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## Parishes feel the pinch from 'rocketing' heating costs

Ruadhán Jones and Brandon Scott

Rising energy costs are having a dramatic impact on parishes' ability to heat churches, with some forced to resort to rationing and leaving it off for large parts of the week.

Recent months have seen a huge increase in energy prices which are predicted to continue to rise. Coupled with the need to keep churches ventilated to comply with Covid-19 rules, it is costing parishes huge sums at a time when donations have suffered due to restrictions on Mass.

Fr Martin Graham of St Peter's Cathedral in Belfast said that costs "are rocketing to the point that even for us we put the heating on at the weekends, but we won't be able to afford it during the week."

"The cathedral is notoriously hard to heat so if we were to keep it our heating bill would be between £4,000 to £7,000 a month. We switch it on on a Friday morning, switch it off on a Sunday morning after Mass, that's the only way we can do it," he said.

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### Three festive fundraisers



Carmen Perez Cox (6), Elia Perez Cox (5), Adam MacSeinicín (6) of Gaelscoil Áine, Dublin hold Irish Christmas cards they are selling to fundraise for their school.

## Crucial decisions urged for COP26 as poorest suffer climate impacts

Chai Brady

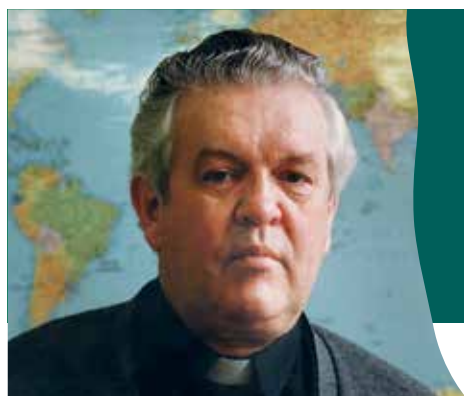
It is "unacceptable" Ireland remains the second highest emitter per capita in the EU, according to Church charity Trócaire in a policy document ahead of the COP26 Climate Change Summit taking place in Glasgow this week.

The charity said that while Ireland's Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill aims to reduce emissions by 51% by 2030, the country needs to be catching up with EU neighbours "as fast as possible".

Trócaire CEO, Caoimhe de Barra, said: "COP26 cannot merely be a 'talking shop'. The international community must seize the historic opportunity to agree crucial decisions to put the world on track to deliver on climate action."

"The harsh reality is that 2021 was a year of unprecedented climate impacts compounding existing health, poverty and inequality crises. Trócaire's work across the world has given us first-hand experience of the unequal impact of climate change, especially on women

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## Inside this week

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**Ireland to be pushed in even more liberal direction** [Page 13](#)



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**Joy in Navan as popular priest celebrates milestone**

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**Garry O'Sullivan**

**Irish Synods: The Devil is in the detail**

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## Wherein lies the power of the papacy?

The story is told – probably apocryphally – that in the year 1210 St Francis of Assisi had an audience with Pope Innocent III. During the course of their meeting, both men strolled through the Vatican treasury with all the wealth that this contained at the time as a sure sign of the temporal power of the Pope.

It is said that Pope Innocent recalled to St Francis the moment in the Acts of the Apostles where St Peter had nothing to give to the beggar. The Pope boasted: “My dear Francis, we can no longer say with Peter ‘silver and gold have I none.’”

Francis is reported to have replied, ‘true Holy Father, and neither can you say ‘rise and walk’.’

The teller of the tale was undoubtedly trying to get across the idea that as earthly wealth is accumulated and becomes intoxicating, the Church’s power to act in the name of Christ diminishes.

**“Francis is reported to have replied, ‘true Holy Father, and neither can you say ‘rise and walk’”**

In the 21st Century, the papacy remains a potent force in the world and Pope Francis is undoubtedly one of the most recognisable moral leaders in the world. His thoughts on climate change, for example, led bulletins across the BBC network for almost 24 hours last week. The following day, the motorcade of the US president

us up until now...But I think that from now on prices will continue to escalate as we are seeing and we will have to factor this into our budget for the year to try and meet the increased cost.

“The people of Longford have been very generous to us so we hope that they will continue to financially support the church during this time,” he said.

Fr Tim Bartlett in St Mary’s in Belfast said that the concern for many parishes was not just about the cost of heating the church, but parishioners who are having trouble heating their homes.

“What I am much more concerned about and see every single day, especially as a city centre church, is individuals and families under incredible financial pressure at this time. Living in real fuel poverty and struggling to choose between food and heat.

“Parents choosing not to eat themselves, in order to give food to their children and in order to keep their homes sufficiently warm. This is very definitely on the rise. The level of general anxiety over finances is clearly on the increase,” he said.

**Editor’s Comment**  
**Michael Kelly**



Pope Francis shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting at the Vatican on Saturday. Photo: Vatican Media.

Joe Biden – leader of the free world – rolled into Vatican City for an audience with the Pope. Just a day later, the leader of India – the world’s biggest democracy – prime minister Narendra Modi sat in the same seat as Mr Biden before the Pontiff.

### Headlines

Mr Biden made immediate headlines by insisting to journalists that the Pope had lauded him for being a good Catholic, despite his support for abortion, and told the president (only America’s second Catholic head of state) that he should continue to receive Holy Communion despite the misgivings of some US bishops.

We don’t know what went on during the meeting, and the Vatican is unlikely to contradict the president

even if his recollection of the meeting is slightly different from that of the Pope’s.

Francis has long argued against what he describes as the ‘weaponisation’ of the Eucharist. Dialogue, he says, rather than confrontation is the way to approach Catholic politicians who stand diametrically opposed to Church teaching while insisting on their Catholic credentials and presenting themselves for Communion. Mr Biden insisted that the Pontiff did not raise with him the issue of abortion and the incompatibility of a Catholic supporting it. Again, we only have the president’s account of the meeting but it seems to be that if the Francis way is dialogue rather than confrontation, surely the meeting could have been the beginning of a dialogue to help Mr Biden see the wrongheadedness of his position?

**“During a brief conversation, the cordial relations between the Holy See and India were discussed”**

In relation to the meeting with Mr Modi, a brief communique from the Vatican stated that “during a brief conversation, the cordial relations between the Holy See and India were discussed”. No mention was made whether or not Pope Francis had raised with the Indian leader a rise in anti-Christian violence in the country, despite the fact that the bishops’ conference there has been extremely anxious about the issue and the

wider concern about anti-Christian discrimination.

Perhaps, the issue did come up and the Vatican felt it more judicious not to mention this in the communique. Diplomacy often involves discreet conversations that are not reported to the media, but I am sure that Indian Catholics would appreciate the Pope raising the issue.

### Listening

The Vatican remains one of the greatest ‘listening posts’ in the world where leaders go both to meet the Pope and to benefit from the Holy See’s unrivalled network in every corner of the globe. When it comes to geopolitics, the Pope exercises what can best be described as ‘soft power’. The Church has no selfish strategic interest in world affairs, so the Pope can often offer a more nuanced approach to world affairs than countries that are trying to outdo one another in trade talks.

That voice must continue to be a prophetic one: whether it is calling on a leader like Mr Biden to be more authentic in his Catholicism, or standing up for persecuted Christians throughout the world, the Pope must be to the fore of having those difficult conversations. Otherwise, on the temporal stage the power of the papacy is little more than a carryover from a time when the Pope was a monarch and the visits of world leaders really just photo opportunities.

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## Parishes feel the pinch from ‘rocketing’ heating costs

» **Continued from Page 1**

“Our parishioners are extremely good and generous but our numbers are down so that will also reflect on what we get in the collection... You’ve got the collection going down and the energy prices going up – that’s going to get worse,” he predicted.

Fr Frank Reburn of Ballymun parish in Dublin said that they have to be “very conservative” in when they switch the heat on due to rising costs.

“One of the big concerns for myself is the need to ventilate our buildings coming into the colder snap. It’s going to take a lot more heating to keep a bit of warmth in the church,” he said.

Asked whether he felt that parishioners would have to start wearing heavy coats to Mass, he said: “Well, I’d say they might have to with keeping the windows open heading into the colder weather.

“It’s hitting at a hard time, what with the pandemic having depleted funds... the prices have just gone crazy,” Fr Reburn said.

In Ennis, Co. Clare Fr Tom Ryan

said that it is a huge concern coming into winter. “Energy costs have risen, there’s no doubt about it. And each year, we try to tender for the cheapest supplier that will give us the best value... But with our reduced income and increased costs it is one of the challenges facing us as a parish.

“It’s very important that churches are warm, that they’re welcoming and that they’re well lit,” he said, “that comes sadly at a price and an increasing cost at the moment”.

“We’ll keep going even though we are aware of the costs that are there and they are rising – but we have to keep our churches open and warm,” he said.

Fr Thomas O’Mahony of Skryne and Rathfeigh in Co. Meath said that the parish had just turned the heating on for the first time last week, and he is increasingly concerned about the cost of fuel as well as electricity.

At Longford Cathedral Fr James MacKiernan told *The Irish Catholic*: “The prices are just beginning to escalate now at the moment. We have been able to conserve heat in the cathedral as the weather has been quite kind to

# Religious people more likely to take personal responsibility for climate

Ruadhán Jones

People who describe themselves as religious are significantly more likely to take responsibility for climate change than the general population. New research also reveals that young people are particularly inclined to lay the blame for climate change at the hands of government rather than taking personal responsibility.

As world leaders gather in Glasgow to try and agree new climate targets, the poll by The Good Information Project and Ireland Thinks asked people around Ireland for their personal perspectives – whether they've made changes for the environment, who's most responsible for addressing the climate crisis, and how

large a problem they understand it to be.

Some 87% of people said they have recycled more in recent years while 71% have cut down on single-use plastics and 43% have reduced their purchases of clothes, while one-third of people say they eat less meat.

## Issue

On the issue of where responsibility lies for tackling climate change, overall 44% of people said the Government, 28% said individuals and 27% said corporations.

However, for those who attend Mass at least weekly the figure for those taking personal responsibility rose to 39% while 45% said Government had the lions' share of responsibility with just 14% saying corporations should take the lead.

Of those aged over 65, 40% thought individuals bore the most responsibility, 37% laid this at Government and 22% said corporations.

However, younger people were significantly more likely to think that responsibility lies outside of themselves. In the 18-24 age cohort, 58% said Government was most responsible, followed by corporations at 32% while just 10% – one in ten – felt the responsibility lay with individuals. A similar picture is evident in the 25-34 age cohort where 54% cited Government, 30% corporations and 15% individuals.

Women were also more likely to take personal responsibility with 33% saying individuals should take the lead as opposed to only 23% of men surveyed who believed the same thing.

## Keeping a feast in honour of the saints...



St Saviour's Dominican Church in Dublin city centre hosted an All Saints' Day party to mark the solemnity on Monday. See page 10



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# Metaverse a 'distraction' from real-world issues

Jason Osborne

Mark Zuckerberg's plans for the 'metaverse' have been criticised as "pure escapism" by Jesuit priest Fr Kevin O'Higgins.

Facebook's Mr Zuckerberg recently announced his company's rebranding as 'Meta' which he described as more in-line with their plans and focus on building the 'metaverse'.

The metaverse is envisioned as a breakthrough of the internet into the physical world, through the technologies of augmented and virtual reality.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, Fr O'Higgins said "everybody knows the bottom line is profit".

"I think whether it's himself or Jeff Bezos or Elon Musk, they're constantly presenting

their projects as humanitarian, as if all of this was out of the generosity of their heart. The fact is that it's all about profit."

Fr O'Higgins noted that there are other concerning aspects other than the "profit" motive, saying that it's "no coincidence" that the rebranding move comes as Facebook faces increased scrutiny in the US over its effects on the men-

tal health of young people.

However, Fr O'Higgins said the biggest problem is the "pure escapism" behind the "ploy".

"It's pure escapism. The other thing I think that's interesting is the choice of name. 'Meta' has connotations of metaphysics - it's almost a religious connotation. It's almost trying to elevate this whole

idea of virtual reality onto a religious plane. It becomes a new faith.

"I would imagine they took it from the Greek, the Greek has the same root as words like, 'metaphysics' - it literally means 'beyond the physical'.

"It's trying to turn this whole thing into a new, cyber-age spirituality, semi-religious thing. But it'll be the world cre-

ated by the Zuckerbergs and his successors," Fr O'Higgins said.

Such escapism is "clearly a distraction from the real world problems," Fr O'Higgins said, continuing, "it's a cynical way again of making an apparent gesture, but in fact it's meaningless in the light of the kind of money that they're raking in".

## Crucial decisions needed at COP26 as the poorest suffer

» Continued from Page 1

and indigenous peoples who are bearing the brunt of climate impacts."

Regarding climate emissions, Trocaire said success at COP26 can only be achieved if high-emitting countries show leadership and commit to keeping global temperatures below 1.5C.

They stated it is essential to support countries least responsible for creating the climate change problem, but who suffer the worst of its impacts including sea level rises, floods and droughts.

Trócaire said the world is now in an era of 'loss and damage'. This has led to irreparable harm caused by climate change and has huge costs for people in low-income countries. The charity said COP26 must establish a new financing facility for loss and damage, specifically to support low-income countries.

## Consecrating the columbarium



Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan blesses Ennis Cathedral's new columbarium - for storing cremated remains - with the oil of chrism. The columbarium was part-funded by Eternum Columbarium, and was consecrated on October 21.

## Priest criticises decision to potentially close hospital's emergency department

Brandon Scott

Ahead of a mass rally held last Saturday, which saw in excess of 10,000 people take to Navan's streets to protest against the potential closure of the hospital's emergency department, Fr Declan Hurley Parish Administrator of Navan Parish, Co. Meath, spoke to *The Irish Catholic* and explained why he believes its emergency department should be retained at all costs.

"The hospital is really at the heart of the life of our town and has been for many, many years," he said. "I grew up in Navan and as a child I broke my arm and wrist and I ended up spending time in Navan hospital. At the moment there is no paediatric unit, that has gone but in the past Navan hospital had everything."

Depriving the town of an intensive care unit and A&E could come at greater cost

than ever before given the demographics of the town, according to Fr Hurley. "We have a very big population in the Navan area and also a lot of medical needs," he explained. "If those people with serious medical needs had to go to Drogheda, Blanchardstown or Cavan, the time factor that these patients may face would be critical, absolutely critical."

Fr Hurley expressed why he found the HSE's original decision to earmark the hospital's intensive care unit for closure highly counterintuitive in such a volatile climate for our health. "We really believe that we have these services and with ICUs coming under pressure from Covid and given the delays in Blanchardstown and Drogheda, it doesn't make sense to be closing an intensive care unit when we need them. What's wrong with having one in Navan? Our hospital is really important and it is an excellent hospital," he said.

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## Are we born bad and need to learn to be good?

**K**atharine Birbalsingh is a renowned British educator and headmistress of a school she founded: she is reckoned to be among the 20 most influential individuals in British education, and was recently appointed chairwoman of the Social Mobility Commission.

**“There was a storm of protest, and others who served on the Social Mobility Commission rejected Ms Birbalsingh’s viewpoint”**

But she caused ripples of shock and criticism when she launched a defence of original sin last week, concurring with a statement that “we are all born bad”. This was, said Ms Birbalsingh, part of “Original sin. Children need to be taught right from wrong and then habituated into choosing good over evil. That requires love and constant correction from all the adults in their lives over years. Moral formation is a good thing.”

