

# The Irish Catholic

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## 'We need rehab not more prison'

Chai Brady and Ruadhán Jones

Pleas to help those suffering from addiction are falling on deaf ears as jail rather than rehab becomes the default option, a nun working with prisoners' families has warned.

Presentation Sister Imelda Wickham urged the Government to stop letting reports on justice reform "gather dust" on shelves and address the need for a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system.

Sr Imelda told *The Irish Catholic* that it has been recognised for decades that prison should be a measure of last resort. "It is used today as the only resort," she said.

"Mental illness and addiction are not criminal justice issues, they are medical issues – we need to set up drug rehabilitation centres for those with addictions not more prison," she said insisting that rehabilitation is "more effective and serves the needs of everyone".

"But all the pleas are falling on deaf ears...we could paper O'Connell Street with all the reports and recommendations – but nothing gets done," she said.

Her comments come as the Government has announced plans to move towards minimum sentences for very serious crimes.

Veteran social justice campaigner Fr Micheál MacGréil SJ insisted that "before they do anything, they should look at the prison system."

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## 'Derry Girls' step up for the parish...



Students from St Patrick's College Maghera, Co. Derry, attend the 15th annual John Paul II awards ceremony in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry.

## Pro-lifers facing vigil ban with a smile

Jason Osborne

The pro-life community in the North has vowed to continue standing up against abortion despite a new law on 'exclusion zones' aimed at silencing protests and prayer vigils.

Derry-based activist Margaret Devlin told *The Irish Catholic* that pro-lifers have been "galvanised" by the ban and will not be intimidated.

A regular at prayer vigils outside clinics providing abortion, Ms Devlin said the community is "all onboard and willing to take whatever comes".

"We would see it as: no matter what persecution comes to us it's not going to be as bad as what happens to a wee baby," she said of possible criminal sanctions.

"If it means the difference between a life and death, what can you do? You have to challenge these things. You can't just say, 'Well that's that, we don't go there anymore'," Ms Devlin said.

The law making pro-life presence outside abortion providers illegal by establishing so-called 'safe zones' around the premises was passed in the Northern Assembly March 24 by 55 votes to 29.

Ms Devlin hit out at the move as an "attack" on free assembly and the right to pray freely, calling it an "unjust law".

Sinn Féin, the SDLP, Alliance and the UUP were among parties in favour of the Green Party legislation. But the DUP said it was strongly opposed to it, arguing it could affect the rights of people to protest.

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# We must long to breathe the fresh air of human contact

**A**s a journalist, one of the great barriers to working as effectively as one would have liked during Covid-19 was the lack of 'in person' opportunities to meet.

Many have hailed the revolution in communications brought about by zoom and other online platforms. Others have embraced the idea of working from home with an enthusiasm scarcely seen since the time of the Apostles.

The 'new normal', we are told, is a creative way of seeing communication and interpersonal relations. And, of course, who can fail to see the obvious benefits of being able to 'e-meet' people over the internet when it is impossible to meet in person?

But the virtual world, whatever its benefits, is a very shallow and hollow alternative to real life.

## Necessitated

The rush to virtual reality necessitated in some ways by the pandemic also tragically comes at a time when many younger people had already been fleeing the real world and spending more and more time online. Youth clubs and other activities (now known as in-person) had been struggling even before Covid-19. The technologies that we have allowed to dominate every home in the country and every teenager's consciousness are at one

level colluding to imprison and alienate our younger people. How many teenagers and young adults now prefer playing video games with faceless strangers via fibre optic rather than having to get to know a real person.

**“The ‘new normal’, we are told, is a creative way of seeing communication and interpersonal relations”**

The metrics by which we normally judge the wellbeing of young people are fascinating: the number of teenagers having sex has been coming down in recent years, the numbers of younger people reporting alcohol abuse is also decreasing. On the face of it, these are encouraging trends – but they also point to the fact that younger people are more isolated and therefore less likely to be in the company of one another to experience mischief together.

A columnist in a national newspaper who is in her early 20s recently opined about how 'offensive' it is now to call people of her generation on the telephone unless it has been pre-arranged. Better to send a WhatsApp message, she said – as if the soulless ping of a mobile phone is any substitute for the warmth of a human voice.

The sad thing for people embracing this life as the 'new normal' is that they do not notice what they are missing. A friend told me that he now cuts his own hair at home rather than

going to the barbershop. The results are mixed, shall we say. But he seems entirely unaware of the fact that his chit-chat in the shop with fellow customers and the barber contributed anything to his life.

## Slab

Another friend now buys a slab of cans on a Friday night rather than going to the pub and sits alone at home drinking them while watching boxsets from Netflix. It's not because he can no longer afford to go to the pub, but he finds it "handier" he says to just have the beers at home. It's sad to me that he believes that meeting his friends in the pub offered nothing discernible to his life.

**“The virtual world, whatever its benefits, is a very shallow and hollow alternative to real life”**

The trend is affecting workplaces, too. I have some friends who haven't been to work in over two years – opting to continue working from home long after that particular innovation served any useful purpose. "I don't miss out on anything at all," one confidently told me recently. How awful for her, I thought, to have worked with such dull or horrible people in such an awful workplace to miss absolutely nothing about her working life.

I do appreciate concerns about a work-life balance, hellish commutes and more creative childcare arrangements – but I suspect that

the more discerning citizens are acutely aware of what they miss in isolation.

St Francis de Sales used the phrase 'cor ad cor loquitur' meaning 'heart speaks to heart' to discuss the relationship between a Christian and God. But this is not just true of the vertical relationship to our Creator – it is also true of the horizontal relationships in families, between friends, work colleagues and even casual strangers we meet in coffee shops or at the barbers.

**“I do appreciate concerns about a work-life balance, hellish commutes and more creative childcare arrangements”**

In a speech in 2011, Pope Benedict XVI warned about the prevalent isolation in modern society "which recognises nothing beyond mere functionality [and] resembles a concrete bunker with no windows, in which we ourselves provide lighting and atmospheric conditions, being no longer willing to obtain either from God's wide world."

"And yet we cannot hide from ourselves the fact that even in this artificial world, we are still covertly drawing upon God's raw materials, which we refashion into our own products. The windows must be flung open again, we must see the wide world, the sky and the earth once more and learn to make proper use of all this," the Pontiff said.

More than anything else, the Pope said, we must hear "a cry for fresh air which must not be ignored or pushed aside".

We Christians believe this comes ultimately from a living relationship with God, but also in communion with those with whom we share our lives, loves and this finite planet.

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# ‘We need rehab not more prison’

## » Continued from Page 1

"I think that jail is being used as punishment – that is not its function. Its function is curtailment and rehabilitation".

"Imprisonment increases crime, because in a way the prison can become a university for crime. Whereas, it should be an occasion where people who have been found guilty of crime are restored and rehabilitated," Fr MacGréil told *The Irish Catholic*.

Former head prison chaplain Fr Fergal MacDonagh also warned that addiction is one of the key problems not being addressed in conversations about criminal justice.

"The high recidivism rate is generally related to anti-social behaviour, burglary and drug offences...they are all because the offender has an addiction. If you hold them in prison, even keep them clean in prison and you stop drugs getting in – which is almost impossible – they are released back out into a society and return to the same environment they became addicted in."

## Behaviour

"You must address the offending behaviour because locking him up in prison hasn't taught him or her anything, it hasn't improved how they interact because the underlying issue has not been dealt with and the

underlying issue is addiction," he said.

Sr Imelda, who worked as a prison chaplain for many years before founding a support group for prisoners' families called New Directions, said that society needs to move from a "punitive approach towards one that prioritises restorative justice and healing."

"Victims must be central – a model based on restorative justice is one that would better serve the needs of victims as well as the perpetrators."

"Continuing to apply the same solutions that are not working is contributing to a more unjust society," she told *The Irish Catholic*.



# Dublin airport make a meal of Jesus-sausage tweet

**Ruadhán Jones**

Having initially defended a tweet that was widely criticised as making fun of Jesus' name, the Dublin Airport Authority have backed down and removed it following massive backlash.

While thousands of passengers raged at delays in security queues that caused some to miss their flights, Dublin Airport's Twitter page responded March 29 to a follower who tweeted the airport asking, "Any update on the lack of sausages in terminal 2?", saying: "No, but did you know that if you say 'Jesus' backwards it sounds like sausage."

## Offensive

The joke caused immediate upset, with many calling it offensive and inappropriate, particularly as reports came in of "crazy" queues causing "ridiculous" waiting times.

Patrick Kelly wrote to Dublin Airport, saying the "tweet was offensive and inappropriate" and added that Dublin Airport "needs to apologise to Christians and remove the tweet. Today. It would pay

you better to sort out the chaos up in the airport."

Following a query from *The Irish Catholic* newspaper March 30, the DAA initially stood over the Tweet, saying it was "disappointing" that some were interpreting the joke to be offensive.

"The tweet was a light-hearted response to a light-hearted question about sausages," the DAA's spokesperson Graeme McQueen told this paper.

"It is disappointing to see attempts being made to interpret the tweet as having any deeper meaning than that."

The tweet remained on Dublin Airport's feed for a further 24 hours after our inquiry, before being taken down.

Following a further query from this paper, Mr McQueen confirmed the tweet had been removed as "some Twitter users seemed to be taking offence to it".

"We apologise if the tweet, which was intended as a light-hearted response to a light-hearted question about sausages, offended anyone," Mr McQueen said, adding that "this was never our intention".



Heavy queues seen at Dublin airport last week. Photo: Twitter

# Beloved actress June Brown wore Faith proudly



Recently deceased actress June Brown as Dot Cotton of the British soap opera *Eastenders* offering Christian counsel to a fellow resident.

**Brandon Scott**

British actress June Brown, who most notably played the role of the chain-smoking Christian Dot Cotton on the soap opera *Eastenders* for 31 years, wanted to be remembered for her devout commitment to her faith above any of her acting distinctions.

The soap icon who died on Monday confessed in 2014 to BBC's *Sunday Morning Live* that she purposely altered scripts written for her Dot character to include references to Christian ideals which mirrored

her own personal convictions.

"I think I've made Dot more like me," she said. "It's something I've done which I don't approve of because I think you should play characters like they're written but they don't always write the prayers and the behaviour for a Christian into it."

"And I'm afraid that I have changed it [the script]. Her faith and my faith have changed her."

The character of Mrs Cotton was one regularly seen with an accompanying Bible or extending her Christian

counsel to the residents of Albert Square, but in spite of this, Mrs Brown lamented that she didn't always feel that scriptwriters were able to successfully translate the essence of Christianity to a wider audience saying that she "can tell if the script has been written by an atheist or an agnostic" as opposed to a Christian.

"She [Dot] was a kindergarten Christian, someone who thinks of God as being a man in the sky, someone who has no real knowledge and hasn't really bothered to try and read anything," she said.

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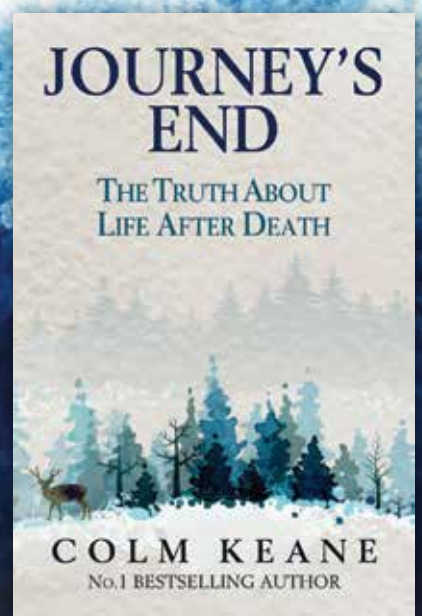
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# Richer nations must heed UN climate warnings to avoid 'catastrophic impacts'

**Chai Brady**

Church-charity Trócaire has said a report released this week on climate change is a "clarion call" for rich countries to respond or the "impacts will be catastrophic".

A UN report, published on Monday, has said there is less than three years left for humanity to halt harmful climate emissions. There is also less than 10 years left to cut them in half, it stated.

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report warned climate change is already

causing "increasingly irreversible losses, in terrestrial, freshwater and coastal and open ocean marine ecosystems" and extreme weather has increased food and water insecurity.

Trócaire CEO, Caoimhe de Barra, said the report comes at a time when the world is "sliding backwards" on its climate commitments.

"There are no two ways about it. A phase out of fossil fuels must begin now, not in 10 years' time. It is crystal clear that if we continue on this path, the impacts will be catastrophic and will be seen in a massive loss of lives and livelihoods,

mass displacement of communities, and a further breakdown in biodiversity, ecosystems and food security," she said.

Ms de Barra said the global south is bearing the brunt of climate impacts, including droughts, floods, famines, storms, sea level rise and death, and while it contributes least to climate change it suffers more than 90% of its impacts, and 98% of the deaths associated with climate breakdown.

Food and water shortages can be seen in Somalia, where 4.3 million people are now severely affected by the ongoing drought.

"This report makes clear that the richest nations have not taken adequate climate mitigation actions in time. The world's richest 10% are responsible for nearly half of all emissions, while the world's poorest account for just 12%. Countries in the global north must now step up to support a fair and fast transition to renewable energy, phase-out fossil fuel subsidies, infrastructure and production, while increasing climate finance flows to poorer countries," Ms de Barra said.

"Increasing support to the poorest countries to enable them to take action is not only a moral imperative

and a political and legal obligation under the Paris Agreement but it is also a practical necessity if global climate goals are to be achieved."

Ms de Barra added that climate justice and human rights must be at the heart of climate action and Ireland needs to adopt a much stronger leadership role at EU and international level to support these changes.

Harmful emissions rose 12% since 2010, 54% since 1990, and are now higher than at any point in human history.

## Daughter of assassinated Free State leader and 'caring' contemplative nun passes (98)

**Brandon Scott**

Sr Mary Kevin O'Higgins, the daughter of politician Kevin O'Higgins who was assassinated by anti-Treaty members while journeying to Mass in Booters-town, Dublin, passed away last week at the age of 98.

Born in Government Buildings on the June 7, 1923, Sr O'Higgins was four years

of age before tragedy struck her family in the form of her father's assassination, a day which she was still "vividly" able to recall in her later years.

After graduating with a first-class honours degree in law from UCD, Sr O'Higgins abruptly diverged from the path she had forged and decided to enter the Carmelite Sisters order in Blackrock in 1945 to become a contemplative nun - a role that she ultimately fulfilled until

the end of her life, of which 75 were spent as a professed member.

Remembering her in tribute, Fine Gael TD Charlie Flanagan referred to Sr O'Higgins as someone who was "most kind and caring" and who experienced "momentous change" throughout her life. Sr O'Higgins funeral Mass took place on Thursday, March 31, in the Church of St Laurence O'Toole, Kilmacud.

## Fake nun barred from Clonard Monastery

**Jason Osborne**

A woman dressed as a nun has been banned by a court from going within 150 yards of Clonard Monastery.

Rachel Mulcahy was served with an interim injunction following complaints from some priests at Clonard about her disruptive behaviour, and an application for a full injunction is to be heard at Lagside court later this month.

Wearing a brown habit, Ms Mulcahy had disrupted a number of services at the Belfast church. Speaking to *Sunday Life* however, Ms Mulcahy said she was praying for the souls of the parishioners and priests at Clonard Monastery.

Regularly seen dancing to religious songs in Belfast city centre, Ms Mulcahy was also spotted dancing to religious music outside the GPO in Dublin in March, videos of which went viral on social media.

## A synodal chat



Fr John Carroll, Joe Bridges and Aidan Roche have a chat at a synodality gathering in the Wexford deanery of Ferns diocese. Attended by over 250 people, the meeting was held in White's Hotel in Wexford on Monday April 4 at 7.30pm.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### IHF launch Pledge to Plant appeal to fund crucial hospice care

The Irish Hospice Foundation has launched its Pledge to Plant appeal to help raise funds to deliver care to nursing homes for those facing their final days.

The appeal encourages supporters to plant seeds and grow flowers, plants and vegetables to sell to raise "vital funds", the IHF said in a statement.

This year, the IHF will

invest over €1 million in its nurses for night care service, which delivers nursing care into the homes of those facing their final days.

"Funds raised from the Pledge to Plant campaign will go towards the running costs of this crucial national service and end-of-life work across the country," the IHF said.

### Bikers' Memorial to return after three years

The Bikers' Memorial, an annual memorial Mass remembering motorcyclists who have passed on the roads, will return on Friday May 6 at 8pm in the Sacred Heart Church, Clones, Co. Monaghan.

The Mass will also be an opportunity to celebrate the life of former motorcy-

clist enthusiast and committee member Fr John Kearns, who passed away on December 20, 2021.

The memorial this year will be celebrated by Fr Stephen Joyce, Fr Tony Conlan, Canon Helen Steed Church of Ireland and Fr Jim Moore PP of Clones parish.



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# The problem with a state religion...



**Mary Kenny**



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill of Moscow. Photo: CNS

**H**ow can a Churchman stand by Vladimir Putin and justify his utterly brutal attack on Ukraine? But the Russian 'pope', Patriarch Kirill has made it clear that he is fully aligned with Mr Putin and his ideological position – that Kyiv is essentially a part of Russia, in culture, religion and tradition.

"It is my firm belief that [the conflict's] initiators are not the peoples of Russia and Ukraine, who came from one Kyevan baptismal font,

are united by common faith, common saints and prayers, and share common historical fate," he has written. He went on to reiterate the view of Mr Putin that "the NATO member states have been building up their military presence, disregarding Russia's concerns that these weapons may one day be used against it."

## Condemned

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams – who will speak at Maynooth later this month – has

condemned Patriarch Kirill's stance and suggests the Russian Orthodox Church should be expelled from the World Council of Churches (the WCC is an international body of Christian churches comprising 352 denominations. The Catholic Church is not a member but works closely in fraternal support of the group, which includes all the Orthodox).

Dr Williams cannot accept that there have been no words of compassion or regret about the horrific scenes we have witnessed in Ukraine. "I'm still waiting for any senior voices in the Russian Orthodox hierarchy to say that the slaughter of the innocent in war is condemned unequivocally by all forms of Christianity." He added that he couldn't understand and "can't begin to condone...a nakedly aggressive, unprincipled act of violence against a neighbouring Christian nation."

Yet a state Church is almost invariably aligned with the apparatus of the state. The Russian Orthodox church was established by a Czar, and has, throughout the centuries, been part of the Russian realm. In a much milder way, the Lutheran churches of the Nordic countries are state religions: Crown

and altar are intertwined. The Church of England is in a similar position.

## Tradition

Obviously, western European Churchmen have a greater tradition of free speech, and do not feel the need to defer to the state: but they are nonetheless part of the state establishment. The 26 Anglican Bishops who sit in the House of Lords are, literally, the establishment.

The Catholic Church, even where it was closely intertwined with the faith and traditions of a nation, has never been part of machinery of state. It regards itself as having a universal remit.

At Westminster, the late Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor did, I understand, get an approach from the powers that be about joining the Anglican bishops in the House of Lords. It was felt that it would show 'diversity' to have a cardinal on the red benches. Cormac would not have been averse, but Rome said – no way! Catholic clergy are not part of any political structure.

It seems deplorable that Patriarch Kirill cannot at least exercise his influence to restrain the onslaughts in this inhumane war. But the Russian Patriarch will always be in partnership with the Russian Czar.

So Michael O'Leary, pugnacious boss of Ryanair, hopes that his children will choose to be farmers, and he plans to leave them just enough funds – and 250 acres – to start a life on the land (his eldest son is studying agriculture science).

Mr O'Leary's parents and grandparents were farmers – and equipped him with a fine education at Jesuit-run Clongowes Wood to launch his own career.

I think it's great to encourage young people to go into agriculture. Ireland will always need farmers, and a life on the land can be a wonderful life.

## An Irish welcome

It's heart-warming to hear of so many Irish people ready to extend the 'céad míle fáilte' to the afflicted Ukrainian refugees. British commentators have been impressed by the numbers being helped in Ireland, and the swiftness of the official Irish response.

I'm not sure if the 200,000 expected will be easy to accommodate though the numbers may turn out to be

less. It's also likely that when this terrible war is over, many Ukrainians will, naturally, want to return to their own country.

Back in 1956, Irish people were also welcoming to Hungarian refugees who had fled after the Hungarian uprising was crushed by Soviet tanks, and the last radio signals were silenced after the forlorn cry "For the sake of God and freedom, help Hungary!"

But Ireland was a poor country in the mid-1950s, and Irish emigration was rife. The issue, at that time, wasn't so much accommodation as jobs – there just weren't the job opportunities to sustain substantial Hungarian immigration to Ireland. Many eventually moved on to Canada – although one famous Budapest hairdresser 'Janos' remained in his Dublin premises, just off Grafton Street, for many years.

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# Raphoe launches 'ambitious' plan to encourage synod-inspired structure

**Ruadhán Jones**

Bishop of Raphoe Alan McGuckian SJ launched an "ambitious" pastoral plan March 31, which he said will encourage a more synodal diocesan structure, with greater emphasis on well-formed parish pastoral councils.

The pastoral plan for 2022-2024, *Forward Together/ Ar Aghaidh le Chéile*, recommends the formation of a diocesan pastoral council, as well as new professional roles that will be filled by lay-people, Bishop McGuckian told *The Irish Catholic*.

He said these measures are "absolutely" done with the idea of giving laity more of a voice at diocesan level.

"I hope that really good candidates both male and female present themselves for the positions," Dr McGuckian said.

The bishop of Raphoe said the vision of the plan is for "a more synodal approach" and is the fruit of two years' work.

"The vision we have is of a synodal approach and Pope Francis speaks about the simple thing of see, judge, act," Bishop McGuckian said.

"To judge involves praying and discerning together, and I want priests, me as a bishop and people to increasingly do that."

Dr McGuckian added that "well-formed pastoral councils are the ideal vehicle to ensure that happens".

"There will be a big structural emphasis on parish pastoral councils, well-formed and supported going forward as well as a diocesan pastoral council."

The plan, which is divided into three sections, devotes the last of these to questions of social justice. Bishop McGuckian said it is important the Church's charitable works are not forgotten as it restructures.

"We want to have at diocesan level a real support for the works of charity and justice and peace throughout our parishes," he added.

Speaking at the launch of the plan, the bishop also said that the decline in the number of priests is "a big worry" and told this paper that that parishes and groups of parishes will be "actively involved" in making decisions regarding the closure of churches or amalgamation of parishes.

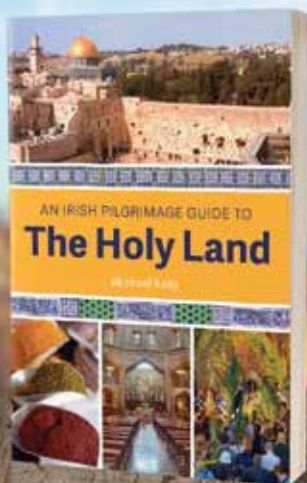


Bishop of Raphoe Alan McGuckian SJ launches the *Forward Together* Pastoral Plan 2022-2024 in St Eunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, March 31. Also pictured are Connor Duncan, diocesan pastoral director, Abigail Hannigan and Ciara Ferry. Photo: Joe Dunne.

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## Priest hails Charlie Bird's Croagh Patrick pilgrimage

**Chai Brady**

The priest of Westport parish in Co. Mayo has said there was a "very strong spiritual element" on the day broadcaster Charlie Bird ascended Croagh Patrick as part of his charity fundraising campaign on Saturday.

Fr Charlie McDonnell said he was with Mr Bird when he heard the news his campaign had raised €2 million, describing it as "brilliant".

Mr Bird (72), a former RTÉ chief news correspondent, set out to raise funds for the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association and Pieta following his diagnosis with motor neurone disease.

"It was more of a pilgrimage than a walk in the end and it was certainly very much a pilgrimage for Charlie and Claire [his wife]," said Fr McDonnell.

"He described it as being on a spiritual journey in the last couple of months and I would say the crescendo of that journey would certainly have culminated on the mountain on Saturday.



"A lot of people were climbing the mountain for their own reasons as well, a lot of people maybe who had lost family members to motor neurone disease, people who had lost family members to suicide, people who were struggling themselves. There certainly was a very strong spiritual element to the day," he added.

