

# The Irish Catholic

## EUCCHARIST MATTERS

We can't let our Faith conform to 'productivity'  
Pages 14 & 15

## HEALING LOURDES

Pilgrims finding peace and prayer  
Pages 18 & 19

## IRAQI JEWS

Understanding the unseen history  
Pages 16 & 17

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# Parents are 'morally obliged' to vaccinate their babies

### Only 74% of Irish trust medical vaccines

Colm Fitzpatrick and Chai Brady

Parents are morally obliged to vaccinate their children if it poses a serious risk to their health, priests and theologians have said.

With over 20 confirmed measles cases in the Dublin area since the beginning of the year, and other fringe outbreaks in Donegal, religious and ethicists are urging parents to vaccinate their children.

"If there's a danger of a child contracting a grave illness and there's vaccination readily available that's affordable without controversial side effects, then there is an onus on parents to avail of that," Fr Alan O'Sullivan OP told *The Irish Catholic*, adding that this moral duty can shift depending on the seriousness of the disease.

Likewise, Fr Michael Short-hall, secretary of the Irish

Bishops' Consultative Group on Bioethics and Life Questions agrees that parents have a moral obligation to take their children's health seriously.

"In Catholic teaching, there is a concept called the common good and one aspect of the common good is public health. So, parents by vaccinating their children, they're not just protecting their children – making choices about their children – but they're making choices, in effect, about their community and they relate to the community," Fr Shorthall said.

### Spread

The comments come as a new survey carried out by biomedical research charity Wellcome has revealed that Ireland's trust of medical vaccines is lower than the international average, sitting at a mere 74%.

» Continued on Page 2

## Tour de force reaches Knock



Five cyclists celebrate after completing the 2,000km ultra-cycling challenge from Lourdes to Knock in five days to raise funds for Down Syndrome and mental health awareness in Ireland's farming community. (l-r) Jonathan Verry (Crossmolina), Gary Bigley (Kiltimagh), Maurice Dore (Mulling), Alan Heaney – Leader (Killasser, Swinford) and Gerry Boots.

FR RON ROLHEISER

The loss of Heaven and fear of Hell

PAGE 30



IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT GENDER

New Vatican document invites some important questions

PAGE 11



DAVID QUINN

Reflecting on the 1980s as a 'hateful fantasy'

PAGE 9



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## Inside this week

### Notebook

**We all hear the call of a gable wall**

Page 40



### Married priests

**Understanding the debate about the Amazon's future**

Page 27



### Get running

**The big attraction of hitting the trail**

Pages 31 & 33



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# Bumper papal issue sees IC top Catholic press awards...again!

**Greg Daly**

The Irish Catholic has scooped a major international religious journalism prize for the second year running.

The 'Welcome, Pope Francis' special issue won first place in the 'Best special supplement – one-time special issue' category of the Catholic Press Awards, held this year in St Petersburg, Florida. The award to the staff of The Irish Catholic for the 48-page special issue, published just ahead of the Pope's arrival in Ireland in August 2018, follows last year's triumph in the same category for 2017's 'Reformation 500' issue.

The newspaper placed in five categories in this year's awards, and received two honourable mentions, building on last year's performance, when, entering the Catholic Press Association competition for the first time, The Irish Catholic placed in four categories and received one honourable mention.



Coverage of how a group that campaigned for reduced religious influence in Church-owned schools was recognised by the State's ethics watchdog as a campaigning organisation in receipt of funds vastly in excess of amounts permitted for such groups earned this newspaper a second-place award for investigative news writing. Analysis of three disap-

pointing aspects of 2018's papal visit also won the paper a third-place ranking in the 'Best coverage – papal trips' category.

The Pope's visit also provided the context for the third-place winner in the

'Best personality profile – national newspaper or wire service' category for 'From addiction's darkness to family joy', a feature on onetime heroin addict Damien Richardson.

### Determination

The Irish Catholic also won a third-place ranking for 'Best coverage – religious liberty issues', taking into account Susan Gately's February 2018 profile of pro-life student Katie Ascoug, David Quinn's August piece on apparent Government determination to exclude religion from public life, and Dr Noreen O'Carroll's December claim that 'The abortion law is about coercion and manipulation'.

This newspaper also received honourable mentions in the 'Best national newspaper' category and for 'Best analysis', the latter for 'Changing the electoral landscape', a May 2018 piece on Google's role in last year's referendum on the rights of the unborn.

## Parents morally obliged to vaccinate their babies

» Continued from Page 1

With the spread of infectious diseases becoming more widespread due to a failure to vaccinate, the Department of Health said that it is considering introducing mandatory vaccinations.

"The Minister's [Simon Harris] priority is to increase vaccination rates across the country and he is exploring a number of options in this area. In this regard, the Minister wrote to the Attorney General to seek legal advice as to the Constitutionality of introducing schemes of mandatory vaccination.

While DCU lecturer and theologian Dr John Murray has said the government and Church has a duty to inform and provide accurate information to its citizens about the medical procedure, as well as make sure that resources "are readily available", concerns have been raised about whether enforcing vaccinations is a step too far.

"I think that would be the State overstepping the mark

actually. You've got to be careful of what's called today the 'granny State' or the 'parent State' which tries to substitute at the times the role of parent," Fr O'Sullivan said. He added: "The parents have the major cooperative role in raising the child, and the State only intervenes in extraordinary circumstances. It doesn't become the ordinary educator of facilitator."

See Page 10.

## Pro-lifers criticise NI Equality Commission appointment

**Chai Brady**

Pro-life groups have decried a decision to appoint a former director of abortion provider Marie Stopes to the NI Equality Commission (NIEC), dubbing it a "conflict of interest". Dawn Purvis, who is also a former PUP leader, was one of nine new commission members appointed by Secretary of State Karen Bradley for the next three years.

According to Dawn McEvoy of Both Lives Matter questions must be asked about the possible role of the Equality Commission in future campaigning for increased access to abortion in NI.

"Pro-abortion activists here (and across these islands) are intent on the introduction of as permissive an abortion legislation as possible," she told The Irish Catholic.

"Their position depends on a false assertion that there is an international human right to choose abortion, and that anything less than unrestricted abortion discrimination against women."

Given NI's current laws on abortion, she says, "it would be concerning to see either of those publicly-funded bodies engaging in abortion activism".



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# Prayer service to help 'grieving community' after Ana verdict

Chai Brady

A prayer service to comfort families will be held in Leixlip, Co. Kildare this Sunday in the wake of the tragic murder of Ana Kriegel (14, pictured).

Confey parish is organising the service "for people to come to pray for families who are hurting and grieving and for the entire parish community", according to Administrator Fr Tony O'Shaughnessy.

Those convicted of her murder, 14-year-olds known as Boy A and Boy B throughout the case, were found guilty unanimously by a jury on June 18. Ana and the two boys are all from the area.

Fr O'Shaughnessy said: "I'm talking to people still, people are trying to come to the reality of the enormity of this event, this tragedy.

"People are still a little bit fearful of saying too much, or saying anything, but I'm just giving our parishioners that opportunity and space to come together, to be with one another, to pray for all that are hurting and grieving and to pray for the entire parish community.

"It will cover everybody without it being specifically related to

one particular group."

Ana was born in Siberia in 2004 and was adopted at age two. She was killed on May 14 last year in St Catherine's Park in Lucan.

The trial was adjourned until July 15 to allow psychiatric, probation and school reports to be submitted. Both boys have been remanded in Obers-town Detention Centre until then.

The case has been particularly high-profile due to the age of the children involved. Boy A and Boy B are reported to be the youngest people to be convicted of murder in the history of the State.

## Grief

Fr O'Shaughnessy described the planned service as "an opportunity to come together as a community to pray for families who are obviously in deep grief and pain and hurt and to pray for one another and the entire parish community in the wake of the recent unfolding tragedies and more so in recent times".

By then schools will be closed, he explained, adding that he didn't want to do anything that might "resurrect negative emotions".



## Mayo boy's Camino for children on streets

Colm Fitzpatrick

A ten-year-old boy is walking the Camino to raise funds for children exposed to violence and poverty on the streets.

Christopher Nugent from Ballina in Co. Mayo is currently journeying on his third Camino, this time walking 400 kilometres from Saint Jean Pied de Port in France to Leon in Spain, with his father Robert.

"He's enjoying it very much at the moment, Mr Nugent told *The Irish Catholic*, adding that "we're not killing ourselves" over the 16-day walking period.

All money raised will go towards Let The Children Live, a charity that works with children from the streets and shanty-towns of the city of Medellín. It aims both to safeguard the lives of children from the violence and poverty of the streets, and to make their lives worth living by providing an education and a future.

## Intrigue

The 400-kilometre walk began on June 21 and finishes on July 9. Christopher walked from Porto in Portugal in 2017 and from Leon to Santiago last year.

"Everyone is intrigued at him walking," Mr Nugent said, adding that it is a tradition that he and his son hope to continue.

"I do it every year, this is my sixth year, we'll probably do the whole one in the next



Christopher Nugent with his dad, Robert.

couple of years."

You can follow Christopher on <https://www.facebook.com/kidsonthecaminodesantiago/> to see the daily updates on the 16-day-walk from France to Spain via Pamplona and Burgos.

## Pilgrimage walk to celebrate St Oliver Plunkett

Staff reporter

A three-day walk to celebrate the 350th anniversary of St Oliver Plunkett's appointment to the See of Armagh will take place next month.

The pilgrimage walk begins at St Peter's in Drogheda, the shrine of the relics of St Plunkett, in July 7 at 10.45am and finishes in Armagh's St Patrick's Cathedral, with the unveiling of a statue of the saint.

Masses and Prayer Services will be celebrated at different points along the way.

Anyone who is interested in walking the last stage is asked to join the walk at Corran Hall (Newtownhamilton Road) on Tuesday, July 9 at 4pm. A short prayer service will take place at St Patrick's Church, Ballymacnab at 4.30pm.

People are also welcome to meet the walk at St Malachy's Church on the Tuesday evening at 6.30pm and then walk through the centre of Armagh to the Cathedral for the special celebration at 7.30pm.

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# Archdiocese raises no objection to gender neutral uniform policy

Chai Brady

The Archdiocese of Dublin has offered no objection after a Wicklow primary school's decision to introduce a new policy that will allow girls to wear trousers and boys to wear skirts in September. Uniform policy is decided by individual schools, with this policy seemingly aimed at transgender children. The Vatican recently reiterated its opposition to gender ideology.

Asked to comment on the decision by St Brigid's National School in Greystones, a Catholic school under their patronage, the archdiocese said: "A uniform policy that could be considered by schools is that primary school

children all have the option to wear a school tracksuit."

Fr Gerry Young, a priest in Greystones parish, described the new uniform policy as "a political move". He said: "This has nothing to do with the nature of children growing up and discovering that life has sexuality...I don't think they have thought it out."

"You tell me what boy is going to go to school in a skirt? It's not going to happen."

However, he said he was more concerned about plans to introduce gender neutral bathrooms. "What I would consider wrong about it, not so much the dress, but the shared toilets," Fr Young said.

"And boys in particular will have

bravado acts, boys get up to devilment, does the teacher have to stand in the toilet to mind what's going on?"

He added: "Now we've come through education and prosperity, where people can make decisions for themselves and that's to be welcomed, but are they making the right decision? Choice is one thing but what are you choosing?"

Principal Máire Costello said the move was prompted by the school's student council. She said the students conducted their own research and surveyed students and "made the case to the board who were fully behind them".

"We have children who are questioning their sexual identity. It is hap-

pening at an earlier age. We want all our children to have a happy experience in school," Principal Costello said.

The move was subsequently agreed on by parents and the board of management.

Chairperson of the school's management board, Tom Sherlock, said he hopes the move will help students who are questioning their gender.

The main clinic in Britain and Ireland dealing with transgender children is the Tavistock Institute in London. Five doctors resigned from it recently because they believe that some children struggling with their sexuality are being wrongly diagnosed as "transgender".

## Pro Life Campaign working to create 'future youth leaders'

Chai Brady and Madison Duddy

The Pro Life Campaign is working on programmes aimed to "empower young people" to be future leaders in the pro-life movement in Ireland in order to sustain the fight for life.

Inés Lonergan, a pro-life student, told this paper the group are currently working on programmes to engage youth to be pro-life politicians, activists and communicators "who can spread the message in a really effective way in the coming two years".

"We're building on the political activism that we saw in young people in the campaign coming up on the referendum to the Eighth Amendment," she said.

One of their initiatives is the Future Leaders programme, which will be an entry programme that runs three times a year, which Ms Lonergan says will be "very intensive".

"The goal would be to get young people coming over who have got an understanding of the legal and medical realities surrounding the protection of life in Ireland and in all of the EU. Also, kind of how political systems work here in our country and in the EU and how individuals can influence them."

There's also a media and communications programme which has already begun and includes interview training and "how to get your point across in an effective way whether that's in print media or on the radio or television".

## Anything to be said for another Massey?



Recently-ordained Fr Malachy Thompson blesses the new John Deere tractor on Mount St Joseph Abbey's farm in Roscrea.

## St Luke's says 'No' to abortion

Staff reporter

The Government has said it is investigating a hospital which is refusing to provide abortions.

Four consultant obstetricians at St Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny, wrote to GPs in the area to advise that abortion services are not available in the hospital. The letter said it was "decided unanimously that the

hospital is not an appropriate location for medical or surgical terminations".

In response to this decision, the Department of Health told *The Irish Catholic* that it is to engage with [the] HSE about the matter.

"The Minister has asked his Department to engage with the HSE to address his concerns regarding the recent letter sent to Ireland East Hospital Group

from consultants in St Luke's Hospital. Additional resources have been allocated to provide for termination of pregnancy services this year including the provision of services at St Luke's."

The department added that it is policy that all 19 maternity hospitals be in a position to "provide termination of pregnancy services".

## Irish Vatican official speaks of 'loss of innocence' over abuse cases

Staff reporter

The Irish priest who deals with cases of clerical sex abuse worldwide for the Vatican has described how the work has impacted adversely on him and his colleagues.

Fr John Kennedy has headed the discipline section of the Vatican's Congregations for the Doctrine of the Faith since 2017. He said that the issue of abuse rather than heresy dominates the work of his 17-staff unit.

He described the human cost of the work. "I can honestly tell you that, when reading cases involving sexual abuse by clerics, you never get used to it, and you feel your heath and soul hurting".

## Burden figures

He said: "I have seen bishops who were once smiling pastors turned into morose, burden figures."

Fr Kennedy added: "This is nothing compared to those [the victims] who have borne this for years in silence...can you imagine what it is like not to be believed by Church authorities?"

## Most IC readers support the idea of married priests – poll

Staff reporter

The majority of *IC* readers believe that the Church should consider ordaining men in the Amazon region.

Online readers were asked in a Facebook poll: "The Vatican's synod on the Amazon will consider whether 'proven men', who are married, could be ordained priests. Would you support this?"

Out of the 494 votes, 304 respondents said they would support the move, representing a 62% majority in comparison to the 190 who rejected the suggestion.

The poll comes as a preparatory document for an October summit of bishops on the Amazon, has confirmed that the ordination of married "elderly people", meaning men, will be on the agenda.

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## Bishop's final procession



Cork and Ross' Bishop John Buckley takes part in his final function as bishop of the diocese, during the 94th annual Eucharistic Procession. Photo: Tony O'Connell

# Priest dubs First Holy Communion an 'empty show'

**Madison Duddy**

A Derry-based priest has dubbed First Communion celebrations as an "empty show" for many, as few children return to church after receiving the Sacrament.

Fr Paddy O'Kane of Holy Family Parish told this newspaper that many Communicants aren't committed to the Faith and that the church-return rate afterwards is low.

His comments come after this past May marked a record high on Communion spending since 2011, where parents shelled out an average of €929 for their child's day. The annual Ulster Bank Communion survey revealed that the surge in spending

is mainly due to the costs of children's clothes with additional boosts in expenses for after-parties and monetary gifts. Children also collected an average of €610, and one quarter received over €800.

### Help

Although there is a decline in parents who feel pressured to spend as much as other parents, one in 10 still claim they had to seek help from family to pay for their child's Communion and a smaller number say they subsidised the event through loans.

Fr O'Kane said that he and other priests try to convince parents to spend less money on Communion celebrations, but parents are "adamant" to continue the practice. He

added that a more pressing matter is the "lack of commitment" from children receiving the Sacrament, noting that only 10% of Communicants return to church.

"My main concern is the fact that the First Communion has just become a First Communion," he said, adding that "for so many [it] has just become an empty show".

Fr O'Kane added that sacramental preparation is the responsibility of parents and parishes, and should no longer be a school event.

"I think it should be taken out of the schools and, like the way they have it in US, become a Sunday-school thing and then get the committed parents to be teachers."

# Government urged to tackle Tipperary mental health crisis

**Colm Fitzpatrick**

A Tipperary priest has urged the government to tackle the country's current suicide and mental health crisis.

In a meeting with mental health minister Jim Daly, Fr Michael Toomey of Clonmel raised serious concerns about the lack of resources in the county to address this epidemic, stressing that the county has had a higher than national average for suicide in the last five years.

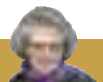
The well-known priest presented a list of action points which included the opening of mental health beds; the appointment of a Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurse; a task force to address issues facing communities;

and better health programmes and drug prevention schemes in schools.

Given these serious deficits, the minister said he will raise these concerns and suggestions at a government meeting in the area next month.

### Appeal

Fr Toomey also made an appeal that parents talk to their children more openly with their children about mental health and drug issues. "To any parent who states that my child can talk to me about anything, and would never be involved in drugs or suicide, I am sitting with parents who say to me 'If only my child spoke to me' after a tragedy."



**Mary Kenny's column returns next week**



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# Why we must stand up for life together



Ireland's abortion regime makes visible pro-life campaigning all the more vital, writes **Niamh Uí Bhriain**

**V**oter regret in regard to the abortion referendum is real and it is growing. Every month seems to bring a new and more shocking revelation about Simon Harris's new abortion regime, and in response come increasing numbers of people who reluctantly voted Yes and are now horrified at the outcome.

This month, Peadar Tóibín TD raised shocking new details about the tragic case of a baby aborted after a misdiagnosis in the National Maternity Hospital. The parents say that an abortion



Above and right, images from previous pro-life rallies in Dublin.

was suggested by doctors who insisted the baby had a "fatal" abnormality and told the family not to wait for the results of further tests. After the abortion, the tests revealed the baby was perfectly healthy.

Deputy Tóibín revealed that the family at the centre

of the case claimed that this might, in fact, be an illegal abortion because it was performed without a second doctor examining the woman in question. He also said that the parents were fearful that the matter was being swept under the carpet, and he called on Leo Varadkar not to let that happen.

On Aontú's Facebook page, one woman posted: "If I could vote again, I'd vote No....it saddens me that I chose wrong. I would change my vote and I think I'm not alone in that statement."

## Compassion

Already, those who voted No are being shown to have been on the right side, not just of history, but of progress and mercy and compassion. We take no pleasure in that, just as we take no pleasure in being correct about the other horrifying outcomes that are hurtling towards us, but it does bolster our conviction that, now more than ever, we must stand for life at the pro-life rally on July 6 in Dublin.

To paraphrase Yeats, all may be changed, changed utterly, but it is not a beauty that is born but a terrible cruelty.

Abortion doctors are boasting that at least 10,000 abortions will take place in 2019 – three times the number that occurred in 2018 when women travelled to Britain. So

much for Leo Varadkar's claim that abortion would be "safe, legal and rare".

The HSE's website is advising women who take the abortion pill to flush their baby's body down the toilet. There has been widespread revulsion on social media to that crass, unfeeling and inhumane suggestion, though the media have been happy to ignore any such reactions.

**“Standing for life is how we keep the path lit as we rebuild the broken culture”**

This is the brave, compassionate new Ireland then, where abortion numbers are going through the roof, a baby is aborted at 15-weeks after a 'mistaken' diagnosis of a disability, and our health service is abandoning women and their babies with callous and cruel indifference. It is shameful, just as the vote last May was one of the most shameful days in Ireland's history.

But we do not bear this shame, nor do any of the 723,000 others who voted



'No'. We sought to protect both mother and child from the barbarity of this abortion regime.

That motivation has not changed, and that determination has not faltered. We are now urgently needed more than ever, because standing for life is how we keep the path lit as we rebuild the broken culture.

## Vulnerable

On Saturday, July 6, we will gather at Ireland's largest annual event in support of the human right to life of every human person, especially the smallest and most vulnerable of all, unborn babies.

We will march for life because no vote, no act of parliament, no referendum can ever make it right to kill a child. We will call for a better answer than abortion for mothers and babies. We will hold this government and

their life-ending abortion legislation to account.

The Rally for Life is also about raising up the next generation to stand for life and to change the culture, because in a society which kills its own children with legal impunity, the future belongs to those of us who love and protect all of our children. And about giving voice to pro-life medical professionals who oppose abortion and wish to be free to conscientiously object.

Most of all, we will stand for Life because the alternative is unthinkable – we will not abandon helpless preborn babies to abortion, and we will not abandon women to a mentality that tells them that they are on their own. We hope to see you there.

**📍 The Rally for Life will take place on Saturday, July 6 in Dublin, beginning in Parnell Square at 2pm.**

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**“We must stand for life at the pro-life rally on July 6 in Dublin. To paraphrase Yeats, all may be changed, changed utterly, but it is not a beauty that is born but a terrible cruelty”**



## Martin Mansergh

### The View



# Avoiding the temptation of the libertarian route

**P**ope Francis' approval of the Italian bishops' decision to render more precise the passage in the Lord's Prayer in Italian that is the equivalent of, but perhaps not precisely the same as 'lead us not into temptation' was news here, in the sense that it came as a surprise to most people but was of considerable interest. In Italian, '*non ci indurre in tentazione*' will become '*non abbandonarci alla tentazione*' (do not abandon us to temptation).