There was a storm of protest, and others who served on the Social Mobility Commission (a government organisation to enhance social mobility) rejected Ms Birbalsingh’s viewpoint.



**Mary Kenny**

One of her critics from her own organisation, Jessica Oghenegweke, strongly dissented from the view that children are born with the capacity for being bad. “I wouldn’t agree with those comments...I’ve always viewed young people in the best light and any negativity comes from the fact that they haven’t been nurtured or aren’t in the position to get the support they need.”

### Moral formation

This is the core of the debate: are we born bad and moral formation needs to erase or diminish the wickedness within us? Or are we born essentially good, and it is just the world, or circumstances, that can corrupt the child, and then the person?

It was the influential Frenchman Jean-Jacques Rousseau who introduced the theory that human beings are born good - it is society which makes them do bad things. While Christian education had held that human beings are flawed, and must be taught morality.

The Rousseau-esque view - all children are basically good - has prevailed among liberal influencers and the teaching profession for some time now. Katharine Birbalsingh shocked her

peers by flagging up such a traditional concept as original sin.

Yet it seems to me that most of us, including children, obviously have the capacity for sinfulness and devilry. I know that I have that capacity. But most of us also have the potential for good if we are given the right guidance - and correction, too. Christians would also add the grace of God, although Ms Birbalsingh was not speaking from a religious point of view.

**“True, surely, although not every teacher has the gift of imparting her authority positively”**

Katharine Birbalsingh is 48, and her heritage is Indo-Guyanese. She has a reputation for insisting on high standards of behaviour from her own pupils, and says that “the teacher must be the adult in the classroom” and should exercise authority. True, surely, although not every teacher has the gift of imparting her authority positively.

## Crossing the Tiber

When members of the Anglican Communion - particularly clergy - become Catholics, it’s known among ecclesiastics as ‘crossing the Tiber’. (Sometimes the colloquial verb ‘to Pope’ is also used, half-jokily.)

It’s reported that thirteen Anglican Bishops have ‘crossed the Tiber’ since 1990 - three this year alone. The most recent is the former Bishop of Rochester, Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, who was ordained as a Catholic priest at the weekend by Cardinal Vincent Nichols. Fr Michael, as he is now known, was once tipped to be a future

Archbishop of Canterbury.

Cradle Catholics are told they should not be ‘triumphalist’ about the Tiber-crossings - and I think few are. From what I hear, Catholic-Anglican relations remain harmonious, and there is respect for those who follow their conscience.

Pope Benedict made the ordinariate possible, for Anglicans joining Rome - five former Anglican bishops are now in the ordinariate. *The Portal* magazine (available on-line) is an excellent source of news and information about this increasingly significant aspect of the Catholic family.



Fr Michael Nazir-Ali. Photo: CNS

● The Central Catholic Library in Dublin’s Merrion Square has been a wonderful archive source for me, and Dr Teresa Whittington has been its librarian and custodian for some years. Very sadly, Teresa died suddenly last week. She was an erudite and knowledgeable person, kind, helpful and self-effacing. A single woman, she seemed to dedicate herself to serving the concerns of others, and took everything to heart, including the responsibilities of the library. Her brother, Paul Whittington, is the film critic of the *Irish Independent*, and all my condolences to him and to the rest of her family. Ar dhéis Dé go raibh a hanam.

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# ACP claim bishops are targeting priests

Staff reporter

The Association of Catholic Priests has claimed that some bishops have banned gay priests from working in parishes. However, the group did not name any diocese in a series of allegations contained in a statement released to the media ahead of the annual meeting this week.

Another claim from the

group is that some priests say they feel that their confidence has been knocked after a bishop made remarks about their appearance.

The ACP said that its claims are against a "small number" of members of the hierarchy and claimed that complaints it had received related to:

- priests being told that they have to take responsibility for another parish at short

notice and being left to his own devices to negotiate the extra workload;

- priests whose bishops insist on appointing them against their will to parishes for which they believe themselves to be unsuitable;

- priests who take time out being refused permission to return to active ministry;

- priests being refused

permission to leave their own diocese to work in another diocese;

- priests who are gay being refused permission to work in parishes while in other dioceses they are treated as equal and valued members of the priesthood;

- priests who have concerns about the demands on their mental or physical health of remaining in full-

time ministry until they reach 75;

- priests who feel unable to stand up for themselves;

- priests whose bishops comment disparagingly on their personal appearance and have their confidence undermined and their pastoral effectiveness diminished;

- priests who have experienced specific difficulties being refused permission to

say funeral Masses for parents or close family members;

- priests with no accusation against them being forced out of priesthood.

The ACP insisted that it is "prepared to challenge bishops who fail to live up to their responsibility as bishops which is to be shepherds to their priests as well as to their people," the statement added.

## Church response to Govt criticises its lack of housing ambition

Jason Osborne

Archbishop Eamon Martin has criticised a lack of ambition in the Government's *Housing for All* plan in a written response to Minister Darragh O'Brien's request that the Church identify property it owns to use in tackling the housing crisis.

While welcoming the plan, Archbishop Martin wrote that "sadly", Ireland's current national crisis in housing has "in large part resulted from political and economic choices

made over recent decades".

Three years on from the Bishops' 2018 pastoral letter on housing and homelessness, Archbishop Martin said "we face the same problems, but on a larger scale".

The targets set out in the *Housing for All* plan aim at 32,700 new homes per year.

However, Archbishop Martin noted that "while this is an ambitious target, research shows that it may well not be enough to meet current and future needs".

Dr Martin said "there are

more than 90,000 homes being sought already, well in excess of the 32,700 units per annum targeted in *Housing for All*".

He said that the Church will continue to encourage discussion and action at a local level, through dioceses, parishes and various communities, agencies and bodies.

"As Christians, committed to the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, we will continue to play our part in helping people who are suffering because of this housing crisis," Archbishop Martin concluded.

## Only quarter of new PSNI recruits Catholic

Chai Brady

Only 24% of new recruits to the PSNI (Police Service Northern Ireland) have come from a Catholic background according to the latest statistics.

### Catholic officers

The figures demonstrate ongoing problems hiring Catholic officers. Of the 193 officers recruited in 2020, only 46 were Catholic while 144 (75%) were Protestant.

The PSNI has stated a commitment to increasing

the number of Catholic officers. The new figures were released as the PSNI launch a new recruitment drive on the week it marks 20 years since it was established.

Currently Catholic officers make up 32% of the force, which is largely due to legislation that ran for 10 years until 2011 which saw a huge increase in Catholic recruits. The legislation pushed for the equal recruitment of Catholics and Protestants to the police force, or 50-50 recruitment.

Archbishop of Armagh

and Primate of All-Ireland Eamon Martin has often encouraged Catholics to join the PSNI, saying before the 2020 recruitment drive "...if we do not have a police service which is representative of the society that it polices, you immediately begin to run into accusations that the police service is not friendly to Catholic people, or you allow a vacuum to be created which allows others to exploit intimidation and fear in communities".

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### President Higgins' presence would have 'enriched' partition service, says Col Primate

Church of Ireland Archbishop John McDowell has said that President Higgins' presence at the service to mark partition would have "enriched" it, and reiterated that the service was never about celebration.

"It would have been lovely to have him there because he would have enriched the gathering but...if it was

just the five church leaders there, it would have been worthwhile," Archbishop McDowell said, speaking on The Saint Patrick Podcast.

"We felt - still feel - that what we were planning was a good thing - that it was a positive thing. The word celebration never entered our heads and never entered our literature."

### Schools' right to uphold their ethos must be ensured, bishop says

Bishop Donal McKeown has said that the Church isn't looking to protect the current FETO arrangements in the North, but that it is looking to ensure Catholic schools' right to "have their distinctive ethos and employ people who support it".

This comes as calls increase for the exemption of teachers in Northern Ireland from fair employment legislation to be

scrapped.

"Catholic schools aren't looking to employ Séamus rather than Mervins. They've always been looking to employ people who can promote the distinctive ethos of the Catholic school," Dr McKeown said.

"It's nothing to do with religious affiliation, but preparedness to support the ethos of the school and being qualified to do so."

## Pro-life goes live



Ellis Mulroy of the Pro Life Campaign and Wendy Grace get ready for broadcast before the PLC National Conference 2021, which saw hundreds tune into the live-streamed conference, October 30.

## Martin Mansergh

### The View



# Partition was never envisaged as a final settlement

**P**ope Francis, meditating recently on the problematic history of Latin America including his own country of Argentina in its evolution over the past 500 years, and especially the treatment of native peoples, ran into criticism from Spanish conservatives. They hold that Spain gave Latin America (except Brazil) its language and Catholic religion, and that the Spanish Empire was a glorious one. There are echoes closer to home of the last point.

The Pope in the present age is a world leader, with an authority that stretches well beyond the members of his own Church to most of Christianity, and he indeed speaks to those of other religions and none. A symbol of this role is the existence of Vatican City as an independent State. Pope Francis has used his office, as did his predecessors over the last 60 years, to preach a progressive Christian message addressing a wide range of contemporary moral problems of every kind. He is not beholden to any partisan political or material interest. It is true that this can sometimes be overshadowed by focusing on difficulties the Church has with the direction taken by society in the western world and by aberrational individual or organisational conduct that gravely undermines trust in its authority and integrity.

**“President Macron suggested recently that in serious circumstances the seal of the confessional should be overridden”**

This last weekend, he met President Joe Biden, in Rome for the G20 Summit, and, according to news reports, they discussed climate change and Covid. President Biden, like President Kennedy before him, is proud of his Irish Catholic background, in both cases dating back to Famine emigration, but it would have been unrealistic to expect of either of them that they would be free or bound to pursue confessional politics in a country as diverse as the United States with no mandate to do so.



Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin speaks with Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, following a service to mark the centenary of the partition of Ireland in Armagh, September 21. Photo: Chai Brady

Churches also have to defend themselves from attack. President Macron suggested recently that in serious circumstances the seal of the confessional should be overridden. All that would achieve is that serious wrong-doing would never be confessed, and the perpetrator, potentially open to religious counsel, would be deprived of the benefit of it. Unfortunately, political leaders resort too frequently to what sounds plausible, in this case pandering to the anti-clerical French republican ethos, before it has been fully thought through.

### German counterparts

Macron, to be fair, like his German counterparts, is willing to grapple with the legacy of imperialism, in his case the Algerian war, in theirs German South-West Africa, today Namibia. The British Government is reluctant to do this, and the problem lies not only in former British possessions far away but much closer to home.

As a conference hosted by the National Museum of Ireland last Friday discussed, Ireland has its own problems, in that some of its collections were assembled in Victorian times (or earlier), when post-1800 Ireland was not only part of the Union but of the Empire, and when soldiers, scientists and explorers shared colonial assumptions. It would be comforting to put it mainly down to the Anglo-Irish élite, but it is a wider problem than that.

### Partition

The four Church leaders conducted a dignified, moving and genuinely rec-

onciliatory remembrance in Armagh of the establishment of Northern Ireland in 1921 and a century of partition. It was not a celebration of either, even if the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson left muttering that word in obvious disappointment. Participation in commemoration, even for office-holders, is a matter of choice, and one of the principles of the decade of centenaries is that we are not all required to think or react in the same way to our shared history. One can respect different decisions made in good faith, without having to condemn either those who decided not to go or those who went.

**“The context was Ukraine, which is de facto divided into an independent state and an unrecognised Russian-dominated part of its territory”**

Outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel's diplomatic advisor for twelve years, Christoph Heusgen, in a *Spiegel* interview (September 19) stated that Germany was always ready to help a country move from being a partitioned state to a reunited one, and turn its economic strength into political strength. The context was Ukraine, which is de facto divided into an independent state and an unrecognised Russian-dominated part of its territory. But his observation has a wider validity, in that few States in the world like to see other countries being partitioned or staying partitioned. Germany was able

to make the leap, when circumstances allowed, but that moment has not yet arrived for Korea, Cyprus and Ireland.

At the time of the Treaty, it was recognised by the British and very occasionally by

Ulster Unionists that partition was not ideal, which is why the door has always been left ajar to Irish reunification, if the principle of consent is satisfied. Indeed, that was the policy of the British Labour Party in the era of Kevin McNamara. The new dispensation created by the Good Friday Agreement would satisfy most people, if it were allowed to work as intended, rather than being continually frustrated in many areas. It was never envisaged as a final settlement, but nor was it a purely temporary and transitional arrangement, particularly as conditions that would allow constitutional change would take time to come about.

### Public servants

Sir John Chilcot, who has died, was one of the most effective British public servants, who had to deal with Northern Ireland. During his time he brought the North-

ern Ireland Office right back into the centre of things, after being sidelined during the lead-in to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. He steered the British back-channel exploratory dialogue with the Republican Movement, while managing as best he could real political constraints on his side. His leadership contributed to making possible the initial breakthroughs in the peace process. Later, his inquiry into what went wrong on the lead-in to the Iraq war was not a comfortable one for those responsible for having justified British participation on a flimsy and mistaken premise. That event was not a good demonstration of the merits of the Churchillian ideal of a united Anglosphere, still touted, even here occasionally, as a superior alternative to the EU.

## The Irish Catholic

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# Joy in Navan as Fr Louis celebrates 25 years



Fr Louis with the Knights group.

## Brandon Scott

There was a jubilant atmosphere as Navan parish in Co. Meath celebrated the 25th year of ordination of Fr Louis Illah, who arrived from the parish of St Peter and Paul in Egume, Nigeria in 2013.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* after the celebratory Mass, which saw Fr Louis presented with gifts from Navan Parish Pastoral Council, Navan African Catholics' Association and The Knights of St Columbanus, a typically effusive Fr Louis expressed his gratitude to God and for those who have made such a celebration possible. "I am excited and very happy first and foremost for the opportunity to be alive and celebrate this holy Mass," he said. "It is an opportunity for me to offer thanks to God and also express my gratitude to all of the people back home in Nigeria and also to all of the people in the Diocese of Meath, who have been so supportive and helped me every step of the way."

## Hymns

The concelebrated Mass, which featured prayers in the Irish language led by Fr Louis and African versions of hymns, was also attended by Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan and his predecessor Michael Smith. The Mass epitomised the inter-cultural element that Fr Louis and his fellow African Catholics have brought to the Faith in the Diocese of Meath as it was disclosed that Fr Louis' arrival and his outreach to African Catholics in the Navan area encouraged many former African Catholics, who had been attending other Christian denominations in the region, to enter a Church that

did not initially resemble their own personal brand of Catholic worship.

Commenting on this new dimension to the Faith in Ireland, Fr Louis attributed the foothold that African Catholics now have in the Church in Ireland to the pioneering tenets of the Second Vatican Council and Pope St John XXIII. "If you go back to the famous prayer of St Pope John XXIII at the beginning of the council, he prayed for the Church to embrace a new way of life," he said. "In his own words he said that 'the windows of the Church need to be open to let the fresh air of the spirit blow through', so essentially for a new vibrant renewal to occur. One of the things that we treasure so much back home in Africa is our way of worship; it is very much in tandem with the cultural outlook and that is what we have brought here with us."

