar early is ten dollars saved in emergency response, this window of opportunity has passed.

She said: “We need to help these communities ride this period and for Concern public donation and funding from donors allows us to do that. These are lives we're talking about, these are people that have needs, kids, ambitions, and need to look forward to a future. Us not responding actually means we are sentencing the hundreds of thousands of children that are at risk to certain death. Are we comfortable with that as a global community?”

Ms Abdulla added that Legacy donations are “very important” for Concern's work as “it is what keeps us in these communities for the period needed to build resilience, address factors that drive poverty and actually create impact in the lives of women and children in these communities and all of this is key to breaking that intergenerational cycle of poverty”.

Anyone looking for more information about Legacies can call Siobhán O'Connor on 01 4178020, email siobhan.oconnor@concern.net or visit www.concern.net/legacy

“A legacy of *incredible* humanitarian significance”



Photo: Concern Worldwide.

Fr. Aengus Finucane.

Fr. Finucane's legacy

Fr. Finucane is the cornerstone behind much of what Concern has become today. It was he who expanded its aid work into 11 countries and dramatically increased its fundraising.

Tom Arnold - Concern's CEO from 2001 to 2013 - says:

“There can be few Irish people of his generation, or of any other generation, who have contributed as much to improving the lives of so much of humanity.”

“He inspired a whole generation of Concern overseas volunteers.”

Fr. Finucane continues to inspire as his legacy still influences Concern 12 years after his death.

“Do as much as you can, as well as you can, for as many as you can, for as long as you can.”
– Fr. Aengus Finucane

In 2020 Concern worked in 23 countries, responding to 78 different emergencies, helping 36.9 million of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

Concern's vision, mission and work continues to strive to end extreme poverty, whatever it takes. The charity believes that no-one should live in fear of not having enough food.

The devastation of climate change

Today one of the primary causes of acute food insecurity are weather extremes.

Climate change is increasing hunger levels and pushing even more people to the brink of famine. With multiple famines predicted, there are currently 41 million people teetering on the edge of starvation.

Extreme weather caused by climate change is having a devastating effect on the most vulnerable people in the world's poorest countries.

And these calamitous weather conditions are now more frequent and varied. No sooner has one disaster struck than another arrives. People don't have enough food for months, sometimes years on end.

In Malawi droughts, floods and strong weather patterns are a regular occurrence – placing huge stress

on land and crop production resulting in food shortages and hunger.

These weather extremes affect an already vulnerable population where 80% source their livelihoods from the land, 71% live below the poverty line and an estimated 20% are living in extreme poverty.

People like Yona Lambiki and his family.

Yona, a farmer, lives in Nkhambaza village with his wife and five children. He was always able to support his family with the crops and food he grew providing them with a healthy balanced diet. Any excess was sold, with some of the money used to pay for his children's schooling. But two years ago everything changed ...



Photo: Kieran McConville / Concern Worldwide.

Crops destroyed by Cyclone Idai.

In March 2019 Cyclone Idai caused devastating floods and loss of life in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The floods completely destroyed crops just weeks away from harvest – food people were relying on for survival.

Although his house wasn't affected, like thousands of others, the crops Yona was about to harvest were completely washed away. There was nothing for his family to eat, let alone any to sell.

Help for now and the future

But thanks to Concern's generous donors and Yona's hard work he is now able to look after his family again.

Yona immediately received a vital cash transfer from Concern. With this he bought food and other basic necessities his family needed to be safe and free from hunger.

Yona received seeds including maize, tomatoes, beans, three bundles of sweet potato vines and other vegetables to grow so he could, once again, support his family. He also received, fertilizer and a hoe to help him grow his crops. As well as five goats for milk and manure.



Photo: Jason Kennedy / Concern Worldwide.

“I would really love to meet everyone that is behind this support so I could thank them in person.” – Yona Lambiki

Like other families in his community, Yona planted the seeds he received in his home garden. What they harvest is used to feed their families, any excess is sold to improve their livelihoods.

But Concern do far more than simply give communities plants, seeds and tools. They provide training in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) to ensure long term, inter-generational support.

providing support for years – possibly decades – to come.

On speaking about the people who support Concern and make our work possible, he said, *“I'm so very happy with the support I have received from Concern. My life and family's life is healthy and can afford everything we could not afford before. I'm so happy and thankful to Concern.”*

Will Fr. Finucane inspire you too?

There's a way you, just like Fr. Finucane, can leave the world a better place. And help improve the lives of families like Yona's both now and for future generations.

How? By leaving Concern a gift in your Will.

When you leave a gift, your legacy lives on - helping for years to come.

“I know that this is a very personal decision. But I assure you, gifts in Wills have had a phenomenal impact in reducing extreme poverty, hunger and suffering around the world. Today, as the catastrophic combination of conflict, climate change and COVID-19 have plunged so many people into the grip of crisis, your gift will help us to be there in their time of need.”

– Dominic MacSorley, CEO, Concern Worldwide

Gifts in Wills are a vital source of funding for Concern.

Your legacy will help families like Yona's reverse the many struggles caused by Climate Change ...

... will provide the tools and knowledge they need to not just survive but help themselves – a gift from you they can pass down for generations.

To find out more about how a legacy gives a safe, secure future, please request your complimentary copy of 'A World Without Hunger' – Concern's legacy booklet.

You'll learn of others who desperately needed help, and how legacies from people just like you have done so much.

There are also answers to common questions people ask about leaving a gift in their Will. And explains how to get started.

Requesting your free booklet does not oblige you to do anything else.

To receive your free, no obligation booklet – in complete confidence – please contact Concern's Legacy Manager, Siobhán O'Connor. Call **01 417 8020**, email **siobhan.oconnor@concern.net**, or write to 52-55 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2



The Irish Catholic looks at a rich and varied life lived in the service of others and of God.

Fr. Finucane was ordained as a Holy Ghost Priest in 1958. In his first assignment in Uli, Nigeria, Fr. Finucane found himself involved in the bitter civil war between Nigeria and Biafra.

Following Biafra's attempt to secede, this widespread conflict had displaced millions. What's more, there was a blockade of food, medicine and basic necessities by the Nigerian authorities.

At the height of the crisis in the summer of 1968, it was estimated 6,000 children died every week.

An Irish effort

In response to the Biafrans' terrible plight, Concern Worldwide – originally called Africa Concern – was founded and began raising awareness and funds to help those suffering.

On 6th September 1968, the 600 tonne, Columille set sail for Sao Tome – a Portuguese island close to West Africa. The cost of chartering the ship and its vital cargo of powdered food and medicines was all paid for with donations from the people of Ireland.

To circumvent the blockade, the supplies were then flown from Sao Tome to Biafra overnight. The following day in Uli, Fr. Finucane was among the Holy Ghost priests who would help distribute the life saving supplies.

With his commitment and

that of the Irish public and priests, this operation grew into one flight a day for 11 months.

Fr. Finucane was deeply committed to helping the poorest of the poor. So after leaving Biafra, in 1972 he became Concern's Field Director in Bangladesh after its war of independence from Pakistan – the war had left millions in desperate need of food.

The period after Fr. Finucane's time in Bangladesh was particularly testing. In Thailand's Kampuchea refugee camps he saw the desperation of Cambodians who had fled the Khmer Rouge's genocide.

And in Uganda the horror of HIV in Kampala, where even in the best hospitals one third of the children born were HIV positive.

Fr. Finucane worked tirelessly to alleviate suffering, and recognised his responsibility to help the poor and underprivileged.

Concern appointed Fr. Finucane as its Chief Executive in 1981.

During his 16 years as the head of the charity he was 'on the ground' during many of the world's worst disasters. These included the 1983-1985 famine in Ethiopia and the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

Relinquishing his post in 1997, Fr. Finucane became Honorary President of Concern Worldwide US. He held this post until his death on 6th October 2009.



Merchants Quay Ireland

Anne's recovery from the sickness of addiction, with Merchants Quay Ireland

"If I could say one thing to MQI donors -- it's wonderful that you want to see people change their lives. Some people don't understand about addiction. But knowing there's people out there who care, that's wonderful" Anne, former client of Merchants Quay Ireland



St. Francis Farm is a working farm. As part of their rehab programme, clients get involved in planting crops and caring for the animals...

Anne had never been in a detox and rehab programme before MQI's St. Francis Farm. She comes from a supportive family. Experimenting at 13 years old seemed like just a bit of fun at the time. But before long, Anne fell into the wrong company - people who brought her drugs. Over the years, Anne's addiction lost her everything. Including her family, and even her own children. Her life became a chaotic misery. Eventually, she found herself in prison.

Prison was a turning point

"The lightbulb went on, the penny dropped. I was sick and tired of what my life had become. I knew I had to

change. Then the news came that there was a bed for me at St Francis Farm. I was brought there straight from prison by two officers. I was scared and deeply ashamed, but I knew I needed this chance to prove that I could change. No matter how bad the sickness was."

Now in her 40s, Anne is now finally able to enjoy having the security of her own, neat-as-a-pin flat. Her mum and brother will visit Anne in her new home for the very first time this weekend. And she's looking forward to giving them a big, warm welcome.

Through hell and back for her family

"Without St Francis Farm I don't think I'd be here today. But now I have a life with

lots to look forward to. My eight-year-old is making his First Holy Communion in May. It's on the very anniversary that I've been healthy for 3 years. My relationship with my family and children is brilliant now. But it took time for us to work on that together. They're very supportive and I'm so grateful to be here for them too. I'm present today. I can be a mother now.

Your loving support of Merchants Quay Ireland helps to make these beautiful changes possible. With your generosity, people are growing and thriving at St. Francis Farm. Thank you for being a part of this work - and for every life you help to turn around.

Sowing seeds of Honesty with Merchants Quay Ireland's St. Francis Farm Manager, Norah

22 years ago, Norah answered an advertisement in the Farmer's Journal: "Horticulturalist wanted to work alongside former drug users on the development of a walled garden." With your support, at MQI's St. Francis Farm in County Carlow, Norah's gentle wisdom nurtures clients back to full bloom.

People can be a lot like plants, some of us do very well in the shade, others like full sun. All of us need to be well-fed and given time to flourish. Most of all, everyone needs love... like the love your support makes possible at St. Francis Farm.

"Every single day is different here, just like every person who arrives at MQI" explains Norah. "We adapt the recovery programme for each client and bring people along at their own pace." In the gardens, Norah opens up a new world for clients where they grow stronger as each day passes.

Honesty at the heart of recovery

"The first time a client comes outside, I ask them to sow a tray of seeds. Often it's the *Honesty* flowers that grow all around the Farm. Ten days later, they see green shoots coming up. That's when they say to themselves, 'I'm not a complete failure if I can do this!' I give people something I know they can do, and they start to build

on that themselves."

Clients grow their own food with Norah's encouragement. In one of the poly-tunnels, rows of tiny carrot seedlings are starting to emerge. There's satisfaction for each client in their harvest. The fresh vegetables, salad and fruit are brought straight from the gardens to the kitchen. They pack goodness into every meal.

Norah witnesses firsthand the changes in people at St Francis Farm. "Within six weeks you can see their skin improve and their faces fill out with a healthy bit of weight going on," she explains. "Add a bit of fresh air, exercise in the gym and regular sleep - and there's a complete transformation."

He was finally able to grieve

"One young chap wanted to take an hour in the Memorial Garden on his mother's anniversary. In life, he hadn't had a great relationship with her, but he'd started to see other aspects of his mother while he

was here. He'd realised in the therapy group that his childhood hadn't been so awful compared to other clients. His mum had only been trying to manage her own problems as best she could. So, he took the afternoon in the Memorial Garden to reflect on her. I was keeping an eye on him and, in passing by, I asked him if he'd like to help me sow a rosebush.

"As we were working together, that young man told me lots of the memories he had of his mother. He hadn't been able to grieve for her at the time she'd passed away. It was only now, having a bit of space, that he was really feeling for the first time the loss of his mother. And so I asked him a very important question: 'What would she say to you now? If she could see you today?' You could see him take comfort in the thought. You could feel the glow. He knew she'd be proud of him. There was a huge softening in his attitude from then on. He'd planted his emotions in the form of a rose."

Knowing I've done something, just my own little bit... it gives me such a warm feeling inside." - Legacy supporter with Merchants Quay Ireland

A gift in your will, in any amount, can do so much good.

For the men and women who come to Merchants Quay Ireland when there's nowhere else to turn, your legacy can be lifesaving.

You can decide on a specific amount, or you can name a percentage of what's left after taking care of your loved ones.

Even 1% is enough to change lives for the better.