Thousands of people joined Mr Bird in climbing Croagh Patrick. There were also almost 200 other 'Climb with Charlie' fundraisers across Ireland and in South Africa, the US, Spain and Australia.

## Youth and religious team up for worship album

**Jason Osborne**

A group of young Catholic musicians and a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal have collaborated to produce a praise and worship album.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, singer Ruth Hogan said they had a desire to create their own Irish praise and worship sounds, as much of the current offering comes from America or Australia.

Ms Hogan said that Fr Damien Joseph CFR was inspired by Knock and the adoration of Our Lady, St Joseph and St John, and that an adoration retreat was born out of this.

"He began to do these retreats based around praise and worship. Then it got to the point where people were creating and writing music for the Blessed Sacrament, to the point where we had enough that we could record," Ms Hogan explained.

Following a retreat last summer, nine stayed on and recorded the music before the Blessed Sacrament in Rosnowlagh.

Ms Hogan said of music that it's "a really powerful way of opening our hearts to receiving from God, to be able to hear his voice better".

The album *Take this Land* is available to stream on Spotify, Bandcamp and Apple music, with CDs expected to be available in coming weeks.



## Breda O'Brien

### The View



# Give up gossip and apply the golden rule

**P**ope Francis hates it. Thomas Aquinas dedicated a section of the Summa Theologica to it, analysing all the different ways we can indulge in it. Robin Dunbar, the primatologist and anthropologist, judged it to be “the core of human social relationships, indeed of society itself. Without [it], there would be no society”.

We are talking, of course, about gossip. Pope Francis has at various times called it both a form of terrorism and a pandemic worse than Covid-19.

**“He believes that it is the human equivalent of the grooming that primates do in order to bond with each other”**

For example, in 2018 he warned: “Gossipers are terrorists because with their tongues they drop a bomb and then leave, and the bomb they drop destroys reputations everywhere.”

In 2020, he said: “Please, brothers and sisters, let’s make an effort not to gossip. Gossiping is a worse plague than Covid.”

These are just two of his better-known pronouncements on the topic but he speaks against it constantly, echoing Biblical injunctions about it. Our Lord in the Gospel of Matthew, states that “...on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak”. In the Letter of St James, we are told that “no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison”.

It’s a rather odd evolution from these views (if you will pardon the pun) for Robin Dunbar to describe gossip as the “core of human social relationships”. He believes that it is the human equivalent of the grooming that primates do in order to bond with each other. Other evolutionary psychologists have built on his work, seeing the exchange of information about others as a way not only to build bonds but as a subtle form of obtaining power.

So which is it? Is gossip a form of terrorism, a pandemic worse than Covid-19 or an essential social mechanism? It turns out that Robin



Dunbar has a rather broad definition of gossip, that encompasses any form of exchanging information about other people. He believes that about a third of these conversations are unconsciously designed to deal with the ‘free rider’ problem. Technically, free riders are those who make use of a public good or service provided by others but do not want to contribute to paying for it. More broadly, it is sometimes used to describe those who do not live up to group norms.

### Gossip

Is there a way of reconciling these two functions? Is it acceptable to gossip about people who are doing things that are selfish or wrong? Given human nature, and its tendencies towards self-righteousness, this seems to be fraught with difficulties.

Bishop Robert Barron recently wrote about a visit to St Joseph Abbey in Covington, LA, where he admired the paintings of Fr Gregory de Wit, especially of the seven deadly sins. But Fr de Wit added an eighth deadly sin – gossip.

Bishop Barron uses Dave Ramsay’s definition of gossip, which is “discussing anything negative with someone who can’t solve the problem”. (Ramsay seems to be quite extremist about gossip however, firing one staff member for a single instance of gossiping, which seems to offend against natural justice, not

to mention mercy.)

### Ramsay’s definition

Bishop Barron supplements Ramsay’s definition with John Shea’s, who told his students that they should feel utterly free to criticise another person precisely in the measure and to the degree that they are willing to help the person deal with the problem that they have identified.

Both of these definitions are challenging and useful but they also raise another question about effective communication within communities. If there are proper channels of communication, if people feel free to express concerns when others are not living up to gospel values, then gossip is much less likely to happen.

Exchanging information about others is a bonding

mechanism but can also be a poison. It all depends on the content and the intent behind it. If you are passing on to a colleague that another colleague is having a hard time and needs additional support, without betraying any confidences and only telling people who will be sympathetic and helpful, that is not gossip.

If, however, you are constantly narking about

someone else’s deficiencies behind their backs, without any intention of trying to help the person to improve, that is definitely gossip.

What about when you need to chat through a difficulty with a wise counsellor but need to give details that are potentially damaging to another person? I suppose the answer is to choose your confidante carefully and give the minimum amount of detail possible.

**“All the more reason to apply the ‘Golden Rule’ in these last days of Lent, and to think how we would feel if we were the subject of the juicy morsel we are tempted to pass along”**

Gossip has reached whole new depths with social media, where reputations are sometimes routinely trashed within hours. All the more reason to apply the ‘Golden Rule’ in these last days of Lent, and to think how we would feel if we were the subject of the juicy morsel we are tempted to pass along.

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UKRAINE APPEAL





# Wind farm plans loom over iconic Cork chapel

Jason Osborne

A local community in Gougane Barra has taken issue with the proposed nearby building of Cork's biggest wind turbines, close to the picturesque St Finbarr's Oratory.

An Bord Pleanála gave the controversial project a green light in February after it had been refused planning permission by Cork County Council because of the negative impact the development would have on the scenic landscape.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, owner and manager of the Gougane Barra Hotel Neil Lucey

said that to do something "industrial in a special, spiritual place" such as Gougane Barra wouldn't be good for the location's future.

"We live here all the time, and I'm always impressed with people and the word 'pilgrimage'," Mr Lucey told this paper.

"Pilgrimage to Gougane can be broad because people all have their own pilgrimages and they all have their own wishes that they bring here and they all have their own reasons and they come from all walks of life and all backgrounds. Pilgrimage is such a broad word, but they come to Gougane for that and so many people get relief from the place, for

lots and lots of different reasons."

In its refusal, Cork County Council said that the development would go against the objectives of the Cork County Development plan and would be "excessively domineering from very many vantage points over a wide area".

Mr Lucey said that this development wouldn't be happening in Glendalough, and that it was easy for An Bord Pleanála to make the decision as a result of its distance from Dublin.

"They'd have a different point of view if it was Glendalough because it'd be closer to urban Dublin and they wouldn't put wind turbines on

the slopes above Glendalough, it just wouldn't happen," Mr Lucey said.

"I know there's a larger monastic development in Glendalough and it has its lakeside and it's a beautiful place and it's spiritual and it's got so much going on there, but Gougane is the same. It's St Finbarr and St Declan, they're connected in so many different ways."

A local village development group has lodged an appeal in the High Court to challenge the plans, the group raised €30,000 in less than a month to fight the case, with plans to raise more if permission is granted to take the judicial review.

## Augustinians to leave two Dublin parishes

Ruadhán Jones

The Augustinian order have made the "painful" decision to withdraw friars from Rivermount Parish in Finglas and Meath Street parish in the Liberties.

The decision came following the order's chapter last week, as it seeks to downsize due to a decline in the number of friars. Prior provincial Fr Tony Egan OSA told this paper that there are around 90 friars left at an average age of 76.

Speaking about leaving the two parishes, Fr Egan said that it "can be a painful issue".

"No religious leader wants to do that, but unfortunately because we just don't have the manpower, we have to," he added.

The order is considering amalgamating with the Augustinian province in England, who are also facing reduced numbers.

"We belong to each other in a mutual relationship and our destiny is a shared one," Fr Egan said.

However, he continued, there is a great sense of camaraderie in the order, and they "have to be hopeful, otherwise you wouldn't be in the line of work we're in".

# Trans 'rights' can be used to shut down debate, says senator

Staff reporter

Pre-packaging claims as "rights" can be used to shut down debate and deny the chance to "discern" the validity of the claims, Senator Rónán Mullen has said.

This comes after senators took issue with Senator Mullen's reluctance to use the term "transgender rights" during an Order of Business debate.

Senator Mullen took to Twitter to say that the word "rights" can be abused to "compel ...support for claims that people may legitimately support or oppose".

"It's the pre-packaging of claims as rights, and that is meant to deny

us the chance to be discerning about these claims," Senator Mullen told this paper.

"The trouble is that once people start talking about rights and using a phrase like 'transgender rights' without saying what exactly they mean, what you end up with is a loaded phrase where you're possibly being invited to subscribe to things

that may or may not be true, or that you may or may not agree with.

"That's what I think the Seanad is for, it's for that discussion, so when I say 'so-called' rights, I'm not denying that transgender people have human rights, far from it, but what you call a right may not be what I call a right," Senator Mullen said.

## LASI brings home the award



Fr Dominic McGrattan, chaplain to the Catholic chaplaincy at Queens University Belfast, and pastoral manager Shannon Campbell (back left) congratulate student volunteers who supported the Language and Solidarity Initiative (LASI) initiative. LASI received a Students' Union Award in the 'Outstanding Contribution to the Community' category, for providing English language classes and a book club for newcomers who wish to make Northern Ireland their home.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### WHO says conscientious objection may become 'indefensible'

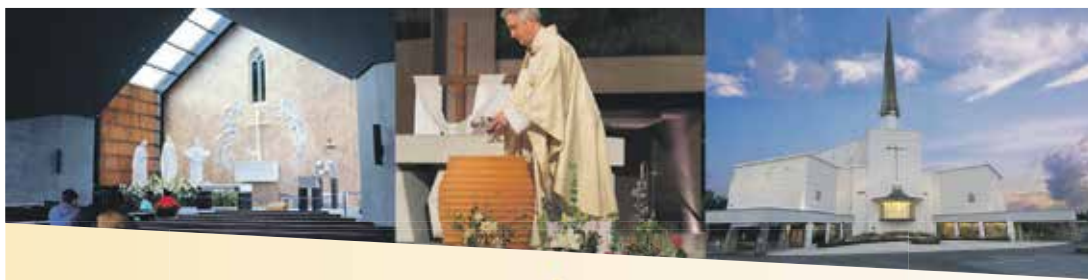
Conscientious objection has been severely criticised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an obstacle to making abortion freely available in their latest guidelines on abortion.

Responding to this, consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology Dr Trevor Hayes said everyone has an "inalienable" right to preserve their conscience.

"Everyone has a right under the Irish constitution to follow their religious persuasion. You're impinging on a person's right to protect their soul," Dr Hayes said.

"What will happen is you're going to get the screening out of similar, like-minded people – the pro-life people – out of medicine. That would be dreadful, absolutely dreadful."





## Pilgrimage Season 24 April – 9 October

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Since the first organised pilgrimage came to Knock in 1880, the Shrine has welcomed pilgrims from all over the world to this sacred place.

Pilgrimage Masses take place at Knock Basilica each weekend throughout the season. Public Ceremonies take place daily, including Anointing of the Sick, Confessions, Stations of the Cross. Eucharistic Adoration takes place daily in the newly refurbished Blessed Sacrament Chapel. On Sunday's, Mass is offered followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary Procession to the Shrine and Blessing of religious objects.

### *Your time at Knock*

Spiritual Direction is available in the Chapel of Reconciliation. Pilgrims are encouraged to take part in this service which is offered by the Prayer Guides at Knock Shrine.

The award-winning Museum is open daily and offering free admission throughout 2022.

The HUB is a fun space for young people at Knock Shrine. The HUB offers a kids club throughout July and August as well as a drop-in service for teens and young adults.

The Bookshop in the Shrine grounds is a quiet haven where you can browse through a wide selection of books, journals, new releases, and sought-after faith-based titles.

### *Group visits*

Bring your group to Knock Shrine and enjoy a day immersed in the peace and tranquillity of this sacred place. Whether you wish to visit for a few hours or a few days, we can arrange an itinerary to suit your needs. Self-guided audio tours of the Museum and Shrine grounds are available free of charge at Knock Museum.

Groups travelling with a priest may wish to celebrate a private Mass in the Apparition Chapel (advance booking essential). Alternatively, you can join in one of the public Masses in the Basilica.

St John's Welcome Centre boasts a large seating and dining area where pilgrims can relax. There are also meeting rooms available which can be booked for private retreats, talks or workshops.

**For the most up-to-date information and opening hours, including details of Mass Times, Confessions and Anointing of the Sick, please visit our website at: [www.knockshrine.ie](http://www.knockshrine.ie) T. 094 93 88100 E. [info@knockshrine.ie](mailto:info@knockshrine.ie)**

# Holy Week Ceremonies

*Celebrate the glorious season of Easter at Knock Shrine*

## Holy Thursday, 14th April

- |        |                                      |
|--------|--------------------------------------|
| 10am   | Morning Prayer (Parish Church)       |
| 7.30pm | Mass of the Lord's Supper (Basilica) |

## Good Friday, 15th April

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 10am:   | Morning Prayer (Parish Church)                |
| 12pm:   | Stations of the Cross (Basilica)              |
| 3pm:    | The Passion of Our Lord (Basilica)            |
| 7.30pm: | Prayer and Veneration of the Cross (Basilica) |

## Holy Saturday, 16th April

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 10am: | Morning Prayer (Parish Church)             |
| 11am: | Blessing of Bread for the Polish Community |
| 9pm   | Easter Vigil Mass (Basilica)               |

## Easter Sunday, 17th April

- |       |                                  |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| Mass: | 9am (Parish Church)              |
|       | 10am, 12 noon and 3pm (Basilica) |

All Easter Ceremonies will be live-streamed online  
on the Knock Shrine website  
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# Even if it means compromise, we truly need peace now



Catholics must support a swift peaceful resolution in Ukraine to avoid further catastrophe, writes **David Quinn**

**I**t still seems hard to believe that a major war is taking place again on European soil. It is not the first since the Second World War, of course. Long-running conflicts took place when Yugoslavia broke up in the 1990s and they were very bloody. But they did not involve a nuclear power like Russia. This one is different in that the chances of escalation are very real. It is why I believe peace needs to be pursued as rigorously as possible, even if

it means both sides accepting compromises they believe are unacceptable.

## Plausible scenario

Here is one very plausible scenario if peace is not arrived at early: the war drags on for months, and possibly years, with tens of thousands dead on both sides. More and more Ukrainian cities are devastated, and the economy ruined. But by and large the conflict is a stalemate because the Russian army is not as powerful as

many thought, and the Ukrainian army is far better. But neither side is strong enough to defeat the other.

What then? Do both sides continue to insist on a winner-takes-all approach even though neither can achieve all they want? For the Russians that might be a Ukraine split in half with a Russian-ruled part in the East and an independent part in the West.

For the Ukrainians and many in the West, victory might look like Russia being driven out of their entire country including the parts Russia effectively occupied before the war, that is the Donbas region and the Crimea.

If both sides want 100% victory, then this could drag out like World War 1, in the most hideous manner.

And then what? In this scenario both sides are going to have to compromise anyway, but at much greater cost than if they compromise now.

**“The UN has warned of food shortages and even starvation”**

The best scenario, of course, is that Russian president, Vladimir Putin, is overthrown internally in some kind of ‘palace coup’ and replaced by a leader willing to say the invasion of Ukraine was a catastrophic mistake and withdraws Russian troops immediately.

But observers say this looks increasingly unlikely and that Russian voters are actually rallying around the flag, for now at least. Putin has long said that the West wants to destroy and humiliate Russia and the very strong and unprecedented sanctions against his country allow him to make this case.

The hope that the damage caused to the Russian economy as a result of the sanctions will eventually cause Russians to turn against Putin may also be misplaced. Strong Western or American sanctions exist against countries like Cuba, Venezuela and Iran, but those regimes are still standing.



A woman reacts in front of destroyed apartment buildings in the port city of Mariupol, Ukraine. Photo: CNS

Sanctions alone did not bring down Iraq’s Saddam Hussein either.

In the event of the war dragging on for months or years, the consequences for many developing countries are dire. Countries like Egypt import nearly all their grain from Ukraine and Russia. At a minimum, the price of bread is set to soar. This will push many people in developing nations, and some in the West, literally below the bread line. The UN has warned of food shortages and even starvation.

Added to the soaring price of energy, we have a recipe for political turmoil in much of the world. Developing countries are by and large not taking sides in this war. They reason that the West doesn’t care very much about terrible wars in places like Yemen, where hundreds of thousands have died, so why should they care very much about a war in Europe, and why should they be made to suffer for it?

The worst-case scenario is that the war goes so badly for Russia that they are faced with a humiliating defeat, and Putin, in desperation, decides to use nuclear weapons against Ukrainian forces.

This cannot be ruled out completely. What happens then? Does America strike back against Russia with its own nuclear weapons? If so, then we are faced with an all-out nuclear war. Putin could easily calculate that no American president will sacrifice his own country for the sake of Ukraine

(would Ireland do so, if it had the ability?), and therefore Putin might take the risk of defeating the Ukrainians with nuclear weapons.

Is there a definitive Catholic view of the conflict and what must be done? Clearly, the Russian invasion is indefensible. At no level does it fulfil the criteria for a just war under Catholic moral theology.

**“The Irish civil war was fought because many Irish people believed the Treaty was an unacceptable compromise with Britain”**

Catholics will also be united in seeking peace. But after this, agreement will be less easy to find, because some Catholics will say peace can only come after Russia has been completely driven from Ukrainian soil, no matter how long this takes and how many lives are lost.

This is not my view. The Irish civil war was fought because many Irish people believed the Treaty was an unacceptable compromise with Britain.

The pro-Treaty side said it was better to sign it than to have the War of Independence continue with the loss of more lives and growing economic devastation.

Compromise can be better than indefinite war.

What might a compromise

look like in Ukraine? Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has already suggested that his country will not join the American-dominated military alliance, NATO. He seems willing to allow the status of Crimea and Donbas to remain unresolved for some years to come. He also wants his country to be given EU-accession status at a minimum.

This seems perfectly reasonable, although he has said he would put it to a referendum, which might be beaten if Ukrainians are in no mood for compromise and want to fight on no matter what the cost, as the anti-Treaty side did in this country.

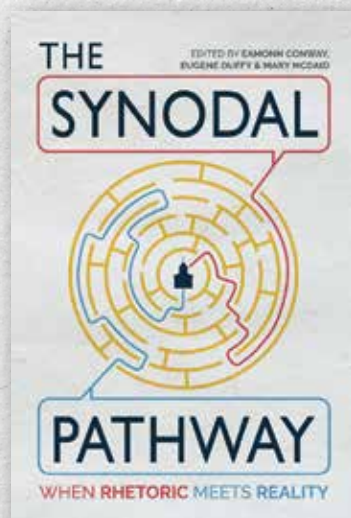
But Russia appears to want much more than Zelenskyy is offering. As mentioned, Putin appears to be seeking a divided Ukraine with the western half demilitarised once Russia has conquered the Eastern half.

The hope must be that continued Ukrainian resistance makes him more realistic, and that the Chinese government, which leans heavily towards Putin, puts pressure on him as soon as possible to accept less than he wants.

The sort of compromise outlined above leans much more towards Ukraine than Russia, but seeking 100% victory would be disastrous in human terms for both sides. Realists need to intervene on both sides and force this war, if they can, to an early, peaceful resolution for the sake of the whole world.

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# In the brotherhood of suffering all are equal

## The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



**O**n Passion Sunday each year we have what people refer to as the long Gospel, properly called The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This year we have St Luke's version. The four evangelists basically write about the same event but each one has his own particular interests as well as his immediate readership in view. There are far more references to prayer in Luke's writing than in any of the others. We can see this prayerfulness in his account of the Passion.

Beginning with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, Luke understands the agony as a testing on the deepest level of Jesus' total union with the Father's will. He pictures Jesus kneeling, a strong posture, not prostrate in fear and sadness. "Father, if you will, take this cup away from me yet not my will, but thine be done." In prayer he handed everything over to the Father's will. An angel from heaven appeared and gave him strength, testifying that the Father has accepted his prayer. In his anguish he prayed even more earnestly, and his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.

At the beginning and end of the agony, Jesus told the three apostles who were with him, "Pray, not to be put to the test." This is the last petition in the Our Father. But in contrast to the strength of Jesus in prayer, they were weak and fell asleep for sheer grief.

### Three Prayers

Luke is the only evangelist who mentions three prayers uttered on Calvary. The first prayer is for the forgiveness of his persecutors. "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." The love of Jesus is not contaminated by the injustices, mockery and violent actions to which he is subjected. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke writes that the first Christian martyr, Stephen, also prayed for his persecutors. Down through



Jesus is depicted in the Garden of Gethsemane in this stained-glass image from the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. Photo: CNS

the centuries many heroic martyrs did not allow the wrongdoing of others lessen the Christian love in their hearts.

The second prayer on Calvary is that of the repentant thief. He admits his own guilt while recognising the innocence of Jesus. Then he utters one of the most famous of prayers, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom". This is the first time in the Gospel that we hear Jesus addressed by name alone, without any accompanying title such as Master or Lord. In the brotherhood of suffering all are equal and titles of superiority count for nothing. To this repentant sinner Jesus promises a share in the fruits of the day's events. "Indeed, I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise."

The third prayer is the dying cry of Jesus, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

In the versions of Matthew and Mark, Jesus, in a final muscular spasm, cries out the opening words of a psalm, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." The complete psalm is actually one of trust in God.

### Acceptance

The Letter to the Hebrews, written at a time of persecution and suffering, calls Jesus a compassionate high priest. "For the sufferings he himself passed through, while being put to the test, enables him to help others when they are being put to the test" (Hebrews 2:18). For the past two years, due to the Covid-19 epidemic, we have been through very testing times. As I write, the Ukrainian people are victims of an evil, brutal war. It is a time to remember that Jesus is not just a Saviour from a remote past, but he has entered into solidarity with all people suffering in any way. The wounds of suffering humanity are a continuation of the incarnation when the Word became flesh.

Think of the many ways that Jesus suffered. People who have suffered an injustice might remember that Jesus too was a victim of false charges and unjust trial. He was mocked and spat upon. People who were betrayed in marriage will relate to the cold kiss of Judas on the cheek of Jesus. When we feel let down by friends, remember that

Jesus was deserted by many of his close friends when he most needed support. He experienced family pain as he looked at his mother standing at the foot of the cross. As Simeon had predicted, the sword of sorrow pierced her heart. Think of the physical suffering... crowned with thorns, lacerated with whips, falling under the cross, nailed through hands and feet. As his dry throat grew swollen, his breathing became difficult. Every movement of his body stabbed a new pain. In any time of suffering remember that Jesus is the Saviour who is with us. You are not alone.

### People who accompanied Jesus

The Stations of the Cross remind us of people who accompanied Jesus. Simon of Cyrene shared the weight of the cross. Veronica wiped his face clean of blood, sweat and spittle. A group of sympathetic women supported him. The apostle John and some women supported Mary at the foot of the cross. During the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, people were heroic in medical service, care of vulnerable neighbours and observance of restrictions. The generous response of people to the needs of the Ukrainian victims is another manifestation of a Christ-like solidarity with those who suffer.

On this Passion Sunday,

think of the humble donkey carrying Jesus into Jerusalem. You may not have much to offer, but the little sacrifice you make for the wellbeing of others makes you a carrier: not a carrier of virus or of evil war, but a carrier of Jesus, the wounded healer.

"Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which lay ahead of him, he endured the cross, disregarding the shame of it, and has taken his seat at the right hand of God's throne" (Hebrews 12:2).

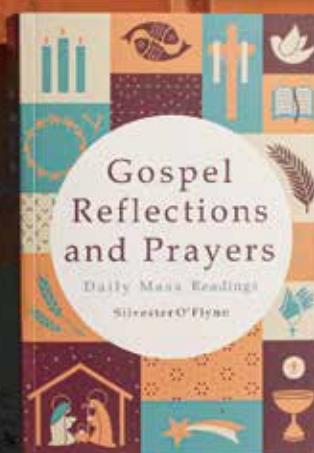
### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, compassionate Saviour, by humbly accepting the sufferings of your Passion, you have lovingly entered into solidarity with all who are suffering in any way. As we look up at your cross may we recognise that you have not deserted us but you are with us in any dark valley. As your painful death was the prelude to your resurrection, may we go forward to Easter full of hope.