Although recent studies demonstrate that devotion to the Catholic Faith is decreasing in Europe while conversely the trends in Africa reveal a Faith that continues to flourish, Fr Louis is adamant that Ireland still possesses strong convictions on the basis of what he has encountered in his eight years in the country and states that his time here has been worthwhile. "God will never abandon his people," he stated. "This is such a beautiful country and this is the country that brought the Faith to us in Africa, to millions of people. Missionaries, both men and women were happy back in the day to go out to preach and share the good news of salvation. I believe in the depths of my heart that God has his own plan and the good Lord has his own way of drawing people back in and I have witnessed it here," he said.



Fr Louis and Nancy Finnegan.



Fr Louis with Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan, concelebrants and servers.



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Every 18 seconds, a priest somewhere in the world celebrates a Holy Mass for the intentions of one of ACN's benefactors. On 1,782,097 occasions in 2020, a benefactor's intention was offered up together with the host on the paten during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: for the soul of a departed loved one; for the healing of a sick person; for a parent or grandparent grieving because of a child who has lost their Faith, all these were brought before God.

**“By having your Mass intentions celebrated through ACN you are supporting priests living in the poorest countries in the world”**

Having Mass celebrated for someone is not only the most beautiful and, in many cases, the only thing we can do for a loved one, especially for a departed soul. In doing so, we are offering the greatest possible gift, Christ Himself, in the Eucharist. The Mass stipend we offer is not a 'payment', but an expression of love and gratitude. In a sense, our Mass offering more intimately unites our intentions with the Sacrifice of Christ.

## Support

In 2020, one in nine priests around the world received Mass stipends from ACN. For priests in the poorest countries of the world, Mass offerings are often their sole means



Holy Mass being offered in Ukraine for the intentions of one of ACN's benefactors.

of support – they are vital to their very survival. Without them basic necessities such as shoes, medication and even food would be unaffordable. They also make it possible for priests to carry out their pastoral work and help others.

For example, Father Francis Yagau writes to us from Papua New Guinea: 'Thanks to your Mass stipends, I can

buy wafers and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist. They also enable me to visit one of the ten communities under my care each month.' He and his fellow priests in Alotau-Sideia Diocese can count on us providing €15,200 in stipends to support them this year.

Priests working as teachers in seminaries also rely on your

Mass offerings. Most of them receive little – if any – remuneration for their work. They don't have time for parish work, since the formation of these future priests demands care and dedication, so they don't get stipends from there. That is why we are helping thousands of seminary teachers, including those in three major seminaries in

Ghana, who have been working throughout the pandemic. 'Despite COVID-19, our seminaries are able to continue as before, while observing strict hygiene measures. God has been so good to us', writes the rector of Saint Victor's seminary in Tamale. We are giving €19,430 to support 17 seminary teachers, so that they can devote themselves unreservedly to their most important task – forming young seminarians in the love which comes from the Heart of Jesus.

By having your Mass intentions celebrated through ACN you are supporting priests living in the poorest countries in the world. You are also supporting the Church to minister to the faithful in some of the most difficult circumstances in the world and are helping to support the formation of seminarians. Please be assured that 100% of all Mass stipends gifted to ACN go to priests in the suffering and persecuted Church.

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# She gave all she had...

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



The first reading and Gospel today (Mark 12:38-44) feature poor widows who gave all they had. The evangelist Mark had a habit of following the teaching of Jesus with the example of some person who embodies or exemplifies that lesson. Last Sunday we heard the answer of Jesus to the question of what was the most important commandment of religion. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength: and love your neighbour as yourself." Jesus called the attention of his disciples to the poor widow who put into the collection box everything she had, all she had to live on. In giving her all she is a model of discipleship. And in doing so she anticipates the total self-giving of Jesus on the cross, which was to happen shortly afterwards.

**“We are into November so it is not too soon to call a conscientious limit on Christmas spending”**

There is a contrast between the humble, unobtrusive giving of the widow with the showy, hypocritical religion of some of the temple staff. God looks at the inner heart and is not deluded by flowing vestments and titles of honour. There are no calculators in heaven, only the scales of love. As St Paul expressed it, if I give away all that I possess but without love, it profits me nothing. A simple act of generous love is of more value in God's eyes than some massive scheme without love.

### Where do we stand today?

Where do we as a community of disciples stand today? From the beginning of his pontificate, by taking Francis of Assisi as his patron, Pope Francis announced that his focus would be primarily on observing the Gospel of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. He refers to the beatitudes as the identity card of a Christian. St Paul wrote that Christ became poor for our sake so that we might become rich through his poverty...the poverty of being born in a stable, forced



Mother Teresa was a wonderful example of charity.

to migrate from persecution, living a simple lifestyle, the poverty of an unjust trial and being treated as a criminal, and the poverty of death. He identified himself with people in need: "I was hungry and you gave me food to eat." In *The Joy of the Gospel* Pope Francis proclaimed, "This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. In their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to be evangelised by them". Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

### The rich young man went away sad

A few weeks ago, our Sunday Gospel was about a rich young man who was invited by Jesus to sell his property portfolio and give the money to the poor. But his face fell and he went away sad for he was a man of great wealth. We should not be surprised that Pope Francis' vision of a Church of the poor and for the poor is being rejected by the wealthy Church. There is a danger of being so heavenly minded that one is no earthly good. *The Joy of the Gospel* mentions various ways of masking reality: angelic forms of purity, ethical systems bereft of kindness and brands

of ahistorical fundamentalism. Selective traditionalism is ahistorical because it goes back maybe four or five hundred years but does not go back to the Church of the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and the apostolic letters. The results of the synod, walking together with Christ, will be very interesting.

### Purchasing is a moral issue

Getting back to today's Gospel. The wealthy people in the temple gave money they had over. Fair dues to them. But we must ask where does necessity end and surplus begin? Definitions of need are relative to our expectations. What we regarded as luxuries some years ago are now seen as necessities. We are slaves to consumerism. I must have...but do I really need it? One of the great advances of today is that we are beginning to realise that everything in this world is related to everything else. So, what is surplus to my needs does not belong to me but to those who are lacking the necessities of life. Pope Benedict wrote that justice gives to you what is yours but charity gives what is mine. In this consumeristic society, purchasing is a moral issue.

### Giving at Christmas

We are into November so it is not too soon to call a conscientious limit on Christmas spending. Instead of racking your brain trying to find a suitable present for people who already have more than enough, why not send a card to say that in their name you have made a donation to some charitable organisation like Trócaire or the Society of St Vincent de Paul?

**“As St Paul expressed it, if I give away all that I possess but without love, it profits me nothing”**

Money, or what it can purchase, is not the only way of giving to others. Giving our time to others is wonderful: voluntary time given to any organisation that helps people...a charitable society, a sports club, the local parish council, a choir. Have time for others, to listen to them, to keep in touch, to be sensitive to their needs spoken or unspoken.

### The joy of giving

Mother Teresa was informed of a family with eight children who were starving.

She went to them with a bowl of rice. The mother divided the rice and went out. "Where did you go?", Mother Teresa asked. "To our neighbours who were hungry too". Mother Teresa decided not to bring more rice that evening because she wanted them to enjoy the joy of sharing. That is the joy of the Gospel which Pope Francis saw when he visited the very poor people

in the shanty suburbs of Buenos Aires. We need to be evangelised by them.

Today's first reading is about the widow who shared her last fist of meal and drop of oil with God's prophet. For the rest of that famine, the jar of meal was not spent nor the jug of oil emptied. Praise the Lord!

Do I trust God sufficiently to share my last ounce in his name?

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# Our coming appointment with the Human Rights Council



**Left-wing pressure groups are lining up to push Ireland in an even more liberal direction, writes David Quinn**

**F**or many years, various United Nations (UN) bodies exerted pressure on Ireland to abolish the Eighth Amendment. Moves are now on to cajole us into making our present already very liberal abortion law even more permissive.

Ireland is a signatory to many UN treaties and conventions which commit us to living up to certain human rights standards. We are not legally obliged to abide by any of the various treaties etc., but sometimes we feel morally obliged.

By signing up to those documents, we agree to a process whereby every few years we appear before this or that UN committee charged with ensuring countries stick to their commitments.

**“There is no evidence that pro-life groups are intimidating people entering hospitals and we already have laws against this sort of thing anyway”**

On November 10, we are appearing before the UN Human Rights Council which will have an overall look at our human rights record.

Ahead of these appearances, local non-governmental organisations (‘NGOs’) write to the relevant UN committee setting out where they think their particular country has allegedly failed to live up to its commitments.

Many of these NGOs are extremely socially liberal and secular and so are the members of the UN committees. They are usually of the same mind, ideologically speaking.

This means that when the official representatives of a country like Ireland appear before a given UN committee,

the members of that committee will have received their information from campaigning organisations which think like they do, and the questions they ask will push the country under examination in one direction, and one only.

Sometimes, that might not be a bad thing. For example, a number of religious bodies have sent submissions to the Human Rights Council ahead of Ireland’s appearance and are seeking more rights for asylum-seekers, among other things.

But quite a number of the secular NGOs believe that Ireland’s abortion law doesn’t go far enough. They (wrongly) believe we are still violating some of the provisions of the human rights documents we have signed, and they want us to make amends. There is little doubt that the members of the UN Human Rights Council will agree.

One of the organisations complaining our law isn’t permissive enough is the Abortion Rights Campaign, which has made a submission along with ‘Termination for Medical Reasons’ and the ‘Abortion Support Network’.

## Submissions

Among other things, the submissions want to see the three-day waiting period before a woman has an abortion, eliminated. This would mean no cooling-off period in which she might change her mind about such a decisive, life-ending act.

It agrees with the World Health Organisation (WHO) that “mandatory waiting periods can have the effect of delaying care, which can jeopardise women’s ability to access safe, legal abortion services and demeans women as competent decision-makers”.

Note that there is no mention whatsoever of the rights of the unborn child, which seem to count as nothing in the eyes of the WHO.

The submission also complains that our abortion law only mentions ‘women’, and that this is offensive to pregnant people who might not identify as women (for example, a biological female might now identify as male).

In addition, the document targets conscientious objection. As it stands, Ireland’s abortion law allows doctors and nurses to refuse to take part in abortions, although doctors who are pro-life are required to refer women seeking abortions to doctors who are pro-choice (an already unacceptable infringement on conscience rights).

The Abortion Rights Campaign doesn’t go quite as far as calling for the outright abolition of conscientious objection, but it seems to be moving in that direction.

It also objects to the fact that women (or ‘people’ as it



The Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland where the UN Human Rights Council meets.

might put it) must still travel to England if they want an abortion in cases where the baby has a severe, as distinct from a fatal, disability. A severe disability would include Down Syndrome. In other words, the campaign wants Ireland to allow babies to be aborted when they have Down Syndrome. This is eugenics, which is the deliberate elimination of those considered defective in some way.

Amnesty International in Ireland shares this same position.

Meanwhile, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties want to ban pro-life vigils near facilities such as hospitals that conduct abortions. That is, it wants so-called ‘safe-access zones’ set up around hospitals and clinics.

## Civil liberties

To put it another way, an organisation established to defend civil liberties, wants to curb a civil liberty. There is no evidence that pro-life groups are intimidating people entering hospitals and we already have laws against this sort of thing anyway. In practice, exclusion zones would stop pro-life activists even silently praying near hospitals.

**“The submissions want to see the three-day waiting period before a woman has an abortion, eliminated”**

The Iona Institute (which I head) has made a submission of its own to the Human Rights Council, or rather, it has signed up to one, along with the Pro-Life Campaign, made by Alliance Defending Freedom, an international organisation devoted to defending religious freedom.

The submission says that conscientious objection to abortion should be strengthened, not weakened. It defends the right of parents to be informed when an underage daughter is having an abortion, and also opposes moves to allow assisted suicide.

If the Human Rights Council is true to form, it is quite likely

to misinterpret human rights documents which do not create a right to abortion, much less eugenics, or allow conscience rights to be quashed, or authorise assisted suicide.

## Practice

The Irish delegation that appears before the council ought to point all this out,

but if past practice is followed, is likely to kow-tow instead.

A three-year review of our abortion law is due to begin soon, along with a campaign to make it more permissive still. The pro-life movement must do its best to resist, including internationally at the UN next week.

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# Irish diocesan synods and assemblies – angels abound but the devil is in the detail



Inviting people to participate in a process that is really only about erecting scaffolding around old structures will further alienate even the enthusiastic, writes **Garry O'Sullivan**

“**T**rying to turn the pyramid upside down,” is how Fr Brendan Hoban described

what they were doing by organising a diocesan assembly in Killala, one of the smallest dioceses encompassing much of north Co. Mayo and parts of Co. Sligo. The pyramid, he explains, is the current structure of the Church with the Pope and cardinals and bishops forming a hierarchy down to the laypeople at the bottom.

Some of the recommendations from the 2018 Killala assembly (‘Placing Hope in Faith’) are now being implemented, (they were partially delayed due to Covid-19). The first recommendations, to be implemented are that all parishes should have pastoral councils and that a family Mass should be held in every parish once a month.

So how did the assembly come about and can we learn anything as the Church in Ireland embarks on a five-year synodal process? The clergy in Killala talked about reform from 2015 to 2017 because they felt a “very palpable decline” in Church attendance and interest in the Faith. After two years, they concluded that they did not know what to do, so they would consult the laity and so the diocesan assembly was called in 2017 and would meet in 2018.

## Urgency

The urgency might not be felt in their speed to act however it is revealed in the numbers. Killala has 22 parishes, and 27 priests at the moment serve those parishes. In 10-15 years, they will be down to just seven priests. There is a Catholic population of 36,000 people, which as Fr Hoban notes, is smaller than Ballyfermot parish in Dublin. It has also been speculated that Killala might be subsumed or amalgamated into a



Pope Francis speaks during a meeting with representatives of bishops' conferences from around the world at the Vatican on October 9. The meeting came as the Vatican launches the process that will lead up to the assembly of the world Synod of Bishops in 2023. Also pictured is Maltese Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops. Photo: CNS.

larger diocese arrangement in time, so time is limited.

I don't intend here to go into all the detail of the organisation of the Killala assembly, there is a very comprehensive account given by the coordinator Fr Hoban online on the website of the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP), of which he is a founding member. My sole intention here is to examine the process of the assembly and see if it is a suitable model for other dioceses to emulate and/or if it has failings that can be improved on or learned from especially for a national synod and from the lay perspective.

“**They were open for discussion on any topic, but that controversial issues were a dead-end”**

One of the key challenges for the clerical organisers in Killala was to convince the people that their assembly was a serious attempt to listen (there had been a previous

consultation in 1990 which was implemented by a few parishes and people had been burned by that experience) and that whatever programme of reform came out of the listening process, it would be *de facto* the policy of the diocese.

This was, says Fr Hoban, stage one – the process had to be serious and credible, and convince people that the clergy and bishop did actually want to hear from the people. There had to be an open agenda, differences would be respected and honest engagement had. And that it would lead somewhere, that the findings would be implemented because there were reservations that the priests would actually back it.

Therefore, the organisers were scrupulous that privacy and confidentiality would be absolute in the voting process in the assembly and they hired an outside company to analyse results of the survey to avoid any accusation of manipulation of the answers.

In fairness to the coordinator, Fr Hoban, the lengths that he and others went to, to assuage participants that it would be an open, fair and

serious process, is commendable and would act as a good template for other dioceses.

