

The Irish Catholic

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Legion hopes high for centenary year as 'prophetic' Frank Duff cause nears Rome

Jason Osborne and Ruadhán Jones

The focus on lay leadership in the Church of Legion of Mary founder Frank Duff has been hailed as "prophetic" as celebrations get underway to mark the centenary of the organisation. *The Irish Catholic* can also reveal that final preparations are now underway to progress the cause for canonisation of Mr Duff who died in 1980.

Founded 100 years ago this week, the Legion of Mary remains the largest international organisation ever to come out of Ireland.

Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell described Mr Duff as "a man ahead of his time" because of his clear focus on an articulate laity stepping up to leadership within the Church decades before Vatican II.

Comparing Mr Duff to John the Baptist, Archbishop Farrell said "he realised, ahead of his contemporaries that every Christian is called to the apostolic dimension of our Faith".

"It was only with the Second Vatican Council that the laity began to regain their rightful place in the Church. From its foundation in 1921, the Legion was carrying out the mission of the Church as was proposed by the Second Vatican Council," Archbishop Farrell said at Mass marking the opening of the centenary in Dublin on Friday evening.

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Joy as first Holy Communions return in Dublin



Colman, Christian, Luke, Julie and Jenny Walsh are pictured at the Church of Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners in Rathmines, Dublin, on Saturday as First Communions recommenced in the parish. Photo: Chai Brady. See pages 12-13

Lay parish admins on cards for Ferns says new bishop

Chai Brady

The new bishop of Ferns has said he will be exploring a 'parish administrator' role for laity, which aims to alleviate some administrative burdens from clergy.

Bishop Ger Nash, who was ordained on Sunday in the Cathedral of St Aidan, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, told *The Irish Catholic* that one of the reasons for creating the role is that "we don't want to be draining the energy of ordained ministers".

"I've been talking to different bishops previous to this who would be saying that the burden of safeguarding regulations, financial regulations, charity regulations and data protection regulation has become a huge task, which is totally non-ministerial but absolutely has to be done..." Bishop Nash said.

"Parish administrators, to be effective, would have to be working beside the priest, not for the priest, taking full responsibility within the community for that area of life and there are people who would like that too, who would have skill in that who might not like a public profile. It's an area for exploration because these regulations are not going to become less, they are going to become more."

He added: "I've come across examples of it in Australia and New Zealand but I think doing it here, it would be a mixture of training people in the practicalities but also to train people for ministry they have to have an understanding of what Church is about. They're not just administrators."

"It would be giving them a vision of Church as well and low-level knowledge of Canon Law and civil law. I could envisage maybe a one- or two-year training programme with practical experience built-in."

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God is the antithesis of fundamentalism

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The serendipity of opening a drawer

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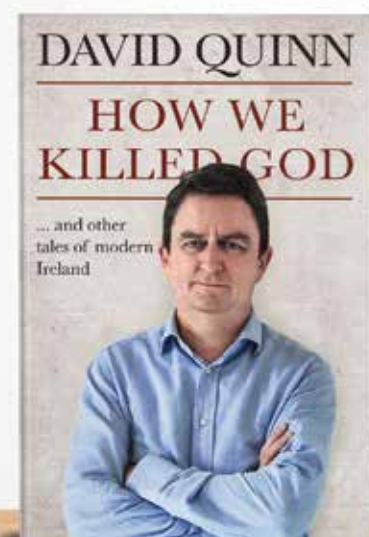
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Frank Duff: a model of robust lay leadership

Frank Duff, the indefatigable founder of the Legion of Mary was a man ahead of his time. What he founded in Dublin a century ago – September 7, 1921 – quickly became the largest international association ever to come out of Ireland.

Mr Duff had a two-fold vision for the Legion of Mary. On the one hand, the spiritual growth and development of members of the legion was vital. At the same time, this would go hand-in-hand with a commitment to be actively apostolic, alert to the many challenges afflicting Ireland at the time – not least of which was the crippling material poverty – and roll up their sleeves to tackle them.

Members of the Legion of Mary have been doing so quietly now for a century. Often the work goes unnoticed since it is with the people who society would either rather forget or else blame them for their own misfortune.

Frank Duff saw every single person, regardless of where they found themselves in life, as precious children made in God's image and likeness.

For him and the members of the Legion of Mary, Christ's words: "in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

Shame

While we now look back in shame as a people about the ill-treatment meted out to unmarried mothers for decades in Ireland, Frank Duff and the legionaries went against the prevailing mood of the time and helped unmarried mothers to keep their babies. The legion's approach was not one of narrow judgementalism of

condemnation, but sought to be the loving presence of God in concrete situations.

Frank Duff's vision was of a group of committed laypeople who actively sought out the rejected and the neglected and befriended them and witnessed to their unique dignity.

“Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell described Frank Duff as ‘prophetic in the true Christian sense of that word’”

At the weekend, Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell described Frank Duff as “prophetic in the true Christian sense of that word: someone sensitive to the call of God and utterly dedicated to God's will”.

Frank Duff was articulating the idea of the ‘universal call to holiness’ of all believers decades before it was formulated by the Second Vatican Council

Editor's Comment Michael Kelly



Frank Duff who died in 1980.

in *Lumen gentium* (1964).

He himself had attended Vatican II as an observer at the invitation of Pope St Paul VI and prioritised the importance of the call to laypeople to live the Gospel in everyday life and therein find holiness. In that sense, he stands as a model of robust lay leadership in the Church.

For all of its outward greatness, he was also acutely aware of the deficiencies of the institutional Church and the failure to nourish people with sound material that would aid their spiritual growth. This is one of the reasons why a key apostolate of the Legion of Mary became the distribution of *The Irish Catholic*. He felt passionately that every Catholic home should have a Catholic newspaper to read. He also knew well that a lack of faith formation and a lack of clerical trust in lay leadership existed in the Church.

In the 1950's Catholic Ireland seemed secure and strong but Frank Duff saw things differently. He wrote in relation to those years: “religion

has become routine...a terrible conservatism exercises sway...an inert laity is only two generations removed from non-practice, non-practice is only two generations away from non-belief.”

Prophetic? Without question. But, Frank Duff was also not a pessimist and we must resist the temptation to give in to pessimism or fatalism.

Vision

Part of the vision of the universal call to holiness that Pope Francis is setting before us today is the synodal process where laypeople, priests, religious and bishops set out on the journey together listening attentively to the Word of God for our time. We could do a lot worse than adopting Frank Duff – that great champion of the mission of our Baptism – as a patron as the Church in Ireland embarks on a synodal process eventually leading to a national synod.

Speaking about the synodal process at the Vatican on Tuesday Cardinal Mario Grech – the man responsible for shepherding it – warned that a synod is not a parliament. Without the Holy Spirit, he insisted, a synod becomes a “game of sides,” and the participation of the “holy people of God” would become an “opinion poll.”

Frank Duff's model of authentic lay leadership at the service of the Gospel is a wonderful antidote to the divisiveness of those who want to see battle lines drawn.

Legion hopes high for centenary as ‘prophetic’ Frank Duff cause nears Rome

» Continued from Page 1

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Legion of Mary President Mary Murphy said the “huge” work of reading Mr Duff's prolific writings has been completed, and that a historical report is currently being prepared in Dublin before the cause that could see him declared a saint can be sent to Rome.

Incoming provincial of the Irish Dominicans Fr John Harris described Mr Duff as “the most influential Irishman in the last 100 years, when you look at the outreach of the Legion of Mary.

“I think he's been more influential, as an Irish man on the world stage, than anybody else.”

He said that he hoped the centenary

would be an opportunity to raise awareness about the huge work of Mr Duff and the legion. There “absolutely should be more excitement around the potential for his canonisation”.

He described him as “a totally and utterly prophetic figure in the life of the Church...This should be something that the whole of the country knows about.”

Ms Murphy said that the difficulty with Mr Duff's cause is that “there's huge documentation” because he lived to be 91 and also because he wrote so much.

Mr Duff wrote 33,000 letters, according to Ms Murphy, who says that part of the process for getting the cause ready to go to Rome involved reading all of these letters.

The legion employed a full-time his-

torian and four part-time readers to get through the correspondence.

“All of that work is now done, so at the moment the process is the historical commission, which is chaired by Msgr Ciaran O'Carroll of the archdiocese, he's a historian, they will now prepare a historical report for the cause to proceed and then hopefully at that point, all the loose ends will be tied up and the cause will be sent to Rome.

This, coupled with the centenary celebrations, have seen the legion experiencing “joy”, as they seek to “continue the apostolic work” that Mr Duff started.

Archbishop Farrell praised Frank Duff as “prophetic in the true Christian sense of that word”.

See pages 14-16.

Don't make soccer into a religion – former Man U star

Staff reporter

A former Manchester United player turned priest has cautioned against turning football into a god and treating it as a religion.

Fr Philip Mulryne OP, who spent most of his career with Norwich City, said football was fundamentally good and was a wonderful vehicle for teaching virtue but should be kept in perspective.

Speaking on St Patrick's Podcast, the Dominican priest said

football shared a lot of characteristics with religion and could be a form of worship in which there is collective adulation and chanting.

Re-bind

"Even the word religion comes from the Latin *religare* – to bind, to re-bind yourself. That's what we are doing when we practice our religion towards God. We bind ourselves to God and him to us. In a sense people bind themselves

together into a particular club and so it is a form of worship in some way," he said.

However, he warned: "From our perspective [it] can be quite disordered if it takes over one's life, affects and starts affecting one's family life and marriages and your moods and things like that."

"Taken to an extreme it can have a detrimental effect on one's life. While there is a fundamental goodness in it, there is that temptation to turn it into a god."

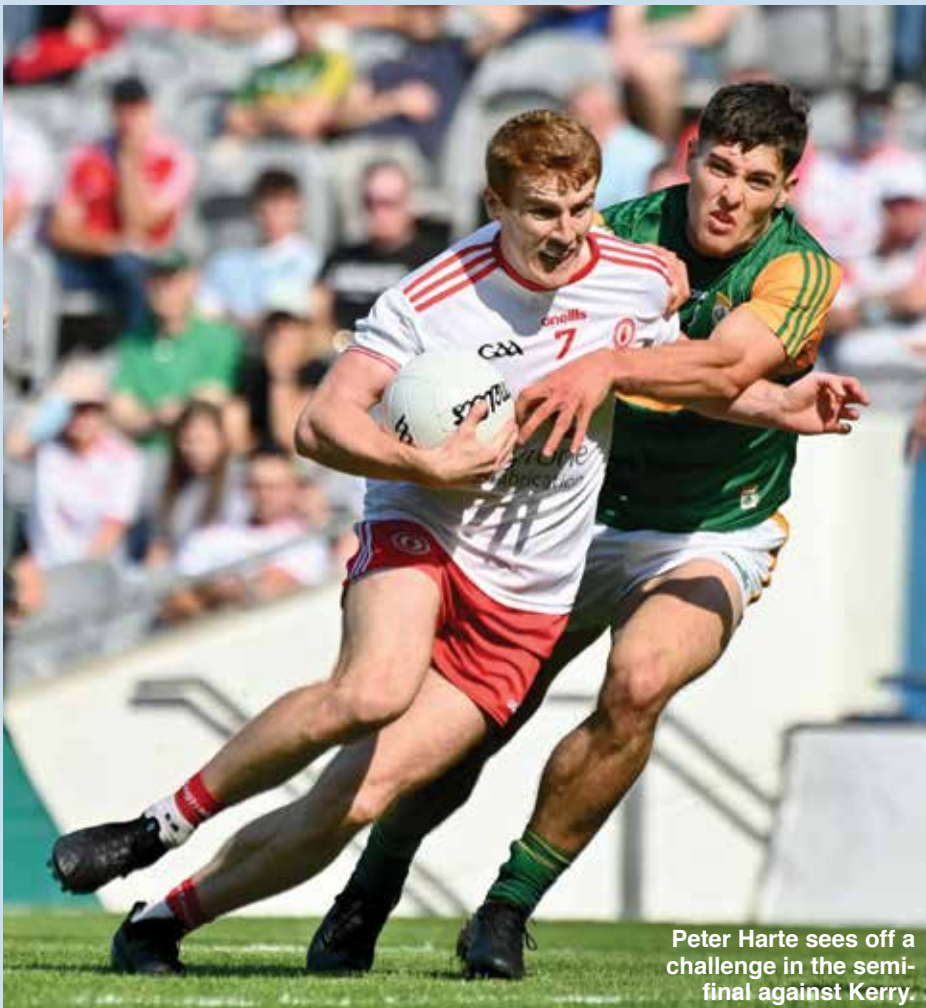
Fr Mulryne was in conversation about faith and football with former adoration sisters turned pilgrim guides, Martina Purdy and Elaine Kelly. The podcast is produced by The Saint Patrick Centre, Downpatrick, the world's only permanent exhibition to St Patrick in the world.

At the end of the podcast he was asked what he would like to ban from Ireland, in the Spirit of St Patrick. "I would like to ban Liverpool supporters," he joked.

He added that he would also like to ban "indifference" especially around faith and would rather have an argument with someone about faith than meet with an attitude of "I don't care."

He told the podcast that he felt called to the priesthood when he realised that he truly believed in his Catholic Faith. He said that St Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, had much to teach us about the worship of God, the Trinity and prayer.

Belfast's St Mary's college proud of Tyrone team



Peter Harte sees off a challenge in the semi-final against Kerry.

Jason Osborne

Ahead of this weekend's All-Ireland showdown with Mayo, the Catholic college where many members of the Tyrone team attended has wished them well in the match.

St Mary's University College in Belfast boasts 11 former students among the players in the team, and one on the support team. The principal said the entire college community is immensely proud that the team has reached the final.

"At St Mary's University College, we are very proud of a strong and long-standing connection with the Tyrone Gaelic football team," College Principal Prof. Peter Finn KSG said, before wishing the team the best

of luck against Mayo, hoping that "the Sam Maguire Cup returns north".

Tyrone overcame a flat Kerry 3-14, 0-22 in a scrappy match to reach their first All-Ireland final in three years.

Prof. Finn said regardless of the result in the final, the year is already "very special" with so many of their graduates having the "opportunity to experience an All-Ireland football final".

Dr Finn said that the College's Catholic ethos may well have contributed to "the strength of character displayed by our graduates," before referencing centre forward Peter Harte's "fantastic block that he made at a vital time to step a Kerry goal". Mr Harte has both a Bachelors and Masters degree from St Mary's College.

Pope appoints Irish priest to new Vatican role

Brandon Scott

Pope Francis has appointed a Fermanagh-born priest to head the office at the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Fr Enda Murphy will take up the role in the Vatican office responsible for supervising liturgy in the universal Church and

approving translations of the Mass and other ceremonies.

A native of Derrylin, Fr Murphy is a priest of the Diocese of Kilmore and has worked in the same dicastery of the Roman Curia for a number of years. He holds a doctorate in liturgy and previously served as diocesan director of pastoral services and youth ministry

in his native Kilmore.

Following the recent retirement of Cardinal Robert Sarah as head of the congregation, Pope Francis ordered a visitation to look at the functioning of the office. The cardinal was perceived as being more conservative in his liturgical outlook – including the use of Latin – than the Argentine Pontiff.

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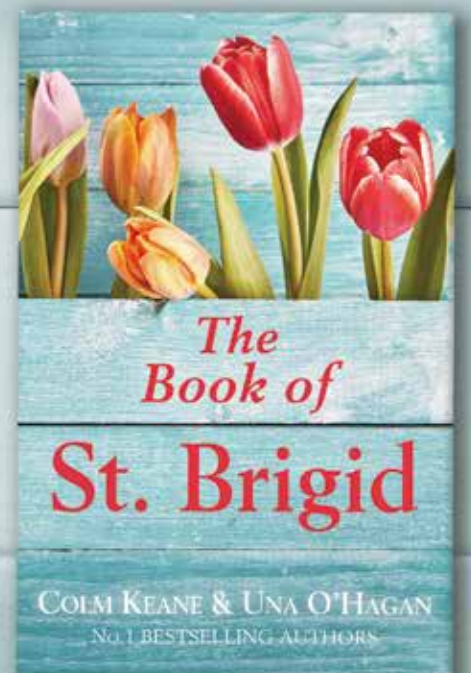
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IN ALL BOOKSHOPS NOW

Small farms vital for rural communities' survival post-pandemic, says priest-farmer

Ruadhán Jones

The Government must stop "overlooking" small and family farms, or else risk compromising the survival of rural communities, a priest-farmer said.

Fr Joseph McEvoy's statement comes after Pope Francis called for governments to include small farms as "privileged actors" as we "restart" following the pandemic.

Vital

The Meath priest and smallholder farmer echoed the Pope's statement that "their traditional knowledge should not be overlooked or ignored", saying it's "vital" that this knowledge is considered by the Government.

Farming "is just such a back bone of things in the country", Fr McEvoy told *The Irish Catholic*.

"I think it's vital, not just important, vital, that their traditional knowledge shouldn't be overlooked or ignored," he continued.

"If we want our rural communities to thrive and to be sustained, then we have to give more consideration to farms.

"Even from the point of view of heritage and tradition, that if they're going to

be overlooked, we're going to start losing things again."

Fr McEvoy adds that small farms are important food sources: "If they were to go, and you see this happening in the UK already, food prices would skyrocket."

As the Government considers how to restructure the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Fr McEvoy expressed concern that it will favour industrial farms over small and family farms.

"Even the way the Common Agricultural Policy is being reformed at the minute, it's geared more towards large, industrial farms than it is towards small family farms," he said.

Part-time farmers

Small farmers are reliant on CAP subsidies to survive, Fr McEvoy continued, saying that the majority are "part-time farmers, because it's not sustainable anymore. They're working as well as farming".

More than two-fifths of farms in Ireland (43%) are small, less than 20 hectares. But "when it comes to policy making, it's never a consideration about small farms and family farms", Fr McEvoy explained.

Church in Wales to bless same-sex marriages

Staff reporter

Same-sex couples can now have their marriage blessed by the Church in Wales following a vote earlier in the week.

The Church still won't be performing same-sex marriages, however.

The Church in Wales is the Anglican Church in Wales, made up of six dioceses.

The Evangelical Fellowship expressed its opposition to the move, saying it did not uphold the "standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman".

However, the former Dean of St Albans, Very Reverend Jeffrey John supported the move, describing it as a "halfway house" that didn't go far enough.

The Church in Wales said it was a step on the way towards repentance of a history which has "demonised and persecuted gay and lesbian people".

Individual clergy will be able to opt-out of offering the blessing to same-sex couples, with some arguing that the change is likely to cause a split in the Church.

The bill authorising a service of blessing was passed by all three orders of the

Church's governing body at the meeting in Newport.

The bishops passed it unanimously, the clergy passed it by 28 to 12, with two abstentions, and the laity passed it by 49 to 10, with one abstention.

The Church in Wales currently allows for gay and lesbian clergy, and does not require celibacy of them.

However, the Church of England does not currently recognise same-sex marriages, forbids its clergy to bless same-sex unions and only allows celibate gay and lesbian clergy to minister, signalling a divide with the Church in Wales on the topic.

Mass offered on Skellig Michael for renewal of faith



Jason Osborne

Mass was recently offered atop Skellig Michael for "a renewal of the faith in the hearts of all those in our hallowed land," according to the event organiser, David O'Donnell.

The third century Monastic site saw nine priests concelebrate the Mass and pray an informal consecration of Ireland to the

Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Chaste Heart of St Joseph.

The special service involved many orders stationed in Ireland, including the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, the Servant Home of the Mother, Institute of the Word Incarnate, Dominicans, Franciscans, Salesians, Order of St Camillus and diocesan priests.

A short video of the Mass is available on YouTube under the title: 'Consecration of Ireland on Skellig Michael'.

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Cecelia's very moral book theme...