**“For the sufferings he himself passed through, while being put to the test, enables him to help others when they are being put to the test (Hebrews 2:18)”**

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# Malta urged to embody 'Gospel of Welcome' during flying papal visit

Jason Osborne

**M**alta and its people need to remember the country's roots as a centre of "welcome", especially to those in need such as migrants, Pope Francis told leaders of the Mediterranean nation during his fleeting April 2-3 visit.

Visiting the territory that hosted St Paul following his shipwreck around AD60, Pope Francis encouraged Malta in its efforts to protect and foster the dignity of life, while also taking the opportunity to comment on the "sacrilegious war" in Ukraine and a potential trip to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.

## Pope greets Ukrainian refugees before first papal flight of 2022

Pope Francis greeted a group of Ukrainian war refugees on Saturday morning before heading to the airport for his first papal flight of 2022.

The group of 15 refugees consisted of mothers and children who found refuge in Italy after Russia's full-scale invasion of their country.

Among the refugees was a mother of two children, aged five and seven. She came to Italy for a heart surgery for her daughter, according to the Vatican on April 2.

The Pope met the group at the Casa Santa Marta, his residence in Vatican City, along with the papal almoner Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, who has served as a papal envoy to Ukraine.

On the eve of his visit, Pope Francis visited the Basilica of St Mary Major in Rome, where he prayed before the icon Salus Populi Romani, Mary Protection of the Roman People, entrusting his two-day trip to Malta to the Virgin Mary.

## Malta urged to remember country's history of welcome

Malta and its people must remember the country's roots as the centre of spirituality and welcome, especially to those most in need, Pope Francis told gathered leaders.

As he started a two-day visit, the Pope spoke to government and civil leaders and the diplomatic corps, praising them for welcoming migrants – especially



Pope Francis walks with Maltese President George Vella and his wife, Miriam, as he arrives at the international airport in Malta, April 2. Photos: CNS

those arriving on their shores from places like Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

In a speech at the presidential palace April 2, Pope Francis said that while the influx of migrants in recent years has "nurtured a certain discouragement and frustration," the issue of migration must "be situated within a broader context of time and space".

"It brings with it the burden of past injustice, exploitation, climatic changes and tragic conflicts, whose effects are now making themselves felt," he said. "From the poor and densely populated south, great numbers of people are moving to the wealthy north: This is a fact, and it cannot be ignored" by nations isolating themselves.

## Church must be centred on witness, not religious customs alone

Malta's great spiritual and pastoral traditions must serve as a road map to the future for the Catho-



Priests arrive in procession for Pope Francis' celebration of Mass at the Granaries in Floriana, Malta, April 3.



lic Church, rather than a relic commemorated with “received traditions, solemn celebrations, popular festivals and powerful and emotional moments,” Pope Francis said.

“We need a faith built upon and constantly renewed in the personal encounter with Christ, in daily listening to his word, in active participation in the life of the church and in authentic popular piety,” the Pope said April 2 at a prayer service outside the Ta’ Pinu National Shrine.

“The crisis of faith, apathy in religious practice, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic, and indifference shown by many young people toward the presence of God; these are not issues that we should ‘sugarcoat,’ thinking that, all things considered, a certain religious spirit still endures,” he said.

## “Malta’s centuries-old Catholic faith and traditions were on display in the streets in front of the grotto”

After meeting with diplomats and government and civil leaders in Valletta, the Pope travelled by catamaran to the island of Gozo, one of 21 islands that make up the Maltese archipelago in the Mediterranean Sea. Seated on a white chair on the bow of the catamaran, Pope Francis admired the views of Maltese architecture the pristine-blue Mediterranean as pilgrims stood along the coast, waving at him.

As the vessel pulled into Mgarr Harbor, he was whisked away in a white Fiat 500 before boarding his popemobile. Arriving at the national shrine, the Pope greeted the estimated 3,000 pilgrims gathered outside waving flags bearing the yellow and white papal colours.

## Pope Francis prays at St Paul’s Grotto in Malta

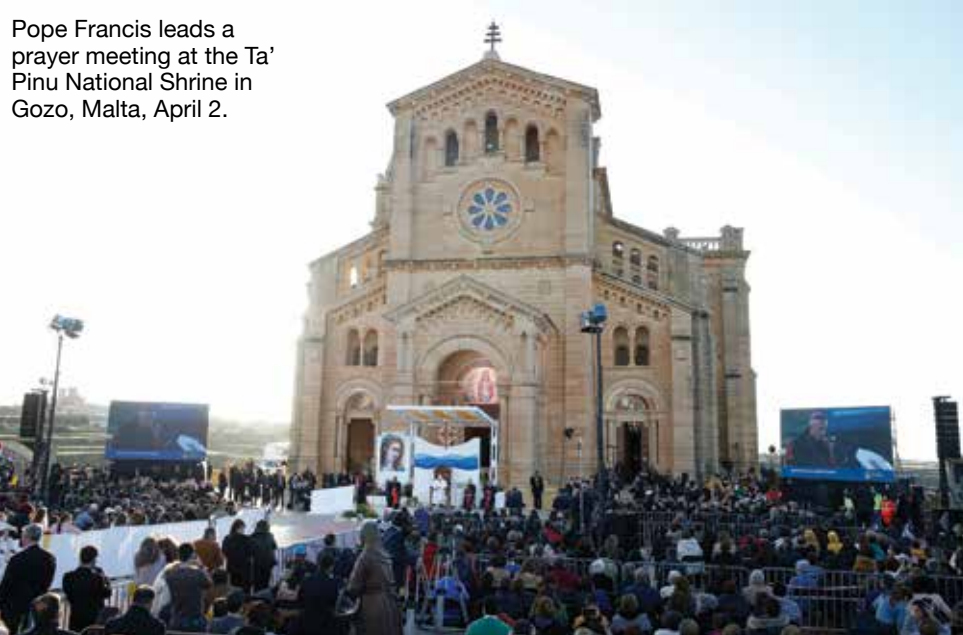
Pope Francis prayed on Sunday morning at St Paul’s Grotto in Rabat, where local tradition holds that the Apostle lived and preached during the three months he spent on the island of Malta in 60 AD.

“Good Father, grant us the grace of a kindly heart that beats with love for our brothers and sisters,” Pope Francis said in a prayer that he read during his live-streamed visit to the grotto on April 3.

The Acts of the Apostles (Acts 27:27-28:5) records that St Paul was being taken to Rome to be put on trial when the ship carrying him was



Pope Francis, accompanied by Maltese President George Vella, delivers his blessing as he greets the crowd gathered outside The Palace in Valletta, Malta, April 2.



Pope Francis leads a prayer meeting at the Ta’ Pinu National Shrine in Gozo, Malta, April 2.



Pope Francis and Maltese President George Vella attend a meeting with authorities and members of the diplomatic corps at The Palace in Valletta, Malta, April 2.

caught in a violent storm. The vessel, transporting hundreds of people, was wrecked off the Maltese coast but all aboard swam to land safely. The Apostle stayed on the island for three months.

Malta’s centuries-old Catholic faith and traditions were on display in the streets in front of the grotto, which were decorated with elaborate Maltese banners and flags depicting their patron saint.

Catholics of all ages lined

the streets waving Vatican flags and cheering as Pope Francis entered the basilica.

## Pope Francis reminds migrants in Malta of his ‘closeness’

Addressing a crowd on Sunday at the John XIII Peace Lab, an immigration reception centre in Hal Far, Malta, Pope Francis called for strengthening “the fab-

ric of social friendship and the culture of encounter, starting from places such as this.”

The Holy Father made his comments during an outdoor ceremony on the second and final day of his trip to the Mediterranean island nation. Seated in front of a display of crushed water bottles and life jackets, Pope Francis began his address by recalling a message he gave from a



People hold the Ukrainian flag as Pope Francis greets the crowd before celebrating Mass at the Granaries in Floriana, Malta, April 3.



A young man wears a Vatican flag in his hair as he waits for the start of Pope Francis’ meeting with migrants at the John XXIII Peace Lab’s Centre for Migrants in Hal Far, Malta, April 3.

refugee centre on the Greek island of Lesbos in December 2021.

“Let me repeat what I said some months ago in Lesbos: ‘I am here ... to assure you of my closeness. ... I am here to see your faces and look into your eyes,’” he said to the crowd, which included approximately 200 migrant men, women, and children. “Since the day I visited Lampedusa, I have not forgotten you. You are always in my heart and in my prayers.”

After his arrival at 4.45pm local time, Pope Francis was welcomed by Fr Dionisio Mintoff, the founder of the peace lab, and then listened to two testimonies given by migrants at the centre.

“None of us leave our homelands because of lack of love for our countries,” Siriman Coulibaly, a migrant who has been living at the centre in Malta for four years and now has a pregnant wife, told the Pope. “On the contrary, our journeys are journeys that start in hope of finding a safe space. We flee war, violent conflict, violations of human rights.”

In response to the man, the Pope later said that those who are forced to leave their countries with dreams of freedom and democracy often experience a collision of their dreams with “a harsh reality, often dangerous, sometimes terrible and inhuman”.

Speaking directly to Mr Coulibaly, he said, “You gave voice to the stifled





Pope Francis departs by catamaran for Gozo from the Grand Harbour in Valletta, Malta, April 2.



People watch as Pope Francis visits the Basilica of St Paul in Rabat, Malta, April 3.



Pope Francis meets with migrants at the John XXIII Peace Lab's Centre for Migrants in Hal Far, Malta, April 3. The backdrop was built with plastic bottles and life vests pulled from the sea.

plea of those millions of migrants whose fundamental rights are violated, sadly at times with the complicity of the competent authorities. That is the way it is, and I want to say it the way it is: Sadly, at times with the complicity of the competent authorities. And you drew our attention to the most important thing: the dignity of the person."

### Pope indicates he has not spoken directly to Putin about Ukraine war

Once again, Pope Francis avoided speaking directly about Russian President Vladimir Putin and instead focused on condemning war as a cruel and inhumane act that "goes against the human spirit".

During a conversation with journalists April 3, on the flight from Malta to the

Vatican, the Pope was asked if he had spoken to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

### “Pope Francis continued the long-held Vatican tradition of not condemning one side in a war”

"The things I have told to the authorities on all sides are public," the Pope said. "I have not held back any of the things I have said." He also revealed that the last time he spoke to Putin was when the Russian president called to express well-wishes for the New Year.

Despite numerous reports of alleged war crimes committed by Russia, Pope Francis continued the long-held Vatican tradition of not condemning one side in a war. Most recently, a series

of photos released online showed the aftermath of atrocities committed in Ukraine, including numerous Ukrainians who were seemingly executed.

Unaware of the images before the news conference, Pope Francis said the information was further proof that "war is a cruelty".

While reiterating that a possible trip to Ukraine was "on the table," the Pope said it remained uncertain. "I say with all sincerity I would like to go. The willingness is always there, there isn't a 'no,'" he said. "If it can be done, I must do it. This is all up in the air".

However, Pope Francis told journalists that a meeting with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill is in the works. "We are thinking of doing it in the Middle East," the Pope said.

*Additional reporting from CNA/CNS.*



Pope Francis accepts artwork presented by journalist Eva Maria Fernandez Huescar on his flight from Rome to Malta, April 2.



Pope Francis answers questions from journalists aboard his flight from Malta to Rome, April 3.



# Supporting beleaguered Ukrainians suffering war's toll



When a building is shaking due to incessant bombing, it causes fear but “we are with the people” a Salesian priest delivering aid to Ukraine tells **Chai Brady**

**T**he world has looked on in horror at the devastation and death left behind by Russian soldiers who retreated from a town north-east of Ukraine's capital of Kyiv over the weekend, while some offered strong words of criticism, there are those quietly continuing to deliver aid across the embattled nation and helping refugees at the borders.

Reports that Russian soldiers have committed numerous war crimes – the town of Bucha which they occupied being one example – across Ukraine have continued to grow as the leaders of other European countries offer condemnation and aid. This is not enough according to Fr Roman Sikon SDB who has been driving truckloads of supplies into Ukraine from Poland.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* from a town close to Lviv in Ukraine, Fr Sikon was optimistic about the future of Ukraine and its people. He says: “We can see the great fighting spirit and unity against the aggressors, against Russian war criminals who are coming here, so I think the Ukrainian nation won't be defeated in this war. I don't know how long it will take, maybe months, maybe years – but I think, even for years, they are ready to fight.”

He says there has been “big disappointment” among the people of Ukraine due to the actions of some European countries. He mentions France and Germany who are continuing to do business on a large scale with Russia due to their dependence on Russian gas.

“We can say they are financing this war for Russia. So this is the big disappointment for people here, and pain... in this war Ukraine is alone. Of course, there is supply coming from Nato, we don't know what kind of supply it will be but it's coming,” he says, adding “there's no safe place in Ukraine”.

Even in Lviv, which has become a hub for refugees, and as it's close to



A building near the National University in Kharkiv, Ukraine, burns after shelling. Photo CNS

Poland many refugees pass through the city before crossing the border. Fr Sikon says that even Lviv, which is considered safer than other more war-torn parts of the country, “was attacked by sophisticated weapons launched from the Black Sea”.

“Sometimes we're going to the places that are supposed to be safe but even there, if we stay there for one night, the city is attacked by rockets. When you can feel the building shaking, the windows shaking, it makes you scared but we are with the people here,” he says.

His Salesian community are based in Krakow where they collect donations and bring them via car and truck to several areas across Ukraine, including the capital Kyiv, Odesa and Korostyshiv.

## Money

One of the most important things people need is money, Fr Sikon says, as well as food, fuel and medicine.

Asked if he ever felt fear going out on his journeys around Ukraine, he says that he arrived to Kyiv just one day before Russia invaded. “This attack was of course very big, from seven directions. So you can feel scared. I was in the crowd to run away to Poland, we walked 18km then we waited 18 hours on the border to enter Poland.”

“Later they ask me in Krakow can I try to drive the first small truck to bring things to Ukraine and I said yes,

but later you have some doubts but on the day when I was starting, when I was going to Ukraine, we read the Gospel and Jesus said, the one who wants to save his life will lose it... this Gospel gave me strength. I went through the border a few times with our transport, with our relief help,” Fr Sikon says. He has been delivering aid to Ukraine for more than a month and a half now.

## “Reports that Russian soldiers have committed numerous war crimes”

Speaking directly to the people of Ireland, he says: “What is important to say to the people of Ireland is that it's not war, like somebody is fighting with somebody, there is an innocent country, the victim is Ukraine, the war criminals are the Russian army.”

“It is not only Putin, it is Russia again from the ages, it doesn't matter if it's the Tsar or Lenin, Stalin, all of them, they want to kill our nations, Ukraine, and Poland too, and other nations. The situation for us is similar from history, so maybe that's why Poland especially understands that Ukraine is fighting also for us. In Europe we have to understand they are fighting for us all.”

Fr Sikon accused Russian soldiers and pilots of deliberately tar-

geting civilians, including women and children.

“They don't respect any humanitarian efforts, they bomb people who want to run away from the city, they are shooting cars and buses with people and children in them. Even if they have agreements to keep safe corridors, when the people start to move they don't respect those and still shoot, there are many, many testimonies like that,” he says.

“Mines, land mines and special mines, they send them by plane with small parachutes in different places and those mines are specially for people and they are very sensitive. You don't have to touch this mine, it is enough if you are walking close by they feel the vibration and then they kill people, this is what they [Russian military] do.”

## Faith

The faith of the Ukrainian people has gone from strength to strength despite the war, Fr Sikon believes, saying that it is growing “even though it is very hard and painful for people and we are living in the fear of losing this life, on this earth”.

About three quarters of the population of Ukraine is Christian Orthodox while more than 10% identifying as Catholic. The west of Ukraine is where Catholicism would be strongest.

“When Pope Francis consecrated Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary a lot of people

gathered in this small parish, almost 100,000 parishioners came for this prayer,” Fr Sikon says. The consecration took place on March 25 and was led by the Pope in St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

“The spiritual condition of the Ukrainians is growing and they believe the moral justice is on the side of Ukraine. We know that Ukraine did not attack Russia, they are the ones who are being attacked by Russia. So the situation in this context is comfortable and people are strong.”

Fr Sikon states that the war in Ukraine is very much a “spiritual fight”, which is why they are fighting first and foremost with prayer. “We are praying for peace every day,” he says.

The bishop of Odesa, according to Fr Sikon, has called the exorcists in the diocese to use the exorcism ritual on Russian President Vladimir Putin to “chase out the demons who are ruling the country through him”.

“St Michael is the patron of Ukraine, we are praying to him to win this war, because the peace here will come only through the victory of Ukraine,” he adds. Donations to the Salesians can be made through [salesiansireland.ie](http://salesiansireland.ie)

## Suffering

It's not just the Salesians who are assisting the people of Ukraine, many congregations are working hard to alleviate suffering and provide spiritual and material support.

John Moffett, the CEO of Misesan Cara, an organisation which supports missionary congregations and volunteer organisations and has 88 members working in 51 countries around the globe, says missionaries are uniquely placed to respond to humanitarian crises.

**“His Salesian community are based in Krakow where they collect donations and bring them via car and truck to several areas across Ukraine”**





Fr Roman Sikon (right) stands in front of supplies which will be distributed to Ukrainian refugees.

Currently in Ukraine there are a number of members of Misesan Cara who have a congregational presence. This includes the Jesuits, the Redemptorists, the Salesians of Don Bosco, the Salesian Sisters, the Salvatorians, the Daughters of Charity and the Loreto Sisters also have a connection.

Mr Moffett says the orders that they know are actively responding to the crisis are the Jesuits, the Redemptorists, the Salesian Sisters, the Salesian of Don Bosco and the Salvatorians.

**“One of the most important things people need is money, Fr Sikon says, as well as food, fuel and medicine”**

“I can’t stress enough just how well placed these missionary organisations are to respond first and uniquely to the needs of people in Ukraine as they’re suffering from the loss of services, the lack of transport, the shelter they need during bombing,” he says.

### Network

Another advantage missionaries have is access to “a fantastic network through the churches, they’re working with local communities to help find longer term accommodation for people as well,” says Mr Moffett, “The missionaries are using all the facilities that they have available to the disposal of people. They are providing people with help as they move out of Ukraine, as people are moving across countries and particularly in Poland, they are providing support to people who are queuing up at the border, giving out blankets, food, water.

“The Salesian sisters are providing medical aid to people who have been injured through bombings in Lviv and Odesa. The Salesians are working on both sides of the border providing shelter in their facilities, churches and homes. They’re there at reception centres in Poland to help them get access to accommodation, to provide them with a cup of tea, blankets and clothes for all the people that are leaving everything behind as they move out.”

While it is clear that many Ukrainian refugees long to return home, even

if the war were to end tomorrow there is still extensive damage done to vital infrastructure which will take many years to rebuild.

Mr Moffett says missionaries, when the time comes, will have a role in the rebuilding efforts. “We all hope that a ceasefire will come in the near future but if you look at the extensive damage that’s been done it will be a long, long time before people are able to return to Ukraine that have left the country so it’s not a short term fix and I guess the challenge of this crisis is that once the immediate emergency is over the funding can dry up very quickly so what’s going to be needed is a long term commitment and support which missionary organisations are absolutely devoted to and they’ll be there both during this initial crisis but through the longer period of recovery and the return back to Ukraine when people are able to do so.”

He adds: “We’re trying to promote the work that they’re doing in Ukraine and to help them raise funds so we’re both accepting donations to Misesan Cara that we pass on to our members but also on our website we’re advertising their own fundraising efforts and promoting the work that they’re doing and directing people to their websites so they can directly contribute towards them.”

### Education

There is a plethora of challenges refugees face including barriers to education, trauma, the loss of their livelihoods and much more.

Emilia Sorrentino, the Education in Emergencies Specialist for the charity Plan International, told The Irish Catholic they have sent teams out to Moldova, Romania and Poland to assist in the refugee crisis.

She says they are supporting national organisations in the countries in a variety of ways, including to provide child protection services.

In Moldova in particular they have “set up mobile units who are composed of child protection social workers, there are lawyers, psychologists, who are providing psychological first aid because many of the refugees, you can imagine, are distressed because of the situation. They have witnessed destruction they have left family members behind so it’s evident that they really are in need of psychosocial support”, she explains.

They are providing support particularly to children who are unaccompanied and separated and may not be crossing the border with their parents.

Ms Sorrentino says: “We have been at the borders, and we have wit-



Fr Sikon pictures men with supplies for Ukrainian refugees.

nessed many women crossing with a lot of children who are not necessarily their sons and daughters therefore these children are, in particular, at risk of sexual and gender-based violence – the likes of trafficking – but the same risk is there for the women.

**“We’re trying to promote the work that they’re doing in Ukraine and to help them raise funds so we’re both accepting donations”**

“Most of the refugees, the large majority, are women and children and elderly. Most of the young men are left behind because they are engaging in the fight, supporting the military operation in Ukraine and they are not allowed to cross. “So we have witnessed children who are completely distressed and shocked because they had to leave their fathers behind and they do not know when they will see their fathers again or their brothers,” she says.

According to Plan International many of the refugees who are crossing in recent times may not have a plan compared to refugees who fled earlier in the war. Ms Sorrentino says that the first wave refugees that

were crossing had financial means, they were crossing the border in cars, and many had relatives in other European countries or a support network somewhere “but now the situation has changed”.

“More and more of the refugees who are crossing are vulnerable, they don’t have much financial means and they don’t have a plan, so they don’t know what they are going to do next,” she says.

Regarding their child protection efforts, they have seen many refugees crossing without identification documents. While adults may have IDs there are children who do not have any documents.

Ms Sorrento explained: “There are also newborn children who were born a few days before the war has started, so they don’t have a birth certificate, this is another big challenge and without any documents it is really difficult for them to continue their journey even if they want to continue and go to other European countries.”

### Education

Providing education for refugee children who speak a different language is something Ireland is already trying to navigate. Ms Sorrento say they are trying to assist the education systems in the three countries in which they are operating to help integrate refugee children who are enrolling in their schools.

“There is a need for children who want enrol to have bridging classes to learn the language, so Polish in the case of Poland and Romanian in the case of Romania, unless they are able to enrol in a Russian speaking school for instance, in Moldova there are some Russian speaking schools: Some children are bilingual so they speak Ukrainian and Russian,” Ms Sorrento says.

The level of support and engagement of local communities in Moldova, Romania and Poland is “huge”, Ms Sorrento adds, “so they are really making a huge effort, they have been at the forefront of the response and I think this has to be acknowledged.

“What international humanitarian organisations and the international community can do is really to support them, to work in collaboration with them, because they were definitely those who were there when the first refugees started crossing the borders”



Plan International donated 500 backpacks to the City Hall of Chisinau in response to a request to support child refugees from Ukraine who have been enrolled at schools in Moldova. Photo: Plan International Tat



# UCC's Honan Chapel reopens after €1.2 million refurbishment

**Ruadhán Jones**

**T**he iconic Collegiate Chapel of St Finbarr – better known as the Honan Chapel at University College Cork – reopened in March, after a €1.2 million refurbishment.

Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin celebrated Mass to mark a new chapter in the chapel's 106-year-old story.

The occasion was also marked with a dinner in the Aula Maxima hosted by the Honan Trust.

In attendance were Fr Christy O'Dwyer; Bishop Tom Deenihan, Bishop of Meath; Bishop John Buckley, Bishop-emeritus of Cork and Ross; Bishop Fintan Gavin; Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly; Bishop Ray Browne, Bishop of Kerry; Fr Noel O'Sullivan and Fr Gerard Dunne, secretary of the Honan Trust.



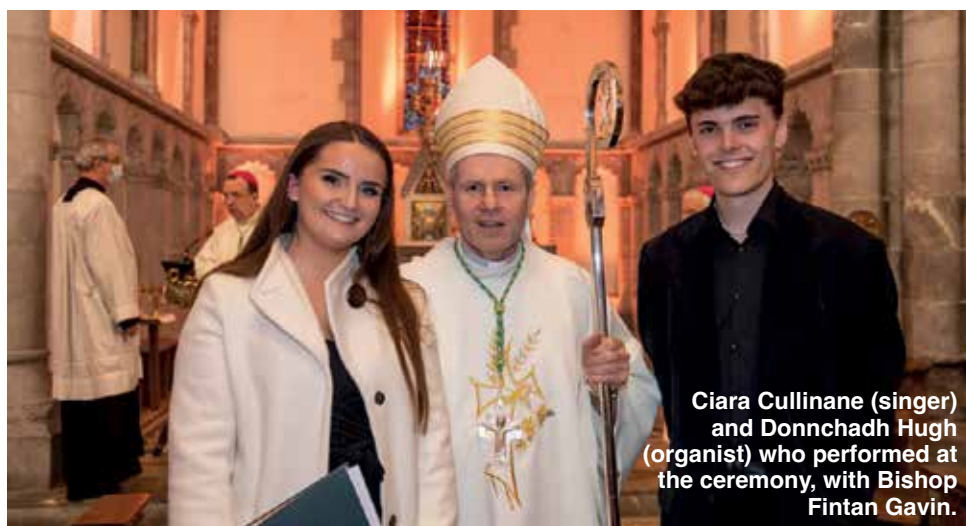
Bishop Fintan Gavin blesses the newly refurbished Honan Chapel.



