

# The Irish Catholic

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# Call for communities to take lead in fight for homeless

Greg Daly

Parishes and communities need to take responsibility for tackling the country's housing crisis, leading homelessness campaigners have said, calling for pressure to create political will around the issue.

"Trying to get people out of homelessness while others are coming into it is like trying to empty bathwater with the taps full on," Fr Peter McVerry SJ told *The Irish Catholic*, maintaining that State and local authorities are building nowhere near the number of houses necessary to stem the tide of homelessness.

### Reluctance

"What they're doing is they're building six here and they're buying five there – that's never going to sort things. What we have to do is go back to the 70s when we were building thousands of social houses," he said, adding: "There is a huge reluctance to go down the road of social housing, but there is no other solution. If we want to get out of this, there is no other solution."

This reluctance stems partly from an unwillingness on the part of local authorities to manage large social housing projects, and partly from issues around planning permission

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### Spring welcome for St Brigid

Pupils in Scoil Bhride, Portlaoise, look forward to St Brigid's Day on February 1 by celebrating the tradition attributed to the saint of making crosses from rushes.

## Irish Govt pressured to help 'suffering' Asia Bibi

Chai Brady

The Irish Government should "be working tirelessly" to offer Asia Bibi asylum here according to a group who fight Christian persecution, after another effort to prevent her release was batted away.

Pakistan's Supreme Court dismissed a petition seeking a review of the verdict that acquitted Ms Bibi of blasphemy on Tuesday. The National Director of Aid to the Church in Need, Michael Kinsella, said: "It shows that mob justice has not prevailed over both common sense and human rights."

"It shows that the judiciary of Pakistan, bravely in my view, under immense existential and legal pressures have made the right decision for a persecuted minority in their country."

Ms Bibi was imprisoned for eight years, mostly in

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# Taking the pulse of the Faith

One of the great sorrows of many Irish parishes is the pain felt by parents and grandparents when family members no longer go to Mass. Whenever I speak at parish events or novenas, I see the acute pain as people tell me about how they did their best to bring their children up in the Faith only to see these same children reject it.

Every now and then people tell me stories of their son or daughter having a fundamental issue with tenets of the faith. Sometimes it is a story of child feeling unwelcome due to sexual orientation or a marriage that didn't work out. More often than not, it's cold indifference – a modern-day conformism.

If the 20-something of the 1970s who didn't go to Mass was something of a rebel, it is the young person who does practise their faith today who is the true rebel swimming against the tide.

## Pain

Parents feel immense pain when their values are rejected by those they have brought up. I hear variations of it all the time: "Mary is very kind and good, but she never brings the children to Mass."

Some grandparents struggle and bring their grandchildren to Mass, but it doesn't take the children long



## Editor's Comment Michael Kelly

to ask why Mum and Dad don't go. Their parents' indifference becomes infectious.

People often tell me of their friends and neighbours who live very Christian lives but never go to Mass or worship God communally. Is Mass really that important, they ask? Well, the short answer is 'yes'.

**“Jesus did not come to instigate some new way of living more ethically. He came to reveal God”**

People of Faith don't have a monopoly on goodness, and I don't deny for one minute that there are many good people who are not religious or don't attend Mass. That is self-evident.

Mass attendance can be a crude measure, but it does speak to us about the health or otherwise of faith.

Christ gave us the Sacraments for a reason. If 70 or 80% of people aren't churchgoers, well, they're missing out on something that Jesus himself personally invited them to.

If we believe, as we do, that the Sacraments are vital gateways to God we should want people to participate in them.

Jesus did not come to instigate some new way of living more ethically. He came to reveal God and the way that God's presence is made manifest in through the Sacraments – particularly participation in Holy Communion.

So, while we might take quiet satisfaction that many young people formed in Catholic schools live lives of admirable charity and altruism, our proclamation of the Gospel has failed spectacularly if they are not practising their faith. A Church without young people is a Church with an uncertain future.

**Michael Kelly is co-author of a new book with Austen Ivereigh How to Defend the Faith – Without Raising Your Voice – it is available from Columba Books www.columbabooks.com**



# Call for communities to take the lead in fight for homeless

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and electoral support for councillors, he explained.

"If you have a large-scale social housing project the whole world is going to object to it," he said. "The neighbours are going to object to it, and the local councillors are looking at the next election and they don't want to be seen to be supporting a

big social housing project – so they're very reluctant to give planning permission for social housing projects."

"It's NIMBYism everywhere you go," he said, adding that localised 'not in my back yard' attitudes tend to extend not merely to social housing but to 'affordable housing'.

Homeless figures in Ireland would have topped 11,000 people by now if the system for counting the country's homeless had not been changed last year, according to Focus Ireland's advocacy manager Mike Allen,

who believes reluctance to face problems at a local level must be overcome if shortages in housing supply are to be addressed.

"We need to deliver around 35,000 new homes every year to stand still," he told this newspaper, continuing: "We probably only delivered around 18,000 last year, so we're a long way even from standing still."

Calling for this to be sped up, he said there's a serious paradox in how people across Ireland recognise that the country is facing a housing crisis that must be addressed

while often opposing building projects in their areas.

"That really needs to be accelerated, and that involves things like local communities, local politicians and so on not objecting to every development in the area that's proposed, because there's a real contradiction between the widespread desire for a public solution to the housing problem, and the localised resistance by local communities to every proposal to actually build homes," he said, adding "That has to change if we're to deal with this problem."

» See Pages 16-17.

## What do you think?



Let us know by writing to:

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## Government pressured to help Asia Bibi

» Continued from Page 1

solitary confinement, for false blasphemy allegations. She was released in November but her movements have been kept secret by the government due to massive protests and threats against her life.

"I would emphatically back

the petition of any western nation to bring Asia Bibi to any country within the EU, and I think not only the Irish Government but the EU as a political body should be working tirelessly on this issue," said Mr Kinsella.

"It's not just about Asia Bibi. It's about the many persecuted Christians who

are suffering under these circumstances."

Ms Bibi is still on the 'no fly' list, trapping her in Pakistan. Mr Kinsella described it as essentially "house arrest", and that it was another case in which "a Christian's life, livelihood and welfare are held hostage because of political expediency".

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# RTÉ clarification on claim against bishop disappears from the web

Chai Brady

A clarification from RTÉ accepting that there was no evidence for a claim that Bishop John McAreavey concealed child abuse has apparently disappeared from the station's website.

On *Morning Ireland* in August it was stated that the diocese had hidden documents concerning child sexual abuse from a child safeguarding audit led by the National board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.

However, in an article published on [www.rte.ie](http://www.rte.ie) on January 16, the national broadcaster said it now "accepts that there is no evidence of such concealment by the diocese or by its then Bishop John McAreavey, and is happy to provide this clarification".

*The Irish Catholic* understands that this clarification was sought by Dr McAreavey and that RTÉ also agreed to pay a sum to charity on the bishop's behalf because of the error.

However, this week a link to the clarification was not working and

the article appears to have been removed from the RTÉ website. Despite repeated calls, a number of spokespersons for RTÉ spoken to by *The Irish Catholic* were unable to provide clarity on the status of the clarification.

When this newspaper checked the clarification published it was no longer active on RTÉ's website, only the message 'Page Not Found'.

The allegations, which were reported by a number of news outlets in the second week of August last year, related to the Diocese of Dromore's handling of allegations

against the late Fr Malachy Finnegan.

The diocese initially responded to the allegation in a statement issued on August 11 which stated that the diocese gave access "to all available records and the review made reference to those files and acknowledged the work of Bishop McAreavey in the field of safeguarding".

Bishop McAreavey's resignation was accepted by Pope Francis last year, six years before he was due to step down.

## Camino unlikely to suffer from new finale site

Greg Daly

The decision to cease pilgrim Masses in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela for the next year is unlikely to affect numbers of pilgrims on the Camino, according to an Irish pilgrimage company.

"I think the overall pilgrimage – the walk itself – is the experience. The pilgrim Mass at the end is the nice cherry on top, you could say," Fergus Glynn of Marian Pilgrimages told *The Irish Catholic*. "I don't think it will affect it that much. I think it's more the walk itself, really."

Cathedral authorities announced last week that with the exception of a parish Mass in a side chapel, no religious services will take in the 11th-Century cathedral for the next year while restoration work takes place. The cathedral will, however, remain open for pilgrims who wish to visit the relics of St James.

Pilgrim Masses will take place at the nearby Church of St Francis, and according to Fr Brendan McManus SJ, it will be important that it have a similar atmosphere to the cathedral.

"There's something about that big liturgy, where everybody's there, all the groups are there from all over the world," he said. "They're going to have to try to replicate the same thing – you need a meaningful liturgy or ritual to finish the pilgrimage, and obviously that is the key place because it is the official end of the pilgrimage and that Mass is the end of your pilgrimage."

"There's something special about that, even if you're not Catholic, just being at that."

## Faith-focused actress shares acting accolade

Staff reporter

A prominent Christian actress was among the winners of the top prize at the Screen Actors Guild Awards last weekend.

The superhero movie *Black Panther* took away the prize for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture. Guyanese-born British actress Letitia Wright (25, pictured), who plays Princess Shuri, the hero's inventor-sister, has already been identified as last year's biggest box-office earner, after appearing not merely in the blockbuster *Black Panther* but *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, *Ready Player One* and *The Commuter*.

Ms Wright has previously spoken about taking time out from acting to focus on her faith.

"I just needed to take a break from acting because I really idolised it. So I came off from it and I went on a journey to discover God and my relationship with God and I became a Christian," Wright told a UK chat show last year.

"I felt secure and I felt like I didn't need validation from anyone else or from getting a part. My happiness wasn't dependent on that, it was dependent on my relationship with God," she said.



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## Irish missionaries decry deadly cathedral bombing

Chai Brady

Irish missionaries have condemned the actions of an Islamist terrorist group who detonated two bombs at a cathedral in the Philippines killing 20 people and leaving over 100 injured.

Fr Shay Cullen, who has worked in the Philippines for 50 years defending human rights under the PREDA Foundation, said he was "shocked".

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* from Olongapo City, he said the bombing on Jolo Island was "very bad" and that the area where it occurred "is the most violent island in southern Philippines".

Philippines-based extremist group Abu Sayyaf is believed to be the culprits as they have aligned themselves with ISIS, who claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack.

"Everyone is shocked, there were two bombs and it was well planned – obviously a terrorist group, who specifically targeted a Catholic cathedral," said Fr Cullen.

He added that these incidents are generally perpetrated by a very small minority of individuals.

The first bomb exploded inside Jolo Cathedral during Mass and the second blast occurred outside the compound.

### Violence

The island has been plagued with violence over the years with two priests and a bishop, all Oblates of Mary Immaculate, being killed in the diocese since 1997.

Columban missionary Fr Seán Coyle who spent decades in the Philippines, only returning in 2017, said: "I am deeply shocked, any attack on a place of worship and while

people are praying is utterly horrible. There is a history of violence in that region."

Fr Seán said he doesn't believe any Irish missionary has been stationed on Jolo Island, which he described as "missionary territory", but added that in nearby Mindanao, where several Irish Columbans have served, "there has been an awful lot of violence in the last 50 years".

The church attack came nearly a week after more than 1.5 million Muslims in the predominantly Catholic nation overwhelmingly approved a more powerful autonomous region in the south.

They voted for the new region called Bangsamoro, or nation of Moros, in hopes of ending nearly five decades of separatist rebellion and reining in a new wave of Islamist extremism.

## Water, water everywhere, but only bottled to drink – priest

Colm Fitzpatrick

A Sligo-based priest has resorted to using bottled water for the Mass, following ongoing drinking restrictions on the local water supply.

Fr John Glynn of Kilmattigue parish said that as a result of a boil notice imposed on customers supplied by Lough Talt in Sligo, he has turned to shop-bought bottled water for mixing with the wine before consecration. The mingling of the water and wine in the chalice symbolises the Incarnation of Christ, and failure to add the water is illicit.

Commenting on the notice which requires up 13,000 households to boil and cool down their water before it's safe to drink, Fr Glynn told *The Irish Catholic* that the injunction is "frustrating for the whole region", and that it's causing environmental damage as residents are forced to buy plastic bottles.

"Well, you have to buy water and the problem is that if you buy it, it's in these plastic containers and with the thing now about the plastic, what's the best thing to do?" he said.

The notice was imposed in January last after the hazardous bug cryptosporidium was detected during routine testing. Fr Glynn said the restrictions, which are expected to be in place for at least another two years, affect day-to-day living, pointing out that electricity costs are higher because more water is being boiled.

"If I was drinking water, I'd have some in the plastic bottle, but I'd boil the rest of it. It you're brushing you're supposed to use bottled water."



Msgr Andy Dolan greets parishioners celebrating the annual Mass to launch Catholic Schools Week in St Eugene's Cathedral, Co. Derry. Photo: Stephen Latimer

## Christmas and new year crossword solutions

**Grand prize winner:**  
Martin Mannion, Co. Dublin.

**Runners up:**  
Caroline McNally,  
Co. Monaghan;  
June Ryan, Co. Dublin;  
Noreen O'Sullivan, Co. Kerry.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Christmas crossword

**Across** 1 Flamboyant 6 The Sistine Chapel 11 Pathway 14 The ox and the ass 15 Campaign 17 Crystal clear 19 Santa 20 Slipped disc 23 Pie 24 Neither 25 Raw 26 Leo 28 Atom 30 Crisps 33 Lamb 37 Nacho 38 Reign 39 Bar chart 40 Entrap 43 Embers 45 Sty 46 Outhouse 48 Juror 49 Timber 50 Urdu 51 Foiled 54 Mass media 56 Muslin 57 Candle 58 Amps 59 Today 61 Awl 65 Dew 66 Lit 67 Cheap 68 Lea 70 Table 74 Fawn 75 Wisdom 77 Bereft 78 Odd-job man 79 Daring 80 Knot 83 Assisi 84 U-boat 86 Sacristy 89 Cornet 95 Civil war 97 Myrrh 98 Error 100 School 101 Shed 106

Eat 108 Own 110 Lowdown 111 Ham 112 Shut off 113 Trash 116 Rabbit warren 117 Platinum 118 Defer 119 Endgame 120 Deathwatch beetle  
**Down** 2 Aversion 3 Boxing Day 4 Yucca 5 Nemesis 7 High priesthood 8 Inca 9 Toys 10 Enamel 11 Pacino 12 The Light of the World 13 Worshipper 14 The Halleluiah Chorus 16 Aries 18 Oral 21 Drags 22 Owl 23 Puma 27 Ethos 29 Mace 30 Chestnut 31 Ron 33 Peace on Earth 34 Abate 35 Brook 36 Cry 41 Temple 42 Preaching to the choir 44 Bedspread 46 OPEC 47 Easily 48 Jumper 53 Adele 54 Meat 55 D'Artagnan 59 Twist 60 Yet 63 Sprout 64 Climbs 65 Dawn 69 God 71 Banana republic 72 Artist 73 Officers 76 Mary 77 Beseech 81 Crows 82 Isere 87 Anita 90 Rood 91 Ail 92 Hymns 94 Les Misérables 95 Colombia 96 Ahem 99 Rightful 100 Silt 102 Doc 103 Trout 104 Effendi 106

Endive 107 Thawed 109 Sandra 113 Tomme 114 Fret 115 Snow

### New year's crossword

**Across** 1 Church mice 6 Nutcracker 11 Leopard 14 Hotel 15 Stampede 17 First footing 19 Weary 20 Rewards 23 Bus 24 Eyesore 25 The Venerable Bede 26 Err 28 Harm 30 Thanks 33 Tank 36 Pilate 37 Dacha 38 Heart 39 Cannibal 40 Eddied 43 Rivers 45 Dry 46 Peerless 48 Hindi 49 El Paso 50 Urns 51 Adhere 54 Boomerang 56 Red top 57 Twelve 58 Darn 59 Bleak 61 Goa 62 Acorn 65 Fur 66 Ass 67 Urban 68 UFO 70 Digit 74 Yeti 75 Nibble 77 Rhodes 78 Needs must 79 Update 80 West 83 Amoral 84 Not on 86 Nail file 88 Win 89 Tiptoe 93 Gazebo 95 Patience 97 Shake 98 Add up 100 Sampan 101 Test 103 Casino 105 Glow 106 Den 108 Aim 110 Entitle 111 Eft 112

Purpose 113 Ashen 116 Curling stone 117 Cockatoo 118 Water under the bridge 119 Resolve 121 Preference  
**Down** 2 Untoward 3 Cellar 4 Messy 5 Chagrin 8 Raft 9 Cure 10 Refuse 11 Looter 12 Olive oil 13 Anglo-Saxon 14 Hit the ground running 16 Pawns 21 Storm 22 Vet 23 Bona fides 27 Ruins 29 Mane 30 The seven sacraments 31 Had 33 Knees-up 34 Aches 35 Knoll 36 Pay 41 Deputy 42 Ringing in the New Year 46 Port 47 Slogan 48 Hyenas 52 Ewe 53 Gloat 54 Begs 55 Atonement 59 Bribe 60 Kid 63 Unison 64 Autumn 65 Font 69 Flu 74 Gatwick Airport 72 Coarse 73 Well-to-do 76 Epee 77 Rum baba 81 Flint 85 Thumb tacks 87 Agile 90 Plug 91 Wan 92 Champ 94 Ban 95 Pastoral 96 Cent 99 Plankton 100 Suet 102 Tay 103 Cloak 104 Shelter 106 Define 107 Neighs 109 Shower 113 Aloof 114 Sour 115 Beam

# Censorship or not? A fine judgement

**Y**ou can change your mind about a subject not just once, but several times. The subject over which I have vacillated in the course of my lifetime is that of censorship.

As a young person, I was vehemently against censorship, largely because both movies and books were subject to sometimes quite draconian censorship: either the state Censorship Board or members of the public objected to material considered to offend public morals or taste. In response, the generation of the 1960s wanted an end to all censorship.

## Influences

Then, when my children were young, in the 1970s and 80s, I began to have second thoughts about a culture in which there might be no controls. It's natural to want to protect young minds from nefarious influences, and I encountered parents who felt that – even then – some of the material in sex education was too explicit, and that on-screen violence was hurtful to young minds.

In Britain, Victoria Gillick campaigned to stop under-age girls being given the all-clear to engage



**Mary Kenny**

in sexual relationships via contraception without parental consent, and I saw she had a point (though she lost, and the law ruled that girls under 16 could make their own choices).

**“There will always be a tension between freedom and necessary controls”**

Then, as I travelled in Poland, East Germany and in the declining Soviet Union, I saw that the restraints on freedom of expression, including freedom of faith, were odious. Censorship is dangerous because it prevents discussion and usually prompts political control. So I modified my views again in the light of experience.

In this century, I have seen how Christian values can be censored, not just officially, but through more subtle ways of social control and Groupthink. The channels of freedom must

surely be kept open.

Then last week I met a woman who runs a charity for bereaved parents, and she told me that the most compelling problem arising now are the suicides of young people, driven by ‘suicide porn’ on the Internet, and by cyber-bullying of vulnerable teenagers, who are urged to kill themselves by influencers. After the tragic suicide of the English schoolgirl Molly Russell [pictured] – and a 13% increase in suicides by adolescent girls since 2017 – there are wide demands that social media like Google, Facebook and YouTube should be subjected to certain censorships.



There will always be a tension between freedom and necessary controls, and it will always be a fine judgement which side of the fence we may fall: sometimes too much towards liberty, sometimes too much towards authority. Sometimes we just have to make a judicious call to find that delicate moral balance.



## A civil war can be tranquilly commemorated

● How will Ireland mark the looming centenary of our Civil War (1922-23)? That's a problem which historical experts are addressing, including Gabriel Doherty, who contributes so knowledgeably to these pages.

The English have found a harmless way to remember their own Civil War – by dressing up in 17th-Century clothes and re-enacting it [pictured].

This week, the 370th anniversary of the

execution of King Charles I – on January 30, 1649 – was marked by the English Civil War society in the usual way: by riding down Whitehall on horseback to the place of execution where Charles mounted the scaffold, on Cromwell's orders.

A civil war can be more tranquilly commemorated if it's 370 years in the past.

There are High Anglicans (and some Catholics) who regard Charles as a Christian martyr because he faced

regicide execution with perfect acceptance. He was a High Anglican, but his wife, Henrietta Maria, was Catholic and that made him more suspect for the Puritans and Scottish Covenanters.

However, Charles I probably could have been more politically shrewd in his dealings with Parliament and not insisted quite so emphatically on his own ‘red lines’, as they say in the Brexit discussions.

## Decisions, decisions, decisions

● I've known priests who faced the dilemma of a person approaching for Holy Communion whom they know, from private or public knowledge, was not in a position to be a communicant (in one case, the priest knew the would-be communicant was not a Catholic, but he decided not to make a judgement at the altar rail).

By contrast, I was refused Communion

(along with several others) at a Greek Orthodox Mass, although it was my understanding that inter-communion with Rome was permitted. Our reaction was “their Church, their rules”.

A priest or eucharistic minister is entitled to make decision to administer or withhold Communion according to their own judgement of what is appropriate.

## Catholic deaf charity support struggling IDS

The CEO of a Catholic charity for deaf people has said it is “absolutely critical” the Irish Deaf Society (IDS) continues to advocate for and educate the deaf community.

This comes as the IDS announced they will have to close by next month if they don't receive €300,000 in funding from the HSE.

The CEO of the Catholic Institute for Deaf People (CIDP) Keith Adams said that the IDS provides many services that inform and support his own charity. This includes providing training for some of CIDP's staff, and that losing the IDS would

## NEWS IN BRIEF

have a “major impact” on their ability to deliver maximum use of Irish sign language with “appropriate understanding of deaf community needs”.

He said: “The loss of IDS would set the deaf community back significantly at a time when Irish sign language has achieved statutory recognition and the work of the IDS is much needed and valued by all who depend on its service.”

### Substance abuse cause for homelessness mortality

Mortality rates among homeless people are “exceptionally” high, with drugs and

alcohol implicated in almost six out of 10 deaths, a new Irish study has revealed.

The study, conducted by researchers at Trinity College Dublin, documented and verified 201 deaths of homeless people in Dublin over a five-year period, 156 (78%) males and 45 females. Drugs and alcohol accounted for 75 deaths (38%) and were implicated in a further 43 deaths – meaning a total of 118 (59%) deaths involved the substances. “Services and programmes, particularly housing and those targeting overdose and alcoholism, are urgently needed to prevent premature mortality in this vulnerable population,” concludes the study, published in the *British Medical Journal Open*.



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# Schools going 'extra mile' to support homeless children

Colm Fitzpatrick

School principals and teachers are on the "frontline" in combating many of Ireland's current social problems, a Catholic education spokesperson has said.

According to Seamus Mulconry of the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, every social issue that has affected the country, such as homelessness, "hits schools first" and teaching staff need more "resources and support" to be able to address these problems.

The comments come after new findings which show that more than one in four primary schools across the State have homeless children who are suffering from anxiety,

poor self-esteem and exhaustion. The survey conducted by the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) found that 27% of primary schools have homeless children.

## Study

Commenting on the study, Mr Mulconry said the figures "underscore" how instrumental school staff are in tackling social issues of the day and that more help is needed.