Cecilia Ahern always has interesting themes for her novels, and her new book *Freckles* is based on a lofty moral ideal. It was, she says, inspired by the expression that "you are the average of the five people you spend most time with"; so she decided to create a character, Allegra, whose ambition is "to become a better version of herself" by reaching out to the five people she considers admirable.

Ms Ahern – Bertie's daughter, as we know – suggests that choosing good people as influencers helps us to 'curate' a higher ideal of ourselves.

It might prompt us all to ask – who are the five people we would choose to make us better versions of ourselves?

Retrospective question

It also prompts a retrospective question about the people who have most influenced our lives. And it reinforces an old Christian and Catholic moral theme – that the company we keep can shape the direction of our destiny.

● One of the people who influenced me was Nuala Scarisbrick, the co-founder of 'Life', in Britain, who has just died. Nuala and her husband Jack – the Tudor historian Prof. J.J. Scarisbrick – set up Life in 1970 to provide alternatives to abortion. Nuala and Jack took pregnant girls into their own home in Warwickshire and set up a series of Life houses as accommodation for women with crises pregnancies. They also founded three hospices for disabled babies, 'Zoe's Place', in Liverpool, Coventry and Middlesbrough.



Mary Kenny



Novelist Cecilia Ahern

The influence of 'bad companions' was a cautionary note often sounded. It's evident that there can be bad, or negative, influences as well as positive and inspiring ones.

There can be the teacher who opens the portals of learning and high ideals – the psychiatrist Anthony Clare ascribed his achievements in life to a terrific Jes-

uit at Gonzaga, Fr Joe Veale. But there can be a teacher who has the opposite effect because of a negative, even toxic, attitude. I had a surly piano teacher who rapped me painfully across the knuckles with a pencil every time I played a wrong note, which made me recoil from ever trying to play anything at all.

Shining path

I've encountered good people who showed me a shining path; but it has to be admitted that sometimes the bad boys and girls can be the ones who lead us astray with their charms and beguilements. Sometimes, it has occurred to me, that I was the nefarious influence, the 'bad companion'.

Cecilia's novel is underpinned by a serious intellectual idea, and although she may not be consciously aware of it, her 'higher self' draws on a Christian aspiration to grow in virtue by emulating the saints, and distance ourselves from the demons who would bring out the worst side of our characters.

Nuala was beautiful, funny, energetic and great company and she showed me that being 'pro-life' wasn't something disapproving and gloomy, but life-enhancing and cheerful. She died on August 31, aged 82, surrounded by her husband, daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Nuala also expanded pregnancy counselling services and one of the most successful has been Life Belfast, where a dedicated team from all sections of the community work together.

Her passing calls for mourning, but also the celebratory words "To life!"

The horrors of war

I grew up among a generation who had lived through the Irish Civil War of 1922-23 – my mother, aunts and uncles had all been young people during the 1920s. And not a single word did they ever utter about the experience. My ma preferred to remember the Charleston, the appearance of 'cocktails' and the 'Talkie' movies of the 1920s; otherwise, a complete silence prevailed over the period.

And now I understand why, having read Diarmaid Ferriter's new book *Between Two Hells: The*

Irish Civil War. A full review will surely appear on our books pages, but just let me say the story is both riveting and appalling. The suffering, on both sides, was unspeakable. Young men 'executed' by one side or the other for trivial offences, or for being in the wrong place at the wrong time; and the pitiful pleadings of mothers, not only bereft of husbands and sons, but left with no breadwinner, plunging families into destitution.

Small wonder Taoiseach Seán Lemass could never talk

about it: his brother Noel was abducted, shot three times, his head 'detached' from his body, and several fingers cut off. "When his parents were brought to the scene, they could only identify him from his cigarette case, rosary beads and gold tie clip".

The Church did preach peace and anti-violence, though it was evident the hierarchy's sympathies were with the Free State, being the legitimate government. But what anguish they all witnessed, and what torment so many went through, God help them.



Sister Nilcéia, on mission in Malawi

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Govt housing targets must be met to help most vulnerable says Depaul

Chai Brady

Irish charity Depaul supported 554 people to find a home and exit their services which is an increase of 40% compared to 2019 despite the challenges raised by the pandemic, according to their 2020 annual report.

CEO David Carroll told *The Irish Catholic* this week that the Government must reach its targets for social housing and prioritise the homeless in the new 'Housing for All' strategy to make a dent in the homelessness and housing crisis.

Mr Carroll said: "The publication of 'Housing for All', the new Government policy on housing, is a key development for us and we've given that a broad welcome. The areas we would particularly welcome would be the focus on single units from the social housing stock, the increased focus and emphasis on health and the health of homeless people and a particular emphasis on mental health.

"We feel that if that if those targets can be delivered, of

10,000 per year, that should make some difference in the amount of people who find themselves homeless and obviously we're looking for the longer term housing options for people. But it does depend very much on how we deliver not only those social housing units but the wider targets of 33,000 units per year

Devoted

He added: "I think we can all argue on whether enough money has actually been devoted to the amount of stock coming on board but I think if we can deliver the 33,000 units per year we're hopeful that it will make a significant difference, if we take into consideration that we have 8,500 people in temporary accommodation at the moment, I think for it to make a real difference is that the 10,000 social housing units have to be focused towards those people who are currently in temporary accommodation otherwise we are going to face ongoing difficulties going forwards."

Overall in 2020, 3,542 men, women and children were supported by Depaul and 410 families came through their services. The charity helped 554 people move on from services to find a suitable home, an increase of 40% on 2019, and 772 children facing homelessness were helped.

In total of 30 services were provided across the Island of Ireland in their five service areas: Prevention, families and young people, high support accommodation, health and rehabilitation and housing.

Depaul reconfigured its services in response to the pandemic, adding two stand-alone isolation units for those displaying Covid-19 symptoms as well as establishing three staffed shielding units in several Dublin city centre hotels, which provided an additional 240 shielding beds to the most medically vulnerable, out of a total stock of 355 beds in the city. Depaul managed and supported 67.6% of shielding bed capacity in Dublin during the pandemic.

Female religious cause for joy across Ireland

Jason Osborne

A spate of activity on the female religious front has been warmly welcomed by sisters across Ireland, with new sister, Elizabeth, for the Knock Carmelites, a new postulant, Bindhu, for the Drumcondra Redemptoristines, and profession formation taking place with the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master in Ireland (PDDM).

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, new Carmelite Sister Elizabeth said it was "good to be fully a part of the community," and that she looked forward to being able to "fade a bit more into the background" after her August 6 Solemn Profession.

She said the biggest step for her was receiving the habit, as she "gave her yes to God" then.

"My happiest reaction was when I received the habit," Sr Elizabeth said.

"I know it's not as important in monastic life, but I know myself I wouldn't have gone forward for the reception of the habit unless I'd already made the commitment to stay here for life. So, for me really, that was my happiest moment, as that was when I said, 'Yes' to God."



Sr Elizabeth, centre, is pictured after making her Solemn Profession.

She said the profession itself was "lovely" and that the prostration stood out to her, reminding her of "how you're really uniting yourself to Christ's offering and for the rest of your life, everything you do is all united to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

She encouraged other young women considering religious life to "definitely" discern it, and to "go and look" if it suits them.

"You don't lose anything by trying it...it's better to know if it's not for you, and then you're free if you find out it's not God's will for you - you won't be asking yourself, 'What if?'"

She said it was a "great gift" and a "joy" she had received, which was a line taken up by Sr Louise O'Rourke, Vocations Director of the PDDM Sisters in Ireland.

"I pray that those discerning God's design for them may have courage to make that first step now to set out on the great pilgrimage of religious life," Sr Louise said, continuing, that the "first step is always the hardest" but that there are people available to journey with and support those who authentically wish to discern their vocation in life."



New postulant Bindhu, centre, is pictured with Srs Gabrielle (left) and Lucy (right).

Archbishop Eamon unveils plaque to WWII Martyr St Maximilian Kolbe

Ruadhán Jones

The Primate of All-Ireland praised St Kolbe as "martyr of love" at a Mass in Warrenpoint, Co. Down, to mark the 80th anniversary of his martyrdom.

In his homily September 5, Archbishop Eamon Martin said the Nazis attempted to take away St Kolbe's humanity, but "what mattered to Fr Maximilian was not number they tattooed on his arm, but the indelible spiritual mark of priesthood imprinted on the day of his ordination".

Fr Kolbe saw the "concentration camp could now be his new parish; the prisoners, his flock to shepherd.

"His greatest act of witness and love was the day he stepped forward to offer his life in exchange for that of a fellow inmate, Franciszek Gajowniczek," the archbishop continued.

After the Mass, Archbishop Martin unveiled a memorial plaque to St Maximilian Kolbe, at an event organised by the Belfast-based Consulate General of the Republic of Poland, the Polish Honorary Consulate and Newry & Mourne Polish Community Group.

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Martin Mansergh

The View



The serendipity of opening a drawer

One of the pleasures of an older family house is that occasionally one may go rummaging in drawers, boxes and old suitcases and find something interesting, unusual or exciting. Two weeks ago, I pulled a small painting on a wooden block out of a drawer. It depicted a winter scene in the Dutch style, showing three gentlemen standing together on frozen water in front of a ramshackle-looking cottage. Written on the back was 'Sophia Orpen 1794', with the numerals, especially the seven, written in the 18th Century manner. The gentlemen's coats were in the style of the 1790s. Three years later, she married a Limerick landowner, and is my great-great-grandmother.

Another find a few years back, since given to the National Museum, was a framed red wax-coloured profile of King George III attended by two draped women representing England and Ireland. A Latin inscription describes him as 'Head on Earth of the Church of England and Ireland'. Written on the back was attribution to [Nathaniel] Marchant 'at the time of the Irish Union'. Under the 1800 Act of Union, the churches were to be united 'forever'. Historically, such pronouncements often prove temporary, whereas other things introduced temporarily (e.g. income tax) turn out to be permanent.

“Since given to the National Museum, was a framed red wax-coloured profile of King George III attended by two draped women representing England and Ireland”

Britain has no written constitution. Nothing is entrenched, not even the Act of Union, as any act of parliament can be changed by a subsequent one. Dis-establishment was an early necessary modification of the Act of Union, and some Protestants, including generations back a younger sibling in my family, reacted by attending the first meeting



Lady Butler's *The Remnants of an Army*.

of the Home Government Association in 1870 initiated by Isaac Butt.

Notoriety

Afghanistan has notoriety as 'a graveyard of empires'. In 1839, Lieutenant David Inverarity, a distant Scottish relative, rode ahead of his troops in an Afghan Pass, despite being warned not to do so, to see what was around a bend. He was never seen again. *The Irish Catholic* (August 19) featured Elizabeth Butler's painting *The Remnants of an Army*, depicting a disconsolate British army surgeon and sole survivor straggling home on a tired horse in 1842. Her husband, General Sir William Butler, was from Tipperary, and like her a Catholic. A letter of July 1879 in our family papers about the end of a further war expressed the correspondent's opinion: "I cannot say how glad I was that we were out of this wretched Afghan war. The mortality has been awful & they are still dying. How utterly disgusted everyone was with the whole concern".

President Vladimir Putin, speaking from calamitous Soviet experience in Afghanistan, warned recently that one cannot impose political standards of behaviour on other countries or peoples, regardless of ethnic and religious make-up and historical traditions, and that they had the right to determine their fate by themselves, however long it took them to achieve democracy (*Financial Times*, 21-22 August).

That the world's greatest military machine ended up giving way to the Taliban graphically exposes the limitations of armed superiority in distant and difficult terrain. It is easy to go in, and the US attack had unanimous UN

backing after 9/11, but finding a right time to exit may be next to impossible. Liberal internationalists or neo-conservatives wanting to reshape the world would do well to recall the lessons of the Crusades and those of imperialism. Tasking the EU with fighting wars to make up for the US is not a bright idea. Other ways must be found of addressing humanitarian crises, including a willingness to take in endangered refugees, and of discouraging the confiscation of rights newly enjoyed by Afghan women. It will be recalled that Malala, a young Pakistani champion of women's education, who was the victim of a Taliban assassination attempt, won the Tipperary Peace Award in 2013, a year before the Nobel Peace Prize.

“Britain has no written constitution. Nothing is entrenched, not even the Act of Union, as any act of parliament can be changed by a subsequent one”

My grandmother, partly educated in France, collected some historic items. One was a manuscript letter of Josephine Bonaparte, wife of the First Consul, addressed to a 'Citoyen Ministre', recommending a young botany student for employment in plant procurement for public gardens. Her own botanical garden and rose-beds at Malmaison were famous. Napoleon regretted divorcing her for dynastic reasons. He had brothers and nephews, one of whom later became Napoleon III.

sexually abusing her young son. She made a passionate appeal to all the mothers in the courtroom, and won public sympathy, before being sentenced to the guillotine. Robespierre was furious.

Newspaper

Another find was a newspaper cutting from May 27, 1930, with an account of the funeral of Henry Cole Bowen, a second cousin of my grandmother. Besides being a landowner, he was a barrister, who had been an examiner of titles to the land commission, author of a standard work on statutory land purchase in Ireland, as well as legal adviser to the Church of Ireland bishops of Cork and Limerick. He got on well with his Catholic neighbours, some of whom helped to carry his coffin to Farahy churchyard. His special pride was the rising fortunes of his daughter, the novelist Elizabeth Bowen.

The drawer also contained a 1961 Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society, which, besides a plea to protect from destruction the ESB buildings in Lower Fitzwilliam Street, prematurely reported that Bowenscourt, after it was sold by Elizabeth Bowen locally, was to be preserved. Although a photograph of the exterior showed it in good order, shortly afterwards, it was demolished. While this has been hailed in one quarter in effect as just retribution for the sins of her fathers, a fine house with a literary connection, which would have drawn visitors and given employment, is still missed. OPW put on an exhibition on Elizabeth Bowen in neighbouring Doneraile Court last summer, while An Post issued a stamp commemorating her visiting friend and fellow novelist Irish-born Iris Murdoch.

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Pat Hume fondly remembered as peacemaker with a ‘pure heart’

Brandon Scott

“If John brought the brilliant mind to the peace-making then Pat brought the pure heart,” the funeral Mass of Pat Hume was told this week.

Fr Paul Farren paid tribute to Mrs Hume both as a community activist and as a mother.

The funeral of the 83-year-old former teacher was held in St Eugene’s Cathedral and attended President Michael D. Higgins. The deputy Lord Lieutenant Helen Quigley represented Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II.

Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown said that in welcoming the dignitaries the funeral is “first and foremost, a family event as they grieve the loss of a mother and grandmother.

“Their personal bereavement is at the heart of this gathering,” he said.

During his homily, Fr Farren compared Mrs Hume’s personal philosophy with the Beatitudes. “In the Gospel we have heard that blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called children of God. More than that we heard, blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God.

“Pat had the purest heart of anybody I have ever met,” he said.

Fr Farren noted the critical influence that Mrs Hume exerted during the peace process and that her “commitment to truth and to justice was consistent and unquestionable”, particularly when she engaged with victims of the Troubles alongside Mrs Daphne Trimble wife of the former First Minister Baron Trimble.

Although large periods of the latter stage of Mrs Hume’s life were spent tending to her ill husband, Fr Farren maintained that these years merely enhanced her reputation as “a

motherly figure to everyone” and that her faith sustained her during such distressing episodes in her life.

“It was Pat’s faith which was a practical and living, contemplative and silent faith, nourished by the Eucharist here at Mass every day and with quiet prayer that enabled Pat to put the realities of life in the eternal context of God’s love.

“This certainly was how Pat got through the tough days in her life. It was her faith that enabled her to see God in everybody she met,” Fr Farren said.

New lectionary translation raises practical concerns



Ruadhán Jones

Last week, the Irish bishops’ conference announced that Ireland will have a new translation of the lectionary, the book from which Holy Scripture is proclaimed during the celebration of Mass.

Following a public consultation that garnered around 220 responses, the bishops decided to replace the 1966 *Jerusalem Bible* translation with the 2019 *Revised New Jerusalem Bible (RNJB)*.

It appears from a September 3 statement from the bishops that this edition was largely favoured due to its “inclusive language” (their emphasis) and gender-sensitivity.

Over 150 individual submissions, and virtually all the 20 organisations that submitted proposals, gave this as the reason for their preference.

This is curious, as the bishops do not cite concerns over inclusive language or gender-sensitivity to explain why a new edition was necessary in the first place, unless it comes under

the “developments in the English language over this half century” that they allude to.

Instead, in the same statement, the bishops list a number of practical concerns.

For instance, new copies of the current 1984 print-run of the *Jerusalem Bible* are not readily available.

A simple reprinting would not suffice, as certain changes have been introduced to the Lectionary over the last 35 years, including replacing “This is the Word of the Lord” with “The Word of the Lord”, as well as new selections of readings from the National Proper for Ireland, among others.

This all makes sense, but there are concerns that in attempting to solve

these practical issues, choosing the *RNJB* will cause new ones.

For instance, at the end of the statement, the bishops say they will explore collaboration with other English-speaking conferences regarding use of the *RNJB*.

It’s more than unfortunate, then, that our nearest English-speaking neighbours, Scotland and England & Wales, are already progressing a different lectionary based on the *English Standard Version: Catholic Edition*.

That means that Sunday Masses in Ireland will now differ from the UK’s. It also raises the spectre that Irish publishers will not be able to produce texts suitable for the UK and Ireland.

In addition, the bishops them-

selves note that this edition of the lectionary will take several years to prepare.

This process involves finding an English-speaking conference to join Ireland for the preparations, and there is no guarantee the Vatican will approve bishop’s our choice.

This raises the following questions: given that practical concerns motivate the change, why didn’t we simply join the churches in Great Britain in their choice?

Is it that the *RNJB* is better? If that is the case, how was that determined? Was it a democratic vote based on the edition that received the most submissions? Or was it the result of expert consultation?

Centenarian celebrates her milestone



Maureen Cowley of Navan, Co. Meath, celebrates her 100th birthday September 1 with Fr Robert McCabe of St Mary’s Parish, Navan.

NEWS IN BRIEF

‘Older people deserve more’ says charity launching budget submission

An Irish charity which supports older people has called on the Government to increase the State pension, introduce an older person technology grant, introduce legislation on statutory home care, keep the pension age at 66 and more in their Budget 2022 submission.

Alone launched its submission, ‘Future-proofing Ireland for Older People’ this week.

CEO Seán Moynihan said: “Alone has put forward a number of measures that we believe puts in place the necessary supports and plans for an ageing demographic. We believe that Budget 2022 should be the budget that lifts older people above the poverty line, addresses current and future housing needs and supports older people to age in place.

“We believe that Budget 2022 presents an opportunity. It is an opportunity to support ageing. Older people deserve the choice to age at home. Older people deserve a State pension that provides an income above the poverty line. Older people deserve the right to home care. Older people deserve this much and more.”

Irish missionary decries 'depraved' child-marriage laws in Philippines

Ruadhán Jones

Fr Shay Cullen SSC accused the Philippines' House of Representatives of delaying a bill that would end the practice of "baby brides".

In the Southeast Asian country, the age of sexual consent is 12 years. The alleged delaying of the *Girls not Brides Act of 2019*, which would raise the age to 16, speaks of a "wicked and deviant element in society", Fr Cullen wrote in *Independent Catholic News*.

"Recent reports show that many thousands of

girl-children as young as 12 years of age worldwide and in the Philippines are being sold off to men 25 years old and older in so-called 'child marriages'," the renowned child-rights campaigner said.

Describing the practice as a "cover for paedophilia", Fr Cullen questioned "why this has been allowed to go on for generations".

"It speaks of a wicked and deviant element in society, a social evil, where the ruling powers have conspired to keep it that way," he continued.

"What could be more depraved than to cover

up child sexual abuse and try to avoid penalties of strict anti-child abuse laws RA 7610 by declaring that the relationship was approved by 'marriage'?