Bishop Gavin celebrates Mass in the Honan Chapel. Photos: Brian Loughheed.



Pictured from left are Fr Christy O'Dwyer, Bishop Tom Deenihan of Meath, Bishop John Buckley – the bishop emeritus of Cork and Ross, Bishop Fintan Gavin, Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly of Cashel and Emly, Bishop Ray Browne of Kerry, Fr Noel O'Sullivan and Fr Gerard Dunne, secretary of the Honan Trust.



Ciara Cullinane (singer) and Donnchadh Hugh (organist) who performed at the ceremony, with Bishop Fintan Gavin.



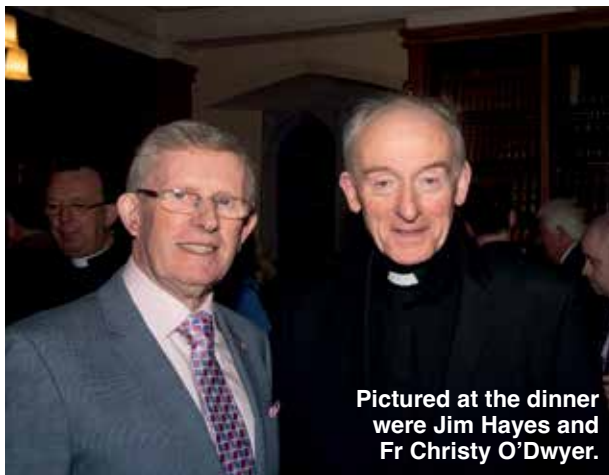
Pictured in the in the Aula Maxima dinner were, from left: Bishop Ray Browne, Bishop of Kerry with Maeve and Cillian Hurley.



Pictured at the dinner were Bishop Fintan Gavin, Bishop of Cork and Ross with Chris and Susan Dineen.



President of UCC Prof. John O'Halloran, Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan and Virginia Teehan



Pictured at the dinner were Jim Hayes and Fr Christy O'Dwyer.



Pictured at the dinner were, from left: Prof John O'Halloran, President of UCC; Cllr Mary Rose Desmond, Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork; Dr Cathy Day, Chair of the Governing Body UCC and Bishop John Buckley, bishop-emeritus of Cork and Ross.





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# Fr McVerry commends Derry JP II awards recipients for outreach

**Ruadhán Jones**

**A**t the 15th annual John Paul II awards ceremony in Derry, Fr Peter McVerry commended the recipients of the awards for reaching out to their parishes and communities.

In reaching out, Fr McVerry said, “they were meeting Jesus in those they encountered”.

Fr McVerry was the guest speaker

at the ceremony, and along with Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown presented 288 young people from Derry and beyond with their certificates and medals in St Eugene’s Cathedral, Derry.

The young people represented 42 parishes in the diocese and 19 from outside of it, including seven from London.

This year, four people who had previously achieved their gold award received the Papal Cross award.



Parish of Saint Eugene’s Cathedral, Derry City



Bishop Donal McKeown and Fr Peter McVerry present medals to students and staff from Crana College in St Eugene’s Cathedral, Derry.



Saint Columb’s College



Sacred Heart College Omagh



Loreto College Coleraine



Lumen Christi College



Saint Brigid’s College



Holy Cross College



# Out&About

## Feeding the leaders of tomorrow



**ARMAGH:** A group picture taken following a Mass of thanksgiving in Armagh Cathedral for the work of Mary's Meals in Armagh and Benburbs through the Mother's Prayer Group. During the Mass, Fr Barry Matthews commented that Mary's Meals is feeding the priests and leaders of tomorrow.



**KILDARE:** Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty is pictured with students who received their Meitheal award in Cill Mhuire Church, Newbridge parish on the first of three Meitheal achievement nights. Bishop Nulty said it was great to meet students from CBS Naas, St Pauls Monasterevin, Kildare Town Community School and six other schools from the north of the diocese.



**DERRY:** Some Primary 4 children from St Eithne's PS are pictured with Fr Paul Farren at St Eugene's Cathedral, where they led the responses to the rosary for peace.

### IN SHORT

#### Conference to bring youth to God through Mary

A young adult conference hopes to teach young people to trust God with Mary, through a day of adoration, talks and conversation.

The conference, hosted by the Legion of Mary, takes place Saturday April 30 in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and costs €25 (including lunch).

Running from 10am-5pm, organisers hope to invite young adults to "learn, share and discuss our faith".

"We are delighted that Fr Declan Lohan will lead the conference, while the schedule includes eminent speakers, such as Fr Luke

Demasi," one of the organisers said.

Fr Demasi, of the Servants of the Home of the Mother, has spoken at conferences across the country, bringing "a great zeal for Our Lady and knowledge of the challenges of modern life for young people".

"It will be a fantastic day of events for young Catholics including talks, liturgies, adoration, confessions along with lots of social time," the spokesperson said.

The conference is aimed at Catholics aged 18-40 and tickets can be purchased on Eventbrite.ie.

The day-long event will include testimonies from young men and women, as well as a talk on the founder of the Legion of Mary, Servant of God Frank Duff, by *The Irish Catholic* journalist Ruadhán Jones.

#### Celebration to mark 70 years of Catholic education at NI school

A special celebration will take place in Co. Antrim this summer to mark seven decades of Catholic secondary education at Garron Tower.

Current and former pupils and staff are invited to visit St Killian's College, near Carnlough, for an open day on August 20, *The Irish News* reports.

Mass will be celebrated in the chapel, with the last surviving past president of St MacNissi's College, Fr Paddy Delargy, as chief celebrant.

In addition, a new book will be launched in the college gymnasium that has been put together after the Garron Tower past pupils' association decided to place on record as much historical material as possible.

It has been written by former *Irish News* journalist Denis O'Hara, a Garron Tower pupil, who has trawled through the school's history to record as many school days as possible.

Donations towards the open day and book launch, can be made at [www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/garron-tower](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/garron-tower).

Contributions of £100-plus will receive a complimentary book, signed by Denis O'Hara. Books can be pre-ordered for £30 by emailing [garrontower1@gmail.com](mailto:garrontower1@gmail.com).





**WEXFORD:** Teacher, Tony French is pictured with Fr Michael Collender after Mass in Good Counsel College Church, New Ross, where they prayed for all who suffer in Ukraine, and for peace in our world through the power of God's holy cross.



**DERRY:** Lizzie and Niamh of Derry Diocesan Youth and Mary O'Boyle, Post-Primary advisor updated the rosary for peace tracker today at the Grotto in St Eugene's Cathedral. Derry schools have prayed 329,857 Hail Marys for Peace for Ukraine.



**ITALY:** Fr Michael Toomey is pictured bringing over 2,000 petitions from people all over Ireland to the tomb of Padre Pio, where he celebrated Mass, March 29.



**KERRY:** Fr Michael Moynihan PP Dingle, presents a cheque with the proceeds of the cribs in the parish of Dingle, which amounted to €3,440 to Órla Kennedy, Sinéad Moriarty, Róisín Dalby and Cora Slattery, students of Pobal Scoil, Corcha Dhuibhne who are part of the Kenyan Cara Project. The students will be travelling to Kenya in May.



**TIPPERARY:** Fr Billy Meehan is pictured with Mayor Michael Murphy and Tipperary councillors during St Patrick's Day Celebrations at St Mary's Church, Irishtown, Clonmel.



**DOWN:** Members of Queen's University Belfast's Blest group joined The Hub for an evening of arts, crafts and shopping in aid of Waakisa Ministries, March 29.



**TYRONE:** The North's Minister of Education Michelle McIlveen, meets students from Sacred Heart College during a visit to the school, March 23. She met teachers, staff and students and was treated to a concert by the school's traditional music group and vocal/ukulele band.



Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
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Events deadline is a week in  
advance of publication



**CORK:** Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin prays before a statue of the Virgin Mary during the act of consecration of Russia and Ukraine in the North Cathedral.



**CORK:** Second Class boys from St Mark's NS, the Glen, after pictured after making their first Confession. The school said they were very proud of the boys and thanked their teachers Ms Feehan and Ms Downey who prepared to them for the ceremony today.



**MAYO:** Fr Richard Gibbons rector of Knock Shrine bows before the processional statue of Our Lady of Knock during the act of consecration in Knock Shrine, March 25. Photo: Sinead Malee.



**ARMAGH:** Archbishop Eamon Martin prays the act of consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at Newry Cathedral.

## ARMAGH

Archbishop Eamon Martin along with clergy of the diocese will celebrate a Chrism Mass on April 13 in St Patrick's Cathedral. Mass commences at 7pm.

Lenten Reflections in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh take place on Tuesday evenings during Lent concluding on April 12 with a talk on the theme of 'Grief – a process that's experienced one day at a time' at 7.30pm.

The Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre is hosting a workshop entitled 'Finding the joy, purpose and happiness you deserve' on Saturday April 9 (9.30am-4.30pm).

## CARLOW

Bishop Denis Nulty will celebrate a Chrism Mass at Carlow Cathedral on Monday 11th April at 7.30pm.

## CORK

Bishop Fintan Gavin, Bishop of Cork and Ross will officiate at a special Mass for People with Parkinson's, their families and friends to take place in St Patrick's Church, Rochestown, Cork on Wednesday April 27 at 7pm.

## DERRY

A rosary group meets at St Patrick's Church, Castledawson every Tuesday at 7pm.

## DONEGAL

Contemplative meditation meetings take place each Saturday at 11am in the Franciscan Friary, Rosstown.

## DUBLIN

The Manresa team from the Jesuit Centre of spirituality will be hosting the last of its series on Synodal prayer and discernment evenings, which concludes on Wednesday April 13 with a Zoom meeting entitled 'Finding inner freedom' between 7.30-9.30pm. Mike Drennan SJ and Mary Hunt will guide the online session.

A young adult Catholic conference will take place on Saturday April 30 at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, organised by the Legion of Mary. Fr Declan Lohan will lead the conference, while the schedule includes noted speakers, such as Fr Luke Demasi. For more information, visit Eventbrite.ie.

## KILDARE

St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth will host an international conference entitled 'The Future of Christian Thinking' April 27-30 which will feature prominent guest speakers, including former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and Cyril O'Regan. For more information visit maynoothcollege.ie.

## KERRY

Adoration for world peace will begin after the 11am Mass on Friday April 8 in the O'Connell Memorial Church, Cahersiveen until midnight in front of the main altar.

## GALWAY

Adoration takes place each Tuesday in the Achonry/Mullinabreena Parish between 4pm-8pm in Mullinabreena and 6pm-9pm in Achonry.

## LAOIS

A triduum celebrating the Paschal journey in the 21st Century will take place at Mount St Anne's Retreat and Conference Centre, Portarlinton from April 14-17 and will be facilitated by Fr Diarmuid O'Murchú. For more information visit www.mountstannes.com.

## LOUTH

A one-day archdiocesan youth retreat will take place at the Oasis of Peace in Collon on Sunday April 10. The day will commence at 10am with Mass celebrated by Bishop Michael Router and will conclude at 4pm.

The St Padre Pio Mass and devotions will recommence on Thursday April 21 at 7pm at St Mary's Church, Drogheda.

## LIMERICK

The Legion of Mary hosts weekly meetings in the Pastoral Centre, Doon on Tuesday evenings at 7pm.

## MAYO

Latin Mass in the Extraordinary Form will take place at Our Lady's Shrine Knock on Sunday April 10 at 5.30pm.

Adoration will take place at Bohola Parish from 7.00pm to 9.00pm every Wednesday.

## MEATH

The St Padre Pio Mass is held in St Mary's Church Navan on the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. Rosary said before Mass.

## MONAGHAN

Adoration in Blessed Sacrament Chapel at St Joseph's Carrickmacross takes place Monday 9-10am, Tuesday 9am-7pm, Wednesday 9-10am, Thursday 9-10am, Friday 9-10am, Saturday 10-11am and Sunday 1-6pm.

## ROSCOMMON

Bishop Paul Dempsey is inviting parishioners from every parish in the diocese to participate in the Chrism Mass at St Nathy's Cathedral, Balaghaderreen, on Monday April 11 at 7.30pm.

## SLIGO

Eucharistic Adoration is held at Tubbercurry Church on Wednesdays from 11am to 7pm.

## LEITRIM

A period of Eucharistic adoration will take place each Saturday morning after the 10am mass during Lent at St Mary's Church, Carrick-On-Shannon.

## LONGFORD

Christian meditation on Tuesday evenings in St Mel's Cathedral's Meditation Room over the sacristy 6.40pm to 7.15pm. Enter through the back door of the Cathedral, from 6.30pm.

## TIPPERARY

Easter Penitential Mass will be held at St Kevin's Church, Littleton on Thursday, April 7 at 7.30pm.

## TYRONE

A one-day archdiocesan youth retreat will take place in Cookstown Parochial Centre on Saturday April 9. The day will commence at 10am with Mass celebrated by Bishop Michael Router, concluding at 4pm.

## WESTMEATH

Prayers are recited every Wednesday at 3pm in Our Lady, Queen of Peace Church, Coosan.

A prayer meeting is held in the Friary Church, Athlone, every Monday night from 7pm-8pm.

## WEXFORD

Legion of Mary meetings will take place every Thursday afternoon at noon in St Michael's Pastoral Centre, New Ross.





# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Catholic priest abducted after Sunday Mass in Nigeria

● A Catholic priest of the Diocese of Minna in Nigeria was among 45 people kidnapped after Mass March 27.

The Nigeria Catholic Network reported that on the morning of March 27, assailants abducted villagers along with Fr Leo Raphael Ozigi, a priest of St Mary's Catholic Church in the town of Sarkin Pawa.

Fr Emeka Amanchukwu, the diocesan chancellor, confirmed to ACI Africa that Fr Ozigi had been kidnapped.

Fr Amanchukwu said in a letter to the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria that "the unfortunate incident occurred when the priest was returning to his place of residence in Christ the King Parish, Gwada, after the celebration of the Holy Mass in his parish, St Mary's Parish, Sarkin Pawa".

### Tabernacle of Chilean church desecrated

● Fr Pedro Pedraza, the rector of the Lourdes Grotto Shrine in Santiago, Chile, has reported that two ciboria which had contained consecrated hosts were stolen from the shrine's tabernacle March 28.

The Daughters of Saint Ann, nuns who live in the area, were "alerted by a call from parents from Saint Ann School," who told them that

there were "hosts lying in the street."

Around 4:30 pm the superior picked up "some hosts and then others were found, along the same street".

In his statement, the rector lamented "the sad and painful news" and asked the Faithful to join in prayers of reparation.

### Thousands march for life in Madrid

● Thousands of people participated in the March for Life held March 27 in Madrid. The march terminated at the Plaza de Cibeles, where a stage was set up for the main event.

The organisers explained that the purpose of the march was to emphasise that "life must be cared for from conception until natural death and that just laws must be passed".

A manifesto was read at the March 27 event stating that "every human being has the right to life and to be treated as he deserves because of his dignity, from conception to natural death".

### Colombian priest urges conscientious voting ahead of election

● A Colombian priest has called on Catholics to be consistent with their religious convictions and the teaching of the Church when voting for their political representatives, as the country's presidential election nears.

Colombia's presidential election will be held May 29.

In a video, Fr Ramiro Quintero Salazar reminded the Faithful of the

importance of participating in elections and voting for political representatives who respect the teaching of the Catholic Church on life, family, and religious freedom.

Fr Quintero, a member of the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity, is a chaplain at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Chapel in Cali.

### Egyptian cardinal's life marked by 'faith and priestly zeal'

● Pope Francis has offered condolences after the death of the Egyptian Cardinal Antonios Naguib.

Cardinal Naguib died in Cairo on March 28, nearly 10 years after he retired as the Patriarch of Alexandria, the head of the Coptic Catholic Church, for health reasons. He was 87 years old.

In a message sent by the Pope to Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak, the current Coptic Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria, Pope Francis recalled Naguib's "faith and priestly zeal" and his prioritisation of priestly formation.

## German cardinal calls for change in Church teaching on homosexuality

German Cardinal Reinhard Marx said in an interview published on last week that the Catechism of the Catholic Church is "not set in stone" and "one is also allowed to doubt what it says."

The cardinal made the comments in a seven-page spread in the March 31 edition of the weekly current affairs magazine *Stern*, reported CNA Deutsch.

Cardinal Marx, the archbishop of Munich and Freising, is one of the most influential Catholic leaders in Europe, serving as a member of Pope Francis' Council of Cardinal Advisers and president of the Vatican's Council for the Economy.

He spoke about the Catechism in response to a question about "how homosexual, queer, or trans people are to be accommodated in Catholic teaching".

He said: "An inclusive ethic that we envision is not about being lax — as some claim. It is about something else: encounter at eye level, respect for the other. The value of love is shown in the relationship; in not making the other person an object, in not using or humiliating the other person, in being faithful and dependable to each other. The Catechism is not set in stone. One may also doubt what it says."

He went on: "We discussed these questions during the family synod, but there was reluctance to set something down. Even then I said: there are people living in an inti-



German Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising speaks in front of a rainbow flag during a service marking the 20th anniversary of the LGBTQ community at St Paul's Church in Munich, March 13. Photo: CNS.

mate love relationship that is expressed sexually. Are we really going to say that this is worthless? Sure, there are people who want to see sexuality limited to procreation, but what do they say to people who can't have children?"

Cardinal Marx's comments are part of a growing push within the German Church for changes to the Catechism's teaching on homosexuality.

Earlier this month, Bishop Georg Bätzing, Cardinal Marx's successor as chairman of the German bishops' conference, agreed with a journalist's assertion that

"no one" adhered to the Church's teaching that sexuality should only be practiced within marriage.

"That's true," Bishop Bätzing said. "And we have to somewhat change the Catechism on this matter. Sexuality is a gift from God. And not a sin."

He was speaking after participants in the German "Synodal Way" voted in favour of draft documents calling for same-sex blessings and the revision of Catholic teaching on homosexuality.

In February, another prominent European Church

leader, Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich SJ, was asked by the German Catholic news agency KNA how he dealt "with the Church teaching that homosexuality is a sin".

He replied: "I believe that this is wrong. But I also believe that we are thinking ahead in doctrine here. The way the Pope has expressed himself in the past, this can lead to a change in doctrine. Because I believe that the sociological-scientific foundation of this teaching is no longer correct."

## Former Vatican official 'obeyed' orders in London property deal

A former Vatican official facing charges of extortion and abuse of office related to a controversial London property deal said he was acting under obedience in his role and made no decisions without approval from his direct superior, Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra.

Msgr Mauro Carlino, who served as secretary to then-Archbishop Angelo Becciu, when he served as the Vatican substitute secretary for general affairs — the No. 3 position in the Vatican Secretariat of State — and Archbishop Peña

Parra, the current substitute, took the stand at a Vatican trial March 30.

Since his indictment last year, Msgr Carlino told the court: "I have turned my gaze to the cross. I asked myself several times: What wrong have I done? I have obeyed. And in obedience I think I have done the Lord's will. Obedience to superiors has characterised my existence."

Msgr Carlino is among the 10 defendants, including Cardinal Becciu, facing charges stemming from a Vatican investigation into how the Secretariat of State

used \$200 million to finance a property development project in London's Chelsea district.

Archbishop Peña Parra is not one of the defendants. The Vatican's initial investment in the property was made while then-Archbishop Becciu worked in the Secretariat of State; later, under Archbishop Peña Parra, the Vatican moved to purchase a majority stake in the property. In the end, the deal cost the Vatican millions of dollars.

## Arab Christian policeman killed in terror attack in Israel

An Arab Christian police officer was one of five killed by a Palestinian gunman in a suburb of the Israeli city of Tel Aviv March 29.

The attack took place that evening in Bnei Brak, one of the country's most populous

ultra-Orthodox Jewish areas.

One of those killed was Christian police officer Amir Khoury, a 32-year-old Israeli Arab from Nazareth.

The first two victims were two Ukrainian men killed as they sat outside of a local

grocery shop, while the final victims before Mr Khoury's intervention were Israeli residents of the Bnei Brak neighbourhood.

Mr Khoury was fatally wounded when he and his partner confronted the

attacker, while his partner shot and killed the gunman.

The funeral of the "hero of Israel" was presided over by a Greek-Orthodox priest, before he was interred with the nation's flag draped over his casket.





Edited by Jason Osborne  
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## Carrying each other home



Rescuers in Kyiv, Ukraine, carry the body of a person killed during shelling by Russian troops, March 30. Photo: CNS

## Christian MP acquitted on all charges after Finland's Bible tweet trial

The verdict in the closely watched trial of a Finnish Christian MP was announced March 30.

A court in Helsinki dismissed all charges against Päivi Räsänen, a physician and mother of five, and Juhana Pohjola, a bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland, after a free speech trial that drew international attention.

The court said in a unanimous 28-page ruling on March 30 that "it is not for the district court to interpret biblical concepts".

It said that Ms Räsänen had sought to "defend the concept of family and mar-

riage between a man and a woman". If some people found the statements offensive, it said, "there must be an overriding social reason for interfering with and restricting freedom of expression".

It ordered the state pay legal costs to the defence of more than €60,000.

Ms Räsänen said: "I am so grateful the court recognised the threat to free speech and ruled in our favour. I feel a weight has been lifted off my shoulders after being acquitted."

"Although I am grateful for having had this chance to stand up for freedom of

speech, I hope that this ruling will help prevent others from having to go through the same ordeal."

The charges against the 62-year-old Ms Räsänen related to her comments in a 2004 pamphlet, her appearance in a 2018 radio debate, and a Twitter post in 2019.

The Prosecutor General charged Ms Räsänen, who served as Finland's interior minister from 2011 to 2015, with incitement against a minority group, arguing that her statements were "likely to cause intolerance, contempt, and hatred towards homosexuals".

The charge against Poh-

jola concerned his decision to publish Ms Räsänen's pamphlet, "Male and Female He Created Them."

Ms Räsänen, who was chairwoman of the Christian Democrats party from 2004 to 2015, is an active member of the Finnish Lutheran Church. But she questioned her Church's sponsorship of an LGBT pride event in 2019.

On June 17, 2019, she asked in a Twitter post how the sponsorship was compatible with the Bible, linking to a photograph of a biblical passage, Romans 1:24-27, on Instagram. She also posted the text and image on Facebook.

## US state drops residency requirement for assisted suicide

Oregon has dropped its residency requirement for assisted suicide, meaning doctors will be allowed to prescribe lethal drugs to people who do not reside in the state.

In response to a federal lawsuit, the state agreed to stop enforcing the residency requirement, March 28. In addition, the Oregon Health Authority agreed to write a bill for state lawmakers which would repeal the requirement entirely.

Oregon Right to Life, a pro-life group active in the state, deplored the settle-

ment and expressed worry that this would mark the start of "death tourism" in Oregon.

"We already have a problem with dangerously short physician-patient relationships and the push to eliminate any waiting period for life-ending drugs. We should not be expanding access to lethal prescriptions," said Oregon Right to Life Executive Director Lois Anderson.

"The residency requirement at least protected some patients from predatory practices going unnoticed in the current execution of the law."

Compassion & Choices, an advocacy organisation that pushes for expanded legalisation of assisted suicide, filed the suit on behalf of Nicholas Gideonse, an Oregon doctor wishing to write prescriptions for patients in nearby Washington to end their lives.

The group filed the lawsuit arguing that Oregon's residency requirement violated the Privileges and Immunities Clause of the Constitution, which states that "the citizens of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several states".