## ‘Hot Button’ issues

Gaining that trust depended on how they approached so-called ‘hot button’ issues such as Church teaching on LGBT+, women deacons, women priests, etc., and the organisers knew that unless Bishop John Fleming gave the assurance of an open agenda there would be no assembly. People would walk, said Fr Hoban.

However, a compromise was offered by the diocese: there would be open discussions but ‘hot button’ issues that were deemed to have a global dimension and therefore deemed beyond the power of the local bishop, would be sent by the bishop to the hierarchy, and then to Rome via the Papal Nuncio. This solution was used in the Limerick synod and some of the organisers of that synod, such as Fr Eamon Fitzgibbon, were consulting with Killala on their assembly.

Let's take a ‘time-out’ here and look at this more closely, because while it's neat and convenient for

the organisers, it's also troubling. Clearly the ‘hot button’ issues were of great importance to the delegates as ordinary practicing Catholics (and let's be clear that the delegates, according to the organisers, were faithful Mass-going Catholics, the process was unable to get the ‘faithful departed’ to join as the reader will see later on here. So, it's not the case of some angry, disillusioned lapsed Catholics turning up and demanding radical change).

“**It has also been speculated that Killala might be subsumed or amalgamated into a larger diocese arrangement in time, so time is limited”**

What the diocesan organisers were telling people was that they were open for discussion on any topic, but that controversial issues were a dead-end as the diocese would wash its hands of responsibility and pass them ‘up the line’.

The question begs itself – up the line to whom? Does Bishop Fleming go to the Winter meeting of the bishops' in Maynooth this December and say “here brother bishops, I have a mandate from my people from 2018 on a range of difficult issues”. And what is the bishops' conference supposed to say? Down to a man

“**One of the key challenges for the clerical organisers in Killala was to convince the people that their assembly was a serious attempt to listen”**



Some of the participants in the Killala listening process.

they probably know that their own flocks would be favourable in similar numbers to those 'hot button' issues. Will they stand behind their people and demand change from Rome?

As for sending a dossier to Rome, who in Rome? The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) which has said that the Church doesn't have the authority to bless gay unions and has consistently slammed down any Irish priest that has dared put his head above the parapet on difficult issues? No point sending them to Pope Francis who stands behind the CDF on all these 'hot button' issues. In the Amazon Synod there were strong demands for female deacons and the Pope said 'no'. Instead, he changed Canon Law to allow women to read at Mass, something they've been doing for decades.

**“Sending letters and reports of the what the Faithful think to Rome appears to be sending them into an ecclesiastical black hole”**

There is a rather idealistic view that if every diocese in the world sent in similar reports of the *Sensus Fidelium* then the Pope would have to act. But the Pope acted in 2016 when he set up a commission to study the female diaconate and said it was inconclusive, then set up another commission to continue the study this year.

So, sending letters and reports of the what the Faithful think to Rome appears to be sending them into an ecclesiastical black hole.

What seems especially depressing about this manoeuvre is the enthusiasm that the people brought to the questionnaire sent out by the organisers of the assembly seems betrayed.

## “The Pope acted in 2016 when he set up a commission to study the female diaconate and said it was inconclusive”

It had 1,000 adult respondents and about 500 secondary school students responded. The ordination of women “was a huge issue for adults and teenagers” says Fr Hoban. He adds: “Priests are more liberal than bishops and people are more liberal than priests. They recognise what the problems are. When the assembly met in July 2018 in a hotel in Ballina, “86% of 300 delegates voted for the teaching of the Catholic Church on LGBT+ to be revamped.” People, he says, from small little parishes all around the diocese, grandparents who had grandkids maybe who were gay, or knew a lad down the road who is gay and said ‘yes’ he should be welcome to our Church. “Mainly rural mainly elderly, I was stunned,” he says.

### Women

Some 69% of the 300 delegates voted for the ordination of women while 73% voted for ordination of women deacons.

“This really opened my eyes and the change that has taken place in Irish society and the change that has taken place in people at Mass even though the numbers are smaller,” said Fr Hoban.

The issues sent to the bishop were:

- Ordination of women as deacons;
- Women as priests;
- LGBT teaching to be looked at as a matter of urgency;
- Clerical celibacy;

The danger with this approach in Killala and before that in Limerick is that it creates the illusion of a synodal type process. Whereas in

fact it is simply getting the laity to take up the everyday bureaucratic slack caused by a dearth of priests. The hard issues are sloughed off on a vague promise that it will be referred upward...to whom? What happens to it next? Who responds? On behalf of whom?

The people are sold a pup through dissembling and detouring, and it's the Church at its worst.

Where is the respect of the clamour for structural change? The laity are to be content with parish councils – one of the main recommendations of the Killala assembly – which are a 1960s Vatican II idea never properly articulated or realised and unlikely to be fit for the purpose of a reformed/reforming Church. Some in Killala seem not to understand that the priest is in charge of the pastoral council and can dismiss it at will. A lay-chairperson will not trump the local priest under Church law.

**“Some 69% of the 300 delegates voted for the ordination of women while 73% voted for ordination of women deacons”**

As Fr Hoban has said writing in the Jesuit journal *Studies* in 2019 after his own diocesan assembly, “All the targeted parish programmes, all the parish councils in the world, all the experts sitting in offices with secretaries and computers, all the prayers in Christendom, won't put the old Church back together again. Its day is done,” he said.

diocese one of the central themes of the 2016 Limerick synod, Bishop Brendan Leahy described the *Role of Women in Church Leadership* report as “timely”. The report came five years after the synod and only concentrated on the role of women within the confines of Canon Law. Five years after 81.1% of delegates voted for it as a priority, the highest single ‘priority’ vote at the synod.

However, over five years on from the Limerick synod the bishop's most prominent move to date has been to invite men to become permanent deacons in his diocese.

### Criticised

This was recently criticised by Fr Roy Donovan, parish priest of Caherconlish and Inch St Laurence in Limerick, who said the move was a ‘return to the dark ages’.

He said this move towards male deacons raises questions about how women in the Limerick synod have allowed this to go forward. Or have they? It also raises questions about having a meaningful synod in the Church in Ireland. “Men in every diocese in Ireland and throughout the world should join in solidarity with women and refuse the male diaconate,” Fr Donovan concluded.

What both Limerick and Killala have shown in having a synod and assembly respectively is that the hot button issues are not being taken seriously and under the guise of a new openness and transparency on these issues, the Church leadership is drawing laity into increased bureaucratic functions and kicking the can of real change, so clearly demanded in both dioceses, way down the road.

**“Over five years on from the Limerick synod the bishop's most prominent move to date has been to invite men to become permanent deacons in his diocese”**

If bishops want more help from laypeople to keep their dioceses functioning as clerical numbers decline, ask for that help but don't pretend that they are opening up to the ‘hot button’ issues when really the people are being duped into thinking that change is possible. The CDF and Rome have been very clear on a number of controversial subjects that they either have no authority or that it is closed and that's a matter of doctrine. And that's not changing.

The pyramid is not shifting, and to tell people that they are contributing to turning the pyramid upside down is unfair even if honestly held.

Bishop Leahy is vice-chair of the new Irish synod committee, and will have a huge influence on the shape and structure of both the forum and the synodal process. But we need to know now how that committee intends to handle the ‘hot button’ issues because if the Limerick and Killala ‘compromise’ is proposed, then the national synod will be a very small affair.

**① Garry O'Sullivan is the Managing Director of Columba and Currach books and Columba will be publishing a series of books on the synodal process in spring 2022.**

In the same article which was reported in the national press, Fr Hoban called for “a robust commitment to a respectful re-imagining of our Church; on an honest acknowledgement that clergy in the interests of the Gospel need to divest their control and authority; and on a consensus that a robust synodality is the obvious and only way forward.” He added: “for the Irish Catholic Church, the tectonic plates really have shifted” but people were still “trying to build a scaffolding around a house that has already collapsed.”

It's hard not to see the Killala assembly as more scaffolding to use Fr Hoban's phrase and certainly anything but robust or respectful of people's genuine concerns of the so called ‘hot button’ issues.

Sending ‘hot button’ issues such as women's ordination to the priesthood to Rome is a nonsense, the Church will not change this and says it is now unchangeable doctrine.

Killala organisers found it very difficult to reach out to people who had left the Church and many didn't even know the assembly was happening. This is a huge challenge if the national listening process wants to hear from what one bishop rather innocently called the ‘unfaithful Catholics’. But they will be even stronger on the ‘hot button’ issues and won't be diverted by ‘letters to Rome’.

### The Limerick synod

The Killala assembly drew much organisational inspiration from the 2016 Limerick synod. Opening a webinar last May to discuss a report on the role of women in the



# World Report



Edited by Brandon Scott  
news@irishcatholic.ie

## IN BRIEF

### Pope Francis donates €145,000 to Catholic Church in Syria

● Pope Francis has donated approximately €145,000 to the Catholic Church in Syria for its charitable work with the poor. Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, prefect of the Congregation of the Eastern Churches, announced that each of the country's 17 ecclesiastical circumscriptions would receive roughly €8,500.

The 77-year-old Argentine cardinal explained that his congregation was making the donation in the Pope's name to address the areas of greatest need identified by each bishop.

Syria's Christians have suffered sustained persecution since the commencement of its civil war, with formerly large Christian communities being decimated, such as the 180,000 residing in Aleppo before the war, which has now eroded to a mere 32,000 as per statistics compiled in 2019.

### English bishop encourages pro-life advocates amid struggles

● Bishop Mark Davies of Shrewsbury told a pro-life pilgrimage that the enemies of abortion, assisted suicide, and other crimes against human life cannot give up joy and hope in a culture that is becoming increasingly hostile to their beliefs.

"In this century we can expect a protracted struggle and we must be ready for

repeated assaults on both the laws and the social environments of care, which have long protected and cherished the lives of our society's weakest members," Bishop Davies said. "Yet, this struggle is the opportunity to give witness to the value of every human life and to announce once more the Gospel of Life with joy."

### Bishop stresses value of human life after Sudan coup

● Bishop Yunan Tombe Trille Andali of El Obeid spoke of how the international community must put pressure on Sudan's military to show respect and value for human life in the wake of the military's coup against the country's transitional government.

"We hear of the death of the people who express their feelings towards the coup against civilian governments," Bishop Tombe Trille said after

multiple protesters were reportedly killed.

He added that he believes the international community should put their pressure on the junta to value the life of their citizens and sent a rallying call to Catholics in the region by saying that [the] "Church in Sudan has never remained silent under the Cross of Christ despite some changes which took place in Sudan; the attitude of the rulers towards the Church never changed".

### Catholic doctor honoured for service during Covid pandemic

● A neurologist who responded to the start of the Covid pandemic in New York City in 2020 has been awarded this year's Catholic Doctor of the Year Award.

Major Daniel O'Connell, MD, MPH, received the award during the Archdiocese of Los Angeles' Mass for Catholic Healthcare Professionals. Dr O'Connell explained that he was raised

in the Catholic Church, and he said his Catholic faith is integral to his medical career.

"I specifically sought out a Catholic medical school, which I think is somewhat unique in the modern era," Dr O'Connell said. "I never had that Catholic school experience, and I wanted my grounding as a physician to be of Catholic origin."

## Pope describes US President Biden as 'a good Catholic'

The Pope received US President Joe Biden and according to the US President, the Pontiff referred to him as "a good Catholic". Biden was in Rome for the G20 Heads of State and Government Summit. He met with Pope Francis for 75 minutes on Friday, during which they did not reference abortion, a topic that has seen Mr Biden receive criticism from certain Catholic bishops and priests in the US for his own personal beliefs.

Biden said that he and the pope prayed for each other and discussed climate change. "We just talked about the fact that he was happy I was a good Catholic and I should keep receiving Communion," Biden said. Biden also told reporters he discussed "a lot of personal things" with the pontiff and described the lengthy meeting with the Pope as "wonderful."

During the meeting between the Pope and the US president, Biden presented Francis a special coin with personal context as it bore the insignia of the 261st Signal Brigade, the Delaware National Guard unit in which his late son Beau served as a captain and described the Pope as "the most significant warrior for peace" he has ever met.

Unlike past meetings between the Pope and a head of state, the Vatican did not



US President Joe Biden greets Pope Francis during a meeting at the Vatican, October 29. Photo: CNS.

permit media to be present when Biden and Pope Francis met. No live video stream of the pairs' meeting was offered to members of the public.

During his time in the Vatican, Mr Biden attended a Mass celebrated by Fr Joe Ciccone and two concelebrating priests, and that Biden placed US currency in the collection basket. Contrary to the stance of many US priests, Mr Biden was permitted to receive

Communion during the Mass.

"Communion is what brings us together in the Lord. None of us are pure and perfect. We struggle through life. We're all saints and sinners", Fr Ciccone told media after the Mass. "When you're a public figure you have to make certain decisions, especially in a democracy, on behalf of more than just your own personal feelings," he said.

An estimated 30 people

attended the Mass at St Patrick's Catholic Church, which had a large security presence. The president and his wife sat in the last row and the church that Biden attended was the same church that another US politician, Nancy Pelosi, travelled to for Mass when she visited Pope Francis earlier in October. Pelosi and her husband left Mass in Rome before the second reading because of a security incident.

## Authorities kidnap Catholic bishop in China

Chinese authorities have kidnapped Catholic Bishop Shao Zhumin of Wenzhou, according to reports emerging from China.

The Vatican confirmed Bishop Shao to lead the diocese in September 2016, following the death of his predecessor, Bishop Vincent Zhu Weifang, who was imprisoned for 16 years.

The 58-year-old prelate was taken by authorities "on vacation," adding that it was not the first time the bishop was taken away. He has been arrested several times since he was appointed to the diocese in 2016.

Speaking anonymously, Catholics in the region expressed concern for the safety of Bishop Shao and were praying that that "the Lord will give [Bishop Shao] confidence and courage, that he will not be disheartened by what has happened".

Detentions of underground clergy in China are commonplace as a means of pressuring them to join the state-run Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the "abductions" of religious leaders usually occur on the eve of important Catholic events, such as Christmas, Easter, the Feast of the Assumption, and

All Souls' Day and All Saints' Day. In recent years, authorities have blocked the entrance to the Wenzhou cemetery ahead of All Souls' Day to prevent Catholics from congregating.

In Zhejiang, the percentage of Christians exceeds 10%, and the Faithful "are very zealous", according to local sources.

Earlier in 2021, Bishop Joseph Zhang Weizhu of Xinxiang disappeared for months after Chinese officials detained him along with other clergy and seminarians opposed to joining the state-run church.

## Cardinal Burke advises pro-choice Catholic politicians to not present for Communion

Cardinal Raymond Burke has maintained that Catholic bishops have a "sacred duty" to apply canon law by advising pro-choice politicians not to receive Holy Communion.

Issuing a 2,800-word statement Cardinal Burke recalled his efforts to persuade Catho-

lic politicians to defend the lives of unborn children while serving as the bishop of La Crosse, Wisconsin, and later of St Louis, Missouri.

Cardinal Burke explained that he was speaking out because the issue was "a matter of life and death for the

unborn and of eternal salvation for the Catholic politicians involved." Addressing the controversy surrounding certain bishops' refusal to administer Holy Communion to Catholic politicians who are pro-choice, Cardinal Burke stated that he believed

that it was in the best interests of the Church to continue to withhold the Sacrament to those who contravene Church teaching as it could possibly "correct the scandal of Catholic politicians who publicly and obstinately promote pro-cured abortion".