Meet legacies manager, Emma Murphy



I'm here to help if you have any questions at all. I've left my own small legacy to MQI too. If you've any questions or specific wishes, just get in touch with me, confidentially at 01-5240965 and I'll be happy to hear from you.

All your solicitor will need is this:

Merchants Quay Ireland of 24 Merchants Quay, Dublin 8

Registered Charity Number 20026240

Charity Number CHY10311

MQI

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

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

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

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

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

Operation  Smile

CRA No. 20054588 Charity No. CHY15661



Arlyn, Philippines

For advice on how you can make or change your Will to include a gift to Operation Smile, please contact our Legacy Manager, Kristen Bell.

t. 01 667 6659

e. kristen@operationsmile.ie

w. operationsmile.ie/lastingsmile

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

Name

Address

Eircode

Phone no.

Email

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

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

Please detach this form and return it to:

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

Somalia



Kabasa internally displaced camp in Dollow, Gedo Region, southern Somalia.

Trócaire
Working for a just world.

Miriam Donohoe, Head of communications with Trócaire

It is 40 degrees Celsius, and scores of weary women, men and children shuffle slowly in the searing heat through the vast Kabasa internally displaced persons camp outside Dollow, a bustling small town in Gedo Region in southern Somalia.

Young babies clutch to mothers dressed brightly in colourful traditional dress and scarves. Small children run around and two boys amuse themselves playing "ball" with an empty container. Groups of tall, lean men curiously eye today's camp visitors - a Trócaire team with an Irish journalist and members of the Dollow District Committee.

The visit is a distraction for the camp community weary and beaten from monotonous days focused on keeping alive and scrambling to get enough food for the next meal.

Humanitarian assistance

Currently 7.7 million people in Somalia, or half the population, are in dire need of humanitarian assistance as climate change takes its deadly toll, triggering a devastating hunger crisis. The country is experiencing its worst drought in 40 years with four seasons of failed rains and temperatures unbearably high. 90% of the country is now experiencing extreme drought.

The UN says over 800,000 people have so far fled their homes, flocking to already overcrowded Internally Displaced Persons camps similar to this one in Kabasa. New camps are sprouting up to cope with the increasing numbers expected to rise to 1.4 million in the coming months. The UN has warned that 350,000 children could die this year if nothing is done to help them.

Kabasa is a sea of makeshift shelters built from sticks and covered with whatever scraps of material and plastics the displaced can get their hands on. The earth is scorched and there is no vegetation apart from bushes of dried sticks.

Already overflowing Kabasa has had over 1,100 recent new arrivals. They tell of villages deserted as hungry people move in search of relief, and of carcasses of goats, donkeys and camels strewn along rural roads, a catastrophe for Somalis who earn their

living by raising and selling animals.

Mother of three, Buhoy Rahey (20), arrived in Kabasa from the Ethiopian border three months ago, enduring a gruelling 230 kilometres walk that took five days and nights. Her husband died from hunger on the second day of the journey.

"We were hungry. Our livestock failed (died) and we had no food. We had to leave to save our children. My husband died on the second day. He was very sick. We buried him on the roadside, and we didn't get to mourn. I had to continue the journey, or we would have all died."

Deep in the camp Issack Hassan sits in his tent cradling his three-month-old son, Mohamed. His other son Hamza is toddling around outside, under the careful eye of his grandmother, Muna.

Issack arrived in Kabasa from Wajid in Bakool region after walking for four days with his wife and other people from his village.

“When Mohammed was discharged from Dollow Health Referral Centre we were given a food basket and he was put on the Trócaire nutrition programme”

Issack's wife gave birth prematurely to their son, Mohamed, in their shelter in Kabasa in February. It was a difficult birth and tragically Mohamed's mother died shortly afterwards due to complications from measles. Mohammad was only 1.4 kilograms (just over three pounds) when he was born, and on the brink of death. He was rushed to the Trócaire run Dollow Referral Hospital in Dollow town.



Mother Naima Abdi (22) and her one-year-old malnourished baby boy Faizal Abdullahai being assessed at the Trócaire run Dollow health referral Centre in Gedo, southern Somalia.

Mohamed was monitored in an incubator in the hospital, under the care of Trócaire's Nursing Coordinator, Habiba Ali Maalim, and her team. Mohammed was fed with drops of formula milk every three hours and was turned regularly to avoid pressure sores.

Within a week of his birth Mohamed's weight had increased to 1.95 kgs. He was going to make it.

The Trócaire team are here today in Kabasa to check on Mohammed's progress. They are happy as he now weighs 3.5 kgs.

Sitting in the room in which Mohammed was born and his wife died Issack, a quiet spoken man, says: "When my wife got pregnant she had no health check-ups. After she died a community leader got help and the baby was sent to Dollow for treatment."

"When Mohammed was discharged from Dollow Health Referral Centre we were given a food basket and he was put on the Trócaire nutrition programme. I have no work and survive on whatever I can get. Everybody helps. We do what we can for each other."

"My mother came to Kabasa to help me with my sons. My hope for them is that they will have an education and a better future than the one I face. Maybe I will marry again. My children need a mother."

Health service

Trócaire has run the health services in Gedo region, an area slightly bigger than the size of Ireland, for the past 30 years, providing lifesaving healthcare, nutrition, and protection to hundreds of thousands of people.

According to Dr Abdi Tari Ali, Head of Programmes for Trócaire Somalia, the agency is reaching over 215,000 people with lifesaving services every year through its health facilities in Dollow, Luuq, Garbaharey, Belet Hawa and Burdhubo. Some of the work is supported by Irish Aid. They include three hospitals, one referral hospital, five health centres, 11 primary health units, three TB centres and eight mobile clinics.

Back in the stabilisation unit in Dollow Health Referral centre Naima Abdi (22) has brought her one-year old baby boy Faizal Abdullahai for a check-up. Her family arrived recently to the new internally displaced camp at Ladmbam near Dollow town and Faizal was seriously malnourished.

He is now being regularly assessed using a MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference) Tape, a colour coded tape which is used on children from



28-year-old Issack Hassan with his three-month-old son, Mohamed, in his shelter in Kabasa internally displaced camp in Dollow, Gedo region in southern Somali.



Buhoy Rahey, (20), and her three children who walked five days and five nights to reach Kabasa Internally Displaced Camp.



Issack Hassan with his three-month-old son, and his mother Muna.

“Trocaire nursing coordinator Habiba Ali Maalim, who is looking after baby Faizal today, said it brings her great joy when she sees children improving”

6 months to 5 years to measure malnourishment.

The tape is wrapped around Faizal's arm. Green means that there is no acute malnutrition, yellow indicates moderate acute malnutrition and red severe acute malnutrition. When Faizal first arrived here the tape measured red, but today he is yellow which means he is improving.

Trocaire nursing coordinator Habiba Ali Maalim, who is looking after baby Faizal today, said it brings her great joy when she sees children improving. "We see children every day who are seriously malnourished. With the proper care they can get better."

Trócaire Country Director for Somalia, Dubliner Paul Healy, says it is devastating to witness what is happening on the ground.

"Severe hunger has taken hold in Somalia and it will get much worse

in the coming months unless urgent action is taken. Currently the world is focused on the dreadful crises in Ukraine, but we must not forget what is happening here in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. Thousands of people will die unless urgent action is taken."

"Children are the most vulnerable. There is limited access to food, and food prices are rising due to the war in Ukraine. Climate change is wreaking havoc. Severe water shortages have heightened the risk of disease outbreaks, with people and animals now competing for untreated water from hand-dug shallow wells and dwindling rivers."

"Thanks to the support of the people of Ireland and Irish Aid and our other donors we are reaching hundreds of thousands. But the need is huge."

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Bill Gates set to open luxury hotel stone's throw from Vatican



A view of Vatican City.



Elise Ann Allen

Initial negotiations have begun between the Catholic Church's Order of the Holy Sepulchre and Bill Gates's Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts chain about the potential opening of a luxury hotel near St Peter's Basilica, catering to the wealthier tourists and pilgrims visiting the Eternal City.

The property in question is the Palazzo di Domenico della Rovere in Borgo, simply called "Palazzo della Rovere," which is located along the Via della Conciliazione, the main street leading up to the embrace of Bernini's colonnades in St Peter's Square.

Previously owned by the Jesuit order, the building now belongs to the order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, which consists of roughly 30,000 Knights and Dames throughout the world, who are dedicated to providing financial support to the Church in the Holy Land.

Funds

The funds are given to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which operates pastoral, educational, and social works in the territories of Jordan, Palestine, Israel, and Cyprus.

The building dates from the Renaissance and contains a turret, a large courtyard, and ancient frescoes by Italian artist Pinturicchio, and is the only property owned by

the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. It currently serves as the order's global headquarters.

Until recently, the building was occupied by the family-run Hotel Columbus, which closed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Only the order's administrative offices remained open.

Now, the order is in initial negotiations with the Four Seasons chain for a 27-year, roughly \$52.4 million contract for a swanky new hotel complete with a spa, gym, and restaurants staffed by world-renowned chefs.

“A business plan for the hotel includes 64 rooms plus 11 executive suites and two super suites, with a starting cost of around \$514 a night”

The Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is headquartered in Toronto and operates more than 100 hotels and resorts worldwide.

Although it was founded by Canadian hotelier Isadore Sharp, since 2007 Microsoft founder Bill Gates has been a majority stakeholder in the chain, owning around 71 per cent through his Cascade Investment holding company.

“Several companies that lost the bid, including the Radisson and the Centurion Hotel Management chains, have said they are considering whether to lodge a formal complaint with the Vatican Gendarmerie”

According to Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, which claims to have documents related to the negotiations, after the closing on the Hotel Columbus, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre's Grand Master, Italian Cardinal Fernando Filoni, gave his consent at the end of 2020 for a public tender for the property.

The tender noted that it was for hotels rated with four or fewer stars.

Within weeks, nearly 60 offers were made, and that list eventually dwindled to 10. Last summer, the order reportedly reduced the number to just three candidates for the contract, eliminating other prominent chains such as Hilton and Marriott.

Negotiations

Negotiations with Four Seasons have just begun. According to *Corriere della Sera*, the multi-million-dollar contract would stipulate an annual rent of just over \$1 million and would include the reconstruction of the property and restoration of the frescoes.

A business plan for the hotel includes 64 rooms plus 11 executive suites and two super suites, with a starting cost of around \$514 a night. It also includes an underground parking area already under construction.

The goal is to have the contract signed and the work completed in time to host pilgrims and tourists,

albeit wealthier ones, in time for the 2025 Jubilee of Hope.

Critics of the decision have argued that placing such a luxurious hotel on property owned by the Church runs in direct contradiction with the “Pope of the poor” and his vision of a “poor Church for the poor”.

Notably, the hotel would be located near where many homeless people sleep at night, taking refuge under the cover of several buildings just outside St Peter's Square.

“They insisted that each step of the process has been approved by the Vatican's Secretariat for the Economy”

Several companies that lost the bid, including the Radisson and the Centurion Hotel Management chains, have said they are considering whether to lodge a formal complaint with the Vatican Gendarmerie, and have even threatened a class action suit if they believe it is warranted, saying Four Seasons entered the tender late and is a five-star chain, above the stipulations of the tender.

In a statement published on their website May 18, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre defended their decision-making process as regards

the Palazzo della Rovere, saying the order, “Like a faithful and prudent administrator...has a duty to take care of everything that has been entrusted to it and that it manages with transparency”.

“Until recently, part of the building was rented to a hotel company to cover, through remittances, the management costs of the order, so that all the donations received can actually be directed to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem,” they said, insisting that this was the idea behind the donation of the property to the order “from the beginning”.

Vacancy

The order said it has been looking for a new company to manage the vacancy left by the Hotel Columbus, one that can do the necessary restoration work in line with the city of Rome.

To this end, an international commission was established by Filoni to evaluate the options.

“This Commission has indicated its preferences and has chosen – in accordance with the rules laid down by Pope Francis for the Holy See – the manifestations of interest, following market research, that best correspond to the needs and purposes of the order,” they said.

They insisted that each step of the process has been approved by the Vatican's Secretariat for the Economy, and said the order is aware of its responsibility “to preserve and manage the property with care and transparency, in the light of its mission of evangelisation and attention to the Holy Land”.

“This ethical line is clear in the ongoing preliminary talks with the candidate hotel companies,” the order said.



World Report

IN BRIEF

Madrid launches holy year in honour of St Isidore the Farmer

● Madrid has kicked off a holy year in honour of the 400th anniversary of the canonisation of its patron saint, St Isidore the Farmer.