"Obviously, the best thing to help homeless children is to solve the problem of homelessness. I think in terms of resources for schools though, school principals in particular have an incredibly heavy administrative burden and real work needs to be done on that, and taking some of the pressure off school prin-

cipals so they are able to focus more on the children in their schools. We need less administration and more focus on children," Mr Mulconry said.

Despite the lack of resources school staff currently have, Mr Mulconry added that principals and teachers are going the "extra mile" to support struggling students, and are cognisant when families are under pressure.

"I would also say that all of the evidence suggests that schools are going the extra mile to provide support to pupils whether they have the resources or not, they are going the extra mile to provide that support, and to treat people with dignity which is fundamental in a situation like this," he said.

## Crosses for everyone



Fr Joy Micle Njarakattuvely offers a helping hand to parishioners in Ennis parish making St Brigid's Crosses for a charity sale in Killaloe's St Flannan's Cathedral.

## Keep your 'eyes on peace' instead of violence, says priest

Staff reporter

Parishioners in Derry are "totally appalled" that a dissident paramilitary group would target their estate with a car bomb, a local priest has said.

Fr Joe Gormley of Creggan told *The Irish Catholic* that the car bomb which exploded in his parish earlier this month has "frightened" residents, and particularly children given their lack of exposure

to violence.

There are schoolchildren, "who have never grown up in that environment and can't understand what that's about. They can't understand it at all - they're really frightened by it", Fr Gormley said.

He added that the attack, believed to have been committed by dissident republican group 'The New IRA', gave residents a "glimpse back in the past" to the Troubles, adding that the group have an ideology they want to

"ram down people's throats" through violent rather than political means.

However, Fr Gormley noted that paramilitary activity does not have the same level of support it once had, and that the visit of the Centennial Pilgrim of Our Lady of Fatima to St Mary's Church on Sunday, followed by a candlelight procession of around 250 people, shows how focused parishioners are in keeping their "eyes on peace".

## Don't feel 'isolated' – warning after Donegal crash

Chai Brady

A Donegal priest has warned young people in particular against becoming "isolated in grief" in the wake of the tragic January 27 car crash in which four young men died.

Gweedore priest Fr Brian O'Fearraigh, who attended the scene of the collision, said to young people affected by the incident: "Care for yourself, you are extremely important to your family, friends and community. Please don't feel isolated or alienated in your grief, you have support."

He added the parishes would "rally around"

family and friends to help "make the journey of grief more bearable".

The four men, Shaun Harkin, Micheal Roarty, John Harley and Daniel Scott, will be buried today (Thursday) after the crash on Sunday night. Tributes have been paid to each of them by the local community, representatives, GAA teams and more.

The emergency services were called to the single car collision shortly before 9am on Sunday. Gardaí have appealed for witnesses to the incident to contact Milford Garda Station on 074 915 3060 or the Garda Confidential Line on 1800 666 111.

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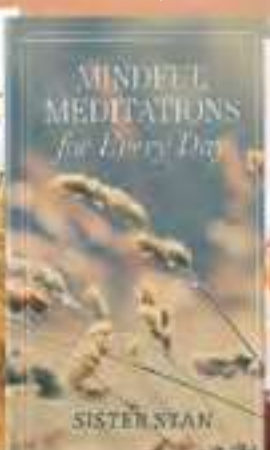
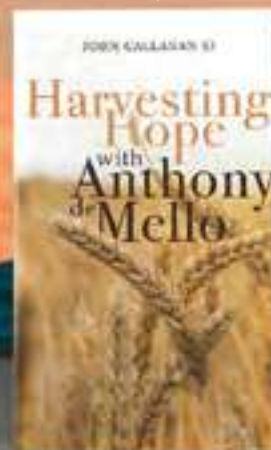
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## Pól Ó Muirí

The View



# Arise and follow Micheál and Colum? Thanks but no thanks

In the trench warfare that passes for Northern politics, the news that Fianna Fáil and the SDLP were talking of getting spliced caused some interest. Some change, any change, is enough to get people talking. Then it emerged that, no, the parties were not going to marry; they were going to go for a sort of civil partnership in which they would swap policy ideas and, who knows, recipes too.

It is testament to how far both parties have fallen that no one was really interested one way or another. Fianna Fáil leader, Micheál Martin, more and more resembles a teacher without a lesson plan while the SDLP's head yin, Colum Eastwood, is a serious and earnest man but, oddly for someone from Derry, lacking in charisma. Arise and follow Micheál and Colum? Thanks but no, go raibh maith agat.

Fianna Fáil and the SDLP have managed to saddle themselves with the worst of both worlds. Northern nationalists do not have much interest in southern politicians in general. Disdain is the default mode. That disdain is manifest in the Mass-going Catholics who have traditionally been the bulk of the SDLP's voters.

### Support

Many might sulk silently about the SDLP's support for same-sex marriage – and be sensible enough to say nothing in public – but they will not sulk silently over Micheál Martin's support for abortion and the SDLP's new position on the issue. The SDLP says it is pro-life but will allow members a conscience vote on the issue of abortion. It was a policy change that caused one past leader, Alasdair McDonnell, to note: "I'm a little confused. I mean the SDLP has been and still is a pro-life party. But we're opening up that we're pro-life but that you can do your own thing."

Essentially then long-suffering SDLP voters have to deal with a party that is going soft on one core plank of its politics while being



Michéal Martin (left) and Colum Eastwood.

tied into another party that has already reneged on its pro-life commitments. That will not excite many SDLP voters or, one imagines, many in Fianna Fáil either who will not want to hear the 'a' word spoken ever again.

Indeed, what is really in it for Fianna Fáil, a sort-of link up with Northerners but not too much of a link up because those Nordies are real trouble and backward on so many issues?

Unquestionably, a few years ago, many SDLP voters would have happily given their vote to Fianna Fáil, if only to spite Sinn Féin. But now, now, there is sourness in the soul, now the whole thing stinks of another shower of Free State wasters looking out for themselves and with no genuine interest in the plight of Northern nationalists.

**“Yes, a united Ireland would be a nice thing but not at the price being asked. The voters were as much Catholic Irish as they were Irish Catholics; Resurrection being more important than Insurrection...”**

There is an apt saying in Irish that might describe Northern nationalist mentality: 'is fearr uaigneas ná droch-chuideachta'/'better loneliness than bad company'.

**“Their voters were steadfast in rewarding candidates who most resembled themselves, who understood their woes and, yes, their anger, but they did not strike out”**

The SDLP is a hard thing to describe. Technically, it is a political party like every other political party. You can join it. In reality, though, it was more a moral choice, a movement if you

will. In that, it was oddly similar to Fianna Fáil which sees, or saw, itself as being more than simply a party; it was the soul of the Irish independence movement.

Without doubt, the SDLP provided a platform for some very astute and able politicians during the Troubles, politicians who countered violence and who worked towards a peaceful society. Their voters marched from Mass to the polling booths in huge numbers and cast their ballot with one simple aim: 'Not in my name'.

The party did not kill people, blow them up, torture, maim or indulge in shoot-to-kill policies. Their voters were steadfast in rewarding candidates who most resembled themselves, who understood their woes and, yes, their anger, but they did not strike out.

Better to endure than injure, might be an apt enough description.

### Morality

That simple morality – 'Thou shalt not kill' – held sway over many of the party's pre-Vatican II voters. It was a reason why many voted for it. Yes, a united Ireland would be a nice thing but not at the price being asked. The voters were as much Catholic Irish as they were Irish Catholics; Resurrection being more important than Insurrection.

The diminishing, but

ever moral, voters that remain with the SDLP are casting their votes for a diminishing pool of local candidates. They cast them for people they know and like and once the candidates they know and like are no longer on the ballot paper they will, in all probability, not bother voting at all. They will go to Mass, say their prayers, go to the Novena, raise their children and local politics will be further impoverished by their loss come election time.

Is fearr uaigneas ná droch-chuideachta.



***“Tell them that: the God they have forgotten has never forgotten them”***

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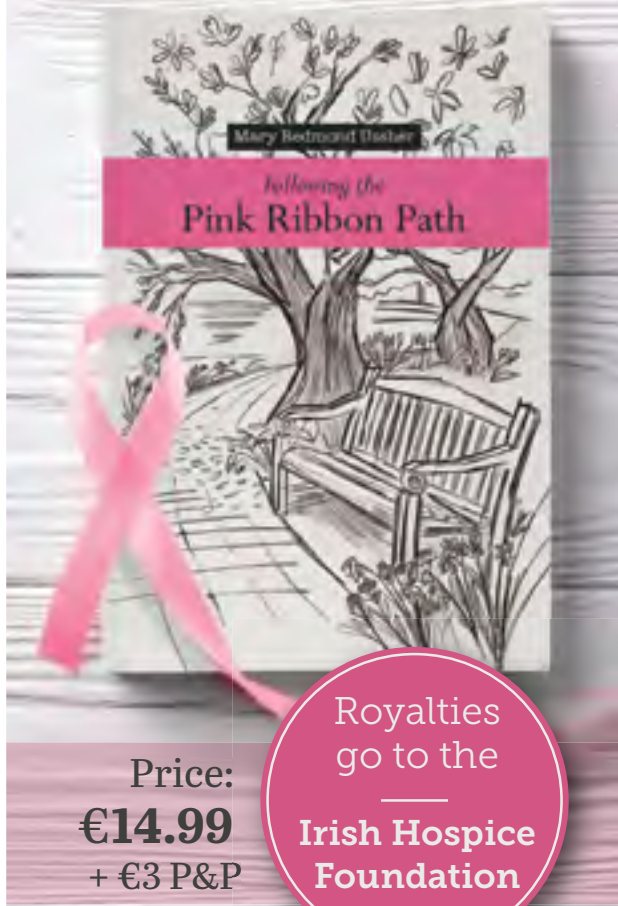
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## 'Time to get our act together' on Brexit, urges Primate

**Greg Daly**

Political leaders across Ireland and Britain need to work together to show leadership around Brexit, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh has said.

Describing border communities as "worried" and "anxious" about the UK's impending exit from the European Union, the Primate of All-Ireland told *iCatholic* that they "are wondering what is going to happen, and when you have uncertainty like that, it's only natural that people will be fearful".

In this context, and citing the January 21 car bomb in his home town of Derry, Dr Martin stressed the importance of politicians and other leaders engaging in genuine dialogue around Brexit.

### Reconciliation

"It does appear that we need to get our act together to be able to ensure that there is peace and reconciliation, all those things we have worked so hard to achieve in recent years," he said, describing the bombing as "horrific" and a reminder of how things used to be in the North.

"I think it's so important that we work with each other now," he said. "I would call on the political leaders in Northern Ireland, political lead-

ers north and south in this island, in the UK government, the Irish Government, all of our local assembly members, to get together at this point to show some leadership because the communities are calling for that."

He expressed concern, however, that the ongoing impasse around Stormont following the assembly's January 2017 collapse over the Renewable Heat Incentive

scandal was making matters worse.

### Assembly

"We've been without our assembly now for more than two years, and what that does is it puts people back into their corners, where we do tend towards rhetoric and shouting at each other and scoring points - we win, you lose, we lose, you win," he said. "This is the time when

we need to work together for a win-win for all people on this island."

Maintaining that a return to the Troubles must be avoided "at all costs", the archbishop said he believed it is time to capitalise on the relationships that improved during the peace process.

"This is a time for all of our political leaders to model that for the common good," he said.

### Gospel on the go



Bishop Denis Nulty celebrates Mass in Our Lady & St David's Church, Naas, with students from the local seven primary and three post primary schools for the launch of Catholic Schools Week. During the Mass, the Book of the Gospels was passed through the Church by procession.

## TD Tóibín's 'Aontú' aims for justice

**Colm Fitzpatrick**

Pro-life TD Peadar Tóibín has announced the name of his new political party as Aontú - which means unity and consent.

The name was unveiled on Twitter ahead of a public meeting in Belfast on Monday night. The Meath West TD said the city was chosen for the formal announcement because it was the birthplace of United Irishmen.

"Belfast was the birth place of the United Irishmen who fought for a free,

independent and pluralist Ireland for Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter," he tweeted, later telling this newspaper that he wants a party that reaches out to different traditions.

### Support

The politician, who resigned from Sinn Féin last November because of his pro-life stance, said his new party will focus on social justice issues like abortion.

"We want to make sure all mothers have the economic support necessary so

they have the confidence to bring their child to term as well as raise their child," he said.

Mr Tóibín added that the party is also concerned with economic justice and intends to alleviate the homelessness crisis across Ireland and deal with the enduring problem of medical treatment on trolleys.

With a "massive level of momentum", and hundreds of people joining the party on a weekly basis, he encouraged Irish citizens to support it.

## Two-thirds say publicly refusing Host is necessary

**Chai Brady**

A majority of people agree that a Meath-based priest was right to publicly refuse giving Holy Communion to a pro-choice politician, according to a poll conducted by *The Irish Catholic*.

Fr John Hogan denied giving Holy Communion to Robert Troy TD on Sunday at a funeral Mass in Multyfarnham. The politician publicly admitted to endorsing abortion legislation and voted against amendments to the legislation.

Almost 700 people

responded to the poll. Two-thirds of respondents agreed that refusing someone publicly on the spot was better than taking them aside afterwards to explain why they shouldn't present themselves to receive Holy Communion.

One commenter said: "You don't give someone you suspect to be in a state of grave sin Holy Communion and then pull them aside after, the Church doesn't teach this. Jesus overturned the tables publicly and rebuked others publicly..."

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**Readers split about schools' sale - IC poll**  
IC readers are at odds with each other as to whether the Church should sell large numbers of Catholic schools to the State. The newspaper's Facebook page asked online users: "In this week's edition, columnist Maria Steen says the Church should prepare to sell large numbers of schools to the State and use the money to strengthen remaining schools' Catholic identity? Do you think the Church should sell a large number of Catholic schools, or do you think this will damage Catholic education?" Out of

the 287 users who voted, 157 respondents said the schools should be sold, narrowly outnumbering the 130 who did not support the sale of schools.

**Priest refuses to host Sinn Féin in hall**  
Parish priest Fr John Connolly has withdrawn permission for Sinn Féin to use a Co. Tyrone church hall, forcing the pro-choice party to instead hold an advice clinic in a caravan.

Anti-abortion activists had planned to protest outside Fermanagh and South Tyrone Sinn Féin MLA Colm Gildernew's advice clinic at St John's Church Hall in Moy.



# Going with the flow...again



Today's young people follow the crowd as much as their predecessors did, writes **David Quinn**

**W**e should beware of romanticising any particular generation of people. At the end of the day, people are simply people, a mixture of good and bad, no matter how old or young they are. Nonetheless, people are shaped by their times and if we have to generalise, we could say that older people were raised in a more dutiful, but also more judgemental society, and young people in a less judgemental, more tolerant (after a fashion) but also less dutiful one in which 'commitments' come and go.

The latest World Youth Day ended in Panama on Sunday. In Dublin, a Mass was held to mark the event celebrated by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin. He spoke to the young people present about the sort of Ireland he grew up in. He described how choices were far more limited in the country of his youth.

## Decision

He told them: "The job decision you took as a teenager was almost definitive. You made a choice for life. You became a doctor, a postman, a mechanic, a nurse, a carpenter, a builder's labourer, an accountant for life. The chances of changing were limited. You tried to get a job for life, a permanent job that would give you and your future family security. Options were limited and very often you took what you could get, rather than chose what you really wanted."

He might have added that when you married, you also married for life.

He said that now people have far more choices. He remarked: "Today that is very different. Your generation chooses. Young people choose to believe or not to believe, to belong to a Church or to go their own way. Many have some kind



of generic faith or spirituality but little to do with the Church. In that sense, your presence here today is a sign that you wish to be different. You wish to move away from an inherited faith and come to a better understanding of what faith in Jesus Christ can mean in your life and in discerning who you really want to be."

Archbishop Martin is obviously right about the lack of job choices people had in the past. We were much poorer. We sought whatever economic security we could. Many had to leave in search of work. Emigration re-emerged in the most recent recession.

But I had to wonder at his remark that today "young people choose to believe or not to believe, to belong to a Church or go your own way". That's not how I see it. I think young people today, like young people in the past, and people in general, tend to just go with the flow. A lot of the time we actually aren't making choices at all, we are following social norms.

Recall what happened in the referendum last May. According to exit polls, 87% of 18-24 year olds voted for repeal. Were they thinking independently, and their peers who

voted against repeal were not? Or were they all thinking for themselves, but repeal arguments were so persuasive that nearly all of that age group independently voted for legalised abortion?

In fact, repeal arguments were more all-pervasive than all-persuasive. Pro-life students will tell you how difficult it is to be openly pro-life, or about your faith in many of the country's universities. We need only bring to mind the case of Katie Ascough at UCD and the vitriolic campaign which drove her from her job in the students' union.

A similar, but far less publicised fate befell Clare McCarthy at Trinity College at around the same time. This is what can happen to young people of faith in today's Ireland at the hands of some of their peers. Our vaunted 'tolerance' stretches only so far it seems.

What happened in May is similar to what has happened to church-going among that same generation. The vast majority do not go to Mass. Is that really because of choice, or it is because it is no longer the done thing?

Have they really thought deeply about the Faith and

**“Have young people really thought deeply about the Faith and come to a well worked-out conclusion, or are they not going to Mass because of convention, just as a different kind of convention led to most people going to Mass in the past?”**

led to most people going to Mass in the past?

Obviously, many young people are interested in politics, but how many actually join political parties, or even NGOs? Older people are more likely to vote and are far more likely to be members of a political organisation.

**“Young people need all the encouragement they can get, from each other, from their parents and other adults, and from Church leaders as well”**

But lots of young people are as indifferent towards politics as they are towards religion.

The American sociologist Christian Smith has found that in his country, even when Barack Obama first became President, the lack of civic and political involvement of young people was striking. That was back

in 2008. Since then social media has become far more dominant in their lives and for the most part this is not leading to greater political engagement except at a superficial level, when a new bandwagon is passing by and clicking 'like' for something politically fashionable will win you kudos.

Young Christians today really have to be counter-cultural. It is assumed by many of their peers that they are weak-minded and easily led at best, and bigoted at worst. It is not easy to withstand those sorts of assumptions. They need all the encouragement they can get, from each other, from their parents and other adults, and from Church leaders as well.

If anyone has made a conscious choice in their lives it is these young people because they can never be accused of simply going with the crowd.

They are ones most likely to be free and independent today.

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# Out&About

## JPII gold medal winners



**GALWAY:** Bishop of Clonfert John Kirby joins 15 young people from the diocese as they receive gold medals for their hard work in their community and Church as part of the first annual Pope John Paull II Award Ceremony in the Meadow Court, Loughrea.



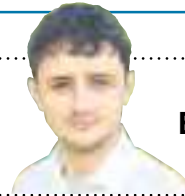
**ARMAGH:** Pupils from St Joseph's lead events at the launch Mass for Catholic Schools' Week 2019 in St John the Baptist's Church, Portadown. The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Eamon Martin and representatives from schools all across the Armagh Diocese.



**CLARE:** Parish Sacristans Brigid O'Halloran, Mary Borron and Bernadette Glynn receive Benemerenti Medals in Fergus Church, Newmarket, alongside Bishop Fintan Monahan and Fr Tom Fitzpatrick.



**DOWN:** 160 young people from 10 schools and parishes around the Diocese of Down and Connor finish the eight-week Youth Alpha programme with Living Youth facilitated by 25 young adult volunteers at Ganaway Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Newtownards.



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie

Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**MAYO:** Over 150 people attended the launch of the new biography of Fr Patrick Peyton in the Fr Peyton Centre in Attymass. Pictured are (l-r) Padraic Walsh, Manager of the Fr Peyton Memorial Centre, Fr Tom Mulligan, author, Tommy Peyton nephew of Fr Peyton, Fr Dermot Meehann Diocesan Administrator of Achonry Diocese, and Fr Steve Gibson, Spiritual Director of the Fr Peyton Memorial Centre. Photo: Mayo Now



**CLARE:** A group of young faith-filled people have some fun at the Solas Youth Faith gathering in St Flannan's College, Ennis.



**MAYO:** The Kelly family with author Fr Tom Mulligan at the Fr Peyton book launch, Attymass. Photo: Mayo Now

**IN SHORT**

**Book launch celebrates the Rosary priest**

Over 150 people turned out to celebrate the incredible life of Mayo-born Fr Patrick Peyton at the book launch of *The Rosary Priest*.

The wonderful biography, which was launched on the 110th anniversary of

his birth in Fr Peyton Memorial Centre, Attymass, brings to life this devout and charismatic figure who became a household name in America, where he produced hit radio shows and films that captivated tens of millions and starred such Hollywood Luminaries as Bing Crosby, James Dean, Grace Kelly and Loretta Young.

It also explores Fr Peyton's mission to the share gift of the Rosary with the

world, a decision largely inspired by his astonishing recovery from tuberculosis as a young man, which he attributed to the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

The Fr Peyton Memorial Centre is open all year round, five days a week and seven days in the summer months. Visitors are welcome to come and visit and learn how Fr Peyton travelled the world helping families to pray.



**CARLOW:** Bishop Denis Nulty and some of the Kildare and Leighlin community participate in the 'Walking Towards Unity' initiative in Carlow with friends from the Church of Ireland and Methodist traditions.



**PANAMA:** Young pilgrims from Ireland arrive in Panama for World Youth Day 2019, and spend time getting to know their host families, meeting other international pilgrims and celebrating Mass.

**ARMAGH**

Sr Mary Roe, RSCJ will offer six sessions once per week of Lectio Divina in The Synod Hall, Armagh, beginning on Monday February 11 at 10.40am which conclude on Monday, March 18.

**CLARE**

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

**CORK**

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

"Come and See" Vocations Afternoon, 2-4.30pm on Saturday, February 9, for young women discerning a vocation at Poor Clare Monastery, College Rd.

**DERRY**

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

**DUBLIN**

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

'Mary, Raise Our Spirits' All-Day Conference in All Hallows College, Drumcondra on Saturday February 2, 2019. Registration begins at 9.30am with first session at 10am. Concludes with Mass 4pm. Panel of speakers will address Our Lady's help with problems Ireland faces today. Light lunch provided. A Legion of Mary Project.

**FERMANAGH**

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

Mass in the Extraordinary Form in St Patrick's Church (opposite St Kieran's College) every Sunday at 5pm.

**GALWAY**

First Saturday Healing of Prayer at Emmanuel House, Clonfert. Led by Eddie Stones and team on Saturday, February 2 at 10.30am. Mass, Confessions, Adoration, Aspirational Talks and Music.

**KERRY**

Christian Spiritual Development Course in Ardfert. Be Still and Know: Fr Louis Hughes OP on Saturday February 9 from 10am-4pm. Life in the Spirit: Moss and Janice Carrig on Tuesdays starting February 19 from 7.30pm-9pm.

**KILKENNY**

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

**LIMERICK**

Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Friday in Raheen church following 10am Mass until 10pm, Crecora on Thursdays, following

morning Mass until 12noon and from 6-10pm, and in Mungret Church on Wednesdays, from 10am to 12noon.

St Saviour's Dominican Church will be offering Bishop Barron's *Catholicism* Series at the Church on Thursday at 1.30pm and Fridays at 7.30pm weekly. Free of charge.

**LOUTH**

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

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

A Holy Hour with music and reflections to be held in St Mary's Church, James Street, Drogheda on Wednesday February 13 at 8.00pm. All welcome.