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Dearth of evening Masses for workers

**Dear Editor,** I am a full-time worker with regular hours who doesn't finish before 5pm, and prior to the pandemic I had little difficulty locating an evening Mass to attend on weekdays. Since the churches have re-opened however, I have found to my dismay that there is now a dearth of evening Masses (7pm-7.30pm) in Dublin city. At present daily Mass times are mostly scheduled in the

morning, and thus seem exclusively geared to the retired and elderly. I wonder why this is? I feel it's unintentionally unfair on those of us who are not available to attend during the daytime. Where I live there are at least eight churches within a few kilometres. Would it not be possible for each of them to schedule one evening Mass on different days to each other Monday to Friday? I

presume I am not the only day time worker in Dublin who would welcome the opportunity to attend Mass after work, so there is no reason in my opinion why this type of arrangement could not be rolled out in various areas of Dublin

*Yours etc.,  
Anne Lardner  
Kimmage, Dublin 12*

### Objections to women's ordination in Killala

**Dear Editor,** The back story to this story [Bishop to send report on 'hot button' issues to Rome, The Irish Catholic 21/10/2021] is that Bishop Fleming also took a submission from objectors to women's ordination. Bishop Fleming corrected the original thinking behind the proposal for women's ordination through a lecture presented by a Jesuit who stated that feminist ideology, indeed any ideology, has no place in the formation of the People of God or in the direction the Church takes. The submission from objectors was also shared with the Irish bishops' conference, Papal Nuncio and the Vatican dicastery responsible for overseeing the listening process.

*Yours etc.,  
Jane Campbell  
Ballina, Co. Mayo*



### Paganism should not be imposed on St Brigid's Day

**Dear Editor,** For the proposed extra public holiday, I appeal to this Government to take their hands off St Brigid's Day. St Brigid is a patron saint in Ireland whose feast has always been observed by Catholics and by Protestants, too, perhaps. This day, with us for so long is embedded in our Christian culture.

A heavy media campaign is in progress to make February 1 a public holiday. Enthusiasts are regularly on RTÉ eulogising a goddess, and certain presenters are cheerleading this drive to impose the pagan on the feast day, for the new holiday.

The pagan is the deity Brigit, which some pagan perspectives present as an

entity that is interchangeable with St Brigid or that the two are one, which we know is heresy. She is described by followers as the fire goddess of the Tuatha Dé Danann, deity of the Imbolc and of the mystical magical world of the underworld and more.

St Brigid's Day cannot be replaced by or shared with a goddess of the occult.

We must resist demands to impose a pagan from the underworld on a feast that belongs to the largest Christian Church in the world. This has left me feeling hurt, harassed and marginalised. It is an attack on my religion.

*Yours etc.,  
Mary Reynolds  
Dublin 6*

### Catholics can celebrate Halloween in a Christian way

**Dear Editor,** Although I agree somewhat with Fr Richard O'Connor [The Irish Catholic - October 28, 2021] who expressed concern about Halloween's focus being on dressing up as witches, demons etc. rather than the saints, I think Paula McKeown from Living Church also made some excellent points in the same article.

While we can try to put an emphasis on dressing as saints and learning about them around Halloween, it does not mean Catholic children can't do both while not be driven towards the demonic!

Mrs McKeown says we should trust parents, their approach to Halloween

can be "with a sense of fun, but we can always draw children into the right traditions". She says Halloween can also be a teaching moment for children, bringing up discussion about life and death and schooling them in the Faith.

It is certainly true however that Halloween has a darker side. It's a time when people might be drawn towards the dark side through Ouija boards, seances and things like that but carving a few pumpkins and dressing up as your favourite superhero certainly are not things that will endanger young people.

Furthermore, Catholics should not

retreat from society but lead the way in showing how celebrations like Halloween can be done in a Christian way and that does not necessarily mean everyone dressing up as saints, which although would be wonderful, perhaps is unrealistic in an increasingly secular society. There could be uproar in some Catholic schools if it was mandated children only dress as saints, as it would exclude children of other faiths and no faith.

*Yours etc.,  
Mary O'Donnell  
Blanchardstown, Dublin*

## facebook community

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

### Call for Catholic schools to ditch 'occult' Halloween celebrations

I could not agree more. It horrifies me to see the children coming into school with axes in their heads and ghoulish masks and blood all over. Over recent years I have seen an occult element coming in. In our church group children dress up as their favourite saints and it is so beautiful to see them.

– **Deirdre Nic Eanruig**

Fully agree, they should be taught the difference between Halloween and its demonic practices and the victory of the cross of Jesus Christ. – **John Corcoran**

I hated this when we had the children in school. I couldn't understand why parents dressed their children up as the devil or other evil characters. Very disturbing because the children would often go into character then too. – **Aoife de Clár**

It's an ancient pagan festival, nothing to do with Christianity. It's for fun, mine always went as characters from favourite books or movies. All grown now... Fun times. – **Breda Eiffe**

It's more for the parents now than the kids. I see more parents dressed up now than the kids. No fear of them bringing the children to Mass. – **Daragh Harmon**

First of all, lots of parents bring children to Mass. Secondly, most children dress up as Disney princesses or super heroes like Batman or Spider-Man, ninjas, pirates, yes and witches too. Older children don't really bother. I can see no harm when they know it's just make believe. However Jesus is real. That's all they need to know, in my opinion. – **Eadaoin Goggin Delaney**

### We need to invite people back to Mass

I think Christmas Church celebrations should be well advertised within the community and each of us should be aware of the importance of the nativity, I have always found Christmas morning so very special. The birth of Christ, our most important feast. – **Deirdre Quinn**

Best decision I ever made during these uncertain times has been to return to Mass. It has given me huge peace of mind. – **Thomas O'Mahony**

Then churches need to reopen with traditional times back. – **Margaret Kelly**

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

### The Church is not a democracy

**Dear Editor,** Before priests and religious go headlong into changing the Church, perhaps, first they should see if the synod ends up attracting extremist feminists/liberals/atheists who want the Church to follow them, rather than they follow it?

As has often been said the Church is not a democracy, but it seems to be the case with religious pro-modernists that "all the Church is out of step except us".

*Yours etc.,  
Brid Fitzpatrick  
Terenure, Dublin*

### Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

# 📷 Around the world



▲ **VATICAN:** A child touches Pope Francis' face during his general audience in the Paul VI hall. Photos: CNS.

◀ **SUDAN:** Demonstrators march and chant at a protest during what the information ministry is calling a military coup in Atbara.

**USA:** A man and young woman walk through floodwaters near a submerged vehicle along Maryland's Chesapeake Bay.



**MEXICO:** Migrants in Huixtla rest as they join a caravan heading to Mexico City.



**SCOTLAND:** Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, arrives for the UN Climate Change Conference, COP26, in Glasgow, November 1.



**LEBANON:** A man holding a Rosary joins supporters of the Christian Lebanese Forces party during a protest in Maarab.

# Including a loved one in heaven

**“T**o tell someone, with fullness of heart, ‘I love you’, is virtually the same as saying, ‘You shall never die.’ Twentieth century philosopher Gabriel Marcel wrote those words and they echo words written 500 years earlier by Blessed Magdalen Panattieri, a Dominican Tertiary, who wrote to a friend, “I could not be happy in heaven if you were not there too.” Moreover, both Marcel and Panattieri echo words spoken by Jesus 2,000 years ago: “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

**“We have the power to tell God that our heaven needs to include a loved one”**

What does it mean to ‘bind and loose’? Among other things, it means that as a Christians, as members of the Body of Christ, like Jesus when he walked this earth, we have the power to dispense God’s mercy and forgiveness and be a salvific cord that connects others to God’s family. If someone is connected to us, she is connected to Christ and to the community of salvation.

In previous writings, I used this example as an illustration. Imagine you have a child, a spouse, or a friend who is not going to church and is indifferent or hostile to religion. She has seemingly cut herself off from the community of faith.



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

However, as long as you love that person (and she doesn’t reject your love) she cannot be lost. As long as a bond of love exists between her and you, she is connected to the Body of Christ and to the community of salvation, and this is what Gabriel Marcel meant when he says that to say to another ‘I love you’ is to say to him or her: ‘You shall never die.’

## Challenged

Almost every time I have written on this, I have been challenged on its orthodoxy (though never by a professional theologian or a bishop). Invariably, the challenge comes in one of two ways. One group voices this objection: “How can you say this? Only Christ has the power to do this!” Ironically, that answers its own question. It’s true, only Christ has the power to do this, but we are the body of Christ. It’s Christ, not we, who are

doing this. A second group objects by saying that they simply find the concept incredulous: “How can this be true? If it were true, it would be too good to be true!” But, isn’t that in fact an apt description of the incarnation? It’s simply too good to be true! The incarnation gives us that power and consequently, like Blessed Magdalen Panattieri, we have the power to tell God that our heaven needs to include a loved one.

**“Imagine you have a child, a spouse, or a friend who is not going to church and is indifferent or hostile to religion”**

Perhaps a more serious challenge is this. To whom exactly was this power given? Wasn’t it given

explicitly to Peter, as the Vicar of Christ, and by extension to the institutional Church in its sacramental powers, as opposed to it being given to every sincere Christian?

## Matthew

A first glance at Matthew’s Gospel (chapter 16) would seem to indicate that it was given exclusively to Peter. Here is its context: Peter had just made a powerful confession of faith, saying to Jesus, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” In reply, Jesus says to him, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my community. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

So are binding and loosing reserved exclusively for Peter? No, rather through Peter it is given to the whole Church and to everyone who makes the same confession of faith he did. It’s given to everyone who confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God because it’s this confession of faith and love that makes for “the rock”

that no power, including hell itself, can prevail against. When we make the same confession of faith Peter made, we too become the rock, with power to bind and loose.

**“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven”**

In making a confession of faith, we become members of the Body of Christ and then, just as was the case with Jesus when he walked the earth, when people touch us they are touching Christ. Moreover, as Jesus assures us, “whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works”. (John 14, 12)

## Ultimate power

Love is the ultimate power within life. God is love, and in the end there will only be love. Already at a purely human level, outside of any faith considerations, we sense its power, as something that can ultimately withstand everything. Love is the rock! This is doubly the case when it happens inside the incarnation. Love is the rock on which Jesus built his Church. Hence, when we love someone and he or she responds to our love, being members of Christ’s body gives us the power to say, my heaven includes this loved one.

**“We have the power to dispense God’s mercy and forgiveness and be a salvific cord that connects others to God’s family”**

# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, November 4, 2021

## Personal Profile

The profound effect of Irish monasticism

Page 42



# Memento mori this November



People in Derio, Spain, visit a cemetery November 1, All Saints' Day.

**T**he leaves continue to fall from the trees as nature uses the rest of autumn to prepare for winter, a fitting natural symbol of death, which is at the forefront of Catholic minds in the month of November. November is the month traditionally associated with the dead, both those in Heaven and those whose salvation is being worked out in purgatory. All Saints' Day is followed by All Souls' Day, and both are intended, at least in part, to orient our minds to things eternal.

The benefits to the souls in purgatory of our attention and prayers is obvious, and while the saints in Heaven don't need our prayers, there is certainly value for us in their intercession. What then is the point in remembering our own death?



**The Catholic Church has always embraced meditation on death, and November is the month most associated with that, writes Jason Osborne**

### Memento mori

*Memento mori* means 'remember your death' or 'remember you must die', and this exhortation has a long history in Catholicism. Saints have long extolled the benefits of reflecting and meditating on death, and the Church has traditionally set aside this month to help us do just that, a practice as much ingrained in many cultures as it is in the Church at this stage. St Alphonsus Liguori famously

encouraged the Faithful to "embrace death" to fulfil God's will, and said that such a step would "assuredly" see us die saints.

To go even further, the Bible itself encourages such contemplation. Psalm 90:12 says, "So teach us to number our days/ that we may get a heart of wisdom". It is in this that the highest value of this meditation is to be found: reflection on death, on the limited span of our lives, informs us regarding how to live

properly here and now. It helps us to receive the time we've been allotted as a gift, rather than as an endless resource to be plundered.

Cardinal Sarah's frequent collaborator, French author and journalist Nicolas Diat, wrote a book on the centrality of *memento mori* to the monastic lifestyle. *A Time to Die: Monks on the Threshold of Eternal Life*, saw Mr Diat travel to eight of Europe's most remarkable monasteries, such as the Carthusian Grande Chartreuse in France, to interview the monks about their attitudes towards death and the end of life.

The overwhelming impression they gave was that of humility in the face of death, acknowledging that they are encountering a foe that cannot

be fought, only submitted to, trusting in God's mercy. As such, the tradition of *memento mori* continues to thrive and instruct at the beating heart of the Church today.

A key observation the monks make is that much of the western world today is terrified of death, and so it is pushed out of view, solely into the corridors of hospitals and hospices. *Memento mori* encourages the Faithful to face up to the fact that, sooner or later, each of us will die. Rather than being a macabre or morbid fascination, it is a helpful tool to help us to live better lives, closer to those God intended for us. How is this to be incorporated into a life in proper, Catholic spirit?

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## Family News



### AND EVENTS

#### SELF-DRIVING RACE CARS MAKE HISTORY IN INDIANAPOLIS

The winner was not a driver but an algorithm at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, where the top car clocked an average speed of 218km/h, ushering autonomous vehicles into a new era.

Setting the record pace over two laps, a team from the Technical University of Munich (TUM) won a \$1m prize in the first Indy Autonomous Challenge, an event dedicated to self-driving cars.

Their car beat EuroRacing, another European team who fell to a coding mistake by one of their student engineers despite securing the fastest lap time ever recorded for an autonomous car, at 223km/h.

EuroRacing's Dallara IL-15 had been programmed to run five laps instead of the six scheduled for every competitor and therefore slowed down during its final drive around the oval, bringing down the average speed.

"I have a bitter taste in my mouth," said Marko Bertogna, professor at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia in Italy and EuroRacing team head.

#### MADRID TAKEN OVER BY HUNDREDS OF SHEEP FOR ANNUAL FESTIVAL

The streets of Madrid were filled with sheep and the clanking of bells as shepherds guided their flocks through the heart of the Spanish capital, following ancient seasonal herding routes.

Locals lined the route to welcome back the spectacle, which was cancelled last year because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The annual event, which started in 1994, allows shepherds to exercise their right to use traditional routes to herd their livestock from northern Spain to more southerly pastures for winter grazing.

The route would have taken them through quiet countryside a few centuries ago, but today sees them traverse the busy city.

"It's marvellous. I come every year and this is the first year I've brought the children so it's amazing," said Graciela Gonzalez, 39.

The sheep walked to the sound of their jangling neck bells. Shepherds dressed in traditional dress accompanied their flocks with folk music and dancing.

#### START-UP LAUNCHES €585,000 HOVERBIKE IN JAPAN

A Japanese start-up is hoping to convince motorists to swap their cars for a €585,000 hoverbike, the BBC reports.

ALI Technologies' XTurismo Limited Edition went on sale in Japan last week.

Electronics giant Mitsubishi and footballer Keisuke Honda are two backers of the Tokyo-based company.