During the jubilee year, which will last until May 15, 2023, pilgrims can receive a plenary indulgence by praying at the tomb of the 12th-century saint in the Spanish capital.

Cardinal Carlos Osoro Sierra, the archbishop of Madrid, launched the holy year with a Mass at the saint's tomb on May 15.

"I thank Pope Francis for having granted us this year of grace for Madrid," he wrote in his letter announcing the jubilee.

Nicaraguan priest denounces police harassment of his parish

● A priest in Nicaragua has denounced police surrounding his parish as an act of intimidation and harassment – the latest attempt by the government to impede the work of the Catholic Church.

Fr Harving Padilla told Nicaraguan media that police have parked outside his parish in the city of Masaya since May 15 and have not provided an explanation of

their activities.

He said police took photos while he celebrated Mass at the St John the Baptist Parish and later parked outside the garage of the parish residence, blocking access.

Video on social media showed Fr Padilla confronting police as they hindered people entering the parish.

Berlin archbishop asks forgiveness for homophobia in Church

● Archbishop Heiner Koch of Berlin has asked forgiveness for the Church's discrimination against people because of their sexual orientation.

Homophobia was an "unholy line of tradition" in the Catholic Church, Archbishop Koch said May 17 during an ecumenical service in the Protestant Twelve Apostles Church in Berlin.

The German Catholic news agency KNA said he called for respect for the dignity of every

human being, regardless of their sexual orientation, and announced that the Archdiocese of Berlin would take measures to ensure this.

The archbishop said each parish would have commissioners to counter such discrimination. He pledged to intervene personally if employees of the archdiocese were threatened with consequences under Church labour law on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

Experts say Canada's assisted suicide law undercuts palliative care

● Evidence is mounting that assisted suicide's introduction into the Canadian medical system is not only undermining the government's oft-stated plans to improve palliative care but is actively damaging the country's already inadequate palliative care system.

Some patients are choosing to die rather than to continue to live without adequate palliative care. Dr Neil Hilliard, a palliative care expert from Abbotsford, British Columbia, said health facilities' introduction of

assisted suicide into palliative care wards and hospices, following legalisation of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in June 2016, has led to a reduction in true palliative care services.

"It's like a cancer growing within the palliative care programs," said Dr Hilliard who, in 2017, resigned as medical director of the Fraser Health Authority's palliative care program because of his opposition to the authority's insistence that he support the performing of assisted suicide in hospices.

Nancy Pelosi barred from Communion over abortion stance

San Francisco's archbishop declared May 20 that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is not "to be admitted" to Communion unless and until she publicly repudiates "support for abortion 'rights'" and goes to confession and receives absolution "for her cooperation in this evil".

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone said he decided to make this declaration "after numerous attempts to speak with her to help her understand the grave evil she is perpetrating, the scandal she is causing and the danger to her own soul she is risking" as a Catholic who supports legalised abortion.

Ms Pelosi represents California's 12th Congressional District, which is entirely within San Francisco. A call to Ms Pelosi's Washington office from *Catholic News Service* to request a comment was not returned immediately.

"Please know that I find no pleasure whatsoever in fulfilling my pastoral duty here," Archbishop Cordileone said. "Speaker Pelosi remains our sister in Christ. Her advocacy for the care of the poor and vulnerable elicits my admiration. I assure you that my action here is purely pastoral, not political. I have been very clear in my words and actions about this."

The archbishop opened his 1,300-word letter by saying that Pope Francis "has been one of the world's most vocal advocates of human dignity in every stage and condition



San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone receives an honorary doctorate of Christian ethics from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, May 13. Photo: CNS.

of life."

"He decries what he evocatively calls the 'throwaway culture,'" Archbishop Cordileone said. "There can be no more extreme example of this cultural depravity than when direct attacks on human life are enshrined in a nation's law, celebrated by society, and even paid for by the government.

"This is why Pope Francis, as much as any pope in living memory, has repeatedly and vividly affirmed the Church's clear and constant teaching that abortion is a grave moral evil," he said.

Archbishop Cordileone said he is bound by canon law to be "concerned for all the Christian Faithful entrusted" to his care.

He added that over the years he has heard from many Catholics "expressing distress over the scandal being caused by such Catholics in public life who promote such grievously evil practices as abortion".

Ms Pelosi considers abortion health care and, as recently as May 13 in remarks on the steps of the US Capitol, she warned the Supreme Court to keep its "hands off women's reproductive

health care". She also said if Roe is overturned, Republicans have a "dangerous and extreme agenda" that could see "an all-out assault" on more rights.

Ms Pelosi's position on abortion "has become only more extreme over the years, especially in the last few months," Archbishop Cordileone said. "Just earlier this month she once again, as she has many times before, explicitly cited her Catholic faith while justifying abortion as a 'choice,' this time setting herself in direct opposition to Pope Francis."

Vatican hosts synod session with disabled Catholics

The Vatican hosted a virtual listening session with Catholics with disabilities May 19 as part of the Synod on Synodality process.

People from more than 20 countries participated in the video call hosted by the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life on May 19, with some expressing concerns about experiences of discrimination and exclusion.

A participant from France with Down syndrome shared on the call: "At birth, I could have been aborted. I am

happy to live."

"I love everyone and I thank God for creating me," she added, according to the dicastery.

Other participants from Mexico, Liberia, Ukraine, and other countries also took part in the discussion of some of the synod's preparatory questions, including: "How are we walking with Jesus and our brothers and sisters to proclaim him? For the future, what is the Spirit asking our Church to grow in our journey with Jesus and with our brothers and sisters to proclaim him?"

Accommodations were made so that people with sensory, physical, or cognitive disabilities could express themselves in their own languages, including sign language.

Fr Alexandre Awi Mello, the secretary of the dicastery, said that one of the challenges posed by the global synodal process is to "overcome any prejudice of those who believe that those who have difficulties in expressing themselves do not have a thought of their own, nor anything interesting to communicate".

US bishops welcome easing of Cuba sanctions

The US bishops' chairman on international justice and peace May 19 lauded the government's decision to ease sanctions on Cuba.

"We commend the Administration's renewed interest in restarting US engagement with Cuba. Recognising that points of contention remain between

our two countries, Cuba's punitive isolation has not produced the economic and social change that the United States has sought to effect," Bishop David Malloy of Rockford said May 19.

The Biden administration announced earlier this week that caps on family remit-

tances sent to Cuba will be lifted, gifts to non-family members will be allowed, family reunification programs will be restarted, and travel to the island will be more readily available.

"The expansion of travel opportunities for US citizens, as well as the lifting of oner-

ous remittance limitations, will strengthen familial, economic, and social ties between our countries. Cuba's developing civil society and private sector depend on the leadership provided by active US civil society engagement in Cuba," Bishop Malloy commented.



Edited by Jason Osborne
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Flying the flag



Ukrainian soldiers present colours during an international opening ceremony May 13, for the International Military Pilgrimage at the Basilica of St Pius X in Lourdes. Photo: CNS.

Nuns work to save mothers and children in Nigeria

A Catholic diocese and nuns are working to reduce the number of women who die in childbirth and the number of children who die young, and a hospital administrator said it does not take expensive technology.

The Medical Missionaries of Mary run Mile Four Hospital for the Diocese of Abakaliki. Many of the sisters are doctors and nurses.

"There is no high technology needed to stop maternal mortality," said Sister Charity Munonye, the hospital administrator. "All it takes to prevent maternal death is antenatal care, skilled birth attendant before, during and after child delivery, and that is what we

do at Mile Four Hospital."

The programs the hospital runs include comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care and essential newborn care. Their prenatal clinics are held at the hospital and in their wide outreach program.

The sisters have clinics that monitor the health of children under 5. These clinics provide nutritional support and participate in a national immunisation program.

Drama is used as an educational tool at all the clinics, in education talks and workshops.

Georgina Ndulaka, a nurse at the hospital, says every pregnant woman wants to deliver

her baby alive, return to her home and celebrate with family and friends.

"Since the woman wants to be alive with her baby, she comes to register for her antenatal care, meaning that the woman will want to be attended to by a skilled birth attendant during the delivery," she told *Catholic News Service*.

Ngozi Enu, a staff midwife who oversees the family planning department, told CNS she and her team introduce couples to the hospital's natural family planning program as soon as they register for delivery and give them lectures after delivery. In a situation where the husband shows resistance,

"we enroll the husband, too, and tell him the importance of child spacing and be in control of how many children to give birth to. It's a combined class that requires teamwork for both husband and wife."

She said they also work to discredit rumours, such as the idea that intercourse is not possible during breast feeding, in an effort to help couples avoid infidelity.

The World Bank says Nigeria has the fourth-highest maternal mortality ratio in the world. Out of 100,000 deliveries, nearly 1,000 women die.

Final Australian state allows euthanasia and assisted suicide

New South Wales has become the sixth and final Australian state to legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide. Its legislation forces health care and elder care organisations with religious objections to allow the practice on their premises.

"If a civilisation is to be judged by how it treats its weakest members, the New South Wales parliament has failed miserably, and has set a dark and dangerous path for all posterity, determining a new and disturbing definition of

what it means to be human," Archbishop Anthony Fisher of Sydney said May 19.

"Despite our disappointment, our fight for life does not end with this vote," he added. He then invoked a phrase of Pope Francis: "We must redouble our efforts to care for those who are victims of the 'throwaway culture' and instead rebuild a culture of life and love in this state."

The Upper House of the New South Wales Parliament voted to approve

the 'Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021' by a vote of 23 to 15 on Thursday. It will take effect in about 18 months, according to *The Catholic Weekly*, a publication of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Objecting religious health care providers had sought the ability to ban euthanasia and assisted suicide from their premises, but the relevant amendments were rejected.

Vatican roundup

Patrons of World Youth Day 2023 announced

● Pope St John Paul II and Blessed Carlo Acutis will be among the patrons of World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon.

Cardinal Manuel Clemente, the Patriarch of Lisbon, unveiled the new patrons on May 18, the anniversary of the Polish pope's birth.

The 73-year-old cardinal said that the Virgin Mary would be the "patroness par excellence" of the world's largest gathering of Catholic young people, taking place in the Portuguese capital on August 1-6, 2023.

Other patrons include St John Bosco, St Vincent of Saragossa, St Anthony of Padua, St Bartholomew of Braga, and St John de Brito.

The remaining patrons are Blessed Joanna of Portugal, Blessed João Fernandes, Blessed Maria Clara of the Child Jesus, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, Blessed Marcel Callo, and Blessed Chiara Badano.

Cardinal Clemente said: "Each in their own time, the patrons of WYD Lisbon 2023 have shown that the life of Christ fills and saves young people of all times. We count on them, we leave with them."

World Youth Day was established by Pope John Paul II in 1985. The week-long gathering usually attracts hundreds of thousands of young people.

Rules changed for major superiors of religious orders

● Pope Francis has changed the Church's regulations to allow religious brothers who are not priests to lead their religious communities with Vatican permission.

In a *rescriptum ex audientia* issued May 18, the Pope said that the Vatican congregation overseeing religious orders can, in individual cases and at its own discretion, grant permission for non-priest religious members to assume the role of major superior.

The change includes the derogation of the second paragraph of canon 588 in the Code of Canon Law, which says that clerical institutes are under the direction of ordained priests.

Pope Francis said that the council of an institute of consecrated life, or a society of apostolic life of pontifical rite, may now nominate or elect a "non-cleric member" as major superior after receiving written permission from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The congregation, the *rescriptum* said, "reserves the right to evaluate the individual case and the reasons given by the Supreme Moderator or the General Chapter".

A non-cleric member can be nominated as a local superior without the Vatican's permission.

At Vatican trial cardinal says Pope ordered auditor's ouster

● Questioned for 15 hours over two days in a Vatican courtroom, 73-year-old Cardinal Angelo Becciu insisted the "good of the Holy See" was the only motivation for every transaction or financial decision he was involved in when he worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State.

However, testifying May 18 and responding to questions about hundreds of documents, the cardinal frequently responded that he did not know or could not remember the details.

Taking the stand for the third time, Cardinal Becciu, who is accused of embezzlement, abuse of office and witness tampering, told the court that the 2017 resignation of Libero Milone, the former Vatican auditor general, was ordered by Pope Francis.

The cardinal said he had declined to answer questions about the resignation at the trial's session May 5 "out of love for the Holy Father," but he had since "asked the Pope if I could speak freely (and) he said yes. I had no responsibility in Milone's resignation," he told the court.

