

# The Irish Catholic

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# Opportunity for parishes as survey reveals youth 'hunger for prayer'

Jason Osborne

Youth ministers at the grassroots level in the Church in Ireland have said a new survey revealing that younger people are twice as likely to pray than older people is an opportunity for the Church to reach out beyond those who currently attend Mass regularly.

The study found that 51% of 18 to 34-year-olds polled said they pray at least once a month, compared to 24% of those aged 55 and over.

Pastoral Manager at Queen's University Belfast's Catholic chaplaincy, Shannon Campbell told *The Irish Catholic* that young people's desire for prayer "is something to be welcomed, and indeed nurtured".

"Young people must be given a safe space to explore their faith in an intellectual and meaningful way," she said.

Ms Campbell said that they see first-hand in the university's chaplaincy young people's spiritual hunger, with many students availing of their facilities for both Eucharistic adoration and "extended periods of prayer".

"Other students, often new faces, simply pop into our main chapel between lectures and before exams to light a candle and just 'be' for a moment," she said, continuing, "it's easy to see the draw".

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## A time to laugh



Two young women attend the Catholic Women's Conference, which was held in St Mary's Dominican Church, Cork, September 18. Photo: Cillian Kelly. See P18-19

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# Looking beyond ourselves for inspiration on the vocations crisis

**T**he US state of Kansas ranks 27th in terms of American states for the percentage of residents who are Catholic. Some 18% of Kansans – fewer than one in five – identify as Catholic.

In the Diocese of Wichita – which covers 26 counties in south central and south-east Kansas – only about 10% of the almost one million residents identify as Catholic.

Against this backdrop, the diocese currently has 28 young men undertaking formation with a view to being ordained to serve the people of Wichita.

In an Irish context, this would be equivalent to the Archdiocese of Dublin having 280 seminarians preparing for priesthood. As it is, the country's largest diocese with over a million Catholics is one of several Irish dioceses with not a single person in formation. Given the length of seminary formation this means that none of these dioceses will have a single ordination in the next seven years. Some Irish dioceses haven't seen an ordination to the priesthood in a decade up to this point.

**“Sometimes there can be a temptation to despair when it comes to vocations or the seemingly intractable problem of the vocations crisis”**

The situation when it comes to vocations to the priesthood in Ireland is bleak. And the landscape a difficult one – a combina-



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Wichita seminarians are installed as acolytes.

tion of a tide of secularism and overwhelming scandal has contributed to a lack of trust in the Church and a corrosive lack of confidence in many hardworking priests and bishops. They have certainly borne the burden and heat of the day (cf. Matthew 20:12).

### Lack of confidence

Some priests I speak to tell me that they lack the confidence to speak about priesthood and the fact that – despite the challenges – they derive great joy from their ministry journeying with people. That's a terrible pity. Other priests, regrettably, indulge the widely-held stereotype of the lonely priest which makes priesthood seem particularly unattractive to younger people and – crucially – their parents.

I wonder today how many even very conscientious Catholic parents would encourage a vocation to the priesthood or religious life if one of their children expressed a desire to discern such a way of life.

**“The situation when it comes to vocations to the priesthood in Ireland is bleak”**

Sometimes there can be a temptation to despair when it comes to vocations or the seemingly intractable problem of the vocations crisis. Many good people are involved and much good work has been done and is being done. Some of the religious orders have shown great tenacity in being able to help a steady number of young men take the path to discerning a vocation as part of their religious community. Not all stay, of course – but a steady flow of ordinations ensures the long-term viability of the congregations in Ireland and gives a boost to older members who can see someone coming behind them.

Sometimes in Ireland we lack the humility to look outside of our own local situation to see what works elsewhere. We can also be so mired in our own challenges that we fail to see that the Church and vocations to the priesthood have prospered in deeper crises, for as the scriptures tell us

time and again God uses crises to call us to a deeper intimacy with him.

What is the Diocese of Wichita doing that is bearing so much fruit when it comes to vocations? I don't know. I've never been and one can only learn so much from the internet. But I know that they are obviously doing something that is making priesthood seem a credible option for young men in the diocese.

### Crisis of faith

A crisis of vocations is ultimately a crisis of faith, and if young people aren't in the parishes to begin with then there is no-one to transition to discerning a vocation in the first place. Despite this, there are great seeds of hope in youth ministry in Ireland. Whether in the university chaplaincies or in groups like NET Ministries, Youth 2000 and the Legion of Mary, young people are embracing the path of discipleship.

When it comes to helping these young people discern priestly vocations, we need to look to places like Wichita and other parts of the world that have seen a reversal in vocational fortunes and adopt or adapt what they are doing well.

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## Survey revealing youth hunger for prayer hailed as opportunity for parishes to grow faith

**» Continued from Page 1**

Ms Campbell praised young people as “some of the most open-minded, inquisitive members of society”, and said that in the university context, the transition from secondary school to further education prompts a searching for the answers to “life's big questions”.

She said that she was not surprised by the research – carried out in the UK – and said: “There is a spiritual yearning among young people, and, through prayer, they can begin to form their own spiritual outlook and... grow closer to God.”

She highlighted research done by the Mayo Clinic in the US which links religious

involvement and spirituality with better health outcomes, greater longevity and coping skills, as well as less anxiety depression and suicide.

Meanwhile, Tony Foy executive director of NET Ministries Ireland said young people are searching spiritually because “inside every one of us, we're searching”.

“If you ask me, God is really on the move... People are searching, and we need to get out there and engage with them,” Mr Foy said, adding that this is “totally” an opportunity for the Church, which will only be seized if the parishes “gets out there” and meet the needs that young people experience.

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## Gold-medallist celebrates his success with thanksgiving Mass

Staff reporter

Fiji's rugby-sevens star Waisea Nacuqu attended a Mass of thanksgiving in his hometown, to thank God for his Olympic gold medal.

The Mass was celebrated by Irish Columban Fr Pat Colgan, who said Mr Nacuqu's successful use of his talents will "inspire others to use their gifts more courageously and consistently".

Fr Colgan also referenced Mr Nacuqu's

habit of making the sign of the cross whenever he scores.

The Fiji international had to sacrifice much to achieve his dream of playing for his country. He dropped out of school at class six with this aim in mind, and Fr Colgan said "This was a dream he kept close to his heart as he worked on sugarcane fields and caught fish to provide for his family".

Mr Nacuqu missed out on the Rio 2016 Olympics, and he said that to play in the Tokyo Olympics was a blessing.



## NI education review must ask 'awkward questions'

Ruadhán Jones

Bishop of Derry Dr Donal McKeown welcomed the announcement of a panel for an independent review of the North's education sector, but warned it must be able to ask "awkward questions".

After the panel was announced on Monday, Dr McKeown said that "the education system is doing very well for some, but is failing too many people".

He warned that the panel must be independent enough to ask "awkward questions", adding that some people "may not be comfortable" with their answers.

"The focus has to be on outcomes, rather than assuming that some sort of input is going to solve all our problems," Bishop McKeown said.

### Key commitment

A press statement from the Department of Education said that the establishment of the review is a "key commitment" within the New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) agreement.

This agreement sparked concerns among Catholics,

as the deal said the way education is run at present - with a range of sectors and school types - is "not sustainable" and it promises a "fundamental review" as a basis for change.

Responding to concerns that there is a move in political circles to replace Catholic education in the North, Bishop McKeown said that "We have many problems other than a divided society - underachievement is one of them".

**“The education system is doing very well for some, but is failing too many people”**

"The main point is that Catholic education does exceptionally well, does better than other sectors, particularly for those who are multiply disadvantaged."

Bishop McKeown welcomed the appointment of two experts to the panel of five who will provide "a strong voice" for Catholic education.

"Marie Lindsay, a principal here in Derry, is a fantastic educationalist committed to Catholic education, and a high achiever for non-selective schools," he continued.

"And Gerry Loughran, who I've known for very many years. He was head of the Civil Service in Northern Ireland in the past, and is very much involved in the board of governors for Catholic schools."

### Good experience

"There are people around the table who will have a good experience of Catholic education. They will not be pushed into the background".

Announcing the appointments, Education Minister Michelle McIlveen said the independent review "is an essential starting point for longer term reform, modernisation and transformation" of the North's education sector.

The five panellists are: Chairperson Dr Keir Bloomer, Vice-Chairperson Sir Gerry Loughran, Marie Lindsay, Robin McLaughlin and Isabel Nisbet.

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# Govt concern after Christians re-arrested in Eritrea

Chai Brady

The Irish Government are “deeply concerned” after the arrest of 15 Christians due to their faith in Eritrea earlier this month.

The Christians had been arrested and imprisoned previously on the basis of their religious belief, most for five to six years but some for as long as 16, according to human rights organisation Release International. They had been freed in September 2020 due to measures taken to tackle Covid-19.

Following a question from Peadar Toibín TD of Meath West about the situation and the

Government’s response, the Minister of State with responsibility for Overseas Development Aid and Diaspora, Colm Brophy TD said: “I am deeply concerned by the imprisonment of Christians in Eritrea on the basis of their religious belief.

“The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion... is regarded as a fundamental freedom, provided for under Article 18 of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. Ireland strongly condemns all forms of persecution on the basis of religion or belief, irrespective of where they occur or who the victims are,” he said.

Mr Brophy said that Ireland has “consistently expressed concern about the human rights situation in Eritrea, including through our engagement at the United Nations Human Rights Council”.

Ireland has made two statements on Eritrea at sessions of the Human Rights Council this year, echoing the call of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea for the Eritrean authorities to cooperate with UN and AU human rights mechanisms to address ongoing human rights violations.

In March 2021, the EU imposed sanctions on Eritrea’s National Security Agency under the new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions

regime, citing their responsibility for serious human-rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances and torture by its agents.

Mr Brophy added: “My officials and Ireland’s Embassies in Nairobi (accredited to Eritrea) and Addis Ababa, continue to monitor the human rights situation in Eritrea and Ethiopia closely, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”

The Christians who were arrested were taken to the Mai Serwa maximum security prison in Eritrea’s capital of Asmara after a list of Christian contacts was discovered.

## Students’ backs to a wall in tight accommodation situation

Jason Osborne

Students in Limerick are facing a “very tight” situation when it comes to finding accommodation, the Catholic chaplain of Mary Immaculate College has said.

Fr Michael Wall told *The Irish Catholic* newspaper that student accommodation is becoming increasingly scarce, and that it is a concern of some of the students that he interacts with in his capacity as chaplain.

This comes following recent reports that students in Limerick are staying in hotels

because they cannot find more suitable accommodation.

“It is difficult at the moment, and it’s extra difficult for first years because they’re coming to the table a little bit later, they got their results later,” he said.

A couple of reasons for the shortfall this year, Fr Wall speculated, include landlords growing used to not having students after a prolonged lockdown, student accommodation being offered to tourists instead, and landlords potentially being wary of students over Covid fears.

# Frank Duff would be ‘appalled’ at constant criticism of the Pope

Staff reporter

Bishop Paul Dempsey has said the founder of the Legion of Mary Frank Duff would be “appalled” by polarisation in the Church and by those who criticise Pope Francis.

Speaking at Mass at Knock Shrine on Sunday to mark the centenary of the founding of the Legion, Bishop Dempsey praised Mr Duff for his visionary understanding of the need for laypeople to take on responsibility in the Church.

Rejected

However, he also rejected what he described as polarisation among Catholics.

“One worrying trend emerging in the Church today is a sense of disunity.

“Some in the Church want us to go back to the way things were decades, and in some cases centuries ago. Others want the Church to change its Tradition and adapt its outlook in ways that it has never done before,” he said.

Referring to the Pontiff, Bishop Dempsey said that: “Some in the Church are openly critical of the present Pope whereas they decried any criticism of previous popes.

“Pope Francis referred to this himself last week mentioning a large television network that constantly speaks ill of him,” the bishop said. The remark was

widely interpreted as a criticism of the US-based Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), though the Pope did not identify the channel.

The bishop continued: “I think if Frank Duff was to appear today, he would be appalled at such attitudes in the Church.

“Frank Duff respected the rich Tradition of the Church, but he was not rigid about it, he was open to doing new and radical things in an imaginative way. In other words, he had a balanced approach that allowed him to involve people in the life of the Church in ways that were never done before,” he said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Calls for investigation into priest’s death rejected

A new enquiry into the violent death of Roscommon priest Fr Niall Molloy has been ruled out by the Government, after calls TDs called for an investigation.

The calls came from TDs after an RTE documentary into the 1985 case, where Fr Molloy was found dead in a Co. Offaly house and no one was convicted.

It would be “inappropriate” to establish a commission of investigation, as “it is unlikely that any further inquiry would have a reasonable prospect of establishing the truth”, said Frank Browne, Minister of State at the Department of Justice.

### Columbans launch new schools’ competition

The theme for the 2022 competition is that “anyone can make a difference”, the Irish Columbans said in a press release.

“Young people 13-18 years are asked to consider: Who in the world today is doing something about inequality, injustice, exclusion and environmental degradation? What can they teach us? How can we draw on our own faith and personal experience to be changemakers,” the September 24 release says.

The competition is open for writing and image entries until February 11 2022 and winners will be announced on March 11 2022. For more information, visit [www.columbans.ie](http://www.columbans.ie).

### Day for life to encourage model of care for terminally ill

The Church in Ireland’s annual Day for Life will highlight a Christian model of care and compassion for people in terminal illness, Bishop Kevin Doran said.

This year, the October 3 Day for Life is being held against the backdrop of a push for assisted suicide, the chairman for the council for life said.

“Authentic compassion is about staying with people and supporting them in living life to the full for as long as it lasts,” Bishop Doran continued.

The alternative, ending a person’s life, “is not an authentic compassion. It’s a failure of society to journey with the person”, he said.

## All along the banks of the Royal Canal...



Fr Robert McCabe makes a pastoral visit to the Irish army as they patrol along the Royal Canal, September 21. Fr McCabe is pictured with (from left) Fl sgt. Colin Heaslip, Cpl. Ian Keogh and Cpl. Jonathan Sanatmaria.

## My safe teen years...

Members of the British royal family are not supposed to get involved in anything political or controversial: but Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, has pointedly supported current campaigns protesting about violence against women.

She sent flowers, and tweeted about the horrific murder of the primary schoolteacher, Sabina Nessa, and attended a huge protest about the killing of Sarah Everard – both young women met their deaths, almost randomly, on London streets.

### Praised

Kate has been praised, not reprimanded, for her gestures – because public feeling in Britain is running so high about women's safety and misogynistic violence. There's a heated debate on whether women themselves need to be prudent about going out alone: or whether that is 'blaming the victim' – rather than the perpetrators of violence and homicide.

The issue has cast my mind back to how safe society seemed in my own youth. In my teenage years, I wandered all over Dublin, at all hours of day and night, without any thought that I might be attacked or menaced. Aged 16, in 1960, I haunted the Dublin quays, where second-hand bookshops



Mary Kenny

were located, as well as the Astor cinema, which showed arty continental movies. A fan of Seán O'Casey, I roamed all over inner city Dublin whose Georgian tenements I thought so beguiling. I have no recollection of being threatened, assaulted or even aware of the dangers of violence.

### Warned

I never heard the word 'rape', until I went to France at 18, when I was repeatedly

warned about rape: I had to consult a dictionary to translate the word *violée*.

Perhaps I had led a very sheltered life. Perhaps I was just fortunate – human nature doesn't change, and bad things have always happened. Perhaps a constellation of circumstances have contributed to women's fears today. But I was indeed lucky to have the teenage freedom I did have in a time when street crime was the last thing on our minds.

● The retirement of Angela Merkel from the European political stage may have implications for Irish military neutrality.

France's Emmanuel Macron is now likely to become the dominant EU political personality – and Mr Macron is very keen to press ahead with developing an active European defence force. He is strongly supported by EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen. As America retreats, he has also had Joe Biden's blessing.

Would Ireland continue to remain militarily aloof, behind a wall of neutrality, if a proactive EU army were to materialise? It's worth a

conversation.

Ireland's neutrality was established during the Second World War, when it was fully democratically supported. But, politically, this neutrality was a statement of independence from Britain.

As Britain is no longer in the EU, this condition has disappeared.

I'm fairly certain that the late James Dillon TD, for a time leader of Fine Gael, would urge Ireland to be ready to bear arms alongside EU member states. During the neutrality debates of 1939-40, Mr Dillon pleaded ardently for Ireland to defend Europe's Christian civilisation.

## God in art

*The Light of the World* by Holman Hunt is one of the most renowned – and has been one of the most influential – religious paintings of the last couple of centuries. It shows Our Lord in a dark wood, knocking on a door covered in plants and weeds.

The door has no outside handle, so it can only be opened from the inside – Christ has to be invited within. It is symbolically saying that we have to choose to open our hearts.

Holman Hunt, who was part of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood of Christian painters, painted three versions of the picture in the 1850s, one of which hangs in London's St Paul's.

His apprentice, Edward Robert Hughes, also did a version of *The Light of the World* in water-colours, and it was going on sale at Christie's Auction House this week. It was expected to fetch up to £100,000 sterling.

This holy picture has a compelling quality: Holman Hunt felt the inspiration for it as a divine calling. He did many other paintings with a religious theme: *The Awakening Conscience* is another very striking work, showing a young woman suddenly aware that she may be getting into the coils of a heedless seducer.

The pre-Raphaelite circle included the painter and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his sister Christina Rossetti, who wrote the carol "In the Bleak Midwinter", and several other lovely verse compositions, almost all with a spiritual theme.



The version of *The Light of the World* by Holman Hunt on display in Manchester.

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# New initiative a 'daring' project to attract vocations, says Bishop Cullinan

Ruadhán Jones

The Irish Catholic bishop's council for vocations is founding a 'house of discernment/formation' in a bid to attract new vocations to the priesthood.

Chairman of the council Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan said the house will provide "a group of like-minded people with whom they can really get to the bottom of the discernment process".

"We know we need to do something much more daring in the present culture," the bishop of Waterford and Lismore said, referring to the house. "We do realise that we need to do something much more proactive."

The bishop's comments come as *The Irish Catholic* found there are four seminarians starting this year across the 26 dioceses.

The house of discernment is a model already practiced by several dioceses in the United States, Bishop Cullinan said. It also draws on the example of such houses as the

Holy Family Mission in Waterford.

"We've learned a lot from that," Bishop Cullinan said, adding that "more of such places I believe are necessary".

The house would be "for young people who are searching for their vocation in life, who want to deepen their relationship with the Lord".

"The house would be an oasis of peace where people can come face-to-face with their vocation in a serious way over a lengthy period of time," Dr Cullinan continued.

"The culture is so individualistic and secular and God is cut out of the picture – life gets in the way and distractions."

A venue has already been found for the house, and the council are currently seeking "a good team of spiritual directors" to run it.

"We would need people who would commit to spending a number of years given to a project like this," Bishop Cullinan said. "People who themselves are solid in their faith, and who would be willing to live in such a place and to run it."

## Pandemic sees increased interest in vocations

Chai Brady

There has been increased interest in priestly vocations during the pandemic, according to some diocesan vocation directors.