ALI Technologies says the hoverbike can fly for 40 minutes at up to 100km/h (62mph) on a single charge.

The company aims to have manufactured 200 single-rider 300kg (47-stone) hoverbikes by mid-2022.

Each is equipped with a conventional engine and four battery-powered motors.

"Until now, the choice has been to move on the ground or at scale in the sky," ALI Technologies chief executive Daisuke Katano said.

"We hope to offer a new method of movement."

# Young Catholics: let others know the joy of faith



A young woman I was talking to thought it would be difficult to ask her four friends, who are atheists, to accompany her into the church to light a candle. She's Catholic, while they don't believe in God; the presumption might be that such an invitation would be rejected. It's a pretty regular concern when you're a Catholic: do you bring up the importance of your faith among your non-Catholic or more secular friends or do you hide your light under a bushel? I spotted a post on the social network, Reddit, where a contributor was wondering how she would tell her friends that she's Catholic. She'd recently returned to practising her faith and was worried about how to introduce this key change in her life. She felt that she didn't want to alter the old dynamics but knew things wouldn't be exactly as before either. In these types of situations, you could be tempted to follow the path of least resistance and live some version of a double life, remaining safely in the spiritual harbour instead of risking having to go against the tide.

November's a great month giving us an opportunity to remember all those who have died. After the sugary excesses of Halloween, it may seem like full speed ahead to Christmas but, the month of November, the Month of the Holy Souls, is the time to focus on our dearly departed, to think about them and to pray for them. We visit our loved one's graves and the Church encourages us to pray for the dead by granting special indulgences. This time of contemplating the souls in purgatory is also a good time to reflect upon death in general. It's not something a lot of



## A parent's perspective Maria Byrne

us like to ponder on too often but, a realisation that our time on earth is fleeting may urge us on in our efforts to live better lives. Part of living a Christian life and trying to run the good race is having the courage to leave the comfort of the harbour. There's a well-worn metaphor that a ship is safest in port but that's not what ships are built for.

**“St Dominic Savio died at the tender age of 14 but, in his short life, he always strived to win his friends over with gentleness and friendliness”**

November also contains one of my favourite feast days, the Feast of All Saints. While struggling to live our Catholicism in an increasingly secular society, the exemplary lives of so many saints is a real inspiration to us. They too shared many of the challenges and obstacles that we face; they weren't lofty, distant figures with lives we could never hope to aspire to.

They knew what it was like to face uphill battles. St Francis de Sales went on a perilous journey to restore the Catholic Faith to an area where it had been outlawed. St Martin de Porres overcame rejection and discrimination and didn't let the difficulties of his life interfere with his kindness and compassion. St Dominic Savio died at

the tender age of 14 but, in his short life, he always strived to win his friends over with gentleness and friendliness. In more recent times we have the great example of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati who died in 1925 when he was only 24. A great role model for young Catholics today, he endured many



of the very ordinary problems that any young man or woman might face. His parents weren't particularly devout but this didn't deter Pier and he became a daily communicant as well as performing many great works of charity. He proclaimed "Jesus comes to visit me each morning in Holy Communion. I return his visit to him in the poor." Just in the last few days, we had the beatification of Sandra Sabattini, a 22-year-old woman who spent her short life helping the poor and people with disabilities before being tragically killed by a car in 1984. In the year before she died, she wrote in her journal about loving deeply the minutes you live and feeling the joy in the present moment. This

lived joy that Blessed Sandra experienced is the type of joy that will attract others to the Catholic Faith. When she was 16 she wrote that she couldn't oblige others to think like her, she could only let them know her joy. St Teresa of Calcutta said that "peace begins with a smile" - bringing love and peace with something as simple as a smile spreads the love of God to others.

**“We have a great friend in Jesus and also in the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the saints”**

In a reply to the Reddit post, one Catholic suggested "All you have to do is continue being a good friend", also saying "You can convert through example in the long run" urging the worried poster to "Pray and move forward with trust in God and love for your friends." My son is a religion teacher in a boys' secondary school. He told me that he wants to communicate to the children that we're all called to be saints and that the path to sainthood is our ordinary, everyday lives. In our ordinary lives, it takes courage, as well as kindness, to be upfront and open about the cause of our faith, our hope, our joy and our love. We have a great friend in Jesus and also in the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the saints. What good friend would possess the greatest treasure of all, the love of God and the promise of everlasting joy in heaven, and keep this great news a secret?

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### Visits to cemeteries

Married to a Polish woman as I am, I'm aware of the central tradition in Poland of visiting cemeteries frequently, and most especially on the feasts of All Saints and All Souls, and throughout November. On the two big feasts marking death, thousands upon thousands of people flock to the cemeteries, and illuminate the gravesides with candles and lanterns, keeping vigil and praying for the souls of the dead.

“Simple acts such as tending to the grave and praying at the graveside are good ways to continue to love the dead, whether they be family, friend or stranger”

My own family make frequent trips to the nearby cemetery to take care of the family grave and spend some time in reflection or prayer, and I've come to learn the significance of such an activity. Catholicism insists on the importance of the physical, and visiting cemeteries and continuing to care for the dead is a very effective way to *memento mori* in your own life.

Simple acts such as tending to the grave and praying at the graveside are good ways to continue to love the dead, whether they be family, friend or stranger. As is suggested by the tradition of *memento mori*, these concrete acts for the dead at cemeteries give us a greater respect and regard for life everywhere – which is essential at all times and in all places.

### Considering our use of time

*Memento mori* brings to mind the scarcity of our time in this life, which seems to slip away like leaves off trees in autumn. Every moment, good and bad, is a brief flash in the span of our whole lives – although we also don't know how long those lives could be. We could live another five, 10, 15, 20 to 50 years, depending on our age. It's simply unknowable.

However, there is an extra dimension for Catholics – we know that what we do with our time is of eternal significance. These considerations should prompt us to reevaluate how we spend our time. Do I spend too much time browsing social media or watching TV, and not enough with the precious people I'm surrounded by? Do I lie in bed until midday at the weekend, week after week? This isn't to say that we shouldn't relax or take some time off, just to say that



Altar servers are pictured in a file photo leading a procession through a cemetery in celebration of All Saints' Day in Schliersee, Germany. Photos: CNS.

*memento mori* very much compels us to reconsider how we spend our time, and whether it's sufficiently good and meaningful.

### Reignite your Faith

All times are perfect for taking back up the Faith and its practices if you're flagging, but November is ideally suited to this. The whole point, as discussed, of *memento mori* is to remember the temporary nature of this life, that it might propel you on to remembrance of God and Heaven.

“We all go through spiritually 'dry' spells and it can be difficult to focus on what's deep and meaningful rather than on what's cheap and easy sometimes”

When we examine our own lives, more often than not, we realise that there's a lot of fluff that could be cut out – to our own benefit. Excessive (and that's the key word) internet browsing, TV, or video games could be replaced with a Holy Hour, mental prayer, spiritual reading, a family rosary, reading the Bible or going to Mass. We all go through spiritually 'dry' spells and it can be difficult to focus on what's deep and meaningful rather than on what's cheap and easy sometimes.

However, if *memento mori* teaches us anything, it's that in the end, we'll be so happy we made the effort.

# Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



It is the most natural thing in the world for parents to want to pass on their values and way of life to their children. This is how cultures survive. Yet in Ireland, what was once the traditional way of life is in danger of disappearing.

The beliefs which underpinned the traditional Irish way of life are increasingly under assault by both the Irish State and the wider culture. The State's new ideas of right and wrong are increasingly at odds with what were, for centuries, the core values of the Irish people. There is a cultural chasm opening up between those who wish to continue living in ways that chime with the traditional Irish way of life, and those who have constructed a radically new Irish culture and identity – one which comes complete with a totally revised belief system and even a brand-new accent.

It's jarring to arrive in a village in West Cork and to find yourself surrounded by people who speak and act in ways completely at odds with how Irish people have traditionally behaved. At certain times of year, the more materialistic elements of what is often termed the 'D4 crowd' arrive and overwhelm certain places. Such loud-mouthed, ostentatious displays of status-seeking are completely at odds with the traditional values and way of life in Ireland. It provides a sharp contrast with the way people still act in rural Ireland.

A certain friendly humility and a kindly sense of fellow feeling have long been the hallmarks of the Irish people. The show-off conduct of a certain type of visiting American once stood out as noticeably foreign. Yet nowadays we have Irish citizens with quasi-American accents behaving in the very same way. The same people will pass others dead-eyed on a remote path and not return a greeting. I remember hiking in Germany in the 1990s and being amazed that people would just walk silently past each other on quiet rural ways. In Ireland, the humanity of the other person was always acknowledged, but not by this new Irish culture.

Irish society is dividing culturally, and we are rapidly becoming foreigners to one

another. The earthy Christian morality which infused Irish culture for centuries is now in reality a minority faith. Catholicism is particularly hated by the new, ascendant Irish culture. The Irish State is rapidly embracing this new way of being and all its fashionable causes.



The new Ireland prioritises wealth at all costs and sees faith as a dangerous superstition. It imitates the secular morality of other Western countries, which Ireland was obstinately slow to adopt for centuries.

The Irish State is making moves to control what schools with a Christian ethos can teach children about morality. The State now has very different ideas to those traditionally held in Ireland across all the usual hot topics of divorce, abortion, transgenderism and so on. The demands for the removal of religious ethos from schools grow louder by the day. The State wants to teach Irish children its new creed. Competing ideologies wish to mould children according to their ideas. Ireland's culture war is undecided, but it is underway nonetheless.

Irish religion teachers warn that kids who practise faith are now inordinately subject to bullying. Anything resembling traditional values are anathema. Yet the new Irish culture has a profound weakness. It is following the same demographic pattern of all western countries which have embraced those same precepts. Ireland's birth rate has collapsed to 1.6 children per woman.

Yet across those swathes of rural Ireland where something resembling the traditional way of life still prevails, families of three and four children are still the norm. Many of those children can see that the old way of life has a beauty, which is deeply rooted in time and place. The future of the indigenous Irish way of life depends on whether our children will carry on that way of life. The question is which of the two Irelands will have the greater allure to them in the decades ahead. The answer will decide the future of our culture. No wonder there is such a battle brewing for our control of our children's schools.

# The profound effect of Irish monasticism

## Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

When Dr Alex O'Hara visited Clonmacnoise as an eleven-year-old, he could hardly have known that it would be a life-defining moment. But looking back now, the professor of early Church history and Irish monasticism knows that this visit and another to a monastery in Normandy had a "profound effect" on him.

Dr O'Hara's faith was nourished from a young age by his mother and grandmothers, after his father died when he was two-years-old.

**“Another aspect of his young life that was to have a lasting effect was visits he paid as a young boy to ancient Christian sites connected with Irish monastics”**

“I would say my faith was really transmitted through my mother and grandmothers from a young age,” Dr O'Hara explains, “the women in my family. My father died when I was two – I remember being at another funeral when I was six and seeing a dead body for the first time – at that age, you begin to wonder. I think that experience of death at a young age had an impact.”

As well as the faith that was passed on to him by his mother, Dr O'Hara says he was lucky to have a number of good religion teachers in school: “I was very lucky in



Alexander O'Hara.

primary school in Galway to have two fantastic religion teachers. A laywoman called Miriam Costello and Dara Mannion... And then I was an altar boy for a while and there was one particular priest in Dublin who was a very dynamic and young priest, and he had a positive influence on me.”

Another aspect of his young life that was to have a lasting effect was visits he paid as a young boy to ancient Christian sites connected with Irish monastics.

“I always had an interest in monastic sites,” Dr O'Hara remembers. “It was because my mother brought me to Clonmacnoise for my birthday and stuff like that... I think places like Clonmacnoise, Glendalough, they really had an influence on me. There was a sense of what TS Elliot would call ‘where prayer has been valid’. There was still a sense of peace, of tranquillity, and just the deep richness of the Faith in these places.”

## Remarkable

“When I was nine, we did a trip – it was organised through the Friends of St Brendan and *The Irish Times* – to Normandy. It was 1989, so the centenary of the French Revolution, and we visited a lot of the monasteries in the north of France associated with the Irish. It was really remarkable.

“Jung would call it synchronicity or whatever, the Holy Spirit really, but later on when I was working on my book for Oxford University Press on Jonas of Bobbio, biographer of St Columbanus, I went to stay in Saint Wandrille in Normandy for a few days when I was researching the book on Jonas, and there was a *deja vu* moment where I went, I've been here before.

“I came as a nine-year-old and it was my first experience of Gregorian chant, in the Benedictine community, and at the time it had a profound impact on me as a young boy. I remember crying after hearing

the monks. There was something sad and very beautiful about the chant. I asked my mother who are these strange men with their funny haircuts and dressed in black. I found it really bizarre. But something about the beauty of the chant struck me. And then in 2013, I ended up going back there as a historian, it was incredible really.”

Between the two trips, Dr O'Hara's life had begun to take shape. He studied in St Andrew's University, Scotland, where at the chaplaincy – for which he eventually served as warden – he found a “vibrant Catholic community”. It was also here that he began to study medieval history under the well-known English Medievalist Robert Bartlett, and on his holidays he went to a Benedictine abbey for retreats.

After a year in Oxford, he returned to St Andrews to do a PhD on the biographer of St Columbanus: “I ended up going to Vienna then after my PhD. I worked in the Austrian Academy of Sciences, but I had felt

the pull to monastic life from my mid-20s. Once I had finished up my academic projects in Vienna, I was 34 at the time, I decided to go back to Ireland. I always wanted to return.

“I came back in 2016, having been away for 16 years. I returned to enter Glenstal Abbey as a Benedictine monk, from October 2016. I completed the novitiate, the one-year novitiate, and I took simple vows, before deciding to leave in 2018.

**“Someone reached out to me last summer and asked me if I would like to apply for this role as national director for catechetics”**

“Again, that was a very important experience. It certainly deepened my faith, I'm still friends with many of the community there. That was quite tough once I'd made that decision to leave. It was a big decision going in and a big decision leaving.”

Afterwards he worked for the Loyola Institute in Trinity University, lecturing and continuing his research. This year, he organised a series of online lectures to mark the 1500th anniversary of St Columba of Jonás birth. Now, however, he is beginning a new chapter of his life as national director for catechetics for the Irish bishops' conference, responsible for coordinating Catholic religious education and faith formation on behalf of the Council for Catechetics.

“Someone reached out to me last summer and asked me if I would like to apply for this role as national director for catechetics. I wasn't aware of the role at the time. I said yeah sure, and that's it basically. I finished up my work with the Loyola Institute and began my current appointment as national director. I'm very excited by it... I'm also quite hopeful.”



## Children's Corner

Chai Brady

# Have a ball of a time exploring energy

Energy is constantly changing forms and transferring between objects. There are many forms of energy, a few science whizzes may have heard of what is known as the law of conservation of energy: “Energy can neither be created nor destroyed – only converted from one form of energy to another.” Why don't we explore ‘kinetic’ energy? This is the energy an object has due to its motion. Try seeing for yourself how this works. Use two balls to transfer kinetic energy from a big ball to a smaller one and see what happens!

### Apparatus

- A large, heavy ball such as a basketball or soccer ball.
- A smaller, light ball such as a tennis ball or inflatable rubber ball.

### Method

1. Make sure you're outside with plenty of room.
2. Carefully put the tennis ball on top of the

basketball, holding one hand under the basketball and the other on top of the tennis ball while standing up.