"The order was issued by the Pope without my participation. He asked me to summon Milone and inform him that he no longer enjoyed his trust."

Family & Lifestyle

Family News



AND EVENTS

PENTAGON COMMITTED TO UNDERSTANDING UFO ORIGINS

Two top US defence intelligence officials have said the Pentagon is committed to determining the origins of what the US government calls "unidentified aerial phenomena" in the first public congressional hearing in more than 50 years concerning what are commonly known as UFOs.

The two officials, Ronald Moultrie and Scott Bray, appeared before a US House of Representatives intelligence subcommittee 11 months after a report documenting more than 140 cases of unidentified aerial phenomena, or UAPs, that US military pilots have reported observing since 2004.

Mr Bray, deputy director of naval intelligence, acknowledged that there have been some sightings that US officials "can't explain".

Some of those involved instances in which there was too little data to create a reasonable explanation, Mr Bray said.

However he added: "There are a small handful of cases in which we have more data that our analysis simply hasn't been able to fully pull together a picture of what happened." These, Mr Bray said, have involved unexpected "flight characteristics" or "signature management".

ITALIAN OPERA SEEKS UNESCO RECOGNITION

Opera originated in Italy. It was sung by Italian patriots and some of the world's greatest arias came from the peninsula. Now, Rome wants credit where credit is due.

Home to Scarlatti and Verdi, Italy has put in a bid for UNESCO – the UN's cultural agency – to recognise the art of Italian opera singing on its list of intangible global heritage.

A decision is due at the end of the year. "Opera was born in Italy," said Stephane Lissner, the French director of the San Carlo theatre in Naples, which opened in 1737 and claims to be the oldest opera house in the world.

After various experiments with musical theatre in the 16th century, opera came into being around 1600 in Florence, with the founding of an academy promoting an innovative combination of sung text and music.

7-MILLION-YEAR-OLD CROCODILE FOSSIL FOUND IN PERU

The discovery of a prehistoric crocodile fossil in Peru from around 7 million years ago has given palaeontologists clues as to how modern crocodiles, now both saltwater and freshwater creatures, first came to land from the sea.

According to a Peruvian research team that analysed jaw and skull remains of the species, the animal likely would have crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the coast of South America, eventually populating what is now southern Peru.

Researchers say they had collected partial skeletons from the species in recent years, and that after finding a jawbone in Peru's Sacaco desert in 2020, they understood how these animals evolved after living in saltwater.

The crocodile has been dubbed *Sacosuchus cordovai*.



Ingredients for a long life

Figures this year show that life expectancy in Ireland is now the highest in the EU at 82.6 years with the gap between females and males narrowing in the last decade.

Women are now living to 84.1 and men 80.5 years which compares to a mean age of 76.6 years about two decades ago. It has been estimated that if life expectancy trends continue, between 30-50% of children born today could live to 100. Indeed, over 400 individuals in Ireland last year were able to make claim to centenarian status, a number which overall continues to rise.

Currently, the oldest person in the world is 118 year old nun, Sister Andre (Lucile Randon) in France who also has the title of being the oldest Covid survivor and the fourth oldest person ever to have lived. When asked about the secrets of longevity she remarked that "people say that work kills, for me work kept me alive, I kept working until I was 108". She also enjoys having a glass of wine every day and cites as her guilty pleasure eating chocolates!

Oldest Covid survivor

Studies suggest that 25-30% of the variation in human lifespan depends on genetics, but there is little understanding of which genes are involved and how they affect longevity. Indeed, lifestyle and environmental factors appear to be the strongest determinant of health and lifespan in the first 6-7 decades, with genetics more important in maintaining health into the 80s and beyond. In fact, first degree relatives of centenarians are more likely to have longer lives and develop age related diseases much later in life.

Medical Matters

Dr Kevin McCarroll



Studies point to genes influencing longevity by promoting DNA and cell repair, maintaining chromosome regions called telomeres and helping to protect cells from oxidative damage. They may also modulate inflammation, the immune response and effects on the cardiovascular system. In fact, chronic low grade inflammation has been associated with cancer, dementia, diabetes and other conditions in what has been described as "inflammageing", this might also be influenced by gut microbiota.

“Several cohorts of centenarians globally are also being researched”

Of interest, animals including mice, flies and worms that have mutations induced in certain genes have lifespans that are up to 50% longer. Among mammals, bowhead whales have the record for longevity reaching over 200 years of age likely due to differences in cellular ageing determined by genetic programming.

But what can one do to promote a healthier and longer life? Well, studies are looking in parts of the world designated 'blue zones'

where people are living longest including Okinawa (Japan), Ikaria (Greece), and Sardinia (Italy). They tend to have lower income, little industrialisation and to follow a traditional (non-Western) lifestyle. Several cohorts of centenarians globally are also being researched.

A large body of evidence does show that a Mediterranean diet is linked to a lower risk of developing cancer, cardiovascular disease and dementia, as well as a lower overall mortality. It's also associated with longer telomeres (proteins in cells that protect our chromosomes) and this is linked to longer lifespan. This diet contains a high intake of vegetables, fruits, legumes, unrefined cereals, nuts and olive oil, a moderate intake



of fish and wine and low intake of dairy products, meat, poultry and saturated fats.

People who are more socially integrated or have better social networks are also more likely to live longer. This may only in part be explained by better health behaviours. A key factor is probably improved psychosocial well-being as it may positively alter stress hormone response, reduce inflammation and optimise

immune function.

The role of exercise in promoting better health in ageing couldn't be underestimated. Physical activity is associated with reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, depression and overall mortality. It helps to maintain blood circulation, muscle mass, bone density and balance whilst also helping to prevent unhealthy weight gain.

Of course, avoidance of smoking, obesity and alcohol excess has a huge impact on mortality risk. It's also important to keep cholesterol and blood pressure in check. In particular, treatment of high blood pressure substantially reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke, and also appears to lower the likelihood of dementia. Make sure also to have an adequate fibre intake in your diet as it is associated with a lower risk of colorectal cancer.

“The research into ageing may yet turn up these answers though!”

Finally, the limits of human lifespan under optimal dietary, lifestyle and environmental conditions and with current medical treatments is probably not much more than 120 years! Further gains in longevity would probably require manipulation at a cellular and genetic level, raising profound ethical questions. The research into ageing may yet turn up these answers though!

i Dr Kevin McCarroll is a Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine, St James's Hospital, Dublin.

Trusting God through life's ups and downs

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

There are stereotypes that the college academic profession is a hostile one for Catholics, but law lecturer in IT Sligo Leonard Taylor has never found that to be the case. Having nurtured a love for truth and knowledge in Maynooth, he finds that Catholic teaching still has a big role to play in third level education.

Growing up as a young boy in the West of Ireland, Dr Taylor (51) says that it was normal for the Faith to be part of one's life. From the age of seven until he was 12, Dr Taylor was an altar server and was impressed by the priests who ministered in his parish.

“Dr Taylor maintained his connection to the Faith during his teens and early 20s, initially heading to college to study construction”

“I think that was a positive, formative time in my childhood, where I got to mix with a lot of people from my school, but also the local priests of the time – they were all terrific people. They were great men, we were very fortunate in the parish I grew up in to have such great priests,” he recalls.

Dr Taylor maintained his connection to the Faith during his teens and early 20s, initially heading to college



Dr Leonard Taylor (far left, centre row)

to study construction. “Once you are exposed to the faith at a formative stage, it stays with you no matter what happens, throughout the ups and downs of life,” he says. But then, having discerned for some time, he decided to enter the seminary and went to study in Maynooth.

“In your early teens and 20s you're thinking about your future, what are you going to do, what are you going to invest your time in? And I was very idealistic at that age,” Dr Taylor begins. “That would have been a huge factor then. As well as that, my secondary school was a diocesan one and there were a lot of great priests around. They were good role models.

“That was a great experience, to have that example and see them as very ordinary men doing very challenging work. I thought they were really great people. It made it very accessible to make that choice to go to seminary.”

Having joined Maynooth, he stayed for seven years, saying it was a “great seminary” and had a very formative influence on him.

Different environment

“It was the mid-1990s, there were three or four hundred people there when you think about it. Compared to today, which is very a different environment, with 50 or 60, maybe even less. So it was more like a huge boarding school with a very lively college and university life there. You had the best of all of that. I made great friends and got a fantastic exposure to education and knowledge. That really sparked my interest.

“I think it was only then that I realised the value of education. The penny dropped then that education and knowledge are fantastic things to have in your life,” he says.

However, Dr Taylor found the transition from seminary to life as a priest in a parish quite challenging,

describing it as a bit of a shock.

“There are a lot of challenges in parish life, diocesan priesthood is a very particular life, because it combines so many different types of skillset,” he says. “You're at the coalface of people's lives, the very frontline of their personal lives. You enter into the depths of people's experiences because people share an awful lot with you. That was very eye-opening and challenging. And then all the other parish responsibilities that came with it, being involved in schools and communities. It was a mixed experience for me, coming from seminary, it was a bit of a shock.”

“While he studied, Dr Taylor got a job in social services working with people in homelessness”

For the next 10 years, Dr Taylor continued in his ministry, but says that it became increasingly difficult. Over time, it became evident to him that he wasn't doing what he should be. In 2009, he felt the proper thing to do was leave the priesthood and pursue the path of education.

“I did a masters in Law in Galway and I was thinking, this is a better path for me,” Dr Taylor says. “The experience of Maynooth never left me, it really made me aware of the pursuit of knowledge, truth and values, how rich they are, how inexhaustible. You can figure out good values for life.

“It provided great opportunities, to read and to study and to encounter fantastic people. They were very incredible people to be around. I always had that desire to pursue further education, I think that's where it really kicked off.

“The masters helped and then two years later I started a PhD down in Galway in the human rights centre

there. I spent five years again studying and writing that up. That was a great part of my life as well, very hard because it was a lot of work and study, but it was a great opportunity to do that.”

While he studied, Dr Taylor got a job in social services working with people in homelessness.

“I spent seven years working there while I was doing the PhD. I was very fortunate. You have this old cliché of one door closing, another opening, I guess I always had this sense of service and wanting to work for justice. I think working in the social services was a great way of channelling and nurturing that desire,” he explains.

Stereotype

Having completed his masters and his PhD, Dr Taylor received a position as a lecturer in law and social justice theory in IT Sligo. While there is a stereotype that academe is a cold house for Catholics, Dr Taylor says he has never experienced anything like that.

“I would never have encountered anything that would say it's a closed space for Catholics,” he says. “I think the people working in third level education are very curious people by default. The disciplines I work in are always open to critical ideas and thinking. Ireland has changed quite a lot from the Ireland I grew up in when I look back at being an altar server and all that.

“There's still a great appreciation for the Catholic religion, even if people aren't practising anymore. Particularly in academic teaching, areas like ethics and morality – Catholic teaching has a lot to say on that, whether you agree or disagree with it. It's still very valuable and contributes a lot to the way people think about these matters.”

Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie

Living Laudato Si'

Jane Mellett



A global Catholic event responding to cry of creation

Laudato Si' Week 2022, held from May 22-29, marks the seventh anniversary of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on creation care. It is a global Catholic celebration which unites us to listen and respond together to the cry of creation.

It is also an opportunity to celebrate the progress that has been made in bringing *Laudato Si'* to life since its publication.

During this week many global events are taking place and you can see what is happening via www.laudatosiweek.org

One exciting online event is the preview of the *Laudato Si'* Movie which will be released this September globally. A sneak preview will be shown on May 27 where people are encouraged to join and be inspired to bring this movie to their local parishes in the coming year. Perhaps your local parish will mark this annual celebration of *Laudato Si'*?

Laudato Si' week is an opportunity to intensify our efforts through the dynamic *Laudato Si'* Action

Platform which we have been exploring here over the past few months. We have been looking at the *Laudato Si'* Goals, one each month, to see how we might, as church communities, strive to achieve these goals by 2030. The seven *Laudato Si'* Goals are a response to the call for healing in our relationships with God, our neighbours and the Earth itself as we build a better future.



This month we are going to look at *Laudato Si'* Goal number 5 which is on Ecological Education. This goal is about re-thinking and re-designing curriculum across all Church institutions, schools, parishes, universities, seminaries, in order to foster ecological awareness and education. Actions under this goal include ensuring equal access to education for all, promoting human rights, bringing *Laudato Si'* themes into the community activities.

It involves training and encouragement for ecological leadership amongst students, teachers, and boards of management in the spirit of integral ecology. This means acknowledging the deep

interconnectedness of everything which includes all that happens within our educational spaces.