Fr Ruairi O'Domhnaill, vocations director in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin told *The Irish Catholic* that "all of a sudden" there has been "great interest".

"All kinds of people have been getting in contact with me like I never had before. I'd say from the point of view of meeting people I'd say I've never been as busy," he explained.

"A lot of people are thinking about things like moving to the country, working from home, changing job and it's probably part of that dynamic because I've had people with extraordinary stories coming to me. Now they are not 18-19-year-olds, they are the older lads and I think that's part of it, it's something they've put off

for a long time and maybe Covid just gave them greater time to think so it's an interesting dynamic at the moment."

Fr Rory Brady of Raphoe diocese also confirmed he has experienced an uptick in those expressing interest, while Fr Paul Kivlehan of Achonry said of his diocese: "There has been some interest. Two of the priests of the diocese contacted me to say there's been enquiries about vocations."

Fr Joseph Walsh of Cashel and Emly, who is "delighted" to have a man starting seminary for the diocese this year, added that he is "struggling".

"I've had a lot of enquiries but that's as far as it has gone. We are trying to promote it but the bite is not there. There will be great support and great help for people if it's something that they want," he said.

## Just four men enter seminary

Staff reporter

Just four men started studying for the priesthood for Ireland's 26 dioceses this autumn, with a further two Neocatechumenal Way students entering that movement's seminary in Dundalk for the Archdiocese of Armagh. When ordained, Neocatechumenal students tra-

ditionally serve for a period in the diocese before being reassigned overseas.

A further ten men began a pre-seminary year raising hopes that they will proceed to seminary next year.

The pre-seminary programme – known as a propaedeutic year – is increasingly a feature of the path to priesthood and is usually

conducted in Spain.

A survey by *The Irish Catholic* newspaper revealed the extent of the vocations crisis across the country's dioceses with eight dioceses having no students in seminary at all. In all, just five of the dioceses – including the two Neocatechumenal students for Armagh – had new entrants this year.

DIOCESE	Entered Propaedeutic year	Entered seminary	Total in seminary
Achonry	0	0	0
Ardagh and Clonmacnoise	0	0	0
Armagh	0	2#	20*
*Includes 18 seminarians of the Neocatechumenal Way			
#Both are seminarians of the Neocatechumenal Way			
Cashel and Emly	0	1	1
Clogher	2	0	1
Clonfert	0	0	0
Cloyne	0	1	3
Cork and Ross	0	0	1*
*Was ordained a transitional deacon at the weekend.			
Derry	0	0	5
Down and Connor	4	0	6
Dromore	0	0	1
Dublin	0	0	0
Elphin	0	0	2
Ferns	0	0	2
Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora	0	0	0
Kerry	0	0	2
Kildare and Leighlin	1	0	0
Killala	0	1	2
Killaloe	2	0	0
Kilmore	0	0	1
Limerick	0	0	1
Meath	0	1	3*
*Includes a transitional deacon working in a parish.			
Ossory	0	0	0
Raphoe	1	0	1
Tuam	0	0	2
Waterford and Lismore	0	0	3

## On the path to priesthood



Bishop of Cork and Ross Dr Fintan Gavin is picture of with Deacon Ronan Sheehan, having ordained him to the diaconate in the Cathedral of Sts Mary and Anne, Cork, September 25. Pictured are Ronan's parents Denise and Bud (to his right) along with his sisters Ciara, Orlaith and Aoiobe, brother-in-law Trevor and niece Gia. His sister Leona in Portsmouth joined via live-stream.

# CHRISTIANS SUFFERING GREATLY AS ESSENTIAL HOSPITAL SUPPLIES BLOCKED

**Dear Fellow Pro-Lifer & Irish Catholic Reader,**

My name is David Manly and I'm writing to you on behalf of Family & Life, one of Ireland's oldest and largest pro-life organisations.

For the past six years, Family & Life supporters have aided the Christian villages of Nalu and Smil persecuted by Islamic terrorists in Northern Iraq. Now, Iraqi government officials have turned a blind eye to our Christian brethren by diverting supplies from their local hospital and leaving them to fend for themselves.

As grim as it is, here is what's happening to these suffering Christians...

## 'Cruel' is the only word to describe what is happening in Iraq.

Iraqi government officials are cruelly preventing delivery of essential medical equipment to the Christian hospital serving the villages aided by Family & Life. The hospital faces critical shortages of these and other crucial supplies...

- Umbilical clamps – mothers delivering babies may find the hospital without even this basic maternal equipment
- Sterile gloves
- Disposable bed sheets
- Diabetes test strips to help people monitor and control their diabetes
- Syringes to administer pain-killing and other medicines, plus still other essentials

Can you imagine a hospital trying to function without necessities like those? At first, none of us at Family & Life could imagine it either. But such is the determination of some in power to wipe out what's left of the Christian community in Iraq!

## Stories of Christians suffering persecution

- A 5-year old girl was suffering severe stomach pain, unable to eat. Her parents took her on the 3-hour journey to the Christian hospital only to discover that it lacked testing equipment to help the child. So another agonising two hour journey was required to get the suffering little girl to a hospital where she could be treated.

- Severely wounded by Islamic terrorists, a farmer was rushed to the Christian hospital. But there were no sterile needles to give him a pain-killing injection. So a used needle was wiped 'clean' to inject a pain killer!
- A 42-year old woman with heart disease is in immediate need of a stent. But the hospital cannot perform this fairly common procedure because it lacks equipment and medicine. The woman has been referred to another hospital, but her family does not have the money for the long journey required. So the woman continues to suffer.

All this cruelty is happening because of the constant discrimination against Christians. That would mean Christians will have to rely on the Muslim-run government for "medical care". You cannot blame our Christian friends for establishing their own local hospital.

## Made worse by COVID

COVID is on a rampage in Iraq. And with the hospital running out of basic supplies, it's worse for the Christian villagers who have come to count on help from Family & Life and others heroic organisations.

We think we've had it tough in Ireland with COVID-caused church, school and other closings. But try to imagine how much worse it is for our persecuted Christian brethren in Iraq when their hospital is denied essential supplies during a COVID outbreak! Suddenly our own situation here doesn't look so bad, does it?

## The needs are immediate and urgent – there is no time for delay

The hospital needs a three month supply of the basic hospital supplies. **Already, Family & Life supporters have provided several months of supplies. But hospital supplies are once again dangerously low.**

Each one-month supply costs €3,620. That's €10,860 in total to get the hospital through the coming three months.

- **Will you sacrifice €100... or €75... but at least €50?** Your gift will be pooled with other gifts from Family & Life supporters to provide the hospital with basic essentials like syringes, umbilical clamps and diabetes test strips.
- **Or can you dig a little deeper and send €150... €200... €500 or even €1,000?** What a wonderful sacrifice one of those amounts would be for our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters in these Iraqi villages!

**Gifts in ALL amounts matter greatly.** There is no such thing as a gift that's 'too small' to matter to our persecuted Christian brethren in Iraq. Your gift – in whatever amount you can afford – will be a blessing indeed to Christians who have suffered much in their homeland!

## Can they count on you now?

With sincere thanks for your prayers and sacrifice,



David Manly

**PS** It's terribly sad to have to ask you for support to buy standard hospital equipment like syringes and umbilical clamps for this Iraqi Christian hospital. But such is the depth of Christian persecution.

I know you'll be as generous as possible for our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters, with both your prayers and your financial support!

## Other ongoing pro-life projects of Family & Life...

- Family & Life helps lead the fight against late-term abortion... we visit classrooms across the county, teaching sanctity of life issues to young people... we train pro-life volunteers to become pro-life leaders... Family & Life conducts community education programmes across Ireland...
- We aid crisis pregnancy centres in Africa and other countries... Family & Life works in remote parts of Latin America, providing pro-life services that would otherwise be unavailable
- Plus many more pro-life programmes that help save babies lives!

### URGENT FREEPOST REPLY

Dear David,

**YES!** I will absolutely help Family & Life aid our Christian brethren suffering persecution in these Iraqi villages.

**Enclosed is my maximum gift of...**

- €50  €75  €100  €150  
 €250  €500  €750  €1,000

**I can make an extra special sacrifice:**

- €2,500  €5,000

**Please cut out and freepost to: David Manly, Family Life, FREEPOST F2030, 25 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1, Ireland.**

Family & Life depends on gifts in **ALL** amounts. So if we can count on you for some other amount, please enter it here

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**You can also phone our donation hotline at 01 855 2790. Or donate now securely online [donate.familyandlife.org](https://donate.familyandlife.org).**

Family & Life is a not-for-profit socio-political NGO.

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ICIQ21

## Nuala O'Loan

### The View



# The dire consequences of short-term politics

Quite suddenly it seems to me that we are moving very rapidly towards Christmas - it is just 12 weeks away and the shops are already beginning to offer Christmas decorations and presents! I was pondering on how rapidly time has passed in this strange coronavirus half-world which we have been inhabiting - a world in which our normal freedoms which we took so much for granted have been dramatically curtailed.

We are emerging from that strange state gradually, but, as we do so, we are facing what can seem like a perfect storm - political differences are becoming more and more obvious again in Northern Ireland and indeed in the Republic. Brexit has caused many supply problems, the Covid-19 pandemic it seems has exacerbated those problems because many industries, forced to close during the pandemic, have lost staff, some of whom have returned to their home country because of

Brexit. Supply chains have been disrupted. In the UK, energy and fuel supplies appear to be threatened. Street protests are becoming more frequent and less well policed.

#### Fragilities

All this suggests that the fragilities in our systems which are the result of short-term political actions over many years are becoming more obvious.

**“If we do not have a flourishing economy we will not have the national income to provide the houses”**

However, out of every crisis there is an opportunity - the enhanced opportunities for cross-border trade, for example, are obvious as we go about our daily shopping. The availability of training can encour-

age those who have lost their employment during Covid-19 to retrain and fill some of the many employment vacancies which now exist. People cannot, however, just transition from one set of skills to another without financial support - there will be months before new HGV drivers, new carers etc., will be working again, with all that that means for personal well-being.

There is another opportunity though and it may seem naive to suggest it - there is an opportunity for the development of a greater level of honesty and integrity in our politics and our world so that we may come to trust more readily again. It is no coincidence that a recent surveys of trust in professions revealed the greatest trust in nurses and doctors. Politicians, government ministers and business leaders score very badly.

There are problems which will be much harder to solve such as energy supply issues, but we do need to step back



A demonstrator at a climate change protest in London's Trafalgar Square. Photo: CNS.

and reflect on where we actually are in this world of ours and why we are there. For example, it is undoubtedly the case that there is an increase in the incidence of flooding in recent years. This is attributed to climate change. However, it is also the case that we relaxed our vigilance in ensuring flood prevention processes: where previously there was a recognition that water needed to be able to drain away and that flood plains were an essential part of land planning, we have allowed building on those flood plains, so that the routes through which water can be removed are no longer there. As individuals, increasingly we make driveways out of gardens, install paving rather than grass. We no longer routinely clean the storm drains as we once did. It is no surprise therefore that we do have a greater incidence of flooding than previously. All those problems can be fixed by simple changes in how we live, allowing the water to escape once more.

#### Revelations

In the UK there are major problems in housing following the revelations after the Grenfell tragedy. In Ireland houses are unfit to live in because of the Mica problem.

Such problems would not have arisen had governments remained vigilant and ensured that building processes were properly managed. More and more people wanted good housing with accessible shops and schools, for example, (a perfectly legitimate aspiration) but this did require a level of national management and regulation which quite simply did not occur. Greed and lack of necessary regula-

tion lead to major problems for ordinary people.

We need as a society to plan holistically to create the kind of world we want to live in - not subjected to undue influence by particular sectors who have undue influence in our world.

**“The fragilities in our systems which are the result of short-term political actions over many years are becoming more obvious”**

The business of governance is challenging - there are so many competing priorities to be considered. If we do not have a flourishing economy we will not have the national income to provide the houses, the schools, the infrastructure. There are many possible solutions to problems - each with their own cost. There are thousands of lobby groups across all sectors from industry to social care and support. They make cogent cases for particular action. Those with the greatest resources are often heard more readily. Short term solutions to problems often do not serve us well because the original problem - be it lack of housing for example which is remedied by building housing estates on the outskirts of a town without all the necessary infrastructure - is not resolved and other very difficult problems result from the associated isolation, lack of access to transport and facilities etc.

The ongoing erosion of the social fabric of our society is patently obvious. We can all contribute, though, to easing the consequential problems - homelessness, poverty, poor health, loneliness, suicide.

#### Scandal

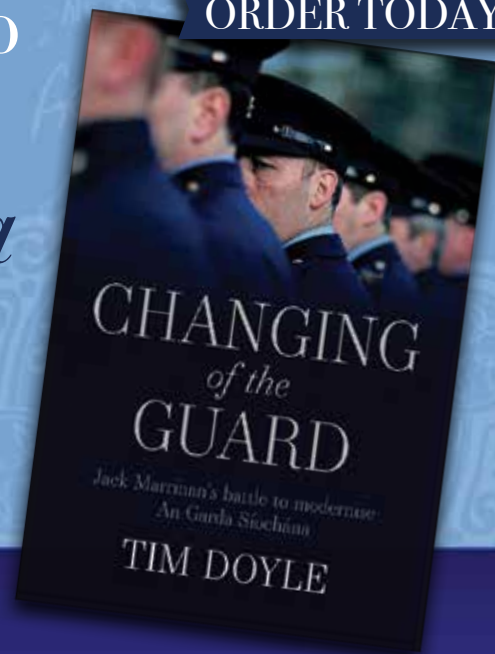
It is a national scandal that we still have such levels of poverty, that little children have no place to call home, that our people need food banks to be able to eat. As Catholics we could look at our immediate world and ponder on what each of us could do to make the world a better place for all of us. We can put pressure on politicians to provide the basic infrastructure of a society including homes. We can demand more honesty and integrity in the processes of government. All these things we can do, but we can also make sure that, each day or each week maybe, we consider what we have done to alleviate the loneliness which we know exists, to help those for whom life is so very difficult. We cannot just leave it to charities.

Maybe, as we contemplate the run up to Christmas we could each, politicians, industry leaders, professionals, members of the community commit to working for and with others with integrity and compassion to rebuild the trust which is fundamental to a healthy society.

As the Christ child came to bring hope and salvation to the world, so each of us, no matter our circumstances have the capacity to be a force for good in our community and in the world as this Christmas approaches. This is what we are asked to do as Catholics, after all.

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The pandemic has allowed people to reflect on what really matters to them in life, writes **David Quinn**

**T**he pandemic has impacted different groups in different ways. I am not referring to the direct effect of the disease itself, but of lockdown and other restrictions imposed to ensure Covid-19 did not go out of control.

Some groups had to continue to go out to work every day during the worst of the pandemic, the most obvious category being nurses and doctors. But manual workers far more than professional, white-collar workers had to go to their workplace each day regardless of how widespread or not the disease was over the past 18 months.

This category includes those working in essential retail, truck drivers, bus drivers, food processors and so on.

Priests with chaplaincy duties had to don their personal protective equipment and go into hospitals and care homes to continue offering succour, spiritual support and the sacraments to those seriously ill and dying, including from Covid-19.

**“Being able to work from home on full-pay because your duties could be performed online was a great boon for many people”**

The pandemic has been particularly draining for all these groups because they were exposing themselves to danger in a way others were not. We had to lockdown to minimise our chances of being infected, or infecting others, but these workers had to take risks each day, even though they did their best to maintain social distancing and so on.

#### Work from home

On the other hand, being able to work from home on full-pay because your duties could be performed online was a great boon for many people. They no longer had to make long commutes to and from work. Their working hours became more flexible. They could spend more time with their children, although the demands of having to give them additional help with their schoolwork because teaching was taking place online could also be draining.

Now that the worst of the pandemic is over thanks to vaccines,



# The ‘Great Reset’ is an evangelistic opportunity

many people are taking stock of their lives. What do they want to do from here on in? Lots do not want to go back to the way things were.

For example, a worldwide poll conducted by the technology giant, Microsoft, found that 41% of people are thinking of quitting their present jobs or changing profession. This is twice as many as in a normal year.

#### Poll

An Irish poll, conducted by the Work Futures Lab at the Kemmy Business School, found an almost identical result. This is being called ‘The great Resignation’. Another, bigger term, is ‘The Great Reset’.

Many people are obviously deciding that they don’t want to go back to their lives as they were before. Clearly, lots of workers have preferred being able to work from home. They believe they have proven they can do their job as well online as they can in the office. Of course, whether their employers agree with them is a different matter.

Regardless, there is a shortage of workers at present in many

sectors, so employees are in position to make demands. If a given company insists on someone coming into the office each day, that person will obviously go working for a firm that doesn’t make this demand.

**“These workers had to take risks each day, even though they did their best to maintain social distancing and so on”**

The aforementioned Irish poll says that men are seeking to change jobs for greater flexibility, and women for more pay. That could be down to the fact that women (or rather, mothers) already tend to work fewer hours in employment on average than men.

The pandemic has allowed people to reflect on what really matters to them in life. Is climbing the career ladder as important as they thought it was? Do they have to try and make so much money if it means working 60-hour weeks?

What have priests been thinking during all this? If ordinary workers have been re-evaluating their lives, then maybe some clergy have as well. They might also want a change in life, whatever that may mean.

#### Resignation

But can ‘the Great Resignation’ work? No matter what, people still have to make a living, they must still pay the bills, including the mortgage. We can dream of a better life, but in practice if we change job, we may find it doesn’t live up to our expectations, that we prefer our old work colleagues better, or that we’re becoming lonely working at home.

This would be especially true of younger people. Even before the pandemic they spent a lot of time ‘meeting’ each other online, but ultimately nothing beats face-to-face contact. Having to attend a class online rather than in person means you are missing the chance to make new friends and catch up properly with old ones.

#### Learn

Also, if you rarely go into the office, then how can you learn from the

experience of older colleagues, develop workplace camaraderie, learn about a company’s way of doing things?

I suspect what will happen in the months and years to come is that more people than usual will change jobs or careers and might find ways to simplify their lives.

Many will end up working at home part-time, and in the office the rest of the week. So, a compromise will be found between workers and employers.

Rural towns will become busier, the centres of cities like Dublin will be permanently quieter. The pandemic might have the unexpected side effect of helping to revive rural Ireland.

**“If ordinary workers have been re-evaluating their lives, then maybe some clergy have as well”**

Christianity has, of course, been teaching all through its existence that the spiritual is more important than the material, and that family matters more than work. Therefore, from a Christian point of view, aspects of the ‘Great Reset’ are to be welcomed.

In fact, the Church ought to view the present moment as an evangelistic opportunity. Can it find ways to seize this moment and put its message before people in a fresh way?