"The ruling powers in society decided to stay quiet and to keep it that way for the pleasure of depraved paedophiles in high and low positions of authority."

Although the Senate passed the 2019 bill, Fr Cullen called the delay in passing a similar bill in the House of Representatives "a big win for the child sexual abusers in power".

Fr Cullen added that a "practice of denial, cover up and a culture of enforced silence" is placed on the child-victims and on their families "to protect society, institutions, charities, civic organisations, churches and the powerful".

He finished by calling readers to send his article by email to House Speaker Lord Allan Velasco at speakerlordvelasco@house.gov.ph and lavmarinduqueph@gmail.com and Senate President Vicente C Sotto III at os_sotto@yahoo.com.

"It is our collective responsibility to fight for child rights," Fr Cullen concluded.

Tributes to broadcaster Ó Dúlaing

Brandon Scott

Veteran broadcaster Donncha Ó Dúlaing, who died at the weekend, has been remembered as a man who was animated by his deep Catholic Faith.

Mr Ó Dúlaing (88) died just a week after his beloved wife Vera. From Doneraile in Co. Cork, he was known for his cultural and traditional music programmes.

In a career that spanned more than 50 years, he even got to interview Pope

St John Paul II during the Polish Pontiff's historic pilgrimage to Ireland in 1979.

Fr Dermot McCarthy, former editor of religious programmes with RTÉ paid tribute to Mr Ó Dúlaing this week describing him as a man of great faith and charity.

"Faith was very much in his background", Fr McCarthy told *The Irish Catholic*, "he never dismissed it and there were always large numbers of people who I can remember referencing this point throughout his life".

After illness in 2014, Mr Ó Dúlaing attributed his recovery to the many Masses that had been offered for him by his loyal band of listeners.

Fr McCarthy said that Mr Ó Dúlaing was immensely generous with his time.

"He was always so keen to do charitable works and I actually helped him with a few of the events over the years.

He was "a good man and this was proven in so many ways," Fr McCarthy said.

Northern bishops organise talks on partition to 'bring community together'

Chai Brady

The Northern Catholic bishops have announced they will host an online webinar series of historical talks marking the centenary of partition and the establishment of Northern Ireland "to help bring the community together".

The talks will be led by Dr Éamon Phoenix, a political historian, columnist and broadcaster, who will be joined by a number of academic historians from the North and south over four Monday nights from September 13 to October 4.

Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland Eamon Martin said: "This webinar series is an opportunity for people of all traditions to engage with our shared history. The presentations, expertly put together by Dr Éamon Phoenix, will allow for the story of the coming into being, and development, of Northern Ireland to be examined and analysed while critically assessing the role of the Churches, and others, in that respect.

"On behalf of the Northern bishops, I invite those with an interest in Church, society, politics and history to join us

in helping to unravel further this complex and sometimes contentious story," Archbishop Martin said.

From next week, the programme of talks will be delivered online via Zoom over four Monday evenings from 7pm-9pm.

Each of the webinars are free of charge but registration is required in advance by email to cjp@iecon.ie. The Zoom link

will be sent out in advance of each webinar.

Archbishop Martin added: "We are grateful for the funding we have received from the Northern Ireland Office and the National Lottery Heritage Fund which will enable the sharing of untold stories about important aspects of our history and to help bring the community together at this important moment."

Modern knights rise to the top



Members of Queens University Belfast's Knights of Columbanus stop for a photo atop Croagh Patrick, August 28. Pictured (from left) are Ruairi Crummey, James McKenna, Mark McDonnell, Michael Ward and Gerard Scullion.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Vatican launches synod schedule

The Vatican has presented the preparatory document for an upcoming ecclesial endeavour: A synod on synodality.

Synodality, according to the preparatory document, will grant Catholics the "the ability to imagine a different future for the Church and her institutions, in keeping with the mission she has received".

The meeting of the Synod of Bishops will take place in October 2023, but the event will officially start next month, with a process of listening, dialogue and community discernment in the local churches.

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Take up your cross and follow me



A man portraying Christ carries a cross as performers re-enact Jesus' passion and crucifixion as part of Holy Week celebrations in Pekanbaru, Indonesia on April 2 this year. Photo: CNS

The Sunday Gospel

Fr Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.



In today's Mass we reach the halfway point of Mark's Gospel (Mark 8: 27-35). The first half develops the identity of who Jesus is and it is time to ask the question, "Who do people say I am?" The second half will deal with the question of the way that Jesus is going, namely to his cross and Resurrection.

Starting with the first question regarding who Jesus is, his identity is gradually revealed in how he teaches with an authority that gives him victory over evil spirits and the power to perform great miracles of healing. The passage immediately preceding today's reading is the strange story of the unusual way that he healed a blind man. It wasn't an instantaneous miracle but a gradual process. After touching the man's eyes with spittle and laying hands on him, Jesus asked him if he could see anything. He said that he saw people but they were like trees walking. It was still imperfect sight, representing the

imperfect understanding of the apostles. So, Jesus laid his hands on the man's eyes again and he saw clearly.

Beginning to see

From the start of this Gospel the apostles did not understand Jesus but this gradual healing represents how at last they were beginning to see. So, it was time to ask them "Who do you say I am?" Peter spoke up and said to him, "You are the Christ". This meant he was the anointed one, the promised Messiah. But Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone.

This is called the messianic secret, and the reason for secrecy was that the popular expectation of the Messiah was very different to the role Jesus would play. Most people expected a political leader who would lead them to freedom from foreign dominion and they would have great earthly power and wealth.

The road towards Calvary

Jesus then made the first prophecy of the Passion. He was destined to suffer

grievously, to be rejected and put to death but, after three days, to rise again. Again, it was Peter who spoke up, but this time he told Jesus that this could not happen. But Jesus rebuked him: "Get behind me, Satan! You are thinking not as God thinks, but as human beings do".

Here we have begun the second half of Mark's Gospel. Repeatedly we are informed that Jesus is on the way to his destiny and his followers must travel in the same direction. "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

Three steps on the way

The first step on the way is to renounce self, that is, to overcome being self-centered. In today's second reading, St James tells us that the sort of faith which is not expressed in practical works of compassion and charity is dead.

In the second step Jesus invites us to take up our cross. Before the crucifixion of Jesus, the cross was regarded as a cursed thing, reserved for condemned criminals. But in rising from the dead, Jesus transformed the tree of death into the tree of life. "Having loved his own in this world, he loved them to the end". That is how St John introduced the Passion of Jesus. Christians now understand the cross as a symbol of the total, life-giving death of Jesus.

The third step on the way is the invitation of Jesus, "Follow me." It reminds me of a story about Saint Teresa of Kolkata. Her Missionaries of Charity spend an hour in prayer before going out to serve Christ in the poor. One morning Mother Teresa noticed one sister going out with a very sad face. Mother gently pulled her aside and asked her, "Did Jesus say 'Go before me' or did he say 'Follow me'?" Sister got the message and her mood changed. We are never on our own when we follow Jesus in our own sufferings or in meeting others in their suffering.

Walking the road with Jesus

By entering into the world of suffering, Jesus expressed his solidarity or companionship with us in any kind of suffering. He suffered physical pain, the injustice of a sham trial, betrayal and desertion, the sword of sorrow which his mother felt, and even the spiritual darkness of feeling abandoned by the Father. We are never alone in our suffering once we know that we are following Jesus who has been in that valley of darkness before us.

I remember many years ago how a recovering alcoholic shared his story with me. Giving up drink was no problem: he had done it countless times. Staying off it was another matter. He was in and out

of hospitals, in and out of meetings. One night after an AA meeting, an oldish man with the battered face of long years of abuse gently pulled him aside and said, "There's only one problem in your life, Jack. Self-pity." He took a little crucifix from his pocket and pressed it into Jack's hand. "Here, take this cross. Always keep it in your pocket, and the next time you're feeling sorry for yourself, just look at him there on the cross. And give up all your self-pity."

The Twelve Steps were reduced to three. Renounce or give up your self-

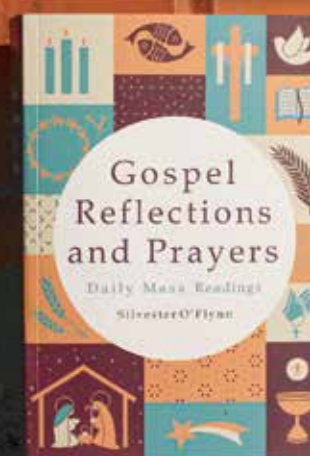
centeredness, take up your cross and follow me.

Prayer

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world. Lord Jesus, we thank you for your total love in allowing yourself to be taken and put to death as the lamb of sacrifice on our behalf. When we look up at you raised on the cross, may we be inspired to be less self-centered, to take up our cross, and to follow you. You are always walking with us: may we always walk with you.

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Joy as First Communion



Parish administrator of Rathmines, Fr Andrew O'Sullivan, stands with Noela Huele, Francis, Xander - who celebrated his First Communion - and Colm Byrne.



The Walsh family, Colman, Christian, Luke, Julie and Jenny.

First Communion recommenced in Rathmines parish at the church of Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners in Dublin after long delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Children, parents and priest Fr Andrew O'Sullivan, were delighted to celebrate the sacrament on Saturday and Sunday, with more First Communion planned for this coming weekend.



Ewa, Pawel, Wiktor, Zofia, Hanna and Maria Kazimierkiewicz.



Michael, Noah and Siobhán Lally pictured inside the church of Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners for Noah's First Communion.



Marie, Jean and Chloe Young.



John, Prapawadee, Chloe and Mali Crosby.



Principal Delores Hanrahan of St Louis Senior Primary School stands with pupils Fionn Martin, Aodhnaid Gallagher and Noah Lally who celebrated their First Communion.

return to Rathmines parish



Marcin and Adrian Sas and Aneta Ilkow.



Oliver celebrated his First Communion with his family Amelia, Monika and Arthur Sikora.



Hui, Dean and Wayen.



The McCrory family, Stephen, Isabela, Brenda and Paolo Reyes gather to celebrate Patrick's First Communion.



Claire, Billy, William and Mo Fitzgerald.



Martyna, Jakub and Bartek Walczak.



Owen, Eve, Beth and Nicky Denny. Photos: Chai Brady

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Archbishop Farrell praises ‘prophetic’ Legion of Mary founder on its 100th anniversary



Mary Murphy, President of the Legion of Mary, shows Archbishop of Dublin Dr Dermot Farrell pictures of Legion envoys from around the world at a reception after the centenary Mass on Friday, September 3. Photos: John McElroy.



Ruadhán Jones

Frank Duff was “a man ahead of his time”, the Archbishop of Dublin said September 3, as he celebrated Mass to mark 100 years since the Legion of Mary was founded.

Legion’s first meeting

In his homily in the church of St Nicholas of Myra on Francis Street, across the road from Myra house where the Legion’s first meeting took place September 7, 1921, Dr Dermot Farrell described Mr Duff “as prophetic in the true Christian sense of that word”.

“A man ahead of this time”, Frank Duff was “someone sensitive to the call of God and utterly dedicated to God’s will”, the archbishop told the 50 people attending the Mass, including Mary Murphy, president of the Legion of Mary. “He translated his prophetic perspective of the universal call to holiness into a vibrant lay movement.”

Comparing Mr Duff to John the Baptist, Archbishop Farrell said “he realised, ahead of his contemporaries that every Christian is called

to the apostolic dimension of our faith”.

“It was only with the Second Vatican Council that the laity began to regain their rightful place in the Church. From its foundation in 1921 the Legion was carrying out the mission of the Church as was proposed by the Second Vatican Council.”

Though no one realised how far the small group Mr Duff founded would “spread its wings”, it grew “phenomenally” after its foundation, Dr Farrell said.

“The Legion of Mary in Dublin still has a strength about it that it may not have in other parts of Ireland”

“It was an apostolate that grew phenomenally after its foundation, helped in no small way by the conviction and zeal of its earliest members, and the Legion’s profile in the Eucharistic Congress held in Dublin in 1932, a mere decade after its foundation,” he continued.

“There was a wonderful idealism in Frank Duff which prevented him from being blown off course, despite persistent opposition he experienced from ecclesiastical authority.”

Pointing to the success of the Legion in spreading across the world, the Archbishop of Dublin praised its “significant” role in

“organising the apostolate of the laity” across the developing world.

“This was the case in Africa – and we remember the gentle witness of Edel Quinn; it played a crucial role in the Columban mission to China – providing a natural extension of that mission, with Legionaries bringing dynamism and dedication of the rapidly growing Church in China. Many of them endured persecution and imprisonment.”

Formidable consequences

Archbishop Farrell said that, in a world “often hostile to the values and vision proclaimed by Christ”, the Legion’s apostolic work can have “formidable consequences”.

“The Legion of Mary in Dublin still has a strength about it that it may not have in other parts of Ireland,” he continued. “Why? Because from the start the Legion in Dublin tackled serious social and pastoral problems which other groups shied away from.”

“They had an apostolate to prostitutes, for instance and set up the Morning Star hostel for the homeless. In contemporary Ireland, the apostolic work of Legionaries can have formidable consequences – if lived with authenticity, gentleness, and courage – at the social, political, cultural and economic levels.”

“The values of the gospel are not just ideas; they are radical actions on behalf of the poor, the homeless and the refugees and migrants.”

Reminding the attendees that the Church’s charitable work is “guided by faith, that is by trust in God and what God is doing”, Dr Farrell said



Ms Murphy cuts centenary cake alongside Archbishop Farrell at a reception after the Mass, held in Myra house.

“In Mary we can see that at the centre of Christianity there are not merely ideas, but lives, real lives”

“the Legion cannot aim at solving all problems, but must trust in the way of Jesus, in prayer which sustains us in our service of others”.

Spirituality

He pointed out the Marian roots of its spirituality, adding that “in Mary we can see that at the centre of Christianity there are not merely ideas, but lives, real lives”.

“Everything about her reminds us

that God’s heart is close to the poor, the weary and the oppressed. Like her son, she embodies the mission of the Church: to bring us home to the God who is already with us.”

Archbishop Farrell encouraged the Legion to continue to evangelise, and to embrace the call of Pope Pius XII that organisations “procure by every means that in Christian families the Scriptures be read with piety and devotion”.



Archbishop Farrell greets people after the centenary Mass.



Archbishop Farrell celebrates the Legion's centenary Mass, which was attended by 50 people.



Ms Murphy speaks to the congregation at the end of Mass.



Archbishop Farrell gives his homily at the Mass.



The centenary Mass was celebrated in the church of St Nicholas of Myra on Francis Street.



Fr Bernardo Denardo uses his phone to broadcast the centenary Mass live.



Eileen Carey and Msgr Ciaran O'Carroll PP Donnybrook parish wait for the Mass to begin.



Dan Lennon and Karen Wynne are pictured before the Mass.



Christine and Gayle Osorio are pictured with Fr Colm Mannion OP before the centenary Mass.



Patrick Dixon, Galway diocese priest and Legion member Fr Declan Lohan and Rita Kavanagh are all smiles before the centenary Mass.



Mary and Siobhan Flynn, who sang and played the harp respectively, provided music at the Mass.



Helen Murphy, Fr Eamonn McCarthy of Radio Maria and President of the Legion of Mary, Mary Murphy, are pictured outside St Nicholas of Myra.



Fr Liam O'Cuiv and Anne Evers at the Mass.



Irish Catholic journalist Ruadhán Jones meets Legion president Mary Murphy, along with Finola Kennedy and Paddy Fay.



Fr McCarthy interviews Karen Wynne before the centenary Mass.

New bishop of Ferns: 'May your heart burn with joy and peace'



Apostolic Nuncio Jude Thaddeus Okolo laying his hands on the new bishop.



Chai Brady

The new bishop of Ferns has said he will nurture a system of thinking about Church "which will recognise the reality of the world in which we live", at his episcopal ordination on Sunday.

Speaking after his September 5 ordination in the Cathedral of St Aidan in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, Bishop Nash (62) said he hopes the diocese can work together to "ensure a place of welcome and hospitality for all".

Bishop Nash was ordained by the Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell who was assisted by the outgoing bishop of Ferns, Bishop Denis Brennan, whom Bishop Nash thanked for being a "steady hand in difficult times".

"He helped in no small way to tread a compassionate and healing path for a diocese and people in deep trauma as they dealt with the issues of the past," Bishop Nash said.

Hope

"My hope is that we can work together here in Ferns with the Spirit of God sustaining us to nurture the Faith and continue to ensure a place of welcome and hospitality for all."

Bishop Nash was born in Co. Clare. He studied business after school and then worked in the manufacturing industry for a number of years. After choosing to study for the Diocese of Killaloe in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, he was

ordained on June 15, 1991 in Tulla.

After ordination, he was appointed as chaplain/teacher in Roscrea Vocational School and as priest responsible for Roscrea Youth Centre. In 1996 he was appointed as General Manager of Clarecare, which provides a range of social services to the people of County Clare.

He served as a priest in several parishes and was appointed Diocesan Secretary in 2010. In 2016 he was appointed Director of Pastoral Development for the Diocese of Killaloe until Pope Francis appointed him to succeed Bishop Brennan in the Diocese of Ferns.

Fr Billy Swan, Administrator of Wexford Parish, preached the homily at the ordination. Focusing on Bishop Nash, he said "we do not know how the journey that you begin today will all work out, for we walk by faith and not by sight".

"The challenges are many, the ongoing impact of Covid-19 being one of them. But I am sure St Senan did not know how it would all go either when he first came here. Yet, he trusted in God and because he did, his ministry was fruitful. In that same spirit of trust, we believe that the Holy Spirit that you receive today will guide you and empower you as you go forward to meet with the people of our diocese, listen to young and old, accompany us, visit our parish communities and pastoral areas. By the integrity of your own life, your love and care for people, your love for Christ and love for his Church, God will shape the future with you and ahead of you.

Forward

"As you go forward, keep before you the themes revealed in this beautiful Gospel – themes that you carry into your episcopal ministry as you build on and



The book of the Gospels is placed on Bishop Nash's head.

encourage all the terrific work being done in our diocese. We are certain that you will carry that work forward and build up the Church here among us," Fr Swan said.

"You have chosen as your episcopal motto, 'I sith agus muintearas losa' (In the peace and companionship of Jesus). This will define your ministry as our bishop – walking with us and patiently drawing us deeper into the peace and friendship of Jesus Christ so

that we become more like him – to become other Christs and partakers in his nature. This will be our strength as we go forward – possessing the gift of his friendship that we want to share with others."

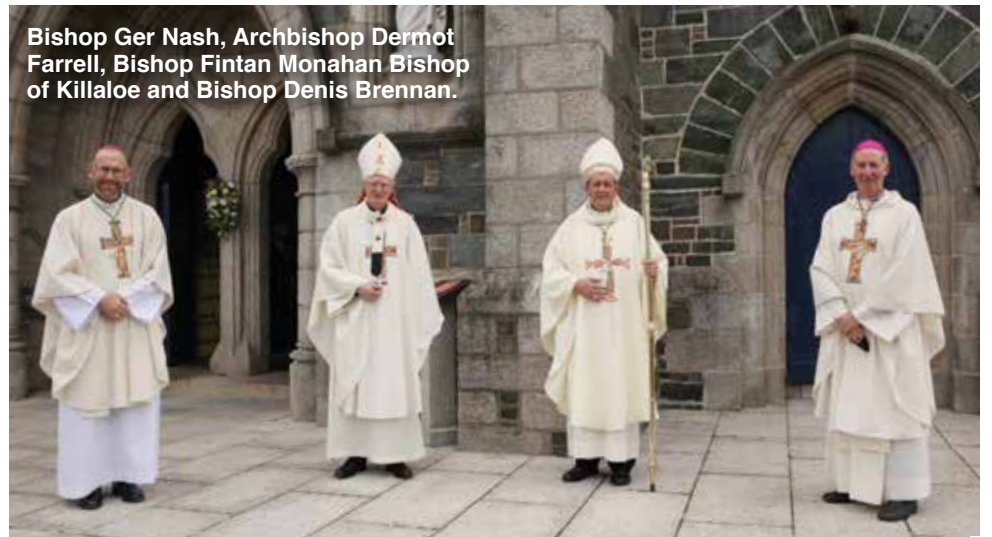
He added: "As you now become our bishop who walks with us to the Father's house, may your heart burn within you with joy and peace. And may you always be sustained by our prayers, friendship and support.