For a school, for example, to seriously look at this goal, it would involve a whole school approach where care for our common home becomes embedded in the ethos and mission of the school and includes a cross-curricular approach to ecological education. Some of this is already underway, for example, most schools in Ireland have achieved their Green Flag awards through innovative and inspiring projects. What is needed now is to integrate the spirit of *Laudato Si'* with the actions.

Hope is found through action, even the smallest actions, and the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform gives us the blueprint to bring healing to our world. To celebrate *Laudato Si'* Week 2022, perhaps your family, school, business or parish could consider signing up? Go to www.laudatosiweek.org to find out more.

“Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change.” (LS, 202)

Jane Mellett is the *Laudato Si'* Officer with Trócaire

Letters

Letter of the week

Failing to follow medical science with the NMH

Dear Editor, I find it unbelievable that media commentators and politicians are objecting to the words "clinically appropriate" in the constitution for the new National Maternity Hospital.

Seriously, are we proposing that this State sponsored maternity hospital carry out 'clinically inappropriate procedures' even ones leading to fatal consequences? There is a word for deliberately killing someone, and it is not 'healthcare'. Sadly, no media outlet has been bold enough to

name it for what it is.

How quickly we have forgotten the actions of doctor Josef Mengele – the 'Angel of Death' in Auschwitz – who had no regard for the health and safety consequences of his procedures. Are we witnessing the 'Mangelisation' of healthcare in this multi-billion euro development?

Whatever it is that the State is investing in on behalf of the Irish people, it ought not to be called a hospital, nor should it be funded by

the Department of Health.

Let's have a reality check here, with tens of thousands of Irish lives being ended, in accordance with State policy, in the first three years of the operation of the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018, not alone are we failing to follow the medical (clinical) science, we are clearly on the wrong side of history.

*Yours etc.,
Gearóid Duffy,
Cork City, Cork*

GAA matches clashing with Church services

Dear Editor, As we all know Jesus died a long and very painful death for us all on Good Friday.

So I was shocked to hear that some GAA clubs had organised matches and medal presentations events for young players on the holy day.

Nowadays many clubs also organise matches on Sunday mornings which are guaranteed to clash with Christian church services.

Time for clergy and laity to cry stop and show religious believers some respect. After all most GAA members are nominal Christians.

Perhaps all GAA clubs should have a chaplain for their spiritual support. Indeed many clubs have problems which include lack of respect for referees and other players, aggression on pitches, angry and foul mouthed supporters, racism and sectarianism.

*Yours etc.,
Liam De Paor
Loreto Road, Co. Cavan*



Like dead fish on the shore of history

Dear Editor, The war in the Ukraine could well escalate into something much bigger, engulfing many more countries and become nuclear also, with all the destruction that that could entail for all of us. In light of that, it is amazing to see with what passion the proponents of the new maternity hospital are insisting that abortion and other immoral practices will be included as 'services' available there and that the Church be kept out.

Put simply, while they themselves and all of us now are threatened with large scale killing they still want to perpetrate large scale killing on future generations in the new hospital. To make the irrationality of it all even clearer I will use a simple example from the animal world: a cat intent on killing a mouse will nonetheless draw back when she (the cat) finds herself threatened by a big dog. But not so the proponents of the new hospital.

Even with more war looming, they still want more killing as if the blood of the 15,000 killed already by abortion since the repeal of the eight amendment is not enough for them.

But the tide is turning in favour of life in the US with the possibility of Roe v. Wade being overturned soon, and that is giving inspiration to pro-lifers everywhere. Hence, the proponents of the new hospital will soon come to look like dead fish stranded on the shore of history.

And the Church? We hear a lot about the involvement of the laity, which, in practice, often amounts to little more than a pandering to feminists. Will the clergy instead step up now and support those truly caring, gallant lay women, and men, in the pro-life movement who do so much in the battle for life?

*Yours etc.,
Fr Richard O'Connor
Rome, Italy*

State should praise sisters profusely for NMH land

Dear Editor, The State and a huge cohort of the Irish public have been maliciously attacking some of the most hardworking, generous, kind and hugely impressive people this country has known: members of the Sisters of Charity.

Of course there have been people within religious orders that did terrible things, but that should never take away all the good work that has been done, and there is a lot of it.

The sisters, many very elderly and frail, gave the land to the State for a new hospital to be built – basically for free – for 300 years. They obviously do not have any involvement and would certainly not want any involvement seeing as abor-

tions will be conducted there.

Now there's talk of just seizing the land from some people – ungracious to say the least. If they own any land, how would they like if I just decided to seize it?

Even cabinet ministers have rolled over and are speaking about the Church and sisters horrendously (some always did so). They in no way have acknowledged the sisters and their good works, only trying to calm the baying mob – reiterating the hospital will be secular with no Church involvement.

What should have happened is a State-organised event thanking the religious order for their generosity, praising them profusely for identifying a site for the

National Maternity Hospital which will help women across Ireland bring new life into the world and for doing the work the State should have been doing at the time.

Catholic religious have been helping the marginalised, the sick and the poor of Ireland, many of them for their whole lives, and they are thanked with abuse when they decide to give a last parting gift as they are too frail to continue the work. Dreadful.

Maybe they should have just sold the land and sent the money to a Church project elsewhere?

*Your etc.,
John Doyle
Drogheda, Co. Louth*

facebook community

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

Educationalist refutes non-religious teachers' study

The Church has let the people and their children down for many years. The influence of new-age material being shoved into the children is criminal and the Church has done nothing to put a stop to it. When the schools are owned by the Church and parents want their children to be taught the catechism they should have more of a say! When God is pushed aside the Devil comes in. – **Frances Donaghy**

It's true. I know many students who won't reveal their Catholic faith for fear of retribution in their schools and chosen professions. This is horribly sad. – **Jessica Rist Stanco**

Everyone can help promote vocations to priesthood, says Bishop Gavin

Until reverent Masses are restored, I don't think the vocations drought will improve. All the gimmicks and phony happy talk of the last 50 years have failed badly. Maybe it would be a good idea to start teaching the Catechism to children again, too. – **William Broderick**

Catholic ethos in hospitals is something to be proud of

In pre-civil war Spain, the communist authorities forcibly removed Catholic agencies from hospitals. – **Jayne Turner**

The sisters should withdraw the offer of this site in my opinion. And then if the Government still want it, they pay the full market value. – **Robert Allen**

All conveniently forgotten about. Ireland has become the most anti Catholic country. – **Caroline Hendron**

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

No respect for Catholics in Ireland

Dear Editor, The Irish liberal establishment tell us we must respect LGBT people, Travellers, all types of foreign people. We must give respect to Muslims. But the one group of people we are still allowed hate are Catholics. Catholic opinion is not to be taken into account.

Catholic nuns have gifted to the State a valuable site in Dublin 4, almost free for 300 years, for a maternity hospital.

Have the Irish people thanked these nuns? Not at all. These nuns are hated by the establishment because they are Catholics.

The liberals want us to respect all kinds except Catholics. Many Irish people are so prejudiced against religion, that they even want the State to confiscate the land.

*Yours etc.,
John F. Hyland
Killiney, Co. Dublin*

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



The problem of mixing fact with fiction

Dramas based on true stories can be fascinating, but mixing fiction and history can produce odd results.

So it is with **The Terror: Infamy** (BBC Two, Fridays). The first series is still on repeat on RTÉ Two, Sunday nights, and is an absorbing but very grim story on the ill-fated expedition of Sir John Franklin in the Arctic – one of his ships was called *The Terror*. The unique aspect of the series is the way it blends in supernatural elements as the historical story is embellished. This new series is running with double episodes, and this time the historical background is the internment of Japanese citizens and US citizens of Japanese origins after the attack on Pearl Harbour. That in itself would have provided an intriguing story, but the 'terror' element this time involves a malevolent spirit stalking the camps, leading to some pretty gruesome deaths. The central story concerns Chester, an American of Japanese origin who gets his Catholic girlfriend pregnant. Her parents are unsympathetic to put it mildly. An abortion is planned and this seems to spark the awakening of a nasty spirit who has designs on the baby.

Even as they are considering it the proposed abortion



A scene from *The Terror: Infamy*.

it is described as an "offence against God" and the woman who provides the deadly potion comes to a sticky end. The story is most touching when the woman also considers why she should keep the baby, and in the developing relationship between her and Chester's family – the personality and cultural differences are huge obstacles, but there was a moving encounter in last Saturday's first episode between her and Chester's father.

Backstory

The second episode last Saturday spends a lot of time on backstory, which drains the tension somewhat. We see an historical adoption and a baby handed in to a Catholic orphanage by a mother who can't cope. The nun who receives the child is courteous, but doesn't seem to be caring about the ongoing welfare of the mother. Well, that feeds in to a familiar narrative!

I've also been following **Croí na Ceiste le Caoimhe** (BBC Two NI, Mondays). Caoimhe Ní Chathail explores issues that are of interest and concern to young people, mainly in relation to Northern Ireland. There's nothing very ground-breaking or surprising in it so far, but I am impressed by the standard of spoken Irish. The presenter, Caoimhe, is cheerful and articulate but at times too inclined to give her own views – a more dispassionate and less preachy approach would help. The episode about religion was fresh and varied in that we got to hear from young people enthusiastic about their Christian faith as well as those who were atheist or following minority religions. One girl had been inspired by a Youth 2000 retreat and was active in her parish. Another girl came from a Hindu background but while she still practiced the cultural aspects of that religion she had become a born again Christian. A young man had converted to Judaism and said he found it harder to come out as a religious person than to come out as gay. A young woman preferred to follow old pagan and nature related practices

Last week's episode was about sex education, but this was much more predictable. There was heavy emphasis on 'consent', important but

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM: HIDDEN FIGURES

Film Four Saturday May 28, 6.30pm and Wednesday June 1, 6.30pm

(2016) African American women face several levels of prejudice as they work with NASA on the space race in the 1960s. Positive portrayal of religious faith.

VATICANO

EWTN Monday May 30, 8.30am

Vaticano covers the canonisation of St Titus Brandsma and how the Order of Malta brings relief to Ukrainian refugees.

CLOCH LE CARN

RTÉ One Wednesday night June 1, 4.35am

Pat Hume: For decades Pat Hume supported her husband, John Hume, in his work towards peace in Ireland, but behind the scenes, Pat was a quietly formidable woman in her own right.

surely a low bar! There was the usual dig at the supposed inadequacy of sex education in religious-run schools. I was impressed by a woman who was both a parent and a teacher. For her, good values started at home, where hopefully children could learn by example what constituted a good relationship. Much of the rest was worrying and parents with young adults in college would have seen plenty to scare them!

Debate

When I wrote about it a few weeks ago I didn't think the debate about the National Maternity Hospital would still be so prominent. And the media debates have been so repetitious – the same arguments reshaped

interminably, with rotating spokespersons. The view that a maternity hospital is not an appropriate location for abortion is largely screened out, by design or neglect. David Quinn of this parish and the Iona Institute did get to make an unfairly brief contribution on the matter during *The Tonight Show* (Virgin Media One, Tuesday) when his main concern was how unfair it was to the nuns that there was a 'total exclusion of the positive side of their legacy'.

Injustice takes so many forms.

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Film

Aubrey Malone



Tom-Boy in cruise control on another mission impossible

You won't see a better action film all year than this aerial drama. It's an unashamed ode to machismo and is dripping with characters from innumerable other like-minded vehicles but in the end it wins you over with its charm.

I normally have problems with Tom Cruise in films like this. I've never bought into the idea of him as an action hero. Isn't he too pretty? Too lightweight? You might send him out to do the shopping but not to save the planet.

Here, though, his high wire antics come with a lot of emotional undertones – most of them going back to 'Maverick's' past.

Can you believe it's all of 36 years since the original

Top Gun? This time, like Paul Newman reprising the role of Eddie Felson in *The Colour of Money* a few decades on from the original pool movie to go from player to teacher (of Tom Cruise!) he takes a step sideways.

Mission

His mission is to fly a group of elite pilots into an Iranian bunker and blow up a uranium plant that's in breach of NATO regulations. They have to fly so low to avoid the radar that breathing becomes a problem. Unless you're Tom.

We all know he's the best pilot on the planet but to give the film topspin they have to have aggressive superiors (Jon Hamm and



Top Gun: Maverick (PG).

Ed Harris) disapproving of his anti-authoritarian ways.

Only Val Kilmer (Iceman) really believes in him. But Val is battling cancer and

isn't long for this world. (He has cancer in real life too. So has Harris, which makes it ironic that he says to Tom at one point, "The

future is coming and you're not in it.")