**MEATH**

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

Charismatic Prayer Group: Every Thursday, 8pm, in the Boardroom, Parish Centre of the parish of Trim and Boardsmill. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Tuesdays 2-9pm, Wednesdays 10.30am-8pm, and Fridays 10.30am-9pm. Adoration is held in the Side Chapel in St Patrick's Church.

**OFFALY**

Clonmacnois Prayer Vigil in Cluain Chiarain Prayer Centre every third Friday. Mass at 9pm. Adoration and Prayers follow until 2.10am. Enquiries Dave: 085 7746763.

**ROSCOMMON**

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St Croan's Church, Ballymoe, every Monday, 10-11am and Thursday, 8-10pm. Also at St Bride's Church, Ballintubber, every Wednesday, 7.30-8.30pm.

**TIPPERARY**

Three-hour vigil in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes will be held in Pallotine chapel, Thurles, on Monday February 11 from 7.30-10.30pm. Includes Eucharistic hour and Marian hour conducted by the Pallotine Fathers, concluding with Anointing of the Sick and prayers for healing.

**WATERFORD**

Day of prayer and praise celebrating the anniversary of Charismatic Renewal in the Church: Sunday, February 17 in the Edmund Rice Chapel, Waterford from 11-5.30 pm. Guest: Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan. (Tea/ coffee available at Lunch time.) All welcome! Contact Síle 086 8590394/ Mossy 087 087 2136812 Word of God Outreach.

**WICKLOW**

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

St Patrick's Prayer Meeting, Tuesdays, 7.30pm in the De La Salle Pastoral Centre beside St Patrick's Church, Wicklow Town.

# God wants to be



Young people celebrate as Pope Francis meets with Central American bishops in the Church of St Francis of Assisi in Panama City. Photos: CNS



**Colm Fitzpatrick**

Hundreds of thousands of young people and religious descended upon Panama City last week to celebrate faith and friendship, with the hope of also catching a glimpse of Pope Francis. Running from January 22-27, World Youth Day 2019 saw an incredible number of pilgrims travelling to the Catholic country as part of the festival, presided over by the Pontiff.

Speaking to over half a million young people at the open-air concluding Mass at the capital's Metro Park, the Pope said that God does not call us to mission in the future, but right now in the present. It is through this missionary zeal, he added, that both God and our hopes are realised.

"You, dear young people, are not the future but the now of God. He invites you and calls you in your communities and cities to go out and find your grandparents, your elders; to stand up and with them to speak out and realise the dream that the Lord has dreamed for you," the Pontiff said. "Not tomorrow but now, for wherever your treasure is, there will your heart also be."

## Message

Francis said that the message of Jesus should not be understood as just relevant to a particular people or to a particular time, but transcends all boundaries with everyone being called to listen.

"For Jesus, there is no 'meantime', but only a merciful love that wants to enter into and win over our hearts. He wants to be our treasure, because he is not a 'meantime', an interval in life or a passing fad; he is gen-



World Youth Day pilgrims from Peru cheer at the Pope's welcoming ceremony and gathering with young people at Santa Maria la Antigua Field.



Pope Francis greets the crowd before celebrating Mass for World Youth Day pilgrims at St John Paul II Field in Panama City.



A Panama City resident fills a pilgrim's water bottle as she makes her way to the World Youth Day vigil.



erous love that invites us to entrust ourselves."

At the conclusion of the closing Mass, it was announced that Lisbon, Portugal, will host World Youth Day in 2022.

The announcement was

made by Cardinal Kevin Farrell, head of the Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, and upon hearing the location, Portuguese people erupted into cheers, waving their country's flag and chanting "We are the Pope's youth!"



Young people travelled to the Emmaus Centre Swords where they came together to celebrate World Youth Day. The event in Dublin culminated with Mass on Sunday afternoon celebrated by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin. Photo: John McElroy

# our 'treasure' now, says Francis



The faithful in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, gather to celebrate World Youth Day 2019 with Archbishop Eamon Martin. Below, the scene in Panama.



People await Pope Francis' arrival at the World Youth Day welcoming ceremony and gathering with young people in Santa Maria la Antigua Field.



World Youth Day pilgrims from Panama are moved to tears as Pope Francis leads the Way of the Cross at Santa Maria la Antigua Field.



Pope Francis pours chrism oil as part of the dedication of the altar during Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Santa Maria la Antigua.

## Focus Ireland founder

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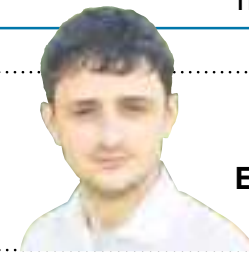


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# World Report



Edited by Colm Fitzpatrick  
colm@irishcatholic.ie

## IN BRIEF

### Christian unity is necessary measure against violence

● At a gathering of Middle East leaders coinciding with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Syriac Orthodox patriarch emphasised the need to unify efforts against extremism and terrorism.

"A hundred years after the genocide during the Ottoman Empire and major displacements", Christians in the region are still facing similar circumstances, said Syriac Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II of Antioch. "Many of our churches have been destroyed and hundreds of thousands of our Christian brothers have been forced to migrate from the land of their fathers," he said. "To whose benefit is it if the region is emptied of Christians?"

### Indonesian politician freed after blasphemy sentence

● An Indonesian Christian, the former governor of Jakarta was released from jail on January 24, completing a two-year long sentence for alleged blasphemy against Islam. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Chinese Christian, was Jakarta's governor from 2014 to 2017.

He was sentenced to prison that year, after being convicted of blasphemy after he charged that his opponents in his re-election race misused a Quranic verse about Muslims being ruled by non-Muslims. A video of his comments with inaccurate subtitles was later released. Hundreds of Muslim protestors gathered outside the court and called for his imprisonment.

Similar demonstrations of 150,000 people had twice occurred against the governor. The protests were largely supported by the Islamic Defenders Front, a group that has previously been involved with violence against Christians and Shia Muslim groups.

### Priests and protestors trapped by Venezuelan army

● As opposition marches were held across Venezuela, at least 700 supporters of interim president Juan Guaido were trapped in Maturin's Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel for several hours, besieged by the Venezuelan Army.

Bishop Enrique Pérez Lavado of Maturin reported that seminarians, priests, and some 700 people participating in the demonstration were besieged in the cathedral, with the military "trying to

break their way inside", according to the Venezuelan bishops' conference on Twitter. The people took refuge in the cathedral due to repression by the regime's security forces and by pro-government groups.

After more than three hours trapped inside the Maturin cathedral, the group of opposition supporters managed to begin leaving at 5pm. The opposition marches were supported by the Venezuelan bishops, some of whom participated.

### Heart relic journeys to Philippines for health prayers

● A heart relic of a saint is being sent to the Philippines during the 'heart month' of February. The heart relic of St Camillus de Lellis, patron of the sick, doctors, nurses, and health workers, will arrive on February 2 and remain in the country until the end of March.

Bishop Oscar Florencio, member of the Episcopal Commission on Health Care of the bishops' conference, called the visit a "grace from God". "There are many requests to have the relic [of St Camillus] visit their place...but by the grace of God we were given this chance," Bishop Florencio said.

### Schools risk 'shutdown' in Fiji

● The Catholic Church in Fiji is prepared to shut down all of its 44 primary and 19 secondary schools if the government continues to elect non-Catholics as the head of those schools. Fiji's education ministry recently named two non-Catholics as principals of St Thomas High in Lautoka and Xavier College in Ba. The Church is now calling for greater autonomy in the governance of its schools. Archbishop Peter Loy Chong of Suva has said he is prepared to close the local schools, but will only do so if Catholic leaders and government authorities cannot arrive at a solution.

## Priestly celibacy should not be optional, says Pope Francis

Pope Francis has said he is opposed to the idea of optional priestly celibacy in the Latin rite, and he would consider it only for very remote places if a serious need existed.

"Personally, I think that celibacy is a gift to the Church," the Pope said on Monday. "I would say that I do not agree with allowing optional celibacy, no."

Speaking aboard the papal plane from Panama to Rome, Pope Francis said he does think there is room to consider an exception for married clergy in the Latin rite in "very far places", "when there is a pastoral necessity" due to a lack of priests, such as in the Pacific islands.

However, he said that he has not thought or prayed sufficiently about the issue to

come to a decision on it, and that he would not want to put himself "before God with this decision", even if it suggests he is "narrow-minded".

His comments were made ahead of a synod on the pan-Amazon region to be held in October, at which priestly celibacy is expected to be discussed as it pertains to the remote Amazon basin where there is often a shortage of priests.

### Long tradition

Responding to a comment about the long tradition of married priests in the Eastern Catholic Churches, or in the case-by-case exceptions made for married Anglican ministers who convert to Catholicism, he said he was reminded of St Paul VI's comment: "I prefer to give my life

before changing the law of celibacy."

He described this as a "courageous" comment, during one of the then Pope's "more difficult" periods. Paul VI was the author of the 1967 encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* which defends priestly celibacy.

Pope Francis also recalled the writings of German Fritz Lobinger, bishop emeritus of Aliwal, South Africa, who argues for the possibility of ordaining 'viri probati', or 'proven men', in places where there is a dire lack of priests. These married priests could, he suggested, administer the Sacraments and celebrate Mass, though they would not have the full competency of ordinary priests.

Francis called this idea "interesting", and said it could

provide a basis for considering the question, but that it should be studied by theologians. At the same time, he emphasised that his personal opinion was against making celibacy a choice candidates made as they prepared for ordination: "optional celibacy before the diaconate, no...I would not do it. And this remains clear."

"It is something to study, think, rethink, and pray about," he said.

### Exceptions

The celibate priesthood has long been a tradition of the Latin Catholic Church, with exceptions made only in the cases of married ministers of other denominations who convert to Catholicism and then become priests.

## Church leaders condemn 'evil' act of terrorism

Church leaders have condemned bomb explosions that killed at least 20 people and injured about 100 others inside a Catholic church in the southern Philippines on January 27. They called the attack a "heinous and evil" act of terrorism. Allegedly, the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the bombing, which occurred during Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the city of Jolo.

Islamic State, which often claims responsibility for acts of terrorism, issued a statement claiming two suicide bombers detonated explosive belts inside the church and near its entrance.

The first blast left bodies strewn on the floor amid destroyed pews.

### Attack

A second explosion near the entrance shortly after killed at least five soldiers trying to help the wounded. The attack, one of the deadliest in recent years in Mindanao, occurred less than a week after a plebiscite was held on expand-



The scene at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Mount Carmel after the attack.

ing and strengthening an existing Muslim autonomous region in the area.

The Filipino bishops' conference condemned the attack and called on Christians "to join hands with all

peace-loving Muslim and indigenous communities in combating violent extremism".

Pope Francis also expressed his sorrow over the attack.

## Global 'task force' of experts to be created tackling abuse

Since the work of child protection must continue after the February meeting at the Vatican on safeguarding, one organiser has said they plan on creating a "task force" with teams on every continent.

The task force would be just one of a number of "concrete measures that we want to offer the bishops of the world", Jesuit Fr Hans Zollner told the Vatican newspaper,

*L'Osservatore Romano* on January 24.

"One of our main ideas", he said, "is that this encounter is another step along a long journey that the Church has begun and that will not end with this meeting", which will bring presidents of the world's bishops' conferences, the heads of the Eastern Catholic churches and representatives of the leadership

groups of men's and women's religious orders to the Vatican on February 21-24.

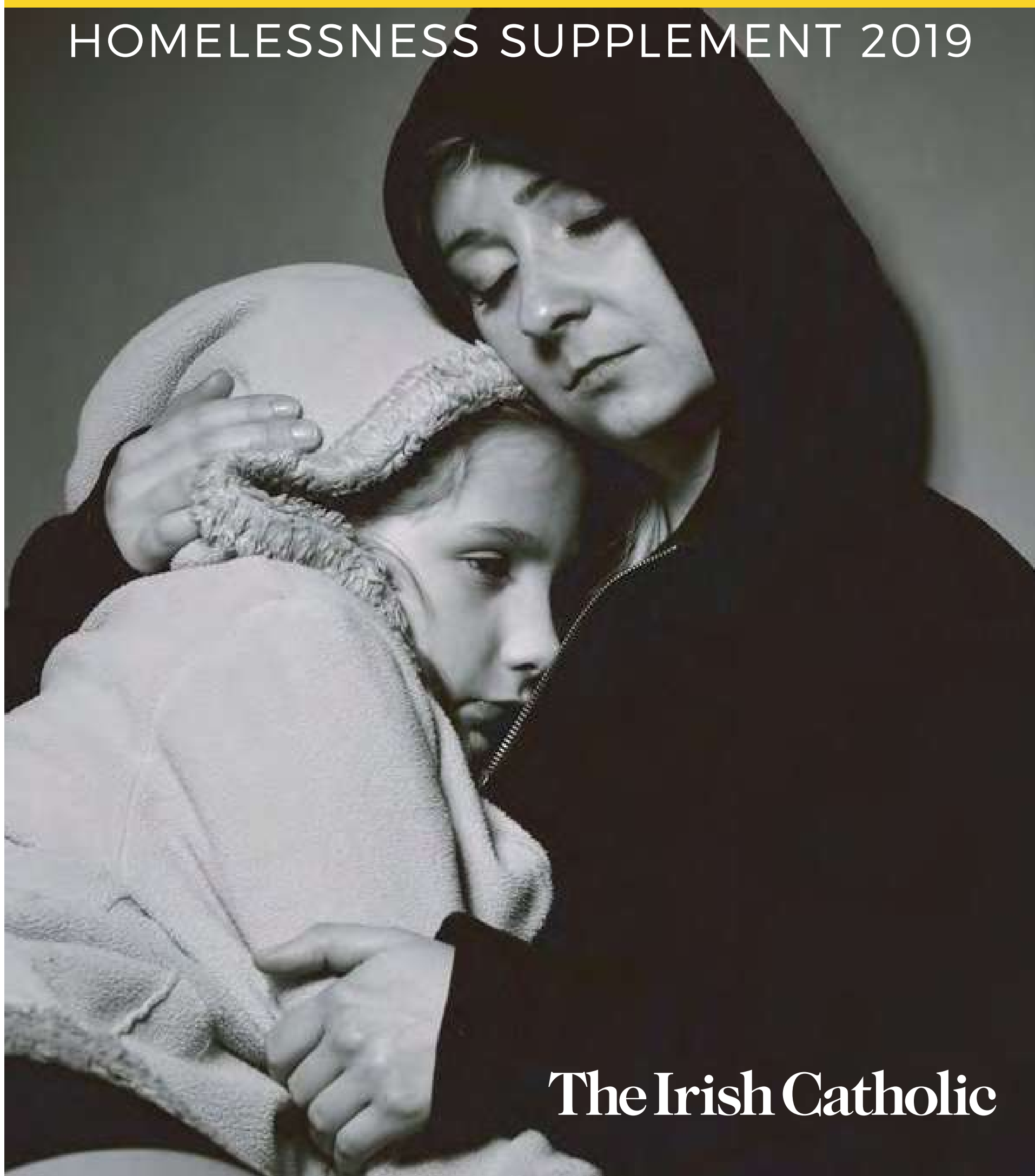
A task force made up of child protection experts "will probably be instituted in the various continents where the Church is present", and they will travel from place to place, said Fr Zollner, who is a member of the meeting's four-person organising committee, president of the Centre for

the Protection of Minors at the Pontifical Gregorian University and a member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

"They will be able to find out about the guidelines that the bishops' conferences are about to implement, what point they are at in this process and what they may need," he said.

# Compassion in a Crisis

HOMELESSNESS SUPPLEMENT 2019



The Irish Catholic

# Still Focusing on Ireland's



While progress is being made on the homelessness crisis, much more needs to be done, **Greg Daly** reports

**J**ust over four years ago, Ireland seemed to reach a watershed moment in its attitude to homelessness, as the death of Jonathan Corrie just metres away from Leinster House shocked the nation. Despite this, the country's homelessness crisis seems to be getting worse and worse.

Mike Allen, Advocacy Manager for Focus Ireland, says the situation is somewhat more complicated than that.

"It depends on how you want to measure it or look at it," he tells *The Irish Catholic*. "In terms of the number of people who are experiencing homelessness and how long they're experiencing it for, it is much worse now than it was four years ago.

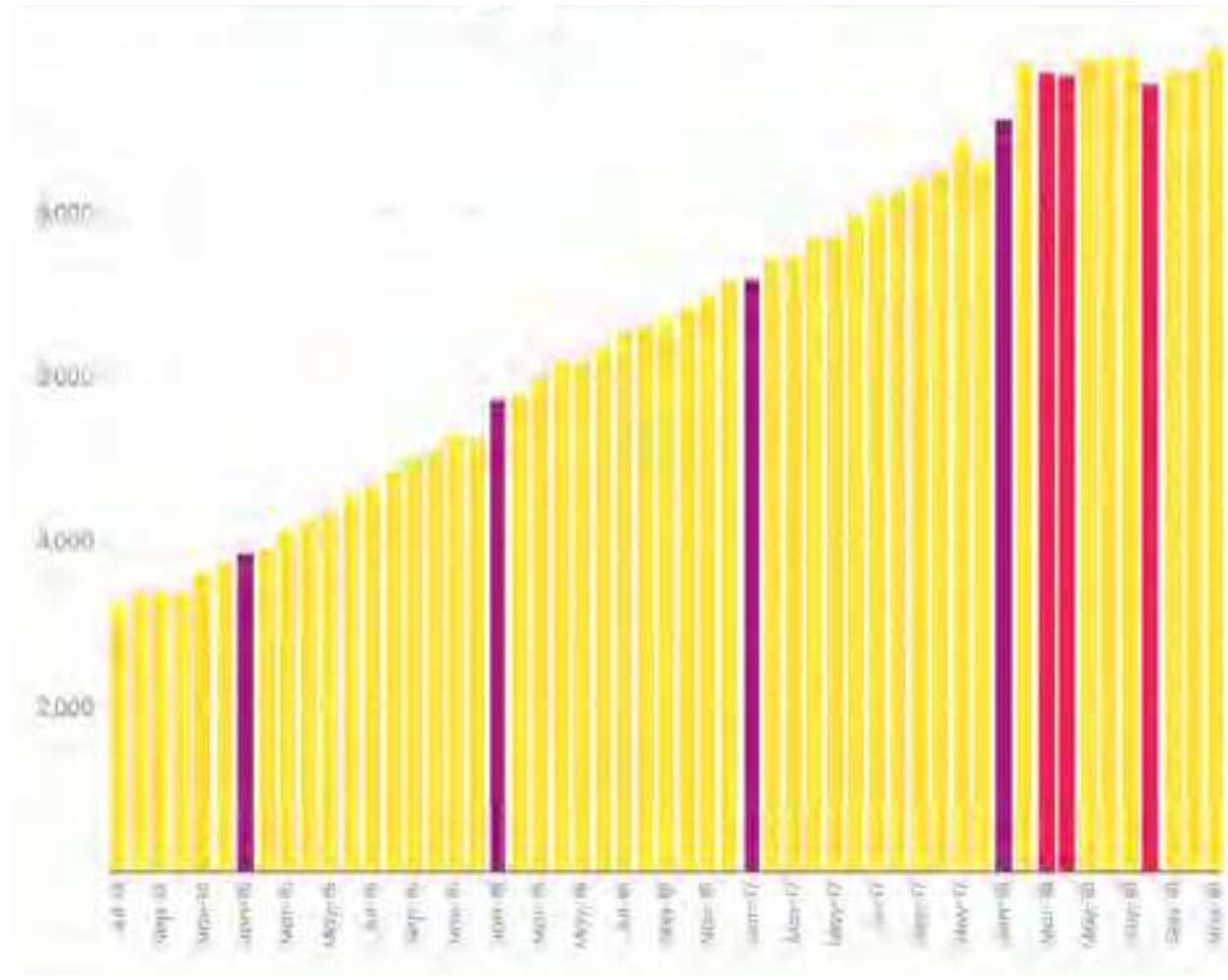
"The statistics are on the Focus Ireland website and they're very, very clear," he continues. "They've doubled and doubled again with the numbers of individuals and families and children who are all experiencing homelessness. So at that level, which is the most human and important level, it is far, far worse than it was before."

## Developers

There has, however, been progress in some respects, he points out.

"You've got to counterbalance that with how the solutions to the problem are now much more advanced than they were four years ago. So, four years ago there was virtually nothing being built, but not only that, the various State and private organisations which build housing – local authorities and developers and whatever – were on their knees. They didn't have staff, they didn't have capac-

## Total number of people homeless in Ireland



In March, April and August 2018, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government decided to change the definition of homelessness used to compile these statistics, and remove a number of families which had previously been counted as homeless. As a result, the months highlighted in red are not comparable with months that precede them.

ity, they didn't have access to money, they were still really decimated from the Crash," he says.

## Capacity

"Now there is considerably more capacity, there's more housing getting planning permissions, things are in the pipeline for delivery, so in some sense there's that balance between how the human scale is worse, but the cavalry are closer to coming over the hill, for want of a better metaphor."

While adamant that a solution is closer now than it was when Jonathan Corrie died, Mr Allen cautions that there should be no false optimism around this, explaining that the numbers of new homes being built is far below what it needs to be if the problem is to be solved.

The problem, in the meantime, is continuing to grow, with homeless figures continuing to rise, even if they have not yet crossed the symbolic 10,000 mark.

"They changed the definition of what was to be counted as homeless," he says. "If they had kept the same definition it would probably be up to over 11,000 but they changed

the definition..."

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the real dangers around the crisis, he acknowledges, is that people simply move beyond shock and horror, beginning to accept it and think of it as normal.

"That happened with the unemployment crisis, that happened with the trolley crisis, and so on: it's the nature of news and media and humanity that people become used to things," he says, adding that this issue may be different.

"I think there's a very high intolerance in Ireland around homelessness. There's a particular attachment to home, and a particular rejection to the idea that thousands of people could be without a home," he says.

"The other factor is that it's not just a homeless crisis – there'd be more risk of people just walking on by if the problem was confined to a particular group of people," he adds.

"The reality is that what we see as a homeless crisis is exactly the same set of

factors which is pushing rents up for ordinary working people, that means that lots of parents have their kids coming back to live in the family home, that people in their family home can't afford to buy their own home, companies can't recruit the staff that they need because of rent and housing in Dublin. All these things are all interwoven, and people recognise that homelessness isn't just a thing over there."

In short, he says, the issue is a broader housing crisis, with homelessness being the tip of the iceberg. "I think there's a wide recognition of

that, and there isn't a sense that it's something that happens to other people. It's affecting us all, and the solutions that will help homelessness will also help the

people who are paying massively excessive rents or can't get suitable accommodation," he says.

The key to addressing this is, quite simply, increasing the housing supply, he stresses, while pointing out that this isn't enough.

"Very little else works without that," he says. "It's necessary but not sufficient."

For tackling long term homelessness, the expansion of the Housing First programme across Ireland to such cities as Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford has made a real difference, he says.

"The traditional approach was you provided somebody with shelter, and then while they were living in that shelter you'd try to help them to deal with whatever problems have caused their homelessness," he says, adding that for long-term homeless people these problems would typically involve mental health or addiction issues.

"The traditional approach was let's get them off the drugs, let's get their mental health sorted

out, and if they do that we can put them in transitional housing, and if they settle in there then we give them temporary housing and if they're very good we'll give them a house," he says, adding that this is known as a 'Staircase' approach.