Whether there will be parallel modification of the English text, potentially across many countries and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, has yet to be appropriately determined. One factor is that the Lord's Prayer is common to practically every Christian denomination. This is not to say that its rendering is absolutely identical. In the Catholic Church, it ends with 'deliver us from evil'. In the Anglican prayer book, it continues with 'for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever', and there are also versions in modern language not necessarily preferred by the older worshipper, including this one.

It could be argued that the meaning of the Italian word '*indurre*', which is not just 'lead' but 'induce', is subtly different, implying perhaps that God is trying to inveigle humans, perhaps as a test, into temptation, usually seen as Satan's role.

### Literal meaning

Despite the literal meaning of the words in English, it had never occurred to me that we are saying in effect that God is in the habit of tempting us and we are pleading with him not to. Any reasonable interpretation of 'Lead us not into temptation' is that it is a prayer asking for help in avoiding us being placed in situations of temptation, and that 'lead' in that context is closer in meaning to 'let'.

It would not be surprising, if the English version is left unchanged. While there may be lots of scope for liturgical innovation, changes to core liturgy need to be very carefully considered indeed.

It has to be said that the God of the Old Testament, whose thought-processes are sometimes explained



in considerable detail, and even in direct speech, may occasionally perplex later Christians. Earlier this month, I was listening to a lesson being read from Genesis 11, the story of the Tower of Babel as the origin of the diversity of tongues. It begins with what some might think was a positive: 'And the whole earth was of one language and one speech.'

### “Legislatively, Ireland should not go down the libertarian route”

The people decided to build a tower that would reach unto Heaven. The Lord decided this was going too far, that the people were one, and nothing could stop them, so decided 'to go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech', at which point they dispersed in every direction. It is probably best to treat it as a colourful Bible story not requiring too close analysis, part of the creation myth.

Discipline and self-control are central to civilization, and are part of the religious ethos. They are perfectly compatible with energy, enthusiasm and creativity. A top-class or even a competent performer in any field has to be disciplined.

Public figures are expected to set an example. This can sometimes work inversely. The dangers of cocaine use both to health

and career have been highlighted recently in the Tory leadership contest. The problem today is that many people have tried hard drugs for a period, they believe without much ill effect or falling into addiction, ignoring that the devastating collateral effects are mostly borne by others, with the bulk of crime today being drug-related.

Legislatively, Ireland should not go down the libertarian route. The scourge of drug use is one of the biggest evils to have emerged in my lifetime. Curiously, there are strong public health and safety campaigns against the abuse of alcohol and the dangers of smoking and even sugary soft drinks, whereas warnings against (illegal) drug use are incredibly muted, perhaps for fear of glamorising it.

The argument against continued criminalisation that it is not effective could be applied to practically any crime.

Would it be sensible to decriminalise knife attacks, on the grounds that police forces have not got on top of that problem?

\* \* \* \* \*

The President of Colombia Iván Duque has attacked the hypocrisy of middle-class cocaine users, who ignore the environmental damage caused by cocaine production, claiming that for every gram produced two hectares of tropical forest is destroyed.

Another area where public figures have set a ridiculous example is in

the pursuit of personal injury claims. The primary responsibility for avoiding gratuitous hazards lies with the individual, or, if a minor or a dependent, with those that look after them.

Prohibitive insurance costs can have serious anti-social effects, in precluding certain forms of recreation and community activity. It is to be hoped that recent reactions will introduce a reality check.

### Social media

While traditional print and broadcast media are subject to tight laws, on social media practically anything goes, especially under

the cloak of anonymity, sometimes with extremely hurtful effects and occasionally driving people to suicide. While overall the social benefits of the digital world greatly outweigh the costs, effective policing and regulation as well as more accountability for what is posted needs greater development.

If totalitarian societies can police the internet quite wrongly for political censorship purposes, then surely democratic societies can do it for the right purposes, in keeping with their norms of openness.

Why should extreme pornography, incitements

to terrorism, and medical obscurantism which costs lives on matters such as vaccination be tolerated?

Christian values are eminently compatible with great care for the environment and the natural world. 'All things bright and beautiful...the Lord God made them all' is a famous children's hymn by Ms Alexander, a Derry bishop's wife. Yet advertising for the most fuel-consuming cars and frequent fancy holiday flights continues unabated.

It is much easier to subscribe to noble aspirations in the middle distance than to start painful sacrifices rightaway.



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# Putting abortion 'healthcare' under the spotlight

Political calls for safer maternity care are incoherent, writes **David Mullins**



**I**magine a scenario in which it came to be known that cars with defective seat belts had been allowed on to the market.

Now imagine that this information on the increased risk of passenger fatalities was known to government and all the major political parties prior to the sale of the cars, but they failed or refused to act on it.

As the ensuing scandal is debated, one of the main opposition parties stands up and declares that yes, we knew all about that seat belt business, but we are still the party of car safety and are committed to the highest standards of vehicle manufacturing.

It would be fair to say that such a statement would deserve to be met with justifiable derision and outright scepticism, regardless of the apparent sincerity in which it was made.

I want to suggest that something distinctly comparable to this happened last week when the Fianna Fáil parliamentary party brought forward a Private Members motion on the National Maternity Strategy.

The first line of the Fianna Fáil motion calls on Dáil Éireann to recognise "the need for Ireland's maternity services to be as safe as possible for women and babies, including the need for women to be listened to and respected".

This is of course a reasonable and unproblematic statement that no one could fairly disagree with.

What is profoundly unreasonable and deeply problematical is that it was made on behalf of a political party who practically guaranteed through its 'Confidence and Supply' arrangement with the government, that Ireland's national maternity services would annually become a theatre of destruction for thousands of unborn children.

## Aspiration

In light of that, it is simply impossible to ascribe any kind of credibility, or even sincerity, to the motion's aspiration to make our maternity services safe for all mothers and babies.

The only way in which the motion could have been rescued from ethical inconsistency was if it called on Dáil Éireann to recognise "the need for Ireland's maternity services to be as safe as possible for 'some' women and 'some'

babies, including the need for 'some' women to be listened to and respected".

A moment's reflection should make this absolutely clear. For how can any political party logically insist that babies be treated with the utmost safety within our maternity services while at the same time reserving the right to facilitate the termination of thousands of unborn children "without restriction as to reason" for the first 12 weeks of their unborn lives and in extremely permissive circumstances thereafter?

At the very least, this also places an uneasy spotlight on the unavoidably discriminatory nature of abortion as 'healthcare'.

What fills this situation with an even greater degree of conflict is the fact that the person who introduced the Dáil Motion, Fianna Fáil's Health Spokesperson, Deputy Stephen Donnelly, was personally made aware on numerous occasions over the course of a single Health Committee meeting in September 2018, that the rollout of the abortion service within the framework of the national maternity services was fraught with danger and infrastructural challenges.

**“If we were rolling out a vaccination programme, we would need longer than this to plan”**

This, let us recall, was almost a full four months after the referendum of May 25, which repealed the Eighth Amendment.

During the course of that Health Committee meeting, Deputy Donnelly asked Dr Cliona Murphy, of the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, what was required in order to meet the January 2019 deadline for the national rollout of abortion within the national maternity service.

Her reply was as follows: "As things stand, we do not know the capacity we are trying to become ready for. There will be major public expectation for a rolled-out service and that can lead to issues. We have seen how if things are not planned properly they can unravel. I certainly advise caution and perhaps we should consider some



Dáil Éireann in Dublin.

phasing in or a pilot – that is my own personal view – so that there would be some understanding among the public that it is a short timeframe to roll out a separate health strategy.

"If we were rolling out a vaccination programme, we would need longer than this to plan. While we are doing our best in all areas, there needs to be more integration into the whole planning."

Despite these warnings on infrastructure and capacity levels, however, Deputy Donnelly, the Fianna Fáil party, and indeed all the major political parties went ahead and supported the introduction of abortion services according to what was manifestly a political rather than a clinically-imposed deadline.

In passing, it might be noted that the word 'deadline' has rarely been so apt.

These events create further difficulties for the integrity of the motion that was introduced last week.

For within that motion is Fianna Fáil's call on the government to recognise "the growing crisis in maternity care for reasons including: poor staffing ratios, limited diagnostics and the increased burn-out and stress for

clinicians, together with a retention and recruitment crisis and chronic staff shortages".

Yet these are the very issues that Dr Cliona Murphy and other medical representatives also highlighted at the Health Committee meeting in September 2018.

**“The consequences of getting it wrong are serious. We could end up with a termination done for a condition that is not fatal or vice versa”**

This is most definitely the case with respect to the limited availability of diagnostics.

In fact, Dr Peter Boylan explicitly informed Deputy Donnelly at the Health Committee that when the abortion service came into force in January 2019 there would still be real concerns around the capacity to safely diagnose unborn children who displayed indications of a so called 'fatal foetal abnormality'.

Here is what Dr Boylan told Deputy Donnelly after he was asked about the capacity of our maternity services to deal with

this issue: "The MRI machine in the National Maternity Hospital, with some jiggling around, could possibly be a national centre for referral to clarify the diagnosis for women and pregnancies where there are foetal abnormalities. The consequences of getting it wrong are serious. We could end up with a termination done for a condition that is not fatal or vice versa."

We need only look to the recent and tragic case in Holles Street to see that this predicted eventuality was far from being an exaggeration.

Ultimately, it has to be said that when any political party speaks passionately but inconsistently about protecting mothers and babies, then they will run the very real risk of coming across as incoherent.

Unfortunately that is the situation which the majority of our political class now finds itself in despite their efforts to maintain what has been described elsewhere as a "posture of reasonability and thoughtfulness".

**i** David Mullins is a bioethics commentator with a special interest in the ethical implications of emerging technologies.

**“As things stand, we do not know the capacity we are trying to become ready for. There will be major public expectation for a rolled-out service and that can lead to issues”**





## Claims that Ireland was repressed in the 1980s are absurd, writes David Quinn

**‘W**hy were we so hateful?', the editorial in the *Irish Examiner* asked of Irish people living in the 1980s. A feature last weekend in the *Irish Independent* described the same decade as "traumatising" for women.

The 1980s is in the spotlight because of the Majella Moynihan case which has received huge publicity. Ms Moynihan was a trainee garda when she became pregnant in 1984. The father was another trainee at Templemore. Because she was not married, she faced disciplinary procedures and even the sack. The father received a fine.

The case was covered at the time, although she was not named, and the actions of the Gardaí were widely attacked including by a pro-life group called 'Women for Life'.

Ms Moynihan was saved from the sack by the intervention of the then Archbishop of Dublin, Kevin McNamara, who worried that the precedent would encourage women to travel to England for abortions.

He intervened at the request of a Cura worker named Mena Robinson, who Ms Moynihan said has been very kind to her. She said she would ensure Ms Moynihan would not lose her job.

In the end, Majella Moynihan gave up her child for adoption. She felt pressured to do so because of her circumstances and lack of support.

### Influence

Even though Archbishop McNamara helped to ensure she was not sacked, the fact that she faced such a situation at all because she was pregnant outside marriage is being held up as another example of how unfriendly Ireland was to women back then under the baleful influence of the Catholic Church.

There can be no doubt that traditional societies treated unmarried mothers and their children cruelly,

# A hateful fantasy



The Queen concert at Slane in 1986. Photo: queenlive.ca

and in the 1980s some of this attitude remained.

Other cases are cited, for example that of Joanna Hayes and the 'Kerry babies', and Ann Lovett who died in childbirth aged 15 at a grotto in Granard, Co. Longford in 1985.

But to paint the 1980s as the new 1950s is, simply... absurd. You cannot paint an entire decade in dark colours because of unrepresentative cases such as the ones just mentioned.

The 1980s were, in fact, the decade when the sex revolution really began to take hold in Ireland. Contraception had been made legally available for the first time in 1978 and from then on, they became more and more available.

**“You cannot paint an entire decade in dark colours because of unrepresentative cases such as the ones just mentioned”**

A sure sign that things were changing fast was the rapid rise in the number of births outside marriage in the 1980s. The old taboos against sex outside marriage were disappearing.

Some of the iconic images of the 1980s are from the huge concerts which took place at Slane Castle in that decade. The Rolling Stones played there in 1982. It also hosted Queen, Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan. 'Repressed' is not the word that springs to mind when

you look at those images.

I was at Dublin City University during the early to mid-1980s (the NIHE as it was called then). At this stage in my life I was only nominally Catholic, and it was the same for most of my friends, who were mainly from the country. Some of them were no longer even nominal in their faith. Young people were already drifting away from the Church by the 1980s. It is fair to say that we were not a devout bunch and we did not feel 'repressed'. That goes for both sexes.

The Church was simply not a 'shadow' over our lives at that point. There was a chaplain at DCU, a very nice man. He was anything but the 'moral police'.

### Conversations

The referendums of the 1980s came up a bit in our lunchtime conversations or over a pint, but the big cloud for us was not the moral climate. Instead, it the rotten state of the economy. It's why so many of us had to go overseas in search of work after graduation. Aside from that we talked about exams, the opposite sex, Charlie Haughey vs Garret FitzGerald, and Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

It is true that homosexual acts between men were still criminalised in the 1980s (I supported the decriminalisation when that happened in 1993).

It's also true that Garret's attempt to allow divorce was defeated by two-to-one in the referendum of 1986, and in 1983 we passed the Eighth Amendment, also in a two-

to-one vote.

Critics of the 1980s attack those two votes as evidence of social repression, but if they are, then we did it to

ourselves, and by very big margins.

What about today? Do we live in a less 'dark' time now? Violent crime is up compared with the 1980s. There has been a spate of women murdered. Suicide is up. Marital breakdown is up. People seem less neighbourly than they were. Social media is often a cesspit. Hard-core pornography is all-pervasive.

**“Even back in 1985, Majella Moynihan was told by a senior colleague that she should have had an abortion. What must the pressure be like now?”**

Political correctness has turned into a form of bullying. Anti-Catholic sentiment is rife. Drug abuse is rife. Recorded sexual offences are on the rise.

The two youngest people ever have been just found guilty of the murder of a teenage girl. We have had the horrible case at Holles Street of a perfectly healthy baby being aborted after it was mistakenly believed the child had a 'fatal foetal abnormality'.

Healthy babies are being routinely and legally aborted every day all over the country in any case.

A pilots' representative has spoken of the pressure women pilots on casual contracts can feel to abort their children.

Even back in 1985, Majella Moynihan was told by a senior colleague that she should have had an abortion. What must the pressure be like now?

The idea that the 1980s was an awful and repressive time and that today we are far more compassionate and enlightened does not stand up to the evidence.

Yes, there was a dark side to life in the 1980s, but it is exaggerated, and there are many dark sides to life today. That is to put it very mildly.

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# Making the ethical choice



Parents are morally obliged to vaccinate their children, writes **Colm Fitzpatrick**

**W**ith the recent spate of measles outbreaks across Ireland, questions have been raised about what role both parents and government play in preventing the spread of infectious illnesses.

Vaccinations, of course, seem to be the obvious solution as they provide immunity to the targeted diseases – but with a growing scepticism about the effectiveness of vaccines, many parents are avoiding this medical norm and opting for their children to contract the disease and develop resistance naturally.

There have been well over 20 confirmed measles cases in the Dublin area since the beginning of this year, with other fringe outbreaks in areas such as Donegal. The best protection against it is to be vaccinated with MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine, but with a greater drop in people receiving this vaccine in the past few years, the illness is re-emerging on a wide-scale level.

Despite an overwhelming scientific consensus that deems such vaccines to be safe, many parents no longer have confidence in them, believing they do more harm than good. A new survey carried out by biomedical research charity Wellcome revealed that Ireland's trust of medical vaccines is lower than the international average, sitting at a mere 74%.

## Positive effects

Given that the positive effects of vaccines are well-attested, is it the case that parents are morally obliged to vaccinate their children?

According to moral theologian Fr Alan O'Sullivan OP, parents ought to vaccinate their children if refusal to do so could lead to grave illness or death.



"If there's a danger of a child contracting a grave illness and there's vaccination readily available that's affordable without controversial side effects, then there is an onus on parents to avail of that," he told *The Irish Catholic*, adding that this moral duty can shift depending on the seriousness of the disease.

Likewise, Fr Michael Shorthall, secretary of the Irish bishops' Consultative Group on Bioethics and Life Questions agrees that parents have a moral obligation to take health seriously and that this responsibility "rises" the greater the seriousness of the illness that's being vaccinated.

**“There's no problem with the State advising people as long as its accurate with regards to possible side effects, and any negative aspects”**

"In Catholic teaching, there is a concept called the common good and one aspect of the common good is public health. So, parents by vaccinating their children, they're not just protecting their children – making choices about their children – but they're making choices, in effect, about their community and they relate to the community," Fr Shorthall said.

The Church is quite clear that this decision is a personal matter for parents – this doesn't mean ignoring evidence to suit one's narrative or confirmation biases, but developing a properly informed conscience. There must be comprehensive reasons for refusing immunisations to dangerous diseases, and if all that can be mustered up is an esoteric and uncredited study, then questions need to be asked.

There is of course a legitimate concern among Christians about the use of vaccines developed from cell lines descending from aborted foetal tissue, such as the vaccine against Rubella. Catholics have rightly asked whether it's morally permissible to use such vaccines, but a statement from the Pontifical Academy for Life in 2005 has confirmed that vaccines connected with abortion are licit to use, at least until a new product becomes available.

While the question of what moral duty parents have in providing vaccines for their children is worth considering, a more pressing matter is the role of the State in enforcing this medical procedure. There's no doubt that the government has a responsibility in reducing the spread of diseases, but there have now been calls to introduce mandatory vaccinations, especially given the devastation these infectious illnesses can cause schools.

The Department of Health told this newspaper: "The Minister's [Simon Harris] priority is to increase vaccination rates across the country and he is exploring a number of options in this area. In this regard, the Minister wrote to the Attorney General to seek legal advice as to the Constitutionality of introducing schemes of mandatory vaccination."

## Minimum

At a very minimum, the government has a duty to inform and provide accurate information to its citizens about the positive effects of vaccines, and ensure that such services are available to everybody.

"There's no problem with the State advising people as long as its accurate with regards to possible side effects, and any negative aspects. That's straight-forward enough," DCU lecturer and theologian Dr John Murray explained, adding that



both Church and State should "give information and good advice, and make sure that things are readily available that are necessary for basic health and wellbeing".

However, when a person refuses to provide a vaccine for their child, should the government move beyond this advisory paradigm and enforce the medical procedure regardless of the parent's objections? The answer isn't clear-cut, primarily because there are different views on the role of government in society, and also what constitutes a serious illness.

"I think that would be the State overstepping the mark actually. You've got to be careful of what's called today the 'granny State' or the 'parent State' which tries to substitute at the times the role of parent," Fr O'Sullivan said, adding, "The parents have the major cooperative role in raising the child, and the State only intervenes in extraordinary circumstances. It doesn't become the ordinary educator of facilitator."

Fr Shorthall, on the other hand, holds that the State does have the right to enforce vaccinations if the illness is serious enough, and in more minor circumstances, it must simply educate and inform parents, leaving the choice down to them as are they primary carers of their children.

There are certainly strong arguments on both sides and as this topic enters the public arena in the coming months, perhaps a better understanding of parental and governmental roles will be reached.



# Not just about gender

A new Vatican document invites important questions about dialogue and understanding, writes **Kevin O'Higgins SJ**



**T**his month, the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education issued a document, 'Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue On the Question of Gender Theory in Education'. While the focus is on gender theory in relation to education, the document is a useful summary of recent Church teaching on a much wider range of issues.

Most significantly, it highlights the fact that, at the heart of many of the current tensions between Church teaching and secular or 'post-Christian' ideologies, is a clash between two very different ways of understanding not just gender, but human life itself.

It is important to emphasise that the document is not an attack on transgender people. On the contrary, it condemns all forms of intolerance and fully acknowledges that "forms of unjust discrimination have been a sad fact of history and have also had an influence within the Church".

Nor does the document close the door on dialogue with scientific and other research into issues related to gender. It recognises the need to engage constructively with such research in a spirit of openness to whatever advances our understanding of complex issues. The document is organised around three guiding principles: listen, reason and propose.

## Dialogue

The hope is that a genuine dialogue may reveal some common rational elements which, in turn, can foster mutual understanding and indicate a path forward. However, genuine dialogue becomes impossible when a particular point of view is presented as unquestionable.

This is even more the case when the point of view is based on absolutised individ-

ual perspectives that are not open to rational challenge.

Unfortunately, this is precisely what occurs with certain currents of radical subjectivism, of which at least some versions of gender theory are an expression. It becomes clear that what is at stake is not merely a theory about gender, but a comprehensive view of human life, an anthropology, fundamentally at odds with the Christian understanding of what it means to be a human being and closed to the possibility of uncovering shared rational elements which might form the basis for dialogue and mutual understanding.

**“Time constraints alone mean that any presentation of viewpoints will be selective”**

The conflict between competing anthropologies has been referred to frequently by Pope Francis. In *Amoris Laetitia*, for example, he speaks of new ideological perspectives on gender that undermine the very foundations of a Christian understanding of marriage and family.

This is so because the premises and presuppositions implicit in these ideologies contradict those at the heart of Christian and other traditional interpretations of the nature and finality of human life.

Indeed, they are at odds with the Christian understanding of reality as whole. Pope Benedict XVI spoke about school curricula which, while claiming to be neutral on questions related to the meaning and value of human life, "in fact reflect an anthropology opposed to Faith and to right reason".

Frequently, talk of 'ethos-free' education naively assumes that it is possible to

present an account of human life devoid of profound ethical implications. But, if only for practical reasons, that is an impossible task.