Bishop Nash is led by Archbishop Farrell to the seat of his episcopal ministry, the cathedra, during the ordination on Sunday.



Bishop Ger Nash, Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Bishop Fintan Monahan Bishop of Killaloe and Bishop Denis Brennan.



Bishop Ger Nash with members of his family in St Aidan's Cathedral on Sunday.



Bishop Nash and Bishop Brennan.



Bishop Nash leaves the cathedral after his ordination and greets other bishops.



Bishop Ger Nash greeting Ber and Pat Norris after his episcopal ordination on Sunday with Bishop Denis Brennan, bishop emeritus of Ferns, to the right. Photos John McElroy



Bishop Willie Walsh, bishop emeritus of Killaloe, chatting after the ordination.



Margaret Nash sister of the new bishop with Niamh Willis.



Bishop Nash with his two sisters Teresa and Margaret.



Bishop Nash greeting people on Sunday after his ordination.



Parishioners must be trained and prepared in innovative ministries to keep parishes alive, the new bishop of Ferns tells Chai Brady

Every diocese has a unique set of challenges but there is a “definite trend” all are experiencing in Ireland which is the continued decrease in priestly vocations, with the new Bishop of Ferns saying his experience in his native diocese will help him prepare for the future in the southeast, in dialogue with all the Faithful.

Consecrated as the new chief shepherd of Ferns on Sunday, Bishop Ger Nash has first-hand experience in tackling parish decline due to depopulation and aging priests and says he has plans to counteract the negative effects in close collaboration with parishes and priests.

“I’m coming from the Diocese of Killaloe where we have 18 parishes with no priest out of 58. The numbers in relation to priests and parishes in Ferns is where Killaloe was maybe 10-15 years ago,” Bishop Nash tells *The Irish Catholic*.

“I think the challenge I see in Ferns is being able to say this is a definite trend, there will be vocations in the future but there won’t be vocations to replace the system built on a large number of priests.

Working together

“Parishes [in Ferns] have already been talking about working together, supporting each other but there’s no parish in Ferns without a priest. That doesn’t mean the problem isn’t visible because a lot of these people are in their 70s-plus and the number of students does not match.

“There are two clerical students at the moment for Ferns,” he says.

However, he adds that although his previous knowledge will be useful, it won’t be the sum total of the solution because just because something worked in one area, does not mean it will work in another.

“I think the most useful thing I’ll be able to bring with me is the experience of being able to sit down with parishes and priests and laypeople in parishes and say ‘What is the future likely to hold? How can we best address it? What economies of scale can be achieved if two or three parishes work together? Are there things that can be done better or more efficiently? Are there ways in which a smaller number of priests will be able to minister effectively, without burning themselves out?’

“Of course, that means very often a change in the perception of what ministry is, and priests don’t want to be just sacramental ministers alone, just to provide sacraments, priests as well are human, they want a relationship with people. It’s not just about the efficiency of priests providing services to parishes, it’s about priests building a meaningful community and a sustainable community,” Bishop Nash says.

“There are currently more than 50 people in the Diocese of Ferns who have been trained in pastoral ministry”

Supporting and building up lay ministry is an area Bishop Nash says he is “really interested in”. There are currently more than 50 people in the Diocese of Ferns who have been trained in pastoral ministry.

It is the new bishop’s vision to continue training people and promoting the sense that it is not only priests who can conduct school and hospital visitation, visitation of the elderly and working with children who are preparing for the sacraments; ministerial roles which are non-sacramental.

“As priests get older and scarcer these are sometimes the tasks that get done less frequently, so we need to be able to have lay people and priests working together to keep all those really important touchstones of Church life,” Bishop Nash said.

Asked about the permanent diaconate and its role in the diocese’s future, the bishop said while they have a permanent deacon and another in training, he is more “anxious to move away from a clerical model of Church”.

“One thing that I’m really

“There will be vocations in the future but there won’t be vocations to replace the system built on a large number of priests”



interested in is the Pope’s development of the new ministry of catechist, which is a commissioned ministry and that is sort of giving all people the ability to build up the Christian community,” he says.

A new ministerial role, Bishop Nash says is “waiting in the wings” is that of a parish manager or administrator, who would work alongside a priest but take many burdens off his shoulders.

“I’ve been talking to different bishops previous to this who would be saying that the burden of safeguarding regulations, financial regulations, charity regulations and data protection regulation has become a huge task, which is totally non-ministerial but absolutely has to be done, it is inescapable and is non-negotiable: we don’t want to be draining the energy of ordained ministers doing that

so far as we possibly can,” Bishop Nash insists.

Effective

“Parish administrators, to be effective, would have to be working beside the priest, not for the priest, taking full responsibility within the community for that area of life and there are people who would like that too, who would have skill in that who might not like a public profile. It’s an area for exploration because these regulations are not going to become less, they are going to become more.

“I’ve come across examples of it in Australia and New Zealand but I think doing it here, it would be a mixture of training people in the practicalities but also to train people for ministry they have to have an understanding of what Church

is about. They’re not just administrators,” Bishop Nash explains, “It would be giving them a vision of Church as well and low-level knowledge of Canon Law and civil law. I could envisage maybe a one- or two-year training programme with practical experience built-in.”

“I know from past experience it’s easy enough to get trainers because you don’t have to get a trainer to stay with somebody for two years”

He adds that finding people to train parish managers is not something he is concerned about as there are

many individuals who are qualified.

“I know from past experience it’s easy enough to get trainers because you don’t have to get a trainer to stay with somebody for two years, you can get a trainer to do modules, so if you put together a programme you can have eight different sections and it’s reasonably easy to get somebody to take one of those modules because it might be their area of expertise, they might know nothing about the others,” he explains.

Troubled history

Safeguarding has become part and parcel of all branches of the Church and will undoubtedly need continuous oversight and management and parishes are no exception. The Diocese of Ferns has a troubled history, after the 2005 Ferns report revealed widescale abuse and mismanagement.

For Bishop Nash, the price of good safeguarding is “eternal vigilance” and that must be kept in mind as people take up Church



The mitre is placed on the new bishop's head by principal ordaining bishop, Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin.

“We need to be able to have lay people and priests working together to keep all those really important touchstones of Church life”

roles such as sacristans, parish secretaries, readers, Eucharistic ministers, choir leaders and all people who will be interacting with young people or vulnerable adults. An inescapable part of their induction is safeguarding training and regular updates. It is for this reason he says the diocese has come a long way and huge strides have been made.

“Ferns had its history, but I think every diocese has its history of light and darkness,” Bishop Nash says.

“Undoubtedly it has been a trauma for the priests and people of Ferns. I would have to pay great tribute to the work of all my predecessors, the bishops who tackled it early on, Bishop Eamonn Walsh and then Bishop Denis Brennan who came after the worst of the crisis but who did a huge amount to restore the faith of priests and people in Church structures and in parish structures.

“I have heard since I came, Bishop Brennan has worked tirelessly on that with a gentle healing presence over the last 15 years and that has assisted in a big way to help people move on. You never forget, and it's right not to forget, but you also need to move on.”

Synod

Before Bishop Nash took over, Dr Brennan had already put a committee in

place to further the synodal process in the diocese this month. As the preparations continue for Ireland's national synod, Bishop Nash says at the heart of synodality is conversation.

“It's about hearing where people are at, hearing what the real issues are on the ground but also bringing to people some of the reality of what it means to be Church,” he says, “It's not just what I feel or what any one individual feels. Church is about being together and it's about finding a way forward. On one hand you have Church teaching and regulations, the things that hold us together as Church, and on the other hand then you have the reality of people's lives.”

“Where parishes wanted to give something, not just to the homeless, but to another charity, it's not a forgone conclusion that the charity regulator will sign off on that”

Part of the process is acknowledging peoples' unique realities but at the same time encouraging them to ask questions, Bishop Nash says, such as “How can we have a common Christian community here? How best can we give all sorts of people a feel-

ing that the Church is for them, beside them, that the Church hears and understands their life and that the Church calls all of us, every one of us.

“It's not the Church calling people, it's all of us together being called to a better way because no matter what your role in life is you are called to be better and you are called more into communion with people and there are so many people we are not in communion with.”

Examples

He gives examples of people experiencing homelessness and others on the margins, perhaps “due to their marriage relationships, their lack of marriage relationships, their sexuality, their economic status or even people who might have a real passion about the way we're treating the planet, do they also feel that the Church is on their side or that it's just a disinterested player?”

The blessing of gay couples has often come up as a subject of debate. Asked about this Bishop Nash said there will be “a lot of pastoral conversations”. At a worldwide level I suppose the Church will have to say, holding everybody together, how can we recognise the reality of people's lives?”

Leaving aside other issues, he says it's about “being able to hold conversations with people and make people feel welcome

first, that they don't feel excluded”.

Honest conversations need to be had about what realistically can be expected after the synodal process according to Bishop Nash, including what can and can't change and subsequently finding common ground.

“Ferns had its history, but I think every diocese has its history of light and darkness”

“There's things in all of our lives that can change, I'm not talking about Church teaching, I'm talking about an ability to engage more with the world, be more present to the world we live in, while not compromising any doctrines or teachings,” he says, “but certainly being open to people because there are great people who are not Church people. It's not about making them Church people either but actually saying we can work beside people whose motivation is not Church or Christianity or faith or the Gospel who are doing wonderful work.”

Climate change

Speaking about the issue of climate change, Bishop Nash says it's not something for future generations to tackle.

“One of the things that's fascinating here, thinking about climate change, this is

an extremely flat diocese, I've moved away from the mountains of the West, there's very few mountains in Ferns diocese other than in the northern part,” he says.

“If climate change was as dramatic as the scientists tell us it might be, now it won't happen in my lifetime, but if we don't change, then parts of Ireland – whole coastal areas that we've always lived for thousands of years – will not be inhabited. It will be no good to say ‘well the generations alive at that time will sort that out’ because they won't be able to sort that out, it can only be prevented not solved, so the prevention happens now.”

Housing crisis

Last week the Minister for Housing asked the Church if it could identify unused land or buildings that could be used to tackle the housing crisis. While well-known Catholic housing activists supported the idea of the Church doing all it can to address one of the most difficult social challenges Ireland is currently facing, there was also criticism of the State's role in alleviating the emergency as it has enough land to build more than 100,000 houses.

For Bishop Nash, he is open to assisting the crisis but admits it's a complicated issue, adding any land the Church may offer to the State for housing must be for social and affordable housing.

“If you take the property in any parish, it actually belongs to the people of that parish in the first instance, so it goes back to conversations, it's building an awareness in parishes and with people,” he says.

“The amount of property in most parishes, other than schools, the parochial house, the churches and the parish hall, is fairly mini-

mal, but where there are bits of property, it belongs to the people of that parish so it's about raising awareness that we have a Gospel calling to be generous and to be conscientious and to be good citizens.

“There's a lot of property that different religious orders had at different times mostly in the cities. A lot of dioceses, parishes and religious orders have given land and property to the local council. You also have a controlling factor on this which is the charities regulator which means any charity cannot dispose of its assets for less than market value even to another charity.

“One of the things that's fascinating here, thinking about climate change, this is an extremely flat diocese”

“I know from my own experience where parishes wanted to give something, not just to the homeless, but to another charity, it's not a forgone conclusion that the charity regulator will sign off on that.”

Asked about the use of the land provided by the Church, he said: “I think that would be a very important conversation, especially land that would have been bought for social housing, it shouldn't end up being flipped in any way for the benefit of a developer.”

Facing into a challenging future with questions around aging priests, lay ministry, exigent social issues and more, Bishop Nash is hopeful as a new member of the hierarchy he can empower parishioners and maintain and develop vibrant Catholic communities, paving a way for a bright future for the diocese.

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Out&About

Thrilled to be back



LAOIS: St Fiacc's National School's students give the thumbs up to being back to school, August 30.



GALWAY: Members of the family of Karzan Ahmed and his wife Shahen, the Kurdish community, civic and religious leaders from Galway, the Students' Union and students and staff from the university joined NUI Galway chaplain Fr Ben Hughes for a service of remembrance, August 26.



ARMAGH: The Irish Church leaders' group meet in person after many online gatherings, August 29. Pictured (from left) are Presbyterian Moderator Dr David Bruce, Methodist President Dr Sahr Yambasu, President of the Irish Council of Churches Rev Ivan Patterson, Church of Ireland Bishop of Armagh John McDowell and Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin.

IN SHORT

Season of Creation a 'timely call', says Kerry Diocese

The diocese joins others across Ireland in calling for action to "restore our common home", as the Church seeks to raise awareness of climate change.

A spokesperson from the diocese called the Season of Creation, which runs from September 1-October 4, "a timely call to awaken us to the urgent need to heal our relationship both

with creation and with one another".

The diocese is encouraging all its 53 parishes to make use of the resources and activities on offer to mark the season.

This includes the diocesan aim that each parish will plant a native Irish Tree on church grounds in time for National Tree Day in October and a September 16 webinar from the diocesan Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee (JPIC) focusing on the importance of protecting precious habitats.

For more information, visit the diocesan website www.dioceseofkerry.ie and the diocesan Facebook page.

NUIG Chaplaincy hold service for Kurdish family killed in car accident

The service was held in remembrance of NUI Galway student Karzan Ahmed, his wife Shahen and their baby girl Lina, who were killed in a tragic road accident August 19.

Members of the family, the Kurdish community, civic and religious leaders from Galway, the Students' Union and students and staff from the university attended the service.

In a statement, Chaplain Fr Ben Hughes said "the service provided some comfort to those who are grieving this devastating loss especially for Karzan and Shahen's families from Kurdistan who joined the online live broadcast from NUI Galway".

"The Chaplaincy team, in collaboration with family, friends and colleagues, plan to pay tribute to the memory of Karzan, Shahen and their beautiful baby girl Lina at a ceremony to be held later this semester, when Karzan's expertise as a researcher will be honoured with a posthumous PhD award."

Edited by Ruadhán Jones
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



KILDARE: Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty is pictured with a new icon celebrating St Ailbe, which was anointed in Clane, August 28. Photo: Eoghan Corry.



ROSCOMMON: The Diocese of Elphin welcomes Fr Ali Joe, from the Diocese of Idah, Nigeria, who is joining the diocese having recently completed his doctoral studies in Maynooth, August 28. He is pictured with Fr Ray Milton PP Knockcroghery.



WEST-MEATH: Our Lady's Bower Secondary School's sixth year mentors take a rest in the sun having helped to welcome the new first years, August 27.

ANTRIM: Queens University Belfast's Catholic Chaplaincy relocated to Glenavy for Mass celebrated by chaplain Fr Dominic McGrattan, where recent pharmacy graduate, Emily Nelson, hosted them at her family home.



GHANA: Sr Mary Rita and Sr Regina Opoku in their jubilee outfits celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the sisters of Our Lady of Apostle's Province in Ghana the weekend of August 28-29.



CAVAN: Pictured are Michael Crosby and Leanne Smith on the occasion of their marriage at St Joseph's Church, Corlea, which took place on the weekend of August 21-22.

Events

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



World Report

IN BRIEF

Peace Prize nominee urges Biden to protect Iraqi Christians

● After the last US forces left Afghanistan last week, an interfaith coalition implored President Joe Biden to keep American troops in Iraq to protect Christians and other persecuted religious minorities.

"We beseech you on behalf of two historic and endangered peoples, Assyrian Christians and Yazidis, to continue the presence of American troops in Iraq," said a letter signed by Juliana Taimoorazy, Founder and President of the Iraqi Christian Relief Council, as well as Hadi Pir, Vice President of the Yazda organisation.

Ms Taimoorazy was nominated for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize for her work to protect Assyrian Christians, Yazidis, and other minority groups in Iraq from the threat of genocide.

Bishop urges Queenslanders to fight euthanasia and assisted suicide

● Catholics in Australia's Queensland state are being urged to sign a petition asking the parliament not to pass a bill that would allow for euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The parliament of Queensland is set to debate the bill later this month.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane sent a letter this

week urging all people of good will to sign the petition, which has about 1,300 signatures so far.

"These laws, if passed, will overturn foundational principles that have underpinned our medical and legal systems for centuries – the ethic of 'do no harm' and the prohibition on killing," Archbishop Coleridge wrote.

Pope Francis appoints Benedictine as Swiss Guard chaplain

● The Pontifical Swiss Guard's new chaplain is the Swiss Benedictine Fr Kolumban Reichlin, who completed part of his studies at Saint Meinrad Seminary in Indiana.

Fr Reichlin, 50, was appointed chaplain by Pope Francis September 1 and will take up his new position in October.

The Pontifical Swiss

Guard was established by Pope Julius II in 1506 and is charged with serving and protecting the Pope.

Members of the world's smallest but oldest standing army – known for its colourful striped Renaissance-era uniforms – are responsible for Vatican security together with the Vatican gendarmes.

Mexico's bishops oppose migrant restrictions at country's border

● The bishops of Mexico have reiterated their opposition to the "contain and return measures" implemented by their government to stop migrants passing through the country.

The Mexican bishops' conference said on Twitter August 31 that "as Christians, we reject the contain and return measures that governments have implemented against migrants".

The conference also condemned "the xenophobia, discrimination and violence against them".

"We demand strict respect for their rights!" they insisted.

German bishop proposes alternative 'Synodal Way' text

● A German Catholic bishop last Friday proposed an alternative text for the country's controversial "Synodal Way".

Bishop Rudolf Voderholzer of Regensburg presented the text on a website launched on September 3, reported CNA Deutsch.

In an introduction to the website, the bishop wrote: "We are joining in the Synodal Way, but we are increasingly convinced that [this process]

will not reach its goal if it continues along the path it has taken so far.

"We are convinced that only a Synodal Way that is undertaken alongside and by the whole Church can be sound and achieve its goal. The whole Church is not only the worldwide Church, but also the early Church and the Church of the saints who have already arrived at their destination."

Remains of first South Korean Catholic martyrs discovered

The mortal remains of the first three Korean Catholic martyrs have been recovered more than two centuries after their deaths, announced the Diocese of Jeonju.

Ucanews.com reported that following historical research and DNA tests, it has been confirmed that the remains are of Paul Yun Ji-chung and James Kwon Sang-yeon, both beheaded in 1791, and Yun's brother, Francis Yun Ji-heon, who was martyred in 1801. Bishop John Kim Son-tae of Jeonju made the announcement during a news conference September 1.

During his visit to South Korea in 2014, Pope Francis beatified the three along with 121 other martyrs persecuted and killed during the rule of the Joseon dynasty in Korea.

Bishop Kim said the remains were recovered in March in Wanju, on the outskirts of Jeonju, near the burial ground of family members of another beatified person that was being converted to a shrine.

"The discovery of the remains is a truly amazing and monumental event," the bishop said, according to *Yonhap News Agency*.

"This is because our Church, which has grown on the foundation of the bloodshed by martyrs, has finally found the remains of the people who began the history of martyrdom."

The diocese said the



Pope Francis venerates a statue of Mary and Jesus with incense in 2014, as he celebrates the beatification Mass of Paul Yun Ji-chung and 123 martyred companions in Seoul. Photo: CNS.

remains showed cuts made by a sharp object around the necks of Paul Yun Ji-chung and Kwon, and around the neck, upper arms and left femur of Francis Yun Ji-heon.