"The Housing First approach turns that on its head, and says a person with mental health or addiction issues is much more likely to be able to tackle those problems if they have their own home and can close their own front door and have their own privacy," he says.

"So you provide the person with a home, and put very high levels of support around them in the home. With Housing First you have very high levels of mental health and tenancy sustainment supports around the person. There'd be substantial multidisciplinary teams working in Housing First with mental health professionals, nurses, as well as tenancy sustainment and social workers and so on."

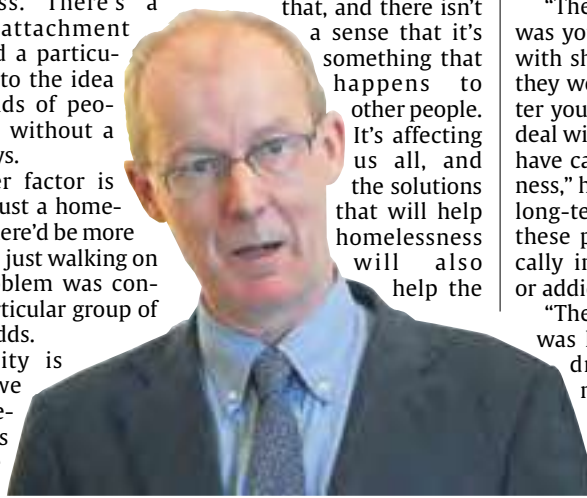
**“The key to addressing this problem is increasing the housing supply, he stresses, while pointing out that this isn't enough”**

Describing this as probably the most researched social policy intervention ever, with large amounts of data especially from Canada, he says that internationally it has around an 80% success rate. In contrast, he says, traditional staircase approaches tend to run at between 30 and 50%.

"In Dublin the Focus Ireland Housing First part of the programme we've been running for a number of years has been running at a 90% success rate," he says. "It's been working very well – about 200 people in Dublin have been housed through Housing First, and most of those people have been people who were not using shelters, who were very long-term rough sleepers sleeping on the streets, not engaging with homeless services."

While the approach is intensive, cost-benefit studies on it in Canada and elsewhere have found that it's not more expensive than traditional approaches.

"It's extremely expensive to keep people homeless, in the sense of providing people with emergency accommodation, and the mental health and criminal justice issues that arise are very, very expensive," he says. "Some



Mike Allen of Focus Ireland.



# deepening housing crisis



lessness, and Mr Allen says that this continues to rise.

"About four years ago, there were about 300 families homeless when the homeless figures first came out, and now there's over 2,000 families homeless, so it's a massive, massive increase," he says.

**“One of the things social workers talk about is parents being infantilised”**

"Focus Ireland would be the main lead agency responding to that with the Homeless Executive, so practically how this works is that there's a team called the Family Homeless Action Team, that comprises case managers for the family and child support workers," he explains.

"Each case manager would be trying to provide support to about 20 families who are living in hotels or hubs or B&Bs or whatever," he continues. "Their job would be to support that family to exit from homelessness, but also to support them to survive homelessness and deal with

the issues, but all the survival work is directed towards getting the people out of it. We're very much not interested in managing homelessness – we're interested in ending it for the individuals in it," he stresses.

Last year Focus helped over 1,000 families out of homelessness, but with about as many families becoming homeless over the year the figures haven't improved. Meanwhile, Mr Allen says, about 10% of Ireland's homeless families have been homeless for over two years, which takes a toll on the children.

"Typically the kind of problems were having is children reluctant to go to school not able to concentrate on their school work, doing less well at school, and for older children there is a risk of them dropping out of school," he says.

With their families there are behavioural problems and difficulties with discipline, he continues.

"One of the things social workers talk about is parents being infantilised," he says. "The role of the parent is about security and author-

ity and a sense of order for the child, but in actual fact the parents are not able to provide the security and the child might often see the parent being told off by the person who's running the B&B, or there are curfews for the parents or parents can't bring their children into the kitchen.

"The way in which the parents' authority are constantly undermined from every direction during their experience of homelessness, our child development people tell us, not unreasonably, has long-term environmental impacts on the children and the family," he says.

## Apology

"The question is whether in 30 years' time the Taoiseach of the day will be standing up and issuing an apology for the way we treated homeless families in this period in the way we've seen for the Mother and Baby homes or industrial schools, and so on," he observes.

In terms of going forward, and stressing that extra beds in emergency shelters are not merely an answer but may be

deepening the general homelessness problem, Mr Allen reiterates the importance of increasing the housing supply.

"While very clear about the progress that's been made in providing more housing, that really needs to be redoubled, because we need to deliver around 35,000 new homes every year to stand still," he says.

"We probably only delivered around 18,000 last year, so we're a long way even from standing still."

Ordinary people have a key role to play in tackling this, it seems.

"That really needs to be accelerated, and that involves things like local communities, local politicians and so on not objecting to every development in the area that's proposed, because there's a real contradiction between the widespread desire for a public solution to the housing problem, and the localised resistance by local communities to every proposal to actually build homes," he says.

"That has to change if we're to deal with this problem," he says.

studies have shown that it is a lot cheaper than traditional approaches, but I think that those are in particular cases. Our view is that it works out

as being about the same cost as traditional approaches, but it works."

Recent years has seen a lot of attention on family home-

**“We were so happy to have spent Christmas in a home of our own, at last.”**

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## Support from Cork Simon can transform lives, Greg Daly learns

**B**ecoming homeless and having to rely on emergency accommodation in his home city seven years ago was a desperate experience for Garry, a native of Cork City.

"Some weeks you might get a bed three nights out of seven so you might have to sleep out rough for the other four nights. It was lonely, it was cold – it was around this time of year. It was probably the loneliest time of my life," he tells *The Irish Catholic*.

Now 31 years old, the onetime window fitter is living in Gateway, a high-support housing unit run by Cork Simon, which operates as a supportive bridging community, intended to prepare long-term homeless people for independent living. It's a far cry from how he lived on the streets.

"When I first became homeless, I went to the homeless persons unit," he says, explaining how once he had a letter confirming him as homeless he turned to Simon.

"I was using the day centre daily," he says. "You put your name down for a bed that morning and then around lunchtime they gave whoever's there dinner, and let you know whether you've got a bed for the night or not. There would be so many people they didn't have enough beds to give everyone so they rotate it, so some nights you're in, some nights you're out."

### Biting cold

With the January cold biting, the charity's provision of blankets, sleeping bags, and a chance to get in from the cold and have a hot meal in the evening – even now the daily soup run serves over 12,000 meals a year – was especially welcome.

"Then you could try and find a safe place where you can sleep that night, where you're not being kicked or you're not having abuse thrown at you, smart comments and that," he says, saying the dangers and discomfort of the night could vary, with drunk passers-by being a real challenge.

"It was hard, it was tough, just trying to find a safe place to sleep," he says. "You spend most of your day in survival mode, really, trying to think where am I going to tonight, or how am I going to about it. You're planning it really, most of the day. You've nowhere else to go, because all you're doing is walking round town for the day.

As time went on the city's homeless crisis worsened, and Cork Simon expanded its capacity,

Garry looks down St Patrick's Hill on the streets where he used to beg.



# From homelessness to hopefulness

with an emergency night service being added to the community's day centre so an extra 15 people without beds could be given at least a mattress to lie on in the night.

"A lot of the time it's full and not everybody can get in. That's how I started and it took a while before I got a bed in Simon full time," Garry says.

"When you do get a fulltime bed you get assigned a keyworker," he continues. "I was still using heavily at the time – I was on heroin at the time. I'd progressed obviously from smoking weed to cocaine, ecstasy and then heroin. That was kind of the end of the line."

It was difficult to fight addiction in the emergency shelter, Garry adds.

"It's very hard to get clean in the shelter because there's so many people using and whatever is going on behind closed doors that the staff can't see. It was very hard to get clean there, and I was using heavily at the time, and the keyworker was working with me to try and get clean," he says. "I managed it after about 12 months. I was so sick and tired of it, and gave it a break and got in contact with Gateway here. They told me that if I could stabilise myself and get some clean time behind me that they might be able to provide me with a bed, so there was a bit of hope

there then, where I'd had no hope and felt hopeless before that."

The prospect of a way out was key to him getting clean, as it gave him things he knew he could live for. Not least the hope of being able to see his infant daughter.

**“It gave me great confidence. It showed me that I can go back and do it, to move away from homelessness and addiction”**

"I was suicidal at times," Garry says. "At the start when I was sleeping out, many times I thought it'd be easier...sometimes I'd pray to God that I wouldn't wake up the following morning, but when I got the bit of hope from Gateway I stopped using, stabilised myself, and got a routine. I got a second interview with Gateway here, and they told me there was a bed here for me, so from that point on I got clean and started working on myself and getting my daughter back in my life."

Praising staff at the community for helping him get access to his child, he says: "I'm on a methadone programme now at the moment, on a reducing dose and hopefully I'll be off that as well come the summer. I only got access back with my daughter last week. When

I got here that was one of my main priorities. Obviously, my main priority was to stay clean, because without staying clean none of that was possible. There was plenty of motive there."

At the same time, Garry says, getting clean and staying clean are different things, with the latter being much harder, though Gateway provides him with an environment where he has a fighting chance.

"When I got here it was a lot easier, and a lot more relaxed because everyone in the house was in the same boat as me, trying to stay clean," he says. "This house would be a kind of stabilisation house, focused on helping you in recovery and stuff like that. It's a lot more relaxed – the shelter would be a lot more chaotic, I suppose, whereas Gateway's a stabilisation place: keyworking sessions weekly, and if something needs to be done or the staff notice a certain behaviour they'll pull you up on it and say you need to work on this."

### Community

Routine is key to his day, he says, with daily meditation being an important part of his life there, along with meetings, working with his keyworker, courses, and his own room, as well as common areas for recreation, with the members of the community occasionally having

outings to the cinema, go-karting or football matches among other things. As much as anything, it's about warding off boredom.

"Idle hands are the devil's playground, so you're battling addiction and don't want to fall backward into homelessness again. You're working both sides of it, and it's hard," says Garry.

"It's kind of like being in a houseshare at home with support from the flat, which is good. It kind of helps you to move on to independent living as well. It kind of gives you all the tools that you need for when you do go to independent living," he says.

Simon also arranged for Garry to work part-time as a kitchen porter ahead of Christmas to get him used to possibility that he could work again. "It gave me great confidence. It showed me that I can go back and do it, to move away from homelessness and addiction, and go back to normal living," he says, adding, "before I became homeless I always worked as a window fitter, a glazer and I'd like to go back doing that fulltime again".

"I wouldn't have dreamed of that a year and a half ago," he continues. "I would have been suicidal then, sleeping rough. A year can make a big difference – without the help and support of Gateway and Cork Simon it wouldn't have been possible."

**“This house would be a kind of stabilisation house, focused on helping you in recovery and stuff like that. It's a lot more relaxed – the shelter would be a lot more chaotic, I suppose, whereas Gateway's a stabilisation place”**

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# Offering more than shelter in a time of need – Depaul

For people experiencing homelessness, living in uncertainty, with a lack of good nutrition and self-care can all lead to an overall decline in mental and physical health. At Depaul we truly believe people experiencing homelessness should have clear pathways to the health care they require.

Over the last number of years, we have urged Government leaders to take an integrated approach to homelessness and health. To really bring joined up thinking so the most vulnerable in our society get the care they deserve.

**“Jess Sears is one of Depaul’s two clinical nurses who work within its services, helping to bring vital health care to those most in need.”**

Jess Sears is one of Depaul’s two clinical nurses who work within its services, helping to bring vital health care to those most in need. Jess says, “We support service users by providing direct, one-to-one, nursing support. What that means is basic assessments, wound care and health promotion interventions. As part of my role in Depaul I advocate and support service users to access health services they would otherwise find challenging because of blocks or gaps in service provision. It’s all about liaising and supporting people to access the right types of care.”

In 2017 Depaul provided 1,334 nursing consultations, 1,217 GP consultations and 2,541 health interventions for some of the most unwell people experiencing homelessness. Our services are tailored to meet the health of our service users and we aim to put them first in everything we do.

Jess continues, “I think we all need to be working within an inclusion health model.

So inclusion health looks to include people that are the most marginalised. So people that have complex addiction issues, people from traveller back-grounds, people that have experienced trauma and people with different disabilities. At Depaul we really look to focus on how we can bring the best service to those people.”

What our work within homelessness has taught us is that people in homelessness, suffering with chronic addition issues, age quicker than those who have a secure place to call home. In a recent study carried out by Depaul in its Sundial House service, a service for entrenched rough sleepers with alcohol addiction, we found that those in this service suffer more with chronic illnesses and also have a shorter life-expectancy than people who have a secure place to live.

Jess says, “What we’re seeing is people are a lot sicker in our services than in the general population. We are seeing people that are aging at a much younger age. So somebody that would be living in the community that might be 80 or 85 years old

we’re seeing the same health conditions in our population with people who are in their 50’s. In essence we are caring for a much younger aging population.”

**“Jess currently works out of Depaul’s Back Lane Hostel, a 100-year-old hostel for homeless men. Back Lane provides 62 beds for those most in need.”**

Jess currently works out of Depaul’s Back Lane Hostel, a 100-year-old hostel for homeless men. Back Lane provides 62 beds for those most in need. Jess believes having a dedicated nurse within services really helps in identifying and meeting the needs of those experiencing homelessness, “Depaul is really good at identifying a person’s needs and the level of support that they’ll require. I think we have such a range of services that we have the ability to meet people where they are at and support them to move to a specific service, based



on the support that they are likely to need.”

Originally from Canada Jess came to Ireland in 2007. Before joining Depaul in 2014 Jess worked with other non-profit organisations within the homeless sector.

Her work centred around caring for rough sleepers and people suffering with drug addiction, “I have been providing nurse-lead, primary care in inner-city Dublin for the last ten years. Specifically, around health promotion interventions. So things like flu clinics, blood virus screening, vaccinations. A lot

of specialist wound care and a lot around women’s health. Things like cervical test smears and also safe injection and needle exchange.”

Depaul believes in the potential of all people and with the right supports

people can move out of homelessness to live independently and really thrive within their community. This includes receiving the right care in terms of health needs and really showing people that they matter and that somebody does care about them.

“What I would say to people is, the people that we work with are lovely and they are a privilege to work with. We are not in a position where people have to disclose everything to us but it is a real privilege when a service

user shares their story with you and it is a privilege when you’ve developed a relationship with somebody where they feel comfortable to do that and where they start to consider themselves as having value.”

At Depaul we aim to empower our service users, to give them a sense of hope. We believe in rights and responsibilities which is why our programmes are based around involving our service users and really enabling them to take the lead and make decisions which they feel comfortable with.

Jess says, “Our goal at Depaul is to empower people so they understand they do have value and they are worth being looked after. And to support them to see that and to learn how to look after themselves better. People often ask ‘did you ever fix somebody?’ and I’d say we are not there to fix people. We are there to support people and to show them that somebody cares about them.”



If you wish to help those most in need and to help to provide the vital health care those experiencing homelessness require you can do so by visiting [ie.depaulcharity.org/](http://ie.depaulcharity.org/) and giving what you can. Thank you.



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# Empowering vulnerable tenants in a failing system



## Chai Brady speaks to Threshold about Ireland's crippling housing crisis

**R**enting families are not only struggling to afford their homes, but are hesitant to engage with their landlords regarding accommodation issues in fear of real or perceived repercussions, an Irish charity warns.

On the frontline of the housing crisis, Threshold assists with a plethora of queries and defends vulnerable people from homelessness.

With the crisis continuing seemingly and alarmingly in perpetuity, people are becoming increasingly desperate to keep their homes, but this is leading to the standards of tenancy or much-needed repair work not being addressed.

The sooner people engage with Threshold regarding a dispute the better, according to project worker Irene Dunne.

While the charity gives advice and advocates on behalf of individuals struggling with a difficult tenancy, it's important that they're approached at the "initial stages of maybe a difficulty before it escalates" according to Ms Dunne.

This is particularly relevant if an arrears or anti-social behaviour case is brought before the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB), as it is then in the hands of an adjudicator whose decisions are legally binding.

### Advice

She described a case she was assisting with last week, in which a father of three called in to ask advice about a landlord not extending their lease for another four years, after the family had been living in the house for almost eight years.

"The children are of an age they were born in the house, this is their home, they don't know any other home," says Ms Dunne.

"And obviously their friends the school, it's a huge wrench for people because when they do go into temporary accommodation, it's whatever is available. People



Irene Dunne, a project worker with Threshold.



are traveling from one end of the city to the other side of the city in early morning trying to get children to school so that their lives aren't disrupted, so that they're still around their friends in school.

"Then you have that awful thing of them going back to maybe a hotel room or a B&B, there's no facilities for them to cook.

"People are doing everything they can to remain in their tenancy, they're nervous, and particular people who are more vulnerable, if English isn't their first language as well, and that they can't get their point across, they're fearful of what might happen. They don't know what their rights may be, they may not be au fait of what should be happening and there's that element throughout."

In another one of her cases Ms Dunne spoke of a woman with children who had to vacate her rented house in North Co. Dublin while work was being done to tackle pyrite issues.

"We assisted her to vacate the

property and got her temporary accommodation from the local authority so she moved out with her family," says Ms Dunne.

However it was when she was in the temporary accommodation that the landlord unexpectedly served her with a notice, despite reassurance from the landlord there would be no break in her tenancy.

**“The vast majority of landlords are willing to speak at least and to listen to what you have to say”**

"I got on to the landlord and explained this is not what he could do, he must reinstate her in the tenancy and then issue a notice. She moved back into the tenancy, she left in June and was back in September and this is still an ongoing case with us – we're still very much involved.

"She could have been out of the

property if she hadn't got in touch with us and we hadn't worked on her behalf with the landlord."

Ms Dunne says that it's "quite unnerving" for many people in the private rental sector, particularly people who have lower incomes.

Although the charity mainly receive calls from people who have low incomes, there are many couples who are both working and on "decent wages" who still find it hard to manage exorbitant rental prices.

They also receive calls from people who aren't in immediate danger of losing their home, but could be looking for advice as to how to approach their landlord regarding a particular issue. Once they give consent in writing to Threshold they can intervene on the tenant's behalf – or even just give advice.

Recently Threshold have expressed concern about the large amounts of data being asked for by letting agencies and landlords – from PPS numbers, pictures of

themselves and links to social media accounts – in order for people to be given preferential treatment at the pre-letting stage of the private rental market.

Practices like this, and others are what Threshold has been vocal about, and continues to advise people about who avail of their services.

Although landlords can often be painted in a bad light, Ms Dunne says there are good and bad landlords just as there's good and bad tenants.

"You would have to say that, the vast majority of landlords are willing to speak at least and to listen to what you have to say, obviously there is pressure on everybody, on some landlords there might be pressure from a financial institution to get a certain amount of money back from a particular property.

"The pressure is on to sell or to get more rent, sometimes they see no alternative than to sell," she added.

### Stressful

Helping people fighting to keep their houses can be "stressful" says Ms Dunne, but with good supports in the Threshold office they're able to keep their heads above water.

"People do break down on the phone, they break down in the interview rooms, men and women. Sometimes you have people come in in extremely difficult circumstances, maybe English isn't their first language and they might have one of their children in who is interpreting for them.

"That's very upsetting because the child is hearing something they shouldn't be hearing but the parents have no other option, they need that help. That can be difficult."

Despite the challenges, Threshold are continuing to do all they can to support those fighting a failing housing system and to give advice to those in need.

# Leave a Legacy of Hope

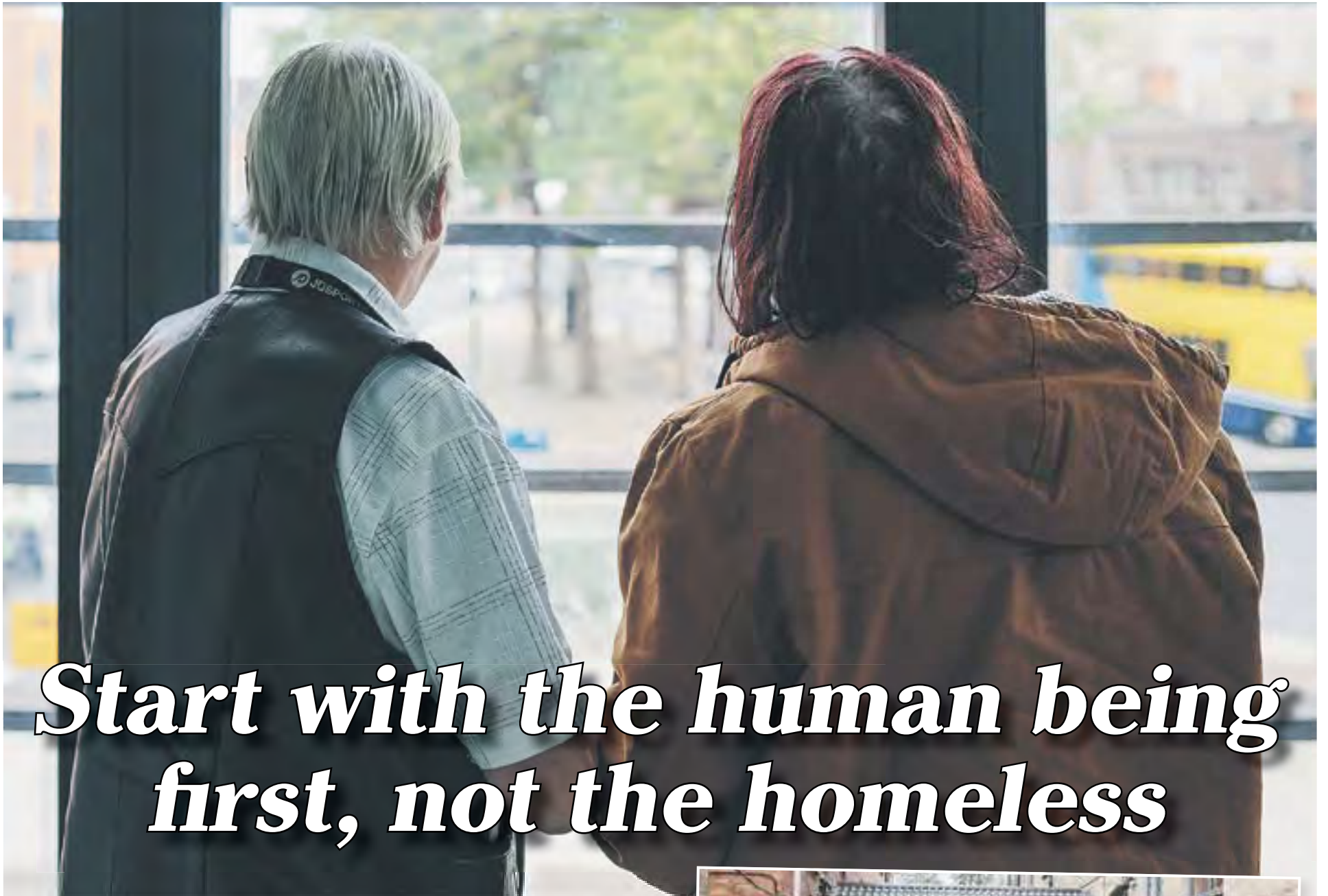
When you are making your Will, please remember the vulnerable families you can save from homelessness. Contact Saoirse at Threshold in strictest confidence.