## Vatican roundup

### Pope Francis to visit Indigenous peoples in Canada in July

● Pope Francis has said that he will travel to Canada in the summer, possibly for the feast of St Anne on July 26.

He made the announcement during a meeting with Canadian Indigenous leaders at the Vatican on April 1.

"You have brought the living sense of your communities here in Rome," the Pope said. "I will be happy to benefit again from meeting you by visiting your native lands, where your families live."

"I will not come to you in winter," he said, adding "see you again in Canada, where I shall be able to express my closeness to you better."

The Vatican has not yet confirmed a papal trip to Canada, though the Canadian bishops said last year that they would welcome his visit as a "pilgrimage of healing and reconciliation".

### Pope: Person with autism can be a Good Samaritan

● Pope Francis on Friday urged for a culture of inclusion, belonging and solidarity for persons with autism so that they not only receive attention but also participate in and contribute to society.

He made the exhortation in his meeting with over 200 representatives of the Italian Autism Foundation (FIA), on the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day, April 2, Saturday.

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterised by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication.

The Holy Father thanked the foundation saying through their research projects and initiatives in favour of the weakest and most disadvantaged, they are making a valuable

contribution to the fight against the "throw-away culture prevalent in our society that is too focused on competition and profit".

In this regard, he encouraged a culture of inclusion and belonging. Disability, in all its forms, he said, represents a challenge and an opportunity to build together a more inclusive and civil society, where family members, teachers, and associations like FIA are not left alone but are supported.

This calls for raising awareness about autism spectrum disorder, breaking down prejudices, and promoting a culture of inclusion and belonging, based on the dignity of the person, he said.

The Pope said that men and women who are more fragile and vulnerable and that are too often marginalised are actually a great asset to society.

### New bishop of Lourdes appointed

● Pope Francis named March 30 a new bishop of the French Catholic diocese that is home to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, one of the world's most-visited Marian shrines.

Msgr Jean-Marc Micas was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Tarbes-et-Lourdes on March 30.

Msgr Micas currently serves as the French provincial superior of the Society of Priests of Saint-Sulpice (PSS), a society of apostolic life founded in 1642 that focuses on priestly formation.

The 58-year-old priest will fill the vacancy in the Lourdes diocese left when Bishop Nicolas Brouwet was reassigned as bishop of Nîmes in August 2021.

In a video message on March 30, Msgr Micas said that he was overwhelmed and surprised by his appointment.

He noted the difficulties and suffering facing the Church in France as a result of clerical abuse scandals and said he hoped to be a pastor and friend to all entrusted to his care within the diocese.



# Passion Play makes a post-pandemic return in Germany's Oberammergau

Gunther Simmermacher

In 1633, at the height of the Reformation, the Black Death was sweeping through Europe, including the southern German region of Bavaria. The terrified people of one small village decided to do something to protect themselves from this pandemic: The villagers vowed that every 10 years they would perform a "Passionsspiel" – a play depicting the Passion of Christ – should their hamlet be spared.

The pandemic spared the village of Oberammergau, and on Pentecost the following year the villagers staged their first Passion Play, at the town's cemetery. It has been performed by the villagers at regular intervals ever since, most recently in 2010.

Now, 389 years after that pandemic, Oberammergau is ready to stage another Passion Play, at a time when the world is waiting to mark the end of another pandemic. The Passion Play was originally planned to be performed in 2020, but Covid-19 caused cancellation. With foresight, the organisers decided to delay the play for two years. This year, from May 14 to October 2, the play will be performed five days a week.

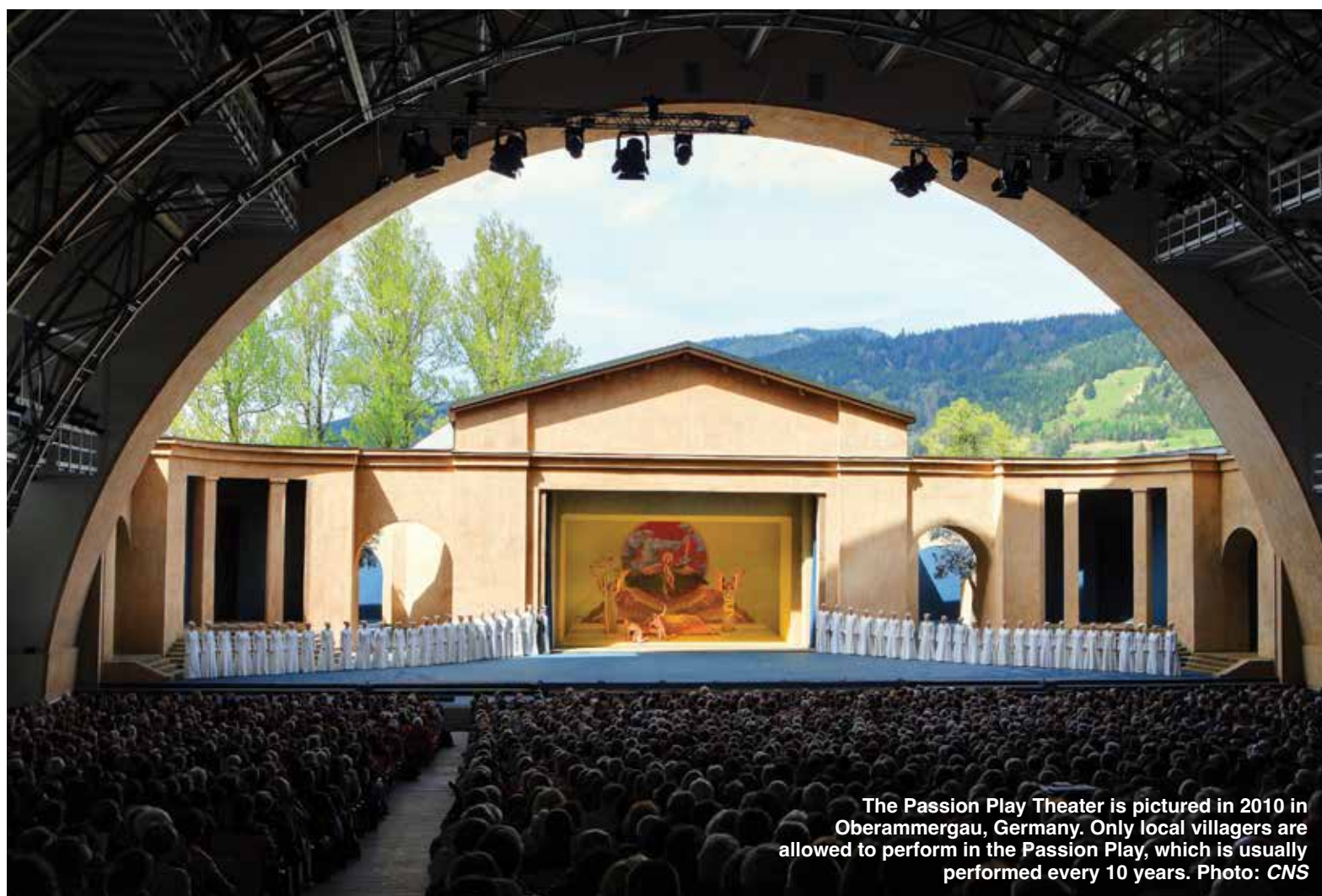
Oberammergau, population 5,400, is near the winter sports resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, and the village subsists on the revenue of the play and the associated tourism. While those who produce and act in the play are driven by local pride and piety, the organisers of the modern Oberammergau Passion Play are motivated by economics.

**“In return for their modest remuneration, the cast members invest many hours of practice every night from January to the opener in May”**

Performances are sold out well in advance. In 2010, half a million people attended the 102 performances. One day fights broke out at the box office when 300 people came to compete for 40 available tickets. Many of these multitudes come from afar, and they must sleep somewhere, eat, drink, buy souvenirs. The whole region around Oberammergau benefits.

The souvenir shops are plenty, and the village's world-famous wood-carvings are popular with visitors. Not all wood carvings on sale are produced in Oberammergau; some are made in China.

But it would be unjust to dismiss the Passion Play as a purely commercial exercise. The Catholic faith infuses the air in Oberammergau, as it does throughout the region – most of Germany's remaining 21 Passion Plays are performed in Bavaria. The sincerity of those who take part should not be doubted. Only locally born people or residents of at least 20 years may act in the play; musicians and members of the chorus may be drawn from surrounding areas. The



The Passion Play Theater is pictured in 2010 in Oberammergau, Germany. Only local villagers are allowed to perform in the Passion Play, which is usually performed every 10 years. Photo: CNS

**“While those who produce and act in the play are driven by local pride and piety, the organisers of the modern Oberammergau Passion Play are motivated by economics”**

cast also includes animals, which need not be local.

## Villagers

For the 2,100 villagers who take part, it is a labour of love and, for many, an exercise in evangelisation. There is not much in it for most of them, but the sacrifices are many. Some actors take unpaid leave to participate. Outside the leading roles, the actors do not earn much. And there are fines for transgressions, such as laughing on stage.

In return for their modest remuneration, the cast members invest many hours of practice every night from January to the opener in May. The men must grow long hair and beards – by a traditional decree promulgated by the mayor.

Since November 2018, everyone has known what their role will be, from the leads to understudies to ushers. One of the two Jesuses, Frederik Mayet, a 41-year-old art director at a Munich theatre, played that role in 2010. Years before that, he played St John – and 2010's John has been promoted to the role of Judas in 2022.

This year's alternate Jesus is Rochus Rückel, at 25 the second-youngest

actor to play the part in the Passion Play's almost 400-year history. The two actors playing Annas, the high priest Caiaphas' ruthless father-in-law, have been performing in the play since 1950.

Oberammergau did not invent Passion Plays. These were widespread in medieval times, performed throughout the German-speaking region as well as in countries such as France, Italy and England. Before and for long after Oberammergau's villagers made their plague-dodging bargain with God, the most famous Passion Play was that of Benediktbeuren, also in Bavaria. The oldest complete script of a Passion Play dates to the 14th century.

## Reformation

With the Reformation, Passion Plays fell out of common usage in most parts of Germany, but in the solidly Catholic Bavarian Alps and Austria they became increasingly popular. It was in that context that the Oberammergau play was born, along with 40 others in the region between 1600 and 1650.

Oberammergau gained a measure of pre-eminence in 1750 when its script was thoroughly reworked by

Benedictine Father Ferdinand Rosner of the nearby Ettal Abbey. That script was adopted by other Passion Plays throughout Bavaria. In 1780, when Passion Plays were banned in Bavaria, Oberammergau's was one of two plays granted an exemption. This near-monopoly helped establish Oberammergau's Passion Play and, in the mid-19th century, it began to attract international attention and increasing popularity.

**“For the 2,100 villagers who take part, it is a labour of love and, for many, an exercise in evangelisation”**

By the 1930s, Oberammergau attracted 400,000 spectators. Among them in 1934 – the play's 300th anniversary – was Adolf Hitler.

Throughout their history, Passion Play runs generally were not a good time for a Jew to be seen in public – and not only in Germany. Stoked on by the assertion that Jews were responsible for the execution of Christ and the blood libel (the

rumours that Jews used the blood of Christian children for the production of matzos for the Passover), Christian crowds would attack Jews, even burning their homes.

Oberammergau did not solve the problem of anti-Semitism in its script until the 1990s, almost three decades after the Second Vatican Council decree “Nostra Aetate,” which put an end to the final remnants of institutional anti-Semitism.

## Reworking

The reworking came with Christian Stückl, who first directed the play as a 29-year-old in 1990 and has done so ever since. He supervised two comprehensive revisions to shed the play of any trace of anti-Semitism. The script now presents Jesus as the leader of a Jewish movement, rather than as non-Jewish victim of an intrinsically bloodthirsty people.

The theology of the Passion Play is modern and profoundly Christian: The play does not condemn but seeks to understand motivations. Judas does not betray Jesus for greed but in a tragically misguided strategic gambit. Likewise, Caiaphas' concerns are mostly political: Jesus is a danger to a delicate peace between the Jews and the Roman occupiers.

It is not spoiling any plotlines to reveal that the story culminates in the Resurrection. In 2010, the last words in the Oberammergau play belonged to the choir, which declared: “Hallelujah! Praise, honour, adoration, power and majesty be yours, forever and ever!”



# UN agencies paint dire picture with stats showing 1 in 10 Ukrainians a refugee



A Ukrainian girl from Kharkiv looks out a train window bound for Warsaw, Poland, March 23, with people fleeing Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. Photo: CNS



Carol Glatz

**M**ore than 4 million people have fled Ukraine in the past five weeks, and half of them are children, said two UN agencies.

"Children make up half of all refugees from the war in Ukraine," UNICEF said March 30 in a media release that included data from UNHCR, the UN refugee agency.

UNICEF estimated that 2 million children have fled the war in Ukraine in search of safety across borders, and an additional 2.5 million children are displaced within the country. That means about 60% of all children have been forced from their homes since the conflict started February 24, it said.

**Poland has taken in the majority of refugees – 2.3 million, according to the UN, "**

The UNHCR reported March 23 that 6.5 million people have been displaced internally within Ukraine and over 12 million more have been affected in the areas hardest hit by the war. "Humanitarian needs are increasing exponentially," it said.

With the latest figures, nearly 10% of the 44 million people who lived in Ukraine before the conflict have become refugees, according to the UNHCR estimates as of March 30. Those figures could be higher, it added.

"The situation inside Ukraine is spiralling," said Catherine Russell, executive director of UNICEF.

"As the number of children fleeing their homes continues to climb, we must remember that every single one of them needs protection, education, safety and support," she said in a March 30 statement.

## Majority

Poland has taken in the majority of refugees – 2.3 million, according to the UN, and more than 1.1 million of them are children, with hundreds of thousands also arriving in Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, it said.

Rafal Trzaskowski, mayor of Warsaw, has appealed for help from other nations. There are some 300,000 refugees just in the capital, which is struggling to provide needed services, he said.

Meanwhile, Italians in the northern Lombardy region, with the help of a major trade fair management company in Milan, have sent seven tractor-trailers loaded with the first of a total of 100 tons

of food and supplies to the Ptak Warsaw Expo centre, LombardiaNotizie.online said March 30.

The expo centre is the largest congress centre in Central and Eastern Europe, and it has been repurposed into a humanitarian aid shelter for refugees. Up to 10,000 people a day come through the centre on their way to other destinations in Europe, the news outlet said.

**"The situation inside Ukraine is spiralling," said Catherine Russell, executive director of UNICEF"**

A "peace caravan" of about 60 trucks, minivans and other vehicles left Italy March 31 to arrive in Lviv, Ukraine, which has also been the target of Russian missile strikes.

In addition to bringing one million euros worth of emergency supplies, drivers will also be transporting back to Italy about 300 vulnerable people, including children in need of urgent medical attention, according to *Avvenire*, the daily newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference.

There will be a peace march through the city centre and an

ecumenical prayer service April 2, it said.

The initiative was organised by the Pope John XXIII Community, founded by the late Father Oreste Benzi, and was part of its "Stop the war now" appeal, the newspaper said March 30.

Nearly 200 people are expected to arrive in Lviv. Among them will be Archbishop Giuseppe Satriano of Bari-Bitonto, who will carry a message on behalf of the Italian bishops' conference, and representatives of Pax Christi, the Focolare movement, the Comboni Missionaries and many other groups promoting nonviolence and rights' protections.

## Initiatives

The "peace caravan" comes under an umbrella of similar initiatives launched by Father Benzi in 1992, called "Operation Dove of Peace," which saw 500 members of the community and Italian conscientious objectors march to Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was then under siege. "Operation Dove of Peace" continued over the decades with activists arriving in other cities caught up in deadly conflicts around the world to offer aid, support and solidarity.

"We want to show the other side of Europe, the part that does

not believe in sending arms and weapons of war, but wants to bring another kind of help," said Gianpiero Cofano, general secretary of the Pope John XXIII Community.

"We are also thinking of organising a small delegation that will head to Moscow to show our closeness to Russian civilians who are against this war," he told *Avvenire*.

**"There will be a peace march through the city centre and an ecumenical prayer service April 2"**

Despite the dangers and risks of speaking out against the war, more than 1.5 million Russian civilians signed a change.org petition in early March, calling for an end to the war with Ukraine. "We demand an immediate cease-fire by the Russian armed forces and their immediate withdrawal from the territory of the sovereign state of Ukraine," said the petition.

Other open letters and petitions protesting the war were launched by different professional communities, gathering the following numbers of Russian signatories: some 30,000 information technology experts, actors and other professionals; nearly 15,000 doctors, nurses and paramedics; some 10,000 students, university professors and journalists; and nearly 8,000 Russian scientists, including the 2010 Nobel Prize winner in physics, Konstantin Novoselov.

**"There are some 300,000 refugees just in the capital, which is struggling to provide needed services"**



# Letters

## Letter of the week

### Anti-Catholic political 'bigots' behind Church land rezone

**Dear Editor,** Dublin City councillors, and some TDs – whose housing failure, for years, gave us our housing crisis – now want to re-zone Church land to prevent it being used to build houses and to impoverish the Church, its services, parishes, clergy and people.

Some propose seizing such assets, Henry VIII style, built by poor Catholics pennies since Penal times,

compulsorily. This land grab agenda is driven by hostile anti-Catholic bigotry and political bigots' anxiety to cover up their own decades of housing failures by scapegoating the Church for their own neglect.

We'll wait a long time before we see such politicians sacrifice their own fat salaries or valuable properties to alleviate the chronic housing crisis

they created. They still sit on State owned, tax payer land which right now could be used for housing.

Anti-Catholic political bigots should be electorally removed. Their bigoted Church land grab agenda requires legal challenge and public rejection.

Yours etc.,  
**Oliver Maher**  
Harold's Cross, Dublin

## Reintroducing Sunday obligation 'unnecessary'

**Dear Editor,** I understand Michael Walsh's concern about the reimposition of the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays [*The Irish Catholic* – March 31, 2022].

There are, I think, some Irish bishops who would not favour restoring the obligation.

"The general law of the Church gives each diocese and bishop the faculty to grant dispensations in particular cases to the Faithful over whom he exercises authority according to the norm of law" (Vatican II – *Christus Dominus*).

Hopefully, some bishops will not reimpose this unnecessary obligation in their own diocese.

All going to Mass on Sundays, and weekdays too, are present because they want to be. Serious efforts must be made to encourage others to attend Mass and to make them welcome.

Yours etc.,  
**Daithí O'Muirneachain,**  
Drumcondra, Dublin 9



## Sticking heads in the sand will not result in solutions

**Dear Editor,** David Quinn is so right when he stated in his article entitled 'Facing the synod journey with hope' [*The Irish Catholic* – March 24, 2022], that as a result of the synodal process in Ireland, we need to become more energised Christians with a stronger pastoral and missionary sense. However, if we are truly open to the Spirit and we seek solutions to the reality that few people under the age of 60 practice their faith regularly in a parish setting and that there are few vocations to the priesthood, change is surely required. Young adults still want their children to receive the

sacraments, but they have lost any real understanding of their faith, yet there is still an opportunity to proactively engage with these families. But we do need trained pastoral teams and we especially need priests for the years ahead. Sticking our heads in the sand will not result in solutions to the vocational crisis. I have hope that there are many married men and women who may respond to a vocational call, if the Church invited them to do so.

Yours etc.,  
**Deacon Frank Browne,**  
Rathfarnham, Dublin

## Consecration of Russia and Ukraine to Immaculate Heart of Mary

**Dear Editor,** How stunning was that, and Gospel inspired. The Consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (for the conversion of hearts to Christ) took place within the context of a two-hour penitential service in St Peter's Basilica.

Instead of concentrating on the very obvious sin and evil of others, Pope Francis wanted us to look at our own lives and into our own hearts and to seek forgiveness. In front of 3,500 persons in the basilica and over 2,000 outside, he was the first to go to Confession.

Yours etc.,  
**Judith Leonard**  
Raheny, Dublin

## Refreshing to see famous Irish sportsmen speak about faith

**Dear Editor,** It's always so refreshing to see well-known sports personalities speak about their faith. Particularly for young people, many of whom are not exposed to religion in their families, it's great to have a role model who is openly and unapologetically Christian.

That's why seeing former Ireland footballer Keith Fahey on your front page [*The Irish Catholic* – March 31, 2022] calling young people to make God the centre of their lives was wonderful. There are fewer and fewer very influential people in kid's lives that are urging them to do this and they will suffer

because of it. As Mr Fahey explains he was never introduced to God and only found Christ when he was at his absolute lowest, do young people have to go through great pain before they realise the truth?

Better to develop a personal relationship with Christ while young. This will lead to kids being in a much better position to deal with the temptations and hard knocks in the world.

Mr Fahey comes from Tallaght, an area with many difficult neighbourhoods, harbouring people and activities which can lead people astray.

There is a great football scene there with huge numbers of young people into soccer, which explains why there's been several famous footballers coming out of Tallaght, including Robbie Keane. Hopefully Mr Fahey can be an example to them as it's examples such as his that will help children keep away from excess and materialism, which blight Ireland and the western world, and stick to more wholesome pursuits.

Yours etc.,  
**David Murphy**  
Rathfarnham, Dublin

## facebook community

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

### Pope reforms Curia with launch of Vatican constitution

It is a change that should be welcomed and encouraged and most importantly, implemented! – **Vincent Doyle**

### When did we lose basic respect for each other?

Is it because authority has broken down – in these days of equal and human rights, the 'common good' has been negated-because everyone is now an 'expert'? – **Sean Conway**

Today in our world everything is permissible and nothing is forgivable. Yesterday, today and always in the Church a lot is not permitted but through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, everything is forgiven. Thanks and Glory to God. – **Margaret Griffin**

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

## Prayer is the answer to everything

**Dear Editor,** Concerning war between Russia and Ukraine, God's law states we reap what we sow sooner or later. And we can't bargain with God. God is never neutral. Everything begets everything and Jesus told us in the Garden of Gethsemane, those who live by the sword will die by the sword. We only pass this way once, and evil triumphs when the good do nothing.

The Gospel tells us better are the peacemakers, the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Peace and justice are intertwined, and only the just will flourish. Prayer is the answer to everything and our prayers will be answered to our spiritual advantage.

Yours etc.,  
**Bridget Sherlock,**  
Mitchelstown, Co. Cork

## Thanks for good news stories in bleak media landscape

**Dear Editor,** I was catching up with back issues of *The Irish Catholic* and was struck by two very uplifting/positive stories.

The first was Chai Brady's interview [*The Irish Catholic* – December 16, 2021] with the songwriter, Johnny Duhan. It was very encouraging to read Mr Duhan's defence of his faith, especially in an environment when to do so is distinctly counter-cultural.

The second was Fr

Vincent Sherlock's [*The Irish Catholic* – December 23, 2021] recounting of his positive encounter with the US visa control employee at Dublin airport. Especially the latter's respect for the priestly vocation.

Thanks to *The Irish Catholic* for these good news stories in an all too frequently bleak/negative media landscape.

Yours etc.,  
**Eric Conway**  
Navan, Co. Meath

## 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



▲ **MEXICO:** A migrant girl in Reynosa eats watermelon at a makeshift camp. Photos: CNS.

◀ **MALTA:** A girl holds a teddy bear as people wait for Pope Francis' arrival to visit the grotto of St Paul at the Basilica of St Paul in Rabat, April 3.



**VATICAN:** People who attended a papal audience eat pizza from a food truck run by the Milan pizzeria, PizzAut, at the colonnade at the Vatican, April 1.



**NICARAGUA:** Students chat at Jesuit-run Central American University in Managua. Nicaragua has approved a law increasing government control over educational institutions and stripping funds from the university, which has been at odds with the government.