Tom also has problems with one of his crew, Bradley Bradshaw (Miles Teller). Teller thinks he was responsible for the death of his dad in the original movie.

Romantic interest

Then there's blast from the past Jennifer Connelly, the romantic interest. She's the owner of the happiest bar I've ever seen in my life. There are generally more of the military in here than in the Navy itself!

Like Kelly McGillis in the original movie, Jennifer gets to ride on a motorcycle with Tom at one stage. Cast your mind back to that iconic scene. No helmets of course.

Helmets are for wimps, right?

The film rarely stops for breath in its two hour plus running time, showing Tom to be still king of land and air (and even sea briefly). He doesn't look 36 years older than he did in 1986. In fact Tinseltown's Peter Pan hardly looks 36 minutes older. How does he manage that? By having "work done"? (I've always loved that euphemism for a facelift).

It's escapism with a capital E but in the hands of Joseph Kosinski – who also helmed Tom's 2013 movie *Oblivion* – it ticks all the boxes of the genre. There's even a Lady Gaga song. What's not to love?

The Ascension of the Lord

The celebration of the Ascension of Jesus to heaven marks the definitive closure of his mission on earth. According to St Luke, over a period of 40 days the Risen Lord appeared to certain disciples in varied ways to prepare them for his final departure. The apostles were told that they would continue the work of Jesus. They were instructed to return to Jerusalem and to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit to empower them.

We can celebrate the Ascension in three ways.

A new mission

On the Mount of the Ascension, the apostles were told not to be looking up to the skies but to look out to the world as a field of mission. "Go, therefore, make disciple of all the nations. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time". That mission and promise extends to our time. God is not just up there, but God is with us and in us. As Pope Francis put it, each one of us not only has a mission but each one is a mission to bring God's love and compassion to others. "I have no hands now but yours."

A new power

Jesus promised that the new mission would be empowered by the Holy Spirit. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." Next Sunday we will celebrate Pentecost. See how the power of the Spirit changed the apostles... from confusion to belief, from fear to courage, from dependency to joy.

A new hope

The Ascension opens up the doors of heaven for us. This is beautifully expressed in the Preface for the Feast. "He ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we, his members, might be confident of following him where he, our Head and Founder, has gone."

The famous scientist, Stephen Hawking, described human life as "chemical scum on an average-sized planet, orbiting

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



around a very average-sized star, in the outer suburb of one of a million galaxies." Chemical scum! No, thank you! Give me our beautiful, meaningful and hope-filled Christian religion any day. Planets and galaxies suggest a big story. But religion offers a story even bigger.

Peter

I invite you to use your imagination to share in the experience of the apostles. For instance, how did Peter remember those days? Let us listen to him.

Ever since that morning of the 153 fish I hardly knew myself. Such peace and quiet strength I had never known. Some were watching me, probably wondering when I might suddenly explode in temper. But I was at peace. And waiting.

The great dreams were back. One hundred and fifty-three fish. I was waiting on his advice where to cast his net again. Feed his lambs, feed his sheep! Me, a shepherd! He had a sense of humour. I no longer resented his departure. Gone were the nightmares about charcoal fires and denial. I had been liberated from guilt and shame. The lightness of peace was new to me. I tried to explain it to the others. And tried to explain that he had to die and go away. John of course understood it all before I did. Thomas too, in his own way. But some of them were slow to fit the pieces together. It was odd that I was the one offering patient explanations. Witnesses to the ends of the earth!

In my impulsive days as Simon, I would have jumped immediately into the nearest boat going anywhere but would have ended up nowhere. Now in my new life as Peter I waited. And prayed. We had once asked him to teach us how to pray. Now it was happening. If anyone wanted proof of the rising of Jesus, here it was...Peter was waiting patiently...and praying! New life was a fact.

Two great memories helped to keep us



together. Somebody had mentioned Elijah. Together we returned to the story that he had been taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire but his prophetic spirit came to rest on his disciple, Elisha. That story helped us to make sense of things. It gave us hope. And hope gave us patience.

And then, too, there was the presence of Mary. She joined our group with John, but I think she would have come in any case for now we felt that she was a mother to us all. Nobody had to mention Cana, but the miracle at the wedding

feast was forefront in our minds whenever she was around. She was part of the first great sign given by Jesus, changing water into wine. Her presence reminded us that such a transformation could happen again...to us. And her favourite saying was, "Nothing is impossible to God."

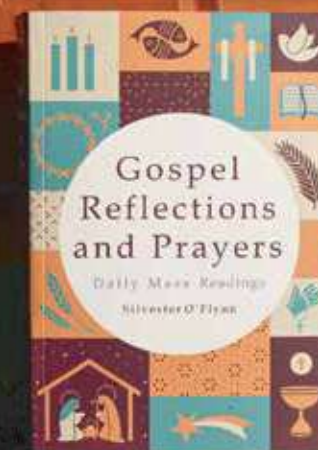
And so, we waited...and prayed. Not for nine months, but for nine days of deep peace I felt the tranquility of a child in the womb of a loving mother. Then the Holy Spirit came down in tongues of fire and the Church was born.

Prayer

With St Paul we pray: "May God enlighten the eyes of our mind so that we can see what hope his call holds for us, what rich graces he has promised the saints will inherit, and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers."

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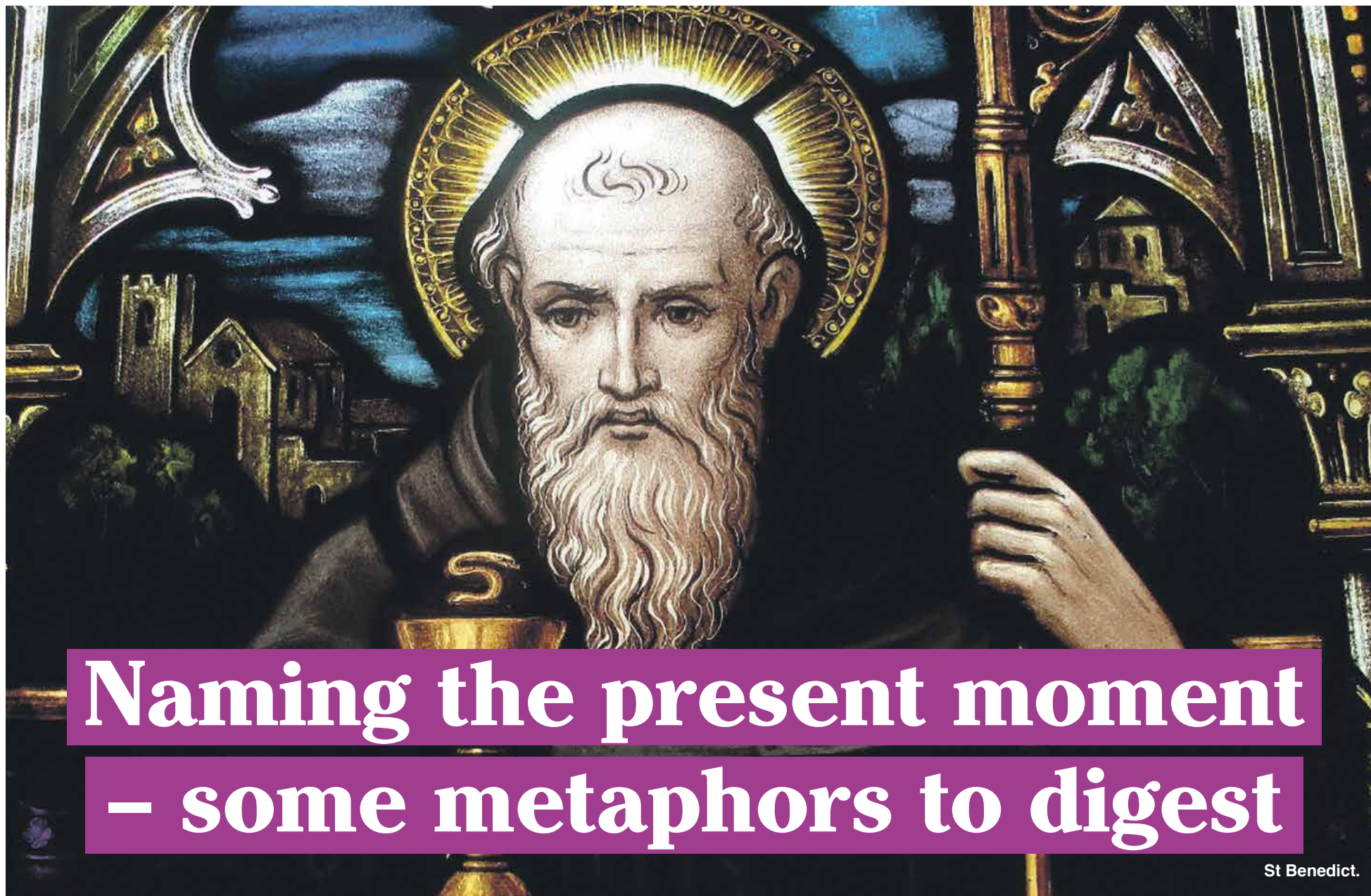


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St Benedict.

Naming the present moment – some metaphors to digest

Not everything can be fixed or cured, but it should be named properly. Richard Rohr said that. James Hillman suggests something similar when he wrote that a symptom suffers most when it doesn't know where it belongs.

“Some of these seemingly contradict each other, but all of them merit some thought. I leave them for you to digest”

Where does our present moment belong vis-à-vis our faith in God and the relevance of our Churches? Are we post-Christian? Are we witnessing the death of God and our churches? Or, is our faith being purified by the very criticisms levelled against it and, despite a massive decline in church attendance, aren't the Churches making genuine moral progress on issues like racism, sexism, and social justice in general? Are we dying or maturing? How do we name our present moment?

By way of an answer, I would like simply to offer a series of “metaphors” gleaned from various commentators that attempt a naming. Some of these seemingly contradict each other, but all of them merit some thought. I leave them for you to digest.

1. Faith is a spent project!



Fr Rolheiser

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In essence, that's the view of the Enlightenment thinkers, classically expressed in persons like Nietzsche, Freud, Feuerbach, and Marx, who suggest that faith and belief in God are something you eventually outgrow, like belief in Santa and the Easter Bunny. This belief was needed for a time, but it's something we outgrow when we lose our naiveté. God and the Churches have had their time in history, and that day is over. Today, this is the belief (or unacknowledged fear) of millions.

2. Our world is still in diapers! Pierre Teilhard de Chardin suggests that far from faith being a spent project, it's only in its infancy stage. In an evolutionary view of history and faith, we are still a world in diapers, emerging from the crib. Faith is far from spent! We are just beginning!

3. A post-Christian West! That

was the view of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger before he became pope. Interestingly, he never asserted it again explicitly after he became pope, namely, that the secularised world, particularly in North America and Western Europe, is now “post-Christian”.

4. Faith in the secularised world is suffering a certain noonday fatigue! This is an image offered by Thomas Halik. In his view, faith and the Churches aren't dying; they are merely suffering “acedia”, the “noon-day devil”, the fatigue that the early Christian desert writers told us could afflict even the most committed believers.

5. We are experiencing a crisis of the imagination, not of faith and fidelity. The conditions of belief have changed radically and our imaginations haven't caught up. This is the view of the renowned philosopher on secularity, Charles

Taylor. For him, as believers today we are pioneers, struggling to learn how to live in a (faith) country that we and no one else has ever before inhabited. Small wonder we are struggling.

6. Secular culture is the adolescent child of Judeo-Christianity and in its adolescent grandiosity our culture sees only its parents' faults. This is the view of the popular spiritual writer Kathleen Norris and is echoed by Yale philosopher Louis Dupre. As Norris puts it, if you want to visualise the relationship between our secular world and Christianity, watch how a seventeen year-old teenager who is out of sorts with her parents interrelates with them. To this, Dupre adds that grandiose adolescents aren't bad, they just aren't finished growing.

“Christian vision in the West is the residue of a former seeing, before suffering a detached retina”

7. Secularity is a fantasy indulged in by intellectuals. For ordinary people there are divine whispers behind every door. In real life, religion of some sort is unavoidable. This from French philosopher Chantal Delsol.

8. Like Jonah, we are in the belly of the whale. This is one of Richard Rohr's preferred namings. Inside our contemporary doubt and

confusion, God is taking us through a darkness to where we need to be.

9. Christian vision in the West is the residue of a former seeing, before suffering a detached retina. This from Walter Kasper. His idea: if someone is born blind, he will not have visual images of outside objects inside of him. However, if someone goes blind sometime in life, he will retain the images of what he once saw, even though he is no longer seeing them. As Christians, we are living too much off past images, and no longer seeing directly with the eyes of faith.