Time constraints alone mean that any presentation of viewpoints will be selective, and their treatment is unlikely to equip pupils with sufficient elements to judiciously 'decide for themselves'. The elimination of any particular ethos will not result in neutrality, but rather an alternative ethos.

There are few questions, if any, more fundamental than 'What does it mean to be human?'

Inevitably, how we answer this question will determine our understanding of how we ought to live, what we regard as true and false, or right and wrong. At the heart of the anthropological proposals critiqued in the Vatican document is a collection of ideas which have become familiar in recent debate on key moral issues. While many of these ideas may have originated in the thinking of philosophers and others, they

frequently filter down to the level of popular culture in the form of mere slogans. Endless repetition makes them seem self-evident.

\* \* \* \* \*

A current TV commercial for cars proclaims 'Your choices define you'. The same message is conveyed, continuously, via mainstream print and broadcast media. This can be interpreted to mean that who I am depends exclusively on whatever I happen to choose, and my choices may even be in a permanent state of flux.

Implicitly, this would involve rejecting the notion of any external, objective checks on my chosen self-definition. There would be no such thing as an essential 'human nature' to challenge my personal choice of identity. My essential 'self' would even be divorced from my bodily biological reality. The Vatican document speaks of "a gradual process of denaturalisation, that is a move away from nature and towards an absolute option for the deci-

sion of the feelings of the human subject".

Clearly, such a view is incompatible with the Christian understanding of reality and human nature. The notion of objective criteria of truth and goodness, knowable by means of reason, is replaced by a radical subjectivism.

The individual self and its personal choices become the only acceptable measures of meaning and value. On this view, it is hard to see how the traditional building blocks of social coexistence could possibly endure, since there would be no objective criteria for resolving differences and avoiding conflict.

**“It is important to emphasise that the document is not an attack on transgender people”**

Instead of appeals to objective truth, goodness and justice, the most obvious recourse would be for like-minded individuals to band

together in order to secure the triumph of their particular ideas and causes over those perceived as hostile.

Very easily, the subordination of reason to the will of individuals or groups morphs into something akin to a Nietzschean 'will to power' or a Hobbesian 'war of all against all'.

We are confronted with the prospect of a potentially violent 'state of nature', very different from the goal of a harmonious natural state, ordered in accordance with in-built laws knowable by means of 'right reason', as envisaged by a Christian account of the meaning and purpose of human life.

The Vatican document sees all of this, and more, at stake in current debate around certain strands of gender theory. It does not claim to be the last word, but rather seeks to open up "a path of dialogue". If the document succeeds in sparking open-minded discussion about the key issues, especially in the context of education, its main purpose will have been achieved.

The content of its 36 pages is far richer than could be conveyed in a short article and I urge everyone to read it. It is available for download at: [https://www.americamagazine.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Vatican\\_Gender\\_Male\\_and\\_Female\\_He\\_created\\_them.pdf](https://www.americamagazine.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Vatican_Gender_Male_and_Female_He_created_them.pdf)



**“Frequently, talk of ‘ethos-free’ education naively assumes that it is possible to present an account of human life devoid of profound ethical implications. But, if only for practical reasons, that is an impossible task”**





Zelie Louise Turpin, Isabelle, Aifric and Róisín Ni Fhlionn.



Bláithín Smith, Maeve O'Hanlon and Heidi Flanagan.



Rachel Kenny and Dr Berry Kiely.

Aubrey McCarthy  
Auctioneer.

## 600 turn out to support Pro Life Campaign dinner

More than 600 people attended the annual Pro Life Campaign dinner last weekend.

The keynote speaker was Elma Walsh, mother of Donal Walsh, who captured the attention of the nation with

his brave fight against cancer in 2013. The event took place at the Clayton Hotel in Ballsbridge. It is the fifth annual fund-raising dinner. It was also addressed by Senator Ronan Mullen, who was the main organiser. People

attended from all over the country. Each table had one sponsor. Sponsors included a number of dioceses and religious orders as well as private individuals. It is the biggest single Pro Life fund-raising event in the country.



Senator Rónán Mullen, Margaret Davin and John Smyth of the Pro Life Campaign.







Colm Fitzpatrick and Mahak Verma of *The Irish Catholic*.



Student attendees at Ceiliúradh Cois Life.



Maeve O'Hanlon of the Pro Life Campaign with MC Clare McCarthy.



Eilís Mulroy of the Pro Life Campaign addressing the gathering.



Seán and Margaret Davin.



Elma Walsh, Declan O'Loan, Baroness Nuala O'Loan and Fr Robert McCabe.



Fionnbar Walsh, Eilís Mulroy of the Pro Life Campaign, keynote speaker Elma Walsh and Senator Rónán Mullen.



Bishop Kevin Doran and Sheen Darcy.



Iona Institute director and *The Irish Catholic* columnist David Quinn at the dinner with his wife, Rachel.



# Remembering why we're here

A little while ago I found a little golden ring. I was going up the stairs in my house and it was there sitting on one of the steps. It was thin, it had a break in it, and it wasn't actually gold. My best guess is that it belonged to a Christmas ornament or decoration of some kind. Whatever it was, it was not designed to be worn.

And yet, I decided to wear it.

I wore it for about two weeks and most people either didn't notice or didn't feel the need to comment. My friends noticed immediately and gave me varied feedback mostly in the form of either approval or confusion.

After I had been wearing it for a while the comments mostly shifted to: "Why are you still wearing that?" My answer was always shifty and didn't really explain at all why I was wearing the ring. "I like it!" was about as specific as I got. For all anyone knew, my choice to wear a little gold-coloured, ring-shaped, piece of metal was entirely based on fashion.

I have since lost the ring but I still want to explain it and what it meant to me during that very short time.

## Adoration

The night I picked it up off the stairs and decided to put it on my finger, I was on my way to Eucharistic adoration at the Adoration Convent of Christ the King (Pink Sisters) at Lincoln, Nebraska. I had been recently directed to start going to adoration more often and was informed that the Pink Sisters were open late.

When I walked into the chapel with the ring on my finger I was greeted by a striking sight. The monstrance that had held the body of Christ each time I had gone in the past few weeks was gone. In its place was a different monstrance that prominently featured a thin golden ring like a halo around Our Lord. It bore a noticeable resemblance to the ring I had just placed around my little finger.

My first reaction was to

**Our society demands productivity, but we can't let our Faith conform to this, writes Ben Swanson**



brush it off as a coincidence. It was far too insignificant to be the direct influence of God and way too easy to explain. Of course, if you pick up a golden ring and then go to a place where there is a monstrance you will find something that resembles that golden ring. Almost all monstrances are circular and gold. So, it was a coincidence, but what grace God bestows by way of these insignificant coincidences! The decision to see in this moment a call by God to renew my devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was my decision as an expression of my God-given free will. But I got to that moment by following the tug upon my heart that begged me to return to him.

A golden ring means nothing if you are not willing to see the symbol in it and the graces that God wills you to enjoy through it. This moment was a confirmation in me of what I knew to be true. I needed to return to the Eucharist, especially in adora-

tion.

Adoration has always been a special devotion of mine. It was before the Blessed Sacrament that I had my first and greatest 'come to Jesus' moment the summer after high school.

**“There is nothing I can do that is divorced from the call to be with Christ and to be Christ to others”**

It was before the Blessed Sacrament that I first felt truly loved and forgiven by Jesus. It was a daily adoration slot that saved my faith during my sophomore year of college.

It was Thursday evening adoration that allowed me to grow in my faith at the very moment I most wanted to give up in London, and that kept me from imploding from loneliness and homesickness in Tanzania.

Tuesday night adoration

with Youth 2000 in Dublin was my spiritual rest in an otherwise spiritually exhausting schedule.

I have been called back time and time again to adore my Lord in the Holy Eucharist. Finding a little golden ring may have been insignificant, but the message was clear: Come back to me. In that moment, it was a miracle.

*Thus says the Lord:  
Cursed is the one who trusts  
in human beings,  
who seeks his strength in  
flesh,  
whose heart turns away from  
the Lord.  
He is like a barren bush in  
the desert that enjoys no  
change of season,  
but stands in a lava waste, a  
salt and empty earth.  
Blessed is the one who trusts  
in the Lord,  
whose hope is in the Lord.  
He is like a tree planted beside  
the waters that stretches  
out its roots to the stream:  
it fears not the heat when it  
comes;  
its leaves stay green;  
in the year of drought it shows  
no distress,  
but still bears fruit.*

— Jeremiah 7:5-8

I didn't begin to realise the full significance of this little golden ring until I left the chapel. That night as I was going to bed I went to take off the ring and decided not to. I decided I was going to wear it at all times.

As I lay there in bed I went to reach for my phone as I always do and felt the ring on my finger. I remembered Christ exposed in that monstrance and I reached for my rosary instead. I fell asleep praying.

## Aware

In the next days I was constantly aware of the extra bit of metal on my hand. At work, at home, or with friends I was forced to think about the significance of that piece of metal.

The Eucharist was not con-

**“It was Thursday evening adoration that allowed me to grow in my faith at the very moment I most wanted to give up in London, and that kept me from imploding from loneliness and homesickness in Tanzania”**



finied to a chapel but is Christ who is everywhere. He was with me wherever I go. Even more, I was not simply carrying the ring with me but was wearing it. I was inside of it and it was around me. I was regularly made aware of our Eucharistic existence each time that little golden ring caught on something or got in the way. Each time I fidgeted with it I was called back to that little chapel and the miracle that was there. No part of my life is separate from Christ or can be.

There is nothing I can do that is divorced from the call to be with Christ and to be Christ to others.

This integration of the Eucharist into my daily life caused me to realise that I usually have things backwards. I wonder and worry about what my life is supposed to be. What job should I have? Will I get married and have a family? How am

I called to make a difference in the world? These questions regularly plague me and fill me with doubt.

I have no clear answers and so often assume this means that my future will be just as murky and aimless. To combat this, I obsess over the future and fabricate grand plans that satiate my desire to matter, or I exhaust myself in stress trying to be productive with my 'leisure' time.

I feel anxious if too much of my down time is 'wasted' instead of spent doing something I consider useful. Useful could include writing music or reading an important piece of literature (right now it's *The Brothers Karamazov*) or writing. I had to force myself to go to adoration before writing this article, and it wasn't easy to convince myself to do it. Writing is productive and sometimes gets me compliments and recognition.

Eucharistic adoration is





not productive in that sense and will never get me compliments or recognition (okay, maybe from the old ladies who frequent the chapel). I forced myself to go to adoration and lose some of the time I needed to write this because that is the very point of this article: to express the immeasurable worth of the Eucharistic adoration that can never be matched by a lifetime's productivity.

### Schedules

We spend so much time trying to figure out what we are supposed to do with our lives that we so often forget that it all begins with Christ.

We try to fit Christ into our schedules instead of letting our schedules be shaped by Christ. We make plans to con-

form our lives to Christ but they so often start at what we will do to get there and skip over the first and most vital piece, that which Christ does.

He is the one who will lead us to himself. He is the one with the plan for us that will bring us happiness. We scurry around from one thing to the next trying to please ourselves, those around us and God without stopping for a moment to spend time with God and give ourselves over to Him.

I guarantee that no saint, canonised or uncanonised, was ever made by their own effort to get to holiness. Holiness is attained by resignation to the will of God. It is attained by regular commitment to a practice of relationship with the divine.

It must be found where God is. It cannot be found as a prerequisite to visiting with Christ. If we are trying to be holy so as to be worthy of God then we shall never realise that we will never be worthy and that God doesn't care.

Holiness is union with God. That union is achieved through the Eucharist. It could be the Eucharist of sacrifice, charity, scripture, and community, but it will be Eucharist. It will have as its source the life, death, and resurrection of Christ that can be found under the accidents of bread and wine in every Catholic Church in the world.

Every good thing we do must have Christ as its source. Otherwise it is only adding to the noise of the world and can do nothing for our souls.

For as Jeremiah told us: "Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh...blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord."

We can do everything right, support all the right causes, say all of the right prayers, and change the world with a new non-profit, but if it is done for ourselves it will only help us to fall more deeply in love with our own ego.

Our society demands productivity and our faith can easily conform to that same mould. God, however, does not keep a time card or expect results. He just wants us to give ourselves to him. He wants us to love him as he loves us.

**“Holiness is attained by resignation to the will of God. It is attained by regular commitment to a practice of relationship with the divine”**

Any moment spent entering into a relationship with Christ, listening to his word and conforming our hearts to his, can never be a waste of time. That is where we must start.

For me, Eucharistic adoration is the place I find this relationship most present. It will be different for everyone.

I was reminded of the need to return to Christ by a piece of gold-coloured ring-shaped metal. This insignificant coincidence was the miracle I needed to draw me to Christ in the Eucharist. It was my little reminder to never waste another moment chasing productivity and achievement when that time could be spent resting in the love.

And yes, the irony is not lost on me that the item of note here was a small plain golden ring. Tolkien enthusiasts can rest assured that I have lost the ring and do not find the item itself in any way 'precious' to me.

Wait for the Lord, take courage; be stout-hearted, wait for the Lord.

**Ben Swanson is a writer who studies philosophy and theology at the University of Notre Dame. He worked at the Dublin-based Notre Dame Centre for Faith and Reason from 2017-2018 and blogs at <https://actnaturalblog.weebly.com>**

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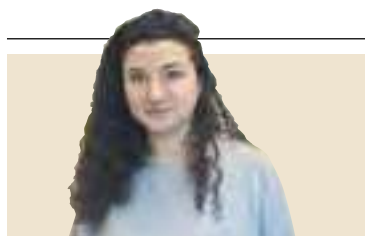
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## Hannah Harn learns about the history of the Jews of Iraq

**A**s of 2016, Ireland was home to fewer than 3,000 Jews. "In the region of Munster, we have about 95 people on a day to day basis and we'll meet up occasionally," said Aida Phelops of West Cork.

Ms Phelops is a speaker on the history of the persecution of the Jews of Iraq. She is an Iraqi Jew, born in Baghdad, and has been giving talks on the history of her people since 2014.

"Growing up I didn't really visit it," she said of her history. "Logically, I knew this is my history, but emotionally I couldn't go there. It's literally only in the last five or six or seven years that I have really been entrenched in it."

The Iraqi Jews are one of the world's oldest and most historically significant Jewish communities. At present, they have strong communities in Israel that maintain their religious and cultural traditions. Smaller communities uphold Iraqi Jewish traditions after their 1940s and '50s diaspora in Britain, Australia, Singapore, Canada, the United States, and some countries in Europe.

### Mob attack

In 1941, the Farhud pogrom, a mob attack against the Jewish communities in Iraq during the Jewish festival of Shavuot, killed more than 180 Jewish citizens of Iraq and wounded 240 more.

Later, in the 1950s, the Iraqi government decided to allow Iraqi Jews to leave the country if they surrendered their citizenship. During Operation Ezra and Nehemiah, hundreds of thousands of Jews were airlifted out of Iraq to immigrant camps outside Tel Aviv, with only 7,000 deciding to stay behind in Baghdad.

In 1958, the overthrow of the monarchy and the declaration of Iraq as a republic brought an end to British influence and control in the country. Things seemed to calm down, with around 4,000 Jews living in Baghdad in peace. However, in 1963, Saddam Hussein staged a Ba'athist coup. Jewish citizens had their passports taken, and in 1967 Iraq joined the Six Day War against Israel. Their loss increased repercussions against the Iraqi Jewish community.

Thirteen men were hanged in 1969, accused of being spies

# Lost history: understanding the unseen story of Iraqi Jews

An Iraqi boy plays in front of a closed synagogue in Baghdad.

for Israel. In 1970, a route out of the country reopened, and more Jewish families began leaving for Israel and other countries to escape persecution. With the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Jewish Agency for Israel launched efforts to present the remaining Iraqi Jews with the opportunity to go to Israel. Today, only around 500 Iraqi Jews remain in Baghdad and Basra.

Ms Phelops, who left Baghdad with her family at just two years old, has lived in the UK as well as Israel and has now been living in West Cork for over 11 years. In the last couple of years, she became an Irish Citizen and sees herself as an Irish Iraqi Jew.

"Growing up in the UK as an Iraqi Jew was very frustrating," Ms Phelops said. "People would know I was Jewish and then, when they would hear where I was born, the question I always got was, 'well, how can you be an Arab and a Jew?'"

"I wasn't Aida anymore," she explained. "I became a political subject. It became so annoying that I used to lie."

However, nearly 80 years after the Farhud pogrom, she still feels justice has eluded her people. "The older I've gotten the more I've



Aida Phelops.

wanted justice, not just for the Iraqi Jews but for all the Arab Jews."

Throughout history, the story of the Iraqi and Arab Jews has gone mainly untold, and while parts of the timeline align with the Holocaust, Ms Phelops feels there is rarely a balanced representation of the persecution of the Jews in Arab states and their unique, long-term

struggles.

"Just because it happened that long ago doesn't mean it doesn't need to be addressed. It does need to be addressed," said Ms Phelops. "They need to honour both histories, equally and separately."

One of the biggest divides between the two histories is the inability of Iraqi and Arab Jews

**“The survivors and descendants of Holocaust survivors are all able to go back to their birthplace, to their ancestral birthplace. Arab Jews are not”**

to return to their birthplaces. Around 856,000 Arab Jews had to leave their homes, escaping to Israel, Canada, the UK, France and the Netherlands. Many had their citizenship and their passports revoked. Others were given new citizenships when moving to other countries.

### Trauma

"They were absorbed into those countries and had to recreate their lives," she explained. "And when you're actually the surviving generation, you have no room to visit the pain and trauma you've been through. You've got to get on with it, which is why it takes the next generation or even the next generation like myself...to tell the story."

"Survivors and descendants of Holocaust survivors are all able to go back to their birthplace, to their ancestral birthplace. Arab Jews are not. And it was a history that has been silenced and nobody knew about, and only lately has it been spoken about."

On Sunday, March 10, 2019, the Supreme Court of Israel found that Iraqi victims of the two-day 1941 Farhud pogrom would no longer be eligible for the same compensation or recognition as Nazi survivors.





It was only in May of 2016 that Israel's Arab Jews were originally granted recognition as Holocaust survivors.

However, some members of the Iraqi Jewish community have their sights set on returning to their birthplace. In 2018, Vice President of the European Jewish Congress Edwin Shuker and others said they would be petitioning the Federal Supreme Court in Baghdad to request the reinstatement of thousands of Iraqi Jews' citizenship. 2018 also marked the 70th anniversary of the start of the transplanting of the Iraqi Jews to Israel and beyond.

**“I suppose personally if I were to go back [to Iraq] it would be to see how I would feel...I do feel I have a hole that is my birthplace...”**

“Not only has he gone back [to Baghdad], but he's also actually bought property there,” said Ms Phelops. “In his head, he believes that one day he can actually go back there.

“I suppose, for me, I'm scared,”

she continued. “I think Shuker is fascinating and he goes back all the time. When I heard him speak I just sat there, and I wanted to say, ‘Take me with you. Keep me safe and bring me back safely.’”

“I am not brave, but if I was told I had a limited amount of time to live, I'd do it,” said Ms Phelops when asked if she herself has thought about returning. “Because if I've got a limited amount of time to live, I'm going to die anyhow so I would.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The separation Ms Phelops has felt from her birthplace has made it difficult for her to truly feel at home, regardless of where she has lived. “I suppose personally if I were to go back [to Iraq] it would be to see how I would feel,” she said. “I do feel I have a hole that is my birthplace, and it's hard.”

“I can't connect [to my countries of residence],” Ms Phelops explained. “At the end of the day, what am I? I've never seen myself as British even though I grew up there. I used to put ‘British’ because it was on my passport. Am I Irish? I feel more Irish than I did British. And Israeli? I felt more Israeli than I did any of them.

“Israel was the best country

I could live in. On some level, organically, it was as near to my country of birth as I could ever be. But it is hard not being able to go back,” she said. “Arab Jews can't go back. Iraqi Jews can't go back. And it's dangerous. It's a different kind of danger than it used to be.”

According to Ms Phelops, Arab states are still dangerous for Jewish people, but in a new way.

“Back when I was growing up, Iraq was literally targeting the Jews, whereas now it's targeting everybody,” she said. “It's still not safe but at least you're not standing out as a Jew.”

**Fantasy**

Because of this, Ms Phelops generally feels that the Iraq people dream of returning does not truly exist anymore. “If they return there with the fantasy of returning to the Iraq that they left, I think that is a fantasy and they're not going to gain that,” she said. “I don't know what they're looking for, apart from some kind of closure. I don't know what they're looking for.

“I can't speak for those people who want to go back and what they're expecting from it,” she said. “I have no idea. I suppose each person's agenda is different. Whether they can create an Iraq that includes the Jews again, I think that's far away if it can ever happen, because the Iraq that's there is such a mess. It would be a lovely idea if they could. But Iraqis do miss Iraq. Iraqi Jews miss it.”

Ms Phelops first began to explore this side of her personal history later in her life, after a friend had sent her books on the subject. “I had a friend in Dublin who was more obsessed with my history than I was, and he just kept sending me books,” she explained.

“One day I picked up one of the books and I read it and it was stuff I didn't know about. I mean, my parents didn't talk about it. Yes, we were Iraqis. Yes, we mixed with Iraqis, but it was never talked about. What happened back then was never talked about.”

Avoidance of this traumatic history was not just present at home with her parents. Ms Phelops has seen the same experience with many other Jewish people, and even her family in Israel seemed reluctant to discuss it.

“We just had to get on with it, and so did the Holocaust survivors,” she said. “In Israel, the Holocaust survivors that landed in Israel were told, ‘Right, get on with it. We don't want to draw attention to ourselves, we're Jews, we have to survive, we're not going to be crying.’ And that is kind of a Jewish ethos that I find quite tough, actually. That's the way it was.”