Christianity came to Korea during the Japanese invasion in 1592, when some Koreans were baptised, probably by Christian Japanese soldiers, according to Church sources. It started as a lay movement. Korean Yi Seung-hun, who was baptised in China in 1784, began to baptise others that year.

As the faith began to

spread, Catholics faced persecution and hardships from rulers who viewed the religion as a subversive influence. Korean rulers began to see Catholicism as a false religion that denied Confucian ethics and invited Western imperialism to the country, ucanews.com reported.

The persecution in the late 18th and 19th centuries saw thousands of Catholics murdered for refusing to renounce their faith. The largest persecution in 1866 produced some 8,000 martyrs.

Among the most famous

martyrs was Andrew Kim Taegon, the first Korean-born Catholic priest and patron saint of clergy in Korea, who was beheaded in 1846 at the age of 25.

In 1984, during his visit to South Korea, Pope John Paul II canonised 103 martyrs, including St Andrew Kim, and nine French missionaries who had been martyred in the 19th century.

The Church in Korea is celebrating the 200th anniversary of St Andrew Kim's birth this year.

Catholic priest in Cameroon freed after three days in captivity

A Catholic diocese announced last Wednesday that kidnappers had freed a priest seized in Cameroon's restive Anglophone region.

In a statement circulated September 1, Fr Sebastine Sinju, chancellor of the Diocese of Mamfe, said that Msgr Julius Agbortoko Abbor was released without payment of a ransom, reported ACI Africa.

"After three days in captivity, we are glad to announce that our brother and priest, Msgr Julius Agbortoko Abbor, has been released without any ransom paid," Fr Sinju said.

Msgr Abbor, the vicar general of Mamfe diocese, was abducted from the residence of Bishop Francis Teke Lysinge, the 82-year-old bishop emeritus of Mamfe, at about 6.45 pm August 29.

Announcing the kidnapping August 30, Fr Sinju said that the priest had travelled to the village of Kokobuma "for a pastoral visitation and the inauguration of the presbytery of the parish."

Around 30 minutes after he returned to his residence, "some young men who identified themselves as separatist fighters bumped into the Major Seminary compound and made their way straight

to the residence of Bishop Lysinge," the chancellor said.

"While there, they noticed the presence of the vicar general, whom they considered younger and stronger than the frail bishop emeritus."

The kidnappers, believed to be armed separatists, demanded a ransom of more than 20 million francs CFA (around €30,000).

"We thank God for his release. We thank all those who joined us to pray for his unconditional release and for us in these turbulent days," Fr Sinju said in a statement.

McCarrick pleads not guilty while more lawsuits filed

Former cardinal Theodore McCarrick pleaded 'not guilty' September 3 to several charges of sexual assault, while appearing for the first time in a Massachusetts court.

McCarrick, 91, has been charged with three counts of indecent assault

and battery on a person over the age of 14, incidents which allegedly took place in the 1970s. Each of the three criminal charges carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

He appeared for his arraignment September 3

in Dedham District Court, accompanied by his attorney Katherine Zimmerl, of the firm Coburn & Greenbaum. The court entered a "not guilty" plea on his behalf. McCarrick's next court date is October 28, and his bail was set at \$5,000.

"Today's arraignment provides hope for many clergy sex abuse victims and survivors that justice will prevail, truth will be told and children will be kept safe," said Mitchell Garabedian, attorney for the alleged victim of McCarrick, after the arraignment.



Edited by Jason Osborne
jason@irishcatholic.ie

Battling against the tide



Men wade through a waterlogged street after heavy rains in New Delhi, India, September 1. Photo CNS.

Biden condemns Texas pro-life law ruling

President Joe Biden last Thursday announced a “whole-of-government” response to “ensure” abortion access in Texas, after the state’s pro-life law went into effect September 1.

In a September 2 statement, the president – a Catholic – directed his administration to examine “what steps the Federal Government can take to ensure that women in Texas have access to safe and legal abortions.”

On Wednesday, September 1, the “Texas Heartbeat Act” went into effect. The law prohibits abortions in the state after the detection of a foetal heartbeat – which can occur as early as six weeks into

pregnancy. It can be enforced by private lawsuits. The law went into effect last Wednesday, after the Supreme Court had not yet acted on a petition to block it.

Late that night, the court ultimately rejected the petition to block the law in a 5-4 decision. Biden denounced the decision as “an unprecedented assault on a woman’s constitutional rights” to abortion.

Biden said he was directing his White House Gender Policy Council, as well as the White House counsel, “to launch a whole-of-government effort to respond to this decision,” reviewing “what legal tools we have

to insulate women and providers from the impact of Texas’ bizarre scheme of outsourced enforcement to private parties”.

It is unclear what action the administration would take on implementation of Texas’ law. Vice President Kamala Harris, in her 2020 presidential campaign platform, had promised that her Justice Department would have oversight over all state abortion laws.

A proposed law in Congress, the Women’s Health Protection Act, would grant women a “right” to an abortion and would override most state abortion regulations.

When asked about the

proposed law, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said she would have to review the “specifics” of the bill to comment.

On Wednesday, the Supreme Court majority ruled that the petitioners in the Texas case – the abortion providers requesting the “heartbeat” law be blocked – had not made a sufficient case for relief.

“In particular, this order is not based on any conclusion about the constitutionality of Texas’s law, and in no way limits other procedurally proper challenges to the Texas law, including in Texas state courts,” the court majority ruled.

Anglican bishop steps down to join Catholic Church

The Anglican bishop of Ebbsfleet stepped down from office after announcing that he will become a Roman Catholic.

The resignation of Bishop Jonathan Goodall was announced by Anglican Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury in a September 3 statement released by Lambeth Palace. Bishop Goodall is a former ecumenical secretary to a previous archbishop of Canterbury and was ordained in 2013 to serve as a “flying bishop” of a diocese

erected to cover traditionalist parishes that would not accept women priests.

“I am deeply grateful to Bishop Jonathan for his ministry and many years of faithful service,” Archbishop Welby said.

“My prayers are with him and Sarah, both for his future ministry and for the direction in which they are being called in their continuing journey of dedicated service to Christ,” he said.

He continued: “With regard to the see

of Ebbsfleet, we will be starting a process of consultation with colleagues and others – including the parishes to whom Bishop Jonathan ministers – to determine what the next steps will be.”

No details of who will receive Bishop Goodall into the Catholic Faith or where his reception will happen have been revealed. His Anglican ministry will end September 8, according to the statement from Lambeth Palace.



Vatican roundup

Cardinal Parolin urges cooperation and friendship in North Korea speech

● The Vatican Secretary of State said last week that the Holy See supports cooperation over confrontation in efforts to achieve peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin delivered a virtual keynote speech to the South Korean government’s annual forum to discuss issues concerning North Korea and the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

In his speech, the Vatican’s top diplomat highlighted St John XXIII as a model for today’s Vatican diplomacy. John XXIII, who was Pope from 1958 to 1963, is known for pursuing a policy of “Ostpolitik” in his diplomatic efforts with communist countries in Eastern Europe.

“To set out some ... principles that can help define a new vision of relationships within the Korean Peninsula, I would draw inspiration from Pope John XXIII, who always emphasised the universal values that bring people together,” Cardinal Parolin said.

“Pope John XXIII spared no effort to make world leaders understand the inestimable values of peace, and the value of dialogue, dialogue for bringing peoples of very different histories and traditions closer together,” he said in the live-streamed speech to the Korea Global Forum for Peace.

US Bishop DiMarzio cleared of sexual abuse allegations

● The Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith announced September 1 that it found the allegations against Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio to “not to have the semblance of truth” following an independent investigation that lasted over a year.

A statement released by the Archdiocese of New York said the CDF has informed Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, that it has found the allegations of sexual abuse of minors brought twenty-one months ago against Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop of Brooklyn, to be baseless.

“Given this finding, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith will not authorise any further

canonical process to address the accusations,” the statement said.

Two civil lawsuits have been filed against Bishop DiMarzio alleging that, as a priest in the Archdiocese of Newark a half-century ago, he had committed acts of sexual abuse against minors, which Bishop DiMarzio has steadfastly denied.

In a personal statement released following the announcement, Bishop DiMarzio said: “I repeat what I have said from the beginning. There is no truth to these allegations. Throughout my more than 50-year ministry as a priest, I have never abused anyone.”

Pope encourages participation in 2021 Season of Creation

● Pope Francis has called on Catholics to take action during the Season of Creation.

In the Pope’s video for the month of September, he encourages everyone to question the way we live, and to turn “towards lifestyles that are simpler and more respectful of the environment”.

The Holy Father has also stressed that the “cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are becoming increasingly serious and alarming,” urging Catholics to take “decisive, urgent action to transform this crisis into an opportunity.”

Furthermore, at the weekly General Audience last Wednesday, he recalled the celebration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and the beginning of the Season of Creation. He noted that a message for the occasion had been prepared together with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

“Together with our brothers and sisters of different Christian denominations, let us pray and work for our common home in these times of grave planetary crisis,” the Pope said.

Letter from America



Mark Pattison

The United States last declared war nearly 80 years ago in the conflict known as World War II. Afterward, there were several wars fought that weren't declared as such.

Some ended successfully from a military standpoint: the 1983 invasion of Grenada, a 135-square-mile island in the Caribbean that was set to seat a communist government. Another was the 1989 invasion of Panama to oust its military strongman, Manuel Noriega, who had holed up in the Vatican embassy.

Less successful

Others were less successful. The war in Korea ended in a tense stalemate between north and south that persists today. Another was Vietnam, where the communist-led Viet Cong in the north overran the south following withdrawal of US troops after 14 years and 58,281 US military deaths.

Since 2001, Congress passed a bill calling for AUMF – Beltway-speak for authorisation for use of military force. Under AUMF, Congress gives the president the leeway to set the terms of military engagement. The bill was passed one week after the 9/11 terror attacks and was used to send US forces to Afghanistan that year and Iraq in October 2002.

A Congressional Research Service report five years ago found 35 other citations of AUMF to justify US military involvement in 14 countries and on the high seas.

With all of these military adventures, do they meet the criteria of just war?

"Whether it's authorised by Congress or not, most of our military adventures starting with Vietnam have been unjustified morally," said Jim Sterba, an ethics professor at the University of Notre Dame.

With Afghanistan's takeover by the Taliban in August, following a US pullout after nearly 20 years of combat, there was "no moral justification" for invading, Sterba said, adding: "There are alternatives."

First, a review of what criteria are needed for war to be considered ethically just under just-war principles. Having the nation's leader pronounce, "Our cause is just" is not one of them.

However, the cause must indeed be just. A nation cannot go to war just to punish people who have done wrong or taken things belonging to another nation.

The principle of comparative justice says the wrongs suffered by one side in a conflict must significantly outweigh those suffered by the other.

What is the criteria for a 'just' war?



A girl gestures to a US soldier on patrol in the town of Senjaray in the Kandahar province of southern Afghanistan in this 2012 photo. Photo: CNS.

“The principle of comparative justice says the wrongs suffered by one side in a conflict must significantly outweigh those suffered by the other”

Only duly constituted authorities can wage war. That would not mean dictatorships like Adolf Hitler's Germany, and deceptive military actions like the US bombing of Cambodia in 1968 violate this criterion.

The right intention is also key. The cause must be just and force can be used only to right the wrong suffered.

Probability of success is another criterion. Arms cannot be used in a futile cause.

Proportionality is a related criterion. The benefits of waging war must justify the violence used. Self-defence, or defence of another, must be present.

Last resort

Finally, war must be waged as a last resort. All other means of resolving the issue peaceably must first be exhausted.

Mr Sterba said the Taliban twice offered to find Osama bin Laden, the architect of the 9/11 attacks, for the United States in exchange for having one Islamic judge on a three-judge panel that would try him for his crimes, but the United States nixed the deal each time. "No," we said, "we're coming in." Because we

thought we could do it," he added.

"There's effectively no difference" between AUMF and declared war, including military conduct during the conflict, said Jesuit Father Drew Christiansen, a senior fellow at the Walsh School of Foreign Service of Georgetown University's Berkley Center.

"People haven't gone back to get further approval as the conflict has gone on," Fr Christiansen said. What is needed, he added, is for "the terms of the AUMF to get tightened and Congress get more involved in the regulation and enforcement of AUMF".

"The AUMF is explicitly about empowering the president for a quick, effective, short-term response, thought to be needed in the wake of 9/11, whereas with the War Powers Resolution, Congress is more empowered in terms of declaring war and in terms of authorising military budgets," said Brian Orend, a philosophy at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, and the author of books on just-war examinations.

After President Richard Nixon ordered the bombing of Cambodia without Congress' consent, Con-

gress passed the War Powers Resolution of 1973, intended to limit the president's authority to conduct war.

"Many presidents, since 9/11, have appreciated the added latitude of the AUMF, whereas their critics would argue the urgency is long gone, and is no longer needed. But, in the wake of the Taliban re-taking of Afghanistan, perhaps the feeling of urgency has returned to some extent," Mr Orend said.

"It was felt needed to authorise quick action, which Congress perhaps might not be capable of, as well as to authorise so-called 'measures-short-of-war,' like cruise missile strikes, or drones, launched from afar," he said.

“Yet without changes to the law, such AUMF uses may continue to be drawn out, Mr Sterba said”

"At the same time, the AUMF is explicitly nested within the War Powers Resolution, where Congress is quite empowered, especially in terms of formal declarations of war as well as financing armed conflict," Mr Orend said, adding he believed the 2001 law would not be altered by Congress.

Yet without changes to the law,

such AUMF uses may continue to be drawn out, Mr Sterba said. "The fact that there is the unjustified nature of it means there's opposition at home to doing this," he said.

And looking at the current situation in Afghanistan, Fr Christiansen pointed out that because of the corruption in the Afghan government, its inability to reform and the ineffectiveness of its forces, the US "should have withdrawn a long time ago".

Yet where was the call for withdrawal, or mounting an argument that the war in Afghanistan was no longer just?

The war of choice

"It was so outweighed by the debate in Iraq I didn't take into consideration at the time how it was playing out in Afghanistan," he replied.

"Iraq was the war of choice and the problems just kept multiplying there and my attention was there and the attention of most ethicists was there. Afghanistan became a kind of backwater."

That status may have been what foiled the US military effort, Fr Christiansen said.

It's what did in Alexander the Great millennia ago. "There's a battle of technological civilization against tribal people," the priest noted, adding that tribal rule seems to win each time.

Political left and right threaten free religious practice in Dreher's new book



Elise Ann Allen

In the 2010's, the term 'woke' became a popular word, implying political and social awareness, although critics say the term signals a sort of pretentiousness or elitism about one's understanding of any given issue.

In his new book, *Live Not by Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents*, Rod Dreher – author of the *New York Times* bestselling hit *The Benedict Option* – warns that increasingly extreme leftwing 'woke' groups pose a serious threat to the freedoms enjoyed in Western society.

Catholic associations

However, speaking to a small group of journalists and representatives from Catholic associations following the Rome presentation of the book, Mr Dreher said he sees new threats also coming from the right.

The main concern, in Mr Dreher's view, is "wokeness, the soft totalitarianism of the left, but that's not the only threat. We've seen emerge on the right fanatical illiberalism that has the same qualities, but from the right. I'm talking about QAnon, which is all about conspiracy theories."

QAnon is an umbrella term referring to a widespread set of internet conspiracy theories which allege that the world is run by a cabal of Satan-worshipping paedophiles, most of whom are on the left.

Once a small fringe group no one paid much heed to, QAnon has now gone mainstream, with believers playing a key role in the January 6 US Capitol riots, and their activities have become increasingly violent.

"What I'm really afraid of," Mr Dreher said, "is that this radical left wing in power is going to inspire the radical right, especially the racist right, to rise up and make conflict."

"As Christians, we have to reject all totalitarianism, all anti-Christian doctrines, whether it's from the woke left or the racist right," he said.

Mr Dreher gained international fame for his 2017 work, *The Benedict Option*, in which he argues that Christians can "no longer live business-as-usual lives in America," and must develop "creative, communal solutions to help us hold on to our faith and our values in a world growing ever more hostile to them."

In his new book, Mr Dreher goes further, arguing that a form of "soft totalitarianism" is overtaking the West, posing a threat to Christian culture through the subtle imposition of a leftist ideology, any opposition to which could potentially result in a hefty fine, a jail sentence, or the loss of one's business.

He opens the book with an anecdote about a small-town pizzeria in



Author Rod Dreher. Photo: CNS.

Indiana forced to close for a while after facing mob and social media threats for telling reporters that they would not cater a same-sex wedding on religious grounds.

The whole episode happened in the context of a broader debate about gay rights and religious liberty in the state in which several large corporations, including Apple, were threatening repercussions unless Indiana walked back legislation providing some legal protections for people like the pizzeria owners who invoked their religious freedom to refuse certain business.

“A progressive – and profoundly anti-Christian militancy – is steadily overtaking society”

In Mr Dreher's account, an American physician contacted him whose elderly mother, a Czech immigrant to the US who in her youth had spent six years as a political prisoner in her home country, said the episode with the pizzeria reminded her of when communism first came to Czechoslovakia.

"What if the old Czech woman sees something the rest of us do not? What if we really are witnessing a turn toward totalitarianism in the Western liberal democracies, and can't see it because it takes a form different from the old kind?" Mr Dreher asked in the book's introduction.

The rest of his book outlines his

description of the "soft totalitarianism" taking over today's Western culture, how to identify it, what its potential consequences are, and several steps he believes Christians must take if they want to resist what's coming based on conversations he's had with survivors of Soviet communism.

Communism

"What unnerves those who lived under Soviet communism is this similarity: Elites and elite institutions are abandoning old-fashioned liberalism, based in defending the rights of the individual, and replacing it with a progressive creed that regards justice in terms of groups," he said.

This mentality, Mr Dreher said, "encourages people to identify with groups—ethnic, sexual, and otherwise—and to think of Good and Evil as a matter of power dynamics among the groups. A utopian vision drives these progressives, one that compels them to seek to rewrite history and reinvent language to reflect their ideals of social justice."

"People are becoming instant pariahs for having expressed a politically incorrect opinion, or in some other way provoking a progressive mob, which amplifies its scapegoating through social and conventional media. Under the guise of 'diversity,' 'inclusivity,' 'equity,' and other egalitarian jargon, the left creates powerful mechanisms for controlling thought and discourse and marginalises dissenters as evil," he said.

"A progressive – and profoundly anti-Christian militancy – is steadily

overtaking society," he said, noting that the communism survivors he's spoken with insist that "liberalism's admirable care for the weak and marginalised is fast turning into a monstrous ideology that, if it is not stopped, will transform liberal democracy into a softer, therapeutic form of totalitarianism."

According to Mr Dreher, there are several signs of this soft totalitarianism already on display, including widespread loneliness and "Social Atomisation," namely through social media; a lack of civic trust; a loss of faith in hierarchies and institutions; a desire to "transgress and destroy" simply for the sake of it; the presence of propaganda and a willingness to believe so-called "useful" lies; a craze for ideology; the valuing of loyalty over expertise; a fatalistic view of the future; and seeing intellectuals as the "revolutionary class."

In terms of what Christians can do to resist this culture and protect themselves from it, Mr Dreher stresses the importance of valuing the truth – something increasingly hard to identify in today's vast digital web of information, misinformation, and conspiracy theories – and to "never accept lies in exchange for comfort."

He also urges Christians to cultivate a "cultural memory" attuned to the values of Christian culture and committed to conserving them, and stressed the role of families as "resistance cells," with parents living according to the traditional Christian values of marriage and passing these on to their children.

If Christians want to survive the

subtle totalitarianism that's coming, he said, they must also lean on and strengthen their own faith and stand in solidarity with one another, forming groups and communities with shared values who can be a source of support.