**“41% of people are thinking of quitting their present jobs or changing profession. This is twice as many as in a normal year”**

# Bishop of Meath celebrates 'pivotal' Legion of Mary at Mullingar centenary Mass



Brandon Scott

**B**ishop of Meath Tom Deenihan, reflected on what he described as the “fundamental” influence that the Legion of Mary has had in the Church in Ireland at its centenary celebration at the Cathedral of Christ the King, in Mullingar. The Mass on September 20 was attended by legionaries from branches throughout the Diocese of Meath.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* after the Mass, Bishop Deenihan said that, “The Legion of Mary was very significant because as we see throughout Irish society the corporal works of mercy were a fundamental part of the Church in Ireland’s contribution.

“And I think particularly in the Dublin area in the 1920s and 1930s the work of the legion was pivotal,” he said.

The bishop compared the legion’s pioneering principles to the current philosophy of Pope Francis. “I think that Pope Francis is leading the Church in a way of synodality and open lay involvement and I think that the Legion of Mary is well poised.

“It is unfortunate that membership has dropped in Ireland and I think we need always to see the international perspective”, the bishop added. “I was delighted to see two Columban priests here tonight because in Korea, in Asia – the legion is a very strong organisation and in keeping with Duff’s founding ethos, is working very much with the Church in terms of spreading the Gospel. I think that is what Pope Francis is saying”.

## Current role

When commenting on the current role that the legion exercises in the Church in Ireland, the bishop felt that “the legion has been working silently in many parishes not just in the area of faith support, but undertaking specific works of charity quietly, discreetly as they should be done. I think they are a very strong faith presence among the lay people of Ireland”.

But the nature of the legion’s mission and altruism can, at times, obscure its presence in the Church



Kentstown and Navan legionaries at the Mass in Mullingar.

and lead to its work going largely unnoticed as the bishop laments, “the strong point is also the tragedy in that the legion is very strong in Navan and Mullingar but much of their work is done so silently that the drawback to that is that it is not visible in many cases as well”.

**“Pope Francis is leading the Church in a way of synodality and open lay involvement and I think that the Legion of Mary is well poised”**

Speaking on the future of the legion, the bishop believed that there is cause for optimism as he was, “pleasantly surprised and encouraged to see quite a number of younger members here tonight”.

Also attending the Mass was Liam Dawson, a member of the Dunderry Legion of Mary branch. Mr Dawson attributed the diocese’s strong devotion to the Legion of Mary to Frank Duff’s County Meath connections, “Frank Duff came from outside of Trim”, he said. “His grandfather was a principal in a school in Trim. His sister lived in Navan, Mrs Monaghan. Trim would be very special to him because of his grandfather”.

When asked if he believes the legion helped popularise lay



Legionaries from Navan who journeyed to the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar, celebrating the legion’s centenary.

involvement in the mission of the Church, Mr Dawson responded, “I think so, definitely”. “You do not join, you are recruited into it because you know someone that is in it. Then when you join it holds you. It helps your spiritual life.

“You are fighting all the time to do your best and give a good example. When you are in the Legion, you are more prepared for problems that might come down the road. Spirituality is very important in the legion”, he said.



Legionaries from Navan, including Nicola Tamburrino and Edel Flynn.

**“The Legion of Mary was very significant because as we see throughout Irish society the corporal works of mercy were a fundamental part of the Church in Ireland’s contribution”**

# The sanctity of marriage

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester  
O'Flynn OFM Cap.



**T**oday's Gospel (Mark 10: 2-16) is first of all about the sanctity of marriage between husband and wife, and then about the touch of God on their children. The background is a trick question about divorce in an attempt to trap Jesus. "Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?" Opinions were divided on the complex matter of divorce so the plotters felt that whichever way Jesus answered would alienate some people. They reminded Jesus that Moses allowed a husband to draw up a writ of dismissal of the wife and so to divorce. The man then had the right to remarry whereas the woman did not have that right and would be guilty of adultery if she remarried. Jesus struck a blow for women's equality in saying that the man who divorced his wife and married another would equally be guilty of adultery. The same law for men as for women. Moses faced an unteachable people so he made the best of a messy situation by salvaging some protection for a woman out of the wreckage of a divorce. Jesus went on to say, "But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. That is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide."

### Christian marriage

Christian marriage is more than a legal contract. It is a Sacrament, one of those sacred moments in life when the presence of God is celebrated. In a dialogue on marriage, Rabbi Abraham Skorka quoted the Old Testament for Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio - the future Pope Francis. "A cord of three strings is not quickly torn apart" (Eccles. 4:12). The third string is God whose presence is celebrated in the Sacrament. As Father Peyton used to say, "the family that prays together stays together."

### Touched by Jesus

After the debate about divorce, people were bringing little children to Jesus for him to touch them. Nowadays Christian parents bring their child to be touched by Jesus in the Sacrament of Baptism. This touch is not a one-day affair. The parents and godparents are asked if they are accepting the responsibility of training their child in the practice of the Faith. Family life has been called a little church where faith is nurtured and passed on. It is in family life more than anywhere else that that belief, prayer and Christian morals are nurtured.

### Instability of family life

We usually think of Jesus living 30 years in family life and only three years travelling on his public ministry. That means that for every year in his public mission he spent ten years in his family environment. Actions speak more loudly than words. Family life is the most important sphere of his kingdom.

Since the family is still the basic unit of society, good family life is the backbone of a stable society. In our rapidly changing society, family life is under pressure. People change jobs, addresses and spouses. Houses are bigger but families are smaller. In many places more than half of firstborn children are conceived outside of marriage, or, indeed, of any stable relationship. The number of single-parent families has multiplied.

Today's liberal agenda pursues individual rights to the detriment of the rights of others. It's my right and no mention of my responsibilities. It is a crime to slap a child but it does not appear to be a crime to walk out on one's spouse and children. To quote a great Jewish writer, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks: "Turning promiscuous males into responsible fathers is the hardest task in any culture". In regards to abortion, the so-called 'right to choose' is a lie because it is a denial of the right to life



A newly-married couple walk next to the Flavian Amphitheatre in Rome.

of another human being.

### The family school

The most important school one can ever attend is the family. It is there, more than any other place, that one takes to heart the skills of interpersonal relationships. This personal schooling begins with self-worth. It expands into responsible relationships with others. And it blossoms in a relationship with God.

The foundation of self-worth is established in the way a child is welcomed into the world. The seeds of trust, reliance on others and confidence are planted in the brain and heart as the cries and needs of the infant are heard and answered. I am wanted and loved in this world. The warm hugs that the child receives are deeply embedded in the subconscious memory. The foundations of a mature personality are set in place.

As the child grows, he or she learns that the world is bigger than *me*. It's not all about my rights: others have rights too. "You can't have this, it belongs to your brother." "Shh, quiet, or you will wake the baby." Learning that others have

rights will be the beginning of responsibility. It is in the family that we learn the reality of love, trust, sharing, respect for others, and awareness of the rights of others. We absorb the need for gentleness and patience. Very important will be learning how to handle conflict and how to forgive. Pope Francis speaks of three necessary words in any marriage: please (or may I), thanks, and sorry.

### The cradle of faith

The family is the cradle of faith, handing on the Christian story, telling the story of the crib and cross, teaching the basic prayers. It is said that faith is not so much taught as caught. It is the atmosphere that one breathes in. Jews have a saying that God has no grandchildren. If parents fail to pass on the Faith, a whole generation is skipped. Nowadays it is often the grandparents who have to bring the children to the crib. Jesus spent ten years in family life for every one year is public ministry. That's how important family life is.

### Prayer of Pope Francis

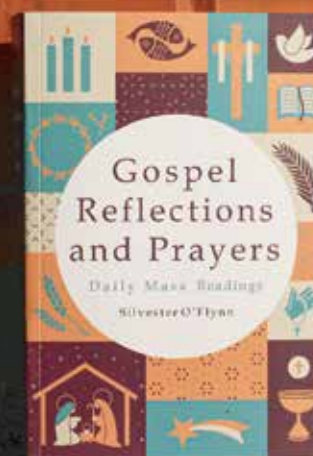
*Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches.*

*Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalised find ready comfort and healing.*

*Holy Family of Nazareth, make us ever more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan.*

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# The Holy Spirit triumphs



The grounds of O'Moore Park in Portlaoise played host to almost 400 children who received their Confirmation last week. Presided over by the apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Ossory, Bishop Denis Nulty, the ceremony was planned for outdoors because of ongoing Covid-19 restrictions in places of worship.



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# Mass of thanksgiving held for departing Belfast Marist sisters

## Staff reporter

The sisters were praised for embodying the mission of welcome and care, at a thanksgiving Mass held September 19.

The Marist sisters are leaving the parish of St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast, where they had ministered since 1986, invited by then-Bishop Cahal Daly.

The first sisters moved in to the parish and lived in the flats in Divis Tower at the height of the troubles in the area.

Bishop Treanor joined the priests and parishioners to celebrate the Mass of Thanksgiving for the sisters.

Fr Martin Graham Adm. said in his homily that they "embodied the mission statement to welcome others and see others as God's children".

"They have reached out with care, with strength and determination, they have reached out because of their goodness and Godliness," Fr Graham continued.

They were involved in many pastoral activities in the parish, developed many community and inter-church projects and took on the management of a hostel on Grosvenor Road.

In the past 12 years Sr Georgina Cawley, Sr Augusta Thornton and Sr Elsie Gilmarin continued the pastoral work in the parish of bringing Communion to the sick and housebound, as well as preparing families for Baptism, comforting the bereaved and many other numerous jobs around the parish and the Cathedral. Sr Elsie also was one of the Chaplains at the Belfast City Hospital as well as the Cancer Centre.



Bishop of Down and Connor Dr Noel Treanor with Marist sisters from St Peter's Cathedral parish, September 19. Photos: Fr Brian Watters.





# Cardinal Brady invests eight new members of Holy Sepulchre order



Richard Hearn is invested by Cardinal Sean Brady to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, September 25. Photos: John McElroy.



Cardinal Brady, Fr Bill O'Shaughnessy, Nicholas McKenna, Mr Durnin, Fr Ger MacCormack.

## Ruadhán Jones

The Archbishop of Dublin praised the "outgoing Order" for reflecting "spiritual realities", at the September 25 ceremony

Archbishop Dermot Farrell called on the new knights and dames of the Equestrian

Order of the Holy Sepulchre "to witness to the life of Christ, with its good news and its hope".

The seven new knights were: James Hanely, Richard Hearn, Fr Gerard MacCormack, Frederick O'Brien, Colm O'Farrell, Fr Bill O'Shaughnessy and John Smith. Lynda McGivney-Nolan was invested as a dame.



Apostolic Nuncio Jude Okolo, Mr Durnin, PF O'Brien and Kieran O'Brien.



Lieutenant for Ireland Peter Durnin, Mr Hearn, Archbishop Dermot Farrell and Ms McGivney Nolan.



Sebastian Coleman, Ms McGivney-Nolan and Denis McGivney Nolan.



Mary McGivney-Nolan and Mairéad Walls.



Cardinal Brady, Mr Hearn, Archbishop Farrell, RF Hearn and Margaret Hearn.



Nicholas McKenna, Mrs Greta McKenna and Dr Dermot Farrell.



Ms Lydna McGivney-Nolan is invested into the Order by Cardinal Brady.

# Conference encourages Catholic women to 'find voice in secular Ireland'



Two young women attend the Catholic Women's Conference, which was held in St Mary's Dominican Church, Cork, September 18. Photos: Cillian Kelly.



Fr Damien Polly says Mass at the Catholic Women's Conference in St Mary's Dominican church in Cork city on the September 18.

## Ruadhán Jones

The Catholic Women's Conference held in Cork September 18 was run "by women, for women", one of the organisers said.

Anita Sheahan, outreach minister for the Dominicans in St Mary's Church, Cork City, said that more than 100 women attended the conference in person.

"It was a great success, the speakers were all fantastic,"

Ms Sheahan said. "The focus was encouraging women to find a Catholic voice in secular Ireland."

Three guest speakers – Jackie and Katie Ascough and Olive Foley – gave talks during the conference, and Mass was also celebrated.

"I look at it as something to build community and fellowship within the Church," Ms Sheahan continued. "We look forward to having more events going on, a women's one, a men's conference and a mixed event."



Attendees listen to a talk from Olive Foley.



Jackie Ascough gives a talk during the September 18 conference.



Olive Foley, Jackie Ascough and Katie Ascough were presented with a gift in thanks for their talks.





Katie Ascough, creator of Catholic catechetical website Called to More, speaks at the conference.



The band play and sing at the Catholic Women's Conference in St Mary's Dominican church.





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Daniel O'Leary

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Daniel O'Leary

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**The Healing Habit**  
Daniel O'Leary

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**Holistic Healing**  
Fr Pat Collins

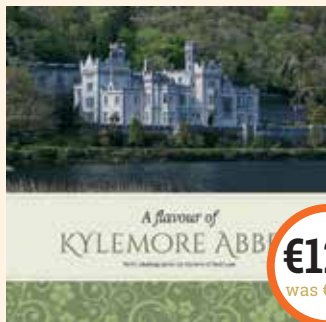
This timely book describes how the gift of healing has been rediscovered in recent years and stresses the therapeutic power of the Eucharist, while addressing questions like, 'why isn't everyone healed?'



€6.49  
was €12.99

**Sending Positive Vibes**  
Fr Bryan Shortall

Fr Bryan's memories and reflections are interspersed with prayers, stories of Saints, and rare insights into the lives of the priests and religious who work so tirelessly about us.



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**A Flavour of Kylemore**  
Valerie O'Sullivan

Today Kylemore Abbey is one of Ireland's best loved visitor attractions. A cookbook with a twist, this book gives an exclusive peak into one of Ireland's most intriguing estates, along with the nun's own recipes!



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**Wild Stories from the Irish Uplands**  
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As a veteran hiker, John G. O'Dwyer draws upon his treasure trove of experiences to recount many captivating tales from times gone by, from saints and scoundrels to rescuers and rebels.



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Eddie Mallin

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Craig Larkin

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**Give Us Back the Bad Roads**  
John Waters

John Waters outlines the facts of his departure from Irish journalism and finds himself writing to his father as he looks back over the arc of his life and his escape from the ideological cesspit the Dublin media has become.



€4.99  
was €9.99

**The Church and the Rising**  
Greg Daly

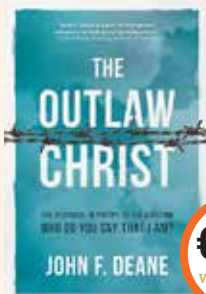
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**Glenstal Abbey through the Seasons**  
Valerie O'Sullivan

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**€12.49**  
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**Glencairn Abbey**  
Valerie O'Sullivan

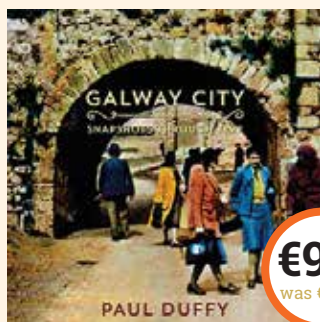
Through a series of images and words, we get a glimpse into the lives of the Sisters of St Mary's Abbey in Glencairn. Their lives are a true, living, monastic journey fulfilling the motto of St Benedict, *ora et labora*.



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**Urban Sketcher's Galway**  
Róisín Curé

In this beautiful book, local artist Róisín Curé captures snapshots of life in the City of the Tribes in bold ink and vibrant watercolour. Her sketches show the beautiful details of Galway in all its colour.



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Unique postcards share an intimate history of Galway City from 1890 to 1930. The shots range in type from tourist and promotional productions to true to life scenes from Galway's history.



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**Early Irish Saints**  
Fr John Ó Riordáin

These short essays on well-loved saints present a very readable mix of historical fact and folklore. The introduction provides a useful commentary on what early biographers of saints saw as their function.



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**What Have the Irish Ever Done for Us?**  
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# Out&About

## Charity on wheels



**WEXFORD:** Cyclists take a break having completed the 32nd Peter McVerry Trust Wexford Cycle, September 18, in aid of the McVerry trust.



**LAOIS:** Fr John Byrne of Portlaoise parish and Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Dr Denis Nulty blessed the start of the ploughing championships in Portlaoise, September 12.



**MONAGHAN:** Jack Culleton is pictured with his parents Sean and Rosella after receiving his Confirmation in St Patrick's church, Bawn, administered by Fr Owen Joe McEaney PP.

## IN SHORT

### Archdiocese of Tuam clerical appointments announced

Archbishop of Tuam Dr Michael Neary announced September 20 the diocesan appointments and retirements for the archdiocese.

Diocesan Education Secretary Msgr John O'Boyle is to retire, as is Sr Mary Kenny PBVM, who handled Post-Primary Catechetics. Mrs Rosaleen Crowe-O'Neill will become Diocesan Education Secretary *pro-tem*.

Fr Pádraig Standún, PP Carna, and Fr William Reilly, PP An Cnoc, Indreabhán, are both to retire, while Fr Joseph Feeney PP Ballinlough parish is to retire as parish priest and become AP for the same parish.

Fr Michael Molloy, PP Moore, is to be Vicar

Forane (VF) for Tuam East Deanery and Fr John Kenny, PP Partry, is to be VF Ballinrobe Deanery.

An Cnoc: Fr Hughie Loftus, PP An Cheathrú Rua, is to become, in addition, PP An Cnoc, Indreabhán. Fr Clement McManus, CSSR, is to join him as an AP An Cnoc.

Ballinlough: Fr Stephen Farragher, PP Ballyhaunis, is to become, in addition, PP Ballinlough.

Carna: Fr Shane Sullivan, CC Castlebar, is to become PP Carna.

Castlebar: Fr Shane Costello, CC Westport, is to become CC Castlebar.

Knock: Fr Christopher Clarke, OCD, is appointed to be CC Knock.

Westport: Fr Henry O'Connell, Congregation of the Oratory, York, UK, is appointed to be CC Westport.

In announcing this year's appointments and retirements, Archbishop Neary said: "I

take this opportunity to thank those who are retiring for their generous service, their availability to God and to the People of God, often in challenging times.

"I pray God's blessing, and the protection of Our Lady of Knock on those who are taking up new appointments in our Archdiocese."

### UK faith-leaders sign declaration ahead of climate conference

The leaders of all the UK's major faiths declared their "obligation to be responsible in caring for our common home" ahead of COP26 in Glasgow.

The document was signed on behalf of the Scottish Catholic Bishops by Bishop of Argyll and the Isles Dr Brian McGee, who

is also President of the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Interreligious dialogue, and Sr Isabel Smyth of the Sisters of Notre Dame and Secretary to the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Inter-religious Dialogue.

The signatories state in the declaration that "Our faith communities are united in caring for human life and the natural world.

"We share a belief in a hopeful future, as well as an obligation to be responsible in caring for our common home, the Earth," the declaration continues.

The leaders emphasised "that the burden of loss and damage falls most heavily on people living in poverty, especially women and children".

They committed to respond to the challenges of climate change through prayer, transformational change in their own lives and being advocates for justice.

Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**CORK:** Dominican Bros Desmond, Philip and Sean celebrate their first profession of vows to the order with a homemade cake, September 15.



**LOUTH:** Fr Columba Mary Toman OP (right), pictured with Fr John Harris, made his solemn profession as a Dominican of the Irish Province, September 11.