**Call: 01 6353629**

**Email: [Saoirse.Jacoby@threshold.ie](mailto:Saoirse.Jacoby@threshold.ie)**

**Visit: [www.threshold.ie](http://www.threshold.ie)**



# Start with the human being first, not the homeless



**Kerry Anthony**  
CEO Depaul Ireland

**S**r Susan is a Chaplain and has volunteered with Depaul for almost two years. As part of her role she provides spiritual and pastoral support for Service Users and staff through difficult times.

"I would always say, look at the person first. This is a human being like you or me, we have blood in our veins, we get up every morning hoping for the best for our day. We never know what circumstances could interfere or change in our lives that we too could end up homeless. That could be us, you know, and how would we like to be treated?"

On a weekly basis, Sr Susan visits a number of Depaul's services, listening to and providing comfort for those who have found themselves in really difficult circumstances: "I link in with people in the 24-hour, the One Night Only



Sr Susan receiving an award from Depaul's Volunteer Department, pictured with Dermot Murphy, Senior Services Manager with Depaul and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Nial Ring.

services and people who are coming in to homelessness for the first time. Just being able to sit with them and let them cry if needed and to just listen to their story, their fears and to try and give them a little bit of reassurance and support and practically to tell them what staff they need to

link in with in the morning before they leave."

She goes on to explain how from time to time she offers pastoral accompaniment to various places and does hospital visits and how important that can be to someone who is homeless and may have a lack of family support: "I remem-

ber one time visiting a service user in hospital and the person saying to me 'I love when you come in because you make me feel normal in the ward'. You have to understand that that visit may be the only visit the person receives."

On the topic of Chaplaincy and what it means, Sr Susan

**“Sr Susan encourages everybody to look at people in a compassionate light and most importantly be kind, ‘Even if you pass somebody that is begging on the street, that is a human being that for some reason has to beg’”**



Back Lane Hostel, an open door in a time of need.

is not so much worried about if people understand what it means, but more the role a Chaplain can play within these vital homeless services. "It's not so important about what a Chaplain does but it's the presence of a Chaplain that matters and having the time, especially when staff are very busy, to sit down with Service Users and that you're there as a person who can maybe help them tap in to the resource of hope or resilience that is in that person. If it from a source of faith or a belief in God well and good but if not that is okay because you're trying to hold them and keep them until they can get their feet back underneath them to move on from homelessness," she said.

When it comes to misconceptions of homeless people, Sr Susan encourages every-

body to look at people in a compassionate light and most importantly be kind: "Even if you pass somebody that is begging on the street, that is a human being that for some reason has to beg. Even if you don't give them anything, just say hello. Just acknowledge that they exist. Remember, it is a human being with blood in their veins like you and me, and begin there."

**Depaul is a homeless charity which was set up in 2002. They provide a range of outreach and accommodation services across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and last year helped almost 4,000 men, women and children. To find out more or to make a donation visit [ie.depaulcharity.org](http://ie.depaulcharity.org)**





Elise Harris

# For the next ‘Catholic Woodstock’ there’s definitely something about Mary

At Sunday’s closing Mass for World Youth Day (WYD) in Panama, it was announced that the next edition of the international festival dubbed the ‘Catholic Woodstock’ will take place in Lisbon, Portugal. While there are undoubtedly multiple reasons, it’s hard not to start with the fact Lisbon is less than an hour’s drive from Fatima – the site of what are, perhaps, the most famous Marian apparitions of all time.

The Lisbon gathering, set for 2022, will mark just the second time the event has focused so pointedly on the Virgin Mary. The previous record-holder for most ‘Marian’ gathering was St John Paul II’s August 10-15, 1991, WYD at the shrine of Jasna Góra in Czestochowa, Poland.

Czestochowa is the site of the widely revered image of Our Lady of Czestochowa, also known as the ‘Black Madonna’ due to years of soot built up from candles left by pilgrims who came to the shrine, lighting the small flame as a sign of their petitions. St John Paul II was hugely devoted to the Madonna of Czestochowa and to Mary generally, so much so that his papal motto, *totus tuus*, was an expression of his consecration to Mary.

In 2022, just over 20 years after his historic visit to the Polish shrine, Mary will again be the heart of the massive international WYD gathering – in a place with its own painful history of conflict and anti-Catholic sentiment, coupled with deep faith and popular devotion.

## War

In 1917, when Mary is believed to have appeared to three shepherd children, Portugal, like most of the world, was embroiled in war.

With World War I raging, Portugal was unable to hold onto its neutrality and eventually partnered with the Allies in a bid to protect their African colonies and maintain trade rights with Britain. Some 220,000 Portuguese civilians died during the war.

Complicating the situation was the fact that the country’s government had been unstable following a revolution and *coup d’état*, which overthrew the monarchy and led to



Pope Francis places flowers near a statue of Mary as he prays in the Little Chapel of the Apparitions at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal. Photos: CNS

the formation of the First Portuguese Republic in 1910.

With the advent of a new regime, a fresh constitution was drafted stressing separation of Church and state and sought to banish the faith from public life.

A rise in anti-Catholic sentiment in the post-revolution years led to the

government’s seizure of Catholic property, including churches and schools; clergy were forbidden from wearing priestly attire in public; the ringing of church bells was forbidden; and popular cultural festivals and processions were banned. An estimated 2,000 priests and religious were killed

between the years 1911-1916.

It was against this backdrop that in 1917, three shepherd children began seeing the Virgin Mary on the 13th of every month from May-October. They were Lucia dos Santos, aged 10 at the time, and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta



St Paul VI is pictured next to Carmelite Sister Lucia dos Santos, one of the three Fatima visionaries, during a visit to the Marian shrine in Fatima in 1967.

Marto, 9 and 7.

Revealing herself to the children in a field in Fatima while they were tending sheep, Mary made an appeal for penance and prayer, particularly the recitation of the rosary, and for the children to make sacrifices for the conversion of sinners. She also showed the children a vision of hell, revealing what she said was a “secret” regarding the fate of the world – a secret involving the Second World War, the rise of communism and a request for the Church to consecrate Russia to her Immaculate heart.

**“Francis has long had a devotion to Mary, and on May 14, 2013, he consecrated his entire papacy to Our Lady of Fatima. In 2017, he visited the Portuguese shrine himself to mark the centenary of the original 1917 apparitions”**

It was also in 1917 that Europe was facing some of its most drastic changes, as the Russian revolution was beginning to unfold and the Soviet Union took shape, which would launch its own vicious anti-religious campaign shortly after the USSR was formed in 1922.

In 2022, exactly 100 years later, Fatima will again be the site of a major worldwide event centred around Mary with youth as protagonists. Unless something truly dramatic happens in the meantime, it’ll happen at a time when the global community is again marred by violent conflicts - in this case, what Pope Francis has often referred to as a Third World War being fought “piecemeal.”

Francis has long had a devotion to Mary, and on May 14, 2013, he consecrated his entire papacy to Our Lady of Fatima. In 2017, he visited the Portuguese shrine himself to mark the centenary of the original 1917 apparitions.

While there, he canonised Francisco and Jacinta Marto, marking the first time that children who weren’t martyrs were made saints.

Though as yet no official themes or patrons for the Portugal edition of World Youth Day have been announced, it’s impossible to imagine that the legacy of Fatima won’t be front and centre.

The next version of the largest regular Catholic gathering on the planet, in other words, will be one in which there’s definitely something about Mary.

**i** Elise Harris is Senior Correspondent with Crux.com

**“In 2022, just over 20 years after John Paul’s historic visit to the Polish shrine, Mary will again be the heart of the massive international WYD gathering – in a place with its own painful history of conflict and anti-Catholic sentiment, coupled with deep faith and popular devotion”**

# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Ignorance at highest levels well exposed

**Dear Editor,** Gabriel Doherty's comments in your front-page story this week (IC 24/1/2019) have really shown up the ignorance and intellectual shallowness of our political classes.

That the Taoiseach should have thought references to private property and the Common Good in our Constitution derive from socialism rather than from basic Catholic social teaching points to an outlook embarrassingly ill-informed about politics, religion and history.

Mr Varadkar's preposterous claim leaves one longing fondly for the time – not long ago – when one of our TDs stood up in the Dáil and

criticised Bunreacht na hÉireann as the handiwork of a priest. That Joan Collins TD was talking nonsense without saying, of course, but at least she recognised that our Constitution from the first bore a deep Catholic influence. It seems the Taoiseach does not even realise that.

And if Mr Doherty is right, it looks as though Mr Varadkar isn't alone. Did none of those who spoke in the Mansion House for the Dáil's centenary session really think that the Democratic Programme approved by those present at the first Dáil's first meeting was the work of one man, and a deeply socialist document? At the height of the Russian Civil War?

Ours was a famously conservative revolution, one where the left was a fringe element – even in the 1916 Rising, the high tide of Irish socialism in many ways, the Citizens' Army was a minority of a minority, and one that still devoutly prayed its Rosary.

And as anyone familiar with the history of Masses for the dead of 1916 and the Conscripted Crisis of 1918 should realise, when we won our independence we did so while standing upon the shoulders of the Irish Church.

*Yours etc.,  
Cathal Rafferty,  
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.*

### Is RTÉ television worth watching anymore?

**Dear Editor,** Articles appear regularly in your columns criticising RTÉ, a TV channel which is undoubtedly very biased and propagandist and run by people of an anti-Christian persuasion.

I get the impression however that RTÉ deliberately broadcasts programmes containing material which attacks Catholic beliefs in the mischievous expectation of provoking a reaction in the many still loyal Catholics in Ireland. I believe RTÉ is

however becoming less and less relevant in the lives of younger people here and may presently not enjoy the advertising revenue it once did.

May I suggest a different approach; other than comments in your Media Watch section, simply ignore RTÉ and its producers as totally irrelevant, with none among them with anything of value whatsoever to contribute to modern life. An attitude of complete indifference towards their

propagandist and unedifying broadcasts and absolutely no comments or mention of the station in your newspaper columns whatsoever, outside Media Watch, might be far more effective in pulling their fangs.

Your paper would do well, I feel, to concentrate instead on a positive promotion of the benefits of living as a true Christian. Cultural Catholicism, often promoted and allowed by high ranking Irish clergy, has weakened the Church and disappointed

many true Catholics here, and your paper would serve Christians well by helping further erode this pernicious form of devotion.

Engaging in journalistic skirmishes with the likes of RTÉ is, in my view, beneath your very informative newspaper's mission of promoting the real benefits of genuinely living the Gospels.

*Yours etc.,  
Maurice Kiely,  
Dundalk, Co. Louth.*

### Myths endure

**Dear Editor,** Regarding Greg Daly's article on the lack of appreciation for the Church's role between 1914-1923 (IC 24/01/2019) we have to realise that we aren't in the ascendance anymore and no matter what is said, the history of the Church will always be associated with mad evil nuns and pederast clergy. With such films as *Song for a Raggy Boy*, and the current drivel of director Vito Russo's *Cellar Door*, which will no doubt be rushed to DVD time for any remains discovered at the Tuam homes, the truth suffers while the myth endures.

*Yours etc.,  
Fr John McCallion,  
Clonoe, Co. Tyrone.*



### Part-time, dabbling Christians will simply fall away

**Dear Editor,** I refer to the excellent insights in the Editor's Comment of January 3, 2019. You quite rightly state that "some of our faith-based institutions have become secular and in some instances hostile to religion". It is worth noting that such institutions are often supported and under the patronage of our shepherds, the bishops.

You observe that "the Christian of the future will be an intentional one" – part-time dabblers just going through the motions will indeed fall away from lack of interest. But surely intentional Christians also require intentional shepherds who can remain relevant and active in the support of their flocks and those institutions under their

patronage?

On a recent television programme, one shepherd declared that he was "not the protesting type". I suppose if one feels they have nothing worth protecting, then there is no need to protest. Such a spirit sadly speaks of the lukewarm and non-intentional spirit of leadership that has sadly left us struggling intentional Christians to the wolves – a media and political class set upon dismantling and undermining the position of faith and morals, which are vital to maintain the true good and dignity of all within society.

One wonders who will protect us from this unrelenting movement of secularism and often strongly anti-

faith message of the current age. Only the shepherd who seeks to defend and speak the Gospel undiluted.

In our hope for such shepherds we can be confident, for Christ has assured us he is with us "to the end of time". History proves this for the Church has been graced with Christ-like leaders such as the recently canonised Oscar Romero, who was not only willing to protest when the truths of the Gospel and human dignity were being undermined, but was willing to pay the ultimate price for such holy protest.

*Yours etc.,  
Michael Connolly,  
Newbridge, Co. Kildare.*

## facebook community

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

### Should priests publicly refuse Communion to pro-choice politicians, or should they give Communion and speak to them privately afterwards?

You don't give someone you suspect to be in a state of grave sin Holy Communion and then pull them aside after, the Church doesn't teach this. Jesus overturned the tables publicly and rebuked others publicly. This politician publicly denied children the right to be born with his vote so never mind him. – **Stephen McElligott**

I'm sure the loving compassionate heart of our Lord Jesus, looks upon the TD with kindness, acknowledging that we are all sinners and that everyone else in that Communion queue will have 'sinned', that's the precise reason they are there at all. It's so sad that sinners judge sinners and I'm sure the priest is not perfect. – **Emma Green**

They know they are committing a grievous sin by supporting abortion, they know the consequences. – **Craig Walker**

Who are we to judge anyone? It's no wonder people are turning away from the Church in droves. Would Christ turn anyone away? – **Martin Murphy**

Why would you go to receive Communion when you disagree with the very basics of any Christian Church beliefs? Everyone is entitled to express whatever political opinion, but it is pure hypocrisy to then pretend you are Christian. – **Cristóir McGrath**

As a Eucharistic minister, I was told nobody was to be refused, by me or by the priest. The priest explains later, why that person should not present himself, privately. If that person persists, then he should be given the Blessed Sacrament and he sorts it out with Almighty God. – **Gertrude Morrissey**

### Should the Church sell a large number of Catholic schools, or would this damage Catholic education?

Don't sell the schools because the children will suffer for it. You need to fight the Government rather than appease them. – **Kevin McMulkin**

Our 'Catholic' schools are State schools and are not truly Catholic. If the Church keeps some schools it should be on condition that the schools would be real Catholic schools. – **Maureen Normoyle**

They couldn't damage it anymore than disinterested religious teachers already do. I wouldn't say a large number, though phase it in to see how it works out. – **Annette Devlin**

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

## Letters to the Editor

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

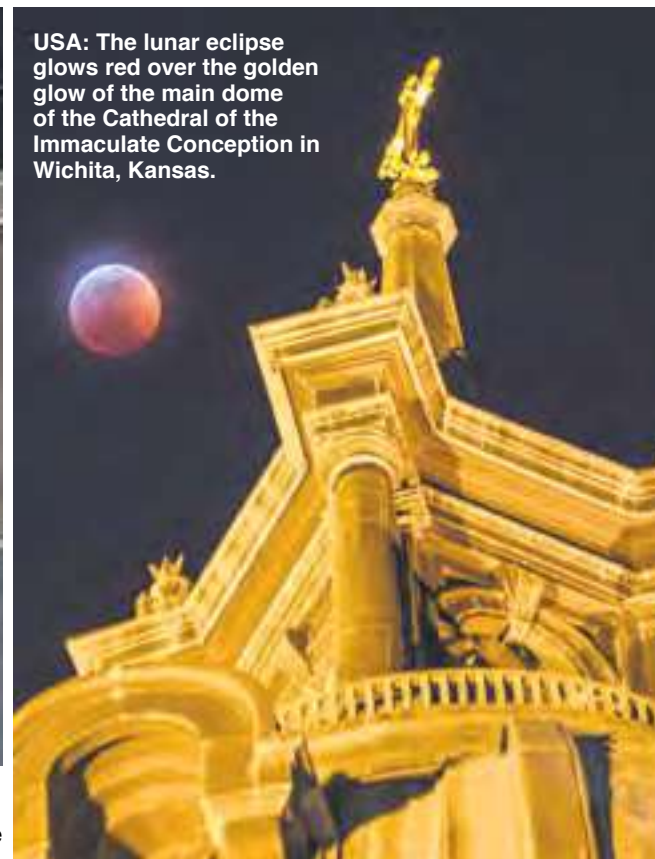
We regret that we cannot give prior notice of a letter's publication date, acknowledge unpublished letters or discuss the

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

# 📷 Around the world



**VATICAN:** The Swiss Guard have started using helmets made with a 3D printer and tough, weather-resistant ASA thermoplastic. The cooler, more lightweight headgear is crafted in the 'morion' style of the Renaissance. The new ceremonial helmets were used by the 110 Swiss soldiers for the first time, during a special ceremony commemorating the 513th anniversary of their foundation by Pope Julius II.



**USA:** The lunar eclipse glows red over the golden glow of the main dome of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Wichita, Kansas.



**VENEZUELA:** A demonstrator throws back a tear gas canister while clashing with the Venezuelan National Guard, during a protest close to one of their outposts in Caracas. The Venezuelan bishops' conference labelled fresh calls for anti-government street protests as "a sign of hope" in the country, which continues to suffer through a deep economic and humanitarian crisis.



**MEXICO:** Relatives of Cesar Jimenez Brito, 40, who was killed during a pipeline explosion, mourn earlier this month, during his burial at a cemetery in Tlahuelilpan. The nation's bishops offered prayers for the victims of the explosion, in which dozens of villagers in the central state of Hidalgo perished after rushing to get some of the gasoline gushing from what appears to have been an illegally tapped pipeline.



**USA:** Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, superior general of the Sisters of Life, prays during a Holy Hour, at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. The service and Mass that followed it comprised a Prayer Vigil for Life marking the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children.



**PANAMA:** People cheer before Pope Francis' arrival to attend a welcoming ceremony and gathering with young people in Santa Maria la Antigua Field in Panama City on January 24. Photos: CNS

# Spirituality & spiritualities

**W**hat is spirituality and what makes for different spiritualities? The word spirituality is relatively new within the English-speaking world, at least in terms of how it is being used today. Prior to the 1960s you would have found very few books in English with the word "spirituality" in their title, though that wasn't true for the French-speaking world. A half-century ago spiritual writers within Roman Catholicism wrote about spirituality but mostly under titles such as 'The Spiritual Life' and 'Ascetical Theology', or under the guise of devotional treatises. Protestants and Evangelicals, for the most part, identified spirituality with Roman Catholic devotions and steered clear of the word.

What is spirituality, as generally understood within church circles today? Definitions abound within spiritual writings of every sort, each of which defines spirituality with a particular end-goal in mind. Many of these definitions are helpful within academic discussions but are less so outside those circles. So, let me risk simplifying things with a definition that's wide, interreligious, ecumenical, and hopefully simple enough to be helpful.

## Presence

Spirituality is the attempt by an individual or a group to meet and undergo the presence of God, other persons, and the cosmic world so as to come into a community of life and celebration with them. The generic and specific disciplines and habits that develop from this become the basis for various spiritualities.

Stripped to its root, spirituality can be spoken of as a 'discipline' to which someone submits. For example, in Christianity we call ourselves 'disciples' of Jesus Christ. The word 'discipleship' takes its root in the word 'discipline'. A disciple is someone who puts herself under a discipline. Hinduism and Buddhism call this a 'yoga'. To be a practicing Hindu or Buddhist you need be practicing a certain spiritual 'discipline', which they term a yoga. And that's what constitutes any religious practice.

All religious practice is a question of putting oneself under a certain 'discipline' (which makes you a 'disciple'). But we can distinguish among various religious 'disciplines'. Aristotle gave us a distinction which can be helpful here.



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

He distinguished between a 'genus' and a 'species', e.g. bird is a genus, robin is a species. Thus looking at various spiritualities we can distinguish between 'generic' disciplines and 'specific' disciplines: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, and various Native Religions are 'generic' spiritualities.

**“No one serves one's God fully, just as no one lives out one's God-given dignity fully”**

But within each of these you will then find a wide range of 'specific' spiritualities. For example within the wide category of Christianity you will find Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Protestants, Evangelicals, Mormons and Congregationalists. Each of these is a species.

Then we can distinguish still further: within each of those you will find a wide range of 'sub-species', that is, particular Christian 'disciplines'. For instance, within Roman Catholicism, we can speak of persons who have Charismatic spirituality or a Jesuit, Franciscan, Carmelite or Salesian spirituality, to offer just a few examples. Notice the

pattern here –from genus to species to sub-species. As a spirituality, Christianity is a genus, Roman Catholicism is a species, and being a Jesuit or a Franciscan (or, in my case, being an Oblate of Mary Immaculate) is a sub-species.

I apologise if this seems a bit irreverent, that is, to speak so clinically of genus, species, and sub-species in reference to cherished Faith traditions wherein martyrs' blood has been shed.

But the hope is that this can help us understand more clearly a complex issue and its roots.

No one serves one's God fully, just as no one lives out one's God-given dignity fully. We need guidance. We need trusted, God-blessed patterns of behavior and disciplines that ultimately come from divine revelation itself. We call these religions.

Then, inside of these religions, we can be further helped by models of behaviour lived out by certain saints and wisdom figures. Thus, inside of Christianity, we have the time-tested example and wisdom of 2,000 years of faithful women and men who have carved out various 'disciplines' which can be helpful for us to better live out our own discipleship. Jesuit, Franciscan, Carmelite,

Salesian, Mazenodian, Charismatic, Opus Dei, Focolare, Catholic Worker, Sant'Egidio, Cursillo, Acts-Missions and Catholic Christian Outreach, among others, are spiritualities, and just as the exercise and diet regiments of health experts can help us keep our bodies more healthy, so too can the discipleship practices of particular saints, spiritual giants, and wisdom figures help make our following of Jesus more faithful and generative.

**“God gives us different gifts and different callings and life puts us in different situations”**

Which one of these spiritualities is best for you? That depends upon your individual temperament, your particular vocation and call, and your circumstance within life.

One size doesn't fit all. Just as each snowflake is different from every other snowflake, so too with us. God gives us different gifts and different callings and life puts us in different situations.

They say the book you need to read finds you and finds you at the exact time that you need to read it. That's true too for spiritualities.

The one you need will find you, and will find you at the exact time when you need it.



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

## Could Our Lady have said 'No' to bearing Jesus?

**I**t's no secret that Catholics believe Mary is the Mother of God, a fate she learned about at the Annunciation. According to the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel came to Mary as a young virgin and said: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus."

Some scholars have suggested that Gabriel's message was declarative rather than a proposal, meaning that Mary couldn't have refused the message. This point seems compelling from reading the passage alone, but it's important to remember that the author of Luke wasn't recording every small detail of the conversation, but giving an overall synopsis of what happened.

Besides, we know that Mary voluntarily accepted the message because of her reply to Gabriel: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

**“What would have happened if Mary said 'No' to God? The short answer is that we don't know, and there's plenty of speculation on the matter”**

It's clear from Mary's response that she isn't coerced into bearing Jesus; she chose this option. Mary, like everyone else ever created, had free will and could have said 'No' at the Annunciation. Of course, God knew that she would voluntarily accept the word given to her, and gave her

the grace to do so.