The first time she ever gave a talk on the subject, she found that even a friend from the UK, who spoke on the Holocaust, was unfamiliar with the history of Iraqi Jews. When she was asked to fill in for him at a talk, she agreed on the condition that she would be allowed to include the history of her own people alongside the history of the Holocaust.

“I said I would do it if they don't mind me giving the history of the



persecution of the Iraqi Jews, as well,” she said. “To which his reply was, ‘What Iraqi Jews?’ He'd never heard of the Iraqi Jews, let alone the persecution. And when I went to give that talk, he had tears.

“I'm just one person going around Ireland telling this story,” she said. Ms Phelops hopes to see more representation in education on the history of the Arab and Iraqi Jews. “It needs to be heard more on a government level. The powers that be here need to be educated ...on the true history of what happened to the Jews.”

Beyond education, however, Ms Phelops believes that those who engage and seek to learn more are the ones who will carry the history with them and prevent future dismissal of her people

“The people I meet at these events, they are going to be the people who know the story, they don't need the education,” she said. “They know we existed. And that's the other thing! We existed! I've had people dismiss that I existed, say ‘oh don't be so ridiculous there's no such thing’, and I'm standing in front of them.”

**“She believes that those who engage and seek to learn more are the ones who will carry the history with them and prevent future dismissal of her people”**

One issue that has held back the story of the Iraqi Jews for so many decades has been, per Ms Phelops, a desire not to clash with Arab countries who had control over the oil industry. “Back in those days, the Arab world was globally powerful in regards to oil, so the world could not be seen to be upsetting the Arabs,” she explained. “Everything is political at the end of the day. Everything is kind of a political game.

Growing up, Ms Phelops remembered feeling frustration and confusion as to why nothing was ever done or said about it. “I forgot that I thought that,” she said. “In those days, it was important not to upset the Arab nations because

they had the monopoly on the oil. Now, they're still important but not as important as they used to be.”

But the shift in power has not helped to bring any increased recognition to the Iraqi Jews. Even in Israel, which today is home to around 450,000 Iraqi Jews, focuses its Jewish history education on European Jewish history.

“The history lessons are all about the Holocaust, the European Holocaust, not even what happened with the Nazi influence,” Ms Phelops said. “The Farhud was Nazi influenced. Only recently have they started to bring that into the school curriculum. Even in Israel, with over half the population consisting of descendants of those Arab Jews, the history still revolves around the Holocaust.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The divide reaches into cultural education as well. “All the songs and poems all come from the European Jewish culture,” she explained. “There was a wealth of songs and poems that came from the Arab Jewish culture that's not really taught in Israeli schools.”

For Ms Phelops, the biggest help non-Arab Jews can give to Iraqi Jews is to support them in telling their stories. “Non-Arab Jews can help by recognising our history,” she said. “Get people like myself to get that story out. More than that I don't know if they can do. Get that story out and acknowledge us.

“They could not forget us,” she continued. “They could not go and do a documentary about the Holocaust and introduce all these peoples going through atrocities and then forget a whole group of their own people who went through atrocities. Make it as important as the Holocaust. There's no better or worse. They're equally horrific in their own ways.”

Now, she feels that what is needed is not just recognition, but accountability. “This history should have been remembered from day one,” she said. “In the last few years, this history has been brought out to kind of make the world realise that there need to be reparations, but the Arab states need to be held accountable for what happened to their non-combatant Jews. The fact that it was silenced was wrong.”





Pictured in Lourdes with the Waterford and Lismore Diocesan Pilgrimage 2019 were Youth Group members that included Emma Stubbs, Ellen O'Driscoll, Jenny Drohan, Abbie Roche, Chloe Landers, Jessie Mulcahy and Jodi Kavanagh. Photos: John Power

## Pilgrims finding the Lord in Lourdes

**Colm Fitzpatrick**

This month, hundreds of people from the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore travelled as part of the annual diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. Now in its 61st year, 485 people made the journey, with 94 sick pilgrims as part of the group.

Noting that all in attendance enjoyed the trip, Bishop Phonsie Cullinan told *The Irish Catholic*: "It was wonderful, grace-filled, I think everyone benefitted spiritually from it and every year [they are] struck by the pace that abounds in the grotto. Our Lady through her Motherly help is helping us, caring for us," adding that pilgrims come away with a "renewed faith".

Among many events on the itinerary, parishioners celebrated Mass in Bernadette's Chapel, visited the baths for the sick, and took part in a torchlight procession.

"I'm a pilgrim too so I come away with a renewed faith as well and also of course, to see, meet other pilgrims with their particular stories and the sick with the burdens that they carry, it always reminds one of one's blessings," Bishop Cullinan said, adding that there are "wonderful things" happening in France at the moment.



Eileen Norris, Alex White, Evan O'Keefe and Yvonne Norris.



Marian Hobbins, Breda Cummins and Chloe Condon.



Geramiah Hegarty and Declan Fitzgerald.



Maria Halley and Megan Waring take a well-earned break.





Tom Whittle, John Fennell, Don Nix and Lee Kay.



Orlaith Deegan, Sarah Coughlan, Claire Power, Dearbhla Kearns and Amy Meagher.



Pilgrimage President Nellie Power and Lorette Morgan cutting a cake to mark 50 years of unbroken service to the pilgrimage. Included are Marie Dineen, Fr Conor Kelly and Deirdre Chapman.



Kate Batan, Peg Curran and Jodi Kavanagh.



Sr Germaine Durney; left, Abbie Roche and Anna Steward.



Members of The Pilgrimage Youth Group.



# Out&About

## Mass of Thanksgiving in Derry



**DERRY:** A Mass of Thanksgiving takes place in the diocese to celebrate the first set of graduates in the Masters in Catholic School Leadership, presided over by Bishop Donal McKeown.



**LIMERICK:** First Communion pupils from Doon CBS at the Solemn Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour at Mount Saint Alphonsus Church, pictured with their teacher, Michelle Walsh, Fr Gerry Moloney CSSR, a past pupil of Doon CBS and school principal, Joanne O'Connell.



**CAVAN:** Pictured outside the Cathedral of Sts Patrick and Felim following a special Farewell Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the Golden Jubilee of Bishop Leo O'Reilly's ordination to the priesthood and his recent retirement as Bishop of Kilmore are: Deacon Andy Brady, Cardinal Seán Brady, Bishop Leo O'Reilly, Msgr Liam Kelly (Diocesan Administrator) and Bishop Francis Duffy of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. Photo: Colm Connaughton



**CLARE:** Mary Fitzgerald, Bridget Slattery and Nóirín Uí Cheallaigh each receive a Benemerenti medal in Kilmaley church, with Bishop Fintan Monahan, Fr Pat Larkin, Canon Michael McLoughlin and Fr Martin Shanahan.

**KERRY:** Fr Sean Jones CC celebrates Mass in St John's Church, Tralee, with Rev Denis Kelliher, Deacon at the Féile na mBláth festival in Tralee Town Park. Photo: John Cleary





Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**DOWN:** Kathleen McCoy is pictured with Ms Florence McMahon, organsist at the Cathedral of Ss Patrick and Colman, Newry, and members of the cathedral choir after receiving a Benemerenti medal from Fr Desmond ADM.



▲ **WESTMEATH:** Committee members of the Pioneer Association stand with Meath's Bishop Tom Deenihan, in the Cathedral of Christ The King, Mullingar. Peter McCrum (Diocesan Treasurer), Joe Monaghan (Deanery Chairman) Rita Clarke (Diocesan Chairwoman) Bridie Hannigan (Mullingar Secretary) Betty Mimmagh-Dunne (Mullingar Treasurer).

◀ **WEXFORD:** Fr Tom Dalton of Riverchapel celebrates his Silver Jubilee of Ordination (25 years), with his parents Tommy and Frances.



**WESTMEATH:** Bishop Denis Nulty and Dr Eddie Murphy stand with various Accord company members from around the country and staff from the Columba Centre, Maynooth, as part of the Accord Cruinniu Day in Athlone.

## ARMAGH

A Centre Prayer Meeting is held at Mount Oliver (near Ballymascanlon Dundalk) every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm.

## CLARE

Youth 2000 prayer meeting every Friday at 7pm in the Poor Clare's Oratory, Ennis. Join other young adults for prayer and reflection followed by tea and chats in the Friary.

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

Celtic spirituality workshop from July 10-13 in Ibricken Lodge, Spanish Point, from 8am-6pm.

Outdoor Novena of Prayer at Drumellihi Shrine, Cooraclare Parish on August 15 from 6-7am.

## CORK

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

Rosary conscious group prayer meeting on Fridays from 7.30-8.30pm in the Portiuncula Chapel, St Francis Church, Liberty Street. Entrance to the rosary through the Mass office door.

## DERRY

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

The Annual Service of Intercession for the Dead will take place in the City Cemetery Derry on Sunday, June 30, 2019 at 6pm.

## DUBLIN

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

Eucharistic Procession in Drumcondra village on Sunday, June 30, at 7.30pm.

## FERMANAGH

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

## GALWAY

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

## KERRY

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

Sacred Circle Dance to mark World Day of Circle Dance with Bernadette Purcell PBVM, on Saturday, July 6 from 10.30am-4.00pm in Ardferret Retreat Centre. Also, stress reduction weekend with Clodagh McCarthy from Friday, July 12 to Sunday, July 14. Phone: 0667134276

## KILDARE

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

## KILKENNY

Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday at 5pm in St Patrick's Church, College Road, Kilkenny (opposite St Kieran's College).

## LIMERICK

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

## LOUTH

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

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

## MEATH

Enfield Prayer Group meets every Monday evening at 7.30pm in the parish centre.

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

Annual Eucharistic Procession will take place on Sunday, June 30, at 7.30pm in Drumconrath. The procession will be led by the Kingscourt Brass Band.

## ROSCOMMON

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

## TIPPERARY

A three-hour vigil in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel will be held in Holycross Abbey, Thurles on Tuesday, July 16, from 7-10pm. Consisting of Eucharistic Hour and Marian Hour which will be conducted by Rev. Connie Doherty MSC. Enrolment of the Brown Scapular, concluding with Mass.

## WATERFORD

Dungarvan Faith camp from July 4-7, 10am-3pm.

## WICKLOW

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

St Patrick's Prayer Group, Wicklow town, meet on Thursdays at 7.30pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Care Centre.





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Archbishop calls for dialogue between US, Iran

● Amid rising tensions between the United States and Iran, Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the US Archdiocese for the Military Services called on President Donald Trump's administration to seek "sustained dialogue...to de-escalate the current situation that is a danger to both the region and the world".

The archbishop's call for diplomacy rather than military action came in a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. His letter was made public on June 19.

The correspondence from the chairman of the US bishops' Committee for International Justice and Peace outlines the Catholic Church's long-held stance that has preferred dialogue and engagement as the best actions to resolve political stalemates.

### Scottish bishops authorise independent diocesan audit

● The Catholic bishops of Scotland have authorised an independent audit of every diocese in the country to ensure child protection procedures are as robust as possible.

Baroness (Helen) Liddell of Coatdyke, chairperson of the Independent Review Group of the Church, said the bishops had "shown a willingness to submit their dioceses to the utmost scrutiny".

She said that the audits were "a major undertaking, unique in Scotland", but added that they were necessary because self-administered audits had given the review group "real cause for concern".

### People in need after Church health facilities seized

● All health facilities run by the Church in Eritrea have been seized by the government, the country's bishops said. Government security officers are said to have removed the staff from the health centres and closed them.

Patients were ordered to go home and soldiers

were deployed to guard the centres, the bishops said in a letter to the ministry of health. The Church runs more than 20 clinics in Eritrea, and many are on the property of monasteries. The Church's main concern is the people in need of the services that the government action has halted, it said.

### Mexican bill to redefine marriage rejected

● The legislature in the state of Sinaloa in northern Mexico has rejected a bill which sought to redefine marriage.

The bill, which sought to amend articles 40 and 165 of the Sinaloa Family Code, was defeated by a vote of 20 to 18.

The rejection of the legislative proposal means that the Sinaloa Family Code continues to recognise in its Article 40 that marriage consists of "one man and one woman, with equal rights, duties and obligations, with the possibility to generate human reproduction in a free, responsible and informed way".

The failed bill had sought to replace "a man and a woman" with "persons".

### Prominent priest resigns following plagiarism reports

● Fr Thomas Rosica, CSB [pictured] has resigned as CEO of the Salt and Light Media Foundation, four months after reports emerged that the priest had plagiarised sections of texts in lectures, op-eds, scholarly articles and other writings. "After 16 years as the founding Chief Executive Officer, I have submitted my resignation to the Board of Directors of the Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation effective today," Fr Rosica said in a statement last week. The priest, who led the Salt and Light network since it launched in 2003, was placed on leave from the non-profit in March. Fr Rosica also apologised for his acts of plagiarism.



## 'Brilliant news' that forced abortion is stopped

A panel of Court of Appeal judges has halted a court-ordered abortion in the UK, overturning a decision made last Friday in a case involving a mentally disabled woman.

On Friday, Justice Nathalie Lieven ordered that a 22-week-pregnant mentally disabled woman be forced to have an abortion, despite the objections of the woman and the assurances of her family that they would care for the child.

The woman has not been identified, but her family is from Nigeria and she is said to have the mental age of a six- to nine-year-old child. The family is Catholic.

Her doctors have argued that having an abortion is in the woman's "best interest", since they say it would be less traumatic than giving birth and having the child placed in foster care.

The woman's mother, who is a midwife, has offered to care for her grandchild and says the doctors have "underestimated her [daughter's] ability and understanding".

The three-judge appellate court panel overturned the ruling on Monday after the



Bishop John Keenan.

mother made a legal challenge, although their legal reasoning will not be made public until a later date.

### Initial ruling

Two British bishops – Bishop John Keenan of Paisley in Scotland and Auxiliary Bishop John Sherrington of Westminster in England – issued statements condemning the initial ruling by Lieven.

After the announcement of the successful appeal, the

Diocese of Paisley posted a message on Facebook calling it "Brilliant news!"

Clare McCarthy of Right To Life UK said it was a "very welcome decision that will save the life of the unborn child and the mother from a forced late-term abortion and much undue distress".

"However, the horrific original ruling should never have happened. Unfortunately, we fear that this is not a one-off case. We are

calling on the Department of Health to urgently reveal how many women have been forced to have an abortion in the UK over the last 10 years and make it clear how they will ensure it will not happen again," McCarthy said in a statement.

Lord David Alton said the Appeal Court decision "restores my faith in our judicial system".

"The implications of their decision should now be carefully considered by the Court of Protection," he said, referring to the UK court that deals with people judged not to have the mental capacity to handle their own affairs.

"By supplanting the rights of the family, and the rights of a vulnerable pregnant woman, the Court of Protection went way beyond the rights of a British Court. In trampling on the foundational, paramount human right – the very right to life itself – the Court exceeded its authority and the Appeal Court is to be warmly congratulated for overturning it," Alton said in a statement.

## Satanic Temple member sparks outrage among Christians

A Satanic Temple member who won the right to open a regional Alaska government meeting declared "Hail Satan" during her first invocation, prompting about a dozen officials and attendees to walk out.

Last week's invocation that started the meeting of the Kenai Peninsula Borough also spurred a protest outside the southern Alaska borough's administration building that drew 40 people, *The Peninsula Clarion* newspaper reported. Protesters held signs saying "reject Satan and his works" and "know Jesus and his love".

During her invocation, Satanic Tem-

ple member Iris Fontana said, "that which will not bend, must break, and that which can be destroyed by truth should never be spared as demise. It is done, hail Satan", Kenai radio station KSRM reported.

### Plaintiffs

She was among the plaintiffs in the lawsuit litigated by the ACLU of Alaska against the borough after it approved a 2016 policy saying that people who wanted to give the invocations at the government body's meetings had to belong to official organisations with an established presence on the Kenai

Peninsula, which lies 75 miles south of Anchorage. Other plaintiffs who had been denied permission to give the invocations included an atheist and a Jewish woman.

The Alaska Supreme Court last October ruled that the borough policy was unconstitutional and the borough government changed it in November to allow anyone to offer invocations regardless of religion.

Assembly members Norm Blakeley and Paul Fischer and borough Mayor Charlie Pierce were among those who left the assembly chambers along with some audience members.

## Bishops warn of rising 'political intolerance' in Burundi

Burundi's Catholic bishops have expressed their concern at rising political intolerance in the east African country. "We are worried about the progressive increase of political intolerance which, in different parts of the country, provokes clashes," the bishops said in a statement at the end of their four-day plenary meeting in the capital, Gitega.

Burundian authorities and ruling party youths "have carried out dozens of beatings, arbitrary arrests, disappear-

ances and killings against real and suspected political opposition members", Human Rights Watch noted earlier this month.

### Tensions

Political tensions over many years have forced more than 374,000 Burundians to take refuge in neighbouring countries, including Tanzania, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, the bishops said.

Many of the 192,000 Burundian refugees in Tanzania are in camps that lack adequate security and humanitarian assistance, they said.

"We have learned with pain of the insecurity in some refugee camps in Tanzania," the bishops said.

Burundi has been in crisis since 2015, when President Pierre Nkurunziza ran for a third term and was re-elected in elections boycotted by most of the opposition.





Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
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## Haiti celebrates Feast of Corpus Christi



A priest carries a monstrance during a Corpus Christi procession in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

## Australian prelates condemn euthanasia legalisation

Australian bishops have written a pastoral letter denouncing Victoria state's "new, and deeply troubling chapter of health care", as voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide became legal last Wednesday. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017 took effect on June 19.

In a letter earlier this month, the bishops of Melbourne, Ballarat, Sale, and Sandhurst wrote that "we cannot cooperate with the facilitation of suicide, even when it seems motivated by empathy or kindness."

"What is being referred to as 'VAD' is a combination of what in plain-speaking is more commonly known as physician assisted suicide and euthanasia," they noted.

"We feel a responsibility not just to say 'no' to VAD, but to give every encouragement to model a way of life that ren-

ders VAD unnecessary."

The Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017 allows adult Victoria residents who are terminally ill, expected to die within six months (or 12 if they have a neurodegenerative condition), and mentally competent, to ask their doctor to prescribe drugs that will end their lives.

### Requests

Two doctors must verify the requester's eligibility, and the person must make three requests for assisted suicide or euthanasia. Those seeking to end their lives must have lived in Victoria for at least a year, and be an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

Health practitioners are granted conscientious objection rights against participation in euthanasia or assisted suicide under the law.

About 100 doctors across the nearly 92,000 square mile state have begun receiving the mandatory training required to be allowed to assist patients who need medical help to die.

The bishops said the legislation has been inappropriately labelled as a compassionate response to terminal illness.

"We object to the unnecessary taking of a human life; we object to the diminishment of the love that can be given and received in the last days of our loved ones; we object to the lack of adequate funding for excellent palliative care; we object to state-sponsored practices that facilitate suicide; and most of all we object to the lazy idea that the best response our community can offer a person in acute suffering is to end their life."

## Exorcist Mexican priest charged with murder

A priest in Mexico City has been arrested for murder barely a week after he celebrated a funeral Mass for the victim. Fr Francisco Javier Bautista was arrested on June 19 and was charged with the murder of Hugo Leonardo Avendano Chavez, 29, who had recently graduated with a master's degree from a Catholic university, worked with Fr Bautista at Christ the Savior Parish and had aspirations of

entering the priesthood.

The priest, who also served as an exorcist, was ordered to be held pending trial.

Avendano was found murdered on June 13 in southern Mexico City. Family say he had gone to the Christ the Savior Parish, where he worked, late on June 11 and saw Fr Bautista.

The two men were spotted together outside the parish, according to footage from

surveillance cameras.

The Archdiocese of Mexico City issued a statement last week, saying it was watching events closely – without naming the priest – and adding it was cooperating with investigators.

"The same as the rest of society, the Catholic Church of Mexico City hopes and trusts that the work of the authorities in charge of the investigation and the prosecution is

efficient, rigorous, conforms to the law and is respectful of the human rights of the victims, their family members and those eventually accused," the statement said.

Mexico City media reported Fr Bautista had celebrated Avendano's funeral Mass. Television outlets showed Fr Bautista telling reporters, "on behalf of priests of the Church, forgiveness is granted" for the crime.

## Vatican roundup

### Christians must respond to migration crisis humanely – Pope

● The Vatican recognises how difficult it is for nations to manage the flow of migrants and refugees, but one thing is certain: "We must respond in a humane manner, a Christian manner, and we must try to help people, not harm them," said the Vatican foreign minister.

While the Vatican obviously respects the sovereignty of individual nations to determine how best to respond to the needs of migrants and refugees, archbishop Paul Gallagher said, "the numbers are what they are, and we must face that and we must help".

In connection with World Refugee Day, the UN Refugee Agency released its annual report on "forced displacement" around the world.

While the situation is dire for the migrants and refugees, the archbishop said that people in wealthier nations must acknowledge the contributions of newcomers, and not just in terms of cultural enrichment, but also in offsetting the declining birth-rate in many European countries and the need in many nations for factory and farmworkers.

"So, it is necessary to have a balanced approach, but also try to humanise ourselves," he said. "In fact, if one treats others badly, we are the ones who are diminished."

### Holy Spirit unites in face of human weakness, Francis says

● Pope Francis said has that the Holy Spirit unites and grows the Church despite human limitations, sins and scandal.

"The Holy Spirit is the creator of communion, the artist of reconciliation...he builds the community of believers by harmonising the unity of the body and the multiplicity of its members," Pope Francis said last week in St Peter's Square.

The Holy Spirit "makes the Church grow by helping it to go beyond human limits,

sins and any scandal", he said.

Dedicating his Wednesday catechesis to the Acts of the Apostles' account of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Pope Francis reflected on how the Holy Spirit transformed and strengthened St Peter.