10. We need “The Benedict Option”. This from Rod Dreher. Heavily secularised culture is asphyxiating our faith. What's needed to save and nurture it is the “Benedict option”. Like the great monastic founder, St Benedict, those of us with a committed faith need to pull away from a culture that is eroding our faith and live out our faith in a “monastic” way, namely by withdrawing and building new kinds of “monasteries” within which to live out our faith and raise our children. Eventually, as has happened before the world will come to us seeking help and meaning.

Who's right? What best names both our symptoms and our moment? There is something to digest in each of these images.

“James Hillman suggests something similar when he wrote that a symptom suffers most when it doesn't know where it belongs”

BookReviews

Peter Costello



Recent books in brief

Peace Apart: Lasting Impressions of C.S. Lewis
by Bishop Fintan Monahan
(Veritas, €9.99/£8.99)

This little book is the third in a series in which Fintan Monahan, the bishop of Killaloe, is evoking writers who have been important to him, and whom he wishes to encourage others to take up and read.

The previous two books were about Newman and Thomas Merton. Here he turns to C.S. Lewis, who was both theologian and novelist. Lewis was born in Belfast, but many Irish people would fail to see him as an Irish writer, which is a pity. Perhaps this is because his life seems to revolve around what we see as English experiences, especially at Oxford University.

Others, of course, recall Lewis as a unique scholar of medieval literature, whose exposition of the medieval world view *The Discarded Image* is still powerfully readable and insightful.

Here, however, Fintan Monahan concentrates on his fearful experiences of war in early life and then his resolve to put his talents as a creative artist to the service of a Christian vision for everyone, especially through the *Narnia* series.

This book is aimed at encouraging readers to try Lewis, or to renew their former acquaintance with Lewis in a manner well-adjusted to those who might not feel Lewis is their sort of writer.

Bishop Monahan's encouragement will hopefully open up to a great writer to many, many people. Great teachers are not always great artists, for as they say, "those who can, do; those who can't, teach". Lewis, however, was miraculously both teacher and artist. In this context his Irishness scarcely seems to matter.

What Are We Waiting For? Finding Our Way in a World, Ever Changing, Ever Divided, Ever Seeking
by Donal Murray
(Veritas, €10.99/£9.99)

The author will need no introduction after his long career as a pastor. Now in retirement, he is writing a series of meditative books opening up to the ordinary reader what in theology are often complex matters, but which he thinks can be expressed with a finer simplicity. His twelve short chapters, taken on the basis of one a day, will provide his readers not only with food for thought, but with reasons for hope.

These small pamphlet publications by Veritas (the heirs of the old CTS of Ireland) should be more widely available in churches, but rarely are. In France and Italy local churches seem to expect people, even tourists, will visit them out of interest; this is never the case here.

The Self-Care Squad Journal for Teens and Pre-teens

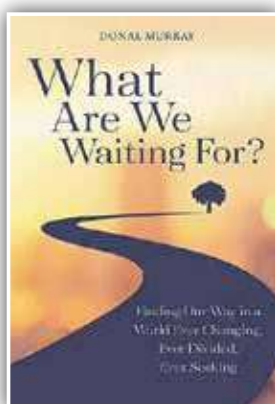
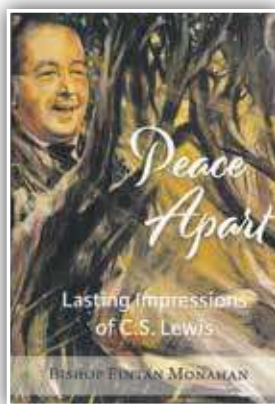
by Amy Claire
(Veritas, €16.99/£14.99)

Those years between being a child who is looked after, and a person who has become an adult who can look after themselves, are very difficult. Tides of emotion wash in and out on a daily basis. All very confusing, and undermining.

This book of self-help is designed by life-coach Amy Claire to help record, control, and learn from those moments, so allowing the young person to take control and to find a sense of respect for themselves through keeping a sort of annual journal.

The benefits of a book like this, with varied activities and prompts, can only be achieved through working with it over a whole year. But there *will* be benefits she claims. It is very much a case of try it and see.

The motto emblazoned on the cover says it all really: "Embrace your uniqueness today!" In other words, you deserve to be the person you can make of yourself.



Ireland's Great Famine, Britain's Great Failure

William H. A. Williams
(Anthem Press, £80.00/€94.00)

Felix M. Larkin

It is impossible to write about certain matters, even in a scholarly context, without feelings of outrage.

The Irish Famine of 1845–49, the subject of this new book by William H. A. Williams, an American historian who taught at University College Dublin in the late 1960s and early 1970s, is a case in point. Dr Williams, however, avoids being overwhelmed with outrage in his study of this seminal event in Irish history. His book is exhaustively researched, and the result is a wide-ranging and carefully balanced analysis of the Famine.

The demographic consequences of the Famine are well known, but bear repetition here. Ireland's population was 8.175 million in the 1841 census and is estimated to have risen to over 8.5 million by 1846, but declined to 6.55 million in the 1851 census – a loss of at least two million, roughly a quarter of the population. While official statistics are incomplete, it is thought that about a million people died during the Famine. The other million emigrated – and the exodus continued afterwards.

Emigrated

Williams records that a total of 2.1 million Irish people fled the country between 1845 and 1855, and by 1900 some five million people had emigrated. This left Ireland's population at about 4.5 million in 1900, approximately where it had been in 1790. The population of Ireland today, including Northern Ireland, is estimated at 6.9 million – approximately 1.5 million short of the 1846 figure.

The rapid rise in Ireland's population between 1790 and 1845 – an increase of nearly 45% – and the over-dependence of the rural population

The Irish Famine: natural disaster or genocide?



on the potato for sustenance created conditions that were unsustainable. Irish society was already in crisis before the advent of the potato blight.

The Famine arguably precipitated changes in Irish society which would have happened in any event, but they would have happened more gradually and with less human suffering. As Dr Williams points out, "it makes a difference whether events span decades or are concentrated

within a few years". He quotes one authority as suggesting that the country's population would have fallen to the levels actually reached by 1900 even without the Famine. He comments: "In this sense, perhaps the ghost of Malthus did hover over rural Ireland."

Inadequate

The government's wholly inadequate response to the Famine is what has given rise to the charge of genocide. John

Mitchel wrote thus in 1861 that "the Almighty, indeed, sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine". While not dismissing this argument, Dr Williams wisely observes that "responding to disasters is seldom a simple matter" – and he draws a parallel between the failure of successive British governments under Peel and Lord John Russell to meet the very considerable challenge of the Famine with the blundering of the US government in its response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Priority

The misplaced priority of the British authorities at this time was to protect the UK Treasury and the British taxpayer from the burden of funding Irish relief, and their laissez-faire ideology provided intellectual – if not moral – justification for their reluctance to intervene. Nevertheless, Dr Williams concedes that "a quick, painless solution to the crisis did not exist ... Nothing could have spared Ireland's poor from some degree of disruption, death and panicked emigration."



Carrying out the Famine dead in the 1840s

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.



Famine Memorial in Dublin by the banks of the Liffey

Dr Williams, therefore, sees the Famine as “Britain’s Great Failure” – a failure of public policy. It was not genocide, but equally it was not simply the result of a natural disaster.

“The demographic consequences of the Famine are well known, but bear repetition here”

Moreover, he emphasises that it was the Irish poor – not the “Irish people” – who were “starved and driven out”. For the Irish upper and middle classes, Catholic as well as Protestant, life during the Famine went on pretty much as before. The framing of the Famine in nationalist terms by John Mitchel and others – to quote Williams, “as England against Ireland, the landlords against the people and, by implication at least, Protestants against Catholics” – is wholly misleading, though sadly it remains part of our popular memory

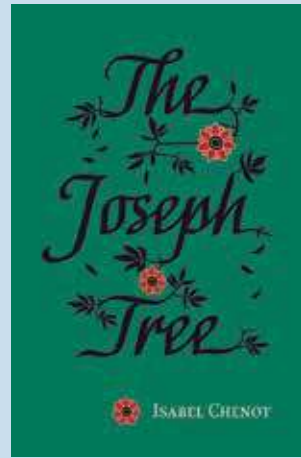
and still provokes anti-British sentiment both in Ireland and among the descendants overseas of those “driven out”.

Conversations

Dr Williams credits his interest in Irish history to “conversations in the snug at Hartigan’s pub on Lower Leeson Street, the off-campus headquarters of UCD’s male historians” during the years when he taught American history in Dublin.

The UCD history school at that time was a particularly talented one, and Williams notes that two of its luminaries – R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams (no relation of his) – had edited a volume of essays entitled *The Great Irish Famine: Studies in Irish History, 1845-52*, published in 1957. This was the first scholarly study of the Famine. There is now a substantial corpus of work on the subject, and Dr Williams’ book is a valuable addition to it. His wide perspective on Irish society before, during and after the Famine enriches our understanding of the catastrophe that befell Ireland in the years 1845-49.

A poet’s intimations of immortality



The Joseph Tree
by Isabel Chenot
(Wiseblood Books, US \$14.00; the publishers can be addressed at P.O. Box 870 Menomonee Falls, WI 53052, USA, or emailed at wisebloodbooks@gmail.com)

Aubrey Malone

Isabel Chenot writes beautifully about the transcendent power of nature in this poetry collection. It’s dedicated to a friend who lost her baby son. The poem documenting this is staggeringly impressive:

“You were his space, his flood, his element –
Your blood was his kinetic spark.

But moving on your water was genesis
Spirit and spirit’s Ark.”

In the landscape poetry of the book, which comprises most of the rest of it, we also see intimations of immortality. These aren’t the teleological “sermons under the stones” of a Wordsworth. They’re more reminiscent of Patrick Kavanagh in the way they’re threaded seamlessly through the lines.

Poetry, she writes in her introduction, has a “terse sharpness to tell the ache of our core fracturing”. To that extent it’s the natural language of vision and prophecy. Both are evident here in a style that – to paraphrase Ernest Hemingway on F. Scott Fitzgerald – is as delicate as the dust from a butterfly’s wings.

Generously served with quotations from both Old and New Testament, Isabel crafts her lyrics with visionary zeal. We don’t know where any of the poems are going to lead us. That increases their



Isabel Chenot

power. The sentiments aren’t imposed. It’s as if they just occurred to her.

Teasing “the fingertips of grace” into existence, she writes, “Life came as clear/as prayer.” They’re poems of searching but cathartic answers are generally within reach: “Faith apprehends the dark.”

Loading every rift with ore, she strip-mines the mother-lode of present and past. History is described as

being “like God’s garment folded in a boat”. With a proficiency that seems to belie her youth she proffers what she calls “etchings on a soul” in bite-sized chunks of monumental insight.

“I am too stooped, my God, to carry you,” she reveals. The Almighty, who “shoulder[s] every broken will’s/ burdensome sky” carries her instead.

Aubrey Malone is the film critic of The Irish Catholic

A fresh eye and ear for the sights and sounds of our ancient land

A Breath of Fresh Éire
by Olga Balaeva
(Beehive, €14.99/£12.99)

Peter Costello

Author and photographer Olga Balaeva is a new kind of Irish writer, representative of the emerging culture of a future island. Born in Moscow she is alive in several languages including Gaelic. She has already *Ireland as gaeilge* “a user friendly guide to the language” – considering the baleful effect that grammarians have had on preventing free and easy use of our “native language”

this sounds very refreshing. Doubtless our new citizens of Slavic, African and Asian origin will indeed save the language.

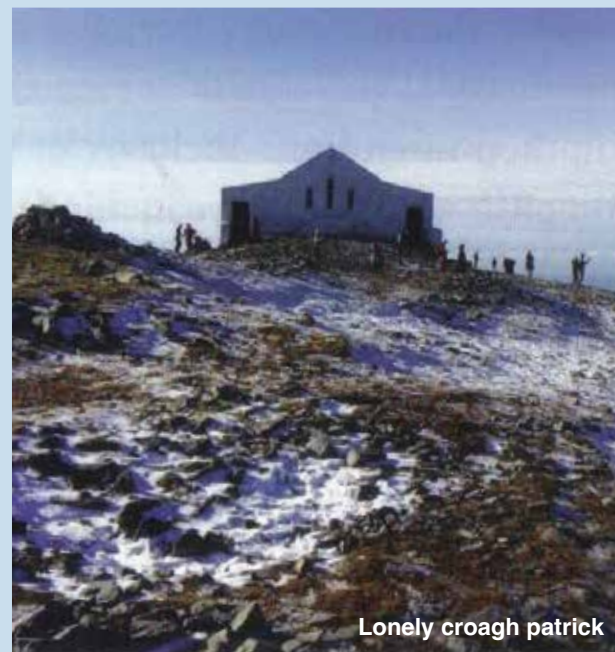
This little book is full of charm, and the insights of a new imagination seeing our ancient landscape with a very different eye, revealing to us sights that we may well be blind to.