**LOUTH:** The Augustinians Drogheda said goodbye to Terry McHugh, who announced he was retiring from music in the Augustinian church. His final performance, with Michael Holohan accompanying him, took place September 12.



◀ **DUBLIN:** Four Irish Dominicans took the habit September 15. Bros Sean Hurley, Martin Dunne, Joseph Mary McGinty, Michael Donohue are pictured (from left) with Dominican Prior Provincial (centre) Fr John Harris.

▼ **KERRY:** Fr Kevin McNamara of Glenflesk Parish is pictured with a local First Holy Communion group, as the sacraments get under way again, September 18. Photo: Seamus Healy.



**OFFALY:** Fr John Moorhead PP and Noel Quagan hold a plaque presented to Eglis/Rath parishioner Bridie Kinsella on her recent 90th birthday, honouring her service and dedication to the parish.



### Events

● In the current Covid-19 crisis, it is clear that most (and perhaps all) Church events, other than some Masses, are suspended. Consequently, we are withholding the popular Events Listing column until normal activities can resume in our parishes. However, please do email us if you know of any parish event planned and we will publish details.



# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### St Januarius' blood liquefies for the second time in 2021

● The blood of St Januarius, patron of the Italian city of Naples, liquefied for the second time this year.

The miraculous event took place in the city's Cathedral of the Assumption of Mary during morning Mass on September 19, the saint's feast day.

Before the Mass, Naples Archbishop Domenico Battaglia went to the Royal Chapel of the Treasure of St Januarius with Msgr Vincenzo de Gregorio, the chapel's abbot, and city mayor Luigi De Magistris.

Archbishop Battaglia opened the safe containing a reliquary with a circular sealed vial filled with the third-century bishop's blood.

During the miracle, the dried, red-coloured mass confined to one side of the reliquary becomes blood that covers the entire glass.

### Canadian archbishop: Only fully vaccinated can attend Mass

● Anyone age 12 or over attending a gathering at Catholic churches, rectories or community centres under the responsibility of the Archdiocese of Moncton must present proof that they are fully vaccinated, the archdiocese announced September 17.

The new policy applies to all religious celebrations, Sunday and weekday Masses, baptisms, weddings and funerals, parish and pastoral meetings, catechesis, and social

meetings.

The archdiocese's announcement comes in the wake of new provincial government rules which took effect September 21 requiring proof of vaccination to access certain events, services, and businesses.

Fewer than 50 people have died from Covid-19 in the province of New Brunswick since the pandemic began, out of a total population of more than 780,000, according to government statistics.

### Cardinal says Haiti's 'catastrophic situation' led Haitians to US border

● Cardinal Chibly Langlois has said that the "catastrophic situation" in Haiti caused by poverty, violence, and natural disasters has led to Haitians seeking asylum at the US border.

The Catholic cardinal, who was injured in Haiti's recent earthquake, is also a leader in the recovery efforts for the island nation facing

the consequences of the 7.2 magnitude earthquake, aggravated by widespread poverty and gang violence.

"The people of Haiti are suffering, believe me," Cardinal Langlois said September 21.

The Haitian cardinal spoke in French with live interpretation into English at a webinar organised by Caritas Internationalis in Rome.

### Eight elderly nuns in Manila succumb to Covid-19

● The Congregation of the Religious of the Virgin Mary in Manila announced the death of eight elderly nuns who had been diagnosed with Covid-19.

The nuns were between 80 and 90 years old and were among the 62 sisters earlier reported to have been infected with Covid-19 at a convent in Quezon City in the Philippine capital.

Sr Ma. Anicia Co, RVM, the congregation's spokesperson, said that 52 convent staff and personnel were also positive for Covid-19.

"The personnel are still young so they are on the road to recovery," said Sr Co in an interview over Church-run Radio Veritas 846.

Meanwhile, a Covid-19 outbreak also hit a seminary of the Society of the Divine Word in Manila last week. At least 25 of the 59 residents of the Christ the King Mission Seminary were reported to have contracted the disease, including nine priests and 16 employees.

## Court rejects challenge to UK's Down syndrome abortion law

The High Court in London rejected a landmark challenge to a UK law allowing abortion up to birth for disability.

In its September 23 ruling, the court declared that a law allowing abortion up to birth for disability was not discriminatory.

The challenge was brought by Heidi Crowter, a woman with Down syndrome, and Máire Lea-Wilson, a mother whose son has Down syndrome.

Speaking after the verdict, Ms Crowter, a 26-year-old from Coventry, said: "I'm really upset not to win, but the fight is not over. The judges might not think it discriminates against me but I'm telling you that I do feel discriminated against."

"This is a very sad day but I will keep on fighting," she said. "I won't give up. Let's do this!"

Ms Lea-Wilson, a 33-year-old from West London, said: "People with Down syndrome face discrimination in all aspects of life. This ruling condones discrimination by cementing the belief in society that their lives are not as valuable as the lives of people without disabilities."

"I do not regret bringing this case because I believe it has helped raise awareness around the wonderful lives of people with Down syndrome and their families' lives," she added, "and helped to dispel some of the negative, outdated, and prejudiced attitudes that are prevalent in society and the medical pro-



Heidi Crowter, who has Down syndrome, speaks outside the High Court ahead of a case to challenge the Down syndrome abortion laws in London July 6, 2021. Photo: CNS.

fession."

"As Aiden's mother, I will continue to fight and I will look to appeal this judgment with Heidi because everyone should be equally valued regardless of the number of chromosomes that they have," Ms Lea-Wilson said.

Section 1(1)(d) of the UK's Abortion Act 1967 permits abortion up to birth if "there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be

seriously handicapped."

There were 3,083 abortions on the basis of disability recorded in England and Wales in 2020, 693 of them following a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome – an increase from 656 in 2019.

Jason Coppel, a senior barrister representing Ms Crowter and Ms Lea-Wilson, told the High Court in July that Ms Crowter had been "the subject of abuse because of her disability and believes that the existence of a law

allowing abortion up to birth for babies with DS [Down's syndrome] is a contributory cultural cause of this type of abuse."

The claimants, who are supported by the group Don't Screen Us Out, have crowd-funded more than €125,000 for the case.

Ms Lea-Wilson told CNA in May that she was inspired to take part in the case after seeing Ms Crowter discussing the law on television.

## German Catholic lay groups voice frustration with slow pace of reforms

Catholic lay organisations took to the streets of downtown Fulda under the motto "We remain loud" to express their dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church, on the final day of the German bishops' annual fall plenary assembly.

On September 23, Catholics demonstrated in front of the 18th-century palace where the bishops met and marched to demand equality, justice and credibility in the Catholic Church after they claim bishops have asked them for years to be patient.

Throughout the week, Catholic lay organisations set up information stands outside the venue.

"This is demoralising. The signs of the times and the questions of justice are so urgent that further delay is no longer an option," said Beatrix Ahr, one of the spokeswomen for Maria 2.0 Kassel, one of the lay Catholic groups that organised the march.

Catholic lay organisations and victim advisory councils have been pressing for changes since the extent of the Church sexual abuse first came to light in Germany

in 2010.

The German Catholic Church is now under severe pressure to act quickly, but is divided by various internal factions among the 27 bishops, most notably an extremely reform-hesitant faction under Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki of Cologne, who was recently confirmed in his post by Pope Francis after an apostolic visitation of his diocese.

The cardinal has been accused of mishandling cases of abuse in the archdiocese.

## East European Church leaders pledge new efforts to counter abuse

Catholic leaders from Eastern Europe pledged closer cooperation against sexual abuse by clergy, despite different levels of preparedness, at the region's first international child protection conference.

A statement from the Sep-

tember 19-22 conference said lectures and group sessions had covered "spiritual, theological, legal and pastoral aspects of the crisis", adding that key themes would be taken to the Synod of Bishops opening October 9 in Rome.

At the end of the conference, Archbishop Wojciech Polak of Gniezno, Poland, questioned the motive behind some in the Church.

"The crisis caused by sexual abuse of minors and neglect by Church superiors

touches the essence of our Church community; these terrible crimes and neglect have robbed many of their faith and blurred the image of God," said Archbishop Polak.





Edited by Jason Osborne  
jason@irishcatholic.ie

## US migration crisis



Migrants are seen at a makeshift camp in Del Rio, Texas. Photo: CNS.

## Church in Spain urges volcano victim support

Spanish Church leaders are urging prayers and donations for residents of the Canary Islands, after earthquakes and a volcanic eruption devastated parts of the Atlantic island chain.

"We welcome the public administration's speed in ensuring the safety of all those affected and caring for those with greatest vulnerability," said a September 22 statement from the Catholic aid agency Caritas in the Tenerife Diocese. "We are adding our own resources to agencies and institutions across the territory, sharing the commitment and solidarity which move us as a Church."

The message was published as emergency workers battled to save properties and businesses on La Palma, one of the seven main Canary Islands, after a volcanic eruption in the Cumbre Vieja mountain range.

Caritas said a special fund had been set up to help the evacuated and homeless and to provide family support and employment for those facing poverty and dispossession.

Meanwhile, the Tenerife Diocese, covering the islands of La Palma, Tenerife, La Gomera and El Hierro, arranged special Masses in its 312 parishes, and said Mary and St Michael the Archangel

had traditionally protected islanders "during times of epidemic and eruption".

"We thank God for the technical human means which enabled us to anticipate this eruption and save our population," the Caritas statement said.

"Imploring God for an end to this volcanic crisis, we will also request comfort and hope for those who will have lost their homes and livelihoods."

Two days earlier, Bishop Bernardo Álvarez Afonso of Tenerife expressed "closeness and solidarity" with La Palma residents, and urged prayers especially "for the

sick, elderly and those with mobility problems".

Spanish TV reported that at least 22,000 minor tremors had been detected on La Palma before the September 19 eruption, which also triggered four substantial earthquakes.

It said more than 6,000 people had been evacuated by September 22. Maritime officials established an exclusion zone of two nautical miles from La Palma's densely populated west coast, amid fears the molten rock could release toxic gases when it reached the ocean.

## Bill to codify Roe one of most 'extreme' abortion bills seen in US

The Women's Health Protection Act of 2021, introduced in the US Senate and House June 8 and currently moving through various committees in both chambers, "is nothing short of child sacrifice", said Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco.

The "misnamed" measure, he said, "shows to what radical extremes the supposedly 'pro-choice' advocates in our country will go to protect what they hold most sacred: the right to kill inno-

cent human beings in the womb," he said in a September 21 statement.

Denver Archbishop Samuel Aquila also weighed in with a statement a day later, echoing the San Francisco prelate in urging the bill be defeated.

"Today, the abortion industry and its supporters are pushing one of the most extreme national abortion bills this country has ever seen, and doing it under the lie that abortion is a form of health care that must be protected and

promoted," the Denver prelate said.

If Congress passes the bill and it becomes law, it would invalidate nearly all existing state limitations on abortion. The House and Senate bills – HR 3755 and S 1975 – would codify the US Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade decision in law legalising abortion nationwide.

It would establish the legal right to abortion in all 50 states under federal law.

## Vatican roundup

### Vatican requires vaccine pass for visitors and employees

● The Vatican will require all visitors and personnel to show a Covid-19 pass proving they have been vaccinated, have recovered from the coronavirus, or have tested negative for the disease in order to enter the city state beginning October 1.

To enter Vatican territory, tourists and other visitors, employees, and officials will be required to show a digital or paper Covid Certificate issued by the Vatican or another country, according to an ordinance published September 20.

The president of Vatican City State, Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, issued the ordinance at the request of Pope Francis, who asked "to take all appropriate measures to prevent, control and combat the ongoing public health emergency in the Vatican City State".

Under the new order, Catholics attending liturgical celebrations at the Vatican will be an exception to the vaccine rule. People will be allowed to access a liturgy "for the time strictly necessary for the conduct of the rite," while also following distancing and masking rules.

Italy's vaccine passport, called the "Green Pass," requires proof of vaccination against Covid-19, proof of recovery from Covid-19 within the previous six months, or proof of a recent negative Covid-19 test.

### Pope Francis says people wanted him to die amid health problems

● In a private meeting with Jesuits in Slovakia September 12, Pope Francis said that there were people who wanted him to die after he underwent colon surgery in July.

During the encounter, a Jesuit priest asked the Pope how he was doing, to which he replied: "Still alive, even though some people wanted me to die."

"I know there were even meetings between prelates who thought the Pope's condition was more serious than the official version. They were preparing for the conclave," he added. "Patience! Thank God, I'm all right."

Pope Francis answered questions from fellow Jesuits at a closed-door

meeting in Slovakia's capital city, Bratislava, during his September 12-15 visit to the country.

The trip was his first since being hospitalised on July 4 for an operation to relieve severe stricture of the colon caused by diverticulitis. The three-hour surgery included a left hemicolectomy, the removal of one side of the colon.

After the operation, false rumours began to circulate on social media and in online posts that Pope Francis might soon resign, based in part on other unsubstantiated claims that the Pope was possibly suffering from a "degenerative" and "chronic" disease.

### Vatican 'worried' about AUKUS nuclear rearmament

● The Vatican's Secretary of State commented on the new security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to deploy nuclear-powered submarines in the Indo-Pacific region.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin told journalists at the sidelines of a September 22 event that "the Holy See is opposed to rearmament".

"All the efforts that have been made and are being made" by the Vatican are "to eliminate nuclear weapons, because they are not the way to maintain peace and security in the world, but they create even more dangers for peace and even more conflict," Cardinal Parolin said. "Within this vision, one cannot but be worried."

The AUKUS trilateral security pact, announced September 15, will add to the Western military presence in the Pacific amid concerns about China.

# LetterfromRome



John L. Allen Jr

## Why a 'peace Pope' could get behind a Europe preparing for war

US President Joe Biden went before the United Nations September 21 and declared, "We are not seeking a new Cold War, or a world divided into rigid blocs." The statement became necessary in the wake a week earlier of the new "AUKUS" pact among the US, the UK and Australia, seen precisely as the dawn of a new Cold War between the Anglo-Saxon powers and China.

### New alliance

So, did the UN speech represent a walking-back of the geopolitical implications of the new alliance? Or, was it just the sort of rhetoric that great powers facing perceived threats always employ – "We don't seek conflict, it can still be avoided if only our enemies come to their senses," etc.?

Most immediate commentary, at least in Europe, took it pretty much in the latter sense.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyden had already called for the EU to develop its own common military capacity in the wake of the abrupt US pullout from Afghanistan, asking pointedly, "You can have the most advanced forces in the world, but if you are never prepared to use them, of what use are they?"

Those calls have accelerated post-AUKUS, and little about Biden's assurances at the UN seem poised to change that. Just hours afterwards EU market commissioner Thierry Breton told the Atlantic Council that trust in the US across Europe "has been eroded" and the time has come for Europe to reposition itself to act on its own.

Yet September 22 in *Corriere della Sera*, Italy's paper of record, distinguished Italian essayist and political scientist Ernesto Galli della Loggia published the inevitable "emperor has no clothes" reaction to the idea of a "Euro-Army," asking who, exactly, would have the authority to send such a force into war? Who could give the "go" order?

Presumably, Mr Galli della Loggia writes, we're not just talking about a force to conduct humanitarian and peace-keeping missions, which European troops have been doing for decades – and, he notes, with a decidedly mixed track record. Nor are we talking about repelling an aggressor within Europe itself, i.e., a defensive force, which is the purpose of NATO. Instead, the idea would be a genuine European army whose mission is to project and defend European interests around the world, in the classic way in which states and empires have deployed military force over the centuries as an extension of diplomacy.

For instance, suppose the situation in Afghanistan for women under



European Union flags flutter outside the EU headquarters in Brussels July 14, 2021. Photo: CNS.

**“Christian humanism was the foundation upon which the EU was originally constructed, and it remains the lone European cultural achievement strong enough to sustain anything other than economic prosperity”**

the Taliban becomes completely intolerable, but the US, having just pulled out, has no appetite to go back in, and nobody else seems inclined to do it. Who in Europe could tell the commander of a common army to put boots on the ground, with the mission of eradicating the Taliban as a fighting force once and for all?

The problem is, Mr Galli della Loggia says, the only possible authority in the European system right now that could approve such a mission would be the Council of Heads of State and Government, meaning the elected leaders of the 27 member EU states.

He asks, "Is it ever imaginable that 27 political leaders – expressions of electorates, traditions and interests enormously different among themselves – would decide to embark on a military action that could become violent and cost the lives of some of their own citizens, beyond creating unpredictably serious complications?"

At bottom, Mr Galli della Loggia

argues, the near-impossibility of envisioning an executive authority that could command a European army, even if you could put one together, is a reflection of a deeper failure of the European project. At the beginning, he writes, the founders of the EU wanted it to be based on a shared political project. When that failed, he says, the EU became largely about trade, on the idea that a common economy would lead to a deeper political union. Seventy years later, Mr Galli della Loggia concludes, we now know that a common economy leads only to a common economy.

### Brief-lived

Are the events of the past few weeks enough to actually change that calculus? Perhaps. Twenty years ago, September 2001 brought a brief-lived sense of, "We're all Americans now." September 2021 seems to be sowing the impression, "We've got to be Europeans now, because America just cut us loose."

As one possible sign of something fundamental moving, French President Emmanuel Macron reportedly has signalled that he may be willing to reconsider long-rebuffed German requests to split France's permanent seat on the UN Security Council in exchange for support for a common EU foreign policy and defence system.

If there is a unique moment now for Europe to get its act together, the foundation of any common political project almost certainly would have to lie in some form of Christian humanism, even if no one in 21st century western Europe would dare say so out loud. Christian humanism was the foundation upon which the EU was originally constructed, and it remains the lone European cultural achievement strong enough to sustain anything other than economic prosperity.

The take-away is that the next few months may be decisive in terms of whether Europe can develop a political infrastructure capable of under-

girding von der Leyden's desire for enhanced military capacity. In that effort, the Catholic Church across Europe, and especially the Vatican, could play a decisive role.

**“One great hallmark of Vatican diplomacy over the centuries, however, has been precisely its realism”**

For decades, the Vatican has wanted a more independent, assertive Europe, one that can provide a genuine global counterweight to both the United States and Russia and China. Granted, the idea of a more robust military may not exactly be the Vatican's preferred method, especially under a "peace Pope" such as Francis, but the objective is nevertheless a longstanding Vatican *idée fixe*.

One great hallmark of Vatican diplomacy over the centuries, however, has been precisely its realism. As they survey the landscape, Francis and his advisers could just decide this is a moment in which the best has to be put on hold, in order to achieve the good.

# Australians search for ‘a new way of living as Church’



A young woman prays with a rosary inside St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney January 6, 2021. Photo: CNS.



Barb Frazee

As part of the listening and dialogue phase of the Australian Catholic Church's Plenary Council, 220,000 Australians answered the question, "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?"

In 2015, Australian Archbishop Mark Coleridge was asking himself something similar. Australia was in the midst of a government-mandated investigation into sexual abuse in the Church. Australian Catholics were leaving the Church. The Brisbane archbishop was at the Vatican, attending the Synod of Bishops on the family. It was there he had an idea that "seemed to me at the time and still seems to me the work of the Holy Spirit".