“If we shrink away, then let us cease complaining that someone does not let us draw breath – we do it to ourselves!”

Finally, Mr Dreher said there must be an increased appreciation for the Christian understanding of "the gift of suffering," and a willingness to suffer for one's beliefs, as did many who resisted communism.

Mr Dreher closes quoting a 1974 essay by Russian philosopher and political prisoner Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn titled "Live not by Lies," which he references in the title of his book, saying: "The more of us set out together, the thicker our ranks, the easier and shorter will this path be for us all! If we become thousands – they will not cope, they will be unable to touch us. If we will grow to tens of thousands – we will not recognise our country!"

However, he added, "If we shrink away, then let us cease complaining that someone does not let us draw breath – we do it to ourselves!"

i Elise Ann Allen, senior correspondent for *Cruxnow.com*

Letters

Letter of the week

Afghanistan and the dilemma facing liberal secular humanism

Dear Editor, With his customary clarity David Quinn describes the dilemma facing liberal secular humanism [IC 26/08/2021] in light of the Afghanistan debacle now unfolding: should Western democracies try to change societies which inherit centuries of tribal customs and loyalties, or leave them alone?

They believe that their human rights gospel must be extended to the whole world.

Mr Quinn points to a similar dilemma which faced Christian missionaries long before it faced "UN-type human rights type activists". Should they bring the Gospel to nations which had not received it or not? For

centuries this was no dilemma at all; missionaries never doubted that they should bring the Good News to all nations in accordance with the original commission given by the Lord.

It is true that the Christian faith was often brought to non-Christian countries in tandem with the colonial conquest of those countries. Its acceptance – despite this fact – testifies powerfully to its uniqueness. Paul was both an out-and-out Jew (Ph 3:5) and a tireless missionary to the non-Jews or Gentiles, championing them against his own people, who had rejected the Gospel. He tells the Thessalonians that he thanks God, "that as soon as you heard the

message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what it really is – God's message, and not some human thinking" (1 Th 2:13).

Blessed Fulton Sheen in his book on Our Lady devotes a chapter to 'Mary and the Muslims'. It has this intriguing sentence: "Because the Muslims have a devotion to Mary, our missionaries should be satisfied to expand and to develop that devotion with the full realisation that Our Blessed Lady will carry the Muslims the rest of the way to her Divine Son."

*Yours etc.,
Fr John Joyce SPS
Kiltegan, Co. Wicklow*

Taliban victory a 'major step backwards'

Dear Editor, One can only hope that the article 'Taliban's victory will embolden Islamists, warns ACN Ireland' [IC 26/08/2021] is more of a worst-case scenario, or at least that it won't be a large scale, worldwide phenomenon. Religious extremism has been a blight on the world since the dawn of humanity, across all religions. I pray for peace in the Middle East and between all religions but the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban seems to be a major step backwards.

*Yours etc.,
Patrick O'Connor
Drogheda, Co. Louth*



More will be lost by abandoning priestly celibacy

Dear Editor, In response to Mr Browne's thoughts on the future of the priesthood [IC Letters 19/08/2021], I feel compelled to point out that, as such, celibacy is not a "traditional rule of the priesthood" but is an essential prerequisite for the consecration of the holy Eucharist, which we

as Catholics believe to be the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the true presence of Jesus on the altar.

Celibacy is required of a priest in order to have "consecrated hands" and elevate the Host in the offering. There is also an issue here regarding the utilisation of extraordinary ministers of

the Eucharist.

In bygone times when priests were married, they were required to abstain from any form of intimacy in the days leading up to the celebration of the Eucharist which was much less frequent then. Today a priest could have a number of Masses per day, therefore

requiring celibacy as part of the efficacious preparation to celebrate Holy Mass.

If celibacy is abandoned by the priesthood, then we will lose much more than could possibly be gained.

*Yours etc.,
Aidan O'Brien
Lisnalong, Co. Monaghan.*

Protecting impartiality and tackling RTÉ

Dear Editor, A fundamental principle of journalism is impartiality, which protects truth, justice and freedom of speech. I was astounded therefore to watch the unbalanced report on the repeal of the 8th Amendment presented as a documentary, *The 8th*, on RTÉ One on 04/08/2021. What RTÉ favours today could be its opposite tomorrow so it is in everyone's interests to insist on impartiality. As mainstream media have such power to shape opinion and influence behaviour, I believe urgent, strong and sustained action by Irish citizens is

required to protect ourselves, particularly in light of multiple complaints to the BAI (Broadcasting Authority of Ireland) having little or no effect. Some options to consider: Complain again to BAI, don't watch or listen to RTÉ, litigate RTÉ if that is possible, do not pay the TV licence fee and remove all devices capable of receiving a TV transmission from one's home, litigate or lobby our government that supports the unjust legal requirement to pay a TV licence fee. I do not need a licence to own other appliances so I do not need one to own a TV. I do however

need to pay for any service provided through the appliance, unless it is free. If I want to watch RTÉ, I need an RTÉ licence, not a TV licence.

Tying access to other TV networks to payment for the RTÉ service, is bribery for consumers who do not want the RTÉ service but do want access to other networks, while compulsory payment for an unwanted service is extortion. Obstructing access to other networks must also be an offence.

*Yours etc.,
Mary O'Regan
Millstreet Town, Co. Cork*

facebook community

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

'Do they want the Church to run the country for them' – Bro. Kevin

You have to laugh, one minute they're doing all they can to separate Church and State in the name of "progress" and in the next they're turning to the Church for handouts to make up for their mistakes and ineptitude as leaders. Why the Church is even bothering to engage them is beyond me. – **Cearbhall O Lonagain**

I support you Bro. Kevin, Church will be blamed etc. but all that waste of Government land sitting unused may be put to good use not sold off for development. – **Deirdre Quinn**

I agree with Bro. Kevin they want the Church and charity organisations to do the work they are paid well to do. – **Eilish Higgins**

Well said, Bro. Kevin and a pity they wouldn't take a leaf from your book. When there was no education or healthcare in this country, the Church stepped up and provided a healthcare system that was second to none and was the backbone of this country as far as education was concerned. Since they took over the health service they have created a monster and all to serve their own purpose. The consultants, nurses and doctors are leaving the country and those who stay are treated like slaves, working long hours for very little reward. The education system will go the same road if they are allowed get away with it. – **Sheelagh Hanly**

The nerve of this anti-Christian pro-abortion bigoted Government who still haven't officially rescinded their restrictions on our sacraments. And who have done everything in their power to suppress our religious freedom. Then asking for this? Talk about cognitive dissonance. They are a disgrace. – **Ismise Máire**

If they expect the Church to provide land maybe they should also expect golf courses to provide land. The multiplication of golf courses is a luxury the world cannot afford as we need land for the homeless and for reforestation. – **Brendan Kennedy**

Church whistleblower calls out clericalism

The Church was founded on Peter and the apostles. Why is this model being abandoned? – **Noel Kelly**

They may not be perfect but they are the best we have and we should stand up for them it is a difficult job and no one is perfect. – **Eilish Higgins**

Campaign hopes to overcome negative reactions to pregnancy

People legitimately react poorly or with disdain when a woman shares they are pregnant? Who would do something so tone deaf and cold? – **Tara Ní Dochartaigh**

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

Letters to the Editor

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

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

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

Around the world



▲ **AFGHANISTAN:** Afghan children look at the weapons of a Taliban soldier in Kabul, September 1. Photos: CNS.

◀ **VATICAN:** Pope Francis greets young people during his general audience in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican September 1.



MEXICO: Migrants and asylum-seekers from Central America and the Caribbean walk in a caravan in Tapachula, August 28. They are headed to the Mexican capital to apply for asylum and refugee status.



KOREA: The remains of the first Korean Catholic martyrs are being excavated from a gravesite near Jeonju, 230 years after they were executed and seven years after they were beatified.



USA: First responders in Mamaroneck, NY, pull local residents in a boat September 2, as they rescue people trapped by floodwaters after the remnants of Tropical Storm Ida.



LEBANON: Maronite Catholic bishops of Lebanon participate in a monthly meeting at Bkerke, the Maronite patriarchate near Beirut, September 1.

Under a bridge in Texas



Recently at a workshop, a woman shared her anxiety about the death of her brother. Her older brother had died from the Covid virus before there were vaccines for it, and had died because he had dangerously exposed himself to catching the virus. However, he had exposed himself to that danger for a worthy reason. A military veteran, living alone, he used much of his salary and savings to cook meals and take them to feed homeless people living under a bridge in his hometown, Austin, Texas.

“He simply didn’t believe in God or go to church anymore”

That certainly seems like a noble, Christian death, except that in his adult life he had lost any explicit faith in God and in Jesus, and self-defined as an agnostic (though with no antipathy towards religion). He simply didn’t believe in God or go to church anymore. His sister who shared this story, loved him deeply, admired his feeding the homeless, but worried about his dying outside of an explicit faith and the Church. Her anxiety was compounded by her other brother, a Christian fundamentalist, who is firm in the belief that dying outside of the Church puts one eternally outside of salvation; in brief, you end up in hell.



Fr Rolheiser

www.ronrolheiser.com

At a gut-level, his sister knew that this could not be true. Still she was anxious about it and wanted some assurances that her fundamentalist brother was wrong and that her anxiety about her brother’s eternal salvation was a false fear.

Fundamentalism

What does one say in the face of that? A number of things might be said. First, that the God who Jesus incarnated and revealed is a God who is in every way the antithesis of fundamentalism and of this sort of false fear about salvation. Jesus assures us that God reads the heart in all its complexity, including its existential complexity. A fundamentalist reads only a written rubric, not the goodness of a heart. As well, scripture describes

“Moreover, in the abstract language of academic theology, God has a universal will for salvation, and that means for everyone, including agnostics and atheists”

God as ‘a jealous God’. This doesn’t mean God gets jealous and angry when we are preoccupied with our own things or when we betray God through weakness and sin. Rather, it means that God, like a solicitous parent, never wants to lose us and seeks every possible means to keep us from slipping away and hurting ourselves. Moreover, in the abstract language of academic theology, God has a universal will for salvation, and that means for everyone, including agnostics and atheists.

More specifically, Jesus gives us three interpenetrating perspectives that expose the narrowness of all fundamentalist thinking regarding who goes to heaven and who goes to hell.

First, he gives us a parable of a man who has two sons and he asks

them both to work in his field. The first son says that he will not do it, but in fact ends up doing it; the second son says he will do the work, but ends up not doing it. Which is the true son? The answer is obvious, but Jesus reinforces the parable with this comment: It is not necessarily those who say ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of God on earth.

What this parable highlights is what theologians (from John Henry Newman through Karl Rahner) have tried to teach, namely, that someone can have a notional faith that in fact rings hollow in the light of true faith. Conversely, someone can explicitly deny what we hold in our notion of faith and yet in the light of what a genuine faith demands, have real faith since this is not necessarily manifest in one’s notion of faith but in the fruits of one’s life.

Heaven or hell

As well, we have Jesus’ shocking warning in Matthew 25 about how we ultimately will be judged for heaven or hell, namely, on whether or not we served the poor. This warning does not suggest that explicit faith and church attendance are of no consequence; they have their importance, but it is warning that there are things that are more important.

Finally, and perhaps most far-reaching in this regard, Jesus gives us the power to bind and loose. As

parts of the Body of Christ, our love, like Jesus’ love, keeps a loved one connected to the community of salvation. As Gabriel Marcel puts it, to love someone is to say, you can never be lost. This woman’s love for her brother assures that he is not in hell.

All of this I might have said, but instead I simply referred to a wonderful quote from Charles Peguy the noted French poet and essayist. Peguy once suggested that when we die and appear before God, each of us will be asked this one question: “Where are the others?” (“Où sont les autres?”).

“When he stood before God and was asked the question (Where are the others?) he had a very good answer: They are under a bridge in Austin”

I assured the anxious woman she need not worry about her brother’s eternal salvation, despite his dying outside of an explicit faith and the Church. When he stood before God and was asked the question (Where are the others?) he had a very good answer: They are under a bridge in Austin.

Family & Lifestyle

The Irish Catholic, September 9, 2021

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How to pack health into school lunches



I must have caused some headaches at times in my house as a child, so picky were my eating habits. It only dawned on me in adulthood what a monumental task it is to put together lunches every day for school that are not only healthy, but edible – particularly when childhood is often the heyday of culinary fussiness, as it was for me.

Getting a child to eat healthy school lunches is surely a challenge in this sugar and fat saturated age, but there are ways to prepare meals full of vitamins, minerals and nutrients, that will ensure your child doesn't grow just in intellect during their early schooling years, but in health, too.

Here I'll share some tips that got me eating, and that seem to be staples in the arsenal against food-fussiness.



Packing school lunches can be a struggle, but there are ways to ensure even the pickiest eaters are healthfully fed, writes Jason Osborne

Making fun lunches

Children are highly visually-oriented, and the younger they are, the more likely they are to be influenced by the way their meals look. Quirky shapes and bright, varied colours can tempt a child to pick it up and take a bite faster than something that looks, quite simply, boring.

This isn't to say you need to spend hours colouring, dyeing or carving food – maybe just spend a little extra time arranging the lunch, using a cutter of some sort

to add some shape to sandwiches or slices of meat or cheese, or maybe draw the eye in in the first place with a personal note. If the food looks attractive and tantalising to you, there's a good chance it will to your child, too.

Sneak in the food groups

Creativity is a useful skill when trying to ensure your child gets all of the food groups they need in their packed lunches. There are five main food groups: fruits and

vegetables, protein, grains, dairy and fats, and it can take some inspiration to get all of these into the mix.

First of all, if your child has any intolerances or allergies, it's worth talking to a pharmacist, doctor or dietician about supplementing their nutritional intake with a multivitamin or supplement instead. However, if that's not an issue, you can simply try sneaking in the foods or food groups that your child refuses to eat.

Smoothies being so popular, blending less popular vegetables into a predominately healthy, and tasty, fruit smoothy can be a good way to get lesser-eaten vegetables like spinach into a child's diet. Alternatively, mashing cauliflower into mashed potatoes and similar such tricks are another good way to get your child's less-favoured foods into their daily meals.

It may also be worth asking your child why they don't like certain foods – if they simply don't like the look or texture of a food, this can sometimes be put to rights with an alternative cooking technique. I love salmon, for instance, but I'm reluctant to touch it when smoked. It can be as simple a thing as changing how a food looks or feels.

Involve your children in meal prep

Children are a lot more likely to eat, or at least try, something if they were involved in its making. They, and the same is true of adults, have a sense of control over what they create, and so are more likely to try a sandwich or a stew if they had a hand in making it.

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Family News



AND EVENTS

POPULATION OF REPUBLIC ABOVE 5 MILLION FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 1851

The country's population was estimated to stand at 5.01 million in April, the latest statistics from the CSO revealed last week. This is the first time the population has risen above five million since the 1851 census, when the population stood at 5.11 million. The CSO said the combination of positive net migration and natural increase resulted in population growth of 34,000 (0.7%) in the year to April 2021. It noted that this was smaller than the rise of 55,900 (1.1%) the previous year. The statistics show there were 55,500 births and 32,700 deaths in the year to April, giving a natural increase in the population of 22,800. This is the lowest level of natural increase recorded since the 2000 population estimates, the CSO said.

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION FACING IRREPARABLE FAILURES, RUSSIA WARNS

The International Space Station (ISS) could suffer "irreparable" failures due to outdated equipment and hardware, a Russian official has warned. At least 80% of in-flight systems on the Russian segment of the ISS had passed their expiry date, Vladimir Solovyov told state media. He also said small cracks had been discovered that could worsen over time. Russia has often raised concerns over hardware and has suggested it could leave the ISS after 2025. The station was built in 1998 as part of a joint project between Russia, America, Canada, Japan and several European countries and was originally designed for a 15-year lifespan.

CHINA CUTS CHILDREN'S ONLINE GAMING TO ONE HOUR

Online gamers under the age of 18 will only be allowed to play for an hour on Fridays, weekends and holidays, China's video game regulator has said. The National Press and Publication Administration told state-run news agency Xinhua that game-playing would be only allowed between 8pm to 9pm. It also instructed gaming companies to prevent children playing outside these times. Earlier this month a state media outlet branded online games "spiritual opium". Inspections of online gaming companies will also increase, to check that the time limits are being enforced the regulator said. Earlier rules had limited children's online game-playing to 90 minutes per day, rising to three hours on holidays. The move reflects a long running concern about the impact of excessive gaming on the young. A month prior to the latest restrictions, an article published by the state-run Economic Information Daily claimed many teenagers had become addicted to online gaming and it was having a negative impact on them.



A loss of family time post-lockdown

I'm definitely not the only mother who feels a bit sad and weepy at the prospect of a return to some semblance of pre-Covid normality. It's not that I don't relish a return to normal life but I'm really going to miss having my two eldest daughters at home all the time. They're dying to stretch their wings and to make up for all that they've missed but I'll be shedding a few quiet tears as they head back to college. I've seen many parents expressing sadness at the various changes the end of Covid restrictions will bring. Most hated the loss of basic freedoms but there were some unexpected benefits too. A lot of parents loved the flexibility of working from home and there was a dawning realisation that they didn't want to go back to the bad old days when they hardly had a minute to breathe.

As a parent of older and younger children, I really enjoyed the unexpected extra time with my college-aged children. There were some tough moments but, overall, the extra days and weeks together were a pleasure. Instead of my 21-year-old being off seeing the world and experiencing all the joys of college life, we reaped the benefits of her get-up-and-go approach in our home. We never played as many games, watched as many films and our fitness levels soared with all the walks and excursions. In some ways it was like recapturing some moments that had been lost in time. It was a bit like early childhood when your children are always around but, maybe you don't quite appreciate the magic until it's gone. This was a second chance to have those long chats, to share intimate morning coffees and to almost forget that time was moving on and that this little reprieve wouldn't last forever. From the



A parent's perspective Maria Byrne

point of view of teenagers and young adults, it wasn't all idyllic but lasting memories have been formed and new bonds forged. I even realised that I actually like BTS, the South Korean band and really enjoyed watching *Mob Psycho 100*, the Japanese anime series that my 20-year-old daughter introduced me to.

“For those whose only experience was the busyness of both parents working full time, having enjoyed a slower pace of life may be prompting a re-evaluation of priorities”

Now that we're moving slowly towards business as usual, how will we deal with all the transitions? Some will quickly adjust and will just be happy to enjoy a bit more freedom while others won't bounce back as quickly. I've seen some accounts from those who complained about having their children under their feet during lockdowns but felt lonely and despondent when the children had to return to school. One journalist I follow on Twitter remarked that she was taken aback by her sense of loss and by how much she missed her children. For those whose only experience was the busyness of both parents working full time, having enjoyed a slower

pace of life may be prompting a re-evaluation of priorities. Parents with older children who'll be leaving home completely may be experiencing 'Empty Nest Syndrome', that sorrow and distress that can accompany the last child flying the nest. I'm in a category of its own with some children



being home educated and others who'll be home in the evenings but I still feel a bit forlorn. However, with a bit of thoughtful planning, we can move on to this new phase while still preserving some of the positive elements of all our time together.

Children being back in school or college doesn't mean that we still can't carve out a few special moments each week to keep that positive family vibe going. I'm definitely planning to keep up the regular family hikes. It's amazing the conversations that take place while you're trudging along and how walking in all sorts of terrain builds confidence and resilience. As in life, you face the challenges, feel

tired at times and even think of throwing in the towel, but get there in the end with a little help along the way. Another area that really benefited from everyone being together was prayer life. Without all the coming and going, it was easier to pin down a time for prayer. I was delighted to get the whole family onboard with a 33-day online devotion to Our Lady leading to a consecration to Jesus through Mary. It was a Legion of Mary initiative which captured the imagination of all age groups. On one particular August evening, my four youngest logged on from a windswept Omev Island in Claddaghduff, Co. Galway. Another evening found me joining in from a Clifden restaurant as I tried to screenshot the day's readings while waiting for our food.