3. Let go of both the balls at exactly the same time and observe what happens.



If you dropped the balls at the same time, the tennis ball should bounce off the basketball and fly high into the air. They will hit each other just after hitting the ground. Afterwards, a lot of the kinetic energy in the larger basketball is transferred through to the smaller tennis ball, sending it high into the air.

While you held the balls in the air before dropping them, they had another type of energy called ‘potential energy’. The balls gained this through the effort it took you to lift the balls up, and it is interesting to note what was mentioned earlier, that energy is never lost, only transferred into other kinds of energy.

Balls used in sport generally bounce, whether that is the basketball or the tennis ball used in this experiment. When either of them falls, they

initially gain speed – known as kinetic energy. Upon reaching Earth, it collides with our incredibly large planet which is at rest (well sort of but that is another story!).

When the ball slows down it deforms temporarily before bouncing back up as the air in the ball acts like a spring – it compresses and expands again. During the collision, some of the ball's energy is converted into heat. As a consequence, the ball shoots up with less energy than it had when it reached Earth. Our planet, being so massive, does not move as a result of the collision.

As witnessed due to the experiment, the heavy ball reaches the earth with more energy as kinetic energy is proportional to the mass of the object. However, it may not bounce as high as the smaller ball as, due to its mass, it needs more energy to reach a specific height. Why not try this experiment with different sports balls and see what happens? We know now that when two balls collide, they exchange energy, but how will balls with different masses react with one another?

# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## When journalists become activists they let the side down

Crossing lines that shouldn't be crossed has caused unnecessary conflict and division, has fractured social discourse and has damaged our trust in institutions and people.

When a journalist is interviewed on a controversial topic, you expect them at least to try and be impartial, even if you know where their sympathies lie. My admiration of their professionalism grows when I see them keeping that neutrality despite their strong opinions. I hoped that might happen when journalist Susan McKay was interviewed by Áine Lawlor on *Morning Ireland* (RTÉ Radio One, Thursday). I was disappointed. She was discussing the current abortion situation in the North and was hugely partisan, coming across as more of a campaigner. Even worse, she wasn't challenged on her views. You'd think a pro-life perspective didn't even exist – it is increasingly erased from public debate. The presenter described the situation – that in Northern Ireland abortion was “legal but not available”. Ms McKay showed her true colours when she described the current UK abortion regime as “very humane”! Surely that deserved a challenge, even something as minimal as “some would say that abortion is not humane”. Also disturbing was her dissat-



Áine Lawlor didn't challenge Susan McKay's characterisation of the abortion issue in the North.

isfaction with distinctions being made in law between fatal and severe but non-fatal foetal ‘impairment’ – diagnosis was difficult (as pro-lifers have always argued but with different conclusions). She favoured having the option to terminate in both situations – no reference to any time limit. She was critical of Sinn Féin for not voting against a unionist motion to rule out that repulsive outcome. There was no challenge from the interviewer, no attempt to suggest that another viewpoint even existed.

### Challenged

Later Áine Lawlor interviewed Sinn Féin's leader in the North, deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill. She was challenged – but on why she wasn't more supportive of the move to broaden the grounds for abortion. It was the party position, she said, not to support abortion in cases of non-fatal foetal abnormality, so that North and South would be aligned. Judging by past experience I suspect it won't be that long before this policy will be ‘evolved’ to suit. It has long

seemed incongruous to me that Sinn Féin would support the British government in imposing abortion ‘services’ – what she euphemistically called ‘compassionate healthcare’.

### Crossed

That same morning, on *It Says in the Papers* there were reports from *The Irish Times* of other lines being crossed – protests at the private houses of politicians and media figures, apparently by those opposed to Covid-19 vaccinations. Names of those targeted included Health Minister Stephen Donnelly and broadcasters Joe Duffy and Pat Kenny. If protests are to be made let them be made peacefully and respectfully at institutions or offices, away from private houses and families and even children who can understandably feel intimidated.

The problem is that activists feel that their cause is so righteous that crossing these lines is justified, with disregard for justice or wise judgement. Sometimes the temptation to cross lines is understandable to a degree. I find myself increasingly annoyed by Pat Kenny going on and on about ‘the unvaccinated’, as if they were ‘the walking dead’ or afflicted with leprosy. To me this comes across as demonisation and he's not the only one at it. The presenters of current affairs programmes

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### MASS

RTE One Sunday November 7, 11.00am

Fr Séamus Madigan, Head Chaplain of the Irish Defence Forces, celebrates Mass with the Arbour Hill faith community. Music by Susan, Sally and Claire Keane, with piper Private Seán Maher.

#### SCOTLAND'S SACRED ISLANDS WITH BEN FOGLE

BBC One Sunday November 7, 11.30am

At the end of his spiritual journey across Scotland's sacred isles, Ben Fogle meets Orthodox nun Mother Mary, who lives a solitary life of prayer and contemplation in this very remote place.

#### FILM: DOUBT

TG4 Monday November 8, 9.30pm

(2008) Starring Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Amy Adams. Directed by John Patrick Shanley. A Catholic school principal questions a priest's ambiguous relationship with a troubled young student.

should be more neutral, teasing out the issues rather than teasing the protagonists. Recently he described those who argue against the vaccinations as “the crazies” – wholly inappropriate for a presenter. His position is a privilege and should not be used for flying personal kites, especially if divisive and inflammatory. On *The Pat Kenny Show* (Newstalk, Thursday), in a discussion with Stephen Donnelly, he was lecturing the minister – “tell the unvaccinated people – stay at home...why give them any quarter!” He likened it to the cocooning of the early days and clarified he was not talking about those who couldn't take the vaccine for medical reasons, but thankfully the minister

was still more in favour of engagement. I write all this as one who currently finds the case for vaccination compelling.

Finally, it was groundbreaking to have Pope Francis deliver *Thought for the Day* (BBC Radio 4, Friday). He pursued his theme of creation and our ‘common home’, but while acknowledging the challenges of climate change it was positive and forward-looking. He saw “a brighter horizon” and hoped the COP26 gathering would bring “concrete hope to future generations”.

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# Film

Aubrey Malone



## From Princess of Wales to Queen of Hearts

The late lamented Princess Diana is once again centre stage in *Spencer*. Featuring Kristen Stewart in the title role, it's set at Christmas in the 1990s. She spends a traumatic weekend with the Royal family at Queen Elizabeth's Sandringham estate.

It's a speculative piece by the great Pablo Larrain, allowing him to re-visit the terrain he explored so well in *Jackie*, another film about a sensitive woman (Jacqueline Kennedy) in high society. Jackie loved a man who died. Diana doesn't love one who's living. It's a different kind of crisis.

*Spencer* catches her at a time when her marriage to Prince Charles (Jack Farthing) has crumbled. She's stuck with the arid formality of the

Royals as she tries to make sense of a kind of schizoid life. “There has to be two of you,” Charles tells her.

“Will they kill me, do you think?” she enquires despairingly. In the time of Henry the Eighth they probably would have. In a post-Henry era, instead of being sent to the Tower for her sins, the world listened to her plight and took her to its heart. The rest is history – or herstory.

Kristen doesn't really look like Princess Di but then neither did Naomi Watts who played her in *Diana* in 2013. Both are also too short. But with the right expressions, tilt of the head etc. you can get over these things. Neither does Jack Farthing look like Charles. The best like-



Kristen Stewart is Princess Diana in the film *Spencer*.

ness is Stella Gonet as Queen Elizabeth.

The film will no doubt re-ignite speculation about Diana's trials and tribula-

tions. There have been a number of documentaries on her already this year, the 25th anniversary of her death. Coming on the

heels of *The Crown* and the cringe-inducing *Diana: The Musical*, one wonders if there's anything left to say about the woman who died in 1997 after her car crashed into a pillar in Paris. Maybe we should let her rest in peace.

*Nine Perfect Strangers*, a mini-series now streaming on Amazon Prime, explores different kinds of traumas. It has Nicole Kidman as the owner of a luxurious Wellness Centre where people suffering from all sorts of problems (fraud, addiction, bereavement) arrive to get themselves sorted out.

They aren't long there before they realise Ms Kidman's definition of ‘wellness’ doesn't exactly jibe with

theirs. Is the cure worse than the disease? You betcha. It's high time someone did a satire on these extortionately-priced spas which often do little more than separate gullible people from their money.

A more authentic form of healing takes place in the delightful Swedish film *A Man Called Ove* (Alibris). It's about a cranky character who's suicidal over the death of his wife. He's soft underneath but we don't learn that until later. That makes it more effective.

The manner in which he comes to terms with his situation is handled with both humour and depth. This is a pro-life film with a big heart.



# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Fr Willie Doyle, pastor to the wounded, troubled and despairing

**Father William Doyle, A Year's Thoughts**  
edited by Alfred O'Rahilly  
(Te Deum Press, \$US16.95  
/€19.95)

J. Anthony Gaughan

This is a useful collection of prayerful reflections from the pen of Fr William Doyle, a spiritual leader who touched many souls during his career as a retreat-giver and for a long time after.

A Jesuit priest and military chaplain, he was born at Dalkey, Co. Dublin, on March 3, 1873. He was educated by the Rosminian Fathers at Ratcliffe College in Leicester City, England; joined the Society of Jesus in 1891 and was ordained in 1907.

Following his ordination, Fr Doyle spent nine years conducting retreats in religious houses and parishes throughout Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. At the outbreak of World War I in 1914 he volunteered to serve as a military chaplain and was posted to the Eighth Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers, Sixteenth (Irish) Division.

### Bravery

Soon after arriving in France, he gained a reputation for bravery. Present at the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, he was awarded the Military Cross for his assistance to casualties. He was killed in Flanders on August 16, 1917, while attending the dying and wounded at the fourth battle of Ypres. He was recommended posthumously for both the Victoria Cross and the DSO.

Among the ordinary soldiers, Catholic chaplains were greatly respected and admired as they always went forward to give the last rites when they could, sharing the risk the Tommies themselves underwent.

**“Fr Doyle spent nine years conducting retreats in religious houses and parishes throughout Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales”**

News of his untimely death was received with widespread regret and sorrow in Ireland where he was well-known because of the many years he spent conducting missions and retreats in parishes and religious houses.

Among those grieving was Alfred O'Rahilly. He was a year younger than Fr Doyle; he had also been a member of the Society of Jesus, though he had departed from it before he was due to be ordained. He had been a friend and admirer of Fr Doyle and he set out to write a biography of his hero.

Not long after he had begun this work a collection of spiritual journals and personal recollections, which Fr Doyle had written for his own use and guidance and which in normal



Fr William Doyle

circumstances would have been destroyed, became available. Those were given to Mr O'Rahilly by Fr Doyle's brother, Fr Charles Doyle, SJ. This material formed the greater and most valuable portion of the resultant book.

*Fr William Doyle, SJ: A Spiritual Study* was enormously popular. It went through numerous editions and was translated into German and French. As a result of Mr O'Rahilly's biography, Fr Doyle became the focus of popular devotion throughout Ireland, particularly in Dublin. For a period, he was even elevated to the status of an Irish icon by his generation. Later, in August 1938, the cause for his canonisation was proposed and the relevant documentation was sent to Rome.

### Request

In response to the request of readers of his biography of Fr Doyle, Mr O'Rahilly compiled *A Year's Thoughts* from Fr Doyle's letters, diaries and retreat notes. This was first published in 1930 and has now been reissued by a new Catholic press in the USA.

The pieces quoted have the unmistakable stamp of Ignatian spirituality. There are recurring themes such as the importance of dedication to duty, cheerfulness, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, Christ's Mercy, the necessity of prayer, *agere contra* (pushing back against the world and its temptations), the role of Mary in the spiritual life, the heroism of the saints and the 'last things'.

The chief merit of this publication is that it is a collection of the profound thoughts - at one and the same time inspiring and practical - of a totally committed follower of Christ. It may also help, or so admirers of Fr Willie hope, bring forward again his cause for sainthood.

**i** A blog about Fr Doyle at [www.fatherdoyle.com](http://www.fatherdoyle.com) is curated by Patrick Kenny, who is the editor of *To Raise the Fallen*, a collection of Fr Doyle's war letters and spiritual writings, published by Veritas.

**Natural revelation,  
from many angles,  
speaks to all  
humanity**

The essential relationship between humanity and the rest of nature.  
Photo: Christopher Moriarty.

**Every bush aflame: Science, God, and the natural world**  
by John Feehan  
(Veritas, €16.99/£14.61)

Dr Christopher Moriarty

**T**he first creation story in the Bible - the 'six day' account - is remarkable in being, in its essentials, a scientific document. Its writer observed nature and made deductions from his observations. Above all, he postulated the need for time and a logical order of events to create the universe as he knew it.

Only a relatively small number of believers give any credence to the literal accuracy of that account nowadays. Generations of scientists, over the course of some thousands of years, have added their observations and provided us with a very much

more detailed and credible account.

The scientists have created a vast body of knowledge on the nature of the universe, the structure and variety of objects - living and non-living - and how they work. The great question that pure science on its own doesn't approach, let alone answer, is 'Why?'

Many scientists, therefore, take the step of believing that there is no answer, it all happened by 'chance'. In parallel with them are a host of other philosophers, many scientists among them, who hold that the self-same universe is, equally, clear evidence of the existence of a conscious being, known throughout Christianity as God.

### Environmental

John Feehan is one such. A onetime lecturer in environmental science at University College Dublin (UCD), he

has written excellent books both on the material environment and the relationship between land and people with the Holy Spirit.

**“A central theme is the inter-connectedness of all material objects insofar as the ultimate building blocks of everything are quanta which are units of energy”**

His new book, *Every bush aflame*, is one such, inspired in part by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and, in part, by his own concern with current threats to biodiversity caused, by and large, by the achievements and

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.



activities of human beings— a species of animal among the latest to evolve.

Although this reviewer found it difficult to follow as a whole, this book can be acclaimed for its generous content of gems of thought and fact which make it an inspiration to dip into again and again.

### Central theme

A central theme is the inter-connectedness of all material objects insofar as the ultimate building blocks of everything are quanta, which are units of energy. Their nature is understood only by people with an uncommonly advanced grasp of mathematics.

A little easier to understand, if hard to explain, is the near certainty that all living things are directly related to each other. Life on earth was created once and once only. Expand this philosophically and realise that not only humans and the higher animals but every microscopic organism should be accounted as creatures of the God that we worship and

therefore worthy of a level of respect as fellow-beings.

This concept leads at a very much more appreciable level to the need for us to support the recently developed ideals of protecting the world from global warming and plant and animal species, known and unknown from extinction.

The author supports his argument by a wonderful presentation of facts about nature and relevant quotations from philosophers and poets, most of them with well-known names and personalities, but some, such as the writers of various Biblical psalms, are now totally anonymous to us.

A pleasing note to end on in the context of respect for nature is the reminder of the belief of St Francis in our brotherhood with birds and beasts and the less well-known traditions of similar views on the part of such Irish saints as Ciaran and Columbanus who lived and preached centuries before him. Good ideas don't ever fade away.

## Modern writers wandering far from the Celtic Twilight?

### The Celtic Myths that Shape the Way We Think

by Mark Williams  
(Thames & Hudson,  
£20.00/\$23.99)

Peter Costello

This book ought to have a wide readership for it explores an area of modern literature that has, since the mid-Victorian era, exerted great influence over writers, artists and filmmakers in these islands.