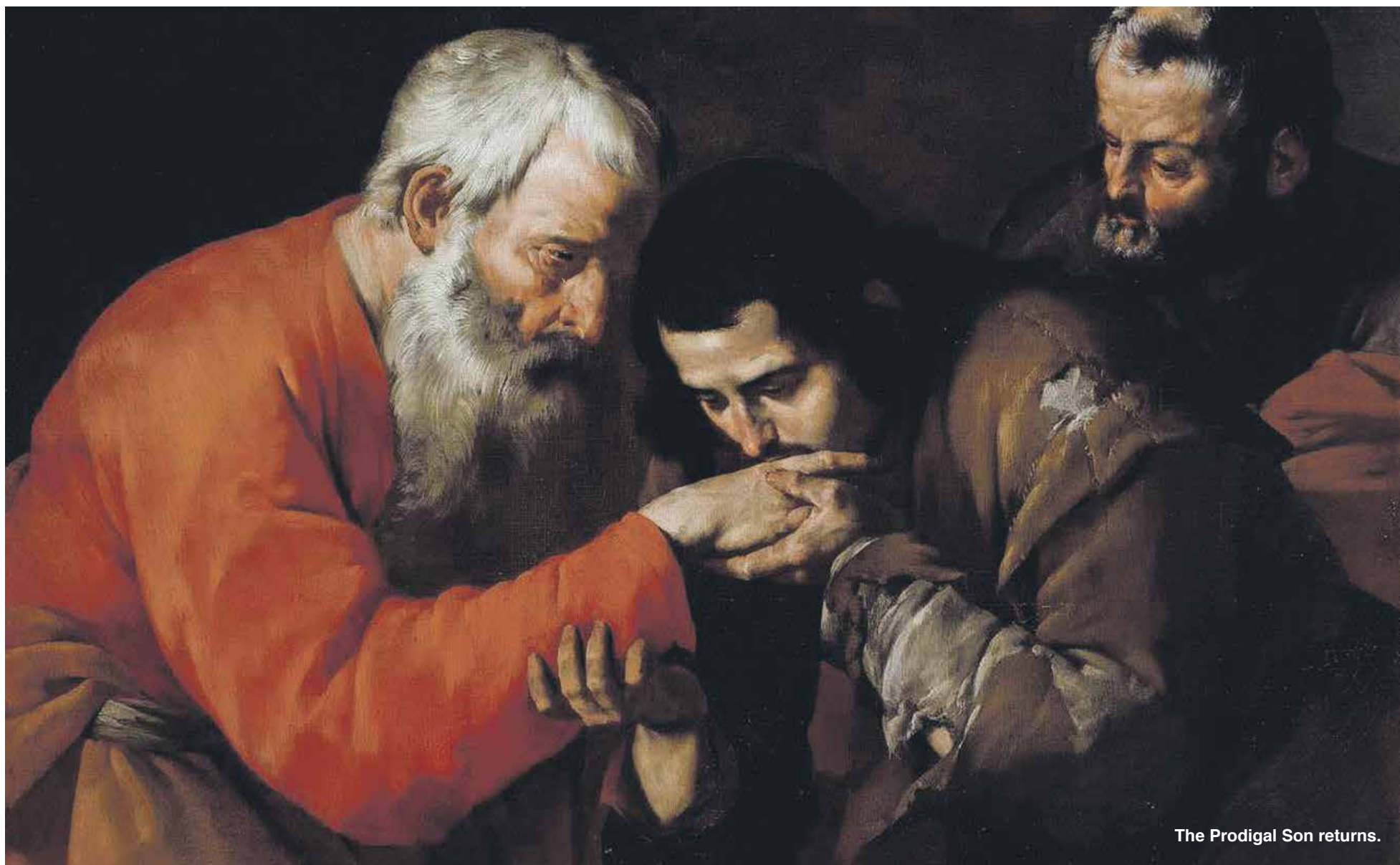


**MEXICO:** Ukrainians wait for their turn to try to get into the US at the San Ysidro Port of Entry in Tijuana at the US-Mexico border.



**SRI LANKA:** Demonstrators react after they set fire to a bus parked at the top of the road to Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's residence during a protest in Colombo.





The Prodigal Son returns.

# The secret hidden from the amoral

**A**ccording to the Bible, there's a secret that's hidden from the amoral, known only by the virtuous. The Book of Wisdom tells us that when we are not virtuous "we do not know the hidden counsels of God, nor do we grasp the recompense of holiness, nor discern the innocent soul's reward."

How true! How hard it is to know, existentially grasp, actually believe, that virtue is its own reward and the highest happiness. We envy the amoral and pity virtue. Nikos Kazantzakis once remarked that virtue sits itself on the highest branch on a tree, looks out at all it has missed, and weeps.

**“Imagine a man who is entirely careless about all things moral and spiritual”**

What's to be said about this? Who ultimately misses out on life?

A generation ago, Piet Fransen wrote a classic book on grace, *The New Life of Grace*, which for years was a standard textbook in seminaries and theology schools. He begins his treatise on grace this way. Imagine a man who is entirely careless about all things moral and spiritual. His only interest is his own pleasure. He lives for pleasure, ignoring all the



**Fr Rolheiser**

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

commandments. He has multiple sexual affairs, never denies himself any pleasure available to him, and lives like this for his whole life until, just before his death, he realises his irresponsibility, repents of his ways, makes a good confession, and dies in the arms of God and the Church.

Fransen then makes this comment. If, even for a minute, you felt some envy – “The lucky guy, he got away with this his whole life and then dies and still gets to go to heaven!” – you have never really understood grace. Rather you are like the older brother of the prodigal son, angry with God for welcoming back a wayward son who had forsaken him to pursue a life of pleasure while you, the faithful son or daughter, have stayed home and dutifully renounced many pleasures to be faithful.

When we are the older, duty-

laden brother or sister of the prodigal son, virtue is seldom felt to be its own reward, nor indeed a reward of any kind. Mostly no one believes the hidden counsel of God that the highest recompense is awarded for holiness and innocence of soul. Rather most of us stand somewhat angry and bitter in our fidelity, envious of our unvirtuous brothers and sisters.

Why? If virtue is its own reward and the highest reward of all, why do we, like the older brother of the prodigal son, so often envy the excitement and pleasure we imagine fills the lives of those who have forsaken virtue for the pleasures of this world?

## Complex

The reasons are complex. First, there's human nature itself. We aren't simply spiritual, faith-filled beings, but also mammals, creatures

of flesh and blood, with powerful innate instincts. There is a strong unyielding part inside us that wants to taste every pleasure, irrespective of morality. That's in our hardwiring. Part of us finds it almost impossible not to envy those who give themselves over to pleasure and, seemingly, get away with it.

**“Should we die in this ignorance, we will no doubt be a bit disconcerted when we get to heaven and meet an infamous sinner there”**

Moreover, it's precisely this part of us that does not understand grace or happiness. When the older brother of the prodigal son expresses his frustration to his father, a frustration that does little to conceal his secret envy, his father's answer reveals the hidden counsel of God. The prodigal father tells his elder son that they need to be happy that his brother has come back home because he was dead. What might look to our human instincts as an enviable fling, a happy carefree time away from morality, is not in fact a joyous, life-giving, happy thing at all, but a time of being dead to most everything that constitutes actual

happiness.

Superficially, it can look like the prodigal son got away with something, a fling, a free season of pleasure, that we secretly wish we had enough nerve to do ourselves. However, as the image of eating with pigs and growing desperate for the food in his father's house graphically depicts, the wayward son was, whatever the pleasures his prodigal life afforded him, far, far from happy. Sin, like virtue, is also its own reward.

When we envy the amoral, we have not yet understood grace or happiness. Should we die in this ignorance, we will no doubt be a bit disconcerted when we get to heaven and meet an infamous sinner there. After being faithful ourselves, we might angrily ask, “how did he get in here, given how he lived his life?”

Conversely, if we have understood grace and what makes for actual happiness, we will instead feel both gratitude and relief in seeing that infamous sinner and say instead: “God, I'm glad he made it! I was worried about him.”

## Punishment

Sin is its own punishment and virtue is its own reward. At the end of the day, nothing feels better than virtue and nothing feels worse than sin. However, that doesn't make easy peace with our natural instincts; it's a truth that can only be grasped by living it.

**“The lucky guy, he got away with this his whole life and then dies and still gets to go to heaven!”**



# Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, April 7, 2022

## Personal Profile

Enkindling the  
embers of the  
Faith today

Page 34



## Finding work in an uncertain world



**R**esearch throughout the pandemic and since those uncertain days informs us that millions of people across the world have upped and left their jobs, often in pursuit of a better opportunity but sometimes out of simple discontent with the role they find themselves in.

Who in Ireland hasn't seen the effects of this first-hand, as restaurants, cafes and shops fell prey to chronic understaffing (even aside from all of the positive Covid tests among their staff)? Recent unfortunates have been subjected to lengthy delays at Dublin airport, also reportedly as a result of staffing issues.

It's quite likely that if you're not in this situation, you know someone in this situation. How does one go about moving from the



**Reports suggest large numbers of people continue to leave their jobs in search of greener pastures, so how does one find them, asks Jason Osborne**

fluid and uncertain landscape of unemployment (or poor employment), to work that better suits you and your dependents? The answer isn't the same today as it might have been even a few years ago, with the job market seeming to change by the hour.

However, some things remain the same – foremost among them being putting yourself out there, focusing on your strengths and working to improve your weaknesses.

### Networking

A somewhat unofficial or informal step, networking remains a fantastic way of throwing yourself into the milieu that you want to be working in. Meeting and mixing with people in the field or industry you'd like to break into is one of the best ways of making that dream a reality.

Networking doesn't often lead to instant results – sometimes it does – as its relationship-centric, but it's an investment well worth

your time. Even if job offers don't come flooding in, exposure to people with desirable experience can only help you to form a clearer idea of what it takes to succeed in your chosen industry.

An example pertinent to a Catholic newspaper, many young Catholics hope to work one day in ministry-related roles or in some form of Christian or Catholic advocacy. The best bet of seeing this goal across the line is to immerse yourself in Catholic circles in Ireland. A young man or woman with a dream of working full-time in youth ministry would be best advised to partake of Ireland's vibrant missionary landscape, whether it be through NET Ministries, Holy Family Mission, Pure in Heart, Youth 2000 or otherwise.

Similarly, attending as many retreats, talks, prayer meetings

and socials as is feasible is a great way to meet people who are "in the know" and likely to be able to point you in the right direction. While the appearance of the path may be different for another industry or field, the principles are the same.

### Back the virtual

It feels like only yesterday that I was walking into shops and offices and handing our CVs physically for jobs, but the world has "changed, changed utterly" since then, and it seems the vast majority of job applications are to be sought and filled out online.

Depending on your age, you might be loathe to give up more of the "real" world in favour of the virtual, but regardless, the job-

» Continued on Page 33



## Family News

## AND EVENTS

## PROPOSAL TO EXPAND NATURE RESERVES TO 30% GLOBALLY

Expanding nature reserves to cover at least 30% of the planet by 2030 is the flagship proposal of high-stakes talks to rescue Earth's animals and plants from human destruction.

But experts agree that a new target is the easy part and will be ineffective without funding and rigorous monitoring.

Negotiators, who wrapped up talks in Geneva last week, are working on a draft text of the so-called global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the UN COP15 meeting in Kunming, China, later this year.

A global commitment to set aside at least 30% of both land and oceans as protected zones by the end of the decade has the support of a broad coalition of countries.

## AFRICAN MASK SELLS FOR €4.2M IN FRANCE DESPITE PROTESTS

A carved mask from Central Africa, dating from the 19th Century, has been sold in France for €4.2 million, despite Gabonese protesters in the auction house calling for the item's "restitution".

The rare wooden "Ngil" mask, used in ceremonies by the Fang ethnic people of Gabon, smashed its estimate of 300,000-400,000 euros at the auction in the southern French city of Montpellier.

"It's a case of receiving stolen goods," a man describing himself as a member of the Gabonese community in Montpellier exclaimed from the back of the auction room, surrounded by half a dozen compatriots.

"We'll file a complaint. Our ancestors, my ancestors, from the Fang community, we will recover this object", the protester added, describing the mask as a "colonial ill-gotten gain".

Auctioneer Jean-Christophe Giuseppi said the auction was "entirely legal", as far as he was aware.

## CONFERENCE FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN RECENTLY DIAGNOSED WITH A HEARING LOSS

Chime, the national charity for deafness and hearing loss, is hosting a weekend for families whose child has recently been diagnosed with a hearing loss. They invite you and your family to attend on Friday 13th to Sunday 15th May 2022 in the 4 star Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise Town, Co. Laois.

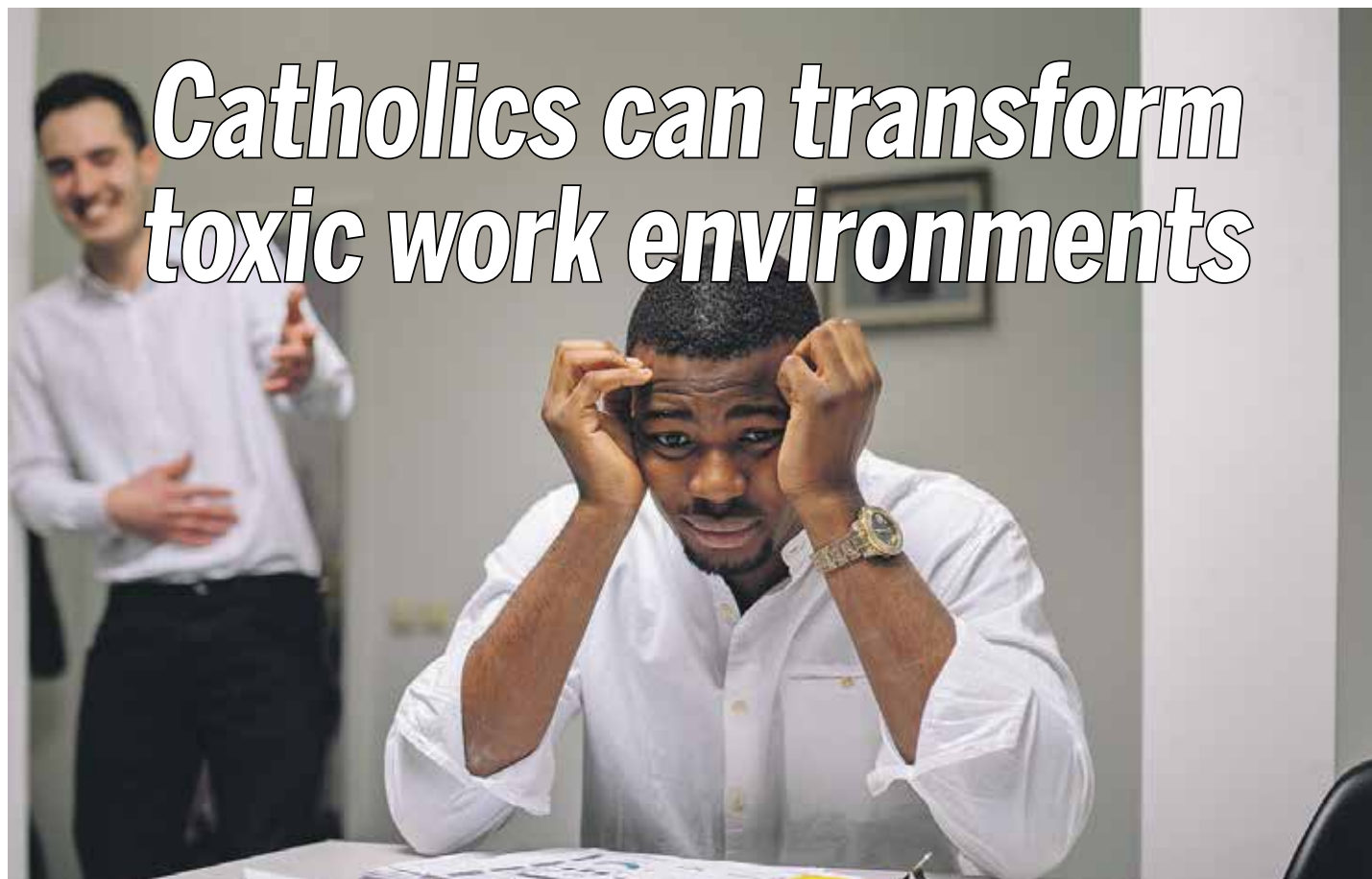
The benefit of the weekend is having the information you need in one place, and it is also a chance to meet other families at a similar stage. Workshops will be run on communication development, hearing aid care and assistive technology for school and the home.

The cost of attending the weekend is €70 per adult and €40 per child (4 months to 15 years) and includes accommodation Friday and Saturday night, all meals and creche.

A payment link will be sent and payments taken through the Chime website in advance of the weekend.

For any queries in relation to this event, please contact Teresa O'Rourke at [teresa.orourke@chime.ie](mailto:teresa.orourke@chime.ie) or call/text 086 0455339.

## Catholics can transform toxic work environments



I was reading a Facebook post recently about a woman who wanted to scale back on her working hours due to chronic illness. She was hoping for some sort of flexibility and understanding of her position having been an exemplary employee in the past.

Her boss was not too eager to facilitate her, complaining that she had a business to run. It seemed that the profit margin and the expectation of a less than peak performance were higher up on the employer's list of priorities than any concern for a loyal worker who'd fallen into ill health. Of course, in usual social media style, there were a number of conflicting responses to the situation the woman found herself in. Many were sympathetic but quite a few people had no sympathy at all and even accused the woman of being lazy or wanting to shirk her duties.

**“Work-related politics was mentioned by 37% as the key cause of their distress with long hours and financial worries also featuring highly”**

Another common view was sorrow for the woman but pointing out that in the real world there could be little expectation of any special treatment. A few days after I read this post, I happened to be in the same room as a friend who was engaged in an online meeting connected to their work. A problem had arisen and I couldn't help noting that, yet again, all the discussion was about outputs and deadlines, new products and productivity.

Talking to my friend later, he poured out his worries about the stresses of a high-octane

A parent's perspective  
Maria Byrne

workplace, the difficulty of dealing with an almost constant barrage of information and emails and the feeling of always chasing his tail. Worst of all was the workplace environment which was so negative that he found himself in a permanent state of nervous tension which was starting to take its toll on his general health and wellbeing.

In Pope John Paul II's 1981 encyclical, *Laborem Exercens* (Through Work), he emphasised the "call to work" describing it as one of the characteristics that distinguishes human beings from other creatures. Work is a good thing, Pope John Paul explained, which "corresponds to man's dignity, that expresses this dignity and increases it". Through work, we're meant to grow, develop and flourish, transforming nature and adapting it to our own needs. We also achieve fulfilment as human beings and, in a way, we become more human. While daily work and labour is good for our body and soul, *Laborem Exercens* warns against situations where work leads to a lowering of human dignity and where work is used against people. We can immediately think of situations like forced labour and exploitation but we can have very oppressive and demeaning workplace environments without these extremes. A UK survey carried out in 2020 showed that 79% of adults in employment commonly experience work-related stress; this was 20% higher than the 2018 findings. Work-

related politics was mentioned by 37% as the key cause of their distress with long hours and financial worries also featuring highly. Based on conversations with friends and family, social media and various investigations and research, it's clear that for many, the wonderful dignity of work has been replaced by a



dull compliance with the daily ordeal. What should be a means of growing in holiness and sanctifying our daily lives is often having the exact opposite effect.

A work environment that is detrimental to physical, mental and spiritual growth could be rooted in several factors such as an expectation that an employee's first priority is to the job, a lack of work/life balance or even workplace cliques that can leave colleagues out in the cold. There is nothing worse than overhearing gossipy comments over the water cooler or feeling isolated and excluded. Neuroscience research has shown that being left out of the social circle actually lights up the same areas of the brain

that light up when a person experiences physical pain. As Catholics, we can transform a toxic environment and make small changes which respect the dignity of work and the unique value of everyone we work with. I only recently came upon the story of Venerable Enrique Shaw, an Argentine businessman who lived a life of admirable virtue as the CEO of his wife's family industry.

He became a very wealthy man but instead of enjoying a life of leisure, he dedicated himself to many charitable causes as well as looking after the 3,400 workers in his company. He always had their best interests at heart, setting up a health care system and a pension fund for them as well as providing loans for key events in their lives. All of this while being a devoted husband, and a father of nine children. Shaw believed that through work well done people could be united and could develop their talents while contributing to the common good of society. He was determined that people were treated more importantly than the company and once wrote in his personal notebook: "In dealing with our employees, are we, for example, more sympathetic? Have we put aside hatred, even for deeds or persons who, without cause, have harmed us?"

As employers or employees, we can be the work colleagues that contribute to a nasty workplace environment or be more like Venerable Enrique Shaw who died at the young age of 41 leaving us a great legacy of how to infuse the most ordinary places with the extraordinary scent of holiness.



» Continued from Page 31



seeker's best strategy in Ireland 2022 is to build up your online profiles, portfolios and presence.

There are a number of incredibly useful online portals that are free to use, and bring you into direct contact with job offers and requests from employers. The best examples are:

- LinkedIn
- Indeed
- Glassdoor
- Monster
- ZipRecruiter

Each website has its idiosyncrasies, but the basic idea is the same – you're free to fine-tune your search parameters, and the website will offer you job postings by employers that you might be interested in.

**“If you're in the market for a job, take some time to set up a LinkedIn profile, following their suggestions to fill out your page”**

Indeed suggests itself as the best recruitment website on the internet, having built up an enormous database of jobs since its inception in 2004, and currently hosting more than 250 million users. It's broad reach means it covers a wide variety of industries and sectors, and presents offerings of full-time, part-time, in-person, remote and hybrid work. There are jobs to be found for those with decades of experience, and for those looking to make their first break into the working world.

LinkedIn, meanwhile, continues to hold the title of best “professional networking” site and application. Allowing you to build a profile and connect with other users, it blurs the line between recruitment platform and social media.

Buttering up your LinkedIn profile isn't just for times of active job-searching – it's a way of establishing your professional presence in a work world that's increasingly dominated by technology. Again, I'm not argu-

ing the rights or wrongs of the way things have gone, but this is certainly the way things are.

If you're in the market for a job, take some time to set up a LinkedIn profile, following their suggestions to fill out your page. There's room for experience, education, interests, volunteering, achievements and more. Once you've told the platform your desired industry, there's jobs to browse and perhaps people to connect with, giving you plenty of concrete steps to take in your job search.

### Job fairs

If you'd rather stick to the “real world”, job fairs remain a feature of the Irish employment landscape. While many target a specific industry and a certain kind of employee, there are more generalised fairs. The promotional material of any given event will give you the details of what is being represented.

Research companies that interest you and keep an eye out for their names at job fairs. It's a good opportunity to talk to their employees and to other jobseekers in the hope of gaining a competitive advantage. Bring a number of resumes, or business cards if you're particularly prepared, and use the opportunity to sell your-



self. Conduct yourself as though each conversation is a mini-interview, and view it as an opportunity to set yourself apart from the crowd.

JobsExpo.ie is a useful resource in this regard, with a list of upcoming careers events around the country on their website and means to register for them.

### Internships

No matter your age or experience level, internships aren't to be sniffed at. If you have the luxury of holding out on serious money for a while in favour of experience or a change in career direction, internships offer a viable path for you.

**“They're worth checking out, and Generation Apprenticeship, citizensinformation.ie, and careersportal.ie offer useful information on this front”**

Unlikely to be highly paid, they're often geared towards those looking to break into the relevant industry, or those fresh out of college. For young people who are unsure about which career path they want to commit themselves to for the long haul (not that this is necessarily how the work-world operates anymore), internships provide a great opportunity to find out if this line of work is for them, and a potential foothold if it is.

A final word ought to be offered to apprenticeships, which were often shortchanged when I was in school. Many of the young men I went to school with who proceeded down this path are now in the best-paying, most secure jobs, while some of us who attended university floundered a while upon graduating. They're worth checking out, and Generation Apprenticeship, citizensinformation.ie, and careersportal.ie offer useful information on this front.

# Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



**“I**f all your friends jumped off a cliff, would you do it too?” my father asked me. “Yes, I would”, my teenage-self replied triumphantly. This was a completely truthful answer since, as teenagers, jumping off cliffs was in fact one of my chief hobbies. At weekends, my friends and I would cycle to the coast and seek out ever-higher and more dangerous cliffs and sea stacks to climb up and jump off.