"For the first time – certainly at a Roman synod – I saw discernment in action," Archbishop Coleridge wrote earlier this year. "It was messy and unpredictable; at the halfway mark it looked very unlikely that we would achieve anything worth achieving. Yet at the end we did produce something which wasn't the last word, but which was a real contribution to the ongoing journey of the Church."

## Succeed

"Part of why that synod succeeded when failure threatened was the

speech on synodality given by Pope Francis in those last days of the gathering," he wrote. It was when listening to the Pope that he thought, "Yes, now finally is the time for the Church in Australia to move toward a plenary council."

Archbishop Coleridge returned to Australia and discussed the idea with others. After years of planning, committee work, Vatican approval and – perhaps most importantly, listening sessions – the first of two Plenary Council assemblies will be October 3-10.

Synodality is a buzzword these days in Catholic circles, and it is at the heart of the Plenary Council. Pope Francis has announced a 2023 Synod of Bishops on synodality, the preparations for which kick off near the end of the Australian assembly.

**“There is an understanding that seven hours online for seven days in a row”**

In a virtual meeting September 21 with members of his international Council of Cardinals, Pope Francis insisted the upcoming Synod of Bishops on synodality "is not so much about deeper reflection on this or that theme as it is about learning a new way of living as Church," said

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office.

The Pope, he said, insisted the Church must adopt a style "marked at every level by mutual listening and by a pastoral attitude, especially when faced with the temptations of clericalism and rigidity".-

## Inquiry

During the Australian government inquiry into abuse, clericalism was often blamed for decades of covering up abuse cases.

The government investigators' call for a change of culture was echoed by Catholics participating in the Plenary Council's listening sessions.

"So much of what we heard during the council journey related to this concept of 'conversion' – personal conversion, communal conversion and institutional conversion – with an ever-deeper renewal in Christ," said Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, Plenary Council president. "Through the Plenary Council, we are being called to consider how we can be a Church that goes out to the peripheries, that welcomes all into our communities and shows the face of Christ to the world."

This will be Australia's fifth Plenary Council; the last was in 1937. Rules for a plenary council are outlined in canon law, which determines who must be included as well as who may be included, said Gavin

Abraham, spokesman for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. Laypeople are among those who may be included, and the Australians sought permission to increase those numbers.

"Our understanding is that this is the first time laypeople have been members of a plenary council," he told *Catholic News Service* September 20.

Mr Abraham said each diocese and eparchy, depending on size, was allowed to send anywhere from 1-4 people who "may be called". When organisers were allowed to increase those numbers, they looked for underrepresented groups, such as younger women and members of migrant communities and ecclesial movements.

**“Our understanding is that this is the first time laypeople have been members of a plenary council”**

On most mornings from October 4 to 9, all 279 Plenary Council members will meet in a large group – at least virtually – for Mass, prayer and formal proceedings. In the afternoon, they will join smaller virtual groups to discuss one of 16 questions developed as a result of the listening and dialogue phase of the

council. The small-group discussions will be summarised and submitted in a report the following day during the large morning session.

## Different

Mr Abraham told CNS the October 7 session will be slightly different, because "there is an understanding that seven hours online for seven days in a row" is difficult.

October 7 will include much offline time for people to pray and discern over two questions: "How might we heal the wounds of abuse, coming to see through the eyes of those who have been abused?" and "How might the Church in Australia meet the needs of the most vulnerable, go to the peripheries, be missionary in places that may be overlooked or left behind in contemporary Australia? How might we partner with others (Christians, people of other faiths, neighbourhood community groups, government) to do this?"

The same delegates will meet again – they hope in person – July 4-9. Between the assemblies, as pandemic restrictions allow, organisers hope to have a Liturgy of Lament for abuse victims and perhaps meetings with other religious leaders, Mr Abraham said.

Archbishop Coleridge said that after the July assembly, "we will gather up the results of the assemblies and send them to Rome for papal approval, which is to ensure that what has come from the council is in harmony with the doctrine and discipline of the universal Church. This will lead to the promulgation of the decisions and decrees of the council," which are binding on the Church in Australia.

**“Part of why that synod succeeded when failure threatened was the speech on synodality given by Pope Francis in those last days of the gathering”**

# Letters

## Letter of the week

### History cannot be un-lived

**Dear Editor,** thank you for your courageous words in your timely 'Editor's Comment' on the controversy provoked by the president's refusal to attend the ecumenical service in Armagh [*The Irish Catholic*, September 23, 2021].

The commemoration (not celebration) of partition was always going to be something that had to be handled sensitively – a fact known by the Church leaders all of whom lead denominations divided by the border that divides this island.

President Michael D. Higgins seems to have captured the public imagination with his refusal to attend and his characterisation of the ceremony as a celebration of partition and the creation of the northern state. One opinion poll that I saw said that 81% of people supported his stance. I would suggest that this represents little more than a knee-jerk reactionary approach to remembering the past.

History is complicated and different people experience the same event in different ways. The creation of Northern Ireland was a catastrophe marked by an orgy of violence for northern Catholics. At the same time, it is part of the history of unionism and represents for them the birth of a state.

Church leaders, with the Gospel emphasis on forgiveness, are well-placed to handle contentious commemorations with discretion and sensitivity.

*Yours etc.,  
Mary Murphy  
Belfast, Co. Antrim*

### Frank Duff should be better known

**Dear Editor,** It is great to see the coverage each week of the various celebrations around the country to mark the centenary of the founding of the Legion of Mary.

Fr John Harris OP is right in his contention that Mr Duff was the most influential Irishman of the 20th Century [*The Irish Catholic*, September 9, 2021].

It is a great pity that Frank Duff is not better known or more broadly spoken about in Irish society. He worked hard on mending a broken society decades before anyone ever heard of social workers and sociologists and left the country a much better place for that.

Please God he will soon be raised to the altars of the Church and we will have another great saint to look up to.

*Yours etc.,  
Frank Doyle  
Dublin 8*



### Synod must lead to deeper fidelity to Christ

**Dear editor,** Former president, Mary McAleese, already has the "freedom of speech" she is lecturing about and she makes use of it often, which is her right [*The Irish Catholic*, September 16, 2021].

What she has absolutely no right to do is attempt to impose her ideologies upon the Catholic Church, or 'demand' changes to Church teachings to suit her views.

Given her stated opinions on such matters as abortion, Mrs McAleese is far from being a voice of authentic Catholicity. She has adopted stances which

are irreconcilable with the Catholic Faith.

She and others like her, are perfectly free to dissent from the teachings of the Church if they so wish. No one is forcing anyone to remain in the Church who does not want to be there.

Nevertheless, if we seek to be part of the Church of Christ, we must "accept and submit" to the Word of God and to the truths of the Faith (James 1:21). The Church can neither change, alter, nor dilute her teachings to suit this current era – absolutely not.

Even if the whole world

rejects the saving truths of Christ's message, we Catholics must be faithful to it and insist upon it, welcome or unwelcome (II Timothy 4:2).

Any synod or synodal path, must lead us to deeper fidelity to Christ and his Gospel – not further away. Mary McAleese and others of her views, must not be permitted to try and dictate terms. Worldly ideologies that are the very antithesis of our Faith have no place among the People of God.

*Yours etc.,  
Fr Patrick McCafferty,  
Belfast, Co. Antrim*

### A turn-up for the books?

**Dear Editor,** I cannot be alone in my bemusement at the DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson effectively trying to bully President Michael D. Higgins into attending an ecumenical service. It is not that long since the DUP actually picketed ecumenical ceremonies in the North because they were frightened of the prospects of God-fearing Presbyterians being tainted by Papists and Romish plots.

We really do live in a different world. Either that or it was sheer political opportunism. Readers can decide for themselves.

*Yours etc.,  
Tom Savage  
Tralee, Co. Kerry*

### Exacting privileges at someone else's expense

**Dear Editor,** In a step towards a more inclusive society, babies having a heart-beat, detectable at six weeks' gestation, are once again receiving legal protection, in Texas.

Some would characterise this development as merely part of the to-and-fro swing of a public-opinion pendulum, in that debate between the right-to-life and legalising for the intentional killing of babies in the womb. But it is more than this.

Already, in Texas thousands of babies' lives have been saved from death. These will go on to celebrate their first birthday, take their place in pre-school, 'big' school, college life, and ultimately contribute to

society as artists, professionals, tradesmen and homemakers. Without the right-to-life no other right can exist; we all become disposable, beholden to the prevailing socio-economic forces.

If we demand for ourselves something that we are unwilling to extend to every other human being, regardless of where they are at in the cycle of life, then we are merely corrupt judges, exacting perceived privileges at someone else's expense.

Our existing social model, places vulnerable mothers of unborn babies in socio-economic dilemmas, isolating them, and steering them towards the abortion industry. No woman is ever the same after losing a baby in this way; too often I

have heard those most heart-wrenching refrains: "I had to do it", "I had no other option", "I had no choice".

In our upcoming review of Ireland's abortion law, it is vital that we are guided by this life-affirming legislative change in Texas. Only those ensnared by ideological absolutism will discount all the good it's doing.

A detectable heart-beat means a baby and his or her mother needs to be embraced and supported by all society. Without babies we have no future, without compassion we lose our humanity.

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

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

### Reject 'fashionable' urge to knock the Church, pleads former minister

Yes, many people seem to forget the massive contribution made by Church organisations. Yes, there have been people who did not live up to the highest standards expected but their actions should not tarnish the good work of the majority. – **Edward Duffin**

Couldn't have said it better myself. Who forked out and provided education to the entire country at a time when the State didn't give a monkeys? They will still say even today that they don't have the money and we are supposedly one of the richest nations in the world, if this is true why are students forking out thousands for what is supposed to be four years of 'free' education? – **David O'Connor**

Yes I totally agree. We must show our joy at all times. Stand up and be counted. – **Deirdre Quinn**

### Neymar offered €500,000 a month to keep quiet about faith

Unbelievable but then I suppose not. Never enough! – **Carmel Hogan**

This is quite a common clause in all such contracts. Neymar may not even know that such a clause exists in his contract unless his agent specifically made him aware of it, which is highly unlikely. – **Robert Barry**

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

## Christians: the forgotten victims

**Dear Editor,** I was astonished to read that the Department of Foreign Affairs regards the persecution of Christians in Nigeria as a trivial matter from one of the tales of John B. Keane [*The Irish Catholic*, September 23, 2021].

Carol Nolan was correct to point out that the characterisation by the Government "reframes the issue out of all recognition".

We must not shrink from the fact that Christians are being killed precisely because they are Christian – they are dying for their faith in Jesus Christ.

The response from the Department of Foreign Affairs shows no appreciation or understanding for this.

The matter is all the more egregious for the fact that Ireland now has a seat on the United Nations (UN) security council and could be using this to advocate for persecuted minorities around the globe such as the Christians of Nigeria.

*Yours etc.,  
Peter Scully  
Ballina, Co. Mayo*

### 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

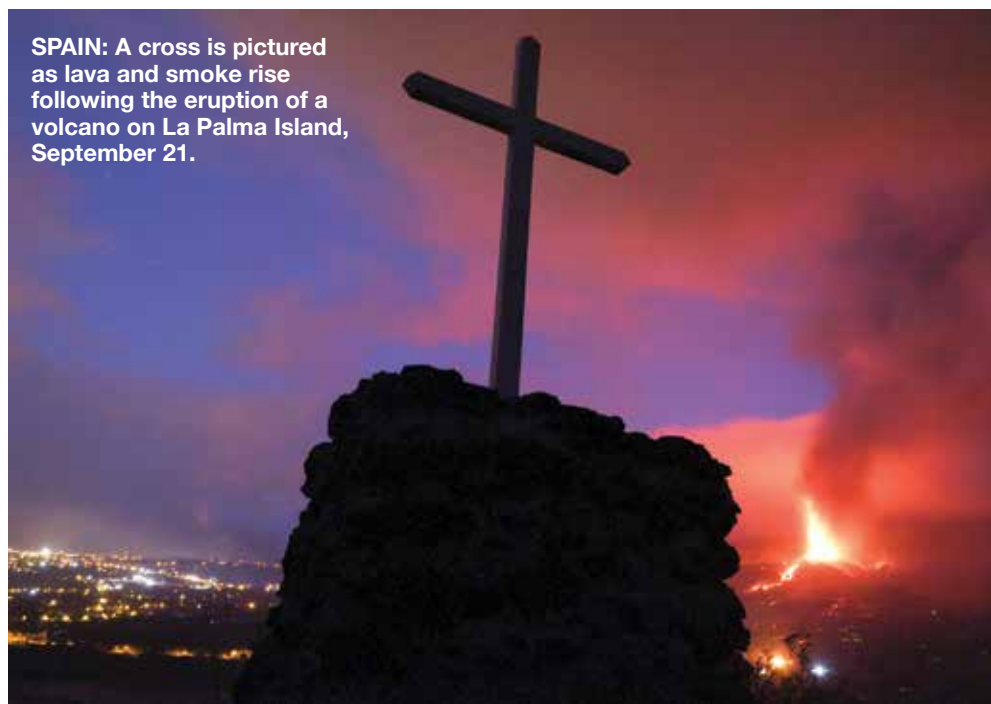
merits of letters. We do not publish pseudonyms or other formulae to conceal the writer's identity, such as "name and address with editor". We do not print letters addressed to someone else, open letters, or verse. Letters to the Editor should only be sent to *The Irish Catholic*, and not other publications.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

# 📷 Around the world



▲ **HAWAII:** Fr Wayne Schmid, a priest of the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas, and a retired US Army chaplain, gives a salute September 21, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, during a chain of custody event for the recently identified remains of Fr Emil J. Kapaun, a Wichita diocesan priest who laid down his life as a military chaplain during the Korean War. He is a candidate for sainthood. Photos: CNS.

◀ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis celebrates the opening Mass of the plenary assembly of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences at the Altar of the Chair in St Peter's Basilica, September 23.



**SPAIN:** A cross is pictured as lava and smoke rise following the eruption of a volcano on La Palma Island, September 21.



**USA:** Members of the Guadalupe Society in Detroit hold candles for immigrants around the world during Mass at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, September 22.



**MEXICO:** Haitian and Central American migrants line up outside the Mexican Commission for Aid to Refugees in Mexico City, September 22.



**GERMANY:** Bishop Peter Kohlgraf of Mainz talks with women during a demonstration at the end of the fall plenary meeting of the German bishops' conference in Fulda September 23.

# The nuance in putting God first



In Walker Percy's 1971 novel, *Love Among the Ruins*, his central character is a psychiatrist named Tom More. Dr More is a Catholic who is no longer practicing his faith, albeit he still believes. This is how he describes his situation: "I believe in God and the whole business but I love women best, music and science next, whiskey next, God fourth, and my fellowman hardly at all... Nevertheless, I still believe."

## Sinners

Ironically, perhaps it was persons like him, sinners who still believed, who were the ones most drawn to Jesus in the Gospels.

**“God is a good spouse who knows that sometimes, given our innate promiscuity, our affections will momentarily be infatuated by a different centre”**

Reading Dr More's list of what he loves and in what order, I'm reminded of a conference I once attended on the theme of secularity and the Gospel. One of the keynote speakers, a renowned social worker, made a comment to this effect: I work on the streets with the poor and I do it because I'm a Christian. But I can work on the streets for years and never mention Christ's name because I believe that God is mature enough



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

that he doesn't demand to be the centre of our conscious attention all the time.

## Statement

As you can guess, her statement sparked some debate. It should. Does God demand to be the centre of our conscious attention all the time? Is it okay habitually to be focused elsewhere? If, affectively, we in fact love a lot of other persons and things before God, is this a betrayal of our faith?

There are no simple answers to these questions because they demand a very delicate balance between the demands of the First Commandment and an overall theology of God. As the First Commandment teaches, God is primary, always. This may never be ignored; but we also know that God is wise and trustworthy. Hence, we may safely deduce that God did not make us one way and

then demand that we live in an entirely different way: that is, God did not make us with powerful proclivities that instinctually and habitually focus us on the things of this world and then demand that we give him the centre of attention all the time. That would be a bad parent.

Good parents love their children, try to give them sufficient guidance, and then set them free to focus on their own lives. They don't demand to be the centre of their children's lives; they only ask that their children remain faithful to the family's ethos and values, even as they still want them to come home regularly and not forget about their family.

This dynamic is a little more complex within a marriage. Spouses with a mature love for each other no longer demand that they be the centre of each other's conscious attention all the time.

Most of the time, this is not a problem. The problem arises more when one partner is no longer the affective centre for the other, when at the level of emotional attraction and focus someone else has displaced him or her. This can be emotionally painful and yet, within the context of mature love, should not threaten the marriage. Our emotions are like wild animals, roaming where they will, but they are not the real indicator of love and fidelity. I know a man, a writer, who has been lovingly and scrupulously faithful to his wife through more than 40 years who, by his own admission, has a crush on a different person every other day. This hasn't threatened his marriage. Admittedly though, but for a strong spirituality and morality, it could.

## Principles

The same principles hold true for our relationship with God. First, God gave us a nature that is affectively wild and promiscuous. God expects us to be responsible as to how we act inside that nature; but, given how we are made, the First Commandment may not be interpreted in such a way that we

should feel guilty whenever God is not consciously or affectively number one in our lives.

Next, as a good parent, God doesn't demand to be the centre of our conscious attention all the time. God is not upset when our habitual focus is on our own lives, so long as we remain faithful and do not culpably neglect giving God that focus when it is called for.

**“Does God demand to be the centre of our conscious attention all the time? Is it okay habitually to be focused elsewhere?”**

As well, God is a good spouse who knows that sometimes, given our innate promiscuity, our affections will momentarily be infatuated by a different centre. Like a good spouse, what God asks is fidelity.

Finally, more deeply, there is still the question of what ultimately we are infatuated with and longing for when our focus is on other things rather than on God. Even in that, it is God we seek.

There are times when we are called to make God the conscious centre of our attention; love and faith demand this. However, there will be times when, affectively and consciously, God will take fourth place in our lives – and God is mature and understanding enough to live with that.

**“I believe that God is mature enough that he doesn't demand to be the centre of our conscious attention all the time”**

# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, September 30, 2021

## Personal Profile

Combining  
new and old  
experiences

Page 34



**W**hether it's in front of a large audience or before a small team of colleagues, most of us have to speak before groups of people at some time or other. The pandemic mitigated this by offering the less-daunting prospect of Zoom meetings and other similar online forums, but the recent return to workplaces, colleges and schools means many are going to have to face down public speaking once again.

This is no small thing – public speaking consistently featuring in lists of fears and phobias. Being social creatures, we're intensely conscious of making fools of ourselves in front of others and seek to reduce the risk of doing so as often as possible. Standing before a crowd or group puts the spotlight firmly on us, and in our minds, magni-



**The return to offices, colleges and schools means more presentations, so it's a good idea to practice public speaking, writes Jason Osborne**

fies every mistake we make.