This is why the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "God sent forth his Son", but to prepare a body for him, he wanted the free co-operation of a creature. For this, from all eternity God chose for the mother of his Son a daughter of Israel, a young Jewish woman of Nazareth in Galilee, 'a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary'."

Like anyone else, Mary could have declined the message, but God knew that she would accept, much like when someone knows their partner will accept a proposal of marriage, but in a much more radical way. There's no force or compelling involved at all.

## Rejoice

Answering this question, of course leads to another one. What would have happened if Mary said 'No' to God? The short answer is that we don't know, and there's plenty of speculation on the matter. Perhaps God would have chosen someone else to bear Jesus, or taken a different path completely. What we do know is that God ordered the world in such a way that Mary would freely say 'Yes' and for that we can rejoice!

Theologians are often accused of asking esoteric or hypothetical questions that don't have any relevance to real life but questions like these provoke thought and give a better insight into what we believe and why we believe it.

For example, this question has shone a light on the topic of free will and also how incredible Our Lady was to accept an offer that would make most of us tremble and cower.

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

# Cornerstone

Building tomorrow's parish today

**February:**  
Journeying  
through the  
liturgical year

Page 32



# Building tomorrow

## Bishop Donal McKeown

**T**he old adage says that if you fail to plan you plan to fail. In the Diocese of Derry, a 14-strong Interim Diocesan Pastoral Council spent 30 months teasing out who we are called to be today and how

we can face the future with hope. We wanted not just to develop a plan but to model a consultative and discernment-based way of planning about being church. We became clear about a number of core values.

Firstly, because of the Resurrection of Jesus, we have to learn

how to tell an honest story about the past – but to do so in a way that gives priority to good news. A church that moans about a loss of power and influence, of too much work and too few resources is not a Church that knows the Risen Lord. The early Church had to jolted out of its fear and nega-

tive narratives – and had to stop lamenting a lack of apostles. In our plan we wanted to acknowledge current realities and then see what the Lord is calling us to do in facing those challenges. There is a hunger out there for good news. If we fail to look like Good-News-People and to speak

that language, we are not proclaiming the Resurrected Lord. The Israelites coming out of Egypt had to learn that the Promised Land was always ahead of them, never behind. Going back or recreating the past is never an option.

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## Welcome to this week's Cornerstone

### Fish and Tips:

Pope Francis has launched his new Click to Pray app profile.

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### Dr. Ryan's series on the sacraments:

When do you eat your god?

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### PPCs:

Donal Harrington continues his series regarding PPCs: mobilising and leading.

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Please spread the word and join us on the journey of the building tomorrow's parish today – a familial community of faith, fostering authentic, intentional discipleship. If your parish is engaged in something exciting or innovative, contact us and let us know! Email me on [eoin@irishcatholic](mailto:eoin@irishcatholic).

# Building tomorrow

» Continued from Page 29



**Bishop Donal McKeown** shares the inspiring work from the Diocese of Derry

Secondly, we recognised that the Church is not called to be powerful. Power and pride corrupt. With St Paul we know that ‘when we are weak, we are strong’. The Church is called only to be fit for purpose in our current changed world. And that purpose is

to ‘bring good news to the poor’. There is so much pain and distress in our society. The banal consumerist dogma creates so many victims. Too many young people are dying for want of a reason for living. The Church is only a divine instrument to speak healing, mercy, love, beauty and belonging into our current reality. That means putting an end to moaning about

ourselves and having a Jesus heart that has compassion for those who are harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.

Thirdly, we worked on the assumption that people live in local communities. The job of the Bishop is not to devolve his power - but to support, encourage, co-ordinate the development of parish communities where the love of God can be experienced and celebrated. Belonging is not just useful context for believing. For Christians in the Body of Christ, belonging is part of the content of believing. In the Body of Christ, we are all gifted in different ways.

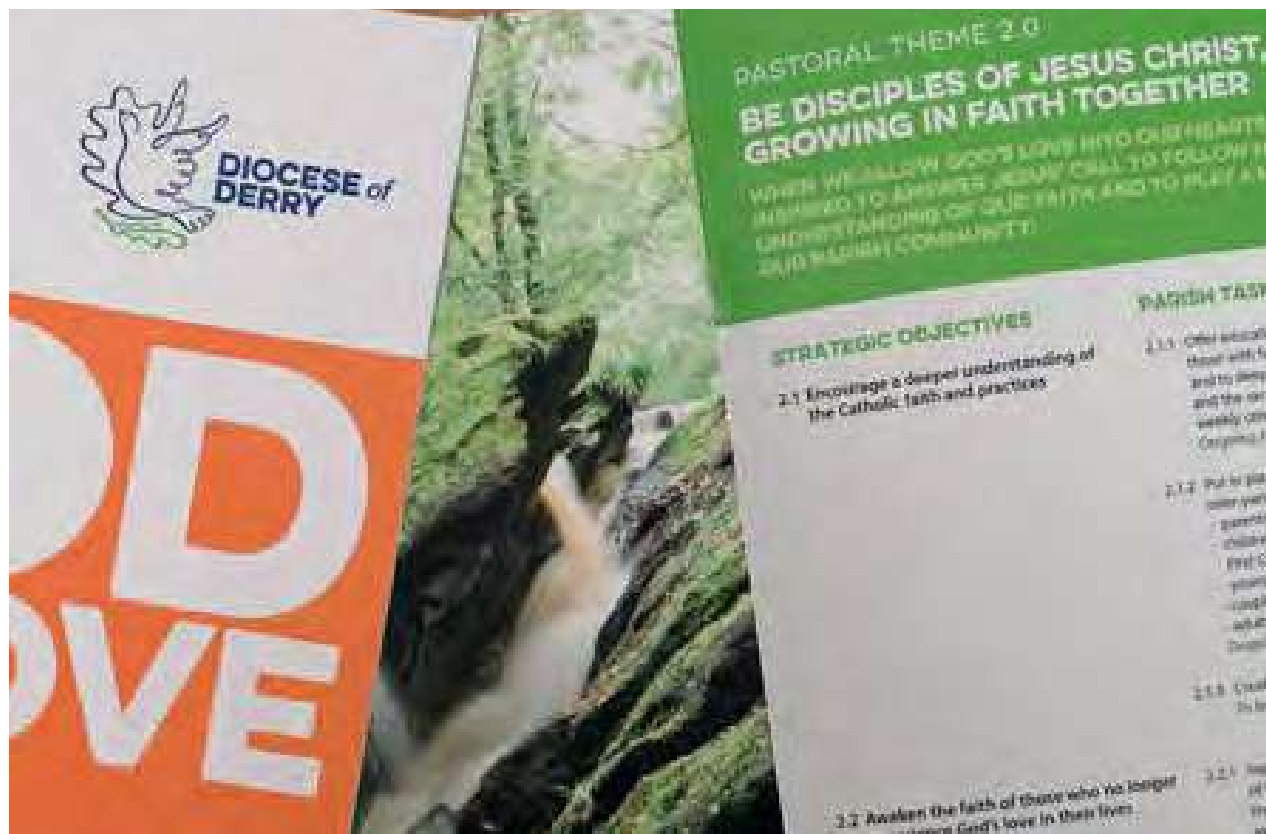
Fourthly, we worked on the basis that lay involvement does not mean ‘helping poor Father to do all the jobs that he has’. It is not a question of clericalising more laity. Lay involvement means the priest ensuring the laity are prepared for their job in a missionary church. Churches around the world are thriving – in Africa and Asia – where



**“The Church is only a divine instrument to speak healing, mercy, love, beauty and belonging into our current reality.”**

there was a perceived shortage of clergy and religious and active lay formation. A Church is living where laity are constantly being formed to take on their baptismal responsibility for the mission of God’s people.

The overall thrust of the Derry Diocesan Plan is simple. In 2021 we celebrate the 15th centenary of St Columcille’s death. That year we aim to have a Diocesan Assembly,



In the intervening period we want to ensure that every one of our 51 parishes is structured and equipped to have adult conversations about its pastoral priorities and outreaches. Only such parishes will be in a position to meet and discern God’s way forward for the next three or five year period.

The three themes that we have chosen are simple.

1. Build welcoming and inclusive communities.

2. Be disciples of Jesus Christ, growing in faith together.

3. Work to make Jesus known and loved.

It was agreed that each theme would have a small number of clear objectives and parish tasks – along with a timeline. That means doing things well today rather than fearing tomorrow. And the Diocese pledged to put resources in place that will help each parish receive the

training and support they need.

Furthermore, the Plan was designed to be read by parishioners. We launched it officially in June 2018 on the Feast of St Columba. In September, we arranged a full-day conference for the priests and five laity from each parish to look at the Plan and to offer workshops. Then in October, on each of three Sundays we offered homilies, tied in with the readings, to reflect on each of the themes. We have now had Deanery conferences to consider local needs and how training could be delivered to parish groupings.

The plan is not an end. It is a work in progress. But the

focus is clear – how do we make disciples of Jesus in communities that reach out? That change needs not just new structures but a pastoral conversion. New circumstances need new methods.

But what has driven the process has been the evangelical enthusiasm of so many great lay people – and the hunger of so many young to be heroes and saints, not just consumers and self-centred. God is Love and still wants to offer Good News to our hurting society. Our diocesan church wants to be used by God letting new shoots sprout. This is an exciting time to be Church Ireland! We sow the seeds today – and let God be Lord of the harvest.

See [www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org) to view plan and other resources for your parish and/or diocese.

## Scripture

Reflecting on Scripture is an important part of the Christian faith. Often, however, we Catholics do not allow ourselves the time to really reflect on the Word of God. This weekly series will explore the Second Reading from the coming Sunday’s Mass. While originally written to the early church communities, Scripture is the living Word of God, so each week we can read what was being said to encourage and challenge early Christian communities in order to hear what is being said to us today.

### 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge – for this, too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am a man, all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known. In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

### Spend some time in prayer with the reading.

1. Find a quiet place, and give yourself fifteen minutes without distractions. Read the section once, and then pause for reflection. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and response to the passage.
2. Read the passage a second time. Ask yourself: What do I find challenging about this reading? Is there anything that I can try to do differently in my life as a response to it? What is the message in this reading for our parish? Write down anything that comes to your head.
3. Pause in silent reflection, and then read the passage a third time.



# PPCs mobilise!



## Donal Harrington continues his series regarding PPCs.

**T**he role of the faith community in the process of planning for the future of the parish needs to be emphasised. If only the PPC is involved, then there is no ownership. However good it may be, it is merely 'their plan'. Planning is meant to take place in the context of, and in the spirit of, every member ministry. That asks for a substantial engagement with the faith community, consulting people about what is proposed, listening to views and concerns, taking feedback on board. Then people will have a sense of the plan being their own.

Implementing a plan successfully hinges on mobilising people. The PPC formulates a plan of work, then it mobilises others to carry it out. It is a kind of marrying of needs with gifts. The PPC identifies the needs, then it calls for the gifts in the faith community to respond to these needs. So two aims are at work in tandem; achieving specific targets and activating every member ministry.

Part of the mobilising will be working with existing groups. The PPC has to gather them around a vision, to establish the 'jigsaw' we spoke of earlier. It enables each of them to see their part in implementing the plan and realising

the vision. But a big part of it is also to mobilise new gifts in response to new needs. And it is not good enough for the PPC to do something itself because nobody else volunteered. Its principle should be along the lines that nothing is done until gifts are discovered and people come forward.

A relationship with the parish finance committee is also important. Plans have financial implications. So the finance committee has a significant role in sourcing or generating the resources needed. Part of a good relationship here is about the committee looking beyond the financial, to become familiar with the pastoral planning that is at work.

### LEADING

To speak of the PPC in terms of overall care and planning for the parish is to see it in a leadership role. The PPC is not just another ministry group. It is different. It is meant to be the parish leadership team. In the clerical church, the parish priest was the leader. In the people's church, the leadership group is the PPC, with the parish priest as its president.

This is new, and takes getting used to. Members have to grow into it. Often, when the PPC is described in leadership terms, there is resistance. This is quite understandable, because when people think of leadership in the church context they often think of authority and power, subservience and obedience. Members do not want to be seen, or to see themselves, as wielding power and exercising authority.

But this is a different kind of leadership. It draws its inspiration from the Gospel. There, leadership is about service, not power. Jesus says to his disciples, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant ... just as the Son of Man

came not to be served but to serve' (Matthew 20:25-8).

In this Gospel spirit, the PPC's leadership is at the service of the faith community. But service does not mean just 'doing things' for the community. It means enabling the community to become itself, to grow into its own identity. The real leader here is the Spirit; the teacher is Christ. The PPC seeks to facilitate the faith community's journey towards what it is meant to be.

Vision is central to such leadership. The PPC 'holds the vision', the kind of vision articulated in this book. It is inspired and energised by the vision. If not, it has little to offer. And, thus energised and inspired, it leads by enthusing others, by spreading the energy, by mobilising the faith community around the vision; the vision that is its identity and its calling.

We have already touched on this kind of leadership. The PPC leads when it cares for and supports the parish ministry groups, and when it unites them around the vision. It leads when it consults the faith community, when it listens to people and invites people into ownership. When this kind of thing happens, it is not the priest who is in charge of the parish. It is not the PPC that is in charge of the parish. It is the parish that is in charge, assuming responsibility for itself.

This is the kind of leadership that the PPC is called to. It is leadership in the service of every member ministry. So we could say that the role of the PPC – in its caring, its planning, its leading – is to bring into being a truly ministering parish, where every member ministers and is ministered to, where each one evangelises and is evangelised.

## Fish & Tips

### Daily Ideas for Disciples



#### WHAT IS CLICK TO PRAY?

The App that connects your prayer with the world.

Click To Pray is the app of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (including the Eucharistic Youth Movement). The app connects you with thousands of people who, in all the continents, are praying every day for the challenges of humanity and for the mission of the Church as the Pope proposes in his monthly prayer intentions. Pray, live and build a world which tastes of the Gospel. Give meaning to our live and put your prayer into action.

Click To Pray offers you three brief moments of prayer each day. You are invited to join the Pope's call to connect your heart with others seeking to serve the mission of Jesus, a mission of compassion for the world. Together, we make each day different. Live each day with a twist. Click To Pray also lets you share your own prayer intentions for all to pray – and is available online at [www.clickto-pray.org](http://www.clickto-pray.org)

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer), a Pontifical Work, introduced the Click To Pray

platform of prayer "24 Hours for the Lord," on March 10, 2016. It is the official prayer platform for the intentions of the Pope (App, website, blog, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Newsletter). During the Jubilee of Mercy, all Catholic pilgrims were invited to pray for the intentions of the Pope. Click To Pray was launched to make these intentions known and to help all to pray for them. Before it became the digital platform of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and its youth branch, EYM (Eucharistic Youth Movement), the Apostleship of Prayer of Portugal had started Click To Pray in November 2014. Today it exists in Portuguese, Spanish, English, French, German, and Italian. Another version is going to begin soon in Vietnamese and Chinese. The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network engages the challenges facing humanity and the mission of the Church. Those challenges are expressed in the monthly prayer intentions of the Pope. It is an ecclesial service of the Holy See entrusted by the Pope under the care of the Society of Jesus.

#### THE MISSION



Click To Pray is the prayer platform of the Pope, of his Worldwide Prayer Network. The app invites you to pray together for his intentions which address current challenges facing humanity and the mission of the Church. And because "every day is different," the app

offers you a prayer 365 days a year to help you discover each day how God calls you to live. Join us as we pray together with the Pope, united with the Heart of Christ, thousands of us throughout the world now form a truly global prayer network.

## EVANGELISATION

## Going green

**Natalie Doherty** returns with an edition 'journeying through the liturgical year' for February.

**A**fter surviving the start of the year and concluding with the Christmas season, our churches spring to new life. Green is the dominant colour as we enter the first 8 weeks of Ordinary Time. The green symbolises hope, life and growth. February is a bit quieter this year, as with Easter being the 21st of April, Lent kicks off on March 6th. The Sunday Gospel's of February follow the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus: they trace the people of his hometown not understanding how extraordinary he was; those that dropped everything and followed him; Luke's take on the Beatitudes and Woes; and the difficult call to love your enemies. February is peppered with Feast days, the most important being on February 1st, with the Feast of St Brigid, secondary Patron of Ireland. This is followed by Feast of The Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd and the Feast of Saint Peter's Chair on February 22nd.

So, where would we begin to engage with the Liturgical Year and how to engage with it on a deeper level? For me February will take a bit of a change in direction this year and the key is the return of the green of Ordinary Time. It got me thinking – while we still have a bit more winter to

go in February, we are heading towards Spring. New life is starting to get ready to bloom under the soil, and while we may not be able to see it just yet, we have hope that it will come. We hope the leaves will begin to emerge out on the trees that have been bare for the last few months and daffodils will begin to line the sides of the roads. We hope and pray for this to happen, for the sign of new life to emerge. However, this year, I'm a little more conscious that it might not happen, or may not happen as we are accustomed.

**“The challenge of climate change is something that can't be ignored, featuring most days on the news in some shape or form.”**

Green may fill our churches, but how “green” are our churches and our parishes? The challenge of climate change is something that can't be ignored, featuring most days on the news in some shape or form. After COP24 in Poland, people are acting and taking the steps necessary to create a better living environment for future generations as governments continue to be slow to act.



Grassroots movements can and will achieve, only if action begins now. We don't have time to spare. As a church, we take our inspiration from Pope Francis who called us with *Laudato Si'* to Care for our Common Home. He says, “If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith.” (*Laudato Si'* #64)

The green of Ordinary Time should spring us into action. How can we bring green into our parish? In the family space for the month of February, tips and tricks of how to be “green” at home, in school, and in the parish

community will be set out to take away. This will include facts and hints about water use, recycling, picking up litter around the area, walking to school, quoted from Pope Francis. Families will be invited to take up one new “green” habit and bring the green of the church into their home. There will be many more links and information on the ‘Eco-Parish’ section of the parish website as, after all, we don't want to use up too much paper!

There will be a family prayer on care for our earth, based on the prayer by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. Families will be encouraged to say this as often as possible.

For the entire parish, the key is to reflect deeply and spend time with another quote of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* where he asks: “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment in

isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal.” (*Laudato Si'* #160) Like the Family Space, the entire parish are asked to take steps at home and to help the parish work towards gaining the awards administered by Eco Congregation Ireland. The roadmap of how to do this will be through action and using Lorna Gold's book *Climate Generation: Awakening To Our Children's Future*. A parish-wide commitment to action will begin and will be the basis of, and shape, how we journey through the rest of the liturgical year. If we don't act now, we won't have the green to pass on to the next generation.

## Sacraments

## When do you eat your God?

**Dr Fáinche Ryan**

A friend once recounted a valuable learning experience of hers. She used to give hospitality every summer to a student from overseas, young students who had come to improve their English. She enjoyed having them, learning about their cultures, and at the same time augmenting her income. Once she had an Indian student to stay; he wasn't a Christian but he went along with her to Mass. At one stage during the Mass he asked her, in total innocence, ‘when do you eat your God?’



This is indeed a remarkable question, which reminds us that that which we claim to do is understandably strange to the outsider. Indeed what do we do, or claim to do? Our minds having been nourished, we proceed as a community to what is termed the Liturgy of the Eucharist. What happens here is quite simple, and at once most profound, and as

we have seen, it makes no sense to someone outside the story. It is indeed ‘non-sense’. We have heard the story of God's faithfulness to people throughout history, firstly to the Jewish people through their many struggles, and then of God's faithfulness to the followers of Jesus – God raised Jesus from the dead. No matter what we do, have done,

or indeed fail to do, the message is clear. Even when we crucified the Son of God on a cross, the truth remains that God is with us and will respond to our cry if we can but trust. Psalm 78 is one of the many places in Scripture where we are reminded of God's constancy: “Their heart was not steadfast towards God; they were not true to God's covenant. Yet God, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; often God restrained his anger, and did not stir up all his wrath. God remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and does not come again.” (Ps 78:37-39) Anamnesis (memorial) is central to what we do at Eucharist. As we remind ourselves of the stories of God's faithfulness in the proclaim-

ing of Sacred Scripture we are also, one might say, in a sense, ‘reminding’ God of God's faithfulness. We are saying ‘God, you did these great things for our ancestors in the past, do them again in our time, now, in our Eucharistic celebration, answer our plea’. We know we can trust God because we have experienced God's fidelity in the stories we recall. And our plea, our prayer is straightforward – send your Holy Spirit and change this bread and this wine into the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ, the long awaited Messiah, so that we can all receive Christ in Holy Communion.1 Send your Holy Spirit on us so that we, your people, might become more truly the Body of Christ. Simple, yet most profound, it is indeed an everyday miracle.

**‘Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them’ (Jn 6:56)**



# The Christian roots of mindfulness

## Mindful living

Dr Noel Keating



I am looking forward to exploring in this column the ancient yet very modern practice of meditation and to reflecting on its deep fruits for individuals, families and communities. One of the wonderful things about meditation is that it can be practiced by anyone, of any age, at any time, in any setting. All over the world people meditate regularly as individuals and in groups and I see great potential for meditation in the context of family life. Children love to meditate and often take to it more easily than adults.

Meditation can be said to be very old and very new at the same time. Very new because of the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn who developed the secular practice of mindfulness which he introduced as a health practitioner for the benefit of his patients. New medications or health interventions are never accepted in the health sector until they have been tested and their benefits demonstrated beyond doubt and potential side-effects identified.

Since Kabat-Zinn first introduced the practice of mindfulness in the 1970's there have been thousands of studies which have verified its practical benefits. For that reason, mindfulness has spread across the world in recent decades and is now regarded as a highly effective holistic practice. Over coming articles we will examine these benefits for adults and children alike.

### Core practice

Although the spread of secular mindfulness is a fairly recent phenomenon, its core practice of meditation goes back thousands of years and can be found in almost all of the wisdom traditions and religions of the world. The earliest written records on meditation come from the Hindu tradition around 1500 BC.

The Christian tradition can be traced to the Desert Fathers and Mothers at the end of the third century AD through the writings of St John Cassian, the early mediaeval Christian monk and theologian. Meditation also appears to have been part of Celtic spirituality and the Irish word for contemplation is 'rinnfheitheamh', which literally translates as 'the edge of waiting' or 'waiting at the edge'.

Meditation, then, is a universal practice but one in which the intention and purpose of the practice



differs from one tradition to another. All of these customs speak of the deep inner fruits of meditation, each one in the unique language of their tradition. In the Christian tradition, the intention is to be still and silent in God's presence and its fruits are described in terms of personal transformation which leads to compassionate action in daily life.

As Pope Benedict XVI expressed it: "Silence has the capacity to open a space in our inner being, a space in which God can dwell, which can ensure that his Word remains with us, and love for him is rooted in our minds and hearts and animates our lives."

**“In this column, when we refer to meditation, we are referring to the practice of sitting in stillness and silence with the intention of making ourselves present to God.**

We will explore the fruits of meditation, as experienced and described by adults and children, in future articles and we will consider how families might go about introducing meditation as a family practice.

Words can often mean more than one thing; sometimes a word can mean a thing and its opposite! For example, depending on the context of the word in a sentence, the word sanction can mean that a person has permission to do something or it could mean a punishment for doing something that was not permitted! Words can also have different understandings in different traditions.

The common understanding of meditation today is that it refers to the practice of being still in body and mind, especially quieting the mind.