"Peter's word, weak and even capable of denying the Lord, when crossed by the fire of the Spirit gains strength and becomes capable of piercing hearts and moving to conversion."

### Vatican charity raises millions to support Christians

● Aid to the Church in Need raised over €111m in 2018 to help support persecuted Christians, particularly in the Middle East where tens of thousands of Christians have been forced to flee their homes due to ongoing war and conflicts over the last decade.

Releasing its 2018 annual report on June 20, the Vatican-recognised foundation that assists minority Christian communities and people persecuted for their faith said the donations funded "no fewer than 5,019 pastoral projects in some 139 different countries" with 27% of the donations going to Africa and 25% to the Middle East.

Over 12% of the total aid, the report said, went to assisting thousands of Christians in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Iraq, and funded the rebuilding of nearly 1,500 Christian homes.

The other nations in the top five for foundation-supported projects were India, Ukraine and Congo.

Among the projects supported by the funds collected by the Catholic aid group were €23.2million for construction or reconstruction of homes, chapels, churches, convents, seminaries and pastoral centres.

Donations also funded the formation of candidates for the priesthood and religious life, education initiatives, transportation as well as the purchase and distribution of Bibles and other religious literature.



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# Venezuelan emigrants could become 'victims of human trafficking'

The Venezuelan bishops have expressed their concern for the risks to which Venezuelan emigrants, especially women, are exposed. More than four million Venezuelans have emigrated since 2015.

Under the socialist administration of Nicolas Maduro, Venezuela has been marred by violence and social upheaval, with severe shortages and hyperinflation.

"The Justice and Peace Commission and Caritas urge the authorities in all branches of government to investigate, pursue, prosecute and sentence those responsible for human trafficking crimes," the bishops said.

They also called for "guaranteeing the relatives of victims direct access and without any kind of obstacles to law enforcement and the justice system so they can present their cases".

## Agreements

They asked the authorities to provide the victims with "timely justice without any delay, as established by the

Constitution and the different international agreements for the protection of human rights than have been signed and ratified by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela".

The commission warned that the vulnerable position of migrants fleeing from destitution could cause them to become victims of human trafficking.

**“A boat carrying 32 Venezuelan emigrants sank on its way to Curaçao earlier this month. Each had paid \$400 (€353) for the crossing”**

"Migrants can be enslaved by 'the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs,'" they



A Venezuelan migrant carrying a baby walks along a trail into Brazil, in the border city of Pacaraima, Brazil. Photo: CNS

noted, citing a UN resolution.

In their statement, the bishops said that they met with relatives of the 28 people who disappeared in Güiria following the shipwreck of a boat that left April 3 heading for Trinidad and Tobago.

The relatives indicated that although the bodies of the victims have not been found, "the agencies in charge of carrying out the investigation have not given a timely response".

"The Commission observes

with concern the increase of this type of incident, not just in the eastern part of the country but also in the border areas of Falcón, Brazil and Colombia," the bishops emphasised.

Another boat carrying 32 Venezuelan emigrants sank on its way to Curaçao earlier this month. Each had paid \$400 (€353) for the crossing.

The bishops' commission warned that in the border areas there operate "criminal gangs that put in danger the life and physical integrity and

dignity of women, especially youths and minors".

This situation produces "enormous anxiety and despair" in the families, affecting the children who are left abandoned, they said.

## Commitment

They expressed their commitment to those affected, to whom they will continue to provide support in following up their cases, in order to obtain justice, timely information, and a determination of facts.

"Let us combat the sale of children, women and men as slaves for the purposes of begging, prostitution or forced labour," they urged.

Some 1.3m Venezuelan emigrants are being hosted by Colombia, and some 800,000 are in Peru.

In a move to restrict the flow of immigrants, Peru mandated on June 15 that Venezuelans have a passport and visa to enter the country; previously, only a national ID card was needed.

# Catholic school sacks teacher in same-sex marriage after dispute

A Catholic school in the Indianapolis archdiocese has said it will stop employing a teacher in a same-sex marriage, after its Catholic status was stripped by Archbishop Charles Thompson.

"It is Archbishop Thompson's responsibility to oversee faith and morals as related to Catholic identity within the Archdiocese of Indianapolis," Cathedral High School leaders said in a June 23 letter. "Archbishop Thompson made it clear that Cathedral's continued employment of a teacher in a public, same-sex marriage would result in our forfeiting our Catholic identity due to our employment of an individual living in contradiction to Catholic teaching on marriage.

"Therefore, in order to remain a Catholic Holy Cross School, Cathedral must follow the direct guidance given to us by Archbishop Thompson and separate from the teacher," said the letter, signed by Matt Cohoat, chairman of Cathedral High School's board of directors, and Rob Bridges, the school's president.

The conflict between Brebeuf

Jesuit Preparatory School and the archdiocese began with an archdiocesan request that the contract of a teacher who is in a same-sex marriage not be renewed.

**“He added that this problem ‘cuts to the very heart of what it means to be a Jesuit institution’”**

The school became aware of the teacher's same-sex marriage in the summer of 2017, according to a June 20 statement from Fr Brian Paulson, SJ, head of the Jesuits' Midwest Province.

Fr Paulson said the archdiocese requested "two years ago that Brebeuf Jesuit not renew this teacher's contract because this teacher's marital status does not conform to Church doctrine".

The school leaders originally wrote that: "After long and prayerful consideration, we determined that following the Archdiocese's directive would not only violate our informed

conscience on this particular matter, but also set a concerning precedent for future interference in the school's operations and other governance matters that Brebeuf Jesuit leadership has historically had the sole right and privilege to address and decide."

Fr Paulson stated that Brebeuf Jesuit "respects the primacy of an informed conscience of members of its community when making moral decisions".

## Mission

"We recognise that at times some people who are associated with our mission make personal moral decisions at variance with Church doctrine; we do our best to help them grow in holiness, all of us being loved sinners who desire to follow Jesus."

He added that this problem "cuts to the very heart of what it means to be a Jesuit institution with responsibilities to both the local and universal Church, as well as for the pastoral care we extend to all members of our Catholic community".



Archbishop Charles Thompson said that Brebeuf Jesuit preparatory school "can no longer use the name Catholic".



# Charity on the alert for Ebola virus

Catholic Relief Services is monitoring the health situation in Uganda, following two confirmed deaths from the Ebola virus.

"We consider even one case a very serious development," said Niek De Goeij, Uganda Country Representative for Catholic Relief Services.

"But while Ebola is a frightening disease, we've seen almost a year of critical preparedness efforts on the part of the Ugandan government, and now immediate action by the Ministry of Health and international partners, to quickly contain these cases so far while avoiding its spread."

Two deaths from Ebola have been confirmed in Uganda in recent days, as the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues to fight an outbreak of the virus that has lasted nearly a year.

## Local partners

Catholic Relief Services said it is working closely with government authorities and local partners in the Kasese District of Uganda and surrounding areas. "For now, CRS will focus on making sure its partners are safe and can continue their other important work in this new reality," De Goeij said.

An outbreak of Ebola began in the DRC in August 2018. Since then, it has killed



A World Health Organisation worker administers a vaccination during the launch of a campaign aimed at beating an outbreak of Ebola in Mbandaka, Congo.

more than 1,300 people in the country, making it the second largest outbreak in history.

Efforts to contain the disease have been hampered by misinformation and distrust on the part of local communities, who in some cases have retaliated against

health teams by attacking them. More than 100 attacks on medical centres and staff have been reported this year, according to the BBC. This has limited many of the health services that non-governmental organisations are able to provide.

Catholic Relief Services has been supporting local Caritas partners in responding through education campaigns to help residents know how to prevent and respond to the virus.

More than 100,000 people have received the Ebola vac-

cine but many more are fearful of it and refuse to receive it. Violence in the eastern part of DRC has made it difficult to reach some areas of the country, and difficult to monitor the virus as it spreads.

For months, public health experts had feared that the

virus could spread to surrounding countries. The two confirmed Ebola victims in Uganda had recently attended a funeral in DRC.

A handful of other suspected cases in Uganda have been reported, but have not been confirmed. An experimental Ebola vaccine was approved for use in Uganda this week.

The Kenyan government is also on alert for cases that may cross the border into the country.

## Deadly virus

Ebola is a deadly virus that is primarily spread through contact with bodily fluids. Symptoms include fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, muscle pains and occasional bleeding. The disease is fatal in up to 90% of cases.

Several outbreaks have taken place in Africa in recent decades. An outbreak in 2014-2016 in West Africa killed more than 11,000 people and spread briefly to Spain, the United States and the UK.

During that outbreak, Catholic Relief Services and other Catholic groups worked to treat those who were infected, support Ebola orphans, provide food support and educate people on hygiene practices to help avoid the spread of the virus, such as hand washing and avoiding contact with dead bodies.

# Californian bishops call for an 'ecological spirituality'

The California Catholic Conference commemorated the fourth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical 'Laudato Si', on 'Care for Our Common Home' by issuing a pastoral statement calling for heightened attention to ecological issues in the state that could affect future generations.

The document from the conference, which includes all of California's bishops, focused on the encyclical's theme of integral ecology to demonstrate that the environmental protection of the state is ingrained in a spirituality that unites all of creation in praising God.

The pastoral statement emphasises two goals: "To animate and energise the implementation in California of what *Laudato Si'* calls us to do and to offer a dynamic teaching and evangelisation

tool for our Catholic faith community and beyond, especially for young people."

The bishops encouraged Californians to work in solidarity and consider approaches that faithfully and efficiently care for the state's environment. They said the Pope's encyclical shows that ecological spirituality is not limited to simply cultivating the environment.

"To live out integral ecology with joy and authenticity, we are called to recognise the interrelated character of our existence – its environmental, economic, social, and cultural dimensions – and to practice care for all that God has created," said the document, titled 'God Calls Us All to Care for Our Common Home'.

The first part of the pastoral statement includes a reflection on the "beauty and bounty" of California, the



Firefighters work to put out hot spots in a fast-moving wildfire in California. The California Catholic Conference commemorated the fourth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, on 'Care for Our Common Home' by issuing a pastoral statement calling for heightened attention to ecological issues in the state that could affect future generations.

decline in access to water, increased air pollution and how creation symbolises a family that should be protected at all costs.

California's natural ecosystems and water systems are being affected because droughts are becoming more common and

more intense, causing rainfall to be inconsistent, the bishops said.

## Statement

The statement also recalled that in 2012 California became the first state to acknowledge that access to safe, clean and affordable

water is a universal and basic right. The bishops expressed concern that, despite the measure, thousands of rural Californians are unable to access clean drinking water from their taps.

A common thread among the prevalent environmental issues facing the state

is that poor people are most affected, leading to social justice concerns, the document said, adding that elected officials and policymakers must develop policies that ease such burdens on the poor.

The bishops' document cites the Catholic social teaching principle of subsidiarity, which grants freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility for the common good from those who hold greater power.

The second portion of the pastoral statement prompts Californians to acknowledge their "ecological vocations" and to act upon them with faith and gratitude in order to achieve integral ecology.

Such a vocation, the bishops said, involves many paths and includes not only a career choice, or a means of earning a living, but also a means of encountering an overall ecological conversion as individuals, families, and communities. Those who work and advocate for environmental justice embody and live out their ecological vocations to the fullest, they said.



# Letter from Rome

## Pope Francis warns theologians against 'collapsing' into ideology



Inés San Martín

Pope Francis visited the southern Italian city of Naples last Friday, participating in a theology congress dedicated to interreligious dialogue and migration in the context of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Argentine Pontiff revisited some of his core concepts, calling for theologians to be an expression of a Church that is a "field hospital", and to be merciful, because without this, "our theology, our law, our pastoral care, run the risk of collapsing into bureaucratic pettiness or ideology, which by its nature wants to tame the mystery".

The theology summit was organised by the Pontifical Catholic University, a Jesuit institution. The scope of the gathering was to discuss the impact of the Pope's Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, on theological studies. His speech was entitled "Theology after *Veritatis Gaudium* in the context of the Mediterranean".

"Theology is the expression of a Church that is a 'field hospital,' which lives its mission of salvation and healing in the world!" Pope Francis said.

"Mercy is not only a pastoral attitude, but it is the very substance of the Gospel of Jesus," he said. "I encourage you to study how, in the various disciplines - dogmatic, morals, spirituality, law and so on - the centrality of mercy can be reflected," Francis said to around 1,000 people, including students and professors.

### Compassion

In the journey of leaving oneself and encountering others, it is important for theologians to be "men and women of compassion, touched by the oppressed life of many, by the slavery of today, by social wounds, by violence, by wars and from the enormous injustices



Pope Francis greets the crowd during his general audience in St Peter's Square at the Vatican.

suffered by so many poor who live on the shores of this 'common sea'".

"Without communion and without compassion, constantly nourished by prayer, theology not only loses its soul, but loses its intelligence and ability to interpret reality in a Christian way," Francis said.

Francis also underlined the importance that universities having study plans that allow lay people, particularly women, to attend, not only seminarians.

"The contribution that women are giving and can give to theology is indispensable and their participation must therefore be supported," he said.

Speaking in particular about the context of the Mediterranean - which he's often dubbed the *mare mortuum* for the number of people who've died trying to reach European shore after fleeing hunger, violence and persecution in Africa and the Middle East - Francis said that it must be "in harmony" with the spirit of Christ, "with his freedom to go around the world and reach the peripheries, even those of thought".

According to Francis, theologians are called to encourage "the meeting of cultures" with God's revelation and the Church's tradition, and even though "the ancient architectures of thought,

the great theological syntheses of the past are mines of theological wisdom, they cannot be applied mechanically to current questions".

The first sources of theology, meaning the Word of God and the Holy Spirit are, the Pope said, "inexhaustible" and therefore, theologians are called to work towards a "theological Pentecost".

Francis also said that "theological freedom" is necessary, because without the possibility of experiencing new paths, "nothing new is created" and there's no room left for the newness of the Spirit.

### Variety

Quoting his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, written by the Argentine Pontiff in 2013, Francis said that: "For those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion. But in fact such variety serves to bring out and develop different facets of the inexhaustible riches of the Gospel."

The theology that should follow *Veritatis Gaudium*, according to the Pontiff, is one that is done "in net", and in the context of the Mediterranean, "in solidarity with the 'castaways' of history".

The work of theological faculties

and ecclesiastical universities, he said, contributes to building a "just and fraternal society", that cares for creation and is set on building peace as the result of the collaboration between civil, ecclesial and interreligious institutions.

Francis also spoke about the importance of dialogue among Christians, Muslims and Jews, particularly as a tool that can foster understanding and peace.

"With Muslims we are called to dialogue to build the future of our societies and our cities; we are called to consider them partners to build a peaceful coexistence, even when there are shocking episodes by fanatical groups that are the enemy of dialogue, such as the tragedy of last Easter in Sri Lanka," the Pope said, referring to the deadly bombings in three churches and two hotels on Easter Sunday that left over 250 people dead.

Being docile to the work of the Spirit when it comes to theology, Francis said, means to proclaim the faith without a spirit of conquest or the will to proselytise. Instead, it implies a dialogue "from within", with men and women, their cultures and different religious traditions.

If theology is to be consistent with the Gospel, it must also be open to the testimony "up to the sacrifice of life", Francis said,

quoting as examples Charles de Foucauld and the monks of Tibhirine, murdered in Algeria and "many brothers and sisters who, with the grace of Christ, they were faithful with meekness and humility and died with the name of Jesus on their lips and mercy in their hearts".

### Horizon

Non-violence, he said, is a "horizon" to which theology must look as a constitutive element, with the help of the writings and practices of Martin Luther King, Italian philosopher Lanza del Vasto and "other artisans" of peace.

Lastly, Francis also urged theologians to work in an "interdisciplinary" way, overcoming "individualism".

"The method of dialogue and listening, guided by the evangelical criterion of mercy, can greatly enrich the interdisciplinary knowledge and interpretation," he said, making the prophecies of peace that the Holy Spirit "has never failed to arouse" emerge.

Francis spoke of this as a contrast to the "aggressive and warlike" attitudes that have marked the inhabitants of the Mediterranean, many of whom called themselves Christians: From colonial practices to the justifications of all kinds of wars and the persecutions perpetrated in the name of religion or an alleged racial or doctrinal purity.

❶ Inés San Martín is Rome Bureau Chief of Cruxnow.com

**“The contribution that women are giving and can give to theology is indispensable and their participation must therefore be supported”**





A woman participates in a march of indigenous people through the streets of Atalaia do Norte in Brazil's Amazon region.

# Understanding the debate over married priests at the Amazon synod

Every so often, we get official confirmation of the obvious, and, surprisingly enough, it still makes waves. Such is the case again with the release of a preparatory document for an October summit of bishops on the Amazon, which confirms that the ordination of married "elderly people", meaning men, will be on the agenda.

From the moment the Synod of Bishops on the Amazon was announced, it's been clear that the issue of the *virī probati*, meaning tested married men who are pillars of their communities, would come up. Requests for consideration of the possibility have been voiced with increasing urgency by bishops and other Catholic personnel from the region for decades, and it was basically unthinkable a whole synod would go by without it being floated again.

Nonetheless, given all the lengths to which Rome has gone over the years to squash consideration of married priests, seeing the topic on an official Vatican agenda is still a bit arresting.

To understand the nature of the discussion we're likely to see in October, here are three essential things to understand.



John L. Allen Jr

First, the debate is not over whether the Catholic Church can have married priests. It already does, and plenty of them. The 23 Eastern churches in communion with Rome have married priests, and in the US, there are hundreds of former Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans and others who were married in their original denominations and permitted to remain married as Catholic priests.

## Celibacy

The question, therefore, is not whether to have married priests, but whether to have more of them. As a corollary, no one is talking about eliminating celibacy for the vast majority of priests in the Latin Rite.

Second, this discussion will be very different from debate over married priests in the US or Western Europe, because it's

basically not ideological.

In the West, more liberal Catholics sometimes press for a married clergy on grounds that celibacy is unnatural and breeds sexual dysfunction, often linking it to the clerical sexual abuse crisis. Such activists also sometimes make the argument that by creating a special caste of unmarried men, celibacy contributes to clericalism, elitism, a detachment from the struggles of ordinary families, and all manners of other ills.

**“The question, therefore, is not whether to have married priests, but whether to have more of them”**

Whatever one makes of the merits of those arguments, they're not what drives discussion of the *virī probati* in the Amazon, or for that matter in most other parts of the world.

Americans often complain of a priest shortage, but the statistical fact of the matter is that the US is priest-rich compared to everywhere other than Western Europe. In the US there's one priest for every 1,300 baptised Catholics.

Across Latin America it's 1 to 7,000, in sub-Saharan Africa it's 1 to 5,300, and in the Caribbean it's 1 to 8,300.

In some Latin American nations, including several that share the Amazon, those ratios in some dioceses can soar as high as 1 to 16,000 or 17,000. Moreover, the isolation of many rural communities in the Amazon, which are accessible only by boat or by horseback up steep mountain climbs, sometimes means they see a priest only once every few weeks, perhaps once every six months or so.

## Circumstances

Routine sacramental life under such circumstances is obviously impossible. Mass, Confession, and so on, which are the backbone of Catholic life most places, is exceedingly rare, and those communities feel the absence of it. It's almost like being under a sort of geographical interdict, except for the fact these people have committed no sin to warrant it.

For bishops from these parts of the world, the issue of the *virī probati* isn't a question of left vs right, and some of the prelates campaigning for it are otherwise among the deepest theological

and political conservatives you'll ever meet. It's also not tied to any larger diagnosis of what's ailing the Church - it's instead a simple practical matter of wanting to be able to provide the Sacraments to their people on a regular basis.

As a further benefit, the *virī probati* would also be a way of empowering indigenous communities and ministering to them from within, since the candidates would come from those communities themselves.

Third, this fall's debate will be just that - a debate. It's not a foregone conclusion that the *virī probati* will enjoy majority support, and although a synod is merely advisory and Pope Francis can do whatever he wants, he will certainly be listening.

**“In the West, more liberal Catholics sometimes press for a married clergy on grounds that celibacy is unnatural”**

I've been covering synods of bishops for more than 20 years, and I honestly can't remember very many in which the *virī probati* didn't come up - never on the formal agenda before, but always in the air.

At the 2005 Synod on the Eucharist, for example, several bishops from the global south mentioned areas in the developing world, including Latin America and the Pacific Islands, where isolated communities strung out over vast distances often go without priests for long periods of time. Bishop Roberto Camilleri Azzopardo of Comayaga, Honduras, reported having one priest for every 16,000 Catholics in his diocese. Several bishops suggested that the Church might consider the ordination of *virī probati*.

That effort was turned back by other bishops, mostly from the global north, determined to defend the spiritual and pastoral value of priestly celibacy. In the end, the synod issued a reaffirmation of celibacy. Granted, there won't be many northern bishops at this synod, but those views still will be heard.

That's especially likely to be the case given the global village dynamic of Catholicism these days. Even if permission for the *virī probati* were to be granted only for a highly circumscribed geographical location, it would set a precedent, and it wouldn't take long for activists elsewhere to begin seeking the same latitude.

While it's anyone's guess what might happen during the October 6-27 synod, one thing is for sure: By putting married priests on the agenda, the Vatican has ensured that a much wider audience will be tuning in.

**John L. Allen Jr.** is Editor of Cruxnow.com



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Time to divide the diocese of Dublin?

**Dear Editor,** Perhaps the most interesting aspect of your interview with Archbishop Eamon Martin this week (IC 20/6/2019) was not his comments on the country's smallest dioceses, or even his openness to a national synod in a few years, but his barely veiled suggestion that the Archdiocese of Dublin be dismantled to make the Church fit for mission in the most populous part of Ireland.