It need not be so, though. Our ability to speak publicly is fortunately something that is in our control. Countless books and presentations have been given on the topic to just that end; helping people to improve their public speaking skills. Having been on the debating team in secondary school and having had a job a number of years ago that was constructed around delivering presentations to large groups, I've been fortunate enough to pick up some tricks

of the trade, reducing a once nerve-wracking experience to a routine one.

### **You don't look as nervous as you feel**

The first thing to say, and one of the most useful pieces of advice that I received, is that you don't look as nervous as you feel. When standing up to speak in front of a group, you're always far more aware of your sweating palms, your racing heart, your muddled thoughts, than the

crowd is. They simply see you standing before them.

It's very important then, that you learn to dissociate these feelings from the idea that you're doing poorly or making a fool of yourself. Understanding that nervousness and excitement are two sides of the same coin helps to harness the adrenaline rush you experience before doing something scary – which in turn helps you to be more alert and ready to give a commanding performance.

### **Prepare beforehand**

Preparation is also the best way to overcome pre-presentation nerves. Going over your speech or notes multiple times in advance of the occasion familiarises you with the material and the topic, making it a routine rather than a once-off event.

Another good piece of advice I received in this regard is to either practice giving the presentation or speech in front of a mirror, or videotape it. Both will help you to see yourself perform, and identify the ways in which you can do better. It's helpful to bring a friend in on these occasions if you feel comfortable doing so, as they can offer gentle critiques to help you improve.

A key part of preparation is knowing your audience. Knowing who they are will help you deliver your message in a way well suited to them. It's important to remember that your speech is about them, not you. This will help you to choose your words, phrases and the general thrust of your presentation more aptly.

» **Continued on Page 33**

## Family News



### AND EVENTS

#### MINORITY PUPILS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE NEGATIVE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Pupils from Muslim minority backgrounds are more likely to have a negative relationship with their teacher, new research from Queen's University Belfast (QUB) shows. The study, lasting three years and involving more than 3,000 students, showed that 94.5% of majority students experienced positive or moderately positive relationships. Meanwhile, 77.7% of Muslim minority students had positive relationships with their teachers. A small group of both majority adolescents (5.5%) and Muslim minority adolescents (13.8%) initially experienced negative relationships with teachers but then went on to have a positive relationship. Among Muslim minority adolescents, a group of 8.5% experienced deteriorating relationships over the three years, with an increase in feelings of rejection by their teacher. Dr Gülseli Baysu, who led the research, said "We found that for minority kids, their relationships with teachers can play a more critical role for success but unfortunately it is these students who are more likely to experience rejection by their teachers."

#### GET TO KNOW IRELAND'S NATIVE TREES

The National Botanic Gardens is offering free tours every Wednesday and Saturday to October 13, as Wild Ireland want to help you get to know Ireland's native trees. "While we've all become familiar with neighbourhood trees in recent times, great change happens them in autumn, and where better to witness it than the National Botanic Gardens," Wild Ireland said. "Visit Wild Ireland and meet our native trees, the productive, palatable and poisonous denizens of fields and forests." In attending the hour-long tour, you will get to know "their names and shapes, their stories and uses, and the importance of trees in the Irish landscape". The tours will take place in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, and can be booked by visiting [www.eventbrite.ie/e/themed-tour-wild-ireland-meet-the-native-trees-tickets-167997772861?aff=ebdssbdestsearch](http://www.eventbrite.ie/e/themed-tour-wild-ireland-meet-the-native-trees-tickets-167997772861?aff=ebdssbdestsearch). Group numbers will be limited, so book ahead. Meet at the sign in front of The Palm House, where a guide, wearing an identifiable name badge, will meet the tour groups.

#### CHINA PLACES TIME LIMIT ON DOUYIN – THEIR TIKTOK

Douyin, China's version of TikTok, will limit use of the platform for children to 40 minutes a day. The rules will apply to users under 14, who have been authenticated using their real names, and who will be able to access it between 06:00 and 22:00, the BBC reports. It comes as China cracks down on teenagers' use of technology. According to Douyin's user agreement there is no minimum age on the platform, but under 18s must obtain the consent of a legal guardian. On sister app TikTok the minimum age is 13. New educational content - including science experiments, museum exhibitions and historical explainers - has been launched by Douyin as part of Youth Mode. "Yes, we are more strict with teenagers. We will work harder to provide quality content so that young people can learn and see the world," the company said in a statement.

# Is it bigoted to be sure we're right?



**H**ow open-minded should a Christian be? On the one hand, open-mindedness is generally a good thing. Being open to the possibility of learning new things, and to the possibility that one is mistaken, is a mark of a healthy mind. It's also a sign of humility. Openness to being wrong is an acknowledgment that we are not infallibly clever, perceptive, or wise.

**“But on the other side of things, Christian faith is supposed to require a sort of absolute certainty”**

What's more, open-mindedness is a way of respecting the people we're talking to or arguing with. By being open to the possibility that they're right and we're wrong we treat them as having something at least potentially worth listening to, something that could at least potentially change our minds and actions. There's something depressing about disagreeing with someone whose mind is completely closed. It feels as though there is no genuine dialogue happening at all, that our own contributions are essentially pointless because there's no chance they will alter our interlocutor's position. And if we hate arguing with someone whose mind is closed, can we expect others to listen to us if we're absolutely certain we are right?

But on the other side of things, Christian faith is supposed to require a sort of absolute certainty. At least, many great Christian thinkers have thought so, Sts Thomas



## Everyday philosophy Ben Conroy

Aquinas and John Henry Newman among them. If we are still open to the possibility that it is all false, that Christ is not risen or that God isn't real, our commitment to Christ and to the Christian life seems less than total. Here we are not supposed to be relying on our fallen intellects, but on the supernaturally given virtue of faith.

It's not just faith that seems to demand absolute certainty. There seems to be something off about holding certain ethical beliefs with anything less than absolute certainty. And there seems to be something more admirable about the person who is completely unwilling to entertain the possibility that torturing a child could ever be permissible than the one who is willing in the name of intellectual humility to entertain the possibility.

#### How to solve the problem?

G.K. Chesterton once wrote "It is not bigotry to be certain we are right; but it is bigotry to be unable to imagine how we might possibly have gone wrong."

This statement, like others of Chesterton's, is a bit mysterious. If we can really imagine how we might have gone wrong, how can we actually be certain that we are right? It's unclear. Or is the imagination of how we might have gone

wrong completely theoretical, requiring only that we imagine how we might be wrong if things had been different, perhaps in some other possible world? Then it doesn't seem like much of a concession to humility.

I have a guess at what Chesterton may have meant, though whether it is the right interpretation I am (perhaps appropriately) not sure. He might have been saying that confidence and certainty in



your own beliefs may actually be helped, not hindered, by an openness to being wrong.

Imagine I am arguing with someone about the existence of God. If I am completely certain that God does exist, I will, presumably, be certain that his existence will stand up to questioning. So by honestly entertaining the possibility that God might not exist, and genuinely considering and evaluating the arguments to that effect, I could be described

as acting from that certainty rather than against it. I can risk genuine openness to being wrong because I am so confident that I am right.

If this has a whiff of paradox about it, well, par for the course for Chesterton. But at least this time I think there is something to the paradox. If I was arguing with someone and they closed their ears and refused to listen to me, I would take that as a sign that they had doubts about their own position, not that they were supremely confident. If they said to me "I am only engaging in this conversation to help correct your errors: I have no need to consider the possibility that I am wrong", I'd have a similar suspicion. By contrast, when I talk to someone who really seems to be thinking about my arguments and actually testing them against their own belief, I'm more inclined to think they're confident and free from insecurity.

**“But it's the best way I have now of resolving the tension between the virtues of open-mindedness and faith”**

So I think there is something to the idea that openness to being wrong and certainty are not as incompatible as they seem at first. I'm not completely satisfied with this Chestertonian solution (for example it sometimes seems good to refuse to entertain arguments, as in cases of temptation). But it's the best way I have now of resolving the tension between the virtues of open-mindedness and faith. Of course, I could be wrong.



» Continued from Page 31



### Use (minimal) notes

When you're nervous about giving a speech there can be a tendency to write it out word for word so that you can always refer to it if you forget what comes next. However, while this may get the entire speech down on paper, it compromises on all of the other important aspects of public speaking: eye contact and gestures foremost among them. If you've ever watched or listened to a speech or presentation read off a sheet, you know what I'm talking about. It's a sure way to lose the audience's attention.

### “On the topic of the speaking itself, avoid at all costs the ‘ums’ and ‘ahs’ that we automatically fill our speech with”

Instead, try minimal notes, using prompts and talking points instead of lengthy paragraphs. This should help you keep your place without resulting in a poorer experience for the audience.

### Personalise your speech

Personal connection is very effective when it comes to public speaking. While it's true, as I said, that the speech or presentation isn't about you but your audience, it's also true that giving them personal anecdotes, stories and a sense of your personality is more likely to help them connect with you and your message.

It's a cliché at this stage, but it's often the case that people don't remember everything you say, but they surely remember how you made them feel. Scripture itself alludes to this, when the resurrected Christ appears to the pair travelling on the

road to Emmaus. After he vanishes, they turn to each other and ask, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?”

### Avoid fillers, embrace pauses

On the topic of the speaking itself, avoid at all costs the “ums” and “ahs” that we automatically fill our speech with. We generally do this in order to avoid awkward silences as we gather our thoughts, but those silences aren't as awkward as we're inclined to think.

A well-timed break in speaking can emphasise or strengthen a point, letting the audience mull over it before moving on.

They say that when in doubt, keep it brief (or briefer, at least). Often when we're speaking or giving a presentation, we're given a certain amount of time in which to do so. Less is sometimes more, as the saying goes, but going over on your time is likely to turn a structured presentation into a wandering, ponderous discussion that loses its point somewhere along the way.

Going over on your time reveals a lack of preparation, and is poor etiquette if your presentation or speech is part of a larger event, as it deprives others of their time.



With this in mind, it's also not ideal to rush through your talk. A sure sign of nervousness and a lack of preparedness is to rush through your talk, barely pausing to take a breath. You need to give your audience the opportunity to connect by slowing down and making sure they hear what you're saying.

The key to balancing your speech's pace just right is practice, of course. Practicing in advance ensures you won't go over your time, without rushing through all of your material.

### Body language

A final flourish to put on your performance is practiced body language and tone. The way things are communicated has an enormous, unconscious effect on your audience, and delivers the feelings you intend to convey. Good delivery and movement doesn't distract, rather, it emphasises the points you're making.

### “These few tips are simply to get you started as you head back into the public forum”

This stands in stark contrast to an inward, hunched over, nervous speech or presentation. Your message doesn't carry as well, and you make your audience work to engage with you. When practicing, simply begin by standing up straight with your shoulders back, resisting the urge to make yourself smaller. Then you can start adding in gestures and movement.

As mentioned, there have been many books written and speeches given on 'the art of public speaking'. These few tips are simply to get you started as you head back into the public forum.

## Faith — IN THE — family



Gerard Gallagher

Without a doubt, restrictions and measures employed during the Covid-19 pandemic have had a lasting impact on our parishes and our families. For 18 months we were unable to physically gather in our parishes. It was the same with families, many were unable to meet during this period. Clearly the Church missed the people gathering. For others, they didn't miss the Church. It's time now for a conversation.

Inviting parishes and people to reflect on how they will pass on the Faith is crucial. Our parishes have changed with reduced participation and attendance. Just reopening for business as usual is not good enough. Many young people and young families have not returned. Maybe they will. Clear pastoral planning will be required to support all our active parishioners in living and understanding their faith in the months ahead. It is time to begin to look towards new models and methods for passing on the Faith at home and in the parish.

Yet as we gather again in our parishes it will be a missed opportunity if we just simply return to and revert to keeping our parishes maintained as before. Bishop Michael Duignan has reflected on this saying, “To return to the way things were, without any attempt to learn from the experience or to embark on serious effort to consider where as a faith community we go from here would be truly short sighted.”

Pope Francis has called for a new 'living of faith' and for “everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, styles and methods of evangelisation in their respective communities”.

Boldness and creativity will be required all of us in building up our communities of faith. Restoring our sacramental programmes to the default position as we did before would be a lazy approach. We have crossed a Rubicon. We require a new group of pastorally trained leaders to guide and nurture opportunities to pass on faith.

Stories have emerged that our 'smaller' First Communion and Confirmation celebrations have been more meaningful for those attending. The same can be said of marriages in Church. Smaller was better. Building on this will be crucial, supporting young parents as they attempt to pass on a faith that they may not have

reflected on will be crucial. Rather than fall into the trap that we don't see these people often, use our moments of gathering in new ways to support with better catechetical supports. These moments of new encounters can become pastoral moments of evangelisation.

For those who tried to stay connected to their faith during Covid-19, it was most likely at home and possibly on the kitchen table with a piece of technology. This may be one of the solutions of passing on faith in the home and with families. Some viewers began to discover that they could find better liturgies or moments of prayer online. The bar was raised. Others discovered the benefits of joining online faith groups where faith was explored and developed. We need to accept that our Church will be 'blended' mixing the in-person experiences with other efficient online opportunities. We can review the online Church option rather than cease it. Just like sport on the television we can grow our in-person experiences with a viewing audience too.

In 2020 I was involved in a research project examining the experience of faith online for young adults. One of the conclusions was that many were online, just not with Church. It would also be fair to conclude this would be a similar sentiment for young families and others too.

The challenge now as we reconnect is to find the new paths and possibilities that will lead to a more developed and meaningful faith. The new Directory for Catechesis can assist with this task. The obligation to attend mass was restrictive for some and liberating for others. Our faith should not only be about rules, but also one where freedom to grow in faith can take place.

A challenge facing all of us in our parishes is to find new ways for people to encounter faith at home and in our churches. Covid-19 forced many parishes to minister in new ways. Just like the two apostles on the way to Emmaus we can walk together and gain new insight into the 'important matters'. Rather than lament for the past, let us with joy take new opportunities in our parishes to reach out to those who have become disconnected from us.

Gerard Gallagher is a Pastoral Coordinator in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

# Combining new and old experiences

## Personal Profile



Brandon Scott

**F**r Sean Coyle and Fr Donal O'Hanlon are retired Columban missionaries who are now based in Dalgan Park, Co. Meath. Both spent the vast majority of their ministry in the Philippines, where they encountered both tragedy and fulfilment in the turbulent state. The two priests were involved in the Legion of Mary before and after leaving Ireland and reflected on their experiences of the legion in both the Philippines and Ireland and why the organisation is held in such significance by them both.

Fr Coyle recalls his initial interactions with the legion in the Philippines and the work he undertook, "I was involved with the legion in my early years in the Philippines...I was in a parish presidium in my first parish and then I was a college chaplain", he told *The Irish Catholic*. "Most of the students were from poor backgrounds; not destitute because they were at college but just of very modest means. I used to do mainly hospital visitation and some house-to-house visitations".

### Involvement

But, as he reveals, involvement with the legion in the Philippines could quite often expose the harrowing deprivation in the country, "I remember one time, some of the praesidium found two children who were starving and we got them to hospital", he begins. "Sadly, a boy of five years of age died and I buried him on Christmas Eve. The saddest thing of all was that he never once smiled when he was in hospital. His



Fr Sean Coyle

sister, I thought she was an undernourished seven-year-old when she was actually 12, she died the following September".

**“Most of the women in the hostel would be homeless, some temporarily but all for different reasons”**

When asked if there were any differences between Irish and Filipino praesidia drawing from their experiences of both, Fr Coyle and Fr O'Hanlon both agreed that, "the membership would be much younger" [in the Philippines]. "Oh, yes. Much, much younger", Fr O'Hanlon confirms. "I was in a city parish and I set up two new praesidia", he explains. "Usually, I would have about seven men and seven women. They would usually be in their 30s and 40s. It was much eas-

ier to get legionaries there than here. I was in the Legion of Mary before I went to the Philippines in a small, rural parish. The work was the same, visitations, catechetical work etc," he recalls.

When queried on why he believes the legion met such resounding success, Fr Coyle attributed it to the legion's principles that were imbued with an unwavering emphasis on Christian ethics, "the legion was a classless movement from the beginning", he says. "The first president, Mrs Kirwan, she was a widow from New Zealand and Frank Duff wrote years later that she was the poorest in the very first group and he was happy that she was. You had people involved in government in Ireland; senior civil servants and very ordinary people in the Legion. In the legion, you all address each other as brother and sister in the praesidium meeting".

### Remarkable

Fr Coyle, like most who have followed the remarkable life of Frank Duff, marvels at the man's groundbreaking philosophy, a philosophy that he says was dismissed by many at the time, but was vindicated in the subsequent reform that accompanied the Second Vatican Council, "he was a pioneer in ecumenism with Protestants and also a pioneer in inter-faith dialogue with Jews in Dublin when it was frowned upon. His vision was that every Catholic by virtue of Baptism had a responsibility to be part of the mission of the Church. That was not understood by many and yet that was the vision of the Second Vatican Council".

Fr Coyle continues, "he insisted that if unmarried mothers wanted to keep their child they should be enabled to do so. The Regina Caeli hostel was largely for unmarried mothers, most of whom came from very poor backgrounds. He was way ahead of his time".

The Regina Caeli's work is something that Fr Coyle is informed of as he is spiritual director of the praesidium of Regina Caeli in Navan. This has enabled Fr Coyle to fully immerse himself in the charitable conceptions of the legion and gain an insight into why these initiatives were originally introduced by the legion.

"Most of the women in the hostel would be homeless, some temporarily but all for different reasons. Some of them are immigrants. Some of the indoor sisters and brothers are people who are full-time, live-in, voluntary legionaries. Since I became involved four

years ago, I have seen indoor sisters from Pakistan and Austria," he says.

When asked about the influence that the Legion of Mary currently holds within the Church in Ireland, Fr Coyle was quick to underline the legion's importance in the country's capital, and believed that the key to the legion's longevity is on account of its attraction to Catholics from all around the world.

**“Fr Coyle attributed it to the legion's principles that were imbued with an unwavering emphasis on Christian ethics”**

"In Dublin, there are younger legionaries...One man, Emmanuel Burke, is principal of a boys' Catholic school in Dublin and is totally involved with the legion. I think it has brought out that sense of being evangelised".

"Some of the legion families I know are raising their families with a very living faith. The legion in Navan, prior to Covid, had adoration of the Blessed Sacrament once a month. This was mainly for pre-teens and parents. The one giving the catechises was from Pakistan and there is also a French couple who are involved".

Although both priests are currently enjoying their retirement in the home of the Missionary Society of St Columban in Ireland, both are still heavily involved in the legion in Navan and eagerly attend related events. Fr Coyle also continues to deputise in the parish of Johnstown and Walterstown when necessary.



Fr Donal O'Hanlon

## How can I avoid those painful 'holiday blues'?

**Every year when I come back from holidays after a time of refreshment and family time, we often return with really bad post-holiday blues. How can I avoid them this year?**

**T**his is totally normal and natural. You work hard all year, you save, you spend hours daydreaming about your two week holiday. Yet sometimes you can come home feeling more drained than before you left. It can be hard to come back into your normal routine, but understanding that it's normal to feel this way can be half the battle.