But the word 'meditation' can also mean to think about something. In the Christian tradition the word meditation used to refer to reflecting on and thinking about, say, a passage from Scripture and to this day the term is often used in that sense; traditionally Christians have used to word 'contemplation' to refer to the state of being still in body and mind, to simply being in God's presence.

However, when in 1975 John Main recovered the ancient practice of contemplation in the Christian tradition he named it 'Christian Meditation'. So, in this column, when we refer to meditation, we are referring to the practice of sitting in stillness and silence with the intention of making ourselves present to God. Not thinking about God or talking to God but simply being with God. Meditation is not what you think.

In the Christian tradition meditation is a form of prayer, a means of leaving ourselves open and vulnerable to communion with God. We cannot make that communion happen but we can leave ourselves open to it. It is recommended as a daily practice where we leave our preoccupations to one side and turn to what matters most. Meditation is more than a form of personal development; ultimately, it transfigures our way of seeing and being in the world.

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

## Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



My wife and I are like ships in the night –weary ships, that need a long spell in dry dock for repairs. We are incessantly commanded on strange, but urgent, midnight missions by capricious miniature admirals: babies, small children and viruses. From the deepest dream, each night I might awaken to find the bedroom door ajar and a distraught seven-year-old standing there with an earache, or a four-year-old who has wet the bed or a nine-year-old with a sore throat. And that is just my department.

My wife has a sole admiral, but a far more demanding one. Hers is a six-month-old baby girl, who is the sweetest thing in the world,

but who wakes six times a night for a feed and comfort.

During the day, I am busy with work while my wife is preoccupied with the baby, housework, and preparing for her approaching return to work, which involves filling out all sorts of forms and things.

Evenings are the busiest time of all: the evening meal has to be prepared, tidied up after, homework done, bedtime stories read, schoolyard disputes must be debriefed, school lunches prepared and more housework attended to.

**“It is strange, how thousands of sleepless nights, lifelong commitment, worry and all the rest of it amounts to the most beautiful and worthwhile experience of your life”**

The 24-hour demands of childrearing are remarkable. If we are fortunate, we get to pass a sentence or two to each other in the evening before being interrupted by the baby's cries on the monitor, summoning my wife; or perhaps one of the older kids can't sleep, or one or both of us collapses asleep, having been up much of the previous night.

The ensuing blur is nothing

new. I vaguely recall having been through all this before. It's what happens when you have a new baby, other small children and demanding work commitments.

I'm used to carrying on reasonably effectively in the face of such fatigue and busyness. I know it will all steadily, if sporadically, improve and that perhaps next summer a slightly more sane lifestyle will again begin to prevail. The one aspect of the new-baby chaos that bothers me most is not having time with my wife. Arranging who is going

to pick who up after football or cubs doesn't count. I mean some time for conversation. It is the strangest thing to have spent almost every waking moment (and

there are many) in another person's company, yet to find yourself missing them.

We've found a solution: Every Monday, when the three older admirals are in school, we put ourselves out of signaling range by putting the littlest admiral in childcare for an hour, while the others are in school. Gloriously cut off from all orders, we then alter course and meet for lunch in a local cafe. This is a precious hour for the two of us. Soup and sandwiches by the fire, without indigestion. Whole minutes of completely uninterrupted conversation. It is an oasis in the week.

Inevitably, though, even then talk turns to the kids and, somehow, by the time we leave we are missing them again. It is strange, how thousands of sleepless nights, lifelong commitment, worry and all the rest of it amounts to the most beautiful and worthwhile experience of your life. But it does.

Each month, the baby's sleep will get incrementally better. The older kids can settle themselves more and more now, and need us a little less each year. Perhaps by 2029 I will turn in at night, in the legitimate expectation of sleeping undisturbed through the night; contentedly, like I once did. For now, though, a night's sleep is a distant dream.





## Green Fingers

Paul Gargan

### Your garden will soon wake from its winter sleep

“Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures your dream” – Barbara Winkler.

Prune Buddleja and Elder right down to old wood to keep it to a manageable size and also to keep it flowering on new growth where you can see it and enjoy it. After flowering, prune winter-flowering shrubs such as mahonia, winter-flowering jasmine and winter-flowering heathers.

When pruning heathers, just remove the shoot tips with garden



shears, don't cut into old wood as it won't rejuvenate. Also using shears, cut all of last years' leaves from Epimediums before spring flowers develop. This not only allows light in for new growth but lets you enjoy the flowers unobstructed. Cut down ornamental grasses left standing before fresh shoots appear.

Clear soggy, collapsed stems from perennials and compost them. Remove and compost debris from shed guttering so rain water can fill your water butt. After snow falls, clear it from on top of hedges, conifers and evergreen shrubs to prevent it from weighing down and breaking branches.

#### Infestations

Check anything you have planted in the last season or two. It may have been slightly lifted by frost or

windrock, if so firm them back down.

Hang fat balls in holders on or very close to roses or any plant susceptible to greenfly infestations. This is to encourage blue tits to forage for overwintering pests.

**“To increase your stock or just to prevent overcrowding, lift and divide snowdrops and winter Aconites”**

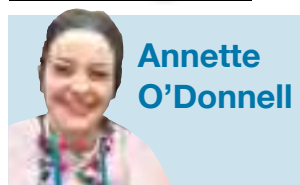
Plant Lily of the Valley crowns. They want partial shade, in a moisture-retentive but not wet soil that has been enriched with homemade garden compost. To increase your stock or just to prevent overcrowding, lift and divide snowdrops and winter Aconites. Do this after they have finished flowering but while they are still in the green. Dig the holes where you wish to replant them before you dig them up and replant them immediately. Don't let them dry out between plantings.

Prune late-summer flowering clematis, cutting back stems to healthy buds about 30cm/1 foot from the base. Some types of clematis can be pruned now and some at other times. The best way to tell when to prune clematis or any other plant is to look at the label that comes with a new plant.

The plant's name, pruning, planting instructions, what type of soil and aspect it prefers and some basic instructions on how to care for your plant are on the label. If you leave the label on the plant, it will last for a few years outside and then it is gone. It's best if you remove it and store it inside away from the elements. Then you will always have it and the invaluable information that it contains.

# Catholic youth SEEK holiness

## Youth Space



Annette O'Donnell

Speaking at his recent papal visit to Ireland, Pope Francis said: “Young people are the future. It is very important to prepare them for the future, preparing them today, in the present, but also rooted in the past.” Such words summarise well a trip taken by 60 Irish youth to the recent SEEK conference in the US.

SEEK is a Catholic university conference run by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students). FOCUS, established in 1998 by Curtis Martin in Kansas, is a missionary organisation.

Today, FOCUS has almost 1,000 missionaries worldwide. Each missionary has a college degree and has undergone training with FOCUS, enabling them to merge their personal experience of college life with FOCUS's evangelical expertise. Missionaries live on campus and have close collaboration with college chaplains.

They meet students where they are – from the church to the rugby pitch. Through various outreach events, bible studies and one to one conversations, the missionaries foster authentic fellowship with students. They help build students in their faith and in doing so cultivate an apostolic fervour and zeal for Catholicism. UCD has been blessed to have six missionaries commence their second year on campus last September, who accompanied students to the conference.

#### Speakers

The conference ran from January 3-7 in Indianapolis, with some 17,000 attending. Our group comprised over 60 Irish people including four priests, Bishop Phonsie Cullinane and students from almost every Irish university.

Some of the brightest and best Catholic speakers from across the globe featured, including Fr Mike Schmitz, Dr Scott Hahn and Crystalina Evert to name a few.

Attendees enjoyed a packed schedule of daily Mass, adoration, Confession, women and men's sessions, talks, workshops as well as free time to chat with hundreds of Catholic organisations in the US.



Irish attendees at the SEEK conference in Indianapolis.

The talks challenged us to respond wholeheartedly to the irrevocable call of the Lord.

To not bargain with mediocrity nor look to what this world has to offer us but rather to fix our eyes steadfast and unceasingly upon heaven – striving always for holiness.

**“To meet so many fantastic Irish people who are just like myself gives me motivation to continue to spread the message of God”**

We were challenged to imitate Christ in all we do and don't do, not just for our salvation but for the sanctification of all those around us too. To be pillars of fire and strength and to always have our hand stretched open to our neighbour while simultaneously clinging to our heavenly mother's hand.

Coinciding with the challenges was the imparting of practical knowledge: how to be a practicing Catholic in a secular environment; how can we evangelise in college; and what programmes and ideas can be implemented on campus and in communities.

One memory that stands out to me was watching the priests line in for Mass, witnessing the priestly fraternity of over 600 colleagues and brothers from across the world.

Seeing them accompany thousands of their young parishioners and students as I stood and waited the three minutes it took for them to pass by. Each individually and inherently different and

yet all universally united by the very bond of our fraternity and indeed the foundation of Christian charity.

#### Experience

In a word, the experience was transformative. The generosity we experienced in the days preceding the conference – of families who opened their homes to strangers, who fed 20 of us as they prayed in thanksgiving for being in a position to do so, offering us their cars, entertaining us in song and catering to our every need was reflective of the Church, not as an institution but as a family. To reiterate Pope Francis, as young people we must be rooted in the past. Now, we are ready to branch into the future as Catholic Ireland's representatives.

“Seeing the thousands of young Catholics coming together from all over the world to share their faith was so inspiring. In Ireland, faith is diminishing and it can be a struggle to hold onto, especially when we live in a society where faith is no longer the norm,” said Eugene Kealy, a third-year Sport, Physical Education and History student from UCC.

“However, the various talks that were given at SEEK can relate to the many different hurdles that we face as young people in our faith and we can learn strategies to overcome these.”

“The adoration and Confession was also beautiful and rewarding and I hope to be able to spread the information I gathered at SEEK to the many young people who are living in emptiness in Ireland today.”

Clara Terren Hogan, a first-year Medicine student from NUI Galway said: “Returning from SEEK, I felt that I had grown in spiritual maturity and gained a better understanding of what it really means to be a young Catholic.”

**“One memory that stands out to me was watching the priests line in for Mass, witnessing the priestly fraternity of over 600 colleagues and brothers from across the world”**

In the world we live in it can be so easy to simply tick all the Catholic sacramental boxes and think “Ok, I'm a good enough Catholic”.

However, at SEEK I encountered people whose love of God was on another level and really challenged my idea of comfortable Catholicism.

Witnessing the reverence held by thousands of young people at Mass was incredible. The witness of both attendees and speakers at the conference opened my eyes to what God is truly calling me to, what he is calling all young people to: sainthood.

“And for that we need to take our faith seriously and challenge ourselves to grow in our love of God every single day.”

**i** FOCUS' 2020 conference SLS will be held in Phoenix, US, December 30-January 3.

# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## ITV's gamble on *Cleaning Up* pays off

People say we have a toxic relationship with all sorts of things, but gambling has to be up there as one of the most serious scourges.

TV drama **Cleaning Up** (UTV, Wednesdays and Virgin Media 1, Mondays) makes for uncomfortable viewing as Sam (Sheridan Smith) unravels due to her addiction to all sorts of gambling. She squanders thousands of pounds, including on online gambling through her phone, in the grip of an addiction that demands to be fed.

We see the children she obviously loves being neglected, a close friend being ripped off and a moneylender demanding repayment. The clever and ironic title could refer to her illogical optimism about the next 'sure thing' and to her job as a cleaning lady – the specific spark for the drama happens when she overhears some shady stock market information in one of the offices she cleans, which draws her into the complex gambling of insider trading.

In last week's episode the downward spiral continued. Despite a brief, if unlikely, improvement in fortune she got herself in deeper with dodgy traders. There was a touching moment with her mother-in-law who sees through the chirpy mask, though ironically this lady is suffering from the effects of smoking addiction and has to



Sheridan Smith stars in *Cleaning Up* (ITV).

wear a mask of her own, for oxygen.

There are plot holes, and the tone seems uncertain at times – it wavers between social drama and thriller, with even a flavour of roguish caper as two other women join Sam in an ill-judged scam, but it's engaging and you don't get much of a chance to dwell on the few flaws.

The topic of gambling also surfaced on **Liveline** (RTÉ Radio 1) last week when people told some real life stories of the destruction caused by gambling. On the Tuesday, 'Cormac' told his story of gam-

bling away around €5,000 left with him to pay some bills. Presenter Joe Duffy and other callers, in informal therapy mode, had some good advice to offer him in his desperation and while you could feel his pain it was still hard to understand exactly what happened as he said he hadn't gambled like this before, and didn't seem to have done it since.

Sensitive as that subject is, it feels like walking on eggshells to write about the **Prime Time** special on transgenderism, on RTÉ 1, on Tuesday of last week. Heavy promotion in advance

raised a Twitterstorm among transgender activists, but I found it reasonably balanced.

There has to be love and respect for all those personally involved, and there's no place for gratuitous offence. However it is a current social issue with implications for public health policy so it must be discussed. In these polarised times is there somewhere between intolerance shown to transgender people and intolerance practiced by transgender activists?

I was particularly interested in the way scientific research on the matter has, in at least two specific cases outlined, been stifled because, it seemed, universities were afraid of controversy – ideology squashing science, with the assistance of institutes of learning that should know better.

Another interesting strand covered was the way the issue



Joe Duffy, presenter of RTÉ Radio 1's *Liveline*.

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### MASS

RTÉ1, Sunday, February 3, 11am

Mass with The Big C Choir from Naas, Co. Kildare. Musical Director Christina O Connell, celebrant Fr Liam Morgan.

#### G. K. CHESTERTON: APOSTLE OF COMMON SENSE

EWTN, Monday, February 4, 2pm

Dale Ahlquist gives an overview of Chesterton's popular Fr Brown detective stories, featuring Fr James Kolp as Fr Brown.

#### DISPATCHES

Channel 4, Monday, February 4, 10.15pm

Investigating why more and more children are leaving school and being educated at home.

has some feminists clashing over transgender men in particular, with the feminists feeling their female-only spaces are being encroached upon. We saw this conflict becoming very robust in the UK, but not here.

Most troubling of all is how, through such gender ideology, medical intervention and even surgery is visited upon children who may just be going through a temporary phase, but are, especially in the case of young girls, affected by what was described as 'social contagion'.

Certain relevant issues could have been raised but weren't, e.g. when cultural appropriation is so frowned on in politically correct circles, why is transgenderism not regarded as gender appropriation? Why are those who identify as another race roundly lambasted in the

media, while those who identify as a different gender are affirmed?

EWTN's coverage was invaluable as usual, and RTE 1's **World Youth Day: Pope Francis in Panama** opened with some colourful, joyful and inspiring highlights, but what a pity they didn't broadcast the final Mass – instead there were 'key elements' of an earlier Mass with the Pope in a basilica in Panama city, which didn't seem to have much connection with WYD at all.

We did get to see some faith-enthused Irish pilgrims heading off, when group leader Gerard Gallagher hit a key note: "World Youth Day changes lives."

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Pat O'Kelly

# Music

## Stutzmann continues to thrill with the RTÉ NSO

Following the departure of Kazakh musician Alan Buribayev when his extended contract expired in 2016, the RTÉ NSO has been without a principal conductor. In the 'interregnum' there have been a number of visiting artists on the podium not least Nathalie Stutzmann who has been principal guest conductor since 2017.

Born in Suresnes, outside Paris, in 1965, Madame Stutzmann has proved a very popular figure on the rostrum with her NSO appearances drawing full houses. I find her performances mostly stimulating with her latest concert on January 11 being a case in point. In it symphonies by Haydn (*Surprise*) and Mendelssohn (*Italian*), separated



Nathalie Stutzmann.

by brilliant Norwegian pianist Christian Ihle Hadland in Beethoven's *1st Piano Concerto*, were incisively satisfying.

Besides her guest conducting here, Nathalie Stutzmann

also directs Norway's Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra and continues as director of Orfeo 55 – a mainly Baroque ensemble, which she founded in 2009. Interestingly, Madame Stutzmann is also a fine contralto but, considering the demands of her conducting career, she confines her singing within the realm of Orfeo 55. She will continue her guest appearances with the NSO until the end of next season.

### Riveting account

Another 'interregnum' visitor has been Spaniard Jaime Martin who made his NSO debut in October 2016 when his programme included Shostakovich's volatile *11th Symphony* (*The Year 1905*).

He has returned on three occasions since and was on the rostrum again on January 18 when he delivered a riveting account of Dvôřák's *6th Symphony* and had with him Belfast's intrepid Barry Douglas in Brahms's massive *2nd Piano Concerto*.

The occasion happily coincided with RTÉ's announcement of Señor Martin becoming principal conductor of the NSO from September 2019. His term will extend for three years. Céad míle fáilte.

As well as his position here, Señor Martin also assumes responsibility for the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra later this year and remains director of the Gävle Symphony Orchestra in Sweden's Norrland region until 2020.

Staying with the RTÉ NSO, I am delighted to find a revival of John Buckley's splendid *Organ Concerto* on its programme tomorrow (February 1). Written for the inauguration of the NCH instrument in 1991, and with the late-lamented, and highly flamboyant, Peter Sweeney in mind, the colourful *Concerto's* reprise is long overdue. Under David Brophy, the soloist is Fergal Caulfield with music by Stanford and Ina Boyle completing the evening.

Santander-born (1965), Maestro Martin studied in Madrid and The Hague and, before pursuing his conducting career, was a distinguished flautist, enjoying acclaimed worldwide solo appearances. He was also principal flute with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, English National Opera and the Royal and London Philharmonics.

Martin also has a close association with the Orques-

tra di Cadaqués – based in the picturesque Mediterranean resort in Catalonia's Girona province. Cadaqués annual music festival, as well as that of Santander, falls under Señor Martin's remit.

All this means he is a very busy fellow indeed and one wonders exactly how many concerts he will direct at the NCH and on tour during his NSO tenure? I wish Jaime Martin well in Ireland and beyond.



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



# Mohandas Gandhi: the man

**Gandhi: The Years that Changed the World 1914-1945**

by Ramachandra Guha  
London: Allen Lane, 2018, £40

Patrick  
Claffey SVD



In 1911 the British authorities decided to move the capital of their Indian Empire from Calcutta to Delhi. They set about doing this by creating a new district that came to be known as New Delhi.

The work on what was to become an enormous project was handed over to the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944) who set to work on the task that was to last up to the end of his life. The Scottish historian and great Indianist William Dalrymple writes that “there can be no doubt that New Delhi was very deliberately built as an expression of the unconquerable might of the Raj”.

He adds that Lord Stamfordham, Private Secretary to George V, was echoing the King Emperor’s views when he wrote: “We must let [the Indian] see for the first time the power of Western civilisation...”

Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, described the project as “the visible symbol of British power, with all its ostentation and wasteful extravagance”. There is more than a little irony in the fact that the Raj, like many other empires before it, was all over just four years after the completion of Lutyens’ “monstrous, almost megalomaniac” project, when India gained independence.

## Activism

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born October 2, 1869 into a Gujarati Hindu family of the Baniya or merchant caste. He studied law in London and qualified as a barrister at the Inner Temple. He failed in his attempts to establish a practice in Mumbai and in 1893, at the age of 24, he accepted a position in a practice in Natal, South Africa, also a part of the British Empire, where he spent the next 21 years.

Becoming involved in political activism, it was here that he first enunciated the political methodology of *satyagraha* (devotion to the truth), that was to become

one of the cornerstones of his political philosophy.

## Gandhi’s charisma

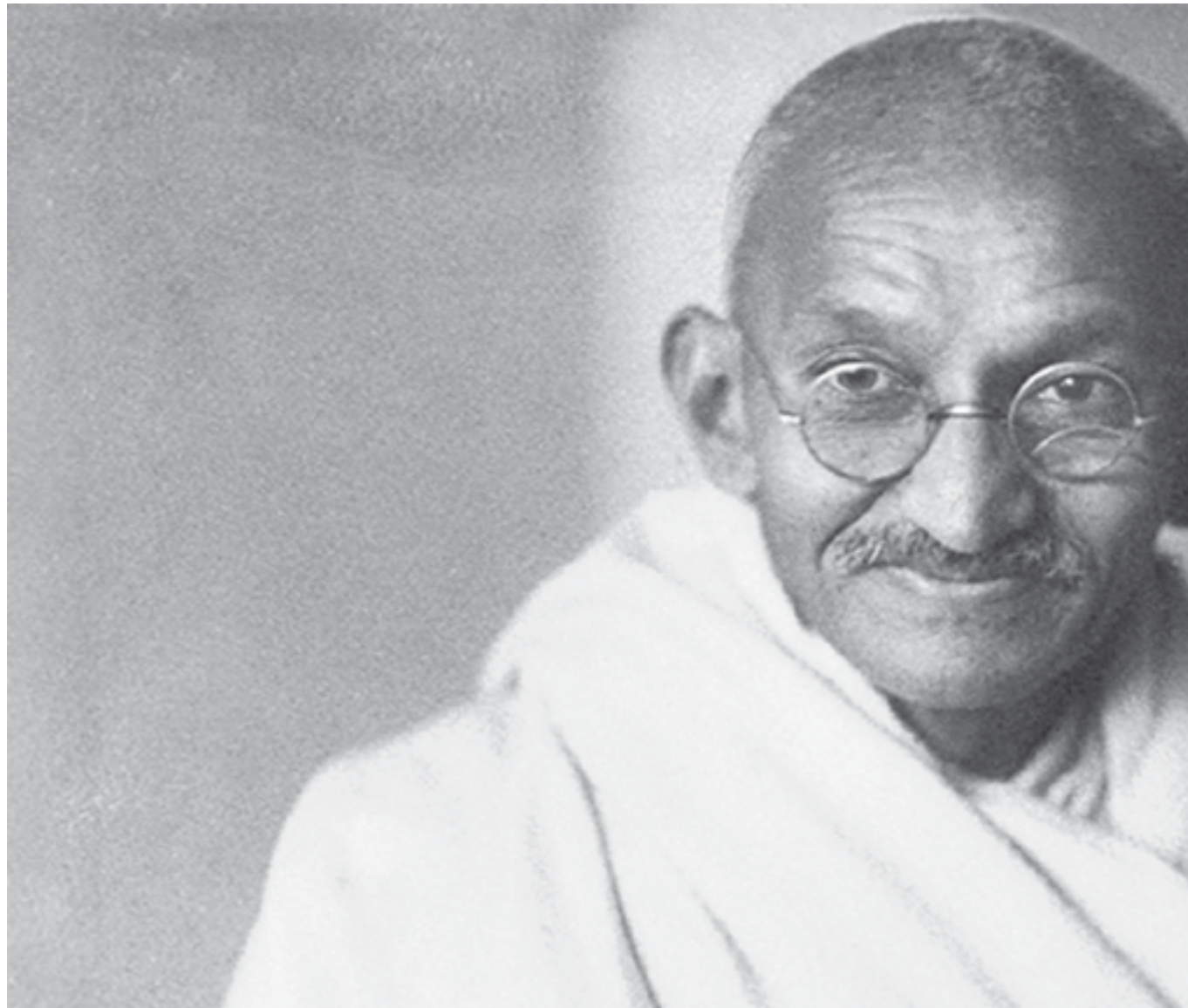
Some years after Lutyens had commenced the grandiose New Delhi project, in 1915, Gandhi returned to India to commit to what became his life’s work. This “dark little wisp of a man” as the admiring American clergyman and pacifist, John Haynes Holmes described him, took on the might of the most powerful Empire of the earth.