My 11-year-old son is now really familiar with Psalm 91 after the nightly recitation of this lovely prayer. I'm really determined to keep this joint effort going no matter how busy our autumn schedules are. The final thing I'd love to hold onto is our film and game nights. Sharing a movie you loved as a child or winning at Scrabble or Monopoly seems like something small but the family that plays together will stay together. Even though the constant physical togetherness may be gone, every family can map out ways to keep living out the positive elements that blossomed while everyone was under the same roof. In the words of Pope St John Paul II "As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world."

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A child's involvement can be as extensive or limited as you or your child feels, from picking a recipe, to shopping for the ingredients and cooking or preparing the meal. You could even collaboratively put together a list of meals that are tried and true from their perspective, and that you approve of, making the lunches task easier going forward.

No new foods at lunch

Introducing new foods to children is an important part of developing a healthy, balanced diet, as it can take many attempts before a new food is taken to. However, school lunches may not be the best time for it, as the food items they're inclined to stay away from may simply end up being left in the box or bag, and through sheer habit, they'll come to consider that food one they avoid.

“The positive example of others eating the food together is important for children to see”

A much better time to introduce new foods, which can later be used in lunches, is at dinner, as the whole family sits down to a meal. The positive example of others eating the food together is important for children to see.

Lead by example

As mentioned, children are highly impressionable, and they observe your behaviour a lot more closely than we might think. If you don't eat healthily or skip over certain foods in your meals, they'll mirror that behaviour too.

If you eat dessert or snack before dinner, don't be surprised if your child starts to adopt the same practice, too. Be bold in serving foods you yourself are picky about, and lead by example at the dinner table. If you serve broccoli to your child yet pick it off your own plate, don't be surprised when your child starts doing the same.



Be as creative as possible

The days are busy enough, but if at all possible, try to be creative with your child's lunchbox. The stereotypical contents include sandwiches and an apple – and there's nothing wrong with this.

“Expending energy on school lunches can be difficult, but they can be a valuable opportunity to pass on the gift of health to your child”

However, just as that would get boring for an adult if it was every day's fare, so too will it get boring for a child. Soups, salads, curries and tacos all make for great alternatives, and these can be made in bulk, to get you through a few of the days of the week.

Expending energy on school lunches can be difficult, but they can be a valuable opportunity to pass on the gift of health to your child – one they'll cherish long after you've stopped making their lunches (even if they don't say it).

Dad's Diary

Rory Fitzgerald



The kids were only back in school a few days before the inevitable message from school came through. A child in one of our kids' classes had tested positive for Covid. We soon learned that it was not a child in our child's pod, and so she could continue to go to school if we wished, according to the HSE's guidance. The school was wonderfully communicative, and fully supportive of any decisions which parents might make – whether to keep kids out, or to send them in, acknowledging that every family had different circumstances to consider.

With some reluctance, we decided to send her in for a day. Yet that very evening, more messages came through, and we learned that other kids had tested positive. The HSE advice was now that the entire class were close contacts should get tested, stay home for at least 10 days. Pending the outcome of the initial test, the other kids also would have to stay home.

So, once again, all the kids are at home thanks to coronavirus. Yet again, we have to watch anxiously for symptoms. Hopefully, those kids who are sick will recover swiftly. Yet while the illness is thankfully mild for most kids, it's clearly best avoided. After all, with a new virus we cannot know whether there could be any long-term consequences.

Small children process their worries in funny ways, and cannot always articulate their anxieties. You usually find out that they're worried when they start behaving unusually. I know that our child knows that the illness is usually mild for children. Yet she also knows that her grandmother died of coronavirus earlier this year. She now knows that she was in a school with kids who had coronavirus last week. Her only remaining grandmother is staying with us now. Although she's vaccinated, it would only be natural for any child to harbour anxieties in these circumstances.

Only last week, I heard her crying in the hallway. I went outside to see what was wrong, expecting that she might have fallen over, or was frustrated that she couldn't find a toy. Instead, I found her clutching a

picture of her and my mother together, which she had taken down from the wall. “I miss her so much” she said, her eyes big with tears. We hugged and talked for a long time. It's good that she can express her grief, yet it's tragic to think what this virus has taken from her and so many other children. It has taken loved ones, as well



as disrupting their schooling, their sports, their friendships, their holidays. It caused cancelled birthday parties, a lack of playdates, a lack of freedom and a million other injuries to millions of childhoods – all of which add up to a big wound.

During the lockdowns, we were fortunate to be living in a rural area with plenty of open space, and a large enough family to ensure that there was never a quiet moment for the kids. They were never short of company, whether human or animal. Yet many kids were confined to small spaces, isolated from friends. Teachers I know say that many are struggling to reacclimatise to school life, after so much time alone.

At least the older kids knew what school life was like before coronavirus. The younger cohort who started school just before the pandemic arrived, cannot recall having the simple certainty that school will be open next week. They are used to being isolated from other classes, divided into pods, and being told to avoid others. They can hardly remember a time when adults did not wear masks in the shops, nor when overseas travel was routine. The way the world was before the coronavirus pandemic eludes their memories.

There's plenty of hope to brighten the horizon, and the success of the vaccine programme means that many things look set to return to something resembling normality before too long. Yet we had hoped for a normal return to school this September, but we have not had it. We must continue to hope for the best. It's important to try to see these strange times through the eyes of children too, and to do all we can to support them as – hopefully – the dark tide of this pandemic begins to slowly recede.

Appreciating the honour of being a priest

Personal Profile



Ruadhán Jones

This has been a busy year for Fr Ger Jones of Ennis parish. Firstly, he celebrated 10 years as a priest this and now, following the elevation of Fr Ger Nash to be Bishop of Ferns, Fr Jones is stepping up to fill his shoes as diocesan secretary for Killaloe.

"Fr Ger Nash did a fantastic job, he's a great loss to us - he's a great benefit to the diocese of Ferns, but we'll certainly miss him here," Fr Jones says, adding that he's looking forward to the challenges and experiences the new role holds. "When you're asked to do something, you give it a go and you give it your best shot."

“For him, the idea of the priesthood was always in the back of his mind”

"I'm still in the parish as well, I'm between two stools," he continues. "I'm in Ennis, in the Abbey pastoral area, but also working in the diocesan office. I'm really at the early stages of that, so I'm only learning the ropes, you'll have to call me back in a year to ask what I think of it!"

Fr Jones, a native Co. Clare, comes from a family whose faith background was strong, he says. Both his parents were daily Massgoers, even when they were working. For him, the idea of the priesthood was always in the back of his mind.

"I would have considered it growing up and that, when I was in secondary school and that kind of



Fr Ger.

thing," Fr Jones says. "But I didn't go for it when I did the Leaving Cert, I went and studied in the University of Limerick. But it was still there in the back of my head all the time."

"When I finished my degree in Limerick, I then went for the diocese. I suppose the idea of priesthood, to be there and offer the sacraments, attracted me to it. I was aware there was a need for it. Thinking about it now, it's 17 years ago that I went in to Maynooth. At that time, we were aware of the need for priests and the shortage of priests. It's much more acute now. I felt that I'd like to give it a go and see."

Fr Jones spent seven years studying, spending three years in Maynooth and three in the Irish college in Rome. Both were rewarding environments, and he considers himself lucky to have had the experience of

studying in both. In Rome, he says he gained an especial appreciation for the universal nature of the Church.

Universal Church

"I got to meet in Rome a lot of people from other places," Fr Jones tells me. "You're not just meeting Italians, you're meeting Americans and Australians and Iraqis, it gave me a much better sense of the universal Church. The struggles and the difficulties that we're having in Ireland are different from the struggles and the difficulties that people in other countries are having, countries with lots of vocations but no money to build seminaries, or to look after the people who are going forward."

"Then there are people like the Iraqis who are being driven out - the Iraqi Christian population has been decimated since the Iraq war, basi-

cally since I went to Maynooth. A lot of them have gone to Australia and to different parts of the world. It was an extraordinary grace to meet people like that and to get a sense of the universal Church."

"To understand what other people are going through in different parts of the world, places where the Church is booming, places where the Church is undergoing physical persecution, I got a much better sense of that. It was a great experience in that sense, seeing the global Church in Rome."

"But I made lots of friends in Maynooth too and people I'd still be in touch with. There aren't that many priests under whatever age, so a lot of us would know each other. I would have positive things to say about both places."

Having spent 10 years working in

parishes, Fr Jones is well aware of the privilege and the honour that comes from serving the Faithful.

"I suppose being there for people [is one of my favourite experiences]," Fr Jones begins. "As I say, people who are faithful appreciate your presence. Being there and accompanying people who are sick, accompanying people to their journey in the next world is a great privilege and a great honour."

“Fr Jones will continue to work in the Abbey pastoral area, while also working in the diocesan office”

"The families of those people are deeply appreciative. Celebrating the funeral Masses, it's a wonderful connection. People of faith appreciate it, but people who aren't Massgoers, when a funeral comes around and when a bereavement comes around, it's a chance to reconnect with their faith and to pose the questions about life and eternal life and that kind of things."

"That's a great privilege - I wouldn't call it a favourite thing, but it's a really important thing that we do."

Fr Jones will continue to work in the Abbey pastoral area, while also working in the diocesan office. He says the people in the parishes are always supportive and positive of the work he and other priests do.

"It's been a pleasure to work in what we'd call town parishes in our diocese. There's been a great deal of support and very, very good people I would have met. People who would be involved in the parish, who are faithful people, I would describe them as good people and good people to know."



Children's Corner

Chai Brady

How to check your lung capacity at home

There are many tests to see how fit and healthy you are, each checking certain parts of your body. One of the indicators of good health is lung volume. Just how much air can your lungs hold? With the help of a few simple household objects, some scientific know how and a dash of curiosity you can make this experiment look easy.

Apparatus:

- Clean plastic tubing
- A large plastic bottle
- Water
- Kitchen sink

Method:

1. Make sure the plastic tubing is clean
2. Put about 20cm of water into your kitchen sink.
3. Fill the plastic bottle right to the top with water.
4. Put your hand over the top of the bottle to stop water escaping when you turn it upside down.
5. Turn the bottle upside down. Place the top of the bottle under the water in the sink before removing your hand.



6. Push one end of the plastic tube into the bottle.
7. Take a big breath in.
8. Breathe out as much air as you can through the tube.
9. Measure the volume of air your lungs had in them by measuring how many millilitres of water are left in the bottle and taking it away from the full capacity of the water bottle.
10. Make sure you clean up the area to finish.

What's happening?

As you breathe out through the tube, the air from your lungs takes the place of the water in the

bottle. If you made sure you took a big breath in and breathed out fully then the resulting volume of water you pushed out is equivalent to how much air your lungs can hold. Having a big air capacity in your lungs means you can distribute oxygen around your body at a faster rate. The air capacity of lungs (or VO2 max) increases naturally as children grow up but can also be increased with regular exercise.

Over time people's lung capacity decreases but there are certain breathing exercises that can help maintain and increase lung capacity, making it easier to keep your lungs healthy and get your body the oxygen it needs.

Regular exercise is an excellent way to stay in shape but also to keep your lungs healthy, but improving the quality of air that you breathe is another step. Your lungs will thank you for keeping the house tidy and clean, free of mould and dust.

Smoking is probably the worst thing you can do to your lungs, even if someone is smoking close to you it has a negative impact, so stay well away!



TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



The influence of good people lives beyond the grave

It's not often you hear the Beatitudes highlighted on mainstream radio, especially on a current affairs programme.

And so I was glad to hear 'Blessed are the Peacemakers' referenced on **Morning Ireland** (RTÉ Radio One, Friday), in the context of the sad passing of Pat Hume, wife of John. Her contribution to the peace process was widely acknowledged in the tributes. Former President Mary McAleese paid Mrs Hume a glowing and gracious tribute – she described Mrs Hume as a “formidable community activist in her own right”, and in relation to the couple admired “the courage of their partnership”. When pursuing the peace process they had met with much opposition or abuse from all sides, but persevered. She also spoke admiringly of the times when John became very unwell and when Pat became his loving carer. Local Derry people also paid tribute. One described her in terms that could hardly be bettered: “one of the nicest women I've ever met...she treated everybody with dignity and respect”. We will always need inspirational people – they die, but thankfully their influence lives on.

Forgiveness

Not entirely unrelated **Songs of Praise** (BBC One, Sunday) focused on the power of forgiveness. Presenter



John and Pat Hume pictured shortly after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

Aled Jones suggested it was a way to move from tragedy to hope. We heard of an IRA bomb that destroyed a medieval church in London in 1993. It was revived as St Ethelburga's Centre of Reconciliation and Peace. Chaplain Rev David Tomlinson explained how they sought to lift people's burden of guilt and revenge. Particularly topical was Pam Rhodes' interview with Rob Halligan, a Christian musician

whose father was killed in the attacks of 9/11, 20 years ago this weekend. He spoke of how his faith had helped him through the tragedy. The “challenge of forgiveness” moved him to pray not just for his father, but for the perpetrators, to help break “the cycle of hatred”. Most moving of all was the story of Nadim Ednan-Laperouse and his wife Tanya, whose teenage daughter Natasha had died because of a food

allergy. Not particularly religious up to that point he described a vision of angels at the moment of her death on a plane, and the touching moment when he forgave to boss of the company that had inadequately labelled the ingredients of a baguette. I liked the way all the contributors joined in a prayer at the end.

Return

Last Sunday also saw the return of **Sunday Morning Live** (BBC One), with Sean Fletcher and Nina Wadia exploring the religious, ethical and quirky stories of the week. The episode featured an interesting discussion on whether the Christian churches should accept, facilitate or bless same-sex unions, though the Catholic perspective wasn't considered. It was mainly in the context of the Church in Wales considering the matter this week. At least it was a balanced discussion with two Church of England clergy (Rev. Andrew Foreshaw-Cain in favour, Rev. Ian Paul, against) Methodist minister (Rev. Delyth Liddell) who explained the position of her church and author David Bennet who is gay, celibate and opposed to same-sex marriage – a real diversity of opinion which we don't often get. And, as a bonus, it was a respectful discussion - between people who disagree strongly

PICK OF THE WEEK

52ND INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

EWTN Sunday September 12, 6.30am

Official welcome for Pope Francis live from Budapest, International Airport. More coverage of the congress follows.

MASS

RTÉ One Sunday September 12, 11.00am

Fr Martin Collum is celebrant for today's Mass with a congregation from the Parish of Killygarvan and Tullyfern, along with students from Errigal College, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

RTÉ One Sunday September 12, 10.30pm

The Meaning of Life returns. In episode one, Joe Duffy meets screen legend Jane Seymour. She reflects on how her parents' experiences of World War II affected their lives.

on something fundamental. Now there's a lesson.

Discussion

I tuned in to Radio Maria Ireland on Sunday afternoon and heard a fascinating discussion on religious art. In the latest episode of the series **Understanding Icons** Aoife Smith explored that particular art form associated with the Orthodox churches. In fact, in the past there had been debates whether there should be any icon painting outside of these churches. In the 17th Century there had even been persecution of iconographers, with some of them put to death or getting their hands chopped off – some, referencing the strictures on ‘graven images’, were very disapproving, while oth-

ers valued the art form, and so you got iconophiles and iconoclasts in a conflict that's hard to get one's head around today. Whatever about that it was clear that icons can be a great aid to, and inspiration for, prayer, with so much symbolism to reflect on and explore. Irish iconographer Dick Sinclair provided some intriguing background information and explanation of the complex symbolism.

You can catch the series and see the icons discussed via the Radio Maria podcast page at www.radiomaria.ie – easy access to some fine nourishment for the soul.

✉ boregan@hotmail.com,
[@boreganmedia](https://www.facebook.com/boreganmedia)



Film

Coming of age in its various forms

Someone said to me recently, ‘What was Bill Nighy before he got old?’ I thought it was a good question. I saw him for the first time in *Love Actually* in 2003. He was no spring chicken then.

I thought to myself: Where had he been before that? Had he arrived from outer space? Was it possible that he was born as an old man and, like Benjamin Button, was going to age backwards? Would he end up as an infant?

After a plonk through the internet I discovered to my relief that Mr Nighy did indeed come into the world as a baby. The momentous event took place in 1949.

He made a string of films before *Love Actually* but

either I didn't see them or they didn't register with me. In one of them he played an uncredited flower boy so maybe that's not surprising.

His latest is *Buckley's Chance*. In it he plays a man moving to Australia with his mother a year after his father's death to live with his estranged grandfather.

I have great respect for the aura of craggy dignity he exudes. Maybe some day the people who manage his career will re-issue some of his pre-*Love Actually* releases to let the world know he did in fact inhabit the planet before then. We would all be infinitely better off armed with this knowledge.

Beast Beast (VOD) is a

coming of age drama set in America's Deep South. *Here Are the Young Men* (Amazon Prime) adopts a more hard-edged approach to a similar theme as a group of Irish teenagers get drawn into a drink and drugs subculture.

Fosse/Verdon (Disney+) explores the choreographic collaboration between Bob Fosse and his wife Gwen Verdon. They had a fruitful working relationship but a stormy marriage. Fosse's self-destructive life was brilliantly covered in *All That Jazz* (Amazon). Here the focus is on his relationship with a woman who was in many ways his muse.

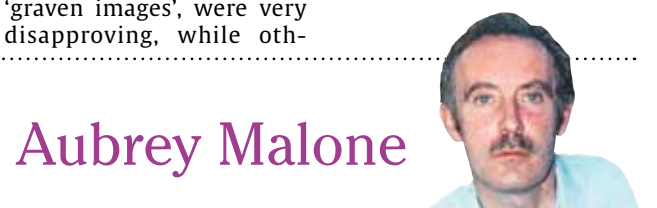
If you survived being stuffed in a bodybag and thrown into a river you'd

probably want to report it to the police. The heroine in *Lethal Love* (Netflix) goes off to her mother's wedding instead.

In the next scene a woman who's had her sister bumped off by the same guy happily sings a song in a cake shop while the heroine and her mother – both of whom the killer was romantically involved with – look on smilingly. Everything seems hunky dory. But where's sis?

The mother/daughter scenario worked better for me in *The Graduate*. Imagine Dustin Hoffman going off with Anne Bancroft instead of Katharine Ross and you'll have an idea of what transpires here.

Many years ago I saw a



Aubrey Malone



film called *The Stepfather*. It was about this maniac who keeps marrying women and killing them off when the families they create don't

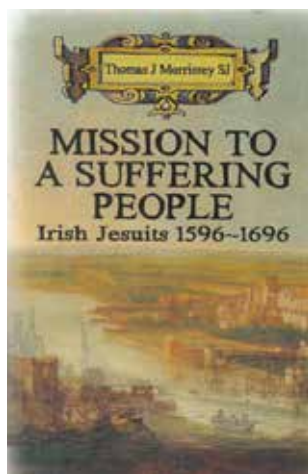
come up to scratch for him. This is even more ridiculous, which is saying something. File under TNN (Typical Netflix Nonsense).

BookReviews

Peter Costello



A grim but important century in Irish history



Mission to a Suffering People: Irish Jesuits 1596-1696

by Thomas J. Morrissey SJ
(Messenger Publications, €19.95/£18.95)

Peter Costello

The Jesuit historian T. J. Morrissey is well known for his books on the Irish trade union movement and on modern Church history, especially in Dublin. But he has also written widely about the more distant past. His new book deals with the 17th Century, which is often seen today as the period when the modern era in Europe really began. Certainly it was a period of turmoil, conflict, pain, and suffering in a way quite akin to recent days rather than to the middle ages.

Add to this the fact that much that happened in Ireland was often an outcome of what originated in Europe, such as the Reformation and its aftermath. Movements that began in central and southern Europe eventually washed over the bogs of Mayo and the mountains of Donegal.