The Primate of All-Ireland is, of course, careful not to say quite this, but he talks both about the administrative reality that since 1994 Co. Dublin has now been divided into

four distinctly administered parts, and raises the admittedly "controversial" question of whether some Irish dioceses might be too big for their people to be in communion with their bishop and indeed with Rome.

With Dublin significantly bigger than the country's next three most populous dioceses – Down and Connor, Meath, and Derry – combined, it seems clear that Dr Martin must have been talking about Dublin.

Numbers really suggest that something is amiss in Dublin: a story you ran last year revealed that the three aforementioned dioceses have

between them at least twice, if not three times as many men in formation as does Dublin; we keep hearing of parishes with 2% Mass attendance, and the pathetic attendance at the papal Mass in the Phoenix Park last summer should have been the reddest of red flags about how lifeless our biggest diocese is.

Maybe dividing Dublin is the only way to unlock whatever potential the Church has there.

*Yours etc.,  
Gabriel Kelly,  
Drogheda, Co. Louth.*

### Nothing new about priests being wounded healers

**Dear Editor,** In *The Tommy Tiernan Show* on RTÉ recently, Fr Brian Darcy lamented the Church's failure to keep step with developments in the sexual revolution. The Church is "way behind society" and that is for him a failure both of enlightenment and "compassion".

The changes in sexual mores have brought us to a place where over one third of Irish children are being raised in single-parent households (Census 2016). Family breakdown is rising with devastating

consequences for children's health, housing, education and future prospects.

So is the number of Irish women having abortions since the beginning of this year.

Abortion and the effect of promiscuity on the mental and physical wellbeing of the young are the kind of issues one might expect a Catholic priest to reflect on in a lengthy prime time television opportunity.

Instead Fr Darcy spoke about marrying couples "from the same address" without any

acknowledgment of the benefits of the Christian understanding of marriage to both families and society.

The interview was about Fr Darcy the man rather than the minister of souls and he was happy to keep it there. He went from his abuse experience to what he sees as the pointless burden of celibacy.

Yet, the Church's mission around the world and at home was made possible by the dedicated service of men and women who lived celibate lives in religious orders and as ordained

ministers.

There is nothing new about the concept of the priest as wounded healer. However, it is hard to listen to the narcissistic pleadings of Fr Darcy without calling to mind the plight of many other priests in persecuted lands today whose sufferings are of a rawer, deadlier kind than his.

There are few to listen to their stories and fewer still to tell them on their behalf.

*Yours etc.,  
Margaret Hickey,  
Blarney, Co. Cork.*

### Ring of truth

**Dear Editor,** It was fascinating to read Fr Conor McDonough's Notebook column about C.S. Lewis (IC 20/6/2019). Fr McDonough is entirely right to note how often we forget how the experience of war formed Belfast's greatest Christian writer, as it did that of J.R.R. Tolkien. Indeed, there's a case to be made that not merely is Tolkien's masterpiece *The Lord of the Rings* the 20th Century's greatest work of the Christian imagination, but also that it is the most profound study of evil and the horrors of war that the last, horrendous century produced. Anyone unconvinced of this should take the time to read John Garth's astonishing *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle Earth*.

*Your etc.,  
Carol Rafferty,  
Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.*



### A move out of the blue can be upsetting for all

**Dear Editor,** If our lot as Catholics is 'not to wonder why', then that dictum applies even more to our priests, some of whom at this time of the year receive instruction to uproot their ministries and lives and head off to pastures (or parishes) new. The bishop's transfer request will surely be welcomed by some, but for those of us well used to a priest or parish priest and who have come to depend and love the man as much as his vocation, transfers 'out of the blue' can be hard to take.

Change, it is said, is good but surely no change can be better. In my

experience, fresh religious faces are always welcome and all 'new' arrivals bring something of their own, and of course this is welcome. But let's not forget the moved man.

More than once, I have developed deep and precious personal relationships with priests; I have worked with them and for them and firmly believe that I am better person for listening to them and watching them in action in liturgical and parish work. And then, come June, there is a question mark over the location of their ministry and, if we're unlucky, they get

posted to a new parish. Good luck to the new parishioners, but it leaves another parish deflated and perhaps a priest or two thrust into a new and lonely situation.

There is no easy answer, I know. But at this time of the year, let's remember the priests who are required to walk away from their lives and begin fresh ones elsewhere, all for the sake of their people and of their God.

It can't be easy for any of them.

*Yours etc.,  
Declan Rankin,  
Donnycarney, Dublin 9.*

## facebook community

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

### Would you support the ordination of married 'proven men' to the priesthood?

I believe the decision should remain with the Holy Father under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Personally I would be happy for the priesthood to be open to those with sincere vocations, married or celibate, but that the special calling to celibacy should always be valued and cherished.

– **Martina O'Connor**

In an Irish context the way forward may well be for elder married priests who are able to support their families through their pensions and any small stipends that might come their way. There is no way that the average €22,000 salary enjoyed by present single priests would ever support a young family and the evidence is that many parishes including my own are finding it increasingly difficult to provide the necessary funding of a resident priest. – **Alan Whelan**

In the Church in England they have accepted married men who were Anglicans so I don't understand the reasoning for losing so many good and committed priests here because they fall in love and want a family. As there is a precedent it cannot be against Church law. – **Liz O'Sullivan**

Because it is unnecessary. There has always been a shortage of missionaries, this is nothing new. We are told to pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers in his harvest. But we always seem to rely on human solutions. It seems Faith is lacking. – **Eilín Glynn**

Marriage and the priesthood require 100% commitment. It's impossible to give 100% to both. – **Mairead Breen**

The practice of a celibate/unmarried priesthood is a discipline, not dogma or doctrine. Discipline can be changed if conditions require it. The Eastern Rite has had married men as priests forever, and they are just as Catholic as the Latin Rite. – **Jon Brill**

### Mapping a Church fit for mission

Amalgamation of some small dioceses with bigger dioceses is not really the way to go. They're a thousand years old, before we had towns, cities, universities. They're premised on the need for access to the sea. Instead of tacking Dromore onto Armagh, think about a diocese including Newry, Dundalk and Drogheda currently split between Meath and Armagh. What was rational 1000 years ago isn't today. – **Christopher McCamley**

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

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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



# Around the world

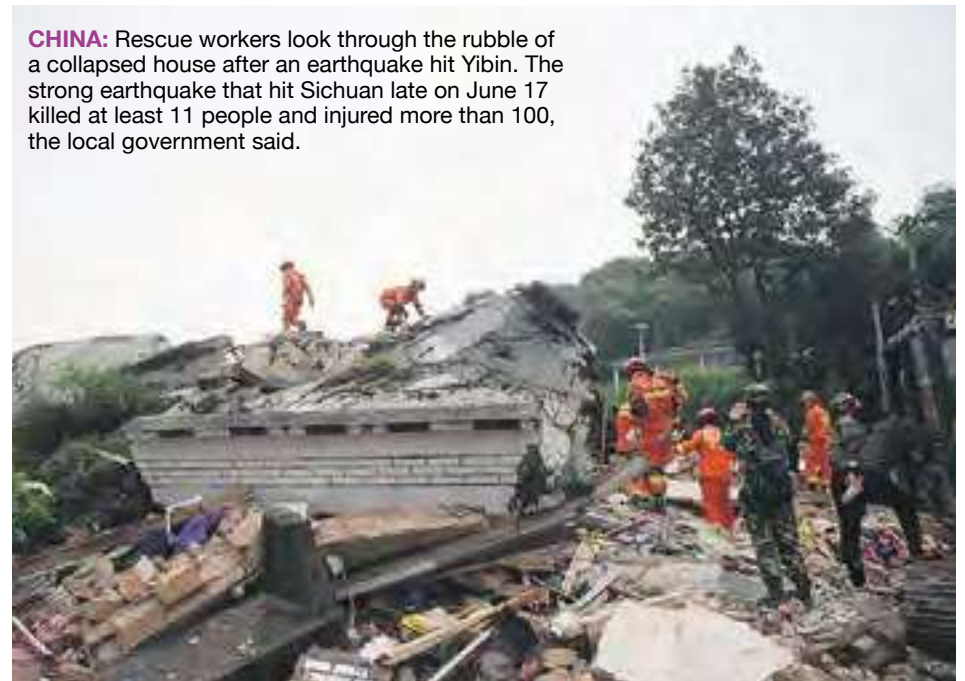


▲ **PAKISTAN:** An Afghan girl walks with a water bottle along a road in Lahore, on World Refugee Day. Children under the age of 18 make up one half of the world's refugee population, a UN report said. Photos: CNS

◀ **US:** Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn, New York, greets people after concelebrating Mass at St Athanasius Church in Brooklyn. The bishop's pastoral visit to the parish coincided with his 75th birthday. Per canon law, bishops are required to submit their resignation to the Pope upon turning 75.



**MEXICO:** Members of the National Guard keep watch at a checkpoint in Mexico's Chiapas state. A catechist instructor was shot dead on June 15 at Immaculate Conception chapel in Acacoyagua, about 75 miles from the border with Guatemala.



**CHINA:** Rescue workers look through the rubble of a collapsed house after an earthquake hit Yibin. The strong earthquake that hit Sichuan late on June 17 killed at least 11 people and injured more than 100, the local government said.



**HONG KONG:** Christian demonstrators sit near the office of Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam as protests against an extradition bill continue. Cardinal John Tong Hon, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Hong Kong, called on Lam to withdraw the bill.



**VATICAN:** A young person participates in the post-synod Youth Forum at the Vatican. More than 280 young people from 109 countries attended the four-day forum.





## The loss of Heaven and fear of Hell



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

Growing up as a Roman Catholic, like the rest of my generation, I was taught a prayer called, The Act of Contrition. Every Catholic back then had to memorise it and say it during or after going to confession. The prayer started this way: "Oh, my God, I am truly sorry for having offended thee and I detest all of my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of Hell..."

To dread the loss of Heaven and fear the pains of Hell can seem like one and the same thing. They're not. There's a huge moral distance between dreading the loss of Heaven and fearing the pains of Hell. The prayer wisely separates them.

Fear of Hell is based upon a fear of punishment, dreading the loss of Heaven is based upon a fear of not being a good, loving person. There's a huge difference between living in fear of punishment and living in fear of not being a good a person. We're more mature, humanly and as Christians, when we're more worried about not being loving enough than when we're fearful that we will be punished for doing something wrong.

### Emphasis

Growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, I breathed in the spirituality and catechesis of the Roman Catholicism of the time. In the Catholic ethos then (and this was essentially the same for Protestants and Evangelicals) the eschatological emphasis was a lot more about the fear of going to Hell than it was about being a loving person.

As a Catholic child, along with my peers, I worried a lot about not committing a mortal sin, that is, doing something out of selfishness or weakness that, if unconfessed before

I died, would send me to Hell for all eternity. My fear was that I might go to Hell rather than that I might not be a very loving person who would miss out on love and community. And so I worried about not being bad rather than about being good. I worried that I would do something that was mortally sinful, that would send me to Hell; but I didn't worry as much about having a heart big enough to love as God loves.

I didn't worry as much about forgiving others, about letting go of hurts, about loving those who are different from me, about being judgmental or about being so tribal, racist, sexist, nationalistic or narrow in my religious views that I would be uncomfortable sitting down with certain others at God's banquet table.

The Heavenly table is open to all who are willing to sit down with all. That's a line from a John Shea poem and it spells out succinctly, I believe, a non-negotiable condition for going to Heaven, namely, the willingness and capacity to love everyone and to sit down with everyone.

It's non-negotiable for this reason: how can we be at the Heavenly table with everyone if for some reason of pride, wound, temperament, bitterness, bigotry, politics, nationalism, colour, race, religion or history we aren't open to sit down with everyone?

**“I didn't worry as much about forgiving others, about letting go of hurts”**

Jesus teaches this too, just in a different way. After giving us the Lord's Prayer which ends with the words, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us", he adds this: "If you forgive others when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you." Why can't God forgive us if we don't forgive others? Has God arbitrarily singled out this one condition as his pet criterion for going to Heaven? No.

We cannot sit at the Heavenly banquet table if we are still selective as to whom

we can sit down with. If, in the next life, like here in this life, we are selective as to whom we love and embrace, then Heaven would be the same as earth, with factions, bitterness, grudges, hurt and every kind of racism, sexism, nationalism, and religious fundamentalism keeping us all in our separate silos. We can only sit at the Heavenly banquet when our hearts are wide enough to embrace everyone else at the table. Heaven demands a heart open to universal embrace.

### Ingratitude

And so, as I get older, approach the end of my life, and accept that I will soon face my maker, I worry less and less about going to Hell and worry more and more about the bitterness, anger, ingratitude and non-forgiveness that still remains in me. I worry less about committing a mortal sin and more about whether I'm gracious, respectful and forgiving towards others. I worry more about the loss of Heaven than the pains of Hell, that is, I worry that I could end up like the older brother of the prodigal son, standing outside the Father's house, excluded by anger rather than by sin.

Still, I'm grateful for the Act of Contrition of my youth. Fear of Hell isn't a bad place from which to start.

**“How can we be at the Heavenly table with everyone if for some reason of pride, wound, temperament, bitterness, bigotry, politics, nationalism, colour, race, religion or history we aren't open to sit down with everyone?”**

## QUESTIONS of faith

Each week Colm Fitzpatrick looks at interesting and sometimes controversial questions people have about Catholicism...



## Is having faith something stupid?

When criticising religion, it's common to hear the expression: "Faith is believing in something without having proof." This accusation is usually thrown at people who adhere to a particular religious or spiritual belief in an attempt to show the irrationality of their thinking. In others words, while you may think it's noble or virtuous to believe in God, keep in mind that there is no evidence to justify your claim – you're just relying on faith.

But is having faith in an idea or outlook always irrational, or can faith be reasonable?

When the Christian apologist John Lennox was debating the prominent scientist Richard Dawkins a number of years ago, he asked the well-known atheist: "I presume you have faith in your wife, is there any evidence for that?"

The point of the question was to show that it's rational to believe in something without having impeccable proof that it's true. In this case, Dr Dawkins had faith that his then-wife was wholly committed to him, without having proof that this was the case.

There was plenty of evidence to show that he was justified in holding this belief – she had married him, she seemed trustworthy, and she portrayed behavioural patterns of monogamy consistently – but he didn't have proof. She could have been secretly deceiving him throughout their entire relationship.

### Evidence

This thought-provoking question, then, demonstrated that faith is the act of believing in something on the basis of evidence, rather than believing an idea without having proof. We all hold faith-based ideas without being able to prove them. For example, we have faith

that the world is real and not a convincing simulation, that our parents love us, or that the ground we walk on isn't going to randomly collapse. We have overwhelming evidence that our beliefs are rational, but no proof that they are true.

St Augustine also tackled this question at the end of the 4th Century in his work *Concerning Faith of Things Not Seen*, where he discusses believing in that which cannot be physically proved.

**“Faith is the act of believing in something on the basis of evidence, rather than proof”**

He argues that when befriending someone, we must have faith that they will be a worthy and true friend. We must also have faith that our friend has good will, otherwise the friendship will collapse. In this, we can safely say that it is rational to have faith in something.

But does belief in God fall into this category? Sure, it's rational to hold faith when it comes to relationships because we have evidence to support this, but belief in God is different. Augustine cleverly anticipated this response and pointed out that we also have evidence for the existence of God.

He suggests that the fulfilled prophecies of the Old Testament and the fact that Christianity spread so rapidly despite its origins of crucifixion are evidence of God's existence.

Today, we can appeal to philosophical arguments and the historicity of the Gospels to bolster this claim. If there is enough evidence to suggest that God exists, then it's a perfectly rational move to hold that belief, even without conclusive proof.

**Got a question or comment?  
Email [colm@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:colm@irishcatholic.ie)**



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, June 27, 2019

## Personal Profile

Calling youth to a fulfilling life of service

Page 34



# Get Running



Mary Jennings. Photo: Donal Glackin for Irish Runner

### Mary Jennings

If you are not a runner (yet), you may wonder what the attraction is. From the outside running must seem like a very boring hobby indeed. Constantly putting one foot in front of another for minutes and possibly even hours? How is that in any way exciting?

But talk to any runner and you'll realise that running offers a lot more to an individual than just a means of getting from A to B.

We all run for different reasons.

- Some runners train to win races and push their bodies as far as they can.

- Some people run for health and weight-loss reasons.

- Many runners use running as a way to escape – to reduce stress and clear their heads of their worries and responsibilities.

Whatever their reason to run, most runners are passionate about how running makes them feel and are keen to encourage others to give it a try. Running is my way of feeling free and enjoying the fresh air.

I return home positive, enthusiastic and energised. I feel strong and capable and clearer in my head. I feel like my day is a success even if I have done nothing else but run. I may not be the fastest runner, but speed is not the priority in my running. I love how running makes me feel afterwards and also the friendships and opportunities

for travel and adventure it has offered me. I never envisaged how much I would enjoy the social side of running.

Whether it is the company of a friend on a leisurely weekend run, the exchange of a smile and a nod with a passing runner in the park, the buzz of taking part in a marathon or the simple joy of coaching a group of runners to their first 5k, the camaraderie of fellow runners is priceless.

Growing up, the only runners I was aware of were 'athletes'. They were members of an athletic club, comfortable in short shorts and very competitive. Running was about winning races, getting faster and pushing themselves to their limits. I don't remember knowing anyone who ran purely

as a leisure pursuit. But in recent years there has been a significant growth in the number of people running for fun.

While certain runners continue to run for peak performance and podium places, more of us are happy to run just for ourselves and take on challenges with a little less dedication than those at the top. This more relaxed bunch are what we call 'recreational runners' and there are a lot of us out there. Many have taken up running in their adult years and their focus is very different from that of the competitive athlete.

We all know someone who is the 'unlikely runner'; someone who was never sporty and is now taking part in races and

events and is passionate about how running makes them feel. Running has a strange power of taking hold of our perceptions of our capabilities and makes us realise that we are able to do a lot more than we think. The increased self-belief, pride and resilience leads to a more positive mindset overall.

While many recreational runners start out running for health, fitness or weight-loss reasons, most runners keep it up for another reason. It's only when you start running regularly that you realise the main added bonus of running. Running has a powerful way of offering headspace.

Running can reduce a temper

» Continued on Page 33



## Family News

### AND EVENTS

#### FAMILY-FRIENDLY FESTIVAL OFFERS MUSIC AND PLAY ALL DAY

A festival with all the bells and whistles takes place this summer and offers a huge array of exciting spectacles and activities. Playstival is a two-day festival dedicated to play and discovery, fun and excitement, great food and live music, and most of all family time together according to organisers. This summer's new festival line-up allows parents the opportunity to play with their children, or let them interact with other kids and enjoy the games and interactive shows. Expect a live music stage with dance-worthy bands and DJs, a new world food market and a plethora of hands-on programming for toddlers to tweens as well as the grown-ups. Children under two years old can go for free. Playstival runs from Saturday, August 10-11, running from 9am-6pm. Those interested can stay tuned by visiting [playstival.ie](http://playstival.ie) and the Playstival social media channels for updates. The event will be held at Airfield Estate, Overend Avenue in Dundrum, Co. Dublin.

#### HEALTHY DADS MAKE HEALTHY BABIES

Fathers who eat right and exercise regularly are passing down metabolic health to their children, lowering their chances of developing diabetes and obesity later in life. According to a study, the lifestyle choices of men before conception can have an impact on their offspring's lifelong health. "Even a month or so of moderate exercise before conception can have major benefits to his children's metabolic health," stated Kristin Stanford, an assistant professor of physiology and cell biology at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Centre and an author of the study. "Those benefits include lower body weight, increased insulin sensitivity and decreased fat mass." Aside from possibly affecting their offspring's metabolic health, men can reap other benefits from opting for a healthy lifestyle. Josiah Larowe of the American Cancer Society said that eating right and exercising regularly can also significantly lower a person's risk of cancers of all types.

#### NIFTY SLIM WALLETS: KEEPING CASH AND CARDS SAFE

As the need to carry coins and cash slowly fades and people continuously move towards using credit and debit cards and even their smartphones to pay for products when they're out and about, is there a need to have a big wallet? On the market now there are 'slim wallets' that only have space for cards and some notes and just a very small space for coins. Secrid is the brand commonly known for this design, which is sold in Arnotts. An aluminium element is inbuilt to protect contactless cards in some of the designs, there is also a press stud closure and a sliding system allows you to pop up cards easily rather than fishing through the wallet. Whether it be for children getting their first wallet, or mothers and fathers looking for something more slim and nifty, this looks to be the wallet of the future.

# Nourishing our spirituality



**W**e have seen that meditation is a universal practice which has a particular expression and meaning in the Christian tradition. Many who practice meditation have been drawn to do so because of its pragmatic benefits. Indeed, the spread of mindfulness as a secular practice in health and other secular settings has made people keenly aware of its practical benefits. These can be physical, psychological, emotional or cognitive.

**“In the Christian tradition meditation – often called contemplation in the Catholic tradition – is seen as a form of deep prayer without words or images.”**

An internet search on the benefits of meditation will reveal thousands of studies carried out over the last 30 years which demonstrate beyond a doubt that the practice of meditation is enormously beneficial to the person. But the wisdom and religious traditions of the world, all of which embrace some form of meditation practice, also attest that meditation gives rise to deeper, spiritual fruits.

In the Christian tradition meditation – often called contemplation in the Catholic tradition – is seen as a form of deep prayer without words or images. It is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer; rather, it adds depth of meaning to all prayer and facilitates the movement from active prayer into receptive prayer. It moves our centre of gravity from the head to the

#### Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



heart. It deepens our awareness of our spiritual nature.

In modern secular society many have lost touch with their spirituality. Religion was an integral part of the society in which I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s and a very significant majority of the Irish population would have described themselves as being affiliated to the Christian religion. But even then I wonder how many people would have been keenly aware of their spirituality?