Holmes was perhaps the first to see the importance of Gandhi’s charisma, the most powerful of all political tools. In a sermon in 1921, he spoke of Gandhi in very American terms as ‘the Greatest Man in World’, who, of all of those then living, reminded him most of Jesus.

**“Gandhi is far more, infinitely greater, than a nationalist leader. At bottom he is a great religious leader...”**

Like Jesus, “he lives his life; he speaks his word, he suffers, strives, and will someday nobly die, for his kingdom on earth”. Prophetic words indeed! Holmes provided an insightful analysis of the man when he compared him to Garibaldi and to George Washington. “Gandhi is far more, infinitely greater, than a nationalist leader. At bottom he is a great religious leader...his movement in this respect is a movement for world redemption, Gandhi is thus undertaking to do exactly what Jesus did when he proclaimed the kingdom of God on earth.”

In today’s more prosaic terms he didn’t just “talk the talk, he walked the walk”, eschewing all the trappings of worldly power. Gandhi and his wife Kasturba Makhanji Kapadia (known as ‘Kasturba’, and affectionately as ‘Ba’) set up what was in fact a lay religious community in



the Sabarmati ashram in the Gujarati city of Ahmedabad. Here he gathered a group of about 40 members “called to serve the motherland one’s whole life”.

They all, whether married or not, took vows, dedicating themselves to truth, non-violence, celibacy, non-stealing, non-possession and ‘control of the palate’. In addition, they were committed to wearing hand-spun cloth and the abolition of untouchability, which Gandhi described as “a great Satanism in Hinduism”.

There were morning and evening prayers at the ashram, with readings from Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Islamic and Christian scriptures, as well as hymns from these traditions. There was also regular manual work, notably

spinning, which he did himself daily.

His political objectives were simple: *swaraj* or self-rule for India, harmony between India’s often disputatious communities, the end of untouchability, and *swadesh* or self-reliance. The objectives were not to be prioritised but rather striven for in parallel. In his moral view, political independence meant nothing without religious harmony, caste and gender equality and the development of self-respect for every Indian.

## A heterodox faith

As a heterodox Hindu, who did not go to temples during his adult life, there were many religious, spiritual and intellectual influences in

Gandhi’s life. He had a good knowledge of Jainism and Buddhism, both of which contributed to his espousal of *ahimsa* (non-violence), but also Islam and Christianity. He argued that “it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world...for myself, I regard my study of and reverence for the Bible, the Koran, and other scriptures to be wholly consistent with my claim to be a staunch sanatani Hindu”.

His sources were not only scriptural and religious but was also strongly influenced by secular authors and philosophers, most notably the great Russian Leo Tolstoy with his emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1–12), but also by the American tran-

scendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson and the English art critic, social thinker and philanthropist John Ruskin.

There can be no doubt, however, that the most influential text for Gandhi was the Hindu Bhagavad Gita. He described it as a valuable provision for the mind in one’s life journey, as the spinning-wheel is for the body. The Gita “is a big knowledge feast, as it is the very *amrita* [nectar] of knowledge”.

In reading and meditating on the Gita he came to a deep understanding of his own *dharma*/duty as a life of self-sacrifice. As Guha points out: “Gandhi spoke repeatedly of the Gita’s emphasis on work without expectation of reward.”

This short text of 700

**“While it would be easy to dismiss Gandhi as an eccentric as many did and still do, including modern Indians, he was much more. He was a wily political strategist in an enormous and deeply divided country”**

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.

# who 'walked the walk'



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and, above, on the Salt March.

verses was certainly the bedrock of his spiritual life, as well as his political philosophy. He noted that "in trying to enforce in one's life the central teaching of the Gita, one is bound to follow *satya* (truth) and *ahimsa* (non-violence)". As Guta notes: "Pluralism of faith, was for Gandhi a political choice as well as a moral obligation." *Ahimsa*/non-violence was an ethical choice but also a political strategy and both were at the core of Gandhi's faith and life.

## Holding to the truth – Satyagraha

*Satyagraha*, a policy of passive political resistance, was undoubtedly his most powerful and original political concept. He had developed and used it to great effect in South Africa. *Satyagraha* is a composite of the Sanskrit words for 'truth' (*satya*) and 'insistence' or 'holding firmly to' (*graha*).

It became the centre of his strategy in the *swaraj*/self-rule campaign and was

later adopted in other liberation struggles, notably in the Civil Rights Movement in the US, and several other similar movements. It was first used in India, in Gujarat, in 1917 in a local dispute on taxes.

It was, of course, the ideal weapon of the weak, based entirely on non-violence but leaving the oppressor, who did not hesitate to use violence, the loser in the moral argument and in the eyes of the world.

While it would be easy to dismiss Gandhi as an eccentric as many did and still do, including modern Indians, he was much more. He was a wily political strategist in an enormous and deeply divided country. Guha writes: "No political leader before Gandhi had so radically simplified his life. The clothes he wore, the food he ate, the homes he lived in all brought Gandhi far closer to the masses than professedly socialist leaders like Lenin. While passive resistance had been practised by particular groups...it had

never before been made part of wider national struggle. That both man and movement had set themselves up against the great British Empire was a further marvel."

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Probably the most spectacular of the *satyagraha* actions was the Salt March, which took place from March to April 1930. The colonial administration in the Salt Act of 1882 had prohibited Indians from collecting or selling salt.

It was a truly perverse piece of legislation by which citizens were forced to buy the staple commodity, a local product, from their British rulers, who, in addition to exercising a monopoly, imposed a heavy tax on it.

Although India's poor suffered most under the tax, all Indians required salt and thus it was an effective rallying point for popular discontent across the castes and classes.

The plan was quite simple. On March 12, 1930, Gandhi set out from his Sabarmati ashram, with several dozen followers, to walk the 240 miles to the coastal town of Dandi on the Arabian Sea.

Not surprisingly, this brought enormous publicity.

While there were several locations that were much closer and could have been used, Gandhi adopted one of

the most important aspects of Indian culture for his purpose, the pilgrimage, thus charging the demonstration with a quasi-religious significance.

One of his followers, Vallabhbhai Patel told village audiences along the route that the march [was to be] "a *dharmayudh*, a battle of righteousness, for good against evil, 'unprecedented in the history of the world...'"

**“It struck me there were many ways of walking and that any other would have looked ridiculous. Suppose that he had led the procession at a slower pace, like a gipsy pedlar or a mandarin...”**

The nationalist press, both in English and in the vernacular languages, was already well-developed and presented the march in "epic and mythic terms", while Nehru's father, Motilal, a close friend, "compared it to the march of Lord Rama to Lanka" recounted in the great Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*.

Gandhi declared: "I can understand there being a tax

on such things as *hookah*, *bidis* (Indian cigarettes) and liquor...and if I were an emperor, I would levy with your permission a tax of one pie on every *bidi*...but should one levy a tax on salt?"

He openly defied the authorities, making salt from Indian seawater. He addressed large crowds on the way, adding an increasing number of people each day, thus creating the effect of a rising tide coming not from the sea but from the heart of rural India, where he lived. Playing on a religious register, it was an act of political genius.

An eye witness left a marvellous account of the conclusion of the march:

"When I saw him on the morning of the 4th [of April] he was coming briskly up the straight road...the red sun has just risen...and his body was golden and transfigured, in the light of the morning... It was a quick pace, between running and walking...It did not seem to me he was using his staff to any purpose. He was not particularly leaning upon it. He seemed strong, lean like a lathe and fleet of foot... the country road was cool and frank and beautiful. It struck me there were many ways of walking and that any other would have looked ridiculous. Suppose that he had led the proces-

sion at a slower pace, like a gipsy pedlar or a mandarin, how incongruous it would be. I realised what a consummate artist-realist the old man must be. The breathless walk made you see how urgent and downright and final was his message."

Ramachandra Guta has written what will be for a long time the definitive biography of Mahatma, the Great Soul. He is not blind to his often self-acknowledged weaknesses or what appear as his eccentricities, particularly in relation to his family. However, he has captured his essential greatness, and what is now the myth in the best sense of that term.

While I had read his autobiography and seen Richard Attenborough's wonderful film, I had never read a critical biography of Gandhi. Reading this doorstopper of over 900 pages has been a rewarding experience in a time when politics and politicians seem too often to let us down.

**1** Patrick Claffey SVD lectures in *World Religions at Trinity College Dublin*. He teaches modules on *Christianity in Africa and Asia*, the *Dharmic Religions of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism*, and also the *relationship between religions and politics in today's world*.

# Classifieds

The deadline for advertising in the classifieds is 10.30am, the Friday before publication. Contact the Classified Team on 01 687 4094 or email [advertising@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:advertising@irishcatholic.ie)



## A beacon of hope to shine, because of you...

For Ireland's homeless and hungry, Merchants Quay Ireland's Riverbank Centre is first to open in the morning and among the last to close at night. Those with nowhere to turn can find a good meal, medical care, a helping hand, and a fresh start, thanks to donations and legacies.

**Come for Tea and a Tour**, in private while Riverbank is closed for a couple of hours. See confidentially how Merchants Quay Ireland uses donations and legacies to bring relief and hope. All welcome, bring a guest if you wish.

Ring Emma Murphy at 01-5240965 to be included on the guest list for the February 14th Tour.

Please pray for the beatification of

## Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

- Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

## LITTLE FLOWER PENNY DINNERS



Little Flower Penny Dinners have been providing meals and services to the homeless and the elderly for over 100 years. Please help us continue and donate what you can on our website [www.LFPD.ie](http://www.LFPD.ie) or by phoning us with your credit/debit card details or by post to Little Flower Penny Dinners, 11 Meath St, DB Phone 01 4536621 or 01 4546795 e-mail: [sbrigid@littleflower.ie](mailto:sbrigid@littleflower.ie)

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E-mail: [info@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:info@hospicefoundation.ie)  
[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

## Archives and Records Care

If your organisation possesses archives, or records that come under the new data protection law, then you may need a professional. Qualified, and experience dealing with Catholic organisations.



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### Classified Ads

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#### PILGRIMAGE

**WALSINGHAM**, Irish group pilgrimage to Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk. England's National Shrine of Our Lady. Friday 26th - Tuesday 29th April 2019 (4 nights with full board €427). Group accompanied by Spiritual Director. Pilgrims make their own travel arrangement on Ryanair flights\* to/from Stansted. Private coach from/to Stansted and for Day's Outing. Accommodation in Pilgrim Hesel. Insurance NOT included. Deposit €50 for place. Details from \*Martin O'Brien 086 8254680 or Margaret Golden 086 855 4665.

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The Irish Catholic, 23 Merrion Square North, Dublin 2. **Phone: 01 687 4094**

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**Giving Family & Life a gift in your Will is a hugely inspirational, lasting and dignified way to leave a loving mark on countless lives.**

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For further advice or to avail of our Solicitor's free Wills service, please contact us today on **01-8552790**

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Tel: 021 - 4543988

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

**When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places**

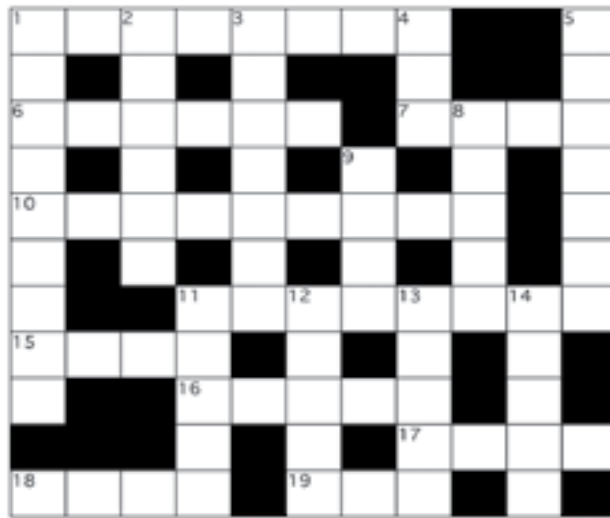
It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call **Grace Kelly** on 01 629 3333, email [grace.kelly@trocaire.org](mailto:grace.kelly@trocaire.org) or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

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



## Crossword Junior

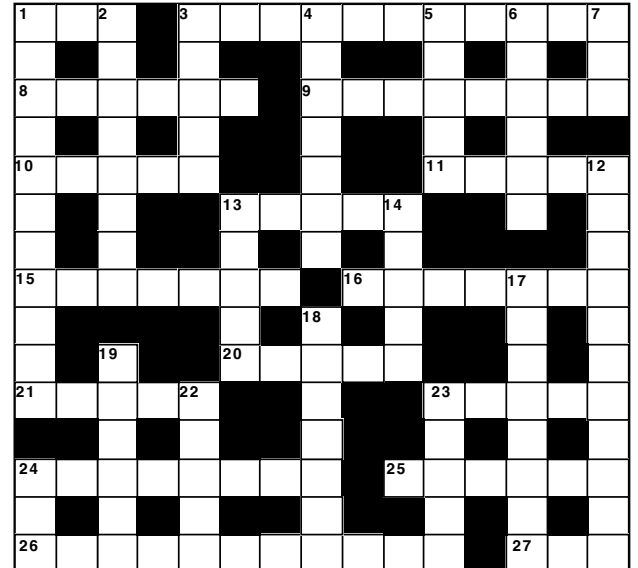
Gordius 267



- ACROSS**
- 1 You might drive onto this ship (3,5)
  - 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Twist was written by Charles Dickens (6)
  - 7 You can buy things here (4)
  - 10 A surgeon does this in a hospital theatre (9)
  - 11 Person who minds sheep (8)
  - 15 Change the way something is facing (4)
  - 16 Church music is often played on it (5)
  - 17 Sign over the way out (4)
  - 18 Some people say sucking this sweet will give you fresher breath (4)
  - 19 "Have a go" (3)
- DOWN**
- 1 This tasty treat might be \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
  - 2 Lara Croft, Tomb \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
  - 3 Hair on the eyelid (7)
  - 4 The opposite of 'no' (3)
  - 5 Clap (7)
  - 8 A door swings on this (5)
  - 9 Walk lamely (4)
  - 11 An animal's nose (5)
  - 12 Two fours make this (5)
  - 13 Sweet stuff made by bees (5)
  - 14 You watch TV, you listen to \_\_\_\_\_ (9)

## Crossword

Gordius 388



- ACROSS**
- 1 The little devil is mostly polite at first (3)
  - 3 Canal trains may emanate here, from the English northwest (11)
  - 8 Has Ed rung up to find the '-ing' form of a verb? (6)
  - 9 Memorial structure (8)
  - 10 Leers (5)
  - 11 Love to be in stockings? What kind of beastly sickness is that? (5)
  - 13 Get the cardinal a make of car that comes from the Middle East (5)
  - 15 Is this illness caused by chopping lime, Nat? (7)
  - 16 Have the poem put into fast, musical form (2-5)
  - 20 Many a tale has been rehashed as cards were given out (5)
  - 21 Tree from which we get filberts (5)
  - 23 May you not pin it on if you are goodge? (5)
  - 24 How is it that the boar lost a seat in the pub? (8)
  - 25 Run away to the outskirts of Carnoustie for a woolly coat (6)
  - 26 A lack of written music? Then sketch how no goals have been achieved (2-5,4)
  - 27 A cardinal and an alien have \_\_\_\_\_ (3)
- DOWN**
- 1 Popular, worthy religion - there's no intent to deceive here (2,4,5)
  - 2 & 3 As long as mathematicians to study this geometrical concept, they won't have a meeting! (8,5)
  - 4 White, fluffy cloud type (7)
  - 5 Veracity shown by a character to a Biblical lady (5)
  - 6 The forerunner of the refrigerator (3,3)
  - 7 Do fishermen use it for tennis? (3)
  - 12 Might the monster need such approval? (11)
  - 13 A gathering of church leaders will be held in part of the embassy, no doubt (5)
  - 14 Contribution to a meeting or discussion (5)
  - 17 Look after fewer? How crazy is that? (8)
  - 18 Wheedled, coaxed (7)
  - 19 Upset? So raze these islands in the Atlantic (6)
  - 22 Release (3,2)
  - 23 Statute enacted by a local authority (5)
  - 24 Note one French tasty piece of baking (3)

## SOLUTIONS, JANUARY 24

### GORDIUS No.387

- Across** - 1 Cow 3 Fascinating 8 Friend 9 Unspoken 10 Essay 11 Eland 13 Tiled 15 Extreme Unction 20 Amble 21 Sweep 23 Sauce 24 Triptych 25 Senior 26 Wood anemone 27 Noh
- Down** - 1 Coffee beans 2 Wainscot 3 Funny 4 Crumble 5 Ample 6 Ink-cap 7 Gun 12 Down-to-earth 13 Tampa 14 Dance 17 Illusion 18 Abraham 19 Merino 22 Petra 23 Scene 24 Tow

### CHILDREN'S No.266

- Across** - 1 Quidditch 6 Press 8 Two 9 Zoo 10 Sleepover 12 Bus 13 Frills 15 Cobra 17 Teabags 18 Eye 19 Imp 20 Poor
- Down** - 1 Quiz 2 Impossible 3 Diesel 4 Hot 5 Choir 7 Superman 11 Volcano 12 Bucket 14 SOS 16 Atom

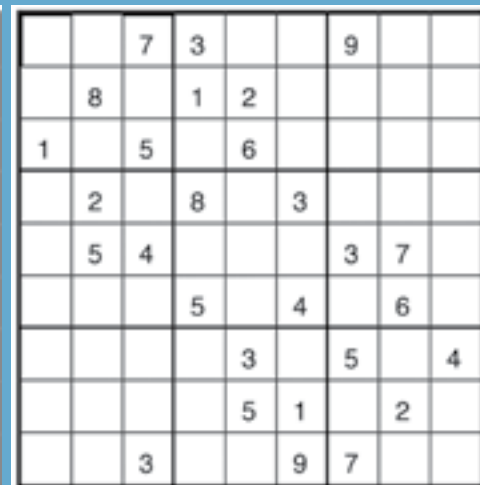
## Sudoku Corner

266

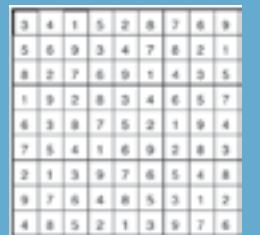
Easy



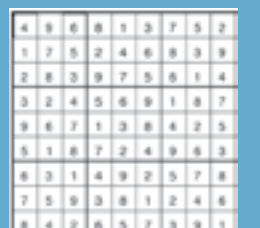
Hard



### Last week's Easy 265



### Last week's Hard 265



Notebook

Fr Conor McDonough



# Taking responsibility for building the Church ourselves

**WORLD YOUTH DAY**, the massive, global gathering of young Catholics, took place in Panama this year, finishing with a papal Mass last Sunday. As always, this colourful gathering yielded all kinds of beautiful moments and images, but the one that spoke most powerfully to me was taken by a pilgrim by the name of Carlos Yap.



The pope in Panama. Photo: Carlos Yap

This image has already yielded many beautiful interpretations, but for me it illustrates beautifully the particular role of the laity in the Church.

Think about it: World Youth Day has a massive official structure, with volunteers, major events, rules, and systems. But what happens when the unexpected arises? What happens when one of your group is in a wheelchair, and is several rows back from the Pope as he passes. Do you throw your hands up and complain about the situation? Do you grumble about the inadequacies of the system and its planners? Or do you make use of your talents to overcome, as best you can, the obstacles you face? This is what the Panamanian youth group in the picture above did, spontaneously lifting their friend Lucas high above their

heads so that he could see the Pope, and the Pope see him.

It's the same story in the life of the Church. The central role of the clergy is to teach the unchanging Gospel and to confer the unchanging sacraments of grace. But how do these spiritual realities take form and flesh today, in the home, on the street, at school or at work? That depends entirely on the spontaneity and creativity of laypeople.

We sometimes imagine that the valuing the lay vocation means getting more laypeople into the sanctuary, but that's far from the central challenge. The church building is not just a place of gathering, it's above all a place from which life-giving waters flow to a thirsty world. The laity are

those waters, sent out from Mass every Sunday with minds and hearts renewed, responsible for their personal missions.

That personal responsibility for mission in the world has often, especially in Ireland, been undermined by clerical overreaching, but I see more and more signs that the Irish laity are growing in responsibility for mission.

### Communities of Faith

In recent months I've come across parents who are taking it upon themselves to form communities of Faith for the sake of their children (the Living Family conference in Sligo, 'Couples' Time Out' in Leopardstown, various homeschooling networks,

the Nazareth Community in Loughlinstown, Cana Ireland, and so on). They see clearly the challenges facing Christian families today, but rather than wasting time complaining, these parents support each other in groups of prayer and fellowship, and are working hard to provide the kind of education their children need.

I've also come across young adults who have, by various routes, come to discover the joy of the Gospel after spending many barren years in nominally Catholic schools. Rather than waste time groaning about all the things they missed out on, these young adults are doing what's necessary: they're forming little study groups, reading Scripture together, and making use of online resources to form themselves (among others, I'm thinking of Juventutem in Cork, Spiritual Batteries in Merrion Road, and the Sanctum group on Bachelor's Walk).

The results of these creative, spontaneous experiments are still fragile, but when viewed close-up they are quite extraordinary. The Lord is at work in Ireland, and he is raising up some courageous and creative co-workers. I can't wait to see what they will do.

When we do speak in the Church about the lay vocation, it's often in terms of charitable work and political action, which are, of course, vital aspects of the work of the laity. But we rarely speak about the intellectual life: reflection, discussion, wide reading, writing, debate. Yet some of the most influential Christians of the last century were effective precisely because of their sharp minds: G.K. Chesterton, C.S. Lewis, Flannery O'Connor, Jacques and Raïssa Maritain.

In St Saviour's Priory here on Dominick St (now conveniently located on the Green Luas Line), we'll be discussing these issues next Thursday (February 7) at 7.30pm, as the great Fr Thomas Joseph White OP addresses us on 'The Need for Catholic Intellectuals Today'. All are welcome!



## Could you help to save a poor helpless child?

The Little Way Association receives numerous requests from missionaries throughout the world asking for help to feed, support and educate needy, deprived children. They tell us of orphaned children left alone with no one to love or care for them, of families so poor that they cannot afford to send their children to school, and of street children, totally abandoned, hungry and homeless, experiencing much anguish and hardship during their most tender years. The whole future of these children often depends upon whether a missionary can find sufficient funds to care for them.

### Your gift will mean a chance of health and happiness for a deprived child

In this New Year, please consider making a gift to The Little Way Association's fund for children. You can use the coupon below or give online at [tinyurl.com/lwadonations](http://tinyurl.com/lwadonations) quoting "children" in the message field.

Every euro you send will be gratefully received and sent without deduction, to enable a missionary priest or sister to carry the love, care and compassion of Christ to a deprived, abandoned or orphaned child. Thank you, and may God reward your generosity.



"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself as it were at our mercy; He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart, and the very least trifle is precious in His sight."

- St Therese

### HELP A PRIEST IN A MISSION COUNTRY TO REPAIR HIS CHAPEL

Priests in mission lands constantly turn to The Little Way for help to build, renovate, or roof their chapels.

### PLEASE WILL YOU HELP?

Your donation will be sent intact and gratefully received.

### MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

Your Mass offerings help to provide the missionary priest's maintenance and assist him to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth. We like to send a missionary a minimum of €5 or more for each Mass.

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

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