What about your holiday did you enjoy? It probably was spending time together, relaxing or reading a good book. You don't have to fall straight back into your hectic routine, where can you make more time to spend together. What are the activities you enjoyed on holiday? Maybe it was a walk or cycle together, you can do those things at home too, you just have to make the time to do it. Did you enjoy reading on holiday? Why not make sure you read for 20 minutes at night in bed and

ditch that second episode of your favourite TV show on Netflix? It's also tempting to go online and look at everyone else who is now on holiday.

Don't! Get off social media and do the things you enjoyed on holidays - spending time with those who you love. It's good to also unpack quickly and put your cares away in the attic so your suitcases are not reminding you of the sunshine!

### Memories

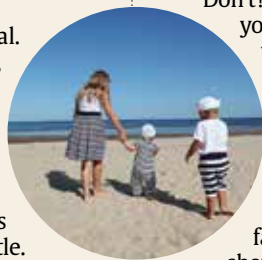
Share your holiday memories with family. I love going over to my mum's and showing them a slideshow of some photos on the TV and excitedly telling the family all we got up to. Remember to be positive if you come home talking yourself into the post holiday blues you will likely feel them worse, think of all the things you have to be positive about, I am always grateful to get into my own bed and thankful I am coming home to a roof over my head.

The plane journey home itself without the adrenaline or excitement of going on holidays can

be tough. Make sure to drink lots of water and try to get a good night's sleep the night before your flight. Often feeling tired and low on energy is just because you're dehydrated. Most of us on holidays eat and drink a lot more than we usually do, so it's important to get back into eating healthy and cutting down on alcohol as well as planning some fresh air and exercise.

Plan to come home two days before you have to go back to work. The day after your flight home plan a nice family day together, catch up with family and friends you have missed. Gently ease yourself back into being home rather than arriving on a late night flight the night before having to go back to work. Plan to keep up what was great about holidays - plan to have a family day once a week and incorporate your date night once a week, even if that's just having a dine in meal when the kids are gone to bed.

And remember the holiday blues are usually pretty temporary, after a short period of adjustment the blues will be long gone and you can start planning your next holiday!



Wendy Grace

# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Touching to see a life of loving and joyful service

**F**or some reason, coincidence or God-incidence, the theme of vocation has featured a few times in the media this week.

**75 Years in Japan** (RTÉ One, Thursday) was one of the most marvellously inspiring and moving programmes I've seen this year. This documentary told the story of Jennie O'Sullivan who became Sr Paschal when she joined the Infant Jesus Sisters in the early 1930s. She spent most of her life teaching in Japan, and when back in Ireland she was interviewed over a period of months, starting at the age of 100 and finishing at 101, by her cousin James Creedon. Her memory was impressive, as was her infectious good humour, not to mention her ability to converse in English, French and Japanese. And what a life! She experienced an earthquake on her first night in Japan, was put into an internment camp during World War II and was there when the atomic bombs were dropped. She said she would do it all again but try harder!

### Emotional

She became most emotional when she spoke of goodbyes – leaving her parents to join the convent and soon after leaving all family and friends to go to Japan, leaving Japan for her first trip home in the early 1950s,



Filmmaker James Creedon with Sr Paschal, RIP.

leaving Japan again, reluctantly, to come home to Ireland at the age of 98. James organised video calls with some of her past pupils and went to Japan to film more of them. She must have been a wonderful teacher considering how devoted her past pupils were. We saw these middle-aged Japanese women in tears listening to her video messages as she said a final *sayonara!*

The pace of the film was leisurely, the animations were beautiful and the original score by Alexander Kato-Willis was enhancing rather than distracting. The archive footage complemented and punctuated the story as we walked down memory lane

to a time of Irish missionary zeal. Instead of getting nostalgic for a lost world, one's reaction might be to take from Sr Paschal's example – to be of loving and joyful service as we live our vocational lives of faith. Watch it soon on the RTE Player.

The issue of vocations was also raised, in a mostly sympathetic way, on **Today With Claire Byrne** (RTE Radio One, Wednesday), but there wasn't much inspiration. Focusing on the Diocese of Cloyne, the context was the declining number of priests, rural parishes losing their parish priest ("another pillar of rural life being removed"), the need to limit the number of Masses available and the

amalgamation of parishes. It was more than a tad predictable as the reporter referenced, several times, the Church's stance on celibacy and women priests. I'd like to have heard more about vocation campaigns, vocation education, efforts to make the religious life more dynamic and appealing.

### Music

**The Vocation Music Award**, covered at launch some months ago in *The Irish Catholic* culminated last weekend in an online finale (YouTube, Saturday). Sixteen young people from Ireland and Britain sang their original songs on the theme of vocation and it was so full of

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### AIFREANN AN DOMHNAIGH

**Radio na Gaeltachta Sunday October 3, 11.00am**

A Mass commemorating the 50th anniversary of the death of Seán Ó Riada today. Mass this morning will be broadcast live from Séipéal Ghobnatan in Cúil Aodha, Co. Cork.

#### SELMA

**BBC Two Wednesday October 6, 11pm**

Biopic chronicling the three-month period in 1965 which saw Dr Martin Luther King Jr lead a turbulent march from Selma to Montgomery in a bid to secure equal voting rights.

#### UNREPORTED WORLD

**Channel 4 Friday October 8, 7.30pm**

Unreported World follows a private investigator who is trying to track down the Indigenous women going missing without a trace in the wilderness of the United States.

sincerity, devotion and hope for the future. Songs spoke of calling, of God's very personal love for us, of finding our place in the world. As one of the judges, Jo Boyce, said they were adding to the mosaic of Church life. If you want an uplift and a glimpse of what the young Church of the future can be, watch it back – just search 'Vocation Music Award UK-IRL 2021: Finale' on YouTube.

Also launched on YouTube, Tuesday of last week, was **Ireland's Fall, The Abortion Deception**, a short documentary on the loss of the Eighth Amendment. Tim Jackson's film had high production values and told a hugely important story. It will stand as a concise and valuable record of what happened, seen from the pro-life perspective. It

will enrage pro-choice activists, confirm what pro-life activists knew and felt all along and, I suspect, if they watch it, will make reluctant or soft 'yes' voters feel very uneasy. The interfering role of the social giants, and bias in mainstream media was highlighted, while there were thoughtful and insightful contributions from some of the main pro-life spokespersons. The main emphasis was on the Save the Eighth campaign and I thought the contribution of the Pro-Life Campaign and the associated Love Both campaign deserved more attention.

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# Music

Pat O'Kelly



## The Russian-ness of Stravinsky returned to take its final curtain

Remembering this year is the fiftieth anniversary of Stravinsky's death, I wrote about him in this column of September 2 reaching his Symphony in C of 1940 when he had settled in America.

This followed the death of his first wife Katya and marriage in March 1940 to extrovert artist and divorcee Vera Sudeykina. They met in 1921 and engaged in a lengthy extra-marital liaison.

After their wedding in Bedford, Massachusetts they resided in Hollywood for over 30 years but travelled extensively as the composer fulfilled worldwide conducting engagements and attended performances of his music. Visiting Dublin in June 1963, he directed his Symphony of



Igor Stravinsky's grave in Venice.

Psalms with the RÉSO, Singers and Choral Society at the Adelphi Cinema in Abbey

Street as part of a Radio Éireann festival of music.

Stravinsky's next major work, after his Symphony in C, was his Symphony in Three Movements written for the New York Philharmonic. Completed in 1946, its extensive piano part successfully merges the essential features of concerto and symphony together. The piece also uses music from his abandoned film scores including *The Song of Bernadette* of 1943.

### Opera

The last of Stravinsky's neo-classical oeuvres came with his only full-length opera, *The Rake's Progress*. Premiered in Venice in September 1951, its inspiration came

from a Chicago exhibition of engravings by English artist William Hogarth (1697-1764). Conducted by the composer, the cast included tenor Robert Rounseville, soprano Elisabeth Schwartzkopf and baritone Otakar Kraus in the principal roles.

Described as a "mock-serious pastiche of 18th Century grand opera" with its libretto by W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman, the score is a fusion of brilliance, wit and refinement that could only have come from Stravinsky's pen.

The opera's story deals with the decline and fall of one Tom Rakewell who deserts his fiancée Anne Trulove for the delights of London in the company of Nick

Shadow – Satan in disguise. The moral of the tale is, "the devil finds work for idle hands, hearts and minds".

### Indulging

Stravinsky's final series of compositions found him indulging serial technique but mainly adapting it to suit his own purposes. None of these late works enjoy the popularity of many of his earlier pieces, although several are much admired not least the ballet *Agon* (1957); the choral *Threni: id est Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetae* (1958) and *Requiem Canticles* (1966), which was sung at his funeral.

Whatever about its austerity, *Threni* has been described as "the most

ambitious and structurally the most complex of Stravinsky's religious compositions and among his greatest works". Close listening may well discover hints of the much earlier *Renard* and *Les Noces* making one realise the Russian-ness of Stravinsky's music had returned to take its final curtain.

As Stravinsky, who died in Manhattan, had expressed a wish to be buried on the island of San Michele in Venice, his funeral rites took place in the Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo there on April 15, 1971. Following her death on September 17, 1982, Vera Stravinsky was laid to rest beside her husband. I visited their graves when last in Venice in 2010.

# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Recent books in brief

### The Messenger Advent Booklet 2021: reflections on the Weekday Reading

by Donal Neary SJ

(Messenger Publications, €4.95/£4.50)

The author opens his little seasonal booklet with the observation that "Advent is the annual season of waiting". This year, however, the notion of waiting has taken on an even heavier weight of expectation: will the pandemic die away, will things get back to normal, what will this year's Christmas season bring, a welcome relief, or more of the same?

In these pages of reflection on the readings for the season Fr Neary widens the scope of our views. "Waiting in many ways is a good thing for us." Certainly many, especially weekday Mass-goers, will find a resource in these pages. What we can be certain of is that this year's Christmas will be different.

### Advent & Christmas 2021-2022

(The Irish Jesuits/Sacred Space, €4.95/£4.50)

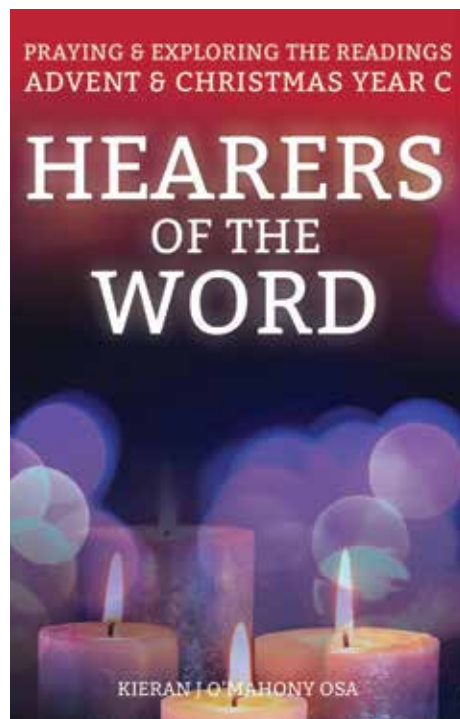
Those who are connected with Sacred Space, a creation of the Irish Jesuits, will also like to have the little booklet taken from their website [www.sacred.space.ie](http://www.sacred.space.ie). This will provide an admirable supplement to the Advent booklet above. Briefly it looks forward to a "future filled with hope", an appropriate thought.

### Hearers of the Word: Praying & Exploring the Readings Advent & Christmas Year C

by Kieran J. O'Mahony OSA

(Messenger Publications, €19.95/£18.95)

This is the latest volume in Fr Kieran O'Mahony's popular series. But unlike the booklets above, these pages call for longer and more serious reflection. That said, however, the readers who buy this book should turn first to the section at the end called 'The Table of Faith', which explains with a simple image how four aspects of faith can be connected, and become like a table, supportive of personal identity and of community engagement.



# Pope Francis and 'the contagion of hope'



### Church, Interrupted - Havoc & Hope: The Tender Revolt of Pope Francis

by John Cornwell (Chronicle Prism, £21.99/€25.00)

#### Prof. Eamonn Conway

**Y**ou know you are in the hands of a master author and story-teller when you open a book by John Cornwell.

Readers may be familiar with his best-seller *A Thief in the Night: the Death of John Paul I* (1989), as well as *Hitler's Pope* (1999), a far from flattering account of the war-time papacy of Pius XII.

There followed two highly critical accounts of the Church under the papacy of John Paul II, *Breaking Faith* (2001) and *Pontiff in Winter* (2004), and then, in more recent years, testimonials, at times harrowing, of his own Catholic upbringing: *Seminary Boy* (2006) and *The Dark Box: A Secret History of Confession* (2014).

These autobiographical works, which record memories of spiritual and psychological abuse as well as the abuse of conscience and of sexual violence Mr Cornwell himself experienced as a young man and seminarian, explain the very personal and distinctive critical lens he has brought to bear upon all his ecclesiastical subjects.

This is, sadly, a lens with which many of his readers will readily recognise and identify with from

their own experience of the Church growing up.

In 2010, Mr Cornwell published *Newman's Unquiet Grave: The Reluctant Saint*. Though intended as a less academic and more accessible account of the soon-to-be-canonised Cardinal John Henry Newman it was rightly taken to account not only for theological 'looseness', for instance in regard to Mr Cornwell's account of Newman's understanding of miracles, but also for an unfair and unfounded, gratuitously sensational, portrayal of Newman's personal life and personality.

**“Mr Cornwell provides very readable and credible accounts of Francis' preference for the peripheries”**

So what does Mr Cornwell make of Pope Francis?

Six months after Francis' election Mr Cornwell wrote confidently in the *Guardian* newspaper that Pope Francis would restore the moral authority of the Church destroyed by the cases of clerical sexual violence against children and the culture of cover-up.

This is still his hope. In fact, one could say that hopes for Pope Francis and for the Church book-end this thought-provoking interim report



John Cornwell

on the current pontificate. Indeed, the opening words of *Church, Interrupted* are "Hoping against hope!", spoken by Pope Francis on March 19, 2013 - the day of his installation as Bishop of Rome. The book concludes with describing the legacy of Pope Francis as "the contagion of hope".

#### Predecessors

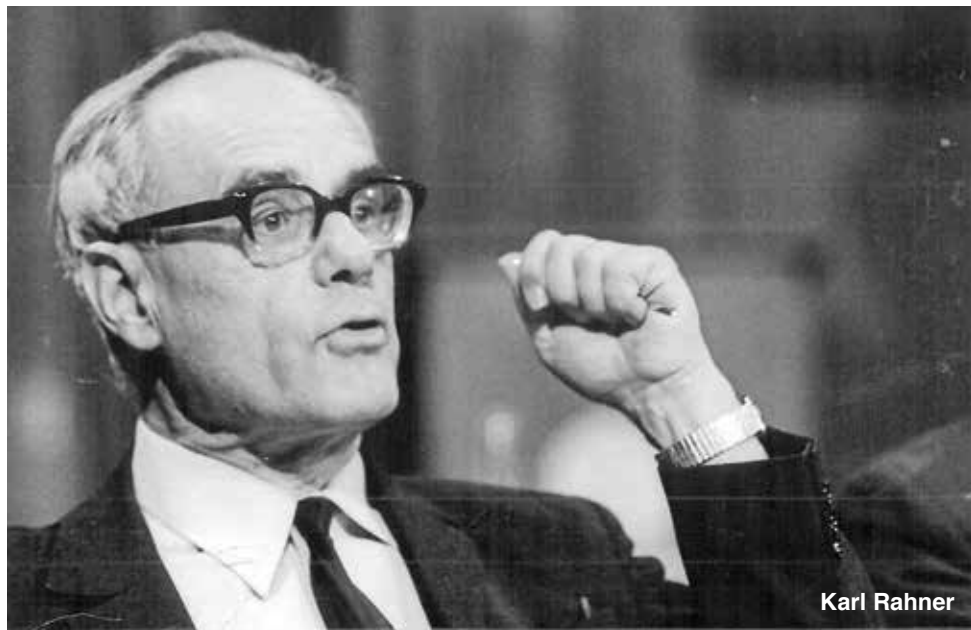
Perhaps even more so than his predecessors, Pope Francis has generated a veritable industry of commentary on his pontificate. When it comes to the finer points of Pope Francis' teaching; for instance, theological underpinnings of and detailed reasoning behind pastoral developments one finds such as in *Amoris Laetitia*, and so on, there is no substitute for reading the texts

themselves and some solid theological commentary.

And for those already familiar with Pope Francis' own speeches and writings as well as the ever-expanding corpus of secondary literature there will be little new in this book by way of fact or detail, the exception being some unsubstantiated but likely true tittle-tattle in regard to the Roman Curia slipped in along the way along with interesting personal anecdotes.

Nonetheless, Mr Cornwell provides very readable and credible accounts of Francis' preference for the peripheries, the manner in which he brings the qualities of mercy and tenderness to bear on Church policy and practice, and his courageous words and gestures

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.



Karl Rahner

in the area of inter-faith and ecumenical dialogue and reconciliation.

The section on the Amazon synod seems somewhat rushed and uneven, perhaps explained by the fact that the synod took place shortly before the book went to print.

In regards to the topic of synodality itself the book is already overtaken by subsequent events and publications. One of the best sections is the concluding one, which, tentatively yet persuasively, points to Francis' legacy in terms of sowing new seeds of hope for the flourishing of Christian faith in a post-pandemic world.

### Challenges

What interested me most was Mr Cornwell's reasonably fair and forthright account of the many challenges Francis has faced, several of his own making.

These include his mishandling of sexual abuse reports from Chile, and what seems like overly-protracted, stop and start attempts at reform within the Curia. There are also legitimate concerns about his handling of the Church in China, as well as far too many instances of poor communication and miscommunication that continue to dog his pontificate.

While reading the author's account of Francis' failings and weaknesses, despite which Mr Cornwell is still betting on him, I was reminded of an extraordinary essay by Karl Rahner published in 1983 not long before his death.

It is composed in the voice of a fictional Pope Paul VII elected sometime in the twenty-first century to an equally fictional Peppino, a friend and classmate from their old days together in the Gregorian University. In case you're in any doubt, this was a most unusual writing genre for Karl Rahner.

I don't know if Francis has ever read Fr Rahner's letter;

the fact is that he could have written it.

So, our fictional Pope Paul VII expresses some relief that an Italian (himself) is once again Pope because the Pope is first and foremost Bishop of the Diocese of Rome, something that Pope Francis, of strong Italian heritage, has been at pains to stress.

Paul VII says that his priority will be to reform the Curia including by insisting on every priest working at the Vatican having at least 15 years' pastoral experience.

He will also insist that there are people working in the Curia from all over the world because "a Church that is no longer the Church of Europe with a few outlying sections, but which has become a world-Church, can no longer be ruled in such a centralised way as before".

### “Pope Francis has generated a veritable industry of commentary on his pontificate”

Though Fr Rahner's Paul VII doesn't speak of synodality, he commits himself to developing a strategic pastoral plan for the world-Church which has strong synodal overtones (see *Theological Investigations*, Vol XXII, 191 - 208). The echoes of Pope Francis in this 1983 letter are so strong that they are uncanny.