Overview

In this overview Fr Morrissey tells the tale of the period through the lives of four Jesuits, some familiar, others less so.

“Much that happened in Ireland was often an outcome of what originated in Europe, such as the Reformation and its aftermath”

They are James Archer (1550-1620), Richard Conway (c.1573-1626), Robert Nugent (1577-1652), and Stephen Rice (1625-1699). Their experiences in Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny and elsewhere in their very different ways illustrate vividly the course of the century in a very human way that will attract many readers.

The book manages to encompass the tragic turmoil for the Irish people of the 17th Century. That century oddly enough seems to contain a large number of the events and personalities that seem to epitomise Irish history for many people: the Counter-reformation, the Confederation of Kilkenny, Cromwell's Irish campaigns, the Restoration of Charles II, the advent of William III, and the 'Broken Treaty of Limerick'. Quite a catalogue altogether.

Admired

The much admired 18th Century that followed has the appearance of a more settled period. It was, however, notorious for the Penal Laws, legal instruments that had their origin in the hatreds and fears of the previous century. But we have to remember that (as Fr Francis Finnegan pointed out long ago) the 17th Century that Fr Morrissey deals with, was the peak of Ireland for martyrs and confessors: hardly a place in the country seems to have been free of blood.

For any reader who wishes to have an approachable yet detailed account of a very confusing era *Mission to a Suffering People* provides insights which will serve them well in trying to bridge the great gulf that separates medieval Catholic Ireland from the multicultural society that we have today.

Peter J. Drumm, First Professor of Biochemistry at University College Cork

by Ned Barrett
(Clogher Historical Society, €15.00; Clogher Historical Society, St Macartan's College, Mullaghmurphy, Monaghan; ; info@clogherhistory.ie)

J. Anthony Gaughan

Peter J. Drumm was born in Drumod, Co. Monaghan, on October 24, 1898. He attended Derrygooney National School and was a boarder at St Macartan's College in Monaghan Town from 1911 to 1915. Obtaining a county council university scholarship, he enrolled at University College Dublin and graduated with a BSc in 1918, and was conferred with an MSc the following year.

“Drumm came to the chemistry department in UCC as the holder of a state research scholarship in 1925

He began his working life as a research chemist at British Dyestuffs Corporation in Huddersfield in England. He formed a good relationship with Prof. Robert Robinson, director of the research laboratory, and the professor who was later to be a Nobel laureate publicly commended his work. Drumm returned to Ireland in 1921 when he became an assistant chemist at Fine Chemicals Ltd in Dublin. However, within a year the company was in the hands of a liquidator. Drumm then secured an appointment as science teacher in his *alma mater* and held it until 1925.

Research

Drumm came to the chemistry department in UCC as the holder of a state research scholarship in 1925 and was appointed research assistant the following year. He was elected to a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship at the Chemistry Institute for Medical Research in Heidelberg in Germany in 1931. There he witnessed the rise to power of Adolf Hitler and became aware of the Fuhrer's attitude to academics and scientists; he referred to them in his rants as *geistreiche Schwachlinge* (smart Alec weaklings). Nor was Drumm unaware of the Fuhrer's attitude to his colleagues of the Jewish race at the institute. Thus

Laying the foundation of a scientific modern Ireland



“Within a year the company was in the hands of a liquidator. Drumm then secured an appointment as science teacher in his *alma mater*”

he was not surprised when in January 1931, just after his return to Cork, Jewish academics and scientists were being dismissed by the universities. Among them was a valued friend at the institute, Edgar Lederer, who was hounded out of Germany and Europe by the Nazis. At that time, 26% of the chemists and biochemists in German universities and research institutes were dismissed, 90% being forced out because of their

race. However, those unaffected by the Nazi race laws, with few exceptions, remained in their posts.

Assistant lecturer

Drumm was granted leave of absence from UCC to act as visiting assistant lecturer in medical chemistry at the University of Edinburgh for the academic year 1936-1937. Back in Cork, he was appointed Professor of Biochemistry in March 1946. Thereafter, as was noted in

the *Cork University Record*, he put his experiences at Heidelberg and Edinburgh to good use in conducting his department to the highest standards.

In the meantime, UCC was expanding not least because of the acquisition of the grounds of the old Cork Jail, which was contiguous to the college. There was a plan to construct a medical centre on the site, which would have included a premises for the

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.



University College Cork .

department of biochemistry. However, owing to the influence of President O'Rahilly, a department of electrical engineering was built on the site instead. It was hinted that Drumm's immense disappointment at this outcome could have contributed to his sudden and early demise on January 14, 1952.

List

The author provides a comprehensive list of Drumm's scientific publications. He also describes his extended family. Among the best-known was his eldest brother, Dr James J. Drumm, inventor of the electric storage battery – the 'Drumm battery' – which was installed in the Drumm battery train in 1932. Two

other brothers, Charles and Patrick, were ordained for, and served in, the Diocese of Clogher.

“He put his experiences at Heidelberg and Edinburgh to good use in conducting his department to the highest standards “

This is an interesting and valuable monograph on a distinguished academic and scientist who contributed to the remarkable development and repute of University College Cork in the 1940s and early 1950s under the presidency of Alfred O'Rahilly.

Lessons for life from *The School Around the Corner*

By the Books editor

A little while ago, from a book picked up in my book-hunting rambles, I plucked a leaflet on *Choosing pupils for The School around the Corner*. This was once among the most popular programmes that Radió Éireann (as the single national station was then called) ever broadcast. Some reflections on it may strike a chord in these return to school days of gloomy September.

It was printed for the then celebrated Paddy Crosbie, the compare of the show, for sending out to the principals or managers of national schools around the country on request who had expressed an interest in their school taking part. It is dated February 18, 1958, and was sent from his own home to a local curate on a Dublin southside parish.

Mr Crosbie, who was himself a national school teacher of great experience – the epitome of a 'lovely man' to many parents – is direct enough. (However I have rearranged his remarks for use here however):

“Pick four chatty, talkative youngsters who have two or three *true* funny incidents to narrate – the younger they are the better; say, from six to twelve. The ideal four would be of ages: (1) 6 or 7; (2) 7 or 8; (3) 9 or 10; (4) 11 or 12. There will be no need for a rehearsal.”

Recite

“One pupil will be required to recite and sing in Irish, and if fluent enough, will be required to chat in Irish. If in doubt here, contact me.

“Look for clear voices and *strong accents*. Do not be afraid to choose back-benchers, I promise that they will not 'let down' the school.

“The 'harum-scarum' type is best, e.g. the youngster who has mitched (and has been caught).

“Arm each with a short poem (for recitation) and a song. Of the four, have two patriotic songs or ballads, and two popular or funny (for



Paddy Crosbie with a young guest in the heyday of *The School around the Corner*

community singing).

“Do not pick any pupil on 'school merit' only. A 'weak' pupil who has the gift of the gab *will always shine in this feature*. 'Cheekiness', however, is not wanted.

“The informal chat will be based on home, relations, holidays, pets, likes and dislikes, ambitions, school, pastimes, accidents, escapades, etc., and above all, on *true funny incidents*.”

“Some reflections on it may strike a chord in these return to school days of gloomy September”

So much for Paddy Crosbie's communication: it is interesting to learn that for Paddy Crosbie the best types for the programme were characters with charm and a talkative way with them, and to be preferred to the academic types: - no 'swots' were called for.

But then this was the year Pope John XXIII was elected and was considering calling an ecumenical council. It was a year before Éamon de Valera 'went to the Park', but a year after the first earth satellite was launched by the much-feared USSR. This was a time when commerce was still studied at UCD, and not economics, let alone business management. Looking



What a rural national school once looked like.

damn about the smart lads – they can be kept in a back room. What people really appreciate is the man with the retentive memory for a face and a strong handshake to circle the room at a reception.

Brains

Modern Irish society would deny discounting brains. We will be assured that so-and-so had all the brains of a man with three doctorates (real, not honorary), but often what we like to see in the papers and on television are the charmers who tell us all how great we all are.

The original show brings to mind the Ireland evoked in that fine little film by Kevin Corcoran that provided the background to the playing of the national anthem at the close of daily service when RTÉ arrived in 1960. It shows a long line of children streaming into a white-washed rural school of the just kind often built in the first days of the new state that were then a common sight.

The School Around the Corner later migrated to television. But whereas for Paddy Crosbie the children as they were called then were the real stars of the programme – and rightly so; for the professional celebrity presenters of today *they* are the stars and the kids, as children have now become, are there to support them.

Ah, yes, we do indeed live in a different moral climate.

back it was, some now think, still for many an age of innocence, but one has to wonder, our grandparents were not the complete idiots that the 'woke' generation seems to think.

But what a sharp stab of light some of the expressions used cast on Irish attitudes, then and now. The use of the term 'back-benchers' for the slower students corralled at the back of the room.

Admit

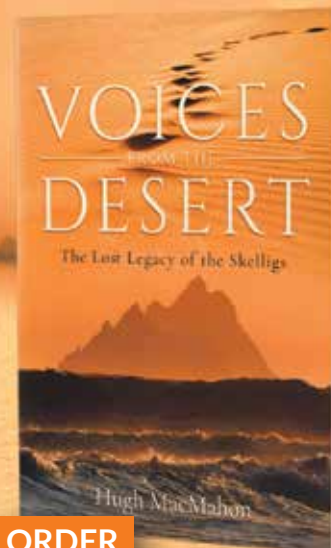
And we would have to admit as regards the prominence of the devil-may-care charmers – those sorts are still with us, and given our unchanging outlook on life since the days of the Celts always will be.

These are still the personalities who manage to get on – I will leave a blank space, you can fill in names of your choice! That charm explains how some such people get to the top in Irish life. Matter a

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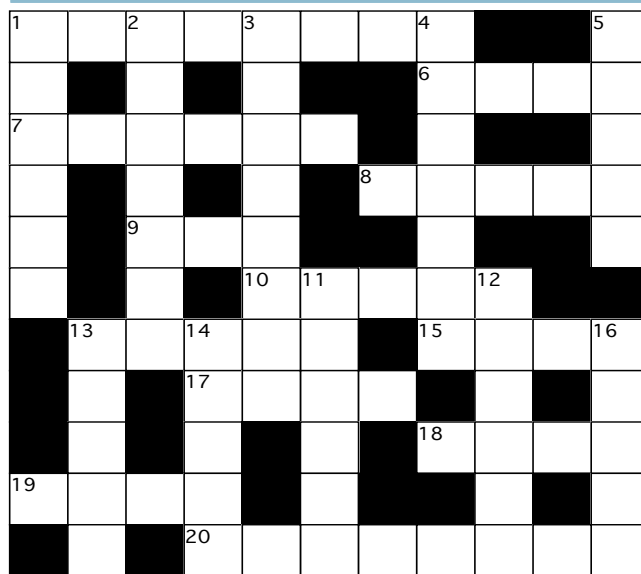


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One day, parents and their children will tell the story of how your legacy of love changed their lives. Thank you for considering a gift to Trócaire in your Will.

Crossword Junior

Gordius 399



Across

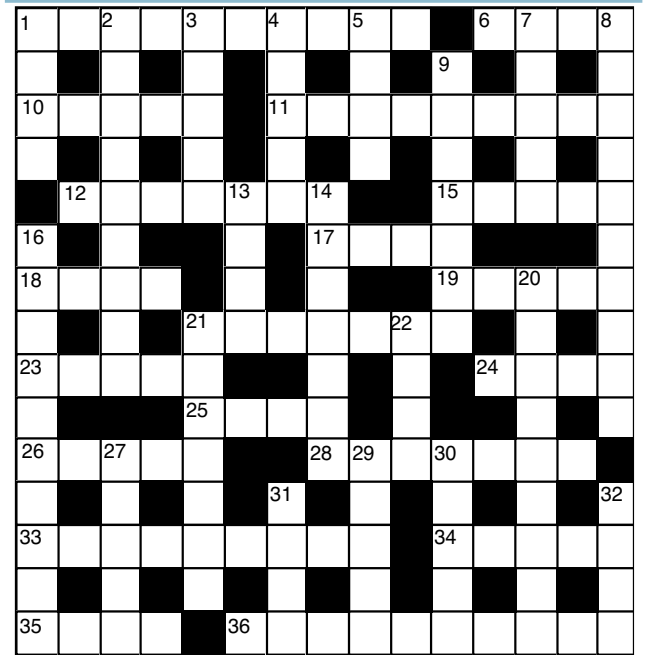
- 1 Tourists in Antrim go to see the Giant's _____ (8)
- 6 Coin that can be spent in many countries in Europe (4)
- 7 Zero (6)
- 8 There's a book about her adventures in Wonderland (5)
- 9 Flying saucer (1.1.1.)
- 10 Musical instrument (5)
- 13 Not fancy (5)
- 15 Get bigger (4)
- 17 Quick or speedy (4)
- 18 One of some french fries (4)

Down

- 19 A joint in the leg (4)
- 20 Came back (8)
- 1 You put one on your birthday cake for each year (6)
- 2 Rare - not often seen (7)
- 3 Addis Ababa is the capital of this African country (8)
- 4 Shouting (7)
- 5 Lid (5)
- 11 A hurtful thing someone might say (6)
- 12 Someone whose parents have both died (6)
- 13 You put it on with a brush (5)
- 14 The opposite of 'before' (5)
- 16 Cleaned with a cloth (5)

Crossword

Gordius 524



Across

- 1 Piece of advice given as a genius togs out (10)
- 6 Farm which specialises in thoroughbreds (4)
- 10 & 22d Tibetan spiritual leader (5,4)
- 11 & 36a Great enthusiasm characteristic of one new to a religion (3,4,2,3,7)
- 12 Hinders (7)
- 15 Consent, concur (5)
- 17 Pitcher, water jug (4)
- 18 Telephoned (4)
- 19 Its leaf is on the Canadian flag (5)
- 21 The pro duly changed with a great sense of pride (7)
- 23 In the Old Testament, Abraham's wife and the mother of Isaac (5)
- 24 Item of Celtic jewellery (4)
- 25 One would love to prohibit this Scottish town! (4)
- 26 & 34a Moby Dick was this kind of creature (5,5)
- 28 Visibly marked by injury (7)
- 33 It gives a sense of history and continuity (9)
- 34 See 26 across
- 35 Take note (4)

Down

- 36 See 11 across
- 1 Pieces of turf (4)
- 2 Clementine's father's occupation in the American folk song (4,5)
- 3 The 'cream', the privileged few (5)
- 4 Name of a book, film etc (5)
- 5 Do as you are told (4)
- 7 Grouting is part of this person's trade (5)
- 8 Dissimilarity (10)
- 9 Russian military or Munster fans (3,4)
- 13 Portal (4)
- 14 Sparkling discs sewn onto a costume (7)
- 16 Portable timepiece (10)
- 20 How one moped near a seafront walk (9)
- 21 Mythical bird, or the state capital of Arizona (7)
- 22 See 10 across
- 27 Icon or picture (5)
- 29 Sceptical person (5)
- 30 Mountain ash (5)
- 31 Aspiration, desire (4)
- 32 Mighty deed; great achievement (4)

SOLUTIONS, SEPTEMBER 02

GORDIUS NO. 523

Across - 1 Rio de Janeiro 7 Boa 9 Cyan 10 Guitar 11 Fell 14 Vexed 15 Elope 16 Claw 18 Swans 21 Papal visit 22 Tidal 23 Total 24 Lull 25 Inert 26 Puppy 29 Arch 33 Stolen 34 Edit 36 Spa 37 Mademoiselle

Down - 1 Ray 2 Owns 3 Eggs 4 Alike 5 Erase 6 Oboe 8 All's well that ends well 9 Caterpillars 12 Gospel 13 Dealt 17 Ledger 19 Alloy 20 Stain 27 Untie 28 Polio 30 Cram 35 Ice

CHILDREN'S No. 398

Across - 1 Showjumping 7 Track 8 Everest 11 Rags 13 Slovakia 14 Yolk 16 Initials 17 Hear 18 Tease

Down - 1 Saturday 2 Orange 3 Joke 4 Mice 5 Idle 6 Gift 9 Veronica 10 Relative 12 Willow 13 Skirt 15 Open

Sudoku Corner

399

Easy

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

Hard

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

Last week's Easy 398

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

Last week's Hard 398

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

Notebook

Fr Martin Delaney



Milli Vanilli and religious lip synching

SOME OF THE READERS of this column might remember a band called Milli Vanilli which caused quite a music controversy. In 1990 the duo of Rob and Fab exploded on to pop music scene. They had five big hits, including three number one songs. Then it was discovered that they weren't really singing on their records or at their concerts. They were simply lip-synching. The actual vocals were by two former American soldiers who just didn't have the "look" the record company wanted. People in the recording industry were outraged, and Milli Vanilli had to give back the Grammy Award presented to them for Best New Artist. Regularly in the gospels Jesus accused the Pharisees and the priests of his day of simply doing an Old Testament lip synch. They mouthed the appropriate words but were not singing God's song. As a priest who stands up on a regular basis to preach the word of God I'm haunted by that lip-synching accusation from Jesus. I'm also deeply uncomfortable about the instances of lip-synching which characterise so many areas of our faith, especially in relation to the sacraments and how we celebrate them.



Every year many young parents come to me and priests throughout the country to have their new born babies baptised. The birth of a baby is a happy event, an event to be celebrated and ritualised. All parents want the best for their children and for most parents in Ireland today that wanting the best still includes having them baptised. Serious questions exist as to why some parents want Baptism for their children. In many urban areas it may simply be to insure that they get into a Catholic school. In the Baptism ceremony, very direct questions are asked of the parents about their willingness to raise their children in the Faith:

Baptised

"You have asked to have your child baptised. In doing so you

are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the Faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us by loving God and our neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?"

In 35 years I have never known any parent to say no to that question and yet in so many cases I have huge reservations whether they have any grasp of what is being asked of them. The lip synching continues when parents present children for First Communion and perhaps the worst of all is Confirmation. Every few years more than 60 children in our parish present themselves for Confirmation. They promise publicly that they will be committed to their faith and to practicing it regularly. If I have

ever seen 5% of them in church afterwards it is the most there has been. Far from being the Sacrament of commitment and initiation into the Church, Confirmation is for so many the Sacrament of exit out of it. More Milli Vanilli, more religious lip synching.

Angry

Now some of you reading this will perhaps be angry with me because I'm even raising these questions. You may be thinking he is on a rant and he must surely have gotten out of bed at the wrong side this morning. I'm sorry if I have upset you but I believe passionately that these are fundamental questions of integrity that we have to have a conversation about.

Someone once defined integrity as being when our inners match our outers! So many times in the Gos-

pels, Jesus holds up a mirror to all of us and asks us that uncomfortable question; 'Are we who we say we are?' That is the question for each of us every day.

Falling Leaves

One, then another and another
On the skim down from above,
Bedding the forest table before me
With comforting crunches and crackles.
This gigantic death scene of leaves
Does not smell of sorrow or sadness,
Rather, the earth is coloured with joy
And the leaves make music in the wind.

(Joyce Rupp)

In a Word!

In the African country of Malawi with a population of 20 million, a book titled: *How to change your wife in 30 days* sold two million copies in one week after its' publication, before it was discovered that the title had a spelling error! The correct title was: *How to change your life in 30 days*. So, after the correction, for the whole month, only 3 copies were sold. Does it not fascinate you that in life, "nobody wants to change himself/herself, but they'll do everything to change someone else". This is a blatant reality of life.



The Pope with a Lebanese flag at his 4 August audience, at which he appealed for the people of Lebanon.

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"Jesus wills that we give alms to Him as to one poor and needy. He puts Himself as it were at our mercy; He will take nothing but what we give Him from our heart, and the very least trifle is precious in His sight." ~ St Therese

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