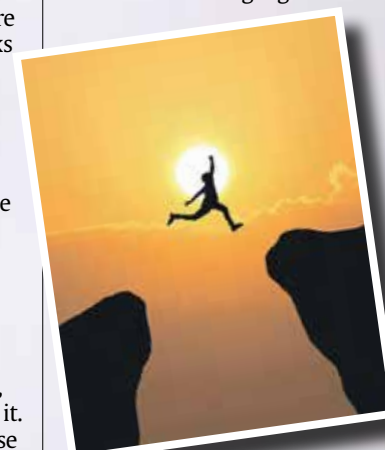
These days, kids don't seem to be quite so daring. While fewer seem to take physical risks, virtually all of them are on social media. One of my kids recently revealed their sadness at being the only kid amongst their peers not on social media. Never mind that none of these kids are the minimum age for the particular service mentioned, apparently all of them are on it. Never mind either the increase in teenage depression, self-harm, suicidality that followed the advent of social media. Never mind the risks of online bullying. Never mind how the social media corporations harvest data and deploy clever algorithms, designed to manipulate minds, to ‘hack the human’, by playing upon our psychological vulnerabilities. If all a child's friends are doing something, they are going to want to do it too, no matter the potential downsides.

In my estimation, our teenage hobby of jumping off cliffs was fundamentally far less dangerous than social media is for today's teenagers' minds, souls and lives. Getting out into nature and doing dangerous things like climbing cliffs, mountain biking or surfing involves a sharp engagement with reality, and with the very universe itself. Such things make your own mortality more clearly known to you and so they have philosophical benefits. You learn about nature, courage, risk-taking and friendship too. Social media has the very opposite effects. It is a flight from reality into a twisted facsimile of it. It is a refuge for cowards who attack others from behind a cloak of anonymity. The friendships that form online are, in truth, but a pale imitation of the real thing.

That is before we even speak of the sometimes astonishing lack of physical fitness and strength amongst many of today's teens. The connection between rising childhood obesity and the time spent staring at screens is abundantly

clear. The evidence for the dark side of the technological revolution mounts daily.

Yet none of this is to deny the amazing benefits technology has brought us. Our house is remarkably high-tech and fully automated, sporting even robot hoovers and lawnmowers. The kids understand and know how to use all the latest gadgets.



However, it is often those who understand tech best who understand its dangers best too. Many Silicon Valley scions like Steve Jobs have been very careful to limit their kids' access to technology. Facebook founder Sean Parker observed that social media “literally changes your relationship with society,” and said, “God only knows what it's doing to our children's brains”. It's mostly those who are clueless about technology who regard it as harmless for children. Sadly, that seems to be the majority of people.

Yet kids need to understand and inhabit the world and the time they live in. Those parents who are alive to the risks and benefits technology presents need to find some sort of balance, where their kids can gain the benefits of digital connectivity, while minimising its harms.

This will mean carefully limited and supervised access, at the appropriate age. It will mean educating kids as to the depth and subtlety of the risks, which are social, emotional, psychological, physical, reputational and even political. It will mean ensuring that they have the knowledge and self-discipline to limit their own access to addictive technologies and to use them appropriately. Yet, for now, such an approach seems almost eccentric, in a world where even the minds of young children are casually let slip into the strange digital fog that is rapidly enveloping society.



# Enkindling the embers of the Faith today

## Personal Profile



**Ruadhán Jones**

**R**ecently appointed pastoral manager in Raphoe diocese Connor Duncan grew up in a Catholic family. While he left the Faith “in a big way” for a time, the embers never fully died. Now, he hopes to enkindle the flame of faith in people today.

Born in Ballymena, Co. Antrim, Connor grew up in a Catholic setting. Mass was an integral part of his life, he explains, and they were taught to pray when they were young.

**“I found myself slowly skipping Mass, not thinking about prayer in the same way in my life”**

“Faith was instilled into myself from a young age, even in organisations I was involved in,” Connor says. “I would have been an altar server, or at scouting. They all had a Christian dimension to them and prayer was in there. My faith was in my life and has carried through. Even in moments where maybe I had drifted away, there’s always been an ember or something burning away within. Maybe I wasn’t on fire at all times, but it never died in me.”

By the time he had finished studying in college, Connor says



Connor Duncan, new pastoral manager for Raphoe diocese

he started working and socialising with new groups of friends and found himself drifting away from the Faith.

“I found myself slowly skipping Mass, not thinking about prayer in the same way in my life,” he continues. “I started realising my opinions and thoughts were changing from where the Church was. And I found myself listening to stuff about where the Church was in terms of scandals and all that sort of stuff was coming out when I was at an age where I was thinking, do I keep with this or do I go off on my own. Rather than keeping in the path I was on, I diverged off it. And for quite a number of years I wouldn’t have been practising in my faith at all really.”

Although he drifted away, the Faith wouldn’t let Connor go completely. Through co-workers and customers in his bank in Ballymena, Christian views and actions remained in his life. However, it wasn’t until he moved to Manchester that something stirred within him, when a customer gave him a Gideon Bible.

“Ironically I opened it on one of the best known passages in the Bible, which is John 3:16, God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son. That sent me on a journey, I went back to Mass over the Easter triduum and really from there I found myself starting to get back into my faith slowly.

“It was a considerably long journey over a few years. It wasn’t a

Damascus moment, I didn’t have a big moment like a Sr Clare Crockett or St Paul. But nonetheless, it was a journey... I’m sure the Lord was giving me a good slap around the head going, ‘Connor, why didn’t you see the signs sooner, I’ve been calling you for a long time!’”

## Faith

In the unlikely setting of a stag do in Spain, Connor took his next step forward, as it were, back into the Faith: “I was 30 and there was a procession of statues of Jesus through the streets,” Connor says. “You’ll find lots of stuff like that in Spain and there was something in it that just spoke to me at that time. The statues stopped, and it was like Jesus was staring at me in a way where I was standing.

“And something inside me just questioned, what are you doing with your life? At this stage in my life I was managing my own hotel, I got to where I thought I wanted to be with career, money, a car, all those sorts of things.

“I quit my job, about a month or so after that. I went on a mission year with Net Ministries. I didn’t even know at that stage how deep my faith was. But that was a major rekindling of my faith, taking a gap year I suppose. It was a time out from work and from there really I grew deeper in my faith, it gave me a hell of a good shake up. It was one of those things, when you are around other people who are in love with Jesus and have a relationship through prayer and whatever, there’s something unique about them.”

After his gap year, Connor continued working with Net in different roles, including managing retreats and a retreat centre. He said it felt like he was “leaving behind a lot of my old self and finding out who Connor was properly”.

A time came when Connor felt he wanted to leave Net, but he didn’t

know where. He thought he would take a break and travel for a while, but the Lord had other plans.

“Myself and Bishop Alan (McGuckian), we crossed paths and he asked if I would come and look after the pastoral centre, the company side of the diocese – buildings, HR, all that kind of stuff. One of the guys was wanting to retire. And I said yeah, and it’s been a remarkable few months in the role. I’ve got to know so many phenomenal people from the diocese, so many people across the spectrum, other people in similar roles across the northern dioceses.

**“But I think it’s not dead, it’s only now coming alive again in places and I think Covid has given some people a shake up, in that some people might not feel they can come out the same”**

“The role’s very diverse. I didn’t come in here to be a caretaker, I came to get involved. I have a background in youth ministry and now I lead a nightly prayer and praise for young adults, as well as launching the diocesan Lenten programme.

“There is a future, I think there’s a hope. I hear people saying the Church is dead in places. But I think it’s not dead, it’s only now coming alive again in places and I think Covid has given some people a shake up, in that some people might not feel they can come out the same. I’m finding the vast majority of people are wanting to come out and engage. I’m excited for the future,” Connor finishes.

**Do you know someone who we should profile? Send an email to [ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie)**



## Children’s Corner

**Chai Brady**

## Dissolving sugar: A sweet way to learn about solutions

**S**olutions are not just what you try to achieve when you’re stuck on a problem. A solution can also be a liquid mixture. You can learn all about solutions and their significance by adding more and more sugar cubes to water. To make it more interesting, why not also change the temperature of the water and see if this makes any difference? This easy experiment shows that you can only dissolve a certain amount of sugar in water and that this changes depending on the temperature of the water.

### Apparatus:

- Sugar cubes
- Cold water in a clear glass
- Hot water in a clear glass (be careful with the hot water)
- Spoon for stirring

### Method:

1. Make sure the glasses have an equal amount of water.

2. Put a sugar cube into the cold water and stir with the spoon until the sugar disappears. Repeat this process (remembering to count the amount of sugar cubes you put into the water) until the sugar stops dissolving, you are at this point when sugar starts to gather on the bottom of the glass rather than dissolving.

3. Write down how many sugar cubes you could dissolve in the cold water.

Repeat the same process for the hot water, compare the number of sugar cubes dissolved in each liquid, which dissolved more?

### Significance

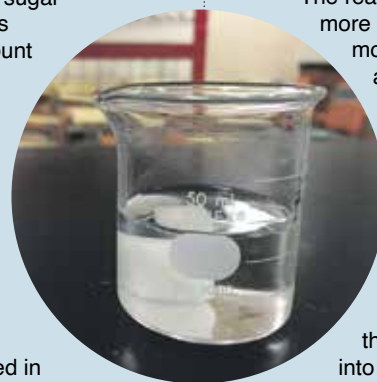
The cold water isn’t able to dissolve as much sugar as the hot water, but why? Another name for the liquids inside the cups is a ‘solution’, when this solution can no longer dissolve sugar, it becomes a ‘saturated solution’, this means that

sugar starts forming on the bottom of the cup.

The reason the hot water dissolves more is because it has faster moving molecules which are spread further apart than the molecules in the cold water. With bigger gaps between the molecules in the hot water, more sugar molecules can fit in between.

Regarding the sugar, its crystals are solid so when sugar is added to water the weak bonds between the individual sugar molecules are broken and the sugar molecules are released into the water. When this occurs a sugar water solution forms.

A very practical example of the benefits of this phenomenon is hot chocolate. Anyone who has ever mistakenly put hot chocolate powder in cold milk has learned the hard way that it doesn’t mix well. However hot milk and hot chocolate powder quickly mix and form a solution.







# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## Truly shocking images of carnage and destruction

**L**ate at night (late for me!) I tend to dip into the newspaper review programmes on the British channels – it's a good snapshot of what's coming up on the next day's headlines.

**Press Preview** (Sky News) and **The Papers** (BBC News) still have their guest reviewers joining in remotely, while **Headliners** (GB News) seems to be making a point by having their guest reviewers in the studio, and not doing much distancing. The mainstream programmes mostly feature journalists as guests while GB News opts for comedians. Hmm...nothing very funny on the news these days.

Button popping between the three shows on Wednesday of last week I was struck by a contrast between two stories in the scrolling news. There was justifiable outrage over the severe inadequacies in pregnancy care in one of the UK's hospital trusts. Babies had died and mothers had suffered, all of which was revealed in a report by senior midwife Donna Ockenden. In a massive example of moral blindness and confusion there were also reports of a decision to continue in the UK with 'telemedicine' in relation to abortion – a practice that was used during Covid-19 restrictions to avoid in-person consultations. There is pressure on to continue this dangerous practice in Ireland. Remember when we were told that one of the reasons we had to



Family members of Borys Romanchenko attend his funeral in Kharkiv, Ukraine on March 24. Mr Romanchenko, a 96-year-old Holocaust survivor, was killed at his apartment during shelling by Russian forces. Photo: CNS

liberalise abortion legislation here was those dangerous DIY abortions – pills in the post with no in-person consultation with a doctor? Such consultations guarded against abuse cover-ups and medical complications. The newspaper review programmes reported no outrage and no casualty figures.

All news programmes last Sunday night and Monday morning reported upsetting casualty figures from newly-liberated suburbs north of Kyiv in Ukraine. The numbers were horrifying but the images of carnage and destruction were truly shocking. *RTÉ News* was restrained, with images

of bodies in the street blurred out, but **News at Ten** (ITV) did not spare us, and I'm sure there is worse online. In general news reports tend to focus mainly on bad news but these were some of the worst scenes I've ever seen on live TV. And what are we to do with our shock? Yes, we can contribute to humanitarian aid, and it's great to see news reports showing Irish aid agencies working on the ground in Ukraine – e.g. the Garda convoy that brought medical supplies with the involvement of Ukrainian doctors in Ireland. But with the atrocities we can just watch, have a righteous anger about the injustice, pray

and hope that international courts will ensure justice at some stage, probably far into the future. As reported on **Good Morning Europe** (Euronews) on Monday morning, Russian state outlets claimed this was all Ukrainian propaganda, and how can we really know for sure? But with so many independent journalists reporting from the scene this just strained credibility past breaking point.

With all this misery you'd need some infusion of hope and joy. **Lent at Ephesus** (EWTN, Sunday) was just what the spiritual doctor ordered. We followed the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### SOLEMN LITURGY

**Good Friday April 15, RTÉ One TV and RTÉ Radio One Extra/LW252 3 pm**

Fr Thomas O'Byrne leads the congregation of the Cathedral of the Assumption, Carlow, in the solemn liturgy of the Lord's Passion.

#### WALLED CITY PASSION

**RTÉ Player Good Friday April 15, 4.30pm and RTÉ One, Easter Sunday 10.30pm**

A re-imagining of the events of Easter, transposing the 1st Century narrative to the walls and streets of Derry, where a security alert during a Peace Festival leads to a lethal escalation.

#### THE LEAP OF FAITH

**RTÉ Radio One Good Friday April 15, 10pm**

Prof. Siobhán Garrigan hosts a special Good Friday edition of RTÉ Radio One's flagship religious series.

Apostles from the USA as they recorded a Lenten CD of their tranquil chants and hymns. One observer reckoned they sang more than they talked! There was a regularity to their daily routine of prayer, chant, work and modest meals, but the music was central. Mother Cecilia spoke of her music education and how she played in an orchestra for a few years after graduating. She had a house and a car but all along felt God's call to religious life, and eventually found peace in following that vocation.

Kevin and Monica Fitzgibbon of De Montfort Music heard their singing and worked with them to produce the *Lent at Ephesus* CD (available on Spotify). The tracks played in the background during the programme, though I would have liked better synchronisa-

tion with footage of the sisters singing. This wouldn't be my own favourite kind of music, but I was particularly drawn to *God of Mercy and Compassion* and *O Sacred Head Surrounded* with Bach's familiar melody (also borrowed by Paul Simon for *American Tune*).

I was struck by the age profile of the sisters – most were young and it seemed quite a large community. I'd love to have heard vocation stories from more of the sisters. Mother Cecilia was glad to be able to 'share the beauty of sacred music' and prayed it will help many to love God all the more.

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# Music

Pat O'Kelly



## A feast of treats coming this Holy Week

From 1723 to the end of his life in 1750, Bach spent his time, more or less, in Leipzig where he was *kantor* at the Thomasschule. His duties included providing music for the city's two major churches – St Thomas and St Nicholas – as well as for two of the smaller ones – St Peter and the New Church, formerly a Franciscan friary.

A rule demanding a motet or sacred cantata be sung every Sunday in the larger churches resulted in Bach's church music being very considerable indeed. It was also in Leipzig that he composed his St John and St Matthew Passions, his Easter and Christmas oratorios and Mass in B minor.



Conductor Peter Whelan

With Bach serving the Church for most of his life, its music became part of him and, in turn, he became part of it. But why would an

essentially Protestant composer bother to write an essentially Catholic Mass? Well, there really isn't a clear-cut answer. The B minor Mass was obviously not intended to accompany any celebration of sacred mysteries as its proportions are too enormous for even the most solemn occasions.

### Impulses

He may have composed the Mass purely as a result of his own devotional impulses or that the Latin prayers appealed to his own particular feelings. However, no matter what the reason, the composition is truly astounding. Leaving aside Bach's technical ability, which man-

ifests itself so clearly in the work, the ordinary listener cannot but be overawed by the sheer drive, energy, passion and excitement of music that praises God.

A chance to hear the B minor comes on Friday April 8 at Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral and Saturday April 9 in Galway's St Nicholas Collegiate Church with the vocal ensemble Sestina, director Mark Chambers, and Irish Baroque Orchestra. Peter Whelan will conduct with the solo voices coming from Sestina members.

St Nicholas' Church in Galway is also the late afternoon (5pm) Good Friday venue for a rare performance of Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Christi*

(Most holy members of our suffering Jesus) by Resurgam under its conductor Mark Duley. Composed in 1680, the work comprises seven meditative cantatas on the body of Christ on the cross.

### Attached

While Handel's *Messiah*, first performed in Dublin's Fishamble Street Musick Hall on April 13, 1742, now seems to be more attached to Christmas, it also has a resonance with Passiontide and Easter.

The piece comes to the National Concert Hall on Good Friday afternoon at 3.30pm with the National Symphony Chorus (formerly RTÉ Philharmonic Choir) and the NSO

under Nicholas McGegan. The soloists are Máire Flavin, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, James Oxley and Stephan Loges.

Remaining in a vocal sphere, US mezzo Joyce DiDonato returns to the NCH on Saturday April 9, with the instrumental ensemble Il Pomo d'Oro under young Russian conductor Maxim Emelyanychev, for her latest project – EDEN.

This exploration of "the majesty, might and mystery of nature through music" has costumes, lighting and stage designs by Vita Tzykun, John Torres and Marie Lambert Le-Bihan. The music ranges from Cavalli, Handel and Gluck to Wagner, Mahler and Copland. Easter joy.





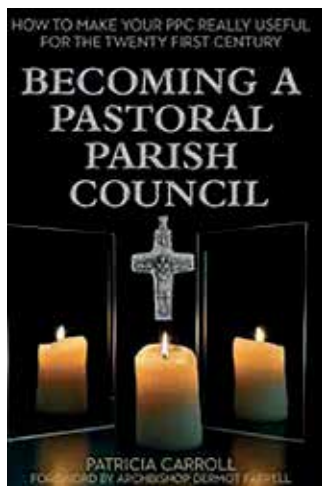
# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Recent books in brief

### New ways, and new demands for parish life



**Becoming a Pastoral Parish Council: How to Make Your PPC Really Useful for the Twenty-First Century**  
by Patricia Carroll, foreword by Archbishop Dermot Farrell  
(Messenger Publications, €9.95/£8.95)

Peter Costello

This is a short book, but intentionally so, for it is very much to its purpose which is to promote and encourage the emerging parish pastoral councils, which have been a response to Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*.

At the heart of all this are ambitions for direct lay involvement in the daily life of the parish, which all are delighted with. Lay governance, however, which some might see as another important objective, will have to wait for its own day, like some other things.

Scottish-born author Patricia Carroll is the director of mission and ministry of the Archdiocese of Dublin, and the book carries a foreword by Archbishop Dermot Farrell. It is very much a call for changing ways in changing times.

To reach the widest possible audience the book is quite straightforwardly presented. In some seven chapters Ms Carroll outlines what is actually involved. She begins by defining the parish and the role of the parish pastoral council within it. There are valuable overviews and insights in every chapter, though perhaps chapters two, four, and five may be found the most valuable.

Early in the text, Ms Carroll poses the question 'What is a Parish?' This, of course, goes to the heart of the matter. But the parish can mean different things to different people in different circumstances, I suspect. Is such a parish council to concern itself only with those who are in church each Sunday? This clearly leaves out those who define themselves as Catholic, but are perhaps infre-

quent church goers? Often these are the parents of the children attending the local school associated with the church: these two groups cannot be left aside in considering parish life everyone would agree.

But in a definition of parish I have something more in mind.

Lately Google, the great arbiter of so much of what people know and think today, has taken to defining addresses in Dublin city and elsewhere by giving the parish name. Now this, like so many things on the internet, derives from US and Canadian practise. There, in such places as Quebec and parts of New England, the parish is more clearly a definition of a political or civic area.

But what Google are using here is the civic parish designation for local government use derived from the Norman administrative system of Ireland. These definitions were, and are, used in the civil administration of the city council. But the civic parish boundaries are now no longer exactly those of the ecclesiastical parishes, either Catholic or Anglican, which have been set and revised from time to time with boundaries of their own.

#### Significance

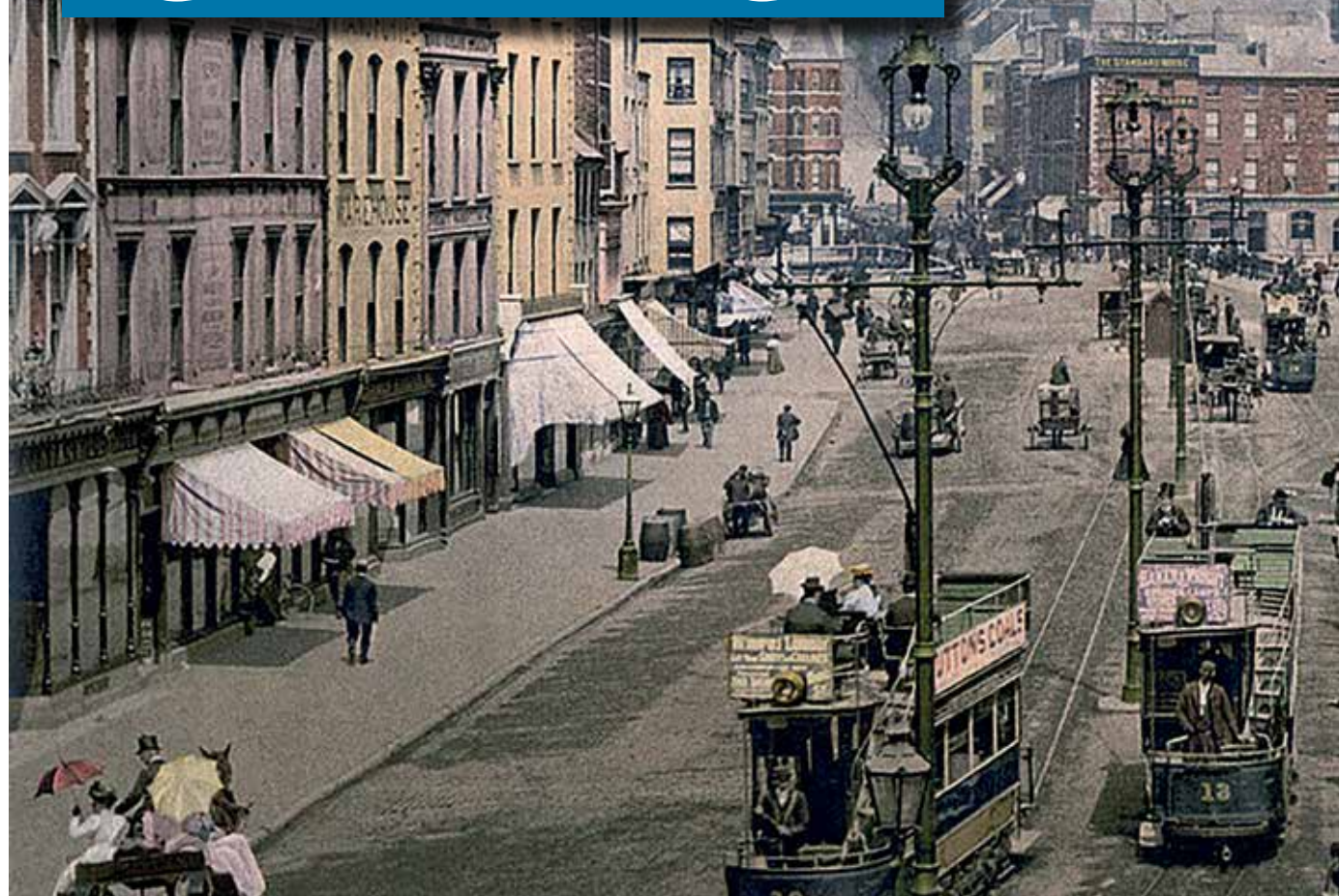
Brooding on this lately, the Google move seemed to me of significance. We all seem to have lost sight of this civic dimension when thinking about parishes. Ms Carroll refers in passing to the dangers of 'parochialism', but a definition that loses sight of all those who live in your civic parish is to lose sight of a very important dimension of local life. Though these inhabitants of the parish may not be Catholic parishioners they are certainly neighbours.

'Who is my neighbour?' was the query posed to Jesus by a man with a legalistic mind. Jesus' answer can be found in Luke 10: 30-37, where he relates the parable of the good Samaritan (one of the much abused outsiders of Biblical society), and urges the querist, in the words of the Rheims version, "Go, and do thou in like manner".

So, as a matter of everyday life, members of parish pastoral councils concerned about their religious parishes should also have a continuing concern on a daily basis for their neighbours, all of them, of every kind, in the civic parish.

These days, by having a mind for everyone in the civic parish, it will prevent a religious parish council becoming in any way at all 'too parochial'.