Religion and spirituality are not the same. In the 1950s spirituality would have been understood – if referred to at all – as a subset of religion; referring to people who took their religion seriously who might have been described as 'spiritual' or 'very holy'. Whereas, nowadays, it is religion which is often seen to be a subset of spirituality. There are many today who would say of themselves "I'm not a religious person but I do see myself very much as a spiritual person". Within the larger circle of spirituality, different religions are then understood to give expression to the spirituality of the person in different ways; while others would assert that they do not need to be affiliated with any religion in order to give expression to their spirituality.

Defining spirituality – like other abstract concepts such as truth or beauty – is not an easy thing to do. To describe the basic human desire for insight into the meaning of life, Kees Waaijman, a Carmelite and former professor of spirituality at Radboud University in the Netherlands, uses the expression 'primordial spirituality', "because this type of spirituality belongs to the basic processes of human existence ... beyond or prior to the type of spirituality as it is institutionalised" in the religions of the world. In other words, spirituality may be considered as an inner drive to live an authentic life, a drive



that finds expression in all religious traditions – theistic and non-theistic – and none.

This dynamic, this drive can be described in secular terms or in terms of a particular faith or religious tradition. Spirituality, then, can be understood as a natural, innate human predisposition.

In the Christian tradition, spirituality can be seen as a discovery of the true-self, as a form of self-knowledge. Thomas Merton saw the discovery of the true-self as an experience of finding God deep within the centre of the human person and Richard Rohr describes the true-self as "who we are in God and who God is in us". When

we discover this for ourselves, when we experience this form of conscious awareness, it is not merely psychological insight but an experiential insight into our participation in Being itself. As we learn the language of the heart, the language of silence, we begin to appreciate that spiritual knowledge is not irrational but trans-rational. In this state of consciousness, we no longer perceive ourselves as objects but as participants in Being. In Christian terms, it makes us deeply conscious of our mysterious and intimate connection with the Divine and that we are called to discover our personal relationship with Christ. This is perceptual, spiritual knowledge and it is simply not possible to give adequate expression to it in words.

Yet a 12-year-old boy who had been meditating for eight years could say to me that in his view "meditation is like a map and your destination is who you really are". This was knowledge of the heart, not the head, but didn't he describe the essential fruit of meditation as well as any of the great mystics. And as well as John Main, who described the same truth by saying that "the Spirit of God dwells in our hearts, loving to all".

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



» Continued from Page 31



or lift a bad mood. There are also benefits from running that have nothing to do with our physical or mental wellbeing. Something as simple as the discipline of following a training schedule and structuring a season of training has taught many of us how to set goals, follow a plan and deal with setbacks along the way. This can then be applied to many other areas of our lives.

### Forget the gym

Let's be clear. I am not anti-gym. If you enjoy the gym and you are motivated to go then please keep going. There are great exercises, classes and trainers that come with a gym membership. That is, if you actually turn up. It's very easy to buy a gym membership but it's a lot harder to be a consistent gym-goer.

Gyms can be intimidating places full of beautiful bodies and complicated machines and if you are self-conscious or lacking in confidence as well as fitness, often the gym can become the place that you feel guilty avoiding rather than somewhere you look forward to attending.

I have exercised outdoors for so long now that exercising indoors feels claustrophobic. I love the fresh air and the clarity and freedom that being outdoors brings. If you too are a little gym shy, remember there is a whole gym on your doorstep if you look outside the window.

The hardest bit, like any exercise regime, is getting started. Once you walk or run outside, a treadmill is never quite the same again. From park benches to trails, steps to lamp posts, you can create your own 'green gym' workout. The fresh air clears the head and lifts the spirits – I find that my best ideas come to me when I'm out for a run. It's not just me who finds this either – studies in Britain, Scandinavia and the United States are consistently finding that people exercising outdoors display higher vitality, energy, enthusiasm and self-esteem than when they perform

the equivalent exercise indoors. In virtually all of the studies, they also show signs of lower fatigue, tension and depression after an outdoor activity. I miss it when I don't get outside; sunny days stuck in an office drove me to leave my desk-bound job and set up Forget The Gym.

I dreamt of a job where I could be in the driving seat and choose to be outdoors when I wanted. It was not a particular love for exercise, but more a love for the freedom of the great outdoors. Getting outside at whatever pace is right for you today is the best thing you can do to enhance your life.

### Less stress, more fun

I remember asking one of my running students how she was feeling about running. She told me that it was her running anniversary and guess what she said? 'I'm two years older but ten years younger.' Running needs to be fun, yet many people take it too seriously. Put simply, if we don't enjoy it, we won't keep it up.

If running becomes a chore, it joins the long list of things we feel we should be doing but never get time to do properly. Instead we need to start seeing it as a privilege and an honour to be able to get out the door. Running doesn't have to always be about keeping up with

others. We have enough stress in our days without running adding to it. Yet I see a lot of runners anxious and disillusioned with running because they have perceptions of where they should be as a runner and constantly compare themselves with other runners. They overtrain and burn out.

**“Over the past 10 years, her business, Forget The Gym, has developed to teach everyone from beginners right up to seasoned marathon runners.”**

What is the point in running if it is going to bring such anxiety with it? While there are times when pushing our bodies to reach a personal best time or a longer distance is right for us, the number of kilometres, or the time on the clock should not always be the most important thing. It's true that we thrive on that feeling of progress when we get faster and stronger, but there is a fine line between pushing ourselves and getting injured.

For running to be a lifelong fun activity we need to look after our bodies, treat them with respect, reward them for the hard work put in, and sometimes give them a kick in the right direction when feeling a little lazy.

Mary Jennings started coaching family and friends to enjoy running just for fun, but as they started to improve, look for new challenges, and tell their friends, this expanded into coaching running full-time for her. Over the past 10 years, her business, Forget The Gym, has developed to teach everyone from beginners right up to seasoned marathon runners. • *Get Running* by Mary Jennings is published by Gill books and is available in bookshops and online (€16.99).



## Faith — IN THE — family

Bairbre Cahill



I feel a yearning for the wild. I don't mean I plan to run off and behave badly, I just mean I have a deep desire to go and sit and be in a wild place, listening, noticing and not 'doing' anything else.

Life has been rather hectic recently. We have just completed our fourth and final Leaving Cert. Of course, it was our son who was doing the exams not us but nevertheless we have felt the pressure of it all. At work I have come towards the end of a major training project involving pulling together a large network of people and services over many months – plus ridiculous amounts of paperwork. At the weekend I travelled to England to my God daughter's First Holy Communion having very nearly missed my flight and proving unexpectedly to myself that I can run at speed for substantial distances when the need arises!

During those days away I also spent time in the wild – on a marsh in Norfolk to be precise – and that is where my heart yearns to be. My friends Cindy, Simon, Joseph and Eddie (who is also my Godson) live in a wonderfully named place called Heckingha Holes, a place of marshland and waterways. Simon (Barnes) is a wildlife writer and his new book *On the March* – a year surrounded by wildness and wet was published the day I arrived at their house. In celebration not only did we raise a glass of champagne, kindly provided by the publishers, but also took a stroll out onto the marsh.

Simon has seen more than one hundred types of bird on the marsh. Eddie – who has Down's Syndrome – is skilful at identifying birds by their song. As we walked on paths created sometimes by the Chinese Water deer which have made the marsh their home, Simon helped me to recognise the rattling music of the sedge warbler amongst a myriad of bird songs. Knowing that we were in a place of herons and otters, stoat and fox, grass snake and kingfisher – even though we did not see them – gave me a sense of being in a

sacred place.

In the book Simon describes how himself and Eddie regularly head out onto the marsh – with a beer for Simon and apple juice for Eddie – to listen and notice and be. Eddie has a great capacity for contemplation. He is deeply at home in this wild



place. Simon can recognise a bird by its call, its flight, its silhouette, noting that when we have that store of wisdom and experience even a flash of 'something' in our peripheral vision can be identified. For a young man who faces the challenges of Down's Syndrome Eddie has a remarkable knowledge and understanding of the wild world.

And I found myself wanting to be there. It spoke to me of creation and blessing, a place to put aside the hassles and pressures of work and nearly missed flights and to reconnect with my own spirit. I promised myself I would take a cup of tea out on to the marsh the next morning and sit a while but of course I didn't. So when I wake in the night and have a list of 'things to be done' running through my head I imagine myself walking out onto the marsh and sleep returns.

I have realised my need to connect. I've tried sitting out in the back garden with my cup of tea in the morning but with our weather at the moment it is a chilly experience. I think this summer I need to make time to walk in wild places, to listen to what is happening around me, to notice the flowers and plants – even take pictures and try to learn a little more about them. Simon insists he is not 'religious' and yet his marsh and the way he writes about the wild world nurture my soul.



# Calling youth to a fulfilling life of service

## Personal Profile



Madison Duddy

**T**he Daughters of Charity have committed themselves to service and prayer for almost 400 years. In a world of preconceptions of religious life and the Church, the good work they do can often be misunderstood, leading to fewer young women choosing to join.

After 43 years as a Daughter of Charity, Sr Carmel Ryan (63) says she could never have imagined a more fulfilling life.

**“Immediately, she noticed their kindness, humility and ‘down to earth’ quality.”**

“I have met and helped people, done things and been places I don’t think I would have been or I would have done if I had not been a Daughter of Charity. I had the privilege of being involved in people’s lives that I never would have been involved in. To me, that makes it very worthwhile,” Sr Carmel says.

It was during her time at the Maria Immaculata Secondary School in Dunmanway, Co Cork, that Sr Carmel first met the Daughters of Charity. Immediately, she noticed their kindness, humility and “down to earth” quality.

Sr Carmel says the sisters

Sr Carmel Ryan



were “treated the same with no exceptions and no distinction made between any of them”. During her Leaving Cert year, She shocked her parents when she told them of her plans to join the order. To this day, Sr Carmel says she knows she made the right choice, “without a shadow of doubt”.

As a teacher and school chaplain, she loved watching “the changing faces of the students” as they grew up and helping them find happiness in a world that defines them by their exam scores.

“They came in very immature 13-year-olds, and by the time they’re let out six years later, they had grown up, become adults, and as a teacher, I witnessed that growth and development in each of them,” Sr Carmel says.

When her students faced challenges, she helped them by “treating them as human beings, not just people who were sitting exams at the end of three years or

two years. It was encouraging them to live full lives outside of school and within school... to see life is more than just the exam results and getting on well”.

Despite the joyful aspects of life as a Daughter of Charity, Sr Carmel says her constant exposure to tragedy often made her question her faith.

**“However, the strength and support from her community and faith help her overcome these obstacles.”**

“When I see extreme poverty, when I see extreme violence and when I continue finding evil things that happen for no good reason, yes, it would cause me to question things, cause me to think about how

we treat each other, and this would cause me to call into question, sometimes, my relationship with God,” Sr Carmel says.

However, the strength and support from her community and faith help her overcome these obstacles.

“It’s taking that step back and being reflective with prayer,” Sr Carmel says. “Sometimes just sitting and then listening and trying to be aware of the presence of God in life, even amidst that poverty or violence or whatever it is.”

Unfortunately, fewer young women join the Daughters of Charity every year. This is a difficult reality to face, especially for Sr Carmel who is the Director of Vocations.

“There [are] a different combination of things that are challenging to them [young women],” Sr Carmel says. “I think there is a concern around lifelong commitment; I suppose their fear

is not being able to live the life of the religious Daughter of Charity. Sometimes it is the role of Church in society or the perceived role of the Church and their fear of how they will be perceived as an active member of the Church.”

If young people could only see beyond what society tells them about religious life in the Church, Sr Carmel says they would have numerous opportunities to travel the world, helping and connecting with others.

“It is also about people really knowing who we are, not just the kind of misunderstood preconception or presumption of who we are and what we do. It is about getting the real story of the Daughters of Charity and people being aware of who we are as human beings, who we are in the Church and our role in society,” Sr Carmel says.

**“It is a challenge, but more than that it is a privilege, and we always receive much more than we ever give, and that’s an exciting way to live.”**

Through her many decades as a Daughter of Charity, serving as a teacher, chaplain and relief worker, Sr Carmel feels grateful for every experience and interaction. She says she could never give more love than she has received.

“It is a challenge, but more than that it is a privilege, and we always receive much more than we ever give, and that’s an exciting way to live. It’s a challenging way to live a life, but it’s also a very fulfilling way to live a life; to be at the service of others, especially those in extreme need, and certainly those who are living in poverty on a day-to-day basis.”

## Sweet Treats

Laura Anderson

## Rhubarb and Orange Crumble - the perfect combination of summer flavours

**T**his is a twist on a classic crumble flavour, that added orange gives it a lovely citrusy kick. Rhubarb is right in season at the moment so now is the best time to enjoy it. Its delicate pink colour makes it a perfect centrepiece for your summer dinner party. If you want to make the colour even more striking try using a blood orange instead of a regular one. You can also try adding some ginger into the fruit or some cinnamon to the crumble if you’d like to add a little more warmth to the flavours. This is so fast to whip up and is a perfect one for beginners, no fiddling around with tricky pastry.

### Ingredients

#### For the crumble

- 100g unsalted butter, chilled
- 60g light brown sugar
- 140g plain flour
- 2 tbsp oats
- Rind of one orange

#### For the filling

- 50g rhubarb
- Juice of 1 orange
- 60g golden caster sugar to sweeten

Preheat the oven to 200°C/190°F/Gas mark 6. Trim the ends off the rhubarb stalks, wash and cut them into 1-inch pieces. Place in an ovenproof dish, it can be as deep or as shallow as you like. Finely grate the rind from the orange and set it aside for the crumble. Squeeze the juice of the orange over the rhubarb. Sprinkle over the caster sugar and gently toss everything together to coat. If you like your rhubarb filling very soft you can always cook it on the hob for 10 minutes before adding it to the dish. You can also add more sugar to the fruit if you have an extra

sweet tooth but don’t kill all the tanginess, the contrast with the sweet crumble is essential.

To make the crumble, cut the chilled butter into cubes then rub it together with the flour using your fingertips until it resembles breadcrumbs. Some recipes suggest that you can use a food processor for

this step. It’s personal preference, the processor results in a very fine crumb almost like sand. I prefer it to be a little less even, with a more interesting texture and a rustic feel! Next, stir in the brown sugar and the orange rind. Spread the crumble topping evenly over the rhubarb and orange. Mixing the oats in with the crumble could result in them soaking up the fruit juice and becoming stodgy so instead, sprinkle them on top where they will toast and add even more texture. Bake in the preheated oven for 30-40 mins, until bubbling and golden brown on top.

This is delicious both hot and cold with vanilla ice cream, homemade custard, crème fraîche or fresh cream.





# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Religion and science not so different!

A few weeks ago in this column I lamented the false dichotomy between science and religion – some-one must have been paying attention!

Last Friday BBC Radio 4 launched a new series, **The Secret History of Science and Religion**, presented in an amiably cheerful fashion by Nick Spencer. It's not exactly easy listening, and not easy to do justice to it in a short review.

Spencer is presenting a historical approach, and his thesis is that the idea of science and religion being always in conflict is a myth – he called it the “warfare narrative”. The real issue, according to Spencer, is not so much God, evolution, the age of the earth and such but has more to do with how we think of ourselves as human beings, more about “who owns the right to define what a human being is”.

Part of the reason for the warfare narrative is that, as one professor put it, “conflict sells”. Prof. Fern Elton Baker of the University of Birmingham found that this sense of conflict is a minority position among religious people, but is strong among atheists.

In his exploration of medieval times, wrongly thought of as an age of faith rather than science, Spencer showed a harmony between these pursuits with the Church



Nick Spencer presents *The Secret History of Science and Religion* (BBC Radio 4).

being a kind of “massive research funding agency”, with the Church supportive of and responsible for the universities. “Hopeful theology” and “hard science” worked together and were not oppositional. He instanced the little known medieval bishop and scientist Robert Grosseteste. Spencer described how early scientists were theologically motivated, seeking to understand how God's world works.

Originally, Galileo was encouraged by his friend Pope Urban but fell out of favour when he represented the Pope's views as coming

from a simpleton, and proposed his views too definitely rather than in an exploratory way. The row was more a dispute within religion and within science – as different views of the world vied. Spencer said people then didn't see it as science vs religion – that polarisation would not become evident until 200 years later. I'm looking forward to the next episode.

### Quirky stories

**Sunday Morning Live** is back on BBC1 and after two episodes I find it rather light. I'm not convinced of the value of

the opening segment where quirky stories of the week are reviewed, usually by journalists or comedians. Some serious items get through, but last Sunday there was a part where the presenters and viewers showed pictures of their cute dogs!

On a more serious note, the discussion on whether society was too soft on criminals was interesting, though, with some nuanced difference, all seemed to agree broadly that while deterrent was needed, there should be serious efforts at rehabilitation during the time people spent in prison in order to reduce the risk of re-offending.

Later, the show featured the new Vatican document exploring the idea of ordaining married men to cope with the shortage of priests in the Amazon area. Journalist and author Joanna Moorhead was supportive of the idea, pointing to Eastern Rite churches and those married former



Francis Campbell.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### SUNDAY

**BBC Radio 4, Sunday, June 30, 7.10am**

Sunday morning religious news and current affairs programme presented by William Crawley.

#### MARRIAGE WORKS IN CHRIST

**EWTN, Sunday, June 30, 3.30pm**

Frequently asked questions about marriage: Greg and Julie Alexander, along with Fr James Dean, continue their series on overcoming marital adversities.

#### THE SECRET HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

**BBC Radio 4, Friday, July 5, 11 am**

Nick Spencer examines the history of science and religion and questions the extent to which they have been in conflict with one another.

Anglican priests who had become Catholic priests. She described the Catholic Church as ‘an organisation where there's lots of change’.

Perhaps ironically, one of those married priests, former Anglican Fr Simon Chinery, urged caution – there were advantages and problems – with married priests, he said, the normal stresses of family life were on the public stage.

Moorhead thought the Church should look at the possibility of women priests and that the faith was what was most important, but Fr Chinery said this was not possible, was not a matter of choice for the Church and was part of that important faith.

Finally, it was good to hear Francis Campbell, former British ambassador to the Holy See, delivering **Thought for the Day** last Monday morning on BBC Radio 4. On the

occasion of the recent feast day of St Thomas Moore, he had some thoughts on politicians. He wasn't a fan of those who were all motion and no direction. He wanted to see leaders of breadth, depth and principle.

With all the shenanigans in the UK over the Conservative Party leadership contest, it was a timely piece. Unfortunately, it can happen that politicians of principle get booted out of their political parties.

We can see politicians that we thought had principles taken on mysterious ‘journeys’, returning with a different set of principles, or none at all.

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# Film

Aubrey Malone



## Witness the Fab Four as a forgotten phenomenon

### Yesterday (12A)

A singer finds himself in a world where the Beatles never existed. This means he can sing their songs without fear of being accused of plagiarism – or sued for breach of copyright. Who could have dreamt up an idea like that? Either he deserves a special award or he needs to get out more.

The film's director, Danny Boyle, has built much of his career around similarly loony precepts. Having the cutesie Richard Curtis riding shotgun as his screenwriter grounds him. It's a marriage made in both heaven and hell – a bit like a latterday merger of Quentin Tarantino and Frank Capra.

Curtis gives Boyle the anchor he probably wouldn't otherwise have had to make the film palatable to the middle-of-the-road audiences that were always going to be its main target, audiences perhaps as twee as the Liverpool Mopheads themselves.

Anti-hero Jack Malik is played endearingly by British Indian actor Himesh Patel. He's been pounding the Suffolk streets as a busker for nigh on a decade, his career going nowhere fast. In fact if it wasn't for the encouragement of his friend Ellie (the ever-delightful Lily James) he'd probably have thrown in the towel years ago.

But then he gets hit by a bus. At that exact moment, as

luck would have it, the world undergoes a power cut. Cue a Beatles airbrush in the collective global psyche. It's the greatest non-sequitur in cinema history.

### Amnesia

After some desperate attempts to convince his friends he didn't write *Yesterday* etc., Jack decides to make hay while the sun shines. The universal amnesia persists as he goes around the world wowing audiences. Beatlemania morphs into Malikmania for the unlikely opportunist.

Can he remember the lyrics of evergreen numbers without the help of Google? Or sheet music? If he can, he stands to finally attain the

fame that's been eluding him for so long.

The stage is set for him to give his career the shot in the arm it sorely needs. As John Lennon said, it's just like *Starting Over*. (This might have been a more appropriate title for the film).

*Yesterday* is a single-idea movie that's so nonsensical you have to pinch yourself at times to convince yourself you're actually buying it, thereby becoming as wacky as Messrs Boyle and Curtis combined.

But you do. Eventually you get roped into its lunacy – largely due to the conviction of Malik.

Joel Frey plays his roadie. Kate McKinnon is the inevitable greedy agent. Also along



Good  
★★★★

Himesh Patel stars in *Yesterday*.

for the ride is Ed Sheeran – offering him the opportunity to “open” for him at concerts. And then having to face the fact that he's being outclassed by the *ingenue*.

The romantic possibilities

of the relationship between Jack and Ellie are unexplored. This is a pity. You can only take so much of him belting out hits to mesmerised audiences.

All you need is love? Maybe. And an enormous suspension of disbelief.





# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## An unquiet American

**Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the end of the American century** by George Packer (Jonathan Cape, £25/€30)

Felix M. Larkin

**R**ichard C. Holbrooke, the subject of this biography, was a bombastic, egotistical, but immensely talented US diplomat who served at senior levels in the administrations of three Democratic presidents – Carter, Clinton and Obama.

He was earlier a relatively junior State Department official in Vietnam, and the failure of US policy there marked him for the rest of his life.