The section of this letter that came to mind reading Mr Cornwell's book is where Pope Paul VII discusses the strong likelihood that he will make several serious mistakes while Pope.

He speaks of a Pope's right to be a struggling Christian and how history demonstrates that there were many "frightful, stupid, narrow-minded, backward things" that Popes did in the past. The likelihood, then, he says,

is that he too will commit stupidities despite his good will and honest endeavours. Otherwise, "we would not be poor sinners, finite creatures, who painfully grope along in history's darkness".

Recognising, then, the inevitability that Popes will get things - even serious things - wrong, Pope Paul VII asks why should acknowledgment of this wait until later? Why should it not be capable of acknowledgment during a Pope's lifetime?

It is wrong, he suggests, for Church leaders to have the idea that "their legitimate authority would be jeopardised if they let their 'subjects' see that they too were only human beings who committed blunders".

### Convinced

And so he asks, "If I am convinced that as Pope I remain a human being who will commit faults, perhaps even serious ones, why would I not be allowed to admit this even during my lifetime?"

Finally, he sees that the people who really matter know that authority does not suffer, but rather profits, when its bearer openly admits the limitations of a poor and sinful human being, and is not afraid to acknowledge them." How often has Francis acknowledged that he is, first and foremost, a sinner in need of God's mercy?

Would that, as Church leaders, we ourselves realised more that our strength lies in knowing and acknowledging our weaknesses.

Cornwell's *Church, Interrupted: Havoc & Hope - the Tender Revolt of Pope Francis* is a useful and timely reminder that we might all have some growing up and maturing to undergo in order to receive and benefit from the pontificate of Pope Francis.

Prof. Eamonn Conway is a priest and theologian.

## The World of Books

By the books editor

# The emperor on Elba

This year France is marking, in various ways and styles, the bicentenary of the death of Napoléon Bonaparte. In the cause of heritage preservation the emperor has joined the Bourbons as part of the great panoply of French culture. The current head of the family, international investment banker Jean-Christophe, Prince Napoléon, a young man in the modern style, has been interviewed by *Paris Match* in the echoing halls of Les Invalides, where Napoléon I is laid in a magnificent sarcophagus.

### Glory

Magnificence, glory, daring, new ways of winning wars and running a country: all these are associated with the emperor. Few of his French admirers chose to dwell on the 'Hundred Days' and the disaster of Waterloo - Victor Hugo's *morne plaine*.

However, given my mischievous love of irony and the *outré* aspects of patriotic glory, his short reign as the sovereign prince of the island of Elba reads almost like a comic opera.

### “The island of Elba still welcomes many who come to sample its seafood dishes and to see the relics of Napoléon's brief rule”

This was after the battle of Paris, and as a consequence of the Treaty of Fontainebleau in April. We, in the English-speaking world, hear less of this, because the British played a lesser role in the matter.

He was allowed to retain his title of *Sa Majesté l'Empereur* for life. He was given Elba as "a separate principality for his life time, held by him in complete sovereignty". There he went, taking with him some 600 members of the *Grande Armée* who volunteered to go.

He was taken there on a British warship, and spent the five day voyage designing a flag for his new pocket kingdom. He landed there on May 4, 1814. Ashore he chose with the help of the mayor a residence on the high ridge above the town, the *Casa dei Mulini*. This mansion had the great



Napoléon's home on the island of Elba

advantage that all the open drains used for sanitation on the island flowed downhill from this peak; the stink of the town on Napoleon's arrival nauseated him.

Once in residence he set about his new ambition to dominate his domain now reduced to these narrow acres. How quickly worldly glory, so strongly lusted after by rulers, sacred and profane, comes to nothing.

On Elba he collected his mother, his sister, his current mistress, his wife and other camp followers. Hearing tales of how unpopular the restored Bourbon monarchy was in France, Napoléon decided to gamble again.

### Supporters

Urged on by supporters in France, he left Elba at the end of February 1815 and landed at Antibes on March 1. A hundred days later he was finally defeated at Waterloo.

This time he threw himself on the mercy of the King of England. Now a prisoner of the British, there was to be no more nonsense about him ruling in any capacity. He was sent to the remote St Helena in the South Atlantic, where his way of life was described by his Irish doctor Barry O'Meara, that unique work of Irish literature, *Napoleon in Exile, or A Voice From St Helena* (1822).

However, the island of Elba still welcomes many who come to sample its seafood dishes and to see the relics of Napoléon's brief rule. This delightful place has a special charm for all those who believe that "all political careers end in failure". The emperor had attempted to tame the Pope; the Vatican survives. The nation marking the emperor's death is now a republic, albeit its fifth.

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Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken  
Heart where your Father sees it.  
Then, in his merciful eyes, it will become your favour, not mine. Amen.  
Say this prayer for three days.  
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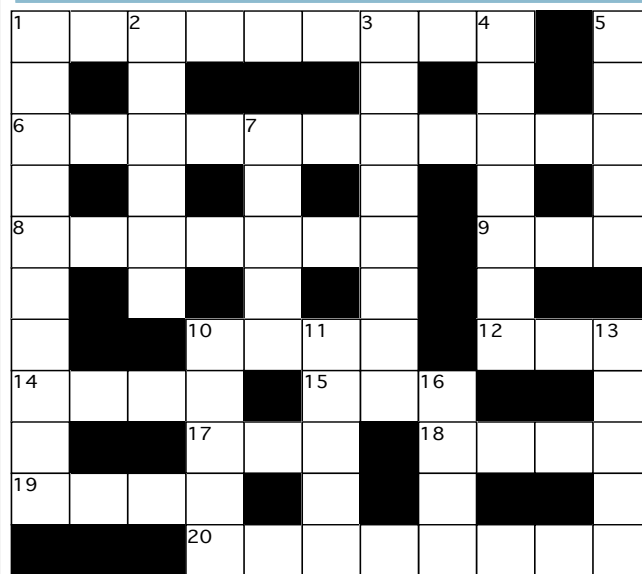
Trócaire

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One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

## Crossword Junior

Gordius 402



### Across

- 1 Mending, fixing up (9)
- 6 Gets the meaning (11)
- 8 Bring a letter or parcel to the address intended (7)
- 9 Sprint (3)
- 10 Costing nothing (4)
- 12 Allow (3)
- 14 Shrek is this type of monster (4)
- 15 Had some food (3)
- 17 We get our oxygen from it (3)
- 18 Adam and Eve's first two sons were Cain and \_\_\_\_\_ (4)
- 19 Spin a coin (4)
- 20 Series of movies with Woody and Buzz Lightyear (3,5)

### Down

- 1 This piece of road is the shape of a circle (10)
- 2 Walk in shallow water (6)
- 3 Where addresses begin with www (8)
- 4 High army rank (7)
- 5 There is one in your bathroom for when you wash your hands and face (5)
- 7 The Lagan or Shannon, perhaps (5)
- 10 Huge meal, banquet (5)
- 11 With time to spare (5)
- 13 A short word for television (5)
- 16 Direction opposite to West (4)

## SOLUTIONS, SEPTEMBER 23

GORDIUS NO. 526

**Across** – 1 Rip Van Winkle 7 Dee 9 Step 10 Seldom 11 Knit 14 Wheel 15 Taunt 16 Pear 18 Mates 21 Singe 22 Parma 23 Lanky 24 Yolk 25 Egg on 26 Globe 29 Babe 33 Amelia 34 Auks 36 Lye 37 White wedding

**Down** – 1 Rut 2 Pipe 3 Also 4 Welsh 5 Noose 6 Eden 8 Entertainers 9 Status symbol 12 Funnel 13 Steel 14 Woman 17 Enrage 19 Thyme 20 Speed limit 28 Below 30 Brew 31 Maid 32 Wadi 35 Keg

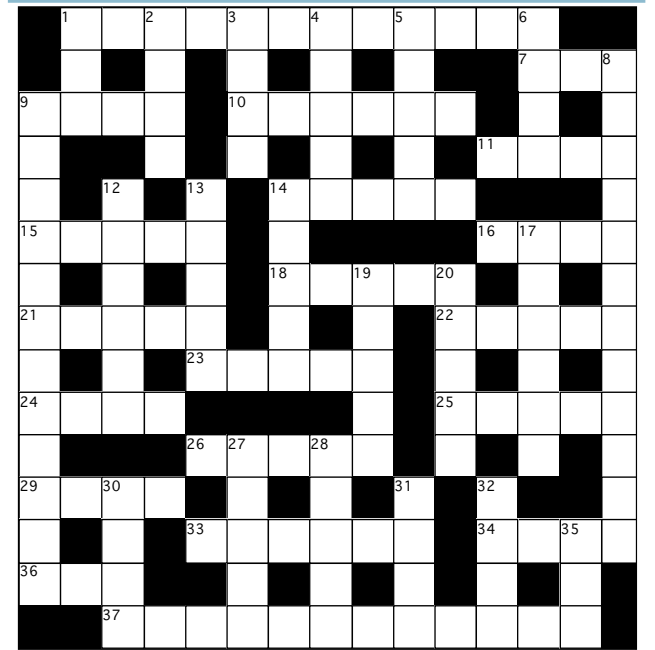
CHILDREN'S No. 401

**Across** – 1 Cloudy 6 Equal 7 Nothing 8 Grass 9 Boils 11 Larks 13 Finds 16 Snooker 18 Eagles 19 Asking

**Down** – 1 Candy floss 2 October 3 Daisies 4 Human 5 Glasses 6 Eggs 10 Win 12 Knock 14 Dozen 15 Keen 17 Rag

## Crossword

Gordius 527



### Across

- 1 David Bowie song title referencing words that may be said at a funeral (5,2,5)
- 7 Spherical symbol of monarchy (3)
- 9 Gather a harvest (4)
- 10 The seventh planet from the Sun (6)
- 11 Compartment on a ship in which to confine sailors (4)
- 14 Unsteady (5)
- 15 Precise (5)
- 16 Festive occasion (4)
- 18 Scene of bullfighting (5)
- 21 Of which old records were made (5)
- 22 Traditional Dutch footwear (5)
- 23 Shouts (5)
- 24 Large book (4)
- 25 'Knight of the road' - who sings in the 12 down? (5)
- 26 Answer (5)
- 29 Lubricates (4)
- 33 Perhaps scare a Roman ruler (6)
- 34 Italian word for 'Pope' (4)
- 36 Moral transgression (3)
- 37 The trusty sidekick of Sherlock Holmes (6,6)

### Down

- 1 Great wonder (3)
- 2 Jumps to get an ingredient used in brewing (4)

- 3 Self-satisfied (4)
- 4 The county town of Tyrone (5)
- 5 Open the shell of an oyster to eat the contents (5)
- 6 Sharp-tasting (4)
- 8 This musical work by John Gay involves some garbage prose! (7,5)
- 9 Second thoughts about the bookings one has made? (12)
- 12 & 32d From the Latin, one's greatest piece of creative work (6,4)
- 13 Country where the laity get confused (5)
- 14 Escargot (5)
- 17 Hooded jacket (6)
- 19 Written composition (5)
- 20 Sharp, severe (5)
- 27 Bring in a piece of legislation (5)
- 28 Powerful light beam used in certain types of surgery (5)
- 30 Provide a loan (4)
- 31 Acreage (4)
- 32 See 12 down
- 35 You need to key this in, in order to use a card at an ATM (1,1,1)

## Sudoku Corner

402

Easy

		1	3			6		
4			9			5		1
7	6				5			2
8		3				7	4	
1			8		6			9
	9	5				3		8
	4		5				9	2
2		6			3			5
	8				2	1		

Hard

		8	7					
		6				7		4
							4	8
		7	4		3			
				5	7		1	4
						5		1
7				1	8			
6	3		2					8
							9	1

## Last week's Easy 401

5	4	7	2	6	9	1	3	8
2	6	8	3	7	1	4	9	5
3	1	9	8	5	4	2	6	7
4	2	1	6	9	5	7	8	3
7	8	5	4	3	2	9	1	6
9	3	6	1	8	7	5	2	4
6	7	2	5	1	8	3	4	9
8	5	4	9	2	3	6	7	1
1	9	3	7	4	6	8	5	2

## Last week's Hard 401

8	9	1	2	3	5	6	4	7
6	5	7	1	4	9	8	3	2
4	2	3	7	8	6	9	5	1
5	8	6	4	7	3	2	1	9
9	7	2	5	1	8	3	6	4
3	1	4	9	6	2	7	8	5
1	3	5	6	9	7	4	2	8
2	6	9	8	5	4	1	7	3
7	4	8	3	2	1	5	9	6

Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough



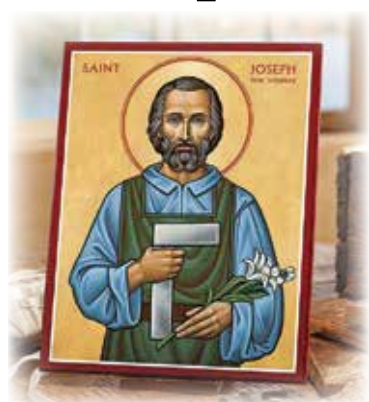
# There is no separation between work and faith

**WE'RE ALL FAMILIAR** with trade unions, organisations like SIPTU and ASTI, founded by workers in a particular sector, and designed to protect the rights and welfare of such workers.

They play a vital role in society, and in modern times Popes have consistently made major pronouncements in their favour, most elaborately in Pope St John Paul's *Laborem Exercens*. This line of papal teaching was really kicked off, though, by Pope Leo XIII. In an encyclical written in 1891, *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo praised the work of these unions in defence of justice, but he also pointed to their long history, tracing their roots back to the craft guilds of the Middle Ages.

**Trades**

The major trades at that time were highly organised. A medieval cobbler who moved to another city, for example, couldn't simply set up shop. He'd have to become a member of the local guild. Likewise, a young man wanting to become a carpenter had to do so through the guild of carpenters, being recognised first as an apprentice, then as a journeyman, and finally as a master, after having produced his 'masterpiece', a particularly challenging piece of carpentry. The guilds defended the rights of individual



members, but were also responsible for making sure that they produced work of a sufficiently high standard.

Dublin was no different from other medieval cities in being home to a large number of guilds. Incredibly, there survives a list of members of one guild dating back to the 12th Century! This guild, known as 'the guild merchant', eventually split into many different associations. A few centuries later, there were guilds in Dublin for the shoemakers, butchers, goldsmiths, bakers, gardeners, barber-surgeons, glovers, carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers, cooks, and many more besides.

We're used to thinking of the world of work as quite distinct from the world of religious prac-

tice, but the medieval guilds were deeply religious organisations. Each guild had a chapel, for example. The barber-surgeons had a chapel in St John's Church (where the Augustinian church is now located, on John's Lane), the weavers had theirs in the Carmelite church, on Whitefriar Street, and the carpenters' chapel was in St Thomas' Abbey church (on what is now Thomas Street).

During the year, the guilds would make sure the chapels were kept in good condition, and would keep candles lighting there throughout the week. Some of them supported a priest too, who would say Mass for members of the guild, living and deceased. On their patronal feast day, all members would be in attendance, wearing their fine uniforms and car-

rying banners. The chapel would be hung with coloured fabrics, a choir assembled, and the liturgy celebrated with great solemnity and joy.

**Theatrical**

The guilds weren't just private clubs, though. They sought to contribute to the good of all the citizens. The main form of outreach was, perhaps surprisingly, theatrical: the guilds funded and participated in the so-called 'mystery plays', dramas based on Bible stories, performed on the streets of Dublin on great feasts.

These plays were probably performed on wagons that made their way through the streets, and paused in several places to act out the scene for different crowds of people. As the wagons passed, the crowds would be

led through the whole story of salvation, from creation to the last judgment. While the plays were edifying, there was also plenty of room for humour, usually through characters like Mrs Noah, Balaam and his ass, and St Joseph.

A list dating to 1498 tells us what plays were performed on Corpus Christi that year. With a touch of humour, it assigns responsibility for each play to a particularly appropriate guild: the glovers put on the story of Adam and Eve; the mariners and shipwrights joined forces to build Noah's Ark; the goldsmiths kitted out the Magi; and the guild of fishermen acted out the twelve apostles.

By their creativity and devotion, these craft guilds remind us that there is no real separation between our work and our faith. As Pope St John Paul II taught, the Christian always "unites work with prayer" (*Laborem Exercens*).

**A saint for the working class**

Although it was Pope Leo who kicked off papal defence of workers' rights in modern times, his successors Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII gave a devotional underpinning to this teaching by connecting it with the carpenter, St Joseph. At one and the same time they called on Catholics to fight for workers' rights and to fight against communism, and they did so invoking the patronage of St Joseph, who, in the words of Pius XI, "belonged to the working class".

So when Pius XII decided to Christianise the communist celebration of International Workers' Day, May 1, it was natural for him to follow on from his predecessors, and to name Joseph the Worker as patron of workers and trade unions.



Little Way Sisters providing refugees with food, medicines and accommodation, and bringing them the love, care and compassion of Christ.



## THE LITTLE WAY MISSIONARY SISTERS OF ST THERESE URGENTLY NEED OUR HELP

The Little Way Missionary Sisters of St Therese live and work in small communities that have been established in remote mountainous areas of Myanmar (Burma), where Jesus and His Gospel are unknown, as well as in the towns and more populated areas. The Sisters have opened their convent doors to large numbers of refugees providing them with food, medicines and a place to stay. They are caring for the sick and attending to their needs. They ask for our help and for our prayers.

### Can you spare a donation for the Sisters?

Your gift which will be forwarded without deduction will enable the Sisters to continue to serve the refugees, the poorest of the poor, the sick and the uneducated and will provide a presence where the love of God and neighbour can be recognised. Archbishop Mang Thang assures all benefactors of a daily share in his prayers and asks for our prayers for the Church in Myanmar.



"I will spend my heaven doing good on earth. I will let fall a shower of roses."  
- St Therese

**Feast Day: 1st October**  
**WE WISH ALL OUR FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS A VERY HAPPY FEAST DAY.**

In gratitude for all your kindnesses a Novena of Masses is being offered for your intentions.

**MAY ST THERESE OBTAIN FOR YOU A SPECIAL BLESSING FROM HEAVEN.**

**MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS**

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities. The Little Way Association will convey your stipends and your intentions to the clergy overseas.

We like to send a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass

**WALSINGHAM THERESIAN CENTRE**

praying for the missions and offering accommodation to pilgrims. For reservations please contact Rose on 00 44 1328 820 222.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:

**THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION**  
Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR  
(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466  
[www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

- €..... **LITTLE WAY SISTERS OF ST THERESE**
- €..... **HUNGRY, SICK, DEPRIVED & REFUGEES**
- €..... **MASS OFFERINGS**  
(Please state no. of Masses \_\_\_\_\_)
- €..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

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Address

To donate online go to [www.littlewayassociation.com](http://www.littlewayassociation.com)

**DONATIONS FOR THE MISSIONS ARE SENT WITHOUT DEDUCTION FOR ANY EXPENSES.**