## Limerick shining out in its 'golden age'



**Limerick: Snapshots of the Treaty City and County 1840-1960**  
by Tom Donovan and Vincent Carmody, forward by JP McManus, preface by Matthew Potter  
(Poundlane Publications, €35.00/£30.00)

J. Anthony Gaughan

Limerick is a much-storied city which traces its origin back to its establishment by the Vikings in 821. The authors take just a snapshot of that history, zooming in on the period from 1840 to 1960. This was a golden age in Limerick commercial and industrial history. It was a time when the industrial revolution had transformed the world economy and the modern, generally family-run, shop had replaced fairs and mar-

kets as the principal retail outlets.

Using advertisements, billboards, drawings, invoices, letterheads, photographs, postcards, publicity-posters and other assorted signage the authors present the commercial and industrial enterprises of a bygone age. Beginning with apothecaries and chemists they provide potted histories of each pharmaceutical business and pen-pictures of their proprietors.

**“It was a time when the industrial revolution had transformed the world economy”**

The bacon factories are next to attract their attention. Limerick ham was

prized at home and abroad and Denny's, Matteson's, O'Mara's and Shaw's thrived as they supplied meats across Britain and Ireland.

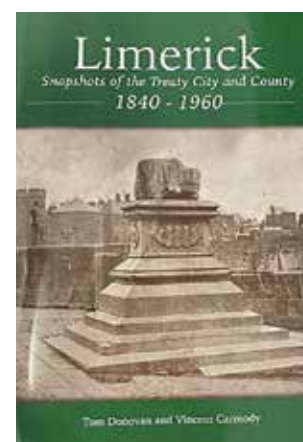
Co. Limerick is located at the centre in the golden vale, hence it was an important centre of the dairy industry. This was con-

ducted by the creameries developed by the co-operative movement. They were dotted throughout the city and country, many of which are here featured in picture and byline.

#### Cityscape

The authors roam far and wide across the rest of Limerick's commercial cityscape. The account of its newspapers, printing and booksellers is particularly interesting. The earliest recorded Limerick newspaper is a copy of the *Limerick News Letter*, dated May 4, 1716. Limerick printers were often associated with or owned newspapers.

Booksellers found it difficult to survive on book sales alone and needed to sell stationery and cognate items to supplement their income. There is an affectionate salute to





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.



the *Limerick Leader* and to O'Mahony's bookshop in O'Connell Street now trading for 125 years.

**“The earliest recorded Limerick newspaper is a copy of the *Limerick News Letter*, dated May 4, 1716”**

Ireland's history is weaved into the Limerick story. There is a nod in

the direction of the Treaty Stone, and the O'Connell monument in the Crescent. It is noted that the well-known Fenian, John Daly, was the founder and proprietor of John Daly's bakeries.

#### Recalled

Tragedies of the war of independence are recalled, including the murder on March 7, 1921 by the crown forces of two mayors of Limerick: George Clancy, a sitting mayor and Michael O'Callaghan, his prede-

cessor. And a photograph shows William Street after the Free State army had recaptured the city from the Anti-Treatyites in 1922.

This cornucopia of information is a valuable addition to the local history of Limerick city and county and will be of immense interest to all Limerick people. In the recent past the city had often received bad headlines. It is good to be reminded about its great heritage, on which its future is surely being built.

**“Co. Limerick is located at the centre in the golden vale, hence it was an important centre of the dairy industry”**

## The World of Books

By the books editor

### Putin's metier and one past crime of the Russian secret service

Peter Costello

The key to the link between past and present, as is so often the case, lies in a book.

President Vladimir Putin's earlier life was spent in the ranks of the Russia secret service. The distorted moral vision of that organisation has shaped his views of people, life and the world. For that state service from Tsarist era, through the decades of Lenin and Stalin, down to today is a continuum. It is the same creature in different jackets.

In their long history of subterfuge, one of the great crimes of the Russian secret service was the creation and circulation of a notorious anti-Semitic publication that later delighted the national socialists.

I cannot imagine that many people these days have actually read *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, one of the most influential pamphlets in modern times, which was directly responsible for the murders of the Holocaust and the continuing flow of anti-Semitic nonsense around the world, and the disruption and displacement of populations in Eastern Europe down to the 1940s.

The material was first printed in Russian in 1903 as part of a book called *The Great in the Little: Anti-Christ as a coming possibility, by an Ordinary Person*, written by a 'Professor' Sergei Nilus, a Russian Orthodox crank obsessed with the apocalypse. The protocols, alleged to be the records of the discussions of an active secret political group bent on world conquest, were however by another hand.

#### Historical

Soon because they were seen as an historical document, the protocols were separately reprinted and were soon in wide circulation around the world. Two English language versions appeared in 1919, one heavily promoted by H. A. Gwynne, the editor of the then influential *Morning Post*, at that time the newspaper of the conservative English elite (for which reason Michael Collins read it first thing every day). Gwynne believed it was a true document, as did many others from the Tsar to Rudyard Kipling.

The idea being promoted was that there existed a Jewish conspiracy to control the world. There is no need to go into the details here, as they are still trotted out on the internet today. It was



intended originally to discredit the leaders of Russia's Jews. None of these promoters knew the origin of the document. The story of the protocols was a complicated one. But a couple of years later the truth was revealed in a very curious way.

The plot had its convolutions: but at the very heart of it was Colonel Rachkovsky, the head of the foreign branch of the Russian secret service. He invented the concept, which was carried out for him, largely by two 'useful idiots'. One was Nilus. The other, and the actual author of the protocols, was a young man named Golowinsky, who adapted a long forgotten French text to a new and different purpose.

The fabricated nature of the protocols was brought to the attention of the world in 1921 by the Anglo-Irish journalist Phillip Graves - *The Times* of London correspondent in intrigue riddled post-war Constantinople.

(One of the well-known Graves family of Ballylickey in West Cork, he was the son of the poet Alfred Percival Graves, and the older half-brother of the poet and novelist Robert Graves.)

It was in Constantinople that Graves secretly received from an exiled White Russian a battered copy of a little book. It had lost its first pages so there was no indication of who the author was. On the coverless back there was a single word: JOLI.

Graves was familiar with the ramblings of the protocols and the text he read was that of the protocols. And yet curiously not protocols, for there were many alterations. Whatever it really was the booklet was clearly the basis of the notorious Protocols.

But who or what was 'JOLI'? The name might be a clue. Graves realised he had a major story of world importance on his hands. He sent it off at once to the editors in London.

A few hours in the great library of the British museum revealed the booklet was in

fact a political squib aimed at the regime of Napoleon III. It had been composed for anti-Masonic purposes by a French lawyer named Maurice Joly in 1864. He was jailed for his temerity, and the authorities ordered the destruction of the edition. A few copies, however, escaped the vigilance of the French secret police.

In the copy in Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris the pages carried various pencil marks. These were later seen to be significant: for they had been made by the editor preparing the version for Col. Rachkovsky.

#### Inclusion

The text had in fact been prepared for its inclusion in Nilus' book by a young man called Golowinsky, working to a direct commission from Colonel Rachkovsky. He basically rewrote Joly's text making it overtly anti-Semitic rather than anti-Masonic. He made little secret of his work among his small group of eminent friends in Paris, such as Princess Catherine Radziwill, who later on related his conversations to other reporters.

This breakthrough story was published by *The Times* with long parallel extracts of the texts, over several days in mid-August 1921. This should have killed the matter dead. But it is hard to kill a lie. Further exposures with further details of the crime had to follow especially when the then-emerging Adolf Hitler took up the matter. He believed these muck-raking activities by journalists of the 'bourgeois' press merely showed that the Protocols were indeed true.

In the present day, in Russia's lies, then lies about the lies, and yet further lies about the original lies, we see the same secret service mentality of both Col. Rachkovsky and of Mr Putin's sometime colleagues, now his own fawning functionaries in action, working away as well as they did in the days of the Tsar.



# 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)

Inspired by the vision and passion of Sr. Stan, many people are choosing to leave a loving gift in their will to support people who are homeless to find safety and a place they can call home.

To join in Sr. Stan's vision please contact [cian.dikker@focusireland.ie](mailto:cian.dikker@focusireland.ie) or phone 01 881 5962

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Please pray for the beatification of

**Little Nellie of Holy God**

“May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model”

– Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

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For over 130 years, *The Irish Catholic* has been a voice of hope and inspiration for Catholics in Ireland. Help us pass on the flame of faith by remembering us in your Will.

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# Leisure time

## The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Anna Sadlier at [anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie) or call 01 679 3188



Irish Hospice Foundation

[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

**MQI**

Merchants Quay Ireland  
Homeless & Drugs Services

## Your heart for the homeless

Merchants Quay Ireland reaches out with kindness to people living on our streets, sleeping in doorways, suffering and alone.

Your legacy, of any amount, can enfold the most vulnerable and lonely in wrap-around supports. You may wish to keep the details confidential. But we want to give you this little wooden keepsake, made by a client, for you.

This is your heart for the homeless and those on the road to recovery.

**To receive your little wooden heart and information on remembering**

Merchants Quay Ireland in your will, ring Emma Murphy, Legacies Manager at 01-524 0965 or email [emma.murphy@mqi.ie](mailto:emma.murphy@mqi.ie)

*Please pray for the beatification of*

## Little Nellie of Holy God

"May God enrich with every blessing all those who recommend frequent Communion to little boys and girls proposing Nellie as their model"

— Pope St Pius X, June 4, 1912

## Will the MSC Missions

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart bring hope to the poorest people living in over 48 countries worldwide.

**Please help us with a gift in your Will**

Contact:

MSC Missions Office, PO Box 23 Western Road, Cork.  
Tel: 021-4545704 Email: [info@mscmisions.ie](mailto:info@mscmisions.ie)

[www.mscmissions.ie](http://www.mscmissions.ie)

When you remember Trócaire in your Will, you bring hope to people living in the world's poorest places

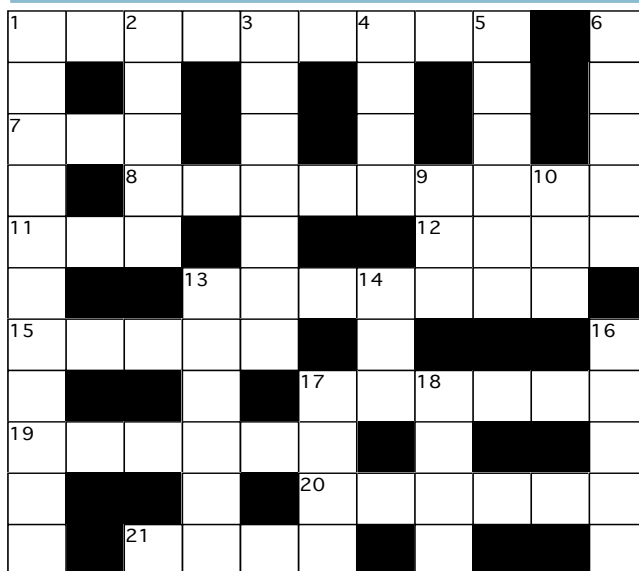
**Trócaire**

It's easy to get started, and we'll help you every step of the way. Call Grace Kelly on 01 629 3333, email [grace.kelly@trocaire.org](mailto:grace.kelly@trocaire.org) or write to me at Trócaire, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

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

## Crossword Junior

Ferdia 427



### Across

- 1 Two people sleep in this (6,3)
- 7 A plus sign tells you to do this (3)
- 8 "The \_\_\_\_\_ gets the worm" (5,4)
- 11 Row a boat using this (3)
- 12 A thought (4)
- 13 Got fit and ready for a race or match (7)
- 15 Cross, very annoyed (5)
- 17 In this position, you may win a silver medal (6)
- 19 End (6)
- 20 Time when you might receive a chocolate egg (6)
- 21 "The girl was \_\_\_\_\_ 10 years"

### Down

- 1 Harry Potter's main rival at Hogwarts (5,6)

### 2 Below (5)

- 3 Where you go to borrow books (7)
- 4 Seaside town in Co Wicklow (4)
- 5 Make your mind up (6)
- 6 Black and white bear (5)
- 9 Depending on its type, it's where you put your rubbish, or things you want to recycle (3)
- 10 This traffic light tells us to stop (3)
- 13 "Having a go" (6)
- 14 There is a TV show called 'Dancing on \_\_\_\_\_' (3)
- 16 Love greatly or worship (5)
- 17 Small building in the back garden (4)
- 18 Piece of luggage (4)

## SOLUTIONS, MARCH 31

GORDIUS NO. 552

**Across** — 1. Wet 3. Controversy 8. Normal 9. Laburnum 10. Spite 11. Tower 13. Beach 15. Flavour 16. Aramaic 20. Fiery 21. Genie 23. Boris 24. Mourning 25. Louvre 26. Willingness 27. Lot

**Down** — 1. Windsurfing 2. Tortilla 3. Clare 4. Telstar 5. Vault 6. Renews 7. Yam 12. Red Crescent 13. Bluff 14. Hardy annual 17. Approval 18. Decagon. 22. Ennui 23. Books 24. Mow

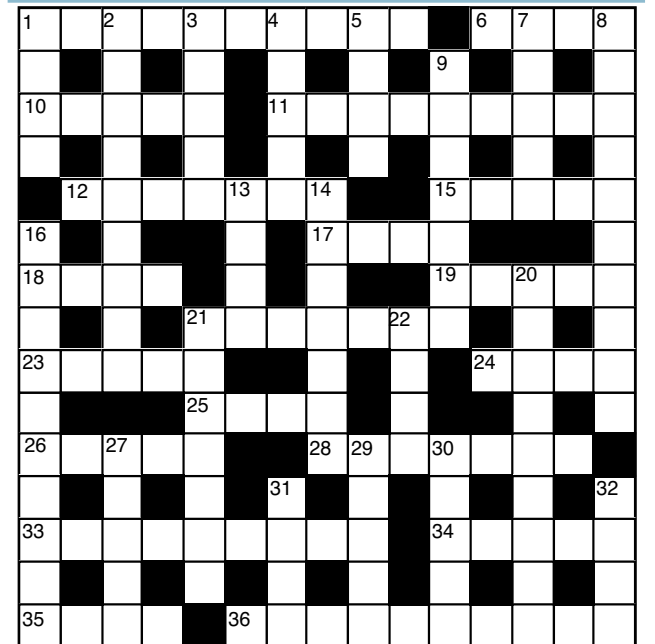
CHILDREN'S No. 426

**Across** — 1. Home run 7. Eagle 8. Retreat 9. Trees 10. Opens 11. Needle. 14. Reach 16. Uniform 17. Paint 18. Covered 19. Yes

**Down** — 1. Harbour 2. Mathematics 3. Reels 4. Nettle 5. Agreed 6. Peas 12. Eiffel 13. Larger 15. Hutch 17. Pay

## Crossword

Gordius 553



### Across

- 1 I let biceps loose for a constitutional vote (10)
- 6 In America, a tramp (4)
- 10 In accordance with the law (5)
- 11 Cease girl! That could literally become a violation of the sacred (9)
- 12 Jewish candelabrum (7)
- 15 Does as one is told (5)
- 17 Way out (4)
- 18 Shells out (4)
- 19 What bosses call when a coin is tossed? (5)
- 21 You might put it in a torch (7)
- 23 More impolite (5)
- 24 Stalk (4)
- 25 & 32d This plant can be seen around the area, love (4,4)
- 26 Religious songs (5)
- 28 Might the rat grow as a dangerous weed? (7)
- 33 Acquired new knowledge or techniques, especially for one's career (9)
- 34 Gas that protects us from harmful solar rays (5)
- 35 Otherwise, get chopped eels (4)
- 36 How to prod a pagan with what you want people to hear (10)

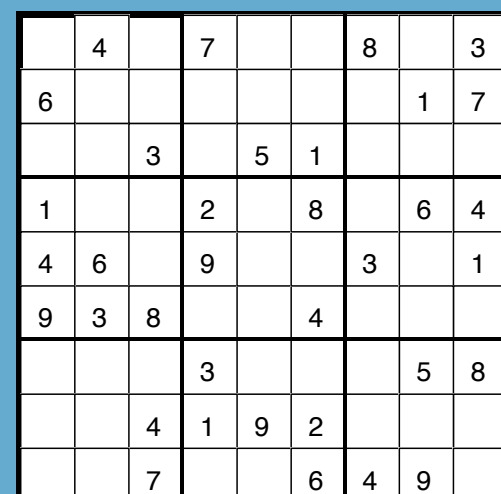
### Down

- 1 Friends (4)
- 2 As acutely observant as a large bird of prey (5-4)
- 3 Traditional Inuit dwelling (5)
- 4 & 13d Central American country where CIA actors are redeployed? (5,4)
- 5 Small nail (4)
- 7 Variety of daisy named after part of an animal (5)
- 8 Password from 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' (4,6)
- 9 Omit thy mixture for a correspondent of St Paul's (7)
- 13 See 4 down
- 14 A wild plant will make her warm (7)
- 16 Venue where might hear Madame Butterfly or Tosca (5,5)
- 20 Part of the day following lunch (9)
- 21 In golf, a Two Wood (7)
- 22 Jewellery for the finger (4)
- 27 Ponders (5)
- 29 Find the total (3,2)
- 30 Mistaken (5)
- 31 Imputation (4)
- 32 See 25 across

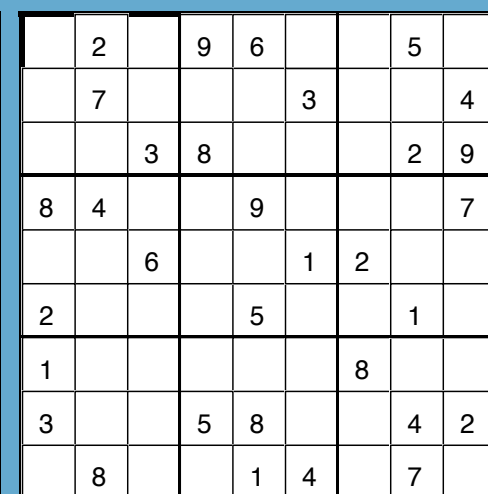
## Sudoku Corner

427

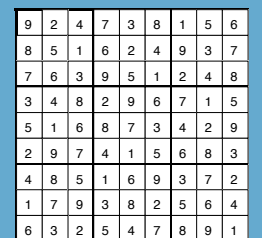
### Easy



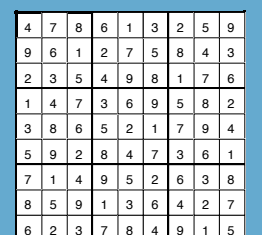
### Hard



### Last week's Easy 426



### Last week's Hard 426





Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



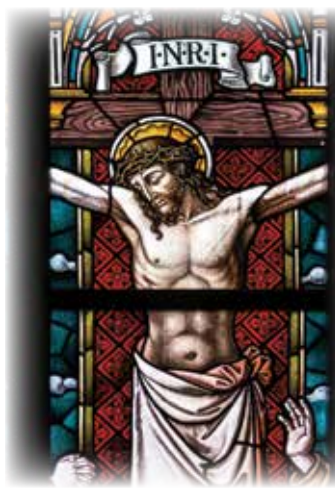
# Easter calls us to show respect and be truly Christian

**Lent has almost run** its course. Palm Sunday approaches and, on its heels, Holy Week.

This is intended to be the high-point of the Church's liturgy; the recalling of those sacred events of more than two thousand years ago. We will journey with Jesus into Jerusalem on a donkey's back, see him betrayed, we will receive the gift that is the Eucharist from the table in the upper room, listen as he cries out in Good Friday anguish: "It is accomplished" and share in the carrying of his lifeless body to a borrowed tomb. On Easter Sunday, with the women, amongst his closest and most loyal friends, we will stand before an emptied tomb and hear again those life-giving words: "He is not here. He is risen."

## Mother

My mother, God rest her, used to say she preferred Easter to Christmas. As a child, maybe even as a man, I could not fully grasp that. Christmas seems to bring out the best in people. Goodwill abounds and there is literally music in the air. There is a sense of the world wanting to be right, even when it's not, around Christmas, and huge efforts are made to ensure families are together, nobody is left alone



and that sharing at every level takes place.

The baby in the borrowed stable is a lovable image. Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, the animals and kings, combine to give us a sense of Walton's Mountain. All is well. A saviour is born and Chris Rea is driving home again (though it will be a more expensive trip now with the way fuel prices are going!) The infant seems far removed from the man falling beneath the weight of the cross. The infant's cries are not mentioned in the Gospel, but the cries of Good Friday are well and truly documented.

In fairness to my mother, she spoke the truth and chances are it is a truth we struggle with. Easter is essential if we are to make any sense of suffering, to find any hope in death and any semblance of reassurance for our own journey. Everything about the days to come speaks to us of God's abiding love for our world and sadly too that the world is an impoverished place when people either don't hear or choose not to hear God's call, God's message – God's plan.

## Test card

I remember as a child looking at a test card on television on Good Friday as the station did not broadcast. I am not sure if that was for all Good Friday or just around 3pm to mark the hour that is linked with Jesus' death on the cross. I recall the starkness of the day, the reading of the "long Gospel" and maybe Stations of the Cross in the even-

ing. Fasting too and the length that added to the day remain memories for me. Perhaps there was something in this collective sense of this being a day unlike any other. It was easy to get caught up in the moment, to be moved by it and to recognise it for what it was – special. That is more difficult to do now, as Good Friday morphs into every other day and can all too easily be bypassed or ignored. I am not saying that TV channels should fall silent but somewhere, within what we call the soul, there remains a call to mark this day and the days that follow. There is a need to see them as days set apart, story-telling days, remembrance days and, with the dawning of Easter Day, hope filled days.

## Funeral

A few months ago, a funeral left the church in the parish where I work, to go to the cemetery. It was

a small funeral, just a handful of cars. I noticed a man on a motorbike. He was in the line of cars. As the hearse moved into the right lane for the cemetery, he stopped in the left lane, bowed his head, and held the traffic behind him. I knew then that he was not in the funeral. I lowered the window and said: "Thank you, that was a kind thing to do."

He looked at me and said: "It was the right thing to do."

Maybe we are being asked now to mark these days in a way that reflects our faith. Remembering Christmas, its songs and joys, its giving and receiving and the birth of the Saviour; we are called to recognise that saviour now and give gratitude for all he said and did in the name of God's love. It is a call to show respect, to give thanks and to be truly Christian – it is the right thing to do.

## It's all about where you start

I heard once of a priest walking into a church and noticing a young boy praying the Stations of the Cross. Impressed by the boy's reverence but also noticing that the boy was doing the Stations in reverse, the priest spoke to him. "Well done on praying the stations but you started at the wrong end, young man", he said "you're going the wrong way."

The boy looked at the priest and said: "I was wondering Father, because he seemed to be getting better as I went along!"



## LITTLE WAY EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR UKRAINE



Hundreds of thousands of families have been displaced in Ukraine and many more have sought refuge by crossing international borders. A bishop in south-western Ukraine, whose identity we must protect, has written that his diocese has already taken some 300 displaced women and children into their seminary, youth centre and retreat house.

These refugees all need food, clothing and hygiene products. The diocese is also providing free medical examinations. Another 100 refugees are in a church school and the bishop writes: "The refugees sleep in the classrooms. We have provided mattresses, blankets, etc., we prepare the food in the kitchen and the refugees get three meals in the dining room. In the basement there are 10 shower cabins. People are very grateful." He adds: "We collect food in our parishes of our diocese - some food we keep for refugees in our archdiocese and some food we send to the [Russian occupied] east of Ukraine." The bishop sends his blessing on all who would help him.

Iryna Havryshkevych, head of projects for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church, writes: "I am very grateful for all your prayers for Ukraine and for your initiative to support us in these difficult times. The war in Ukraine affected foremost the priests and religious serving in the eastern territories of Ukraine. Many priests and religious stay at the frontline with their parishioners (for today - estimated 110 priests and 70 religious). We are searching for the funds to support them. Would The Little Way Association be able to provide emergency existence aid for them?"

**Please give what you can for the families, clergy and religious of this war-torn country. Every penny you send will be gratefully received and sent without deduction to help the suffering people of Ukraine.**

**Please join us in praying the rosary for peace in the Ukraine and for her afflicted people.**



In 1893, St Therese of Lisieux wrote to her sister Celine:

**"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself, as it were, at our mercy. He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart. The very least trifle is precious in His sight."**

## MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS

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

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