Mark Williams was born in London and is now a professor in Oxford University specialising in Celtic and medieval English literature. Yet a scholar who admires Macpherson, the over-creative author of the lays of *Fingal*, will wrinkle a few brows among the Celtic experts at Irish universities who are the heirs of those who have denounced Macpherson himself in the firmest of terms since the 18th Century (whatever his influence on Napoleon and Mendelssohn).

The book has some faults, I think. The index could have been made much fuller, given the wide variety of material covered. Though there is a further reading list, a small amount of annotation of sources would not have been amiss.

But a greater disappointment, especially in a book from this publisher famed for their art books, is that though there are many interesting and relevant illustrations from modern artists with Celtic enthusiasms of several kinds, they are not discussed in any detail.

They needed a separate section of extended captions giving an a-z of their iconography for those readers concerned with the treatment of Celtic cultures in 19th and 20th Century art. An opportunity to expand on the literary themes of the chapters has been lost.

### Survey

Yet the book provides an excellent survey of many literary works which makes it immensely valuable - especially to students. Though in some cases, with authors I am familiar with, such as T.H. White, his comments seem to miss the nature of what the writer was attempting.

On the whole Mr Williams intends the book for younger millennials and members of 'Generation Z', than the age cohort to which this reviewer belongs. However the author himself provides a succinct epitome of what the book attempts which is worth quoting in case I may seem to be doing



Queen Maeve

this book an injustice with some of these comments.

"People often go to Celtic myth looking for authenticity - a sense of identity and connection," he writes. "But, as this book has endeavoured to show, Celtic myth is not a seamless garment woven in pagan antiquity and handed down to us as whole cloth..."

**“The book provides an excellent survey of many literary works which it makes immensely valuable”**

"My main assertion in this book has been that going in search of Celtic mythology means encountering medieval Celtic literature and history: the myth is embedded in actual texts, the provenance and context of which cannot be ignored..."

"So while it seems certain that many medieval Irish and Welsh stories contain some ancient myth, it is likely that many mythic elements have been radically shifted around and altered, because the material has been passed down in a rich Christian story-telling tradition for the attention of a courtly audience or a warrior aristocracy...But this does not reduce the value of these extraordinary stories - and that brings me to my final point.

"For all their complex and composite origins, these tales...form patterns of plot, character and that which

possess an intrinsic and satisfying sense of rightness...

It has been my contention in this book that contemporary pop culture puts us in a better position to appreciate some aspects of these stories than was the case for the enthusiasts of a century or more ago, such as Yeats...

"These stories are neither as mystical nor as far from us as they have been thought to be, and they have the potential to act as a rich resource for new creative ventures in years to come.

"With a little commentary, the Celtic stories told in this book are as open to our common experience and empathy, and to our capacity to be entertained, as they were for their original audiences in the Middle Ages. It is time to reclaim the myths from the mists."

### Identity

This is indeed what the book does. Yet I suspect those of his readers who derive their identity in part from the cultures of the 'Celtic fringe' that gave rise to these stories may feel that there is some kind of 'cultural appropriation' going on here.

There is little sense here that as these sagas were recovered during the second half of the 19th Century they drove national political revivals in these lands, which tended and still tend to drive them apart from the English worldview which envelops this book.

For people in Ireland, Scotland, and in Wales, the trend, in years rather than decades, is to dissolve the United Kingdom. Boris Johnson may not want this, but he is perhaps helpless to stop it.

# 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)

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# Leisure time

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**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.

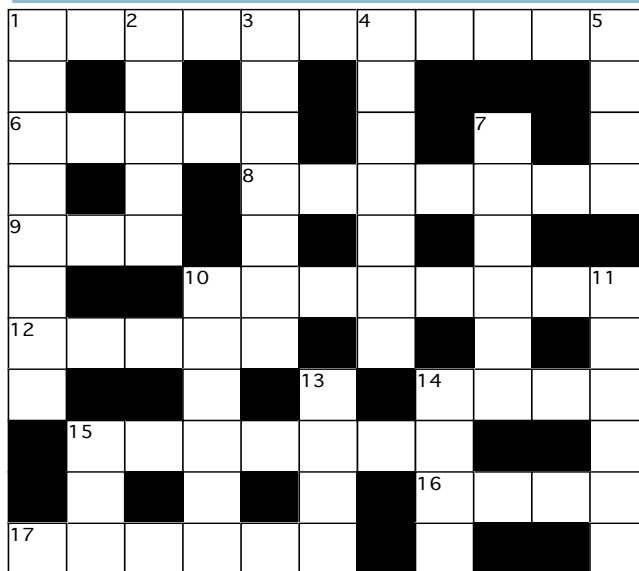
**One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives.**

**Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.**

**Trócaire**

## Crossword Junior

Children's 407



### Across

- 1 A special meal for all the family, once a week (6,5)
- 6 French fries (5)
- 8 Count in (7)
- 9 The fifth month of the year (3)
- 10 Sprinters, jumpers and those who compete in other such sports (8)
- 12 You control a horse with these straps (5)
- 14 This has a curved shape (4)
- 15 'It couldn't possibly be better - it's \_\_\_\_\_!' (7)
- 16 The capital city of Norway (4)
- 17 Use it to hit a nail (6)

### Down

- 1 The seeds of this tree are like helicopters (8)
- 2 Loud (5)
- 3 Helps (7)
- 4 Abraham \_\_\_\_\_ was a famous American president (7)
- 5 A home for bees (4)
- 7 You might spread it on your bread (6)
- 10 The Giant's Causeway is in this Ulster county (6)
- 11 Where pupils and teachers learn together (6)
- 13 An animal like Bambi (4)
- 14 In science, a tiny particle of something (4)
- 15 Vegetable which grows in a pod (3)

## SOLUTIONS, OCTOBER 28

GORDIUS NO. 531

**Across** - 1 Bat 3 Gila monster 8 Louvre 9 Kylemore Abbey 11 Yield right of way 13 Girth 16 Maigret 20 Tweet 21 Sails 23 Harpo 24 Marriage 25 Mexico 26 North Dakota

**Down** - 1 Bold as brass 2 Thunberg 3 Gorey 4 Awkward 5 Needy 6 Trowel 7 Rye 12 Deuteronomy 13 Gloat 14 Heart 17 Rearview mirror 18 Berserk 22 Smith 23 Hyena 24 Man

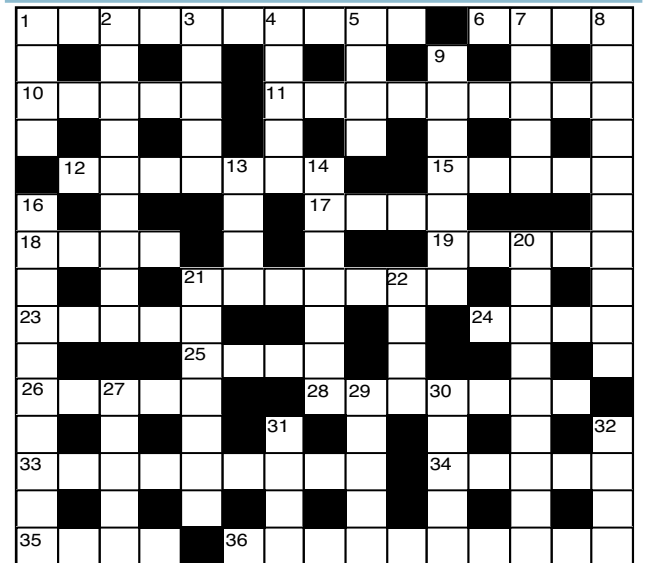
CHILDREN'S No. 406

**Across** - 1 Trainer 5 Seed 6 Napkin 8 Lorries 9 Lee 10 Terminus 12 Sleet 15 Motto 17 Ideas 18 Car 19 Flock 20 Enter

**Down** - 1 Tangled 2 Apple tart 3 Nail 4 Jewels 5 Sprinted 7 Normal 11 Laser 12 Sock 13 Eire 14 Tent 16 Owl

## Crossword

Gordius 532



### Across

- 1 Suffering from hopelessness: dejected (10)
- 6 Laundry, perform ablutions (4)
- 10 & 34a A jab odour I dispel with equipment associated with the occult (5,5)
- 11 & 12 Gaudi's great cathedral in Barcelona, whose name means 'The Holy Family' (2,7,7)
- 15 Communal money (5)
- 17 & 5d Tourists flock to this Scottish lake (4,4)
- 18 Baghdad is the capital of this country (4)
- 19 Have an altercation (5)
- 21 Will Tony hop about when he gets the wind up? (7)
- 23 Pavarotti was such a singer (5)
- 24 Where Jesus performed His first miracle (4)
- 25 Lily (4)
- 26 Speedy (5)
- 28 Americans - or a New York baseball team (7)
- 33 Would this irregular combatant rule a girl differently? (9)
- 34 See 10 across
- 35 Playthings (4)
- 36 The second of Lewis Carroll's fictional twins (10)

### Down

- 1 It is one's fate to bring the mood up (4)
- 2 Tell a tall tale or make some thread (4,1,4)
- 3 Creature related to the giraffe (5)
- 4 Lid he exchanged for a place in India (5)
- 5 See 17 across
- 7 Linger in anticipation (5)
- 8 Loud type of music (5,5)
- 9 Asian potentate or equestrian trophy at the RDS (3)
- 13 Indolent (4)
- 14 The attempt to turn base metals into gold (7)
- 16 Esau sold his for a mess of pottage (10)
- 20 Elvis Presley's Memphis home (9)
- 21 Merchants involved in Red Arts (7)
- 22 Unlock (4)
- 27 Holiness, virtue (5)
- 29 Heedful (5)
- 30 The capital city of Afghanistan (5)
- 31 At a leisurely pace (4)
- 32 Heavy hand tool used for dressing or shaping wood (4)

## Sudoku Corner

407

### Easy

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

### Hard

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

### Last week's Easy 406

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

### Last week's Hard 406

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

Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



# Sisters of St John of God's compassion will never be forgotten

**DEAR SR LELIA,** You will be surprised to see this letter which is almost 50 years too late but please bear with me. Last week I participated in a beautiful celebration to mark the 150th anniversary of your congregation, the Sisters of St John of God. This celebration has brought me into something of a reflective space and I realise that for 35 years as a priest and for many years before, my life has been touched, blessed and enriched by the St John of God sisters.



I'm addressing this letter to you, Lelia, because you were the first one I met back in 1974. I was a frightened, unhappy and homesick 12-year-old boy beginning my life in the boarding school where you worked as the infirmarian. There were many days I turned up at your door with some excuse of a physical illness when the real pain was of a different kind that I could not even articulate. In an all-male environment that could be sometimes cruel for those that did not always fit in, you, with your gleaming white uniform and veil and your knowing smile, could see beyond the 'presenting illness' recognising that what was needed was tenderness and compassion and sometimes just a listening ear. Thank you.

Through you Lelia, that 'thank you' stretches out to so many more of your colleagues in the 'little flock' as you were known in Wexford 150 years ago. Through my remaining years in secondary school and seminary I was to come to know and witness the earthiness, and practicality, the humanity and holiness and

always the kindness of the St John of God sisters. Your influence in the lives and formation of generations of Irish priests is incalculable and certainly not acknowledged enough.

### Foundress

Your foundress, Brigid Clancy, later known as Mother Visitation, was born in Ballyouskill, Durrow, Co. Laois in 1842. In 1861 she entered the Sisters of Bon Secours in Paris. A meeting with Bishop Furlong of Ferns was to change not only her life but the lives of so many others as well. At the bishop's invitation and with his full support, Mother Visitation and six companions headed to Wexford to begin a community which would primarily care for the sick and the poor in their own homes. From very small beginnings in those difficult post famine decades of poverty and deprivation, the congregation of the

St John of God Sisters began to grow and flourish. New ministries in care of the sick, education and social work, spiritual formation and direction all brought new challenges.

When she was close to death, Mother Visitation spoke some prophetic words: "My death will leave an empty place in the community, but do not fear-no one is necessary. My place, can be supplied when God wishes, by someone more worthy to fill the vacancy. The institute will go on. If it were my work, it would die with me, but it is God's work."

Through the last 150 years more than 1,600 women have followed in Visitation's footsteps. From Ennis to Enniscorthy, Bristol to Balgo in the Australian Outback, Perth to Pakistan, New Zealand to Tzaneen in South Africa, Kilkenny to Cameroon and so many other points on the planet, the lives of countless individuals and

communities have been touched, enriched and blessed by St John of God sisters.

### Continue

Lelia, many of your sisters continue to work in communities and parishes throughout the world. However, your congregation is on a 'journey of completion'. This 150th celebration will most likely be your last significant jubilee to celebrate together. All the more reason for those of us who have been and continue to be enriched and encouraged by your congregation's ministry to say thank you. At the conclusion of his homily at the recent Mass of celebration, Bishop Ger Nash of Ferns quoted from the American poet Maya Angelo: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Together with millions around the world, my twelve year old self and indeed my adult self knows the truth of those words of the poet.

Yours sincerely,  
Martin

### Regular customer returns to the bar

A man is drinking in a bar when a nun harasses him about drinking. In self-defence the man says, "Who told you that drinking is bad?" The nun says, "Mother Superior told me." To which the man asks, "So, have you ever tried it?" The nun replies, "No, I haven't ever taken a drink of hard liquor." The man says, "Well then, don't criticise me if you haven't tried it. I'll

tell you what if you try it and don't like it, I'll give up drinking for life." The nun agrees, "Okay but bring it in a tea cup. I don't want people thinking I'm drinking." The man goes up to the bartender and says, "Bring me a couple of shots of vodka but bring one of them in a tea cup." The bartender looks at the man and says, "Is that nun in here again?"

### The prophetic ministry of religious life

"The women and men who dedicate their lives to the call of the Gospel are at the heart of life of our Church. Without their service, without the presence of their communities, our Church would be a very different Church. They have been at the forefront of renewal in the Church, taking bold initiatives, and making significant sacrifices, putting flesh on the hope that was within them. This is not a mission that belongs to the past. In another age, they were at the forefront of addressing the educational, social, and health of those who risked being left behind. Today they continue their prophetic ministry in the service of those whom our society might prefer not to see." - Archbishop Dermot Farrell



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

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

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



"I would travel to every land to preach Thy name, O my Beloved, and raise on heathen soil the glorious standard of Thy Cross."  
- St Therese

It was St Therese's vocation to be "love in the heart of the Church, and to assist priests, missionaries and the entire Church", and this has been the continuing inspiration of The Little Way Association. Ever since the death of St Therese on 30 September 1897, countless priests and missionaries have given witness to the extraordinary way in which she has helped them. Let us pray today for the fulfilment of her desire that the Gospel message would be spread throughout the world.

### MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

In these fraught times, missionary priests rely more than ever on stipends for their daily subsistence and for helping the poorest of their communities.

### Your November Masses for the Holy Souls

Remember the Holy Souls in November. The Little Way Association will be pleased to send your Mass intentions to missionaries.

A minimum stipend of €5 is recommended for each Mass.

Our benefactors will be glad to know that a Mass is offered each day for their intentions.

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

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

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

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

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

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

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

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

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