Unusual angle

She often finds an unusual angle. For instance, the peak of Croagh Patrick is shown almost bereft of pilgrims in winter with snow on the

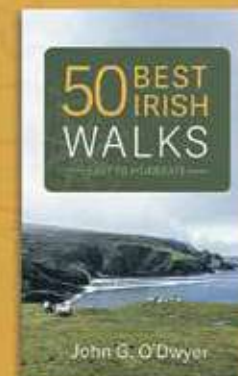
ground, so that the chapel in its bleak loneliness is rightly emphasised. We never really see it that way ever, for the usual idea is to illustrate the place filled with summer pilgrims. But it too has its moments of lonely isolation it seems.

A larger page would have allowed readers to better enjoy what she picks out – a pity the publishers skimmed on that aspect of presentation. Perhaps something twice the size will do her talents full justice in future books.



Lonely croagh patrick

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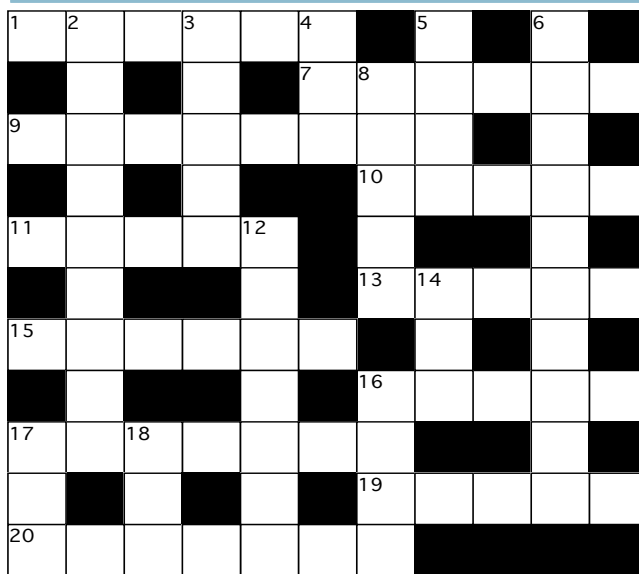


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Crossword Junior

Children's 434



Across

- 1 Church or temple for people who follow Islam (6)
- 7 Tidier (6)
- 9 Helped someone's memory (8)
- 10 You pass the baton in a ____ race (5)
- 11 Celebration you might have for your birthday (5)
- 13 Containing nothing (5)
- 15 Paper hankie (6)
- 16 The nut of an oak tree (5)
- 17 Promised in marriage (7)
- 19 Girl's or lady's garment (5)
- 20 Sends something out of the country (7)

Down

- 2 A surgeon does this in a hospital theatre (9)
- 3 Silent (5)
- 4 Finish (3)
- 5 Created (4)
- 6 This area of the airport is for people taking flights out (10)
- 8 Spooky (5)
- 12 Not as old (7)
- 14 You can get an item of fast food called a Big ____ (3)
- 16 Puts numbers together to get a total (3)
- 17 The first woman in the Bible (3)
- 18 A space (3)

SOLUTIONS, MAY 19

GORDIUS NO. 559

Across — 1 Gap 3 Painstaking 8 Alaska 9 Sweet-pea 10 Skier 11 Piled 13 Prism 15 Pie Jesu 16 Fashion 20 Swept 21 Rumba 23 Woody 24 Roomiest 25 Big toe 26 Baton charge 27 Lit

Down — 1 Grasshopper 2 Pharisee 3 Poker 4 Nostril 5 Ate up 6 Impala 7 Goa 12 Down payment 13 Poses 14 Meant 17 Immortal 18 Regatta 19 Import 22 Alien 23 Waive 24 Rub

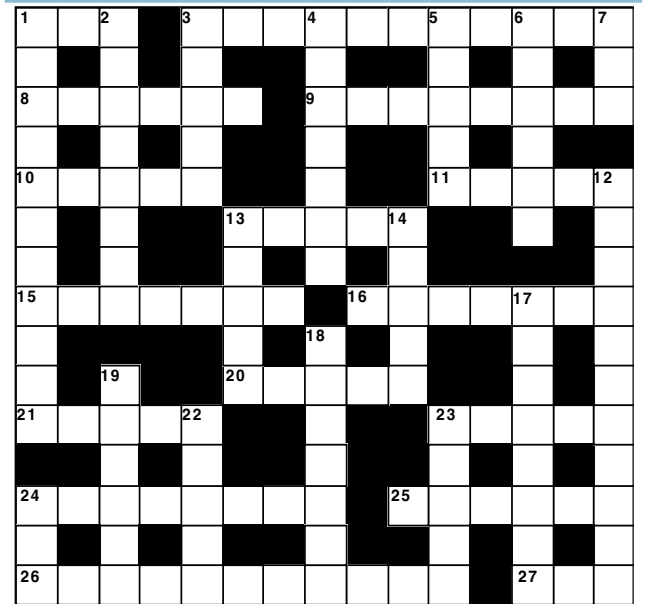
CHILDREN'S No. 433

Across — 1 Extra time 7 Pub 8 Latin 10 London 11 Eye 12 Other 14 Tasks 16 She 18 One hundred 21 Own 22 Irons 23 Des 24 Tight

Down — 1 Empress 2 Table-tennis 3 Amen 4 Igloos 5 Eat 6 Centre 9 Ant 13 Herring 15 School 17 How 19 Nest 20 Dart 21 Old

Crossword

Gordius 560



Across

- 1 Interval (3)
- 3 Extremely careful in doing something (11)
- 8 American state, known as 'The Last Frontier' (6)
- 9 Flower that looks like it should be a sugary vegetable! (5-3)
- 10 Winter sports enthusiast (5)
- 11 Stacked (5)
- 13 Shape that can break sunlight into its constituent colours (5)
- 15 Beautiful hymn composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber (3,4)
- 16 Style, haute couture (7)
- 20 Cleaned out, using a brush (5)
- 21 Latin-American dance (5)
- 23 The hero of the Toy Story films, voiced by Tom Hanks (5)
- 24 Most spacious (8)
- 25 It's TOE, not toe, that identifies the hallux! (3,3)
- 26 An extreme response to dangerous riotous behaviour (5,6)

Down

- 27 Ignited (3)
- 1 Small breaded fillets of cod, etc (4,7)
- 2 Put up with (8)
- 3 Nervous, agitated (5)
- 4 Provide back-up (7)
- 5 Situated close to the centre (5)
- 6 & 13d This James Bond actor had a cigar nailed up (6,5)
- 7 Used to be (3)
- 12 Large grocery shop (11)
- 13 See 6 down
- 14 Spooky (5)
- 17 Well-known for the wrong reasons (8)
- 18 Clot, as blood does (7)
- 19 It's worth two fivers (6)
- 22 It may be sounded by an emergency vehicle (5)
- 23 Scottish golf course that has hosted the British Open on nine occasions (5)
- 24 Variety of lettuce (3)

Sudoku Corner

434

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 433

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

Last week's Hard 433

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

Notebook

Fr Bernard Cotter



Revamp of Chicago parishes point to Ireland's future

THE 24 APRIL EDITION of *Chicago Catholic* (the Church paper in Chicago) carried news of clergy appointments that were to come into force this summer. Fourteen priests were appointed to new parishes with strange names, places like 'St Pius X and St Leonard', 'St Agatha and St Martin de Porres', 'Ascension and St Edmund'. In addition, one man was getting a parish with a triple-barrelled name: 'Holy Name of Mary, Sts Peter and Paul and St John de la Salle', quite a mouthful.



What was going on? Chicago is going through a phase of Church renewal which involves the amalgamation of parishes. This follows a particular template. Take parish A and Parish B, two adjacent units. The diocese judges that they are suitable for amalgamation, taking into account a variety of factors, which includes the value of properties. Both pastors (PPs) are asked to resign, and one is given charge of the new parish, to be titled 'Parish A + B'. The two schools are amalgamated, one church is closed and the pastor moves into the rectory of the remaining church.

At least that's what happened in the parish in Chicago I am

most familiar with, St Bernadette in Evergreen Park. Here, the diocese followed the process suggested by 'Renew my Church'. Lay people were consulted, and clergy; all sorts of items were assessed, including Mass attendance, local demography, school enrolments etc.

Significant role

Finances were examined also, and these played a significant role in decisions, it seems. Despite all the good work of the young Polish-born pastor, Fr Benedykt, the diocese decided

that St Bernadette would be amalgamated with the nearby Queen of Martyrs parish. Because this was not strictly adjacent, a wedge of property was lopped off the intervening parish so the new parish could consist of contiguous territory.

Once the decision to amalgamate was taken, a set procedure was followed. There was no need to close St Bernadette's School, as this had already happened. The decision was taken instead to sell the property to the nearby Catholic hospital, which is always seeking to acquire extra property for expansion. Fr Benedykt resigned as pastor and became pastor of the new 'Queen of Martyrs and St Bernadette' parish. And he got the unpleasant task of explaining to St Bernadette parishioners that not

only was he moving to the other rectory, but that their church itself was to close within two years. This latter decision was the saddest outcome of all. Many suspected that the decision was finance-driven, that their church would be sold to the hospital as their school property had already been. Many mourned, some were angry, some protested.

Bittersweet

The 75th anniversary of the church, which I attended in Easter Week, was thus a bitter-sweet affair, with many memories shared and not a few regrets. But what is happening in Chicago will happen in some way or other in many parts of Ireland, before too long – though I hope that not all share the brutal fate of St Bernadette Parish.

Appreciation of American congregations

I had forgotten how appreciative American congregations can be. In the 10 days I spent in Chicago, I got to preach a few times, both at Sunday and weekday Masses. My preparations were patchy – I was on holidays, after all. But people could not have been more affirming: not only did they compliment me, they remembered my words, quoted them, treasured them. I was very touched.

Though I might spend a whole week preparing a homily in Ireland, compliments rarely flow. People see preaching as "part of my job".

It's no wonder America is so hard to come home from.

May texting never replace letters

I once spent a very happy year in Chicago, studying liturgy. I returned often in the intervening years, keeping in touch – until Covid. Because of all that happened in those years, I was certain I would never see the US again. This conviction lasted until March, when I got a beautifully-written invitation to church celebrations there. This didn't tell me that I would be the star of the show, but that there were many people who would love to see me. The letter swung it – and showed me the power of words. May texting never replace beautiful writing: words count.



PLEASE HELP MANY ABANDONED ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN IN PERU

Sr Elsa Reyes Mejia, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, has written to The Little Way Association from the region of Cusco in Peru appealing for funds. "We arrived in the parish of San Pedro in 2018", Sr Elsa tells us, "and soon found, during our pastoral work, that many elderly people are living alone and abandoned, their children having moved to the city or gone abroad for work or study. The local community gave us a 6,000 sq. m. plot of land and since then we have been raising funds for the building of a large Home for many lonely aged people. Some organisations have helped us and we trust in God that the Home will gradually be built.

"Many die alone, having no one to care for them. We take Holy Communion to many, and sometimes food. The cost of the Home is fairly high, and we still need much financial help. We are confident The Little Way Association will assist us."

Please send whatever you can for this special project.

The Little Way Association will send your gift, without deduction, to the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for this much-needed Home for the abandoned elderly in Peru.



"A word or a smile is often enough to put fresh life in a despondent soul."
~ St Therese

WELLS NEEDED

Missionaries constantly appeal to The Little Way for funds to sink wells in order to provide clean water, the lack of which causes much illness and many medical needs. On average, women in Africa and Asia walk around three hours every day to fetch water, often in scorching heat.

Can you help provide a well?

Your kind gift will be forwarded intact and gratefully received.

MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €6 or more for each Mass

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466
www.littlewayassociation.com

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

- €..... HOME FOR ABANDONED ELDERLY, PERU
- €..... UKRAINE APPEAL
- €..... WELLS AND CLEAN WATER
- €..... MASS OFFERINGS (Please state no. of Masses _____)
- €..... LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES

To donate online go to www.littlewayassociation.com

DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address