During the Republican administrations of Reagan and the two Presidents Bush, he decamped to Wall Street – where he used his impressive range of contacts worldwide to open doors for bankers, though he knew nothing about banking and was interested only in public service.

He claimed to have been inspired by Kennedy's exhortation: "Ask not what your



Richard Holbrooke 'in the field' in Pakistan.

country can do for you..."

Under President Clinton, he was responsible for negotiating the Dayton Accords which ended the genocidal conflict in Bosnia in 1995.

Later, as Clinton's ambassador to the United Nations (UN), he secured the payment to the UN of huge arrears of funding due from the US which had been blocked by a

hostile Congress in Washington – thus saving the UN from imminent dissolution.

### Manner

However, his overbearing manner and personal insecurities made him a difficult colleague, and he never hid his contempt for most of his peers and superiors – and this is partly why he failed to real-

ise his ambition to become US Secretary of State, a job for which he was eminently qualified.

He died in 2010, aged 69, as Obama's Special Representative for Afghanistan – trying, without success, to broker a peace deal there as he had done at Dayton.

He was an old-fashioned US diplomat who believed

that America had a mission to save the world for democracy. He believed in what he called "the basic moral force that exists in the principles of our system of government" – that is, the US system of government.

**“This is an utterly brilliant book, written with style and panache”**

His heroes were the US diplomats who had “saved” Europe after the Second World War – Dean Acheson, George Kennan, Averell Harriman and others less well known – and he was a protégé of Dean Rusk, Secretary of State under Kennedy and Johnson.

He saw his roles in Bosnia and Afghanistan as messianic, spreading Pax Americana.

Such activist US diplomacy had been discredited by Vietnam, and so Holbrooke was increasingly something of an anomaly – an anachronism

– in the corridors of power. That explains the subtitle of this biography – “Richard Holbrooke and the end of the American century”.

The author, George Packer, argues that America largely withdrew from engagement with the wider world in the later 20th Century – and Holbrooke's career is the prism through which he analyses that withdrawal.

Packer writes that “Pax Americana began to decay at its very height”, but he dates its final demise to 1998 when Clinton's personal peccadillo with a White House intern completely overshadowed the business of government and pushed international problems off the radar of the American political establishment.

This is an utterly brilliant book, written with style and panache, about a man who, notwithstanding his faults, represented what was best about America in its prime – when, to quote Packer: “America stood for something more than just its own power.”

## Lavery and Osborne: observing life

**Hunt Museum, The Custom House, Rutland St, Limerick, V94 EV8A Limerick**  
Exhibition continues to September 30, 2019  
The catalogue (€25) is available from the museum.

Peter Costello

The summer exhibition at Limerick's Hunt Museum is just the thing for a family outing, a show which will introduce children and perhaps others to the delights of art.

On display are paintings from two of Ireland's most important and interesting artists of the turn of the 19th Century: with images of Irish scenes, animals, children, elegant society ladies and exotic locations, this is a show with something for every taste.

Both will be familiar to many, but this exhibition is special in that it includes many items from private collections or little known galleries which will be difficult to see again in one place. Even for the aficionados of both artists there is nothing tired here, little sense of déjà vu.

The show is arranged so that visitors can compare and contrast the two artists



Primary Education, Walter Osborne (c.1886), Private collection, courtesy David Britton.

allowing new views on both to emerge. Osborne, who lived in Rathmines, has always seemed to me a very domesticated artist, and that sense is reinforced here, though many of the pictures also show scenes he painted in England and Brittany.

**“Osborne ...leaves a sense of a creative talent only partly expressed”**

Lavery, on the other hand, stands in one's mind as a society artist with an

unusual eye for the exotic. The entrance to the show, however, is dominated by a large canvas called *The Mother* from about 1909, which has an immediate sense of intimacy and love which is quite moving.

An Osborne sketch of Connemara is contrast with a Lavery showing the cliffs at Tangier. But if Osborne evinces a feeling of privacy observed, Lavery reflects high society, the worlds of Scott Fitzgerald and Somerset Maugham on the Riviera, or in a very striking image *Winter in Florida*, an emerg-



The Terrace at Cannes, Sir John Lavery (1931), courtesy collection of Maire and Maurice Foley.

ing resort for the international rich. Yet his paintings of North Africa blind one with the brilliant light of quite another world.

But in contrast both artists created images of the dark green damp, always clouded corners of their

native land, filling this exhibition with fresh scenes and lovely situations.

Lavery lived to fulfil his ambitions in many directions (his record of the revolutionary decade for instance), but Osborne who died in 1903 at the age of 43,

leaves a sense of a creative talent only partly expressed. The exhibition is well worth making a special effort to go out of one's way to visit.

Visit the online exhibition at: [www.huntmuseum.com/lavery-osborne-exhibition](http://www.huntmuseum.com/lavery-osborne-exhibition). Tel: (061) 312 833.



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.

## Three days of siege that shook the Free State



**The Battle of the Four Courts**  
by Michael Fewer  
(Head of Zeus, £20/€28)

**Peter Costello**

Easter Week in the GPO has been the subject of many books, providing a day by day, almost an hour by hour, account of what happened, if not why. The siege of the Four Courts in 1922 has not been so lucky. Yet studies of single events often illuminate the larger scene and the motivations of those involved in very revealing ways.

This account of the battle for the Four Courts is one of these. Michael Fewer is an architect by profession and he brings to account a trained eye on how buildings are made and how people move about in them.

This, in fact, is one of the best books of the huge crop of tomes about the revolutionary decade because in contrast to a wide range of time, it focuses on a much smaller period. If you read nothing else about the period, read Michael Fewer.

### Seizure

The seizure of the Four Courts by the Irregulars was intended very deliberately as a re-enactment of Easter week – posters to this effect appeared around the city centre at the time [picture]. But the strategic and military foolishness that led to the failure of 1916 was also repeated.

This is strange. After the disaster of 1867, “after the rebels were scattered and bated”, it was clear to the Republican movement that attempts to seize buildings and engage in fixed battles

were a disaster. Only the “flying columns” that took to the hills had had any success, though not for long.

The lessons of history were there, but were not learned. The Irregulars seized the Liffey-side buildings, of which the Four Courts was the main one.

They allowed themselves to be besieged, with no real hope of breaking out or engaging their enemy in any real way.

When the Four Courts was taken a very ill-disciplined group moved in. There was no real firm chain of command, or obedience. This was not an army, but a bravura adventure of individuals.

### Effectiveness

Michael Fewer gives in this excellent book a carefully researched account of the day by day proceedings. He displays great expertise as regards to such things as the guns used by the Free State Army and their effectiveness.

At first there was perhaps a desire to not hit too hard, as those on the other side were old friends.

However within the Four Courts elements were smuggling in petrol and explosives and laying them about the network of buildings with intent to kill and destroy in the last event. That came, of course, and the explosion under the national Record Office (the State Papers were over in Dublin Castle), scattered the record of 1,000 years of Irish history in fragments of torn paper and vellum all over the city centre.

Talking about this to the ageing Peadar O'Donnell in

the 1970s, who had been one of the extremists in the garrison, I felt there was a sense, not of shame, but certainly an unwillingness to face a harsh truth about an event he was a leading figure in.

From this disaster some escaped. One of these was Liam Lynch himself.

He was detained and questioned by Eoin O'Duffy. In a moment of aberration O'Duffy released him.

This was a gesture of good will perhaps. But it allowed Lynch to escape to the South West and to fight another day. If only O'Duffy had kept him prisoner, the Civil War, and all the horrors it entailed, might not have been dragged out over not so much the next few months, but next few years.

The last act of the Irish revolution was the murder of Kevin O'Higgins in 1927 – that finally brought some of the Republicans into the Dáil. Those left in the wilderness have to all intents and purposes have remained there.

The Irish people in whose name all these people were acting decided for themselves they were sick of the fighting and dying, and settled for the boring grind, the necessary compromises of politics. Elections may not be quite as exciting as tearing a city apart, but it is what works in the end.

The story of *The Battle of the Four Courts* is an object lesson in Irish history.

## WebWatch

Greg Daly



## Bishops reminded God uses web too

“Popular opinion,” began K. Albert Little on his Twitter account @cordialcatholic a fortnight ago, continuing, “whomever is running the @USCCB twitter account is pretty much singlehandedly restoring the confidence of the laity in the clergy. Also, did I use ‘whomever’ correctly?”

Chicago-based Twitter stalwart Michael Bayer from @mbayer1248 astutely responded: “I can pretty much guarantee the person/team running point on this whole Twitter thing the last few days is not a member of the clergy.”

Indeed it wasn't. Connie Poulos, who tweets from @Connie\_Ann, has run the American bishops' social media accounts for the past two years, but in the face of ongoing controversy around the hierarchy and the Church, the bishop's Spring general assembly saw a different approach being taken.

“With all the recent things that have happened just before this particular meeting, we decided...let's be out there,” Connie tells Michael O'Loughlin in a brilliant [americamagazine.org](#) piece entitled ‘Want to rage-tweet the bishops? Their Twitter account is ready to listen’.

**“In truth, it has probably been centuries since the average informed Briton would have recognised a Corpus Christi procession”**

One tweet in particular was meant to spur conversation, asking: “If you are a young Catholic who is still Catholic, what has made you stay?” With over 1,200 responses in just over 24 hours, what was all the more impressive was the extent to which the bishops' twitter account engaged with the responses, when they were highly critical.

Anyone serious about how the Church should engage on today's ‘digital



continent’ should study how the account has operated over recent weeks, thinking carefully about how our own bishops could consider how God “uses the internet to reach people”.

A pointer as to the importance of this came just last week when Jess Brammar, executive editor of [huffingtonpost.co.uk](#), tweeted a video of a Corpus Christi procession, and asked “What the actual... is going on on Oxford Street right now?”

Journalist Sohrab Ahmari initially responded from @SohrabAhmari by saying “the Creator of the universe passed by you, only under the appearance of bread”, but then needlessly added: “Also, it's a sad comment on the state of British education and journalism that the executive editor of HuffPo UK knows so little about the beliefs and liturgies of Christianity.”

In reality it's nothing of the sort, as Niall Gooch pointed out from @niall\_

● Elsewhere on the internet, Msgr Eric Barr asks ‘What in the world is Cardinal Burke doing?’ in a [patheos.com/blogs/ericbarr](#) piece about the apparently progressive campaign to establish a “parallel magisterium”, while at [wherepeteris.com](#), Stephen Walford addresses the seemingly “endless stream of ‘doctrinal declarations’, ‘corrections’, and ‘clarifications’ [that] continues to cause confusion and scandal for the Faithful” in a post entitled ‘A Warning from History: St Paul VI, the Magisterium, and Theology’. As ever, it's enlightening stuff.

gooch when retweeting the original @jessbramar comment.

“I'm glad that at least some of the Christian comments on this weren't snide. CC processions are not widely seen in the UK, and haven't been for a very long time. It's not an act of cultural ignorance to not recognise one,” he said, adding: “Catholics need to get out of the defensive crouch.”

In truth, it has probably been centuries since the average informed Briton would have recognised a Corpus Christi procession, and it may not be helping that misinformation about the age when British Catholicism was at its most robust continues to be rife. Dr Eleanor Parker, of Oxford's Brasenose College, continues to be a constant source of online enlightenment through her @ClerkofOxford twitter account.

It's worth looking at her retweeting of a description of early Tudor Corpus Christi processions, and her fascinating June 16 dismantling of a section on relics in a documentary about medieval Canterbury, showing in enthralling detail how recycled clichés – sectarian, misogynistic, racist clichés at that – can become part of our mental landscape.

“I don't think the Channel 4 clip is consciously replicating Victorian prejudices,” she says. “But the act of selection – picking a few uncontextualised, unrepresentative items, on the principle that they sound weird – has been directly shaped by a profoundly biased tradition of scholarship.”



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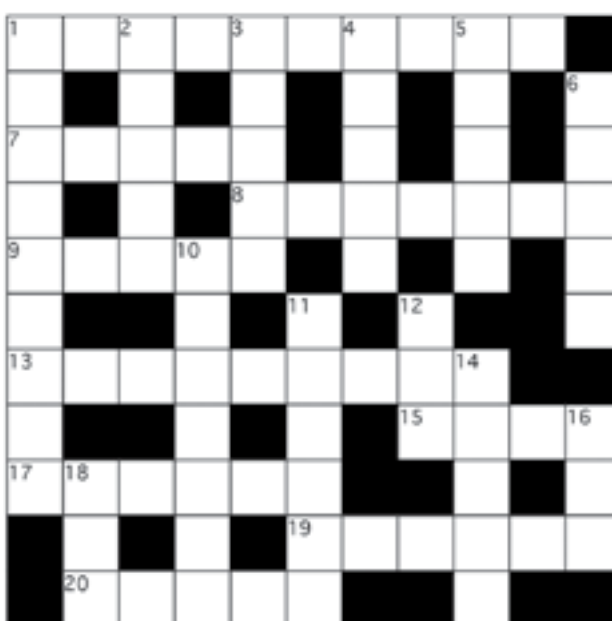
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# Leisure time

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 288



### ACROSS

- 1 Hogwarts headmaster (10)  
 7 Not at any time (5)  
 8 You get this piece of paper when you pay for something (7)  
 9 Each and \_\_\_\_\_ one (5)  
 13 Serious; deserving your attention (9)  
 15 CD stands for compact \_\_\_\_\_ (4)  
 17 This plant might sting you (6)  
 19 What you get when you add forty and forty (6)  
 20 Ahead of everyone else (5)

### DOWN

- 1 Yellow weed (9)  
 2 Film (5)  
 3 Truck (5)  
 4 Coming from Holland (5)  
 5 Bird with a red breast (5)  
 6 Strike it to start a fire (5)  
 10 Cock (7)  
 11 City road (6)  
 12 Finish (3)  
 14 Hold on \_\_\_\_\_, don't let go! (5)  
 16 Weep (3)  
 18 Pixie (3)

## SOLUTIONS, JUNE 20

### GORDIUS No.408

**Across** – 1 Can 3 Magic carpet 8 Legion 9 Fair game 10 Bites  
 11 Squid 13 Tonic 15 The Holy Roman Emperor 16 Bubonic plague 21 Smell 23 Dylan 24 November 25 Snooze 26 Window frame 27 Nut

**Down** – 1 Celebrities 2 Negative 3 Moons 4 Inferno 5 Acres  
 7 Tie 12 Discernment 13 Tiler 14 Churn 17 Nail down  
 19 Leaven 22 Limbo dance 24 New

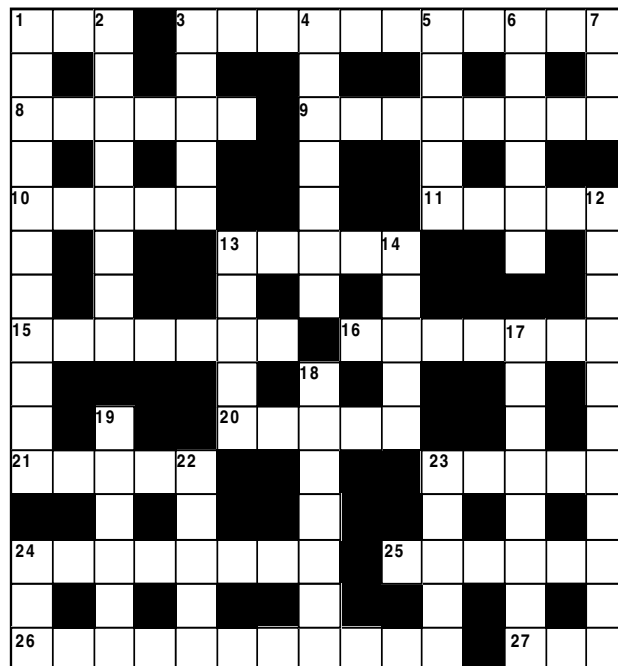
### CHILDREN'S No.287

**Across** – 1 Basketball 6 Apologising 8 Key ring 10 Gun 11 ink  
 13 Editor 16 Driving 17 Bee 18 Cosy 19 Faster

**Down** – 1 Blackbird 2 Story 3 Tag 4 Lying 5 Agent 7 Olive oil  
 9 Going 12 Knits 14 Orbit 15 Deer

## Crossword

Gordius 409



### ACROSS

- 1 Many a sailor gets the taxi (3)  
 3 The musicians who played "Nearer My God to Thee" as this order was given on the Titanic? (7,4)  
 8 Canopy (6)  
 9 How one stank, sir, is written in Asian language (8)  
 10 & 19d Use it to point out how one's ex infringed (5,6)  
 11 Young salmon (5)  
 13 Fire found on a horse's forehead? (5)  
 15 Aerial (7)  
 16 Chop an inch off the material (7)  
 20 Head-case! (5)  
 21 Vertical stretch of rock (5)  
 23 How the French may deride a German, by over-cooking hot egg starters (5)  
 24 A heavenly article featuring an ingredient (8)  
 25 & 24d Curvy French saint? (4,2,3)  
 26 Finding the good French between vehicles is an ecological phenomenon (6,5)  
 27 A type of bread or alcoholic spirit (3)

### DOWN

- 1 One who emphasises the

gifts of the Spirit can dispel archaic mist (11)

- 2 The emeritus pope made a name for himself when he bent dice like this! (8)  
 3 Add an extra wing to a complex, or appropriate some territory (5)  
 4 Bouquet that makes the hooter happy (7)  
 5 Fledglings may be found here in North-Eastern streets (5)  
 6 Agricultural instrument sourced in an English Public School (6)  
 7 Domesticated animal (3)  
 12 Ten refs' fear that maybe there's a price to be paid for adding to the team (8,3)  
 13 Prohibit cardinals by writing wedding notices (5)  
 14 Ms Barrymore was found in the street, Helen has written (5)  
 17 One keeping a bird of prey - for Lance, perhaps (8)  
 18 Part of Italy the British have nicknamed Chiantishire (7)  
 19 See 10 across  
 22 Page I fool about with (5)  
 23 Destitute (5)  
 24 See 25 across

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288

Easy



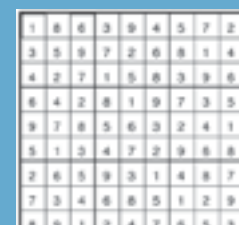
Hard



Last week's Easy 287



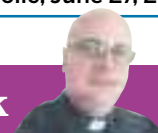
Last week's Hard 287





## Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



# Hearing the call as we stand at our own 'gable wall'

**"THERE WERE PEOPLE** of all ages, gathered 'round the gable wall", so begins Dana's wonderful hymn telling the story of the Knock Apparition of August 1879. It's a lovely image of Church – people of all ages, gathered, content to be with one another and respectful.

I often think that the church, the parish church, is quite likely the only building in the parish where this happens on a regular basis. There are places where groups gather, for sure, during the week: parent and toddler groups, active retired, soccer teams, Gaelic training, social dancing, etc. but in the church, the ages are all represented from the oldest parishioner present to the youngest babe in arms. There is something very right about this – long may the 'gable wall' of all our churches be places of gathering.

As I write these words, I am in Glencomeragh House, Co. Waterford, coming to the final hours of a diocesan retreat with some priests of the Diocese of Cloyne. The days have been good, and I have enjoyed meeting these men, only two of whom I'd known before this week. We have spent a bit of time together, reflecting on priesthood and the road that



we too are travelling together. One of the men, this very day, celebrated the 64th anniversary of his ordination and he is two years junior to another one of the retreatants. From a man ordained 66 years to me, ordained 32,

● **BUMPS AND SPILLS:** Recently someone shared with me an interesting thought. Imagine drinking a mug of coffee and someone bumping into you, causing the coffee to spill. The only reason the coffee spills is because it is in the mug. Equally were the contents of the mug tea, water or any other beverage, they too would spill. The contents spilt are whatever is in the mug.

Likewise, the thought ran, when someone bumps

we have reflected on the bond that joins us – the bond that is priesthood.

Only three of the men attending were in the seminary in the same decade as myself. It's fair to say, we are a seasoned group! A group, nonetheless, gathered in the belief that our ministry is of significance and that what we do continues to matter and always has the potential to make a difference.

## Decisions

What has struck me very much since coming here is a group of young people who live in this place, as their home, for an academic year. During that time, they seek to deepen their own Faith, look at their lives and make – quite likely – life-changing decisions about their future.

Young men and women of Holy

Family Mission, together with a resident priest and team leaders, give this time to deepening their faith and recognising Christ's place in their lives.

The first young man I met on Sunday evening told me that he is going to Spain in September in preparation for entering the seminary next year. Though Sunday was drawing to a close, he gave me such hope. He was so happy and clearly looking forward to what the future might hold and totally sincere in his decision and desire to be a priest.

Another young man spoke of meeting a girl at a Youth 2000 retreat, who three years later is his wife. His happiness, too, was palpable. Young men and women, from Ireland and beyond, served us food during the week and the food, welcome as it was, paled in comparison to their joy and

contentment.

There is no denying the Lord is at work, calling, calling, calling to people of "all ages" to gather at the gable wall and, having gathered, to go out and spread the good news.

## Religious life

For some this may include priesthood or religious life but for the majority, I think, it will mean bringing their Faith to the highways and byways of life, to their places of work and relaxation that others too may come to recognise Christ and welcome him as they so clearly have.

It's likely that church personnel might change, roles may be re-defined but, from what I've seen this week, from priests in their 90s to young people in their late teens and 20s, the Church is alive.

against us, what spills is what is within so if we react with anger, the truth is that anger is the main content of our 'mug'. Equally, rudeness or hostility of any kind. If, on the other hand, we are content in ourselves, gracious and at peace – that's what will spill out when we are inevitably bumped into. I'm paraphrasing someone else's thought but only because I wanted to remember and share it.

There's something being said here...



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